

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 31 October 2014

OPERATOR CHOSEN FOR NEW NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

- Healthscope has been chosen as the preferred tenderer to design, build and operate the new Northern Beaches Hospital, the first hospital to be built on a greenfield site in Sydney in 20 years, delivering the best possible care to public and private patients.
- After a rigorous evaluation process, Healthscope's proposal for a modern, nine storey hospital will contain 488 beds, 1,400 car spaces and a helipad.
- The project will be valued at about \$1 billion, including \$400 million in road upgrades that the NSW Government will complete before the doors open in 2018. It will also provide an economic boost to NSW, with 700 jobs created during construction.
- Premier and Member for Manly Mike Baird said the people of the Northern Beaches have been waiting decades for this hospital to get off the ground and today the NSW Government is delivering.

IMPROVED BUDGET RESULT AND NET DEBT DOWN FOR 2013-14

- The 2013-14 Total State Sector Accounts, released by NSW Treasurer Andrew Constance, show a Budget surplus of \$1.2 billion - an improvement of \$259 million since the June Budget.
- The result is \$3.1 billion better than stated in the 2013-14 Budget, largely as a result of improved stamp duty revenues due to strong growth in the residential and commercial property sectors, and higher-than-forecast Commonwealth grants and subsidies.
- Mr Constance said the NSW Budget is in a powerful position with net debt down, expenses under control and our triple-A credit rating recently upgraded to a stable outlook. The NSW Half-Yearly Review will be released in December.

NEW GOLD OPAL CARD FOR SENIORS AND PENSIONERS

- From Monday November 3 seniors and pensioners can order their own Gold Opal card if they choose to, and pay no more than \$2.50 a day to use public transport.
- The new Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card means eligible customers won't pay more than \$2.50 a day for travel on trains, buses, Sydney Ferries and light rail when it is rolled out.
- Seniors and pensioners can still buy and use their paper Pensioner Excursion Tickets (PET) if they don't want to use the Gold Opal card.

- The launch of the brand new Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card marks another major milestone in the Opal rollout, and will make a huge difference for seniors and pensioners when it comes to paying for and using public transport.
- To order a Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card customers can call 13 67 25 (13 OPAL) or visit the Opal website at www.opal.com.au – it takes only minutes to apply, and then it takes about one week for the card to be mailed out to the customer's home.

LISMORE HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT PROGRESSING

- NSW Premier Mike Baird has inspected progress on the \$80 million Lismore Base Hospital Redevelopment, which will provide a major boost to health services in the region.
- Major work on the hospital began in June 2014. The multi-storey development will include: a new Emergency Department with 31 treatment spaces, a new ambulance drop-off area, a new renal dialysis unit, and expanded Medical Imaging capacity.
- The redevelopment at Lismore will provide improved access to and equity in the delivery of a wider range of services, and additional capacity to respond to the rapid growth in demand and the needs of the local community.
- The Lismore Base Hospital redevelopment is jointly funded with \$60 million from the Australian Government's Health and Hospitals Fund and \$20 million from the NSW Government. The project is scheduled for completion in mid-2016.

FOUR CORRIDORS SHORTLISTED FOR PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL

- Western Sydney is another step closer to having light rail after ten options were shortlisted to four corridors for detailed studies, moving the NSW Government's project for a future Parramatta light rail network to the next stage.
- The shortlisted corridors for light rail are: Parramatta to Macquarie Park via Carlingford; Parramatta to Castle Hill via Old Northern Road; Parramatta to Bankstown; and Parramatta to Sydney Olympic Park and Strathfield/Burwood.
- These four corridors will now be subject to detailed engineering, transport planning and customer analysis, to establish which represents the best option for light rail connecting Parramatta with other Western Sydney centres.
- Funding to accelerate this work was identified in the 2014-15 NSW Budget, with \$400 million set aside from Restart NSW. The light rail project will help continue the transformation of Parramatta, Sydney's second CBD.

SWEEPING REFORMS TO CHILD PROTECTION IN NSW TAKE EFFECT

- The NSW Government's most important reforms to the child protection system for a generation have taken effect, targeted at the almost 19,000 children and young people currently in out-of-home care in NSW.
- Among the changes, caseworkers and families will have access to more resources to help parents to improve their parenting skills and capacity, and the process for open adoptions will be improved to help children who cannot live safely at home.

- Around 1,600 carers across NSW - many of them grandparents – have also transitioned to a ‘Guardianship Order’. They will be paid a guardian’s allowance, instead of a carer’s allowance, but will continue to be paid the same allowance amount.
- Safe Home for Life has seen the NSW Government invest more than \$500 million over four years into making sweeping changes to improve the child protection system, giving children and young people the best chance at a better future.

NSW GOVT TO DELIVER \$44M CARBON TAX REFUNDS

- The NSW Government has instructed Sydney Water and Hunter Water to refund 100 per cent of the carbon tax they passed on to customers, equating to \$44 million.
- Rebates will be back-dated to 1 July 2014, the date the Federal Coalition repealed the tax, and will appear on customers’ water bills under the title ‘Carbon Tax Refund’.
- Hunter Water and Sydney Water will provide rebates for customers for the carbon tax the utilities are no longer paying in the November and January billing quarters, respectively.
- As a result this year water prices for Sydney Water and Hunter Water are now among the very lowest of any Australian water utility.

POLICE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

- The Lake Macquarie Local Area Command will benefit from a \$28.24 million investment from the NSW Government.
- This will fund a major redevelopment of Belmont Police Station and upgrades to Morisset and Toronto Stations.
- The NSW Government will continue to work with the New South Wales Police Force to ensure it has the powers and resources needed to keep our communities safe and secure.

BELUBULA DAM INVESTIGATIONS UNDERWAY

- Water NSW is considering potential dam sites on the Belubula River in order to improve water security in the Lachlan Valley as part of the NSW Government’s *Water Security for Regions* program.
- State Water will conduct a high-level analysis of options to improve water security in the region and produce recommendations to the Government by December 2014.
- Any dam recommended in these initial investigations would be subject to further feasibility and concept studies as well as a full examination of the environmental, heritage, engineering and community considerations.
- The NSW Government is committed to delivering the water infrastructure that will prepare our regional communities for drier conditions in the future, while also boosting regional populations and agricultural productivity.

MORE CAR SPACES FOR OATLEY AND SPRINGWOOD STATIONS

- A brand new 100 space car park has been announced for customers at Oatley Station as a major upgrade at the train station takes shape.
- Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian and Member for Oatley Mark Coure announced the new 100 space car park would be built next to the existing Oatley station car park, increasing convenience for customers and making a difference to their daily commute.
- Planning approval for a major revamp of Oatley Station has been received and will include an overhead footbridge, new stairs and lifts, as well as redesigned station forecourts and new landscaping.
- Meanwhile, work has begun to deliver an extra 25 parking spaces for customers at Springwood Station as part of the NSW Government's commitment to hand back more than 1,200 staff parking spaces to customers across the rail network.

NEW FELLOWSHIP TO HONOUR PETER SCULTHORPE

- A Fellowship will be created to honour the contribution of Peter Sculthorpe AO OBE to Australia's musical heritage. Peter Sculthorpe passed away this year and is widely acknowledged as Australia's most significant composer.
- The \$30,000 Sculthorpe Fellowship will be offered by the NSW Government and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, every second year beginning in 2015.
- The Fellowship will support the professional development of an emerging NSW-based composer or performer dedicated to producing new Australian music.
- Further details on the Sculthorpe Fellowship will be made available early in 2015.

\$2.4 MILLION GRANT TO SUPPORT THE EXODUS FOUNDATION

- The NSW Government has announced a \$2.4 million grant for the Exodus Foundation to support its homelessness and educational programs for vulnerable people in our community.
- The Exodus Foundation does an outstanding job combating disadvantage by providing food, educational and social health services to vulnerable people across Sydney.
- The Loaves and Fishes Restaurant provides hundreds of meals a day for homeless people, while its Tutorial Centre teaches literacy skills to children who have fallen through the cracks in the mainstream education system.
- The grant will support the Exodus Foundation for the 2015 and 2016 calendar years while transition arrangements are made for it to operate under the funding reforms of Going Home, Staying Home and Local Schools, Local Decisions.

SPECTACULAR SCULPTURES TO ADORN WOLLOMBI VALLEY

- Outdoor sculptures will adorn the Wollombi Valley Wine Trail as part of the annual *Sculpture in the Vineyards* exhibition in the Wollombi Valley, in the NSW Hunter.
- Now in its 12th year, *Sculpture in the Vineyards* features more than 100 works from emerging and established artists and sees vineyards, cellar doors and Wollombi Village transformed into vibrant galleries.
- The NSW Government supports the event through the Regional Flagship Events Program, which aims to boost visitor numbers and encourage economic growth in our regional communities.
- The exhibition is open daily from 10:00am to 6:00pm until Saturday 29 November. For more information visit: www.visitsw.com/events/sculpture-in-the-vineyards

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