

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 11 DECEMBER 2015**

### **MAKING IT HAPPEN IN WESTERN SYDNEY: PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL NETWORK UNVEILED**

- Premier Mike Baird has unveiled the preferred route for the Parramatta Light Rail Project which will kick start revitalisation and jobs growth along a 22 kilometre corridor.
- Western Sydney's light rail network will connect Parramatta's CBD to the key hubs of Sydney Olympic Park, Westmead Hospital, Western Sydney University and Strathfield.
- Work will now begin on a final business case and assessment of the preferred network and this will include planning, design and consultation with key stakeholders along the network to develop the staging of the project, the exact light rail route and stops, and the final project cost.
- This light rail network will help Parramatta reach its potential as Sydney's second CBD and will be a major boost to existing public transport services in Western Sydney.

### **NSW MOVES TO A FAIRER SYSTEM FOR FUNDING FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

- The NSW Government has announced plans to introduce a fairer and simpler system of funding fire and emergency services that will bring NSW into line with all other mainland states and help reduce the high levels of underinsurance across the State.
- From 1 July 2017, the NSW Government will abolish the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) on insurance policies and replace it with an Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL), paid alongside council rates.

- The reform will mean funding of these vital services will no longer fall only on those with property insurance but all landowners. Under the current funding model, NSW property owners who insure their properties are subsidising households who don't purchase contents or building insurance.
- By moving to this fairer system, the NSW Government anticipates the vast majority of insured residential property owners will be better off under the ESPL, with the average insured property owner saving around \$40 per year. This will reduce the cost of insurance and encourage more people to insure their properties.
- The introduction of the ESPL will not in any way reduce levels of funding to the State's fire and emergency services.
- Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian said this long overdue reform has been recommended by recent reviews into State taxes, including the Henry Review, and shows the NSW Government is committed to tax reform.

### **MOODY'S CONFIRMS NSW TRIPLE – A RATING**

- Ratings agency Moody's has today confirmed NSW's triple-A credit rating, acknowledging the state's improved financial performance.
- Moody's report found that the NSW economy is expected to remain more resilient than other states in the medium term and also signalled that NSW may face challenges with a potential slowdown in revenue growth.
- This report follows Standard & Poor's reaffirmation of NSW's triple-A credit rating in October 2015.
- After more than four and a half years of hard work, the NSW Government has ensured NSW's position as the nation's number one economy.

### **PARRAMATTA JOBS BOOST**

- Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Mike Baird has announced more than 1,800 public servants are set to move to Parramatta in a major jobs boost for Western Sydney.
- Under the plan, all Department of Education staff currently working in the Sydney CBD will move offices to Parramatta.

- Western Sydney is the economic powerhouse of NSW and the NSW Government is doing everything possible to further strengthen this dynamic region.
- The first staff will move into the Parramatta premises in 2018 and the transfer will be complete by mid-2020.

### **MAJOR DISTRICT COURT FUNDING BOOST**

- Attorney General Gabrielle Upton has announced a comprehensive \$20 million package to slash the NSW District Court backlog by more than 600 criminal trials over the next two years.
- As at September 2015, the NSW District Court had a backlog of 2,055 criminal cases.
- This funding package includes:
  - Additional sittings for NSW District Court;
  - Targeted Trial Call-Over Courts that will identify matters that can be resolved faster by an early guilty plea;
  - Pre-trial conferencing for long trials that last 20 days or more to ensure early resolution of criminal trials;
  - Appointment of acting judges to hear more matters;
  - Appointing of additional public defenders to ensure defended matters are dealt with faster.
- The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the justice system is fast, fair and accessible.

### **METRO NORTHWEST COMMUNITIES TAKE SHAPE**

- Planning Minister Rob Stokes has released draft plans for new homes, jobs, infrastructure and public facilities around the Sydney Metro Northwest stations – Showground, Bella Vista and Kellyville stations.
- These plans include around 13,500 new homes, 14,000 new jobs, areas for schools, high quality public spaces, pedestrian and cycle links and road upgrades and will shape the future of the area over the next 20 years.
- The Draft Precinct Plans are now on exhibition until 28 February 2016.

## **NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADER**

- Minister for Multiculturalism John Ajaka has called for nominations for the 2016 Premier's Multicultural Community medals which recognise community leaders who have made an outstanding contribution to NSW.
- The awards honour achievements in community harmony, youth, lifetime, community service, arts and culture, regional communities, and economic participation.
- Nominations close on 5 February 2016 and winners of the medals will be announced by NSW Premier Mike Baird at the Premier's Harmony Dinner on 10 March 2016.
- For more information visit [www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au).

## **INCREASED COMPETITION AND LOWER PRICES IN NSW RETAIL ELECTRICITY MARKET**

- The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has released a report that confirms electricity customers continue to benefit from increased competition under the NSW Government's reforms to the retail electricity market.
- The report found that in the first year of electricity price deregulation, the market was working effectively.
- Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, Anthony Roberts welcomed the report which found that households could save up to \$389 to \$522 by switching to the lowest priced market offer.
- The NSW Government's reforms to the retail electricity market are boosting competition and putting downward pressure on prices for the state's households and businesses.

## **FUNDING TO INCREASE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES**

- Minister for Multiculturalism John Ajaka has announced grants for 31 projects that aim to help young people reach their full potential through activities that benefit their community.
- The 'Youth Opportunities Program' provides more than \$1 million to organisations each year to deliver youth-led and youth driven community

projects and invests in grass-roots projects across NSW that engage young people to become involved in community development activities.

- Since the program launched in 2012, more than \$6.8 million has been allocated to 120 youth development projects. The latest projects will commence in 2016.
- More information about this year's grants recipients can be found at [www.youth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au)

### **NEW ERA IN HEALTH: \$211 MILLION TAMWORTH HOSPITAL OFFICALLY OPENED**

- Health Minister has officially opened Tamworth Hospital, delivering on one of the first of the NSW Government's major regional health commitments made in March 2011.
- The acute services building provides a central hub for medical and surgical services, including the emergency department, intensive care unit, high dependency unit, operating theatres, day surgery and recovery. It also includes medical imaging, the maternity unit, birthing suite and special care nursery, the children's ward and the medical, surgical and palliative care wards.
- Since becoming operational in July, more than 21,000 patients have presented to the emergency department or been admitted to the new hospital.
- The Tamworth Hospital redevelopment was jointly funded with the Commonwealth Government providing \$120 million and the NSW Government contributing \$91 million.