

## NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 4 DECEMBER 2015

### KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS

- A priority of the NSW Government is delivering a justice system that is fast, fair, accessible, is tough on offenders and supports victims especially children and young people.
- We have delivered on key election commitments to keep our communities safe including:
  - Strengthened our already tough bail laws to make it harder for people with links to terrorism to get bail;
  - Halved the threshold required to charge dealers with manufacturing or supplying ice so more drug dealers and suppliers now face time behind bars;
  - Increased the maximum sentence to life imprisonment for sexual intercourse with a child under 10 years age;
  - Added more firearms offences to the standard non-parole period scheme so offenders get tougher sentences;
  - Reviewing sentencing of domestic offences in NSW to better deliver justice and better protect victims.
- The NSW Government is also protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims through a number of measures including:
  - Appointed two specialist judges and introduced the use of Children's Champions to help victims of child sexual assault.
  - Expanded *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* Domestic Violence Program to more sites across NSW – helping victims to immediately connect with the support and services they need;

- Upgrading courts with state of the art technology such as video links and prerecording of evidence to reduce trauma to children and domestic violence victims when they attend court.

## **END OF THE LINE FOR ELIZABETH – SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST TUNNELS 97 PER CENT COMPLETE**

- Tunnel boring machine (TMB) 'Elizabeth' has now finished work on Australia's longest railway tunnels, arriving at Cherrybrook and ending her role in building the twin 15km tunnels from Bella Vista to Epping which are now 97% complete.
- Elizabeth started digging on Australia's biggest public transport project - Sydney Metro Northwest - in September last year, and was in the ground four months ahead of schedule.
- She dug 9km from Bella Vista to Cherrybrook, with more than 29km of the 30km tunnelling task now complete.
- The only remaining mega machine working on the project, tunnel boring machine Florence, has about 850m left to dig and is on its way to Cherrybrook.
- Sydney Metro Northwest was the first transport infrastructure project in Australia's history to use four TBMs.

## **NSW RENTAL BONDS SYSTEM GOES DIGITAL**

- Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation Victor Dominello has launched NSW's Rental Bonds Online – a new online system for the lodgement and refund of residential rental bonds offering greater protection for tenants.
- Each year NSW Fair Trading processes around 540,000 paper-based applications for the deposit and refund of residential bond monies
- This new scheme will provide tenants with greater confidence that their money is held in trust and is expected to reduce red tape for tenants, private landlords and real estate agents by approximately \$20 million per year.
- Rental Bonds Online is mobile friendly and voluntary for tenants who can opt for paper based lodgements if they wish.

## **NEW DRUG DRIVING CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED: MDT- THERE'S NO ESCAPING IT**

- The NSW Government has launched this state's first ever drug driving campaign to warn motorists that if you take drugs and drive you will be caught.
- So far in 2015, one in 10 Mobile Drug Testing (MDT) assessments have come back positive, compared to around one in 300 positive Random Breath Tests for alcohol.
- The NSW Government is committed to eradicating drug driving and is tripling Mobile Drug Testing to 97,000 tests each year by 2017.

## **SITE SELECTED FOR NEW GRAFTON PRISON**

- Minister for Corrections David Elliott has announced the selection of a site for the new Grafton prison in an important step forward for the state's prison infrastructure strategy.
- The prison will significantly boost the number of jobs and economic opportunities in the Grafton, Clarence Valley and Northern Rivers region – it is expected to create about 300 jobs during construction and more than 250 ongoing jobs when it opens in 2019.
- The new modern facility will have the latest security and surveillance. It will be built and operated as a public-private partnership but will be owned by the NSW Government.

## **RECORD BREAKING NSW HOUSING APPROVALS**

- The NSW housing industry will finish 2015 on a record breaking high, with the latest ABS figures showing building approvals soared by more than 22 per cent in October.
- There were more than 5,300 approvals in October, which remains well above the average of the last five years.
- Nearly 65,000 homes were given the green light in the 12 months to October which is a 27 per cent increase on the previous year and 72 per cent above the decade average.

- Since the NSW Liberals & Nationals came into office, there has been on average 3,964 approvals per month, which is almost a 50 per cent increase compared to the five years to March 2011.

## **CAR PARK BUILDING BOOM AT NSW HOSPITALS**

- The NSW Government has invested more than \$250 million to construct over 10,000 car park spaces at the state's public hospitals since 2011.
- Surveys of patients, staff and visitors deliver an overwhelming message about the need for modern, safe and accessible car parking at our hospitals, which is why the NSW Government embarked on an ambitious program of car park construction when it came to Government in 2011.
- Old car parks are giving way to state-of-the-art structures which incorporate security features such as improved lighting and CCTV.
- The car park boom includes current projects:
  - Westmead Hospital (2200 spaces / \$72 million)
  - Lismore Base Hospital (270 spaces / \$9 million)
- It also includes new car parks which have been completed since 2011:
  - Wollongong Hospital (750 spaces / \$30 million)
  - Liverpool Hospital (900 spaces / \$29 million)
  - Blacktown Hospital (600 spaces / \$24 million)
  - Nepean Hospital (930 spaces / \$20 million)
  - Sutherland Hospital (300 spaces / \$9 million)
  - Coffs Harbour Hospital (460 spaces / \$8 million)
  - Royal North Shore Hospital (600 spaces / \$40 million)
- Other hospitals receiving new or upgraded parking include Dubbo, Forbes, Hornsby, Kempsey, Parkes, Port Macquarie, St George, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga, as well as Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) sites across rural NSW.

## **LARGEST PHILANTHROPIC DONATION TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

- Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Medical Research Pru Goward joined with the Black Dog Institute, the Paul Ramsey Foundation and the NSW Mental Health Commission to announce a contribution of \$14.76 million from the Paul Ramsay Foundation which will provide a new, evidence based approach to suicide prevention in NSW.

- This world first trial will utilise an evidence based framework and will see collaboration between the government and non-government sector to help solve health and social problems.
- This funding from the Paul Ramsey Foundation, in partnership with the support of the NSW Government, will enable us to save lives and create a suicide prevention framework that is effective and sustainable.

### **‘DROUGHTHUB’, NSW DROUGHT FRAMEWORK LAUNCHED**

- Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair has launched ‘DroughtHub’, a one-stop online destination for information on services and support available to primary producers, families and communities to prepare for and manage drought conditions
- The NSW Government has also launched the formal NSW Drought Framework which clearly outlines decision-making processes, what measures are available and when, and the role of various government agencies through the cycle of drought.
- Both of these measures were key commitments under the NSW Drought Strategy.
- For more information and how to apply for measures available under the five year \$300 million NSW Drought Strategy visit [www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au](http://www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au).

### **STRONGER TRADE TIES WITH SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA**

- Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres has signed a two year agreement between Destination NSW and low cost airline carrier Scoot, a partnership which includes multiple marketing campaigns to increase inbound tourism from Singapore to Sydney and across Regional NSW.
- The Minister also met with the Singaporean Minister for Trade and the Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry to talk about opportunities for further collaboration.
- Singapore is Australia’s fifth largest trading partner and Malaysia is Australia’s fifth biggest source of foreign direct investment in Asia.

## **'GO FISHING DAY'**

- The NSW Government has encouraged the community to get out there and fish to celebrate 'Go Fishing Day' on Sunday 6 December 2015.
- The NSW Government has fulfilled another election commitment by designating a special day for the celebration of recreational fishing, which contributes more than \$1.6 billion each year to the NSW economy.
- The requirement to hold a recreational fishing licence has been removed for one day only on 'Go Fishing Day' to encourage new participants to take up the pastime.
- For more information about 'Go Fishing Day' please visit [www.dpi.gov.au/fisheries/recreational](http://www.dpi.gov.au/fisheries/recreational).