

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS NEW SYDNEY CANCER CENTRE

Premier Nathan Rees today visited Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to announce that the NSW Government will provide much needed support for a new centre of excellence for cancer care, education and research.

Mr Rees welcomed the Sydney Cancer Foundation's plans to build a centre of excellence that will provide diagnosis and treatment for public and private cancer patients.

"To ensure this much needed centre can go ahead the Government will provide a long-term lease, with a pepper-corn rent, of the state-owned land on which the centre will be built," Mr Rees said.

"The lease gives the Sydney Cancer Foundation complete control of the land and the security they need to take the next step in their plans to build this world class centre.

"Each year, around 35,000 people in NSW are diagnosed with cancer," Mr Rees said.

"While treatments currently available throughout NSW are world-class and survival rates for most cancers have increased, the sad fact is cancer rates are also increasing.

"The Sydney Cancer Foundation proposal aims to

deliver a concentration of talent, expertise and resources in the one centre of excellence.

"That will lead to better treatment outcomes, increased patient participation in clinical trials of new therapies, and rapid translation of research findings to improved care."

"The Centre will be a public benevolent organisation – a charity that will return operating surpluses into ongoing cancer research. It is envisaged that up to 4,000 inpatients and 100,000 outpatients could be treated at the Centre every year."

The Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) Jodi McKay joined the Premier at the hospital.

Ms McKay said that working in partnership with the Sydney Cancer Foundation and the Federal Government, the new Centre will educate the next generation of doctors and researchers, paving the way for continued advancements in cancer treatment.

"The NSW Government has been a long supporter of the Sydney Cancer Centre, previously providing \$1 million for planning and developing a business case for the new centre," Ms McKay said.

"Supporting cancer research and treatment centres throughout NSW is a priority.

"The Government has instructed the Cancer Institute of NSW to look at how we can deliver integrated cancer research centres like this, at other locations across NSW.

"This will include a discussion paper for public consultation which will be released in early 2009."

Premier Rees said the Federal Government has injected \$50 million into this project and the NSW Government plans to fully support this funding to make this centre a reality.

"The Federal Government has provided the stimulus and we have committed to providing a long-term lease of the state-owned land," Mr Rees said.

"A driving force behind the new Sydney Cancer Centre project is Professor Chris O'Brien, former head of the Sydney Cancer Centre at RPA and Clinical Director of Cancer Services at Sydney South West Area Health Service.

"Professor O'Brien is a world leader in cancer treatment and has been a strong advocate for the establishment of a world-class cancer centre in Sydney.

"His energy, expertise and compassion for cancer sufferers are the building blocks for this new Sydney Cancer Centre and the Government is very pleased to play a part in his great vision."

Coupon plan to boost recycling

A pilot project in Athens offering citizens redeemable coupons for recycling their trash is to be extended across the capital and introduced in Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Patras and Iraklion, authorities said yesterday.

Under the system – called "Compensatory Recycling" – citizens who recycle plastic, metal, paper and other waste are given a coupon, whose value depends on the volume of trash recycled, that they can either donate to the municipality's recycling kitty or use to get discounts at supermarkets. The scheme will be funded by packaging producers and so costs will not be passed on to consumers, Deputy Mayor Giorgos Dimopoulos told Kathimerini.

Apart from its standard blue recycling bins, Athens already has 25 special compensatory recycling kiosks with slots for different types of trash.

The aim is for another 75 to be set up across Athens next year and dozens more in other cities.

REES HONOURS TOP HSC STUDENTS



Premier Nathan Rees congratulated 112 outstanding students who achieved first place in a 2008 NSW HSC course.

The students, who came first in 110 HSC courses, were recognised at an award ceremony at the Australian Technology Park in Sydney.

This year's honoured students are from schools across Sydney and regional NSW, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast,

Illawarra, Hunter, Southern Highlands, Riverina, Western NSW and New England.

"Every year the First in Course Awards brings a completely different combination of students, schools and courses," Mr Rees said.

"This year is no different with a fresh batch of students achieving outstanding results in the HSC."

Some of the 2008 highlights are:

Female students topped or came equal first in four of the five sciences.

13 students topped two courses – with four achieving first place in different subjects;

Daniel Swain from Smiths Hill High School came first in Modern History in 2007 and has this year topped Comparative Literature (Distinction Course) and come equal first in Society and Culture;

Shifra Waks from Sydney Secondary College, Blackwattle Bay Campus topped two beginners courses in different languages; and

A total of 13 students have

received a first place award in a Mathematics course - six students have tied equal first place in the 2 unit course, five share first place in Extension 1 and two have tied in Extension 2.

Mr Rees said a record 67,931 students sat the HSC this year and they are all to be congratulated.

"Students who have achieved first place in a 2008 HSC course deserve their moment of glory and I join their family and friends in congratulating them and marking the occasion," Mr Rees said.

"To top a course is a remarkable achievement.

"The NSW HSC promotes outstanding achievement in every field – from the sciences and humanities to technical trade skills.

"As a qualification, the HSC is accepted all over the globe and it opens up a world of possibilities for every student."

The First in Course award ceremony took place on the eve of the release of results for a record number of HSC students across NSW.

Schoolboy 'killed for not doing homework

An Egyptian maths teacher has gone on trial after allegedly beating an 11-year-old to death because he did not do his homework.

The teacher, Haitham Abdelhamid, 23, is accused of violently hitting his student, Islam Amr Badr, with enough force to break his ribs, the BBC reports.

The boy fainted and was taken to hospital but later died of heart failure.

The incident, which took place at a primary school on the outskirts of Alexandria in October, has caused national outrage and is being held up by observers as an example

of the failings of Egypt's education system.

The court heard evidence from medical staff who said Islam had two broken ribs and stomach injuries which caused a sharp drop in his blood pressure and heart failure.

According to Islam's classmates, he was hit by his maths teacher as a punishment for not doing his homework.

Mr Abdelhamid has said did not mean to hurt his student and had only meant to disci-

pline him. Islam's father, Amr Badr Ibrahim, is calling for the government to be held responsible for his son's death.

"The problem is the teaching and the teachers because they cannot find good teachers," he told reporters.

"The minister of education should be the first person to be accused – how can he agree to let such a young man teach children?"

