

Sydney families offered incentives to relocate to regional NSW

Sydney families who relocate their homes from the city to regional NSW will receive a \$7,000 grant from 1 July, NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and Treasurer Mike Baird announced today.

The introduction of Regional Relocation Grants fulfils another NSW Liberals & Nationals' election commitment, and will encourage population and economic growth in regional NSW. A resident of the Mid North Coast, Mr Stoner said communities across regional NSW offer lower costs of living but with facilities, cultural events, food and wine equal to or even better than Sydney.

"Regional NSW is a great place to live, work and raise a family – these \$7,000 grants will provide extra assistance to families planning a move out of Sydney," Mr Stoner said.

"The NSW Government is commit-

ted to supporting population growth in the regions with increased spending in infrastructure and further job creation.

"The message to people considering a move out of Sydney is clear – there is no better time to move to regional NSW.

"From our beautiful country air and stunning landscapes to strong communities and a more affordable lifestyle, regional NSW is a great place to live and raise a family.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is proud to be supporting regional NSW and Sydney families who would like to make a tree or sea change," Mr Stoner said.

Under legislation which passed through Parliament this week:

- One-off \$7,000 grants will be payable to individuals or families who relocate homes from Sydney to regional NSW;

- The grant will be payable after the settlement of the purchase of a home in regional NSW and sale of a home in metropolitan Sydney;

- Grant is eligible for properties in regional NSW valued up to \$600,000;

- The new home must be the applicants' principal place of residence for at least 12 months;

- The scheme will operate for four years from 1 July 2011; and

- Budget impact is estimated to be up to \$46.9 million per year, depending on the number of people taking up the offer.

Mr Baird said the Regional Relocation Grants were consistent with the NSW Government's Regional Kick-Start and Making Sydney Liveable Again action plans.

"The Government is committed to policies that assist and encourage whole-of-state growth. The Regional

Relocation Grant, together with our policies which will ensure that regions get their fair share of jobs growth and infrastructure spending, will play an important role in getting the NSW economy moving again."

"The Regional Relocation Grants will provide a very real benefit to families relocating within New South Wales, while driving economic growth in regional areas and relieving congestion pressures within Sydney.

"The NSW Government is committed to developing all of NSW – when regional NSW is strong then all of NSW benefits."

"This scheme is just one of a number of measures the NSW Government is implementing to attract more people, growth and investment into regional areas," Mr Baird said.



Pop Up Parramatta injects life into unused spaces

More than 40 artists and creative practitioners are enjoying their new creative spaces, thanks to Pop Up Parramatta arts program, which has transformed disused commercial premises into temporary innovative spaces, offering artists and other creative practitioners, a place to create, exhibit and sell their work.

Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr John Chedid, said Council is dedicated to providing artists with opportunities in Parramatta and this project will ensure that we not only retain our artistic talent, but also expand Parramatta's creative industries. Since the project first started early this year, artists and creative practitioners are temporarily based in retail spaces at two locations: Connection Arcade, 162-172 Darcy Street, Parramatta and Westpac Bank, top floor, 264 Church Street, Parramatta. They use the space to sell and produce their creative pieces that range from paintings to sculptures, jewellery, children's toys and more.

"This project works best for people who already have a developed creative practice and simply need affordable space to develop it further or a shop front to sell or showcase their creative work," Cr John Chedid, said.

"Expression of Interest applications are still open, so I encourage artists and creative practitioners who need an affordable space to create or display their work, to apply and get involved in this wonderful project," Cr Chedid said. Based on the successful Renew Newcastle project, Pop Up Parramatta is jointly funded by Parramatta City Council and the NSW Government.

The foundation of this project is the temporary licence agreement with the property owner and participant, on a rolling 30-day licence structure. Applicants who meet the selection criteria will be required to pay a nominal fee for each space, which covers maintenance and insurance costs but does not include the cost of utilities such as power, water and gas.

To get involved contact Merryn Spencer m Spencer@parracity.nsw.gov.au or phone 9806 5743. For further information on the project www.popupparramatta.com

Chimney owners urged to monitor winter wood smoke

As the days and nights get colder, Parramatta residents are being urged to do their bit to reduce air pollution by ensuring wood heaters burn efficiently. "While wood heaters or fireplaces are a popular form of heating, they contribute to the winter haze in Parramatta when they're not used correctly," Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor John Chedid said.

"Under NSW air pollution laws, Council can issue notices to stop excessively smoky chimneys.

Therefore, we're encouraging all residents with wood heaters to go outside and check their chimneys. If you can see or smell smoke from your chimney then you might be causing a problem for yourself, your family and your neighbours", he said. Air pollutants from wood heater smoke are known to cause breathing difficulties especially for

people suffering from existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, the very young and elderly people. When wood heaters are operated correctly, they should only vent smoke when you first start a fire, with older models venting thin wispy smoke. If a chimney is venting excessive smoke then this means the wood heater is not operating efficiently.

"An efficient wood heater not only reduces air pollution, it also produces more heat and costs less to run – that's good news for the whole family,"

Cr Chedid said. "Using aged, dry wood will reduce the amount of wood smoke pollution and help run our heaters properly", he said.

Some of the simple steps to reduce wood smoke include:

- Don't let your heater smoulder overnight – keep enough air in the fire to maintain a flame.
- Burn only dry, aged hardwood in your wood heater. Unseasoned wood has lots of moisture, which causes a fire to smoke.
- Store your wood under cover in a dry, ventilated area. Freshly cut wood needs to be stored for at least eight to 12 months.
- Never burn rubbish, driftwood or painted or treated wood, as these will pollute the air and can produce poisonous gases.
- Use several small logs rather than one large log and stack them loosely in your heater, so air can circulate around them. Don't cram the firebox full.
- Keep the flame lively and bright. Your fire should only smoke when you first light it and when you add extra fuel. Open the air controls fully for five minutes before and 15 to 20 minutes after re-loading the heater.
- Check your chimney regularly to see how well your fire is burning. If there is smoke coming

Sydney Liquor License freeze extended

A freeze on new liquor licences and related development applications in entertainment precincts in the City of Sydney will be extended for another year, Minister for

Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing George Souris announced today. Mr Souris said the extension of the freeze in Darlinghurst, Kings Cross and the southern Sydney CDB until 24 June 2012 will ensure certain new liquor licences are not issued while new research is being carried out. "This freeze is an important tool in a range of measures designed to combat alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and violence in Sydney's entertainment areas," Mr Souris said. "It restricts the expansion of trading hours and patron capacity for some ex-

isting licensed premises as well as prohibiting new hotel, club, night-club, producer/wholesaler and packaged liquor licences.

"A liquor licence freeze continues to be strongly supported by the City of Sydney Council as well as local stakeholders such as police and residents.

"While feedback to date supports the view that the freeze is currently effective, it is vital that we have a strong evidence base to inform future policy decisions". Following a request by the previous Government, the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing (OLGR) has commissioned new research into the relationship between liquor licence density and alcohol-related issues. The new research, which is yet to be completed, will build on

Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data released earlier this year, which examined links between density and assaults. "We are committed to using a strong base of critical evidence to shape and steer the development of licensing, compliance and policy related directions and decisions for pubs, clubs and other licensed venues," Mr Souris said. Mr Souris added that reducing the negative impact of alcohol on local communities is a top priority for the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government. "The freeze extension will complement key measures, such as strengthening 'Move On Powers', introducing the new offence of 'Intoxicated and Disorderly', and legislating 'Three Strikes and You're Out'," Mr Souris said.