



# **The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP**

## **Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Western Sydney**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday 6 April 2011

### **FAST TRACK OF NORTH WEST RAIL LINK UNDERWAY**

NSW Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Barry O'Farrell and the Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian today unveiled the NSW Government's strategy to speed up planning and construction of the North West Rail Link.

"The fast tracking of the North West Rail Link is one of the NSW Government's priority election commitments – and it will be delivered,' Mr O'Farrell said.

"A project team has already been established to accelerate work on the line and a new community information centre will be established soon," he said.

"We expect geotechnical work to begin later this year – in line with our commitment to start on the project as soon as possible."

Mr O'Farrell said the project team had been directed to:

- Determine the planning approvals needed to proceed with the line;
- Put together a full costing of the rail line;
- Begin planning on the best way to integrate trains on the North West Rail Link with the rest of the rail network; and,
- Open discussions with communities and stakeholders along the route.

Mr O'Farrell said families in Sydney's North West have been denied a decent public transport system for too long.

"The population in North West Sydney exceeds that of Canberra – and we are determined to give them the train services Labor failed to deliver for 16 years.

"The North West Rail Link will serve a population of 360,000 which is conservatively expected to grow to 485,000 by 2021.

"This 23-kilometre line will take passengers from areas including Rouse Hill, Castle Hill and the Norwest Business Park to and from the city and make life easier and cheaper for the forgotten people of North Western Sydney.

"It is simply unbelievable that so many people have been allowed to build homes and move into the North West without planning for a rail network in the area.

"We are going to redress that situation immediately by accelerating the North West Rail Link and that work starts today with the establishment of a project team.

"This isn't just about moving people from the North West into the CBD - by 2036, Sydney's North West will be home to more than 145,000 jobs.

"We want to make sure that workers from the rest of Sydney have good access to these employment centres."

Ms Berejiklian said the project team would be headed by Rodd Staples, currently Deputy Director General at Transport NSW where he leads the Infrastructure Division.

"Mr Staples has extensive experience working in both the public and private sectors in NSW, Queensland and Victoria," Ms Berejiklian said.

Mr O'Farrell said there is growing support for the North West Rail Link – and it is time the Labor Party backed the project.

"Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore, the Centre of Independent Economics and Labor's former Planning head, as well as major business groups have thrown their support behind the North West line – leaving the Federal and State Labor leaders isolated," he said.

"The new Labor Leader in NSW needs to decide whether he supports this line or not. "Does Labor support giving the people of North West Sydney a decent public transport system?"

Mr O'Farrell said the Prime Minister also needed to realise the NSW Government has a mandate to build the line and Federal funding should be diverted to it as a matter of urgency.

"We all agree that the Parramatta to Epping line has merit – but it is also clear that the top priority is to build the North West Rail Link.

"The Prime Minister must accept the will of the people of NSW – they want funding for the North West line to be approved as soon as possible."

Ms Berejiklian said the community information centre would be established along the proposed train route.

"We have always said the community comes first and that's why we are setting up this information centre so people can be fully informed and also have input before decisions are made – not afterwards," she said.