

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES - JUNE 2014

Another Successful Candidate Training Day

This month, Labor and Country Labor candidates and their campaign teams from across NSW came together at our Candidates Training Day



NSW Labor Parliamentary Leader, John Robertson gave an address about the significance of the upcoming state election highlighting the current Liberal/National Government's failures to deliver on key election promises. He also stressed the importance of increasing the Labor vote in country areas and winning back key country seats.

Candidates and their teams heard from a range of experienced campaigners including General Secretary, Jamie Clements who discussed broader strategies and themes for the 2015 NSW campaign.

Assistant General Secretary, Kaila Murnain explained the latest ways on how to

'win the ground war' and John Graham touched on lessons from previous campaigns.

There were a range of workshops throughout the day which covered community campaigning, local media, funding and disclosure and digital campaigning.

A message from the Country Organiser



Thanks to all of our Country Labor candidates and campaigners who attended our Training Day on Saturday 31 May.

NSW Labor's Candidate's Training Days are designed to provide local campaigns with information about the latest campaigning strategies and techniques.

Country Labor candidates and their campaign teams will have the opportunity to attend an additional training day at Country Conference on Friday 24 October in Queanbeyan. This training day will be especially targeted towards campaigning in rural and regional areas.

We encourage all candidates and their teams to come along. For

more information or to RSVP for this training day, please contact Acting Country Organiser, Josephine Hillard on 0447 744 955.

Courtney Roche

Courtney Roche
NSW COUNTRY ORGANISER

High regional unemployment forces Baird to change failed relocation scheme

The Baird Government has been forced into yet another embarrassing revamp of its failed Regional Relocation Scheme.

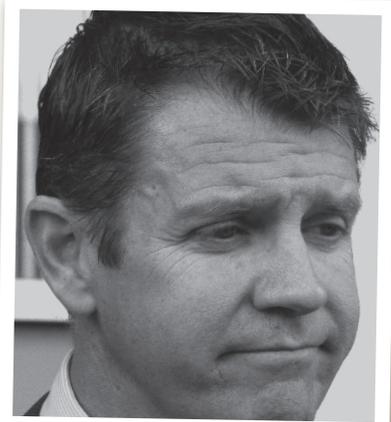
The Government will now allow people to move as little as 50km away from the city – not the 100km previously required – to access the grant. Despite initially budgeting for 7000 grants a year over four years, only 1166 grants have been taken up this financial year. The annual budget has been cut from \$49 million to \$10 million.

Country Labor MLC, Mick Veitch said Mike Baird was the ultimate city-centric Premier who had no answers to why unemployment is significantly above the State average in regional and rural NSW. For instance, in the Far-West unemployment levels are at 9.6%; 9.2% in the New England/North West region and 8.1% in Murray.

Under cover of the Abbott budget late last week, Mr Baird moved to increase the cost of a TAFE qualification by as much as \$3000 in 2015 – a measure that will decimate the hopes of young people and older workers seeking to retrain across regional NSW.

The Government has already cut \$800 million from TAFE. It has sacked 800 teachers and eliminated or downgraded vital courses such as the HSC syllabus in the Hunter and Riverina.

Mike Baird is allowing huge swathes of regional NSW to suffer unemployment rates that would never be tolerated in Sydney. The money from the Regional Relocation Grant scheme would be far



Baird fails to address high unemployment levels in the bush.

better spent reversing Mr Baird's TAFE cuts and creating new regional job opportunities.

Fighting to protect emergency rooms from a new tax

The NSW Labor Opposition will introduce legislation to the NSW Parliament to prevent any attempt to place a co-payment on NSW Public Hospitals. This follows Tony Abbott and the Liberals introducing a fee to visit a GP.

Under the legislation, Labor will amend Section 75 of the *Health Services Act 1997* to prevent a patient in a public hospital from being charged for any health service that is currently free.

Opposition Leader John Robertson said NSW Labor was very concerned about the Baird Government following the lead of Tony Abbott and introducing a fee to visit a public hospital in NSW.

INITIALLY MIKE BAIRD SAID OF THE NEW FEE ...

“We will be ruling that out.”

Hansard, 14.05.2014

BUT TWO DAYS LATER ...

standing shoulder to shoulder with Tony Abbott he weakened his



NSW Labor Opposition will introduce legislation to prevent a co-payment on NSW Public Hospitals.

position and said of a fee on hospital visits:

“We’ll be considering and obviously watching events as they unfold... it is part of the broader discussion we want to have on health.”

NSW Labor will defend the right to access healthcare in a NSW hospital regardless of a person's financial position.

This bill will ensure that the services currently provided free of charge in a NSW hospital remain free and accessible to everyone.

HUGE WIN!

BENTLEY BLOCKADE: Community win against CSG



The decision of the NSW Government to suspend Metgasco's licence to explore for CSG at Bentley on the NSW North Coast was a great win for the local community. It followed widespread action over several years culminating in the protest camp.

Below are extracts from a speech Justine Elliot gave in federal Parliament, which explains why local residents were so united in their opposition to CSG.

"The People of the North Coast want to be part of a sustainable environment, and demand to see effective action on climate change. That's why the major issue in my electorate before; during and after the election campaign has been harmful coal seam gas mining.

"This was the single biggest issue that was raised with me time and time again. There is a very real fear shared by many locals about the impact of harmful coal seam gas mining on the North Coast.

"Indeed, this continues to be the single largest issue across all levels of government, all community groups and all individuals no matter where you go.

"This is the issue that people talk about; it is the issue of concern to them. They have real and genuine concerns as to what could happen to our environment, to our water and to our communities if this industry were allowed to expand on the New South Wales North Coast.

"Nearly all the villages and towns, along with the local councils of Tweed, Byron and Lismore, have made declarations to be coal seam gas mining free.

"Also, in outlining the history of the communities' concerns about coal seam gas, on 14 February 2013 the former member for Page, Janelle Saffin, and I launched a petition calling on the New South Wales government to declare an immediate moratorium on all CSG activities and licences within the boundaries of the state parliamentary seats of Lismore, Ballina, Clarence and Tweed on the New South Wales North Coast and further declaring them to be CSG-free and thereafter off limits to the CSG industry.

"In a very short period of time the petition got more than 12,000 signatures and was presented to the Speaker of the New South Wales parliament for subsequent debate on 30 October 2013. When the debate occurred it was disappointing for a number of reasons. Local State National Party MP's either didn't speak or refuse to acknowledge the concerns of locals.

"It is important to keep in mind the reason why many people have moved to the North Coast of New South Wales. They made a conscious choice about the area they wanted to live in. They wanted to live in an area that has a pristine hinterland, beaches, beautiful ranges and all of that. They love the area. It is a great place to raise a family and a great place to live.

"I would like to make it clear that it is only the Labor Party that will stand with those people; the National Party has walked away."

SHOWING SUPPORT



Federal Member for Richmond Justine Elliot was a regular visitor to the Bentley Camp in support of the campaign to keep the Northern Rivers Gasfield Free.

Recently the State Government backed down and suspended Metgasco's licence at Bentley.

"While this represents a substantial community victory for CSG mining opponents on the North Coast we must remain ever vigilant as the Mining licences still exist. I will continue to stand with the community in opposing CSG mining and together we'll continue to fight the National Party and their pro-CSG expansion agenda."

— JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Abbott rips **\$288 million** from local councils across NSW

Tony Abbott has slashed \$288 million worth of funding from already cash-strapped local councils across NSW by pausing indexation of Local Government Financial Assistance Grants.

This means councils will not be able to repair and maintain local roads. In addition, this will result in job losses such as council road maintenance and engineering staff.

"Tony Abbott has swung an axe through the heart of local government, and NSW Liberals and Nationals must stand up for the families and businesses of our State," Shadow Minister for Local Government Sophie Cotsis said.

Shadow Minister for Roads Walt Secord said that local councils are at the heart and centre of providing safe and reliable roads, particularly in rural and regional areas. "The National Party has rolled over and allowed

the Liberals to rip road funding out of the hands of local communities," Walt Secord said.

All 152 councils across NSW will be forced to make cuts to vital road upgrades and infrastructure work. Recent reports by the NSW Government show that NSW councils have a \$7.2 billion infrastructure backlog and only one third of councils reported an operating surplus in 2012.



Tony Abbott has swung an axe through the heart of Regional NSW.

SAVE THESE DATES

What's coming up ...

Post Budget Breakfast

7.30am, Friday 13 June
Bathurst City Community Club,
William St, Bathurst

SPEAKER:

Hon. Chris Bowen, MP

COST: \$25 / \$20 concession

RSVP:

labor.bathurst@gmail.com

Campaign Insight

11am, Sunday 6 July

The Pub,
Tamworth

SPEAKER:

Hon. Walt Secord, MLC

RSVP:

josephine@nswlabor.org.au

State Conference Country Fringe Event

Sunday 27 July

Sydney Town Hall

SPEAKERS:

Hon. Justine Elliot, MP &

Hon. Steve Whan, MLC

RSVP:

dorothy@nswlabor.org.au

Save the date ...

Eddie Graham Dinner

Saturday 16 August

International Hotel,
Wagga Wagga

SPEAKER:

Hon. Chris Bowen, MP

RSVP:

timkurylowicz@gmail.com

Light on the Hill Dinner

Saturday 20 September

Bathurst Panthers Leagues Club

RSVP:

labor.bathurst@gmail.com

Country Conference Campaign Insight

Friday 24 October

Queanbeyan

RSVP:

josephine@nswlabor.org.au

Country Conference

**Saturday 25 -
Sunday 26 October**

Queanbeyan Bicentennial Hall

RSVP:

josephine@nswlabor.org.au

Do you have a story or a photo for Country Labor Dialogue?

Email your story and photos to jay@nswlabor.org.au