Country Labor Conference 2014
Friday 24 - Sunday 26 October

Country Labor Conference 2014 will be held at the Bicentennial Hall in the Queanbeyan Conference Centre, Queanbeyan from Friday 24 – Sunday 26 October.

We will adopt the successful model for an expanded 3-day Country Conference that was trialed in Cessnock in 2012.

THE FORMAT OF CONFERENCE WILL INCLUDE:

- A full day of training for candidates and campaign directors on Friday;
- Leaders’ and Unions NSW addresses and policy workshops on Saturday; and
- Conference proceedings, including policy workshop report backs on Sunday.

The strategic aims of the Conference will be to build and develop the exposure of Country Labor and our country candidates, further develop rural and regional policy and reconnect with the trade union movement.

An information pamphlet with more details about Conference, including booking forms for the Conference Dinner, Campaign Training and Policy Workshops will be available soon to download from the Country Labor website: www.countrylabor.com.au

A message from the Country Organiser

Country Labor Conference is the highlight of the Country Labor calendar, and a great opportunity for our rural and regional members from around NSW to gather together.

This year, our Conference will be held in Queanbeyan. We will use the successful format of the expanded 3-day Conference that we trialed in Cessnock in 2012.

Make sure you get in early and book your Dinner Tickets, Campaign Training and preferences for Policy Workshops.

If you have any questions about Country Conference, please don’t hesitate to contact Acting Country Organiser Josephine Hillard on 1800 503 035 or josephine@nswalp.com

Courtney Roche
NSW COUNTRY ORGANISER
The O’Farrell Liberal Government has swung the axe on more jobs in regional NSW – after revealing 40 forestry workers are set to lose their jobs.

Forestry workers on the North Coast, South Coast and Northern Tablelands were informed of the job losses in a video message from Forestry Corporation of NSW CEO.

Forest Corporation workers have been told that all jobs in the Hardwood Division will be declared vacant and they all have to contest new positions - with 40 less jobs to be available. These job losses are likely to occur on the Mid-North, the North Coast, the South Coast and the Northern Tablelands.

“The O’Farrell Liberal Government said one thing in opposition about supporting regional jobs – yet they have implemented savage cuts to rural public sector jobs,” Shadow Minister for Primary Industries Steve Whan said.

Once again we see the National Party selling out regional New South Wales. Remember this is a party that came in promising more jobs in regional NSW – a so-called decade of decentralisation – yet all we’ve seen so far is centralisation, office closures and job losses.

The O’Farrell Liberal Government has swung the axe on more jobs in regional NSW – after revealing 40 forestry workers are set to lose their jobs.

Government must resolve North Coast Pacific Highway koala dispute

The NSW Labor Opposition has called on the O’Farrell Government to find a solution that ensures the Pacific Highway upgrade on the North Coast goes ahead, but also protects rare colonies of koalas.

NSW Shadow Minister for the Environment Luke Foley and NSW Shadow Minister for Roads and Shadow Minister for the North Coast Walt Secord issued the plea after a key scientific advisor to the O’Farrell Government resigned in protest over the Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade.

Last November, the O’Farrell Government released its plan for the proposed route. However, the community has expressed concerns that it would go straight through koala colonies. The upgrade is planned for the Woolgoolga to Ballina stretch known as the Wardell bypass.

Barry O’Farrell allows reckless logging to occur in magnificent North Coast koala habitats and now Roads Minister Duncan Gay is putting a 12 kilometre stretch of the Pacific Highway straight through rare koala colonies.

Barry O’Farrell is hiding behind the fig leaf of so-called green tape. He is using it as an exercise to wind back Labor’s environmental protection achievements. In Opposition, Barry O’Farrell promised that he would protect the environment, but in Government, he does otherwise.
Stoner’s rebadged funding

NOT DROUGHT RELIEF

Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and the Nationals have again failed NSW farmers by re-announcing old projects instead of delivering genuine drought relief.

“It’s a bit rich for Mr Stoner to claim this is a new program. People in country NSW are able to see through the Nationals with their constant cuts to programs followed by re-announcements of so called ‘new programs’,” Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Water Steve Whan said.

During the last major drought the previous Labor Government announced $2 million for towns including Forbes to develop bores. Now Mr Stoner has just rebadged and re-announced this program.

This commitment to provide the money will be welcomed by farmers. But this is not funding that goes direct to farmers for drought support. Farmers in Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange and as far west as Wentworth still won’t get any extra funding for stock and fodder subsidies.

Baird bungles Macquarie generation transaction

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has disallowed the O’Farrell Government’s sale of Macquarie Generation to AGL Energy.

The ACCC made it crystal clear that if the sale proceeded it would have meant higher electricity prices for all consumers in NSW.

“Thank goodness the ACCC is looking out for electricity consumers in NSW – because Mike Baird and Barry O’Farrell are certainly not.

“Why did Mike Baird announce the sale and the transaction price before the ACCC signed it off, effectively telling the world what the value of the assets were? You have to wonder how much this botched transaction has cost NSW in terms of fees for lawyers, consultants and spin doctors.

“Mike Baird needs to stop behaving like a merchant banker looking out for his clients and instead start acting in the best interests of families in NSW,” NSW Shadow Treasurer Michael Daley said.

Since Barry O’Farrell came to office, electricity prices have increased by as much as $750 for the average NSW household. AGL gas prices are up $250 – with the Government recently announcing that a further 20% rise would be considered.

State power sale on Barry’s agenda

THE state’s electricity assets are likely to be sold under the O’Farrell Government ...”selling electricity is an absolute no brainer.”

Sunday Telegraph 11 September 2011

NSW gears up to sell power network assets

The NSW government is preparing to sell the state’s electricity networks in its second term, according to a top adviser to the Coalition.

Australian Financial Review, 20 August 2012
Public misled over coal dust pollution

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has misled the public in the Hunter Valley about dust and air pollution from uncovered coal train wagons.

Documents released by the Labor Opposition reveal that the EPA falsely claimed that there were not elevated levels of air pollution from coal train wagons, and covered up crucial facts concerning coal dust pollution in the Hunter Valley rail corridor.

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is licenced by the NSW EPA for pollution caused by trains hauling coal from Hunter Valley mines to the port of Newcastle. The ARTC was twice required to monitor and report on air particle pollution from the uncovered wagons during 2012.

The NSW Government’s subsequent technical reviews of the company’s reports on this monitoring highlighted significant spikes in pollution as coal trains passed, and flaws in the methodology and data analysis. Yet the Chair of the EPA, Barry Buffier, and Environment Minister Robyn Parker made statements to the contrary, in public and to the parliament.

“Under its current leadership the EPA seems focused on protecting polluting industries rather than looking after the community and human health,” Shadow Environment Minister Luke Foley said.

Coal train dust is causing air pollution.

O’Farrell collects record speed camera revenue

The O’Farrell Government has broken its major election promise on speed cameras, the NSW Opposition said.

In 2013, the O’Farrell Government collected more than $79.1 million in fines from speed and red light cameras in NSW – an all-time record in revenue for the State Government.

This is an increase of more than 32% over the previous year. Revenue from speed and red light cameras shows the huge jump under Barry O’Farrell.

In December, the O’Farrell Government introduced 45 new mobile speed camera units operating at 2,500 locations throughout the State. This has increased the number of surveillance hours from 900 a month to 7,000.

The 45 new mobile speed cameras are more for revenue than safety.

Do you have a story or a photo for Country Labor Dialogue?
Email your story and photos to jay@nswlabor.org.au