

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES - DECEMBER 2014

State campaign heats up

Candidates and campaign teams across the state have hit the ground running ahead of the 2015 NSW State election in March.



This month, John Robertson along with Kate Washington, Labor Candidate for Port Stephens, attended a jobs summit at Raymond Terrace with local business and community leaders.

Labor candidates Jenny Aitchison in Maitland and Paul Spooner in Ballina have been fighting hard to keep their local hospitals in public hands unlike the Liberal-Nationals who are determined to privatise our health system.

We also continue to train candidates and campaigners. This month, a one-day regional Campaign Insight seminars was held in Wauchope for candidates and teams from across the Mid-North Coast.



Goulburn hosted a successful training day on Saturday 29 November with over 30 people from the area.

Next year's election will be a critical one for Country Labor as we fight to take back seats in the bush and see a Labor Government back in power in NSW. The message is clear: only Labor will put in the people of NSW first.

A message from the Country Organiser

It's been a big year for Country Labor!

This month marks 12 months since our first Country Labor candidates were pre-selected with Jenny Aitchison in Maitland and Cass Coleman in Bathurst.

Since then, we have pre-selected possibly the strongest field of Country Labor candidates in about a decade with the likes of former police officers, army officers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, community service workers and business men and women amongst our ranks.

All of our candidates and their teams have done an extraordinary job campaigning against the Liberal-National Government's harsh cuts to health, education and jobs. From Bathurst to Byron Bay, we've travelled the state training members and volunteers about the most up-to-date campaigning techniques. Last month was no different, where we held one-day Campaign Insights in Goulburn and Wauchope.

A big thank you must go all candidates and party members who continue to make great personal sacrifices to fly the flag for Country Labor and the betterment of the Party and their communities.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to again thank all Country Labor members for their continued support and wish you all a happy and safe Christmas holiday.

Courtney Roche

Best wishes,

Courtney Roche
NSW COUNTRY ORGANISER



BAIRD FORGETS

farmers in North West NSW

Farmers in North West NSW are facing a bleak Christmas as they continue to suffer a devastating drought with no support from the Liberals and Nationals.

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries Steve Whan said that in some cases farming families are eating only with the help of vouchers from the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul.

Three months ago, Premier Baird visited drought affected farmers and promised to take another look at drought support – particularly stock and fodder transport subsidies.

Unfortunately it seems he went back to the beaches of Manly and forgot the severe hardship the people who are trying to grow our food and fibre in the state's north west are facing.

"I recently spoke to one farmer who has spent more than \$1.3 million on fodder and agistment for his core breeding stock, and that is after using more than 2000 tonnes of grain and a large amount of hay he had put aside for drought," Steve Whan said.

Farmers in many parts of the North West are doing it tough and for those in the Lightning Ridge area, the situation is beyond desperate. For the Liberal Premier to go to Northern NSW for a few nice media photos and then do absolutely nothing to follow up is disgusting.

Country Labor supports Taree kidney dialysis

Country Labor candidate for Myall Lakes Dr David Keegan and NSW Shadow Minister for Health Walt Secord recently met with medical staff, Taree's mayor and concerned locals on the mid-North Coast to support a community-based campaign to stop the impending closure of the Nita Reed Centre which has supported local patients requiring dialysis.



The State Liberal-National Government planned to close the Nita Reed Centre and force patients to travel 80 minutes to Foster to a private hospital to receive treatment.

It was one of the first locally supported kidney dialysis centres in NSW. It is also the centre for the greatest need for kidney dialysis in the State. Dr Keegan was involved in the community-based campaign which collected more than 5,000 petitions – almost a quarter the community.

The Liberal-National Government are privatising Kempsey hospital's X-ray unit; privatised the food testing service in Sydney and moved it to Melbourne; announced that the private sector will be providing day surgery at Bryon Central Hospital; refused to detail their privatisation plans for the Lower Hunter hospital and in Sydney, they have handed a multi billion dollar

tender to private consortium to run the Northern Beaches hospital.

"This is all part of Baird Government's ideological obsession with cutting and private health and hospitals in NSW and slashing first-line jobs," Walt Secord said.

NOTE: Since Walt's visit and Dr Keegan's support for the community based campaign in Taree, the Nationals have since announced that funding will be reinstated to the centre. However, the community is worried that after the election they will again close the program.

Labor commits to Byron Central Hospital – in public hands

A NSW Labor Government will build Byron Central Hospital and pledge to keep it in public hands with no privatisation of surgical services. The facility would provide day procedures like colonoscopy and endoscopy.

The National Party plan for Byron Central Hospital is “private providers to deliver surgical services at the facility”.

Linda Burney MP said there would be a clear choice on health and privatisation in the forthcoming election, “A vote for the National Party is a vote for privatisation of health services, but a vote for Labor and its Ballina candidate Paul Spooner was a vote for a government-run hospital with government-run surgical services.”

In September, the NSW Government announced it had awarded the contracts to begin construction of Byron Central Hospital to Brookfield Multiplex. In their statement, the Nationals said:

“The Byron Central Hospital project team is undertaking a market sounding process to determine whether there is interest from private providers to deliver surgical services at the facility.”



State Labor has ruled out any privatisation of hospital and services.

The Nationals on the North Coast have a poor record on health services. They introduced paid parking, slashed cleaning and maintenance jobs, closed services and privatised health.

Labor has also committed that Byron District and Mullumbimby Hospitals would remain fully operational until Byron Central Hospital opened.

Abbott's GP Tax is still alive

Tony Abbott and the Liberal National Party have tried to claim his GP Tax was dead but the GP Tax is well and truly alive. This isn't a back down – this is a GP Tax through the backdoor.

“This Liberal National Party Government is doing exactly what it did with the Petrol Tax – sneaking it around the Parliament, pushing up the cost of living for families on the North Coast,” Justine Elliott MP said.

This is still a tax on going to the doctor, and it's still a broken promise. Families cannot afford a GP Tax and we all know this is just the thin edge of the wedge. Tony Abbott is determined to destroy Medicare and make healthcare unaffordable in this country.

Labor believes every Australian should get the healthcare they need, not the healthcare they can afford. This is a desperate Prime Minister who will say and do anything to save his own skin.



Labor has fought the Liberal National Party's GP Tax every step of the way, and we will keep fighting.



JOHNO JOHNSON

Tribute Dinner

'THIS IS YOUR LABOR LIFE'

On Wednesday 3 December, NSW Labor hosted the Johnno Johnson 'This is Your Labor Life' Tribute Dinner in Sydney. The sold-out event was a great success and celebrated the Labor-filled life of Johnno Johnson.

Speakers included, former Prime Minister, Hon Bob Hawke AC, former NSW Premier, Hon Barrie Unsworth, Hon Luke Foley MLC and the General Secretary, Jamie Clements.

The dinner provided a great opportunity to thank Johnno for his continued fundraising efforts and mentorship.



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

Email your story and photos to jay@nswalp.com

