

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

STATE BUDGET EDITION – JULY 2015

TAFE cuts – Dramatic drop in enrolments

After years of lies by the Liberals and Nationals, the terrible truth about their TAFE cuts is out. The 2015 budget has revealed the dramatic impact of their fee hikes and staff cuts on enrolment and training levels.

New South Wales now has the lowest level of apprenticeship completion since 2010. Only 69.4% of school leavers aged 15-19 are in education, training, or employment – well short of the Government's own 90 per cent target.

On top of course cuts and fee increases, there are over 2,100 fewer TAFE teachers and support staff than when the Liberals came to power in 2011 – including 1,000 staff cut between June 2013 and June 2014.

In 2012, Barry O'Farrell said 800 TAFE staff would lose their jobs over four years, but the truth is 1,931 staff – more than double the original 800 – have been laid off since he made that claim. In all, more than 2,111 TAFE teachers and staff have lost their jobs under this Governments' watch.

TAFE staff cuts under the NSW Liberals and Nationals

New South Wales is in a youth unemployment crisis – especially in rural and regional areas, where up to 17% of 16-20 year olds cannot find work.

And yet the Liberals are doing nothing to help young people get into a job. Instead, this government is hiking fees, sacking teachers, and doing everything they can to lock young people out of qualifications, training, and employment.



	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014
TAFE support staff	4153	4161	3896	3611
TAFE teachers	10422	10234	9642	8853
Total TAFE staff	14575	14395	13538	12464

Source: NSW Department of Education Annual Report 2014

Jay Suvaal writes...



Last month I travelled up in Casino for the annual Primex Field Days. Thanks to all the members who came along to staff the Country Labor stall and promote the party in the lead up to the federal election.



It was great to see so many of our country candidates come to parliament house recently where they were thanked for their efforts during the state campaign by Luke Foley MP, Kaila Murnain and many Labor MPs and MLCs.

Thanks to the members of Bawon SEC who made the long journey to meet with me in Cobar, some travelling around 500km each way. I look forward to continuing to work with branches in the lead up to the next campaign.

Please contact me on jay@nswlabor.org.au or **1800 503 035** if there is anything I can help you with.

Jay Suvaal

ACTING COUNTRY ORGANISER

Coming Events

▶ **ALP NATIONAL CONFERENCE – Melbourne Convention Centre 24-26 JULY 2015**
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▶ **CAMPAIGN INSIGHT REGIONAL ONE DAY TRAINING SEMINARS JULY-SEPTEMBER 2015**
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▶ **LIGHT ON THE HILL DINNER – Bathurst Panthers Leagues Club 19 SEPTEMBER 2015**
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▶ **INAUGURAL COUNTRY LABOR NATIONAL FORUM – Casino 26 SEPTEMBER 2015**
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▶ **NSW LABOR STATE CONFERENCE – Sydney Town Hall 3-5 OCTOBER 2015**
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▶ **THE DANIEL DENIEHY DINNER – GOULBURN SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2015**
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If you have an event you would like to promote to other Country Labor members please email it to jay@nswlabor.org.au

Excerpts from Luke Foley's Budget Reply Speech

“ This year's budget undermines the economic foundations of New South Wales – it's a budget built on sand not stone.

Instead of putting the State's finances on a more sustainable footing, the Budget makes us increasingly vulnerable to the volatility of Sydney's property market. Through its obsession with selling off profitable state owned corporations the Government is now more reliant than ever on revenues from property taxes – particularly stamp duty.

There is no plan to deal with the \$25 billion of cuts that have been inflicted by the Abbott Government on our schools and hospitals. Forty per cent of the New South Wales budget is made up from Commonwealth payments – and as Tony Abbott's cuts have proved – this imbalance has devastating consequences.

The Government likes to talk about making New South Wales number 1 again. But here are some sobering truths.

When the Government was elected, there were 187,000 people unemployed in New South Wales. This has surged to 225,000 people today. One in eight young people looking for work can't find a job. Across regional areas it is one in six and in many areas it is higher still. In Richmond and the Tweed youth unemployment stands at 17.5%. In the Far West and Orana it is 17%. In Newcastle and Lake Macquarie it is 18.1%.

We should not accept this.

The regions of New South Wales are crucial to our economy. Many of the regions are undergoing difficult transitions in increasingly global and interconnected economies. Regions, like the Illawarra and the Hunter, have been making a fundamental transition for the last quarter of a century. Just last week, the Illawarra

was hit hard by speculation that the steel industry would cease.

I make it clear: under a Labor Government, regions like the Illawarra will never face the difficulties of economic transition alone. There will always be a leadership role guaranteed by a State Labor Government. There will always be a helping hand extended by a Labor Government. We have done it before and we will do it again.

We will focus on delivery of crucial infrastructure, expanding business opportunity, and investing in people. Rural and regional areas are important to Labor, they always have been and it is time this Government gave them the attention they deserve.

There is a better way for NSW.

Labor understands that government should defend the public interest against vested interests.

Labor understands that health and education are not potential budget savings but essential public services.

Labor has new ideas for the delivery of public services.

Labor has a plan to spread prosperity beyond Sydney's CBD to the regions, towns and suburbs of this state.

Labor is excited by the opportunities of the sharing economy and engaged with this Asian century.

Labor is focused on the future; focused on a sustainable economy delivering opportunity for all. ”

Luke's full speech is available online at www.lukefoley.com.au/budget_reply_2015



Saving North Coast Koalas

Labor frontbenchers have been reiterating calls this month for the Broadwater to Ballina upgrade of the Pacific Highway to be rerouted to avoid bisecting a significant koala population.

Joined by Friends of the Koala and the International Fund for Animal Welfare at NSW Parliament today, Labor MPs have tabled a petition of 17,149 signatures from across NSW and especially from people who live on the North Coast.

In NSW, koalas are listed as vulnerable to extinction and are on the Federal threatened species list.

While the Pacific Highway must be upgraded between Broadwater and Ballina, there are ways to route the road that won't have such a terribly negative environmental impact.



Labor has reiterated its call to re-route the Pacific Highway to protect North Coast koalas.

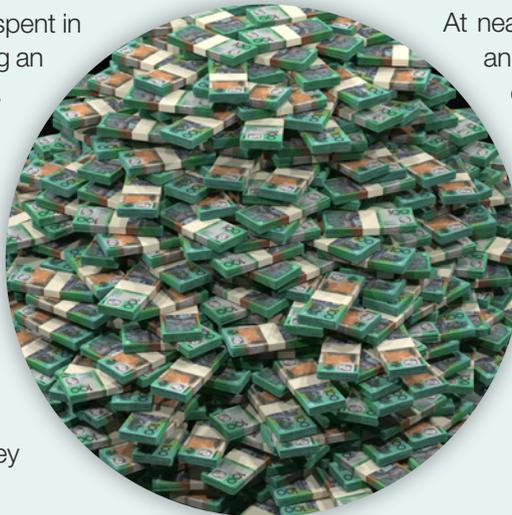
\$300 million gone missing from agriculture funding

In the fine print of the last state budget, the Nationals and Liberals have been caught out overpromising and under-delivering for farmers and sneaking money out of rural areas.

New analysis shows they have underspent in three of the past four budgets – leaving an effective \$307 million hole in finances.

Attempting to justify the effective cut in Parliament today, the Minister said, “it’s not a case where every time you get a bit of money in the bank you should rush out and just blow the lot.”

Over the next few weeks and months, Country Labor will be asking the Baird Government why they have callously hoarded money meant for primary industries in NSW.



At nearly one-third of a billion dollars, this is an incredible loss to the industries that drive regional NSW, and for the minister to imply that spending this money on programs in the bush is wastefully blowing the money is a massive insult.

This is yet another example of National Party members promising one thing in the bush, and then doing another thing in Sydney.

Year	DPI Budget (\$m)	DPI Actual (\$m)	Difference (\$m)	Difference (%)
2015-16	\$1,048.8			
2014-15	\$951.5	\$906.0	-\$45.5	-5%
2013-14	\$1,053.7	\$1,077.5	\$23.8	2%
2012-13	\$978.9	\$882.4	-\$96.5	-10%
2011-12	\$1,081.3	\$916.2	-\$165.1	-15%
			Total underspending:	
			-\$307.1	

Budget analysis: Department of Primary Industries

Rural affairs roundtable meets

In Mid-June, the NSW Labor frontbench brought together a broad range of stakeholders from rural and regional NSW to discuss the critical issues facing those living outside of metropolitan Sydney.

Participants in the roundtable included high-level representatives from the NSW Farmers Association, Landcare NSW, NSW Business Chamber, Nature Conservation Council, NCOSS, Local Government NSW and Youth Action NSW.

Mick Veitch said: “Our regions are often forgotten by a Premier influenced by the Liberal Party’s city-based MPs and heavyweights – but a cross-section of Shadow Ministers and Labor MPs heard first-hand about the broad spectrum of challenges facing the people of country NSW.”

Topics covered included:

- High cost of basic services such as electricity and water
- Limited accessibility to digital technological infrastructure that is going backwards
- High levels of youth and long-term unemployment
- High barriers of access to frontline health, mental health, education, employment and training services

- Coal Seam Gas and its threat to the natural environment and pure water sources
- Lack of any coherent integrated federal and state drought policy
- Disproportionately disadvantaged regional Aboriginal communities
- Local Land Services agreements
- Lack of clarity in relation to the government’s agenda for Crown Lands

The roundtable was part of a comprehensive policy review, which requires high-level and intensive stakeholder engagement forums. The result was a deeper understanding among frontbenchers of the varied and complex needs of regional communities.

But the Labor shadow cabinet is equally determined to make sure that roundtables are about more than just talk, and how critical it is that NSW Labor turns meetings into actions and to continue to highlight just how much the Baird Government takes regional NSW for granted.



Country Labor Caucus Members are taking the lead on policy for rural and regional NSW.

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

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