

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES - OCTOBER 2015

National Country Forum Success

The National Country Labor Forum has been branded a huge success, as 200 Country Labor Members and Members of Parliament met up in Casino on 26 September.



Labor goes bush to take on Nationals: 'We're coming for you'

The Australian, 26.9.2015

Led in discussion by Bill Shorten and Joel Fitzgibbon, the delegates discussed policies related to regional communities and services, agriculture and sustainability, as well as the latest low-cost tactics to win seats off the Nationals. Panels also featured Federal Labor MPs like Mark Butler, Shayne Neumann, Justine Elliot, Warren Snowden and Lisa Chesters, plus others.

At the Conference, Labor announced 17 seats it has targeted in rural areas that it aims to win off the Coalition at the next Federal Election. These include Page

and Gilmore in New South Wales.

Janelle Saffin was a special guest at the forum, as it took place in the federal seat of Page, which she is campaigning to win back. The event served to highlight Janelle's incredible grassroots campaign to retake the seat, as well as to energise other Country Labor hopefuls in attendance.

Particularly successful was the "90 second statement" section, where every attendee had the chance to contribute to the ideas of the Party.

"My colleagues and I are here because – like all of you – we believe Australians on the land and in our country towns deserve a stronger voice and a better deal. We refuse to accept, all of us, that any party has a monopoly on the interests of rural Australia."

**Bill Shorten MP,
Leader of the Opposition.**

Jay Suvaal writes...



It was great to be in Casino again, this time for the inaugural National Country Labor Forum. I was really pleased to see so many NSW Country Labor members attend and take up the fight on the national stage.

Please keep an eye out this month for voting information for the Country delegates to the State Policy Forum. Good luck to all the candidates.

Online voting is now open and will close on Wednesday 28 October. To cast your vote or to find out more about the candidates please visit yoursay.nswlabor.org.au.

Thanks to the members from Page and Richmond who came to the Campaign Insight Training Day in Lismore in September. This month we will be travelling to Eden-Monaro and Hume. For information on the training visit www.countrylabor.com.au/events.

I look forward to travelling around visiting more branches this month. If there is something I can assist you with please contact me on 02 9207 2000 or jay@nswlabor.org.au.

Jay Suvaal
NSW COUNTRY ORGANISER

Coming Events

▶ EDEN MONARO CAMPAIGN INSIGHT

DATE Sunday,
11 October 2015

TIME 11:00 AM

VENUE Narooma
Golf Club

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▶ HUME CAMPAIGN INSIGHT

DATE Saturday,
24 October 2015

TIME 12:00 PM

VENUE Goulburn
Community Hub

.....

▶ DENIEHY DINNER

DATE Saturday,
24 October 2015

TIME 6:30 PM

VENUE Goulburn
Soldiers Club

.....

▶ NSW LABOR STATE CONFERENCE

Sydney Town Hall
13-14 FEB 2016

To see all upcoming
Country Labor events visit
countrylabor.com.au/events

If you have an event you
would like to promote
to other Country Labor
members please email it
to jay@nswlabor.org.au

Talking about regional youth & jobs



BLAKE MOONEY

CONVENOR OF THE YOUNG
COUNTRY LABOR NETWORK

There are significant challenges facing rural towns and regional centres in NSW. Most would agree that they are entirely unique from the somewhat uncomplicated metropolitan experience of more than half our state's population.

Indeed, when you exclude Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle, you exclude around two thirds of the permanent population of NSW. So at some level it's understandable why inner-city folk will rarely be our policy-making saviours.

And Country Labor has long been the manifestation of this principle: regional people dealing with issues particular to their communities.

But as a young person, it's increasingly concerning that issues largely being played out and decided in metro areas are hitting regions the hardest.

An accumulation of industry and environmental policies that on their own seem entirely reasonable, have, when mixed together, hastened the ebb of many remarkable communities around our state.

The usual left/right political spectrum blurs on these issues when decent progressive policy expects regional areas to shoulder much of the burden, often without proper consideration, acknowledgement or support.

And right now, youth unemployment rates in country NSW are simply atrocious. The industries that once employed the town's young rascals and early school-leavers are all but gone in many communities. Mining investment is winding down because of soft export markets and unholy divestment campaigns, leading to fewer jobs and uncertain futures.

The remnants of trades training have been centralised and repeatedly cut.

Unemployed youth have, until recently, been told to expect a full month without welfare support; and somehow young kids whose parents can't afford 100 hours of driving instruction are being told to 'earn or learn', when neither are in walking distance.

These are the consequences of political decision making without regard to regional communities.

In Country Labor, we should be unashamedly counter-cultural when it comes to public and private investment as well as the provision of jobs and services in regional NSW.

We need to be the party for all workers, not just university graduates in the city and those who expect above minimum wage to get out of bed in the morning. Every policy that reduces jobs in country NSW should be fought tooth and nail, because unlike two thirds of our state, young people from the country can't jump on a train and find another job in a suburb next door.

The dignity of young people, and their ability to build a life for themselves, should work its way back into these important debates.

In Country Labor, we proudly embrace a country identity because we know the value of our communities. The fact is we need more Country Labor Councillors and MPs, because the more Jenny Aitchisons and Kate Washingtons and Mick Veitchs and Clayton Barrs we have, the better represented and secure our communities and young people will be.

Baird fails the regions

The Baird Government has released an updated list of priorities for NSW – replacing 321 state targets for 30 ‘priority areas’ – none of which mention regional NSW.



Demonstrating a total failure of the National Party to represent the interests of rural and regional communities within government, the new priorities make no mention of agriculture, primary industries, rural affairs or regional development.

When pressed in Question Time earlier this month, Deputy Premier Troy Grant revealed he had been consulted on the new priorities – indicating the National Party knew all references to regional NSW would be scrapped.

Some of the commitments and priorities dropped by the Liberal/National Government include:

- ▶ An increase in the share of jobs in regional NSW;
- ▶ Increasing the population in regional NSW by 470,000 by 2036;
- ▶ Protecting strategic agricultural land and improving agricultural productivity; and
- ▶ Increasing investment in regional infrastructure and rural roads.

“This Sydney-centric Government has produced a plan for the state which totally ignores agriculture, primary industries, rural affairs and regional development – it’s a slap in the face to regional NSW.” – **Luke Foley MP**

NSW Government to sell 27 TAFE campuses

Minister for Skills John Barilaro has admitted the Baird Government is open to “**asset recycling**” of regional TAFEs across NSW.

After being questioned in Budget estimate hearings about the risk of regional TAFE closures in Dapto, Murwillumbah and Belmont, Mr Barilaro stated that the Baird Government was “open to a process of asset recycling and rationalisation” – allowing the government to sell these sites.

The TAFE sites in these regions have and continue to provide classes to youth seeking to further their skill set and seek gainful employment, and fewer educational choices mean fewer opportunities for people in regional NSW to gain the skills needed to excel.



“The Baird Government is failing to commit to protecting the crucial resources needed by regional communities. Instead they’re busy focusing on how they can use these sites for something else.” – **David Harris MP**

Queanbeyan policy forum success: Jobs in a digital economy

Rapidly changing technology and its effect on jobs and Australia's economy was the topic of a very successful forum conducted in Queanbeyan in September.

As part of the NSW Labor Party's reinvigoration of its policy committees, this was the first forum in a regional or rural area held jointly by two policy committees.

Run jointly by the by the Economics and Education & Skills policy committees, it focussed on the link between economics and education in a world with changing technology.

It was fantastic to have NSW Deputy Opposition Leader Linda Burney MP, Federal Shadow Minister for Vocational Education Sharon Bird MP and NSW Shadow Minister for Skills David Harris MP all attending the event.

Former Senator Dr Ursula Stephens delivered the keynote address, saying that up to one third of Australia's jobs will be disrupted by



NSW Labor Assistant General Secretary, Kaila Murnain, welcoming members to the policy forum.

digital change over the next decade.

In terms of Australia's future, Dr Stephens warned that the biggest risk for us is to do nothing and

that the Labor Party has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in policy formulation in meeting the digital challenges.

Judge condemns **Baird cuts to justice**

The most senior judge in NSW has delivered a stinging critique of the Baird government as part of their annual review of courtroom practices, with special mention to the burden this places on remote and rural justice systems.

NSW Chief Magistrate His Honour Judge Graeme Henson has condemned the NSW Liberal decision to axe six magistrate positions during a period of increasing caseload, and warned that cutting two further magistrates next year would hamper "the ability of [the] court to maintain an adequate level of service to country regions."

Shadow Attorney-General Paul Lynch has condemned these cuts, saying "When the Government is drowning in rivers of gold from stamp duty receipts, it's not acceptable to try to deliver justice on the cheap."

“ If the trend towards decision making in government simply based on measured outcomes without consideration of the impact on communities persists, it is likely in the near future to be one affecting decision-making and accountability elsewhere in government ” – **Chief Magistrate His Honour Judge Graeme Henson**

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

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