

# COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES – MARCH 2017

## Fair Work Commission guts the regions

The recent decision by the Fair Work Commission to cut penalty rates, with no compensatory increase in other areas of pay, is one that will affect millions of people in regional Australia.

**FACT** Retail is the second-largest industry in the regional economy, employing 93,000 workers.

Rural Australians already earn far less than their Sydney-based counterparts. Where one in four Sydney families earn more than \$2000 a week, only one rural family in 10 can claim the same.



**FACT** A substantial share of the rural retail economy is headquartered in Sydney.

If a business is owned locally, it's possible that any cut in penalty rates will still be spent in the area by the business owner. When companies are headquartered in Sydney or internationally, any cut in pay will leave the rural economy entirely.

**FACT** Rural retail workers will lose about 10% of their income.

This means \$225 million will leave the rural economy – or \$17 million per rural electorate. This is disposable income that won't be spent in regional shops, impacting the whole economy.

**FACT** The Nationals are in favour of this pay cut.

Barnaby Joyce has come out in favour of cutting penalty rates – and against the interest of his community.

FIGURES COURTESY OF THE MCKELL INSTITUTE.

## Jay Suvaal writes...

The Turnbull Government's attacks are continuing on Country NSW with its latest attack on penalty rates. Congratulations to Bill Shorten and the Labor team for taking up the fight and moving legislation to protect this important workplace conditions.



It's now more important than ever to be talking about these attacks in our local communities and make the case for change.

As we all know, you can't win government without winning seats in Country NSW.

Over the next few months I will be travelling around to meet with Branches and Electorate Councils to talk about the campaigns we are running right across NSW.

If there are any local issues in your community that you would like assistance to start campaigning on please contact me at [jay@nswlabor.org.au](mailto:jay@nswlabor.org.au) or **1800 503 035**.

**Jay Suvaal**  
COUNTRY ORGANISER



# Coming Events

▶ **5 MARCH**  
Wollondilly Branch -  
Thirlmere Festival  
of Steam

▶ **16 MARCH**  
Queanbeyan  
Town Hall Forum  
**LABOR'S PLAN  
FOR THE REGION**  
**SPEAKERS:**  
Luke Foley MP  
and Bryce Wilson  
[www.countrylabor.com.au/monaro\\_town\\_hall](http://www.countrylabor.com.au/monaro_town_hall)

▶ **1-31 MARCH**  
Branch AGMs

▶ **15 APRIL-31 MAY**  
Electorate  
Council AGMs

▶ **27 MAY**  
**DAME MARY  
GILMORE DINNER**  
Bomaderry  
Bowling Club

▶ **29-30 JULY**  
**STATE  
CONFERENCE**  
Sydney Town Hall

To see all upcoming  
Country Labor events visit  
[countrylabor.com.au/events](http://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](mailto:jay@nswlabor.org.au)

## Country Labor on the trail



Mike Kelly talking to locals at the Bega Show.



Justine Elliot and Jenny Aitchison with 10,000 signatures  
to reopen the Tweed Valley Women's Service.



Kate Washington with Peter Garrett and Bryce Wilson.



Pat Garcia training members  
in the Richmond FEC.



Kaila Murnain on the road for a Country Labor  
stall.

# Turnbull and Joyce contract out regional policy

After more than three years of regional policy failure, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his Deputy Barnaby Joyce plan to contract out regional policy to the Productivity Commission.

Asking the Productivity Commission to review regional policy is essentially an admission that this Federal Government has no ideas of its own, other than a failing dams policy and a decentralisation agenda that amounts to pork barrelling.

“Any review that does go ahead should start with the second-rate copper-based National Broadband Network, with inferior services that stifle growth.”

It should continue on to examine the cuts to health and education that disadvantage everyday Australians, and the Centrelink funding cuts that force



pensioners, carers, and people with disabilities to waste days in the queue for basic entitlements. Their struggles are amplified in the regions.

If Turnbull and Joyce were serious about regional and rural Australia they would commit to ongoing funding for the Regional Australia Institute so the

regions could benefit from ongoing, evidence based policy.

The Government's Budget cuts in the 2014 Budget and since have hit the regions hardest. We can't wait for a Productivity Commission review; we need to invest in job-creating economic infrastructure now.

## Gap between Sydney and the regions widens

Under the Turnbull Government, the economic gap between Sydney and the NSW regions is widening.

A report produced by SGS Economics and Planning, *Australian Cities Accounts 2015-16*, shows that while Sydney prospers, regional NSW is falling further behind.

Annual GDP growth in regional NSW was just 0.4 per cent in 2015-16; eleven times less economic growth in regional areas compared to Sydney; and seven times less economic growth than the Australian average.

The Report also shows a 0.6 per cent decline in per capita GDP growth for regional NSW, and GDP per capita growth lagging behind Sydney (2.6 per cent) and the Australian average.

The Report shows income per person being \$32,200 less in regional NSW compared to Sydney, the widest income per person gap on record.

More data from the Report shows:

- ▶ The rate of jobless families with children under 15 is three times higher, 21.3 per cent, in Eurobodalla (Electorates of Gilmore and Eden-Monaro), compared with 6.7 per cent in Waverly (Electorate of Wentworth).
- ▶ Average personal investment income in Shellharbour is just \$3,986 (Electorate of Whitlam) but is more than fourteen times

higher, \$59,010 in Woollahra (Electorate of Wentworth).

- ▶ School leaver participation in higher education is just 6.1 per cent in Lismore (Electorate of Page) but it is more than 8 times higher, or 50.3 per cent, in Waverly (Electorate of Wentworth).

**Malcolm Turnbull and his government are out of touch.**

**This is a Government that provides tax cuts to multinationals while abandoning low and middle-income families in regional Australia.**

# Queanbeyan Town Hall Forum



Bryce Wilson, Country Labor candidate for Monaro with Luke Foley MP.

Come along and hear from Luke Foley MP and Bryce Wilson, our candidate for Monaro, as they explain Labor's plan for the region.

**Thursday 16 March 2017**

**VENUE: Queanbeyan Town Hall**

**TIME: 6pm**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT**  
[www.countrylabor.com.au/monaro\\_town\\_hall](http://www.countrylabor.com.au/monaro_town_hall)

## A word from Jenny Aitchison

### As Shadow Minister for Small Business and Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault,

I've travelled to Broken Hill, Dubbo, Orange, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Tweed, Goulburn and Queanbeyan to meet with stakeholders and find out what needs to be done to make our state a safer place to open and operate a small business and live a life free of domestic and family violence.

If you'd like me to meet with key stakeholders in your electorate please call my office on 4933 1617 or email [maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au) to arrange a visit.



### Jenny's Wagga / Cootamundra visit

#### ▶ 13 MARCH

**Small Business Round Table in Wagga.**

#### ▶ 14 MARCH

**Small Business Street Walk in Cootamundra** and a **Small Business Forum** arranged by the Cootamundra Development Corporation.

#### ▶ 15 MARCH

**Domestic Violence Round Table** in Cootamundra.

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

Email your story and photos to [jay@nswlabor.org.au](mailto:jay@nswlabor.org.au)