

Country
Labor

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES - DECEMBER 2016

2016 Year In Review

This past year has been dominated by the Federal Election, and the consequences that has had for Country NSW. Country Labor has been growing in membership, getting active and leading the charge over the last 12 months.



2016 kicked off with State Conference, which saw a remarkable debate on the Country Labor report, as well as a rules change that finally mandates at least one winnable Country Labor spot in the NSW Legislative Council.

Country Labor's success in the Federal election has been well-documented – Eden-Monaro broke the bellwether, with a huge swing towards Labor in smaller country towns like Tumut and Tumbarumba. Meryl Swanson had a 10% swing in Paterson, and we came incredibly close in Gilmore. Even in tiger-country seats like Parkes and Riverina, towns like Gundagai and Broken Hill recorded double-digit swings.

Beyond the Federal Election, we were able to elect candidates on the Country Labor

ticket in National strongholds, like Peter Alley in Port Macquarie-Hastings, Dan Hayes and Vanessa Keegan in Wagga Wagga, and Joshua Brown in the Upper Hunter.

And to cap off the year, strong Country Labor opposition to forced council amalgamations and the greyhound ban led to a historic upset for the Nationals, as their voters abandoned them in droves during the Orange By-election.

“None of these victories would have been possible without your support over the last twelve months.”

A message from the Country Organiser



Thank you for joining us at Country Conference 2016.

Country Conference is the highlight of the Country Labor calendar. Over the two days of this conference we'll hear from our party's state and federal leadership, participate in workshops designed to push forward the debate on issues that matter to regional communities and to set the agenda for the next elections in 2019.



I'm looking forward to discussing how Country Labor can deliver more for the regions, as well as how we can continue to demonstrate to rural communities that the Nationals and Liberals are poor representatives of regional concerns.

Thanks again for coming, and enjoy the conference.

Best wishes,
Jay Suvaal
NSW COUNTRY ORGANISER

What you need to know about John Barilaro

With Troy Grant unceremoniously dumped from the Deputy Premiership, it has fallen to John Barilaro to lead the Nationals out of their current slump.

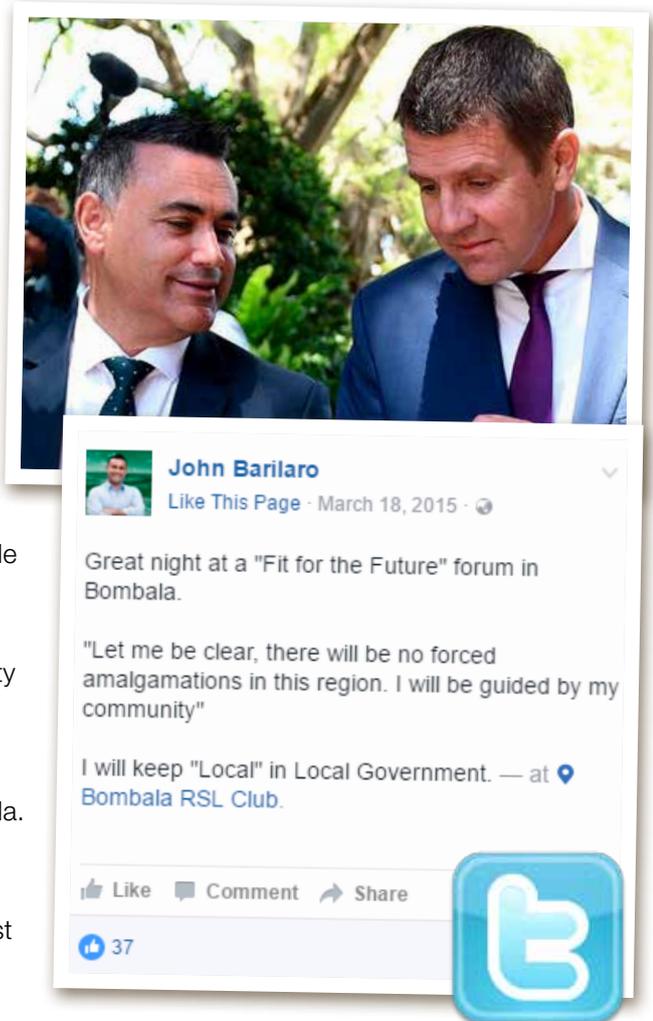
But Mr Barilaro, who holds the seat of Monaro by 2.5%, has come under significant pressure in his first few days in the job

First it was revealed that Barilaro had given \$78,000 to a club in which he was the "Founder President" without declaring a conflict of interest.

Then it came to light that he never declared income received on a \$2 million estate he rents out on websites like AirBnB and Stayz, even while the Government is considering laws to regulate AirBnB.

Despite claiming to oppose council mergers in March last year (pictured), the first action taken by Mr Barilaro upon reaching the Deputy Premiership was to immediately back Mike Baird on forced council amalgamations – in the face of huge opposition in his own area of Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas. In his first real challenge as leader, he's shown himself to be a rubber stamp for Mike Baird's agenda.

But most disturbing of all is Mr Barilaro's record as Minister for Skills. Over the term of this Liberal-National State Government, the yearly enrolments for 2016 are down by more than 126,000 compared against 2012. The most recent budget papers confirm that in that same time more than 5,200 teachers and support staff have been sacked.



“ John Barilaro comes to the Leadership of the National Party promising change from the Troy Grant era, and a new approach to the issues that sent off his predecessor. But in his first few weeks in the job, he's shown himself incapable of standing up to the Liberals on these issues and lax in how he deals with conflicts of interest. ***Regional Australia deserves better.*** ”

Renewable energy regional transition

Australia needs an orderly and planned retirement of coal-fired power stations and a transition to clean, renewable energy.

BY MERYL SWANSON MP

But it's folly to ignore the jobs that will be lost in coal regions, mining towns, and Labor heartlands like the La Trobe Valley in Victoria and our own Hunter Valley. Labor policy must support investment in renewables, but also in redundant workers and their communities.

“ We should think about investing in a fund for transition planning in regions that are moving away from coal. ”

It would provide the impetus for ideas and projects that would replace jobs. For example, new battery storage technology is an area where the Hunter has competitive advantages.

Dr Gary Ellem, from the Newcastle University's Tom Farrell Institute, told a forum in the Hunter in April: "New battery storage technology is likely to encourage decentralised energy distribution and driverless transport systems. Skills and infrastructure developed by the Hunter's mining

industry could create the ideal environment for a driverless transport system test bed. The Region's skills also make it an ideal site for a Tesla lithium-ion battery factory, similar to that currently in Nevada in the US."



It's all about jobs **BY MICK VEITCH MLC**

As I travel around regional NSW, the number one issue raised with me is jobs. Not just creating new jobs, but keeping the ones we have.

There are places in country NSW with youth employment exceeding 20%. The Coalition Government's policies are simply not working. They talk up their efforts regarding job creation, but are silent on the jobs lost under their watch.

Labor should be the champions of economic diversity in the regions. We simply can't rely on one or two industries.

“ We need to invest, not just in agriculture and other primary industries, but also in our manufacturing and service sectors. We need to be inventive in supporting apprenticeships across regional NSW. ”



This is why TAFE is so important. This is why Barilaro's Nationals stand condemned for what they have done to this critical skills and education provider.

Finally, we need to find new ways for regional NSW to better leverage off the investment that is in Sydney.

Rather than investing in an overheated property market, we need strategies and infrastructure to attract investors and entrepreneurs to the regions – creating jobs, diversity and wealth at the same time. An efficient, fast and reliable NBN would help!

Growing anger over Baird's **disregard for regions** **BY JENNY AITCHISON MP**

In recent months I've visited communities all over regional New South Wales – towns like Broken Hill and Goulburn – where I have observed a growing anger at this government's disregard for regional Australia.



People are sick of hospital privatisation. They're angry at seeing money spent on more Sydney infrastructure when they have no public transport and terrible roads. They desperately need more schools – in areas that are rapidly growing. And they're outraged by the centralisation of government departments and service and the closure of regional offices, which take jobs in their communities.

Most importantly we must stop domestic and family violence in rural and regional communities, where rates are sometimes 2½ times the state average. All around NSW it is the same story – victim services always coming last in the

funding race. If we want to break the cycle of violence, we need to prioritise working with victims too.

“ Labor must stand with rural and regional communities, as it is clear that the Nationals are not doing this effectively within the Coalition agreement. ”

Like my Country Labor Shadow Ministers, I am passionate in reaching out to all our regional communities, to improve our policy to be more reflective of the needs of country people, and I invite you to request a visit to your area.

Country Labor: People and policies to win

BY JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Winning and holding seats in regional Australia is key to Labor forming governments at both State and Federal levels. To achieve this we have to have strong Labor policies that invest in the regions, great local Labor candidates from country communities, and the invaluable support of Labor members and volunteers coming together to make change happen.

Labor has a very proud history of delivering for the people of regional Australia and we should always highlight these facts. Labor and our values were founded in the bush and many of the successes underpinning regional communities today are the legacy of previous Labor governments past.

The National Party has betrayed people living in the regions. Only Labor can fight for them on the important issues: driving economic growth in regional towns and creating well paying jobs; saving Medicare and investing in local country hospitals and health care; increasing funding for our local schools; better TAFE training and university opportunities for young people from the regions; and protecting our precious environment into the future.

“Regional Australia is depending upon us to form government and Country Labor has the people, policies and commitment to win and deliver the change and growth our country towns and villages need and deserve.”



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

Email your story and photos to jay@nswalp.com

