Labor's Plan for Our Environment
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I am proud to put the most comprehensive environmental protection policy that has ever been presented to the people of New South Wales at this election.

There can be no new approach for New South Wales without a bold agenda for environmental protection.

This is one of the passions of my public life.

I am proud of the NSW Labor tradition of nature conservation. Premier Bill McKell, the architect of modern Labor in this state created the Kosciuszko National Park in the early 1940s. Neville Wran protected the rainforests in the 1980s and Bob Carr massively extended the National Parks estate through the nineties, adding over 3 million hectares of reserves.

The health of the natural environment affects the well-being of all people. That means we need to create jobs and increase our prosperity in a sustainable economy. We need to generate energy and use natural resources without depleting our land and forests, our rivers and oceans.

We are committed to expanding and better managing our National Park network – both terrestrial and marine. These are the core arks of protection for our native flora and fauna.

We are committed to building a sustainable program for empowering local communities to build ecological resilience across landscapes. With increasing threats we have no choice.

We are committed to ensuring our legislative and regulatory regime provide robust protection for the natural environment.

A Labor Government will impose a state wide moratorium on CSG activity. We will not lift the moratorium unless the Chief Scientist has deemed the industry safe.

Our waterways and our communities are too precious to risk.

Yours sincerely

Luke Foley
NSW Labor Leader
**protecting flora and fauna**

**Labor protecting our life support system**

We have a biodiversity crisis. For all our efforts, extinction threatens many of our plants and animals as we continue to degrade the habitat - bushland and waterways - on which they rely.

Being able to enjoy healthy natural environments is something all Australians are proud of. It is the state government’s job to balance economic outcomes with keeping NSW ecologically healthy. Our quality of life depends on it.

Apart from the enjoyment that nature provides, functioning ecosystems are essential because of eco-system services they deliver. The quality of our water, the health of our soils and the pollination of our crops all rely on us ensuring ecosystems continue to function. Floods, droughts and weed infestations are often outcomes of failure to protect the functioning of ecosystems.

Increasingly, protecting and restoring bushland is a cost effective approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Labor’s policy aims in relation to biodiversity are:

- To ensure that our National Parks are truly delivering protection for the state’s plants and animals. Our National Parks must prove they are preventing species decline and improving the condition of habitat;
- To make sure we look after ecological integrity beyond National Parks and work across tenures to protect biodiversity;
- To ensure the full suite of biodiversity actions in NSW deliver no further species loss; and
- To include the reality of climate change in all biodiversity planning and policy making.
New NATIONAL PARKS

Labor is proud of its legacy of National Park creation and committed to continuing the task of building a fully comprehensive, adequate and representative public reserve system in New South Wales.

An elected Labor Government will continue its legacy of National Park creation. Labor will direct the National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop funded reserve proposals and a plan for progressing the implementation of the NSW National Parks Establishment Plan.

Our first priority is the creation of the Great Koala National Park on the state’s north coast. Other priorities include improving the links between the various parts of the Paroo-Darling National Park to ensure this inland oasis of lakes and birdlife is safe.

**Labor will commit at least $150 million over 4 years towards establishing new National Parks.**

Ensuring OUR PARKS DELIVER

NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT

Labor will not permit commercial logging, amateur hunting and grazing of hoofed animals in our national parks estate.

Over recent years there have been increasing concerns raised about the failure of our National Park estate to effectively halt species and habitat decline, even within their borders.

Key threats, particularly feral animals and plants and fire, do not respect Park boundaries. Some radical solutions that have been proposed include fencing or contracting management of the parks to outside managers.

An elected Labor Government will establish a taskforce of experts to consider how we ensure National Parks remain the arks of animal and plant protection that we expect them to be. The Taskforce will be asked to review current approaches, test management effectiveness against key biodiversity baselines and consider all options for better ensuring our Parks remain the centre piece of effective biodiversity strategy for this century.
Scientists agree that we cannot protect the environment with National Parks alone. We must look after ecological systems across the landscape if we are to continue to have a healthy environment.

We need to be building a network of corridors across the landscape and across tenures that improve the ecological fabric of our state, building resilience and allowing natural processes to operate. Dangerous global warming makes this ever more important as connectivity will prevent extinctions in a changing climate.

Done well, this land stewardship will also support our agricultural industries by increasing the land’s resilience and productivity.

The institutional infrastructure to deliver this has been gutted by the Federal and State Coalition Governments. CMAs have been dismantled and funding for natural resource management has been slashed.

An elected Labor Government will:

- Reinvigorate the multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach to landscape wide planning and management in NSW. We will ensure investment is targeted and effective in delivering outcomes and that rural communities are given the tools and support to protect the assets they manage;

- Deliver state wide planning and goals for natural resource management by restoring the Natural Resource Commission as a respected leader in scientifically based resource management and environmental protection. We will put a scientist at its head;

- Maintain in the environment portfolio an effective, well-resourced and independent Threatened Species Scientific Committee;

- Deliver regional planning and accountability by restoring the integrity of Local Land Services as regional leaders in natural resource management. We will rebuild the strength of the governance model in which local plans and initiatives are embedded in state wide planning and reinstate a strong emphasis on community innovation and cooperation in relation to biodiversity protection; and

- Support local communities in driving protection by encouraging community level collaborations to drive outcomes. We will adopt the framework developed by the last Labor Federal Government to support community led proposals for corridor projects, integrating them into biodiversity planning. Adopted corridor projects will receive support on issues like governance and be priorities for funding. The NRC will lead these decisions.

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative is a great example of a corridor that runs up the escarpment of eastern NSW and has bought together scientists, community and environment groups.

Labor will continue the current Green Corridors funding including allocation to the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.
DATA and RESEARCH

In much of the work done by the Chief Scientist in recent years, the lack of centralised and definitive data has been identified as a barrier to good environmental decision making. There is also room for stronger partnerships between government agencies and research bodies to inform better biodiversity management and decisions.

Labor will:

• Ensure vegetation mapping of the entire state is completed;

• Build a data repository that actively collects all the available scientific data on environmental impacts across the state;

• Actively build partnerships between government agencies and external research bodies to build our capacity for innovation; and

• Investigate establishing state wide Environmental Accounts as a path to accurately tracking our environmental assets to inform policy making and planning.

PROTECTIONS FOR NATIVE FORESTS

Labor is proud of its legacy of defending forest industry jobs, providing just transitions and protecting old growth and high conservation value forests.

A NSW Labor Government will:

• Reinstate the prohibition on burning native forests and cleared vegetation for electricity;

• Ban cable logging in NSW and ensure no wind back of Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs);

• Increase penalties for forestry breaches ten fold and re-introduce third party appeal rights; and

• Not allow the Abbott Government to simply “roll over” the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) without a full scientific and economic review. Labor will insist the Commonwealth revisit the assumptions of the original RFAs against the experience of their operation both in terms of resource management and biodiversity outcomes. The new study will include consideration of the impacts of climate change.

LAND CLEARING AND OTHER LEGISLATION TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

Labor reaffirms its commitment to strong land clearing laws, and in particular the Native Vegetation Act. Labor will ensure adequate funding is available to increase compliance and to educate and work cooperatively with farmers.

Labor will not take a backward step when it comes to environmental protections in the Native Vegetation Act, Threatened Species Conservation Act, and Nature Conservation Trust Act.
Voluntary WILDLIFE CARERS

The unsung heroes of animal protection in the state are our voluntary wildlife carers. They rescue and care for sick and injured animals in wildlife hospitals and in their homes across the state.

A NSW Labor Government will:

• Ensure the efforts of voluntary wildlife care and rehabilitation providers are acknowledged and incorporated into the species recovery efforts of the National Parks and Wildlife Service through a formal relationship with the NSW Wildlife Council; and

• Support the work of voluntary wildlife care and rehabilitation providers, with funding of $4 million over four years to assist them in their work.

FEDERAL Environment LAWS

With respect to the environmental approval of major projects, NSW Labor believes the Commonwealth should retain responsibility for approval of actions which may impact Matters of National Environmental Significance.
A NSW Labor Government will immediately act to ensure that internationally significant rainforests on the NSW North Coast are inscribed on the World Heritage list.

A NSW Labor Government will work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure our exceptional subtropical rainforests receive the recognition and protection they deserve.

460,000 hectares of rainforests in NSW, spreading along the escarpment from the Queensland border to the Hunter, should be immediately nominated as additions to the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area.

The current Gondwana Rainforests World Heritage Area consists of numerous reserves in eight groups across northern NSW and southern Queensland, covering 370,000 hectares in total.

The proposal for additions to the World Heritage Area includes another 460,000 hectares in NSW, including icons such as Washpool National Park, Dorrigo National Park, Chaelundi and the Barrington Tops National Park.

The World Heritage List allows all countries to identify and protect places of outstanding universal value, whether they be cultural treasures such as the Taj Mahal and the Pyramids of Giza, or natural treasures such as Kakadu National Park and the Great Barrier Reef.

In NSW, Labor can be proud of its rainforest heritage. In 1982 Neville Wran acted to protect core areas of rainforests in northern NSW. In 1986 and 1994 some of these areas were added to the World Heritage List as the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area.

Labor will also conduct an assessment of the forested national parks in the southern ranges and south coast of NSW – many of which also include magnificent rainforests – to determine their worthiness for World Heritage nomination.

Furthermore, NSW Labor will direct the Office of Environment and Heritage to assess the proposal by World Heritage experts to pursue a Eucalypt World Heritage listing. The vast and unique variety of eucalypts that run along the Great Escarpment and down to the sea, from the Queensland to the Victorian border would be included.
Biodiversity Offset Policy

Biodiversity offsetting means accepting some loss of wildlife or bushland provided it is ‘made up’ or enhanced somewhere else, where there is similar habitat available.

Biodiversity offsetting is an important tool. Done well it can help manage the competing demands of economic activity and environmental protection. Done badly it facilitates disregard for environmental standards and destruction of biodiversity values. Labor will ensure biodiversity off-setting is a tool that reflects Labor’s commitment to a planning system that balances the demands of economic activity, environmental protection and community concern.

A NSW Labor Government will review and replace the Liberal Government’s watered down biodiversity offsetting rules that allow unjustifiable loss of habitat and wildlife.

NSW Labor will ensure that biodiversity offsets policy is built on key foundations:

- ‘like for like’ offsetting, within a reasonable geographic proximity;
- no ‘net loss’ biodiversity outcomes and ideally ‘net positive’ outcomes; and
- recognition that some high conservation value lands must be off limits to offsetting.

NSW Labor will design our offsets policy with reference to the principles identified by The International Council on Mining and Minerals and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. These principles include equivalence and permanence. They also acknowledge that some areas cannot be offset. NSW Labor’s approach will be transparent and defensible.
PROTECT Koalas

The koala is Australia’s most loved and iconic native animal, an instantly recognisable symbol of Australia and an integral part of our cultural heritage.

In the state’s north, the koala is under serious threat. Without committed action we will be the generation responsible for the regional extinction of koalas in Northern NSW. Loss of habitat is the greatest threat. We cannot save the koala with kind words, we must act to protect habitat.

A NSW Labor Government will:

1. **Create the Great Koala National Park**

Covering 315,000 ha of forests inland from Coffs Harbour, the Great Koala National Park will include all the public land within two meta-populations of koalas.

Despite the status of the koala as the second most recognised animal in the world, no nationally recognized reserves have been set aside in Australia to ensure the protection of the koala in the wild.

Modelled on China’s panda reserves, NSW Labor will create Australia’s first koala national park and create a great tourist attraction as well as solid protection for our state’s iconic animal.

NSW Labor will also protect the Royal Camp State Forest and assess other forests for koala protection.

2. **Convene a NSW Koala Summit to bring together all stakeholders concerned with koala protection.** The last Koala Summit in NSW was held in 1988. It is overdue.

3. **Update the NSW Recovery Plan** for the koala and establish pathways to effective koala conservation across Government and between local and state governments.

4. **Map koala populations across the state as a baseline to direct cumulative impact assessments of development on koalas.**

5. **Fully explore alternatives to the proposed Pacific Highway upgrade at Wardell that will endanger a regionally significant koala population.**

6. **Provide $1 million to ensure the koalas of Campbelltown are protected.**
Saving CLIEFDEN CAVES

STANDING FOR Secure Water Supply IN ORANGE AND AGAINST UNNECESSARY DAMS

A NSW Labor Government will explore all water security and management options for Orange without constructing an environmentally destructive dam on the Belubula River.

The Liberals and Nationals cling to twentieth century water policy when we should be embracing twenty-first century water management strategies and innovation to secure water for regional communities. These solutions are cheaper for the taxpayers and don’t destroy river systems.

A NSW Labor Government will:

• Commit to ensuring the Orange community has a secure water supply;

• Explore all other options for water security. New dams are the most expensive and environmentally destructive solution to water security;

• Not support any proposal that will inundate Cliefden Caves, including the Needles Gap and Cranky Rock proposals; and

• Pursue NSW Heritage listing for the Caves in recognition of their historical and geological significance.
Controlling POLLUTION

EPA Reform

A NSW Labor Government will restore community faith in the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) by ensuring its governance arrangements are robust.

NSW Labor is committed to ensuring the EPA is an independent, strong and trusted environmental regulator, because building an economically vibrant and safe society depends on it.

A NSW Labor Government will implement the following recommendations of the NSW Upper House Inquiry into the Performance of the Environment Protection Authority:

RECOMMENDATION 1
That the NSW Government amend the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 to provide for the appointment of an independent chairperson of the board.

RECOMMENDATION 2
That the NSW Government amend the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 so that the Governor, on the recommendation of the portfolio Minister, and with the concurrence of the board, appoint the Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 3
That the NSW Government amend the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 to provide that the board of the Environment Protection Authority has a performance management agreement with the Chief Executive Officer.

COAL DUST Pollution

A NSW Labor Government will ask the state’s Chief Scientist to investigate and advise on the health impacts of coal dust pollution. A NSW Labor Government will abide by the Chief Scientist’s recommendations.

This issue is hotly contested with claim and counter claim from the two sides of the debate. NSW Labor will expedite a process that gives primacy to the scientific evidence.

NSW Labor will ask the Chief Scientist to conduct an independent study that includes consideration of international data on coal dust impacts and policy responses.

If the Chief Scientist finds that coal wagons should be covered, a NSW Labor Government will cover them.
Healthy RIVERS, WETLANDS AND COASTS

An elected Labor Government will implement a 3 Point Plan to improve the health of the state’s rivers, wetlands and coasts.

A NSW Labor Government will:

1. Establish a Healthy Rivers Commission to assess the health of NSW rivers and propose solutions for managing them into the future;

2. Set up an independent NSW Coastal Council to provide oversight on coastal policy development; and

3. Review all Acts, policies and planning policies relating to river health, coastal health and connections between the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Water is the life blood of our country.

NSW’s rivers are some of the most degraded in the country. A little over a decade ago the Australian Resources Council found that only 3% of NSW rivers are in a healthy state, with the Paroo the only river in NSW that flowed free.

Our coasts are under unprecedented pressure. Over 80% of NSW’s population lives within 3 kilometres of the coast and development continues apace.

And our estuaries, including coastal lakes and wetlands, are diminishing rapidly with development pressures causing rapid degradation.

Protecting our waters, managing the links between the terrestrial and the aquatic, the fresh and the salt water is essential. Ensuring healthy agricultural lands, water supplies and thriving landscapes all rely on a renewed focus on caring for our rivers, wetlands and coasts.
A HEALTHY RIVERS Commission

NSW rivers and the landscapes they feed are under pressure. Water extraction, mining, climate change, feral plants and animals and land clearing all continue to degrade them. NSW Labor will establish a one off Healthy Rivers Commission to assess the health of NSW rivers, both rural and urban and propose solutions for managing them into the future.

The Commission will report within two years. Labor will allocate $5 million to its operation.

A NSW Coastal Council

We will establish an independent NSW Coastal Council to provide oversight on coastal policy development and advise ministers, planning decision-making bodies and local councils on integrated approaches to protecting ecological values as well as the linkages between coastal catchments, rivers, floodplains, estuarine and marine environments.

Revitalise AND Review POLICY AND LEGISLATION

We will review all Acts, policies and planning policies relating to river health, coastal health and connections between the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

These include the Coastal Protection Act 1979, State Environmental Planning Policy 71 – Coast Protection, NSW Coastal Policy 1997, State Environmental Planning Policy 14 - Coastal Wetlands and other relevant government processes and instruments. This will be done in the context of the broader planning processes and their ability to protect coastal environments.
A NSW Labor Government will implement a comprehensive plan to protect the state’s oceans and marine life. It will reverse the backward steps of the NSW Coalition Government. Labor is committed to protecting our marine environment so that its beauty and diversity can be enjoyed by future generations, and our unique marine life can flourish.

A NSW Labor Government will:

1. Establish a dedicated Sydney Marine Park to protect the jewel in Sydney’s crown, the world renowned Sydney Harbour;
2. Lift the Liberal/National Government’s moratorium on the creation of any new marine parks;
3. Return marine sanctuary zones to full protection, so they again become areas where wildlife and habitats are protected;
4. Prioritise protection of breeding areas such as the islands, headlands and beaches where seabirds nest and raise their young;
5. Ask the NSW Scientific Committee to consider the addition of the hawksbill sea turtle to the State’s Threatened Species List, to give this rare and beautiful creature the protection it deserves; and
6. Immediately reinstate protections on the state’s Mid North Coast for the labrador of the ocean - the critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark.
A NSW Labor Government will protect the jewel in Sydney’s crown – the world renowned Sydney Harbour – by creating a dedicated Sydney Marine Park that will ensure its precious beauty and diversity will be enjoyed by future generations.

Labor will permanently protect one of Australia’s most internationally recognised icons.

Marine Parks are declared under NSW legislation, covering certain waters in order to maintain ecological processes, provide for sustainable use of fish and provide opportunities for public enjoyment of those waters.

The Sydney Marine Park will extend from Pittwater to Port Hacking, incorporating Sydney Harbour, Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, Middle Harbour, Pittwater, Narrabeen Lakes, Dee Why Lagoon, Botany Bay and Port Hacking. It will also extend three nautical miles off the coast to the limit of the state waters.

Sydney Harbour will remain a working harbour. It will remain a well-loved and used recreational resource for the people of Sydney. Families will continue to be able to boat, swim and fish on Sydney Harbour and they will be able to do it in the knowledge that our great harbour is being looked after.

The pressures on Sydney Harbour are significant and growing. As well as the longer term threat posed by climate change, it is already suffering from contaminants and the inevitable development and pollution associated with a city of 4.8 million people. Invasive species threaten Sydney’s marine life.

Sydney Marine Park will be open to the public and cater for a range of sustainable activities including fishing, boating, dolphin and whale watching, swimming, snorkelling and kayaking.

To ensure the new park is properly designed and effectively managed Labor will establish an advisory committee consisting of representatives from:

- Marine conservation;
- Marine Science;
- Indigenous communities;
- Surf Life Saving clubs;
- The tourism industry;
- Recreational fishers;
- Scuba divers;
- Commercial fishers; and
- Local councils.

The committee will develop a long term zoning plan for the park and replace the existing ad hoc approach to the management of the Harbour’s marine environment with one that is science-based. The Park will include sanctuary zones as well as general use zones open to fishing and recreational fishing havens.
A NSW Labor Government will impose a state wide moratorium on CSG activity. A NSW Labor Government will not lift the moratorium unless the industry is proven to be safe.

Labor acknowledges that Governments have rushed into CSG mining, without fully understanding the potential impacts on communities and the environment.

In November 2011 the NSW Opposition called on the Liberal/National Government to suspend all current Coal Seam Gas exploration licenses to protect the State’s water resources.

This decision was a departure from previous NSW Labor policy, and was a decision that was made after hearing the concerns of people right across NSW.

A NSW Labor Government will impose a state wide moratorium on CSG activity. Labor will suspend all existing CSG exploration licences and will not issue any new exploration or extraction licences. It will refuse applications to expand existing operations.

A Labor government will not lift the moratorium unless the industry is proven to be safe.

When new medicines are introduced, they have to go through rigorous testing to ensure they are safe for patients to consume. No medication is allowed onto the market until it is proven to be safe and the same should apply to new industries like CSG mining.

The NSW Chief Scientist summarised the areas of concern as follows:

- contamination and depletion of groundwater resources and drinking water catchments;
- impacts of the co-produced water from CSG activities on the environment;
- impacts on the environment of hydraulic fracturing or ‘fracking’;
- impacts on human health from air quality, chemicals, noise, etc;
- rapid expansion of the industry;
- land access and landholder rights;
- potential impact on property values;
- fugitive emissions;
- uncertainty of the science, a lack of data especially baseline data and a lack of trust in the data sources;
- the industry is moving ahead of scientific understanding and regulation;
- cumulative impacts of multiple CSG wells and multiple land uses such as other mining and agricultural activities;
- inadequate monitoring by government of industry activity and perceived unwillingness by government to enforce legislation; and
- complex and changing legislation.

Labor will only lift the moratorium and allow the unconventional gas industry to proceed when each of the issues identified by the Chief Scientist is resolved and we have a world class legislative and regulatory system in place to ensure our natural assets and our people are protected.

Labor will implement all the recommendations of the Chief Scientist in her final report of 30 September 2014 before the industry proceeds.

The onus of proof is on the industry. Labor will not permit the further development of the unconventional gas industry in NSW unless it is proven to be safe.
**NO GO Zones**

While a moratorium is appropriate while we investigate the science, there are some places that coal seam and unconventional gas extraction will never be appropriate.

**KEY WATER SOURCES**

A NSW Labor Government will ban CSG in core drinking water catchments across the state. Labor will legislate to ban unconventional gas in the Special Areas of the Sydney Water Catchment.

Elsewhere in the state, Labor will work with local authorities to ban unconventional gas in core areas that directly feed drinking water storages.

**RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

A NSW Labor Government will not allow any unconventional gas wells or drilling, above and below ground within 2 kilometres of urban or residential areas.

**NORTHERN RIVERS REGION**

A NSW Labor Government will declare a total ban on CSG and unconventional gas in the Northern Rivers of NSW, encompassing the local government areas of Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Kyogle Shire, Lismore City, Tweed Shire, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley.

**NATIONAL PARKS AND WETLANDS**

Labor will impose a 2 kilometre exclusion zone around all National Parks and RAMSAR listed wetlands.
Improving MINING APPROVALS

A NSW Labor Government will implement all 26 recommendations of the Independent Commissions Against Corruption’s report, *Reducing the Opportunities and Incentives for Corruption in the State’s Management of Coal Resources.*
Labor knows that climate change is threatening everything we hold dear about our way of life. Our experience of increasing extreme weather confirms this.

NSW must play its part in addressing global warming. We are responsible for 31% of the country’s economy. We must pursue greater energy efficiency and cleaner sources of energy. Labor will support the growth of the renewable energy sector in NSW, creating jobs and economic opportunity.

Obtaining a greater share of our energy needs from renewable sources is not only better for the environment, but promotes greater energy security through diversifying sources.

**Public Ownership – FACILITATING THE RENEWABLES FUTURE**

Reliable and affordable battery storage will transform the energy sector as completely as email transformed the postal system. It will allow renewable energy to fully replace traditional generation. A publicly owned electricity network can manage this shift in the public interest.

With battery storage, individuals and communities will be able to generate most, if not all of their energy needs. Decentralised renewable energy generation will allow communities and businesses to share excess energy, trading amongst themselves. The grid will be just as important for facilitating this new regime, but it will be profoundly different.

In Germany communities are buying back their electricity networks, not only because of failures of service and increased prices but because they are failing to facilitate the shift to clean energy.

Government ownership can deliver in the public interest in a way that the private sector struggles to. A NSW Labor Government will keep the electricity networks in public hands and shepherd the shift to affordable, decentralised and renewable energy.

The transition to clean energy is better for us all. And a publicly owned electricity network can manage this fairly.

**Shifting Focus – NEW INDUSTRIES, JOBS AND INNOVATION**

Furthermore, Labor will help fossil fuel dependent communities to diversify their economic base and to capitalise on the global shift to a decarbonized economy.

The Hunter, for example, has everything it needs to prosper in a low carbon future: world class academic institutions and research, a strong manufacturing sector used to commercializing innovation and a highly skilled workforce.

We must plan for the future and ensure we are building modern, resilient industries that provide prosperity for decades to come.
1 A NSW Labor Government will deliver 20% of the state’s electricity use from renewable sources by 2020, and legislate this target.

A NSW 20 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 was established by the last Labor Government, NSW Labor recommits to this target and will legislate it in government.

Current renewable energy consumption in NSW is around 12%.

2 A NSW Labor Government will deploy energy efficient lighting to all public hospitals with savings directed to health services in the local area.

Hospitals use lights all day and all night. From lighting wards, to car parks, to marking emergency exits: hospitals rely on lights.

A NSW Labor Government will replace inefficient fluorescent and incandescent lighting with high efficiency LED lighting throughout all NSW public hospitals within the first term.

Labor will invest $37.4 million to replace fluorescent and incandescent lighting with LED technology in hospitals. This is expected to cut hospital power bills by approximately $72.6 million over 15 years.

After an initial payback period, the energy cost savings will be directed to local health services while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
A NSW Labor Government will remove the Coalition Government’s draconian restrictions on approvals for wind farm developments.

NSW Labor will unlock the tens of millions of dollars of projects stalled by the Coalition Government’s hostility to future focused industries.

NSW Labor will facilitate a fair go for the wind industry, the fastest growing, most mature and cheapest renewable energy source. Wind farms will be subject to usual planning laws for developments of the applicable size and scale. Instead of leaving the industry in limbo with unclear guidelines, Labor will provide clarity for the wind industry and the community.

A NSW Labor Government will ensure that the wind industry properly consults with affected communities as well as provides an adequate and shared financial benefit from the prosperity generated.

A NSW Labor Government, through COAG, will initiate a national framework for the decommissioning of obsolete coal generation plants.

There are costs for industry in decommissioning old and unused generation plants. Rather than properly decommissioning plants and undertaking required remediation work, operators will often ‘mothball’ them. This is not in the public interest. A NSW Labor Government will work with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions to develop a fair, industry-funded decommissioning program for obsolete plants.

A NSW Labor Government will establish an Office of Renewables within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, lead by the Energy and Climate Change Minister to drive Labor’s dual policy aims of affordable and clean energy.

It will bring together cross government representation to lead the restructure of electricity in the state, facilitate the growth of renewable energy by removing barriers and bringing stakeholders together to solve problems.

As a first step it will hold a roundtable with representatives of old and new energy industries to identify the key challenges that need to be addressed. It will remove barriers to the growth of a clean energy sector and model options for decentralised energy solutions.

It will actively pursue investment in the renewable energy sphere for NSW as a path to increasing economic activity, creating jobs and reducing our greenhouse pollution. It will ensure NSW gets its fair share of investment as the renewable energy industry builds in Australia, particularly through measures such as the RET and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

The Office of Renewables will reinvigorate the Renewable Energy Precincts to foster locally driven plans to increase renewables and decentralise power. Barriers to the growth of decentralised power will actively be removed, embedding these projects in the planning system, standardising contracts and approaches.

A fund of $6 million over 4 years will augment proposals put forward by councils and communities. This will include grants to Community Renewable Energy projects of up to $500,000.
A NSW Labor Government will ensure the Hunter region is a Renewable Energy Hub and is well placed to capitalise on the opportunities in the low carbon future.

Labor will provide $10 million to the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER) to facilitate research into storage, $2 million to establish a Hunter Clean Tech Innovation Taskforce and $2 million to ensure Hunter TAFE can train workers in industries of the future. (see separate policy)

A NSW Labor Government will provide consumer protection for solar households and mandate a fair price for householders’ excess solar electricity.

A NSW Labor Government will provide consumer protection for those who put solar on their roofs, ensuring a fair tariff for those who sell excess energy back to the grid.

Currently electricity companies are not obliged to pay anything for the energy generated by householders which electricity retailers then sell onto other consumers. This gives the giant energy companies a free ride on the backs of households that make a contribution to energy supply.

The reason people put solar on their homes is to manage price increases as well as to do their bit for our environment.

Electricity retailers should not be able to rip these families off.

A Labor Government will require there be a fair minimum payment for energy fed back to the grid from households generating solar energy. This will be set by IPART, with a rigorous mandate given by law to ensure.

Labor will also make compliance with the Clean Energy Council’s Code of Conduct for solar retailers mandatory for all those who wish to receive NSW government contracts. This will provide consumer protection for solar households.
8 A NSW Labor Government will facilitate the establishment of an Australian-first market that allows electricity customers to trade energy savings into the wholesale electricity market, creating downward pressure on peak demand.

NSW Labor will provide the framework and remove the barriers for householders and business to make savings on their bills by deciding how they use electricity at key times of demand. This is the cheapest way to reduce peak demand and therefore long term costs to consumers while also providing direct savings to consumers willing to participate. The development of this framework will also allow those households that generate solar energy over and above the energy their homes consume to trade their surplus energy.

9 A NSW Labor Government will maintain a ban on uranium exploration or extraction in NSW.

NSW Labor has long opposed the exploration and extraction of uranium in this State, and its export from NSW.

We remain unconvinced of any benefits nuclear power may bring, and remain mindful of the challenges caused by how to manage and store spent fuel rods and radioactive waste that lasts many lifetimes.

A Labor Government will maintain a ban on uranium exploration, extraction and export.

10 A NSW Labor Government will purchase electricity for NSW Government departments and agencies from renewable sources, where possible.

As power contracts come up for state government electricity use, a NSW Labor Government will purchase power from renewable sources, if it can be done in a cost effective manner.

Labor will investigate “reverse auctions” that have been used successfully in the ACT and will be explored in Queensland. This is where private enterprise bids to provide new renewable energy generation at the cheapest price. By purchasing directly from renewable generators a Labor Government will drive down costs. This will stimulate the growth of the renewable energy industry in NSW while also driving down carbon pollution.