

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES – MARCH 2018

New Parliamentary Year - Country Labor Won't Let Up On Berejiklian's Failures To Deliver Public Services

NSW Parliament has resumed for the final year before the next state election and the Labor Opposition has vowed to keep the pressure on the Berejiklian Government over its failure to invest and deliver key public services.



Labor will continue to hold this government to account on its failures for regional NSW.

This is a government that has the wrong priorities led by a Premier who thinks there's nothing wrong splashing \$2 billion on stadiums while kids in the regions struggle to find work and the cost of living continues to rise."

– Michael Daley MP

During Parliament Labor will hold the government to account on overcrowded schools or those still waiting for essential repairs and maintenance, growing hospital waiting lists or its cuts to TAFE.

When regional communities are being deprived of much needed funds, more schools are closing than opening and more patients than ever are waiting for elective surgery, then the Berejiklian-Barilaro government had reneged on its promise to govern for all of NSW.

Jay Suvaal writes...

It's been an eventful start to 2018 with the resignation of Barnaby Joyce and Riverina MP Michael McCormack promoted to Deputy Prime Minister.

I know the Riverina Country Labor members will be hoping this promotes more government investment in their region however if Barnaby's performance in New England is anything to go by then they shouldn't hold their breath.

Joel Fitzgibbon is still fighting Malcolm Turnbull in the courts to have the Coalition Agreement released. I believe this is even more important given the failures of the PM in recent weeks.

It's been great to be out visiting branches and holding training sessions around the state.

I look forward to continuing to visit all the regions as we move throughout the year.

Jay Suvaal
NSW COUNTRY
ORGANISER



NSW Labor Welcomes Calls For Lower Electricity Prices

The Labor Opposition has welcomed calls for strong action to be taken on sky rocketing electricity prices in NSW at a parliamentary inquiry.

The NSW Farmers' Association fronted the Legislative Council inquiry into electricity supply, demand and prices in NSW, to call for lower electricity prices.

Retail electricity prices have risen by up to 16 per cent from 1 July last year, on top of earlier steep increases since the Liberals and Nationals came to office in 2011 which has seen a combined increase in electricity bills of up to 60 per cent.

In addition, customers in rural and regional NSW are paying more for electricity compared to those living in the city.

Labor has a positive plan to bring retail electricity prices under control in this State.” – Adam Searle MLC

Last year, NSW Labor Leader



Strong action must be taken to protect customers across NSW from punishing increases in electricity bills.

Luke Foley vowed that a NSW Labor Government elected in 2019 would re-regulate the retail electricity market to bring electricity prices back under control for households and small businesses across the State.

If Future Generations Wonder

Who Killed The Darling - Tell Them About The NSW Nationals

The NSW Minister for Rural Water, Niall Blair, is about to make a legacy defining decision to pull NSW out of the Murray Darling Basin Agreement, flushing \$6 billion down the drain and destroying the far western NSW river network in the process.

It has been a scandalous six months for the NSW Nationals. There have been widespread allegations of water theft, rorting, meter tampering and a deliberate culture of non-compliance when it came to enforcing the rules.

“The NSW Nationals through their scandalous management of the water portfolio have brought the Murray Darling River network to the brink of collapse.” – Luke Foley MP

The Government's hand-picked chief water bureaucrat was sacked and the Government's own inquiry into water management under the Nationals labelled it as 'diverging from the best traditions of Australian public administration'.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption is now investigating.

Minister Blair's predecessor in the Water portfolio is accused of giving permission for certain irrigators to pump water during a total ban and thereby denying water to his own



There are now torrents of inquiries with agencies attempting to uncover how much water has been stolen and by whom.

constituents and just last week another former Nationals Minister was accused of altering water plans after public consultation had concluded in order to give certain irrigators up to 32 per cent more water.

Labor Calls For Local Land Service Rate Relief For Drought Affected Hunter Farmers

The NSW Opposition has called on the Berejiklian Government to extend the due date for the payment of this year's Local Land Service Levies.

Many of the region's farmers are faced with skyrocketing bills for water and fodder for stock. Country Labor says the due date should be extended until the dry conditions lifts.

The LLS rate, paid by anyone with more than 10 hectares of land, has increased significantly from last year - and the deadline for payment presented another financial burden for struggling farmers.

Landholders face further financial

penalties if their payments are not made by February 26- with the NSW Government setting interest for late payments at an above market rate of 11.31 percent.

“The Government has been flat footed and slow off the mark in their responses to the region's drought.” – Mick Veitch MLC



The extended dry period had caught the NSW Government out and so far their response had been inadequate.

More needs to be done and the LLS rate relief is a quick and simple decision that would provide further assistance to affected farmers.

Berejiklian-Barilaro Government Votes Down Bill To Support

Locally Caught Seafood

The NSW Opposition has slammed the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, and in particular regional MPs representing coastal communities, for not supporting a Private Member's Bill to require restaurants, cafés and other food outlets to display whether the seafood on offer is sourced from Australia or overseas.

NSW Parliament voted on a Private Member's Bill introduced by the Labor MP for The Entrance, David Mehan. The Bill was defeated 46 votes to 35. Only National and Liberal MPs opposed the Bill.

The Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2017 would have required restaurants, cafes, pubs and clubs to display whether the seafood on offer was imported or caught in Australia. Provisions were in the Bill for mixed sources such as marina.

“Labor has consulted the food retail industry as well as local fishing industries, which strongly support the Bill.”

– David Mehan MP

Instead, the Government has become bogged down in the botched roll-out of commercial fishing reforms which have destroyed many small family run fishing businesses up and down the coast.

HALL OF SHAME

The regional coastal Government MPs who voted down the Bill are:

- ✗ Andrew Constance (Lib) – Bega
- ✗ Adam Crouch (Lib) – Terrigal
- ✗ Stephen Bromhead (Nat) – Myall Lakes
- ✗ Leslie Williams (Nat) – Port Macquarie
- ✗ Melinda Pavey (Nat) – Oxley
- ✗ Andrew Fraser (Nat) – Coffs Harbour
- ✗ Chris Gulaptis (Nat) – Clarence
- ✗ Geoff Provest (Nat) – Tweed

*Shelley Hancock (Lib) – South Coast and Gareth Ward (Lib) – Kiama, didn't turn up for the vote.

Taking Up The Fight In Country NSW



Mike Kelly, Kaila Murnain and Jay Suvaal with members of the Sapphire Coast Branch



Joel Fitzgibbon, Jay Suvaal and David Dobson at Campaign Central training in the Hunter region



Mike Kelly, Kaila Murnain and Jay Suvaal with members of the Bermagui Cobargo Branch



Daniel Mookhey and Pat Garcia with members of the Wagga Wagga Branch

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

SAVE THE DATE

Dame Mary Gilmore Oration

6.30pm Saturday

27 May 2018

Bomaderry Bowling Club

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

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