

COUNTRY LABOR DIALOGUE

CONNECTING COUNTRY COMMUNITIES – MAY 2010

Better healthcare for NSW

Premier Kristina Keneally has secured an extra \$6.6 billion of Commonwealth funding for healthcare in NSW.



Premier Kristina Keneally and Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt talk with patients about health reform.

THIS WILL PROVIDE:

- 11,000 additional elective surgery procedures providing shorter waiting times for essential procedures such as hip and knee replacements;
- 300 additional acute care beds for victims of severe accidents and trauma and people with life threatening conditions;
- 200 sub acute beds for people who have left emergency and need time to recover from serious injury or illness; and

- Four comprehensive Multi Purpose Service centres to provide appropriate care and facilities for older and more vulnerable patients – particularly in regional and rural areas - who need longer term care.

Following negotiations with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Premier Keneally secured an additional \$722 million above what the Commonwealth originally offered.

NSW has also secured block funding for small rural hospitals which will help maintain their viability under the reforms.

Investing in rural health training

Training for medical, nursing, dental and allied health students in Broken Hill will receive a major boost through a \$1.9 million investment in student accommodation and education facilities.

The Rudd Government's investment will provide support for student accommodation units and a new wing to the University of Sydney Department of Rural Health at Broken Hill.

By providing high quality training and accommodation facilities, the Rudd Government is determined to attract more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to regional and rural communities – and keep them there. This will mean more Australians will get better access in the future to appropriate health care, regardless of their location.



Carmel Power, Alan Struck, Narelle Rich, Jeff Condron, Dawn Farnham, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Labor Candidate for Lyne Frederik Lips in Port Macquarie.

Shorter waiting times for surgery



Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Premier Kristina Keneally during a recent hospital visit.

NSW families will get 11,000 extra elective surgery procedures and 500 more acute and sub acute beds – as part of the historic health care agreement reached yesterday.

This means shorter waiting times for elective procedures like hip and knee replacements, cataract and hernia operations and other surgical operations.

The funding which equals \$6.6 billion over 10 years will also enable older and more vulnerable patients – particularly in regional and rural areas – to get the longer term care they need through four new Multi Purpose Service centres.

As a result of NSW negotiations the Federal Government has agreed to the following:

- An extra \$722 million to take the total new funding to \$1.7 billion over 4 years to implement health reforms in NSW;
- \$4.9 billion guaranteed in growth funding from 2014-15 to 2019-20 – our portion of the guaranteed \$15.6 billion across the country;
- An expansion of the health reforms to include the entire health system – not just hospitals. As a result aged care and primary care will now be included in reforms and receive additional funding and support;
- Limiting unnecessary bureaucracies – by limiting the number of Local Health Networks to 90 nationally – not the 150 originally proposed;
- Block funding for small rural hospitals; and
- \$116 million funding nationally for NGO mental health programs including early intervention and additional Head Space centres.

\$30,000 boost for Wagga Showground

Wagga Wagga Showground is set to undergo improvements thanks to \$30,000 in NSW Government funding.



Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, said Wagga Wagga Show Society has been allocated a \$10,000 grant and \$20,000 loan for the project.

The funding will help pay for the cost of constructing an amenities block, including a disabled toilet, baby change area and additional female toilets at the showground.

“I have allocated this funding to support what is an important community asset.

“This funding is an excellent example of the NSW Government fulfilling its commitment to ensuring Crown parks and reserves are available for community use,” Minister Tony Kelly said.

This year the Keneally Government will spend almost \$14 million on improvements and new works at Crown land reserves, parks, showgrounds, caravan parks and walking tracks.

Premier challenges Nationals over rural visits

Kristina Keneally issued a challenge to the Leader of the National Party asking if he supported the attacks by the Opposition Leader, Barry O'Farrell, on her frequent visits to rural, regional and coastal NSW.

Since becoming Premier in early December, Kristina Keneally has visited Armidale, Bathurst, Bundarra, Cowra, Coonamble, Dubbo, Kiama, Lake Cargelligo, Orange, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Tweed Heads, Wentworth and Wyangala Dam.

"I make no apologies for getting out and visiting our regional communities.

As Premier, I intend to continue to visit our regional communities to ensure this Government is doing all it can to see many of those communities through these tough times," Kristina said.



Premier Kristina Keneally and Minister David Borger at the opening of an upgraded section of the Pacific Highway near Port Macquarie.

Supporting country public transport



Councils, transport operators and community groups are being encouraged to apply for grants to help improve public transport infrastructure in country NSW.

The Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme (CPTIGS) funds projects that directly benefit passengers in rural, regional and remote communities.

"Communities across the State will benefit from projects such as new bus and taxi shelters, new bus stop signage, interchanges, and better lighting and security," Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport and Roads David Borger said.

Over \$10.48 million has been allocated under the scheme to fund 298 projects in the past 6 years.

These projects have increased awareness and patronage of local public transport and have ranged from new bus stop shelters in numerous towns from Shoalhaven to Byron and Murray to Moree and beyond; including an improved transport interchange in Bomaderry and improved facilities in Blayney to meet disability standards.

Application forms, guidelines and tips for improving funding applications for the 2010-11 round are available at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/cptigs or by contacting the CPTIGS Administrator on 8836 3190.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON 14 JULY 2010.

Less than 8% of NSW now in drought

Almost one-third of NSW moved out of drought last month bringing the area of the State officially in drought down to 7.3%. This is the lowest level in 9 years.

“This month marks a significant point in the history of the drought – hopefully a turning point. It is a very welcome boost from January when 81% of the State was in drought,” Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan said.

Not since the drought began 9 years ago has the situation been this good across the State. Good recent rains have seen the area in drought reduced by 32.5% last month and 58% over the last 2 months.

More than half of the State is marginal - so without continued good rains these areas could slip back into drought.

The Bureau of Meteorology forecast to June 2010 for a large part of western NSW is that there is about an equal chance of either average or below average rainfall.



Premier Kristina Keneally and Minister for Water Phil Costa visit Burrendong Dam.

Arsenal ready to attack locusts

The NSW Government is ready to help farmers tackle the locust plague predicted for this spring.

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO MINIMISE DAMAGE AND AVERT A DISASTER INVOLVES:

- About 40 aircraft on stand-by for the spring;
- More than 100 field staff ready to be called up for the campaign;
- Experts mapping locust and egg beds locations;
- Chemical on-hand to treat more than 75,000 hectares of swarms and locusts on the ground and a stocktake is underway of potential supply demands ;
- Planning team working on the war plan for spring;
- Preparing to order and distribute chemical to landholders; and
- High level Plague Locust Management Group meetings comprising government and industry representatives including the NSW Farmers Association.

Landholders with locusts should contact their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) and report sightings and egg beds.

Weather suitable for **hazard reduction**

The current favourable weather will allow firefighters from the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and other agencies continue important hazard reduction works.

“Hazard reduction burns are an important part of bushfire management. They form part of a planned fuel reduction program designed to protect life and property from bush fires,” said Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan.

Controlled burns are dependent on weather conditions with often only a handful of days each year where conditions are suitable.

Smoke will be visible in areas where hazard reduction is being conducted and may settle across some suburbs depending on weather conditions.

Residents should only contact Triple Zero (000) if they see an unattended fire.

All scheduled hazard reductions are listed at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au