



Supporting NSW Women

March 2011



Supporting NSW Women

We've come a long way in advancing women's rights in NSW. But many women today still face inequality and disadvantage at home and in the workplace.

Labor's aim is to ensure all women in NSW, regardless of their economic status, ethnic background or location, are able to experience justice and equality.

That's why we've always been focussed on the areas that have a practical impact on women's lives: health, safety, education and employment.

I am proud that under Labor, women's participation in the workforce has continued to increase and unemployment has continued to drop.

I'm proud that our public sector is the largest employer of women in Australia and that we've introduced paid breastfeeding breaks for nursing mothers.

I am proud of our record \$50 million investment to address the scourge of domestic violence and the ground breaking laws we've introduced to bring the full force of the law down on perpetrators of sexual violence.

I'm proud that we fought hard during the health reforms and have secured a fair deal for NSW, allowing us to provide comprehensive services, care and support for women.

This \$17.9 million package of new initiatives will ensure we can continue to create opportunities for women to participate fully in society and reach their full potential.



Kristina Leneally

What this policy means for NSW women

This policy means that women in NSW will get a fairer deal in the workplace.

Women will get the support they need to balance work and family commitments.

It means that women will be supported to take on leadership opportunities, and that all women will be recognised for the contribution they make to our State.

Women across the State will have access to health services with new mothers receiving the support they need.

ACTION:

Leadership opportunities

- Increase the number of women on NSW Government boards and committees towards a target of 50 per cent by 2012
- Provide an additional \$104,000 grant to expand the Premier's Lucy Mentoring Program to support young women studying business, law, accounting, engineering, IT and the sciences at the State's universities

Recognise the contribution of women to NSW

- Provide \$1 million seed funding to set up an independent NSW Trust for Women in partnership with the Sydney Community Foundation. This Trust will run an annual grants program and undertake project and advocacy work for women, with a focus on disadvantaged women and young women
- Continue to recognise women's achievements through the Rural Women's Honour Roll, the Rural Women's Award, the Premier's Woman of the Year award, and the Women in Local Government Awards

Support for new mothers

- Provide increased funding of \$800,000 for the Australian Breastfeeding Association to ensure women across the State, particularly in rural and remote communities have access to free advice to help them through the experience of being a new mother and breastfeeding
- Provide increased funding of \$16 million to expand the number of home maternity and post-natal nursing places under the Sustaining NSW Families program to Bankstown, Blacktown, Redfern/Waterloo and Wollongong

Fair deal for women in the workplace

- Continue to support the implementation of the Government's *Making the Public Sector Work Better for Women* strategy that aims to increase the number of women in senior positions and in non-traditional public sector jobs
- Promote flexible workplace options in the public and private sector through 'Flexibility @ Work' principles and by collaborating in the development of a 'how to' guide for implementing the National Employment Standards
- Support the national MyChild.com website which will give parents better access to information about child care services, from 1 January 2012

Labor and Women

The Keneally Labor Government believes in justice and equality for all women in NSW.

We understand women face particular challenges in the workplace, at home and in the community.

We recognise some groups of women face even greater challenges and need specialised support and services.

That's why we are targeting our support to make sure we reach all women in NSW.

Our Challenges

Women around the world continue to face discrimination simply because they are women.

In NSW women enjoy the civil rights that men do, however some challenges remain.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics Average Weekly Earnings trend data (August 2010) shows that the national gender pay gap for full time workers before overtime and bonuses were taken in account is 16.9 per cent.

In NSW, we are doing better – the comparable gender pay gap for full time earnings is 14.4 per cent, one of the lowest among the states and territories. However, we still have a way to go.

Women are also dramatically under-represented on private sector boards.

The NSW public sector is performing better. As at September 2010 women occupied 38 per cent of NSW Government board positions and 39 per cent of new appointments. This is good news but clearly there are still improvements to be made.

Our Record

LABOR

- Unemployment rates for women have substantially improved under Labor.
- Varied the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009 to allow women paid breaks to breastfeed in the workplace.
- Doubled the proportion of women in senior positions in the public service and have women leading 4 major government agencies.
- Doubled the number of women school principals and women judges.
- Labor made NSW the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce standard non-parole periods - meaning that serious offenders, including serious sex offenders, are more likely to be sent to prison than in any other State or Territory in the country.
- Committed increased funding for breast screening, making this service more accessible to a wide range of women across NSW, and a specially designed program to screen women with a disability for cervical cancer.
- Expanded antenatal care for women in rural and regional communities and also antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual reproductive health for Aboriginal women and girls.
- Introduced special leave provisions for public sector employees to access if they are experiencing domestic violence.

OPPOSITION

- There is not a single policy targeted at women in the Coalition's election document.
- The Coalition has not proposed any new reforms or support for women.
- Women occupy only one-fifth of Liberal-National seats compared to over a third of Labor party seats.

Leadership opportunities

NSW Labor recognises women make good leaders. We're leading by example with women holding the roles of Premier, Deputy Premier, and NSW Governor and a third of the NSW Cabinet.

The number of women judges and school principals has doubled under Labor, however there's still a way to go in some areas.

We've been active in increasing the number of board positions held by women, and are delivering a package of initiatives to increase the number of women on NSW Government boards and committees to reach a target of 50 per cent women's representation. Women occupy 38 per cent (as at September 2010) of NSW Government board positions.

If the target is not reached by 2012 we will consider further measures, including legislation, to ensure at least one woman is nominated for every board position.

Labor also recognises the benefits of mentoring. We are expanding the successful Premier's Lucy Mentoring Program to allow more women and young girls access to the program.

The successful program partners young women students in business, law, accounting, engineering, IT and the sciences in with senior women in the public and private sectors who act as mentors.

An extra \$104,000 – over three years – will be available to universities across the State to establish or expand their Lucy programs and includes:

- grants for participating regional universities to attract guest speakers to their campus for networking events;
- one-off grants for participating universities to expand Lucy to other non-traditional degrees for female students, including science, engineering and IT;
- one-off grants for universities to introduce the Lucy program;
- a grant to the Lucy Program Mentoring Alumnae Committee to host a major networking event each year; and
- grants to help universities establish databases of current and former Lucy Mentees.

ACTION:

- Increase the number of women on NSW Government boards and committees towards a target of 50 per cent
- Provide an additional \$104,000 grant to expand the Premier's Lucy Mentoring Program to support young women studying business, law, accounting, engineering, IT and the sciences at the State's universities

Recognise the contribution of women to NSW

Women make an enormous contribution to NSW. Women's contributions are this year being recognised as part of 100 years of International Women's Day on the 8th March.

NSW Labor wants to build on the momentum created by this day and will provide the seed funding to establish a NSW Women's Trust in partnership with the Sydney Community Foundation. This Trust will be specifically targeted at projects to help women that face additional disadvantage.

We will also continue to recognise women through our NSW Woman of the Year Award, Rural Women's Award, Women in Local Government awards and Rural Women's Honour Roll.

ACTION:

- Provide \$1 million seed funding to establish an independent NSW Trust for Women in partnership with the Sydney Community Foundation - the Trust will run an annual grants program and undertake project and advocacy work for women, with a focus on disadvantaged women and girls.
- Continue to recognise women's achievements through the Rural Women's Honour Roll, the Rural Women's Award, the Premier's Woman of the Year award, and the Women in Local Government Awards.

Supporting new mothers

Supporting new mothers has always been a key focus for Labor.

A re-elected Keneally Government will provide increased funding of \$800,000 for the Australian Breastfeeding Association to ensure women across the State, particularly in rural and remote communities have access to free advice to help them through the experience of being a new mother and breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is important because it protects babies from illness and infection and provides the correct food for the growing child. In the last century, there was a movement away from the breast to bottle feeding. We want to ensure that mothers have an informed choice.

Further, we will ensure new mothers at risk of post-natal depression can access appropriate support from nurses in their own homes.

NSW Labor established the Sustaining NSW Families initiative to improve the health, developmental, and wellbeing outcomes of infants and children, and to support and strengthen the capacity of parents to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children.

The target group for this intervention is socially and economically disadvantaged families with a particular focus on women with high levels of antenatal depression. Families meeting these criteria are offered intensive structured home visiting services, commencing in pregnancy and extending up until the child's second birthday.

Currently, this program is offered in five sites:

- Kurri Kurri/Maitland/Cessnock;
- Fairfield/Liverpool;
- Wyong;
- Arncliffe; and
- Kyogle.

We will increase the funding of this program by \$16 million to expand it to four new locations at:

- Bankstown (also servicing Canterbury);
- Blacktown;
- Redfern/Waterloo (also servicing Sydney, Marrickville and Leichhardt); and
- Wollongong (also servicing Shellharbour).

ACTION:

- Provide increased funding of \$800,000 for the Australian Breastfeeding Association to ensure women across the State, particularly in rural and remote communities have access to free advice to help them through the experience of being a new mother and breastfeeding.
- Provide increased funding of \$16 million to expand the number of home maternity and post-natal nursing places under the Sustaining NSW Families program to Bankstown, Blacktown, Redfern/Waterloo and Wollongong

Fair deal for women in the workplace

Women's participation in the workforce is at an all time high in NSW, which is a great step towards achieving gender equality.

Labor is committed to supporting women in the workplace.

It is a basic right that women are able to work free from harassment, discrimination and bullying. That's why NSW Public Sector agencies have long been required to have a policy on harassment free workplaces and to implement strategies for preventing and dealing with harassment.

Throughout the course of life, women continue to overwhelmingly confront the burden of balancing paid employment with caring responsibilities, whether they be as mothers caring for children, as children caring for elderly parents, or as family members caring for relatives with a disability.

We know this challenge is getting greater with more women undertaking paid work in NSW.

That's why we have the 'Making the Public Sector Work Better for Women Strategy' – the Government's strategy for attracting, developing and retaining women employees.

It's also why we promote women's access to quality part time work and continue to develop initiatives concerning mature-age workers with carer responsibilities.

Part-time work and family-friendly working conditions are long established entitlements in the public sector. We are helping young mothers re-enter the workforce through initiatives such as varying the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009* to allow women paid breaks to breastfeed in the workplace.

Labor understands the importance of supporting women to balance work and care responsibilities. And it's why we will promote flexible workplace options in the public and private sector through 'Flexibility @ Work' principles.

The *Premier's Expert Advisory Council for Women* is looking at a number of draft principles which currently include that:

- Requests for flexibility should be fairly and sensitively considered.
- Requests for flexibility should be negotiated in the spirit of 'getting to yes'.
- Trialling and experimenting with flexibility is encouraged.
- Staff who work flexibly should be afforded equity of access to training and other career development, or income enhancing, opportunities – such as consideration for promotion or overtime.

We will also collaborate in the development of a 'how to guide' for implementing the National Employment Standards.

Supporting women with childcare is also a strong focus of ours. That is why we are ensuring that all parents can access early childhood programs for their children for at least 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year for every child in NSW in the year before they start school.

In 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a new National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments have committed to ensuring that all children will have access to a quality early childhood education program by 2013, delivered by a four-year university-trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, in the year before formal schooling.

The NSW Government's Preschool Investment and Reform Plan (PIRP) provides \$29.8 million in new funding to preschools each year. In addition, the Commonwealth has committed \$278.5 million over five years to reach the goal of Universal Access to preschool in NSW by 2013.

This new funding is being used to boost preschool funding and reform in NSW. From July 2009, \$21.3 million of this money is being invested annually in community preschools in NSW, and 87 per cent of preschools have already received increased funding.

We also want to make sure that parents can access reliable information about childcare services. That is why we will be supporting the national MyChild.com website that will provide better information to parents from January 2012. This initiative was developed as part of the Coalition of Australian Governments' National Quality Agenda on Early Childhood Education and Care.

ACTION:

- Continue to support the implementation of the Government's *Making the Public Sector Work Better for Women* strategy that aims to increase the number of women in senior positions and in non-traditional public sector jobs
- Promote flexible workplace options in the public and private sector through 'Flexibility @ Work' principles and by collaborating in the development of a 'how to' guide for implementing the National Employment Standards
- Support the national MyChild.com website which will give parents better access to information about child care services, from 1 January 2012



www.kristinakeneally.com.au

