



# Kristina Keneally MP

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Mr Tony Harris  
Acting Parliamentary Budget Officer  
NSW Parliament  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

21/3  
1192m

Dear Mr Harris

I am writing to you to formally request, under Part 4 (Election policy costings) of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010, an official costing for the following announced policy documents:

- *Protecting NSW rural and regional communities*
- *Providing homes and caring for the vulnerable*
- *Fairness for your neighbourhood*

These policy documents outline our ongoing commitments in key areas of government.

Please find attached a copy of these policies outlining the purpose of the policy and relevant details required to complete the costing as per the requirements of the Act.

Should you require any further information on this request, please contact my office on (02) 9228-5239.

Yours sincerely

**Kristina Keneally**  
Premier of NSW  
Leader of NSW Labor Party





# Protecting NSW rural and regional communities

March 2011





## **Protecting NSW rural and regional communities**

Regional NSW is the backbone of our State's economy, supporting both country and city communities.

**That's why Labor has a strong history of delivering real results for hardworking rural families.**

That's why we invested a record \$3.5 billion dollars on regional roads in the last budget alone.

That's why 74% of our entire roads budget for the state is spent outside of Sydney. Because country families deserve a safe travel, and market access for our regional producers is essential to the strength of our economy.

And that's why last year's budget saw \$4.4 billion put aside for rural and regional health services – and that figure will continue to grow.

The health agreement I won for NSW protected the interests and the special funding needs of our regional hospitals; and delivered 163 extra beds and \$11 million in new equipment for 51 hospitals.

This will ensure that rural hospitals remain viable and can meet the needs of local communities.

**Labor is also growing our regional centres; so that country kids have a choice of careers in their own community.**

We have strengthened the economic development of regional NSW, through the worst drought in almost a hundred years and through some of the toughest global economic conditions in memory.

During these challenging economic conditions, more than 129,000 new jobs have been created in regional NSW since May 2007 – more than twice as many as the Coalition is promising in the next 4 years.

**And this is most important, because it shows how Labor really supports regional NSW, and not just when it is popular to do so.**

And we will continue to support young people with the skills and education they need - investing \$5.2 billion in rural and regional education this year alone; and creating 3,000 fully-funded training places for apprentices.

**In these ways, and in so many others, Labor has shown itself to be the protector of jobs and services, and a support of families right across this State.**

A re-elected Labor Government will continue to deliver record investment and real results for rural and regional communities – because we recognise rural NSW is key to the prosperity of all NSW communities.



*Kristina Leneally*



## What This Policy Means For Regional NSW

Rural, regional and coastal communities in NSW are the backbone behind industries that sustain communities all over the State.

From food and electricity to vital building materials, all of NSW is reliant on the valuable contribution these communities make.

These communities face different circumstances and challenges and cost of living pressures in these areas are unique. NSW Labor's vision for regional NSW revolves around providing the same access to services, infrastructure and opportunities as other citizens in the State.

People live and move to regional NSW because of the unique lifestyle. Strengthening the rural and regional way of life through community development, access to health and education and social support will attract more people, more jobs and create a better place to live.

NSW Labor is committed to protecting the livelihood of rural and regional families.

If re-elected, a Keneally Government will protect regional and rural families by:

- Capping cost of living pressures,
- Protecting jobs;
- Investing in providing state of the art health services;
- Creating an arterial road system to meet the unique transport needs of rural and regional communities.

NSW Labor will invest in giving rural and regional families all the chances to live their lives to the fullest.

## **ACTION:**

### **Supporting Rural and Regional Jobs**

- Maintain the \$12 million investment into developing business in regional NSW
- Build on the record 75,000 jobs created in regional NSW during 2010

### **Building Business in Country Communities**

- Make Regional NSW a more attractive and economically vibrant place to live and work
- Continue investment in \$85 million Building the Country Package
- Continue investment in \$200 million Regional Business Development Programs
- Provide \$10 million towards Regional Community Infrastructure Programs to fund community, arts and sports facilities
- Continue to provide ongoing funding for programs like EVOcities, Small Communities Awareness Fund and Country week

### **Creating Healthier Regional Communities**

- Work with the Commonwealth Government to develop four Multi-Purpose Services at Gulgong, Peak Hill, Murrurundi and Hillston
- Invest \$3 million over four years to enhance pre-hospital thrombolytic and early stroke management services for rural areas to enable patients suspected of having a heart attack to have their electrocardiogram (heart scans) transmitted from an ambulance to a cardiologist or ED in order to fast track treatment to open up the blood vessels and restore blood flow to the heart, on arrival at hospital - funding will also enable an ECG reading service to be developed to support smaller emergency departments
- Undertake a review of the GP Procedural Training Program in order to improve the pathway to procedural training and practice in NSW
- Establish a Rural Health Directorate within NSW Health to provide better co-ordination of health services in rural NSW
- Invest \$1 million to implement risk based drinking water management plans for country utilities
- Invest \$2 million for additional special care cots at Dubbo, Gosford and Wagga Wagga
- Invest \$1 million in local priorities identified by rural local health networks
- Invest \$10 million to refurbish and expand the emergency department at Armidale Hospital

### **Keeping Rural and Regional Communities Safe**

- Increase authorised police force by 360
- Spend additional \$1.46 million on 25 new Highway Patrol Cars
- Continue record investment in rural and regional police stations
- Additional \$100 million to regional centres for new and upgraded fire stations, more firefighters and flood rescue personnel
- 24/7 firefighters at Nowra and Bathurst Fire Station
- \$7.3 million for a new Fire Station at Broadmeadow
- Nowra Fire Station Upgrade
- A new, world-class \$73 million Emergency Services State Training Academy at Richmond to provide comprehensive training in firefighting, hazardous materials protection, counter terrorism, rescue and other emergency response
- \$6.4 million over four years to recruit and train more young people to emergency service crews, providing the next generation of volunteers and leaders to carry on the important work
- Legislation to protect emergency services workers who face abuse or threats while on duty



### **Investing in Roads and Transport in Regional NSW**

- Build on record \$3.5 billion road budgets in regional NSW
- Deliver \$1.5 billion critical highways program
- Maintain commitment to providing increased road transport options for rural and regional communities
- Cap increases in CountryLink fares to the rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Continue to offer free pensioner travel vouchers and \$2.50 pensioner excursion tickets for pensioners in rural and regional NSW
- Implement recommendations from the *CountryLinkUp Review 2011* – providing better connections to other public transport services and improving comfort and convenience for passengers
- Continue our program of free wheelchair accessible taxi licences for operators in regional communities
- Invest \$1.5 billion over ten years to maintain, upgrade and operate the Country Rail Network

### **More Teachers and Better Educational Opportunities**

- Continue to provide incentives to attract and retain high quality teachers in regional NSW
- Continue record investment in high-speed internet and technological services for students in regional NSW
- Invest \$315.5 million on new and upgraded facilities on TAFE Campuses – including Maitland, Cooma, Tamworth and Orange
- Maintain Labor's concession fee structure to ensure our TAFE system remains accessible to all

## Labor and Regional NSW

The NSW Labor Government has a strong record in implementing policies which support our regional communities and assist farmers and producers in the agricultural industry.

We have consistently delivered record rural and regional budgets on all key fronts

Last year's budget alone included:

- \$4.4 billion dedicated to regional health with that amount set to grow due to the landmark Council of Australian Government's agreement that NSW secured from the Commonwealth
- \$3.5 billion for regional roads last year alone – that's 75 per cent of our entire roads budget.
- \$5.2 billion in rural and regional education
- \$443 million in State's Primary Industries
- \$1.02 billion for Ageing, Disability and Home care support in regional areas, an investment up 9.3 per cent on last year.
- \$972 million for Emergency Services.
- More than \$544 million in water infrastructure across rural and regional NSW including \$30.4 million to improve sustainability in the Murray Darling Basin.
- \$174 million for steel resleepering, upgrade works and bridge renewals.
- \$355.4 million towards private bus services for rural and regional regions

A re-elected NSW Labor Government will continue to deliver a number of policies which will invest in the ongoing development and growth of rural and regional industries.

## Our Challenges

Regional communities face a range of different and equally important challenges that differentiate them from metropolitan communities.

Labor is working to deliver services and infrastructure to regional NSW to give them access to the same opportunities and experiences as those living in the city.

The drought that has plagued country communities throughout the last decade and has demonstrated the need for a strong commitment to investing in protecting country jobs – a commitment Labor has shown that we are more than capable.

Labor will continue this investment in the future employment of rural and regional communities and provide support and options to families doing it tough.

Investing in providing transport options to regional communities, whether it be on roads or by public transport, has also shown itself to be one of the core necessities for regional families. NSW Labor has demonstrated its commitment to this task by providing record regional roads and transport budgets each year.



## Our Record

### LABOR

- **JOBS** Supported a record 76,000 jobs in Regional NSW during 2010
- **HEALTH** \$4.4 billion to regional and rural health including around \$150 million into capital works. \$35.1 million for multi-purpose health facilities
- **POLICE** \$11.5 million spent on eight world-class Police Stations across rural and regional NSW (Tenterfield, Kempsey, Walgett, Deniliquin, Parkes, Moree, Bowral and Tweed Heads)
- **ROADS** \$3.5 billion for regional and rural roads. This includes \$1.5 billion for critical highways including the Pacific Highway (\$827), Princes Highway (\$62), Hume Highway (\$345) and the Great Western Highway(\$174)
- **EMERGENCY SERVICES** \$972 million for Emergency Services including \$13.8 million for 27 new fire engines for regional stations. 32 new staff to be based in the Illawarra and other regions.
- **STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT** \$90.3 million for regional jobs.
- **HOUSING** \$367 million to deliver new housing and assist those doing it tough in rural and regional NSW.
- **AGEING and DISABILITY** \$1.02 billion to Ageing, Disability and Home care to support programs for older people, people with a disability and their careers in regional and rural areas

### OPPOSITION

- Will endanger NSW food supply – as they commit to building on Sydney valuable food bowl
- Not one new police officer on the beat
- Will risk the lives of rural and regional drivers by increasing speed limits on roads
- No commitment to meeting the threat of natural disasters

## Supporting Rural and Regional Jobs

The Keneally Government is committed to making Regional NSW a more dynamic and economically vibrant place to live. Labor has actively supported the economic development of regional NSW through the worst drought in almost a hundred years and during some of the toughest global economic conditions in living memory.

During these challenging environmental and economic conditions, since 2007, 129,000 new jobs have been supported in regional NSW and 75,000 in 2010 alone.

The NSW Government has a suite of Business Assistance Funds targeted to encourage business growth and generate new employment in Regional NSW. These funds aim to provide sustainable long term growth in regional communities by attracting more investment, and providing more jobs.

Financial assistance will be available to eligible businesses to offset costs impeding the establishment or expansion of operations, where new employment will result.

These funds have helped support the record 129,000 jobs in Regional NSW over the last four years and include;

- The Hunter Advantage Fund:
- The Illawarra Advantage Fund:
- The Western Sydney Business Employment Fund:
- The Regional Business Employment Fund:
- Regional Business Development Scheme: and
- Small business development

### **ACTION:**

- Maintain the \$12 million investment into developing business in regional NSW
- Build on the record 75,000 jobs supported in regional NSW during 2010



## **Building Business in Country Communities**

Regional communities in NSW offer an excellent quality of life and a great place to work. Labor is aware that the only way to provide sustainable long term growth in country communities is by attracting more investment, providing more jobs and offering a better way of life for people in Regional NSW.

The NSW Government's Building the Country package, worth more than \$85 million over five years, is a targeted suite of seven programs designed to revitalise regional communities and encourage growth in regional NSW. It includes:

- The Local Infrastructure Support Fund;
- The Water Adjustment Innovation Fund;
- The Community Broadband Development Program;
- The Country Halls Renewal Package;
- The Country Libraries Fund;
- The Small Communities Awareness Fund; and
- The Small Chambers' of Commerce Fund;

Building the Country is designed to address issues restricting growth in Regional NSW. It consists of targeted programs to address infrastructure needs, community facility upgrades, and assist with economic development in Regional NSW.

Building the Country also contains a number of programs designed to upgrade community facilities which are the heart and soul of regional areas. Facilities such as libraries and Town Halls provide an important place for communities to come together.

A re-elected Keneally Government will invest in the Building the Country program and funding for improvements to these important regional institutions.

In addition, NSW Labor offers financial and expansion assistance to businesses in, or relocating to, regional NSW through the Regional Business Development Scheme.

Through Industry and Investment NSW, Business Development Managers are available to:

- help potential investors identify and develop commercial opportunities in regional NSW
- assist businesses wanting to relocate to the State's regions
- assist regional firms to expand and find new markets
- help firms to diversify and add value to products

As well as our support for infrastructure and facilities, we are also selling the benefits of life in regional communities to people living in metropolitan areas. The Keneally Government has been a proud major sponsor of the Country and Regional Living Expo (formerly Country Week) since 2004, this important event, is all about selling the country lifestyle to those living in Sydney.

On top of this, we have also provided funding for EVOcities, this unique marketing program, a joint initiative of seven regional cities in NSW, aims to promote the advantages and opportunities of living, working and investing in regional NSW.

**ACTION:**

- Make Regional NSW a more attractive and economically vibrant place to live and work
- Continue investment in \$85 million Building the Country Package
- Continue investment in \$200 million Regional Business Development Programs
- Provide \$10 million towards Regional Community Infrastructure Programs to fund community, arts and sports facilities
- Continue to provide ongoing funding for programs like EVOcities, Small Communities Awareness Fund and Country week



## **Creating Healthier Regional Communities**

NSW Labor is committed to delivering high-quality health services for families across NSW.

We recognise the traditional challenges faced by those in rural and regional areas accessing healthcare compared to urban residents.

We have taken specific steps to enhance services in country areas, including committing to building new and upgraded health facilities, initiatives to bolster the rural and regional health workforce, and devising ways to encourage collaboration between rural health workers to strengthen local services.

In 2010/11, the Keneally Labor Government is spending a record \$4.4 billion on rural and regional rural and regional health services.

We've committed \$257 million to the new Orange Base Hospital and \$22.7 million to redevelop Dubbo Base Hospital.

We are upgrading Grafton Hospital and rolling out HealthOnes and Multi-Purpose Services across rural and regional NSW.

Under Labor, more than 50 Multipurpose Services have been built, including new services at Eugowra and Balranald. Multipurpose Services projects scheduled for completion include Gundagai, Werris Creek and Lockhart

In conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, NSW Labor is building new regional cancer centres on the Central Coast, Tamworth and Nowra, as well as expanding the Illawarra Cancer Centre and North Coast Cancer Institute.

A visit to the emergency department can be a stressful experience for children and adults alike. That's why the Keneally Government has worked hard to ensure people receive the best possible treatment when they need emergency care.

A re-elected Keneally Government will invest in some of our busiest hospitals by expanding and refurbishing their emergency facilities.

## **ACTION:**

- Work with the Commonwealth Government to develop four Multi-Purpose Services at Gulgong, Peak Hill, Murrurundi and Hillston
- Invest \$3 million over four years to enhance pre-hospital thrombolysis and early stroke management services for rural areas to enable patients suspected of having a heart attack to have their electrocardiogram (heart scans) transmitted from an ambulance to a cardiologist or ED in order to fast track treatment to open up the blood vessels and restore blood flow to the heart, on arrival at hospital. Funding will also enable an ECG reading service to be developed to support smaller emergency departments
- Undertake a review of the GP Procedural Training Program in order to improve the pathway to procedural training and practice in NSW
- Establish a Rural Health Directorate within NSW Health to provide better co-ordination of health services in rural NSW
- Invest \$1 million to implement risk based drinking water management plans for country utilities
- Invest \$2 million for additional special care cots at Dubbo, Gosford and Wagga Wagga
- Invest \$1 million in local priorities identified by rural local health networks
- Invest \$10 million to refurbish and expand the emergency department at Armidale Hospital



## Keeping Rural and Regional Communities Safe

Safety is our number one priority for Rural and Regional NSW.

NSW Labor has built new police stations at Oak Flats, Lismore, Dubbo, Orange, Wagga Wagga. This commitment to law and order in regional areas is a priority. This year an additional \$11.5 million will be spent on eight world-class Police Stations in Kempsey, Walgett, Deniliquin, Parkes, Moree, Bowral and Tweed Heads.

A re-elected Keneally government will spend \$60 million to increase our authorised police force by 360, bringing it to 16,166 across the state, and will continue to invest in police stations and mobile commands to keep people safe in regional areas.

NSW Labor will also spend \$1.46 million on 25 new Highway Patrol Cars – keeping our rural and regional highways clear of road crime.

Our emergency services play a crucial role in protecting our communities in regional NSW. Recent floods, bush fires and storms remind us all of the pain and destruction that can be caused by nature's ferocity.

Labor understands the challenges these disasters bring to communities across rural and regional NSW and the demands on our emergency services personnel to save lives, minimise injuries and protect homes, businesses and vital infrastructure.

We must – and will - continue to invest in our country towns and communities

If re-elected, we will deliver an additional \$100 million in spending. This will provide regional centres with new and upgraded fire stations, more trained firefighters and flood rescue personnel.

We will work in close partnership with the volunteers from the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) who play a vital role in rural NSW. This Labor Government will strengthen their operations and infrastructure and support the successful Cadet Program to provide for the next generation leaders and volunteers.

We will continue to support the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association and Marine Rescue NSW who provide rescue services across the State and on our waters.

Our emergency services are renowned for their skill and experience. The Keneally Government, if re-elected, will continue to provide them with the training and resources they need to respond rapidly and expertly when fires, floods, storms and other emergencies strike.

## **ACTION:**

- Increase authorised police force by 360
- Spend additional \$1.46 million on 25 new Highway Patrol Cars
- Continue record investment in rural and regional police stations
- Additional \$100 million to regional centres for new and upgraded fire stations, more firefighters and flood rescue personnel
- 24/7 firefighters at Nowra and Bathurst Fire Station
- \$7.3 million for a new Fire Station at Broadmeadow
- Nowra Fire Station Upgrade
- A new, world-class \$73 million Emergency Services State Training Academy at Richmond to provide comprehensive training in firefighting, hazardous materials protection, counter terrorism, rescue and other emergency response
- \$6.4 million over four years to recruit and train more young people to emergency service crews, providing the next generation of volunteers and leaders to carry on the important work
- Legislation to protect emergency services workers who face abuse or threats while on duty



## Investing in Roads and Transport in Regional NSW

The Keneally Labor Government has demonstrated a clear commitment to delivering transport options for rural and regional communities.

Year after year, NSW Labor has consistently delivered record budgets for rural and regional roads. This year alone, \$3.5 billion, or 74 per cent of the entire roads budget has been allocated to improving regional and rural roads.

This includes \$1.5 billion for critical highways including:

- the Pacific Highway \$827 million;
- Princes Highway \$62 million,
- Hume Highway \$345 million; and
- the Great Western Highway \$174 million..

This is in addition to a number of projects NSW Labor will deliver with the Federal Government, including:

- \$340 million to continue construction of the Hunter Expressway between the F3 at Seahampton and the New England Highway at Branxton;
- \$155 million to start major construction of the divided highway between Coffs Harbour (Sapphire) and Woolgoolga;
- \$146 million to continue construction of the divided highway bypass of Tarcutta;
- \$135 million to continue construction of the divided highway bypass of Kempsey;
- \$133 million to continue construction of the divided highway bypass of Woomargama;
- \$115 million to continue construction of the divided highway bypass of Ballina; and
- \$110 million to continue construction of the divided highway upgrade at Banora Point, near Tweed Heads.

A re-elected Keneally Labor Government will continue this record commitment to regional roads in NSW.

A re-elected Keneally Government will also support rural and regional communities with affordable, accessible public transport.

Under *Fairness for Families*, CountryLink fares will be capped at the rate of inflation and pensioners will continue to have access to four free CountryLink trips per year.

The Keneally Government will implement recommendations from the *CountryLinkUp Review 2011* – providing better connections in regional centres and improving comfort and convenience for passengers.

Wheelchair Accessible Taxi licences will be provided free to operators in regional communities, to help improve reliability and response times for taxis in Country areas.

In contrast to the Coalition's record of closing country rail lines, a re-elected Keneally Government will invest \$1.5 billion over 10 years to maintain, upgrade and operate the Country Rail Network.

## **ACTION:**

- Build on record \$3.5 billion road budgets in regional NSW
- Deliver \$1.5 billion critical highways program
- Maintain commitment to providing increased road transport options for rural and regional communities
- Cap increases in CountryLink fares to the rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Continue to offer free pensioner travel vouchers and \$2.50 pensioner excursion tickets for pensioners in rural and regional NSW
- Implement recommendations from the *CountryLinkUp* Review 2011 – providing better connections to other public transport services and improving comfort and convenience for passengers
- Continue our program of free wheelchair accessible taxi licences for operators in regional communities
- Invest \$1.5 billion over 10 years to maintain, upgrade and operate the Country Rail Network



## More Teachers and Better Educational Opportunities

Attracting and retaining quality staff is a key challenge in rural and regional areas. Labor has created the Institute of Teachers to improve teacher quality across the board, by improving pre-service training, co-ordinating quality professional development opportunities and requiring teacher accreditation according to agreed standards.

To assist rural and regional schools in particular, Labor maintains a state-wide staffing system which combines flexibility for principals with incentives for staff to teach in many country areas.

Under the *Smarter Schools National Partnership*, Labor has pioneered additional incentives for high quality staff to move to country schools, including cash and release time incentives, as well as the Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) initiative, which offers an annual salary of \$100,000 for our very best teachers to work in identified schools.

So far, 42 HATs have already taken up positions in schools outside the major metropolitan centres.

A re-elected Keneally Government will continue to provide incentives to attract and retain high-quality teachers in regional NSW

NSW Labor in government has also sought to use Information Technology to extend opportunities to country students that have previously only been available in metropolitan centres.

Labor recognises that reliable, high speed internet access is crucial to all schools, and particularly to bridge the isolation experienced by schools in rural and remote NSW. This Government has signed a \$280 million, four year contract with Telstra to improve broadband speeds by up to 20 times to NSW public schools.

For the 34 very isolated schools that Telstra could not connect to a cable broadband service, the Government is investing in an alternative, satellite-based technology to ensure no student misses out on the learning opportunities the internet provides.

Through the state-funded Technology for Learning program, more than 83,500 computers have been purchased for NSW public schools since the last election.

Separately, the \$168 million Connected Classrooms Program is providing every NSW public school with video-conferencing and interactive whiteboard facilities.

The NSW Labor Government has supported the Federal Government's Digital Education Revolution program and funded the purchase of individual laptops for all public secondary school teachers.

A re-elected Keneally Government will maintain its commitment to providing high-speed internet and advanced technological services to students in regional NSW

Furthermore, a re-elected Keneally Government will continue to build our strong public TAFE system and enhance our apprenticeship program to support our dynamic and growing economy.

We will continue to properly resource our TAFE system so we can provide training opportunities for the NSW community and deliver highly skilled graduates to the workforce. Regional TAFE's to receive funding include Maitland, Cooma, Tamworth and Orange

**ACTION:**

- Continue to provide incentives to attract and retain high quality teachers in regional NSW
- Continue record investment in high-speed internet and technological services for students in regional NSW
- Invest \$315.5 million on new and upgraded facilities on TAFE Campuses – including Maitland, Cooma, Tamworth and Orange
- Maintain Labor's concession fee structure to ensure our TAFE system remains accessible to all





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