



CHALLENGE MAGAZINE

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"We respectfully acknowledge that this magazine was designed on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and printed on the lands of the Bidjigal people of the Dharug Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging."

EDITORIAL

As we near the upcoming state election in March 2023, an opening is emerging for NSW Labor to win. After over a decade in power, the wheels are coming off the NSW Coalition and ill-discipline is rife throughout its ranks. Liberal Ministers are more interested in fighting each other publicly than for the future of NSW. Coalition MPs are jumping ship and the Liberals face a threat from "teal" independents in their North Shore heartland. It will be a tough fight for NSW Labor to get the ten seats needed to form a majority, but it is not out of the question.

The benefits of incumbency that governments enjoyed during COVID-19 have dissipated and there are lessons for NSW Labor more broadly from the federal election. Lessons should guide NSW Labor's approach as well as warnings that it is not guaranteed to be the beneficiary of anti-government sentiment.

Firstly, it is possible but increasingly difficult to form majority governments. The recent federal election shows that dissatisfaction will not automatically mean oppositions will be the main beneficiaries of swings against the government. Voters in safe seats can no longer be taken for granted and will vote for a viable third option if they are dissatisfied with candidates who do not reflect the diversity and aspirations of their communities. Instead, it may encourage further fragmentation of the party system on the left and right, with independents coming through the middle.

Hubris must be avoided and there is a need to be disciplined and to not get bogged down on a day-by-day basis. The federal victory of 2007 encouraged speculation about whether the Liberals would ever win again. The lesson of the past two years is that the world can be overturned, and politics dramatically shifts.

Secondly, what Labor needs is an agenda and offer that is centred on direct relevance to people's lives and delivering a material improvement. In an era where many people do not feel it matters who is in power, Labor needs to articulate why it matters and show it.

The handling of the pandemic in New South Wales clearly demonstrated it. The divide we know that exists within Sydney was illustrated and exacerbated by COVID as Western Sydney was targeted with lockdowns and bore the brunt of police overreach. Decisions by a NSW Coalition Government disproportionately impacted on culturally diverse and working-class communities without any genuine recognition of the unequal treatment.

Beyond the pandemic, NSW Labor has started to sketch out the problems with a disciplined set of messages. It has rightly called out the Coalition's addiction to privatisation that extends from asset sales to the creation of an extensive of toll road monopoly that can only be described as privatised taxation. Labor has also emphasised the importance of economic resilience, building things locally to have that skills base and supply chains with the benefits to communities that come with it. The Coalition's attempts to neutralise Labor's narratives indicating it is cutting through.

Rather than focusing on the future, the lack of integrity illustrated by politicised appointments to well remunerated overseas postings, to accounting tricks, to the true budgetary position, has reinforced the image of NSW Coalition Government that has lost interest in governing in the interests of all.

But we still need a clearer answer on the everyday challenges facing the people of New South Wales. From the lack of affordable housing and growing rental crisis, to the pressures on health and education as there are not enough staff to the impact of energy bills on cost of living.



OSMOND CHIU

*Editor of
Challenge Magazine*

The scope to act is politically limited by fiscal pressures that governments across the world are facing. The focus on cost of living and services cannot be at the expense of the environment and climate change, devastating floods across the state have only reinforced that it cannot be ignored.

There are no simple answers to these challenges but there needs to be an offer to cut through to a public that is increasingly dissatisfied but does not yet hate the incumbent government. The alternative is sliding into a minority situation where there is a reliance on Shooters and/or the Greens to form government, neither of which will benefit the people of New South Wales.

NSW LABOR MUST SEIZE THIS MOMENT AND CLEARLY ARTICULATE THE NEED TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT

because the alternative for those who rely on Labor governments, whose struggles have increased over the past term, is another four years of aimless navel-gazing and internal Coalition politics. We cannot let them down.

THE EVOLUTION OF

On Saturday 15 October, delegates to the NSW Labor Conference will be witnessing history.

The address to our Conference by a sitting Prime Minister is rare enough.

BUT TO BE ADDRESSED BY A SITTING PRIME MINISTER THAT FORMERLY LED OUR FACTION ON THE CONFERENCE FLOOR IS UNPRECEDENTED.

In many ways, the evolution of Anthony Albanese represents the evolution of our faction. The Prime Minister started his political journey on the very conference floor where he will address us as Prime Minister. He spent his early political years fighting to shape the Labor Party as an organisation that reflected our values.

For the nearly seven decades since the existence of the Socialist Left faction, we have acted as a moral conscience for the Labor Party. We have held power to account. We have fought against attempts to undermine fundamental Labor values. We have waged this struggle against forces whose dominant ethos has been to do "whatever it takes" to seize, hold and exercise power.

But we are also so much more than that. At the recent federal election, we proved that we aren't just a faction that exists to hold internal Labor power to account. We have shown we can fundamentally change the country. We proved that our values are more in touch with the values of the majority of Australians than the NSW Right has ever been willing to concede.

So often, our group is criticised as a minority group of protest. We get a lot of lecturing from the other side of Conference floor about how we don't

know how to win. But we won an election with a clear left-wing agenda, discipline and an intense focus on grassroots campaigning.

Over the last three years, it didn't always feel like it could be this way. In August 2019, as I sat through day after day of the Operation Aero proceedings, an ICAC investigation into a scheme by the NSW Labor Party to circumvent NSW electoral laws, I felt despondent about our ability to bounce back. Like many party members, I felt betrayed and angry that the NSW Head Office had found itself engulfed in scandal yet again.

But rather than take a back seat and argue that we told you so, our group stepped up. We demanded serious reform of the party to make it more accountable to members and more capable of living up to our ambition.

Together, we have worked to make the NSW Head Office more effective, more fit for purpose and more accountable. Turning the NSW Branch around from complete organisational failure in 2019 to a Federal Labor victory just three years later was only possible because of our activism. The joint is far from perfect but we have done a pretty decent job of focussing the organisation on Labor's core purpose.

We made it possible and now we get to be part of reshaping the nation. The early months of the Albanese Government are proof enough that this effort was worthwhile.

We have legislated a minimum emissions reduction target. We are on the path to constitutional recognition of a First Nations voice to parliament. We have re-engaged with our Pacific neighbours in a more respectful way. We brought the Nadesalingam family home to Biloela. We have brought together union, business and government leaders in a National Jobs Summit to reaffirm our commitment



GEORGE SIMON

NSW Labor Assistant General Secretary

to economic reform that works in the interest of working people.

RIGHT NOW, WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF WINNING STATE GOVERNMENT AFTER 12 YEARS IN OPPOSITION. WE ALSO HAVE A CHANCE TO TURN THIS STATE AROUND.

We can stop the privatisation, end the wage cap, build trains locally, fix our critically under-resourced hospital system and give our kids a better education.

But just like we were required to do a few months ago, this requires the discipline to look past our narrow interests and work towards a broad Labor interest.

Fundamentally, we all believe in a single purpose. A progressive Labor party capable of forming government to deliver enduring change.

This Conference is the first in person conference we have had since 2018. On Saturday morning, we will get to witness the transition of Anthony Albanese from the bloke who turned up to throw spears for the minority faction at conference to the person that will address the conference as the highest office holder in the country. We would never have dreamed of that 30 years ago.

I'm excited by it. I'm excited by how much more we can achieve. And I'm excited to do that with the most important group in the Labor Party.

ANTHONY ALBANESE



FROM GARMA TO THE REFERENDUM

Amid the enormous amount of work that goes with being a new Minister, I've been doing a lot of reflection recently.

Perhaps it's the stage of life that I find myself.

I've been in politics for a while now –

From the walk for Reconciliation over the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

To the Apology.

To the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

And soon a referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

Indigenous people have a special connection to the past and the future.

Charged with this great task to implement a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament.

I have never felt a stronger connection to the past and the future.

I want to thank Patrick Dodson for his wisdom and leadership on this issue over a long period of time.

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

Now, I must admit, I shed a tear during the Prime Minister's speech at Garma.

I believe it was the most significant speech by a PM on Indigenous Affairs since Kevin Rudd's Apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008.

In the red dirt of North East Arnhem land – The Prime Minister proposed a simple question and possible amendments to the Constitution.

The PM's Garma speech gave us hope.

Hope for a better future.

Hope for a more reconciled Australia.
Hope that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will grow up with more opportunities and better outcomes in life.

Because the Uluru Statement from the Heart is a plan for the future.

And a Voice to Parliament is about ensuring First Nations voices are heard.

Heard on policies
Heard on laws.
Heard on what works.

A Voice to Parliament - recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say on the decisions that affect our lives.

Pretty simple isn't it? It's common sense.

The Voice will deliver practical change that will lead to better outcomes in areas like health, education and housing.

To understand the road forward, we need to look at the past.

To reflect on how far we've come.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart, is a historic First Nations consensus on the way forward.

It is the best chance Australia has ever had.

Perhaps will ever have, to address the injustices of the past and structural change that will create a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

And then there is the historic and extraordinary process that lead up to Uluru.

The First Nations Regional Dialogues that commenced in 2016 –

Were designed to ensure that Aboriginal decision making was at the heart of the process for constitutional recognition.

Bottom up.
Not top down.

The stories that were recounted in those Dialogues were then read to the First Nations Constitutional Convention at Uluru in May 2017.

This was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people telling the rest of Australia what we wanted.

The Convention endorsed the work of the Dialogues and issued the Uluru Statement from the Heart to the Australian people.
Voice, Treaty and Truth.

This is what Indigenous Australians want. This is our aspiration.

As the Uluru Statement from the Heart states:

“WE SEEK CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS TO EMPOWER OUR PEOPLE AND TAKE A RIGHTFUL PLACE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY. WHEN WE HAVE POWER OVER OUR DESTINY OUR CHILDREN WILL FLOURISH. THEY WILL WALK IN TWO WORLDS AND THEIR CULTURE WILL BE A GIFT TO THEIR COUNTRY.”

I want to pay special tribute tonight to the three co-chairs – Pat Anderson, Noel Pearson and Megan Davis – who joins us tonight.

We also owe so much to the great work already undertaken, including: The 2012 Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition.

The Referendum Council and Uluru Statement, Joint Select Committee - from which the Dodson / Leeson Report came. And of course the Indigenous Voice Co-design Process, led by Ken Wyatt as well as Tom Calma and Marcia Langton.

This work is important and will continue to inform the way forward.

So what comes next?

THE ROAD FORWARD

A group of First Nations people will soon meet with the Prime Minister to discuss the road forward –

With Senator Dodson and myself as Co-Chairs.

The Referendum Working Group will work together with government and guide the big questions that need to be considered in the coming months, including:

Firstly, the timing to conduct a successful referendum.

Secondly, refining the proposed constitutional amendment and question.

Thirdly, information on the Voice necessary for a successful referendum.

Its work will be enhanced by the establishment of a second group, the referendum engagement group. Its job will be to:

Provide advice on, and assist with, building community understanding, awareness and support for the referendum.

Engagement with First Nations communities.

And advocate for the Voice.

The Referendum Engagement group will comprise of representatives from the across the country –

Including land councils, local governments and community controlled service organisations.

THE PLAN

These are the next steps.

The plan on the road to the referendum.

One. Getting First Nations representatives together to work closely in partnership with government on key issues relating to the referendum.

Two. Continue to build a broad consensus of community support from across country.

Already at National Cabinet all state and territory leaders have given in-principle support for the Voice to Parliament.

Three. Harness the goodwill in the Australian community to take Australia forward by supporting this nation-building project.

These are the necessary ingredients to winning the referendum.

There is much to work to do.

Many more steps to be taken on the road to the referendum.

And let's be clear government cannot lead this referendum.

This will come from the grassroots. From communities.

Because the Voice is a nation-building project.

We will need a united "Yes" campaign that captures your attention and the imagination of the Australian people.

Everyone has a part to play.

From sports clubs, schools, community groups and the union movement.

It's everyone's responsibility to get this done.

In the years to come, we will be able to measure the success of referendum not just by the number of people who vote for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, but by the lives that the Voice helps to improve.

THE HON. LINDA BURNEY MP

Minister for Indigenous
Australians

This is an edited version of a speech given on the 8th of September 2022 to the Centre for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) State of the Nation conference at the National Museum of Australia



EARLY EDUCATION IS IN CRISIS

It's Time for Real Reform

MEL GATFIELD

*National Director
Food & Beverages
NSW Secretary
United Workers
Union*



On Wednesday, 7 September – Early Childhood Educators' Day – educators from around the country walked off the job, shutting down the sector and rallying around the country to demand urgent reform for a sector in crisis.

I've worked with early childhood educators for 16 years in my roles at the United Workers Union (previously the LHMU and United Voice). Educators are not quick to take industrial action. They are some of the most selfless workers in our society, working long hours in difficult conditions to shape the minds of children at the most critical time in their development. They often put their own health and safety second to the care of our nation's children. They miss time with their own families, starting their shifts early and finishing late. And they do it for as little as \$24 an hour – less than they might make stacking shelves at a supermarket.

Educators are now leaving the sector in record numbers every week, due to burn-out, workload and low pay. Centres across the country are having to limit enrolments, close rooms and cancel staff leave. Children and families are suffering due to the strain.

Traditionally, Early Childhood Educators' Day is a day where parents thank their children's educators by bringing them cards, or their employers might bring in a box of cupcakes. But this year educators had had enough.

For too long they've been overworked, undervalued, and underpaid. They've now reached breaking point. After bearing the brunt of the pandemic – coming to work when other sectors were able to stay home, caring for the children of frontline workers but unable to socially distance themselves, not being given adequate PPE, working long hours to cover for colleagues who were sick or in isolation – educators just don't have anything more to give. They need action, and in September they stood up to demand it.

EDUCATORS HAD THREE DEMANDS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

**GIVE EDUCATORS A REASON TO STAY
AND PAY THEM WHAT THEY ARE
WORTH,**

**VALUE EARLY LEARNING AS PART OF
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, JUST AS
IMPORTANT AS SCHOOLS, AND**

PUT CHILDREN BEFORE PROFIT.

The importance of early childhood education and care is becoming more widely understood. The Labor Party went to the last election with its "Cheaper Childcare" commitment as a marquee policy, and at the recent Jobs and Skills Summit there were calls for this policy to be brought forward, for even more to be done around childcare affordability.

But all too often early education is talked about exclusively in relation to productivity, in relation to getting more women into the workforce. Not enough is being said about the importance of early years education itself. And not nearly enough is being said about making sure that we have a well-paid, properly valued workforce that is able to do this crucial work – work that the rest of society is relying on.

The fact of the matter is that the Federal Government cannot deliver on its commitment to increase access and affordability without addressing the workforce crisis. To do this, we need to value early education as education, the same way we value schools.

Earlier this year, the Victorian Government announced, as part of a \$9 billion ten year commitment to early learning, that it would build 50 new government-operated early education centres. Centres will be located in areas of most need and co-located with primary schools. Crucially, educators at the new centres will be directly employed by the government.

At the same time as they were making this commitment, the New South Wales Government was making its own commitment to increase funding for early learning. But the subsidies they announced would only increase funding to a private market which has failed to deliver affordable and accessible early learning. The only sure outcome of the NSW scheme will be an increase in profits.

The Victorian Government's commitment is a step in the right direction. Their model has the potential to address the staffing crisis by providing decent jobs for educators. The New South Wales announcement does nothing to address the workforce crisis in the sector.

New South Wales needs to follow in Victoria's footsteps. And above all, we need urgent action from the Federal Government.

Early education needs to be better. It needs to deliver for workers, for families, and for the community. We cannot continue with business as usual.



AUSTRALIA IS NOW THE MAMMAL EXTINCTION CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

In the past five years, the number of threatened ecological communities has grown by another twenty per cent. The number of threatened species has grown by almost ten percent.

The Murray Darling just experienced its lowest level on record. And for the first time, we have more foreign plant species than native ones in this country.

The previous Government hid the report because they didn't want Australians to know the truth – because they weren't prepared to change the laws and economic settings that have led to this environmental catastrophe.

Look at their record on the environment over nine years:

They came to power with a mission to repeal climate legislation and slash emissions reduction targets. They cut funding to the environment department by 40 percent. They wrapped the Murray Darling Basin Plan up in brown tape so it couldn't be delivered. They cut our highly protected areas of Commonwealth Marine Park in half. And even when they made nice sounding promises, they almost never bothered to deliver them.

WHILE THE COALITION WAS CONTENT TO WASTE A DECADE IN POWER, WE ARE DETERMINED NOT TO SQUANDER A MINUTE.

That's why, as one of our first acts in government, Labor legislated higher ambition on climate change, with a clear path to net zero emissions. This is the first step towards building Australia up into a clean energy superpower, with good jobs and abundant power and new globally competitive industries.

It's why we are determined to rewrite our national environmental laws, to build trust, integrity and efficiency into our system of approvals.

It's why we're establishing a new Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure that these laws are being enforced on the ground.

And it's why we've announced a new

nature market, to reward farmers and other landholders for their work in restoring and protecting our precious environment.

We will do all of this in partnership with First Nations Australians – because we recognise the great gift we have in Australia of 65,000 years of environmental stewardship to learn from.

We're taking this action because too many native species are at risk of extinction. Too many native habitats are being destroyed. And too many places of national environmental significance are being degraded.

We know that our laws aren't working. Professor Graeme Samuel reviewed them two years ago, and concluded that they are slow, they lack coherence, and they don't actually protect the environment.

But like so much else, Scott Morrison thought it was all too hard, so ignored the review.

OURS WILL NOT BE A GOVERNMENT THAT IGNORES HARD QUESTIONS, OR WATCHES PROBLEMS DEEPEN UNTIL THEY TURN INTO CRISES.

The Australians I meet care deeply about the environment – the strong vote for teal independents shows even conservative electorates are prepared to vote for the environment. Australians are sensitive to the threat of climate change. They want to recycle more effectively. They want to minimise their environmental footprint wherever they can. And they want governments to stop bickering – and to act sensibly in the national interest.

Because it's only ever Labor Governments that do the big things – the necessary things – to make this country fairer, more productive, more inclusive, and more sustainable.



TANYA PLIBERSEK

Minister for the Environment and Water

After Labor's election victory on 21 May, millions of progressives and true believers around Australia woke up with an extra spring in their step. I certainly did. After a wasted decade – after a decade of drift and neglect, where people lost faith in the power of government – the entire Labor Party is filled with hope and excitement about what we can achieve for Australia and its people.

This is why everyone in our party worked so hard over the past nine years in opposition. It's why we endured heart break and disappointment and the cold years of exile: to be back here, in government, with the power to change people's lives for the better, and with a chance to fulfil this country's endless potential.

It's been an exciting few months, but there have been sobering moments too – when the scale of our task has revealed itself.

As Minister for the Environment and Water, one of my first acts was to publicly release the State of the Environment Report. The previous Minister, Sussan Ley, received this document before Christmas but chose to keep it hidden – locked away until after the federal election.

This decision was undemocratic, and it was contemptuous of the Australian people. But when you read through the report you can understand why the conservatives were so desperate to keep it secret – to hide their neglect from the world.

As the report shows, Australia is now the mammal extinction capital of the world, having lost more species than any other continent.

CLIMATE ACTION, FINALLY

After a decade of delay, we can finally fulfill the vision so many of us have been working toward for so long: a Labor Government acting to respond to climate change and support jobs of the future.

The former Coalition Government not only failed to act on climate change, but actively dragged us backwards. In a damning assessment from the international community, the Morrison Government's policy response was ranked last out of 60 countries.

This failure stymied our ability to secure the benefits of clean energy, trashed our reputation on the global stage, and stifled investment and confidence. Inaction has also put people and nature at risk.

NSW was hit hard by floods again in 2022, including my hometown region in the Tweed Valley along with so many communities across the Northern Rivers, Central Coast, South Coast and parts of Sydney. My heart goes out to those of you who have been impacted, losing homes and businesses.

Communities are getting on with the work of rebuilding, but we need governments to act to address climate change. Otherwise we know that disasters like floods, fires, heatwaves and more will increase in both frequency and intensity. Our actions at home matter internationally – building confidence in the global commission for climate action.



Acting to address climate change and invest in a better future is a Labor value. It's an ongoing priority for the party, for the NSW Left, of the union movement, and for members of Labor's Environmental Action Network (LEAN).

Together we have campaigned for climate action, generated solutions, built relationships and shifted public opinion.



Our opportunity now is to set an agenda that cuts climate emissions, cuts cost of living pressures and invests in good local jobs.

In the lead up to the election, we united conservation groups, unions, business, agricultural and industry leaders behind the Powering Australia plan.

As one of our first priorities, the Albanese Government passed our climate change laws to not only legislate emission reduction targets but also send a clear message – at home and abroad – that we are ready to act.



Our Climate Change Bill

- legislates both the 2050 net zero target and the 43 per cent emissions reduction target by 2030
- tasks the Climate Change Authority to assess progress against these targets and advise Government on future targets
- requires the Minister for Climate Change to report annually to Parliament on progress in meeting our targets and
- makes the targets relevant to key agencies, like the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Export Finance Australia.

Perhaps even more importantly, these new laws provide the policy certainty and stability that the community and industry have called for.

It sends the message that Australia is back as a good international citizen.

For future generations — that we are determined to lift our game.

To communities — that we are ready to invest in their future.

To investors — that when it comes to renewable energy, Australia is open for business and raring to go.

For business — who have been crying out for policy certainty after having the lane ropes changed on them time and time again.

For our economy — because acting on climate change also means harnessing the opportunities of a renewable revolution.

For our nation — restoring our international credibility on climate, and playing a constructive role as a member of the Pacific family.

We know this legislation isn't the end of the work, it's only the beginning.

We can expect there will be challenging debates in Parliament and across the community about exactly how we can get on with the job. The usual suspects will seek to drag us backward.

I know that Labor members will be active — championing the case for ambitious climate action in branches, unions, communities, and workplaces. This is vital to providing the momentum we need for urgent action.

Your tireless efforts have been and will be critical in building consensus, generating ideas, and ensuring we can together respond to one of the most pressing issues of our time — climate change — and create a better future for us all.

The time for action is now, we don't have a second to waste. Let's get to work.



SENATOR JENNY MCALLISTER

Assistant Minister for Climate Change & Energy



**ROSIE
RYAN**
*Secretary of
the NSW
Left*

“We must genuinely empower our members and make their experience of membership a meaningful and rewarding one.”

THE LEFT'S CAMPAIGNS

On the night of the Federal Election, I was in the seat of Gilmore, one of our must-hold marginals where I'd been campaigning in the months leading up to 21 May.

Gilmore was one of several seats around the country where we didn't get a result on the night, so as the razor's edge booth numbers trickled through, I had a familiar sense of dread sitting in my belly.

As I checked the AEC website, that dread turned to elation - in Macquarie Susan Templeman and her incredible local campaign team had taken the seat from being one of the most marginal in the country, one of those who'd had to sit through the weeks of suspense last time around, to having an almost 8% margin.

In the coming days, the good news kept coming. We won seats that seemed impossible, including Jerome Laxale bringing home Bennelong, and Fiona Phillips making up the magic 77 in Gilmore. All the demographically and geographically different seats we won had three things in common - a compelling local candidate, volunteers from and embedded in their communities, and a locally-driven campaign that spoke to issues that mattered to people in those seats.

It's clear that the days of selecting candidates with no grounding in their local area, who require volunteer support from outside of their community, and who run on a set of centrally-determined issues are coming to a close.

But having these kinds of candidates and this kind of campaign infrastructure requires investment. We must be looking year in year out at how our party supports building up our party branches and local networks outside of formal election periods. Support that is only there at the 11th hour is too little, too late.

We need an ambitious, continuous and outward looking training program that skills up everyone - branch members, parliamentarians and their staff, candidates - to be active, engaged and continuously campaigning in their communities on the issues that matter.

Many will relate to the experience of signing up to the Labor Party, eager and ready to make change, and coming up against the seemingly impenetrable wall of acronyms, branch meetings which can veer towards dry and confusing, and party processes which confound.

In the era of teal independents, who have claimed the community organising model that is fundamental to the way in which the ALP was first conceived and structured, we must do better - we must genuinely empower our members and make their experience of membership a meaningful and rewarding one.

THE NSW LEFT HAS A PROUD HISTORY OF ADVOCATING FOR A PARTY THAT IS MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE MEMBERSHIP, AND THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF NSW LABOR HEAD OFFICE.

These reforms are critical to having a party that is relevant, representative of the community and campaign ready.

So, what are some of the things the NSW campaign did better this time that we can build on for the upcoming State Election?

- Merit based recruitment of staff with professional experience from outside the party in areas such as fundraising and

digital.

- Supporting local, issues-based campaigns that fitted with national themes but were specific to what the local community care about through a digital strategy that was adaptive and hyperlocal.

- A small donor program that brought more money in and will ultimately shift the party to a model that is more membership focussed and accountable.

- Training and forums for campaigns to share what was working on the ground and get support to try out new ideas and approaches

A special shout out as well must go to the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) team set up at Campaign Headquarters.

This was the first time Labor had a full team dedicated to CALD campaigning. This work extended from making sure we had the right how-to-votes, that we were using best practice for translating materials, through to making sure first time candidates knew how to be respectful when visiting a church or were speaking to the right news outlets.

One of the most exciting pieces of work was led by Kun Huang, who ran the Chinese media and digital media campaigning. Labor's ground campaign on WeChat was pivotal to our win, and that was because of Kun's leadership in this space. From making sure daily messages were disseminated, to countering any misinformation that he was seeing.

Prioritising CALD campaigning work will be critical to winning the seats Labor needs to win in the upcoming State Election.

I look forward to seeing how the NSW State Campaign builds on the work of the Federal Election to develop our campaigning capacity further and deliver a NSW Labor Government.

WE NEED CLIMATE ACTION AND JOB CREATION



STEVE MURPHY

National Secretary of the AMWU

Australia is about to undertake an economic and industrial transition - the largest in our lifetime. As our energy needs change and industries adapt to meet our net zero target, our industries and jobs will be significantly impacted. The transition is currently being shaped to protect private investments and profits, but little effort is being made to protect jobs, communities and our standard of living. We cannot leave a transition of this size to private capital.

I GREW UP AND DID MY TRADE AS A FITTER MACHINIST IN THE HUNTER VALLEY.

I've worked with, and represented as an AMWU Organiser, workers across all areas of the supply chains of our coal and electricity industry. The Hunter, along with energy regions all around the country, will be earliest and hardest hit by decisions already made in overseas boardrooms, and that change is coming faster than we had expected.

We are a movement of organisations that care deeply about this issue. It doesn't belong to any one of us, but to all of us. Whether we come to this issue as environmental, indigenous or community

activists, as academics or thought leaders, or as school strikers or trade unionists, we have a collective role to shape not just the framing of this debate, but what justice actually looks like.

Importantly, a discussion about what justice for workers looks like is a missing piece of the puzzle in our energy regions. These are workers and communities that have powered our economy and our homes for generations. They have looked after us, and now is our turn to look after them.

Right now, there's no trust in mining bosses or politicians to make sure that workers and their communities are going to be looked after. Of course, there is always opportunity in change. The impacts of COVID on our international supply chains has uncovered the high level of public support for making things in Australia, and a high level of support for public investment and ownership. We need to work together, as early as possible, if we are to make the most of the opportunity presented to us.

Whether it is to add value to our natural resources and our agricultural products, to build our renewable energy infrastructure and shift to public ownership, or to become a green manufacturing superpower and secure our local supply chains, there are hundreds of thousands of potential jobs to be created. We are however, in a global race. Hesitation or poor planning will see Australia miss out - and our potential new jobs, traded away.

We also need to invest in workers. We need to value their ideas and their labour. We need to give them the skills and training necessary to be able to change jobs. We need to support them into secure, unionised jobs with good pay and conditions.

PRECIOUS TIME HAS BEEN WASTED IN THE CLIMATE CULTURE WARS. CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL. ACTION IS NEEDED TO LIMIT GLOBAL HEATING. THE TRANSITION IS HERE, AND IT IS HAPPENING TO US, NOT WITH US.

This is why we need a decision making table and a seat at it. We need an independent, fully resourced National Energy Transition Authority to build a plan. A statutory body, that will manage this transition - because encouragement and voluntary participation of private capital will not get us there.

Labor has been the party from and for the working class. There will be resistance politically to have an authority with teeth to drive this change in our collective interests. Together we can deliver justice for workers in this transition. We can have climate action and job creation.



WINNING MACQUARIE

by *Tori McGregor*
Macquarie Campaign Manager

Macquarie has gone from being the seat we almost didn't win in 2019 to being a seat that sits on an almost 8% margin in 2022.

The recipe to this success isn't a secret and it isn't overly complicated. Apart from being surrounded by an incredible team and having an extraordinarily hardworking candidate, there were four main things that delivered the victory in Macquarie:

- A clear strategy
- Identified paths to victory
- A clear plan for the candidate
- Trust in your team

Of course, lots of seats did well but we saw extraordinary results among voters that didn't come to Labor across the rest of the country - this is what makes looking at this campaign well worth your while.



A CLEAR STRATEGY

The campaign team were given the time and space to develop a campaign strategy that included branding, messaging, targeting etc. It encompassed everything and it identified how we were going to win.

Every decision that was made in the document was able to guide decisions down the track that didn't then need to be run by the candidate. It empowered our whole team to make good decisions, it saved the back and forth on emails, enabled consistency and essentially allowed us to operate as efficiently and effectively as we could.

We had an agreed upon tactical plan, allocated roles, clear lines of communication, trust in each other's abilities and we knew how we could win.

The only task left to do, was to execute it.

I can't emphasise enough how vital this early stage planning was.

IDENTIFIED PATHS TO VICTORY

Very (very!) early on we worked to establish our potential paths to victory, we decided which ones worked well together and then didn't let anything set us off course.

We adopted three separate paths that could be run in parallel.

1. We needed to lock in the support base of 2019. We only won by 371 votes, but that's still a win. The political climate of late 2021 and early 2022 was suggesting we weren't going to be losing votes, so locking in was a clear path of choice.

2. There was a huge opportunity in winning back the people we know we lost in 2019. There was a sufficient amount of analysis in the public domain to know who those people were and we decided persuading them to come back would be a priority.

3. Finally, we wanted to persuade undecided voters and soft liberals who were looking elsewhere to lock in behind our candidate.

Points one and two were essentially insurance policies and point three was approximately 75 per cent of our campaign. The flexibility this sort of infrastructure provides is incredibly powerful. It means at short notice you can adjust the path you are pursuing and how intensively based on the national political climate on a weekly basis.

There were moments where the third path dropped down to being only 30 per cent of the campaign, but pre-planning of all of these paths meant that the adjustment was quick and easy.

CLEAR PLAN FOR THE CANDIDATE

In Macquarie, we had a very clear rule and everyone agreed to it. Susan was to be doing



what only Susan could do which was say "Hi, I'm Susan...." to only the people we believed we needed to be talking to.

It seems harsh, but in those final weeks in a marginal seat you are fighting to retain the privilege to fight for your community in our Parliament and you need to be spending every minute of your time in the most effective way possible.

Controversially, we did not have Susan stand full time on prepoll as we did not deem this to be the most useful way for her to spend her time. I'm more than happy to chat about this decision in further detail with anyone who is interested!

TRUST IN YOUR TEAM

We had a team of people who were incredibly competent and hard-working. Crucially, we also had a candidate who let us do our jobs.

The campaign was able to almost run completely independently of the candidate so that her time and headspace was as free as it could be, and so that our team could get on with doing what we were tasked to do - deliver Macquarie as part of an Albanese Labor Government.

This outcome is achieved by very clear planning in the early days and is crucial to having the final weeks run as smoothly as possible.

In short, campaigns are intense, messy, high pressure and high stake environments. As much work as possible needs to be done ahead of time to enable you, your team and your candidate to be using your time and energy as effectively as possible.



BUILDING IT HERE AGAIN: BRINGING MANUFACTURING BACK TO NSW

The past ten years have been a tough decade for the manufacturing sector both in NSW and across Australia.

While some of the difficulties faced by the sector were caused by the consequences of the mining boom, State and Federal Coalition Governments have deliberately undermined our manufacturing sector on an ideological basis.

They didn't care that it was a profitable sector with a skilled workforce that delivered quality products. They wanted to drive down wages and conditions, and they hated the fact that the sector was well organised by the trade union movement.

One of the first acts of the Abbott Government when it was elected in 2013 was to openly tell the car industry that it was no longer welcome in Australia.

AND IN NSW THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT MADE A DELIBERATE DECISION TO BUILD TRAINS, TRAMS, BUSES AND FERRIES OVERSEAS.

Former Transport Minister Andrew Constance said this would save the taxpayer millions of dollars, while former Premier Gladys Berejiklian claimed, "Australia and New South Wales are not good at building trains, that's why we have to purchase them."

This came as news to all the manufacturing workers who built the K Set, Tangara and Millennium Trains which are still carrying passengers on Sydney's train network today.

Thousands of high-quality manufacturing jobs were exported from New South Wales on the NSW Liberal Government's watch. Transport infrastructure that should have been built here was instead built overseas, including ferries built in China and Indonesia, trains built in South Korea and China and light rail trams built in France and Spain.

The McKell Institute's Build It Here Report estimates the NSW Governments decision to build these projects overseas cost a grand total

of 7,289 Australian jobs.

Workers and their communities paid a heavy price, but the decision to offshore these important projects didn't just cost jobs and skills.

Passengers didn't even end up with a quality product.

INSTEAD, THE GOVERNMENT BOUGHT TRAINS THAT COULDN'T FIT THE TRACKS AND WHICH ARE YET TO CARRY A SINGLE PASSENGER, FERRIES RIDDLED WITH ASBESTOS AND DEFECTS WHICH CAN'T CROSS THE HARBOUR OR TRAVEL AT NIGHT, AND LIGHT RAIL TRAMS FILLED WITH CRACKS THAT HAVE BEEN OUT OF ACTION FOR ALMOST A YEAR.

And what happened to all the savings promised by the Liberals?

It turns out that the NSW Government's six major overseas procurements experienced increases to their budgets of between 40 and 50 per cent.

These increases negated the cost savings originally used by Gladys Berejiklian and Andrew Constance to justify building them overseas in the first place.

Since these issues have come to light, the public is now rightfully sceptical of the Coalition's cheaper sticker price claims and overseas made obsession while the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare many of the consequences that can stem from an overreliance on overseas supply chains. The pandemic has also shown that governments have the power to shape our economy in ways that put people first and deliver real benefits to our society over the long term.

And after a lost decade in manufacturing thanks to the Coalition's ideological prejudices and neglect, Labor can lead the way on bringing it back.

Already, Labor Governments in Victoria,

Queensland and Western Australia have shown that we can use our public transport sector to rebuild our local manufacturing base, delivering secure work for communities that need it and ensuring that the skills base expands.

A Chris Minns Labor Government can do the same in NSW.

NSW LABOR HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY PACKAGE WHICH USES THE PROCUREMENT AND PURCHASING POWERS OF GOVERNMENT TO BOOST DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

which includes a 50 per cent minimum local content target for transport rolling stock and an increase to the tender weightings to 30 per cent for local content, jobs creation, small business and ethical supply chains. We'll establish the NSW Jobs First Commission – an independent, expert body to oversee the growth of local industries and provide support for businesses to bid for Government tenders and build a TAFE manufacturing centre of excellence in Western Sydney.

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF A BROAD-BASED PLAN FOR MANUFACTURING

that can end up delivering much more than just high-quality transport infrastructure and forms a key plank of our agenda for delivering better wages, more secure work, better access to skills and training and a just transition to the jobs of the future for communities that might otherwise be left behind.

JO HAYLEN MP
NSW Shadow Minister for Transport





PROTEST & PROGRESS IN NSW

Popular protest movements have shaped Australian society. Women's suffrage, protected wilderness areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights and equal marriage are now considered to be a normal part of our lives, but only exist because ordinary Australians took to the streets.

OUR HISTORY PROVES THAT THE RIGHT TO PROTEST IS ESSENTIAL TO A WELL-FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY. IT ATTRACTS A DEGREE OF PROTECTION UNDER OUR CONSTITUTION. NONETHELESS, IT IS VULNERABLE TO POLITICIANS WHO WANT TO ATTACK PROTESTORS AND THE CAUSES THEY STAND FOR. WE CANNOT LET THESE ATTACKS SUCCEED. WHEN OUR RIGHT TO PROTEST IS QUASHED, SO IS A PILLAR OF OUR DEMOCRATIC STATE.

In NSW, the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment 2022 was introduced on 30 March 2022, and passed two days later on 1 April.

It significantly undermines our ability to protest in NSW. It is a draconian measure.

Under s 214A of the Amendment, a person must not 'block entry' to a major facility. Subparagraph (d) defines blocking entry as 'causing persons attempting to use the major facility to be redirected'. Furthermore, s 214A(7)(a) provides that a 'major facility' includes Town Hall and Martin Place Railway Stations. The implications are clear. The regular rallies and marches that are held at these stations will be characterised as 'blocking entry'. The punishment is a \$22,000 fine, or two years imprisonment (or both).

To be exempt from the law, you must get prior approval for your gathering from NSW Police. This differs from the previous system where you only had to notify NSW Police of your gathering to be exempt from obstruction offences. Under the old system,

if the NSW Police opposed your gathering, they had to take you to court. Now, they have full discretion to deny approval. This gives enormous power to the police to decide which gatherings are 'OK' and which are not. The legislation also allows the list of 'major facilities' to be increased by regulation, enabling the Minister to add almost any site, road, bridge, or transport link at any time.

We should never support action that is violent or unsafe, however, the new laws are so broad and vague that almost all protest activity without prior approval now risks criminal sanction. For example, a large turnout as part of the Climate Strikes or Reclaim the Night rallies may spill out into the entrance of a nearby railway station. While they do not pose any safety risk, station staff, police or security staff may need to redirect people to use another station entrance. Causing people to be 'redirected' breaches the new laws which can result in people being fined and/or imprisoned.

The subjectivity of the laws and the broad definitions within the new laws mean that police and prosecutors will have immense discretion over which protesters to arrest and prosecute.

There is a view by some that union protests have been 'carved out' of the new legislation. But the definition of 'industrial action' in the legislation is very vague and also demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of what 'being union' means.

The Australian union movement is the largest and most significant source of organised dissent in the country. We have a long and very proud history of working together in a broad-based coalition with women, students, First Nations People, LGBTQ+ communities and climate activists. Most union members will at some time in their working life be involved in a protest instigated or supported by their union in relation to an issue that is not linked to 'industrial action' under any definition.

EVEN WITH THE BROADEST POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION

OF THE LEGISLATION, UNION MEMBERS WOULD NEVER ACCEPT A HIERARCHY OF PROTEST RIGHTS, IN WHICH WE ARE CARVED OUT. UNION MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED TO EQUALITY AND EQUITY BEFORE THE LAW AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT THAT OTHERS WHO PROTEST SHOULD FEEL THE FULL BRUNT OF THIS TARGETED AND PUNITIVE LEGISLATION WHILE WE ARE SEEN TO BE EXEMPT.

This Amendment was rushed through Parliament and unlike most controversial legislation, it has not been the subject of a Parliamentary Inquiry, Public Consultation Process, or reviewed by a parliamentary oversight committee. The Amendment bears many similarities to Tasmanian anti-protest laws struck down by the High Court in 2017. In his judgement, Justice Gageler described these laws as a 'Pythonesque absurdity'.

THE FREEDOM TO PROTEST GOES TO THE HEART OF REPRESENTATIVE, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. SOCIAL CHANGE HAS NEVER BEEN INEVITABLE. MANY PEOPLE IN NSW HAVE PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY ACTION TO SUPPORT ISSUES THAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE IMPORTANT.

In Government, NSW Labor should repeal the current Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment 2022. NSW Labor should never support any legislation that restricts the right of NSW residents to express themselves through peaceful protest.

ANGUS MCFARLAND
NSW Secretary of the ASU



THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AT ITS BEST!



“The lessons of the 1890s still hold true today. By using the democratic mechanisms of the Parliament we were able to hold the CEOs of some of the biggest companies in Australia to account.”

As far back as the 1890s trade unionists acknowledged that exercising worker power by taking industrial action was not going to be sufficient to ensure that workers' interests were recognised by democratic governments. This “ah ha” moment led the unions to establish the Labor Party. It still holds true that when workers and politicians work together, we can effect change.

Over 130 years later the Finance Sector Union (FSU)'s pay transparency campaign demonstrates the change workers can achieve when their unions and elected politicians work together.

On 24 September 2022, the finance industry recognised “(Un)Equal Pay Day”. Twenty six days later than the national “(Un)Equal Pay Day” which had fallen on 29th August 2022.

The gender pay gap in the finance industry sits at 19 per cent when calculated on full time ordinary hour earnings but increases to 23 per cent when you include all types of employment and remuneration.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ISSUE OF THE GENDER PAY GAP IS COMPLEX, WITH NUMEROUS DRIVERS.

THERE IS NO SINGLE SIMPLE SOLUTION TO ELIMINATE THE GAP.

There are several things that can be done to drive down the gap and one of the easiest is to improve pay transparency. Pay transparency simply means that the workforce is not subject to “confidentiality clauses” that prohibit disclosure of pay and remuneration details. It also means that employers are transparent about how their pay systems work and the criteria used to set up pay rates.

In February 2019 the Finance Sector Union embarked on our Pay Transparency campaign. We wrote to the largest employers in our industry asking them to commit to pay transparency ahead of International Women's Day (IWD) 2019. There were only six employers who agreed, every other employer backed in their commitment to secrecy.

UnEqual Pay Day fell in late August 2019, with the finance industry's day falling in early October. We launched our #PayTransparencyMatters selfie campaign where finance workers used the time between August and October to share selfies and encourage their colleagues to talk about pay.

We were unable to move any employers to change their approach.

When COVID 19 hit this campaign took a backseat temporarily but we relaunched it in the second half of 2021. Given our lack of success through grassroots campaigning we reevaluated our campaign strategy and decided that we might find more success by working more closely with our federally elected ALP members. There were some key ALP comrades who had seats on the House of Representatives Economics Committee (The Committee). This is a committee that regularly has the opportunity to grill the CEOs of the big banks.

During the first round of hearings all of the CEOs of the Big Four were questioned about the link between the gender pay gap and pay transparency. All of the CEOs of banks that had confidentiality clauses claimed they weren't enforced but agreed to review them. FSU members then committed to #StartTheDiscussion with their colleagues and to talk about how pay transparency can reduce the gender pay gap by up to 7 per cent.

During this campaign the Commonwealth Bank sacked one of their workers for talking about pay. CBA thus demonstrated their commitment to review clauses was insufficient and proved that we needed to force employers to remove the clauses all together.

In the final round of hearings, ALP politicians publicly pressured these employers to do the right thing.

NAB was the first to capitulate in early 2021 followed by Westpac leaving CBA as the outlier.

On IWD 2022 the FSU released the report “The Price of Silence” exposing the \$500M cost to workers of pay secrecy.

FINALLY IN APRIL 2022 CBA AGREED TO ABOLISH THEIR PAY SECRECY CLAUSES.

In May 2022, we elected the Albanese Federal Government who have committed to outlaw pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts. Working together the labour movement has demonstrated the power of the collective.

The lessons of the 1890s still hold true today. By using the democratic mechanisms of the Parliament we were able to hold the CEOs of some of the biggest companies in Australia to account. When grass-roots action is followed through with the support of elected officials we can achieve meaningful change to make Australia a fairer place for all workers.



ANGELA BUDAI
FSU National Policy Officer



ADDRESSING SPATIAL INEQUALITY IN POST COVID-19 SYDNEY

by *Charishma Kaliyanda*
Councillor for Liverpool City Council

THIS TIME LAST YEAR, SOUTH WEST AND WESTERN SYDNEY WERE IN THE GRIP OF BOTH THE DEADLY DELTA WAVE OF COVID-19, AND SOME OF THE HARSHTEST LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON ANY COMMUNITY IN NSW, IF NOT THE WORLD.

These combined to expose some of the long running inequalities in our health and economic systems that disproportionately affect those of us who live in south west and western Sydney.

It is widely acknowledged that the response to the outbreak and spread of COVID-19 in western and south-western Sydney was hampered by fundamental misunderstandings of our communities and how we live, work and connect. Tough policing, constant rule changes and ineffective health messaging combined to create an environment of fear and paranoia, resulting in a corrosion of trust and respect in government and public institutions in relation to our health and wellbeing. This will have lasting impacts beyond the easing of restrictions and ending of the lockdown.

We know that the unparalleled disruption of not only the pandemic, but the bushfires before it, and multiple flooding events since, has had a cumulative negative impact on mental health and wellbeing within our community.

However, as we recover as a community, we must address the social determinants of mental health. We must consider the social, economic and physical environments in which people live, that shape our mental health and wellbeing to a large extent.

The idea that where you come from affects

the quality of opportunities you have access to and the infrastructure you depend on is not new. In fact, Gough Whitlam once wrote that "a citizen's real standard of living, his children's opportunities for education and self-improvement ...are determined not by his income, not by the hours he works, but by where he lives".

THIS IS WHY WHITLAM'S VISION WAS DRIVEN BY A DESIRE TO REDUCE SPATIAL OR "POSTCODE" INEQUALITY AND ROOTED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE ALMOST 50 YEARS SINCE HE WROTE THOSE WORDS, SPATIAL INEQUALITY IN OUR MAJOR CITIES IS GETTING WORSE.

According to a report by the City Futures Research Centre at UNSW, the proportion of people classed as highly disadvantaged in suburbs 10 to 19 kilometres from the Sydney CBD is 80 per cent, rising further to 139 per cent in the 20 to 29 kilometres band. By contrast, the rate of disadvantage within 10 kilometres of inner Sydney has shrunk by 82 per cent.

Australian research shows that there are three key social determinants of mental health and wellbeing – social inclusion, freedom from violence and discrimination and economic participation or income security. The pandemic response in western and south-west Sydney exposed the fault lines within our city on all of those key areas.

In western and south west Sydney, we further face increasing temperatures thanks to the urban heat island effect and ever decreasing green spaces. We are also on the cusp of a

significant shortage of GPs and other health professionals, which will pose significant barriers to accessing mental health support and care. Furthermore, many of those most vulnerable to the increasing cost of living and rising interest rates live in western and south west Sydney.

Often, in the wake of a crisis (like natural disasters), we set up a specific task force or team with responsibility for coordinating the response. Although we have heard a lot of rhetoric about understanding the inequalities exposed by COVID-19 and the response to the pandemic, and tackling the mental health and wellbeing crisis, there has not been much of an attempt to mount a coherent or structured response to address not just existing inequalities but also ones to come.

Since risk and protective factors for mental health act at several different levels, responses to them need to be multi-layered and multi-sectoral. Health, education, welfare, transport, and housing sectors all need to be involved and contribute to a 'health in all policies' approach.

Just over a decade ago, the Marmot Review identified a series of priorities in addressing health inequalities in the UK. The Review encouraged dedicating resources to addressing inequality in childhood, and focused on ensuring social justice, health and sustainability were at the heart of all policies. This presents a useful framework for a best practice approach in how we can better respond.

But we must remember that any action on addressing existing health inequalities must be universal and inclusive, but also proportionate to need. Simply targeting resources at the most disadvantaged groups alone runs the risk of detracting from the overall goal of reducing the steepness of the social gradient in health.



THE NSW GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FIX THE HOUSING CRISIS - ONLY LABOR WILL TAKE ACTION



ROSE JACKSON

NSW Shadow Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Water

YOU WOULD NEED TO BE LIVING UNDER A ROCK IN RECENT YEARS (AND BECAUSE OF THE HOUSING CRISIS SOME SADLY HAVE) TO BE AWARE THAT MOST LOW AND MIDDLE CLASS AUSTRALIANS CANNOT AFFORD HOUSING IN OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET. RENTING, LET ALONE SAVING FOR DEPOSIT TO PURCHASE A HOUSE, IS UNAFFORDABLE. THIS LET IT RIP HOUSING MARKET IS CAUSING AND EXACERBATING RENTAL STRESS, OVERCROWDING, A DECADE-LONG SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST, AND GROWING HOMELESSNESS.

Despite these concerns, the NSW Liberal-National Party's approach to housing since 2011 has been nothing but neglect, short-sightedness and indifference. It is as if we show the doctor our severe and worsening symptoms, and they inform us "yes that seems bad, I'll look into that" - but this continues for over 10 years. The solution is glaringly obvious: we need a new doctor who will acknowledge the symptoms, find the underlying cause, and take urgent action to fix the problem.

THE SYMPTOMS

One of the clearest recent sign that NSW is in a housing crisis comes from Hinchinbrook, a South-Western Sydney suburb located 35 kilometres away from the CBD. On an inspection day in January this year, police were called to manage the 200 prospective tenants flooding the street where a four bedroom rental was listed for \$530 a week. This example is just one of many - the statistics paint a grim picture on housing unaffordability.

The median Sydney house price is \$1.6 million, a full 55 per cent higher than in 2019. Most Australians do not receive pay rises of half their salary in their life, let alone in three years. One might assume that these prices are growing only in affluent, ultra-rich neighbourhoods. In reality, even the reasonably "affordable" Western Sydney at one point faced a \$1,200 per day increase in the median house price.

It's not just those trying to buy a house who face sky-rocketing prices, the median rental price in Sydney now subsumes 70 per cent of the median NSW income. This phenomenon is called 'rental stress', something which a third of renters in Western Sydney suffer from.

In NSW's regions, similar issues exist regarding housing unaffordability. Realestate.com revealed that, in the last year, rentals rose as much as 52 per cent in some towns. It is also reported that regional home prices spiked by 15 per cent in the previous 12 months.



How is this impacting on the most vulnerable Australians? Homelessness is on the rise, and in the 2020-21 financial year, almost 50 per cent of NSW's homeless population were rejected from public homelessness accommodation. There are 50,000 applicants on NSW's social housing waiting list, eight-thousand of which are on the priority list. And even for our front-line workers, there is not one LGA in Sydney with an affordable two bedroom apartment for their salary.

THE DIAGNOSIS

NSW has a housing crisis. The NSW Government has allowed our cities and our regions to become increasingly unequal - and housing is a major cause of this. Tens of thousands of key workers to commute more than 30 kilometres to work, that's time away

from family trapped in their cars.

The Government has made \$3.1 billion from the sale of social housing and yet the percentage of social housing stock in NSW continues to decline. It's the Liberals and Nationals who treat our most fundamental need for shelter as another commodity. It is the same government that suppresses wage growth through their public sector wages cap, and in their short-term political opportunism exacerbates house prices with demand subsidies like early superannuation access to pay mortgage deposits. It's obvious that the housing crisis is not just an uncontrollable outcome of market failure, the current NSW Government has directly contributed to this disaster.

TIME FOR A NEW DOCTOR

Labor will address housing inequality as a matter of urgency and priority. Remedying the issue starts with electing a NSW Government which treats housing as essential infrastructure that requires long-term investment and maintenance, not as a market commodity sold to the highest bidder.

Further, funding for new, safe, secure, and clean social housing is necessary and non-negotiable.

NO LONGER CAN NSW TOLERATE THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRE SALE OF PUBLIC HOUSING. WE MUST SERIOUS THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM LETTING ON HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN REGIONAL NSW AND WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT MEANINGFUL LOCAL SOLUTIONS. AS FOR RENTERS, LABOR WILL ELIMINATE NO-GROUNDS EVICTIONS AND BUILD A SYSTEM BASED ON FAIRNESS, SECURITY, AND AFFORDABILITY.

These policies will help alleviate inequality and ensure everyone in our state - from our hard-working essential workers to our most vulnerable citizens - are in positions to find and afford stable housing. If we truly consider affordable, safe, and secure housing a human right, then it is time for a new doctor.



JOHN GRAHAM

DEPUTY LABOR LEADER IN THE NSW
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

POVERTY & INEQUALITY

For many years NSW Treasurer Matt Kean has been attempting to pass himself off as a minor member of the Kennedy clan, posing under a poster of JFK at the slightest provocation.

In my view he would do better to take inspiration from another Kennedy – Robert Kennedy – and RFK's focus on the impact of poverty in his community.

Bobby Kennedy served on the Senate's subcommittees on Migratory Labor and Poverty. His interest in poverty encompassed both urban areas, including Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, and also rural America, most famously in an encounter in April 1967 in the Mississippi Delta. The scenes of childhood poverty RFK saw there stayed with him.

Back home in Australia, issues of poverty and inequality are regarded as the domain of the Federal Government. In one sense that is for good reason. Federal Governments hold many of the tax and welfare levers so important to determining levels of poverty in Australia.

HOWEVER I BELIEVE THAT TACKLING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IS ALSO A STATE ISSUE, ESPECIALLY AS AUSTRALIA'S COST OF LIVING CRISIS INTENSIFIES.

Labor's platform now recognises this. After a key conference debate in 2017, platform commitments make decreasing inequality a major state Labor priority.

The poverty statistics tell their own story. In 2020, 11.4 per cent of people in New South Wales were living on less than 50 per cent of the median income, one of the commonly accepted definitions of poverty. 7.2 per cent of the population lived on less than 40 per cent of median income and 4.1 per cent of people on less than 30 per cent.

We know that decreasing levels of inequality can boost economic performance, especially when inequality presents a barrier to full participation in

the workforce, or where it stops people reaching their full potential.

That provides a reason for a particular focus on the working poor. In New South Wales, 5 per cent of those in full-time work and 7 per cent of those in part-time work are living in poverty. In Australia the working poor are most likely to work in the industry sectors of agriculture, fishing and forestry or accommodation and food services.

State government holds five of the key levers that directly impact poverty and inequality:

- The justice system, with its tendency to entrench disadvantage.
- State cost of living measures and state fines, including driving fines, are generally not means tested either and impact differently on different communities.
- Service delivery in health and education varies greatly according to geography and can compound disadvantage.
- State government holds key housing policy levers that impact on homelessness, which is heavily linked to poverty.
- Government grant programmes are often insufficiently rigorous, with grants going to the loudest local lobby group, not on the basis of need.

POVERTY LEADS TO DISTRESS AND SOCIAL DISLOCATION. EXPERIENCED IN CHILDHOOD, THE EFFECTS CAN LAST A LIFETIME. CHILDREN GROWING UP IN POVERTY ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE A JOB AND MORE LIKELY TO REPORT ONGOING NERVOUSNESS.

Being poor can be lonely. With less money to eat out, to go out or in the most tolled city in the world to even get around, life can be very isolating.

In my inaugural speech, I said that living out the back of Albury in public housing taught me that often communities that rely most on government feel the least engaged by politics. As

a result, compared to other issues represented by energetic lobby groups, poverty can often be unseen.

Hence the need to turn the NSW spotlight to poverty and inequality. One way to do that is to take a leaf out of RFK's book, and in the next term of parliament launch a wide-ranging inquiry into poverty and inequality in NSW.

Such an inquiry should look at the extent of poverty and inequality in NSW. It should look behind the statistics at the causes and examine the state levers that could be used to help. The inquiry should tell the stories of poverty and inequality right across our state, especially for the working poor.

WE LIVE IN ONE OF THE RICHEST NATIONS ON EARTH, AT THE RICHEST TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY. IF WE CANNOT TACKLE THESE ISSUES NOW, WHEN WILL WE EVER BE ABLE TO?

After the pandemic more seems possible, when even an intractable issue like rough sleeping could be temporarily solved with hotel accommodation. Pandemic welfare measures also showed how quickly government action can address poverty. In 2020, an 8 per cent rise in incomes of the lowest 20 per cent saw many being able to afford essentials, bills and rent without stress for the first time. St Vincent de Paul New South Wales reported a 75 per cent drop in people needing help.

Even if we do win the next election, a wide-ranging inquiry would serve an important purpose. Such a complex problem that crosses agencies and jurisdictions is simply too large for one agency or one program to deal with it. Real progress requires a change in the culture and focus of government.

I hold out little hope that the Treasurer will switch Kennedys at this late stage so it will be left to a winning Labor Government to act in the spirit of RFK, launching a wide-ranging Legislative Council inquiry as one of its first acts with a mandate to detail and expose the issues of poverty and inequality in NSW.



**MICK
VEITCH**

*Shadow Minister
for Agriculture & for
Regional NSW*

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NSW HAS BEEN MISUSED UNDER THE CURRENT NSW COALITION GOVERNMENT.

Their outdated approach is either based on a “tax and spend” methodology or the distribution of funds derived from one off public asset sales, funds that are swiftly running out. In recent times, expenditure has also been characterised by pork-barrelling where the short-term political need of the Liberals and Nationals takes precedence over the long-term sustainable needs of the community.

The failure of the NSW Coalition to implement effective regional development policies has meant that many rural communities more than ever rely heavily upon one industry or employer and have no depth or layers to their economy. There is simply no effective strategy to diversify these economies. This affects the availability of quality, well-paying jobs for people living in our regions. There has also been no real attempt to address systemic issues such as gaps in economic performance and wealth accumulation, not only between the cities and the regions but also in the suburbs.

Many regions are realising that waiting for external economic injections through stimulus programs and direct government investment either will not occur or will not be sufficient to support community well-being and a sense of economic self-worth. There is a deep-seated sense in the regions and the suburbs that the prosperity of the last three decades has not been shared. The black summer bushfires, drought and floods have only compounded these sentiments – leaving already vulnerable people further exposed.

REBUILDING OUR REGIONS WITH COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

IT IS TIME TO EXPLORE NEW APPROACHES TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING OFFERS A NUANCED, FLEXIBLE APPROACH WHERE GOVERNMENTS CAN SUPPORT LOCAL, GROUND UP INITIATIVES.

Over the last decade or so, Community Wealth Building (CWB) has been embraced in several jurisdictions in the UK and the USA by local authorities responsible for communities and sections of the population “left behind” by the economy. Communities with high rates of disadvantage and unemployment, combined with diminished local economic self-determination and capacity.

The concept emerged in the United States grounded in the political activism of the 1960s and 70s. It came to prominence after the global financial crisis with the prime example being the Evergreen Cooperatives of Cleveland. This initiative was designed to create an economic breakthrough in Cleveland. In opposition to trickle-down economics, the Cleveland model focuses on economic inclusion and building a local economy from the ground up through both local employee-owned business creation and local job creation.

CWB represents a set of policies focussed on sustainability and distributive economics as seen in programs like the “Green New Deal”. It is one response to the extractive tendencies of global capitalism and financialisation, where wealth and dividends tend to be taken away from the local communities and environmental catastrophe is locked in. It is not too hard to identify a regional community in NSW that fits this description.

The argument for this policy response is only strengthened because of the shocks brought upon by COVID-19 and the related economic upheavals. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) talk about the Five Pillars of Community Wealth Building, the first being the progressive procurement of goods and services. This principle sees major

public entities acting as anchor institutions who use their procurement processes and decisions making to deepen local supply chains and socially responsible business development, spending and investment. The second pillar relates to fair employment and local labour markets and increasing fair work and developing local labour markets that support the wellbeing of communities. The third pillar is posited around the socially productive use of land and property, and this grows the social, ecological, financial and economic value that local communities gain from land and property assets. The Finance pillar ensures that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities and businesses and finally there is the plural ownership of the economy which focuses on developing more local social enterprises which generate community wealth.

The Growing Regional Opportunities for Work (GROW) in regional Victoria is an example of Community Wealth Building in practise in Australia. The initiatives were driven by local communities and are supported by the Victorian government. Currently Geelong, Shepparton, Gippsland, Bendigo and Ballarat all have CWB programs in place, but the approach taken in each location is different as they are driven by local needs. The City of Sydney are also engaged in the discussion about CWB, issuing a discussion paper last year.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING IS A SLOW AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS THAT REQUIRES TIME.

After so much recent devastation in our regions we need to ensure that all future rebuilding and resetting redirects wealth back into communities and gives those regional communities control over their future. Regional development policy should at the very least draw upon CWB principles to ensure that the benefits of expenditure are long lasting, embed economic resilience, and democratic development for all our regional communities.

We should at least have the discussion.



“We must bring expertise back in-house and stop draining institutional knowledge and skills out of the public sector through expensive and ineffective labour hire, outsourcing and consultant arrangements.



MELISSA DONNELLY

National Secretary of the CPSU

REPAIRING THE PUBLIC SERVICE

It's well-documented that the Abbott-Turnbull Morrison Government was profoundly destructive of the public service. The impacts of this vandalism are lived across our communities every day, in the form of enormous visa backlogs, long waits to access Centrelink and declining trust in Government following scandal after scandal. The impacts are being felt by staff too, who like so many others in the community are struggling with insecure work and wages falling well behind the cost of living.

THE ALBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS AN ENORMOUS JOB TO DO, TO REPAIR THIS DAMAGE.

But we want more than just a restoration – public sector staff, and the community, deserve a public service that is even better. Labor must be the party that builds rather than destroys, and no nation-building reform can succeed without a skilled, secure, and invigorated public service.

The debate about the kind of public service we want is often dominated by argument about big government versus small government. The more

important question is what we want government to do, and what citizens have a right to expect. Fundamentally, we need services that we can all rely on, when we need them. We want respectful, responsive and reliable access – such as set out in our Shared Statement for a Better Services Australia, signed by the CPSU, the ACTU, ACOSS and a range of civil society organisations.

The public service also has a critical function of providing ideas, analysis and policy advice. This is a core function of government that the Coalition also undermined and sought to privatise, through the extraordinary reliance on expensive consultants.

Finally, we also need a service that has the respect of its government. Public servants are rightly proud of the incredibly important work that they do. I've written elsewhere of the important signals that the Albanese Government is sending about respect for the public service. We want a career-based public servants that continues to attract motivated, skilled people. Reckoning with insecure work in the public service is a critical first step.

On these issues there are some good stories so far. From the recent Jobs Summit, the Government has announced 500 additional APS employees to address visa backlogs, 1000 digital traineeships, the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia, and gender equity measures in the APS.

On top of that, the Government is starting to directly address insecure work. At the end of June, there were over 1,000 labour hire workers at Services Australia. By the end of August, this was down to 68.

This work must form part of a bigger picture, in which the public service is resourced to its full potential. We need a secure jobs audit across the whole of the APS, so that staff have security and the community has the services it needs.

WE KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, AND WE WILL PURSUE OUR AGENDA AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. ON SERVICES, THE COMMUNITY MUST BE GUARANTEED GOOD, RELIABLE SERVICES THAT GET US THROUGH GOOD TIMES AND BAD.

We must bring expertise back in-house and stop draining institutional knowledge and skills out of the public sector through expensive and ineffective labour hire, outsourcing and consultant arrangements.

And we need to also ensure the integrity and transparency of government, including through establishing the National Anti-Corruption Commission but also better resourcing functions such as the National Audit Office and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

The election of the Albanese Government has been an enormous relief, and we're at an optimistic moment. Work is starting to repair the damage but there is of course much to do. CPSU members are strong and united and will use our collective voice to make sure Labor delivers in government.

THROUGH FIRE, FLOOD AND PANDEMIC, WE NEED STRONG PUBLIC SERVICES. THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS HAVE DRIVEN HOME WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO. WE'VE ALSO SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GOVERNMENTS DON'T WANT TO TAKE ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

The labour movement has a vital job – to make sure our Government is the best version of itself that it can be.



JEROME LAXALE MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BENNELONG

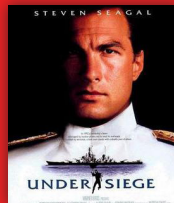
JEROME LAXALE'S TOP 5!



As you'll see by some of my answers below, when I consume entertainment, I usually head towards the most intellectually un-challenging.



As such, I'm a total sucker for predictable action movies. I'm talking the Under Siege and Die Hard variety of cinematic brilliance.



When I watch these films, my mind stops working and I'm hooked on the cheap thrills, bad jokes and workshopped catch-phrases.

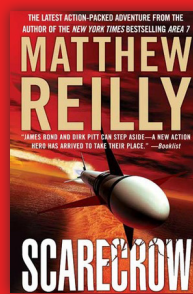
The best of the bunch for me? Under Siege. What's not to like? Segal, Tommy Lee Jones and the USS Missouri. I'm just a cook.



I'm a big fan of Muse, with Madness being my favourite song of their catalogue. I tend to just listen to whatever playlists Apple Music or Spotify throws up for me.



Again, cheap n nasty thrills are needed when I make time to read, usually only over the Christmas and New Year break.



I tend to reach for the holiday house staple Matthew Reilly. Reading the latest book in Scarecrow series on the balcony is just fine by me.

My favourite stand-alone book of late is Girl on a Train by Paula Hawkins.

Hot tip, the book is better than the film.



TOP MAGAZINE

I'm a millennial, I don't read magazines. Does Twitter count?



TOP WEBSITE

TikTok.

Hands down.

I waste waaaay to much time on that damn thing.



WHAT IS ONE KEY CAMPAIGN LESSON YOU LEARNT IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION?



**LISA
JEFFERY**

MACQUARIE CAMPAIGN

“Every interaction with voters is an opportunity to start developing trust and the belief that things can be better. Make sure the follow-up gets prioritised and delivered during the campaign, even if we can’t achieve the exact outcome (yet).”



**LUKA
HARRISON**

HUNTER CAMPAIGN

“The biggest thing I learnt is that Labor campaigns are at their best when we run candidates that reflect their communities and we’re having genuine, authentic conversations with voters.”



**INDIA
JONES**

SHORTLAND CAMPAIGN

“One key lesson that I learnt is the importance of campaign volunteers and the values they can incorporate into your campaign.”



**DECLAN
DAVIS**

BANKS CAMPAIGN

“Prioritise follow-up with voters. People are used to campaigns underdelivering on this, so when you do it well it leaves a deep impression on that voter, which they are likely to amplify by telling their friends / family. And sort your local commitments as far in advance as you can to give yourself adequate time to campaign on them properly!”



**TERYN
CRICK**

GILMORE CAMPAIGN

“For regional seats especially, keep it local to connect with what really matters to people. Translate big national issues into the local context, ensure you have local solutions and be responsive to what you are hearing from voters.”

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This

cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

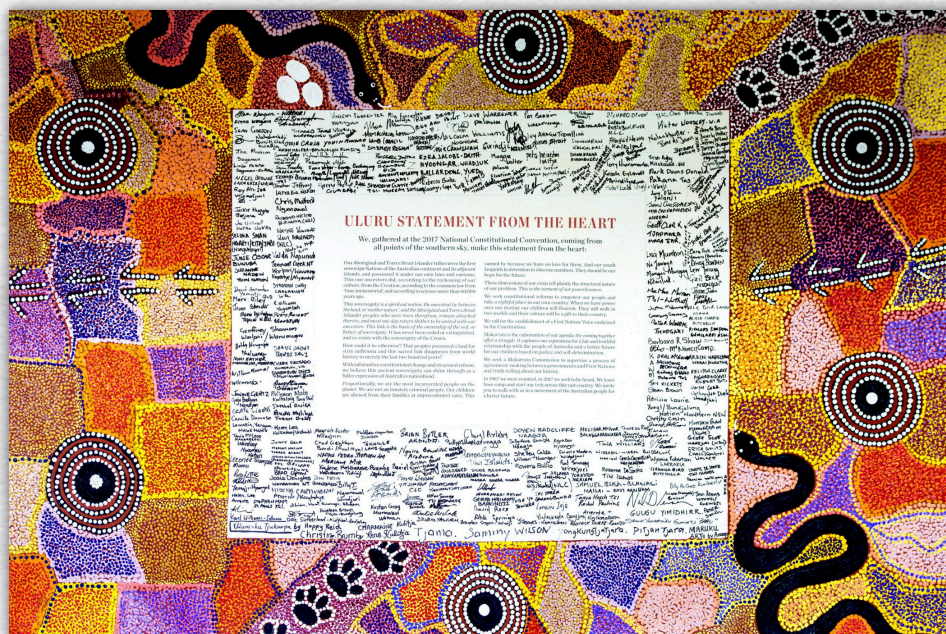
We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.



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