

START THE CHANGE

MAKE NSW NUMBER ONE AGAIN

ECONOMY
HOSPITALS SCHOOLS
PLANNING ROADS ENVIRONMENT
HOSPITALS
ENVIRONMENT HOSPITALS
ROADS
JOBS SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY TRAINS PLANNING
BUSES PLANNING TRAINS
SCHOOLS ECONOMY POLICE
HOSPITALS COMMUNITY
TRANSPORT
SCHOOLS
POLICE
MAKE
NSW
NUMBER
ONE
AGAIN



THE NATIONALS
for Regional NSW



A CLEAR GOAL: MAKING NSW NUMBER ONE AGAIN

NSW was once the engine room of the Australian economy and the best place in Australia to live. The NSW Liberals & Nationals team are committed to making NSW Number One again.

We have a strong action plan for government. It is based on a Five Point Plan:

- 1. Rebuilding the NSW economy:** through lower taxes and business growth.
- 2. Returning Quality Services:** we will return quality services in areas such as health, transport, education and community safety.
- 3. Renovating Infrastructure:** we will renovate the infrastructure that makes a difference to both our economy and people's lives.
- 4. Restore Accountability to Government:** by giving people a say on issues that affect their lives; and
- 5. Protect our Local Environment** and return planning powers to the community.

Outlined in this agenda for change are initiatives and policies that the NSW Liberals & Nationals have already announced over the past 3 years.

We have a strong team and the right ideas to turn NSW around.

The election next March represents the most significant choice in a generation. The choice between a future where we make NSW Number One again – or more of the decline and lost hopes of the last 15 years.

We need you to join us and start the change.

STRONG VALUES: I BELIEVE

I believe that good government must understand the aspirations of people and communities if it is to deliver the best possible services, modern infrastructure and public institutions that strengthen people's choices, opportunities and freedoms.

I believe in:

1. **Providing opportunity:** The people of NSW deserve opportunities to shape their own future. A vibrant and strong economy generates the best opportunities for a fulfilling job, choice and financial security. A strong economy allows government to re-build services such as health care and education and to properly protect our environment.
2. **Delivering the best possible services:** The people of NSW are also 'customers' of government. They pay taxes. People deserve reliable services and a public service that is ready and responsive. People deserve a government that works as hard as they do and one that respects the efforts that produced the taxes entrusted to government.
3. **Enhancing your quality of life:** People work to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities. They expect government to do its part. It's about more than economic considerations. It's about protecting our communities, our local environment and our physical and mental health. I want to get government focused on building a better life for the people of NSW.
4. **Talking honestly about our challenges:** I believe in trust. If you trust people they will make good decisions for themselves and others. Honesty is about not fearing accountability. Governments that measure their performance openly and are honest with people about the challenges will be able to do better. The best governments work to deliver for the people, not themselves.
5. **Valuing home and neighbourhood:** Our homes and neighbourhoods are more than just 'places'. They are where we raise our children and make friends, where we volunteer and help those in need. We strive to make our streets safe and secure. It's time to give people back their sense of place and purpose and to make our neighbourhoods places of positive opportunities.

These are the five values that will shape a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.



Barry O'Farrell
Leader of the NSW Liberals

FIVE POINT PLAN

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Rebuild the NSW economy through lower taxes and business growth

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The NSW Liberals & Nationals will

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The NSW Liberals & Nationals will

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ONE:

REBUILD THE NSW ECONOMY THROUGH LOWER
TAXES AND BUSINESS GROWTH

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY



ONE: Rebuild the NSW economy through lower taxes and business growth

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY

The people of NSW deserve opportunities to shape their own future. A vibrant and strong economy generates the best opportunities for a fulfilling job, choice and financial security. A strong economy allows government to re-build services such as health care and education and to properly protect our environment.

The NSW Liberals' & Nationals' first priority for NSW is unashamedly restoring economic growth and establishing NSW as the first place in Australia to do business.

The dividends of strong economic management are better services and infrastructure. Whether in transport, health, disability, homelessness, regional development or any other area of State Government responsibility, improved outcomes can only be delivered from a strong bottom line.

Many of us remember when NSW was unarguably number one in Australia - we were the 'Premier State', the financial capital, the leader in ideas and innovation. We were proud to say we were from New South Wales.

Over 15 years our reputation and performance has suffered as other states and nations became smarter and more competitive - and the NSW Government remained complacent.

It's taken a toll on our reputation, our quality of life and our opportunities.

Since June 1995 while our competitor states have posted economic growth rates as high as 90 per cent in Queensland, 80 per cent in Western Australia and 65 per cent in Victoria, NSW dragged along the bottom at 46 per cent.¹

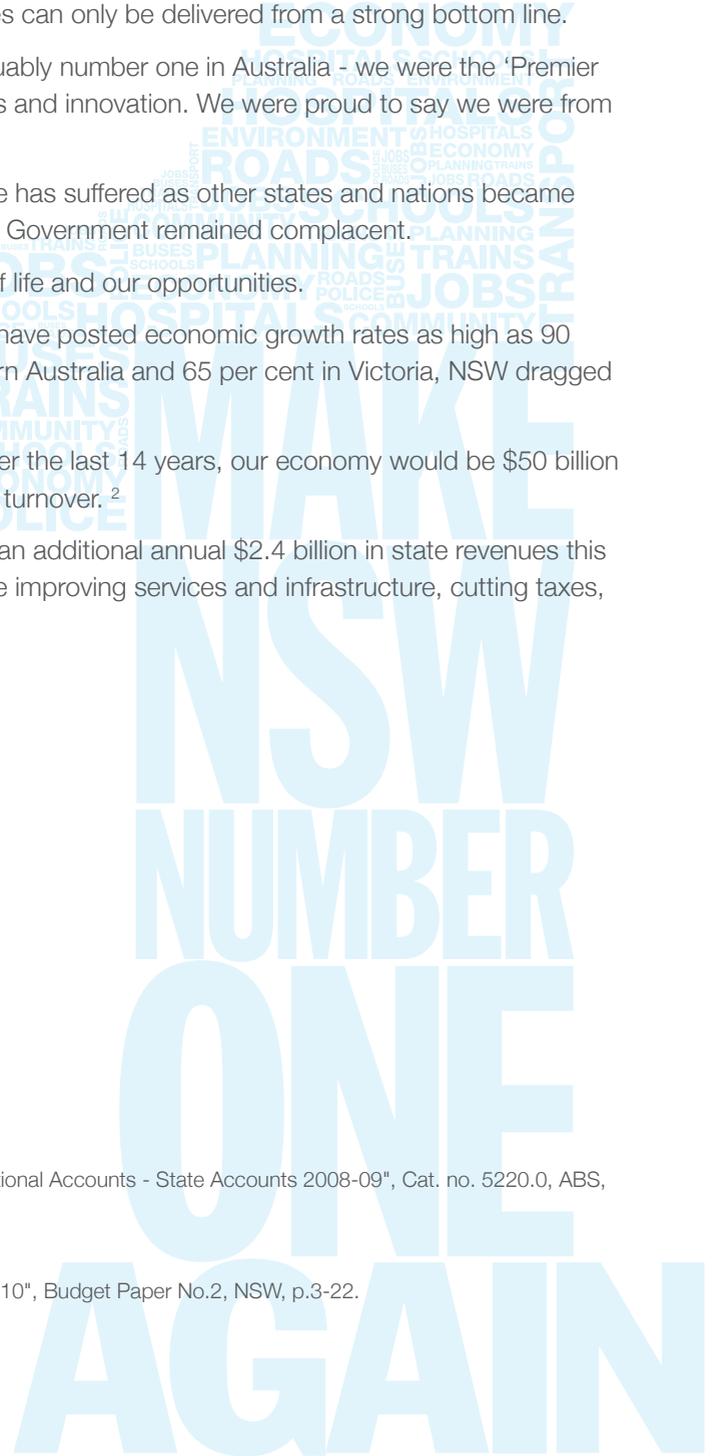
If NSW growth had kept pace with Victoria over the last 14 years, our economy would be \$50 billion larger - the equivalent of BHP Billiton's annual turnover.²

But more importantly, it would have delivered an additional annual \$2.4 billion in state revenues this year³ - money that could have been put to use improving services and infrastructure, cutting taxes, or encouraging investment and jobs.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2009), "Australian National Accounts - State Accounts 2008-09", Cat. no. 5220.0, ABS, Canberra.

2 Ibid.

3 NSW Government, (2009), "Budget Statement 2009-10", Budget Paper No.2, NSW, p.3-22.



THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL TARGET 100,000 NEW JOBS FOR NSW WITH THEIR JOBS ACTION PLAN

The opportunity of a job is a significant pathway to choice, quality of life and security for every individual.

To grow our economy, and enable jobs growth, government should remove obstacles to job creation where possible.

This is why the NSW Liberals & Nationals have a **Jobs Action Plan** to target 100,000 new jobs for NSW.

NSW lags Australia when it comes to jobs growth. Over the past decade NSW has suffered the lowest jobs growth of any Australian State¹ and over the last 5 years NSW has had the highest unemployment rate of any mainland State.²

NSW also boasts the highest payroll tax burden of any Australian State.³

The first priority of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Five Point Plan is to rebuild the NSW economy through lower taxes and business growth.

Under the NSW Liberals & Nationals **Jobs Action Plan** businesses that increase employment levels will not pay any payroll tax on the additional employees for their first year of employment.

The **Jobs Action Plan** will work by:

- **providing a payroll tax rebate of \$4,000 per full time employee for the first 100,000 new payroll tax paying jobs created in NSW;**
- **paying the rebate in two equal parts, on the first and second anniversary of the hire of a new full time employee. This will encourage long term, sustainable jobs.**

It is estimated that the NSW Liberals & Nationals **Jobs Action Plan** will reduce the NSW unemployment rate by up to 0.3 per cent, and increase economic activity by up to \$3.6 billion.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2010), "Labour Force, Australia", Table 04 Labour force status by sex – New South Wales - seasonally adjusted, time series spreadsheet, Cat. no. 6202.0, ABS, Canberra, viewed 15 March 2010 at [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/meisubs.nsf/0/644C2FD6F8871B16CA2576E2002225CC/\\$File/6202004.xls](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/meisubs.nsf/0/644C2FD6F8871B16CA2576E2002225CC/$File/6202004.xls).

2 Ibid.

3 Institute of Public Affairs, "State Business Tax Calculator – Fact Sheets", retrieved 20 March 2010 at http://www.ipa.org.au/library/publication/1262832430_document_20091218--state_tax_2009_-_fact_sheets.pdf.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL DELIVER GREATER REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY THROUGH A 'DECADE OF DECENTRALISATION'

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will work with councils, shires and communities around NSW to ensure that regional NSW plays an even bigger part than ever before in the future of NSW and managing predicted population growth.¹

We are determined to make the next ten years **'The Decade of Decentralisation'**.

With a front bench team including eight Nationals and six country-based Liberals, we will change the way government approaches the opportunities of our regional economies, environment and quality of life.

We will work closely with local communities to ensure their priorities, preferences and local regional strengths are understood in policy-making.

In addition to other regional initiatives in this publication, we will

- actively pursue strategies and policies to encourage **decentralisation** - steady and strategic growth in our regions;
- identify more **public sector job opportunities** to locate in regional areas;
- ensure the **services** people need to make regional living attractive and viable are available and of high quality;
- give back to local communities at all levels as much **local decision-making** and participation as possible, along with appropriate accountability and responsibility;
- invite local communities to help **identify more ways** to devolve decision making to regions, cities, towns, neighbourhoods, schools and local health services;
- manage NSW's predicted **population growth** with a careful balance between green-fields, urban infill and regional housing growth;
- deploy **Infrastructure NSW** to assist in planning for the provision of major regional infrastructure; and
- work with local councils and shires to deliver the right priorities and the best value for local areas from the NSW **roads** budget.

¹ Summary of key points made in an address by Barry O'Farrell, NSW Liberals & Nationals Leader, to the NSW Shires Association Annual Conference, June 1, 2010.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL REVITALISE REGIONAL NSW THROUGH OUR REGIONAL KICK-START PACKAGE

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe in the potential of regional NSW and it will play a central role in our plan to Make NSW Number One Again.

Our Regional Kick Start package will ensure we build the infrastructure, create the jobs and bring the people back to regional NSW.

Regional NSW is a great place to live, work and raise a family. However it has unfairly borne the brunt of NSW Labor's neglect. Infrastructure is run down and it lacks basic services.

NSW is one state. We cannot stand and watch a two-tiered society and two-speed economy emerge. Regional people are industrious, hard working and capable. There is no reason for regional unemployment to run above the state average.

Regional NSW contributes more than its fair share to the NSW economy through industries like mining, agriculture and tourism. It deserves its fair share of economic growth and infrastructure investment.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals have a plan for kick starting regional NSW. It involves building the infrastructure, creating jobs and bringing the people:

- **Building the Infrastructure: 30 per cent of Restart NSW, the NSW Liberals & Nationals capital fund to fix NSW will be earmarked for regional NSW.**
- **Creating the Jobs: 40,000, or 40 per cent, of the new jobs targeted for NSW under the NSW Liberals & Nationals Jobs Action Plan will be prioritised for regional NSW.**
- **Bringing the People: The NSW Liberals & Nationals will introduce a Regional Relocation Grant of \$7,000 to encourage individuals and families to move from Sydney to regional NSW communities.**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe in regional NSW and have a strong plan to give it the kick-start it deserves.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL DELIVER INDUSTRY ACTION PLANS FOR HIGH POTENTIAL AND HIGH PERFORMANCE INDUSTRIES

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to growing the NSW economy.

According to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics NSW has been the slowest growing Australian state over the past 15 years and over 2008-09 gross state product in NSW grew 0.2 per cent – the lowest of any state.¹

Economic growth enables the government to provide a higher standard of services and infrastructure. Ultimately this strengthens community wellbeing and improves people's quality of life.

Part of growing NSW and future proofing the NSW economy for the next generation is encouraging 21st century industries. We must ensure that NSW has a competitive advantage in the major job generating industries of the next 100 years.

The first step is refocusing the Department of State and Regional Development to ensure it is a highly focussed department with clear, deliverable goals. It must have a clear mandate to deliver on our plans for economic growth.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will deliver **Industry Action Plans** for high growth industries such as environmental management, coal seam methane, financial services, biomedical, defence and information technology.

Industry Action Plans will:

- **identify drivers for and barriers to, growth and innovation in the sector, especially those caused by government practices;**
- **detail a program for government and industry to encourage sector growth and innovation, covering areas including skills, regulations, R&D, infrastructure and policy reform; and**
- **contain specific KPI's including clear timetables and benchmarks to monitor progress.**

By providing clear plans for high potential and high performance industries the NSW Liberals & Nationals will ensure the long term drivers for growing jobs and prosperity are firmly established for the next generation.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2009), op. cit., Cat. no. 5220.0.

THE NSW LIBERALS' & NATIONALS' CABINET MINISTERS WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR FISCAL DIRECTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Accountability starts at the top. Every Cabinet Minister should be held responsible for decisions relating to fiscal strategy including announcements on services and infrastructure.

In any business, project management is an essential part of daily financial management. Boards and CEOs have a responsibility to shareholders to be aware of the status of projects in terms of timetable, expenditure and risk.

Yet in NSW over 15 years of Labor, projects have gone off the rails with multi-million dollar cost overruns and blowouts in completion dates. Some projects have incurred hundreds of millions of dollars in expenditure – and been cancelled with nothing to show for it.

No boardroom, or CEO in the private sector would be permitted to get away with such incompetence. Recent examples of Labor incompetence include:

- The Epping-Chatswood Rail Link, where only half the original project was delivered at almost double the cost – and delivered three years late.¹
- The North West Rail Link, when first promised in 1998,² was estimated to cost \$50 million/kilometre and to be operating this year.³ Labor says it now won't be finished until 2024 and the cost has escalated to \$300 million/kilometre.
- Labor's T-card fiasco has cost at least \$100 million, with no T-Card to show for it.⁴
- Labor's Rozelle Metro fiasco has cost at least \$498 million in cancellation compensation costs.⁵

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will introduce a Cabinet reporting framework for all major infrastructure and service commitments that will include:

- **independent verification of Treasury costings;**
- **clear statements on the impact of costings on forward budgets;**
- **quarterly project progress updates direct to Cabinet that note time and costings variations; and**
- **quarterly Treasury fiscal reports to Cabinet.**

1 Foschia, Liz, (2009), "Overdue Sydney rail link due to open", ABC News Online, 21 February 2009, retrieved 16 March 2010 at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/02/21/2497615.htm>.

2 NSW Ministry of Transport, (1998), "Action for Transport 2010", Media Release, 23 November 1998.

3 Ibid.

4 West, Andrew, (2009), "Tcard company cries poor over lawsuit", The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 December 2009, p. 2.

5 Murray, Lisa, (2010), "Axed metro to cost \$500m", The Australian Financial Review, 19 March 2010, p. 5.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL PAY NSW GOVERNMENT BILLS WITHIN 30 DAYS

The NSW Government is a major part of the NSW economy, with government expenditure representing 18 per cent of GSP.¹ The NSW Government is also a significant customer for many small businesses.

Many small businesses rely on the NSW Government to pay its bills on time, so they can pay their own suppliers and employees.

In 2009 it was revealed that NSW Health owed almost \$92 million dollars, including the South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service owing \$21.7 million dollars and the Sydney West Area Health Service owing \$21.7 million dollars.²

Local nurses at the Dubbo Base Hospital were forced to borrow bandages and medical equipment from a vet to use on patients because of the Health Department's failure to pay millions of dollars in bills on time.³

This is why the NSW Liberals & Nationals will ensure the NSW State Government bills are paid within 30 days. It is about treating small businesses with respect and honouring commitments the Government has made.

We will introduce a **Code of Practice** that will:

- **require public sector accounts with small business suppliers involving contracts of up to \$1 million to be paid within 30 days, bringing NSW into line with current Federal Government policy;**
- **ensure that failure to meet the 30 day deadline will result in penalty interest being paid to the creditor;**
- **direct all agencies to provide quarterly reports about their payment performance with results to be posted on the Department of Commerce website; and**
- **direct the Auditor-General to undertake compliance audits of payment systems across government to ensure agencies meet the new on-time bill payment policy.**

1 Calculated from New South Wales Government, (2009), "Budget Statement 2009-10", Budget Paper No. 2, NSW, p. 3-23.

2 NSW Health, "FOI09/248 – unpaid accounts 45 days and over", NSW Department of Health, request made by Jillian Skinner MP, 8 December 2009.

3 Wallace, Natasha, (2008), "Why Dubbo's gone to dogs", Daily Liberal Online, 16 October 2008, retrieved 10 March 2010 at <http://www.dailyliberal.com.au/news/local/news/general/why-dubbos-gone-to-dogs/1335173.aspx>.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR NEIGHBOURING TRADING PARTNERS

Growing the NSW economy is not just about sharpening our competitive edge with our rival Australian states and territories.

Our opportunities are also beyond Australia – especially in the powerhouse economies of China and India and our other Asia Pacific neighbours.

It is our objective to make Sydney not just Number One in Australia – but a leading economy and financial capital in our region.

It is disappointing that none of the four Labor Premiers over the past 15 years made it a priority to make official visits to our significant trading partners. These relationships are too important to put on hold.

In February 2010 Barry O'Farrell led a delegation of senior business representatives from NSW to China and India. The delegation met with senior government officials and business leaders in both countries. The visit was conducted with no taxpayer funding.

Visiting Beijing and Shanghai was an opportunity to visit Australia's Shanghai Expo 2010 Pavilion, which expects to receive 40,000 visitors per week and help promote greater investment and trade between NSW and China. We need to aggressively pursue these types of opportunities.

Barry O'Farrell also became the first NSW MP to visit both the Shanghai and Mumbai NSW Trade and Investment offices, where local staff work hard on behalf of NSW businesses and residents to maximise our trade and investment opportunities every day.

Since these visits, Barry O'Farrell has received visiting trade delegates to Sydney.

Trade relationships with these important and growing markets need time, trust and maturity to maximise benefits to the NSW economy and citizens.

To prove our resolve to develop long term relationships in these markets, a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will;

- **return to China and India in the first six months of government with a delegation led by the Premier and the Treasurer; and**
- **consolidate and develop relationships and promote the skills and resources of NSW.**

Industries such as information and communication technologies, mining and resources, financial services, education, pharmaceutical and health care, and building and construction are among the many opportunities to pursue for NSW in these growing economies.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL COMPETE FOR MORE INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES

As in commerce and life, NSW has to get out and compete. A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will send a clear message that NSW is open for business.

We will stimulate economic activity and boost trade and exports with measures to;

- create a consistent and cohesive 'Brand NSW';
- restore Sydney's reputation as a global finance capital;
- engage our universities and think tanks in economic development; and
- make the most of our multicultural society to strengthen trade relationships.

To facilitate export development and help open doors to export markets we will:

- **appoint a Parliamentary Secretary for Asia Pacific Trade to work with representatives of our Trade Offices;**
- **ensure NSW Trade Offices are actively seeking out emerging opportunities and trial the most promising with 'pilot' projects; and**
- **convene a NSW Export and Investment Advisory Board (NSWEIAB) comprising experienced business and NGO representatives.**

To harness NSW's cultural diversity, language skills and overseas links as part of our pitch for new business we will:

- **create a Multicultural Business Advisory Panel to work with the new NSWEIAB; and**
- **continue to support the National Multicultural Marketing Awards.**

To develop Sydney's credentials as a global financial capital we will:

- **pursue the opportunity to also position Sydney as a regional centre for international development finance;**
- **directly offer specialised NSW public service expertise to developing nations; and**
- **encourage the headquartering of more global NGO's in Sydney as the place where ideas are exchanged and partnerships formed.**

TWO:

RETURN QUALITY SERVICES IN AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH,
TRANSPORT, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

PROVIDING YOU WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICES



TWO: Return quality services in areas such as health, transport, education and community safety

PROVIDING YOU WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICES

The people of NSW are also 'customers' of government. They pay taxes. People deserve reliable services and public service that is ready and responsive. People deserve a government that works as hard as they do and one that respects the efforts that produced the taxes entrusted to government.

In September 2009 we launched a statewide consultation on our **Social Policy Framework: 'Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer'**.¹

Valuable feedback to Liberal and Nationals MPs has contributed to our plans to fix problems and improve services.

Six principles guided consultations, and continue to shape policy.

Firstly, we believe that **early intervention and prevention** of problems before they become serious should be our objective.

With our ageing population and the rise of chronic and avoidable illnesses, the NSW Liberals & Nationals recognise the importance of prevention through the establishment of a separate Shadow Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. Our intention is to focus on ways to maintain and improve good health, and give it the attention it deserves across all government activities.

Similarly, our **Literacy & Numeracy** policy focuses on identifying and supporting students at risk of falling behind early in their learning – rather than let more complex consequences develop later in life.

Secondly, we place value on **local decision making and community partnerships**. This approach underpins policies on local health boards; tackling graffiti; and community involvement in planning decisions. The same characteristics that make Australians such generous volunteers motivate people in their own communities to participate in community projects, governance of local services and looking after each other. The NSW Liberals & Nationals want to steadily devolve more decision making in sectors and communities where people want it.

Thirdly, we believe in the right of individuals to make **informed choices and the expectation they will accept responsibility**. This approach underpins our proposal for individualised care packages for people with disabilities. Carers and the people they care for should be respected and trusted to make the choices which are best for them.

Fourth, it goes without saying that residents should expect that **NSW should offer the highest quality and standard of services** in Australia. This will require disciplined economic management, and a focus on the performance of government, with an open mind as to how to improve services and keep them responsive to emerging needs. In other words, to put the people and taxpayers of NSW firmly at the forefront of a new customer service culture for public services.

Fifth, delivery of services must be **timely and equitable**. People should not have to accept lower quality services based on where they live or their personal circumstances.

Finally, **openness, transparency and accountability** defines the character, and actions of a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.

¹ O'Farrell MP, Barry & Stoner MP, Andrew, (2009), "Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer : NSW Libs/Nats Social Policy Framework", Media Release, 21 September 2009.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL INCREASE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE RUNNING OF THE NSW PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

The NSW Liberals & Nationals have faith in local communities, and believe they should be involved in making the decisions that affect their area and future.

In government we will empower local communities by giving them better information and genuine data about local health services and let them have a real say in the public health system that is there to serve them.

We will decentralise clinical decision-making, support the role of medical practitioners, nurses, and other health care professionals, empower hospital managers and provide a structure for significant community involvement.

As detailed in the NSW Liberals & Nationals *'Making It Work'* health policy, we will:

- **replace Labor's huge and out-of-touch Area Health Services with smaller Health Districts;**
- **appoint Boards to the Health Districts and make them accountable to the communities they serve;**
- **restore the decision-making power of Hospital General Managers and give authority back to expert clinicians;**
- **further develop clinical networks that link medical experts across the system;**
- **appoint a qualified medical practitioner as Executive Clinical Director in each Health District; and**
- **publish information about health service management including Budget allocations, the capacity of an institution to undertake treatments and patient care outcomes through an independent Information Bureau.**

There is consensus between most health stakeholders, including the Federal Government, that the NSW health system needs a flatter and more locally focused management structure that better utilises the expertise of medical practitioners, nurses, other health care professionals and the community.

Only a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will restore confidence in the public health system, re-engaging medical practitioners and once again give local communities a strong and direct voice in local patient care.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL IMPROVE THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY OF OUR STUDENTS THROUGH OUR LITERACY & NUMERACY ACTION PLAN

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will ensure children develop the foundations for success in literacy and numeracy at an early age. We believe every child has the right to achieve in reading, writing and maths.

The **Literacy & Numeracy Action Plan** will invest \$250 million in early intervention by individually targeting those students most at risk. It includes:

- **providing an additional 900 teachers for the Reading Recovery Program and expanding it to include both literacy and numeracy;**
- **reallocating more than 300 K-2 Support Teachers Learning Assistance (STLA) to provide more intensive support to students in Years 3-10;**
- **moving responsibility for preschools from the Department of Human Services (formerly the Department of Community Services) to the Department of Education;**
- **using Kindergarten screening assessments and other data to identify K-2 students at risk of not meeting literacy and numeracy standards; and**
- **establishing a Ministerial Working Group comprising educational experts to report annually on the performance of our Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.**

With one in five Year 9 students at or below the minimum standards in reading, writing and maths, it's time to change our approach towards literacy and numeracy.¹

Under Labor almost 13,000 students across NSW every year are unable to adequately read, write or count by the time they finish primary school.² Sadly for most of these children, by the time they reach high school it is almost too late for them to recover these skills.

Only a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will deliver a strong education system that promotes equity, as well as excellence.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Action Plan will help develop children's literacy and numeracy skills and ensure a seamless transition from preschool to primary school and then onto high school.

1 National Assessment Program, (2009), "Literacy & Numeracy – NAPLAN Summary Report", Australia, 2009.

2 Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, (2009), "National Report: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy 2009", Australia and NSW Department of Education and Training, (2008), "Statistical Compendium 2008", NSW.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL FIX SYDNEY'S FERRY SERVICES

Sydney's ferry services are not just an efficient form of transport; they are an iconic part of Sydney's history.

However, for many years the management, culture and safety record of Sydney Ferries has been an ongoing concern. Despite report after report Labor's only response has been inaction.

Trip forecast figures in the State Government's \$50.2 billion Metropolitan Transport Plan, which maps out the future of Sydney's transport network, show ferry patronage falling by 4.8 per cent by 2020.¹

Currently 40,000 commuters a day use Sydney Ferries but this will fall to 38,000, despite the fact the city's population is predicted to grow by more than five million people.²

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe we can fix Sydney's ferries by increasing the role of the private sector in service delivery without privatising the service.

In government we will look to involve business in the leasing, maintenance and operation of the Sydney ferry fleet.

To ensure customers and taxpayers are protected we will also look to introduce strict new community obligations which will cover areas such as fare structure, routes and safety obligations within a service contract.

This model in delivering ferry services is consistent with that undertaken successfully in Brisbane.³

The potential for government to enhance quality and affordability of ferry services by working with the private sector has been demonstrated through the success of the privately run Manly Fast Ferry.

NSW Labor axed the JetCat services to Manly in November 2008,⁴ to be replaced with a private operator to deliver the service. Since then commuters have been enjoying better customer service, more environmentally friendly vessels and significantly improved reliability.

1 NSW Government, (2010), "Metropolitan Transport Plan – Connecting the City of Cities", Sydney, February 2010, p. 15.

2 Ibid.

3 Petersen, Kary & Wilkie, Caroline, (2009), "TTF Transport Position Paper – Revitalising Sydney Ferries", Tourism & Transport Forum Australia, New South Wales, p. 3.

4 NSW State Government, (2008), "2008-09 Mini-Budget", New South Wales, p. A-10.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL INTRODUCE NEW NIGHTRIDE BUS SERVICES

The NSW travelling public deserves a safe, reliable and accessible public transport system, particularly late at night.

NightRide bus services play a valuable role in ensuring that people in Sydney are able to get home safely from shift work or following a night out. However, currently across many destinations the service is simply not available, or is too infrequent.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will:

- **Provide a weekend timetable service on Thursday nights.** In many cases this means that the frequency of services will be doubled.
- **Introduce a new NightRide Bus Service to Richmond.** On weekends four bus services terminate at Blacktown. We will extend these services to Richmond with an additional ten stops – Marayong, Quakers Hill, Schofields, Riverstone, Vineyard, Mulgrave, Windsor, Clarendon, East Richmond and Richmond.
- **Increase the frequency of weekend NightRide services to Macarthur.** We will extend the current weekend N50 Route that terminates at Liverpool to Macarthur, meaning there will be a service to Macarthur twice an hour on weekends. This will further assist people living in Campbelltown, Leumeah, Minto, Ingleburn, Macquarie Fields, Glenfield and Casula.
- **Introduce a new weekend NightRide Bus Service along the Carlingford Line and increase NightRide services to Parramatta.** A new service will be established to run from the City to Carlingford. This service will follow the existing N60 Route between Town Hall and Lidcombe and then extend from Lidcombe to seven stops – Clyde, Rosehill, Camellia, Rydalmere, Dundas, Telopea and Carlingford. The service will run every hour, which will provide increased frequency for commuters on the N60 Route between Town Hall and Lidcombe and a new service for commuters on the Carlingford line.

These additional services will help people commuting to work at night, and ensure people having a night out arrive home safely.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL INCREASE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Community Transport is vital for seniors, the ill, people with disability and people who live in isolated communities.

It provides non-emergency transport to members of the community who do not have access to transport. This includes assisting transport-isolated people to get to medical appointments, social and recreational activities, grocery shopping and access to social services.

Community Transport groups rely on over 3,500 volunteers to assist in various roles including volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles and bus assistants.¹

In 2007-2008 Community Transport Groups carried in excess of 139,103 passengers on 2,262,150 trips, travelling nearly 29 million kilometres.² Thirty per cent of these trips were health-related.³

Community transport groups estimate they refuse 90,000 requests for transport to health services every year.⁴

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will make access to Community Transport a priority. In government we will:

- **Provide an additional \$12 million to the Community Transport Program through the Ministry of Transport. This will extend services to thousands of transport-disadvantaged people.**
- **Establish a “one stop shop” for Community Transport providers within the Ministry of Transport to improve communication, efficiency and reduce unnecessary administration costs.**
- **Establish an appropriate driver accreditation framework to ensure Community Transport providers can enhance their services and ensure utmost safety of volunteers, employees and clients.**

We will end Labor’s decade of neglect. The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe we owe it to those with disability, those in remote communities and our seniors the ability to get around.

1 Nowacki, Ian, (Vice President), (2008), “Annual Report 2007-2008”, Community Transport Organisation, p. 3.

2 Ibid.

3 Denmark, David et al., (2007), “No transport no treatment : community transport to health services in NSW”, Cancer Council New South Wales, November 2007, p. 6.

4 Ibid.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL REFORM THE NSW POLICE HIGHWAY PATROL

The NSW Police Force's Highway Patrol plays a valuable role in our road network safer. Their presence is the best deterrent to bad behaviour on our roads.

However, NSW Labor is increasingly using Highway Patrol Officers to perform duties other than road safety such as general police work and prisoner escorts. This is jeopardising community safety.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will introduce a new model for the Highway Patrol. We will consolidate the Highway Patrol, traffic police and Accident Investigation Squad into a standalone **Highway Patrol State Command**, headed by an Assistant Commissioner for Road Safety.

A **Highway Patrol State Command** will:

- ensure a single chain of command is primarily responsible for road safety throughout NSW;
- deliver a clear, intelligence-based outcome for road safety;
- ensure greater control by supervisors on Highway Patrol Officer duties, ensuring they focus on road safety duties rather than being regularly called upon to fill deficiencies in frontline policing in other areas; and
- ensure Highway Patrol and other traffic-related officers will be consistently trained, with a defined career path involving further educational and practical professional development.

The **Highway Patrol State Command** will utilise the specialist skills and expertise of non-sworn public officials from other NSW Government departments to work on a continuous basis with NSW Police. For example, officials from the Roads and Traffic Authority who are experts in identifying motor vehicle modifications and heavy vehicle inspections.

The **Highway Patrol State Command** will also be charged with improving the relationship with NSW high schools and Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYCs) that play a pivotal role in delivering a safe driving message to young people.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO SAFE DRIVERS

NSW is losing the battle against dangerous driving.

In January 2010 there were 45 road deaths in NSW.¹ Compared to January 2009, this is a 73 per cent increase.³⁹²

During the twelve months ended January 2010, there were a total of 481 deaths on our roads, compared to 372 deaths during the twelve months until January 2009.

Number of Road Crash Deaths in Each State / Territory³

	Feb 2009 – Jan 2010	February 2008 – Jan 2009	% Difference
NSW	481	372	29.3
Vic	284	306	-7.2
Qld	317	327	-3.1
SA	134	100	34.0
WA	195	208	-6.3
Tas	57	46	23.9
NT	33	75	-56.0
ACT	12	13	-7.7
Australia	1,513	1,447	4.6

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe a new approach is needed to licensing NSW drivers, an approach that rewards good behaviour and punishes bad behaviour.

In government we will introduce our **Fair Go for Safe Drivers** strategy, which takes a “carrot and stick” approach to road safety.

Under a **Fair Go for Safe Drivers**, safe drivers who have a driving record free of an offence for at least five years will have their licence renewal fees cut by fifty per cent. This discount will apply whether the licence is renewed for 1, 3 or 5 years.

A similar scheme has been operating successfully in Victoria since 2006.⁴

1 Department of Infrastructure, Surface Transport & Road Safety Statistics, (2010), “Road deaths Australia”, Australian Government, January 2010, p. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Vic Roads, “Driver Rewards Scheme”, State Government of Victoria, retrieved 15 March 2010 at <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/Licences/RenewReplaceOrUpdate/DriverRewardScheme.htm>.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL STANDARDISE RETIREMENT VILLAGE CONTRACTS

The decision to purchase a property in a retirement village can be a difficult one.

It is a decision that is made more complicated by the many differences between different villages' sale contracts. Differences include areas such as management fees, ongoing fees, ownership and use of village assets, village policies on guests and visitors, departure fees and the process for the sale or transfer of a unit when the resident leaves.

There are standard contracts for the sale of a house, so why shouldn't there be standard contracts for the sale of property in a retirement village?

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will:

- **develop standard contracts for retirement villages to use when selling property or occupation rights to consumers; and**
- **establish a committee of experts to develop the standard contracts.**

Under these reforms, consumers will be better able to compare and understand the differences in costs and conditions between villages before entering into a contract.

Operators will still be able to include special conditions on important or unique matters and to reflect their existing financial and operational practices.

The wide variety of contracts in use also adds complexity for village operators – tracking which residents are subject to which terms and conditions can be difficult.

The committee of experts will comprise representatives from key stakeholder groups including the Retirement Village Association, the Aged and Community Services Association of NSW & ACT, the Retirement Village Residents Association and the Law Society of NSW.

The model for this process has been used in the successful development of other key property standard contracts by the Law Society in consultation with groups such as the Real Estate Institute of NSW.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to building a stronger retirement living sector for the benefit of residents and operators.

THREE:

RENOVATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MAKES A
DIFFERENCE TO BOTH OUR ECONOMY AND PEOPLE'S LIVES

ENHANCING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE



THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL ESTABLISH INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

Infrastructure is central to driving economic growth, yet NSW is facing an infrastructure crisis. Whether it is roads, rail, hospitals, schools or utilities, people in NSW are entitled to better.

NSW Liberals & Nationals will establish **Infrastructure NSW** to ensure infrastructure is delivered according to need, on time and on budget, and remove political interests from infrastructure decisions.

Infrastructure NSW is built on the successful Infrastructure Australia, Partnerships UK and Partnerships Victoria models and will:

- **be overseen by an expert board, and independent Chair; with a highly qualified professional CEO (who is also the NSW Co-ordinator General), and executive staff drawn from the very best of the public and private sectors; and**
- **ensure infrastructure is delivered on the basis of need, expert advice and world best practice – not the political demands of marginal seats or a looming election.**

Infrastructure NSW will:

- **be accountable to the Premier;**
- **prepare a 20 year State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS), detailed 5 year Infrastructure Plans funded in Budget forward estimates and sectoral State Infrastructure Strategy Statements for approval by the Premier and Cabinet Infrastructure Committee. The SIS will be tabled in Parliament and debated;**
- **advise on project procurement, contractual arrangements, best practice, delivery and funding modes and create a project pipeline; and**
- **maximise NSW's funding opportunities from Infrastructure Australia.**

The lack of a long-term strategic plan for infrastructure is the greatest infrastructure problem facing NSW. Without a clear, long-term strategy to address emerging bottlenecks, the impact of population growth and changes in land use and employment patterns, poor decisions will inevitably be made.

We will encourage the best ideas and solutions from the private sector and a greater level of private sector investment and participation in projects, with rigorous planning and costing to deliver the highest standards of public value – and confidence to investors and the community.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL ESTABLISH RESTART NSW: AN INFRASTRUCTURE FUND TO FIX NSW

NSW is caught in a vicious cycle. Economic growth drives government revenue. However, NSW lacks the essential infrastructure to grow and without growth there is no additional revenue for future infrastructure.

Something needs to change and fast. We need to restart the NSW economy. We need to regain NSW's reputation as Australia's number one place to live and do business.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will establish Restart NSW, a capital fund to build essential infrastructure including public transport, roads and infrastructure to support people working in frontline services.

The fund will have a specific mandate to grow economic productivity in NSW and a clear goal of lifting NSW economic growth to above the national average.

Restart NSW will fund projects such as:

- public transport infrastructure;
- roads infrastructure to address urban congestion, black spots and missing links;
- economic infrastructure to address the economic competitiveness of NSW, including freight, inter-modal facilities and water;
- hospitals and health infrastructure; and
- improvements to workplaces for frontline workers including law and justice officers, teachers and nurses.

Restart NSW will be funded from:

- **above budget windfall tax revenues;**
- **additional borrowing including new Waratah Bonds; and**
- **proceeds from the \$1.2 billion long-term lease of the Sydney Desalination Plant.**

The board of Infrastructure NSW will govern Restart NSW, giving it the teeth to make a difference. Infrastructure NSW will not only have the mandate to make recommendations to government but the initial capital to underpin their decisions.

Any additional borrowing will be undertaken in strict compliance with our fiscal commitment to maintaining the AAA Credit Rating

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to whole of state development. For this reason, one third of Restart NSW funding will be quarantined for projects outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, consistent with our policy to pursue decentralisation.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL BUILD THE SOUTH WEST AND NORTH WEST RAIL LINKS

People in South West and North West Sydney, our major residential growth and employment areas, expect and deserve high quality public transport.

Many people bought homes and started businesses in the growth areas believing Labor promises and commitments would deliver new transport infrastructure to match population and commercial growth.

The North West Rail Link was first promised in 1998, to be open by 2010 at a cost of \$50 million per kilometre. It was then cancelled, resurrected as a North West Metro, cancelled again, and announced once again in Labor's latest discredited transport plan.

Labor's latest plan, has the North West Rail Link commencing in 2017 and not opening until 2024, at a cost of \$300 million per kilometre.¹

The South West Rail Link has a similar story – announced, then cancelled, and then re-announced. Based on Labor's current promises, the South West Rail Link will not carry a passenger until 2016.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will:

- **build the South West Rail Link; and**
- **build the North West Rail Link, starting work in our first term.**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe the priority for new public transport links should be areas currently without such options.

Many long suffering commuters in Sydney's north west and south west have no effective public transport alternative and are forced to use cars.

It is estimated that under NSW Labor's regime, commuters who travel daily to the city from the north west will have spent \$65,000 in road tolls over 14 years before they have any public transport alternative.

Our commitment to building these essential links will help restore investor confidence in NSW and improve choices and quality of life for NSW residents and commuters.

¹ ABC News, (2010), "Rail delay costs \$2 billion", ABS News Online, 25 February 2010, retrieved 19 March 2010 at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/25/2829766.htm>.

THE NSW LIBERAL & NATIONALS WILL GROW THE NSW ECONOMY, BY INVESTING IN A WORLD-CLASS CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION FACILITY

The NSW Liberal & Nationals will start constructing a world-class conference and exhibition facility in our first term of government.

In 2007 the NSW Government commissioned a review of Sydney's convention and exhibition facilities, which found that NSW needed greater capacity in the Sydney CBD to host major conventions. It is estimated that under-provision of convention and exhibition facilities will cost Sydney \$477 million in economic activity and 3,037 jobs each year.¹

To ensure the project starts quickly the NSW Liberals & Nationals have started the procurement process from Opposition.

We have commissioned an independent professional feasibility study, to be overseen by an expert panel with requisite experience in the delivery of infrastructure and the tourism industry.

When the study is complete, the private sector will be invited to start preparing submissions before March 2011 for an accelerated Expression of Interest process we intend to commence after the election.

The Feasibility Study, which is supported by peak infrastructure and tourism bodies, will identify:

- **the best location for a new or expanded facility;**
- **make recommendations on the size and facilities required;**
- **develop a funding model for the convention centre, including the potential for private investment and private public private partnerships; and**
- **identify the benefits to the NSW economy from the new facility including models to ensure that regional NSW benefits from the infrastructure.**

The panel will also develop a target list of international conferences and events that could be attracted to the new convention centre.

The policy will help grow visitor and convention market traffic into Sydney, from which point, visitors are well placed to travel onto other NSW regional tourism attractions. Investing in this long overdue infrastructure will boost the NSW economy and help achieve the growth and the competitive edge we need.

¹ Tourism & Transport Forum Australia, (2009), "Tourism and Infrastructure Policy Priorities", Sydney, p. 5.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL MAKE HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE BY MAKING HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS CONTESTABLE

One of the main drivers of the cost of buying a home - or business premises - is the cost of government-mandated infrastructure levies in growth or infill areas.

Levies on housing or employment land development are based on the cost decided by the government and can result in costs exceeding \$180,000 per hectare¹ – which are passed onto home buyers and business.

Government costings for roads, utilities or social infrastructure, that form the basis of these levies, are generally not transparent.

As a result of the high cost of these levies, housing and employment investment is redirected to cities like Melbourne and Brisbane which offer more competitive and lower cost land.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will make NSW competitive again.

Our plan to help reduce the costs of housing and employment land will:

- **inject transparency and require disclosure of the way government levies are formulated - to force discipline on infrastructure costs;**
- **commit to consider proposals that offer better ways of delivering infrastructure that maintains or exceeds appropriate standards, delivers results and represents value for money; and**
- **convene a roundtable (including representatives of peak infrastructure and housing bodies, suppliers of utility infrastructure and services and local government) to assess where contestability can be most effectively applied.**

Labor complacency has led to NSW becoming uncompetitive – and a costly place to live, work, employ and raise a family.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will start the change to attract people, investment and jobs back to NSW – both our city and our regions – with choices in housing and lifestyle that meet people's aspirations and goals.

¹ Rees MP, The Hon. Nathan, (2009), "Delivering Infrastructure and Jobs in Western Sydney", Media Release, 12 August 2009.

FOUR:

RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOVERNMENT AND GIVE
PEOPLE A REAL SAY ON ISSUES THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES

TALKING HONESTLY ABOUT OUR CHALLENGES



FOUR: Restore accountability to government and give people a real say on issues that affect their lives

TALKING HONESTLY ABOUT OUR CHALLENGES

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe if you trust people they will make good decisions for themselves and others. Honesty is about not fearing accountability. Governments that measure their performance openly and are honest with people about the challenges will be able to do better. The best governments work to deliver for the people, not themselves.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe that decisions are best made by the people they affect and as close as possible to the places where they will have an impact.

A big difference between NSW Labor and the NSW Liberals & Nationals is that we trust people to make good decisions about issues that affect them.

We know that personal responsibility is one of the most valuable forms of leadership in our civil society, and the more it is encouraged and valued, the more we prevent difficult problems developing among us.

We believe in the essential civility and goodwill of NSW citizens. We know that these values are the reason why thousands of people volunteer every day in NSW in hundreds of different roles. These are the values we try to teach our children.

Volunteering and service is central to our Australian character and trust should be central to the character of state government.

It will be, to a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.

We will give back to local communities at all levels as much decision-making, and participation in decision making, as possible. It will be a steady process, and our first commitment is to give to local communities real decision-making power in Health District Boards.

Our graffiti initiative is another example of inviting local government and community organisations to partner to tackle local graffiti.

And our review of the planning system will make sure people have a say in local planning issues.

Where decision-making goes back to communities, so should management of money and other resources. And with decision-making comes personal and organisational responsibility and accountability.

It is hypocritical of any government to speak of devolving power and accountability without taking a good hard look at its own standards of accountability.

Policies in this section include a commitment to open government up to scrutiny at all levels, including election funding, Freedom of Information (FOI), and the idea of recall elections.

Taking away the perception or opportunity for political manipulation and interference in decision-making is central to our intentions.

We want to restore confidence in our public institutions and government, give people back the power to control their own lives and environments, and restore trust and civility into governance in NSW.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL GIVE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR CARERS CHOICE, VOICE AND CONTROL

In life we all want to make choices. We all want the opportunity to create valued relationships and the capability to build a safe and secure future for ourselves and those we love.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to a disability service system that increases 'choice, voice and control' for people with disability and their carers.

The emphasis of quality of life 'outcomes' for people with disability is central to the NSW Liberals & Nationals plan.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals support an individualised funding approach to the delivery of disability services. This plan will offer choice between the current case management model and that of a more personalised service approach in which funding packages enable the individual to direct the services that they wish to have and when.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals do not subscribe to the 'one size fits all' approach that is supported by the NSW Labor Government when it comes to the delivery of services to people with disability.

An individualised funding approach will restore choice, voice and control to people with disability, their carers and families to manage their own social care needs.

Our plan will be guided by six principles for reform and systemic change and informed by consultation with the disability sector:

1. **Non government organisation viability and sustainability:** capacity building in the non-government sector that provides the services to people with disability is critical to addressing any gaps or duplication in service provision that exists across NSW. Addressing workforce development, infrastructure and service gaps will be key to the success of the roll out of individualised funding packages in NSW.
2. **Building opportunities:** support for the empowerment of individuals and families to enable them to get the most out of personalised service opportunities.
3. **Outcomes led and evidence based:** accurate data and information collection about the likely take up of individualised funding packages will be assessed prior to the programs implementation.
4. **Comprehensive and transparent stakeholder engagement:** a consultative process between service users, providers, peak sector bodies and government will be undertaken to guide the implementation.
5. **Regional emphasis:** funding ensures the ongoing sustainability of services, particularly in rural and regional areas where there are currently service gaps.
6. **Clear political leadership and direction:** reasonable and clear expectations about the pace of change will be provided to assist service providers and users to achieve a seamless transition to any new arrangements.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL ELIMINATE TAXPAYER-FUNDED 'POLITICAL' ADVERTISING

Taxpayers' money should not be used for political advertising. It is a principle of good government, and accountable and transparent democracy that taxpayers deserve to know that government revenues are being responsibly and acceptably spent only in the public interest.

Since 1995, Labor has spent more than one billion dollars of taxpayers' money on government advertising.¹

In 2007 alone the NSW State Labor Government spent \$111.7 million on taxpayer funded advertising.² This means it was the seventh biggest advertiser in the country. Its annual advertising expenditure is bigger than McDonalds and the Commonwealth Bank combined.³

The NSW Auditor-General has deemed the current advertising guidelines as inadequate to prevent the use of public funds for party political purposes.

The Auditor-General has stated that the increase in the amount spent on government advertising leading up to the 2007 state election "contributes to the perception that government advertising may inappropriately serve the political interests of the party in government."⁴

In a review of recent government advertising campaigns, the Auditor-General found that some claims in government advertising could be "misleading", and that the budgets for some campaigns, such as the Labor Government's budget advertising were "excessive in relation to its objective."⁵

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will:

- **introduce legislation to require approval of the Auditor-General for advertising campaigns; and**
- **give the Auditor-General the power to make governing political parties pay for taxpayer-funded advertising found to be overtly 'political'.**

The Auditor-General will have the authority to scrutinise government publicity that appears to have the capacity, in whole or in part, to influence public support for a political party.

1 Robins, Brian, (2007), "Auditor in attack on state's high ad spending", The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 August 2007, p. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Benson, Simon, (2008), "NSW Government now nation's seventh largest advertiser", The Daily Telegraph Online, 20 May 2008, retrieved 10 March 2010 at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw-act/iemma-spends-95m-on-ads/story-e6freuzi-1111116387167>.

4 Achterstraat, Peter, (Auditor-General), (2009), "Auditor-General's Report – Performance Audit – Government Advertising", The Audit Office of NSW, December 2009, p. foreword.

5 Ibid, p. 3

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL REFORM FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS AND ESTABLISH AN OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER

The community has the right to openness, accountability and transparency when it comes to government decision-making and information.

Community scrutiny of government – including through increased access to government information – both protects the public interest and propels better public sector decision-making and performance.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will pursue a new era of open government.

This will include reforming the Freedom of Information (FOI) process based on the following basic principles and initiatives:

- **pro-active disclosure of government information;**
- **one-stop online shop for information from all government agencies;**
- **enforced public disclosure of government contracts and grants; and**
- **no cost for FOI applications and the establishment of mandatory deadlines.**

We will also appoint a fully independent *Open Government Commissioner* within the Office of the NSW Ombudsman who will:

- **play an independent ‘watchdog’ role and drive the information-sharing performance of government agencies toward the highest standards of openness, accountability and transparency;**
- **provide citizens with advice and hear complaints on FOI and other government information matters; and**
- **report annually on the government’s overall performance and on the comparative performance of government agencies, including total number of requests, number of requests complied with, turnaround times, number of complaints and number of complaints upheld or denied.**

The people of NSW deserve open government.

A NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS GOVERNMENT WILL RESTORE TRUST IN OUR PUBLIC SERVICE AND ESTABLISH A PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will restore trust and confidence in our public service, uphold the tenants of sound and accountable ‘Westminster’ government and rebuild the appeal and respect of a public service career.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will establish a NSW Public Service Commission to improve the integrity, performance and accountability of the State’s public sector workforce.

The NSW Public Service Commission will:

- **ensure NSW has a qualified and professional public service;**
- **restore the highest levels of integrity, impartiality, ability, accountability and leadership in the NSW public service;**
- **ensure public service positions are filled on the basis of individuals’ merit and qualifications;**
- **assist the NSW public service to become an employer of choice that is attractive to the highest calibre of individual candidates;**
- **promote a public sector culture where initiative, the achievement of results and individual responsibility are strongly valued; and**
- **rebuild the public’s confidence in the NSW public service.**

The NSW Public Service Commission will drive improvement through the following initiatives:

- **monitoring, auditing and enforcing compulsory public advertisement of all public sector positions;**
- **reviewing and reporting on agency performance against standards for public sector recruitment and selection processes; and**
- **conducting independent investigations into employment actions to ensure they have been objective and fair and not subject to patronage.**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals value and respect the professionalism and service of dedicated public servants, and want to strengthen their ability to provide impartial and expert advice to the government of the day, respecting the best of our ‘Westminster’ traditions in public sector governance.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE HONEST AND ETHICAL

Honest and ethical government produces good government; government that delivers better outcomes for the people it represents, and achieves trust.

Labor's failure to uphold these principles has damaged the reputation of NSW and its public institutions.

It will come as no surprise that unlike their Queensland counterparts, NSW Labor has failed to establish a Public Sector Ethics Act. As a result the NSW public service has no clear whole-of-government statement of values and ethics.

In 2002, the ICAC Commissioner released a report on Codes of Conduct and stated "Almost every public sector organisation in NSW now has a code of conduct - an achievement to be proud of."¹

The report also stated that "ICAC investigations invariably uncover substantial breaches of codes by public officials. The public officials in the witness stand usually claim that they were either not aware that a code of conduct existed, or that their organisation's code was irrelevant."²

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe honesty and integrity in government at all levels is essential to delivering the services and administration the community expects.

In government we will introduce legislation to:

- **establish a set of ethics and values for Ministers and the Public Service. It will be developed in consultation with ICAC and the public sector, and will require the ethics and values established in the legislation to be reflected in the codes of conduct of each government department and agency.**

¹ Moss AO, Irene, (Commissioner), (2002), "Codes of Conduct – The next stage", The Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, March 2002, p. 4.

² Ibid, p. 5.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL PROPERLY REGULATE LOBBYISTS

Australians have lost faith in their elected officials.

A recent Roy Morgan poll found that just 16 per cent of Australians rate their Members of Parliament as having 'high' or 'very high' standards of ethics and honesty.¹

Similarly a Reader's Digest poll showed that in terms of 'trusted professions' politics ranked behind astrologers and car salesmen and only just above telemarketers.²

This crisis of confidence stems in part from the public perception of the influence lobbyists have on government.

Political lobbying is a perfectly legitimate activity, and an integral part of the democratic process.

However, it needs to be properly regulated. The public needs to be absolutely confident that decisions are made in the public interest, and are not unduly influenced by sectional, commercial or private interests.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will introduce effective regulation of lobbyists in NSW including:

- **establishing a more comprehensive Lobbyists' Register:** Currently, NSW Labor's register ignores former Ministers and MPs, unions and industry groups, whose dealings with government should also be subject to public scrutiny. A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will ensure the NSW Lobbyists' Register covers all those seeking to influence government decisions; and
- **banning 'success fees' for Lobbyists:** The NSW Liberals & Nationals will also ban lobbyists' so-called 'success fees' – payments over and above normal service fees when a desired outcome is achieved for a client. Besides creating incentives for lobbyists to cut ethical corners, success fees feed public concern that access and decisions rest on factors other than merit and public interest.

1 Roy Morgan Research, (2007), "Image of Professions Survey: Nurses Most Ethical - Politicians Just Ahead Of Journalists", Roy Morgan, 4 April 2007.

2 Atkins, Mary, (2008), "Australia's Most Trusted Professions 2008", Readers Digest Interactive, retrieved 10 March 2010 at <http://www.readersdigest.com.au/popular/australias-most-trusted-professions-2008-readers-digest-australia/article77699.html>.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL STRENGTHEN ICAC LAWS

It was a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government that established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1989.

Its principal functions are to investigate and expose corrupt conduct in the NSW public sector; actively prevent corruption through advice and assistance; and educate the NSW community and public sector about corruption and its effects.¹

Over the last decade or more, scandals and corruption involving public sector decisions (including matters involving RailCorp, government property agencies and Wollongong City Council) highlight that there is still more to be done.

Government Ministers must be strongly accountable for upholding high standards.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will:

- **strengthen the powers of ICAC and impose an obligation upon Ministers to report possible corrupt conduct.**

Part 3 Section 11 of the ICAC Act currently requires the state's most senior public servants '...to report to the Commission any matter that the officer suspects on reasonable grounds concerns or may concern corrupt conduct'.

This includes the Ombudsman, Commissioner of Police, heads of public authorities and directors of departments – but not state government ministers.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will amend the ICAC Act and extend this corruption-reporting obligation to state government ministers.

¹ Independent Commission Against Corruption, (2010), "Overview", NSW Government, retrieved 20 March 2010 at <http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/about-the-icac/overview>.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL FOR RECALL ELECTIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Accountability is the driver of good government. The ultimate accountability is at the ballot box on election day.

After 15 years of incompetence and scandal the community is rightfully frustrated. However, until March 2011 there is no way for people to hold Labor to account.

Moreover with the security of four-year terms there is no pressure on Labor to deliver across all four years rather than just focusing on the final year.

In government, a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will respond to citizen interest in this issue, and establish an independent panel of constitutional experts to advise on the potential for recall elections in NSW.

The panel of experts will examine:

- **international practices, including the 18 states in America that have recall provisions and their applicability to a Westminster system;**
- **reasons under which a recall election could be petitioned for in NSW and the extent of the recall provision;**
- **the appropriate percentage of voters that would need to petition and the time frame for signature collection;**
- **processes for auditing of signatures and funding of the process; and**
- **the best ways for constitutional reform to take place in NSW, including potential referendum questions to be put at 2012 local government elections and the 2015 NSW State election.**

Despite strong support for fixed four year terms when they were introduced, strong public sentiment has emerged in reaction to NSW Labor's incompetence in office, that the community should have options to bring an election forward.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL REFORM ELECTION CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS

The community has a right to expect decisions to be made on the basis of merit and public interest and for those decisions not to be swayed by special access or political donations.

Without public trust, no government can achieve its goals for the people it serves.

The growth of ‘decisions for donations’ culture under NSW Labor has eroded community confidence in public administration.

It has arisen against a background of NSW Labor’s fundraising effort in the lead up to the 2007 election which saw it raise \$24 million – or \$115,000 a week – over four years.¹

It was reinforced by the concentration of decision-making powers in the hands of Ministers, for example the Planning Minister, and came into sharper focus during the Wollongong corruption enquiry, involving ALP councillors.

As part of a wider program to restore honesty and accountability to government, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will:

- **introduce limits on election spending, to be set by an independent arbiter;**
- **apply spending limits to groups other than political parties who seek to influence voters, whether union, business or community based. Without this provision candidates or parties could use special interest groups or other ‘third parties’ to circumvent campaign spending limits; and**
- **impose an annual cap on how much a person is able to donate to the candidate or political party of their choice. Donation caps will be set by an independent arbiter.**

¹ Frew, Wendy, (2009), “Reversal of fortune: donations to Libs leave Labor behind”, The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 February 2009, p. 9.

FIVE:

**PROTECT OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND RETURN
PLANNING POWERS TO THE COMMUNITY**

VALUING HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD



FIVE: Protect our local environment and return planning powers to the community

VALUING HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Our homes and neighbourhoods are more than just 'places'. They are where we raise our children and make friends, where we volunteer and help those in need. We strive to make our streets safe and secure. It's time to give people back their sense of place and purpose and to make our neighbourhoods places of positive opportunities.

When communities have a real say on their local planning and environment, they are strongly motivated to take responsibility for other related issues that align with their preferences and local priorities.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals want to encourage this local energy and ownership.

At a local level, interests range from planning issues, preservation of natural areas and the quality of the built environment and the value it adds to peoples' quality of life.

Policies such as tackling graffiti crime will help give local communities the power to take control of the look and feel of their shopping centres, public facilities and neighbourhoods.

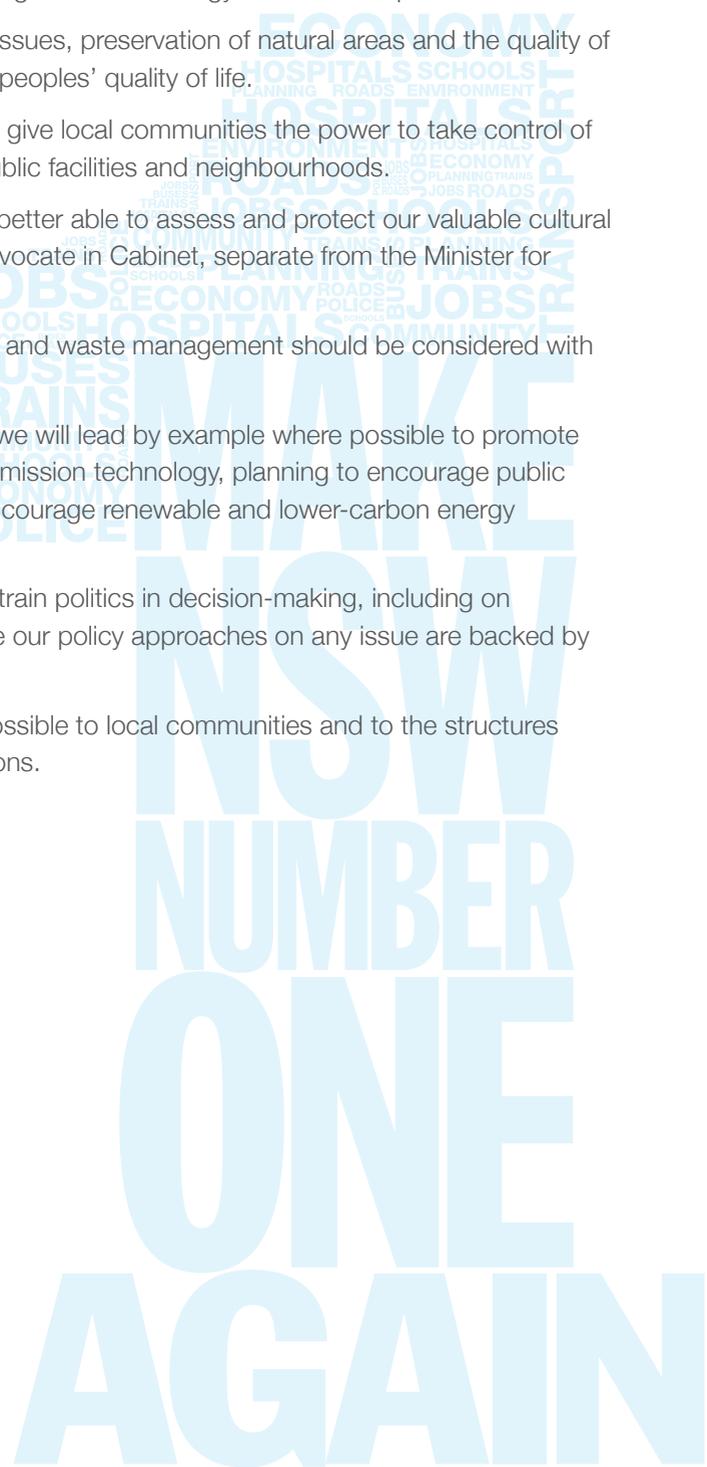
On a broader level we will ensure that we are better able to assess and protect our valuable cultural heritage by giving heritage an independent advocate in Cabinet, separate from the Minister for Planning.

Issues such as water management, air quality and waste management should be considered with community input and ideas.

On national and global environmental issues, we will lead by example where possible to promote and support innovations in transport-related emission technology, planning to encourage public transport and bicycle use and measures to encourage renewable and lower-carbon energy technologies.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will act to constrain politics in decision-making, including on environmental and planning issues and ensure our policy approaches on any issue are backed by evidence and are sustainable.

We will return as much decision-making as possible to local communities and to the structures closest to the places affected by those decisions.



THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL REWRITE THE STATE'S PLANNING LAWS

The NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act came into force more than 30 years ago.¹

Since then it has become dysfunctional. The system does not provide the certainty that communities deserve and our economy needs. Most other Australian states have modernised their planning laws while ours have stagnated.

In recent years more and more approvals have been taken out of community view and decided by politicians – a recipe for collapse of public confidence in the system, and a blow to our reputation as a good place to invest.

The NSW Liberal & National Parties are committed to returning local planning powers to local communities (through their councils). We believe that local residents – through councils – are best placed to make local planning decisions affecting their suburbs. After all, it is local residents – not Macquarie Street planners – who have to live with the results of these planning decisions.

We will scrap 'Part 3A' – one of the wide-ranging powers NSW Labor has given its Planning Minister to override local communities and a factor that ICAC noted had contributed to corruption risks in the planning process.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will commence an overhaul of the planning system soon after March 2011.

We will remove the politics from planning decisions. Our review will:

- **ensure our planning system centres on merit and the public interest and re-empowers local communities on local planning issues;**
- **create a system that enjoys public support – with a state government that respects people;**
- **create a system that is modern, takes into account sustainability, gives certainty to investors and makes NSW competitive again, including a reserve power for genuinely state significant developments; and**
- **deliver certainty about planning rules and decision making processes that are made transparently and in a timely way.**

The review will be conducted by an independent expert panel, with the aim of enacting legislation around the middle of our first term.

¹ NSW Government, "Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979", New South Wales Legislation.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL GIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES A GREATER SAY OVER LOCAL SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe that our education system is a community asset and a community effort. Principals, teachers, parents and students should all be involved in decision-making.

In government the NSW Liberals & Nationals will hand over funding for any Building Education Revolution projects that have not yet commenced to school principals and school communities.

NSW Labor's handling of the Building Education Revolution is a case study in government incompetence, bungling and central command and control.

A national review of the program, The Orgill Report, found that while NSW Government schools represented only 22 per cent of the total BER program, NSW Labor's incompetence saw them account for 56 per cent of complaints.¹

The Orgill Report also singles out NSW Labor in its list of recommendations for immediate action noting that NSW Labor has left taxpayers open to further contractors' costs and the NSW Labor system adopted a higher cost, 'one size fits all' approach, leading to pronounced shortcomings.²

The NSW Liberals & Nationals trust communities to make the decisions that affect them and believe in giving frontline staff, local communities and individuals real responsibilities and decision making powers.

In September 2009 the NSW Liberals & Nationals launched a statewide consultation on our Social Policy Framework: 'Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer'. Amongst the goals, which guided our consultations in the area of education, was the need to improve the voice of students, parents and teachers in our education system.

We know that nobody knows the needs of a local school like its parents, principals and teachers. That is why in government we will let them make decisions and take responsibilities for their school infrastructure projects.

¹ Orgill, Brad, (Chairman), (2010), "Building the Education Revolution Implementation Taskforce", Australian Government, Interim Report, 6 August 2010.

² Ibid.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL GIVE HERITAGE CONSERVATION A STRONG INDEPENDENT VOICE IN CABINET

We owe it to future generations to protect and conserve our natural, cultural and indigenous heritage.

Currently heritage conservation does not have an independent advocate within government. Moreover excessive red tape in decision-making impedes heritage conservation and frustrates the economic development of the State.

Currently the Minister for Planning is also the minister responsible for the protection of heritage. This arrangement creates a conflict of interest for the Planning Minister, a situation compounded by the relocation of the Heritage Office into the Department of Planning.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will ensure heritage and conservation has a strong, independent voice in Cabinet.

To ensure heritage decisions are made quickly and properly we will also reform the Heritage Council, including:

- **reducing the number of appointees to the Heritage Council to no more than 9 members, to be selected generally from each of the categories of the Heritage Act provided no more than one is selected from each category;**
- **abolishing Ministerial Review Panels. Only the Heritage Council will make recommendations to the Minister on proposed additions to the State's Heritage Register;**
- **introducing timelines for the heritage assessment process, including for the production of recommendations from the Heritage Council and decisions by the Minister;**
- **requiring the Minister for Heritage to publish reasons for his/her decisions about Heritage Council recommendations;**
- **ensuring the Minister for Heritage makes public any recommendation from his/her department as to the heritage conservation priority of any item that may be subject to development proposals; and**
- **requiring the Minister for Planning to make public the reasons for his/her determination on planning approvals involving items subject to heritage conservation orders.**

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL INTRODUCE A RENEWABLE ENERGY BUY-BACK SCHEME

Effective action on environmental issues requires sensible policies that deliver practical and real improvements.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will introduce market mechanisms that will encourage people to use renewable energy.

We will introduce a renewable energy buy-back scheme – sometimes known as a feed-in tariff. The scheme will:

- **be a credit or payment to households, institutions or businesses for the renewable power they produce. This will include small-scale solar power from household rooftops; and**
- **encourage households to make decisions that save energy bills over the medium term.**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals policy for a gross feed-in tariff was first announced in October 2008.¹ The Labor Government mimicked the policy when it adopted a Solar Bonus Scheme in November 2009 for small solar photovoltaic installations.²

Despite this, the government has excluded many renewable and innovative energy sources, as well as involvement from many commercial energy users who are best positioned to take up decentralised generation.

It is estimated that if 5,000 households take advantage of the scheme, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is the equivalent of taking 16,250 cars off the road.³

Decentralised generation can reduce demand for costly generation and transmission infrastructure, and can reduce the peak price of electricity.⁴

The NSW Liberal & Nationals policy will ensure that NSW leads Australia in establishing a decentralised energy sector, by honouring the State Government's current commitments and improving the scheme to make it more effective. A comprehensive scheme could cut NSW's emissions by around 1 per cent per annum.⁵

1 O'Farrell MP, Barry, (2008), "O'Farrell commits to renewable energy buy-back: practical measures to address climate change", Media Release, 1 October 2008.

2 Rees MP, The Hon. Nathan, (2009), "Premier delivers better solar tariffs for families", Media Release, 10 November 2009.

3 Leichhardt Municipal Council, (2009), "Notice of Motion – Item 42", 23 July 2009, p. 2.

4 Access Economic Pty Ltd, (2008), "The Economics of Feed in Tariffs for Solar PV in Australia" November 2008, p. 42-43.

5 Ibid, p. 58.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL OPPOSE LABOR PLANS TO COMPULSORILY ACQUIRE FAMILY HOMES

Faced by the realisation that their planning policies over 15 years have failed thousands of homebuyers, the NSW Labor Government has confirmed it will create a new planning body, with new government powers to compulsorily acquire private homes and property.

NSW Labor confirmed in March that 'compulsory acquisition might be part of the future'.¹

NSW Labor's plan to force people out of their homes to allow properties to be seized and sold to developers will be strongly opposed by the NSW Liberals & Nationals.

Labor's plans are a consequence of years of failing to plan properly for growth, failing to release sufficient land and failing to control the costs of infrastructure necessary for new homes.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals have detailed positive policies to address Sydney's home affordability crisis, accelerate the release of housing and employment land and put downward pressure on government imposed infrastructure charges for housing and employment land, by injecting transparency and opening it to contestability.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals **will strongly oppose NSW Labor's plan to forcibly seize peoples homes** to make up for their failures on Sydney's new housing needs.

¹ Sky News interview with The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP, 12 March 2010.

THE NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS WILL TACKLE THE GRAFFITI CYCLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Graffiti imposes a real cost on businesses, individuals and local councils. It also makes our communities less attractive places to live and families feel less safe.

Our plan to tackle graffiti in local communities balances meaningful penalties and incentives to break a developing juvenile habit. It will:

- **require juvenile graffiti vandals to appear before the court for a graffiti offence;**
- **empower courts to suspend convicted graffiti vandals' drivers' licences or extend the time spent on Learners and Provisional licences;**
- **legislate for courts to impose Community Service Orders on offenders to make recompense and clean up the graffiti; and**
- **encourage the formation of voluntary graffiti removal squads in local areas, in partnerships with local government and local communities.**

We believe local communities make great decisions about their area if given the power to do so. The policy invites local councils and groups to get involved in partnership with State Government and create responses that suit their local areas.

Our plan to tackle graffiti in local communities balances penalties for young people who do the wrong thing with positive incentives to break a criminal habit from developing.

Cancelling drivers licence privileges is a highly motivational penalty to make offenders think twice about graffiti vandalism. Positive measures and incentives, including constructive time with volunteer mentors, will offer solutions to young people who have not had this opportunity in their personal background, while cleaning up the consequences of their offence.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will hold partnership discussions with all interested community groups and organisations, including local government and young people who wish to participate in tackling graffiti.

Funding will be allocated to support local councils to set up local schemes in their areas – funding which will be redirected from existing graffiti-related resources, to produce better outcomes.

THE NSW LIBERALS' & NATIONALS' ACTION PLAN TO TACKLE ALCOHOL RELATED VIOLENCE AND CRIME

People have the right to enjoy a good night out. They should not feel scared by the threat of alcohol-related violence and crime.

Across NSW people are sick of having their nights ruined by drunks and police have had a gutful of wasting their time and resources on alcohol-related violence.

In September 2009 the NSW Liberals & Nationals launched a statewide consultation on our Social Policy Framework: 'Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer'.

Amongst the principles which guided our consultations, was the need for early intervention and prevention of problems before they become serious.

Valuable feedback to NSW Liberals & Nationals MPs has contributed to our plans to tackle alcohol-related violence on our streets.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will implement a plan to tackle alcohol-related violence and crime to make our streets safe again by:

- **strengthening 'Move On Powers' so they can be used for individuals. Currently they can only be used for groups of three or more;**
- **introduce the new offence of 'drunk and disorderly' under the Summary Offences Act with a maximum penalty of 6 penalty units or an on-the-spot fine of \$200; and**
- **pilot three 'Sobering Up Centres' in NSW. One will be in Sydney City covering the entertainment precincts taking in Kings Cross, George Street and The Rocks, another in a Sydney suburb and a third in regional NSW.**

Recently retired Police Superintendent Ron Mason said of the NSW Liberals & Nationals' action plan, "we need to target the intoxicated offenders themselves and this is one way to get peace on our streets".¹

NSW Police Association secretary Peter Remfrey said of the proposed trial of Sobering Up Centres, "I think it's a good idea".²

¹ The Daily Telegraph, (2010), "Cops back lock-up for drunks", 17 May 2010, p. 3.

² Ibid.

