



Welcome to the November issue of the **Cunningham Examiner**.

Its purpose is to keep you updated on issues affecting our local community. I want to hear from you too.

If you want to promote a community event or just make a comment, my contact details are:

Sharon Bird MP

Federal Member for Cunningham
PO Box 387,
Wollongong NSW 2520

Phone: 4228 5899

Fax: 4228 5077

Email: sharon.bird.mp@aph.gov.au

Internet: www.sharonbird.com.au

Previous editions of the **Cunningham Examiner** can be found on Sharon's website.

WIN Stadium to score upgrade if Labor is elected

Labor has committed up to \$230,000 to help improve facilities at Wollongong's premier entertainment and sporting precinct - WIN Entertainment Centre and WIN Stadium.

Senator Kate Lundy, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Sport, Recreation and Health Promotion, Sharon Bird, Federal Member for Cunningham and Jennie George, Federal Member for Throsby made the announcement at the WIN Entertainment Centre during a recent visit by Kate Lundy to Wollongong.

"This funding commitment will substantially improve facilities and ensure that we can attract high quality sport and entertainment to the Illawarra region," Sharon Bird said.

The commitment includes \$160,000 for an improved rigging system at WIN Entertainment Centre and \$70,000 to install new fencing at WIN Stadium. Being so close to the sea, the fencing around WIN Stadium has rusted and poses a public liability risk. It has become an eyesore at one of the most picturesque stadiums in Australia.

The new Entertainment Centre rigging will reduce the time taken to assemble staging, lighting and sound gear for bands.

"The improved facilities will likely mean that more performances like the recent concert by Silverchair and Powderfinger will take place in Wollongong. We will be more of a destination on national tours now," Sharon Bird said.

This announcement comes thanks to the efforts of the two Federal Labor Members, Sharon Bird and Jennie George to ensure that this region has access to the best possible community infrastructure," Senator Lundy said.



Sharon discussing Labor's \$230,000 promise with Kate Lundy, WIN Stadium Chairperson Chris Christodolou, Jennie George and General Manager of WIN Sports and Entertainment Centre Stuart Barnes.

Kevin Rudd & Sharon Bird New Leadership

Kevin Rudd's and Labor's tax plan for Australia's future



Kevin Rudd and Labor have released a tax plan that goes beyond the election and is in Australia's long-term national interest.



Kevin Rudd and Sharon Bird's tax plan includes tax cuts for working families plus \$600 million to clear the elective surgery backlog in our hospitals.

Sharon Bird, Member for Cunningham said that "unlike Mr Howard's plan, Kevin Rudd's meets future challenges like fixing our hospitals and investing in our children's education – it addresses the real priorities."

The Tax plan aims to keep the economy strong while also making sure it delivers sizeable tax cuts.

Kevin Rudd's tax plan includes:

- Responsible and fair tax cuts to help working families.
- A tax refund to help parents with their children's education expenses.
- Fixing our hospitals with \$600m to clear elective surgery backlog.
- A simpler personal tax system, three rates instead of four.

"Federal Labor's plan is fully costed and funded and designed to keep downward pressure on interest rates. It is no use giving tax cuts if they are going to put pressure on inflation and push interest rates up," Sharon Bird said.

Tax system to reward hard work

Federal Labor has a six year goal to make the tax system simpler, more transparent and easier to understand.

By 2013-14 under Labor, Australia's personal income tax system would have the following features:

- A reduction to three rates from the current four.
- A reduction of the current 45% rate to 40%.
- A reduction of the current 40% rate (which by 2010-11 would have been reduced to 37%) to 30%.

Middle-income earners would be the major beneficiaries – with only a 30% marginal tax rate applying over the full income range from \$37,000 to \$180,000.

Hospital services to get boost from tax plan

As part of Kevin Rudd's **Tax Plan for Australia's Future**, Labor will invest \$600 million to reduce elective surgery waiting lists.

Kevin Rudd will end the buck passing between Canberra and the States and reduce waiting times for treatment in public hospitals.

Labor's \$2.3 billion Education Tax Refund

As part of Kevin Rudd's Tax Plan, Federal Labor has committed \$2.3 billion to help working families meet the growing costs of educating their children.

"Labor will provide a **new 50% Education Tax Refund** to help the parents of around 2.3 million school-aged children meet the costs of education" local MP Sharon Bird said.

Under the plan eligible parents will be able to claim a 50% refund every year for up to \$750 of education expenses for each child attending primary school (maximum \$375 refund per child, per year) and a 50% refund every year for up to \$1500 of education expenses for each child attending secondary school (maximum refund \$750 per child, per year).

Eligible expenses for the 50% Education Tax Refund will include laptops, home computers, internet connection, printers, education software and school textbooks.

"This new 50% Education Tax Refund will help ease the financial pressures faced by working families," Sharon Bird said.



Sharon Bird is a strong supporter of Kevin Rudd's new Education Tax Refund policy because it gives our children the right support to excel at school.

Rainwater tanks for Surf Life Saving Clubs

A RUDD LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL INVEST UP TO \$3 MILLION IN A NATIONAL PLAN TO HELP EVERY SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB IN AUSTRALIA INSTALL A RAINWATER TANK.

Federal Labor's plan would provide a grant of up to \$10,000 to every Club to install a rainwater tank, or contribute towards a larger water savings project.

"With concerns about climate change and the water crisis at an all time high, Federal Labor's grant of up to \$10,000 will assist every Surf Club to conserve thousands of litres of fresh water a year," Sharon Bird said. This initiative builds on Federal Labor's

detailed plans to tackle climate change and water shortage. Other Labor rainwater tank policies include:

- A rebate of up to \$500 for 500,000 homes to install rainwater tanks or grey water piping; and
- Low interest rate loans of up to \$10,000 each for Australian families to undertake practical energy and water saving measures at home.



Local MP Sharon Bird visiting the Bellambi Surf Carnival recently.

Local schools to go solar under Labor

A Rudd Labor Government will invest up to \$489 million in a **National Solar Schools Plan** to make all of Australia's 9612 private and public schools "Solar Schools" within eight years – including all schools in the Federal electorate of Cunningham.

"Federal Labor's National Solar Schools Plan will allow all Australian schools to apply for grants of up to \$20,000 to install 2 kilowatt solar panels to provide average greenhouse gas savings of up to 2.8 tonnes per year," Sharon Bird said.

Grants of up to \$30,000 to install efficiency improvements so schools can invest in energy and water measures including rainwater tanks, solar hot water systems, and lighting upgrades were also announced by Labor at the same time.

Federal Labor's National Solar Schools Plan will invest up to \$50,000 in every school.

The National Solar Schools Plan will replace the Government's current Green Vouchers scheme which only allows schools to apply for grants to install rainwater tanks or solar hot water systems.

"We will inject an extra \$150 million on top of the existing funding commitment to ensure that every that every school in Australia is able to install solar panels on their rooftop," Sharon Bird MP said.

Federal Labor's plan will also allow schools to install a much wider variety of energy and water saving projects as well as rainwater tanks.

Thirroul Public School wins regional science awards

Students from Thirroul Public School excelled recently at the Illawarra Coal Regional Science Fair held at the University of Wollongong winning a prize in the primary school category.

Local Federal MP Sharon Bird visited the fair held on 29 October and praised the contestants. "They are a great example of our education system, particularly our strong public education system," Sharon said.

Sharon Bird, herself a former teacher, was impressed by the range and inventiveness of local students. "Our children across the

Illawarra really took to this competition and used their imaginations," Sharon said.

Students competed for monetary prizes for outstanding projects in biology, chemistry, earth and environmental science, geography and physics.

"With the nation facing a skills shortage for scientists we have to encourage students into this field," Sharon said.

I commend Illawarra Coal and the University of Wollongong for running this great competition.



Sharon Bird MP with Illawarra Coal Science fair contestant winners from Thirroul Public School.

Authorised by Sharon Bird MP, Shop 501, Globe Lane, Wollongong

Making child care affordable

Kevin Rudd and Labor have a comprehensive plan to raise child care standards and make it more affordable for working families.

Kevin Rudd has committed \$77 million to lift training qualifications for child care workers – ensuring better care for kids.

Labor will introduce tough national accreditation standards including on-the-spot checks of centres to ensure they maintain high standards.

This is in addition to Kevin Rudd's already announced \$1.5 billion commitment to make child care more affordable for working families by lifting the Child Care Tax Rebate from 30% to 50%. This means that working families will be up to \$7500 better off, per child.

In this election, working families have a clear choice on child care: Kevin Rudd and Labor's comprehensive child care plan, or a Howard Government that has failed to act over 11 years.



Music Variety Concert

Music Illawarra Local Performers Variety Concert
2pm, Sunday 11 November
Wesley Church on the Mall
Crown Street, Wollongong

Performers include:

- St Marys Star of the Sea Choir
- Wollongong Conservatorium Flute Ensemble
- Arcadians Children's Theatre Group
- Rosalia Flute Ensemble
- Pianists Annie Tsai and Cassandra Cordero (winner of our 2007 Junior Performers Competition)
- Vocalist Katelin McInerney

Tickets: \$15 Adults, \$10 Concessions and \$40 Family (2 Adults/2 Children)

Tickets available at the door, or by contacting Peter Wouters on **4229 9120** or online at www.musicillawarra.org.au



Free information kits, factsheets and DVDs

My office provides information kits on many different areas. If you wish to order any of the kits below, please fill out the form below and return to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong 2520.

To order your free copies, please tick the items you want ...



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| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor's IR Taskforce Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superannuation Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor's 5 Point Plan for Small Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Join my Email List |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Separation (CD): Experiences, Tips and Tools | |

Your contact details

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please mail to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong, NSW 2520.
 For more information please phone Sharon's office on 4228 5899.