POLICY INFORMATION FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA AND THE NEW ENGLAND ELECTORATE

Bringing Australia’s Education and Political Systems into the 21st Century to Create Greater Prosperity for all Australians
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Bringing Australia’s Education and Political Systems into the 21st Century

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MAY 2013

This document sets out the Regional Australia and New England policy priorities of the 21st Century Australia Party.
"It is my vision and the vision of our party to turn the New England area into the Education Capital of Australia"

Apart from growing our agricultural assets, I believe education can become the largest driver of the New England economy and become the benchmark in leading the education standards in Australia as well as globally.

New England University, and the city of Armidale, is already renowned for its educational excellence. Let’s enlarge this and make the region a leader in educational standards.

As an educator myself, I have dedicated the past 15 years of my life to the creation, development and implementation of a modern day 21st Century Education System, which has now reached over 550,000 people from 17 different countries. This experience has provided me with great insight into seeing the power of the right education to transform people’s lives. This is why I believe that in order to create greater prosperity and abundance for all Australians, a modern day 21st Century Education is essential!

Regional Australia and in particularly New England could utilise a new, modern day, 21st Century Education System combined with new technologies to deliver an unprecedented education model for our region. This can become the envy of the rest of Australia and other countries and an exemplary system to model. I also believe we should attract more students to the region. This is one of the reasons I committed to entering politics and founding the 21st Century Australia Party and movement; to progress the transformation of our outdated 19th Century designed education system and move it into the 21st Century.

Expansion of the University of New England in Armidale can be part of this multi-pronged approach in making education one of the region’s biggest drivers of economy and job creation. However, we shouldn’t stop at that - a key part of our Regional and New England health policy is to create training facilities to train more doctors and health practitioners in New England as it has been shown that Doctors trained in regional areas are more likely to stay and practice in regional areas. Doctor shortages are one of the key issues facing regional Australia. We also need health education taught at schools to prevent many of the health issues created from poor diet and lack of exercise. Increased commitment to sports also assists in better exercise regimes and good physical and mental habits for our youth.

We can expand education to attract more training facilities such as the pilot training school being established in Glen Innes, which will boost the local economy. We should also look at boosting colleges with educational facilities for agricultural industries in order to attract and keep more talented Australians in regional Australia.

Our policies also include the de-urbanisation of Australia by incentivising more Australians to locate to regional Australia and infrastructure such as a fast train network through many regional areas would facilitate this, allowing for many to live in regional Australia but still travel quickly to a larger metropolis for work. We also envisage a dual carriage way connecting Sydney to Tamworth and eventually connecting the New England to Brisbane as well.
The sheer wastage created by our current government, which was put into power against the majority of the New England constituents’ wishes, could have already funded much of this infrastructure.

Our policies include increased funding for business start-ups to stimulate small business which will lead to more local jobs. The National Broadband network which, under our policies would be completed sooner will enable regional hubs to be created to support innovative technology start-ups.

This can be assisted by increased funding into research facilities into the New England Region to help boost our current agriculture sector through continued innovation.

Our policy to ensure productive and efficient governments at all three levels would see an end to wasted resources, thus allowing a marked increase in monies going into local roads, health, education and other key services - as opposed to being wasted in the bulging bureaucracy, administrative red tape and ‘fat cat’ government managers who can’t seem to make a decision even if their life depended on it.

This country has many rich resources and it is time we stopped squandering our wealth and allowing inept Governments to waste it. Our policies will see a private sector mentality introduced to the public sector to eliminate the current gross wastage.

We will set strict key performance indicators; and we will attract top level private sector managers to run Government departments to ensure efficiencies and productivity, thus putting an end to Government waste and the accepted notion that if you work in the government it is okay to be mediocre and inefficient. This will exponentially enable greater prosperity and progress for regional Australia and for the New England.

These are just some of the ideas we have to transform New England if voters decide they are finally over inept governments - governments with their career politicians and petty political bickering. We are prepared to clean out the past, bring in fresh innovative thinking and a fresh approach delivered by people who have actually produced results outside of politics. We do not need more of those who have supported and are responsible for one of the worst governments in our history.

It’s time to vote for change!
For the last 15 years I have travelled around Australia, both city and country, as an educator and author speaking to Australians and encouraging them to develop a real life modern day 21st Century Education, one I believe that we all need to excel and prosper in today’s rapidly changing world and one we all should have received at school but didn’t.

Over 550,000 people from over 17 different countries have been inspired by the teachings of a 21st Century Education and the large majority of them being the most passionate and committed Australians we have. This has enabled me to not only learn a lot about what Australians want, but to gain a tremendous insight into the human potential we all have to do better. I have also learnt what is possible to achieve when we combine a directed mind, the right mindset and psychology and access to common sense, intelligent, practical and innovative strategies modelled from those who have produced results - not just theory - and how it can transform people’s finances and ultimately their life.

Collectively this can transform an entire country as well, if such an education and a supportive environment was to be made available to more Australians. I have seen people time and time again through the power of the right education, environment and mentorship achieve so much more then they ever thought possible. Many of these individuals in Australia in particular have gone on to successful careers. Many have started business’s and employed fellow Australians or become successful investors and provided funding for companies and or houses for Australians to live in. Their success has been my reward. They have increased their efficiencies and productivity, contributed more to society by adding value, have become more fulfilled in life and have become more ideal citizens, with both healthier and more prosperous futures.

A wise man once said, “The first step to creating change is ‘awareness.” It is the correct education, mentorship and environment that not only creates the awareness to change but to support the implementation of change to live a more prosperous and abundant fulfilled future. Not only does this work with individuals, companies and organisations but it can transform an entire nation if made readily available.

It is my vision and that of 21st Century Australia Political Party to assist in the transformation of Australia into a more abundant and more prosperous nation for every single Australian, and to bring it truly into the 21st Century, by providing an economically successful environment that encourages, inspires and supports all Australians to perform at higher levels and add even more value to our society and great country.

I firmly believe in compassionate capitalism and having a strong social conscience. With passion, dedication and awareness combined with strong leadership that has vision, strength and courage to create change, Australia can and will achieve its full potential as the best nation on earth and become a world leader in many fields and endeavours.

**We truly are a blessed and lucky country.**

However we can’t take what we have for granted and if change isn’t brought in now we won’t remain the ‘lucky country’. When we talk of political change we see that political parties, starting up before elections, are often a dime a dozen and they rarely go on to achieve much in the way of change or choice.

“We will create an abundant prosperous economy for New England and Regional Australia”

Jamie McIntyre
We are more than just the launch of a new political party!

The 21st Century Australia Party is about a new movement to transform Australia’s education and political systems and provide greater abundance and prosperity for all Australians.

The 21st Century Australia Party is about returning true democracy to this country and returning the power back to the voters where it belongs.

Our party is about change
Our party is about results
Our party is about providing each and every one of us with a legitimate third party choice

The 21st Century Australia Party is for those who don’t want to vote Gillard or Abbott at the next election, but would like to vote for something that stands for something more than the same old.

Our party is about providing common sense results, by utilising intelligent and strategic solutions to challenges our country and region faces.

Our party is about giving you a say in the future direction of this country and the region of New England.

We want to make it clear we are serious about change and serious about delivering key solutions for the future running of this great country.
“I am a New England local”

Let me reinforce at the outset that I am a New England local. I was born and raised on a farm near Glen Innes. I have family in Glen Innes and throughout the New England region. I own half a dozen working farms in the New England electorate. I understand and identify with local and regional issues.

I understand and empathise that hospitals, other health services, bad roads, children’s services and electricity prices are major concerns for New England voters.

I understand the current market issue facing live cattle exporters which is causing flooding of the domestic beef market and driving prices down in New England.

I understand that the New England electorate covers many industries and issues from the coal industry around Gunnedah to a strong community-based renewable energy and holistic farming movement around the university centre of Armidale.

I understand that the New England electorate has special appeal for it’s strong and stable agricultural area, coupled with its strong sense of community - close knit, friendly as well as family friendly and a sense of belonging.

Many voters in this electorate of New England have been very critical, even shocked, by the decision of the current member for the electorate, Tony Windsor MP, to back Labor to form the current minority government. They perceive Prime Minister Julia Gillard as a backstabber and are appalled by the way she has led our country.

Many expected Mr Windsor to side with the coalition, especially given his rural background and the rural background of the electorate.

Even more so as only 8% of New England voters voted for Labor in the 2010 election, which meant that 92% did not vote for Labor. Yet Mr Windsor decided to go against the wishes of the very voters who just weeks before had re-elected him to power. Surely this is one of the greatest betrayals of an electorate - and an entire country – in the entire political history of Australia.

Mr Windsor claims it was in the nation’s best interest. Let’s analyse that. It is now 2013 and Mr Windsor’s judgement to put in power an unelected Prime Minister, who appears to be a puppet of large, seemingly corrupt unions, has to be questioned.

Such support of a Prime Minister, who is arguably the worst Australia has had, can hardly be claimed as being in the nation’s best interest, let alone New England electorates best interest.

Surely Mr Windsor should resign over his role as the catalyst for turning Australia’s political scene into the political circus we have to tolerate to this day; or he should show his true colours and run as a Labor candidate so voters won’t be betrayed again.

Despite never declaring prior to the election that he would support Ms Gillard, it was clear Mr Windsor voted for her because of his dislike of the Nationals and the Coalition. For Mr Windsor to put his personal interests ahead of New England and Australia can only be described as appalling politics and deserving of harsh judgment.

His claims that he is responsible for large funding increases for the New England electorate is somewhat dubious, as it is clear that the Coalition would have also provided significant funding for New England.

There is a very strong undercurrent of feeling in New England against Mr Windsor. Voters expected him to act as a “real political independent” and there is a strong perception that has not lived up to the expectations of those who elected him. Given the chance of a ‘hung parliament’ voters would have expected that, in such an unlikely situation, Mr Windsor would support the conservatives - or at least be more trenchantly “independent”.
What sets 21st Century Australia Party apart?

For one we take this as a lifetime challenge; the beginning of a 10-20 year and beyond project to help Australia achieve its full potential. 21st Century Australia Party (21CA) is more than just another political party.

It is a movement about changing our entire 19th Century, heavily out-dated, industrialisation era, education system and redesigning it into a modern day, 21st Century, Education System. It is a movement also about changing our heavily out-dated 19th Century political system; a movement to redesign and bring our political system into the 21st Century to return the power to the hands of many disillusioned voters.

It’s time to let go of our past and move into a new future.

Take the lessons from our past and use this wisdom to create a better future.

By changing our education and political systems for the better we will ensure Australia achieves its full potential and an outcome that will benefit every single Australian. This is at a time when Australians are frustrated, even annoyed and dismayed at our current political system with many calling it a ‘political circus’.

This is at a time when our political system is so flawed it can be easily hijacked by minority groups with their own greedy self-interest ahead of the best interest of our nation. Such selfish interests are costing us dearly. This is at a time when our political system is so flawed it requires compulsory voting to get Australians to vote, generally for one of two major political parties, whether Australians particularly like either party leader or not despite being a so-called democracy.

This is at a time when our political system is so flawed our elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was removed by “faceless union men” who then instilled a leader that the clear majority of Australians did not choose nor want. This system where a Prime Minister can’t be “recalled” despite the large majority of voters being dissatisfied with her performance and wanting her to resign, but no such option is available until an election is due; a political system whereby voters are denied the right to vote on major policy directly, (and this is
Despite the voting technology systems being available to allow accurate online voting which could prevent politicians voting against our wishes.

A political system whereby a political leader can say no to a carbon tax to win votes but when in office lie and then introduce a carbon tax; a segregated system instead of one national framework that could deliver better services for a fraction of the costs and quickly save billions; a state political system that creates replication and duplication of health, education, transport and infrastructure across six states and 2 territories designed more than two hundred years ago.

A system that allows politicians with little or no business, financial or executive management experience (33 of the 226 MPs in Parliament have come straight from business) to manipulate $360 billion of taxpayers money each year, spending taxpayers hard earned dollars, for the most part, without checks and balances, (often in local electorates just to win votes), quickly run up hundreds of billions in debt and then justify it by saying we aren’t as bad as the “basket case” European economies.

An independent board for good reason sets interest rates, however we don’t insist on Government spending being put in the hands of an independent board, with the best and brightest business and finance brains to oversee it, in order to protect tax payers’ money. Therefore by default we allow this money at times to be abused and exploited for self-interested political purposes.

We have a system that enables corrupt unions to operate above the law and extort billions of dollars off Australian tax payers. Also by inflating construction prices and arranging illegal kickbacks these corrupt unions gain company funds unethically. Such funds are used to place party members in power, all the way to the top of Government. This effectively steals our democracy and abuses our political system; a system when it was created, failed to see how corrupt unions could one day learn how to manipulate it to serve their self-interested agendas and corrupt our democracy from within. A system that despite being a so-called democracy within a successful capitalistic society allows extreme socialistic and communistic thinkers, even in Government, to attack the wealth creators of this country thus creating false class warfare in order to manipulate desperately needed votes.

We live with a system that allows a government that seemingly detests and attacks the business community; despite the businesses, small and large, within this community being the creators of wealth and providers of employment for Australians to share in; a government that stifles and obstructs the very progress of our great nation at every possible turn to shore up their own selfish agendas.

We need to change the 19th Century education system and it isn’t enough to simply become a teacher or even to start a school. Both can make a difference however on their own aren’t enough. We must change the entire curriculum and entire education system to be effective long-term; keep what works and start fresh with everything else.

Similarly just changing bits and pieces of the current out-dated 19th Century political system, isn’t good enough either. We must change the entire system to create sustainable long-term change.

The 21st Century Australia Political Party is about changing our out-dated political and educational systems; to bring Australia truly into the 21st Century; to create more prosperity and abundance within our great nation for all to share in.

It’s about the change so many Australians have been hoping for. Many have thought that it may never happen or have felt powerless to know exactly how to create such a change. With the advent of social media and new technologies a change is possible for voters to unite against our decaying, corrupted and out-dated political system. Those who have the most to lose will attempt to stop this change as it erodes their self-interested power base.

Is it not a change worth fighting for?

If enough Australians are willing to take a united stand, we will return the power to voters. Voters will get to vote on major policy, voters will get to recall poorly performing Prime Ministers and voters will have a legitimate third party choice. No longer will a politician be able to lie to the electorate and go against the majority of voters wishes, as voters will decide on major policy - not party aligned politicians.

The 21st Century Australia Party will remove government spending from the hands of politicians and have them safe guarded by an independent board ensuring tax payers hard work and taxes are protected and wastage eliminated saving billions per month. With such savings the government can deliver increased services and maintain a budget thus creating a surplus and paying back the $260 billion in debt our current government has created.
In education and awareness lies the very solution to all of our problems. True education, not just academia, is the key to prosperity.

• We will create from the ground up a new, modern day, 21st Century Education System for our schools.

• We will return fiscal responsibility to Government, so that never again can governments break the social contract that says: ‘Australians are happy to work hard and pay taxes, provided the Government uses such taxes efficiently and effectively and does not waste such money. The government must, treat taxes as if they were coming from their own back pocket and not waste them like a drunken sailor.’

• We will see corrupt unions stopped from taking advantage of Australian workers and misleading workers into believing that ‘business is the enemy’. We believe increased business profits are the key to pay rises and increased employment, as it is a win-win situation and not a war against a made up enemy.

• We will ensure businesses pro actively look after their workers’ needs as their employees are their greatest asset. We will see unions having to pay tax and brought under the same corporations law as companies are. This will ensure that they are treated equally and fairly under the law and held to account if found to be involved in misconduct. Honest union officials will have nothing to fear and would welcome such inquiries; whereas the guilty ones will no doubt oppose such change.

• We will see the removal of senseless red tape, over-regulation and bureaucracy that stifles, impedes and prevents business achieving increased profits and thus benefiting all Australians.

• We will ensure Australian workers’ rights are always protected and they get to benefit from the increase in Australian corporate wealth by encouraging better training and willingness to add more value to employers, and in return share in the benefits of wealth creation.

• We will focus on wealth creation for all Australians willing to work hard and apply themselves as opposed to the flawed ideologies of wealth distribution. We will learn to appreciate the contribution that our most successful entrepreneurs make to our country and encourage their continued success and provide the economy and environment for them to do so whilst equally recognising the contribution made by workers.

• We will learn how to combine environmental interests for a sustainable future with industry and economic interests and focus on win-wins, and not wage war against opposing views. We want a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

• We will ask questions of our current debt-based monetary system and seek greater transparency and debate on future models that can achieve greater sustainability. We will reform our overly complex and ineffective tax systems and prove lower taxes can increase productivity and increase the total tax income.

• We will learn from our indigenous culture about sustainability and how we can apply those lessons to our civilisation, and how we can properly recognise and value indigenous contributions to our society.

• We will focus on reducing crime, increasing medical access, medical screening and technology in rural areas, increasing correlation between tertiary education and employment, multiculturalism and research and innovation.
• **We will** support and encourage migrants to adapt to the Australian culture and to recognise the many benefits migrants have brought to this country, and to utilise migrants to fill our labour supply shortfalls when Australian workers can’t meet them.

• **We will** lower taxes and increase services by being innovative, intelligent, strategic and by adopting private sector mentalities in Government Departments and organisations to boost productivity and efficiencies.

• **We will** encourage Australians to save for their retirement and to become self-sufficient and to take active responsibility for their life and for governments to leave superannuation alone.

• **We will** give low income earners a help-up by the removal of taxes for earners below $22,500 pa and the removal of contribution tax on superannuation for low income earners.

• **We will** use more incentives, not more welfare to assist low income earners to empower themselves to enjoy a better life by providing a hand up not a hand out.

• **We will** ensure those who can’t look after themselves, the most vulnerable in our communities are looked after in a way a compassionate society should.

• **We will** encourage the wealthiest Australians to give more to charity and contribute even more to Australia by acknowledging and commending the largest tax payers for their valued contributions and assist them in even greater success and contribution.

• **We will** encourage new economic zones to stimulate growth.

• **We will** listen to what Australians want and ensure all Australians have a voice and say in how to make this great country even greater.

• **We will** recognise the contribution of the elderly and tap into their wisdom and better support them in their retirement.

• **We will** encourage engaged, committed and passionate voters who feel they can influence policy.

• **We will** have voter-initiated policies.

• **We will** support regional Australia and recognise its valuable contribution to our nation and ensure regional Australia benefits equally from the increased abundance of our nation.

• **We will** smartly invest in key infrastructure ahead of time, not behind time, in large nation building projects.

• **We will** encourage the development of Northern Australia and encourage contributions from our most successful entrepreneurs, and not see them as the enemy.

• **We will** unite Australians of all backgrounds to work together to make a 21st Century Australia vision a reality.

• **We will** with your help, change this nation. Your country needs you. Will you take a stand?

*Jamie McIntyre*
Founder of the 21st Century Australia Party
Our 10 Key Policy Areas

For Regional Australia and the New England Electorate

1. Health

- In the 2010 federal election in New England, Health emerged as the major local issue, with agreement that a new hospital was desperately needed in the area.

- A key part of our Regional and New England health policy is to create training facilities to train more doctors and health practitioners in New England as its been shown that Doctors trained in regional areas are more likely to stay and practice in regional areas.

- Doctor shortages is one of the key issues facing regional Australia. We also need health education taught at schools to prevent many of the health issues created from poor diet and lack of exercise.

- Our health platform includes a dramatic overhaul of the health industry to obtain dramatic gains through innovation and technology, without requiring one extra cent of revenue to deliver improved health services.

2. Transport

- As part of our platform of investing in key infrastructure and large nation building projects ahead of time, we will address the major issue of our road system. Completion of the Pacific Highway is a priority as well as speeding up the improvements of the New England highway with a vision for dual carriage way connecting Sydney to Tamworth and eventually to Brisbane.

- Directly related to our road system is the pressing need for a High Speed Rail system that would provide fast and cost effective transportation from city centre to city centre without the need for the hassles of waiting at airports and commuting to airports.

- A High Speed Rail system could take thousands of cars and trucks off our roads while simultaneously reducing road accidents.

- Review the re-opening of the existing rail network that currently stops at Armidale and no longer connects to Brisbane, the regions closest capital city. This would remove many of the large trucks using the New England Highway and reduce road deaths as well as helping to stimulate the New England economy.
3. Coal Seam Gas

- Coal-seam gas exploration is looming as a major election issue. It is also an extremely emotive issue for residents and landowners affected by the mining of coal-seam gas.
- The proposition that coal seam gas will provide energy for the New England region, does not stack up on economic grounds.
- Coupled with the prohibitive expense of a pipeline making it a potentially inferior option to renewable energy options.
- We need to develop processes and plans for developing Regional Land Use. It can be a multi-pronged approach to provide energy needs.
- However, we believe in a healthy environment and a healthy economy so environmental concerns must be addressed.
- We invite input from experts in renewable energy options for the region.

4. Job Security and Growth

- The five major employers in the New England electorate are the University of New England, the NSW Government, the Commonwealth Government, Hunter New England Health and Armidale Dumaresq Council - these are all government organisations. It is obvious we need more jobs and diversity in the private sector.
- Investing in education and people is a top priority for long-term returns across the whole economy. Better education will translate to jobs and opportunities.

5. Children’s Services

- Most people find child care costs prohibitive, which in turn makes it difficult for them to earn a second family income.
- The child care services sector needs to reorganise, in order to enhance their capacity to provide high quality services for young children and their families, while simultaneously securing a long-term quality future for themselves.
- Early childhood pedagogical leadership is an essential component of a quality children’s service. Pedagogical leaderships is what sets a service apart in terms of outcomes for children. The evidence is in on this: you cannot deliver what you do not understand; and you cannot see what you do not know about.
6. Electricity Prices

- Electricity prices and the privatisation of electricity are something of a political football in Australia.
- Electricity prices are of growing concern to most Australians and especially to people in the New England electorate and northern NSW - even though it may be supplied from Queensland.
- In February 2013 The Northern Daily Leader reported, “Tamworth residents not only pay some of the highest petrol prices around, it’s now claimed we pay some of the highest electricity prices in the country too. According to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, Tamworth householders can pay up to nearly $850 more a year to turn on the lights than people in Sydney.”

7. Live Cattle Exports

- The livestock industry is an important part of New England’s vibrant and growing economy.
- Concerns about cruelty towards animals has greatly slowed down the export trade for live animals and also had a negative impact on domestic sales of beef.
- In turn this has impacted on the New England area, as the cattle from the north of Australia that used to go to Indonesia are now flooding the local market, as well as other parts of Australia, and depressing prices.
- Better education and marketing at both domestic and export level is one of the keys to improved sales and profit margins in the cattle industry.
- It is time for wide-ranging reforms in the cattle industry. Critics within the beef and sheep industry say the current structure is out of date and lacks transparency and accountability.

8. Education

- Our vision is to turn the New England area into the education capital of Australia.
- Apart from growing our agriculture assets, we believe education can become the largest driver of the New England economy and become the benchmark in leading the education standards in Australia and globally.
- Falling education standards are both a local and national concern. Just ask any teacher about their student’s verbal and literacy skills!
- We believe investing in education and people is a top priority for long-term returns across the whole economy. Better education will translate to jobs and opportunities.
- Our platform for education is based on a modern day 21st century education curriculum to replace our current 19th century industrialisation system. One that is based on practical real life education with financial education as a necessity. This will achieve a world leading education model without needing one extra cent of revenue. It will ensure the pay quality of teachers is increased due to their significant importance in society with pay rise funded from efficiency gains.
- A modern day 21st century education system can be delivered for no extra cost than the education budget.
9. De-urbanisation and Decentralisation of Australia

• Strong population growth is a position advocated by many business interests. A Productivity Commission, Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia, Research Report, predicts an increase in population up to 42.5 million people by 2056, and our population to reach between up to 62.2 million by 2101. (At the time of writing Australia’s population had just passed 23 million.)

• Significant progress toward a sustainable physical economy in Australia requires more than just managing our future levels of population. It will also require the simultaneous management of infrastructure, lifestyle, energy, international trade, inbound tourism and the technology incorporated in key machines and processes.

• To boost instant prosperity in regional Australia including New England we would look at ways to incentivise workers, industries and families to relocate to regional areas through grants incentives and supportive environments in order to prosper while creating a win-win for all Australians.

• By providing and delivering improved services and infrastructure in regional Australia we can entice more people to regional areas.

10. Rising Crime Levels

• The perception of rising crime levels, coupled with their personal safety, are of serious concern to most people. The latest statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that in 2012 in the Tamworth council area criminals were stealing property from nearly one house every night of the year. They show that break-and-enters to houses were occurring at a rate of between two and three every night – and that somewhere in the city a motor vehicle was being stolen every two days.

• Many people believe the underlying aspects of crime rates - such as economic factors - are not being addressed and if they continue to be ignored crime rates will not change.

• Crime is at the top of the list of major social ills. However, a lot of criminologists and sociologists don’t relate economic incentives to a rise in crime.

• One novel solution to the crime rate in Redfern, is for local youths to box with NSW police at dawn. This it is claimed has saved some of Redfern’s most troubled indigenous youth from a life of crime and prison. The initiative has been credited with an 80 percent drop in juvenile robberies in the first year after police and local indigenous leaders established their boxercise project.

• Why not adopt this initiative in other problem areas?

• Increased police effectiveness is surely the most effective way of reducing crime!
Wastage in all three levels of government needs to be reduced to free up cash to improve current services.

For instance the $16 billion the Government wasted on Building the Education Revolution (BER) school program, (not to mention the insulation fiasco), could have been put into infrastructure, or least into completing the Brisbane to Melbourne Freeways. Unfortunately the Government squandered that opportunity.

In 2010 the federal government canned its botched $2.45 billion home insulation scheme after the government found that the arrangements and timeframe for the modified scheme would not ensure the highest safety standards.

The government was also forced to assess the incidence of alleged fraud of the scheme. Defence spending is another area where governments of both persuasions have wasted billions on overpriced and sometimes worthless equipment.

More funding is urgently required for preventative health care and health education including teaching health education in schools.

In recent times slashing health funding has been a convenient way of balancing budgets.

Federal Labor and state Coalition governments have both promised funding to cut waiting lists. The National Health Reform Agreement, which took effect from July 1, 2013, was meant to “end the blame game”. Instead, the governments are feuding over funding as the public suffers cuts to hospital staff, beds and services and waiting lists grow.

Instead of governments meeting each other halfway, they have elevated their politically driven goal of surpluses above the public interest in covering the shortfall hospitals face. The public has also been denied the right to know the full facts about public funding and the hospital activities that help determine it.

The use of innovation largely from technology to improve health and education.

Our health platform includes a dramatic overhaul of the health industry to obtain dramatic gains through innovation and technology, without requiring one extra cent of revenue to deliver improved health services.
4. More use of 457 visas to assist in increasing the number of health care workers and old age carers.

Researchers claim 457 visas, the program Australian employers most commonly use to sponsor specialised skilled workers from overseas temporarily, play an essential role in the resources sector by filling highly-skilled positions that cannot be met locally. In fact, migrant workers played a significant role in helping major resource projects get off the ground, the study found. And why not more use of 457 visas to assist in increasing the number of health care workers and old age carers?

5. Voters should have more direct influence on policy leading to better policy to serve voters interest.

Why not have elections or referendums based on policies, not parties. Do we agree with all the policies of our preferred party? Of course not.

With the software available today fraudulent voting could be prevented; this can be introduced in a cost effective manner.

But we are forced to vote for a party even though we might only agree with some of their policies. When elected they claim a mandate to implement all their policies, even though we didn’t give them such a mandate.

For example, they say their policy is, “no to carbon tax”. Yet after being elected they implement a carbon tax, and use taxpayer’s money to run a media campaign asking us to say yes to a carbon tax. Didn’t the majority already say “no”? Why even run a media campaign asking us to say yes, when we don’t actually get a choice again to say yes or no?

6. National Broadband Network (NBN) savings to have 50% injected into regional areas and broadband rolled out sooner - an extra $7.5 billion dollars for regional Australia.

The current $42 billion NBN is overpriced (the initial estimated cost has had considerable cost blowouts and faces even more blowouts) and is a poor return on taxpayer’s money. Taxpayers will be asked to pay twice for it - with our taxes first, then again every month to use it.

The government has already projected in its NBN plans that most households will only take up the packages offering 25% of its full speed. Most people won’t pay the extra because that speed is more than enough. A NBN that covers a large majority of the population for a fraction of the cost would save $15 billion and still enable faster broadband for regional Australia.

The debate isn’t about whether we need a NBN, that’s a given. The debate is we need one sooner and for better value for money, which we can have. Further, the debate should also be about how can governments spend $42 billion (and counting) of our money without a simple cost analysis or any control over such spending. With just half the savings of the $15 billion being $7.5 billion injected into rural Australia (and broadband rolled out sooner) we could make huge improvements to critical services such as health care and better rural roads.
A sovereign wealth fund can assist in lowering of the Australia dollar to assist local farmers.

Myself and others have lobbied to have a sovereign wealth fund implemented for years. It is critical to preserve Australia’s wealth after the mining boom and to ensure our government doesn’t waste the boom years generating large mining revenues.

All proceeds from the mining tax should go to such a fund with the goal of building a sovereign wealth fund comparable to those of Norway and Dubai.

Such a fund also could be used to help stabilize and lower our currency by shifting some of our wealth into overseas markets to diversify and expand Australia’s sovereign wealth and better balance global inflows.

8

A better financially managed government will lead to more revenue being available for regional Australia.

Spending should be removed from the hands of politicians and placed in the hands of an independent oversight committee run by suitably qualified people, just as the Reserve Bank Board is independent from the Treasurer.

Just as interest rates are set by an independent board and not by the Government, Australia needs an independent board to oversee government spending.

Why leave something as important as Government spending in the hands of elected politicians and current governments?

The money wasted on defence spending and unsuitable defence equipment is a good example. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted.

In a recent survey by global consultants McKinsey, the US and Australia came at the bottom of a list of 33 countries ranked according to how efficiently they spent their defence budgets in their analysis. The McKinsey study says the US and Australia are the world’s worst performing countries with regard to “equipment output for every dollar spent”.

Other examples of poor financial management by the federal government include the Building the Education Revolution (BER) scheme and the disastrous insulation scheme.

Julia Gillard’s critics claim she was responsible for overseeing the spending of $16.2 billion on the BER, including a $1.7 billion blowout and up to $8 billion in waste through mismanagement, gouging and state government substitution.

Critics of the BER program claim huge cost overruns have been committed and covered up. As a nation, Australia eventually outlaid upwards of $16 billion of funding to get maybe as little as $10 billion worth of projects on a value-for-money basis.

Two of the more important reasons the BER program produced such blowouts is that the commonwealth is not good at overseeing state procurement and states and territories have vastly different procurement practices and planning expertise on the ground.
Better marketing of the New England region and its commodities will lead to more industry, more jobs for the region, increased revenue and increased prosperity

What do people living outside of the New England region know about its attractions and products?

Tourism is an important industry, worth over $110 million annually and Tamworth is well known as the “Country Music Capital of Australia”, annually hosting the Tamworth Country Music Festival in late January; the second biggest country music festival in the world. But could it be marketed better?

How many Australians know that Tamworth prides itself as the “National Equine Capital of Australia” because of the high volume of equine events held in the city and the construction of the world class Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre, the biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere?

How many Australians know that the New England region has a great diversity of mineral deposits ranging from large coal deposits in the Werris Creek to Boggabri area to metallics and gemstones on the tablelands. Antimony, coal, gold, sapphires and tin have been the most important economic commodities mined in the New England region?

Cattle and sheep are the predominant types of livestock produced in the New England area. The Northern Tablelands produce some of Australia’s best fine wool and beef cattle. The western slopes are major areas for cotton and wheat. Other primary production activities include dairying, the production of grains, lamb, pork, fruit, potatoes, poultry, eggs, various mining activities, timber production, viticulture and aquaculture.

Why aren’t we branding and marketing these commodities and products as New England products to lead to more industry and more jobs for the region?

Additional revenues need to be found, such as a visa tax which can lead to more funding for regional areas.

An example of innovative tax revenue increase that doesn’t disincentivise Australians is our example of a Visa tax. By offering a paid Visa to all potential immigrants including suitably qualified boat people, it would greatly reduce the financial incentive of people smugglers to bring illegal immigrants by boat.

We estimate such a visa fee could raise $15 billion p.a. from the 200,000 immigrants that come to Australia annually, without penalising Australian tax payers or the Australian economy.
Running budget surpluses would lead to more funding being available for regional areas.

Our policy is to have spending removed from the hands of politicians and placed in the hands of an independent board. This would ensure tax payers hard work and taxes are protected and wastage is eliminated, saving billions per month.

With such savings government can deliver increased services and maintain a budget, thus creating a surplus and paying back the $250 billion in debt and counting our current government has created. According to Wikipedia the gross Australian federal debt was $244.325 billion as of 31 August 2012.

Bear in mind that budget deficits reported by governments are not the same as government debt levels. Business Spectator (7 May 2013) reported, “The Labor government is expected next week to report a $17 billion revenue write-down in the current financial year. "Treasurer Wayne Swan is struggling with revenue growth that has failed to live up to Treasury’s optimistic forecasts for this year and next.

“This most recent federal budget reported that the total write-down in tax collections in the current financial year will total $17 billion, and will rise to more than $20 billion in the next financial year.

“Labor had promised as recently as October 2012 a $2 billion surplus for 2013-14, but the expected revenue write-down pushed the deficit to at least $19 billion.” The Australian Financial Review reported that revenue write-downs between 2013-14 and 2016 could run between $60 billion and $80 billion.

Relocating more of Australia’s population into regional areas can lead to greater jobs, greater prosperity, stamp duty incentives and other incentives can be used to attract individuals and families and business to add value to the region.

To boost instant prosperity in regional Australia including New England we would look at ways to incentivise workers, industries and families to relocate to regional areas through grants incentives and supportive environments in order to prosper while creating a win-win for all Australians.

By providing and delivering improved services and infrastructure in regional Australia we can entice more people to regional areas.

Removal of excess regulation will help stimulate more business growth in the region, along with incentives to start business.

Currently, Australian businesses have to face immense red-tape, too many regulations and a large number of taxes such as Goods and Services Tax (GST), Payroll Tax, Mining Tax, Carbon Tax and Company Tax.

These regulations and taxes are weighing down companies and the biggest sufferers are small businesses that are the very backbone of the Australian economy. Therefore, investing in Australia is becoming an increasingly less attractive option.
A supportive business environment will stimulate business success and more job creation.

Starting a business in Australia is difficult because taxes are too high and the cost of employing staff is too high. Add to that the rates of productivity which are too low, the cost of compliance which is too high, an unfriendly business environment, as well as a small, isolated local market.

Then we are taxed for employing people and we pay payroll tax as well. Which means more entrepreneurs will set up business elsewhere, in order to be globally competitive.

Our problems are compounded by high labour costs which in turn have supported high property prices. Australia needs to lower its’ labour costs.

Respected business commentator Robert Gottliebsen wrote in Business Spectator on 30 April 2013, (The Gillard government have embarked on a) “dedicated and vicious campaign against small business, which is the main private employment creating sector of the economy.

“This was done via the Australian tax office which attacked small operators and refused to give many ABN numbers. Thousands of complex but useless regulations were introduced at the same time as the Gillard government promoted union dominated industrial relations laws that were designed for large business and made staff flexibility in small business much tougher. Independent contracting was actively discouraged.”

The Gillard government “decide to be completely remote from business. Treasury took the same view. As a result Canberra had no idea what was happening in the business arena (particularly in mining) and most of the treasury business forecasts were wrong. Worse still, they spent the money that they incorrectly anticipated receiving.”
NEW ENGLAND

POLICY INFORMATION FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA AND NEW ENGLAND

LOCAL & NATIONAL ISSUES
Health

Health issues in Australia are directly linked to our aging population. The aging of the population is one of the major transformations being experienced by Australia’s population, and is a current focus for the provision of health and disability services, and family and community care.

A key part of our Regional and New England health policy is to create training facilities to train more doctors and health practitioners in New England as its been shown that Doctors trained in regional areas are more likely to stay and practice in regional areas.

Doctor shortages is one of the key issues facing regional Australia. We also need health education taught at schools to prevent many of the health issues created from poor diet and lack of exercise.

Our health platform includes a dramatic overhaul of the health industry to obtain dramatic gains through innovation and technology, without requiring one extra cent of revenue to deliver improved health services.

In the 2010 federal election in New England, Health emerged as the major local issue, with agreement that a new hospital was desperately needed in the area.

Local Hospitals and Health Services

Tamworth residents face a three-month wait to see a doctor if they are new patients, and a trip to Sydney if they are diagnosed with cancer.

A recent local council survey indicated these health issues were important to New England residents:

- **Improved health services** – rebuild the hospital, improve staffing levels, more specialists, become a training centre, and maintain local G.P. services
- **The need for mental health services**
- **Better care for older and disabled** people and family support services

New England Area Health Service covers an area that includes three Divisions of General Practice - New England, North West Slopes and Barwon.

New England Division has 1 non-metropolitan district group 1 hospital (Armidale), 1 non-metropolitan district group 2 hospital (Inverell), 2 non-metropolitan community acute hospitals (Glen Innes and Tenterfield) and 3 non-metropolitan community non-acute hospitals (Guyra, Tingha and Emmaville).

**Other Health Services within the Division include:**

- **Physiotherapy:** Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield
- **Nursing Homes:** Armidale 3, Glen Innes 2, Inverell 1, Guyra 1
- **Aboriginal Medical Service:** Armidale with outreach to Uralla, Guyra & Tingha
- **Optometrists:** Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield
- **Counselling:** Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield
- **Radiology:** Armidale, Inverell
- **Pathology:** Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield
Mental Health Services:
Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield

Medical Specialist services include:
Armidale
orthopaedics, O&G, surgery, ophthalmology, psychiatry (p/t),
physician, geriatrician, fly in urology

Inverell
surgery, visiting ophthalmology, geriatrician & physician & O&G

Glen Innes
limited surgery, visiting physician & geriatrician

The major health services and specialities that are lacking across the Division include:
Neurology, dermatology, psychiatry, procedural GPs (particularly obstetrics), podiatry, diabetes educators, dietitians and psychology. Several of the allied health services that are under represented are provided by the Division through the MAHS Programs including some podiatry, diabetes education and dietetics.

New England urgently needs full clinical services plans to be drawn up for the Glen Innes and Inverell Hospitals.
These plans should lead to redevelopment of the hospitals to meet current and future needs of their local communities.

Both infrastructure upgrades and health workforce issues should be addressed as these are the matters the communities and local health providers regard as crucial.

In early 2012 a petition of more than 11,000 signatures was collected in these two towns and surrounding regions after Hunter New England Health completed preliminary Network Service Plans for both hospitals after extensive community consultation.

The lack of mental health services in some areas is a major concern.
We also need a separate government funding category for middle tier district hospitals which have missed out in recent rounds of infrastructure grants.

Larger hospitals have received the lion’s share of the funding and smaller centres have seen their aging hospitals replaced by Multi Purpose Health Services.

It is time that the needs of district hospitals were considered in their own right. They are the forgotten pieces of the health service scenario in Australia.

A recent survey asked local General Practitioners (GPs) whether they considered that there are enough doctors, medical specialists, allied health services, community based services and aged care services in their towns.
All participating General Practitioners considered there to be an acute shortage of medical specialists. Shortages in services relating to the other health areas are assessed as existing by between 23% and 52% of the participating General Practitioners.

The 4 top priority medical specialist services, nominated by the General Practitioners, as required for Armidale, are obstetrics and gynaecology, dermatology, psychiatry and physicians.

The General Practitioners nominated the following allied health services as particularly being in short supply: (public) physiotherapy, dietetics, diabetes educators, psychology and podiatry.

In the area of community based services, the General Practitioners nominated (mental health) counselling as being in short supply. In the aged care service area, more ACAT staff are assessed as being required for this region.

90% of the participating General Practitioners supported the Division to investigate the feasibility of setting up and running a Rehabilitation Service.

Health issues within the New England Division Of General Practice
50 - 70% of respondents in Glen Innes, Inverell and Tenterfield communities were unhappy with the availability of medical specialist and allied health services within their communities. Waiting lists, cost and travel to use these services are all issues that prevent these community members using these services when they need them.

All communities within the New England Division of General Practice would like to see increased access to specialists preferably in their town, if not at least closer than having to leave their Division. Specialist Services they would like increased access to include: Gynaecologist, Psychiatrist, Ophthalmologist, Endocrinologist, Paediatrician and Neurologist.

Access to allied health within their town is important to all communities surveyed and they would like to see more access to the following
services; dietetics, podiatry, physiotherapy, speech pathology, diabetes educators and social workers.

**Health activities of the New England Division of General Practice**

Suggestions for health projects the New England Division could run, included mental health, women’s health, men’s health, prevention activities, support groups, community keep fit programs and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) programs.

These comments were made concerning matters raised in this survey:

- Need more funding for more isolated communities
- The need to travel to see specialists is expensive and difficult especially with children, the elderly and disabled
- It is important to have permanent allied health services in all communities
- Concerns re heavy workload of hospital staff and GPs
- Lack of general surgeons and medical specialists
- Extreme need for increased mental health services
- NSW is ‘Sydneycentric’ and rural areas get less funding
- More funds are needed to update services

**DOCTOR SHORTAGES**

The next decade will be a critical juncture for the rural health system in this country, especially the New England electorate.

We have the chance right now to train a new generation of rural doctors to replace the older doctors who are now retiring.

However, we need to do more than just train these doctors – we need to entice them to rural practices like those in the New England electorate and keep them here.

Some suggestions from feedback from rural residents for enticing and retaining doctors in rural areas:

- More GPs to reduce work loads and stress
- Housing incentives
- Work for spouses
- Lower indemnity insurance

- Local GPs who own practices to be more welcoming to potential resident GPs
- Bonuses for rural GPs
- Better equipment and facilities
- Good terms and conditions
- Appropriate remuneration
- Compulsory time spent in both city and rural locations as part of medical training
- Local committee to welcome GP and family including introduction to community, school, sporting, services, etc.
- Availability to allow GPs weekend off / reduce the on-call commitments

**RURAL MEDICINE**

Rural medicine allows doctors to undertake a range of work in the general practice and hospital setting that delivers high levels of professional satisfaction, but strong support systems are needed to build strong and viable rural practices.

It is a known fact that many doctors leave rural practices because of the lack of support systems and qualified back up staff.

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is urging for a sustainable, home-grown medical workforce to improve access to healthcare in rural and remote areas including New England. We strongly support these aims and objectives.

With the significant number of young doctors now graduating from our universities, there are huge opportunities to deliver a home-grown future medical workforce to the New England electorate.

Our decentralisation policy is in unison with the aims and objectives of the Rural Doctors Association. There must be hundreds of big-city based doctors who would relish a move to a far less expensive cost base and a rural life style. Especially if incentives such as tax breaks and removal costs can be provided.

We strongly support the aims of the Rural Doctors Association “to create a pipeline of doctors to rural practice, taking our eager young medical graduates, equipping them with the qualifications, training and skills required for rural practice, and delivering them to rural communities and practices that have the support systems needed to attract and retain these doctors once they graduate.”
We concur with the Rural Doctors Association claim “medical students and registrars who undertake medical training in rural settings are significantly more likely to return to the bush to work once they have graduated, so let’s fund more rural training places for interns, junior doctors and registrars.”

We strongly support the Rural Doctors Association in their claims, “We also know that the opportunity to perform procedural and higher level clinical work increases the attractiveness of general practice as a career, so let’s invest in a National Advanced Rural Training Program to help deliver a whole new cohort of young doctors with advanced medical skills to the bush.

“Let’s also invest in infrastructure to build the capacity of rural practices to train medical students, junior doctors and GP registrars as future rural doctors, and provide realistic reimbursements for the skilled rural doctors and rural practices that train and supervise these doctors-in-training.

“We also need to ensure we better support the existing cohort of rural doctors, including regional and rural specialists, so that high-quality medical services can be delivered closer to patients’ homes, and so we can build regional centres of academic excellence to support medical training.

We strongly support and endorse the Rural Doctors Association Election Platform which sets out nine fundamental steps that a federal Government can take to secure a future pipeline of rural doctors and to support rural practices to help train and retain these doctors.

To secure a pipeline of doctors with the qualifications, skills and training required for rural practice, RDAA recommends that the parties commit to:

1. Funding more rural training places for interns, junior doctors and registrars.

2. Implementing a national advanced rural training program to provide a fully supported training pathway into rural medicine tailored to meet the needs of rural communities.

3. Investing in infrastructure to build the capacity of rural practices to train medical students, junior doctors and GP registrars as future rural doctors.

4. Realistic reimbursements for skilled rural clinical supervisors and rural practices to train future rural doctors.

5. A national approach to employing GP registrars as a way of delivering a more sustainable model for training future GPs.

6. Funding a nationally coordinated program to ensure that overseas trained doctors seeking to practise in rural and remote communities receive access to the basic and advanced training required to meet the needs of these communities, prior to unsupervised practise.

To ensure rural practices receive the support they need to be able to provide health services that meet the needs of their local communities, we support the RDAA recommendations that a federal government commit to:

7. Providing fair and realistic incentives to encourage rural doctors to relocate to, and remain in, rural practice, with the level of incentive increasing with actual rurality.

8. Recognising and rewarding rural doctors for the complexity of work they perform across the general practice and hospital setting.

9. Implementing a rural health infrastructure program to assist rural practices to expand and extend health services to meet the needs of their communities.

The next federal government has the ideal opportunity, and our support, to put in place the measures needed to more evenly distribute the medical workforce and deliver substantive health equality for rural Australia.
The potential future rural doctor workforce is there. We just need to make it a reality by getting more doctors - and support systems - into rural practices.

**Hospitals and health services are probably the biggest health issue in Australia.**

Lack of skilled workers, lack of funding, lack of management, lack of preventive measures, lack of people with basic first aid knowledge, lack of education, long waiting lists for operations and access to health services are all major issues.

When it comes to funding hospitals are something of a political football with both state and federal governments sharing responsibility.

In recent times slashing health funding has been a convenient way of balancing budgets.

Victoria for instance has suffered from federal government cuts, which coincided with the state government slashing $616 million from its last two health budgets over five years.

Patients returning to NSW after hospital treatment interstate report difficulties accessing support services back in NSW. They state that referrals made for follow-up services in Queensland were not acknowledged by NSW and they had to go through another referral process once back in NSW.

Federal Labor and state Coalition governments have both promised funding to cut waiting lists. The National Health Reform Agreement, which took effect from July 1 2013, was meant to “end the blame game”. Instead, the governments are feuding over funding as the public suffers cuts to hospital staff, beds and services and waiting lists grow.

Instead of governments meeting each other halfway, they have elevated their politically driven goal of surpluses above the public interest in covering the shortfall hospitals face. The public has also been denied the right to know the full facts about public funding and the hospital activities that help determine it.

For all the focus on cuts, however, the bigger picture is that the Commonwealth and state have put much more money into hospitals. Since 2008, the federal share has risen by about $1 billion, with $900 million to come over four years. Victoria has restructured health service budgeting since 2008, but we can directly compare acute health services - which is essentially hospitals. Spending is up by a third in five years, from $7.016 billion in 2008-09 to $9.332 billion in the 2012-13 budget. Budget-to-budget rises were 8.4 per cent in 2009-10 and 10.4 per cent in 2010-11 (a time of rising public impatience with the Labor government), 6.7 per cent in 2011-12 (when the Baillieu government honoured election commitments) and 4.2 per cent this year. Budgets are being tightened as Spring Street and Canberra struggle for revenue - including GST shortfalls that hit Victoria hard - but health funding is still growing in real terms.

The inability of governments to find enough revenue to cover the relentless increases for health treatments, much of it driven by an ageing population, is the bigger and more serious policy picture that is being lost amid political squabbling.

Federal and state governments are hitting the wall when it comes to meeting demand growth trends.

The priority must be to improve public health through education, early detection and treatment. Unhealthy eating, sedentary lifestyles and weight gain, as well as neglected and ignored health problems, mean millions of people are on track for costly hospital treatments that could be avoided.

Governments are talking about preventive health measures, but these still receive only a tiny fraction of funding, despite the huge returns of a healthier public and healthier budgets. Without a greater long-term focus on moderating demands on hospitals, there will never be enough hospital funding.

**One very important issue in our health platform is to ban cigarette sales for those born in the year 2000 onwards to reduce the huge health liabilities smoking causes.**

We live in a world in which the mass commercialization of cigarettes in the early 20th century rapidly out paced our understanding of their health consequences.

About 15,500 Australians die every year from smoking-related diseases, more than road accidents, murders, alcohol and other drugs combined. Every year, three foreign tobacco companies make a combined profit of more than $500 million in Australia while leaving the country with a combined social cost of more than $31 billion.

After the government banned cigarette advertising on television and radio; the tobacco industry increased its print media advertising. The government then banned print media ads, so the tobacco industry increased its sponsorship of sporting events. The government then mandated plain packaging, so the tobacco industry hired a battalion of high priced lawyers and took the matter to the High Court and lost.

This relentless tug-of-war persists as 70,000 young people are
recruited into the ranks of smokers every year.

To resolve this impasse we would mandate that cigarettes can be sold only to a person over 18, and who was born before 2000.

This would gradually phase out cigarettes in Australia by forever prohibiting their sale to the next generation.

This proposal balances the rights of existing smokers and the need to protect children born this century from the pernicious effects of tobacco addiction. When it was raised by a group of oncologists in Singapore in 2010, more than 70 per cent of people surveyed supported the plan, including 60 per cent of smokers.

The proposal would not criminalise smoking; it would solely impose heavy fines on vendors caught selling tobacco to anyone born after 2000. Despite knowing that cigarettes will kill about 50 percent of long-term smokers, we are somehow happy to carve out an exception for tobacco companies.

Ultimately, it is very difficult to come up with a good reason that justifies the premature deaths of 15,500 Australians every year.

It is time for the government to pick up a knife and cut the problem in half. The phase-out proposal ensures that current smokers will be unaffected, while future generations will be protected.

Waiting lists for elective surgery are a major issue

NSW hospitals performed worse than any other state in Australia when it came to elective surgery waiting times, with patients forced to wait a median 50 days.

In Victoria budget cuts continue to decimate the hospital system and blow out elective surgery waiting lists. In early 2013 more than 45,000 were on the waiting list!

In recent times more than 325 beds including intensive care and high dependency beds have been closed and thousands of elective surgery procedures have been cut. Victorian patients are expected to wait for longer than six months for semi-urgent surgery.

Fifty jobs were recently cut at the Royal Children’s Hospital and predictions are that another 700 jobs will be lost.

The Victorian regional committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Dr Robert Stunden, said he believed senior teaching doctors, scrub nurses and theatre technicians were being retrenched or moved into other positions as some hospitals cut elective surgery activity in half.

While urgent surgery would still be done within 30 days, he said people waiting for semi-urgent surgery, including hip and knee replacements, hernia repairs and gall bladder removals, could be waiting for longer than six months when they should be operated on within three.

“The cutbacks are biting hard … I have never seen morale in any health service in the world like it is in Victoria today and I’ve worked in five countries on four continents,” he said.

State secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation Lisa Fitzpatrick said nurses were concerned hospitals were not filling job vacancies due to the cuts, amounting to “redundancies by stealth” that would affect patient care.

She said many nurses who had completed a graduate year in a public hospital were not being offered ongoing employment, and hundreds of new graduates were unable to secure a position.

In Queensland drunken brawls resulting in horrific facial injuries are forcing the postponement of elective surgery for people with serious medical illnesses such as tumours.

Elective surgery patients in the Brisbane suburb of Logan can expect to add nine months or even more to their waiting time for treatment.

Some patients report waiting more than eight years to see a specialist before then going on the elective surgery list.

LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle behaviours such as tobacco smoking, risky alcohol consumption, and obesity are three of the more prominent health risks in modern Australian society.

These three risk factors may affect a person’s ability to work, as well as the ability to participate in other aspects of life such as family and community activities. On a broader scale each of these risks have wider implications for both society and the economy.

Both smoking and obesity are associated with social disadvantage, while excessive alcohol consumption affects society in a number of ways, such as through property damage, road accidents and the need for law enforcement. From an economic point of view, diseases or conditions resulting from these risk factors (e.g. diabetes, some cancers, cardiovascular disease, mental illness, and injury) place demand upon Australia’s health care system. The annual cost to Australia of harm arising from smoking and drinking has been estimated to exceed $31 billion and $15 billion respectively.
OBESITY

Obesity is a major contributor to the global burden of chronic disease and disability. Levels of childhood obesity have been rising for a number of reasons including the fact that children are eating more foods that are high in fat and sugars and spending less time on physical activity.

Overweight and obesity in children is a major health concern. Studies have shown that once children become obese they are more likely to stay obese into adulthood and have an increased risk of developing both short and long-term health conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Obesity not only has significant health and social impacts, but also considerable economic impacts. The total annual cost of obesity for both children and adults in Australia, including health system costs, productivity and carers costs, is estimated to be around $60 billion.

Overweight and obesity pose a major risk to long term health by increasing the risk of chronic illnesses. Estimates put 7.4 million people aged 18 years and over (54% of the adult population) as overweight or obese, an increase from 5.4 million adults (45% of the adult population) in 1995.

Three main ways to prevent children becoming overweight or obese:

1. **Promote healthy eating at home:** keep only ‘everyday’ foods in the cupboard, avoid or limit ‘sometimes’ foods, and talk to your child about health and nutrition. Have three meals and two healthy snacks a day, always have breakfast and make water their ‘everyday’ drink.

2. **Encourage your child to be active, and develop an active family lifestyle:** you don’t have to engage in strenuous physical activity all the time - instead, make being active a fun part of your family’s daily routine. For example, walk to school or sport, kick a football together in the park, or take stairs instead of lifts or escalators. Getting active can be a great way to spend positive family time together!

3. **Limit screen-based activities:** make some family rules that set boundaries on the amount of time spent watching TV or playing computer games. Think about limiting screen time, particularly while eating and during daylight hours when it takes away from outdoors time and active leisure.

There are a range of risk factors associated with higher rates of illness or injury in the population. Such factors may be physiological (e.g. high blood pressure), they may relate to the environment (e.g. air pollution) or to lifestyle choices (e.g. smoking). Risk factors have been found to contribute substantially to disease and disability, and thus to reduced length of life and quality of life in Australia.

**Work-related injuries pose a serious problem.**

Work-related injuries range in seriousness from minor cuts and bruises to major injuries and illnesses or death. They may affect a person’s health, through immediate or long term pain, suffering or disability, and impact their economic well being through health expenses and lost income.

Employers also incur costs when workers are injured, through lost working days or lower productivity and the cost of workers’ compensation insurance. Information on work-related injury is used for planning occupational health and safety measures and appropriate financial compensation of people who suffer a work-related injury.

In a recent year there were 346 compensated fatalities in Australia, of which 84 resulted from accidents on the journey to or from work and 262 from workplace activities. As not all work-related deaths result in compensation, the total number of work-related deaths is thought to be higher.

The most common type of non-fatal compensated injuries or illness, which resulted in at least 10 days off work, were sprains and strains of joints and adjacent muscles, accounting for 54% of claims. Back injuries accounted for 25% of claims, making the back the most commonly injured part of the body.

Consistent with these data, ‘body stressing’ was the most common way that injuries arose, accounting for 44% of claims. Non-powered tools or equipment were involved in the injury in 25% of all claims, and environmental causes, such as slippery ground surfaces, high traffic areas, or steps and stairways, were involved in 14%. In all, 92,900 such claims were lodged, indicating that in 2000 about 1% of the workforce were compensated for a non-fatal injury or illness which entailed at least 10 days off work.

Not all work-related injuries and illnesses result in compensation. Household surveys supplement compensation data with information on the broader pattern of non-fatal work-related injury.
PROBLEM GAMBLING AND HEALTH

Researchers have also detected a strong link between problem gambling, particularly on the pokies, mental health problems and suicide.

CURBING RISING MEDICAL COSTS

Improvements in technology are unlikely to curtail Australia’s burgeoning healthcare costs, unless they are combined with eliminating wastage from inefficiencies in the current health system. These costs are projected to rise across every age group and expose the Commonwealth to “fiscal risk”.

The important thing about health projections is that it’s not just about the aging effect; it’s also about the increase in real per capita costs of health expenditure with technological change.

Health is actually a very productive industry. Every time a new technology comes around that lowers costs, demand goes up, swamping any decline in outlays. Examples are diagnostic imaging, pathology testing, nuclear medicine; you can think of any technology. Once they get cheaper, they become far more widespread.

Demand and technological pressures are projected to lift health spending across every age group. This is not just about the aged; for every age group, because health is a superior good, health costs will increase.

People aged 65 and above are very aware of the skyrocketing costs of the federal pharmaceutical benefits scheme since the 1990s.

As a proportion of GDP, spending on health is projected to rise from 4 percent in 2009/10 to 7.1 percent in the 40 years to 2049/2050.

Age-related pensions and aged care are projected to rise from 2.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent of GDP, to 3.9 percent and 1.8 percent respectively in 2049/50.

Spending on health, age-related pensions and healthcare could almost double to about 50 percent over the decades to 2050 without action to curtail spending growth.

Most Australians Should Improve Their Diets

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s report, Australia’s Food and Nutrition 2012, found 91 percent of adults do not eat enough vegetables and only half eat enough fruit. One in five drinks alcohol at risky levels.

Households spent an average of $237 a week on food and beverages in 2009-10. By far the biggest component of spending was on food prepared outside the home, at restaurants and takeaways, where the average outlay was $63 a week. In second place was spending on alcoholic drinks, $32 a week, followed by meat, fish and seafood, $30 a week.

Australians spent just a few dollars more a week on fruit, nuts and vegetables than they did on condiments, confectionery, food additives and prepared meals.

In another section of its report, titled “We’re getting fatter”, the institute said 36 percent of adults are overweight and a further 25 percent obese. And we’re starting young. Of children two to 16 years old, 17 percent are overweight and a further 6 percent obese. That’s nearly one in four children with a weight problem.

Our increasingly sedentary lives are part of the problem, but this is swamped by the increased consumption of calorie-dense but nutrient-poor foods.

A federal government green paper on its National Food Plan hints at one reason. Obviously we eat sweets, burgers and chips because they taste great. But we also eat them because they are readily available and inexpensive.

“Analysis of Australian food expenditure data suggests a substantial proportion of the Australian population is severely restricted in its capacity to make healthy food choices and achieve a healthy lifestyle. Compounding the situation is evidence that the cost of healthy (low energy-density, high nutrient-density) foods are increasing disproportionately when compared with the cost of higher energy-density, relatively nutrient-poor foods.”

The problem is exacerbated in regional and rural areas, where not only is the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables restricted, but transport costs and fewer supermarkets mean prices are often higher. Fast food chains tend to have uniform national pricing, making it relatively cheaper for people in regional areas to eat at their restaurants.

Given the cost imposed on the public purse of treating obesity-related conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, not to mention the cost to individuals of poor health, self-image and shorter lives, we need to get serious about our what we eat.

One economic solution would be to increase the cost of fatty, sugary or excessively calorie-dense foods.

Other products harmful to our health, such as cigarettes and alcohol, already attract so-called ‘sin taxes’.
Sin taxes work by raising prices and discouraging consumption. Additionally, it can be argued the relatively low cost of junk food doesn’t incorporate the cost to the community of poor health and treatment.

Obviously, such a tax would be regressive - disproportionately affecting those on lower incomes - as do taxes on alcohol and cigarettes.

Governments could use the revenue from a fat tax to compensate the low income earners, who would still find fatty foods relatively more expensive. Sound familiar? It’s the same logic as the carbon tax. Even if you compensate people for the full effect of higher prices, by raising the relative price of a good, consumers will want to consume relatively less of it. That people respond to prices and incentives is one of the most basic concepts of economics.

All taxes impose some cost on society in terms of administration. Can we prove that the benefits through improved health would outweigh those costs?

A big part of the solution to the nation’s obesity crisis lies with education. Only by arming ourselves with knowledge of our body’s energy needs and the energy content of what we eat, can we begin to bring the two closer into line.

More funding is urgently required for preventative health care and health education including teaching health education in schools. And why not more use of 457 visas to assist in increasing the number of health care workers and old age carers?

The shambles of our health system highlights the numbers of levels of government we have.

Why do we need state and territory governments? We have eight in total with all the consequent levels of bureaucracy, to say nothing of the huge numbers of parliamentarians and their staff. They are costly and ineffective.

Why should we carry the massive costs of three layers of Government? Not to mention the extra administrative burdens on business as well as additional taxes and inefficiencies.

Why aren’t health, education, transport and infrastructure all regulated at federal government level with a single nationwide system, rather than state based. Are we not one country?

2. Roads

As part of our platform of investing in key infrastructure and large nation building projects ahead of time, we will address the major issue of our road system. Some of the connecting roads in the New England district to other major towns and cities really are appalling.

For instance, the Newell Highway which runs from Queensland into Victoria, with its numerous connections to the New England district, is a very busy road with just two lanes and the occasional passing lane. This road also carries large numbers of huge, very heavy Double-B semi-trailers travelling at the maximum allowable speed limit of 100 kilometers per hour.

When southern New South Wales and northern Victoria experience heavy, consistent rain such as in February and March 2012, motorists travelling on the Newell and Sturt Highways were forced to take major detours of up to hundreds of kilometers, for weeks. The inconvenience and cost of these disruptions to thousands of people and transport operators must have been huge.

Despite constant lip service by transport operators of how seriously they take this speed limit and assurances that they do not tamper with the truck’s speed limiters, it is not unusual for cars travelling at the 110 kilometers per hour speed limit to be tailgated and passed by trucks, supposedly speed limited to 100 kilometers per hour.

Four-lane highways that are not subject to flooding all across our national road grid would be a wonderful nation building project and when completed would surely attract more tourists to all the towns along the way?
The New England Highway

We wish to speed up the improvements of the New England highway with a vision for dual carriage way connecting Sydney to Tamworth and eventually to Brisbane.

Complete The Pacific Highway

Anyone who drives between Australia’s major cities will be aware of the deplorable roads on many journeys. If you drive from Sydney to Brisbane on the Pacific Highway part of the highway is a very good four-lane road. However, large parts of that highway are still a poor two-lane road and at holiday times motorists can face long delays as they merge from two lanes to one. Some sections of this highway are regarded as some of the most accident prone areas in the country. This highway is also heavily used by huge, very heavy Double-B semi-trailers travelling at the maximum allowable speed limit.

Once this is complete it should assist in reduction of road congestion on the New England Highway and also allow increased funding to be diverted to the New England Highway to achieve a four-lane dual way though the heart of New England, connecting Sydney to Brisbane.

Such infrastructure would be accelerated under our policies.

Connectivity

Much of the New England electorate is closer to Brisbane than it is to Sydney.

Why isn’t the rail network utilised through to Brisbane which could reduce trucks on the road and decrease the costs of road works and lower the road toll?

We wish to revise the re opening of the rail network through to Brisbane that currently isn’t used past Armidale if a cost effective solution can be found.

Part of the answer of course is the mostly petty preferences for supporting the capital city of the state you live in. We are supposed to be a commonwealth federation, though petty state politics often over ride issues that could be beneficial to voters.

A High Speed Rail system

Directly related to our road system is the pressing need for a High Speed Rail system that would provide fast and cost effective transportation from city centre to city centre without the need for the hassles of waiting at airports and commuting to airports.

A High Speed Rail system could take thousands of cars and trucks off our roads while simultaneously reducing road accidents.

The issue of a High Speed Rail system has been raised before in my book 101 Ways to Improve Australia and the idea has been around for more than 25 years.

We really think this type of infrastructure project needs to happen.

Initially the rail project should start with Canberra to Sydney, and then extend to New Castle and start Geelong to Melbourne, then to Ballarat and Bendigo, and eventually Canberra connecting Melbourne to Sydney.

In Queensland it should start with Gold Coast to Brisbane, eventually to the Sunshine Coast. Last but not least, connecting Gold Coast to Newcastle - thus connecting Brisbane with Melbourne, covering the large majority of Australia’s population.

Admittedly, to complete such a large project will require anywhere from $120 billion dollars. However redirecting fossil fuel subsidies, and other cost savings could fund this or private sector funding used. Plus it can be cash positive well before it’s entirely complete. With latest estimates suggesting returns of $2.30 for every $1 invested into it.

The $16 billion the Government wasted on the BER school program could have been put into infrastructure like this, or least into completing the Brisbane to Melbourne Freeways. Unfortunately the Government squandered that opportunity.

A rail network is also more environmentally friendly than air travel and takes congestion off the roads, which are expensive to build and maintain. The fast rail network could eventually pay for itself.

A high speed rail network can also assist in our goal of decentralisation by making regional cities closer to cities so more Australians can choose the quality of life regional Australia has to offer whilst committing to major cities in a timely fashion.

Even though the High Speed Rail network is unlikely to be placed through New England it will help reduce road congestion on the New England Highway. It would also enable those in the New England region to have approximately less than a 2-hour drive to access a high speed rail network to connect to Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne.
The benefits of a fast train network to regional Australia

It can be more cost effective to house people in regional Australia than urban areas, thus helping to fund the cost of a fast train linking the major cities of Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Newcastle, the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

Victorian Deputy Premier Peter Ryan provides a good example. He says regional growth is an important focus for the Government. “A 2012 report found that by supporting growth in the regions we can help reduce the estimated $95 billion in cumulative congestion costs associated with expanding Melbourne’s outer-metropolitan areas over the next 20 years,” Ryan said.

“The cumulative cost of providing critical infrastructure to support an additional 50,000 persons in the regional cities is $1 billion; this compares with inefficiency costs of $3.1 billion associated with the same number of persons being accommodated in metropolitan Melbourne.”

Victorian Planning Minister Matthew Guy concedes decentralisation had been “talked about for decades. (But) very few governments have actually put in place targeted growth plans that provide clear and deliberate strategies to grow regional Victorian population and economies,” he said.

“One of the ways we will do this is a permanent urban growth boundary around Melbourne. It cannot continue to grow beyond Nar Nar Goon, Bunyip, Tynong, Garfield, on that good farm land ... it has to have a limit to it, once it reaches those limits people will look for places to live. Towns outside of Melbourne who will then begin to grow as commuter locations to Melbourne and eventually non-commuter. They will have a population that needs to be serviced unto themselves.”

A ministerial advisory committee and planning department are currently examining how it could be enforced, and looking to examples in European cities such as London and Dublin. The Metropolitan Planning Authority, consulting with councils, would determine whether the current boundary was where the city stops.

“The days of huge expansion of our urban growth boundary are over,” Mr Guy said. “Our biggest advantage as an economy and most strategic advantage, will be our ability to be a food producing economy in future.”

Mr Guy said an agricultural production overlay was also being “looked at, at the moment” to identify priority areas. It will heavily restrict residential growth within it,” he said. “It will determine that this is an area that is for important agriculture production ad infinitum.”

High Speed Rail Viable For Economy

“Politicians agree a high speed rail line along Australia’s east coast could be a visionary game changer that could prepare the nation for its future”, Ed Logue reported in 21st Century News on April 12th, 2013

“But making a 1748 kilometer fast train rail track between Brisbane and Melbourne a reality within 50 years requires tough decisions by governments likely to baulk at the estimated $114 billion price tag.

“In April 2013 Federal transport minister Anthony Albanese released the second and final report on a high-speed rail network, which the study forecast would be fully operating by 2065.

“‘There is no doubt that there are challenges with this but I think high-speed rail will be an important part of Australia’s future,’” Mr Albanese told reporters in Canberra.

“He stressed the report was not the government’s position but he was releasing it for public discussion because it raised all the issues of building such a complex project from scratch.

“‘The route, the costs, the environmental consequences – these all have to be thoroughly examined and understood before decisions can be finalised,’” he said. “The report throws up a myriad of issues. Like all major projects, this one would mean some tough decisions and potential trade-offs.”

“The study found the network was financially viable and could return $2.30 to the economy for every dollar invested.

“Travel from Sydney to Melbourne or Brisbane would take under three hours, while a trip from Canberra to the NSW capital would be 64 minutes.

“The line could carry 84 million passengers a year with 19 million trips between Sydney and Melbourne.

“The preferred route would have regional stations at the Gold Coast, Casino, Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, the NSW central coast, the southern highlands, Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Albury and Shepparton.

“That might mean state governments need to quarantine land corridors for the line ahead of earliest construction in 2022.

“The report said there would be benefits for the regions and warns
current transport modes already face serious capacity, cost and logistical constraints.

“High Speed rail is one of the top ten policy priorities of the new 21st Century Australia Party.”

“Queensland premier Campbell Newman called the plan “exciting and visionary” but said Canberra had its priorities wrong. Mr Newman wants $4 billion now as an immediate priority to make the 1600km Bruce Highway dual-carriage.

“NSW transport minister Gladys Berejiklian said her state backed fast rail but the commonwealth had to first reveal what funding it would provide.

At peak hour the roads of our capital cities are choked, often to the point of gridlock, with mostly single occupier cars.

Vastly improved public transport systems have the potential to reduce traffic congestion and pollution, as well as providing a relatively low cost method of travel for people who are unable to drive. Almost one in five adults used public transport as their main form of travel to work or study.

Public transport use is considerably higher in capital cities than in other parts of Australia. This is in part due to their relatively large populations and extensive public transport infrastructure. Increased use of public transport in capital cities has the potential to reduce traffic congestion and pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicle exhaust. Public transport systems supply a social welfare service by providing a relatively low cost method of travel for those who are unable to drive or do not have access to a private motor vehicle. Public transport also contributes to economic development by transporting labour to locations of work.

The transport sector accounts for about 14% of Australia’s net greenhouse gas emissions. Between 1990 and 2005, the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO2-e) from the transport sector grew by 30% or 18.5 million tonnes.

People should be encouraged to reduce their reliance on private motor vehicles and consider more sustainable modes of travel, such as public transport.

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) estimates that the ‘avoidable’ costs of traffic congestion total approximately $10 billion across Australian capital cities.

Road Safety
Better roads of course must lead to improved road safety. The loss of life and horrific accidents on our roads has been greatly reduced, but any loss of life on the roads is completely unnecessary; simultaneously it involves a financial cost and burden.

Recent reports suggest a large proportion of road deaths were preventable through investment in key areas including a more comprehensive approach to improving road infrastructure, more research and development in building safer cars, better driver education and improved emergency treatment for crash victims.

The need for more integrated planning and funding for cross-border road infrastructure at a number of locations is of concern to New England residents.

Heavy Vehicle Load Limits
Issues around legal load sizes and weights at all borders including NSW/Queensland need to be addressed.

The lack of volumetric loading in NSW is considered to disadvantage primary producers and transport companies unable to haul full loads in NSW. There are numerous examples of wide loads being able to be hauled in other States and not in NSW.

The need for an upgraded road between Warwick (Qld) and Grafton (NSW) to allow for B double trucks as an alternative freight route to the Pacific Highway is a priority.

Mobile Cranes
Mobile cranes reportedly have different registrable weight limits between NSW and Queensland, creating reduced availability of cranes on the NSW side of the border.
3. Coal Seam Gas

Coal-seam gas exploration is looming as a major election issue. It is also an extremely emotive issue for residents and landowners affected by the mining of coal-seam gas.

Coal seam gas (CSG) refers to methane that is trapped within pores and fractures in underground coal deposits. Due to high underground pressures, the gas is usually found in a semi-liquid state, lining the inside surfaces of the coal matrix. CSG is chemically similar to conventional natural gas — methane is the main component of both. Other common names for CSG include coal seam methane, coal bed gas and coal bed methane. Methane gas can also be released from coal deposits by coal mining activity, which is known as coal mine waste gas.

CSG is extracted through wells drilled directly into coal seams. This became possible on a commercial scale relatively recently, especially since the 1990s, due to advances in drilling technology. Following extraction, CSG can be provided to residential and industrial customers through natural gas pipelines or exported via liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Emissions from the combustion of CSG — for example for electricity generation — depend on a range of factors, including the geological properties of the gas basin, the techniques used in gas extraction and processing, emissions during pipeline transportation, further processing and transportation emissions if CSG is converted to LNG for sale to overseas customers, and the efficiency of end use terminals.

Hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, is a technique used to boost the flow of gas from a new well. Large quantities of water and sand, together with certain chemicals, are pumped into a newly drilled well at high pressure, to create fractures in the underground rock layers such as shale deposits. Gas can then migrate through the fractures, reaching the well much faster than it would otherwise.

In Australia, large reserves of CSG exist in geological basins in eastern Australia, with the majority located in Queensland and New South Wales.

The first commercial CSG well in Australia was established in 1996 in Queensland. The industry has developed rapidly since then.

In 2009-10, CSG accounted for approximately 10% of gas production in Australia, and is now growing. In Queensland, CSG provides approximately 90% of the domestic gas supply, and a number of projects to convert CSG to LNG for export are underway.

The technique has been used extensively in the US during the expansion of the shale gas industry from the 1990s onwards. However, several countries have recently introduced restrictions due to possible environmental effects. In Australia, Queensland has recently banned certain chemicals (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenein, or BTEX) from being added to hydraulic fracturing fluids. During the first few days after well completion, “flowback” water returning to the surface through the well can also be accompanied by fugitive methane emissions.

In Australia, hydraulic fracturing is not as widespread as in the US in deposits exploited so far. This is because the coal deposits that contain CSG, which are relatively common in Australia, typically have a high permeability. This means that gas can migrate to wells more easily, even without fracturing, as well as allowing the use of “in seam directional drilling” techniques, which enhance the flow of gas but are only possible in reasonably permeable seams. By contrast, shale deposits, which are a common source of gas in the US, are generally much less permeable, and therefore require hydraulic fracturing to create economic gas flows.

In Queensland, hydraulic fracturing is estimated to have been used in around 8% of CSG wells drilled to date. However, this proportion is expected to rise to 10% to 40% as the industry and production increase.
Emissions occur at several stages during the production, supply and use of CSG.

Fugitive emissions of methane are a significant source during the production phase. This includes methane released from exploration drilling, production testing and well completion, and gas production activities including processing, venting and flaring. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with a global warming potential more than 20 times that of carbon dioxide over 100 years.

In 2008-09, fugitive emissions from the natural gas sector, which includes CSG as well as conventional gas, were estimated to be 9.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2-e), or around 1.6% of the national inventory total.

Other sources include fugitive emissions during transportation and supply (for example leakage from pipelines), emissions from fossil fuel use during the development and operation of CSG facilities, and emissions from end-use combustion of CSG (for example for heating or electricity generation).

We would all like the economic benefits the CSG industry can offer in relation to job creation and local investment - but not if it damages our environment. Our policy is to have a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

Thus we support regulation to ensure the industry meets strict environment concerns, particularly the restrictions in regard to the closeness to residential areas or using prime agriculture land and ensuring aquifers are not polluted.

We also wish to support farmers in receiving a better balanced economic return for use of the land from CSG.

We also support the growth of more renewable energy as a greater way to achieve more of the required energy needs.

Local residents and action groups have raised questions about coal seam gas promoters that ignore other energy options and ride roughshod over the interests of local farmers.

The Armidale community have been strong advocates for renewable energy for a long time. Farmers threatened by coal seam gas mining have every right to be concerned that elected representatives are providing a platform for coal seam gas companies without affected local farmers having an opportunity to participate.

Coal seam gas represents a serious risk to farm enterprises and water resources, to the future profitability of agriculture and other industries such as tourism, and to the social cohesion of rural communities.

The proposition that coal seam gas will provide energy for the New England region, does not stack up on economic grounds.

We invite input from experts in renewable energy options for the region.

It is interesting to record that The Australian newspaper reported that one of my opponents (Tony Windsor) spent almost $5.9 million buying three northern NSW farms in a region targeted for coal-seam gas exploration in early 2011.

Mr Windsor’s family company, Cintra Investments, bought the properties in Coonamble, about 100km west of Gunnedah, between January and March.

Mr Windsor, said he had bought the Coonamble properties for his family to farm.

This was after Mr Windsor sold his main farm, the 376 hectare Cintra, south of Tamworth, to Werris Creek Coal for $4.625 million in February 2010.

The sale of the property delivered Mr Windsor about $12,300 a hectare, which was a windfall about three times more than nearby farmers who sold to the miner. According to land titles searches, the other three farms of substantial sizes to have sold within 18 months of the sale had changed hands for between $2767 a hectare and $5128 a hectare.

In February 2013 the NSW government caved in to community and political pressure over coal seam gas, announcing a ban on all activity within two kilometers of residential areas and industry clusters, such as horse breeders and wine producers, across the state.

It also announced that the Chief Scientist and Engineer, Mary O’Kane, will review all coal seam gas activity in NSW, including the effect on water catchments.

The federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, set up coal seam gas as an election issue by attacking the state government’s approval regime and threatening to use federal powers to intervene before the September 14 poll.

Of course the federal government is looking at the amount of Carbon Tax it can extract from Coal-seam gas exploration.
I support a push for a regional assessment of the impact of proposed coal seam gas and mining together with tighter controls on coal seam gas extraction.

Like other people in New England I have growing concerns about the impact on farming and the environment of the rampant growth of coal seam gas exploration and coal mining.

I agree wholeheartedly with one local farmer, a third-generation cereal, cattle and sheep farmer, who told the media, “We are the stewards of this land and we take our role very seriously indeed. We believe we have a responsibility to look after this land and pass it on, and we also have a responsibility to keep producing food. This area is the breadbasket of Sydney.”

4. Job Security and Growth

One of my major concerns regarding employment in this electorate is job growth and diversity.

The five major employers in this electorate are the University of New England, the NSW Government, the Commonwealth Government, Hunter New England Health and Armidale Dumaesq Council - these are all government organisations. It is obvious we need more jobs and diversity in the private sector.

Investing in education and people is a top priority for long-term returns across the whole economy. Better education will translate to jobs and opportunities.

There must be hundreds of big-city based employers who would relish a move to a far less expensive cost base and a rural lifestyle?

Our area surely provides many opportunities for the establishment of some major, new decentralized industries and businesses.

The rise of China has been of great benefit to our mining industry, though conversely Chinese manufactured goods have caused the demise of many thousands of manufacturing jobs in Australia.

**Lower The Company Tax Rate and Eliminate Payroll Tax to Create More Jobs**

Our country has an uncompetitively high corporate tax rate, is the 28th highest in the world, which needs to be lowered.

The recent Henry review wanted a substantial cut in the company tax rate, lowering the company tax rate from 30 percent to 25 percent but, like so many of the review’s proposed reforms, there was never a political constituency for it and the Gillard government did nothing to build one.

One way to achieve a lowering of the company tax rate at less cost is to create a tiered tax rate.

For instance, profits under $250,00 could be taxed at only 15 percent, profits between $250,000 and $1 million could be taxed at 20 percent, profits between $1 million and $10 million at 25 percent, profits between $10 million and $100 million at 27.5 percent, and profits above $100 million at 28.5 percent.

This would encourage new companies to grow stronger faster, as well as creating more jobs before being burdened with a higher tax rate and simultaneously increase the chances of more companies paying higher tax in the future.

By comparison Great Britain currently has a company tax of a maximum of 24 percent which is set to reduce to 21 percent in 2014.

The US has a sliding scale with a maximum tax of 30 percent.

Company tax in the Republic of Ireland is often cited as an example of tax competition, as it is used as an incentive for foreign companies to invest in the state.
There are three rates of corporation tax in the Republic of Ireland: 12.5 percent for trading income, 25 percent for non-trading income, and at one stage there was a special rate of 10 percent for companies involved in manufacturing.

**Nation Building To Create More Jobs**

What was the last nation building project Australia took on that had wide benefits to millions of Australians?

Beside the jobs created, how could Australia and Australians benefit from some major nation building projects? What nation building projects would you like to see? Currently the National Broadband Network (NBN) is under construction and is promoted by the federal government as a nation building project.

The federal government has a website listing current ‘nation building projects,’ which in reality are very small localized projects such as upgrading a stretch of road.

Where is the next nation building project of any magnitude?

As mentioned earlier Australia is a huge land mass and surely the mining boom presented the opportunity for the establishment of major new self-contained rural centres. Instead the mining companies choose to fly their workers in on a fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) basis.

**Payroll Tax is absurd!**

We believe Payroll Tax will lead to further outsourcing of jobs overseas. That means Australians are losing jobs due to the tax disincentives.

At least in the short-term pay roll tax should be removed from companies with less then 100 staff. That way small to medium businesses can grow and employ more people, before being bled to death by incompetent state governments who mismanage our money.

Did you know the state governments were supposed to remove payroll tax in return for GST revenue when GST was introduced? It’s true, but they failed to.

Few employees realize that companies pay 4 to 5% payroll tax on top of each employee’s salary (on top of superannuation).

That’s approximately $2,500 for someone on $50,000. And $5,000 for someone on $100,000 – plus 9% for super.

Payroll taxes imposed by greedy state governments will surely lead to a continued loss of Australian jobs, replaced by outsourced overseas staff. We also need to look very closely at penalty rates and their impact on job creation.

**To create jobs, Australia needs to become a value added manufacturing country**

Value added refers to “extra” feature(s) of an item of interest (product, service, person, etc.) that go beyond the standard expectations and provide something “more” while adding little or nothing to its cost. Value-added features give competitive edges to companies with otherwise more expensive products.

In Australia we are very good at digging holes in the ground and selling that product overseas. Australia needs to follow the example of Germany and Japan for instance and become world-class at value adding to raw materials and creating cost effective, world class products that have export potential.

Both of these countries produce up-market motor vehicles, that have many value added features over their basic model that allow them to be sold at much higher prices and higher profit margins. Trade gossip has it that the value added Lexus model creates more profit for Toyota than their basic models despite much lower sales volumes.

In Australia our agribusinesses can add value in a number of ways. Value-adding is driven by a thorough knowledge of consumer needs, local resources and production processes. It can occur at any stage of the production process and can include creative new uses of previously unconsidered resources or by-products.

Marketing is a key part of the value-adding process. It might focus on increasing understanding of the health benefits, the convenience advantage or the environmental safety of a product. These are communicated through branding, labelling and advertising so the consumer can see the benefits of the new value-added product.

**Business Education to Create Jobs**

Surely better educated people who have real life work skills when they enter the workforce, thus being able to make a real contribution as soon as they start work, will in due course lead to the creation of more jobs?

Business education is something I am very passionate about. I have outlined my ideas on this topic in the education section.
Employment Sectors

Since 2008 there have been 279,000 private sector jobs created in Australia. Yet in the same period a massive 406,000 public sector jobs have been created.

Since 2008 private sector jobs have grown by 20%, yet public sector jobs have increased by a massive 60% In 2000 there were 3.2 private jobs to every government employee. This has now dropped to a ratio of only 2.5.

(This is an estimated 270,000 excess public service workers, at an approximate cost of $27 billion per annum).

Source: Australian Financial Review April 19 2013

5. Children’s Services

In the New England electorate the 27-year-old Gum Tree Glen childcare services operated by Glen Innes Severn Council was closed after councillors debated its fate.

Funding changes and the establishment of a commercial operation also offering a long day care (LDC) service is threatening the viability of Glen Tree Glen. Projected losses for LDC for the coming financial year are $228,065 with the current enrolment of 25 children. Even at full capacity, the deficit is projected to be $150,595.

In a report prepared for the meeting, community services manager Robyn Condon recommends discontinuing LDC as a matter of urgency, and moving the facility’s out of school hours care (OOSHC), supported playgroups and early intervention programs to council’s Pool House. This would leave the current Gum Tree Glen building vacant for another use, or sale or lease.

LDC and OOSHC both used to attract a disadvantaged area subsidy, but in 2005 this was discontinued and replaced with sustainability assistance funding. This funding is received by the OOSHC program but was not forthcoming for LDC, despite an appeal.

Changes to the child care benefit also had an impact. Furthermore the introduction of the National Quality Framework increased staff/child ratios and required higher qualifications.

The factors impacting on council’s costs of running Gum Tree Glen are payment of staff under the local government award, strict adherence to regulations, complex and stringent requirements for recruitment and a focus on disadvantaged families, in some cases allowing overdue accounts to accumulate.

Renovations and upgrades have seen the number of licenced places climb to 55, but community services manager Condon said the demand for long day care is being met elsewhere in the community.

Between them Premier Early Learning Centre, Inverell & District Family services and KCL Family Day Care have up to 35 vacancies.

Councillor Andrew Parsons says his concern is for staff and for the 25 families put into a dilemma by the discontinuation of LDC, and he is hoping the facility can find efficiency gains to make it economic.

“Why can other long day care services cover costs and Gum Tree Glen can’t, especially given some of the logistical and operational efficiencies of an entity as big as council,” he said. “A stack of people are going to be affected, at a time when they can’t afford it.”

This local case epitomises the problems facing child care services nationally.

After the ABC Learning debacle surely the whole child care industry could do with some major reforms. Most people find child care costs prohibitive, which in turn makes it difficult for them to earn a second family income.
We have made the changes that are necessary to build a high-quality, sustainable child care system.

The child care services sector needs to reorganise, in order to enhance their capacity to provide high quality services for young children and their families, while simultaneously securing a long-term quality future for themselves.

**Early childhood leadership matters.**

Early childhood pedagogical leadership is an essential component of a quality children’s service. Pedagogical leadership is what sets a service apart in terms of outcomes for children. The evidence is in on this: you cannot deliver what you do not understand; and you cannot see what you do not know about.

Generalists and managers have their place in any service but the leadership has to be clear about what matters for children.

We need a private sector mentality of council run services to achieve efficiency and productivity gains to ensure such child care services can break even or run at a profit.

This requires a whole new approach that can only be delivered by those who have proven real life results!

In February 2013 The Northern Daily Leader reported, “Tamworth residents not only pay some of the highest petrol prices around, it’s now claimed we pay some of the highest electricity prices in the country too.

“According to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, Tamworth householders can pay up to nearly $850 more a year to turn on the lights than people in Sydney.

“Based on an average family home with an offpeak hot water system using 20 kilowatts a day, the average annual bill for a Sydney household would be $2390 – compared to a $3231 bill for the same house in Tamworth.

“Residents of Newcastle, Muswellbrook and Singleton all pay the same price as Sydneysiders – that is, the first 1000 kilowatt hours (kWh) are charged at 24.4c, the next 1000kWh at 25.5c and the balance at 34.3c/kWh. The controlled load, which is what offpeak hot water systems are on, is charged at 10.1c/kWh.

“Left in the dark with Tamworth are residents of Dubbo, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Bega and Port Macquarie, who are charged a flat rate of 31.29c/kWh and a controlled load of 12.29c/kWh. A difference of six or seven cents per kilowatt hour may not sound like much, but it can cost an average household $800 more each year, even within the same energy suppliers. Wollongong and Nowra are even cheaper than Sydney, being charged at a rate of 24.25c for the first 1750kWh, with the balance charged at 27.11c/kWh and a controlled load of 8.47c/kWh.

“As far as the country goes, NSW has the third highest average household bill price of $561.72, behind Tasmania and South Australia – and is the only state with unregulated prices.

“The cheapest state is Queensland with a regulated price of 8c per kWh, and an average household bill of $438.83, followed closely by Western Australia with similar figures.

“Energy Matters claims solar panel systems can lower energy costs to 7 cents per kilowatt hour compared to the average electricity company prices of between 18 cents and 45 cents per kilowatt hour in daytime hours.

“Some energy prices in Australia and our (New England) region have risen by an astounding 91 per cent in five years, caused mainly by the NSW government privatising the retail electricity market, but not regulating prices.
It is no small irony that although the cost of electricity is rapidly rising, demand is falling.

Economics 101 would suggest prices should fall when demand falls.

When it comes to the supply of power there is a flaw in the regulatory framework that leads to a ‘gold plating’ of the grid, the poles and wires that make up the network.

For instance in New South Wales, where consumers will be hit hardest, network upgrades will account for 60 percent of the total rise in electricity costs. The carbon tax is often regarded as causing these massive rises, though that tax will have some bearing, network upgrades are the big offender.

Wholesale prices, meanwhile, are the same as they were 12 years ago.

Power prices are escalating so rapidly, and to such levels, that they will soon come under pressure from an increasingly angry electorate.

‘Bill shock’ will likely be a big political issue in the next few years – although the NSW government, paradoxically will make a nice return from the pain of consumers.

A line item in the 2012 NSW budget showed an increase of $250 million in dividends from the state’s electricity transmission and distribution businesses.

This hefty 41 percent increase in payments to the NSW government – up from $639 million to $901 million in only a year - comes at a time when electricity prices for consumers are spiraling, and ironically, when consumer demand is actually falling.

This is a massive impost on households and on business, and will even act as a drag on the whole economy.

Electricity prices and the privatisation of electricity are something of a political football in Australia.

In August 2012, NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell released details of an a report that delivered a harsh assessment of NSW electricity businesses, saying they are “inefficient in comparison to others” and that this has contributed to prices rising more quickly in NSW than in other states.

In Australia prior to 1994 virtually all electricity was supplied through vertically integrated state monopolies. A decade later, the integrated monopolies had been disaggregated into different businesses with the competitive aspects of supply (generation and retailing) reconstituted into dozens of independent firms, many of them privately owned and the rest ‘corporatized’ and operating at arms length from their government owners.

People living large home unit complexes often have an electricity supplier forced upon them that they have never previously heard of, while wondering if the prices they are charged are extortionate.

Monopoly aspects of supply are regulated by agencies independent from the jurisdictional governments.

Despite, or is it because of this, regulation by agencies, ‘bill shock’ is a looming nightmare for low-income households. Electricity is a basic commodity and rises of 15 percent and more each year in a basic commodity are not merely a menace to the welfare of the household, but a threat to small business and economic growth.

The ‘gold plating’ arises because the network providers make a margin on the size of their asset base. The more they spend on their assets, the higher the dividend they pay to government each year.

Transgrid, the owner, operator and manager of the transmission system for NSW’s high-voltage electricity, expects to expand its asset base by 24 per cent at a cost of $2.6 billion over the next five years.

Demand for electricity has been falling since 2008 in Victoria, NSW and Queensland at roughly 1 per cent a year. That is in spite of forecast rises of 2.2 per cent a year. Demand is now 10 per cent below where the industry forecast it would be four years ago.

Mild weather, changing consumer behavior and rising input costs have all been factors. The billions earmarked to upgrade the grid for the National Electricity Market have been based, erroneously, on assumptions of rising demand.

Independent pricing regulator IPART and the Australian Energy Regulator have both expressed concern about the network costs, to no avail.

Incredibly, while the NSW government ignores the issue, we have the bizarre situation of Canberra compensating the biggest polluters as part of its carbon tax package.

So what is the real impetus behind spiraling electricity prices?

Look no further than what the independent regulatory agencies are saying.
The Australian Energy Regulator (AER), the Australian Energy Markets Commission (AEMC) and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) have all suggested that rising prices are due to overspending on the part of the network providers.

It is also likely that the NSW government will exploit this surging capital expenditure, or ‘gold-plating’ of the networks, as it fattens up its electricity cash-cow Transgrid for privatization.

Prices in NSW have risen 70 percent over the past five years and were forecast to jump another 18 percent in the financial year 2012-2013, even though the carbon price will contribute to just 8 percent of that, according to IPART.

We have a situation bordering on the ridiculous where the more the network spends - it makes a regulated return - the higher its budget and the more revenue flows to government.

For its part, Transgrid fends off claims of ‘gold-plating’ by saying that pricing is determined by independent parties and the network needs to be constantly upgraded. Both claims are true, but it seems there is also truth to claims of ‘gold-plating’.

Further evidence of gold-plating came from John Pierce, chairman of the Australian Energy Markets Commission (AEMC), who says the industry’s explanations for price hikes are unconvincing: “We don’t find particularly convincing the explanations for the price increases that have been provided by either the regulator or by the industry,” said Pierce.

Then there is the independent pricing regulator, IPART. In a letter to the Pierce, IPART chief executive James Cox said the current regulatory arrangements were putting upward pressure on network prices.

“(These arrangements) constrain the AER’s ability to apply what it considers to be the best estimate of the efficient operating and capital costs.

“(They) provide strong incentives for network business to invest capital in the network because the prescriptive requirements of the Rules may lead to excessive returns.” ‘Gold-plating’ that is.

Cox went on to say that the rules allowed the network businesses to earn a return on all capital invested, “regardless of efficiency and prudence, by requiring the AER to roll all capital expenditure into the asset base”.

In federal parliament independent MP Rob Oakeshott lambasted the NSW government for failing to cap prices as it had said it would. “The National Electricity Market was the greatest market failure in Australia today, sending cost of living pressures through the roof” Oakeshott said. He has a point.

It is also interesting to record the time it takes one of Australia’s largest energy provider to do a final reading when someone vacates their premises. Not so long ago energy companies were able to do a final reading at one days notice. The energy provider mentioned here quotes around seven or eight days for a final reading.

In August 2012 the federal regulator which approves power price increases confirmed what many consumers have long felt - consumers are paying more than necessary for a reliable supply of electricity.

However the regulator says it is unable to do much about it, saying, “We are constrained in our ability to reject excessive demands from businesses.” The chairman of the Australian Energy Regulator, Andrew Reeves, said that unless the regulations which govern its decision-making process were overhauled, network operators, including state governments, will continue to over-invest in infrastructure, forcing consumers to cover the costs which the operators receive back as dividends.
7. Live Cattle Exports

The livestock industry is an important part of New England’s vibrant and growing economy.

In other parts of Australia the export of live cattle, especially cattle to Indonesia, and sheep to the Middle-East earns more than $1 billion annually and underpins the employment of around 11,000 people in rural and regional Australia, including 700 indigenous workers.

Concerns about cruelty towards animals has greatly slowed down the export trade for live animals and also had a negative impact on domestic sales of beef.

In turn this has impacted on the New England area, as the cattle from the north of Australia that used to go to Indonesia are now flooding the local market, as well as other parts of Australia, and depressing prices.

Surprisingly live trade profit is insignificant compared with broader meat exports or with wheat, coal and even wine. Australia’s sheep-meat exports to the Middle East are worth around $120 million more than live sheep exports around ($420 million against $290 million).

This shows an increasing willingness from buyers’ to take a chilled product. Should we be educating our export markets to take chilled product instead of live animals?

We believe both domestic and export markets for beef would increase if Australia did not provide live animals.

Better education and marketing at both domestic and export level is one of the keys to improved sales and profit margins in the cattle industry.

Interestingly after the negative reaction to the scandal surrounding live export to Indonesia of live cattle exports an alliance of beef producers and processors called for the abolition of Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the producer-owned company.

It is time for wide-ranging reforms in the industry, including the abolition of its peak advisory council.

Critics within the beef and sheep industry say the current structure is out of date and lacks transparency and accountability.

Critics of the current structure claim the MLA has failed in its duty to promote and service the industry, with cattle prices stagnant over the past 10-15 years - while the price of beef to the consumer had risen by 50 percent. At the same time the demand for beef had dropped 20 percent.

MLA is funded by a $5 per head levy from beef producers, processors and exporters every time an animal changes hands, totalling $70 million in revenue a year.

It also receives around $40 million annually from government sources for research and development.

Currently it seems the supermarket chains are the only ones benefiting from the MLA. The assumption by the MLA, that if consumers paid more for their beef the producers would get more hasn’t panned out.

There’s a wide gap now between those who consume our food produce and those who produce it.

Do cattle producers and exporters need re-engage with their markets - both urban Australia and export markets?

We need major changes in the cattle industry.

Perhaps, in line with our party’s policy of more Value Adding in Australia, the cattle industry should engage in a marketing campaign to convince their live cattle export customers the very real benefits of buying chilled meat.
The export of live cattle is unpopular with the vast majority of Australians and has a stigma associated with it.

It is also not the most practical and efficient method of shipping the product.

The opportunity exists for a huge boost in Australian jobs while simultaneously increasing our cattle exports.

We also believe we should be encouraging live exports of premium priced breeding stock to the Indonesian market so they can build their breeding herds - not just supplying cattle for slaughter.

Farmers should be compensated for the Labor Governments destruction of the Indonesia Export Cattle Market.

This fiasco is sending many farmers in the north to the wall while Julia Gillard and co will retire to $8 million or more in superannuation.

It may be easy for many to forget about this fiasco considering there have been so many other failed policies by Labor; such as the Pink Batts insulation fiasco, the $16 billion wasted with the BER school shed program, the failed carbon tax and the mining tax policy, which are just some of the gross failings in a government that has run up the massive $250 billion dollars debt that our children’s children will still be paying for.

So much for taking advantage of the coming Asian food crisis; when this government made ludicrous decisions to destroy the beef export market to Indonesia and annoy one our future, potential, largest trading partners.

It is not just farmers in the north of Australia suffering. This year the impact has finally made it to the rest of Australia with beef prices down 20-35% across the board.

As a grazier myself, in the New England region of northern NSW, I see the affect this has on farms. If my farms weren’t supported by off-farm income they would effectively go broke this year, as a 30% drop in income wipes out not only any potential profit, but creates significant losses, all due to the direct actions of this Labor Government.

Farmers who don’t have off-farm income are suffering due to the inept politicians in this current government, who don’t give a rip about regional Australia, nor about farmers or business owners.

### 8. Education

It is our vision to turn the New England area into the education capital of Australia.

Apart from growing our agriculture assets, we believe education can become the largest driver of the New England economy and become the benchmark in leading the education standards in Australia as well as globally.

New England University and the city of Armidale are already renowned for their educational excellence. Let’s enlarge this and make the region a leader in educational standards.

As an educator myself, I have dedicated the past 15 years of my life to creating, developing and implementing a modern day 21st Century Education System, which has now reached over 550,000 people from 17 different countries.

This experience has provided me with great insight into seeing the power of the right education to transform people’s lives.

This is why we believe that in order to create greater prosperity and abundance for all Australians, a modern day 21st Century Education is essential!

Regional Australia, and in particular New England could utilise a new, modern day, 21st Century Education System, combined with new
technologies, to deliver an unprecedented education model for our region. This can become the envy of the rest of Australia and other countries and an exemplary system to model.

I also believe we should attract more students to the region. This is one of the reasons I committed to entering politics and founding the 21st Century Australia Party and movement; to progress the transformation of our outdated 19th Century designed education system and move it into the 21st Century.

Expansion of the University of New England in Armidale can be part of this multi-pronged approach to making education one of the regions biggest drivers of economy and job creation.

Falling education standards are both a local and national concern. Just ask any teacher about their student’s verbal and literacy skills! We believe investing in education and people is a top priority for long-term returns across the whole economy. Better education will translate to jobs and opportunities.

Our platform for education is based on a modern day 21st century education curriculum to replace our current 19th century industrialisation system. One that is based on practical real life education with financial education as a necessity. This will achieve a world leading education model without needing one extra cent of revenue. It will ensure the pay quality of teachers is increased due to their significant importance in society with pay rise funded from efficiency gains.

We believe In a new modern day 21st century education curriculum to replace our current 19th Century industrial era education system. One based on practical real life education with financial education as a necessity.

A modern day 21st century education system can be delivered for no extra cost than the education budget.

In fact it can be delivered for billions less and prove better services can be delivered by a results driven government that knows to make things happen.

There is no excuse for continuing with our flawed 19th Century Education System when a modern 21st Century one can be implemented immediately and save billions in the process.

We need business education taught at school to develop and breed smart future entrepreneurs. Schools should be the hub of innovation where many business’s and apps are created.

For example, recently, a former Australian 17-year old had just sold the app business he started as a 14-year old for $28 million to Yahoo.

How many more budding talent in schools are there that we are not developing or profiting from the encouragement of entrepreneurial talent?

Why can’t our schools help develop and fund some selected start ups and profit from the success of such projects like the large American colleges do?

Our society depends upon the success of entrepreneurs. Students need to be taught the importance of entrepreneurship in society and that there is no abundant society without them.

Every job and every single tax dollar all starts from entrepreneurial success.

This makes our current Treasurer Swan appear ridiculous as he attacks entrepreneurs and our wealth creators as he makes them out to be the enemy of the state. In fact, it is his indirect employers, the corrupt unions, who are the enemy of the state and who endanger our society with their greed, deception and theft.

Interestingly education is the largest employer in the New England electorate.

The 21st Century Australia Political Party is about changing our outdated political and educational systems; to bring Australia truly into the 21st Century; to create more prosperity and abundance within our great nation for all to share in.

An education that matches the requirements and expectations of both students and future employers is essential to ensure Australia’s future prosperity and growth.

We will create from the ground up a new, modern day, 21st Century Education System for our schools.

In education and awareness lies the very solution to all of our problems. True Education, not just academia, is the key to prosperity.

**A New, Modern Day 21st Century Education**

Let’s have a new modern day 21st Century Education curriculum created by non-government bureaucrats based on practical real life education and Financial education as a necessity.
Common sense tells me that to excel in the 21st century one needs an education designed for today’s world; that is what I call a 21st century education.

It is obvious those who have a 21st century education are more likely to excel than those who do not.

In my view there are five major components to a 21st century education:

1. Emotional Intelligence
2. Financial intelligence
3. The four key skills: i) Creative thinking  
   ii) Negotiating  
   iii) Communicating  
   iv) Marketing
4. Results, Purpose, Action (or RPA)
5. Designing your life

Further Financial Education should be taught at schools by those with a PhD in Results.

With such world leading technology, this much-needed modern education system could be provided to all Australians for minimal cost.

Think about it! Why send our children to 20th Century schools designed in the 19th century industrialization era (that sets them up for financial failure in life)? Let’s get into the 21st century!

The current schooling system needs to embrace Financial Education and better equip the youth of today to excel financially.

Combined with Financial Education being taught at schools, I would suggest a Government grant of $5,000 be made available to Australians who have finished school, but didn’t get a proper financial education. That grant would be used to invest in financial education courses to improve their financial intelligence.

We don’t need the Gonski Report: we need a 21st century education. Governments don’t need to waste more on education, instead, western countries need to adopt a 21st century education system.

Following the release of the Gonski report, education is a hotly debated topic. Unfortunately, many of the states and territories are unable to come to any form of agreement with the federal government on the implementation of a new education system.

Surely this says something about our education system and those responsible for it?

The Australian government mistakenly thinks the solution to improving the Australian education system is the Gonski report which basically involves throwing more money at education. This trend is similar to other western countries. However, it is a complete waste of taxpayers’ money.

Following the footsteps of the UK and US, ever since the Rudd and Gillard governments in Australia came into power, the education budget has risen by 40 percent. Yet, the standard of education is simply going backwards despite billions of dollars being spent on it.

Throwing more money at a flawed and inept education system is simply wasting billions of dollars!

The education system doesn’t need more money thrown at it. What it needs is the scrapping of the 19th century industrialisation era’s outdated and badly designed education system. The real need is to implement a modern day 21st century education system - something I have been lobbying for 15 years now.

A modern day 21st century education system will not only deliver results tenfold to the current one, with the use of modern day technology it can be delivered for a fraction of the cost.

For instance, many classes can be delivered using DVD or videos downloaded online. Similarly, work sheets for lessons and tests can be downloaded. These are valuable resources to help teachers provide a better quality education and improve student learning.

In fact with the uptake of Apple technology, iPads have become an engaging learning tool. Moreover apps are providing teachers and students greater resources for learning at their fingertips. This can help revolutionise our education system.

Last year I spoke to Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, who is also passionate about transforming the world’s education system. According to Steve, with breakthrough technology computers can
be implemented to provide a teaching role to students that are one-on-one with personalised curriculum.

For instance, current technology, such as Siri on the iPhone, can answer most questions. Using technology akin to this and turning computers into a one-on-one personal teacher isn’t so farfetched.

Such technology would decrease the cost of delivering education because computers can cost less than a sole teacher’s annual wage.

It is time for a change - a change that involves proper training for teachers. Teachers are effectively educators and hold one of the most critical roles in society, therefore they need more support.

Top teachers should be rewarded with performance bonuses and there should be consistent reviews to eliminate the low performing ones.

In a 21st Century education system, teachers need to be trained also in public speaking; NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), psychology and they should know how to teach accelerated learning and how to engage an audience effectively by imparting an education system for today’s world.

Moreover, a part of a teacher’s job should be to inspire and influence students positively in order to have them truly motivated so that those students can go on to add massive value to the society.

The curriculum for a modern day 21st century education needs to include areas such as:

- Life skills
- Financial literacy
- Emotional Intelligence
- Health
- Social and relationship skills
- Technology skills for the digital age including options to learn ‘coding’

The curriculum for a modern day 21st century education should also include generalist skills that can be used in almost all vocations not just specialised skills. These could include:

- Creative problem solving skills
- Negotiation skills
- Communication skills
- Marketing skills
- Entrepreneurial skills

A ‘results’ based education system working closely with parents and employers will deliver students that are ready, willing and able to advance our society to higher levels with their passion, dedication, intelligence and emotional fulfilment.

I have designed a framework to change the world’s current education system into a 21st Century Education System which I have outlined below:

**Outcomes:**
Create, design, and implement a modern day, global 21st Century Education System and replace the out-dated 19th century industrialised education system.

**Why:**
To be the catalyst for worldwide, systematic change and to empower, inspire, and educate billions of youth globally thus reshaping the entire planet positively.

**Action:**
1. Form a Global Think Tank of leading business and thought leaders to both support the initiative and contribute ideas and resources.

I have started inviting business and thought leaders to join this Global Education Initiative to help change the world’s education. These people, many of whom readers will be familiar with, include Sir Richard Branson (founder of the Virgin Group), Anthony Robbins (self-help author and motivational speaker, Robert Kiyosaki (financial literacy activist and author of Rich Dad, Poor Dad, Tim Ferriss (entrepreneur and author of The 4-Hour Workweek, Sir Ken Robinson (author and international advisor on education in the arts, Oprah Winfrey (media proprietor, talk show host, and philanthropist, Steve Wozniak (Apple co-founder), Bill Gates (Microsoft co-founder), Arnold Schwarzenegger (actor, bodybuilder, politician and businessman).
Apple, Google, Samsung, Facebook and Microsoft are also being invited to be involved due to them showing interest in reshaping the world's education system through technology.

2. Develop a non-profit foundation to help create, design, and implement a new 21st Century Education System.

3. Develop websites and apps that provide access to resources for governments, teachers, and educators worldwide to immediately improve the current education system, and to encourage the involvement of leading technology experts to expand the available resources.

4. Convene an annual gathering of the 21st Century Global Education Think Tank leaders, plus a national one for each major country.

Class size debate
Perhaps the debate should not be about the optimum class size; instead it should focus on the quality of the education being taught, and the ability of the educator to reach out to the student through skill and the power of influence.

For example: why can Anthony Robbins (one of the world’s leading educators) intimately influence and impact 5,000 people in a room, while a teacher with no public speaking training struggles to teach 25 students in a classroom?

Challenges to overcome
Challenges facing the creation of a 21st Century Education System include funding the creation, design and implementation of a new, modern day 21st Century Education System.

Funding is not likely to be an issue for schools and governments, because a new, modern day education utilising existing technology can increase the quality and efficiency of the current education model.

This will reduce costs that can then be redistributed to more resources, ensuring a modernised education system is implemented effectively at a lesser cost than existing education budgets.

Use technology to improve Australia’s outdated education system
For instance, every Australian child at school should be provided with a mini-tablet such as the mini iPad.

To bring our education system into the 21st Century we must have students utilising 21st Century technology.

This would save billions in the cost of text books as it is cheaper to download text books. It will also save children having to lug large heavy text books in their back packs which has caused a lot of back related issues.

Studies are showing that school children that have been using iPads in classes have improved their learning abilities and are far more engaged, and see learning as fun again.

I was impressed when I recently met with Apple’s co-founder, Steve Wozinak, as he has a similar passion to revolutionize the world’s education system and bring it into a 21st century education. This is in alignment with my core mission.

Steve believes computers can one day be personal one-to-one teacher mentors.

Just as you can now ask Suri, using an iPhone, almost anything, he believes the technology isn’t far away where a Suri like computer can be tailored to teach students a preset curriculum.

In the meantime, the iPad is showing positive results in schools that have introduced them. You only have to see how eager kids become when an iPad is within sight, they set everything aside to use one.

Schools that have started using them found that suddenly learning and behavior problems in kids have become almost non existent. Which suggests a lot of disobedience in students stems from the sheer boredom from the traditional 19th Century style school system.

I am preparing a ‘National Think Tank’ on how to implement a 21st Century modern day education into Australian schools. The ‘National Think Tank’ will also support global initiatives being prepared from the ‘Global Think Tank’ I’ve started.

The good thing is, a modern day education system can be implemented into Australian schools that would dramatically lower the costs of the education budget, thus funding isn’t an issue.

In fact, the current government has increased education spending by 44% since the last government. This begs the question; has there been any improvement whatsoever in education standards?
9. De-urbanisation and Decentralisation of Australia

Strong population growth is a position advocated by many business interests. A Productivity Commission, Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia, Research Report, predicts an increase in population up to 42.5 million people by 2056, and our population to reach between up to 62.2 million by 2101. (At the time of writing Australia's population had just passed 23 million.)

Significant progress toward a sustainable physical economy in Australia requires more than just managing our future levels of population. It will also require the simultaneous management of infrastructure, lifestyle, energy, international trade, inbound tourism and the technology incorporated in key machines and processes.

To facilitate this almost doubling of our population we will need to seriously address a wide range of issues. We will need to implement substantial innovation to ensure that stocks of buildings, motor cars, passenger transport and freight systems that incorporate the cleanest, most advanced technology will have time to penetrate the national system.

If these trends eventuate, growth could underpin new export industries that are rich in services and information, which can substantially replace the current export mix.

Under this high-population scenario, the population would be proportionally younger. The proportion of dependent people - important for health and welfare issues - is greater than for the low and medium scenarios.

This changing demographic structure raises important issues.

Regional Australia tends to age more than the cities, due to internal migration. The impact of regional aging is compounded by increasing age-related medical problems in the regions, compared to younger cities. Also, the demand for services such as education will fluctuate, because of slow-moving changes in demographic structures.

Australia needs to prepare the workforce and its infrastructure well ahead of time, to better accommodate these issues.

Sydney and Melbourne are already overcrowded to the point that large tracts of both cities have become little more than dormitory suburbs, and in some cases rife with high rates of criminal activity.

This predicted population increase provides huge opportunities for decentralised cities and rural growth.

Properly managed and managed sustainably it has the potential to create significant prosperity for regional Australia as never witnessed before.

De-urbanisation and decentralised cities can also reduce cost of road works by taking pressured off roads by utilising high speed rail network.

Larger populations in regional towns and cities can help assist with improved services such as health education transport and infrastructure through better economies of scale.

We should also look at creating special economic zones to encourage people to live in remote areas.

Northern Australia is a perfect spot for an economic zone to boost Australia’s wealth. The idea of utilising an economic zone to boost a country’s prosperity is nothing new and it has proven to work successfully in many places.

The high speed rail network can also assist in this goal by making regional cities closer to cities so more Australians can choose the quality of life regional Australia has to offer whilst committing to major cities in a timely fashion.
Improved roads and infrastructure are vital to encourage de-urbanisation and decentralised cities, such as completion of the Pacific Highway and vast improvements to the New England highway with a vision for dual carriageway connecting Sydney to Tamworth and eventually to Brisbane.

We must get away from the capital city of each state being the hub for most government and business activity.

With the massive waste of money from the Gillard government, such as $250 billion and counting in debt we could have funded many major projects such as this.

By being fiscally responsible and driving efficiency gains in all three levels of government this could free up large amounts of funding to create rapidly improved infrastructure for regional Australia.

We also support the borrowing of money if required to invest in quality infrastructure ahead of time, not behind time.

If both economic and social returns on selected infrastructure projects can be shown to be viable, then such good debt is worthy of consideration as investment into regional Australia.

**Incentives to relocate to Regional Australia**

To boost instant prosperity in regional Australia including New England we would look at ways to incentivise workers, industries and families to relocate to regional areas through grants incentives and supportive environments in order to prosper while creating a win-win for all Australians.

By providing and delivering improved services and infrastructure in regional Australia we can entice more people to regional areas. Some suggestions:

- NBN savings to have 50% injected into regional areas and broadband rolled out sooner - An extra $7.5 billion dollars for regional Australia.
- A sovereign wealth fund can assist in lowering of the Australia dollar to assist local farmers.
- A better financially managed government will lead to more revenue being available for regional Australia.
- Better marketing of regions commodities will lead to increased revenue and increased prosperity.
- Better marketing of the New England region will lead to more industry and more jobs for the region.
- Additional revenues need to be found, such as a visa tax which can lead to more funding for regional areas.
- Relocating more of Australia’s population into regional areas can lead to greater jobs, greater prosperity, stamp duty incentives and other incentives can be used to attract individuals and families and business to add value to the region.
- Running budget surpluses would lead to more funding available for regional areas.
- Removal of excess regulation will help stimulate more business growth in the region, along with incentives to start business.
- A supportive business environment will stimulate business success and more job creation.
- Borrowing for key infrastructure would be good debt, to build infrastructure ahead of time which is financially intelligent and will improve regional Australia’s infrastructure.
10. Rising Crime Levels

The perception of rising crime levels, coupled with their personal safety, are of serious concern to most people.

Tamworth’s top police officer and the city’s crime prevention group chairman say alarming new figures which show huge jumps in some household crime rates over the past year can be blamed on the result of criminals getting caught – but then getting back out onto the street to do it all again.

The latest statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that in 2012 in the Tamworth council area criminals were stealing property from nearly one house every night of the year. They show that break-and-enters to houses were occurring at a rate of between two and three every night – and that somewhere in the city a motor vehicle was being stolen every two days.

Break-and-enters to houses was up 36 percent on 2011 figures to 826 last year while motor vehicle theft was up 52 percent to 208.

There were 341 incidents where homes had property stolen from them, an increase of 26 percent, while thefts from motor vehicles was up 11 percent to 435 incidents in 2012.

Acting Oxley Local Area commander Jeff Budd described the newest crime figures as disappointing and frustrating. But he said the most alarming of the crime statistics that have galvanised public opinion and occupied plenty of headlines in news media over the past two years at least, were directly related.

“It’s not reflective of the work police are putting in, and there’s some brilliant stuff. This is a big social problem and we are trying to mop it up,” he said.

Inspector Budd said it wasn’t a case of the crooks being smarter than the cops, it was about police having moral codes and legal rules and legislation to adhere to. Criminals had no such morals and they were beating the system.

Councillor Russell Webb, the chairman of the Tamworth Regional Council working group on crime prevention, described the statistics as “horrendously high” but he was sure that while police were doing a good job, criminals responsible for much of the crime were “being locked up and then let out”.

Inspector Budd said young people were going out at night, breaking into houses, stealing car keys among other household items like cash and jewellery, and then stealing cars.

“They are directly related. Part of the MO for these young people is that they sneak into houses, they steal and they steal. We had about eight cars stolen in one night about three weeks ago,” he said.

“And they are the same groups of offenders. But they are very resourceful, they use gloves, I think they watch TV shows like CSI to get pointers.

And they were accessing police radio to keep ahead of the law.

Inspector Budd said it was obvious that police were catching many of the thieves, but between bail and jail, many were returning to the streets after some time.

“I am absolutely confident we are arresting people for these crimes but it is cyclical. We catch them, we put them in court, they get locked up – and then they get out.”

And they go back to their old ways.

“I am confident we are doing the best we can,” Inspector Budd said.

He admitted it would be wonderful to have more resources, such as a dog squad and drug unit.

Cr Webb, has given his strongest backing yet to a renewed push for
those police resources to be put into operation.

Cr Webb said he’d be putting strategies to the meeting of the working party next month to push for strategies like a dog squad and drug unit to be put into place.

“Whatever we are doing now is clearly not working, when you look at these figures. The solutions are not working. We need to look at how to make them work.

“We are all fed up with it. Everyone is frustrated by it. And more people are scared and fearful in their own homes. It is a deepening crisis.”

In the 2009/10 financial year, 84,100 women had police action taken against them across Australia, up by six percent compared with the previous year. 290,400 men had police action taken against them in 2009/10, an annual increase of 4 per cent. About 30 per cent of the women were accused of theft, whereas the most common principal offence for men was intention to cause injury and matters related to public order.

Statistics indicate that crime rates are actually falling, though TV news bulletins continue to feature armed hold ups on a seemingly daily basis.

Though many people wonder if these figures are manipulated. A senior police source said that thefts have become so common residents are no longer bothering to report them to police.

In April 2013 reported break and enters were up 30 percent in Sydney’s inner west with a staggering 79 percent increase in robbery with a weapon in the Hunter region.

Big increases were also recorded in possession and use of cocaine and amphetamines.

Fraud was the only major offence category to show a rise in the same period, up by about 16 percent across NSW.

**Many people believe the underlying aspects of crime rates - such as economic factors - are not being addressed and if they continue to be ignored crime rates will not change.**

Crime is at the top of the list of major social ills. However, a lot of criminologists and sociologists don’t relate economic incentives to a rise in crime.

The latest data available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows that during the 2009/10 financial year police took action against 375,259 people, up by 4.8 percent from 2008/09 figures. Young offenders aged 10 to 19, comprised about 29 percent of the total offender population across Australia.

One novel solution to the crime rate in Redfern, is for local youths to box with NSW police at dawn. This it is claimed has saved some of Redfern’s most troubled indigenous youth from a life of crime and prison.

**Why not adopt this initiative in other problem areas?**

Redfern’s police commander, Superintendent Luke Freudenstein, credited it with an 80 percent drop in juvenile robberies in the first year after police and local indigenous leaders established their boxercise project.

With 100-plus robberies a month previously, in recent months there were just three and six robberies.

**Increased police effectiveness is surely the most effective way of reducing crime!**
In Conclusion

To ensure all Australians share in the future prosperity Australia has to offer, the development of regional Australia must be given the highest of priorities.

Regional Australia and New England can play a key role in seeing Australia develop not only financially, but also culturally and socially.

Regional Australia has a lot of benefits to offer such as higher quality of living at a lower cost, especially if health care, education services and aged care services are at least equal to larger metropolitan areas.

1. Our de-urbanisation strategy to shift much of the future population of Australia between now and 2050, and beyond, into regional Australia would see an unprecedented boom for regional Australia. Major regional centres such as Tamworth and Armidale would benefit immensely from large job growth and increased level of services.

2. The key to making this a reality is the investment into key infrastructure projects such as the fast train network to connect regional Australia more closely to the major cities.

3. We also need to accelerate the building of four-lane dual highways to connect the New England region to Sydney and Brisbane.

4. Our strong education platform can see New England become the education benchmark for Australia and the envy of other regions as we transform New England into an Education Capital.

5. This will include facilities to train doctors and health specialists in New England and regional areas to boost the likelihood of them remaining after training in regional areas.

6. Combined with our policies to ensure the elimination of wastage and increased productivity and efficiencies in all three levels of Government, we foresee immediate improvement in funds available to increase services levels.

Further, we can see instant improvements with or without extra funding support from Canberra. Our policies will see improvements regardless of Canberra’s abilities (or often inabilitys) to deliver due to a multi-pronged approach to creating change.

If elected as the Member for New England I passionately look forward to helping be the catalyst for accelerated change - change that has been a long time coming and now within reach!

Together let’s achieve more not just for New England but for regional Australia and an entire country.

Jamie McIntyre
New England Candidate | Founder of 21st Century Australia Party
Together as a united nation we can achieve a country of greater prosperity for all

Will you take a stand for your country?

Join us as we transform Australia’s education and political systems to create greater prosperity for every Australian. A country to be truly proud of and one confident in its leadership and future.

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