



Country Women's Association of NSW

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW
Parliament Constituent Society of the Associated Country
Women of the World*

ABN 82 318 909 926

25 January 2019

Rev the Hon. Fred Nile MLC
Member of the Christian Democratic Party
Sent via email:
F.Nile@parliament.nsw.gov.au

cc: Rev Dr Ross Clifford AM
NSW State President of the Christian Democratic
Party
Sent via email: headoffice@cdp.org.au

Dear Reverend Nile,

RE: NSW State Election 2019 – CWA of NSW Policy Priorities

As you may be aware, the CWA of NSW is the state's largest rural issues advocacy group. With well over 8000 members and close to 400 branches across NSW, there is no other member-based organisation that has the breadth and depth of membership on matters affecting country people.

We are always working hard on behalf of our members to give their issues a voice. Leading into the March 23 election, we write to seek responses on a number of CWA of NSW policy imperatives. These matters have been democratically debated and voted on at our annual conference; and truly represent the grassroots concerns of our members, who are closely in touch with their regional, rural and remote ("RRR") communities.

The policy objectives and subsequent details outlined below have been selected after consultation with our internal issues-based committees and also on the basis that we believe they are actionable, reasonable and able to be delivered upon in a relatively short time frame.

Policy Objective 1: recognition of the importance of regional, rural and remote communities to the overall economic and social fabric of NSW:

- A commitment to more equitable and significant funding for RRR areas, particularly for transformative infrastructure projects such as significant road projects linking Sydney to the west of the state, and the construction of new dams.
- **ANS: The CDP support the establishment of high speed rail and Highways to create a decentralised state with job and business opportunities in all regional areas. Water is a big issue and we want to connect water storage so as to maximize the storage of water without destroying the life in our rivers. Where more dams can be built without compromising the rivers health we will support them**
- The establishment and/or continuation of policy frameworks that encourage the creation of jobs in RRR areas and encourage decentralisation.
- **ANS as per above**

- A commitment to continued and ongoing drought support and recovery at the same level or above current initiatives. Specifically:
 - funding should be made available to capture a larger pool of rate and fee relief including local government rates, vehicle rates and all other state-based statutory rates payable by farmers and farm-reliant contractors/businesses.
 - the current eligibility criteria for water infrastructure grants should also be urgently reviewed to provide a wider eligibility pool.
 - **Ans: the emergency support must continue as it is now with possible increases if the drought continues, though once over we must prepare better for the next event.**

Policy Objective 2: significant and equitable investment into health, education and social issues that impact regional, rural and remote areas:

- A commitment to strongly lobby the federal government to place QVax on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- Better and increased storage of blood products across a wider range of regional, rural and remote hospitals, regardless of cost.
- A commitment to better nurse to patient ratios and a review of the decision relating to the need for registered nurses in high care nursing homes 24/7.
- Funding for the implementation of a cardiac bus service to visit and service country areas of NSW.
- Increased measures for the protection of health employees against violence and assaults whilst at work.
- Commitment to the development of a policy and any associated actions to assist and provide specific housing options for older women faced with homelessness or a housing crisis.
- Commitment to equal access to education for RRR early learning and school aged children. In particular, increased funding for reliable mobile coverage and technology for rural and remote schools.

ANS: Access to health in the bush must be as equal as possible as it is in the cities to this end we will encourage the development of remote education centres for health studies as we know people leaving the bush to study medicine do not always return but doctors and health professionals are needed in the bush

Policy Objective 3: Ongoing and increased support for our agricultural industries:

- Increased effort and funding to commit to the control and eradication (where possible) of feral pests, particularly feral cats and wild dogs. The full classification of deer as a pest animal across the state.
- Compulsory water metering of all water users within the Murray Darling Basin.
- A genuine and clear-cut commitment to protect agricultural land and water from inappropriate coal and coal seam gas developments, and urban development in general.
- **ANS: As far as it is possible to eradicate the wild dogs and cats we are fully supportive of that as to the deer we believe that some may wish to farm the deer and if so we will recommend a window for those wanting to round up the wild deer to do that after that their control and or eradication would be supported.**

As the state's largest organisation representing RRR interests, we look forward to your response. We are happy for this correspondence to be passed on if there are more appropriate people in your team that can provide relevant responses. We also have a large number of other policy priorities, which we would be happy to discuss further with you at any time, should you wish.

If you could please address your response to our Chief Executive Officer, Ms Danica Leys at d.leys@cwaofnsw.org.au by the 15th February 2019 that would be appreciated.

After this date, responses will be collated and presented to our members and the wider public as part of an aggregated document. Please note that responses may be summarised into that aggregated document, however links to your original correspondence will be provided. Non-responses by the due date will also be recorded and publicised.

Best of luck with your campaign and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Annette Turner".

Annette Turner
State President.