



The Hon. John Barilaro MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional New South Wales,

Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business

15 FEB 2019

Ms Annette Turner
Country Women's Association of NSW
PO Box 222
MASCOT NSW 1460

Dear Ms Turner

NSW State Election 2019 – CWA of NSW Policy Priorities

Thank you for your letter on 25 January 2019 and sharing the CWA's policy priorities heading into the State Election on 23 March 2019.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals sincerely value the role of the Country Women's Association of NSW. I would like to thank you for your important and continued contribution to regional and remote NSW. I want to specifically acknowledge your advocacy for ground-up policy that puts regional communities first, and the heartfelt support you provide those communities in times of need.

One of the things I am most proud of is the fact that my government places regional communities at the heart of everything we do. One of the first actions of the Berejiklian/Barilaro Government was to create the Regional NSW portfolio, which sits within the Department and Premier and Cabinet, the central arm of government. The NSW Government is now in a better position to deliver for regional communities than ever before, as the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW is accountable for everything we do in the regions. And there is a lot underway!

Since 2011, the NSW Government has been hard at work rebuilding NSW. Today, NSW's economy has been restored to its proper position as the nation's leading economy, with a first-class infrastructure pipeline that is creating jobs, skilling our young people and ensuring NSW has the infrastructure it needs to meet current and future demands. Thanks to good decision making and careful economic management, I am pleased to report that the NSW Liberals and Nationals are on track to spend \$50 billion on infrastructure in regional communities. This is an unprecedented level of investment that will ensure our regions have a strong future.

We have spent this money on projects that make our regional, rural and remote communities safer, healthier and more prosperous places to live. Key areas of focus are:

Regional schools and hospitals

Regional communities deserve access to first class health facilities and schools. We have built or upgraded more than 50 regional hospitals, including \$276.3 million for the Dubbo Hospital and the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo, \$30 million for the Broken Hill Health Service Redevelopment, and more than \$431 million for

the Wagga Wagga Health Service Redevelopment. We have spent \$1.4 billion building or upgrading more than 60 regional schools, including Brewarrina Central School, Murrumbidgee Regional High School and the Yawarra Community School (Dubbo Network Specialist School). This new school in Dubbo will help students with disabilities and additional support needs via personalised learning, health and wellbeing services and social benefits.

Roads and rail

The NSW Liberals and Nationals have undertaken a road safety blitz resulting in a reduced road toll and thousands of kilometres of country roads being sealed or upgraded. We are also replacing the entire regional NSW rail fleet, including 60 XPTs and 50 XPLOER and Endeavour passenger cars. The maintenance work for this will be carried out in Dubbo, delivering jobs to regional NSW residents.

Water

Water is Australia's most precious resource, and access to safe and secure water has become increasingly difficult. That's why we have already committed \$1 billion to invest in water infrastructure projects which will secure town water for regional communities as well as improve large-scale water infrastructure for industries in regional NSW. We delivered legacy projects such as the Broken Hill pipeline, however we know there is still more to do which is why water security is prioritised for investment under the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund.

Connectivity

For the first time, the NSW Government is addressing the issue of digital connectivity in country areas with \$39 million invested to date to extend mobile phone coverage. Great progress has been made eliminating mobile blackspots across the state and there are plans to fix poor internet connectivity. I have committed to making regional NSW mobile blackspot free where people live and work, in the next term of government.

Drought

In response to devastating drought conditions, we have made more than a billion dollars in drought support available to help farmers through this very difficult time – including long-term low interest loans for farmers to invest in efficiency-improving infrastructure through the Farm Innovation Fund, as well as Freight Assistance Subsidies and more funding into Mental Health. We know tough times are likely to continue, and if there is more to be done to support our farming communities, we step in.

Local infrastructure projects

Our \$1.6 billion Regional Growth Fund was set up to fund the kinds of infrastructure projects that make communities exciting and thriving places to live, work and raise a family. In just under two years, we have committed to over 1,300 community infrastructure projects. We designed this program to make sure no local government area in regional NSW would go without. To see what's being funded in your community, please visit www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund.

Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund

We have legislated the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund which will prioritise investment in transformational economic projects exclusively in regional NSW including regional rail, transport and freight hubs, digital connectivity, water and inland international airports.

Over the coming weeks, we will be making significant announcements that address a number of your recommendations and reflect the importance our Government places on the families and businesses located in regional NSW. We are particularly mindful of cost of living pressures placed on seniors. I look forward to informing you of these announcements during the campaign.

We appreciate the hard work that the Country Women's Association does in representing the needs of our important regional communities, and we will continue to work collaboratively with you to ensure that as a government, we're doing all we can to ensure these communities don't miss out.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Barilaro', written in a cursive style.

The Hon. John Barilaro MP
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Regional NSW
Minister for Skills
Minister for Small Business

cc. The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, Premier of NSW