



'Your views are important to me!'

"I always want to hear your views on the big issues affecting you"

- infrastructure
- carbon farming
- water
- small businesses
- foreign ownership - just to name a few

Please contact me at the Orange office or through my website **www.johncobb.com.au**



Looking over Carcoar Dam at Blayney Wind Farm

The Hon. **John COBB**^{MP} Federal Member for Calare
Shadow Minister for Agriculture & Food Security

Calare *in* Focus

The engine room of NSW

My thanks to the people of Calare for re-electing me as their representative in Federal Parliament. I'd particularly like to thank those whom I have not previously represented. The boundary changes to Calare last year were extensive. We now have the old Calare of five years ago with Parkes and Forbes adding western flavour.

The last two elections have moved my western boundaries from Broken Hill to Forbes and Parkes. The eastern boundaries have been extended to Lithgow and Oberon.

I am proud to be the Federal Member for Calare and I welcome the new areas of the electorate and new constituents who I look forward to meeting and working with over the coming term. I am excited about the prospects the new area of Calare will bring.

The electorate is now home to eight diverse Local Government Areas, each with their own distinct characteristics. Agriculture, small businesses, tourism and mining are the base of our economy. Geographically, our electorate spans from the spectacular Blue Mountains in the east, through to the wheat growing regions in the west.

The people who make up the communities of Calare know how lucky they are. Calare is where serious mining and agriculture started in Australia. Calare is the engine room of NSW and there really is no better place to live.

2011 will be an exciting year in Federal politics and a year of policy making. For me personally, I am determined to continue

the fight for regional Australia. Under the Labor Government we have seen constant neglect of the people and communities in rural and regional Australia. I will be fighting for better representation and equal opportunity in our electorate. Improved infrastructure, safer roads, water security and access to health facilities will be on my priority list for Calare in the year to come.

In my capacity as Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security I will be looking for ways to improve our agricultural

industry and further the message that Australia is home to the cleanest and greenest food in the world.

On a local level I will continue to be out and about in the Calare electorate, visiting the communities and meeting with the people and businesses that make up this fantastic region of ours.

Calare is an exciting and diverse electorate. I always look forward to being involved in local events and activities and hearing about people who have been doing great things in their community.

As a result of last year's electorate boundary redistribution I will be opening a new electorate office in Bathurst. This will allow constituents in the new areas of Calare greater access to my services and government resources. I am excited about the prospect of having two electorate offices up and running and look forward to representing the people of Calare in Federal Parliament in 2011.

"Calare is the engine room of NSW and there really is no better place to live."



Caring for Calare

DATES FOR THE DIARY

2011

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

New Year's Day	Saturday 1 January
Additional Day	Monday 3 January
Australia Day	Wednesday 26 January
Good Friday	Friday 22 April
Easter Saturday	Saturday 23 April
Easter Sunday	Sunday 24 April
Easter Monday#	Tuesday 26 April
Anzac Day	Monday 25 April
Queen's Birthday	Monday 13 June
Bank Holiday**	Monday 1 August
Labour Day	Monday 3 October
Christmas Day##	Monday 26 December
Boxing Day	Tuesday 27 December

** Applies to banks and certain financial institutions
Substituted public holiday for Easter Monday.
Transferred public holiday for Christmas Day.

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Cobby tours Centennial Coal's operations at Angus Place Colliery



Oberon Mayor and GM meet with Cobby in Canberra

Cobby with Charles Sturt University Vice-Chancellor, Ian Goulter

Shop local, buy local and support our local businesses

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New in 2011

JOHN COBB E-NEWSLETTER

Keep up to date with Federal Politics and the issues affecting your community on a monthly basis.

See website for more details: www.johncobb.com.au



Calare - A Great Place to Live

Youth allowance mess continues for Calare

As of 1 January 2011 changes to Independent Youth Allowance came into effect and have come as a disappointment for students in Calare. Labor has effectively drawn an arbitrary line splitting the Calare electorate into 'inner regional' and 'outer regional'. Under the new criteria to determine independence, those living in the 'inner regional' areas of Calare may find it difficult to comply with the new requirements.

'Inner regional' areas include the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lithgow, Bathurst, Oberon, Orange, Blayney and parts of Cabonne east of Molong. Parkes and Forbes LGAs will not be affected.

The changes will undoubtedly have a financial and emotional toll on thousands of students, their families and communities.

In early 2010 the Coalition put up a fight to allow students from the 'outer regional' and 'inner regional' areas to receive Independent Youth Allowance. Our persistence prevailed and we had a win for students living in the 'outer regional' areas. However, the Labor Government refused to reinstate the 'inner regional' students.

Late last year we called on students, parents, teachers and members of the community to rally together and make submissions to the Independent Youth Allowance inquiry.

This inquiry continues to create more uncertainty and confusion for our students.

Even with a first class university like Charles Sturt in the region, many students will seek courses only available in the major city institutions.

Independent Youth Allowance is a basic necessity for the students of Calare. Hence, for a government that claimed to have a 'renewed focus' on regional Australia it is hypocritical to make access to tertiary education more difficult for regional students.

I will continue the fight to re-instate the original, fairer criteria which did not discriminate, regardless of where you lived. The students of regional Australia deserve a fair go. The Coalition will continue to hold the Labor Government accountable for this Youth Allowance mess.

Update

Murray Darling Basin Authority's Guide to the Basin

The Murray Darling Basin Authority's (MDBA) community consultations came to an end late last year. It is hoped that the response from farmers and basin communities has given the Government a serious wake-up call as to how much the proposed plan will hurt regional Australia.

The proposed cuts to water allocations as part of the MDBA's plan are set to have a devastating effect on regional communities.

The impact of this political decision to make cuts of up to 45 per cent in some areas across the Basin will affect not only farmers, but the entire Calare electorate.

Food prices will soar, jobs will be lost, industry will dwindle and our already overcrowded cities will become bigger as Basin residents relocate.



Talking water with Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott and Leader of the Nationals, Warren Truss

Locally, I attended the Forbes and Dubbo MDBA community consultations alongside a number of my Coalition colleagues, including Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott. A large number of farmers and businesses rallied together at the meetings. They voiced their opinions on the devastation that Labor's plan would wreak on a valley that doesn't even contribute to the Lower Murray.

What I found to be utterly deplorable was that at no stage during the consultation process did the Minister responsible for the mess, Tony Burke, have the guts to face the people who will be affected. It was one of the most

blatant examples of how completely out of touch the Labor Government is with rural and regional Australia.

According to the MDBA, the finalisation of the Basin Plan has faced some hurdles and is not expected to be released until the second half of 2012.

In the mean time, the Coalition will continue to push for a vibrant future for communities within the Murray Darling Basin. We will only support a plan which establishes a sustainable use of water and equitably considers the economic, social and environmental factors.

Addressing the doctor shortage – our greatest challenge yet

Another big change for 2011 has been the abolition of the Greater Western Area Health Service (GWAHS). It has been replaced by the Western NSW Local Area Health Network which has slightly smaller boundaries than GWAHS. Lithgow and Portland will be the only towns in Calare not included in the Western NSW Local Health Network and will be a part of the Nepean Blue Mountains Network.

This change is an attempt by the Labor Government to reform the national health care system. They have promised locally managed health networks to ensure consistently high patient care, supported by enhanced local input from clinicians and the community.

However, there are mounting concerns that Labor's health reforms are nothing more than an expensive name change and will do nothing to improve services or enhance community access. With the closure of hospitals, such as St Vincent's Private Hospital in Bathurst, and the downgrading of services in our region, it is increasingly difficult to access quality health care facilities. I am supportive of locally managed health networks, however staffing of hospitals and maintaining existing services will continue to be a problem.

Addressing the growing doctor and staff shortage is still one of the biggest challenges our regional health networks will face and must be a priority.

The establishment of Rural Clinical Schools has been a big step forward in dealing with the medical professional shortages. Charles Sturt University's proposed medical school will ensure we have rural kids practicing in rural areas.

CSU is a fantastic facilitator of tertiary education and its proposed medical school will be crucial in tackling our medical professional shortages.

My Coalition colleagues and I are committed to addressing the critical shortage of medical services in rural and regional Australia.

A land of droughts and flooding rains

With the worst drought in the history of NSW officially declared over, Calare's agricultural communities have been dealt another cruel blow. After expectations of a bumper season, the recent rain and extensive storm damage have devastated farming communities. We have certainly seen mother-nature at her worst, yet we hope to salvage something after this disaster.

I visited a number of the flood affected communities in Calare and met with farmers to gauge what Government assistance would be needed for the recovery.

The most disappointing aspect during this period was the lack of interest and involvement from the Labor government. Not once did we see any reassurance from Agriculture Minister Ludwig or Prime Minister Gillard, that help would be available for rural and regional NSW.

Alongside my Coalition colleagues I called upon the Government to reinstate Exceptional Circumstances (EC) in the areas in which it had ceased and extend EC into areas where it is due to finish on 31st March 2011. However, EC alone is only an interim measure. Consultation with farmers and community leaders is needed to work out what additional forms of assistance should be made available.

Despite setbacks, NSW and much of Australia's grain crops have still managed to produce record yields and obtain encouraging prices. As of January, in the Central West alone, 2.6 million tonnes of grain has been received. This is a good indication that our grain receipts will still be on par with years gone by.

Calare and the Central West were hit hard by natural disasters during December 2010. However, thankfully we did not sustain the wide-spread destruction that devastated Queensland and Victoria. Our communities and farmers are beginning to rebuild and I am confident they will make a full recovery.

Cobby inspects a rain damaged barley crop with Peak Hill farmer, Winston Westcott



Flooded Macquarie River in Bathurst - December 2010

Stop Press

Labor has bowed to the Coalition Parliamentary pressure and has promised to review the criteria for Independent Youth Allowance by July this year.

Cobby presents flag to Kinross Woleroi students



Cobby speaks at Forbes water meeting



Cobby with the Kelly family in Trundle



Northparkes Mine Open Day with NSW Governor Marie Bashir