



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

## **Campaign Launch Speech**

**4 October 2007  
Maritime Centre  
Newcastle**

I acknowledge that we are on Awabakal country and pay my respect to the Awabakal elders, the original carers for this land.

Thank you all for joining me this evening in this magnificent venue. It's good to be amongst friends. I take this opportunity to thank my wonderful staff, family and friends, the ALP clan and the many generous sponsors who have contributed to this evening.

For me, tonight is a special occasion – the launch of my third campaign as Labor's candidate to represent Newcastle in the federal parliament. But for all of us here who contemplate the future and imagine something better under a Rudd Labor government, it's a very special occasion indeed.

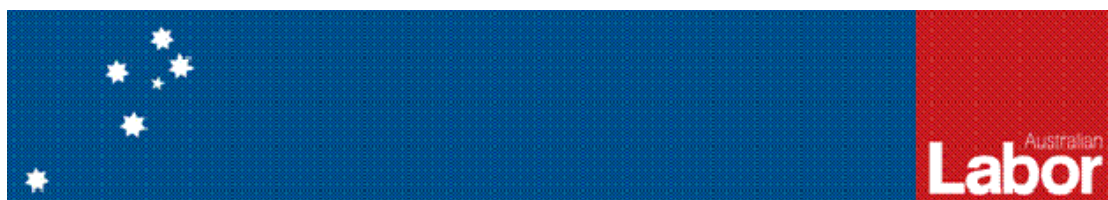
It's a night for reflection – looking back, and a night for hope – looking forward.

It's very appropriate then, that we gather in the Newcastle Maritime Centre, originally a place of work and trade – a place where labour and enterprise combined to produce the wealth that built Newcastle and the Hunter.

The great cedar trade of the early colony began here, the glory days of wool and wheat had a strong presence here, and the Australian coal industry that fuels the economic boom that we benefit from today was born here on the shores of the Hunter River.

But Newcastle's special spirit of mateship and community is represented here too in the stories of maritime shipwrecks and rescues, of salvage and salvation, from the Cawarra shipwreck in 1866 and the Stockton Bight Disaster of 1954, to the grounding of the Pasha Bulker on Nobby's beach during the devastating storms of June 2007. It's a noble history and still in the making.

Standing here in this former industrial workplace, you can imagine the struggles that took place for decent wages and conditions, for dignity and fair reward in work. And today as Howard's Workchoices lowers pay, strips conditions and robs families of time and security, the resolve to put that right, to restore balance and fairness in the workforce seems quietly firm in the minds of decent Australians.





But this place is also a symbol of change, transformation and Newcastle's future. In the past, Novocastrians worked here on the wharves and in the railway heritage buildings across the way. Behind me the pump house lights up Carrington, where perhaps the most courageous feat of resistance in the waterfront dispute took place.

But this building gained a new future through the Honeysuckle Development Corporation which began with Labor's Building Better Cities program.

Labor's policies of the past have clearly delivered for Newcastle today, just as Labor's new leadership and fresh ideas will support a prosperous economy that delivers for working families, builds our communities and strengthens our national democracy into the future.

But the new service economy that is now evident in this precinct and the greater area of Newcastle – tourism and leisure, hospitality and retail, commercial and legal offices, health and personal services, marketing and telecommunications, consultancies of engineers, scientists and mathematicians – as well as the smart manufacturers spread from Dyke Point, to Waratah and Tomago, can only continue to grow and compete if they have access to a skilled workforce and modern technology.

Under a Rudd Labor government that means an Education Revolution giving all children the chance to succeed and be better prepared for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For Newcastle, our commitments thus far support lifting our school retention rates, new trade technology centres in all of our high schools and special investment into tertiary maths and science training. It also means a national broadband plan that offers speeds 40 times the current capacity to make it easier for all Novocastrians to learn, research, communicate and participate in the global economy. These are all a part of Kevin Rudd's plan for our future.

When we look out from here onto the harbour where the coal ships pass, perhaps we may also see bushfire haze from Salt Ash and Port Stephens. Both remind us that climate change is real – and that eleven years of wasted opportunity under a complacent government has exacerbated the stress on our environment.

Labor's \$500m clean coal fund, our announcement of an additional \$50m to turn Newcastle's CSIRO into a National Solar Institute, as well as our commitment to carbon trading, renewable energy targets and the signing of the Kyoto Protocol reflect the decisive action on Climate Change that our region and this country not only needs, but demands.





Newcastle will be a major player in sustainable energy. Tonight I give you my personal commitment to prosper that in every way possible. The illumination of the promenade along to Nobby's is running on renewable energy, the CSIRO Energy Flagship and Division, and Newcastle University, are collaborating with the coal and energy industries to make sustainable energy just that – economically and environmentally sustainable.

We can and will be part of the sustainable energy solutions, and our local initiatives will be supported by Labor's decisive action on climate change.

Finally, we can only truly benefit from these commitments for the future if we live each day in healthy and strong communities. Kevin Rudd and Labor's national \$2b plan for our hospitals will make sure that our local health services - the John Hunter, the Mater, the James Fletcher, the Newcastle Community Health Centre and the invaluable GP Access After Hours service can operate effectively, and are assisted to overcome the current and very obvious strain from serious under-resourcing. Labor has already promised a full Medicare licence for Newcastle's PET scanner to benefit cancer sufferers from across the region.

When my special guest Lindsay Tanner and I entered tonight, the music playing was by Silver Chair – home grown Newcastle talent of international fame. There's a line in their song that says: "lately I'm a desperate believer, but walking in a straight line." It's a song of troubles and dysfunction but also of hope for the future. Well, it is Labor governments that reach out and reach down to lift everyone up to share in our collective success. It is Labor governments that build social capital and strong communities. It is Labor's policies of decency and equity that will nurture the unique quality of community life that we enjoy here in Newcastle.

There is particular evidence that a future Labor government will again succeed in that quest. And that evidence is standing beside me tonight. Kevin Rudd's team in government will have a Finance Minister, Lindsay Tanner, known for his economic acumen. But Lindsay is also known for his writings about the value of relationships, the value of time and work balance and the value of strong communities. Lindsay encapsulates the decency, the intellectual rigour and the economic stability that will characterise the next government of Australia – a Rudd Labor government. So thank you Lindsay for being here tonight to launch my campaign.

Before Lindsay Tanner launches our Newcastle Campaign, I leave you with an invitation. I ask you all to take Kevin Rudd's 'fork in the road' and walk in a straight line with me as your voice in the new leadership and fresh ideas of a Rudd Labor government.

