



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle



# Media Release

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## GRIERSON KEEPS PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT

Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, today vowed to continue pressing the Howard Government to fulfil its post-election promise to 'govern for all Australians'. Delivering a speech in the first sitting week of Federal Parliament for the year, Ms Grierson said she recognised the support in the Newcastle community for the Labor Party's election agenda, and would be ensuring the Government couldn't simply forget about the region.

Ms Grierson highlighted the Labor's commitment to provide \$20 million in funding for our EnergyAustralia Stadium, home of the Knights and Jets football teams, and expressed her disappointment at the Government's decision to offer no contribution whatsoever to the project. "I encourage the Prime Minister to have a fresh look at this issue, which would have allowed us to better compete for international sporting and entertainment events", she said.

"Indeed, the Government's lack of understanding of the benefits of such projects to Newcastle's economy is also reflected in its reluctance to form genuine regional partnerships in all regional economies, not just in seats the Coalition holds."

As a former educator, Ms Grierson also vowed to press for the restoration of our university's regional status and continue to push for 40 additional medical places at the University of Newcastle. "I will also be vigilant in protecting the Hunter GP Access After Hours service, after the Health Minister had to be dragged, kicking and screaming to support its ongoing funding," said Ms Grierson. "This kind of grudging support for the regions is not good enough."

The Howard government's neglect of regional areas is no more apparent than in the trend of declining birth-rates in areas outside the capital cities, including Newcastle. "The Government must ensure that affordable child care and predictable financial support are within reach of families raising children", she said. "The 90% of Novocastrians earning less than \$52 000 per year, who missed out on tax cuts in the Treasurer's last Budget, deserve better from the Government."

"All these issues remain of vital importance to the people of Newcastle," Ms Grierson said. "I will be fighting for them every day over the next three years."

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