

## FAIRNESS FOR FAMILIES:

## Reducing the cost of living in NSW

Premier Kristina Keneally will ease the cost of living on NSW families to the tune of \$913 million, after detailing her Fairness for Families plan. A re-elected Labor Government would on the first day of the new Parliament introduce two pieces of legislation to enact the Fairness for Families plan. "Over the last 12 months, I have heard families all over NSW tell me one thing more than anything else: that they need help with rising costs of living and inflation," Ms Keneally said.

"The bottom line is this: NSW families deserve a fair go. That's why I'll do everything within my power as Premier to ease cost of living pressures in NSW." "This is not a promise. It will be the law," Ms Keneally said.

## The Fairness for Families plan will:

- ✓ Cap a long list of Government fees, taxes or charges to the rate of inflation;
- ✓ Cap increases in public transport costs to the rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI);
- ✓ Protect Sydney Water, Hunter Water and the desalination plant as public assets by law;
- ✓ Increase the Energy Rebate to \$250 a year – saving families \$1000 in electricity bills over the life of the plan; and
- ✓ Extend eligibility for the Energy Rebate to all NSW households with a combined income of under \$150,000 a year.

"Families across NSW have told us they need help coping with rising costs of living and inflation," Ms Keneally said. "We will not be distracted by naysayers or by Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell's claims that this is class warfare.

"It is not class warfare, Barry, it is a fair go. We will continue to campaign and advocate plans to ease the cost of living pressures on families.

"It is a core Labor principle to give help to families who are working hard, but not getting ahead due to circumstances beyond their control."

## The legislation to enact the Fairness for Families plan will be:

- ✓ The Government Services (Fairness for Families – Reducing the Cost of Living) Bill 2011 – reducing the cost of living arising from increases in public transport fares and government services and amending the administration of energy rebates; and
- ✓ The Water Utilities Legislation Amendment (Retaining Public Ownership) Bill 2011 – preventing the sale, lease or disposal of the Sydney Water Corporation and the Hunter Water Corporation and the desalination plant so that the corporations remain in public ownership.

The Fairness for Families Act is fully costed and funded – at a total of \$913 million over four years.

The plan will be submitted to the Parliamentary Budget Office for independent verification of costings and methodology.

"Cost of living is the biggest issue we all face together and I acknowledge that it's not fair," Ms Keneally said. "I know families right across NSW are still doing it tough and many are struggling to make ends meet. "Petrol prices have gone back up, bills are increasing and grocery prices are set to rise as a result of the devastating floods in the nation's food bowl. "On top of that, inflation, government taxes, levies and charges, interest rates and electricity prices have all been adding to the strain.

"It's my job to make sure that NSW remains the greatest place in the world to live, work and raise a family. "That's why we're putting forward this positive, practical plan to ease cost of living pressures on families across the State. "This is a fully funded, fully cost-



ed and sustainable plan; unlike Mr O'Farrell's plans which are never costed and never thought through. "Given the strength of our economy and our AAA credit rating, we can afford to spend a little of our surplus on this plan to make life easier for families in NSW."

## Background notes

Fairness for Families builds on recent NSW Government initiatives designed to ease cost of living pressures, including:

- ✓ Cutting payroll tax twice in the last year – saving NSW businesses \$180 million;
- ✓ Offsetting the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme from the NSW Climate Change Fund – saving families up to \$100 next year;
- ✓ Expanding eligibility for the NSW Energy Rebate to cover all Commonwealth Healthcare card holders;
- ✓ The NSW Home Builder Bonus, providing full exemption on stamp duty for new homes where the value does not exceed \$600,000 and building has not commenced;
- ✓ The MyZone ticketing system – making 94% of journeys cheaper or the same price and capping weekly travel at \$57 for all commuters;
- ✓ A public transport fare-freeze for 2011, announced last December;
- ✓ Slashing stamp duty for homes already under construction by 25%.



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