

Subject: LMM 28/03/2022 - NSW ELECTION RESULTS

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Acknowledges the election of Chris Minns MP as Premier and the NSW Labor Government following the NSW State Election held on 25 March 2023;
2. Congratulates the following local Greater Newcastle and Hunter Members of Parliament on their re-election:
 - a. Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle
 - b. Jodie Harrison MP, Member for Charlestown
 - c. Sonia Hornery MP, Member for Wallsend
 - d. Kate Washington MP, Member for Port Stephens
 - e. Jenny Aitchison MP, Member for Maitland
 - f. Yasmin Catley MP, Member for Swansea
 - g. Clayton Barr MP, Member for Cessnock
 - h. Greg Piper MP, Member for Lake Macquarie
 - i. David Layzell MP, Member for Upper Hunter;
3. Supports the Minns Labor Government's promise to reinstate the position of a dedicated Minister for the Hunter;
4. Looks forward to portfolio announcements in due course in relation to relevant positions including the Minister for Planning, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Housing, Minister for Local Government, Minister for the Hunter and briefing these incoming Ministers on the challenges and opportunities for our city;
5. Commits to continuing our collaborative working relationship with the NSW Government, the NSW Opposition and Independent Members of the NSW Parliament for the benefit of the people of the City of Newcastle.
6. Acknowledges the outgoing Liberal National NSW Government, and thanks them for their collaboration with the City of Newcastle throughout the last term.

BACKGROUND:

NSW election 2023: Labor MPs push for 'fair share' for Hunter after Chris Minns leads red wave

The Hunter's Labor MPs say they will have strength in numbers when it comes to getting a fair share for the region from the newly elected state government.

Premier elect Chris Minns said during the campaign that his Hunter MPs had "sharp elbows" when it came to advocating for their electorates.

The pressure will be on the seven Hunter Labor members, who could make 20 per cent of Mr Minns' cabinet, to deliver on that promise after Saturday's triumph at the polls.



Kate Washington gives her fellow Hunter Labor MPs Yasmin Catley, Jenny Aitchison, Sonia Hornery, Jodie Harrison and Tim Crakanthorp the thumbs-up in Newcastle on Sunday. Picture by Jonathan Carroll

Labor is on track to govern in its own right without support from crossbenchers such as Lake Macquarie independent Greg Piper.

All nine of the Hunter's incumbent MPs are poised to hold their positions, though Upper Hunter Nationals member Dave Layzell and Labor challenger Peree Watson say the seat is too close to call.

Labor comfortably retained all seven of its Hunter seats, all with increased margins, and five of those sitting members hold shadow portfolios.

The swing to Labor in the Hunter was similar to the statewide swing of 6.3 per cent after half the vote was counted on Saturday night, but Port Stephens MP Kate Washington increased her margin by 15 percentage points.

Shadow minister for the Hunter Yasmin Catley said Mr Minns had not confirmed if she, Tim Crakanthorp, Jodie Harrison, Jenny Aitchison and Ms Washington would retain their portfolios in government.

"Now we've been elected, it's our role now to advocate strongly for the Hunter and to make sure that a Labor government delivers," she said.

"We're a big bloc with seven, and we're so committed to our region, and we will work hard to ensure we deliver."

Ms Catley said voters had "unequivocally rejected" the Coalition's "agenda of privatisation, sending jobs offshore and running down the education system".

Only one Hunter Labor MP, Sonia Hornery, has served in government after Labor spent 12 years in the electoral wilderness.

Newcastle Greens candidate and councillor John Mackenzie said it was now incumbent on the region's Labor MPs to deliver in government.

"The question now is Labor has an unfettered ability to implement its agenda," he said.

"They kept it pretty quiet as to what that agenda was during the election campaign, so what is it?"

"What are they going to do about climate and housing and everything else?"

"We've heard many of our Hunter MPs say they've been unable to do things because they're in opposition.

"That excuse no longer applies, so let's see what you've been wanting to do for the past 10 years that you haven't been able to do.

"You can't continue to blame the Liberals for the Adamstown gates or the lack of infrastructure funding in general."

Leading lobby groups such as Business Hunter and Committee for the Hunter have railed against the Coalition government for withholding key infrastructure investment in the region.

Labor promised during the campaign to build a new high school at Medowie by 2027 and committed to another at the Huntlee housing estate near Branxton.

It also pledged \$21 million for sand renourishment at Stockton, vowed to form a Hunter transition authority, promised dredging for Swansea channel and committed to re-establishing a Hunter ministry.

Mr Minns also said a Labor government would establish one of three new manufacturing centres of excellence at a Hunter TAFE campus and change the NSW Constitution to prevent Hunter Water being sold.

Business Hunter chief executive Bob Hawes said on Saturday night that he hoped some of the Hunter MPs gained cabinet positions under Mr Minns.

"I also welcome back the prospect of a Minister for the Hunter and the focus that role can bring given the diverse needs and ambition of the region," he said.

"We have lots of work to do, and the next four years are going to be a critical time for the region and the state.

"The asks from the region are very clear, and we look forward to working with the new government and collaborating to achieve our respective objectives."

Ms Aitchison was shadow minister for regional transport and roads in opposition, Ms Washington held the family and community services portfolio, Ms Harrison was shadow minister for women, Ms Catley held the customer service portfolio, and Mr Crakanthorp was shadow minister for skills, TAFE and tertiary education.

Cessnock MP Clayton Barr said Labor's first focus should be on fixing basic services.

"We've got a hospital and health crisis to fix," he said.

"We've got a housing and homelessness crisis to fix. We've got a crisis in education that needs to be fixed.

"They are just basic services.

"I know that people want to potentially get onto, 'What's the list of infrastructure projects and which ribbons are you going to potentially cut?'

"Let's fix the basic services that people need and the infrastructure projects will come.

"I've got a few ideas in mind, but I'm sure every electorate across the state has as well."

Mr Crakanthorp said the Hunter deserved recognition as an economic driver for the state.

"We've got millions of dollars in coal royalties, so we'll certainly expect the Minns government to deliver our fair share and acknowledge the work that we do as the engine house of NSW," the Newcastle MP said.

"We certainly drive a lot of the region and the state's economy, and as such we need that recognition."

He said he was particularly keen to get moving on putting sand on Stockton beach.

Ms Aitchison said the 5.8-point swing in her favour, based on the count so far, was "incredible".

"I just did not expect the swing to me that we got," the Maitland MP said.

She said health and schools were a priority for Labor, which has promised more nurses, midwives and paramedics, vowed to convert 10,000 casual teachers to permanent and committed to scrapping the public sector wage cap.

"We really need so much more investment in education. We need our teachers to be better supported. We need our students to be better supported," she said.

The vote delivered some woeful results for the Liberals and Nationals in the Hunter after another a lackluster campaign which focused mostly on the marginal electorate of Upper Hunter.

The Nationals' dis-endorsed Cessnock candidate, Ash Barnham, was polling fourth in the primary count on just 11 per cent of the vote, behind One Nation's Quintin King on 14.7 per cent and Legalise Cannabis' Andrew Fenwick on 13.5 per cent.

Labor MP Jodie Harrison was heading for a 7 per cent swing in her favour against Lake Macquarie Liberal councillor Jack Antcliff.

The Liberals drafted in Joshua Beer from Sydney to contest Lake Macquarie and won just 8.5 per cent of the primary vote.

Mr Piper was on track to maintain most of his 23-point margin against Labor's Steve Ryan.

The Liberals' Michael Cooper won less than 20 per cent of the vote in Maitland, a seat the conservatives held eight years ago.

Mr Crakanthorp was heading for a margin above 20 per cent after a strong result against the Liberals' former German army officer Thomas Triebsees.

The Greens failed to gain ground in Newcastle, a seat they had suggested they could flip in the next four years.

Ms Washington stormed to victory in Port Stephens, taking her seat out of marginal territory to a 20-point advantage after a huge swing against Liberal candidate Nathan Errington.

Port Stephens is another seat the Liberals held as recently as 2015.

Ms Catley also was on track to enjoy a strong swing in her favour, and Ms Hornery, the custodian of the safest Labor seat in NSW, could emerge with an even larger margin of victory, beyond 30 percentage points.