

Workplace laws come under fire

THE South Coast Labour Council will use its annual conference today to sound a call to arms against the Howard government's workplace laws.

"It's an election year and there's an obvious focus on the Your Rights at Work campaign," South Coast Labour Council (SCLC) secretary Arthur Rorris said.

"We need to be focusing working communities on these issues to ensure that Howard's unfair workplace regime is dismantled.

"We've made no bones about that, and we'll be redoubling our efforts in that regard." Affiliated organisations from NSW will attend the conference, which runs all day at the Illawarra Steelers Club. ACTU president Sharan Burrow is scheduled to speak this morning and ALP EdenMonaro candidate Colonel Mike Kelly will attend in the afternoon.

Colonel Kelly spearheaded Australian reconstruction operations in Iraq and is a strong critic of Australia's role in the war.

The SCLC also is keen to look beyond the election to longer term objectives.

"We will be tabling a paper that focuses on the future, because there are other things we want to achieve," Mr Rorris said.

"As a region, we shouldn't be competing based on a race to the bottom in terms of wages; we want to compete based on skills, research and development, natural assets and infrastructure."