

SOUTH COAST LABOUR COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

FRIDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2006

Premier's Credibility Questioned - Chopper Contracts Sham

Revelations in the media that the tender process for rescue helicopter contracts in NSW do not allow regional bids have angered the South Coast Labour Council, labeling the exercise a sham and a disgraceful act, calling on the Premier to make good his assurance to the people of the Illawarra and South Coast that the community will be able to tender for our region in an open and fair exercise.

Joanne Kowalczyk, South Coast Labour Council President said,

"Morris Iemma, then Health Minister and later as Premier made it very clear to the people of the Illawarra that our community would be able to bid for our region's helicopter contract, he did not say that in order to do so that we would have to bid for the whole of Sydney and Orange as well."

"Why is it that the people of Newcastle don't have to bid for the whole of Sydney in order to continue operating their community run helicopter rescue service and why for that matter weren't tenders called for the whole state but just Sydney, Orange and Wollongong?"

"They must think that the people of the Illawarra are either stupid or just prepared to put up with a sham exercise that was never intended to give our community a look in let alone a fair opportunity to bid."

"This community campaign began with two key demands, that there be a rescue helicopter in this region operating 24/7 and that there be a doctor on board to enable rapid pre-hospital response."

"The doctor on board was eventually secured after a year of community outrage despite the ridiculous excuses initially offered by the Ambulance Service bosses."

"The local rescue helicopter however, continues to operate only 10 hours per day. Sydney, Newcastle, Lismore and shortly Orange we understand will all operate 24/7. It means that people of the Illawarra have, again, been relegated to second class citizen status."

CONTACT: Jo Kowalczyk M: 0411 219982 W: 4221 3701

Organising Workers



Building Communities

South Coast Labour Council

Fred Moore House
Lowden Square
WOLLONGONG NSW 2500

Telephone: (02) 4229 2888 Facsimile: (02) 4227 2875
Web: www.sclc.com.au Email: mail@sclc.com.au

Contact: Arthur Rorris / Secretary
Mobile: 0409 223 029