

GREENVOICE



NEW SOUTH WALES STATE ELECTION ISSUE – 28 MARCH 2015

CLEAN UP OUR STATE

by Hall Greenland

We are at a tipping point

If we are going to protect and improve our living environment and our public services we're going to have to clean up politics in NSW.

Our problems are connected

Let's start with our environmental crisis. 2014 was the planet's hottest year on record. It was also the year greenhouse gases in the atmosphere set new records.

Limiting climate change – and all the damage it can do by reducing our ability to grow food, wiping out species, increasing extreme weather events and making areas uninhabitable – is now the major challenge facing humanity.

We can play our part in NSW. We can lead the way to a new sustainable world.

As a first step, it will require leaving fossil fuels in the ground. It means no new coal mines and an end to gas fracking.

As a second step it means moving to 100 percent electricity from renewables by 2030 because power generation is now the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.

The Greens have a detailed scientific plan for achieving 100 percent renewables by 2030. Of course a ban on new coal mines, fracking and 100 percent renewables needs Members of Parliament who listen to communities rather than big corporations.

WE HAVE A PLAN TO CLEAN UP POLITICS:

- ▲ a limit to size of donations
- ▲ stricter campaign spending limits
- ▲ immediate disclosure on the internet of donations over \$1000
- ▲ a ban on donations from developers, fossil fuel interests, and tobacco and gaming corporations
- ▲ heavy penalties for failure to disclose or for taking illicit donations, and
- ▲ open diaries to record all meetings between lobbyists and politicians and senior bureaucrats.

But as we know from the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) investigations, senior figures from both Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition are embroiled in controversy – including corrupt development deals and illegal donations.

In addition to corruption, both the Coalition and Labor are committed to putting the interests of the Big End of Town before the public interest. It's in their DNA.

This results in favouritism in all areas. It is why communities are on the back foot when faced with greedy developers in our suburbs or new coal mines and fracking

that threaten food-growing areas and water supplies.

It's the reason why insider deals are made on new high-roller casinos.

It also helps to explain why the Coalition and Labor want to destroy TAFE in favour of for-profit corporations. And why they favour hugely expensive motorways instead of improving public transport.

It is also what lies behind the privatisation of valuable public assets.

So we not only need a clean energy system, we need to clean up politics as well. We need to renew our democracy so

that the public interest comes first – not corporate interests.

The policies The Greens are presenting in this state election not only meet the community's most pressing needs but flow from our four founding principles: ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, social justice and peace and non-violence.

Only representatives guided by these principles can help us all successfully meet the challenges that face us in the 21st century.



PROTECT

Land and water

BUILD

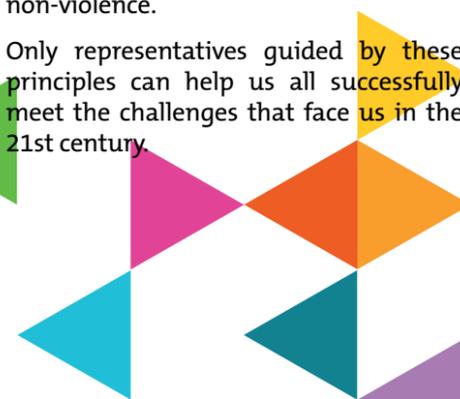
Public transport not motorways

CREATE

100% renewable NSW

KEEP

Our assets in public hands



NO POWER SELL-OFF

Public ownership critical to protect jobs, environment and our future

by John Kaye MP

Electricity privatisation has a sordid history in NSW. The previous Labor government privatised the state's electricity retailers and the output of some of the generators for much less than they were worth.

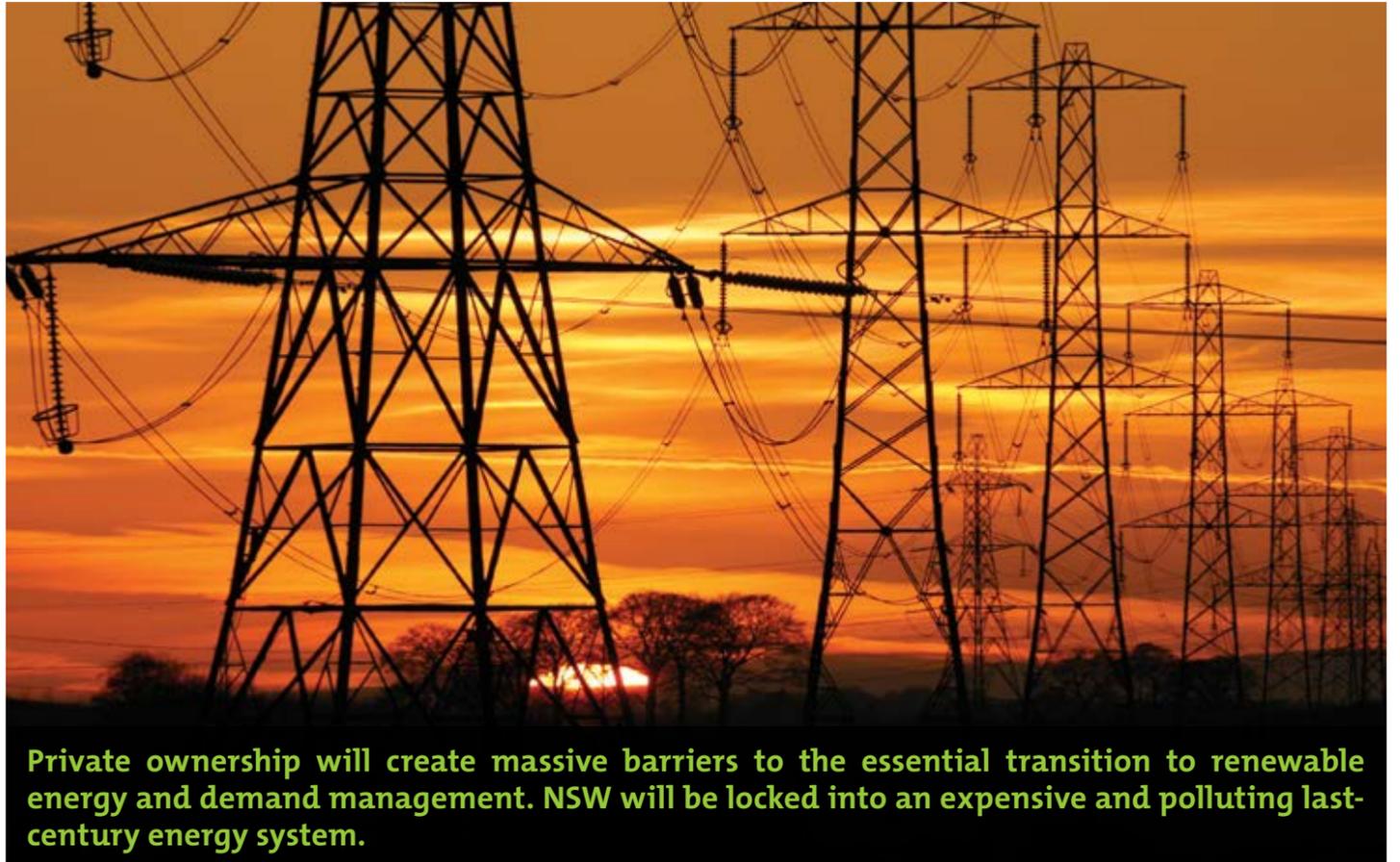
The Liberals and Nationals made matters worse through a deal that will see just three private corporations own more than 70 per cent of the state's electricity generation capacity.

The poles and wires network will follow if they are re-elected in March 2015.

Privatising half of the state's electricity distribution and transmission system will put the future of household power bills and greenhouse gas emissions into the hands of multinational corporations.

A full sale will inevitably follow. Nationals MPs are kidding themselves if they think that public ownership of the rural and regional Essential Energy has any long term future in a privatised industry. The cash hit gives Mike Baird lots of opportunities to announce shiny new projects before the 2015 election, but it will leave the state of NSW worse off in the long run.

Privatisation is no magic pudding. The wires and poles provide NSW with \$1 billion in dividends and another \$500 million in tax equivalent payments each year. NSW will be poorer while the merchant bankers and the multinational energy giants grow rich at the expense of the state's economic future and household bills.



Private ownership will create massive barriers to the essential transition to renewable energy and demand management. NSW will be locked into an expensive and polluting last-century energy system.

It is households who will pay in the end. Not only will bills be fattened up by the massive profits taken by the giant energy corporations, but state taxes and charges will have to increase or services will decline.

Private ownership will create massive barriers to the essential transition to renewable energy and demand management.

NSW will be locked into an expensive and polluting last-century energy system.

Labor, the Shooters and Fishers and The Greens have all vowed to block any sale of the poles and wires, making the composition of the Upper House a critical factor in the campaign to maintain public ownership. However, Labor's track record on power privatisation is poor and their newly installed leader Luke Foley will not

commit to stopping the privatisation of the poles and wires.

The Greens fully support the Electrical Trades Union's campaign to keep it public. We will continue to take a strong and principled stance against dodgy short-sighted sell-offs that place households, workers' conditions, the economy and the clean energy future at risk.

STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS & TAFE

by John Kaye MP

The success of society is built on a strong public education system. The next generation should benefit from innovative, comprehensive, free, secular schools and TAFE colleges. Yet this cannot be taken for granted.

The Abbott government is cheating on the Gonski agreement, punching an \$850 million hole in annual government spending on public education in NSW by 2019.

After years of state Labor's savage budget cuts, the NSW Liberal-National government dumped TAFE into an unfair market. It now has to compete for money and students against low-quality, profit-focused corporate providers.

Fees for many students have jumped to unaffordable levels. Course options have disappeared. TAFE colleges have been thrown into chaos.

The Greens will not sit back and watch the state's public education system be

dismantled by political pressure from the wealthy private school lobby and the profit-driven training providers.

We will not allow public schools to be robbed of additional specialist teachers, smaller class sizes and a critical boost to resources for students with special needs.

It is unfair that non-government schools continue to receive almost \$1 billion a year while public education is facing an uncertain future. The Greens will restore equity to the education budget and greatly increased funding for public school maintenance. We want shabby classrooms to be a thing of the past.

So-called school autonomy, driven by the former federal Labor government and implemented by the NSW Coalition, is undermining the promise of qualified teachers in front of every classroom. It has already reduced the targeted support available to each child from a non-English speaking background.

The Greens oppose the use of school chaplains and scripture classes in public schools as beach heads for religious zealotry.

TAFE Institutes across NSW have batted down the hatches in preparation for Labor and the Coalitions' so-called 'Smart and Skilled' training market. Thousands of teaching and support positions have been cut, student contact hours have been reduced, support available to students with special needs have been slashed and critical courses have been deleted.

The Greens pushed NSW Labor into voting for our bill to stop Smart and Skilled, despite their long standing support for private colleges and competition.

In the new parliament The Greens will move legislation to limit non-TAFE providers to just 20 percent of the public funding pie and prohibit for-profit corporations from receiving taxpayer handouts.

Countries like Finland have supercharged their public education systems, creating not only world-leading outcomes but record levels of fairness. In NSW, we too can have public education that delivers for every student and every adult seeking new skills. It just takes some political courage to stand up to the vested interests.

This is a disaster for young people in the Illawarra. We have high youth unemployment. We should be encouraging people to do vocational training, not making it less attractive. A lot of the students enrolling in TAFE and other institutions will be very disappointed this year. Some will find that the course they wish to study is no longer offered unless they are willing to travel a long distance. Many will find that they need to pay huge fees to do the course. Take, for example, students wanting to study a Diploma of Applied Fashion Design and Technology at Illawarra TAFE. The course has been offered there for nearly 100 years. Students were told they would now have to travel to Sydney to study the course. Fees for the course have jumped from \$3,028 to \$29,000.

Elena Martinez, candidate for Keira

“What? Abortion is still illegal?” scoffed Judi in her facebook comment. She was responding to my post about the first ever Bill to decriminalise abortion tabled in the NSW Upper House late in 2014.

IT'S TIME TO DECRIMINALISE ABORTION IN NSW

by Darelle Duncan

Mehreen Faruqi, NSW Greens MP and Spokesperson for Women, is campaigning to remove abortion from the Crimes Act 1900.

Many people in NSW, who believe we won the right to safe abortions many years ago, share Judi's disbelief. They are misinformed.

Women can access abortion because District Court rulings from 1971 have deemed it 'lawful' where it is necessary to prevent

serious risk to life or health. However seeking an abortion and performing an abortion remain listed as a crime in the Crimes Act.

This means women and their doctors are at risk of criminal liability, and women face stigma, harassment and barriers to access.

Women's access to reproductive services is a health matter, not a crime.

Last year we saw conservative politicians try to strengthen this criminality by a bill referred to as 'Zoe's Law', which was designed to give legal, independent

personhood status to the foetus at 20 weeks. This Bill sailed through the Lower House where the two old parties had a 'conscience vote'.

They ignored the community outrage and action opposing the bill. It came unstuck in the Upper House and eventually lapsed when Parliament closed for 2014.

'Zoe's Law' is only one of many bills that are planned by conservatives such as the Rev Fred Nile. He follows the well-organised American path to limit the right of women to control their own bodies by one sneaky bill after another. The continued

criminality of abortion provides the springboard for this action.

So the time has come to once and for all take abortion out of the Crimes Act.

Greens MP Mehreen Faruqi has taken the first step and presented a Bill to Parliament. This Bill will repeal relevant sections of the Crimes Act and create privacy zones around reproductive health clinics.

The right of women to control their own bodies will be 'front and centre' in this election campaign. Join us, vote for us to make the criminality of abortion history.

EVERYONE NEEDS HOUSING SECURITY

by Jan Barham MP

Having a home that is close to work, education and social opportunities is crucial to people's well-being. Whether renting or buying, everyone needs a home where they can be secure. The unaffordability of housing has become a major source of stress in people's lives. But there are ways we can improve people's opportunity to access affordable housing that meets their needs.

Pathways to home ownership

State and federal tax policies that make property a lucrative investment have distorted the housing market and made it harder for young people to find a home they can afford. Stamp duty disadvantages owner-occupiers, adding to the cost for first home buyers and discouraging 'empty-nesters' from moving to smaller homes.

The Greens will plan a transition to remove these barriers to home ownership while treating investors fairly, by reducing stamp duty for owner-occupiers and

first home buyers, and extending land tax for investors to promote the appropriate development of valuable, under-used land.

Improving security of tenure for renters

Many people are now renting for the long-term, not just while they save to buy a home. Current rental laws leave them living in uncertainty about when they'll next have to move, with short-term lease agreements and few protections against evictions or rapid rent increases.

Renters deserve to feel more secure in their homes. The Greens will introduce protections against the 'no-grounds' termination of leases and excessive rent rises that force tenants to move when they want to stay.

Boosting affordable rental housing

Only a tiny fraction of rentals are affordable for people on low incomes. Urgent action is needed to deliver affordable housing, as other cities and states around the world are doing right now.

We can deliver and fund affordable housing by directing funds from NSW Waratah Bonds to provide a \$200 million pipeline for urgently-needed affordable housing. This will ensure that

a fair share of the windfalls developers get from rezoning and new development is used for affordable housing. Councils will be encouraged to develop affordable housing strategies that meet local needs.

Reinvigorating social housing and preventing homelessness

Successive governments have neglected the public housing

system and left people needing shelter on enormous waiting lists. Inner city public housing is being sold off and there is a massive shortfall in the maintenance budget.

We need investment and innovation to grow the supply of public and community housing across NSW. Our social housing system must ensure disadvantaged people have access and connections to their community, support services, and to education and work.

Anglicare's 2014 snapshot of available rentals found that in Greater Sydney:

less than 1% of properties were affordable and appropriate for a single person earning the minimum wage, or were affordable and appropriate for couples or families on income support.

none were affordable and appropriate for singles on the disability pension or Newstart/Youth Allowance.

59,534 applicants on the social housing waiting list at 30 June 2014.

10+ yrs expected waiting time for most housing types across Sydney and in many regional areas.

\$315m maintenance backlog for Land and Housing Corporation at 30 June 2014.



CUTTING THE NEWCASTLE RAIL LINE

This could happen to your area

by Jan Davis

As someone who has lived in the in the Hunter for many years, I have seen the people in my community threatened by successive Labor and Coalition governments. They've threatened that our precious inter-city rail line into Newcastle would be cut off from the rest of the rail network.

The reason given was that the rail line 'divided the city' and 'cut off people from the harbour'. Nothing could be further from the truth! The rail line actually brought commuters right into the heart of the city on a regular timetable.

The real explanation is that much of Newcastle is undermined by old coal workings which require massive amounts of expensive concrete foundations in a process known as 'grouting'. At the same time developers have been nagging, exhorting and demanding that successive governments stop the rail, so that they can build on the rail corridor.

The community in the Hunter have fought long and hard to protect our public transport. We have presented petition after petition. We have written letter after letter, we have spoken with government minister after government minister. The old parties are not listening.

But the community of the Hunter is used to fighting, and we are now feeling the rage that comes from knowing the government has shafted us. How dare they treat us with such contempt!

Save Our Rail in the Hunter is fighting the brave fight. Have a look at their website (www.saveourrail.org.au). We are gaining strength, we are recruiting more supporters, and we will never give in and accept this Great Train Robbery.

Come on board!

If the developers win in the Hunter, they can win near you. So watch out for that special park, open space or that old rail track that could have been turned into a cycle way. Watch it closely and fight for it!



THE RET MEANS NEW JOBS

by Jane Oakley

The Greens hold a strong position on fossil fuels. We envision a future where jobs don't cost the environment.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that mining is the holy grail of employment, yet it makes up only around 2 percent of the Australian workforce and is royally assisted with up to 7 billion of dollars annually in taxpayer funded subsidies. These result in a 14 percent tax rate, well beneath the already low actual corporate tax average payment of 21 percent.

Mining is unsustainable both environmentally and economically. Continued investment and propping up of fossil fuel industries comes at the expense of a local renewable energy sector.

It comes at the expense of the environment and other industries such as farming, wine-growing, horse-breeding and tourism. It comes at the expense of community health and well-being. It comes at the expense of jobs and the local economy.

OUR REGIONAL JOBS PLANS

Lee Rhiannon, Senator

The Greens have been working closely with environmental organisations, unions and social justice groups for over two decades to develop a full suite of realistic, progressive policies that will help transform the NSW economy and create tens of thousands of new jobs.

Creating opportunities for secure and fulfilling work is one of the primary responsibilities of government. Unfortunately both Labor and Liberal-National federal and state governments have neglected this responsibility. They've ceded more and more authority to the market.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has done nothing to honour his pledge to create one million new jobs across Australia. Liberal-National policies are hurting NSW. They've cut public services, limited investment in renewable energy and axed funding to TAFE and universities.

A study commissioned by the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the

73,800

jobs in renewables across NSW alone

Renewable energy is jobs rich compared to mining. Newcastle University says 73,800 jobs are on offer in renewables across NSW alone. Its 2008 report estimates a shift to a renewable energy economy in the Hunter/Wyong region would create between 7,500 and 14,300 new jobs – a net gain of between 3,900 and 10,700 jobs.

Key to the transition is the Renewable Energy Target (RET). The RET requires 20 percent of our electricity to come from renewables by 2020. Having this target gives investors confidence in the longevity of their investment and helps build the fledgling industry. Yet the Federal Government is considering lowering the target.

20,000

new jobs within

25 yrs

Australian Conservation Foundation found that investment in clean energy and energy efficiency would help revitalise a manufacturing base in Western Sydney. Coupled with building sustainable infrastructure for households, industry and commercial buildings, it would create 20,000 new jobs within 25 years. This is just one example of how prioritising people and the environment instead of private-for-profits can be a recipe for economic and environmental success.

A strong, democratic union movement is critical to jobs growth and job security. Thanks to the struggles of workers

20%

electricity from renewables required by RET by 2020

Analysts say investment in training will ensure people have the skills needed for a transition to renewables.

In 2015 we have the opportunity to move toward producing power from sources that can coexist with towns, communities, farmers and other businesses. These are power sources which don't degrade our local environment or affect our atmosphere and global home. In doing this we can offer more jobs, training and skills to our young people as well as experienced workers.

organised through their unions over more than one hundred years, we now have safer workplaces, paid holidays, lunch breaks and lots more. We need to protect union workers' pay and job conditions so they can help protect our own employment conditions, as they have done for over a century.

The Greens support the right of workers to take industrial action and go on strike. The Your Rights at Work campaign that brought an end to the Howard Government's WorkChoices laws showed us what collective action can achieve. We now need a similar united campaign to defeat the Abbott government and to ensure improved job security, rights at work and safer workplaces.

A strong labour movement, alongside smart, environmentally focussed and redistributive policies can lead Australia into a new era of innovation and prosperity.

The Greens have developed comprehensive job plans for key regions across NSW including Western Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra. These plans look at how government investment in crucial public services like health, education and transport can directly create new jobs. They would also lead to a fairer society.

A strong, democratic union movement is critical to jobs growth and job security. Thanks to the struggles of workers organised through their unions over more than one hundred years, we now have safer workplaces, paid holidays, lunch breaks and lots more.

THE NATIONAL PARTY ARE FAILING REGIONAL NSW

by Max Phillips

Three hundred million dollars is what Shenhua paid the former NSW Labor government for a coal exploration licence over some of the most fertile soils in Australia. Shenhua are the largest coal company in the world and are owned by a foreign government.

Local farmer Tim Duddy said the decision to approve the Shenhua Watermark mine was a 'death warrant' for Australia's best agricultural land. The exploration licence was granted by former Mining Minister Ian Macdonald, who has since been found by ICAC to have acted corruptly.

In opposition the National Party condemned the deal and promised before the 2011 State Election to protect prime agricultural land and water resources from mining.

Four years later, the Shenhua Watermark mine on the Liverpool Plains has been approved,

and the Liberal-National Coalition government will receive a further \$200 million payment. The National Party has sold out their constituents.

NSW Farmers Association President Fiona Simpson condemned the Government, saying "this decision represents a complete policy failure by the NSW Government to protect any of the state's high value agricultural land and water."

Many in the bush now see the National Party as representing the interests of big mining companies rather than farmers. They point to the enormous loopholes written into policies that were meant to protect good farmland and ground water sources. More sinister is the close relationship between Nationals MPs and mining companies.

We are all too familiar with the revolving door between the National Party and lucrative positions within mining companies. Former Nationals Leader Mark Vaile is now Chairman of the Whitehaven Coal board, a company that is destroying the Leard State Forest and threatening

farmers in the Boggabri area. Perhaps most concerning is that another former Nationals MP, Gary West, was a key decision maker for the Planning Assessment Commission that approved the mine. John Anderson, another former Nationals Leader, became Chairman of Eastern Star Gas even before he left federal parliament.

The Nationals anger many in the bush by blocking the development of a renewable energy industry in the regions. Since they took office in NSW and then federally, their climate change denial and hostility to renewable energy has seen investment in the sector fall 88 percent in 2014.

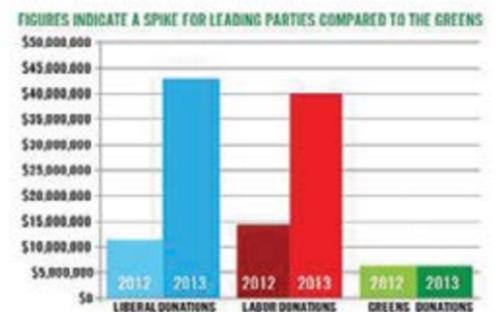
"The National Party's dumb opposition to renewable energy is now harming regional NSW. Billions of dollars and associated jobs in the renewable energy sector are being lost to the detriment of regional economies," said Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham.

Who funds The Nationals?



"Political donations to the major parties quadrupled in 2013/14, encompassing the lead-up to the federal election..."

- Sydney Morning Herald
2 Feb 2015.



nsw.greens.org.au



Photo: Michael Bell

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hear from everyone involved

POLICIES & ISSUES
environment, people and economy

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join, donate, volunteer, enrol to vote

PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

Everyone deserves a secure job

by Jim Casey

Are you a casual or on a short contract, but really want a permanent job? You're not alone. About one in five workers in Australia are now in insecure work.

How can you plan your life when you don't know when you're next working? How can you get a loan if you can't be sure you'll have a job next week? What happens when you or someone you care for is sick?

Casual work is fine if it's a real choice – but for too many people it's their only choice. Too many people are treated as 'permanent casuals', never able to get permanency. We say everyone deserves job security. Casual work should only exist for a short time – not for months or years on end.

The Abbott government is reviewing everything that protects workers' rights. They believe the minimum wage is too high, that penalty rates should be cut and that workers have too much protection from getting sacked for no good reason. They would love to bring back individual contracts – like in WorkChoices under John Howard – and to make it harder for workers to get organised in their union to protect pay, conditions and rights.

This will mean even more of the nation's wealth will end up in the pockets of the richest 1 percent, at the expense of the rest of us.

None of the changes the Federal Government are considering are about improving the working lives of most Australians – they're all about making us work harder, for less.

Join your union

We need to change the law to improve protection for people who don't have choices at work, including limiting how

long someone can be stuck as a casual. There should be no cut in penalty rates; they were fought for to compensate people who work at night or at weekends and public holidays. Most people accept this, but not the Coalition and their donors in big business.

The truth is profits have been rising faster than wages for thirty years. It's time to stop undermining workers' rights and instead to increase tax paid by the very wealthy. Then we would share the wealth for a fairer, more caring society.

Turning that around will require people prepared to fight for it, and those people will have to be active in the workplace, in the community, and in parliament. That's why I hope you will join your union (if you're not already a member), get active in your union (if you are), and vote for The Greens on March 28.

Jim Casey is the NSW Secretary of the Fire Brigade Employees Union.

SHIFTING AWAY FROM COAL

by Max Phillips

Australia must leave 95 percent of its coal reserves in the ground. This was the conclusion of research by scientists into how much fossil fuels can be burned without triggering over two degrees of global warming – the level considered highly dangerous.

This means NSW can only produce coal at its current rate for another three years before busting its coal budget of 575 million tonnes and severely damaging the climate.

Both the Labor Party and the Coalition continue to not only support the coal industry, but actively endorse its expansion. Prime Minister Tony Abbott recently

declared that coal is good for humanity to the bemusement of many.

The Earth's climate is not affected by the rhetoric of our politicians, it is affected by our actions; we continue to head towards dangerous climate change. Now is the time for real action on climate change. Now is the time for renewables.

The Greens want a rapid transition of our energy sector away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy. Greens NSW mining spokesperson, Jeremy Buckingham, said the party supports a transition strategy to phase out coal mining, and believes all existing coal mining leases should be reviewed and reduced to meet the targets of the phase out strategy.

"Politicians do no one any favours by pretending we can continue to mine coal in the age of climate change. The faster we face up to reality and draft a phase

out plan, the better off we will be in the future," said Mr Buckingham.

Calls for a phase out of coal are not new. Former Greens Leader, Bob Brown, called for a phase out in 2007, to great controversy.

Senator Brown wrote at the time, *"The Greens believe that we need to move beyond Australia's reliance on coal. Last week, I called on whoever wins office at this year's election to commit to a plan to phase out coal exports. That plan must be in place by the end of the next term of government so that we can move beyond coal as a matter of urgency. It might take decades for the task to be completed, but the scientists are telling us that we must start immediately."*

Eight years later—with the remaining coal budget almost blown – many wish governments had heeded Senator Brown's

warning and there was more time to implement a phase out plan.

Many individuals, institutions and organisations are now taking their own action to stop coal. A divestment campaign has seen hundreds of councils, cities, universities, churches and millions of individuals seek to stop their savings, investments and superannuation from funding fossil fuel projects.

The Greens successfully moved for Marrickville Council to begin divesting from financial institutions that finance fossil fuels, while the Australian National University has sold its shares in fossil fuel companies.

The next term of government will be critical in preparing a transition plan. Inaction will cost trillions of dollars globally and cause much misery as the impacts of dangerous climate change mount.



Greens councillors successfully moved for Marrickville Council to begin divesting from financial institutions that finance fossil fuels, while the Australian National University has sold its shares in fossil fuel companies.

100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

Cheaper, more jobs and eliminating climate damage

by John Kaye MP

Imagine a world in which power bills are no longer painful, dangerous greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation are eliminated and tens of thousands of new jobs are created.

This is not some pipe dream, but The Greens' fully-costed plan for a clean energy future for NSW.

Rapid developments in technology and falling costs for renewable energy technologies like wind generators and solar power mean that this state can escape

from the expense and pollution of coal mining and coal-seam gas drilling.

But it will not happen as long as the major parties remain committed to coal and gas and continue to undermine wind and solar.

The Greens' plan is to rapidly transition households and businesses to a clean energy economy to enable the closure of the state's fossil fuel power stations and to end the reliance on gas.

Increasing numbers of independent studies are showing that the lights will not go off and industry will not shut down without fossil-fuel power. Tens of thousands of new jobs can be generated

in activities like research, development, manufacture, construction, operations and maintenance.

A key part of the plan is to ensure that every household has the financial and technical help it needs to be part of the energy revolution. This includes low interest loans to install new appliances and technology to manage energy usage so that bills are stabilised and reduced, and emissions from energy use are eliminated.

In coal mining and gas extraction areas, new jobs in renewable energy can more than compensate for the closure of mines and wells.

The Liberals and Nationals' plan to privatise the wires and poles, like Labor's sale of the retailers and the outputs of the generators, will make any transition much more expensive and difficult to achieve. Reshaping the electricity transmission and distribution network to accommodate renewable energy and allow households to participate in critical energy decisions will affect the profits of any future private owner.

Continued public ownership is the only way to create the flexibility to ensure that decisions in the energy industry are about what is best for households, jobs and the economy, not the profits of a multinational corporation.

NO MINING UNDER WATER CATCHMENTS

by Helen Wilson, Illawarra Greens

The Greens oppose the construction of any new, and the expansion of any existing coal mines. We're committed to the protection of our water catchments, our prime agricultural land, the health of our communities and our environment.

Sydney's water supply comes from a series of dams in various waterways, which are in turn fed from a landscape of upland swamps. These act as filters and sponges, releasing water slowly in different weather conditions.

Community groups are concerned about the damage to these swamps from mining beneath them. There are campaigns to save Sydney's water catchment

from mine expansions involving the very invasive and risky long-wall technology.

One campaign focuses on Wollongong Coal's Russell Vale mine north of Wollongong. This foreign company and its predecessor have revived the mine. There have been irregularities in the approvals given so far, but the company has been forced to drastically reduce its targets and operations.

The community still has concerns about many of the mine's impacts, including the effects on the water supply for over four million people. In particular we're concerned about destroying any of the swamps. No approval should ever be granted to projects which risk our water supply.

There have been two recent Planning Assessment Commission hearings related to this mine. Both have been addressed by community groups, residents and

scientists. The overwhelming community view has been strongly and thoughtfully put. Government agencies and expert panels have also urged caution.

But so far these efforts haven't had the effect on government decision making that they should have had. How can we risk our water supply like this?



CSG RESISTANCE

Coal seam gas – let the community decide

by Justin Field

In the last four years community opposition to coal seam gas has exploded across NSW as people have come to understand the risks this industry presents to their health, water supplies, farming land and the rights of communities to decide their own economic future.

Actual explosions at gas plants and worrying reports of people getting sick from gas developments in the United States have become public knowledge. In NSW we have witnessed uranium contamination of groundwater linked to leaking fracking ponds – where the waste water produced when fracturing the coal seam is stored. Earlier this year dangerous BTEX chemicals found in fracking water led to AGL's Gloucester project being suspended while multiple investigations are undertaken.

The CSG industry in NSW is in trouble and an informed public has withdrawn their social licence.

But despite these risks, and clear examples of failure by the companies and regulations, the Premier Mike Baird has stated unequivocally that his Coalition Government wants a coal seam gas industry in NSW. Labor, like they so often do, are hedging their bets, calling for a moratorium until it can be proven safe, whatever that means.

In many ways the coal seam gas debate in NSW is a microcosm of a wider political problem across NSW and most of Australia. The coal and gas industry have too much influence over Government and the community's voice is being shut out.



Ex Senior Liberal, Nationals and Labor figures in recent years have left politics and gone directly into executive or lobbying roles with the coal and gas industry. Spectacularly former Labor federal resources Minister Martin Ferguson became a lobbyist for the peak gas industry body straight after the last federal election.

The Greens have drafted legislation that would give local communities the right to veto mining projects and ensure the community has a genuine say in their economic future. At a time when we know that to avoid dangerous climate change most coal, oil and gas must be left in the ground, regional communities want to see investment in renewable energy to

Communities want to see investment in renewable energy to create long-term and sustainable regional jobs.

create long-term and sustainable regional jobs.

A new Australian documentary will tour NSW in March telling the story of Dayne 'Frackman' Pratz. Dayne, a landholder from a rural estate in Queensland, has been on a one man crusade to find out the truth about fracking which pitted him against some of the largest and most

powerful companies in the world and a Coalition Government in Queensland well and truly in bed with the gas industry.

The story is one that will resonate with many in NSW who have battled to have their voice heard when it comes to protecting land, water and climate from coal seam gas. The Greens are listening.

NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION 2015

Your Greens NSW candidates



Jamie Parker MP for Balmain

Jamie Parker has been the Member for Balmain since 2011, when The Greens made history by winning their first seat in the NSW Parliament's Lower House. Before this, Jamie served on Leichhardt Council for 13 years, including three as the Mayor of Leichhardt.

The Balmain electorate, which includes Leichhardt, Rozelle, Birchgrove, Glebe and Ultimo, is diverse and faces the challenges of a booming population with poor state urban and social planning. Issues that communities are concerned about include over-crowded schools and a lack of affordable childcare, traffic congestion and

inadequate public transport, and rampant overdevelopment.

Jamie is a leading advocate for extending light rail through Sydney as a transport solution, resourcing public schools, and preserving public land and heritage areas. Major campaigns he is working on include ending the pollution at the White Bay Cruise Terminal, protecting Callan Park, preventing the overdevelopment of the Bays Precinct, and stopping the WestConnex toll road.

Jamie is also a White Ribbon ambassador, advocating for more support and awareness of women's services. In parliament, Jamie has led the campaign against corruption in politics.

Jamie has an undergraduate degree in economics from Macquarie University and a Master of Economics (Political Economy) from the University of Sydney. He lived and studied in Thailand at Thammasat University and has a particular interest in Burma, being a founding member of the Australian Coalition for Democracy in Burma.



Jenny Leong – candidate for the new seat of Newtown

Jenny has lived, studied and worked in the suburbs that make up the electorate of Newtown for close to 20 years.

Jenny is a long-time human rights and community campaigner who has held diverse roles including campaign co-ordination and crisis management at Amnesty International.

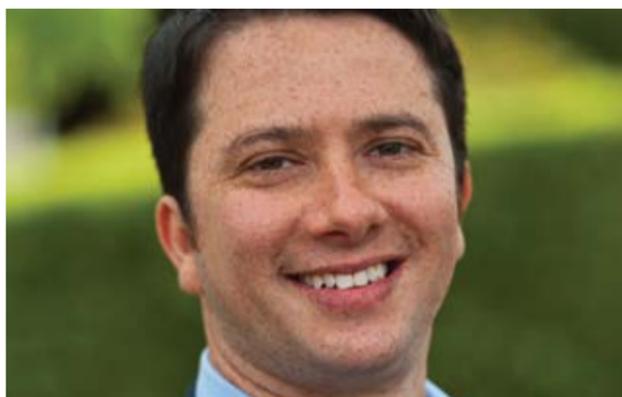
Jenny gained a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Sydney. As a post-graduate student she gained leadership roles as a fellow on the University of Sydney Senate, and President of the Sydney University Postgraduate Association.

Following her studies, Jenny began work in the not-for-profit sector. For a number of years Jenny worked at Amnesty International, mostly as a crisis manager and global human rights campaigner. These roles saw her working in London, Hong Kong and Sydney.

Jenny played a lead role in campaigns such as protecting freedom of expression during the Burma elections, the uprisings in the Middle East and north Africa, and the need for a Human Rights Act in Australia.

Jenny has been an active member of The Greens for over a decade. In 2013 she worked as the Federal Election Campaign Coordinator for the NSW Greens, supporting the campaigning efforts across the state.

Before taking leave to contest the newly created seat of Newtown for The Greens at the upcoming NSW election, Jenny was working at the Australia Council for the Arts.



Max Phillips – candidate for the new seat of Summer Hill

Max Phillips is the candidate for Summer Hill, a new seat in Sydney's Inner West. As an experienced local councillor, Max has a reputation for shaking things up, challenging inappropriate high-rise development and secretive deals. He is campaigning to transition from fossil fuels to clean energy as well as on policy solutions for housing affordability.

As the Summer Hill candidate Max has joined the community chorus against the WestConnex motorway that will plough through the Inner West's parks and suburbs, dumping cars and spewing out unfiltered emissions from smoke stacks. The Greens want investment in public transport instead.



Tamara Smith – candidate for Ballina

Tamara's family have lived in the Northern Rivers for four generations. She is a solicitor with a background in energy law, social justice and human rights and also a secondary school teacher with professional experience working in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission.

Tamara has been active in a number of national environmental campaigns, including Roxby Downs, Chaelundi Forests and Fraser Island. She has worked locally to stop sewage outfall into Byron Bay and to protect the region's koalas. She was part of the historic 'No Club Med in Byron Bay' campaign and organised recent rallies to Save Cape Byron Marine Sanctuary. Tamara is a member of the Lock the Gate Alliance, fighting coal seam gas mining and was part of the legal team supporting the protectors working to stop gas mining at Bentley.



Adam Guise – candidate for Lismore

Adam is The Greens candidate for Lismore, which is a rural electorate of some 8700km² in northern NSW.

Adam grew up in country NSW and moved to Lismore for university studies at SCU. The forcing of coal seam gas mining onto the beautiful Northern Rivers was the catalyst for Adam joining The Greens and dedicating himself to the Gasfield Free Northern Rivers campaign.

In 2013, Adam worked for Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham as his policy adviser. In 2014 Adam worked as a Lock the Gate Regional Coordinator, and was intimately involved in the Bentley Blockade. Adam sees this election as a referendum on coal seam gas and the corruption it has spawned, and is intent on seeing gas licences cancelled and replaced with a future based on clean energy, sustainable agriculture and tourism.

HEY TONY: DON'T INCREASE THE GST, CLOSE THE TAX LOOPHOLES!

by Ben Spies-Butcher

Given the talk of budget crisis and deficits you may be surprised to discover that Australians are lightly taxed and our public debt is small compared with other countries.

In fact many years of privatisations and tax cuts – mostly to the better off – have seen the size and scope of government activity decline. That is now causing real problems. Public sector job cuts are straining essential services and Australians are being forced to pay more for education, health and childcare. At the same time the Abbott government plans to cut Medicare, pensions and unemployment benefits and raise university fees.

In the USA increases in the cost of basic services since the 1970s have done most to undermine the living standards of 'middle America', adding to the gap between ordinary households and the top 1 percent. Let's not go down the American road here.

Given our existing low tax rates, a small increase in taxation could improve living standards by lowering other costs of living – like education, health and childcare. This is the experience overseas, where countries with high tax rates tend to have lower levels of inequality and higher quality services for everyone.

There is a growing consensus that governments have a 'revenue' problem. But there is no agreement about where that revenue should come from. Liberal MPs

1%
of income earners receive
\$30+ billion
in superannuation concessions
over their lifetimes

and the conservative Business Council of Australia want an increase in the GST.

They are considering two options for the GST: to raise the rate above 10 percent, or to expand the tax to cover items like fresh food that are currently exempt. Changing the GST requires the consent of state premiers like Mike Baird. The Abbott government is putting pressure on him to agree by slashing federal funding given to NSW to run schools and hospitals.

While economists like the GST because it is simple and easy to administer, it is also one of the most unfair taxes. Unlike income tax, if you are a low income household you end up paying a higher proportion of your income in GST than a high income household – simply because you typically spend all your money and

can't afford to save. That is even more the case for items like fresh food. Raising the GST will force low income households to do more of the heavy lifting. Thankfully there are many other options.

One of the most revealing documents for understanding how government revenues work – or don't work – is the Tax Expenditure Statement. This boring-sounding document is released separately from the main Budget, often during the summer slowdown. What it reveals is the scale of tax loopholes and exemptions. These are called 'tax expenditures' because they act just like government spending, but are hidden in the maze of the tax system.

Tax loopholes have been growing rapidly in Australia – for both business and rich households. Unlike government

spending, which is targeted to those most in need, the biggest winners are those on the highest incomes.

While many households gain small benefits from tax concessions for superannuation or negative gearing, the vast bulk of the benefits flow to the top. The scale of those benefits are hidden from the normal budget process so the media don't report it!

Superannuation concessions flow so strongly to the rich that the top 1 percent of income earners will receive twice as much through the tax system over their lifetimes as those at the bottom receive from the age pension. This costs the budget over \$30 billion every year. Imagine how we could improve health, education, housing, transport and pensions with an extra \$30 billion every year!

It is a similar story for businesses. Multi-national companies only pay taxes on the profits booked in Australia. But there are 'legal' ways these companies can 'move' their profits from Australia to often very small, low tax nations like Luxembourg and Bermuda. This allows very large companies to reduce their tax, creating a bigger burden on the rest of us.

Closing these tax loopholes is a fair way to fund the public services we all use. With inequality rising around the world – including in Australia – we will have to force governments to do the right thing. That means ensuring all of us can access high quality public services, and it means funding those services fairly. We don't need to raise the GST to do that. We just need to fix the broken unfair tax system.

FREE RIDE FOR BIG BUSINESS OR CARING FOR PEOPLE?

SAFE PATHWAYS, NOT DETENTION

by Bruce Knobloch

Abbott's Liberal-National government and the previous Labor government are both condemned in the recent *Forgotten Children* report by Gillian Triggs. The Human Rights Commission slams the governments for continuing to punish children who have done nothing wrong.

The physical and emotional effects of detention – here and on Nauru and Manus Island – have long been known, not just for kids, but for all asylum seekers seeking safety in Australia.

Mandatory detention began in 1992 under Labor's Paul Keating and has become more and more cruel, expensive and deadly under Howard, Rudd-Gillard-Rudd and Abbott. It is no crime to seek asylum. People fleeing from war and torture have a legal right to protection.

Australia is a rich country and we have "boundless plains to share". Yet successive governments insist there is a border crisis and have unnecessarily militarised the response to peaceful asylum seekers.

There is no crisis – unless you're seeking safety in Australia.

The Greens and many other groups are campaigning for a safe pathways system where asylum seekers are processed as close to their home countries as possible, as quickly as possible. Any processing in Australia needs to happen quickly and can happen in the community, not in a detention centre.

Like everyone else, asylum seekers want to work and begin to establish a good life. It is perverse that they are not allowed to work while they wait on 'bridging visas'. Greens MPs are campaigning to change this ridiculous law.

For more information please go to greens.org.au/safer-pathways

Photo: Bjorn Wallin



THE WAR ON DRUGS IS OVER

by Dean Procter

Australians won gold for recreational drug use in the United Nations' World Drug Report last year, with 10.3 percent of us using cannabis regularly and 3 percent using ecstasy. We also came third globally for the use of methamphetamine (ice) and three of us will die every day from a drug overdose. Even though the global war on the supply of drugs has been declared ineffective, Australia still spends \$2.5 billion on policing and imprisonment associated with illicit drugs.

Portugal's experience with illicit drug decriminalisation shows us a lot about what to do here. Decriminalisation has reduced addiction and use (injecting drug use fell 50 percent) and the health of users and ex-users is much better. Social, cultural and economic conditions – like unemployment and good services – have a far greater impact than drug supply.

The Australia 21 think tank released a report on illicit drugs policy in 2012 which proclaimed that *"The prohibition of illicit drugs is killing and criminalising our children and we are all letting it happen"*. It says that resources should be diverted

away from detection, prosecution and prison towards reducing demand.

NSW Labor has promised a 2015 Drug Summit, but the new Victorian Labor government has indicated they plan to continue with this ineffective approach. They have recently revealed new 20-25 year prison penalties for offences relating to methamphetamine supply, ignoring how ineffective attacking the supply is and not addressing the root causes of demand.

Thankfully the world is starting to move on. Medicinal cannabis is legal in many countries around the world and some American states have voted for the legalisation of a recreational supply with tax revenue directed towards drug education and abuse treatment programs. Australian attitudes are changing too with 69 percent supporting medicinal cannabis and one in three supporting a legal recreational supply.

Forms of cannabis decriminalisation in some Australian states and territories (WA, SA, NT, ACT) have been found to beneficially keep people out of the criminal justice system and did not generate an increase in use.

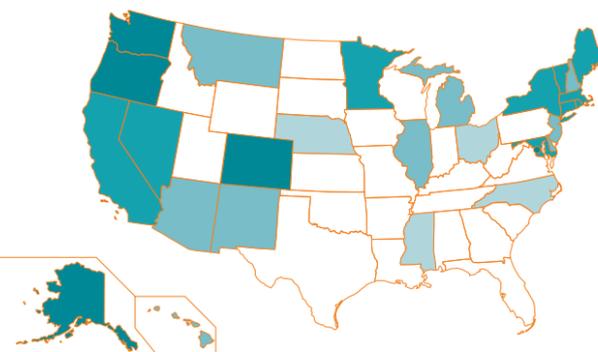
The Greens want to take the politics out of drug law reform by establishing an independent regulatory drug authority to develop evidence-based and up-to-date policies and programs for safer drug use. Our policy also endorses the legalisation of cannabis as

a test case. A possible alternative for reducing dangerous heroin use in NSW could be a prescription program, successfully run throughout Europe.

Our policy does not make specific recommendations for generating a legal supply of more dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine as experts have not advocated for this approach. Methamphetamine use in NSW is rising fast, making a new approach based on evidence that it will work an urgent priority. We should all be able to recognise that more than 40 years of prohibition and punishment has failed and welcome this new way forward.

IN THE UNITED STATES

- 4 States & the District of Columbia have legalised cannabis
- 10 have legalised medicinal cannabis and decriminalised possession
- 9 have legalised medicinal cannabis
- 4 have decriminalised possession



69% of Australians support legalisation of medicinal cannabis

42% of the Australian population aged 15-64 report using an illicit drug at least once in their lifetime

IN AUSTRALIA

- Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory & Australian Capital Territory have decriminalised cannabis possession



1 in 3 Australians believe personal use of cannabis should be legal

"The key message is that we have 40 years of experience of a law and order approach to drugs and it has failed."

Dr Wooldridge, who as health minister supported a heroin trial in the ACT

DEFENDING WOMEN'S REFUGES

Prevention key to ending domestic and family violence

by Mehreen Faruqi MP

In NSW, three-quarters of all women killed die at the hands of someone they were in a relationship with. About two in five of all assaults are domestic violence related. And about 370 instances of domestic and family violence a day are dealt with by police, but only half are reported.

These stark and shocking statistics highlight the unacceptability and injustice of domestic and family violence. Yet for

too long meaningful action to tackle this serious issue has been sadly lacking.

Just last year, the Coalition Government defunded dozens of feminist women-only refuges, with their buildings being handed over to religious or generalist homelessness service providers.

Women's refuges are not just homelessness shelters. They are where women work with women to keep them safe.

They provide counselling and resources that can help prevent violence from occurring again. For decades they have provided high-quality, tailored, long-term assistance and crisis accommodation for

many women. These women often have complex needs and come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.

The impacts are more drastic in rural and regional NSW, where rates of domestic violence are some of the highest. Refuges in Kempsey, Wagga Wagga, the Blue Mountains and Wollongong – among others – have been amalgamated, lost their funding and been forced to run more services without additional funds.

This one-size-fits-all model is irresponsible and shows a real ignorance of the needs of women facing domestic violence. It also disregards their safety.

A massive community campaign has forced the Coalition government to restore funding to some refuges in the city. But this is not enough to address one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Funding to women-only refuges must be restored and increased so they can provide crisis and long term counselling and support. Significant funding also needs to be allocated for the specific needs of Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities.

Most importantly, we need to prevent violence. This means addressing root causes in historical gender inequalities, power imbalances, sexist

attitudes, social isolation and alcohol abuse.

To be successful, violence prevention must reach all parts of society – schools, workplaces, businesses, sporting organisations and the media. It must be supported by a coordinated, integrated, approach between governments and communities.

Rosie Batty, 2015 Australian of the Year, recently said to women and children who are victims of violence *"... you do not deserve to live a life that is dictated by violence."* Indeed. And we must do everything possible to stop the cycle of violence.

FULL EQUALITY. NO EXCUSES. NO EXCEPTIONS.

by Jenny Leong

Discrimination has no place in our laws – equal treatment under the law should not be a matter of an individual's personal belief or conscience, it's a matter of human rights.

Marriage equality again made headlines when Luke Foley was appointed the new leader of the NSW Labor Party. He voted against marriage equality in 2013.

It is clear from vote that NSW Labor's new leader Luke Foley thinks he has the right to pick and choose who enjoys full equality under the law – and which people have the right to human rights.

The implications of this 'pick and choose' approach to rights extends well beyond marriage equality (which he now apparently has chosen to support). It demonstrates a willingness of the Labor party to disregard human rights when it suits them and shows an acceptance within the party to tolerate inequality and discrimination.

State and federal conservative Coalition governments also have little regard for human rights protection and addressing inequality.

NSW Labor's new leader, Luke Foley, voted against marriage equality in 2013.

When it comes to equal treatment under the law for everyone in our community and a respect for human rights protection – including marriage equality – The Greens are the only party in the NSW parliament that can give a commitment that we will vote for equality and against discrimination every MP, every vote, every time.

Allowing a conscience vote for MPs on matters of human rights is nothing more than an indication that a party is willing to put vested interests of particular individuals over and above universal values of equality.

Unfortunately this discrimination goes beyond marriage. There are still other laws in NSW that allow discrimination against people in our community on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity – as well religion or marital status.

There are currently exemptions in the Anti-Discrimination Act for private schools that allow them to discriminate even though they receive state government funding.

It should be illegal to deny enrolment or employment on the grounds of sexuality, gender identity, religion or marital status. No kid should ever be turned away from a private school because she has two mums. No teacher should be excluded from a job because they are gay or lesbian.

It is unacceptable that taxpayer money is being used in schools that are allowed to discriminate.

With polling showing that over 65% of Australians support marriage equality, NSW Parliament (like our federal government) – and both the Liberal and Labor party are increasingly out of step with the views of the community.

The community understands that marriage equality is an issue of basic fairness.

The Greens are the only party in the NSW parliament that share the community's view – without exception or excuses.

In November 2013, Greens NSW MP John Kaye moved an amendment to stop public funds going to non-government schools with enrolment or employment practices that would otherwise be unlawful under the state's Anti-Discrimination Act if it were not for the exemptions for non-government educational institutions. Labor and the Coalition voted against The Greens' amendment.

Labor's shadow minister with carriage of the bill in the Upper House was Penny Sharpe who is now the Labor candidate for the inner city seat of Newtown.

"I was genuinely shocked when Labor voted against my amendment. I have no doubt that a number of Upper House MPs, including Penny Sharpe, would be very uncomfortable with public funds being used to discriminate against children and adults. I also have no doubt that the Labor party is not prepared to take on the politically powerful private school lobby, including the Catholic Church." – John Kaye, NSW Greens MP and Education Spokesperson.

NDIS

The devil is in the privatisation details

by Christine Donayre

With the passing of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) NSW is poised to be the one of first states in the country to benefit from the increase in overall funding for disability support.

But who really is going to be better off under this new scheme? Apart from the obvious benefits for people with disabilities (PWD) who have long been without basic services, there are some fundamental glitches.

The NSW Liberal-National government pulled a swifty by linking the privatisation of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

(ADHC) to the roll out of the NDIS. This will see critical cuts to public disability support services. Home Care will be sold off as a monopoly to a for-profit provider, and the assets to be transferred to NGOs. ADHC provides essential services for people/groups that will not be funded under the NDIS. There was no consultation with unions representing disability workers nor PWD who will be directly affected by the changes.

The NDIS does not work or provide benefits for all PWD, with only a small percentage eligible for support. People who may require public services like home care or engage with the health system, or need modifications to access education may be ineligible for support. For people who cannot afford a private service, where will they go?

The NDIS is all about a market based system, where individuals receive direct funding that they can use in the private sector to access services, instead of the model of block funding NGO services, backed up with a robust public system. But the NDIS was never intended to replace disability support across the range of public services, which is what the Baird-Grant government is doing.

In this context The Greens are concerned not only about the transfer of disability workers' jobs from the public sector, with their hard fought for entitlements and protections, but also with the options for PWD who were never consulted on the new arrangements and who will now have to navigate the private sector for their basic needs and now have nowhere to go for services that were provided by ADHC.

AINA WANTED A GENTLE EXIT, BUT WAS DENIED THAT

by Jan Davis

The laws on voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide in Australia prohibit a gentle exit for those seeking it. This is hard to bear for the loved ones and friends of people who want this.



For our friend, colleague and fellow Green, Aina Ranke, her exit was anything but gentle for those of us left behind.

Aina was an extremely active and fit person all her life. It was partly Aina's agitating that led to women being accepted as full life savers in NSW. Her home club was Nobby's Beach in Newcastle, where you can still see a trophy on the wall in her honour.

Then a degenerative illness crept up on her in her early fifties. Aina was incredibly competitive in all her sports, squash and surf life-saving being her main ones.

Aina always ate well, so it was a double blow to her that this unexplained disease of the body affected her. It made life under these circumstances just too savage to bear.

When Aina resolved to exit her life, it was a relief for her. A feeling that it was all too hard was left behind. She was looking forward to being free from pain and disability forever. It was hard for those of us who saw her every day, for she needed help to look after her little one-winged cinnamon scaly-breasted lorikeet, PC, as well as herself.

The fact that Aina was resuscitated after taking an illegal drug was very hard on all of us left behind. Her Advanced Health Care Directive asked that she not be brought back, but be left in peace to die quietly. Doctors relented only after they saw she had no brain function left.

We have all been touched by Aina's love and zest for life, but also by her wish for a peaceful death. We also hope that not too many more friends and loved ones have to endure the pain and anguish that Aina went through.

The Greens' vision is that individuals with a terminal illness have a right to choose to die with dignity, provided that proper safeguards are in place.

TIME TO GIVE THE TREE KILLING 10/50 LAWS THE CHOP!

by David Shoebridge MP

In legislation rushed through Parliament in May 2014 the Liberal-National government, with the support of the Labor Party, introduced the 10/50 clearing law. This law, and the code issued under it, allows property owners in 'clearing entitlement areas' to cut down all trees within 10 metres of a dwelling, and all bush and scrub within 50 metres. The laws were an attempt by the Government to win votes in rural areas, but their effects are being felt across NSW. But since the 10/50 laws were introduced the chainsaws have not stopped across much of urban NSW.

Clearing entitlement areas are allegedly based on bushfire risk, but the mapping across NSW includes vast urban areas which, unlike rural and regional areas, face no real bushfire risk. Many of these areas include land that is up to a hundred metres from a pocket park or narrow wooded strip that poses no realistic bushfire risk at all. More fundamentally there is little evidence that chopping mature trees far from bushfire prone land will reduce the likelihood of houses being lost to ember attacks.

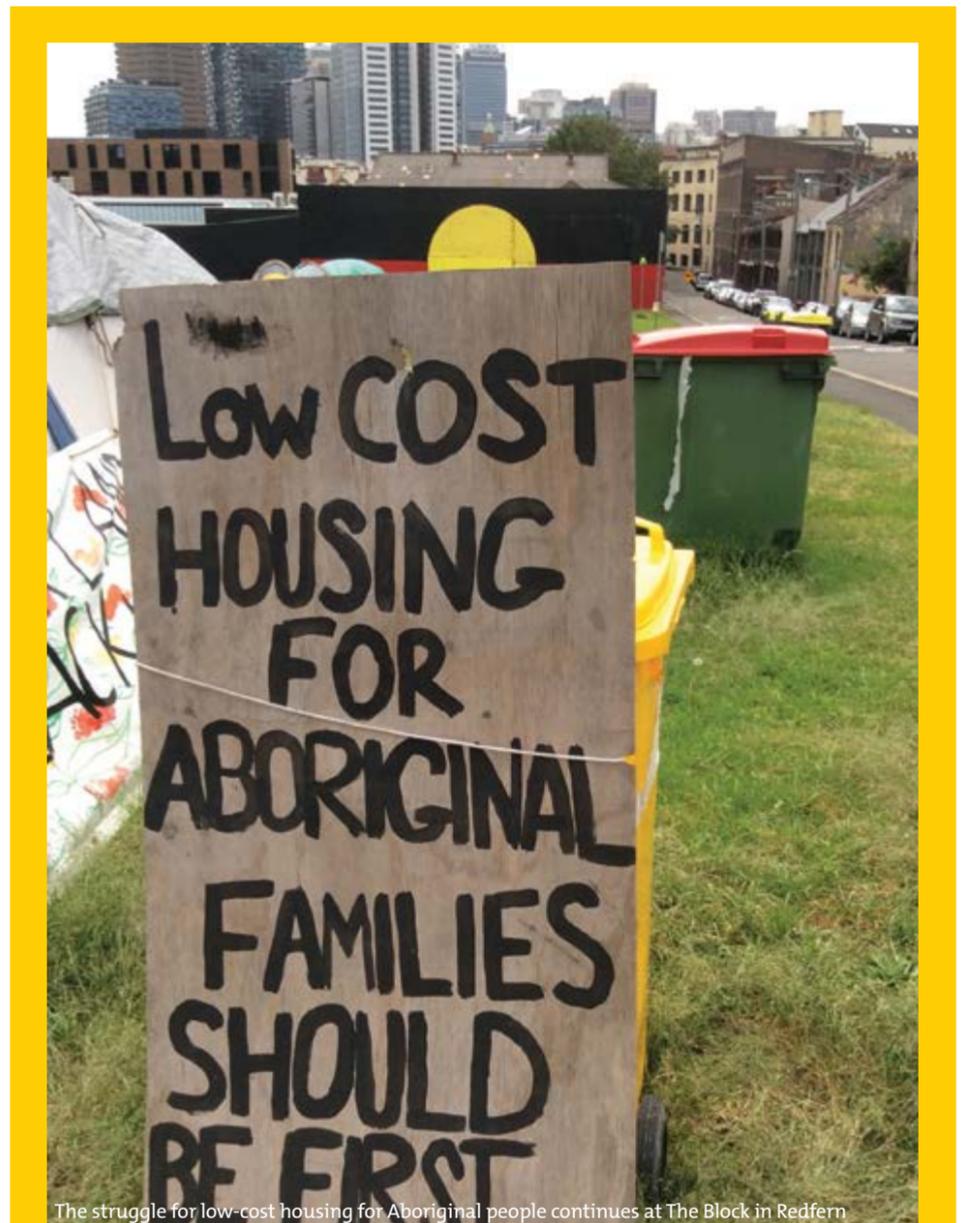
Assessment for whether you are in a 10/50 area is done via an online tool on the Rural Fire Service website with no contact required with your local council or the experts at the RFS. The code is already being used by unscrupulous property owners to open up views and enhance development potential of their properties, with no impact on bushfire safety.

The 10/50 code has already seen the loss of many cherished trees. The code overrides long-standing protections for trees in local council tree protection orders, heritage listings and even protections under State Environmental Planning Policies to endangered ecological communities, koala habitat and coastal rainforest.

Many councils are already demanding to be exempted from the 10/50 code with Greens councillors across NSW active in this campaign. Please visit my homepage for more information and to join the campaign.



The code overrides long-standing protections for trees in local council tree protection orders, heritage listings and even protections under State Environmental Planning Policies to endangered ecological communities, koala habitat and coastal rainforest.



The struggle for low-cost housing for Aboriginal people continues at The Block in Redfern

The Greens support a Treaty with Indigenous people, recognising on-going ownership and cultural rights.

Photo: Bruce Knobloch

COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

Baird-Grant Government attacks local democracy

by James Ryan

Our system of local government NSW is one of the most open and participatory in the western world. In NSW we still have local councils with proportional representation which are small enough for local residents to have a real chance of having their voice heard.

Local councils are sometimes noisy, sometimes disappointing, sometimes inspiring (for example, Marrickville Council electing to divest from financial institutions who invest in fossil fuels). A test of a successful local council is whether there is robust debate and a range of views – some of which you disagree with.

Small local councils have largely disappeared in Victoria and Queensland after conservative governments succumbed to the 'management efficiency' mantra and have forced councils to amalgamate.

Now in NSW the Baird Government is on a crusade to reduce the number of local Councils and Councillors.

The NSW Treasury wants 41 Sydney Councils to become five. Councils in far western

NSW may cease to exist, and many rural councils will become little more than committees who vote on which colour they would like the community hall painted by a NSW Government appointed contractor (as the locally employed Council workforce will likely disappear).

The Baird Government has said that all Councils in NSW must submit a proposal by 30 June to either amalgamate or prove

how they will achieve economies of scale and efficiency.

In short the Baird Government is pursuing an attack on community participation and on local communities being able to determine their own future.

The NSW Coalition Government is wrecking our system of local government. It is time to say no! Contact your local Councillor and tell them to keep local government local.

New South Wales residents may sometimes complain about their Councils, but at least we still have small local Councils to complain about, and Councillors who we can approach at local sausage sizzles or public meetings.

We still have grassroots democracy in our small local Councils.

The NSW Treasury wants 41 Sydney Councils to become five. Councils in far western NSW may cease to exist, and many rural councils will become little more than committees who vote on which colour they would like the community hall painted by a NSW Government appointed contractor (as the locally employed Council workforce will likely disappear).

INVEST IN WORLD CLASS PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Scrap the \$15 billion WestConnex toll road

by Mehreen Faruqi MP

Across the world, cities and regions are moving towards building integrated transport systems. These connect people and places with fast, reliable and affordable public transport services. They're essential for people's access to jobs and education. They also ensure social inclusion.

However instead of building such systems, NSW governments have wasted billions of dollars on private toll roads. These haven't solved the traffic problems and have been financial disasters. The biggest beneficiaries of these roads have not been the public,

but the private owners and operators of these toll roads, banks and financiers.

First, it was the NSW Labor government who invested heavily in failed toll roads such as the CrossCity Tunnel and the Lane Cove Tunnel. Now the Coalition is repeating and amplifying past mistakes.

The situation is so dire that even Infrastructure Australia's assessment is that "Australia has an addiction to roads" and Australia's road spend is "hideously inefficient."

With support from Labor, the government is pushing ahead with the \$15 billion WestConnex and \$3 billion NorthConnex toll roads in Sydney. They haven't provided a business case or cost benefit analysis.

These roads will rip through communities, take over homes and consume parks while adding to traffic congestion, pollution and climate change. If built, they will starve NSW of investment in public transport, schools and hospitals for decades to come.

The people of NSW deserve a modern, world-class public transport system that meets our requirements now and into the future.

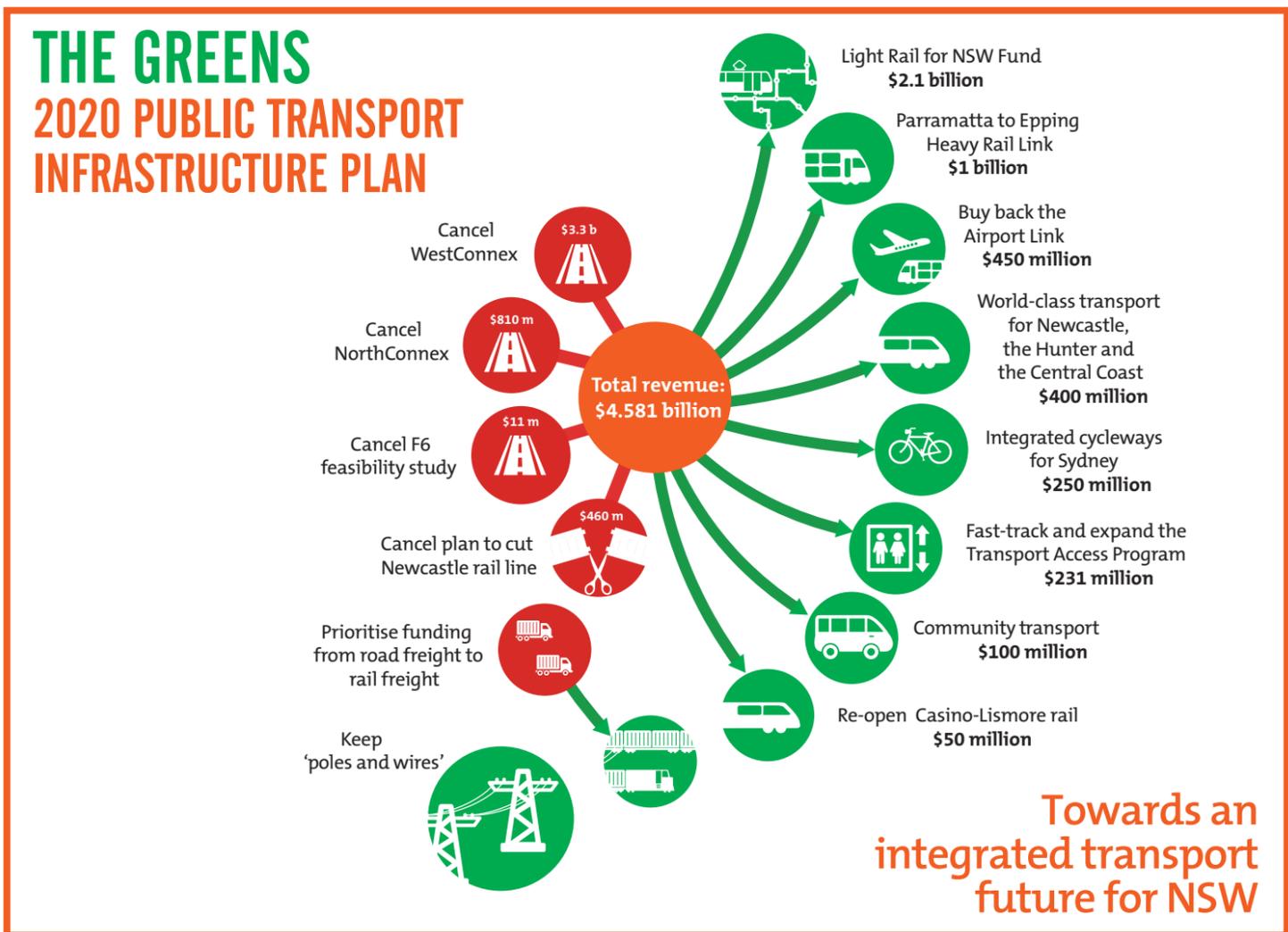
So what does a Greens vision for transport in our State mean?

It means investing in affordable, efficient and sustainable public transport across NSW as a matter of priority. It means publicly owned and operated transport for the benefit of the people of NSW, not private and vested interests.

It means expanding light rail and heavy rail networks to areas that are underserved in a way that integrates with the wider network, and connecting our cities with High Speed Rail. It also means providing intermodal infrastructure, where commuters can seamlessly change transport modes.

We need more 'park and ride' stations, and more and better cycling and walking infrastructure. We must reinstate and upgrade regional rail services, invest in community transport and move more freight on to rail. It also means increasing frequency and capacity of current services.

We must stop WestConnex and NorthConnex, and divert funds to these real transport solutions that will bring NSW into the 21st century.



So what does a Greens vision for transport in our State mean?

It means investing in affordable, efficient and sustainable public transport across NSW as a matter of priority. It means publicly owned and operated transport for the benefit of the people of NSW, not private and vested interests.

GIVE SMALL BUSINESS A FAIR GO!

by Carol Vernon

Small businesses play a vital role in the economy, providing jobs to almost half the workforce. They are part of the community in a way big business can never be. Yet small business often feels the impact of uncaring government decisions.

"Planning Minister Pru Goward's scheme for 24 hour shopping in six retail centres is a gift to the big chain stores but will leave many employees and small businesses

struggling", according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

There is also a move by the big chain stores to subsume another line of small businesses: local newsagents. It does not bode well for towns wanting to preserve a variety of choice for customers.

The Greens have a plan to put the brakes on the supermarket duopoly by strengthening competition law to ensure companies can no longer abuse their market power. The Greens would give the ACCC more resources and broad powers to break up corporations that are exercising destructive market dominance.

The Greens have a plan to put the brakes on the supermarket duopoly.

Unfair competition destroys smaller local businesses.

The NSW Coalition government has done nothing to protect small business.

"The real game is open slather trading hours for their boardroom mates despite the parliament clearly rejecting Treasury's legislation to deliver it." says Dr John Kaye, Greens MP.

Like its federal counterpart, the Baird-Grant government is too close to big business and is too afraid to offend their boardroom mates.

The Greens know the risks that people take on when they establish a business.

The Greens want a fairer NSW where small business gets a fair go.

5 ESSENTIALS FOR PLANNING LAWS

by David Shoebridge MP

Greens love talking about planning. There's a good reason for this. Planning is at the heart of almost every controversial land use decision from building new housing, to creating a new rail line, digging a mine or protecting a forest. So what is it that makes planning work for people and places? It starts with 5 basic principles:

1. Ecologically Sustainable Development must underpin any planning laws.

The principle of Ecologically Sustainable Development lies at the heart of good planning. This means protecting what is precious, encouraging what is good and working on a precautionary principle when you are unsure of the impact. We have a responsibility to look beyond the 'market' to balance the environment, the economy and social well-being. It is through Ecologically Sustainable Development that we can protect and enhance biodiversity while ensuring we have the jobs and housing we need.

2. Democratic involvement in the making of planning laws and the determination of development applications.

You only need to follow the trail of developer money, scandal and lies that has engulfed state politics over the last few years to know that far too many planning decisions have been made behind closed doors.

The Greens believe in grass roots democracy and that local communities, through their elected representatives, are best placed to decide their own future. Any planning system that deliberately bypasses community voices and local voices will lose its legitimacy. We see this time and again in NSW with state government bodies such as the Planning Assessment Commission, joint regional Planning Bodies, and plain old Ministerial intervention making the most important decisions. In each case it is local voices, local concerns and, too often, the local environment that loses out.

We believe that decision making must be local, integrated and above all impartial.

3. A corruption proof planning system that limits discretion and enforces the law.

You only need to follow the trail of developer money, scandal and lies that has engulfed state politics over the last few years to know that far too many planning decisions have been made behind closed doors. Planning laws need to be

reformed to include proactive anti-corruption measures and a strict limit on the use of corruption-ready discretions that so often favour developers. The reintroduction of third party merit appeals is one of the keys to holding decision-makers and developers to account.

4. Strategic planning that looks beyond the narrow interests of property developers and integrates transport, community wellbeing and environmental protection up front.

Rather than developing isolated pockets of land and endless urban sprawl, planning across the state must consider more than just land values and developer returns. This means strategic planning decisions that incorporate input from local communities, town planners, public transport agencies, ecological consultants and health policy experts.

Strategic planning needs to be forward thinking, consistent and democratic so that it delivers for people and places, not profit. This is the way we can build liveable, walkable neighbourhoods that come

with the services, open space and public transport that we all need.

5. Integrity in decision making by ending private certification and removing developer-chosen consultants from the assessment process.

The private certification system was introduced by Labor and expanded on by the Coalition with a fundamental flaw at its core – the certifier is selected and paid for by the developer.

This conflict is so obvious, and so fundamental that it is extraordinary it ever found its way into the planning system. Not only do developers choose their own certifiers, they also choose their own experts and consultants. Just as with private certifiers, private consultants deliver for their clients and this inherent conflict means planning decisions are almost always based on partial, biased and pro-developer evidence.

These links between consultant and client as well as certifier and client must be broken if there is to be any integrity in the system.

Planning in NSW can be different. It is through these principles that we can create a planning system that balances and promotes the needs of the State's people, its economy and environment well into the future.



URBAN ACTIVATION PRECINCTS (UAPs)

Missed opportunities – cannibalising our communities

by Justin Alick

For too long NSW has suffered under governments that have put the interests of property developers first.

The land-grab of the past left Sydney with an urban sprawl that was poorly equipped to deal with the challenges of the future, such as the need to keep house prices under control. Prices have risen faster than incomes for the past two decades, and our city is on its way to becoming the least affordable in the world for renters.

Sydney must now look to higher density housing and transit-oriented development if it is to cope with its rapidly

increasing population and to address its affordability crisis.

Unfortunately, the Coalition Government has chosen to repeat the mistakes of the past by giving in to property developers and by establishing Sydney's eight Urban Activation Precinct's (UAPs).

The UAP program allows centralised, public-private planning under the discretion of the Planning Minister. This can bypass local government and push radical new provisions, rezoning, and public land sales onto local residents.

This planning frenzy could have been aimed at reducing congestion, environmental impacts, and prices.

It will instead result in an eruption of 'build cheap, sell expensive' high-density

apartment towers, priced for up-market investment rather than meeting local demand. Minimal requirements for green space, energy efficiency, the provision of commuter parking or integrated transport infrastructure represent a critical missed opportunity.

The impact of these UAPs will be increased traffic and decreased amenity. However, they will be especially devastating for the residents of public housing estates, such as the more than 800 people at Ivanhoe Estate in Macquarie Park, who will be evicted to make way for this false progress.

Sydney deserves better.

A vote for The Greens on 28 March is a vote for a people-powered plan which meets the combined challenges of increased

population, sustainability, amenity and affordability.

There are real solutions to the development crisis facing us, and The Greens have a vision for better, fairer communities in NSW. No more missed opportunities!

Minimal requirements for green space, energy efficiency, the provision of commuter parking or integrated transport infrastructure represent a critical missed opportunity.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

inadequate and hard to access

by John Vernon, Mid-North Coast Greens

One in five Australians aged 18-65 will experience a mental illness in any given year. Others may have to support a relative or friend as they seek services and support from underfunded and understaffed public mental health facilities.

The barriers faced by a person with acute mental ill health make it difficult to obtain treatment. People with a mental illness experience lengthy waiting times. Rural patients must regularly travel hundreds of kilometres to see a psychiatrist or psychologist. If their psychiatrist is a 'fly in' then the continuity of care is often disrupted.

Unless a patient is about to self-harm or harm another, they will find it hard to access public health facilities at short notice. Even if they do, it will often just be overnight or for a very short time.

A person with acute mental health issues may exhibit erratic behaviour, organisational difficulties, concentration problems and possible memory failures. Expecting them to chase up services may be unrealistic. Often the person will have no family support.

Cuts to our hospitals by the Coalition government have only worsened this distress. The Coalition government should prioritise spending on health care.

The Greens will work towards significantly increasing funding for public mental health services, including public hospital inpatient services, community-based services and case managers. We believe that people with a mental illness deserve high quality care.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Let's make it free

by Lee Rhiannon, Senator

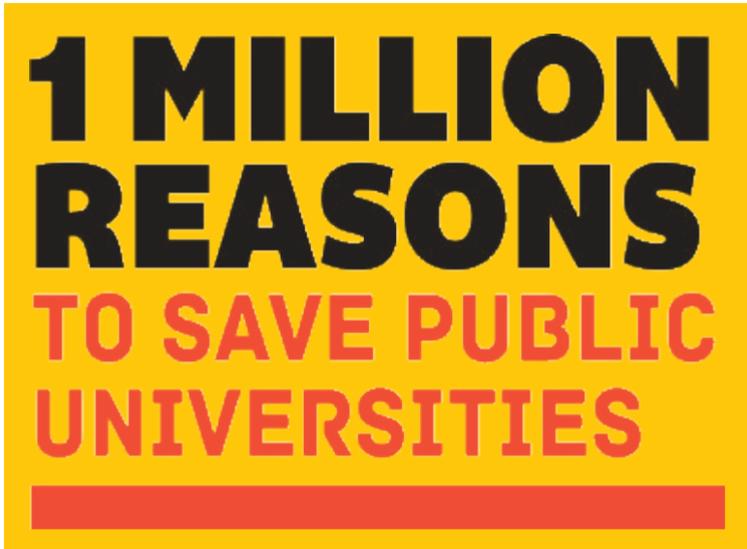
A country where only the wealthy can afford higher education is a poor country.

Australia enjoyed a free TAFE and university education system from 1974 to 1988. Many of today's political leaders benefited – Joe Hockey, Malcolm Turnbull, Julie Bishop, Barnaby Joyce, along with Christopher Pyne and Tony Abbott.

Now these Coalition leaders are pushing for deregulation that would allow university managements to increase fees to beyond \$100,000. The government's plan includes a 20 per cent funding cut and just on half a billion dollars allocated for private education companies.

The good news is that, thanks to a strong campaign by the tertiary sector union and student groups backed by The Greens, the Liberal-Nationals bill that set out their plan to make students pay more, cut university funding and bring in the private sector was voted down in the Senate.

In another sign of the desperation that has come to characterise the Abbott government,



Minister Pyne has reintroduced for the first parliamentary session of 2015 virtually the same bill as the one that was defeated.

The battle is on again and The Greens campaign 'One Million Reasons' to vote down the bill a second time is surging with support. Our aim is to defeat this latest

attack on public universities and build the campaign for free higher education.

The level of per student public funding in Australia is now well below the OECD average. The cuts that have seen this run down have led to increased class sizes, bigger academic teaching

loads, greater casualisation and job losses.

Meanwhile more countries are recognising the benefits of free higher education. Last year Germany joined the growing number of nations from Europe, Latin America and Asia that foster equity and accessibility in their universities. They abandoned the fee paying system they introduced in 2005.

As the battle heats up to defeat the Abbott government and their attacks on public universities, student rights and staff working conditions, let's create a future in which every Australian has an equal opportunity to obtain a higher education, regardless of their parents' bank account.

Australia is a rich country where education should provide everyone with opportunity. So let's make it free.

For more information go to millionreasons.com.au

Many of today's political leaders benefited – Joe Hockey, Malcolm Turnbull, Julie Bishop, Barnaby Joyce, along with Christopher Pyne and Tony Abbott.

HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL FOR HEALTH SERVICES?

by Carol Vernon

The National Party has let rural patients down. The push to privatise health services by the Liberal-National state government will only further stress overworked medical workers. It will further erode rural and regional health services.

Many patients in rural and regional areas are elderly or financially stressed. Over 60 percent of residents in some towns are over 60.

I recently marched through Kempsey streets with locals worried about the complete privatisation of Kempsey Hospital's Radiology services.

I heard of the elderly husband who has frequently needed to access Kempsey Radiology for diagnosis of the thirteen strokes he has had. The ease of accessing Kempsey radiology services within fifteen minutes has saved his life many times. The

threat to privatise this service and to close weekend services will mean travel to Port Macquarie, a life threatening delay of at least 50 minutes.

A private provider has already closed the South West Rocks radiology service because the service was 'unprofitable'. South West Rocks residents, unable to access Kempsey Hospital Radiology services will also need to travel to Port Macquarie, 75-minute journey.

In the streets of Nambucca Heads, Macksville and Bowraville, locals are proud of their hard working hospital staff at Macksville Hospital, but are angry at its age and condition. Thirty elderly patients have access to only two toilets.

At a meeting of concerned Nambucca Valley residents and local health professionals, I heard the overworked doctors describing the need for a new hospital to service the Nambucca Valley.

The Macksville District Hospital serves a population where the average age is 16 years above the

Australian Average and where only 43.4 percent are employed full time. (Census 2011).

I heard how the old Macksville Hospital was beyond upgrading. Medical staff called for a modern hospital to deliver 21st century medical services.

Rural and regional residents, especially chronically ill patients, face life threatening delays in accessing services. Many rural residents do not drive, taxi services are expensive and public transport is often unavailable, especially when needed. When you add on the distance rural patients have to travel, over poor rural roads, patients do not have the level of health services city residents have.

The centralisation of services like obstetrics in larger hospitals such as Wollongong, Newcastle, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour also increases patient travel and expenses.

Unable to access services easily, it is no wonder rural patients are less healthy than their city counterparts.

Unable to access services easily, it is no wonder rural patients are less healthy than their city counterparts.



UPDATE At the time of going to print the Baird-Grant government has promised an upgrade of Macksville Hospital. Locals wait with 'bated breath' for this promise to become a reality.

SO HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

Hundreds of thousands of voters are trying the ABC's Vote Compass to see how their values really line up with what political parties say.

The results can be surprising!

A lot of people are discovering that the party they voted for last time does not actually have their values.

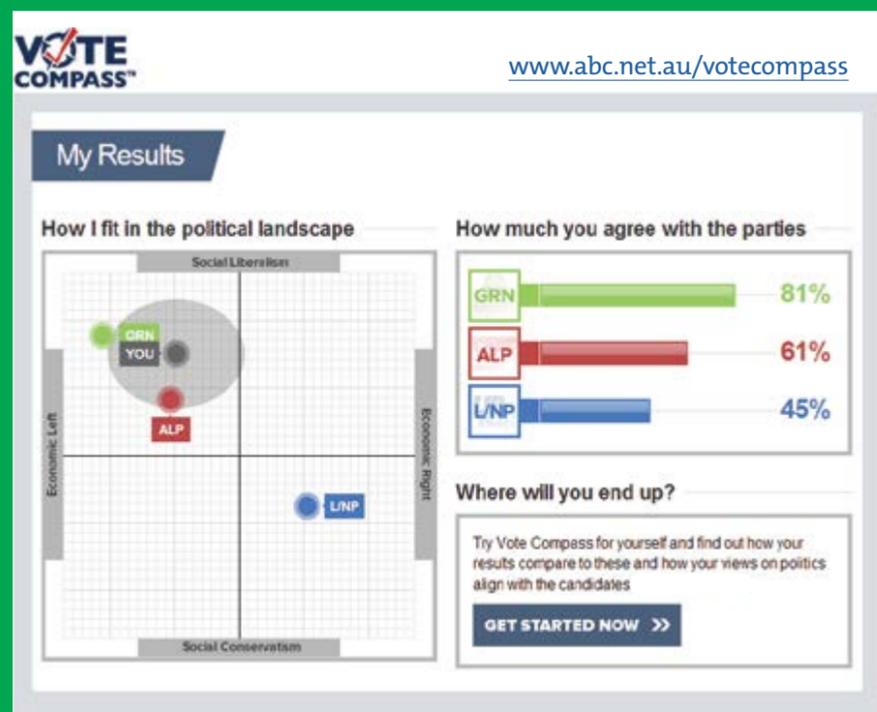
With so much media spin and bias it can be hard to know what to believe.

Vote Compass compares your answers with what parties have written they will do about different issues.

Have a go and see if you are really a Greens voter, but haven't known until now!

It takes ten minutes and will help you make a wise decision on March 28.

Share it with friends to help NSW have a better informed election than ever before.



“WHAT FUTURE ARE WE GOING TO LEAVE TO OUR GRANDCHILDREN?”

wonders Kokoda veteran Bill Ryan arrested at Maules Creek

by Toni Payne

Bill Ryan is 94 years old. A lifetime of experience has taught him a lot of things, one of the key lessons being “*Our politicians have been bought. They're fossils*”. He's referring to the old parties of course. So Bill has joined the Sutherland Greens.

Bill grew up during the Great Depression, formed the Sutherland Shire Progress Association in the 1950s and has even been arrested at a protest. He's been an activist all his life.

He says that growing up during the Depression affected him in many ways. He developed a social conscience early on.

The issue that concerns him most now, however, is climate change. He says “*I turn on the radio and there's not a day that goes by without a disaster caused by climate change*”. He thinks that climate change is a world-wide battle now.

Bill is adamant that we must take action on climate change. He's definitely put his money where his mouth is. Bill has been to protests at Whitehaven's Maules Creek coal project (where he was arrested), in Gloucester (about coal seam gas), a blockade in Canberra (about climate change) and actions to stop coal trains in Newcastle.

Bill gets email newsletters from the Labor Party as well as The Greens. He says the difference is clear. “*The Labor Party newsletter is all about asking to be put into power. However The Greens say that they'll support the community and work with them*”. He thinks that these two different approaches stand in stark contrast.

Bill is clear about why he joined The Greens. He likes the fact that rank and file members participate and that policy is formulated by the members. He also notes that funding comes from members and supporters, not corporations.



“The only ones who've been consistent in fighting for a healthy Australia are The Greens”.

ARE YOU ENROLLED TO VOTE

elections.nsw.gov.au/enrol_to_vote

DON'T LET THE OLD PARTIES CONFUSE YOU

1 Voting for The Greens is **POWERFUL**. We win MPs and change the agenda when you vote for us #1. Putting us #2 puts no pressure on the old parties.

2 Voting for The Greens is **SAFE**. If we don't win, your vote can still go on at full value to help decide government if you vote #2 for another party.

3 Voting is **YOUR CHOICE**. We put an end to the system that gave parties power not voters. Number the boxes how you want on both ballot papers.

GreenVoice is published by The Greens NSW. GPO Box 1220, Sydney 2001. p: (02) 9045 6999 f: (02) 9519 2177 e: office@nsw.greens.org.au w: nsw.greens.org.au
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