



Editorial

Welcome to the local government election 2021 special edition of *GreenVoice*, a publication of The Greens NSW.

In this edition we showcase a large variety of articles demonstrating the diversity of our elected councillors' work.

Local government is an especially important aspect of The Greens, for it is a shining example of our commitment to grassroots participatory democracy. Indeed, it is one of our four core pillars, on which we build our policies and activities.

Our other three core pillars are ecological sustainability, social justice, and peace and nonviolence.

Local government is central to our work because it is the level of government closest to the people. Given the relative ease of observing council meetings, speaking at them, and interacting with councillors, it is certainly the closest we come in this country to participatory democracy.

In your hands you will find articles that demonstrate the achievements of our candidates and councillors. You will also notice the diversity of our candidates in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. They truly represent a cross-section of the range of different communities spread across NSW.

Our councillors are certainly not limited to grey men in grey suits.

The issues highlighted in this local government special also showcase the diversity of issues tackled by our councillors, ranging from public toilets through heritage preservation to the importance of urban tree canopies – and all points in between. One rural council even has free access for all to its swimming pools!

The Greens endorse candidates to stand for election in almost all of the local government areas, including regional and rural areas, where the major parties usually do not run candidates on party tickets. And as you'll see here, we are also very well represented in metropolitan areas.

We currently have 58 councillors on 32 local councils across NSW. Several are mayors or deputy mayors.

As you vote for your local council, you can add to this already impressive tally by voting for your local Greens candidates standing at this election.

Ray Goodlass, Riverina Greens,
GreenVoice Editor

Our four founding principles guide all our actions, policies and decision-making.

- ▲ Ecological sustainability
- ▲ Social equality and economic justice
- ▲ Peace, nonviolence and disarmament
- ▲ Grassroots democracy

These principles are what makes The Greens unique. Our principles guide our actions, policies and decision-making. When faced with a decision, a policy, a response; an internal party matter, we pass it through the filter of our four principles.

Of these four principles, the one that is the bedrock is Grassroots Democracy. As a member of The Greens you can be actively involved in the policy decisions of the party and directly choose who our candidates will be.

Your ideas, opinions and contributions are welcome, and you have the right to express them and have them discussed respectfully, again, under the governance of our four guiding principles.

nsw.greens.org.au/join



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The Great Koala National Park

by Sue Ferris and Dominic King, Bellingen Greens

The Greens-led Bellingen Council have been seeking community input and feedback on a variety of plans, all of which drive the work of Council. That input has given Council the confidence to be an active and vocal supporter of the establishment of the Great Koala National Park.

Bellingen Council has developed a *Strategic Planning Statement – 2020-2040*, in which People of the Gumbaynggirr language have described their vision for Bellingen as:

A place where there is genuine respect for the land and the original people of this country. A place where the ancestors' way of holding country is recognised. A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for Elders and the children of the future. A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life. The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal ... in a way that's not separating.

Bellingen Council has also developed a Biodiversity Strategy, in which the people of Bellingen have a vision:

We are a community that values, protects, conserves and enhances natural areas and biodiversity in unique coastal, river and plateau environments.

Mayor Councillor Dominic King is keen to make Bellingen shire the leading biodiversity-conservation shire in Australia by 2040. Under the leadership of Dominic, the shire is working on this impressive project, which will effectively address many of our current local issues.

A leading project that is encompassed within the *Biodiversity Strategy*, and that will help achieve that vision, is the Great Koala National Park (GKNP).

What underpins this vision?

- 1) Koalas are now listed as Vulnerable to Extinction. As approximately 50 per cent of koalas in NSW are found in north-eastern NSW, it makes sense to safeguard this part of their range.
- 2) Knowledge that biodiversity in all its forms determines the quality of life (fresh water, food, health and fitness) for us, all wildlife and our shared habitat.
- 3) Some of the known threats are:
 - ▲ Logging: studies show that logging increases the severity at which bushfires burn. High-severity fires occur noticeably more often in forest-stands which are 7-36 years old; older-growth forests are more resistant. The GKNP will become more resistant to wildfires as it matures.
 - ▲ Clearing (especially clear-felling) reduces the environment's capacity for carbon-sequestering, increasing the risk of bushfire and the consequent loss of precious biodiversity (reduced water quality, loss of older hollow-bearing trees, weed infestation, and soil degradation.)
 - ▲ Fragmentation of forest-habitat from logging is seriously threatening the lives of our iconic koala, along with many other vulnerable species.

How will the Great Koala National Park help tackle these problems?

The Bellingen Shire Council led the funding of an economic study by local councils and Destination North Coast. Working in collaboration with researchers from



Ironically, because the Bellingen region survived the 2019-20 wildfire season relatively intact, it is an increased target for the Forestry Corporation's legal, but unsustainable logging of native forests.

the University of Newcastle, the implementation of this proposal will achieve the following outcomes over its first 15 years:

- ▲ the creation of 9,800 full-time local jobs (involving \$330m in additional wages)
- ▲ opportunities for First Nations peoples to have meaningful employment on Country
- ▲ the attraction of \$145m capital-expenditure investment locally
- ▲ provision of \$128m in operational expenditure
- ▲ generation of 1 million more visitors, increasing local business revenue by \$412m, and
- ▲ generation of a further \$1.26b in regional economic output, of which \$531m will flow into the regional economy.

Alongside these economic benefits, the GKNP will:

- ▲ conserve enough forest habitat, with some corridor inclusion, for wildlife and flora diversity to survive and flourish
- ▲ provide healthy, outdoor engagement with nature for locals and tourists
- ▲ deliver opportunities for closer connection with wildlife, and
- ▲ be the perfect opportunity for children of all ages to experience the natural world – offering better prospects for future survival.

Ironically, because the Bellingen region survived the 2019-20 wildfire season relatively intact, it is an increased target for the Forestry Corporation's legal, but unsustainable logging of native forests. Logging of native forests is already happening in the Bellingen region, and is exposing it to greater risk

of fire damage and the consequent loss of already vulnerable biodiversity.

Over 15 years the Great Koala National Park will create

9,800

full-time jobs and generate

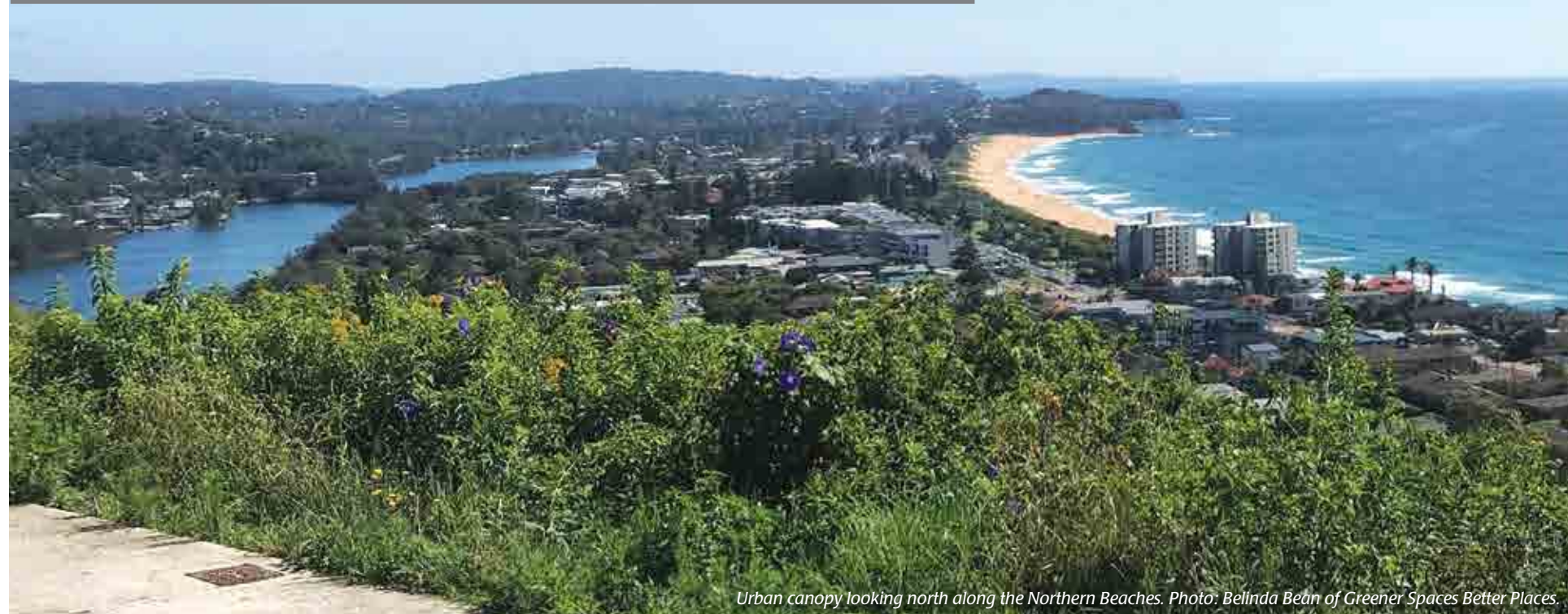
\$330m

in additional wages

The case for the GKNP is powerful, and our Mayor and Council are working in close collaboration with NSW National Parks Association, Bellingen Environment Centre and Greens NSW, with a strong commitment and conviction that they can see the GKNP developed. We, the residents in Bellingen, are passionate about this project, and proud of our team of councillors committed to fulfilling this vision.

Dominic King is the Mayor of Bellingen

Value of urban tree canopy



Urban canopy looking north along the Northern Beaches. Photo: Bellinda Beah of Greener Spaces Better Places

by Miranda Korzy,
Northern Beaches Greens

Anyone following Facebook groups in Pittwater, on Sydney's Northern Beaches, would be familiar with outraged posts about yet another old-growth tree falling victim to the chainsaw. All too common are the photos of giant spotted gums or angophoras, having taken decades to grow and providing homes for wildlife, hacked to the ground. Others call for locals to oppose development applications proposing to clear dozens of trees from a block destined for housing.

While the battle for the forest plays out on social media, researchers remind us that trees play a vital role in our urban landscapes. One of these is Macquarie University's Leigh Staas, Program Manager of the Which Plant Where research unit. Ms Staas says that trees can improve air quality, decrease stormwater run-off, provide shelter for

animals and reduce urban heat. In fact, research from the program has found that trees and other vegetation can lower local land temperatures by more than 5 °C on days of extreme heat.

"Right now, our cities are undergoing an enormous transformation," Ms Staas tells *GreenVoice*.

"We are losing green space and trees to such things as major infrastructure works, urban development, granny flats and bigger houses with small yards.

This type of urban development and planning will not protect us against climate change and rising temperatures.

We need to protect the existing urban canopy."

Urban canopy loss has been quantified by the Greener Spaces Better Places group, based at Melbourne's RMIT, with a survey of all 116 urban council areas around Australia in 2020.

Recently reported in *Where will all the trees be*, council planners, arborists and landscape architects were amongst the respondents.

The bad news was that while urban canopy cover has increased around Australia since 2016 by 62 per cent, long-term loss of green cover has persisted, with 68 per cent less than in 2013. What's more, the study found most of the decline has happened on private land. Lead researcher, RMIT Associate Professor Joe Hurley, says that councils directly control vegetation in streets and parks but protecting the urban forest on private land is much harder.

"What we've heard from councils is that while people generally support the protection and enhancement of green cover in public spaces, they're less inclined to support the same on private land," he told *GreenVoice* in a statement.

"Given the number of trees on private land, it's near impossible to make up for the significant losses happening by planting on public land.

"We need to urgently ... turn our attention to privately held land and the significant role it plays for green cover in our towns and cities, so we

don't continue to see this incremental systemic erosion of green cover."

Another researcher on the project, urban tree consultant Meg Caffin, believes a comprehensive state strategy dealing with private land through regulation, resourcing and education is essential, but that there is also a role for councils.

"We need to continue to grow the understanding of the positive individual and collective benefits of trees and shrubs on private property, not only with residents and developers, but also with councillors, who are often the ones on the frontline dealing with community conflict (over) tree removal," Ms Caffin says.

Many suggestions for ways councils can increase canopy on private land are mentioned in the report – many originating from respondents. They range from tree audits, reducing the number of tree removal exemptions, and incentives for landowners to manage canopy trees on their land, to advocating for overhead wires to be bundled together or placed underground.

Assoc Prof Hurley stresses that until trees are recognised as infrastructure, the future of urban forests is at risk.

"In the face of a warming climate, green cover could make all the difference between making scorching suburbs liveable and unliveable," he says.

"We must work together to ensure that as our towns and cities grow, so too does our green cover, as essential infrastructure."

Changing the culture of clear felling a block for development or cutting down trees for a view will not be easy. But if anyone's ready to take up the challenge, it'll be Greens councillors.

Miranda Korzy is a candidate for the Pittwater Ward of Northern Beaches.

First Nations Peoples on council

By Dominic WY Kanak, Waverley Greens

Sovereignty, as the inherent right of First Nations Peoples to exercise custodianship over land, water and sky, is the system of governance that looks after Country and community. It so happens that it is also what local government is supposed to do for our contemporary municipal communities. It is what I have been striving through since first being elected to boondiboondi Bondi ward Waverley Council as a Waverley Greens councillor at the turn of the century in 1999.

Invasive post/neo-colonial administrations have usurped and displaced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determining cultural power to govern Country which is a right of expression all Indigenous Peoples have, as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples, UNDRIP.

Being an elected NSW local government councillor is an opportunity to be part of a governing body which, with respect, fulfils some of the pre-Invasion role that was part of the deliberations of a Council of Elders and Community, who were likewise tasked with the responsibilities of looking after routes (Song Lines and Trading Lines), reciprocities (that system of cultural Reciprocal Obligations between people 'paying back' to Country for their survival) and refuse (those rules about how to dispose of human/ environmental waste).



Dominic WY Kanak.

Aunty Pat Dixon (?-2001), first Aboriginal Woman elected to NSW Local Government, has left our Community a memorial legacy in the form of the NSW Local Government Aboriginal Network, LGAN, which seeks to support more First Nations councillors being elected, and more First Nations People working across all sectors of NSW local government administration. We are assisted in this pursuit by Local Government NSW, LGNSW (and Councillor Linda Scott, President of both LGNSW and ALGA – Australian Local Government Association).

These two bodies host web pages for the 'Collaborate' program,

created with the assistance of NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and NSW Planning and Environment, to encourage our people's inclusion in council decision-making. Our people have an enormous cultural, social and economic contribution to make to local government which is constitutionally recognised in Section 2 of the NSW Constitution "as the traditional custodians and occupants of the land in New South Wales:

(a) have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters, and

(b) have made and continue to make a unique and lasting contribution to the identity of the State."

Greens NSW Parliamentarian, David Shoebridge MLC, has strongly championed the causes of First Nations People in the portfolios of Aboriginal Justice and Local Government. Local government 'councilloring' is an opportunity to stand up for our mobs and tackle the important issues of Truth, Treaty and Voice, whilst walking amongst, and with, the community on issues of Blak Deaths in Custody, Stolen Generations reparations and heritage/ environmental sovereignty.

I thoroughly recommend anyone, First Nations and non-First Nations people, with an interest in politics to consider serving a term as a local councillor, a most rewarding experience. With monthly meetings and sometimes with a community precinct (described as the 'fourth tier of government') system, local government is a chance to explore the Greens principle of consensus decision-making through grassroots democracy in a most challenging way that frequently really tests the Greens Fourth Pillar (peace, nonviolence and disarmament being the other three).

I still say after 22 years that it is the best job I've ever had, and for which, the people willing, I am happy to serve another term pending favourable NSW local government election results after polling day Saturday 4 September 2021.

Dominic WY Kanak is a candidate for Waverley.

Swimming is free in the Snowy Valleys

by Marjory Tomlinson, Riverina Greens

In October 2017 Snowy Valleys Council decided to trial free entrance to their five under-utilised swimming pools.

Reasons that were tabled to justify the motion included:

- ▲ Encourage participation at pools
- ▲ Promote social cohesion across all ages and abilities
- ▲ Enable people to exercise freely
- ▲ Develop an appreciation of our beautiful pools
- ▲ Welcome tourists and backpackers into our communities
- ▲ Socially equitable

Youth were formerly able to swim freely in our rivers, which Snowy Hydro has made too dangerous.

The total revenue across all five pools used to be \$214,000, of which \$133,000 came from entry fees and the remainder from kiosks and activities. The previous operating loss amounted to \$900,000.

It was agreed to trial free entry for the coming swimming season and to gather data about the age and postcode of pool users.

Today in 2021, Snowy Valleys Council pools continue to have free entry. Adult swimmers can also pay \$30 for a swipe card to use the pool after hours when they have been inducted to safety procedures.

Marjory Tomlinson is a candidate for Snowy Valleys.



Trees and other vegetation can lower local land temperatures by more than

5°C

on days of extreme heat.



Clearing canopy, Pittwater.

Local or mega councils? Let the people decide

by Colin Hesse, Marrickville Greens, and Hall Greenland, Port Jackson Greens

In the wake of the 2015 State elections, the re-elected Coalition government moved to forcibly amalgamate some 50 councils across the State.

They had no mandate for such a policy and the residents of the targeted councils were denied a genuine say in the final forced mergers.

Those mergers have proved to be a financial and democratic disaster.

The O’Farrell Government’s Independent Local Government Review Panel Report in 2012 made unsupported claims that bigger councils were more financially sound, and this was followed by the government-commissioned KPMG report into the so-called advantages of the forced mergers. The report was never released. Convenient conclusions were cherry-picked from the report without any information about the report’s assumptions and evidence being revealed.

From the moment the merger plan was announced, David Shoebridge, the Greens spokesperson on local government in the NSW parliament, argued that forced amalgamations were bad for both local democracy and the efficiency and financial health of the councils.

“People can have more impact on their local council than they can on any other level of government,” said David Shoebridge. “As for efficiency, overseas experience confirms that bigger councils don’t deliver efficiency benefits.”

As part of the campaign to stop the forcible mergers, David Shoebridge sought legal opinion from a senior counsel on the legality of the government’s moves. The resultant advice was that any council challenging a forced amalgamation in court could win.

As he toured the State speaking at public forums advocating resistance, David Shoebridge encouraged councils to launch legal challenges.

Leichhardt Greens Councillor Rochelle Porteous was also active building Save Our Councils, a broad coalition against the mergers. “We drew in people and councils from across the political spectrum, in the regions as well as the city, to oppose the amalgamations and take action,” Rochelle Porteous recalls.

Fifteen councils took the court option and every single one of them won. They defeated a forced merger and survived. Those that didn’t found themselves forcibly merged.



David Shoebridge speaking outside parliament at one of many rallies and press conferences supporting local councils.

Fifteen councils took the court option and every single one of them won. Those that didn’t found themselves forcibly merged.

“The one great lesson of the battle over forced amalgamations,” says David Shoebridge, “is that if you don’t fight, you lose.”

If you fight, you also stay healthy financially. Of those 15 councils who resisted, 13 of them are now in budgetary surplus. By contrast, only two of the merged councils are in the black (or surplus). Local government finance expert, Prof Joseph Drew at the University of Technology Sydney, calculates that the merged councils have deficits totalling more than \$1 billion.

Prof Drew’s work built on research by Prof Brian Dollery from UNE who examined the financial results of the previous round of forced amalgamations in 2001. Prof Dollery found there was no overall improvement in the financial situation of merged councils.

The government spin that the mega-councils would save money and be more efficient proved worthless.

The worst case, in what David Shoebridge describes as ‘this whole unnecessary mess’, is the Central Coast Council whose accumulated deficits are in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Councillors in this merged council claim that they were kept in the dark by the management of the new mega-council. Rates are expected to rise on the Central Coast by around 50 per cent.

Communities across the State are now trying to get out of this mess of the State Government’s making. Residents of Sydney’s Pittwater peninsula, for instance, are trying to get their council back with a giant petition. They were forcibly amalgamated with Warringah and Manly councils despite a local poll showing 89 per cent of residents opposed. They are now faced with

significant rates increases, worse services and environmentally adverse planning decisions.

Yet the State Government is delaying and blocking efforts to de-amalgamate. Residents and councillors in the forcibly amalgamated Snowy Valleys Council and the Gundagai-Cootamundra Council have been waiting for more than two years for government agreement to bring back their local councils.

That’s the trouble: for councils to demerge, it involves a petition of more than 10 per cent of electors in the council area, then a Local Government Boundaries Commission inquiry and report, and then a decision by the Minister for Local Government.

But there has been no time frame for the Boundaries Commission or the Minister to make a decision.

Thankfully, the NSW Parliament has just forced a change in this process on the government. Now a council can vote to demerge and the Boundaries Commission and the Minister must promptly publish their reports and recommendations.

One council has already decided to take advantage of this new pathway. The Inner West Council (which yoked together Leichhardt, Marrickville and

Ashfield councils) has now decided to hold a referendum on demerging at the local government elections on September 4. This was supported by The Greens and Independent councillors and opposed by the Labor and Liberal councillors.

‘We believe in grassroots democracy,’ says Greens Councillor Rochelle Porteous. ‘The Greens advocated referendums of residents right from the beginning. The people should have been properly consulted. If they had been, we might have saved local democracy and the financial health of the councils.’

‘But it’s not too late if the people want to get back to genuine local democracy.’

Opponents of demerging will harp on about the costs, but the changes that parliament has made to the Local Government Act require the State Government to fully fund the costs. Besides, the costs of demerging have to be weighed against the inevitable deficits, large rates increases, cuts to services and fire sales of community land and assets that will follow if the forcibly merged councils continue to exist

Colin Hesse is a councillor in Marrickville. Hall Greenland is a former councillor on Leichhardt Council.



Local campaigning on synthetic turf

by Greta Werner, Canterbury Greens

Over the last year my neighbours and I have been fighting against the installation of a synthetic field at Gardiner Park in Banksia, Inner South Sydney.

We initially spoke up against the project because a fenced synthetic field would restrict access to the park. Drainage works to accommodate the synthetic surface would leave very little open space for general use. We did a lot of research online and began to connect with other similar campaigns across Sydney (for example, please sign the Natural Turf Alliance petition against synthetic on change.org). To our horror, the collective research began to identify a growing number of studies showing that synthetic grass has negative environmental and health impacts and is more expensive to maintain than natural grass.

Synthetic fields shed microplastics from broken grass blades and carcinogenic substances from the crumb-rubber infill. The crumb rubber, from ground-up car tyres, is used to hold up the blades of plastic and keep the field bouncy. It ends up in players’ shoes and clothing, exposing them to a range of toxic substances. Gardiner Park also sits in a floodway, some of which leads through the backyards of our neighbours. These substances will thus be caught in our neighbours’ backyards on their way into Botany Bay.

While installations of synthetic fields are increasing in number around Australia, the European Union is considering restricting their use. Last June the European chemical agency (ECHA) Risk Assessment Committee finalised their advice to the European Parliament to restrict intentional uses of microplastics, including the rubber infill in synthetic fields. If the European

A study from the University of Western Sydney shows that on a hot day, synthetic grass becomes hotter than bitumen.

Parliament endorses the advice, a ban will be introduced over six years to allow sports clubs and the firms who install and maintain the fields to develop alternatives. There is no reason the Australian Government cannot consider a similar ban, as microplastics are just as damaging to our Australian environment. Furthermore, there are no facilities to recycle the plastic at the end of its useful life. As a result, tonnes of rolls of spent plastic grass are accumulating around the world.

While natural grass cools the ground, synthetic grass absorbs and radiates heat. A study from the University of Western Sydney shows that on a hot day, synthetic grass becomes hotter than bitumen. According to Football NSW, synthetic fields should not be used if the temperature is above 32 °C. At that temperature, the field can be 45 degrees and cause heat stress, especially for children. Children cannot regulate their temperature as well as adults, and their heads are much closer to the ground. They are thus much more susceptible to heat illnesses from hot synthetic surfaces.

The expense of maintaining synthetic fields results in equity problems and less publicly accessible green open space. Synthetic fields are expensive

to maintain and eventually need to be replaced. Some soccer clubs cannot afford to pay for this (as evidenced in Bayside Council Sport and Recreation Committee minutes). Ratepayers will pay for the upkeep of a space they have no access to unless they play soccer. The cost of maintenance and replacement will need to be covered by ratepayers unless the fields are commercialised. If monetised, ratepayers will pay less of the cost of maintenance, but residents will be left with even less green open space to walk through and enjoy.

Ratepayers’ money should be spent equitably to support a variety of sports and other uses of public space, not just soccer. If elected, The Greens will ensure that Bayside Council conduct a sports and recreation study to understand the needs of all residents, and make sure that funds are allocated to a variety of these needs. Bayside LGA is host to beautiful green spaces, waterways, and unique ecological communities, including wetlands, creeks, bushland, and beaches. Vote Greens to reduce toxic substances harming our beautiful environment while making sure that we can continue to access and enjoy our public green open space.

Greta Werner is a candidate for Bayside.

Volunteer for The Greens

The Greens are the only party to be powered from the bottom-up, engaging members and supporters every step of the way.

We know conversations are the most powerful way to connect with people and shift perspectives on the issues we care about. Will you help with door knocking or making phone calls?

Our volunteers also help with essential jobs such as data entry, mail-outs and other office tasks.

Come polling day, our lifeblood is the generous people who hand out how-to-vote cards with a smile.

Volunteering provides you with opportunities to learn new skills and make new friends.

No experience needed. Training is provided.

Thank you for joining us – and welcome to the team!

nsw.greens.org.au



Are you enrolled to vote?

125 councils in NSW will be holding elections on Saturday, 4 September 2021 for the election of councillors.

Voting is compulsory at all NSW local government elections.

elections.nsw.gov.au/Voters/Enrol-to-vote

Black summer bushfires



Rural firefighter observes a bushfire in Glen Innes. Photo: Stu Shaw.

by Carol Sparks, Glenn Innes Greens

Time has flown by and, looking at previous notes, I am amazed at the resilience of our communities; however the lasting effects of the 8 November 2019 catastrophic bushfire event and their ongoing repercussions are still very evident.

The area is Traditional Ngarabab Country and 230 years of mismanagement of the land and waterways by governments has seen the rivers emptied, town water depleted despite extensive dams and auxiliary infrastructure, agricultural viability threatened and native habitat all but destroyed; including the last of the World Heritage Gondwana wet rainforest ecosystem that has burned for the first time known to our records.

These areas are not recovering in 2021. We are getting ready for the next event. We are not seeing the platypus recover or the biodiversity of the rivers recover; extinction of our iconic native animals is becoming a reality.

The recovery of our communities has been slow, despite the good intentions of people and the amazing help from charities. Personally I still am without

windows and verandahs, I have a new water tank and my solar system might be in place in a month.

We are getting some rain and the watertable has risen, not sure how long that will last and if it will be enough to sustain new growth.

Council has been dealing with the grant applications and the responsibilities of getting everything completed within the short time allowed.

Our extensive road and bridge networks are looking good and some roads are tarred, which is a new thing for a lot of us bush folk.

Mental health services and lack of GPs and other health professionals are at an all-time low, people's lives have been lost because of this and no matter how many inquiries take place, the message is not getting through to governments.

Mental health remains a huge issue and many people are still struggling, including myself.

Climate change in the New England/Northern Tablelands region is still difficult to discuss, many people will not use those words; however calling it out at the time of the fires and acknowledging a climate emergency in Council has kept the subject up front and centre; Glen Innes Severn Council now has a Climate Emergency Action Plan (draft) and has had its first Climate Council Meeting.

Focusing on reducing emissions requires change and commitment and a new language that will engage people i.e. sustainability and reducing the cost of electricity. Many councils are starting to make inroads into this but we need people to be active in the community. Galvanising people in a community like ours, (aging National Party voters) and coming to terms with changes that are needed will be a challenge in the elections and in the years ahead.

I still find myself comforting and offering counsel to traumatised and vulnerable residents of my community so no, the bushfires and their effects are not over and, as my mentor says, unsustainable economic priorities have produced unsustainable environmental conditions (catastrophic storm events, mice plagues) that now pose a threat to the very fabric of our civilisation. Everything we believe in, everything our forebears strove to safeguard.

Our people, my community in Glen Innes and Wyalaliba have already met the Prime Minister's challenge to be "resilient" and "adaptable".

The question remains: can the Government?

Be kind

I pay my respect to the Ngarabab People and their elders past, present and emerging.

Carol Sparks is Mayor of Glen Innes Severn Shire.

The World Heritage Gondwana wet rainforest ecosystem has burned for the first time known to our records.

Jack Munday and local government

by David Shoebridge, Woolhara Greens

I was proud to call Jack Munday a friend and a comrade and to know he found a place within the Greens.

Jack led the NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) in groundbreaking working class struggles that protected the natural and built heritage of Sydney as well as winning important battles on wages and conditions for workers.

When Jack and the BLF established the idea of a Green Ban, a boycott on development that caused environmental or social harm, they were ahead of the world. They stood up for the culture and history of Sydney. They did so against the powerful ruling classes, including big developers supported by hopelessly corrupted Liberal Premier Bob Askin.

It was a real lesson in the need for the union movement to develop a social and environmental conscience. As Jack said: "It is no point winning great wages and conditions if the world we build chokes us to death".

Kelly's Bush, the site of the first Green Ban, is a story in how unlikely political alliances can make perfect sense – where activists from the leafy North Shore allied with radical builders labourers. It was this linkage between community campaigns and a militant union that resulted in billions of dollars of development being blocked through tens of Green Bans across Sydney.

As a tactic the Green Ban is unique, it is a refusal to engage in destruction

for narrow economic gain. It is a visionary and defining statement of our collective responsibility to social and environmental justice.

Jack was a grassroots union leader, so it's particularly appropriate he found his political home in a grassroots party. He worked hard to increase union democracy, ensuring that every decision on bans or industrial action was subjected to a vote by the BLF membership.

Jack knew the links we need to make between social and environmental justice 40 years ago. As he wrote in 1981 in *The Green Bans and Beyond*: "Ecologists with a socialist perspective and socialists with an ecological perspective must form a coalition to tackle the wide-ranging problems relating to human survival ... Such survival is based on a way of living in harmony with the rest of nature. My dream and that ... of millions ... of others might then come true; a socialist world with a human face, an ecological heart and an egalitarian body."

He died last year on 10 May, aged 90 and with him we lost a champion for the planet and for working people. Jack Munday was a comrade and a leader, who saved so much of our heritage with the Green Bans movement and who, even more importantly, showed us that another way of doing politics is possible.

In an interesting turn in history, the Greens took their name from the BLF's Green Bans movement when German environmentalist Petra Kelly came to Australia in the 1970s and was inspired

by the struggle of Jack and the Builders Labourers who were fighting for social and environmental justice. She took the idea back to Germany and established the first "Greens" party. We took it back a few years later. It all started with Jack.

Greens co-convenors Sylvia Hale and Rochelle Flood described Munday as "a great visionary", saying, "Under his leadership of the Builders Labourers Federation, for the first time we saw unity between the struggles of unions and environmentalists".

Jack's close friend, former Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon, summed it up like this: "A member of the Communist Party of Australia, Jack spoke up for socialism with a human face. As a member of the Greens Party, he stood as a candidate on a number of

occasions and helped strengthen the party's work with unions".

This work is ongoing and I'm proud as Workers Rights Spokesperson to be working directly with unions around NSW on campaigns including those focusing on fair wages, workers compensation and the transition to renewable energy that we know is so necessary.

It's hard to imagine an individual with a greater impact on Sydney than Jack Munday, but the truth is he was never just an individual – he always worked with others, he knew the power of community, of workers united, of passionate people joining a political party and together changing the world.

David Shoebridge is a current MLC and federal senate candidate.



Photo: Merran Hughes.

"Ecologists with a socialist perspective and socialists with an ecological perspective must form a coalition to tackle the wide-ranging problems relating to human survival ... My dream and that ... of millions ... of others might then come true; a socialist world with a human face, an ecological heart and an egalitarian body."

Jack Munday

Councils and gender-neutral toilets

by Amanda Cohn, Albury Greens

You've probably heard the adage that local government is just "roads, rates and rubbish". In fact, it's that adage that's rubbish – our local councils profoundly impact our lives by shaping the physical and social environment that we live in and interact with every day.

Many of us are lucky to be able to plan a trip to the shops, a local event, park, meeting or show without considering the availability and features of public toilets – but something as simple as getting public toilets right can make or break whether a significant number of people are able to fully participate in community life:

people with a variety of chronic medical conditions, parents of young children, people with a disability and their carers, and people who are gender diverse.

Here in Albury, an audit of our public toilets showed that not a single public toilet was fully compliant with current disability access standards, and half had no disabled facilities at all. More than half were not in good condition and required major upgrades or replacing, with a majority having no sanitary bins, change tables, rubbish bins, soap, hand dryers or hot water.

We have embarked on a program of sweeping upgrades guided by a public toilet strategy to have no more than 1km between public toilets in our urban areas, for toilets to be clean and maintained, brought up to current

accessibility standards under the *Disability Discrimination Act*, for some toilets to have prolonged opening hours to support people experiencing homelessness and, importantly, for all new and refurbished public toilets to be gender neutral.

The idea of gender-neutral public toilets can be controversial for people who don't completely understand what this means, but once the concept was explained to (mostly conservative) Albury councillors, they were accepted unanimously. A modern gender-neutral design means individual bathrooms, each with their own sink, instead of cubicles within a shared space. Having bathrooms that open directly onto visible spaces like a park or main corridor are safer than a row of cubicles hidden behind

a narrow winding corridor. This design means that parents and their children, or people with a disability who require the assistance of a carer, can enter together regardless of gender. This design can relieve the significant anxiety and stigma experienced by people who are transgender or gender diverse in having to choose which gendered toilet area feels safer for them. Gender-neutral toilets also significantly reduce wait times for women at large events.

Getting public toilets right is such a simple way in which local government can contribute to a safe and inclusive community for everyone. Ask your local council candidate what they've got planned!

Amanda Cohn is Deputy Mayor of Albury City.

This impressive bunch is just a handful of the 400+ Greens candidates standing for council seats across New South Wales in the coming local government elections. They have a wide variety of real life experiences, unlike the old parties who tend to stand candidates from within their ranks. *Scan the QR code to find the Greens candidate standing in your local government area.*



Dominic WY Kanak
candidate for Waverley Council –
Bondi Ward



Amanda Findley
mayoral candidate for
Shoalhaven Council



Dylan Griffiths
candidate for Inner West Council –
Djarrawunang (Ashfield) Ward



Kingsley Liu
candidate for Blue Mountains
Council – Ward 3



Rochelle Flood
candidate for Lane Cove Council –
West Ward



Marghanita Da Cruz
candidate for Inner West Council –
Galgadya (Leichhardt) Ward



Ashley Edwards
candidate for
Albury Council



Asm Mahub Morshed
candidate for Liverpool Council –
Southern Ward



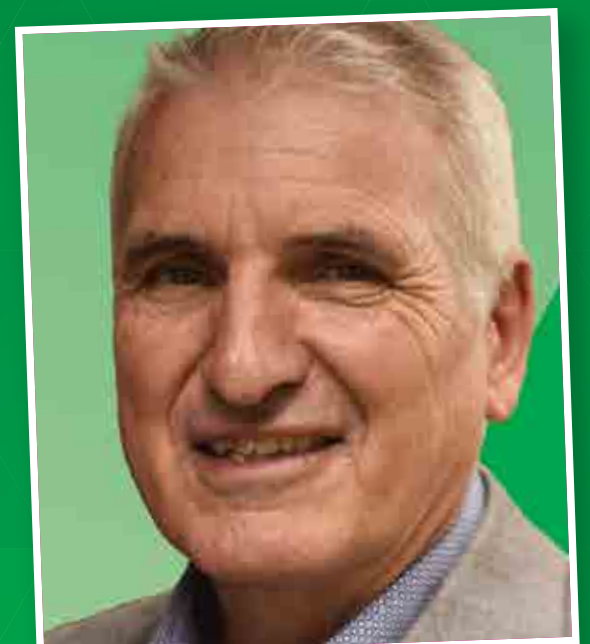
Liz Atkins
candidate for Inner West Council –
Damun (Stanmore) Ward



Vanessa Ekins
mayoral candidate for
Lismore Council



Ethan Hrnjak
candidate for Northern Beaches
Council – Narrabeen Ward



Dominic King
mayoral candidate for
Bellingen Council

A green city is possible

by Ben Moroney, Macarthur Greens

Campbelltown proudly advertises itself on old boundary signs as 'Australia's First Green City'. There's a lot to justify that – proximity to remnant Cumberland Plain bushland, the Scenic Hills, the only disease-free koala colony in NSW – but for all of its green, it doesn't have much Green. Campbelltown has had a Greens councillor since 1999, but never more than one at any time out of a council of fifteen. Campbelltown's Council swings between solidly Labor and Liberal/ independent alliances, and the Greens have never been in a position to exercise the sole balance of power, particularly not over the last five-year term where I have had the privilege of serving as the Greens representative on Council.

Nonetheless, Campbelltown has a declaration of climate emergency, and staff are actively planning for emissions reductions and building resilience in a warming world. It has a plan for levying high-density development to provide for community infrastructure such as libraries, sports fields and childcare facilities. It has an Arts Centre that draws from artists from all over the country to enrich all of Greater Sydney's cultural life. It has moved to a low-kill animal shelter

from one of the highest euthanasia rates in the city, delivered millions in new funding for its libraries, made provisions in its administrative systems to accommodate non-binary and gender-diverse people, and supported its most vulnerable and struggling small businesses while maintaining its full workforce during the COVID pandemic, and did this all while maintaining a rating system that ensures those with the most capacity to pay shoulder their fair share of the burden.

While not all of these are things that were the direct result of Greens notices of motion or amendments on the floor of council, a Greens presence on council has led to good, material, progressive changes in council's policy. I have achieved wins through notices of motion, through negotiations with other councillors, through meeting with staff, and through giving a voice to community sentiment and outrage – every tool in the toolbox of electoral politics.

There's always more work to do, of course, with a huge number of problems facing the city in terms of protecting our wildlife and bushland under the State Government's pro-developer regime, and maintaining our level of services under harsh rate-capping, but the Greens have punched well above our weight in Campbelltown.

This is because any Greens councillor is more than a single voice on their council. Even lone

Greens have the support and collective wisdom of their local groups to draw upon, and ultimately decide the direction of their policy. But we have more than this. We have the support of fellow councillors from across the State who can advise us on what has been done on their councils, on how they approached or fought issues, and some of the legal traps and tricks of council work. We have a team of activist MPs who can work directly with councillors on issues of concern to our communities, unlike the Labor and Liberal councillors whose parties often ignore or actively work against their councillors. We have a state office with a funded position to provide advice and support to councillors on planning and environmental law. Even a lone Green carries with them the full might of the party when they engage with their council, and that collective strength is greater than any that can be marshalled by the major parties or independents.

Don't ever feel as though a single councillor will not be enough to achieve great things on your council, or that your area doesn't have the demographics to achieve wins within our Four Pillars and our progressive vision for our society. Every member of the party, elected or not, is more than just an individual – they are a Green.

Ben Moroney is a councillor in Campbelltown.

Watch this space – Sydney's parks under threat

by Hall Greenland, Port Jackson Greens

During the recurring Covid-19 lockdowns people fell in love again with their local parks. This was especially true in tightly packed Sydney.

It would now be a pity if the State Government's dubious plans for Sydney's most iconic parks was to pass under the public radar.

The Minister for Planning Rob Stokes plans to turn these parks over to an agency packed with corporate high flyers from the finance and development worlds and commercialise their operation.

Those plans are detailed in the White Paper entitled *Parklands for the People* published in late May. Mr Stokes plans to introduce legislation based on the White Paper in August.

In a sudden move by Mr Stokes last year, Sydney's major parks – Centennial Park, Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill, Mulgoa – were put under the control of the Greater Sydney Parklands agency (GSP). The members of the various park trusts that had managed these parks were sacked and replaced by the GSP board.

This board is packed with corporates from the finance and development world. As the investigative journalist



Wharf Road, Callan Park. Photo: David Liddle.

Wendy Bacon discovered about the GSP: 'Of the seven directors, six have property development experience – two have worked in Sydney's very top corporate law firms.'

These are the new park bosses – if Mr Stokes can get his legislation legalising all this through parliament later this year. These GSP board members may be very good in their chosen fields but they are scarcely ideal candidates to manage the very distinctive and particular parks under their control.

Their mercenary mission has been spelled out in the White Paper. They have been charged by Mr Stokes to find ways for the parks to fund themselves – at least partly.

After boasting that the government has granted \$108 million to the GSP – compared to 20 times that amount for new football stadiums – the White Paper adds: 'However this must be

matched with the development of an ongoing sustainable funding model for the future.' Matched? How precisely are our parks to raise sums like these?

There are danger signals like this scattered through the White Paper. There is no acceptance of the fact that the community expects governments to fund the protection and upkeep of parks as an essential public good.

Will you have a say?

The White Paper does promise each park will have its own 'community trust board' but its members will be handpicked by the GSP board. Their role is purely advisory and troublesome trust board members could be removed by the GSP board at will.

First on the list of duties of these community trust boards is to 'to advise ... on revenue generation'.

This very limited role for the community in what happens in their parks goes against the fine words in Mr Stokes' introduction to the White Paper where he promises a central role for the community in the management of their parks.

He writes: 'Any decision on the future of our parklands must be validated by the views of the community. They are the park users and the park experts. Their voice gives meaning to what we are trying to do.'

If these very fine words are to be honoured in fact, then the Stokes top-down model will have to be turned upside down and the 'park experts', the 'park users', put in control.

Mr Stokes never tires of reassuring listeners that he does listen and wants everyone to be happy with the new model for managing our parks. His forthcoming legislation will test that promise. It may sail through the Lower House of Parliament but its fate will depend on how the Labor-Greens-Shooters majority in the Upper House judges it.

Hall Greenland is a former councillor on Leichhardt Council.

The White Paper can be read at planningportal.nsw.gov.au/GSPwhitepaper and you can email the Minister at nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-planning-and-public-spaces

Councils and affordable childcare

by Rochelle Flood, Lower North Shore Greens

We are fortunate in Lane Cove to have council-run childcare facilities like Kindy Cove and Possums' Corner. However, the fees at both facilities quickly add up, particularly when parents are working full time or if they have several children enrolled. The fee schedule ranges from approximately \$126-\$132 per day for Kindy Cove, and \$122-\$177 a day for Possums' Corner. We need to ensure council-run childcare is affordable and accessible for all.

Lane Cove Council can play a crucial role by offering subsidised childcare for low to middle-income families, to ensure that it is affordable for all those who need it. This would help close the gap for children from low to middle-income households, ensuring that they do not fall behind from the outset. Affordable childcare would also help primary caregivers move back into the workforce, helping to improve not only the families' financial security, but also that of the broader economy.

Research clearly supports the benefits of early childhood education. It helps with a child's educational and social development, improving their readiness for school. Without affordable childcare options for low to middle-income households, we are creating a gap in society where some children are denied this important start in life.

The lack of affordable childcare options is also keeping primary caregivers out of the workforce. High early childhood education fees

means that for many caregivers, most or sometimes all of their salary would go towards putting their children in early childhood care. For many, this means enrolling their children is not financially viable, so they are forced to remain at home, or to only work limited hours. The

Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey from 2019 found that this predominantly impacts women. Women often have lower take-home pay than men, meaning that they are often the ones who remain at home as the primary caregivers.

Introducing subsidies for low to middle-income families would help women get back into the workforce. This would help to remove one significant disadvantage faced by women.

Rochelle Flood is a candidate for Lane Cove's West Ward.



The financial case: \$10 childcare for Lane Cove residents

Background: Long-day care fees average between \$100 and \$150 per child 2-5 years old per day.

The Federal Government subsidises a large proportion of the fee. Precisely how much subsidy is received varies according to the caregiver's income. The balance of the childcare fee is paid by the carer to the childcare provider. Based on a 70 per cent subsidy, the net fees actually paid per child would be approximately \$40-\$55 per day.

Therefore a council can provide a limited number of subsidised childcare places for \$10 per day and the actual cost of the subsidy to council will range between \$20 and \$45 per day.

Lane Cove case study 1: Lane Cove Council provides childcare at Kindy Cove. The fee for a child aged between 2 and 6 years is \$128 per day.

A couple living in Lane Cove with one partner working fulltime and the other part-time, and needing 3 days per week of long-day care for a 4-year-old child, would be charged \$384 per week. The Federal Government subsidy would amount to \$219 and the fee paid by the carers would be \$165 (\$55 per day). By providing \$10 per day childcare, Lane Cove Council would be providing a subsidy of \$45 per day, or \$135 per week, or \$6,885 per year (the 51 weeks that Kindy Cove is open).

Lane Cove Case study 2: A sole parent or guardian with a 4-year-old child in care 3 days per week who is working 3 days per week would also face a total cost of \$384 per week. The federal subsidy would amount to \$249 and out-of-pocket expenses would be \$135 per week. By providing \$10 per day childcare, Lane Cove Council would be providing a subsidy of \$35 per day, or \$105 per

week, or \$5,355 per year (the 51 weeks that Kindy Cove is open).

Budget impact: Lane Cove Council has put on exhibition a Draft Budget for Financial Year 2021-22 showing a forecast income of \$59 million and a surplus of \$6 million.

Based on the 2021-22 Draft Budget and the two examples above, Lane Cove Council could provide 100 subsidised childcare places for \$10 per day at an annual cost to the Council of \$612,000 i.e. 1 per cent of its overall budget, or 10 per cent of its surplus. For such a small cost, Lane Cove Council could help make childcare more affordable for local residents on low incomes. Every child and every family deserves access to affordable childcare. With so many young families calling Lane Cove home, it is crucial our local council plays their part in making affordable childcare a reality.

Saving local heritage

by Phil Bradley, Parramatta Greens

When most people are asked about how important it is to save heritage, they tend to think simply of old buildings, but I believe it is more important to acknowledge and preserve important Aboriginal First Nations' heritage, to which we owe a great debt and from which we need to learn for a sustainable planet.

There are few places where this is more important than Parramatta. For about 60,000 years, my City of Parramatta Council's local government area (LGA) has been mostly in the custodianship of the Burramattagal, a clan of the Darug Nation. The word Burramattagal is derived from the Aboriginal word for 'place where the eels lie down' to breed in the Parramatta River. Thus our local rugby league's club name 'the Eels'.

As a Councillor, I have always sought to reflect and, in strategic planning, embrace the rich culture and heritage of the Darug people, and their deep connection to the River. To do this, I constantly draw on my knowledge and experiences from being President of the Reconciliation for Western Sydney group for 20 years, and a member of the Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee for 10 years. I have great respect for the ongoing contribution of our local Western Sydney Darug people and always seek to have their proud history represented and preserved across the LGA. This continues to be done by Council by having a Welcome or an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and public events, and flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. Unfortunately, there are still some who seek to

undermine this proud tradition and as such we always need to be vigilant in seeking support to prevent this happening.

Two recent examples of this have been the refusal of most councillors to consider Darug names put forward for our new civic building in Parramatta Square, and the refusal of our State Government to respect the wishes of our Darug community (and most councillors) to preserve the historic Willow Grove heritage building, which is threatened with demolition for the Parramatta Museum commercial development. This beautiful Italianate Willow Grove was once a hospital, with a rare history in the Parramatta area as a place where the local Darug people were respected and treated as equals to European patients. Along with North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG) and unions with their Green Ban, I have also strongly supported the protection of local heritage gem Willow Grove and St George's Terrace from demolition for the museum development.

Parramatta is also significant as the second European settlement (or invasion from the Darug perspective) in Australia in 1788. Parramatta Park, with its Old Government House and Domain, is a UNESCO World Heritage Listed site.

The Parramatta LGA has some 70 items of State Heritage significance and over 1,300 items of local heritage significance. Other sites of high heritage value include Elizabeth Farm, Experiment Farm, Lancer Barracks, St John's and St Patrick's Cathedrals, Roxy Theatre and the Female Orphan School. A number of heritage conservation areas protect the local historic character of specific areas, but I have had to lobby hard to get the majority of councillors to save some of these areas from being

overshadowed by 29-storey towers. Heritage sites cluster around Parramatta and the older established suburbs. I have voted to reduce or prevent detrimental heritage impacts from numerous overdevelopment proposals in these areas.

There has also been a long community campaign to have the iconic 1821 Parramatta Female Factory Precinct granted National Heritage Listing and then have long overdue UNESCO World Heritage Listing. Groups involved included Parra Girls, the Parramatta Female Factory (PFF) Friends and NPRAG. I also involved Greens MPs David Shoebridge and Jamie Parker, and then Senator Lee Rhiannon to ask incisive questions in the Senate to promote this. I lobbied local State MP Dr Geoff Lee too and was particularly proud that my first major success on Council was having a motion carried that required Council to urgently lobby the NSW Minister for Planning and the Federal Minister for Environment (and Heritage) to support the long overdue National Heritage Listing for the North Parramatta Female Factory Precinct. The Greens, ParraGirls, the PFF Friends and NPRAG were jubilant when within two weeks, the Federal Minister announced the well-deserved National Heritage Listing for the historic site. Now we need to campaign for World Heritage Listing before the adjoining high-rise development proposal damages the site's high heritage value.

This PFF campaign clearly shows how persistent, passionate campaigning by community can win against the power of state and federal governments. To strengthen these campaigns though, we need to elect more Greens councillors to put pressure on governments to act democratically in the public interest.

Phil Bradley is a councillor in Parramatta.



Photo: Andrea Chelfi.

Councils and renewables

by Sarah Ndiaye, Byron Bay Greens

Byron Shire Council has long acknowledged its contribution to global carbon emissions, reducing its reliance on fossil fuels since 2004 and monitoring emissions reduction since 2015. In 2017 our council resolved to achieve net zero emissions for council operations by 2025, and to source 100 per cent of its energy through renewable sources by 2027. Acting on this resolution, the Net Zero Emissions Strategy for Council Operations 2025 was adopted in 2019.

This strategy has led to the completion of several major renewable energy projects, including an additional 400 kilowatts (kW) of solar installed across council assets, and further progress towards investigating a 5-megawatt (MW) solar farm and a bioenergy facility to manage our green waste within the Shire. In addition to this increasing renewable energy portfolio, Council now offset over 2,600 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e) by choosing a carbon-neutral electricity retailer, bringing its total net emissions down from 17,984 to 15,358 tCO₂-e in the 2018-19 financial year. Also in 2019, Council resolved to become certified carbon neutral by the 2025-26 financial year under the Federal Government's Climate Active requirements. The Climate Active standard is bound by rigorous auditing and reporting, and represents the highest level of commitment to reaching net zero emissions for council operations.

Our Action Plan aims to address the questions: where are we now, and what do we need to do to reach net zero emissions by 2025? Council's vision is mapped out through a series of objectives, goals, actions,

and measures, providing council staff with specific and practical steps as to how they can help meet the net zero emissions target. The five overarching objectives provide the foundations for our emissions reduction goals and are based on the principal contributing sources of emissions within council operations.

Guiding principles

The Action Plan represents Council's commitment to tackling climate change alongside a growing cohort of leading Australian and international governing bodies. The rapid growth within the climate science space means that technology and policy will be constantly evolving throughout the implementation of the Action Plan.

The goals in this plan are based on the figures and progress made over the past four years since Council's emissions baseline was established in 2016.

We acknowledge it is therefore essential that we continue to learn and adapt our response to the climate crisis by reviewing and updating our processes, together with Council's annual emissions reporting. This ensures that the Action Plan remains up to date and relevant for Byron Shire Council in the context of changing climate science, technology and policy, as well as reflecting the emissions reduction goals we achieve along the way.

We have committed to:

- ▲ Achieving 100 per cent net zero emissions for council operations by 2025 in collaboration with Zero Emissions Byron
- ▲ Sourcing 100 per cent of council's energy needs through renewable energy within 10 years (2027)
- ▲ Becoming certified under the Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard by 2025-26

The Net Zero Emissions Action Plan is mapped out using five high-level objectives, which correlate with the five principal contributing sources of emissions within council operations:

Objective A – Electricity: improve electricity efficiency and transition to 100 percent renewable energy.

Example projects: We have installed more than 600kW of solar across numerous Council sites.

Objective B – Fuel: optimise fuel efficiency and transition to renewable fuel sources.

Example project: Review council's passenger vehicle policies and procedures to encourage hybrid and electric vehicle ownership.

Objective C – Waste, water and sewer: reduce waste and improve water efficiency.

Example project: Progress the closure and rehabilitation of the Southern Expansion landfill cell at the Byron Resource Recovery Centre.

Objective D – Governance: disclose and improve emissions reporting and invest in high quality carbon offsets.

Example project: Become certified carbon neutral under the Australian Climate Active standard by 2025/26.

Objective E – Community Infrastructure: minimise emissions from the construction of community infrastructure.

Example projects: Implement the Integrated Transport Plan and Bike Plan and investigate alternative materials for construction of infrastructure.

How we will achieve our targets:

Net Zero Emissions Strategy

To provide a framework to achieve the above commitments, the *Net Zero Emissions Strategy for Council Operations 2025* was adopted on 20 June 2019. The strategy sets the climate change



context and maps out a dynamic, high-level pathway for council to achieve its aspirational mitigation goals.

Council's 2015/16 emissions profile is being used as the baseline against which to measure progress. The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) methodology is being used to monitor and report on Council's emissions.

Net Zero Emissions Action Plan

The *Net Zero Emissions Action Plan for Council Operations 2025* was adopted on 26 November 2020. It sets out actionable steps that staff can follow in order to achieve the high-level goals set out in the Strategy, and is designed to align with council's four-year delivery program and annual operational plan. Progress updates on the action plan will be provided to Council each year as part of the annual emissions inventory.

For a cleaner, greener future.

Sarah Ndiaye is Deputy Mayor in the Byron Shire.

Sustainability through renewables

by Amanda Findley, Shoalhaven Greens

The Shoalhaven is one of those glorious places renowned for its great beaches, wonderful mountains and bushwalking, clean air and abundant water bodies. We are also one of the ‘Capitals for Natural Disaster’ in NSW, with six natural disasters declared in the last two years. We bore a massive hit from the black summer fires; the mental health cost will most likely be borne for a generation or more considering how any children and their families were impacted.

From the moment that Shoalhaven established its Recovery Committee, there has been a very clear point of view that underpinning our work was an action mindset. That it is not OK to say that’s too hard, but to find solutions and get them into action.

What resulted was a Response into Recovery action plan that was effectively executed within six months. This

strategic position made it far easier for Shoalhaven City Council to get the ear of State and Federal governments, and it is pleasing to hear from the Commissioner for Resilience that they are streamlining the way data is collected, and taking on the issue that survivors face telling their story multiple times to multiple agencies.

Shoalhaven Council reached out to hundreds of businesses to ensure that those who were eligible for financial assistance got it, resulting in a whopping \$36 million in \$10K grants – that represents about half of our local businesses receiving assistance.

Our environment was badly damaged, but with investment of over \$1.4 million into managing fire-affected waterways, coir logs were deployed to assist in managing debris and runoff – this project ran across three councils and is still running today.

A major issue during any disaster is the loss of communications and power. The first Mayoral Minute that I put to SCC in January 2020 was to improve power with solar and battery installations and

to add in a satellite connection to the community halls to ensure that there was some way to get to the outside world for our isolated one-road in and out communities. It is pleasing that with joint Federal and State government assistance, a \$2 million grant is now paying for the delivery of SCC’s Resilience program.

COVID of course threw a massive spanner in the works for social recovery and, as we all faced March and April of 2020 with a lockdown, everyone’s economic future was unclear. However, I took a very clear view to the CEO of SCC that there were to be no job losses on our Council, that redeployment to other tasks was to be the focus. The feedback was terrific and the work that was completed was useful for the City as it gave a bit of a lift to see things improved when mobility was improved. Staff had fun too, challenging themselves in new work situations.

Directions were also given to the CEO and senior staff to rapidly audit projects that Shoalhaven had perhaps not quite completed planning and to give them

priority to get them ‘shovel ready’. The results are in and this year is the year of announcements as we have received record amounts of State and Commonwealth funding for projects to make our place better, from small-scale parks and amenities to ambitious projects such as the Ulladulla Harbour boardwalk, which was created to stimulate redevelopment of some key properties in the town.

I never thought I could have felt the great sense of optimism that I currently do feel for our area so soon after all this sorrow, but it is that sense of optimism that has driven the hope that our future will be brighter and better than where we came from. I am proud of the work our Greens team has achieved on Council against horrendous odds and I hope the community values our contribution enough to return me as Mayor and our new candidates as councillors in 2021 for we have optimistic, future-driven plans that have been informed by our communities’ needs. Bring on 4 September!

Amanda Findley is the Mayor of Shoalhaven.



On becoming a Greens mayor

by Katie Milne, Tweed Greens

When I was contemplating being a councillor for the Tweed Shire back in 2008, it made me dizzy and literally turn green with nausea and fear. Who was I to stand for such a monumental role?

We had won a couple of local campaigns and, whilst I was fairly competent, I was certainly no rocket scientist.

Climate change had just become really big, bad news though, and I felt compelled to play my part and do my utmost for humanity and the planet.

To my great surprise I received the highest vote ever recorded for a Tweed councillor ... but it was all downhill for the rest of that term. I was desperate to make urgent changes, but I was in a minority and generally losing votes 6-1 against me.

I put up hundreds of more than reasonable initiatives, knowing they would get knocked back by my fellow councillors, but I would write to the paper reporting on the votes. All I could do was bear witness. Thankfully, the community noticed.

Next term on council was a bit better. We achieved a weak majority with two ‘and a half’ other progressive councillors, so things improved a little at first. Bitter divisions developed though, and for the last year of that term I was the only one acceptable to be the Mayor, but it was a hostile Council and little could be achieved.

My third term on council saw a much clearer progressive majority. From being outvoted 6-1 at the start of my council journey, I was now elected as Mayor for the next 4 years of this 5-year term. I was finally able to make many, though still not all, of the multitude of changes needed.

Council now officially recognises in media messaging that Tweed Shire is an internationally significant environment after years of me harping on about it.

We declared a Climate Emergency, developed a policy for zero emissions by 2030 for council and a draft community emissions strategy; we entered a 10-year contract for renewable energy, and secured funds to replace all our streetlights with LED.

We undertook a community-led sustainability review of our water supply strategies and stopped new water mining activities in our shire.

We have a zero-waste-by-2040 strategy, green bins for food and organic waste, and we took back our tip shop to reinvigorate our recycling efforts which have been going gangbusters.

I was able to redistribute council’s budget for a 1 per cent increase for the environment and provide \$15,000 for our wildlife carers from the roads budget. I also set in train a council campaign to fundraise for large scale regenerative landscape management.

I initiated a Cool Towns Strategy for Urban Greening and a Scenic



Katie Milne. Photo: The Echo.

Landscape Strategy to protect our majestic vistas.

We now have sustainability awards and grants for sustainable innovations.

An Economic Development Strategy was initiated to ensure the community had a say, and to ensure that sustainability and the arts played a major role.

There are more initiatives passed but still on the waiting list, such as a sustainable review of our subdivision manual, green star ratings, and policy for green roofs and living walls, and our ‘Be Kind’ campaign, but council is a very busy place with limited resources, so patience is required.

Much of this change wouldn’t have happened without a Greens on council.

It is the Greens’ mission to stand up for the community, a safe, healthy environment, and a sensible economy that can sustain us all. The Greens are, without doubt, the ones driving the changes we need for a modern, just and responsible society.

After 13 years on Tweed Council, I say a heartfelt goodbye and deepest thankyou to the truly beautiful Tweed community and the wonderful NSW and Australian Greens teams, and pass on the green mantle with complete confidence to our new Greens candidate for Tweed, the highly esteemed Dr Nola Firth.

Katie Milne stepped down from the position of Mayor of Tweed

Disability access and local councils

by Jane Scott, South Sydney Greens

Councils organise the ordinary stuff around the places where we live. As a wheelchair user, I know that they have a significant impact on how liveable a community is and that is why I think we need more Greens on councils. We need communities where everyone can get around.

Councils choose where there are footpaths, decide what they’re made of and ensure that they have access ramps and enough space for wheelchairs and prams. Paving that is slippery when it’s wet is dangerous for everyone but especially those who use walking sticks. Paving that makes it easy to walk encourages people who can walk to do so more often, as well as making it safer and easier for people in wheelchairs. The footpaths in my neighbourhood allow me to travel about an hour’s walk from home independently in my power wheelchair to spend time with friends. Without those paths, I couldn’t do

it. Attention to details such as being able to safely reach the buttons for the pedestrian lights gives more people independence too.

Parks are spaces that pretty much everyone can access regardless of their physical ability or their income. Having outdoor space to gather with friends is really important for those of us who are apartment dwellers, with or without a pandemic. Our councillors work to ensure that there are parks to enjoy, with lots of trees for shade and seats to have a rest on.

Freedom to go to the park has been much more important to many of us since COVID hit and unfortunately, many of the medical experts seem to think that COVID will not be our last pandemic. If it isn’t, we need to be better prepared. It would be great to see councils installing more covered picnic spaces with lighting which could then be used at night by those who want to gather with friends but don’t have a big backyard. Advice on which parks already have some lighting at night would help, so we could make more use of them. Parks are spacious so they

can even cope with more than one wheelchair at a time! Some councils provide beach wheelchairs as well as play equipment that can be used by people in wheelchairs so that everyone can play together. It would be fantastic for beach wheelchairs to become a common sight on all our beaches. We need lots of access ramps in the parks so that everyone can access all areas, as well as toilets that include wheelchair access, hoists and adult changing places. Wheelchair-accessible toilets without these extra facilities still don’t provide access for everyone.

Councils also have an important role in working with businesses to make the community more liveable and more accessible. It’s amazing how many of the accessible entrances to pubs and restaurants were locked once COVID hit. People in wheelchairs and with other mobility needs had to go back to asking permission to enter a venue and wait for someone to come around and unlock the door to let us in, while our friends went up the steps through their designated front door.

Community priorities to determine planning

by Ned Cutcher, Ashfield Greens and Jamie Parker, Port Jackson Greens

New South Wales is endowed with a wealth of natural wonders. From Sydney with its majestic harbour, the wonders of the Blue Mountains, and our beautiful coastline, we have so many great places.

But when it comes to our built environments, the government and many local councils are failing to deliver world-class, liveable and accessible towns and cities.

The Greens are taking a leading role on councils across the State to protect what is special about our communities, and to ensure development puts community priorities before the ever-increasing profits of the development industry.

The Greens are pressing for five key changes that will make our planning system work better and deliver more liveable communities:

1 Plan for the planet: Addressing climate change needs to be at the heart of our planning system. If we are to reduce climate emissions to net zero by 2030 and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, what we build and how we build it must change.

Climate impact assessments must be mandatory for all developments, and buildings should be designed and built to be carbon neutral within 10 years of construction. Council planning instruments should have a target for environmental performance and sustainability over and above the basic rules set by the State Government.

2 Restore local democracy: Communities should be shaped by the people who live, work and play in them, not big developers. The best planning decisions are made in the hands of local councils who are uniquely placed to understand the needs of their area. We must end the exemptions that ensure the biggest development proposals are subject to the lightest scrutiny, and put a stop to the charade of privatised building inspections and certification.

3 Celebrate and protect Indigenous and cultural heritage: Laws around the protection of heritage must be enhanced, and support for conservation and restoration must be given the highest priority. Local councils have an important part to play in identifying and supporting local heritage items and conservation areas.

4 Stand up to developers: Land zoning and development decisions are one of the greatest sources of local and state government corruption.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) needs increased and independent funding, developers and real estate agents should be stopped from running for council, and MPs should be banned from taking commissions from property developers.

5 Demand our fair share of the wealth: When governments and councils decide to rezone land, it can drastically increase its value. Currently all that added value goes straight into the hands of the land owner – usually a developer. NSW could raise an astonishing \$8.2 billion per year by following the Australian Capital Territory government's model of levying 75 per cent of the increase in land value created by rezoning decisions. Sharing that wealth with the community means it can pay for basic infrastructure like schools, libraries, parks and public housing.

Greens on council will press for these goals and push back against the worst aspects of Labor, Liberal and the Nationals' anti-community planning laws. Wherever you are in New South Wales, more Greens on council means we can focus on building great communities while taking better care of the planet.

*Ned Cutcher is a candidate in Burwood.
Jamie Parker is the current Member for Balmain.*

Domestic violence and local government

by Amanda Cohn, Albury Greens and Danielle Wheeler, Hawkesbury Greens

Domestic and family violence is a complex, whole-of-community problem that demands responses from all levels of government. This must include local government – the level of government that is closest to the communities it serves. Greens councillors across NSW are leading the way on action on domestic and family violence.

Councils must respond to family and domestic violence within the services they already provide. We can provide buildings and community rooms at no or peppercorn rent to service providers and community organisations. In 2016, Hawkesbury City Council gave the only local DV service free rent, following a Greens motion. This allowed the service to stay open an extra half day a week. Community rooms are free in the central library building.

Accommodation for pets often delays or prevents victim survivors seeking safety. Local councils often run animal shelters

and work closely with rescue groups. Free temporary accommodation for pets and larger animals like horses is another way councils can help people seeking safety.

Local councils play a critical role in housing supply. Councillors can call for increased affordable housing in their council's planning documents – Inner West, Campbelltown and Parramatta all provide working examples of how this can be done. Provision of crisis accommodation, homelessness services and compassionate treatment of people who are homeless are all roles councils take on when state and federal governments fail.

Local councils are well placed to take on leadership roles, supporting the expansion of effective work where it is already happening, and facilitating coordinated action between sectors. Albury City Council has supported the Love Bites respectful relationships program to be delivered to local young people. Its Crime Prevention Officer has directly supported and assisted the annual Step Out Against Violence survivor-led community march, and

set up a web page to collate and promote the work of our local family violence service providers. As Deputy Mayor of Albury, Amanda chairs the Border Domestic Violence Network, a grassroots network of service providers and community members with lived experience of family violence who meet monthly to collaborate on community responses to and prevention of family violence in the region. Albury City Council also supports the network with secretarial and administrative support. Recent successes include educating local media outlets on responsible reporting of domestic violence incidents, and successful establishment of a men's behaviour change program in Albury. As a survivor of domestic and family violence, Danielle uses her experience to speak to community groups and service providers at council-run interagency events and in Council, and MCs the annual Reclaim the Night march.

Greens councillors continue to influence NSW legislation. Councils are large organisations that employ a significant number of people. In 2019, Greens councillors on Randwick Council brought

in a policy of 10 days paid domestic violence leave for all staff. Following a strong campaign from the United Services Union, in 2020 the NSW Local Government Award was varied to include up to 10 days paid leave for all council staff experiencing family and domestic violence. This is a strong example to set for other employers.

In 2021, following a Greens motion, Hawkesbury Council was successful in getting peak organisation Local Government NSW to agree to lobby the NSW State Government to criminalise coercive control, a pervasive and very dangerous form of domestic violence implicated in the majority of domestic homicides. This directly supports the work of Greens MLC Abigail Boyd.

One woman per week, on average, is killed by a current or former partner in Australia. Action on domestic violence should be part of every local government campaign. What are your local candidates doing to make sure your council plays its part in responding to this tools-down national crisis?

*Amanda Cohn is Deputy Mayor of Albury City.
Danielle Wheeler is a councillor in Hawkesbury City.*

"It bothers me that a woman gets killed by her male partner every single week, and somehow that doesn't qualify as a tools-down national crisis, even though if a man got killed by a shark every week, we'd probably arrange to have the ocean drained."

Annel Crabb

Councils providing affordable housing



by Dylan Griffiths, Ashfield Greens

Sydney is the third worst city in the world for housing affordability. In Australia, one in six young people aged 15–19 have experienced homelessness, 25 per cent of whom are based in NSW. For many, the amount needed for a home loan deposit seems insurmountable, with the inability to become a homeowner tied to intergenerational inequality. We have a growing gap between property owners and lifelong renters. In 2016, the percentage of renters in the Inner West had climbed above 40 percent compared to 32.6 per cent in greater Sydney. It's even more stark in my area of Ashfield.

I lived in affordable government-owned housing for a few years – it changed my life. It lifted me up, allowed me to study at university, find secure employment, and pursue my passions. If it wasn't for affordable housing, I would not be running for Council today.

You may have heard, generally from a relatively affluent property owner, that 'Councils can't do anything for housing affordability', 'only state and federal governments can take action, or 'this isn't a key issue for our area' – these assertions are far from reality, councils can and must take action on affordable housing.

Access to financial resources vary significantly between local government areas – so does a council's ability to leverage funding. The Inner West Council has land, underutilised borrowing power, and was recently given \$70 million due to the compulsory acquisition of council-owned land in Tempe.

Council's affordable housing fund

In 2019, with sustained pressure from Greens councillors, the Inner West Council established an affordable housing trust fund to hold revenue from its small affordable housing stock and relevant Voluntary Planning Agreements, so that they could be reinvested into maintenance of units and development of new affordable housing projects. This fund could be significantly bolstered by levying developers for an affordable housing contribution.

A developer levy

The Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme and State Environmental Planning Policy 70 (SEPP70) allows councils to levy developers and make them pay for affordable housing by contributing a share of their windfall profits when an area is rezoned for higher density. Once councils develop an Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme, they must embed it in their local environmental plans (LEP) and it becomes part of the local planning laws. The scheme is not currently used by the Inner West Council.

**In Australia,
1 in 6
young people aged
15–19 have experienced
homelessness.**

This scheme has been available in selected parts of the City of Sydney since 2002, and recently became available across NSW. In Green Square, the City of Sydney gives residential developers the choice of 3 per cent of the total residential floor area being provided as affordable housing or \$228.58 per square metre (indexed annually) of the total residential floor area. Monies are collected in a trust fund and passed onto City West Housing, which is responsible for development and management of affordable housing in the area.

Using this scheme and others driven by former Greens councillors on the City of Sydney Council, the City reports the delivery of 835 new affordable housing dwellings, with hundreds more in the pipeline. Imagine if the Inner West had had a similar scheme in place prior to large developments along the Summer Hill/Lewisham/Dulwich Hill light rail corridor.

While intended to provide rental units for very low to moderate-income households, the City

of Sydney's scheme that delivers below market rental housing is still too expensive for people on low incomes. Further, the City does not retain ownership of many of the affordable housing units and, from some perspectives, it could be viewed as a developer-led affordable housing program. We want to take a different approach to SEPP70 and an associated developer levy.

A Greens-led council would do more

We believe that not-for-profit housing should be owned by council. This means the public can hold their council to account on quality, management, and growth of council's housing stock. A Greens-led Inner West Council will build hundreds of council-owned affordable housing units.

Inner West Council Greens also prefer using the SEPP70 as a levy rather than inclusionary zoning (floor space contribution) as it would allow council to retain control over a development's architectural, sustainability and management standards – we don't want to see developers just reserve their cheapest and most poorly-built units for their contribution.

It's disappointing that more councils have not managed to embed a SEPP70 scheme into their LEP – a Greens-led Inner West Council will ensure that a developer levy is implemented. Housing is a right, and the perverse role of the profit motive in the housing industry should, at the very least, be mitigated with profits being channelled back into the community.

The Greens on council will make full use of the current planning rules to get proper benefits for the community from new development. As well as calling on the State government to massively increase its affordable and social housing stock, our MPs are also working hard to give local government greater power and to change the planning rules that allow poor quality, expensive housing to be built under the guise of 'affordable housing'.

While the State and Federal governments need to address the housing crisis, action at the local level is not a question of ability but of priority and political will.

Dylan Griffiths is a candidate for the Ashfield Ward in the Inner West.

What is preferential voting?

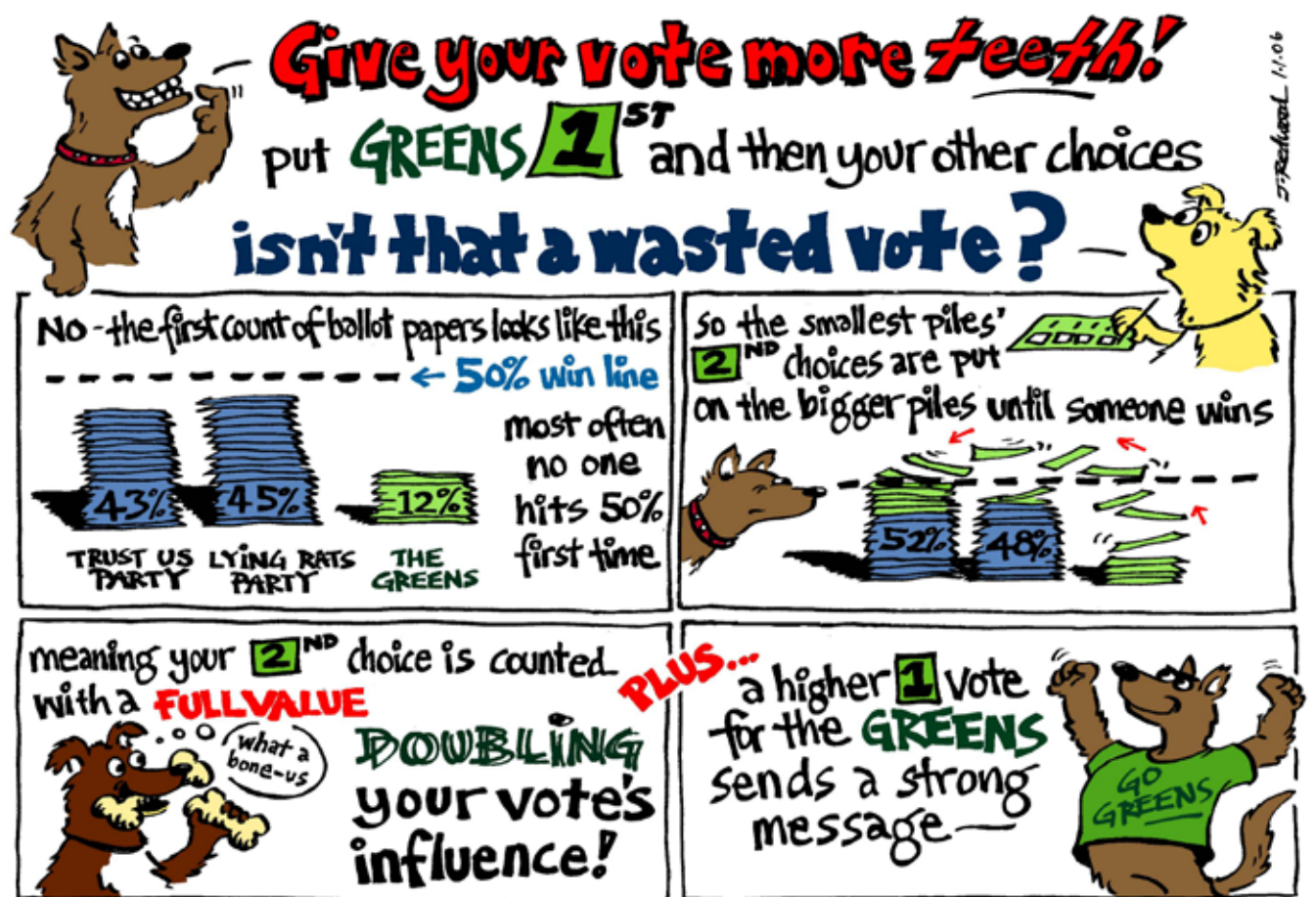
By Chris Maltby, Waverley Greens

Q: If the candidate you chose for your #1 vote is not elected, does your #2 choice get the full value of your vote?

The answer is YES.

Surprisingly, only about one in three voters get it right. Another one in three say they don't know. Although Australia has had preferential voting for more than 100 years, many people are confused about it. Is it because it's to do with numbers? Or does it suit some politicians to pretend it's all too complicated?

To work it out, remember they count the number of ballot papers when sorted into a pile for each candidate. Each paper is one vote. Your preferences decide which pile your vote begins on and where it may end up as the count proceeds. It's always a full value vote. You can't waste it unless you want to.



Don't let the old parties confuse you

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

Voting for The Greens is **SAFE**. If we don't win, your vote goes on 100% to support whichever candidates you number in your preferences.

Voting is **YOUR CHOICE**. Number your preferences how you want. Vote 1 above the line for your Greens council candidate or number all the boxes below the line.

Why not join The Greens?



We want you to become a member and join us in the fight for a better world today!

By becoming a member you'll join a network of tens of thousands of likeminded people across Australia. We are driving the national agenda towards greater equality. We are at the forefront of the climate movement and the most important social justice campaigns of our time.

As a Greens member, you'll be given the opportunity to help shape Greens policies, to run as a Greens candidate, nominate for

internal party positions, cast your vote in internal elections, join working groups and committees focusing on important issues, like climate action, health and education, and work with local and state Greens representatives on our campaigns.

Most importantly, you'll be able to say that you were part of the movement for a more compassionate society and a sustainable world.

Membership enquiries can be made at nsw.greens.org.au

