

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

2015 NSW State Election

Environmental Questionnaire to Candidates



Introduction

Concern for the natural environment has consistently been shown to be important to residents of the Blue Mountains. Hence, the following questionnaire has been prepared by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society to gain insight into candidates' environmental position and/or opinion on a variety of issues.

We thank the candidates for taking the time to complete the questionnaire thoughtfully and in so doing inform voters in the Blue Mountains electorate of their positions.

The Questionnaire was sent to candidates on the 5th November 2014. Alandra Tasire (The Greens) responded initially on 14th December, Trish Doyle (Labor) on 31st December 2014, and Roza Sage (Liberal) on 28th January 2015. The Society recognises that over the course of a campaign policy positions can and do change. As such we have offered the candidates the facility to update their answers as the campaign progresses. Candidates continue to avail themselves of this facility. This printed document reflects candidates' responses as at 9.00 PM on 30th January 2015.

In considering the candidates' answers please bear in mind that the Questionnaire sent to the candidates contained the two following statements.

"candidates are also encouraged to provide both their personal position and their party's official position where there is a significant difference between the two."

"The Society recognises that an individual, even if elected to Government, cannot single handedly guarantee legislative enactment or change. As such, throughout the questions below what we are really seeking is a clear commitment of "support", and in this context "support" of course includes real advocacy for the action mentioned, in both public forums/media and in your respective party rooms."

The Questionnaire contains 24 non-trivial questions, so please take your time. A thoughtful review of the candidates' responses will give you considerable insight into where they stand on key environmental issues. As you read through the questions ask yourself *"What would be my answer to this question?"* and *"Am I happy with what the candidates have said or failed to say?"* You're the judge.

And, last but not least, when you have finished with the Questionnaire please don't just put it into paper recycling, rather pass it along to family, friends, or colleagues.

**We hope you find the document
worthwhile, and please
Vote for the Environment in 2015**

**Visit bluemountains.org.au
for the most up-to-date version of this
Questionnaire and much much more**

Authorised by: Blue Mountains Conservation Society Management Committee,
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782

Section 1: The candidates' personal positions on the big environmental issues of our age, and the actions they have personally taken in response.

Personal Question 1 Do you believe Climate Change is real and represents a major threat to our world, and the fire-prone Greater Blue Mountains area in particular?

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *I believe climate change is real.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *Yes!*

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) *Yes. There is overwhelming scientific evidence of human-induced climate change and the threats it imposes has a direct impact on the Blue Mountains environment, notably increasing the risk and intensity of fires.*

Personal Question 2 Do you believe Climate Change is predominantly caused by human activity (that is, it is anthropogenic with very high certainty as stated by the IPCC and CSIRO)?

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *I believe that human activity is a contributor to climate change.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *Yes!*

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) *Yes. It is very likely that the increase in green house gases, in the more recent past, is induced by human activity and is affecting our climate. Each IPCC assessment report has emphasised the increased risk to our food, water and the economy because of climate change.*

Personal Question 3 In 1972 the landmark text *The Limits to Growth* ignited an ongoing public debate on the issue of continual economic and population growth in a world of finite resources. Focussing primarily on NSW, what broad-brush model of growth/change do you advocate?

- a) Business as usual, that is ongoing growth of both population and the physical economy
- b) Planned reductions in the rates of growth to achieve a steady-state population and economy
- c) Other scenarios of your own devising, but please avoid such logically inconsistent phrases as "sustainable growth"

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *This is a fundamentally important question for humanity broadly. Examining it specifically in regard to NSW would risk ignoring external influences on a national and international level. The question of controlling population growth goes to the core of basic human rights issues and poses moral and ethical dilemmas.*

Many contentious approaches have been tried or proposed, from closing borders to China's population control measures.

Education, especially for women and girls, is a key to decreasing birth rates and increasing the standards of living. Until cultural norms change regarding reproduction and gender equality this problem will remain.

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *I concur with the view that unless we seriously invest in renewable energies then resource depletion issues will be incredibly problematic.*

Human behaviour must change and education is the key. It is widely expected that world GDP growth will continue to rise and with it energy consumption will continue to grow. Many predict (perhaps optimistically) that whilst oil supply will

decline, it will occur slowly enough that other fuels can replace its loss. 'Renewables' are our future: planning, leadership, policy, legislation and lifestyle 'choices' must reflect this.

Population growth, and that of the economy, with a limited or restricted food supply will continue to be debated alongside and because of the environmental imprint we leave. In short, an 'ecological footprint analysis' will always demonstrate our unsustainable ways of living.

I wholeheartedly believe in BMCS' aims & advocate the highlighted objectives (insofar as advocating a broad-brush model of growth/change where human behaviour is unpredictable):

- Promote ecological sustainability as the basis for all human activities;*
- Preserve the natural environment: flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air; and,*
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.*

Alandra Tasire *(Greens)* *First, a change is needed to a low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive NSW to address our impact on the environment. This will affect the way we view our population. We need to address our ecological footprint by looking at factors such as: consumption patterns and levels, distribution of resources, agricultural practices and level and types of industrial activity, urban design and transport options.*

Personal Question 4 **What demonstrable actions have you taken to minimise your personal and your household's environmental footprint?**

Roza Sage *(Liberal)* *Growing up on a small farm with electricity being the only service, I learned at an early age the value of recycling and being careful with precious water resources. My family lived in an isolated area surrounded by bush. My love of the bush is why I chose to live in the Blue Mountains over 30 years ago.*

These values of being careful with resources have stayed with me into my adult life. I am an avid recycler and have a rain water tank for use in the garden. I use a compost bin for organic kitchen waste and garden clippings. I also shop local whenever I can and catch public transport to the city.

Trish Doyle *(Labor)* *My family takes the following steps to minimise our environmental footprint: Removing weeds and planting natives; recycling, re-using, re-purposing materials; where possible absorb or minimise the waste we create; and, create less emissions by walking/using public transport where possible. We compost and invest time in gardening to provide some of the food resources we need. We live in a small home and we live without certain appliances, eg: air-conditioner, dishwasher, dryer. We aim to save power, water and money. We love our natural bushland backyard, enjoy caring for it and learning about ways to live sustainably in our community so the household impact on our environment (run-off into local waterways for example) is non-existent or minimal.*

Alandra Tasire *(Greens)* *My life is based on efficient resource use. Most resource impact comes from housing, food and transport. To consume less I have taken steps to live in a small dwelling that uses less energy to run, I use small appliances (fridge etc) with high energy efficient ratings, and I rely on passive solar to provide much of my warmth in winter. I recycle my grey water onto the vegetable garden, compost and buy bulk food to limit glass and plastic recycling. I eat a mostly an animal free diet and have focused on public transport and cycling as a way of transport.*

Personal Question 5 Over the last decade, looking beyond your own personal space, what are a few of the significant and demonstrable actions you have taken to protect, restore, or advocate for the environment?

- Roza Sage** (*Liberal*) See question 7. I have also belonged to a local Bushcare Group.
- Trish Doyle** (*Labor*)
In the last decade I have worked as a Teacher with the Brewongle Environmental Education Centre's team and with many other Schools across the Mountains and Hawkesbury to educate our young people about protecting the environment.
I worked casually with Bob Debus (former Member for the Blue Mountains & Minister for the Environment) and managed Phil Koperberg's office when he was Member. In this role I worked to ensure the voice of BMCS was always represented to Government. I am a member of groups such as LEAN (Labor Environment Activists Network) and BMCS in order to work collaboratively on environmental issues, to share views and actions with like-minded people and lobby/advocate/educate together on campaigns such as 'Protect Gardens of Stone', 'Stop Hunting in National Parks' and lobby against CSG, to name a few.
I have worked hard over the past 4 years in holding the current NSW Government to account for its vandalism of the environment, collecting thousands of signatures on petitions, listening to our community about the issues that concern them and delivering these to Parliament to be tabled/debated.
- Alandra Tasire** (*Greens*) *I have worked in the environmental education field with NPWS and as an outdoor recreational guide. As an activist I have: organised a petition on climate change tabled in Parliament, actively supported campaigns opposing coal mining and CSG, and have advocated for the end of live export of animals. I volunteer with WIRES to save injured native animals and have participated in endangered native animals programs. I volunteer for the Blue Mountains Foods Rescue and Soul Kitchen who divert food from land fill to support people in need in our community. Most importantly, I joined the Greens to actively work to change legislation relating to clean energy, protection of the environment, health and education.*

Section 2: Local Seat of Blue Mountains Issues

Local Question 1 Do you support the recently exhibited draft Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan?

- Roza Sage** (*Liberal*) *The Blue Mountains is unique, the city being surrounded by national park. The Local Environmental Plan needs to balance the future requirements of the community as well as the surrounding World Heritage National Park. There are many worthy aspects within the Plan and many aspects which could be improved upon.*
- Trish Doyle** (*Labor*) Yes
- Alandra Tasire** (*Greens*) *Yes. I support the BMCC's attempts to protect the social and ecological environment of our area in the draft LEP.*

Local Question 2 Will you seek the deletion of the Blue Mountains, as an identified Metropolitan Urban Growth Area, from the Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney?

NB: The NSW Government released "A Plan For Growing Sydney" on 14th December. The Blue Mountains is now classed as "Metropolitan Rural". We are reviewing this development.

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *Having personally attended the Planning NSW workshops pertaining to the draft metropolitan strategy, it was clear that the Lower Blue Mountains would not be included in the Urban Growth Area. I reinforced this by making further representations to the Minister and am pleased to report the revised maps in the Metropolitan Strategy make it clear that the towns and villages of the Blue Mountains are not part of Sydney's metropolitan urban area.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) Yes

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) Yes

Local Question 3 Do you support an "Instant Action" fund of \$50,000 per annum for the Blue Mountains volunteer bush regeneration program to facilitate a quick response capability for urgent/unforeseen tasks?

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *There are a number of competitive grants programs run through the Office of Environment and Heritage that volunteer groups can apply for.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) Yes

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) Yes

Local Question 4 Do you support the protection of the Gardens of Stone on the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains by creating new reserves over this spectacular pagoda landscape?

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *I support protection of the Gardens of Stone.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) Yes!

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) *Yes. I will work with Greens MLC, Mehreen Faruqi who has continually raised this issue in Parliament.*

Local Question 5 Do you support a 15% increase on the 2013/14 base funding/staffing levels for the Blue Mountains National Parks and Wildlife Service specifically to facilitate the protection of rare and threatened species? If not, what level of funding/staffing do you support?

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has committed \$4.8 Million to the new Saving Our Species program.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) Yes!

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) *Yes. Review of the funding for 'proactive management' of rare and threatened species and the suggested estimated 15% increase would be supported.*

Local Question 6 Will you support legislation to enact a ban on both mining and gas extraction from all designated water catchment areas, as well as a similar ban on mining and gas extraction within one kilometre of significant waterways that feed these catchments?

- Roza Sage** (*Liberal*) *The NSW Government has put a hold on CSG activities in the special areas of the Sydney Water Catchment. As well, the Aquifer Interference Policy was developed to protect aquifers and groundwater by setting objective criteria to assess the potential impact of all activities.*
- Trish Doyle** (*Labor*) *Yes!*
- Alandra Tasire** (*Greens*) *Yes. The Greens oppose coal seam gas exploration and production, and associated pipeline and export infrastructure developments.*

Local Question 7 Will you actively, and publicly, seek the removal of AGL's CSG exploration licence (PEL2) from all lands within the Greater Blue Mountains area? If so, how will you do it?

- Roza Sage** (*Liberal*) *I have previously written to the Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon Anthony Roberts MP, expressing my view that AGL's exploration licence (PEL2) for any areas covering the Blue Mountains should be relinquished. I also presented to the Minister the petition from BMCS regarding this issue in order that he understood the strong community sentiment in the region.*
- It is worth noting I also strongly advocated against the petroleum exploration license application by CEEMAC Pty Ltd (PEL 158) which included parts of the Blue Mountains National Park. This application was rejected by The NSW Office of Coal Seam Gas.*
- In 2011 when the Liberals came to office there were two PELs over the Blue Mountains as a result of the previous Labor government's lack of a coherent approach to mining. Liberal policy provided a two kilometre exclusion zone from communities and national parks.*
- As a result of listening to the community and strong advocacy, all previous PEL's have been removed from the Blue Mountains. PEL 483 which was granted in 2010 was cancelled in Nov 2011 and PEL 2 was removed from the Blue Mountains.*
- Commentary Note:** Mrs Sage says that "PEL 2 was removed from the Blue Mountains." BMCS has checked the Government's online register of Licences and areas covered. As at 30th January 2015 AGL'S Petroleum Exploration Licence 2 (PEL2) is still showing as a "Current Petroleum Title" over the Lower Blue Mountains up to Valley Heights.
- See: <http://minview.minerals.nsw.gov.au/mv2web/mv2>
- Trish Doyle** (*Labor*) *Yes.*
- How will I do this? With passion, vigour, utilising scientific evidence to argue the case via Parliamentary bills and submissions, organising for BMCS and other interested activist groups to present to the Minister. Regardless of the Government of the day I will be advocating for the environment.*
- Alandra Tasire** (*Greens*) *Yes. I will actively seek in Parliament an immediate cancellation of PEL2 and seek to have lands within the Greater Blue Mountains area regarded as off-limits in regard to future applications.*

Local Question 8 **Do you support the NSW State Government providing funds to the City of Blue Mountains to facilitate the sorting, recycling, composting, and thermal treatment of waste?**
If so, what level of funding do you advocate?

- Roza Sage** *(Liberal)* *The NSW Government is committed to increasing recycling and diversion of valuable resources from landfill back into the economy. As a result of the Waste Less, Recycle More strategy the Liberal Government has allocated \$465.7 million for important environmental initiatives.*
- Under Waste Less, Recycle More Blue Mountains City Council has benefited by receiving \$65,627 as part of the Community Recycling Centre grant in 2013, and \$53,350 for the Combating Illegal Dumping: Clean-up and Prevention Program in 2014. Council has also received a further \$223,853.36 under the Better Waste and Recycling Fund for 2013/14 and \$196,649.96 for 2014/15.*
- Trish Doyle** *(Labor)* *Yes. I will take advice from my Councillor colleagues and BMCS as to funding levels required for these activities. The initial suggested amount of \$20m would be supported.*
- Alandra Tasire** *(Greens)* *Yes. The primary aim of the Greens on waste is to achieve 'Zero Waste' through zero waste generation and zero waste disposal. The strategy requires co-ordinated, not competitive action by government at a National, State and Local level, industry, and the community. The prime objections being consumption avoidance, product and packaging re-use, organic and non-organic material recycling and composting - in that order of priority.*

Local Question 9 **The Wollangambe River forms the Northern border of the Blue Mountains Electorate and is a declared "wild river" that flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Peer-reviewed scientific testing shows that discharge water from the Clarence Colliery is polluting this "wild" river. What steps will you take to protect the Wollangambe?**

- Roza Sage** *(Liberal)* *I will be writing to the Minister to reinforce my strong view that Clarence Colliery is required to meet its conditions and ensure the future of the Wollangambe.*
- I am informed that the Blue Mountains Conservation Society met with the EPA in December to discuss its concerns.*
- The Clarence Colliery underground coal mine holds an environment protection licence (EPL No. 726) which includes conditions relating to the discharge of the mine water into the Wollangambe River. The location of this mine near the headwaters of the Wollangambe River, which drains into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, is taken into account and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requires that the company treat the mine water prior to discharging it into the environment.*
- The EPA is conducting a statutory review of the EPL held by Clarence Colliery under section 78 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.*
- I am also informed that sampling of the Wollangambe River by the University of Western Sydney has been provided by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society to the EPA. The EPA will take these findings into account in undertaking the licence review.*
- Trish Doyle** *(Labor)* *I will work to ensure that EPL 726 IS urgently reviewed, the anomalies contained therein are rectified and the regulatory system revised. The impacts of Clarence Colliery's mine contamination must be acknowledged (data of Belmer et al 2014), further investigated by an adequately resourced EPA and illegal pollution addressed urgently. I will advocate for immediate steps to be taken to provide for*

serious environmental protection measures, such as improving water discharge standards and issuing CC with a clean-up notice (supported by substantial consequences for failure to comply). I would further argue that the state's 'protected waters' definition of the Wollangambe Wild River must be reviewed so that protection measures can be strengthened.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) *I will work with Greens member Mehreen Faruqi, who has recently called for a strong independent and rigorous agency dedicated to the protection of the environment in the Inquiry into the performance of the NSW Environment Protection Authority. We will call on the EPA to request the Clarence Colliery cleans up contamination and implements a plan to ensure the receiving waters of the Wollangambe River do not carry chemical properties from the colliery.*

Section 3: State Wide Issues

State Question 1 Do you support the endorsement of the Community Charter drawn up by the Better Planning Network, and the adoption of the details as listed in the Community Charter Companion?

Roza Sage (Liberal) *As part of the delivery for A Plan for Growing Sydney, communities in the Blue Mountains will have the opportunity to shape their future by signing up and getting involved. Community consultation has already been a key factor in the development of the plan.*

The Government has already started work on a number of planning improvements to make the system simpler and easier to access for the community.

Trish Doyle (Labor) *I wholeheartedly support the Community Charter drawn up by the Better Planning Network. Labor's Shadow Planning and Environment Minister Luke Foley and I have both personally signed the Charter.*

Labor believes that a good planning system facilitates economic development while also protecting the environment and ensuring strong community participation. Planning in the interests of the society as a whole must be the overriding principle at the heart of our planning system.

The Community Charter Companion deals in detail with particular legislative planning processes and development control instruments. Labor will release policy in this area prior to the March 2015 election.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes

State Question 2 Do you support the proposal that the NSW Government establish a centralised database for all agencies to record weed removal projects in NSW?

Roza Sage (Liberal) *Although it is challenging to capture the activities of all weeds managers across the State, NSW Department of Primary Industries is in the process of developing a 'real time' data capture system called the Biosecurity Information System' (BIS) which will soon be able to record all regulatory, extension activities performed by local Government weed officers across the state.*

Trish Doyle (Labor) *I have no objection if it helps us in the war against weed infestation. I am very worried about the spread of feral animals and plants in NSW. It is a perennially difficult problem. Feral animal and plants are one of the greatest threats to our unique biodiversity and controlling them is both costly and never ending. We must do everything we can to limit the spread (and the further introduction!) of invasive species.*

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes

State Question 3 Do you support the return of base funding and staffing levels for NSW National Parks to at least 2013-2014 levels, adjusted for both inflation and new areas added to the estate?

Roza Sage (Liberal) *I am aware of inaccurate Labor information about the NPWS budget. Budget paper 3 shows transfer or redirection of funds.*

Commentary Note: The Society would welcome a comprehensive explanation of this "transfer or redirection of funds" from Mrs Sage as the official Budget Papers clearly show that NPWS as an agency (and indeed as a Budget Paper 3 line-item) did suffer significant cuts in the 2014/2015 budget compared to 2013/2014 figures. Mrs Sage should have no problem guaranteeing a return to 2013/2014 funding and staffing levels for NPWS if, as she implies, there have been no cuts.

Trish Doyle (Labor) *Yes. Labor is committed to building and resourcing the National Parks estate. That is our record from when last in Government. In government Labor added 3.07 million hectares of land to the national parks estate between 1995 and 2011. To date, the current Coalition Government has added only 51,490 hectares of land to the national parks estate since coming to office in March 2011. At this rate, it will take this government 228 years to match what Labor did in sixteen years!*

The budget papers are intentionally hard to decipher so the extent and nature of the Coalition Government's cuts to the National Parks and Wildlife Service are impossible for us to quantify. Labor will, however, ensure the Parks estate is not only expanded but cared for.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes

State Question 4 Further to Question 3 above, do you support additional supplementary funding and staffing to NP&WS to address: the many new trial programs staff are having to coordinate, and the growing threats posed by climate change, rapid feral animal population growth, and noxious weeds?

Roza Sage (Liberal) *The NSW Government allocated an additional \$11 million over five years from 2012-2013 to NPWS to implement and evaluate the trial supplementary pest program. In 2014-2015 the budget allocation is \$2.3 million.*

Trish Doyle (Labor) *Yes. Labor will be making further announcements concerning this issue, including funding for Parks establishment before the March 2015 election.*

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes

State Question 5 Do you support the permanent cessation of all programs related to "recreational" hunting / feral-animal control by "volunteer hunters" in NSW National Parks?

Roza Sage (Liberal) *I have consistently stated that there is not and will not be any volunteer feral animal control in the Blue Mountains.*

Trish Doyle (Labor) *Yes. Both I personally and the NSW Labor Opposition are implacably opposed to recreation hunting in National Parks. Labor in the Blue Mountains campaigned hard to have the decision of the Coalition Government reversed. We are proud of the part we played in that campaign victory.*

Labor believes that National Parks are there for the primary purpose of protection of our plants and animals with a secondary, but important role of

providing nature based recreation for the people of the state. Recreational hunting will not contribute to effective feral animal control. It will threaten the lives and enjoyment of those using the Parks and will lead to collateral damage of our precious wildlife. Recreational hunting in National Parks should never be allowed.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) *Yes, and would also support the same in State Forests.*

State Question 6 **Do you support a moratorium on all CSG operations in NSW until such time as the full framework of safeguards recommended in the NSW Chief Scientist's final CSG Report (30th September 2014) is put in place?**

Roza Sage (Liberal)

I support the NSW Government's recently released response to the report by NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane. The NSW Gas Plan adopts all of the recommendations in the final report.

Our Gas Plan cuts the percentage of the State covered by CSG titles and applications to just 15 per cent. The previous Labor Government had left 60 per cent of the State covered by title when we came to office.

Large swathes of the Blue Mountains were covered by petroleum title and exploration areas as a legacy of the previous Labor government. I am proud to say these title and exploration areas have been completely removed under the Baird Government (see illustrative maps provided to BMCS as part of this response).

The NSW Gas Plan provides a strategy across five key areas:

- *Better science and information to deliver world's best practice regulation;*
- *Pause, reset and recommence-gas exploration on our terms;*
- *Strong and certain regulation;*
- *Sharing the benefits; and*
- *Securing NSW gas supply needs*

Trish Doyle (Labor)

Yes. Labor has been very strong on this recently. Whilst the previous Labor Government must take responsibility for getting ahead of both the scientific understanding and the community concern while in Government when we issued exploration licenses, Labor has heard both the concern of scientists and community on the lack of certainty and safety associated with this untested industry.

Labor believes a full moratorium on CSG in the state should be in place until we are sure (if ever) that CSG extraction can be done safely without impacting our environment, particularly our aquifers and water systems. The moratorium should remain in place until the industry has proven (if ever) that it is safe.

Alandra Tasire (Greens)

The Greens oppose coal seam gas exploration and production, and associated pipeline and export infrastructure developments. CSG pollutes ground and surface through the extraction of large volumes of saline water and the injection of chemicals into gas wells, reduces ground water supplies through the draw-down of fresh aquifers and destroys agricultural and environmentally significant areas due to the large surface infrastructure required to support an operating gas field.

State Question 7 **Do you support the enactment of "No-Go zone" legislation to exclude mining and gas extraction from prime agricultural land and environmentally significant areas?**

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *Each mining application is considered on a case by case basis to ensure that prime agricultural land and environmentally significant area are preserved. With particular regard to the CSG industry, the NSW Gas Plan is a comprehensive plan to deliver world's best practice on CSG to NSW. Labor's disastrous and reckless approach to coal seam gas in NSW saw the majority of the state covered by CSG titles and applications.*

The NSW Gas Plan adopts all of the recommendations in the final report by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *Whilst Labor believes in a moratorium policy on all CSG in NSW, there are some places in the state where large scale industrialisation should never occur. Labor has already announced "no go zones" for our drinking water catchments, special areas of the Sydney Catchment Authority and in the Northern Rivers region.*

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) **Yes**

State Question 8 **Do you support the proposal that, beyond the "No-Go" zones, mining and gas extraction applications should be assessed on the basis of environmental, community, and economic considerations equally; and that economic gains must not be the "principal consideration" ?**

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *In assessing all applications the triple bottom is assessed - is it of benefit to the community, the environment and the economy of the area.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *Labor is appalled by the Coalition's so called "Mining SEPP" that makes economic considerations the primary consideration in mining approvals. Labor voted with the cross benchers to remove this SEPP from the planning system, however the Government did not vote for its own planning legislation once amended by the Upper House, so it did not come into law.*

Labor believes the same principles apply as with any planning decision. The economic issues should be considered alongside the environmental and social issues and be balanced appropriately.

Personally I am interested in some of the ideas that the ICAC put forward regarding ensuring that mining approvals are not open to corruption. These include the idea that we should have a state wide plan on the various goals we are trying to achieve to inform how particular mining applications are considered against other priorities.

Alandra Tasire (*Greens*) *Yes. Coal mining and CSG exploration and extraction results in massive damage to: the social and economic viability of communities in the vicinity of coal mines; ecosystems, rivers, and the geological integrity of landscapes; other wealth and employment generating activities including farming and tourism; health of communities; and climate.*

State Question 9 **In the event of the collapse or watering down of the national Renewable Energy Target (RET), will you support the enactment of legislation at the state level to mandate a 20% renewable energy target by 2020 for NSW?**

Roza Sage (*Liberal*) *The NSW Government has a Renewable Energy Action Plan that guides renewable energy development in NSW. The Plan aims to increase the use of energy from renewable sources at minimum cost to the consumer. NSW is already progressing with 13% of energy production from renewable sources, well on the way to our 20% target.*

Trish Doyle (*Labor*) *Labor had in place a 20% renewable energy target for NSW when in Government and still stands by this. Labor believes that we must switch our*

energy use to renewable sources in order to protect our society from dangerous climate change.

As a member of Labor's Environment Action Network (LEAN), I support our internal call for the ALP (and Australia) to commit to ensuring that 50% of our electricity comes from renewable energy and that our pollution levels drop by 50% by 2030.

Labor supports the full Federal RET at 41,000 GW and the investment this will bring to our state. For example, in October 2014 Labor announced a \$14 million package to help ensure the Hunter is well placed to take advantage of the economic opportunities that the global shift to a low carbon future provides. This included \$2 million to assist Hunter TAFE in training workers in the skills of low-carbon growth industries.

Labor will be making further announcements in relation to its commitment to renewable energy before the state election in March 2015.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes. The Greens believe that by rapidly phasing out fossil fuel electricity generation and investing in wind power, solar technologies and energy efficiency, NSW can reap the benefits of being a world leader in the clean energy economy. The technology is ready and the time is right. The investment is available and the benefits are substantial. The environmental, health and economic costs of climate change are too high not to act now. The Greens want to; phase out all fossil fuel power stations by 2030, remove barriers to develop and expand renewable energy technologies, facilitate public and private investment, and reform the energy market to make it ready for renewables.

State Question 10 Do you support a mandatory residential solar feed-in tariff? If so, in what form (gross or net), and at what approximate level (some examples: a fixed rate such as 15-20 cents per kWh, a relative rate such 10 cents below retail supplier peak kWh rate)?

Roza Sage (Liberal) Educating and encouraging residents to use renewables is a much better way of ensuring uptake rather than mandating pricing levels which takes away any flexibility in the marketplace. The NSW Regional Clean Energy Program has been improved and expanded to support early and effective engagement in renewable projects and the development of community-owned NSW renewable energy projects.

A market led rollout of Smart Meters has been announced, allowing electricity retailers the opportunity to provide customers meters as part of energy deals.

Trish Doyle (Labor) When in Government Labor established a generous feed-in tariff for solar households. Since then the economics of the industry have shifted and solar is more cost competitive without such high levels of subsidy. I personally believe we need to address the environmental costs of fossil fuel produced power via regulatory change and will advocate for this.

Labor believes those putting solar on their roofs should be paid fairly for the electricity they export back to the grid, while limiting the subsidy other electricity customers are providing.

Labor will be making further announcements on this issue before the state election in March 2015.

Alandra Tasire (Greens) Yes. We support a mandatory gross feed-in tariff at the prevailing retail sale rate, less a few cents. This is part of our 100% renewable NSW bill.