

NSW State Election March 2015
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Environmental Questionnaire to Candidates

Candidate: Alandra Tasire (Greens)
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Section 1.

Your personal position on the big environmental issues of our age, and the actions you 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?

Answer: 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 IPCC¹ and CSIRO²)?

Answer: 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"

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

1 IPCC 2013: "degree of certainty . . . *extremely likely*: 95-100% probability"

2 CSIRO scientists 2014: "a close to certain probability exceeding 99.999%"

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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 water ways that feed these catchments?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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 ?



Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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*" ?

Answer: 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?

Answer: 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)?

Answer: 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.