

Blue Mountains Conservation Society



Questions to Candidates – 2010 Federal Election

The following questions were sent to the candidates of the three major parties contesting the Federal Electorate of Macquarie.

1. How do you intend to protect the nationally endangered shrub swamps in places such as the Newnes Plateau? Do you support subsidence protection zones around these swamps to see that no damage is done?
2. Do you support the listing of the Gardens of Stone area on the National Heritage List? Will you work actively to achieve this?
3. How do you see Climate Change affecting the Blue Mountains? What do you think needs to be done in our area to combat Climate Change?

As of midday on Thursday 19th August, we had not received a response from The Liberal Candidate – Louisa Markus. This is despite several emails and phone calls.

The unedited responses from the Greens and Labor candidates are included below. Some minor formatting has been applied for presentation.

Response from Carmel McCallum - The Greens candidate for Macquarie

1. I do support the establishment of subsidence zones. Swamps are an important part of the eco-system and need to be protected from the adverse effects of underground mining.
2. I do support the listing of the Gardens of Stone on the National Heritage List. As a member of ConSoc and (potentially) as an MP, I would assist in that process by proposing or supporting a bill to that effect.
3. Climate change is THE issue of this campaign and it is not getting the attention it needs from the older parties. Likely effects on the Blue Mountains include greater risk of bushfire, less ground water, drying of swamps and streams and who knows what other adverse effects. Action required in the Blue Mountains is the same as that required globally and includes all the usual - cutting emissions by increasing use of trains instead of trucks and cars, installing solar power systems on all buildings, re-cycling green waste, re-cycling water, etc. These measures can be greatly encouraged through legislation and carbon-pricing to make them more cost-effective than they are currently. One action of particular relevance to the Blue Mountains is to prevent or discourage the NSW government's plans to allow private, commercial developments in national parks.

Susan Templeman - Labor Candidate for Macquarie

- 1 & 2. I am aware of the support of your Society for the Gardens of Stone Park stage 2 proposal and for protection of endangered ecological communities on the Newnes Plateau. I am supportive of both of these initiatives but I'm sure you will agree that they will require actions at the Local and State, as well as the Federal level.

In office I would work with your Society and in consultation with organisations like NPWS to actively support submissions to the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage for the better protection of endangered ecological communities and of the wider Gardens of Stone landscape.

You will understand that I would prefer to have the benefit of the expertise of your Society amongst others before making more precise commitments. However generally I am absolutely dedicated to the conservation of the environment and the protection of biodiversity in the Blue Mountains.

3. Climate change is likely to cause the Blue Mountains region to become hotter and drier. Nevertheless the effects will not be as extreme as in the inland regions of Southeastern Australia.

The Blue Mountains is likely to become more bushfire prone but at the same time to increase in significance as an area of refuge for species affected by climate change. Therefore it will be quite critical for those in public office to work closely with the community and relevant agencies to constantly improve ecologically sensitive bushfire management.

At the same time of course it will be appropriate for the Blue Mountains community, like other communities, to be assisted to improve the efficiency of its energy consumption and over time to share in the conversion to an Australia-wide green economy.