

Questions For Candidates

2022 Federal Election

Macquarie Electorate



The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is providing a set of questions to candidates in the 2022 Federal Election for the seat of Macquarie.

The answers to these questions will be published.

Questions have been deliberately framed to provide a “yes” or “no” answer. Please add a brief comment if required.

Candidate's Name:	Susan Templeman
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Candidate's Party:	Labor
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The Questionnaire

Preamble

- A common acronym in this document is GBMWA - Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.
- Each question includes an estimate of its financial impact. This should be considered in light of the estimated Federal government receipts in FY 2021-22 of \$532 billion.
- References are at the end of the document. NB. The links and the text are unprotected. That is, any changes can invalidate the links.

Q.1 Climate change and sustainability action

<p>Question: Will you commit to meaningful climate action for the Macquarie electorate through:</p> <p>a. a stronger 2030 national emission reduction target (the current 2030 target is 26-28% below 2005 levels)¹;</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<p>This is a vital issue for the Macquarie electorate. We are already at the forefront of experiencing climate change. Federal Labor has committed to cutting emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 if we win government - keeping Australia on track for net zero by 2050 - through our Powering Australia plan. We have an extremely detailed and modelled plan on how to achieve these emissions cuts, and our expectation is that \$50 billion of investment in renewable energy will be unleashed if we win government. Our plan was published last year, and anyone who'd like more information can visit https://www.alp.org.au/policies/powering-australia.</p>
<p>Question: Will you commit to meaningful climate action for the Macquarie electorate through:</p> <p>b. financial support to transition Macquarie electorate communities from gas to renewable energy through incentives to make homes more energy efficient, facilitating electric modes of transport and funding local councils to convert community building and facilities to use renewable energy;</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<p>The quicker we electrify our energy the faster we can reduce emissions. Gas is a fossil fuel and, while it has a role in the transition, the aim is for us to capitalise on our incredible renewable energy potential and become a renewable energy superpower. At a local level, I have announced that, if elected, Labor will install the first two community batteries in Macquarie in East Blaxland and Hobartville: https://www.susantempleman.com.au/news/media-releases/supercharging-solar-at-blaxland-east-with-a-community-battery/ Labor is also committed to rolling out 85 community solar banks around Australia to ensure more households can benefit from rooftop solar. Switching to electric vehicles is a key part of the reducing emissions and a Labor Government will introduce an Electric Car Discount – to make electric cars cheaper so that more families who want them can afford them, and to reduce emissions. As part of the Discount, Labor will exempt many electric cars from: Import tariffs – a 5 per cent tax on some imported electric cars; and Fringe benefits tax – a 47 per cent tax on electric cars that are provided through work for private use. These exemptions will be available to all electric cars below the luxury car tax threshold for fuel efficient vehicles (\$77,565 in 2020-21). This cut-off will encourage car manufacturers to import and supply more affordable electric models in Australia.</p>
<p>Question: Will you commit to meaningful climate action for the Macquarie electorate through:</p> <p>c. recognising that we are in a climate emergency and supporting the urgent development of climate action policies which focus on emissions reduction, equity and justice, and effective climate change adaptation?</p>	

<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<p>For 12 years in public life I have advocated for strong action on climate change that recognises the climate emergency that we are experiencing. The facts, not open to dispute or opinions or personal views, written by 234 scientists, backed by 14,000 pieces of peer-reviewed research and then approved by 195 countries, including Australia, are proof that Australia has already warmed by around 1.4 degrees Celsius and could be just 10 years away from heating by more than 1.5 degrees. This is the level of warming that the world agreed in 2015 we must try to avoid. It is the level Australia agreed to take action to prevent, yet the failure of our actions has seen us ranked last among 200 countries in terms of climate action.</p> <p>Labor has published serious climate action policy such as Powering Australia (mentioned above), and a Labor Government would ask Treasury to build into their forecasts proper broad-based modelling of climate risks, and to take seriously the jobs, investment and opportunities that could come from cleaner and cheaper energy.</p> <p>No credible or responsible government could ignore the broad impact of climate change.</p>
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Financial impact: The Australian, NSW and Victorian government report Pathways to scale: Retrofitting One Million+ homes² found that retrofitting Australian homes across five years could:

- Reduce average home energy use by up to 9,000kWh per year;
- Reduce average home emissions by up to 5.8 tonnes CO2 eg per year;
- Reduce pressure on the electricity grid;
- Create economic activity and job growth;
- Create an up to \$55 billion private finance investment opportunity;
- Improve household health and wellbeing.

Background: According to the 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, increased heatwaves, droughts and floods are already exceeding plants' and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals. These weather extremes are occurring simultaneously, causing cascading impacts that are increasingly difficult to manage.

The impact of climate change is affecting Australians now. In the past two years alone, the Macquarie electorate has been devastated by unprecedented bushfires and floods.

Q.2 Warragamba Dam

Question: Will you advocate for the refusal of Commonwealth approval of raising the Warragamba Dam wall?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	There is no request from the NSW Government to approve the raising of the wall. I've said publicly that the NSW Liberal Government's Warragamba Dam wall-raising proposal "has been exposed as reckless, simplistic and ill-informed". The failure of successive Liberal governments to get a dam wall raising proposal stretches right back to 1993 when John Fahey attempted it. Raising the wall and flooding the area doesn't just affect the environment, although the effects are absolutely profound; it also affects Indigenous cultural heritage, and the assessment of those impacts have been appalling. This latest proposal is considered flawed according to government agencies, the insurance industry and a range of flood experts, including former SES Deputy Chas Keys. What they do support, and what is clearly needed, is better roads including evacuation routes. We could get that done fast, and I've had plenty of suggestions as to which roads have low lying areas that could be fixed.

Financial impact: Minimal – can be covered by existing budget of the federal Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Environment.

Background: The NSW Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall 14 metres to reduce and manage flood risk on the Hawkesbury River will destroy 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers and inundate 4,700 hectares of the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park. Significant aboriginal cultural heritage sites will also be destroyed. Raising the dam wall will enable unsustainable housing development on flood-prone land in Western Sydney.

The current Environmental Impact Statement for the project has been considered as inadequate by a number of experts, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature, who consider the impacts on the World Heritage Area so significant that they could potentially lead to the area being de-listed or identified as being at risk.

Raising the dam wall would not actually solve the problem of flooding in Western Sydney. It would have only a moderate effect even in a 1 in 500-year flood event³ and other catchments could still cause significant flooding in the valley. And that is without further housing built on the flood plain. Climate change will make these flood events more common, just like fires.

Q.3 Extend the boundaries of the GBMWSHA

Question: Will you actively support the extension of the existing GBMWSHA to include all additions to the national parks and reserves since the listing of the GBMWSHA in 2000?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Yes

Financial impact: Minimal – can be covered by existing budget of the federal Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Environment

Background: Ecologists have found that -

*"Increasing scientific knowledge of the natural biodiversity in and around the Greater Blue Mountains, awareness of increasing threatening processes and the potential impact of climate change, all indicate that long-term conservation effectiveness will be improved with targeted boundary changes."*⁴

The World Heritage Area should be extended to include all additions (over 30,000 ha) to the national park and reserves since World Heritage status was secured in 2000 and adjacent significant natural areas which would improve the GBMWSHA's biodiversity.

Q.4 Support additional values criteria for GBMWHA listing

Question: Will you actively support the nomination of additional values including cultural, scenic and geomorphological for the GBMWHA?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> no	

Financial impact: Minimal – can be covered by existing budget of the federal Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Environment

Background: The Greater Blue Mountains was granted World Heritage listing for its biodiversity and for the diversity of Eucalypt species. The additional criteria of cultural, geodiversity and scenic splendour are currently not officially recognised and are thus not protected⁵. A current example of this is the proposed flooding of the Burratorang Valley by raising the Warragamba Dam wall. This will destroy significant aboriginal cultural heritage sites which are not recognised under the current listing of the GBMWHA.

Q.5 Limit aircraft flights over the GBMWHA wilderness areas

Question: Would you initiate a process to ban low-flying non-essential helicopter flights (e.g. joy and recreational flights) over wilderness areas in the GBMWHA?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	Yes, I have supported groups such as the Katoomba Community Airfield Group in the past in their opposition to leasing Crown land for a commercial aerodrome and helipad at Medlow Bath. Intensification and commercial use of sites like that presents risks to the GBMWHA and a real threat to the peace and tranquility of those who live nearby.
<input type="checkbox"/> no	

Financial impact: Minimal – can be covered by existing budget of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Background: There are five declared wilderness areas which together amount to two-thirds of the GBMWHA. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has the power to regulate aircraft flights for environmental reasons. There is ample scientific evidence of the environmental impacts of low flying helicopters over natural areas, including noise and aircraft movements impacting wildlife. Wilderness areas within the GBMWHA deserve protection against this threat, as do people walking in these and nearby areas.

Q.6 GBMWHA eucalypt baseline research

Question: Will you actively and publicly advocate for adequate funding for research to establish baseline data on health and status of the GBMWHA Eucalypts in order to establish a credible monitoring regime for these eucalypts and the effect of climate change on them?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	Yes, one of the reasons the Blue Mountains has been declared World Heritage is the exceptional diversity of eucalypts - it's estimated that there are about 91 different eucalypts found in the World Heritage Greater Blue Mountains Area. There are outstanding examples of how those eucalypts have evolved and adapted on our continent. We have a wide range of habitats, from wet and dry sclerophyll forests to woodlands, mallee heathlands, grasslands and localised swamps. I support continuing research to monitor the effects of climate change.
<input type="checkbox"/> no	

Financial impact: Medium – new research grant funding is required.

Background: The GBMWHA was declared on the basis of its biodiversity and eucalypts, of which there are 99 identified species. Restoring the GBMWHA to its original state before the 2019-2020 bushfires, and

tracking future changes due to climate change, requires baseline data on the current health and status of the eucalypts. This research is now urgent so that we are prepared for future climate change induced impacts.

Q.7 Establish an active and stronger role for federal government in environmental protection

Question: Will you advocate for an active federal role in legislated environmental protection and, in particular, for retaining the federal Minister's independent approval role under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*?

- yes
 no

I supported Labor's amendments to the government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, because what we had before us in its original state was a rehash of old legislation put forward by former prime minister Tony Abbott. It was a bill that failed then and fails now because it put Australia's natural environment at greater risk. This needs to be a piece of legislation that provides for the long term, and that gives stability.

Financial impact: Minimal – can be covered by existing budget of the federal Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Environment.

Background: World heritage and climate change are two policy areas where national responsibility is essential. Leadership and active engagement with environmental protection is needed so that failure or absence of state government commitment, if it occurs, can be overcome. For example, Australia's national environment laws are currently failing to protect nationally listed swamps and the wildlife they support from permanent destruction from underground coal mining in the Lithgow area.

Our environmental laws need to properly protect nationally recognised threatened species and ecological communities. As well, the Federal government should continue its independent approval role under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* and not agree to refer this role to the state government.

Q.8 Political integrity, donations & transparency

Question: Will you actively work towards the introduction of the following four measures to reduce corporate influence and restore balance to politics?	
a. Limit the size of donations to political parties and politicians.	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	In 2016 Labor committed to reduce the donation disclosure limit from the then level of \$10 000 (indexed to inflation) to a fixed \$1 000, and ban anonymous donations over \$50. In the 46th Parliament, Labor also introduced a private Senator's bill to lower the donations disclosure threshold to \$1 000 and remove indexation.
b. Real time disclosure of all political donations.	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Labor introduced a private Senator's bill to implement a real time disclosure regime in the 46th Parliament.
c. Limit the amount individuals or an organisation can spend on election campaigns.	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Yes
d. Create a federal Integrity Commission with powers to investigate allegations of corruption and ensure accountability.	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Labor has committed to establishing a powerful, transparent and independent National Anti Corruption Commission, and will give priority to establishing such a body. More information is available here https://www.alp.org.au/policies/national-anti-corruption-commission

Financial impact: An Australian Federal Integrity Commission and Commonwealth Parliamentary Standards Commissioner would cost approximately \$200 million over four years to establish and operate (Parliamentary Budget Office advice to Helen Haines MP 16 October 2020⁶).

Background: Our political system works best when the people we elect represent the values and concerns of the community. However, right now weak laws allow powerful industries, such as coal and mining, to exploit democratic processes by employing lobbyists and through large donations to political parties. In contrast, community environment or human rights groups often have difficulty accessing Ministers and key decision makers.

Q.9 Western Sydney Airport

Question:	
a. Will you commit to a <u>comprehensive and genuine</u> community consultation for the proposed flight paths for the Western Sydney Airport?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	I have called for this for six years. The EIS identified that the Blue Mountains would bear the brunt of incoming flights, 24 hours a day. The only protections offered by the government copied commitments made by Labor, but there's no proof of how they would work in reality, because there's no detail about the flightpaths. The government expects people to take it at its word. That is not not good enough – we need to see what the plan is and be allowed to have input into it.
Question:	
b. Will you commit to including the option of a curfew as part of the flight path community consultation process?	
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	While our platform commitment is night time fly free zones over communities, I will continue to argue for the residents of the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney to be treated the same as eastern Sydney residents

Financial impact: Minimal – The Commonwealth government has committed to a public consultation process.

Background: Western Sydney (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport is currently being constructed at Badgerys Creek and is due to commence operations in 2026. To date, detailed information on flight paths, including those over the electorate of Macquarie, has not been released.

Detailed planning for flight paths started in 2017 and, according to the website for the airport, will not be finalised until 2024. The airport website also states that there will be community consultation on the proposed flight paths. Currently, the Western Sydney Airport is designed to be a 24-hour no-curfew airport, unlike Kingsford Smith Airport which operates under a night-time curfew.

Q.10 Personal conservation goals

Question:

If elected, what will you do for the environment? Outline one or more projects/issues that you intend to work on – limit 100 words.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Blue Mountains Conservation Society in advancing Labor's environment policies, which are available here: <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/protecting-our-environment>

References

NB. The following is unprotected text. Any changes can invalidate the links

- 1 (Q1) The Australian Conservation Foundation, the [Climate Council](#) and the [Nature Conservation Council](#) have a greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 75% below 2005 levels by 2030.
- 2 (Q1) Pathways to scale: [Retrofitting One Million+ homes](#)
- 3 (Q2) [Leaked charts published in the Sydney Morning Herald](#)
- 4 (Q3) D Benson & J Smith, Protecting biodiversity values in response to long-term impacts. In [Values for a new generation – Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area](#) published by the GBMWA Advisory Committee.
- 5 (Q6) For more detail see [Values for a new generation – Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area](#) published by the GBMWA Advisory Committee
- 6 (Q8) [Parliamentary Budget Office advice to Helen Haines MP](#)