

Questions For Candidates 2023 NSW State Election Blue Mountains Electorate: The Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Jenna Condie - Greens candidate for Blue Mountains

Q1. NSW Government proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres

Will you support implementation of the alternative flood management strategies outlined below, or similar strategies, and oppose raising the Warragamba Dam wall?

YES

COMMENT:

If elected, I promise to take every step available to me, to implement alternative ways to minimise the impact of flooding, support flood prone residents to relocate and stop further development of housing on floodplains.

The raising of the Warragamba dam wall has never been supported by The Greens due to its well documented safety and environmental issues. We have continually taken steps to raise these issues within parliament and the community.

The Greens will continue to advocate for alternative flood management strategies and support the communities in the Blue Mountains and the western Sydney region to stop this proposal.

Q2. Invasive Species (cats)

Will you commit to amending the Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local governments to regulate roaming pet cats at a local level to reduce predation on wildlife, as recommended by the Local Government Association of NSW and the Invasive Species Council?

YES

COMMENT:

Australia's biodiversity is declining at unprecedented rates. As we are surrounded by World Heritage national park, we have important responsibilities, both as residents and as communities, to protect biodiversity in the Blue Mountains.

I commit to amending the Companion Animals Act 1998 and adopting the best practice example set by the ACT Cat Plan, a Greens initiative, to mandate registration and containment to protect wildlife and keep cats safe.

The Greens are also supportive of new solutions. In 2021, Local Greens Councillors proposed a trial of catbibs and supported Council joining the RSPCA 'keeping cats safe at home' project.

Q3 Commercial activity in the National Parks Estate

Will you:

- a. ONLY support commercial activity under the proposed revised Blue Mountains National Park Plan of Management (PoM) if it can be clearly demonstrated that biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage will not be compromised?

YES

BUT changes to the Plan of Management and plans more generally need to go much further. There must be much greater emphasis on the role of these protected areas in actually providing the necessary long-term protection to native animals, plants and ecological systems so that they might flourish and thereby support biodiversity in perpetuity. The role of planning, control, care and management by First Nations custodians and communities in sites and areas of cultural significance must be made more explicit. There needs to be a shift in balance in phraseology – parks need to be recognised for their intrinsic values, not merely as objects for the entertainment of humans.

- b. support amendments to the *NPWS Act* which will ensure robust and transparent public comment on any proposals for private commercial leases?

YES

The recent call for comment on proposed leases in the Gardens of Stone SCA **without** provision of supporting documentation of proposals by lessees represented an appalling demonstration of arrogance on the part of the Department of Planning and Environment. It is essential that there be **extensive public participation and transparency** in all decision-making processes in relation to these protected areas on public lands. These areas must be viewed through a lens of their potential benefit to the wider community through respectful interaction, not as a commodity for monetary profit by the private sector and government.

Q.4 Climate change – Gas Phase Out

Will you advocate for the introduction of planning controls which ban gas connection to new residential subdivisions and commercial developments?

A. YES

COMMENT:

If elected, I will advocate in Parliament for the introduction of planning controls banning gas connections to new residential subdivisions and commercial developments. This is in line with NSW Greens policy. It is Greens policy to begin prohibiting gas connections for new grid connected residential dwellings.

Climate science is clear about fossil fuels. If we are to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, we cannot continue mining coal and gas. Our reliance on coal and gas must end by 2030. NSW must be powered by 100% renewable electricity by 2030.

Q5. Stormwater Impacts on Drinking Water and the Environment

Question:

Will you strongly advocate for:

- c, the Low Rise Housing Diversity Code to be amended so that the stormwater

management standards under the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan apply to developments under the Code in the Blue Mountains (as proposed by the Blue Mountains City Council)?

YES

COMMENT

The NSW Low Rise Housing Diversity Code (November 22) was designed to fast-track development, applying a one-size-fits-all standard to Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

If elected, I will undertake to carry out the will of the community, environment movement and Council as expressed in the Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan of 2015. The current exemption for medium density low rise housing development from controls on stormwater management should be withdrawn.

The Greens call for current NSW Planning laws to be overhauled, with the power returned to local communities and the emphasis on environment and community, NOT developers and profits.

d. the provisions of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 protecting the quality of Sydney's drinking water to be applied to development under the Code in drinking water catchment areas?

YES

COMMENT

As large areas of the Upper Blue Mountains flow straight into Sydney's drinking water catchment, it makes sense that increased low rise (medium density) housing developments on the central ridge should be subject to the same stormwater controls as the rest of the Blue Mountains. If elected, I will support the efforts of CONSOC and the BMCC to amend the NSW Low Rise Housing Diversity Code and bring these developments into the ambit of the SEPP21 which protects Sydney's drinking water catchment.

Q.6 Personal conservation goals

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

A key focus would be to overhaul the NSW planning laws, with decision making returned to local communities with an emphasis on the environment and community, and not on developers and profit. Blue Mountains residents are expressing to me their frustration with the lack of appropriate consultation and implementation of transparent processes on major developments, such as raising the Warragamba Dam wall, the Greater Western Highway duplication, Western Sydney Airport and the 'Croc Park'.

The current mechanisms of community participation on decision making are failing us. Now as we try to raise our voices, the right to protest has been criminalised by the NSW Liberal-National Government with the support of Labor. The Greens are committed to reversing the anti-protest laws and restoring our right to protest.

I will continue to advocate for climate action within parliament. We must stop the major parties from keeping us locked in a fossil fuelled economy for any longer. You can not offset the climate crisis with carbon and

biodiversity credits. We need real and genuine action on climate, not creative accounting frameworks that encourage a 'pay to pollute' mindset. A liveable future for children, young people and future generations depends on climate action now.