

# sydney news

Alex Greenwich MP Member for Sydney

PARLIAMENT : LOCAL NEWS : COMMUNITY : TRANSPORT : PARKS & ENVIRONMENT

## STATE GOVERNMENT INTERFERES WITH DEMOCRACY... AGAIN

The Government has a bill before Parliament to allow the Local Government Minister to interfere with council operations or sack them at his discretion.

Essentially the bill gives party-partisan state governments new tools to manipulate democratically elected councils.

A government could harass a council ruled by a different party or overturn decisions it doesn't agree with like not rezoning land at developers' requests, refusing DAs or opposing CSG fracking.

The bill extends councils' accountability beyond residents and rate payers to the Local Government Minister. This could create conflicts when councils advocate for the community against state government decisions or policies.

Councils will be reduced to state-owned corporations, which can be sacked for failure to comply with the agenda of the government of the day.

In a democracy councils are accountable to their communities, which can vote them out. Interference should only be a last resort where there is serious and proven dysfunction. Currently alleged problematic councils can't be sacked without a public open inquiry.

I support constitutional recognition to stop this constant manipulation.

Proposed changes are another assault on democracy by this Government which created laws to unseat Clover Moore as MP, changed rules to fast track James Packer's proposed second casino and is set to introduce hunting in national parks.

Alex Greenwich MP  
Member for Sydney

### Barangaroo Casino and Asbestos

New discoveries of asbestos at Barangaroo are a worry and in Parliament I asked for action to protect workers, residents and students. Meanwhile, I continue to challenge Jamie Packer's plans for a second casino and the Government's lack of process that could turn Sydney Harbour into a mini Las Vegas.

### Great work at Lou's Place

In Parliament I spoke about the inspiring and vital work of Lou's Place in Potts Point after visiting the drop-in centre where over 50 volunteers help provide a safe place for women in crisis.

### Out and About – Mardi Gras

I joined Lord Mayor Clover Moore to celebrate this year's Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Our float's theme 'generations of love' looked back at past achievements and forward to future campaigns.

### Happy Year of the Snake!

I attended the City's Twilight Parade with over 3,500 performers, including 120 Shenzhen artists. Tens of thousands visited the CBD for the event – the largest outside China. Around 14,000 people in the electorate have Chinese ancestry and I told Parliament celebrations foster relations with China.

news snapshot



Celebrating Chinese New Year



With the team at Lou's Place

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## FROM PARLIAMENT

### Protect the Pink Eared Duck: Support my Bill!

When the Government re-introduced duck hunting so the Shooters and Fishers Party would support ports privatisation, it promised ducks would only be shot to protect crops.

Yet its laws allow the shooting of Pink-eared ducks, which don't eat crops but eat the pests that farmers control with pesticides.

There is no agricultural argument to support shooting a Pink-eared duck and my Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Duck) Bill removes it from the list.

### 300 Year-old Right to Silence Lost!

The right to silence is a fundamental principle that protects the innocent by ensuring confessions are voluntary.

I opposed the Evidence Amendment (Evidence of Silence) Bill, which erodes this right by allowing a jury to make an "unfavourable inference" about an accused who doesn't give information initially.

There are many reasons why someone may not want to talk during police questioning, particularly vulnerable people, and this should not incriminate them. There's no evidence that the guilty use the right to silence more than the innocent.

### Marriage Equality for NSW

I've joined members of all major parties to progress State based same sex marriage. The Marriage Equality Cross Party Working Group has drafted a constitutionally strong bill and encouraged thousands of supportive submissions to the Upper House inquiry – more than any previous NSW inquiry. We now have the Premier's support!

To join the campaign, go to [nswmarriageequality.com.au](http://nswmarriageequality.com.au).

## CAN NSW BE A DIGITAL INNOVATION LEADER?

The digital revolution is creating a new economy based on ideas and intelligence.

Oxford Street Darlinghurst has become a hub for startups (businesses in the development phase) under City of Sydney affordable co-working space leases. Co-working spaces create community that encourages innovation and Oxford Street now attracts business from across the country and globe with new workers stimulating the local economy.

Entrepreneurs normally work from home to save on rent. Silicon Valley has links to government support in research and development and in Parliament I called on the Government to support Information and Communication Technology through affordable rent and programs like Victoria's vouchers for technology business development.



*Talking with digital entrepreneurs*

## RELIEF FOR COMPANY TITLE RESIDENTS

In Parliament I supported new laws for local courts to hear company title disputes. Previously disputes went to the costly Supreme Court, taking years and discouraging owners from pursuing their rights.

Company title owners purchase shares in a building to occupy a unit. It was common before strata laws began and still exists in many art deco apartments, particularly in Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay.

Some constituents report inadequate rights and protections and want all company titles transferred to strata. It is unclear if other owners agree and in debate I called for a review to determine if company title remains a fair form of home ownership.

The Government is slow to deliver its promised strata reforms and I will push to ensure they favour residents over developers.



*Parliament's Marriage Equality Working Group.  
Photo courtesy of Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby*



*Another noisy night in the Cross*

## NOISE NOISE NOISE

Inner city noise comes from many sources which accumulate to worsen impacts. Noise comes from congested roads, old buses, street parties associated with late night hot spots, major development and neighbourhood noise from living in close proximity.

Cars modified to exaggerate noise in late night problem areas like Kings Cross breach laws but action is difficult because residents must go outside to record details before the car moves on. Kings Cross Police summer "Elvis" joint operations charged 27 vehicles but the Office of Environment and Heritage should station inspectors at known hot spots.

Residents affected by noise must navigate various complex laws and policies under different agencies that are poorly enforced. In Parliament I asked the Government to update controls and coordinate complaints under one reports line.

## SMALLER BARS

In Parliament I supported laws for a new liquor licence that will make it easier to open bars of 60 patrons or less. However I argued that small bars should be subject to impact assessments and Councils need powers to prevent saturation of licensed venues causing violence and anti-social behaviour.

The liquor freeze has curbed spiralling growth of licensed premises in late night hot spots and my requests ensured the freeze was extended on Oxford Street for another year. Problems stem from larger venues and I support alternatives to civilise our drinking culture.

## POLICE FORUM

Following distressing footage of heavy handed policing at the Mardi Gras parade, my forum allowed the LGBTI community to tell the Surry Hills Commander and Chief Superintendent about other policing incidents during the festival. They agreed police officers need more training before Mardi Gras.

I met with the Police Minister and asked the Ombudsman to oversee investigations into brutality. In Parliament I asked whether strip searches and sniffer dogs actually uncover major drug trafficking crime.

## ENDING NETWORK GOLD PLATING

Electricity prices are rapidly rising and while the State Government blames carbon pricing, the Energy Regulator found over-investment in energy infrastructure like new substations is responsible.

New infrastructure is built to meet peak demand and all Australian ministers agreed at COAG to cut prices caused by network expansion. My questions in Parliament put pressure on the State Government for action like smart meters, time-of-use pricing and more efficient investment.

### Mining: an inner city threat!

Mining is not only a rural concern, it threatens Sydney's water supply. The State Government has approved expansions to a long-wall mine under upland swamps that feed nine per cent of Sydney's drinking water. Subsidence and cracking could drain and pollute swamps that filter our drinking supply.

Coal seam gas exploration licences exist across Sydney's water catchments, which if developed into full projects could contaminate drinking water. The Sydney Water Catchment Management Board should stop these mines, but the new chair comes from the mining industry and the Government removed Nature Conservation Council representation.

In Parliament I asked the Premier to honour his pre-election commitment to ban mining in water catchment areas.

**For information and action see**  
[www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/mining](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/mining).



Woronora Creek at risk

### Where's the Rainbow?

Almost 16,000 people signed my petition to make the rainbow crossing at Taylor Square permanent. The public art recognised the area's LGBTI history and was a tourist attraction. An audit showed it did not cause accidents and the Assistant Police Commissioner called it a pedestrian safety "innovation". Yet the Roads and Ports Minister used emergency powers to rip it up late at night. West Hollywood's rainbow crossing causes no problems.



Bringing the Police to the community.  
Photo courtesy of ACON



Celebrating the Rainbow Crossing with Clover

snapshot  
follow the live  
feeds at  
 [Twitter.com/alexgreenwich](https://twitter.com/alexgreenwich)

# Campaigns & People

## LIGHT RAIL NEWS

The chosen South East Rail route to Randwick Hospital and UNSW came as a surprise with the service cutting through Surry Hills along Devonshire Street and through a local park and apartment block. Moore Park could be impacted.

I asked the Minister to underground the Devonshire route and to hold a public information forum. I am submitting petitions calling for alternative routes. To get the best outcome for Surry Hills go to <http://alexgreenwich.com.au/surryhills>

CBD light rail will remove over 200 buses and cut congestion and travel times between Central and Circular Quay. The George Street route was devised after years of extensive research. Light rail's reliability is 97 per cent while it's only 19 to 34 per cent for buses. It can carry 300 people while buses can only carry 60.

## HIGH SCHOOL CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

In Parliament I submitted petitions with over 500 signatures calling for an inner city high school and I asked that local selective Sydney Boys and Sydney Girls high schools prioritise local students. There are few options for inner city students, all involve long commutes and they are filling fast.

## ENDING BULLYING

Bullying remains a big problem in Australia. Victims can develop emotional and physical scars that manifest via anxiety, depression and self-harm. Bullying puts pressure on our health system and economy, and impacts people's daily lives.

New South Wales legislation varies for workplace, school, cyber and online bullying, which can make addressing it difficult.

Download and sign my petition for an integrated approach with greater education at <http://alexgreenwich.com.au> and support the Community Brave campaign.

## MILLERS POINT HOUSING CAMPAIGN

With the Government reviewing a further 208 Millers Point social housing properties for potential sale, I'm working with local residents to get the best outcome. Residents who want to stay in their home should not be evicted to fill government coffers.

My petition, questions and motion in Parliament call for proper maintenance of public housing to prevent sale by neglect. Community group CORE meets every Monday and will peer review the Government's Social Impact Assessment of selling homes.

## KEEP GUNS OUT OF NATIONAL PARKS

National parks protect biodiversity and provide nature experiences like bushwalking and wildlife education. But the Government's deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party to privatise power will make them shooting grounds for hunters to kill animals for fun.

Eradication of introduced animals is not possible and wildlife services only manage populations after considering many factors. Ad hoc recreational shooting is not helpful and hunters have released game in state forests to shoot! Hunting is cruel and the risk of people getting shot is real.

I will lodge a petition signed by 10,000 people across the State calling on the Government to stop the introduction of hunting in national parks.



*Fighting hard for a high school*



*Tackling bullying with Community Brave*



*Listening to concerned Millers Point tenants*



*Thousands rally against hunting in national parks*