



newsletter 4 | november 2013

sydney news

Alex Greenwich MP Member for Sydney

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

REMOVING RIGHT TO DISCRIMINATE AT PRIVATE SCHOOLS

All students should be treated fairly and given the same opportunities regardless of their background, family make-up, sexuality, disability or personal characteristics.

The Anti-Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for schools, colleges and universities to expel, or disadvantage a student based on race, sex, marital or domestic status, transgender, homosexuality or disability. But on all grounds except race there are exemptions for private education bodies allowing them to discriminate.

My Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Private Educational Authorities) Bill would remove these exemptions.

Discrimination against children should never be condoned, regardless of which school the child attends, because it affects self-confidence and worth, disrupts education and legitimises vilification and harassment. Beyond Blue and the Australian Institute of Clinical Psychologists support my bill.

In Parliament I shared moving stories from students who suffered discrimination at private schools. While not all private schools discriminate, the law should protect all children. The stories focussed on gay and lesbian students, but there are reports of pregnant girls pressured to leave school and students with a disability refused entry into private colleges.

There are many reasons parents choose a private school such as location or academic record, but this does not mean they condone discrimination. All parents want a supportive school environment for their children.

The bill will be debated early next year and I have asked the Government for a conscience vote.

Alex Greenwich MP
Member for Sydney

Barangaroo Open Space at Risk

I asked the Premier to relocate the proposed Packer/Crown Casino on land already approved for development. Packer wants the building on much needed public open space. Any changes to the approved concept plan must be subject to an open and transparent impact assessment.

Junior Youth Parliament

I acted as Speaker for the YMCA's Junior Youth Parliament debate and was inspired to see young people engage with the political process, including Sydney Youth MP Lily Fuller from Paddington. I encourage young people to engage with politics and contribute their ideas and energy.

Digital Innovation

The digital revolution is creating a new economy based on ideas, intelligence and innovation. I asked the Trade and Investment Minister to support small business and help Sydney's start-up sector create new jobs. I will monitor progress of the Government's Digital Economy Industry Action Plan.

Schools Update

The Inner City Schools Working Party will prepare a business case for funding to redevelop Ultimo Public School or build a larger school, and then review high schools. The minister agreed to investigate my call for selective schools to increase local student numbers.

news snapshot



I ❤️ Darlo Public



With Sydney Electorate Youth MP Lily Fuller

Alex Greenwich MP
Independent Member for Sydney
58 Oxford St, Paddington NSW 2021
Telephone 9360 3053
Email sydney@parliament.nsw.gov.au

www.alexgreenwich.com.au

[Facebook.com/alexgreenwich](https://www.facebook.com/alexgreenwich)

[Twitter.com/alexgreenwich](https://twitter.com/alexgreenwich)

contacts

FROM PARLIAMENT

Kings Cross Liquor

Intoxicated people who cause a public nuisance or create public safety risks will be banned from large Kings Cross venues for up to 12 months under the Liquor Amendment (Kings Cross Plan of Management) Bill to stop someone kicked out of one venue moving on to another.

I support getting troublemakers out of the precinct but told the Government ID scanning outside peak times will invade the privacy of locals having lunch or dinner, harm good businesses and do nothing to curb violence. The minister agreed to limit scanning to Thursday to Sunday but will still require it on weekend lunch times.

Chalking and other Misdemeanours

Graffiti laws fail to differentiate between street art and ugly, violent and obscene tags. The recent Graffiti Control Amendment Bill reinforces that rainbow chalking and possibly even hopscotch are illegal!

I told Parliament we should look at ways to make temporary markings and street art that is supported by the community lawful.

Prohibition won't work

The Government banned all synthetic psychoactive substances except chocolate, tea, coffee and tobacco in response to the sad death of a teenager who took legal synthetic LSD. But the Drugs and Poisons Legislation Amendment (New Psychoactive and Other Substances) Bill will do nothing to reduce drug-related harm.

Bans have always failed to curb demand for mood altering substances; they create lucrative illegal drug markets run by criminals that cost lives through crime, overdose, disease and corruption. Governments must develop evidence-based drug policies that prevent harm and provide help for people with drug problems.

WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AT RISK

I opposed the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill (No. 2) because it could reduce access to safe legal abortions by treating a foetus as a person under the law that has rights separate and possibly at odds with its mother.

The law currently acknowledges a crime that causes the loss of a foetus as grievous bodily harm to the pregnant woman, with a penalty of up to 25 years in prison.

The law must recognise the unimaginable suffering of an expecting mother who miscarries or has a stillbirth delivery due to a violent crime as the woman's loss, not a separate crime against the foetus.

Exemptions in the bill for medical procedures and actions done with a pregnant woman's consent leave the legal position for women and doctors unclear, for example when a pregnant woman is charged with reckless driving or drug use, or has a mental illness or intellectual disability.

The bill is opposed by the NSW Bar Association and NSW Australian Medical Association.



Development impacts need to be limited

PLANNING LAW CHANGES

In response to widespread concern that proposed new planning laws prioritise economic growth and fast development approvals over the environment, heritage and community, the minister promised to change the bill so fewer developments bypass council assessment and existing land zonings are maintained.

However I share environment group and community concern that the minister and director general still retain discretion to override planning instruments to approve non-complying developments. The 'ecological sustainable development' principle is still earmarked for deletion from the act despite decades of case law protecting the environment.

The bill remains fundamentally flawed and I cannot support it without further changes.



Kings Cross at lunch time



There's a difference between chalking and graffiti

POVERTY

Up to 15 per cent of Australians live in poverty including about 600,000 children, many of whom will remain socially and economically disadvantaged all their life. Disadvantaged children are more likely to miss school and have poorer nutrition, health and mental health. Entrenched poverty can continue over generations.



The Big Kitchen helps people through tough times

The early years of a child's life profoundly shape their future and it is this time when assertive support for families can make a difference, but prevention and early intervention budgets are being cut. In Parliament I called for childcare and education targeted at children with specific needs, baby healthcare centres that provide home visits, and integration of maternal and paediatric health services with family support, mental health and childcare services. I stressed the need for secure low-cost and affordable housing to break the intergenerational poverty cycle.

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH OPPORTUNITIES

The Government's proposal for massive redevelopment of land over the rail line between Central Station and Eveleigh could provide new public open space, childcare, primary and high schools and safe pedestrian and cycling routes but planning must aim for more than developers' profits. In response to my question in Parliament, the Planning and Infrastructure Minister committed to examine these opportunities and said he will work with me, the Department of Education and City of Sydney to get the best outcome.

RECOGNISING AUSTRALIA'S SLAVE HISTORY

Parliament unanimously supported my motion recognising the inhumane treatment of Pacific Islanders who were kidnapped or coerced to work on sugar farms in Australia 150 years ago. They were exploited and suffered massive mortality from disease. Under the White Australia Policy, thousands were forcibly deported.

Australian South Sea Islander descendants have serious disadvantage but no specifically targeted support. The Assembly supported my call for action to help create positive futures for descendants and the minister has since met with community leaders.

GARDEN ISLAND'S FUTURE

In Parliament, I supported a motion to retain a naval presence at Garden Island. Many of the 4,000 plus employees live locally, use local schools and shops, and contribute to their neighbourhood. In debate I supported relocation of some industrial activities inconsistent with the densely populated area, and for public access to the parkland, ferry links to Circular Quay and cruise ship berthing.

The Future of Social Housing

The Auditor General's report 'Making the best use of public housing' shows the number of available low cost homes is declining and another 2,500 social housing homes are needed each year just to keep the current numbers. The Government has reduced waiting lists and is changing rent policies to get more income in the short term, but it has been selling some houses to pay to maintain others and has no long term strategy to expand availability.

Other countries use social housing bonds to increase investment in low cost housing and I've asked the minister to consider this approach, including from Waratah Bonds.

Sydney Electorate Changes

The number of voters in each electorate must be about 50,000. New developments and changes in household makeup make some electorates grow and others shrink, requiring boundary redistributions.

The Sydney electorate has the second largest population in NSW with further growth projected. The recent redistribution will move some residents to other electorates: Centennial Park to Heffron, Ultimo to Balmain, and Chippendale and Surry Hills south of Foveaux Street to a new electorate to be named Newtown. I will continue to represent these areas until changes come into effect at the March 2015 election.



With Australian South Sea Islander descendants and fellow MPs



My grandfather's Naval service acknowledged at Garden Island

snapshot
follow the live
feeds at



Twitter.com/alexgreenwich

Campaigns & People

TAFE AT RISK

Proposed reforms to TAFE threaten its viability, particularly for second-chance learning, and people with a disability, returning to work after caring for children, with limited literacy or over 55 years old. Government plans to increase student costs, cut staff and tender out courses threaten the experience and future of TAFE colleges. In Parliament I called on the Government to continue funding accessible TAFE programs – education is too important to leave to the market alone.

For more information: www.tafecommunityalliance.org

GOVERNMENT CRACKS EGG LABELLING CAMPAIGN

In Parliament I supported the Greens' Truth in Labelling (Free-range Eggs) Bill which would require eggs labelled as 'free-range' to be produced on farms with no more than 1,500 birds per hectare.

There is no legislated free-range definition and unscrupulous producers use the label to charge more for eggs produced in cramped conditions. The Government refuses my calls to outlaw cruel factory farming because it supports "consumer choice", but blocked this bill even though it would help consumers exercise choice. I hope the mega-complaint by CHOICE to Fair Trading will help reform.

COUNCIL OVERHAUL NEEDS OVERSIGHT

Councils are concerned that the State Government has introduced a number of overlapping studies, reviews and laws that affect local government including the Samson Review on council amalgamations, the Local Government Acts Taskforce, the Metropolitan Strategy and the Planning Review.

In Parliament I asked for a whole-of-government oversight body to assess and coordinate final recommendations, but the minister said "communication" between various offices is enough. Join the campaign against amalgamations and loss of council powers at **www.Keepitlocal.net.au**

NATIONAL PARKS WIN

The State Government withdrew plans to allow uncontrolled recreational hunting in national parks ahead of debate in Parliament initiated by my petition of 10,000 signatures. Hunting will now be restricted to a three-year trial in 12 national parks under the rules and supervision of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Government abolished the Game Council following serious findings that its roles as hunters' regulator and representative created conflicts. At the same time the Government reinstated hunting in State forests following a temporary ban.

During debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill I called on the Government to apply the same restrictions in State forests as national parks. Recreational shooting of feral animals has never succeeded and puts forest visitors and animals at risk.

CELEBRATING THE UNIQUE WILLIAM STREET EXPERIENCE

I joined thousands of locals and visitors to celebrate the creative designers and retailers at the William Street Festival. William Street entrepreneurs have worked with Woollahra Council to create a special niche in this heritage precinct – a pedestrian friendly high street that draws customers from afar. Congratulations to all involved with the festival and to William Street retailers.



TAFE at risk



There are good eggs and bad eggs



10,000 petition handover courtesy of National Parks Association



With William Street creatives
Photo courtesy of Sydney Standard