

ADDRESSING INNER CITY EDUCATION NEEDS

With more families living in the inner city, childcare services and primary and secondary schools are reaching capacity.

Sydney childcare centres have waiting lists of up to two years and demand is growing 13 times faster than supply.

Rebates and benefits are low compared with other OECD countries and insufficient for low-income families. The lack of choice forces parents to use centres not eligible for rebates and the complex system could be feeding price rises. One in 10 mothers stay home for economic reasons.

Australia has low female labour-force rates. Childcare affordability and accessibility are vital to our economy. All levels of government must work together to make childcare flexible, affordable and accessible.

In Parliament I urged the State Government to require childcare in all major developments like Darling Harbour and the Central to Eveleigh project. I welcome City of Sydney plans for at least six new centres over the next two years.

Parents increasingly use nannies though the cost can make it a last resort choice; benefits could be extended to this practice. Other parents want the 'playrooms' model, where professional staff look after children in the same co-working space that parents work.

Meanwhile, after getting funds for a new Pyrmont/Ultimo primary school the Inner City Schools Working Party – created in response to my first question in Parliament – is consulting on new inner city high schools. I hosted a forum with local parents who came up with creative solutions and ways to increase local access to existing high schools.

You can read more at alexgreenwich.com/education.



Alex Greenwich MP
Member for Sydney



With Governor Bashir at the ANZAC Day Parade



Vibewire hosted another great #fastBreak

Renewable energy target needed

My questions in Parliament push for a NSW specific renewable energy target to cover generation and consumption and help grow the renewables industry. If the federal carbon tax and renewable energy target are repealed there will be few incentives for low carbon energy. The new state environment minister's comments are promising.

New Premier's LGBTI commitments

In response to my Question in Parliament, the new Premier committed to continue support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, including funding for Mardi Gras, ACON, Twenty10 and the Gender Centre, and at least conscience votes on LGBTI-related legislation.

Judicial independence vital to democracy

My motion for courts' independence was supported and the new Attorney General spoke. Courts can withhold freedom, rights and property; healthy democracies ensure this is done without political interference or influence. Everyone has the right to a fair trial and I hope Parliament's support means an end to mandatory sentencing laws.

Community view of alcohol violence

Parliament supported my motion to consider the "Vibrant and Safe Sydney" Citizen's Jury recommendations on late night violence. The 43 randomly selected participants met police, experts, hospital and council staff, visited late night hotspots and took submissions. It recommends more diversity, transport, policing and education, and lockout exemptions for good venues.

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)

FROM PARLIAMENT

Political donations disclosure gap closed

Following a meeting with the Election Funding Authority I repeatedly asked the government to close the loophole caused by the December High Court decision, which reversed the ban on donations from corporations, unions and peak industry groups but did not require their public disclosure.

I supported the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Consequential Amendment Bill and worked with the Opposition to amend it to cover *all* donations last financial year.

I raised concerns that the government's expert panel on political donation reform only has major party representatives, which could lead to biased recommendations that make it harder for new independents to raise funds and get elected.

Transparency in Lobbying

The current policy that requires lobbyists to be registered before meeting with ministers has been put into law with the Electoral Commission to enforce a strengthened Lobbyist Code of Conduct. Ministers will now be required to publish their diaries in line with my 2013 calls. I supported the bill and asked that the code be extended to shadow ministers who are also lobbied, especially before elections.

ICAC Escapes Funding Cuts

I spoke in favour of preventing budget cuts to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. ICAC is critical to exposing corruption and ensuring those with power act with integrity and high standards. With a number of high profile investigations pending, I was pleased the motion received multi-partisan support.

Action needed on illegal posters

Commercial posters continue to be placed on poles and fences, causing visual pollution and litter when they fall off. I asked the government to introduce penalties for the producers and promoters responsible not just the person putting up the poster.



OWNERS PREVENTED FROM PURSUING DEFECTS

Thousands of apartments need to be built to house Sydney's growing population and most inner city people live in apartments. The law must encourage sound construction and protect owners from defects. But the government reduced the warranty period for most defect types from six to two years including defects that take years to appear, and gave developers and builders a new defence in court if defects arise from architects' or engineers' advice. People's homes are their biggest investment and in Parliament I argued these changes will make it even more difficult to get defects fixed.

'GAY PANIC' DEFENCE REMOVED

In Parliament I welcomed the long awaited removal of the provocation defence, which would downgrade murder convictions to manslaughter where an accused proved that the victim's words or conduct caused them to lose self-control and kill. Provocation has been used by jealous husbands killing their spouse on hearing of an affair or 'gay-bashers' claiming unwanted romantic advances.



Working with colleagues towards LGBTI reform

SAFEGUARDS GONE WITH NEW POLICE POWERS

Police need powers to ensure effective and efficient investigations to prevent crime and hold criminals to account, but the government removed safeguards that ensure police give suspects information when it is needed and that limit initial questioning time. Vulnerable people are most likely to be impacted.

In Parliament I raised concerns that the bill could lead to loss of important basic rights, lengthen detention without charge and remove police accountability.



Illegal posters litter our streets



Will the bridge connect to hidden plot?

BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN MUST BE PROTECTED



Open space alienated for events

My submission to the draft Botanic Gardens and Domain Master Plan argued that the government must protect the parklands and gardens from alienation and commercialisation. The plan provides little detail about specific proposals and I am particularly concerned about development of a permanent sound shell in the Domain, a viewing platform at Mrs Macquarie's Point and a new hotel.

Planning should ensure these unique environs continue to provide green grass, trees, open space and a refuge to city residents, workers and visitors and contribute to botanical science.

DARLING HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Construction has begun on the convention, exhibition and entertainment venues following planning approval for the \$2.5 billion Darling Harbour redevelopment. My submission raised serious concerns about overdevelopment of the site and unacceptable impacts on adjacent residents including overshadowing from the commercial and residential towers. The planning department also approved the Sydney International Convention Centre Hotel which I argued would tower over Pyrmont.



BRIDGE TO NOWHERE LINKED TO ALARMING CAR PARK PLANS

The Anzac Parade pedestrian and cyclist bridge proposed and approved by the Roads and Maritime Service will alienate massive parts of Moore Park, block vistas and fail to meet pedestrian and cyclist needs. Alarmingly, media reports reveal the bridge is part of an SCG long term plan for car parking on Moore Park west. A car park on or under parklands will damage open space and trees, and cause traffic congestion. It is not needed with light rail expected to provide future event transport needs.

In Parliament I asked the government to keep car parking off Moore Park west, which was removed as part of compensation for parklands lost to the Eastern Distributor.

Growing the business vote

Business can already vote in City of Sydney elections but too few know their rights and the process can be complex. I have given notice of a bill to make it easier for eligible businesses to get on the electoral roll through an ongoing business and non-residential ratepayer register used to create a business roll before elections.

I was alarmed that the Shooters and Fishers Party has a bill to change inner city elections. The party is focussed on hunting, guns, fishing and land clearing, has a rural support base, and does deals with government. It wants the Melbourne model which can be easily rorted, and gives overseas corporations and people who've never visited Australia votes.

I will consult with chambers of commerce and Council before introducing a final bill.

Easy recycling solution

In Parliament, I again called for a Container Deposit Levy, which adds around 10 cents to drink prices that gets refunded when the container is returned for recycling. NSW recycles just over 40 per cent of drink containers and CDL could increase this to over 80 per cent, reducing litter and landfill. The community wants container deposits, but we have to convince the government in the face of strong industry opposition.

The future of bus passes

With the Opal Card expected on all public transport by the end of the year, I asked the transport minister whether TravelTen and short trip tickets will continue to be available so as not to disadvantage infrequent bus users. Opal cards are vital to the public transport system but may not provide the flexibility or value needed by those who only catch buses occasionally.



Helping Sydney's business vote



The UNSW cash for containers machine

follow my work at

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Campaigns & People

GADEN AND HOLDSWORTH COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Holdsworth Community Centre offers programs to Woollahra council residents disadvantaged by age, income, disability or social isolation and to families with young children. Dementia, disability and carer support programs are also available to City of Sydney residents. I visited its exciting new Gaden Centre and took part in the Tuesday Discussion Group which discussed topics including the federal budget and education and employment for people with a disability.



At Gaden with Woollahra locals

COAL SEAM GAS PROHIBITION BILL

I supported the Opposition bill to ban coal seam gas activity in the Sydney Catchment Authority special areas. Mining can have devastating impacts on water from land clearing, dust, chemicals, waste water and subsidence. Sydney's catchment must provide drinking water to almost six million people by 2031 and during debate I argued that any risks to water integrity should be banned. The government blocked the bill.



Mining not compatible with drinking water

INNER CITY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES AT RISK

Transferring homeless support funds from the inner city to outer regions risks putting people escaping violence, trauma or grief on the street as they come to the city for anonymity. The minister has responded to our calls and restored some funding but specialist homeless women's services could still close because they lose their premises and must re-tender for new funds that end within 18 months. I've repeatedly asked the minister to maintain inner city services and ensure no gaps during changes.



The 78ers still fighting 30 years on

30 YEARS SINCE DECRIMINALISATION

I joined MPs from all major parties to acknowledge 30 years since homosexual decriminalisation. Criminalisation was a moral approach to law that sanctioned homophobia, discrimination, violence and abuse. Men were imprisoned and received criminal records for consensual homosexual sex. Members recognised the hard work and achievements of LGBTI advocates and committed to further reform including expunging criminal records.

RECOGNISING VOICELESS

In Parliament I commended the invaluable work of Paddington-based Voiceless which works to remove animal suffering in factory farms and the kangaroo industry. Voiceless unites leaders in science, business, politics, law, media and the arts to help spread its message of compassion and respect for animals. US journalist Will Potter's Voiceless lecture charted the rise of "ag-gag" laws, which criminalise animal advocates for exposing animal cruelty on farms and in abattoirs. I will oppose similar laws if introduced in NSW.



Factory farm animals suffer
Photo courtesy of Animal Liberation