

The dying need dignity

Most people want access to a painless death if they become terminally ill.

Palliative care cannot always prevent a slow and painful death because it does not relieve all suffering like the inability to swallow, communicate, control muscles and bowels, or sleep. If death is inevitable, dying people should be able to get assistance to end their life when suffering becomes unbearable – if that is what they want.

It's unfair and futile to force someone to undergo severe suffering when they are soon going to die from their illness and along with colleagues across the political spectrum, I have drafted a bill for voluntary assisted dying.

The bill includes strong safeguards to ensure a patient fully understands their prognosis and treatment options, and is not being coerced into a decision. The patient would need to see three medical practitioners – one must be a specialist and one must be a psychiatrist – before assistance can be provided, and no physician would be forced to participate.

Assisted dying laws exist in Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Canada, France and Colombia, and in the USA states of Oregon, Washington, Vermont and California.

I will co-sponsor the bill with Trevor Khan from the Nationals, Lynda Voltz from Labor, Mehreen Faruqi from the Greens and Lee Evans from the Liberals and it will be introduced in the upper House after we consult on details. I understand members of the major parties will likely have a conscience vote.

While the majority of Australians support assisted dying, I know that it is a difficult issue for some and I hope the Parliament will take a compassionate approach when it comes to a vote.

You can follow progress of the bill and campaign at www.facebook.com/nswassisteddying/



Alex Greenwich MP
Member for Sydney

ULTIMO SCHOOL RETHINK

I asked the education minister to reconsider rebuilding the Ultimo school on the Fig and Wattle street depot site to provide for more students, recreational space and childcare. The planned final and temporary sites for the school both require remediation, potentially making remediation of the depot site cost-effective.

GREYHOUND CRUELTY TO END

I congratulate Premier Baird for committing to shut down greyhound racing in 2017. The industry uses abhorrent training methods like live baiting and kills thousands of dogs that are too slow to race annually. I have pushed for a ban since I was elected. You can adopt a retired greyhound through www.gapnsw.org.au.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES SACKED

The government sacked elected mayors and councillors of 42 councils and appointed unelected officials to run 19 newly merged local government areas. Elections to restore democracy won't happen until September 2017. Woollahra council lost its court case and could be next. The City of Sydney was spared and is up for election in September.

ART SCHOOL SHUTDOWN

Sydney College of the Arts has been closed with students sent to the UNSW Art and Design school; the National Art School could be absorbed too. Opportunities to study under different artistic approaches, styles and practices are vital and I asked the government to retain programs, courses and teachers.



Greyhound cruelty to end



We're moving to 21 Oxford St, Darlinghurst

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FROM PARLIAMENT

HOLIDAY LETS NEED REGULATION

Letting out your home while on holiday or a spare room to tourists is part of the sharing economy but some people are hijacking this business model to make significant profits at the expense of community, neighbours, housing affordability and city planning. Some apartment buildings have become quasi hotels. In Parliament I called for protections including improved enforcement, legislated time limits, bonds, strata approval by special or unanimous resolution, and obligations on booking sites to provide information to enforcement bodies.

LIMITING DONATIONS INFLUENCE

The government finally imposed a cap on local government election donations in line with State caps. Previously one donor could legally fund a candidate's entire campaign, creating significant potential for corruption and undue influence given council planning decisions can lead to massive private profit. Reform is needed more than ever as election campaigns grow under amalgamated councils. During debate I asked the government to ensure further reforms, including expenditure caps, are in place before the September 2017 elections of merged councils.

WESTCONNEX STILL OPAQUE

It's hard to believe that in 2016 the government would build an extensive motorway spilling thousands of cars into the congested CBD, with massive inner city spaghetti junctions adjacent to parks and homes.

The appalling WestConnex project is shrouded in secrecy with functions transferred to a private corporation excluded from freedom of information laws. In Parliament I supported Labor's bill to allow the public to apply to see WestConnex documents like the business case, modelling and costings. The government blocked the bill.



With Mark Pearson from the Animal Justice Party

ENDING CIRCUS CRUELTY

I will sponsor an Animal Justice Party bill in the lower House to restrict which animals can be used in circuses. Forcing animals to undergo a lifetime of travelling long distances, being trapped in tiny cages and subjected to harsh training regimes so they can do tricks is a cruel and archaic form of entertainment and unacceptable. It's time the Parliament put an end to this cruelty.

REPLACING FAIR TRIALS

The government created a new 'serious crime prevention' order to allow police to control a person's actions, associations and ownership if it *could* prevent a crime. Anyone who has had an alleged brush with crime in the past can be subject to an application and the courts can use hearsay evidence to make an order.

Orders could be used to punish and control suspects when there isn't enough evidence to convict them. Healthy democracies do not assume all suspects are guilty or that fair trials get in the way of catching criminals. I opposed the bill.

BETTER WAYS TO ADDRESS TERRORISM

Terrorism is a serious global challenge but boosting police powers to the point where 14 year olds can be arrested, detained and questioned for 14 days without charge, access to their families or judicial oversight will not reduce terror and extremism. In Parliament I opposed the latest terrorism bill, which erodes the very rights that differentiate our society from authoritarian countries that breed global terrorism. Governments need to prioritise social cohesion and inclusion not resentment and alienation.



Holiday lets need regulation



WestConnex to destroy Sydney Park

follow my
work at

www.alexgreenwich.com.au



SCG development begins without consultation

FORCING SCG TRUST TO CONSULT

Unlike land owned by developers, hospitals, schools, churches, and governments, development on Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust land does not have to go through an open development application process: the sports minister approves proposals behind closed doors.

Traffic, heritage, tree or shadowing reports are not released and neighbours can't contribute to the decision. The 2007 Rugby Centre for Excellence and the 2008 Sports Medicine Clinic were built, and construction has begun on the Australian Rugby Centre with sports science facilities – all with no community input.

My private members bill would remove exemptions from planning and local government laws for SCG Trust land and I encourage you to ask the Premier to support it.



Cross party support for Moore Park

LIGHT RAIL MUST RESPECT MOORE PARK

Sydney needs new public transport and I support light rail, but it should be done in a way that protects green open space and trees. I oppose the rerouting of the service on Alison Road into Centennial Park, and diversion of Anzac Parade, and built structures on Moore Park.

My letters and questions call for better oversight of contractors, who appear to be making ad hoc decisions on trees to fast-track construction, and to minimise built forms on the parklands.

BARANGAROO CROWNED

With architects and the City of Sydney I presented at the public hearing to implore the Planning Assessment Commission to refuse Lend Lease and Crown's proposal for a tower with casino, luxury hotel and apartments on Barangaroo South's only public waterfront park. I previously made submissions and opposed legislation for the casino. Unfortunately the commission approved the proposal. Improvements merely shift the tower back when a complete relocation was needed.

DIMINISHING THE NATIONAL PARK ESTATE

Only nine per cent of NSW is protected national park and few additions have been made in recent years. While I accept some revocations are necessary, such as to reflect a native title decision, the government's recent repeal of 350 hectares includes a part of the Ku-ring-Gai Chase National Park to expand a pistol club. So-called 'compensation' for the loss will be kilometres away in Heathcote, in land that should be reserved anyway. I told Parliament national park declarations are meant to be in perpetuity, not repealed for private land grabs.

FORESTRY AGREEMENTS EXPOSED

I launched a National Parks Association report that shows devastating destruction including on threatened species' habitat from logging native forests for timber and woodchip. The report shows massive social, economic and environmental benefits from tourism and carbon sequestration if logging were replaced with conservation.

PADDINGTON BOWLING CLUB

The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority agreed with most of the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing's 33 complaints about the Paddington Bowling Club and cancelled the club's licence and imposed significant fines. A number of club directors and officers have been disqualified. I've asked ICAC to revisit a previous corruption referral and the minister to implement recommended protections against commercialisation of Crown Land.



Public view and access to be limited by casino tower



Launching forests report



Paddington Bowling Club licence cancelled

Campaigns & People

CONTAINER DEPOSITS AT LAST

After decades of campaigning by environment groups, the state government will introduce a container deposit system by mid next year. Drink containers will incur a 10-cent levy that gets refunded when it is returned for recycling. There is too much plastic in the environment and container deposits boost recycling. I congratulate everyone who signed my petition.

PROBLEM GAMBLING

I helped launch HopeStreet's 'Responsible Gambling Awareness Week' which reminds us of the damage gambling can do to gamblers and their families and communities. Gambling is linked to family violence and breakdown, homelessness and poverty. I congratulated HopeStreet's Gambling Help Sydney counselling service which provides counselling, support, family workshops and outreach.

INTERSEX ADVOCATES MEET CHIEF PAEDIATRICIAN

I convened a meeting between intersex advocates and the NSW Chief Paediatrician and the paediatricians who co-chair the forum that reviews all medical decisions for infants with intersex variations. I support advocates' continued call to delay cosmetic genital surgery on infants until the child is old enough to understand impacts which can involve multiple follow-up surgeries and lost sexual sensation in adulthood. The paediatricians agreed to pursue improved data collection of infant surgeries.

LOUD FENCE FOR FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

Institutions across the world are showing support for victims and survivors of child abuse in institutional care by tying brightly coloured ribbons to their fences. I spoke at the Botanic Gardens launch, helped community advocates arrange an event at Parliament House and asked the government questions about creating a Forgotten Australians redress scheme like those in Queensland and Western Australia.

ENDING HIV

In response to my question in Parliament, the health minister restated the government's aim to end HIV transmission by 2020. She reported a 77 per cent increase in HIV tests since last year, advances in rapid testing and early treatment, and extended approval of pre-exposure prophylaxis treatment for people at high risk. I congratulate all those involved in this work: NSW is leading the world in addressing HIV.

HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

A new high school will open in 2019 on the Cleveland Street school campus providing for up to 1,200 students. The Intensive English School currently on the site will move to Alexandria Park, which will be expanded to cater for up to 2,200 primary and secondary students by 2022. Inner city parents currently have few options for their children and I congratulate campaigners who pushed for new facilities.



Container deposits at last



Responsible Gambling Awareness Week



Loud Fence for Forgotten Australians



Ending HIV transmission by 2020



New high school site in Cleveland Street