



alex greenwich
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR SYDNEY

sydney news

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Greatest Risk to Our Environment Ever!

NSW has one of the worst extinction rates in the world: we've lost animals, plants, ecosystems, and almost all rainforests, with much of what is left at risk.

Only nine per cent of NSW land is protected national park – most of our native vegetation is privately owned or Crown land.

Yet late last year the government pushed through legislation to let landowners clear native vegetation without oversight and to make it easier to sell Crown land.

Land management controls now reflect Queensland's which clears 300,000 hectares of native bush a year – NSW previously cleared around 10,000 hectares a year!

The government will review all Crown land parcels, which make up about 42 per cent of NSW, and sell or transfer any considered not of 'State significance'. Vital habitat and travel routes for endangered species are at risk, as are inner city parcels like the Paddington Bowling Club – we know the Fish Market site will be sold.

Environment groups say the laws will have devastating impacts on air, water and land quality, and biodiversity.

Climate change will bring extreme weather events creating massive challenges to our quality of life; land management changes must be about protecting remaining biodiversity, not destroying it.

Alex Greenwich MP
Member for Sydney

ANOTHER GREAT MARDI GRAS

I got cross party support from Parliament to welcome the contribution of Mardi Gras to Sydney and NSW. Speakers gave strong messages of acceptance and celebration of LGBTI communities. Mardi Gras remains an important tool in the push for equality and this year I was proud to again march with Lord Mayor Clover Moore and supporters.

SHORT TERM LETTING

Short term letting in private homes can be good for visitors and hosts but if not regulated properly, can impact on housing affordability and neighbours through strata costs, security and noise. In Parliament the minister promised me he would consider giving owner corporations the power to control short term letting in strata. I will push for other protections for terrace homes.

PRIVATISATION GONE MAD

I opposed the bill to privatise NSW Land and Property Information because it risks the quality of service, property fraud and increased costs to buy and sell a home. The government's privatisation agenda is getting out of hand – what will be next!

SYDNEY WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Elaine Czulkowski of Darlinghurst, Sydney Local Woman of the Year. Elaine is committed to equality and has supported LGBTI organisations including Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, The Bingham Cup, ACON, Out for Australia, Queer Screen, Australian Marriage Equality and the Equality Campaign.



Sydney Local Woman of the Year,
Elaine Czulkowski



Celebrating Chinese New Year
'Year of the Rooster'

contacts

Alex Greenwich MP
Independent Member for Sydney

Ground Floor 21 Oxford Street,
Darlinghurst NSW 2010
Telephone 9267 5999
Email sydney@parliament.nsw.gov.au

www.alexgreenwich.com.au

FROM PARLIAMENT

CORRUPTION WATCHDOG PUNISHED

The Independent Commission Against Corruption investigates and exposes corruption of politicians and public officials, and its recent Operation Spicer implicated former government MPs. Appallingly the government rushed through legislation to sack the sitting commissioner and make it harder for investigations to go to public hearing. I opposed the bill and supported Labor amendments to keep the then sitting commissioner.

COMMUNITY HOUSING TRANSFERS

The government will transfer 18,000 public housing tenancies outside the inner city to community housing providers through a new system of leases that allow tenants to keep the same conditions and rights including a fixed term lease. While the government should not lose control of tenant management, community housing providers have high tenant satisfaction so I supported the bill. In response to my concerns, the government promised to only transfer to non-profit organisations.

LAND ACQUISITIONS STILL NEED FIXING

Many inner city home owners forced to sell and tenants forced to move for the metro, light rail and WestConnex projects felt cheated. In response to community outcry the government increased compensation for non-financial disadvantage, but in Parliament I argued the compulsory acquisition system remains unfair because it does not guarantee people can buy or rent a new home within their community. Inner city low cost housing is becoming rare and getting market value may force someone to move away from their community and supports.



DIGITAL EDUCATION FAIL

ICT professionals tell me NSW technology education is falling behind. We are the only state not to adopt the national curriculum, which increases digital technologies emphasis and includes great teaching resources. About 40 per cent of jobs will be lost to automation in 10 to 15 years and in Parliament I asked the government to adopt the national digital technologies curriculum to skill our future workforce for the digital and innovation economies.

ACTION NEEDED ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Escalating home prices and stagnant wages prevent first home buyers entering the market, and inner city renting is "extremely unaffordable". Diversity is at risk and people who help the inner city function like teachers, nurses and police can't afford to live here.

The government's promised housing affordability strategy aims to help first home buyers and in Parliament I asked for it to address inner city and rental unaffordability. I called for a 15 per cent social and affordable housing target in redevelopments, developer levies and a fairer tax system, and warned that short term letting proliferation could worsen affordability.



Independents working together

FULL PRISONS SHAME

I supported the Independent Member for Lake Macquarie's motion calling on the government to reduce the number of people in jail, particularly young people, Indigenous people and those on remand. A record 12,641 people are in prison and the number continues to grow without improving safety. Nearly 70 per cent reoffend; we need active programs to educate, rehabilitate and address underlying disability, mental illness, disadvantage and trauma. I asked the minister to invest in post-release and justice reinvestment programs to help prisoners reintegrate.



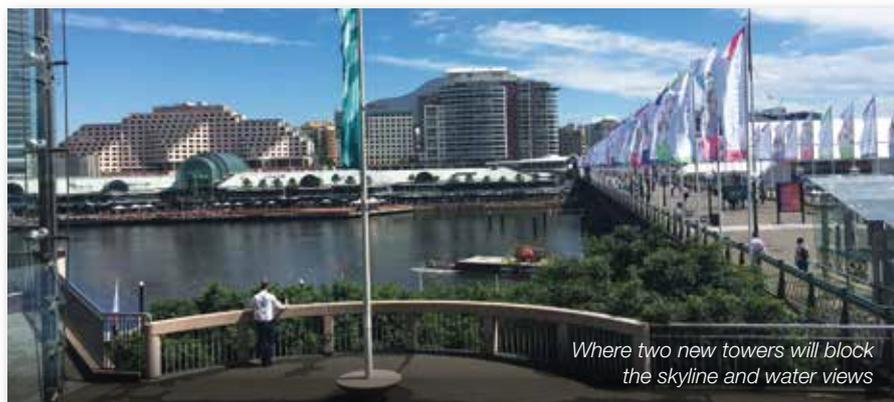
1930s heritage affordable homes to go for metro station



With the former minister and Lord Mayor opening City West Housing in Glebe

follow my
work at

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RAMPANT HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT

Good planning principles are being abandoned to overdevelop and privatise the harbour foreshore. The low rise human scale of Darling Harbour is being replaced with towers and soon the waterfront will be windy and overshadowed, and without city skyline views.

I recently opposed proposals for a 39-storey Harbourside residential tower and 235-metre Cockle Bay Wharf commercial tower. Previously I opposed the now approved 25-storey IMAX tower and the now built 142-metre ICC Hotel tower. Over 600 new private car parks will be added to the area, despite already congested CBD and Pyrmont traffic networks. Now Star City Casino wants to build a 215-metre residential tower.

The government promised strategic planning, but these proposals are ad-hoc and have no public benefit.



WESTCONNEX BIGGER AND CLOSER

The government released alarming proposals to widen roads and intersections, and introduce clearways between Alexandria and Moore Park. Details are scarce but it looks like parts of Moore Park will be shaved off. The changes are to deal with increased traffic from the WestConnex St Peter's Interchange, despite government promises that the existing inner city local road network would be able to cope with increased traffic.

It is unsustainable to continually expand road space; new roads encourage private vehicle use, leading to more congestion and at massive cost. My submission asked the government to abandon proposals and work across roads, public transport, environment and planning agencies to address future congestion.

NOISY VEHICLES

Intrusive noise from vehicles late at night has long been a concern and getting effective action has proved difficult. Noise regulations are impractical, requiring you to report licence plates to the EPA so that vehicles can be called in for inspection.

Kings Cross Police carry out weekend operations with noisy vehicles tested on the spot. I asked adjacent police commanders to carry out similar operations.

CRUISE SHIP POLLUTION

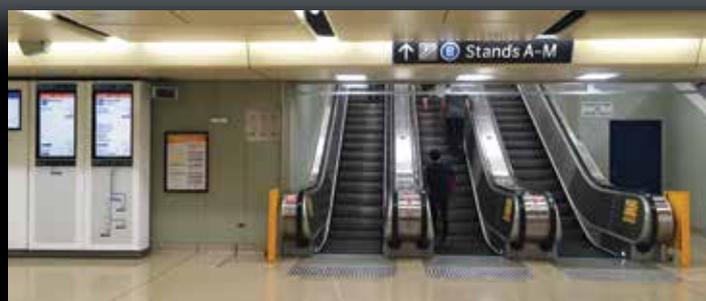
The solution to cruise ship noise and air pollution is providing shore-to-ship power supply. Emissions from ships berthed in Sydney Harbour can affect thousands of residents, workers and visitors and I've asked another question in Parliament about plans for the Overseas Passenger Terminal and White Bay Cruise Terminal. With federal law changes overriding the State's tightening of fuel standards to lower sulfur emissions, this matter is urgent.

EDGECLIFF STATION STALLED

In response to my latest question about the promised upgrade of the Edgecliff Railway Station and bus interchange, the minister says that the concept design stage is finished, but detailed design won't be done until the end of the year and there is still no date for completion. The station urgently needs improved accessibility, especially lifts and I will continue to push for this needed upgrade – announced with fanfare in 2015.



Plugging in... It's the cruise ship pollution solution



Still waiting for the urgent Edgecliff Station plan upgrade

Campaigns & People

ELIZABETH BAY MARINA EXPANSION

Revised plans for the Elizabeth Bay Marina are still too big, with more and larger boats to block views and disrupt peaceful Beare Park and adjacent homes. Structures including a taller facility will cover more water surface and potential ferry services haven't been considered. The densely populated adjacent communities rely on Beare Park for recreation and respite and my submissions opposed this marina expansion.



Elizabeth Bay Marina, big boats to block park views

STOP MINING THE GARDENS OF STONE

Spectacular rock formations, threatened species and Aboriginal art of the Gardens of Stone are excluded from the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area and subject to mining. Underground mining has collapsed cliffs, cracked pagodas, and polluted and dried water sources; now miners want to extract all remaining coal through open cut mines. I asked the environment minister to extend the Gardens of Stone National Park to protect what's left. Get involved www.colongwilderness.org.au/campaigns/the-gardens-of-stone



In Armidale with committee colleagues

PETS IN RURAL TRANSPORT

As a member of the Community Services Parliament committee, I learned how limited transport options prevent older and disadvantaged people in rural and regional areas do basic things like shopping, banking or going to the doctor. I successfully amended the report to highlight the importance of new options for pet owners without cars, which could have benefits across the state.



With Seniors Award winner Ron Jennings

SENIORS AWARD WINNERS

My local Seniors Awards are a way to thank and acknowledge older people's contribution to our community. This year the awards recognised the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association for helping older people use computers and online communication; Ron Jennings of Pyrmont for community service over many years; Angela Corvila of Paddington for preparing food and helping neighbours; and Mina Batra of The Rocks for work with the United Nations Association and seniors groups.



Selling access to public icons

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE COMMERCIALISATION

The Sydney Opera House is an important entertainment venue, but the community must decide how much commercialisation is too much. Four community celebrations were approved on the forecourt in 2003; last year 99 days a year of ticketed events were approved – without consultation. Heritage experts are alarmed about built structures, clutter and reduced public access. My questions in Parliament push for more transparent management of this state, national and world heritage precinct.



At the recent Keep Sydney Open rally

SMALL LOCKOUT REPRIEVE

Live entertainment venues in the lockout zone can have their 1.30am lockout moved to 2am, and 3am closure moved to 3.30am on a two-year trial. While I welcome this small relaxation, more is needed to improve Sydney's declining nightlife. Sydney is a global city and needs a vibrant late night economy. With transport, renewable licences and tools to prevent licensed premises saturating small areas, we could lift the 1.30am lockout for live music, live entertainment, smaller and well managed venues, while maintaining safety benefits. The government will set up a taskforce on further action and I will push for progress.