



newsletter 3 | july 2013

# sydney news

Alex Greenwich MP Member for Sydney

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

## VICTIMS FALL VICTIM TO GOVERNMENT CUTS

The Government's latest budget slash cuts maximum compensation payments to the most seriously injured victims of violent crime from \$50,000 to \$15,000.

Retrospectivity means victims with pending claims end up with significantly less than expected, despite major assessment delays due to a government backlog. Many would not have gone through the trauma of recounting their experience had they known they would receive so little.

Victims who don't make an application within two years of an incident or two years after a child victim turns 18 will not get compensation. Thankfully time limits were removed from the bill for child abuse cases ensuring compensation for victims appearing before inquiries into child sex abuse in institutions.

During debate on the Victims Rights and Support Bill I spoke of real cases such as a victim badly beaten on a public street whose wheelchair was damaged beyond repair. The victim would have got a \$6,000 interim payment to repair the wheelchair and a final award of \$37,000 for injury but entitlements will now drop to a mere \$5,000.

The new scheme excludes lawyers, so people who are homeless, live in institutions, come from lower socio-economic backgrounds or are prisoners can't get help to access their rights.

Compensation helps victims get back on their feet. I opposed the bill and similarly opposed the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill, which would significantly cut benefits for lost wages, treatment and care to the majority of people injured in motor vehicle accidents at no fault of their own.

Responsible governments protect and help vulnerable people and I am concerned at this Government's slash-and-burn approach to vital benefits.

Alex Greenwich MP  
Member for Sydney

### Voluntary Euthanasia

The *Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill* has strong protections for the vulnerable, and doctors would not be forced to assist someone to die. The bill did not pass the upper House *this time* but I will co-sponsor it in the lower House with Greens Jamie Parker and Independent Greg Piper.

### More childcare needed

Inner city childcare centres have long waiting lists as more young families live in the city. All levels of government must address the shortage. I have asked the State Government to improve childcare affordability, availability and quality. My August forum in Pyrmont will discuss solutions.

### Affordable housing crisis

In Parliament I asked the Government to focus its Affordable Housing Taskforce on the inner city where social housing waiting lists are enormous, boarding houses are being converted in to single residences, essential workers like teachers and nurses get priced out and student accommodation demand outstrips supply.

### Smaller buses... finally!

In a welcome move away from previous one-size-fits-all approaches, the Government is trialling smaller buses on the 326, 327, 355 and 361 routes. I asked the Minister to use smaller buses on the heavily trafficked and narrow 311 route.

news snapshot



My Voluntary Euthanasia Forum in Paddington



With Woolloomooloo locals on Walk to School Day

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## FROM PARLIAMENT

### More inner city high school places on the agenda

Public high schools in the local area are full or fast filling up and families need new options. In Parliament I asked the Education Minister to allow Sydney Boys High School to increase local enrolments to provide additional capacity. The minister is considering the suggestion, which has the support of the school's headmaster and the parents and citizens association.

### Succession to the Crown

In 2011 Commonwealth countries agreed to enact laws to remove discrimination against female heirs to the throne. While I am a republican, I support modernising succession laws. In Parliament I raised concerns that the Succession to the Crown (Request) Bill could reduce the argument that NSW has its own Crown separate to the Commonwealth because it only refers to the 'Crown of Australia'. Monarchists and republicans concerned about State rights share this view.

Since the Australia Acts of 1986 the Queen can only act on the advice of the Premier on State matters. It remains unresolved whether this means she is Queen of NSW separate to Queen of Australia. NSW should have adopted a similar bill to Queensland, which specifically protected the possibility of a separate Crown.

### Pets in Apartments

Most strata schemes adopt the default bylaw which bans pets, making it difficult for responsible pet owners to find homes. In response to my question in Parliament the Minister committed to changing the default bylaw to allow pets with executive committee permission, which can't be unreasonably refused. This could mean more pet friendly apartments.

Pets provide owners companionship, security and health benefits and pet owners should be able to find somewhere to live including in the densely populated inner city. I will push for similar changes to help owners keep pets in rental properties and retirement villages.

## STATE TIGHTENS GRIP OVER COUNCILS

In Parliament I opposed the Local Government Amendment (Early Intervention) Bill, which gives the State Government sweeping powers to place orders on and sack councils it claims are 'underperforming'. I moved to defer debate until the outcome of two local government reviews but did not get government support.

I worked with other MPs to amend the bill so that councils get an opportunity to respond before being sacked and to remove provisions making them accountable to the Minister. I worked with upper House MPs to try to get the guidelines for using new powers in the regulations.



*Standing up for Local Government in Parliament*



*Merging councils on the agenda*

## SO WHAT DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE IN STORE FOR COUNCILS?

There is widespread suspicion the bill is part of an agenda to amalgamate councils, especially the City, which has a long history of boundary changes to benefit the government of the day. The Independent Local Government Review Panel recommends merging 40 Sydney councils into 15 large councils, including a 'super' City of Sydney covering almost 800,000 people by 2036.

Massive councils can't target services to local needs, and residents and ratepayers will lose access to decision makers. In Parliament I called on the Government to renew its commitment of no forced amalgamations ahead of the next election.



*Max, my rescue dog, happy in our apartment*



*More public high school spots needed*

## PLANNING CHANGES IMMINENT

Planning reform is needed because over a decade of ad hoc changes have stripped heritage and environment protections and people's say in shaping their neighbourhood, while handing planning decisions to unelected people.



*Minister hears concerns at my Planning Forum*

The current Planning White Paper and draft bills put a greater focus on early strategic planning to identify areas for housing and jobs growth in consultation with the community. While I support this, my submission opposed removing community participation on individual developments and proposals that 80 per cent of developments bypass proper assessment.

Climate change and population growth require strong planning controls to ensure new areas are liveable and environmentally sustainable.

## CPMPT LONG TERM VISION

The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust released its long term vision for the parklands which despite great proposals like a shared cycle and pedestrian path along Oxford Street, threatens the park's integrity.

Moore Park west would have an underground car park risking trees and open space, to make way for access points and ventilation stacks. We should use the new light rail service to rid the area of on-grass parking and traffic gridlock. New buildings on Moore Park, the E S Marks Field and at Fox Studios will alienate more green and public open space. When will it end?

While the cash-strapped trust needs revenue as the Government chops recurrent funding, the parklands should be protected for the outdoor recreation needs of present and future generations as intended in Governor Macquarie's 1811 Sydney Common bequest.

## MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS EARLY INTERVENTION

In Parliament I called on the Government to fund mental health programs that prevent relapse, help recovery and promote inclusion. Despite 3.3 million Australians affected and almost 12,000 hospitalised in NSW each year, prevention and early intervention only get 6 per cent of funding, compared to New Zealand where it's about a third. Most funding goes to crisis care.

St Vincent's Hospital Mental Health Service is under pressure to discharge early and make way for others in crisis. It has a 90 per cent occupancy rate and caters for residents, visitors and workers across greater Sydney.



*Talking health and mental health strategies with the local Chinese community*

## Greyhound cruelty

Lots of constituents have raised concerns that around 7,000 greyhounds are killed every year in NSW because they won't run fast enough to make a profit and that most racing dogs are killed on retirement because there are not enough homes to adopt them.

In response to my concerns the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing said initiatives like the Greyhounds as Pets Program, better breeding practices, re-homing support, industry education and a Greyhound Welfare and Veterinary Services Unit will help.

It is cruel to treat live sentient animals as disposable commodities and I've asked follow-up questions in Parliament.

## Darling Harbour Redevelopment impacts

While updating Sydney's exhibition, entertainment and convention facilities provides vital opportunity to integrate Darling Harbour with the city and surrounding areas through building design and pedestrian links, the project includes eight new residential and commercial towers that will overshadow adjacent residents and interrupt views.

My submission opposed the overdevelopment in the Southern Haymarket Precinct and called for consent conditions to prioritise active transport to reduce private motor vehicle reliance, traffic congestion and emissions.



*Darling Harbour to become denser?*

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

# Campaigns & People

## HELLO SUNDAY MORNING

Most government campaigns try to tackle binge drinking by showing the consequences of intoxication like ending up in the gutter or getting into fights. Hello Sunday Morning is different; it provides positive support to people who want to change their drinking habits through an online tool. The over 9,000 users create a network of people sharing their experiences of not drinking, providing peer support and recommending alternative activities. Sign-ups double every six months.

In Parliament I acknowledged this achievement and asked the Minister for Health to contribute to funding. **Join at <http://hellosundaymorning.org/>**

## NATIONAL PARKS AT RISK

In response to my questions in Parliament the Environment Minister said the Government would not review the 2008 National Parks Establishment Plan until the outcome of the Shooters and Fishers Party chaired Management of Public Land in NSW inquiry. Since then, the inquiry alarmingly recommended opening national parks to logging and a moratorium on new parks.

The loss-making timber industry is taxpayer subsidised and national parks were recently opened up to horse riding, tourist development and soon hunting. Native species and rare forest types are at risk.

**Take action <http://nccnsw.org.au/take-action/forests>**

## A METRE MATTERS

Following the death and serious injury of a number of bicycle riders when motorists overtook them dangerously, I asked the Minister for Ports and Roads to support the *A Metre Matters campaign*. While road rules require motorists to overtake other vehicles 'safely', there is no definition, which allows flexibility that can put cyclists at risk. The Amy Gillett Foundation wants road rules to require motorists to ensure there is at least a metre between their vehicle when it overtakes a bicycle.

**More information [www.amygillett.org.au/a-metre-matters/](http://www.amygillett.org.au/a-metre-matters/)**

## ENDING HIV

Parliament supported my motion acknowledging the achievements of successive governments, ACON, health professionals and the community for making NSW a world leader in the response to HIV-AIDS.

Thanks to joint efforts, contracting HIV is no longer a death sentence and infection rates have been stable for over a decade. Nonetheless 250 gay men a year still contract HIV in NSW, and continued efforts are needed. The Ending HIV campaign aims to stop infections by 2020 through regular testing and early treatment.

**More information at <http://endinghiv.org.au/>**

## REVITALISING OXFORD STREET

Revitalising Oxford Street is possible, and my recent meeting with Paddington Business Partnership members and the Small Business Commissioner confirmed that we are all working for the same outcome. Short term goals include removing the clearway, 40 kph speed limits, landscaping, branding and parking changes. Sign my petition <http://alexgreenwich.com.au>



*Ecological communities at risk*



*A metre really does matter to people's lives*



*NSW Parliament supports Ending HIV*



*Growing Oxford Street's potential*