



Local Government Environmental Policy Initiatives

An snapshot of policy ideas for NSW Labor Candidates

NSW Labor Environment Action Network (LEAN) has compiled this snapshot of environmental policies for Labor Government candidates at the 2021 local government elections.

We hope this can serve as inspiration in developing policies and campaign ideas to support your local government campaign, and ultimately to drive progressive environmental change across NSW.

We want to help you achieve these policies!

If you're looking for more information on these policies, please reach out! We can try and put you in touch with other Labor councillors who have made them happen in their areas. Or if there is any other way you think LEAN may be able to help your local government campaign - please get in touch!

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Waste and Recycling

KEY POLICY: Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) recycling

About 40% of waste to landfill is food organics. This waste stream is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in landfill, and a valuable resource that can be turned into compost. The NSW Government is committed to net zero emissions from food organics in landfill by 2030. Councils will most likely need to offer a kerbside FOGO collection service to divert and recycle this waste stream, see for example [Randwick City Council](#).

Interim measures could include:

- Phasing in and trialling FOGO in high density dwellings first.
- Offering free/subsidized compost bins for residents.

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- Support for community waste sharing apps like [ShareWaste](#).
- Offering composting facilities at community gardens and reserves.

KEY POLICY: Electronic waste (e-waste) recycling

E-Waste is a large and growing waste stream in Australia. [Clean Up Australia estimates](#) that fewer than 1% of TVs and around 10% of PCs and laptops are recycled. E-waste is still difficult to recycle in many areas. Whilst some retailers offer in-store drop offs, they often do not accept all forms of electronic waste, and awareness is poor. **Councils have a key role to play in making recycling of all forms of electronic waste accessible and free to residents.** The [City of Sydney offers free E-waste drop off](#) and pick up services, allowing residents to conveniently recycle electronic waste.

Other Waste and Recycling Initiatives:

- Free **mattress recycling** - [as Waverley Council does](#).
- Ban **single-use plastics** at council events and in operations, and create support programs for local small businesses to transition away from single-use plastic.
- **Textiles recycling**. Council can provide textile recycling bins, as [Bathurst Council recently tried](#), and support local school uniform reuse programs.
- **Cigarette butt litter prevention** - butts are the most littered items in NSW, with an estimated 1.32 billion littered every year. Install butt bins in key smoking hotspots, and consider applying for the [EPA Cigarette Butt Litter Prevention Grants Program](#).
- Install more **water-refill stations** and bubblers to reduce plastic bottle use, [see Northern Beaches Council](#).

Climate Change and Energy

KEY POLICY: Join the Climate Council's 'Cities Power Partnership'

The Climate Council's Cities Power Partnership is Australia's largest local government climate network, made up of over 140 councils from across the country: citiespowerpartnership.org.au

KEY POLICY: Electric Vehicle (EV) uptake and charging infrastructure

Transport is Australia's second largest source of emissions, and particle air pollution from road emissions leads to the death of 1,700 people every year in Australia - more than the national road toll. Uptake of EVs is low in Australia compared to comparable countries overseas. As the managers of local roads and carparks, **local governments have a key role to play in supporting the uptake of EV's, and charging stations.**

- Councils can create dedicated priority parking spaces for electric vehicles with charging stations at council car parks and community facilities.

- On-street charging stations in high-density urban areas where off-street parking is limited is also essential to driving higher EV uptake - providing charging stations for residents who cannot install their own in apartment blocks. See how the [City of Ryde](#) and the [City of Newcastle](#) have installed public charging stations.
- Commit to a 100% electric council fleet, including garbage trucks. Due to the relatively high turnover of council car fleets, this assists in the creation of a secondary market for used EV's.

KEY POLICY: Renewable Energy Target

Introduce or increase the ambition of councils Renewable Energy Target. Things are moving quickly in terms of the costs of renewable energy, available technology, public appetite for action - making more ambitious targets achievable. A new council may bring more political opportunities to increase ambition.

Other Climate and Energy Initiatives:

- Set an ambitious **Emissions Reduction Target (ERT)** for both council operations, and for the local LGA area as a whole.
- Convert to **efficient LED streetlights** (may require partnering with AusGrid or other provider to do so)
- Commit to **solar PVs** on all council owned roofs - including swimming pools, libraries, depots, etc.
- Ensure the council has an **active transport strategy** and invests in building bike paths and associated infrastructure such as bike lockers.
- Develop an **electrification strategy** - phasing out gas heating and cooking in council-owned buildings, particularly gas heating and hot water at swimming pools, gyms, surf lifesaving clubs and sporting facilities.
- **Development standards** - mandate rooftop solar, rainwater tanks, and even the phasing out of gas heating and appliances as [City of Canterbury Bankstown](#) has recently done.

Local Environment and Waterways

Urban Canopy and Habitat

- **KEY POLICY:** Set ambitious targets for **urban tree canopy** or review and increase ambition on existing targets.
- Involve the community to increase buy-in of **street tree planting**, eg: Newcastle council surveys residents for their preferred native species and organises community planting days, with residents self nominating to take ongoing care and watering.

- **Native plant giveaways** for residents - eg: [Northern Beaches council](#). This can also be targeted to properties that are within wildlife corridors or adjacent to bushland reserves.
- Develop a policy to support the construction of **green roofs** on residential and commercial buildings in the LGA.

Protecting and Regenerating Bushland

- **KEY POLICY:** Set ambitious targets and increase funding for local **bush regeneration programs**.
- Ensure the council is using the latest scientific evidence to guide **bushfire hazard reduction** and Asset Protection Zones.
- Ensure council has a **wildlife corridor policy** and invests to increase tree canopy and supports residents to create native gardens in these critical corridors.

Protecting and Restoring Waterways

- **KEY POLICY:** Set targets for the restoration of local rivers and waterways and develop whole of catchment management strategies that incorporate the below ideas:
 - Build **rain gardens** to filter stormwater pollution and create urban habitat - see [City of Sydney](#). Replace hard surfaces (ie traffic devices and roundabouts and chiccanes) with rain gardens or native groundcovers where possible.
 - **Naturalise concrete canals** and channels, restoring urban waterway habitat, as has been done recently at [Johnstons Creek in Annandale](#).
 - **Upgrade water infrastructure**, in particular Gross Pollutant Traps and increase monitoring and cleaning.
 - Improve local LEPs and development control plans to incorporate **water sensitive urban design principles** into local development.
 - Ensure that your council join the **local catchment group**.
 - Move to have your council join the [Get the Site Right campaign](#) (Sydney campaign), or similar local education program for sediment reduction.

Water-use and Recycling

- Set targets for **stormwater recycling**.
- Invest in large-scale **stormwater recycling infrastructure** - see the [Maroubra Stormwater Recycling and Reuse System](#) by Randwick Council.