



# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES in NSWVotes2023

BPN invites responses from candidates and registered parties/groups to the questions below, which aim to provide information for voters on where they stand on the need for reform of the Planning system in NSW.

Please complete the questionnaire by indicating YES or NO to each question and, preferably, inserting comments in support (The easiest way to do this is to just edit this word document).

Please return the questionnaire, as soon as possible but by 20 March at the latest, to [bpn@betterplanningnetwork.org.au](mailto:bpn@betterplanningnetwork.org.au)

BPN intends to publicise the responses we receive, to provide guidance for voters interested in planning reform. We will also publicise non-response.

# ELIZABETH FARRELLY INDEPENDENTS

## BPN Questions for Candidates #NSWVotes2023

1. Do you believe the current NSW land use planning system strikes the correct balance between the voice of property developers and local communities? YES **NO** Please discuss why.

No. The planning system is essentially seen as an exercise in parcelling out windfall gains to developers. Far too much control is given to developers, as well as too much and too-easy Ministerial access. A consequence is that the government starts to see the public as the enemy and forges that in fact its only real purpose is to control development in pursuit of the public good. We need to limit Ministerial discretion, end developer access, remove deliberate loophole like Unsolicited Bids and SSD and engage in genuine, intensive community engagement at the front of the planning process. The Planning Act should be scrapped and rewritten in a far shorter, simplified form to put the long-term public interest at the centre of every decision.

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2. Do you believe State Planning Policies grant excessive decision-making discretion to the Minister for Planning? **YES** NO Can you provide any examples which illustrate your view?

Far too much ministerial discretion exists. Examples abound – but most egregiously Barangaroo, in all its successive modifications (which have doubled floorspace).

Central Station is another. The Powerhouse is another, and so on.

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3. Do you regard it as a priority for the next NSW Government to address climate impacts of developments more comprehensively under the planning system? **YES** NO If yes, please detail what policies you have adopted and what initiatives you will pursue if elected.

Immediate climate action (transition to renewables, proper royalties on gas mining, green roofs, urban shade, the missing middle in housing, habitat preservation and regenerative farming) needs to stand front and centre of the Planning Act. Planning must engage the community up front, map the entire state (soils, forest, aquifers, floodplains, habitat, towns and cities) and control roads, transport and infrastructure accordingly.

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4. Do you think the concept of "State significance" in NSW planning is applied correctly? YES **NO**  
Can you provide any examples which illustrate your view?  
State Significance has become an excuse for developers and government agencies to override all planning constraint – eg Barangaroo, Cumberland Hospital Parramatta, the Powerhouse, Central Station, Fig Tree Hill etc.

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5. Do you think the NSW Independent Planning Commission is sufficiently independent of the Government?  
YES **NO** Please give examples.  
Barangaroo – what a disgrace

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6. In your opinion does environmental impact assessment of planning developments in NSW meet community expectations in relation to the following?
- |                                                            |     |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| - Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage?                 | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Protecting post-European cultural heritage?              | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Preventing irreversible harm to natural environment?     | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Taking into consideration flood risk?                    | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Protecting tree canopies in urban and regional contexts? | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Preventing sterilisation of peri-urban food bowl?        | YES | <b>NO</b> |
| - Ensuring quality housing?                                | YES | <b>NO</b> |

7. Should a responsible NSW climate response include the issuing of further coal and gas exploration licences?  
YES **NO** Please detail what policies you would support and which initiatives you will pursue if elected.  
We need to transition immediately to renewables: a moratorium on new mining licenses (most urgently the Liverpool Plains and Narrabri); impose proper royalties on exiting mines and use the estimated \$25bn pa to fund the transition to clean jobs. Also a ban on new tollways, investing instead in a fully networked solar-electric rail system for passengers and freight across the state.

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8. The 2022 auditor general's review of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme concluded the scheme failed to protect NSW environment. Will you support an overhaul of the scheme, so that Positive Conservation Outcomes are assured? **YES** NO

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9. Is it time for a root and branch review of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*?

**YES** NO If yes, what do you think the scope of such changes should be, and who should be responsible for this review (e.g. NSW Productivity Commission)? If no, please explain why not?

Planning is not about productivity. It should be structured by wise planners to understand the natural attributes of the state (as outlined above) and put the public interest (food and water security, climate action, green jobs, liveable, walkable communities) at the centre of all planning decisions.

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10. Many properties, particularly foreign investment properties, are reported to remain vacant. Do you support a government audit and introduction of financial disincentives for residential property owners who leave their property vacant for more than six months in order to encourage delivery of more housing to the rental market? **YES** NO If yes, do you have specific suggestions?

- Limit Air BNB, especially in rural and regional towns
- Build public housing with public money
- Institute proper rent controls to make dignified renting secure and dependable for a lifetime
- End “investor-grade product”
- Require properties to be vacant for no more than eight weeks

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11. Current NSW affordable housing policy includes bonus development as an incentive for developers to deliver some affordable housing but the housing only remains affordable for 15 years. Is this in your opinion a sustainable solution to the affordable housing crisis? YES **NO** What is your policy on affordable housing?

Affordable housing should be properly defined (which it currently is not) and required as 30% of all new residential development.

Public housing is a separate category and must be built within city centres, close to services and transport, with public money and high quality design (reconstitute the Government Architect).

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