



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

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

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. Local communities voices are largely ignored.
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?

Yes. For example most SSI proposals are strongly opposed by local communities but the Minister approves them anyway. Coal and coal seam gas proposals are being approved at a time of climate emergency, which is clearly the wrong way to go. The WestConnex motorway was also approved despite tens of thousands of detailed objections.
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.

Yes. Our policy is a planned shift to 100% renewable energy within 5-10 years via public investment and emission reduction targets.
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?

No. In fact it mean significant to the donors of the major parties! The Crown Casino and entire Barangaroo development is a perfect example.

5. Do you think the NSW Independent Planning Commission is sufficiently independent of the Government?
YES NO Please give examples.

No. The approval by the IPC of the Narrabri gas project is a good example.

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 | NO |
| - Protecting post-European cultural heritage? | YES | NO |
| - Preventing irreversible harm to natural environment? | YES | NO |
| - Taking into consideration flood risk? | YES | NO |
| - Protecting tree canopies in urban and regional contexts? | YES | NO |
| - Preventing sterilisation of peri-urban food bowl? | YES | NO |
| - Ensuring quality housing? | YES | NO |

No for all of these.

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.

No. No new coal and gas.

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

Yes

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?

Yes. It has been watered down over many decades. A public enquiry should be held with sessions for the public to have input and final say over the legislation.

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?

Yes. A vacancy tax should be levied and NSW should lobby the federal government for the abolition of investor tax concessions eg negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts.

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?

No it is insufficient. We need a massive increase in public housing construction. Public housing should be of high standard and available to everyone who wishes to live in it and at affordable rents.

Response from (name): Steve O'Brien

Date: 20/3/2023

Capacity: Lead Legislative Council candidate for Socialist Alliance

Contact details (optional): Steve O'Brien Newcastlesocialists@gmail.com