



# 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.

## 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?

**All decision-making systems should be continually monitored and improved. It is important that the planning system, which is tasked with resolving demands on alternate uses for parcels of land, balances the views and needs of all stakeholders, including project proponents, existing residents, and future residents. A NSW Labor Government will always look to opportunities to improve the decision making process in the planning system.**

.....

- 2. Do you believe State Planning Policies grant excessive decision-making discretion to the Minister for Planning?

**All planning decisions exercised by the Minister for Planning should be made with integrity and open transparency.**

.....

- 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?

**Government must work with the community towards the shared goal of net zero emissions by 2050. A NSW Labor Government would legislate this target (as we attempted to do in the last Parliament) and introduce a Net Zero Commission, which will be tasked with developing adaptation and mitigation plans for a range of sectors, including the built environment.**

.....

- 4. Do you think the concept of "State significance" in NSW planning is applied correctly?

**The principle of State Significant Development (SSD) and State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) are important for large projects. There are however examples, such as the declaration of the Warragamba Dam wall-raising project, where the current Government's use of a state significant designation appears to have been used to achieve a political outcome, rather than applied, as required by the Act, in accordance with its intent.**

.....

5. Do you think the NSW Independent Planning Commission is sufficiently independent of the Government?

**NSW Labor believes that the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) should remain a separate and independent statutory agency. The IPC role strengthens the planning system. A NSW Labor Government will continue to resource it to continue exercising its function in planning assessments and determinations.**

.....

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?
- Protecting post-European cultural heritage?
- Preventing irreversible harm to natural environment?
- Taking into consideration flood risk?
- Protecting tree canopies in urban and regional contexts?
- Preventing sterilisation of peri-urban food bowl?
- Ensuring quality housing?

**Community expectations on these important issues have evolved over time as new information and values change. The planning system's assessment and determination of projects should reflect these broad community expectations. NSW Labor believes that, in government, we can achieve more consistent decision-making with respect to community expectations than the current government has been able to achieve over the last 12 years.**

7. Should a responsible NSW climate response include the issuing of further coal and gas exploration licences?

**Any future resources proposals must stack up environmentally and financially and be assessed and determined by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) following its public hearing processes.**

.....

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?

**Labor will ensure the statutory review of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act* strengthens and restores environmental protections that will stop run away land clearing and fix the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.**

.....

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

**In addition to utilities and local government, there are currently more than a dozen agencies reporting to five ministers that have a role in planning decisions, which is adding to the confusion and complexity of the**

**planning system. A NSW Labor Government would reduce this confusion and complexity by having agencies associated with planning decisions (except for utilities and local government) be accountable to the Minister for Planning. There is no substantive consensus among planning system stakeholders for yet another review of the Act.**

.....

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?

**NSW Labor is not proposing any new taxes at this election. A NSW Labor Government would introduce reforms to rental arrangements in NSW that are fairer on renters and property owners. We believe these reforms will encourage owners to add properties to the permanent rental market.**

.....

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?

**A NSW Labor Government will introduce a mandatory target of 30 per cent social, affordable and universal housing on surplus government land. We will also undertake a pilot build-to-rent program led by Landcom to develop a model to deliver extra rental stock in regional areas. The pilot will guide the extension of the program to other suitable areas in the future. A NSW Labor Government will also work closely with the Albanese Labor Government to deliver affordable housing supply for New South Wales as part of the National Housing Accord.**

.....