



# GreenActive

From the Greens federal and NSW parliamentary teams

## Resisting Howard's agenda

With the re-election of the Howard Government and its newfound control of the Senate, Australia will suffer the full impact of Howard's divisive and destructive policies. More than ever, we need strong social movements that can defend our public services, civil rights and the environment. The Greens, with our positive alternatives to the Howard agenda, can play a key role in these campaigns.

The Coalition Government is already moving to wind back redundancy pay and unfair dismissal laws, as part of a fresh onslaught on worker and union rights. It is also delaying its election promise to reveal which areas of Tasmanian forests will get federal protection. People on disability support pensions are in the Government's sights, and Labor has agreed to Howard's election promises of more public funding for private health schemes and private schools. Howard still refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

It's time for the Greens to really tap our strengths in the fight against Howard's policies. Senator Kerry Nettle and her team are ready to wage this campaign from the grassroots up. The election campaign inspired and enthused many Greens members and



supporters to get active and become involved, and among them are plenty of committed and skilled grassroots activists.

Our passion to achieve justice for asylum seekers and Indigenous Australians and our commitment to a multicultural, diverse and just

Australia will grow in the face of the Coalition's control of Parliament.

Greens senators, state parliamentarians, local councillors, activists and members will be forging new alliances to resist the attacks on public services, the environment and workers' rights.

### Greens oppose Redfern Development Bill

Speaking on the Redfern-Waterloo Authority Bill, Sylvia Hale said that property development would not solve the ongoing problems of poverty and unemployment.

The Carr Government wilfully misled members of parliament and the community by repeatedly denying the existence of a plan to redevelop the area. The task of formulating a plan was to have been the job of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority; but documents leaked to the media revealed that the Government had its own plan that they had been working on for some time.

In speaking on the bill, Sylvia Hale predicted that gentrification of Redfern and the accompanying rise in property prices would displace many of the local Aboriginal people unless adequate protections were put in place.

The Authority will have the power to compulsorily acquire public or private land to develop or sell off, which it can do without approval from Sydney City Council.

Sylvia Hale's motion calling for all documents relating to the plan for Redfern-Waterloo to be made public was passed by the Legislative Council.

### People before profits should underpin Metropolitan Strategy

Sydney can and should be a vibrant, liveable and environmentally sustainable city. There is

little doubt that Sydney needs a long-term vision to cope with the social and environmental pressures of the future.

Sylvia Hale has therefore welcomed the concept of the Carr Government's Metropolitan Strategy, but is concerned at the underlying motivation.



Already the Government has released grand plans to build more tunnels and freeways, expand urban sprawl, cut corners on public transport infrastructure and erode open space.

The government appears to be following belatedly in the footsteps of the Queensland, West Australian and Victorian governments, which have announced their strategies for key areas such as south-east Queensland, Perth and Melbourne. But unlike its interstate counterparts, the NSW Government has not even waited for submissions from key organizations.

It has pre-empted the strategy by announcing major road and tunnel projects, sweeping land release proposals for the city's western fringes, and the transfer of planning powers over Redfern-Waterloo from the democratically elected Sydney City Council to a Government-appointed Authority.

Missing from the Minister's discussion paper on the Metropolitan Strategy, released in September, was any reference to social justice objectives, to the provision of affordable housing or rental accommodation. And the recent land release announcements did not include any plans to build rail links to Sydney's north-

west where they are desperately needed.

The Government does not plan for the rail line to the south-west to be operating for at least 15 years. The government is allocating \$3.7 billion for motorways and arterial roads, more than three times what its budget for public transport.

The Greens have a clear vision for Sydney. We want a city that provides high quality of life and that does not place unsustainable pressure on the environment. Central to that vision are social justice, environmental sustainability and grassroots democracy.

Sylvia Hale is lodging a submission on the Government's Metropolitan Strategy that lays out the Greens' long-term vision for Sydney.

### Land clearing promise broken

The Carr Government has now broken its promise to end broad-scale land clearing three times, following the release of draft new native vegetation regulations this month.

Despite election promises to end broad-scale land clearing since it was elected in 1995, the Carr Government has now released regulations that will allow hundreds of thousands of hectares of native vegetation to be cleared each year. Ian Cohen has been actively opposing this latest betrayal.

Under these new regulations, land clearing will continue to occur in NSW at a shocking rate. Exemptions under the regulations will allow hundreds of thousands of hectares of vital native vegetation to be cleared each year.

## Refugee rights – stop the deportations

As part of the ongoing campaign for the just treatment of refugees, Kerry Nettle has visited Villawood several times and went to South Australia to visit the Baxter Immigration Detention Facility and the Port Augusta Residential Housing Project.

The Greens have called for an end to forced deportations, and have condemned the Government for deporting asylum seekers into situations where they face grave personal danger.

Kerry has used question time to put the Minister on the spot over forced deportations, stateless detainees and stranded Iraqis.

## Exposing Australian involvement in Fallujah

Kerry Nettle has argued that withdrawal of the 160,000 foreign troops including Australians from Iraq is essential to ending the violence and ensuring Iraqi self-determination.



During question time in Parliament, Kerry forced Defence Minister Robert Hill to admit that Australians were involved in both the planning and execution of the attack on Fallujah that destroyed up to 80% of the city and left thousands of Iraqis homeless.

According to the Red Cross, this attack may have killed over 800 civilians.

## Seeing through Carr's anti-terror spin

The Carr Government regularly introduces new laws or regulations that are designed to get tough on terrorism but either achieve nothing or counterproductively trample on long-established civil liberties.

A recent case was the regulation to create a new 'AA' category of prison inmate. Anyone suspected of terrorism within the prison system can be immediately transferred to maximum security and denied many of the rights prisoners are usually entitled to.

Lee Rhiannon sought to disallow this regulation in Parliament, but after a feisty debate the Government and Coalition combined to defeat the Greens' bid.

## Fighting for fair trade – not "free trade"

The Greens have continued to speak out against the unfair trade deal with the US.

Kerry Nettle moved a whole raft of amendments to mitigate the deal's negative impacts on Australian culture, quarantine, environment, labour and social policy, but these were not supported by either the Coalition or the ALP.

The Greens similarly fought the

Trade Agreement, pointing out that just as the US had done to Australia in negotiating the US-FTA, the Australian government forced an unfair trade deal onto the Thai government to the detriment of the broader public interest.

## East Timor's Oil

The Greens have continued to speak out about the need for justice for the East Timorese in relation to their oil and gas reserves.

The Australian government's uncooperative negotiations that do not adhere to fair process or the requirements of the international



legal system are bringing greater hardship to the people of East Timor.

Lee Rhiannon won the unanimous support of the Legislative Council for a Greens motion recognising East Timor's resources as being critical to the future of that country.



## Greens MPs e-brief

The Greens MPs put out a fortnightly e-brief, which contains the latest Greens news - information on the work of Greens MPs in and outside parliament, coming events, job vacancies.

To subscribe please send an email to:

[lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

### Working for a nuclear-free future

Kerry Nettle has called for the operating and export licence for Energy Resources Australia's Ranger Uranium Mine in Kakadu to be revoked following the contamination of water and vehicles.

The Kungka Tjuta in central Australia won their protracted battle against a forced siting of a siting of a radioactive waste dump on their country, and several states introduced legislation banning the storage or transport of nuclear waste.

Without a dump site for its radioactive waste, the Greens argue that construction of a new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights should be abandoned. This call was echoed by the Medical Association for the Prevention of War, whose recent report confirmed that a new reactor is not required for medical purposes.

The Greens and Greenpeace have revealed that the Silex Systems uranium enrichment technology at Lucas Heights can boost proliferation of nuclear weapons introduced legislation banning the storage or transport of nuclear waste.

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### Community colleges under threat

Many metropolitan community colleges have had six-figure funding cuts this year, forcing them to end discounts to pensioners and the unemployed.

These colleges provide skills and cultural enrichment to many people, but the Carr Government has callously ignored the important and much valued role these colleges play in the community.

Lee Rhiannon's office is co-ordinating a leafleting campaign to make students aware of the looming threat to the colleges' service quality and equity of access.

### Keeping up pressure on James Hardie

In the Senate, Kerry Nettle successfully moved a motion calling for a boycott of James Hardie products until the company's compensation liabilities are met.

The motion also called for all political parties to put donations they have received from James Hardie into a fund for victims of asbestos-related diseases.

Lee Rhiannon called for a stamp duty on James Hardie share transactions, as a way of raising money for victims or funding the complex task of chasing down the elusive multinational.

After the proposal gained considerable airplay in the media, Premier Bob Carr said he "viewed it sympathetically".

### Indigenous justice now

The Greens have been campaigning against the abolition of ATSIC and its replacement with a hand-picked advisory council to the Prime Minister.

Kerry Nettle, who sits on the Senate Select Committee into the abolition of ATSIC, has argued against the mainstreaming of indigenous services and for self-determination.

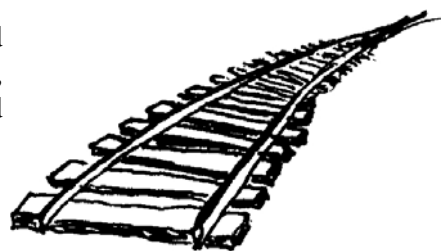
In the wake of riots in Redfern and on Palm Island, the Greens have renewed calls for the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Bob Brown and Kerry joined Michael Long on his walk to Canberra to see the PM and were very well received.

### Branch line battle

Lee Rhiannon has worked closely with the NSW Farmers Association and the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee to save the State's endangered rail lines.

The Government is leaving the lines to rot, when a mere \$150 million could rescue up to a dozen lines and make them fully serviceable for efficient freight rail.

The decay of the rail lines is putting more and more semi-trailers onto the inadequate rural roads, and local councils are having to foot the bill to upgrade and repair the damage that's being caused.



### Protect farmers from GM

Ian Cohen and the Greens candidate for the Dubbo by-election, Terrance Loughlin, joined forces to call on the NSW Government to protect farmers who choose not to grow GM food crops.

In the debate on the Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Act, Ian argued that the person responsible for the release of a GM food plant or the manufacturer of a GM organism that results in the contamination of non-GM crop, should be liable for the costs of cleaning up.

It is only fair that there be controls that protect non-GM farmers from having to pay if they face contamination of their crops.

### Carr's hollow words on greenhouse

At a 'No New Coal Mines' rally in Sydney, Ian Cohen reminded the Premier that the Carr Government was now part of the climate change problem, as it is doing nothing to stem the state's dependence on coal mining and coal-fired power.

The rally was held outside a meeting of the International Climate Change Task Force that was hosted by the Premier.

### Jobs and environment future

All the NSW Greens MPs, along with environmentalists, unionists and a number of Greens councillors participated in the Greens' Jobs and Environment Forum.

Tasmanian Greens MP Peg Putt presented the Greens plans that would see the Tasmanian old-growth forests saved with no job losses.

Other speakers from unions covering transport, maritime, manufacturing and electrical workers spelt out how Australia is missing out on tens of thousands of high quality new jobs each year because of the failures of governments.

Sustainable energy is the fastest growing industry in NSW, valued at \$5.3 billion, and employment is increasing at a rate of 12 per cent a year.

### Canary in the coal mine

The temperature is rising in the coal industry, where communities across the Sydney Basin are locking horns with giant mining companies intent on wrecking rivers and ecosystems.

At Mandalong Valley in the Lower Hunter, Lee Rhiannon is helping locals battle Centennial Coal's plan to set up a longwall mine under a fragile floodplain.



The Carr Government has sat on its hands for 5 years, finally producing a flood study in November and

leaving the community just three weeks to digest it.

Meanwhile, a committed community in the Douglas Park area has formed the Nepean Action Group and is battling BHP Billiton's plans to mine under the Nepean River. BHP Billiton has already mined under the Georges and Cataract rivers.

This causes river beds to crack, which damages and pollutes waterways, kills fish and creates massive water losses.

Pressure from NAG and the Greens has put BHP on the back foot, but the battle isn't over yet.

Back up north, similar issues are besetting the Dooralong and Yarralong valleys near Wyong.

Sydney Gas is planning to dot the valley with gas wells, which could spell disaster for a vulnerable area that also serves as a water catchment for the burgeoning Central Coast. Lee is working with well organised locals to keep Sydney Gas at bay.

### Sydney draining away

Ian Cohen has called on the Carr Government to shelve its plans for a desalination plant in Sydney and instead

prioritise water-saving initiatives such as recycling stormwater and sewage, encouraging more efficient toilets and enforcing permanent low-level water restrictions.



Research compiled by Ian Cohen's office has found that building a desalination plant in Sydney would damage the Premier's commitment to reduce greenhouses gas emissions and produce less drinking water than would be saved via simple water conservation initiatives.

Simply spending more money sinking new bores, deepwater pumping and building new pipes to the Shoalhaven River will not secure Sydney's water future.

The Carr Government also continues to ignore the tens of millions of litres of stormwater and of wastewater in sewage that could be harvested.

The government has known all along just how damaging a desalination plant would be for

our environment, yet it has pursued its construction to act as some sort of opiate to relieve people's concerns over dwindling water supplies. A desalination plant creating 37 gigalitres of fresh water would produce up to 260,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year.

The 25-year plan for Sydney's water supplies fails to take the hard decisions necessary to help the city become smarter in how it uses water.

Permanent low-level water restrictions on outdoor water use, greater financial incentives for rainwater tanks and grey water and effluent recycling in homes are all vital if Sydney is to have a sustainable water supply in the future.

### Standing up for women

The Greens continue to speak out against Howard Government policies which have been a disaster for women in terms of democratic participation, health outcomes, economic independence, labour standards for casual workers, safety and discrimination.

Kerry has also been defending women's reproductive choices by asking questions in Parliament, supporting National Abortion Rights Day and preparing a background paper on the need to defend safe, legal and affordable abortion.



## Cruel cuts bite into disability care

This January, the Carr Government will cut funding to disability support programs by up to 60%.

These cruel reforms that punish people with severe disabilities who are unable to find work was one of a number of topics discussed at a morning tea to celebrate United Nations International Day of People with a Disability hosted by Sylvia Hale.

David Brice from the Physical Disability Council gave the keynote address.

At present many people with disabilities are funded to receive between \$19,000 and \$22,000 towards the Adult Training Learning And Support (ATLAS) and Post School Options (PSO) Programs.

The proposed reforms will cut the per-person funding to about \$9,000 a year. The Government's excuse is that not enough people are making the transition to work.

In protesting these changes Sylvia Hale stated that while the programs may need reform, cutting their budgets is not the solution.

They need quality programs not funding cuts. The Government's cuts will fall most heavily on people with the severest disabilities at a time when they need even more assistance.

People with severe disabilities need stimulation and one-to-one assistance, rather than being punished for their disabilities.

This move by the Carr Government to penalise the most vulnerable members of society because they are literally unable to work.

Minister for Disability Services Carmel Tebbutt has failed to give a straightforward undertaking that clients of disability services in NSW won't face cuts in the support they receive.

The Minister claims that "it's impossible to tell" how the new programs will affect particular individuals.

Many people have contacted the Greens, desperately worried about the impact of the new rules on clients and carers.



Carers make extraordinary sacrifices to look after loved ones at home and often provide 24-hour care.

For the Government to cut back on the hours and quality of care offered by service providers is heartless. Setting up complicated and discriminatory assessment schemes will not solve complex issues.

People with disabilities and their carers need lifelong services and support, not short-term band-aid schemes.

The Greens Disability Working Group has been working hard behind the scenes to provide support and advice to Sylvia Hale. If you would like to find out more about the working group, please contact Sylvia's office on 9230 3030.

### 2007: Smoking banned in pubs and clubs

A proposed ban on smoking in pubs and clubs could and should be coming into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2005. Instead the Government has delayed this, in a sell-out to the gambling industry.

Sylvia Hale moved an amendment in Parliament to fast-track the ban but this was resisted by both the Government and the Opposition. The NSW Greens MPs viewed this as necessary for health reasons as it has been proven that people gamble less when smoking is not permitted in gaming areas.

Research shows that people are more likely to go to the pub, but less likely to put money in the pokies when smoking is banned. Smoking-related diseases kill between 30 and 100 pub and club workers each year. Public opinion supports the ban. Eighty per cent of people don't smoke, and two-thirds want to see smoking banned in pubs and clubs.



### A win for worker safety

After a long and concerted campaign, the Carr Government finally bowed to pressure and took action to beef up workplace safety laws.

While it didn't support the Greens position to declare industrial manslaughter a crime, the tough new penalties under the

Occupational Health & Safety Act should make bosses think twice before they cut corners on safety.

### Defending Lake Cowal

Lee Rhiannon moved a Private Members' Bill to ban cyanide leach mining, a toxic and dangerous form of gold and silver mining that has been responsible for a string of major pollution disasters around the world.

The bill would apply to the proposed Lake Cowal Gold Mine, which is on the traditional land of the Wiradjuri people and hosts unique wetlands and thousands of birds.

While the bill was being debated, it came to light that Barrick Gold, the developer of Lake Cowal, was involved in yet another cyanide contamination case, this time in Western Australia. Nevertheless, both major parties voted down the bill.

### Opposing Howard's industrial relations agenda

It comes as no surprise that one of first big losers of the Howard Government's re-election are the unions. Howard has nominated regressive industrial relations reform as a priority for the fourth term, when a Senate majority from July 1 next year will allow the Coalition to proceed with changes including:

- further restrictions on the right to strike and the right of union entry to workplaces;
- cutting back the matters permitted in awards;
- constraints on the role of the Industrial Relations Commission;
- removal of legal rights of redress for people employed by small business;
- expansion of the use of individual contracts.

## Get Active!

### Sign on to The Greens Urgent Action Alert list

Often fast moving political developments need a quick response with a quickly organised demonstration or action crucial to getting our message out.

By signing on to the list you will be part of a pool of Greens members and supporters who are willing to be contacted at short notice to participate in actions, picket lines or demonstrations that can't be advertised through our regular information bulletins.

Send an email with you name, mobile/phone number, daytime postcode and email to Damien Lawson:

**damien.lawson@aph.gov.au or call 02 9690 2038**



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## Donations unmasked

Lee Rhiannon and her donations team have set up a new website, [www.democracy4sale.org](http://www.democracy4sale.org), that lifts the lid on the murky world of corporate donations to political parties.



A comprehensive searchable database will answer all your questions about who's paying the piper and which parties are raking in the cash. There are also feature articles, quotes and gossip.

We're still looking to improve this valuable campaigning tool and research resource, so give us your feedback. And check out the list of mysterious companies that we haven't yet been able to categorise – sleuths, we need you!

[www.democracy4sale.org](http://www.democracy4sale.org)

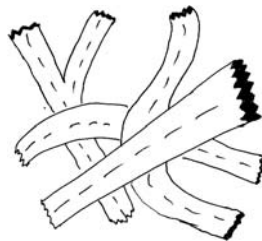
### STOP PRESS

FREE SPEECH UNDER THREAT  
SUPPORT THE GUNNS 20

Gunns Ltd, the Tasmanian logging company, has issued a 219 page writ against 20 individuals and groups, including Greens Senator Bob Brown, suing them for \$6.4m. Unable to win the debate over the forests Gunns is now pursuing legal action against its critics. This is an attack on free speech and democracy.

For more information go to [www.bobbrown.org.au](http://www.bobbrown.org.au). For information on what NSW Greens are doing to support the campaign contact the Office of Senator Kerry Nettle 02 9690 2038

## Moving against motorway madness



Lee Rhiannon continues to work with local Greens groups to fight the proposed M4 East tunnel, which will only add more traffic to the Inner West's roads.

In September, she took part in a successful protest at Dobroyd Park, preventing RTA crews from carrying out preliminary testing on the planned tunnel route.

The Greens are also planning to letterbox leaflets that will explain to the Ashfield and Haberfield communities why the long tunnel to the Anzac Bridge is as dangerous to local residents as the shorter version that exits in their suburb.

No matter which tunnel is built, it means more pollution, congestion and disruption.

