

## Answers from The Greens candidates

1. Do you think that the protection of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment is a high priority for the region? How valuable is biodiversity in this area?

As the Greens it is well established that the protection of green and open spaces is a high priority for all of our representatives at every level of government. We know that the Narrabeen Lagoon is the largest coastal lagoon in the Sydney region. Its catchment covers 55km square with 5 main creeks flowing into it provides a vital wildlife corridor and a diversity of habitats that are home to a large number of threatened species and to international migratory birds. It is without question we know that our Northern Beaches are made special, unique and beautiful because of our natural environment so we need to prioritise its conservation and ensure that any development in our region runs complementary to our environment and of course this is all reliant on ensuring that our biodiversity in the region is protected.

2. What measures can you as a Councillor take to ensure that the remaining bushland in the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment is protected from urban Development?

Key measures should include:

- a) Ensuring that all developments, whether that be residential, roads or other, uphold a high level of due diligence and assessment of environmental impacts in the region.
- b) Respecting those who are passionate and well informed on the issue by providing high levels of stakeholder

engagement and consultation in decision making about the region

- c) Facilitating a holistic approach when making decisions in the region
- d) Conducting a review of all stormwater entering the Lagoon and its waterways and working to upgrade the quality of runoff, retaining vegetated riparian buffers and improving erosion control from local development.

3. In the last three years the Narrabeen Lagoon and some of the adjoining lands have been made a State Park where Council is represented on the Management Committee. What would you do to expand the State Park and what would you do to ensure the State Park is managed with an adopted plan?

Work through the Management Committee to develop a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the whole park and seek commitment to its implementation by all landholders, both private and public.

Include and enhance key vegetation corridors connecting the State Park to other important natural areas, including Ingleside Chase, Garigal National Park and Katandra Nature Reserve.

4. Do you think environmental protection should be retained as a key land use objective for non-urban land in Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment? Friends have supported the E2 (environment protection) zone e.g. for core bushland, rather than the E3 (environmental management) zone. In bushland areas where no development should occur, the E2 zone is preferable to the standard zone translation of E3.

Yes, it is important that land use zoning supports the highest possible protection for these key areas.

5. What do you think your Council could do to provide incentives for landowners to conserve natural bushland on their properties?

- a) Promote and raise awareness of the critical links between recreational water quality in the Lagoon and management of the surrounding natural areas.
- b) Provide incentives for vegetation retention and habitat restoration on private properties.
- c) Encourage and support the activities of Bushcare and related groups working in the catchment.
- d) Develop private and public partnerships to conserve the land.
- e) Review and commit to a strong Conservation Agreement or have areas proclaimed as Wildlife Refuges or Threatened species Critical Habitat .
- f) Emphasise the investor confidence in the region.

In short yes. By providing incentives for landowners to conserve natural bushland we are protecting what is unique about our community. This also has advantages for our biodiversity in the region and for native flora and fauna and also for native species as well as for the recreational values of the Lagoon and its bushland. It has capacity to create greater wildlife corridors.

6. In what ways would you as a Councillor influence your council to arrange funding for bush regeneration in the catchment of Narrabeen Lagoon?

As a Greens local councillor we would work with our State and Federal colleagues to lobby all levels of government for better protection of our natural area and accordingly this requires investment and resource allocation. Council may also

be able to assist local community groups in gaining grant funding or corporate sponsorship to support their voluntary work.

7. There are a number of worthy volunteer community organizations like Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment that desire the support of Council. How would you propose Council work more effectively with Friends and other community groups?

- a) The council needs to play a role in legitimising the community groups and recognise them as key stakeholders in issues of their expertise.
- b) Council should actively consult and reach out to local community groups when issues that they advocate about arise.
- c) Council members are elected to represent the community and, as Greens, grassroot democracy is one of our core pillars, which means that we value the role of community groups and want them to be a part of and involved in, as much as possible, in the decision making process.
- d) Ensure that representatives from relevant local community groups are included among members of Council committees and working groups.

We would also work tirelessly with our local community groups and engage them in the decision-making process.

8. Illegal land clearing is a problem in the Northern Beaches – what actions would you pursue as a Councillor to provide more adequate penalties for offenders and more authority and resources to Council staff to prevent illegal land clearing and enforce compliance with laws, plans and conditions of consent?

Whilst fines can act as a deterrent, there is evidence to suggest that the fines alone are ineffective and do not deter the activity. Positive incentives and penalties together are repeatedly shown to be more effective. In addition to fines there are options for orders, or to enter into negotiated environmental agreements or outcomes. An order could be a direction to revegetate or to restore or remediate the cleared land. These should be complemented by rewards for sound conservation management and education initiatives. Reversal of recent changes to NSW land clearing laws purportedly for bushfire management are also necessary.