



NEWTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC

NEWSLETTER
February / March 2011



Fiona
Byrne
The Greens

NSW Election
Meet the
Candidates Night
Wed 23rd Feb

**MEET THE
CANDIDATES
ISSUE**



Carmel
Tebbutt
Australian
Labor Party

Rosana
Tyler

Liberal Party of
Australia



Pip
Hinman
Socialist
Alliance



MEET THE CANDIDATE FORUM 2011 **Wednesday, 23rd February 2011**

Candidates and Community Come Together for Pre-Election Dialogue

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Hosts

Meet the Candidate 2011

It is four years since the 2007 NSW State Election, and during this time, local, regional and global events have fuelled tumultuous change in Marrickville's social, economic and political landscape.

Therefore, with the next state election to take place on 26th March 2011, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre believes that this election will be both close and integral to future directions of Marrickville.

To ensure an informed and democratic lead up to this event; Newtown Neighbourhood Centre invites Marrickville candidates and community members to come together in pre-election community dialogue, to ask questions on key issues in Marrickville including housing, homelessness, the environment, education, emerging communities and a range of other issues .

To ensure a constructive and fair forum, renowned academic, activist and social commentator, Eva Cox has once again agreed to chair the event.

Questions will be asked and answered in a fair and open forum environment, giving community members a rare and important opportunity to ask questions to local candidates and table local issues affecting the Marrickville community.

In addition, over recent months, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre has also provided candidates with a series of written questions on local issues that were developed in consultation with both local services and community members and were listed as the main issues impacting on local individuals and families in Marrickville.

Flood Relief

Donate to Chinchilla Family Support Service, QLD

Help this Queensland community get back on its feet.

Visit www.newtowncentre.org for details.

MEET THE CANDIDATE FORUM

WHEN: Wednesday 23rd February

TIME: 6:30-8:30pm

WHERE: St Lukes Church Hall
11 Stanmore Road
ENMORE

COST: FREE

CANDIDATES

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party
Fiona Byrne – The Greens
Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia
Pip Hinman- Socialist Alliance

Candidate responses will be published in latter pages of this newsletter (pages 7-24), and will also be available on the NNC website www.newtowncentre.org.

Richelle Figliuzzi
Community Development Coordinator

Reason for Standing

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

For the last 7 years I've worked in the community as a Greens councillor and have seen the impacts of state govt decisions on our local residents and businesses.

It has been a privilege to work towards the community vision of inclusiveness, environmental responsibility and long-term sustainable planning. I know that we can achieve more if we can bring that vision to the state parliament which is why I am standing for The Greens to represent the people of Marrickville.



*Fiona Byrne,
The Greens*

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

When I'm out meeting local residents, it's clear that the community wants a local member who is committed to delivering progressive results for them.

My reasons for standing at this election are the same as they were when I first stood for public office: a commitment to social justice and to working to improve the quality of life of my constituents, especially those who suffer disadvantage or discrimination.

This time I stand for re-election based on a record of experience in bringing real, effective change to people of Marrickville. I've been the Member for Marrickville since 2005 and I've lived in the Inner West for over 20 years. I am extremely passionate about the Inner West and the diverse communities that make up our electorate.

The Labor Government has delivered train station upgrades, new services at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, a new community health centre, new classrooms and equipment in our schools, new bus routes and more funding for community organisations like the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. More than anything else, Marrickville's diverse community needs to be represented by an experienced and strong voice in the Parliament who can actually make a difference.



*Carmel Tebbutt, Australian
Labor Party*

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

I am standing as a candidate for Parliament because I want to make NSW number 1 again.

I want to be part of a government that understands the aspirations of people and communities and that delivers the best possible services, modern infrastructure and public institutions that strengthen people's choices, opportunities and freedoms.



*Rosana Tyler,
Liberal Party of Australia*

Reason for Standing



Pip Hinman,
Socialist Alliance

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

I'm campaigning on the slogan "NSW is not for sale - Community need not corporate greed!" Having been an activist all my adult life, I believe that people have the know-how, the ingenuity and the ability to re-create communities shaped by our common needs and not by the greed for profits of the wealthy few. With the global climate crisis, breaking from the profits first system has become an urgent necessity.

I'm campaigning for a massive injection of public funding into public transport, housing and health services, and a transition to renewable energy. I am also campaigning to stop the corporate drive for coal seam gas mining. Reverse the electricity privatisation and freeze electricity prices pending a state-wide plebiscite on this critical social and environment issue.

I'm campaigning for a radical expansion of direct democracy. Our communities need the power to decide on all the important issues that affect them.

Abolish Part 3A; introduce community assemblies, community- initiated

referenda on important social issues and the right to recall any elected official that does not act in the community interest.

The last federal election revealed that more people than ever realise both Labor and the Coalition are parties of the corporate rich. They were put on notice by being denied a majority in their own right.

In NSW, the Labor government has been exposed even more clearly as being in the pockets of the big developers, the coal industry, the banks and other corporate privatisers.

A similar result from the NSW Elections, combined with greater organising efforts by communities, trade unions and other progressive forces, could halt and even reverse the madness of privatising our public assets. It could also end the irresponsible refusal by governments and the big end of town to take the urgently needed measure to address climate change.

NNC'S MEET THE CANDIDATE FORUM

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Fiona Byrne,
The Greens

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

I am currently the Mayor of Marrickville Council, the first female Mayor of Marrickville. I have been a Greens Councillor on Marrickville Council since March 2004 and also served as Deputy Mayor for 2 years. I have lived in the area on and off for much of my life, starting in a bedsit in Newtown with my Irish migrant parents. I lived and travelled overseas extensively and am currently raising my three daughters in Marrickville's wonderfully diverse community. I have a Bachelor of Arts from Sydney University and have worked in book publishing and office administration.



Carmel Tebbutt,
Australian Labor Party

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

I've been the Member for Marrickville since 2005 and prior to that I was a Member of the Upper House. In addition to my current role as Deputy Premier, I am also the Minister for Health. Health is a critical portfolio and I really enjoy working with frontline staff to ensure patients are at the centre of the NSW health system. I've previously worked in other human services portfolios including Education and Community Services as well as the Environment portfolio which means I've got a wide range of experience. I've had plenty of experience in local government as well, both as a Councillor on Marrickville Council and as the Deputy Mayor. I live in Marrickville with my husband and son, who attends the local public school.

Brief Background Information

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia



Rosana Tyler,
Liberal Party of Australia

I am married with 4 children aged 24, 20, 16 and 15. I operate my own business as a lawyer in the inner west, employing 4 employees. I was born in Argentina and came to Australia when I was 2. My first language is Spanish. I worked as a high school teacher in Tasmania for several years, and overseas for several years in France, Chile and Switzerland, before returning to Australia and turning to law. I worked with two disability organisations for a few years, and was a telephone counsellor with Lifeline. My youngest son has Down Syndrome so I have a deep understanding of disability issues and am passionate about the integration of the disabled into our communities.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance



Pip Hinman,
Socialist Alliance

I trained as a restorer of artifacts. I'm now a journalist with the progressive newspaper *Green Left Weekly*. I've lived in the area for more than 15 years and have been an activist all my adult life in a range of union and community campaigns. I'm a founding member of the *Sydney Stop the War Coalition* which opposed the invasion of Iraq, and is campaigning for the troops to get out of Afghanistan, for justice for Palestine, and for all the criminal charges against David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib to be dropped. I have a daughter at a local high school and I live with all the stresses and strains that come with raising a family on a low income. If elected I pledge not to take more than an average worker's wage and donate the remainder into building the movements for change.

3. Housing Affordability

Lack of secure, appropriate and affordable housing is affecting many low income individuals and families in this area.

How does your party's policy intend to ensure more affordable housing options for low income households?

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

The Greens believe the major parties have largely ignored the affordable housing issue. Despite recent spending on social housing, there is still a significant affordability problem.

The Greens housing policy advocates increasing social and affordable housing options via direct capital investment, a minimum of 10% affordable housing to be included in new multi-unit residential developments in the most unaffordable cities and regions, better targeting of the First Home Owners Grant in order to avoid inflationary effects, and use of unused government and council land for new affordable housing.

We also advocate sustainable and energy/water efficient housing design. Subsidies for water efficiency and energy efficiency measures make it easier for home owners and landlords to make changes and reduce water and energy consumption. This in turn assists lower income households as their bills will reduce.

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

The Labor Government has a strong record on affordable housing. Last year alone, 32,000 low income households were assisted into the private rental market through RentStart, a program which includes bond assistance, rent in advance, help with rent arrears and temporary accommodation.

The National Rental Affordability Scheme increases the supply of affordable housing and reduces rental costs for low and moderate income households who are doing it tough in the current tight rental market. To date, the Australian and NSW Governments have approved funding for 2,545 new dwellings in high need areas of NSW.

NSW is the only state in Australia with a dedicated office for Aboriginal housing. The Aboriginal Housing Office currently manages over 4,000 properties.

In the Inner-West we have invested in \$10 million worth of new public housing stock.

We have also redeveloped a series of sites in the Inner West into 228 new homes - an investment of \$50.2 million and are continuing work to bring an increase of 153 new homes to the families of the Inner West.

3. Housing Affordability

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will make Sydney more liveable again by addressing housing affordability. The NSW Liberals & Nationals will introduce a range of practical measures to make housing more affordable. The \$630 million Action Plan to Make Sydney Liveable Again include:

- repealing Labor's homebuyers tax on property purchases, which will give people greater opportunity to afford to buy their own home;
- providing a Regional Relocation Grant of \$7,000 to encourage "whole of NSW" growth;
- extending stamp duty concessions to Empty Nesters who are over 55 years old who choose to move from a house to a smaller dwelling; and
- accelerating land release and reducing infrastructure costs on new developments.

The Action Plan to Make Sydney Liveable Again will stimulate construction, facilitate better utilisation of housing stock and encourage regional development.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

NSW needs a large-scale building program to make good quality, creatively designed, energy efficient, appropriately located, affordable, long-term social housing with a low carbon footprint, to suit a wide variety of domestic arrangements, including the needs of people living communally, in extended families and in Aboriginal communities.

Funding could come from developer contributions via local and state government planning laws, taxation, superannuation funds. All major new developments should be required to allocate 30% of their housing stock to low rent tenants. Implement rent control laws (similar to those in Los Angeles and New York) which cap all rents at a maximum of 20% of income. There must be mandated high standards for private accommodation and require landlords to fix problems and maintain private housing stock in good condition. Those landlords who refused would have their properties confiscated, and renovated by the state.

- Expand funding to and support the development of, resident-controlled housing co-operatives.
- Extend rent assistance to low-income home buyers for mortgage assistance and to those receiving Austudy payments.
- Additional funding for programs which provide support services for the aged homeless including additional funding to ensure greater access to aged care accommodation.
- Increase funding to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) to a level sufficient to provide crisis accommodation for all who need it, as well as to maintain support services to assist homeless persons into independent accommodation and preventive programs for those at risk of homelessness.

NSW must also provide high quality, community-based, supported accommodation for people with disabilities or other special needs. It should fully fund refuges and other secure emergency accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. Laws covering the rights of both public and private tenants, including the right to long-term leases, must be strengthened. Community control of public housing through democratically-elected housing boards comprised of tenants and housing workers is a must.

4.

Multicultural Marrickville

The social fabric of Marrickville is changing. In a five year period, the population in Marrickville that spoke another language other than English at home, dropped by approximately one sixth.

Given these changes, how do you intend to protect the diversity and needs of emerging communities in Marrickville?

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

This change is due to the increasing affluence of some parts of the Marrickville electorate which means that new migrants seeking more affordable rental may settle in other areas of Sydney instead. The key to retaining a diverse population (including socio-economic and cultural diversity) is affordable housing, work opportunities and retaining our commitment to making new migrants welcome in Marrickville – something that I think our community already does very well.

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

Marrickville is one of the most culturally diverse communities in NSW with 58 per cent of the population speaking a language other than English at home. Our diversity is an asset and makes Marrickville an exciting place to live. It was the Labor Government which introduced the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Bill into Parliament.

We are more than doubling the funding to Community Language Schools in NSW, making it the best-funded program in the nation. In Marrickville alone, there are 17 Community Language Schools teaching ten different languages and every student that attends these schools will benefit from the doubling of funding from \$60 to \$120 per student a year. Learning another language opens up new opportunities for young people and this investment in our Community Language Schools will ensure children can retain the language of their parents.

In Marrickville, I know how valuable the services of neighbourhood centres and local organisations are to new residents from ethnically diverse backgrounds. I've been a strong advocate for increased resources for these groups and through the Community Building Partnership Program I've been able to provide financial support for organisations like the Metro Migrant Resource Centre, the Addison Road Centre, Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and the Brazilian Community Council.

I am standing for re-election again because I am determined to ensure that access to services and support for our ethnically diverse community continues to increase.

NSW State Election
Saturday, 26th March 2011

4.

**Multicultural
Marrickville**

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

Existing and emerging communities of non English speaking background in Marrickville identified a lack of community meeting spaces, including tables and chairs in open spaces and parks, as one barrier to social inclusion. In addition, they identified that some urban areas are run down, particularly around Illawarra Road (Marrickville South) and Petersham. The community regards new footpaths, trees and other improvements as necessary to make the area more attractive to people.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals have announced the introduction of a Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme that will help allow local councils borrow an additional \$1 billion to build and renew economic infrastructure including roads, kerbing and guttering, footpaths, bridges, storm water drains, sports grounds, public parks and gardens, community halls and other public buildings.

The scheme will reduce the cost of borrowings to repair, replace and reconstruct community infrastructure. This plan is a positive, practical plan that will help deliver the infrastructure communities and neighbourhoods need.

On a personal level, as a university lecturer the majority of my students come from the subcontinent. I employ a young man from Nepal in my office so am aware of issues affecting the Nepalese community. I have assisted many of my students and their families with social justice issues, including housing, issues with contracts and transport. I am an Australian of non-English speaking background. I am very much aware of the challenges faced by emerging communities. I firmly believe that the NSW & Liberals policies will assist these communities.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

Education and employment and training are critical to inclusive communities. Poverty and unemployment promotes social isolation. We need adequate funding for public education, job training, and welfare programs so that all people - regardless of background or ethnicity - feel valued as members of the members of the community.

Newly-arrived community members should be able to access welfare payments immediately rather than having to wait and rely on family or friends. English language classes and employment assistance should be offered immediately as well. Voluntary, well-staffed, high quality, free public programs should be established for those who wish to enter the workforce, providing skills at a level appropriate to the needs of participants.

We should be strengthening the number of people who work in the community development and employment program fields: they must be paid award wages and receive equal pay with their counterparts in the private sector.

Schools should offer language programs from kindergarten level: this would help establish a broader understanding of the world and its peoples.

5. Coal Developments

One of the most significant challenges in addressing global climate change is reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the use of coal.

How will your party approach reducing coal developments in NSW including mines and coal fired power stations?

What will your party approach be to new coal developments in NSW?

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

The Greens strongly oppose new coal mines and power stations. Climate change means that it is urgent that we start making the transition to clean renewable energy and create new jobs, rather than continue burning the fossil fuels that are warming our planet. The Greens support investment in renewable power such as solar thermal, wind power and also energy efficiency measures (which can save huge amounts of energy).

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

It's critical that we act quickly on the issue of climate change. That's why we have set ourselves a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2050. Achieving this target requires us to look to a range of energy sources. The government is investing in renewable energies, with hundreds of millions of dollars being invested in wind and solar technology.

As a former Environment Minister, I established Renewable Energy Precincts across the State to ensure renewable energy projects were up and running as soon possible. The Labor Government also put in place faster approval times, better community consultation, and reduced planning fees.

I also oversaw the investment of \$27 million in renewable energy technologies which once completed could generate or displace grid electricity by more than 390,000MWh per year, the equivalent annual power demand of 49,000 homes.

Of course, while we look to a renewable energy future, I also recognise that we need to consider alternative fuel sources to coal that can be transition fuels. We know that we can't rely on coal forever, and gas is a much cleaner form of energy with a far smaller environmental footprint in exploration, production and use.

Have Your Say!
at the...

NNC MEET THE CANDIDATE FORUM

Wednesday, 23rd February 2011

6:30-8:30pm

St Luke's Church Hall, Enmore

5. Coal Developments

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe we need a proper strategic process in regards to the mining of agricultural lands and the exploration and mining of coal seam gas and will continue to work towards that outcome.

Duncan Gray, as Shadow Minister for Primary Industries & Energy, has been working closely with the NSW Farmers Association and the NSW Minerals Council, in conjunction with others including the Thoroughbred Breeders Association and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, to develop a strategic plan.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will be taking a strategic approach that reflects the need to apply precautionary principles. What is certain is that any future mining development proposals will be subject to a tough planning approval process. We need to be certain that any future mining does not interfere with aquifers and does not have an adverse impact on the environment.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals support legislation introduced in Queensland to ban benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX) chemicals in the extraction of coal seam gas. This group of chemicals is said to be cancer-causing agents.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will deliver a comprehensive policy in relation to these important issues in the coming months, though it is not something that can be rushed. There are some agricultural lands and other sensitive areas in NSW where mining should not occur.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

While scientists are telling us we must phase out coal quickly or risk an uninhabitable planet, government and the CEOs of fossil fuel companies are unremitting in their efforts to prolong the industry's life.

Coal burning now accounts for around 36% of Australia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; mining and handling coal adds even more. Coal seam gas mining is the industry's latest attempt to prolong the life of this dangerous and destructive industry. Given this, it is irresponsible to continue to develop new coal mines and make a push on coal seam gas mining: alternative renewable technologies are available and can provide base-load energy needs.

Beyond Zero Emissions has demonstrated that it is technically possible to move to 100% renewable energy in 10 years and is developing a detailed plan for state investments into wind and solar-thermal power generation. Socialist Alliance supports this plan.

We need to start phasing out thermal coal – used for power generation – immediately. With direct government investment in a publicly-owned renewable energy sector, jobs and retraining on full pay would be guaranteed for coal-mining and power-station communities. This would guarantee that jobs were created, not lost, and it would encourage unions to fully back the shift to sustainable energy policies.

6.

Public Transport

Access to public transport, cycle ways and footpaths in Marrickville is not adequate in meeting transport needs of all community members.

Currently there is no train station other than Summer Hill in the Marrickville LGA that enable access for wheelchairs, prams and for those with mobility issues. This excludes many people in the area from public transport use.

How do you intend to improve access to public transport for the whole of members of the Marrickville community?

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

Summer Hill station is actually not in the Marrickville LGA so we have exactly zero accessible stations. The Greens have advocated for lifts to be installed in stations for many years now and we regard the lack of progress on this as absolutely reprehensible.

The Easy Access program has not been updated for years, which means Marrickville still only has confirmation of access upgrades for 2 stations, neither of which will be delivered as per the timetable. We need a program of works to be carried out over the next 3 years to start making our train stations accessible for those people with a disability, older people, people struggling with prams and heavy bags. We want to see lifts installed in the majority of our 11 stations within three years. Without some sort of timeline and target, it simply isn't going to happen. I and The Greens will keep pushing on this and residents need to make their voices heard because our electorate is definitely missing out.

We also have the appalling situation where only 17% of the bus routes through our area are accessible routes. Of these only 18% of the timetabled services are actually marked accessible. When you combine this situation with buses being allocated to the driver, not the route, it is nearly impossible to plan travel arrangements if you have a mobility issue. This has to change. We need to update all our fleet to fully accessible buses to ensure nobody is disadvantaged socially or economically by the capacity of the public transport system.

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

One of the main reasons people love living in Marrickville is access to good public transport. The Inner West is serviced by public buses, trains, new metro bus routes and I'm extremely proud the Government is extending the light rail to the Inner West and building a new GreenWay for cyclists next to this line. Verity Firth (Member for Balmain) and I have campaigned with residents for many years to preserve and protect the corridor for future use and it's great to see work already occurring on this important public transport project.

Providing easy access to train stations has always been a priority for me as the local member. It's vital that people with disabilities, the elderly and mum and dads with prams have easy access to public transport which is why I've campaigned for upgrades to train stations in Marrickville. I fought hard to upgrade Newtown Station to make it accessible for all members of the community – this upgrade work is now underway and expected to be completed next year. I've been really involved in this project and I'm excited about the accessibility the new Station will bring through new lifts, walkways and accessible bathrooms.

Construction of Sydenham Station will begin later this month and will include 4 new lifts, a new concourse, platform resurfacing and tactile indicators as well as a family accessible toilet. An upgraded Marrickville station is now in design phase with the scope of the project being finalised.

6. Public Transport

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

Community Transport is vital for seniors, the ill, people with a disability and people who live in isolated communities.

It provides non-emergency transport to members of the community who do not have access to transport. This includes assisting transport-isolated people to get to medical appointments, social and recreational activities, grocery shopping and access to social services.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will make access to Community Transport a priority. In government we will:

- Provide an additional \$12 million to the Community Transport Program through the Ministry of Transport. This will extend services to thousands of transport-disadvantaged people.
- Establish a “one stop shop” for Community Transport providers within the Ministry of Transport to improve communication, efficiency and reduce unnecessary administration costs.
- Establish an appropriate driver accreditation framework to ensure Community Transport providers can enhance their services and ensure utmost safety of volunteers, employees and clients.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will end Labor’s 16 years of neglect. We believe we owe it to those with disability, those in remote communities and our seniors the ability to get around.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

The Marrickville LGA is relatively well serviced with public transport, but it can be qualitatively improved. Access for less mobile travellers must be urgently addressed at stations and for connecting light rail and heavy rail lines. The current profit-based transport system, in which the state pays private developers billions of dollars, simply encourages reliance on the private car. The inadequate Sydney Metro Plan recommends the very low target of 28% of trips to be taken by public transport by 2015. To address climate change, increasing densities in the inner city, and general health and well-being; this target should be radically ramped up.

An essential part of making NSW a sustainable state would mean:

- Introducing more light rail services - including on busy thoroughfares such as King Street;
- More frequent train and bus services especially at peak times; and increased right of way for buses;
- Increase networking between bus/train and light rail, to reduce waiting times and encourage greater patronage;
- Removing fares (or significantly reducing them) and allowing one ticket to cover all modes of public transport;
- Expand lateral services (that is, between suburbs, not to and from the city). Light rail would be useful here; and
- Expand council planning powers to insist that developers factor in transport planning (such as bike paths) into all developments.

7. Health Outcomes

Unlike states such as Queensland, New South Wales does not have regulated 'nurse to patient' ratios. This is leading to reduced standards of care and consequently worsening health outcomes for community members. Marrickville is home to a rapidly ageing population and many vulnerable community members with complex needs.

How do you intend to contribute to creating more equitable and positive health outcomes for those who are vulnerable in the community?

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

In Marrickville, we have access to a magnificent hospital in Royal Prince Alfred. RPA has one of the best performing emergency departments in NSW and a patient survey conducted in 2009 showed 93 per cent of patients considered their care good, very good or excellent.

Since 2005, the budget for RPA hospital has increased by over \$100 million and the Government has continued to invest in new equipment and new services for RPA. As well as being redeveloped, RPA has been upgraded with new cancer treatment places, new neonatal facilities and a medical assessment unit to better treat older people with chronic conditions. In 2010, an additional 8 beds with staff were delivered to the hospital, through the historic national health reform agreement between the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Of course health isn't just about hospitals. The Labor Government also delivered a new community health centre for Marrickville which provides child adolescent and family health care, mental health care, community nursing and multicultural health care. I recently visited the Centre and saw first-hand the fantastic work taking place and the ways in which health workers engaged the non-English speaking community.

Under the Labor Government, every infant in Marrickville can now access hearing and eyesight checks – another initiative I'm extremely proud of.

I'm passionate about providing fair and equitable access to health services for people, no matter where they live and I'll build on my strong track record to continue delivering for vulnerable members of the community, including older people, Indigenous Australians and people from non English speaking backgrounds.

Of course, a sustainable health workforce is an important part of the equation and we'll continue to increase and upskill our workforce.

We recognise that nurses are the backbone of our health system. Between 2005 and 2010 we have increased our full time equivalent nursing workforce in NSW by almost 11 per cent. Nurses in NSW are among the highest paid in the country.

In NSW, there is already an agreed award-based approach that applies for determining nurse numbers in general medical and surgical in-patient wards in acute hospitals. This workload tool is used to determine the appropriate level of staff for a ward based on a range of factors including the number and type of patients in the unit.

I understand that nurses have concerns about their workload which is why the Government is continuing constructive discussions with the Nurses' Association. We have put forward a proposal to them, which if accepted would lead to a substantial increase in the number of nurses employed in NSW public hospitals, as well as a pay rise for all nurses. Discussions between NSW Health and the Nurses' Association are ongoing and good progress is being made.

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

The nurses want to look after their patients properly. It must have been a difficult decision for nurses to roll out bed closures to bring the state government to the negotiating table.

The Nurses Association should be congratulated for achieving a nurse to patient ratio offer from the current government and The Greens call on the Opposition to guarantee they will adopt this ratio if they were to be in government after the election.

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to a health system that cares for nurses, supports nurses and gives nurses a stronger say in patient and management decisions.

In regard to nurse to patient ratios, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will support the findings of the Industrial Relations Commission.

The Keneally Labor government has failed to give nurses a fair workplace and has cut nurse numbers in NSW.

7. Health Outcomes

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

Socialist Alliance supports the NSW Nurses Association Campaign. Cost cutting of essential services - such as public health and hospitals - should be considered a criminal act because patients die as a result and it affects the lives of many more.

Cost-cutting bureaucrats and governments, not the workers on the front line of health care, are to blame. Neo-liberal economic “imperatives” are to blame for nurses fleeing the public system, fleeing the profession and being demoralised by the lack of an adequate nurse-to-patient ratio at work.

University research confirms there is a strong link between the number of experienced skilled nurses and safe patient care. A UTS Centre for Health Services Management study found there was a 30% increased chance of dying if a nurse is caring for eight patients instead of four, and that patients suffered with increased overtime, fewer permanent staff, fewer nursing hours per patient, inadequate clinical nurse educator support, and more patients per bed.

Victorian public hospitals have a mandated minimum nurse-to-patient ratios of 1:4 and so should NSW. Victoria introduced nurse-to-patient ratios in 2001 after a campaign by Victorian nurses, their union and the community. Surveys afterwards revealed a drastic improvement in patient care. Nearly half said patients received their medication on time more than they did before ratios; 67% said they had more time for the personal care of patients; and 57% said they had more time to talk with the families of patients.

The introduction of ratios led to an increase in staffing levels as almost 10,000 nurses who had left the profession came back. Victoria is now the only state in Australia that does not have a severe nurse shortage.

8. Educational Opportunities

Observations from local community and education services in the Marrickville LGA indicate that there is a significant number of children and young people who are at risk of becoming or already disengaged from schooling in the Marrickville area.

How do you intend to strengthen educational opportunities for children and young people in the Marrickville LGA?

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

Strengthening funding for public schools and programs designed to deal with disadvantaged schools and students is something The Greens are very passionate about.

We need to keep people engaged in schooling in Marrickville and give them options for further education whether it be TAFE and an apprenticeship, or University.

Usually there are a lot of complex factors at work including issues at home, so we need to look at all these factors.

I think our teachers do a good job but as always, the more support we can give kids, the better, so that may mean ensuring disadvantaged schools funding is weighted properly, is going to the schools that need it, and is adequate.

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

In Marrickville we have fantastic schools and students have access to a diverse range of Vocational Education (VET) courses (some taught on the school site, or at a TAFE) including school based apprenticeships and traineeships. Vocational education allows students to explore their interests through practical and theoretical studies while still studying at school.

This government introduced smaller class sizes in the first three years of schooling, the most important years of a child's development. Under the Labor Government, the average kindergarten class size has been reduced from 24 children to 19 children and funding for literacy programs has quadrupled.

We also introduced a requirement for all students to stay at school until the end of Year 10, after which they must continue in education, training or paid work until they turn 17.

We recognise that some students may become disengaged from traditional schooling so these reforms have been designed to lift overall student engagement by providing a wide range of pathways for students to choose, once they have completed Year 10.

Students in Marrickville also have access to student welfare co-ordinators and careers counsellors as well as access to transition advisers who support students as they prepare to move from school to their post-school options.

Without doubt, education increases opportunities, career choices and income capacity. If re-elected I'll protect and promote a broad curriculum to keep students engaged with their learning and students at risk of disengagement will be continue to be targeted with better support and guidance.

8. Educational Opportunities

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe that our education system is a community asset and a community effort. Principals, teachers, parents and students should all be involved in decision-making.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals trust communities to make decisions that affect them and believe in giving frontline staff, local communities and individuals real responsibilities and decision making powers.

In December 2009 the NSW Liberals & Nationals launched a statewide consultation on our Social Policy Framework: 'Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer.' Amongst the goals which guided our consultations in the area of education, was the need to improve the voice of students, parents and teachers in our education system.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals know that nobody knows the needs of a local school like its parents, principals and teachers.

On a personal note, my eldest son benefited greatly from attending a TAFE course run through the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre when he was in Year 10 at a local high school.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

A sure fire way of strengthening education is to limit class sizes - which are currently too large - so that teachers can meet students' needs and the teachers also get a chance to enjoy their profession. Teachers need more time to prepare classes, there is a need for more trained counsellors and teachers of Aboriginal background.

All this is becoming difficult, if not impossible, as the public education system is systematically dismantled, while private schools enjoy billions in taxpayer subsidies.

Free, quality, secular education is important for all. Fees, in the form of voluntary levies, at public schools should not be necessary if there was adequate government funding. Ethics classes should be an option for all state schools. Religious and non-government schools should not be funded by the state. Socialist Alliance calls for the abolition of school league tables and NAPLAN testing.

Early childhood education is increasingly out of the reach of most people, leading to increased pressure on parents, in particular mothers, to exit the workforce. This is privatisation by stealth.

Universal, free access to quality childcare and preschool and after school would have a huge positive impact on children and parents. Childcare and early education teachers must be acknowledged with wage parity with other education professionals. Extra funding for public schools and TAFEs and for students with special needs is necessary.

9. Tenant Protection

What level of commitment do you intend to provide for better protection for those groups in Marrickville who are marginal renters, including boarders and lodgers?

Carmel Tebbutt – Australian Labor Party

This Government has ushered in a new era for social housing in NSW in which the government and non-government sector is working together, closer than ever before, to assist those in need.

The NSW Government has set an ambitious target to grow the not-for-profit community housing sector to 30,000 homes by 2016 to deliver more affordable rental housing for lower income people in NSW.

A new system called Housing Pathways started on 27 April 2010 and has made it easier and simpler for clients in need to apply for housing assistance or receive an offer from any participating social housing provider in NSW.

Last year the Government helped over 30,000 low income households enter the private rental market through RentStart. The RentStart program includes bond assistance, rent in advance, help with rent arrears and temporary accommodation.

If re-elected, the Government will increase support for renters through expansion of the Rent Start program. The Government will support the growth of affordable housing by increasing the size of the Community Housing Sector from 13,000 to 30,000 homes. Community Housing Providers will be able to leverage these assets to facilitate the construction of new homes and expand overall supply of social housing.

We'll continue our commitment to the National Rental Affordability Scheme, designed to increase the amount of affordable rental housing – defined as 80% of the market rental rate - for families and key service workers in the metropolitan area.

We'll protect those most vulnerable members of the community living in inner-city areas through the expansion of the Boarding House Programme and the retention and refurbishment of current boarding houses.

In 2011, the NSW Government will spend over \$62 million through the Boarding House Reform Program to improve community based accommodation support services to former Licensed Residential Centre residents who have high support needs.

The funding will also help us enhance support services such as case management, advocacy, primary and secondary health care to current residents and recreation and leisure services to assist people remaining in Licensed Residential Centres.

We recognise that there is more to be done to improve protection for all vulnerable residents, which is why we are undertaking extensive consultation with the sector including looking at a single regulatory framework for the sector and establishing occupancy agreements between residents and owners.

It is expected that this consultation will deliver a firm vision for reform that will revolutionise this industry.

Rosana Tyler – Liberal Party of Australia

I firmly believe in a just and humane society that includes everyone. The marginal renters, including boarders and lodgers, includes the disabled, the elderly and the disadvantaged.

If elected, I commit myself to promoting the protection of the those people in the community who have special needs, and will advocate on behalf of them to formulate policy that will give special consideration to their needs.

I am committed to effecting a real change. I firmly believe that through the Liberals' Five Point Action Plan we will deliver more nurses, more teachers, better transport, and invest in infrastructure for now and the future.

9. Tenant Protection

Fiona Byrne – The Greens

Last year, The Greens sought changes to the residential tenancy law that would have provided some protection from immediate eviction for boarders, lodgers and other marginal renters. Other states already have this legislation in place.

However the Minister for Fair Trading refused to consider this in the review of NSW tenancy law and did not adopt any changes to protect boarders and lodgers in the new Act (which commences on January 31st this year) despite lobbying from the Tenants Union, NCOSS and other housing advocates.

Boarders and lodger's rights is something The Greens can and will pursue again via state parliament – we can introduce a Bill to amend our tenancy laws along the lines of Victoria and the ACT so that we do give boarders and lodgers some protection and legal recognition as tenants. At the moment they are not legally recognised as tenants and can be evicted immediately with no notice.

All the Government's claims that rights for boarders and lodgers would create landlord 'disinvestment' are wrong – this did not happen in Victoria or in the ACT. Labor has really failed to protect the most vulnerable.

Pip Hinman – Socialist Alliance

The character and circumstances of boarding house residents and lodgers have changed significantly over the past 30 years or so. Public housing has been reduced to welfare housing while the spiralling cost of owner-occupied housing and rents to private landlords and the deinstitutionalisation of vulnerable people without the effective provisions of community support.

As a result, low income people with varying levels of support needs and issues have been stranded in boarding and lodging places and many have experienced periods of rough sleeping or other forms of homelessness including couch-surfing at various points in their lives. These include people with mental health needs, people affected by violence, including domestic/family violence and elderly people, often migrants with diminishing family and support networks.

While marginal renters generally are glad to have a roof over their head, too often issues of support, safety, rights, security of tenure and dignity are not guaranteed as the majority of boarding house owners are driven by profit interests rather than human empathy.

For historic reasons, Marrickville has a high number of boarding houses. This presents an opportunity for positive change. The NSW and local governments need to work together to address housing availability and security and homelessness.

By implementing state legislation that sets a cap on rents, increases tenants' rights, demands good quality housing and undermines rogue landlords with the potential to confiscate properties and convert properties into community-controlled housing, marginal renters will immediately benefit. In addition, funding to community organisations able to link marginal renters and other vulnerable people into existing support networks, programs and developing new ones will address issues immediately impacting on people's housing vulnerability while not being housing specific.

Have Your Say!
at the...

**NNC MEET THE
CANDIDATE FORUM**

23rd February 2011

6:30-8:30pm

**St Luke's Church Hall,
Enmore**



***Newtown
Neighbourhood
Centre invites you to***

MEET YOUR MARRICKVILLE CANDIDATES

WEDNESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

The NSW Election will be held

26th March 2011

This free community forum will be a great opportunity for you to meet your local candidates beforehand and ask questions, be informed and talk about issues affecting *you* in your community.



MARRICKVILLE CANDIDATES:

CARMEL TEBBUTT – AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
FIONA BYRNE – THE GREENS
ROSANA TYLER – LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA
PIP HINMAN – SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

WHERE: ST LUKES

CHURCH,

11 STANMORE ROAD

ENMORE.

TIME: 6:30 – 8:30PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
NEWTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD
CENTRE

TELEPHONE: 9516 4755

EMAIL: richelle@newtowncentre.org

WEBSITE: www.newtowncentre.org

**Renowned Activist
and Academic, Eva
Cox will Chair the
Event**

Online Dialogue

CANDIDATES HAVE ALSO
SUBMITTED WRITTEN
RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY
QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE
ACCESSED NOW ON OUR
WEBSITE

www.newtowncentre.org