



VOTE FOR
THE COMMON
GOOD

The
Catholic Weekly

ELECTION GUIDE 2023

The outcome of this election is very important. Make your vote count.



**Archbishop
Anthony
Fisher OP**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that we all must participate in promoting the common good (CCC 1913).

Every four years, we have the opportunity to participate in promoting the common good in a concrete way when we cast our vote in the NSW state election.

The past four years have demonstrated to us how much our vote matters.

In 2019, just months after the last state election was held, a law was passed to allow abortion up until birth. It is one of the most extreme abortion laws in the world. Disappointingly, this was not raised with voters prior to the last election.

In 2022, it was the vulnerable elderly placed at risk, with euthanasia and assisted suicide laws passed through the parliament. As well as authorising the killing of those to whom we should offer the most care, these laws have stripped religious aged care facilities of the ability to “opt out” and will force them to allow euthanasia and assisted suicide on their premises.

Each of these laws was afforded a “conscience

vote” in parliament, meaning every member was given the freedom to vote according to their own beliefs. Sadly, a majority of the parliamentarians used their free vote to vote against the protection of human life. In doing so, they have reminded us of the importance of voting not simply for a party, but for individual members who will uphold the dignity of the human person and work and vote for the common good. They have also given us a rare insight into what they believe the “common good” to be.

The lack of protections now afforded to people’s religious and moral beliefs is a matter of real concern and we should be aware that some parties would seek to remove the few remaining protections or exemptions.

It is important that we

consider the previous voting record of those who are again seeking our vote, because—as the saying goes—the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

This election guide includes information on how each member of parliament who is standing for re-election on 25 March voted on abortion and euthanasia. I trust that you will have regard to this information when deciding which individual candidates to support this year.

As we look to the next four years, there are a number of other issues that are cause for hope or for concern for those of us seeking to promote the common good. Some of the parties have outlined specific promises for faith communities, and they are included in this election guide. I trust that you will consider

these matters when deciding which party will receive your vote.

We know that the primary issue for a majority of NSW voters is the current cost of living crisis. Whether it is housing affordability, rising interest rates, energy and fuel prices or simply the weekly groceries, individuals and families are under stress. These are also crucial social issues because they speak directly to the dignity of the human person and the care for the most vulnerable. Matters relating to social and affordable housing, rental properties, energy prices and gambling are included in this guide, but I am aware this only scratches the surface. Cost of living pressures traverse so many other policy areas, like taxation, environment, jobs and wages, infrastructure, education and child-

care as well. Some of the minor parties will not have public positions on these matters, given that expenditure is decided by which of the major parties is in government.

When comparing the parties and deciding who deserves your vote, I urge you to consider not only how these policies will impact you, but others in NSW, particularly the poor.

It is no mere coincidence that this year’s election occurs on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord; I believe it is an act of Divine Providence inviting us to entrust all our political leaders and the outcome of this election to our Blessed Mother, that she will intercede for the needs of all in this state before her Son.

Our Lady, Help of Christians, pray for us.

LYLE SHELTON INDEPENDENT

Lyle Shelton does not have a specific policy for faith communities. However, publicly-stated policies that would affect religious communities include:

- **Education:** will seek to remove all LGBTI material from school and early childhood curriculum and reject the recommendation that teachers should hide a child's decision to change their gender from the child's parents.
- **Religious discrimination:** will seek to legislate to protect the rights of churches and schools to hire staff in accordance with their beliefs, to make it an offence to fire a person based on their religious beliefs and to abolish anti-vilification and anti-discrimination laws that restrict freedom of speech and religion.
- **Conversion therapy:** will oppose bans on so-called conversion therapy, and seek to prohibit the use of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and gender affirmation surgery on minors.
- **Abortion:** will seek to ban late-term and sex-selective abortions and provide practical supports for women who they do not feel they have no other choice than abortion.
- **Euthanasia:** will seek to repeal euthanasia laws and increase resourcing for palliative care.

Mr Shelton's publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:

- **Problem Gambling:** will seek to phase out poker machines or, if this cannot be achieved, support the cashless gaming card.
- **Housing:** will advocate for more public land to be released for housing and red tape reduced in order to increase supply for housing and lower prices.
- **Energy prices:** will seek to lift restrictions on exploration for natural gas to unlock gas reserves, firm up electricity supply and lower retail power prices.

Labor

OPPOSITION LEADER, Chris Minns MP, outlined NSW Labor's plans for religious communities if Labor is elected:

- **Engagement with faith communities:** Stephen Kamper MP, Member for Rockdale, will be a single point of contact for NSW faith communities within the government;
- **NSW Faith Affairs Council:** will establish this council as a formal channel of communication between faith organisations and the government. Members will be chosen by faith groups, rather than by the government;
- **Premier's Panel on Racism and Extremism:** will establish this panel to address the growing concerns of faith and cultural and linguistically diverse communities in NSW;
- **Safety and security:** will provide \$15 million to improve safety and security of religious institutions, including schools, community centres and places of worship; and
- **Religious vilification:** will introduce legislation to religious vilification within the first 100 days of government.

NSW Labor's publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:

- **Religious discrimination:** in terms of outlawing all other forms of discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity, Mr Minns has said that the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 is outdated, and the entire piece of legislation will be referred to the NSW Law Reform Commission for review.
- **Conversion therapy:** NSW Labor has said that, if elected, it "will ban LGBTQ+ conversion practices." Conversion practices have been defined by Labor as "the formal or informal practices based on the ideology that LGBTQ+ people have a disorder or require treatment." Mr Minns gave assurances that neither the expressing a religious belief in a sermon nor a person consensually seeking guidance through prayer would be banned under Labor's plan.
- **Modern slavery:** has shown a strong commitment to the full implementation of the NSW Modern Slavery Act and ongoing support for the important work undertaken by the Anti-slavery Commissioner.
- **Cemeteries:** will support Catholic Cemeteries as a standalone Crown Land Manager and charitable operator, continuing to serve all faith groups.
- **Problem Gambling:** NSW Labor's plan includes a 12-month trial of cashless gaming using 500 poker machines, banning advertising of gaming outside clubs and pubs, introducing responsible gaming officers in venues, allow third parties who hold joint accounts with problem gamblers to apply to have them banned from gaming lounges and ban clubs from donating to political parties.
- **Social and affordable housing:** will ensure that 30% of housing built on surplus government land will be social and affordable housing.
- **Rental policy:** will end 'no grounds' evictions for fixed-term and month-to-month residential tenancies.
- **Energy prices:** will establish an Energy Security Corporation to invest in community batteries and promote adoption of renewable energies to drive down energy prices.

WHAT'S PARTY POSITION

Before you go to the polls, here's the party's position on issues from conversion therapy to



PAULINE HANSON'S one NATION

Party leader, Mark Latham MLC, has named four key priorities when it comes to the concerns of faith communities:

- **Religious discrimination:** In 2020, One Nation proposed a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious

belief and activity in NSW. A NSW Parliamentary Joint Select Committee recommended the bill be passed with some minor changes. However, both major parties voted against it and so it was defeated. One Nation will seek to pass this bill in the next term.

- **Parental rights:** In 2020, One Nation proposed a bill that would protect parental rights by requiring parents to

be told in advance what their children would be taught in relation to moral and ethical standards, political and social values, and matters of personal wellbeing and identity, including gender and sexuality, and give them the right to withdraw their children from classes where they did not agree with the content. A NSW Upper House Committee supported many of the bill's inclusions, but it was not put to a vote. One Nation will continue to advo-

cate for these rights in the next term of parliament, as well as ensure schools are not permitted to keep information about a child's gender transition from parents.

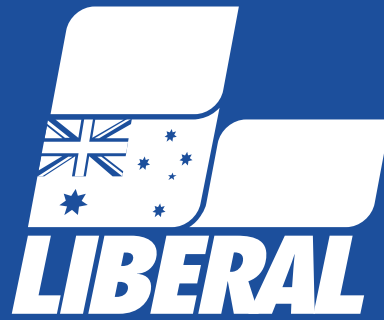
- **Conversion therapy:** will resist attempts by Alex Greenwich MP and any others to prohibit so-called conversion therapy.
- **Religious freedom:** will resist attempts to remove religious exemptions from the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

One Nation's publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:

- **Problem gambling:** supports a cashless gaming card.
- **Energy prices:** will seek to reduce electricity prices by building the Bayswater 2 coal-fired power station in the Hunter Valley.

YOUR TY'S TION?

on 25 March, know each
from religious freedom and
housing and energy.



NSW Premier, Dominic Perrottet MP, outlined the Government's plan for 'free and flourishing' faith communities:

- **Respect and protect the fundamental right of freedom of faith:** the Premier described faith as being at the core of a person of faith's identity and dignity as members of the community, and said freedom of faith would never be an 'optional extra';
- **Support families who want to pass on their faith and values to children:** recognising parents as the first educators of their children, provide ongoing support for Special Religious Education (catechism classes in government schools) and funding for independent faith-based schools;
- **Engage with faith communities on matters of public policy that affect people of faith:** continue the NSW Religious Communities Advisory Council - established in December 2022 - as the body to formalise collaboration between the government and religious communities;
- **Safety and security:** has committed \$10 million to protect places of worship, schools, community centres and other buildings bearing

religious symbols where there is a risk to safety; and

- **Ongoing support for festivals and religious events celebrated by faith communities throughout the year,** such as Christmas at the Cathedral and the Golden Jubilee of the Maronite Eparchy in Australia.
- The NSW Liberal Party's publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:
- **Religious discrimination:** will introduce a bill to prohibit religious discrimination but will wait until the federal government finishes its work on religious discrimination. Once this has concluded, the Attorney-General will introduce a bill in NSW.
 - **Conversion therapy:** will outlaw practices such as food deprivation and electroshock therapy in order to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Premier Perrottet confirmed that such laws will not ban prayer or preaching, because it is fundamental to religious freedom.
 - **Modern slavery:** appointed an independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to investigate and report on modern slavery in

NSW and implemented legislation requiring the NSW Government, NSW Government agencies and Local Councils to mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains.

- **Cemeteries:** will support Catholic Cemeteries as a standalone Crown Land Manager and charitable operator, continuing to serve all faith groups.
- **Problem gambling:** the NSW Liberal plan includes self-prescribed limits on gambling and commencing a roll out of cashless poker machines at the beginning of 2024, with a full transition to cashless gaming by 2028. The Government will also ban political donations from pubs and clubs.
- **Social and affordable housing:** will ensure that 30% of housing built on state rail land will be social and affordable housing.
- **Rental policy:** NSW Liberals have pledged to change 'no grounds' evictions to 'reasonable grounds' for evictions during periodic residential tenancies; the notice period for 'no grounds' evictions for fixed-term rentals will be extended from 30 days to 45 days.
- **Energy prices:** will provide a \$250 rebate on energy costs and are favourable towards community batteries and solar as a way of bringing down prices.

SILVANA NILE

REVIVE AUSTRALIA PARTY (FRED NILE ALLIANCE)

Silvana Nile does not have a specific policy for faith communities. However, publicly-stated policies that would affect religious communities include:

- **Education:** will advocate for the inclusion of scientific evidence for Biblical creation and the dangers of Marxist- and Communist-related ideologies in the curriculum.
- **Religious freedom:** will seek to legislate for religious freedom, including the ability for people of faith to resist progressive political beliefs.
- **Abortion:** will seek to recriminalise late-term abortion and prohibit sex-selective abortion.
- **Euthanasia:** will continue to advocate against euthanasia, recognising the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

Mrs Nile's publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:

- **Housing:** Mrs Nile will support programs that seek to increase social housing, particularly in regional and rural NSW.
- **Energy prices:** Mrs Nile will seek to implement permanent price caps on energy providers and mandate them to prioritise the domestic markets before overseas markets.



The NSW Greens do not have a specific policy for faith communities. However, publicly-stated policies that would affect religious communities include:

- **Education:** will seek to abolish all state government funding for non-government schools (including Catholic schools), abolish existing land tax exemptions for non-government schools and ensure no capital works funding is given to non-government schools. They will also seek to have LGBTI family structures represented in early childhood education curriculum content and require the

Safe Schools program to be taught in all schools.

- **Religious freedom:** will introduce a bill within the first 100 days of the new parliament to remove all religious exemptions from the Anti-Discrimination Act. They will also seek to and strip funding from schools that discriminate on the basis of religion, sexual orientation or gender identity when choosing staff.
- **Conversion therapy:** will

seek a complete ban on all so-called conversion practices related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

The NSW Greens' publicly declared positions on other relevant issues include:

- **Problem gambling:** support self-prescribed limits on poker machines and the rollout of cashless poker machines. Their plan also includes limiting maximum bets on poker machines to \$1 per push, require winnings above

\$250 to be paid by cheque, and frequently interrupting play on machines to provide information to the player about time and money spent on gaming.

- **Social and affordable housing:** will seek to have 30% of all new private residential developments housing to be social and affordable housing.
- **Rental policy:** have pledged to end 'no grounds' evictions for fixed-term and month-

to-month residential tenancies and will seek to legislate to prevent rents from exceeding 30% of a tenants' income.

- **Energy prices:** NSW Greens want to see a rapid transition to 100% renewable energy and in the meantime protect low- and middle-income households from increased prices through market regulation and direct monetary assistance.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSCIENCE VOTE

One of the key responsibilities of a Member of Parliament is to vote on proposed laws. Generally speaking, members of a political party are expected to vote in line with the position chosen by the party to which they belong. From time to time, however, Members of Parliament are allowed a 'free vote,' which is otherwise known as a 'conscience vote.' Conscience votes are usually given on matters of moral or social significance, especially when they relate to issues of life and death. The conscience vote is given for a few reasons: to not restrict members in matters of conscience; to allow them to represent the views of their electorate in their vote; and to avoid having a 'party position' on matters that are often divisive and highly emotive.

During the most recent term of NSW Parliament, conscience votes were given on the legalisation of abortion until birth, and the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide. The table provides information about the votes cast by each Member of Parliament who is standing for re-election in March 2023.

Name	Party	Electorate	Against Abortion	Against Euthanasia
Justin Clancy	Liberal Party	Albury	X	✓
Lynda Voltz	Australian Labor Party	Auburn	X	X
Tamara Smith	The Greens	Ballina	X	X
Roy Butler	Independent	Barwon	X	X
Paul Toole	The Nationals	Bathurst	X	✓
Stephen Bali	Australian Labor Party	Blacktown	✓	✓
Trish Doyle	Australian Labor Party	Blue Mountains	X	X
Peter Sidgreaves	Liberal Party	Camden	✓	X
Greg Warren	Australian Labor Party	Campbelltown	X	✓
Sophie Cotsis	Australian Labor Party	Canterbury	X	✓
Ray Williams	Liberal Party	Castle Hill	✓	✓
Clayton Barr	Australian Labor Party	Cessnock	X	-
Jodie Harrison	Australian Labor Party	Charlestown	X	X
Gurmeh Singh	The Nationals	Coffs Harbour	X	X
Marjorie O'Neill	Australian Labor Party	Coogee	X	X
Steph Cooke	The Nationals	Cootamundra	X	X
Mark Speakman	Liberal Party	Cronulla	✓	✓
Dugald Saunders	The Nationals	Dubbo	X	X
Wendy Lindsay	Liberal Party	East Hills	✓	✓
Dominic Perrottet	Liberal Party	Epping	✓	✓
Liesl Tesch	Australian Labor Party	Gosford	X	X
Wendy Tuckerman	Liberal Party	Goulburn	✓	X
Julia Finn	Australian Labor Party	Granville	✓	✓
Robyn Preston	Liberal Party	Hawkesbury	✓	✓
Lee Evans	Liberal Party	Heathcote	X	X
Ron Hoenig	Australian Labor Party	Heffron	X	X
Matt Kean	Liberal Party	Hornsby	X	X
Ryan Park	Australian Labor Party	Keira	X	X
Gareth Ward	Independent	Kiama	X	X
Chris Minns	Australian Labor Party	Kogarah	X	✓
Alister Henskens	Liberal Party	Ku-ring-gai	X	✓
Greg Piper	Independent	Lake Macquarie	X	X
Jihad Dib	Australian Labor Party	Lakemba	✓	✓
Anthony Roberts	Liberal Party	Lane Cove	✓	✓
Janelle Saffin	Australian Labor Party	Lismore	X	X
Prue Car	Australian Labor Party	Londonderry	X	X
Anoulack Chanthivong	Australian Labor Party	Macquarie Fields	X	✓
Jenny Aitchison	Australian Labor Party	Maitland	X	X
James Griffin	Liberal Party	Manly	X	X
Michael Daley	Australian Labor Party	Maroubra	X	X
Eleni Petinos	Liberal Party	Miranda	✓	✓
Edmond Atalla	Australian Labor Party	Mount Druitt	✓	✓
Tanya Davies	Liberal Party	Mulgoa	✓	✓
Helen Dalton	Independent	Murray	X	X
Tim Crakanthorp	Australian Labor Party	Newcastle	X	X
Jenny Leong	The Greens	Newtown	X	X
Felicity Wilson	Liberal Party	North Shore	X	X
Adam Marshall	The Nationals	Northern Tablelands	X	X
Mark Coure	Liberal Party	Oatley	✓	X
Philip Donato	Independent	Orange	X	X
Stuart Ayres	Liberal Party	Penrith	X	X
Leslie Williams	Liberal Party	Port Macquarie	X	X
Kate Washington	Australian Labor Party	Port Stephens	X	X
Hugh McDermott	Australian Labor Party	Prospect	✓	✓
Stephen Kamper	Australian Labor Party	Rockdale	✓	✓
Mark Taylor	Liberal Party	Seven Hills	✓	✓
Anna Watson	Australian Labor Party	Shellharbour	X	X
Jo Haylen	Australian Labor Party	Summer Hill	X	X
Yasmin Catley	Australian Labor Party	Swansea	X	X
Alex Greenwich	Independent	Sydney	X	X
Kevin Anderson	The Nationals	Tamworth	X	X
Adam Crouch	Liberal Party	Terrigal	X	X
David Mehan	Australian Labor Party	The Entrance	X	X
Geoff Provost	The Nationals	Tweed	X	X
Dave Layzell	The Nationals	Upper Hunter	-	✓
Joe McGirr	Independent	Wagga Wagga	✓	✓
Sonia Horner	Australian Labor Party	Wallsend	X	X
Nathaniel Smith	Liberal Party	Wollondilly	✓	✓
Paul Scully	Australian Labor Party	Wollongong	X	X
David Harris	Australian Labor Party	Wyong	X	X

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CONSCIENCE VOTE

Name	Party	Against abortion	Against euthanasia
John Graham	Australian Labor Party	X	X
Courtney Houssos	Australian Labor Party	✓	✓
Rose Jackson	Australian Labor Party	X	X
Natasha Maclaren-Jones	Liberal Party	✓	✓
Chris Rath	Liberal Party	-	✓
Mark Latham	Pauline Hanson's One Nation	✓	✓
Tania Mihailuk	Pauline Hanson's One Nation	✓	✓
Robert Borsak	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	✓	✓
Cate Faehrmann	The Greens	X	X
Scott Barrett	The Nationals	-	X
Ben Franklin	The Nationals	X	X
Bronnie Taylor	The Nationals	X	X