

## Candidate's Pledge to Save the Forests

I believe that continued clearing of peri-urban native vegetation, usually to provide land for residential development, is not ecologically sustainable.

If elected as a Councillor my policy will be to oppose the further clearing of native vegetation for development for the reasons below:

Firstly, I acknowledge that land clearing results in critical loss of habitat and is a major driver of increased pressure on the survival of terrestrial biodiversity. Land clearing compromises threatened species, placing native flora and fauna at further risk at a time when habitat conservation is absolutely critical.

More than 17 million hectares of land burned during the 2019.2020 bushfires, which was devastating for native species and killed more than 800 million animals in New South Wales. The predicted worsening effects of climate change puts already threatened/vulnerable species at further risk of population decline and mortality.

Secondly, land clearing is recognised as a major contributor to greenhouse gases and climate change. Clearing vegetation removes stored carbon and prevents the ongoing sequestration of carbon, thereby contributing to increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and reducing the land's ability to contribute to climate solutions.

I understand that while housing supply and affordability are critical social issues, they are problems that can and are being solved without the need to clear land. Australia has some of the lowest urban population densities on the planet. Some of the world's most liveable cities have population density many times greater than that of Newcastle LGA.

Increasing density and prioritising developments on already cleared land parcels is a tangible solution to housing supply and affordability, which will spare the remaining forested areas of the region, providing habitat connectivity essential for threatened native species to flourish. Habitat loss and climate change are crises that do not have alternative sustainable solutions. Clearing vegetation results in habitat loss and exacerbates climate change.

While I acknowledge it will be my duty as an elected decision maker to consider all matters put before me in relation to any planning and development proposals and to keep an open mind, I also acknowledge that I will be entitled to evaluate those proposal in accordance with my policies and beliefs that I hold and have made public during the election. These are the policies and positions that constituents have considered when deciding whether or not to vote for me. The impacts upon biodiversity and climate, and the amount of green space remaining are fundamental matters that will be a major influence on my considerations.

SIGNED  DATE 24/11/2021

CANDIDATE'S NAME Nuatali Nelmes PARTY Newcastle Labor