



## **MANIFESTO**

*Our policies. Our vision.*

# KEEP SYDNEY OPEN. *Our policies. Our vision.*

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# KEEP SYDNEY OPEN. *Our policies. Our vision.*

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## 1. **Unlock the city's night-time economy and create a 24- hour city**

### *From lockouts to best-practice nightlife management*

The lockouts were a sledgehammer blow to Sydney's night-time economy. Jobs, businesses, creativity and talent lost. Lives ruined. Some – including the Government and Labor opposition – maintain that this is simply the 'price of safety'.

Everyone wants a safer city. But safety doesn't come at the price of nightlife, and nightlife doesn't come at the price of safety. It's a false dichotomy. There are other far more effective and less damaging alternatives to curfews.

If the major parties were fair dinkum about safety, they wouldn't leave [Casinos](#) and [sporting stadiums](#) off their 'violent venues list' - not when [the Star is 10 times more violent than NSW's most violent pub](#). If they were fair dinkum about safety they'd push for [late-night transport](#), more effective policing and late-night trading.

\$16b a year. [That's how much our underperforming nightlife costs us](#) - enough to rebuild a couple of stadiums, move the powerhouse, build a major toll road with enough left over for a cheeky light rail extension or two. Each year.

Whether it's Sydney, Byron, Newie, the Mountains, the Gong or elsewhere, a more vibrant and diverse nightlife - with arts and culture, retail and entertainment pumping late - is a safer one. It's also good for 'jobs and growth'. With the day so congested, why shut down the night?

Each weekend before the lockouts, 70,000 people used to cram into Kings Cross. What do we see for similar sized crowds at sporting and cultural events? Where were the road closures, transport hubs and scaled up transport options? Why was there such a density of liquor licences and why weren't licensees incentivised for good performance? And why did police leave intoxicated, anti-social idiots on the street?

Police, planners and regulators dropped the ball. Majorly. Yet it was the venues, artists and workers that paid the price. Keep Sydney Open seeks to learn from authorities' mistakes and bring our state into line with global best practice.

### ***Licensing reform***

**Removing the 1.30am lockouts and ending the liquor licence freeze** in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD Entertainment precincts are at the top of our list, but by no means the end game. Repealing without replacing them with a coherent night-time management strategy would be reckless and will land us right back where we began.

NSW needs to overhaul its liquor licensing to better target high-risk venues while rewarding good management. Well-run venues are the cornerstones of a vibrant nightlife and should be encouraged and supported. We'll be looking to **lower licensing fees and award trading extensions past 3am and up to 24 hours to venues that have a proven track record of good management**, both in the Sydney CBD/Kings Cross and across NSW. We'll also support creating a **new class of licence for venues offering cultural and performance space**.

If you finish work at midnight and want a vino or a cheeky beer with your dinner, you should be able to buy a bottle on your way home. In Melbourne several bottle shops are open past 3am and the sky hasn't fallen in. We'll be looking to **repeal the nanny-state ban on takeaway alcohol sales after 11pm** and replace it with a **licensing regime for late-night packaged liquor [similar to the one in place in Victoria](#)**.

### ***24-hour transport for a 24-hour Sydney***

Modelling shows that [extending late night public transport is more effective in reducing alcohol-related harms than venue lockouts](#). We need better late-night transport options to get people off the street and back home where they want to be... not fighting over buses and cabs. A **coordinated 24-hour transport solution** will provide the infrastructure on which a vibrant nightlife and night-time economy can grow. Melbourne is already miles ahead with its now permanent all-night transport on weekends. So let's **trial 24-hour transport on key trains and buses from Thursdays to Sundays** alongside an open, public scoping study into a **permanent 24-hour transport network strategy** incorporating increased taxi, rideshare, bike-share and emerging technologies.

### ***More collaborative and effective policing***

Policing strategies to deal with public intoxication were found wanting in the lead up to the lockouts and remain out of touch with community expectations.

Heavy-handed enforcement by licensing police, including high frequency and visibility of inspections, and disproportionate fines, have led to numerous venues closing for minor incidents and an unhealthy relationship between licensees and regulators. We'll be looking to foster a more collaborative and effective model of policing entertainment precincts, involving **regular roundtables between local police, business and liquor licensees** to strengthen working relationships, integrate approaches (shared communication, training and planning) and provide greater community oversight of licensing police and their operations.

We also want to see police **take violent people off the street** rather than just move them on. Let's **trial 'drunk tanks' and other 'proclaimed places' where antisocial drunks can sober up off the streets**. And, more broadly, we want to invest in best-practice security with a focus on **harm-minimisation, inclusivity and preventative measures to avoid intoxication**.

### ***Govern with vision***

The night-time economy lacks the representation worthy of a sector that contributes \$30 billion a year and almost a quarter of a million jobs to the NSW economy.

From sex workers and taxi drivers to small businesses owners, from nightclub operators to late-night retail and hospitality workers, stakeholders of the night-time economy are a veritable 'broad church'. Just as diverse are the activities that thrive on nightlife – creative industries, retail, hospitality, music and the arts, tourism, start-ups trying to attract global talent amongst others.

We propose the creation of a **dedicated NSW government office ('Office of the Night')** that serves as a single focal point for leadership, coordination and accountability for stakeholders of the NTE with a whole-of-government approach to relevant cultural,

economic and planning policies. This should be combined with a Ministry of Culture, Music and Nightlife for a seat in Cabinet.

A clearly articulated **state government vision** for live music and performance in NSW, informed by broad-based consultation, will provide the strategic framework for the development of the night-time economy, improve policy coherence and provide a benchmark to which government would be held accountable.

The study ‘found lower rates of alcohol consumption during live music events compared to non-live music events, and on the night of a live music performance, lower rates during the performance than before, after and between sets.’

*City of Sydney Pilot study - Alcohol Consumption in Live Music Venues*

## 2. Unshackle and stimulate nightlife and culture

### *Creating cultural opportunities across the state*

Sydney – a once glittering cultural powerhouse – is now famous for oppressive regulation and forced bedtimes. Distracted by the bright lights of Vivid and other major, corporatised events, the Government has been blind to the destruction it has brought to small and medium-sized spaces - the ‘ecosystem’ where our artists start out, forge careers and earn a living.

The live music scene in Sydney alone [lost around a net total of 200 venues](#) and a [40% decline in revenue](#). Incredibly, the closure of the Basement in April 2018 left [only two small live music venues in the Sydney CBD](#): the Oxford Art Factory and Hudson Ballroom. Livelihoods of countless musicians have been harmed - particularly alarming considering that around [40 per cent of Australia's 48,000 practising professional artists](#) live in NSW.

Faced with a significant rebuilding task, KSO has some exciting ideas to unshackle and stimulate local creativity and entrepreneurial talent across the state.

#### ***A ‘Live Music Bonus’: lower licensing costs for spaces with live music***

Slower drinking rates and lower alcohol-related risks in live-music and cultural spaces justify a different approach to licensing. We’ve spoken with industry and seen the evidence – we’re calling for a **separate class of licence for live music venues with lower fees and less compliance**. In an industry of wafer thin margins, [reducing compliance and operating costs](#) - are an effective and costless way to breathe new life into the live music scene in NSW.

[Research shows](#) that almost half (45 per cent) of restaurants and cafes and one in five hotels and bars would stage live music if it was subsidised. And the best thing about it? Lower licensing fees pay for themselves: for every dollar invested in live music, [three dollars circulate back into the economy](#) through food and beverage consumption, audio visual hire, wages, hotel stays and more - we’re talking millions of dollars per year.

To complement this, we'll be advocating for a [community benefit fund](#) that uses revenue pokies taxes to support the live music industry, as proposed by the [NSW Parliament's Live Music Inquiry](#).

### ***State funding for contemporary music and culture***

In 2017-18, the NSW Government provided a mere \$800,000 to contemporary music - a pittance compared with the [\\$22 million over four years](#) invested by the Victorian Government. We've got a lot of catching up to do, so **we're looking to quadruple what Victoria spends on contemporary music per person - \$100 million over four years on:**

- [NSW music grants](#) to improve the dynamism of NSW's contemporary music scene, through grants for venue infrastructure, soundproofing and promotion. Grants would range from \$2,500 to \$25,000 for individuals and \$2,500 to \$75,000 for groups and organisations.
- [Music quick-grants](#) to help artists and organisations take advantage of career opportunities that arise at short notice and outside of the major grants process. This would include funding for touring and recording, and for professional development. Grants of \$1,000 to \$5,000 for individuals and \$1,000 to \$15,000 for groups and organisations.
- [NSW music passport](#) to help individuals and organisations establish global links, learn world's best practices and break into overseas markets, including grants to help NSW musicians tour internationally.
- [Music for the regions](#). A program to help revitalise the live music scene in regional NSW. This would involve delegations of NSW's leading music artists, managers and booking agents visiting regions to explore opportunities for contemporary music touring and collaboration.
- [A contemporary music hub](#) with collocated facilities for rehearsal, performance, recording, production and radio providing a platform and community focal point for the local industry.

In recognition of the reputational damage done over the past 5 years, we want to see **\$10 million dedicated to a targeted marketing and promotion campaign** to rebuild confidence in the state's nightlife and cultural offering. We also want to see **\$10 million allocated to establish a 'Street Party Fund' to activate outdoor public spaces**. Again, we've got a lot of catching up to do, so let's hit the ground running. We'll also be looking to restore funding to [the Sydney Festival's First Night](#).

### ***Culture pass***

There is now an entire cohort of young Sydneysiders who have grown up with lockouts as the norm, with Netflix and the Star Casino dominating late-night options. These are formative years where patterns of engagement with culture are defined.

To encourage the 'lockout generation' - those aged 18-24 - to consume culture and support the creative industries, we're **proposing a 'Culture Pass' with free access (up to \$250 per person, per year) to live music, performance, theatre, galleries and other cultural events and institutions**. We're inspired by successful rollouts of similar schemes in [New York](#) and [France](#), also targeting behaviour change and the consumption of culture.

### ***Remove ridiculous, oppressive and outdated regulation***

The incredible creativity and entrepreneurialism of Sydney's artists have pushed the city's nightlife and culture into new directions, formats and spaces. But in Sydney, culture happens [despite the government](#). Oppressive regulation has woven [red tape around our creative industries and nightlife](#) and stifled vibrancy. The development consent process for venues seeking to host live music and other cultural activities is prohibitively complex, costly and inflexible. Liquor licences contain unnecessarily restrictive conditions on use of space and duplicate or even contradict development consent processes.

We'll be looking to drastically simplify and **loosen regulatory and compliance responsibilities to allow the creative sector to flourish**, including scrapping development applications for small-scale and temporary cultural projects, removing outdated and unnecessary licensing conditions and security requirements, and streamlining liquor licensing approvals and development consent processes.

In parallel, we aim to work with city councils to **extend trading hours of other businesses that are integral to the night-time economy**, such as food, retail and entertainment vendors.

#### ***How will we pay for it all?***

Government is all about priorities. By opposing the [\\$1.5 billion rebuild/refurbishment of ANZ and Alliance stadiums](#), and [the \\$1-2 billion relocation of the Powerhouse museum](#), we have a 'war chest' of billions to reallocate to higher priority investments in culture, health and education.

Specifically, KSO's policy to remove pokies subsidies for NSW casino clubs is worth around \$500m per year (see below). Half of this will be used to help small-medium clubs diversify their business. The rest - \$250m a year - will be redirected to a *Community Benefit Fund* that will be used to fund contemporary music, services for problem gambling and social investments.

### **3. Tear up the nanny state and restore civil liberties**

#### ***The Nanny State and infringement revenue***

There's something really un-Australian about the way we're governed in NSW. We're increasingly defined by what we can't do and what we can get fined for - jaywalking, beers on the beach, a few tinnies while kayaking, not wearing a helmet, [daring to pack a cricket bat and ball or even a guitar for a NYE picnic](#), leaving your car unlocked, organising a street party... the list goes on and on.

The infringement revenue state that is NSW squeezes the last dollar out of us at the drop of a hat, for personal choices that harm nobody and all under the pretence of 'looking after us'. Common sense and discretion by police has been replaced by revenue targets. How much does the NSW Government waste protecting us from ourselves? Is there not something better they can be spending it on?

We'll be looking to **cut off the state's dependence on revenue-raising infringements** by ending the waste of police resources on trivialities and personal choices that don't harm others such as jaywalking and breathalysing kayakers, and **refocusing on educating**

people to make better choices. We also want to bring NSW into line with global best practice and [end fines for not wearing a helmet](#) to encourage the use of active transport.

### ***Civil liberties and the police state***

At times comical, it has now gone way past a joke. Since the O'Farrell-Baird-Berejiklian took office, our civil liberties have been steadily eroded under the pretence of 'public safety'. It's been waging a [relentless war on our civil liberties and basic rights](#) in favour of vested interests and a misguided notion of 'public safety'. It's [staggering](#). We've now got laws [to force a person to move on just for being drunk](#) (2011); [to remove the right to remain silent](#) (2013); [to reverse the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty](#) (2014); to [restrict a person's employment, movement, and association without proof they've committed a crime](#) (2016); [to prevent environmentally-motivated protests](#) (2016); [to move on people occupying designated public reserves](#) (2017); and to [break up almost any gathering of people on public land](#) (2018).

Many of these laws are drastic curtailments of civil liberties, human rights and democracy masquerading as "public safety" measures. And it's well known that these laws [disproportionately affect marginalised groups](#), such as Aboriginal Australians, the homeless and the mentally ill.

Our first step will be to **reclaim our public spaces by winding back the anti-democratic 'move-on' laws** that have allowed police to unjustifiably take people off the streets. We're then going to **conduct an inquiry into the gradual reduction in civil liberties of the last decade**, with a view to paring back and repealing laws found to excessively restrict civil liberties and human rights relative to any security benefits. And we'll be pushing for an **overhaul of the current model of heavy-handed punitive policing towards community policing**, focussed on building trust with the community and on the [underlying social dynamics of crime](#).

There's nothing that epitomises the wasteful misallocation of police resources as riot police breaking up Australia day beach BBQs. And what risk is there really to a family celebrating NYE fireworks with a bottle of Riesling? High risk enough to be banned? We'll be pushing for a review of alcohol-free zones, restrictions on outdoors events and pare back policing of low-risk activity.

## **4. Save our festivals from destructive overregulation**

The Government's war on festivals is 'lockouts 2.0'. Just as they did with the lockouts exactly 5 years before, the Government has pivoted blame onto operators for the actions of individual; failed to consult stakeholders and experts; treated entire communities and cultural spaces with contempt; will bludgeon an entire industry in the name of 'safety' with small businesses, creative entrepreneurs and workers feeling the brunt all while ignoring evidence-based solutions.

By demonising festivals and dismissing them as a fringe subculture, our politicians ignore the reality that festivals are mainstream and a significant contributor to the NSW economy and vibrancy of our cities and towns. Indeed the Australian live music performance industry is worth [\\$1.8 billion in Australia](#) - more than the combined revenue of attendances at AFL, NRL, soccer, super rugby, cricket and NBL.

### ***Regulating festivals***

[New licensing regulations were](#) one of the key recommendations of a rushed “expert” review which explicitly [excluded the music festival industry](#) and [ignored pill testing](#). There was zero consultation with industry – like drafting policy on agriculture without consulting a single farmer. We’re going to **repeal the regulations and initiate a festival stakeholder roundtable between industry, emergency services and policymakers** to create smarter and informed risk management strategies.

### ***Policing costs***

Alongside the regulations are exorbitant policing costs imposed arbitrarily on festivals and used to shut them down or drive them interstate. Why is it that [Good Things festival was charged 5 times more for police in NSW than in Victoria?](#) Why was [Bohemian Beatfreaks charged 20 times more than the previous year for policing](#), despite recording no major drug incidents? We’ll be looking to **bring the user-pays police to attendee ratio at festivals in line with other states and cultural gatherings, including sports.**

### ***Harm minimisation***

And while the Government actively stands in the way of harm minimisation interventions, swarms of police and sniffer dogs conducting strip searches at festivals are [encouraging risky drug-taking behaviour](#) and preventing punters from seeking help. It’s time to introduce genuine **harm minimisation programs for festivals covering pill testing, amnesty bins, drug education, rovers, health services and water stations** (*see below for more on drugs and harm minimisation*). And instead of funding more and more police, we’ll be looking to fund **the development and implementation of emergency services and counter-terrorism strategies for sport, festivals and cultural events.**

## **5. End the war on drugs and minimise harm**

Treating drug use as a law enforcement issue is expensive, ineffective and produces counterproductive results. It’s 2019. All the evidence shows that the criminalisation of drug use, ‘zero tolerance’ and ‘just say no’ policies are both ineffective and extremely wasteful, and that harm reduction and treatment is the best way to minimise the dangers and reduce the broader impacts on crime and health. Let’s learn from tragedies of this summer by finally shifting drug policy out of law enforcement and into health and education. KSO will be promoting [policy reform, attitudinal and cultural shifts, and stronger cross-sectoral partnerships](#) towards a genuine harm minimisation strategy.

### ***Pill testing and drug education***

Time and time again families and friends have been ripped apart by the NSW Government’s stubborn opposition to pill testing. We have two decades of evidence from Europe alongside the [successful 2018 trial](#) at Groovin’ The Moo festival in the ACT.

We know that [there is demand for drug testing services](#) and broad consensus about their effectiveness across [experts](#), the [medical](#) and [legal](#) professions, [non-for profit groups](#),

[families of victims](#) and the [majority of NSW voters](#). Even a [former federal police commissioner](#) is on board. We'll be looking to **introduce free pill testing and drug education facilities at music events and festivals.**

But we need to stop demonising festivals – the vast majority of drug use occurs outside music events. [As recommended by the pill testing team at the Groovin' the Moo festival](#), we'll be pushing for pill testing and drug education to be **provided at fixed locations such as public health centres across NSW.**

Pill testing generates vital information about the substances that find their way into the market. We'd like to see **data gathered from pill testing results compiled into a statewide database administered by the NSW Department of Health** for use by public health researchers, advocates and law enforcement. This will allow for better monitoring, preparedness, community health warnings and evidence-based interventions. The data should be published online as part of a public awareness campaign.

#### ***Legalisation of cannabis, drug decriminalisation and ending the sniffer dog program***

A majority of Australians support the [decriminalisation of cannabis](#) and of [drug use and possession more broadly](#). We'll be looking to **bring NSW law into line with public sentiment by legalising cannabis**, while progressively decriminalising the possession of recreational drugs for personal use. In the meantime, we want to **replace fines and court attendance for illegal drug possession with diversion notices to educational or treatment programs.**

Police strip searches have [doubled in NSW in just one year, yet two thirds of these searches produce nothing](#) other than an utterly humiliating experience. This is on top of the [completely unreliable, wasteful](#), and [potentially illegal](#) sniffer dog program. All in the name of a misguided notion of 'public safety'. We'll be looking to **roll back police strip search powers and seek an immediate end to the sniffer dogs program.** We can then redirect the millions in savings to pill testing and drug education.

#### ***An impairment approach to drug driving***

Unlike random breath testing for alcohol, the NSW police mobile drug testing program (MDT) tests drivers for minute traces rather than amounts that would impair driving ability. As a result, it regularly [unfairly punishes drivers who are no longer under the influence, often including those who took drugs days prior to testing](#). The current approach is a [backdoor way of punishing people for taking illegal drugs](#) and [criminalises individuals for taking legitimate medicines](#) and even eating legalised foods.

Meanwhile, and despite the rising abuse of prescription medicines in Australia, no effort has been made to address genuine impairment from prescription and other legal drugs. We'll be looking to **adopt an [impairment-based approach](#) to enforcement of drug driving that focuses on drivers who actually pose a danger - including those on prescription and other legal drugs - rather than the moral or criminal status of a substance.**

## **6. Clean up NSW politics: corruption, lobbying and donations reform**

The lockouts brought us together, but scratch the surface of NSW Inc. and you realise that they are just a symptom of a broader sickness: carve-outs from [gambling laws](#) for

racing; carve-outs from lockouts for casinos; subsidies for pokies; special treatment for the SCG trust; spending billions on moving the powerhouse and ripping up stadiums while suppressing the business case; promoting gambling on the Opera House after a call from Alan Jones; ignoring public transport to boost the 'return on investment' of toll roads; privatising NYE celebrations; and [dodgy sales of our public infrastructure](#).

It's normal for key decisions shaping our future to be hijacked by vested interests, amid a culture of secrecy and impunity and a blatant disregard for community consultation and due process. NSW's system of governance is broken. Gladys Jones, Barry O'Grange and Casino Mike: each of them chose to directly and knowingly compromise the public interest under pressure from mates.

What can be done?

### ***A stronger and truly independent ICAC***

NSW's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) plays a vital role in protecting the integrity of a notoriously filthy NSW politics. And so, even by NSW's lofty standards, it took a special premier - Casino Mike - to attack its independence and deliberately weaken its structures as political payback for ICAC daring to [investigate corruption inside the governing Liberal party](#) and exposing its dodgy inner workings.

Successive years of [vindictive cuts](#) and [restructuring](#) were designed to weaken and intimidate, and were arguably the most brazen and malicious assaults on the public interest in recent memory. [Staff were shed, commissioners were forced out and the number of investigative teams slashed by 25 per cent](#). The institution was gutted and performance fell - both in quality and timeliness. Former assistant ICAC commissioner Anthony Whealy warned that corruption fighting in NSW had "[been set back for years](#)".

ICAC's funding - as well as the rules around what and how it can investigate - should not be at the whims of the very politicians that it is supposed to hold to account. Instead, we think that ICAC should be provided with more resources, and made truly independent - to ensure it is out of reach of the politicians of the day.

If KSO is elected we will work to:

- **Increase and secure funding for a stronger ICAC** to ensure it holds politicians accountable without fear, favour or intimidation from government.
- **Enshrine the powers, funding and scope of ICAC into the NSW state constitution.** Thereafter, it would take a two-thirds majority of both houses of parliament to weaken or reduce ICAC's capacities.

### ***Shut Parliament's revolving door of lobbyists***

[The revolving door of lobbyists is an enduring feature of NSW politics](#). It supports jobs for ex-politicians and ex-political staffers, and increases the [risk that vested interests can hijack government policy-making](#). In the end, it's the people of NSW who lose out.

This sad state of affairs is not helped by [vast loopholes in the NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct](#). Currently, only lobbyists working on behalf of another individual or organisation need to be registered. In contrast, [ex-premiers who are, for example, engaged in-house by the gambling industry](#) (after giving the industry tax cuts), are not covered by the Code. Nor are lobbyists from peak bodies, religious or charitable organisations, doctors, lawyers and accountants, foreign state-owned corporations and local government councillors.

And there are no penalties for breaching the Code: the Electoral Commission has powers to investigate but can only sanction by removing lobbyists/organisations from the register or placing them on a watchlist.

If KSO is elected we will work to close the loopholes in the Lobbyists Code:

- **Broaden the definition of lobbying** to include all meetings of ministers, their staff, parliamentary secretaries or senior bureaucrats with any person or representative of an entity seeking to gain financial benefit or material advantage.
- **Extend cooling-off periods** so that ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentary secretaries and senior bureaucrats are prohibited for a period of four years from engaging in lobbying activities or working in, or obtaining a benefit from, industries over which they had exerted regulatory influence.
- **Create a Lobbyist Integrity Commissioner** to regulate lobbyist activity with powers to apply financial penalties and refer matters to ICAC as required.

### *Ensure value from public infrastructure projects*

Taxpayers don't mind funding large-scale infrastructure projects as long as they know they're getting value for money. But successive NSW governments have pushed ahead with major infrastructure projects that fail this simple test. And it's us NSW taxpayers who ultimately pay.

KSO understands the value of risk-sharing, public-private-partnerships and cost-benefit analyses. It's the [manipulation of these principles](#) that angers us. By [not comparing the costs and benefits of the \(much\) cheaper rail alternatives](#) to those of WestConnex or the Sydney F6 Extension, for example, the Government made their figures look good. The 'return on investment' of these projects [was also deliberately inflated](#) by ignoring the full range of costs (such as to public health and public amenities). This is cooking the books, plain and simple. Outside parliament, this sort of thing lands you in jail.

Westconnex, as with the Government's proposal to rebuild Allianz stadium, has been shrouded in secrecy, failed to consult communities and lacked even a shred of independent oversight. For both, [the Government plans to stubbornly push ahead, despite the dud deal for NSW taxpayers](#). The main beneficiaries? Transurban, Alan Jones, Barry O'Farrell and co on the SGC trust.

What can be done? The process for project assessment and selection needs to be rigorous and transparent. If KSO is elected we will work to:

- **Create an independent commission** to provide oversight of major infrastructure projects to ensure NSW taxpayers get value for money.
- **Incorporate the relevant recommendations of the [WestConnex Report](#)** into government processes for project assessment and selection.
- **Expand the role of Infrastructure NSW** to prepare detailed business cases for all proposed infrastructure projects that have a value of \$100m or more. Business cases need to assess alternative project options, and be made public upon completion.
- **Enhance the role of the Audit Office of NSW.** Consistent with the WestConnex Report, the Audit Office needs to have the resources to undertake detailed and comprehensive performance audits of major projects. It also needs to have 'follow the dollar' powers to provide oversight of how public money is spent by private contractors.

### ***Reform donations laws to restore trust in our political system***

It's no secret that [the public's trust in their politicians and political institutions is at an all time low](#). [People don't trust politicians - beholden to donors and lobbyists - to act in their best interests](#).

We think it's time to shine a light on NSW's opaque system of political donations. This will make it easier for the public to 'follow the money' and so help restore the public's trust. We will work to:

- **Mandate real-time disclosure of political donations** of \$1,000 or more on a public website maintained by the NSW Electoral Commission, with [interactive maps](#) of donations by electorate. (NSW political parties are currently required to disclose donations of \$1,000 or more within 21 days during election campaigns, as in Victoria, and within six months otherwise.
- **Broaden the definition of 'prohibited donors'** from companies profiting from property development, tobacco, alcohol and gambling to also include:
  - Companies that are currently involved in government contracts or are planning to bid within the next four years;
  - Not-for-profit gambling entities, including registered clubs;
  - Mining and petroleum extraction business entities; and
  - Any entity that poses a significant specific risk of corruption or damage to the public interest.

### ***End special exemptions for casinos from smoking laws, the three-strikes liquor licensing scheme and the violent venues list***

The NSW Government is addicted to gambling. Successive NSW governments have gone out of their way to make special deals for casinos. For more than ten years, indoor smoking has been illegal in public venues across NSW - everywhere [except the VIP gaming rooms at Sydney's Star Casino!](#) Successive governments have rolled-over the casino's annual exemption. [Now a second venue has been granted the same exemption - Crown's VIP gaming facility at Barangaroo.](#)

How can this be?

Blanket smoking bans were introduced to protect the public's health - including hospitality staff. What could possibly be the justification for such an exemption?

[Star is also exempt from the Government's "three strikes" and "violent venues" schemes](#), where licensed premises lose their liquor licence for repeated licensing law breaches, despite being [the state's most violent venue by a stretch](#). [And now Crown will get the same favourable treatment](#).

Exemptions made by the O'Farrell-Baird-Berejiklian Government that trips over itself to save us from ourselves?! Seriously?

If KSO is elected we will work to **end special exemptions for casinos from the smoking ban, the three-strikes liquor licensing scheme and the violent venues list.**

### ***Decouple our clubs from pokies***

The NSW club gaming industry is a multi-billion dollar business with some of the largest registered clubs in the world operating more poker machines than many casinos.

Meanwhile, private lobbying and back-room shenanigans have led to [\\$13.5 billion in tax concession](#) on pokies profits of clubs over the past decade. [Backroom deals between O'Farrell and Baird governments](#) and Clubs NSW alone cost over half a billion in foregone revenue. These are staggering sums of taxpayer money being used to subsidise an industry that causes [immense social harm](#).

For decades, the Government has justified its promotion of pokies behind the smokescreen of 'clubs' social contribution': to question government support for pokies is to be 'anti clubs'. We're calling BS. Sure, clubs play an important role in communities across the state, particularly in regional areas. We love clubs! But surely there are less destructive and socially costly ways to fund them than by subsidising pokies.

What is particularly distressing is the way a small number of 'mega clubs' in NSW are gaming the system. These 'casino clubs' [benefit the most from the lower tax rates](#): the [top 6 percent of clubs \(with annual annual poker machine revenue in excess of \\$10m\) account for around half of clubs pokie revenue](#) and half the tax concessions. Their status as 'mutuals' also allows them to pay little if any corporate income tax.

Forced to spend on capital projects because of their not-for-profit status, these casino clubs are on a [billion-dollar development spree across Sydney](#) including luxury beachside apartments, shopping centres, office towers and... other clubs. Nine of the 10 clubs are located in western Sydney amongst some of NSW's most vulnerable communities.

A government-subsidised, pokie-fuelled forced expansion. Hardly an optimal use of taxpayer funds! What can be done to stop this vicious cycle?

We want to **decouple NSW clubs from pokies**. And we're not alone - there are even some courageous [leaders in the NSW clubs sector](#) who agree with us and have started diversifying business away from pokies.

If KSO is elected we will end tax breaks on pokies profits for 'casino clubs' and use the savings to fund a decoupling of clubs from pokies:

- **End the tax concessions for 'casino clubs'**, bringing their pokies tax rates into line with rates paid by large pubs.
- Use half of the the additional \$500m in revenue per year to **support small-medium sized clubs to diversify their activities**.

***Ensure there are no changes to the Crown Casino deal ever!***

The deal that Barry O'Farrell gave Crown for its 'VIP-restricted gaming facility' in Barangaroo [was dodgy enough](#). Let's contain the damage by ensuring it doesn't [just morph into yet another casino with poker machines](#).

The terms of Crown's casino licence don't allow poker machines. Crown's pitch to the NSW Government was for a gambling facility targeting foreign high-rollers, rather than local punters – so no need for pokies. However, even before Crown has opened, [concerns have been raised that it won't lure enough foreign gamblers](#). And if they don't come, expect Crown to lobby government to alter the terms of its licence to allow pokies.

Successive NSW premiers have assured the public that Crown won't have pokies. [Barry O'Farrell stated emphatically in 2013](#). [The current premier has reiterated](#) it more recently..

Let's keep NSW's politicians to their word.

If KSO is elected we will work to ensure there are **no changes to the Crown Casino deal ever! That means no pokies, ever!**

#### ***Implement harm minimisation strategies for poker machines***

It's widely accepted that modern gaming machines are designed for addiction. In fact, it has been found that the basic characteristics of pokies, combined with increasingly sophisticated features, results in [addiction symptoms like those for cocaine](#).

Yes, many adults choose to play the pokies, and do so responsibly. But much more needs to be done to help people who have a gambling addiction and to reduce the harm that pokies cause in the first instance.

If KSO is elected we will redirect pokies tax revenue to a [community benefit fund](#) to invest in gambling addiction support services and harm minimisation strategies. Consistent with broad principles of harm minimisation, we advocate for lowering the speed limit of losses with \$1 maximum bets (as recommended by the [Productivity Commission](#)), making [pokies design fairer](#) and [other harm minimisation strategies](#).

## **7. Protect our venues & cultural heritage**

The NSW Government wastes billions rebuilding stadiums and relocating the Powerhouse in the name of 'culture' while presiding over the biggest shock to Sydney's cultural ecosystem in the city's history. Small- and medium-sized spaces are where artists develop, earn a living and forge careers. Rather than sheltering them from the forces of gentrification and commercial rent hikes, the Government has actively exacerbated their decline with lockouts, red tape and heavy-handed enforcement.

In Sydney, culture is consistently undervalued, ignored and, ultimately, priced out. Rules around cultural heritage are at odds with community expectations. Investors think they are buying a convertible asset, while the community considers them custodians of culture (#savethebasement, #savethefour). If regulation can limit what can be done to a building's façade, why not a place of cultural significance?

#### ***Stocktake and protection of culturally significant venues***

Increasingly high-rise towers are built where clubs and performance spaces once entertained, historic pubs are closed due to noise complaints from new residents and musicians and creatives are being edged out of Sydney.

So we're going to **undertake a stocktake of venues under threat and conduct audits every two years to identify venues across NSW of community value and cultural heritage**. At the same time we'll be looking to **amend the law to allow the cultural and community use of a heritage item to be protected**, [similar to the approach taken in England](#), so that they can't simply be taken away.

#### ***Gentrification and density done smart: soundproofing and insulation***

It's simple. If you move in next to a venue that has been hosting live music for years... decades even... it's up to you to noise proof your house. You should have thought of it before moving in. If not, no worries. A cheeky renovation will sort that out. Shame the developers didn't think of it.

We'll be working to embed the ['agent of change'](#) principle, which makes recent arrivals subordinate to existing cultural venues, **into development processes to protect our cultural and music heritage**. We would like to see **new developments within 100 metres of established cultural venues be responsible for noise attenuation measures**.

Any soundproofing must also be **coupled with broader building insulation measures** considering the woeful state of Sydney's home insulation.

We'll also look to establish a **'Soundproofing Fund'** with [matched grants](#) to retrofit venues threatened by noise complaints, and simplify how we manage noise complaints. It's stupidly and unnecessarily complicated.

If we can sort out barking dogs, neighbours, garbage trucks and the noisy reality of urban life in 2019 NSW, we should be able to sort it out between residents and venues: gentrification and density done smart.

### ***New entertainment and cultural precincts***

Some areas have long been mainstays of Sydney's nightlife, such as Kings Cross and Oxford Street, while others have the potential to become new areas of cultural vibrancy, such as Alexandria or Marrickville. So we're going to go a step further by **identifying specific 'cultural precincts'** where residential land use will be subordinate to entertainment use and soundproofing on new developments mandatory. We will also be advocating for the **development of planned entertainment precincts or cultural hubs**, in consultation with industry and local government.

### ***Stop damaging commercialisation of cultural assets***

Finally, let's get government to finally recognise the difference between commercial and cultural interests. We'll be advocating to **stop the sell-off or leasing of culturally and architecturally significant public buildings that compromises heritage value**, such as the Powerhouse museum or the Sirius building. And we want to **ban brand advertising and promotion on culturally significant buildings like the Sydney Opera house**.

## **8. Energise small business, startups and entrepreneurship**

### ***Plug the talent drain***

Small business and entrepreneurship is in our blood: from kebab shops and taxi drivers to creative startups and nightclubs, small businesses and sole traders bore the brunt of the lockouts and are the key beneficiaries of a vibrant 24hr economy.

Our underperforming nightlife and reputational disaster has also hampered our ability to compete on a global scale for the world's best and brightest. It's not just artists and creatives that have fled the state. Tech and creative startups are finding it increasingly difficult to attract young professionals - [an innovation culture thrives on a vibrant nightlife and 24-hour services](#). These are important factors when choosing their base of operations based on vibrancy, nightlife and culture.

KSO's policies to build a vibrant 24-hour economy are essential if we are to **plug the talent drain** and make Sydney a genuine start-up hub.

### ***Fair compensation***

Disruptions to business are inevitable when building infrastructure and changing regulations and shouldn't halt progress. But good governments minimise the pain and adequately compensate.

Yet in NSW we have a government facing class actions over its handling of light rail construction, a separate class action over its destructive festival regulation, the threat of class action from businesses affected by the lockouts and a taxi industry fuming at the mishandling of rideshare in NSW.

Small businesses and sole traders are the lifeblood of the NSW economy. They should not be the ones footing the bill for the Government's policy debacles and cost blowouts. That's why KSO will work to **embed a 'fairness' principle within government agreements to compensate individuals and businesses that are adversely impacted by government decisions.**

### ***Cut red tape and invest in our entrepreneurs***

Meanwhile, red tape has been [estimated to cost the Australian economy \\$176 billion every year](#). Other estimates indicate that in NSW, [small businesses are spending roughly 14 hours a week on compliance](#). We'll look to **cut unnecessary red tape that stifles startups and entrepreneurs, and threatens the viability of small businesses across the state.**

In many cases, entrepreneurs have ideas but can't get the investment capital to bring those ideas to fruition. They're also generally lacking reasonable office space to work together, especially considering the high rents that have become the norm in Sydney.

We'll be looking to set-up an **interest-free loan program for startups and entrepreneurs** to get on their feet without being struck by prohibitively high interest rates - or simply being left with no access to finance at all. More broadly, we'll be looking for ways to **increase funding to startups and established small businesses** on the basis of good business cases and a proven contribution to the NSW economy, **including subsidising rent and office space for small business, startups and incubators.**

## **9. Open Sydney: make NSW fairer, more affordable, liveable & inclusive**

Many of our parents were lucky enough to own their own home - to live the Australian dream. Since then, [Sydney house prices have gone from about 3 times the average income to over 7](#). We may never get onto the famed property ladder and are resigned to pay off someone else's mortgage forever - 'generation rent'. Rental affordability is no better, with [fewer than one in 100 rental properties considered affordable for people on welfare or single people on the minimum wage](#). It's forcing longer commute times and pushing those who do culture for a living - musicians and other artists - to live ever farther out.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Costs of living have gone through the roof, with Sydney [ranking 10th in the world](#). Roads are congested and transport infrastructure is either falling apart - remember the train debacle on New Year's Eve? - or delayed and over budget - light rail anyone? Property development is out of control and in cahoots with the NSW Government. Our recycling isn't getting recycled and, despite having one

of the most diverse cities, NSW is still behind most other states on a range of social measures. Even abortion is still only [allowed in case of a serious danger to a woman's life or her physical or mental health](#). Seriously, isn't this 2019?!

No wonder there's a mass exodus to other states: [in 2016-2017 over 18,000 people fled NSW](#). What went wrong and how can we fix the mess?

### ***Fairer and more affordable***

We want to make NSW fairer and more affordable. We want to **better protect tenants, in particular by [ending 'no grounds' evictions](#)**. We want to tackle the social housing crisis through two key policies: by **providing incentives to landlords that offer leases to low-income earners at affordable rates, [like in Tasmania](#)**; and by **introducing a [vacant residential property tax like in Victoria](#)**, to discourage landlords from keeping housing vacant at a time when so many of us are looking for affordable homes.

It took the Opal Tower debacle to highlight the inadequacy of current regulation of the property development industry. How is it possible, in 21st century NSW, for a tower to be built and filled with residents despite not being compliant to Australian building standards?! We'll push to **embed independent quality control into the development process by [reintroducing 'Clerk of Works' requirements](#)** to ensure higher standards for new large-scale developments.

### ***Liveable and environmentally progressive***

Ever since China [closed its borders to foreign recycling](#), NSW has been struggling to deal with a growing mountain of waste. Many of us were shocked to learn that [half of our plastic collected for recycling was exported, with up to 70% to China](#). Stockpiling, landfilling, and finding alternate international destinations for our recycling are just some of the emergency measures considered – but none of these are sustainable long-term solutions.

Decades of underinvestment in a domestic recycling industry have been exposed and we're now in a recycling crisis. While the NSW Government collects a waste management levy (from licensed waste facilities and residents via council rates), it [plans to invest only 16 per cent of the \\$2.1 billion raised over the next four years into reducing waste](#), despite the massive and unsustainable increases to landfill forecast.

It's a complex problem with no silver bullet. That's why we're going to be advocating for [a comprehensive range of short- and longer-term strategies, with the state government working with local councils throughout the region, as well as the federal government](#). In addition to a ban on single-use plastics, we'll be **calling for the major parties to reinvest 100 per cent of the 'waste levy' collected into new recycling facilities and jobs across the state**.

KSO represents a generation of people who are conscious of their place in a delicate system that is increasingly becoming out of whack. We don't accept that masses of fishes dying, prolonged and intense urban heat, freak storms, increasing air pollution, and mounds of rubbish piling-up are problems without solutions. For decades, the major parties have lacked the courage and foresight to protect what the people of NSW value deeply – breathable air, healthy oceans, clean parks, affordable energy and lush liveable streets and parks. We need a government that is willing to adopt good ideas, redesign systems – financial, planning, transport, social and housing – in a way that prioritises

liveability and resilience and recognises that the system of which we are a part is interconnected and interdependent.

Our policies to improve liveability include **adopting [minimum tree canopy](#) and open space targets** across all urban areas in NSW; **ensuring affordable irrigation, drinking water and energy** is available to all people throughout NSW; **providing real-time air pollution, heat and water quality data** to local councils and the public to inform priority, evidence-based policy; and **decongesting our streets and roads by investing in bicycle infrastructure and embedding it into transport planning**. And we'll be looking to **reduce waste in innovative ways and make NSW a true [circular economy](#)**, while also developing **diverse, sustainable and resilient food and agriculture systems** in both urban and regional areas.

### ***Inclusive and diverse***

KSO condemns any kind of discrimination based on race, gender, age, ethnicity, ability or otherwise. We believe in a society and culture that is fundamentally 'open' and compassionate toward each other. This includes immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and we only support policies that treat all people as human beings. KSO condemns racism, overt or covert, and supports a thoughtful approach to planning, recognising that 'density done well' is an essential pillar of a growing, diverse and thriving NSW.

To promote the interests of our marginalised and vulnerable groups, we're committing to **long-term funding for disability advocacy and support services** throughout NSW. We want to **[permanently - not just occasionally - fly the Aboriginal flag from the Sydney Harbour Bridge](#)**. We'll push to finally get some things that were long overdue dealt with in the legislation once and for all: **legalise abortion and a woman's right to choose** and **ban [gay conversion therapy](#)** throughout NSW. And we think **voluntary assisted dying should be legal**, just as it now is in a **[number of other developed countries around the world](#)**.

