

Candidate's name: Jason Yat-sen Li

Are the current actions undertaken by the NSW State Government adequate to address the problem of climate change? Why?

On both mitigation and adaptation the government has fallen short. The government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap received and retains bipartisan support. However, in the 2+ years since the policy was legislated, the Renewable Energy Zones, meant to substitute retiring coal fired power stations with renewable energy are running well behind. The most advanced REZ in the Central-West Orana does not have a single shovel-ready project. In addition, new renewables are not complemented by investment in medium-long duration storage so that the supply of renewables can be reliable. On adaptation, in 2016, the government committed to delivering a Climate Adaptation Plan by 2017. At the end of 2021 the Auditor-General slammed the government for non-delivery, and in late 2022 the government delivered a high level 'plan' to make more plans rather than give an overview of where resources need to be directed for adaptation purposes.

Will you vote in parliament to legislate an emissions reduction target in NSW? If not, why not?

Yes. Labor introduced legislation in the last Parliament to legislate emissions reduction targets. It was passed in the Upper House despite every member of the government voting against it. The government voted against legislating their own targets in the Lower House. If elected, Labor is committed to re-introducing the legislation.

What more do you think could be done to reduce emissions in NSW?

We need to invest in medium-long duration storage to make renewable energy more reliable. This makes NSW less reliant on coal and gas. NSW Labor will establish the NSW Energy Security Corporation, seeding it with \$1 billion to finance these projects. In addition, the Corporation will invest in Community Batteries to support households who have already taken up solar and incentivise further take-up. As above we need to legislate emissions reduction targets to attract further private sector investment to renewable generation. Labor will also establish a Net Zero Commission, an independent expert-led body to advise Parliament on policies to reduce emissions to bridge 2030 and 2050 targets whilst setting interim targets. This will also be important to develop sector-specific policies for sectors that are emissions-intensive but where electrification is not an easy substitute.

Given that coal is the most polluting of all fossil fuels, would you favour banning new coal projects in NSW? If so, when?

The government has failed to invest in dispatchable renewables, which means NSW is still reliant on coal as a source of baseload power. The Renewable Energy Zones meant to generate 12GW to substitute coal fired power stations are running well-behind schedule. NSW Labor will accelerate investment in storage to complement renewables so that the state is less reliant on coal and gas but we will also ensure that there is adequate energy supply to keep the lights on during the transition.

How will you increase the penetration of EVs in NSW so it matches take-up rates in Europe and China?

It's clear that despite the government's commitment of funds, there is not a speedy roll-out of EV charging infrastructure. Labor will establish an EV Readiness Taskforce to complement existing funding initiatives to undertake planning and preparatory work to prepare for the introduction of electric vehicles in new and existing residential developments.

Do we need new gas exploration and mining for domestic supply, or would a gas reservation policy be preferable?

NSW Labor believes the NSW Government should explore working with eastern states to develop a Gas Reservation framework to ensure future gas projects produce a domestic economic benefit. A reservation policy would ensure affordable supply for local manufacturers and families to use. As for any other proposed gas exploration and mining for domestic supply, there is an independent process to assess all resources proposals, which NSW Labor supports. Community consultation is a key aspect of any proposal. The community needs to have their say and be listened to on these projects

Land clearing is one of the main roadblocks in the quest to reduce emissions in NSW. What will you do to stop it from occurring?

After the Liberals and Nationals removed environmental protections in 2016/2017 that Labor installed when last in Government, land clearing rates accelerated 72% in NSW. There is even more land clearing in the pipeline, with clearing approvals exploding 1300% since the laws were changed. A Labor Government will take quick action to restore environmental protections, starting with ensuring the statutory review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act strengthens environmental protections, stops runaway land clearing, and fixes the biodiversity offsets scheme so that it genuinely works to protect habitat. Labor will also ensure the role of the Agriculture Commissioner is strong and independent and will focus on resolving critical land use issues between agriculture, natural resources, renewable energy and population growth.