

# NSW Election 2019: High-rise brawl in minister's seat

North Shore Times 18 March 2019  
Doug Conway



*NSW Planning Minister Anthony Roberts. Picture: Joel Carrett*

Independent and Labor candidates have accused the Liberal Party of “dirt” messaging and “Trump-esque” deception by claiming they are encouraging high-rise development in the seat held by Planning Minister Anthony Roberts.

Independent Richard Quinn and Labor’s Andrew Zbik both took exception to a Liberal Party flyer in Lane Cove saying: “A vote for Labor or independent could make (Opposition Leader) Michael Daley premier and force high-rise into Lane Cove and Hunters Hill.”

The flyer also said Labor or independent votes in Saturday’s state election would mean “overcrowding in schools and hospitals, and more traffic and slower commutes”.

Mr Quinn, a former Hunters Hill mayor who quit the Liberals to run as an independent, said: “Sadly, the ‘dirt’ messaging has started, and confirms the reasons why I resigned from the Liberal Party.”

Mr Zbik said: “This is a misleading Trump-esque statement not based on any facts.”

A spokesman for Mr Roberts responded: “A vote for anyone other than Anthony Roberts is a vote for Labor, and a vote for Labor is a vote for all of those things.

“The only way to guarantee a responsible and economically sound government is to vote for the Gladys Berejiklian team.”



*Independent candidate for Lane Cove Richard Quinn.*

Mr Quinn led Hunters Hill Council as an independent Mayor from 2012 to 2017, although a member of the Liberal Party.

He faced expulsion, and was ultimately warned, for supporting independent candidates in the 2017 local government elections. He quit the party earlier this year.

He acknowledged the sound majority held by Mr Roberts but said the minister’s primary vote had dropped by 8.3 per cent at the 2015 state election, and the Liberal vote across the Lane Cove electorate had collapsed to around 34 per cent in the local government polls in 2017.

Mr Roberts, whose portfolio places him in the firing line of the volatile overdevelopment issue, maintains no new dwelling completions in the electorate in the past 10 years were through the current state government-initiated zoning.

He said 87 per cent were from council zoning and 13 per cent were a result of the previous Labor administration’s “spot rezonings”.

“I am firmly ensuring development does not outpace appropriate infrastructure,” he said.

But Mr Zbik said: “Anthony Roberts needs to explain the truth. Why does he not take any responsibility for the 6,500 units approved by state government-controlled planning panels (Joint Regional and Sydney North) since 2012?”

“This Liberal government in 2012 for the first time allowed developers to bypass local councils and get local planning rules changed in their favour.

“This rule bending is why the community no longer has faith in our planning system.”



*Labor candidate Andrew Zbik. Picture: Julian Andrews*

Mr Roberts backed his re-election campaign by pointing to recent achievements such as building the Mowbray School and the expansion of Greenwich Public School, and 976 additional bus services in the Lane Cove area since 2011.

He said his advocacy had secured millions of dollars to upgrade sporting facilities and parks such as Boronia Park, Mindarie Park, Tantallon Oval, Kingsford Smith Oval at Longueville and Gladesville Reserve, and more land for Lane Cove National Park.

“Residents of Lane Cove will receive ten extra bus services every morning during peak hour. Those who catch the ferry can expect to see over 280 weekly services introduced.

“A further 60 specialist high visibility officers will help crack down on crime and anti-social behaviour in Lane Cove. On top of this, we’ve reduced our local school’s maintenance backlog to zero for the first time in NSW history.”

Mr Zbik said residents were worried that local infrastructure had not caught up with the increase in housing density.

“Residents have also lost faith in our planning system given developers can work the system to overrule decisions of council,” said the Lane Cove councillor.

“NSW Labor will stop developers going to the state government to seek a site-specific amendment to a council’s Local Environmental Plan after it has been rejected by council.”

He also supported Sydney Buses remaining in public ownership and a plan to tackle climate change by installing solar panels on 500,000 homes in NSW.

Greens candidate Pierre Masse slammed the government's "obsession" about levels of expansion.



*Greens candidates Pierre Masse.*

"This government was elected on a promise of returning planning to the community and councils, yet they have done the complete opposite.

"They have run rough shod over council's development plans to maximise the number of dwellings being built in our suburbs, without any significant upgrades of infrastructure."

He said the Greens supported returning planning powers to councils, phasing out coal fired power stations, banning corporate political donations and transitioning NSW to a renewable energy future.

Mr Quinn said he would seek an end to developer-led planning proposals that bypass local council planning controls and greater regulation of private certifiers.

"Everyone is talking about 'overdevelopment' and they've had enough of it," he said.

"The Planning Minister currently has too much authority to make planning decisions at all tiers of development, and local communities have lost their say."

Also running in Lane Cove are Murray Fleming (Sustainable Australia) and Joanne Spiteri (Keep Sydney Open).