



MEDIA RELEASE

19 DECEMBER 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## HEALTH & EQUAL RIGHTS GROUPS CALL ON NSW ELECTION CANDIDATES TO OUTLINE COMMITMENTS TO LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITIES

A coalition of organisations dedicated to the health and human rights of sexuality and gender diverse communities has released an election questionnaire for the major parties and independents, canvassing their positions on key issues affecting LGBTIQ+ communities ahead of the NSW state election.

The *NSW Election 2023: Candidates Questionnaire* outlines 39 commitments to improve the health, human rights and safety of people in LGBTIQ+ communities. It has been developed by:

- ACON
- BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation
- Equality Australia
- NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (GLRL)
- Hepatitis NSW
- Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)
- Positive Life NSW
- HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC)
- Twenty10

All major parties and independents have been asked to complete the survey by early March 2023, after which the result will be publicly available.

Following its release, a community town hall forum will be held, giving the major parties and independents an opportunity to engage with LGBTIQ+ voters directly.

ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill said: “The questionnaire invites all major parties and independents to commit to the key pillars of current NSW health strategies including LGBTIQ+ health, HIV, blood borne viruses and STIs, as well as to the future of community organisations in NSW, and law reform in a number of areas that disproportionately affect our communities.

“These commitments cross the political landscape, as these issues affect many groups within our communities, including trans people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, multicultural communities, older people, women and sex workers, and also touches on matters relating to regional health, mental health, sexual, domestic and family violence, housing, justice and others.”

“We call on the major parties and independents to publicly demonstrate their commitment to people of diverse sexualities and gender identities in NSW by completing the questionnaire.”

To view the *NSW Election 2023: Candidates Questionnaire*, [click here](#).

### ADDITIONAL QUOTES

#### **ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill:**

“Despite the fact that NSW has the largest LGBTQ population in Australia, our communities are still often ignored in government decision-making processes and data collection. The upcoming state election is a clear opportunity in NSW for greater leadership and a whole-of-government investment in policies and programs to develop adequate responses addressing the determinants of our communities’ health and well-being.”

#### **Equality Australia CEO Anna Brown:**

“NSW has a special place in the history of LGBTIQ+ equality but now the home of Mardi Gras is lagging behind other Australian states and territories on long-overdue reforms like ending harmful conversion practices and removing barriers to ID that accurately reflects a person’s gender.”



“With a state election just months away, Equality Australia is calling on the major parties to make firm commitments to progress the rights of our communities and ensure that every one of us, no matter who we are or those we love, can live with dignity and respect.”

“Next year Sydney will host WorldPride, the world’s largest global LGBTQ+ celebration, and with the spotlight on NSW it’s time for our parliament to ensure all of us are protected equally under the law.”

**Twenty10 Executive Director Jain Moralee:**

“Twenty10 is committed to working in partnership with our colleagues through this coalition and within NSW State Government to achieve the best outcomes for our communities, with a priority focus on young LGBTQIA+ people in NSW. Ahead of the 2023 election, we will be asking MPs to consider safe and equitable access to healthcare including mental health care; safe educational environments; safe and accessible housing for young LGBTQIA+ people as well as birth certificate reform and access to gender affirming healthcare for young trans and gender diverse people. Together, we can make all these priorities realities for young people in NSW.”

**Hepatitis NSW CEO Steven Drew:**

“Guaranteeing appropriate inflation-linked indexation is essential to our quest to eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health concern in NSW. We can’t develop and deliver programs to expand our reach into our communities while losing income year-on-year. The point where you do more with less passed a long, long time ago. New investments in proven, successful initiatives such as peer programs is essential. Hepatitis NSW’s Peer Partnership Program has recently achieved the milestone of more than 10,000 engagements with people about hep C. With more support and funding we can reach more people, in more places and realise our goal of a world free of viral hepatitis.”

**HALC Principal Solicitor Alex Stratigos:**

“NSW has started to regress in creating an enabling legal environment for people living with HIV and hepatitis. Our organisations are calling on NSW parliamentarians to commit to eliminating the negative impact of legal and human rights issues on the health of people living with HIV and hepatitis.”

**Positive Life NSW CEO Jane Costello:**

“NSW is a demonstrated world leader in the HIV/AIDS response and this success can be attributed to the exceptional partnership between government, people living with HIV, clinicians and researchers. We need to continue this momentum of striving toward the ambitious goals of the virtual elimination of HIV transmission for all in NSW, reducing barriers for people living with HIV to access equitable treatment and care, and attain optimal health and wellbeing outcomes and quality of life. To this end, we call on the major political parties to make commitments to ensure that the foundational achievements of the past continue to be built upon to ensure that people living with HIV are not left behind.”

**BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation CEO Shane Sturgiss:**

"BlaQ embodies and promotes self-determination of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQ+SB Mob. We are committed to advocating for the social and emotional wellbeing of our Community. We recognise the importance of collaborating with our fellow coalition members to take action, and we are calling for the NSW government to show us their solidarity now".

**SWOP NSW CEO Iain Stewart Brady:**

“In the upcoming NSW election sex workers in NSW want a commitment to completing the process of decriminalisation of sex work begun in 1995. Outdated, dormant portions of the Summary Offences Act must be repealed. Sex workers deserve to be protected under Anti-Discrimination legislation, recognising that sex work is work.”