



Media Release - Dr Tonia Gray 2023 Greens Campaign for Kiama



Wednesday 15th March 2023

Kiama Greens candidate Tonia Gray calls on Labor leader Chris Minns to rescue Blue Haven nursing home and home care services from privatisation.

The following words were spoken by Kiama Greens candidate Tonia Gray

After attending the very informative United Services Union meeting to save Blue Haven last night I am incensed.

I encourage people to read the independent report prepared by Associate Professor Martin O'Brien for the Union, which is available on our Kiama Greens website. It provides chilling evidence that privatisation is likely to result in much poorer aged care outcomes for Blue Haven residents and the entire home care services Blue Haven provides across the Illawarra.

It's depressing to witness the dismantling of more than four decades of Council investment in Blue Haven for our community. This will end community oversight of our well respected nursing home and extensive home care services. It will also result in the halving of Council staff with 250 local jobs privatised along with potential pay and conditions reduced.

Kiama Council has been blatantly opaque and sneaky about the biggest decision ever made on behalf of our community. It has minimised the consultation period required to reclassify the land from its "community" status to "operational", which is a legal prerequisite to sell the land.

It also pre-empted the outcome of this reclassification consultation process by moving to sell the land in advance, turning the whole exercise into a farce and exposing itself to challenges of apprehended bias.

So, I urge residents to please go on-line now

to <https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Council/News/Blue-Haven-Bonaira-land-reclassification-consultation> during this short exhibition window and tell your Council why Blue Haven must remain in Community ownership on community classified land.

The residential care industry lost \$1.7 billion last year and is broken due to poor Federal and State planning and lack of funding so all Governments have an obligation to address this dysfunction

Blue haven is by far the largest Council owned aged care centre in the State. It has a premier service reputation. So, I demand to know why there has been no effort to save it?

- Why haven't alternatives been investigated by Council?
- Why have they hoisted the white flag and not even tried to lobby State and Federal Governments, whose financial and moral responsibility this really is?
- Why has our Federal member Fiona Philips been so mute, since she stood alongside United Services Union members outside Blue Haven protesting its privatisation last May ?
- Why has the Liberal Government given up on Kiama, after all they recently promised Bombala residents a \$15 million grant to resuscitate their community owned nursing home?

Privatisation of government assets has become an important issue in this election so I am calling on Chris Minns to acknowledge the value of community ownership of this great social institution and rescue our nursing home and home care services from privatisation. The true measure of a fair and just society is how they treat their elderly with dignity and respect.

For further comment please contact Dr Tonia Gray:

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