Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE24081258

Clay, Jo

Occupation Environmentalist, Parliamentarian

Summary

A member of the Greens Party, Jo Clay was elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly as one of the five members for Ginninderra on 20 October 2020. She has served as the ACT Greens spokesperson for a variety of portfolios, including the Arts and Culture, the Circular Economy, Environment, Transport, Active Travel and Road Safety, Treasury and Economic Equality. She has served on several committees, including Environment and Planning, Public Accounts and Administration. After a membership vote Jo Clay took up the position of leader of the ACT Greens in the Assembly on 19 May 2026, following the retirement of Shane Rattenbury; she had formerly held the position of Deputy Leader.

Details

After graduating in 1994 from Radford College in Canberra, Clay obtained her degree in Creative Writing and a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) from the University of Wollongong in 2000. She worked as a Legal Officer and Senior Legal Officer at the ACT Attorney-General's Department from 2001 to 2003 and later as Project Manager with the ACT Law Society from 2004 to 2008. From childhood, Clay has been concerned about climate change and has become committed to urgent action. This commitment to environmentalism translated into her professional career, and she began working as an Operational Policy and Business coordinator for ACT NOWaste in 2004.

In 2016 Clay became co-founder and CEO of the recycling company Send and Shred with national recycling expert Graham Mannall. While running that business, she decided to set up a personal project with her family, The Carbon Diet, with the aim of cutting their household emissions, aiming for a 75 per cent reduction of their carbon footprint. Clay blogged about her Carbon Diet from 2018 to 2020.

Clay's commitment to tackling the climate crisis led her to run for the electorate of Ginninderra at the 2020 ACT general election. In her inaugural speech to the Assembly on 3 December 2020 she spoke of how it had never occurred to her to enter politics, but that she wanted more environmentalists at every level in parliament, leading her to ask 'if not her, then who?'

Clay has been a member of the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity, and she introduced a bill to amend legislation to ban fossil fuel company advertising at Canberra sporting venues. She has also been a strong advocate for a 'circular economy' strategy, supporting Labor's draft public consultation strategy in 2022.

Published resources

Website
Clay, Jo: Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory website, https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/tenth-assembly-members/ginninderra/clay-jo

The Carbon Diet website, Clay, Jo, https://www.carbondiet.com.au/

Article
Never fly again? Go vegan? It was too hard, Clay, Jo, 4 November 2003, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/nov/04/never-fly-again-go-vegan-it-was-too-hard-but-i-still-cut-my-emissions-b

How parenthood led Jo Clay MLA to stop running from climate change and start fighting it, Twyford, Lottie, 3 March 2022, https://the-riotact.com/how-parenthood-led-jo-clay-mla-to-stop-running-from-climate-change-and-start-fighting-it/537471

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