

NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW
2012 ANNUAL REPORT



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NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Founded in 1955, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW is the peak environment organisation for New South Wales, representing more than 100 community environment groups across the state.

Our members are united by a vision of a world in which nature is respected, protected and embraced by an ecologically sustainable society. We strive to achieve this vision through advocacy, education, research and community empowerment.

For more than fifty years, we have worked successfully to protect wildlife, forests, rivers and oceans and mobilised thousands of people to demand action on climate change.

www.nccnsw.org.au



CHAIR'S REPORT

This year, the environment movement marked two key milestones: the introduction of a price on carbon pollution, and a commitment by the Australian Government to establish the world's largest network of marine reserves.

These landmark achievements are a result of years of sustained effort by many environmental advocacy organisations, supported by hundreds of thousands of ordinary Australians. We are proud of the role that we, and our members, have played in securing these vitally important environmental outcomes.

However, much more remains to be done. Recent reports of unprecedented melting of the polar icecaps underscore the urgent need for further action on climate change. Rapid expansion of the coal and gas industry presents serious threats to local communities and the environment, while our forests, woodlands, rivers and wetlands continue to suffer from overexploitation and unsustainable use.

These pressing issues demand leadership and decisive action. However, in New South Wales, the past year has seen a series of significant backward steps on environmental protection, casting doubt on the environmental credibility of the new state government.

Since its election, the NSW Government has rolled back marine sanctuaries, placed a moratorium on new marine parks and opened the door to hunting in our national parks. The government has comprehensively failed to deliver on its promise to protect sensitive areas from destructive mining and gas development, and has proposed sweeping changes to the state's planning laws which will exclude the community from many development decisions.

These are challenging times for environmental policy in New South Wales. However, despite these

substantial challenges, we remain optimistic that sustained, strategic advocacy, with broad community support, will secure improved environmental outcomes over time.

Nationally, we have seen increased support for large scale conservation initiatives, focused on maintaining and restoring connectivity in the landscape. We have witnessed explosive growth in indigenous protected areas, and new federal funding for biodiversity conservation.

Public concerns about coal seam gas have engaged tens of thousands of people, often for the first time, forging new alliances and building a constituency for improved protection of local communities and the environment. Technology has provided opportunities for innovative campaign strategies, and created the potential for large-scale, rapid responses to new threats.

In the coming years, it is essential that we seize these opportunities and respond to new threats with renewed energy. Over the past year, we have built a solid foundation for future growth, by diversifying our income sources, expanding our donor base and increasing our investment in environmental advocacy and programs.

The NCC Executive has provided wise counsel and leadership throughout the year. A crucial part of our current and ongoing success is the dedication and professionalism of our staff, led wonderfully by CEO Pepe Clarke and supported by all our passionate volunteers.

We are, as always, extremely grateful for the voluntary contributions of our representatives, interns, office volunteers and committee members.

Thank you all for going beyond the call of duty, working tirelessly for our members and a better future for our landscapes, wildlife and environment.

Professor Donald O. White

CEO'S REPORT

It has been a dynamic year for environmental policy. Following years of sustained advocacy for action on climate change, we are proud to have helped secure a price on carbon pollution, billions of dollars for renewable energy and funding for protection of carbon rich ecosystems.

With your support, we played an active role in the successful national campaign to establish the world's largest network of marine reserves, covering more than 3 million square kilometres of federal waters.

Over the past year, we have played a leading role in efforts to secure better protection of natural areas, water and local communities from destructive mining and gas development, working in collaboration with our members, supporters and a broad alliance of campaign partners.

Following a series of toxic leaks at the Orica chemical plant in Newcastle, we took a prominent role in highlighting systemic problems with our state's pollution control system, contributing to the pressure for positive legislative and operational reform.

Our report into illegal logging in our public forests raised the profile of community compliance audits and resulted in the introduction of a private members bill to increase penalties for forestry breaches. We also commenced legal proceedings to seek the release of secret timber supply contracts.

We have played an active role in the review of the NSW planning system, engaging and informing our members and supporters, preparing comprehensive recommendations for reform and engaging in the government policy process.

In recent months, we have played a central role in building a national campaign alliance to defend our federal environmental laws, and

developed an environmental policy platform for the council elections, as a resource for members and candidates.

Our sustainable living programs have helped hundreds of people to save power, reduce waste and make sustainable food choices, and our clean energy roadshow raised the profile of clean, renewable energy in regional centres across New South Wales.

Our fire and biodiversity programs continue to lead the way on ecologically sustainable fire management, working with hundreds of rural landholders and peri-urban households to achieve improved outcomes for nature and local communities.

We are very pleased to have secured federal funding for a new partnership with indigenous landowners, focused on fire and invasive species, commencing in July 2012.

Our representatives have given freely of their time and expertise, providing a vital voice for nature on more than 100 state, national and international committees.

These achievements would not have been possible without the generosity of our donors, the support of our members and the dedication of our executive staff and volunteers.

To you all, my most sincere thanks.

Pepe Clarke





CLIMATE AND ENERGY

This year marked an historic milestone for the climate movement, with the introduction of a price on carbon pollution, and billions of dollars in new funding for renewable energy and protection of carbon rich ecosystems.

Over the past decade, we have mobilised tens of thousands of people to take action on climate change. We are proud of the role that we have played in securing a **price on carbon pollution** and funding for renewable energy, important first steps on the road to a clean energy economy for Australia.

During the year, we worked actively to promote the benefits of renewable energy, travelling across regional New South Wales to showcase real stories from the **clean energy frontline**. Our community forums attracted hundreds of people and extensive regional media coverage.

We engaged actively in public debate about climate change and energy issues, featuring in nearly one hundred **media stories** about the carbon price, renewable energy, energy efficiency, wind farms, climate change impacts, fossil fuel subsidies and coal exports.



Solar Panels in a field

We condemned the state government's decision to cut funding for **energy efficiency** programs, and opposed the proposal to introduce regressive planning guidelines for wind farms. Hundreds of our supporters took action to support wind farms and oppose retrospective cuts to the solar feed in tariff.



STORIES FROM THE CLEAN ENERGY FRONTLINE

Real people. Real Stories. Real action.

In 2012, we travelled across regional New South Wales, showcasing real stories from the clean energy frontline and inspiring local communities to recognise the benefits of clean energy.

Our clean energy roadshow visited ten regional centres across the state, presenting the stories of families, farmers, workers, business people, investors and community leaders who are experiencing the benefits of making the switch to renewable energy.

We produced a series of inspiring videos, launched a new clean energy website and secured extensive regional media coverage of positive community action on renewables.

www.100percentready.org.au

We called on the NSW Government to start the transition away from polluting **coal-fired power**, highlighted the coal export industry's contribution to carbon pollution and called attention to the perversity of federal subsidies to the coal industry.

We worked to raise the profile of climate change issues with elected officials, meeting with state political leaders to discuss **renewable energy policy**, and helping community representatives to effectively lobby federal members of parliament as part of a national campaign to promote large scale solar power.



Yes to Climate Action Rally, Sydney



MINING AND GAS

Over the past year, we played a leading role in efforts to secure protection of natural areas, water resources and local communities from destructive mining and gas development, working in collaboration with our members, supporters and a broad alliance of campaign partners.

Mining and gas development creates permanent, destructive changes to the environment, including destruction of wildlife habitat, pollution of air and water and damage to rivers and aquifers.

Throughout the year, we worked to raise public awareness of the serious risks associated with the rapid expansion of the **coal seam gas** industry, calling for a moratorium on the industry until the environmental risks are better understood and regulated, and sensitive areas are placed permanently off limits.

We played a leading role in efforts to hold the state government accountable for its election promise to protect important **farmland and environmental assets**, by mobilising public support for genuine change and engaging actively in the reform process.

We represented the concerns of our members and broader community on the government's **stakeholder**

reference group, arguing strongly for improved protection of high conservation value areas, farmland, water resources and local communities.

Following the release of the government's draft land use plans, which comprehensively failed to deliver protection for land, water and local communities, we worked with a broad alliance to organise a **public rally** which brought together 5,000 farmers, environmentalists and community members.

Our mining and gas working group continued to provide a platform for collaboration and information sharing by experienced community campaigners. Together, we mapped areas of high conservation value as a priority for protection from mining and gas development and supported local campaigns to protect **iconic natural areas** threatened by mining and gas expansion.



NATURAL ICONS UNDER THREAT

Our report, *Icons Under Threat*, outlines case studies from seven iconic, sensitive natural areas of NSW under significant threat from mining and gas expansion.

The report attracted significant media coverage, drawing attention to the thousands of hectares of wildlife habitat threatened by mining activities, the damage already occurring in our drinking water catchments and the current inadequacy of mining company assessments and biodiversity offsets.

Rapid expansion of the mining and coal seam gas industry is threatening iconic natural areas that sustain life for threatened species and are treasured by their regional communities. The seven case studies contained in the report bring to life the very real threats that mining poses to our wild places and native species.

Iconic places highlighted in the report include the Gardens of Stone, Pilliga Forest, Leard State Forest, Putty Valley, Warkworth Sands Woodland, Great Dripping Gorge and Sydney's drinking water catchment.



Community court challenge to Warkworth mine expansion

We strongly opposed plans to establish an 85,000 hectare gas field in the **Pilliga Forest**, calling on state and federal governments to rule out approval of this destructive development. Our report on breaches of federal environmental law in the Pilliga, *Under the Radar*, attracted national media coverage and prompted an investigation by federal regulators.

We worked with our members to oppose a proposed open cut coal mine in the **Gardens of Stone**, and campaigned for the area to be protected in a state conservation area, mobilising hundreds of supporters and supporting our members' lobbying efforts.

We welcomed the declaration of **Dharawal National Park**, following a 30 year local campaign to protect this important natural area from the impacts of longwall mining.

We condemned the government's decision to lift a 26 year ban on **uranium exploration**, organised a public rally, petition and letter writing campaign, and supported the establishment of a broad alliance of environmental and community organisations opposed to uranium mining and exploration.



MARINE CONSERVATION

With your support, we played an active role in the successful national campaign to establish the world's largest network of marine reserves, covering more than three million square kilometres of federal waters.



Target Beach, Jervis Bay. Photo: Attila A Bicskos

The new federal marine reserve network will provide protection for extraordinary marine habitats around the country. Four **marine sanctuaries** are proposed in deep waters offshore from New South Wales, protecting unique marine features like the Derwent-Hunter seamount.

We are proud to have been part of a national campaign which attracted the support of hundreds of thousands of Australians, and resulted in a **globally significant** marine conservation outcome. Together with our supporters and campaign partners, we helped to secure one of the largest conservation wins of the decade.

Closer to shore, the NSW Government continued its attacks on marine conservation measures in state waters, rolling back **marine sanctuaries** at Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay, weakening protection for the critically endangered **grey nurse shark** and enacting a moratorium on new marine parks and sanctuaries.



PROMOTING SHARK CONSERVATION

In recent decades, shark populations have declined by about 90 per cent worldwide, with up to a third of shark species living in the open ocean at risk of extinction. Urgent action is required to protect shark populations and critical habitat sites, and end targeted fishing of these remarkable species.

We maintained our longstanding support for shark conservation measures, arguing for improved protection of grey nurse and hammerhead sharks, responding publicly to speculation about the risk of shark attack, and mobilising our supporters to speak up for shark protection.

Over the past year, more than 1,500 people spoke up for the critically endangered grey nurse shark, by making written submissions supporting improved conservation measures for the species in New South Wales.



Big eye trevally. Photo: Attila A Bicskos

We publicly condemned these regressive policy decisions, and mobilised our supporters to respond by writing letters to the editor, making submissions and lobbying their elected representatives. We made a detailed submission to the **marine parks audit**, and met with policy makers to make the case for improved marine conservation measures.

We have been an active **media commentator** on marine conservation issues, calling publicly on the

NSW Government to recognise the benefits of marine conservation, lift the moratorium on marine parks and introduce robust measures for the protection of threatened marine species.

We continued to play an active role in promoting **sustainable fisheries management**, and initiated constructive talks with recreational and commercial fishers on issues of common concern, including water quality and fish habitat.



FORESTS AND WOODLANDS

Throughout the year, we worked to protect our forests from unsustainable logging, land clearing and mining development. We exposed illegal logging, took legal action to secure the release of secret logging deals, and opposed proposals to weaken land clearing laws.

Current logging activities in New South Wales' native forests are **fundamentally unsustainable**. Over-allocation of timber resources from our native forests has resulted in timber being harvested faster than it can grow, and is driving increasingly unsustainable logging practices.

Recognising the broad public support for protection of our native forests, our members adopted a new **forest conservation policy**, calling for the protection of native forests for their natural, social and cultural values, with wood products sourced from sustainably managed plantations.

To strengthen the case for an end to unsustainable native forest logging in New South Wales, we commissioned **independent research** into timber supply, with an emphasis on opportunities for a transition to a sustainable plantation based industry.



Cypress and Ironbark logged from private land



EXPOSING ILLEGAL LOGGING

To highlight unlawful and unsustainable logging practices, we commissioned independent research to identify breaches of forestry regulations in our public forests, and to make recommendations for preventing illegal logging in New South Wales.

The report built on forestry compliance audits conducted by community campaigners, exposing a statewide pattern of illegal logging operations resulting in the destruction of old growth forest, endangered ecosystems and habitat for threatened wildlife across the state. Many of these breaches would have remained hidden if not for the hard work and diligence of concerned members of the community.

The report highlighted a recent decision of the NSW Land and Environment Court in relation to regulatory breaches by Forests NSW, which found that “the number of convictions suggests either a pattern of continuing disobedience in respect of environmental laws generally or, at the very least, a cavalier attitude to compliance with such laws”.

Following the release of the report, *If a Tree Falls*, a private members' bill was introduced to the NSW Parliament, proposing to increase penalties for forestry breaches.

To promote transparency and accountability in the public forestry sector, we commenced **legal proceedings** to secure the release of government wood supply contracts. Full disclosure of government wood supply contracts will, for the first time, allow informed dialogue about options for reining in unsustainable logging in our public forests.

We publicly highlighted the increasing environmental impacts of unsustainable logging, and engaged with policy makers to make the case for **protecting our native forests**, ending perverse subsidies, improving management of plantation resources and expanding the reserve estate.

Private native forestry has expanded rapidly in recent years, posing a significant threat to forest wildlife. When the government announced a review of the **private native forestry code**, we took the lead in arguing for improved protection for wildlife habitat, mandatory fauna and flora surveys, and improved monitoring and compliance mechanisms.

It's been nearly a decade since we celebrated the success of our campaign to protect native vegetation from **broad-scale land clearing** in New South Wales. These hard won environmental protections came under threat this year, with the new state government releasing proposals to weaken important land clearing regulations.

We publicly opposed the proposed changes, entered into discussions with key stakeholders, informed and engaged our supporters, made detailed policy submissions, and met with policy makers to present the case for strengthening, not weakening, our state's **land clearing laws**. In the coming year, we are committed to defending our state's land clearing laws, to protect our woodlands, water and wildlife.



Rescued Feathertail Glider. Photo: Anne Miehs

During the year, we promoted the implementation of the *National Parks Establishment Plan* and welcomed the declaration of the **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park** extension and wilderness declaration.

We publicly condemned the government's decision to allow **hunting in our national parks**, and worked with our members to oppose implementation of the decision, through media advocacy, public rallies, supporter mobilisation and lobbying.



POLLUTION AND WASTE

Following a series of toxic leaks at the Orica chemical plant in Newcastle, we took a prominent role in highlighting systemic problems with our state's pollution control system, contributing to the pressure for positive legislative and operational reform.

On 8 August 2011, a **chemical leak** at the Orica chemical plant on Kooragang Island showered the nearby residential suburb of Stockton with highly toxic hexavalent chromium. Less than two weeks later, a second pollution incident occurred at the same chemical plant when arsenic contaminated water was unlawfully released into the Hunter River.

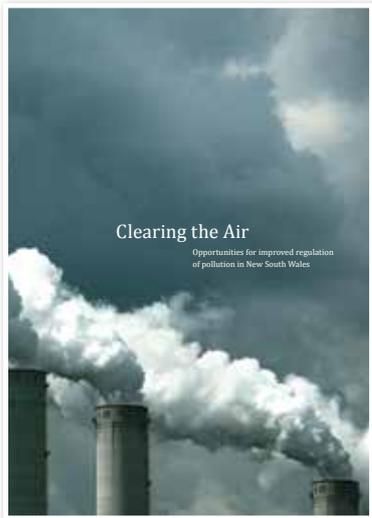
These were not isolated incidents. Our **independent research** revealed that Orica's facilities at Kooragang Island and Port Botany had breached their pollution licences hundreds of times over the last ten years. These breaches included unlawful releases of arsenic, ammonia, sulphur dioxide, sodium hypochlorite, vinyl chloride and acidic effluent.

Our research found that hundreds of facilities across the state are routinely breaching their pollution licences, with little or no **enforcement response** by the regulator. Over the past decade, thousands of breaches have

been reported at industrial facilities across the state, with only a small fraction of incidents resulting in prosecution.

Following the Orica incident, we took a prominent role in highlighting the systemic failures of state's pollution control system, securing extensive **media coverage**, and calling for strong action to prevent illegal pollution and drive sustained reductions in air and water pollution.

We appeared before the **parliamentary inquiry** into the Orica incident and met with policy makers to present the case for broad reform of our pollution control system. We completed an analysis of major pollution sources and commissioned a law reform report to identify opportunities for regulatory and operation improvements in our pollution control system.



CLEARING THE AIR

In March 2012, we released *Clearing the Air*, a comprehensive pollution law reform report, outlining more than thirty opportunities for regulatory and operational reform.

Prepared by the Environmental Defender's Office at our request, the report places pollution control under the microscope, with a view to identifying opportunities for strengthening the current system to better protect public health and the natural environment.

Clearing the Air sets out a clear agenda for strengthening our pollution control system, in line with community expectations of a safe, healthy environment. Regulation of pollution in our state must move from granting permission to pollute, to a limit-based approach that prevents or minimises environmental harm arising from industrial activities.

The recommendations of the report attracted state media coverage, and have provided a basis for ongoing discussions with policy makers and regulators.

The NSW Government announced a number of changes to state pollution laws, including a requirement for companies to report pollution incidents immediately. These changes are a step in the right direction, but they do not address the fundamental failings of our pollution system.

'Each year, industrial facilities across New South Wales release hundreds of millions of kilograms of pollution into our air, water and soil. The legislative reforms announced following the Orica incident are a step in the right direction, but further action is needed to reduce pollution of our air, water and soil.'

Pepe Clarke

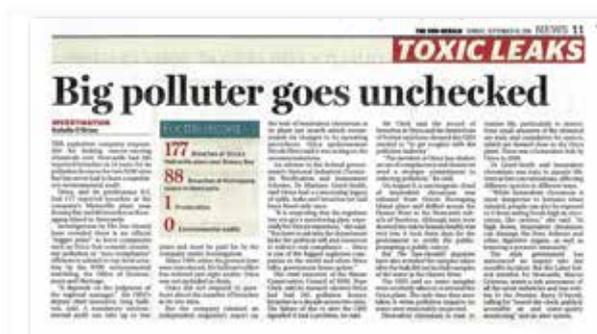
Chief Executive Officer, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

There remains a very real need to push for a major review of our pollution control system, to ensure that government regulators have the legal tools, financial resources and political support to crack down hard on polluting industry.

When the state's chief environmental regulator resigned, we urged the NSW Government to appoint a strong, independent **environmental regulator** with the power and resources to crack down on pollution breaches and drive sustained reductions in air, water and soil pollution.

We lobbied the Minister for Environment and members of parliament to maintain **community representation** on the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Board, and condemned the decision to appoint the former head of a convicted corporate polluter to the EPA Board. During the year, we also highlighted toxic pollution from the **coal industry**. Coal-fired power stations are the state's largest source of air pollution by mercury, oxides of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide, while coal mines are by far the largest source of arsenic pollution in rivers and waterways across the state.

Through our involvement in the Boomerang Alliance, a national campaign for recycling, we were proud to support efforts to introduce a national container deposit scheme. Significant progress was made during the year, and we are optimistic about prospects for the introduction of a national **container deposit scheme**, despite opposition from the beverage industry.





PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We have played an active role in the current review of the NSW planning system, engaging and informing our members and supporters, preparing comprehensive recommendations for reform and engaging in the government policy process.

Our planning system has an important role to play in helping us to address many of our most pressing environmental challenges, including: loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, loss of strategic agricultural land, degradation of rivers, wetlands and water catchments, urban sprawl, traffic congestion, air pollution and waste, and carbon pollution and impacts of climate change.

The current review of the New South Wales planning system presents an opportunity to develop a modern planning system that is consistent with contemporary community expectations. Over the past year, we have participated actively in the planning review process, advocating for improved environmental outcomes and more effective community engagement.



Sydney Light Rail. Photo: City of Sydney



DEFENDING FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

In response to moves by industry and government to transfer federal environmental powers to the states and fast track approval for large developments, we took a leading role in a national campaign to defend federal and state environmental assessment laws. The proposed changes, if implemented, will remove essential federal protection for threatened species and accelerate mining and gas development in our forests, woodlands and rural landscapes.

Since the days of the Franklin Dam campaign, the federal government has played an essential role in protecting Australia's wild places and native wildlife. From the wild rivers of Tasmania to the tropical rainforests of the Daintree, it has been federal government intervention that has saved our country's most iconic natural areas from destructive development proposals backed by state governments.

The *Places You Love* campaign aims to stop the federal government from walking away from its environmental responsibilities, and to defend state planning laws from attacks by industry and developers.

www.placesyoulove.org

We have highlighted opportunities for developing a modern planning system that integrates the environment and community in planning for a sustainable future, and vigorously opposed moves to fast track development at the expense of the environment and local communities.

We have represented our members in high level policy discussions, made detailed submissions to government, informed and engaged our members and supporters, met with legislators and policy makers, delivered community workshops and commented on key policy developments in the media. Our policy work and public advocacy has been informed by active collaboration with our members through our planning working group.

Our law reform report, *Our Environment, Our Communities*, outlined a positive vision for a planning system that better integrates environmental outcomes and community engagement. The report emphasises the intrinsic link between environmental protection and planning, the benefits of public participation and the legitimate expectation of the community to be involved in decisions that affect the environment in which they live.

The report also outlines a proposed legislative model for integrating environmental outcomes and community engagement in the NSW planning system. We will be strongly advocating for the legislative provisions set out in this model to be adopted in the new planning system.



Our Environment, Our Communities report



SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Our community education programs have helped thousands of households save power, reduce waste, switch to clean energy and get involved in community action for a sustainable future.

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

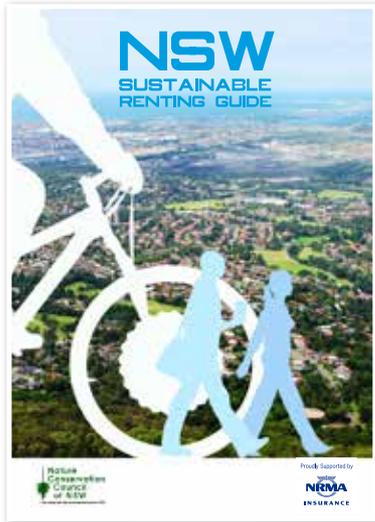
Our *Food Waste Challenge* provides practical advice to help households reduce the amount of food they waste. Preventing food waste saves money, water, energy and natural resources, and reduces landfill and methane emissions.

This proven behavioural change program focuses on helping households to reduce waste by teaching people how to shop, how to store food correctly, how to cook with correct portion sizes and with leftovers and surplus fruit and vegetables.

The *Food Waste Challenge* was run this year in Willoughby, Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, Wagga Wagga, Eurobodalla and Coffs Harbour. Food waste champions were identified and trained in each area so these local food champions can spread the word in their community.



Community Climate Challenge award winner Darren Collins with NCC Sustainability Program Officer Kate Hopkins



SUSTAINABLE RENTERS GUIDE

For many participants in our community education programs, renting is perceived as a barrier to achieving a sustainable lifestyle and reducing their environmental footprint. To help overcome these concerns, we produced the *Sustainable Renters Guide*, a practical guide for residential tenants wishing to live more sustainably.

From choosing a rental property to saving water in the garden, the *Sustainable Renters Guide* provides a comprehensive collection of practical advice, presented in simple language and a user-friendly format. For every topic from power saving to recycling, the guide provides handy tips and simple checklists to help you make your home more sustainable.

The guide was prepared with assistance from NRMA Insurance, and is available for download from our website.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICES

The *Foodprint Challenge* is an education program designed to improve the community's awareness of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable food consumption and to encourage sustainable food consumption patterns.

Through a range of educational tools including face-to-face workshops and a *Sustainable Shopper Passbook*, the challenge encourages sustainable food consumption strategies.

These include buying local, seasonal produce and producing your own food, supporting cooperative agriculture, reducing meat consumption, buying sustainable seafood and promoting the purchase of environmentally, economically and socially beneficial food choices such as organics and fair trade.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING FOR RENTERS

The *Sustainable Renters* workshop series, funded by a grant from the City of Sydney, focused on ways renters can reduce their environmental footprint. Each participant learned how they could live more sustainably in rented accommodation, using less energy and water and choosing a house with an orientation to maximise cooling in summer and warmth in winter.

Participants received a *Sustainable Renters Guide* and three workshops were run in the City of Sydney,

including workshops for students at the University of Technology Sydney.

REDUCING HOUSEHOLD CARBON EMISSIONS

Our *Community Climate Challenge* promotes practical action by householders such as saving power and taking public transport to reduce their carbon footprint and save on energy bills. Since the *Community Climate Challenge* was launched in 2006, we have worked with more than 4,000 households across New South Wales.

"If we want our children to have a future, we need to start taking responsibility for our impact and learning to live more lightly on the earth. The Climate Challenge has been very rewarding, as everyone is on their own journey and we both teach and learn from each other."

Darren Collins

Winner of the Illawarra Climate Challenge

This year, we delivered the *Community Climate Challenge* in two regions: the Hunter Valley and the Illawarra. More than 600 participants took the challenge to reduce their carbon footprint and live in a more sustainable manner. Participants earned points for every practical action they chose – from riding a bike to work, to starting a kitchen garden and using a smart power board to turn all appliances off at the wall.



FIRE AND BIODIVERSITY

Our fire and biodiversity programs continue to lead the way on ecologically sustainable fire management, working with hundreds of rural landholders and peri-urban households to achieve improved outcomes for nature and local communities.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE FIRE MANAGEMENT

Recognising the important role of fire in the Australian landscape, our award winning *Hotspots* fire project provides landholders and land managers with the skills and knowledge needed to protect and restore biodiversity using sustainable fire management practices.

Over the past year, our team has delivered 38 workshops, reaching 450 landholders within 20 different regional communities across New South Wales. Each workshop series brings together the latest ecological knowledge and practical operational skills in a unique training model.

The program continues to receive positive feedback from landholders and land managers. This year, our team had the opportunity to work with Aboriginal landholders in culturally significant landscapes and

contributed to survey work and fire management planning for the nationally endangered Hastings River mouse along the Northern Tablelands.

Hotspots is delivered in close collaboration with the NSW Rural Fire Service, under the guidance of an advisory committee comprised of key stakeholders and land management agencies.

FACILITATING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We have taken a leading role in the Northern Rivers Fire and Biodiversity Consortium, a network of 22 stakeholders and land management agencies focused on managing fire for biodiversity outcomes in the Northern Rivers region.

The consortium has established working groups focused on ecological burning constraints, koala habitat and bell miner associated dieback, and has secured federal funding for restoration of habitat for threatened



COLLABORATING WITH INDIGENOUS LANDOWNERS

In an exciting new development for our fire and biodiversity programs, we successfully secured funding for a long-term partnership with Aboriginal landowners in Northern New South Wales.

This new initiative, *Firesticks*, will use contemporary and traditional fire management practices to enhance ecological health and resilience by creating habitat mosaics, reducing the impacts of wildfire, protecting carbon rich ecosystems and reducing the impacts of invasive species.

The program will be delivered over 5 years, in partnership with Willows Boorabee Indigenous Protected Area (IPA); Wattlebridge IPA; Minyumai IPA; Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC); Gugin Gudduba LALC; Ngulingah LALC; Casino Boolangle LALC; NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS); Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).

species in the Border Ranges, including the eastern bristlebird, Hastings River mouse and eastern chestnut mouse.

Consortium partners have secured funding to protect and restore koala habitat on the Far North Coast, and plan to deliver a community awareness program on the consequences of intense wildfires on koala populations.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FIRE POLICY

We have been actively involved in fire management, bushfire education and advocacy for sustainable fire policy since 1979. Over the past year, we have provided extensive advice and input on fire management policy, including detailed submissions on management of fire in national parks, planning for bushfire protection, protection and restoration of wildlife corridors and controls on burning of native vegetation.

We provided high level policy advice through our participation on the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, Rural Fire Service Advisory Council, Hazard Reduction Panel and Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code Review Panel. Our representatives provide a vital voice for nature on more than 40 bushfire management committees across the state.

PREPARING FOR FIRE

We believe that hazard reduction burning is most effective, and least environmentally harmful, when implemented as part of an integrated program, which

recognises the important role of the community in managing fire risk and conserving native bushland. Our *Preparing for Fire* workshops aim to build the awareness and capacity of peri-urban householders to prepare for fire. Four pilot workshops were delivered this year, reaching over 100 residents. The workshops involve a two-way exchange of information between residents and agency representatives about bushfire risk and biodiversity conservation. They also help the community understand the limitations of prescribed burning.

RESTORING THREATENED WOODLANDS

In collaboration with the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, we have commenced a three year program to examine the use of fire as a restoration tool in the threatened woodlands of the Cumberland Plain.

The native vegetation of this region has been extensively cleared for agriculture and the growth of western Sydney. Today only 13 per cent remains as intact bushland. These important last patches of habitat are highly fragmented and vulnerable to weed invasion. Over the next three years, we will conduct an extended trial to investigate the use of fire for the control of three priority weed species and to restore ecosystem health in the Cumberland Plain.

ENVIRONMENTAL LIAISON OFFICE

The Environmental Liaison Office fosters close collaboration between the state's leading environment organisations, works to develop common policy positions on important environmental issues and facilitates effective engagement with the NSW Parliament.



Environmental Liaison Office members at Parliament House.

Over the past year, ELO members met regularly to exchange information, discuss policy issues of common concern and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Throughout the year, ELO members met with the Premier, Ministers, Members of Parliament, policy advisors and senior officials to represent the interests of their members on a wide range of environmental issues.

Roundtables with the Minister for the Environment provided an opportunity for dialogue on issues such as national park management, pollution control, land clearing and private land conservation.

The Environmental Liaison Officer provided essential secretariat support, tracked parliamentary debates, legislation and inquiries, prepared correspondence and submissions and contributed to the development of common policy position.

The ELO made submissions on a wide range of issues, including the COAG environmental reform agenda, budget allocations, national park establishment, corporatisation of the state forestry agency and the review of native vegetation regulations.

LEADING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

In the lead up to the local government elections, the ELO launched *Leading Sustainable Communities*, an environmental policy platform for candidates in the 2012 council elections.

Local governments have a critical leadership role to play in reducing pollution, investing in natural infrastructure and restoring our environment to health.

Leading Sustainable Communities outlined environmentally responsible policy positions on a range of important issues, including natural areas and wildlife, urban sustainability, pollution and waste, planning, development, public participation and accountability.

The policy platform was distributed to candidates and local environment groups across the state, to provide a reference for candidates and campaigners with an interest in environmental protection and sustainability.



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

NCC has a strong media profile and is a leading voice on environmental issues, securing positive media coverage on a regular basis in print, online and on radio and television. In the past year, we featured in more than 500 media articles on key environmental issues.



Press conference, Parliament House.

Our reputation as a respected commentator on environmental issues is critical to our ability to effectively represent the interests of our members. Over the past year, we continued to foster strong relationships with key media outlets and actively participated in public debate on a wide range of environmental issues.

Our sustained investment in media relations allowed us to reach hundreds of thousands of people through national, state and regional media, across all media channels. From local communities threatened by mining development to federal climate change policy, we have successfully communicated key environmental issues to a state and national audience.

During the year, we were quoted or interviewed on every aspect of climate change including the carbon price, renewable energy funding, wind farms, sea level rise, cuts to renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, electricity prices and solar hot water rebates.

In the lead up to the commencement of the carbon price, we promoted the benefits of clean energy by securing more than 50 media stories celebrating the efforts of individuals and communities making the switch to renewable energy.

Mining and coal seam gas were a key focus for the media this year. We were a leading commentator on

policy developments, and increased the impact of local campaigns by raising their profile in state and national media.

Following a series of toxic leaks at the Orica chemical plant in Newcastle, we took a prominent role in the media, exposing the company's long history of pollution breaches and calling for serious reform to prevent pollution breaches and reduce pollution of our air and water.

Throughout the year, we provided a voice for the environment and local communities in debates about planning and development, native forest logging, marine conservation and the Murray Darling Basin.

Subscription numbers for our email newsletter, *Nature News*, continue to grow, confirming its value as a source of timely information about environmental issues and regular updates on our activities. We also produced a range of specialist newsletters, on topics such as renewable energy, waste avoidance and power saving.

Our social media networks continue to expand, providing a platform for our supporters to share ideas, participate in discussions, support events and activities and inspire community action.

OUR MEMBERS

With more than 100 members across the state, we represent a vibrant, democratic network of local and regional community organisations united by a vision of a sustainable future for New South Wales.



Our members discussing planning and development issues at the NCC Regional Conference 2012, Coffs Harbour.

Our members came together from across the state for our **2011 Annual Conference**, to discuss a wide range of policy issues, share experiences and learn new skills. One of the highlights of the conference was the adoption of a new forest policy, calling for our native forests to be protected and restored for their biodiversity, climate, water and natural beauty.

Our **2012 Regional Conference**, hosted by the North Coast Environment Council, brought together members and supporters from across the region to share inspiring stories of community resistance to the mining and gas industry and explore opportunities for secure improved protection for forest wildlife.

Our members work on an extraordinarily wide range of environmental issues, on a largely voluntary basis, providing an essential voice for nature conservation and sustainability. This year, our members celebrated a number of important environmental victories and milestones.

In March 2012, the Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association of NSW and their local campaign partners celebrated the success of a 30 year campaign for the declaration of **Dharawal National Park**. The new national park protects more than six thousand hectares of rugged bushland, pristine creeks and delicate upland swamps.

Only two months later, the Friends of Berowra Valley Regional Park, the Association for Berowra Creek, Berowra & District Community Association and the Hornsby Conservation Society celebrated the success of their decades long campaign to secure national park status for the beautiful bushland of **Berowra Valley**.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society celebrated 50 years of successful campaigning on local environment issues in the Blue Mountains. The Frog and Tadpole Society celebrated 20 years of conservation work for our unique frog species.

MEMBER GROUPS

Alpine Riverkeepers
Association for Berowra Creek
Australian Association for Environmental Education
Austraian Association of Bush Regenerators
Australian Conservation Foundation – Central Coast
Australian Conservation Foundation – Shoalhaven
Australian Network for Plant Conservation
Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd
Bankstown Bushland Society
Bellingen Environment Centre
Berowra & District Community Association
Blacktown & District Environment Group
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Capertee Valley Alliance
Castlecrag Conservation Society
Central West Environment Council
Chipbusters
Columban Mission Institute
Centre for Peace, Ecology & Justice
Community Environment Network
Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW
Dubbo Field Naturalist & Conservation Society
EcoNetwork-Port Stephens
EcoTransit Sydney
Forestmedia
Friends of Berowra Valley Regional Park
Friends of Quarantine Station
Friends of the Koala
Friends of the Pilliga
Friends of Tumblebee
Frog & Tadpole Study Group
Goulburn Field Naturalist Society
Great Lakes Environment Association
Green Shareholders
Hill Road Reserve Action Group
Hornsby Conservation Society
Hunter Community Environment Centre
Hunter Environment Lobby
Inner West Environment Group
Jervis Bay Regional Alliance
Kalang Land and Environment Action Network
Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society
Lake Wollumboola Protection Association
Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society
Linnean Society of NSW
Lithgow Environment Group
Mosman Parks & Bushland Association
Mudgee District Environment Group
Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists
Nambucca Valley Conservation Association
National Parks Association of NSW
Native Bird Liberation Alliance
Nepean Action Group
No Tillegra Dam Group
North Coast Environment Council
Northern Illawarra Sustainability Alliance
NSW Teachers Federation
NSW Wildlife Council
NSW WIRES
Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society
Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society
Orienteering Association of NSW
ORRCA
Pikapene & Cherry Tree Environment Centre
Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability
Parks & Playgrounds Movement
Parramatta Climate Action Network
Razorback Environment Protection Society
Redgum Bushland Committee
River Canoe Club of NSW
Robertson Environmental Protection Society
Ryde Community Alliance
Ryde Environment Group
Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society
Rylstone District Environment Society
Save Manly Dam Catchment Committee
SCRAP Ltd (School Communities Recycling All Paper)
South East Region Conservation Alliance
STEP Inc
Sustainable Population Australia NSW Branch
Sutherland Shire Environment Centre
Sweetwater Action Group
Sydney Environmental Education Network
The Bush Club
The Clean Age
The Coastwatchers Association
The Colo Committee
The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd
The David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research
Foundation of Australia
The Wilderness Society Sydney
The Wilderness Society Newcastle
Transition Newcastle
Ulitarra Conservation Society
Upper Middle Harbour Conservation Society
Western Sydney Conservation Alliance
Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia
Willoughby Environmental Protection Association
Wolli Creek Preservation Society
World League for Protection of Animals
YHA NSW Ltd

EXECUTIVE, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The achievements of the past year would not have been possible without the dedication of our executive, staff and volunteers. We thank them all for the generous gift of their expertise, energy and endless commitment.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2011-12

Prof. Don White	(Chair)	Lorraine Bower	Annie Nielsen
Robert Pallin	(Vice Chair)	Megan Kessler	Bev Smiles
Anne Reeves	(Secretary)	Chris Kowal	Jane Smith
James Ryan	(Treasurer)	Jim Morrison	James Whelan

OUR STAFF

Anne Miehs	Bushfire Program Manager	Kevin Taylor	Ecologist
Cerin Loane	Planning Policy Officer	Larissa Olenych	Fundraising Officer
Fieke Geerts	Sustainability Program Officer	Mark Graham	Ecologist
Greg Banks	Bushfire Program Officer	Pepe Clarke	Chief Executive Officer
Jamie Payne	Office Manager	Rachel Mimmo	Sustainability Program Manager
Jilea Carney	Media and Communications Officer	Shaun Gilchrist	Outreach Coordinator
Kate Hopkins	Sustainability Program Officer	Tamzyn Chapman	Environmental Liaison Officer
Kate McShea	Hotspots Program Officer	Waminda Parker	Hotspots Program Manager
Kate Smolski	Campaigns Director	Xavier Mayes	Communications Office

FORMER STAFF THAT LEFT DURING THE PAST YEAR:

Emma Wasson	Sustainability Program Officer	Kathie Hewitt	Administration Officer
Jane Garcia	Media and Communications Officer	Naomi Hogan	Environmental Liaison Officer
Lesley Andrew	Sustainability Program Officer	Justin McKee	Marine Campaigner
Paula Brown	Marine Campaigner	Tonia Tschanz	Administration Officer
		Trieu Nguyen	Outreach Assistant

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Alexis McShane	Kristina Prokopcova	Phil Siu
Alina Tamrakar	Latifah Phillips	Rosemary Corkill
Alyssa Kalter	Laura Fudim	Ruhie Kumar
Bethany Lawlor	Lauren Van Etten	Sara Martin
Bill Jarvis	Leo Tsoy	Stephanie Sandberg
Bruce Diekman	Lisa May	Suman Ahlawat
Chen Xu	Michelle Dang	Tabassum Mahzabin
Jenny Matthews	Paul Kim	Trieu Nguyen
Kojo Sarkodee	Peter Bonney	Yuri Salazar

OUR REPRESENTATIVES

Our representatives provide a vital voice for nature on more than 100 local, state and national committees. Our sincere thanks to all our representatives for their commitment and expertise.

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Adrian Davey	Greg Banks	Martin Driver
Andrew Cox	Ian Lockhart	Mary Goodacre
Anissa Lawrence	Jack Thieme	Michael Augee
Anne Miehs	James Johnson	Mike Thompson
Anne Reeves	James Ryan	Nancy Pallin
Bev Smiles	Jane Judd	Nick Skelton
Brigid Dowsett	Jane Smith	Pepe Clarke
Bryce Woods	Jim Morrison	Peter Dykes
Buzz Sanderson	John Asquith	Phillipa Walsh
Cilla Kinross	Judy Messer	Rob Pallin
Dane Wimbush	Julia Imrie	Rod Bennison
Dianne Thompson	Laura Hartley	Wendy Ambler
Don White	Leon Hall	
Ellen O'Brien	Lorraine Cairnes	

BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Nigel Greenup	Gordon Limburg	Di Thompson
Ian Dixon	Nick Skelton	Tina DeJong
John Edwards	David Lemcke	Brian Lord
Gabrielle Tindall	David Holland	Eric Whiting
Greg Elks	Bob Warren	Martin Driver
Joy Van Son	Helen Brown	Hillary Crawford
Bob Wolcott	Graham Williams	Mike Augee
Mathew Bailey	Barrie Griffiths	Cilla Kinross
Wendy Hawes	Trevor Bensley	Neridah Reid
Chris Wright	Sue Wakefield	Ian Thompson
Milton Judd	Shane Grundy	Judy Lambert
Janusz Haschek	Rob Mitchie	Stephen Byrnes
Daintry Gerrand	Rob Pallin	Anne Miehs
Hugh Patterson	John Hawksworth	Rob Pallin
Anne Miehs	Chris Kowal	
Wendy Goonan	Alan Scrymgeor	

NSW ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2011

The *NSW Environment Awards* celebrate and acknowledge the inspiring contributions made by environmental groups and individuals over the past year throughout New South Wales.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2011 awards:



Chris Jonkers, Winner of The Dunphy Award

Dr Judy Messer, AM

The Allen Strom Hall of Fame - *for long standing service and commitment to the conservation movement.*

Chris Jonkers

The Dunphy Award – *for the most outstanding environmental effort of an individual.*

Stop CSG Illawarra

The Marie Byles Award – *for the most outstanding new environmental campaign.*



Stop CSG Illawarra, Winner of The Marie Byles Award

No Tillegra Dam Group

The NCC Member Group Award – *for the member which has demonstrated an outstanding commitment and success in the conservation of the NSW environment.*

Beyond Zero Emissions

The Community Climate Action Award – *for the most inspiring climate action initiative by a climate change community group.*



Jess Moore, Winner of The Rising Star Award

Jess Moore

The Rising Star Award – *for the most outstanding new campaigner under the age of 30.*

Henry Gold, OAM

The Ziggy Megne Volunteer Award – *for the most outstanding voluntary effort behind the scenes.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Our sincere thank you to our Voice for Nature regular supporters and the many individuals and community groups that through their generous support have helped protect the NSW environment.

You are at the heart of the successes we've enjoyed this past year. Thank you!

The generous donations of our supporters allow NCC to respond to emerging conservation issues and expand our capacity when needed, so we can put forward a strong and independent voice for threatened species, native forests and natural landscapes, urban bushland, marine environments, renewable energy and our climate.

Our increasing number of NCC supporters should feel proud of their contribution to building a healthy and sustainable future for NSW. Your kind financial donations, active participation in signing petitions and remarkable direct engagement in asking politicians and candidates about their policies for the environment have made a big difference to the success of our programs and campaigns this year.

A special thank you to the growing number of our Voice for Nature regular givers. Thank you for providing us with a reliable source of funding so we can respond to urgent needs the moment they arise, as well as funding long-term campaigns needed to secure a sustainable future. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

The NCC would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of those supporters who passed away this year. We would especially like to recognise the generosity of those people who left a gift in their will during 2011 - 2012. Their thoughtful contribution will help leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

We at the NCC are continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of donors like you who answer the call to give as we address the challenges facing our precious environment.

Thank you all.

For more information about how you can support the work of NCC please call our Philanthropy Manager Steve Clarke on 02 9516 1488, email sclarke@nccnsw.org.au.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

\$10,000+	
David Roser and Kate Dator	
Colin Hindmarsh	
\$2,000+	
Netcomm Ltd	
Mrs Belinda Webster	
John Burke	
Dr Sharnie Wu	
\$1,000+	
David Mathers	
Bellingen Environment Centre	
Prof Don & Rosie White	
Gabby Potrykus	
Susie Russell & Greg Hall (Gladney's Trust)	
Mr Murray Scott	
Gould League of NSW	
Ruth & Evan Griffiths	
Conny Harris	
Sustainable Population Australia	
Vera Yee	
Anonymous	
\$500+	
Norman Harris	Ms Kate Girdwood
Linda Bond	Priscilla Guest
Pepe Clarke	Scott Epple
Celia Perceval	David Gibson
Association for Berowra Creek and Jean & Lyn Bolton	Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW
Vanda Wright	Margaret Lederman
Paul Barnett	Patricia Lee
Jason Coombs	Leif Lemke
Geoff Giles	Dr Susie Linder-Pelz
Mrs Elizabeth Hartnell	Ros Madden
Craig Kingston	Robert Mann
Lane Cove Bushland Conservation Society	Larissa Olenych
Richard and Maria Maguire	Pamela Reeves
Pam Morris	Jim Sloan
Robert Pallin	Lyndal Sullivan
Peter Barker	Moirra Sullivan
Prof Terence Smith	Beth Williams
Jonathon Milford	Mrs Marion Wood
Terry Barratt	Richard Zoeller

... and our thanks to every donor – every contribution is greatly appreciated.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2011-12, we made significant progress in expanding and diversifying our funding base. Our total income increased by 52%, while our income from fundraising activities increased by 67%. During the same period, we held administration costs steady while doubling expenditure on environmental advocacy and increasing investment in environmental programs by 54%.

Figure 1: breakdown of 2011-12 expenditure by category.

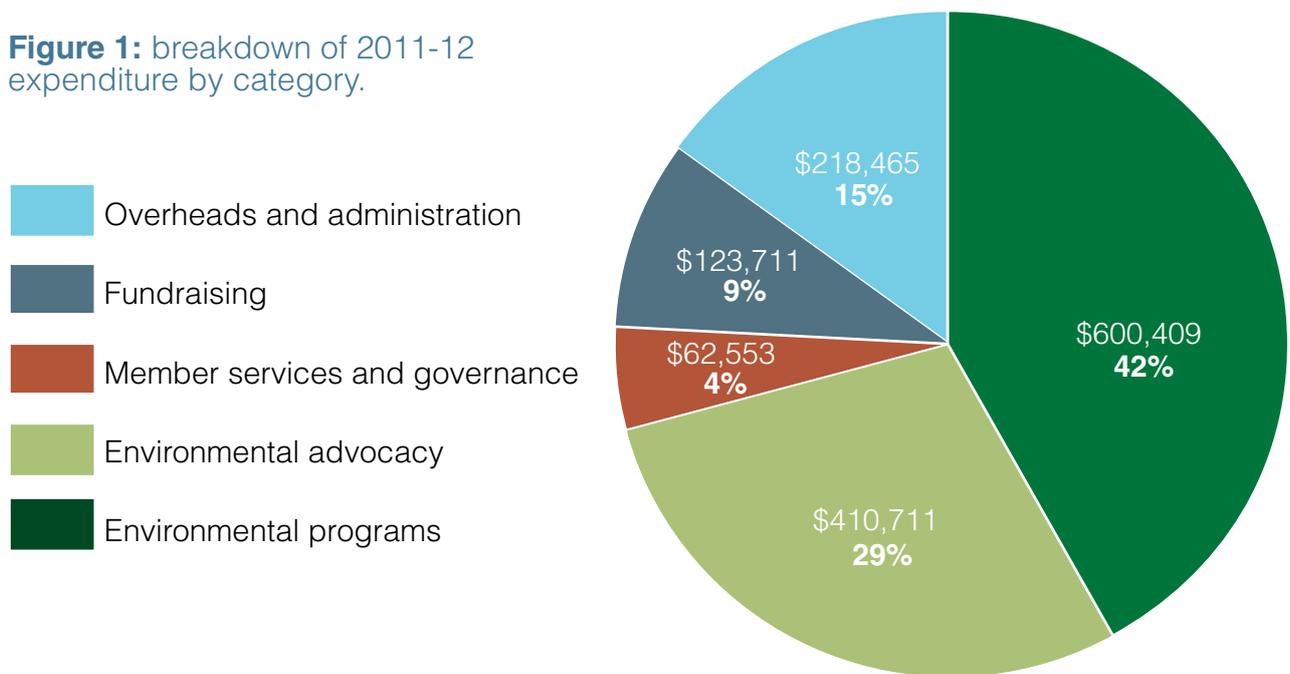
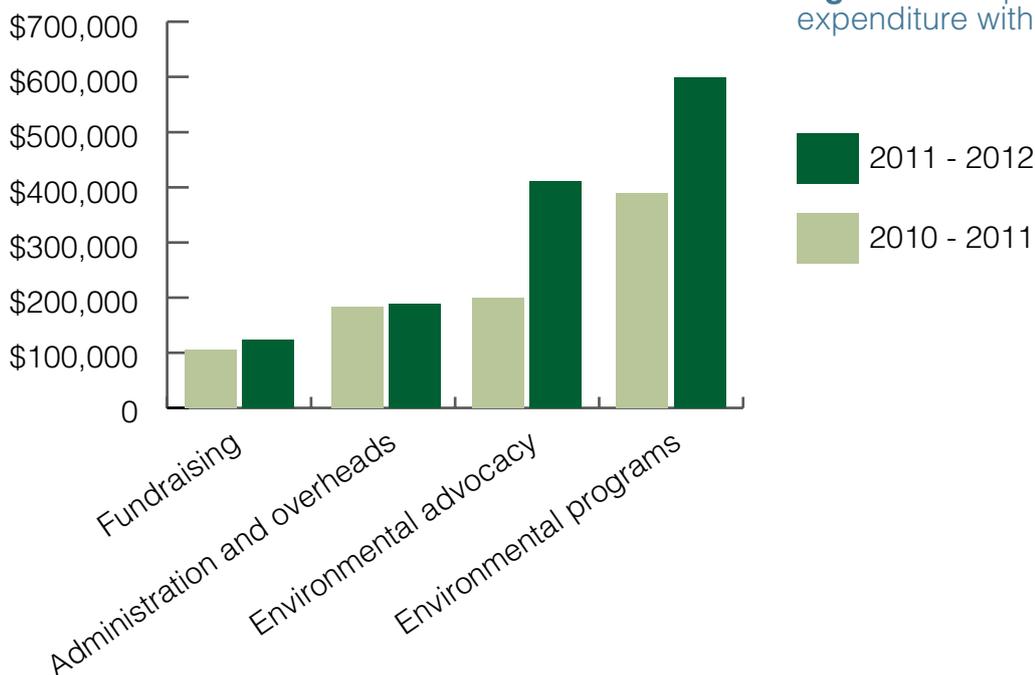


Figure 2: comparison of 2011-12 expenditure with 2010-11 by category.



Our audited financial accounts are available in full on our website: www.nccnsw.org.au. To request a hardcopy, please contact our office by telephone on 02 9516 1488 or via email at ncc@nccnsw.org.au.

Nature Conservation Council of NSW Inc

ABN 96 716 360 601

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012

	Note	2011-12 \$	2010-11 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities	2	1,468,370	929,871
Expenses	3	(1,415,849)	(928,704)
Surplus from ordinary activities before income tax expense		52,521	1,167
Income tax expense	1(b)	-	-
Surplus attributable to members		52,521	1,167

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2012

	Note	2011-12 \$	2010-11 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	828,050	836,069
Trade and other receivables	5	113,065	53,996
Other current assets	6	4,988	3,824
		946,103	893,889
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7-11	39,167	33,788
		39,167	33,788
Total assets		985,270	927,677
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	12	656,895	705,109
Short term provisions	16	64,112	29,598
Other current liabilities	14	1	1
		721,008	734,708
Non-current liabilities			
Bequest	15	109,091	90,319
Long term provisions	16	36,729	36,729
		145,820	127,048
Total liabilities		866,828	861,756
Net assets		118,442	65,921
MEMBERS' EQUITY			
Retained earnings		118,442	65,921
Total equity		118,442	65,921

	2011-12 \$	2010-11 \$
REVENUE		
Operating activities		
Member subscriptions	11,176	13,286
Fundraising	297,477	178,034
Grants and sponsorship	1,020,397	534,260
Australian Government's GVEHO program	102,000	87,000
Services	-	24,681
Events	-	66,651
Interest	29,337	18,108
Other	7,983	7,851
	1,468,370	929,871

SURPLUS FROM OPERATIONS

The net surplus from ordinary activities is after charging expenses for:		
Member services and governance	62,553	48,353
Fundraising	123,711	106,190
Environmental programs	600,409	390,517
Environmental advocacy	410,711	200,714
Administration and overheads	189,266	182,929
Depreciation and amortisation of non-current assets	26,583	9,011
Audit costs	2,616	2,264
	1,415,849	928,704



Founded in 1955, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW is the peak environment organisation for NSW, representing 100 community environment groups across the state.

Nature Conservation Council of NSW

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Website www.nccnsw.org.au

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