



Nature Conservation Council of NSW

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2010

**Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st
October, 2010**

MINUTES

Motions for Annual Conference 2010

A. Council Affairs

Admission of new Member Societies

See Late Motions for the new member society admitted.

B. Biodiversity Conservation

Motion No: 10/B1

Habitat for Flying Foxes

Submitted by the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose dispersal and disturbance of flying-fox camps and promote:

- a) Public education to dispel myths about flying-foxes; and
- b) Better use of resources to establish additional roosting habitat to avoid human-bat conflict at camp sites.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the NSW Government, the Opposition the Greens and Forests NSW seeking their support for managing flying-foxes in their camps and redirecting public funds to protecting and establishing additional roosting habitat adjacent to camps and educating communities on living with these vital native animals.

NCC to recommend actions such as the re-establishment of nectar rich foraging habitat along the coastal zone on cleared farmland and reducing weed species such as Cocos palms, Canary Island (phoenix) palms and Chinese celtis in urban areas, and longer term actions which could ameliorate problems for people and flying-foxes.

MOVED: Nancy Pallin **SECONDED:** Barry Tomkinson **Carried**

Motion No: 10/B2

Cessation of licences to cull flying foxes

Submitted by the NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW in accordance with its previous resolution of 2008 continue to call on the NSW government to cease issuing licences to commercial fruit growers to cull flying foxes.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That the NCC write to the Minister for Environment Climate Change and Water, and the Minister for Department of Industry and Investment, informing them of the Conference's decision and requesting they take the actions necessary, and promised since 2002, for the cessation of shooting of flying foxes and clubbing to death of infants of slain or wounded females as a crop protection measure for orchardists, including assistance to orchardists in acquiring exclusion netting for their crops.

MOVED: Lorraine Vass **SECONDED:** Marjorie Beck **Carried**

Motion No: 10/B3

AMENDED POLICY: Flying Foxes

Submitted by the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW adopt the amended policy on flying-foxes. The original policy is available on the NCC website.

Changes

- Remove 1.6 because it is included in Part 2
 - “Promotes the conservation of sites on both public and private lands which provide for roosting, including breeding and weaning of flying foxes, especially the grey-headed flying-fox.”
- Remove 3.3
 - “accepts that a phase out period for the issuing of licenses to cull flying-foxes for commercial fruit crop protection is necessary for social and economic reasons, however, in view of the 30% decline in the population of grey-headed flying foxes in the last decade this period must not be prolonged.”
- Remove 3.5
 - “recommends that the banana industry be encouraged to develop bunch bags which prevent flying-foxes from damaging banana bunches by a Commonwealth research loan.”

- Add at 2.15:
 - “urges the NSW Government to fully apply the NSW Flying-fox Camp Management Policy especially in relation to applications for dispersal/relocation of flying-fox camps.”
- Add at 5.1(c):
 - “will protect power supplies and communications infrastructure (phone lines) in fire prone areas and will avoid bush fires caused by electrical short circuits.”
- Change at 2.3 (c): change from ‘monitored at the time of the annual assessment of abundance of species’ to ‘monitored for species and abundance’.
- Change at 2.8: replace ‘NPWS’ with ‘DECCW’. It will then read:
 - “supports the retention of an adequate buffer zone surrounding each flying-fox camp to avoid the conflict between people and flying-foxes which is detrimental to communities, Local Councils, DECCW and flying-foxes”
- Merge 3.2 and 3.4 to read
 - “strongly supports the immediate cessation of shooting and other lethal methods of protecting fruit crops from flying-foxes and urges the NSW Government to cease issuing licences to fruit growers to shoot flying-foxes and provide a negotiated industry readjustment package which:
 - (a) would allow fruit growers with uneconomic orchards to leave the industry,
 - (b) enable viable orchards to be protected by netting by means of special industry loans or grants, and
 - (c) reviews the basis of eligibility for fruit growers to obtain loans or grants.”
- Update Appendix 1 from 2002, ‘Flying-foxes in NSW – brief summary’ as suggested by the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society.

PROPOSED ACTION: Replace the Flying-fox Policy on the NCC website and remind member groups that it exists.

MOVED: Nancy Pallin **SECONDED:** Gordon Limburg **Carried**

NB: See appendix 1 of these minutes for the full and amended NCC Flying Fox Policy.

Motion No: 10/B4

Coastal Koala Populations

Submitted by the NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call upon the NSW Government to halt the decline in koala numbers and to urgently develop and implement policies which will restore the viability of the state's koala populations, including no logging in identified Koala habitat.

PROPOSED ACTION:

The Nature Conservation Council's campaigning leading up to the 2011 State election to highlight the precarious state of the koala, particularly east of the Great Divide.

That the NCC develop a list of priority reforms which it considers integral to koala recovery and seek pre-election commitments from all parties to in principle implementation of the identified priority reforms.

That as soon as practicable following the election an NCC delegation meet with the new Premier with the purpose of negotiating the in-coming Government's urgent uptake of the priority reforms to achieve meaningful Koala recovery measures east of the Great Divide.

MOVED: Lorraine Vass **SECONDED:** John Hibberd **Carried**

C. National Parks, Protected & Natural Areas

Motion No: 10/C1

Berowra Valley

Submitted by Hornsby Conservation Society Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government:

- a) to recognise the classification of Berowra Valley as a Regional Park in 1998 was not appropriate; and
- b) correct this as soon as possible by re-classifying the area as Berowra Valley National Park, under the normal management and control of NSW NPWS Division of the Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to reiterate its 2003 resolution and accordingly write to the Premier, the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, the Leader of the Opposition

and Member for Ku-ring-gai, the Member for Hornsby and the Member for Castle Hill member for Epping and Shadow minister for Climate Change and Environment.

MOVED: Gordon Limburg **SECONDED:** Barry Tomkinson **Carried**

Motion No: 10/C2

National Parks and use of wood

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) oppose the collection of firewood for domestic use or commercial use in national parks estate, except as any negotiated logging phase out, that should not be more than 12 months from the date of announcement for new reserves.
- (b) oppose regeneration harvesting (e.g. ecological thinning) of trees in national parks estate with the exception of non-locally native and exotic species; and
- (c) call on the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to reaffirm its policy of no harvesting of trees or other wood products from national parks estate for domestic or commercial purposes.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the NSW Minister for Environment and Climate Change, asking that the Conference decision be implemented.

MOVED: Keith Muir **SECONDED:** Jim Morrison **Carried**

Motion No: 10/C3

Confirmation of park protection

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to all political parties before the election and ask them to specify that they will not allow, if elected to Government in NSW:

- a) Logging in any parks and reserves under the National Parks estate and Wildlife Act; except as any negotiated logging phase out, that should not be more than 12 months from the date of reservation for new reserves.

b) Mining in parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, except in State Conservation Areas under adequately regulated circumstances; and

c) Revocation or reduction of Wilderness Areas.

d) revocation or reduction of national park estate land.

IN ADDITION, if not already done so, that the Nature Conservation Council of NSW obtain undertakings in writing from all political parties that key environmental protection contained within *Threatened Species Act, the Native Vegetation Act, the Waste Management Act, the Wilderness Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act* will be retained.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That NCC writes to political parties seeking confirmation of their intentions towards national parks and the above environment protection legislation.

MOVED: Keith Muir

SECONDED: Jim Morrison

Carried

Motion No: 10/C4

State Environmental Planning Policy on World Heritage Areas

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW reject the provisions proposed in the World Heritage State Environmental Planning Policy and redraft the policy. that would make it possible to develop World Heritage Areas and even damage World Heritage values.

This is intended to only apply to national park estate areas and therefore excludes Lord Howe Island.

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to:

a) Abandon the current draft State Environmental Planning Policy (the SEPP);

b) Redraft the SEPP to consider natural and Aboriginal heritage based World Heritage Areas differently from other culturally based World Heritage Areas, such as the Opera House and convict sites around Sydney Harbour;

c) Exclude from the redrafted SEPP any area within the NPWS estate and the permanent park preserve on Lord Howe Island;

d) Ensure that the redrafted SEPP applied to areas adjacent to the NPWS estate and that these areas be designated as Buffer Zones; and

e) Require the development control provisions of the redrafted SEPP to apply to Buffer Zones and that these controls operate to reduce the impact on the World Heritage Area.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the Minister for Planning calling for the proposed World Heritage State Environmental Planning Policy to apply to World Heritage buffer areas only.

MOVED: Keith Muir

SECONDED: Gordon Limburg *Carried*

Motion No: 10/C6

Bushland Tracks and Trails

Submitted by STEP Inc.

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, and to Head of Parks and Wildlife Group, Deputy Director General, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, to:

- a) endorse the June 2010 STEP Inc. *Position Paper on Bushland Tracks and Trails* as it applies to existing official mountain biking sanctioned management trails in National Park estate.
- b) urge the adoption of the approach and standards laid out in the Paper, particularly:
 - item 3.1 (Appropriate Recreational Activities on Tracks and Trails);
 - item 3.2 (Construction and Maintenance of Tracks and Trails);
 - item 3.3 (Monitoring); and
 - item 3.4 (Tracks and Trails in Different Bushland Categories);pointing out the damaging consequences of thoughtless bushland track and trail construction (outlined in item 3.5).

MOVED: Barry Tomkinson **SECONDED:** Nancy Pallin *Carried*

D. Planning, Development & Extraction

Motion No: 10/D1

Cobbora coal mine

Submitted by the Mudgee District Environment Group

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government not to proceed with the Cobbora coal mine proposal in Central West NSW.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That the NCC communicate with appropriate Government Ministers through letters and meetings.

MOVED: Bev Smiles

SECONDED: Caroline Graham *Carried*

Motion No: 10/D2

Mining Impact on Thirlmere Lakes

Submitted by the Nepean Action Group

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- a) Write to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments requesting information on the impact of longwall mining on the drying up of the World Heritage listed Thirlmere Lakes; and
- b) Ask that the possibility of the fracturing of vital aquifers feeding the lakes should be taken into account when making decisions on longwall mining under other especially valuable areas, such as the Dharawal State Conservation Area, site of the pristine headwaters of the Georges River and O'Hares Creek, where longwall mining is now under consideration by the NSW Government.
- c) Bring the matter of Thirlmere Lakes drying out to the attention of UNESCO and the ACIUCN, and ask these organisations to consider listing the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) as a WH property in danger;
- d) Invite a representative from UNESCO and the ACIUCN to inspect Thirlmere Lakes National Parks in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area
- e) Request that the NSW and Commonwealth Governments consider measures to restore the Thirlmere Lakes.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, the Minister for Planning, the Shadow Minister for the Environment Cusack and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, Sydney Catchment Authority, Shadow Planning Minister Brad Hazzard, DECCW Minister Phil Costa and NPWS.

MOVED: Caroline Graham

SECONDED: Keith Muir *Carried*

Motion No: 10/D3

Coal mining in the Gardens of Stone and Coxs River catchment area

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose the issue of further development consents for open-cut coal mining in the 2005 Gardens of Stone Reserve proposal area and in the Coxs River catchment area.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the Premier and the Minister for Planning.

MOVED: Keith Muir

SECONDED: Haydn Washington *Carried*

Motion No: 10/D4

Moratorium on coal seam gas extraction

Submitted by the Sweetwater Action Group

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call for a moratorium on all coal seam gas extraction in NSW and any exploratory drilling, until such time as adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that coal seam gas extraction can only proceed where it has been demonstrated that the project will not:

- a) Contaminate underground water supplies, or otherwise render them unavailable for agriculture, human consumption, or the maintenance of important water-dependent ecosystems;
- b) Result in the release of significant quantities of methane into the atmosphere, regardless of whether that occurs at the drilling site, from pipelines, from nearby bores, or anywhere else; and
- c) Lead to significant areas of agricultural land being lost for farming, regardless of whether that occurs as a result of wells, pipes, roads, or any other coal seam gas infrastructure.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to call for a moratorium on all coal seam gas extraction in NSW.

MOVED: Chris Parker **SECONDED:** Gordon Limburg *Carried*

E. Climate Change

Motion No: 10/E1

Beyond Zero Emissions Stationary Energy Plan

Submitted by Parramatta Climate Action Network

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW lobby the NSW and the Commonwealth governments to adopt the Beyond Zero Emissions Stationary Energy Plan of zero carbon emissions by 2020 (that is 100% renewable energy), by reducing energy consumption and by the application of solar and wind technology to generate electricity.

FURTHER THAT the Nature Conservation Council urge these governments to commence planning to achieve zero carbon emissions for transport, buildings, industrial processes and land use.

PROPOSED ACTION: Write to and lobby the Commonwealth and NSW Governments.

MOVED: Annie Nielsen **SECONDED:** Haydn Washington *Carried*

F. Animal Welfare

Motion No: 10/F1

Native reptiles in pet shops

Submitted by the NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose the sale of all reptiles, especially native reptiles through pet shops and ask that the Government rescinds the “in principle agreement” to allow such sales granted by then NSW Environment Minister Koperberg in 2007.

PROPOSED ACTION: NCC to write to the Minister for Industry and Investment and the Minister for Environment Climate Change and Water.

MOVED: Lorraine Vass **SECONDED:** David Murray *Carried*

Motion No: 10/F2

NSW Companion Animals Act

Submitted by the NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call upon the Government to amend the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to give equal treatment to cats and cat owners as there are for dogs and dog owners, i.e. cats being contained on the owner's property in safe housing, and under the effective control of a responsible person when off the owner's property, as the basis of regulation.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Industry and Investment and the Minister for Environment Climate Change and Water, informing them of the Conference's decision and requesting amendments to the Companion Animals Act 1998 in accordance with this decision as a matter of urgency.

MOVED: Lorraine Vass **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin *Carried*

G. Food Policy

Motion 10/G1

Support for the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance

Submitted by the Columban Mission Institute, Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW send a letter of support to the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance (SFFA) for its campaign to have the NSW Government develop a Food Policy.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That the NCC send an official letter of support to SFFA.

MOVED: David Murray **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin *Carried*

H. Bushfire

Motion 10/H1

Promoting the NCC response to the Recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commissions

Submitted by Hornsby Conservation Society Inc

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Government and relevant members of Parliament promoting its response to the Recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

PROPOSED ACTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister for Emergency Affairs, and Minister for Rural Affairs, the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, the Leader of the Opposition and Member for Ku-ring-gai, the Member for Hornsby and the Member for Castle Hill.

MOVED: Anne Reeves **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin *Carried*

I. Population

Motion No: 10/I1

Removing the Baby Bonus

Submitted by Sustainable Population Australia NSW Branch

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the Commonwealth Government to remove the Baby Bonus.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Write to the Commonwealth Government.

MOVED: Nola Stewart **SECONDED:** Brigid Dowsett.

Amendment:

MOVED: Nola Stewart **SECONDED:** Brigid Dowsett *Carried* (five against)

Motion No: 10/12
Population Growth Policy
Submitted by STEP Inc.

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW recognise that exponential population growth is one of the key threats to the environment, that there cannot be infinite growth in a finite world, and develop and prosecute policy accordingly. Re-activate the Population Sub Committee and integrate various population policies.

MOVED: Rob Pallin **SECONDED:** Margery Street **Carried**

Motion No: 10/13
Sierra Club population statement: 'Too Little of Everything Except People'
Submitted by Hornsby Conservation Society

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the Commonwealth Government to invite their attention to the policy statement adopted by the Directors of *The Sierra Club* at their March meeting in 1967.

In noting the Sierra Club statement, the NCC notes that increasing consumption is a significant problem in the excessive ecological impact by people on the planet.

That NCC urges the Commonwealth Govt to bring out an ecologically sustainable population plan for Australia within the next 12 months.

MOVED: Anne Reeves **SECONDED:** Janine Kitson **Carried**

Motion: 10/14 Thanks to Ian Cohen MLC
Submitted from Conference Floor

THAT the NCC express its appreciation to Ian Cohen for his parliamentary assistance and hard work over 16 years which has been invaluable to the NCC and its member groups in helping to protect the environment.

MOVED: Phil Bradley **SECONDED:** Bev Smiles **Carried** unanimously

Motion: 10/15 Thanks Judy Messer

Submitted from Conference Floor

A formal vote of thanks to Judy Messer for her long service to the NCC Executive and insistence that our efforts are underpinned by good science. Judy attended her first NCC Conference in 1979.

MOVED: John Hibberd **SECONDED:** James Ryan **Carried** unanimously by acclimation.

Motion: 10/15 Retiring Executive Committee members

Submitted from Conference Floor

The meeting voted thanks to John Jeayes and retiring Executive Committee members, Jason Coombs and Kalina Kolloff

Carried unanimously.

Executive Election

The executive election was held and there were 14 nominees. Geoff Lambert, the Returning Officer, coordinated the election. The NCC Executive for 2010/11 is:

James Whelan
Jim Morrison
Anne Reeves
Robert Pallin
Don White
Megan Kessler
Mark Selmes
Haydn Washington
John Hibberd
Bev Smiles
James Ryan

Sally Castle was elected in a new ballot after the final position was tied.

John Jeayes and Nola Stewart were not elected.

LATE OR URGENCY MOTIONS

J. Late Motions

Motion No: 10/J1

Application for membership - The Australian Network for Plant Conservation

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW accept the application for membership from The Australian Network for Plant Conservation.

MOVED: John Hibberd **SECONDED:** Haydn Washington **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J2

Application for Membership - Chipbusters

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW accept the application for membership from Chipbusters.

MOVED: Lorraine Bower **SECONDED:** Frances Scarano **Carried**

Amendment: That applications from Chipbusters and Ryde Environment Group be held over for consideration by the Executive.

MOVED: Anne Reeves **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin. **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J3

Application for Membership - Ryde Environment Group

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW accept the application for membership from Ryde Environment Group.

Amendment: That applications from Chipbusters and Ryde Environment Group be held over for consideration by the Executive.

MOVED: Anne Reeves **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin. **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J4

David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation Annual Lecture

Submitted by the David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation of Australia

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW support in principle options to promote the memory of the distinguished conservationist David G. Stead, for example with a David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation annual lecture or award.

THAT this occur in partnership with the David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation of Australia and other organisations that have connections to the work and vision of David Stead.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That NCC form a Committee to investigate David G Stead Award/Lecture. The WLPS would consider supporting financially.

MOVED: Janine Kitson **SECONDED:** David Murray **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J5

Native Vegetation Protection

Submitted by North Coast Environment Council

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Director Generals of both the Department of Environment Climate Change and Department of Planning requesting the urgent application of the Native Vegetation Act to all areas zoned R5 in all new comprehensive LEPs both currently gazetted and any yet to be gazetted.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to undertake media regarding this matter and urge all member groups to raise this matter in submissions to exhibited draft comprehensive LEPs.

MOVED: John Edwards **SECONDED:** Jim Morrison **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J6

Reinstate and extend NSW feed in tariff

Submitted by the Colo Committee

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW immediately write to the Premier the Hon. Kristina Keneally condemning the recent move to scale down then abandon the feed-in tariff for renewable electricity, noting that this sends entirely the wrong message to the community at a time when advances are being made towards a renewable energy society. The scheme provides power for the grid during peak daylight periods, and can help provide energy that would otherwise require the building of expensive new coal or gas-fired power stations.

THAT the Nature Conservation Council urge the State Government to reinstate an effective gross feed-in tariff which supports the renewable energy industry and extends it for a further 10 years, and that it should also be expanded to apply to electricity produced by solar PV, solar thermal and wind.

MOVED: Haydn Washington **SECONDED:** John Hibberd **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J7

Support for concentrated solar thermal power station at Dubbo

Submitted by the Colo Committee

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on all political parties in NSW to support the immediate construction of a 50 MW concentrated solar thermal plant in the Central West of NSW as part of their policies for the next election. This is a key site identified in NSW by the Beyond Zero Emissions plan.

THAT the Nature Conservation Council call on the next NSW Government to become the key partner in a public/private partnership to build such a plant within 3 years, with tenders being sought within 12 months.

MOVED: Haydn Washington **SECONDED:** Brigid Dowsett **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J7

Support for immediate declaration of the Genowlan-Airly SCA

Submitted by the Colo Committee

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to immediately create the Genowlan-Airly State Conservation Area and other similar SCA reserves for all other areas of the Gardens of Stone proposal capable of reservation *before the next State election*. Much work on this proposal has already been done by DECCW, and the SCA would give greater protection to an area of high biodiversity and geodiversity significance.

MOVED: Haydn Washington **SECONDED:** Keith Muir **Carried**

Amendment to Motion 10/C5

Mountain Bikes in National and Regional Parks

Revised motion submitted by Colo Committee

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- a) Not support the *construction* of any mountain bike tracks in NPWS estate.
- b) Move that mountain bike riding not be permitted off track or on designated 'walking 'tracks in any bushland;
- c) Only support new *authorised* mountain bike single tracks being built (in areas other than NPWS estate by the proper authority in degraded or significantly modified bushland. Any track that is already in existence and is suitable to be used for mountain biking should *only* be authorised:
 - after all other illegal bike tracks have been closed;
 - after a thorough environmental assessment to ascertain the impacts of new tracks on native ecosystems;
 - if such tracks will be managed by the appropriate authority to have a strong bush regeneration component and strict weed control in addition to track maintenance;
 - if riders are required to be registered and display ID on their bike when riding on these authorized single tracks.

PROPOSED ACTION:

NCC to write to the NPWS and Hornsby Shire Council. plus Premier and Opposition. Ask NPA and LGSA to assist in this campaign.

MOVED: Frances Scarano **SECONDED:** Haydn Washington **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J8

Jervis Bay National Park and Lake Wollumboola wetland

Submitted by Lake Wollumboola Protection Association

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW immediately write to the NSW Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water requesting that he:

- a) Gazette immediately the Jervis Bay National Park and Woollamia Nature Reserve Plan of Management; and
- b) Commit to completing the NSW part of the Lake Wollumboola as a Wetland of National Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

MOVED: Frances Bray **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J9

Recognition and conservation of Lake Wollumboola

Submitted by Lake Wollumboola Protection Association

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW seek a commitment from NSW political parties to the recognition and conservation of Lake Wollumboola and its catchment, and request that the future NSW government agrees to:

- a) gazette immediately the Jervis Bay National Park and Woollamia Nature Reserve Plan of Management (if not completed by the March 2011 State election); and
- b) complete the NSW part of the Lake Wollumboola as a Wetland of National Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

MOVED: Frances Bray **SECONDED:** Rob Pallin **Carried**

Motion No: 10/J10

Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Submitted by the Inland Rivers Network

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call upon the NSW and Commonwealth governments to take urgent and effective action to achieve the restoration of the natural values and long-term ecological sustainability of the Murray-Darling Basin river system through adoption of a scientifically robust Basin Plan supported by strategic measures to help communities adjust and diversify for their long-term wellbeing.

Specifically **THAT** the Nature Conservation call for:

- a) 'Sustainable Diversion Limits' (SDLs) at the upper level identified in the Guide;
- b) establishment of the most effective way to restore natural seasonality of flood regimes as well as the amount of water needed to achieve the environmental water requirements of the Commonwealth *Water Act* 2007;
- c) consideration of scenarios for long-term average sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) for both surface water and groundwater that take into account climate change, drawing on social and economic analysis in conjunction with the environmental water requirements;
- d) consideration of the potential social and economic effects of reductions to current diversion limits to meet the identified environmental water requirements, such as development of innovative mechanisms to promote social harmony including:
 - proposals for meeting critical human water needs, and
 - proposals re transitional arrangements to implement SDLs;
- e) clarification on how the baseline to be used will prevent further degradation;
- f) assurance that there will be compliance *by State Water Plans* including monitoring and reporting re: Ramsar sites and other international obligations; and
- g) promotion of similar actions by the Victorian, Queensland and South Australian governments, through addressing the above policies and/or actions.

In addition, **THAT** the Nature Conservation Council call on the NSW and Commonwealth governments to facilitate broad community participation in relevant decision-making, ensure financial assistance for NGOs actively involved in Murray-Darling Basin water planning, particularly in relation to community education and awareness regarding biodiversity conservation and ecological sustainability issues.

MOVED: Anne Reeves

SECONDED: Judy Messer

Carried

Motion No: 10/J11

Native forest logging

Drafted and submitted by Conference

MOTION:

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

1. Revoke the NCC *Forest Policy 1991*;
2. Prepare a comprehensive draft forest policy for consideration at the NCC Annual Conference, in the 2011 International Year of Forests; and
3. Pending adoption of a revised forest policy, support the following principles as an interim policy and as a basis for campaigning, with emphasis on the forthcoming NSW election:
 - a. end *native forest logging*, with a *rapid transition* to plantation sourced timber, with the exception of:
 - i. *high value speciality timbers*; and
 - ii. cutting of timber by landowners for *non-commercial use* on their own land;
 - b. notwithstanding the above exceptions, maintain or improve existing forest protection, including prohibition on logging of *protected rainforest*;
 - c. an immediate end to logging of *high conservation value* forests;
 - d. support for further development of *plantations*, as necessary for the transition referred to above, on a *socially acceptable* and *ecologically sustainable* basis;
 - e. establishment of plantations must not result in the destruction or conversion of *natural ecosystems* (including forests) or *prime agricultural land*;
 - f. delivery of a *structural adjustment package* for industries and communities dependent upon native forest logging; and
 - g. as an interim measure, pending the transition referred to above, immediately:
 - i. place a moratorium on further *private native forestry* approvals;

- ii. undertake a comprehensive review of *forest management practices* and take action to ameliorate the impacts of *industrial logging* on *ecological values* and, in particular:
 - reinstate the prohibition on *logging* on all slopes above 18 degrees;
 - require threatened species assessment for all logging operations, including private native forestry; and
 - require increasing *buffer zones* in accordance with international best practice for *all streams*.

Carried

Noting the importance of defining the terms *italicised* in the motion, the Executive undertakes to consider and adopt definitions for those terms, consistent with international best practice and discussions held during the Annual Conference.

APPENDIX: POLICY

FLYING-FOXES (2010)

The Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales (NCC) recognises that increasing human population, increasing urbanisation and development in rural areas will result in removal of more flying-fox habitat and increased human-bat conflict. These will lead to increased threats of colony dispersals and deliberate killing of bats at orchards thereby further impacting on viability of flying-fox populations and particularly the grey-headed flying-fox a listed threatened species.

NCC believes identification and protection of important flying-fox habitat, better public education, and implementation of stronger legislation (particularly regarding crop protection and camp management) are essential in the recovery of threatened flying-fox species and in the maintenance of the ecological services they provide.

The policy covers:

- 1) The conservation, status, monitoring and recovery of the flying-fox population;
- 2) The conservation of flying-fox camps;
- 3) The interaction of flying-foxes with commercial and private horticulture;
- 4) Education of the community;
- 5) Reducing other causes of flying-fox mortality.

1. CONSERVATION STATUS, MONITORING AND RECOVERY

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- 1.1 supports the listing of the Grey-headed Flying-fox as a vulnerable species in NSW and by the Commonwealth.
- 1.2 urges the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to provide for effective, scientifically valid monitoring of the grey-headed flying-fox population, such as the synchronised evening 'flyout counts'. [This method of assessing population abundance was accepted by both the Commonwealth and NSW Scientific Committees].
- 1.3 urges the Commonwealth Government to adopt the National Recovery Plan for the Grey-headed Flying-fox, first drafted in 2006 and made available in draft form for public comment in late 2009.

- 1.4 encourages funding of research and public reporting of research findings on all three species of flying-fox and their ecological roles by the Commonwealth and NSW Governments and universities.
- 1.5 promotes the conservation on both public and private lands of native vegetation communities which provide foraging habitat (see list of native diet species in Appendix 2) for flying-foxes, especially the grey-headed flying-fox.
- 1.6 supports and encourages the incorporation of locally native flying-fox diet species into regeneration and replanting plans / programs for restoring native vegetation on rural lands especially in the coastal zone and western slopes.
- 1.7 supports the conservation of locally native flying-fox diet species in urban areas in Local Environment Plans (LEPs) and other mechanisms.
- 1.8 will be represented on the NSW Flying-fox Consultative Committee.

2. CONSERVATION OF CAMPS

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- 2.1 supports the conservation of flying-fox camps because of their importance in the survival and recovery of protected and threatened flying-fox species and for the maintenance of ecosystem processes.
- 2.2 recommends that the NSW Government maintain and annually update the database of occupied and historically used flying-fox camps.
- 2.3 recommends that those camps in national parks or nature reserves are:
 - a) identified in management plans;
 - b) protected from disturbance by appropriate management policies and actions;
 - c) monitored for species and abundance; and
 - d) the native vegetation regenerated if necessary to maintain the roosting habitat.
- 2.4 recommends that camps are identified as an environmental asset on Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and are protected from bushfire and smoke effects.
- 2.5 recommends that the area reserved for each flying-fox camp is of a size sufficient to cater for periodic increases in the number of flying-foxes due to local flowering events and for recovery of canopy vegetation.

- 2.6 recommends that Local Government Areas (LGAs) record the location of flying-fox camps and give them planning protection in the Local Environment Plans using mechanisms such as 'Environmentally Sensitive Areas'.
- 2.7 strongly urges that land adjacent to flying-fox camps is not sold, subdivided or developed for residential areas or schools or used for active sports, concerts, etc.
- 2.8 supports the retention of an adequate buffer zone surrounding each flying-fox camp to avoid the conflict between people and flying-foxes which is detrimental to communities, Local Councils, DECCW and flying-foxes.
- 2.9 recommends that a Management Plan for each camp and buffer zone be prepared with full public consultation.
- 2.10 urges the NSW Government to require that camps on privately-owned rural land are not disturbed and, through the Recovery Planning process for the threatened species, such camps are fully protected.
- 2.11 opposes attempts to move flying-fox camps and instead recommends that resources are best used to establish additional roosting habitat on adjoining land to encourage flying-foxes to roost away from sensitive sites such as residential areas.
- 2.12 agrees that flying-foxes must not be disturbed during the breeding season, particularly while females are in the later stages of pregnancy or feeding dependent young. For the grey-headed flying-fox this is generally between August 1 and April 30.
- 2.13 recommends that if a new camp is claimed to have formed, then the history of the site should be fully researched to find out if there was previous occupation.
- 2.14 supports the restoration of habitat at flying-fox camps provided that it is undertaken in accordance with a management plan which minimises disturbance to the flying-foxes, especially during the breeding season and maintains habitat for other fauna and flora.
- 2.15 urges the NSW Government to fully apply the NSW Flying-fox Camp Management Policy especially in relation to applications for dispersal/relocation of flying-fox camps.

3. FLYING-FOXES AND HORTICULTURE

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- 3.1 considers, in view of the steep decline in the population of grey-headed flying-foxes, that lethal methods of flying-fox control (shooting, poisons, entanglement in loose netting) in commercial orchards and private gardens must be quickly replaced by ecologically sustainable horticultural practices.
- 3.2 strongly supports the immediate cessation of shooting and other lethal methods of protecting fruit crops from flying-foxes and urges the NSW Government to cease issuing licences to fruit growers to shoot flying-foxes and provide a negotiated industry readjustment package which:
 - (a) would allow fruit growers with uneconomic orchards to leave the industry,
 - (b) enable viable orchards to be protected by netting by means of special industry loans or grants, and
 - (c) reviews the basis of eligibility for fruit growers to obtain loans or grants.
- 3.5 supports the use of appropriate netted structures to protect fruit trees in urban areas as an alternative to single fibre 10mm square nylon throw-over nets in which birds and flying-foxes become entangled with lethal consequences.

4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- 4.1 will continue to make strong representation to governments to adequately fund the preparation and wide distribution of accurate and interesting information on flying-foxes which:
 - dispels myths about them,
 - explains their biology, ecology including ecosystem processes,
 - explains the causes of population decline and how it can be reversed.
- 4.2 will encourage the effective delivery of appropriate educational material on flying-foxes to the horticultural industry, local government, schools, parliamentarians, government departments and residents living near camps
- 4.3 will provide information on flying-foxes to NCC representatives on Regional Native Vegetation Committees, Catchment Boards, member groups, Landcare.

- 4.4 will encourage community environmental groups to assist with flying-fox monitoring programs and include flying-foxes in bio-diversity surveys.
- 4.5 will urge Local Government Authorities and NSW DECCW to educate people to live safely near flying-fox camps by advising people:
 - to leave all bats alone (microbats as well as flying-foxes);
 - to report injured or sick flying-foxes to the local wildlife care organisation;
 - of current NSW Department of Health updates re infectious diseases.

5. REDUCING OTHER CAUSES OF FLYING-FOX MORTALITY

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- 5.1 supports the undergrounding of electricity supply and communication cables because it will:
 - (a) reduce the numbers of flying-foxes electrocuted on electricity cables;
 - (b) eliminate the need for severe pruning of trees, many of which are remnants of the native vegetation and are therefore valuable in providing bio-linkages through urban and rural areas; and
 - (c) protect power supplies and communications infrastructure (phone lines) in fire prone areas and will avoid bush fires caused by electrical short circuits.
- 5.2 encourages the retail nursery and hardware industries to ban the sale of lethal fine nylon netting and instead provide information on and market materials to correctly net backyard fruit trees to prevent entanglement and consequent injuries and death to flying-foxes and other wildlife.
- 5.3 encourages the use of alternatives to barbed-wire to reduce the numbers (unknown) of flying-foxes which die slowly from being caught on barbed-wire fences in rural areas and in urban areas where barbed and razor wire is used to protect construction sites.

Appendices

1. Brief summary of flying-fox species
2. References and Websites

Appendix 1

Flying-foxes in NSW - brief summary

Three species of flying-fox, large vegetarian bats, occur in New South Wales.

- Grey-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*
- Black Flying-fox *Pteropus alecto*
- Little Red Flying-fox *Pteropus scapulatus*.

Ecological significance

Flying-foxes are recognised by scientists in Australia and overseas as being important for ecosystem function as pollinators and dispersers of seeds. Unlike other pollinators such as birds and insects, flying-foxes play an important role in long distance pollination.

Diet lists for Grey-headed Flying-foxes include over 100 species of flowering trees and fleshy-fruited trees and lianas.

The draft National Recovery Plan for the grey-headed flying-fox states:

“Recovery of the grey-headed flying-fox will benefit 6 flora species, 57 vegetation communities 26 bird species and 19 mammal species or populations listed as threatened (critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or rare) under the threatened species legislation of the Commonwealth or the three States in the range of the grey-headed flying-fox. Also to benefit would be three of Australia’s World Heritage Areas – Fraser Island, the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves and the Greater Blue Mountains.”

Grey-headed Flying-fox

This species was listed as **vulnerable** on the list of Threatened Species under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) on 6/12/01. It was listed as a **vulnerable** species on Schedule 2 of the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSCA) on 4/5/01. The species is recognised as vulnerable under Commonwealth and NSW legislation because of a decline in abundance since 1989 in the order of 30%. Estimates of population abundance were undertaken in 1989 (minimum estimate 566,000) and from 1998 to 2001 (maximum estimate 400,000) based on evening fly-out counts at camps averaged over two consecutive nights. It has also been estimated that the population will continue to decrease by at least 20% in the next three generations given the continuation of the current rate of habitat loss and culling (Martin 2000).

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is endemic to Australia with a distribution ranging from Bundaberg in Queensland to southern Victoria and from the coast to the western slopes of NSW. In 2010 following extreme and prolonged rainfall in Queensland and northern NSW grey-headed flying-foxes formed temporary camps in Adelaide and several crossed Bass Strait.

Mating commences in January, conception occurs in April/May, gestation lasts for six months and a single pup is born in spring, October/November. A female successfully raises her first young at 3 years of age. The species has a low reproductive rate, making it impossible for the size of the population to increase rapidly and therefore it can only recover slowly from reductions in population size.

Grey-headed flying-foxes are highly nomadic. For example in July 1998, 21% of the national population was in NSW while in April 1999, 85% was in NSW. Individuals have been fitted with radio or satellite transmitters and tracked over distances of 800 kilometres to abundant flowering of eucalypts. They have been tracked moving between Sydney and Melbourne. Solar powered satellite tracking showed they can move about 150-200 km a night for about a week. They have also been tracked while foraging up to 100 km in a single night, returning to the same camp. They spend the day in camps (or roosts or colonies) numbering many thousands. Each camp provides suitable resting habitat in close proximity to feeding areas, most within a 20 km radius. The network of camps also provides stepping-stones, or stopover sites, for migrating animals. The population of a camp fluctuates in size coinciding with the amount of food available in the local area. Large aggregations are associated with intensive flowering of eucalypts.

Loss of native vegetation, especially on the relatively higher nutrient soils of the coastal zone and western slopes has reduced food resource options for flying-foxes. Grey-headed flying-foxes are especially threatened by further losses of winter and spring flowering species, mainly eucalypts, melaleuca and banksia, due to land clearing in particular in north-east NSW where a 25% increase in human population is predicted in the next decade.

In NSW less than 15% of potentially suitable forest for the Grey-headed Flying-fox occurs in conservation reserves; only 5% of roost sites are similarly reserved (Hall and Richards 2000).

Shooting of flying-foxes to protect fruit crops is believed to be contributing to population decline especially as it coincides with the breeding season and the death of a female causes the death of her dependent young. No data is available. Data collected by NSW Government on the numbers killed by shooting relates to shooting that is licensed by Parks and Wildlife (DECCW) but as this is collected by the licensee it is not considered complete, accurate or credible. Unlicensed shooting is not recorded nor have there been any prosecutions.

The NSW Licensing Review Panel concluded (in part) in 2009 that

- The animal welfare issues that result from shooting as a method of mitigating crop damage caused by flying-foxes are unacceptable ethically and legally.

- Shooting is ineffective when larger numbers of flying fox visit orchards. Full exclusion netting provides the most effective protection against damage from flying fox.

Other causes of flying-fox deaths are electrocution on electricity supply cables, entanglement on loose netting over fruit trees or on barbed-wire fences and heat events. Temperatures over 42°C high numbers of deaths and the prediction of increased global temperatures heat events would be expected to become more frequent.

Shortages of native food resources, during droughts or lengthy wet periods, are natural hazards from which the species can only recover if the unnatural threats are eliminated. Periodic natural food shortages lead to heavy orchard raids. Shooting to protect crops leads to high mortality of females and young. In adverse seasons young may be aborted or die because the female ceases to lactate, however, female is likely to survive to reproduce in future years.

Black Flying-foxes

This species occurs widely in Queensland, Northern Territory and the northern portion of Western Australia. It was listed as **Vulnerable** in NSW under the TSCA until 2008, but has since been delisted due to expansion of the population in NSW. Black flying-foxes have extended their range southwards into NSW since 1930s. In 2010 they reached Melbourne. Black flying-foxes have a diet similar to grey-headed flying-foxes. Being forest-dependent mammals they are vulnerable to habitat loss and could decline as a result.

Little Red Flying-foxes

This species is the most widely distributed of the flying-fox species occurring in all mainland states and territories. It feeds predominantly on nectar and is highly nomadic following mass flowering of native hardwoods and forming camps of up to a million individuals. In NSW it mainly feeds along the inland river systems.

Periodically, often during droughts inland, they share camps of grey-headed flying-foxes in the coastal zone of NSW forming camps sometimes exceeding 100,000 flying-foxes. Little red flying-foxes cluster together, hanging onto each other causing branches to break. This behaviour can cause significant damage to roosting vegetation but managers of camps such as Wingham Brush report that the forest recovers provided weeds, especially invasive vines, are controlled.

Unlike black and grey-headed flying-foxes, little red flying-foxes mate from November to January, gestation takes up to five months and females give birth to a single young from April to May.

Appendix 2

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Websites

- NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/flyingfoxes.htm>
Updated August 2010 - on this site there are many documents relating to flying-foxes and their management.
- [Best practice guidelines for the grey-headed flying-fox](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/08540tsdsflyingfoxbpg.pdf)
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/08540tsdsflyingfoxbpg.pdf>
- [Flying-fox camp management policy](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/ffcmp07281.pdf)
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- [Ranking the feeding habitats of grey-headed flying-foxes for conservation management](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/GHFFmainreport.pdf)
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- Protecting commercial fruit crops
- Report of the [flying-fox licensing review](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/Flyingfoxlicrev.htm) panel 2009
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/Flyingfoxlicrev.htm>
- Virus information:
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/rabiesbatinfection.html>
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/horses/health/general/hendra-virus>
- Australasian Bat Society website:
<http://batcall.csu.edu.au/abs/absmain.htm>
- Australian Museum: <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Australian-bats>
- Humane Society International (www.hsi.org.au) provides the following documents:

- *Why NSW Should Ban the Shooting of Flying-foxes* endorsed by 55 conservation, animals welfare and wildlife rescue organisations
- *Report on deaths and injuries to Grey-headed Flying-foxes, Pteropus poliocephalus shot in an orchard near Sydney, NSW* revealing evidence of extreme cruelty to shot flying-foxes
- Statements of support from fruit growers opposed to shooting
- Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society website: www.sydneybats.org.au