



2007 Annual Conference Minutes

McMahon's Point Community Centre
20 October 2007

The conference officially opened at 10am.

New Members

NSW Wildlife Council was accepted as a new member. Other new members will be accepted at the Special Conference on 14 December 2007.

Chairperson's Report

Don White presented his report.

Executive Director's Report

Cate Faehrmann presented her report.

Motion: That the Chairperson's and Executive Director's reports be accepted.

Moved: Rob Pallin Carried.

Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation Policy

DRAFT NCC Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation Policy

ABORIGINAL INTERESTS AND NATURE CONSERVATION

1.0. PREAMBLE

1.1 The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) first developed a comprehensive policy in relation to Aboriginal interests at a Special Conference in 1988. It was subsequently amended at the 1993, 1998, and 2005 Annual Conferences. This policy updates and replaces all previous policy statements on Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation. An important purpose of the policy is to assist NCC and its member groups to engage in open and constructive dialogue with Aboriginal people on the future of the nature conservation lands of NSW. This policy recognises that Aboriginal people need land to meet their economic, social, cultural and spiritual needs and that an important part of NCC's mission is to protect the nature conservation values of lands throughout NSW, ideally in well-managed and adequately funded public reserves secured under the provisions of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act. There is much common ground, and also some potential conflict, in the aspirations of Aboriginal interests and nature conservation interests. NCC seeks an honest and mutually respectful relationship with Aboriginal people that builds on shared values and aims, but does not deny differences where they exist. It is hoped that this policy statement will assist NCC in building good relationships with Aboriginal communities and help to deliver outcomes that benefit Aboriginal interests while ensuring the conservation of nature, the protection of the environment, and the attainment of an ecologically sustainable society. Regardless of specific disputes and their outcomes, NCC will uphold this policy statement and will work towards its implementation in a manner that values both the conservation of nature and the Aboriginal cultures of NSW.

2.0 INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 This policy is to be interpreted and implemented in accordance with NCC's constitutional aims and objects and with NCC's other relevant policies. In this policy the term 'lands' includes 'waters'; the term 'national parks' includes other categories of protected area of similar standing;

3.0 GUIDING STATEMENTS ON ABORIGINAL RIGHTS TO LAND

- 3.1 Aboriginal people have the right to maintain their communities and their cultures.
- 3.2 Aboriginal communities are the original occupiers, custodians and stewards of the land.
- 3.3 Aboriginal communities are now disadvantaged, in part because the land was taken from them.
- 3.4 Aboriginal communities have special rights to land based on their occupation since time immemorial.
- 3.5 It is right that land be returned to Aboriginal communities.
- 3.6 Aboriginal communities have deep spiritual relationships with their traditional lands or 'country'.
- 3.7 Aboriginal communities have rights and responsibilities to maintain their cultural practices on country.
- 3.8 Aboriginal communities have knowledge and cultural practices and values that can assist in the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment.

4.0 GUIDING STATEMENTS ON NATURE CONSERVATION

- 4.1 While this policy largely addresses the significance of land to different groups in human society, NCC recognises that land supports geodiversity and biodiversity with values that are intrinsic and independent of their worth to any human group.
- 4.2 The primary constitutional aims of the NCC are the conservation of nature, the protection of the environment, and the attainment of an ecologically sustainable society, and NCC will continue to work towards the realisation of these aims.
- 4.3 The public system of national parks, held in perpetuity under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and managed by an expert and well-funded nature conservation authority, is a cornerstone of nature conservation in NSW and NCC will continue to work for its protection, expansion and enhancement.
- 4.4 NCC will continue to work towards the establishment and good management of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of national parks reflecting the full range of IUCN categories.
- 4.5 NCC will continue to work for the conservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity, and for ecologically sustainable management, on all lands throughout NSW regardless of tenure and ownership.
- 4.6 NCC will continue to support wilderness reservation and management under the NSW Wilderness Act, and will work to protect wilderness areas from development and inappropriate uses.

5.0 NCC WILL WORK WITH ABORIGINAL INTERESTS TO ACHIEVE COMMON AIMS

- 5.1 NCC expresses its appreciation for the vital and important role that Aboriginal Australians have played in preserving the natural heritage of NSW and its respect for their cultural links to 'country'.
- 5.2 NCC believes Aboriginal lands can form a vital part of the protected area system. These 'indigenous protected areas' can be achieved through Aboriginal-owned lands managed to maintain their nature conservation values under arrangements secured by statutory arrangements and/or legal instruments.
- 5.3 NCC advocates support, funding and other resources for the management of Aboriginal lands with nature conservation values in order to achieve high quality indigenous protected areas.
- 5.4 NCC will seek the co-operation of Aboriginal communities in applying to any lands with significant nature conservation values which may be sought, claimed, controlled or owned by them - under whatever process or legal regime - appropriate policies for nature conservation and the protection of the environment, including policies on fire management.
- 5.5 Where NCC shares a common interest with an Aboriginal community in the management of their lands, NCC may assist that community to source funding for that purpose.
- 5.6 Where vacant crown land claimed by Aboriginal interests has nature conservation values, NCC may support such claims on the basis that the lands are held as Aboriginal-owned conservation reserves under joint management as provided under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act; alternatively, NCC may support the claim subject to conditions as may be applied under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act to protect those values, while allowing community uses of an appropriate kind and scale.
- 5.7 NCC may support Aboriginal co-management of national parks and other protected areas, and other forms of participation in the management of such lands. These arrangements can help to re-establish Aboriginal traditional links with country while maintaining national park tenure and public ownership of the land.
- 5.8 Where an area of existing national park land is of great cultural or spiritual significance to a local Aboriginal community, NCC may support the vesting of title in the land in that community, under terms which will maintain its national park status, and protect the natural and cultural values of the land, in perpetuity [Part 4A National Parks and Wildlife Act].
- 5.9 NCC will collaborate with Aboriginal interests to seek grant funding for joint research and other purposes consistent with NCC's aims and objects.
- 5.10 NCC will support strategies for the management of Aboriginal lands in ecologically sustainable ways.
- 5.11 NCC will support skill sharing for sustainable land management.
- 5.12 NCC will support significant Aboriginal roles and Aboriginal employment in environmental management.
- 5.13 NCC will support the appointment of adequately resourced Aboriginal representatives to government advisory councils and committees concerned with natural resources and the environment. NCC supports additional and more culturally appropriate ways for government to engage Aboriginal opinion and acknowledge Aboriginal interests in the management of natural resources and the environment.
- 5.14 NCC will take into account and apply, as appropriate to conditions in NSW, relevant international policies including the policies of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) on protection of indigenous interests, management of protected areas, and conservation of biodiversity.

6.0 NCC WILL WORK WITH ABORIGINAL INTERESTS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES

6.1 Certain lands in NSW are of particular interest to both NCC and to Aboriginal communities. These include public lands which may be subject to native title claims, vacant crown lands which may be subject to claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, and some national park lands of special cultural significance for which transfer of title with lease-back arrangements may be sought. Aboriginal rights over public lands may also be granted via regional indigenous agreements concluded by government with Aboriginal communities.

6.2 NCC and Aboriginal interests may not always agree on the best use of lands subject to Aboriginal claims and agreements. NCC believes that an open and honest approach which addresses both areas of agreement and of difference, and which allows an ongoing dialogue, offers the best way forward. NCC will make itself available and support negotiations to resolve conflicts.

6.3 Unless NCC's interests are significantly affected it will generally not take a position on native title claims, land rights claims, or indigenous regional agreement processes, or question the outcomes.

6.4 Where the granting of Aboriginal claims on public lands with significant nature conservation values is likely to lead to a serious diminution of those values, such claims will not be supported by NCC, and may give rise to objections; this may also be the case where the lands are likely to be on-sold, leased, or otherwise alienated to non-Aboriginal interests.

6.5 NCC is concerned that the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act allows for the alienation of Aboriginal lands and hopes that this does not lead to a new era of dispossession. NCC would like to see Aboriginal-owned lands held in perpetuity in a secure form of community title. NCC nevertheless recognises that this is a matter for Aboriginal communities to decide, subject to law, and accepts that Aboriginal people must participate on an equal basis in contemporary society, including the manner in which they hold and deal with their lands.

6.6 NCC supports consistent and non-discriminatory planning rules in NSW which protect the environmental values of the land. Land uses and development approvals should be decided on the basis of good planning and not influenced by the ownership of the land.

6.7 NCC accepts that some areas of national park land of great cultural or spiritual significance to local Aboriginal communities, may be transferred from public ownership to Aboriginal community ownership, subject to statutory lease-back and joint management arrangements which continue the national park status of the land in perpetuity [Part 4A National Parks and Wildlife Act]. NCC will seek to ensure that uncertainties about the long term status and protection of national park lands under Part 4A are addressed. Similarly, NCC will seek to ensure that national park lands held under Part 4A are not exposed to added financial burdens as may detract from their good management or their capacity to conserve the nature conservation values of the land.

6.8 NCC does not accept that national park lands should be made available to compensate Aboriginal interests for historical wrongs, or for economic purposes. NCC believes the best way to provide compensation to Aboriginal communities for the past loss of their lands, and to improve their economic position, is for substantial funding to be made available to them for land acquisition, and for other forms of investment, and to help secure improvements in their levels of health, education and vocational training. NCC supports the reinstatement to Aboriginal interests of a share in NSW land tax receipts expressly for these purposes.

6.9 NCC will seek the co-operation of Aboriginal owners in applying NCC policies for the protection of biodiversity and the environment to their lands.

6.10 NCC will promote considered approaches to bushfire management across the landscape, based on the best interests of nature conservation, consultation with any affected Aboriginal landowners, and the best available expert knowledge.

6.11 NCC will seek the co-operation of Aboriginal communities in ensuring that hunting and gathering activities in national parks are carried out in accordance with formally adopted plans of management made under the relevant legislation. NCC hopes that Aboriginal hunting and gathering in NSW national parks will be limited to essential cultural purposes; NCC does not support hunting and gathering in national parks for economic or other purposes.

6.12 NCC recognises that wilderness areas contribute significantly to nature conservation and the protection of the environment in NSW. NCC will seek to keep wilderness areas free of encroachments, dwellings and other structures, roads, tracks and other works in accordance with the provisions of the NSW Wilderness Act. NCC also recognises that 'wilderness' is a concept that is seen by some people as not fitting well with the Aboriginal concept of 'country'. However, NCC believes there is much scope for cooperation with Aboriginal groups in managing and caring for wilderness areas and will work towards finding common ground.

7.0 RESPECT FOR ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES

7.1 NCC will seek to co-operate with all Aboriginal interests in order to achieve common aims and resolve differences.

7.2 NCC will always seek to deal with differences with Aboriginal interests in a manner that maintains mutual respect.

7.3 NCC will listen to individual and collective Aboriginal viewpoints.

7.4 NCC will respect Aboriginal decision-making processes including decisions about who is a traditional owner and who can speak for place and for people.

7.5 NCC will respect Aboriginal sensitivities and practices concerning the holding and use of Aboriginal cultural knowledge.

7.6 NCC recognises the rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal communities to participate in the development and implementation of policies and strategies for the management of lands and natural and cultural resources in which those communities have an interest.

7.7 NCC will promote links, alliances and contacts between conservationists and Aboriginal people at local, regional and state levels to protect the environment and Aboriginal cultural heritage and for other common goals.

7.8 NCC will encourage its member societies to become more involved with local Aboriginal groups.

7.9 NCC will support and encourage Aboriginal people who advocate the management of communal land for conservation.

7.10 NCC will encourage member societies to invite Aboriginal people to join their organisations.

7.11 NCC will welcome as members Aboriginal non-government organisations which subscribe to NCC's constitutional aims and objects.

Motion: That the Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation Policy be accepted.

Moved: John Hibberd Seconded: Nancy Pallin Carried unanimously

Amendments to the Constitution of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW Inc.

Submitted by the NCC Executive

1. Removal of clause 12(b) relating to NCC's Ecofriends program.

12 (b) Any person may subscribe to "Ecofriends" (Friends of the Nature Conservation Council) and shall be entitled to be known as "an Ecofriend" of the Council for the year or years for which the subscription is made".

MOTION: That clause 12(b) be removed from the constitution.

Moved: Peter Prineas Seconded: Lorraine Cairnes Carried

2. Amendment of clause 13(a) relating to annual conference period.

13. (a) The Conference shall be the supreme governing body of the Council and an Annual Conference shall be held in September or October of each year.

MOTION: That clause 13(a) be amended to remove the words "September or October" and insert the words "September, October or November" in their place.

Moved: Peter Prineas Seconded: James Ryan Carried

3. Removal of clause 19 relating to TRUSTEES and amendment of clause 4 relating to POWERS in order to give NCC the power to hold and deal with property in its own right.

POWERS

4. The Council shall have the power to:

- (a) Purchase, acquire and receive any real or personal property which shall be held on behalf of the Council by the trustees and sell, transfer or demise and otherwise deal with any real or personal property of the Council.
- (b) Collect funds, and solicit, receive, enlist and accept subscriptions, donations, bequests and other financial aid from any person, trust corporation, firm, instrumentality or Government or any other body.
- (c) Raise and borrow money and secure repayment of money borrowed or the repayment of any debt or liability of the Council by any lawful means

TRUSTEES

19. There shall be four Trustees of the Council. The Trustees shall be appointed by the Executive. All the real and personal property of the Council held now or hereafter acquired (other than cash which shall be under the control of the Secretary) shall be vested in the Trustees to be dealt with by them as the Executive shall from time to time direct by resolution. The Trustees shall hold office until death or resignation or until the attainment of seventy years of age whereafter the appointment shall be reviewed annually or until removed from office by a resolution of the Executive who may for any reason which may seem sufficient to a majority of

them present and noting at any meeting remove any Trustee or Trustees from the office of Trustee. If by reason of any such death, resignation or removal, it shall appear necessary to the Executive that a new Trustee or Trustees shall be appointed or if the Executive shall deem it expedient to appoint an additional Trustee or additional Trustees the Executive shall by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed new Trustee or Trustees. For the purpose of giving effect to such nomination the Chairperson of the Executive is hereby nominated as the person to appoint new Trustees of the Council within the meaning of section 6 of the Trustee Act and s/he shall by Deed duly appoint the person so nominated by the Committee as the new Trustee or Trustees of the Council and the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925-1942 New South Wales shall apply to any such appointment.

MOTION:

(a) That clause 19 relating to TRUSTEES be removed from the constitution; and

(b) That clause 4 relating to POWERS be amended by removing all words contained in the clause and inserting the following in their place:

In furtherance of its Objects the Council shall, subject to this Constitution, have and exercise all powers and functions which in the opinion of the Executive are necessary or desirable including, but not limited, to the following:

(a) To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire and otherwise acquire any real or personal property, and any right or privilege, which may be used, in connection with any of the Objects of the Council and, in furtherance of those Objects, to manage, develop, improve, invest, exchange, lease, dispose of, assign, entrust to trustees, turn to account, or otherwise deal with any such property, right or privilege;

(b) To enter into any negotiations or arrangements with, or co-operate with or support in any way, any person, or any association or organisation whether incorporated or not;

(d) To enter into any negotiations or arrangements or co-operate with in any way, any government agency or authority, municipal, local or otherwise;

(e) To appoint, employ, remove or suspend staff, workers and other persons;

(f) To undertake, contribute to, subsidise or take part in any works, demolitions and any other activities affecting buildings, structures, grounds and works;

(g) To borrow or raise or secure the payment of money and to secure the same or the repayment or performance of any debt, liability, contract, guarantee or other engagement incurred or to be incurred by the Council in any way, and to purchase, redeem or pay off any such securities;

(h) To make, draw, accept, endorse, discount, execute and issue cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable or transferable instruments;

(i) To take or hold mortgages, debentures, liens and charges to secure payment of the purchase price or any unpaid balance of the purchase price, or any part of the Council's property of whatever kind sold by the Council or any money due to the Council from purchasers and others;

(j) To make any gift of money or any other property either wholly beneficially or subject to any trust or any condition.

(k) to collect and receive money by voluntary contributions, subscriptions, donations, grants, sale of goods or property, and legacies.

(l) To manage the money of the Council and to invest such money in fixed or other deposit in any bank, or in notes, stocks, shares, debentures or securities of, or advances to, any company whether public or private, or in any other securities.

(m) In furtherance of the Objects to lend money to persons, organisations, associations, firms or companies being members or not, and on such terms, as the Executive may consider appropriate.

(n) To do all such acts, deeds, matters and things and to carry on such activities, and to enter into and make such agreements and arrangements as the Executive considers may further the Objects of the Council or any of them.

(o) To do all such acts, deeds, matters and things and to carry on such activities, and to enter into and make such agreements as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the Objects of the Council.

Moved: Peter Prineas Seconded: Judy Messer Carried

4. Removal of clause 21(h) relating to NCC's bank account and the signing of cheques.

21 (h) A bank account shall be opened as directed by the Executive and all payments in excess of \$50.00 shall be paid by cheque signed by any two of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

MOTION: That clause 21(h) be removed from the constitution.

Moved: Peter Prineas Seconded: Rob Pallin Carried

5. Incidental and consequential changes.

MOTION: That such further changes to the constitution, limited to the re-numbering of clauses, and changes to references to re-numbered or removed clauses, and such other changes as are strictly incidental or consequential to the above amendments 1. to 4. be made by the Executive, and circulated to all Member Groups within 60 days, and in the event of any objection to any such proposed change from a member of the Executive or by a member group it shall either be put to a postal vote or be brought to the next annual conference for approval.

Moved: Peter Prineas Seconded: John Hibberd Carried

Climate Change

Submitted by Robertson Environment Protection Society Inc. (REPS)

MOTION

That the NCC call upon the Australian Government to implement the following climate action measures within the next Parliamentary term:

1. Introduce a non-partisan executive process to deal with climate change as a national emergency,
2. Ratify the existing Kyoto Protocol and co-operate internationally to develop new emission targets,
3. Select a national cap that would help limit global temperature rise to 2°C beyond that of 1990,
4. Regulate emissions by such measures as carbon taxation, equitable carbon trading and rationing,
5. Maintain carbon sinks by ecologically sustainable reforestation and nationwide biodiversity corridors,
6. Develop renewable energy and make the technology available to nearby countries at low cost,
7. Mandate energy and water-efficiency practices by governments, businesses and households,
8. Reduce dependence on cars, trucks and planes by subsidising public transport and freight rail,
9. Introduce natural gas as a transitional fuel to phase out coal-fired power stations and coal mines,
10. Assist those individuals most affected by the transition to a low-emission economy,
11. Encourage the transition to low-emission food production and distribution systems.

PROPOSED ACTION:

- 1 Write to all current members of the Federal House of Representatives and Senate, urging that they consider the above NCC recommendation for limiting the adverse environmental effects of man-made climate change.
- 2 Seek Deputations to key Members and Senators to discuss the NCC Recommendations.
- 3 Urge kindred environmental organisations to do the same.

Moved: David Tranter

Seconded: Bob Salt

Carried

MOTION: That the NCC Formally request Minister Phil Koperberg to take to Premier Iemma strong NCC concerns regarding the need for effective resourced community participation in water planning and management so as to better deliver the State Plan outcomes.

Moved: Anne Reeves

Seconded: Judy Messer

Carried

Mining

Submitted by the Nepean Action Group

MOTION:

The Nature Conservation Council calls on the NSW Government to give the Sydney Catchment Authority and all other Catchment Authorities where mining operations are impacting on water resources adequate legislative powers and staffing capabilities, so that mining will cease to crack and pollute the State's drinking water sources/supplies.

Moved: Caroline Graham

Seconded: Keith Muir

Carried

Wilderness

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

1. Resolution to the legal impediments to wilderness

MOTION

This conference calls for the removal of the legal impediments to wilderness processes on non-commercial Crown-timbered lands by:

- a) Ensuring any wilderness assessments or identified wilderness land within the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval areas are legally valid;
- b) Amendment of s39 of the Forestry and National Parks Estate Act, 1998 so that it is transparently clear this provision applies only to FMZ 4 (commercial forests) areas in the State Forest estate and not to non-commercial Crown-timber lands, in keeping with the manner in which this Act was originally put into effect;
- c) Similarly amend the Community Conservation Area Act, 2005 so that the Pilliga, Bebo and Mt Kaputar wilderness areas can be formally assessed and protected under the Wilderness Act, 1987.

PROPOSED ACTION

Write to relevant NSW Government Ministers informing them of the decision of this Conference.

Moved: Keith Muir Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

2. Protection of Wilderness from logging

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW supports the protection of identified wilderness from forestry operations on private land under an amended Private Native Forestry Code.

PROPOSED ACTION

Write to relevant NSW Government Ministers informing them of the Council's decision.

Moved: Keith Muir Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

3. Bring back the Dingo

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls on the NSW Scientific Committee to review its stance regarding deferral of listing as threatened certain dingo populations in national parks and state forests.

PROPOSED ACTION

Write to the Scientific Committee informing it of the views of this Conference that certain populations of dingoes in national parks and state forests, be they pure or not, should be considered threatened with

extinction and merit statutory protection under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and that strategies should be developed to restore the genetic integrity of these populations.

Moved: Keith Muir Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

4. Fire Management and Wilderness

Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

MOTION:

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls for fire management that treats wilderness as an asset that should be protected from fire regimes and fire operations that are detrimental to the conservation of wilderness values.

PROPOSED ACTION

Write to the Minister for Rural Fire Services and the Minister for Environment and Climate Change informing them of the decision of this Conference and requesting they establish a working party to develop appropriate fire management strategies, fire operation procedures and fire policies for wilderness areas.

Moved: Keith Muir Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

Kangaloon Borefield

Submitted by Robertson Environment Protection Society Inc.

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose the Kangaloon Borefield proposal on nature conservation grounds.

PROPOSED ACTION:

1. That the NCC show their opposition to this Kangaloon Borefield proposal by writing to, and lobbying the relevant Ministers.
2. That the NCC help to inform the general public, especially Sydney Water water users, of the proposed degradation of their catchment area and of their right to comment with the imminent release of the Environmental Assessment.

Moved: Leon Hall Seconded: Brigid Dowsett Carried

Water (1)

Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government to:

- (a) plan for and adequately resource an ecologically sustainable supply of water of both quality and quantity sufficient to meet the identified needs of the growing metropolitan population of the Greater Sydney Region and all aspects of the encompassing environment; and
- (b) Introduce a long-term (e.g. 50-year) metropolitan water plan and commit to ensuring its rolling short-term (e.g. 5-year) plans are consistent with the long-term plan's objectives and strategies.**

PROPOSED ACTION

Pass the motion unanimously.

Arrange meetings with the pertinent ministers and their departments to press the need for long-term planning, and the need to fully factor in climate change and population expectations.

Meet with all political parties to gain cross-party support for true long-term planning and commitment to an environmentally sustainable water supply that is not predicated upon a substantial 'single-use-throw-away' philosophy.

Recognise that a desalination plant will be constructed at Kurnell and that it is time to move beyond unproductive campaigning against it. For example, with a little bit of lateral thinking, the plant could easily become a unit within a comprehensive stormwater-recycling scheme!

Reflect the fundamental importance of water [within a framework of climate change and an increasingly focussed expanding population] by apportioning more human and financial resources to combating the deficiencies of water supply and utilisation in the Sydney Metropolitan Region and NSW in general.

Moved: Lisa Scott-Smith Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

Water (2)

Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government to give greatly increased consideration to recycling of water in future planning operations.

PROPOSED ACTION

(a) Pass the motion unanimously.

Acknowledge that this motion is a subset of Motion 1 and predominantly involves the same actions.

Arrange meetings with the pertinent ministers and their departments to press the need for long-term planning, and the need to fully factor in climate change and population expectations.

Meet with all political parties to gain cross-party support for true long-term planning and commitment to an environmentally sustainable water supply that is not predicated upon a substantial 'single-use-throw-away' philosophy.

Recognise that a desalination plant will be constructed at Kurnell and that it is time to move beyond unproductive campaigning against it. For example, with a little bit of lateral thinking, the plant could become a unit within a comprehensive stormwater-recycling scheme!

Campaign for a government-driven long-term education programme, throughout schools and the broader community, that develops a true understanding of the current quality of Sydney's tap water, the expected quality of desalinated water, and the merits of recycling technology and the quality of its product irrespective of the feed-source.

Reflect the fundamental importance of water, within a framework of climate change and an increasingly focussed expanding population, by apportioning more human and financial resources to combating the deficiencies of water supply and utilisation in the Sydney Metropolitan Region and NSW in general.

Moved: Lisa Scott-Smith

Seconded: Lorraine Cairnes Carried

Water (3)

Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government, as part of any long-term planning, to commence education of the community, and especially schoolchildren, on the facts underlying the safety of potable recycling, and the preconditions required for safety, with a view to reducing irrational resistance to that concept when it becomes necessary or desirable to introduce it.

RATIONALE

'Indirect potable recycling' or 'drinking water recycling' involves treating wastewater to high quality drinking water standard, mixing the product with catchment water and distributing through existing supply networks.

The MWP dismissed this option in the 2006 MWP because: "The Government does not support introducing recycled water into Sydney's drinking water supply at this time for several reasons. The independent expert analysis of the supply and demand balance shows that Sydney's water supplies are more than adequate to meet the demands of a growing population to at least 2015". "Implications for public health of such a scheme would need to be assessed. For example such a scheme would need to consider the quality of recycled water, dilution levels as the recycled water is mixed into the raw water in storages and the presence of harmful micro-organisms or chemicals". "Further, no such scheme could proceed without community acceptance. Local research shows community reluctance to accept the introduction of recycled water into the drinking water system at present"¹.

The Government's "reasoning" is disingenuous. The facts are well documented and were known to the planners. It is technically feasible to treat water that would otherwise be discharged from a sewerage treatment plant, raise it to better than present drinking water quality, and then recycle it. This has been practised since about 1968 and is routine in extensively studied places such as Orange County, California and Singapore. In the last 20 to 25 years the technology available enables the quality of the product to compete with the purist forms of water available and far exceed tap water (see Table 4). As Darryl Day, President of the Australian Water Association said "Technology is no longer a barrier for indirect potable reuse; it is now community acceptance"². In fact the desalination plant now being constructed would be capable of this use when not required for emergency seawater desalination and could provide re-cycled water at much lower electricity cost than desalination requires. BMCS considers that perceptions of community reluctance are overstated. However, to the extent that such perceptions are held, they can be shown to be false and Leadership is required to educate the public to the realities so that misconceptions will not be a barrier to future introduction.

¹ NSW Government, MWP 2006 p. 31

² Smith, S. NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service - Briefing paper 10/05 "Desalination, Waste Water, and the MWP", p.12

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government to greatly increase incentives for rainwater collection in coastal areas (subsidies for additional tanks up to a capped total, differential capping, etc) and undertake government-driven large-scale stormwater harvesting.

PROPOSED ACTION

(a) Pass the motion unanimously.

Acknowledge that this motion is one focus within the broader Motions 1 and 2, and would be facilitated by essentially the same actions.

Campaign for the pertinent ministers and their departments to focus short-term planning on improving incentives for and take-up of rainwater tanks and plumbing them in, including examining the role of ex gratia payments where householders' commitments preceded government enlightenment.

Campaign for government to include stormwater harvesting and recycling as a major component of an economically responsible and environmentally sustainable water supply.

Promote the view that fully integrated large schemes should have a major role in a multi-faceted plan for dealing with Sydney's long-term water needs, in contrast to short-term panic-driven environmentally damaging options.

Moved: Lisa Scott-Smith

Seconded: Gordon Limburg Carried

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government, as part of any long-term planning, to commence education of the community, and especially schoolchildren, on the facts underlying the safety of potable recycling, and the preconditions required for safety, with a view to reducing irrational resistance to that concept when it becomes necessary or desirable to introduce it.

PROPOSED ACTION:

- (a) Pass the motion unanimously.

Acknowledge that this motion is one focus within the broader Motions 1 and 2, and would be facilitated by essentially the same actions.

Campaign for the pertinent ministers and their departments to focus long-term planning on educating the community on the benefits of treating wastewater to potable standards, rather than pandering to the 'yuk!' factor.

Campaign for government to recognise the total unacceptability of a 'use-once-and-throw-away' philosophy.

Promote the view that fully integrated large schemes should have a major role in a multi-faceted plan for dealing with Sydney's long-term water needs, in contrast to short-term panic-driven environmentally damaging options.

Moved: Lisa Scott-Smith

Seconded: Judy Messer Carried

NCC URBAN WATER POLICY

Motion

Noting that the NCC water policy be reviewed to include urban water related matters:

- (a) **that** the NCC should draft an urban water policy, based on the "PENGO" reports and other relevant documents, to be presented at the 2008 Annual Conference, and
- (b) **that** a drafting group be formed, supported by a reference group drawn from Membership, to review the draft before it is finalised for Annual Conference consideration.

Moved: Lorraine Cairnes Seconded: Brigid Dowsett Carried

Election of the NCC Executive

Nominee

Don White
James Ryan
Robert Pallin
Lorraine Cairnes
Judy Messer
Jim Morrison
Brigid Dowsett
John Hibberd
Anne Reeves
Nola Stewart.

Consent Authorities

Submitted by the Berowra & District Community Association Inc.

MOTION

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on The Premier and The Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water to recognise that Local Councils are not satisfactory as the sole authority for implementation of the Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995), for reasons detailed in Motion adopted by the NCC Annual Conference of 2006.

AND call for all development applications affected by the Threatened Species Act to require oversight of the assessment process by the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water through the responsible Officer in charge of the Threatened Species Unit, who is competent to understand the priorities of protection of the natural environment, in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development and to ensure public accountability and transparency.

AND take what urgent action is available to prevent ongoing destruction of the ecological community exemplified in the background notes to this motion.

Moved: Robyn Borkovic Seconded: John Hibberd CARRIED

MOTION

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the NSW Government to respect the precautionary principle in relation to groundwater by placing a moratorium on inclusion of groundwater abstraction in any water-supply plan. This moratorium should remain in place until the full hydrogeologic regime in terms of recharge zones, recharge rates, and groundwater flow-paths and ages are fully evidenced and documented, the impacts of climate change on these data become better understood, and any proposed abstraction can, in consequence, be proved to be hydrologically and environmentally sustainable.

PROPOSED ACTION

(a) Pass the motion unanimously.

Acknowledge that this motion is one focus within the broader Motions 1 and 2, and would be facilitated by essentially the same actions.

Facilitate meetings between the pertinent ministers, their departments and other concerned parties (NCC's 3Rs, SWA, BMCS, etc) to press the total inadequacy of 'planning' that has the capacity to compromise groundwater and surface flows and their dependent ecosystems in the eastern Blue Mountains and the tract embracing Kangaloon, Wallacia and Leonay, yet would only yield a small volume of Sydney's expanding need for a sustainable water supply.

Promote the view that a multi-faceted plan for dealing with Sydney's water needs does not necessitate resorting to short-term environmentally destructive expediency, particularly when extending and expanding initiatives linked to plumbed-in rainwater tanks, leak reduction throughout the water-supply system, and various forms of recycling are more efficient and effective.

Moved:

Seconded:

Motion

A visionary new plan to enhance Australia's climate change policies and improve water supplies in southern Australia

proposed by the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA)

SERCA considers that:

Motion: The Nature Conservation Council endorse the following general statements in keeping with ESD principles and work with member groups to improve them and initiate action on them.

Recommendation 1: that carbon sequestration in Australia's native forests be adopted immediately as a major strategy for climate change mitigation, and to improve the quantity and quality of water supplies.

Recommendation 2: that Australia include investment in native forest protection and habitat restoration in Australia's climate change mitigation strategies, and specifically in its carbon trading scheme and Australian involvement in global trading schemes.

Recommendation 3: that the Commonwealth require an end to all broad-scale native forest logging, while making special provision for a limited amount of logging for sawlog extraction and tree removal essential for restoration of critical animal habitat.

Recommendation 4: that the Commonwealth require that only plantation timber be used for the export hardwood chip industry, for further processing as pulp in Australia, and for biomass fuel production.

Recommendation 5: that the Commonwealth negotiate with the States and Territories a structural adjustment package for the native forest timber industry, that will underpin new, visionary Australian climate change mitigation strategies for native forests.

Recommendation 6: that the Commonwealth, as part of the new water initiative with the States, remove taxation concession for plantations or reforestation which are not ecologically sustainable.

MOVED: John Hibberd

Seconded: Nancy Pallin

CARRIED

URGENCY MOTION

Submitted by Association for Berowra Creek

That the Nature Conservation Council note that Al Gore and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change were jointly awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize, and write to Al Gore to congratulate him.

Moved: Gordon Limburg

Seconded: Bob Salt

URGENCY MOTION

Submitted by Green Shareholders

Call on the NSW Government to set a target for the reduction of fossil fuel exports by a definite percentage by 2020.

A revised greenhouse policy is to be introduced at the next Annual Conference.

Moved Richard Maguire

Seconded

Gordon Limburg

CARRIED

Meeting Closed