



ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
**2005**

MINUTES

# NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW

## MINUTES of the ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005

**Saturday and Sunday 22 to 23 October**

At the Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens  
Mrs Macquarie's Road, East Sydney

**Chairperson:**

Robert Pallin

**Present:**

**Member Society Delegates and Observers**  
(see attendance list)

**Executive Councillors**  
(see attendance list)

**Guest Speakers:**

Alison Gibbons  
Greenpeace

Virginia Young  
The Wilderness Society

Graham Tupper  
Australian Conservation Foundation

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# ATTENDANCE LIST

## MEMBER SOCIETY DELEGATES & OBSERVERS

**Association for Environmental Education, Central Coast**  
Norm Harris

**Australian Conservation Foundation, Shoalhaven Branch**  
Terry Barratt

**Australian Conservation Foundation, Sydney Branch**  
Margaret Smith

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**  
Don Cameron  
Lyndal Sullivan

**Castlecrag Conservation Society**  
Marie Clifton-Bassett  
Mark Crew  
Matthew Keighery

**Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.**  
Fiona McCrossin  
Keith Muir  
\*\*Peter Prineas

**Community Environment Network**  
John Asquith  
Jane Smith

**Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW**  
Michael Maack

**Friends of Currawong**  
Buzz Sanderson

**Friends of Old Toongabbie Forest**  
Phil Bradley  
Annie Nielsen

**Friends of the Pilliga**  
\*\*Peter Thompson

**Gould League of NSW**  
Peter Roberts

**Green Shareholders**

\*\*Don White

**Hornsby Conservation Society Inc.**

Colleen Tucker

\*Gordon Limburg

**Hunter Ecologically Sustainable Employment Group Inc.**

\*\*James Ryan

**Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society**

Kathleen Delany

Ken Holland

Maree Kerr

Nancy Pallin

**Lake Wollumboola Protection Association**

Frances Bray

**Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society**

Ron Gornall

Doug Stuart

**Linnean Society of NSW**

Mike Augee

Peter Myerscough

**Mosman Parks & Bushland Association Inc.**

Audrey Lenning

**National Parks Association of NSW Inc.**

Roger Lembit

John Macris

\*\*Anne Reeves

**North Coast Environment Council Inc.**

John Jeayes

\*\* \*Jim Morrison

**NSW Wildlife Information & Rescue Service (WIRES)**

Stan Wood

**Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society**

\*Simone Marrier d'Unienville

\*Jennie Minifie

**Rylstone District Environment Society Inc.**

Naida Wills

**Scotts Head Protection Group Inc.**

Moira Ryan

**South East Region Conservation Alliance**

John Hibberd

**STEP Inc.**

Neroli Lock

**Sustainable Population Australia (NSW)**

Nola Stewart

**Sutherland Shire Environment Centre**

Jenni Gormley

**Sydney Environmental Education Network (SEEN)**

Sue Burton

Nilushi Disanayake

Lara O'Dell

**The Coastwatchers Association Inc.**

\*\*Chris Kowal

Mike Thompson

**Willoughby Environment Protection Association Inc. (WEPA)**

Lorraine Cairnes

Leone Snowden

**Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia**

John Clarke

John Robertson

**Wolli Creek Preservation Society**

Judy Finlason

**YHA NSW Ltd.**

Graeme Evans

**Delegates with Proxy Votes**

Gordon Limburg

*Association For Berowra Creek Inc.*

Simone Marrier D'Unienville

*Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society*

Jennie Minifie

*Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society*

Jim Morrison  
*Friends Of Shannon Creek Action Group*

## **Executive Councillors Attending**

Jen Guice  
Chris Kowal\*\*  
Dr. Judy Messer  
Jim Morrison\*\*  
Robert Pallin  
Peter Prineas\*\*  
Anne Reeves\*\*  
James Ryan\*\*  
Peter Thompson\*\*  
Prof. Don White\*\*

### **Apologies (Executive)**

Dr. David Murray

## **Guest Speakers**

### **Panel Discussion 'NGOs under siege'**

- Alison Gibbons, Greenpeace
- Virginia Young, The Wilderness Society
- Graham Tupper, Australian Conservation Foundation

### **Staff Presentations**

- Angela Baker, NCC Education Coordinator
- Nikki Conroy, NCC Hotspots Fire Project Coordinator

### **Returning Officer**

Geoff Lambert

### **Staff**

Cate Faehrmann (Director)  
Samantha Newton (Manager)  
Bruce Diekman (Office Coordinator)  
Bek Erichsen (Marine Intern)  
Madeline Hourihan (Native Vegetation Project Officer)  
Elaine Johnson (Environment Liaison Officer)  
Marnie Kikken (Sydney CMA Community Support Officer)  
Waminda Parker (Hotspots Project Officer)  
Peter Randall (Biodiversity Education Officer)  
Cecile van der Burgh (Freshwater Campaigner)

### **Volunteers**

Christine Bridle



Eva Nowacki  
Lesley Killen  
Matthew Sparks

Notes:

- (\*) Denotes delegates who hold a proxy vote for their own or other member societies - please refer to the list of proxy votes at the end of the attendance list.
  
- (\*\*) Indicates an Executive Councillor who is attending as a delegate for a member society.

# **PART A ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005**

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **Acceptance of 2005 Annual Report**

The Annual Report was presented by the Chairperson and approved unanimously by the Conference.

### **In honour of John Asquith**

A presentation was made to John Asquith who resigned from the Executive earlier this year after almost 9 years of service. John also represented NCC as a Bush Fire Committee member for many years and after the 1994 bushfires played a major and much appreciated role in revitalising our Ecologically Sustainable Bushfire campaign, policy and activities.

John will continue to devote his energies to the Community Environment Network, a member organisation he helped establish, which operates on the Central Coast and Lower Hunter region. We wish him well.

### **Elected Councillors 2005/2006**

New Executive Council (no election required)

Lorraine Cairnes  
Jen Guice  
John Hibberd  
Dr. Judy Messer, AM  
Jim Morrison  
Robert Pallin  
Peter Prineas  
Anne Reeves, OAM  
James Ryan  
Peter Thompson  
Prof. Don White

**PART B**  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005**

**LIST OF MOTIONS**

**A. COUNCIL AFFAIRS**

1. Admission of new Member Societies  
(submitted by the Executive)

**B. LEGISLATION & LAND USE**

2. POLICY ADDITION: ABORIGINAL INTERESTS & NATURE CONSERVATION  
(submitted by the Executive)

**C. WETLANDS & WATERWAYS**

3. Unsustainable groundwater extraction
4. Review of the Water Management Act, 2000
5. Replacing the Waterwise Program
6. Erosion and sediment control standards  
(3 to 5 submitted by the Community Environment Network; 6 by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society)

**D. BIODIVERSITY & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

7. Funding for cane toad research
8. National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan  
(7 submitted by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia; 8 by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness)

**E. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

9. POLICY: EDUCATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY  
(submitted by the Executive)

**F. URBAN & TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES**

10. Parliamentary Inquiry into sustainable water future for Sydney
11. Public forum - 'Finding Answers to Sydney's Water Needs'
12. Raising Tallowa Dam  
(10 submitted by the Australian Conservation Foundation, Shoalhaven Branch, 11 by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre; 12 by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness)

**G. WILDERNESS & NATURAL AREAS**

13. Support for the nomination of Wilderness in south-east NSW
14. Sand mining on Newnes Plateau
15. Alps and Forests World Heritage proposal
16. Impacts of recreational use on NSW reserve system
17. Government policy on recreational land use  
(13 to 17 submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness)

## **H. REMNANT BUSHLAND & NATIVE VEGETATION**

18. POLICY: NATIVE VEGETATION POLICY, 2005

19. Woodchipping in native forests

20. Conservation of biodiversity on private lands: Local Government Rebate Scheme

21. Conservation of biodiversity on private lands: Tradeable Development Rights Scheme

22. Fagan Park, Galston

(18 submitted by the Executive; 19 by the South-East Region Conservation Alliance; 20 & 21 by Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society & WEPA Inc.; 22 by the Association for Berowra Creek)

## **I. URGENCY MOTIONS**

1. Seaplanes in Ku-ring-gai National Park

2. Key environmental issues

(1 submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW; 2 by the Executive)

## **J. LATE MOTIONS**

1. Camphor Laurel Research and declaration as 'Threatening Species'

2. Involving youth in environmental NGOs

3. Amending SEPP 71 - protecting the Coastal Zone

4. Promotion of renewable fuels

5. Promotion of public transport

6. Proposed Shannon Creek dam

7. NSW Planning 'Reforms' - Standard Instrument (Local Environment Plans) Order 2005

8. Minister for Natural Resources, Bell Miner Associated Dieback & Forestry Operations

9. Undermining of Member Societies

10. 'Biodiversity Banking' and related issues

11. Updating mining legislation

12. Port Botany

13. Sydney Working Harbour

14. Regional Planning Process

15. Cumberland Plain Vegetation Recovery Plan - Completion

(1 submitted by the Camphor Laurel Research Centre; 2 by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre & OzGREEN; 3 & 8 by North Coast Environment Council; 4 & 5 by the Alternative Technology Association, Sydney; 6 by the Friends of Shannon Creek Action Group; 7 by Blue Mountains Conservation Society; 9 & 14 by the Community Environment Network; 10 by the South East Region Conservation Alliance; 11 by the National Parks Association of NSW; 12 by Friends of Wollli Creek; 13 from the floor; 15 by Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society)

## MOTIONS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 2005

Chairperson, Robert Pallin welcomed the traditional owners of the land, the Eora people, and acknowledged that the land had been stolen from them, without apology.

### **A. COUNCIL AFFAIRS**

#### **1. Admission of new Member Societies**

*Submitted by the Executive*

Moved: Anne Reeves      Seconded: Jim Morrison

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Conference confirm the admission to membership of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the organisations listed below, whose membership applications were accepted by the Executive since the last Annual Conference:

- Friends of Shannon Creek Action Group
- Gloucester Environment Group
- Hunter Community Environment Centre
- Nepean Action Group
- Robertson Environment Protection Society
- South East Region Conservation Alliance

*For the information of Annual Conference, the following groups formally ceased their membership of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW during 2004/2005:*

- Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists – ceased operating

## **B. LEGISLATION & LAND USE**

### **2. POLICY ADDITION:**

#### **ABORIGINAL INTERESTS & NATURE CONSERVATION**

*Submitted by the Executive*

Moved: Peter Thompson

Seconded: Jim Morrison

The following amended Policy was carried:

*The August 2004 meeting of the NCC Executive resolved to support this draft policy statement as additional policy to the current 1988, 1993 and 1998 'Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation' policies. Following this Conference, the Aboriginal Policy working group will be activated to revise and merge all the policies and policy statements into a new draft policy on 'Aboriginal Land and Conservation' for submission to the 2006 Annual Conference.*

#### **1. Preamble**

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) has a policy on 'Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation'. This policy was last revised in 1993 and 1998 after the *Mabo* High Court decision on native title, and reflects an optimism that the Native Title Act would deliver land justice. It is now obvious that this is not the case for Aboriginal peoples in NSW, so a policy based on working with native title holders has little practical value.

Other significant changes since that time include experience with Aboriginal ownership of National Parks, increased management and professional experience among Aboriginal people, land purchases by the Indigenous Land Corporation, some land dealings between Aboriginal Land Councils and property developers, and some good local alliances between conservationists and Aboriginal people. For these reasons an additional policy statement is needed.

Despite the fact that land is increasingly seen as merely a short term financial commodity, there is also a growing appreciation of the non-material values of land in Australian society. This maturing relationship with the land provides an opportunity for better engagement between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people concerning the environment.

This additional policy statement is to be read in conjunction with NCC's 1988, 1993 and 1998 policy statements on Aboriginal Interests and Nature Conservation, which remain current.

#### **2. Principles**

2.1 NCC recognises that:

- 2.1.1 Aboriginal peoples are the original owners of the land;
- 2.1.2 it is right that land be permanently returned to communal Aboriginal ownership;
- 2.1.3 there are complex social justice issues involved with Aboriginal land;

- 2.1.4 although the total area of land returned to Aboriginal people is now significant, the percentage is still small and is less than half the percentage of Aboriginal people in the population;
- 2.1.5 Aboriginal communities face more than the usual range of cultural, social and economic demands on their limited land and other resources;
- 2.1.6 where large numbers of people have moved over the last 50 years or so, especially to large urban centres, economic thinking may dominate over cultural obligations to land when communities make decisions about use of lands;
- 2.1.7 the Native Title Act will not deliver land justice to Aboriginal people in NSW;
- 2.1.8 Aboriginal peoples have the right to cultural survival and social reconstruction of their societies;
- 2.1.9 Aboriginal peoples have a deep spiritual relationship with the land and unique knowledge and skills relating to the environment;
- 2.1.10 conservationists and Aboriginal groups may not always agree.

### **3. Policy Statement**

#### **3.1 NCC supports:**

- 3.1.1 the use of Aboriginal communal lands for conservation and other sustainable uses;
- 3.1.2 Aboriginal persons who promote the management of communal land for conservation;
- 3.1.3 options for Aboriginal land management that are good for both Aboriginal community development and good for the environment;
- 3.1.4 Aboriginal ownership of protected areas (including Marine Parks) with high cultural significance;
- 3.1.5 Aboriginal roles in environmental management.

#### **3.2 NCC is committed to:**

- 3.2.1 promoting links, alliances and contact between conservationists and Aboriginal people at local, regional and state levels to protect the environment, cultural heritage and other common goals;
- 3.2.2 dealing with potential differences between conservationists and Aboriginal landholders with mutual respect;
- 3.2.3 assisting Aboriginal landholders to use their lands in a sustainable manner;
- 3.2.4 skill sharing for land management.

#### **3.3 NCC is concerned that the NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* 1983 currently allows disposal of land and that there is a danger of a new period of dispossession of Aboriginal people. NCC supports changes to the NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* 1983 that will ensure that:**

- 3.3.1 land returned is held as inalienable communal title;
- 3.3.3 rate exemptions be available for lands that are not commercially used;

- 3.3.4 land can be leased to the government for conservation;
  - 3.3.5 voluntary conservation agreements are available;
  - 3.3.6 the land tax income for land councils is reinstated.
- 3.4 NCC wishes that bushland granted to Aboriginal Land Councils will remain bushland with the principal use being conservation.
- 3.5 NCC supports consistent non-discriminatory assessment of zoning, development proposals and environmental protection rules. Allowable use of all land should be based on the values of the land and not on who owns the land. NCC opposes the practice whereby prospective land developers offer deals with Aboriginal Land Councils and then argue the special social and economic needs of Aboriginal communities to justify inappropriate developments.
- 3.6 NCC expects the government to prevent developers from manipulating the Land Rights Act in a way that results in 'Aboriginal land' merely being a temporary title status while deals are done to pass on previously public land to developers.

**Appendix: Aboriginal Community Landholdings in NSW (2005)**

| <b>Source of Land</b>                   | <b>Area (hectares)</b> | <b>Number of Properties</b> |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Former Aboriginal Reserves              | 4,000                  | 100                         |
| Claims granted to Land Councils         | 79,000                 | 2,100                       |
| Purchased with funds from ALR Act       | 135,000                | 8                           |
| Purchased by ILC                        | 210,000                | 42                          |
| Purchased with other Commonwealth funds | 55,000                 | 10                          |
|   | <b>483,000</b>         | <b>2,260</b>                |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                        | (0.6% of NSW)          |                             |
| Aboriginal-owned National Parks         | 77,000                 | 2                           |
|   | <b>560,000</b>         | <b>2,262</b>                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | (0.7% of NSW)          |                             |



## **C. WETLANDS & WATERWAYS**

### **3. Unsustainable groundwater extraction**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network*

Moved: John Asquith      Seconded: Gordon Limburg

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, reaffirming the 'Groundwater Extraction' motion from the 2004 Conference, request the State government to implement a moratorium on expansion of existing groundwater licences and any new groundwater extraction licences being issued until:

- (a) more detailed investigation into the sustainability of groundwater usage is completed; and
- (b) access licences for groundwater used or intercepted by any activity, align with EPA approved extraction tonnages.

### **4. Audit of the Water Management Act, 2000**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network*

Moved: John Asquith      Seconded: Jane Smith

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) deplore the slow and inadequate implementation of the NSW Government's water reform commitments to date, including the already gazetted but inadequate water sharing plans; and
- (b) initiate or conduct an audit and review of the implementation of the Water Management Act and associated regulations and documentation.

**ACTION:** NCC to convene a workshop and following that workshop NCC write to the NSW Auditor General seeking a performance audit of the implementation of the Water Management Act including regulations and policies. (Blue Mountains Conservation Society publication to be publicised and circulated).

### **5. Replacing the Waterwise Program**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network*

Moved: John Asquith      Seconded: Gordon Limburg

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to establish an ongoing extension program to assist landholders to use water wisely and efficiently.

### **6. Erosion and sediment control standards**

*Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society*

Moved: Lyndal Sullivan      Seconded: Michael Maack

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the NSW Government, as a matter of urgency, to:

- (a) raise the standards for sediment and erosion control used by government instrumentalities across NSW;
- (b) ensure that the supplementary volume 2 of The 'Blue Book' (*Soils and Construction, Landcom, 2004*), currently being developed, takes greater account of regional differences in rainfall, erodibility and receiving environments, accounts for predicted climate change and requires designs which will be effective in severe conditions rather than average conditions; and
- (c) increase resources to the EPA so that it can adequately perform and enforce its role as regulator of government authorities in respect of sediment and erosion control.

**ACTION:** Write to the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Natural Resources.

## **D. BIODIVERSITY & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

### **7. Funding for cane toad research**

*Submitted by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia*

Moved: John Robinson      Seconded: Stan Wood

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW lobby the State Government to provide substantial funds for control and further research into methods to stop the further invasion of the cane toad into NSW, to complement increased federal government funding.

**ACTION:** The NCC write to the State Government seeking a clear allocation of additional research funds to combat the invasion of NSW by the feral cane toad.

### **8. National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

Moved: Keith Muir      Seconded: Peter Prineas

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW request:

- (a) clear protocols and progress reports from the NSW Government, informing NCC of the implementation of Objective 7 of the National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan; and

- (b) the incorporation of Objective 7 of the National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan into NSW and Commonwealth State of the Environment reporting as a matter of course.

**ACTION:** Write to the Premier.

## **E. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

### **9. POLICY:**

#### **EDUCATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY**

*Submitted by the Executive*

Moved: Don White                      Seconded: Sue Burton

The following amended Policy was carried:

#### **CONTENTS:**

##### **A. PREAMBLE**

##### **B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

##### **C. DEFINITIONS**

##### **D. OBJECTIVES**

##### **E. CONCEPTS**

1. *Policy Development*
2. *Background & Context*
3. *The Role of Education in the NCC*

##### **A. PREAMBLE**

This policy has arisen from the requests of member groups and the continued work of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC). There are many NCC member groups who identify as being primarily environmental educators and also many groups that have an education component to their work. Similarly, many projects undertaken by NCC have community education and awareness as a key component.

The environment movement in NSW has always played an active role in increasing the community's awareness of environmental issues. NCC member groups are either directly or indirectly engaged in educating other NCC members, government, the private sector and the broader community, in ways to achieve an ecologically sustainable NSW. This educational engagement takes many forms and can be through, for example, lobbying, campaigns, workshops, forums, conferences, on-ground works and information provision.

The success of these activities can be measured by the fact that community environmental organisations are considered by the general public as one of the most trusted sources of information on environmental issues (NSW DEC, Who Cares about the Environment in 2003?). As the peak non-government environment organisation in NSW, with over 120 member groups, the NCC is ideally placed to play a major role in environmental education for ecological sustainability.

##### **B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

*This Policy on Education for Ecological Sustainability (EfES):*

- will assist the NCC to work with the NSW community towards ecological sustainability;

- outlines the important role that education has in assisting the work of NCC and its member groups;
- identifies current principles and practices in environmental education that can be applied to *Education for Ecological Sustainability (EfES)*; and
- recognises that EfES practice in the NCC is continually developing, which will require the policy to be reviewed regularly.

## C. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions have been taken from the NSW Council on Environmental Education, *Learning for Sustainability: NSW Environmental Education Plan 2002-05*, (NSW Government, Sydney, 2002).

1.1 *Environmental Education* is defined to mean:

*“any process or activity that assists the development of awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to environmentally responsible practices and behaviour”.*

1.2 *Education for sustainability* is defined to mean:

*“Processes and activities that are holistic and integrate environmental education that leads to the development of a sustainable society”.*

The following definitions are taken from NCC policy.

1.3 *Ecological sustainability* is defined to mean:

*“The principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) as defined in the NSW Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991, summarised as:*

- *The precautionary principle;*
- *Inter-generational equity;*
- *Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity;*
- *The improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources”.*

The NCC Education for Ecological Sustainability Committee has developed the following definition of *Education for ecological sustainability* from the NSW Environmental Education Plan and the NCC definition of Ecological Sustainability.

1.4 *Education for ecological sustainability* is defined to mean:

*“Processes and activities that are holistic and incorporate environmental education into processes that lead to an ecologically sustainable NSW”.*

## D. POLICY

The following policy outlines the processes required to implement this across NCC programs and among NCC member groups and the wider community, so that NCC can support its mission of an ecologically sustainable NSW.

The NCC is committed to:

- Progressively integrating the principles of Education for Ecological Sustainability (EfES) as a key component of NCC's work towards an ecologically sustainable NSW;
- Developing and promoting practical resources, processes and training to assist NCC staff and member groups, by providing the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to implement EfES principles;
- Developing resources to support the implementation of EfES and to address new programs and new audiences for the NCC;
- Developing and implementing EfES programs with the consultation and participation of NCC member groups, to increase member groups' capacity to address the complexity of sustainability;
- Assisting member groups to build on their environmental knowledge and develop and utilise appropriate Ecological Sustainability (EfES) strategies in their work with their communities;
- Advocating for Education for Ecological Sustainability on behalf of member groups.

## **E. CONCEPTS**

### **1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

This policy was developed by NCC staff, member group representatives and others. Existing NCC planning documents and practices relating to education were identified and drawn upon. Member groups with an interest in education also contributed.

The 2004 Annual Conference resolved to develop an education policy with a focus on ecological sustainability. Motion 12 , 2004 committed NCC to:

- *greater support for Member Groups' education activities;*
- *development of an advocacy role in environmental education issues;*
- *development of projects focused on Ecological Sustainability;*
- *support for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;*
- *development of an Education Policy; and*
- *the establishment of an Advisory Committee to guide these tasks.*

### **2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 International**

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is dedicated to education, public awareness and training, calling for a reorientation of education towards sustainable development.

*“Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues..... It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent*

*with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making.”*  
(UNCED 1992, Chapter 36, p.2)

At the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, governments agreed to “*integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels of education in order to promote education as a key agent for change.*” (United Nations 2002, as quoted in PCE 2004, p. 37)

Agenda 21 also stated that non-governmental organisations play an independent “vital role in participatory democracy”, help to “develop a sense of common purpose” in society, offer extensive networks with “well-established and diverse experience”, and should foster co-operation both between themselves and with the rest of the community.

## **2.2 The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development**

In recognising the principal role for education in sustainability elaborated in Agenda 21 and the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the United Nations declared a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) commencing in 2005. The Decade is being facilitated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and aims to encourage and support all governments to integrate sustainable development into their national education plans at all levels and all sectors of education. Strategies for doing this include: promoting the concept of Education for Sustainable Development; encouraging international cooperation and sharing innovative policies, programmes and practices in education for sustainable development.

## **2.3 Australia**

As a signatory to Agenda 21, Australia has accepted the imperative to reorient our education systems towards sustainable development<sup>1</sup>. The framework for this has been established within a national education for sustainability agenda. The *Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future: National Action Plan* was adopted by the Commonwealth Government in 2000 following the development of a discussion paper, *Today Shapes Tomorrow – Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future*, and consultation process.

The National Action Plan aims to provide leadership to education sectors on environmental education and to be the commencement point for national support for achieving ecologically sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> It recognises the responsibility of “government, industry, media, educational institutions, community groups – as well as individuals” (p.3) in achieving this goal and that “a holistic appreciation of the context of environmental problems is essential” (p.4). Significantly, despite the emphasis on education for the environment in the Plan, it states that “one of the objectives of environmental education is to develop a fundamental acceptance within the community that the nation’s environmental objectives should be accorded the same priority as its social and economic objectives” (p.4).

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 36, Para 2 (a), United Nations Council on Environment and Development, 1992

<sup>2</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, 2000. p.3

The Plan's five principles of environmental education are:

- Environmental education must involve everyone;
- Environmental education must be lifelong;
- Environmental education must be holistic and about connections;
- Environmental education must be practical;
- Environmental education must be in harmony with social and economic goals and accorded equal priority. (pp. 3-4)

A non-statutory National Environmental Education Council has been established which provides expert advice to the Australian Government on current approaches and future directions in environmental education.

## **2.4 New South Wales**

NSW is the first Australian State to develop its own environmental education policy through the NSW Council on Environmental Education. *Learning for Sustainability: NSW Environmental Education Plan 2002-2005* approved by the NSW Cabinet in 2002, provides a framework for whole of government and whole of community action in environmental education with the vision to achieve:

*“Effective and integrated environmental education which builds the capacity of the people of NSW to be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability”*  
(NSW Council on Environmental Education 2002, p.1).

## **3. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE NCC**

NCC's mission is to protect, conserve and promote the NSW environment. NCC is now thinking more critically about the role and benefit of education in our work and how we can use it to help us achieve our vision of an ecologically sustainable NSW. Environmental Education has played an important role in the activities of NCC's member groups for many years, from awareness raising activities to organisations focused solely on environmental education projects. NCC itself has run many campaigns that have a major education focus – most recently *Cool Communities* and *Community Bushfire Education*. The resolution at the 2004 Annual Conference confirms the role of education in working towards the NCC vision.

Education is recognized and used around the world as a tool for change towards sustainability. This change can take place on a number of levels including, the individual, organisational, whole-of community and in the political arena. As such, it plays a role in all of our environmental campaigns regardless of their size and scope.

## **4. PRINCIPLES**

There are several principles, acknowledged by education professionals in the health, arts, environment, and community development fields as key for achieving effective change-focused education projects. These principles have been used to guide education



programs run by the NCC in the past. These principles are intended to apply to NCC's work through its core operations; relationships with members and member groups; and the broader community. These principles are not exhaustive but make up the core of the style of education that will help achieve Ecological Sustainability.

#### **4.1 Environmental education must involve everyone**

##### ***Partnerships*** (working together)

Sharing our visions for sustainability by exchanging information and tools for education between member groups and with other organizations and working with communities to assist them to identify and resolve the issues;

##### ***Participation***

Advocating for and implementing a culture of participation in framing issues, problems and solutions, leading to better and more inclusive decision-making processes and planning;

##### ***Ownership***

Education for Ecological Sustainability (EfES) processes foster ownership by groups to have input into the methods and content of education and educational materials used within the NCC.

#### **4.2 Environmental education must be life-long**

##### ***Critical thinking***

Facilitating reflection on values and attitudes that impact on the environment;

##### ***Values***

Developing positive values towards the environment through education that provides opportunities to experience, learn about and advocate for ecological sustainability;

##### ***Recognising existing knowledge and values***

A process which recognises and acknowledges existing knowledge and strengths, and supports and encourages learning.

#### **4.3 Environmental education must be holistic and about connections**

##### ***Futures thinking***

Applying a futures focused approach by encouraging NCC, its members, and their communities to identify what their desired futures are in ecological sustainability, in order to work towards them. This requires an understanding of the state of past and present ecosystems at both state wide and community levels;

##### ***Holistic thinking***

Encouraging and assisting NCC, its members & audiences to apply a holistic approach to thinking about and reflecting on ecological sustainability in the context of their daily work and life;

##### ***Complex connections***

Recognising the diversity of issues and approaches in ecological sustainability.

#### **4.4 Environmental education must be practical**

##### ***Skills building***

Assisting and facilitating the development of the skills necessary to address ecological sustainability, to act sustainably, and create projects that will also be sustainable;

##### ***Integration***

Ensuring that practical educational approaches are integrated with other key tools for change toward ecological sustainability, so that planning, operations and campaigns include an educational component and a wide range of educational tools are available to member groups;

##### ***Ecological knowledge***

Education for Ecological Sustainability (EfES) can contribute to and be based upon practical skills that foster ecological knowledge-based approaches.

#### **4.5 Environmental education must be in harmony with social & ecological goals and accorded equal priority**

##### ***Connections***

Linking ecological sustainability to other aspects of sustainability to ensure a holistic understanding of issues;

##### ***Social Change***

Ensuring as far as possible, that education for ecological sustainability also promotes change towards social sustainability;

##### ***Ecological Outcomes***

Using education as a vehicle to work towards a more ecologically sustainable NSW.

## F. URBAN & TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES

### 10. **Parliamentary Inquiry into sustainable water future for Sydney**

*Submitted by the Australian Conservation Foundation, Shoalhaven Branch*

Moved: Terry Barratt      Seconded: Peter Thompson

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call for the establishment of a Parliamentary committee of inquiry into a sustainable water future for Sydney, noting that:

- (a) the committee should inquire into Sydney's need to adopt an integrated water management approach that incorporates a 'closed loop water cycle system';
- (b) the terms of reference for the inquiry must be to propose sustainable outcomes that significantly reduce water consumption, the treatment and re-use of waste water and harvesting of stormwater, as this is the only sustainable future for the people of Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra;
- (c) a lead agency with the specific responsibility for driving total water cycle policy is the best option to ensure the implementation of sustainable water consumption practices throughout NSW; and
- (d) only transparent planning processes and community engagement in decision-making, infrastructure solutions and behavioural changes will lead to sustainable water outcomes.

**ACTION:** NCC write to the NSW Legislative Council cross-bench parliamentarians using the background notes to suggest terms of reference for the inquiry.

### 11. **Public forum - 'Finding Answers to Sydney's Water Needs'**

*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre*

Moved: Jenni Gormley      Seconded: Gordon Limburg

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to promote and lead three months of public forum on 'Finding Answers to Sydney's Water Needs'.

The purpose of the forum would be to circulate existing good ideas and invite new ones (especially local initiatives), all to be incorporated in an 'Integrated Water Plan for Greater Sydney'.

The forum should:

- (a) stress responsibility at every level, i.e. families, businesses, industry, and all levels of government;

- (b) show the necessity of a *mix of policies*, such as vigorous public education, water-saving devices, rainwater harvesting, stormwater harvesting, leakage fixing, pricing curbs, and several major recycling measures; and
- (c) critically examine the 'last resort' option of desalination.

## **12. Opposition to the Raising of Tallowa Dam**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

Moved: Keith Muir            Seconded: Jenni Gormley

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) continue to register its opposition to the raising of Tallowa Dam wall and a massive increase in water transfers from the Shoalhaven River to augment Sydney's water supply; and
- (b) call on the NSW Government to develop the appropriate *mix of policies*, such as vigorous public education, water-saving devices, rainwater harvesting, stormwater harvesting, leakage fixing, pricing curbs, and several major recycling measures.

**ACTION:**

1. Write to NSW Government Ministers.
2. The NCC Executive to consider ways in which NCC can assist the Shoalhaven River Alliance and interested NCC member groups to bring the efforts of those opposing to this dam project to greater public attention.
3. Review the draft licence proposal.

## **G. WILDERNESS & NATURAL AREAS**

### **13. Support for the nomination of Wilderness in south-east NSW**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

Moved: Keith Muir            Seconded: John Hibberd

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** this Conference support the nomination of 313,053 hectares of wilderness in southern NSW by the Colong Foundation, Total Environment Centre, National Parks Association of NSW, the Nature Conservation Council and The Wilderness Society.

**ACTION:** Write to certain NSW Government Ministers informing them of the decision of this Conference.

### **14. Sand mining on Newnes Plateau**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

Moved: Keith Muir            Seconded: Nancy Pallin

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

- (a) oppose the development of Newnes Plateau sand resource for Sydney as it contains high conservation values including the coldest and highest development of native vegetation on Sydney Basin geology including snowgums, montane heaths and nationally endangered upland swamps in an outstanding scenic landscape of pagodas, canyons, cave overhangs, rock arches and wind-formed (but now stationary) sand dunes; and

- (b) call on the State Government to adequately fund a preferred metropolitan sand resource management strategy which has minimum environmental impact and examines all feasible options for sand supply, including an enhanced sand re-use option.

**ACTION:** Write to the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning.

### **15. Alps and Forests World Heritage proposal**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

Moved: Keith Muir            Seconded: John Hibberd

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW strongly support the 'sea to snow' concept underlying the proposed Alps and Forests of South East Australia World Heritage nomination proposal.

**ACTION:** Write to the Premier asking for NSW Government support for the nomination.

### **16. Impacts of recreational use on NSW reserve system**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness*

Moved: Fiona McCrossin    Seconded: John Clarke

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW seek a commitment from NSW Government to:

- (a) implement monitoring programs to establish, and respond to, the impacts of recreational use on the NSW reserve system; and
- (b) that such programs receive high management priority and adequate funding.

**ACTION:** Write to the Minister for the Environment.

### **17. Government policy on recreational land use**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness*

Moved: Fiona McCrossin    Seconded: Michael Maack

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW seek a commitment from the NSW Government to:

- (a) enact its publicised policies of providing recreational opportunities across all land tenures, including the clear objective of directing high impact activities out of conservation reserves; and
- (b) that such enactment should ensure the commitment of all agencies and provide for liaison with local government.

**ACTION:** Write to the Minister for the Environment.



## **H. REMNANT BUSHLAND & NATIVE VEGETATION**

### **18. POLICY:**

#### **NATIVE VEGETATION POLICY, 2005**

*Submitted by the Executive*

Moved: Jim Morrison

Seconded: Frances Bray

The following amended Policy was carried:

**THAT** the revised policy be accepted in principle subject to the Executive ensuring consistency with relevant legislation and other NCC policies.

*This Policy is a revision of the Draft Native Vegetation Policy submitted to and adopted in principle at the 2004 Annual Conference. Comments have been received from member organisations, Executive Councillors and others and incorporated into this new draft.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The conservation of native vegetation is critical for protecting biodiversity, countering soil and water degradation, maintaining coastal processes, maintaining and improving a healthy and productive landscape, and reducing the impacts of climate change.

Land clearing is the single biggest threat to the ecosystems and environment of eastern Australia. More than 60,000 hectares of land are cleared every year in NSW alone, causing massive land degradation and loss of biodiversity, landscape health and productivity. Increasing population pressure and urban development on the coast is fast emerging as a significant threat to conservation of native vegetation in addition to broadscale land clearing.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) works towards:

- 2.1 Ending broadscale land clearing of native vegetation, which includes smaller scale clearing of remnants of significant value, and reversing the decline of landscape health through regeneration and strategic revegetation with appropriate local species and an accompanying sustainable system of land management;
- 2.2 Ensuring the conservation value of native vegetation on private and public lands is managed in a way that protects and enhances the biological and ecological integrity of the dependent flora and fauna, and landscape health;
- 2.3 Ensuring that integrated planning measures identify and protect areas of high conservation value native vegetation and significant biodiversity as 'No Go' areas for development expansion.

## 3. DEFINITION OF NATIVE VEGETATION

For the purposes of this policy, the term *Native Vegetation* shall be understood to mean all forms of indigenous vegetation, including, but not limited to:

- 3.1 vascular and non-vascular plants and fungi, such as mosses, lichens, bryophytes and some forms of algae;
- 3.2 terrestrial *and* aquatic vegetation, both saltwater and freshwater;
- 3.3 vegetation occurring in all forms of grasslands, forests, woodlands and shrub lands, coastal heathlands and dunes;
- 3.4 dead timber, both standing and fallen;

- 3.5 plants occurring in a wetland or salt marsh area, as well as mangrove swamps;  
and
- 3.6 seed beds.

## 4. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

### 4.1 Policy objectives

NCC promotes the ecologically sustainable management of native vegetation in NSW in order to maintain and enhance the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the landscape.

NCC believes that:

- 4.1.1 The decline in extent and quality of native vegetation cover in NSW must be reversed by:
- implementation of integrated regional strategic plans that identify and rezone areas of high conservation value native vegetation as 'No Go' areas for development;
  - enforcing appropriate natural resources legislation and regulation to bring an end to broadscale land clearing;
  - ensuring NSW's biodiversity is conserved across all land tenures and zonings;
  - restoring, by means of natural regeneration and revegetation, the environmental values and productive capacity of NSW's degraded landscape; and
  - identifying targets for restoration and maintenance of vegetation communities in the landscape.
- 4.1.2 Conservation and, where appropriate, restoration of native vegetation must be undertaken to maintain and enhance biodiversity, protect or improve water quality and environmental flows and conserve soil resources, including on private land managed for agriculture, forestry and urban development.
- 4.1.3 Biodiversity and native vegetation must be retained and enhanced at the local, regional and national levels.
- 4.1.4 The ecological condition of existing native vegetation must be maintained or improved.

### 4.2 Policy principles

#### *Principle one*

Recognition that protecting and linking remaining native vegetation is the most effective and efficient method of conserving biodiversity.

#### *Principle two*

Landscape health, agricultural productivity and biodiversity are increasingly threatened by land clearing, unsustainable development and unsustainable land and vegetation management practices on both private and public lands.

#### *Principle three*

Recognition of the inherent importance of native vegetation in the function and resilience of ecosystems.

***Principle four***

Recognition that the biological diversity of vegetation must be maintained through appropriate land management practices. These include a suite of measures from environmental protection through to sustainable use and production using ecologically sustainable management practices.

***Principle five***

Recognition that sustainable native vegetation management requires the partnership of land managers, government, industry, interest groups and the broader community.

***Principle six***

NCC is opposed to the use of offset systems in the management of native vegetation. Offsets systems are driven by development not conservation of native vegetation. Offset systems result ultimately in a 'net loss' of biodiversity and extant high quality native remnant vegetation.

***Principle seven***

Recognition that where there are threats of environmental damage, lack of scientific certainty must not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:

- Careful evaluation to avoid damage to the environment wherever practicable;
- An assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options; and
- Acknowledgment of an inherent duty of care to protect the environment.

***Principle eight***

Those responsible for natural resource management and more specifically vegetation management should:

- Employ an integrated and holistic approach based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and the application of the precautionary principle where there is insufficient scientific knowledge to make a decisive judgement;
- Recognise the biophysical limits on natural resource use;
- Implement a publicly-funded, prioritised incentive payment system for vegetation conservation on private land; and
- Recognise the responsibility of the broader community to conserve native vegetation and recognise the social, environmental and economic values of native vegetation.

***Principle nine***

The economic value of native vegetation must be recognised and programs established, to change the perception of native vegetation on private land from a liability and an impediment, to an asset in terms of productivity and market value. This can be achieved through community education programs, public demonstration sites for ecologically sustainable management practices, and recognition of model farms and changed practices.

*Principle ten*

Recognition that exploitation of natural resources has gone beyond sustainable limits and that there must be a continued reduction in current resource use to attain a state of sustainable resource use.

*Principle eleven*

Recognition of the need for a defensible legislative, regulatory and policy framework based on the best available science to manage vegetation, which is common to all levels of government.

## **5. ECOLOGICAL COMPONENTS**

### **5.1 Protection of biodiversity through native vegetation management**

Protection of biodiversity through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

- 5.1.1 Protection of biological diversity and maintenance of ecological processes and life-supporting systems;
- 5.1.2 Maintenance and conservation of viable communities of all remaining native vegetation types, species and habitat types;
- 5.1.3 Maintenance of the genetic diversity of native vegetation species;
- 5.1.4 Instituting measures to reduce the number of threatened native vegetation species and communities;
- 5.1.5 Avoidance or mitigation of processes and activities that threaten the health of native vegetation communities;
- 5.1.6 Ending broadscale clearing of native vegetation;
- 5.1.7 Elimination of activities that adversely affect the conservation of vegetation communities or the species dependent on them; and
- 5.1.8 Maximising opportunities for long-term regeneration.

### **5.2 Land capability**

Protection of soil and water resources through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

- 5.2.1 Ensuring that land use does not exceed land capability, as per the DIPNR Land Capability Classification system and recommendations;
- 5.2.2 Maintenance and enhancement of the ecological integrity and physical stability of ground and surface water systems, including riparian zones, drainage features and wetlands;
- 5.2.3 Regeneration or revegetation of upslope recharge areas to reduce the volume of groundwater movement to lowland areas;
- 5.2.4 Protection and rehabilitation of lowland wetland and salt marshes.;
- 5.2.5 Protection of vegetation in erosion prone areas;
- 5.2.6 Protection of native vegetation in areas of potential acid-sulphate soils;

5.2.7 Protection of native vegetation in the coastal zone.

### **5.3 Protection of hydrological systems through native vegetation management**

Protection of hydrological systems through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

- 5.3.1 Protection of vegetation in areas at risk from dryland salinity;
- 5.3.2 Revegetation of recharge areas to slow or reverse rising groundwater tables and ameliorate dryland salinity;
- 5.3.3 Maintenance or increases in the area of native vegetation in riparian buffers on all water courses including first order streams, to protect water quality and yield. 75% of 1st, 2nd and 3rd order streams should have a minimum 50 metre (coastal) or 20 metre (inland) native vegetation buffer zone and be subject to active management and, where degraded, rehabilitation;
- 5.3.4 Protection of native vegetation in catchments of coastal lakes and estuaries to protect natural processes and habitats.

### **5.4 Sustainable land use outcomes through native vegetation management**

Sustainable land use outcomes through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

- 5.4.1 Promoting awareness of the economic, social and environmental values of retaining native vegetation in landscapes;
- 5.4.2 Protection and sustainable management of native vegetation across landscapes to ensure farming lands remain productive while maximising biodiversity outcomes;
- 5.4.3 Integrating native vegetation management into sustainable agriculture systems;
- 5.4.4 Future development being restricted to historically cleared land of low conservation value, not identified as a significant corridor gap.

### **5.5 Protection of natural and cultural heritage through native vegetation management**

Protection of natural and cultural heritage through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

- 5.5.1 Identification of landscapes and places that have natural and cultural significance and the protection and management of native vegetation in these areas to retain their significance;



5.5.2 Recognition that place and landscape are important aspects of Aboriginal culture.

## **5.6 Protection of the values of Indigenous people through native vegetation management**

Protection of the values of indigenous people through native vegetation management can be achieved through:

5.6.1 Maintenance of biological diversity on lands and waters over which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have title or in which they have an interest, to ensure the wellbeing, identity, cultural heritage and economies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## **5.7 Conservation of native vegetation in the riparian zone**

*(This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with the NCC Water Policy, 2002 – available on request or on the NCC website at [www.nccnsw.org.au/about/nccpolicy.html](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/about/nccpolicy.html))*

5.7.1 Maintenance and restoration of native vegetation in riparian zones is essential for the purpose of:

- erosion control;
- reducing disturbance from adjacent land use practices such as fertiliser and chemical drift;
- buffering of sediment, nutrient, chemical and bacterial run-off;
- stabilisation of banks;
- ecological functions (e.g. providing terrestrial and aquatic habitat connectivity for wildlife); and
- maintaining natural estuarine processes and ecological functions.

5.7.2 Management practices within the riparian zone can significantly affect its capacity to perform each of these functions. When planning the management of a riparian zone, principal management objectives for each sub-catchment or reach should be clearly stated.

5.7.3 A number of factors must be considered when determining the width of riparian buffers and appropriate riparian management regimes, including:

- class or order of the stream, river, lake or estuary;
- soil factors (including texture, permeability and the rate of bank erosion);
- slope;
- length of the hillslope above the riparian zone;
- flood frequency and the effect of river regulation;
- rainfall intensity;
- whole river catchment area;
- the ecological connectivity between floodplains and channels in western NSW;
- vegetation type;
- adjacent land use;

- target sediments, nutrients or pollutants; and
- the ecology of species using riparian vegetation as habitat.

5.7.4 A riparian zone management plan must address:

- retention of riparian vegetation;
- stock management (access to off-stream water, crash grazing, etc.);
- erosion and sediment control;
- rehabilitation and restoration of native vegetation in degraded riparian areas and
- weed management.

NCC recommends:

5.7.5 All watercourses should have protected riparian zones where native vegetation is conserved and rehabilitated. 1st, 2nd and 3rd order streams should have buffers of at least 20 metres and these should be wider depending upon the relevance of factors listed in 5.7.3, and be subject to active conservation management and, where degraded, rehabilitation.

All other streams should have buffers of at least 100m.

*(NB - these buffer zones were the result of extended consultation with several Environment Groups during negotiations over the Native Vegetation Reforms)*

5.7.6 Extensive projects be undertaken to progressively fence riparian buffers and install off-stream stock watering to allow for active management for conservation.

## **5.8 Bioregional vegetation targets**

The lack of bioregional conservation and retention targets is a serious failing in the battle for integrated natural resource management in NSW. At the most fundamental level, regional vegetation planning and catchment planning have failed to provide basic landscape level protection of the natural environment.

Failure of government to provide any guidance in terms of bioregional targets has resulted in much confusion within the vegetation planning process. It has also resulted in clearing approvals being issued without any reference to the broader picture in terms of the land cover status of the region and without consideration of the conservation status of broad vegetation types.

NCC recommends that the NSW Government:

- 5.8.1 Adopt a target, that no less than 30% of the pre-clearing extent of each ecological community should be 'managed for conservation';
- 5.8.2 Allow no further clearing or destruction of known habitat of threatened species or rare ecological communities;

- 5.8.3 Give priority to funding the establishment of protected areas to 'manage for conservation' the habitat of threatened species and rare ecological communities, and where necessary restoration of habitat;
- 5.8.4 Complete recovery planning under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (and where appropriate the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) for each threatened species, population and community currently listed by 2005, with targets to be met by 2010;
- 5.8.5 Protect rainforest and old growth forest remnants in the formal reserve system by 2010;
- 5.8.6 Protect all mature native trees and encourage their regeneration in rural landscapes;
- 5.8.7 Protect all identified wilderness areas in formal reserves by 2010;
- 5.8.8 Allow no further broadscale clearing of native vegetation including clearing for change of land use;
- 5.8.9 Ensure yearly net gain in the extent and quality of all ecological communities;
- 5.8.10 Require all landholdings to have some protected regrowth with the amount being in proportion to the extent of clearing on that landholding;
- 5.8.11 Allow no offsets that facilitate further broadscale clearing of intact, remnant native vegetation in return for revegetation of other areas; and
- 5.8.12 Restore under-represented ecosystem types to at least 30% of pre-clearing extent and condition by 2030.

## **5.9 Conservation of native vegetation values on Crown Lands**

Conservation of native vegetation values on Crown Lands can be achieved through:

- 5.9.1 Granting, with conditions to protect conservation values, Aboriginal land claims over Crown and public lands of high conservation value;
- 5.9.2 Government retention of all other Crown and publicly owned lands;
- 5.9.3 Assessment of conservation values of travelling stock reserves and routes (TSRs) and crown roads and comprehensive mapping at an appropriate scale across NSW;
- 5.9.4 Provision of financial assistance for Rural Lands Protection Boards (RLPBs) for the ecological management of TSRs with identified conservation values;

- 5.9.5 Government investment in long-term consolidated funds for conservation management of Crown and other public lands. This investment would yield long-term savings on recovery projects for threatened species, land degradation and restoration and provide a positive management model for private landholders to follow;
- 5.9.6 Clarification of Departmental responsibilities for Crown and public land. Various ministries (Natural Resources, Lands, Primary Industries, Planning, Agriculture, and Local Government) have partial responsibility for TSRs, Crown Lands and other public lands.

### **5.10 A summary of NCC's policy position on offsets**

*(This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Council position paper on offsets, 2001 – available from the NCC)*

- 5.10.1 NCC is opposed to the use of any proposed offsets system with an underlying motivation to facilitate clearing of native vegetation.
- 5.10.2 NCC does not support any system that assists further land clearing.
- 5.10.3 Offset systems that allow the clearing of high quality native vegetation in return for protecting larger areas of low quality vegetation (i.e. trading quality for quantity) will fail the 'no net loss' test. Conserving or planting low quality vegetation cannot compensate for losses of high quality vegetation.
- 5.10.4 The biodiversity values of existing native vegetation cannot be offset.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Legislative reform**

- 6.1.1 Remaining native vegetation should be retained in the landscape. This should be achieved through rezonings based on assessments of biodiversity values as well as land clearing regulations and management controls. Such initiatives need to be supported and complemented by education and awareness campaigns delivered by Government and community, to emphasise the importance of native vegetation in protecting environmental values and sustaining agricultural production.
- 6.1.2 Land clearing regulations and management controls need to take a broader ecological approach to reflect the complexity and variation found within natural ecosystems. Regulations need to ensure the full spectrum of native vegetation types is covered in the mapping, monitoring and reporting components.
- 6.1.3 There must be a consistent, efficient and transparent methodology for the monitoring and reporting of all land clearing state-wide. This needs to be

supported by effective monitoring and enforcement of compliance.

6.1.4 Public investment in native vegetation should include incentive payments for the protection of native vegetation. This may require increased public education and awareness so that communities and governments continue to value the importance of native vegetation for protecting environmental values while sustaining productive use of the land.

6.1.5 Implementation and reform of legislation should ensure that:

- The principles of ESD and a duty of care to protect the environment are incorporated in the objectives;
- Decision-making processes are transparent and accountable;
- Cumulative impacts are considered in all decision-making tools;
- All reports of breaches and the results of investigations or reasons for not taking action should be kept in an enforcement register which is readily accessible to the public;
- Operational, management and regulatory accountability and responsibility are dealt with by separate organisations to prevent conflicts of interest;
- There is improved co-ordination and communication between agencies with respect to management of natural resources;
- There are improved procedures for setting environmental standards;
- Adequate consultation with all stakeholders is provided for;
- All permits be listed in a publicly available register.

## 6.2 Conclusions

Government should ensure that planning for vegetation management takes into account the full suite of environmental values and recognise the multiple benefits of vegetation conservation such as enhancing biodiversity, managing salinity, improving water quality and maintaining soil health at the landscape scale.

An integrated approach to landscape planning, that includes the retention of all high conservation value native vegetation, the regeneration and revegetation of degraded and cleared areas is the most effective method for achieving maximum environmental outcomes, as opposed to offset schemes which rely on revegetation to counter clearing. Native vegetation management that relies purely on offsets generally fails to reverse the decline in vegetation extent and quality. Replanted vegetation in an offset is a poor substitute for the natural complexity of the remnant vegetation that has been cleared, ultimately resulting in the net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Vegetation management poses a significant problem in agricultural regions due to a combination of fragmentation, salinity, dieback, overgrazing, lack of natural regeneration and weed invasion. Government should provide support and guidance for positive and strategic management by landholders to protect and enhance remnant native vegetation, to prevent a further decline in the quality of existing vegetation by encroachment of the before-mentioned factors.

## 6.3 Definitions

### ***Biodiversity***

Diversity of species of plants and animals, (Macquarie Concise Dictionary).

### ***Broadscale clearing***

Means the clearing of any remnant native vegetation or protected regrowth.  
(*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Buffer***

A zone on each side of a watercourse where no clearing is allowed.  
i.e. a 50m buffer is a buffer of 50m on each side of the watercourse (as measured from the bank, or the centre line plus 10m.

### ***Clearing***

Of native vegetation means any one or more of the following:

- (a) cutting down, felling, thinning, logging or removing native vegetation,
- (b) killing, destroying, poisoning, ringbarking, uprooting or burning native vegetation.

(*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Ecologically Sustainable Development***

“Ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- (a) the precautionary principle – namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:

- (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
- (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,

- (b) inter-generational equity – namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,

- (c) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity – namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,

- (d) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms – namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:

- (i) polluter pays – that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,

- (ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
- (iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.”  
(*Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*)

### ***Indigenous Vegetation***

Is of a species of vegetation, which existed in the State of NSW before European settlement. (*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Offsets***

An offset is a means to compensate for the negative impacts of an activity by taking a separate action with positive impacts. Offset actions for native vegetation clearing may include revegetating or regenerating a previously cleared area, or enhancing existing native vegetation. (*Offsets, Salinity and Native Vegetation: Discussion Paper*)

### ***Protected regrowth***

Means any native vegetation that is regrowth and that is identified as protected regrowth under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003* via:

- (a) a property vegetation plan, or
- (b) an environmental planning instrument, or
- (c) a natural resource management plan of a kind prescribed by the regulations, or
- (d) an interim protection order under this section.

Protected regrowth also includes any native vegetation that is regrowth and that has been grown or preserved (whether before or after the commencement of the NV Act) with the assistance of public funds granted for biodiversity conservation purposes.  
(*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Remnant native vegetation***

Means any native vegetation other than regrowth. (*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Regrowth***

Means any native vegetation that has regrown since the earlier of the following dates: 1 January 1983 in the case of land in the Western Division and 1 January 1990 in the case of other land. (*Native Vegetation Act 2003*)

### ***Riparian***

Of, relating to, or situated or dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water. (Macquarie Concise Dictionary).

## **6.4 References**

Delbridge A., J.R.L. Bernard (eds), 1998, *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, NSW, Australia.

Part 4, *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, (NSW).

Price, Waterhouse Coopers Legal (2001), *Offsets, Salinity and Native Vegetation: Discussion Paper*.

Part 1 (6) (2), *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*, (NSW).



## **19. Woodchipping in native forests**

*Submitted by the South-East Region Conservation Alliance*

Moved: John Hibberd      Seconded: Don White

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) call on the NSW Government to demonstrate national leadership by working with other States, particularly Victoria, to move the woodchipping industry from native forests to existing plantations;
- (b) seek a public commitment from the NSW Government that it will take action to end woodchipping of native forests and close native forest woodchipping operations at the Eden chipmill; and
- (c) advise the Government that this can be achieved by a transition to existing hardwood plantations, without the need for further plantation development.

**ACTION:** Write to the Premier and Minister for the Environment.

## **20. Conservation of biodiversity on private lands: Local Government Rebate Scheme**

*Submitted by Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Protection Society & WEPA Inc.*

Moved: Jennie Minifie      Seconded: Lorraine Cairnes

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to take immediate steps to legislate for the implementation of a *local government rate rebate scheme* to serve as an incentive for the management of natural areas on private lands, such as *urban and remnant bushland*, for the purpose of biodiversity conservation and the maintenance of ecological integrity, noting that:

- (a) such a scheme should be managed and audited on the same basis as approved Council Plans; and
- (b) that the costs of implementation should be met by the State Government

## **21. Conservation of biodiversity on private lands: Tradeable Development Rights Scheme**

*Submitted by Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Society & WEPA Inc.*

Moved: John Hibberd      Seconded: Jim Morrison

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) call on the NSW Government to:
  - (i) legislate for a system of *transferable development rights* for private property, to serve as an incentive mechanism for the conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity on lands containing *remnant bushland, wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems* that may otherwise be inappropriately developed.
  - (ii) ensure that this *transferable development rights* system be supported by prior ecological assessment and appropriate landuse zoning to ensure the long-

- term protection of biodiversity and ecological integrity values, while allowing for private trade in development rights; and
- (iii) notwithstanding which Act would apply to this proposal, the Minister for the Environment should have a determining role; and
- (b) as a matter of urgency:
- (i) convene a workshop with a view to developing a unified environment group position and way forward on biodiversity banking and related issues (such as transferable development rights, etc.); and
  - (ii) following this meeting, seek to meet with the Minister for the Environment to relate its concerns about the biodiversity certification process.

**ACTION:** Write letters to the Premier and relevant Ministers and urge Member Societies to do likewise.

## **22. Fagan Park, Galston**

*Submitted by the Association for Berowra Creek Inc.*

Moved: Gordon Limburg                      Seconded: Keith Muir

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW request the Minister for Lands to enforce Hornsby Shire Council, as sole Trustee of the Crown land known as Fagan Park at Galston, to comply with conditions of the Deed of Gift under which the Park was gifted to the residents of New South Wales by Bruce Fagan on 4th December 1979, for the benefit and use of the community forever.

## **I. URGENCY MOTIONS**

### **Urgency Motion 1.**

#### **Seaplanes in Ku-ring-gai National Park**

*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*

Moved: Anne Reeves      Seconded: Ron Gornall

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) oppose licensing of seaplane activities within and adjacent to and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park including in the vicinity of Cottage Point, on the basis of adverse environmental impacts on the coast and waters of the Park; and adjacent areas.
  
- (b) make a submission to the NPWS accordingly; and encourage member groups to do likewise.

### **Urgency Motion 2.**

#### **Key environmental issues**

*Submitted by the Executive*

Moved: Judy Messer      Seconded: Jim Morrison

The following motion was carried:

Noting the continuing threats to terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity, the ongoing degradation of rivers and wetlands and coastal, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the ongoing urbanisation of rural and semi-rural landscapes, the failure to provide for adequately protected marine ecosystems or the implementation of widespread terrestrial recovery plans for threatened species:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call upon the NSW Government:

1. To approve no new coal-fired power stations and not expand existing coal-fired power;
  
2. To halt the construction of a desalination plant at Kurnell and use the \$2.2 billion to implement water re-use, stormwater harvesting and demand management initiatives;
  
3. Not to expand any dams or inter-basin transfers;
  
4. To end the logging of old-growth vegetation across all tenures;
  
5. To immediately create 1500m sanctuary zones around the 16 grey nurse shark critical habitat areas;
  
6. To return full and effective public participation rights to the EP&A Act, especially in regard to matters of state significance, and ensure that matters of state significance

are subject to the requirements and environmental constraints of the Water Management Act; and

7. To stop crown land sell-off, crown leasehold conversions and general sale of public lands.

**ACTION:** Letter to Premier.

## **J. LATE MOTIONS**

### **Late Motion 1.**

#### **Camphor Laurel Research and declaration as 'Threatening Species'**

*Submitted by the Camphor Laurel Research Centre*

The following motion lapsed:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) formally recommend to the Royal Botanic Gardens that detailed research be commenced into the various toxic chemotypes of Camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*), to assist in the elucidation of types that are 'least toxic'; and
- (b) urge the NSW Minister for Primary Industries to declare the species 'Noxious Category 2' or 'Noxious Category 1' under the Noxious Weeds Act; and
- (c) urge the NSW Scientific Committee to declare the species a 'Threatening Species'.

### **Late Motion 2.**

#### **Involving youth in environmental NGOs**

*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre & OzGREEN*

Moved: Jenni Gormley      Seconded: Jen Guice

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) support Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC) to convene a focus group of environmental NGO representatives and other relevant stakeholders, to examine attracting and involving young people in their organizations.
- (b) work with the SSEC through an appropriate funding body or mechanism to secure resources to conduct broader research into this matter in order to develop models of operation, approaches and tools that support NGOs to successfully attract and involve young people into their organizations.

### **Late Motion 3.**

#### **Amending SEPP 71 - protecting the Coastal Zone**

*Submitted by the North Coast Environment Council Inc.*

Moved: Jim Morrison      Seconded: Frances Bray

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Premier and the Minister requesting an amendment to SEPP 71 to clarify the position regarding that instrument and the possible conflict with SEPP Seniors Living to ensure the protection of the coastal zone through SEPP 71.

### **Late Motion 4.**

#### **Promotion of renewable fuels**

*Submitted by the Alternative Technology Association, Sydney*

Moved: Don White      Seconded: John Asquith

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to increase efforts to promote and encourage the use of renewable fuels to supplement and progressively reduce reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels.

**ACTION:** Letters and deputations to the appropriate Ministers

**Late Motion 5.**

**Promotion of public transport**

*Submitted by the Alternative Technology Association, Sydney)*

Moved: Don White            Seconded: John Asquith

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to undertake an active multi-faceted effort to promote greater use of public transport, including trains, buses and ferries, and to encourage people to make less use of private cars.

**ACTION:** Letters to the appropriate Ministers

**Late Motion 6.**

**Proposed Shannon Creek dam**

*Submitted by the Friends of Shannon Creek Action Group*

Moved: Jim Morrison        Seconded: Peter Thompson

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the State Government to:

- (a) undertake a review into the need for the proposed Shannon Creek dam, and the twelve year old rationale still being used to justify its completion; and
- (b) that, with the benefit of a decade of hindsight, the review give particular attention to the following:
  - the acceptance of climate change and associated global warming, and its implications in relation to river flow sustainability, given Shannon Creek is an off-stream storage to be filled from the Nymboida River;
  - the current perspective on the area's biodiversity, following the exposure of flawed ecological assessments for the 1999 EIS, and the current tripling of known threatened species;
  - the recent finding of the plant root rot pathogen, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*: its implications for biodiversity and potential impacts on unique habitat both at Shannon Creek and neighbouring nature reserves;
  - proposed changes to almost all components of the project since the original scheme was approved in 2000;
  - the additional cost a of water treatment plant as a consequence of the *Phytophthora* discovery. (a need as yet unaccepted by the proponent);
  - relative changes in costs of alternate technologies resulting in those alternatives becoming more cost competitive;

- overall costings anomalies, including the implications of escalating world fuel costs that are likely to see massive 'blow-outs' in the final cost;
- changes in population growth patterns courtesy of the 'sea-change' phenomenon;
- security issues resulting from world terrorist threat; and
- modern thinking in relation to dams as presented by the World Commission on Dams.

**ACTION:** Write letters to the Premier of NSW and Ministers for Energy and Utilities; the Environment; and Infrastructure and Planning.

**Late Motion 7.**

**NSW Planning 'Reforms' -**

**Standard Instrument (Local Environment Plans) Order 2005**

*Submitted by Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.*

Moved: Don Cameron      Seconded: Michael Maack

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW make representations to the Minister for Planning about serious environmental concerns regarding the proposed 'Draft Standard LEP 2005'; viz:

- (a) There is no disagreement with having a standard format or template, however it should promote 'best practice' planning models, not ones that are problematic. This LEP template does not easily allow for 'place -based planning', a mechanism which provides a high level of certainty in planning;
- (b) This template is heavily biased towards development rather than protection of the environment or local communities. The land use matrix proscribes land uses which must be permitted. Councils are invited to allow more uses, but prohibited to reduce the number of uses. This effectively allows councils to reduce environmental standards, but not improve them (e.g. in the Environmental Protection Zones);
- (c) This template fails to give legal precision and certainty. This will inevitably result in more appeals to the Land and Environment Court. Apart from the sandmining clause, there are no environmental development standards which have any legal certainty. There are no other total prohibitions or 'conditions precedent to a decision', only environmental factors for 'consideration'; and
- (d) This template should be providing a base line of environmental standards which can only be improved and not reduced. The standards currently operating in the best practice LEPs should be incorporated into the template.

**Late Motion 8.**

**Minister for Natural Resources, Bell Miner Associated Dieback & Forestry Operations**

*Submitted by North Coast Environment Council Inc.*

Moved: Jim Morrison      Seconded: Gordon Limburg

The following amended motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) call on the Premier to relieve Minister Ian Macdonald of one of his conflicting portfolios, either Natural Resources or Primary Industries, due to the potential for a serious conflict of interest; and
- (b) reiterating its call for a moratorium on logging in all NSW State Forests affected or at risk of being affected by Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD) until the cause is fully understood and an acceptable, sustainable plan of management to restore forest health is developed, call for the terms of reference for the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA) Review to be immediately



released for public comment, and that there be public participation in the review process, and that BMAD be specifically addressed in the review.

**Late Motion 9.**

**Undermining of Member Societies**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network*

Moved: John Asquith                      Seconded: Frances Bray

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) make member societies aware of the experiences of fellow member groups in relation to activities and techniques used to attack and undermine them; and
- (b) advise member societies of strategies to manage these attacks and report appropriately to the NCC.

**ACTION:** Article in NCC newsletter.

**Late Motion 10.**

**'Biodiversity Banking' and related issues**

*Submitted by South East Region Conservation Alliance*

This motion was merged with Motion 21 - '*Conservation of biodiversity on private lands: Tradeable Development Rights Scheme*'.

**Late Motion 11.**

**Updating mining legislation**

*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*

Moved: Anne Reeves                      Seconded: Gordon Limburg

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- (a) lobby the NSW Government to update the Mining Act as soon as possible, following up the Review of the Mining Act 1992 position paper released in June 2005; and further
- (b) seek removal of provisions whereby mining and quarrying activities override other legislation, including the exemption of licensing of groundwater extraction from the Water Management Act and the approval to intercept an aquifer by quarries and mines under the Water Management Act.

**Late Motion 12.**

**Port Botany**

*Submitted by Friends of Wollie Creek*

Moved: Judy Finlason                      Seconded: Fiona McCrossin

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to reverse its decision regarding the expansion of Port Botany and commence rational decentralised planning that utilises all four ports of NSW, where that does not lead to increased truck movements on roads.

**ACTION:** Letter to the Premier as a matter of urgency

**Late Motion 13.**

**Sydney Working Harbour**

*Submitted from the floor*

Moved: Judy Messer      Seconded: John Asquith

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call upon the NSW Government to reverse its decision to transfer commercial shipping associated activities from Sydney Harbour to Botany Bay, Port Kembla and Newcastle on the basis of:

- (a) the resultant destructive impacts on the Botany Bay ecosystem;
- (b) increased greenhouse gas emissions due to greatly expanded trucking activities between the Illawarra, Newcastle, Botany and Sydney; and
- (c) the loss of Sydney Working Harbour cultural heritage and economic value for tourism and other industries.

**Late Motion 14.**

**Regional planning process**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network*

Moved: John Asquith      Seconded: Frances Bray

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the State Government to ensure that the regional planning process is an open, transparent and accountable process with full public consultation.

**Late Motion 15.**

**Cumberland Plain Vegetation Recovery Plan – Completion**

*Submitted by Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society*

Moved: Lorraine Cairnes      Seconded: Jennie Minifie

The following motion was carried:

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW make urgent representations to the Premier and Minister for the Environment concerning the need to finalise and adopt the Cumberland Plain Vegetation Recovery Plan, noting that this has been promised for several years and that the Recovery Plan is an essential component of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.