



**Nature Conservation Council**

The voice for nature in NSW

## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017**

**Saturday & Sunday  
28th & 29th October, 2017**

**Redfern Town Hall  
73 Pitt Street, Redfern**

## **MINUTES**

Download extra copies of Business Papers at: [www.nature.org.au/about/governance/annual-conferences](http://www.nature.org.au/about/governance/annual-conferences)

## **EXECUTIVE 2016-2017**

**Chairperson:** Prof. Don White

**Vice-Chairperson & Minutes Secretary:** Megan Kessler

**Hon. Secretary:** Gabrielle Appleby

**Hon. Treasurer:** Ben Pearson

**Public Officer:** Robert Pallin

- Gabrielle Appleby
- Jamie Hanson
- Cilla Kinross (Western representative)
- Megan Kessler
- Suzanne Milthorpe
- Jim Morrison (Northern representative)
- Simon Nicholas
- Annie Nielsen
- Robert Pallin
- Ben Pearson
- Jane Smith
- Prof. Don White

## **EXECUTIVE ELECTION 2017**

The Executive election was held on Sunday 29 October. There were thirteen nominees for twelve available positions. The Returning Officer declared the following candidates duly elected:

- Gabrielle Appleby
- Harry Burkitt
- Kate da Costa
- Cilla Kinross
- Franziska Mey
- Suzanne Milthorpe
- Jim Morrison
- Simon Nicholas
- Annie Nielsen
- Rob Pallin
- Ben Pearson
- Prof. Don White

The unsuccessful candidate was Jamie Hanson.

## 2017 Annual Conference Agenda

### Threats and Opportunities—Climate change and Nature in NSW

Day 1: Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> October

- 8.45 am      **REGISTRATION OPENS**
- 9.15 am      **WELCOME TO COUNTRY**
- 9.20 am      **ANNUAL CONFERENCE OPENING** (Chair)
- 9.30 am      **CEO REPORT**
- 9.45 am      **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: How the law needs to change to better protect nature**  
Sue Higginson, former CEO of Environmental Defender's Office NSW
- 10.15 am     **Morning tea**
- 10.45 am     **WORKSHOPS (3x facilitated workshops)**
1. **Changes in land clearing laws and what they mean for nature**  
Emily Ryan, Outreach Director - Professional Programs,  
Environmental Defender's Office NSW  
Daisy Barham, Campaigns Director, NCC
  2. **Crowdfunding for your next campaign**  
Elliot Chapple, Managing Director, Pozible
  3. **Open spaces** featuring workshop on proposed NCC policy on the  
*Steady State Economy*, chaired by Haydn Washington, CASSE NSW.
- 12.00 pm     **ADDRESS: The importance of diversity in the environment movement**  
Tim Lo Surdo, Founding Director, Democracy in Colour
- 12.30 pm     **LUNCH**  
Breakout – NCC welcome for new members
- 1.30 pm      **ADDRESS: Repowering NSW with renewable energy: the campaign to go 100% renewable**  
Dr Brad Smith, Senior Climate and Energy Campaigner, NCC

- 2.00 pm      WORKSHOPS (3x facilitated workshops)**
- 1. How to get coverage in a changing media landscape**  
Alison Orme, Communications Director, The Sunrise Project
  - 2. Running the Repower campaign in your community**  
Jacqui Mumford, Network Organiser, NCC
  - 3. Running the Repower campaign in your community**  
Jacqui Mumford, Network Organiser, NCC
  - 4. Open spaces** featuring workshop on proposed NCC policy on the *Steady State Economy*, chaired by Haydn Washington, CASSE NSW.
- 3.15 pm      Afternoon tea**
- 3.30 pm      Panel discussion: What nature needs from the next term of Government**  
Kristina Photios, Conservatives for Conservation  
Felicity Wade, Labor Environment Action Network  
moderated by Kate Smolski, CEO, NCC
- 4.30 pm      Wrap up and conference photo!**
- 5.00 pm      NSW Environment Awards Ceremony** - Presented by Goldman Prize winner Wendy Bowman
- 7.00pm      DINNER for delegates, staff & guests**

## 2017 Annual Conference Agenda

### Day 2: Sunday 29th October

- 8.45 am**      **REGISTRATION OPENS**
- 9.00 am**      **DAY 2 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OPENING**  
Welcome & apologies  
Agenda for the day (Chair)
- 9.15 am**      **REPORTS**  
Chair, Treasurer; Discussion and Questions
- 9.45 am**      **BUSINESS MOTIONS (Chair)**
- 11.00 am**     **Morning tea**
- 11.30 am**     **ADDRESS: Penny Sharpe**  
Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage
- 12.00 pm**     **ELECTION OF NCC EXECUTIVE FOR 2017-2018**
- 12.30 pm**     **ADDRESS: Mehreen Faruqi**  
Environment Spokesperson for NSW Greens
- 1.00 pm**      **LATE & CARRIED OVER MOTIONS, & GENERAL BUSINESS (Chair)**
- 1.30 pm**      **CLOSING ADDRESS (CEO)**

## **LIST OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE MOTIONS**

### **A. Council Affairs**

1. Admission of New Member Societies
2. Election of Executive Councillors at the Annual Conference  
*Submitted by the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Inc.*

### **B. Planning and Development**

1. Western Sydney Airport – it's not a done deal  
*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*
2. The EPA Board  
*Submitted by the Community Environment Network Inc.*
3. The Murray-Darling Basin Plan  
*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*

### **C. Climate Change & Energy**

1. Carbon spin: thermal power stations  
*Submitted by the Community Environment Network Inc.*
2. Renewable energy targets
3. Construction of baseload solar thermal power stations  
*Submitted by ParraCAN*
4. Electric car charging spots for NSW car parks  
*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc.*

### **D. POLICY: STEADY STATE ECONOMY**

*Submitted by the Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy NSW and Sustainable Population Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.*

### **E. Biodiversity Conservation**

1. Reject development on Riverlands Golf Course site  
*Submitted by Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.*
2. REVISED FLYING-FOX POLICY 2017  
*Submitted by the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.*

### **F. Forestry Issues**

1. Forests For All  
*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*

### **G. National Parks, Wilderness, Protected & Natural Areas**

1. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service  
*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*
2. Don't raise Warragamba Dam wall
3. Reject horse riding in wilderness

4. Reject Perisher development  
*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*
5. The Great Koala National Park
6. The Murray Valley National Park
7. Mining in Schedule 1 Special Areas – Dendrobium Mine  
*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*
8. The Gardens of Stone – a transition plan for Lithgow  
*Submitted by The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*
9. Leave Radiata Plateau Wild!  
*Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.*
10. No infrastructure in national parks  
*Submitted by The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*
11. Support for Royal National Park World Heritage nomination  
*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc.*
12. No Way! F6 Freeway expansion through Royal National Park  
*Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW Inc. & Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc.*

# ATTENDANCE 2017

## **MEMBER SOCIETY DELEGATES & OBSERVERS**

### **Australian Conservation Foundation – Central Coast**

John Wiggin

### **Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd**

Margery Street

### **Australian Wildlife Society**

Patrick Medway<sup>†</sup>

### **Bankstown Bushland Society**

Skye Virgin

### **BeardsOn for Conservation**

James Stanton-Cooke

Jessica Clarke

### **Better Planning Network**

Merrill Witt

### **Blue Mountains Conservation Society**

Heather Hull

### **Bushwalking NSW**

Alex Allchin

Sierra Classen

### **Byles Creek Valley Union**

Emma Heyde

### **Castlecrag Conservation Society**

Mark Crew

### **Central West Environment Council**

Cilla Kinross\*<sup>†</sup>

### **Centre for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy (CASSE) NSW**

Haydn Washington

### **Climate Change Balmain Rozelle**

Ben Pearson\*<sup>†</sup>

### **Community Environment Network**

Jane Smith\*

John Asquith



**Community Power Agency**

Franziska Mey

**Cumberland Bird Observers Club**

Catherine Goswell

**Friends of Berowra Valley**

Robert Salt<sup>†</sup>

**Friends of Malabar Headland**

Claire Bettington

**Goulburn Field Naturalists Society**

Mark Selmes<sup>†</sup>

**Green Shareholders**

Prof. Don White\*

**Hawkesbury Environment Network**

Jade Paton

**Invasive Species Council**

Andrew Cox

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

Maryanne Large

**Lake Wollumboola Protection Association**

Frances Bray<sup>†</sup>

**Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society**

Shauna Forrest

Ron Gornall

Helen Jordan

Doug Stuart

Frances Vissel<sup>†</sup>

**Linnean Society of NSW**

Michele Cotton<sup>†</sup>

Helen Smith<sup>†</sup>

**Mosman Parks & Bushland Association Inc.**

Yolande Stone

**Mountain Districts Association**

John Edye

**National Parks Association of NSW Inc.**

Alix Goodwin<sup>†</sup>

Brian Everingham

Anne Reeves

**Nature Coast Marine Group**

William Barker<sup>†</sup>

**North Coast Environment Council**

Jim Morrison\*<sup>†</sup>

**Parks and Playground Movement**

Doug Lithgow<sup>†</sup>

**ParraCAN (Parramatta Climate Action Network)**

Annie Nielsen\*<sup>†</sup>

**Ryde-Gladesville Climate Change Action Group**

Jill Hartley<sup>†</sup>

**Save Cliefden Caves Association**

Harry Burkitt<sup>†</sup>

**Saving Sydneys Trees**

Helen Armstrong

Kathleen Hennessey

**STEP Inc**

Nancy Pallin<sup>†</sup>

**Sustainable Population Australia**

Nola Stewart

**Sutherland Shire Environment Centre**

Jenni Gormley

**The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd**

Keith Muir<sup>†</sup>

**The David G Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation of Australia**

David Stead

**The Wilderness Society Newcastle**

Suzanne Milthorpe\*<sup>†</sup>

**Total Environment Centre**

Corinne Fisher

Gabrielle Appleby\*<sup>†</sup>

**Willoughby Environmental Protection Association**

Meredith Foley

## **EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR DELEGATES**

Gabrielle Appleby\* †  
Cilla Kinross (Western Regional representative)\* †  
Suzanne Milthorpe\* †  
Jim Morrison (Northern Regional representative)\* †  
Simon Nicholas  
Annie Nielsen\* †  
Ben Pearson\* †  
Jane Smith\*  
Prof. Don White\*

## **Member Groups with Proxy Votes**

Australia New Guinea Fishes Association Inc: *Helen Smith & Michele Cotton*  
Climate Change Australia - Hastings Branch: *Ben Pearson*  
FROGS Landcare Inc: *Mark Selmes*  
Friends of the Koala Inc: *Patrick Medway*  
Hornsby Conservation Society Inc: *Robert Salt*  
Hunter Environment Lobby Inc: *Suzanne Milthorpe*  
Invasive Species Council Inc: *Alix Goodwin*  
Jervis Bay Regional Alliance Inc: *Frances Bray*  
Mudgee District Environment Group Inc: *Cilla Kinross*  
Nature Coast Marine Group: *William Barker*  
No Badgerys Creek Airport Inc: *Keith Muir*  
NSW Wildlife Council: *Nancy Pallin*  
PACTEC Inc. (Pikapene & Cherry Tree Environment Centre): *Jim Morrison*  
Ryde Environment Group: *Jill Hartley*  
Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society Inc: *Frances Vissell*  
Save Our Rail NSW Inc: *Doug Lithgow*  
The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd: *Harry Burkitt*  
Tweed Climate Action Now: *Annie Nielsen*

## **Apologies**

Jamie Hanson (*Executive*)  
Megan Kessler (*Executive*)  
Rob Pallin (*Executive*)  
Noel Plumb, *Chipbusters*  
Lorraine Vass, *Friends of the Koala Inc.*  
Janine Kitson, *Friend of Ku-ring-gai Environment*

## Notes:

(\*) Indicates an Executive Councillor who is attending as a delegate for a member society.  
(†) Denotes delegates who held a proxy vote for their own or another member society.

**RETURNING OFFICER**

Bruce Diekman

**NCC REPRESENTATIVE**

Adrian Davey

**GUEST SPEAKERS, PRESENTERS & WORKSHOP FACILITATORS**

Wendy Bowman, *The Goldman Environmental Prize 2017 recipient*

Dr Mehreen Faruqi, *NSW Greens spokesperson for the Environment*

Sue Higginson, *former CEO of the Environmental Defender's Office NSW*

Tim Lo Surdo, *Founding Director, Democracy in Colour*

Uncle Chicka Madden, *Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council*

Penny Sharpe, *Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage*

Dr Brad Smith, *Senior Climate and Energy Campaigner, NCC*

**Keynote Panel: What nature needs from the next term of government**

Kristina Photios, *Conservatives for Conservation*

Felicity Wade, *Labor Environment Action Network*

**Workshop speakers and facilitators:**

Elliot Chapple, *Pozible*

Jacqui Mumford, *Network Organiser, NCC*

Alison Orme, *The Sunrise Project*

Emily Ryan, *Environmental Defender's Office (NSW)*

Haydn Washington, *NSW Chapter of the Centre for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy*

**STAFF**

Kate Smolski, *CEO*

Daisy Barham, *Campaigns Director*

Dr Brad Smith, *Senior Climate and Energy Campaigner*

Jacqui Mumford, *Network Organiser*

Marnie Frost, *Philanthropy and Major Donor Officer*

Queene Ostria, *Accounts and Administration Officer*

**VOLUNTEERS**

Angela Gormley

John Huang

Belinda Kitchin

William Tsang

Weijia (Bean) Weng

Amber Wu

***VISITORS, GUESTS & FRIENDS***

Ireen Allanson  
Mark Berriman  
Phil Bradley  
Deb Collins  
Mark da Silva  
Rachel Day  
Anne Dickson  
Peter Drinkall  
Kevin Evans  
Keith Hart  
Roger Lembit  
Warren Moss  
Cita Murphy  
Ellie Robertson  
Anastasia Sim  
Mark Simpson  
Robert Skappel  
Ian Tanner  
Mike Thompson  
John Vonwiller  
Graeme Wiffen

# Motions for Annual Conference 2017

## A. COUNCIL AFFAIRS

### Motion 2017/A1

#### Admission of new Member Societies

*Submitted by the Executive*

**THAT** the Conference confirm the admission to membership of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the organisations listed below, whose membership applications were accepted and approved by the Executive from October 2016 to September 2017:

- Australia New Guinea Fish Association Inc.
- BeardsOn for Conservation Inc.
- Cattai Hills Environmental Network
- Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy NSW
- Kogarah Bay Progress Association
- Mountain Districts Association
- Nature Coast Marine Group
- Residents Against Western Sydney Airport
- Save Our Rail NSW Inc.
- Save Sydney's Trees
- Shoalhaven Transition Inc.
- Starfish Initiatives
- Stop CSG Illawarra
- Surfrider Foundation Australia
- Tighes Hill Community
- Wando Conservation and Cultural Centre

*Moved: Don White*

*Seconded: Gabrielle Appleby*

*CARRIED*

## **Motion 2017/A2**

### **Election of Executive Councillors at the Annual Conference**

*Submitted by the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) adopt procedures in relation to candidates standing for Executive election at the Annual Conference, so that relevant information, as required and defined by the Constitution in relation to their candidacy, is provided by them a month before the Annual Conference, so that this information can be included in the Business Papers circulated prior to the Conference, namely:

- candidate nomination forms;
- background information; and
- confirmation of membership of an NCC member group.

**AND THAT** NCC appoint a Returning Officer at that time to oversee this process.

*Moved: Frances Vissell*

*Seconded: Ron Gornall*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** This will enable members to consider candidate information well before the Conference, and for the attending delegates to make better informed decisions when voting in the Executive election. Presently candidate information is displayed during the first day and morning of the second day of the Conference when there is very little time to study these properly.

In our experience circulating the information beforehand is usual practice for many organisations and should be adopted by NCC.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to adopt this 'procedure' as per the motion. The Executive to review this process and the Constitution in this regard.

## **B. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Motion 2017/B1**

#### **Western Sydney Airport – it's not a done deal**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose plans for a Western Sydney Airport due to unacceptable social, environmental and economic costs and request immediate termination of project investment, planning and development.

*Moved: John Asquith*

*Seconded: David Stead*

*CARRIED (as amended 27 votes to 9)*

**BACKGROUND:** Construction of the Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek would cause increased deaths from air pollution, replace the natural quiet of Blue Mountains wilderness areas with 24-hour a day aircraft noise, damage World Heritage values and unfairly disadvantage Western Sydney communities.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Prime Minister with copies to the Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Federal Minister for Environment and Energy, as well as the Federal Opposition Leader, Shadow Ministers for the Environment and Infrastructure, as per the motion.

## **Motion 2017/B2**

### **The EPA Board**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network Inc.*

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

- a) call on the NSW government to undertake an immediate independent review of the performance of the current EPA Board, and replace it with a Board comprised entirely of people with expertise in waste management, forestry compliance, environmental protection and remediation and public health, and include representation from stakeholder groups including the Nature Conservation Council of NSW; and
- b) **THAT** this review report to the government and public within 12 months on plans to correct the failures identified below.

*Moved: John Asquith*

*Seconded: Jane Smith*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The EPA Board has failed to carry out its functions as outlined in Section 16 of the POEA Act 1991, which include to:

- determine the EPA's policies and long-term [strategic plans](#);
- oversee management of the EPA;
- determine when the EPA should prosecute for serious environment protection offences under the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*;
- produce [guidelines](#) about criminal prosecutions and related legal proceedings;
- advise the NSW Minister for the Environment on any matter relating to the protection of the environment; and
- provide the NSW Minister for the Environment with an [annual statement](#) about its performance as the leading NSW environmental regulator.

The failures of the EPA Board are demonstrated in their Annual Reports, Media (an August 7 4 Corners TV program) and records of previous illegal dumping cases for Tier 1 Offences in the Land and Environment Court.

In addition, the EPA has:

- not prosecuted anyone for causing serious harm to the environment (Tier 1 Offences) in the past 5 years;
- allowed illegal dumping to flourish;
- not acted on dumping waste from NSW in Queensland;
- ignored the collapse in recycling rates, with no planning, support or strategies;
- allowed a culture of misleading information and spin to be foisted on the public;



- tolerated and attempted to cover up poor behaviour by staff;
- attacked and marginalised anyone who complained;
- kept information secret with no real transparency;
- issued letters of support to significant polluters; and
- paid out huge grants to the recycling industry despite massive waste stockpiles.

There are two significant examples on the Central Coast:

- **The Hawkesbury River at Spencer**, where the illegal dumping of an estimated 20,000 tonnes of waste, including asbestos, occurred on wetlands and mangroves on the edge of the river. The landowner was charged \$506 for administration costs and issued with a stop work order in 2016. There has been no prosecution, no clean up and no remediation.
- **Mangrove Mountain Golf Course dump**, where the EPA allowed nearly 1 million tonnes of waste to be dumped for \$280,000 to be used for reshaping the golf course. The licensed dump area has been poorly managed, with unknown leachate entering the drinking water catchment and nearly 3 million tonnes proposed to be dumped in the next 10 years.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the NSW Government as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/B3**

#### **The Murray-Darling Basin Plan**

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

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the Prime Minister to:

- a) establish a Judicial Inquiry into the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and management of water across all jurisdictions in the Basin;
- b) ensure the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is balanced and independent; and
- c) honour the spirit of the bi-partisan *Water Act 2007*, in keeping with the Objects of the Act as set out, by delivering a Plan for the Murray-Darling Basin that establishes a scientifically rigorous, sustainable diversion limit;

**AND** call on the Premier of NSW to ensure that state water resources are managed in an open and equitable manner to safeguard environmental as well as social and economic outcomes, including those in the national interest as set out in the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007* with respect to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and rules in NSW water sharing plans to protect environmental water from extraction.

*Moved: Anne Reeves*

*Seconded: David Stead*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The Nature Conservation Council and its members have engaged in the establishment and implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan since the need for improved water management became evident during the Millennium Drought. Recent revelations on ABC programs *Four Corners* and *Lateline* and in other media outlets have exposed systemic problems with the management of water resources in the Murray-Darling Basin, including industry and political interference, water theft, and lack of monitoring, metering and compliance.

A successful Basin Plan is under threat through biased implementation and compromise that weakens the capacity to improve the health of rivers and wetlands.

The political influence of the irrigation industry is damaging the environmental outcomes of the Plan and threatening the livelihood of other industries (e.g. floodplain grazing, tourism, recreational fishing), the health and well-being of Aboriginal communities and cultural values, and the future of downstream communities (e.g. small towns below Bourke on the Darling River).

A scientifically rigorous sustainable diversion limit, that takes into consideration climate change predictions, will ensure a fair outcome for the environment and all stakeholders in the Basin.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Prime Minister and to the Premier, referring to past NCC submissions and the recent Matthews report, emphasising not only the need for improved water management processes and transparency, but also the political will to drive successful outcomes.

## **C. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY**

### **Motion 2017/C1**

#### **Carbon spin: thermal power stations**

*Submitted by the Community Environment Network Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW take steps to educate the public, politicians and media in relation to deceptive terms used to describe carbon emissions from thermal power stations:

- clean coal technologies;
- high efficiency coal;
- low carbon coal; and
- a range of other misleading and deceptive terms being used to create a false impression that carbon emissions from thermal power stations can be reduced significantly.

*Moved: John Asquith*

*Seconded: Margery Street*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Language used in relation to closing coal-fired power stations in parliamentary debates and in some sections of the media and the mining industry is misleading and deceptive. There are plenty of examples being bandied about, including:

- Clean coal technologies can include high ash coal and sulphur scrubbers (with no reduction in ash);
- Changing the methods of measuring stack emissions (e.g. not using long-term average results, instead using 3-monthly spot tests with low-ash coal);
- Burning native timbers and coal in the boilers;
- Installing solar panels on coal fired power stations and claiming the combined total output as being from efficient coal; and
- Terms like *dispatchable base load power* (an oxymoron – it's either 'dispatchable' or 'base load').

It is also impossible to make coal combustion much more efficient as boilers are already around 96%+ efficient.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the industry regulator regarding misleading reporting and publish 'plain English' info on 'clean coal' on-line.

### **Motion 2017/C2**

#### **Renewable energy targets**

*Submitted by ParraCAN*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the appropriate NSW ministers to urge that the state government have its own clean, reliable, renewable energy targets of at least 30% by 2020, 65% by 2025 and 100% by 2030, and not just aim for the same inadequate targets that the Federal Government has.

*Moved: Annie Nielsen*

*Seconded: Jim Morrison*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Most other states have their own targets, e.g. the ACT has a 100% target by 2020, and in June 2016, the Victorian Government committed to renewable energy generation targets of 25% by 2020 and 40 % by 2025.

NSW targets could be largely funded by the state government reversing its proposed 80% funding cuts to the NSW climate change fund. In 2014/15 this fund allocated \$214 million, but forward estimate provisions for "accelerating advanced energy" are only up to \$40 million per year for the next five years. The race is on for storage solutions that can help provide secure, reliable electricity supply as more renewables enter Australia's electricity grid.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to relevant NSW ministers as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/C3**

#### **Construction of baseload solar thermal power station, recommending the decommissioned Wallerawang Power Station near Lithgow**

*Submitted by ParraCAN*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the NSW Government, within a timeline 2 years, to prioritise construction of a publicly-owned, commercial-scale,

baseload solar thermal power station with storage of 500 MW generating capacity, recommending that the site be the decommissioned Wallerawang Power Station near Lithgow.

*Moved: Annie Nielsen*

*Seconded: Jill Hartley*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Now that the SA government has commissioned the construction of their first solar thermal power station, it is important that NSW be the second state to show it's serious about increasing baseload renewable energy and that it can no longer rely on ageing coal-fired power stations which will be too expensive to maintain and too prohibitive to build more of. As the second and third solar thermal power plants in Australia, NSW solar thermal power stations would be cheaper than the Port Augusta plant. Others following will be cheaper still.

NSW has around 20,000 megawatts (MW) of installed electricity generation capacity (including many small generators and rooftop PV systems). Interconnectors with Queensland and Victoria provide additional capacity of about 1,100 MW and 1,500 MW respectively (<http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/energy-sources/electricity/electricity-generation>). To achieve 100% clean renewable energy by 2030, NSW will need to replace approximately 1.5 GW of fossil fuel power per year with renewables.

The decommissioned Wallerawang Power Station near Lithgow is recommended as the most suitable site as it has the availability of adjacent land and immediately accessible infrastructure.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to relevant NSW ministers as per the motion.

#### **Motion 2017/C4**

##### **Electric car charging spots for NSW car parks**

*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc.*

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

- a) the appropriate NSW ministers to ensure all existing car parking lots and structures be required to install a minimum of 10 electric car charging points per 300 spaces; and that 1 electric car charging point per 10 car spaces be required for all new parking structures; and
- b) the NSW Government to introduce legislation enforcing the installation of solar panels on all new large structures, such as car parking stations, to provide direct solar power for EV charging points.

*Moved: Jenni Gormley*

*Seconded: Keith Muir*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Electric vehicles (EVs) are being sold in increasingly larger numbers. Over 750,000 new EVs were registered worldwide in 2016 and the International Energy Agency is forecasting 9-20 million EVs to be in use globally by 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Replacement of all combustion engine vehicles with EVs would eliminate at least 6% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, EVs will benefit Australia by providing greater energy security, decreasing the demand for imported oil and playing an important role in future grid reliability. It is therefore important that Australia prepare for this shift by ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is in place to allow charging of EVs with green electricity. Norway leads the world in EV ownership and usage with 29% of market share<sup>2</sup> so it is valuable to emulate their 2020 recommendations which require one public charging station for every 10 EVs<sup>3</sup>.

1. <https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/GlobalEVOutlook2017.pdf>
2. <http://bze.org.au/electric-vehicles-report/>
3. <http://elbil.no/english/norwegian-ev-policy/>

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write letters to the NSW Government as per the motion.

## **D. POLICY: STEADY STATE ECONOMY**

*Submitted by the Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy NSW and Sustainable Population Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW adopt the following ‘Steady State Economy’ policy.

### **Introduction**

The Nature Conservation Council (as the ‘Voice for Nature’ in NSW) strives for Government to aim at policy which serves both people in communities and the natural world. Such aims, as advanced in a steady state economy, show how we can develop a society that can flourish within ecological limits. We believe our economy must serve society and operate within the limits of the Earth. This policy affirms that NCC believes:

- The Earth is finite, hence physical growth cannot continue forever. While this may be obvious, it is also denied by many neoclassical economists who advise government.
- Humanity has exceeded ecological limits, as noted by: the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; the Global Ecological Footprint; the Living Planet Index; and extinction predictions by 2100 that range from *half to two thirds* of all multicellular life (see background for details).
- In regard to population, NCC in its ‘Ecologically Sustainable Population and Nature’ policy notes:

*Human population and consumption must thus be kept within limits that allow natural ecosystems to flourish into the future ... There are limits to both population and consumption, beyond which the life support systems of the Earth degrade, ecosystems collapse, species extinction escalates and essential ecosystem services decline. These limits are being exceeded globally and within Australia.*

Hence our economy must reflect and address concerns for both overpopulation and overconsumption.

- Inequality of income is currently increasing rapidly around the world, as reflected by a rising Gini Coefficient. This is having both negative social effects, but also likely negative environmental effects.

## POLICY

Accordingly, NCC believes that neoclassical economics is fundamentally *unsustainable*, and that the human economy must operate within ecological limits. Hence it supports *ecological economics*. Further:

- Within ecological economics, NCC supports in particular the *steady state economy* that is based on three principles:
  - A sustainable population size for the carrying capacity of its region,
  - Low resource use,
  - A distribution of wealth which is fair and equitable on an intergenerational basis.
- Within ecological economics, NCC also supports a transitional period to a steady state economy.
- Within ecological economics, NCC accepts that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a poor indicator of how our society is truly progressing. NCC supports alternative indicators such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and other relevant indicators. NCC accordingly believes that the Australian Bureau of Statistics should report GPI per capita *as well as* GDP per capita.

Moved: Haydn Washington

Seconded: Nola Stewart

CARRIED

**BACKGROUND:** The Nature Conservation Council (like all environment groups) faces a major problem – society’s endless growth (neoclassical) economy is trashing the world. As such NCC cannot sit by and ignore this fundamental driver of unsustainability – it needs a policy on a sustainable alternative, the steady state economy.

It is obvious to anyone seeing a picture of the Earth from space that it is *finite*. Clearly nothing can grow physically forever on a finite planet. However, neoclassical economics insists we can. The world’s GDP increased by an astounding 25-fold over the last century (Dietz and O’Neill, 2013). Concurrently, environmental science tells us irrefutably that humanity has exceeded ecological limits, hence we have a major and worsening environmental crisis. This was pointed out by the prestigious Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA, 2005). It is clearly shown by a Global Ecological Footprint of 1.6 Earths (GFN, 2017), and by the Living Planet Index which has dropped by 50% since 1970 (WWF, 2014). If society continues along this path, then by this century’s end we may cause the extinction of a half (Wilson, 2003) to two thirds (Raven et al, 2011) of *all multi-cellular life*.

Traditional neoclassical economics is the dominant form of economics for Australia and most of the world. This *does not accept limits* (to population or resource use), denies the Laws of Thermodynamics, believes we can substitute human-made capital for natural capital (despite the mass extinctions this would cause), ignores issues of inequality, and sees

environmental damage as *merely an 'externality'* to business. Endless growth economics is the driver stopping society reaching sustainability.

As the NCC is the 'Voice for Nature' in NSW, it is incumbent upon us to seek to change society's worldview away from an anthropocentric Modernist worldview (where nature is just a 'resource') and towards an eco-centric worldview that accepts ecological limits, and where humanity is seen as part of nature, and has a responsibility for its care (as indicated in its 'Intrinsic value of nature' policy). Such ethics should also be reflected in society's economics.

As many environmental scientists and scholars note, the endless growth economy of neoclassical economics is not (and cannot be) sustainable. Indeed, it is the cause of the current environmental crisis (Daly, 2014). Neoclassical economics is built on a number of unsustainable assumptions (Washington, 2014a):

- 1) Strong *anthropocentrism*. Nature is seen as 'just a resource' to be used to provide the greatest 'utility' to the greatest number of people (Daly, 2014).
- 2) The idea that the *free market* will control all that is needed, that the 'invisible hand' will regulate things for human benefit (Daly, 1991). Of course the free market needs regulation to protect nature.
- 3) The idea that the economy can *grow forever* in terms of continually rising GDP, with associated environmental impact. 'Decoupling' (as suggested by UNEP and others) is never absolute (Victor and Jackson, 2015).
- 4) The *refusal to accept any biophysical limits to growth*, for when classical economics was developed, limits were distant (Daly, 1991). Today we have exceeded ecological limits so that 60% of ecosystem services are degrading (MEA, 2005).
- 5) A *circular theory of production* causing consumption that causes production in a never-ending cycle. Daly (1991) notes that real production and consumption are in *no way circular*.
- 6) Neoclassical economics *ignores the Second Law of Thermodynamics* and fails to consider 'entropy' as a key feature of economics and reality (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971; Daly, 1991).
- 7) Environmental damage is *merely an 'externality'*. Externalities are costs or benefits arising from an economic activity that affects somebody *other* than the people engaged in it, and are not reflected fully in prices. Environmental damage is known as a 'negative externality', something external to the economic model and is seen by neoclassical economics as being worth only 'peripheral attention' (Daly and Cobb, 1994).
- 8) All forms of *capital can be substituted*, thus human capital can be substituted for natural capital ('weak sustainability', Daly and Cobb, 1994). This assumes we can replace ecosystem services and the biodiversity that supports our societies with human-made capital. This is a recipe for ecocide (as is occurring) (Washington, 2015).

From the viewpoint of environmental science and ethics, the above assumptions are actually absurd, unethical and unsustainable (Washington 2014b, 2015), yet they underlie the neoclassical economic synthesis that currently dominates economics. However, many



scholars (scientists, ethicists and some economists) have rebelled against this unsustainable economics that is the root cause of the environmental crisis (Daly 1991, 1996; Dietz and O’Neill 2010, Washington and Twomey, 2016). They point out the need for *ecological economics*, which acknowledges the ecological limits of the planet, and which considers interactions between economic systems and ecological systems (Common and Stagl, 2005). Faber (2008) explains that ecological economics is defined by its focus on nature, justice, and time. Issues of intergenerational equity, irreversibility of environmental change, uncertainty of long-term outcomes, and sustainability guide ecological economics. Within ecological economics, the sustainable alternative is the *steady state economy* (developed by Herman Daly) that is based on three principles:

- A sustainable population size for the carrying capacity of its region,
- Low resource use,
- A distribution of wealth which is fair and equitable on an intergenerational basis.

This thus addresses the key causes of the environmental crisis, overpopulation, overconsumption of resources, and the growth economy, plus a key cause of social unsustainability – inequality of income (Washington, 2015). Daly (1990) lists three rules we should apply to help define the sustainable limits to material and energy throughput:

- For a *renewable resource* (soil, water, forest, fish, etc.), the sustainable rate of use can be no greater than the rate of regeneration of its source.
- For a *non-renewable* resource (fossil fuel, high grade mineral ore, fossil groundwater, etc.), the sustainable rate of use can be no greater than the rate at which a renewable resource (used sustainably) can be substituted for it.
- For a *pollutant*, the sustainable rate of emission can be no greater than the rate at which that pollutant can be recycled, absorbed, or rendered harmless in its ecosystem ‘sink’ (where it ends up).

While other economies ranked under ecological economics (such as UNEPs green economy, the circular economy) may to some address the resource use issue, and while the sharing economy may assist with inequality, only the steady state economy *combines all three* (Washington, 2017).

Inequality of income is getting worse, and this is causing serious social problems (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010) as well arguably as damaging biodiversity (Islam, 2015). Increasing inequality is tracked by the Gini coefficient ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini\\_coefficient](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient)). A sustainable economy would reduce inequality, as the steady state economy aims to (Stillwell, 2016). Another term increasingly spoken of is the need for ‘degrowth’ (Perey, 2016). This acknowledges that the scale of the world economy is already too big, causing major environmental impacts. Hence ecological economists generally agree (Daly, 2014) that there is need for a transitional degrowth to a steady state economy.

Given that people tend to value what they measure, there is a need for a better indicator to replace GDP, which increases with both what we think of as ‘good’ things (building a school or hospital) as well as with ‘bad’ things (spending money to control air pollution or restore degraded land). The best replacement suggested by ecological economists is the Genuine Progress Indicator or GPI (Lawn, 2016). The GPI assesses 26 variables related to economic, social, and environmental progress. Economic indicators include inequality and the cost of

unemployment. Environmental indicators include the cost of water pollution, air pollution, climate change, wetlands depletion, forest cover change, and non-renewable energy resources. Social indicators include the value of housework, higher education and volunteer work as well as the cost of commuting and crime. Specifically, the GPI reveals that much of what economists now consider economic 'growth', as measured by GDP, is really one of three things: 1) fixing blunders and social decay from the past; 2) borrowing resources from the future; or 3) shifting functions from the community and household realm to that of the monetized economy. The GPI strongly suggests that the costs of the nation's current economic trajectory have begun to outweigh the benefits, leading to growth that is actually **uneconomic** (see: <http://www.sustainwellbeing.net/gpi.html> ). The GPI is reported in the USA and Canada (and has been estimated by scholars for Australia in the past). However the Australian Bureau of Statistics, while it has recently updated its reporting system, refuses to report on the GPI (but easily could). The GPI is a much more balanced indicator of how our economy is tracking in terms of sustainability.

There are many positive steps we can take immediately to move to a steady state economy within many different parts of society, as shown in the book 'Positive Steps to a Steady State Economy' (Washington, 2017) available on the CASSE NSW website <https://steadystate.org.au/> . Direct link is [https://steadystate.org.au/files/2017/06/positive\\_steps\\_royal\\_11pt\\_just\\_header\\_final\\_june\\_12\\_the\\_book\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://steadystate.org.au/files/2017/06/positive_steps_royal_11pt_just_header_final_june_12_the_book_low_res.pdf)

[Draft Policy provided by Dr Haydn Washington, environmental scientist, former Director of NCC, Co-Director of CASSE NSW and author of *Addicted to Growth?* (Washington, 2014) and editor of *A Future Beyond Growth* and *Positive Steps to a Steady State Economy*].

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## E. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

### Motion 2017/E1

#### Reject development on Riverlands Golf Course site

*Submitted by Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.*

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

- a) Canterbury-Bankstown Council to reject the plan for residential housing on Riverlands Golf Course;
- b) the State Government to reverse its refusal of Canterbury-Bankstown Council's application for Environmental zoning.

*Moved: Skye Virgin*

*Seconded: Frances Vissell*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Last year the Department of Planning and Environment rejected Council's application for rezoning the Riverlands Golf Course site at Milperra from open space to E3 Environment Protection, instead rezoning it as Residential. The Development Application (DA) is now up for public comment. We are asking the newly elected Council to appeal the Residential zoning.

Residential development at Riverlands will destroy hundreds of significant trees and habitat hollows recommended for retention, and cause the destruction and/or fragmentation of Endangered Ecological Communities. These negative impacts, along with the lack of provision for accessible open space, renders the DA unsuitable for an area of such high conservation values. Added to this are concerns over stormwater impacts on adjacent wetlands that are breeding grounds for a wide range of wildlife, exacerbated by the fact that part of the residential zone is located within the 1:100-year flood zone. To sacrifice such an environmentally significant area to intensive urban development would be a backward step for the environment of Canterbury-Bankstown.

Riverlands exhibits a wide range of ecological attributes, including a succession of habitats from Holocene estuarine swamp forest, to Pleistocene coastal river-flat forest and wetland, as well as woodland on Tertiary sandy loam and remnant open forest on the Wianamatta shale rise, all of which are Endangered Ecological Communities. No better example of this transition exists in Bankstown. The development will destroy the greater part of the Wianamatta shale component of this important transition - the Statement of Environmental Effects takes no account of this. Many trees at Riverlands are of sufficient age to possess nesting hollows for birds and other wildlife. Riverlands possesses scores of these as a large amount of indigenous trees were left in situ during the golf course's construction in the 1930s and 40s. These trees provide habitat for a wide range of native wildlife, both vertebrate and invertebrate. Approval of the DA will guarantee their destruction.

The road access from the north will be particularly destructive, cutting through a forested corridor of remnant Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest, as well as a rare stand of Scribbly Gum Woodland on Tertiary sandy loam. Native vegetation at this location contains a range of locally rare shrub and ground cover flora. This is the only patch of Scribbly Gum Woodland on Tertiary alluvium in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA with representative shrub layer and ground cover flora. Three species, *Viola banksia*, *Selaginella uliginosa* and *Luzula flaccida*,

have their only known occurrence in Canterbury-Bankstown here. These and other species, are threatened with local extinction by the road and residential plan.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** As per the motion.

**Motion 2017/E2**

**REVISED FLYING-FOX POLICY 2017**

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

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW replace the 2010 Flying-fox Policy with the following updated Flying-fox Policy.

*Moved: Nancy Pallin*

*Seconded: Maryanne Large*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** Since the 2010 policy on flying-foxes was adopted by the NCC, there has been more research on the animals and improvements in some NSW Government policies and processes. There is, however, further progress needed in aspects such as protection and restoration of foraging habitat and camps, population monitoring and community education, before we can consider the species safe from population decline.

The revised policy highlights the importance of protecting foraging habitat for nomadic nectivores, including flying-foxes.

## **REVISED FLYING-FOX POLICY, 2017**

1. The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) recognises that mobile pollinators such as flying-foxes and birds provide essential ecosystem services to native forests, woodlands and heathlands in NSW.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Conservation and restoration of foraging habitat**

- 2.1 NCC recognises that populations of flying-foxes cannot be conserved in protected areas alone.
- 2.2 NCC calls on the NSW Government to arrest any further loss of native vegetation especially those species and communities which support mobile pollinators.
- 2.3 NCC recognises the urgent need to prioritise the conservation and restoration of winter and spring flowering species to conserve mobile pollinators.
- 2.4 NCC strongly supports the cessation of native timber extraction from NSW State Forests, which is contributing to loss of flying-fox foraging habitat and because it is heavily subsidised.

### **3. Flying-fox camps**

- 3.1 NCC strongly objects to the disturbance and dispersal of flying-fox camps on the grounds that the animals usually return to that site or move to a location nearby, because these sites provide access to food resources.
- 3.2 NCC supports the preparation of flying-fox camp management plans, provided the objective of the plan is to restore and increase the area of camp habitat to cater for fluctuations in numbers of flying-foxes and to ameliorate impacts on people where possible.
- 3.3 NCC urges that land adjacent to flying-fox camps is not sold, subdivided or developed for residential areas, schools or used for active sports, concerts, etc.
- 3.4 NCC supports the retention of buffer zones surrounding each flying-fox camp to avoid conflict between people and flying-foxes which is detrimental to communities, local councils and flying-foxes. Where the option still exists, limitations should be placed on developments that can occur within approximately 300 metres of flying-fox camps.

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1. See Appendix 1

- 3.5 NCC recognises that a flying-fox camp can be noisy, smelly and messy for people living or working close by, and recommends that assistance be made available to residents impacted by their proximity to a flying-fox camp in the form of partial grants for double glazing of windows, insulation to ameliorate noise impacts, and assistance for coping with flying-fox droppings in the form of car covers, sails over outdoor living areas, and for water pressure cleaning of pavements.
- 3.6 NCC recommends that both the NSW Government and Local Governments contribute to this approach to reduce conflict between people and flying-foxes.

(**Note:** partial subsidies to orchardists for installing netting have reduced the killing of flying-foxes).

#### **4. Shooting for crop protection**

NCC calls on the NSW Government to end all killing of flying-foxes in orchards, because there is no longer justification for issuing licences to shoot flying-foxes for orchard protection since orchardists had the opportunity to obtain subsidies to assist in the installation of exclusion netting.<sup>2</sup>

#### **5. Conservation status, monitoring, and recovery**

- 5.1 NCC supports the listing of the grey-headed flying-fox as a threatened species in NSW and by the Commonwealth, because the major threat of loss of foraging habitat continues.
- 5.2 **Population Monitoring**  
NCC supports the ongoing monitoring of flying-fox populations, especially the grey-headed flying-fox.
- 5.3 NCC supports research to improve monitoring methodology and the continuation of public reporting on the methods and results.
- 5.4 **Population Recovery**  
NCC calls on the Commonwealth Government and all 'range' State Governments to adopt and implement the Grey-headed Flying-fox Recovery Plan. This recovery plan was first drafted in 2006. A subsequent version was put on public exhibition in 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 2 summarises the progress in reducing shooting in orchards since the NSW Government provided partial subsidies for orchardists to install exclusion netting.

## **6. Community education**

- 6.1 NCC calls on the NSW Government to continue to provide advice and information about flying-foxes, other mobile pollinators and their habitat, which is scientifically based so that people can improve their understanding and appreciation of these native animals.
- 6.2 Information on flying-foxes provided on the Office of Environment and Heritage website has considerably improved in recent years, however, other avenues are needed to reach the wider community.
- 6.3 NCC recognises that health risks from flying-foxes are very low, however, public education must continue to remind people of the potential risks of Australian Bat Lyssavirus and Hendra Virus, how they are transmitted and how to avoid transmission.

## **7. Other threats to flying-foxes**

- 7.1 **Climate change**  
NCC strongly supports action to avoid dangerous climate change.
- 7.2 Flying-foxes suffer heat stress and death when air temperatures exceed 40<sup>0</sup>C, particularly when high temperatures occur with low humidity. Rates of mortality increase rapidly at temperatures above 43.5<sup>0</sup>C. The number of days per year of high temperatures is predicted to increase. As well as direct mortality, climate change will detrimentally impact the availability of the flowering and nectar production of diet plants for flying-foxes and other mobile pollinators.
- 7.2 **Electrocutions**  
NCC supports the avoidance of electrocution of flying-foxes by increasing the spacing between electrical cables when crosspieces are replaced, and the installation of insulated bundled cables near food trees.
- 7.3 **Entanglement in backyard netting**  
NCC supports the use of wildlife friendly netting to avoid the injury and death of flying-foxes.
- 7.4 **Entanglement in barbed wire**  
NCC supports the use of plain wire for the top strand of fences to avoid the injury or death of flying-foxes from entanglement in barbed wire.



## **SOURCES:**

### **Descriptions of flying-fox species**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/flyingfoxes.htm>

### **Planting to conserve threatened nomadic pollinators in NSW**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/planting-to-protect-threatened-nomadic-pollinators-in-nsw>

This document includes a comprehensive list of references on research.

### **Native forest logging**

R. Campbell & R. McKeown (2016) *Money Doesn't Grow on Trees*, the financial and economic losses of native forestry in NSW published by the Australia Institute.

### **Draft Recovery Plan for the Grey-headed Flying-fox**

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/recovery-plans/comment/draft-recovery-plan-grey-headed-flying-fox>

### **NSW Flying-fox Camp Management Policy**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/flyingfoxcampol.htm>

## APPENDIX 1

Extracts from the Summary in *Planting to Conserve Threatened Nomadic Pollinators in NSW*, available at: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/planting-to-protect-threatened-nomadic-pollinators-in-nsw>

Birds and mammals that feed primarily on nectar, listed as threatened in NSW:

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| Scientific name                     | Common name                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Birds</b>                        |                               |
| <i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>          | Regent Honeyeater             |
| <i>Certhionyx variegatus</i>        | Pied Honeyeater               |
| <i>Gavicalis fascicularis</i>       | Mangrove Honeyeater           |
| <i>Lichenostomus cratitius</i>      | Purple-gaped Honeyeater       |
| <i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i> | Black-chinned Honeyeater      |
| <i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i> | Purple-crowned Lorikeet       |
| <i>G. pusilla</i>                   | Little Lorikeet               |
| <i>Lathamus discolor</i>            | Swift Parrot                  |
| <b>Mammals</b>                      |                               |
| <i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>       | Grey-headed Flying-fox        |
| <i>Syconycteris australis</i>       | Common Blossom Bat            |
| <i>Cercartetus nanus</i>            | Eastern Pygmy Possum          |
| <i>Petaurus australis</i>           | Yellow-bellied Glider         |
| <i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>        | Squirrel Glider               |
| <i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>        | Squirrel Glider (Wagga Wagga) |
| <i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>        | Squirrel Glider (Barrenjoey)  |

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“Plant-pollinator mutualisms are fundamental to natural and agricultural systems. In Australia several species of native plants produce large volumes of nectar and pollen, with an unusually high proportion of plants pollinated by vertebrates.

Highly mobile vertebrate pollinators (birds and bats) disperse pollen over large areas during feeding bouts, promoting out-crossing and increasing genetic variation in the plants and plant populations they visit. This genetic variation builds ecological resilience in ecosystems, increasing their capacity to withstand or adapt to pressures from anthropogenic change. Long-distance pollen flow is particularly important in highly fragmented landscapes. It may also provide a mechanism to help long-lived eucalypts withstand the challenges of climate change.

The times and locations of flowering in eucalypts are relatively unpredictable. Nectar-feeding birds and bats move nomadically over long distances to maintain continuous access to productive habitat. These nomadic animals are vulnerable to loss of relatively small habitat areas – particularly those that provide resources at key times. These habitats cannot be conserved within general conservation programs as, for example, networks of protected areas: instead, they require sensitive management, including the restoration of areas outside reserve.”

## APPENDIX 2

The grey-headed flying-fox was listed in 2001 as a threatened species under the NSW Threatened Species Act and by the Commonwealth. Orchardists were required to obtain licences to cull flying-foxes and to report the species and number killed annually:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/flyingfoxes.htm>

An independent review of licensing policy for the legal harm (killing) of flying-foxes by the NSW Flying-fox Licensing Review Panel was released in 2009. It concluded that:

- the animal welfare issues arising from shooting flying-foxes are ethically and legally unacceptable;
- shooting is ineffective at reducing crop damage when large numbers of flying-foxes visit orchards. Full exclusion netting provides the most effective protection against flying-fox damage; and
- the NSW fruit-growing industry could rely solely on exclusion netting as the means of flying-fox crop damage mitigation.

Since 2011, the NSW Government, through the NSW Environmental Trust has provided grants to assist orchardists to protect their crops with netting and to phase out shooting. 708 hectares of netting (421.6 ha canopy type and 286.5 'throw over' type with a mesh aperture less than 5mm, which is required to be secured to prevent entanglement) have been installed through the scheme to July 31 2016. The total investment was \$7.1 million. Receipt of a subsidy precludes orchardists from applying for a culling licence at any time in the future.

Since 2015 licences to shoot flying-foxes as a fruit crop protection measure have only been issued in **special circumstances**. Some small to medium-sized enterprises which had been issued licences between 2001 and June 2014, are still being issued licences, with variations.

During the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fruit growing seasons, 6 licences were issued which authorised the culling of 872 grey-headed flying-fox. No other species of flying-fox were licensed for harm. The majority of licences for 2015–16 (three licences with 16 variations, or 90%), were issued in the Hawkesbury Area. Such killing of a threatened species is unacceptable on ecological grounds. Shot guns are used to shoot flying-foxes which results in slow deaths and death of young when a female is killed. The cruelty which occurs needs to stop.

Conditions of **special circumstances** are available at:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/s120licence.htm>

**Annual Report Commercial Crop Damage by Flying-foxes Licence Summary 2014–15 and 2015–16 Fruit Growing Seasons:**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/nature/flying-foxes-commercial-crop-damage-annual-report-170085.pdf>

### **APPENDIX 3**

Population monitoring of the grey-headed flying-fox has been undertaken across its range (Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia) since February 2013. The National Flying-fox Monitoring Program reports are available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/16393>

Concerns have been expressed by many scientists about the methodology being used to calculate the population of grey-headed flying-fox from the data collected at camps.

The November 2016 estimate for the total grey-headed flying-fox population was 447,000 animals and these were recorded from 134 active camps across the species range. The majority of the animals were in NSW (71%), with 22% in Qld, and 5% in Vic while SA and ACT had <1%. No massive camps (>50,000 grey-headed flying-foxes) were recorded during this survey, however several camps of more than 20,000 animals were recorded in the Northern Rivers of NSW and the Sydney region. Overall the average size of the occupied grey-headed flying-foxes camps was 3,700 animals, quite a lot smaller than the camp sizes encountered in recent surveys.

## F. FORESTRY ISSUES

### Motion 2017/F1

#### Forests For All

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

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

- a) support the National Parks Association's *Forests For All* plan and outline this support in a letter to the NSW Minister for the Environment and the Opposition Shadow Minister; and
- b) alert member groups to *Forests For All* with a request to those groups to which the plan is relevant to provide local support for implementing the plan.

*Moved: Alix Goodwin*

*Seconded: David Stead*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The coming years offer an historic opportunity to protect public native forests, the wildlife they support and the services they provide to the community. As the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) expire in the coastal forests of NSW, the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) is proposing an exit from industrial logging of public native forests, so that forests better deliver benefits to the entire community.

NPA's analysis, conducted in 2016, showed that the RFAs have failed in all of their aims. They have failed to protect forest species, drained our water supplies and reduced carbon stores. They have even failed in the aim of providing economic stability to forest industries: employment has steadily declined and logging is propped up via a range of State Government subsidies and hidden costs borne by ratepayers at local government level.

We want to protect forest wildlife, safeguard the benefits of forests to people and increase public access to forests so regional communities can flourish. We can achieve this by using our public native forests in a better, more inclusive way.

We're proposing that public native forests currently used primarily for timber extraction are protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* or as Indigenous Protected Areas in a reserve category that best considers the needs of local communities. This approach would simultaneously protect forests; accommodate recreation and nature-based tourism; provide increased opportunities for Indigenous people and ensure national parks and nature reserves—the jewels in the crown of protected areas—are protected from damaging development and activities.

NPA is working to build a broad alliance of conservation, recreation, tourism, health and community groups that will support *Forests For All*.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the NSW Minister for the Environment and the Opposition Shadow Minister as per the motion.

## **G. National Parks, Protected & Natural Areas**

### **Motion 2017/G1**

#### **The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**

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

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

- a) condemn the NSW Government for its 2017/18 Budget which has resulted in continuing funding reductions to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) further undermining its ability to protect and maintain national parks in NSW; and
- b) call on the Premier to:
  - provide leadership within her government on the value of caring for nature, including through a robust and well-resourced national park system, and the life support systems nature provides for human wellbeing;
  - transfer the management of marine parks to the NPWS with adequate resourcing; and
  - exempt NPWS from new NSW government branding guidelines which require all government agencies to use the Waratah as their logo.

*Moved: Brian Everingham*

*Seconded: David Stead*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) was established by the then Liberal Government in 1967 following successful lobbying by the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) and in October this year will celebrate 50 years of operation. The success of NPWS is evidenced by the number and size of national parks in NSW today; the public reserve system currently represents nearly 9% of NSW compared to just 1% at the time of NPWS establishment. The NSW Parks system has been recognised as one of the best in the world. Successive Governments, Liberal and Labor, have provided funding to ensure these parks are well managed with effective programs for pest species control and fire management.

NPA understands that NPWS staff cuts, budget cuts, and budget underspending by the State Government will slash \$121 million out of NPWS in just over two years. This represents 27% of this year's entire NPWS budget. It is also understood that restructuring of NPWS has resulted in a loss of 246 full time staff with at least 20% of national park ranger positions removed. The number of regions has been reduced from 14 to 8.

The consequence of these funding cuts and associated restructuring is clear: a substantial loss of dedicated, highly skilled staff resulting in a significant loss of experience. The impact this will have on the capacity and ability of NPWS to maintain and protect over 870 parks

and 7.1 million hectares of land is self-evident, compounding an already depleted capacity arising from budget reductions and staff losses over the last seven years.

As a signatory to the International Convention on Biological Diversity, NSW has voluntarily committed to protect, by 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas. Coming on the back of abhorrent and regressive new land-clearing laws framed as a Biodiversity Conservation Act, these funding and staffing cuts to NPWS will seriously undermine our state's capacity to achieve its international commitments to biodiversity protection.

Finally, it has been reported that the NSW government has introduced new branding guidelines requiring all government agencies to use the Waratah as their logo. If implemented uniformly this will result in the loss of the iconic lyrebird as the logo for NPWS and the unnecessary and wasteful use of an already reduced budget on replacing NPWS signage across the state; funds which would be better spent on employing staff to maintain NSW national park system.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Premier as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G2**

#### **Don't raise Warragamba Dam wall**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose NSW Government plans to raise Warragamba Dam wall and the Full Storage Level of Lake Burragorang.

**FURTHER**, that the Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

- a) oppose revocation to any World Heritage, Wilderness or National Park areas in the vicinity of Lake Burragorang;
- b) support the protection of free-flowing tributaries entering Lake Burragorang from flood inundation, including the Kowmung River, a declared wild river; and
- c) support the development of environmentally sustainable flood management strategies for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley.

*Moved: Keith Muir*

*Seconded: Harry Burkett*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The NSW Government has initiated plans to raise Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres. The raising of the dam wall is supposedly for flood mitigation in the Nepean Valley. The dam wall raising will inundate large areas of National Park in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Endangered flora and fauna habitat will be flooded, with ongoing siltation causing the death of important aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the NSW Premier, the Minister for Planning, Minister for Regional Water and the Minister for Environment, as well as the Opposition Leader, and relevant shadow ministers as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G3**

#### **Reject horse riding in wilderness**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call for horse riding in declared wilderness to be immediately terminated as it is incompatible with wilderness principles, not popular with horse riders and associated with illegal activities.

*Moved: Keith Muir*

*Seconded: Anne Reeves*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** A recent two year horse riding in wilderness trial established that horse riding in declared NSW wilderness does not increase sustainable recreation opportunities. The horse riding trial's predetermined political goal to provide for horse riding established a bias in the scientific methods of the trial at odds with the legal protection purpose of wilderness declaration.

Wilderness should be protected from horse riding impacts. Instead, wilderness damage is permitted and monitoring taken, with a potential trigger level for management action being actual wilderness damage. This risky 'suck it and see' management is contrary to the precautionary principle, a guiding objective enshrined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*.

The NPWS policy to allow horse riding on the five tracks and trails in question was a political expedient with no scientific and use justification. The policy to consider additional horse riding tracks and trails in wilderness also ignores the precautionary principle and abundant evidence of environmental damage.

Future horse riding in wilderness will bring with it vandalism, illegal activity, theft, trial bikes, animal cruelty, environmental degradation and a loss of wilderness values. These abuses will not be monitored by the NPWS but left to 'self-regulation', that has already proven to be a failure by the monitoring undertaken during the trial.

Appropriate management would exclude horse riding from declared wilderness to ensure these precious areas are not threatened by accelerated weed invasion and other environmental damage.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Minister for the Environment and Shadow Environment Minister as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G4**

#### **Reject Perisher development**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call for the Minister for Planning to stop the over-development of Kosciuszko, our largest and most loved national park,



by cancelling the lapsed Concept Plan Approval 262-100-2004 for the Perisher Village Resort that would otherwise convert Perisher village into a town.

*Moved: Keith Muir*

*Seconded: Haydn Washington*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** Proposed work on Perisher Village Resort had not commenced by 2 October 2016. The prior installation of a temporary concrete slab to provide footings for a park bench does not constitute the commencement of the Concept Plan Approval for this large resort complex involving several apartment buildings.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Minister for Planning and Shadow Minister for Planning as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G5**

#### **The Great Koala National Park**

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

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

- a) reiterate its support for the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) to the NSW Environment Minister in light of recent findings of high levels of koala activity in areas proposed for logging in Gladstone State Forest (part of the GKNP proposal);
- b) undertake to communicate its support to the relevant local governments in the GKNP region in order to encourage them to support the proposal; and
- c) undertake to thank NSW Labor, The Greens and Bellingen Shire Council for their active support of the GKNP.

*Moved: Alix Goodwin*

*Seconded: David Stead*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** Almost all koala populations in NSW are in decline with the Southern Highlands and Campbelltown populations being exceptions. The latter are under threat from the NSW Government's proposed Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Area which will deliver 33,000 new dwellings on land that includes important koala corridors. Koala populations on the north coast have declined by 50% in the last 20 years. Extinction of koalas is a real possibility in NSW if we do not urgently act to protect koala habitat.

The preference of koalas for larger trees is well established and was reaffirmed in 2016 by the NSW EPA Koala Habitat Mapping Pilot when the EPA found that "koala activity correlated with larger tree size classes and mapped mature forest" and that koalas "prefer areas of least disturbance". Coupled with previous findings that intensive logging leaving only small-diameter trees is not compatible with koala conservation, the weight of evidence points to serious and worsening impacts of logging on koalas.

Documents acquired by the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) revealed widespread logging in northern NSW that the EPA described as “*not consistent with the definition and intent of Single Tree Selection*”. The NSW Chief Scientist’s report into the decline of koala populations highlighted that there was insufficient data to assess the efficacy of logging prescriptions to protect koalas (i.e. that Forestry Corporation has failed to assess the impact of logging on koalas).

Yet the Government presses ahead with developing new logging rules that, according to documents obtained by NEFA via GIPA, will legalise this form of intensive logging. We urgently need to protect koala populations and koala habitat from logging.

The GKNP has received support from Bellingen Shire Council, State Labor and The Greens. There are also supportive councillors in both Nambucca Valley and Coffs Harbour Councils.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to reiterate its support for the Great Koala National Park as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G6**

#### **The Murray Valley National Park**

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

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW condemn commercial logging in the Murray Valley National Park and call on the Premier of NSW to:

- a) reconfirm her Government's stated opposition to commercial logging in National Parks;
- b) commit that the Murray Valley National Park will not be de-gazetted under her Government nor compromised by excision; and
- c) detail the steps she has taken to ensure that the environmental water allocation to the Murray Valley and Murrumbidgee National Parks has not been misappropriated.

*Moved: Anne Reeves*

*Seconded: Sue Milthorpe*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The NSW Government has been carrying out ‘ecological thinning’ trials in Murray Valley National Park, gazetted in 2010. The stated motive of the trial was to investigate whether thinning could be used as a means to reduce water competition between trees, thus increasing survival, in times of water stress, and whether growth rates and formation of key habitat features could be accelerated. This trial was opposed by NPA due to the apparent political motivation behind it.

In 2012, then NSW Environment Minister, Robyn Parker suggested that 3,000 tonnes of residue would result from the thinning, and that this would be made available to locals for firewood. However, in August 2017, Riverina media reported that Deputy Premier John Barilaro had allocated 15,000 tonnes of thinned timber to the Gulpa sawmill. Thus the ecological thinning has become commercial logging. In its response to the 2012 public lands

inquiry the NSW Government expressed its opposition to commercial logging in protected areas stating that “the Government does not support logging in national parks and has no plans to allow it through the implementation of tenure swaps or other means”.

The owner of the Gulpa sawmill is the head of the Red Gum Branch of The Nationals. This Branch has successfully made it National Party policy to de-gazette Murray Valley National Park and return it to State Forest for logging.

The Four Corners report on water theft from the Murray-Darling raises concerns that water theft may be more widespread. The red gum floodplain forests are entirely dependent on environmental water for their health, given that they are, in essence, a wetland system. It is therefore important that the NSW Government take steps to ensure that the environmental water allocation for the Murray Valley and Murrumbidgee National Parks is secure.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the NSW Premier as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G7**

#### **Mining in Schedule 1 Special Areas – Dendrobium Mine**

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

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government, noting the findings and implications of reports recently released by the Department of Planning on the impacts of longwall coal mining, located in the Schedule 1 Metropolitan Special Area, and in accord with its previous resolutions, to:

- a) halt the acceptance, assessment and approval processes for any and all further proposals or plans (SMPs) to mine coal in the Schedule 1 Special Areas of the Sydney Catchment with the suspension to include new projects, the next stage of existing projects and project modifications; and
- b) undertake the necessary processes, including mining lease withdrawal as needed, required to establish the Schedule 1 Special Areas as Nature Reserves.

*Moved: Brian Everingham*

*Seconded: Keith Muir*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** The Schedule 1 Special Areas were established by legislation to act as a final physical barrier to protect the inner catchment areas around Sydney’s drinking water storage reservoirs. Trespassers risk fines of up to \$44,000. NCC has in the past called on the NSW Government to cease coal mining in these areas, given the risk to both the environment and fresh water supplies.

Despite these calls, the NSW Government has allowed mining to continue and has approved further mining. In 2013 it approved the most aggressive extractions to have been approved in the Special areas, and among the most aggressive in NSW, for Area 3B of the Dendrobium mine. In July 2015 the National Parks Association (NPA) warned the then Planning Minister that mining at Dendrobium could result in seam to surface connected fracturing over parts

of the mine. The warning was repeated in a detailed NPA report sent to the Government in December 2016. This report also found clear evidence of a serious disruption to the groundwater regime between the Aon and Cordeaux Reservoirs. In the same month two further longwalls were approved for Area 3B. The recently released impact studies commissioned by the Department of Planning in response to pressure from NPA, have confirmed NPA's advice.

The released reports again found inadequate monitoring systems, such that it's not possible to quantify losses. Not anticipated were valley bulging, creating reservoir leakage pathways, in addition to other water loss mechanisms, and large scale surface movement across the mine. The reports confirm long held concerns of complete drainage when a swamp is undermined. They also found impacts to some swamps start occurring at distances of up 900 metres. It's long been recognised that the swamps act as slow release 'sponges' that filter water and moderate flow during high and low rainfall periods. Twelve threatened vertebrates are recorded for these habitats. In addition to holding most of the swamps of the Woronora Plateau, the Special Areas hold some of the few remaining areas of pristine bushland in NSW.

In 2014 the Colong Foundation, in partnership with other community groups in the Protect Sydney's Water alliance, reviewed the NPWS reservation status of the Sydney Catchment Authority's Special Areas. This led to a comprehensive proposal for protecting the Special Areas that includes the declaration of Nature Reserves and State Conservation Areas over the Special Areas. The NPA further recommends seeking the withdrawal of mining leases to allow all of the Schedule 1 Special Areas to be declared as Nature Reserves.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Premier as per the resolution and request a meeting to discuss the issues, with NPA staff in attendance.

### **Motion 2017/G8**

#### **The Gardens of Stone – a transition plan for Lithgow**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to take the necessary steps to:

- a) reserve as soon as possible, the Gardens of Stone Stage Two proposal in a State Conservation Area; and
- b) identify and protect all heritage values in the Gardens of Stone Region when Government authorities assess and make recommendations in relation to major project proposals; so that
- c) Lithgow can transition to a leading tourist destination with its fascinating cultural stories and the awe-inspiring Gardens of Stone on its doorstep, and does not decline as coal resources become exhausted.

*Moved: Keith Muir*

*Seconded: Brian Everingham*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** A large state conservation area over the public forests in the Gardens of Stone would protect 100 heritage values, each one rated at being either of national or international significance. This protection would stimulate tourism in the Lithgow region.

The coal industry's claim that mining operations are having little impact was overturned when independent experts found damage to nationally endangered swamps could be extreme. De-escalation of political tensions through a reserve proposal that allows appropriately managed, underground coal mining that protects all above-ground national and internationally significant heritage is not just a theory. Lithgow is more attractive than Katoomba, it's just that few understand its broad range of attractions.

In twenty years Lithgow's coal will be gone - a transition policy is needed now. The Gardens of Stone reserve is part of the change needed to protect the region's outstanding heritage values. A 39,000 hectare Gardens of Stone reserve will not throw coal industry employees onto the scrap heap, but will facilitate gradual change towards a healthy, more diverse community.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Premier of NSW and Opposition Leader requesting protection and reservation of the Gardens of Stone region as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G9**

#### **Leave Radiata Plateau Wild!**

*Submitted by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the Federal Minister for the Environment, the NSW Minister for the Environment and the Premier of NSW to acquire and reserve the Radiata Plateau, Katoomba (Elphinstone Plateau) - the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains - to form part of the Blue Mountains National Park.

*Moved: Heather Hull*

*Seconded: Sue Milthorpe*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** Radiata Plateau is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains. With spectacular and stunning views along the escarpment and down to the Megalong Valley, it has significant biodiversity value as well as being home to many endangered plants and animals.

The vast majority of the Plateau (305 hectares), including escarpment areas, consists of land owned by Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law Ltd. In April 2017 the NSW Land and Environment Court refused two of three development applications lodged by Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law Ltd. The remaining development proposal was approved and the fate of the Plateau is now in the balance. Fragmentation and development of the Plateau will result in the loss of its high conservation value and likely prevent ongoing public access.

The Plateau is special because it:

- is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains and is the missing piece in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area;

- has spectacular scenic values, including stunning views of the southern escarpment;
- has significant biodiversity values, including the presence of rare Blue Mountain Swamps, a threatened ecological community in NSW;
- is home to many endangered animals, including the Spotted Tailed Quoll and Greater Gliders. The Plateau is also home to two threatened plants, and one of only ten places where the highly-endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and the shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grows;
- has an extensive network of walking tracks used by local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers;
- has significant Aboriginal heritage, including the Plateau being used as a traditional pathway down into the Megalong Valley;
- is home to internationally recognised rock-climbing crags and walls; and
- is an invaluable bushland and fauna corridor between Medlow Bath and Katoomba.

While such a significant area remains in private ownership it is threatened by development. The Blue Mountains Conservation Society needs your support for our new campaign, ***Leave Radiata Plateau Wild***, to put the plateau in public hands and protect it. The campaign will advocate for the Plateau to be purchased by the State or Commonwealth government, to form part of the Blue Mountains National Park and thus ensure it is conserved forever and that public access continues.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Federal Minister for the Environment, the NSW Minister for the Environment and the Premier of NSW as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G10**

#### **No infrastructure in national parks**

*Submitted by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.*

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

- a) infrastructure not required for national park purposes, including pipelines, dams, pump-storage schemes, powerlines, telecommunication towers, easements, roads and railway lines, is incompatible with national park values;
- b) existing infrastructure should be removed from national parks when these structures approach the end of their design life, become unnecessary, obsolete or uneconomic; and
- c) operators of infrastructure in national parks must progressively implement measures to reduce the environmental impacts of infrastructure, until removal occurs.

*Moved: Keith Muir*

*Seconded: Haydn Washington*

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND:** National Parks will always be at risk of development by governments who view parks and reserves easier to develop than adjoining private land that must be

purchased at market rates. This is the logic behind the proposed location of the F6 freeway extension through Royal National Park.

There are now hundreds of potential sites for pump-storage hydro-electricity schemes identified around NSW. The Snowy-Hydro 2 pump-storage electricity proposal is in the state's largest national park, but impacts on the park were discounted by media and others. Such proposals in national parks must be opposed.

It is a long-standing policy of environment groups to oppose development in national parks, particularly major infrastructure. However, national parks are often gazetted with a legacy of infrastructure. Some infrastructure operators act responsibly to minimise environmental impacts, while others, for example, allow weeds to proliferate.

Over time, reserve management should improve the integrity of national parks by infrastructure removal. Some infrastructure has been removed, such as certain travelling stock routes and trigonometric survey stations. Aging infrastructure such as powerlines, should be relocated rather than refurbished, or replaced along existing easements within national parks.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Premier of NSW, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment and relevant Shadow Ministers requesting that infrastructure development be banned in national parks as per the motion.

### **Motion 2017/G11**

#### **Support for Royal National Park World Heritage nomination**

*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW reaffirm its support for the Royal National Park World Heritage bid.

*Moved: Jenni Gormley*

*Seconded: Haydn Washington*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre welcomes the support NCC has previously given to the World Heritage listing bid for the Royal Reserves (Royal, Heathcote and Garawarra), including in its press release of September 30th 2013. We particularly note that at its July 2017 meeting the World Heritage Committee inscribed the English Lake District on the World Heritage List for its significance in conservation and protected area history. This has cleared the way for the inclusion of other areas with similar 'Outstanding Universal Value' and should make the World Heritage listing of the Royal Reserves (initially on Australia's Tentative World Heritage) more acceptable.

The media release referred to can be found at: <https://www.nature.org.au/media-releases/2013/09/australia-s-first-national-park-under-consideration-for-world-heritage-nomination/>

**PROPOSED ACTION:** As per the motion.

## **Motion 2017/G12**

### **No Way! F6 Freeway expansion through Royal National Park**

*Submitted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc. & the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.*

**THAT** the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW government to:

- a) acknowledge the significant leadership shown by NSW in the establishment of national parks in Australia, through the commissioning and publication of a scoping study associated with the theme, *The Evolution of Conservation Philosophy and Protected Areas*, as a precursor to a full Thematic Study in accordance with the 2016 Royal National Park world heritage report prepared by Context;
- b) halt geotechnical testing and planning works associated with the apparent, intended expansion of the F6 motorway, instead commissioning and publishing a full cost-benefit analysis of upgrading the Wollongong to Sydney rail link to deal with transport pressures;
- c) adopt a sustainable transport policy which preferences public transport over motorways; and
- d) remove all reference to any corridor related to the F6, either within or taking land from Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park or the Garawarra State Conservation Area, and ensure that such removal is also done within the Department of Roads and Maritime Services.

*Moved: Brian Everingham*

*Seconded: Jenni Gormley*

*CARRIED*

**BACKGROUND:** The Royal National Park (RNP) became Australia's first national park in 1879. It has 4 million visitors each year. In October 2013, the then Minister for the Environment made a commitment to preparing a nomination for World Heritage listing of RNP in collaboration with the Commonwealth. It would be fitting to progress this commitment during 2017, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary milestone of the establishment of the National Parks & Wildlife Service under the National Parks & Wildlife Act in 1957.

Now however the NSW government has allocated a total of approximately \$35m to explore extending the F6 motorway in response to transport pressures between Sydney and Wollongong. Apparent plans to expand the F6 motorway into RNP send a strong message that the NSW government considers national parks as expendable and as resources available to solve infrastructure and other challenges facing this state.

A decision to proceed could ultimately see 60 hectares of RNP lost to bitumen, resulting in further fragmentation of greater Sydney's bushland, and threatening many native plants and animals. It would continue to undermine Sydney as a liveable city due to the further loss of green space.



The allocation of funding for geotechnical testing and planning works suggests the NSW government has made the decision to extend the F6 motorway without fully considering other options. It has been reported that building a rail tunnel between Thirroul and Waterfall would cost as much as \$12 billion less than a motorway (estimated to cost \$18 billion), reducing commuting times significantly. With ever diminishing, high quality bushland in NSW, combined with climate change, it is vital that RNP be saved from becoming the solution to Sydney's transport pressures which would be better addressed through improved public transport.

Expansion of the F6 will require construction of ventilation stations and exhaust stacks at six locations including Rockdale Wetlands (Scarborough Park). A former tidal swamp, the lakes were created with the assistance of government funding during the 1930s Depression. A part of the Rockland Wetlands and Recreation Corridor, the Scarborough Ponds have a very high conservation value, with aesthetic, heritage and environmental components. The Rockland Wetlands and Recreation Corridor provide important habitat for a variety of animal and plant species, including common wetland birds and a number of protected migratory birds.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** NCC to write to the Premier as per the motion.

## **NSW ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2017**

The NSW Environment Awards were presented on Saturday 28 October by Chair of the Nature Conservation Council, Prof. Don White and Goldman Prize Winner 2017, Wendy Bowman.

### **Marie Byles Award**

*For the most outstanding environmental campaign*

**2017 Joint Winners:** 4nature

### **The Dunphy Award**

*For most outstanding environmental effort of an individual*

**2017 Joint Winners:** Sue Higginson & Phil Spark

### **The Rising Star Award**

*For the most outstanding new campaigner under the age of 30*

**2017 Winner:** James Stanton-Cooke

### **The Ziggy Megne Volunteer for the Environment Award**

*For voluntary contribution to conservation over a long period of time*

**2017 Winner:** Garry Kelly

### **The Nature Conservation Council Member Group Award**

*For the most outstanding NCC Member Group*

**2017 Winner:** Mountain Districts Association

### **The Allen Strom Hall of Fame Award**

*For long-standing service and commitment to the conservation movement*

**2017 Winner:** Frances Bray

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