



Nature Conservation Council

The voice for nature in NSW

Nature Conservation Council of NSW

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016

**Saturday & Sunday
22nd & 23rd October, 2016**

**University of Sydney Law School
New Law School Building (F10)
Eastern Avenue, Camperdown Campus**

MINUTES

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EXECUTIVE 2015-2016

Chairperson: Prof. Don White

Vice-Chairperson & Minutes Secretary: Megan Kessler

Hon. Secretary: Jane Smith

Hon. Treasurer: Rob Pallin

Public Officer: Rob Pallin

- Gabrielle Appleby
- Jamie Hanson
- Cilla Kinross (Western Regional rep.)
- Megan Kessler
- Jim Morrison (Northern Regional rep.)
- Ben Pearson
- Noel Plumb (Southern Regional rep.)
- Annie Nielsen
- Rob Pallin
- Jane Smith
- Prof. Don White
- Graeme Wiffen

EXECUTIVE ELECTION 2016

The Executive election was held on Sunday 23 October. There were fourteen nominees for twelve available positions. The Returning Officer declared the following candidates duly elected:

- Gabrielle Appleby
- Jamie Hanson
- Megan Kessler
- Cilla Kinross
- Suzanne Milthorpe
- Jim Morrison
- Simon Nicholas
- Annie Nielsen
- Rob Pallin
- Ben Pearson
- Jane Smith
- Prof. Don White

The two unsuccessful candidates were Grahame Douglas and Noel Plumb.

Full Program

Saturday 22 October

Venue: Law Foyer, University of Sydney

Day One: National Environment Meeting co-hosted with Greenpeace and the Sydney Environment Institute

9.00am-9.30am	<p>Opening and Welcome to Country Uncle Chicka Madden, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council</p> <p>David Ritter, CEO of Greenpeace Australia Pacific Alex Greenwich, MP, State Member for Sydney</p>
9.30am-10.45am	<p>Keynote: Politics and the Environment - Making Environmental Progress in 2016</p> <p><i>What happens in Parliament decides the future for our endangered wildlife, the places we love and whether our kids will have a safe climate. Hear directly from those who've spent years walking the halls of power to really understand how to inspire our politicians to care about nature and how this may be changing in modern politics.</i></p> <p>John Hewson, Former Liberal Party Leader Christine Milne, Former Leader of the Greens Party Professor the Hon. Bob Carr, Former Premier of NSW (Chair) Jonathan Holmes (former presenter of Media Watch)</p>
10.45am-11.00am	<p>Overview of the afternoon/Call for Executive Nominations for the NCC Executive</p> <p>Nature Conservation Council of NSW</p>
11.00am-11.30am	<p>Morning Tea</p>
11.30am-12.45pm	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Choose one workshop from the seven offered. All workshops will be repeated in the afternoon to give you the chance to catch the one you missed!</p>

Economics and the Environment	<p><i>Have you ever suspected that the economic case for destroying the environment might not be as strong as the coal industry suggests? Learn how to fight econobabble with hard economic facts.</i></p>	Rod Campbell, The Australian Institute	<i>Facilitator:</i> Alison Killen
Building powerful narratives across our movement	<p><i>Hands on workshop drawing on recent research from communications, psychology, academia and campaigning. ACF will share their recent Narrative Project research.</i></p>	Phil Freeman, WWF, and Angela Rutter, ACF	<i>Facilitator:</i> Vicky Fysh

Engage your Community with New Technology	<i>Social media is a powerful tool for activists and campaigners. This workshop will cover all the basic principles of social media campaigning including choosing the right platforms, creating great content, and finding your organisation's voice.</i>	Ruby-Rose O'Halloran, GetUp!	<i>Facilitator:</i> Lindsay Soutar
Building community power using the Circles of Commitment	<i>Does your campaign rely on getting a large number of people involved? Or perhaps you have a small core team and there's more to do than you can handle? The Circles of Commitment model can help! Join this interactive workshop to explore how we can build up our supporter base and get people taking deeper responsibility for winning our campaigns.</i>	Ray Yoshida, 350.org, and Emilie Carey, Solar Citizens	<i>Facilitator:</i> Ian Lisser
A guide to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<i>This workshop will challenge environmental movement norms for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and challenge concepts on how to work collectively and be a good ally.</i>	Paul Gorrie, CANA	<i>Facilitator:</i> Fee Mozeley
What can the University do for you?	<i>This workshop focuses on academic resources available to environmental organisations. How can you identify research questions, researchers, and funding – and help Universities develop research in the public good?</i>	David Schlosberg, Sydney Environment Institute	<i>Facilitator:</i> Tanya Ritchie

12.45pm-1.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm-2.30pm	<p>Panel 1: Making Our Narrative Heard in a Changing Media Landscape</p> <p><i>Does the nightly news still drive politics? What about the pressures of the 24 hour news cycle? Are people too busy looking at cat videos to care about real issues? The way we create and digest media has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, posing real challenges and opportunities for protecting nature. Join experienced journalists and communications experts to discuss how to make headlines in our changing media landscape.</i></p> <p>Peter Lewis, Director of Essential Media Communications Lenore Taylor, Editor of Guardian Australia Peter Hannam, 2016 Kennedy Award Winner Eric Beecher, Australian journalist, editor and media proprietor (Chair) Kelly O'Shanassy, CEO, Australian Conservation Foundation</p>
2.30pm-3.45pm	Workshops

Economics and the Environment	<i>Have you ever suspected that the economic case for destroying the environment might not be as strong as the coal industry suggests? Learn how to fight econobabble with hard economic facts.</i>	Rod Campbell, The Australian Institute	<i>Facilitator:</i> Alison Killen
Building powerful narratives across our movement	<i>Hands on workshop drawing on recent research from communications, psychology, academia and campaigning. ACF will share their recent Narrative Project research.</i>	Phil Freeman, WWF, and Angela Rutter, ACF	<i>Facilitator:</i> Vicky Fysh
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A guide to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<i>This workshop will challenge environmental movement norms for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and challenge concepts on how to work collectively and be a good ally.</i>	Paul Gorrie, CANA	<i>Facilitator:</i> Fee Mozeley

3.45-4.00pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00-5.00pm	<p>Panel 2: Building Alliances with Justice</p> <p><i>At the heart of campaigning to protect nature is a cry for justice. The root causes of environmental destruction are often the same as those fuelling entrenched inequality. By building powerful alliances with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Australians, religious communities, unions and justice advocates, we not only become stronger ourselves, we create a stronger movement for a fair-go for all.</i></p> <p>Brendan Sydes, CEO of Environmental Justice Australia Larissa Baldwin, National Co-Director of SEED Reverend Elenie Poulos, National Director of Uniting Justice Australia Ben Davison, Chief of Staff, ACTU (Chair) Professor Don White, NCC Chairperson</p>

5.00pm-6.00pm	Close and Conference Photo David Schlosberg, Co-Director of the Sydney Environment Institute
6.00pm-7.30pm	Drinks and NSW Environment Awards <i>Protecting the places and wildlife we love doesn't happen by chance; it happens because people take a stand for what they believe in. Join First Dog on the Moon, Australian political cartoonist, for a night to celebrate the true champions of NSW as we award the 2016 winners of the NSW Environment Awards.</i> Master of Ceremonies: First Dog on the Moon, Political Cartoonist
7.30pm	Dinner - ThaiRiffic Newtown, 109 King Street, Newtown.

Sunday 23 October

Venue: Law Foyer, University of Sydney

Day Two: Nature Conservation Council of NSW Annual Conference

8.45am-9.05am	Registration Opens
9.05am-9.15am	Annual General Meeting Opening (Chair)
9.15am-9.30am	CEO Report (CEO)
9.30am-9.50am	Other Reports, Discussion and Questions (Chair and Treasurer)
9.50am-10.10am	Shadow Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe
10.10am-10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30am-11.30am	Business Motions (Chair)
11.30am-12.00pm	Election of NCC Executive for 2016/17
12.00pm-12.45pm	Lunch
12.45pm-1.05pm	Dr Mehreen Faruqi, Greens Environmental Spokesperson
1.05pm-2.05pm	Business Motions, and General Business (Chair)
2.05pm-2.25pm	Late and Carried Over Motions
2.25pm-2.30pm	Closing Address (CEO)
2.30pm	Close

LIST OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE MOTIONS

A. Council Affairs

1. Admission of New Member Societies
2. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 1: Removal of fees in Schedule 1
3. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 2: Introduction of staged, two-year elections
4. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 3: Introduction of individual, non-voting members
Submitted by the Executive
5. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 4: Election of Executive Councillors at the Annual Conference
Submitted by the Community Environment Network, Friends of Tumblebee, PACTEC, Trees of Bateau Bay
6. Member Group Support Program
Submitted by the Community Environment Network, Friends of Tumblebee, PACTEC and Trees of Bateau Bay

B. Planning and Development

1. Visual impact of new wind farms
Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network
2. Pacific Highway upgrade: assistance for Friends of the Koala
Submitted by Friends of the Koala

C. Climate Change & Energy

1. The Climate Emergency Declaration Petition
2. Setting an Emissions Reduction Target for NSW
3. Closing NSW coal-fired power plants by 2030
Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network
4. CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY 2016
Submitted by the Executive

D. Biodiversity Conservation

1. Land management and biodiversity laws
Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW
2. NSW Council mergers – bushland protection
Submitted by the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society
3. Moratorium on logging koala habitat in public native forests
4. Saving our Species (SOS) koala strategy
5. Trial release of Tasmanian Devils in NSW
6. Declaration of feral deer as pests
Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW
7. BIOSECURITY POLICY
Submitted by the Invasive Species Council

E. Forestry Issues

1. The Great Southern Forest proposal
Submitted by the South East Region Conservation Alliance and National Parks Association of NSW

F. National Parks, Wilderness, Protected & Natural Areas

1. Protecting Sydney's drinking water supply
Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network
2. The revised NSW Reserve Establishment Plan
Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

LATE MOTION

Individual Supporters of the Nature Conservation Council
Submitted from the floor

ATTENDANCE 2016

MEMBER SOCIETY DELEGATES & OBSERVERS

Australian Association for Environmental Education NSW Chapter Inc.
Sue Burton

Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd
Margery Street

Australian Wildlife Society
Ken Mason
Patrick Medway

Better Planning Network
Jeanette Brokman

Blacktown & District Environment Group
Antony Lewis
Edward Hartley (Sat)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Beth Rohrlach (Sat)
Donald Morison (Sat)
Madi Maclean (Sat)
Paul Vale

Bushwalking NSW
Sierra Classen

Central West Environment Council
Cilla Kinross*

Chipbusters
Noel Plumb*

Community Environment Network
Jane Smith*
John Asquith**

Cumberland Bird Observers Club
Catherine Goswell (Sat)
Ian Johnson

Forestmedia
Lorraine Bower

Friends of Lane Cove National Park
Dana Ghinzel (Sat)

Friends of Tumblebee
James Ryan

Friends of the Koala Inc.

Lorraine Vass**

Goulburn Field Naturalists Society

Mark Selmes

Green Shareholders

Prof. Don White*

Invasive Species Council

Andrew Cox

Reece Pianta

Lake Wollumboola Protection Association

Frances Bray**

Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society

Frances Vissel

Ron Gornall

Linnean Society of NSW

Bruce Welch

Michele Cotton

Mosman Parks & Bushland Association Inc.

Anne Cook

Yolande Stone

National Parks Association of NSW Inc.

Anne Reeves

Grahame Douglas

Roger Lembit

Samantha Newton (O)

North Coast Environment Council

Jim Morrison*

North Lismore Plateau Protection Association Inc.

Julie-Anne Allen

NSW WIRES

Kirstie Harris (Sat)

Leanne Taylor (Sat)

ParraCAN (Parramatta Climate Action Network)

Annie Nielsen*

Phil Bradley (O)

Ryde Community Alliance

Jennie Minifie

Ryde Environment Group

Julie Lee

Ryde-Gladesville Climate Change Action Group

Jill Hartley
Wies Schuiringa (Sat)

Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society

Brigid Dowsett

Save Cliefden Caves Association

Harry Burkitt

Saving Sydneys Trees

Kathleen Hennessey (Sat)

South East Region Conservation Alliance

Bronte Somerset

STEP Inc

Jill Green

Sustainable Population Australia

Nola Stewart

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Jenni Gormley
Mark Da Silva (O)

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd

Alex Allchin
Keith Muir

The David G Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation of Australia

David Stead

The Wilderness Society Newcastle

Suzanne Milthorpe

Total Environment Centre

Corinne Fisher (Sat)

Willoughby Environmental Protection Association

Meredith Foley

EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR DELEGATES

Gabrielle Appleby
Jamie Hanson
Megan Kessler
Cilla Kinross (Western Regional rep.)
Jim Morrison (Northern Regional rep.)*
Annie Nielsen*
Ben Pearson
Noel Plumb (Southern Regional rep.)*
Jane Smith*
Prof. Don White*
Graeme Wiffen

Delegates with Proxy Votes

John Asquith: *Trees of Bateau Bay*

Frances Bray: *Jervis Bay Regional Alliance*

Lorraine Vass: *NSW Wildlife Council*

Apologies

Janine Kitson (*The David G Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation*)

Rob Pallin (*Executive*)

Donna Upton (*Capertee Valley Alliance*)

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

Shaun Gilchrist

NCC REPRESENTATIVES

Adrian Davey

GUEST SPEAKERS, PRESENTERS & WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Uncle Chicka Madden, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council

Alex Greenwich, MP, State Member for Sydney

First Dog on the Moon, Political Cartoonist

Penny Sharpe, Shadow Minister for the Environment

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

Panel guests:

Keynote Panel: Politics and the Environment

Making Environmental Progress in 2016

Dr John Hewson, Former Liberal Party Leader

Christine Milne, Former Leader of the Greens Party

Professor, The Hon. Bob Carr, Former Premier of NSW

(Chair) Jonathan Holmes (former presenter of Media Watch)

Making Our Narrative Heard in a Changing Media Landscape

Peter Lewis, Director, Essential Media Communications

Lenore Taylor, Editor, Guardian Australia

Peter Hannam, 2016 Kennedy Award Winner

Eric Beecher, Australian journalist, editor and media proprietor

(Chair) Kelly O'Shanassy, CEO, Australian Conservation Foundation

Building Alliances with Justice

Brendan Sydes, CEO, Environmental Justice Australia

Larissa Baldwin, National Co-Director of SEED

Reverend Elenie Poulos, National Director, Uniting Justice Australia

Ben Davison, Chief of Staff, ACTU

(Chair) Professor Don White, NCC Chairperson

Workshop speakers:

Rod Campbell, The Australia Institute

Phil Freeman, WWF

Angela Rutter, ACF

Ruby-Rose O'Halloran, GetUp!

Ray Yoshida, 350.org

Emilie Carey, Solar Citizens
Paul Gorrie, CANA
David Schlosberg, Sydney Environment Institute

Workshop facilitators:

James Whelan, The Change Agency
Lindsay Soutar
Fee Mozeley
Alison Killen
Tanya Ritchie
Vicki Fysh
Ian Lisser

STAFF

Nature Conservation Council

Kate Smolski, *CEO*
Daisy Barham, *Campaigns Director*
Cerin Loane, *Policy Officer*
Queene Ostria, *Accounts and Administration Officer*
Waminda Parker, *Healthy Ecosystems Program Director*
Kevin Taylor, *Healthy Ecosystems Program – Hotspots Ecologist*
James Tremain, *Media & Communications Officer*

Greenpeace

David Ritter, *CEO*
Madeleine Scott-Murphy, *NEM Organiser*

VOLUNTEERS

Nidala Barker
Bruce Diekman
Judy Ebner
Keith Hart
Jonathan Heys
Garry Kelly
Trista Liu
Chloe Luo
Alice Simpson-Young
William Tsang

VISITORS, GUESTS & FRIENDS

Ada Kartanaite
Alex Rafalowicz (*Climate Action Network of Australia*)
Alexandra Springett
Alix Goodwin
Alice Beauchamp
Amelie van der Stock
Andy Marks
Angela Michaelis
Angelika Treichler
Ann Sharp
Anthony Lupi
Barbara Hamilton

Bianca Tin
Boyd Robinson
Brendan Hyde
Brett Morgan
Chris Burns
Christopher Webber
Connie Harris
Daniel Noonan
Deborah Johnston
Elizabeth Dark
Elly Tucker
Emily Crawford
Estelle Dollfus-Gates
Frances Burnham
Grace Corrigan
India Hennah-Wood
Jemima Garrett
Jacqueline French
John Edye
John Bellamy (*Save the Trees and Buses*)
John Hamilton
Jonathan Milford
Julia Walsh
Judy Pincus
Liz Power
Kate Johnston
Kathryn Savery
Kathy Zischka
Katie Hennah
Kellie Gee (*Upper Yarra Landcare*)
Kresta Lokumarambage (*Oxfam Australia*)
Kristine Anderson
Krsnangi Mulder (*Hurstville Community Garden*)
L Barto
Liam Robinson
Linda Vergnani
Louise Tarrant (*Greenpeace*)
Louise Dortins
Louise Redmond
Lynne Saville
Margaret Quixley (*Birdlife Australia*)
Martin Bell
Matthew Brunton
Matthew Gill
Maureen Flowers
Mike Aldridge
Mike Thompson
Nicola Rivers (*Environmental Justice Australia*)
Nikki Wedgwood
Nina Rokvic
Phil Evans (*Friends of the Earth*)
Phil Jones
Phil Murphy
Phillip Cornwell
Rachel England

Richard Stiles
Rom Dortins
Roz Walden (*Cairns & Far North Environment Centre*)
Ruth Barcan
Sandra Reynolds
Sarah Neal
Sharnie Wu
Shaun Murray (*Get Up!*)
Sienna Xue
Simon Nicholas
Steph Cox
Stephanie Packer
Stuart Garrett
Sue Gard
Susan Lever
Susan Reid
Tersh Bunsee
Thomas Hooper
Tom Fitzgerald (*Australian Coastal Society*)
Tony Konjarski (*Protect Our Parks Inc.*)
Warwick Moss
Wendy Suiter
Wilfrid Schafhauser
Zhi Yan

Motions for Annual Conference 2016

A. Council Affairs

Motion 2016/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 2015 to September 2016:

- Australian Raptor Care & Conservation Inc.
- Byles Creek Valley Union Inc.
- Community Energy for Goulburn
- Energy Forever
- Invasive Species Council Inc.
- Saving Sydneys Trees Inc.
- The Society for Insect Studies Inc.
- Threatened Species Conservation Society Inc.
- Undermined Inc.

Moved: Grahame Douglas

Seconded: Noel Plumb

CARRIED

Motions 2016/A2-4

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Executive recommends to the Annual Conference three separate changes to the NCC Constitution. Each recommended amendment is set out and explained, as follows.

Each proposed change will be moved as a separate motion.

Housekeeping changes

In addition, to the three major changes proposed, there are a number of 'housekeeping' changes that have been included in the marked-up version of the Constitution. These include minor amendments to achieve consistency in definitions, corrections to out-of-date cross-references to sections within the Constitution and corrections to references to provisions in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936, which have been replaced by provisions in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

These housekeeping changes have no effect on the rights or obligations of members or the Executive. The marked-up version of the Constitution containing all proposed amendments has been sent to members.

Motion 2016/A2
Constitution Amendment 1:
Removal of fees in Schedule 1
Submitted by the Executive

THAT the NCC Constitution be amended as follows:

That clause 6(g) be **amended** to read:

- (i) Each member body shall pay annual dues set in accordance with this clause.
- (ii) By the end of March each year, the Executive shall review and set the annual dues of member bodies.
- (iii) The Executive shall notify all member bodies of any change within one month of a resolution passed under clause 6(g)(ii).
- (iv) The Executive shall make a document detailing annual dues publicly available.

That clause 6(k) be **deleted**.

That schedule 1 (1), (2) and (3) be **deleted**.

That clause 9(c) be **amended** to read:

'Associate members shall pay annual dues as set in accordance with clause 6(g).'

That clause 11(c) be **amended** to read:

'Corresponding bodies shall pay annual dues as set in accordance with clause 6(g).'

That clause 15(a)(ii) be amended to read:

'Receive advice concerning any decisions of the Executive to change all or any of the annual dues-under clause 6(g).'

BACKGROUND (explanation of recommended amendment):

Clause 6(g) refers to the membership dues being set in the schedule. Clause 6(k) refers to the changing to annual dues to be by resolution of the Executive, notified to the member groups and reported to the Annual Conference.

There is a tension within these provisions. If the Executive were to amend the annual dues under article 6(k) then the schedule would no longer reflect the dues set. There is also a tension with clause 28(c), which provides the method for amending the schedule at Annual/Special Conference by agreement of simple majority. This amendment removes these tensions to clarify that the position is that as currently described in clause 6(k).

NOTE: There are further proposed amendments to clause 6(g) in Motion for Constitution Amendment 3.

*The motion was deferred to allow time for the inclusion of the following **housekeeping changes** referred to above:*

Clause 1 (Definitions):

"Corresponding Body" means a body, [society or association](#) fulfilling the requirements for a corresponding body as in clause 11.

"Co-opted Councillor" means a person co-opted to the Executive under clause [19\(d\)](#).

"Gift Fund" means the Environment Gift Fund referred to in clause [31](#)

"Returning Officer" means the person appointed by the Executive in accordance with sub-clause [20\(j\)](#).

"Zones" means those areas of New South Wales referred to in Clauses 19 and 20 and described in the Second Schedule.

Clause 21 (Meetings of the Executive):

- (e) Should the Chairperson or Secretary decline to call a meeting of the Executive when requested as set out in clause [21\(a\)](#) then any other member of the Executive may call a meeting and the meeting when so convened shall, if a quorum be present, have all the powers and functions of a meeting called by the Chairperson or Secretary.

Clause 31 (Gift Fund):

- (a) The Executive shall establish a gift fund within the meaning of Section [30.130](#) of the Income Tax Assessment Act [1997](#) of the Commonwealth to accept gifts of money or property for the environmental purposes of the Council.
- (k) The Council shall within four months after the end of each financial year, provide to the Environment [Secretary](#) within the meaning of Section [30.270](#) of the Income Tax Assessment Act [1997](#) of the Commonwealth statistical data about gifts to the Gift Fund during the financial year.
- (m) Should the Gift Fund be wound up, any monies held in it shall be paid into the gift fund of another environmental organisation entered on the Register of Environment Organisations established under sub- paragraph [30.280](#) of the Income Tax Assessment Act [1997](#).
- (n) The Environment [Secretary](#) within the meaning of Section [995.1](#) of the Income Tax Assessment Act [1997](#) of the Commonwealth, shall be advised of any changes to the rules governing the Gift Fund and of any changes in the membership of the Gift Fund Committee responsible for administering the Gift Fund.

Amended Motion:

Original Motion plus amendment to include identified housekeeping changes to the Constitution.

Moved: Noel Plumb

Seconded: Gabrielle Appleby

CARRIED

Motion 2016/A3
Constitution Amendment 2:
Introduction of staged, two-year elections
Submitted by the Executive

THAT the NCC Constitution be amended as follows:

The addition of a new subclause above 19(e):

‘Subject to this sub-clause, the term of office for councillors shall be two years. At the first meeting of the Executive following the adoption of this sub-clause, the Executive shall divide the Councillors into two classes of equal numbers, or as near as possible thereto. The Councillors in the first class shall have a term for one year before positions are up for re-election and the Councillors in the second class shall have a term for two years before positions are up for re-election.’

[and subsequent renumbering of sub-clauses (e), (f)]

Amendment to clause 19(c):

The number of Councillors elected to the Executive under sub-clause (b) shall be twelve (12) at the Annual Conference held after the adoption of sub-clause (e), and six (6) thereafter.

Amendment to clause 19(d):

The Executive may co-opt not more than two (2) additional persons who in the opinion of the Executive possess special knowledge, skill or experience likely to assist the Executive in its work. Such persons shall have all the rights and powers of Elected Councillors, and shall hold office ~~until a new Executive takes over under clause 22(f)~~ until the first meeting of the Executive following the Annual Conference, unless the Executive at the time of co-opting such person prescribes a shorter term.

Delete clause 21(f). Renumber subclause (g).

BACKGROUND (explanation of recommended amendment):

The Executive recommends the introduction of extended (two-year), staged terms to bring increased benefits of continuity to the Executive, leading to greater ‘buy-in’ from Executive members. Staged terms are recommended to ensure the maintenance of corporate knowledge after elections.

Moved: Noel Plumb

Seconded: Gabrielle Appleby

LOST 17 votes to 31 (3 abstentions)

Motion 2016/A4
Constitution Amendment 3:
Introduction of individual, non-voting members
Submitted by the Executive

THAT the NCC Constitution be amended as follows:

Clause 1 – Definitions – make the following marked up changes:

"Delegate" means a person sent by a Member Body to an Annual or Special Conference who has voting rights at that Conference.

"Member Body" means a Full Member Body or an Associate Member Body as set out in clause 7 and clause 9 of this Constitution.

Clause 1 – Definitions – insert the following definitions:

"Individual member" means an individual as set out in clause 11A of this Constitution.

"Member" means an Individual Member or a Member Body.

Clause 3 – Objects – make the following marked up changes:

(a) To hold conferences:

(i) For the purpose of providing a means whereby those bodies, societies, associations and individuals interested in conservation and who subscribe to the Council's objects can have regular and formal communication with each other.

....

(f) To provide information on request to members societies and assistance where possible.

(g) To do any such thing as is determined from time to time by either the Annual Conference or the Executive to be in the interests of conservation without thereby committing members ~~organisations~~ to support such activities.

Clause 5(a) – make the following marked up changes:

The Council is not formed or carried on for the purpose of trading or securing pecuniary benefit to any person or member ~~body~~. The property and income of the Council shall be applied solely towards the objects of the Council and no part of the property or income shall be applied for the pecuniary benefit of any person or member ~~body~~.

Clause 6 – make the following marked up changes:

MEMBERSHIP

6. (a) Membership of the Council shall be open to any society, body, or association, or individual which is interested in or deals with the conservation of nature and natural resources, and subscribes to the Council's aims and objects and agrees to be bound by this Constitution either as a Full or Associate Member Body or as an Individual Member as hereinafter provided for.

(b) Admission to the Nature Conservation Council as a member shall be by resolution of the Executive or of the Annual Conference, provided however, that where the Executive admits members during the preceding twelve months it shall give notice thereof to the next Annual Conference. Admission shall date from the day on which such a resolution was passed except that nobody shall be admitted to membership within one month prior to the date of an Annual Conference.

....

(e) The Executive may, for causes which to it seem good and sufficient, cause a member ~~body~~ to be removed from membership of the Nature Conservation Council. Before this becomes effective, the member ~~body~~ shall be given thirty days' notice, during which ~~it~~they may request leave from the Executive to be heard before them. The Executive may but shall not be required to give a reason for its action in this matter.

(f) A ~~body~~ member who ~~which~~ has been removed from the membership of the Council in accordance with clause (e) may appeal to the next Annual or Special Conference for reinstatement.

(g) ~~Each member body shall pay annual dues as set out in the Schedule hereto. Membership fees and dues will be reviewed annually.~~

- (i) Each member shall pay annual dues as set out in accordance with this clause.
- (ii) By the end of March each year the Executive shall review and set the annual dues of members.
- (iii) The Executive shall notify all Member Bodies of any changes to dues within one month of a resolution passed under clause 6(g)(ii).
- (iv) The Executive shall make a document detailing annual dues publicly available.

(h) Annual dues of members shall be payable on the first of July each year and any member ~~body~~ which is more than three months in arrears and which fails to give a full and satisfactory explanation to the Executive, shall be deemed to have ceased to be a member of the Council.

....

(j) The liability of a ~~Full Member and an Associate Member~~ member to contribute towards:

- (i) payment of the debts and liabilities of the Council; and
- (ii) the costs, charges, and expenses upon the winding up of the Council be limited to the amount, if any, unpaid by that member of its membership dues as referred to in Clause 6(g).

~~(k) Changes to annual dues will be by resolution of the Executive, and notified to all member groups within one month of such resolution, and reported to the Annual Conference.~~

Clauses 7-11 - make the following marked up changes:

FULL MEMBER BODY - REQUIREMENTS FOR

7. Any body, society or organisation complying with the terms of clause 6(a) hereof ~~shall be entitled to apply for full membership~~ may be admitted as a Full Member Body of the Council.

RIGHTS OF FULL MEMBER BODIES – ~~RIGHTS OF~~

8. A Full Member Body shall have the right to be represented at Conferences by one or more delegates, depending on the size of its membership calculated in accordance with the Schedule hereto. For the purpose of this and subsequent clauses, only Member Bodies paying full dues shall be counted.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER BODY

9. (a) A body, society or organisation which would be eligible ~~for Full Membership to be a Full Member Body~~ but does not seek such membership, or one which does not have conservation as its primary interest although supporting the aims and objects of the Council, may be admitted as an Associate Member Body.

(b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the number of Associate Member Bodies admitted shall not exceed one-third of the number of the votes possessed by Full Member Bodies.

RIGHTS OF ASSOCIATE MEMBER BODIES

10. An Associate Member Body shall have the right to send one delegate to the Conference.

CORRESPONDING BODIES

11. (a) A body or society or association which does not wish to become either a Full or an Associate Member Body of the Council but wishes to maintain

liaison with it and through it with other bodies, may become a Corresponding Body.

Clause 11A be inserted:

11A Rights of Individual Members

(a) An individual complying with the terms of clause 6(a) hereof may be admitted as an Individual Member of the Council.

(b) Individual members shall have the right to attend Conferences, and submit motions for consideration by the Conference, but shall not have the right to vote.

Clauses 13 and 14 - make the following marked up changes:

THE CONFERENCE

13. (a) The Conference shall be the supreme governing body of the Council and an Annual Conference shall be held in September, October or November of each year. The Executive shall give not less than twenty-one days' notice in writing to each Member Body entitled to send a delegate or delegates to such Conference. Such notice must state the time and place of the said Annual Conference together with a resume of the business to be transacted thereat. Prior to such notice convening the said Annual Conference, the Executive shall give to each Member Body entitled as aforesaid, seventy-seven days' preliminary notice of the anticipated date of the Annual Conference for that year.

...

14. (e) Unless otherwise determined at an Annual Conference at which the quorum as hereinafter provided is present, the quorum at any Conference of the Nature Conservation Council shall be the representation of not less than one-third of the Member ~~Organisations~~ Bodies entitled to be represented at and send delegates to such Conference, provided however that such representation shall not be deemed sufficient to form a quorum unless representatives or delegates of Full Member Bodies are in majority.

Clause 20 - make the following marked up changes:

(e) The Executive may set up working groups or committees; it may refer matters to members ~~bodies~~ for comment or action, and it may speak for the Council, and it may by means of Executive resolution speak for the Council.

Clause 27 - make the following marked up changes:

27. (a) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, no decision of the Executive is binding on any member ~~body~~ and the Executive shall, in speaking on behalf of the Council, record the dissent of any member ~~body~~ whose dissent has been recorded under the terms of clause 16(c) hereof.

(b) Nothing in the foregoing shall be construed as limiting the freedom of any member ~~body~~ to take action on any matter which it thinks fit, regardless of any action taken by the Council. However, in taking action independently of the Council, a member ~~body~~ shall not use the Council's name nor involve the Council in any way.

Clause 29 - make the following marked up changes:

29. (a) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a register of members ~~Full Members and Associate Members~~ specifying the name and address of each body, society, association or person who ~~which~~ is a member, together with the date on which such body, society, association or person became a member.

BACKGROUND (explanation of recommended amendment):

The Executive recommends to the Annual Conference that a new category of individual membership be added to the Constitution as described below.

Our challenge: The climate change and biodiversity crisis is upon us. We know that the impacts on nature and humanity will not only be for future generation to endure, they are happening now. We have a responsibility to be the strongest voice for nature we can and to play our part in the global movement to curb the worst impacts of climate change and species loss. It is the role of NCC to provide a voice for nature, which cannot speak – and at the moment, our voices are not loud enough. NCC has a proud, 60 year legacy fighting to protect the environment in NSW. Now we must seize the opportunity to build a strong movement with which to step up our efforts to protect our forests, woodlands, oceans and natural legacy.

Our opportunity: NCC wants to create a big movement of people joining together to fight to protect nature in NSW.

Our federated model has served NCC well over a couple of generations, but it doesn't always address the challenges in a world saturated by Facebook and fast media cycles. In order to support a movement with the type of scale that will be required if we are to effect the political changes, NCC needs to better engage with all environmentally concerned members of our community. This means retaining the best of its current model, while making the changes required to increase our influence far into the future. Our organisation needs to:

1. Foster and support unity and focus amongst its member groups, for so long the real champions of nature in NSW.
2. Represent the environment in Parliament House, corporate boardrooms, and the other halls where power lies in NSW.
3. Have the people-power to effectively give voice to nature in a world in which it is increasingly difficult to gain political and media attention.

Changes to our constitution will allow us to expand the audience of people who want to work with us to achieve better environmental outcomes.

What is suggested are constitutional amendments that will allow NCC to retain the best of its current model, while allowing for upscaling of a type consistent with achieving the core mission to maximise the protection and preservation of nature - defending the organisation's wonderful legacy while also building the broad support required to fight the most important contemporary environmental battles.

What needs to change: We currently have 152 member groups. We need to increase our ability to recruit new people to our movement.

In order to build NCC's collective people power, we need to allow individuals that want to support our core purpose to become members of the organisation. For those who don't wish to join an existing member group, NCC can provide a direct avenue for engagement by supporting these people, by focusing on issues that will have the greatest impact on maximising protections for nature, ensuring individuals know their actions will make a difference, and empowering those people to take meaningful action while increasing their ties to the organisation.

We need to do this with integrity. If we want people to be part of NCC, provide financial support and be involved in the work we do we should invite them to be members of the organisation and be recognised as such in the Constitution.

Benefits to this constitutional change:

- Allowing individuals to be members of the organisation will strengthen their ties to the work we do. It allows us the opportunity to ensure that the people are asking for money, time and support are part of the organisation in a meaningful way.
- NCC will gain a broader collective reach. By bringing more people into the movement we will expose individuals to our member groups' work and encourage engagement with the broader activities of the movement. This grows our collective influence.
- Individuals will not have voting right so the power of setting policy, electing the Executive and other core business will remain with member groups.

The Executive was unanimous in its support for an individual membership program. There was discussion amongst the NCC Executive about whether individual membership should be recognised in the NCC Constitution or managed as a membership program without amending the Constitution. It was noted that other organisations have done so. The majority view is that it is advisable to put individual membership forward as a constitutional amendment.

A proposal to defer this motion due to lack of sufficient consultation with member bodies was narrowly lost. The original motion was then put.

Moved: Noel Plumb

Seconded: Gabrielle Appleby

LOST 12 votes to 37 (2 abstentions)

Motion 2016/A5

Constitution Amendment 4:

Election of Executive Councillors at the Annual Conference

Submitted by the Community Environment Network, Friends of Tumblebee, PACTEC, Trees of Bateau Bay

THAT the Constitution be amended as follows:

a) Insert after clause 19 (b)(i) a new clause (b)(ii) as follows:

(b) (ii) Persons nominating for election to the Executive must be a member of a Member Body of the NCC and their nomination endorsed by an Office Holder of that member body, confirming their membership status.

b) Subsequent numbering adjusted accordingly

As a result clause 19 (a) to (b) would read as follows:

THE EXECUTIVE

19. (a) The Executive shall be the governing body of the Council between Conferences and shall consist of Elected Councillors together with any Councillors who may be co-opted.
- (b) (i) Persons nominating for election to the Executive shall lodge their nomination in writing with the Chairperson of the Conference or the Chairperson's delegate before 2.00 pm on the first day of the Conference at which the election is to be held.
- (ii) Persons nominating for election to the Executive must be a member of a Member Body of the NCC and their nomination endorsed by an Office Holder of that member body, confirming their membership status.**
- (iii) The nomination shall be seconded by two voting delegates to the Conference before the election is held.
- (iv) Persons nominating may lodge at the office of the Council a written statement of not more than 200 words up to seven days prior to the Conference, which the Chairperson shall distribute or display to Conference delegates on the first day; and
- (v) the Chairperson shall, on the day of the election and before the vote is taken, allow each candidate the opportunity to address the Conference for a period of no more than three minutes or such further period of time as may be specified in the rules for elections made by the Returning Officer and approved by the Executive from time to time.
- (vi) a person may seek election to the Executive as a candidate for a specific country zone, being either the northern, western or southern zone as described in the Second Schedule, and may present to the Conference their case for election on that basis.

BACKGROUND (explanation of recommended amendment):

Currently any individual may be elected to the Executive of NCC with the only requirement being that the "nomination shall be seconded by two voting delegates to the Conference before the election is to be held" (Clause 19b(ii) of the NCC Constitution). There is no requirement on that individual to be a member of a NCC member group.

The Annual Conference of Member groups is the "governing body of the Council". There is a growing disconnect between the decision-making of the member groups at the NCC Annual Conference and the decision-making of the NCC Executive.

This motion proposes that there be a requirement that the Councillors elected to the NCC Executive are members of NCC member groups and their nomination be formally endorsed by that NCC member group.

This is not intended to deter the excellent work that NCC staff are doing in modernising our organisation, rather it is to ensure that the NCC remains accountable to its member groups, the governing body of the Council.

This does also not prohibit or alter the ability of the NCC Executive to co-opt individuals to the Executive (currently no more than 2 additional persons - see Clause 19(d) of the Constitution).

Further, it is hoped that this amendment will prompt individuals with talents and skills who wish to contribute to the NCC Executive, to also see value in participating in a grassroots member body of the NCC.

If this amendment to the Constitution is successful, it is intended to take effect at the 2017 Annual Conference.

Moved: Jane Smith

Seconded: James Ryan

CARRIED 41 votes to 10

Motion 2016/A6

Member Group Support Program

Submitted by the Community Environment Network, Friends of Tumblebee, PACTEC and Trees of Bateau Bay

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) adopt a policy whereby a Member Group Support Program is established that includes the following:

- a) Establishing a sub-committee comprising representatives of NCC member groups, and inviting Regional Representatives (representatives of northern, western and southern zones) that will:
 - (i) Develop a program that is focused on developing the capacity of member groups in responding to local and regional issues. This program may include workshops and resources in areas such as, but not limited to: campaigning, membership recruitment, social media, media training, training in direct action, fundraising, etc.;

- (ii) Oversee a regional conference each year (in addition to the NCC Annual Conference);
- (iii) Promote the clearing house of resources and information that is provided by NCC and available for member groups;
- (iv) Be separately identified in NCC financial reports and report to the existing Member Services Advisory Committee or its successor.

AND THAT:

- b) the Member Services Advisory Committee make recommendations to the Executive regarding the program, provide oversight and monitor its expenditure; and
- c) these actions be progressed within 3 months of the new Executive being elected.

BACKGROUND: The prime aims and objects of the Nature Conservation Council are "the conservation of nature, the protection of the environment and the attainment of an ecologically sustainable society" (NCC Constitution).

As noted in the background for proposed constitutional changes: *We have a responsibility to be the strongest voice for nature ... we can to play our part in the global movement to curb the worst impacts of climate change and species loss. ... Now we must seize the opportunity to build a strong movement with which to step up our efforts to protect our forests, woodlands, oceans and natural legacy ...*

NCC as a statewide organisation has a need to focus campaign efforts in key areas which will have an impact at a state level.

However, whilst focusing on these state wide issues, we need to also recognise that there are many and significant environmental impacts at a local and regional level. We are in danger of 'death by a thousand cuts' if we don't build the capacity of grassroots community groups to campaign on these local and regional issues.

The battles and issues that our member groups are facing are significant in their own right. NCC is not able to fight every campaign and at every level, however has an important role in building the capacity of our member groups to fight and win those important grassroots campaigns.

We are not going to succeed if we don't activate grassroots communities. This needs to be a two-way street, NCC should not only focus on engaging member groups that support NCC core campaigns but also needs to build the capacity of member groups to fight their own campaigns on local and regional issues.

"Active citizenship, the power to take action and to respond at the grassroots level, retreats in the face of ever increasing technocracy, professionalism and expertise" (Cormac Russell). NCC needs to be proactive in identifying, connecting and mobilising the assets within communities and our member groups. The solution to the most intractable problems that we face starts from the grassroots, from inside out.

We are fortunate to have outstanding staff that are modernising the organisation and bringing a new range of skills to NCC. The proposed Member Group Support Program is an opportunity to share those talents and skills to strengthen the conservation movement.

This motion is important in stating a clear policy to prioritise member group support work, otherwise it will easily get lost in the never ending urgency of high profile, statewide campaigns in a challenging political environment.

Moved as amended: Jane Smith

Seconded: John Asquith

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

B. Planning and Development

Motion 2016/B1

Visual impact of new wind farms

Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Government encouraging them not to have such strict visual impact conditions for new wind farms as stated in draft windfarm legislation.

BACKGROUND: NSW has the lowest amount of renewable energy of all states with only 6% in 2014. Meanwhile the NSW government continues to approve new coal mines and major coal mine expansions.

The visual impact of wind turbines is clearly much less significant than major projects such as open cut coal mines or high rise residential buildings. Wind projects should therefore warrant less stringent assessment requirements. It is unacceptable to overemphasise visual impacts to appease neighbouring landholders. The critical benefits of increased renewable energy in achieving a safe climate are much more important than some local residents' concerns. These could still be considered but in the context of the bigger picture. It is likely that a modest level of compensation would result in these concerns being allayed.

For more information refer to: <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/~media/3EFB762A3A4F4B14922DF734A4442848.ashx>

Moved: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Jill Hartley

CARRIED

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

Motion 2016/B2

Pacific Highway upgrade: assistance for Friends of the Koala

Submitted by Friends of the Koala

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW assist and support the actions of Friends of the Koala, and other member groups, in their efforts to amend inappropriate approval conditions, which will negatively affect koalas and other threatened species, being carried out by NSW Roads and Maritime Services in upgrading the Pacific Highway from Woolgoolga to Ballina.

BACKGROUND: Federal approval of the scientifically flawed Ballina Koala Plan in July and the naïve, poorly informed associated Koala Plan of Management (KPoM) in August, gave the green light to Section 10 and to the NSW Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) to proceed with the entire Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade Project.

Having lost our 12 year battle to secure a route for Section 10 away from the nationally significant koala population in the southern part of Ballina Shire and in light of advice from the Environmental Defender's Office that legal recourse is unlikely to achieve success, Friends of the Koala has reconsidered its position.

We now believe that our most effective role will be to attempt working with RMS, keeping an eagle eye on them and constantly bringing the short-comings of the KPoM and their on-ground work to their attention with the aim of persuading them to review and modify inappropriate and ineffectual actions so as to improve the outcomes for the koalas. To this end we are actively lobbying RMS to form a Koala Working Group for Section 10, membership of which will include Friends of the Koala.

A risk in choosing this path will be reduced capacity for publically challenging RMS on issues that may not be able to be resolved from 'inside'. For this, the assistance of a range of supporters including the NCC will be necessary.

Moved: Lorraine Vass

Seconded: Jennie Minifie

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: NCC to work with Friends of the Koala and other member groups over the pre-construction and construction phases of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Project (estimated to be four years) to prepare submissions, parliamentary questions, freedom of information applications, media releases, and participate in discussions, etc. with the aim of achieving better outcomes for koalas and other threatened species, including endangered ecological communities, imperilled by the Pacific Highway Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade.

C. Climate Change & Energy

Motion 2016/C1

The Climate Emergency Declaration Petition

Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW sign on to the Climate Emergency Declaration Petition and encourage member groups to sign on and join the campaign as well.

The Climate Emergency Declaration Petition

To Members of the House of Representatives and Senators:

We call on the Australian Parliament to declare a climate emergency and to mobilise resources to restore a safe climate.

BACKGROUND: In February 2016, global temperatures spiked to well over 1.5°C above pre-industrial times, just weeks after the Paris Climate Agreement set an aim of not exceeding that benchmark. Climate scientists say that we are facing a climate emergency, and that the future of ecosystems and human civilisation now hang in the balance. Our Great Barrier Reef is dying as the oceans heat up and recent fires in Tasmania burned ancient world-heritage forests.

Declaring a climate emergency is a vital step in building support for the very large changes required to restore a safe, cooler climate.

A society-wide mobilisation of resources is required at a scale and speed not seen since the Second World War. Carbon emissions must be reduced to zero within a few years, not several decades, and we must draw down all the excess carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere using measures that include mass tree planting. We must rapidly transition from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy, replacing fossil fuel jobs with jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Climate restoration is an enormous task, but given the risks to ourselves and future generations we must rise to the challenge.

For more information about climate emergency goals, see the report Striking Targets at: <http://climateemergencydeclaration.org/petition2/#sthash.VhWACzXy.dpuf>

Moved: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Jill Hartley **CARRIED**

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/C2

Setting an Emissions Reduction Target for NSW

Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the NSW Government to set an Emissions Reduction Target for NSW at least 45-65% below 2005 levels by 2025, at least 65-85% below 2005 levels by 2030, culminating in net zero emissions by 2040-2050.

BACKGROUND: NSW introduced one of the world's first mandatory emissions trading schemes, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme (GGAS) which focused on electricity retailers and required the meeting of mandatory emissions reduction targets. The GGAS took effect in January 2003. The benchmark target was 5% reduction in per capita greenhouse gas emissions from 1989-1990 levels, continuing through to 2021. Unfortunately it did not last very long and today NSW has no target.

Moved: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Jill Hartley *CARRIED*

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/C3

Closing NSW coal-fired power plants by 2030

Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW insist that the NSW Government develop a long-term plan to close NSW coal-fired power plants by 2030.

BACKGROUND: Coal-fired electricity generators are well-aware that their power stations must close for Australia to meet its Paris agreement obligations. However, there is currently no NSW Government plan to support or require generators to close in a timely manner. NCC should demand that the NSW Government immediately prioritise the development of a Climate Change Strategy which addresses coal-fired power station closure and supports a just transition for affected communities.

Moved: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Jill Hartley *CARRIED*

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/C4

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY 2016

Submitted by the Executive

The Nature Conservation Council's original Climate Change Policy was endorsed (in principle) by the 1992 NCC Annual Conference and subsequently updated in 2008. This revised version was workshopped at the 2015 NCC Annual Conference and finalised by the Climate and Energy Working Group with input from some Executive members.

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1 Climate change refers to long-lasting changes to world climate patterns such as average temperatures, rainfall and incidence of severe weather events. Changing weather patterns pose existential risks for human and natural systems.

1.2 The current level of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases is the biggest driver of changing climate patterns including more extreme weather across the world and is ecologically unsustainable.

1.3 The urgent nature of the global threat posed by climate change was recognised by 195 countries plus the European Union at the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, under which the parties, including Australia, have committed to reaching the global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible in an effort to hold the increase in the global average temperature to *'well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels with a view to limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels'*.

1.4 Australia has a special obligation to act given that we are responsible for the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in the OECD, and given that our wealth has been partly built on emissions-intensive activities the result of which now threaten life on the planet and especially many poorer nations, including nearby island nations that are the least responsible for emissions.

1.5 The main human sources of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and ocean are:

- energy production;
- mining;
- transport;
- agriculture; forestry and other land use;
- manufacturing; and
- decomposition of organic waste

1.6 Solutions to reduce greenhouse gas levels and combat changing climatic conditions include:

- tackling Australia's emissions at source - stationary energy, transport, mining, land use;
- sequestering greenhouse gases from the atmosphere through increasing biomass and soil carbon;
- using renewable energy sources in preference to fossil fuel sources
- increasing energy efficiencies;
- preventing habitat loss such as native forests and wetlands and supporting their restoration where possible, to increase the carbon dioxide (CO₂) sink;

- reducing meat consumption; and
- reducing population growth and consumption per capita to environmentally sustainable levels.

1.7 NSW has a key role to play in combating climate change and there are a number of solutions that can be implemented at a state level, to keep warming below 2 degrees.

- (a) Protect our forests, bushland, wetlands and coastal and marine environments as carbon stores and wildlife havens;
- (b) Keep coal and gas in the ground; and
- (c) Implement a strong renewable energy target for NSW to drive clean energy investment, and introduce appropriate mechanisms for reaching this target.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

2.1 To recommend legislation and policy changes by which all levels of government will be able to implement the above solutions.

2.2 To recommend ways our society and its economy can achieve the above solutions as well as measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

2.3 To recommend ways our member groups can address climate change in their communities.

3. CALL ON GOVERNMENT

The NCC calls on the Federal government to:

3.1 Urgently work with the international scientific community to identify the best ways to keep global warming below 1.5- 2°C, to meet Australia's obligations under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. These pathways will be based on the best available science and with a low probability of overshooting this temperature.

3.2 Commit to reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and aim for a national net zero carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2040.

3.3 Commit to a target of 100% renewable energy by 2030.

3.4 Ensure that any long-term targets are supported by specific interim targets for periods of between one and three years.

The NCC calls on the State and Federal governments to:

3.5 Reduce activities that contribute to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, such as the clearing of native vegetation including marine vegetation, draining of wetlands and native vegetation, and abolish subsidies for fossil fuel, transport and energy-intensive industries;

3.6 Commit financial and human resources to the development of performance indicators, precise milestones and ongoing monitoring of government performance on reducing emissions, with full public access and right to comment and review the effectiveness of the strategies in meeting the targets; and

3.8 Ensure that the process and the results of any monitoring are open to the public with opportunity for comment and review.

3.9 The targets set out above must be seen as minimum and precautionary and may need to be further tightened if subsequent scientific evidence demands.

4. MORE DETAILED STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Funding for such measures could come from:

- a carbon price in the form of sale of emissions permits in an emissions trading scheme (see 4.1 below);
- the abolition of subsidies to the fossil fuel industries; and
- an equitable tax regime.

4.1 Reinstatement of carbon pollution pricing scheme

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW recommends that a carbon pollution pricing scheme should be introduced, incorporating the following design principles:

- (a) 100% auctioning of permits, i.e. no free permits to be allocated.
- (b) revenue from the auction of permits should be distributed to:
 - investment in research and development in low-carbon technologies low-income households (although assistance to households should be provided in ways that do not blunt the carbon price signal – e.g. through promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy incentives and increased accessibility to public transport infrastructure);
 - finance for retraining and a just transition for coal impacted communities;
 - development of education and training for green jobs;
 - land stewardship payments; and
 - local adaptation measures.
- (c) removal of financial assistance to coal-powered electricity generators and removal of diesel fuel rebates for mining sector.
- (d) any imported international emissions credits must be additional to the emission cuts Australia needs to make domestically.
- (e) complementary measures such as Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET), National Framework for Energy Efficiency, and a Feed-in Tariff are still required (see below at 4.2).

4.2 Stationary Energy Production – Electricity

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW recommends:

4.2.1 Extending the current Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) for electricity to a minimum of 50% renewable energy generation by 2025 and 100% renewable by 2030.

4.2.2 Legislating a National Renewable Energy Feed-in Tariff (NREFT) that is at parity with the wholesale price and meets the following criteria:

- (a) contracts should be made for a minimum of 10 years;
- (b) connection of renewable energy must be a priority obligation for the distributor;
- (c) qualifying generators must not include those already in operation or already participating in the NREFT scheme – ensuring the tariff applies only to genuinely additional renewable energy; and
- (d) Generators predominantly meeting peak loads to receive a substantial premium over the wholesale bulk price.

4.2.3 Decreasing reliance on thermal coal or gas by supporting the development of renewable energy and non-fossil-fuel-based, low-emissions technologies and prioritising the orderly closure of coal power plants starting with the oldest and most polluting. Gas fired power plants should also be closed as renewable energy replaces the need for them.

4.2.4 The use of low risk, renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, wave and tidal be vigorously promoted by fiscal, regulatory and marketing strategies. Also that geothermal power be still considered as a possible renewable source in the future.

4.2.5 Encouraging the use of energy storage in homes, microgrids and the main network.

4.2.6 Ceasing the extension of the electricity grid by the NSW Government to remote areas of NSW, and instead providing renewable energy and energy storage, which will be more effective in these areas.

4.3 Reduction of energy use

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the Federal Government to set a national energy efficiency target for each year and put in place initiatives to improve efficiency in accordance with the following principles:

4.3.1 The introduction or improvement of energy reduction standards for:

- housing;
- cars;
- appliances;
- public transport; and
- manufacturing.

4.3.2 Improvements to planning guidelines for urban consolidation to include vegetation as a carbon sink and to reduce heat island effects.

4.3.3 The reduction, reuse and recycling of waste products and processing of suitable waste to manufacture products.

4.3.4 The accelerated implementation, tightening and broader coverage of new buildings standards and the appropriate fiscal and other economic incentives and disincentives to accelerate the implementation of such strategies.

4.4 Changes to Transport

Emissions from transport are responsible for about 15% of Australia's national greenhouse pollution.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls for emissions from transport to be reduced through:

4.4.1 a national fuel efficiency standard for vehicles;

4.4.2 town planning and on-line work practices to reduce commuting;

4.4.3 encouraging walking and cycling through safe footpaths and cycleways;

4.4.4 encouraging public transport vehicles powered by renewable energy through incentives for the purchase of vehicles powered by renewable energy, including the rapid increase of infrastructure for recharging electric vehicles;

4.4.5 more railways within and between cities, including high speed intercity rail links to reduce the use of road and air transport;

4.4.6 development of technology to make all forms of transport cleaner;

4.4.7 the evaluation of all government grants for transport to include an assessment of their greenhouse gas emissions; and

4.4.8 the use by the federal government of conditional federal rail grants (under Section 96 of the Constitution) to promote, and immediately switch priority to, the expansion of rail based freight systems.

4.5 Changes to Agriculture

Agriculture is responsible for 17% of current greenhouse gas emissions in Australia, including most of the methane emissions and a significant proportion of the nitrous oxide.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls for:

4.5.1 the promotion of alternative non-fossil fuel based energy within the agriculture sector.

4.5.2 the introduction of economic incentives for revegetation, and a legislated end to broad-acre clearing of native vegetation as well as an end to all native forest logging on public land. This will increase the store of carbon in the forest.

4.5.3 further research as to the relative contribution of greenhouse gases from the different sectors of agriculture, and research into how these emissions can be measured and reported with a view to including agriculture within the scope of a carbon pollution pricing scheme. This research should be made publicly available.

4.5.4 large-scale revegetation of agricultural lands in the context of Total Catchment Management (TCM).

4.5.5 development of ways to convert genuine waste biomass (e.g. stubble) into energy products or biochar.

4.5.6 the introduction of economic incentives to encourage higher levels of sustainable production in an increasingly variable climate and open markets where all food products must be at least initially offered for domestic sale.

4.6 Changes to Forestry

Forestry is responsible for about 1% of emissions.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls on the NSW government to:

4.6.1 restore native habitat, and legislate an end to broad-acre clearing of native vegetation This will increase the store of carbon in the forest.

4.6.2 end native forest logging.

4.6.3 regenerate degraded areas and improve water catchments.

4.7 Planning

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls on all levels of government to:

4.7.1 establish comprehensive zoning plans to co-ordinate development and habitat conservation, including appropriate zones or development controls that protect areas of high conservation value including marine areas.

4.7.2 ensure there is an adequate conservation system of parks, reserves, buffer zones, corridors, botanic gardens, zoos and gene banks for the purpose of maintaining biodiversity in response to climate change.

4.7.3 develop integrated land-use planning systems that enable the sustainable use of present natural resources and limit the expansion of urbanisation and infrastructure development in outer suburban areas.

4.7.4 review local health, building and development codes in terms of their relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

4.7.5 develop strategies to cope with predicted effects such as bushfire, flooding, inundation, altered river flows and water supplies.

4.7.6 develop strategies to adapt to predicted effects of sea level rise and increased likeliness of extreme weather events, including coastal erosion, flooding on coastal ecosystems and Aboriginal cultural heritage, ocean acidification, changing ocean currents and temperatures.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls on Local Government within NSW to:

4.7.6 participate in Total Catchment Management planning in order to promote the efficient use of water and the mitigation of the adverse impact of flooding, urban run-off and stormwater disposal in response to predicted instability of rainfall patterns.

4.7.7 water used in mining to be included in water sharing and catchment management planning.

4.7.8 adopt greenhouse gas reduction strategies at a local level including, land use and planning, energy efficiency in buildings, vegetation conservation and tree planting, waste reduction and transport infrastructure.

4.8 Changes to Industry

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW recommends that:

4.8.1 mandatory energy-use reduction targets be set for all industrial and commercial energy consumers.

4.8.2 all such energy consumers be required to carry out an energy audit at least every five years.

4.9 Changes to Mining in Australia

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls for:

4.9.1 a moratorium on the startup of new coalmines or new coal seam gas development.

4.9.2 changes to discourage expansion or continuation of existing coal export operations.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls on the Federal Government to:

4.9.3 Legislate to ban political contributions from mining companies and developers.

4.10 Waste Minimisation

As a guiding principle, waste minimisation must apply to resources, energy and humans and energy from waste should not include any native forest materials.

5. INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL STRATEGIES

Following the commitment of 195 countries plus the European Union to keeping the global average surface temperature rise to well below 1.5- 2°C at the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges the Federal Government to:

5.1 show continued international leadership in reaching the commitments made in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

5.2 urgently work with the international community to identify emissions pathways for developed and developing countries to keep global warming below a 1.5-2°C increase from the pre-industrial levels, based on the best available science.

5.3 restore funding and focus Australian aid programming to prioritise for energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate change adaptation funding to developing countries, particularly in the Pacific Region.

5.4 provide assistance to developing nations to move to renewable energy systems and to benefit from investment in renewables and carbon offsetting.

5.5 support debt-for-nature swaps with developing countries.

5.6 support large-scale international afforestation and habitat restoration programs.

5.7 participate in aid projects that provide sustainable protection of tropical forests and other endangered habitats through ecotourism, carbon offsetting and other bio services.

6. COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW urges all:

6.1 to promote community awareness that individuals can make a difference by:

- reducing the amount of energy used in the home;
- using renewable sources of energy;
- decreasing their emissions from cars;
- using public transport instead of cars wherever possible;
- walking or riding a bicycle;
- avoiding products that produce large amounts of emissions in manufacture, e.g. aluminium, or give off GHG, e.g. aerosols;
- refusing, reducing, reusing and recycling products/materials - in that order of priority;
- rejecting unnecessary packaging;
- eating fresh rather than food that has produced excessive emissions, e.g. refrigerated, heated, or preserved foods;
- reducing the amount of meat eaten;
- divesting their investments and superannuation away from fossil fuel industries and their financiers; and
- joining a local community climate action group, No Coal or No CSG group or a community power group.

6.2 to encourage and support local organisations to develop educational and community awareness programs to help people become aware of the environmental and social implications of climate change on their local communities.

Moved as amended: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Jill Hartley **CARRIED**

D. Biodiversity Conservation

Motion 2016/D1

Land management and biodiversity laws

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

NOTING THAT the *Draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016* and *Draft Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016* will lead to significant increases in land clearing; reduced habitat for native flora and fauna, including threatened species; reduced soil quality; increased erosion; reduced water quality; and increased carbon emissions, and specifically that:

- Important land clearing laws will be repealed;
- The legal requirement to ‘improve or maintain biodiversity values’ is being removed;
- There are no absolute protections for areas of high conservation value;
- The expansion of land clearing codes will lead to a significant increase in land clearing;
- The proposed native vegetation regulatory map will lead to perverse outcomes, including increased clearing;
- There will be increased reliance on offsetting, however important offsetting rules will be discarded;
- The role of the environment minister is reduced and there is significant ministerial discretion in applying the new rules;
- There is no recognition of climate implications;
- Changes to wildlife licensing and wildlife rehabilitation will mean less oversight;
- Changes to private land conservation weaken existing measures, and have not been subject to cost-benefit analysis or consultation with involved landholders;
- There is an overreliance on government funding to achieve conservation gains;
- There is inadequate detail in relation to monitoring and enforcement;
- The proposed new laws contradict existing policy and conservation efforts;
- The draft Bills do not meet the stated aims of the Biodiversity Legislation Review,

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW reaffirm its position that the NSW Government should withdraw the *Draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016* and *Draft Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016*, and use committed biodiversity conservation funding to improve the current system and support landholders to undertake private land conservation within the current framework.

BACKGROUND: Biodiversity is in decline in NSW. When Europeans arrived in 1788 there were an estimated 897 species of native terrestrial vertebrates found in NSW. Since that time 12 bird species (2%) and 25 mammals (9%) have become extinct in NSW. The latest NSW State of the Environment Report (2015) shows that this decline is continuing, with 999 species of plants and animals and 108 ecological communities listed as threatened under NSW legislation¹.

Clearing of native vegetation and the associated destruction of habitat has been identified as the process representing the greatest single threat to biodiversity in NSW². Land clearing is listed as a key threatening process under both NSW and Commonwealth biodiversity legislation. Protecting habitat and controlling land clearing is therefore essential if further biodiversity loss is to be avoided. The pressure of an increasing population and economic growth means that land clearing and development impacts on biodiversity are significant.

We are living in a time of rapid climatic change, and considerations of climate change are imperative for effective land management and biodiversity conservation. For example, climate change will disrupt the 'climatic envelope' for many species and in response these species will either alter their distributions to more suitable climatic zones or go extinct. For less mobile species and habitat specialists, connectivity of high quality native vegetation will be key to determining whether they can move in the landscape, and therefore whether they can persist in the face of climate change.

The protection of biodiversity is important in its own right; however, it is also fundamental for maintaining healthy ecosystem services and, subsequently, our way of life. In fact, a comprehensive report on ecosystem services and Australian Natural Resource Management stated that: *"Protecting as much biodiversity as possible is a wise strategy for managing risks associated with medium-term and long-term climate change and other environmental changes and for keeping future management options open"*³.

Our current laws, while not perfect, have played crucial roles in the protection of biodiversity in NSW by improving knowledge about biodiversity; the independent listing of threatened species; creation of an objective test of environmental impacts and use of the 'maintain and improve' test.

If implemented, the proposed biodiversity reform package will lead to significant increases in land clearing; reduced habitat for native flora and fauna, including threatened species; reduced soil quality; increased erosion; reduced water quality; and increased carbon emissions.

Further information: www.standupfornature.org.au/resources

Moved: Grahame Douglas

Seconded: Anne Reeves

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

¹ NSW State of Environment Report 2015, p 104, www.epa.nsw.gov.au/soe/soe2015/index.htm

² NSW State of Environment Report 2015, p 114 www.epa.nsw.gov.au/soe/soe2015/index.htm

³ Cork et. al. 2007: *Ecosystem services and Australian natural resource management (NRM) futures*: paper to the Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee (NRPPC) and the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC)

Motion 2016/D2

NSW Council mergers – bushland protection

Submitted by the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for the Environment seeking assurances that in all merged councils the environmental policies regarding protection and maintenance of bushland are based on the highest standards that are now in place in respect of councils that have been merged.

BACKGROUND: Over the past 40 years there has been a major growth in the recognition of the value of Lane Cove bushland as a source for the preservation of biodiversity, a haven for wildlife, a valuable recreational resource and an aesthetic delight. This growth and awareness has been fostered by members of the community working with Lane Cove Council and educating the public, councillors and council staff on the value of our remarkable asset. The increasing development density in Lane Cove reinforces the need to continue to maintain and enhance our bushland. Many thousands of volunteer hours have been put into bush regeneration and rehabilitation alongside Council funded contractors.

One measure of the importance attached to bushland is Lane Cove Council's funding for bushland. Lane Cove Council spends about \$1,343,000 per annum of which about \$130,000 is from grants. The \$1,200,000 of ratepayers' expenditure is about \$35 per head of population or \$92 per residential ratepayer, whereas Ryde and Hunters Hill spend about a third of these amounts. Ryde will be the dominant part of the amalgamation and its relatively low spend reflects a much lower value placed on bushland, even though Ryde has 205 hectares and Lane Cove 93 hectares, which will probably result in less being spent in Lane Cove. This could result in the undoing of years of dedicated bush regeneration and maintenance in Lane Cove LGA.

Moved: Ron Gornall

Seconded: Frances Vissel

CARRIED

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

Motion 2016/D3

Moratorium on logging koala habitat in public native forests

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Environment Minister, Mark Speakman calling for an immediate moratorium on the logging of koala food and shelter trees in public native forests in NSW, pending a full independent investigation into the current age-class distribution of public native forests and the impacts of logging on koalas and other forest dependent species.

BACKGROUND: A recent report by the Environment Protection Authority ('Koala Habitat Mapping Pilot. NSW State Forests') contained strong evidence that the presence of koalas is positively associated with the diameter of their food trees. Correlations between diameter at breast height of trees and detection of koalas ranged between 0.83 and 0.95 and correlations were strong regardless of location

(Royal Camp SF, Carwong SF and Clouds Creek SF) or tree species (*Eucalyptus propinqua*, *E. mollucanna*, and *E. microcorys*).

These new data support previous studies that have identified the koala's preference for larger diameter trees. The increasing intensity of native forest logging was illustrated in the most recent NSW State of Environment Report (SoE) which found that logging is now responsible for the vast majority of cover loss in NSW on an annual basis, and that cover loss due to logging has been increasing annually. The SoE data suggest that an increased proportion of the public forest estate is changing to a younger (and therefore smaller diameter) age class, but the Forestry Corporation has not reported adequately on the age class changes in logged forests, despite requirements to do so.

Given the clear preference of koalas for larger diameter trees, and the documented sharp declines in koala populations, logging of koala food and shelter tree species should stop immediately pending an investigation.

Moved: Anne Reeves

Seconded: David Stead

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/D4

Saving our Species (SOS) koala strategy

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Environment Minister, Mark Speakman, to strongly recommend that the release of the Saving our Species (SOS) strategy for the koala is accompanied by new reservations in all of the SOS koala management zones, including a new reserve to protect key koala populations in the Coffs Harbour locality.

BACKGROUND: SOS is set to fund just \$800,000 of an identified \$3.3 million worth of potential on-ground koala projects in year one. Given this lack of ambition, SOS cannot hope to overcome the large policy problems (native forest logging, urban expansion in coastal NSW and lack of compliance with SEPP 44 and climate change) that threaten the persistence of koalas in NSW.

Large public reserves are required, particularly in the coastal forests which are under-represented in the public reserve system. A 2015 paper (*Conserving koalas: a review of the contrasting regional trends, outlooks and policy challenges*) by leading Australian koala ecologists noted that a range of threats to koalas needed to be dealt with simultaneously, but stated '*central to [conserving koalas] is the conservation of remaining habitat because it is so difficult and expensive to restore*'.

The Great Koala National Park was designed to protect two of the most important koala meta-populations (Guy Fawkes—Coffs Harbour and Bellinger—Nambucca—Macleay) estimated to contain up to 4,500 koalas. Since the GKNP proposal, a report by the Office of Environment and Heritage (*A Preliminary Map of the Likelihood of Koala Occurrence in NSW: comparison of preliminary baseline likelihood of occurrence mapping with koala habitat mapping on the NSW north coast*) also highlighted the GKNP area as having a high to very high likelihood of koala occurrence and high confidence in the findings. In addition, the recent Environment

Protection Authority project (*Koala Habitat Mapping Pilot. NSW State Forests*) identified Clouds Creek and Royal Camp State Forests as having high abundance and diversity of koala feed trees, and high koala activity which illustrates their importance to koala conservation.

Moved Grahame Douglas
Seconded: David Stead

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/D5

Trial release of Tasmanian Devils in NSW

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on Environment Minister, Mark Speakman, to fund a Population Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) to inform a trial release of Tasmanian Devils in NSW.

BACKGROUND: Trial introductions of Tasmanian devils onto mainland Australia have been advocated by academics and other conservation managers for some time, in order to help tackle the seemingly intractable problem of negative impacts of introduced predators on native fauna, particularly mammals. At the recent National Rewilding Forum, several individuals and groups again identified a trial reintroduction of devils as a key strategy to restore ecosystem function. That devils would help achieve this is evident from studies in Tasmania that show an increase in feral cat populations accompanying the decline in devil populations from Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) and a concurrent decline in previously common mammals such as the eastern quoll.

Participants clearly stated the need for action and ambition to help reverse the decline in Australian biodiversity. Ideal sites exist in NSW (and in other states) for reintroduction, and a draft reintroduction plan has already been developed by scientists at University of Tasmania and University of NSW. With the apparent rapid adaptation of devils to DFTD in Tasmania, insurance populations in NSW may also in future be able to provide animals to other mainland states to help assist devil conservation and the conservation of other small marsupials and native mammals. This would help determine whether demonstrated conservation successes in fenced, feral free enclosures can be replicated in future, beyond fences.

Moved: Anne Reeves
Seconded: Graeme Wiffen

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/D6

Declaration of feral deer as pests

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Environment Minister, Mark Speakman, Premier Baird and Minister Blair (Primary Industries) to declare feral deer a pest species, urging the implementation of a

State-wide feral deer containment strategy to limit further damage to the environment.

BACKGROUND: Deer are invasive, non-native species that damage the environment and are consequently listed as pest animals in most Australian States and Territories. Instead of being listed as pests, feral deer are currently protected in NSW as game for hunters. This is despite herbivory and environmental degradation caused by feral deer being listed as a Key Threatening Process under the threatened species act.

Feral deer populations are increasing rapidly in the three states yet to declare them pests, prompting parliamentary inquiries in Tasmania and Victoria and a Natural Resources Commission (NRC) draft report on pest animal management in March 2016 outlining extensive impacts of feral deer on this State's environment (<http://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/pest-animal-management>). The NRC draft report recommended that feral deer be declared as pest species in NSW.

In a submission to the NRC in May 2016 (made jointly with the Invasive Species Council and BirdLife Australia), NCC expressed strong support for the draft recommendation, and urged that it be augmented in the final report with a recommendation for a state-wide feral deer containment strategy.

With the new Biosecurity Act 2015 to come into force in 2017 and Government now considering the NRC's final report and recommendations on pest animal management, it is timely to convey a clear message to Government on this matter.

The Nature Conservation Council notes that:

- a) The Natural Resources Commission draft report on pest animal management has recommended the status of deer in NSW should be changed from game animals to pest animals. *And therefore,*
- b) Calls on the NSW Government to remove the protection of feral deer under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002, to declare all species of feral deer as pests under NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 regulations, and implement a State-wide pest deer containment strategy.

Moved: Grahame Douglas

Seconded: Patrick Medway **CARRIED**

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Motion 2016/D7
BIOSECURITY POLICY

Submitted by the Invasive Species Council

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW adopt the Biosecurity Policy below, as a replacement for its present Feral and Introduced Animals and Plants Policy.

BACKGROUND: Invasive exotic weeds, pests and pathogens are among the most severe threats to the natural environment at global, national and local level. The protection of the environment, economy and public health from negative impacts associated with the entry, establishment or spread of invasive biota is known as biosecurity.

NCC has an existing Feral and Introduced Animals and Plants Policy that displays no date of adoption and appears somewhat dated. Invasive species policy ideas have developed considerably in recent years, with many recent policy reforms including the new NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 to come into force in 2017, and new biosecurity threats like red fire ant and myrtle rust incursions and a rapid increase in deer numbers at state and national level.

Adoption of a new policy covering all invasive species and reflecting up to date knowledge of biosecurity will provide a solid basis for NCC to engage effectively in current and future biosecurity policy debates, to help reduce threats to the state's environment from invasive species.

BIOSECURITY POLICY

Purpose

To equip the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) to work on biosecurity and invasive species issues in a way that increases environmental outcomes for NSW. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant NCC policies.

Policy

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW:

1. Understands that invasive species are one of the greatest threats to the natural environment of NSW and that strong biosecurity is essential to the state's environmental health;
2. Maintains that protection and stewardship of the natural environment, including biodiversity and ecosystem processes, must be an integral part of NSW biosecurity policy and practice;
3. Notes that prevention of new invasions is by far the most effective biosecurity measure, and so prevention must be the strongest component of this state's biosecurity system;

4. Promotes strong surveillance programs to detect any invasive species that evade prevention;
5. Urges rapid action to eradicate and/or to contain invasive species that evade prevention, and the development of contingency plans in readiness for the arrival of high-risk invasive species;
6. Encourages consistent, transparent science-based risk assessments of all invasive species (at all taxonomic levels);
7. Encourages regular independent reporting on biosecurity risks and performance and the identification of future risks (foresighting and horizon scanning), such as through a regular state of biosecurity report;
8. Supports application of a “white list” approach to all invasive species, listing those that are safe to bring into and trade within NSW, not just those that are (so far) known to be *unsafe*, with safe species and taxon being those assessed as having a low risk of establishing in the wild;
9. Advocates use of the precautionary principle in regard to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems from the threat of invasive species;
10. Calls for strong governance of the state’s biosecurity system including adequate independent oversight, and the inclusion of environmental interests and experts in all biosecurity decision-making processes that pertain to protection of the natural environment;
11. Urges the environment department and minister to have a central role in administering invasive species laws and developing policy and primary decision-making authority on invasive species impacting on the environment;
12. Urges that where there are conflicts of interest between agricultural and environmental goals, these conflicts should be made explicit and a process applied to determine what is in the public interest and the best way to minimise environmental impacts;
13. Supports the concept of shared responsibility for protecting the environment from the impacts of invasive species, noting in this context that government holds a particular responsibility for delivering public good environmental outcomes on behalf of their represented community;
14. Encourages adoption of a general biosecurity duty in legislation but holds that a general biosecurity duty should not be a

substitute for prohibiting certain high risk activities and such a duty must be accompanied by an active awareness-raising program clearly outlined expectations and a strong compliance program;

15. Supports a regional approach to preventing and controlling invasive species, supported by similar efforts at the state and national level, with prevention and containment measures implemented at the appropriate scale;
16. Urges provision of funds for an adequate rapid-response to new incursions of invasive species, and on-going targeted effort to reduce the impacts of widespread invasive species on biodiversity and ecosystems to a minimum;
17. Opposes recreational hunting and bounties as pest animal control solutions;
18. Promotes strategic planning for biosecurity action including: measureable biophysical targets and milestones aimed at reducing the impacts of invasive species on the environment to a minimum; clear roles and responsibilities for achieving those targets; and independent evaluation of performance against targets;
19. Supports a tenure-neutral approach to the management of invasive species' impacts on the natural environment;
20. Holds that strong public accountability and review mechanisms must be included in the biosecurity system to enable people to see and understand the degree to which the system is delivering public good environmental outcomes;
21. Supports public education about biosecurity, and community involvement in invasive species policy development and implementation;
22. Urges NSW to take a leadership role in promoting effective environmental biosecurity in the national arena;
23. Supports control of invasive fauna by lethal means (e.g. culling) where proven necessary to protect biodiversity or native ecosystems provided that controls are undertaken within the appropriate legal frameworks, are humane, necessary and designed to be effective and lasting;
24. Supports investment in and coordination of research on biosecurity and invasive species including to develop and refine effective control methods;

25. Supports mandatory domestic controls on hull fouling and ballast water with high biodiversity standards, to minimise the introduction and movement of invasive species that may damage marine, coastal and estuarine environments;
26. Supports the development of strategies to limit the exacerbation of invasive species impacts under climate change.

BACKGROUND: Attitudes and approaches to invasive species have evolved since European settlement from active introduction of foreign species, to their regulation to protect agricultural interests, to today's somewhat more comprehensive approach to protecting the environment, economy and human health from invasive species' impacts – often referred to as biosecurity. Overall however, policy approaches are still weighted heavily towards protecting trade, agricultural, human health, and economic interests, compared to environmental interests.

The NSW State of the Environment Report 2015 found that: *“Invasive species, including pest animals and weeds are widespread across NSW and have significant impacts on native species, ecosystems and agriculture. Many invasive species are listed as key threatening processes in NSW, with pest animals and weeds identified as a threat to over 70% of all threatened species. Pathogens and diseases are an emerging threat to both biodiversity and agriculture and are becoming increasingly prevalent.*

The impacts of invasive species on native species and ecosystems include competition, predation, hybridization, disease, changes to vegetation structure and floristics, soil erosion and compaction, and altered fire regimes. A related issue is the overabundance of some native species within their natural range through human-induced causes. While this does not comprise invasion per se the impacts can be similar”.

The spread of invasive species is not only driven by historic practices such as “acclimatisation” (deliberate establishment of exotic species) but by recent accidental or deliberate introductions through trade, travel and illegal means. Trade pathways include agricultural and horticultural industries (including introductions of new invasive varieties of species already in Australia) and domestic pet and aquarium industries. Some species are spread by hunters (e.g. pigs, deer, foxes). Marine organisms are introduced mainly through ballast water and hull fouling.

Policy and management responses to invasive species that solely impact on the environment, such as feral cats, have not been as strong as those that impact on agriculture. Too often responses reflect particular stakeholder interests rather than reflecting a true science-based risk assessment of the likely impacts of a given species. For example, deer species are protected as game for hunters in NSW, whereas feral pigs are declared pests.

In a similar vein, recreational hunting is often promoted as a pest animal control solution, whereas even the use of carefully selected and highly skilled volunteer shooters will only be effective in a limited number of closely supervised circumstances.

Once an invasive species is widely established in an area it becomes very costly to manage its impacts and often impossible to eradicate. Prevention of the initial invasion is by far the most effective and least costly approach to biosecurity.

Where a species evades prevention, rapid eradication becomes the most effective option. This depends on strong surveillance, contingency planning and early-response systems. Containment of a species' spread may be part of an eradication program or be the next-best management approach where eradication is no longer feasible.

This continuum, from the most cost-effective prevention methods, through eradication to containment and failing that to expensive on-going management of the impacts of established invasive species, is an important framework for constructing biosecurity policies and programs.

Over recent years, policy debates in some states and at national level have begun to reflect this thinking, and to make greater reference to the importance of protecting the natural environment and the fact that environmental invaders constitute the majority of problematic species. For example, the Natural Resources Commission has suggested that feral deer be declared a pest species in NSW instead of being protected as a resource for hunters.

The scale of impacts from invasive species and the risk of future new invasions suggests a need for continued policy reform and program investment to protect the lands, waters, flora and fauna of NSW from the impacts of invasive species.

Definitions

Biosecurity is the protection of the environment, economy and public health from negative impacts associated with the entry, establishment or spread of invasive pests, diseases and weeds.

Containment aims to limit the spread of an invasive species that is not considered eradicable

Eradication aims to detect and completely remove an invasive species from the State or part of it before it can establish a self-sustaining population. This is also very cost-effective, and is best done as a rapid response in the early stages of an invasive species incursion

Invasive species are animals, plants and other organisms (exotic or native) that are introduced by human agency, directly or indirectly, to places outside their natural range where they reproduce and spread, often threatening indigenous species and compromising ecosystem functions

Prevention aims at stopping invasive species from entering new areas. This is the most cost-effective approach to biosecurity

Selected references

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Invasive Species Council 2014, Submission to proposed framework for a NSW Biosecurity Act, <https://invasives.org.au/publications/submission-proposed-framework-nsw-biosecurity-act-jun-2014/>

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NSW State of the Environment 2015, Summary, <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/soe/160186-soe-summary.pdf>

State of the Environment 2011 Committee. Australia state of the environment 2011. Independent report to the Australian Government Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. Canberra: DSEWPaC, 2011.

Invasive Species Council 2010, How many invaders are there?, in Feral Herald, Newsletter of the Invasive Species Council, Issue 25, September 2010, <https://invasives.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/feralherald25.pdf>

Moved as amended: Andrew Cox

Seconded: Jenni Gormley **CARRIED**

PROPOSED ACTION: Alert member groups and appointed nominees to the adoption of the policy below, and provide a copy to the NSW Ministers for Primary Industries and for the Environment.

E. FORESTRY ISSUES

Motion 2016/E1

The Great Southern Forest proposal

Submitted by the South East Region Conservation Alliance and National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW endorse the Great Southern Forest proposal for the NSW and Federal Governments to:

- a) end native forest logging of over 400,000 hectares of public land in the carbon dense Southern Forest Region; and
- b) implement a carbon emissions reduction fund linked to jobs in native forest landscape restoration, wildlife protection, and boost jobs in nature-based tourism.

BACKGROUND: The Great Southern Forest (GSF) campaign emanates from the south-east region of NSW and is supported by the National Parks Association of NSW, the South East Region Conservation Alliance and the National Trust Far South Coast Branch. The proposal presents a plan to manage public native forests in the Southern Forest Region of NSW for carbon capture as opposed to native forest logging and to fund this change with forest carbon credits.

The GSF will protect and connect forests and link national parks, state forests and private land. It is not a proposal for further national parks but promotes protection of these forests and their natural carbon reserves. State Forests comprise over 400,000 hectares from Nowra in the north, to Eden in the south and inland to the Tumut region.

Expiry of the Southern Forest Region's 20-year Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) in 2019 and 2021 is the catalyst for re-evaluating loss-making, logging-based forest management. Major economic and environmental changes have occurred since the RFA process began.

It is now even more obvious that woodchipping is inappropriate for our native forests:

- Logging of native forests for woodchips in south-east NSW has been historically loss making and is in decline, unlike the established pine plantation sector. (The Forestry Corporation of NSW has lost \$79 million from native hardwood operations over the last seven years).
- Our native forests are hugely carbon dense. Including this carbon in Australia's emissions reduction program could provide carbon credit funding of \$20 million or more per year. This could fund over 500 jobs in forest restoration and wildlife protection, and expand jobs in nature-based and eco-tourism.
- Logging causes wildlife habitat destruction. Short logging cycles cause dramatic declines in numbers of many unique native mammals, birds and plants. Water catchments, soil, and wildfire preparedness need to be valued for survival.
- Landscape aesthetics and natural beauty are vital for nature-based tourism.
- Climate change threatens forest habitat and biodiversity. The GSF will help reduce forest fragmentation and thus equip forests with the connectedness

and resilience to withstand a changing climate; factors not considered when the RFA were signed 20 years ago.

The GSF proposal highlights the potential for these biodiverse, carbon rich forests to transition from a loss-making and detrimental activity into a sustainable, environmentally creditable and profitable 21st century enterprise. For more info go to: <http://www.greatsouthernforest.org.au>

Moved: Bronte Somerset

Seconded: Grahame Douglas

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: NCC, in collaboration with the established partnership of SERCA, NPA and National Trust South Coast, write to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments in line with the motion.

F. National Parks, Protected & Natural Areas

Motion 2016/F1

Protecting Sydney's drinking water supply

Submitted by the Parramatta Climate Action Network

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW urge the NSW government to support legislation that will ensure full protection of the state's water supplies from pollution, such as that being discharged by Centennial Coal from the Springvale Coal Mine into the Coxs River which flows into Sydney's drinking water supply.

BACKGROUND: Springvale Coal Mine north of Lithgow was granted a 13 year extension last year by the Planning Assessment Commission, which also allowed the mine's operator, Centennial Coal to discharge polluted mine water into the Coxs River.

Unfortunately a case supported by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Lithgow Environment Group, NPA and ACF was rejected on 13 September 2016 by the Land and Environment Court.

Reportedly Sydney's catchment is the only publicly-owned drinking water area in the world where coal mining is allowed. As the Coxs River is a major source of Sydney's drinking water supplies, the court decision shows that the NSW catchment laws are totally inadequate and must be strengthened.

Moved: Annie Nielsen

Seconded: Antony Lewis

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: NCC to write to the NSW Premier.

Motion 2016/F2

The revised NSW Reserve Establishment Plan

Submitted by the National Parks Association of NSW

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Government to release, fund and implement the revised NSW Reserve Establishment Plan (the 'Directions Statement for National Park Establishment').

BACKGROUND: A strategic approach to reserve establishment is vital if NSW is to complete a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative public reserve system. It is clear that without a guiding reserve establishment plan, reserve establishment has stalled in NSW in recent years. In fact, recent Office of Environment and Heritage data shows that the rate of national park establishment has fallen by 95% under the Coalition. A plan will enable the government to be transparent and accountable to the community for strategic acquisition of land to help build the reserve system. It is therefore vital that the plan is fully funded with performance measures.

A Reserve Establishment Plan was approved by the then ALP Government in 2008. In 2014 the Coalition Government called for a review of the plan. The revised strategy was released for community feedback in 2015. Since April 2015 when submissions closed, no final plan has been endorsed by the Environment Minister.

Moved: Grahame Douglas

Seconded: David Stead

CARRIED

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

LATE MOTION

Individual Supporters of the Nature Conservation Council

Submitted from the floor

THAT the Executive, in consultation with member groups and after reviewing previous activities in this area (including *EcoFriends*), prioritise implementing an appropriate mechanism to engage individual supporters, to facilitate increasing commitment to, and involvement in, NCC and member group work.

Moved: Anne Reeves

Seconded: Jane Smith

CARRIED

NSW ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2016

The NSW Environment Awards were presented on Saturday 22 October by Prof. Don White, Chair of the Nature Conservation Council, and political cartoonist, *First Dog on the Moon*.

Marie Byles Award

For the most outstanding environmental campaign

2016 Joint Winners: Save Wollar Campaign and Pilliga Push

The Dunphy Award

For most outstanding environmental effort of an individual

2016 Winner: Craig Shaw

The Rising Star Award

For the most outstanding new campaigner under the age of 30

2016 Winner: Keith Huang

The Ziggy Megne Volunteer for the Environment Award

For voluntary contribution to conservation over a long period of time

2016 Winner: Cathy Merchant

The Nature Conservation Council Member Group Award

For the most outstanding NCC Member Group

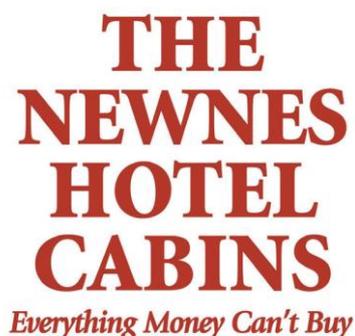
2016 Winner: Australian Wildlife Society (Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia)

The Allen Strom Hall of Fame Award

For long-standing service and commitment to the conservation movement

2016 Winner: Mike Campbell

Our heartfelt thanks go to our generous and wonderful sponsors for helping make the NSW Environment Awards such a success.





For more information on the 2016 NSW Environment Awards, go to:
<http://www.nature.org.au/about/governance/annual-conferences/2016-nsw-environment-awards/>

The 2016 Annual Conference Minutes can be downloaded at:
www.nature.org.au/about/governance/annual-conferences/