



Nature Conservation Council

The voice for nature in NSW

Nature Conservation Council of NSW

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

**Saturday
31st October, 2020**

**Held on Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81319942551>**

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE 2019-2020

Chairperson: Prof. Don White

Vice-Chairperson: Kate DaCosta

Hon. Secretary: Annie Nielson

Hon. Treasurer: Simon Nicholas

Public Officer: Robert Pallin

Executive Members:

Gabrielle Appleby

Hale Adasal

Taylor Clarke

Kate da Costa

Sean Halse

Cilla Kinross

Jim Morrison

Simon Nicholas

Annie Nielsen

Rob Pallin

Julie Taylor Mills (since May 2020)

Prof. Don White

2020 Annual Conference Agenda – Saturday 31st October

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81319942551>

- 8.45 am **Zoom link OPENS**
- 8.55 am **ANNUAL CONFERENCE OPENING Agenda & Apologies** (Chair)
- 9.00 am **The Hon. Matt Kean** Minister for the Environment, keynote address
- 9.30am **Cate Faehrmann** NSW Greens
- 10.00am **Kate Washington** NSW Labor
- 10.30 am **Chief Executive Report**
- 10.45 am **Chair and Treasurer Reports** Discussion and Questions
- Proposed Constitutional amendment**
- 11.00 am **Morning tea**
- 11.30am **Stories of hope during times of crisis:**
- Student from *School Strike for Climate*
 - Subhana Barzaghi from *Psychology for a Safe Climate*
 - Phillip Kennedy and Merran Auland from *the campaign that saved Bylong*
- 12.30 pm **Lunch**
- 1.30 pm **Motions** (Chair)
- 2.30pm **Afternoon tea**
- 3:00pm **Workshops**
- **On Hope** with De Newton <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2488550733>
 - **The states pathway to 100% renewables by 2030** with Liz Hadjia <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86892733076>
 - **Water: Heartbeat of a nation** with Jane MacAllister <https://zoom.us/j/4388981980>
- 4:00pm **Motions (Continued) & General Business**
- 4:45pm **Closing Address (CEO)**

Attendance

MEMBER SOCIETY DELEGATES & OBSERVERS

Delegates

Angela Michaelis	Judy Walker
Ann Collins	Julie Favell
Bill Barker	Julie Mills
Brian Summers	Kate da Costa
Brigid Dowsett	Kate Eccles
Cilla Kinross	Kathy Brown
Claire Bettington	Louise Fowler Smith
David Bell	Madi Maclean
David Stead	Margery Street
Don White	Mark Ambrose
Frances Bray	Mike Pickles
Gay Spies	Nancy Pallin
Geoff Lambert	Naomi Shine
Grahame Douglas	Nick King
Greg Pointing	Pat Schultz
Hale Adasal	Patrick Medway
Haydn Washington	Paul Vale
Helen Armstrong	Phil Bradley
Jan Primrose	Philip Sansom
Jane Gye	Rob Pallin
Jane Judd	Ross McDonnell
Janine Kitson	Sarah-Jo Lobwein
Jenny Goldie	Stephen Ambrose
Jill Green	Yolande Stone
Jim Morrison	Alice Yan
John Moratelli	Annie Nielsen

Observers

Ann Sharp	Mel Gray
Anne Reeves	Merran Auland
Bob Hill	Mike Thompson
David Gallan	Mora Main
Glynis	Nola Stewart
Harry Creamer	Pat Schultz
Helen Wortham	Rosie White
Jack Fry	Ross McDonnell
Jan Davis	Seán Burke
Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame	Simon Wright

Jonathan Milford
Joslyn van der Moolen
Julie Old
Keith Hartski
Kim Wagstaff
Kirsten Mayer
Lesley Scott

Graham W
Stephen Ambrose
Suzanne Little
Thomas Ebersoll
Tracey Carpenter
Liz Hadjia
Megan Fabian

Executive councillors - Elected at this conference for 2020-2021

Don White
Annie Nielsen
Rob Pallin
Melissa Gray
Chris McElwain
Isaac Astill
Jim Morrison
Kate Da Costa
Julie Taylor Mills
Sean Halse
Taylor Clarke
Joel Dignam

Returning officer

Elaine Johnson, Environmental Defenders Office

Guest speakers, presenters and workshop facilitators

Keynote speakers

Matt Kean, NSW Minister for the Energy and the Environment
Cate Faehrmann, NSW Greens
Kate Washington, NSW Labor

Stories of hope in times of crisis

Ava Princi from *School Strike for Climate*
Subhana Barzaghi from *Psychology for a Safe Climate*
Phillip Kennedy and Merran Auland from *the campaign that saved Bylong*

Staff

Chris Gambian, Chief Executive
Jacqui Mumford, Organising Director
Brad Smith, Campaigns Director
Jacs Johnson, Strategy and Operations Director

Angelica Liem, Digital Campaigner
Jane Macallister, Organiser
De Newton, Organiser
Liz Hadjia, Campaigner
Kate McShea, Healthy Ecosystems Coordinator
Amy Strandquist, Office Manager
Ed Mortimer, Movement Organiser
James Tremain, Communications Manager
Karl Kinsella, Fundraising Manager

List of Annual Conference Motions, 2020

A. Council affairs

1. Admission of new Member Societies
2. NCC policies (see Appendix 1 & 2 of this document for full policy documents)
Submitted by the Executive

B. Invasive species

1. Feral cat eradication plan - *Submitted by Australian Wildlife Society*
2. Feral horse eradication plan - *Submitted by Australian Wildlife Society*

C. Planning and development

1. New NCC Urban Density Policy - *Submitted by the NCC Planning Working Group*
2. E-zones in Canterbury-Bankstown LGA
Submitted by Bankstown Bushland Society
3. Removal of mature Australian natives in Liverpool City Council LGA
Submitted by NSW Bush Carers
4. Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Values (AOBVs)
Submitted by Central West Environment Council
5. Protection of high conservation value habitat
Submitted by Protecting Your Suburban Environment (PYSE)

D. Climate, energy

1. New NCC Climate Policy – *Submitted by NCC Climate & Energy Working Group*
2. Coal ash landfill levy - *Submitted by Bathurst Community Climate Action Network*
3. Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Australian Renewable Energy Agency
Submitted by Climate Action Monaro
4. The Climate Change Bill 2020 - *Submitted by Climate Action Monaro*
5. A “gas-led recovery” - *Submitted by Climate Action Monaro*
6. Global population growth
Submitted by Sustainable Population Australia, NSW Branch

E. National parks, wild landscapes, protected and natural areas

1. Sydney Harbour Federation Trust –
Submitted by North Head Sanctuary Foundation
2. Land clearing statute of limitations and moratorium
Submitted by Central West Environment Centre
3. Mountain bike tracks - *Submitted by PYSE*
4. Katoomba Airfield – *Submitted by Blue Mountains Conservation Society*

F. Bushfire management

1. Statutory Review of the RFS 10/50 Clearing Code – *Submitted by PYSE*
2. New RFS code for 25 meter clearing - *Submitted by PYSE*

G. Late and urgent motions

1. Proactive advocacy for urgent action on climate and biodiversity in the NSW Covid19 economic recovery - *Submitted by the NCC Planning Working Group*

Note: references and notes referred to in the background information for motions are available upon request

Proposed constitutional amendment

Moved by: The NCC Executive

Chris Gambian presented the proposed amendment to the NCC Constitution:

INSERT CLAUSE 18A

Notwithstanding anything in clauses 13 and 18:

1. if the Executive determines that due to unforeseen weather, public health or other emergency it is not practicable to hold an Annual Conference or Special Conference at a single place;
2. the Executive may give notice to each member entitled to send a delegate or delegates to such Conference under clause 13(a) that the Conference will be held at two or more places using technology that can facilitate clear and simultaneous (interactive) communication of all meeting participants, and voting on any matter;
3. a delegate or delegates who participates in the Conference using the technology as permitted in (b) is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

INSERT CLAUSE 21(h)

(h) An Executive Meeting may be held at 2 or more venues using any technology approved by the committee that can facilitate clear and simultaneous (interactive) communication of all meeting participants, and voting on any matter. An Executive Member who participates in a meeting using that technology is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person

Decision: The proposed amendment will be addressed in the coming months. The current AGM is being held under an amendment to the Corporations Act allowing for AGMs to be legally held online.

Financial Report, 2019-20

Chris Gambian launched the NCC Impact Report.

The audited [financial reports](#) were shared with delegates.

Motion: That the conference approve the financial reports

Moved by: Don White

Decision: CARRIED

Annual Conference Minutes, 2019

Motion: That the conference accept the amendments put to NCC on the 2019 Annual Conference Minutes

Decision: CARRIED

Annual Conference Motions, 2020

A. Council Affairs

Motion 2020/A1 - Admission of new Member Societies

Submitted by the Executive

Moved by: Don White

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 November 2019 – September 2020

- ANGFA Sydney
- Dimmocks Retreat Wildlife Limited
- Gumbayngirr Conservation Group
- Jarake Wildlife Sanctuary
- Lismore Environment Centre
- Mylestom Community Action Group
- Sustainable Living Armidale
- Terra Australia Coop

Seconded: Rob Pallin

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/A2 - NCC Policies

Submitted by the Executive

Moved by: Kate da Costa

THAT all policies made by previous Annual Conferences prior to 2010 be hereby archived.

Further, that Annual Conference commits to developing, in consultation and collaboration with NCC Member Groups, the Executive, the various working groups, the Chief Executive and the staff a comprehensive statement on policy relating to all contemporary conservation, climate change and other pertinent issues for ratification by no later than the 2021 Annual Conference or sooner by online ballot.

These policies will form the basis of the advocacy agenda of the Nature Conservation Council and its member organisations.

BACKGROUND NOTES: NCC has a long list of policies that have been developed over many years after tireless work and often lengthy debate. This is a substantial body of work and it encapsulates the depth of knowledge, expertise and passion held by the conservation movement and its activists.

The Executive believe that NCC needs to have a contemporary advocacy agenda that can be actively used as a reference point by member organisations, NCC staff and others in our various campaigning, lobbying and public commentary efforts.

As such, this is a proposal to rescind all policies that have not been updated in 10 years, with a view to reviewing those policies, updating them where needed, and putting all the policies into a single bound volume that can be used on a day-to-day basis.

It is not intended that this motion would have any effect on:

- Motions in relation to specific issues passed at previous conferences; or
- Any policies that have been passed or amended in 2010 or subsequently.

PROPOSED ACTION: Over the next 6 months NCC will invite working groups and Member Organisations to contribute to a collaborative process of renewing the policy program. We will aim to revitalise the working groups with new members, and where needed create new working groups to address issues that are of interest to Member Organisations. We will expand the membership of working groups to include a special category of expert advisors where possible.

Further, Member Organisations will be invited to join working groups that the whole organisation has an interest in to create a forum for better cooperation and collaboration between organisations within the conservation movement.

Amendment proposed: Replace “rescinded” with “archived” in the first sentence of this, motion 2020/A2, in recognition that existing policies will not be scrapped, but will continue to be a resource for NCC and its member groups.

AMENDMENT CARRIED WITHOUT OBJECTION

Amended motion seconded: Julie Mills

Amended motion decision: CARRIED

B. Invasive species

Motion 2020/B1 - Feral cats threat abatement plan

Submitted by Australian Wildlife Society

Moved by: Mr Patrick Medway AM

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Minister to commence a plan to remove feral cats from all state national parks to preserve and protect Australia’s native wildlife.

BACKGROUND NOTES: Feral cats inflict an immense amount of damage to Australia’s native wildlife in national parks and threaten the survival of over 100 native species in Australia. They have caused the extinction of some ground-dwelling birds and small to medium-sized mammals. They are a major cause of decline for many land-based endangered animals such as the bilby, bandicoot, bettong and numbat. Many native animals are struggling to survive so reducing the number killed by this introduced predator will allow their populations to grow. By instigating a program of targeting feral cats in national parks, more native animals will survive and thrive.

A threat abatement plan (TAP) establishes a national framework to guide and coordinate Australia’s response to the impacts of feral cats on biodiversity. It identifies the research, management, and other actions needed to ensure the long-term survival of native species and ecological communities affected by predation by feral cats.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Philip Samson

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/B2 - Wild horse heritage management plan
Submitted by Australian Wildlife Society

Moved by: Mr Patrick Medway AM

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW call on the NSW Minister to expedite the removal of feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park.

BACKGROUND NOTES: Feral horses running loose in Kosciuszko National Park continue to damage the natural environment with their hard hooves. Native wildlife and their fragile habitats are being pushed to extinction, in some locations. The recent bushfires have also magnified the impact of feral horses in the landscape. We call on the NSW Minister to expedite the removal of the feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park.

PROPOSED ACTION: Calling for a new wild horse heritage management plan will take the impacts of the 2019-20 bushfire season into account in determining the long-term approach to sustainable wild horse management across the Kosciuszko National Park. A community advisory panel and a scientific advisory panel will provide input to the plan, and community comment will be sought on the draft plan during a public exhibition period.

Seconded: David Stead

DECISION: CARRIED

C. Planning and development

Motion 2020/C1 - New urban density policy
Submitted by the NCC Planning Working Group

Moved by: James Ryan

THAT the Nature Conservation Council NSW adopt the attached policy as the new NCC urban density policy.

BACKGROUND NOTES: The NCC Planning Working Group has developed and agreed upon this new policy position on urban density. The policy can be found at Appendix 2.

Amendment proposed: Add “Does not involve excavation that will compromise the root zone of surrounding trees” at the end of section 6, ‘Medium Density Requirements’.

Decision: Amendment carried

PROPOSED ACTION: The conference vote to adopt the new policy.

Seconded: Don White

DECISION: CARRIED

Motion 2020/C2 - E-zones in Canterbury-Bankstown LGA
Submitted by Bankstown Bushland Society

Moved by: Skye Virgin

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to Canterbury-Bankstown Council asking to consider Environmental Zoning for areas of environmental significance.

BACKGROUND NOTES: Environmental Protection zones - or 'E zones' - are designed to protect land that is of important environmental value. E zones apply to areas that contain high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values. The objectives of E zones are to protect those resources and to prevent development that could destroy, damage or otherwise have an adverse effect on those values.

Many local councils have designated E zones for high conservation value bushland, including urban councils such as Liverpool, Georges River and Sutherland. However, there are currently no E zones (other than the Georges River National Park) in the recently amalgamated Canterbury-Bankstown Council. Bankstown Bushland Society (BBS), in its submission for the 2020 Consolidated Canterbury-Bankstown Local Environment Plan, asked Council to consider E zoning for areas of recognised biodiversity value. Such areas include bushland and wetland at Deepwater Park, The Crest of Bankstown, Carysfield Park, Chullora Bush/Yana Badu Wetlands and Lansdowne Reserve. The current open space zoning for areas of biodiversity value permits development applications to be submitted for things such as roads, bicycle paths, earthworks, kiosks, restaurants, adventure playgrounds, garden centres and sports fields.

On Council's recommendation the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Planning Panel rejected E zoning in favour of a biodiversity clause (6.5) in the LEP which recommends that "appropriate measures" be taken to "avoid, minimise or mitigate the impacts of [any] development" proposed for designated areas of biodiversity value. BBS believes that this clause provides weaker protection for areas of ecological significance than E zoning as its purpose is primarily to lessen the severity of potentially damaging development applications rather than prevent them.

The high biodiversity values of remnant bushland in Canterbury-Bankstown is widely recognised. To protect bushland and wetland, up to 5% of the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA could be considered for E zoning. The Society calls upon the NCC Conference to support the designation of Environmental Protection zones in Canterbury-Bankstown.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: John Moratelli

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/C3: Moratorium on the removal of mature Australian Native trees and associated scrubs and grasses, in the Liverpool City Council LGA

Submitted by Bush Carers

Moved by: Jacquelyn Johnson on behalf of Ian Bailey

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC), advise Liverpool City Council that it is aware of the almost total clearing of native bushland including the Endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland in the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) and call for the preservation of all remaining native trees, shrubs and grasslands, the restoration of those parts of existing parklands that are considered to be degraded and the installation of Environmental Zoning of existing parks and unprotected buffer zones.

BACKGROUND NOTES: Over the last decade large areas of native bushland have been cleared for what is termed Significant Infrastructure. Apart from the total clearing of bushland for housing estates, major sections have been cleared to accommodate large businesses and commercial projects such as:

- The Moorebank Container Intermodal, 125 ha. (the loss of hundreds of trees and koala habitat).
- Western Sydney Airport 3000 ha (the loss of thousands of trees including endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland)
- Widening of access roads to the east from Badgerys Creek for the loss of 100s of trees
- Inglis Horse Stables, Warwick Farm, 80 ha (the loss of ancient Forest Red Gums, valuable habitat trees)
- Warehousing Warwick Farm, Governor Macquarie Drive 80 ha (further loss of old habitat trees)

Existing bushland under protection of NPWS and the work of Council and Volunteers is acknowledged. Small areas of national parks, one at Bents Basin on the Nepean River, the other a slender corridor of connection to the Georges River NP at Voyager Point are important but wide-spread at either end of the huge Liverpool LGA. Council has contracted to restore more than 35 parks over the last few years and engage, under safe supervision, a dozen or so volunteer groups. These works are a success, but the large and extended size of the LGA means that most are isolated from each other.

By Council's own reckoning less than 7% of original bush remains in the LGA.

We call for:

1. An immediate moratorium, followed by a total ban, on the removal of mature native trees and the associated understory at any and all locations in the Liverpool LGA. Not one more tree should be lost to development
2. A long-term plan to be instigated to restore and regenerate bushland along creeks and rivers in the LGA and especially in places that are adjacent to bushland on the opposite side of waterways in other LGAs. An example of this type of location is at Lt Cantello Reserve and New Brighton Golf Course that lie opposite Riverlands and Deepwater Park in the Canterbury-Bankstown Council LGA
3. Install Environmental Protection Zones on all current park and bushlands and include buffer zones of private, public and State lands for future remediation wherever possible.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Phil Bradley

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/C4 - Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Values (AOBVs)

Submitted by Central West Environment Council

Moved by: Cilla Kinross

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Minister of the Environment to ask for the following actions to be undertaken before the end of this year:

1. Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Values (AOBVs) should be included as an 'entity' in S2.3 of the document *Guidance to assist a Decisionmaker to determine a serious and irreversible impacts*
2. The department provide a clear and transparent process for community members or groups to nominate an area in a similar manner to that of nomination for threatened species
3. The department finalise the declaration of Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area as an AOBV

BACKGROUND NOTES:

1. The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act) (NSW Government, 2020) allows for Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value (AOBV) to be declared (NSW DPIE, 2020) and this provides some protection from inappropriate development. However, the BC Act is not very specific about the type of protection provided, apart from being included on a 'biodiversity values map' (Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017, S7.3), which triggers certain actions regarding assessment methods and should restrict code-based clearing, nor does it proscribe penalties for damaging an AOBV. Currently apart from some riparian land, there are no areas of biodiversity value mapped in the Orange region.

The BC Act and the Local Land Services Act 2013 (LLS Act) also impose various obligations on Decision-makers in relation to impacts on biodiversity values that are at risk of a serious and irreversible impact (NSW DPIE, 2019) and the department has created guidelines that provide pathways to assess whether these values are at risk.

Previously, AOBVs were included in these guidelines, but the most recent version (2019) does not include them. It is strongly recommended that AOBVs are included as 'Entities at risk of serious and Irreversible impacts' in S2.3 of these guidelines.

2. The BC Act was passed in 2016 and since the legislation passed, only four AOBVs have been declared. All of these came over from the previous legislation as 'areas of declared critical habitat'.

The department is still working on the guidelines and anticipates that they will be ready 'soon'. Consequently, no new areas have been declared. Indeed, it is understood that there has only been one nomination (see below). This is not very surprising when you consider how little publicity has been provided on this topic to the general public. This raises important questions: why has there been no attempt to solicit nominations for areas known to be biodiversity 'hot spots' and why has it taken so long to prepare 'guidelines' for community members and groups to be able to nominate AOBVs. Four years is surely enough.

3. In July 2018 the Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area (SCA), just south of Orange, was nominated as an AOBV based on the following criteria (Medd and Bower, 2018): the area is of state, national and global significance due to the high level of endemism, regionally important species, the large number of threatened species and ecological communities; biological distinctiveness; ecological processes and integrity; and outstanding ecological value for education and scientific research.

The document demonstrates very clearly that the area meets all the criteria set out in the BC Act and, indeed, the department is using this nomination as a 'test case' for developing further guidelines. However, after over two years, it is time to commence the rest of the processes (eg consultation with stakeholders) in order to declare this area as an AOBV and put in place additional protective measures. It is a unique, largely unspoilt, high altitude area that cannot be 'offset' in other locations.

This is now urgent. The SCA is currently under threat from a 60 km mountain bike track and associated infrastructure. As the park is only 1672 ha, this development would have severe impacts on the biodiversity values and the declaration as an AOBV will help prevent this clearly inappropriate development. Orange City Council has recently voted to provide \$500,000 towards finalizing the environmental assessment and design for the construction of the trail, so time is of the essence.

ACTION: As per the motion

Seconded: John Moretelli

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/C5 - Protection of high conservation value habitat
Submitted by Protecting Your Suburban Environment (PYSE)

Moved by: Jan Primrose

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Planning and Public Spaces Minister, the Hon. Rob Stokes urging the Minister to prioritise protection of high conservation value habitat during Department of Planning, Industry and Environment assessments of projects, planning proposals and state significant developments.

That this Conference urges the Minister to guarantee that particular attention will be paid by his Department throughout the relatively new fast-track assessment process, to ensure that high conservation value land does not become irretrievably lost to future generations, during the Government's efforts to secure short- and medium-term employment and economic gains during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND NOTES: On 18 June 2020, under the NSW Government fast-track assessment scheme, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) approved rezoning of an employment zone at the former IBM site on 55 Coonara Ave, West Pennant Hills, for medium and high-density residential housing. E2 zoning was applied to a large area of remnant Critically Endangered Ecological Communities (CEEC) of Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest on the site.

The developer, Mirvac Residential, had proposed a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) that included dedication of the areas of CEEC to the State Government. However, when DPIE approved the rezoning it deleted the VPA and no requirement was placed on Mirvac to dedicate the areas of the Critically Endangered Ecological Communities.

While Mirvac has said it will dedicate these areas, there is now no legal requirement or agreement that will enforce dedication of the CEEC. Additionally, even within the final Draft VPA, Mirvac stated that it would not dedicate the CEEC until the final Occupation Certificate was approved for the site. Given that Mirvac's timeframe for the staged development of the site is approximately five years, the fate of the Critically Endangered Ecological Communities will be in limbo for at least that length of time. The community's repeated requests to the relevant Ministers to finalise negotiations for the dedication of the CEEC to a public entity have been completely ignored.

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment should arguably have ensured the protection of this rare and significant parcel of urban bushland as part of the approval process. Instead, as a result of DPIE's fast-track approval, there is no certainty of protection or even of maintenance for these 12 hectares of rare, magnificent remnant forest in the heart of suburban Sydney.

We therefore ask that the NCC Conference expresses a strong and unwavering position that high conservation value land and habitat must be protected and secured for our future generations, no matter what the short- or medium-term imperatives and economic demands may be. This is especially the case for land within the Sydney basin, which is where pressure for more and more development is increasing exponentially, while at the same time the need for public open space is becoming an imperative.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion. Copies to be sent to NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, NSW Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, NSW Environment Minister, the Hon. Matt Kean and NSW Treasurer, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet.

Seconded: Jill Green

Decision: CARRIED

D. Climate change, energy and bushfire management

Motion 2020/D1 - New climate and energy policy

Submitted by the NCC Climate and Energy Working Group

Moved by: Annie Nielson

THAT the Nature Conservation Council NSW adopt the attached policy as the updated Climate and Energy policy.

BACKGROUND NOTES: The current policy is out of date and requires updating. Both the climate and energy working group and the NCC committee support the updated policy. The policy can be found at appendix 1.

PROPOSED ACTION: The conference vote to adopt the new policy.

Seconded: Phil Bradley

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/D2 - Coal ash landfill levy

Submitted by the Bathurst Community Climate Action Network

Moved by: Jack Fry

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW writes to the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Energy urging the NSW government to impose a levy on coal-fired power stations on the tonnage of coal ash deposited in landfill. Such a levy would provide an incentive to power stations to reduce the amount of coal ash contributing to contamination of water systems and deterioration of air quality. A levy would provide a source of funding for the state government to incentivise research and development in recycling and de-contaminating coal ash deposits.

BACKGROUND NOTES: According to ABC reports, each year Australian coal- fired power stations produce the equivalent of 500 kilograms of coal ash for every Australian; 18 % of Australia's total waste stream! The ash is contaminated with heavy metal 'nasties' including selenium, chromium, mercury, cadmium, arsenic and lead & is dumped in massive unsealed pits near the power stations. After heavy rain coal ash can leach into underground water systems or overflow, polluting waterways. For example, partly as a result of the coal-fired power stations on the shores of Lake Macquarie, in 2018 health authorities advised against eating mud crabs caught in the Lake due to their high levels of cadmium. In Japan 97 per cent of coal ash is extracted and refined for use such as aluminium production and in concrete. In Australia most coal ash accumulates and will remain decades after the power stations close. The costs from coal ash dumping are high and mostly paid by taxpayers and ratepayers.

PROPOSED ACTION:

- Letter to Minister for Energy and Environment
- Continued lobbying of the Ministers and the NSW Legislative Council Public Works Committee

Seconded: Angela Michealis

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/D3 - Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Australian Renewable Energy Agency

Submitted by Climate Action Monaro

Moved by: Jenny Goldie

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW condemns the federal government for planning to divert funds from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) away from renewable projects to ones that will prolong the use of fossil fuels, such as gas generators and carbon capture and storage.

BACKGROUND NOTES: According to the *Guardian* of 17 September 2020, “the Morrison government will continue to fund Australia’s renewable energy agency (ARENA) to the tune of \$1.43bn over a decade but overhaul its mandate so there will be less investment in solar and wind, and more focus on investment in hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, microgrids and energy efficiency.” While the government will inject more funds into ARENA from the Emissions Reduction Fund, ARENA effectively will have less money than when it was established by the Gillard government in 2011.

The whole purpose of ARENA (along with CEFC) was to promote the development of renewables. Hydrogen fits with that remit as long as it is “green”, that is, made from electrolysis powered by renewables, but not if it is “brown” (powered by coal) or “blue” (powered by methane). In May, the federal and Victorian state governments together offered \$100 million in taxpayers’ money to underwrite a project at Loy Yang that would turn brown coal into hydrogen for export to Japan. While carbon capture and storage (CCS) is associated with the project, CCS has had limited success and is generally seen as a means of keeping the coal industry viable, so goes against the spirit of the development of renewables.

Three weeks earlier, another article in the *Guardian* revealed that the Morrison government was planning to open up the taxpayer-owned CEFC to fossil fuels investments through a change that explicitly defines gas-fired power as a “low-emissions technology”. The legislation was defeated by Labor and Independents in the Senate.

PROPOSED ACTION: That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write letters accordingly to Angus Taylor, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, and to Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister, with copies to the NSW Minister for Resources, John Barilaro, NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Adam Searle MLC, and Greens Energy spokesperson David Shoebridge MLC.

Seconded: John Moratelli

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/D4 - Climate Change Bill 2020

Submitted by Climate Action Monaro

Moved by: Jenny Goldie

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW give its full support to the Zali Steggall Climate Change Bill 2020, to be debated in federal Parliament on 9 November 2020; that NCC encourages all parties and Independent MPs to support the Bill; and that letters be

written accordingly to leaders of all parties in federal Parliament and to the Independents, and the relevant NSW MPs including Matt Kean, Kate Washington and Cate Faehrmann MLC.

BACKGROUND NOTES: According to the website, the provisions within the proposed Climate Change Act ensure there are equitable, transparent and science-based plans to address the impacts of climate change, prevent worsening consequences and take advantage of economic opportunities. While addressing both risks and adaptation, its two most important features are setting a zero-net target for emissions by 2050 and establishing an independent Climate Change Commission.

The Climate Change Bill is modelled on 2019 amendments to the UK *Climate Act 2008* that saw the inclusion of the zero-net target by 2050 and allowed five-year plans by an independent commission to achieve the ultimate target. It has had multi-partisan support. While there are many scientists and environmentalists who argue that we need to achieve zero-net emissions well before 2050 if we are not to experience runaway global warming, it would be an improvement on the federal government's current position, which is *no* target at all. The Bill would allow for multi-partisanship on the issue and allow independent scientists, rather than politicians, to set the pathways to a zero-net emissions' future. Even if we would prefer a much more ambitious target than the Steggall Bill offers, we must not allow the 'perfect' to get in the way of the 'good'.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Kate Eccles

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/D5 - A "gas-led recovery"

Submitted by Climate Action Monaro

Moved by: Jenny Goldie

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW opposes the focus of the federal government on gas for its Covid-19 economic stimulus package; and that letters be written accordingly to Angus Taylor, federal minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, and to Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister, and that copies be sent to the relevant NSW MPs including Matt Kean, Adam Searle MLC and David Shoebridge MLC.

BACKGROUND NOTES: According to various media reports, including the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 14 September 2020, the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, "... will open up new gas supplies and back the construction of a gas-fired power station in a mammoth new plan..." Morrison was quoted: "as we turn to our economic recovery from COVID-19, affordable gas will play a central role in re-establishing the strong economy we need for jobs growth, funding government services and opportunities for all." Despite AGL planning to replace coal-fired energy with renewables when it closes the Liddell coal plant in 2022, the PM intends to build a gas-fired power station nearby. The government will target five regions for Strategic Basin Plans that include the Beetaloo Basin in the Northern Territory, the North Bowen, Galilee fields and the Cooper Basin in Queensland, the Gunnedah Basin in NSW and the Perth Basin in Western Australia. The federal government will push for development of the Narrabri gas field, which now has state regulatory approval. Meanwhile, according to the SMH report, Snowy Hydro, which is wholly owned by the Commonwealth, is studying whether to build a new gas-fired power station at Kurri Kurri in the Hunter Valley.

Ignoring the undue influence of the members (most with links to the gas industry) of the National Covid-19 Coordination Commission (NCCC), the supposed rationale for this massive underwriting of gas exploration and development is that gas emits fewer greenhouse gases than coal. Even were this true, it still locks Australia into the fossil fuel economy for some decades. It is not true that gas is 'cleaner than coal', particularly when the fugitive emissions from fracked gas are taken into account. Should gas-fired power stations be built, they risk becoming 'stranded assets' once renewables become significantly cheaper than gas. This is likely anyway, but will be even more probable in the event of a carbon price being reintroduced.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Angela Michaelis

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/D6 - Global population growth

Submitted by Sustainable Population Australia, NSW Branch

Moved by: Jenny Goldie and Graham Wood

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW recognises that limiting climate disruption and its impacts will require transitioning away from fossil fuels, reducing unsustainable energy and material consumption, and slowing and ideally ending global population growth and urge scientists, policy analysts and politicians not to overlook population growth in the global response to climate change.

BACKGROUND NOTES: Climate change is now recognised as an existential threat that requires an urgent response by all levels of government, nationally and internationally, as well by communities. The main policy response has been the transition away from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy. Efforts to reduce energy and material consumption in wealthy countries have had variable results though must be pursued. So far, however, the international community has largely ignored the potential of population-related policies to reduce risks from global warming. This despite the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) mitigation report on strategies to limit global warming to 1.5 °C noting that reductions in population growth can reduce overall carbon demand and mitigate climate change. The IPCC's adaptation (1.5 °C) report identified modern family planning as an adaptation action that would improve health and simultaneously reduce emissions by slowing population growth.

In a paper published in the 15 December 2020 edition of *Science of the Total Environment*, the authors argue that humane policies that slow population growth should be part of a multifaceted climate response. They say that demographic trends will influence the magnitude of climate disruption and the ability of societies to adapt to it. They argue that 'slowing or ending population growth will not sufficiently limit global warming on its own—but neither will reducing per capita consumption, or ramping up technological efficiency gains.' They also cite many studies that highlight continued population growth as a key driver of future climate risk, particularly in less-developed countries that have contributed the least to climate change but maintain growing populations.

The paper goes on to note that future population growth will be highly dependent on fertility paths, which can be influenced by policies. Reducing fertility levels (voluntarily, without coercion) will lead to lower population pathways. Many factors influence fertility rates including average education level, economic growth and urbanisation, but, most importantly, when women and couples have ready access to contraceptive information and

understand the benefits of limiting and spacing births, population growth rapidly declines, as has been demonstrated in many countries around the world.

In addition to the above, the IPCC 'Climate Change 2014' Synthesis report states:
Globally, economic and population growth continued to be the most important drivers of increases in CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion.

Similarly, the Second World Scientists Warning to Humanity (Ripple *et al* 2017) has also stated:

We are jeopardizing our future by not reining in our intense but geographically uneven material consumption and by not perceiving continued rapid population growth as a primary driver behind many ecological and even societal threats.

Similarly, the IPBES (2019) extinction report notes that:

Key indirect drivers include increased population and per capita consumption.

It goes on to say:

... a key element of more sustainable future policies is the evolution of global financial and economic systems to build a global sustainable economy, steering away from the current limited paradigm of economic growth.

PROPOSED ACTION: A letter be written accordingly to Jamie Isbister, Australian Ambassador for the Environment and head climate negotiator at UNFCCC meetings, with copies to the Premier of NSW, Gladys Berejiklian, NSW Energy and Environment Minister Matt Kean, NSW Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy Adam Searle MLC, and Greens' spokesperson on Climate Change Cate Faehrmann MLC.

Seconded: Haydn Washington

Decision: CARRIED

E. National parks, wild landscapes, protected and natural areas

Motion 2020/E1 - Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Submitted by North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Moved by: Geoff Lambert

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, recognise the unique nature of the natural, built and cultural heritage values of former defence sites surrounding Sydney Harbour and the outcomes of the recently completed independent review of the Sydney Harbour Federation through the following actions.

1. Call upon the Federal and NSW Governments to:

- Support the ongoing existence of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT), as a statutory entity beyond its currently proposed wind-up date in 2032, recognising that a hand-back to NSW at this time would be premature
- Maintain the Objects of the SHFT, which focus on public ownership, access and amenity of the sites, and the protection, conservation and interpretation of the environmental and cultural heritage values
- Ensure that the Harbour Trust sites remain with the Commonwealth
- Work collaboratively to enhance conservation management of the sites, and in particular to strengthen, through formal arrangements and in practice, the integrated management of the lands which together make North Head a place of National Heritage significance valued for its sanctuary qualities

- Maintain and enhance community sector involvement in the conservation management of the whole of North Head as a place of outstanding natural, built and cultural value.

2. Call on the Federal Government to provide funding to enable essential restoration works to be undertaken on key elements of the North Head site

BACKGROUND NOTES: The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) is the Commonwealth body established to rehabilitate former defence lands adjoining Sydney Harbour. The former North Head School of Artillery, one of the key sites, is surrounded by Sydney Harbour National Park and is scheduled for return to NSW once the SHFT's work is done. The SHFT has recently undergone a major review arising out of the 2019 Federal Budget.

While all of the land at North Head is public land, it is managed by a diversity of agencies, both State and Federal, the two major land managers being the SHFT and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. While historical uses of North Head date back to early Aboriginal use as a gathering place and a place of healing, European uses date back to the early 1800s. Despite sometimes competing uses of North Head, much of the approximately 300ha area remains as relatively intact bushland that is habitat to threatened species and ecological communities.

Formed in 2002 (prior to the SHFT's formation), the North Head Sanctuary Foundation has been involved with and advocated for the conservation management of the whole of North Head as a single entity, managed to conserve the Natural, built and cultural values of the whole area.

As pressures for increased revenue from North Head build from both State and Federal Governments, it is important that the values of the whole of North Head (a National Heritage site) are retained and that the bushland remains a place of sanctuary for plants, animals and human users.

The outcomes of the recently completed independent review provide recommendations supporting conservation outcomes, but the extent of government commitment remains uncertain.

PROPOSED ACTION: NCC write to the Federal Minister for the Environment and the Federal Treasurer seeking support for the retention of North Head as a sanctuary, managed collaboratively with the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service to further conservation management of the whole of North Head.

NCC write to the NSW Ministers for the Environment and for Planning & Public Spaces, seeking their cooperation with the Commonwealth for the establishment of a senior officials working group to enhance ongoing collaborative management of the whole of North Head as a place of sanctuary, conserving the natural, built and cultural (Aboriginal, quarantine and military) values of the headland.

Seconded: Rob Pallin

Objections were raised by the National Parks Foundation.

Decision: NOT CARRIED. Motion to be worked at offline for amendment – Motion will be brought back to the Executive in due course

Motion 2020/E2 - Land clearing statute of limitations and moratorium

Submitted by Central West Environment Council

Moved by: Cilla Kinross

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW put pressure on the Minister through a written request and other means as appropriate (meetings etc.) by asking for the following actions:

1. An immediate halt on statute of limitations on prosecutions for illegal land-clearing to be suspended to prevent these being dragged on until their limits are passed
2. A moratorium on clearing of land over 10 ha until the government commits to implementing the recommendations in Natural Resources Commission report on Land management and biodiversity conservation reforms

BACKGROUND NOTES: Since the native vegetation laws were changed in 2017, a report by the Natural Resources Commission (2019) shows that clearing has risen nearly 60%, with 73 per cent of this 'unexplained', meaning either not requiring approval or conducted unlawfully. Much of this is in the Central West of NSW (but most in the north-west). Many of the aims of the new legislation are not being met, with biodiversity suffering as a result. The major fraction of this clearing in 2018 (29,400 ha) was for agriculture, with the remainder for forestry (23,300 ha) and infrastructure (8,100 ha). Self-assessment is clearly not working and it won't take long before the only native vegetation left is in reserves and these cannot cater for a large suite of species adapted to habitat lower in the catchments, mostly alienated by agriculture.

A conference was held in Bathurst in 2015, which brought together many papers on the biodiversity of the Central West (Kinross et al. 2019). The overall picture was very grim, with all indicators of flora, fauna, soils and water being in steep decline. The paper by Kerle and Goldney (2019) is particularly damning. Currently of the 597 vertebrate species of this region, 382 are declining and some have disappeared.

Despite all this evidence the farming lobby, at state and national level, continue to argue that their activities are being hampered by strict environmental laws.

Clearly in NSW, but particularly in this region, we need stronger laws protecting native vegetation, on which our wildlife depends, not weaker. There is little point in providing funds for koala protection on one hand, but allowing rampant clearing on the other. The government has provided responses to parts of this report, many of which are quite encouraging, but there are gaps and inadequate responses. The recommendations are not particularly onerous or extreme and should be implemented as soon as possible.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Kate da Costa

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/E3 - Mountain bike tracks

Submitted by Protecting Your Suburban Environment (PYSE)

Moved by: Jan Primrose

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean, requesting that

1. mountain bike tracks and the riding of mountain bikes not be permitted in bushland containing Endangered Ecological Communities, Threatened Species, Biobanking sites, Nature Reserves, and areas with heritage value

2. in National Parks mountain bike tracks be confined to park edges, for example asset protection zones, and highly degraded sites with low resilience
3. mountain bikes only be allowed on management trails where permitted in the relevant Plan of Management
4. that the recreational needs of the general community should take priority over specialised bike trails within Community and Crown Land

BACKGROUND NOTES: There has been a sustained push over the last few years to permit mountain bikes tracks in the bushland of the Greater Sydney Basin and peri-urban areas along the eastern seaboard of NSW. It should be noted at the outset that this motion does NOT refer to family friendly bike riding but rather to the more extreme sport of mountain bike riding. The comparison of a family riding bikes on a management trail to the sport of mountain biking is like comparing casually kicking a ball in a backyard to premier grade football codes.

The sport of mountain biking focuses on technical difficulties and challenges of the tracks. The sport is not suitable for the broader community and therefore excludes other users, effectively quarantining areas of bushland for the interests of a particular sport. Mountain bikes are incompatible with activities such as bushwalking due to the speed of the mountain bikes. Their speed makes injury far more likely for fauna, or in the event of bushwalker/mountain biker collisions, and altercations between the bushwalkers and mountain bikers are becoming increasingly frequent.

The dissociation of riders from the environment increases as track difficulty increases. Advanced tracks are too fast, too technical and too challenging for riders to do anything other than focus on the immediate trail and exclude any enjoyment of the biodiversity. Mountain bike tracks are damaging to the natural environment and the damaging impact of the tracks increases with their difficulty, with obstacles such as rocks and drop offs and challenging climbs and steep descents exacerbating the damage. A recent report on the significant impact on bushland caused by mountain bikes, written by a Council within the NSW Environment Minister's own electorate of Hornsby Shire stated that:

"Mountain bike and pedestrian tracks have been shown to have significant impacts within bushland areas, effectively increasing the critical distances of edge effects into bushland."

The impacts include:

- increased soil erosion and sedimentation
- vegetation clearing and reduced ground layer biomass
- unforeseen extent of impact due to creation of informal tracks
- increased risk of introduction of domestic pets and/or predators to site
- increased noise levels
- increased introduction and spread of pathogens e.g. *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

Mountain bike tracks have also been shown to introduce more severe impacts including:

- damage from the construction of unauthorised tracks and jumps
- increased erosion from rutting, skidding and wheel spin
- increased native fauna flight initiation distances and escape behaviour
- night access into sensitive areas by both pedestrians and bikes using head torches is known to impact successful breeding and raising of young by *Ninox strenua* Powerful Owl (and other nocturnal species)
- the cumulative impact of regular switchbacks on steep terrain and exclusive separate pedestrian, vehicle and bike tracks can physically cover a substantial area of vegetation clearing multiplying the effect significantly."

The sport of mountain biking does not depend on the presence of bushland and it should not be allowed in any areas of good quality biodiversity. Tracks can and should only be developed on already degraded areas.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Jill Green

Decision: CARRIED

Motion 2020/E4 - Katoomba Airfield

Submitted by Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Moved by: Bridget Jackson

THAT that NCC call on Ministers Stokes and Kean to incorporate the Katoomba Airfield site into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area to be managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

BACKGROUND NOTES The Katoomba Airfield is a 36 hectare Crown land inholding within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It is totally surrounded by the Blue Mountains National Park, located on Grand Canyon Rd east of the township of Medlow Bath. The use and tenure of this inholding impacts the ability of NPWS to effectively manage the surrounding National Park and the continuation of a quiet visitor experience.

If the land remains with Crown lands it is will inevitably be developed as a commercial aviation hub.

Commercial Lease: The Dept of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE) has been facilitating the commercial development of this site since 2017 when it called for expressions of interest for a lease. The lease application to develop Katoomba Airfield as a recreational aviation hub was rejected in January 2020, following overwhelming community opposition. However, the Decision is currently being reviewed by Crown Lands (DPIE). It is imperative to secure the long-term future of this site by incorporating it in the surrounding world heritage Blue Mountains National Park. Over 12,000 signatories to a petition that was presented to the NSW Parliament on 1 August 2019 called on the government to transfer this land.

Environmental values: There is a long history of land assessments which have repeatedly recommended including this inholding in the surrounding National Park. Since the last assessment was undertaken in 2000, further information on the value of this land is available, in particular:

- the presence of threatened species, such as the *Dasyurus maculatus* (spotted tail quoll)
- listing of Blue Mountains Swamps as a vulnerable ecological community (Biodiversity Conservation Act)
- impacts on tourism (now exacerbated by the increased visitation of the Grand Canyon walking track since the closing of other fire affected tracks)

After over 25 years of assessments, submissions and work by departmental officers and the community, it is time to develop a permanent solution and incorporate Katoomba Airfield into Blue Mountains National Park.

PROPOSED ACTION: Write to the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean and Minister for Planning, the Hon. Rob Stokes as per the motion.

Seconded: Paul Vale

Decision: CARRIED

F. Bushfire management

Motion 2020/F1 - Statutory Review of the RFS 10/50 Clearing Code

Submitted by Protecting Your Suburban Environment (PYSE)

Moved by: Jan Primrose

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean MP and the NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott MP, requesting a Statutory Review of the RFS 10/50 Clearing Code, the terms of reference of which should include but not be limited to:

- an assessment of the effectiveness of the entitlement areas in reducing bushfire hazard to people and property
- an assessment of the impacts of the introduction of the 10/50 vegetation clearing code on tree canopy cover in entitlement areas
- an appraisal of reducing the entitlement area noting the implications of reduced canopy cover
- identification of any unintended or unforeseen impacts on vegetation and fauna that may have resulted from the introduction of the scheme

BACKGROUND NOTES: Two years ago the NCC Annual Conference resolved to write to the then Ministers for Environment and for Emergency Services, requesting a Review of the RFS 10/50 Clearing Code. This Review has not yet occurred. During that two-year period, the Statutory Review of the Code has become overdue, which makes it imperative that the Code be reviewed at the earliest possible opportunity.

The current Minister for Energy and Environment has expressed in the past that he has not been supportive of the 10/50 Code, so it is opportune for NCC to write to Minister Kean. While it is understood there are heightened concerns around bushfire safety after last summer's bushfires, we are of the opinion that the self-assessment basis of the clearing code is providing a false sense of security while having a continuing devastating impact on our mature urban tree canopy. Nothing was going to stop those bushfires, except for putting them out at the ignition point, which was not done.

The Environment Minister's own electorate of Hornsby Shire is Sydney's most vulnerable Council to bushfire risk (Hannam, 2016).

It is notable that an analysis of tree canopy loss between 2009 and 2017 found that properties within the Bushfire Prone Lands area, and therefore subject the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing, have reported no additional clearing of tree canopy since 2015 (HSC 2020). This suggests residents living in these areas took advantage of the entitlement early on (2014-2015) as an opportunity to clear land.

It is now individual trees in urban areas that are most at risk, from new owners removing unwanted trees. We therefore call on the NCC Conference to support this Motion to write to the Ministers to ask for a Statutory Review of the RFS 10/50 Clearing Code.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Graham Douglas

Decision: CARRIED**Motion 2020/F2 - New/existing RFS Code for 25-metre clearing***Submitted by Protecting Your Suburban Environment (PYSE)***Moved by: Jan Primrose**

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write the NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott MP, the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean MP and all members of the NSW State Parliament:

- expressing the Nature Conservation Council Conference's strong opposition to the proposed new RFS Code which would allow rural landowners to clear all vegetation including trees up to 25 metres from their boundaries inside their property and includes a requirement that all public landholders, including NPWS and local councils, also clear all vegetation for 25 metres into public lands where the RFS deems vegetation should be cleared
- calling on the members of the NSW Legislative Council to disallow this new/amended RFS Clearing Code

BACKGROUND NOTES: The NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott has recently persuaded the NSW Government to increase the amount of vegetation that landowners can clear with new laws to be in place for this bushfire season. NSW cabinet agreed to amend the Rural Fires Act to allow rural landowners to clear up to 25 metres from fence lines on their property without approval.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott said the NSW Rural Fire Service would be given "stronger and clearer powers" to audit and address bushfire risks. This will mean that public lands are treated the same way as private landholders. The NSW RFS Commissioner will have the power to issue bushfire hazard reduction notices to public authorities in circumstances where vegetation should be cleared to "protect lives or property". Mr Elliott said that if mitigation works were not undertaken in a "timely manner", the NSW RFS would do the work and send the bill to the land manager.

It must be noted that this change was not a recommendation from the final report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry, rather from some unseen information provided by Mr Elliott's Department. The proposed new laws go way beyond anything that the Inquiry recommended and is therefore likely a political Decision.

While there may be circumstances where this clearing on private land could be justified what is currently proposed should not be applied to rural lands within the metropolitan rural areas and peri-urban fringes of Sydney and large regional towns. Many of the properties in those areas are 1 and 2 hectares lots, often with narrow frontages. Allowing clearing for 25m around the boundaries would virtually clear many of those lots.

Thousands of mature trees could potentially be cleared in each Local Government Area. Mention is made in the media of a new code to be developed for clearing endangered and threatened species habitat but many of those areas are not mapped, not even critically endangered ecological communities. For instance, Hornsby Shire has not updated its mapping to include newly identified areas of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest on private property. These CEECs could therefore be cleared as an unintended consequence. These laws, during the COVID-19 economic crisis, will potentially cost the State Government and local councils millions of dollars through penalty arrangements if works aren't undertaken within a given timeframe. The cost, resourcing and environmental impacts of clearing vast swathes of public land have obviously not been properly considered by the NSW Government.

This law will not just be used for bushfire protection, it will be used for land clearing on an unprecedented scale not even envisaged under the much-maligned RFS 10/50 Clearing Code. 10m from a building plus 25m from a boundary plus 25m into a National Park will leave hardly any trees left standing.

PROPOSED ACTION: As per the motion.

Seconded: Rob Pallin

Decision: CARRIED

G. Late and urgent motions

Motion 2020/G1 - Proactive advocacy for urgent action on climate and biodiversity in the NSW Covid19 economic recovery

Submitted by the NCC Planning Working Group

Moved by: Mora Main and Anne Reeves

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW,

Alarmed by the ongoing and interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change, described in the September 2020 Leaders Pledge for Nature in the lead up to the United Nations Biodiversity Convention Conference (CoP 15) as a state of planetary emergency;

Reaffirms the urgent need for acting locally while thinking globally in working for sustainable and equitable outcomes;

Recognises the opportunities within NSW for positive affirmative action while opposing environmentally harmful policies and practice;

And at this 2020 Annual Conference, accepting the need for a Big New Plan,

Commits to ongoing proactive advocacy for urgent action on

1. The reversal of decline in natural systems in all planning reform and natural resource management
2. The end of native forest logging
3. Policies that reverse land clearing and prioritise for ecologically sustainable agriculture and land management
4. 100% renewable energy by 2030 and investment in net-zero emissions strategies
5. Intergenerational justice as a guiding principle to the NSW response to the Covid induced economic downturn, putting people most affected at the heart of any stimulus
6. Investment in sustainable work opportunities that do not degrade the natural environment
7. Decisions affecting natural systems to be accompanied by publicly accessible and most recently available data on the state of nature in NSW
8. Transparent and accountable governance at all levels

In conjunction with its member groups and the wider community.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: NSW is in an enviable position thanks to the considered NCC Annual Conference 2020 Minutes V3 12.01.21

and effective leadership the NSW State Government has shown in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The cooperation achieved during the health crisis needs to continue into the future in order to achieve a sustainable recovery. However, we are concerned at the decisions being taken by the NSW Government with regard to development, projects and planning reform. Decisions taken are failing to responsibly address conservation, management and expansion of natural habitat and ecosystems.

It is also important to foster trust in sound governance while dispelling myths and perverse institutional frameworks that undermine ecological sustainability

As environment groups, we are all too aware of the risk of stepping from this health crisis straight into accelerating the underlying climate and biodiversity crisis. Our recovery should put people's health, safety and security at the forefront, and acknowledge the challenges that we faced long before COVID-19. Our biodiversity and climate are close to dangerous tipping points. Our natural environment has become so fragile that biodiversity, climate, water, air, soil and food are all at risk. Averting a looming environmental catastrophe should be front and centre of any policy Decisions.

The NSW Government must deal with these challenges, first and with primary consideration.

Now is the moment to centre the environment in recovery. We can address the climate crisis, reverse biodiversity losses and increase forest cover, while we regenerate our economy. We can identify innovative opportunities for employment that secure a safe and sustainable livelihood for all. We can move NSW to net zero-emissions and drive ecological and economic recovery.

Proposed action: as per the motion

Seconded: Graham Douglas

Decision: CARRIED

Appendix 1

NCC Climate Change Policy 2020

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, including increased droughts, fires and floods, pose existential risks for natural ecosystems and people.

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 these 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
- decomposition of organic material

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
- 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 help keep global warming preferably below 1.5 degrees and definitely below 2 degrees:

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

About 3000 Australian deaths per year are attributable to air pollution, as well as considerable illness with the resultant health cost estimated to be over \$11 billion annually. NCC advocates for stronger national standards of airborne particle levels that cause both lung and heart diseases. All communities should be protected from air pollution irrespective of size and location.

1.8 Coal is harmful to health when it is burnt. Although air quality standards for electricity generation are comparable to world standards they are not enforced. However our fuel quality standards are below world standards. If power station owners had to pay to have the right technology to meet overseas standards our coal fired electricity would be a lot more expensive.

1.9 We are currently in a climate emergency and should urgently mobilise resources to restore a safe climate.

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 suggested solutions.

2.2 To recommend ways our society and its economy can achieve these 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 to Governments on Emissions Policies

Strong emissions targets

The Nature Conservation Council 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 national net zero carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions by 2040.

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

3.4 include the need to reduce emissions in all considerations of energy policy.

The Nature Conservation Council calls on the State Government to protect nature and people by:

3.5 bringing forward the target date for net zero emissions for NSW to 2040

3.6 setting 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.

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

Redirection of resources

The Nature Conservation Council calls on Federal and State Governments to:

3.7 reduce activities that contribute to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, such as the clearing of native vegetation, including marine vegetation, and the draining of wetlands

3.8 abolish subsidies for fossil fuel, transport and energy-intensive industries, remove any financial assistance to coal-powered electricity generators and remove diesel fuel rebates for the mining sector.

3.9 commit financial and human resources to developing 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

3.10 ensure that the process and the results of any monitoring are open to the public with opportunity for comment and review

3.11 invest in research and development in low-carbon technologies.

Carbon pollution pricing scheme

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

3.12 100% auctioning of permits, i.e. no free permits to be allocated

3.13 any imported international emissions credits must be additional to the emission cuts Australia needs to make domestically

3.14 exemptions for emissions-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) industries should ensure those industries still have an incentive to minimise emissions to meet or exceed international best practice for their products

3.15 revenue distribution should include measures to ensure households, especially low-income households, while receiving price signals to reduce carbon pollution, are not financially worse off. These could include energy efficiency support, renewable energy incentives and increased accessibility to public transport infrastructure.

Just transition for affected workers and communities:

Recognising the inevitable international shift in the energy sectors away from fossil fuels, the Nature Conservation Council calls on the NSW and Federal Governments to:

3.16 timetable the phase out of fossil fuel extraction and exploitation industries

3.17 involve as stakeholders political parties, unions, industry and affected communities in planning a just and orderly transition to a low carbon economy

3.18 provide a stable policy environment and active intervention in local economies to ensure exposed communities are not left behind

3.19 support structural adjustments and investment for affected communities to protect workers through a managed and predictable process of change

3.20 invest in training and redeployment strategies for workers to provide decent jobs and new opportunities in a sustainable economy.

4. Sector Strategies to Reduce Emissions

Funding measures to promote action by government in specific sectors could come from:

- a carbon pollution pricing scheme (see section 3 above)
- abolition of subsidies to the fossil fuel industries
- an equitable tax regime.

4.1 Stationary Energy – Electricity

The Nature Conservation calls on Federal and State Governments to:

4.1.1 implement a Clean Energy Target to progress us to 100% renewable electricity by 2030

4.1.2 ensure that any long-term targets are supported by specific interim targets for periods of between one and three years

4.1.3 update national energy legislation to require that the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) must work to reduce carbon pollution from energy generation in general, and in particular to work towards the emissions reductions trajectory laid out by the government.

The Nature Conservation Council recommends:

4.1.4 decreasing reliance on thermal coal or gas by supporting the development of renewable energy and non-fossil-fuel-based, low-emissions technologies

4.1.5 prioritising the orderly closure of coal power plants starting with the oldest and most polluting, with the goal of closing all NSW coal-fired power plants by 2030

4.1.6 closing gas fired power stations, and opposing the opening of new ones, as renewable energy and storage replaces the need for them

4.1.7 vigorously promoting low risk, renewable sources of energy, such as solar, wind, wave and tidal, by fiscal, regulatory and marketing strategies

4.1.8 planning for and encouraging the use of energy storage in homes, microgrids and the main network, while noting that pumped hydro schemes, like any other development, must satisfy all other environmental criteria

4.1.9 adopting other zero emissions technologies such as green hydrogen and geothermal power as they become technically and economically feasible

4.1.10 retaining complementary measures such as Large Scale Renewable Energy Targets and Small Scale Renewable Energy Schemes.

4.2 Energy use and efficient design

The Nature Conservation Council urges the Federal Government to set a national energy efficiency target for each year and State and Local Governments to initiate improved efficiency, design and planning in line with the following principles:

4.2.1 introduce or improve energy reduction standards for:

- housing
- cars
- appliances
- public transport
- manufacturing

4.2.2 install solar panels and other technologies which reduce emissions on public housing, schools and hospitals

4.2.4 improve planning guidelines for urban consolidation to include vegetation as a carbon sink and to reduce heat island effects

4.2.3 reduce, reuse and recycle waste products and process suitable waste to manufacture products

4.2.4 increase rigor and scope of new building standards, including facilitation of electric car charging and provide appropriate fiscal and other economic incentives and disincentives to accelerate their implementation.

4.3 Transport

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

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

- 4.3.1 a national fuel efficiency standard for vehicles
- 4.3.2 town planning and on-line work practices to reduce commuting
- 4.3.3 encouraging walking and cycling through safe footpaths and cycleways
- 4.3.4 encouraging public transport vehicles powered by renewable energy or green hydrogen through incentives for the purchase of vehicles powered by renewable energy or hydrogen, or disincentives for purchase of vehicles producing carbon pollution
- 4.3.5 switching the fleets of all levels of government to vehicles powered by clean renewable energy
- 4.3.6 rapidly increase infrastructure for recharging electric vehicles, including at all new and existing car parks
- 4.3.7 installation of solar panels on all new large structures, such as car parking stations, to provide direct solar power for EV charging points
- 4.3.8 more railways within and between cities, including high speed intercity rail links to reduce the use of road and air transport
- 4.3.9 evaluation of all government grants for transport to include an assessment of their greenhouse gas emissions
- 4.3.10 use by the Federal Government of conditional federal rail grants (under Section 96 of the Constitution) to promote and immediately prioritise the expansion of rail freight systems.

4.4 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 calls for:

- 4.4.1 promotion of alternative non-fossil fuel based energy within the agriculture sector
- 4.4.2 introduction of land stewardship payments and other economic incentives to encourage higher levels of sustainable production in an increasingly variable climate and open markets.
- 4.4.3 a legislated end to broad-acre clearing of native vegetation
- 4.4.4 further research, made publicly available, on the relative contributions of greenhouse gases from different sectors of agriculture, and on how these emissions can be measured and reported with a view to including agriculture within the scope of a carbon pollution pricing scheme. This would encourage farmers to use methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including regenerative farming
- 4.4.5 large-scale revegetation of agricultural lands in the context of Total Catchment Management (TCM)
- 4.4.6 development of ways to convert genuine waste biomass (e.g. stubble) into energy products or biochar

4.5 Forestry

Retaining and enhancing forests and other native vegetation communities has the effect of storing carbon.

The Nature Conservation Council calls on the NSW Government to:

- 4.5.1 restore native habitat, and legislate an end to broad-acre clearing of native vegetation
- 4.5.2 end native forest logging and transition to a 100% sustainably managed, plantation based resource.
- 4.5.3 only obtain biomass energy from annual crops such as sugar cane and wheat waste, not from forests

4.6 Planning

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

4.6.1 establish comprehensive zoning plans to coordinate development and habitat conservation, including appropriate zones or development controls that protect areas of high conservation value including marine areas

4.6.2 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

4.6.3 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

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

4.6.5 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

4.6.6 develop strategies to cope with predicted climate change effects such as increased bushfire risk, drought, flooding and 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.

4.6.7 develop adaptation strategies that recognise that rising sea levels, increasing extreme weather events, ocean acidification, changing ocean currents and temperatures affect coastal erosion, ocean ecosystems and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

4.6.8 acknowledge quantities of water used in extractive industries in planning for water sharing and catchment management

4.7 Industry

The Nature Conservation Council recommends:

4.7.1 setting mandatory energy-use reduction targets for all industrial and commercial energy consumers.

4.7.2 requiring all such energy consumers to carry out an energy audit at least every five years.

4.8 Mining

The Nature Conservation Council calls for:

4.8.1 a moratorium on the startup of new coalmines and extensions of existing coalmines, and on new coal seam gas development.

4.8.2 changes to discourage expansion or continuation of existing coal export operations. The Nature Conservation Council calls on the Federal Government to:

4.8.3 legislate to ban political contributions from mining companies and developers.

4.9 Waste Minimisation

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

4.9.2 Rather than incinerating waste we should go one step further and be aiming for a zero waste circular economy.

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 urges the Federal Government to:

- 5.1 show international leadership in exceeding 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
- 5.8 heed the plea from Pacific Islands governments that Australia adopt a No New Coal Mines Policy, to help prevent their islands being inundated by sea-level rise and wave surges.

6. Community Awareness

The Nature Conservation Council urges all member groups:

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 food rather than food produced with excessive emissions, e.g. refrigerated, heated, or preserved foods
- reducing the amount of meat eaten
- addressing population and related consumption per capita to achieve environmentally sustainable levels
- divesting their investments and superannuation away from fossil fuel industries and their financiers
- 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 in developing programs to help people become aware of the environmental and social implications of climate change, including in their own communities

6.3 to sign the Climate Emergency Declaration petition calling on all Australian federal, state, and territory parliaments and all local councils to declare a climate emergency and mobilise required resources to restore a safe climate and transform the economy to zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Appendix 2

New NCC Urban Density Policy

Purpose: The purpose of the following principles is to provide a framework for NCC members to assess the desirability of proposed housing developments, which increase urban density. While it is generally accepted that green field, detached housing urban sprawl has an adverse impact on our environment, not all medium, high or infill density development is good either.

The NCC policy position proposed is that **we should not accept increased density development unless there is a net benefit to both our natural and our social environments.**

Principles

- 1. Urban sprawl:** The NCC recognises that low density housing development often results in urban sprawl, land reshaping and clearing, which is highly destructive of native vegetation, habitat, natural drainage and biodiversity. Development of increased density is capable of an improved (increased) conservation outcome provided appropriate conditions are applied and a net biodiversity gain can be demonstrated.
- 2. Remnant vegetation:** NCC recognises that within existing, older low-density suburban housing developments there can be remnant vegetation and ecosystems which should not be destroyed and should be respected when designing sites for redevelopment to a higher density.
- 3. Green spaces and corridors:** NCC recognises that medium density housing, as well as industrial and commercial development sites, if well designed, can contribute to providing increased land for green spaces, not only for active and passive recreation, but importantly also to provide wildlife corridor links, improved habitat for native animals, birds, reptiles and insects, and protection of riparian zones
- 4. Greenhouse gas emissions:** The NCC recognises that medium density housing when combined with transport oriented design (TOD) and investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure (regional and local bikeways and footpaths) should reduce car dependence and avoid the use of resources for car manufacture and large expanses of paved surfaces, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions from concrete and bitumen production and fossil fuel powered vehicles.
- 5. Community participation:** Recognise that all development, including medium density, should aim to have the support of the community and be planned with the community in a participatory and meaningful way with properly considered options and commitment to sustainability.
- 6. Medium Density Requirements:** To provide a benefit, medium density housing, factory, commercial and institutional developments, must:
 - Result in land being set aside for conservation. Land saved from development should be protected and the conservation lands resources for ongoing protection.
 - Result in more green space provided for recreation and habitat in close proximity to the development than would result from the development of an equivalent number

of low-density residences (Land acquisition may be required to provide the green space).

- Be supported by frequent and readily accessible, safe, public and active transport infrastructure along shady, tree lined and logical routes;
- Be of a high standard of passive solar design.
- Adhere to the principles of biophilic design including that no building should be higher than a tree which is capable of growing on the site and surrounding terrain, to a maximum height of 25m (8 storeys).
- Respect the integrity of the landscape and not alter levels to a degree where the landform and its landscape character is changed.
- Result in strategically planned and managed urban tree canopy cover (also known as Urban Forest) that provides optimum liveability for its community.
 - Achieve an Urban Tree canopy coverage of 40%¹ excluding green roofs and 50% when green roofs are included.
 - The urban forest population, when not comprising a naturally occurring ecological community, will be composed of no more than 5% of one tree species, no more than 10% of one genus and no more than 20% of any one family².
- Maintain or improve native urban ecology and biodiversity to provide healthy ecosystems.
- Existing nature corridors are maintained and connected to existing remnant habitat
- Not encroach on existing National Parks and Nature Reserves
- Does not involve excavation that will compromise the root zone of surrounding trees

Application to commercial and industrial estates

- Commercial and industrial estates often cover large areas and have a record of reduced canopy cover, therefore new industrial, commercial and bulky goods retailers outlets should meet 40% canopy cover requirements and have green roofs and/or solar PVs, and rainwater tanks mandated.

Application to hospitals and schools

- Hospitals and schools (both public and private) are locations where connection to nature is highly beneficial. All new schools, hospitals and major renovations should meet the highest standards of biophilic design to maximise learning and wellness, in addition to achieving 40% canopy cover onsite.

¹ Current City of Melbourne target by 2040.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-strategy.aspx>
(City of Sydney target is 27.13% by 2050, Greater Sydney Commission aspirational target is 40%)
<https://www.greater.sydney/metropolis-of-three-cities/sustainability/city-its-landscape/urban-tree-canopy-cover-increased>

² Current City of Melbourne target.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-strategy.aspx>

Conclusion: The NCC can support the development of sites with well-designed medium density housing, industrial, commercial and institutional buildings, provided that it

1. facilitates the conservation of natural areas and biodiversity;
2. is supported by public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure;
3. adheres to the principles of biophilic design (including having a maximum height of 8 storeys),
4. attains an urban forest canopy cover of 40% on site, and
5. is supported by the local community after genuine and informed community consultation.

Definitions:

Urban development: Typically, low density residential and urban development originated in 'the quarter acre block' and more recently has seen lot sizes of 450m² to 800m²; typified by single and two storey dwellings with a dwelling density of 6 – 15 dwellings per hectare.

Medium-density housing is residential development that is at higher densities than standard low-density suburban subdivisions. In Australia the density of standard suburban residential areas has traditionally been between 6-15 dwellings per hectare. Medium density housing can range from about 25 to 80 dwellings per hectare, though most commonly the density is between 30 and 40 dwellings/hectare. Such developments may consist of detached, semi-detached, terraced housing, townhouses or multi-unit housing.

High density housing: Typically has a density of 100 dwellings per hectare or more. High density is not always high rise. Paris neighbourhoods of classic apartment buildings have a net density of approx. 225 dwellings per hectare.

Low rise: A low-rise building is commonly described as a multi unit structure whose architectural height is below 35 meters (12 storeys), and which is divided at regular intervals into occupiable levels. It encompasses all regular multi-story buildings which are enclosed, which are below the height of a high-rise, and which are not entirely underground³. Classic low rise are more usually 6 – 8 storeys such as that found in the classic cityscapes of Paris (see below).



³ Emporis.com

High Rise: A high-rise building is a structure whose architectural height is between 35 and 100 meters⁴. A structure is automatically listed as a high-rise when it has a minimum of 12 floors, whether or not the height is known. If it has fewer than 40 floors and the height is unknown, it is also classified automatically as a high-rise.

Biophilic design: Biophilia is defined as the inherent human inclination to affiliate with nature. Biophilic design, an extension of biophilia, incorporates natural materials, natural light, vegetation, nature views and other experiences of the natural world into the modern built environment (see example picture below).



Document history

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V7 - Revised by Don White 15 May 2020 - to give effect to comments from NCC Executive in April + condense text and tighten up

V8 For NCC Annual Conference - with changes incorporated

⁴ Emporis.com