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## Celebrating Our Wins

**Here's how we're starting 2026 – making real progress on four key campaigns on issues that matter.**

You'll know we have been working for some years to put Sydney's Blue-Green Grid (BGG) on the map to achieve more linked parks and tree canopy – to deliver sustainability, recreation areas, climate resilience and wildlife habitat. Finally the NSW Government has recognised the BGG in the new (draft) Sydney Plan. The Plan will direct regional and local development instruments. **We are working to ensure the Blue-Green Grid plan is effectively mandated and implemented.**

Our work on e-waste has received a boost with NSW rapidly developing a battery stewardship program. Intended to be a template for other states, there's no time to lose to stop the spreading fire and pollution risk from end-of-life batteries. NSW also passed pioneering legislation, to embrace the improved management of the life cycle of products into producer responsibility schemes. **The Minister for the Environment acknowledged TEC's role during the parliamentary debate.**

[continued on the next page](#)

**We are leading the push to reduce microplastic pollution** and have just released a major report, *Do We Have a Microplastic Problem in NSW Coastal Waterways?*, which collates seven years of citizen science surveys along the NSW coast. By linking the results to actions for government, business and the community, **we are setting the agenda on this insidious problem.**

**The crucial corridors for the Sydney Basin's koalas have now been mapped for the first time**, by our Sydney Basin Koala Network program. This work forms the basis for legal protection and provides a tool for 24 local groups to campaign against habitat destruction in a wide region stretching from the Hunter to the Blue Mountains and Illawarra. We'll be **continuing to work for protection of this endangered population.**

Our campaigns are driven by informed advocacy, persistence, constructive engagement with the political system and community mobilisation.

**With your support, we'll continue advancing progress and achieving results for nature and our communities in the year ahead.**

Jeff Angel, Director

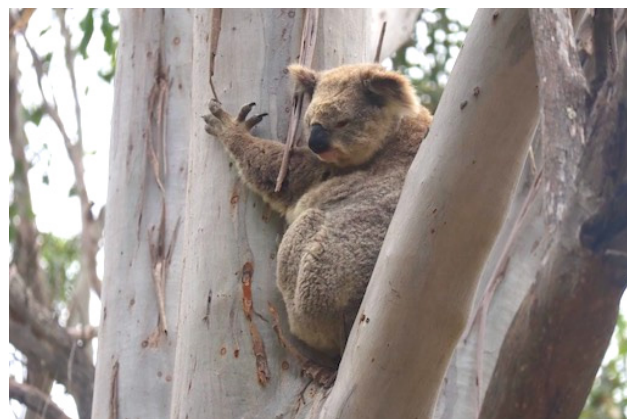


You can read more about all of our campaigns by visiting [www.tec.org.au](http://www.tec.org.au)

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## Greater Sydney Koala Corridors of Survival

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### Communities can use our new tool to defend koala habitat before it's lost

The culmination of nearly a year of work by our Sydney Basin Koala Network has produced the **Greater Sydney Koala Corridor Map and Report**, which identify existing and potential habitat connections between National Parks and council reserves using science from the NSW Chief Scientist<sup>1</sup> to map corridors wide enough for koalas to move safely (390-425m wide). There are immediate potential wins and opportunities for revegetation on private land. It also identifies **important areas at risk of fragmentation from development.**

Our map gives local groups the evidence they need to push back against habitat fragmentation

The map is underlain by multiple layers of data and will be a **powerful community tool** in areas with increased development, and it arms local environment groups with data **to help protect their koala populations.** Our report also provides legal protection mechanisms which will be a key focus for ongoing campaigning to ensure a healthy and sustainable koala population in the region bounded by the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, western Sydney and Illawarra. The future of several thousand koalas is at stake.

**It's urgent the corridors are protected before being lost and fragmented by development and land clearing.**

Preserving green corridors also creates a more liveable Sydney, providing populated areas with valuable urban cooling and climate resilience. **It's a win-win for people, koalas and all the other species** that rely on habitat corridors, which are essential to a healthy city.



For more details, and the Greater Sydney Koala Corridor Map and Report, visit [www.sydneybasinkoalanetwork.org.au/greater\\_sydney\\_koala\\_green\\_belts\\_corridors\\_of\\_survival](http://www.sydneybasinkoalanetwork.org.au/greater_sydney_koala_green_belts_corridors_of_survival)

<sup>1</sup> NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (2018), "Koala Habitat and Corridor Guidelines", NSW Government.

Photo: Koala – Noorumba Reserve, Campbelltown 20Nov25

# Container Refunds: Making the System Better

## After 22 years of campaigning, Australia is now fully covered by 10c Container Refund Schemes.

When the Container Refund Schemes were established, TEC undertook to keep them under assessment and we have been the author of the main non-government, non-business reviews.

We have released four major reports – two on Queensland, one on Victoria and a national oversight of all schemes. Each have found particular problems such as:

- Serious access issues for consumers seeking their refund in Queensland. A recent parliamentary inquiry not only provided further evidence but also pointed to governance and conflict of interest problems arising from drink company dominance of the roll-out of refund points.
- In Victoria we found that the highly unusual three zone arrangement for collection points delivered by three different companies was creating inequitable access, with one company performing best and the others being problematic.
- Our national report established and reviewed over one dozen criteria by which the schemes can be assessed including return rates, cost, transparency and community engagement.\*

### The one common finding was that we need to double the refund to 20c.

Nationally the schemes have plateaued at a recycling rate of 65%. International experience (and in South Australia with its long running program) shows that rates will now decline as inflation erodes the value of the financial incentive.

### 20c is the key to boosting recycling rates nationwide

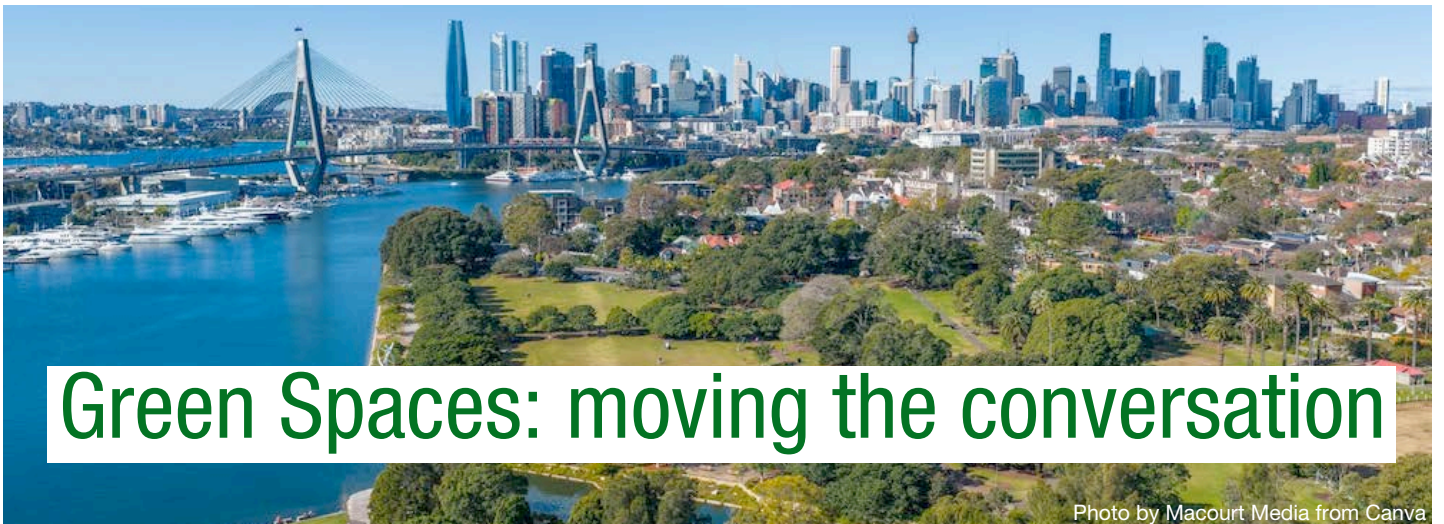
A major effort is now being rolled out to raise the refund. Recycling companies have joined in with TEC and Boomerang Alliance. Big beverage is opposed but there is strong community support. We understand the Victorian government may be keen and a recent NSW parliamentary debate saw bipartisan endorsement.

### Keep an eye out for the campaign during 2026!

\* Our report can be found here – [www.tec.org.au/status\\_report\\_australia\\_bottle\\_and\\_can\\_refund\\_schemes](http://www.tec.org.au/status_report_australia_bottle_and_can_refund_schemes)



Photo by FluxFactory from Canva



# Green Spaces: moving the conversation

Photo by Macourt Media from Canva

## **In welcome news we have had a few green space breakthroughs for Sydney – Blue-Green Grid, Wentworth Park and Warranmadhaa National Park.**

It's taken a while but the **Blue-Green Grid\*** (BGG) – a Total Environment Centre campaign focused on connecting parks, increasing tree canopy and creating spaces that support sustainability, recreation, climate resilience and wildlife habitat – is now on the implementation agenda.

The BGG is a key part of the NSW Government's new draft Sydney Plan\*. While the Plan hasn't been widely publicised for consultation, **we're making sure local groups and the community have their voices heard.** The BGG is also acknowledged as important in the state's new urban heat and climate planning policy.

This is a crucial moment. An effective BGG will help Sydney grow in a way that protects green spaces, supports biodiversity and delivers liveable neighbourhoods for everyone.

**This will help Sydney grow in a way that protects green spaces.**

**A major park win at the end of last year was the re-unification of Wentworth Park** following the closure of the greyhound racing track. In a last developer push there was a proposed trade-off to sell the nearby public foreshore for housing to Mirvac. Premier Minns also went on record suggesting that the greyhound track land too could be used for housing. TEC engaged with the City of Sydney, local state representative Kobi Shetty and community groups – including the Glebe Society and Ultimo Village Voice – to ensure an agreed vision for a complete, publicly accessible park.

The re-unification of Wentworth Park demonstrates **the power of community engagement and collaborative campaigning.**

**It ensures that public green spaces remain intact and accessible for all residents.**

**The declaration of 'Warranmadhaa National Park'** – also known as the Upper Georges River Koala National Park – by NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe is a positive first step. Its establishment is **a critical milestone for koala conservation** in South Western Sydney. However, its scale, size and shape will need to be strengthened to effectively protect the koalas.

**Strengthening its boundaries and protection measures is essential to secure a safe future for the region's koalas.**

With Sydney under major growth pressure, "housing" has become the developer buzzword used to override environmental objections. Yet as the city densifies, it must also prioritise the **implementation of Blue-Green Grid infrastructure**, for the benefit of both people and biodiversity.

*The extreme heat propelled by climate change more than ever points to the need to protect our waterfronts and green corridors.*

\* [www.tec.org.au/blue\\_green\\_grid](http://www.tec.org.au/blue_green_grid)

# Wasted Batteries & Small E-waste Moves

## Voluntary schemes are failing, regulation is lagging – we're pushing for stronger national action.

The voluntary industry stewardship scheme for household batteries (B-cycle) continues to miss more than 80% of their targeted items. Despite acknowledging the limited effectiveness of the voluntary scheme, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) granted B-cycle ongoing authorisation in a narrowly based judgement, despite the clear environmental costs and objections from Total Environment Centre (TEC) and other stakeholders.

**More than 80% of household batteries still go unrecovered – making mandatory stewardship and national circular economy rules urgent.**

NSW continues to lead the way with regulation of waste batteries but it remains in draft form and needs major changes to become effective. Also NSW has introduced additional safety standards for testing, certification and labelling for e-micromobility devices and their lithium-ion batteries before sale – however these standards do not extend to hire vehicles, nor do they address any circular economy objectives.

The Productivity Commission's (PC) widely

anticipated report into the circular economy was released in January. It recognises small electronics as a priority for product stewardship and included a number of key recommendations aligning with TEC's position, including pressing the Federal Government to:

1. Develop and implement a national framework to ensure consistent approaches to small electronics product stewardship across states and territories
2. Develop place-based circular economy plans and pilot place-based circular economy transition brokers
3. Implement recommendations from the PC's previous Right to Repair inquiry

**TEC has taken on the Ewaste Watch website to bolster our campaign, and we will soon be relaunching it for the general public.**

Have your say: if you'd like to contribute content for the website or suggest areas for further investigation, please email [ewastewatch@tec.org.au](mailto:ewastewatch@tec.org.au)



## GERRI ORMONDE – a TEC long timer

For as long as I can remember, Gerri has been associated with TEC. First as a volunteer librarian at our Argyle Arts Centre office, then in 1978 she joined the Management Committee (MC) and later took on the position of Secretary. Gerri has been a much valued member of the MC. Her contribution has been broad and diverse – with a focus on improving people, planning, information and systems. She brought impressive skills to bear helping TEC grow and make generational impacts. Sadly for us Gerri is finally stepping away from the MC.

At the same time she was crafting a distinguished career first with Choice Magazine and then in the Commonwealth public service – culminating in the position of Senior Executive in the department responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, and chairing a regular cross-Commonwealth/State officials' forum on Closing the Gap.

Gerri says, *“It has been very rewarding to see TEC – and the environment movement generally – grow, diversify and professionalise over the decades. For me, it has always been about the people – the staff, the Management Committee, the volunteers, the donors. TEC's staff continue to amaze and inspire me. I am always astonished by their creativity, skills and dedication. I'm proud to have had a hand in recruiting many of them over the years. It's probably been the best bit, really.”*

**Thank you Gerri, for all your years of commitment.**

Jeff Angel, Director



# Microplastics Are Choking Our Waterways

**Our AUSMAP research shows pollution is rising fast. It's time for urgent action at all levels of government to protect our rivers, coasts and communities.**

The evidence of environmental and human health risks from microplastics is increasing, but government action is lagging behind. While container refunds and bans on single-use plastics have helped, microplastics remain largely invisible in policy.

For more than seven years, we have been running the **Australian Microplastic Assessment Project (AUSMAP)** – a citizen science project to educate and engage the public, and build the scientific evidence of microplastic contamination. This project has been hugely successful with more than **1,250 microplastic surveys across more than 450 sites nationally**. It is the longest running microplastic study of its type in the southern hemisphere.

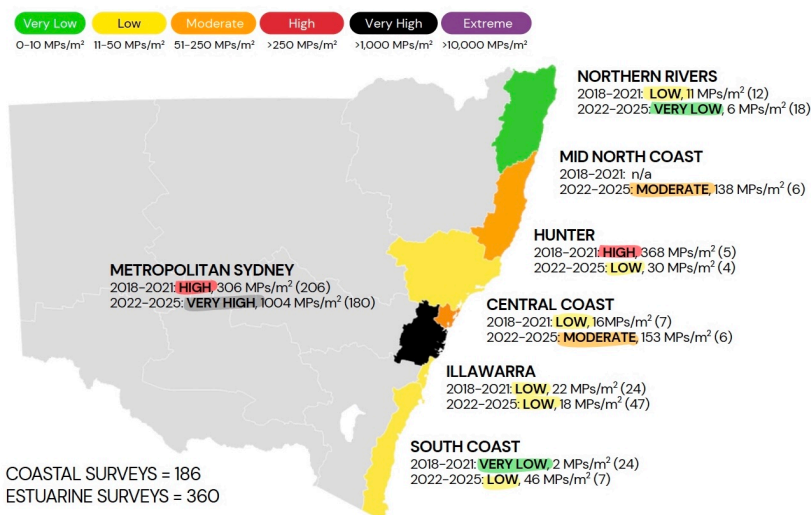
AUSMAP's culminating report, *Do We Have a Microplastic Problem in NSW Coastal Waterways?* reveals an alarming increase in the quantities of microplastics in samples over the past seven years. During the 2018-2021 period the average number of microplastic particles sampled was 306 particles per square metre, while during the 2022-2025 period, this ballooned out to a whopping 1,004 particles per square metre. Unsurprisingly, Sydney has been identified as the highest hotspot region, with 83 hotspot events since 2022 alone.

Within a few days of the release of the report, the NSW Parliament debated our results and unanimously passed a motion recognising the urgent and growing threat of microplastics.

**Microplastic pollution has risen threefold over seven years, with Sydney as the top hotspot.**

**We'll continue to intensify our campaign** aimed at all levels of government to:

1. Implement National and State **Microplastic Reduction Strategies**
2. **Adopt AUSMAP's Microplastic Reduction Framework**, to ensure ongoing transparent monitoring and reporting of hotspots, allowing authorities to implement location specific reduction strategies (ranging from penalty enforcement to the installation of higher quality drain filters)
3. **Phase out the sale and use** of all unnecessary sources of microplastic
4. Regulate extended **producer responsibility and mandatory stewardship** over problematic plastics to ensure those who create this waste focus on and fund risk mitigation
5. Roll out greater **community education initiatives**
6. Facilitate **remediation of coast and waterway hotspots**



Average microplastics concentrations across NSW Coastal Regions, 2018-2021 & 2022-2025. Values in parentheses indicate the number of surveys.



## Too Big to Ignore – A National Campaign Against Plastic Pollution

**Positioning Australia as a global leader by driving a national microplastic reduction strategy and tackling plastic at its source.**

Partnering with **Boomerang Alliance**, we are combining expertise and advocacy to push Australia toward a national framework that prevents plastic pollution at its source.

### Please consider a bequest – remembering us in your will can ensure TEC keeps campaigning.

Recommended bequest wording: “I give, free of all duties and taxes, the whole of my estate or \_\_\_\_\_% of my estate or the residue of my estate or \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate or the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or my units/shares in \_\_\_\_\_ Trust/Ltd or my real property situated at \_\_\_\_\_ having the title reference \_\_\_\_\_ to Total Environment Centre, ABN 54 152 721 302, P.O. Box K61 Haymarket NSW 1240, for purposes that it shall determine. The receipt of the treasurer, secretary or public officer for the time being is an absolute discharge to my executor.”

TO DONATE PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM OR VISIT [www.tec.org.au/donate](http://www.tec.org.au/donate)

### Tax-Deductible Donation to Total Environment Centre

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to donate:  \$50  \$100  \$500  \$1000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to pay by:  Visa  MasterCard  Cheque – payable to Total Environment Centre

Or please deduct \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly from my credit card until further notice

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**If you prefer to make a direct debit / transfer to our Commonwealth Bank account:**  
Name: Total Environment Centre BSB: 062004 Account No.: 10012342  
Mail form or email [jenn.brewer@tec.org.au](mailto:jenn.brewer@tec.org.au) for a receipt



**Please return form to: Total Environment Centre, PO Box K61, Haymarket NSW 1240**

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. A tax receipt will be sent to you within 28 days.

We appreciate your support. The details you provide help us process your donation, issue your receipt and keep you updated about our work. We respect your privacy and communication preferences – you can change or update your details anytime by emailing [info@tec.org.au](mailto:info@tec.org.au) NSW fundraising number: 10614 ABN: 54 152 721 302

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# THANK YOU

Our campaigns succeed due to the generosity and encouragement of our supporters.

## Evidence. Action. Impact.

Every day we delay, more bushland is destroyed, more waste piles up and more wildlife is pushed closer to extinction. We have always relied on your donation to power our campaigns to stop it.

- **Mobilise expert advocacy and campaign teams** influencing state and national environmental policy.
- **Produce rigorous research and coalition work** that turns bold environmental goals into lasting change.
- **Achieve long-term outcomes** – from protecting koalas and green spaces to advancing a circular economy for Australia.
- **Deploy legal and scientific expertise** that strengthens environmental laws and safeguards biodiversity.
- **Facilitate collaboration** between government, research, business and communities to embed the rights of nature into policy.
- **Implement multi-year initiatives** addressing climate, waste and extinction risks.

Please donate generously today. **Because nature can't wait.**