



Nature
Conservation
Council

Nature & Renewables Toolkit

Introduction



Acknowledgement

The Nature Conservation Council NSW acknowledges that we live and work on the land of First Nations people. This land has been cared for since time immemorial by Traditional Owners, whose sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners past and present of the many Countries within so-called New South Wales.

We respect the leadership of Traditional Owners in caring for Country, and support the development of treaties that meaningfully empower them to do so. We acknowledge the dispossession of First Nations People and the harm inflicted on people and Country since colonisation began. We acknowledge that colonisation is an unjust and brutal process that continues to impact First Nations people today. As people living and working on First Nations Country it is incumbent on us to play our part in righting the historical and ongoing wrongs of colonisation. Indeed, our vision of a society in which nature and communities thrive together depends upon it.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) respects and supports all First Nations people's right to self-determination as outlined by the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which extends to recognising the many different First Nations within Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. NCC commits to maintain open lines of communication and to build respectful mutual relationships with First Nations people in all the work we do and wherever possible, seek aligned outcomes with and support the goals of First Nations groups.

We commit, as an organisation, to empower and work together with First Nations people to protect, conserve and restore the land, waters, air, wildlife, climate and culture of the many First Nations people in NSW.

About NCC

The Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales (NCC) is the state's peak environment organisation. We represent over 200 environment groups across NSW. Together we are dedicated to protecting and conserving the wildlife, landscapes and natural resources of NSW.



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Introduction: Why a Nature & Renewables Toolkit?

NSW's environment and planning laws need to be strengthened to ensure that nature is protected and restored through all development, including the building of renewable energy. As Ken Henry's review of NSW biodiversity laws found, all development must move to a nature positive framework. Nature positive means there has been an improvement in the diversity, abundance, resilience and integrity of ecosystems from an agreed baseline.

The build of renewable energy in NSW is a once in a generation opportunity. It has potential to transform rural and regional communities in NSW through economic and community benefits, the ability to diversify industry and income streams for farmers and landholders, and increase nature restoration and protection opportunities.

To achieve the full benefits of the renewable energy transition, our environment and planning laws need to include mechanisms to uphold the values of protecting and enhancing the environment, First Nations self-determination, and reflect the aspirations of local communities.

The Nature & Renewables Toolkit was developed to help communities in NSW who are grappling with how to achieve a renewables rollout that achieves the above values. It aims to build up the capacity of communities and local environment groups to engage with the planning process for renewable energy developments in their regions in an informed, constructive way. It can be used by local community members or groups who are being impacted by the transition (whether located inside or outside of a Renewable Energy Zone), key stakeholders (such as local councils), and decision makers, to inform policy decisions.

This Toolkit is divided into three parts:

1. Protecting nature in the rollout of renewable energy – outlines what a renewable energy transition that protects and restores nature looks like, how we can achieve this, and actions individuals can take to make it happen.
2. Nature and Renewables FAQs – works through answers to some frequently asked questions regarding the transition to renewables and its impacts.
3. Renewable energy developments and the NSW planning system – outlines how renewable projects move through the NSW planning system, ways community members can participate in the planning process, and tips for reading an environmental impact statement (EIS).

All three parts are important to be considered together.

We hope this Toolkit serves as a useful guide for building grassroots support for a positive renewable energy transition while also providing tips on engaging with the NSW planning system.

For any questions or enquiries on this Toolkit please reach out at ncc@nature.org.au.





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