



Submission on the Marsden Park North Rezoning Proposal

30 January 2026

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.

www.nature.org.au

For further information about this submission, please contact:

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Acknowledgement

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW acknowledges that we live and work on the land of First Nations. 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 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.

30 January 2026

NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
via email: northwestgrowtharea@dpie.nsw.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

SUBMISSION: MARSDEN PARK NORTH REZONING PROPOSAL - OPPOSED

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed rezoning at Marsden Park North. Engagement with this process has been prompted by a strong concern that this local-scale proposal would result in the destruction of Western Sydney's only remaining flood-free wetland, which is critical habitat for species of international significance. This conflicts with currently active NSW Government policies and objectives, including the *NSW Wetlands Policy*, the objectives of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, and the *NSW Plan for Nature*.

NCC strongly opposes the proposed rezoning of Marsden Park North and destruction of Riverstone Wetlands.

Riverstone Wetlands constitute one of Western Sydney's most valuable wildlife habitats, providing important sanctuary for a diverse range of animals. In a region increasingly deprived of nature due to the relentless expansion of unsustainable urban sprawl, this site provides irreplaceable refuge for wildlife that would otherwise be unable to continue surviving in Western Sydney.

Riverstone Wetlands provides high-quality habitat for the Green and Golden Bell Frog, which is listed as endangered in NSW. Further, it provides valuable habitat for over ten migratory shorebird species, which fly annually from places like Siberia and Alaska to suitable sites in Australia. These birds are covered by multiple Australian international bilateral agreements, which commit to the conservation of their habitats.

The global loss of suitable habitats like Riverstone Wetlands has already resulted in dramatic declines in migratory bird populations, with fewer of many species returning to Australia every year. **For instance, the Curlew Sandpiper has declined by approximately 80% over the past 50 years, resulting in it being federally listed as critically endangered.** This bird, which is on the precipice of extinction, is known to rely on Riverstone Wetlands as habitat.

The suggestion that this proposal will "*provide opportunities for current and future generations to connect with nature*" contrasts sharply with the reality that destroying Riverstone Wetlands will almost certainly result in multiple local extinctions in the area, possibly causing the extinction of species from the entire Western Sydney region more broadly.

The proposal to 'offset' this destruction with the creation of a new, different wetland nearby is wholly inadequate. NCC has long voiced strong opposition to the NSW planning system's overreliance and overuse of offsets, given their proven track record of failing to negate environmental harms. The offset proposed for Riverstone Wetlands falls far short of providing suitable like-for-like habitat and does not come remotely close to the bare minimum benchmark of a 'nature positive' development.

The proposed offset is half the size of the removed habitat, would produce vastly different hydrology and thus ecologies than the destroyed site, and would not form habitat suitable for much of the wildlife that currently relies on Riverstone Wetlands as refuge, including species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The destruction of Riverstone Wetlands through the proposed rezoning at Marsden Park North would greenlight the local extinctions of species of international importance. It would hasten NSW's ongoing rapid decline in biodiversity and threatened species viability, and contribute to Australia's unenviable reputation as a global leader in habitat destruction and species extinctions.

Once destroyed, this habitat and its resident species are unlikely to ever return. We owe Western Sydney's future generations the same opportunities to witness vibrant and diverse nature, as generations past.

Numerous examples from across Sydney, elsewhere in Australia, and internationally have proven the value of intentionally conserved and maintained urban wetlands. The communities of Western Sydney are deserving of a well-facilitated destination for education, eco-tourism, and recreation, comparable to those enjoyed by people in places like Homebush and Newcastle.

The flood-free characteristic of Riverstone Wetlands makes it one of Sydney's top birdwatching destinations at certain times of year, if well catered for. The choice must be made to preserve and improve this unique and irreplaceable asset for the people of Western Sydney, instead of allowing it to be lost to generic, unsustainable urban sprawl.

NCC reiterates strong opposition to the proposed rezoning at Marsden Park, which would result in the destruction of the internationally important Riverstone Wetlands.

Yours sincerely,



Jacqui Mumford
Chief Executive Officer
Nature Conservation Council of NSW