



Nature Conservation Council

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

Saturday

18 October 2025

Held at the Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub

Level 3, 180 George Street Sydney

MINUTES

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BOARD 2024 – 2025

Chairperson: Carolyn Loton

Vice-Chairperson and Public Officer: Julie Taylor Mills

Secretary: Julie Barnes

Treasurer: Luke Austin

Board Members:

Justine Bucknell

Winsome Hall

Terry Korn

Peter Coughlan

Jo Davey

Lynette Ryan

David Marquard

Sally Townley

All positions are Honorary

Member Society delegates

Member groups represented	31 (quorum = 25, one fifth of the member organisations entitled to be represented [14.(e)])
Voting delegates registered present	36
Number of votes issued to member group delegates	45
Number of votes issued to directors	5
Number of votes issued to proxies	1
Total votes issued	51

Voting delegates

Annette Cam	Francis Breen	Luke Austin
Annette Sartor	Garth Newton	Mal Fisher
Carolyn Loton	George Davey	Melissa Gray
Catherine Goswell	Greg Taylor	Nick Soudakoff
David Bell	Harry Loots	Peter Kerley
David Marquard	Janine Kitson	Rick Eyre
Deb Collins	Jennie Minifie	Shauna Forrest
Deborah Gray	Jenny Goldie	Stephen Horn
Don White	John Creighton	Terry Korn
Dr Stephen Ambrose	Judy Lambert	Tracey Carpenter
Dugald Bucknell	Kate Eccles	Trevor Evans
Eva Coulam	Keith Muir	Winsome Hall

Member Groups represented

Australian Plants Society (NSW)	K2W Link
Australian Wildlife Society	Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society
BirdLife Southern NSW	Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholders Association
Blue Mountains Conservation Society	Manyana Matters Environmental Association Inc.

Bushwalking NSW Inc	Mosman Parks and Bushland
Canopy Keepers	North Head Sanctuary Foundation
Climate Action Burwood-Canada Bay	Professionals Advocating for Climate Action
Climate Action Monaro	Royal Zoological Society of NSW
Cumberland Bird Observers Club	Ryde Community Alliance
Dubbo Field Naturalists and Conservation Society	Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society Inc
EcoTransit Sydney	Save Manly Dam Catchment Committee
Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment (FOKE)	STEP Inc
Friends of Mongarlowe River	Sydney Knitting Nannas
Green Shareholders	Wilderness Australia
Hawkesbury Environment Network	Willoughby Environmental Protection Association
Healthy Rivers Dubbo	

Registered members, observers and other guests

Abigail Thomas	Jan Primrose	Michele Smith
Alanah Jeffries	Jane Smith	Mina Bui Jones
Alexandra Leece	Janet Thompson	Nicole Robinson
Alison Hewitt	Jasmine Payget	Olivia Hadley
Anne Youll	Jemima Coleman	Pat Schultz
Brigid Dowsett	Jenny Cullen	Patrick Conor Druhan-O'Grady
Carmelina Russo	John Benson	Penny Pedersen
Christiane Berlioz	Joyce Fu	Peter Youll
Christina Smith	Joyce van Akkeren	Raymond Wynan
Claire Bettington	Justine Emerson	Rebecca Horridge
Diana Combe	Kay Donovan	Rosemary Hadaway
Dianne Nicholson	Kim McClymont	Samih Mousa
Dot Moller	Lady Nora Preston	Sara Al Arnoos
Fadi Alameddin	Lisa Kelly	Sarah Nolan
Felicity Davis	Lynette Saville	Saul Deane
Hala Al Duleimi	Margaret Sewell	Selen Nazmiye Bilal
Haley Saldamli	Margery Street	Shaun Miller
Heather Kenway	Maria Lucia Malaga Cerpa	Sophie Moore
Heidi Key	Mark Zihrul	Thais Turner
James Vernon	Megan Benson	Trevor Lindars
Jan Davis	Melissa Musicka	Zaya Youkhanna

Guest speakers, presenters and workshop facilitators

Keynote Speakers:

Welcome to Country offered by Craig Madden

Keynote panelists

- Meredith Burgmann AM
- Dailan Pugh OAM
- Cate Faehrmann MLC

Special addresses

- Carolyn Loton – Chairperson NCC
- Penny Sharpe MLC - Minister for the Environment, Heritage, Energy & Climate Change
- Jacqui Mumford - CEO NCC
- Sue Higginson MLC – Greens Spokesperson for the Environment and Climate Change
- James Griffin MP – Shadow Minister for Energy, Climate Change and Environment, and Shadow Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
- Luke Austin – Treasurer

Conference theme:

70 Years of NCC: Reflecting on the past, imagining the future

Keynote panel – Sparks that lit movements: Campaigning for community, climate and nature

Workshops

Rewriting the NSW Net Zero Plan with Dr Brad Smith – Director of Policy and Advocacy Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Ending Native Logging: lessons from 50 years of forest campaigning with Clancy Barnard – Senior Forest Campaigner Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Inland Water Campaigning: Looking Back and Looking Forward with Mel Gray – Water Campaigner and Community Organiser Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Imagining 2045: Thriving People, Thriving Nature with Niamh Murray – Founder Enviro Mentality and Key Relationships Officer Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Board 2025 - 2026

The NCC Board is to comprise 12 Directors.

Our Board is elected each year at the Annual Conference. In accordance with Clause 24(b) of the Constitution, the terms of directors are staggered so that elections for 4 director positions will be conducted each year at the Annual Conference. Board Directors now stand for re-election every 3 years. This year we have received four nominations for the four open positions on the Board. The four nominations are from existing directors.

As there were only four valid nominations for the four positions, there is no need to conduct an election at the 2025 NCC Annual Conference.

Nominations for Board positions closed thirty days before the Conference and accordingly at the date of this Circular, no additional nominations are possible.

In accordance with Clause 19(b)(iv) of the Constitution, the nomination papers submitted by the four prospective Board members must be circulated to delegates, and as such are an attachment to these business papers.

NCC is pleased to declare the following individuals as Board Directors for the ensuing year:

Julie Taylor Mills - SERCA

Justine Bucknell – Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholders Association

Carolyn Loton – Professionals Advocating for Climate Action

Luke Austin - Professionals Advocating for Climate Action

Peter Singleton Coughlan – Climate Action Newcastle

Winsome Hall OAM – Friends of the Mongarlowe River Inc.

Julie Barnes – Green Shareholders and Total Environment Centre

Terry Korn – Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society

David Marquard – Cumberland Bird Observers Group

Jo Davey – Manyana Matters Environmental Association Inc.

Lynette Ryan – Total Environment Centre

Dr. Sally Townley – National Parks Association

Returning Officer: Rana Koroglu

Minutes, Conference of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

18 October 2025

Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub, Telford Room

Chair: Carolyn Loton

Directors present at the AGM:

Julie Taylor-Mills (Deputy Chair)

Luke Austin (Treasurer)

Julie Barnes (Secretary)

Justine Bucknell

Winsome Hall OAM

Terry Korn

Jo Davey

David Marquard

Meeting opened: 9.05am

Annual Conference Motions 2025

A. Council Affairs

MOTION 2025/A1 - Admission of New Member Societies

Submitted by the NCC Board

THAT the Conference confirms the admission to membership of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the organisations listed below, whose membership applications were accepted and approved or recommended for approval by the Board from November 2024 to 18th October 2025.

- The Better Cities Initiative
- Yamba CAN Inc.
- Our Future Shoalhaven
- The Colony Bees
- Transition Towns Australia
- Birdlife Southern NSW
- Fingal Bay Community Association
- Gloucester Transitions Inc
- COAST Rescue
- Canopy Keepers
- Link Road Forest Campaign Inc

Moved: Winsome Hall

Seconded: Terry Korn

Discussion:

- Janine Kitson, FOKE, raised her group's experience of the complex environmental and community impacts of densification.

Proposed amendment, Janine Kitson, FOKE: Defer decision on the membership of the Better Cities Initiative to another suitable time.

Amendment seconded: Keith Muir

Discussion:

- It was noted that Better Cities Initiative (BCI) was admitted as an associate member in 2024, founded by Elizabeth Farrelly.
- It was noted that densification versus urban extension is a discussion that NCC and its members should be having in order to define a position.
- Jennie Minifie, Ryde Community Alliance, also noted that densification is a vexed and concerning issue for member groups in urban areas.
- Deborah Gray, STEP Inc., noted that the mission of BCI is 'better' planning which is not simply about densification, but more responsible planning and development for communities. Deborah encouraged the membership to welcome such groups and their perspectives.
- Winsome Hall, Chair of NCC's Members and Representatives Services Committee (MRSC), spoke in reply. Winsome described the process for receiving and approving applications for membership with NCC. Winsome noted that the MRSC was satisfied by the interests and intentions of the BCI, which are about empowering citizens to be better engaged in the planning system, and delivering healthier, fairer and more regenerative neighborhoods.

Vote on amendment:

For: 1

Against: majority

Amendment is lost.

Vote on substantive motion:

For: majority

Against: 1

Decision: Carried

MOTION 2025/A2 – 2024 Annual Conference Minutes

Submitted by the Board

THAT the Nature Conservation Council NSW accepts the minutes of the AGM held on 16 November 2024.

Moved: Carolyn Loton

Seconded: Don White

For: majority

Against: 0

Decision: Carried

B. Member Group Motions

MOTION 2025/B1 – Gardens of Stone: tourism lease

Submitted by Wilderness Australia

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW request that the Minister for the Environment reject the tourist industry push for a lease over the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area for three luxury glamping resorts set amongst internationally significant pagoda landscapes.

PROPOSED ACTION: That NCC write a letter to the Minister for the Environment.

Discussion

- Members requested more information about emergency arrangements and facilities. Keith Muir, Wilderness Australia, noted that the environmental assessment is not yet available, and this will describe emergency arrangements. Keith noted it is difficult to find answers to such questions on departmental websites.
- Members sought clarity regarding the motion's opposition to all types of camping or only "glamping". The mover noted that the opposition is to "glamping" in

conservation areas, because the impact of the development footprint goes well beyond simple camping.

- Annette Cam, Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS), spoke in support of the motion, reiterating the size of the proposed developments, which include accommodation, common guest areas, and bathrooms. Annette noted that 'public land' should be accessible to community, not only private accommodation providers and their guests.
- Trevor Evans, Australian Wildlife Society, spoke in relation to folks with accessibility needs requiring accommodation that is inclusive in wild areas. Trevor noted that formed walkways without steps and a place to stay should be welcomed into the area.
- Janine Kitson, Friends of Kur-ing-gai Environment spoke in support of the motion and noted that tourist infrastructure had been recommended by the Gardens of Stone campaigners for Lithgow, not in the conservation area.
- Keith Muir spoke in reply, noting that the development is wrecking more pristine areas in an area that is already badly damaged.

Moved: Keith Muir

Seconded: David Bell

For: majority

Against: 1

Decision: Carried

LATE MOTION 2025/B6 – proposed changes to the planning system in Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning System Reforms) Bill 2025

Submitted by Manyana Matters Environmental Association

Approved at the discretion of the Chair and voted by the conference for discussion.

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW full conference condemn the NSW Government for the proposed changes to the planning system in Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning System Reforms) Bill 2025, which strips away decades of planning safeguards.

The Bill in its original and currently amended form removes environmental assessment requirements, strips decision making from experts, and removes community consultation requirements.

The Bill goes beyond development for housing and would make development for other industries easier.

NCC will continue to work to strengthen planning laws to prioritise environmental protection and community consultation.

Proposed action: That NCC write to the Planning Minister, calling on them to retain environmental protections and community consultation in planning assessment processes.

Moved: Jo Davey

Seconded: Don White

Discussion:

- Janine Kitson, FOKE, spoke to applaud the mover and seconder for the motion. Janine noted that the core of the Amendment Bill remains despite some positive amendments. Janine suggested that a review mechanism should be included in the Amendment Bill.
- Deb Collins, Canopy Keepers, suggested asking for deferment of passage of the Bill and a thorough review of the process. NCC staff provided background on NCC's advocacy on the Bill to date, and noted that requests for an inquiry or deferment are not likely to succeed based on the current political context.
- Don White, Green Shareholders, responded to comments, noting that the Bill has passed through Lower House quickly. Don noted that the motion as it is drafted allows for effective and urgent campaign activity. Don asserted that it is also important that the community mobilises to talk to their local representatives, so representatives feel the 'heat'.
- Dugald Bucknell, Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholders Association, requested clarification on how broadly the Amendment Bill applies. NCC staff provided context that the Bill would apply to all kinds of development covered by the EP&A Act. Staff noted the amendments to Targeted Assessment Development (TAD) process providing better guardrails for application, but

amendments passed hadn't addressed core concerns. Staff noted the failure of the Bill to consider cumulative impacts. Staff also noted that the Bill would progress through the upper house in the coming week, and amendments are the best option for reducing the impact of the Bill.

- Keith Muir, Wilderness Australia, suggested a demonstration outside Parliament on the coming Tuesday, the next parliamentary sitting day.

Amendment proposed, Tracey Carpenter, Knitting Nannas: After the sentence "The Bill goes beyond development for housing and would make development for other industries easier."

to add the phrase "In any event, housing cannot be provided in an unsafe environment."

Secunder: Alana Jeffries

Discussion:

- Keith Muir, Wilderness Australia, spoke in opposition to the amendment, due to it returning the issue to housing rather than planning and assessment and the environment.
- Jennie Goldie, Climate Action Monaro, spoke in opposition to the amendment, noting that it does not reflect environmental concerns
- Terry Korn, Dubbo Field Naturalists Society, spoke in opposition to the amendment, in agreement with previous speakers.

Vote on amendment:

For: 3

Against: majority

Amendment is lost.

Amendment proposed, Janine Kitson, FOKE:

Replace the proposed action and insert:

that:

- a) the NCC write to the Planning Minister condemning the Bill and asking that it be withdrawn immediately; and

- b) if the Bill proceeds that NCC begin a process of review with its community groups to establish a Planning and Environment Bill that prioritises nature; and
- c) that a flash demonstration be held on Tuesday 21 October in opposition to the Bill.

Secunder: Jennie Goldie

Discussion:

- NCC campaign staff spoke about the work that has taken place in the last few weeks on this Bill, including a rally, meeting with the Minister, meeting with staff, and working with other environment groups to show joint opposition to the Bill. Staff emphasised that the meaningful opportunity remaining to advocates opposed to the Bill is to secure amendments in the Upper House and that to be useful, the motion should support this advocacy.
- Kieth Muir, Wilderness Australia, spoke in support of the context provided by NCC staff, and withdrew his suggestion for a snap rally on Tuesday.
- Greg Taylor, STEP Inc., queried the practicality of point B of the amendment. NCC staff acknowledged the role of the environment movement in campaigning against the damage caused by this Bill, and that this would happen regardless of the content of the motion, particularly in the lead up to the 2027 Election.
- Terry Korn, Dubbo Field Naturalists Society, spoke against the motion, noting that it would not be strategically effective.
- Mal Fisher, Save Manly Dam, noted that there will be a rally on Tuesday at the Energy and Climate Summit, which would clash with the proposed motion part C, reducing its effectiveness further.
- Janine Kitson, FOKE, spoke in reply to the comments, emphasising the significance of the issue, and withdrew the Amendment.
- Members in the room extended their shared concern about the Amendment Bill.

Amendment withdrawn.

Vote on substantive motion

Moved: Jo Davey

Secunderd: Don White

Against: 0

Decision: Carried unanimously.

MOTION 2025/B3 – Gardens of Stone: endorse the Rise Against Coal resolution

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW Conference endorse the Rise Against Coal event resolution and call for the NSW government to deliver:

1. An immediate halt to water pollution and nature and heritage destruction;
2. A NSW Parliamentary Inquiry to correct regulatory failures and prevent further damage caused to this sensitive region by the coal industry;
3. Protection of Sydney's drinking water catchment through Labor's promised river health laws;
4. A coal phase-out and rehabilitation plan that secures the health of rivers, nature and the community.

Proposed action: endorse the Rise Against Coal motion (no changes may be made to the wording of the motion).

Discussion:

- Jenny Goldie, Climate Action Monaro, noted that climate change isn't mentioned in the motion.
- Keith Muir, Wilderness Australia, spoke in support of the motion, and gave the voting members more information about the vast volume of water use required by the proposed project.

Moved: Annette Cam

Seconded: Keith Muir

Against: 0

Decision: Carried unanimously.

MOTION 2025/B4 – Gardens of Stone: call on the Ministers to take actions

Submitted by Blue Mountains Conservation Society

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW writes to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Penny Sharpe, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon Paul Scully and the Minister for Water, the Hon Rose Jackson, calling for the NSW Government to take the actions in the resolution unanimously passed at the 9 August 2025 Rise Against Coal public meeting that seek to protect the Gardens of Stone region, the health of the Coxs River and Sydney's drinking water.

Proposed action: Write letters to the relevant Ministers as outlined in the motion.

Moved: Annette Cam

Seconded: Don White

Against: 0

Decision: Carried unanimously

MOTION 2025/B5 – Data centres: governing regulations

Submitted by Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society

THAT the Nature Conservation Council of NSW write to the Premier, Treasurer, Planning Minister and Environment, Energy and Climate Change Minister to express concern at changes to the law which would make it easier for all kinds of infrastructure and development to evade proper assessment, and in particular:

- Object to the loss of Council oversight of resource intensive developments,
- Advocate the return approval powers to local councils, and for mandatory expert and community consultation, and
- Advocate a consistent set of regulations governing the location, construction and operation of all data centres, including the associated infrastructure,
 - Adequate physical setbacks to adjacent uses in urban areas and where adjacent to environmentally sensitive zones,
 - Standards for power and water use relative to needs of the local area and

other uses in the supply catchments

- Standards for mitigation of local environmental impacts with thresholds set for unacceptable levels of impact (on people, wildlife and environment) – including tree loss, overshadowing, light, heat and noise generation and intrusion, view impacts, construction impacts and potential pollution from diesel fuel spills
- Capture of stormwater both onsite and, where appropriate from adjacent areas, to supplement water supply for data centre use and relive stormwater disposal pressures in adjacent areas

Proposed action: That NCC write to the Premier, Treasurer, Planning Minister and Environment, Energy and Climate Change Minister urgently, as per the motion.

Discussion

- Jenny Goldie, Climate Action Monaro, queried the full amount of energy projected for use by data centres. Shauna provided some background about data centre energy and water needs, fuel storage and concerns expressed residents nearby. Jenny also noted the global implications of the industry's growth.
- Steven Hore, KTW, spoke in support of the motion, noting that millions of litres of fuel are kept on site at some data centres.
- Deborah Gray, STEP Inc., queried what the most appropriate locations for the data centre industry are, and how the industry should be managed into the future.
- Jennie Minifie, Ryde Community Alliance, suggested writing to other relevant Ministers with the motion.

Moved: Shauna Forrest

Seconded: Jenny Minifie

Against: 0

Decision: Carried unanimously

MOTION 2025/B2 – Gardens of Stone: inappropriate development

Submitted by Wilderness Australia

Motion held over – time expired. This motion will be considered by the Board per the standing orders.

Formal business of the meeting closed at 11.45am