



The Hon. James Griffin MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage

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Dear Ms Mumford and Mr Angel,

I am writing on behalf of the NSW Liberal and Nationals to acknowledge your letter of 24 February 2023 and to thank you for taking the time to make a contribution ahead of the NSW election.

We are sincerely grateful for your constructive engagement, because one of the core beliefs of a Perrottet Government is that embracing new ideas, not politics-as-usual, is the key to navigating the challenges ahead and securing our state's long-term success.

That's why we believe genuine engagement is vital. The best ideas almost always come from the NSW community, and our state moves forward when it is led by a government with the experience and integrity to put those ideas into action.

Climate and Energy

Under the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government, NSW was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to commit to net zero emissions by 2050. We have also committed to interim targets of 50% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030, and 70% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2035.

Modelling by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment projects that under current policy settings NSW is already on track to meet both of its interim targets.

Under the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government, NSW has cemented its position as the most ambitious and advanced jurisdiction in the nation when it comes to the transition to clean energy. The World Wildlife Fund recently ranked NSW as Australia's leading state on renewable energy in its Renewable Superpower Scorecard.



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The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap is the nation's most comprehensive plan to take advantage of the opportunities presented by renewable energy and secure some of the cheapest, cleanest and most reliable electricity anywhere in the world. It will attract \$32 billion in private investment to build at least 12 gigawatts of renewable generation and 2 gigawatts of long duration storage by 2030 to replace the state's coal fired power stations as they come to the end of their technical lives. It will coordinate the delivery of that new electricity infrastructure in 5 Renewable Energy Zones across the State, unlocking economies of scale to drive prices down for businesses and consumers.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is also turbocharging the state's energy transformation with the Clean Energy Superpower Fund (CESF). The CESF is a \$1.5 billion investment facility that will accelerate the delivery of transmission and storage infrastructure. By providing concessional finance and funding early development works that de-risk projects, the CESF will bring forward private investment in critical projects and bring down the costs consumers bear.

In the last 8 years the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has approved

- 33 Solar farms – almost 5000MW – equivalent to powering 1.8 million homes.
- 7 Wind Farms – 1900MW – equivalent to powering 712,000 homes.
- 4 Large Scale Batteries – 1270MW – equivalent to powering 475,175 homes.

Household energy support

The Liberal and Nationals Government is helping households unlock the savings that energy efficiency can provide with its \$128 million Energy Bill Buster program. Under the program, up to 30,000 eligible households can choose to swap their annual rebates for a free solar system or new energy efficient appliance upgrades that can save them up to \$600 a year. Eligible renters can swap their rebates for a suite of energy efficient upgrades, including energy efficient fridges, dryers, air conditioners and hot water systems as well as upgrades such as window shading and draught sealing valued at up to \$4000.

The Clean Energy Superpower Fund will also help unlock greater take-up of rooftop solar and community batteries. One of the greatest barriers to increased levels of distributed energy resources is network constraints. By supporting the delivery of network infrastructure that busts through those constraints, the CESF will support the roll out of rooftop solar and infrastructure like community batteries that help households save, no matter whether they own their own home, or live in a rental or apartment.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has also delivered the Sustainable Building SEPP which is a national first that targets a 7-11% reduction in greenhouse gasses from overall electricity and gas use in new homes.

This policy is the only one in Australia that requires buildings to achieve net zero by 2050 and measure embodied emissions. This Government has also brought in programs to ensure that there are solar panels on Government owned buildings, including social housing.



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Gas decarbonisation roadmap

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government recently announced an \$8 million program to test innovative ways of fully de-carbonising homes in up to 3 local communities across NSW. The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will run a competitive process to partner with the private sector to upgrade existing homes in an urban, regional and remote community, to make them carbon neutral and help unlock long term savings for NSW residents.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is also rolling out Australia's most ambitious Hydrogen Strategy, to help support industry and transport decarbonise and position NSW to thrive as a superpower of the global net zero economy. The strategy provides up to \$3 billion in incentives to support the development of a green hydrogen industry, aiming to reduce the cost of green hydrogen by \$5.80 per kilogram in the next decade. That will help NSW meet stretch targets of 110,000 tonnes of annual green hydrogen production and 700 megawatts (MW) of electrolyser capacity by 2030.

Implement an offshore wind strategy for NSW

Under the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, two of the state's five Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) – the Hunter Central Coast REZ and the Illawarra REZ – hold enormous potential for the development offshore wind.

Industry has signaled significant commercial interest in developing offshore wind farms in both those REZs with the support of the Liberals and Nationals' Roadmap.

A Registration of Interest (ROI) process conducted for the Hunter-Central Coast REZ in early 2022 identified seven offshore wind projects totaling 24.5 gigawatt (GW) proposed in the region. The ROI conducted for the Illawarra REZ in mid-2022 similarly identified eight offshore wind projects totaling 12.9 GW in the region.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to working collaboratively with the Commonwealth Government through its consultation process for the Hunter offshore wind zone. Ensuring alignment with the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap will be critical to that offshore wind zone's success.

Koalas

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to doubling the koala population by 2050. To support this, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government in 2022 delivered more than \$190 million dollars for the NSW Koala Strategy, which is already well underway and is the single largest investment in any species by any government in Australia.

The Strategy is already being implemented around NSW and focuses on more than 30 actions under four themes:



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- a. \$107.1 million for koala habitat conservation, to fund the protection, restoration, and improved management of 47,000 hectares of koala habitat
- b. \$19.6 million to supporting local communities to conserve koalas
- c. \$23.2 million for improving the safety and health of koalas by removing threats, improving health and rehabilitation, and establishing a translocation program
- d. \$43.4 million to support science and research to build our knowledge of koalas.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has recently secured an additional 3,157 hectares of high quality koala habitat across seven properties for the national parks estate. These seven properties are in addition to the 7,608 hectares already acquired for koala habitat through the current and previous NSW Koala Strategy.

There are extensive planning controls in place to limit the impact of development on koala habitat in the Sydney Basin, as well as requirements under federal and state environmental regulation. The NSW Koala Strategy identifies South-west Sydney as a priority for immediate investment and on-ground actions have already rolled out including habitat restoration, vehicle strike mitigation works, habitat mapping and funding for Landcare. The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will also establish a 1,830-hectare Georges River Koala Reserve as part of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan to protect important koala habitat.

In 2020, the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer (OSCE) formed an independent expert panel to provide advice on the protection of the Campbelltown Koala population. A further panel was established in 2021 to provide additional advice and included 31 principles to be applied to protect koalas in the southern Sydney region.

The Department of Planning and Environment supported all 31 principles and reviewed all koala corridors to meet the recommended width for function of koala habitat. All corridors now meet the average width recommended by the OSCE, except for a small area not feasible due to existing development.

Habitat protection and biodiversity

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government recognises the important role that the timber and forest products industry plays as a contributor to regional employment and communities. 1 million hectares, or half of state forests, are permanently protected from harvesting and managed for conservation. In any given year, harvesting takes place in around one per cent of native forest.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to the implementation of a modern regulatory framework for the NSW forestry sector that ensures industry is ecologically sustainable. The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is also investigating options to increase the softwood and hardwood plantation estate in NSW.



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Reduce rates of land clearing to below pre-2016 levels

The statutory reviews of Part 5A and Schedule 5A and 5B of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* and the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* are underway. The reports into the outcomes of the reviews will be tabled in Parliament in August 2023.

Reform the Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to continuous improvement of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) to ensure it delivers effective and lasting environmental and economic outcomes for the communities of NSW. The BOS will be reviewed as part of the statutory review of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

Warragamba dam wall

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to raising the Warragamba Dam by 14 metres, which is part of a range of strategies aimed at protecting lives and properties from floods.

This proposal is consistent with the advice from the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Mitigation Taskforce which recommended raising Warragamba Dam as the most effective and efficient way to reduce the significant risks of flooding downstream.

The project has been designed to avoid impacts on the World Heritage. A biodiversity offset strategy has been developed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement to compensate for the unavoidable loss of ecological values due to the project.

The project will require assessment under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to assess potential impacts to matters of national environmental significance.

Achieve the 30-by-30 target by adding 14 million hectares of protected areas by 2030

The Australian Government has committed to new national and global targets for Australia to reverse biodiversity loss and be 'nature positive' by 2030, and protect 30% of Australia's land seas by 2030. At the 2022 Environment Ministers' Meeting, ministers agreed to work collectively to support these new national commitments.

A NSW Nature Positive Advisory Panel has been appointed to provide advice on how NSW can contribute to the new national commitments in a manner that:

- is equitable, science-based and cost effective
- optimises environmental, social, and economic benefits for NSW

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government already has a strong environmental track record, including securing one million hectares for the national parks estate since 2019, investing in private land



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conservation through the Biodiversity Conservation Trust and developing a NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent to guide policies, plans and investment opportunities in emerging natural capital markets.

Waste and recycling

The NSW Plastics Action Plan Review includes a review of additional problematic and unnecessary plastics within three years from the passage of the *Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021*.

Work on the review will commence in 2023. At the 2022 Environment Ministers' Meeting, ministers agreed to develop national harmonised definitions to support the phase out of problematic single use plastic.

At the 2022 Environment Ministers' Meeting, ministers agreed to reform the regulation of packaging by 2025, to ensure that all packaging available in Australia is designed to be recovered, reused, recycled and reprocessed safely in line with circular economy principles. The NSW Plastics Action Plan also flags the potential for the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government to implement design standards if national packaging targets are not met.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is implementing its commitment in the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy to preference products that contain recycled content on an 'if not, why not' basis. The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is developing regulatory options, in consultation with industry, to decarbonise infrastructure delivery.

The Recycling Modernisation Fund is an Australian Government program which contributes to the NSW Government's Remanufacture NSW. Remanufacture NSW is a \$35 million competitive grants program offering up to 50 per cent co-fund for waste and recycling infrastructure. Ongoing funding for the Recycling Modernisation Fund is a matter for the Australian Government. The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will continue to support infrastructure delivery through the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy and Plastics Action Plan.

Urban planning and green space

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has a range of measures to support net zero cities and buildings, including programs to reduce the urban heat island effect and expand tree canopy coverage.

We have recently:

- Announced the Sustainable Buildings SEPP, which requires embodied carbon emissions reporting and low-energy use buildings. The updated BASIX changes will reduce emissions by 150 000 tonnes a year equivalent to planting 485 000 trees. The Sustainable building SEPP is also a national first in that all large commercial and state significant development will submit a Net Zero Statement to ensure they are future ready and demonstrate that buildings



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are either all-electric or have sufficient space and infrastructure to convert from fossil fuel use by 2035.

- Large commercial development will also need to verify energy and water performance 24 months post-occupancy to close the performance gap between what a building is designed to achieve and what it actually achieves.
- Announced that the NSW EPA will this year develop a Protection of the Environment Policy (PEP), which will require public infrastructure projects to reduce carbon, prioritise the use of low-carbon, recycled building materials and remanufactured substitutes.
- Released the Circular Design Guidelines, which outline best practice methods for buildings to be circular by design – including choosing low-carbon materials, that public and private development bodies can use to give effect to the objectives of the PEP and Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, as well as our Net Zero Plan.
- Released plans to install 30,000 EV charging stations across NSW by 2026, including reforming strata laws to make it easier for people living in apartments.

Existing initiatives that are continuing include:

- A \$37 million Carbon Recycling and Abatement Fund to advance the above objectives, due to go to EOI imminently, announced as part of the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy.
- The Greening Our City Program, to plant trees and meet our 40% canopy coverage target across Greater Sydney by 2030.

Mature tree canopy on public and private land

The Greening Our City Program has a 40% canopy coverage target by 2030. The target of the Greener Public Spaces Premier's Priority is to improve walkable access to new and improved quality public spaces for 230,000 homes by 2023, benefiting over 500,000 NSW citizens.

As of early July 2022, the target has been achieved one year ahead of schedule, with over 233,880 homes having benefited from high quality improvements to existing public spaces and the creation of new public spaces.

A further 50,000 more homes are expected to benefit from Government-funded public space projects in the pipeline. The Government is achieving this through the \$150 million Strategic Open Space Program – focused on creating high quality parks and open spaces.

Rivers and wetlands

The Commonwealth Government has responsibility for recovering water to meet the targets set in the Basin Plan by the 30 June 2024 deadline. NSW is working with other Basin States and the



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Commonwealth Government to agree a pathway for delivering the remaining shared commitments under the Basin Plan.

The NSW Water Strategy includes a commitment to reviewing water allocation frameworks and water sharing plan provisions in response to the last drought. This work is being progressed through the development of Regional Water Strategies which are undertaking catchment specific analysis as the first part of the review.

The benefits and consequences of any changes to allocation frameworks must be carefully considered and require consultation with affected communities to understand the level of risk that government should be managing towards.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to working with Aboriginal people regarding access and ownership of water for cultural and economic purposes.

Oceans

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has an integrated approach to protecting the environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits of the marine estate with marine protected areas up and down the coast of NSW. The Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 sets out the actions to protect and enhance our waterways, coastlines and estuaries, backed by \$286 million since the Strategy commenced.

In addition, the NSW Blue Carbon Strategy 2022-2027 promotes the restoration of coastal biodiversity and ecosystems while reducing emissions. This also provides opportunities to support tourism and recreation by improving habitat for fish populations.

In Sydney Harbour, the \$9.1 million Seabirds to Seascapes project – one of the largest harbour restoration projects of its kind – will bring back kelp forests and seagrass meadows along with nine focus sites for Living Seawalls to bring back marine biodiversity.

The Liberal and Nationals Government have a long-term plan to get through the current uncertainties and make the most of the opportunities ahead, and that includes our environment.

Thank you once again for your contribution and for your commitment to a healthy environment and helping the Liberal and Nationals government build a positive future for NSW.

Sincerely,

The Hon James Griffin MP
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13/3/25