



## Policy Survey: 2023 climate and nature policy priorities for NSW

24 February 2023

Dear Penny and Jihad,

Over the coming weeks, the Nature Conservation Council, the Total Environment Centre, and our member groups are running candidates' forums and distributing scorecards to assist environmentally conscious voters to understand the policy offerings of candidates and parties.

We take our responsibility to assess and communicate these issues seriously, and we are committed to working constructively to achieve the best outcomes for nature.

We'd appreciate your response to this survey by **Friday 3 March**, and please be in touch if there is any way we can assist you to respond. To make the survey less burdensome, we've limited it to the issues of most prominence for our members this election. Many thanks.

Many thanks,

Jacqui Mumford  
Chief Executive,  
Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Jeff Angel  
Executive Director  
Total Environment Centre

## Climate and Energy

| Policy detail  | Response   |
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| <p>1) Set science-based greenhouse emissions targets</p> <p>a. Ensure greenhouse emissions targets and progress toward the targets are assessed through an independent review process that has regard to Paris Agreement aligned emissions reduction scenarios.</p>  | <p>NSW Labor supports emissions reduction targets of 50% on 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050 acting as a floor not a ceiling on emissions reductions. NSW Labor will legislate emissions reduction targets and establish an independent Net Zero Commission to inform interim targets and develop policies to reduce emissions. NSW Labor will also support a suite of policies to fast-track the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, including a publicly owned NSW State Energy Security Corporation to deliver more renewables to accelerate emissions reduction. In tandem with the Net Zero Commission, this will further reduce emissions.</p>   |
| <p>2) Continue and accelerate the transition to 100% clean energy by 2030.</p>   | <p>NSW Labor supports accelerating the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap with a greater role for government in delivering the Renewable Energy Zones. Also see response to 1) in this section.</p>  |
| <p>3) Address the cost-of-living crisis by implementing household energy efficiency package, including minimum efficiency standards for rental properties, solar on community and public housing, and additional rebates to help more households to get off gas and improve the efficiency of their home and appliances.</p> | <p>The current government has a mixed bag of schemes and incentives. We want to properly measure the efficacy of the schemes and bring them together so that they are more targeted and accessible.</p> <p>NSW is one of the few jurisdictions without a gas roadmap. We need a clear, broad strategy that supports households to electrify if they want to do so.</p> <p>Labor's Rental Commissioner will be an advocate and voice for renters by working closely with government, consumer affairs, stakeholders and renters. The Commissioner will be responsible for identifying ways for renters to more easily access energy efficiency initiatives.</p> <p>Labor will also establish Homes NSW to be a single, one-stop social and affordable housing agency to manage the delivery of social housing in NSW. Homes NSW will be responsible for maintenance and upgrades – including examining ways to improve the efficiency of social housing homes and appliances.</p> |

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| 4) Develop a gas decarbonisation roadmap       | NSW is one of the few jurisdictions without a gas roadmap. We need a clear, broad strategy that supports households to electrify if they want to do so. Also see response to 1) in this section.   |
| 5) Implement an offshore wind strategy for NSW | NSW Labor will deliver an offshore wind strategy for NSW. Now that a declaration has been made for the Hunter, it is essential that government has a strategy to skill-up workers and ensure that there is adequate infrastructure and a suitable planning regime for offshore wind. |

## Koalas

| Policy detail   | Response  |
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| <p>1) Protect koala habitat by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transferring core koala habitat to national parks, including the Great Koala National Park proposal (175,000 ha), the Sandy Creek Koala Park proposal (6988 ha), and the Georges River Koala Park proposal (4000 ha)</li> <li>Protecting the Sydney Koala Greenbelt</li> <li>Imposing stricter controls on land clearing including for urban development, throughout the Sydney Basin Bioregion</li> <li>Complete mapping of koala habitat by the end of 2023</li> <li>Mandate the making of Koala Plans of Management to be gazetted by 2024</li> </ol> | <p>Labor is committed to saving koalas and other threatened species by protecting their habitat. We are going to create a Great Koala National Park. We have allocated \$80 million to establish the park including 140,000ha of national parks and the assessment of 176,000ha of state forest. Labor will also protect the wildlife corridor on Sydney Water land at Woronora Heights by transferring the land to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and assess all public land in the area to identify and protect wildlife corridors connecting the local national parks.</p> <p>A Minns Labor Government will save the koala population in south west Sydney by establishing a Georges River Koala National Park on public land between Glenfield and Appin. As part of this plan, Labor will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a koala care centre to support local volunteer wildlife carers already on the ground rehabilitating sick and injured koalas,</li> <li>Establish protective infrastructure like wildlife exclusion fencing along roadways and adequate koala-friendly road crossings, and</li> <li>Work with other landholders to maximise the protection of wildlife corridors and identify further additions to the National Park.</li> </ul> |

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|   | <p>Labor's plan to save koalas from extinction in NSW will also use partnerships, planning, cooperation, and the levers of government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the National Parks and Wildlife Service 'National Parks Establishment Plan' to identify key habitat and wildlife corridors and expand protected areas into the future.</li> <li>• Convene a koala summit with all key stakeholders to review and refocus the NSW Koala Strategy to ensure it is a legitimate recovery plan for koala populations across NSW.</li> <li>• Ensure the statutory review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act strengthens environmental protections, stops run away land clearing, and fixes the biodiversity offset scheme.</li> <li>• Work cooperatively with landowners (public agencies, First Nations people, Councils, farmers and other private land holders) to develop ways to protect key habitat through partnerships &amp; investment on all types of land.</li> <li>• Work cooperatively with the Commonwealth Government to meet the objectives of the Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032 and the 30 per cent protected areas by 2030 commitment to meet the goal of no new extinctions.</li> </ul> |
| 2) Maintain, expand and restore linking corridors by mandating minimum 250m wide with average of 425m wide corridors through strategic and local plans and planning policies generally. | <p>Labor will, where possible, act as quickly as possible to protect koala habitat, as well as protecting wildlife corridors and building protective infrastructure like fauna road crossings and wildlife exclusion fencing as recommended by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer. As part of this work, we would also focus our environmental agencies towards landscape scale preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors across land tenures while working with all landowners, including First Nations people, farmers, local councils, and public agencies to develop better incentives to keep trees in the ground.</p> <p>NSW Labor will strengthen and refocus the current NSW Koala Strategy to turn it into a genuine recovery plan for koalas while working closely with the Federal Labor Government to deliver targeted koala protections and funding.</p>   |
| 3) Remove development loopholes (ie. discretions)   | See above for response to 1) in this section.  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gazette an environmental veto (koala gateway) for koala habitat on all development applications, including state significant development by bolstering safeguards in assessment and determination processes.</li> <li>b. Address ongoing concerns with the operation and implementation of the Koala SEPP.</li> <li>c. Strengthening the 'serious and irreversible impacts' mechanism.</li> </ul> |  |
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### 3. Habitat protection and biodiversity

| Policy detail  | Response  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End native forest logging and transition NSW timber supply to 100% sustainable plantations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assess, value and maximise the role our public native forests play in reducing emissions and storing carbon dioxide.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>The report from the inquiry into the <i>Long-Term Sustainability and Future of the Timber and Forest Products Industry in NSW</i> was recently released. Amongst its findings was an acknowledgement that the NSW timber sector has suffered from a lack of long-term vision from the NSW Government and that failures to invest in and expand timber plantations has greatly exacerbated the current timber supply crisis. NSW cannot meet the demand for timber and forest products with existing supply, particularly while ensuring adequate protections for native species habitat. Amongst other recommendations, the committee recommended the NSW Government establish further state-owned timber plantations, review forestry plans in light of the impacts of the 2019/20 bushfires and State of the Environment Reports, as well as reviewing the most beneficial future use of public native forests. Labor will respond properly to this review.</p> <p>NSW Labor is committed to working with stakeholders in local communities, including residents, industry, forestry workers and their unions,</p> |

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|   | conservationists, and other stakeholders on an evidence-based approach to the use and protection of NSW native forests into the future.   |
| 2) Reduce rates of land clearing to below pre-2016 levels   | <p>Labor will ensure the statutory review of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> strengthens environmental protections, stops run away land clearing, and fixes the biodiversity offset scheme. We will work with all land holders to do so.</p> <p>We will also ensure that greenhouse emissions and climate change impact of land clearing is considered in the review.</p>  |
| 3) Reform the Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prevent the use of offsets for development in the habitat of endangered and critically endangered species</li> <li>b. Ensure any future offsets scheme is based on best-practice principles</li> <li>c. Strictly limit offsetting to losses accrued as a result of genuinely essential and unavoidable development impact</li> </ul> | <p>The statutory review into the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> is a timely and crucial opportunity to examine what has gone wrong with the biodiversity offsets scheme and set up a pathway to fix it. Labor will ensure the review is rigorous, open, transparent, and includes options of reforming the failed biodiversity offsets scheme to prevent an ecological crisis in NSW.</p> <p>The scathing reports by the Auditor General of NSW and the parliamentary inquiry into the <i>Integrity of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme</i> showed the scheme is fundamentally incapable of delivering on its core purpose.</p> <p>Rather than having a clear ‘avoid, minimise, offset’ hierarchy at its core, the Liberals and Nationals designed this scheme to enable developers to pour money into offsets that are never realised, rather than genuinely protecting like for like habitat. As a result, the biodiversity offsets scheme in NSW is riddled with complexity, conflicts of interest, a lack of transparency, inadequate market safeguards and lack of understanding from stakeholders.</p> <p>Offsetting should be genuinely used as a last resort, only for unavoidable impacts of development.</p> |
| 4) Rule out raising the Warragamba dam wall, which would drown 4700 hectares of World Heritage-listed national parks.   | Yes. Labor opposes the raising of the Warragamba Dam Wall and the flooding of the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park.  |
| 5) Achieve the 30-by-30 target by adding 14 million hectares of protected areas by 2030   | Labor will prioritise the National Parks and Wildlife Service National Parks Establishment Plan which has been cast aside by the Liberals and Nationals for   |

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|  | the past decade. Labor will work closely with the Federal Government to contribute to the 30% by 2030 target. |
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## 5. Waste and recycling (with Boomerang Alliance)

| Policy detail   | Response   |
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| <p>1) Ban more single-use plastics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Urgently review the Plastic Action Plan in 2023 and announce a new strategy, consistent with other advanced jurisdictions and targeting new single use items and including problem plastics in other key polluting sectors</li> <li>b. Incorporate reusable products and practices into the solutions agenda.</li> <li>c. Ban single-use foodware for dine-in at all food outlets</li> <li>d. Ban heavier plastic bags and adopt a reusables standard as proposed by the Boomerang Alliance.</li> </ul> | <p>NSW Labor would like to see a nationally consistent approach to tackling plastic pollution and supports the Federal Government's recent move to join the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Plastic Action plan to see where the removal of single use items can be accelerated.</li> <li>• Support circular economy actions for plastics in which plastic products are either reused, recycled, or remanufactured when no longer useful or required for their initial purposes.</li> </ul> |
| <p>2) Regulate packaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure the Packaging Targets will be met and reject attempts by the packaging industry to use the voluntary approach. NSW should introduce its own mandatory product stewardship regulations if national arrangements are not forthcoming in 2023.</li> <li>b. Strengthen the Waste Strategy to mandate recycled content in products purchased by government and for producers generally.</li> <li>c. Continue the Recycling Modernisation Fund</li> </ul>   | <p>See response to 1) in this section. Labor supports government action to incorporate more recycled products into government procurement processes.</p>   |
| <p>3) Support plastic free programs and microplastic reduction strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide financial support for Plastic Free Places and AUSMAP</li> </ul>  | <p>See response to 1) in this section.</p>   |

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| b. Adopt microplastic reduction strategies |  |
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## 5. Planning and urban green space

| Policy detail  | Response   |
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| 1) Implement the draft Design and Place SEPP, to put net zero strategies at the heart of urban planning, including EV ready apartments; deep soil to retain and plant trees; urban heat mitigation   | A NSW Labor Government would introduce a Net Zero Commission and legislate the state's net zero emissions targets. The Net Zero Commission will be tasked with developing adaptation and mitigation plans for a range of areas including the built environment.  |
| 2) Reinstate the neutral or beneficial effect test on water quality (NorBE) on all developments in the Sydney drinking water catchment, including extensions and expansions.   | Labor considers water quality to be one of the core responsibilities of the NSW Government. We rely on our governments to ensure that our water is of the highest quality for consumptive, environmental and agricultural purposes. We do not support any diminution of water quality testing principles and will closely consider any recommendations to ensure NSW continues to have water of the highest quality. |
| 3) Create the Sydney Blue-Green Grid identified by the Government Architect, including all remnant bushland of endangered and critically endangered ecological communities.  | A NSW Labor Government will continue to work with the Blue-Green Grid committee established under the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act</i> to advise on greater connectivity between green corridors and public spaces.   |
| 4) Maintain the mature tree canopy on public and private land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Catalogue parklands and significant trees/canopy in the Sydney metro area</li> <li>b. Make information available digitally, live, and publicly. The quality of open spaces and significant trees/canopy should be measured via connectivity, tree type, understory and grass cover and species to create a dashboard to assess the importance and ongoing management of the open space and canopy.</li> </ul> | A NSW Labor Government will continue to manage our parklands to provide high quality green spaces for citizens and use the work on the Blue-Green Grid Committee.  |
| 5) Prohibit the sale of parkland and ensure protection from adjoining developments.  | NSW Labor negotiated amendments to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust legislation to lock in community voices in the oversight of our parklands and to improve transparency and accountability of their management, including  |

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| a. Establish an Open Space Defenders Office that is independent of government and can challenge rezonings, impacts and sales that are not in the public or environmental interest. | oversight on the activities on the parklands estate. A NSW Labor Government will continue to look for opportunities to expand parklands across NSW and has already committed to complete the Wolli Creek Regional Park – one of Sydney’s largest parks. |
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## 6. Rivers and wetlands

| Policy detail   | Response  |
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| 1) Commit to achieving the water recovery targets in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by the legislated deadline of July 2024.   | NSW Labor remains committed to addressing the long-term problems of over-allocation of water resources of the Murray-Darling Basin, and the neglect of the health of its iconic rivers and wetlands. To address these issues, Labor will co-operate with the Commonwealth and other States in the management of the Murray-Darling River system with particular attention to river flows and salinity.  |
| 2) Fix the cap on the “drought of record” so that all drought data to the present day is considered in determining water allocations from public dams, including modelled future climate impacts on water availability. | As noted above, Labor is committed to the full implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to ensure we have a fair and sustainable allocation of water in the Basin. We are conscious of ensuring the best available science and the most up to date modelling is included in the development of the extraction limits and sustainable diversions under the plan, including ensuring that future climate impacts are properly accounted for. |
| 3) Improve First Nations access to water.   | Labor supports increased First Nations access to water and recognises the importance of cultural water to many Aboriginal communities in NSW. Labor would like to see the urgent roll-out of the \$40 million Federal Government Cultural Water fund to assist First Nations access to water and is willing to work with Aboriginal communities to ensure access to water – in particular any unallocated water – is prioritised.                 |

## 7. Oceans

| Policy detail | Response |
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| <p>1) Meet the 30-by-30 target of marine waters in sanctuary zones on a bioregional basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create marine parks, including sanctuary zones, for the Sydney and Eden bioregions.</li> <li>b. Return management of marine parks to the department of environment.</li> <li>c. Reinstate the sanctuary zones that have been cut since 2013.</li> </ul> | <p>Labor created marine parks in NSW and these protected areas are a proud part of our legacy. Labor will continue supporting marine parks as essential to conserving the marine environment in consultation with the diverse community of water users and based upon the best available science. Labor will also work with the Commonwealth Government to contribute to the High Ambition Coalition target to achieve 30% marine protected areas by 2030.</p> <p>Labor will restore the role of advisory committees for NSW marine parks, to bring all scientists and stakeholder groups together to undertake the complex work of marine conservation. NSW Labor is also committed to supporting community enjoyment of NSW marine environments, while ensuring this does not work against evidence-based conservation of threatened marine species and habitat.</p> |
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