

Policy Survey: 2023 climate and nature policy priorities for NSW

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. If you don't have capacity to respond in that timeframe, we understand, and are happy to base our analysis on the policy positions on your website and your public comments.

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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| 1) Set science-based greenhouse emissions targets a. Ensure greenhouse emissions targets, and progress toward those targets, are assessed through an independent review process that has regard to Paris Agreement aligned temperature goals and emissions reduction scenarios. | Agree |
| 2) Continue and accelerate the transition to 100% clean energy by 2030. | Agree |

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| 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. | Agree |
| 4) Develop a gas decarbonisation roadmap | Agree |
| 5) Implement an offshore wind strategy for NSW | <p>Agree. Offshore wind development in NSW will require the installation of floating wind turbines. The technology infrastructure to support this would need to be accelerated as part of any strategy.</p> <p>NSW's primary wind resources exist in waters off the coast in major coal generation sites such as the Hunter. As such, these projects can potentially look to utilise some of the existing infrastructure and employment which will result from the retirement of coal power stations to support the development and implementation of an offshore wind strategy for NSW.</p> |

Koalas

| Policy detail | Response |
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| <p>1) Protect koala habitat by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 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) b. Protecting the Sydney Koala Greenbelt | <p>Agree. The Upper House Inquiry found that <i>"The ongoing destruction of koala habitat through the clearing of land for agriculture, development, mining and forestry has severely impacted most koala populations in the state over many decades. The committee found that this fragmentation and loss of habitat poses the most serious threat to koala populations and made a number of key recommendations that stronger action must be taken by government to protect and restore koala habitat on both public and private land."</i></p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Imposing stricter controls on land clearing including for urban development, throughout the Sydney Basin Bioregion d. Complete mapping of koala habitat by the end of 2023 e. Mandate the making of Koala Plans of Management to be gazetted by 2024 | The Inquiry made more than 42 recommendations (most of which were supported on a bipartisan basis) including that the Government investigate the establishment of the Great Koala National Park on the NSW Mid North Coast without delay. |
| 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. | Agree |
| 3) Remove development loopholes (ie. discretions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. b. Address ongoing concerns with the operation and implementation of the Koala SEPP. c. Strengthening the 'serious and irreversible impacts' mechanism. | Agree |

3. Habitat protection and biodiversity

| Policy detail | Response |
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| 1) End native forest logging and transition NSW timber supply to 100% sustainable plantations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assess, value and maximise the role our public native forests play in reducing emissions and storing carbon dioxide. | Agree |
| 2) Reduce rates of land clearing to below pre-2016 levels | Agree |
| 3) Reform the Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme | Agree |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prevent the use of offsets for development in the habitat of endangered and critically endangered species b. Ensure any future offsets scheme is based on best-practice principles c. Strictly limit offsetting to losses accrued as a result of genuinely essential and unavoidable development impact | |
| 4) Rule out raising the Warragamba dam wall, which would drown 4700 hectares of World Heritage-listed national parks. | <p>Agree. I do not support the Premier's plan to raise the wall because it will have significant adverse impacts on the environment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragments and degrades two World Heritage listed wilderness National Parks • Reduces rare biodiversity, including 40% of the nationally threatened Camden White Gum Forest • Destroys Aboriginal cultural heritage • Loss of classic bushwalking areas, historic campsites drowned and access restricted • Further increase urban sprawl on the floodplain and degradation to the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. <p>A better solution is to lower the full supply level for flood mitigation. This provides most of the benefits of the proposed dam wall raising and respects international obligations to protect World Heritage.</p> |
| 5) Achieve the 30-by-30 target by adding 14 million hectares of protected areas by 2030 | Agree |

5. Waste and recycling (with Boomerang Alliance)

| Policy detail | Response |
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| 1) Ban more single-use plastics. | Agree |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 b. Incorporate reusable products and practices into the solutions agenda. c. Ban single-use foodware for dine-in at all food outlets d. Ban heavier plastic bags and adopt a reusables standard as proposed by the Boomerang Alliance. | |
| 2) Regulate packaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. b. Strengthen the Waste Strategy to mandate recycled content in products purchased by government and for producers generally. c. Continue the Recycling Modernisation Fund | Agree |
| 3) Support plastic free programs and microplastic reduction strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide financial support for Plastic Free Places and AUSMAP b. Adopt microplastic reduction strategies | Agree |

5. Planning and urban green space

| Policy detail | Response |
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| <p>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</p> | <p>Agree. The SEPP was the best piece of planning work undertaken by former Planning Minister Rob Stokes. It set requirements for energy efficiency, electrification, tree canopy cover, green space (maximum mature tree and bushland retention, canopy cover and green space, urban heat-ready buildings, which plan for future heat stress in a warming climate to name but a few of the provisions).</p> <p>The SEPP sought to reduce emissions from new buildings, as well as make them cheaper to run and healthier for people. It's a no-brainer for anyone committed to net zero targets and liveable communities. It is astonishing that this Government has put this excellent piece of planning work in the bin - this action is completely at odds with their rhetoric and climate promises.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>Agree</p> |
| <p>3) Create the Sydney Blue-Green Grid identified by the Government Architect, including all remnant bushland of endangered and critically endangered ecological communities.</p> | <p>Agree</p> |
| <p>4) Maintain the mature tree canopy on public and private land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Catalogue parklands and significant trees/canopy in the Sydney metro area 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. | <p>Agree</p> |
| <p>5) Prohibit the sale of parkland and ensure protection from adjoining developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish an Open Space Defenders Office that is independent of government and can challenge | <p>Agree</p> |

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| rezonings, impacts and sales that are not in the public or environmental interest. | |
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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. | Agree |
| 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. | Agree |
| 3) Improve First Nations access to water. | Agree |

7. Oceans

| Policy detail | Response |
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| 1) Meet the 30-by-30 target of marine waters in sanctuary zones on a bioregional basis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create marine parks, including sanctuary zones, for the Sydney and Eden bioregions. b. Return management of marine parks to the department of environment. c. Reinstate the sanctuary zones that have been cut since 2013. | Agree |