

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

27 February 2023

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 we will do our best 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
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.	Yes. We cover the following areas below: Fossil Fuels; Animal Agriculture; Land Restoration & Carbon Drawdowns; Carbon & Biodiversity Offsets; and  <b>Fossil Fuels</b> Immediately ban the construction of new coal, oil and gas infrastructure, ensuring we can transition our economy to zero carbon energy while maintaining a safe climate

	<p>Phase out the mining, burning and export of thermal coal by 2030</p> <p>Develop clean industrial and energy infrastructure and export those technologies to the world</p> <p>Assist workers in fossil fuel industries to transition into new careers in renewables and other non-polluting industries.</p> <p><b>Animal Agriculture</b></p> <p>The Animal Justice Party is the only party that acknowledges the role animal agriculture plays in climate change. The agricultural sector's greenhouse gas emissions are a leading cause of global warming; methane from cows and other ruminant animals makes up 42% of this. We also recognise the real damage done by indirect emissions from the land clearing animal agriculture requires.</p> <p>To combat animal agriculture's effect on climate change, we will:</p> <p>Provide government support to assist businesses and workers currently working in animal agriculture to re-train and transition into more sustainable and humane plant-based industries, including emerging industries in plant-based alternatives (e.g. alternative milks and proteins), as well as cell-based meats.</p> <p>Phase out subsidies to the animal agriculture industry and re-direct those subsidies to industries that do not exploit animals or nature.</p> <p>Ensure that land damaged by harmful animal agriculture is reforested to provide new carbon sinks that will help regulate greenhouse gases and provide much-needed habitat for our native wildlife.</p> <p><b>Land Restoration and Carbon Drawdowns</b></p> <p>Ending land clearing and native forest logging so we can ensure we protect the carbon already captured in our native forests and grasslands</p> <p>Restoring ecosystem function (rewilding) by ensuring 30% of NSW private land is placed under conservation agreements that meet the criteria of the IUCN</p>
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	<p>All endangered and critically endangered ecosystems should be protected to prevent further loss. Carbon and Biodiversity Offsets</p> <p><b>Role of First Nations People.</b> There is an important role for First Nations people and local communities in advising and leading the protection and climate-proofing of nature and local communities. We support governance and solutions that enable First Nations people to adopt these leadership roles.</p>
2) Continue and accelerate the transition to 100% clean energy by 2030.	<p>Yes</p> <p>We are committed to: 30% methane emissions reduction by 2030 100% renewable energy target by 2030 50% reduction in carbon dioxide by 2030</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>Yes</p>
4) Develop a gas decarbonisation roadmap	<p>Yes</p>
5) Implement an offshore wind strategy for NSW	<p>Yes</p>

## Koalas

Policy detail	Response
<p>1) Protect koala habitat by:</p> <p>a. Transferring core koala habitat to national parks, including the Great Koala National Park proposal (175,000 ha), the Sandy Creek Koala Park proposal</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a Great Koala National Park, to encompass 315,000 ha of public land in the Coffs Harbour region. This biodiversity hotspot is the home for almost 20% of NSW's remaining koalas.</li> </ul>

<p>(6988 ha), and the Georges River Koala Park proposal (4000 ha)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Protecting the Sydney Koala Greenbelt</li> <li>c. Imposing stricter controls on land clearing including for urban development, throughout the Sydney Basin Bioregion</li> <li>d. Complete mapping of koala habitat by the end of 2023</li> <li>e. Mandate the making of Koala Plans of Management to be gazetted by 2024</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End all logging of native forests and expand koala habitat protections to wherever koala populations are found, including state and private native forests.</li> <li>• \$50m funding to establish a ‘Landholder Guardianship of Native Forests’ scheme to compensate private landholders who had entered into native forests logging contracts with the NSW Forestry Corporation.</li> <li>• Landholders will be able to apply for Native Forest Guardianship payments where their land has been assessed to be of significant environmental value in regards to biodiversity or the presence of endangered species such as the koala. Payments will be calculated on the basis of the monetary value of commercial logging contract rates.</li> <li>• No development approvals or extensions where koala colonies are present.</li> <li>• \$20m in funding for Local Councils to appoint qualified ecologists to carry out population studies and map koala populations.</li> </ul>
<p>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>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50m to reforest strategic koala corridors reconnecting fragmented habitat.</li> <li>• \$150m in funding to implement road safety programs in high density koala areas including virtual fencing, wildlife friendly culverts, land tunnels and vegetation clearance in roadside zones.</li> </ul>
<p>3) Remove development loopholes (ie. discretions)</p> <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>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an Independent Commissioner for Wildlife with powers to cut through the cosy relationship between the politicians, property developers and loggers to ensure that koala protection takes priority over vested interests.</li> <li>• \$50m funding to establish and resource an Independent Commissioner for Wildlife to specifically advocate for the protection of wild animals.</li> <li>• The Commissioner would be independent from government with the power to implement systemic change by prioritising animal habitat over</li> </ul>

	development and intervene in planning and development applications to enforce habitat protection.
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### 3. Habitat protection and biodiversity

Policy detail	Response
<p>1) End native forest logging and transition NSW timber supply to 100% sustainable plantations</p> <p>a. Assess, value and maximise the role our public native forests play in reducing emissions and storing carbon dioxide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• We will introduce a complete ban on the logging of native forests including state and private forests.</li> <li>• A \$50m fund will be established to compensate private landholders for any economic loss where they had entered into native forests logging contracts with the NSW Forestry Corporation</li> <li>• A “Landholder Guardianship of Native Forests” scheme will be established. Landholders will be able to apply for Native Forest Guardianship payments where their land has been assessed to be of significant environmental value in regards to biodiversity or the presence of endangered species such as the koala. Payments will be calculated on the basis of the monetary value of commercial logging contract rates.</li> </ul>
<p>2) Reduce rates of land clearing to below pre-2016 levels</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>We will introduce habitat protection as a fundamental and consistent planning principle in all regions and sectors.</p>
<p>3) Reform the Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme</p> <p>a. Prevent the use of offsets for development in the habitat of endangered and critically endangered species</p> <p>b. Ensure any future offsets scheme is based on best-practice principles</p>	<p>Yes. Abolish NSW Government carbon and biodiversity offsets scheme, and encourage real reductions in emissions by high emissions industries like fossil fuels, transport and agriculture.</p> <p>Yes</p>

c. Strictly limit offsetting to losses accrued as a result of genuinely essential and unavoidable development impact	Yes
4) Rule out raising the Warragamba dam wall, which would drown 4700 hectares of World Heritage-listed national parks.	Yes. AJP MPs have consistently voted against the raising of the Warragamba Dam
5) Achieve the 30-by-30 target by adding 14 million hectares of protected areas by 2030	Yes. Restoring ecosystem function (rewilding) by ensuring 30% of NSW private land is placed under conservation agreements that meet the criteria of the IUCN.

#### 5. Waste and recycling (with Boomerang Alliance)

Policy detail	Response
<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>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To invest in further development of biodegradable products and work toward the banning of harmful plastics</li> <li>• To oppose “planned obsolescence” and barriers to repairing or upgrading consumer goods</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> </ul>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage recycling and composting programs in businesses and public institutions and educate the public about waste issues.</li> <li>• To stop the dumping of clothing and edible food by retailers and to ensure these products are sent to people in need.</li> <li>• To invest in innovative enterprises which are reducing and reusing waste.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	
3) Support plastic free programs and microplastic reduction strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide financial support for Plastic Free Places and AUSMAP</li> <li>b. Adopt microplastic reduction strategies</li> </ul>	Yes

## 5. Planning and urban green space

Policy detail	Response
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	Yes We must mitigate climate change by stopping urban sprawl and developing walkable cities (see our Human Population & Planning and Land Transport Policies). Australia must also adapt to climate change by welcoming nature back into our suburbs (see our Urban Animals Policy) and making our towns and cities cooler with better designs, less concrete and more green spaces. Implementing biodiversity-sensitive urban design (BSUD) creates settlements that support the local ecosystem rather than replace it. It is positive all round: cities are cooler and emit less, people are happier and more active, and species become more resilient to a changing climate and landscape.
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.	Yes
3) Create the Sydney Blue-Green Grid identified by the Government Architect, including all remnant bushland of endangered and critically endangered ecological communities.	Yes

<p>4) Maintain the mature tree canopy on public and private land.</p> <p>a. Catalogue parklands and significant trees/canopy in the Sydney metro area</p> <p>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>	Yes
<p>5) Prohibit the sale of parkland and ensure protection from adjoining developments.</p> <p>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.</p>	Yes

## 6. Rivers and wetlands

Policy detail	Response
<p>1) Commit to achieving the water recovery targets in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by the legislated deadline of July 2024.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant legal personhood to ecologically and/or culturally significant water systems, e.g., the Murray Darling, Lake Eyre and the Fitzroy River.</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise the scarcity of water in much of Australia and address climate change to reduce the likelihood of severe droughts and floods (see our Climate Emergency Policy and Human Population &amp; Planning policy) while investigating ways to harness more fresh water where environmentally appropriate.</li> <li>Ensure that the regulation of Australia’s water, via market-based mechanisms or otherwise, is independent, fair and transparent, and</li> </ul>



	<p>that water allocations prioritise environmental health as well as animal and human well-being over commercial interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosecute those profiting from large-scale water theft and ensure that regulators are sufficiently equipped to enforce the law.</li> <li>• Remove water subsidies for animal agriculture, including feed crops, and transition towards water-efficient plant-based agriculture.</li> <li>• Incentivise efficient water use in agriculture and industry, e.g., making cotton more water efficient.</li> <li>• Increase the number of protected water systems (including Ramsar wetlands) as these systems are important for biodiversity and ecosystems services, and rehabilitate and rewild degraded waterways.</li> <li>• Critically assess development and infrastructure projects, including dams and floodplain harvesting infrastructure, against their water usage and cumulative impact on local waterways, ecosystems and communities.</li> </ul>
3) Improve First Nations access to water.	<p>Yes</p> <p>Involve First Nations communities in developing water plans and include First Nations' knowledge, values and sovereign rights.</p>

## 7. Oceans

Policy detail	Response
<p>1) Meet the 30-by-30 target of marine waters in sanctuary zones on a bioregional basis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create marine parks, including sanctuary zones, for the Sydney and Eden bioregions.</li> <li>Return management of marine parks to the department of environment.</li> <li>Reinstate the sanctuary zones that have been cut since 2013.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Oversight for marine parks must be transferred from the Department of Primary Industries to the Department of Planning and Environment in order to prioritise environmental protection over commercial and recreational exploitation.</li> <li>• \$20m in funding to enforce compliance and resource monitoring and evaluation of marine parks.</li> <li>• The immediate reinstatement of the 16 marine sanctuaries that were previously removed from the existing marine park network.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sydney Harbour to be added to the marine parks network given its incredible marine biodiversity with 675 species of fish calling Sydney home.</li><li>• Marine parks policy to focus on conservation, not 'resource management'. It is recognised that marine animals and plants thrive inside fully protected 'no-take' sanctuary zones.</li></ul>
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