



# **Nature Conservation Council of NSW Annual Conference 2024**

# **Branching Out: Growing the Movement for Nature**

Program



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## **Branching Out: Growing the Movement for Nature**

9:00am **Aunty Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor**  
Gadigal, Bidjigal and Yuin Elder  
Welcome to Country

9:15am **Nature Conservation Council Annual General Meeting**  
Telford Room // Zoom

10:30am **Morning Tea**

10:50am **Nature Conservation Council Annual General Meeting**  
Telford Room // Zoom

*AGM ends and Conference sessions begin*

12:00pm **Member group updates**  
Telford Room // Zoom

12:30pm **Jacqui Mumford**  
Chief Executive Officer, Nature Conservation Council NSW  
Telford Room // Zoom

12:40pm **Sue Higginson MLC**  
Greens Spokesperson for the Environment and Climate Change  
Telford Room // Zoom

12:55pm **Lunch and networking**

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## Branching Out: Growing the Movement for Nature

1:50pm **Keynote Plenary: Branching out: growing the movement for nature**  
Telford Room // Zoom

Featuring:

- Anita Tang, Community Organising Director at Australian Progress
- Natasha Abhayawickrama, Australian Youth Climate Coalition
- Jessica Harrison, Community Organiser at Sydney Alliance
- Zack Schofield, Community Organiser at Rising Tide

3:00pm **Afternoon tea and networking**

3:30pm **Afternoon Sessions**

Option A:

### **Growing the movement for climate**

Telford Room // Zoom

- Jacqui Mills, Nature Conservation Council NSW
- Jo Lynch, Hunter Community Environment Centre
- Eve Altman, Nature Conservation Council NSW

Option B:

### **Growing the movement for rivers and wetlands**

Earle Meeting Room // Zoom

- Sam Johnson, Nature Conservation Council NSW
- Justine Bucknell, Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholders Association
- Terry Korn, NCC Water Working Group

Option C:

### **Growing the movement for forests**

Pearman Meeting Room // Zoom

- Steve Ryan, Nature Conservation Council NSW
- Joslyn Van Der Moolen, NCC Forest Working Group, Coastwatchers and more

Option D:

### **A broken planning system**

Wangari Meeting Room // Zoom

- Elizabeth Farrelly, founder and director of the Better Cities Initiative
- Don White, NCC Planning Working Group
- Francis Breen, Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society

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- 4:40pm **Penny Sharpe MLC**  
Minister for Environment, Heritage, Energy, and Climate Change  
Telford Room // Zoom
- 4:55pm **Conference wrap-up**
- 5:00pm **Drinks and nibbles**
- 5:55pm **Event ends**
- 6:00pm **Optional conference dinner – The Republic Hotel**  
Upstairs on the rooftop at the Sports Bar  
69-73 Pitt St, Sydney (300m from Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub)

*Thank you for attending!*

To help improve the AGM and conference for future years, we would appreciate you taking the time to complete this short feedback form.



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### **About the Speakers**

#### **Special Addresses**

##### **Aunty Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor**

Aunty Rhonda is a Gadigal, Bidjigal and Yuin elder. Aunty Rhonda works tirelessly for human rights and social justice. She is a disability advocate and leading force in climate justice, as well as a daughter, mother, grandmother, mentor, elder and friend to many. Aunty Rhonda works diligently to heal Mother Earth and redress power and wealth inequities across society, and is currently completing her Masters at UTS in decolonising methodologies and how to respectfully engage with traditional custodians. Aunty Rhonda's mission in life is to live as a powerful, passionate and outspoken woman and to share her knowledge and skills to educate and empower others.

##### **Carolyn Loton – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Carolyn is the Chair of the Nature Conservation Council Board, Carolyn is passionate about nature and Australia's biodiversity. She believes that immediate action to address climate change is imperative. Prior to becoming the Chair of NCC in 2022 she held the role of Treasurer. As Treasurer, she led the formalisation of the NCC Evans Wetlands Bequest policy and associated initiatives; and was also involved in developing clearer internal reporting formats. Carolyn is a co-founder of Professionals Advocating for Climate Action, established in response to the 2019/2020 Australian Bush fires, and with a membership of over 550 people in NSW and across the country. Carolyn works fulltime in the marketing agency she founded in 2006. She is a Qualified Practicing Researcher (Australian Research Society) and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She originally trained and worked as an Occupational Therapist and holds an MBA from the University of Edinburgh Scotland.

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### **Jacqui Mumford – Nature Conservation Council**

Jacqui first joined NCC in 2017 as Network Organiser. She has since run multiple regional and annual conferences, member trainings, and visited regional communities and member groups on the frontline of climate and environmental destruction. Jacqui Mumford has a diverse background in strategic leadership, philanthropy, organising and environmental compliance. She brings this wealth of experience into her role as CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, alongside a passion for climate action and environmental protection. “My focus as CEO is to continue the great work we are already doing, protecting the Murray Darling Basin, ending native forest logging, and ramping up NSW’s commitments on climate action.”

### **Penny Sharpe MLC – Minister for Environment, Heritage, Energy, and Climate Change**

Penny Sharpe is the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage. First elected to NSW Legislative Council in 2005, Penny has held a variety of Government and Opposition portfolios including Heritage, Transport and Planning, Family and Community Services, as well as Disability Inclusion. Penny is passionate about the care of our environment and making sure that NSW takes serious action to tackle climate change.

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### **Sue Higginson, MLC – Greens Spokesperson for the Environment and Climate Change**

Sue Higginson is a Greens member of the NSW Legislative Council and is an environmental law expert who has practiced as a public interest environmental lawyer. She was the Principal Solicitor and CEO of the Environmental Defenders Office, which is Australia's leading public interest environmental law centre. Sue is responsible for high profile environmental litigation in Australia and has represented communities challenging mining giants and has delivered environmental legal services to rural, remote, and regional communities, as well as First Nations communities across the state.

Sue holds a Bachelor of Laws, with First Class Honours, and has lectured and taught environmental law in universities across NSW. Sue is also a farmer, and with her partner on their farm on the Richmond Floodplain in the Northern Rivers, focuses on biodiverse management and conservation regarding farming practices. Sue's farm is also home to koalas, whom she has planted thousands of trees for, in a strive to secure their future.

## **Member Group Updates**

### **Jim Morrison**

Critical minerals mining working group. Jim has been resident of rural NENSW for more than thirty years and active in regional conservation issues for most of this time. He has an extensive communication network with conservation groups and individuals across the North Coast and Northern Tablelands and works closely with indigenous groups including the Firesticks Alliance on regional Natural Resource Management projects. In addition to being a Nature Conservation Council executive member 15 years, Jim is currently the president of North Coast Environment Council, Member of North East Forest Alliance, President of Northern Rivers Fire and Biodiversity Consortium, and the NCC representative on Clarence Valley Bushfire Management Committee.

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### **Rick Eyre – Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay**

Rick Eyre is a retired public servant and website producer and lives in Croydon in Sydney's inner west. He joined Climate Action Burwood-Canada Bay in 2020 and is now its vice president and treasurer. Climate Action Burwood-Canada Bay's focus is to inform and engage with local community, business and government representatives about the climate crisis and to seek solutions.

### **Sally Neaves – Blayney Eco Hub**

The Blayney Eco Hub is an innovative community facility located in Blayney, New South Wales, Australia. It focuses on sustainability, environmental education, and community engagement. The hub typically features a range of programs and initiatives aimed at promoting eco-friendly practices, including workshops, events, and resources related to sustainable living, waste reduction, and renewable energy.

The Eco Hub often serves as a centre for local activities, providing information and support for residents looking to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. It may also feature gardens, demonstration areas, and spaces for community gatherings.

## **Keynote Plenary**

### **Anita Tang – Australian Progress**

Anita is passionate about building people power for social change with a particular focus on communities who are subjected to systemic oppression or disadvantage or whose voices are not heard. Her background includes service provision, policy advocacy, Parliamentary committee work, regulatory and rights work. Her organising and campaign experience includes 12 years at the Cancer Council NSW organising a grassroots network of cancer survivors and carers winning campaigns around smoke-free legislation, cost of chemotherapy, and access to treatment. During this time, she also held leadership roles in the Sydney Alliance. At Australian Progress, she focuses on increasing the impact of the advocacy work of NGOs. And from her home on the lands of the Gumbaynggirr people (mid north coast of NSW), she supports local organising efforts of volunteer groups.

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### **Jess Harrison – Sydney Alliance**

Jess Harrison lives on unceded Daruk Country in the Canterbury-Bankstown area where she rents with her partner. She has been working as a Community Organiser with the Sydney Alliance for almost five years. Some of her proudest achievements include organising renters from all across Southwest Sydney which helped end unfair 'no grounds' evictions, and organising an anti-racism action within her Jewish Community. She is a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ and Jewish Communities and is privileged to be a delegate for her union- the Australian Services Union. Prior to Organising she has worked with the Asylum Seekers Centre, as a Hebrew School teacher, kitchen hand, and waitress.

### **Natasha Abhayawickrama – Australian Youth Climate Coalition**

Natasha Abhayawickrama (she/her) is an undergraduate university student at the University of New South Wales with over five years of experience as a community organiser, living and working on unceded Gadigal Country. She is currently employed as an organiser with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and as a Research Associate at Deakin University. The Australian Youth Climate Coalition ('AYCC') is Australia's largest youth-led not-for-profit organisation with over 200,000 supporters across Australia. AYCC acts as an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organisation to benefit the Australian community by building a generation-wide movement to solve climate change by educating, inspiring, empowering and mobilising young Australians around the issue.

### **Zack Schofield – Rising Tide**

Zack is from Rising Tide and was one of the organisers of the Newcastle port blockade, which was part of one of the biggest climate protests in Australia's history. During this civil disobedience action, protesters paddled into the Port of Newcastle on kayaks, surfboards, and pontoons to stop coal exports from leaving the harbor. They aimed to call on the government to tax fossil fuel export profits at 75% and halt new coal projects.

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### **Afternoon Sessions**

#### **Don White – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Don has been actively involved in the environment movement and with conservation issues his entire life. Though he semi-retired in 1998 from his life as an engineer, he now seems to be more active than ever with a part time position at the University of Sydney and environmental interests in Climate change, Sustainable living, Bushfire, Water (rural and urban), Forest conservation, waste and waste avoidance and local environment issues. As well as being an active member of many other organisations, Don was Chair of the Nature Conservation Council board for 17 years and was Treasurer before this.

#### **Elizabeth Farrelly – Better Cities Initiative**

Dr Elizabeth Farrelly is an award-winning writer, columnist, critic, academic, broadcaster, public intellectual and former political candidate. Trained in architecture and philosophy, she is a former City of Sydney Councillor, former Director of the National Trust NSW, occasional academic and author of several books including *Bubberland; the Dangers of Happiness and Killing Sydney; the fight for a city's soul* (2021). She is currently presenter of *The Sydneyist* on Eastside Radio and columnist for *Architecture AU* and for *The Saturday Paper*.

#### **Eve Altman – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Eve is NCC's Clean Energy Campaigner, working to ensure that the renewable energy rollout in NSW protects and restores nature. They have worked in community organising and advocacy in the non-profit sector across a variety of issues including climate and human rights.

#### **Francis Breen – Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society**

Frank is the President Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society. He has a longstanding commitment to the environment being a key member of the NCC Planning Working Group and a bushcare volunteer in the Ryde and Inner West LGAs. From 2012-2016, he was an elected Councillor for Leichhardt Municipal Council. He is a delegate of the Parramatta River Catchment Group, a former Chair of the Environment Committee Leichhardt Council, and delegate for Leichhardt Council to the Sydney Coastal Council Group.

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### **Jacqui Mills – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Jacqui is the Senior Climate and Energy Campaigner for NCC NSW. She has been involved in conservation, animal protection and labour rights campaigning over many years. She shaped the work of The Wombat Foundation to conserve the critically endangered Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat and sat on the board of The Wilderness Society Ltd.

### **Jo Lynch – Hunter Community Environment Centre**

Jo is a lifelong resident of the Hunter, raised on Wonnarua Country. She is a Fine Arts graduate of Newcastle University, imparting strong communication skills and a belief in the perennial power of art to galvanise social change. Since 2018, Jo has worked with the Hunter Community Environment Centre to coordinate grassroots action to protect biodiversity and communities, focused on the adverse impacts of pollution from NSW's thermal coal industry. Jo is passionate about an equitable transition to renewable energy for the Hunter in which the regions' natural beauty, rich cultural and ecological diversity and staunch working-class legacy can continue to thrive together.

### **Joslyn Van Der Moolen**

Joslyn has worked hard on the conservation of SE NSW public native forests for many years and wants to see NSW join WA and Victoria and announce the end of native forest logging (mainly exported at taxpayer expense as woodchips) and move 100% to softwood plantations to supply the domestic construction sector. Joslyn also co-manages the Great Eastern Ranges and WWF-Australia South Coast Project for environmental conservation and restoration projects (2021-2024) as part of the broader bushfire recovery effort.

### **Justine Bucknell**

For the last 20 years Justine has been director/secretary of Quambone Pastoral Co. with her husband Dugald, who run a beef cattle production enterprise on the eastern side of the Macquarie Marshes and floodplain. Justine is also Secretary for the Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholders Association and a member of Healthy Rivers Dubbo, and the Great Artesian Basin Protection Group, and helped with the No CSG and pipeline campaign in Coonamble and participated in the campaign against a proposed re-regulating weir at Gin Gin in the Macquarie River. Justine strongly believes in the power of grassroots advocacy, focusing on the sustainability of the Murray Darling Basin as a whole.

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### **Mel Gray – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Based in Dubbo on Wiradjuri Country, Mel has been voluntarily running local grassroots groups and community led campaigns in the Murray Darling Basin since 2017. She has been with the Nature Conservation Council NSW as a water campaigner since 2021. Mel has brought her strong local connections and community relationships to the role.

### **Sam Johnson – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Sam works on NCC's coastal wetland advocacy campaign, aiming to build the movement for coastal conservation and restoration throughout the state. He has previously worked on the Climate Action Now campaign and 2022 Picnic for Nature, as well as with NCC's Bushfire Program. Sam is a recent wildlife conservation graduate from the University of Sydney, completing his honours research on urban biodiversity with the Global Ecology Lab.

### **Steve Ryan – Nature Conservation Council NSW**

Steve is the Nature Campaigner for Nature Conservation Council NSW and has been working on the protection of nature for over two decades. Steve has experience with national and regional environmental advocacy and NRM organisations.