

CLIMATE CAMPAIGN



A message from Senior Climate Campaigner, Jacqui Mills

In the last year, we've fought hard for better policy and more funding for renewable energy to benefit climate and nature and alleviate cost of living pressures. The NSW Government has announced a multi-million dollar package to support households to embrace renewable energy and save on energy bills and the pace of the renewable energy transition in NSW is picking up. More than half of our state's energy needs are now able to be met through renewable energy sources.

With the regrettable decision to extend the lifetime of Eraring coal-fired power station, the country's largest, we've spoken up and set the NSW Government on notice that we must never again delay the planned closure of a coal-fired power station in our state. It must be full steam ahead for renewable energy.

Yet, concerns on the impacts of projects on regional communities are real, and energy policy is once again shaping up to be a political football for the upcoming federal election. We've been out in the regions designated as renewable energy zones, engaging grassroots environmental groups and community members on their priorities for renewable energy to inform our policy advocacy.

The renewable energy transition is a once in a generation opportunity to protect and restore nature, and we're actively setting out an agenda to achieve this, informed by our work with partners and community.

Thank you for your invaluable support of our campaign to secure a safe and stable climate for generations to come.

Jacqui Mills
Senior Climate Campaigner
Nature Conservation Council NSW



NCC's climate campaign team recently visited the New England REZ to hold a stakeholder workshop that brought together landholders, landcare organisations, and local renewable energy champions. This formed part of the campaign's community outreach and engagement on the renewable energy transition.

2024 at a glance

We made good progress in 2024, with both State and Federal Governments committed to climate action and speeding up the renewable transition. We have had some key wins on the policy front in NSW, including:

- Climate emission reductions targets were legislated in late 2023, setting the scene for greater ambition from the state government on implementing the renewable energy transition roadmap.
- Vales Point coal fired power station reduced pollution to legal limits, ending 12 years of exemptions to clean air laws.
- NCC worked collaboratively with the environment movement and clean energy industry to develop clear policy guidance to protect and restore nature in the renewable energy rollout.
- NSW Government announced a multi-million dollar package to support households to embrace renewable energy and save on energy bills.

Our challenges

Though the NSW Government is on board with the renewable transition there are lengthy delays in the renewable energy rollout. The slow pace of projects through a complex planning system and lack of public buy-in for renewable energy in key regions have led to energy security concerns that influenced the State Government to extend the lifetime of Eraring coal-fired power station.

What we did



Regional Conference: At the coalface of the transition, biodiversity in the balance

In June this year our regional conference showcased the Hunter Central Coast community's engagement with the renewable transition. The conference was at capacity with a number of plenaries, panels, mini-workshops and keynote speakers exploring the topic of nature and the renewable energy transition.



NCC Listening Tour in Hunter and New England Renewable Energy Zones

In October and November, the climate team hit the road, headed for regional NSW. The NCC listening tour heard from the communities of the New England and Hunter Renewable Energy Zones on how to protect and restore nature in the renewable energy transition, and embedded these insights into our policy advocacy.



Tour of Mt Piper Power Station

We visited Mt Piper power station and met with EnergyAustralia to hear from them directly on how they intend to manage the transition and some of the challenges they face.



Getting to the bottom of Vales Point air pollution

In August we attended the Future Sooner-led *Citizens' Inquiry on the impacts of coal fired power stations on the health of the people of the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie*. There we heard harrowing testimony of the community health fallout from air pollution from the Central Coast's dirty energy infrastructure. At the same time we secured Delta Energy documents via Freedom of Information request and lobbied the EPA to deny any attempt by Vales Point to extend their exemption from nitrous oxide emissions limits. The community pressure paid off and Delta Energy chose not to pursue a further extension after 12 long years of dodging NSW clean energy laws.



Webinar: How can we protect and restore nature in the renewable energy rollout

We opened up the conversation in our member network to try to answer the questions: How can we ensure nature is protected in the renewable energy rollout? Can NSW be a leader in renewable developments that protect and restore nature? What role can we play as environmental and conservation groups?

Pushing NSW to 'lead the charge'



Our NSW Leads the Charge campaign was a multi-pronged project that included organising forums about the possibilities for household electrification, engaging people to lobby the NSW Government for action on electrification and community collaboration to create an open letter to Premier Minns. The letter was signed by an alliance of union, NGO and faith groups and was published as a full page ad in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, sending a clear message to the Premier on the steps needed to strengthen the renewable energy transition. Through this project we also identified community leaders to build political influence on renewable energy.

Our goals for 2025

In 2025, we will be pushing for the roll out of renewable energy to continue at the scale and pace required to meet NSW energy demands and close the remaining coal-fired power plants on time. As we do so we will be advocating for best practice in new renewable energy projects, that care for biodiversity and communities and even play a role in restoring degraded land on the sites of renewable projects.

We need to maintain the pressure on the NSW Government to ensure all coal fired power stations are closed or on track to close by 2030 with transition, worker retraining and substitution plans in place.

We aim to work positively with the state government, communities and stakeholders in support of a renewable energy transition that protects and restores nature.