

HABITAT CLEARING



A message from Executive Officer, Jacquelyn Johnson

We've spent 2024 capitalising on the NSW Labor Government's election commitments to end 'runaway land clearing' and fix the biodiversity offsetting scheme. This year saw the release of the government response to the statutory reviews of biodiversity laws, providing a once in a decade opportunity to campaign for nature laws in NSW that put nature first.

We've brought together a range of environmental organisations and their incredible experts to create the Alliance for Nature NSW. We [produced a report](#), and have since been working together to achieve the best possible outcomes during this period of opportunity.

We have focused on growing community understanding about exactly what's at stake. We produced a video exposing flaws in the biodiversity offsetting scheme and habitat clearing self-assessment laws. Our supporter [webinar](#) detailed opportunities for law improvement and tactics for effective advocacy, moving our supporters to action.

We applied community pressure at strategic moments, through media and mobilising 500 supporters across our alliance to send emails to the Environment Minister, Agriculture Minister, and Premier, along with a [public statement](#) from the Alliance for Nature NSW demanding strong reforms.

The last months of 2024 have been spent engaging in the reform process for the biodiversity offsetting scheme. We've made submissions, appeared at enquiries and have been lobbying key decision makers in government and across the political spectrum for amendments to the offsets scheme that will make a difference for nature.

Until the laws and incentives regarding habitat protection change, 570 football fields of habitat are still being cleared on average every day in NSW – in 2025 we will be forcing the government to confront the question – how much more are you willing to lose?

Thank you for your invaluable support.

Jacquelyn Johnson
Executive Officer
Nature Conservation Council NSW



Image by Calumn Hockey

2024 at a glance

Key to our progress this year has been facilitating a group of organisations and experts working together towards the same policy changes. Not only does the government receive a coordinated and clear series of demands from the movement, but our networks combine to multiply the pressure that supporters can apply. Through the Alliance for Nature NSW we were able to mobilise huge numbers of supporters to email key government Ministers, and steer co-ordinated advocacy for biodiversity offset law reform.

This year we were able to:

- Increase community understanding about habitat clearing and biodiversity offsetting.
- Apply pressure to the government by building one strong voice for nature across the environment movement and mobilising supporters at key moments.
- Actively participate in the NSW nature law reform process to push for the best possible outcomes for nature.

Our challenges

NSW Labor has acknowledged the issues, committed to making changes, and they are putting the details in their 'Plan for Nature' right now. The composition of the current NSW Parliament means that Labor must work with minor parties and independent MPs who will push for strong reform for nature. However, Cabinet Ministers and the Premier are also being exposed to lobbying from interest groups and conservative media out to portray laws that protect nature as the enemy of regional NSW.

What we did

Advocated for law reform



We made a submission to the Biodiversity Offsets Amendment Bill and appeared at its inquiry. And through producing reports, public statements from the Alliance for Nature, meetings with Ministers, letters to lawmakers, MP briefings, and media pressure we have been fighting for law reform to address runaway habitat clearing.

Built awareness of the issue



Our timely community [polling](#) of NSW residents found that more than 9 in 10 want to see the state government doing more to protect and restore nature, and only a quarter of people think they're doing enough. And we also found that 73% of NSW residents supported stronger protections against runaway habitat clearing.

We set about informing the public and mobilising supporters to action to get the best outcome for nature from government. We held informative webinars, produced a video exposing flaws in the biodiversity offsetting scheme and habitat clearing self-assessment laws, and led a media campaign to highlight that habitat clearing is out of control and needs to be stopped.

Mobilised people to action

In this campaign we have:



- co-ordinated 12 joint actions with the Alliance for Nature NSW;
- alongside our alliance partners, we got 6500 supporter emails sent to key MPs;
- In May 2024 we escalated media pressure achieving 111 media hits;
- 20+ in depth stories on habitat clearing across the year.

Our goals for 2025

2025 will be critical in securing vital reforms and shifting community perspectives, for immediate change, and working for nature right up to the next NSW election. We want to:

- Produce research on habitat loss and prospects in NSW.
- Engage in community organising to further activate regional communities around pushing for strong incentives for landholders to restore and conserve habitat, rather than clear it.
- Run a campaign which will engage supporters to take strategic actions, use media and communications and political advocacy as the nature law reform process continues over the next 12-18 months.

We will be speaking up to get the best deal for nature every step along the way.