



Bruce McKinney



NPA STRATEGY

2018 - 2022



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Adopted by the NPA State Council on 3 March 2018.

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Established in 1957, the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) is a community-based organisation and registered charity dedicated to the protection and conservation of nature.

PURPOSE

Protecting nature through community action.

VISION

A landscape of intact natural areas connecting at least half of the lands and waters of NSW. It will be an environment where nature thrives across the landscape, where people coexist with nature, and where communities respect and nurture the land.

This is a future that is achievable. The legacy of the national parks that we enjoy today proves that NPA can help to deliver a visionary goal to future generations.

SITUATION

We are living within the sixth mass extinction to occur within the past 570 million years of Earth history. In NSW, over 1000 species and 100 ecological communities are threatened. Only 9 per cent of land area in NSW is protected under the reserve system, a far cry from the IUCN target of 17% to which Australia is a signatory. Natural areas are under increased threat from development, fragmentation, climate change, degraded ecological processes, and invasive pest species.

We are witnessing the impacts of climate change at a much a faster rate than scientists have predicted, putting ecological systems and our native flora and fauna under enormous pressure. It is likely that many species and whole ecological communities will succumb due to their inability to adapt quickly or migrate across the landscape. As this state of emergency becomes increasingly evident, we need to act without delay to expand and interconnect the NSW reserve system in order to conserve our extraordinary, unique and diverse web of life for future generations.

NPA MEMBERS SHARE

- Strong passion for the natural environment and associated cultural values
- Motivation to restore the condition and secure the protection of natural places
- Enthusiasm to share knowledge and experience of nature
- Commitment to evidence based research
- Respect for Aboriginal people, their aspirations and understanding
- Enjoyment and fulfilment from visiting and connecting with natural places

PRIORITIES

1. PROTECTING NATURE

Why

We need a world class, well-managed reserve system to connect natural areas across all land tenures, waterways, and marine areas in NSW. Some bioregions and their subregions are either poorly represented or remain outside the protected area system. Rivers, wetlands, inter-tidal zones, marine areas and fauna also require protection.

What

We are focused on an increase in the protected areas of NSW from the current 9% to at least the IUCN target of 17%¹. This protected area network must be supported by world class environmental law, policy, planning and enforcement that reinforces nature conservation. We also expect world heritage status for places of high universal value.

How

- **BEYOND CAR:** Develop a 20-year vision for protected areas of NSW based on an evolved comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) framework for the management of protected areas.
- **50 PARKS:** Advocate for at least 50 additional protected areas in NSW that should already be part of the protected area estate to protect key habitats, water catchments and forests².
- **FORESTS FOR ALL:** Campaign to end logging in public native forests with State Forests becoming a mix of protected area categories to support multiple uses.³
- **GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK**⁴: Propose the establishment of a new reserve of over 315ha to protect our dwindling koala population. This means adding 175,000ha of state forests and key private lands to existing protected areas in the Coffs Harbour hinterland and protecting other public land between Newcastle and the Queensland border.
- **SOUTHERN FORESTS:** Protect all of the 430,000 ha of public native forests of the Southern and Eden Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) regions. This area is also a component of the Great Eastern Ranges 'Alps to Coast' strategy and aims for all of the region's forests to be protected in reserves of different types according to the needs of local communities.
- **MARINE PARKS:** Establish complementary, interconnected terrestrial and marine parks that incorporate the inter-tidal zones. This is the best way to protect sensitive marine ecosystems and minimises land-based threats like pollution.
- **WESTERN BIOREGIONS:** Implement a protected area plan for the precious bioregions and waterways west of the Great Divide. These areas are significantly underrepresented in our protected area network.
- **PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS:** Continue the fight to stop threats to national parks including, but not limited to development, logging, invasive pest species and underfunded park management. We will press for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to be restored to its former status as a leading, world-class nature conservation and land management agency, and that it remains focused on its core conservation purpose.
- **LEGISLATION:** Review the legislative framework for the protected areas of NSW to ensure priority for the development of a world class system of protected areas, recognising IUCN protected area categories, the cultural importance of protected areas for all Australians, and the aspirations of Aboriginal people in land management and restoration.

1 <https://www.iucn.org/content/new-unep-report-unveils-world-track-meet-2020-target-protected-areas-land-and-sea>

2 <https://npansw.org/publications/npa-publications/>

3 https://npansw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/forestsforall_maindocument.pdf

4 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3sKmVn4kYOBbFhzS1J3NnhyNVE/view>

2. CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Why

Since NPA was formed in the late 1950s, the NSW population has doubled in size and become more urbanised. Further significant population growth is expected over coming decades. There is evidence of a decline in people's connection and familiarity with nature, and also of the value and importance they place on it for personal and societal wellbeing. Nature and its protection is increasingly seen as an inconvenient or dangerous hindrance to modern lifestyles, and as a risk to economic prosperity. The importance of national parks remains generally accepted, although there is increasing pressure for their protection to be weakened or even overturned.

What

NPA will continue to expand its nature-based activities so that more people from all backgrounds have the opportunity enjoy nature and are motivated to actively protect it.

How

- **OUTDOOR NATURE-BASED ACTIVITIES:** We will enhance, expand and promote nature-based recreational activities such as bushwalking, nature study, cycling, kayaking, camping and canyoning . We will improve guidance and support for both leaders and participants, and encourage the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- **DISCOVERING NATURE:** We will expand our programmes that allow people to discover, study and research nature, both for their own personal understanding and appreciation, and to contribute to wider scientific and cultural knowledge. Our programmes will provide an opportunity for people to contribute, share and expand their skills relating to natural and cultural history. This will be an important means for building our member and supporter base, public profile and reputation. We will use the knowledge we generate to support our evidence-based conservation campaigns. We will develop close partnerships with expert bodies, including field naturalist societies, plant and wildlife study groups, universities, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, Aboriginal groups, art and photographic societies
- **LAND MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES:** As well as directly contributing to nature conservation, our land management and rehabilitation programmes support our conservation goals and provide opportunities for our members and local communities to connect with nature through important on-ground conservation activities.

3. STRENGTHENING NPA'S COMMUNITY

Why

We have a distinct community of members, supporters, staff, and allied conservation partners. Our strength comes from their numbers, their remarkable experience and expertise, and their dedicated commitment and enthusiasm as advocates for protecting nature. We cannot achieve our goals without them.

What

Growing and diversifying our membership is essential as we continue to build on our shared purpose and strengthen involvement in our activities. We also rely on committed staff, volunteers and supporters and will seek diverse support and partnerships recognising the strength of broad based community action in protecting nature.

How

- **STRENGTH IN NUMBERS:** We will rebuild membership levels and expand our supporter base by offering sought-after opportunities and experiences.
- **PARTICIPATION:** We will expand opportunities for our members and supporters to be involved in the NPA community in ways that work for them. This could be through activities, sharing ideas, research, education, projects, campaigns, administration and committees.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** We will extend and enhance cooperative relationships and alliances with key conservation partners, key decision makers, research groups, and Aboriginal communities locally, nationally and internationally.
- **STAFF:** As key members of the NPA community, our staff bring dedication and expertise to our work. We will continue to provide them with a congenial and productive work environment as well as opportunities to advance their skills and competencies.

4. COMMUNICATING OUR KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS & VIEWPOINTS

Why

Communication within the NPA community, with key decision-makers that we seek to influence, and with the media and general public are all essential for achieving our goals. This reflects our role as a community educator on the natural environment, as an advocate for change to environmental law and policy, and as a widely recognised expert on nature conservation.

What

We need to be highly effective in the way we share our knowledge, ideas and viewpoints. To achieve greatest effect and influence, communication needs to be tailored to the particular audience, and to our particular communication purpose. All communication should be accurate, reliable, attributed, verifiable, and timely.

How

- **EDUCATION AND IDEAS:** We will expand the opportunities for discussion, exchange of information and ideas relating to nature conservation through face to face and on-line forums such as seminars, lectures, book clubs, discussion groups, blogs and other educational offerings.
- **NATURE NSW:** We will provide our members with an informative and inspiring journal on nature conservation and national parks in both print and online formats.
- **AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE:** We will prepare discussion papers, proposals, submissions and representations targeted at key decision-makers. We will also assist members and supporters to participate in policy and planning processes themselves through submission guides and other tailored information.
- **EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY:** We will support our advocacy with the best available evidence from reputable scientific and other sources, including data generated by members and supporters through our own Discovering Nature programmes.
- **OUTREACH:** We will share our viewpoints and expert knowledge across wider audiences through the press and digital media.

5. STRENGTHENING NPA'S OPERATIONS

Why

Orchestrating and directing the talents and efforts of the combined NPA community requires the necessary organising structures and resources, otherwise the prospects for success will be greatly diminished. Three essential needs are for effective advocacy methods, a robust financial base and efficient governance and management.

What

We aim to be better heard and heeded and we will maintain confidence, effectiveness and efficiency through ongoing improvements to our performance.

How

- **ADVOCACY METHODS:** Continuously review and adopt the best means for effective political engagement so we can more productively advocate for protected areas, an effective NPWS, and better systems of environmental law, policy, planning, and enforcement.
- **FINANCIAL STABILITY:** Improve our financial sustainability through a revised funding strategy.
- **ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE:** Continue to strengthen our systems for managing and coordinating our work. We will also regularly review our policy, management and governance processes, ensuring that they are practical and in accordance with legal requirements.