

# Greens NSW

## Coastal Management Policy



Revised May 2014

### Principles

The Greens NSW believe:

1. The NSW coastal zone is a significant natural asset belonging to the people of New South Wales and must be protected through ecologically sustainable management, the allocation of dedicated resources, and a comprehensive reserve system to protect these natural assets;
2. The impact of sea-level rise and other consequences of global climate change, such as increased storm frequency and intensity, must be recognised and incorporated into all decisions relating to coastal zone management;
3. All development and policy decisions for the NSW coast should be based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, and deliver high quality outcomes for the natural and human modified environments;
4. Activities that threaten the natural values of the coast must be curtailed, and new co-operative arrangements among all levels of government, community and industry must be devised, funded and implemented;
5. The management of the NSW coastal zone should be underpinned by a State Coastal Action Plan aligned with a National Coastal Action Plan that takes into account the physical, ecological, cultural, economic, spiritual, and heritage value of the coast;
6. The coordinated management and protection of the coastal zone, including estuarine, wetland and marine environments, is needed to encourage and promote orderly and balanced utilisation and conservation of the coastal region and its natural and man-made assets;
7. A whole of catchment management approach should be used to manage coasts, estuaries and wetlands as an integrated system through the reinstatement of a catchment management authority;

8. Identified hazards associated with existing or future developments need to be evaluated within an assessments framework of values and risks that identify means for preservation and/or enhancement of values while reducing present and future risks to current and future generations;
9. The recognition and involvement of Indigenous Australians in coastal zone planning and management including estuary and wetland management and protection is essential;
10. The recognition and involvement of the public (e.g. volunteer community groups such as Coastcare and Landcare, and school monitoring programs) in coastal zone planning and management including estuary and wetland management and protection is essential;
11. Coastal regions are among the most prized and widely visited tourist destinations. The impact of tourism on our coastal environments needs to be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure it is ecologically sustainable while providing opportunities for sensitive eco-tourism;
12. The threats posed to coastal ecosystems by waste and discharges of all kinds from industrial, agricultural and domestic land uses and practices are extremely serious and threaten the integrity of coastal ecosystems as well as the fishing industry, residents' health and amenity, and tourist uses of the state's estuaries and coastal waters; and
13. Waste and debris accumulation on coastlines is a major problem, with the debris often arriving through current, wind and tidal action. Addressing this problem requires government funding of creative and innovative solutions and their implementation.

## **Aims**

The Greens NSW will work towards:

14. A NSW Coastal Protection Bill, which is based on ESD principles and a public review of laws to identify the most effective measures to protect coastal lands including estuarine, wetland and marine ecosystems;
15. The establishment of a lead agency to coordinate the protection of the coast through public participation and stakeholder consultation processes to identify and monitor problem areas, enforce strict land-use zoning and develop and

implement an appropriate shared-responsibility framework for the ongoing maintenance and protection of our coastal regions;

16. Measures to protect the coast that are informed by the most comprehensive scientific research and take into account the different needs of all stakeholders with no or minimal impact on the coastal environment;
17. The creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems with certain sensitive areas being reserved as no-take sanctuary zones in marine parks and national parks;
18. Implementation of an immediate moratorium on development (including re-zonings and subdivisions) or new commercial operations in coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems identified as being likely to be required for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system;
19. The use of comprehensive regional assessments to evaluate the natural values and resources of coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems in all regions of the state. Such assessments must employ consultation with Indigenous Australians, public participation, periodic review and scientifically valid and publicly accepted methodologies;
20. Action to ensure national and state coastal zone management objectives and policies align to protect coastal, estuarine and marine environments;
21. The inclusion of new legislative provisions to identify, map, securely protect and effectively manage all areas of wetland in the coastal zone that are of regional, state, national or international significance across all land tenures;
22. A comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and programs in protecting and managing the NSW coastal zone;
23. The development, funding and implementation by the NSW government of a range of community education and awareness-raising programs that highlight contemporary coastal zone management issues and promote policies addressing those issues;
24. Ensuring environmental legal aid is made available so that members of the community can take legal action in the public interest to ensure that environmental laws are implemented or complied with;

25. The immediate allocation of adequate funds through a NSW Coastal Acquisition Fund to coastal-land-acquisition schemes to permit the public acquisition of significant coastal lands currently in private ownership at the earliest possible opportunity;
26. Ensuring that coastal lands in public ownership are maintained as public assets and are managed effectively as such, through co-operative arrangements under publicly agreed plans of management;
27. Protecting publicly owned and operated infrastructure that exists along the coast such as surf lifesaving clubs, vital utilities (including electricity and water assets and port facilities) against the impacts of climate change, and, where possible, relocating vulnerable government assets;
28. Ensuring any development in coastal cities, towns and villages be underpinned by ESD principles and takes into full account sea-level rise predictions;
29. Supporting communities who responsibly plan through their local governments to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring public funding is not disproportionately reallocated to ameliorate the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on private properties that have been developed since New South Wales released its sea-level-rise predictions in October 2009;
30. Protecting the visual amenity of the NSW coast, including by prohibiting the building of high-rise and other inappropriate development adjacent to the shoreline;
31. Developing and implementing planning controls that include restrictions on building height and bulk, require quality and character to match existing architecture, be unobtrusive on view scapes, and include buffer zones to protect foreshores and allow for coastal retreat as a result of predicted sea-level rise;
32. Implementing measures to minimise night-time light pollution of beaches, lakes and headlands caused by the use of both public and private artificial light installations. This 'permanent full moon' effect negatively impacts on the sleeping, breeding, migration, and feeding cycles of nocturnal marine and terrestrial creatures;
33. Promoting the use of integrated water-cycle management including reuse and recycling of rainwater, wastewater, stormwater and sewage;

34. Requiring local councils and the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure to incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in all relevant planning instruments; and
35. The introduction of measures to stop polluting industrial, agricultural and domestic discharges from entering water bodies.

### **Estuaries**

36. Recognition that estuaries represent the end point of an entire river catchment where problems have the capacity to accumulate. To ensure both river and estuarine health, total catchment management solutions are needed and whole of catchment management plans developed and implemented;
37. Reform for estuaries management to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and that community involvement in all management decisions is sought, respected and valued;
38. Ensure the protection and improvement of water quality in all coastal watercourses and coastal waters, through education, regulation and legislation including the measurement and monitoring of the condition of coastal and marine water in estuaries through a system of standard indicators;
39. Development of management and recovery plans for all degraded estuarine environments with associated funding to ensure the plans are implemented;
40. The establishment of funding for specific programs to address acid-sulphate soil management;

### **Native vegetation**

41. Placing an immediate moratorium on the clearing of any coastal native vegetation within 5 km of the reach of tidal waters until effective coastal protection and management legislation is enacted;
42. Encouraging the regeneration, rehabilitation and ongoing management of native vegetation in the coastal zone to improve biodiversity habitat values, visual and recreational amenity, and dune and foreshore stability;
43. The funding for specific programs to address weed control;

### **Sand mining**

44. No new coastal mineral sandmining developments being approved;
45. Communities affected by sandmining being both adequately consulted and involved in decision-making related to developments in their area, and compensated for the impacts on their amenity;
46. Requiring that any area that has been mined have its biodiversity returned to as close to a pre-mined condition as possible, as verified by a qualified, independent assessor;
47. Advocating that existing sandmining operations in all environmentally sensitive locations should not be expanded and, when extraction is complete, the area be regenerated to its maximum potential;
48. Advocating that any exploration and /or mining of the off-shore areas of New South Wales not be approved unless there has been rigorous scientific assessment and comprehensive public debate;
49. Research into alternatives to primary extracted sand in building and other products, and distinguishing between necessary and unnecessary products, with a view to phasing out coastal sand mining and cancelling all existing mining and exploration leases in and adjacent to national parks, nature reserves, and other environmental conservation areas;
50. Creating a register of radioactive tailings sites in an attempt to safeguard against the hazards of radioactive sand contamination;

### **Water activities and fishing**

51. The restriction of inappropriate high-impact activity in areas adjacent to the coast and associated catchments of environmental protection zones;
52. Restricting and eventual phasing out of all non-emergency vehicles on beaches, dunes and undeveloped headlands
53. Limiting the use of certain watercraft in sensitive coastal areas, and a ban on the use of jet skis and all high-powered motor boat use in estuaries where there is a demonstrated detrimental impact on social amenity or the environment;
54. No new boat moorings and marinas in estuaries in New South Wales and provision of funding for the selective closure and removal of those existing marinas and boat moorings that unacceptably damage or threaten the passive and low-impact recreational amenity of the estuarine ecosystem;

55. Securing funding to enforce boating and fishing regulations;
56. Extending the restriction zones for commercial and recreational fishing to end the use of environmentally damaging practices;
57. An immediate moratorium on beach-haul fishing because it interrupts the breeding activity of certain species of fish; and
58. Funding research to define criteria for the ecologically sustainable use of fisheries and other marine resources.

## **Related policies**

Planning  
Tourism  
Marine  
Wetlands  
Biodiversity  
National Parks

## **Definitions**

The NSW '*coastal zone*' is defined as:

- a. three nautical miles seaward of the mainland and offshore islands;
- b. one kilometre landward of the open coast high water mark;
- c. a distance of one kilometre around: all bays, estuaries, coastal lakes, lagoons and islands; and
- d. tidal waters of coastal rivers to the limit of mangroves, or the tidal limit, whichever is closer to the sea.

An *estuary* is defined as a partially enclosed coastal body of water that is a place of transition from salt water to fresh water, from tidal to non-tidal, and from wet to dry

*Sustainability* refers to the practice of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles:

- a. the *precautionary principle*. If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- b. *inter-generational equity* is about fairness among generations. The present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

- c. *intra-generational equity* is about fairness among the current generation, concerns equity within and among people and nations, and is essential for achieving environmental justice.
- d. *conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity*. Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration for the maintenance of healthy, productive and functioning ecosystems.
- e. *integration of environmental, economic and social aspects into decision-making*. The three pillars of sustainability must support each other simultaneously.
- f. *improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms*. Environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*, Harding, Hendriks and Faruqi 2009