

Draft NSW Wetlands Policy fails to go far enough

NSW's inland aquatic ecosystems have undergone significant changes since European settlement, with about 50 per cent of them lost over the past 200 years, according to the 2006 NSW State of the Environment Report.

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change has drafted a NSW Wetlands Policy aimed at guiding wetland managers and increasing cross-government approaches to wetland conservation.

The Nature Conservation Council has a long history of participation in the policy and managements of Wetlands in NSW and welcomed the recent opportunity to make a submission on the draft NSW Wetlands Strategy. The NCC identified several areas where we thought the policy could be strengthened.

The NCC believes the NSW Wetland Policy's guiding principles are deficient in a number of important areas. For instance, the principles fail to address the precautionary principle which states that when there is reasonable suspicion of harm or irreversible change, lack of scientific certainty or consensus must not be used to postpone preventative action.

The draft policy report identifies population growth and urban development as major threats to coastal wetlands, yet does not commit to developing additional planning mechanisms stopping urban development in high conservation wetland areas and coastal lakes.

Read the full Nature Conservation Council submission [here](#) .