

# CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS FOR POSITIONS ON THE CONSERVATION COUNCIL BOARD

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**2024 AGM 21st November**

## NOMINATION FOR THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT (ONE POSITION)

### **Stephanie Booker – Friends of Aranda Bushland**

*Nominated by: Rod Griffith, National Parks Association ACT*

*Seconded by: Jess Fordyce, Rising Tide*

My name is Stephanie Booker and this is a short statement in support of my nomination on the board of the Conservation Council ACT Region.

I moved to the ACT in 2018 to take up the role as CEO and Principal Lawyer of the Environmental Defenders Office in the ACT. During this time, I provided legal advice, legal information and community information to individuals and communities in the ACT on environment and planning issues. I grew to understand, not only the nature of the environment and environmental issues here in the ACT, but the social and political landscape in which environment and planning law operates. From 2021 to 2023 I worked for the ACT Greens as their planning advisor, and provided policy advice on new planning law reforms, in addition to policy advice on other environmental laws and issues. Through this role I learnt how laws are created, negotiated and passed. I am a regular contributor to the Local Government Law Journal, where I write on ACT-related local government issues.

I am a member of Friends of Aranda Bushland (and I have been on the Committee for more than two years). I am also a member of Friends of Grasslands.

I continue to have a passion for nature here in the ACT, and have volunteered for the Conservation Council in the past year.

### **Leon Arundell – Pedal Power, Climate Action Canberra**

*Nominated by: Christopher Watson, NPA*

*Seconded by: Christopher Emery, National Parks Association ACT*

Each of us is passionate about some aspects of conservation.

I am passionate about protecting the dozens of species on the ACT Threatened Species list, and the hundreds of local species that are threatened by global warming.

I am even more passionate about being a Conservation Council president who will argue my own views within the Council, and who in public will represent the collective views of the Council's members.

I will be the first Conservation Council president since 2010 to be [ethical, transparent](#) and accountable for giving board members enough time to undertake the [care and diligence](#) that are required for making constitutional decisions in the Council's [best interests](#).

I will bring to the presidency my prior experience as leader of Climate Action Canberra, Living Streets Canberra, the North Canberra Community Council and the ACT Branch of the Solar Energy Society, plus my six years of experience on the Conservation Council's board.

I will invite member group representatives to observe and contribute to board discussions.

You will all be free to express opinions without fear of having police knock on your door, being expelled from Council working groups, and being banned from the Council's premises.

## NOMINATION FOR THE POSITION OF VICE PRESIDENT (TWO POSITIONS)

### **Danny Jowers Blain – SEE Change**

*Nominated by: Kathy Ehmann, SEE Change*

*Seconded by: Correa Driscoll, SEE Change/Canberra Ornithologists Group*

My first year on the board of the Conservation Council ACT has confirmed the significant and continual environmental challenges we face in the ACT. It has shown just how vital and invaluable the work of the Conservation Council is; its advocacy, campaigning and coordination across community organisations keeps the spotlight on nature.

I'm passionate about Reconciliation with First Nations Peoples. Care for Country is at the heart of Aboriginal cultures, providing us so much opportunity to both learn and build connection. It's crucial that the Conservation Council continues to bring Aboriginal knowledge into its work, engaging meaningfully with elders and knowledge-holders.

This year, I want to bring my professional skills in strategic planning and program delivery to help the Cons Council in setting a multi-year strategy and prioritising its resources.

### **Jess Fordyce – Rising Tide**

*Nominated by: Rod Griffith, National Parks Association ACT*

*Seconded by: Kathy Ehmann, SEE Change*

As a previous board member for 2024, I am seeking to apply for the role of Vice President on the board.

During my time as a board member for the Conservation Council, I have demonstrated my commitment to the organisation. I have regularly attended board meetings, sub-committee meetings, and working group meetings. I have contributed to the governance, fundraising, and environmental justice working groups.

My community organising experience includes co-leading Trash Gather for over five years, a grassroots youth initiative focused on litter prevention. I have been involved in Rising Tide for 12 months as a coordinator for the Canberra Wave. In my role as Senior Project Officer at

the NSW EPA, I support 128 councils with their current and planned FOGO services, coordinate the \$50 million Go FOGO and Scrap Together programs, and represent the EPA at regional waste meetings and conferences.

I believe that my experience in coordination, advocacy, and community engagement, coupled with a deep commitment to environmental justice, make me a strong candidate for this role. In the Vice President role, I hope to use my skills in collaborating with community partners and coordinating engagement activities.

Thank you for considering my application.

## **Leon Arundell - Pedal Power, Climate Action Canberra**

*Nominated by: Christopher Watson, NPA*

*Seconded by: Christopher Emery, National Parks Association ACT*

I am passionate about protecting the planet's ecosystems. I am passionate about protecting the seventy-odd species currently identified in the ACT's threatened species list.

I am passionate about protecting animals and plants that are not endangered as species, but whose numbers have declined to levels that put ecosystems and other species at risk.

I am passionate about protecting the hundreds of species that will soon be added to that list, if the world follows the ACT's lead of having a [per capita carbon footprint](#) four times the current world average. Our legislated "net zero emissions by 2045" target applies to only 6% of our carbon footprint.

I will continue to be a bold and courageous voice for stronger action to bring the ACT's per capita carbon footprint closer to the world average.

My passions are supported by a science degree from UNSW, a Master of Environmental Studies from the University of Tasmania, and decades of public and private sector experience. I also have an economics diploma from the University of Canberra, that is invaluable for decoding econobabble.

## **NOMINATION FOR THE POSITION OF SECRETARY (ONE POSITION)**

### **Maisie Walker Stelling - NPA**

*Nominated by: Rod Griffiths, National Parks Association ACT*

*Seconded by: Danny Jowers Blain, SEE Change*

Hi, I am Maisie, a passionate environmental conservationist with a background in science and a commitment to community engagement. As the previous secretary for the National Parks Association and former Office Manager, I bring valuable experience in coordinating efforts and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

My academic journey includes an undergraduate degree in Science (Biodiversity) from ANU and ongoing work there as a PhD student. I have also gained practical experience as a field and lab assistant at the Coexistence Conservation Lab and Conservation and Environmental Genomics Lab at the Fenner School.

My dedication to transparency, accountability, and professionalism aligns with the Conservation Council's values. As a young person working in this field, I am eager to learn new systems and enhance communication on the Board. My blend of administrative expertise and environmental passion makes me an ideal candidate for the role of board secretary.

I am actively involved in local conservation projects and educational programs, and I admire the Conservation Council's commitment to uniting like-minded individuals. It would be an honour to serve as your Secretary and contribute to the Council's important work in environmental conservation.

### **Leon Arundell – Pedal Power, Climate Action Canberra**

*Nominated by: Christopher Watson, NPA*

*Seconded by: Christopher Emery, National Parks Association ACT*

I will bring to the board my prior experience as secretaries of Climate Action Canberra, Living Streets Canberra, the North Canberra Community Council and the ACT Branch of the Solar Energy Society.

Unlike previous secretaries I will give board members members a week's notice of board meeting agendas. Agenda papers often run to twenty pages. That will give board members enough time to undertake the [care and diligence](#) that are needed to make decisions that are in the [best interests](#) of all of the Council's member groups. Presidents will no longer need to worry about whether they are pushing agendas unconstitutionally through board meetings, on unconstitutionally short notice.

I will be accountable, [ethical and transparent](#) in [supporting member group involvement](#) in Council decision-making. In accordance with our constitution, and with the Associations Incorporation Act and its [Model Rules](#), I will inform member groups of board meeting agendas, and ensure that Council [records and other documents are available for inspection](#) by nominated member group representatives [free of charge at a place in the ACT at a reasonable time](#).

## **NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITIONS OF ELECTED BOARD MEMBER (SIX POSITIONS)**

### **Clare de Castella – Pedal Power**

*Nominated by: David Whitney, Pedal Power*

*Seconded by: Correa Driscoll, SEE Change/Canberra Ornithologists Group*

I am an environmentalist and sustainability professional who is seeking to increase my impact in addressing climate and biodiversity related issues given the crises we are facing. As a member of the board, I would contribute the following expertise:

Governance – Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors' (AICD) Company Directors course. I have served as a board member at Garran Primary School and was

founding convenor of Garran Residents Association. My current role is Associate Director, Sustainability at ANU, where I lead the University's operational environmental sustainability program. As part of this, I am integrating climate risk into the University's governance structure and risk management framework. I also co-chair an Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability working group developing climate scenarios for the tertiary education sector and will chair the Group of Eight Universities Sustainability Forum from 2025.

Research, policy and community engagement on climate change – Nine years' experience working with researchers, policy makers and the community on climate and energy related issues at ANU, including managing the ANU Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions (ICEDS).

Sustainable development – Master of Environmental Management from UNSW. Strategic thinking and planning – I lead strategic planning on ANU decarbonisation and won an Outstanding Leadership award in 2020 for this work.

## **Damian Haas – Public Transport Association**

*Nominated by: Danny Jowers Blain, SEE Change*

*Seconded by: Rod Griffith, National Parks Association ACT*

Damien Haas is the founding Chair of the Public Transport Association of Canberra, and currently Deputy Chair. He is the former Chair of Belconnen Community Council and former Chair of ACT Light Rail. Damien brings to the Conservation Council Board significant experience in the development, oversight and management of volunteer and community groups, and considerable experience in developing policy and influencing decision makers in government.

His professional background is in defence intelligence and communications regulations, specialising in the development and implementation of government policy. Post APS, he became an industrial relations mediator and was a member of the Australian Institute of Mediators and Arbitrators and the Resolution Institute. He then joined the ACT Government as Senior Adviser to the Minister for Transport and City Services in 2019 and 2020.

Since 2021 he has been in semi-retirement studying computer science and maintaining linkages with the community through his Deputy Chair role at the PTCBR, his board role at the Belconnen Arts Centre, mentoring younger leaders, and presenting at seminars on leadership and influencing decision making for the 'Expert Leader' management and consulting company. His particular focus on public transport and the role it plays in reducing transport emissions and creating a more compact and healthy Canberra is a key driver for his involvement with the Conservation Council and his membership of its Transport Working Group for the last three years.

## **Correa Driscoll – SEE Change/Canberra Ornithologists Group**

*Nominated by: Rod Griffith, NPAACT*

*Seconded by: Vivienne Pearce, ACT Chapter Australian Association for Environmental Education*

I have had the privilege of serving on the Conservation Council Board over the last two years and seek to continue to support the invaluable work of the Council. I have always held a deep passion for environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and climate justice. I bring to the board both my volunteer and professional experience in climate activism and advocacy, fundraising, landcare and federal environmental regulation and policy.

I have an academic background in environmental science and sustainability, and have spent many years volunteering with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, working on national campaigns for climate justice. I have also had the privilege to work for Southern ACT Catchment Group and the National Landcare Network, supporting community-led landcare. Having since transitioned to environmental policy in the public sector, I am familiar with Commonwealth legislation and processes.

I value the role of grassroots community groups in change-making, and I believe the Council is crucial in supporting community action for a sustainable future. I am keen to continue to support the Council, and I am excited for the environmental wins of 2025.

## **Louise Crossman – SEE Change**

*Nominated by: Danny Jowers Blain, SEE Change*

*Seconded by: Kathy Ehmann, SEE Change*

I am nominating for the board of the Conservation Council ACT Region because I bring a mix of environmental commitment, strategic planning, board experience and governance skills. I'm committed to a sustainable Canberra, not just maintaining the unique flora and fauna of our surrounding bush landscape, but also supporting a transition away from gas and growing our city in a way that promotes walking and public transport use (good for people and good for the environment!).

I have a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Laws, and a Masters of Employment Relations. I've been a public servant, consulted to small businesses on their employee relations, and was an adviser to a Minister in the ACT Government. I can apply my knowledge of the public service and the ACT political process to assist the Conservation Council to understand and influence ACT Government decisions.

I've been a board director of HockeyACT for the past 4 years so I also understand governance of an organisation made up of different clubs and associations. I'm a member of SEE-Change and PTCBR, both of which I joined because I wanted to support the valuable work these organisations do in our local community.

## **Annika Reynolds – ACF Community Canberra**

*Nominated by: Kathy Ehmann, SEE Change*

*Seconded by: Jess Fordyce, Rising Tide*

I would be delighted to continue to serve on the board of the Conservation Council of the ACT (CCACT). I believe my background in law, and particular expertise in environmental and climate law reform is a valuable addition to the CCACT's board skill set, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the strong governance of CCACT and to assist with the CCACT's biodiversity and climate campaigns.

I am the national climate policy advisor for a major national environmental NGO, and was previously a climate policy advisor for an international climate and energy think tank, working on both federal and territory energy laws. I have recently wrapped up my tenure as an Honorary Fellow at the ANU College of Law and remain a Member of the Fenner School Research Hub on Human Rights, Gender and Climate Change, engaging in research on environmental rights and rights of nature in government decision-making.

I bring a strong advocacy background and extensive network to the board, including connections with federal and territory political and departmental stakeholders and media.

I am a member of ACF Canberra and the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

## **Kathy Ehmann – SEE Change**

*Nominated by: Rod Griffith, NPAACT*

*Seconded by: Correa Driscoll, SEE Change/Canberra Ornithologists Group*

I have served as secretary on the Conservation Council board for the past two years and am seeking re-election as an ordinary board member. I have previously served as treasurer for another community organisation and provided secretariat support for several others. I am the founding convenor of the Community Toolbox Canberra, which operates under the auspices of Council member, SEE Change. The Toolbox is a significant addition to the ACT circular economy, with exciting plans for expanded reach in 2025.

I am passionate about improving our collective sufficiency through skill and resource sharing. I am an enthusiastic participant in sharing and repairing platforms of several kinds. I also love talking to people about gardening for pleasure, food and insects in the eternal quest for an end to astro turf. I have qualifications in sustainability and environment and am completing a Diploma of Governance. I have enjoyed my time on the Conservation Council board and found our collective work rewarding. I'd like to continue to support the work of the organisation and its members.

## **Leon Arundell – Pedal Power, Climate Action Canberra**

*Nominated by: Christopher Watson, NPA*

*Seconded by: Christopher Emery, National Parks Association ACT*

I will bring to the board my six years of experience on the Conservation Council's board, plus my experience on the committees of Pedal Power, Living Streets Canberra, the ACT Branch of the Solar Energy Society, the North Canberra Community Council and the Downer Community Association.

Unlike any current board member I will ensure that the board is accountable for acting [ethically, transparently](#) and [constitutionally](#). I will ensure that board members are given 48 hours to consider matters that are not urgent.

As a board member I will not allow my authority to be used for unethical actions, such as expelling people from Council Working groups because of their views, and banning them from the Council's office. Nor will I allow my authority to be used in applications for court orders to prohibit people from contacting the Council and from writing about the Council in the media.

I will ask the board to grant amnesties to board members who since 2016 have breached rule 19 of the constitution.

I will help the board to draft a new constitution for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on the [Model Rules](#) of the [Associations Incorporation Act](#).