



EXCLUSIVE

## There's a new climate war looming around the Liberal party

By JOANNE TRAN

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The conservatives for climate change movement appears to be eroding in NSW.

Turmoil has engulfed the Liberal-aligned environmental conservation charity Coalition for Conservation (C4C), after four board members quit the group over an alleged lack of transparency.

Two members of the C4C board have now moved to establish a competing organisation, The Australian Conservation Alliance, that will also act as a charity for the moderates for climate action movement.

The chaos at C4C, which boasts NSW Treasurer Matt Kean and former premier Nick Greiner as ambassadors, comes after a member took aim at the internal operations of the organisation in a letter circulated to all board members in March 2022.

Former C4C director Dianne Rule told The Oz she had concerns about financial transparency at the charitable group.

“That made me think it was time to resign.”

Rule said she was concerned about the source of funding about a trip by C4C board members to the Glasgow 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference.

According to Rule, the organisation could never provide “clear answers” to its board members where the funding of the trip came from.

“I asked quite a few times how we would be funding the COP 26 trip and what the budget that we had set aside for that was and I could never get a clear answer.”

“I was then asked by a potential attendee and I couldn’t answer with any certainty, I’m not saying the money was suspicious but even I couldn’t get (from the organisation) direct answer about it.”

“I belong to other organisations that managed to keep us (board members) abreast, that is with funding and donations,” Rule added.

C4C in response said minutes were recorded at all board meetings, including the “referenced meeting” where the query and the response was noted, “All financial transactions are considered and approved by the Board at Board meetings,” C4C chairperson Cristina Talacko said.

The letter queried whether C4C had received donations from climate activist Simon Holmes a Court and Climate 200.

It noted how C4C was a charity that was seeking to work with centre-right political leaders and that an “assurance” of distance from organisations such as Climate 200, who helped fund independent candidates against Coalition MP’s in the 2022 Federal Election, will be “necessary in gaining trust and maximising the organisation’s influence on policy outcome”.

C4C and Climate 200 both confirmed to The Oz no funds flowed between the two groups after the letter also raised concerns about the organisation's accessibility to its confidential donations register.

Former federal MP’s Trent Zimmerman and Dave Sharma, who were toppled by Holmes a Court-backed candidates, have made appearances at C4C events and webinars. Including former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and international politicians, former conservative British Prime Ministers David Cameron and Theresa May.

Talacko told The Oz its charitable register was accessible to board members and “as per the approved board process” allowed directors to comply with their obligations.

The same letter alleged board minutes were not kept up to date in a shared drive and that some did not have access to the information.

The charity said it maintained a record of all meetings and that board minutes are available to “all board members at any time upon request.”

C4C’s constitution states that board members may inspect minutes of board meetings records, books, relevant documents or securities of the association.

In response to the former board member’s concerns about an alleged lack of transparency, Talacko said: “All expenditure is listed in a pre approved budget....every member receives the Treasurer’s report, which includes Balance Sheet, P&L, all transactions and full bank statements, in advance of the Board meetings. This system provides full transparency to Board members.”

Since leaving, former C4C board members Riley Taylor and Tiffany O’Keefe have started a new organisation with similar objectives to C4C called Australian Conservation Alliance (ACA).

Taylor quit C4C due to disagreements with the charity’s management.

Taylor said the new organisation “aligns very closely with their (C4C) objectives of advocating for market based solutions to environmental problems, the work (C4C) accomplished was great, we just disagreed with the management style and governance.”

“We thought it was better to go our separate ways,” he said.

O’Keefe said the new organisation will want to “make it clear that we are here on a voluntary basis to pursue the objectives and the goals, and all fundraising will be going towards those objectives.”

“We’ll be completely transparent about our funds,

“Something we’ll pride ourselves on.” she said.

## TRENDING



NATION

### Missing campers case nearly collapsed

More than a year after he became a 'person of interest' in the disappearance of two campers, police swooped on Greg Lynn – now the full story of his arrest can be told.

By LIAM BEATTY



NATION

### Cop left stunned by police file on missing mother

From the moment Detective Sergeant Glenn Taylor read the paperwork on missing mum Bronwyn Winfield in 1998, he immediately saw red flags. Her inquest years later would be his last in a NSW police uniform.

By MATTHEW CONDON



CRICKET

### Fake injury: Aussies exit World Cup after Afghans' dramatic win

Australia is heading home from the T20 World Cup elimination after a heavy loss to India and Afghanistan's thrilling win over Bangladesh, despite some significant controversy. BEN HORNE reports.

By BEN HORNE



THE NATION

### Coalition backs new G-G's \$200k pay rise

The Coalition will support Labor's legislation to give Sam Mostyn a 43pc pay boost, despite calling it a 'deep embarrassment for the government'.



NATION

### Former Jetstar pilot guilty on one murder charge

Greg Lynn has been found guilty of the murder of one camper who disappeared in Victoria's remote High Country, but not guilty of a second.



NATION

### How campers search exposed 50-year lie

One was a country bushman, the other preferred the city life — so how did Russell Hill and Carol Clay end up on a fatal camping trip?

By LIAM BEATTY

By ROSIE LEWIS

By LIAM BEATTY