

Environmental Defenders Office Of Northern Queensland Inc.



Casework Guidelines

The Environmental Defender's Office of Northern Queensland Inc. (EDO-NQ) is an independent public interest legal centre specialising in environmental law. EDO-NQ is a non-profit association incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1983. It has limited resources and seeks to maximise the use of these resources for the benefit of the environment. EDO-NQ provides services in connection with environmental issues arising in the geographic area of Northern Queensland from Mackay, out west to Mt Isa and north to include Cape York and the Torres Straits.

EDO-NQ's key objectives are:

1. To empower the community to protect the environment through law and through use of the legal process recognising:
 - a) the suffering, distress and disempowerment that result from environmental harm and an inability to obtain legal advice, assistance and representation in relation to it;
 - b) the importance of public participation in environmental decision making to achieve environmental protection;
 - c) the importance of fostering close links with the community and ensuring the Association is responsive to community needs;
 - d) the importance of indigenous involvement in protection of the environment.
2. To provide legal representation, advice and information to those who are otherwise unable to afford it, in connection with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the environment.
3. To provide community educational programs in matters relating to environmental law and environmental policy;
4. To undertake law reform activities contributing to the conservation, protection and enhancement of the environment.

These guidelines have been prepared to enable EDO-NQ to respond to requests for casework assistance in a consistent manner and in accordance with EDO-NQ's primary charter of contributing to the conservation and protection of the environment, including the cultural and built environment.

The guidelines are administered by a Casework Committee ("the Committee") appointed by EDO-NQ's management committee. All requests for significant legal assistance are considered by the Committee. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by EDO-NQ's staff. The Committee determines the amount of work to be undertaken, for example, a written advice detailing the litigation options for a particular fact scenario. If a client requests further work, for example, the drafting of grounds for appeal, the Committee will then consider that additional request and decide whether the further work complies with the case work guidelines and should be undertaken.

There are four matters that the Committee will consider in determining whether to grant a request for assistance, these are:

1. Characteristics of the case - particularly environmental significance and public interest;
2. Resource issues;
3. Prospects of success; and
4. Regional benefit.