

# **EDO NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2005**

## **Public Interest Environmental Law in Australia**

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters**

#### **The AARHUS Convention: An International Response to the Public Participation Debate**

**By**

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**The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters heralded a proactive approach in the international arena to the relationship between governments and their citizens. Although primarily a European initiative, including parts of Eastern Europe where democratic rights of the public were often subjugated to harsh authoritarian control of government, the Convention forges a new path along the road to establishing strong linkages between the environment and human rights.**

**My presentation will examine the role that the international community can play in ensuring that governments at the national level remain accountable and provide their citizens with the appropriate tools in the context of environmental decision-making to achieve the goal of sustainable development. This will only occur when the public is in possession of the necessary information, has access to the necessary resources and the right to challenge environmental decisions made by government before an unbiased and accessible judiciary.**

**If time permits, the role of intervenor funding will also be discussed.**

