

Environment groups turn to new strategies to influence firms

The reluctance of governments to enforce environmental laws and the ability of developers to circumvent assessment requirements has led environmental groups to develop new strategies, according to Jeff Smith of the NSW Environmental Defender's Office (EDO). Environment groups are displaying an increasing understanding of the market drivers of corporate actions and are using this knowledge to influence company behaviour, he said. For the EDO, this means its education and enforcement work is now being augmented with investigations of company law and work in areas such as corporate restructures, Foreign Investments Review Board approvals and intellectual property. The EDO also wants to engage directly with companies and the public to mediate good environmental outcomes, he said. Smith was speaking at the Minerals Council's sustainable development conference.