



EDO BULLETIN

March-April 2008

In this issue:

- Updates of EDO court cases
- Environmental law and policy reform
- News, events and opportunities for public comment

Contents:

<i>EDO Comment on EcoFund</i>	1
<i>Alaskan Village sues for climate impacts</i>	1
<i>Bat Case Update</i>	2
<i>EDO NQ Case Updates</i>	2
<i>EDO Environmental Law Workshops</i>	2
<i>EDO Law Reform</i>	3
<i>Qld Environmental Law & Policy watch</i>	4
<i>Federal Environmental Law & Policy watch</i>	5
<i>Opportunities to Comment</i>	6
<i>EDO News</i>	7
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	7
<i>Other environment news</i>	8

‘Eco Fund’ allows developers to buy their way out of vegetation laws



In March 2008, the Premier announced an intention to increase the area of national parks in Queensland by 50% by 2020, an increase of 7.6 million hectares to around 12 million hectares. The expansion is to be funded by a new body called EcoFund Queensland, which will make strategic purchases of land that will be added to the protected area estate.

However, the funding for EcoFund Queensland will come from payment from developers and government who are unable to otherwise offset the ecological damage their proposal will cause. Under current laws, where a development proposal cannot meet the land clearing laws or provide an appropriate offset, it would have to be refused. This announcement will now allow developers and infrastructure providers to buy their way out of complying with vegetation protection and offset laws.

EDO welcomes the long overdue expansion of the national park estate but is outraged that it comes at the expense of protecting valuable areas that lie in the path of infrastructure and development. EDO will be writing to the Environment Minister and Premier to demand our vegetation protection and offset laws are upheld. We urge our readers to do the same.

Alaskan village sues energy industry for climate change impacts

In late February 2008, the Alaskan Inupiat tribe of the coastal village of Kivalina filed a law suit against 24 American oil, coal and power companies for climate change impacts which are causing the village to slide into the Chukchi Sea. The village is threatened by melting permafrosts and glaciers and increased storm surges and has already relocated south once. Further relocation is now required which is estimated to cost more than \$100 million dollars. The village is claiming damages for global warming against nine oil companies (including BP, Shell and ExxonMobil), one coal company and 14 power companies in the US District Court in San Francisco. EDO will watch the outcome of this case closely.



*Erosion threatening the Village of Kivalina, in Alaska.
Photo by David Hocs*

Case update from EDO-Qld

Booth v Yardley- Farmers refuse to pull down lethal electric grids

Lychee farmers Mr. Richard Yardley and Mrs. Antje Yardley have disobeyed the order of the Planning and Environment Court that they dismantle their electric grids by pulling down and taking apart the horizontal wires and metal poles by 31 March 2008. So Dr. Carol Booth has filed a fresh application that the Yardleys be punished for contempt of the Court. Dr Booth is represented by EDO Qld and barrister Dr Chris McGrath.

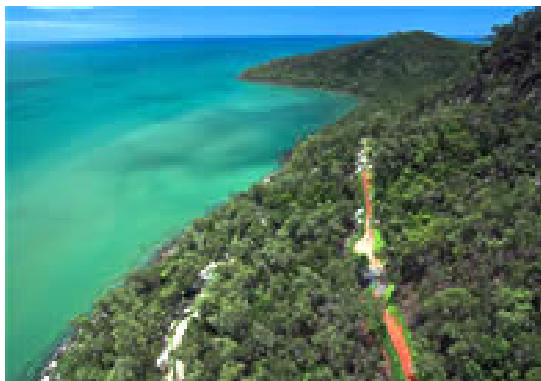
This is the second application Dr Booth has filed for contempt of the Court against the Yardleys. After the Planning and Environment Court first ordered that the grids be dismantled the Yardleys partly dismantled the grids by removing the electric wires and control box leading to the grids. The first application for contempt of the Court led to the Planning and Environment Court making an order on 8 February 2008 that expressly described what was meant by dismantling the grids. No date has yet been set for the hearing of this application.



For more information about EDO-Qld cases contact us on 3211 4466 or edoqld@edo.org.au.

Case update from EDO-North Queensland

EDONQ is still awaiting a decision from His Honour Judge White of the Cairns Planning and Environment Court on the '**grease trap waste disposal case**'. Readers recall that EDONQ represented a large group of concerned farmers in an appeal by the proponents of a grease trap waste disposal operation against a decision by the Mareeba Shire Council to refuse the application. EDONQ and its clients remain hopeful of a favourable decision by the end of May 2008.



False Cape Aerial View. Photo provided by <http://www.falsecape.org.au/>

EDONQ is also waiting for the federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to release an independent report on erosion and sediment control concerns at the **False Cape development** site, adjacent to Cairns across Trinity Inlet. The developer and contractors abandoned the site early in 2008 due to financial constraints. Numerous concerns have been raised by community members regarding the large amount of erosion that has occurred on-site, and the sediment that has flowed off-site and into the adjacent waters including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. EDO NQ and the community is concerned that these issues are a result of inadequately installed and maintained erosion and sediment control measures by the developer and/or the contractors.

For more information about EDO-NQ cases contact us on (07) 4031 4766 or edonq@edo.org.au.

Free EDO regional environmental law workshops

Want to learn how the community can have a voice in environmental planning and protection?

Come along to an EDO workshop near you to learn about your rights to participate in urban development and planning, nature conservation, coastal and vegetation protection, mining, pollution, federal environmental laws and many other issues. Thanks to a grant from the Legal Practitioner's Interest on Trust Accounts Fund, EDO will be giving 18 environmental law workshops for the community throughout Queensland in conjunction with local environment groups.

We've already visited the Sunshine and Gold Coasts, Mission Beach, Port Douglas and Cairns. In May and June we'll be at: **Rockhampton** 10th May, **Bowen** 10th May, **Cairns** 17th May, **Redlands** 24th May, **Cooktown** 24th May, **Emerald** 26th May, **Brisbane** 1st June, **Mackay** 7-9th June, **Toowoomba** 14th June, **Calliope** (15kms south of Gladstone) 27th June, **Bundaberg** 28th June, **Townsville** 28th June and **Maryborough** 29th June.

Contact edoqld@edo.org.au or edonq@edo.org.au for more details.

EPA successfully prosecutes for illegal wildlife trading and environmental harm

EDO congratulates the Environmental Protection Agency for taking Court action against two people to enforce Queensland's wildlife protection and pollution laws. In early March a building contractor was sentenced to three months jail (suspended for two years) for wilfully and unlawfully causing material environmental harm. The Court found the contractor had acted contrary to instructions from the site owners by cutting through a retaining wall which released contaminated stormwater at the site of the major chemical factory fire at the Binary factory at Narangba Industrial Estate. Later in March, a Redcliffe man was convicted and fined \$80,000 for unlawfully trading more than 600 native snakes, lizards, frogs and birds without the necessary commercial wildlife licence.

EDO welcomes and supports EPA action to enforce environmental laws.

Environmental Awards Open

Entries and nominations are invited for the Australian Museum **Eureka Prizes** for Environmental Research, Environmental Sustainability Education, Innovative Climate Change Solutions, Water Research, Environmental Journalism and Young Leaders in Environmental Issues. Entries close 2 May 2008. For more information see <http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka>.

Nominations for the United Nations Association of Australia **World Environment Day Awards** 2008 are open until Friday 2 May 2008. Categories include the Community Award for best community based environmental project or initiative and the Individual Award for outstanding service to the environment. For more information see www.unaavictoria.org.au.

LAW REFORM

RECENT EDO SUBMISSIONS

EDO Qld and EDO NQ have been busy writing law reform submissions on:

- The review of Queensland's *Freedom of Information* legislation
- The review of Queensland's *State Coastal Management Plan* (joint submission with Qld Conservation Council); and
- The review of Queensland's *Environmental Protection Regulation* which regulates polluting industries).

These submissions are available at www.edo.org.au/edoqld/edoqld/lawreform/lawreform.htm

We have also had input into recent law reform submissions by the Australian Network of Environmental Defenders Offices (ANEDO):

- **Professor Garnaut's interim climate change report** and associated discussion papers on low emission technologies and emissions trading; and
- Recommendations for reform of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (Cth), the main federal environment legislation.

These submissions are available at www.edo.org.au/policy/policy.html.

Qld Climate Strategy under review

Adopted only last year, Queensland's ClimateSmart 2050 Strategy is now under review because of updated climate change impact predictions and changes to federal policy. The review is scheduled to be completed late this year by the Office of Climate Change in the EPA, after consultation with community, industry, academic and government stakeholders.

EDO welcomes the review given the numerous flaws in the 2050 Strategy which we identified in our submission, available on our website.

EDO Qld will work with the Queensland Conservation Council to advocate for wide ranging improvements to the Strategy to increase its effectiveness.

EDO model climate law discussion paper

EDO NSW has released a model climate law discussion paper which outlines the issues EDO would like to see addressed by comprehensive national climate change legislation.

Addressing climate change requires more than just the establishment of an emissions trading scheme, and EDO identifies a number of key elements that should form part of a comprehensive legislative response.

The Model Climate Law Project Discussion Paper is now available on the EDO NSW website at www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/policy.php.

LAW AND POLICY WATCH

RECENT CHANGES TO QUEENSLAND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY

- The State government's response to community outrage at Council amalgamations was the **Iconic Queensland Places Act**, which commenced on 6 March 2008. Noosa and Douglas Shire Council areas are listed as iconic, with more areas able to be declared before the cut-off date of 30 June 2008. The Act changes the normal IPA processes of amending a planning scheme by requiring the Planning Minister to condition or reject any planning scheme amendments that would not protect the iconic place. Of concern to EDO is the new process for assessing development applications within iconic places. Decision making powers have been removed from the newly amalgamated Councils that now cover Noosa and Port Douglas and given to a Ministerially appointed panel of 5 people (including no more than 2 Councillors), who need not be locals. The panel decides the application as if it were the Council, using the same criteria, so EDO cannot see how any greater protection for iconic places will result from this increase in complexity which removes decision making from elected (and therefore accountable) representatives. Much simpler amendments to IPA could have been made to better protect these iconic areas, which raises our suspicion that the new rules are designed to take control away from local representatives in areas that have been sustainably planned to date.
- The first two **urban development areas** and their land use plans were declared in late March under the new Urban Land Development Authority Act. That Act was initially billed the government's response to the affordable housing crisis, however affordable housing features little in the parlance of the Chair of the Authority, with the Northshore Hamilton urban land development area being referred to as "millionaire's row" in a recent seminar attended by EDO, and the Bowen Hills urban land development area earmarked for office space in the Ministerial media release. The ULDA takes planning power away from local Councils and the community to plan and deliver urban development areas and has been received with suspicion by the community and some Councils. The Fitzgibbon and Mackay urban development areas will be declared in mid 2008, with Woolloongabba to follow in late 2008. EDO doubts this legislation will assist poorer people afford housing but sees it as overriding planning schemes and opening up more land to development without the necessary provision of additional open space.
- Proposed amendments to the **Environmental Protection Act** to enable it to apply to older mines previously regulated under special agreement Acts (including coal mines in Central Qld, bauxite mines in the Cape and Mt Isa Mines), to enable environmental conditions to be imposed where none exist and to ensure that when the environmental authori-

ties are renewed (which must happen within 3 years) the mines have to comply with current environmental standards. EDO welcomes these amendments.



Mount Isa Mines - Photo from www.epa.qld.gov.au

- From 1 April 2008, residential **tenants will have to pay water consumption charges** where the lessor has installed shower heads, toilets and taps which meet newly prescribed water efficiency levels, except in cases of burst water services or serious water service leaks. Where lessors have received more than one excessive water use notice about the tenants' water use, amendments to the Water Regulation permits water providers to require the lessor to repair leaks and install water efficient showerheads and taps within 20 business days. It is an offence for the lessor to refuse, and an infringement notice can be issued.
- Amendments to the Crime and Misconduct Regulation confirm that local Councils are subject to the **CMC**.
- Passage of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 which repeals 1963 laws and requires Councils servicing more than 1,000 people to **fluoridate their water supply**.
- Adoption of a code for development for local heritage places (not registered places) in **amendments to the Queensland Heritage Regulation 2003** made on 20 March 2008.
- Rules about harvesting **protected plants** between April 2008 and March 2009, declaring gamba grass to be class 2 pest, giving Biosecurity Queensland greater quarantine powers to stop branched broomrape coming to Queensland, and establishing a reward scheme for finding a new fire ant colony on state land.
- Amendments to the Land Act and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Act were introduced in mid March to allow residential and commercial **leases of up to 99 years in Queensland indigenous communities**, to facilitate home ownership, public housing and commercial purposes and allow compulsory acquisition of indigenous land for essential infrastructure like schools and hospitals to follow the same proc-

ess as for non-indigenous land.

- Amendments to the Gas Supply Act to ensure that gas retailers are legally obliged to pay the earlier promised \$55 **gas rebate** to pensioners, back dated to 1 July 07.
- A decision to establish a Civil and Administrative Tribunal to bring together 26 existing bodies by late 2009. The amalgamations potentially include the **Fisheries Tribunal** but exclude all other environment courts and tribunals given the recent amalgamation of the Land and Resources Tribunal with the Land Court.
- The National Gas (Queensland) Bill 2008, introduced in April, will give effect to the National Gas Law and facilitate access to Queensland's **natural gas pipelines** by investors.
- New rules apply for access rights on land acquired for future railway use, allow Queensland Transport to permit local Councils to **build roads on rail corridor land**, allow commercial and retail activities commonly associated with transport stations to be considered part of the transport infrastructure for acquisition and approval purposes, and define "transit nodes" to facilitate transport oriented developments.
- Amendments to **marine pollution laws** clarify that all ships, including commercial, house and recreational ships must hold and treat sewage onboard when in prescribed nil discharge waters.
- Amendments to the **Vegetation Management Act** clarify a drafting ambiguity and ensure that endangered and of concern vegetation will remain defined by Regulation according to the percentage of pre-clearing extent left.

- Changes to the wording and structure (but not the policy) of the **Fisheries Regulation** to make it easier to understand, accompanied by associated amendments to the Fisheries Management Plans for Coral Reef Fin Fish, East Coast Trawl, Gulf Inshore Fin Fish, Freshwater and Spanner Crab fisheries.
- New rules about dealing with **genetically modified organisms** under a Ministerial "emergency dealing declaration", and complying with GMO licences.
- In late April the Minister for Planning, Paul Lucas, used his powers under IPA to **call-in** approval decisions of pre-amalgamation Councils for two residential developments in the Wide Bay Burnett Region. The Minister's substitute decision on these two development applications is expected shortly.
- In March, the first use of '**hurry up**' powers given to the Coordinator General in 2006 enabled a coal rail network upgrade near Sarina to proceed to allow 38 million more tonnes of polluting coal to be exported. EDO lampooned the trend of centralising greater powers in a non-elected bureaucrat to steamroll infrastructure projects with environmental impacts and lock out the community when we examined these amendments in our January 2007 Bulletin. The Coordinator General imposed no conditions requiring the avoidance, reduction or offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions enabled by the project.

*Announcements by the Queensland Water Commission on the **Draft SEQ Water Strategy** and by the Premier on a **feed-in tariff** for solar powered homes will be outlined in our next Bulletin.*

RECENT CHANGES TO FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY

Australia's ratification of the **Kyoto protocol** came into force at on 11 March 2008, making us a full party to the Protocol.

In late March, all **Murray Darling Basin** States and the federal government agreed on a new national framework to manage the Basin, involving a new independent Murray Darling Basin Authority and the federal Water Minister empowered to approve a new Basin-wide plan including a cap on the amount of water that can be taken from rivers and groundwater in the Basin, with States to continue to set annual water allocations within that cap. The July 2008 COAG meeting will formalise the agreement through an Intergovernmental Agreement.

A Bill introduced on 20 March 2008 will amend national fisheries laws to boost Australia's powers to fight **illegal fishing**, including new powers to seize illegal fishing vessels and new offences for Australians caught poaching overseas.

New fuel consumption and **CO2 labelling standards** will apply to cars made after 1 October 2008

and sold in Australia. A mandatory windscreen label on news cars less than 3.5 tonnes will show fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions of the car under different conditions.

The *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* (Cth) came into force on 8 April 2008, establishing a 12-member body 'Infrastructure Australia' and an Infrastructure Coordinator, to advise government and investors on national **infrastructure priorities**, the needs of users, funding options and policy issues arising from climate change.

A Bill introduced on 19 March 2008 will amend product stewardship laws to encourage the **recycling of oils** by giving a grant or benefit to registered entities which consume or sell recycled oil.

New laws which commenced in March 2008 give effect to the *International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage* by establishing a liability and compensation regime for **pollution damage from bunker (engine) oil from ships**. The new laws will require ships over 1000 tonnes to have insurance covering their liability for pollution damage while in Australian waters. The laws will apply when existing state laws do not.

OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT

National electricity meter roll-out Comments due 6 May

The draft Regulatory Impact Statement for the national roll-out of smart electricity meters (as agreed by COAG in 2006) is open for public comment until **6 May 2008**. Smart electricity meters enable energy retailers to introduce time-of-use pricing and allow consumers to better manage their peak power demand. For a copy of the RIS see www.mce.gov.au/index.cfm?event=object.showContent&objectID=2BC64DF8-9F7B-58D8-33D2A163191A90F6.

For a copy of the submission made on the RIS by the Total Environment Centre, which calls for additional measures including tariffs, demand management and technology improvements see www.mce.gov.au/assets/documents/mceinternet/Total%5FEnvironment%5FCentre%5FInc20080422153312%2Epdf.

New SEQ transit authority Comments due 7 May

A new SEQ transit authority to operate from 1 July 2008 has been approved by the State government to expand and improve public transport services (train, bus and ferry) and provide customer service and feedback. You can have your say by **7 May 2008** about your expectations or suggestions for improvement of the new Translink Transit Authority at www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/consultqld/.

State leasehold land rent review Comments due 9 May

Proposed change to rental for the use of state leasehold land (not including long-term agricultural and grazing rentals) are open for public comment in the Regulatory Impact Statement for the proposed *Land Regulation 2008*. Rent for commercial operations will increase, but rent for community organisations will decrease to a new 'community benefit' rental of \$100. Other proposed changes include reducing lease land-use categories from 10 to six. Comments are due by **9 May 2008**. For more information see www.nrw.qld.gov.au/land/state/impact_statement.html.

Ella Bay Supplementary EIS Comments due 16 May

A Supplementary EIS has been released for the proposed tourist and residential development at Ella Bay, via Flying Fish Point east of Innisfail. The proposal includes 540 residences, 6 resorts, a village precinct, a championship 18 hole golf course, public swimming facilities, retail outlets and public infrastructure on a 450ha lot, which was previously used as a cattle station. The project is currently valued at \$1.4 billion and is to be constructed over the next 10-15 years. Submissions on the Supplementary EIS

are due to be lodged with the Qld Coordinator-General by **5pm 16 May 2008**. Submissions should be sent to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning Infrastructure and Economic Development Group, PO Box 15009 City East Qld 4002 Australia or info@dip.qld.gov.au. The Supplementary EIS is available from www.ellabay.com.au/pdfs-seis.html or can be viewed during business hours at the Cassowary Coast Regional Council offices or purchased from 20/20 Group, 1st Floor, 21 Aplin St Cairns Qld.

Coal railway draft EIS terms of reference Comments due 16 May

The draft EIS terms of reference for the proposed "Southern Missing Link" railway to link the Surat Basin's coal mines with Gladstone's port are open for comment until **16 May 2008**. The 207km link in the rail network will connect the 6.3 billion tonnes of coal reserves to the Port of Gladstone. Have you say on the need to consider avoiding, reducing or offsetting the carbon emissions enabled by the railway in your comments on the draft EIS terms of reference. For more information see www.dip.qld.gov.au/eis.

Impacts of climate change on coastal communities inquiry Comments due 30 May

The House of Representatives Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Committee is conducting an inquiry into climate change and the environmental impacts on Australian coastal communities. The terms of reference for the inquiry include reporting on environmental pressures faced in coastal areas particularly in the context of population growth. The Australian Network of Environmental Defenders Offices (ANEDO) will be making a submission, and you should too. Submissions to the committee are due by **30 May 2008**. For more information including on how to make a submission, see www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ccwea/coastalzone/index.htm.

Western Brisbane Transport Network Investigation Comments due 31 May

The Qld government is investigating new tunnels, road and public transport options for Western Brisbane. The State government has ruled out building a road bypass and a public transport tunnel from Indooroopilly to Dutton Park, but other "major options" include a tunnel from Toowong to Everton Park, a connecting road link from Stafford to Aspley, and a tunnel for private transport at Stafford Rd while public transport uses the road. Call for more public and active transport options in your comments, due **31 May 2008**. For more information see www.wbtnei.net.au or phone 1800 636 896.

EDO NEWS

More funding for CLCs in Queensland

The Commonwealth Attorney-General, The Hon Robert McClelland MP, has announced an additional \$10million one-off funding package for all community legal centres throughout Australia, which includes all EDOs. EDO Qld and EDONQ will each receive a one-off funding injection of \$20,000. We are very grateful for this funding and for the acknowledgement of the important work community legal centres perform around the country.

EDO NQ ecoBiz Registration

EDONQ has joined the EPA partnership program, ecoBiz. The aim of the program is to provide tools for businesses to identify resource and cost savings. EDONQ have completed the first three steps of the program and are currently developing our action plan. To register your business visit www.epa.qld.gov.au.

EDO Qld welcomes new staff member

EDO Qld welcomes new junior temporary office assistant Amy Thompson, who will assist our Administrator Bronwyn Bell until the end of this year. Amy is studying law and is already fitting in well at EDO Qld.

EDO Qld's officewarming on 3rd April went very well; thanks to barrister Stephen Keim SC for entertaining the crowd with historical EDO feats, and to all our members and supporters that came along to warm our new digs.

EDO NQ website revamp

EDONQ's revamped website should be up and running very soon. It has been converted to a format that allows it to be updated 'in-house' by EDONQ staff, rather than by our (excellent) IT providers. The conversion should see EDONQ's website become more dynamic, up-to-date and relevant. Thanks for waiting; we'll get there soon!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shark conservation film fundraiser for AMCS

Support AMCS' campaign to stop shark finning on the Great Barrier Reef by attending a fundraiser preview screening of Canadian wildlife documentary maker Rob Stewart's new film *Sharkwater*. Screening is at 7pm **Tuesday 6 May 2008** at the Regent Cinema in Queen St Mall, Brisbane city.



To book tickets (\$25 each) call 1800 066 299 or go to www.customercommunity.com.au/secure/sharkwater.htm.

Queensland's East Coast Inshore Fin Fishery, which is the main cause of shark decline, is currently under review but a fishing ban on sharks has not been proposed by the government. Write and ask for such a ban!

Traveston Dam canoe flotilla protests

On Sunday 27 April, two years after the announcement of the proposed Traveston Dam on the Mary River, kayaker Steve Posselt led a special canoe flotilla through some of the areas earmarked for the dam. This was the halfway mark on Steve's four week "Don't Murray the Mary" trip kayaking the length of the Mary, to protest against the dam proceeding when there are sustainable water supply alternatives available.

A street march to protest the dam and herald Steve's return to Brisbane will be held at 11am on **Saturday 10 May** at Brisbane's West End boat ramp. For more details see www.savethemaryriver.com or www.kayak4earth.com.

Enviro Expos at Burpengary and Beaudesert

The Annual Sustainable Living Expo at Caboolture Region Environment Education Centre in Burpengary is on **Saturday 17 May** from 9-3pm. The Expo will feature stalls with environmentally sustainable products, services and information, talks and activities for kids, with a focus on sustainable homes. For more information see www.creec.org.au.

Beaudesert's EcoExpo is on at the Beaudesert Show Grounds on 8:30-4pm Friday and Saturday **23-24 May**. The EcoExpo will feature programs on sustainability and how to lower your carbon footprint. For more information see www.ecoexpo.com.au.

Upcoming Canberra conferences on climate change and environmental assessment

If you'll be in Canberra in May or June, you might be interested in attending these conferences:

The state of environmental assessment: a national conference, 23 May 2008, featuring EDO Qld's Larissa Waters and lawyers from every state around Australia. For more information see http://law.anu.edu.au/accel/Env_AssessmentWEB.pdf;

Imagining the real: life on a greenhouse Earth, 11-12 June 2008, featuring climate, earth and prehistory scientists, health and population experts and political leaders. For more information see www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/events/docs/MCH_GREENHOUSE_CONFERENCE_FLYER.pdf;

Adapting to Climate Change: Law and Policy Conference, 19-20 June 2008, featuring EDO NSW's Jeff Smith and Queensland Professors Jan McDonald and Poh-Ling Tan. For more information see http://law.anu.edu.au/ccpl/Climate_Law_June08.pdf.

OTHER NEWS

Environmental Reports Released

- **Queensland's 2007 State of the Environment Report** has been released, showing declining biodiversity, river and wetland health and escalating consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Download the report from www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/state_of_the_environment.
- **National Pollutant Inventory data for 2006-2007** has been released, detailing emissions of 93 substances to Australia's air, land and water. For an overview see www.npi.gov.au/overview/index.html.
- Australia's Initial Report under the **Kyoto Protocol** demonstrating how Australia measures reductions in emissions required by the Protocol has been released a year early and is available from www.climatechange.gov.au/inventory/publications/pubs/unfccc-report.pdf. The report shows Australia is back on track to meet our Kyoto target of an 8% increase in emissions on 1990 levels for the period 2008-2012.
- The Initial Report from the **Australia 2020 Summit** held 19-20 April in Canberra is available from www.australia2020.gov.au/report/index.cfm. The report includes ambitions, priority themes and top ideas from each of the 10 streams of the Summit, including the 'Population, Sustainability, Climate Change, Water and the Future of our Cities' stream.
- An **OECD report** on Australia's environmental performance over the last decade shows enforcement is lacking and environmental services are under-priced. Download the report from www.oecd.org/docu-ment/36/0,3343,en_33873108_33873229_39355364_1_1_1.00.html.
- WWF has released a new report on **Australian Species and Climate Change**. Download the report from www.wwf.org.au/publications/australian-species-and-climate-change-report/.

New federal environmental funding program

In March 2008 the federal government announced a new funding program for environmental issues will commence from 1 July 2008, *Caring for Country*. It amalgamates previous programs including the Natural Heritage Trust, Landcare, the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality, and the small grants EnviroFund.

The government has committed \$2.25 billion to the program for the first five years and will develop annual business plans which will direct funding priorities. The first business plan is due in September 2008 for the 2009-2010 financial year, and will include the first series of short term (1-3 year) targets to achieve identified outcomes and invite applications for funding.

For more information call 1800 552 008 or see www.nrm.gov.au.

New appointment to the Planning and Environment Court at Cairns

His Honour Judge White, the sole regular Judge in the Planning and Environment Court at Cairns, is retiring at the end of May 2008.

His Honour's replacement is Barrister William Everson, most recently of the Brisbane Bar. Mr Everson lived and practiced as a solicitor in Cairns prior to being admitted to the Bar in 1992, and has recently specialised in planning and environment law.

Congratulations QCC on funding boost

Congratulations to the Queensland Conservation Council on receiving \$577,500 in funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Conservation Organisations Funding Program, to continue its work as the peak non-government environment group in Queensland.

EDO will continue to work closely with QCC on Queensland environmental issues.

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To subscribe free to the EDO NSW Bulletin, (covering Cth and NSW issues) please send an email to edonsw@edo.org.au

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