

The Air Up There

In late July, the Quoiba Progress Association (**QPA**) hit another hurdle in their long-running battle to stop the odour nuisance suffered by residents living near the North West Rendering Plant near Devonport.

At a Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal hearing on 28th July 2005, North West Rendering Pty Ltd confirmed that the rendering plant and the land have been sold and the company no longer had any involvement in the operation of the plant. As a consequence, the Tribunal could not make any orders against North West Rendering Pty Ltd (**NWR**) in relation to the ongoing operation of the rendering works.

This setback follows years of legal wrangling for QPA, who have been represented by the EDO since 1999. In October 2000, the Tribunal found that the emissions of odour to the air from the plant constituted "material environmental harm". However, the Tribunal felt it was appropriate to give the company the opportunity to address the odour problem. NWR was given 18 months to reduce emissions to an acceptable level or close down.

The residents continued to experience odour problems after 18 months and NWR advised that it would look for an alternative site. The residents agreed to give NWR a further 12 months to arrange for relocation of the rendering works. However NWR did not relocate.

North West Rendering Pty Ltd then commenced a Supreme Court action challenging the original decision of the Tribunal. Earlier this year Justice Evans ruled that the testing regime for acceptable odour emissions, set out in the original orders, were too unclear. However His Honour made it clear that the Tribunal's finding, that the rendering works was causing material environmental harm, was not challenged. The matter was sent back to the original Tribunal panel to decide what, if any, fresh orders should be made.

The residents hoped the Tribunal hearing on 28 July would finally resolve the problem, however the matter has now been adjourned in light of the change of ownership and management of the plant. The Tribunal is expected to reconvene later in the year to consider what orders, if any, can be made against North West Rendering Pty Ltd under its new name: Brown and Grey No. 2 Pty Ltd.

Quoiba Progress Association will continue to fight for better living conditions in Quoiba and hope to work with new owners, Tasman Group Services, to address the odour problems.

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EDO TAS TURNS 10

The president and members of the management committee invite you to attend a dinner to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Environmental Defenders Office (Tas) Inc.

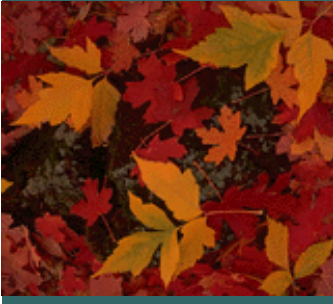
Where: Afritas Restaurant, 201 Liverpool Street, Hobart

When: 7pm, 1 October 2005

Cost: \$50 (welcome drinks & dinner)
Dinner drinks can be purchased at the bar

Entertainment by the Kazakstan Kowgirls and Fabio Chivanda.

RSVP at EDO (Tas) by 16 September 2005



The Nuclear Power Debate

John Howard, Bob Carr and Peter Garrett are among a number of politicians re-opening the debate about the use of nuclear power. EDO Volunteer, Lewis Shillito, explores the risks and potential benefits of nuclear energy.

A number of prominent politicians have recently suggested that Australia should re-open the nuclear energy debate. Though nuclear energy has been a live issue for some time, the current debate is resonating because of a growing recognition that large-scale reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will be necessary to avoid dangerous climate change.

Compared with other major energy sources, nuclear power has a negligible output of greenhouse gas emissions. The process involved in nuclear energy production is said to create only contained nuclear waste.

Carefully controlled, this output has little environmental impact. Given the efficiency of nuclear energy production, replacing fossil-fuel based power plants with nuclear reactors would arguably have an exponential effect on reduction of greenhouse gases for the same amount of energy produced.

However, the debate is fairly polarised, with strong arguments for and against the use of nuclear power. This article explores some of the pros and cons...

References for this article can be obtained from EDO (Tas).

Advantages of Nuclear Power

Environmental Impact

- ◇ **Low Emissions:** Nuclear energy production doesn't produce greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide), nitrogen oxide or sulphur dioxide (which can cause smog, and acid rain).
- ◇ **Water Quality:** Liquid emissions from nuclear power stations do not come into contact with radioactive materials, therefore they contain no harmful pollutants and are discharged at appropriate temperatures.
- ◇ **Land Efficiency:** Nuclear power plants are smaller than other alternative energy sites (such as wind farms and solar energy stations),

therefore the power produced by area is significantly higher.

Reliability

Renewable energy sources such as wind, hydro and solar power are reliant upon variable environmental conditions. In contrast, nuclear energy can be reliably produced irrespective of conditions.

Economic Benefits

Nuclear energy is produced at vastly lower costs than other major energy sources. For example, in 2004 in the United States, nuclear energy was generated at 1.68

cents per kilowatt-hour (including the cost of isolating its waste products), compared with 1.90 cents for coal-fuelled plants, 5.87 cents for natural gas, and 5.39 cents for oil.

Sustainability

Properly managed, nuclear power has the potential to provide a reliable, affordable and safe energy source. This could assist countries to meet the principles of sustainable development pronounced in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

Disadvantages of Nuclear Power

Safety

The principal concerns regarding nuclear power relate to safety. Arguably, the volatile nature of the materials involved, the process of utilising uranium and the ongoing need to isolate nuclear waste make nuclear power "inherently unsafe".

There is also a view that current knowledge on decommissioning nuclear power plants is insufficient to ensure community and environmental safety.

Environmental Impact

- ◇ While nuclear power plants do not produce significant atmospheric emissions, mining and processing radioactive materials leads to significant emissions of greenhouse gases.
- ◇ Reprocessing releases significant

quantities of radioactive liquid effluents into the sea and gaseous discharges into the air.

- ◇ Disposal of nuclear waste is incredibly contentious—there are no treatment options so the waste must be isolated, potentially indefinitely. Clearly, this presents a significant risk of nuclear waste being exposed.

Cost of production

Though nuclear energy can be produced more economically than alternative energy sources, the costs involved in construction, operation and decommissioning of nuclear power stations are significant. In the US, nuclear power over the past 60 years has cost US\$150 billion in government subsidies to make it cost effective – approximately 30 times more than renewable energy sources have received.

Arguably, the vast set-up and maintenance costs would be better spent on alternative options for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, such as subsidising home insulation and energy efficient appliances.

Limited Uses

Nuclear energy only creates electricity, which amounts to less than 30% of world energy usage. Nuclear energy will not address two of the major sources of greenhouse emissions—heating buildings and vehicles.

Mining

Uranium mining **must** be subject to comprehensive environmental assessment. However, as the situation at the Jabiluka Mine in the Northern Territory shows, the environmental threat cannot be removed.

Properly managed, nuclear power has the potential to provide a reliable, affordable and safe energy source.

Given the volatile nature of uranium and the ongoing need to isolate nuclear waste, nuclear energy is inherently unsafe

EDO NQ challenges Federal Minister over climate change

EDO-NQ and barristers Stephen Keim SC and Chris McGrath are representing the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland- Proserpine/Whitsunday Branch Inc (*Wildlife Whitsunday*) in a new Federal Court test case. The case is the first legal challenge against the Australian Government for failing to consider the effects of global warming on the environment.

The legal challenge, launched in Brisbane on 22 July 2005 in the Federal Court of Australia, concerns the failure of the Minister for Environment and Heritage to consider the emission of the large amount of greenhouse gases that will result from the mining, transport and burning of coal from two large coal mines when assessing the impacts of the mines under the EPBC Act. The Minister's delegate determined that these two mines, the Isaac Plains Coal project near Moranbah and Sonoma Coal Project near Collinsville were **not** controlled actions and did not need to be assessed under the EPBC Act.

The mines concerned, the Isaac Plains Coal Project and Sonoma Coal Project, are expected to produce 18 million tonnes and 30 million tonnes of coal respectively, for domestic and overseas markets, including China. The coal from the coal mines will largely be burnt in coal-fired power stations producing greenhouse gases contributing to global warming. Global warming is expected to cause severe impacts to the Australian environment, including to the iconic Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforests.

Wildlife Whitsunday wrote extensive submissions on the referral of these mines to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. These submissions, outlining the impacts of greenhouse gases from these mines, were not considered by the Minister's delegate in making his decision. Wildlife Whitsunday will argue that the Minister failed to consider the environmental impacts of greenhouse gases and global warming.

To avoid the need to produce extensive evidence on accepted facts, EDO-NQ filed a notice requesting that the Minister admit a number of facts, including:

1. *Global warming is a complex bio-physical process involving a rise over time in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere due to human activities.*
2. *The burning of coal to generate electricity generally results in the emission of greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.*

On 5 August 2005, the Minister filed a notice disputing these facts.

Coal mining companies QCoal Pty Ltd (Sonoma mine) and Bowen Central Coal Management Pty Ltd (Isaac Plains mine) have been joined as parties to the proceedings. The matter is set down for hearing in the Federal Court in Brisbane on 20 October 2005.

**For more information,
contact Kirsty Ruddock at
EDO-NQ on (07) 4031 4766**

NOTICE DISPUTING FACTS (Order 18 Rule 2)

The respondent disputes the following facts specified in the applicant's notice dated 19 July 2005:

1. Global warming is a complex biophysical process involving a rise over time in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere due to human activities.

Extract from Notice Disputing Facts filed on behalf of the Commonwealth Government on 5 August 2005

Ethical Investment

From 1 July 2005, over half of Australia's workers are able to choose how their superannuation contributions are invested. EDO Volunteer, Bec Kernaghan explains some ethical investment options.



Under new federal laws, many Australian workers are now able to choose the fund for future superannuation guarantee contributions. If you are an eligible employee, it might be a good time to think about putting your super into a fund which offers ethical investment options.

What is Ethical Investment?

Ethical investment (also known as *socially responsible investment* or *SRI*), involves making investment decisions with regard to both financial returns and social and environmental concerns.

For example, ethical investment funds often refuse to invest in companies producing tobacco or weapons, companies engaged in environmentally harmful activities such as uranium mining or companies with poor human rights' practices. Ethical investment funds may also actively promote investment in "responsible" industries such as renewable energy.

Ethical investment funds still have the objective of maximising profits for shareholders, however their investment choices are *also* guided by social and environmental considerations. Research indicates that, on average, ethical investment funds equalled or bettered the performance of non-ethical investments.

The options available

If you are interested in ensuring that your superannuation funds are invested ethically, think about the following:

- Check the investment practices of your current fund and whether an SRI option is available. To do this, check their Annual Report or product disclosure statement or call them to find out more about their investment policy.
- Consider the fees involved in changing funds—there could be "exit" fees from your current fund, "entry" fees for the new fund and ongoing contribution and management fees.
- What type of ethical investment suits your needs:
 - ◇ Specialist SRI funds manager (e.g. Australian Ethical Superannuation)
 - ◇ Industry Super fund with SRI option (e.g. UniSuper, HESTA Super fund)
 - ◇ Master funds with SRI option
- The performance of your chosen superannuation fund.

Detailed information about the investment methodology and performance of various ethical investment funds, and general tips of what to look for when you choosing an ethical superannuation fund, are available from:

Ethical Investor (www.ethicalinvestor.com.au) or **Ethical Investment Association** (www.eia.org.au).

The number of funds offering ethical investment choices has increased significantly in recent years. As at 30 June 2004, over \$21.5 billion was invested in socially responsible investments.

Everything you ever wanted to know about groundwater (and more)

This article is an edited version of “*Groundwater: Does Tasmania Have Any?*” by Dr. David Leaman, from his series of Leaflets on water issues.

What is Groundwater?

It is quite simply water in the ground and it makes up more than 90% of the usable water on Earth—including Tasmania. The exact proportion varies by region, geology, terrain, climate and history. Groundwater forms an important element of the hydrological cycle and it acts as a balancing flywheel which drives and sustains the system. Usable water is here taken to mean water which can be used for domestic, agricultural or industrial purposes and excludes sea water or the water tied up in ice caps.

How is water contained in the ground?

Water is contained within pore spaces and cracks in soils, weathered rocks and bedrocks of all types. Very fine grained materials such as clays may have pore volumes (porosities) which amount to 70% of their volume but few materials exceed 30% and many rocks may only contain 1 to 5% of their volume as pore or fracture space. While 1% may not seem much it represents a possible capacity of 10 litres of water per cubic metre of rock. Porous media, such as soils and weathered rock (the stuff that can be worked with a pick and shovel), have the greatest capacity to store water and to gain or lose it easily. Some materials may be very wet but be unable to yield it due to molecular attractive forces. How water is stored, and moves, depends on the material and any applied pressure or head.

Water Terms

- ◇ **Groundwater** is any water in the ground
- ◇ **Water table** means the level below the surface at which all the material below is fully saturated
- ◇ **Artesian water** is groundwater under pressure which rises to the surface (e.g. via a bore)
- ◇ **Aquifer** is a rock unit that stores and yields water.

How much water might be present in ground?

This can only be estimated due to thickness and property variations in earth materials but porous sedimentary rocks can contain water to considerable depths (several kilometres). Igneous rocks with fractures rarely act as storages below a few tens or a hundred metres. Tasmanian dolerite, for example, generally has tight joints below 50 to 70 metres but in some localities much water has been encountered in abnormal fracture systems at many hundreds of metres. A conservative estimate for Tasmania is at least 100 to 300 teralitres (million, million litres).

Where does groundwater come from?

There are three main sources: percolation from rainfall, entrapment when the rock was formed, and primary escapes of newly created water from conversion processes deep within Earth. Most is meteoric in origin. Ancient, entrapped water is usually very salty.

How does the percolation process work?

This process may also be called infiltration or recharge. When precipitation occurs some water evaporates directly, some is used in plants, some runs across the surface and away and some soaks in. The absorbed water slowly works downward. Whether it wicks down to the main volumes of groundwater depends on whether plants extract it quickly and if the rainfall was sufficient to permit this. The nature of soils and rocks exposed, and the presence of cracks and pathways, may affect absorption.

What is the water table?

The water table is that surface in the ground at which the materials below are fully saturated; their pore or crack spaces are full of water. The zone above may be partly or patchily wet to the surface. The water table surface may rise or fall according to demands placed on the stored water or the amount of input from above. If we dig a hole deeper than water table depth (e.g. a well) and pump water out then we may draw down the water table locally if water cannot flow in at sufficient rate to restore levels. We can dry our well this way. Pumps always need to match the capacity of the rocks to pass the water. Trees work just like pumps. The water table responds to changes in land use and recharge capacity. If forested land is cleared, then the “pumps” are removed and the water table rises—perhaps bringing trouble with it. Every change produces some reaction.

What is artesian water?

This is groundwater under pressure, usually where the water table is not a free surface to pores connected to the atmosphere, as in soils. If water is trapped between relatively impermeable materials, and the water is bored into, then it may rise in the bore. Water which rises in this way is said to be artesian and it may flow to surface if the pressure is sufficient. The effect is common in Tasmanian rocks which carry water in fractures. Many springs arise in this way.

Does groundwater move?

Yes. The rate of movement depends on the properties of the earth materials and any applied head. The rate may range from mm/year to km/year but is usually only a few m/year in good aquifers. Most movement is caused by displacement: water in at top of hill and flow out the bottom and sides. Flow in fractures can be very rapid.

What is an aquifer?

An aquifer is a rock unit which can both store much water and yield its contained water readily. It is a relative term since all rocks can store and transfer water: some may be called seals because they are poor transmitters. Tasmanian rocks are extremely variable but some can be called fairly good aquifers.

Can groundwater become surface water?

All the time. Whenever the water table reaches the surface this happens. It is common after heavy rainfalls. Springs and marshy ground flag places where the water table is at surface and groundwater is being transferred to the surface system. It also occurs most of the length of all streams at least some of the time. A lake surface is also the water table surface. Surface and groundwaters are intimately connected and should be regarded as a single system.

Groundwater can be contaminated as easily as surface water: just leave a pollutant lying about and wait for rain.

How important is groundwater?

It is so important that Tasmania could not support lush forests, rich farmlands or supply towns in summer without it... Groundwater tides the entire system over between rainfalls.

With rain, some water is lost by evaporation and some runs off directly but after the rain stops it is the ground system bleeding at various rates from its multiple storages in soils and rocks which maintains stream flow. And the storage may do this for months without further rain although the yield continually decreases as head is lost and the rocks are drained.

When we understand this we see that we cannot modify streams much. If we try to streamline flow we simply cause the stream to run faster while it can and then have longer dry times because the rocks impose limits on yield and flow. There is a bottom line. The stored groundwater supports forests through gaps in rainfall while shallower soil water supports agriculture. Both shallow and main groundwater storages combine in wet times and this is when contamination is likely.

What about water quality?

Groundwater quality is determined by the purity of water infiltrating and by solution in the rocks. Some rain near the coast is slightly salty and water percolating on farms may carry excess fertiliser and other potions to the water table. The mineral content of the water increases with time in the ground but is dependent on the nature and composition of the storing rocks. Groundwater is always more salty than newly precipitated run off after rainfall. Note that irrigation water also contributes some salts to the equation since it is rarely as pure as rain water.

Groundwater can be contaminated as easily as surface water: just leave a pollutant lying about (fertiliser, herbicide, fungicide etc) and wait for rain. Septic drainage systems and disposal sites may also act as problem sources.

Conclusion

Groundwater is an integral part of the water cycle and ignorance of it leads to mismanagement of catchment resources. Leaving groundwater out of our thinking leads to problems with salinity, soils, productivity, septic systems and nutrient build-ups, pollution from wastes and chemical applications, reduced catchment yields from plantations, improper accounting of water balances and storages, inaccurate allocations from catchments, no estimation of environmental flows and seepages into buildings—just to suggest a few.

Dr Leaman is a Tasmanian geologist with forty years of professional experience. Dr Leaman was specially trained in groundwater and catchment hydrology and the techniques necessary to assess these resources.



Reporting Pollution



Contacting the right authority and providing enough information about a pollution incident can increase the opportunity for prompt and effective action. EDO Volunteer, Rebecca Irwin has a few tips on how to make an effective report.

STEP 1: Take notes about the incident

If you are reporting a pollution incident, it will assist the agency if you can provide as much information as possible about the incident. Make notes about the location and nature of the incident (what colour is the pollutant? Can you see where it is coming from?), when the incident happened and areas that may be at risk (is it near a school or a sensitive wetland?).

STEP 2: Notify the company

It is a good idea to contact the person / company who you think is responsible for the polluting activity. Often, a company is not aware of the pollution (for example, if it is caused by a leak in a discharge pipe) and will take relevant steps to address the problem once it is notified.

STEP 3: Report the incident to the relevant authority

If no action is taken, you should report the polluting activity to the relevant authority. Ask the responsible agency to investigate the incident and inform you of the outcome of the investigation. Write down the name of the person that you speak with. Where possible, follow up this contact with a letter to the agency formally notifying them of the incident and requesting an investigation.

Who to contact

For **level 1 activities**, contact your local council and ask that the incident be investigated. Common pollution incidents that should be reported to local government include:

- ◇ Noise from music events, workshops, lawnmowers, off-road vehicles and domestic animals (for after hours complaints, contact the police)
- ◇ Pollution from building and construction sites
- ◇ Domestic Fires, including wood fires, backyard incinerators and small-scale burn-offs.
- ◇ Stormwater run off, septic tanks
- ◇ Waste, odours and noise complaints regarding hotels, restaurants, schools etc

If local council doesn't investigate, or if the local government is responsible for the pollution, contact DPIWE.

For **level 2 activities**, contact the Incident Response Unit at DPIWE on **1800 005 171**. Examples of level 2 polluting activities include:

- ◇ Oil spills, disposal of hazardous and chemical products
- ◇ Odours from rendering works, sewage treatment plants, waste disposal sites or transfer stations
- ◇ Air pollution from regulated factories, including textile factories, paper mills, fertiliser production plants, tanneries and breweries.
- ◇ Noise and dust from quarries

For other specific activities, relevant contacts are set out below:

- ◇ **Public Health issues** - where the pollution may give rise to a public health concern, contact the Director of Public Health on **1800 671 738**
- ◇ **Agricultural spray drift** – contact the Spray Information and Referral Unit on **1800 005 244**
- ◇ **Forestry Burn Offs** – for State forests, contact the Forest Practice Board on **6233 7966**. For other fires, contact the Fire Service on **1800 000 699**
- ◇ **Noisy Trains** – contact Pacific National on **6337 2211**
- ◇ **Aircraft Noise** – call **1800 802 584**

Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) Commences

The *Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004* (the **Air Quality Policy**) came into effect on 1 June 2005. The Air Quality Policy provides guidance for environmental managers and industry to protect ambient air quality in Tasmania, having regard to health and well-being of humans and ecosystems and to visual amenity.

The provisions of the Air Quality Policy are not directly enforceable - they are to be implemented by State and Local governments when they develop legislation, policies and planning schemes or undertake environmental assessments relevant to air quality.

The Air Quality Policy contains specific provisions relating to industrial pollution, odour, planned burning, monitoring and modelling. The policy also contains general provisions regarding the management of diffuse sources of air pollution (such as woodheaters, backyard burning and planned burning).

Regulatory authorities should ensure that all reasonable and practical measures are taken to avoid or minimise air emissions from industry (including existing uses). Where air emissions are unavoidable, accepted modern technology should be implemented to minimise emissions. Measures include reducing production of particulates, recycling, recovery of energy, treatment and containment of pollutants.

The government has also released a Draft Air Quality Strategy for public comment. The draft strategy is available at www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au and you can make comments until 21 October 2005.

The Air Quality Policy is not directly enforceable. The Policy is a guide for governments developing legislation, policies and planning schemes, or assessing environmental impacts

Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement: A Way Forward?

On 13 May 2005, the Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments signed the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement. Bec Osborne looks at how the agreement measures up.

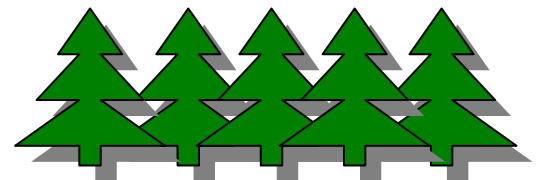
What the agreement offers

- ✦ Establishment of over 73,000ha of reserves in the Tarkine
- ✦ New 31,000ha formal reserve in Savage River and Donaldson wilderness areas
- ✦ Three new formal reserves, totalling 4,660 hectares, in the Styx Valley to protect areas of tall old-growth forest.
- ✦ Forest Conservation Fund to reserve privately owned forest through voluntary covenanting or acquisition. The fund will also assist private reserve owners with land management.
- ✦ \$2 million over two years to accelerate research into the Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease.
- ✦ \$4 million to improve tourism facilities in forest areas, \$1 million to develop bushwalking tracks in the Tarkine.
- ✦ \$2 million to increase community awareness about forest protection.

- ✦ \$1 million for a river catchment quality initiative.
- ✦ \$4 million for research into alternatives to 1080 poison. Elimination of use of 1080 on State land by December 2005.
- ✦ Agreement on an approach to phasing out of clearing and conversion of native forest. At least 80% non-clearfelling in State old growth forests by 2010 (2015 for private forests).
- ✦ Phasing in non-clear-felling techniques – reduction of clear-felling to 20% by 2010 (currently 50%).
- ✦ \$115 million towards new forest management activities to offset resource supply impacts from the changes (including hardwood industry adjustment and protection for country sawmills)
- ✦ \$4 million for skills and training opportunities in the forestry industry.
- ✦ \$11.4 million for support of special species timber and leatherwood honey industries.

Criticisms of the Agreement

- ✦ State government previously committed to completely phasing out clear-felling by 2010. Under the agreement this commitment is reduced to “at least 80%”
- ✦ Many of the informal reserves are areas that would already have been protected under the Forest Practices Code
- ✦ No national park status for the Tarkine—the area is still not protected from mining.
- ✦ No protection for the Weld or Huon Valleys, Blue Tier or the remainder of the Styx valley
- ✦ No commitment to eliminate 1080 in private forests. The ban in State forest is simply restating an earlier promise. The plan does not prioritise research into whether 1080 is a cause of devil facial tumours.



Review of Water Management Act

The review of Tasmania's water management legislation commenced in May 2005 with the release of the *Report on the Operation of the Water Management Act 1999*.

The EDO submission outlined issues that should be addressed to ensure that the *Water Management Act 1999* achieves its objectives. The submission made a number of recommendations, including:

- ◇ Including a conservation representative on the Assessment Committee for Dam Construction
- ◇ Moratoriums on applications for water allocations / dam permits while water management plans are prepared
- ◇ Incentives for off-stream dams
- ◇ Ensuring monitoring programs include groundwater resources
- ◇ Chemical audits for all catchments
- ◇ Requiring urban councils to introduce water meters.

A full copy of our submission is available on our website at www.edo.org.au/edotas

Heritage Management Plans

A bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and a State may declare that actions approved in accordance with an accredited management plan do not require approval under the EPBC Act.

Recent amendments set out criteria for accreditation of a management plan for a World Heritage property or a National Heritage place. The plan must:

- ◇ Include detailed measures to preserve and conserve World Heritage and National Heritage values
- ◇ Provide for risk assessments and minimisation strategies.
- ◇ Require decision-makers to have regard to the Precautionary Principle
- ◇ Provide for monitoring and enforcement of approval conditions.
- ◇ Promote integration of Federal, State and local government responsibilities for the property or place.

Management Plans must be prepared after consultation with the public and any special interest groups. Draft plans must be released for public comment for at least 4 weeks.

Devil Listed as Threatened Species

The Tasmanian devil has been listed as vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. The listing recognises that the facial tumour disease has killed over half the wild devil population and continues to threaten the species.

Research is continuing into causes and potential cures for the disease.

Forest Practices Authority commences

The Forest Practices Authority (**FPA**) has replaced the Forest Practices Board as the body administering the forest practices system in Tasmania.

The FPA Board of directors includes:

- ◇ Isobel Stanley (Chair)
- ◇ Penny Wells
- ◇ Mark Leech
- ◇ Alan Watson
- ◇ Meredith Roodenrys
- ◇ Dr Peter Davies
- ◇ Graham Wilkinson

The FPA directors will be advised by employed scientists and a group of stakeholders known as the Forest Practices Advisory Council (**FPAC**). FPAC members will be appointed in October 2005.

Water Monitoring Program Expanded

Following a recommendation by the Agricultural, Silvicultural and Veterinary Chemical Council, DPIWE has increased the number of water sampling sites around the state to 56 (up from 27).

DPIWE has also released Waterways Monitoring Reports for 40 of Tasmania's 48 catchments. The reports present results of baseline monitoring, a brief summary of catchment land-use, as well as data on streamflow, water allocation, water quality and riverine health.

The reports, and results of the regular monitoring program are available at www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Ralphs Bay Proposal Withdrawn

On 2 September 2005, Walker Corporation withdrew its controversial application for a canal estate development at Ralphs Bay. The decision followed an announcement by Liberal members that, given public opposition to expected environmental impacts, the party would not support the development.

Climate Change Trigger Proposed

Shadow federal Environment Minister, Anthony Albanese, has introduced the *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change (Climate Change Trigger) Bill 2005*.

The bill proposes to amend the EPBC Act to require approval of "climate change actions" which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, including:

- a. establishing an industrial plant or other facility which emits, or is likely to emit, more than 500,000t of CO₂ or CO₂ equivalent per year; or
- b. any other action, series of actions, or program of actions, which will lead, or are likely to lead, directly or indirectly to the emission of more than 500,000t of CO₂ or CO₂ equivalent per year.

Under the proposed changes, the Minister would be required to consider whether the impact of the climate change action can be minimised by the use of best practice environmental management.

Tasmania Together Review

The 5 year review of the Tasmania Together Plan commences in September 2005. Meetings will be held throughout Tasmania to discuss the Tasmania Together goals, new priorities and how to make the plan relevant for the future.

For more information, call the Tasmania Together Progress Board on 6233 5958 or visit www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au

New Draft State Coastal Policy

Following extensive consultation, DPIWE has released a revised State Coastal Policy. The new policy includes specific implementation obligations and guidelines to assist councils to amend their planning schemes to address the Policy.

The draft State Coast Policy, and the initial Response Report, is available from www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/coasts. You can comment on the draft policy until 4 November 2005.

Review of Animal Welfare Act

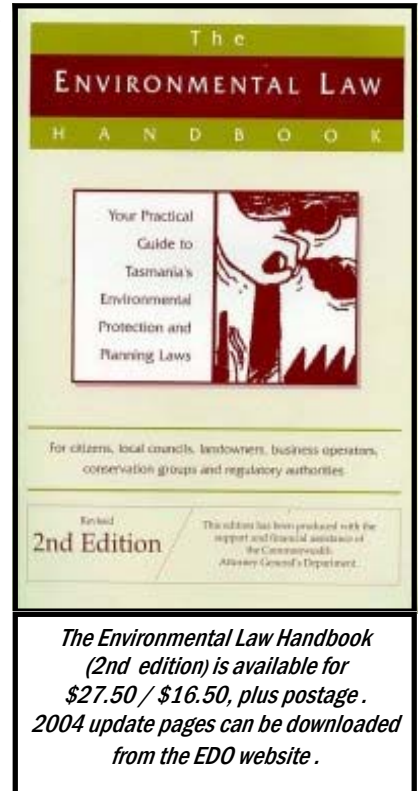
The *Animal Welfare Act 1993* is being reviewed to ensure that the legislation meets expectations about animal welfare in Tasmania.

You can download the issues paper at www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au. Comments can be made until 21 September 2005.

Environmental Defenders Office (Tas) Inc

The EDO is a non-profit community legal centre advising on environmental law. **Our practical guide to environmental and planning law in Tasmania, *The Environmental Law Handbook (2nd Edition)*, edited by Chris Harries, is available from the EDO office, Fullers Bookshop and Hobart Bookshop.**

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