



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



STAFF

Coordinator / Principal Solicitor—Melissa Ballantyne
Solicitor—James Blindell
Administrators—Gabrielle Bond and Ruth Woolley



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair—David Cole | Treasurer—Patricia von Baumgarten
Karen Bubna-Litic, Richard Cook, Alexander Mackey,
Tiana Nairn, Felicity Niemann, Christine Trenorden

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2014~2015

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period from November 2014-October 2015. The last 12 months have been particularly challenging for the EDO as it has been for the other EDOs operating throughout Australia particularly those in the smaller jurisdictions.

2. THE SITUATION – BROADLY

The federal government's decision to end funding for EDOs by June 2014 has struck especially hard at the small EDOs around the nation. The grant provided by the Law Foundation to the SA EDO following this decision was exhausted by the end of the financial year 2014-15 and the organisation faced the prospect of surviving largely on a very modest residue of accumulated funds, a small State grant (from DEWNR) and the generosity of supporters. The future of the EDO was very uncertain at 30 June 2015.

The national environmental political scene witnessed the continuation of an ideological campaign by the coalition government against conservation and environment groups, the underlying position of the government being that the activities of "green" groups, particularly action taken against the coal industry, were unacceptably impeding economic development. The Commonwealth government's campaign comprises, in addition to the withdrawal of Commonwealth funding to EDOs (and other green groups):

(i) attacks on EDOs for representing in the Federal Court opponents of developments such as the Queensland Adani Coal project (where all parties conceded that the Minister had not made his decision lawfully);

(ii) attempts to remove the tax deductibility status of environmental NGOs;

(iii) a bill to remove the standing provisions of the *EPBC Act* for the purposes of judicial review of Ministerial decisions under that Act; and

(iv) a continuation of the "green tape" philosophy from the last term of the former Labor Government that has lead to the EIA approval process under the *EPBC Act* being returned to the States and Territories by way of "approvals bilaterals".

This campaign reflects repudiation by the Commonwealth government of its responsibility to protect assets of national environmental significance, the substitution of a policy of economic development at the cost of the environment and a disregard for the rule of law.

In South Australia it is clear that the current State government is preoccupied with economic growth and the budget and has reduced resources to environmental agencies to the point where some are experiencing serious difficulties in meeting their statutory obligations. The above serves to illustrate that there is a continuing conflict between economic development and protection of environmental values.

With respect to the role of EDOs, there is a need for effective advice and representation in the event of non-compliance with statutory requirements. Additionally, there is a vital need for well-qualified organisations to resist the political attacks on environmental laws that undermine their efficacy and, in many cases, are designed to neutralise those individuals and organisations who advocate for the protection of environmental values.

3. THE CHALLENGES FOR THE EDO

There are several critical challenges to the continuing existence of the EDO in South Australia. These include:

- Limited finances and a small population base from which to attract financial support;
- Because of the nature of the work of law offices, a low profile which exacerbates the fund-raising challenges;
- Limited opportunities for profile-raising litigation;
- A lack of "icon" environmental issues and limited economic development (and associated environmental issues) to attract the attention of the public and raise the EDO's profile;
- Little evidence of younger lawyers in private practice supporting the EDO;
- An associated "re-cycling" of Committee of Management members and an increasing difficulty in attracting new members.

4. FINANCIAL POSITION

The EDO's financial position is addressed in the Treasurer's report. In summary, as of September 2015 the EDO is in a position to survive without Federal government funding (and with limited service delivery) for approximately two years from that date based on current income/expenditure estimates. However, that forecast will depend on cautious and prudent management of the organisation.

5. OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Services

Despite the financial difficulties faced by the EDO at the end of the calendar year 2015 the Committee of Management has stabilised the situation and, as indicated above, is able to project the continuation of the EDO for an additional two years with a limited provision of services.

The financial position permitted the EDO to employ a solicitor (Melissa Ballantyne) one day per week with an additional two days per week grant-supported project work until October 2015. That arrangement has since been extended, with some modification, to the end of calendar year 2015. Administrative support of approximately one day per week has also been possible.

It must be emphasised however, that these arrangements are very much a “holding operation” and that the provision of advice and assistance is severely constrained.

The Thursday night advisory service continues as does the EDO web-site and e-bulletin.

I would like to thank all those who contribute to the management and maintenance of these services, to Richard Cook in particular for his voluntary contribution of a day a week to maintaining the e-bulletin and attending to IT issues.

Special thanks are due to the lawyers from the South Australian legal profession who continue to contribute their time and skills to the advisory service.

That we have been able to continue to this point and beyond is due to the fund-raising efforts of EDO staff and Committee of Management members before and after I assumed the role of chair, the generosity of supporters and assistance from the State government. I would like to extend my thanks to Iris Iwanicki who took charge of the film evening in June and worked closely with Community Alliance SA to successfully raise \$5000. My thanks also to Community Alliance SA for their support.

I wish to thank also South Coast Dune Care (Coast Care) who, in winding up their organisation this year, donated \$14,000 to the EDO. My thanks also to one individual member of the public (who should remain anonymous) for two donations totalling \$25,000. Such generosity has contributed immeasurably to sustaining the EDO in this State.

Special thanks are due to Melissa Ballantyne, James Blindell (prior to his departure from the EDO) and Ruth Woolley and Gabrielle Bond (both administrative support). All have worked tirelessly through the last year in both fund-raising activities and in maintaining a level of service that has been admirable in our difficult circumstances.

The EDO is grateful to Flinders University, in particular the Dean of the Law School, Professor Kim Economides, for providing us with rent free accommodation. The space and facilities are excellent and have resulted in vital cost savings to the organisation.

Management Structure and Strategic Decision-making

In the circumstances, the roles of the Committee of Management and the Administration sub-committee have been supplemented by the work of the Contingency

Planning Sub-committee which “morphed” into the Future Directions Sub-Committee. That sub-committee comprising the chair, Christine Trenorden, Felicity Niemann and Richard Cook has met fortnightly since the beginning of 2015 to monitor the EDO’s circumstances and to provide direction and focus. My thanks to Christine, Felicity and Richard for their contributions.

To distribute workload and responsibilities a “portfolio” concept has been introduced whereby Committee of Management members have assumed responsibility for overseeing various areas of the EDO’s work.

A “crisis meeting” to which members, supporters and friends were invited was held in May 2015 and clearly demonstrated that there is a sector of the South Australian community that regards the EDO as making an essential contribution to the protection of environmental values in this State.

A workshop for Committee of Management members was held on Saturday 22nd August, facilitated by Terry Bruun. Committee members discussed several critical issues. It was determined that there was a clear role for the organisation in the State but in the current financial circumstances, use of our resources had to be more finely tuned.

It was further determined that the EDO would focus its attention on the issue of public participation provisions in State and Commonwealth environmental legislation and challenge governments who demonstrated a willingness to erode or remove vital statutory rights to challenge government decisions and corporate activities in order to protect environmental values. It was recognised that in this area of law reform the EDO had a legitimate campaigning role and that we should take an adversarial approach where necessary.

Project Outcomes

Despite limited resources and a preoccupation with survival, the EDO has made several significant substantive contributions during the last 12 months. In addition to advices provided on a wide range of issues, projects include:

Development Act Reform

Submissions to the SA Expert Panel on Planning Reform (particular thanks to James Blindell for his contribution).

Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission

Submissions made.

Proposed Review of Native Vegetation Regulations

Submissions made.

Mining and Petroleum Guide (Law Foundation Grant)

Commenced.

Further details of work undertaken by the EDO in the last operating year are presented in the Staff Report.

6. RETIRING MEMBERS

During this year Alex Mackey resigned from the Committee of Management due to Law Society commitments and Tiana Nairn will be standing down due to work obligations after five years on the Committee. Many thanks to both for their contributions.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Christine Trenorden who has been a great colleague and support throughout this year following her time as immediate past chair of the EDO. Christine is to stand down from the Committee of Management and on behalf of the organisation I thank her for the valuable contribution she has made and wish her all the best for the future.

7. THANKS

I wish to express my thanks to all who have contributed to the achievements of the EDO during this difficult period. These include Melissa Ballantyne, James Blindell, Ruth Woolley, Gabrielle Bond, Patricia von Baumgarten (Treasurer) and all members of the Committee of Management. I wish to thank also the volunteers and other supporters who have assisted in sustaining the EDO through this difficult year.



David Cole—Chair, 2014-2015

TREASURER'S REPORT 2014~2015

The decline in the EDO's revenue from \$324,288 in 2014 to \$191,979 is the result of the Commonwealth's decision to no longer fund EDOs in Australia. As the Commonwealth was the largest contributor to EDO funding, the Office had a negative net income of \$22,408 in the 2014-2015 financial year when compared with a positive \$11,802 net income the previous financial year.

The receipt of two grants in the amounts of \$90,909 and \$9,091 from the Law Foundation of SA together with \$55,314 in donations and the \$15,000 grant from the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, contributed to a relatively small net income loss for the 2014-2015 financial year.

Other income sources include \$8,752 raised from wine sales and the EDO's film night fundraising event and \$5,157 in membership subscriptions. The Management Committee decided that the EDO should start to charge an administrative fee valued at \$55 (\$25 concession) to

cover some of the expenses, which generated a total of \$3,554 for the 2014-2015 financial year.

In response to the decline in income, the EDO cut its expenses by 68% as shown by the \$214,387 total expense as at 30th June 2015, compared with total expenses of \$312,486 as at 30th June 2014. The greatest contributor to the decline in expenses has been the fact that the EDO is no longer paying accommodation rent due to the kind contribution that Flinders University is making by hosting the EDO at its city campus without charge. The rent free accommodation contributed to savings of \$25,076. Other significant savings made include printing and stationery, seminars and staff development, sundries, electricity, legal fees, outreach and expenses with national network meetings.

Despite the ongoing efforts to reduce expenditure, the EDO has incurred an increase in expenses related to automated bank transactions, insurance, phone, fax and internet, fundraising activities and IT. Although there was a significant increase in fundraising expenses, the amount in donations has also increased. The relatively high bank service charges is associated with automated services and credit card fees. The net assets as at 30th June 2015 were \$89,053 and the year's budget provides for a negative net income. This is an alarming situation because what has contributed for no greater loss of income was the one off \$90,909 grant from the Law Foundation, and a significant increase in donations. For further information, refer to the Income Statement and Balance Sheet.

Looking to the future, despite the continuing support of EDO's members and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, uncertainty remains the theme. However, members of the Committee of Management and staff remain encouraged by the support provided by Flinders University, kind donors and the willingness of EDO members and supporters to contribute with fundraising activities to keep the doors of the EDO open. Conservative budgeting and very careful expenditure will continue to be the EDO's policy.

This financial year has been a difficult time for me, as Treasurer, as well as to other members of the Management Committee. However, I have been fortunate to be working with a great team as we manoeuvre through this time of crisis. The strength of the staff, volunteers and EDO supporters has been inspiring. I am hopeful that better times will come as we continue to look for other income options and review the EDO's strategic direction.

I thank all the staff who have assisted me with my job as Treasurer: Ruth Woolley, Melissa Ballantyne and Gabrielle Bond; and fellow members of the Management Committee, in particular the Chairperson David Cole, for their support during this challenging year.

Patricia von Baumgarten—Treasurer, 2014-2015

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (SA) INC.

INCOME STATEMENT

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
REVENUE FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		
Law Foundation of S.A. Grant	90909	0
Commonwealth Grant	0	275964
Donations	55314	20783
Fundraising	8752	0
Interest	4202	5129
Membership	5157	1650
Other Grants	9091	3000
Other Income	3554	2762
State Government Grant	15000	15000
	<u>191979</u>	<u>324288</u>
EXPENSES FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		
Accounting and Audit	2852	2047
Advertising and Promotion	490	2013
Archives	899	1122
Bank Service Charges	977	367
Computing Expenses	5055	2168
Consulting Fees	885	1800
Depreciation	2002	3449
Electricity	506	2227
Equipment Repairs and Maintenance	360	2524
Fundraising Expenses	4672	999
Insurance	2115	529
Legal Fees	0	4860
Legal Library	197	1211
NALCs & Law Society	0	819
Network Meeting	0	2347
Outreach	1130	3283
Phone, Fax and Internet	5153	3830
Postage and Delivery	928	988
Practicing Certificates	531	1040
Printing and Stationery	1169	7752
Reimburse SACS Funding	13312	0
Rent	0	25076
Seminars & Staff Development	1477	8628
Staff Amenities	1183	1434
Subscriptions and Membership Fees	3623	314
Sundries	1324	4321
Superannuation	14223	23665
Wages	148400	201490
Workcover	924	2183
	<u>214387</u>	<u>312486</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>214387</u>	<u>312486</u>
NET INCOME FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	<u>-22408</u>	<u>11802</u>

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (SA) INC.

BALANCE SHEET AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank and on Hand		
Bendigo Bank Cash Management Account	35303	12921
Bendigo Bank Cash Management Trading Account	6565	192544
Bendigo Bank Term Deposits	60367	44620
Petty Cash	28	28
	<u>102263</u>	<u>250113</u>
Accounts Receivable	0	293
Prepayments	1205	1205
	0	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>103468</u>	<u>251611</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings	2157	4159
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>105625</u>	<u>255770</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accrued Expenses	16572	25931
Provision for Annual Leave	0	9363
Provision for Long Service Leave	0	18106
Grant In Advance	0	90909
	<u>16572</u>	<u>144309</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>89053</u>	<u>111461</u>
MEMBERS FUNDS		
Net Profit/Loss	-22408	11802
Retained Profits	111461	99659
	<u>89053</u>	<u>111461</u>

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (SA) INC.

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

Cash Flows from Operating Activities	2014	2013
Commonwealth Grant	275964	96434
Other Receipts	<u>150184</u>	<u>49572</u>
	<u>426148</u>	<u>146006</u>
Payment for Equipment	0	2200
Payments to Employees & Other Expenses	<u>278703</u>	<u>136028</u>
Net Cash Generated by Operating Activities	<u>147445</u>	<u>7778</u>
Net Increase in Cash	<u>147445</u>	<u>7778</u>
Cash at the beginning of Financial Year	<u>102668</u>	<u>94890</u>
Cash at the end of the Financial Year	<u>250113</u>	<u>102668</u>

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (SA) INC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

This special purpose financial report has been prepared for distribution to the members to fulfil the committee's financial report requirements under the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc's constitution. The accounting policies used in the preparation of this report, as described below, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc's constitution and with previous years and are, in the opinion of the committee, appropriate to meet the needs of members.

The Financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of these statements are as follows:

Goods and Services Tax

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office.

Non- Current Assets

Office equipment, furniture and fittings are shown at cost less accumulated depreciation.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the members of the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc.

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc., which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015 the statement of income for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Statement by Committee of Management.

The Committee of Management

The Committee of Management are responsible for the preparation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the organisation's constitution and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Committee of Management's responsibility also includes such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial report that gives a fair presentation in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Committee of Management as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

Electronic publication of the audited financial report

It is our understanding that the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc. may electronically present the audited financial report and auditor's report on its internet website. Responsibility for any electronic presentation of the financial report on the organisation's website is that of

those charged with governance of the organisation. The security and controls over information on the website should be addressed by the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc to maintain the integrity of the data presented. The examination of the controls over the electronic presentation of audited financial reports on the organisation's website is beyond the scope of the audit of the financial report.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc. as at 30 June 2015 and of its financial performance for the year then ended on that date and complies with Australian accounting standards to the extent described in Note 1.

Basis of accounting and restriction on distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's reporting responsibilities under the constitution. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



.....
D. L. Harradine
Chartered Accountant

.....
Harradine & Norris-Green
3 King William Road,
Unley, S.A. 5061

Dated this 15th day of September 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (SA) INC.

STATEMENT BY COMMITTEE

The attached financial statements of the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2015 are, in our opinion, properly drawn up:

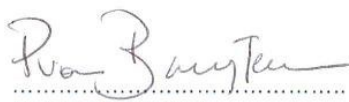
- (i) so as to present fairly the financial position and the state of affairs of the organization at 30th June 2015 and the results of its operations for the period then ended;
- (ii) in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; and
- (iii) in accordance with applicable accounting standards, as disclosed.

As at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Dated at Adelaide this day ^{21ST} September 2015

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Committee.


.....
D. Cole
Chairperson


.....
P. von Baumgarten
Treasurer
25/9/15

STAFF REPORT 2014~2015

OVERVIEW

2014-2015 has been another year of great challenge for the EDO as set out in detail in the Chairperson's report. Whilst funding issues occupied much staff time, we continued providing assistance to the South Australian community. Much of our work involved centred on law and policy issues including the planning reform process, fracking and biodiversity conservation.

OPENING HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-5pm,
Thursday 9am-6.30pm

STAFF

Administrator: **Gabrielle Bond** (3 days pw) until Jan 2015, **Ruth Woolley** from Jan 2015

Coordinator/Principal Solicitor: **Melissa Ballantyne** (4 days pw)

Solicitor: **James Blindell** (3 days pw to 30 June 2015)

VOLUNTEERS, STUDENTS AND PRO BONO ASSISTANCE

As in previous years, the EDO is extremely grateful for the assistance provided by many volunteers. As well as the lawyers on our Thursday evening roster and pro bono lists, the EDO has been helped by many students and law graduates. In round figures, this voluntary contribution is roughly equivalent to about three quarters of the paid time put in by EDO staff. Special thanks to all those mentioned below:

ROSTERED LAWYERS

- Ruth Beach
- Tim Campbell
- Michael Doherty
- Nicole Harris
- Duncan Hartshorne
- Stuart Henry
- Paul Leadbeter
- John McElhinney
- Tim Mellor
- Felicity Niemann

- Kyra Reznikov
- Nicholas Swan

QUALIFIED LEGAL, LAW STUDENT AND RECENT GRADUATE VOLUNTEERS

The EDO continues to attract quality volunteer legal and general researchers. We have had to turn some offers of help away due to lack of a capacity to provide adequate supervision. Special thanks to the following people who have assisted the EDO during the year with legal research and other tasks:

- Richard Cook
- Sarah Day
- Sarah Dickens
- Emma Goreham
- Joe In Ho
- Caroline Manser
- Shannon McMenamin
- Michelle Munro
- Emily Playford
- Taylor Pope
- Catie Raymond
- Hugh Scobie

LEGAL ADVICE AND CASE WORK

During 2014-2015 advice was sought from the EDO by a wide variety of individuals, residents groups, special interest groups and environment groups. EDO clients come from varying socio-economic backgrounds and from all regions of South Australia.

By volume, the largest number of cases involved planning issues under the Development Act (50%) followed by pollution issues under the Environment Protection Act (10%). Some other areas of law with multiple clients included local government, native vegetation and water resources.

Staff and volunteer lawyers provided a total of 124 advices and case work services.

Client advice and case work covered a wide range of topics including:

- Waste treatment
- Clearance of coastal native vegetation
- Mining waste
- Exploration by BP in the Great Australian Bight
- Exploration by Bight Petroleum off Kangaroo Island
- Proposed Arckaringa Coal Mine
- Regulation of unconventional gas extraction
- Suburban tree protection
- Mining proposals on Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas
- Nora Creina and KI golf course proposals

- Apartment development in Adelaide City
- Tree Retention in rural town
- Noise pollution
- Reserve Management
- Community Land Status
- Site Contamination
- Association Rules
- Illegal taking of Protected Animals
- Development Approval –interpretation
- Pesticides and Health Impacts

LITIGATION AND LITIGATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Due to a reduction in lawyer hours from the 1 July 2014 our assistance in this area was limited. The EDO's major assistance was to a rural landowner in relation to mining activities and possible impacts on water supplies. This matter resolved by way of agreement. A number of other matters were in the category of litigation related activities. We provided advice on a number of occasions on how to conduct third party appeals in the Environment, Resources and Development Court.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION & SEMINARS

Environmental Law seminars form part of the EDO's Rural Outreach Programme (funded by the State Department of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources). As well as providing free legal advice, most regional visits include presentations to school classes and/or a community workshop. This year we visited Kangaroo Island. Other educational activities included the commencement of work on a guide to mining and petroleum regulation.

PUBLICATIONS AND WEBPAGE

As in recent years, we have focused on web-based materials rather than paper resources as electronic technologies are widely used by our client base. However, we continue to print and post materials if requested. Our website was upgraded between July and October 2014, giving the organisation an increased online presence. The new website allows interactions such as membership payments, donations and requests for legal advice to be easily managed online, saving many hours of administration time. Our thanks to Gabrielle Bond who undertook this project along with expert volunteers Peter Youll and Walter Marsh.

Our e-Bulletin continued to be produced, and is now distributed through the website bulk email feature. The e-Bulletin is a fortnightly publication, compiled by volunteer Richard Cook. It details the latest relevant South Australian and Commonwealth environmental law

notices, events and inquiries. Many thanks to Richard for his continuing work on this important publication which continues to generate great feedback from the public. Due to resource restrictions we were limited in the number of newsletters we were able to produce and instead focussed on online communication.

LAW REFORM AND RESEARCH

The EDO continues to be active in promoting reform of environmental laws. During the year we were involved in 30 activities of this type.

Our law reform work includes submissions to government departments and parliamentary committees on proposed legislation as well as our own law reform agenda. Not all of these resulted in EDO submissions as many involved giving assistance to conservation clients with their submissions. Copies of EDO submissions are available on our website.

An important and ongoing law reform project is the EDO's involvement in the South Australian government's Planning Review – the Planning Improvement Project. We continued to be actively involved in the review as a member of the Community and Interests Group Working Party (which is a member of the Planning Reform Reference Group) and independently of that Working Party. We participated in the Review by providing submissions, meeting with Expert Panel members and attending a number of workshops and meetings. We continued to work with conservation and community groups in an effort to influence real and lasting improvements to the planning system. Our submissions covered the:

- Retention of the Environment, Resources and Development Court
- Public Participation Charter Proposal
- Expert Panel's Report : Our Ideas for Reform
- Expert Panel's Report : The Planning System We Want

We also participated as a member of the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide Update Reference Group by attending meetings and providing a submission.

Other law reform work included:

- Preparation of the EDO network submission on the proposed Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 draft bilateral assessment agreement between SA and the Federal Government.
- Two submissions to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission
- Submission to the SA Parliamentary Inquiry into Unconventional Gas

- Submission to the SA Parliamentary Inquiry into Biodiversity
- Provision of comment on the review of Commonwealth Threatened Species Listing
- Attendance at a National Summit on Air Pollution
- Contribution to an EDO network submission on Commonwealth Treaties
- Submission to a Review of the Native Vegetation Regulations
- Attendance at a forum on transport issues
- Attendance at a forum on Transparency in the Resources Industry
- Submission on the ICAC Discussion Paper – Review of Legislative Schemes – Complaints and Reports about Public Administration
- Submission on the Draft Environment Protection (Variation of Act, Schedule 1) (Resource Recovery, Waste Disposal and Related Activities) Regulations 2015
- Regular meetings with the Environment Protection Authority
- Submission on the Native Vegetation Council's Draft Interim Guideline- Prescribed Burning)
- Attendance at a National Environment Meeting.

FUNDING ACTIVITIES

As a consequence of our ongoing funding issues the EDO:

- Held a Crisis Meeting
- Moved into office space at Flinders University
- Engaged in political lobbying at the State and Federal level
- Sought to highlight our plight through print, radio and online media
- Lodged multiple grant applications
- Liaised with other EDOs interstate on our responses
- Attended forums on fundraising
- Began process of developing corporate relationships
- Developed a fee charging policy and trust account system
- Ran a crowdfunding campaign
- Held a film night and a wine sale

Flinders University

A huge support for the EDO has been our new partnership with Flinders University which commenced on the 1 July 2014 when we moved into their Victoria Square campus. Many thanks to all the staff who have made us feel very welcome and have been helpful in so many ways particularly the Dean of the Law School Professor Kim Economides and Associate Dean (Professional) Deborah Ankor. Our new partnership was launched by Chief Justice Kourakis on the 24 September 2014. Since then the partnership has been furthered in the following ways:

1. Melissa was part of a panel reviewing the Graduate Certificate in Environmental Compliance course

2. Melissa liaised with PLT staff members in relation to student placements
3. Melissa had a meeting with members of the Environmental Science Faculty
4. James spoke on two occasions to Law School students about the work of the EDO
5. Several students from the Marketing School and the Arts Faculty assisted with our crowd funding campaign.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff attended seminars and information sessions on the following topics:

- Fracking – friend or foe?
- Carmichael Coal Mine Case
- Practical Tips and Strategies to Build Effective Relationships
- Lawyers and the Media
- Norman Waterhouse Local Government Conference
- The American Revolution in Unconventional Oil and Gas
- SA – The Nuclear State?- Why it Makes No Sense
- How to Develop Successful Government Relations
- Public Policy for Community Organisations
- Communication Beyond Words
- RPC Act – Ionising Radiation Regulations
- Leadership Conversations
- Ethics In Pro Bono Practice

NETWORKS

The Australian network of EDOs (ANEDO) supports the staff of EDO offices across the country and coordinates national activities such as submissions on changes to Commonwealth environmental laws. Staff participated in regular phone link ups of the network. As a result of the ongoing funding issues a Network Coordinator was appointed. The Coordinator undertook a number of tasks including a review of governance arrangements (ongoing) and development of resources including a network CV, an information kit for Members of Parliament and letters re-introducing EDOs to their clients and supporters.

Staff also attended meetings of the South Australian Council of Community Legal Services, the South Australian Legal Assistance Forum and JusticeNet.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are a wide range of other activities were carried out by staff to keep our service functioning and accountable. These include:

- reporting to funding bodies

- preparation of financial documents including the annual budget
- bookkeeping
- participation in the professional indemnity insurance review scheme
- preparation for and attendance at various service meetings
- data entry
- organising the volunteer advisory service
- quarterly reviews of all client files
- updating office equipment and information technology

Work also continued with accrediting our service in accordance with the national process applying to all community legal centres. Several new policies were finalised including a media policy.

MEDIA

When approached by media outlets, EDO comment is generally limited to broad legal issues (including law reform) with requests for more specific media comment on particular issues being referred to appropriate clients. This year, we have raised the issue of funding cuts to the EDO through the media. Our Facebook page has also proved significant and has raised the profile of and support for the EDO especially during our crowdfunding campaign.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

Volunteer solicitors provide advice to clients as part of the Thursday evening Advisory Service. Demand for this service has been fairly steady with an average capacity for two appointments each week. The Thursday evening service is the first point of face-to-face contact between the EDO and some of its clients, however urgent issues, public interest matters, issues raised by conservation groups and country clients are usually dealt with by the staff solicitors.

The EDO toll free advice phone number (1800 337 566) continues to be used extensively by rural clients. The toll free number is listed in all South Australian country telephone directories. The funding for the toll free number is from the South Australian Department of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources as part of their continuing support for legal advice to country clients through outreach visits and country phone inquiries.

The EDO does not impose a means test on clients because our main criterion for providing ongoing assistance is “public interest”. In the past, all clients whose problem falls within the definition of “environmental law” have been accommodated at our Thursday evening advisory service. In any event, ongoing assistance depends on meeting the public interest criterion. All clients are asked to pay the administration fee prior to receiving legal advice.

THANK YOU

The EDO staff greatly appreciate the continued support from all members and volunteers who have freely and willingly given their time to the EDO. Without volunteer support, the EDO would not be able to provide services to the people of South Australia and to the environment. Special thanks go to the EDO Committee of Management, particularly our office bearers - Chairperson, David Cole and Treasurer Patricia von Baumgarten. Our thanks also go to:

- Law Foundation of South Australia — grants for staffing costs and preparation of a community guide to Mining and Petroleum Regulation in SA
- South Australian Department of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources — rural outreach, litigation support and other funding
- B and C Legal Software Solutions — Trust accounting software
- Fisher Jeffries — advice on Constitution
- Flinders University — accommodation
- Nick Crouch – Natural Perspectives -videos
- Ben Alberton — fundraising
- Emma Fox — research
- Hugh Scobie — research
- Tom Matthews — fundraising
- Asa Wassberg — fundraising
- Brian Donaghy — fundraising
- Jessa Klecka — fundraising
- Natalie Szymanczyk — fundraising
- Natasha Hunter — fundraising
- Jacquie Ware — fundraising
- Michael Mutitu — fundraising
- Robyn Koldej of The Online Director — Google ad grants assistance.
- Malcolm Griffith & Gui Visuals — IT services
- Norman Waterhouse Lawyers — Government Gazette and advice on employment and lease issue
- Giulio Cirillo — accountant
- Total Computer Solutions — for National EDO Network web page
- Jenny Norris-Green — auditor
- Presidian — Planning Law Service
- Temple Bruer Wines — in kind sponsorship with great wine!
- Tony Hunt, Wavetel — phone system
- Peter Youll, Walter Marsh—website
- Nick Crouch — videos
- All our wonderful supporters who have given donations or have provided assistance in some way

Melissa Ballantyne — Coordinator / Principal Solicitor

Ruth Woolley — Administrator