



2025

Impact Report



Environmental
Defenders Office

Acknowledgment of Country

EDO recognises and pays respect to the many First Nations peoples of the lands, seas and rivers of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

EDO recognises the unique and unwavering connection First Nations peoples have to their Country. EDO understands that it cannot work towards a world where nature thrives without working alongside First Nations peoples as the original guardians of Country.

We recognise that Country was never ceded and express our deep remorse for the injustices and inequities that have been, and continue to be, endured by the First Nations of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands since the beginning of colonisation.

Contents

A message from our Chair	2
A message from our CEO	3
Our impact	4
A safe climate	6
Healthy ecosystems and no extinctions	14
Supporting water justice	20
First Nations and Indigenous peoples' program	26
Reform of laws, systems and structures	32
Governance	37
Acknowledgements	40
Reports & publications	48

The Environmental Defenders Office uses the power of law to deliver legal solutions for nature, climate and people, driven by our vision of a world where nature thrives.

EDO began as a small group of lawyers in 1985 who were responding to the growth in community groups seeking legal representation to oppose major developments. By the mid-1990s, EDO had formed offices in each Australian state and territory, operating as separate legal entities but part of a larger network. In 2019, eight offices merged into what is now the largest environmental legal services organisation in the Australia-Pacific region.



At the start of this financial year, it was my great honour to accept the position as Chair when Dr Bronwyn Darlington stepped down from the role after seven years at the helm and a decade on the Board.

Dr Darlington led EDO through a period of significant organisational and social change, helping to navigate us through the merger of eight state and territory EDOs into a national body in 2019, and then through the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022.

The Board is eternally grateful to Dr Darlington for her contribution and wishes her well in her future endeavours.

In July, we welcomed the Hon. Alan Wilson to the Board. Mr Wilson is a distinguished former Queensland Supreme Court Judge and former President of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

His decades of legal practice at the highest levels and his wisdom are an adornment to the breadth and depth of talent that exists on the EDO Board.

Indeed, the skills and knowledge of the whole Board were tested to their limits over the past 18 months as we grappled with the legal, financial and reputational challenges arising from the Barossa pipeline court case and the subsequent costs proceedings.

I want to pay tribute to all my Board colleagues and staff who responded to those challenges with such energy, professionalism and diligence.

Their efforts and the support of our donors have ensured that EDO will continue to serve the Australian community as it has now done for the past 40 years.

I would also like to acknowledge the fact that the interest free loan we secured to cover the bulk of the liability from the adverse cost proceedings has now been forgiven. Whilst the terms are commercial-in-confidence it demonstrates that there are good people out there who have the EDO's back.

I especially acknowledge the leadership of CEO David Morris, who leaves us this year after more than a decade with the organisation in a variety of capacities, including leading our NSW and NT practices.

Mr Morris led EDO through the merger in 2019 and has served with great distinction as the first CEO of the national entity.

He charted a course for us through some very choppy waters in the wake of the Barossa judgment and safely back to port.

All the while, Mr Morris oversaw a significant organisational restructure that has put EDO on a very firm footing to continue its vital work.

He also implemented significant changes to EDO's operations that have strengthened our practice and safeguarded our future.

The Board and staff wish David well.

In the final few months of the year, the Board initiated an exhaustive local and international recruitment process that resulted in the appointment of Jo Shulman as EDO's next CEO. Ms Shulman is due to start in the role in September 2025.

Ms Shulman is a leader with more than 25 years' experience at the cutting edge of social justice and policy reform, including terms as chief executive of the Moriarty Foundation, the Redfern Legal Centre and the Australian Centre for Disability Law.

We very much look forward to working with Ms Shulman as we chart the next chapter in the EDO story.

Finally, to the EDO staff who have, on behalf of our clients, delivered the outcomes and impacts you will read about in this impact report: thank you!

These extraordinary folk have delivered this work while also helping to build a stronger and more resilient organisation.

Brent Wallace
Chair

This foreword is for me the final punctuation point in a career of almost 10 years with this incredible organisation.

June 30, 2025, marked my last day as CEO and the beginning of a new chapter in the long history of this vital institution in Australia's legal landscape.

This past year has been the most challenging since our state bodies merged to form a national entity in 2019.

The costs settlement with Santos in the wake of the unsuccessful litigation we conducted on behalf of Tiwi Islander clients in 2023-24 presented an immense challenge to the organisation on many fronts.

The experience tested EDO in many ways, but it also created the opportunity for us to strengthen our practice and enhance organisational resilience.

In a magnificent demonstration of the broad support that EDO enjoys, and the professionalism and resilience of EDO's staff, we met that challenge while continuing to provide the high-quality environmental legal services to the community upon which our reputation has been built over the past 40 years.

This report is merely a snapshot of the totality of that work. Much of what we do never makes the headlines, but it often changes lives.

Every day, by advising the community, representing clients, and participating in policy debates at state and federal levels, we have helped to uphold and extend legal protections for nature, climate, communities and culture right across the nation and beyond.

In the past year alone, we have provided legal education, advice and representation to thousands of citizens and community organisations who came to us for help in navigating the complex systems of environmental and planning law that have such immense consequences for families and communities and for the places and species they love.

The litigation EDO has conducted for clients over the past 12 months continues to deliver practical wins for communities and the environment.

In Queensland, we helped our client Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland (EnvA-CQ) to secure a court settlement that slashed by 80% the number of gas wells that Blue Energy could drill in the Bowen Basin.

The settlement not only substantially reduced the project's potential climate impact, it protected critical koala and greater glider habitat, as well as aquifers that sustain farms and ecosystems across the region.

The Blue Energy case was a vivid demonstration of the power of expertly formulated and skilfully delivered public interest litigation to achieve justice for nature, climate and communities.

EDO's commitment to best practice in supporting First Nations and Indigenous peoples to protect their Country and cultural heritage is unwavering.

A clear example is the case brought by the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), challenging the approval of the NSW Fractured Rock Water Resource Plan, alleging governments had failed a legal duty to properly consult Traditional Owners. The proceeding goes to the heart of water justice.

Our engagement with First Peoples extends across international borders through our work with our Pacific partners, including communities in Papua New Guinea who are resisting the dumping of mine waste in their seas.

Of course, as a community legal centre, the support we provide is delimited by the laws prevailing in the jurisdiction where we operate.

Sadly, the environment and planning laws we work within around Australia are imperfect and constantly under pressure from sectional interests pressing governments to weaken hard-fought environmental protections and participation rights.



EDO is a critical counterweight to the influence of industry lobbies, providing frank and fearless advice to governments and community groups, critiquing proposed legislation and proposing law reforms to strengthen protections for climate, nature and communities and to enhance community participation in environmental decision making.

In South Australia, for instance, we contributed to the design of that state's first *Biodiversity Act*.

The benefits that flow from good environmental legislation endure far longer than a single case and provides the framework for accountability and outcomes over the long term.

We were proud to have played a part in South Australia's reform and many others because we know that legislative change is necessary if we are to not merely slow the destruction of nature, but to reverse it altogether.

As to the future, leadership transitions are a feature of healthy institutions and as I step down I do so with complete confidence in the EDO team.

Our remarkable Board and staff, along with our supporters and partners, know where EDO must head and will ensure it continues to be a force for good – a crucial legal service that is independent, principled and effective.

Thank you for your support and trust. EDO has never been more important and the backing of our supporters and the communities we serve ensures we can keep striving with communities to create a world where nature thrives.

David Morris
CEO

Our impact

662

legal services for
overburdened communities

5,028

people who benefitted from
community legal outreach

966

enquiries through
EDO's National
Intake Service

69

matters relating
to the protection of
cultural heritage

64,396

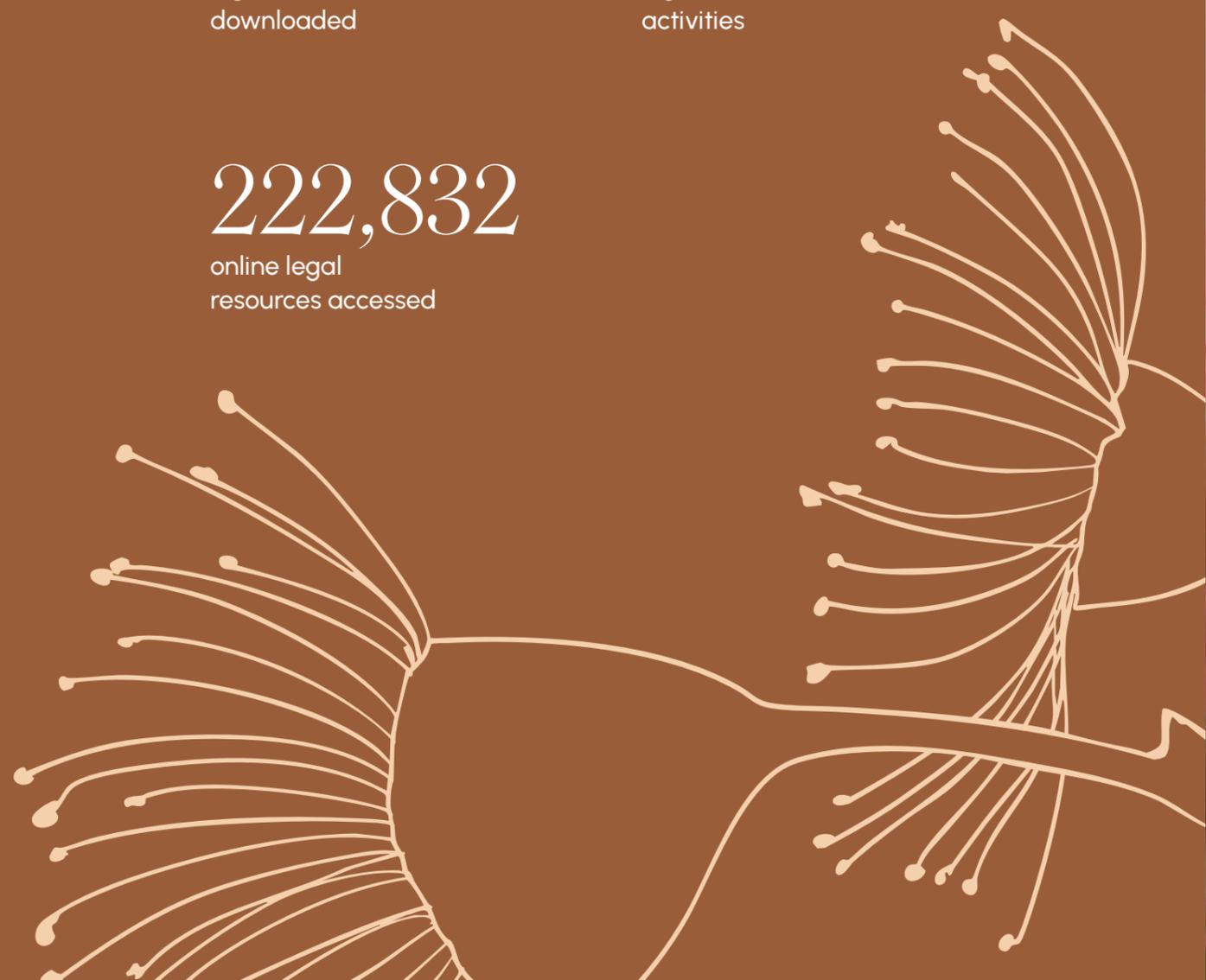
legal resources
downloaded

199

legal reform
activities

222,832

online legal
resources accessed



113

threatened species and
endangered ecological
communities benefiting
from legal interventions

2,164

legal services provided
across the Australia-Pacific
region



A safe climate

We empowered communities to participate in decisions that shape our collective climate future.

Our corporate and commercial team worked tirelessly with clients to ensure companies were held accountable for claims they made on climate, exposing the deceptive and harmful practice of greenwashing that holds us back from fixing the climate crisis.

We worked to ensure clients and frontline communities seeking a safe climate had access to justice by providing advice and representation. Our legal expertise encompasses impacts on health, Country and culture, adaptation failure, loss and damage and breaches of human rights from climate change because of fossil fuel pollution.

CSG company agrees to scale back Bowen Basin project

Location
Bowen Basin, Qld

First Nations place name
Western Kangoulu and Barada Barna Country in Central Queensland

Client
Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland (EnvA-CQ)

Opponent
Blue Energy
Eureka Petroleum

Court
Settlement was reached before the case was heard, with conditions of settlement confirmed via judgment of the Land Court of Queensland

Case status
Successful settlement agreement reached

We represented Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland (EnvA-CQ) in a legal challenge to Blue Energy and Eureka Petroleum's Bowen Basin gas project approval. The case exposed critical flaws in the Queensland Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's assessment process, including Blue Energy's original application that underestimated gas extraction volumes by an extraordinary 18,800 per cent.

Our legal team identified that the department failed to detect this significant error and neglected to properly consider the greenhouse gas emissions before approving the project. Our client's challenge addressed concerns about inadequate assessment of impacts to wildlife, climate, and groundwater resources.

The legal action focused on ensuring compliance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (Qld) and proper consideration of scope 3 emissions, which occur once the gas is sold and burnt offshore. Our client argued that threatened species including koalas, greater gliders, ornamental snakes, and yakka skinks required stronger protections, along with precious water resources in the region.

Our work secured a landmark agreement that dramatically reduced the project's environmental impact. Blue Energy and Eureka Petroleum agreed to scale back three petroleum leases to just one, reducing the development footprint from 31,500ha to 7,630ha and cutting planned gas wells from 530 to 117.

The settlement also established stronger environmental conditions, including mandatory Water Impact Monitoring Assessment Programs, baseline assessments, regular water reporting requirements and ground truthing environmental values to remedy any inconsistency with mapped values.

This case demonstrates the importance of careful legal scrutiny of environmental approvals and the power of community-driven legal action to protect Queensland's natural heritage and address climate impacts.

Why we're doing this work

We took this case because the original project approval had failed to thoroughly assess this project's environmental impacts. The threat to wildlife and water this project posed was significant. The department's failure to detect Blue Energy's substantial error estimating the gas to be extracted raises concerns about the adequacy of the department's assessments of fossil fuel projects and their greenhouse gas emissions.

Our client, EnvA-CQ, represents a community deeply concerned about protecting local threatened species, groundwater resources, and addressing climate change impacts. The case provided an opportunity to strengthen environmental protections while demonstrating that proper legal scrutiny can force better outcomes for both local ecosystems and our globally shared climate.

The impact of our work

This legal action achieved significant environmental protections. The settlement reduced the project's footprint by almost 80 per cent, from 31,500ha to 7,630ha, and cut planned gas wells from 530 to 117.

Stronger conditions now better protect endangered koalas, greater gliders, ornamental snakes, yakka skinks, and other wildlife.

Importantly, the department conceded that greenhouse gas assessment, including scope 3 emissions, is a relevant consideration under Queensland environmental law. This precedent strengthens future environmental assessments of gas projects. The case demonstrates how strategic legal action can transform inadequate approvals into significantly better environmental outcomes, protecting both local ecosystems and contributing to broader climate action.

“Our Central Queensland community cares deeply about our local environment and the amazing natural assets our region provides.

We feel like we have had a win in helping to protect these values from both habitat clearing and the impacts of climate change.”

Coral Rowston, EnvA-CQ spokesperson

Doctors challenge gas approval in landmark climate case

Location
Scarborough Gas Field (offshore WA) / Burrup Peninsula, WA

First Nations place name
Murujuga

Client
Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA)

Opponent
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) / Woodside Energy

Court
Federal Court of Australia

Case status as of 30 June 2025
Protective Costs Order granted limiting DEA's liability to \$80,000; substantive hearing to be heard on 14, 15 July

We represented Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) in a judicial review challenging NOPSEMA's approval of Woodside's Production Environment Plan for the Scarborough Gas Project.

A critical breakthrough came when the Federal Court granted DEA a Protective Costs Order, removing the financial barrier that could have prevented this public interest case from proceeding. Without this order, the charity would have faced prohibitive financial risk in challenging one of Australia's largest corporations. We understand that it is the first time the Federal Court has made this order in favour of an environmental organisation.

In February 2025, NOPSEMA – Australia's offshore oil and gas regulator – accepted Woodside's final environmental plan, the last approval required before drilling could commence in the Scarborough Gas Field.

DEA argued that NOPSEMA acted unlawfully by approving the plan without fully understanding how the significant climate impacts would be managed.

The approved plan allows Woodside to drill for gas in the offshore Scarborough field and transport it to processing facilities on Murujuga, predominantly for export overseas.

The Scarborough project represents a massive addition to Australia's carbon emissions, with an estimated 878Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent to be released over the project's lifetime.



This comes at a time when climate change is already generating severe health impacts for Australians, with deadly heatwaves killing approximately 3,000 people each year and 40% of Australians at risk from extreme heat.

The judicial review process itself served an important function in scrutinising regulatory decision-making around major fossil fuel projects, highlighting gaps between climate science, health impacts, and current approval processes for offshore petroleum developments.

Why we're doing this work

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to public health in Australia, with doctors already treating patients suffering from heat-related illness, respiratory conditions from bushfire smoke, and mental health impacts from extreme weather events.

DEA, as Australia's leading medical voice on climate and health, launched legal action to ensure regulators and proponents abide by laws designed to protect communities.

With consideration of the health implications of adding 878 million tonnes of emissions to the atmosphere, this action was about ensuring NOPSEMA acted lawfully, fully understanding how the climate impacts of the Scarborough Gas Project would be managed.

The impact of our work

The Protective Costs Order secured for DEA represents a significant victory for environmental justice and access to the courts. This precedent strengthens the ability of public interest groups to challenge major industrial decisions without facing financial ruin, ensuring that merit rather than money determines access to justice.

By enabling DEA to bring their case to court, we helped scrutinise the regulatory framework governing Australia's offshore gas industry – one of the nation's most significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The case highlighted critical gaps in how climate and health impacts are assessed in major fossil fuel approvals, contributing to broader conversations about improving environmental regulation and ensuring community voices are heard in critical environmental decisions.

“As DEA members, what we see is that our planet's health is in trouble. We look around and treat the health impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss in our work. And we can't sit by and watch our planet's health decline when we can do something about it.”

Dr Kate Wylie, DEA Executive Director

Landmark greenwashing case goes to trial

Location
Australia

Client
Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR)

Opponents
Santos Ltd

Court/regulator
Federal Court of Australia

Case status as of 30 June 2025
Decision pending

In October and November 2024, our client's landmark greenwashing case was heard in the Federal Court.

Santos and former Santos company officials were cross-examined about the reasonable basis for official statements the company published regarding its emissions reductions plans.

The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR), our client, initiated legal proceedings against Santos in late 2021.

ACCR claims the company made numerous statements in its *Net Zero Plan, 2020 Annual Report, 2020 Investor Day Briefing* and *2021 Climate Change Report* that were misleading and deceptive and in breach the *Corporations Act 2001* and the *Australian Consumer Law*.

This is the first time anywhere in the world that the veracity of a company's net-zero emissions target has been challenged in court.

The case also raises important questions about blue hydrogen in the transition to zero emissions.

In 2019-20, the year of Australia's Black Summer Bushfires, Santos was responsible for about 36.3 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions, making it one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters in Australia.

Despite this, Santos described itself as a "clean energy" provider in its *2020 Annual Report*, stating that natural gas was a "clean fuel".

ACCR is a shareholder advocacy organisation focused on how listed companies, industry associations, and investors manage climate, labour, human rights, and governance issues.

They are also investors in Santos. They are taking this action to ensure this company, and others, fulfil their legal responsibility to be transparent and open with shareholders like ACCR.

Why we're doing this work

As companies rush to convince the market that they are part of the global energy transition, full and frank disclosure has never been more important.

Transparency and truthfulness are particularly important to investors who need to assess which companies will survive and thrive in a rapidly changing global energy economy.

Misleading information can have a dramatic effect on the market, on investors, and ultimately on the environment.

It can impede an effective and timely response to the climate crisis, expose investors to major losses, and skew investment away from companies that are acting responsibly.

The impact of our work

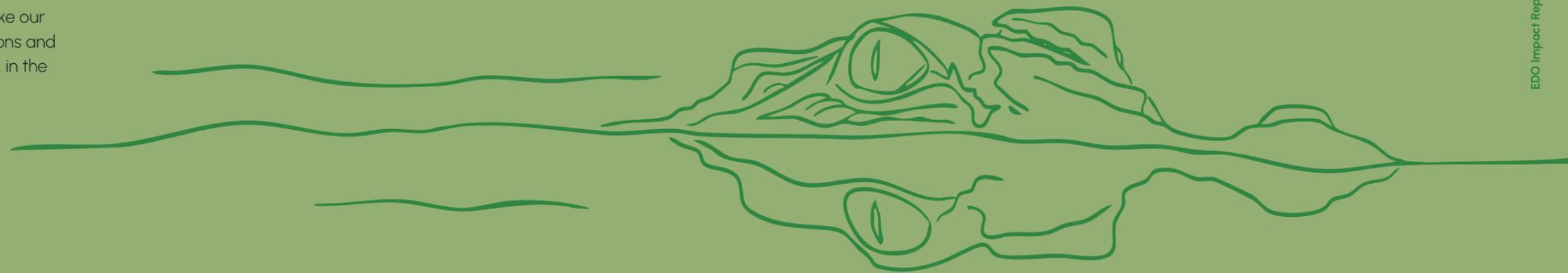
Our client's case is an unprecedented attempt to use the law to hold a major fossil fuel producer to account for statements our client believes amount to greenwashing for commercial advantage.

If ACCR succeeds and Santos is penalised for its actions, it will send a strong signal to other companies that they face third-party actions and potential action from regulators if they deceive investors and markets about their operations and products.

Healthy ecosystems and no extinctions

We worked to prevent extinctions by providing legal advice and representation to clients and communities seeking to hold corporate actors to account for unlawful activities.

Our law reform team worked closely with allies and the Federal Government advising how to make our biodiversity laws stronger to prevent extinctions and drivers of ecosystem destruction on the land, in the water and in the ocean.



New laws strengthen crocodile protections

Location
Qld

First Nations place name
Kuku Yalanji Country, Giringun Country, Wanjuru Country, Gunganji Country and other Traditional Owner lands across North Queensland

Stakeholders
Community Representation of Crocodiles (CROC), Bob Irwin, First Nations communities, including Kuku Yalanji Elders Aunty Kathleen and Aunty Francis Walker, and various Traditional Owner groups

Opponent
Proponents of the Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025

Status
Advocacy ongoing
Parliamentary submission filed March 2025
New protective laws enacted September 2024

We assisted clients who are leading a comprehensive campaign to protect Queensland's saltwater crocodiles while ensuring public safety through responsible human behaviour and education, rather than culling. Working closely with conservationist Bob Irwin, Community Representation of Crocodiles (CROC), and First Nations communities across North Queensland, we successfully advocated for stronger laws that tackle reckless behaviour in crocodile habitat.

We partnered with leading crocodile conservationists to run outreach and community legal education events with First Nations groups at Wujal Wujal, Mossman, Cardwell and Babinda to discuss law reforms, cultural rights, and human and crocodile coexistence. We collaborated with Traditional Owners including Kuku Yalanji Elders, Jabalbina rangers, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, and other First Nations groups to ensure cultural perspectives were central to policy development.

In September 2024, crocodile conservation won a significant victory when the Miles Labor government enacted new laws under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, creating offences for discarding food scraps that could attract crocodiles and for being in close proximity to crocodiles on land, while significantly increasing penalties for deliberately feeding or disturbing crocodiles.

We strongly opposed the proposed Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025, which would have established a Queensland Crocodile Authority with broad powers to cull crocodiles outside existing regulatory frameworks. We made a submission to the parliamentary committee and attended the committee hearing as a witness, demonstrating how the Bill conflicts with international obligations, our national laws, and Queensland's nature laws while potentially breaching First Nations cultural rights.

Why we're doing this work

Saltwater crocodiles are a protected threatened species, conservation success story, and culturally significant to First Nations peoples. The increase in crocodile incidents is largely attributed to reckless human behaviour rather than crocodile numbers.

Published research and First Nations knowledge show that removing dominant crocodiles makes waterways more dangerous by creating territorial disputes among younger males.

Queensland has the world's lowest crocodile attack statistics despite having the highest crocodile density, proving current management strategies work. Education and responsible human behaviour are more effective than culling for managing human-crocodile interactions while protecting cultural rights and biodiversity.

The impact of our work

Our advocacy secured critical legislation making Queensland the first jurisdiction to criminalise behaviour that attracts crocodiles to areas of human activity. The new laws include significant penalties for discarding fish scraps and approaching crocodiles, addressing the root causes of dangerous interactions.

Our parliamentary submission exposed fundamental flaws in the proposed culling legislation, demonstrating its conflicts with international trade obligations, our national nature laws, and Queensland's *Human Rights Act*.

Through community education events, we empowered First Nations groups to engage actively in crocodile management decisions. This work protects public safety, a threatened species and cultural rights of First Nations peoples.

“It’s a wonderful step to actually be able to deter and punish people who put themselves and our threatened species at risk. We can’t change a crocodile’s behaviour, but we can focus on people taking personal responsibility in croc country.”

Amanda French, CROC spokesperson



Victory for community groups and marine life

Location
Otway Basin, Vic

Clients
Six community organisations including Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) and Surfrider Foundation Australia

Opponents
TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company Pty Ltd and others

Status
Seismic testing abandoned by TGS
Environmental plans changed to improve protections for marine life

EDO supported six community organisations opposed to the negative environmental impacts of offshore seismic testing in the Otway Basin. We assisted these organisations to understand the complex environment plans that must be produced by oil and gas companies before they can commence work.

With EDO's help, communities were equipped with the knowledge to meaningfully participate in the decision-making process for these projects. This means they were able to ask tough questions of the oil and gas companies and the regulator, the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) to ensure that if the seismic testing did go ahead, the environmental impacts were minimised.

Why we're doing this work

Seismic testing surveys can harm marine animals and the ability to predict the impacts of the testing is still very limited. In order to conduct the surveys, air guns are used to generate sound signals.

This intense noise can be detected thousands of kilometres from the source in marine environments by whales and dolphins, which are highly sensitive to sound.

Seismic blasting can damage the hearing of marine animals, reduce their ability to communicate through electro-frequencies, increase stress, displace them from their normal habitats, and cause physical injury and death.

One of the surveys was proposed to occur over 400 days and cover more than 31,000km², with the air gun potentially blasting 24 hours a day.

The impact of our work

In a victory for the community and marine life, plans to conduct seismic testing in the ecologically sensitive Otway Basin, off the Victorian coast, were abandoned by energy data company TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company.

The environment plan for the TGS seismic survey, which would have been the largest seismic survey in Australian history, was withdrawn from consideration by NOPSEMA and marked as "cancelled" on the NOPSEMA website.

Community groups were also successful in having changes made to other environment plans to improve protections for marine life. For example, following feedback from community groups, one plan was amended to increase the distance of exploration activities from Deen Maar/Lady Julia Percy Island off the southern coast of Victoria, an Australian sea lion and Australian fur seal colony. The important amendments also ensured that testing would not occur during January to March, which are lactating and pup feeding periods for sea lions and fur seals and the peak period for pygmy blue whale presence.



Supporting water justice

We worked with our clients to secure equitable access to pollution-free freshwater for communities to live well, and for First Nations peoples to maintain cultural responsibilities.

We supported frontline communities to fight for readily available access to high-quality drinking water and to prevent pollution of our freshwater systems.

We advocated for increased legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' water rights, aligning with principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and community understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing water.



Macquarie Marshes protected from mineral exploration

Location
Central West NSW

First Nations place name
Traditional Wayilwan name for the Macquarie Marshes is Maliyanga ngurra, which means “eagle’s camp” or “morning star’s camp”

Client
Graziers Garry and Leanne Hall

Opponents
Inflection Resources and Australian Consolidated Gold Holdings Pty Ltd

Status
Exploration licence withdrawn

The Macquarie Marshes in Central West NSW are such an important breeding ground for waterbirds that they were one of the first sites in Australia listed under the Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetlands of international significance.

The marshes cover an area of almost 200,000ha, but only about 20,000ha are fully protected with a Ramsar listing. That smaller area supports waterbird populations of 20,000 in regular years and more than 500,000 during large floods. The marshes are a breeding site for 16 colonial nesting waterbird species, including large numbers of cormorants, herons, ibises and spoonbills.

In 2021, family farmers Garry and Leanne Hall approached EDO for help after they became aware of plans by a Canadian mining company, Inflection Resources, to explore for gold on their property.

The Halls were concerned exploratory drilling would permanently harm the sensitive wetland ecosystems by disrupting the natural flow and flooding patterns.

Over three years, EDO helped the Halls engage with the consent authority, the NSW Resources Regulator, to obtain details of the proposed drilling and alert the authorities to the risks those activities posed in such a sensitive ecosystem.

After EDO’s intervention, the developer withdrew its application, but the wetlands came under threat again in 2024 from a similar proposal by Australian Consolidated Gold Holdings, a subsidiary of Inflection Resources.

In April 2024, the regulator approved the application, wrongly finding drilling would not occur in an area of high biodiversity.

The Halls again asked for EDO’s help. We provided advice and engaged an ecologist who confirmed drilling would indeed have a significant impact. The drilling licence was subsequently withdrawn.

Why we’re doing this work

The Macquarie Marshes are one of only 66 sites in Australia listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Significance.

They are vital habitat for wildlife in the Murray-Darling Basin, but they are under threat from mineral exploration.

Ecologists have recorded a crash in waterbird numbers, and the size and health of the marshes has declined over several decades.

Under these circumstances, it is vital that landholders like the Halls have access to EDO’s legal assistance so they can assert their rights and resist damaging developments that threaten priceless ecological treasures like the Macquarie Marshes.

The impact of our work

Drilling in the Macquarie Marshes not only threatened to disturb the hydrology of that delicate ecosystem, it could have opened the door to full-scale mining operations.

The NSW planning system and the regulations governing mineral exploration are highly technical.

It is extremely daunting for most people to assert their rights and to navigate the system without the support of specialist lawyers.

If the Halls had not been able to access legal advice from EDO’s experts, the developer would likely have started drilling, presenting a significant new threat to the already ailing wetland ecosystem.



“The support and guidance available to us from the EDO was the main factor that we were successful with the case. Without the EDO it’s likely that there would be exploration drilling within the Macquarie Marshes right now.”

Garry Hall, farmer and private Ramsar site manager

The battle to protect the world-renowned Mataranka Springs

Location
Elsey National Park,
Mataranka, NT

First Nations place name
Traditional Owners of the land covered by the Mataranka Water Allocation Plan include the Mangarayi, Yangman, Wumbalayn and Jawoyn peoples, and other traditional owners

Client
The Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT)

Opponent
The Northern Territory Government

Court
Northern Territory Supreme Court

Case status as of 30 June 2025
Hearing listed for 25 November 2025

EDO is representing the Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) in the Northern Territory Supreme Court where they are challenging the Mataranka Water Allocation Plan, which could have devastating impacts on one of the most important free-flowing tropical rivers in Northern Australia.

Declared in 2024 under the *Water Act 1992 (NT)*, the plan determines how much water is available for allocation to domestic use, stock, agriculture, industry, and the environment.

This plan covers groundwater resources for 9,282km² within the larger Daly Roper Beetaloo water control district, an area of 330,000km². The plan area includes the internationally renowned Mataranka Springs, located at the headwaters of the Roper River.

While the plan allows over 62,000 megalitres of water to be extracted each year, just 30 megalitres per year has been allocated to the environment.

Our client, the ECNT, is taking action to hold the government to account for a decision they say did not have proper regard to the potential negative impacts for ecosystems and wildlife that rely on the aquifer for their survival.

“We are taking this action not just to protect some of the Territory’s most iconic and loved waterways but also to hold the government to account and to ensure it makes decisions based on science.”

Kirsty Howey, ECNT Executive Director

Why we’re doing this work

Both the Mataranka Springs and the Roper River are fed by the Tindall Limestone Aquifer.

The Mataranka Water Allocation Plan permits the yearly extraction of enough water from the aquifer to fill more than 24,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Our client is concerned the minister lacked vital data about what is required to maintain the health of aquatic ecosystems when he signed off on the plan.

Even more critically, the volume of water provided to the environment under the plan does not appear to be based on evidence about what’s needed to sustain these precious ecosystems.

The impact of our work

When decisions like these threaten Australia’s most precious ecosystems, independent legal advocacy often becomes the last line of defence.

Without appropriate allocation of water for the environment, flows to the Mataranka Springs and Roper River and the habitats of plants and animals are jeopardised.

People from all over the world come to the breathtakingly beautiful springs to swim in crystal-clear warm waters. But they’re also home to many important species, including the threatened freshwater sawfish.

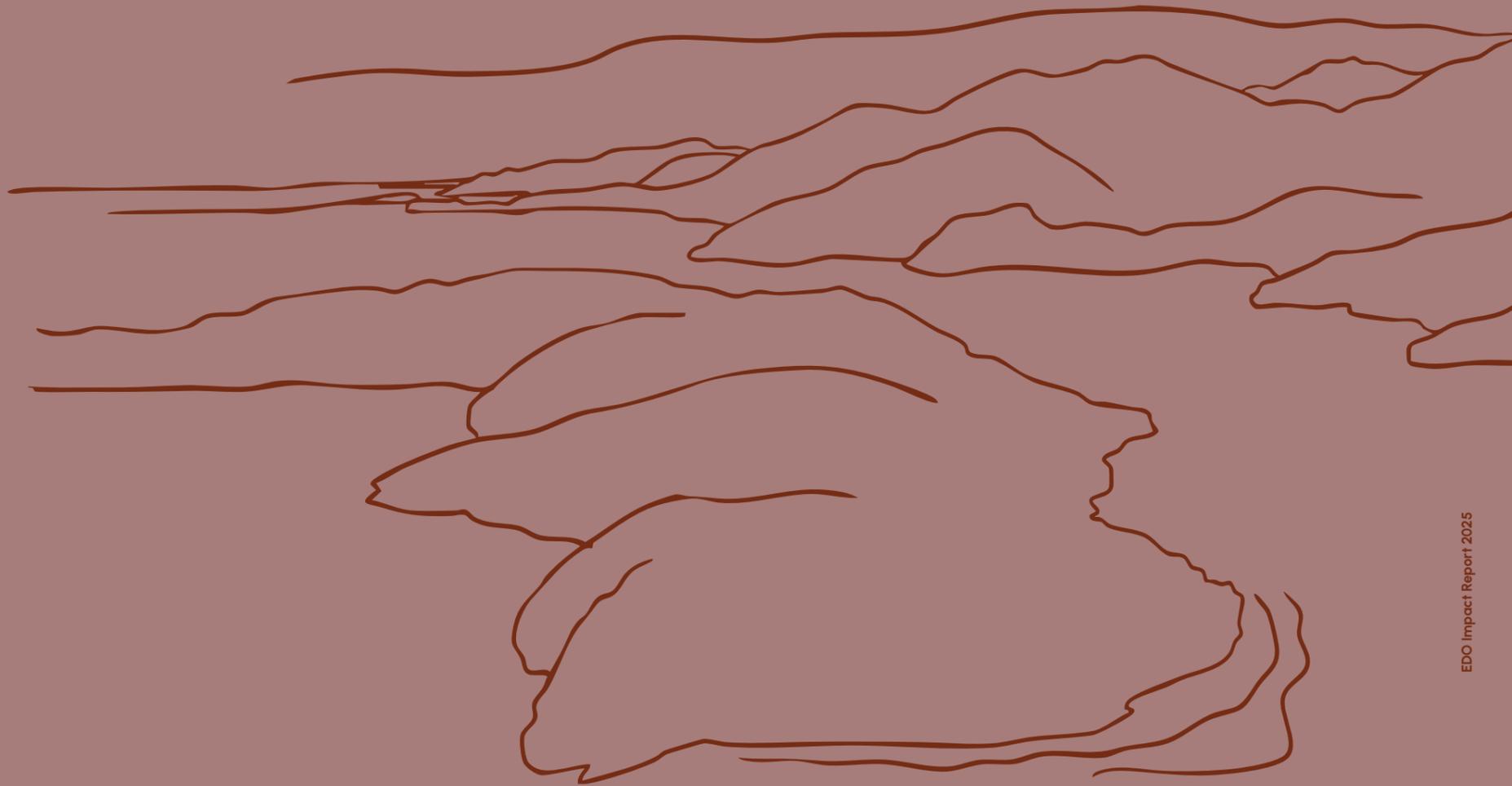
It is critical that decisions about the allocation of precious water resources in the Northern Territory are transparent and based on science.

First Nations and Indigenous peoples' program

We worked to support First Nations and Indigenous communities in preserving and protecting their cultural heritage as they deem fit.

We provided First Nations and Indigenous communities with access to legal advice, education and representation to fight for the protection of their cultural heritage, and to hold those who damage, destroy or desecrate cultural heritage accountable.

We advocated for cultural heritage reform across Australia and the Pacific to improve the rights of First Nations and Indigenous communities to defend cultural heritage and challenge Western notions of cultural heritage.



PNG communities fight deep-sea waste dumping

Location

Huon Gulf, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea

Client

Three village communities (Labu Butu, Wagang, and Yanga) represented by Centre for Environment Law and Community Rights (CELCOR)

Opponent

Papua New Guinea's Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority (CEPA), Newmont Corporation and Harmony Gold Ltd

Court

Supreme Court of PNG

Case status as of 30 June 2025

Awaiting judgment

We partnered with the Centre for Environment Law and Community Rights (CELCOR) to support three Papua New Guinea communities challenging the government's approval of a controversial deep-sea waste disposal plan. The case relates to the proposed Wafi-Golpu copper and gold mine, partly owned by companies based in the US and South Africa. The operation intends to dump 360 million metric tons of mining waste into the Huon Gulf over the mine's 28-year lifespan.

The companies propose using deep-sea tailings placement (DSTP), pumping mining waste through a 103km pipeline to discharge 200m underwater, less than a kilometre offshore. This would occur in the Coral Triangle, a global marine biodiversity hotspot, potentially affecting 400,000 people who depend on the gulf's marine resources for their livelihoods.

In December 2020, the PNG Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority approved the environmental impact statement despite an independent review finding the deep sea would be more biodiverse than reported and more sediment would remain suspended in the water column than companies claimed. Communities filed legal challenges in 2021, arguing they weren't adequately informed of DSTP risks and that the permit violated PNG's *Environment Act (2002)*.

EDO provided support to CELCOR in strengthening its clients' legal arguments on environmental protection, community consultation requirements, and the scientific uncertainties surrounding deep-sea waste disposal in this ecologically sensitive region.

Why we're doing this work

This case represents a critical test of environmental justice in the Pacific region, where mining companies often propose practices banned in their home countries. Currently, six of seven mines worldwide using submarine waste disposal are in PNG, while none operate in South Africa or the US where the Wafi-Golpu partners are based. The case highlights the double standard where strong environmental regulations protect developed nations while developing countries bear the environmental risks.

With limited scientific understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and DSTP impacts, rigorous assessment is critical to avoid potential risks. Success in this case could set legal precedents discouraging similar environmentally destructive projects across the Pacific region.

The impact of our work

Our partnership with CELCOR has elevated international attention on deep-sea tailings disposal, contributing to growing global opposition to this practice. Our scientific expertise helped strengthen legal arguments about biodiversity risks and consultation failures. The case also prompted a 2022 human rights complaint to the Australian National Contact Point governing OECD guidelines on conduct of foreign companies. Regardless of the final outcome, our work has empowered local communities to challenge powerful multinational corporations and demonstrated that rigorous legal advocacy can hold governments accountable for environmental decisions affecting future generations.



Case prompts minister to concede water plan made unlawfully

Client

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN)

Opponents

Commonwealth Environment Minister, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the state of NSW

Court/regulator

Federal Court of Australia

Case status as of

30 June 2025

Decision pending

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan 2012 requires Indigenous organisations to be consulted when basin states prepare water resource plans (WRPs) that set rules for managing water at a local and catchment level.

WRPs are prepared by basin states (Vic, ACT, SA, NSW & Qld), assessed by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, and accredited by the Commonwealth Water Minister.

The Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), a confederation of southern basin nations that advocates for water rights and justice, believes the NSW Fractured Rock Water Resource Plan was unlawfully accredited by the former Federal Environment Water Minister (Tanya Plibersek) in November 2022 because of alleged multiple failures in the First Nations consultation process.

MLDRIN also argues the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's recommendation that the minister accredit the plan was unlawful, for the same reasons.

Our client has also argued the minister's accreditation was unlawful because the former minister did not have the WRP in front of her when she accredited it. The minister has now conceded this.



Besides seeking to have the plan ruled invalid, MLDRIN hopes the court will clarify what constitutes adequate First Nations consultation under the Basin Plan and the Commonwealth *Water Act*.

If our client is successful, the minister will have to reconsider whether to accredit the water resource plan.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority may also need to reconsider its decision to recommend accreditation.

If successful, MLDRIN will call on NSW to consult all basin nations properly to ensure its water plans meet Basin Plan requirements.

With the Basin Plan due for review in 2026, a ruling on consultation requirements may prove to be very important.

The case has also raised important questions about First Nations' cultural knowledge being publicly divulged through court processes.

The Commonwealth parties tendered into evidence copies of 25 First Nations consultation reports that were relevant to the NSW Fractured Rock WRP.

MLDRIN sought to resist their tender but was unsuccessful.

Our client therefore applied for suppression orders to ensure First Nations cultural knowledge does not become publicly accessible as a result of this case.

The Federal Court of Australia conducted a two-day hearing on this matter in February 2025 and a decision is expected later this year.

Why we're doing this work

Basin Nations have a cultural and moral obligation to care for Country, including waterways.

First Nations people have successfully cared for rivers and groundwater systems, and the interconnected ecosystems that depend on them, for thousands of years.

That record of stewardship stands in stark contrast to the severe ecological degradation across the basin since colonisation.

This case seeks to achieve some measure of water justice for First Nations and support their efforts to restore Country to health.

To be able to do that, effective participation of basin nations must be embedded in the water regulation framework.

Proper consultation is only a starting point, but it is critical that this foundational process is undertaken properly.

“The minister’s failure to lawfully accredit the WRP has led to First Nations feeling that our rights and interests are no more than a ‘tick-and-flick’ process, just as they were under the previous Coalition government.”

Brendan Kennedy, MLDRIN Chair

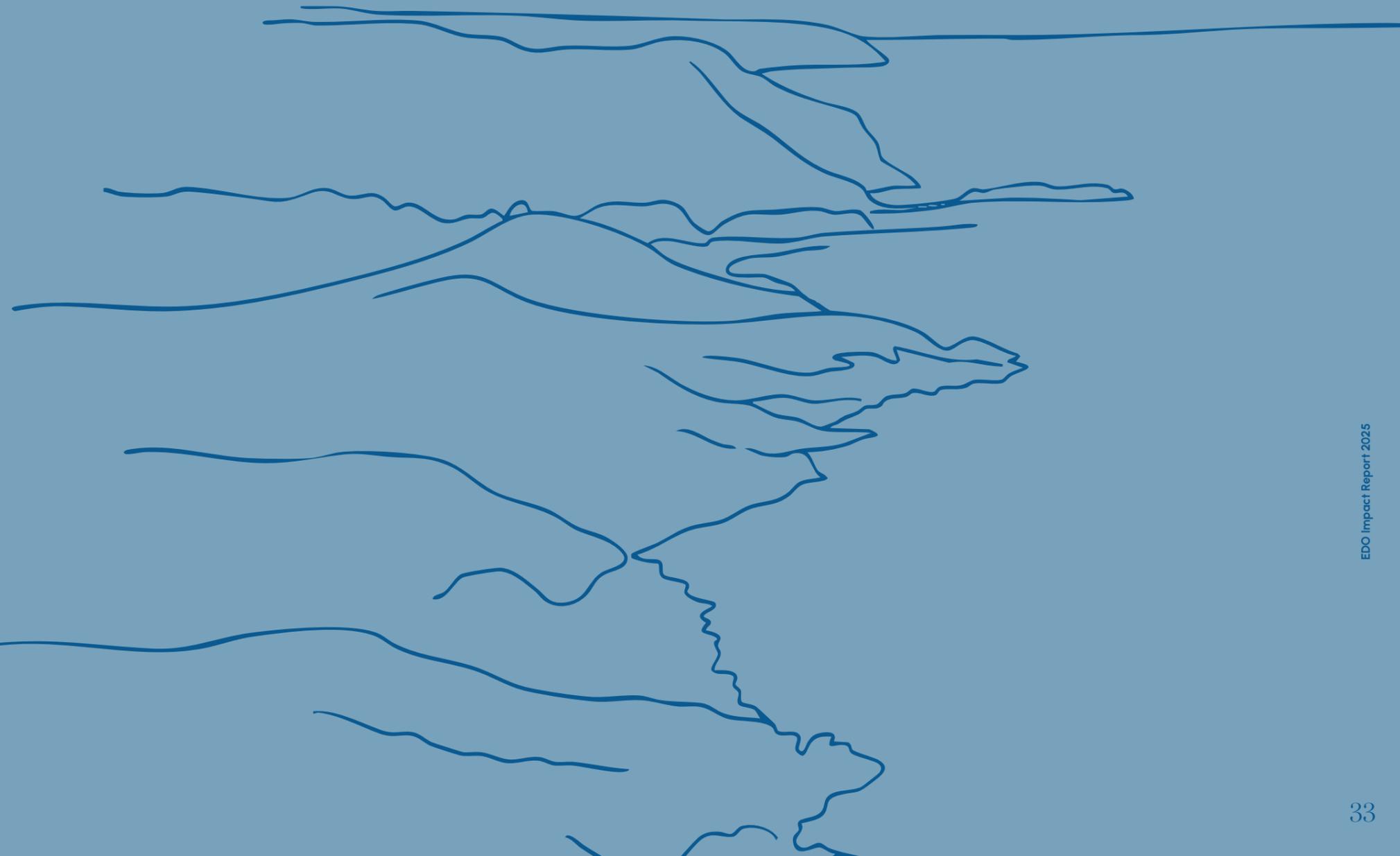
Reform of laws, systems and structures

Reform of Australia's most important nature legislation, the EPBC Act, remains a key focus of EDO's work.

The Federal Government's Nature Positive laws stage two were passed by the House of Representatives in July 2024 but failed to pass the Senate in early 2025. A small amendment in a separate Bill was instead passed to limit the power to request reconsideration of approvals. This was designed to limit any impacts to the operation of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour in Tasmania as a result of a reconsideration request seeking to address concerning environmental outcomes of this industry. The Federal Labor Government was returned in the May election and a new version of the laws, under the oversight of a new Environment Minister, are expected to be tabled later in the year.

It's essential that reform of the EPBC Act delivers on the core principles of stronger environmental protection, and greater accountability and transparency in environmental decision-making.

EDO's law reform and policy experts will continue to scrutinise proposed legislation, advocate for much needed improvements and advise the community on how to effectively participate in the reform process.



South Australia establishes its first Biodiversity Act

Location
SA

Status
Bill passed into law; transition to the new legislation will take place over the next two years

Over the past two years, EDO's policy, law reform and science experts have been working to support the development of South Australia's *Biodiversity Act 2025* – a piece of legislation that brings together existing laws, formalises policies and processes, and introduces new mechanisms to protect the state's biodiversity.

This work has been wide-ranging and included participation in workshops with the South Australian Department of Environment and Water, contributions to discussion papers, and providing detailed analysis and advice to stakeholders.

In January 2025, the government released a draft version of the Bill, providing a window for public consultation and comment.

As part of this process, we made recommendations for improving both the architecture and drafting of the Bill and strengthening the substantive provisions to ensure an effective legal framework that would deliver improved outcomes for biodiversity.

We also played a role in helping South Australian environment groups to navigate the often-complex Bill and the key proposals it would introduce – informing their own analysis and responses.

Ultimately, the Bill passed by the parliament contained many positive changes reflecting stakeholder feedback, including recommendations made by EDO.

Why we're doing this work

The introduction of a modernised and strengthened legal framework for biodiversity conservation in South Australia is welcome, but it is important that the framework and policy settings are right from the outset.

Initial drafts of the Bill fell short of delivering the strong legal framework needed to conserve ecosystems, safeguard threatened species and ecological communities, and prioritise biodiversity recovery.

It is also important to ensure proper scrutiny is given to consolidated and streamlined provisions to ensure there are no inadvertent errors or unintended outcomes.

The impact of our work

South Australia's new *Biodiversity Act* will be gradually implemented over the next two years, as subordinate regulations and policies needed to support the new Act are developed.

The Act includes improved protections for native plants, animals and ecosystems, while also helping to address climate change and its impacts. There are greater critical habitat protections; a legislated process for listing threatened species and threatened ecological communities; and broader provisions allowing persons to enforce the Act.

There are also stronger laws to prevent damage to the environment and tougher penalties for those who cause environmental harm.

EDO will continue to engage on the implementation of the Bill to ensure the South Australian Government delivers a framework that halts biodiversity decline and conserves and restores nature.





Board

Chair

Brent Wallace FAICD

BA Commerce (Marketing),
Monash University

Executive Director, Founder
and Partner, Fiftyfive5
(Part of Accenture Song)

Former Non-Executive Board
Director and Chair Blackmores Ltd
Former Board Director and current
Governor Worldwide Fund for Nature
(WWF Australia)

Former Managing Director
Ogilvy & Mather Australia
Appointed 21/05/2020
Appointed Chair 20/06/2024

Deputy Chair

Phil Vernon

Director Futurity Investment Group
Director Stroke Foundation
Director B Lab Australia &
New Zealand

Former Managing Director
Australian Ethical Investment
Fellow, Australian Institute
of Company Directors
Fellow, Chartered Accountants, ANZ
Appointed 06/09/2019

Dr Rachel Eberhard

Retired 29/03/2025

Scott Franks

CEO Yarrowalk Pty Ltd
CEO Yamari Ochre Signs
CEO Tocomwall
Firefighter, NSW Rural Fire Service
Former Chairperson, Wonnarua
Local Aboriginal Lands Council
Appointed 20/12/2022

Dr Kate Galloway AM

Retired 12/12/2024

Prof Emerita Dr Lesley Hughes

PhD Ecology, Macquarie University
Member Climate Change Authority
Member Wentworth Group
of Concerned Scientists
Councillor and Director
Climate Council of Australia
Councillor Biodiversity Council
Appointed 24/11/2022

Ganur Maynard

BA (History, Hons) & LLB (Hons),
University of New South Wales

Lawyer, North Australian
Aboriginal Justice Agency
Former Associate, Federal Court
of Australia

Former Lawyer, Herbert Smith Freehills
Kamilaroi man
Appointed 23/11/2023

Deborah Nesbitt

MA International Law,
Australian National University
Former EDO ACT Deputy Chair
and Public Officer

Founding Member Australian
Asia-Pacific Media Initiative
Former Australian Correspondent,
Bloomberg Law/Environment
Former Editor Thomson Reuters,
Environmental Manager & Carbon
Extra news services

Former Exec Producer/broadcaster
ABC Parliamentary Bureau, RN, RA,
Triple J, ACT and NT news
Appointed 24/11/2022

Talei Richards

BA Social Science &
International Studies, University
of Technology Sydney

LLB, Macquarie University
Director Community Development,
the Scanlon Foundation

Former Portfolio Manager – Fiji,
International Women's
Development Agency

Former Deputy Associate,
Federal Circuit Court of Australia
Fijian/i-Taukei woman
Appointed 23/11/2023

Sarah Southwell

MA Commerce, University
of Wollongong

Former General Manager
Human Resources, GrainCorp
Appointed 02/02/2023

The Hon. Alan Wilson KC

Former barrister

Former judge of the District Court,
Planning and Environment Court,
and Supreme Court of Queensland

First President of QCAT
Adjunct Professor, Griffith Law School
Appointed 05/07/2024

First Nations Strategic Advisory Group

Conrad Bilney

Retired 23/06/2025

Jayne Christian

Burrumbidgee, Dharug (NSW)

Scott Franks

Wonnarua (NSW)

Harold Ludwick

Retired 18/10/2024

Waniki Maluwapi

Malu Kiwai, Boigu Island, Zenadh Kes
(Torres Strait Islands) and Papuan

Staff

David Morris Chief Executive Officer
Nicole Sommer Principal Lawyer

Corporate Commercial

Amanda Peng Graduate Solicitor
Amelia Smillie Paralegal*
Asha Keane Senior Solicitor
Clare Saunders Solicitor
Jedda Elliott Solicitor
Kirsty Ruddock Managing Lawyer
Selma Burek-Celejewska Legal Administrator*
Tracey Lynch Senior Solicitor*
Zoe Bush Senior Solicitor*

Early Legal Interventions

Belinda Rayment Special Counsel
Christina Meyers Graduate Solicitor
Jemilah Hallinan Deputy Director, Early Legal Interventions
Joanna Maier Solicitor
Jordan Clarke Paralegal, National Intake Service
Justine Emerson National Intake Coordinator
Kirstiana Ward Managing Lawyer, Early Legal Interventions

Finance & Operations

Alex Ariti IT Officer
Andre Breitenstein Grant Administration Lead*
Bao Ngo Finance Administrator*
Blake Powell Director
Bronwyn Bell National Operations Coordinator*
Catheryn Cheetham Head of Accreditation & Compliance
Eamon Fraser-Crooks Senior IT Manager
Jecelyn Anjani Financial Controller
Maha Khan Finance Administrator
Maria Bautista Finance Administrator
Nici McCann Head of People & Culture
Premala Myooran Finance Manager
Sabahat Saifurrehman People & Culture Officer

Shovita Sharma Finance & Payroll Administrator
Shwe McManus Grant Finance Lead*
Toni-Lee Simons Financial Controller*

First Nations Program

Casey Kickett Director, First Nations & Pasifik Programs
Emily Long Special Counsel
Harriet Ketley Deputy Director, Country & Cultural Heritage
Mollie O'Connor Solicitor*
Nadja Zimmermann Senior Solicitor
Troy Leishman First Nations Justice Administrator

Fundraising, Marketing & Communications

Aaron Lamb Director*
Annemarie Kohn Head of Philanthropy*
Ingrid Neilson Acting Head of Philanthropy
Isabelle Tawil Philanthropy Supporter Specialist
Jacqueline Boyce Head of Marketing & Media
James Tremain Senior Marketing & Media Specialist
Jessica Xavier Content Specialist
Lucy Fahey Creative Lead
Melissa Chungue Philanthropy Communications Specialist
Mhairi McClymont Director
Mia Lumb Senior Donor Communications & Bequests Specialist
Ryan Mason Philanthropy Communications Specialist
Sylvie Huot Supporter Care & CRM Administrator
Thomas Trumble Head of Data & Insights
Vanessa Bartholomew Growth Specialist

Legal Practice

Heather McGiddy Head of Legal Systems & Innovation

National Litigation Team

Brendan Dobbie Deputy Director, Litigation
Emma Buckley-Lennox Solicitor*
Jayme Cooper Senior Solicitor
Joshua Paveley Senior Solicitor
Maria Wilson Legal Administrator
Natasha Maugueret Special Counsel

Office of the CEO

Jo-Anne Bragg General Counsel
Tracy Stubbs EA to CEO & Board Secretariat

Pasifik Program

Bal Kama Managing Lawyer
Freda Talao Head of Pasifik Program*
Julie Melrose Special Counsel
Melanie Montalban Special Counsel*
Tinema Kiage Paralegal

Policy & Law Reform

Briana Collins Solicitor*
Cerin Loane Special Counsel
Frances Medlock Senior Solicitor
Rachael Chick Senior Solicitor
Rachel Walmsley Deputy Director
Revel Pointon Managing Lawyer

Region NSW/ACT

Anita O'Hart Special Counsel*
Grace Huang Solicitor
Isobel Brinin Senior Solicitor
Jasper Brown Solicitor
Natalie Vella Special Counsel
Nina Lucas Special Counsel
Rana Koroglu Managing Lawyer
Rebekah Ackerman Senior Legal Administrator

Region NT/SA

Elanor Fenge Managing Lawyer
Jordina Rust Special Counsel
Kerry Keightley Legal Administrator
Natalie Czapski Senior Solicitor*
Rufus Coffield-Feith Senior Solicitor

*Left EDO before June 30, 2025



Sarah Flynne Memorial Scholarship

The Sarah Flynne Memorial Scholarship honours the life and work of former EDO lawyer, Sarah Flynne.

It is a joint initiative between EDO and the Flynne family, with support from the Australian Environment and Planning Law Group of the Law Council of Australia. Its purpose is to carry on Sarah's commitment to environmental law by removing a barrier to entry into the legal profession for young people from a rural, regional, or remote area, and fostering a passion within them for public interest environmental law. The scholarship is open to any law graduate under the age of 25 from a regional or remote part of Australia. Its purpose is to allow for travel and accommodation while undertaking Practical Legal Training with EDO in one of our offices.

In 2023 the inaugural scholarship was awarded to Kashmir Miller from South Gundurimba on Bundjalung Country in northern NSW, for her commitment and passion for environmental justice and her active work in the community on climate and environmental democracy issues. In 2024 the scholarship was awarded to Victoria Vega Garcia, from Darumbal Country, for her lived experience growing up in a regional area that had instilled an innate connection to nature, fostering a profound understanding of the challenges faced by remote communities. Our 2025 scholarship recipient is Alessandra Monaghan who will be based in our Gadi office and has previously been named the top student in Environmental Law at the University of Otago. Alessandra has a deep commitment to environmental justice having previously worked with two marine conservation organisations and at a community legal centre.

Recognition, Awards and Achievements

EDO nominated Special Counsel Ruby Hamilton for the prestigious Mahla Pearlman AO Young Australian Environmental Lawyer of the Year Award in May 2025.

Mollie O'Connor, Solicitor in EDO's First Nations Program, was one of the first two recipients of the inaugural First Nations Environmental Law Bursary administered by the National Environmental Law Association and Ngalaya.

Dr Bal Kama, Managing Lawyer of EDO's Pasifik Program published a book titled, *Rethinking Judicial Power in Papua New Guinea: A Mandate for Activism in a Transformative Constitution*.

Region QLD

Ahmed Faisal Legal Administrator
Andrew Kwan Managing Lawyer
Dylan Orsborn Special Counsel (safe climate)
Karen Cutler Legal Practice Quality & Training Lead*
Maeve Parker Senior Solicitor
Marie Short Legal Administrator*
Naim Santoso Senior Solicitor
Thomas Robson Solicitor

Region TAS/Vic

Akanksha Falor Legal Administrator
Claire Bookless Managing Lawyer*
James Johnson Special Counsel
Talia Slonim Solicitor

Region WA

Jessica Border Managing Lawyer
Katherine Evans Solicitor
Liam Carmody Legal Administrator & Paralegal
Ruby Hamilton Senior Solicitor

Science & Expert Advisory

Charlotte Stalvies Scientific Officer
Krystyna Saunders Scientific Officer
Margaret Shanfield Scientific Officer*
Ropa Moyo Scientific Officer
Sharyn Goldstien Deputy Director



Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace

The Environmental Defenders Office is recognised as a Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace through Mental Health First Aid Australia, acknowledging EDO's achievements in developing mental health first aid skills in our people and embedding a sustainable and effective mental health program. EDO ran Mental Health First Aid refresher training in 2024 to ensure all line managers and Mental Health Ambassadors were accredited with mental health first aid training.



WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AUSTRALIA

Women's Environmental Leadership Australia – National Leadership Program

Women make up the majority of our executive leadership and practice managers at EDO, and we are committed to developing our talented women further by offering scholarships in the Women's Environmental Leadership Australia's (WELA) National Leadership Program.

Three outstanding members of the EDO team participated in the 2025 program: Deputy Director of Policy and Law Reform Rachel Walmsley; Managing Lawyer for Northern Territory and South Australia Elanor Fenge; and Science Officer Dr Ropa Moyo.

WELA's program is for women and gender diverse changemakers who want to accelerate positive transformation for our environment and climate.

Workplace Gender Equality

The Environmental Defenders Office recognises the importance of supporting diversity within our workforce, including with regard to gender. In accordance with the requirements of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, EDO has lodged its 2023-24 Public Report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

During 2024-25 women represented 45% of the EDO Board, and 82% of the staff.

Counsel

Sarah Andrews
Andrew Berger KC
Christopher Beshara
Natalie Blok
Zoe Bush
Patricia Cahill SC
Natasha Case
Patrick Coleridge
Anais D'Arville
Robert Dick SC
Georgia Dobbyn
Anna Elizabeth
Jerome Entwisle
Kathleen Foley SC
Juliet Forsyth SC
Stephen Free SC
Natasha Hammond
Sebastian Hartford-Davis
Jim Hartley
Dr Laura Hilly
David Hume
Noel Hutley SC
Eleanor Jones
Bora Kaplan SC
Georgia Kiss
Richard Lancaster SC
Clare Langford
Andrew Mason
Kasey McAuliffe-Lake
Tony McAvoy SC

Matthew McDermott
Dr Chris McGrath
Sophie Molyneux
Kate Morgan SC
Dr Julian Murphy
Rohan Nanthakumar
Emrys Nekvapil SC
Meg O'Brien
Tom Pontré
Anya Poukchanski
Matthew Pudovkis
Hannah Ryan
Dr Laura Schuijers
Mark Seymour SC
Naomi Sharp SC
Matt Sherman
Lauren Sims
James Stoller
Christopher Taylor-Burch
MatthiasThompson
Daniel Tynan
Julia Wang
Denika Whitehouse
Peter Willis SC
Chris Young KC

Firms

Chalk & Behrendt
Gilbert & Tobin
Holding Redlich
King & Wood Mallesons
Lander & Rogers
Lavan
Maurice Blackburn
Norton Rose Fulbright
Viridis Legal
Williams Roberts

Independent experts

Professor Russell Babcock
Professor Hilary Bambrick
Associate Professor
Fiona Beck
Professor Nathan Bindoff
Dr Michael Bode
Mr Tim Buckley
Rod Campbell
Anthony Coleman
Professor Mathew Crowther
Professor Matthew Currell
Dr Jon Day
Dr Romy Greiner
Rachel Hamilton
Dr Clint Hansen
Wendy Hawes
Nicki Hutley
Professor Tom Kompas
Dr Kellie Leigh,
Science for Wildlife
Professor Martine Maron
Dr Cherie McCullough
Lachlan McRae
Dr Tim Moore

Dr Michael Olsen
Steven Pells
Professor John Quiggin
Dr Saphira Rekker
Bruce Robertson
Dr Debbie Rosen
Professor Penny Sackett
Associate Professor
Robyn Schofield
Dr Amirhossein
Shadmehri Toosi
Professor Stephen Turton
Will van de Pol
Dr Benjamin Wagner
Professor Grant
Wardell-Johnson
Ariane Weiss
Rachel Wilson
Jack Wood

Volunteers

Practical Legal Training (PLT) Placements

Michael Beljak
Emma Bennet
Ena Kennedy Yoshitani
Kevin Liu
Hamish MacDonald
Jelena Rudd
Victoria Vega Garcia
Rohan Vodjdani
Ryan Vowles

Legal Student Clinical Volunteer Placements

Sebastian Adams
Laith Alsnih
Nathan Aylett
Paige Baker
Juliette Bechenec
Panna Biri
Joel Blackall
Adam Cook
Anna Champion
Annabelle Cleary
Ashleigh Carmody
Chantelle Carney
Indianna Diss
Maggie Dorey
Georgina Dwyer
Brendan Fitzgerald
Lucy Gabbay
Louise Galvin
Constance Gentner
Sarah Greaves
Penelope Hallam

Kristian Hutapea
Banipreet Kaur
Oscar Luke
Alicia Marsden
Courtney Mirupasi
Tully O'Neill-Jordan
Natalie Owen
Elle Park
Claire Steinemann
Beverley Taylor
Nicolah Taylor
Dana Thomas
Austin Ward
Isaac Wilkins
Jessica Wytrychowski
Tao Zheng

Legal Student or Graduate Volunteers

Rasika Baig
Alex Battese
Zoe Bellos
Myles Bowes-Mckee
Alfred Brownell
Bram Burger
Annabelle Creer
Jack Crossan
Ruby Donald
Miranda Elyse Deal
Harrison Emery
Hannah Gallis
Olivia Gill
Stacey Gray
Shaun Guha
Laura Hall

Anna Harisson
Kim Hosking
Jiacheng Huang
Amelia Kamp
Sofia Kern
Ciara Leitch
Jasmine Lohman
Philippa Maguire
Alexander Matters
Georgia Naidu
Diana Oakes
Dominic Organ
Nicholas Radford
Georgia Rayle
Graeme Reid
Fabian Robertson
Christine Rowell
Jelena Rudd
Sejay Segal
Matilda Stinson
Issac Tan
Nieve Tobin
Ethan Tran
Julia Tyszkiewicz
Tatiana Valentim
Max Wagland
Kate Weir
Jemima Williamson-Wong
E Wen Wong
Henry Wynter
Abby Zappa

Legal Volunteers

Michael Bennett
Sylvia Capra
Talei Caucau
Kate Cockburn
Phillip Cornwell
Judith Geary
Joseph Lavelle Wilson
Timothy Lawson Lawson
James Mackay
Samuel Mather
Kenny Ng
Ariana Popal
Anna Simpson
Verity Smith
Katie Williams

Volunteers

Edward Butler
Jessica Inman-Hislop

Thank you

Jimmy Atkinson, Marrickville Legal Centre
Nessa Darcy, Women's Legal Service Queensland
Michele Kearns, Martin Place Chambers
Vasili Maroulis, Marrickville Legal Centre
Kelly Moore, Women's Legal Service Queensland
Elk the Label

With thanks to the artists whose photos you see in this report

Kate Trifo: front cover
Karen H Black: p5, 36
David Morris: p9
Greg Brave: p13
Johan Larson: p17
Rich Carey: p19
Dave Irving: p23
Rebecca Parker: p25
Marcus Wallis: p35
Daniel Clarke: p41
Caleb Russell: p47

The Environmental Defenders Office thanks the following people and foundations for their enduring commitment to our financial sustainability. We also extend our profound thanks for their friendship, trust and support.

Donors \$5,000+

Dean Apostolou
 Ceris and Mark Ash
 The Hon. Michael Barker KC
 Monique Bond
 Emerita Professor Chilla Bulbeck
 Jane & Stan Cajdler
 Sarah Charlton
 Richard de Nys
 Anne Marie Delahunt & Meg Clark
 Christine Galbraith
 Rachel & John Griffiths
 Chris & Gina Grubb
 Mark Harris & Lakshmi Kerr
 Bryan Havenhand & Anna Kaemmerling
 Peter Hudson OAM
 Dr David R Hunt
 Krups Family
 Jocelyn Luck
 Nell Macqueen
 Professor Louise Maple-Brown & Simon Niblock
 Cynthia Nadai

Donors \$1,000 - \$4,999

Dr Nick Abel
 Rousseau Anai
 Jonathan Banks
 Peter Barker
 Michael Barnes & Ingrid Neilson
 Dr Scott Bell
 James Bennett-Levy
 Roy Bishop
 Gabrielle Blackwell
 Rosemary Blemings
 Michael Boon
 Sarah Brenan
 John Burke
 Ashley Campbell
 Fiona Campbell
 Tom Campey
 Deb Cocks
 Heather Cole
 Carol & Christopher Collin
 Corinne & Bryan
 Phillip Cornwell AM
 Tui Couch & Colleen Boreham
 Peter Craw
 Maureen Davey
 Paul deFur
 Louise Denson
 Carol & Nicholas Dettmann
 Elizabeth Dudley-Bestow
 Emeritus Professor Dexter Dunphy AM
 Thomas Ebersoll
 David Evans

Robin Evans
 Melissa Fagan
 Diana Fallon
 Jenny Forster
 Edith Fry
 Kathleen Girdwood
 Vivienne Glance
 Alan Glover
 David Gobbett
 Russell Goldflam & Pip McManus
 Alistair Graham
 Dr Cecily Greaves
 Rachel & John Griffiths
 Dr Robyn Gulliver & Simon Jones
 Sylvia Hale
 Andrew Hall
 Julia Hall
 James Hansen
 Heidi & Paul Hardisty
 Anthony & Conny Harris
 Roy Harvey
 Murray Haseler
 Professor Melissa Haswell
 Libby Hepburn
 Alison Hetherington
 Michael & Ann Hewson
 Ian Hill
 Bill Holdsworth
 Glen Holmes
 Vivien Holmes
 Peter Homel & Louise Taggart

Donors \$1,000 - \$4,999

Dr Claire Hooper
 Greg Howell & Jenny Stonier
 Dr Fraser Imrie
 Carol Isaacs
 Rhonda James
 Ann Jarman
 Hubertus Jersmann
 Callan Khera
 Marnie Kikken
 Janine Kitson
 Elizabeth Kristensen
 Mark Lakewood
 Kimberly Lam
 Melinda Lambourne & Ahmet Bektas, Teros Australia
 Andrew Lamond
 Sharon Lane
 Alison Langlands
 Jonathon Larkin
 Arthur & Rosie Lathouris
 Caroline Lawrence
 John Lawrence
 Jane Lemann
 Rowan Logie
 Jane Long
 Amanda Lopez & Peter Crick
 Iain MacPhail
 Jannette & Peter Manins
 Andy Marr
 Helen Mason
 Alexandra Mateer
 Catherine McCarthy
 Angela Michaelis
 Jonathan Milford

Kate Moppett
 Paul Munro
 Vanessa Myer
 Greg & Annette Neill
 K.P. Neilson
 Anita & Patrick Oakley
 Shrike O'Malley
 Jennifer Peat
 William Pitt
 Jamie Pittock
 Dr Raewyn Porter
 Ralph Rallings
 Alison Reeve
 Daryl Reinke
 Prof Ben Richardson
 Margaret Robertson & Dr Roger Livsey
 Genevieve Robey
 David Robinson
 Eleanor Robinson
 Paul and Maggie Room
 David Rothfield
 Jim Roustas
 Kate Russell
 Susie Russell
 Kim Ryan
 Antonella Salpietro
 Matt Ditton & Clair Schultz
 Maria and Grahame Shelley
 Andy Simpson
 Carol Skinner
 Judy Slatyer
 Jeff Smith
 Judith Brett & Graeme Smith
 Lesley Smith

Tim Smith
 Beth Sprunt
 Anna Sri
 Professor John Storey
 Gillian Sudlow-Haynes & Brian Haynes
 Dianne Taylor
 David & Elizabeth Teather
 Horst Thiele
 Shaz Tinant
 Stephanie Tonkin
 Christine Trenorden
 Lennert Veerman
 Gabriella & Martin Veidt-Wiedmer
 Dan Vickers
 Joanna & Peter Voller
 Graham Ward
 Giz Watson
 Ariane Weiss
 Don and Rosie White
 Dr Belinda White
 Kathleen Patricia Williamsz
 William Wilson
 Jason Wu
 Vera Yee & Peter Krinks
 Jochen Zeil
 YiZhong Zhuang
 Guenter Zimmermann

We are very grateful to those supporters who gave other amounts, and to those who choose to remain anonymous.

Funders

2-APES Fund
ACME Foundation
Airteam Australia Pty Ltd.
Animal Happiness Manning & Mobile Vet
Australian Communities Foundation
Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation
Award Force
Barakee Foundation
Bluesand Foundation
Brennan Family Foundation
CBD Law Pty Ltd
Chey Family Trust
Colin & Barbara Hindmarsh
Community Impact Foundation
Crisp Nominees
David and Miriam Sitsky Foundation
Diversicon Environmental Foundation
Dr. Joan Staples and Barry Crisp
Dropbox Foundation
Dunglison Endowment
ELK
EM Horton Family Fund
Ershkigal Foundation
Ethinvest Foundation
Fairer Futures Fund, a subfund of Australian Communities Foundation
Futuru
Goodman Foundation
Graeme Wood Foundation
Grander's Trust
Groundswell Giving
Highfield Foundation
Illawong Fund
Joffe Family Foundation
Keith & Jeannette Ince Fund
KR Foundation
Lopez Investment Trust
Manyana Matters Environmental Association
Mary Maher Family Trust
Morris Family Foundation
Naylor Stewart Foundation
Norman Family Foundation
Now Public Transport Inc
Oceans 5
Orgill Family Foundation
Paddy Pallin Foundation
Purryburry Trust
Purves Environmental Fund
Queensland Environment Fund, a sub fund of Queensland Gives
Rawson Care Foundation
Red Parka
Schimann
Seeds for Life, part of the Community Impact Foundation
Sidney Myer Fund
Sisyphus Foundation
SM Robinson PAF
Stobart Strauss Foundation
Sustainable Solutions International Pty Ltd
Teros
The Angles Family Foundation
The Bimblebox Alliance
The EM Horton Family Fund
The Garry White Foundation
The George Lewin Foundation
The Kimberley Foundation
The Koorabup Trust
The Madden Sainsbury Foundation
The Orgill Family Foundation
The SM Robinson PAF
Thorpewood
Waverley Street Foundation
WPSQ - Upper Dawson

We wholeheartedly thank the anonymous foundations who also gave their support.

Government funding

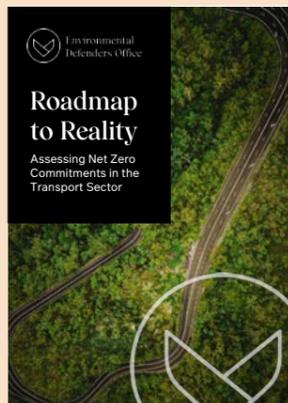
Australian Government – Department of Industry, Science and Resources
ACT Government – Justice and Community Safety Directorate
NSW Government – Legal Aid NSW, on behalf of the NSW Government and the Public Purpose Fund for the Community Legal Centres (CLC) Program in NSW
Northern Territory Government – Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
Queensland Government – Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Department of Environment and Science
Western Australian Government – Department of Justice

Reports & publications

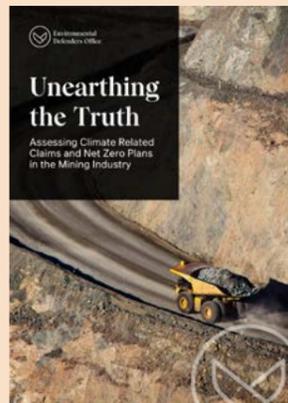
After auditing 30 companies, including some of the highest emitters in Australia's energy, mining and transport sectors, EDO analysis found that many fail to meet United Nations recommendations for legitimate net zero commitments.

EDO's three latest greenwashing reports audit the net zero commitments and climate-related claims made by 30 companies across Australia's energy, mining and transport sectors.

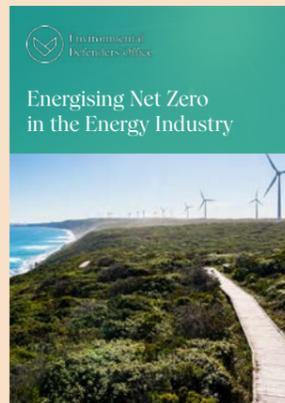
Our Corporate and Commercial Team assessed their claims against the principles and recommendations outlined by the UN High-Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities.



Roadmap to Reality:
Assessing Net Zero Commitments in the Transport Sector



Unearthing the Truth:
Assessing Climate Related Claims and Net Zero Plans in the Mining Industry



Energising Net Zero in the Energy Industry



Improving Coal Methane Regulation in NSW

The International Energy Agency has stated that the single most effective measure that can be taken now to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the near and medium term is to reduce methane emissions.

This report sets out a number of recommendations for the regulation of methane emissions from existing coal mines in NSW. Most of these recommendations can be implemented without any legislative change using statutory powers and the legal framework that is currently in place.



Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission

The Environmental Defenders Office Ltd (ABN 72 002 880 864) holds Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR1) status and is a registered charity under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth).

All donations made to the Environmental Defenders Office are made in the form of a gift, and donations \$2+ are tax-deductible.

Community Legal Centres Australia National Accreditation Scheme

The Environmental Defenders Office is an accredited community legal centre that was assessed under the National Accreditation Scheme (NAS) by CLCNSW. It continued to be certified during the 2023-24 financial year. The National Accreditation Scheme is an industry-based certification process that supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services. The NAS provides a quality assurance process that gives confidence that community legal centres are operating according to good practice and industry standards. The Environmental Defenders Office in Victoria has recently become a member of the Federation of Community Legal Centres in Victoria.



Equivalency Determination

The Environmental Defenders Office Ltd has been certified as equivalent to a US Certified Public Charity through NGOsource. EDO's Equivalency Determination certificate is valid until 30 June 2026 and can be accessed through the NGOsource repository www.ngosource.org

State and Territory Fundraising Legislation Requirements

As a national organisation, the Environmental Defenders Office conducts fundraising operations in all states and territories and holds the following licences:

New South Wales

Charitable Fundraising Act 1991
Charitable Fundraising Authority
Number 12837

Queensland

Collections Act 1966
Organisation Number CH3487

Tasmania

Collections for Charities Act 2001
Approval Number C/11237

Victoria

Fundraising Act 1998
Registration Number FR0015879

Western Australia

Charitable Collections Act 1946
Licence Number CC22957

South Australia

Collections for Charitable Purposes Act 1939
Licence not required

Northern Territory

Licence not required

Australian Capital Territory

Charitable Collections Act 2003
Licence not required

Liability of Members

As at 30 June 2025 the number of members was 43. In accordance with the constitution, if the company is wound up each member may be required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting the outstanding obligations of the company. Based on this number the total amount that members of the company would be liable to contribute is \$430 (2024: \$550).

“The support and guidance available to us from the EDO was the main factor that we were successful with the case. Without the EDO it’s likely that there would be exploration drilling within the Macquarie Marshes right now.”

Garry and Leanne Hall, farmers and private Ramsar site managers

Suite 8.02 Level 8, 6 O’Connell St,
Gadi/Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box 1105, Royal Exchange, NSW 1225

edo.org.au

FreeCall 1800 626 239

ABN 72002 880 864

Publication Date 26/11/25

 @environmentaldefendersoffice

 @environmentaldefendersoffice

 @environmentaldefendersoffice

 @environmentaldefendersoffice

 @EDOLawyers

 @EDOLawyers



Environmental
Defenders Office



To make a
donation please visit
edo.org.au/donate