

EDO ACT Newsletter



In This Issue

ACT NEWS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Community Consultation for Large Developments	3
Interim Review of the Plastic Shopping Bags Ban indicates that ‘Canberrans Approve’	3
ACT Government Online Interactive Maps Updated to Include Significant Plants and Animals	4
Green, Progressive and Proud: Shane Rattenbury	7
Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme has Commenced.....	5
Good News If You Like to Fish.....	5
Collaborating on Light Rail.....	6
Nearly Four Million Tonnes of Greenhouse Gas Emissions saved in the ACT.....	4
A Message for Auto-Dismantling and Recycling Businesses	7
NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION	8
Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project.....	8
Solar Thermal energy costs expected to halve: CSIRO	8
Coming Ready or Not: Managing Climate Risks to Australia’s Infrastructure.....	9
Case law update: Southern Highlands Coal v Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.....	9
COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS	10
Expert Panel Appointed to Assess Environmental Impacts of the Super Trawler	10
Coal Expansion Passed by Federal Environment Minister	10
Mining approved for the Tarkine.....	11
NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD	12
UN Environment Programme report on thawing permafrost	12
Rights of Nature case in Ecuador	12
Now for the downside of fracking.....	13
LAW REFORM AND POLICY	14
ACT Environmental Defenders Office Submissions	14
Draft Nature Conservation Strategy	14
Australian Network of Environmental Defenders Officer’s (ANEDO) Submissions	14

Submission on Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012.....	14
Submissions to the Extreme Weather Events Parliamentary Inquiry.....	14
Opportunities to Comment - ACT	15
Strategic assessment of urban development at Gungahlin, ACT.....	15
Proposed Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre	15
Opportunities to Comment – Commonwealth	16
Nominate a Species, Ecological Community or Key Threatening Process under the EPBC Act	16
Draft Environmental Water Recovery Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin	16
COAG’s Standing Council on Energy and Resources are seeking comment on the Draft National Harmonised Regulatory Framework for CSG.....	16
Inquiry into the Impacts on Health of Air Quality in Australia.....	16
Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mineral and Energy Resource Exploration	17
Referrals under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	17
EVENTS AND COMMUNITY NEWS	18
2012 National Environmental Law Association Conference	18
ACT Centenary Bioblitz on Black Mountain	18
HOPE Australia.....	18
Earth Hour 2013.....	19
SustainAbility Workshop Series	19
Earth Day 2013	19
Nominations for the Prime Minister’s Environmentalist of the Year and Young Environmentalist of the Year	20
Mahla Pearlman Oration	20
Government Sustainability Conference – Registration Open	20
ACT Conservation Council Trivia Night	21
Harvest Festival.....	21
Seminar: How binding are the EU’s ‘binding’ renewables targets?.....	22
Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas	22
The climateXchange Calendar	22
POSITIONS AVAILABLE	23
Environmental Defenders Office (NT) Inc - Principle Lawyer/CEO and Senior Education Lawyer.....	23
National Environmental Law Association Bulletin - volunteer contributors.....	23

ACT Environmental News

ACT NEWS

Community Consultation for Large Developments

New pre-Development Application (pre-DA) community consultation requirements for larger scale development proposals came into effect on 13 December 2012.

The new requirements are based on a 2010 trial community consultation process for certain larger development proposals. Proponents of development applications for these proposals have had to complete an approved form containing a community consultation summary and include this as part of the development application.

In December 2011, legislation was passed to mandate the pre-DA community consultation process and allowed a 12 month implementation period before commencement. The new requirements are now in force.

Pre-DA community consultation must be conducted when a development proposal triggers one or more of the following:

- the proposal is for a building for residential use with 3 or more storeys and 15 or more dwellings
- the proposal is for a building with a gross floor area of more than 5000m²
- the proposal is for a building or structure more than 25m above finished ground level
- the proposal is for a variation of a lease to remove its concessional status.

The proponent will determine the type of community consultation that they will complete. Development proposals in an industrial area are exempt as are proposals in certain developing areas.

Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

Interim Review of the Plastic Shopping Bags Ban indicates that 'Canberrans Approve'

The *Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010* (the Act) came into effect in the ACT on 1 November 2011 following a four-month transition period. The objective of the Act is to restrict the supply of single-use, lightweight plastic shopping bags in the Territory and encourage the up-take of re-usable shopping bags.

In November 2012 the Interim Review of the Plastic Shopping Bags Ban was released. The Review surveyed consumer attitudes towards the ban and determined whether consumer behaviour had changed to reduce bag usage.

The survey results indicate that the ban has changed consumer behaviour, with 84 per cent of primary shoppers now taking re-usable bags always or most of the time when they go to the supermarket. Prior to the ban only 44 per cent of shoppers were using their own bags.

The majority of primary shoppers (58 per cent) supported the ACT Plastic Bag Ban, 33 per cent did not and 9 per cent were still unsure. While the majority of shoppers from every age group supported the ban, the responses by age suggest that the younger people are, the more likely they are to support the ban.

The research indicates that people who support the ban do so due to concerns about the environment. On the other hand, people who object to the ban felt that it wasn't effective in reducing the incidence of plastic bags in the waste stream, it was inconvenient or objected to having to purchase bin liners to replace the shopping bags they previously used.

When asked if they'd prefer to have the ban overturned 70 per cent of ACT primary grocery shoppers disagreed. Further, two-thirds (66 per cent) of shoppers indicated that they would like the ban to be implemented nationally.

Follow this [link](#) to read the Report.

[Back to top](#)

ACT Government Online Interactive Maps Updated to Include Significant Plants and Animals

ACTMAPi is the ACT Government's interactive mapping service. Nine of the most commonly used maps - basic map; aerial photography; territory plan; land custodianship; development applications; survey infrastructure; community interests; lease variation charge; and significant plants and animals - are available [online](#). Members of the community can search the ACTMAPi for planning maps and associated information by block and section number, street address, division (suburb) or district names, or by places of interest.

The new version of ACTMAPi contains data on significant plants and animals, including threatened species and endangered ecological communities.

[Back to top](#)

Green, Progressive and Proud – Shane Rattenbury MLA

The ACT Conservation Council held a well-attended forum on the 20th February, with Minister Shane Rattenbury as their guest. Mr Rattenbury reflected upon his first 100 days holding the TAMS portfolio, where he is responsible for, among other things, land management in the ACT and its implications for biodiversity. Mr Rattenbury was positive about his first 100 days as the person who holds the balance of

power in the assembly, noting that it had a greater opportunity for stronger policies with respect to environmental conservation to be passed. He noted that “the Parliamentary Agreement which binds our Labor-Green Government for the next four years includes many Greens initiatives, including three which particularly relate to land management and biodiversity.”

The ACT Greens want to merge existing ACT conservation services into a single Conservation Agency to achieve better integration of biodiversity policy, planning, research and management. Mr Rattenbury has requested that resources are provided for five additional Park Rangers, and secured \$7 million over the next 4 years for nature park improvements. This will include improved pest plant and animal management; operational plans for all reserves; and more support for Park Care groups and restoration work.

Mr Rattenbury concluded by saying that he looks forward to developing policy that will enhance land management and biodiversity while ‘remaining aware that there are not unlimited resources and we will have to think smarter about how we get to the outcomes we want.’

[Back to top](#)

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme has Commenced

The Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) started on 1 January 2013. The EEIS sets a Territory-wide energy savings target and includes obligations for ACT electricity retailers to meet an individual Retailer Energy Savings Obligation (RESO).

The *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012* provides the legal framework for the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS). The Act contains the legal obligations and options that electricity retailers have under the scheme to meet their RESO, one of which is to undertake eligible energy savings activities. These activities are determined by the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development and must be carried out in accordance with codes of practice approved by the EEIS Administrator. Retailers incur penalties if they do not meet their targets. More information on the *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012* is available [here](#).

The EEIS will initially run until the end of 2015.

[Back to top](#)

Good News If You Like to Fish

On 8th January 2013, recreational fishers and the environment benefited from the release of 6000 Murray cod fingerlings into Gungahlin Pond, with another 100,000 golden perch being released in urban waterways in the weeks following.

The release of the native fish formed part of the ACT Fish Stocking Plan and involved the ACT Government, National Capital Authority and Canberra Fisherman's Club. About 1.5 million fish have been introduced to Canberra's lakes and ponds since the program started in the mid-1990s. Species for stocking are chosen following biennial fish surveys.

The Environment and Sustainable Development Acting Director-General, Ben Ponton, said that "stocking our lakes provides both environmental and recreation benefits by increasing the number of native fish in our waterways and giving Canberrans greater opportunities for fishing closer to home".

"The program supplements existing native fish populations, which are currently dominated by introduced species. Introducing native species makes for a more balanced ecosystem as the native fish will compete with pest carp and, when adults, may even eat small carp."

"The Murray cod should be the legal angling size for recreational fishing in three to four years and the golden perch in two to three years."

[Back to top](#)

Collaborating on Light Rail

Recently Canberra Loves 40% met with Simon Corbell and discussed a proposal for a collaborative rather than a consultant approach to the Capital Metro light rail transit (LRT) project. This approach would include an Enquiry by Design process which would enable better consultative design work given the broad impacts likely on Gungahlin and the inner north areas. It is also a way of quickly generating design solutions while incorporating the knowledge and interests of a diverse group of people. Click [here](#) for an example by the WA government.

The LRT project is more than just an infrastructure project, it is a transformational urban design project and an opportunity to design what a sustainable Canberra could look like. There is a wealth of knowledge and ideas in the community, and Canberra Love 40% believes the standard approach of consulting at the end of the process will neither tap into this community knowledge nor address the real concerns of the community. The opportunity to collaborate on this project could achieve a win-win for Government, the community and for business.

Canberra 40% had successfully lobbied for the 40% emission reduction for the ACT and has been given government funding to undertake a range of initiatives (now completed).

If you would like to have your say contact [Simon Corbell](#) MLA and ask for collaborative community engagement on the Capital Metro project. Click [here](#) for more information about the Light Rail project.

Nearly Four Million Tonnes of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Saved in the ACT

The Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC) has found that the ACT saved almost four million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the ACT greenhouse gas abatement scheme. The most recent ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2010, which was released late last year, notes that:

- ACT emissions in 2009-10 increased by about 3% following an increase in 2009 of about 1.3% and a small decline in 2008
- Total emissions of greenhouse gases were 37.5% greater than 1990 levels.
- Electricity consumption contributes to 63% of our total emissions.
- Per capita emissions peaked in 2006 at 12.7 tonnes, and had reduced in 2009 to 12.2 with a slight increase in 2010 to 12.3 tonnes
- ACT renewable energy use increased from 11% in 2009 to 12.9% in 2010.

It is not good news that ACT emissions increased and that the slight downward trend in 2009 was not maintained. However, there are positive signs that the ACT may achieve the 15% renewable energy target by 2012. Click [here](#) to read the Inventory Report.

There are several ways you can contribute towards greater emissions reductions in the ACT, such as:

- Joining the [Carbon Challenge](#) to reduce your personal carbon footprint.
- Joining [Climate Action Canberra](#) and get active on climate change issues.
- Visiting [SEE-Change](#) for local climate change and sustainability information.
- Joining the climate action movement of over 70,000 young people with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition [Australian Youth Climate Coalition](#).
- Contacting [Simon Corbell](#) MLA, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development.

[Back to top](#)

A Message for Auto-Dismantling and Recycling Businesses

The ACT Department for Environment and Sustainable Development have released a new [fact sheet](#) which outlines several important management plans for auto repair and recycling businesses, particularly with respect to stormwater, waste, air quality and noise management. The factsheet also outlines land contamination and remediation for sites and the legal requirements under the Act.

[Back to top](#)

News from Around the Nation

NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION

Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project

At every level the Carmichael coal mine and rail [project](#) is a bad idea. India's Adani Group is in the process of building Australia's largest coal mine, producing 60 million tonnes of coal per year during its 90 year lifespan. Specifically, the project would entail the digging of a 10,000 hectare coal mine, stretching over 40kms swallowing up farms, prime grazing land and the Bygana West Nature Refuge. When burnt for power generation, the coal would produce 128.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, which is greater than the 2009 carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion in Sweden, Norway and Denmark combined.

As a nation, we can't claim to be serious about stopping climate change and saving our reef while also allowing the creation of the largest coal mine we've ever seen - a mine that will see more damage to the Great Barrier Reef from dredging and the dumping of dredge spoils in the marine park.

New [research](#) by The Australia Institute shows how 'slowing down the pace of coal exports would actually result in enormous benefits to the Australian economy. **It would allow our other key export industries – including manufacturing, tourism, education and agriculture – to expand, employing more people and paying more tax.**¹

[Back to top](#)

Solar Thermal energy costs expected to halve: CSIRO

Solar thermal energy will halve in cost by 2020, the new director of the CSIRO's [Australian Solar Thermal Research Initiative](#) (ASTRI) said today.

Solar thermal energy uses the concentrated heat of the sun to create steam, which turns a turbine and creates a clean, renewable power source. However, it remains expensive compared to other forms of energy due to [fossil fuel subsidies](#) and the limited operator hours of solar thermal energy power plants.

The CSIRO's \$87 million ASTRI, which brings together the country's top researchers in the field, aims to make solar thermal energy cheaper by developing new, more efficient technology and finding ways to reduce capital costs. ASTRI's new director, Dr Manuel Blanco, who has worked in the field for almost 30 years and was previously in charge of solar thermal energy at Spain's National Renewable Energy Centre (CENER), said Australia was well placed to lead research on the technology. Dr Blanco said the research centre would cut the cost of solar thermal energy to 12 cents a kilowatt hour by 2020, down from 25 cents a kilowatt hour now.

¹ This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Climate Law Bulletin](#).

Click [here](#) to read the full article.

[Back to top](#)

Coming Ready or Not: Managing Climate Risks to Australia's Infrastructure

The Climate Institute has released *Coming Ready or Not: Managing climate risks to Australia's infrastructure*, a report which brings together research on the physical impacts and consequences of climate change on major infrastructure across property, electricity, road, rail and finance. It asks how prepared businesses and governments are to manage these risks, and the steps that will be required to improve Australia's climate change adaptation strategies.

The report reveals that Australia will face significant human and economic costs because our infrastructure is poorly equipped to handle more frequent extreme weather events and other consequences of climate change.

[Click here](#) for more information and to read the report.

[Back to top](#)

Case Law Update

Southern Highlands Coal Action Group Pty Ltd v Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

EDO NSW represented the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group (SHCAG) regarding its appeal in the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure's approval of expansion of activities in the Berrima Colliery by Boral Cement Ltd to 2020. SHCAG argued that Boral did not adequately consider the impact the project would have on the local groundwater resources, groundwater biodiversity, and the Wingecarribee River in preparing its environmental assessment.

The Land and Environment Court upheld SHCAG's appeal and refused the application on the basis that the project was not in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development and in particular the precautionary principle. The Court found that the surface and groundwater issues were fundamental issues that could not be left for later resolution or adaptive management.

Importantly the Court also considered the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011 and the Sydney Catchment Authority's Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality Assessment Guideline 2011.

EDO NSW is grateful to barristers Ian Hemmings and Nick Eastman for their assistance with this matter.²

Click [here](#) to read the full judgment.

[Back to top](#)

² This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Weekly Bulletin](#), Issue 798.

Commonwealth Environmental News

COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Expert Panel Appointed to Assess Environmental Impacts of the Super Trawler

The Federal Environment Minister has announced the Chair and Members of the expert panel to assess the environmental impacts of the super trawler. The four member panel, consisting of Ms Mary Lack, Professor Peter Harrison, Associate Professor Simon Goldsworthy, and Dr Kathy Bulman, will carry out an assessment of the environmental impacts of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels in the Small Pelagic Fishery under national environment law.

The expert panel will assess the declared commercial fishing activity to determine if the proposed fishing activity would adversely impact the Australian environment.

The terms of reference for the new expert panel have been developed in consultation with the Fisheries Minister.

The report from the expert panel must be presented to the Minister by **22 October 2014**, at which time a decision will be made as to the future of this kind of fishing activity.

[Click here](#) to read the full terms of reference for the panel.³

[Back to top](#)

Coal Expansion Passed by Federal Environment Minister

Earlier this month, a number of large coal and coal seam gas projects, including the controversial Whitehaven mine, were approved by the Federal Environmental Minister, Tony Burke.

Minister Burke signed conditional approvals for Whitehaven's Maules Creek mine, planned for the Leard State Forest, Idemitsu's neighbouring Boggabri coalmine expansion, and a coal seam gas development planned by AGL for Gloucester in NSW. Together, these three projects would have a huge carbon footprint of 47 million tonnes of greenhouse gases a year – about 8 per cent of Australia's total emissions – according to environmental impact assessments.

The mining projects had all been approved at state level. Minister Burke's signature was seen as a final obstacle to development.

Click [here](#) to read the full SMH article on the approvals.

[Back to top](#)

³This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Climate Law Bulletin](#).

Mining approved for the Tarkine

The Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, has rejected the Heritage Council's advice to protect more than 400,000 hectares of the mineral-rich Tarkine region in north-west Tasmania. He said "from purely environmental terms, it would have been something that would have been a wonderful thing to be able to do but you have to take into account the impact on people and taking that impact into account meant that I simply couldn't go with the Heritage Council's recommendations". However, now, Australia's largest remaining tract of Gondwanan rainforest could be mined for short-term gain. Click [here](#) to view the GetUp! campaign against this decision.

[Back to top](#)

News from Around the World

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

UN Environment Programme report on thawing permafrost

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a report revealing that permafrost covering almost a quarter of the northern hemisphere contains 1,700 gigatonnes of carbon, twice the carbon that is currently in the atmosphere. The thawing of this permafrost could significantly increase global warming if it accelerates as projected. It is not yet accounted for in climate change predictions but is likely to cause significant global warming. The report '[Policy Implications of Warming Permafrost](#)' was released on the second day of COP 18 climate talks in Doha.

The majority of current permafrost formed during or since the last ice age. It extends to over 700 meters deep in parts of northern Siberia and Canada. The permafrost is made up of an active layer up to two metres in thickness which thaws every summer and refreezes every winter, as well as permanently frozen soil beneath.

If the active layer increases in thickness because of global warming, vast quantities of organic matter stored in the frozen soil would thaw and decay, releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere.

This process would trigger the permafrost carbon feedback, which has the effect of increasing surface temperatures and accelerating the further thawing of permafrost. This process would be irreversible.

[Click here](#) for more information and to read the report.⁴

Rights of Nature case in Ecuador

Ecuador is facing one of its most challenging cases for Rights of Nature - which is a right guaranteed in the Ecuadorian Constitution - as the government moves ahead with a contract for open pit mining in The Condor Highland, which is one of the most biodiverse areas of South America. In March 2012, the government of Ecuador signed a contract with Ecuacorrientes (ECSA), a company of Chinese capital to extract copper, gold and silver from the Condor Highland via open pit mining in south eastern Ecuador.

Environmental, human rights, and indigenous organizations, along with local community members from the Condor region in Ecuador have joined together to file a lawsuit to stop the Mirador Mining Project. The suit claims that the mine would violate the protected rights of ecosystems guaranteed in the Articles 71-73 on Rights of Nature in the Ecuadorian Constitution.

Click [here](#) for more information, and to send a letter of support and / or sign the petition to Judge Paul Narvaux.

⁴ This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Climate Law Bulletin](#), Issue 18.

[Back to top](#)

Now for the downside of fracking

In rural Pennsylvania, USA, residents live side by side with America's new shale gas boom and the associated wells which drill and fracture for gas (commonly known as 'fracking'). Locals are beginning to question the risks involved in the contamination of air (pollution from the gas wells and compressor stations) and drinking water (with methane) from which the drilling companies and the local environmental protection agency say they are not in danger - or at least, they say none of the contaminants in the air or water can be traced directly to the well. One pressure group, the Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air, has collated more than 800 cases of people they say have been harmed by fracking nationwide - a body of evidence that environmentalists and local politicians contend is now beyond anecdotal.

As New York and Colorado debate whether to allow fracking, environmental groups and some residents in Pennsylvania argue that the long-term health impacts of fracking so close to residential communities are just too indeterminate to be considered safe. They say two official studies on the impact of fracking on water quality and radiation build-up are not even due to be completed until next year. A local Senator, Richard Kasunic, admits that the regulatory framework for the industry is a "work in progress" and that "we're flying by the seat of our pants here". And that, concludes Jesse White, a Pennsylvania state representative who has taken up the cause of those who say they have been affected by the shale gas boom, is the lesson that other countries should learn if and when they move to exploit shale gas reserves.

[Click here](#) to read more.

[Back to top](#)

Law Reform and Policy

LAW REFORM AND POLICY

ACT Environmental Defenders Office Submissions

Draft Nature Conservation Strategy

The ACT EDO submitted a review of the *Draft ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2012-22*. Issues that were specifically raised were:

- Transparency of Land Management Agreements
- Recognising Volunteers: establishing an awards regime
- Increasing Connectivity and Reducing Fragmentation
- Weed Control
- Monitoring and Enforcement
- An Independent Conservator

The submission is available on the ACT EDO [website](#).

[Back to top](#)

Australian Network of Environmental Defenders Officer's (ANEDO) Submissions

Submission on Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012

Click [here](#) to read why retention of Commonwealth approval powers is vital, and why ANEDO argues it will never be appropriate for the Federal government to hand over their federal approval powers to the States.

Submissions to the Extreme Weather Events Parliamentary Inquiry

Click [here](#) - and then scroll to submission 107 - to read ANEDO's submission to the Extreme Weather Events Parliamentary Inquiry concerning recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events.

[Back to top](#)

Opportunities to Comment - ACT

Strategic assessment of urban development at Gungahlin, ACT

On 2 October 2012, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities entered into an agreement with the ACT Government Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate and the ACT Government Economic Development Directorate to undertake a strategic assessment of proposed urban development at Gungahlin, ACT. The strategic assessment will be undertaken in accordance with section 146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

On 16 January 2013 the strategic assessment agreement was varied to reflect the expansion of the strategic assessment to include the additional suburb of Moncrieff. Parts of the suburbs of Crace and Horsepark North have been removed from the agreement because these areas will now be retained for conservation. All parties to the agreement have signed and agreed to the changes.

A strategic assessment is taking place because environmental studies have identified several matters of national environmental significance protected under the EPBC Act. These include the threatened Superb Parrot, Regent Honeyeater, Striped Legless Lizard, Golden Sun Moth and the threatened ecological community of White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland and (potentially) Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory. A draft assessment will be released shortly, after which there will be 28 days to make a comment.

Click [here](#) for more information and to comment.

[Back to top](#)

Proposed Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre

The Acting Director-General of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, Ben Ponton, has announced a proposal to rezone a block of land adjoining the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre to be used for future landfill. If successful the proposal will amend the Territory Plan so the existing Mugga Lane landfill can be expanded onto the adjacent Jerrabomberra Block 2247. A draft environmental impact statement has been prepared to inform the proposed variation and is available for community comment. Public comments close on **Friday 5 April 2013**. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

Opportunities to Comment – Commonwealth

Nominate a Species, Ecological Community or Key Threatening Process under the EPBC Act

Nominations are open for the assessment period starting 1 October 2013 for any threatened species, threatened ecological communities or key threatening processes to be considered for listing under national environment law. Nominations for this assessment period may be submitted until **5pm on Thursday 28 March 2013**.

The DSEWPC [website](#) has information about the nomination process; information to check what is already listed or unsuccessful nominations; links to nomination forms and guidelines and how to submit a nomination.

Draft Environmental Water Recovery Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin

The draft Environmental Water Recovery Strategy outlines the Government's future approach to environmental water recovery in the Murray-Darling Basin. This includes water recovery through investment in more efficient water delivery infrastructure, environmental works and measures and water purchase. Further details are on the [website](#).

COAG's Standing Council on Energy and Resources are seeking comment on the Draft National Harmonised Regulatory Framework for CSG

The National Harmonised Regulatory Framework is a guidance and reference tool for Australian federal, state and territory government regulators for the Coal Seam Gas (CSG) industry. Its purpose is to provide a suite of national and global leading practices to consider and implement in the assessment and ongoing regulation of proposed CSG projects.

The concerns and issues raised by the community regarding CSG development in Australia to date have warranted the attention of governments and industry. As a result, in December 2011, governments through COAG's Standing Council on Energy and Resources responded by agreeing to develop the Framework.

The draft National Harmonised Regulatory Framework public consultation closed on **28 February 2013**, however all stakeholders are welcome and encouraged to make a written submission. For more information, and to access the submission template, follow this [link](#).

Inquiry into the Impacts on Health of Air Quality in Australia

The Senate has referred this inquiry to the Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 16 May 2013. The terms of reference for the inquiry relate to the impacts on health of air

quality in Australia, including:

- particulate matter, its sources and effects;
- those populations most at risk and the causes that put those populations at risk;
- the standards, monitoring and regulation of air quality at all levels of government; and
- any other related matters.

Public comment is invited until **8 March 2013**. Click [here](#) for more information.

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mineral and Energy Resource Exploration

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a 12-month inquiry into the non-financial barriers to mineral and energy resource exploration.

The Commission will consult with all relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth Government agencies and other key stakeholders. An [issues paper](#) was released in December 2012. Public submissions to the inquiry are invited until **15 March 2013**. Click [here](#) for more information.

Referrals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The only recent EPBC referral news for the ACT regarded the proposed action of Photon Energy Australia Pty Ltd to construct and operate the Mugga photovoltaic Solar Development. A decision that the action did not require approval under the *EPBC Act* was made available on 19 February on the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities [website](#).

[Back to top](#)

Events and Community News

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY NEWS

2012 National Environmental Law Association Conference

NELA's National Conference, *Delivering a Clean Energy Future*, is being held in Melbourne on **7-9 March 2013**.

The conference will bring together different aspects of clean energy law, including environment and climate change lawyers and those at the forefront of environment protection, resources and energy regulation & planning, carbon and biodiversity credits and emissions trading. NELA has put together an impressive line-up of international and Australian speakers from the judiciary, leading law firms, academia, government, policy think tanks, environment NGOs and business. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

ACT Centenary Bioblitz on Black Mountain

[Atlas of Living Australia](#), ACT Government, [Inspiring Australia](#) and Molonglo Catchment Group have come together to organise an ACT Centenary Bioblitz!

This is Canberra's first ever collaborative race to identify as many kinds of plants, animals, algae and fungi as possible at Black Mountain. A Bioblitz comprises scientists, naturalists, citizen scientists and members of the public working together to record a snapshot of the region's biodiversity.

Headquartered at the CSIRO Discovery Centre, all information collected will help assist the national 'Atlas of Living Australia' online portal to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy and benefit from Australia's remarkable biodiversity. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

HOPE Australia

You are invited to join HOPE (Householders' Options to Protect the Environment) Inc. to learn more about sustainable living. Membership is free and open to anyone, including individuals, families, businesses and community organisations.

HOPE encourages people to take responsibility for their relationship with the environment in their daily lives, while promoting sustainable living practices within their community and help to protect the environment.

HOPE encourages their members to view environmental problems in their local, economic and global context. They also encourage people to use what is already there, making the most of existing resources, technology and community networks, as well as encouraging people to create, communicate and celebrate lifestyles which reduce consumption and improve quality of life. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

Earth Hour 2013

Earth Hour is back at **8.30pm on 23 March 2013**.

Earth Hour was started by WWF in Australia as a local event, but was soon embraced by the rest of the world. Last year, hundreds of millions of people from 152 countries and territories took part, and 7 million Australians switched off in support of the planet.

In 2013, Australians aren't just switching off their lights for Earth Hour. They're taking action into their own hands, and pledging to switch on to renewable energy. In the face of climate change, increasing fossil fuel costs and rising electricity prices, there's never been a better time to switch to clean, renewable energy.

Click [here](#) for more information about **Earth Hour 2013**. For specific information about activities and events being held around Earth Hour follow the links to the [WWF Earth Hour Awards](#), the [community challenge](#), and [resources for schools](#).

SustainAbility Workshop Series

The Canberra Environment Centre is continuing its SustainAbility workshop series in 2013. Upcoming workshop topics include seed saving, worm farming 'made easy' and composting 'made easy'. Prices for the workshops are \$15 or \$10 for concession. Follow this [link](#) to check the Canberra Environment Centre's list of upcoming events and workshops.

[Back to top](#)

Earth Day 2013

The **22nd of April 2013** is Earth Day. This year's Earth Day theme is The Face of Climate Change. This theme seeks to put a human face to the dangers associated with global climate change. The campaign calls for people of all nationalities to act now and organise events on Earth Day to help prevent the dangerous impacts associated with rising temperatures.

If you are interested in organising events, discussing goals or are interested in how the Earth Day Network may be able to help promote your organization for Earth Day, please contact hariton@earthday.org or visit www.earthday.org for more information.

[Back to top](#)

Nominations for the Prime Minister’s Environmentalist of the Year and Young Environmentalist of the Year

Nominations for the Prime Minister’s Environmentalist of the Year and Young Environmentalist of the Year awards are now open. These awards recognise unsung heroes in our community who have made an outstanding contribution in protecting our environment and creating a sustainable future for Australia.

Individuals, groups, or organizations who have been working to protect our environment are encouraged to nominate for either award. Nominations close on **22 April 2013** and the awards will be announced as part of World Environment Day celebrations in June 2013. Click [here](#) for more information.⁵

[Back to top](#)

Mahla Pearlman Oration

This year’s Mahla Pearlman Oration will be held at 5pm on **14 March 2013** in the Dixon Room of the State Library of NSW. The keynote speaker will be the Hon Paul Stein AM QC (former judge of the Land and Environment Court and the Court of Appeal).

The Mahla Pearlman Oration is an event which honours the career, contribution and memory of the Honourable Justice Mahla Pearlman AO, former chief judge of the NSW Land and Environment Court. To register your attendance, please contact Gerard O’Neil, Law Council of Australia, on 6246 3788 or gerard.oneill@lawcouncil.asn.au.⁶

[Back to top](#)

Government Sustainability Conference – Registration Open

The Government Sustainability Conference 2013, which will be held in Melbourne on **7-8 October**, is now open for registration. The Conference will provide delegates from local, state and federal government authorities with comprehensive analysis and advice about how to embed environmentally

⁵This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Climate Law Bulletin](#).

⁶This article was provided courtesy of the NSW EDO [Climate Law Bulletin](#).

sustainable policies and practices within their organisations and the communities they serve. Click [here](#) for more information, and to capitalise on the early bird registration discounts.

[Back to top](#)

ACT Conservation Council Trivia Night

Put on your sustainable thinking caps and take up the challenge to show off your trivia prowess at the annual trivia fundraiser for the Conservation Council ACT. It's sure to be a fun night out with the added bonus of supporting the protection of the environment in the ACT region. There are PRIZES to be won, POLITICIANS to be auctioned and LAUGHS to be had!

WHEN: Friday 22 March @ 6:30pm

WHERE: Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, 180 London Circuit (next to Canberra Theatre & Library)

PRICE: \$30pp

Please BYO your drinks & some nibbles. Some light refreshments will also be provided. To book, contact communications@conservationcouncil.org.au or phone 6229 3209.

[Back to top](#)

Harvest Festival

The Canberra Harvest Festival is on again - **Saturday the 23rd of March from 12pm to 4pm** - with delicious, local organic goodies, workshops, a gourmet organic lunch, great live music and even a biggest & best organic fruit & vegetable competition! There will also be kids activities and play areas.

The Festival will be celebrating local and organic produce, and fundraising for the Canberra Environment Centre's projects which include an eco-therapy garden at Calvary Hospital and kitchen gardens at community run childcare centres throughout the ACT.

The Environment Centre will be cooking gourmet, organic food made entirely from local produce while local producers showcase their harvest, and community organisations conduct free sustainable living workshops. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Back to top](#)

Seminar: How binding are the EU's 'binding' renewables targets?

The University of Sydney's Law School is holding a seminar from 6-7pm on **21 March** examining the development of the European Union's law and policy on renewable energy. Click [here](#) to read an abstract on the seminar.

Venue: Minter Ellison Room, Level 13 Old Law School, St James Campus, Phillip St, Sydney.

Cost: Free, but [registration](#) is essential.

Lawyers/barristers: attendance at this seminar is equal to 1 MCLE/CPD unit.

[Back to top](#)

Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), in partnership with host country partner, the Government of Fiji, has now confirmed the date and venue for the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. The conference will be held at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, from **2- 6 December**. For more information visit the SPREP [website](#) or download the [circular](#) for this event.

[Back to top](#)

The climateXchange Calendar

There are numerous environmental activities happening in and around Canberra at any given time. To keep up to date with the when, what, who and where of such activities, have a look at the [climateXchange](#) calendar.

[Back to top](#)

Positions Available

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Environmental Defenders Office (NT) Inc - Principle Lawyer/CEO and Senior Education Lawyer

Are you a lawyer who wants to make a difference and be inspired by what you do? The Environmental Defenders Office (NT) Inc is looking for a **Principal Lawyer/CEO** to manage the legal practice and a **Senior Education Lawyer** to deliver an access to justice in environmental law project.

The positions are **Principal Lawyer/CEO of EDO NT** for up to three years and a **Senior Education Lawyer** to deliver an access to justice in environmental law project for a 6 month full-time or 9 month part-time position. The closing date for applications is **5:00pm CST on Friday 15 March 2013**. For more details please go to the EDO NT [website](#).

National Environmental Law Association Bulletin - volunteer contributors

The National Environmental Law Association (NELA) seeks volunteers to contribute to the NELA Bulletin, particularly for the law and policy developments section. If interested, please contact Ellen Geraghty on decembersunrise@yahoo.com or 0407 459 490.

[Back to top](#)

Environmental Defender's Office

The Environmental Defender's Office is a non-profit community legal centre based in Canberra.

We advise on environment and planning law and aim to increase public awareness of environmental law and available remedies.

We advise on questions of Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory law.

We offer a free telephone advice service on environmental law questions.

Appointments with our solicitor are also available.

Office	Level 1/14 Childers Street (opposite the Street Theatre) Canberra City ACT 2601
Post	GPO Box 574, Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone	(02) 6243 3460
Fax	(02) 6243 3461
Email	edoact@edo.org.au

Make an online donation through our secure server.