



TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC

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INTRODUCTION

TEC grew over the last year in two ways. First we embarked on the Green Capital program which is aimed at 'corporate engagement' and NGO assistance. It is an additional dimension to our ongoing and central campaigning work, but does bring us into constructive contact with leading companies and NGOs in the social welfare and consumer fields. Secondly, some of our campaigns are going national in particular, energy demand management and extended producer responsibility. Both directions are focussed on 'paradigm' changes to our economy and consumption patterns - to combat the fundamental drivers of environmental degradation.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- The NSW coast continues to experience the greatest level of development assault, including pre-emptive land clearing, seen for many decades. In addition to helping dozens of groups with campaign advice, media and support to government, we pressed for a Planning Blueprint for the Coast. This would build on the breathing space intended to be created by SEPP 71 - Coastal Protection. We published 'Concreting the Coast', the result of extensive field trips and consultation with over 130 groups. A bright spot was the gazettal of Lake Wollumboola as a national park.
- TEC was deeply involved with the campaign to stop land clearing. We played a major role in negotiations over the report by the Wentworth Group to Premier Bob Carr; the subsequent election statement and the Implementation Group that set the scene for major bureaucratic and policy change. It is hoped that an end to broadscale land clearing will be achieved in 2003, saving millions of hectares and turning the focus to restoration of catchments.
- An unfortunate outcome of the 2003 State Election was deferral of a decision on the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion (eg Pilliga, Goonoo) with the government seeking to maximise country votes. This led to a battle over the moratorium zone while the government dithered.



Western woodlands and grasslands have been the poor cousin of forest campaigns to date, but with new national parks over the north east 'icons' (an election promise), the woodlands are much more to the fore. TEC has continued assistance to the Western Conservation Alliance and helped in the establishment of a Riverina (Bardi) Group, with that region now subject to a major conservation and resource assessment.

URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

- At the time of writing, TEC is working hard to prevent the construction of the Redbank 2 (150MW) and Ulan (1,000MW) coal fired power stations - with annual CO₂ emissions equivalent to 1.750 million cars. Their construction would wreck the chances for cleaner energy to become mainstream.
- TEC successfully lobbied for greenhouse benchmarks to be legislated for the electricity industry. This is a world first and we will be watching its implementation very closely, as it aims to establish green power and demand management could be undermined if industry influences the new operating rules. We are particularly opposed to tree planting to offset CO₂ emissions - an unreliable exercise, at best.
- The need for demand management or energy conservation to play a central role in energy planning has become very apparent with projections about massive new generation costing \$4billion. Consumer, environment and business groups are opposed to paying for the massive cost (largely to serve peak demand that occurs for a minority of the time) and are directing government attention to demand management. However, while it is cheaper, strong sectors in the traditional energy industry oppose DM - they like big engineering solutions. TEC has spearheaded the campaign at NSW and national levels.
- TEC and other peak groups have completed their 4th review of Sydney Water, with a call for a 500GL annual limit on water use by Sydney. This allows for environmental flows and the emergence of a major conservation and recycling market. TEC has been active in regulatory and pricing reviews and the public debate. In a welcome move, the Government gazetted the Welcome Reef Nature Reserve which occupies some of the land that would have been used for the city's

second dam. In an associated effort we are promoting restoration of urban streams.

- Public transport remains the great disaster for Sydney, with traffic growth and sprawl, fueling air pollution and congestion. Prior to the State Election, TEC sponsored several community transport plans. The Government is now undertaking major investigations into revenue sources and services. TEC is pressing for twice as much to be spent on new systems in half the time (than that currently proposed by Government) and an infusion of federal funds, as the only way to solve the crisis.
- TEC is leading the way on pressing industry to adopt and government to regulate for extended producer responsibility. Instead of consumers bearing the entire brunt of waste disposal, we are campaigning for industry to take the products back at the end of their life and redesign them so they are more easily recycled. We have compiled a hit list of toxic products and are urging community pressure on industry.
- We continued to assist local groups in their efforts to protect urban bushland, including - Tank Paddock in Newcastle and Georges River military land. TEC initiated a joint effort with Victorian and NSW groups opposing the sale of Commonwealth lands, held by the Dept of Defence - including a plan for protective Federal legislation.

TOXIC CHEMICALS

Another active area with campaigns over a range of right-to-know and pollution issues:

- TEC's long campaign for improved pesticide controls is bearing fruit. A number of key regulations are now being made law, subsequent to our successful effort to reform the *Pesticides Act*. As an active member of the Pesticides Implementation Committee, we have worked with other stakeholders on training and record keeping, both of which will introduce a precautionary element into pesticide use. The final part of the package - notification - is still in process, with urban right to know rules more advanced than for rural. Farmers continue to resist their obligation to let neighbours know of spraying plans.
- Our work on exposing pollution is largely intended to put the focus on dirty industry. A FOI by TEC found that hundreds of thousands of tonnes of toxic substances are sent for disposal by industry every

year. The main treatment plant, at Lidcombe, is overloaded. Cleaner production is the only sustainable way to reduce the chemical load.

- We also maintained our lobbying on the EPA and industry to adopt pesticide use reduction strategies. End of pipe laws are one thing, reducing use at source (and providing cleaner food and a greener environment) are the other key part of the exercise.
- TEC was active in the campaign against the use of industrial waste as fertiliser and soil conditioner. The state government has promised to proceed with a new piece of legislation that will prevent the use of hazardous waste products in farming practices. TEC also brought together a wide coalition of farming, health and environmental groups to lobby the federal government against the importation of hazardous material from Denmark that was to be used as fertiliser.

GREEN CAPITAL

Our campaign for corporate social responsibility has grown in leaps and bounds. We have three aims – to genuinely engage the corporate sector; assist NGOs to participate and undertake leading edge research.

- Over the year we held corporate breakfasts – Ethical? Investment, The Great Waste Debate, and Carbon Risk. The last was held in Melbourne, where we are likely to undertake further Green Capital events. Each event was accompanied by a research project.
- Our Community Builders Project worked with NCOSS, ACA and the NSW Trades and Labour Council to develop principles and indicators for corporate social responsibility.
- As a result of our efforts, we have formed working relationships with leading corporations such as Insurance Australia Group, Origin Energy, Baker & McKenzie Lawyers, and National Australia Bank to develop new policies and approaches including environmental risk management; influencing the supply chain; market take up of green initiatives; and cleaner production.
- The influence of Green Capital has expanded rapidly and has been recognised by key government agencies such as the NSW EPA who have contracted Green Capital to conduct a series of industry / NGO forums on key initiatives and policy.

STATE ELECTION

TEC played a major role in advocating policies and auditing election statements. There were some significant gains, most prominently the government's policy to end broadscale land clearing.

LEGISLATION

Through the Environmental Liaison Officer supported by TEC and other groups, we were active in drafting amendments and lobbying for improvement to key pieces of legislation including:

- *Threatened Species Conservation Amendment Act*
- Electricity Supply Greenhouse Benchmarks law
- *Gene Technology Act*
- *Protection of the Environment Tradeable Emissions Act*

PUBLICATIONS

- A-Z of Chemicals in the Home (4th edition) – available from Choice
- Sydney – the urban sustainability challenge
- Safer Solutions – integrated pest management for schools and childcare centres
- Ethical? Investment – a review of the SRI industry in Australia
- The Great Waste Debate – who's responsible?
- The Health of NSW Coastal Rivers – 4 rivers study
- Concreting the Coast – development and land clearing pressures on the NSW coast
- Can the Catchments Sustain us? – the 2nd Sydney Catchment Project

(all except A-Z can be found on our website)

Government committees: TEC staff were members of: Millenium Parklands Advisory Committee; Western Sydney Environment Taskforce; Pesticides Implementation Committee; Resource and Conservation Assessment Council; Sustainability Advisory Council; ResourceNSW; Georges River Foreshore Improvement Program; Technical Review Panel, Load Based Licensing; National Registration Authority Community Advisory Committee.



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STAFF

Paid: Jeff Angel – Director; Sue Kennedy – Administrator, Assistant Treasurer; Fran Kelly – Natural Areas Campaigner; Leigh Martin – Urban Campaigner; Jeanette Neave – Volunteers Coordinator, Public Information and Waste Campaigner; Ben Cole – Chemicals Campaigner; Jane Castle – Resource Conservation Campaigner; Dave West – Green Capital, Manager; Alison Rose – Subscriber Services; Anthony Lazaro – Administration; Jill Merrin – SCA Pengo.

Voluntary: Reception/Office/Information/Library – Betty Mason, Joyce Ladkin, Thelma Hobday, Lidia Petersen, Joan Bell, Angela Raymond, Harriet Kater, Arene Murray, Alla Kamaralli, Patricia Haydon, Ruby Madigan, Judy Ambler, Peter Stapleton, Carole Cole, Roger Cole, Judy Bartram, Margaret Alexander, Ian Edwards. Projects – Arnold Ewald, Doug Lithgow, Mike Rolfe, Sophie Gibb, Phillip Williams, Fergus Fricke, Jane Castle, Jo Immig, Leisha Deguara, Margaret McGregor, Keith Muir, Jeff Tate, Ben Eadie, Ros Lawrie, Deb Young, Anna Christie, Natalie Schmitt, Liam Birchall, Sarah Coggles, Sarah Harmlink, Owen Pascoe, Miriam Pellicano, Grahame Agnew, Jonas Barnes, Clare Blakester, Nancy Dentice, Paul Ribbner, Roberta Freitas.

Management Committee: Sue Salmon – Chairperson; Libby Rankin – Treasurer; James Johnston – Secretary; Gerri Ormonde, Peter Reeves, Jeff Smith, Edwina Laginestra, Ian Higgins, Emily Fewster, Simon Carter, Sebastian Crawford. Public Officer – Philip Williams

Committees: Canopy Native Forests

Resident Groups: Colong Foundation for Wilderness; Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee.

Auditor: Barton Sellars – Financial report available on request from TEC

**AND THANKS TO ALL OUR
DONORS AND SUPPORTERS**