



# Total Environment Centre

www.tec.org.au

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## INTRODUCTION

TEC is committed to working on all fronts for environment protection and ensuring we allocate our resources to natural and urban area campaigns; pollution reduction and new sustainability policies; development of effective laws; and empowering the community.

The last year has seen TEC expand into a number of national campaigns as well as continuing our NSW based work and helping local groups in the city and country. For example, we are playing a prominent role in combating greenhouse gases by leading the campaign to reform the national electricity system; our coastal protection work involves assisting 130 local groups in 3 states; Green Capital is gaining a reputation as the key forum for NGO and business interaction on corporate social responsibility; and we are deeply engaged in new land clearing laws for NSW.

The coming year is expected to be just as busy, with further growth in TEC's contribution to protection of the Australian environment.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- The NSW coast continues to be assaulted by a surge of development. The network of groups with which we work has grown to 130 and while there have been a few wins, the real task of putting new regional and local statutory plans to control development and protect environmental assets, is only just beginning - just in time as a number of local councils have become even more pro-development after the elections. We were successful in removing the 2ha per year exemption from land clearing controls, from application in the coastal zone, thus preventing the preemptive destruction that often occurs prior to rezoning to urban. We published, 'Protecting the Coast - a guide to NSW law'.
- The protection of the western forests remains unresolved. The Government proffers excuse after excuse for the delay and meanwhile pressure on the moratorium area intensifies. As a result, conservationists joined local aboriginal groups in blockading logging in the Terry Hie Hie area. TEC liaised with the locals and the State Government to bring about a satisfactory resolution to this particular woodland crisis and it remains unlogged.
- Extensive work on land clearing laws continued during the year, with attention to the regulations and the 'environmental test' that will gatekeep clearing proposals. TEC is leading the negotiations. Once the regulations have been gazetted (expected late 2004), the new Native Vegetation Act that aims to ban broadscale clearing will be activated.
- The Carr Government's new water laws were a disgrace. TEC opposed the granting of property rights over water and mandatory compensation for environmental regulation. The laws also lock-in inadequate river plans that will deliver meagre environmental flows over the next ten years.
- Our campaign against longwall mining (which causes surface cracks and stream damage) expanded to the Georges River. A major report has been completed and we are pressing for protection zones that prevent this destructive practice. The Government did announce an improved environmental assessment and public consultation process for longwall mining, but the Department in charge (Mines) still favours the failed 'remediation' route.
- The introduction of GE crops into Australia poses grave environmental and economic risks. At present industry is pressing for trial canola crops but this is being resisted by environmentalists and concerned farmers. TEC helped highlight the problem of contamination off-site, describing it as 21st century pollution. The crop trails for NSW were abandoned for this year and other states also extended their moratoriums. However, the very strong GE lobby with its network into government and public relations campaigns, will persist in its campaign.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

TEC has focused its work in a crucial area that was not being attended to by other groups - reform of the National Electricity Market (NEM). Fossil fuel energy consumption is responsible for massive greenhouse gas emissions but the NEM which controls energy planning and delivery, is based on perpetuating fossil fuel use. We researched and campaigned in key areas:

- Demand management - an expert report on how to fix the NEM to mainstream energy conservation was commissioned. This is currently being considered by the Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE). We also convinced the NSW Government to establish a taskforce to create a Demand Management Fund which would promote DM, outside the ambit of the less than supportive traditional energy retailers.
- Our campaign, 'does the national electricity market work?' gained momentum. A position paper by several NGOs and coordinated by TEC sets the scene showing a range of environmental and community failures, and a package of proposals to reform the national electricity law was supported by 19 national and state social welfare, consumer and environment groups. Lobbying of the MCE continues.
- TEC led the NGO discussions on emissions trading. The initiative is currently being taken by the states in the absence of federal government action. Environment NGOs agreed on a number of core principles that should be adopted to ensure achievement of ambitious greenhouse gas reductions.
- We also issued a '5 Point Energy Plan' showing that NSW did not need to build more coal fired power stations, as part of our campaign against the proposed Redbank and Waratah power stations. The proponents of Redbank have now withdrawn their court appeal against the Government's rejection (on greenhouse grounds) of the plant.



## URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

- A major success this year was the 'BASIX' law which requires new housing to consume 40% less water and energy. It is to be extended to apartments and commercial premises in 2005. Despite hysteria from some development groups, its introduction has gone smoothly.
- With the worsening drought the need to place Sydney's water supply on a sustainable basis is urgent. TEC and other groups released, 'Sydney Water – going to waste' which detailed a plan to make most residences water efficient and a city-wide target to recycle 100GL a year. This means setting our water consumption at a sustainable 500GL a year (currently we consume 626GL pa), which will avoid the need for a new dam, even with population growth. We advocated best practice in public reviews of the operating licences, pricing policies and sustainability indicators for Sydney Water, Sydney Catchment Authority and Hunter Water.
- We continued to assist local groups in their efforts to protect urban bushland, with a win on the long running Tank Paddock issue. It also appears there are tentative moves by the Commonwealth to conserve their Sandy Point land along the Georges River, rather than sell it for development.
- Our campaign for extended producer responsibility advanced with the NSW Government issuing a priority list of products for action. TEC is also represented on the review committee assessing industry plans. Efforts to obtain a national regulation to manage EPR for TVs were successful. TEC took the fight on reducing waste to landfill to the Australian Consumer and Competition Council. Regional groupings of councils were seeking permission to issue joint tenders for waste processing, but were pointing to landfill, contrary to the State Waste Strategy.
- Toxic chemicals received reduced attention by TEC due to resource constraints, but it is hoped we can upgrade efforts in the coming year. We did continue lobbying on the right to know laws and opposed farmer efforts to escape scrutiny.

## GREEN CAPITAL

- Major events were held on – 'The Marketplace & Sustainability', 'In Control of Carbon?', 'Ethical Investor Awards', 'Your Foot's Too Big' (ecological footprint of business); 'MRET & The NEM', and 'The Community's Right to Know'. These events have attracted – over 2,000 people. Events are now held in both Sydney and Melbourne.
- A number of smaller forums allowing detailed discussion were convened. The first part of the year focused on energy reform including, 'Emissions Trading', 'Geo-Sequestration's, and 'Carbon Disclosure'. The emissions trading forums were held in both NSW and Victoria, where NGOs and business could discuss their views with Ministers. The second part of the year focused on company reporting with 'The Global Reporting Initiative' and 'Sustainability Reporting', which saw a small group at the forefront of reporting, workshop ideas for increasing its uptake, as part of the DEC sponsored Key Issues Project.
- Green Capital is currently developing a program to help companies engage their staff on sustainability issues. The training packages will be accredited and use expert and NGO advocates to reinforce the sustainability message, tailored for each corporation. The pilot of this program will be delivered to IAG staff.
- The mainstreaming of Socially Responsible Investment, will be core task over the next few years as TEC begins collaboration with the Key Centre for Justice, Law and Ethics at Griffith University.

## 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:

- Native Vegetation Act
- State Water Corporation Act
- Water Management Amendment Act
- Natural Resources Commission Act
- Catchment Management Authorities Act

**Government committees** – TEC staff were members of: Millenium Parklands Advisory Committee; Pesticides Implementation Committee; Natural Resources Advisory Council; EPR Expert Reference Group, Planning Reform Reference Group; Metro Strategy Environmental Reference Group.

## STAFF

**PAID:** Jeff Angel, Director. Sue Kennedy - Administrator; Assistant Treasurer. Fran Kelly - Natural Areas Campaigner. Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner. Jane Castle – Resource Conservation Campaigner. Tony Mohr – Associate Director, Green Capital. Julia Lipton – Green Capital Events and Special Projects. Danielle Domone-Karlsson – Marketing and Subscriber Services, Green Capital. Anthony Lazarro – Program Support, Green Capital. Richard Nicol – Marketing Asst, Green Capital. Dave West (ret) – Director, Green Capital. Ali Rose (ret) – Marketing, Green Capital.

**VOLUNTARY:** Betty Mason, Thelma Hobday, Lidia Petersen, Joan Bell, Angela Raymond, Arene Murray, Ruby Madigan, Judy Ambler, Judy Bartram, Margaret Alexander, Ian Edwards, Arnold Ewald, Brian Andrews, Cameron Eren, Doug Lithgow, Mike Rolfe, Keith Muir, Anne Hughes, Vanessa Cuenca, Antony Sprigg, Sue Jackson, David Creevey, Helen Mountsey, Graham Agnew.

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

**COMMITTEES:** Canopy

**RESIDENT GROUPS:** Colong Foundation for Wilderness; Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee

**AUDITOR:** Barton Sellars - Financial report available on request from TEC

# THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

