

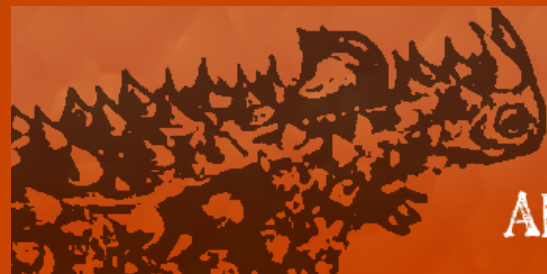


# Annual Report 2011-2012

# ‘Healthy futures for arid lands and people’

*The Arid Lands Environment Centre acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners, both past and present, of this region.*

Front cover image by Oliver Eclipse



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# ALEC's Vision and Strategic Aims

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) is a community-based environment organisation located in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. For more than 30 years, ALEC has advocated for the arid lands, plants, animals and people of Central Australia.

ALEC's vision is **'healthy futures for arid lands and people'** and ALEC works tirelessly to become a regional leader in developing and delivering sustainability initiatives in Central Australia.

ALEC has three broad strategic aims:

## *Keep the arid lands healthy:*

For many years ALEC has advocated for responsible resource use and integrated land management systems that work across the desert landscape. This requires governments, pastoralists, indigenous land managers, Traditional Owners and conservation groups to work together and share knowledge. Through this cooperative approach systems are being developed to best manage the threats of weeds and feral species whilst protecting the natural and cultural values of the landscape.

ALEC works hard to protect biodiversity and the natural values of clean air, water and healthy soils. ALEC also advocates for stronger regulatory frameworks governing pollution reporting and groundwater extraction for mineral, gas and petroleum industries working in Central Australia.

## *Work to create resilient communities in Central Australia:*

Building community resilience is a long-term ALEC strategy in mitigating and adapting to climate change, resource depletion and ecological collapse.

ALEC is working on numerous fronts to build the resilience of Alice Springs and desert communities through working towards regional food security plans, water efficiency programs, renewable energy and energy efficiency programs and environmental education.

Over a number of years ALEC has developed the desertSMART brand which offers a course of action towards living more sustainably in the desert.

From this concept programs such as Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses, desertSMART COOLmob, Alice Solar City and desertSMART EcoFair are now engaging the community in desertSMART practices.

## *Maintain the viability of ALEC:*

For more than 32 years ALEC has maintained a strong voice for the arid lands of Central Australia. This has been the result of continued active support from the community and the maintenance of funding to support the many varied activities of ALEC.

The viability of ALEC is dependent on its ability to obtain diverse and continuous funding from a number of sources including government grants, donations, partnerships and social enterprise development. By improving the reach and influence of ALEC through the strategic use of communications, marketing and messaging, a strong membership base has enabled it to weather the dry times of previous decades.

As we move forward into 2012-13, with strengthened governance processes and administrative capacity, ALEC will continue to be an organisation that people want to be a part of.

# From ALEC's Convenor:



I love the productivity, positivity and energy of ALEC. It's empowering to be involved in a community organisation doing things you believe in. This year ALEC has run a record number of environmental programs and employed seventeen people. The Warburton Street building has been bursting with staff and tenants. This concentration of skilled people builds environmental capital creating a hub which attracts more people, sparks more ideas and drives more innovation. ALEC's passionate and competent executive staff (Jimmy - Coordinator, Carmel - Business & Operations Manager and Nicole - Communications & Campaigns Officer) have been central to this.

The Annual Report provides a place to celebrate the past year's achievements. This year we're reporting program activity against ALEC's strategic goals. The Coordinator's Report provides the overview of what's happened; The Treasurer's Report summarises the financial position; The Program Reports provide detail; and this, the Convenor's Report addresses governance and strategy.

Last year the main challenge facing the Management Committee was to create an organisational structure able to accommodate the expansion needed to deliver the Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses Program. This year the challenge has been to improve the business and governance processes that support the higher staff numbers and manage the million dollar plus turnover whilst also ensuring effort is maintained against the diversity of our strategic interests. To assist in this, governance training has been made available to the Management Committee and executive staff and this has been valuable.

At this year's AGM, we have recommended several constitutional reforms. The objectives of ALEC have been updated to accurately reflect our mission and strategic plans and in particular, the Management Committee has

been renamed to the Board of Governance to emphasise its primary responsibility.

In preparing the Annual Report, a huge effort has gone into tracing back and rectifying legacy accounting issues - several that ran back the better part of a decade as a result of problematic changes of bookkeeping service and staff. As a result, you'll notice corrective adjustments in this year's financial report. Henceforth, financial reporting should be easier and more informative. This financial year, in a first, the ALEC programs have been managed according to individual budgets. I'd especially like to thank our Treasurer, Mark Keyworth, for his diligent and painstaking work in ensuring our financial processes are best practice.

Effective communication with members and stakeholders is crucial for a vibrant engaged community organisation. ALEC has long distributed our familiar weekly email updates and this year saw a return to print of the newsletter publication the Devil's Advocate. However to foster engagement, leading organisations are turning to new technologies. Increasingly members are participating in ALEC's maturing social media presence. The launch of our new website provides access to the latest information about all things ALEC: past, present and future.

I'm happy with the way ALEC is running at present. Still, the next Board will have a good challenge in husbanding resources and preparing for life after the Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses program. The challenge of creating a healthy sustainable future for us and for our arid lands has never been greater. My thanks to members and staff for being involved making ALEC what it is today.

**Stewart Baillie**  
**ALEC Convenor**

# ALEC Coordinator Report:



2011-12 was a year of consolidation for ALEC. The tightening up of governance and management processes while ensuring the organisation holds true to its vision of 'healthy futures for arid lands and people' was the theme for 2011-12.

The approval of ALEC's Strategic Plan 2012-2015 laid the foundation for ALEC to work as one organisation as opposed to the collection of projects and programs that have previously defined it. The diversity of ALEC's scope and scale of operations is testament to the passionate people who share the vision and work tirelessly to ensure that ALEC is on the path to achieving it.

The growing capacity of ALEC both administratively and operationally has been largely due to the recruitment of the Business and Operations Manager and the Communications and Campaigns Officer. The creation of these positions was a decision by the Management Committee (MC) in late 2011 in response to an organisational assessment of ALEC's strategic needs. The increased capacity has enabled the finances and management processes to be tightened to reflect the growing needs of the organisation while significantly boosting the communicative potential of ALEC to new levels. We are in exciting times and sharing it widely... through the new website, Facebook, Twitter, local media and events.

The strategic aims of ALEC are reflected in the layout of this year's Annual Report. In previous years, the annual report has detailed the activities of the various projects and programs of ALEC. This year, we are reporting ALEC's achievements in the context of its strategic aims and goals. This integration allows the reader to see where ALEC is going – rather than catching up on where it has been.

The arid lands of Central Australia are a vast and complex region that has many pressures impacting on the health of its ecosystems and people. As an organisation, ALEC aims high and works hard. Balancing research, advocacy, education, and program delivery – ALEC has a rich history and extensive network of people to draw from. Moving forward, ALEC continues to build a strong and resilient organisation that remains a vocal yet trusted member of the community.

2011-12 was an exciting year that saw the Alice Springs Community Garden blossom into a beautiful and productive community space. desertSMART COOLmob is building on this, by shifting focus towards sustainable food systems as part of its community resilience strategy. The desertSMART EcoFair grew into a 3-day event in August aligned with National Science Week. The increase of staff as a result of the Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses has created a vibrant ALEC workplace, and the program is on track to achieving its water saving targets by mid-2013.

All of this while ALEC gets back to its roots by organising land management and biodiversity workshops. For a small sized organisation, ALEC is making substantial impact and though the challenges we face are huge, the determination for a healthy future grows stronger.

*Jimmy Cocking*  
**ALEC Coordinator**

# ALEC Staff & Management

## *ALEC Staff - as at June 30 2012*

**ALEC Coordinator** - Jimmy Cocking

**ALEC Business and Operations Manager** - Carmel Vandermolen

**ALEC Communications and Campaigns Officer** - Nicole Pietsch

**desertSMART COOLmob Program Manager** - Alex Mclean

**Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses Team:**

**Program & Communications Manager** - Liz Locksley

**Alice Water Smart Homes** - Jethro Laidlaw

**Alice Water Smart Businesses** - Hayley Michener

**Community Engagement Officer** - Neylan Aykut

**Water Efficiency Consultant** - Richard Bentley

**Water Efficiency Consultant** - Sunil Dhanji

**Water Efficiency Consultant** - Ben Wall

**Alice Springs Community Garden Project Officer** - Kim Hopper

**Alice Springs Community Garden Project Officer** - Eleven Greenstones

**Beyond Nuclear Initiative Campaigner** - Natalie Wasley

**Beyond Nuclear Initiative Campaigner** - Lauren Mellor

## *Other staff of 2011-12*

**ALEC Business and Operations Manager** - Ruth Apelt - until Oct 2011

**desertSMART COOLmob Program Manager** - Maggie Turnbull - Nov 2011

**Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses Program Manager** - Les Seddon - April 2012

## *ALEC MC as at June 30 2012*

**Public Officer** - Jason Quin

**Convenor** - Stewart Baillie

**Deputy Convenor** - Jenny Pender

**Treasurer** - Mark Keyworth

**Secretary** - Emily Webster

### **General Members**

Glenn Marshall

Robbie Henderson

Rachel Toovey

Edan Baxter

### **Retired members:**

Alex Kelly

## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Alice Solar City** – support in developing the study on roof paint and internal household temperature.
- **Alice Springs Town Council** - support for Alice Springs Community Garden.
- **Alice Springs Landcare** – developing the Building Community Participation in Land Management and Fire Preparedness program.
- **Australian Conservation Foundation** - management of the Beyond Nuclear Initiative project.
- **Batchelor Institute** – conducting accredited Chemical Awareness Training and on-going land management projects.
- **Bushfires NT** – Basic Wildfire Awareness course as part of the Building Community Participation in Land Management and Fire Preparedness.
- **CAT Projects** – successful application for community solar farm feasibility study.
- **Centralian Senior College** – ALEC provides advice and support for the Centre for Excellence.
- **Desert Knowledge Australia** – on-going strategic partnership in renewable energy and climate change.
- **Environment Centre NT** - on-going, strategic partnership, regular communications, shared media releases, submissions and coordinated approaches to environmental issues and sustainable development in the Territory.
- **Friends of the Earth** – management of the Beyond Nuclear Initiative project
- **Land for Wildlife** - support for the Biodiversity Matters program.
- **Northern Territory EcoLink** – support for the Biodiversity Matters program.
- **NT Parks and Wildlife** - support for the Biodiversity Matters program.
- **Olive Pink Botanic Gardens** - desertSMART EcoFair and member events.
- **Red Hot Arts and Alice Desert Festival** -

desertSMART EcoFair promotion and organisational support.

- **Watch This Space** - creative input Community Garden Gateway to Sustainability project.

## ALEC GRANTS

### Commonwealth:

- Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research & Tertiary Education: Inspiring Australia Initiative
- ⇒ Sustainable Science Trail
- ⇒ National Science Week: desertSMART EcoFair: Participate, Learn, Create

### Northern Territory Government:

#### NT Community Climate Change Grants 2011-12

- Detailed feasibility study for a community-owned solar farm
- Measuring the effects of white roof paint on internal household temperature
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition Alice Springs
- Membership Drive Alice Springs Community Garden Network

#### EnvironmeNT Grants 2011-12

- Living desertSMART Workshop Series
- Alice Springs Community Garden Network
- Building community participation in land management and fire preparedness
- desertSMART EcoFair: Participate, Learn, Create

## REPRESENTATION

ALEC is represented on the following committees and reference groups:

- Alice Solar City Consortium
- Alice Springs Community Garden Steering Committee

- Alice Springs Region - NRM Council
- Alice Springs Town Council Environment Advisory Committee
- Alice Water Smart Consortium
- Australian Association of Environmental Educators NT
- Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
- Central Australian Business Innovation Forum
- desertSMART COOLmob Reference Group
- Education for Sustainability - Central Australia Network
- Environmental Defenders Office NT - Board
- Future Forum Steering Committee
- National Environmental Roundtable
- National Science Week Committee NT
- NT Southern Regional Weeds Reference Group
- Territory EcoLink - Stakeholder Reference Group

## SUBMISSIONS

- Joint Management Plan for East MacDonnell National Park
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation Review Panel
- Draft National Wildlife Corridor Plan

## ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

- Australian Association for Environmental Educators
- Australian Environment Network
- Boomerang Alliance
- Future Forum Steering Committee and General Member
- Lock the Gate Alliance
- National Sustainable Events Network
- NT Chamber of Commerce
- NT Council of Social Services
- Red Hot Arts
- Remote Indigenous Gardens Network
- Right to A Home Coalition

## ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT & HOSTING

ALEC continues to provide organisational support to a range of local community groups and hosted projects including:

- Alice Springs Community Garden Network
- Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses
- Beyond Nuclear Initiative (national)
- Central Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
- Climate Action Group
- desertSMART COOLmob
- Education for Sustainability - Central Australia Network
- Families for a Nuclear-Free Future
- Food not Bombs (Soup Kitchen)

## EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

ALEC has presented numerous community events and workshops throughout 2011-2012.

### July 2011:

- ALEC stall, Alice Springs Show
- Alice Water Smart Launch, Todd Mall
- Community Garden Working Bee, Frances Smith Park
- Open Day: Sustainable Living House
- Open Day: Centralian School Garden

### August 2011:

- Gardens for Food Workshop: Fruit Tree Planting, Frances Smith Park
- desertSMART EcoFair, Olive Pink Botanic Gardens
- Community Garden Annual General Meeting, Frances Smith Park
- Gardens For Food Workshop: No-Dig Garden, Frances Smith Park

### September 2011:

- Australian Nuclear Free Alliance Meeting
- Open Day: Sustainable Living House
- Arid Lands Global Climate Action Party
- Composting Workshop, Centralian Middle School

### October:

- Container Deposit Campaign Meeting

- Gardens for Food Workshop: Ask the Experts, Frances Smith Park
- Alice Community Garden Neighbourhood Information Session, Frances Smith Park
- Nuclear Free NT BBQ, Todd River Eastside
- Alice Water Smart Stalls: Alice Plaza Shopping Centre, Yeperenye Shopping Centre

#### November:

- Community Garden Planting, Frances Smith Park
- ALEC AGM
- ALEC Stall, Alice Springs Town Council's Christmas Carnival

#### February:

- Water Smart Gardening Workshop, Frances Smith Park
- Alice Water Smart Stall, Blooming Deserts

#### March:

- EFSCAN Professional Development Workshop, Alice Springs Desert Park
- Mandala Making Workshop, Frances Smith Park
- Remembering Fukushima, ASTC Lawns
- Mandala Making Workshop 2, Frances Smith Park
- Living Smart Facilitator Workshops
- Harmony Day, Frances Smith Park
- Fruit Tree Planting & Care, Frances Smith Park

#### April:

- Pizza Oven Building Workshop 1, Frances Smith Park
- Pizza Oven Building Workshop 2, Frances Smith Park

#### May:

- Community Garden Camel Burger Stall, Wide Open Space Festival
- Earthship Biotecture Seminar, Andy McNeil Room, ASTC
- Chemical Awareness Training
- Professional Development for Educators Workshop
- Muckaty Rally, Peko Park Tennant Creek
- Youth Climate Leadership Training, Alice Springs Youth Hub

#### June:

- 'Recycled Rubbish Seats' Workshop, Frances Smith Park
- World Environment Day Celebrations, Frances Smith Park
- Basic Wildfire Awareness Training
- Alice Springs Community Gardens' Compost Trials, Frances Smith Park



*ALEC Stall at Alice Springs Show 2011*



*Muckaty Rally, Tennant Creek, May 2011*



*Water Smart Gardening Workshop February 2011*

# ALEC Highlights:

It's been another active and engaging year for ALEC! Here are some of the highlights:

## *Community Gardens blossom*

The Alice Springs Community Garden continues as one of ALEC's most exciting projects with the formation of a new Reference Group taking on the challenge of developing the site at Frances Smith Park. The Ian Potter Foundation funding combined with a \$10 000 boost from ALEC enabled the fence to be erected and the 'Learn, Grow, Share' workshop series to be hosted at the site. The growth of the Alice Springs Community Garden Network now includes schools, youth centres, a town camp and women's shelter. The combined efforts of many are bringing local food production to the forefront of sustainable development in Alice Springs.



*Mandala Making Workshop, Harmony Day March 2012*

## *Launch of new ALEC Website and social media engagement*

The employment of Nicole Pietsch as Communications and Campaigns officer has enabled ALEC to redevelop its website and develop an active and integrated social media approach. The new website has a built-in Client Relationship Management (CRM) system allowing members and donors to subscribe directly. The integration of social media and the revamped Thorny News email updates has

facilitated a much broader audience engagement.

## *Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses*

2011 saw the launch of the Alice Water Smart Program, with ALEC in partnership to deliver the Homes and Businesses component. In its first year, 360 Alice Springs homeowners have had a Water Efficiency Consultation with 112 million litres of water savings identified, equivalent to 45 Olympic swimming pools. 35 businesses and organisations have had Water Efficiency Audits and over 213 million litres of water savings have been identified (85 Olympic swimming pools). Everything is on track to reach the projects water saving goals. Plans are well underway for the development of Voluntary Community Water Rules.

## *desertSMART EcoFair 2011*

This year's desertSMART EcoFair evolved into a 3-day sustainability festival. This was made possible through aligning the event with National Science Week. More than 1500 people attended over the course of the weekend with more than 30 stalls and workshops being presented. The introduction of the School's Day event attracted more than 280 students from 8 different schools participating in science and sustainability-related workshops. The combination of arts, science and sustainability was well-received by the local community and it can be safely said that the three-day EcoFair is here to stay.

## *Better governance and management*

The new Management Committee committed to improving the governance and management processes of ALEC this year. Recruiting Carmel Vandermolen into the Business and Operations Manager role was a huge coup and combined with professional development for the Coordinator and the Management Committee, ALEC is on the path towards good

governance - which like sustainability, is a course of constant improvement.

### *Talking About Uranium*

Talking About Uranium, a community educational resource was published this financial year. Thanks to the huge efforts of Lauren Mellor and the commitment of numerous Arrernte leaders, the book, DVD and i-talk animation (<http://www.italklibrary.com/stories/talking-about-uranium/>) with both English and Arrernte language versions were produced. This will become an important resource for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities facing the threat of uranium mining in their regions.



*Talking About Uranium Educational Resource*

### *Biodiversity Matters*

ALEC was awarded funding through the Territory EcoLink project to develop Biodiversity Matters. This exciting workshop program will be rolled-out in late-2012 in partnership with Parks and Wildlife, Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, Alice Springs Desert Park and Land for Wildlife to increase community awareness and engagement with biodiversity conservation activities. Workshops will be educational in nature with on-ground outcomes including biodiversity monitoring and land management activities.



### *COOL Community Service*





















































































#### *Announcements*

A highlight for desertSMART COOLmob was the screening of the two Sustainability Community Service Announcements that had been developed through 2011. These two advertisements, focusing on the various benefits of cycling and vegetable gardening, were developed in conjunction with the Climate Action group and Bellette Media and are being screened on Imparja and Southern Cross television stations, twice a week for one year (April 2012 – April 2013).



COOL Community Service Announcement featuring Eleven Greenstones

## ALEC'S Strategic Objectives 2012-2015

Strategic Objective 2012-2015	ALEC Board	ALEC Management	desertSMART COOLmob	Alice Water Smart	Community Garden Network	Beyond Nuclear Initiative
<b>Aim 1: Keep arid lands, and people safe</b>						
<b>Goal 1: Develop plans and projects to ensure sustainable land use in central Australia</b>						
<i>Objective 1: Develop strategies to assist ecologically sustainable Natural Resource Management</i>						
<i>Objective 2: Maintain a community voice on biodiversity conservation in the arid lands</i>						
<b>Goal 2: Moving beyond nuclear energy</b>						
<i>Objective 3: Work to ensure no new uranium mines are developed in the NT</i>						
<i>Objective 4: Ensure nuclear waste is managed in line with international best practice</i>						
<b>Aim 2: Work to create resilient communities in central Australia</b>						
<b>Goal 3: to educate, advocate and push for climate change mitigation and adaptation in central Australia</b>						
<i>Objective 5: Regional climate adaptation action plans developed</i>						
<i>Objective 6: Strong support for Education for Sustainability Central Australia Network</i>						
<b>Goal 4: to review, develop and promote action to fulfill the desertSMART RoadMap</b>						
<i>Objective 7: Protect, explain and promote desertSMART brand and concept</i>						
<i>Objective 8: Raise awareness of the Alice Springs Community so that water is valued as a precious and finite desert resource</i>						
<i>Objective 9: Facilitate regional movement towards Energy Efficiency and Renewable energy</i>						
<i>Objective 11: Develop strategies to reduce Alice Springs waste towards zero</i>						
<i>Objective 12: To improve the food security of Central Australia in a sustainable way</i>						
<i>Objective 13: Promote low carbon transport options in Alice Springs</i>						
<b>Aim 3: Maintain the viability of ALEC</b>						
<b>Goal 5: Work toward core financial independence</b>						
<i>Objective 14: Achieve diverse and continuous funding to a level to cover 100% of core operations by 2015-16</i>						
<i>Objective 15: Expand income for projects that fulfill ALEC's aims</i>						
<b>Goal 6: Improve reach and influence of ALEC's vision</b>						
<i>Objective 16: Improve internal and external communications, marketing and messaging</i>						
<i>Objective 17: By 2015 to increase membership to 5% of the Alice Springs population</i>						
<b>Goal 7: Enhance governance and management capacity</b>						
<i>Objective 18: Consolidate strategic and business planning</i>						
<i>Objective 19: Upgrade management and administrative processes</i>						
<i>Objective 20: Enhance staff capacity to achieve ALEC's purposes</i>						

# Aim 1: Keep Arid Lands Healthy

*Goal: Develop plans and projects to ensure sustainable land use in Central Australia*

Human well-being is dependent upon the health of surrounding ecosystems. The complex interactions between land, water and living species have been seriously impacted by more than a century of poor management and the prioritisation of unsustainable industries.

In 2011-12, ALEC developed a number of projects that worked towards its goal to 'Develop plans and projects to ensure sustainable land use in Central Australia'. These projects were educational in nature and sought to encourage involvement in better practice land management activities.

The **Learning by Doing: Soil Rehabilitation workshops** were completed in 2011-12, And were funded through the Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) Community Grants Program, in partnership with Batchelor Institute, Centralian Land Management Association (CLMA) and the Department of Natural Resources Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS). The final workshop was completed at the Department of Primary Industries' Old Man Plains Research Station in September 2011. 13 Batchelor students undertook the Ecosystem Management Understanding (EMU) process to identify and prioritise areas for soil rehabilitation work. Following the completion of a Risk Assessment and Management unit, the students used laser levels and a Bobcat to rehabilitate an area of gully erosion. The legacy of this project is the on-going relationship between Batchelor Institute and NRETAS staff in developing soil conservation workshops in the future.

**Building Community Participation in Land Management and Fire Preparedness** is an initiative that ALEC received funding through the NRETAS Environment grant program. In partnership with Alice Springs Landcare, Bushfires NT and Batchelor Institute – a workshop program was developed to allow land managers and members of the general public to undertake basic training in weed management and bushfire awareness for free. **The Basic Chemical Awareness** and **Basic Wildfire Awareness courses** were held this year. ALEC purchased 2

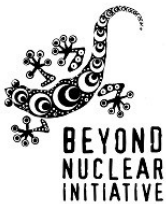
cropland sprayers, associated personal protective equipment (PPE) and 5 full sets of basic fire PPE (pro-ban jackets, trousers, gloves, helmets, visors and boots). In 2012-13, ALEC will organise an FF01 Fire-fighting course in conjunction with Bushfires NT.

**Biodiversity Matters** is a program designed to increase awareness and community participation in land management and biodiversity conservation. The initial program which consists of 5 workshops is funded through Territory EcoLink and was delivered in September (Biodiversity Month) 2012. This partnership between ALEC, Territory EcoLink, Olive Pink Botanic Garden, Alice Springs Desert Park, NT Parks and Wildlife and Land for Wildlife is an innovative and integrated approach to engaging the broader public in biodiversity conservation.

ALEC is represented on the Southern Regional Weeds Reference Group and acts as an intermediary between this expert reference group and the wider community. ALEC maintains an active presence on the Alice Springs Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Stakeholder Group which is both a networking and planning opportunity for the regions NRM groups. ALEC continues to advocate for sensible policies and regulation of the gas, mining and petroleum industries.



Participants in the **Learning by Doing: Soil Rehabilitation workshops**.



## Beyond Nuclear Initiative (BNI)

By Natalie Wasley & Lauren Mellor



Since 2006 BNI has been a dedicated initiative operating from the Arid Lands Environment Centre in Alice Springs, seeking to highlight the adverse impact of the uranium and wider nuclear industry in Australia and to promote a nuclear free future. The project has a focus on the interface between the nuclear industry and Indigenous people.

In the 2011 - 2012 financial year, Beyond Nuclear Initiative continued research and campaign work central to building local and national awareness of nuclear issues, focusing on building opposition to a federal radioactive waste dump proposed for the Northern Territory. BNI also tracks the status of uranium projects in the Northern Territory and works to communicate the risks of the industry to communities being targeted for uranium exploration and mining.

### Uranium Education Resource Kit

In early 2012 we developed the resource package 'Talking about Uranium' which is a booklet and interactive film designed for use in communities and schools to explore the health, environmental, cultural and social impacts of uranium mining and the nuclear fuel chain.

The project was developed with seed funding from the Fouress Foundation and Families for a Nuclear Free Future, with materials developed through the participation of Arrernte Traditional Owners from the communities of Alice Springs, Amoonguna and Santa Teresa, the Arid Lands Environment Centre, Beyond Nuclear Initiative, the Public Health Association (NT), and the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (NT Branch).

Launched in March 2012, the resource package is available in Arrernte and English and has been distributed nationally to Aboriginal community

representatives, health and environment organisations, trade unions and schools. It is available to view online at <http://www.italklibrary.com/italk/environment/> or in hard copy at the ALEC office.

### No Waste Dump at Muckaty

July 2012 marked seven years since the federal government first announced the plan for a national radioactive waste dump in the NT. Of the four sites initially proposed, Muckaty, an Aboriginal Land Trust situated 120kms north of Tennant Creek, remains the only site under active consideration. There has been consistent and strong opposition to the proposal. BNI lobbied to stop passage of the National Radioactive Waste Management Act, which maintains many draconian provisions of the former Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act, including suspension of key environmental and Aboriginal heritage laws at the site selection phase.



*Muckaty Traditional Owner Dianne Stokes speaking at a rally in Tennant Creek*

In 2011-12 BNI convened regular meetings with campaign stakeholders in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Darwin to discuss and plan the next stages of the campaign. A national trade union

delegation travelled to Tennant Creek in August 2011 with the support of BNI.

A federal court case initiated by Muckaty Traditional Owners against the federal government and the Northern Land Council is progressing and will go to trial in mid-2013. BNI is an agent of the legal team, helping communicate developments to the community and obtaining statements and information to assist the case.

If the federal government's national nuclear waste dump plan is advanced the NT will see significant increases in the volume, frequency and radioactivity of materials being transported. BNI and ALEC work closely with ECNT and Friends of the Earth to engage NT councils, Aboriginal land councils, and groups with interests in land and water management on the risks posed by the transport radioactive materials.

BNI has produced a short film titled 'Muckaty Voices' which has featured in national and international film festivals. BNI also collaborated with Muckaty Traditional Owners and Sri Lankan photographer Jagath Dheerasekara to compile a photo exhibition titled 'Manuwangu, Under the Nuclear Cloud'. A grant from Amnesty International has assisted the work to travel to Melbourne (Sustainable Living Festival), Perth and Sydney, where it opened the prestigious 'Head On' Festival in mid 2012. The exhibition will feature in the 2013 Adelaide Fringe festival.

### **Australian Nuclear Free Alliance**

The 2012 Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA) meeting was again hosted in Alice Springs with important organisational and logistical support from BNI and ALEC. ANFA brings together delegates from communities across Australia affected by nuclear projects, and representatives from health and environment organisations and trade unions. BNI and ALEC hold ANFA Committee positions and are committed to building the strength and success of this unique network in future years.

### **National Campaign Coordination**

BNI plays a key role in coordinating national initiatives for the nuclear free movement, including

hosting monthly phone link ups and organising a national nuclear free strategy meeting at the start of each year. BNI has also played a key role in setting up a Uranium Free NSW campaign collective in response to legislation passed early in March 2012 overturning a 26-year ban on uranium exploration across the state.

### **Looking to the future**

The Beyond Nuclear Initiative project has facilitated campaign work and network building that would not have otherwise occurred. Feedback from communities targeted by uranium and nuclear waste developments is extremely positive about the project and people are increasingly approaching BNI to visit communities and provide information and resources.

### **Key supporters:**

Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Student Environment Network, Electrical Trade Union (Qld), Environment Centre of the NT, Friends of the Earth Melbourne, Gerry McCarthy MLA for Barkly, Maritime Union of Australia, Medical Association for the Prevention of War (Australian and NT branches), National Tertiary Education Union (NSW Branch), Public Health Association Australia (NT), SEARCH Foundation, Senator Scott Ludlam (Australian Greens), South Coast Labour Council (NSW), Unions NT, Yellowcake Road Collective (Sydney).

BNI operates through the generous support of the Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund) and other philanthropic donations.



*ANFA Meeting in Alice Springs, September 2011*

# Aim 2: Work to create resilient communities in Central Australia



## desertSMART COOLMob

*By Alex McLean*



2011/12 has been a year of change and progress for desertSMART COOLmob (DSCM), with the program working hard towards inspiring and empowering community-led change, and finding new ways to engage in building sustainable and resilient communities in Central Australia.

Under the management of Maggie Turnbull until the end of 2011, the program saw a significant refining of its' vision and work through the development of a new Strategic Plan. This has been a significant boost to the programs focus, but needs to be further refined to ensure it is realistic, dynamic, and can be effectively used for monitoring and evaluation.

Since the new DSCM program manager, Alex McClean has taken over, this vision has been carried forward, and flagship ALEC projects like the Roadmap to a desertSMART Town are being looked at for review and renewal. Funding opportunities have also been expanded through a high number of applications put to the NT Government in 2012, and through involvement in 2 consortium bids for the multi-million dollar, federally funded Low Income Energy Efficiency Program.

Under both program managers, DSCM has seen the idea of "resilient" communities become more important. In 2011, DSCM embarked upon a new area of work with Power Water Corp, by starting to develop methods for working with low income households on energy efficiency, following analysis showing that these households were some of the most vulnerable to climate change in the NT.

In 2012, the area of food and sustainable food systems has emerged as a new area of work, addressing the need to build resilience in Alice Springs in this area. The DSCM program manager attended the 2nd National Sustainable Food Summit in Sydney in early April, building links with a number of actors and organisations in the

areas of community gardening, food systems research, primary production and community led food initiatives. This has lead to a number of ideas for sustainable food initiatives, including a plan to hold a one day desertSMART regional Food Summit in August as part of the Ecofair

The seasonal Stay Cool newsletter and weekly Sustainable Living with COOLmob column in the Centralian Advocate have remained popular elements in the DSCM media strategy in 2011/12, with readership for each estimated at approximately 125 and 4000 people respectively.

The development of a new DSCM website in October 2011 has provided a more accessible and professional online face for COOLmob, and links to facebook and website have facilitated a more integrated approach to use of social media for disseminating information and news.

In summary, 2011/12 has seen many of the DSCM Strategic Plan goals and objectives met, with many others on the way. However the program is at a critical time in a number of areas, and momentum needs to be maintained to ensure ongoing success.



*Sunil Dhanji with members of the Seddon family.*

Climate change is the biggest challenge facing the world's population today. Although global action is necessary, local actions to reduce carbon emissions and build resilient communities are the most appropriate course of action that ALEC can take.

In 2011-12, desertSMART COOLmob continued its regular Sustainable Living with desertSMART COOLmob column in the Centralian Advocate, providing locally relevant information accessible to the estimated 17 000 readership of the Centralian Advocate. Sustainability education and information distribution is a core function of COOLmob, and the program produces regular COOLnews newsletter to its membership and has organised numerous workshops.

ALEC advocates strongly for local action towards climate change mitigation and adaptation through the Alice Springs Town Council Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC).

ALEC also plays an important role in environmental education through hosting the Education for Sustainability Central Australia Network (EFSCAN).

## EFSCAN Report

*By Carmel Vandermolen*

The Education for Sustainability Central Australia Network (EFSCAN) has been running for over 2 years and has promoted science and sustainability in the education system for both educators and students. EFSCAN's vision is "that today's younger generation inherits a future which is environmentally sustainable, social just and economically resilient" and is a partnership between local, territory, national and international organisations that work in the areas of science and sustainability. ALEC has been involved in EFSCAN from the very start.

EFSCAN has been able to achieve some great results with very minimal resources, and has achieved these outcomes in 2011-12:

1. Develop and maintain a teacher network – enabling educators who are interested in the areas of science and sustainability and give the support necessary for educators to reach the goals of the national curriculum. The year of 2011/12 was the second year EFSCAN has of the teacher reference group and numbers have remained steady. By the end of 2011/12 over 15 teachers registered on the network. The aim for 2012/13 is to increase this

number to over 20.

2. The development and implementation of workshops for educators - in the financial year of 2011/12 we started to understand that we have a number of local people with a vast amount of knowledge in this area. EFSCAN has since then been working at providing professional development for educators using local experts. Our aim is to have 4 per year starting from January 2012 and since starting EFSCAN has been able to fulfil this objective.

3. EFSCAN joined the Australian Association of Environmental Educators (AAEE) NT and was nominated as the National Liaison representative for the group. The EFSCAN representative is currently Jimmy (ALEC Coordinator) who attends quarterly phone link-ups with the national AAEE committee and reports back to the local group.

4. Winner of the Group Training NT (GTNT) Partnership Award for the role EFSCAN has played in bringing diverse partners together in the education and sustainability sector.



*EcoScience Schools Day @ desertSMART EcoFair*

## The desertSMART Roadmap

Over a number of years ALEC has developed the desertSMART brand which offers a course of action towards living more sustainably in the desert.

desertSMART aims to create a national and international competitive advantage for participating businesses and associations, driving Alice Springs to become a show-case town for sustainability. desertSMART incorporates rethinking our approaches to water, energy, waste and the built environment.

The desertSMART process has been informed by the 'Roadmap to a DesertSMART Town' which was developed in 2005 through community consultation in Alice Springs.

## desertSMART EcoFair 2011

Now in its third year, the desertSMART EcoFair has become a permanent fixture on the Alice Springs calendar. This year the event transformed into a 3-day sustainability festival at the Olive Pink Botanic Garden. Through a strategic alignment with National Science Week, the EcoFair held a School's Day on the Friday. The School's Day was a huge success with over 320 students from 8 different schools participating in a range of workshops on biodiversity, food miles, water conservation, energy efficiency and other natural sciences. The feedback from teachers, students and presenters was overwhelmingly positive.

The Friday night launch of the EcoFair featured local band Dr. Strangeways and Tuijuana Cartel and attracted more the 350 people to the event.

The 2-day EcoFair program featured more than 30 workshops and local presentations with 32 information/craft and food stalls taking part in the festivities, with the Harvest Fair and Cast Iron Chef contest being held on the Sunday. The Saturday night featured the Centralian Q & A which brought Karl Hampton MLA, Peter Chandler, Jan Ferguson, Barbara Shaw, Ald John Rawnsley, and Dr Peter Tait together to discuss Centralian issues such as fire management, water conservation, Angela

Pamela, remote communities and the 'carbon tax'. Rohan Barwick from 783ABC Drive hosted the evening .

The 3-day event will be repeated in 2012, with stronger links to National Science Week and a more secure funding base to ease the burden on the organising committee.

## desertSMART Food Summit

In 2011-12, a new area of focus for desertSMART COOLmob is sustainable food in Alice Springs. While in its infancy, funding has been applied for to organise a desertSMART Regional Food Summit as part of the 2012 desertSMART EcoFair. Regardless of the outcome of the grant application, there is commitment by both desertSMART COOLmob and ALEC to ensure that this important gathering happens in August 2012.

## desertSMART Review and RoadMap 2017

An important opportunity for ALEC and desertSMART COOLmob emerged with the release of the Community Climate Change grants and the Environment grants on World Environment Day, June 5 2012. DSCM has applied for funding to review the impact of the desertSMART Roadmap from 2005 and to develop a new desertSMART Roadmap 2012-2017.



Centralian Q&A Panel, desertSMART EcoFair 2011

*Objective: Raise the awareness of the Alice Springs Community so that water is valued as a precious resource*



## Alice Water Smart Homes & Businesses

*By Liz Locksley*



Alice Water Smart is a two year plan to help Alice Springs residents to reduce water use by 1600 million litres per year, equivalent to two months average water supply. Alice Water Smart is delivered by a consortium in which ALEC works alongside Territory government organisations and the Alice Springs Town Council to deliver a community-wide approach to water efficiency. Alice Water Smart is supported by the Australian Government *Water for the Future* Initiative.

Alice Water Smart Homes and Business offers free home Water Efficiency Consultations, free Garden

Watering Assessments for eligible higher users, free business Water Efficiency Consultations and residents can access NT Government Waterwise rebates for a range of water efficiency upgrades.

### Project goals:

- Residential and non-residential water use reduced by 15% by 2013 from 2009 levels
- Socially accepted norms for water use are adjusted on a community wide scale

Services	Measure	Target 2011-12	Actual 2011-12	Target 2012-13	Comments
1000 Free Water Efficiency Consultations for Alice Springs homes	Water Efficiency Consultations complete or signed up	348	360	640	Key activities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design of water efficiency methodology and data capture process</li> <li>• Recruitment and training of staff</li> <li>• Promotion and delivery of Water Efficiency Consultations</li> <li>• Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive</li> </ul>
50 Free Water Efficiency Consultations for Alice Springs businesses and organisations	Consultations and Water Management Reports underway	20	35	15	
Community engagement and change campaign		Campaign strategy approved and underway	Draft campaign strategy prepared	Community Water Rules are adopted on World Water Day 22 March 2013	During 2011-12 the main focus of promotions was Alice Water Smart services and home Water Efficiency Consultations

**Budget \$2.7m over two years**

**Highlights:**

- 360 Alice Springs homeowners have had a Water Efficiency Consultation with 112 million litres of water savings identified, equivalent to 45 Olympic swimming pools.
- 35 businesses and organisations have had Water Efficiency Audits and over 213 million litres of water savings have been identified (85 Olympic swimming pools).
- A Water Audit for smaller organisations is now available through Alice Water Smart. Residents and businesses have been contributing to the development of Community Water Rules for Alice Springs.
- NRETAS has provided over 1,500 Waterwise Rebates in the last year to improve home water efficiency and save 40 million litres.



*Power Water Corporation General Manager Water Services Steve McKenzie, Minister Karl Hampton, AWS mascot Wurgle, Senator Don Farrel, and Mayor Damien Ryan at Alice Water Smart Launch July 2011*

**Events and activities during 2011-12:**

- Alice Water Smart launch July 2011
- Plumbers information session
- Community Engagement and Change Campaign strategy workshop
- Participation in DesertSMART EcoFair
- Participation in desertSMART Eco-Science Schools Day
- Stall at Old Timers Fete
- Water Smart gardening workshop at the Community Gardens
- Water Week stalls at Yeperenye and Alice Plaza
- Night market stalls including the Christmas carnival



Alice Water Smart Stall at desertSMART EcoFair 2011

**Community Partnerships**

Roller Derby  
Rugby  
Rotary



Members of the Alice Water Smart Team: Richard Bentley, Hayley Michener & Jethro Laidlaw



Water Efficiency Consultant, Jethro Laidlaw with Marianne Cummins

## *Objective: Raise the awareness of the Alice Springs Community so that water is valued as a precious resource*

**ALEC** maintains an active presence on the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee (ASWAC). ASWAC is a statutory committee formed under the Water Act to provide advice to the NT Government's Water Controller. The advisory function of ASWAC is a critical part of the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy which was reviewed in 2011. ALEC

continues to advocate for water conservation measures and maintaining a conservative cap on the extraction of water from the Mereenie aquifer. ALEC also advocated both within ASWAC and through the media to remove the exemptions of mining, gas and petroleum activities from the Water Act and Waste Management and Pollution Control Act.

## *Objective: Facilitate regional movement towards energy efficiency and renewable energy*

### **Alice Solar City**

In 2011-12 ALEC continued to be an active voice on the Alice Solar City (ASC) Consortium. A highlight for the year was the opening of the 1MW Uterne solar power station near Norris Bell Drive. Uterne, which means 'hot, sunny day' in Arrernte, is the largest tracking solar farm in Australia.

The Alice Solar City project is set to finish in June 2013. In 2011-12, ALEC advocated for and made numerous representations to both Government and Opposition members requesting commitments to fund an on-going program in 2013-2014. The NT election in August 2012 provides a platform for requesting financial commitments. However, by June 30 2012- neither side of politics had committed to funding Alice Solar City post-June 2013. The challenge remains - how will the momentum be maintained and who is going to drive it?

### **Community Climate Change Grants**

In late 2011, the NT Government released the Community Climate Change grants.

ALEC successfully applied for:

- Detailed feasibility study for a community-owned solar farm
- The impacts of white roof paint on internal household temperatures
- Establishing an Alice Springs chapter of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition

The implementation of these projects will occur in 2012-2013.

### **Low Income Households**

In 2011-12, desertSMART COOLmob (DSCM) established a Low Income Household Energy Efficiency project, funded by Power Water Corp to enable DSCM to continue to promote, deliver and improve residential environmental auditing programs. The project inception workshop on 21 September 2011 was well attended, with over 20 participants from a range of welfare agencies, environment agencies, and government departments attending. This represents a new set of relationships for ALEC and DSCM.

This project has fed into DSCM's involvement in developing Expressions of Interest for the Federal Government's Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP). DSCM is involved in two applications, one with Power Water Corporation and one with Top End COOLmob. If invited, full applications will be submitted in late 2012.



*ALEC staff at Uterne opening, July 2011*

## *Objective: Develop strategies to reduce Alice Springs Waste Towards zero*

In 2011-12, the NT Government passed legislation banning retailers from giving out single-use plastic bags and initiating a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in the NT.

ALEC has advocated for these policies for more than a decade and was happy to see this legislation pass. However, the NT Government was threatened with legal action from the big beverage manufacturers, in particular Coca Cola Amatil. ALEC lead a boycott campaign against the company with joint media releases with Environment Centre NT and Boomerang Alliance. Public opinion very strongly supports a container deposit scheme and the Facebook event attracted 750 people in one week! The CDS is not flawless and will be interesting to see how the big beverage companies attempt to undermine the scheme.

Another way that ALEC is reducing waste in Alice Springs is through the community garden compost project. Funded through the NT Government's EnvironmentNT grant program, a series of compost trials were established at the community gardens.

The results will provide important information on the best way to compost in the arid lands but also to lay a foundation for a potential social enterprise in compost collection from cafe's, restaurants and hotels. The results will be collated in late 2012.

ALEC's active role on the Alice Springs Town Council Environment Advisory Committee (EAC) involved requesting recycling rates to be reported and to support the construction of a regional recycling facility at the Commonage Rd landfill site. This is expected to enter construction phase in 2013.



## *Objective: Promote low carbon transport options in Alice Springs*

In 2011-12, ALEC promoted low carbon transport options for Alice Springs through leading by example and strategic use of media.

The desertSMART COOLmob advertisement made possible by an EnvironmentNT grant is on rotation from April 2012-April 2013 and highlights the health, environmental and economic benefits of cycling in Alice Springs. It is appropriate that the star of the advertisement is Jethro Laidlaw, who as a Water Efficiency Consultant for Alice Water Smart, uses an electric bike daily to get around to household water consultations.

ALEC is a bike friendly organisation that had 100% participation in Ride2Work Day this year and ALEC's Bicycle Advocate, Richard Bentley, actively encourages all staff to cycle to work.

ALEC also applied for funding for a feasibility study to develop a solar-powered electric bike hire scheme in Alice Springs. Though not successful in this instance, ALEC continues to advocate for better bike paths and parking facilities in the CBD.





## Alice Springs Community Garden

*By Kim Hopper*



The Alice Springs Community Garden was originally championed by a group of individuals in 2007. Since then the Arid Lands Environment Centre has supported developing a community garden by auspicing the project, providing support in the form of advocacy for grant monies and by securing a lease on the community garden site at Frances Smith Park in 2010.

In March 2011 project officers were employed by ALEC to progress the development of the community garden in accordance with the Alice Springs Community Garden Project Plan (2010).

It is a goal of the community garden to increase community resilience by increasing local food production and associated skills through education and the provision of useful resources.

In October 2011 the community garden was awarded a \$45000 grant from the Ian Potter Foundation to setup the community garden as an educational 'living classroom' site. This was instrumental in getting the garden site established and connecting the community to the project. The grant monies were used to implement a series of workshops and events that established the infrastructure and garden facilities, and initiated a resource base for the garden.

### **Some areas that we have been promoting learning in is:**

- Arid zone food production
- Indigenous bushfoods and medicine plants
- Recycling and use of local materials

### **Some things that we have learnt about gardening:**

- Minimising waste, composting onsite

- How to construct swales/ponding banks
- The advantages of 'Crop and drop' mulching
- Seed saving
- Local threatened/rare species
- Weed identification and management
- Water management
- Bushfoods garden propagation

### **Community workshops/events 2011/12:**

- Sod Mulching
- Peace Tree Planting
- Bodhi Tree Planting
- Water harvesting and Swale Building
- Soil and Water Testing
- 'Ask the Experts' garden forum
- Tree planting and irrigation
- World Environment Day
- Water Smart Gardening
- Mandala Garden Design
- Harmony Day
- Fruit Tree Planting and Care
- Pizza Oven building
- Recycled Rubbish Seats
- Compost workshops

### **New infrastructure:**

- Boundary Fence
- Independent main water connection
- Cob BBQ and recycled 'rubbish seats'
- Large communal garden

- 17 private garden plots, 23 Fruit trees
- composting bays

## Financial Report :

The community garden would not be established as it is today without the following valuable grant support.

Grants awarded to the ASCG and ASCGN in 2011/12:

- NRETAS Compost trials (\$10K)
- ARTS NT, proposal development with Watch this Space (\$6K)
- Ian Potter Foundation, 'live, learn, grow', (\$46k)
- Office of Multicultural Affairs, Harmony Day grant (\$1k)
- NRETAS Network Membership Drive (\$10K)

## Sponsorship:

The Alice Springs Community Garden has been made possible by the generous contribution of local business and all of the individuals who have given their time, enthusiasm and resources to progressing the establishment of the community garden.

## Financial/in-kind supporters:

Alice Springs Town Council , Arid Lands Environment Centre,

Power and Water

Centre Landscaping Supplies

Tangentyere Nursery

Billette

Reece Plumbing

Centralian Middle School

DuYu Coffee

The Centralian Advocate

Wayne Treggia Irrigation

Geoff Miers Garden Solutions

Flavell Plumbing

Tina Tilhard Designs

Alice Springs Nursery

Alice Water Smart

Rotary Alice Springs

Rotary Stuart



*Swale planting, November 2011*



*World Environment Day, June 2012*



*Cob BBQ Workshop, May 2012*

# Aim 3: Maintain the viability of ALEC

## *Goal: Work towards core financial independence*

In 2011-12, the ALEC Management Committee set itself the task of working towards core financial independence. The goal of financial independence is based on diversifying income streams rather than being reliant on operational funding from both the Northern Territory and Australian Government's.

The Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses Program is an example of ALEC developing fee-for-service arrangements with larger clients – although reported financially as a grant to be acquitted – it is actually an agreement with Power Water

Corporation to deliver the project milestones. At \$2.7 million over 2 years – it has been a steep learning curve for ALEC staff managing this program but important lessons are being learned.

In 2012-13 ALEC will develop business plans for potential social enterprise opportunities, while strengthening partnerships with the philanthropic and private sector. An investment strategy will also be developed to ensure member's funds are earning near-maximum returns.

## *Goal : Improve reach and influence of ALEC's vision*

### **ALEC Communications**

*By Nicole Pietsch*

The launch of the redeveloped ALEC website in April 2011 has been a major achievement for ALEC in this financial year. With a great desert themed look and feel, ALEC's information and online resources are now presented to complement ALEC's Strategic Aims. The user experience has been greatly enhanced, important information is easier to access, and there has been significant positive public feedback.

The new website also incorporates the CiviCRM system, making it easier to join and donate directly to ALEC, and for ALEC staff to keep track of membership and financial contributions. Staff are undertaking training to be able to best utilise this system, and membership renewal and recruitment will be a stronger focus in 2012-2013.

ALEC has continued to build its social media presence through Twitter and Facebook, and is planning to develop a Social Media Policy in 2012/2013, as part of the ALEC Communications Strategy.



The weekly Thorny News E-Newsletter has been revamped, with a new look to complement the ALEC Website. The Thorny News is now produced fortnightly, and again there has been an increase in positive feedback that reflects the change in strategy. The Devil's Advocate Publication has been reintroduced, and is a fantastic tool for disseminating important ALEC information, particularly at events and information stalls.

ALEC has continued to maintain a presence in the local community through participation in the Alice Springs Show, Henley on Todd, Alice Springs Town Council Markets, the Wide Open Space Festival and many other events.

ALEC also continues to maintain a community presence through representation on advisory groups, consortiums and committees, and through active engagement in local partnerships.

## ALEC Business and Operations

*By Carmel Vandermolen*



During the year of 2011/12 ALEC has had an opportunity to be able to really focus on governance of the organisation. This included acting on recommendations that were put forward by an independent review.

The following actions have been implemented:

- Development and completion of a Strategic Plan for ALEC which provides impetus to ALEC's management committee and employees to focus on opportunities and outcomes that will move ALEC forward into the next growth phase. This was completed in early 2012.
- Improving the capacity of the management of ALEC. Two new management positions were designed, the Business Operations Manager and the Communications and Campaigns Officer, and staff recruited. This has enabled the ALEC Coordinator to focus on overall management of ALEC and development of future opportunities.

- Development and completion of staff reviews to enable positive growth for both the employees and the organisation. ALEC is aiming to have these reviews every six months.
- Development of stronger Work Health Safety practices and guidelines, which will continue on into 2012/13.

Further to this there are a number of objectives that will be focused on in 2012/13, including but not limited to:

- Updating ALEC policies and procedures.
- Development of an induction manual for employees, volunteers and board members
- Development of business plans for the different project areas of ALEC that have already been identified as strong development areas in the strategic plan.
- Development of annual staff and project plans.

## ALEC Treasurer's Report

*By Mark Keyworth*



This is my second year as Treasurer of ALEC; there has been plenty to do!

The commencement of the Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses program in March 2011 has resulted in a substantial increase in income and transactions this financial year, and the number of staff employed is currently more than double historical numbers.

Jimmy, the Management Committee and I have

worked hard during the year to ensure that financial systems and procedures, and risk management are appropriate for the increased level of financial activity.

Jimmy has again lodged numerous grant applications during the year and in addition to obtaining the usual grants such as ALEC and DesertSMART COOLmob's Operational grants, a number of smaller grants were recently obtained for various one-off projects. Income was also obtained

from various sources other than grant income.

Carmel was recruited as Business and Operations Manager in March 2012. She has been a great help to both Jimmy and the organisation in liaising with external bookkeepers and me, in providing financial reports, and in carrying out major projects such as preparing the annual budget, which required her to meet with the Project Managers and the Finance Sub-Committee to discuss numerous draft Project budgets. Carmel also provided financial and administration services directly to the Alice Water Smart team.

The figures for the sections of this report relating to current financial position and trading performance were obtained from the draft audited financial statements prepared by Basso & Newman Co. I do not envisage any changes and I would expect the final audited statements to be available at the AGM.

### Current financial position

ALEC is currently in a healthy financial position.

The Balance Sheet reports that at 30 June 2012:

- Total members funds increased by over \$300,000 during the year to be \$654,502 at 30 June 2012
- The majority of assets are current assets – either cash at bank, term deposit or receivables.
- The written down value of plant and equipment at 30 June 2012 was \$49,634
- Current liabilities totalled \$911,748. Unexpended grants expected to be spent in 2012/13 total \$758,667 and other current liabilities include creditors (\$53,304) and amounts owing to the Tax Office for PAYGW and GST which totals \$65,127.
- Jimmy and Carmel are currently investigating asset needs to ascertain whether additional assets or upgrades could assist in improving performance and they will report their findings to the Management Committee. If assets are required, some of the retained earnings may be used to fund the purchases, though it is also possible we could secure grant funding for this purpose.

We continue to lease the premises at Lindsay Avenue and it is unlikely that we will spend any significant amounts on assets that cannot be removed from the building should ALEC relocate.

ALEC's financial position has improved markedly in the past 2 years and it is expected that this improvement will continue for a further 12 months.

The new Management Committee will be required to consider the appropriate amount of accumulated funds should be kept and how remaining funds might be invested. In early 2013, I expect that an investment and/or social enterprise (business) strategy might be developed.

### Financial performance

The Profit and Loss Statement for the year ended 30 June 2012 reports:

- Income more than doubled to be \$1,375,262 compared with \$611,683 last year. The majority of income was from Government grants, which increased by almost \$800,000 to total \$1,212,083. A significant portion of grant income came from the Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses program (which are accounted for as grants despite being fee for service). Income from a number of other sources including interest, membership fees, rent from tenants and fundraising totalled \$163,179.
- Expenditure totalled \$458,112. As usual employee expenses and consultancy fees was the largest expenditure. Including superannuation, these expenditures totalled \$260,840. Other major expenditure items were advertising (\$15,153), motor vehicle expenses (\$15,901) and rent (\$35,782)
- The net operating profit was \$306,068 compared with \$153,571 last year and \$96,666 in 2010.

In line with the Strategic Plan, ALEC is to diversify funding sources in order to minimise risk. I would expect ALEC management and the new Board will work closely together in the next 12 months to identify and pursue opportunities.



**ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 50 100 640 918**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

	2012	2011
<b>INCOME</b>		
Government Grants	1,212,083	428,684
Donations received	20,352	91,428
Interest Received	34,883	15,680
Other Revenue	39,433	23,415
Rent Income	21,223	26,603
Fundraising	22,244	16,334
Recoveries	23,579	4,439
Consultancy Wages	1,465	5,100
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>1,375,262</u>	<u>611,683</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accounting Fees	25,610	9,029
Advertising	33,235	15,153
Audit Fees	4,000	-
Bank Charges	771	543
Building upgrades	-	6,024
Campaigns Expenses	-	2,156
Catering	6,373	5,278
Cleaning	5,164	1,350
Consultancy fees	21,246	28,953
Computer, IT & Internet Costs	24,695	3,164
Conference Fees	-	1,368
Depreciation	9,819	2,590
Donations	-	284
DSW Expenses	94,673	3,536
Electricity	4,164	1,477
Event expenses	-	4,456
Fundraising	7,461	4,889
Hire of plant & equipment	11,914	2,015
Insurance	14,961	6,233
Interest Paid	1,764	-
LLEE - Contract wages	-	6,887
Magazines, journals and periodicals	-	777
Materials & Supplies	5,714	-
Minor Equipment	1,747	2,063
Motor Vehicle Expenses	8,155	15,901
Multi Media Productions	21,013	1,082
Office expenses	871	1,132
Postage	2,286	815
Printing and Stationery	5,838	13,766

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report

**ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 50 100 640 918**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

	2012	2011
<b>EXPENDITURE (Contd)</b>		
Professional Development	3,713	-
Program expenses	-	1,803
Project Contribution	-	6,194
Provision for Annual Leave	20,128	(1,262)
Provision for Doubtful Debts	-	7,000
Recruitment	6,597	9,099
Rent, Rates & Taxes	47,451	39,444
Repairs & Maintenance	2,274	1,216
Salaries & Wages	597,721	213,074
Sponsorships	-	1,000
Staff training & welfare	-	465
Subscriptions	1,147	590
Sundry Expenses	(3,291)	415
Superannuation Contributions	53,306	18,813
Telephone	4,741	4,511
Travel, Allowances & Fares	22,929	13,978
Workshop Expenses	1,004	851
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u>1,069,194</u>	<u>458,112</u>
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<u>\$ 306,068</u>	<u>\$ 153,571</u>

**ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 50 100 640 918**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

	Retained Surpluses
Opening Balance, 1 July 2010	194,863
Net Surplus (Deficit) attributable to members	<u>153,571</u>
Closing Balance, 30 June 2011	348,434
Net Surplus (Deficit) attributable to members	<u>306,068</u>
<b>RETAINED SURPLUSES AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<u><u>\$ 654,502</u></u>

**ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 50 100 640 918**

**ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT AS AT 30 JUNE 2012**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and Cash equivalents	2	1,210,504	483,957
Accounts receivable & other debtors	3	<u>306,112</u>	<u>122,128</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>1,516,616</u>	<u>606,085</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, Plant & Equipment	4	74,237	29,723
Less Accumulated Depreciation		<u>24,603</u>	<u>14,786</u>
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>49,634</u>	<u>14,937</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>1,566,250</u>	<u>621,022</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts payable & other payables		53,304	15,788
Accrued Expenses		7,486	3,995
Payroll Liabilities		32,055	5,503
GST payable		33,072	17,772
Unexpended Grants	6	758,667	222,494
Provision for Annual Leave		<u>27,164</u>	<u>7,036</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>911,748</u>	<u>272,588</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>911,748</u>	<u>272,588</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>\$ 654,502</u>	<u>\$ 348,434</u>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Retained Surpluses		<u>654,502</u>	<u>348,434</u>
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<u>\$ 654,502</u>	<u>\$ 348,434</u>
Contingent Liability	7		

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report

**ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 50 100 640 918**  
**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report being the assets and liabilities statement, income and expenditure statement, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements:

- 1 Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc as at 30 June 2012 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- 2 At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc will be able to pay its debts as when they fall due.

We confirm as follows:

- (a) The name of each committee member of the association during the financial year were:

Jenny Pender	Stewart Baillie
Robbie Henderson	Rachel Toovey
Glenn Marshall	Mark Keyworth
Jason Quin	Emily Webster
Alex Kelly	
- (b) The association is a community based environment organisation
- (c) The net profit of the association for the year ended 30 June 2012 was \$306,068

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

  
Board Member

  
Board Member

Signed in Alice Springs this 17 day of October 2012

## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc (the association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2012, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by members of the committee.

### Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc is responsible for the preparation of the financial report and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Act and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

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

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

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Qualification

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc to maintain an effective system of internal control over cash receipts from memberships, merchandise sales & other income such as fundraising until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, our audit in relation to these activities was limited to the amounts recorded in the accounting records.

**basso  
& newman**  
chartered  
accountants

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INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF  
ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC



**Qualified Auditor's Opinion**

In our opinion, except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had the limitations in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial report of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc as of 30 June 2012 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Act.

**Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution**

Without modifying our opinion we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc to meet the requirements of the Associations Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Basso', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Trevor Basso - Partner**  
**Basso Newman & Co**  
**Chartered Accountants**  
**Adelaide**  
**22 October 2012**

## Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC)

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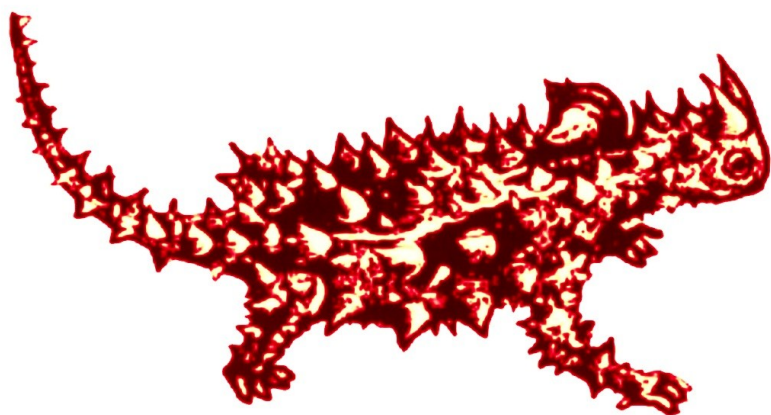
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**Arid  
Lands  
Environment  
Centre**

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