

A photograph of a person hiking through a narrow, rocky canyon. The canyon walls are made of reddish-brown rock. A large, white-barked tree is on the right side of the path. The ground is covered in rocks of various sizes. The sky is blue.

Healthy futures for arid lands and people
ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
www.alec.org.au

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

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The Arid Lands Environment Centre would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands we work on and their crucial role in caring for country. We acknowledge their Elders, past, present and future and the important role Aboriginal people continue to play within our community.

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Front Cover Image: Alex McClean
Fringe Lilly Gorge





Serpentine Gorge Lookout

Our Vision:
"Healthy futures for arid lands and people"

CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME

Much has happened during the last decade! Despite global unrest and significant ecological challenges we find ourselves in a position where climate change is now not just something that is being talked about, but is being acted on from many countries all over the world.

There are many challenges still in protecting our environment, not helped by the short sighted policy decisions of many of our elected leaders. However ALEC remains a constant in this landscape, and in good shape as you'll discover in our 2016/17 Annual Report.

It's a surprise to realise that our ALEC Director, Jimmy Cocking, arrived ten years ago! I'm sure his younger self, travelling from Victoria, would be surprised to see where this town has taken him. He's not alone there! Many ALEC people are making lengthy contributions. This retention of experience and organisational memory is invaluable. Our stability in a town of much transience is a testament to our vision and values. Drawing capable positive people to Alice is one of ALEC's intangible contributions.

This year's treasurer's report provides an historical view of just how agile ALEC has been in responding to fluctuating circumstances. In 2010, ALEC's total income was about \$500,000. Three years later at the peak of the Alice WaterSmart project that had quadrupled to \$2,000,000 before abruptly collapsing back under the environmental attacks of the Abbott and Giles Governments.

Throughout those dark years ALEC deliberately ran substantial deficits in order to take up the fight when it was most needed. At the same time, we continued exploring new revenue models like our social enterprise arm Arid Edge Environmental Services. I am really happy to report that this strategy has paid off. Income this year has risen to \$1,200,000 and importantly ALEC has returned a modest surplus. This largely is thanks to four years of capacity building within AEES. I congratulate the AEES team on behalf of ALEC members, staff and board for their dedicated and successful effort.

There is a diversity of activities documented in this Annual Report. As usual, read it thoroughly to enjoy the many good news stories. You see, good news, though often overlooked, is really important.

The environment movement has been grappling for decades with how to protect nature and spur action on climate change. The early common-sense assumption was that stating the problem would lead to a rational policy response. Then followed detailed modelling and crushing evidence of the end-of-the-world ecological consequences of inaction which has proven to be ineffective.

Bad news leads to despair and inaction. It is empowering good stories that drive change. We need things to believe in - to work towards. ALEC is driving good news stories here in Central Australia and is leading the transition to an equitable, sustainable future.

Stewart Baillie
Chairperson

ALEC Chairperson, Stewart Baillie, exploring the beauty of Central Australia



DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

The Arid Lands Environment Centre is a trusted voice for the desert country where we are working to protect the outback and catalyse change.

Our success this year is due entirely to our people, our community. Without a dedicated management team and staff, combined with the passion and diligence of our volunteer Board and the commitment of our community to turn up when the call goes out - we wouldn't be here today.

2016-17 has been a year of consolidation for ALEC. In this, my 10th Annual Report at the helm of ALEC, you'll see that we have turned the ship back into surplus after 3 consecutive years of deficit due to funding cuts.

ALEC is not only financially stronger, we have also increased our influence in the policy arena; grown our on-ground project footprint; partnered in the development of the region's largest environmental project and embedded our vision of 'healthy futures for arid lands and people' in our growing community.

ALEC's financial performance this year is due to two main factors. Primarily, the increased revenue from Arid Edge Environmental Services (AEES) has returned a surplus to ALEC. AEES, under the management of Alex McClean has seen ALEC's project footprint grow beyond Alice Springs. A

full-time staff member at Utopia working on the Merne Murde – Good Food Programme; Work for the Dole at the Alice Springs Community Garden; a community landscaping project in Wilora; track-building on the Larapinta trail; Todd River Green Army project; the landscaping for the Larapinta Childcare Centre and a growing pipeline of jobs that align to our strategic purpose.

Secondly, the NT Government funding for a Policy Officer has freed up capacity to pursue other opportunities to influence environmental outcomes. ALEC's policy influence is growing with the recruitment of Alex Read and this is enabling ALEC to have an increased presence on a broader range of government committees and reference groups while having a dedicated staff member (with an environmental law background) working on policy submissions.

In 2016-17, ALEC has also invested in community engagement through employing Laurie May as our Community Engagement Officer. Laurie has updated and consolidated our volunteer policies and developed a database. A workshop program has been established and has brought a wide range of people into ALEC, and our membership

ALEC Director Jimmy Cocking assisting with filming at the Southern Desert Rangers Forum



ALEC will continue to advocate for a frack-free Northern Territory, a climate friendly economy and support the community to take action as needed.

numbers are at their highest.

ALEC's coordinating role of the Ten Deserts Initiative has seen a transition in 2017. A face-to-face workshop was held in Alice Springs in August 2016 and the Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert (GVD) was developed. ALEC presented at both the South Australian Buffel Grass Forum and the Indigenous Desert Alliance meeting in Perth.

ALEC also organised and facilitated the inaugural Southern Deserts Ranger Forum in Ilkurlka in Western Australia in partnership with the Indigenous Desert Alliance and Spinifex Land Management. ALEC is a partner in the Ten Deserts Project bid, which will be submitted to the BHP Billiton Foundation in late 2017. If funded, this project will be a game changer in indigenous land management in the arid lands.

The fracking moratorium has been a welcome relief as the NT Labor Government demonstrates a commitment to science and an evidence base.

In 2017-18 we will know which way the Gunner government will lean – a ban, fracking in the Beetaloo basin or open slather.

Either way, the Northern Gas Pipeline is under construction which when completed will provide an opportunity to get NT gas to east coast and export markets.

It's challenging times as climate change continues to be exacerbated by record global carbon emissions.

With the lack of national and global leadership ALEC continues to work tirelessly for 'healthy futures for arid lands and people,' and is supporting local and regional approaches to environmental protection and climate adaptation.

Jimmy Cocking
Director



ALEC Director Jimmy Cocking with Environment Minister Lauren Moss and Chief Minister Michael Gunner at the announcement of the Northern Territory Government funding for an ALEC Policy Officer

TIMELINE OF ENGAGEMENT

JULY 2016

Stall: Alice Springs Show
Election: Federal
Event: RePower Alice Springs Gathering at Owen Springs Power Station
Workshop: ECNT Strategy Session in Darwin
Submission: NTEPA Nolans Bore Rare Earth Project



AUGUST 2016

Event: desertSMART EcoFair
Event: RePower Alice Springs Public Meeting
Event: Ten Deserts Workshop in Alice Springs
Election: Northern Territory



SEPTEMBER 2016

Event: Arid Edge Green Army Todd River Buffel Project Graduation



OCTOBER 2016

Event: Northern Territory Government funding media conference
Presentation: Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert launch and Buffel Forum in Adelaide
Submission: NTEPA EIS Jemena Pipeline
Submission: NTEPA Hawke Review
Representation: National Environment Meeting
EOI: BHPB Foundation for Ten Deserts Project
Action: Don't Dump on SA NDA



NOVEMBER 2016

Event: ALEC Board and staff strategic planning
Presentation: Indigenous Desert Alliance Perth
Presentation: Into Blue Exhibition Opening
Meeting: Tellus pre-EIS
Action: No Fracking Pipeline
Event: ALEC AGM



DECEMBER 2016

Event: Tennant Creek – Films for Climate Action
Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program
Event: Love in the Laneway - Fundraiser

TIMELINE OF ENGAGEMENT

JANUARY 2017

Meeting: Roadmap to Renewables
Meeting: No Fracking Pipeline
Meeting: Ilparpa Claypans Lovers

FEBRUARY 2017

Submission: Dept Mines and Energy
Environmental Mining Bonds
Consultation: Tennant Creek No Fracking Pipeline
Event: Buffel Busters Tour
Presentation: Community Energy Conference Melbourne
Presentation: Friends of the Earth Melbourne No Fracking Pipeline



MARCH 2017

Event: Clean Up Australia Day
Presentation: NT Scientific Fracking Inquiry
Submission: NT Economic Summit
Submission: EIS Tellus Chandler Salt Mine and Toxic Waste Storage
Presentation: Fracking presentation to St Phillips classes
Meeting: NT Environmental Policy Team
Consultation: Titjikala Tellus Hazardous Waste Storage Proposal
Event: Chandler Project Information Session
Event: That Sugar Film, Inspiring Australia



APRIL 2017

Meeting: EcoAdvisors Perth BHPB Foundation
Submission: NT Economic Development Framework
Submission: NT Strategic Indigenous Reserves Water
Event: Earth Day Letter Writing against Fracking
Workshop: Green Cleaning

MAY 2017

Event: Community Garden Open Evening
Workshop: Earth Law & Environmental Jurisprudence
Submission: Western Davenports Water Allocation Plan
Submission: NT Scientific Inquiry into Fracking



JUNE 2017

Event: 60000 Artists Climate Change Exhibition
Event: Southern Deserts Ranger Forum Ilkurlka
Submission: NT Environmental Regulatory Reform
Submission: NT Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan
Workshop: Beeswax Wrap Workshop
Event: Buffel busting at Simpson's Gap
Event: Risky Business – Economic Myths of the Fracking Industry



REPRESENTATION

ALEC's strength lies in the depth of engagement it has with the community and the breadth of representation it has on key projects and working group

Committees and Working Groups

- Alice Springs Regional Weed Reference Group
- ASTC Environment Advisory Committee
- Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee
- Chief Ministers NGO Roundtable
- Ten Deserts Project Working Group
- Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert
- Environment Defenders Office NT Management Committee
- Community Garden Management Committee
- Alice Springs Regional Economic Development Committee
- Outback Alliance Partnership

ALEC Director also sits on:

- Australian Conservation Foundation Board and NT Councillor
- Desert Knowledge Australia Board

ALEC provides organisational support to the following groups:

- RePower Alice Springs
- Central Australian Frack Free Alliance
- Alice Springs Community Garden
- Formation of Ilparpa Claypans Action Group
- Environment Centre NT strategic planning and support (Darwin)

3 interstate presentations

Representation on 12 different committees and working groups

More than 150 hours of meetings



Participants learning about burning around special places at the Southern Deserts Ranger Forum



Section 5 Larapinta Trail

Strategic Aim:

"Create more sustainable and resilient communities in Central Australia"

ARID EDGE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Arid Edge Environmental Services (AEES) is a social enterprise of the Arid Lands Environment Centre. AEES provides research, training, project management, design and consulting services in the areas of water, waste, food, and energy.

2016/17 has been a successful year for Arid Edge, with the team consolidating staff numbers and skill base, delivering on larger contracts and ultimately returning a significant surplus to ALEC.

This continues a long term trend of growth in turnover and profits in the four years of operation. AEES has now returned all ALEC funds invested in it over the first two years of operational losses, and is now \$32,687.52 in surplus over its entire lifetime.

The 'Merne Murde' (Good Food) Utopia Homelands Gardens Project, managed by Utopia Horticulture Projects Officer Hilton Chilvers continues to be a flagship project for Arid Edge. The project supports 13 gardens across 10 homelands, and evidence is growing of the impact the project is having on people's access to fresh fruit and vegetables and healthy eating habits.

The partnerships with My Pathway, Urapuntja Corporation and Primary Health Network (PHN) remain key, and prospects for continuation and expansion are strong.



The AEES team working on the Merne Murde Good Food project at Utopia Homelands

The landscaping team has grown rapidly this year in size and capability. Ra Sim has joined Sunil Dhanji and Simon Hopper on the team adding significant landscape design and drafting skills.

This year the team has delivered on its first major landscape construction contract – the Larapinta Childcare Centre with MPH - as well as its first major landscape design contract, working with Sue Dugdale Architects on the Braitling School Stage 2 landscape design.

Arid Edge has also forged a successful partnership with Tasmanian track maintenance specialist John 'Snapper' Hughes, leading to significant contracts worth over \$290,000 undertaking track maintenance on the Larapinta Trail. After one successful year, this could become an annual

Stage 1 build of landscaping works at Wilora community



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Turnover	\$61,366.00	\$90,358.79	\$402,148.41	\$941,106.13
Profit	-\$48,993.00	-\$42,099.69	\$32,144.04	\$91,636.17
%	-80%	-47%	8%	10%
Staff	1	3	6	8

feature in the AEES calendar, and may also lead to further work maintaining mountain bike trails around Alice Springs.

The Work for the Dole at the Alice Springs Garden lead by Ben Wall also continues to be a real success. At the end of its second project, the gardens are looking fantastic, with solar panels ready for connection, a meeting areas, potting sheds, retaining walls and art in abundance.

The Department of Employment recognises this as one of its more successful projects nationally, with the project providing great community outcomes for the garden's members and at least 3 participants going on to gain employment with Arid Edge's landscape and track work teams.

- Braitling School Design
- 86 Hartley St Design and Build
- Larapinta Child Care Centre
- Titjikala Roo Sanctuary Fencing
- Arlparra Church
- Arlparra school – pre-school play area fence and shade

Utopia Merne Murde Food gardens

Larapinta Trail Track Maintenance

Work for the Dole ASCG

Green Army – Todd River Revegetation Project

Wilora Community Landscaping



Alex McClean
AEES Manager

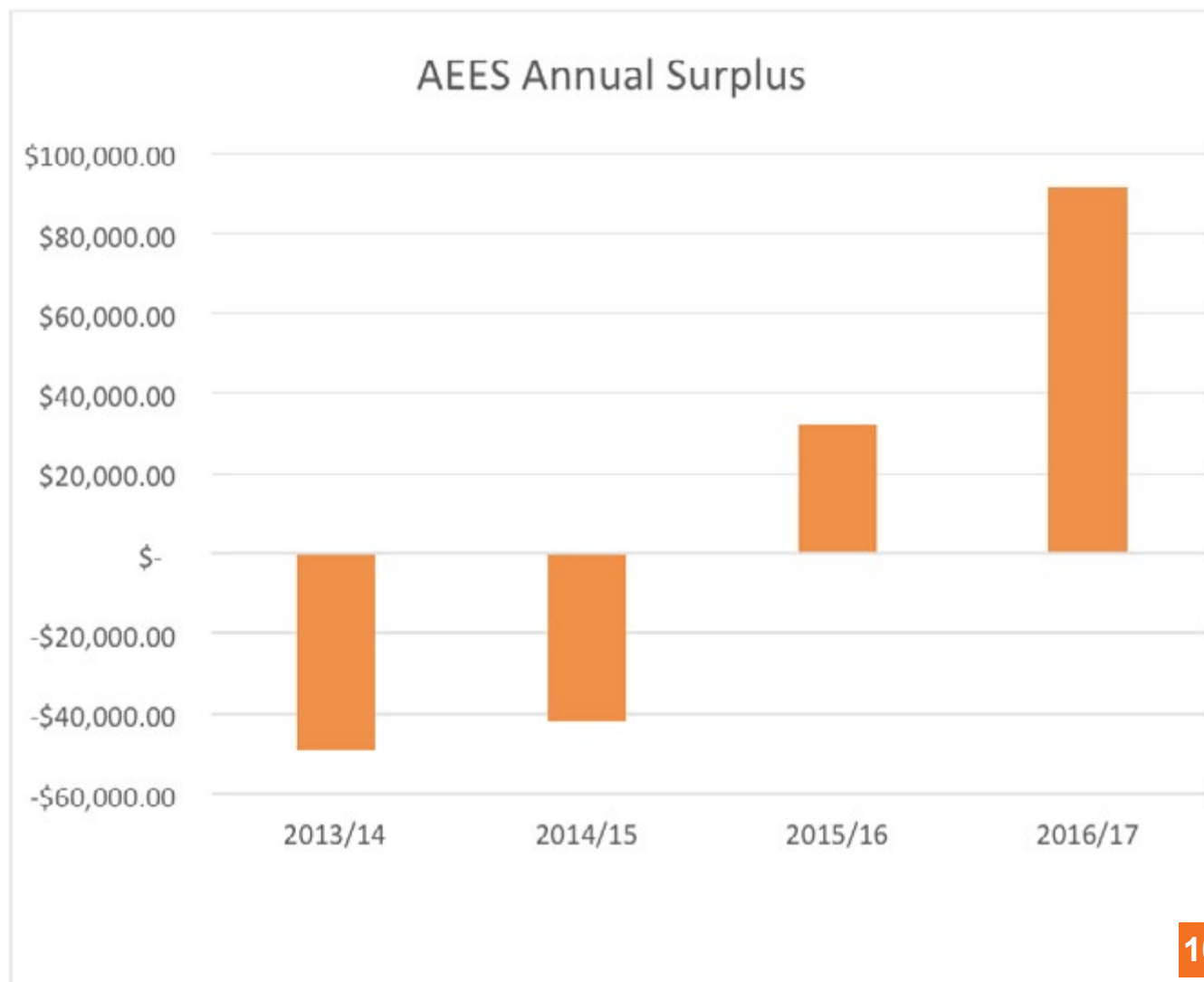
<http://aridedge.com.au>

<https://www.facebook.com/aridedge/>

Summary of Projects 2016-17

Landscaping Contracts

- Allchurch St



DESERTSMART ECOFAIR

desertSMART EcoFair is ALEC's feature event and aims to educate, inspire and activate the community around science and sustainability issues

12-14th August 2016

32 events, presentations & workshops

5 venues

1650 participants

desertSMART EcoFair is in its eighth year and is organised by the Arid Lands Environment Centre as part of National Science Week, and is sponsored by the Australian Government's Inspiring Australia Initiative as well as a range of community sponsors.

In 2016 special guests included Professor Lesley Hughes (Climate Council), Claire O'Rourke (Solar Citizens) and desertSMART EcoFair ambassador Costa Georgiadis (Gardening Australia). The event expanded from the Olive Pink Botanic Garden into other venues in Alice Springs that showcase our environment including the Earth Sanctuary World Nature Centre and the Alice Springs Desert Park.

Highlights included:

- **Eco-Science Schools Day** More than 300 local school students participated in hands on workshops in the areas of recycling, health, renewable energy, climate change, land management, national parks management, science and sustainability.



Costa Georgiadis (Gardening Australia) led the bike ride

- **Science Under The Stars** was a sold out event that saw 100 people enjoy a tour of the Earth Sanctuary, a 3 course dinner, entertainment and even though it was cloudy participants got to see an excellent close up view of the moon through a telescope.
- **Sustainable Living Festival & Sunday Eco-markets.** Despite a cloudy, rainy day more than 800 people enjoyed the Sustainable Living Festival and Eco-markets at the Alice Springs Desert Park Courtyard.



Nicole Pietsch
EcoFair Coordinator

<http://ecofair.org.au>

Keynote speaker Professor Lesley Hughes (Climate Council) with a presentation on climate science



FOOD FOR ALICE

Food for Alice has had an exceptional year. We have increased produce purchases, sales and staff to help run the market. At the beginning of July 2016 FFA was servicing on average 25 customers per market. By the end of June 2017 this average had increased to 35-40 customers per market.

Before growing our customer base we needed to increase our supply of local produce. The biggest indicator of this growth we have measured in tables. This year we started with 3 tressle tables being enough to display the produce for sale. By the end of June 2017 we had to erect 6 tressle tables just to make sure we had enough room.

This is a win for the local community - more local produce is being grown and more community members are enjoying the availability and taste of very fresh and "almost organic" produce. A big thank you to our valued customers and our

Food for Alice is a social enterprise of ALEC and advocates for sustainable and ethical local food. Food for Alice runs a weekly local produce market. Most of the produce comes from private gardens, small-scale producers and the Alice Springs Community Garden.

suppliers - your support has enabled Food For Alice to continue to grow. As a result of the profit for the financial year, FFA will continue to have 2 staff. With this growth we look forward to more people growing and eating local fresh produce, and contributing to a more sustainable community



Costa Georgiadis and friends at the Food For Alice stall through a reduction in food miles.

Sales	\$34,026.60
Total Income	\$34,026.60

Equipment and depreciation	\$783.31
Other	\$618.34
Produce	\$22,488.96
All wage costs	\$9,131.56
Total Expenditure	\$33,022.17

Profit	\$1,004.43
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Carmel Vandermolten
FFA Coordinator

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/108715702520033/>

The Food For Alice stall is full of local produce every Saturday morning



ALICE SPRINGS COMMUNITY GARDEN

ALEC has been supporting the establishment of a community garden in Alice Springs since 2007, and continues to provide ongoing organisational support. The Alice Springs Community Garden (ASCG) has come to be a thriving hub of activity with more than 40 personal and community gardening plots, bush medicine and mandala gardens, a cob oven and regular working bees and community events. The garden is run by a volunteer committee.

ASCG Governance

The Committee met monthly and through a concerted team effort in between meetings and in collaboration with ALEC staff the Garden continued to prosper. Four committee members, Fran, Kay, Margaret, and Deb moved on during the year. Their passionate contribution to the Committee's work and the Garden community's development has been important and most appreciated. We were excited to welcome two new general members, Anna and Jodi.

Plots

Forty individual plots were leased throughout the year. Monthly fees were raised from \$15 to \$20 to help meet costs. Warm thanks once again to Plots Rep Philippe Freidel for another year of enthusiastic persistence in retaining old and recruiting new plot holders and to Carmel at ALEC for managing the financials. The remaining plots in the third and final plot holder section will be available in the next financial year raising the total number of individual plots to around 45.

Garden Infrastructure

The Infrastructure POD was led by Allan O'Keefe. The solar pergola and the wheelchair access path

Happy community gardeners at their individual plot



Gardening guru Geoff Miers delivers a gardening workshop

were both completed during the year. Thanks to Allan from Comwin Pty Ltd, Ben Cartwright from Cartwright Sun Energy and Ben Wall and his team.

The Community Garden received a \$63 000 Community Benefit Fund grant to build a kitchen, disabled access toilet and office space for the gardens. This will be the next big development for the garden in 2017-18. This project will enable the Garden to better host events, school groups and working bees well into the future.

Our Garden Vision is 'Growing Healthy Gardens'. Many interconnected factors contribute to healthy gardens including gardening literacy, soil quality, watering regimes, mulching, planting in season, picking at the right time and shading in summer.

Fundraising and Events

\$1,707 was raised primarily through two sausage sizzles at Bunnings and a highly successful Spring Fair held on October 2nd. A special thanks to Allan, Marilyn and family and to all other volunteers for their efforts.

The desertSMART EcoFair event with Costa Georgiadis and Geoff Miers in August, the Spring Fair in October and the last Friday of the month social evenings promoted the garden as a community meeting place and the concepts of healthy food, healthy communities.

Regular working bees were held every 1st and 3rd

Committee members and friends of the Garden can feel justly proud of their outstanding achievements over the past year and look forward to another year ahead of friendship and happy, healthy gardening.

Sundays. The working bees made a substantial difference to the overall health of the Garden as did composting, mulching and manuring.

BodhiTree/Meditation Group

Kay Smith welcomed other meditators to the quietude of early Sunday mornings in the Garden.

Communications

Healthy Garden newsletters and ALEC Thorny Newsletters continued to provide Garden updates and advice. ASCG social media will be integrated into the new ASCG website over the coming year.

Work For the Dole

Work For the Dole Supervisor Ben Wall and his teams continued to add to the Garden's beauty and visual interest over the financial year. An elegant low stone wall now encircles the mandala garden which is a wonderful addition.

Financials

In summary the Garden commenced the year with Cash at Bank of \$6,085.13 and ended it with \$3,140.11, a loss of \$2,946.02. Expenses included a one-off payment of \$4,236.90 to complete

funding for the the solar pergola project. In effect our operational income exceeded our operational expenses by \$1,291 so the Garden continued to run at a small surplus.

The annual water bill was \$7,457 and costs for garden equipment and garden materials including manure rose to \$2,930, totalling \$10,387. Plot rental income was \$8,464. Produce from the Garden and Bruce's home garden was sold at the Food for Alice stall, raising \$5,279 in income. This income was critical to balancing the budget and there is potential to raise more from Garden sales.

During the year ALEC acquitted \$21,563.80 for the completion of the solar pergola and \$1,450.77 for the Town Council Grant for a wheelchair access path. Thanks to our Treasurer Wendy Mann and to Business Manager Carmel at ALEC for their work.



Bruce Simmons
ASCG Convenor

<http://www.alicecommunitygarden.org.au>
<https://www.facebook.com/AliceCommunityGarden/>

CLIMATE ACTION

Jimmy and Meret standing in front of the stockpiled pipe north of Tennant Creek destined for the construction of the Northern Gas Pipeline



ALEC is part of the global movement working towards a safe climate. We're catalysing change across the arid lands through building local resilience, advocating strongly for emission reductions and a just transition for communities in Central Australia.

Protecting our climate is at the heart of the work we do.

Increased warming will have serious impacts on communities and natural systems across the world unless we act now. Our future depends on us working together like never before, and demanding strong action to reduce carbon emissions from our Governments, businesses and community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is at the core of ALEC's theory of change and is a large component of the work in delivering outcomes for ALEC's first strategic aim - 'create more sustainable and resilient communities in Central Australia'.

ALEC has hosted a range of public meetings, community events, fundraisers, actions, working bees, information stalls and workshops in the 2016-2017 financial year. ALEC also has a strong online presence through its new website launched in July 2016, regular members e-newsletters, and social media sites and groups.

35 community events
10 community information stalls
50 local produce markets
24 garden workings bees
12 workshops
1500 Devils Advocate newsletters distributed
100+ community volunteers



Alice Springs Town Council Youth Action Group volunteers at desertSMART EcoFair

In March 2017 Laurie May was recruited for the Community Engagement Officer position to provide support with managing volunteers, ALEC memberships and community engagement activities.

A policies and procedures manual for managing volunteers was created and has been shared with the Environment Centre NT. The volunteer database has been updated and regular communication with prospective volunteers and interns has been established.

For a small community ALEC has a strong volunteer base with more than 100 volunteers



Community members at a No Fracking Pipeline meeting in the ALEC Courtyard

contributing to establishing a more sustainable, resilient community. Volunteers contributed to desertSMART EcoFair 2016, the Alice Springs Show 2016 information stall, 2 Degrees Fundraiser, Love in the Laneway Fundraiser, Biodiversity Matters conservation volunteer projects, banner painting days, planning sessions, and community gardens working bees.

Interns have provided administrative support for the Science Engagement Officer, Policy Officer and Biodiversity Matters program.

In March 2017 the ALEC Eco Workshop series was launched as a community engagement initiative. Aims of the workshops include:

- bringing in more people into the ALEC space
- encouraging more ALEC memberships
- encouraging the reduction of carbon footprints
- reducing of waste going into landfill
- creating more conscious consumers

The workshops have been very popular, often with waiting lists, and they have generated a small income after covering costs.

Workshops have included:

- Green Cleaning
- Earth Law & Environmental Jurisprudence
- Beeswax Wrap Making workshop

A big thankyou to the volunteers who have supported the workshop series, and Nico Liegme for volunteering the marketing collateral for the project.

Laurie May
Community Engagement Officer

SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT

The aim of the Inspiring Australia Regional Hub is to empower regional communities by increasing science dialogue and literacy through local science events. ALEC was engaged to deliver 5 science engagement events in 2017, funded by Inspiring Australia.

Science is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.

That Sugar Film, Screening for World Kidney Day 9th March, Alice Springs Town Library

The event aimed to promote awareness around Chronic Kidney Disease and included healthy living stalls, a panel discussion on kidney health and a free public screening of That Sugar Film.

Outcomes

- A total of 90 people attended the event, including 20 students from Yirara College.
- Stalls were run by Healthy Living NT, Congress



Rachel O'Leary speaks at the Healthy Living Forum and Charles Darwin University, measuring blood sugar levels, blood pressure and heart rate and promoting healthy eating.

- Presentation on the challenges faced locally with diet, obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease, with Donna Ah Chee from Congress, Morgan Hitchcock from Western Desert Dialysis, Sue Delacy from Healthy Living NT & Alex McClean from Arid Edge Environmental Services.

Rachel O'Leary
Science Engagement Officer

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN NETWORK

The Education for Sustainability Central Australian Network (EFSCAN) is a local network of organisations and individuals working to support and advocate for the development of environmental and sustainability education in Central Australia, facilitated by the Arid Lands Environment Centre.

ALEC staff Carmel, Jimmy and Rachel with Hayley Michener and Mayor Damien Ryan from the Alice Springs Town Council at the Waste Wise launch.



In 2016-17 EFSCAN produced the Waste Wise in Alice Excursion Guide, and organised the desertSMART Ecofair Eco-Science Schools Day.

The 'Waste Wise in Alice: An excursion guide to the Alice Springs Regional Waste Management Facility' was funded by the NT Environmental Protection Authority and produced by ALEC. The guide gives local students an opportunity to learn about waste management by providing activities for students to complete before, during and after an excursion to the Waste Management Facility.

The Eco-Science Schools Day 2017 was held at the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens and was a great success, with 300 Alice Springs students participating from nine different schools, including a remote community school.

Rachel O'Leary
EFSCAN Project Officer

REPOWER ALICE SPRINGS

Repower Alice Springs would like to acknowledge and thank ALEC for auspicing and supporting our group. Achievements over the 2016 - 2017 financial year included:

- Our first EcoFair stall, engagement with our community via markets and the Alice Springs Show generating new members and interest.
- August 2016 we held our first public meeting with Solar Citizens, Repower Port Augusta and the Alice Springs airport.
- At the beginning of 2017 we held meetings with Minister McCarthy Member for Barkly, Minister Wakefield Member for Braitling, MLA Lambley Member for Araluen and MLA Paech Member for Namatjira. Political lobbying is being continued as part of our engagement plan.
- To kick off 2017 we held a planning session, refocused our goals and re-organised our meetings into a main monthly coordination group, with three subgroups focussing on people, power & politics meeting as needed. Up until this point ALEC had been providing facilitation and meeting support for Repower meetings, and after this we took over these functions ourselves.
- We recognised we needed to have evidence of community backing for lobbying government for our vision of 100% solar by 2030. A Community Solar survey was developed to measure community support and identify where we should focus education around solar energy. The survey was commenced in May 2017 and was open for online and paper responses.
- Held a World Environment Day Dinner on the 5 June 2017, with a focus on renewable energy,



RePower Alice Springs volunteers

Repowering Alice Springs, and how we as individuals are inspired to make a difference.

- We held an initial community power initiative meeting with representatives from Pingala, to discuss various power models and how we might implement a community power initiative for Alice Springs. This meeting was the impetus for Repower developing and submitting a funding application to Climate Action Network Australia (CANA).
- Repower met with the Renewable Roadmap Taskforce and made a submission.
- Throughout this year we have had regular and productive meetings with Territory Generation, and look forward to ongoing development of our relationship with them.

We are particularly thankful to all the people who have helped to develop Repower and supported the vision for 100% renewable energy by 2030 for Alice Springs.



Harshini Bartlett
RAS Convenor

Email: repoweralicesprings@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/repoweralicesprings/>

The Repower Alice Springs Public Meeting in August 2016





Section 3, Larapinta Trail, Standley Chasm

Strategic Aim:

"Protect ecosystems and encourage sustainable use of natural resources in Central Australia"

The Ten Deserts Initiative is a cross-border collaborative conservation project working across WA, SA and NT. ALEC has been coordinating the network, with funding from Pew Charitable Trusts since 2015.

This year activities included another face-to-face workshop in Alice Springs in August 2016 and facilitated regular phone link meetings to continue to build collaborative potential across this vast area.

The workshop had more than 40 participants from 25 organisations working on developing strategy for the overall Ten Deserts Initiative and the development of the Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert (GVD) collaboration.

The workshop also included the Bushfires and Natural Hazards CRC consultation, a focus on Payment for Ecosystems Services and the development of a carbon methodology for the arid lands.

Following the meeting, ALEC presented to the South Australian Buffel Grass Forum to launch the creation of the Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert and start building momentum for the collaboration. A presentation was also made at the Indigenous Desert Alliance meeting in Perth.

Due to the lack of certainty with funding, Ten

Deserts has had to be flexible in the way it has approached opportunities to build on the collaboration. In October, ALEC was part of a group that submitted an expression of interest into the BHP Billiton Foundation's Environmental Resilience program.

The \$20.3M project bid is an indigenous led land management project named Ten Deserts. Following a successful invitation to submit a full application, the group has been meeting weekly to fortnightly to develop the bid.

The project lead is Desert Support Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Desert Native Title Services. If successful, ALEC's role will be to coordinate the Buffel Free GVD project activity and the external stakeholder reference group and face-to-face meeting adjacent to the annual Indigenous Desert Alliance meeting. The project, if successful, will start in January 2018.

ALEC, in its role as Ten Deserts coordinator worked with the Indigenous Desert Alliance and Spinifex Rangers to organise the inaugural Southern Deserts Ranger Forum (SDRF) at Ilkurlka, Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia.

The SDRF was organised to provide an on-country workshop for indigenous ranger groups that have traditionally missed out on training and development opportunities. It was a

Participants at the Southern Deserts Ranger Forum



The purpose of Ten Deserts is to raise the profile of arid land management, connect desert land managers to each other and build collaborative projects across the arid lands of Australia.

Organisations that participated in the Ten Deserts Workshop:

- Department of Parks and Wildlife - WA
- Spinifex Land Management
- Kanyirinipa Jukurrpa
- Parks Australia
- Department Land Resource Management - NT
- Territory NRM
- Low Ecological Services - Land for Wildlife
- Natural Resources Alintya Wilurara - SA
- APY Land Management
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Central Land Council
- Rangelands NRM
- Biosecurity SA
- Desert Knowledge Australia
- CSIRO
- Bush Heritage
- Charles Darwin University
- Dept Environment, Water and Natural Resources (SA)
- The Nature Conservancy
- Bushfires and Natural Hazards CRC
- GVD Biodiversity Trust
- Conservation Management
- Arid Lands Environment Centre
- Aboriginal Carbon Fund
- Nakau Programme

highly successful event with around 80 people participating representing an area of more than 1.2M square kilometres of desert country.

Rangers undertook training on tourism management and compliance; rifle safety and technology. Rangers shared knowledge on managing buffel grass; fire; waterholes and camels.

It provided an opportunity for cultural business as well as coordinator debriefs. The value of this activity has been recognised and is being organised to occur again in 2018 in a different location.

The Ten Deserts Initiative as it has been known will change considerably should the BHP Billiton Foundation project be funded.

It will be a game-changer for indigenous land management and collaboration across the arid lands and be the single largest environmental project supporting environmental outcomes in the desert country.



<http://tendeserts.org>

Jimmy Cocking
Ten Deserts
Coordinator

Spinifex ranger Stuart Baker burning buffel in Tjuntjuntjara, WA



POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Policy advocacy, analysing environmental impact statements and making submissions to government is some of the most important and effective work that ALEC engages in. Policy advocacy and engagement with stakeholder reference groups is vital to realising ALEC's strategic priorities of protecting the outback from inappropriate development and working towards a healthy future.

ALEC has a strong representation in the policy advocacy space and has been able to build additional capacity in 2017 with the employment of a dedicated Policy Officer, Alex Read, as a result of additional policy funding from the NT Government.

ALEC's submissions this year included calls for transparency in relation to mining environmental security bonds; banning fracking; strengthening the environmental regulatory framework and greater consideration of the economic impacts of climate change.

ALEC's submission to the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing made the case against the development of the fracking industry through utilising prevention (a ban) and the principles of ecologically sustainable development, such as

- **72% submissions on mining/energy/water**
- **18% submissions on environmental regulatory system**
- **9% submissions on economic development**

the precautionary method, polluter pays and inter and intra-generational equity. It was a substantial submission that outlined the evidence for significant climatic risks of methane emissions and environmental degradation through groundwater contamination.

ALEC has been engaged with the development of the Chandler Salt and Hazardous Waste Storage Facility as it has progressed through Government assessment and approval processes. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the project was released in March and ALEC made a submission in April. A major concern with this project is the uncertainty and ambiguity about the control and regulation of hazardous wastes that



Environmental Impact Statements are generally thousands of pages of reading and analysing

are would be stored in the void space after the salt has been mined. Exemptions under the Waste Management and Pollution Control Act for the NT mean that the mining company is not required to acquire a license for all wastes and contamination. ALEC presented its concerns about this project to community members in Titjikala. Residents were seriously concerned about the prospect of permanent toxic waste storage and reported a lack of details on the waste part of the project during the consultation.

The draft Strategic Indigenous Water Reserve policy was released for comment in May and outlined a plan by the NT Government to reinstate indigenous entitlements to water that could be traded or utilised for commercial opportunities. This policy represented a progressive and unique step towards redressing historical injustice and improving equitable outcomes for indigenous people in the management of water resources in the NT. ALEC supports the policy as it will make the NT a leader in indigenous water rights in Australia.

Another significant policy development has been the beginning of Environmental Regulatory Reform. Phase one involves reform of the environmental assessment and approvals framework. The ALEC submission on this process advocated for the most progressive and best practice framework in Australia, utilising knowledge from leaders in environmental law.

ALEC advocated for the inclusion of environmental

One of the fundamental roles of the policy position is to critique the environmental assessments of mining companies and provide critical oversight through the perspective of ecologically sustainable development.

justice, as a vital guiding principle of the reform, the introduction of open review and appeal rights for development decisions and greater role of traditional ecological knowledge. The next generation of environmental law in the NT must do more than minimise harm, it must prevent development that poses unacceptable environmental risks.

The Draft Water Allocation Plan for the Western Davenport Water Control District was released for consultation as part of its 5-year review in May. Part of this review included consultation with Government on the modelling of groundwater systems and groundwater dependent ecosystems. The ALEC submission focused on the need to develop a more strategic and comprehensive approach to identifying and protecting those groundwater dependent ecosystems and advocating for an allocation that does not exceed recharge rates. This submission has led to ALEC representation on the newly constituted Western Davenport Water Allocation Advisory Committee.

The Todd and Finke rivers feed into the iconic Lake Eyre basin, one of the world's most pristine and biodiverse inland river systems. ALEC made a submission on the state of the basin report 2016 calling for the inclusion of a greater number of environmental indicators to provide a more holistic view of the systems health. ALEC will continue to be involved in the management of this basin.

In addition to making formal submissions ALEC was represented on the Environment Advisory Committee of Council, the Alice Springs Water

Advisory Committee, the EDO Management Committee and the Alice Springs Regional Weeds Reference Group.

It has been a dynamic and exciting period in the development of environmental policy. Positive feedback from government noting our contribution to policy reform reaffirms ALECs strong position. Such official recognition demonstrates our ongoing ability to positively influence the direction of environmental policy in the NT.

Submissions Summary

- NTEPA: Nolans Bore Rare Earth project EIS - July 2016
- NTEPA: Jemena Pipeline EIS - October 2016
- NTEPA: Hawke Review Advice - October 2016
- Dept Mines and Energy: Environmental Mining Bonds - February 2017
- NTEPA: Tellus Salt and Toxic Waste Storage EIS - March 2017
- NT Economic Development Framework - April 2017
- NT Strategic Indigenous Reserves; Water - April 2017
- NT Scientific Inquiry into Fracking - April 2017
- NT Environmental Regulatory Reform - June 2017
- NT Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan - June 2017
- Lake Eyre Basin, State of the Basin report - June 2017

Alex Read
Policy Officer

ALEC Policy Officer Alex Read addressing Titjikala residents re the Chandler Salt Mine proposal



BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

Biodiversity Matters is an Arid Lands Environment Centre initiative to increase community participation in land management and biodiversity conservation activities.

The Biodiversity Matters program includes informational sessions and hands-on field trips, where participants learn about local biodiversity issues and participate in conservation activities including flora and fauna research, weed removal, fencing and other activities as needed.

Despite being unfunded, the Biodiversity Matters program held two events in the financial year, and continued to promote local conservation activities via its Facebook page.

In February 2017, more than 30 people participated in the Biodiversity Matters Buffel Busting Inspiration Tour. Organised by the Arid Lands Environment Centre with grant support from Territory NRM and the National Landcare Programme, and the support of Land for Wildlife, Desert Knowledge Australia, Alice Springs Landcare and Olive Pink Botanic Gardens - the Buffel Busters Tour was organised to inspire potential buffel busters to get active buffel busting after witnessing local success stories.

In June 2017, 16 people participated in Buffel



Participants examined buffel busting efforts in the Ankerre Ankerre coolibah swamp with Jude Pritchard from Alice Springs Landcare

Busting at Simpsons Gap, providing a fire buffer around a large significant ghost gum. Organised by Arid Lands Environment Centre with support from Territory NRM, Landcare Australia and Parks & Wildlife the event was supported by two volunteer interns in the lead up to and on the day.



<https://www.facebook.com/biodiversitymattersaridlands/>

Laurie May
Community Engagement
Officer

DESERT SCIENCE NETWORK

The Desert Science Network is an Inspiring Australia initiative. ALEC was funded to develop the Desert Science Network with project partners in 2014-15. A launch event was organised in early 2015, however a lack of capacity and a loss of momentum due to the defunding of ALEC and some partner groups in 2015-16 meant that project activity had stalled.

This year ALEC employed Rachel O'Leary as our Science Engagement Officer. The increased capacity in this area allowed ALEC to develop a Desert Science Communication Action Plan. This plan proposes a number of actions that can be undertaken to support better science communication in the desert regions. As part of this project, ALEC contracted Ng Media to produce

a film at the Southern Deserts Ranger Forum at Ilkurlka; Desert Rangers: Science Champions. The short film demonstrates desert rangers using technology in their everyday work and discussing the merits of using technology to collect data for land management activities.

In 2017-18, ALEC will have to acquit the funds and is exploring opportunities to work with other Inspiring Australia hubs in South Australia and Western Australia to work on communicating the science of climate change and opportunities for local action in indigenous communities.

Jimmy Cocking
ALEC Director

DON'T FRACK THE OUTBACK

The election of the Gunner Labor Government in August 2016 brought a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing into play. Given the amount of financial and political support the Giles Country Liberals Government gave to the gas industry over its four-year term – it was welcome relief.

The NT Government has established a Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory and appointed Justice Rachel Pepper as the Chair. ALEC has presented and made a submission to the Inquiry, which can be accessed at <https://frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au/submission-library>. The Inquiry will submit its findings to the government before the end of March 2018. ALEC will continue to push for a permanent ban on fracking in the NT.

Leading researcher, Chemical Engineer Tim Forcey, appeared before the NT Fracking Inquiry stating that fracking the McArthur Basin could release four to five times as much greenhouse gas emissions as the proposed Adani Carmichael mine.

ALEC also made a submission on Jemena's Northern Gas Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement calling for the NT Government to not approve the project based on its economic justification 'to open up the Territory's onshore gas potential', the opposition of Wakaya Traditional Owners and the potential for permanent damage due to the number of creek and river crossings.

Frack Free Coordinator Tanya Hall moved



Participants at a roadside community action in August interstate in November 2016. ALEC would like to her significant contribution to the fracking campaign in Central Australia.

interstate in November 2016. ALEC would like to her significant contribution to the fracking campaign in Central Australia.

In the absence of a campaign coordinator, ALEC took the lead locally on the campaign against the Northern Gas Pipeline, a Giles led project to connect the NT to the east coast gas market and a driver for onshore gas fracking. ALEC made two trips to Tennant Creek and made a presentation to the Quit Coal group at Friends of the Earth in Melbourne. Unfortunately the project was approved and license to construct granted in early May 2017. Traditional Owner support was secured with construction to start in 2017-18. ALEC continues to be opposed to the project but with limited resources, we have had to look at other means to stop fracking in the Northern Territory.

Concerned community members gather out the front of the NT Fracking Inquiry community consultation



If we are serious about tackling climate change then there must be a policy of no new fossil fuel projects or infrastructure, including fracking. Solar is now the cheapest energy technology and there must be an urgent transition to renewable energy.

Employment of a new Campaign Coordinator

Through an agreement between Lock the Gate and ALEC, Jesse Hancock commenced as the Central Australian Campaign Coordinator for the Territory Frack Free Alliance on April 1st.

The renewed focus of the Central Australian Frack Free Alliance (CAFFA) was made through embedding the key lessons individuals had learned through the successful push for a moratorium and

Key CAFFA engagements:

- **CAFFA Submission to the Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing: April**
- **Land and Water Network Meeting: May**
- **Lobby meetings with every local MLA: Dale Wakefield, Chansey peach, Scott McConnell, Robyn Lambley: June**
- **Rod Campbell: Risky Business - Why the economic claims of the gas industry don't stack up: June**

scientific inquiry. The CAFFA group as a whole decided to work on a strengths-based approach to strategic planning and action. In practice this has meant committing to actions and events that are based on the strengths represented by core members in the group. This has been an effective

Regular community stalls have been a key engagement strategy of the Central Australian Frack Free Alliance



There is strong community support for a ban on fracking in Alice Springs.

way to avoid burnout and activist fatigue.

Jesse Hancock has also dedicated time to developing connections with station owners and remote communities in the Central Australian region.

The focus for 2017-18 will be to ensure the moratorium holds and the NT Government bans fracking. This is going to take a huge commitment from the frack-free community in mobilising and organising to ensure the NT Government makes the right decision and the Federal Government does not intercede.



Jesse Hancock
Campaign Coordinator
<https://www.facebook.com/CentralAusFrackFree/>

BEYOND NUCLEAR INITIATIVE

Beyond Nuclear Initiative (BNI) has been hosted by the Arid Lands Environment Centre since 2006.

A joint project of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Friends of the Earth Australia, BNI was set up to track the status of nuclear projects across the country. There is close monitoring of radioactive waste management and continual efforts to highlight the disproportionate impact of the nuclear industry on remote and Indigenous communities.

Project convener Natalie Wasley is based in Sydney and speaks regularly about nuclear issues at meetings, public events and rallies.

Radioactive Waste Management

In its efforts to site a national radioactive waste dump, the federal government has lurched from one contested site to the next. Staunch and well-organised community resistance has stopped numerous sites progressing, though three in SA are still under consideration.

BNI works with Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners of the Wallerberdina site and community representatives from the two proposed sites in the Kimba region on the Eyre Peninsula. There is regular strategic discussion held with the local community and attendance at public events in SA when possible. BNI has also prepared media and legal briefings on behalf of the community and will continue seeking and communicating with allies around the country.

Adnyamathanha woman Juanella McKenzie was hosted at a series of meetings in Sydney with media, politicians, union officials and community campaign groups. Juanella also spoke at a rally

Delegates at the Exposure Community Forum in Port Augusta, SA



Adnyamathanha Traditional Owner Regina McKenzie at Pungha Pudanha (Hookina Springs) situated on Barndioota station, nominated to host the national nuclear dump.

in Pitt Street Mall organised by BNI as part of a national day of action.

Briefings on the SA waste dump proposal and its links to the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor in southern Sydney have been provided to NSW Ministers and Shadow Ministers, union officials and federal politicians.

BNI was invited to attend and present at a major community event in Port Augusta called 'Exposure', which brought together people from across the state, including survivors and family members of people who had experienced the nuclear bombs tests in the 1950s and 1960s. It was reiterated to communities currently in the firing line that they are not alone and not starting these campaign from scratch- there are decades of networks and lessons to be shared and learnt from.

In June 2017 Premier Jay Weatherill announced he was abandoning plans to build a high level international nuclear waste dump in SA, a huge relief to campaigners who had been coordinating local, national and international initiatives to bury this ridiculous plan. BNI is an active member of the No Dump Alliance that formed in response to the international dump plan.

Resource Production

BNI continues to assist the No Dump Alliance in production of resources for the SA campaigns.



Australia's nuclear industry is dangerous, expensive, supports nuclear weapons and creates long-lived waste that will remain radioactive for thousands of years, creating a toxic legacy for generations to come.

This has included written materials and editing videos of Yalata community members speaking about the impacts of nuclear weapons testing and their opposition to the proposed radioactive waste dump/s. See vimeo.com/nodumpalliance.

BNI has been approached by trade unions to assist in drafting of motions for state, national and also international conferences and events.

As part of the ongoing documentation of the Muckaty/NT waste dump campaign, BNI was engaged by Maurice Blackburn Social Justice Practice to work as community liaison for production of multi media resources in their "Being Heard" series. This included coordinating community involvement in filming of a TV advertisement and also being interviewed for and featuring in the ad (Youtube: Being heard: The Muckaty Station nuclear waste dump)

BNI worked with Traditional Owners to produce the text for the 'Being Heard' illustrated explainer and supported Kylie Sambo from Tennant Creek to participate in a storytelling workshop and performance event in Sydney run by The Moth as part of Maurice Blackburn's "Fighting for Fair" podcast series.

National Campaign Coordination

BNI coordinates key national initiatives for the nuclear free movement, including regular phone

link ups and an annual national nuclear free strategy meeting.

The BNI website and social media are a central point for information on all national nuclear free campaigns to be collated and promoted.

Beyond Nuclear Initiative has held a committee position on the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance since 2008. Work with the Alliance includes administrative support, drafting media responses and helping coordinate the annual national meeting. See <https://www.anfa.org.au>

BNI Into The Future

Due to a gradual reduction in project funding, BNI has evolved over the last decade from a full time position into project based campaign work.

The hosting arrangement with the Arid Lands Environment Centre continues to be critical for BNI to engage and work with people around the country in their struggles against nuclear industry projects.



Natalie Wasley
BNI Campaigner

<http://beyondnuclearinitiative.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/beyond.nuclearinitiative.1/>

ANFA delegates, Wongatha country in Kalgoorlie September 2016





Ormiston Pound Lookout

Strategic Aim:
"ALEC is effective and influential"

ALEC COMMUNICATIONS

ALEC's communications presence remained strong, despite an ongoing reduction in hours for the Communications Manager position as a result of previous years funding cuts.

Beyond the successes of ALEC's projects, climate change and fracking were dominant themes in media releases which numbered 35 over the financial year.

ALEC's new website was launched on July 1st, which utilises the Nationbuilder platform, a community organising platform made famous in the US Obama campaign. Nationbuilder is designed to bring community members along a ladder of engagement from interested to active members, and many environmental organisations are using the platform across Australia. Training for staff will be undertaken in the next year to better utilise its functions.

ALEC continued to grow its membership base to over 350 members by the end of the financial year. Members received regular Thorny News



Communications Manager, Nicole running an ALEC stall

E-newsletters, and ALEC published the hard-copy Devils Advocate newsletter 3 times in the financial year which was distributed to 1500 people. ALEC's Facebook page likes grew to 1900.

With less funding pressures the Communications staffing time is expected to grow again in the next financial year, with a focus on more strategic communications outputs from ALEC.

Nicole Pietsch
Communications Manager

FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

ALEC is a community organisation focused on delivering a sustainable future, to do this ALEC must work towards being a sustainable organisation itself. Financially, ALEC made a surplus - this is sustainable. In numbers of staff we grew, at times having 20 people employed, but on average we are stable at 13, 3 full time staff and 10 part time, with extra casual staff as projects require it.

The financial investment we made as an organisation into Arid Edge has been returned to ALEC and the profits of AEES have helped ALEC resource the important environmental work we do.

The complexity of ALEC requires the Business Manager role to be many things to many people including operations manager, human resources manager, book-keeper, account manager, compliance manager, volunteer manager and delivering customer service. Combining this all into a part-time role is not without its challenges.



Kate and Carmel at the Food For Alice local produce stall

ALEC is a product of its people. Our organisational purpose is to protect the environment, and our staff continue to work above and beyond to deliver on this noble goal. Our staff and volunteers are the most important assets of our organisation and as such we will continue to support their meaningful engagement.

Carmel Vandermolen
Business Manager

FROM THE TREASURER

ALEC's financial performance in 2016/7 was different to recent financial years in several respects. The differences reflect ALEC's overall strong performance during the year.

Firstly, ALEC made an operating surplus of \$51,906. This followed several years of losses as ALEC reshaped its operations following June 2013 when the Alice Water Smart program, in which ALEC had a major role, ended; and following withdrawal of government support for the core operations of ALEC, and its sister environmental organisations.

The 2016/17 surplus indicates that ALEC's strategy, of developing Arid Edge Environmental Services as a commercial arm whose activities align to ALEC's core business, has started to pay off. This surplus is invested back into ALEC to strengthen ALEC's capacity to deliver on its core purposes of healthy arid lands and people.

Secondly, ALEC's income grew substantially compared to previous years, to over \$1.2 million, as indicated by the audited income and expenditure shown in Figure 1.

Important reasons for this growth were Arid Edge's success in winning contracts and grants for landscaping services, and the NT Government's

delivery on its election commitment to make an annual grant of \$100,000 to support ALEC's core purposes.

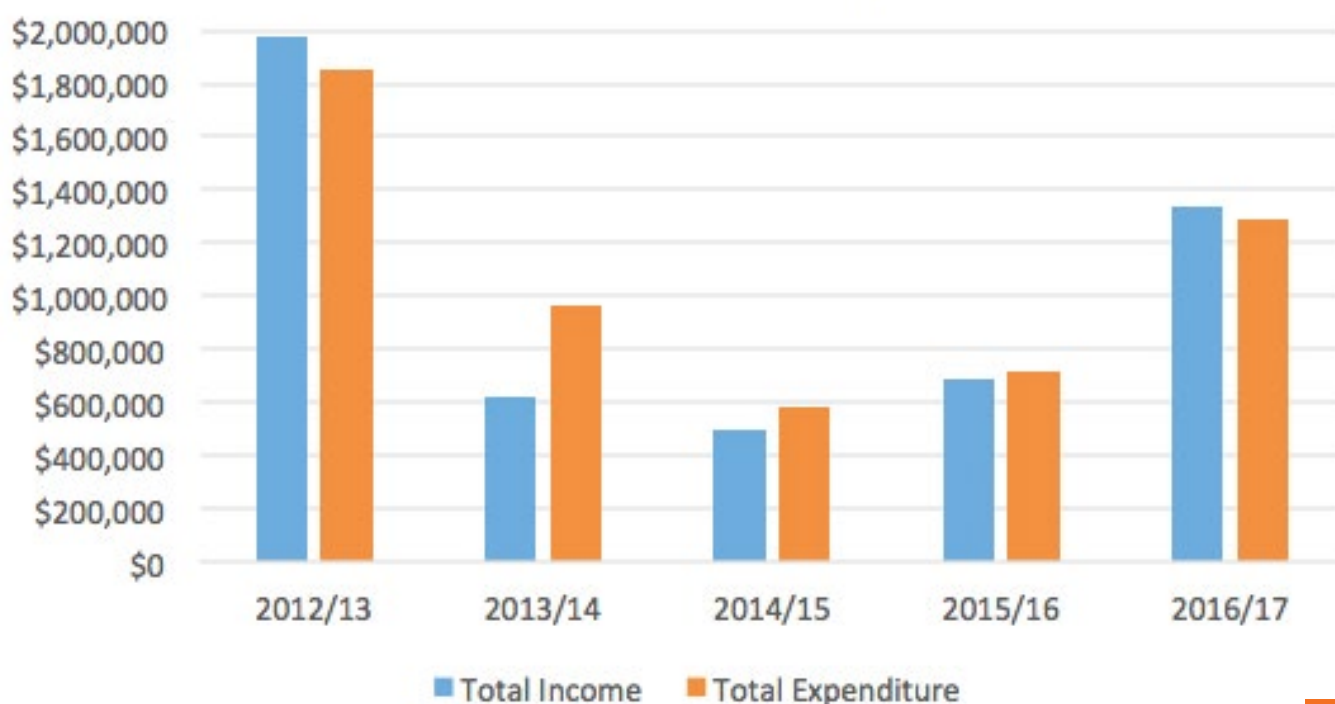
Compared to 2015/6 ALEC's expenditure on salaries and subcontracts nearly doubled in 2016/7 (to \$768,914). This spending on people underpinned ALEC's capacity to deliver on Arid Edge contracts and grants, to boost its input to policy and review of environmental issues and risks, and to strengthen engagement with ALEC members, the local community and other stakeholders.

Memberships, donations and fundraising (total \$110,736) amounted to 8.3% of ALEC's income in 16/17. The total was 7.5% less than in 2015/16 mainly due to lower income from fundraising.

Membership income was very slightly down on 2015/16, at \$11,748. Donations increased from \$83,138 in 2015/16 to \$92,288 in 2016/17. More than 95% of donations in 2016/7 were from donors who benefitted from ALEC's Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Trends over recent years in ALEC's assets are shown in Figure 2, based on the audited assets and liabilities statement in annual financial reports.

**Figure 1: ALEC Total Income and Expenditure
2013-2017 Financial years**



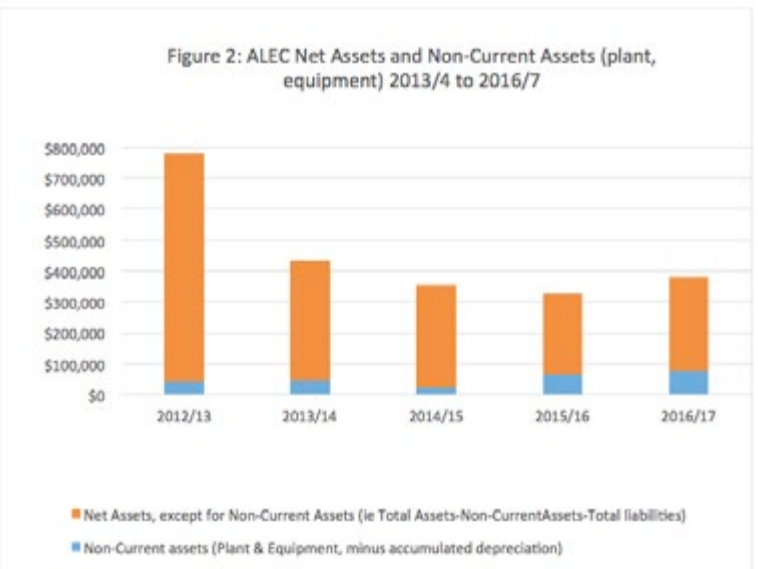
'It's been a pleasure, as Treasurer and as a member, to experience, learn and benefit from the knowledge, professionalism and hard work of ALEC's staff'

The blue colour shows an increase in the value of ALEC's non-current assets (plant and equipment), mainly in 15/16 due to purchase of vehicles. The orange represents ALEC's net cash assets after deducting liabilities (which include unexpended grants, provisions for staff leave etc). Overall, ALEC grew the value of its assets in 16/17, after a few years of loss in value.

In 2016/17 ALEC was managing 34 'projects/activities' plus the 19 contracts and other commercial projects being undertaken through Arid Edge Environmental Services.

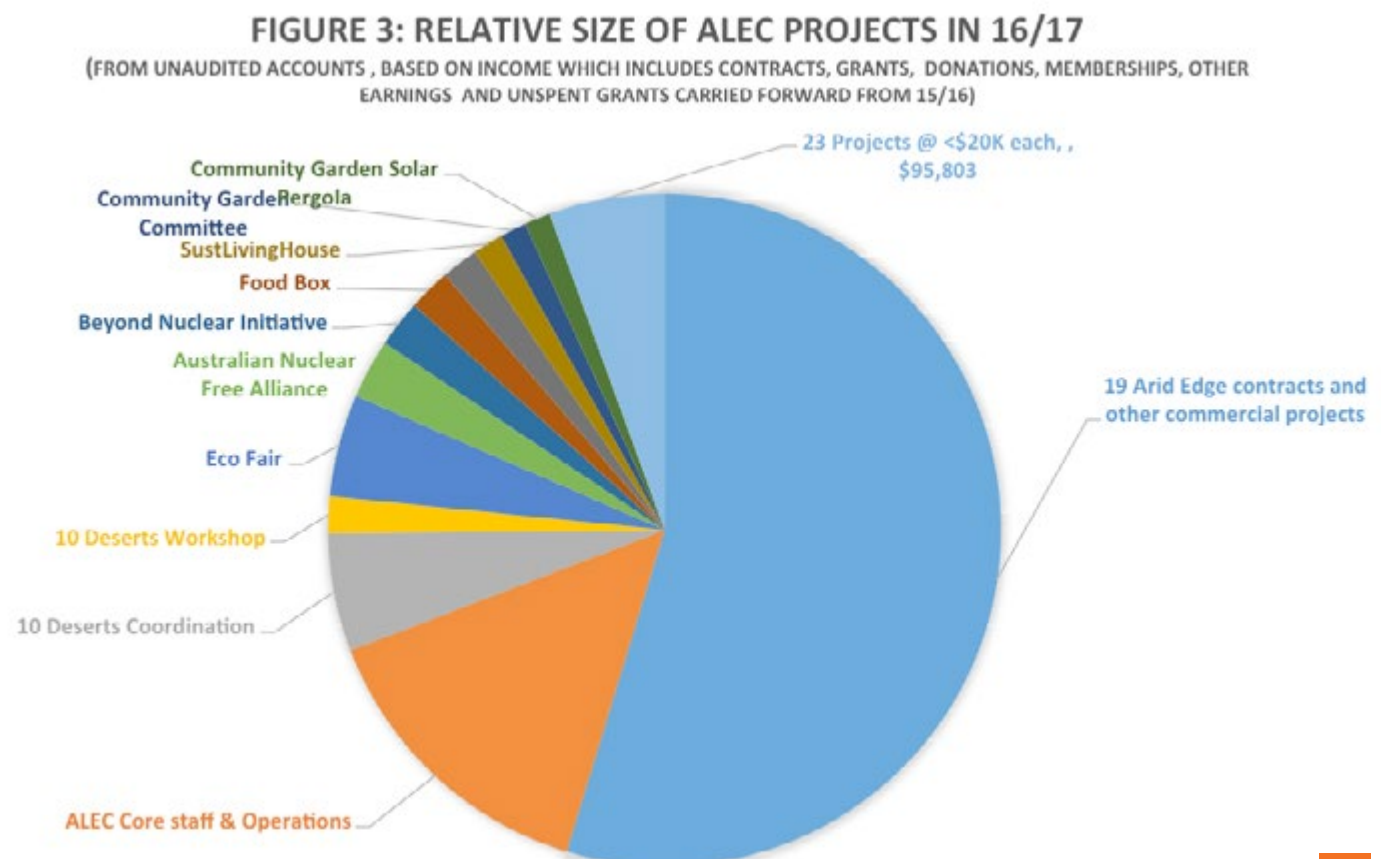
Figure 3 shows the relative size of these projects/activities, based on their relative contribution to ALEC total income in 16/17. Arid Edge accounted for more than half of the pie, and 11 other projects/activities with an average budget of \$65,000 make up most of the rest. One slice of the pie represents 23 smaller projects/activities, each under \$20,000 budget (average \$4,100).

In strategic discussions during 2017, the Board and staff agreed on the importance of striking a better balance between large and small projects/activities: projects with small budgets include some



matters that are very important to ALEC's members and the local environment but a downside is that they can make very heavy demands on core staff. Key analysis of the benefits versus costs of such projects will be further undertaken in the next financial year.

Jocelyn Davies
Treasurer



ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918

FINANCIAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

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ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	2017	2016
INCOME		
NT Government Grant	100,000	-
Project Grants	1,006,131	411,954
Consultancy Income	16,022	80,393
Donations received	92,288	83,138
Interest Received	8,980	11,060
Memberships	11,748	11,928
Merchandise	78,295	36,435
Other Revenue	21,357	19,907
Rent Income	-	4,141
Fundraising	6,700	24,631
TOTAL INCOME	<u>1,341,521</u>	<u>683,587</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Accounting Fees	-	2,352
Advertising	8,313	10,476
Audit Fees	7,299	6,987
Bank Charges	1,844	1,596
Bad Debts	290	1,499
Catering	7,260	5,560
Cleaning	2,238	2,452
Computer, IT & Internet Costs	7,952	9,736
Depreciation	16,446	10,919
Electricity	9,386	9,500
Fringe Benefits Tax	2,646	-
Fundraising	3,700	5,575
Hire of plant & equipment	24,058	12,174
Insurance	17,813	13,223
Materials & Supplies	135,273	59,312
Minor Equipment	13,537	19,928
Motor Vehicle Expenses	47,649	29,433
Multi Media Productions	13,002	5,500
Office expenses	2,012	1,561
Postage	419	110
Printing and Stationery	5,082	4,820
Professional Development	6,849	1,988
Provision for Annual Leave	2,109	11,495
Provision for Long Service Leave	28,495	2,216
Rent, Rates & Taxes	11,360	11,660
Repairs & Maintenance	703	842

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 2017

	2017	2016
EXPENDITURE (Contd)		
Salaries & Wages	631,481	372,653
Subcontractor Fees	155,433	28,844
Subscriptions	3,062	2,540
Sundry Expenses	12,210	2,623
Superannuation Contributions	58,572	35,185
Telephone	3,826	4,058
Travel, Allowances & Fares	49,264	25,650
Workshop Expenses	32	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>1,289,615</u>	<u>712,467</u>
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	<u>\$ 51,906</u>	<u>\$ (28,880)</u>

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Retained Surpluses
Opening Balance, 1 July 2015	356,226
Net Surplus (Deficit) attributable to members	<u>(28,880)</u>
Closing Balance, 30 June 2016	327,346
Net Surplus (Deficit) attributable to members	<u>51,906</u>
RETAINED SURPLUSES AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR	<u><u>\$ 379,252</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017	2016
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Cash equivalents	2	757,480	610,531
Accounts receivable & other debtors	3	95,066	51,730
Rental Bond		500	-
Prepayments & Accrued Income		<u>3,685</u>	<u>11,991</u>
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>856,731</u>	<u>674,252</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, Plant & Equipment	4	125,029	97,122
Less Accumulated Depreciation		<u>48,153</u>	<u>31,706</u>
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>76,876</u>	<u>65,416</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>933,607</u>	<u>739,668</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable & other payables		50,752	17,807
Accrued Expenses		18,144	8,387
Payroll Liabilities		30,587	30,526
GST Payable		36,878	17,906
Unexpended Grants	5	262,435	250,764
Income in Advance		68,182	30,159
Provision for Annual Leave		27,540	25,431
Provision for Long Service Leave		<u>34,463</u>	<u>31,342</u>
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>528,981</u>	<u>412,322</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provision for Long Service Leave		<u>25,374</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>25,374</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>554,355</u>	<u>412,322</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>\$ 379,252</u>	<u>\$ 327,346</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained Surpluses		<u>379,252</u>	<u>327,346</u>
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		<u>\$ 379,252</u>	<u>\$ 327,346</u>

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017	2016
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash Receipts		1,294,995	655,622
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		(1,129,120)	(575,978)
Interest Received		8,980	11,060
Net Cash provided by (used in) Operating Activities		<u>174,855</u>	<u>90,704</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for Property, Plant & Equipment		(27,906)	(53,592)
Proceeds from disposal of Property, Plant & Equipment		-	-
Net Cash provided by (used in) Investing Activities		<u>(27,906)</u>	<u>(53,592)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Net Cash provided by (used in) Financing Activities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash Held		146,949	37,112
Cash at the Beginning of the Financial Year		610,531	573,419
Cash at the End of the Financial Year	2	<u>\$ 757,480</u>	<u>\$ 610,531</u>

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC

ABN 50 100 640 918

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Act. The board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

(a) Income Tax

Under Section 50.5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 the income of the Association is exempt from income tax.

(b) Property, Plant & Equipment

The depreciable amount of all other Property, Plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Profit and losses on disposal of property, plant & equipment are taken into account in determining the surplus for the year.

(c) Impairment of assets

At the end of each reporting period the board has satisfied itself that the carry forward value of tangible and intangible assets is not impaired. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

(d) Employee Benefits

Provision is made in respect of the Association's liability for annual leave at balance date. Long service leave is accrued in respect of employees with more than five years employment with the Association.

Contributions are made by the Association to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred. The Association has no legal obligation to provide benefits to employees on retirement.

(e) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument

Grant income is recognised when the association obtains control over the funds, which is generally when the grant is acquitted.

If conditions are attached to the grant that must be satisfied before the association is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are met.

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**ABN 50 100 640 918****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017****NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (contd)****(f) Goods & Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

(g) Going Concern

The accounts of the Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc have been prepared on the basis that it is a going concern and that the Association will continue to operate. The Association's future as a going concern is dependant upon grants and subject to compliance attached to grants received.

On this basis the Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc will generate sufficient cash flow to be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

	2017	2016
NOTE 2: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash at Bank - Ops Account	14,340	1,058
Cash at Bank - Gift Account	57,675	42,417
Cash at Bank - Holding Account	305,837	195,878
Cash at Bank - Pay Pal Account	16,704	15,006
ALEC Debit card	1,398	3,657
AEES Debit card	1,965	-
Term Deposit	358,156	350,000
Cash on Hand	1,405	2,515
	<u>757,480</u>	<u>610,531</u>
NOTE 3: ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE & OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Trade & Sundry Debtors	97,066	53,730
Less: Provisions for Doubtful Debts	2,000	2,000
	<u>95,066</u>	<u>51,730</u>
NOTE 4: PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT		
Leasehold Improvements (at cost)	38,340	14,200
Less Accumulated Depreciation	9,650	6,625
	<u>28,690</u>	<u>7,575</u>
Office Furniture and Equipment (at cost)	22,574	20,488
Less Accumulated Depreciation	16,508	14,466
	<u>6,066</u>	<u>6,022</u>
Motor Vehicles (at cost)	64,115	62,434
Less Accumulated Depreciation	21,995	10,615
	<u>42,120</u>	<u>51,819</u>
Total Property Plant & Equipment at cost	125,029	97,122
Less Accumulated Depreciation	48,153	31,706
	<u>76,876</u>	<u>65,416</u>

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 5: UNEXPENDED GRANTS

At balance date the Association had not expended all of its grant funds. These unexpended funds have been carried over into the next financial year.

NOTE 6: CONTINGENT LIABILITY

A contingent liability exists in relation to the potential repayment of surplus funds to funding bodies. It is the board's view that any surplus represents unexpended funds and will not be repayable to the funding bodies.

ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC
ABN 50 100 640 918

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

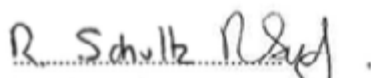
The members of the Board declare that, in the Board's opinion:


The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 9, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:

- a. comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Act; and
- b. give a true and fair view of the financial position of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc as at 30 June 2017 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.

There are reasonable grounds to believe that Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is signed in accordance with subs 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.


Board Member


Board Member

Dated this 18 day of October 2017

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc ("the entity") which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2017, the income and expenditure statement, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by members of the committee.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion section of our audit report, the accompanying financial report of the Arid Lands Environment Centre Inc is in accordance with Div 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

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.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* ("the Code") that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the financial reporting responsibilities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards-Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC**

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.



Trevor Basso - Director
Basso Newman Audit Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants
286 Flinders Street, Adelaide
Dated this 23rd day of October 2017

ALEC'S TEAM



Jimmy Cocking
Director



Carmel Vandermolen
Business Manager



Nicole Pietsch
Communications
Manager



Rachel O'Leary
Science Engagement
Officer



Alex Read
Policy Officer



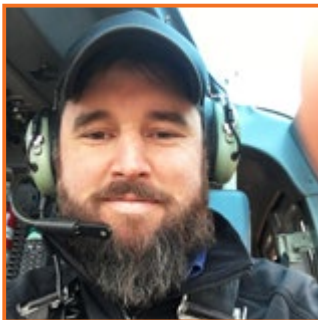
Laure May
Community
Engagement Officer



Tanya Hall
Frack Free
Coordinator 2016



Jesse Hancock
Frack Free
Coordinator 2017



Alex McLean
Arid Edge
Manager



Sunil Dhanji
Arid Edge



Hilton Chilvers
Arid Edge



Ra Sim
Arid Edge



Jake Eden
Arid Edge



Sarah Earl
Arid Edge

ALEC BOARD

Chair: Stewart Baillie Vice: Jodi Lennox
Secretary: Anjali Palmer (resigned
November 2016) Barb Molanus
(November 2016)
Treasurer: Jocelyn Davies
Public Officer: Jason Quin
General Members: Rosalie Schultz, Tim
Brand, Liz Moore, Rodney Angelo,
Isobel Milnes (April 2017), Mikaila
Thwaites*, Clement Bresson*, Jenny
Pender* (*=resigned November 2016)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Arid Lands Environment Centre would like to extend a sincere thankyou to the following organisations for their financial and in-kind support in 2016-17:



Ten Deserts



THE PEW
CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The Nature
Conservancy



desertSMART EcoFair



PowerWater



Arid Edge Environmental Services



my pathway
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES



Alice Springs Community Garden



Beyond Nuclear Initiative



AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION



Friends of
the Earth

Biodiversity Matters



Australian Nuclear Free Alliance



Conservation
Council SA



Conservation Council of Western Australia
ccwa
Look forward



Frack Free Alliance



Lock the Gate
Alliance

ALEC would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our Desert Defenders, donors and community volunteers.



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[@AridLandsEC](#)