

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE



AUTUMN 2018

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



CONTENTS

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The Devils Advocate is the quarterly newsletter of the Arid Lands Environment Centre.

The deadline for submissions for the next Autumn edition is Friday 27th April 2018

Articles, pictures, poetry, letters, welcome.
Email communications@alec.org.au

All opinions expressed within Devils Advocate are those of the author alone, unless explicitly expressed.

The Devils Advocate is edited and designed by Nicole Pietsch, ALEC's Strategy and Communications Manager. It is printed on 100% recycled paper.

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

From the ALEC CEO

A Welcome from ALEC's Chair

ALEC's Key Objectives 2018

Arid Edge

Utopia Food Gardens - Arid Edge

ALEC Media

ALEC Policy

Chandler Salt Mine & Toxic Dump

Developing a Comprehensive NT Climate Policy

RePower Alice Springs

Science Engagement

ALEC Workshop Program

Alice Springs Community Garden

Food For Alice

Campaign for a Vote on Fracking Launched

Better Together Exhibition Artist Call Out

Dare to Hope

Top End Shale Gas Development Would Blow

Australia's Carbon Budget

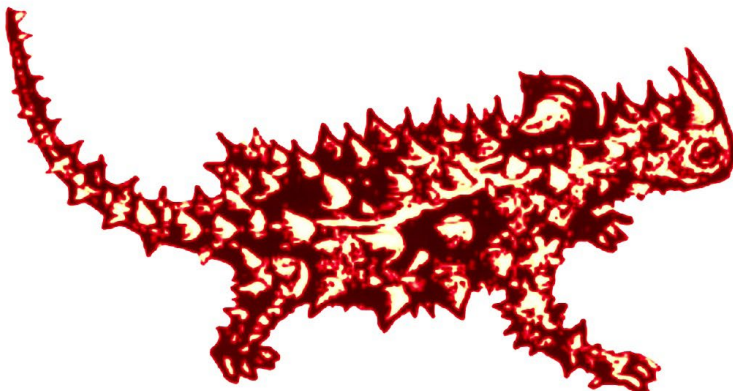
Foreign Donation and Charity Law Changes

Likely to Face High Court

Energy Storage Boom

Donate to ALEC

**Arid
Lands
Environment
Centre**





FROM THE ALEC CEO

G'day and welcome to the Autumn edition of the Devil's Advocate for 2018. Its been a long hot summer and with it has come the recommendation of approval by the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Agency for 4 new mining projects.

A significant part of the work we do is responding the government policy processes and environmental impact statements for mining projects. It's not glamorous work reading and responding to thousands of pages of statements, documents and papers. However it is often the only way that we can input into making sure that environmental impacts are properly acknowledged.

However there is more on the ALEC agenda than mining projects. Our key environmental objectives this year are:

- Calling on the Northern Territory Government to adopt a climate policy with a target of net zero emissions by 2050
- Contributing to the development of a robust environmental regulatory system in the NT
- Campaigning to ban fracking
- Working towards the vision of 100% renewable energy for Alice Springs by 2030
- Protecting the outback from inappropriate developments including toxic waste dumps, large-scale mining impacts and coal-to-gas

proposals.

- Continuing to build collaborative land management approached across the desert country
- Supporting Central Australian communities to become more sustainable through energy, water and waste education



ALEC is in a good position to effect change but we need your support to make it happen. ALEC receives some grant monies but not enough to cover the operations and support the work outlined above. This year we're calling on all of our supporters to dig deep so that we can continue to do the essential work and ramp up activities that support our vision of 'healthy futures for arid lands and people'.

On behalf of the management and staff of ALEC, I thank you for taking the time to read this. For those of you who are supporters of ALEC, thanks for your continued support. Enjoy the read and please check in at our website www.alec.org.au to see how you can get involved.

Jimmy Cocking
ALEC CEO



<https://aridlands.nationbuilder.com/donate>



A Welcome from ALEC's Chair

Hi, I'm Jodi and I'm the current Chair of the ALEC board. I joined the ALEC board 3 years ago because I think it's a great organisation, which is achieving huge things that stretch beyond Alice Springs to the broader Central Australia region. I wanted to support the great work that ALEC and its staff do in working towards protecting our environment and supporting sustainability. I like the way ALEC is a hub for the community to come together on these and other issues.

From a very early age, caring for the environment, and for people and the other species we share the planet with, has been important to me. I grew up in rural NSW and spent my early adult years in Sydney. The mix of country and city helped me develop a strong sense of sharing and community, and to value the importance of working together to achieve community goals. The experiences I have had in my life have fostered a great love and respect for the environment, a deep respect for Aboriginal custodianship and human rights.

Throughout my high school years I set up and organised an environment group that met after school to conduct water testing of our local waterways, talk about the issues we were seeing and run workshops for other students in our local area. Prior to moving to Alice Springs I worked for an environmental NGO that ran environmental education and youth leadership programs across Australia but with a particular focus in the Murray-Darling Basin. I also had the opportunity to work in India and Pakistan delivering these programs.

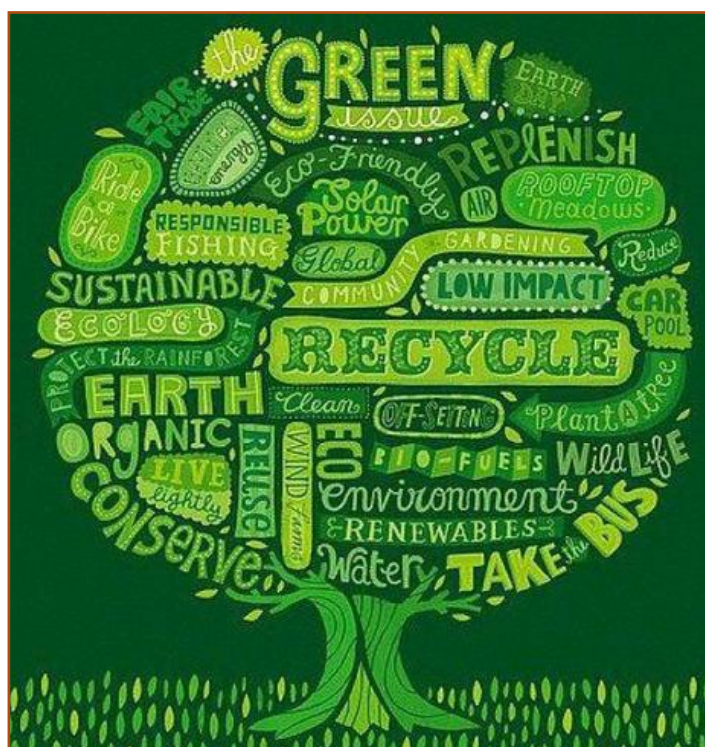
I moved to Alice Springs in 2009 and have developed strong friendships and working relationships across the community as well as a love for this unique environment and community and now consider Alice home. I am passionate about supporting young people and working

together with all members of the community to find our way to protecting our planet and living in a sustainable way that is beneficial to all.

2018 is shaping up to be a big year for ALEC. I encourage you all to get involved as much as you can. There are so many ways to do this, whether its by joining our Desert Defenders program, attending an event, volunteering, coming to a working bee at the community garden or buying fresh local produce from the Food for Alice market stall.

I look forward to bumping into you at one of ALEC's upcoming events.

Jodi Lennox
ALEC Chair





ALEC's Key Objectives in 2018

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) is central Australia's peak environmental organisation that has been advocating for the protection of nature and ecologically sustainable development in the arid lands since 1980.

We are a strong and trusted voice for Australia's iconic desert country. We stand up and speak out for the protection of land and water, animals and plants, special places and the communities that depend on them.

We demonstrate courageous leadership and work with partners across vast landscapes to deliver solutions to the ecological challenges we face.

We understand the importance of knowledge, science, research, education and engaging the community on the issues that matter.

In 2018 our key objectives include:

Calling on the Northern Territory Government to adopt a climate policy with a target of net zero emissions by 2050

The NT Government is currently developing a Climate Change Framework and ALEC is meeting regularly with the relevant departmental officials to contribute to this process. It is understood that a draft framework will be released for public consultation sometime this year.

NT Environment groups have concerns that the framework will not include an emissions reduction target, and that NT emissions will continue to rise. All other states and territories, except for WA, have net zero emissions targets by 2050.

The Northern Territory has significant challenges

in reducing emissions. If the Beetaloo Basin is fracked it is estimated that the carbon emissions will be 4-5 times that of the contested Adani Carmichael Coal Mine project. When the INPEX Ichthys gas project comes online in Darwin it will produce 280Mt of carbon over its 40-year lifetime.

ALEC will:

- Continue to advocate for a net zero emissions by 2050 target to the NT Government
- Advocate for emissions reductions on pastoral properties
- Educate community members on the draft framework process and encourage active engagement with the framework community consultations.
- Host a minimum of two climate change focused community events in 2018
- Translate the educational NAILSMA video "Climate Change in North Australia" into a number of local indigenous languages
- Continue to work with regional and national groups including Climate Action Darwin, Environment Centre NT, Climate Action Network Australia and the Climate Council towards a safe climate for future generations

Contributing to the development of a robust environmental regulatory system in the NT

The NT Government is currently reforming environmental laws in the territory. This is being undertaken in two stages. The first stage is the review and reform of the Environmental Assessment Act, with the view to develop an Environmental Protection Act. The second stage will review other environmental acts such as the Waste Management Pollution Control Act and the Water Act.

The NT has the weakest environmental laws in Australia, and these reforms provide an



opportunity to bring the Territory in line with the standards across the rest of the country. ALEC has responded to the initial discussion paper, and is having regular meetings with the NT Government.

ALEC will:

- Advocate for best practice environmental laws for the NT
- Continue to engage in government meetings, processes and submissions
- Educate community members on the reform process and encourage active engagement with the draft bills
- Work with Environment Centre NT, Lock the Gate and Environmental Defenders Office NT to develop 'Chain of Responsibility' legislation and rehabilitation standards for mines

Campaigning to ban fracking

ALEC has been campaigning against the process of hydraulic fracturing in the NT since 2011. ALEC has facilitated the development of the Central Australian Frack Free Alliance and has provided support for the Frack Free Coordinator since 2015. ALEC has made numerous submissions to the NT Government, and has been actively engaged in both Government inquiries into the process of hydraulic fracturing.

The Inquiry has released its draft report and has just finished the last round of community consultations. The draft report has indicated that

the expert panel believes that the process of fracking should be allowed to go ahead under tightly prescribed conditions, despite widespread community concern.

ALEC will:

- Continue to advocate for a complete ban on fracking in the NT
- Continue to host and support the Central Australian Frack Free Coordinator
- Strongly highlight the climate cost of fracking in the NT via the media and online forums
- Work with Environment Centre NT, Lock the Gate and the Central Frack Free Alliance to campaign against fracking and support community engagement on the issue

Working towards the vision of 100% renewable energy for Alice Springs by 2030

The Arid Lands Environment Centre has been a consistent advocate for increasing renewable energy in Alice Springs. ALEC was a driving force behind the successful Alice Solar City bid in 2007, and a consortium member of the Alice Solar City project that finished in 2013.

ALEC has facilitated and provided support for the RePower Alice Springs community group since 2016, and has made submissions to the NT Government Roadmap to Renewables. ALEC has been a strong advocate for a rapid and just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.



Arid Lands Environment Centre

Protecting nature

Supporting ecologically sustainable development

**ALEC will:**

- Continue providing support for RePower Alice Springs
- Continue to advocate for the vision of 100% renewable energy Alice Springs
- Work with the NT Government to help deliver community education outcomes from the Roadmap for Renewables
- Work with the Environment Centre NT, Climate Action Network Australia, The Climate Council, RePower Australia and other national renewable energy organisations to develop renewable energy initiatives.

Protecting the outback from inappropriate developments including toxic waste dumps, large-scale mining impacts and coal-to-gas proposals.

With 85% of the Northern Territory under application for exploration, responding to Environmental Impact Statements from resource project proposals forms a significant part of ALEC's work.

In recent months 4 new mines have been approved by the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority, and are awaiting final approval by NT Environment Minister Lauren Moss. A further base-metals mining proposal KGL Jervois is developing its EIS.

ALEC has concerns that the NTEPA is recommending projects for approval before the new and improved regulatory system comes in. ALEC is advocating for any new regulations to be administered in relation to these projects and the environment and surrounding communities not bear the risk associated with projects approved under the current regime.

These include:

- Chandler Salt Mine and Toxic Waste Dump; proposed for 120kms south of Alice Springs, incorporates a permanent hazardous waste storage facility. Concerns include toxic waste contamination, and the ability to manage the

waste for the rest of geological time.

- Nolans Bore Rare Earths Mine; proposed for west of the Aileron Roadhouse. Concerns include radioactive waste rock storage, permanent hydrological changes, and the health of groundwater dependant ecosystems.
- Mount Peake Titanium, Vanadium and Iron Mine; proposed for west of Barrow Creek. Concerns include permanent hydrological changes, health of groundwater dependant ecosystems, potential acid mine drainage and adequacy of rehabilitation plans.
- Amaroo Phosphate Mine; proposed near Ampilatwatja. Concerns include waste tailings treatment, the health of groundwater dependant ecosystems and the adequacy of rehabilitation plans.
- Perdirka Basin Coal to Gas Projects, in the last hours of the Giles government (before going into caretaker mode), 15 000km² of land in the southern border of the NT was essentially gifted to Texan coal seam gas fracking company, TriStar Petroleum. ALEC is currently pursuing all available options to ensure this project and others like it do not come to fruition.

ALEC will:

- Continue to engage with relevant NT Government Ministers to address environmental concerns with the mining projects
- Make a deputation to MacDonnell Regional Council with regard to concerns of the permanent waste storage facility at the Chandler Salt Mine
- Support Titjikala community to raise their concerns over the Chandler Salt Mine Proposal
- Continue to comment on terms of reference and respond to Environmental Impact Assessments for mining projects
- Raise awareness of the potential impacts on the environment from mining proposals.
- Work with the Environment Defenders



Office NT and other partners to seek pursue Freedom of Information options to ensure the public understands the risks of some of these resource projects.

Continuing to build collaborative land management approached across the desert country

Australia's desert country is one of the largest and most intact landscapes in the world. The desert country and its people are connected across state and territory borders. Managing this landscape requires people working collaboratively across vast areas to ensure country remains healthy and people remain strong. Good land management requires constant work to protect threatened species while ensuring the impacts of wildfire, feral animals and weeds are minimised.

ALEC has been working to support collaboration across the arid lands of Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia for more than 5 years. ALEC coordinated the Ten Deserts Initiative through organising face-to-face planning workshops, supporting the organisation of the inaugural Southern Deserts Ranger Forum at Ilkurlka in the Great Victoria Desert and regular phone meetings to keep up momentum. This project has entered a new and exciting phase and as such, ALEC's role is changing.

ALEC will:

- Be a partner in this indigenous led collaboration
- Continue to coordinate the Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert project
- Work to support the organisation of the

- Southern Deserts Ranger Forum and;
• Continue to engage with the Indigenous Desert Alliance and other land management stakeholders

Supporting Central Australian communities to become more sustainable through energy, water and waste education

Whilst significant systemic change is required to address the global issue of climate change, the sustainability of local communities and implementing effective local sustainability initiatives have a key role to play towards ALEC's vision of 'healthy futures for arid lands and people'.

ALEC will:

- Organise the 10th desertSMART EcoFair with key science and sustainability speakers, The Transitions Film Festival, and Eco-Science Schools Day.
- Review the desertSMART Roadmap and identify key actions to be implemented
- Deliver energy efficiency audits and education to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek communities
- Continue to host the weekly Food for Alice local produce market
- Continue to be represented on the Alice Springs Town Council Environment Advisory Committee
- Deliver science engagement activities funded by the Inspiring Australia Science Engagement program.
- Continue to provide support for the Alice Springs Community Garden
- Deliver a 2018 sustainability workshop program





Summer 2017/18 has been a time of transitions for Arid Edge, with some exciting developments and the end of an iconic project.

After 2 years and 3 projects, Arid Edge's successful Work for the Dole Project at the Alice Springs Community Garden has come to an end. Aably overseen by long time ALEC stalwart Ben Wall and with a lot of guidance and at times grunt work from garden committee and members, the project has seen a real upsurge in the facilities on site at the gardens now. Paths, garden beds, shade structures, beautiful earth bag and stone walls, a second meeting space, a roof for the pizza oven – the amount of work done by Ben and the Work for the Dole participants is quite amazing. And all beautifully decorated with vibrant colours, beautiful mosaics and rich ochre renders, the project's work really shows off what a lush, productive and inviting desert garden can be.

Further the project has seen at least three participants, Cameron Ross, Eddie Harvey and Paddy Laughton, go on to be employed on AEES' landscaping and track work teams – a real success!

However all good things come to an end, and so changes to government guidelines around eligible projects for the Work for the Dole Scheme has brought this great project to a close for now (although we're keeping our eyes out for further opportunities in the future).

In other news Hilton Chilvers is moving from out Utopia Food Gardens Project to join the landscaping team in Alice – we're looking forward to having his skills, experience and steady hand

on the team. With jobs lined up at MPH Projects and Larapinta Child Care Centre, he should be busy!

Arid Edge's work on the landscape design for Acacia Hill disability school is progressing well, and soon to be complete. AEES designer Ra Sim working closely with Sue Dugdale Architects on some innovative drainage and water harvesting features, as well as multi sensory gardens and play areas amongst a beautiful pallet of swamp and desert-wetland plantings. We can't wait to see it built.

Arid Edge's work in the conservation space continues to grow steadily as well. After a great winter working on the Larapinta Trail I 2017, we are once again throwing our hat in the ring with Snapper John Tracks to do it all again this winter – keep your ears out for news on this front. We have also recently received confirmation of funding from NT DENR to work with TOs on buffel grass management south of the Gap in the Todd River and Claypans, and River Red Gum health surveys along the length of the Todd in town.

Alex McClean
AEES Manager

www.aridedge.com.au



AEES employee Ra Sim laying turf at the MPH offices, Smith Street.

‘MERNE MERNE’ FOOD GARDENS PROJECT

The Utopia Homelands ‘Merne Merne’ Food Gardens Project is ramping up for a big year after a quiet summer break. Changes are afoot, and many local gardeners are keen to get planting, despite the 40 degree heat!

Long time Utopia Field Officer Hilton Chilvers is passing on the baton after a solid 2.5 years on the role. Under his steady hand, new gardens have been established at Boundary Bore, Arlparra School and Soakage Bore, with major renovations undertaken at Kurrajong, Batchelor Institute and Soapy Bore gardens. The quality of Hilton’s fence, garden bed and shade building has been a real asset for the project, with his signature piece – the steel bower shadie – proving a real hit with local gardeners.

Taking up the baton is new AEES staff member Jan Rolston, who has really hit the ground running. Jan’s extensive background in market gardening is proving a real asset, with trays of seedlings already being propagated and plans



for shade houses at Arid Edge’s base and the My Pathway offices already underway.

Gardens and Soapy Bore, Kurrajong, Rocket Range, Apungalindum, Aged Care are already being planted out with late summer and early winter crops. Soapy Bore in particular keen to try out their new melon patch with the classic “Three Sisters” companion planting combo – corn, beans and melons. Stay tuned for results!

We’re looking forward to seeing what Jan can achieve in her new role, and another great year in the gardens at Utopia.

Alex McClean
AEES Manager



Laura Rambler sitting next to spinach ready for harvest and a bed of freshly sown onions and sweet potato at Kurrajong Homeland.



Matthias Homes planting out his garden bed at Atheyle Homeland.



ALEC MEDIA

#STOPADANI FILM SCREENING AT THE ARID LANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) will be hosting the premiere screening of “#Stop Adani – A Mighty Force” at 7pm Thursday 22nd February at 90 Gap Road Alice Springs.

The #StopAdani campaign is currently one of the biggest environmental campaigns across the country, mobilising thousands of people to protest against plans to build the biggest coal mine in Australian history in Central Queensland.

“#StopAdani: A Mighty Force” is the inspiring story of the growing peoples movement to stop the construction of the coal mine, and will be premiered at simultaneous screenings across Australia on the 22nd February.

“Despite living thousands of kilometres away from the mine site here in Alice Springs, the #StopAdani Campaign resonates with many community members. It reflects growing community concern over climate change, and

highlights the shift required away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy,” said Nicole Pietsch, Strategy and Communications Manager at the Arid Lands Environment Centre.

“Here in the Northern Territory we have our own challenges with mining and threats to our climate. If the Beetaloo Basin is fracked it is estimated that the carbon emissions will be 4-5 times that of the Adani project. When the INPEX Ichthys gas project comes online it will produce 280Mt of carbon over it’s 40 year lifetime.”

“The Northern Territory desperately needs a comprehensive climate policy with a carbon reduction target that outlines how we are going to do our bit to act on climate change. We need to ban fracking and stop investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure.”

“We invite community members to come along and be inspired by the action that communities are taking against the Adani coal mine, and hear more about the key climate issues in the NT in 2018,” said Nicole Pietsch.





It has been a year since ALEC employed a dedicated policy officer. This has meant we were able to contribute to most of the relevant environmental consultation over the year and also focus on developing a more proactive approach to policy advocacy. Through reforming our strategic plan we have focused our policy priorities on climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental regulatory reform and natural resource management.

Our work in these policy areas is increasingly built around collaboration with other groups in the Northern Territory, including the Environmental Defenders Office and the Environment Centre NT. This collaboration has been important in preparing presentations for the fracking inquiry as well as senate inquiries on the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund and pastoral land reform.

Working with these groups has allowed us to focus our efforts on advocating for specific changes. We hope to see a draft bill of the new Environmental Protection Act this year that will streamline all development proposals to ensure all projects undergo adequate environmental assessment.

ALEC is in on-going discussions with the Government on developing a climate change framework. We will be continually advocating for an emissions reduction target while also providing research and information on adaptation strategies. The need to consider adaptation

and mitigation strategies informs the majority of our submissions to Government inquiries. Climate awareness should be incorporated across Departments and policy spaces, including planning, water, mining and conservation land management. Reform of the pastoral estate is seriously needed to reduce carbon emissions and to increase the Territory's own source revenue.

Industry is gearing up for strong mineral development through a five mines plan. Three mines, Chandler, Mt Peake and Nolans Bore have been given NT EPA approval and two have submitted Environment Impact Statements, Jervois and Ammaroo. These projects all pose significant environmental risks including; permanent hydrological changes that threaten groundwater dependent ecosystems, long term radioactive waste management and legacies of contamination through inadequate rehabilitation efforts.

The current regulatory reforms are addressed at improved monitoring and compliance but they have not yet addressed the contamination legacy of closed mines. The NT needs chain of responsibility legislation, like QLD that ensures companies are not able to escape their environmental and financial responsibilities to rehabilitate mine sites post closure. Preventing a legacy of financial and environmental costs to the NT is a priority area of reform.

The NT is facing a shortfall in revenue from





changes to GST distribution. In addressing this issue government has opened consultation in a revenue discussion paper to investigate ways of increasing own source revenue.

We will advocate for increased royalties and mining rehabilitation levy's, stock and mine water extraction fees and increased revenue from the Pastoral estate. The NT has considerable natural capital that could be managed far more sustainably and provide a more equitable distribution of benefits.

Groundwater dependent ecosystems are still relatively poorly understood in Central Australia, especially around the water control districts of arid NT. However, our understanding is improving through increased efforts by Government to study GDEs and the connection between GDE health and groundwater extraction.

New research is being published that will help improve our understanding of the location and behavior of GDEs which will inform better management of groundwater systems by establishing sustainable extraction limits. This

research will be important for the governance of the Alice Springs, Western Davenport and Ti-Tree Water Advisory Committees.

2018 is no doubt going to bring with it many challenges in environmental policy as we continue to learn about the increasing rate of extinction, warming and pollution.

However, the year will also bring the opportunity to introduce solid reforms as the Government enters their second year and is able to move past the consultation stage and into the implementation of progressive sustainable policy and law.

We will continue to hold Government and industry accountable to their social and environmental responsibilities.

Alex Read
ALEC Policy Officer

**LOOKING FOR A
GREAT GIFT IDEA?**

**GIVE AN ALEC
MEMBERSHIP
AS A GIFT!**

The Arid Lands Environment Centre says

No Toxic Waste Dump

for Central Australia

at the Tellus Chandler Salt Mine



Write a letter to Northern Territory Environment Minister Lauren Moss urging her to not approve the Tellus Chandler Salt Mine and Hazardous Waste Facility.

Concerns over project include:

- Claims of misleading consultation with Titjikala residents
- Types of hazardous waste to be stored including fracking waste
- Long term responsibility of waste management
- Risk of accidents and spillage at the site
- Transportation of toxic chemicals on local roads and railway
- Inadequate regulations to ensure safety and compliance
- Suitability of the site to host toxic waste forever
- No legislated guarantee that nuclear waste won't be stored at the site in the future

“The Arid Lands Environment Centre has real concerns around the fact that this type of hazardous waste storage facility has never been attempted in Australia before. There are examples in France and Germany where these kinds of waste storage facilities exist, there's accidents that have happened and then there's been a huge environmental and financial cost as a result,” said Nicole Pietsch, Assistant Manager of ALEC.

“We have concerns around the monitoring,

compliance and also the enforcement of the conditions of this project. The NT is currently going through an environmental regulatory reform process and we still don't know whether the regulations will be stringent enough to manage this type of project.”

“What is needed is a National Hazardous Waste Management Policy, that looks at dealing with hazardous waste in the best way possible. This means some waste may be destroyed, some of it might be reprocessed and that there would be greater scrutiny over producing the hazardous waste in the first place. Companies need to be responsible for the waste they produce – an ‘out of sight, out of mind’ approach is not acceptable, particularly when there are significant risks to our environment.

“We acknowledge the concerns of some Titjikala residents and Traditional Owners who feel they have not been properly consulted and have concerns about how this project may impact on cultural responsibilities of looking after country and the long-term risks of contamination. ALEC will continue to work with Titjikala community and the Traditional Owners to ensure their concerns are heard, and we will continue to work towards the best environmental outcomes for Central Australia,” said Nicole Pietsch

Find more information at:

http://www.alec.org.au/no_toxic_waste_dump_for_central_australia



Developing a Comprehensive NT Climate Change Policy

The Northern Territory is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change with predicted increased temperatures and extreme weather events. This will be compounded by the disparity in living conditions for Territorians living remote and in the urban context.

ALEC is calling on the Northern Territory Government to lead on delivering ambitious and effective climate change action including:

1. Legislate a Northern Territory Climate Change Act

- establish a long-term emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050
- introduce a new set of policy objectives and an updated set of guiding principles to embed climate change in government decision making
- the NT Government will develop a Climate Change Strategy every five years, which will set out how Northern Territory will meet its targets and adapt to the impacts of climate change (from 2020)
- develop Adaptation Action Plans for key systems and communities that are either vulnerable to the impacts of climate change or essential to ensure Northern Territory is prepared (from 2020)
- establish a system to reduce emissions in the government sector and across the economy
- establish a system of periodic reporting to provide transparency, accountability and ensure the community remains informed.
- (adapted from the Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 - <https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/legislation/climate-change-act-2017>)

2. Develop an NT Climate Change Strategy

- Overarching strategy to ensure an equitable and planned decarbonisation of the NT

economy

- no new fossil fuel projects or infrastructure policy
- reduce emissions in all sectors (agriculture, mining, transport etc)
- develop opportunities for carbon sequestration including stronger controls for land clearing
- plan for equitable transitioning of workforce to a low carbon economy

3. Develop Climate Action Plans

>>> Regional Adaptation Action Plans

- Develop Top End, Gulf Savannah, Barkly & Arid Lands plans (as per Territory NRM Plan)
- Incorporate community engagement, vulnerability/risk assessments
- Build local resilience

>>> Repowering the NT (Renewable Energy Action Plan)

- 100% renewable energy target by 2030
- develop energy efficiency and demand management programs for residential and commercial sectors
- invest in world leading remote power systems

>>> Land (and Sea) Based Carbon Reduction Plan

- develop carbon methodology for the desert regions
- investigate suitability of carbon crops eg. algae, hemp
- develop methane reduction strategies for the pastoral industry
- enhance use of mosaic burning for carbon reduction

>>> Climate Smart Towns and City Plan

- incorporate climate strategy into the NT planning scheme
- mandate for local governments to reduce emissions eg landfill
- ensuring liveability of NT towns



Repower Alice Springs is starting the next phase of its journey, and to kick this year off we held a planning session on Saturday 3 February. During this session, we developed our Vision, Mission and values.

Our vision: a solar powered future for our community.

Our mission: 100% solar for Alice Springs by 2030 through advocacy, building community capacity and community powered projects and partnerships

Our values are:

- Care, about the environment and about people
- Community control and empowerment
- Equity and fairness in access to affordable power
- Collaboration with suitable parties and partners
- Inclusiveness
- Inspiring change, Solutions-focussed to drive sustainable change
- Encouraging, including encouraging investment in solar
- Transparent processes
- Integrity

Our goals for 2018 are to:

- Develop community power project/s
- Source grant funding and commencement of

Project Officer

- Develop Repowers capacity
- Raise awareness across our community of what we represent & what we are doing

In terms of governance, whilst we are still a community group we have formed a committee to ensure we have clear, transparent decision making processes.

- Chair - Harshini Bartlett
- Technical - Tim Brand
- Community Energy – Hayley Michener
- Media - David Jagger
- Secretary – Michael Hewett
- Additional members - Neil Woolcock & Rosalie Schultz

We have identified four community power initiatives, which were prioritised based on their impact (amount of solar generated) and ease of implementation. At this stage we will be focussing on a 10MW community solar plant which we will be developing in partnership with Territory Generation. As we have the capacity, we will start developing the other community power projects.

We have started meeting with key people and key stakeholders (Minister Wakefield, MLA Paech, Regional Development Australia NT, Warren Snowdon's office, Department of Chief Minister, Desert Knowledge Australia) asking for support, and for seed funding for developing the community power initiative/s.

We will be having a presence at the Todd Mall markets this year to help build our membership list, so if anyone has some time to help out with this, please contact us. Lastly, like our Facebook page, sign up for our email newsletters and tell your friends about this exciting opportunity!

Harshini Bartlett

RePower Alice Springs Chair

www.facebook.com/repoweralicesprings/



SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Inspiring Australia will continue to inspire the Alice Springs community this year, with funding for a series of community science events coordinated by the Arid Lands Environment Centre in 2018.

Stay tuned for more information on a Renewable Energy Tour of key renewable energy sites in Alice Springs, and a series of lunchtime seminars by local researchers.

If you would like to be involved, please contact Rachel.oleary@alec.org.au.

A Repair Café will be held on Saturday 21st April at the Arid Lands Environment Centre. Community members are invited to come along and learn skills in repairing clothing, electrical goods, woodwork, toys, bicycles and general household items.

If you have skills in this area and would like to volunteer on the day, please contact Rachel.oleary@alec.org.au

Rachel O'Leary
Science Engagement Officer



WORKSHOPS AT ALEC



The Arid Lands Environment Centre is running a monthly sustainability workshop program.

Saturday 10th March: Tofu Making	\$20/15
Saturday 7th April: Beeswax Wrap Making	\$20/15
Saturday 12th May: Composting Workshop	\$15/10

For more info & to RSVP: community@alec.org.au



The Community Garden is continuing to flourish with the steady efforts of Garden Friends and volunteers. Don't forget working bees are now every Sunday morning 8-10. You don't have to be a Garden Friend - everyone is welcome!! Come along and get your hands dirty and learn some gardening tips off some local green thumbs. Now is the time to prepare plots and soil for next season planting.

The Garden Committee is hoping to boost Garden contributions to Food for Alice this year utilising a new system of plant and plot ribbon markers to indicate produce availability.

Planning for an exciting Autumn Fair on Saturday April 14th has begun. The garden will need good ideas and volunteers so please consider contributing to this years fair.

A warm thanks to the Alice Springs Town Council



The flourishing produce at the gardens after the summer rains

for replacing our 215 metre water line to the Garden after some significant failures in the old line.

The last Friday of the month social evenings will continue this year commencing again Friday 23rd of February from 5-7pm. Bring drinks and nibbles to share.

Work will soon commence on an NT government community grants funded project to build an office/kitchen at the Garden along with a separate disabled toilet. This will add to potential for the Garden to be opened up to the public including school groups.

Very hot weather has put back many gardens including the community plots but work is continuing on building up the beds in anticipation of new plantings in the next few weeks.

One of two new wheelchair beds has been planted out. The two beds should be accessible to wheelchair users within a month or so. This is an exciting development for the garden.

Finally some plots are available - email plots@alicecommunitygarden.org.au to express your interest.

Bruce Simmons
ASCG Convenor



One of the two new wheelchair accessible beds at the gardens has been planted.





Food for Alice has had a good start to the year. While taking a small break over summer, produce is starting to pick up with a great variety coming from the Community Garden, Happy Farmer and other individual suppliers.

We have seen kilos of delicious cherry and Russian tomatoes. Apricots from Kenmore Park Orchard were an exciting addition, as well as juicy limes. We are still receiving a steady flow of nutritional leafy greens with the lowest carbon miles of all produce in town. We are also seeing zucchinis of all shapes and colours, pumpkins, grapes and a large range of fresh herbs.

Food For Alice will continue to look at ways of increasing both our supply and customer base to provide an ongoing and more viable alternative to the major supermarket chains.

It is going from strength to strength, now requiring two people to set the market up each Saturday. Kate has been an amazing help, bringing her own culinary skills to the market with home grown dates in her own sticky date pudding.

Each Saturday brings surprises in produce and variety. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our regular customer base and look forward to continuing to provide healthy and sustainable produce for Alice throughout the year.

Food For Alice is open every Saturday 9am-11am at ALEC, 90 Gap Road.

Join the Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/108715702520033/>

**Alex Read
FFA Coordinator**



10th-12th AUGUST 2018

**Eco-Science Schools Day, Transitions
Film Festival, Green Science With Costa,
Garden to Plate, Women In Science**

10th Year Celebration

Campaign For a Vote on Fracking Launched

A group of Territorians concerned about the risks of fracking have launched a campaign for a referendum on whether to ban the controversial practice. The campaign features a television advertisement and webpage frackvote.com where Territorians are encouraged to sign on and show their support for a binding vote on a fracking ban.

The campaign will raise signatures ahead of the release of the Fracking Inquiry's report in late March to demonstrate Territorians' investment in the outcome of the fracking decision.

Daniel Tapp, whose family story features in the television advertisement, said "With thousands of square kilometres of cattle stations and communities covered in licences for gas fracking we think it's too important an issue to leave it up to the politicians. "A Gunner Government decision that goes against the views of the majority of Territorians will set our communities up for ongoing conflict with the shale gas industry, so it's important to get this right."

"A referendum on fracking would let every Territorian have a say in our future."

Beloved larrikin Territory filmmaker and author Phil O'Brien has thrown his weight behind the campaign, saying "I've been following this debate

on fracking for a long time now. I see the impact its having on our communities and a lot of us are starting to get worried. We don't want to see the Territory plundered for outside interests, leaving problems behind."

"There's still a chance for the Territory to throw the threat of fracking out the window and move on to find other new exciting industries and projects that we can all share in the benefits of. We need to be unifying our communities rather than dividing."

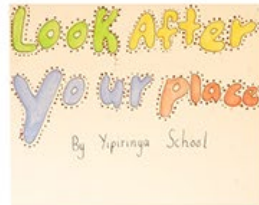
Owner of Seven Emu Station in the Gulf, and 2018 NT Australian of the Year Nominee for Indigenous mentoring, Frank Shadforth, said "Alongside cattle, our family run a successful wildlife conservation program to protect threatened species, and a bush tucker harvesting business. Putting gasfields over the top would put all that at risk, including the jobs of many of our local Aboriginal cattle station and conservation workers."

"We're worried the NT Government hasn't been listening, so it's time to give the people of the Territory a say in the future protection of our land and livelihoods."

Visit frackvote.com to have your say today!



BETTER TOGETHER



**WORLD
ENVIRONMENT
DAY
EXHIBITION**



**2018
OPEN CALL
OUT TO
ARTISTS**



Better Together

Exhibition: 5th - 9th June 2018

Exhibition Opening: 6pm 5th June 2018

"Alone we can do little, together we can do so much" Helen Keller

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) and Watch This Space (WTS) are joining forces for the second year to present a collaborative exhibition for World Environment Day 2018.

You are invited to create and donate an artwork that explores climate change solutions and the power of collective action.

We know that doom and gloom stories don't motivate people to act. Artists are invited to contribute works that reflect the wonder of our environment, the strength of our communities and the work of millions of people across the planet working to create change.

For an application form go to www.wts.org.au



DARE TO HOPE

Yesterday I fell into a pothole of environmental despair. Let's just say I was looking at some statistics on human population growth and well... you get my drift.

However the latest research is showing that we are motivated to action by hope! Harnessing hope can lead to action, and collectively, this action generates more hope and keeps fear at bay (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017).

So how do we stay hopeful?

Firstly, we can moderate our intake of fear. Whilst understanding that science and information is important, reading too much of it can activate feelings of despair and disconnection. By choosing to read less or focusing on articles of hope, we can feel inspired or relieved that some world leaders are acting with vision.

Did you know that 66 million trees were planted in India in a single day last year? And nearly one-third of all new cars sold in Norway this year will be electric? Or that the Giant Panda, whilst still at risk, has moved one strong step away from its endangered listing to vulnerable? Focusing on some of these 'good-news' stories can relieve some of the stress we all carry for the planet.

If you still like to be informed by reading and anxiety strikes, try letting it pass through you, talking it over with like-minded friends, dancing up a sweat, crying, screaming (into a pillow preferably), throwing darts at a picture of Donald Trump (just kidding), having a good laugh or whatever works for you!

Once you find the anxious moment has passed, then act!. Grow a pot plant, repair your jeans, take a reusable container to the takeaway store, cook a vegetarian meal, fix a leak, write a letter, become a volunteer at ALEC.

There is no end to the small and useful steps we can take in our own lives to make this world a more sustainable place.

Finally, thanks to Alex, who when I was feeling down yesterday read me this quote:-

"When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: if you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse."

— Martin Keogh, *Hope Beneath Our Feet: Restoring Our Place in the Natural World*

Rachel O'Leary





TOP END SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENT WOULD BLOW AUSTRALIA'S CARBON BUDGET, TAI SAYS

Developing the Northern Territory's onshore shale oil and gas resources could release the equivalent of 34 billion tonnes of carbon emissions, equal to 60 times Australia's current annual carbon pollution, according to The Australia Institute.

The estimate is made in the institute's submission on the draft final report of a scientific inquiry into the risks of hydraulic fracturing – or fracking – in the territory scheduled for completion next month.

The submission challenged the inquiry's use of a single 365 petajoule per year shale gas field producing the equivalent of 5 per cent of Australia's national emission to conclude the industry would have only a "low" consequence and to be of "acceptable" risk.

"Even a 5 per cent increase in Australia's emissions from a single gas field is a large and unacceptable increase," the submission said. "It is completely inconsistent with Australia's carbon budget and our commitments under the Paris agreement."

Having identified the resource to total 257,276 petajoules, the inquiry should have based its assessment on the cumulative impact of multiple oil gas fields that may be developed, the TAI said.

Methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, particularly over shorter periods, such as 20 years, when its warming impact is about 87 times greater.

Burning the NT's total gas resource would alone emit 12.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent.

Adding fugitive methane emissions through leaks or seepage through the earth's crust – estimated to be between 2-17 per cent in the US shale fields – suggests a much bigger impact.

"This is equivalent to 130 large coal power plants operating for up to 40 years," according to the submission, compiled in part by Tim Forcey and Dimitri Lafluer, formerly with BHP and Shell, respectively.

"A carbon price and valid measurement and reporting of methane emissions would – of course – push the internal gas-producer economics to greater recovery of methane," Mr Forcey said.

The NT's Labor government has said it will consider whether or not to lift a moratorium on fracking after it receives the inquiry's final report. The inquiry's panel, led by Justice Rachel Pepper, found that with "robust and rigorously enforced safeguards", the risk of any harm from the shale industry could "be minimised to an acceptable level, in some instances, it can be avoided altogether", according to the draft final report.

The panel did, however, note "there is very little information available worldwide on the performance of abandoned onshore shale gas wells. The assessment of post-abandonment performance is an aspect that requires greater attention by both the regulator and industry." Mark Ogge, principal advisor at The Australia Institute, said NT's shale industry had the potential to dwarf Queensland's coal seam gas sector.

"Approving Queensland CSG was incredibly irresponsible," Mr Ogge said. "However, the Territory resource identified by the inquiry is far



bigger than CSG so the risk is even greater. “It will also include shale oil extraction, which is a whole other level of risk and impact.”

TAI’s submission argues the inquiry was at odds with its own terms of reference by omitting shale oil from its assessment even though the US government had estimated the territory to have 4.7 billion barrels – much of which would be extracted along with the gas.

“Geoscience Australia believes shale oil could be the ‘key driver’ of unconventional fracking in the Beetaloo and Georgina basins in the Northern Territory,” the submission noted.

The NT itself has an interest in curbing climate change given the vulnerability of tropical regions. “For example, in Darwin the number of days over 35 degrees is expected to increase from 11 per year currently to 308 by 2070 without global action to reduce emissions,” Mr Ogge said, adding that heatwaves have killed more Australians than any other extreme weather events.

Peter Hannam

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/environment/climate-change/top-end-shale-gas-development-would-blow-australias-carbon-budget-tai-says-20180204-h0tc5m.html>

Foreign donation and charity law changes ‘likely’ to face high court challenge

The Australian government’s proposed ban on foreign donations and new disclosure requirements for political campaigners are “likely” to face a constitutional challenge, the Human Rights Law Centre has warned.

The HRLC executive director, Hugh de Kretser, told Guardian Australia it was “actively looking at the legality of the bill” and had concluded there were “serious risks that the legislation violates Australia’s constitutional protection of freedom of political communication”.

The charity sector has warned that, under the changes, it will not be able to use international philanthropy to pay for advocacy work and will face an increased burden of red tape.

The electoral funding and disclosure reform bill requires all groups that have spent \$100,000 or more on political activities in the previous four years to register as a “political campaigner”, and could capture charities because of their advocacy work.

It introduces new requirements for political campaigners to confirm that only “allowable donors” – such as Australian citizens or residents – give more than \$250. Charities must keep foreign donations separate from other revenue to ensure they cannot fund political advocacy.

De Kretser said: “This proposed legislation would significantly harm the ability of charities to speak out about the work they do, whether it’s helping the homeless or protecting the environment.”

He said the HRLC was focusing on “making sure the proposed legislation does not pass in its current form”. “However, if it does, it will likely be challenged in court.”

Constitutional law experts such as Anne Twomey and George Williams have also warned the bill is vulnerable to challenge in the high court because of the implied freedom of political communication.

A brief written by HRLC lawyer Hannah Ryan



argues that charities will “effectively have to choose between political advocacy and international funding”.

The Australian director of the Pew Charitable Trusts, Barry Traill, said examples of advocacy that could not be funded by international donations included World Wildlife Fund calls to preserve Antarctica and RESULTS International’s work to advocate for improved funding for Aids screening and tuberculosis immunisation in Australia and the South Pacific.

Ryan also said the bill delegitimised civil society groups “by likening them to party political lobbyists”.

Despite the fact the Charities Act banned charities from “promoting or opposing a political party”, the bill would “recast issue-based advocacy as partisan, political work”, she said.

The chief executive of Philanthropy Australia, Sarah Davies, said the government had put forward “no evidence ... to justify a ban on international philanthropy funding advocacy by Australian charities”.

“We’re disappointed that the government is pressing ahead with this legislation despite strong opposition from across the not-for-profit sector,” she said.

The government has written a short-form regulatory impact statement on the bill, which is a cabinet document and not publicly available.

Davies said there was “no consultation on draft legislation” and Philanthropy Australia believed, given the scope of changes, a “detailed regulatory impact statement” should have been prepared and published.

The finance minister and special minister of state, Mathias Cormann, said the government was not concerned about the bill’s legality

because it “does not prevent charities from advocating in any way shape or form”.

Cormann suggested that only a “very small number of charities” participated in elections and would be caught by its provisions. He said the bill ensured “all relevant political actors are subject to the same transparency, disclosure and reporting requirements and subject to the same ban on foreign political donations”.

He said charities could use foreign donations for “non-political activities” and political activities could be funded from Australian sources.

“Nothing in the government’s reforms restricts or limits charities’ legitimate activities,” he said.

“This bill simply seeks to keep foreign billionaires and foreign governments out of Australia’s elections.”

The Greens support a ban on foreign donations in-principle but oppose changes that harm civil society groups. Labor has also called for the ban to apply only to donations to political parties and associated entities.

Shadow assistant treasurer, Andrew Leigh, said Labor shares charities’ concerns the bill will stifle charities.

“Our hard-working charity sector is one of the most trusted parts of our society and it needs a government that works with them, not against them,” he said.

Paul Karp

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/12/foreign-donation-and-charity-law-changes-likely-to-face-high-court-challenge>

ENERGY STORAGE BOOM

PROJECTS OPERATING, IN CONSTRUCTION & PLANNING

Australia is investing heavily in new energy storage projects and we may be on the cusp of an energy storage boom. There are already three operational pumped hydro facilities, with a number of batteries and a solar thermal plant under construction. A variety of other projects are being planned.

DEGRUSSA COPPER & GOLD MINE, WA



Battery

Sandfire's West Australian mine has a 6MW/1.8MWh battery

EYRE PENINSULA, SA



Pumped Hydro

Planning underway for largest saltwater pumped hydro facility in the world

PORT AUGUSTA, SA



Concentrating solar thermal with storage

Australia's biggest solar thermal plant, to open in 2020

JAMESTOWN, SA



Battery

The world's currently biggest lithium-ion battery (100MW/129MWh) began operating on the 1st December

YORKETOWN & RIVERLAND, SA



Battery

A 30MW/8MWh battery will be operational in mid-2018, while a 100MW/400MWh battery is planned

ADELAIDE, SA



Hydrogen

Tender underway for 6 hydrogen fuel cell buses

STAWELL, VIC



Battery

Plans to build 20MW/34MWh battery to power glasshouse

TASMANIA



Pumped Hydro

Feasibility study for expansion of Tasmanian Hydro

ALICE SPRINGS, NT



Battery

5MW/3.3MWh battery under construction in Alice Springs

LAKE WIVENHOE, QLD



Pumped Hydro

Queensland's first pumped hydro facility, built in 1984

KENNEDY ENERGY PARK, QLD



Battery

A 2MW/4MWh lithium-ion battery is being constructed alongside a solar and wind farm

KIDSTON GOLD MINE, QLD



Pumped Hydro

Converting an old gold mine into pumped hydro

SHOALHAVEN SCHEME, NSW



Pumped Hydro

240MW storage facility, built in 1977

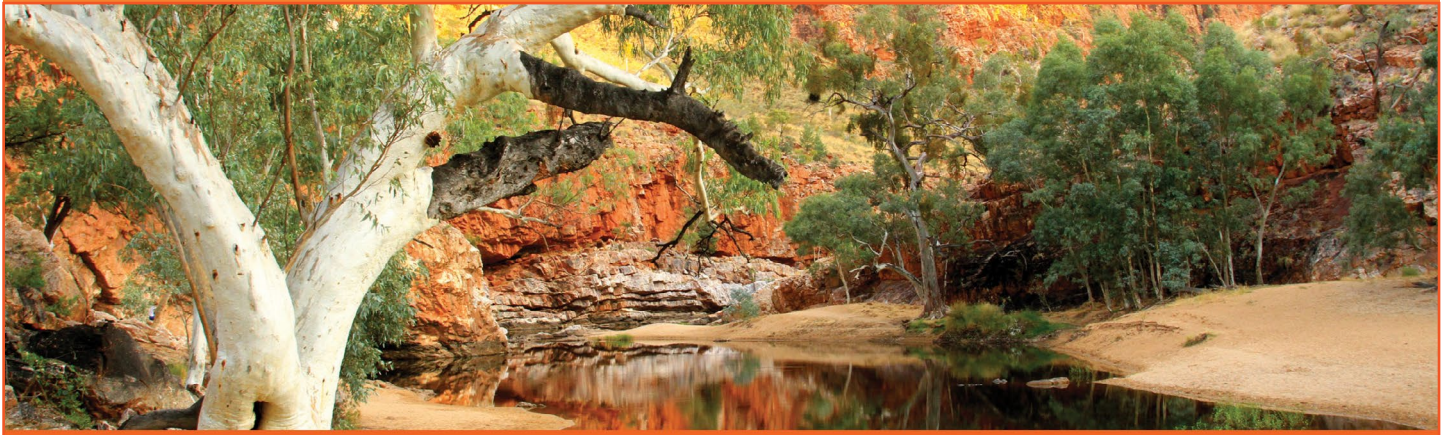
SNOWY MOUNTAINS, NSW



Pumped Hydro

Australia's first pumped hydro facility was built in 1973. Feasibility study recently completed into the potential expansion of the Snowy Hydro scheme

Note: This map does not include all storage projects planned in Australia. Only grid-scale projects are included.



Support the work of the Arid Lands Environment Centre

For more than 36 years ALEC has been standing up for the outback and catalysing change in the arid lands. With unprecedented threats facing the NT environment we need your support.

Can you help?

Become an ALEC 100 member:

Donate \$100 a month each year, or contribute a one off \$1000 tax deductible donation. 100 supporters will provide the ongoing essential operating funds of ALEC.
https://aridlands.nationbuilder.com/desert_defenders

Become a Desert Defender:

Desert Defenders give monthly or one off tax deductible donations that provide critical funds to support ALEC programs and campaigns.

https://aridlands.nationbuilder.com/desert_defenders

Make an Electronic Transfer

Account Name: ALEC Inc - Gift Fund

Bank: Alice Springs - Bendigo Bank

BSB: 633 000 Account #: 1343 58688

Join or renew your ALEC membership

http://www.alec.org.au/become_a_member



Donate at www.alec.org.au



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



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