



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Melbourne**

Annual Report financial year

**2013-2014**

## OUR CAMPAIGN APPROACH

FoE has been active in Melbourne since the early 1970s. In 2013/14 Friends of the Earth continued to campaign for the interests of people and the planet on a range of issues including climate change, pesticides and water, nuclear and clean energy, food, and forests.

The election in 2010 of a state government with a strong anti climate and environment agenda has meant that in recent years much of our campaign capacity has had to focus on defending policy measures intended to protect the environment. We have worked hard to make environment and climate issues that matter in the build up to the November 2014 state election.

We have also been able to mount a range of proactive initiatives aimed at getting better protection for the natural environment. We continue to play a leading role in the campaign to support the development of a viable renewable energy industry in the state and to develop grassroots opposition to any further development of fossil fuels. This includes new coal, shale gas, tight gas and coal seam gas (CSG) operations. This has now taken off to be a significant state-wide issue.



There are millions of Australians who are working towards a better future, in their homes, their workplaces, their families, and through political action. It will be collective action, happening at multiple levels, from the individual to the global, that will create the conditions that will allow our society and economies to shift to a sustainable footing. This will require deep and sustained collaboration amongst civil society organisations, business and all levels of government.

FoE Melbourne has a strong 'movement' focus in its work, seeking to support strategic and effective community action for a sustainable and just future.

This is reflected in our style of campaigning, which often occurs within alliances. We are willing to apply significant resources into 'un badged' campaigning. This means that we have helped build community power rather than just our own organisational power, and our public profile is lower than could be expected. The benefit of this approach is that it helps empower and create space for our local partners to step forward and fully own local campaigns.

Over the past few years, our campaigns have been broader in focus than ever before, and we operate through a range of tactics, including involvement in government planning processes, research and policy development, community education and outreach, alliance building, advocacy and education, and peaceful direct action. Our work in regional Victoria has been both deep and effective, and we have developed working relationships with more than 70 community groups across the state.

*Friends of the Earth (FoE) Melbourne is an independent community-based organisation working towards an ecologically sustainable and socially just future.*

*We are membership-based, and open to all people who share our vision. We are the local member of Friends of the Earth Australia, which is in turn the national member of FoE International, the largest grassroots environmental network on the planet.*

## CLIMATE

Climate change is the greatest single threat to the long-term protection of the natural environment.

Climate science clearly tells us that if the world hopes to avoid dangerous climate change we will need to keep the majority of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground. Our approach to climate change has been to concentrate locally on ways that we can reduce the production of greenhouse gases while advocating for the development of a thriving renewable energy sector as an alternative to the fossil fuels we currently rely on to meet our energy needs. This 'energy future' approach has two distinct but interconnected campaigns: our work to halt new developments of fossil fuels, and our Yes 2 Renewables project.

### Cost of natural disasters report

Our work is based on mainstream climate science. We are deeply disturbed by the fact that Victoria has lost most of the government measures that had previously been put in place to reduce our greenhouse gas production. The state government has walked away from reducing emissions ('mitigation'), opting instead for a focus that solely looks into responding to the impacts of climate change ('adaptation'). Yet it is clear that the adaptation measures currently in place are not sufficient to the scale of the problems emerging around climate change.

We have sought to deliver sound policy suggestions, based on climate science to key decision makers in the state. In this process it became apparent that to a large degree the current state government has not established adequate frameworks for our state to respond meaningfully to the expected physical impacts of climate change. This was highlighted over the summer of 2013/14, when major bushfires impacted on large sections of the state. In spite of the clear link between fire risk and climate change, the government did not publically link the two.

FoE produced a research report, which sought to assess the financial cost to governments and the community in Victoria of natural disasters. The resulting figures are likely to be quite conservative and yet showed that the cost was almost \$20 billion dollars over a ten year period from 2003 to 2013.

The report *Natural Disasters and a Warming Climate; Understanding the Cumulative Financial Impacts on Victoria* is a compilation of disaster loss statistics from weather related Victorian disaster events – fires, floods, storms and heatwaves. The figures of \$6,762.87 million in public costs and \$13,174.2 million in insured costs are based on estimates of loss cost rather than true damage from these events.

Climate change science clearly tells us that, without concerted global action to reduce emissions, Victoria will face hotter summers and extended heatwaves, more erratic rainfall patterns, and longer bushfire seasons. Yet our government has turned its back on taking action to reduce our contribution to climate change.



**Natural disasters cost Victoria  
an average of \$2 billion each year**

**That's enough to build  
50 new schools or 2 hospitals**

**Tell Premier Napthine to stop hiding  
from climate change.  
It's time for action.**

**YES 2 RENEWABLES**  
Energy that lasts longer

Unless our government stops hiding from climate science, and joins the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will be condemning Victorians to an ever greater cost burden from extreme weather events.

## Putting the environment on the agenda – State Election 2014

We have been working hard throughout the past year to try and get all political parties focused on key environmental and climate issues in the build up to the November 29 state election.

While both main parties have run fairly standard ‘bread and butter’ campaigns, focused on the economy, infrastructure, health and employment, we have had some significant impacts through focusing on the economic implications of action (and inaction) when it comes to climate change.

Our four key areas of focus have been:

- 1.) We call for a permanent ban on any new coal and onshore gas mining operations in key areas in Victoria
- 2.) We urge all Parties to rule out any further coal allocations or development of coal infrastructure and any further allocations of public funds to coal research and development
- 3.) We urge parties to commit to re-write the Baillieu government’s VC82 anti-wind laws and reintroduce a science based approach to siting wind energy.
- 4.) We believe that a commitment to establish a state-based Renewable Energy Target (VRET) would drive regional employment and investment, and help Victoria start to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We have developed comprehensive policy proposals, met with all mainstream parties, and engaged the community via direct approaches and strategic media interventions.



The major focus of our activity has been our grassroots organising work across regional Victoria – in the south on coal and gas, and in the Geelong and Macedon areas around renewable energy.

We have also lobbied to have the East West Tunnel stopped (and contracts torn up if signed before the election) and in support of the Great Forest National Park proposal and the need for a strong Climate Change Act.

## Stopping new coal and gas

FoE understands the need to ensure a society-wide rapid transition to renewable energy sources if we are to hope to avoid dangerous climate change. There are enormous ramifications for the natural environment and human communities if, as a society, we fail to act at the required scale. There is a danger that the new boom in the development of unconventional gas (UCG) could further entrench our reliance on fossil fuels. For the past four years, FoE and Quit Coal have focussed on stopping the development of an UCG industry in Victoria.

In 2012, a campaign launched by FoE and Quit Coal was able to achieve the first significant environmental victory under the current Victorian government. The then Premier, Ted Baillieu, announced a moratorium on the process of fracking (hydraulic fracturing) and a ban on the use of the dangerous BTEX chemicals in the gas drilling process. Over the past year we have continued to build community support for a transition away from fossil fuels.

Quit Coal, in alliance with FoE and Lock the Gate Victoria, have continued to focus on supporting farming communities to create effective opposition to unconventional gas exploration and coal mining at a grassroots level.

We have been using the Gasfield and Mining Free Communities organising model across southern rural Victoria. The strategy encourages communities that are under threat from mining proposals to undertake a grassroots survey process of their local area, to ascertain if people want unconventional gas or mining to proceed. Local community groups organise house-to-house surveying of their neighbours to inform them of the proposed projects and seek opinions. Surveys are collated and a percentage of the community opposed to



unconventional gas in the area is established. Once the survey process is complete, we support communities to organise a declaration day, whereby the whole community comes together to declare their community coal and/or gasfield free.

In 2012/13 we had focused on building the campaign in Gippsland. From late 2013, we greatly extended our activity back into western Victoria. To help facilitate activity, an informal alliance called Protect the West has been established. So far 36 communities across southern Victoria have declared themselves coal and/or gasfield free. Support for the declarations has been between 88% and 100%, with an average of 95% of people opposing unconventional gas on their farmland and in their communities. More than 3,500 households have been polled.

The community of Seaspray in Gippsland has been leading the regional campaign. Their area is currently under licence for unconventional gas drilling. The local community worked together to better understand the effects and implications of the drilling on their farmland. FoE and QC have been supporting the people of Seaspray to develop a response to the potential drilling and to voice their concerns to the government and to the company holding the license.

**In response to our combined campaigning, and the threat of direct action by Seaspray locals, in May 2014, the Victorian government announced that it had decided to put a hold on making any decisions on the approval of current onshore gas exploration work plans.** This stops the Seaspray drill application and activity across the state until at least mid 2015.

This was a fantastic outcome, one of the few environmental victories achieved under the current state government, and a testament to the organisation and determination of regional communities across southern Victoria.

As part of the ban on new approvals, Energy and Resources Minister Russell Northe announced the 'onshore natural gas community and stakeholder engagement program'. Our alliance supported members of affected communities to attend, present questions and voice their concerns at the government's open days. We have been liaising with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the consultants undertaking the consultations, to maximise the government's capacity to engage with communities.

All of the work that we have been doing within the alliance is designed to assist communities to have more of a say and a greater input and participation in decision making on unconventional gas drilling and potential coal mining in their area. Our alliance is seeking to support the broader agricultural and tourism industries in Victoria. We are motivated by the need to protect the natural environment and food production, local livelihoods and the economies of rural people, and ensuring sustainable resource management in our beautiful state.

There were two key public events organised as part of the campaign over the past year:

### Farmers and Friends against fracking

Our campaign has largely focused on regional Victoria. In August 2013 we hosted the 'farmers and friends against fracking' rally in conjunction with Coal and CSG Free Mirboo North. Many hundreds of people joined this event to show support for rural communities who are threatened with coal and gas proposals.



**"CSG FREE Boolarra"**



**Declaration Day**  
Sunday March 23rd, 12 - 3 pm  
Ruffing Park, Boolarra

Help us celebrate and declare Boolarra and surrounding districts CSG FREE.

Use "LOCK THE GATE" code

• Breakfast Ceremony • Live Music • Guest Speakers  
• BBQ/Waterbongers • Children's Activities

The 2010 Community Use Survey  
83% of residents surveyed have declared their property 'locked' to the creation of any New Coal Mines and Gas Fields.

For more information, email: [community@lockthegate.org.au](mailto:community@lockthegate.org.au)  
www.lockthegate.org.au

## John Fenton tour

John Fenton is a farmer from Pavillion, Wyoming who has been living with pollution of ground water and air, and a range of other impacts from the gas industry. John has a gas well situated only 100 metres from his house and the snow melt irrigation district where he lives has 200 wells dotted over the land.

John has become a prominent spokesperson in the USA on the issue of unconventional gas. In early 2014, FoE hosted the Victorian section of a national speaking tour. He spoke to packed public forums in Melbourne and Gippsland.

[http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/a\\_warning\\_from\\_wyoming](http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/a_warning_from_wyoming)

## Communities which have declared themselves coal and/or gasfield free

### GIPPSLAND

Poowong  
Poowong North  
Poowong East  
Seaspray  
Gifford  
The Honeysuckles  
Glomar Beach  
Harmers Haven  
Yarragon South  
Boolarra  
Mirboo North

Briagolong  
Yarragon  
Kongwak  
Bena  
Jeetho  
Jumbunna  
Moyarra  
Meerlieu  
Perry Bridge  
Goon Nure  
Bengworden

### WESTERN VICTORIA

Moriac  
Mt Moriac  
Paraparap  
Freshwater Creek  
Boonah  
Bambra  
Deans Marsh  
Drumborg  
Lyons  
Hotspur  
Dartmoor

**A WARNING FROM WYOMING**

**HOW FRACKING FOR GAS POISONED THE WATER**

**John Fenton, Farmer & Gas Activist**

The US Environmental Protection Agency found that the 300 gas wells in Pavillion, Wyoming poisoned the water. Drinking water is now trucked in by the gas company, who local farmers have to ventiliate their houses when they get a bath or have a shower or risk an explosion from the build-up of gas. Some locals have developed major health issues connected with the chemical pollution. Hear John Fenton speak about this situation and the battle against fracking being waged in the USA.

**7pm Friday 7th March**  
**Rosedale Mechanics Hall, Rosedale**

[www.fentonstour.com](http://www.fentonstour.com) - For info email [info@poowongfestival.com](mailto:info@poowongfestival.com)

Friends of the Earth  
100% GREEN

Over the past year we have been fortunate to be able to continue to employ Ursula Alquier and Chloe Aldenhoven as community campaigners. They are supported by a large team of volunteers from Quit Coal. We must acknowledge the efforts of the steering group who supported Chloe and Ursula, especially Peter Callender, Merryn Redenbach, and Ali Leahy.

Noah Beecher Kelk and Eloise Marriott have worked to support the campaign through long term internships with FoE.

### Further information

[www.quitcoal.org.au](http://www.quitcoal.org.au)

[www.melbourne.foe.org.au](http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au)

## Yes 2 Renewables

The Y2R project was established because of the obvious threat to wind energy posed by the Coalition's policy on this industry. One of the motivations for setting it up was because the forces opposed to wind farm developments are well organised and vocal, yet the majority of Victorians who support good and well planned projects are not.

Polling consistently shows overwhelming community support for more renewable energy. We believe that there is a real desire in the community to find ways to support well planned and appropriate renewable projects. This has been shown strongly by the positive response we received to the launch of this pro-renewables project. Over the past few years we have been able to shift the nature of the media and public debate on renewable energy in regional Victoria.

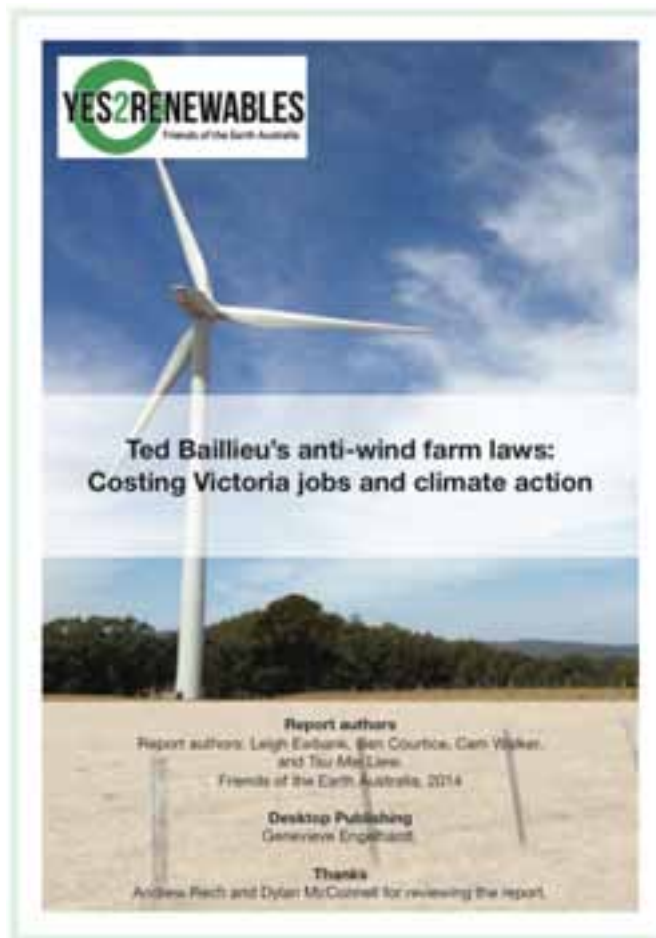
### State election

In 2014, we have helped put renewable energy on the election agenda. We have engaged with all mainstream political parties to encourage them to adopt forward thinking policy on renewable energy and energy efficiency. In the short term this focuses on the need to re-write the existing anti-wind laws and adopt a Victorian renewable energy target (VRET).

We have worked on the ground with local partners to raise support for renewable energy. This work has included the Seat of Barwon South (where our local partners were Geelong Sustainability Group and Surf Coast Air Action) and the Seat of Macedon (Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group and Riddells Creek Sustainability).

### Cherry Tree Range wind proposal approved

In November, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal approved the Cherry Tree Range wind farm proposed for Trawool in Central Victoria.



The Cherry Tree Range wind farm is only the second approved since the Coalition government introduced the world's strictest laws for wind farms.

VCAT's decision is rare good news for the wind energy sector which has been hit hard by the onerous conditions imposed by former Premier Ted Baillieu.

The project's approval would not have been possible without an active proponent and supportive community. FoE's Y2R worked closely with local group BEAM to build organised support in the community for the project and contest some of the more outlandish claims of the anti wind lobby.

We have carried out some significant public education and outreach:

### Renewables Champion Award

In February, Ararat Councillor Gwenda Allgood received the inaugural FoE *Renewable Energy Champion Award* at the Melbourne Sustainable Living Festival 2014.

Yes 2 Renewables selected councillor Allgood to recognise her efforts educating Australians about wind energy.

### "The Way the Wind Blows"

In February 2014, FoE's Yes 2 Renewables campaign hosted a screening of "The Way the Wind Blows", which included a Q&A session after the movie with Director Neil Barrett.

Wind farm laws in Victoria are some of the most restrictive laws which discourage the construction of wind farms. Yes 2 Renewables has helped raise awareness about the benefits of wind energy

This movie has given an honest picture of wind farms and its surroundings. It focuses on the town of Waubra where it was claimed that the local wind farm has caused many health problems to the locals living there. This issue was brought to





national attention when ABC's Four Corners and other current affairs programs featured the story. Independent filmmaker Neil Barrett thus travelled to Waubra and interviewed locals over a period of a year to find out what was really going on, only to find a different story.

### **RET Review Road Trip**

Over the course of two months, Friends of the Earth undertook a fact-finding RET Road Trip. We travelled over two thousand kilometres to speak with eight communities who have benefitted from renewable energy or have been affected by fossil fuel pollution. We did this to get a real understanding of the impacts of energy policy.

The RET Road Trip uncovered strong public support for the 41-terawatt-hour Renewable Energy Target.

In Daylesford, we found a community who is has already benefitted from the scheme. The Renewable Energy Target allowed the community to pool their resources and build their own wind farm.

In Morwell and Anglesea we met with communities whose are sick of their health being the collateral damage of polluting coal-power plants. For these communities the Renewable Energy Target offer hope of a smooth transition to clean energy sources.

We witnessed the economic benefits renewable energy delivers regional towns when visiting Portland and Ararat in Victoria, as well as the Southern Tablelands of NSW.

Engaging with community members in Hoppers Crossing and Brighton we revealed the strength of the public's solar aspirations. Conversations with these folk demonstrated that public understanding of renewable energy is greater than that of most politicians. The solar suburbs view renewable energy as an opportunity for self-reliance and lower power prices.

**For further information, please see:**  
<http://yes2renewables.org/>

### **Public Transport Not Traffic**

FoE is a founding member of PTNT and is on the steering committee for the alliance.

A key focus in 2013/14 has been to build community opposition to the East west link amongst political parties. Opinion polling consistently shows the majority of Victorians do not support this costly project which will only serve to further entrench current reliance on cars, with corresponding impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and public health.

What is required is a major re-consideration of government priorities when it comes to accessibility and traffic in Melbourne, with investment in developing a truly world class public transport system. The environmental and social benefits of such a shift would be significant and help to truly make Melbourne a world famous city known for its liveability and sustainability.

## ANTI NUCLEAR & CLEAN ENERGY

The anti nuclear and pro renewables campaign has been our longest running campaign.

Friends of the Earth's Anti-nuclear and Clean Energy (ACE) campaign has been working on the environmental impacts of different energy sources for over three decades. Historically the focus was on uranium and nuclear energy; more recently the scope of the campaign's activities have been expanded to cover all energy sources.

Over the past year some highlights include the following:

- Radioactive Exposure Tour 2014: a two-week anti-nuclear roadtrip into South Australia and the Northern Territory to expose participants to the realities of the nuclear industry in Australia. Forty people came on this year's extended Rad Tour.

The activities along the way included meeting with significant Australians who have been affected by the nuclear industry, such as Yami Lester, Mrs Eileen Wingfield and test veteran Avon Hudson. The group toured the Olympic Dam uranium mine, protested at Pine Gap, held a forum in Alice Springs and travelled to Tennant Creek to express solidarity with the Muckaty Traditional Owners fighting the radioactive waste dump on their land.

- Workshops on nuclear issues at Students of Sustainability Conference in 2013 and 2014.
- Attending and helping coordinate meetings of the national movement including the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance in Adelaide and national nuclear free meetings in Melbourne.
- Supporting successful campaign against the proposed radioactive waste dump at Muckaty by organising public meetings and attending court



dates when Muckaty Traditional Owners have come to Melbourne, and by coordinating a successful crowdfunding campaign for the Beyond Nuclear Initiative.

- Holding public events such as a four-part series of film nights with speakers on various aspects of the nuclear chain, a commemoration on the anniversary of Fukushima.



# BARMAH – MILLEWA CAMPAIGN

## Protecting the Red Gum Park legacy

This project grew from the campaign to gain protection for the Red Gum ecosystems along the Murray River in Victoria, while acting to ensure traditional owner groups gained greater access to land justice in this process.

The Barmah-Millewa Collective works to protect and restore the threatened ecology of the Murray-Darling Basin and support social justice for the region's Traditional Owners.

A decade of campaigning on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is being rewarded as environmental water quenches key sites such as the Barmah-Millewa forest. But the implementation of the plan requires careful scrutiny and the BMC has been working alongside an alliance of eNGOs to advocate for the environment on a range of issues such as constraints management, the 'critically endangered' listing of the lower Murray and affective delivery of environmental water.

Recognising the rights of the more than 40 Indigenous Nations whose members make up a growing percentage of the Basin population is essential to ensuring a sustainable and equitable future in the region. The BMC is building on our collaboration with Traditional Owners across the Basin to form a strong alliance to campaign for Indigenous water rights.

## Highlights of 2013/14 include:

- Stopped destructive logging trial of red gums in the Barmah National Park. We gathered thousands of signatures, coordinated with local community groups and pressured State and Commonwealth Governments to ensure this outcome



- The Matakupay project, a collaborative, community research project that mapped the health of Platypus (or Matakupay) populations in the Swan Hill/Nyah area in close collaboration with the Wadi Wadi Traditional Owners. The project helped to secure culturally sensitive environmental watering in the Nyah-Vinifera red gum forests.
- We also completed a contract to have the Cultural Flows films, made in collaboration with members of the Wadi Wadi and Mutthi Mutthi communities, screened on SBS TV.
- We've facilitated engagement between peak Indigenous and environmental organizations, prepared detailed submissions and lobbied decision makers including Water Law Review, the Commonwealth Water Act 2007 review, the North Central Regional Waterway Strategy and Commonwealth environmental water delivery. The Indigenous water rights movement is building a strong base for a concerted campaign. Watch this space!

For more information

<http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/barmah-millewa>



# WATER & PESTICIDES

## Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals

FoE has worked for many years to reduce chemical loads to waterways and drinking water, taking a systematic approach to the issue and investigating a different section of the state each year, as well as focusing on different sectors of agriculture. Over the past year, a key focus of this work as to consider the presence and implications of Chlorine Disinfection by-products in drinking water.

FoE produced two reports looking at dangerous levels Chlorine Disinfection Byproducts in drinking water. The first report produced in July 2013 concentrated on the Grampians Wimmera Region and the second report, published in January 2014, looked at DBP levels around the Phillip Island region of Victoria. High levels of DBP's have been linked with cancer of the bladder. Both reports generated local media. FoE is pressuring the National Health and Medical Research Council to set lower guideline levels for DBPs. The NHMRC has not changed the guideline levels since 1996. Millions of Australian's are likely to be drinking and bathing in water, with levels of DBP's which would not be allowed in other countries. For example the Australian guidelines are set at levels 3 times higher than equivalent guidelines in the United States.

FoE continued to network issues regarding pesticides to a number of concerned people and published a report looking at what pesticides local government's use in June 2014. FoE also worked with Canberra based group, Act for Bees in their push to restrict the sale of neonicotinoids for garden use.



## Eastern Golf Course

FoE continues to be concerned about the construction of the Eastern Golf Course in close proximity to the off-take to Sugarloaf Reservoir and likely impacts on the Yarra River.

The Yarra River could well be one of the most pesticide laden rivers in Australia. Recent research found an incredible 800 pesticide detections in the Yarra, most of these being inside the cities domestic water supply.

In previous years FoE has highlighted the likely impacts on freshwater ecosystems and native fish species in the river as a result of earth works on the Yarra floodplains associated with the golf course.

## Other activity

FoE provided 4 Corners, with a large amount of information for their July 2013 program 'Chemical Time Bomb' which focused on the health impacts of dioxin contaminated 2,4,5-T . FoE has long held concerns regarding dioxin contamination of pesticides and research is indicating that many commonly used pesticides remain contaminated with dioxins. Of particular concern is the widely used herbicide 2,4-D.

In October 2013, ABC Radio National Background Briefing aired a show on the dangers of Tattoo Inks. This story was initiated by FoE and toxics researcher Warren Godson. The show also featured information regarding nanoparticles in tattoo ink.

FoE continues to monitor pesticide use in drinking water catchments across the state, and highlights both best practise management of chemicals and the likely impacts of high levels of chemical use on freshwater ecosystems and individual animal species, especially amphibians. Over the past year, FoE received information from Barwon Water showing the highest known Victorian detections of the herbicide MCPA in the Wurdee Boluc water supply.

## FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY

There are two aspects to our forests work – a campaign to ensure adequate protection of native forests which are currently subjected to harvesting operations, and involvement in forestry management systems and processes to ensure that the plantation estate is managed in a sustainable manner, with minimal social and environmental impacts on local ecosystems and human communities.

### **Strzeleckis Ranges**

FoE continues to work with Friends of Gippsland Bush in the Strzelecki Ranges. Much of the work over the past year has involved in monitoring of regeneration inside the Cores and Links Rainforest Reserve.

FoE continues to support initiatives concerning the protection of the Strzelecki Koalas, Victoria's only remnant koala population.

FoE has also been heavily involved in the first population count of koalas in the Strzelecki Ranges. Koala counts have occurred frequently between November and July, with over 150 sites containing 30 trees each, being assessed. FoE continues this work with Friends of Gippsland Bush and groups from New South Wales on this exciting project. This project is very labour intensive as it requires on-ground research across complex and heavily forested terrain. It has added significant new information about the forests of the Strzelecki Ranges, which will be useful to a range of government and private land managers.

FoE, in conjunction with German group Rainforest Rescue delivered a petition signed by 85,000 to Environment Minister Ryan Smith in November, expressing concern over the deaths of koalas in blue gum plantations in the south west of the state.



### **Forest Stewardship Council**

The FSC is an international, non-profit organisation founded in 1993 by environmentalists, social interest groups, retailers and leading forest companies to develop standards based on the '10 Principles for Forest Stewardship' by which

responsible forest practice can be measured. These standards seek to ensure that environmental, social and economic needs are balanced, and that long-term forest management plans are implemented.

FoE has been actively involved in FSC since its creation in Australia.

## FOOD CO-OP AND CAFE

Throughout the year, the downstairs businesses continued to be the cornerstone of the thriving FoE building in Collingwood. The co-op continues to host a number of programs aimed at refugees and other new arrivals to Australia, long term unemployed, and people on day release from corrections facilities. It has also a space for local community groups and the activist community to gather, the co-op hosted a number of public events over the year, fostering community spirit.

### **Sustainable Breakfast Series – March 24-28th**

The Food Cooperative collaborated with 3CR was for a week of live broadcasts from the café 7-8.30 each morning. Open to the public, we provided a free breakfast showcasing local sustainable produce. The breakfast radio featured volunteers and campaigners at FoE, local growers and producers and other guests working towards creating a sustainable future. The Sustainable Breakfast Series was supported by the City of Yarra. You can listen to the broadcasts: <http://www.3cr.org.au/sustainablebreakfastseries#sthash.Jcxh2b2G.dpuf>

### **A space for Campaigns and groups to come together**

We provided a lovely, positive and free or low-cost space to showcase FoE campaigns and other local groups. These events included the Barmah Ecology info night, Friends of Bangladesh fundraising dinner, The Leard Blockade info night, Quit Coal info night, Global Action to Defend World Heritage, Green Pledge launch party, Latin American Solidarity dinner, a Cooking demonstration with Three Bowls and the book launch of “How To Make Trouble and Influence People” amongst other events.

### **Community Support Programs**

The Coop continued with our community support programs such as our volunteering, Community Based Orders and Transitional Programs, City of Yarra Cafe Meals Program and composting with the Fitzroy Primary School kitchen garden program.

### **Changing the world with every meal**

The Coop provided a balanced, low-cost, organic, seasonal lunch plate in the café each day and increased the volume of lunch plates served – promoting a reduction in ecological footprint through vegetarian and waste wise living.



## OTHER INITIATIVES

### Environmental education

Environmental education was a major aspect of our work during the year.

Over the past year, we have helped organise more than 80 public events and forums, especially across regional Victoria.

### Some highlights:

- Our **Energy Futures forum** (Seymour, Nov) saw guest speakers from around Victoria talking about future energy options including solar and wind power, how to reduce energy use, your household bills and the risks associated if we don't move to a renewable energy future.
- We hosted a week of live broadcasts called 'sustainable breakfast' with 3CR, which featured information on sustainable living and interviews on many topics.



### The Change Course

This year Friends of the Earth held our inaugural 'Change Course', an advocacy training school over 6 weeks that gave 22 community campaigners a broad overview of the skills needed to be an effective advocate.

From community organising, to social media and fundraising, participants increased their skills and developed better capacity in their area of work.

The program was coordinated by experienced campaigner and facilitator Nicola Paris, and included interactive workshops, experiential learning and featured guest experts who are leaders in their field.

The project also built an ongoing network of community advocates that will enable participants to gain further skills and support into the future. One participant stated the course was "a wonderful way to meet a group of like-minded people also wanting to change the world. I am sure some of these people will be a part of my activist work for a long, long time."

The Change Course will be running again in 2015.



## Dirt Radio

Into its third year, Dirt Radio, FoE Melbourne's environment and social justice radio show on 3CR 855 AM, keeps the wider community up-dated with campaign news, interviews and timely reports.

Presented by activists on the front line of the environmental movement, each week Dirt Radio covers one of FoE's key campaigns through context setting discussions and on-the-spot reports. Nuclear power, climate justice, coal and coal seam gas mining, indigenous land and water rights, emerging biotechnologies, pesticide use, wind and solar energy alternatives, the transition to renewables, forest destruction are all regular features on the show.

With the Victorian state election coming up in November this year, the focus has also taken in issues such as the controversy around the proposed East-West Link tollway, resistance to unconventional gas mining in rural communities, the coal mine fire in Morwell and the newly legislated 'move-on' protest laws.

**Mondays, 10:30-11:00am each week.**

**3CR 855AM**

Also available on podcast and audio on-demand.

<http://www.3cr.org.au/dirtradio>



## Market Forces

FoE Australia affiliate Market Forces has been based in our office. Further details: <http://www.marketforces.org.au/>

March in May





## LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNING AND ALLIANCES

FoE has continued to collaborate closely with other peak Victorian green groups including Environment Victoria (EV), Wilderness Society (TWS), and the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA).

We work closely with The Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta, Taungurung, Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wamba, Mutti Mutti, Wadi Wadi, Latji Latji, Wergaia and Ngarrindjeri Nations.

We work closely with the Environment Defenders Office (re-named Environmental Justice Australia) and remain active in the Victorian Trades Hall Council green jobs and environment committee.

We have greatly increased our level of shared activity with activist organisation GetUp around climate change campaigning.

We continue to co-facilitate the Gippsland Alliance, a grouping of local environmental and community groups in Eastern Victoria. Protect the West was established in 2014 to better enable networking and shared activity amongst groups in western Victoria.

In addition, we continue to support a range of community campaigns and projects around the state.



### Big Hill

Canadian gold miner Crocodile Gold is pressing ahead with the development of the Big Hill open pit project at Stawell in western Victoria.

The company has started the process of gaining approval from the Victorian Government. It plans to process 2.3 million tonnes of ore to recover more than 108,000 ounces of gold.

This open cut will remove the main landmark for the town (Big Hill), with the promise of subsequent rehabilitation of the hill. The project will cover 36 hectares.

This proposal is unusual in that it would place open-cut mining and back-fill operations in close proximity to many houses, a number of schools, and other important community infrastructure. It can be expected to have significant direct environmental impacts as well as negative impacts on public health within the Stawell community.

Crocodile Gold took over the Big Hill Project after it bought the Stawell Gold Mine in May last year. Community opposition forced the abandonment of plans for an open cut in the same location a decade ago. FoE played a role in the first campaign and has been working to support concerned residents in opposing the current proposal. We have attended meetings and public forums in Stawell, and provided strategic and logistical support to the campaign.

### Anglesea coal mine

FoE has continued to directly support Surf Coast Air Action in their campaign to have the polluting coal fired power station closed down.

### Restoring the Box Ironbark country

Members from FoE have helped manage an ecological restoration project in Castlemaine, in Central Victoria which intends to improve the health of a remnant Box Ironbark forest. This involves weed removal, stabilisation of erosion gullies, and planting back indigenous species.

### Container deposit legislation

We continued to generate support for Victoria to adopt a container deposit scheme (CDS) through our involvement in the Boomerang Alliance. A CDS scheme would greatly improve resource recovery rates in drink containers, reducing litter and improving natural environments and waterways as well as reducing the environmental impacts of this sector.

Kat Moore worked to build active community support for CDS and organised several public events during 2014.

# THE ORGANISATION

## Finances and fund raising over view

The upstairs campaign office has worked hard to continue building our income. Our core team is composed of a campaigns co-ordinator, membership development officer, finance manager and operations co-ordinator. These positions are funded by membership, donations, fund raising and direct debit income. Our efforts are paying off, with good responses to our appeals and an improvement in our overall financial situation.

We have built our overall supporter base significantly over the past year.

Campaigns are responsible for their own fund raising, with support from the office staff.

The downstairs businesses provide considerable financial support to the campaigns, not least through paying the bulk of the rent on the building, therefore greatly reducing overheads for the campaign collectives.

There are currently three part time staff employed in the businesses, and eleven part time staff in the upstairs campaign office.

A copy of our audited financial report is available upon request. [gaye.mcculloch@foe.org.au](mailto:gaye.mcculloch@foe.org.au)

## Governance

FoE's Committee of Management (called the Policy and Accountability Collective, or PAC), has responsibility for oversight of finances, strategic development, and governance and risk assessment for the organisation.

The members of the PAC in 2013/14:

Rodney Vlais  
William Shafer  
David Robertson  
Campbell Walker  
Sam Castro  
Beth Cameron

On a day to day level all campaign collectives manage their own affairs. Once a month all campaigns attend the strategy meeting, which is where whole of organisation decisions are taken. The Committee of Management (PAC) acts in an oversight role to strategy. The Fund Committee is responsible for decisions regarding allocations of donations received.

All members are encouraged to take an active role in the organisation and are eligible to stand for the PAC and Fund Committee, which is appointed each year at the AGM.

There are regular campaigners' meetings and working groups are established as needed to deal with specific issues.



## Organisational changes and milestones

Beth Cameron and Cam Walker celebrated 25 years of work with FoE. Beth is the long term co-ordinator of FoE's food co-operative and cafe. Cam is the campaigns co-ordinator.

In 2013, Environment Victoria awarded FoE/ Quit Coal with a Community Environmental Recognition Award for our work in 'locking the gate' to unconventional gas.

Our finance worker, Miko Thomas, has left FoE to return to work in Africa. Former co-ordinator Melissa Slattery stepped in to manage our finances for several months. Thanks to both Mel and Miko for their efforts over the past year.

Coal campaigner Shaun Murray returned to Melbourne after working with Lock the Gate in Queensland and his energy has helped drive our campaign against new coal mining.

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2013

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2014

	Notes	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash on hand and at bank		\$208,814.08	\$134,205.67
Short-term bank deposits		\$188,342.97	\$153,987.30
Receivables	2	\$6,138.46	\$0.00
Inventories	5	\$43,776.49	\$37,872.45
Sundry debtors	2	\$75,524.12	\$114,963.35
Total current assets		\$522,596.12	\$441,028.77
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Plant and equipment	6	\$10,479.51	\$14,894.25
Total non-current assets		\$10,479.51	\$14,894.25
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>\$533,075.63</b>	<b>\$455,923.02</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade payables		\$36,666.67	\$50,454.85
General creditors		\$21,865.94	\$42,577.54
Grants/income received in advance		\$0.00	\$6,355.92
Employee provisions	1(o)	\$137,810.31	\$79,030.21
Total current liabilities		\$196,342.92	\$178,418.52
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Borrowing's		\$0.00	\$0.00
Other creditors		\$14,743.83	\$1,100.00
Total non-current liabilities		\$14,743.83	\$1,100.00
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>\$211,086.75</b>	<b>\$179,518.52</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>\$321,988.88</b>	<b>\$276,404.50</b>
<b>Retained surplus &amp; reserve</b>			
Opening retained surplus		\$201,447.41	\$153,977.05
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		\$45,584.38	\$22,414.62
Transfer from/(to) building reserve		\$24,424.43	\$25,055.74
Closing retained surplus	11	\$271,456.22	\$201,447.41
Opening balance building reserve		\$74,957.09	\$100,012.83
Transfer from/(to) retained surplus		(\$24,424.43)	(\$25,055.74)
Closing balance building reserve	3	\$50,532.66	\$74,957.09
<b>Total surplus &amp; reserve</b>		<b>\$321,988.88</b>	<b>\$276,404.50</b>

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year ended 30 June 2014

	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Food Co-op Sales	\$623,476.75	\$581,592.69
Book Shop Sales	\$0.00	\$0.00
Membership Subscription	\$15,399.48	\$18,673.69
Donations	\$290,095.14	\$291,865.00
Fundraising	\$31,859.61	\$19,647.93
Grant Income	\$220,333.81	\$192,967.19
Bank Interest	\$7,691.26	\$8,859.07
Miscellaneous Income	\$18,734.79	\$15,970.25
Consultancy	\$0.00	\$0.00
Proceeds on sales of Fixed Assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Legacies & Bequest	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$1,207,590.84	\$1,129,575.82
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Cost of Goods Sold - Food Co-op	\$389,404.98	\$355,917.83
Cost of Goods Sold - Book Shop	\$0.00	\$11,573.34
Wages and Assoc. Cost	\$503,688.55	\$461,965.64
Administration Expenses	\$88,023.62	\$102,917.20
Rent and Outgoings	\$72,518.48	\$65,482.97
Fundraising Expenses	\$20,889.51	\$5,816.60
Campaigning Cost (inc Travel)	\$44,114.21	\$42,681.06
Bank Charges & Fees	\$5,992.19	\$5,393.68
Donations	\$1,310.12	\$777.11
Depreciation & Amortisation	\$6,793.26	\$8,667.53
Insurance	\$0.00	\$9,917.44
Gas, Electricity & Water	\$14,601.75	\$10,366.08
Audit Fees - Audit or Reviewing the Financial Report	\$3,260.00	\$3,185.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$799.83	\$12,105.17
Consultants	\$10,609.96	\$10,394.55
Legal & Government Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00
Advertising	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$1,162,006.46	\$1,107,161.20
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>\$45,584.38</b>	<b>\$22,414.62</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to Profit or Loss	\$0.00	\$0.00
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to Profit or Loss	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>\$45,584.38</b>	<b>\$22,414.62</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to the members</b>	<b>\$45,584.38</b>	<b>\$22,414.62</b>

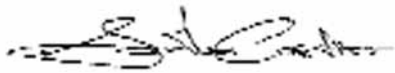
## Statement by members of the PAC Management Committee

In the opinion of the members of the committee the financial report:

- Represents a true and fair view of the financial position of Friends of the Earth (Melbourne) Inc as at 30 June 2012 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards, mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
- At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Friends of the Earth (Melbourne) Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the

Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Samantha Castro, Collingwood, Victoria



## Staff

**Food co-operative co-ordinator** – Beth Cameron

**Co-op** – Karri Cameron

## Other staff

### Campaigns office:

**Membership and Fundraising coordinator:** Sam Cossar Gilbert

**Membership Development Support:** Max Schultz

**Finance co-ordinator:** Miko Thomas

**Operations co-ordinator:** Samantha Castro

**Campaigns co-ordinator:** Cam Walker

**Plantations/ pesticides and Drinking Water:** Anthony Amis

## Barmah Millewa campaign/ Red Gum:

**Co-ordinator:** Sam Cossar Gilbert

**Water campaigner:** Will Mooney

## Climate campaign

**Renewable energy campaigner:** Leigh Ewbank

**Protect the RET project:** Shaun Murray

**Community campaigners:** Chloe Aldenhoven, Ursula Alquier

**Quit Coal interns:** Noah Beecher Kelk, Eloise Marriott

## Nuclear:

**State co-ordinator:** Gem Romuld

**National co-ordinator:** Jim Green

## Volunteer conveners:

**Indigenous solidarity – Latin America:** Marisol Salinas

**Quit Coal campaign** – all the wonderful activists of QC

**Dirt Radio (3CR)** – John Langer, Colin Grimaud

**Food Co-op & cafe** - all the hard working volunteers

## Thanks!

To the following people, foundations, businesses and organisations who supported our work over the last year:

Our long term financial adviser, Frank Fishera

Our long term IT supporters, Glenn Todd,

Many thanks to Shane Korosec for significant website design support

Harry Cossar Gilbert and Kate Bradley, who organised The Green Pledge, a major fund raising project for FoE

And to all our members and supporters for their ongoing support.

## Friends of the Earth Melbourne Inc

**Address:** 312 Smith Street, Collingwood

**Postal Address:** Box 222, Fitzroy, 3065

**Phone:** 03 9419 8700

**Toll Free (outside Melbourne):** 1300 852 081

**Email:** [foe@melbourne.foe.org.au](mailto:foe@melbourne.foe.org.au)

**Website:** [www.melbourne.foe.org.au](http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au)

**ABN No:** 68 918 945 471

**This report covers the financial year 2013/14**

**Directors**Lionel R. Arnold CA B.Bus  
Raeleene Cheng CPA B.Com**Consultant**

Janet L. Collyer FCPA

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT****To the members of FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (MELBOURNE) INC****Report on the Financial Report**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a general purpose financial report, of **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (MELBOURNE) INC** which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, and the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Retained Surplus/(Deficit) and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies notes, and Statement by Members of the Committee.

**Management's Responsibility for the Financial Report**

The management of **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (MELBOURNE) INC** is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The management's responsibility also includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

**Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report 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. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Management's financial reporting requirement. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

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

**Independence**

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the relevant independence requirements.

**Auditor's Opinion**

In our opinion the financial report of **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (MELBOURNE) INC**

- (a) gives a true and fair view of **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (MELBOURNE) INC**'s financial position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1.



Lionel R. Arnold  
**J L COLLYER & PARTNERS**

14th October 2014