



MEDIA RELEASE

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ALP Pledges to Restore Commonwealth Funding to Environmental Defenders Offices

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) has welcomed the commitment by the ALP announced yesterday to restore Commonwealth funding to Environmental Defenders Offices across Australia, pledging \$14 million over 4 years if elected.

The funding commitment was announced yesterday by Shadow Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Minister for Environment and Water Tony Burke. There are 8 Environmental Defenders Offices (EDOs) across Australia which are community legal centres. The EDOs had previously received Commonwealth Government funding but were defunded in 2013.

“The Environmental Defenders Offices across Australia are the only public interest environmental law organisations in Australia” said NACLC CEO Nassim Arrage.

“They provide vital legal help to people across Australia on environment and planning issues, run community legal education programs which allows community members to understand the laws and decisions that affect them, as well as important broader policy and law reform work with the aim of protecting our natural environment. This work is particularly important given the impact of environmental issues, including climate change, on people who experience discrimination and disadvantage”.

“We welcome this funding commitment by the ALP which would restore funding for this important work in communities across Australia” he added.

“Environmental Defenders Office are an important rule of law institution in this country” said David Morris, Executive Officer of Environmental Defenders Office NSW.

“Everyday Australians really do care about the environment. Unfortunately without EDOs, particularly in rural and remote areas, farmers, land holders and community members can’t access good quality, professional advice about environmental law and their entitlements” added Jo Bragg, Environmental Defenders Office Queensland.

“This funding will mean we can help farmers, community members and conservation groups access justice so they can stand up to big corporations and, on occasion, government when they're not complying with the law” Ms Bragg said.

“We now call on the Government to show its willingness to protecting the environment and ensuring everyday people, including farmers, land owners and communities can access the legal help they need by matching this funding commitment” Mr Arrage concluded.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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