

National Association of Community Legal Centres
ACN 163 101 737 ABN 67 757 001 303
Tel: 61 2 9264 9595
Fax: 61 2 9264 9594
Email: info@naclc.org.au
Twitter: NACLCComms
Web: www.naclc.org.au
Mail: PO Box A2245 Sydney South NSW 1235 Australia



MEDIA STATEMENT

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Peak Body Backs Environmental Defenders Offices

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) provides unequivocal support for the vital work undertaken by Environmental Defenders Offices (EDOs).

“The Environmental Defenders Offices across Australia are the only public interest environmental law organisations in Australia. The EDOs, their staff and teams of volunteers work tirelessly to protect the environment in the public interest, despite ongoing funding challenges” said Nassim Arrage, NACLC Chief Executive Officer.

There are nine EDOs across Australia which are community legal centres. The EDOs had previously received Commonwealth Government funding but were defunded in 2013. Many of them continue to receive some State or Territory Government funding, though it is often very limited.

“EDOs help everyday people across Australia, including farmers, land holders, community and conservation groups by ensuring they have access to quality advice about environmental law and their rights and entitlements”.

“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”.

“The EDOs provide high quality services and operate within a strong national quality assurance framework coordinated by NACLC”.

“Numerous independent reviews and inquiries have acknowledged their vital role. For example just last year the Cameron Review of community legal centres in NSW and a similar review in Tasmania specifically recommended that funding for the EDOs continue and be increased”.

“We encourage respectful and factual discussion about the work of EDOs and support ongoing government funding for this important work”.

“We call on the Commonwealth Government as well as State and Territory Governments to show their willingness to protect the environment and ensure everyday people, including farmers, land owners and communities can access the legal help they need by funding and continuing to fund their work” Mr Arrage concluded.

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

Nassim Arrage, CEO on 0408 092 256 or Nassim.arrage@naclc.org.au

Amanda Alford, Director Policy and Advocacy on 0421 028 645 or amanda.alford@naclc.org.au