Green groups and the government
A dangerous duopoly

Asher Judah
Research Fellow

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“Coalition victory could set climate agenda back years...
Environment group Friends of the Earth (FoE) has expressed grave concern at the prospect of the Coalition taking power following yesterday's state election because of its approach to climate change issues.”

- Cam Walker, Friends of the Earth Spokesperson, the day after the 2010 Victorian State Election. Friends of the Earth received $55,000 from the Victorian Government during 2009-10
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Introduction

Governments are using public money and fine revenue to fund advocacy organisations to encourage behavioural change in the community.

In some cases, advocacy organisations which have received taxpayer support have conducted extensive political and legal campaigns against government and opposition parties, as well as major Australian businesses and industry sectors.

This purposeful misallocation of public funds represents a dangerous new duopoly between green groups and government, as well as an outrageous abuse of taxpayers’ trust.

A government grants and penalty system which has become completely politicised and discredited must never be permitted to stand.

An immediate review of third party funding arrangements is necessary to restore the public’s trust.
Commentary

The central mission of contemporary government is to enhance the lives of its citizens.

Over the past two decades, in both New South Wales and Victoria, the motto ‘a great place to live, work and raise a family’ ¹ was heralded as the guiding motivation for the two Labor Governments which governed there between 1995-2011 (New South Wales) and 1999-2010 (Victoria).

Yet despite this gallant ethos, multiple governments operating in these two jurisdictions have been using taxpayer funds to support the operations of environmental and political action groups which unashamedly act against the best interests of the public, and routinely campaign against the governments / oppositions which fund and / or oppose their agenda.

Funding to these organisations has been distributed through a series of grants and programme funding rounds overseen by government. In some cases, the funds have been specifically provided ‘to assist with salaries and salary on-costs for executive and administrative staff; office accommodation rental; electricity, gas, phone and other similar charges; essential office supplies and equipment; staff and volunteer training; photocopying and printing costs; and travel costs incurred on behalf of the organisation.’ ²

According to IPA research, these organisations have been the beneficiaries of over $10 million ³ of taxpayer funds since 2004, although this is not exhaustive account.

Upon receiving government support, these organisations have used public funds to promote their radical economic, cultural and social agendas to the wider community, including impressionable school children. Actively engaged in the political process, some of these organisations have also directly campaign against political parties and governments.

Often operating under the guise of environmental altruism, these organisations advocate, defend and preach a number of policy positions which flow against the interests and values of ordinary Australians. Some of their positions include:

- The mass retrenchment of jobs in the coal mining, exporting and power generation sectors - resulting in the devastation of regional communities and export businesses;
- The promotion of a carbon pricing mechanism (with minimal transition support) which seeks to increase the cost of almost everything in the economy including electricity, petrol, gas prices and manufactured goods;
- The dismantlement of the logging and wood processing sectors - resulting in job losses and factory closures;
- Curtailing mining, drilling and resource exploration activity - resulting in reduced Australian and foreign investment, lower export income and industry retrenchments;
- Halting the expansion of the community’s urban footprint - resulting in land shortages, higher housing prices and the accelerated densification of existing suburbs;

³ Refer Appendix 2
• Curbing population growth – resulting in skills shortages, wage pressures and a radical redefinition of the consequences of human reproduction;
• Opposition to the construction of essential community infrastructure such as roads, highways, freeways, ports, power stations and dams - leading to increasing congestion, electricity and water price rises, and higher construction and transportation costs;
• Higher taxes on businesses and individuals - leading to reduced discretionary spending power for families and decreased international competitiveness;
• Tougher regulatory and auditory controls over businesses - leading to amplified red tape and fines for businesses, and higher end costs for consumers; and,
• Prosecution of publicly funded political campaigns against political opponents, including the governments which fund their activities.

While the official objectives and emphasis of each organisation varies, their overriding philosophical motivations are the same – to fundamentally change the way Australians, consume, behave and act.

Over the past seven years, the following government departments and statutory authorities have provided generous financial assistance to these groups:

• Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (New South Wales)
• Department of Justice (Victoria);
• Department of Sustainability and Environment (Victoria);
• Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Federal)
• Department of Transport (Victoria);
• Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (Victoria);
• Legal Services Board (LSB) (Victoria); and,
• Sustainability Victoria (SV) (Victoria)

There are two troubling aspects to this unfortunate situation which warrant discussion:

1. The contradictory nature of government policy priorities; and,
2. The blatant abuse of taxpayer funds and trust

**Contradictory nature of government policy priorities**

The idea that an Australian government would actively seek to reduce the living standards of the general public is an anathema to ordinary Australians. Consequently, it will come as a surprise to learn that several Australian governments have been funnelling taxpayer-financed grants and preferments to advocacy organisations which seek to promote that very cause.

There are two key organisations which warrant specific mention, Environment Victoria and the Wilderness Society.

In the case of Environment Victoria, this is an organisation which is committed to putting thousands of Victorians in the La Trobe Valley out of work (coal miners and coal power station employees)⁴. Moreover, Environment Victoria is actively seeking to dramatically increase the

cost of electricity for Victoria’s businesses and citizens by seeking the closure of all the coal-fired
cpower plants in the region, including the short term closure of Hazelwood ⁵.

For many Victorian taxpayers, it will no doubt be strange to learn that despite their elected
Governments routinely promoting the future of the local coal industry ⁶, they were also
funnelling almost $4 million into an organisation seeking its destruction ⁷. In the case of
Environment Victoria, that is exactly what the former Victorian Government and current Federal
Government did between 2004-2010 and 2007-10 respectively.

A prime example of the same thing taking place in New South Wales occurred with the financial
support provided by the former Government to the environmental activist group, the
Wilderness Society. The Wilderness Society regularly campaigns against major project
developments throughout the state of New South Wales. They do so because they have an
ideological objection to large scale development. In their own words, the Wilderness Society
believes that...

...‘if it can’t be proven beyond doubt that a development will not impact on the
environment, a community, or existing industries, it should not go ahead. It’s as simple
as that’. ⁸

By holding such an uncompromising position, it seems impossible for any government intent
upon improving living standards to find common ground with such an organisation. Yet despite
these ideological differences, the New South Wales Government continued to provide financial
support to the organisation, going as far as directly subsidising ‘their administrative costs.’ ⁹

Sadly, examples of contradictory policy settings within government are not particularly hard to
find. In fact, the two-faced nature of government policy priorities in this space is honeycombed
throughout almost all of the environmental and industry related portfolios.

If the public’s faith in government policy priorities is to be effectively restored, and the conflicts
of interests which permeate funding priorities are to be completely eliminated, then all
arrangements which permit such activities to occur must be reformed. Anything less would
amount to a tacit endorsement of double-dealing in government.

**Abuse of taxpayers’ funds and trust**

The financial relationship which exists between governments and their citizens is always a tense
one. Due to the nature of tax collection, and the history of repeated government misuse of
taxpayer funds, most Australians remain sceptical of the breadth, reach, utilisation and
effectiveness of government taxation.

Consequently, it will come as a great disappointment for many Australians to learn that their
taxes are being used to support organisations which:

- Advocate radical economic, environmental or cultural agendas;

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⁵ http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/media/thousands-expected-hazelwood-rally-saturday
⁸ The Wilderness Society (Newcastle), Media Release, ‘Hunter Environment under threat from Coal and Gas,’ 9 March 2011
• Engage in political and ideological campaigns against the government and/or opposition parties; and,
• Waste taxpayers funds on activities of dubious community value.

However, what will undoubtedly upset Australian taxpayers most of all is the fact that many of the environmental organisations which are receiving government funding do not support or even espouse mainstream values. In some cases, these organisations conduct extensive political and legal campaigns against those who do.

Three important examples of this kind of activity can be found in the public comments of the *Australian Conservation Foundation*, the *Friends of the Earth* and *Surf Coast Energy Group*.

In the case of the *Australian Conservation Foundation*, an organisation which has received funding from the Victorian and New South Wales Governments, it has publicly called upon the Federal Government to redefine human reproduction as a threat to our wildlife. By singling out population growth as a serious threat, the *Australian Conservation Foundation* is seeking to have the Federal Government abandon mainstream values and instead adopt its own radical social change agenda.

In relation to the *Friends of the Earth*, their activities represent a different kind of breach of trust – one of political neutrality. It is a generally accepted principle in Australia that taxpayers’ funds should not be directed to organisations for use in political activity – unless sanctioned by AEC approved election funding arrangements. However, despite this very important point, generous financial support has been given to the *Friends of the Earth* - an organisation which has aggressively campaigned against multiple political parties in Victoria and New South Wales. While there is always room for alternative opinion in Australia’s political discourse, it is something else entirely to be funding its promotion at the taxpayers’ expense.

Concerning *Surf Coast Energy Group*, this organisation’s recent funding boost is an excellent example of how governments waste taxpayer funds on frivolous environmental endeavours unrelated to their primary responsibilities. In September 2010, the *Surf Coast Energy Group* received $50,000 to help Victorians grow household food. Evidently, this funding allocation represents a bizarre diversion from the core business of government. Put simply, taxpayers do not pay tax to subsidise the green thumb hobbies of other citizens.

Sadly, government funding of groups like those mentioned above is not an uncommon occurrence in Australia. In addition to it being a function anomalous to the primary role of government, its existence represents a serious misallocation of public funds and an outrageous abuse of taxpayers trust. It also represents a glaring breakdown of the supposed checks and balances which should be operating within all government departments. Short of investigating the end uses of such inappropriate allocations, funding to third parties which have engaged in similar practices should cease immediately.

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10 Funding provided by Victorian DSE and NSW DECCW. Refer Appendix 2.
11 *Australian Conservation Foundation*, Canberra Times Opinion Piece, ‘Human impact on the environment is costing us dearly,’ 29 March 2010
14 *Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1*. Refer Appendix 2.
Conclusion

What is evident from this review is that the former Victorian and New South Wales Governments, and the current Federal Government, have each failed to enforce suitable checks and balances over the allocations of government funds to third party groups.

In each of these three cases, third party funding arrangements have been exposed as being poorly targeted, politically biased, weakly monitored and operationally irrelevant in terms of serving a credible function of government.

Additionally, the growth of these funding abuses also represents a worrying trend in the expansion of a dangerous duopoly between green groups and government.

In order to remedy the situation, the current Victorian, New South Wales and Federal Governments should each commence an extensive review of their third party funding practices. The goal of this effort should be to restore the community’s faith, stop the reckless waste, and put to an end the abuse of public funds.

Australian taxpayers, overtaxed as they already are, deserve and expect nothing less.
Case studies

4.1 Environment Victoria

*Environment Victoria* asserts that it is the ‘peak non-government environment group in Victoria’
\(^{15}\). Its primary objective is to mobilise all Victorians to safeguard the environment.\(^{16}\)\(^{17}\)

**Funding:** Over $4 million has been provided by the Victorian and Federal Governments since 2004.

**Funding Sources:**

*Victorian Government*

**Department of Sustainability and Environment**

- Environment Policy and Climate Change Grant, 2009-10: $600,000 \(^{18}\);
- Sustainable Water Management and Supply Grant, 2009-10: $188,180 \(^{19}\); and,
- Regional Sustainable Living Program (In partnership with Sustainability Victoria, the Australian Conservation Foundation and Clear Horizon Consulting) – Delivery of the Eco-Wise Action, Seniors Eco-Wise, Families Go-Green and Youth Eco-Challenge, \(^{20}\) 2006-10: $2,100,000. \(^{21}\)

*Sustainability Victoria*

- Flemington Green – Neighbourhood Renewal Project, Round 4, 2010: \(^{22}\) Amount undisclosed;
- GreenTown – Growing Sustainable Action with Diverse Communities - Sustainability Fund Open Round 4, 2009-10: $300,000 \(^{23}\);
- GreenTown – Multicultural Communities for Sustainability (Trains 40 environmental champions) – Sustainability Fund – Sustainable Communities Round 3, 2008: $560,647 \(^{24}\); and,
- Nha Dep Green Purchasing Program (Vietnamese Community Sustainability Education Program) – Sustainability Fund - Behaviour Change and Community Engagement Projects Round 1, 2004-08: $182,000 \(^{25}\).

\(^{15}\) http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/content/who-we-are
\(^{16}\) http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/content/what-we-do
\(^{17}\) http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/content/our-plan-our-future-2009-2010
\(^{18}\) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P225
\(^{19}\) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P214
\(^{20}\) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2008-09, P68
\(^{21}\) Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
\(^{22}\) Sustainability Victoria, Climate Change and Victorian Households Funding Round - General stream
\(^{23}\) Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
\(^{24}\) Sustainability Victoria, Climate Change and Victorian Households Funding Round - General stream
\(^{25}\) Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
Federal Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

- Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2008–09 (received funding for three years): $87,000 26; and,
- Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2007–08: $55,000 27.

Background

Environment Victoria is one of the largest recipients of government funding amongst Australia’s environmental activist sector.

Some of Environment Victoria’s key policy positions include opposition to future major road construction, the provision of land for residential housing and the long term survival of the Victorian coal industry.

‘The Victorian Government should introduce a moratorium on new major road projects...’ 28 - Environment Victoria, Government Submission

‘The Victorian Government should recommit to principles of urban consolidation, and reverse its decision to expand the Urban Growth Boundary.’ 29 - Environment Victoria, Government Submission

‘The state government needs to give up its obsession with developing the state’s coal resources’ 30 - Mark Wakeham, Campaigns Director

Environment Victoria also works against the State and Federal Government’s infrastructure, investment and energy strategies. In recent months, it has established an interactive website devoted to bringing ‘about a moratorium on new coal projects, or the expansion of existing coal projects for Victoria’. 31

In Environment Victoria’s own words...

‘...US activists have had huge success in recent years preventing the expansion of the coal industry there. We plan to replicate that success here.’ 32
4.2 The Wilderness Society

*The Wilderness Society* ‘is a community-based environmental protection organisation’  
which seeks to promote its agenda through events such as ‘marches and rallies, street theatre, parades and festivals, art exhibitions and media stunts.’

**Funding:** Over $120,000 has been provided by the New South Wales and Victorian Government’s since 2009.

**Funding Sources:**

**New South Wales Government**

*Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water*

- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial funding for 2009-12): $75,000

**Victorian Government**

*Legal Services Board*

- ‘Assessment of Victoria’s Environmental Laws and Regulatory Framework’ – Project Grant, 2009-10: $50,000

**Background**

Despite the *Wilderness Society*’s radical positions on modern infrastructure development, and its aggressive political activity, a significant portion of its administrative costs are paid for courtesy of the former New South Wales Government.

The *Wilderness Society* opposes the development of modern infrastructure and roads.

“If it can’t be proven beyond doubt that a development will not impact on the environment, a community, or existing industries, it should not go ahead. It’s as simple as that.” - Warrick Jordan, Newcastle Campaigns Manager.

“Our conclusion is that the two biggest parties, the ALP and the Liberal-National Coalition, have been missing-in-action on the environment this election...Our final

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34 http://www.wilderness.org.au/about-us/about-us-how-achieve-goals-article
36 Legal Services Board, Project Grants Awarded in 2009-10, P2
37 The Wilderness Society is a NSW DECCW 2009 Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants recipient. These grants cover administrative costs. Refer Appendix 2.
38 The Wilderness Society (Newcastle), Media Release, ‘Hunter Environment under threat from Coal and Gas,’ 9 March 2011
assessment shows that the Greens are way ahead on environmental policy.” 39 - Wilderness Society Media Release

39 The Wilderness Society (Australia), Media Release, ‘The future of our environment hangs in the balance,’ 20 August 2010
4.3 Environmental Defenders Office

The *Environmental Defenders Office* ‘is dedicated to protecting the environment in the public interest.’[^40] They provide legal representation and advice, take an active role in environmental law reform and policy formulation, and offer a significant education program designed to facilitate public participation in environmental decision making.’[^41]

**Funding:** Over $1.1 million has been provided by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments since 2006.

**Funding Sources:**

*New South Wales Government*

*Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water*

- Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2010: $63,440[^42];
- ‘Public Interest Environmental Law project – Community extension’ – Legal Services Board Major Grant, 2009-10: $599,000[^43];
- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $180,000[^44];
- Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2008: $94,657[^45];
- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $30,000[^46]; and,

*Victorian Government*

*Legal Services Board*

- ‘Improving Community Participation in Planning and Environment Appeals’ – Project Grant, 2007-08: <$50,000[^48]; and,
- ‘Public Interest Environmental Law Project - Major Grant 2007-08: >$50,000[^49].

**Background**

The *Environmental Defenders Office* provides legal services ‘to regional, state and national conservation groups, resident action groups and individuals, to protect the built and natural

[^41]: http://www.edo.org.au/
[^43]: Legal Services Board, Major Grants Awarded in 2009-10, P1
[^48]: Legal Services Board, Project Grants Awarded in 2007-08, P2
[^49]: Legal Services Board, Major Grants Awarded in 2007-08, P3
environment.’ 50 ‘The Environmental Defenders Office makes it possible for individuals and
groups who want to protect the environment to pursue public interest conservation issues
through the legal and planning systems with expert, professional help.’ 51

By providing direct financial assistance to the Environmental Defenders Offices, the Victorian
and New South Wales Governments are funding two organisations which regularly challenge or
assist with challenging their policies and decisions through the legal system.

‘In 2009-10 EDO provided legal representation in 73 public interest matters, including against
the Victorian Planning Minister.’ 52 53 Moreover, ‘EDO ran 68 community education projects and
49 policy and law reform projects.’ 54

By providing financial support to the EDO, these two governments increased the likelihood that
they would face legal action or project disruption in the future – which would also has the
potential to undermine government performance and increase taxpayer costs.

In short, the Environmental Defenders Office acts as the primary legal support service of the
broader Australian environmental movement – and a substantial amount of their capacity to do
so is funded by the taxpayer. Some examples include:

“This workshop introduces climate law in Australia to community groups, climate action
groups and interested individuals….As a community campaigner for climate action, do
you have questions about who you should be targeting and what you should be asking
for?” – Environmental Defenders Office Event Flyer: ‘A crash course in climate law –
Training for community, climate action groups and individuals’ 55

‘The EDO has been working with peak environment groups for over a year to encourage
the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Federal Government to produce a plan that
will end decades of over-extraction of water and restore health to the Basin while
supporting regional communities.’ - Nicola Rivers, Law Reform Director. 56

51 http://www.edo.org.au/edovic/about.html
52 Environment Defenders Office, Annual Report 2009-10, P2
53 Environment Defenders Office, Annual Report 2009-10, P6
54 Environment Defenders Office, Annual Report 2009-10, P2
4.4 Friends of the Earth

*Friends of the Earth* ‘is a grassroots and decentralised organisation that operates from an environmental justice perspective.’ 57 Through *Friends of the Earth International, Friends of the Earth* (Australia) seeks to ‘challenge the current model of economic and corporate globalisation.’ 58

**Funding:** Over $60,000 has been provided by the Victorian and Federal Government’s since 2008.

**Funding Sources:**

*Victorian Government*

*Department of Sustainability and Environment*

- Forests and Parks Grant, 2009-10: $55,000 59

*Federal Government*

*Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities*

- Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2008–09 (received funding for three years): $10,000 60

**Background**

*Friends of the Earth* is a federation of political activist organisations who advocate radical economic and environmental reform. Some of their most recent campaigns include opposing the expansion of the Victorian and Queensland coal industry and campaigning against the election of the Liberal-National Coalition in Victoria.

> “Friends of the Earth (FoE) today condemned the announcement by the Brumby Government to give approval to a new coal-fired power station in the La Trobe Valley.” 61
> - Louise Morris, Climate Campaigner

> “The Queensland Government needs to be planning it’s exit strategy from the coal industry rather than planning new coal ports and mines”. - Eleanor Smith, Spokesperson. 62

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59 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P224
61 *Friends of the Earth, Media Release, ‘Friends of the Earth condemns Brumby Government over new coal power station,’* 02 July 2008
62 *Friends of the Earth, Media Release, ‘Community Calls for No New Coal Ports,’* 29 April 2010
“Coalition victory could set climate agenda back years...Environment group Friends of the Earth (FoE) has expressed grave concern at the prospect of the Coalition taking power following yesterday’s state election because of its approach to climate change issues.” - Cam Walker, Spokesperson. 63

Friends of the Earth works against nationally significant infrastructure and investment initiatives. In April 2010, Friends of the Earth ‘denounced the development of two new coal export terminals near Bowen in North Queensland’ 64 which are both considered vital to the long term growth of Australia’s export sector.

As with the Wilderness Society, a portion of the administrative costs for Friends of the Earth are paid for by the government – in this case, the Federal Government 65.

It should also be noted that Friends of the Earth promotes itself as an organisation which ‘receives no government or corporate funding’ 66 despite State and Federal Government records suggesting otherwise. 67

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63 Friends of the Earth, Media Release, Coalition victory could set climate agenda back years,’ 28 November 2010
65 Friends of the Earth is a Federal Government 2008-09 DSEWPC Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) Program recipient. These grants cover administrative costs. Refer Appendix 2.
67 Department Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P224;
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Grants for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation - 2008–09 Round, P2
4.5 Total Environment Centre

The Total Environment Centre describes itself as ‘a hub - a resource and support base - for environmentalists.’ 68 Total Environment Centre has been campaigning for environment protection in the city and country, changing government policy, advising the community and challenging business - since 1972. 69 The ‘Total Environment Centre chooses to concentrate its resources on direct campaign activity, lobbying and research.’ 70

Funding: Over $450,000 has been provided by the New South Wales Government since 2006.

Funding Sources:

New South Wales Government

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

- Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2010: $46,620 71;
- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $240,000 72;
- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $30,000 73; and,

Background

Some of Total Environment Centre’s key policy positions include opposing the construction of dam infrastructure and new coal-fired power stations.

Over the past half decade, the Total Environment Centre has regularly undermined the NSW Government’s infrastructure delivery program. This is despite it receiving over $250,000 in government funding to cover its administrative costs 75.

“Declaring Tillegra Dam critical infrastructure will ensure a sham assessment process...TEC has called on the Government to abandon the proposed Tillegra Dam...” 76 - Jeff Angel, Director

“Total Environment Centre (TEC) today slammed the NSW Government for keeping the door open for more polluting coal-fired power...’The Premier must immediately rule out any new coal-fired power.” - Jane Castle, Senior Campaigner. 77

75 Total Environment Centre is a multi-year recipient of the NSW DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants. These grants cover administrative costs. Refer Appendix 2.
76 Total Environment Centre, Media Release, ‘Tillegra dam damned,’ 5 February 2009
4.6 Australian Conservation Foundation

The Australian Conservation Foundation has existed for over 40 years and seeks to ‘inspire and promote a society which is environmentally aware and responsible.’ The ‘Australian Conservation Foundation’ campaigns to protect, restore and sustain the environment.

Funding: Over $2.9 million has been provided by the Victorian and New South Wales Government since 2006.

Funding Sources:

Victorian Government

Department of Sustainability and Environment

- Environment Policy and Climate Change Grant, 2009-10: $600,000, and,
- Green Home Program – Helps regional Victorians become champions for sustainability, 2006-09: $2,100,000.

New South Wales Government

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $120,000,
- Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $15,000; and,

Background

Some of the Australian Conservation Foundation’s policy positions include advocating higher business taxes and redefining human reproduction as a threat to Australian wildlife.

The Australian Conservation Foundation is a multi-year recipient of the New South Wales DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants. Despite its radical reproductive and taxation agenda, this organisation receives over $100,000 in financial support from the New South Wales Government for its administrative costs.

“If the government’s proposal (Mining Tax) can be criticised at all, it is that it doesn’t go far enough.” - Charles Berger, Director of Strategic Ideas.

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77 Total Environment Centre, Media Release, ‘NSW Govt sceptics try to keep coal alive,’ 2 October 2009
80 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P225
81 Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
‘The Australian Conservation Foundation has asked the Federal Government to agree that population growth is a threat to our wildlife.’ - Prof. Ian Lowe, President.  

85 Australian Conservation Foundation, Crikey, ‘What does population growth mean for environmental policy?’ 30/03/10
86 Australian Conservation Foundation, Canberra Times Opinion Piece, ‘Human impact on the environment is costing us dearly,’ 29 March 2010
4.7 Climate Communities Programme

The *Climate Communities Programme* was launched in 2010 and ‘provides local groups across Victoria with advice, information, research and funding to take practical action on climate change in their own communities.’

Funding is sourced from the Sustainability Fund which is ‘jointly administered by the Victorian Treasurer and Minister for Environment and Climate Change and managed by Sustainability Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government.’

**Funding:** $10 million (over first three years)

**Background**

The Climate Communities programme has been abusing its position as a non-political government information portal by directing Victorian citizens to the highly politicised activist group, *Environment Victoria*.

Through the following web address ([http://www.climatecommunities.vic.gov.au/community/community-leadership/community-enterprises-and-groups](http://www.climatecommunities.vic.gov.au/community/community-leadership/community-enterprises-and-groups)), Climate Communities has been encouraging visitors to visit and become associated with *Environment Victoria*.

As established above, *Environment Victoria* actively campaigned against the Victorian Coalition in the 2010 State Election and offered varying degrees of support for the Australian Labor Party (Victoria) and the Victorian Greens.

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Redistribution of EPA Prosecution Revenue

Another area of concern is the former Victorian Government’s practice of redistributing EPA prosecution revenue to environmental and political activist groups.

Within the State of Victoria, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is charged with working ‘with other government agencies, industry and people in the community to reduce and control air and water pollution, waste and noise.’ As an established ‘independent statutory authority under the Environment Protection Act 1970’, the EPA is able to prosecute organisations which it believes have breached that Act.

‘Under section 67AC...a magistrate may direct a company or individual found guilty of environmental pollution to fund a community environmental project instead of, or in addition to, paying a fine.’

Through this provision, several political and environmental activist groups have been receiving funding support at the expense of government revenue. Over the past four years, prosecution revenue which has been redistributed to these groups has ranged from $750 to $210,000.

This practice represents another unsatisfactory development in how governments are funnelling resources to dubious sources and/or politically and environmentally charged activist groups.

Two of the worst examples include the provision of $80,000 to the Future Canvas Group for the construction of a community garden in the Docklands and a $2,500 donation to the Friends of Merri Creek.

While the Friends of Merri Creek donation is a very basic example of what happens when governments get sloppy with fine redistribution guidelines, the Docklands community garden represents something more serious – an absurd waste of public funds.

The Future Canvas group project seeks to support the ‘growing of fresh produce, community training, composting workshops, permaculture courses and urban gardening seminars.’ It also provides ‘take-home farming kits, seedlings, tools and a pot.’

In the post Global Financial Crisis world, it seems unbelievable that a State Government which lacks the funds to effectively address declining housing affordability has the resources to subsidise the publics’ green thumb interests.

These two examples are just a small sample of the destinations EPA prosecution fine revenue is going. While there are a few recipients which could claim to be deserving sources, the process by which they receive their funding is misguided.

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93 http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/students/students.asp
94 Environmental Protection Authority, Annual Report, 2008-09, PaB
95 Environmental Protection Authority, Annual Report, 2008-09, PS
96 Refer Appendix 1
97 EPA Prior Conviction Register 2008-09
98 EPA Prior Conviction Register 2009-10
99 EPA Prior Conviction Register 2008-09
100 EPA Prior Conviction Register 2008-09
Quite clearly, something has gone wrong in the decision making process if the Victorian Government believes the redirection of fine revenue to these causes, is more important than directing funding to the areas of primary government responsibility.

The recently elected Victorian Government is encouraged to conduct a thorough review of this misguided practice.
About the Institute of Public Affairs

The Institute of Public Affairs, founded in 1943, is the world’s oldest free market think tank. The IPA is a not-for-profit research institute based in Melbourne, Australia with staff and associates based around Australia.

Think tanks act as public policy incubators and develop public policy solutions. The objective of the IPA is to promote evidence-based public policy solutions rooted in a liberal tradition of free markets and a free society. The IPA achieves these objectives by:

- Undertaking and disseminating research;
- Participating in national and international policy debate through the media; and,
- Engaging with opinion leaders, stakeholders and public policy makers.

All work completed by the IPA is published in the public domain for the consumption of governments, politicians, domestic and international policy makers and the public-at-large.

The IPA has a demonstrated track record of contributing to, and changing the terms of the public policy debate in Australia and internationally. In particular, in recent years the IPA has been at the centre of public discussion in Australia and in appropriate international fora on:

- Regulation;
- Trade;
- Intellectual property;
- Water;
- Energy;
- Housing;
- Industrial relations;
- Taxation; and,
- Investment
About the Author

Asher Judah is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Public Affairs.

He is a former manager of policy and communications at the Master Builders Association of Victoria, and an economics, education and livestock adviser at the Victorian Farmers Federation.

During his time with the Master Builders Association, Asher was Campaign Manager for their Is Anybody Listening? housing affordability (2010), Think Before You Vote Greens policy awareness (2010) and Save the ABCC industrial relations (2007) advertising campaigns.

Asher completed a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) and Arts (International Relations / Australian Politics) from Deakin University.

Asher currently manages his own policy and research consultancy and has been published in The Age.
Appendix 1.

EPA Prior Conviction Register 2007-11

Outlined below is a summary of the EPA Prior Conviction Register 2007-11. The details contained within the list are not exhaustive, but highlight who was charged, what their alleged charge was, and who the court instructed the defendant to pay the fine revenue to (often without conviction).

WC = Without Conviction

Table 1. EPA Prior Conviction Register 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defendant</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Result (Fine revenue recipient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boskalis Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>1. Pollute waters of Port Phillip Bay. Contrary to s39(1) 2. Cause or permit environmental hazard, to Port Philip Bay. Contrary to s.27A(1)(c)</td>
<td><strong>Swinburne University</strong>: Funding a course on dredging and its environmental impacts. <strong>Swinburne University</strong>: $75,000 sponsorship of a PhD project on of Turbidity in Port Phillip and Coastal Areas of Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enforceable Undertaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visy Paper Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Permit an environmental hazard at Reservoir. Contrary to S.27A(2)(a)</td>
<td><strong>City of Darebin</strong>: $100,000 for the Edwards Lake: Circling the Lake Project: Involves revegetation of the lake, lighting installation, signage installation, education events and a recycling trial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barro Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Did dump, deposit, discard or abandon or permit to be dumped deposited, discarded or abandoned industrial waste at an unlicensed site, at Yea. Contrary to s.27A(2)(a)</td>
<td><strong>Murrindindi Climate Network Inc.</strong>: $64,800 to develop a Murrindindi Green Business Code of Practice in bushfire communities. <strong>Yea Wetlands Trust</strong>: $60,000 development of an interpretive education centre (Discover-E Centre Interpretive Display). Involves Yea Wetlands Committee of Management, Murrindindi Shire Council and the University of Melbourne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Did cause an environmental hazard at Yarraville. Contrary to s.27A(1)(c)</td>
<td><strong>Brooklyn Residents Action Group Inc.</strong>: $50,000 to develop a green open space including tree planting and picnic facilities. Involves Hobson Bay City Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defendant</td>
<td>Charge</td>
<td>Result (Fine revenue recipient)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Point (Vic) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Pollute atmosphere (make offensive to the senses of human beings) at Footscray. Contrary to s41(1)(a)</td>
<td><strong>Gould Group:</strong> $80,000 for Sustainability Wiz, an interactive online waste reduction program with 8-12 schools. Covers teacher training, access to online tools, tool development, program coordination and tech support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mission Australia:</strong> $80,000 for People and Places – Buna and Mulahang Reserve Redevelopment. Covers the development of a community orchard, vegetable garden, an indigenous garden and an automated irrigation system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITA Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Contravene condition of licence at Brooklyn. Contrary to s.27(2) WC</td>
<td><strong>Hobson Bay City Council:</strong> $40,000 for the Brooklyn Environmental and Education Sustainability Program. Covers retrofit of local facilities, tree planting program, home energy audits and sustainability workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott’s Transport Industries Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Pollute waters and make harmful or potentially harmful to animals, birds, wildlife, fish and other aquatic animals, at Wantirna. Contrary to s.39(1)(c) WC</td>
<td><strong>Australian Platypus Conservancy Inc.:</strong> $55,000 for Yarra Platypus Count – Yarra River catchment. Covers monitoring program and schools education component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Darebin Creek Management Committee Inc.:</strong> $25,000 for Darebin Creek Catchment Community Education Program. Covers the purchase of portable classrooms to create habitat gardens along Darebin Creek. DCMC works with Friends of Darebin Creek, Darebin Parklands Association and La Trobe University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Weston Foods Ltd</td>
<td>Cause waste to be discharged onto a dry bed of a waterway in circumstances where if the waterway had contained waters the discharge would be likely to result in those waters being polluted, at Castlemaine. Contrary to s.39(4). Did pollute land so that the condition of the land was so</td>
<td><strong>Mt Alexander Sustainability Group Inc.:</strong> $60,000 for the Pathways to a Sustainable CO2 Future. Covers education materials, speaking program, training sessions, a program guide and an awards ceremony.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
changed as to make the land unduly offensive to the senses of human beings, Castlemaine. Contrary to S.45(a)(e) WC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defendant</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Result (Fine revenue recipient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brett William Beattie</td>
<td>Cause an environmental hazard at Reservoir. Contrary to s.27A(1)(c)</td>
<td>Friends of Merri Creek Inc.: $2,500 donation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority: $30,500 for JARR Project which covers removing willows and stabilising eroding banks, building fences and planting trees. Involves Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9,500 for Morwell River NEIP Project. Covers signage, interpretive displays and upgrading roads. Involves Boolarra South Landcare Group and Friends of the Upper Morwell River Falls.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Valley City Council: $16,800 for the benefit of Friends of Steele Creek Inc to undertake the Spring Gully Reserve Grassland Revegetation Project. Covers grassland plantation and weed removal.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. EPA Prior Conviction Register 2008-09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defendant</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Result (Fine revenue recipient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whelan the Wrecker Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Dump industrial waste at unlicensed site. Contrary to s.27A(2)(a)</td>
<td>West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority: $30,500 for JARR Project which covers removing willows and stabilising eroding banks, building fences and planting trees. Involves Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,500 for Morwell River NEIP Project. Covers signage, interpretive displays and upgrading roads. Involves Boolarra South Landcare Group and Friends of the Upper Morwell River Falls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis &amp; Palmer (Vic) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Discard industrial waste (by burning it) at unlicensed site. Contrary to s.27A(2)(a)</td>
<td>Friends of Tarra-Bulga National Park: $5,000 for the Tarra-Bulga National Park – Sycamore Maple Eradication. Covers laurel and weed removal and contractors to undertake work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Liquide Australia Limited</td>
<td>Pollute atmosphere (make harmful to the health, welfare, safety or property of human beings). Contrary to s.41(1)(b)</td>
<td>Moonee Ponds Coordination Committee Inc.: $49,840 for the Creek Crusaders Education Program. Covers an environmental education program for school students from 40 schools. Requires employment of a person with an education background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Moonee Valley City Council:</strong> $16,800 for the benefit of Friends of Steele Creek Inc to undertake the Spring Gully Reserve Grassland Revegetation Project. Covers grassland plantation and weed removal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasman Group Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Pollute waters (make harmful to the health of human beings and</td>
<td>Banyule City Council: $8,000 for the Heidelberg West Industrial Safety Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Project Name</td>
<td>Offense</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green groups and the government – a dangerous duopoly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Green groups and the government – a dangerous duopoly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transpacific Cleanaway Ltd</strong></td>
<td>Deposit waste. Contrary to s.27(2)</td>
<td>Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West Inc.: $75,000 for Billi Tea Tales. Covers education schools groups, indigenous and digital storytelling and clay animation workshops. Promotes involvement and awareness of local waterway Friends groups – Kororoit Creek, Stony Creek, Newport Lakes and Maribyrnong Valley. Involves Waterwatch, Gozer Media, Melbourne Water, Environment Victorian and Maribyrnong City Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobil Refining Australia Pty Ltd</strong></td>
<td>Cause environmental hazard. Contrary to s.27A(1)(c)</td>
<td>Williamstown High School: $210,000 for Project 1 Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Stormwater Recycling Wetlands project. Covers creating a wetland and interactive/educational trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria University</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria University: $132,000 for the Keilor-Werribee Plains Flora &amp; Fauna Conservation Promotion Project (2009-10) – an initiative of the Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre. Covers research, website design and ascertaining community and school data presentation needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks Victoria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parks Victoria: $60,000 for Stony Creek revegetation project (2010-12). Covers revegetation of 3 sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fail to comply with 2 section 62B(1) directions, contrary to s.62B(5)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place waste where it could gain access to waters. Contrary to s.39(3)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melbourne Water, and local environment groups, including Waterwatch.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria University</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks Victoria</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobil Refining Australia Pty Ltd</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Williamstown High School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melbourne Water Corporation (Waterwatch program)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group Inc.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table represents violations of environmental laws and the associated financial penalties and project details.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defendant</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Result (Fine revenue recipient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>Dump industrial waste at an unlicensed site at Yackandandah. Contrary to s.27A(2)(a).</td>
<td>Yackandandah Bush Nursing Hospital: $750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaroo Hospital: $750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yackandandah Landcare Group: $750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Golden Shipping</td>
<td>Discharge oil from ship into State waters at Bass Strait. Contrary to s.8(1) of POWBONS. Pollute land and make poisonous to animals, birds and wildlife at Phillip Island. Contrary to s45(1)(c)</td>
<td>Dolphin Research Institute Ltd: $25,300 for Multidisciplinary Investigation of the Dolphin Populations in Port Phillip, Western Port and Gippsland Lakes. Covers three Monash University students and two Dolphin Institute Directors. Phillip Island Nature Parks: $25,000 for Public and Emergency Beach Access, South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company / Individual</td>
<td>Action Taken</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Water Corporation</td>
<td>Pollute waters (make harmful or potentially harmful to fish or other aquatic life)</td>
<td>Coasts Phillip Island – Park Street Beach Access, Surf Beach. Covers the installation of a 190 metre gravel pathway. Involves Bass Coast Shire Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Water Corporation</td>
<td>Pollute waters (make harmful or potentially harmful to fish or other aquatic life)</td>
<td>City of Whittlesea: $60,000 for Growling in the Grass – An Endangered Frog Recovery Project. Covers the design and construction of a purpose built frog breeding wetland and water quality treatment bioretention swale. Involves the City of Whittlesea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Damian McKenzie</td>
<td>Pollute waters (make harmful or potentially harmful to fish or other aquatic life)</td>
<td>Western Port Seagrass Partnership Ltd: $90,000 for Improving Water Quality in Western Port using Mangrove and Seagrass Planting to control the erosion of the Lang Lang Coastline. Covers replanting mangroves to reduce erosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onesteel MBS Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Cause an environmental hazard</td>
<td>Lake Boga Landcare Group: $7,000 for projects identified by the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Metals Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Permit the dumping of industrial waste at an unlicensed site</td>
<td>Merri Creek Management Committee Inc.: $75,000 for Streets to Streams project. Covers community education, guided walks, display materials, information packages and restoration work. Involves the City of Yarra, the City of Darebin, the Hume City Council, Friends of Merri Creek and Fawkner Community House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amcor Packaging (Australia) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Pollute waters (make harmful or potentially harmful to fish or other aquatic life)</td>
<td>City of Manningham: $45,000 for Craithie Reserve Waterway Improvement Program. Covers a capacity building and awareness program for local residents. Involves Port Phillip and Westernport Waterwatch, Friends of Anderson Creek, Manningham Waterwatch Group, local residents and Monash University Facility for Advanced Water Engineering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green groups and the government – a dangerous duopoly
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Alphington and Fairfield Civic Association Inc.</td>
<td>$34,000 for the Alphington Park Wetlands Revegetation Project. Covers revegetation program and community planting days.</td>
<td>Contrary to s.39(1)(c) Education in Schools within Darebin Creek Catchment. Educates students on local waterway issues at 65 schools. $20,000 for Drain Labeling within Darebin Creek Catchment. Covers drain labeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management Pacific Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Cause an environmental hazard at Campbellfield. Contrary to s.27A(1)(c).</td>
<td>Merri Creek Management Committee Inc.: $50,000 for Nearby Nature: Focus on Galada Tamboore Campbellfield program. Covers weed control, revegetation works, and consolidation of remnant vegetation. Involves Melbourne Water, Hume City Council, Friends of Merri Creek, and local residents and schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2.

Recipient Organisations

Environmental Action Groups

Australian Conservation Foundation ($2.9 million)
- DSE Environment Policy and Climate Change Grant, 2009-10: $600,000 101;
- DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $120,000 102;
- DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $15,000 103;
- DSE Green Home Program – Helps regional Victorians become champions for sustainability, 2006-09: $2,100,000 104; and,

Ballarat Permaculture Guild
- Backyard Bounty (Encourages home food production and keeping chickens) – Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1, 2010: $50,000 106

Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions ($152,767)
- Climate change Action - a model for community action groups (works with Environment Victoria to develop a network of climate change groups) – Sustainability Fund – Sustainable Communities Project Round 3, 2008: $152,767 107

Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance ($1.2 million)
- Retrofitting the Region - Sustainability Fund Open Round 4, 2009-10: $200,000 108;
- Monitoring and Reporting for the Central Victorian Solar Cities Program (Monitor, manage and reduce energy consumption) – Sustainability Fund Climate Change Projects Round 2, 2006: $1,000,000 109; and,
- DSE Castlemaine 500 Program - Involving residents in ‘household assessments, householder workshops, energy monitoring and action plans.’ 2006. 110 Amount undisclosed.

Environment Defenders Office (Victoria) Ltd ($1.1 million)
- DECCW Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2010: $63,440 111;
- ‘Public Interest Environmental Law project – Community extension’ – Legal Services Board Major Grant, 2009-10: $599,000 112;

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101 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P225
104 Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
106 The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria’s Climate Communities think global, act local: round one recipients announced’, 29 September 2010
107 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Three 2008, P10
108 Sustainability Victoria, Climate Change and Victorian Households Funding Round - General stream Supported projects 2010, P1
109 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Two 2006, P3
110 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2008-09, P68
• DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $180,000 113;
• DECCW Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2008: $94,657 114;
• ‘Improving Community Participation in Planning and Environment Appeals’ – Legal Services Board Project Grant, 2007-08: <$50,000 115;
• ‘Public Interest Environmental Law Project - Legal Services Board Major Grant, 2007-08: >$50,000 116;
• DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $30,000 117; and,
• DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2006 (triennial fund for 2006-09): $135,000 118.

Environment Victoria ($4.04 million)
• DSE Environment Policy and Climate Change, 2009-10: $600,000 119;
• GreenTown – Growing Sustainable Action with Diverse Communities - Sustainability Fund Open Round 4, 2009-10: $300,000 120;
• Flemington Green – Neighbourhood Renewal Project, Round 4, 2010. 121 Amount undisclosed.;
• DSE Sustainable Water Management and Supply Grant, 2009-10: $188,180 122;
• GreenTown – Multicultural Communities for Sustainability (Trains 40 environmental champions) – Sustainability Fund – Sustainable Communities Round 3, 2008: $560,647 123;
• DSE Regional Sustainable Living Program (In partnership with Sustainability Victoria, Australian Conservation Foundation and Clear Horizon Consulting) – Delivery of the Eco-Wise Action, Seniors Eco-Wise, Families Go-Green and Youth Eco-Challenge. 124 Aim is to engage the community on sustainability issues. 2006-10: $2,100,000 125;
• DSEWPC Grants for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2008-09 (organisation received this level of funding for three years): $87,000 126;
• DSEWPC Grants for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2007–08: $55,000 127; and,
• Nha Dep Green Purchasing Program (Vietnamese Community Sustainability Education Program) – Sustainability Fund - Behaviour Change and Community Engagement Projects Round 1, 2004-08: $182,000 128.

112 Legal Services Board, Major Grants Awarded in 2009-10, P1
115 Legal Services Board, Project Grants Awarded in 2007-08, P2
116 Legal Services Board, Major Grants Awarded in 2007-08, P3
119 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P225
120 Sustainability Victoria, Climate Change and Victorian Households Funding Round - General stream Supported projects 2010, P1
122 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P214
123 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Three 2008, P10
124 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2008-09, P68
125 Sustainability Victoria, Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010, P50
128 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round One 2004, P4
Friends of the Earth ($65,000)
  • DSE Forests and Parks Grant, 2009-10: $55,000; and,
  • DSEWPC Grants for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Grant Allocation Round, 2008–09 (organisation received this level of funding for three years): $10,000.

Mind (Mind Australia) - Sprout
  • Local Food, Local People, Global Thinking (Helping low income people establish home food gardens) – Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1, 2010: $50,000

Murrindindi Climate Network Inc.
  • Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Development of a Murrindindi Green Business Code of Practice, 2010-11: $64,800

Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc.
  • Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Carboncut2: Low Income Community Capacity-Building for Climate Change project. Covers training of young people to conduct energy and water efficiency installations and audits. Also covers young training, workshops and support youth leadership on climate change. Involves South Port Uniting Care, City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Community Group, South East Water and Park Towers Housing Commission. 2008-09: $80,000

Surf Coast Energy Group
  • Grow It! (Training to grow household food) - Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1, 2010: $50,000

Total Environment Centre ($451,620)
  • DECCW Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2010: $46,620; and,
  • DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $240,000; and,
  • DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2007: $30,000; and,
  • DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2006 (triennial fund for 2006-09): $135,000

Upper Yarra Creative Climate Community
  • Seeking creative responses to climate change (Engaging disengaged people on climate change) - Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1: $50,000

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129 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P224
130 The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria’s Climate Communities think global, act local: round one recipients announced’, 29/09/10
131 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #13, 1/07/2010-30/06/2011, P5
132 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #11, 1/07/2008-30/06/2009, P18
133 The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria’s Climate Communities think global, act local: round one recipients announced’, 29 September 2010
138 The Hon. Candy Broad MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria Gets Eight New Climate Communities’, 16 October 2010
Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group
- Story of Warrnambool, Land between the River (Picnics, songs and stories to encourage action on climate change) - Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1, 2010: $48,500 139

The Wilderness Society (Victoria) and (Sydney) ($125,000)
- DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants, 2009 (triennial fund for 2009-12): $75,000 140; and,

World Wide Fund for Nature
- DECCW Environmental Education - Community Grants, 2008: $29,200 142

Political Action Groups

Bicycle Victoria Inc.
- Ride2School (Encourages children to ride to school) – Sustainability Fund - Behaviour Change and Community Engagement Projects Round 2, 2006: $80,000 143

Mission Australia
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue - People and Places – Buna and Mulahang Reserve Redevelopment. Covers the development of a community orchard, vegetable garden, an indigenous garden and an automated irrigation system. 2009-10, $80,000 144

Moonee Ponds Coordination Committee Inc.
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Creek Crusaders Education Program. Covers an environmental education program for school students from 40 schools. Requires employment of a person with an education background. 2008-09, $49,840 145

United Nations Association of Australia (Victorian Division)
- DSE Biodiversity Grant, 2009-10: $10,000 146

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139 The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria’s Climate Communities think global, act local: round one recipients announced’, 29 September 2010
141 Legal Services Board, Project Grants Awarded in 2009-10, P2
143 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Two 2006, P6
144 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #12, 1/07/2009-30/06/2010, P2
145 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #11, 1/07/2008-30/06/2009, P5
146 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P221
Public Sector Groups

Baw Baw Shire Council
- Greenhome for a better Baw-Baw (Trains 20 environmental gladiators to tackle climate change – Part of ACF’s Greenhome Program) - Climate Communities Grants Program Round 1, 2010: $16,200 147

Hobsons Bay City Council ($104,455)
- My Smart Garden - Sustainability Fund Open Round 4, 2009-10: $104,455 148

Monash Sustainability Institute
- Bridging the Skills Gap Sustainability Fund (Training and mentoring environmental professionals) - Sustainability Education and Awareness Project Round 3, 2008: $20,920 149

Swinburne University:
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue - Funding a course on dredging and its environmental impacts. 2010-11. No amount disclosed 150; and,
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue - Sponsorship of a PhD project on of Turbidity in Port Phillip and Coastal Areas of Victoria. 2010-11: $75,000 151

Yackandandah Bush Nursing Hospital
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Donation. 2007-08: $750 152

Yamaroo Hospital
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Donation. 2007-08: $750 153

Commercial Entities

December Films ($350,000)
- Carbon Cops TV series – Sustainability Fund - Climate Change Projects Round 2, 2006: $350,000 154

Future Canvas ($150,000)
- Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Urban Reforestation in the Docklands. Covers the construction of a community garden at Shed 4 in Victoria Harbour, Docklands. Supports growing of fresh produce, community training, composting workshops, permaculture courses and urban gardening seminars. Provide take-home farming kits, seedlings, tools and a pot. 2008-09: $80,000 155; and,

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147 The Hon. Candy Broad MLC, Media Release, ‘Victoria Gets Eight New Climate Communities’, 16/10/10
148 Sustainability Victoria, Annual Report 2009-10, P57
149 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Three 2008, P8
150 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #13, 1/07/2010-30/06/2011, P2
151 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #13, 1/07/2010-30/06/2011, P2
152 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #10, 1/07/2007-30/06/2008, P1
153 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #10, 1/07/2007-30/06/2008, P1
154 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Two 2006, P2
155 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #11, 1/07/2008-30/06/2009, P21
• Urban Reforestation – Climate Change Action in Docklands - Sustainability Fund - Open Round 4, 2009-10: $75,000 156

Heide Museum of Modern Art ($375,000)
• Heide SMart Project (café upgrade) – Sustainability Fund - Greener Buildings Round 3, 2008: $375,000 157

Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West Inc.
• Redistributed EPA Prosecution Revenue – Billi Tea Tales. Covers education schools groups, indigenous and digital storytelling and clay animation workshops. Promotes involvement and awareness of with local waterway Friends groups – Kororoit Creek, Stony Creek, Newport Lakes and Maribyrnong Valley. Involves Waterwatch, Gozer Media, Melbourne Water, Environment Victoria and Maribyrnong City Council. 2008-09: $75,000 158

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156 Sustainability Victorian Annual Report 2009-10, P57
157 Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Fund Projects Round Three 2008, P9
158 EPA Prior Conviction Register, Prosecution Folder #11, 1/07/2008-30/06/2009, P11
Appendix 3.

Overview of Government Grants, Funds and Programmes

Sustainability Victoria - Sustainability Fund

The Sustainability Fund was established in 2004 ‘to support community groups, local governments, businesses and industry to deliver practical projects that help to secure Victoria’s environmental future.’ The Fund is overseen by the Treasurer and the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

Projects are supported through two funding streams, open grants and strategic initiatives. Open Grants exist in four forms:

- Sustainable Fund Open Rounds;
- EcoLiving Grants;
- Neighbourhood Renewal Grants; and,
- Victorian Local Sustainability Accord Grants.

Strategic Initiatives grants have a strong strategic focus upon supporting or achieving key environmental outcomes. Some examples include:

- Environmental Sustainability Action Statement 2006;
- Climate Change and Victorian Households Package 2008;
- Climate Communities Grants Program 2009; and,

The Fund supports projects that address one or more of the following priorities:

1. Mainstreaming sustainable behaviour;
2. Innovation or best practice in resource use; and,
3. Investigation and development of strategic tools, markets, and analysis of trends.

Sustainability Victoria - Climate Communities Grants Program

The Climate Communities grants program was launched in 2010 and ‘provides local groups across Victoria with advice, information, research and funding to take practical action on climate change in their own communities.’ The program is managed by Sustainability Victoria and provides grants up to $50,000 and has recently been increased to $350,000. Funding is sourced from the Sustainability Fund.

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159 Sustainability Victoria, ‘Five years of the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2005-2010’, October 2010
‘Climate Communities grants support the local community to:

- Reduce emissions;
- Build community resilience to adapt to climate change; and,
- Trial and/or promote new ideas to help tackle climate change.’  

**DSEWPC Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) Program**

Through these grants, DSEWPC seeks to help ‘community based environment and heritage organisations to value, conserve and protect Australia’s natural environment and historic heritage by assisting with their administrative funding.’

‘Funds provided through the GVEHO program may be used to assist with salaries and salary on-costs for executive and administrative staff; office accommodation rental; electricity, gas, phone and other similar charges; essential office supplies and equipment; staff and volunteer training; photocopying and printing costs; and travel costs incurred on behalf of the organisation.’

**DECCW Lead Environmental Community Groups Grants**

Through these grants, DECCW seeks to ‘assist eligible lead environmental community organisations in NSW by contributing towards their administrative costs.’

‘The objective of the LECG program is to provide administrative funds to assist eligible lead environmental community organisations in NSW to value, conserve and protect the natural environment through:

- Actively involving the community in projects to protect and enhance the natural environment raising community awareness and understanding of, and gathering information on, environmental issues with a view to bringing about behavioural change across the community;
- Being effective advocates in expressing the community’s environmental concerns; and,
- Being actively involved in program and policy development initiatives with governments and industry bodies on environmental issues.’

**DECCW Environmental Education - Community Grants**

Through these grants, DECCW seeks to ‘support educational projects or programs that develop or widen the community's knowledge of, skills in, and commitment to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable behaviour.’

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‘The Objectives of the Environmental Education Program are:

- To help attain one or more of the outcomes in the NSW Government’s Environmental Education Plan, Learning for Sustainability;
- To facilitate changes in behaviour of individuals and groups which affect specific environmental problems; and,
- To develop and promote education projects which improve the environment.’\(^{171}\)

‘The total funds offered under the Environmental Education program in 2010 were as follows:

- $0.5 million to the Community Organisations program; and,
- $0.5 million to the State and Local Government program.’\(^{172}\)

‘Grants of between $5,000 and $100,000 were available for projects that provide resources or the undertaking of educational projects to increase the environmental awareness of individuals, specific groups, special interest groups and/or the general community.’\(^{173}\)

**DSE - Environment Policy and Climate Change Grants**

Through this grant, DSE seeks to enhance its ‘development and implementation of strategic, whole-of-government responses to issues around environmental sustainability and climate change.’\(^{174}\)

**DSE - Biodiversity Grants**

Through this grant, DSE seeks to ‘protect, enhance and restore biodiversity assets, maintain ecological assets and provide for the sustainable use of Victoria’s flora and fauna.’\(^{175}\)

**DSE - Public Land Grants**

Through this grant, DSE seeks to improve the ‘stewardship of natural, built and historic assets, and incorporates management of public land in partnership with statutory agencies, committees and local government.’\(^{176}\)

This $4 million program has a special focus on removing safety risks on Crown land by encouraging managers to undertake safety works and repairs, develop risk management strategies, improve visitor and staff knowledge and remove potential safety hazards.’\(^{177}\)

**DSE - Forests and Parks Grants**

Through this grant, DSE seeks to improve the ‘stewardship of Victoria’s parks and forests and incorporates direct and delegated management of public land.’\(^{178}\)
DSE - Land Administration and Property Information Grants

Through this grant, DSE seeks to enhance its ability to provide trusted systems and information services to ensure confidence and security in ownership, property boundaries and valuation." 179

DSE - Sustainable Water Management and Supply Grants

Through this grant, DSE seeks to enhance its ‘oversight of, and strategic advice on, regulatory systems and institutional arrangements to drive the sustainable management and efficient use of Victoria’s water resources.’ 180

Legal Services Board Grants

The Grants program was established in 2007 ‘to distribute funding to projects that aim to improve the administration of laws, increase access to justice, improve legal services and inform and educate the wider community about legal services.’ 181

The grants are available from the Board administered Public Purpose Fund’ 182 and require approval from the Attorney General. Two types of grants exist, Project Grants (<$50,000) and Major Grants (>=$50,000). ‘The grants can be used for:

- Law reform;
- Legal education;
- Legal research; and,
- Any purpose relating to the legal profession or law that the Board considers appropriate.’ 183

179 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P123
180 Department of Sustainability and Environment, Annual Report 2009-10, P122