

# ECA WA News

Summer Edition 2014



*ECA Committee and guests at the AGM.*

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## Environmental Consultants' Association AGM

*By Jo Thierfelder, ECA News Editor*

Jamie Shaw presided over his first Annual General Meeting of the Environmental Consultants' Association as ECA President on 27 August at Rydges Perth. After some relaxing drinks and mingling on the terrace among 50 or so ECA members and guests, the AGM got underway.

### Key achievements

The ECA's key achievements in 2014 headlined the President's Report making special mention of:

- The updated ECA newsletter and its new Editor.
- Support given to YECA and YECA events.
- Support given to the interaction between YECA and its mentor group.
- Review and updating of the Services Matrix.

## ECA WA Committee

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The ECA WA committee meets on the third Monday of the month. Please contact committee members or Bec James if there is anything you would like to raise for discussion.

## Editorial contributions welcome

The editorial deadline for the next edition of ECA News will be advised in the ECA weekly email updates. Please email articles and contributions to ECA News Editor, Jo Thierfelder at [editorecanews@eca.org.au](mailto:editorecanews@eca.org.au)

*ECA WA News is a periodical publication of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) Inc. It aims to inform members on the activities of the ECA and its members, events and training, and developments in the environmental industry. The views and opinions expressed in ECA WA News are those of the article authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ECA WA.*



*ECA Committee member and Phoenix Environmental Sciences General Manager, Karen Crews with Ecoscape Principal Environmental Scientist, Bruce Turner.*



*"It was this big!" Leanne Taylor from Strategen with OEPA Director, Anthony Sutton*

- Review of the Association's Constitution, code of conduct and complaints policy.
- Ongoing collaboration with the OEPA and EPA.
- Increased membership particularly from young professionals.
- Membership fees were maintained at their current level.





*ECA President Jamie Shaw talked about ECA's key achievements in 2013-14.*



*Guest speaker Dr Ross Smith, President of Science and Technology Australia.*

## Mentoring program

Commencement of the fledgling mentoring program between ECA and YECA this year is a highlight for the two groups. It aims to facilitate knowledge transfer and increase opportunities for collaboration between mature, established consultants and young, less experienced professionals. There are high hopes for the program and ECA News will follow its progress throughout 2015.

## Events

The ECA's standout, oversubscribed event for the year was undoubtedly the EIA Forum in June from which several of the speakers were in attendance at the AGM as special guests of the ECA including Phil Gorey, DMP Executive Director, Environment; Paul Vogel, EPA Chairman; and Anthony Sutton and Darren Foster, OEPA Directors.

## Stakeholder groups

The ECA Committee actively represented its members on a range of stakeholder groups throughout the year including:

- EPA EIA Reform Stakeholder Reference Group
- Dredging Science Advisory Committee

- Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Regions Stakeholder Reference Group
- Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group
- Property Interest Report and Industry Reference Group
- EPA Strategic Planning Day
- Making a submission on the Draft Assessment Bilateral Agreement with WA

Next year's focus will be on the Approvals Bilateral workshop, Part V reform training, EAG workshops and increased collaboration with DMP. Professional accreditation was also raised as a topic for further discussion in 2015.

## Membership

The President welcomed a raft of new members to the ECA. A motion to amend the wording of the ECA constitution and delete the word "full-time" was accepted, which in effect opens up full membership of the ECA to all eligible consultants regardless of working arrangements.

## Finances

The Treasurer's Report indicated the ECA was in good overall fiscal health despite a small operating loss for the 2014 financial year. This is largely due

Thanks also to those who willingly give their time, advice and support to the ECA on an ongoing basis.



*YECA Committee members, Sally Ascott and JJ Rao from 360 Environmental.*

to the cost of the FY 2013 EIA training course that arrived on the books in 2014 with no course scheduled this year to offset it. There is general acknowledgment within the industry of depressed market conditions of late, which has been reflected in lower than normal attendance at ECA events. The ECA is mindful of the difficulties facing some members and has therefore been using financial reserves to temporarily fund our events.

### **ECA committee changes**

Grateful thanks were given to Barbara Brown who stepped down from the ECA committee after seven years of service. The remaining committee members were re-elected unopposed along with the addition of David Kabay, Phil Whittle and Matthew Harvey.

Special thanks to Dr Ross Smith, President of Science and Technology Australia, who was guest speaker at the AGM and to everyone who attended the dinner. Thanks also to those who willingly give their time, advice and support to the ECA on an ongoing basis.

### **ECA policy reviews**

#### **Services Matrix**

The ECA Committee recently completed a review of the Services Matrix to reflect industry changes that have occurred in the 25 years since it was first prepared. A number of services have been added and some non-environmental services removed. Members are encouraged to consider their suitability for listing under the new categories.



## Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy

In response to a small number of complaints received during the year, the Committee recognised a need to update the Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy. The Code of Conduct was amended to remove reference to prioritising the responsibility of members to the community as it was felt that this may, at times, be in conflict with a consultant's obligations to its clients, the environment or the regulatory authorities.

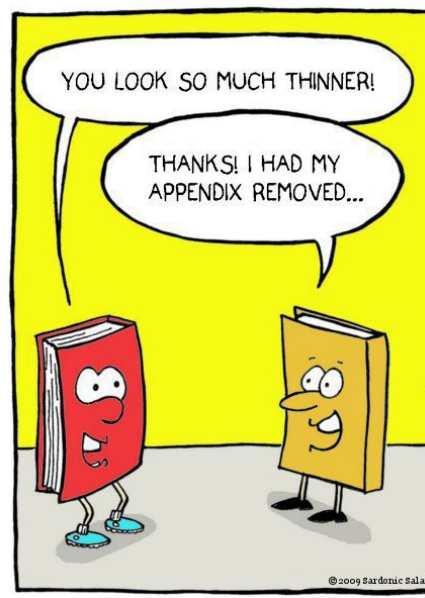
The Complaints Policy was amended to refer only to complaints against members, where previously it allowed for complaints against external organisations or individuals. The policy was also updated to be more closely linked to the Code of Conduct and to more clearly define what action could be taken against a member where a complaint was upheld.

## New ECA Committee members

The ECA Committee on behalf of the broader membership would like to warmly welcome three new additions to the committee who were elected at the AGM. We look forward to working with you and benefiting from your professional experience.



*Clockwise: Mat Harvey, 360 Environmental; Phil Whittle, Hydrobiology; and David Kabay, Kabay Consultants.*



*"For EIA nerds"  
supplied by Alix Chinnery.*

## The ECA: An important stakeholder

As a representative of the environment industry, the ECA committee has actively participated in a wide range of consultations and has been invited to provide feedback on policy and guidance. This role is very important to the committee, not only in promoting the interests of ECA members, but being able to assist in improving these policies and guidance based on our first-hand experience implementing these in our work.

The ECA distinguishes itself by focusing on providing practical advice to regulators and other industry bodies on policy implementation. Regulators already receive extensive feedback on the end result so the ECA concentrates instead on providing input to improve processes, procedures and clarity for the benefit of industry and regulators, as well as consultants.

The ECA committee recently participated in the EPA strategic planning day feedback session, where we provided input from members on the benefits in being able to meet with senior EPA staff early in the assessment processes. We also communicated our experiences with scoping documents prepared by the OEPA, the application of the significance

The EPA's 2013-14 Annual Report has now been tabled in Parliament. A copy of the report is available on the EPA's website <http://bit.ly/ZpDCU6>

test and the new factors and objectives. We provided useful feedback to the EPA on the practicality of the guidance but also highlighted the improvements that we have seen in the EPA's processes.

### Environmental Assessment Guidelines 8 and 9

In September the ECA committee also provided advice to the EPA on the application of Environmental Assessment Guidelines 8 (Environmental Factors and Objectives) and 9 (Application of a Significance Framework in the Environmental Impact Assessment Process). After requesting feedback from members, we concluded the policies were a great improvement. However, we would like to see further clarity in the process of revising guidelines, such as setting target dates for the release of new or revised guidelines, ahead of their release as a lot of work is undertaken by consultants prior to projects being referred.

To continue to provide feedback and maintain the ECA's role as a key stakeholder, it is important that members assist the committee in offering their experiences, feedback and suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you about the ways we can work together to promote members' interests and improve processes and procedures.

### Annual Photo Competition Winner

Congratulations to two-time winner of the ECA Annual Photo Competition, Matt Cann from AECOM. Votes were cast at the ECA AGM and Matt took out the gong for the second year in a row for





his fantastic photo of a thorny devil. Matt will be awarded a \$150.00 gift voucher and his photo will feature on the 2015 cover of the ECA register and be printed to canvas for the door prize at the 2015 ECA New Year Breakfast.

## Tales from the field

**Turtle tagging: not just a job, it's a lifestyle.**

*By Tyrone Farrell, Pendoley Environmental*

If you're looking to reignite your teenage talents as a graffiti artist, then this form of midnight "tagging" is not the type of industrial estate skulking you may be thinking of. Turtle tagging is much harder.

From the window of the air-conditioned plane, the tropical Pilbara islands below may look like the site of a luxurious resort until the ferocious heat punches you in the face the moment you step

outside the plane. Welcome to the Pilbara: where everything is bigger, meaner and wants to kill you.

By the time you walk the short 50m distance across the melting tarmac to the airport terminal, your glasses are fogged, your sweat glands are gushing and the entourage of flies that greeted you at the door are becoming well acquainted with the inside of your mouth and nostrils. Welcome to day one of turtle tagging!

After a comfortable sleep, your first work day commences with a rousing fire drill to help ease you into your 18-day swing. You then spend the afternoon meeting client representatives, completing inductions, carrying out safety training, preparing equipment and, most importantly, brown nosing the chefs (this will save your life one day!)

Only then are you ready to go tag turtles and as nightfall hits and high tide approaches the female marine turtles begin to come ashore to nest. Aided



*Pendoley Environmental taggers finish tagging a flatback turtle at Cowrie Beach.*

[The egg chambering] process is repeated with opposing flippers over and over until she is satisfied with the depth of her beautifully crafted chamber. This is special to watch.

only by the tunnel of red light from the head torch we march up the beach and within minutes we find our first track leading 20m into the sand dune to a flatback turtle.

The intricate process of a nesting turtle can be broken down into four stages.

1. Body pitting - where she uses her two front flippers to push away the top 25cm of dry sand.
2. Egg chambering - switching to her highly adept rear flippers, one is propped against the wall of the chamber to prevent collapse, while the other acts like a hand, delicately reaching down to scoop up sand and fling it away. This process is repeated with opposing flippers over and over until she is satisfied with the depth of her beautifully crafted chamber. This is special to watch.
3. Laying the eggs - using the rear flippers to protect the chamber she proceeds to lay an average of 50 eggs, which will take about 50 days to hatch.
4. Covering - the clutch of eggs is then covered by firmly compacting the sand with her rear flippers. She then uses her front flippers to shift huge volumes of sand to camouflage the nest. These are the most maternal acts she will perform in her lifetime.

Cue turtle taggers. This is the best time to check the turtle for ID and, if required, tag her by applying a titanium tag into one of the two front flippers. As is routinely done with pet cats and dogs, we also microchip her in the left shoulder. Before long, she is back in the water to form her next batch of eggs and will return in two weeks to do it all again.

We, the humans, do this for another 21 turtles on this night before heading back for a feed and sleep, ready to do it all again tomorrow night. And so begins our daily mantra: Eat, sleep, tag, repeat. Eat, sleep, tag, repeat. Eat, sleep, tag, repeat.

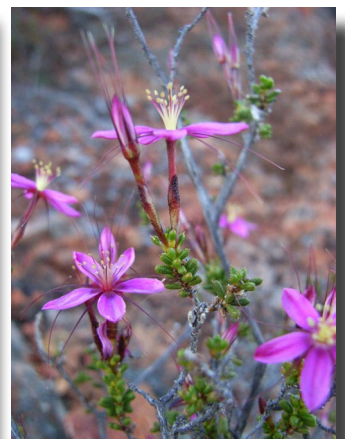
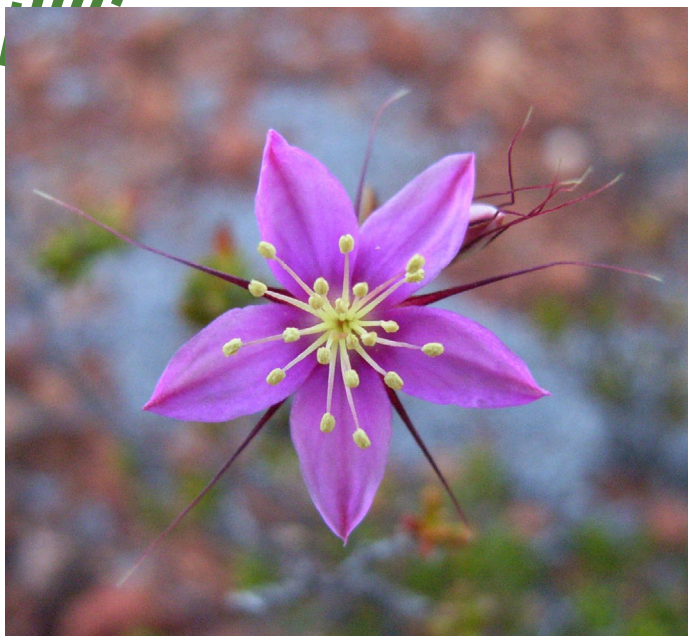
## Photo Stories

This edition we are lucky enough to have two photo stories submitted by ECA members. Who can resist publishing photos as wonderful as these?

*Photos over the page:* *Calytrix viscida* is known from two populations in the Yilgarn region, Coolgardie Biogeographic Region. It is associated with open dwarf scrublands on low duricrust outcrops.

It is one of the few *Calytrix* species known in the region and was recently described by Barbara Rye, Department of Parks and Wildlife, WA Herbarium and published in Nuytsia 23 483:501 (2013).





Photographs courtesy of Geoff Cockerton, Western Botanical and with permission from Cliffs Asia Pacific Iron Ore Pty Ltd.



Western Pygmy Possum (*Cercartetus concinnus*) taken during a fauna survey at Bremer Range (Great Western Woodlands). Photo courtesy of Greg Harewood.

This study provides valuable information towards proposing new locations requiring protection.

## Research paper explores protected species use of a coastal marine migratory corridor

*The following abstract is taken from a research paper submitted by Pendoley Environmental and recently published in "Marine Biology" June 2014, Volume 161, Issue 6.*

The establishment of protected corridors linking the breeding and foraging grounds of many migratory species remains deficient, particularly in the world's oceans.

For example, Australia has recently established a network of Commonwealth Marine Reserves, supplementing existing State reserves, to protect a wide range of resident and migratory marine species. However, the routes used by mobile species to access these sites are often unknown.

The flatback marine turtle (*Natator depressus*) is endemic to the continental shelf of Australia, yet information is not available about how this species uses the marine area. Pendoley Environmental used a geospatial approach to delineate a coastal corridor from 73 adult female flatback post-nesting migratory tracks from four rookeries along the north-west coast of Australia. A core corridor of 1,150 km length and 30,800 km<sup>2</sup> area was defined, of which 52% fell within 11 reserves, leaving 48% (of equivalent size to several Commonwealth Reserves) of the corridor outside of the reserve network.

Despite limited data being available for other marine wildlife in this region, humpback whale migratory tracks overlapped with 96% of the core corridor, while the tracks of three other species overlapped by 5–10% (blue whales, olive ridley turtles, whale sharks). The overlap in the distribution ranges of at least 20 other marine vertebrates (dugong, cetaceans, marine turtles, sea snakes, crocodiles, sharks) with the corridor also imply potential use.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable information towards proposing new locations requiring protection, as well as identifying high-priority network linkages between existing marine protected areas.

*Authors/Contributors: Kellie L. Pendoley, Gail Schofield, Paul A. Whittock, Daniel Ierodiaconou, Graeme C. Hays.*

[Click here](#) to read the full article or contact Pendoley Environmental Pty Ltd on (08) 9330 6200.



## YECA Update

The YECA will bring this year to a close with an upcoming sundowner in mid-late November to end the year on a social note. Following two thought-provoking and relationship-building events, a change in pace will be welcomed by all as the sun sets on the year and a cool beverage is in demand.

### Mentor Mix-up

The YECA hosted a Mentor Mix-up Event on 28 August at the Laneway Lounge. The event was run in conjunction with the ECA'S ORCA initiative (Old and Retired Consultants Association). The event was a great opportunity for young consultants to deepen their knowledge about the environmental consulting world and initiate a mentor-mentee relationship. Feedback on the event was extremely positive, with YECAs and ORCAs both gaining from the experience.

Thank you to the ORCAs for kindly dedicating their time to becoming mentors. To those young consultants who did not establish a mentor on the night, the YECA also facilitated the pairing of mentor-mentees. The mentoring program was designed to be self-guided and we look forward to hearing how the mentoring program is moving forward.

To those who missed out on the Mentor Mix-up, the YECA are looking to host a similar event next year, so stay in touch!

### Networking workshop

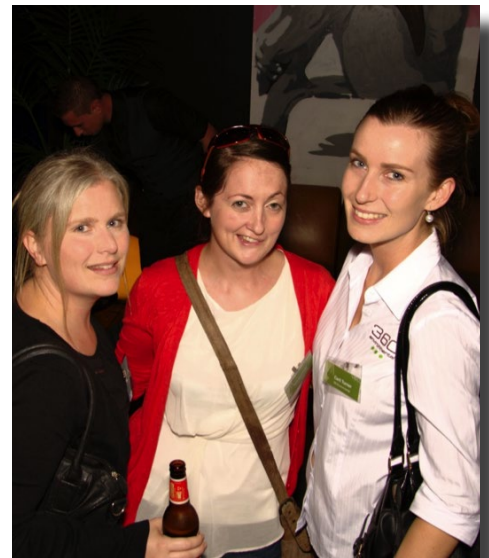
The YECA also hosted a networking workshop at the Llama Bar on 16 October. The workshop was delivered by Ron Gibson, a popular figure in business networking. Ron demonstrated advice and skills that were designed to cater specifically for consultants. The big focus of the night was on practical exercises aimed at building long term relationships, both within and outside of the environmental consulting industry. Feedback on the event was positive, with attendees commenting that the workshop was useful, relevant and constructive. A huge thanks to the ECA committee for funding the event. It was terrific to see young consultants gaining skills to excel in their respective fields.

Our last event for the year will be an informal Sundowner which is expected to take place mid to late November. Stay tuned for a date.

If you haven't yet joined, the YECA has a LinkedIn page where you can keep track of all our upcoming events. Just search 'YECA' on LinkedIn Groups.



*Katrina Browne, Strategen, Tyrone Farrell, Pendoley Environmental and Rebecca Ovens, Endemic at the YECA networking workshop.*



*Corinne Chambers, APM, Ruth Kamrowski, Pendoley Environmental and Carli Turner, 360 Environmental.*

If you are keen on becoming involved in the YECA or have any queries, we'd love to hear from you.



*Dean Main and Jeremy Quartermaine from Bennelongia with Natalie Jurzova (previously APACE WA).*

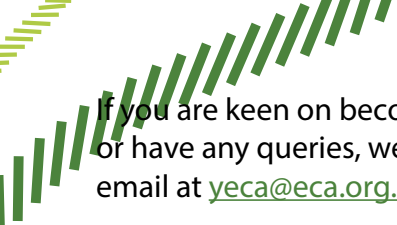


*MWH Global's Ben Leonard, GHD's Laura Zimmermann and Pendoley Environmental's Paul Whittock.*

The YECA committee has also grown substantially this year and now consists of a number of young consultants from a wide variety of parent companies:

- JJ Rao (360 Environmental)
- Louise Tomlin (Greenbase)
- Tyrone Farrell (Pendoley)
- Sally Ascott (360 Environmental)
- Corinne Chambers (Animal Plant Mineral)
- Sarah Nind (Strategen)
- Dean Main (Bennelongia)





If you are keen on becoming involved in the YECA or have any queries, we'd love to hear from you via email at [yeca@eca.org.au](mailto:yeca@eca.org.au)

## WA Environmental Offsets Guidelines released by WA Government

*By Emily Wilson, Lawyer, Castledine Gregory*

The WA Environment Minister has released new guidelines regarding the use of environmental offsets under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986 (WA) (the EP Act)*.

Environmental offsets can be used by proponents to secure approvals in circumstances where they would otherwise be refused as a consequence of unacceptable environmental impacts. By counterbalancing those impacts, offsets can render the net environmental impact of a project acceptable. An offset may involve a proponent undertaking direct action, funding a third party to undertake offset actions or contributing to a fund.

The new guidelines expand on the WA Environmental Offsets Policy released in 2011 and signal the State government's willingness to consider offsets as an option where the environmental impacts of a development cannot otherwise be addressed.

The key points are:

- The new guidelines apply to all environmental offsets required as a condition of approvals under Part IV of the *EP Act* and clearing permits issued under Part V of the *EP Act*.
- The new guidelines also apply to all projects assessed by the WA government under the bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth government under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.
- The new guidelines clarify when environmental offsets will be applicable to a development, which is, in summary, when the residual impacts of a project are determined to be significant and all

options for avoidance, minimisation and rehabilitation have been considered.

- There are generally three types of environmental offsets: land acquisition, on-ground management and research. The new guidelines provide further guidance on when each type of offset will be considered appropriate. The type of offset will depend on the impact predicted, options for offsets in the vicinity of the project and the state of knowledge of the environmental value being impacted.
- The new guidelines confirm that offsets should be proportionate to the level of impact and significance of the environmental value being impacted and should be 'like-for-like' (i.e. the offset should benefit the particular environmental value being impacted). However, where 'like-for-like' is not possible, the Minister may still consider an alternative offset if the offset adequately counterbalances the significant residual impacts of the development.
- An appropriate offset will be determined with reference to the extent of the significant residual impact to be offset and the value of the environmental benefit provided by the proposed offset. The new guidelines indicate that within 12 months, government agencies will consult with stakeholders to refine this methodology for quantifying impacts and offsets. This methodology will need to be understood by consultants when formulating offset proposals.
- The importance of consulting with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and others affected by the proposed offset, is emphasised.

The new guidelines are particularly relevant to environmental consultants working with developers to obtain environmental approvals as it is often the environmental consultant who is tasked with the job of identifying when an offset may be appropriate and, if so, formulating a proposal.

Please register  
your attendance  
for the ECA  
Christmas party  
event on the  
ECA website  
by Monday, 17  
November.

## Upcoming events

### Environmental Assessment Training Course for Practitioners

*Mon-Tue, 10-11 November at The Vines Resort, Swan Valley.*

The 13th Environmental Assessment Training for Practitioners is a joint outcome of the ECA and Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA).

Registration for this popular residential short course has now closed online. However, there are a small number of places still available by registering with Bec James at [admin@eca.org.au](mailto:admin@eca.org.au)

### ECA Christmas Party 2014

The ECA Christmas Party will be held at Zamia Café, Synergy Parkland, Kings Park on Wednesday, 26 November from 5-8pm. Please register your attendance at this free event on the ECA website by Monday, 17 November.

### ECA New Year's Breakfast 2015

Mark your diaries for the 10 February 2015 for the ECA New Year's Breakfast. More details to follow in the weekly email update.





You are invited to attend the Environmental Consultants Association's

# Christmas Celebration

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 | 5pm – 8pm

**Zamia Café | Synergy Parkland | Kings Park & Botanic Garden**

This event is free of charge

Please register through our website by Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November



For more information about this and other ECA events, please visit [www.eca.org.au](http://www.eca.org.au)