

ECA WA News

Winter Edition 2015



Humpback whales breaching at Ningaloo Reef.

In this edition

- 1 President's Message
- 3 ECA welcomes new Committee members
- 4 Photo Story
- 5 Update on EPA Guidance
- 7 Protecting the Quality of Western Australia's Marine Environment
- 8 ECA speaks at WAMSI Conference
- 10 Implementing the Assessment Bilateral Agreement
- 12 SAPPR
- 13 DER Policy Reform
- 14 Refreshed ECA online presence
- 15 YECA Update
- 16 Kimberley Coast- Online Survey
- 17 Control of buffel grass in the Pilbara
- 18 Upcoming ECA Events
- 19 Non-ECA Events

President's Message

By Jamie Shaw

Welcome to the second ECA Newsletter for 2015. It's hard to believe that more than half the year has already passed.

Industry Briefings

Since our last newsletter, the ECA has organised several industry briefings for environmental consultants and practitioners. Our first was a Stakeholder Information Session on the Assessment Bilateral Agreement Implementation, jointly presented by Jessica Sheppard of the OEPA and Melissa Bowman and Matt Warnock of the DER. This highlighted major differences between the previous and current agreement, most significant of which are the inclusion of the API-A level of assessment and the Native Vegetation Clearing Permit process. Further details are provided below.

In June, Sally Bowman and Melissa Lamb, both of the OEPA, provided a briefing on several newly released and updated Environmental Assessment

ECA WA Committee

President - Jamie Shaw
jamie.shaw@aecom.com

Vice President - Jason Hick
Jason.Hick@emergeassociates.com.au

Secretary - Mat Brook
m.brook@strategen.com.au

Ian Le Provost
ian@leprovost.com.au

David Kabay
dkabay@iinet.net.au

Phil Whittle
phil.whittle@hydrobiology.biz

Jordan Tindiglia
Jordan.Tindiglia@ghd.com

Stuart Halse
stuart.halse@bennelongia.com.au

Tim Mitchell
Tim.Mitchell@jacobs.com

Administration - Bec James
admin@eca.org.au

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 contributions to ECA News Editor, Jo Thierfelder at 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.

Front cover photo courtesy of Sandy Gorham.

Guidelines. The EAGs provide invaluable guidance to environmental practitioners by setting the contemporary framework for impact assessment. I'm pleased to say that Sally and Melissa also agreed to respond to a request to take the briefing to members and environmental professionals based in the South West, with a visit to Bunbury later that month. Following on from the success of this, we intend to schedule further visits to the South West in the future.

I'd like to acknowledge the contribution made by the presenters mentioned above in working with the ECA to bring the latest developments in the Environmental Assessment framework to our members. Their efforts mean we can continue to keep our members up to date with environmental policy and practice.

YECA

The Young Environmental Consultant's Association (YECA) continues to work hard at providing events that are relevant to our younger and less experienced members. In June, they held a communications workshop facilitated by Julia Phillips. The workshop allowed participants to question a panel of experienced environmental practitioners including Kelly Faulkner (DER), Melissa Lamb (OEPA); Phil Davidson (AP Management); Troy Collie (Mt Gibson Iron); and environmental consultants Ian Le Provost and Anna Lewis. It was great to see the level of interest shown and the intelligent questions being asked. Once again, the contribution made by our panelists is greatly appreciated.

Training Events

Unfortunately, it would seem that tough economic times have impacted our most popular training event and due to a shortage of numbers we have had to cancel this year's EIA Practitioners Course. I would like to apologise to those who registered their interest and hope that sufficient demand builds in time for us to reschedule for early next year. As an alternative, Dr Angus Morris Saunders has offered to prepare a one-day refresher course, which we plan to hold in November. It is intended as an update on changes to the EIA process and is targeted at those who have previously attended the EIA Practitioners Course.

New ECA Committee Members

In this edition, we announce three new committee members: Stuart Halse, Jordan Tindiglia and Tim Mitchell. I'd like to welcome each of them to the committee and thank them for making the commitment to running our organisation.

The Committee has commenced planning for next year's program of events. I'd like to call on members to provide suggestions as to what you'd like to hear about. We'd also love to hear from members and associates who might be interested in presenting at any of

our events next year. All ideas and assistance is welcomed.

ECA and EIANZ

The ECA and EIANZ have continued to cross-promote each other's events, and as you'd be aware, the EIANZ Annual Conference is being held in Perth on 29-30 October. EIANZ has kindly offered ECA members an \$85 discount, which is fantastic news for our members.

Join us at the ECA AGM

Finally, our AGM is to be held on 19 August at Rydges Perth. I am thrilled to announce that we have secured Dr Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia, as our guest speaker. I am also delighted to announce that Dr Paul Vogel, Chairman of the EPA, has agreed to make an informal address as he ends more than eight years at the helm of the EPA. The AGM is your opportunity to hear about the direction of our organisation, to provide feedback to the committee and have your voice heard. I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

I hope you enjoy the Winter edition of ECA News. Once again, I'd like to thank all of our contributors, workshop participants and members for your ongoing support.

ECA welcomes new Committee members

Tim Mitchell - Principal Environmental Scientist, Jacobs



Tim Mitchell recently joined the ECA as a new committee member and is looking forward to supporting the active development and growth of the ECA's strategy.

Tim is a Principal Environmental Scientist at Jacobs with more than 16 years professional experience as an environmental practitioner. He provides strategic advice,

environmental impact assessment and supporting studies and monitoring, risk governance and stakeholder engagement support. Tim has delivered environmental solutions for resource development projects across Australia, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

His other passions outside work include exploring the great outdoors and travel, and his two young sons are his best advocates for heading off for some camping.

Stuart Halse – Director, Bennelongia Environmental Consultants



Stuart has been a member of the ECA for the past eight years as a director at Bennelongia Environmental Consultants. After graduating from UWA in 1977, Stuart embarked on a long and varied career that started with work on bats, parrots and

gall bladders before completing a PhD on the ecophysiology of ducks. With some international experience under his belt, he joined Parks and Wildlife where he worked in the Science Division for 22 years mostly on aquatic invertebrates. In 2000, he began providing advice to the EPA on stygofauna issues and undertook the stygofauna component of the Pilbara Biodiversity Survey from 2001 to 2006.

In 2007, Stuart moved into consulting at Bennelongia. One of the company's first jobs was writing EPA Guidance Statement 54A, which deals with technical aspects of subterranean fauna surveys. Since then Stuart has been involved in numerous subterranean, SRE invertebrate and wetland assessments.

He also maintains an interest in research and was one of the organisers of the national waterbird count in 2008, which aimed to census Australia's waterbirds based on an extrapolation of counts in 5000 wetlands covering almost 4 million hectares. Stuart is on the editorial boards of the scientific journals *Hydrobiologia* and *Subterranean Biology*.

Jordan Tindiglia - Environmental Scientist, GHD



After graduating from University, Jordan worked for the Department of Environment and Conservation at the Western Australian Herbarium. She was employed in both technical and research positions to undertake plant taxonomy and systematics under the guidance of Bruce Maslin. A key project she worked on was 'Understanding Mulga', which aimed to understand and document the patterns of variation in WA species of Mulga (*Acacia aneura* and related species), and to provide a means of identifying them. She also

completed her honours degree while working for DEC. After nearly five years with the Herbarium, she moved into the world of consulting and joined GHD as an Environmental Scientist where she largely undertakes biological assessments, environmental assessments and approvals, and project management.

Photo Story

Editor's note: I can't resist publishing multiple photos when they're this good. Thanks to Greg Harewood and Sandy Gorham (cover shot) for the fabulous photo story contributions.

Western Pygmy Possum (Cercartetus concinnus) – Bremer Range (Great Western Woodlands) – Greg Harewood 2014.





Lake Disappointment Dragon (*Ctenophorus nuyarna*) (male with crest). Photo taken at Lake Disappointment by Greg Harewood.

Update on EPA Guidance

By ECA committee member, Phil Whittle

The Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA) has been busy releasing new and updating existing guidance over the last 12 months. The Autumn 2015 edition of the ECA News provided an update on the recent Environmental Assessment Guideline (EAG) publications released by the OEPA.

Since then, with continued policy development and the release of several new guidance documents, the ECA saw the value in convening an OEPA presentation. So in April, Sally Bowman and Melissa Lamb of the OEPA presented an information session on the "New Environmental Assessment Guidelines". This event provided an opportunity for practitioners to learn about the direction of EPA policy, preferred assessment methods and to ask questions to those undertaking the assessment process.

In response to a request from members based in the South West, Sally and Melissa agreed to travel to Bunbury to repeat their presentation.

The key message was that there were five new EAG documents and four under revision or planned for revision at the time of the presentation. The next EAG released will cover the preparation of environmental management plans (EMPs), which is due to be published in draft in late August 2015. Key points for a number of the recently released and soon to be released EAG documents were outlined by the OEPA team, including EAG 8, EAG 9, EAG 14 and the pending EMP guidance (see the table below for details).

EAG 8: Principles, factors and objectives

EAG 8 was revised in January 2015 (originally released in June 2013) with the inclusion of guidance on the principles of the Environmental Protection Act (EP Act) and the EPA. Revisions were made to some factors and objectives including:

- Landforms: revised objective with reference to soils removed
- Heritage: revised objective to include reference to natural heritage
- Air quality and atmospheric gases: expanded factor and objective to include reference to greenhouse gases
- Rehabilitation and decommissioning: revised factor and objective with reference to closure, liability to the State, and agreed land use removed

EAG 9: Significance framework

EAG 9 was also revised in January 2015 (original release June 2013) with clarifications on the distinction between the EPA's decision on the significance of a proposal or factor, and its consideration of the role of other regulators. Guidance was also provided to proponents on using the conceptual significance framework diagram in documentation.

EAG 14: Preparation of API-A document

EAG 14 was released in January 2015. The key points for this EAG are:

The guidance provided in this EAG has been tailored for Western Australian marine waters.

- Process for API-A has not changed – encourages assessment option where adequate information is provided at referral
- Incorporates process for assessment bilateral with Commonwealth
- Pre-referral stakeholder consultation is crucial
- Focus on proposal, consultation, environmental studies and assessment table
- Speak to OEPA about relevant examples

EAG 16: Section 38 (s.38) Referral

EAG 16 was also released in January 2015. The OEPA presentation provided information and guidance on the following:

- Background – why the update was required
- Timeliness – incorporation of Administrative Procedures and EAG6 (Timelines for EIA Approvals)
- Consistency – both referral submitted and EPA assessment
- Quality – methodology and application of EPA Policy suite
- Key focus areas:
 - Preliminary environmental factors
 - Application of mitigation hierarchy
- Third Party Referrals
- Future direction – online lodgement

Guidance Number	Title	Status
EAG 8	Environmental principles, factors and objectives	Revised January 2015
EAG 9	Application of a significance framework in the environmental impact assessment process	Revised January 2015
EAG 10	Scoping a proposal	Under review
EAG 11	Recommending environmental conditions	Update with release of EMP EAG
EAG 14	Preparation of an API – Category A Environmental Review Document	Released January 2015
EAG 16	Referral of a proposal under s38 of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i>	Released January 2015
EAG 15	Protecting the quality of Western Australia’s marine environment	Released March 2015
EAG XX	Preparation of environmental management plans (EMPs)	Due late August 2015
GS3	Separation Distances between Industrial and Sensitive Land Uses	Under review

EAG on Environmental Management Plans (in preparation)

The soon to be released EAG (late August 2015 - in draft) providing guidance on the development of EMPs was discussed with the following points made:

- Reason for guidance:
 - feedback to EPA from industry
 - improve quality, consistency and timeliness for assessing EMPs
- Intent of guidance:
 - address site-specific requirements of conditions in Ministerial Statement
 - clarity on outcome and objective based conditions (consistency with EAG 11)
 - clarity on legally enforceable provisions in EMP

Protecting the Quality of Western Australia's Marine Environment

EAG 15 - Summary of key points

By ECA committee member, Ian LeProvost

This Environmental Assessment Guideline (EAG) sets out the EPA's expectations for the management of marine environmental quality in WA and includes the lessons learned from more than 10 years of implementation. The approaches contained within it are therefore not new, but have been applied to all significant and relevant proposals subject to formal environmental impact assessment over the last decade.

This EAG sets out the approach that has been refined and consolidated over this period in a single coherent document. The guidance is intended to impart consistency and clarity to the environmental impact assessment of development proposals and provide increased confidence, timeliness and efficiency to the environmental assessment process associated with wastewater

discharges to marine waters. It will also facilitate and support other activities such as discharge regulation, the environmental management of ports and marinas, and environmental quality management in marine parks and reserves.

The guidance provided in this EAG has been tailored for Western Australian marine waters, including any constructed harbours, marinas and canals that are contiguous with marine waters. The EPA recommends that proponents, regulators and other stakeholders use the environmental quality management framework (EQMF) outlined in this EAG to predict and manage the effects of waste discharges and contaminants on the marine environment.

The EQMF has historically been applied most comprehensively to the heavily used waters of Cockburn Sound and given effect through the Government's State Environmental Policy (Gov. of WA, 2005). To support this policy the EPA released two supporting documents:

1. Environmental Quality Criteria Reference Document for Cockburn Sound (EPA, 2005a); and
2. Manual of Standard Operating Procedures for Environmental Monitoring against the Cockburn Sound Environmental Quality Criteria (EPA, 2005b).

Environmental values, environmental quality objectives, levels of ecological protection and the specific environmental quality guidelines and standards are identified and spatially allocated. Standard methods for measuring environmental indicators in the field have also been provided to ensure that data collected by all stakeholders is compatible and comparable.

This EAG sets out the EPA's specific expectations for determining whether the objective for 'Marine Environmental Quality' is likely to be met and therefore whether it is a key environmental factor or not. In considering whether or not to assess a proposal and/or in preparing its report and recommendations, the EPA has regard for the waste mitigation hierarchy. As such the EPA expects that all proposals to discharge waste to the environment should only be considered after all

ECA has a Partnering Agreement with the OEPA aimed at improving EIA practice in WA and relations between consultants and regulators.

reasonably practicable options for avoiding or minimising the need for a discharge have been adequately investigated and assessed by the proponent in collaboration with the relevant regulatory agency.

It is worth noting that the regulation of waste discharges and pollution is controlled through Part V, Divisions 1, 2 and 3, of the Act by the Department of Environment Regulation (DER).

ECA speaks at WAMSI Conference

A consultant's perspective on WAMSI Dredging Science Node

Ian LeProvost is the immediate past president of ECA and the ECA rep on the EPA Dredging Science Advisory Council. He was invited to present a paper on a consultant's perspective of the WAMSI Dredging Science Node at the WAMSI Research Conference on 30 March. The following article is an edited abstract of his paper, a summary of the background to the WAMSI Dredging Science Node and an update on the current state of research. A summary of key findings to date is also available from Ian at ian@leprovost.com.au. The full transcript of the Conference can be obtained from the [WAMSI Conference 2015 website](#).

Of the ECA WA's membership of around 250 members, 50 or so are marine scientists and many have been involved in undertaking environmental impact assessments for major port developments in WA over the past 15 years.



An aerial photo of dredging plumes created at Pt Parker on the Burrup Peninsula, Dampier.



Dosing tanks that have been set up at UWA to test coral and sponge tolerance to sediment load.

ECA has a Partnering Agreement with the OEPA aimed at improving EIA practice in WA and relations between consultants and regulators. To this end, ECA has, in recent times, undertaken a number of joint learning workshops with the OEPA on a range of topics considered relevant to our membership. One of these workshops (held in September 2011) was focused on “Lessons Learned from Dredging” and presented a number of case studies of recently completed dredging programmes in WA. The key lesson learned from the workshop was that the application of conservative mortality thresholds in impact assessment was resulting in consistent over-prediction of scale of impacts, which resulted in a requirement for complex monitoring programs.

In 2010, the ECA also prepared a 10-page submission to the EPA on the draft EAG 7 for Marine Dredging Proposals seeking clarification of intent and making suggestions for improvement. The EPA took these suggestions on board and the

ECA now considers the final EAG 7 to be a clear statement of the EPA’s expectations of consultants and proponents.

Particularly welcome is the EPA’s acknowledgement that there is a high level of uncertainty inherent in dredging impact prediction and that many information gaps exist which make the delivery of reliable assessments difficult. Also welcome is the EPA’s recognition of the need to make all proponent monitoring results publically available, and the EPA’s support for the WAMSI Dredging Research Initiative.

The ECA has supported the WAMSI Dredging Research Initiative since its inception and various members have contributed information, data, and dredging contacts to the researchers. The ECA has also been represented on the Dredging Science Advisory Council as an observer and been kept informed of developments.

More than
1,100
delegates from
80 countries
attended the
35th annual
conference
of the
International
Association
for Impact
Assessment in
Florence, Italy.

We look forward to the outcomes of the research node, particularly if they reduce uncertainty and increase confidence in the reliability of our predictions.

Implementing the Assessment Bilateral Agreement

An audience of 50 ECA members gathered to hear a briefing from Jessica Sheppard (OEPA), Melissa Bowman (DER) and Matt Warnock (DER) on the implementation of the Assessment Bilateral Agreement, which came into force on 1 January this year.

The briefing highlighted the major differences between the old and new agreements. Most significantly, this is the inclusion of the API – A level of assessment and the Native Vegetation Clearing Permit. There was some uncertainty expressed by members about the value of pursuing a clearing permit via a bilateral process, given it added an extra step to the process. However, it was noted that the Commonwealth assessment process can take significantly longer to run than the NVCP process, so for Controlled Actions, it is likely the Bilateral Assessment will save time.

It's early days and as yet no proposals have been assessed at either of these levels so we are yet to gain a clear picture of how it all works in practice.

Members are invited to contact OEPA on info@epa.wa.gov.au and DER on nvp@der.wa.gov.au with any questions.

Impact Assessment in the Digital Era

Thoughts from the 35th annual conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment

Angus Morrison-Saunders is a lecturer at Murdoch University and presents the ECA's EIA training course. Jenny Pope is a Director at Integral Sustainability and an ECA member.

In April 2015, Angus Morrison-Saunders and Jenny Pope headed to Florence, Italy for the 35th annual conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment. The venue was the Firenze Fiera Congress and Exhibition Centre, the centrepiece of which is an old Florentine villa modified to incorporate a modern (mostly subterranean) conference facility.

The spring weather was superb and many delegates networked and met in the gardens in front of the villa during the breaks. At the end of each day, delegates enjoyed the great food and wine available in trattoria and restaurants within short walking distance of the venue, not to mention the superb city of Florence more generally and the hospitality of our Italian hosts.



Firenze Fiera Congress and Exhibition Centre, the centrepiece of which is an old Florentine villa modified to incorporate a modern, mostly subterranean, conference facility.

More than 1,100 delegates from 80 countries attended IAIA2015. Australia and Western Australia were well represented. There were eight WA folks in attendance including academics, regulators and consultants (and one long-term member of ECA) plus other Australian practitioners with WA experience.

The title and main theme of the conference was "Impact Assessment in the Digital Era". Many sessions and discussions focused on two key technologically-related aspects. The first was how impact assessment might better be conducted using social media, especially within public participation. Anthony Sutton and Donna Weston from OEPA reported on the social media utilised in the shark cull EIA in WA recently. The second key topic concerned how the sheer volume of digital data might best be managed and utilised in impact assessment, including issues around archives and how best to harness learning from practice.

As with previous IAIA conferences, many sessions focused on social and sustainability related themes. The extractives sector was frequently discussed in this context, especially around social license to operate and how the costs and benefits of development can better be equitably shared with community.

Following the pattern of recent years, there were also cutting-edge sessions on some of the emerging themes in impact assessment globally, including Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) and Ecosystem Services Assessment (ESA). A key theme in these sessions was the extent to which HRIA and ESA can or should be integrated with other, more established forms of impact assessment such as SIA and EIA.

Other special events within the conference included a European Forum and an e-Governance Forum running through the program and a special meeting of the World Bank Group following the closing plenary.

The SAPPR only deals with State and Commonwealth environmental and planning approvals, not other local government requirements.

IAIA16 will be held in Nagoya, Japan from 11-14 May. As this is a bit closer to home, we hope many more of our ECA colleagues can join us there.

The Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Regions

The third SAPPR Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) meeting for 2015 was held on Thursday, 23 July. The ECA is represented on the SRG and has been since the inaugural meeting in 2012. The SRG has now met 12 times during the progression of the SAPPR. This summary has been modified from the Chair Jim Limerick's most recent report.


The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) provided an update on the status of the SAPPR. Public release of the draft SAPPR documents, including the Strategic Conservation Plan and Impact Assessment Report, is expected in early 2016. SAPPR state agencies (the State government departments involved in the SAPPR) have been preparing for the August meeting of the Ministerial Taskforce on Approvals, Development and Sustainability (MTADS). At the meeting, Ministers will consider the future use of the Gngara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations, the draft offsets and implementation frameworks, Basic Raw Materials (BRM) master planning outcomes, potential funding mechanisms, and high-level conservation actions for the improved management of the Peel Harvey catchment.

Over the next three months, SAPPR state agencies are likely to focus on:

- completing the draft Impact Assessment Report and Strategic Conservation Plan (SCP) for consideration by Government (October 2015)
- developing the SAPPR communications strategy to guide consultation activities in the lead up to and following public release of the draft Strategic Assessment documents
- seeking funding for completion of the SAPPR process (November 2015)
- preparing a funding package for the implementation of the SAPPR, subject to Government endorsement of the draft SAPPR documents in October

The EPA is expected to publically release its interim Strategic Advice in the next two weeks.

Stakeholders were provided with presentations on the proposed Implementation Framework and Offsets Framework.



The Implementation Framework is contemplating changes to administrative procedures (and legislation if necessary) to streamline state environmental approvals processes so that development proposals consistent with the SCP and the EPA's Section 16(e) advice would not trigger a Part IV assessment under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). Likewise, applications for clearing permits for development consistent with an approved Class of Action (e.g. BRM extraction or infrastructure corridors), and that comply with the SCP requirements, would be subject to a streamlined approach under Part V of the EP Act. Improvements to the statutory planning processes were also outlined.

It was noted that:

- The SAPPR only deals with State and Commonwealth environmental and planning approvals, not other local government requirements; and
- For development proposals outside of, or inconsistent with, the approved Classes of Action, the existing planning and environmental approvals processes will apply. For example, proposed rural developments, which will not be covered by a class of action approval, will go through normal Commonwealth and State environmental approvals process (Part 9 EPBC Act and Part IV EP Act).

The Offsets Framework is contemplating offset obligations consistent with the environmental objectives agreed in the Strategic Conservation Plan and which satisfy both Commonwealth and State offset requirements. In a major shift, it may move away from a project-by-project / like-for-like approach to offsets to a much more strategic approach to achieving agreed environmental outcomes. The changes required to facilitate such a policy shift are being considered (i.e. possible administrative or legislative changes required to apply and fund offset requirements). Suitable governance mechanisms are being developed to ensure compliance.

A presentation by the ECA representative focussed on the relative economics of offsets provided

via land acquisition as compared with offsite land revegetation. The primary message of this was that to achieve economies of scale via revegetation offsets, it is necessary to plan and deliver at a strategic scale and to integrate with other initiatives. This may require a suitable agency to aggregate requests and to provide necessary accountability, management and on-going maintenance of the area.

The next meeting of the SRG is scheduled for September. It is expected that this meeting will include a presentation on the EPA's interim Strategic Advice. As part of consultation process ECA is looking to organise a presentation by the SAPPR team state agency and consultant team to members. Details regarding this event will be released as they are finalised. In addition the ECA will be looking to prepare a submission on the SAPPR documents when they are released for public comment in early 2016. Any members interested in being involved in preparing this submission please contact the ECA committee via Jason Hick by email at Jason.Hick@emergeassociates.com.au

DER Policy Reform

Over the last year, the ECA has seen first-hand the policy reform being undertaken within the Department of Environment Regulation (DER), which has been going behind the scenes as part of the Industry Regulation Stakeholders Reference Group. Like most ambitious tasks, it was probably a much bigger task than first anticipated. The process involved both structural alignment within the DER to focus on sectors and establishment of guidance on regulatory principles.

While the release of the guidance on regulatory principles was certainly not a large document (at nine pages) it was an important first milestone for the DER. Ahead of the next phase in the policy reform, the DER invited the ECA to attend a briefing session at the end of July 2015. The Strategy and Reform Information Session identified an ambitious and impressive schedule of guidance statements relating to Part V licences and works approvals to be released throughout August to October. While the bulk of the detail within the guidelines is yet to be seen, the most pleasing

The ECA is in the process of refreshing and expanding its online presence to maximise services for members and increase its profile to external stakeholders.

aspect of the latest briefing session was the clear and structured foundation that sits behind the individual guidelines, which are being considered as part of the overall framework.

While the process of reform in the sector has taken longer than anticipated, the ECA is confident the end result will represent a substantial improvement in the process and evolution of DER. The ECA will continue to circulate the guidelines to members as soon as it receives them, as well as collating members' responses to provide comments on ways the new guidelines can be improved.

Refreshed ECA online presence

The ECA is in the process of refreshing and expanding its online presence to maximise services for members and increase its profile to external stakeholders, primarily through an organisational presence on LinkedIn and a new website.

The LinkedIn presence incorporates an [ECA company page](#) and an [ECA group](#). The company page will be used to disseminate information about ECA events and other news through company updates. The ECA group is intended to replace the ECA forum that has operated through the existing ECA website. ECA expects the LinkedIn group will provide an avenue for members to initiate and engage in discussion regarding various topics relevant to members. On this basis (and like the forum), participation will be limited to ECA members who can gain access through application. The group has not been formally initiated and the committee expects to go live with this in August.

Finally, the ECA committee is progressing the planning of a new website. The existing ECA website www.eca.org.au has served us well for a number of years but is limited in terms of its ongoing functionality. The committee believes a new website will:

- increase/improve exposure
- update ECA's online brand to reflect the contemporary status of the organisation
- provide a more accessible and functional member online database
- provide promotional and sponsorship opportunities
- facilitate promotion and online booking of ECA events

The committee is working through the final stages of a detailed commercial proposal to work up the new website. This engagement is expected to commence later in the year and members will be kept informed as this proceeds.

YECA Update

Professional Communication Skills Workshop

The YECA's first Professional Development event of 2015 was a huge success with 47 attendees enjoying the Communications Skills Workshop held at the Mount Lawley Bowls Club on 10 June.

As young consultants, we recognise that we're often faced with a number of communication-related dilemmas early in our careers. So the aim of this workshop was to provide YECA members with advice and guidance on this topic from different perspectives within our industry. Panel members were selected to reflect the various industry groups with which young consultants are required to communicate. The facilitator for the discussion was Julia Phillips and the panel consisted of the following experienced professionals:

- Melissa Lamb (Principal Environmental Scientist, EIA Improvement, Office of the EPA)
- Kelly Faulkner (Executive Director, Licensing and Approvals, Department of Environment Regulation)
- Ian Le Provost (Director, Le Provost Environmental Pty Ltd)
- Anna Lewis (Lecturer and Environmental Consultant, University of Western Australia)
- Troy Collie (Project Director – Approvals, Mt Gibson Iron)
- Phil Davidson (Environment Manager, API Management Pty Ltd)

During the workshop the panel members discussed various communication scenarios, shared their interesting anecdotes and experiences, and got to the bottom of some 'hard to answer' communication issues from the audience.

It was a fantastic opportunity for YECA members to learn vital communication skills from a highly

experienced panel of consultants, regulators and clients in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Feedback from the event has been very positive and YECA would like to extend a huge thank you to those who attended and especially to the panellists for providing their time and expertise, and the ECA Committee for funding the event.

Next Event: Sundowner at the Stables Bar

YECA's upcoming sundowner will provide our members with the chance to relax, catch up and network with friends, colleagues and other professionals in their industry over a drink or two. The sundowner will be held at the Stables Bar on Thursday, 13 August at 5pm.

Future Events Schedule

The YECA is currently planning our future events schedule. If you have ideas or topics that you would like covered please let us know.

The YECA Committee

Over the past few months we have said goodbye to committee members that have moved on to new adventures: Louise, Tyrone, Sarah and Ruth, we wish you all the best with your future endeavours. We have also welcomed a new committee member.

Ben Leonard, Environmental Scientist at MWH Global

"From geophysical mineral exploration to marine 3D seismic, my background is broad but it all began with a BSC (hons) Environmental Science (Geography and Zoology) at UWA in 2005. This experience took me to the Goldfields, Pilbara, Kimberley, floating on the ocean off the North West shelf and beyond Australia.

In 2011, I joined Outback Ecology (now MWH) as a part of the mine closure planning team. My role has largely been office-based, focusing on literature reviews and GIS mapping for Closure plans and TSF decommissioning plans. However, this hasn't stopped me getting into the field as part

YECA is looking for enthusiastic young consultants to sit on the YECA Committee and help drive the future of YECA.

of the rehabilitation monitoring, soils and fauna teams as well as the odd mine closure planning tour.

Having been to a number of the YECA events I thought it was time to put some of my own time back into YECA. I see YECA as a great way to meet people in similar roles and develop the professional mindset required for the environmental industry."

Would you like to be on the YECA Committee?

YECA is looking for enthusiastic young consultants to sit on the YECA Committee and help drive the future of YECA. We operate on a voluntary basis and there are no specific requirements for being on the Committee. However, you will ideally have between 1-5 years of consulting experience and be able to attend most monthly meetings (one hour on the second Tuesday of the month) and events, which we collectively organise.

Being on the YECA Committee is a great way to get more involved with the ECA as a young consultant in this industry. If you are interested send us an email at yeca@eca.org.au

Keep in Touch

YECA now has a Facebook Group where you can keep track of all our news and upcoming events, and communicate with other YECA members and the YECA Committee. To find us, search 'YECA' on Facebook or click on this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/YECA1/> You might already be aware of our LinkedIn page. To find us search 'YECA' on LinkedIn Groups. You can also contact us via email at yeca@eca.org.au or we are always happy to have a chat over a drink at one of our events. If you have any queries, comments or feedback we would love to hear from you.

Online Survey – Informing The Management Of The Kimberley Coast

Murdoch University, University of Western Australia and University of Queensland are gathering information on what you value about the Kimberley coast and your preferences for its management. The research aims to assist Government to make informed decisions about coastal management, now and into the future.

We want to hear from as many different people as possible through our online survey. Every voice counts! Just click on the link:

<http://www.landscape2.org/kimberley>

The survey will take around 30 minutes and all information you give will be anonymous. To thank you for completing this survey there is a \$10 gift. Choose to donate to one of three charities or receive a voucher for Amazon.

Have your say about how you would like to see the Kimberley coast managed in the future. ECA members, please feel free to distribute this request as widely as possible to maximise input.

Please contact Jennifer Strickland-Munro on J.Strickland-Munro@murdoch.edu.au if you would like more information.

Prime time for control of buffel grass in the Pilbara

ECA member Astron submitted this article in response to the threat abatement advice for Ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and species decline in arid and semi-arid Australia due to the invasion of buffel grass (Cenchrus ciliaris and C. pennisetiformis) issued by the Australian Department of the Environment and last updated in April 2015.

The threat abatement advice was developed in response to the nomination for the inclusion of 'invasion of Cenchrus ciliaris and C. Pennisetiformis' on the list of key threatening processes under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. [Click here](#) for more information on this advice.

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is a species of grass native to Africa and India that was, and still is, widely planted as a pasture grass in Australia. This species has become a widespread weed in most vegetation types from Geraldton to the Pilbara and the adjacent desert. As buffel grass is hardy, deep rooted and drought tolerant it is able to thrive and often out-compete native species.



Despite being able to grow in semi-arid conditions, buffel grass benefits from significant rainfall events. Buffel grass seeds germinate rapidly but require between 20-25mm of rain for this to occur, as the seeds need to be moist from three to five days in order to germinate. Once germinated, buffel grass can mature, flower and set seed in as little time as six weeks and it produces a large amount of seed, which is easily dispersed throughout the adjacent environment.



Rainfall associated with tropical low pressure systems and tropical cyclone Olwyn resulted in heavy rainfall in the Pilbara in March. On 12-13th March, more than 20 mm of rainfall was recorded in many Pilbara towns, including an astounding 142mm recorded at Barrow Island and 97mm at Onslow.

Dr Mariana Campos, one of Astron's scientists said: "During summer months in particular, buffel grass can germinate and mature rapidly following rainfall. In the Pilbara, we normally recommend on-ground control within 2-3 weeks of rain during the warmer months and within 3-6 weeks of rain in the cooler months."

Astron has a dedicated team of weed scientists and technicians who have been actively involved in numerous buffel grass control programs in the Pilbara region of WA over the past 15 years.

"Our team has a vast amount of experience in weed management including both on-ground control and monitoring. The size, experience

The ECA Committee would like to invite you to the 2015 ECA AGM and Gala Dinner to be held on 19 August at the Rydges Perth.

and capability of our team means that we can quickly respond to germination events resulting from significant rainfall, something that is critical for any successful weed management program," said Dr Campos.

As well as an experienced and trained team of scientists and technicians, Astron operate state of the art weed control equipment, including a fleet of fully mine compliant vehicles, fitted out with industry leading QuikSpray® boom and jetting systems.

Upcoming ECA Events

ECA AGM and Gala Dinner

The ECA Committee would like to invite you to the 2015 ECA AGM and Gala Dinner to be held on 19 August at the Rydges Perth. Members and non-members, including partners, colleagues and clients are welcome. It is an excellent opportunity to see how your Association has represented you over the past year and network with industry colleagues and clients.

Cost: (including GST)

\$75 member (enter discount code ECAM when registering)

\$175 member and partner guest (enter discount code ECAMP when registering)

\$147 non-member

The ticket includes a three-course meal, canapés and drinks. The ECA welcomes guest speaker Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia for the evening.

Register at www.eca.org.au by Monday, 10 August.

YECA Sundowner

YECA's upcoming sundowner will provide our members with the chance to relax, catch up and network with friends, colleagues and other professionals in their industry over a drink or two. The sundowner will be held at the Stables Bar on Thursday, 13 August at 5pm.



Non-ECA Events

Australasian Wildlife Management Society Conference 2015

ECA members are invited to the 28th annual Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) conference, which is being held in Perth on 23-26 November 2015.

The theme for AWMS2015 is 'Wildlife Management in a Changing Environment'. In our dynamic environment, climatic, biological, and social challenges need to be met to ensure the future for our charismatic wildlife.

In addition to dedicated sessions for general and student's papers, proposed symposia are:

- Wildlife management and extraction industries
- Progressing wildlife management to stewardship
- Engineering ecosystems – management interventions
- 'Fence it out/Fence it in'
- Canid management in complex systems – tools, techniques, and tensions
- Feral cat management – a new dawn?
- Remote surveillance as a wildlife management tool
- Wildlife management education and engagement
- Genetics for Wildlife Management

We would also like to invite the ECA or any member to enter the \$2,500 Practitioner's Prize, which is open to an individual or group who demonstrates positive outcomes from the field application of scientific wildlife management. Please visit <http://www.awms.org.au/practitioner-award> if you wish to nominate a staff member, community member or community group who fit the criteria. Please note the closing date is 31 August 2015.