

ECA WA News

Periodical newsletter of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) Inc.
ISSUE 06 SUMMER/AUTUMN 2014



Outgoing President Ian Le Provost (left) with new ECA WA Inc. President Jamie Shaw.
Photo – Bec James

ECA President leaves outstanding legacy

By Jamie Shaw (AECOM)

Ian Le Provost stepped down as President of the ECA WA Inc. in February after five years at the helm. During this time Ian has grown our membership considerably. We are now in a much stronger financial position and have a raised and respected profile.

Ian joined the ECA Committee in July 2006. He was Vice President from July 2007 until December 2008, when he became the President.

Among his many achievements, Ian's most important is the strong relationship he has forged between the ECA and key agencies – particularly the EPA and the Office of the EPA. Ian has done this by building a foundation of trust and collaboration, and we have seen the relationship change from an 'us and them' approach to one with open and meaningful dialogue. It's also important to acknowledge that this wouldn't have been achieved without a corresponding desire for change within the key agencies themselves, and they must be applauded for this.

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ECA WA Inc. meet 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.

Winter ECA WA News

The contribution deadline for the winter edition will be advised in ECA weekly email updates.

Compiled and edited by Jo Tregonning

ECA WA News is a periodical publication of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) Inc (ECA). 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 Inc.



Noongar knowledge retained

By Eleanor Rusack

When I received the 2009 Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship I was well into my honours. After spending most of the year working and studying it was a relief to receive the scholarship, take some time off and focus on finishing my research.

I was examining the role that habitus, an individual's or group's dispositions, has played in the retention of traditional ecological knowledge among Noongar people of the Pallinup River region in south-western Australia.

With my supervisors, I sought to determine if current plant knowledge reflects Noongar habitus or, alternatively, the use of fall-back species that were important due to the intermittency of agricultural employment and the social exclusion of Aboriginal people up until at least the 1960s in Western Australia.

I compared the seasonal availability of Noongar food plant resources currently known by Noongar Elders to those described at the time of European settlement, and used non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (nMDS) and multivariate statistics to compare the seasonal availability of plant resources with the seasonal availability of work prior to the introduction of civil rights for Aboriginal Australians in the 1960s.

I showed that the seasonal pattern of plant knowledge has changed little since settlement and that there was no significant relationship between the



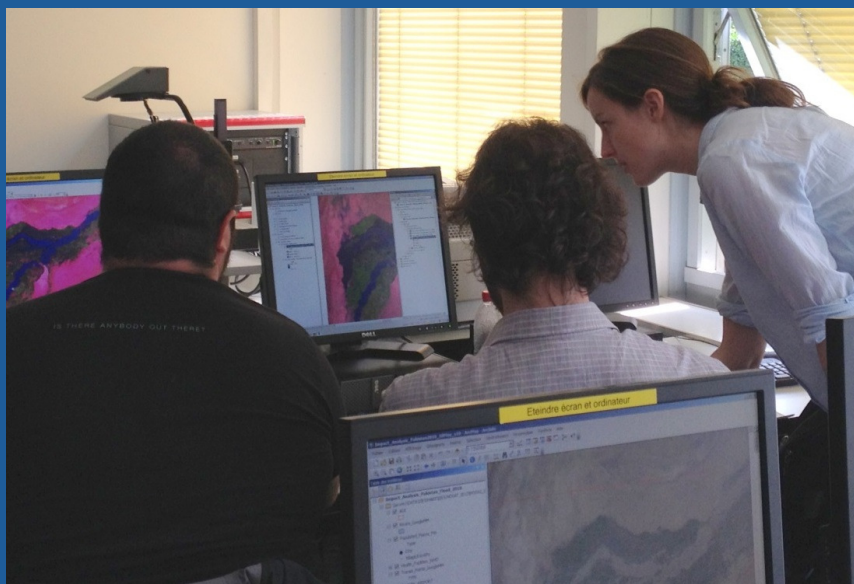
Pallinup River in south-west Western Australia. Photo – Eleanor Rusack

seasonal availability of work and plant knowledge. This result suggests that prior to 1960 Noongars maintained a reasonably traditional round of seasonal activities involving traditional plant use, and that Noongar habitus guided their response to the colonising culture and helped preserve traditional ecological knowledge.

After I finished my honours at the end of 2009 I left to get some experience overseas. After spending some time travelling, working with my supervisors to publish my thesis, and working as a knowledge management consultant, I

obtained an internship at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Satellite Application Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). This internship turned into a job and since April 2012 I have been working at UNOSAT as a GIS Officer.

My daily tasks vary from analyzing satellite imagery to help the emergency response in natural disasters, to monitoring refugee camps, to delivering training courses in GIS, working with people located around the world. The job is not quite what I imagined I would end up doing when I left university in 2009, and is a world away from my honours thesis! Eventually I would like to come back to Australia and get back into ecology and land management. However for the time being I am making the most of this fantastic opportunity to be exposed to the world of the UN and international development.



Eleanor Rusack at work delivering training on the use of satellite imagery and GIS in disaster management and emergency response. Photo – Luca Dell'Oro (UNOSAT)

OUT AND ABOUT

ECA New Year Breakfast



Eighty-five people attended the ECA New Year Breakfast at Burswood on Swan held on 11 February 2014. At the breakfast, Murray Ryall was awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his outstanding years of service to the Association. After five years at the helm, Ian Le Provost handed over the presidency to Jamie Shaw. Matt Cann received his gift voucher as the People's Choice Photo Story competition winner. Invited guests included:

Phil Gorey	Department of Mines and Petroleum
Sean Walsh	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Jim Sharp	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Anthony Sutton	Office of the EPA
Darren Foster	Office of the EPA



Left: Michael Fifield (from left), Brenton Laslett and Renee Blandin.
Right: Louise Tomlin (from left), Claudia McHarrie, Markus Mikli and James Lawton.
Photos – Bec James

Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship

The Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship encourages and assists a deserving student to pursue field research in natural history.

If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund you can download the donation form at www.eca.org.au.

Students requiring more information should contact Sophie Peoples on 6488 8071 or sophie.peoples@uwa.edu.au.

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As a result of this strengthened relationship, our networking functions are now attended by agency representatives, giving our membership informal access to agency staff and increasing the value of ECA functions to our membership.

While President, Ian has ensured the Association holds a role on key representative committees and has personally represented us on the:

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Environmental Management Committee;
- Reference group for Review of EIA Process in WA – Marine Policy Review;
- EPA Environmental Stakeholder Advisory Group; and the Dredging Science Advisory Committee.

Through Ian's leadership, the Association has continued to deliver important training and knowledge-sharing events in partnership with various organisations. These include:

- Fauna Assessment Workshop in partnership with OEPA and DPaW (formerly DEC);
- EIA Administrative Procedures Update forum;
- ECA Offsets Workshop;
- EPBC Offsets Calculator Workshops, in partnership with DSEWPaC;
- Presentation of new Environmental Assessment Guidelines in partnership with OEPA; and
- Dredging workshop in partnership with EPA and PIANC.

More recently, Ian has helped initiate the Young consultants of the Environmental Consultant's Association, Western Australia (YECA) and the Older and Retired Consultants of the Environmental Consultants Association, Western Australia (ORCA) – an initiative aimed at ensuring the lessons learnt by our senior members over many years of consulting are being transferred to our up and coming membership.

As incoming President, I would like to thank Ian for his tireless efforts at raising the profile of the environmental consulting industry as a whole in Western Australia and wish him all the best for his future. Ian isn't leaving us entirely, and his continued involvement on the committee and behind the scenes will be gratefully received. I have huge shoes to fill, and look forward to taking Ian's legacy forward.

Flora Species of Cultural Significance at North Star

By Beiha-Malen Yáñez (*ecologia* Environment)

Since August 2013, I have been seconded to Fortescue Metals Group (Fortescue) on a full-time basis with the Environmental Studies team, to assist the company with their rehabilitation and revegetation commitments and planning. During my time here, I had the opportunity to accompany a group of Traditional Owners from the Njamal Native Title Claim Group to Fortescue's proposed magnetite/hematite project, North Star.

North Star is located around 100 km south east of Port Hedland and 25 km east of Fortescue's rail line, between Port Hedland and Christmas Creek.

In October 2013, as part of a group of Fortescue representatives from the corporate Environment and Native Title teams, we travelled throughout the project area recording flora species of cultural significance and learning about their respective Njamal names and associated uses. This included medicinal, culinary and recreational uses.

Acacia inaequilatera, also known as Baderi, has a tough bark that can be mashed up and boiled, producing a black paste which is mixed with oil, producing an ointment that can be used on babies and young children to treat cuts, sores and measles.

Corymbia hamersleyana (Gunarra or Jarndal) produces honey and sap which is boiled and consumed as a drink, used as a tonic to cleanse the blood. We also noted several large galls forming on the trees,



Mealy bugs on Wayyarnu (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) are a popular snack for Njamal children. Photo – Nerolie Nikolic (Fortescue)

which we were told can be broken open to consume the grub inside.

Eucalyptus camaldulensis, commonly known as River Red Gum (Wayyarnu) is found along watercourses and billabongs. Bardi (witchetty) grubs are commonly obtained from this tree. In summertime, white spots form on the leaves, a protective wax layer formed by mealy bugs. A popular childhood snack for Njamal children, we all gave it a try and were surprised by the sweet, coconut-like taste and texture.

The bark of *Melaleuca argentea* (Silver

Cadjeput) was traditionally used as a plate or shield for carrying various tools and food, and was also boiled together with the leaves and given as a tonic to young children.

Overall, we recorded information for fifteen species, including one environmental weed, but no flora of conservation significance. The information recorded enabled the preservation of traditional knowledge of the flora for future generations of the Njamal Traditional Owners, and will assist Fortescue in planning for revegetation works.



Galls from Gunarra (*Corymbia hamersleyana*). Photo – Beiha-Malen Yáñez (*ecologia*)



North Star project area. Photo – Nerolie Nikolic (Fortescue)

OUT AND ABOUT

ECA Christmas Celebration



Ninety people attended the ECA Christmas celebration sundowner at the Zamia Café in the Kings Park and Botanic Gardens on 20 November 2013. Photos – Bec James



Left: Jason Hart (from left), Ross Sheridan and Kel Baldock.



Right: Kirsty Pope (from left), Dr Stefan Eberhard and Margaret Dunlop.



Left: Dr Michelle Christy (from left), Stuart Hellenen, Mitchell Ranger, Dr Hau Ling and Shaojun Lin.

Right: Jason Hart (from left), Alexander Solodkoff and JJ Rao.



Coming events

EIA Practitioners Course 2014 – Calling for Registrations of Interest

Please email Bec James at admin@eca.org.au.

YECA Professional Development Session, late-March TBA.

Email yeca@eca.org.au.

ECA/Department of Environment Regulation (DER) workshop, early-mid May (date TBA). More information page 8. Contact Bec James at admin@eca.org.au.

YECA in 2014

By JJ Rao (360 Environmental)

The Young consultants of the Environmental Consultants Association, Western Australia (YECA) have a number of sundowners, presentations and networking events planned for 2014. Participation at these events by all ECA members is encouraged. Our first event of the year was a sundowner which took place on 28 February at Rigby's Bar and Bistro. This event was open to ECA and non-ECA members. Our next event will be a professional development session to be held towards the end of March and will be free for ECA members, but will incur a small fee from non-members.

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. There are no specific requirements for being on the Committee. Ideally, you will have between one and five years of consulting experience. You will also need to 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. Although we operate on a voluntary basis, you will have the rare opportunity to influence how we develop into the future. If you are interested in being a part of the YECA Committee, send us an email at yeca@eca.org.au.

Mentoring Program

The mentoring program is a flexible development program run in collaboration with ORCA (Older and Retired Consultant's of the Environmental Consultants' Association, Western Australia). There is no fixed structure to this program and it will be up to you and your mentor to decide when, where and how meetings and catch-ups will happen.

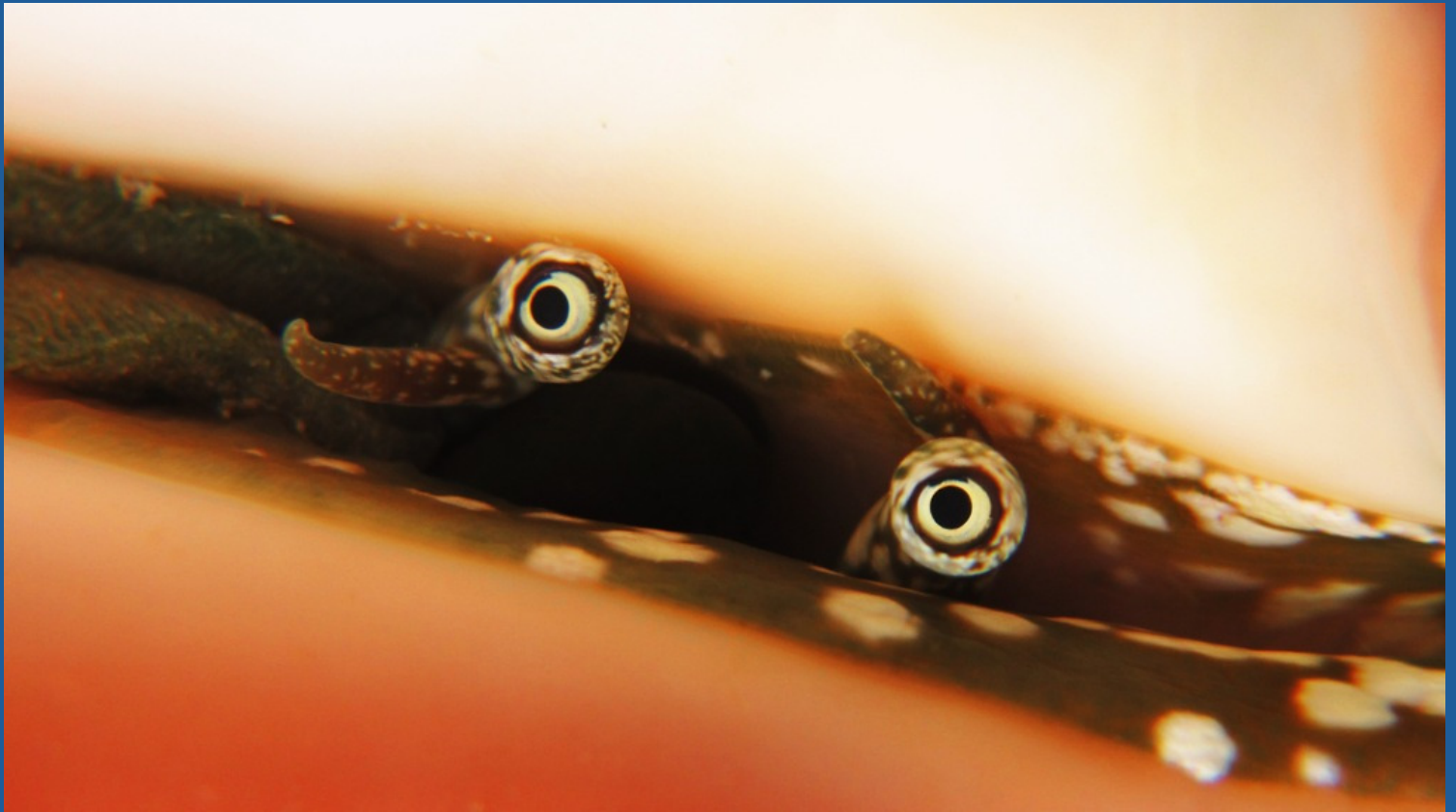
There are still spots available for the mentoring program so do let us know if you are interested and we will get back to you with more information. Email yeca@eca.org.au.

YOUNG
CONSULTANTS YECA
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



PHOTO STORY

Below: A spider conch (*Lambis lambis*) curiously eyeing me. Photo – JJ Rao (360 Environmental)



Murray Ryall Awarded ECA Honorary Life Membership

By Ian Le Provost

Murray Ryall is a foundation member of the ECA and served on the Committee from soon after incorporation. He held the office of Vice President for two years and then as President between 1997 and 1999. He continued as a committee member until 2004 and remains an active contributor.

In his executive positions, Murray had a significant hand in establishing the ECA business structure relating to roles and accountability of the Executive and members. He championed the membership drive that gave the critical numbers for the ECA to become a long-term viable organisation. Murray has been supported by his business partners with committee activities and through providing facilities to support ECA staff. This commitment is also reflected in the high ECA membership rate of his company's staff.

Initiatives that were delivered during Murray's presidency included:

- Annual publication of the ECA Register and maintenance of the membership records database, an initiative he

continues to support;

- Creation of the Sustaining Corporate Membership category, of which his company Greenbase has been a supporter ever since;
- Establishing the executive support staff position which underpins the smooth and consistent operation of the organisation even with changes to executive members;
- Establishment of reserve accounts to ensure financial stability of the ECA in the long term; and
- Promotion of member initiated seminars and especially the annual ECA half day seminar.

Each of these ECA initiatives continue to be important today. In recent times, Murray has provided leadership in establishing the Older and Retiring Consultant's Association (ORCA) group and promoting the Young members of the Environmental Consultant's Association (YECA) to foster mentoring programs.

In an environmental career spanning more

than 30 years, Murray helped develop Greenbase into Australia's premier environmental accounting consultancy which provides greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions reports to mining companies across the continent.



Outgoing ECA President Ian Le Provost awarded Murray Ryall an Honorary Life Membership at the recent ECA breakfast in recognition of his outstanding years of service to the Association.
Photo – Bec James

A DAY IN THE OFFICE

ecologia and Port Hedland Port Authority go Mangrove Monitoring!

By Mariana Campos (*ecologia* Environment)

In November 2013, *ecologia* completed the annual mangrove health monitoring for Port Hedland Port Authority (PHPA) and it certainly presented a number of challenges for staff.

Globally, mangroves are amongst the most endangered habitats, due to the direct and indirect impacts from a range of human activities in coastal areas including; clearing for aquaculture, chemical spills, run-off and sedimentation. PHPA's initiative to monitor the overall health of mangroves in relation to the broader port is in the interests of preservation of these important habitats.

During the field trip, *ecologia* and PHPA staff monitored mangrove health via a series of parameters in 18 quadrats, each

measuring 100 m². These parameters included counts of adult and seedling individuals; foliage cover; leaf width, length and area; dimensions of branches and also the collection of groundwater, root and leaf samples for laboratory analyses of heavy metal concentrations. The monitoring survey was a success and the results should provide good insight into the current health of the mangrove communities.

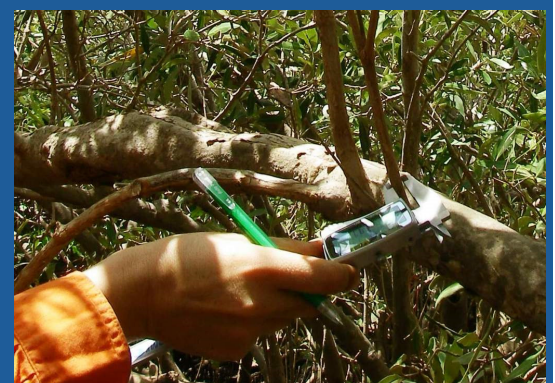
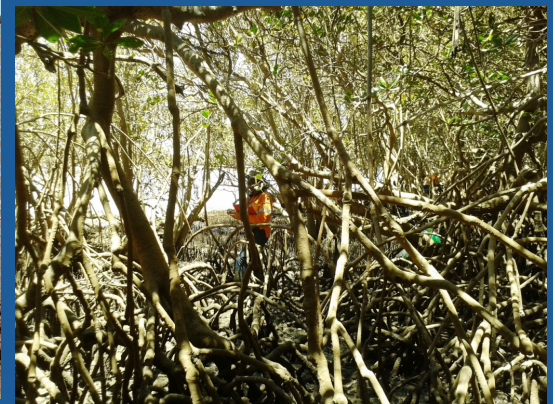
Despite being a botanical survey, the field trip also provided some entertaining moments when spotting mud crabs and flat slugs, not to mention the fact that the *ecologia* team, being terrestrial botanists, thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to travel by water to their study sites for a change.



Mangrove health monitoring presented challenges for staff, from (above) wading through the water and occasionally getting stuck in the mud to (below) navigating the mazes of *Rhizophora stylosa* roots .
Photos – Renee Young (*ecologia*)



Above: Study site at Port Hedland.
Right: Measuring branch dimension to assess mangrove health.
Photos – Renee Young (*ecologia*)



Apps

Coastal Walkabout app A free citizen science smartphone app for recording fauna observations in coastal environments. Data uploads to a freely accessible website. App can be adapted for specific projects. Launched on 28 November 2013 and available at <http://coastalwalkabout.gaiaresources.com.au/wordpress/apps/>

Marri Canker app A free citizen science smartphone app developed by EMRC and Murdoch University to identify and report sightings of marri canker. Launched on 10 December 2013 and available at: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/the-marri-app/id742004918?mt=8> or <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gaiaresources.bdrsmobile.murdochmarri> For more information email jaya.vaughan@emrc.org.au.

State-wide online Environmental Planning Tool provides access to spatial information about environmental attributes relevant to land use planning and natural area management. Recently expanded to cover the whole of WA. Visit <http://lbp.walga.asn.au/Tools/EnvironmentalPlanningTool.aspx>. Email Sonia Lamond at slamond@walga.asn.au.

Publications

Environmental Protection Bulletin No. 20, December 2013, EPA. Protection of naturally vegetated areas through design of urban and peri-urban development proposals. Download at <http://www.epa.wa.gov.au>

Western Australian Mining Act 1978. Proposal for Environmental Reform. Discussion paper for public consultation. Department of Mines and Petroleum, January 2014. **Submissions due 2 April 2014**. Visit www.dmp.wa.gov.au.

Administration of Mining Securities Guideline (Draft) The *Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012* provides the framework for the proposed Mining Rehabilitation Fund. The Department of Mines and Petroleum are seeking comment on the Draft. Email comments to mrferquiry@dmp.wa.gov.au. Visit <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/15822.aspx>

Conferences

31 March–1 April 2014

Resources and the Environment—the next ten years, Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. Presented by Geoscientists Symposia (GS) and the Australian Institute of Geoscientists (AIG). The ECA is a sponsor of this symposium. ECA Members eligible for the reduced registration fee. Visit www.aig.org.au or www.geosymposia.com.au

1–2 April 2014

AMEC Mine Closure and Rehabilitation Conference, Duxton Hotel, Perth. Promoting lead practice in mine closure and rehabilitation activities. Visit <http://www.amec.org.au/events/upcoming-events/mine-closure-and-rehabilitation-conference-2014>

7–9 May 2014

State NRM Conference ‘The Tipping Point’, Abbey Beach Resort Busselton. Visit www.nrmconferencewa.com.au

Workshop

Early–mid May 2014 (TBA)

ECA/DER workshop, Perth.

DER is currently finalising an Overarching Assessment Framework for Emissions and Discharges. Proposed release for public comment is April–May. The workshop aims to update participants on:

- DER update with regard to the Refire Process and license standardisation across industries;
- Details and requirements of the new Assessment Framework;
- Information required when applying for licences or works approvals on behalf of clients;
- Information required for EMPs delegated to the Part V process by the EPA in accordance with their recent guidance (focussing on key factors);
- Anticipated time lines for assessment process and delivery of licences, approvals etc.

The workshop will be open to consultants, DER staff and industry employees, a half day in length and opened by a senior DER director. More details will follow in weekly ECA email updates. Contact Bec James admin@eca.org.au.



Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group

Development of the proposed new ‘Environment Protection (Mobile Equipment) Regulations’ aims to resolve issues experienced by mobile asphalt manufacturing and mobile screening operators in attempting to obtain a licence for each site where mobile equipment is proposed to be deployed. Once introduced, it will not be necessary for these operators to obtain a works approval or a licence prior to deploying and operating such equipment at each site, providing they are able to comply with the new regulations.

The ECA’s response to DER included commenting on the following aspects of the amended Regulations:

- Generic separation distances;
- Time constraints on the use of mobile plant at a single location; and
- The exclusion of crushing plants from the amendment.

In addition, we proposed that better regulation may be achieved by operators advertising contact details for DER at the gate so that complaints can be immediately followed up by DER.

Our response was submitted in December 2013 with a copy released in the ECA weekly email. Please contact Jamie Shaw directly for a copy or for more information at Jamie.Shaw@aecom.com.

Winter ECA WA News

The contribution deadline for the winter edition will be advised in ECA weekly email updates.

Compiled and edited by Jo Tregonning

Previous editions of

ECA WA News available at <http://www.eca.org.au/downloads>

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