

# Annual Report.

2011-12



**Copyright Environment Protection Authority**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

This annual report is prepared in accordance with Part 2, Division 5, 22 (1) of the *Environment Protection Authority Act*.

The report provides an account of the Environment Protection Authority's functions and activities for the 2011-12 financial year and outlines future priorities.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, other stakeholders and the general public of the Environment Protection Authority's activities for 2011-12.

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## This Environment Protection Authority (EPA) annual report covers the fifth year of the authority's operations.

The report highlights the EPA's progress in our key areas over the past year to provide evidence-based information on environmental issues relevant to the Territory. It aims to encourage adoption of leading practice towards good decision-making for the future health of the environment.

In March 2012, following the Northern Territory Government's announcement of a three-year moratorium on seabed mining, we welcomed a referral from the Environment Minister to assess the potential impacts of this activity on the Territory's coast. Seabed mining was already on our radar due to the new and innovative nature of the concept and the lack of

available information on possible adverse impacts. This project is well underway to look at the potential environmental and social impacts, and what may constitute appropriate management regimes to ensure the effects on environmental sustainability and the diverse resource users are minimised.

Another emerging issue identified as a priority was onshore unconventional gas. Our extensive research culminated in the production of an information bulletin to explain the key terms, latest industry activity and to highlight the associated environmental and regulatory issues we considered need to be addressed.

Following the amendments to the *Environment Protection Authority Act* (which came into effect in April 2011), the first project to fulfill its role in monitoring and assessing impacts of development has progressed well. The project involved assessing the potential cumulative impacts of human activities and developmental impacts on the environment and natural resources. This project will be presented in an information bulletin early in the second half of 2012. It will provide practical suggestions on how and why cumulative impacts should be measured in the Territory.

The EPA's mandate to review agency responses in dealing with environmental incidents saw one inquiry carried over from the

# Chair's foreword.

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last reporting period (East Arm Wharf copper concentrate spill incident, Part 2); one new inquiry established (Berrimah Business Park stormwater drainage); and two new watching briefs commence (Edith River train derailment and resultant copper concentrate spill and Mount Todd mine site uncontrolled release of water). This work aims to improve environmental management associated with development.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the previous chair and board member, Dr Andrew Tupper and board member Professor Donna Craig, who both completed their appointments on the EPA Board this year. Dr Tupper and Professor Craig had been on the EPA Board

since its establishment and I congratulate them on their invaluable contribution to defining how to sustain the Territory's environment.

Looking to the future, the EPA recognises the need to recommend practical approaches to sustainability that are well matched to the unique opportunities and challenges facing the Territory.



Professor Grahame Webb



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## EPA is an independent body to lead the adoption of innovative and contemporary frameworks for sustainable development in the Northern Territory.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) was established as an independent statutory body under the *Environment Protection Authority Act* (the Act) in 2008.

The Act defines the EPA's functions and outlines how it conducts its business.

The EPA is a board of independent experts supported by a secretariat.

For administrative purposes, the authority is linked with the Department of Justice (DoJ) after being transferred from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) early in this reporting year.

For the 2011-12 financial year, the EPA reported to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, Mr Karl Hampton MLA.

### **EPA Board**

During the 2011-12 reporting period, the EPA Board was comprised of six members (July 2011-April 2012) and then four members (April 2012-June 2012).

Dr Andrew Tupper, the inaugural chair of the EPA, and Professor Donna Craig had been on the EPA Board since the EPA's inception in 2008. Upon completion of their three-year appointments,

both Andrew and Donna remained members for a further 12 months to aid the transition to the new board.

A new board was announced in April 2011 with four local members appointed for a three-year period from 2011-13. The new members have diverse environmental, scientific and legal expertise. They are Professor Grahame Webb as chair, Dr Peter Whitehead, Professor David Parry and Mr Cris Cureton.

Each board member has a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the Northern Territory (NT) and its environment

# About the EPA.

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through living and working in urban and rural areas, as well as with Indigenous communities. The new board's knowledge and experience spans wildlife management, marine research, Indigenous environmental management, resource and major project procurement, and policy and legislation development.

*The chair of the EPA is appointed by the Minister and the board members by the Administrator of the NT, for a period of up to three years.*





### **Professor Grahame Webb**

Professor Grahame Webb was appointed as chair of the EPA Board in April 2011.

Grahame is the founder and Managing Director of Wildlife Management International Pty. Ltd (WMI). Grahame oversees scientific investigation and environmental management of wildlife at WMI including sustainable use, trade, and the complexities of compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Grahame is also the founder and Managing Director of the wildlife research, education and tourist centre in Darwin, Crocodylus Park.

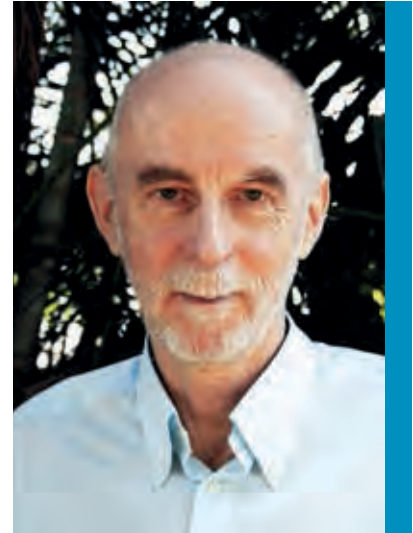
Grahame is the chairman of the International Union for Conservation of Nature-Species Survival Commission's (IUCN-SSC) Crocodile Specialist Group. Previously he was a foundation member of the NT Research and Development Council (1994-2002), Adjunct Professor at Charles Darwin

University (2000), and foundation chairman of the NT Research and Innovation Council (2004-2010).

Grahame has been awarded a citation of excellence from IUCN-SSC for his contribution to world crocodile conservation and sustainable use; the prestigious Clunies Ross National Science and Technology Award for a new vision for wildlife conservation based on sustainable use; and the Australian Centenary Medal for his contribution to crocodile research and leadership, and vision in establishing The Essington School in Darwin.

Grahame's expertise in wildlife and environmental management exceeds 40 years and includes pioneering research on the ecology and population dynamics of saltwater crocodiles in the NT working closely with Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land.

Grahame holds a PhD in zoology.



### **Professor David Parry**

Professor David Parry was appointed as an EPA Board member in April 2011.

Building on 25 years of research experience in environmental analytical chemistry in northern Australia, David is the Principal Advisor – Environment with Rio Tinto Technology and Innovation group. David provides environmental advice to business units to identify, share and implement leading practice across Rio Tinto.

David is an Adjunct Professor at Charles Darwin University (CDU) and established the undergraduate programs in analytical and inorganic chemistry, and research programs in the fields of environmental and analytical chemistry. He was appointed Professor of Chemistry at CDU in 2006. In 2012 David was awarded Companion of the University for his long term contribution to the development of Charles Darwin University and the advancement of environmental research.



Before joining Rio Tinto, David was the Science Leader and Officer-in-Charge of the Australian Institute of Marine Science's Arafura Timor Research Facility in Darwin. He focussed on the establishment of research programs on estuarine and coastal marine processes in northern Australia; and the development of collaborative partnerships with government, university and industry.

Until 2012 David was Director of the North Australian Marine Research Alliance; Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee (DHAC) member; NT Land and Sea Management Board member; and a member of the Kakadu Research Advisory Committee.

David holds a Bachelor of Applied Science, Diploma of Education and PhD and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **Dr Peter Whitehead**

Dr Peter Whitehead was appointed as an EPA Board member in April 2011.

Peter has more than 25 years research, management and policy experience in wildlife, conservation and natural resource management. Although semi-retired, Peter does contract work with government and Indigenous land management groups. He was involved in the development of policy and legislation for native vegetation management, environmental offsets and climate change in the NT.

Peter has had leadership roles as foundation Director of the CDU Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management; theme leader and member of the management group of two cooperative research centres (both relating to tropical savannas resource use and conservation); and head of a NT Government wildlife research group. He also was involved in scientific and policy work to establish the NT's crocodile industry.

Peter is a member of the NT Museums and Galleries Board and University Professorial Fellow at CDU. He has had previous appointments on the boards of Kakadu, Nitmiluk and Gurig National Parks; as Commissioner of the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission; and member of the NT Heritage Advisory Council. He has a PhD in wildlife ecology.

Peter's research includes animal physiology, wetland ecology, wildlife harvest management, fire management, climate change and related policy questions. Peter has a particular interest in working with Indigenous people to support their greater formal role in resource management.



### **Cris Cureton**

Cris Cureton was appointed as an EPA Board member in April 2011.

He is the foundation partner of Minter Ellison's Darwin office.

Cris has substantial experience in resources and major project procurement and delivery. During the past two decades he has been involved in key NT projects including the Alice Springs to Darwin railway and the Bonaparte gas pipeline.

Cris has significant environmental experience which has included advising government agencies and large companies on how to meet their environmental obligations in the NT.

He has been involved in the NT Economic Future forums, and assisted with the drafting of legislation and reforms for the construction industry in the NT.

Cris was named in the list of Best Lawyers Australia 2010 and as one of Australia's leading lawyers in 2011.

Cris has a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts.



### **Dr Andrew Tupper**

Dr Andrew Tupper was appointed as the inaugural chair of the EPA from 2008 to 2011. Upon completing this appointment, Andrew continued as a board member to assist with the transition to the new board for the following 12 months until April 2012.

Andrew is the NT Regional Director of the Bureau of Meteorology. His roles in the NT include representing the Bureau at the Bushfires Council and Counter Disaster Council.

Andrew's professional experience includes aviation and severe weather forecasting, climate information work and meteorological research.

Andrew has key roles in his specialist areas, including volcanic ash clouds and aviation, with the World Meteorological Organisation and International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Andrew has a Bachelor of Science with Honours in meteorology and a PhD in meteorology.



### **Professor Donna Craig**

Professor Donna Craig was appointed as a member of the interim EPA Board in 2006 and then as an EPA Board member from 2008 to 2011. Donna continued as a board member until April 2012 to assist with the transition to the new board.

Donna is Professor of Environmental Law, School of Law, at the University of Western Sydney. She also works with Aboriginal organisations to develop natural resource based livelihoods and advises on national and international legal regimes.

Donna is a specialist in international, comparative and national environmental law and policy and was a founder and key member of Macquarie University Centre for Environmental Law (1983).

Previously, Donna was Research Chair as Professor of Desert Knowledge at CDU from 2004-07 and served as Regional Vice-Chair for Oceania of the World Conservation Union, Commission of Environmental Law, for eight years.

Donna has over 30 years experience in research, legal practice, teaching and working with communities, NGOs, Indigenous peoples' organisations, governments and corporations.

Donna's research and publications emphasise the social, cultural and human rights dimensions of legislation, programs, impact assessments and sustainable development. Her water law research includes resource management, capacity building and Indigenous cultural value issues.

### **Our function**

The EPA's function is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage (the Minister), business and the community on ecologically sustainable development in the NT. The EPA is independent and is not subject to the Minister's direction in preparing its advice.

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Vision:  
A prosperous and sustainable Northern Territory.



# EPA Strategic Plan 2012-14

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## Mission:

To provide independent and evidence-based advice to government and the community, about the environmental implications of development and resource use.

The EPA's strategic objectives are to:

1. work with government, industry and the community to develop integrated approaches, practices and mechanisms for ecologically sustainable development.
2. ensure environmental advice integrates with economic, social and cultural issues.
3. encourage policy and regulatory clarity for environmental management and development.
4. identify approaches to the management of the impacts of development and resource use that benefit both the environment and society.



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As part of the EPA's role to review and assess emerging issues which may affect the NT environment, priorities were established for a number of projects during the 2011-12 reporting period. These included onshore unconventional gas, seabed mining, cumulative impacts, and practical measures to promote sustainability in the NT.



# Current issues.

## Onshore unconventional gas

Unconventional gas is found within shale formations (shale gas), coal seams (coal seam gas) or extraordinarily impermeable, hard, tight rock formations (tight gas). Almost 90% of the NT's land area is covered by petroleum exploration permits, either granted or under application. Many

of these permits are targeting onshore unconventional gas.

In February 2012 the EPA released an Information Bulletin on onshore unconventional gas, to explain key terms and highlight important environmental and regulatory issues. The Bulletin aims to build understanding and encourage

community discussion about onshore unconventional gas, based on best current knowledge. It has been posted on the EPA web site and distributed to interested members of government, industry and the wider community.

The EPA has established a watching brief over this activity.



## Seabed mining

On 6 March 2012 the NT Government announced a three year moratorium on exploration and mining activities in NT coastal waters. Subsequently, the Minister referred seabed mining to the EPA to undertake a comprehensive assessment of:

- the actual and potential impacts of seabed mining activities on the environment and other resource industries; and
- methods to manage the impacts.

During the reporting period the EPA undertook research and began its investigation.

## Cumulative impacts

As part of its interdisciplinary approach, the EPA is examining the combined effects of human activities which can interact or accumulate in an area over time to cause changes in the environment.

During the reporting period, the EPA conducted extensive research on how to monitor and assess cumulative impacts in the NT. The research will contribute to the future work of the EPA including the production of an information bulletin planned for release in the next reporting period.

## Practical measures to promote sustainability in the NT

In November 2011 the EPA received a request from the Minister to provide additional information to the EPA's earlier advice, 'Ecologically Sustainable Development in the NT' provided in 2010. This led the EPA to consider the development of practical measures to promote ecologically sustainable development principles in the NT.

To minimise the risk of overlap and to add value to current and planned initiatives, during the reporting period, the EPA concentrated on consulting with departments about the activities they already had underway to encourage sustainable development.

The EPA will continue the development of its advice in the next reporting period.





# Environmental incident response.

## **Inquiries and watching briefs**

The EPA conducts inquiries to review and assess government agency responses to environmental incidents, environmental assessment processes, legislation and policy to achieve leading practice environmental

management in the NT. During 2011-12 the EPA had two environmental incident inquiries.

The EPA also had four environmental incident watching briefs under investigation. The EPA establishes watching briefs to examine issues to decide whether an inquiry is warranted.

## **East Arm Wharf copper concentrate incident inquiry, part two**

The EPA continued its inquiry into the 2010 copper concentrate incidents at the East Arm Wharf.

This follows the first report to the Minister in April 2011, 'East Arm Wharf Copper Concentrate Spill



Incident Part 1'. Subsequently the Minister announced the doubling of pollution fines and the provision of \$800,000 for additional environmental compliance officers. He also announced amendments to environment legislation.

Part 2 of the EPA's inquiry will:

- review the methods and reports of concurrent investigations by relevant arms of the Northern Territory Government to assess their thoroughness, and effectiveness with regards the uptake of recommendations to prevent future similar incidents.
- analyse the effectiveness of the Northern Territory Government's operational responses, including its communications with stakeholders.
- assess the extent to which the public can be assured that failures involved in the regulating and reporting of environmental incidents at East Arm Port will not be repeated.

Progress on this part of the inquiry was delayed until a related prosecution was completed. This report is being drafted for completion in the next few months.

### **Berrimah Business Park stormwater discharge inquiry**

In October 2011 the EPA received a referral from a member of the public concerning the proposed storm water system at the Berrimah Business Park development site.

Concerns raised were whether planned storm water discharge from the site could increase water flow downstream towards flood-prone residential areas surrounding Knuckey and Ironstone lagoons and possible water pollution of the lagoons.

The EPA established an inquiry to assess potential issues in the planning process, including:

- whether the evaluation of potential environmental impacts in the assessment and approval of Berrimah Business Park was adequate;
- whether the existing systems and processes adequately address the potential environmental impacts of this development; and
- whether the current assessment, approval and monitoring processes provide protection to the downstream urban wetland area.

This inquiry remained active at the end of the 2011-12 reporting period.

### **Edith River train derailment and copper concentrate spill watching brief**

On 27 December 2011 a train carrying copper concentrate bound for the Port of Darwin hit floodwaters on the Edith River bridge and derailed. The copper concentrate was spilt directly into the river and floodwaters.

In response to the derailment, the EPA determined that the regulating agencies had responded immediately to minimise any further impacts.

The EPA Board also decided to conduct a watching brief into the incident in order to satisfy itself that:

- the approval process for the AustralAsia Railway, including infrastructure standards and environmental controls, contained adequate measures to protect the environment.
- the regulator (the Transport Division of the Department of Lands and Planning) required the rail owner Genesee and Wyoming to be responsive to identified vulnerabilities of the track and had established procedures to counter extreme weather events.
- the exemption given to Oz Minerals by NT WorkSafe under the *Transport of Dangerous Goods Act* that permitted Oz Minerals to transport a dangerous good in the manner it did, was the result of a robust approval process within the framework of current knowledge at the time it was made.
- the response by various regulators was timely, effective and proportionate.

Subsequently, the EPA received a referral under the Act to enquire into this matter. The EPA Board considered the referral and determined to continue its watching brief until all the

regulators completed their investigations and their reports were made available.

At the end of the reporting period NRETAS was investigating whether there had been any breaches of the Territory's environmental legislation. Release of the NRETAS report is expected mid-2012.

NT WorkSafe was investigating whether there were any breaches of the *Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (National Uniform Legislation) Act* and Regulations.

The Department of Lands and Planning's Transport Group was awaiting the report on the investigation by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to determine if there were any breaches of the *NT Rail Safety Act*.

### **Mount Todd mine site uncontrolled release of water watching brief**

On 27 December 2011, the Mt Todd mine site had an uncontrolled waste water release into the Edith River.

The EPA determined to conduct a watching brief into the incident in order to satisfy itself that:

- environmental management standards have been met while the mine has been under Department of Resources (DoR) control.
- the regulator/s had acted to require Vista Gold and the Department of Resources to adequately prepare Mount Todd for extreme weather events.

- the response by the various regulators to uncontrolled water release from the Mount Todd retention pond was timely, effective and proportionate.

The EPA's watching brief will continue until the regulators have completed their investigations and made their reports available.

At the end of the reporting period, NRETAS was continuing its investigation into whether there had been any breaches of the Territory's environmental legislation or waste water licence conditions. Its report is expected in mid-2012.

DoR was conducting environmental sampling to determine whether there was any environmental impact from the uncontrolled waste water release.

### **Darwin beaches *E. coli* outbreaks watching brief**

In the 2010 dry season, several Darwin beaches were closed to swimming due to high levels of *E. coli* detected in the water. There were concerns this would happen again in 2011.

A multi-government agency response, along with Power and Water and City of Darwin, was adopted to deal with the human health and environmental concerns, as well as attempting to identify the source of the bacteria. The EPA established a watching brief to assess the effectiveness of this strategy.

In 2011 the NT Government established a cross-agency taskforce to identify the most

probable sources and pathways of contaminants resulting in high levels of *E. coli*.

So far the taskforce has produced an interim report with recommendations to the Government. These include developing a storm water management strategy for the Darwin Harbour catchment and prohibiting the discharge of sewage from large vessels in coastal waters. An education campaign to increase public awareness and change behaviours that cause pollution also was recommended.

The EPA will continue its watching brief into the 2012-13 reporting period to assess the Government's response to the taskforce's interim and final recommendations.

### **Land use planning and ecologically sustainable development in Alice Springs watching brief**

During a visit to Alice Springs in 2010, the EPA Board became aware of community concerns regarding the Department of Lands and Planning's community consultation methodology for the Kilgariff development, as well as other projects associated with the Alice Springs Planning for the Future program.

The EPA opened a watching brief in 2010 to assess these issues. It concluded during the reporting period that there was no evidence to support further action and closed this brief.

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During the past 12 months, the EPA's communications and engagement activities were aimed at better informing the community about leading practices for environmental management.

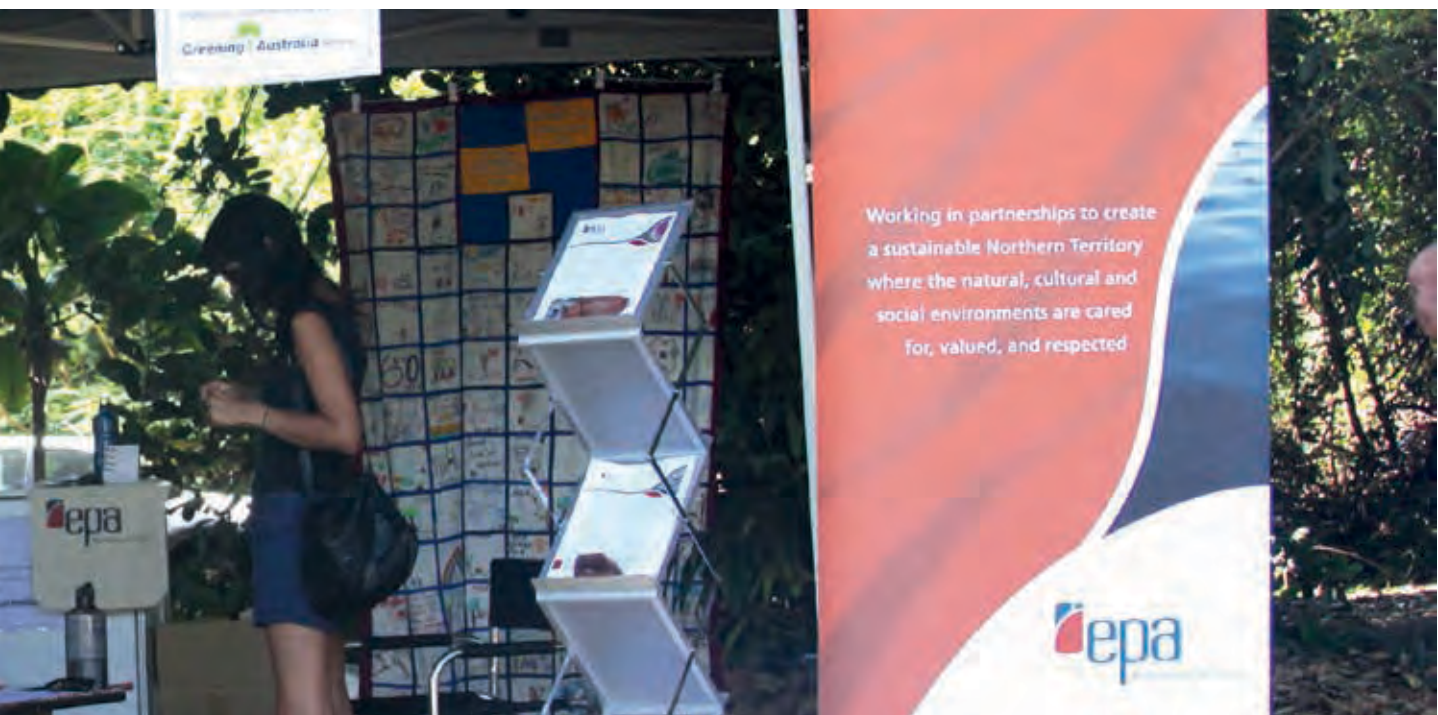


# Communications and engagement.

## Sponsorship

The EPA sponsored the following three events to bring guest speakers to Darwin to share their knowledge and expertise:

- Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators neTwork (AELERT) Conference (October 2011): John Fogarty, Associate Director, US EPA Office of Civil Enforcement
- gave a presentation on large-scale oil spills in navigable waters with the '2010 Deepwater Horizon' incident in the Gulf of Mexico as an example. Mr Fogarty's presentation included oil spill response coordination with other US Government agencies, on-shore management of spill wastes and damage to natural resources.
- Australian Green Infrastructure Council Sustainable Procurement Master Class (November 2011): Shaun McCarthy, Director of Action Sustainability and Chair of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 delivered a one-day class to introduce the new British standard BS8903:2010 'Principles and Framework for Procuring Sustainably'. The class





provided practical guidance on how to utilise the standards in infrastructure projects and the fundamentals and benefits of sustainable procurement for the construction industry.

- Top End Sustainable Living Festival (June 2012): A range of speakers included sustainability expert Professor Peter Newman, Gardening Australia's Costa Georgiadis and the ABC's natural cleaning guru Shannon Lush in panel discussions such as 'Growing Greater Darwin Sustainably' and 'Sustainable Garden Design'.

### Community engagement

The EPA attended the following events to engage with the

community in-person, provide an opportunity to discuss environmental issues, and increase awareness of its role:

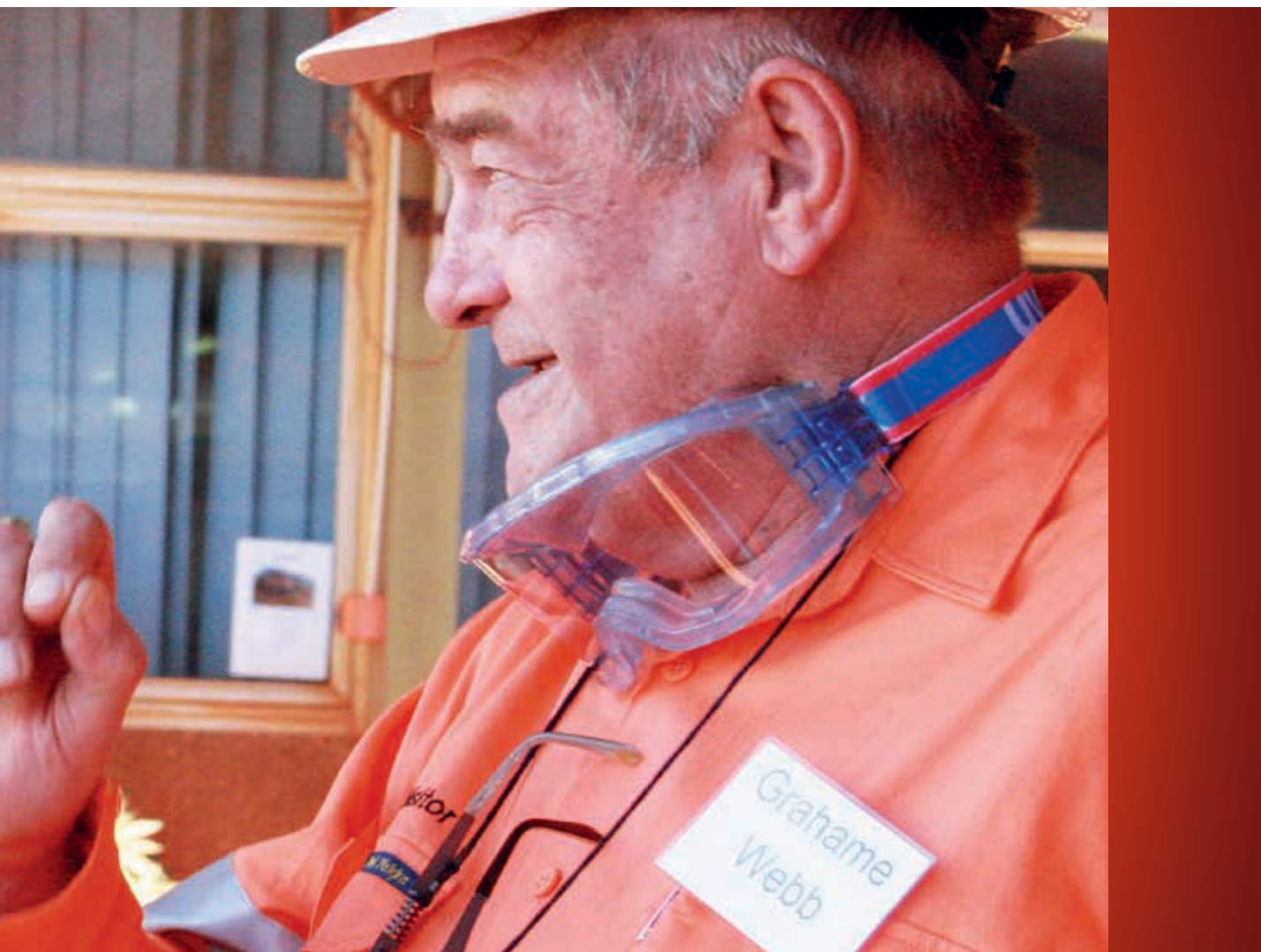
- 2011 Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin regional shows: The EPA stall held a thought-provoking activity at each show for people to draw a picture about an environmental issue that was important to them. One hundred and fifty people drew pictures of environmental issues that included reducing pollution, keeping water clean and protecting wildlife. Following the shows, the drawings were sewn into quilts and exhibited at the regional library of each show to encourage awareness about

caring for the environment.

- 2012 Top End Sustainable Living Festival (June 2012): Participation at this event provided an opportunity for the EPA to share its work with members of the general community. The EPA also conducted a survey on what members of the general community considered to be the main environmental issues for the NT. The results of the survey will help in determining the EPA's future services.

### Environmental Practice, Policy and Law Seminar Series

For the third year, the EPA was a partner of the 'Environmental



Practice, Policy and Law Seminar Series'. The seminars aim to enhance discussion and encourage cross-sector engagement between government, business and the community, including environmental professionals, policy makers, regulators and industry. The seminars during the reporting period included:

- 'Innovation in Sustainable Building Practices' by Robin Mellon (Green Building Council of Australia)
- 'The Climate Change-Energy-Water Nexus' by Dr Jamie Pittock (Australian National University) and Professor Andrew Campbell (Charles Darwin University)
- 'Oil Spill Response Authorities in the United States' by John Fogarty (United States EPA)
- 'Northern Australia: A Change of Climate' by Todd Smith (NT Bureau of Meteorology)
- 'Strengthening Pollution Laws: Proposed Amendments to the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* (NT)' by Heidi Snell (NRETAS)
- 'Rio + 20 Briefing' by David Forsythe (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations & Communities)
- 'Sustainable Transport in the Top End' by Professor Peter Newman (Curtin University – Sustainability)

## Publications

The EPA released public information on its website, to its stakeholders, and mailing list of over 430 subscribers. This information included:

- newsletters (August 2011 and February 2012) with project updates, news and forthcoming events;
- 'EnviroCare Directory' to assist the public with details of who to contact for enquiries on environmental issues; and
- 'Information Bulletin No 1: Unconventional gas – key issues for the NT' to explain the associated environmental and regulatory issues.

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During the past 12 months, the EPA's communications and engagement activities were aimed at better informing the community about leading practices for environmental management.

During the reporting period, the EPA contributed to raising awareness of environmental management topics as well as providing submissions to national policy debates that it considered were, or could become, significant issues for the NT.



# Contributions to environmental debates.

## **Presentation: on Improving Environmental Regulation and Assessment in the NT at the 2011 AELERT Conference**

In October 2011, the EPA gave a presentation on its role to promote leading-practice environmental regulation in the NT that covered:

- contributing to improved regulatory practice through reviews of environmental issues, strategic projects and public education;
- reviews of environmental legislation and regulatory practice; and

- improved processes of environmental assessment and regulation in the NT.

## **Workshop: 'Integrated Policy-Making Workshop'**

In October 2011 the EPA hosted a cross-agency government workshop on integrated policy-making for complex problems with Dr Jamie Pittock from the Australian National University. The workshop aimed to:

- promote understanding of the need for, and value of, integrated policy-making to identify areas of synergy and avoid policy-making conflicts;

- help policy-makers recognise opportunities for practising integrated policy-making, particularly across climate change, energy and water issues; and
- facilitate constructive cross-agency conversations.

## **Submissions to national policy debates**

Clean Energy Legislation Package, August 2011

Issues paper to inform development of a National Food Plan, September 2011

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act Environmental Offsets Policy Consultation Draft, October 2011

EPBC Act Cost Recovery for Environmental Approvals, October 2011

Future COAG Regulatory Reform Agenda Stakeholder Consultation Paper, October 2011





# Future priorities 2012-13.

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1. Prepare advice to the government on sea bed mining.
2. Encourage community understanding and debate on cumulative impact management.
3. Define environmental sustainability in different environmental contexts.
4. Develop tools for the practical application of sustainable development principles.
5. Develop and implement communications guidelines.
6. Continue to support government and the community to better understand unconventional gas developments and associated issues.
7. Monitor and assess emerging trends and innovations in developments and resource use and address where required.





# Reporting.

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## Activity

The NT Government's Budget Paper No. 3 2011-12 outlines the performance measures for all NT Government agencies. For the purposes of financial administration in the reporting period, the EPA was transferred from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts

and Sport to become an output group within the Department of Justice. The transfer reflects the greater emphasis on the EPA as an independent body that reviews the work of environmental regulators. The EPA sits within the department for the purposes of the *Financial Management Act*

and the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* and related regulations. For all other purposes, the EPA remains an independent advisory body providing advice to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, to business and to the community.





Key Deliverables	2010-11 Actual	2011 12 Estimate	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimate
<b>Strategic Advice</b>				
Advice to government	3	2	2	2
Formal public stakeholder events held	8	8	8	8
Discussion papers and reports released	2	2	4	2
<b>Reviews and Assessments</b>				
Referrals identified as significant and actioned	2	4	4	4
Projects and reviews commenced	3	3	5	3
<b>Monitoring and Reports</b>				
Cumulative impact information released	n/a	1	0	1
<b>Inquiries and complaints</b>				
Inquiries or complaints received and closed (referred to other agencies)	n/a	n/a	168	200
Inquiries or complaints received and actioned	n/a	n/a	55	60
<b>Board meetings</b>				
Number of meetings	4	4	5	4
<b>EPA satisfaction surveys</b>				
Number of surveys*	n/a	1	1	1

\* See survey results at Annex A

## Financial

The Authority's Budget for the previous year 2010-11 was \$1.475 million.

The Budget allocation for the EPA for reporting year 2011-12 was \$1.454 million.

The Budget allocation for this current year 2012-13 is \$1.447 million, a \$7000 reduction

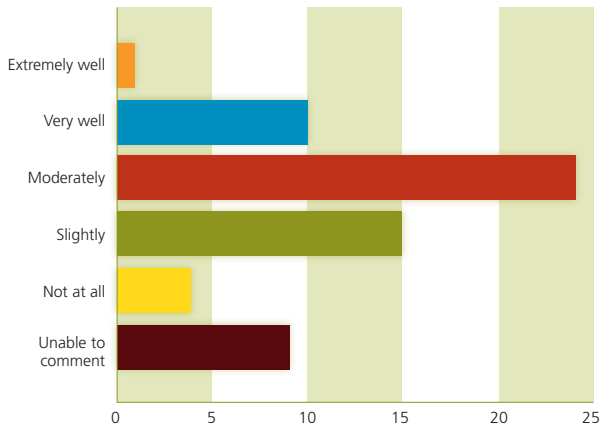
## Annex A– survey results

The pilot Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey was undertaken to trial a methodology for provision of empirical data to meet the

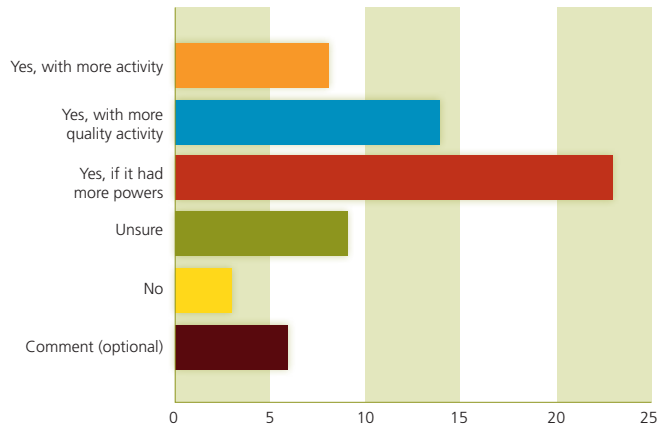
requirement of The Budget Paper No.3 Performance Measures of 'stakeholders' satisfaction with activities and advice'. With only 70 responses, mainly from the environment and public sectors, from a wide range of stakeholders (>700), future surveys will be undertaken using focus groups.



**How well do you think the EPA performed over the past 12 months?**

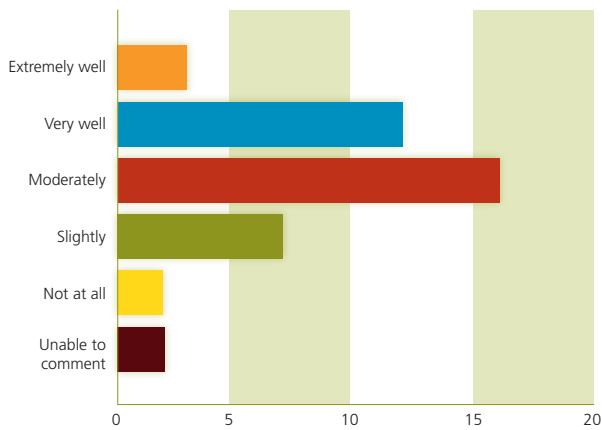


**Do you think the EPA needs to improve its function?**



**Promoting debate on environmental protection and sustainability**

**How well do you think the EPA contributed to these debates?**



[www.epa.nt.gov.au](http://www.epa.nt.gov.au)

