

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

On 25 February 1992, it was announced that an Intergovernmental agreement on the environment had been reached between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

The agreement is a complex document and will be the subject of an article in the next edition of the AELN.

The agreement is the culmination of a process which commenced in October 1990 when heads of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and representatives of Local Government met at a special Premiers' conference in Brisbane and agreed to develop and conclude an Intergovernmental agreement on the environment to provide a mechanism by which to facilitate:

- a cooperative national approach to the environment;
 - a better definition of the roles and the respective governments in respect of the environment;
 - a reduction in the number of disputes between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories on environmental issues;
 - greater certainty of government and business decision-making; and
 - better environmental protection.
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AUSTRALIA JOINS THE BASEL CONVENTION

On 17 February 1992, the federal government announced that Australia had joined the Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes.

One of the aims of the Convention is to prevent the practice of industrial countries shipping toxic waste to developing countries who do not have environmentally sound means to dispose of them. The Convention bans this type of trade in hazardous wastes, as well as strictly controlling the movement of such wastes. Hazardous wastes included PCB's and banned pesticides such as DDT.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ALLIANCE WORLDWIDE

The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (E-LAW) is a network of public interest environmental lawyers with offices in Australia, the United States, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Peru, Malaysia, Ecuador and Chile. It is likely that offices will soon be established in India and Japan.

The aim of E-LAW is to help develop and provide support for public interest environmental law and litigation around the world. As environmental law is an area of rapid change it is important that lawyers advocating environmental protection are able to learn from the knowledge and experience of those in other countries. Assistance provided by lawyers in different nations can be crucial to effective environmental advocacy.

The beginnings of E-LAW were in the meeting of public interest lawyers from all over the world at the 1989 and 1990 Public Interest Law Conferences at Oregon in the United States. At these conferences they discussed ways to facilitate and make more effective locally based public interest environmental law movements in various countries. Subsequent contacts with lawyers on every continent confirmed that no existing organisation served this role. No group actively promoted cooperation, training, information sharing and exchanges of experts among public interest lawyers and advocates.

E-LAW Australia was established in July 1991 and is based in Sydney. To date E-LAW Australia has principally responded to overseas requests from other E-LAW offices for information. Communication between E-LAW offices is facilitated by being linked to computer conferences which allow ongoing dialogues and information exchange.

Unlike North America, where the tradition of public interest environmental law has been established for over 20 years, in the Australian region it is still in its relative infancy. Because of this, one of the principal goals of E-LAW Australia is to help develop a network by establishing contacts between those working in the public interest environmental law area.

In order to do this E-LAW Australia is currently preparing a directory of public interest environmental lawyers, consultants and other contacts in Australia, the South Pacific and South

East Asia. The aim of the directory is to provide information on the experience and skills of people who are or may be involved in public interest environmental law and litigation. It is intended to foster cooperation amongst those working in the field. This will provide the basis for an effective network that will make public interest lawyers in the region more effective.

The need for such a directory was echoed at the NELA/LAWASIA conference held in Bangkok in August 1991 where it was proposed to establish a register of public interest lawyers. It is hoped that the E-LAW directory will complement the work that flows from the Bangkok conference.

David Mossop, Project Officer
Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide -
Australia
Suite 85, 280 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 264 2088

and will continue for the balance of 1992. It was decided to make the two volumes merge together with combined indices being produced and inserted in both Volumes 1 and 2. With many changes to the law in Queensland so far and to be expected during 1992, this Service provides a valuable way of keeping in touch with new developments.

The Service is not to replace any textbook nor any set of reported cases. Instead it seeks to set out case notes (two examples published above) and short extracts and explanations of new legislation. From time to time articles are published on changing areas of the law.

The publication has a multi disciplinary list of contributors and it is published to help all the professions associated with environmental law matters. It is not limited to lawyers. More and more are other professions needing to know the parameters of new environmental laws.

Subscription details can be obtained from Carmel Coyne, the Executive Officer in Queensland on telephone (07) 832 4865 or fax a request to (07) 832 4233 and an Order Form will be sent to you.

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY

Starting in 1993 (subject to formal approval by the University), The Australian National University will offer, through the Law Faculty's Centre for Environmental Law and Policy has designed an Environmental Law and Policy Program, Graduate Diploma and Master courses for graduates of both law and non-law disciplines with relevant academic or professional backgrounds. The ANU says the program is appropriate for Australian candidates from the public service and the private sector and for the wider international community, and will be particularly suited to anyone who is required to administer legislation on the natural or cultural environment, to advise on environmental policy and new legal developments which affect public or private sector activity, or to understand legal issues which arise in environmental matters.

For further information contact the Assistant Faculty Secretary, Faculty of Law (Rosemarie Gill) on (06) 249 0510.

1992 NELA STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE

Entries are invited for this year's essay competition.

Essays eligible for the prize should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length and have been submitted for an undergraduate environmental law or natural resources law course.

The essays should normally be submitted by the course co-ordinator for the course which the essay was presented. The course co-ordinator should include a brief description of the nature of the task set for the students, including a comment on the degree of supervision given in the preparation of the final essay. The essays should be submitted to the Executive Officer of NELA by no later than 1 August 1992. Only those essays submitted in the second semester of the 1991 and the first semester of 1992 will be eligible for consideration for the prize. The award of the prize will be announced at the NELA annual conference in September.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SERVICE

In Queensland there is published an Environmental Law Service which commenced in 1990 and is now in Volume 2. Volume 2 was introduced during 1991