

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Cuts to Environment Defenders a blow to democracy**

Federal government funding cuts to legal centres providing advice on the environment are a blow to democracy says the National Environmental Law Association.

‘Environment Defenders Offices provide vital information to communities about how to protect our environment, and they help make sure government and others comply with the law’ says Association President, Amanda Cornwall.

‘The move will effectively deny the community access to the courts to protect the environment,’ Ms Cornwall said.

A national network of Environment Defenders Offices across the country provides advice and representation for environment-related cases deemed to be in the public interest.

The federal government announced a total funding cut of \$10 million to EDOs in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) released yesterday.

‘I believe the government has misjudged the way people feel about EDOs,’ Ms Cornwall said.

‘I’m heartened by comments by Brendan Sydes, CEO of EDO Victoria that this will galvanise support for EDOs and they’ll find a way through, possibly through crowd funding,’ she said.

The MYEFO introduced new funding of \$300 million for the Green Army to support conservation management through local projects. At the same time it made cuts from abolishing the Biodiversity Fund (\$1.4 million), taking \$6.7 million from the *Caring for our Country* program for the pink batts Royal Commission, and reducing the functions of the former Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (\$45 million over four years).

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***NELA is the leading environmental law organisation in Australia***

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