



National Environmental Law Association: Rules for the Annual Environmental Law Essay Competition

Preamble

The National Environmental Law Association ('NELA') is Australia's peak environmental law organisation. Established in 1982, NELA brings together professionals in environment and resources law and related disciplines, 'to promote the understanding of the role of environmental law in regulating and managing the conservation and usage of the environment' (*NELA Constitution*, cl 3.1).

Among its other activities, NELA administers an annual essay competition to achieve its primary purpose and the following objectives from its Constitution:

- provide a forum for and otherwise assist the discussion, consideration and advancement of environmental law among the legal profession and the wider community (cl 3.2.1); and
- encourage research into environmental law for the purpose of making and encouraging the making of recommendations and submissions for the advancement of environmental law (cl 3.2.2).

This document constitutes the Rules for NELA's annual essay competition.

Rules

1. The name of the competition is the 'NELA Annual Environmental Law Essay Competition' (the Competition).
2. The Competition is open to any student enrolled at an Australian tertiary institution, including undergraduate (LLB) and postgraduate (JD, Masters, PhD) programs. **Evidence of enrolment as a student must be submitted along with the essay.** NELA encourages students to consider basing their submission to the Competition on essays that were submitted for assessment in a unit about Australian environmental or climate law.
3. Essays must have been written in the twelve (12) months before the submission deadline. A person submitting an essay may not submit more than one essay to the Competition in any given year.
4. It is intended that the Competition will be run annually, but NELA reserves the right not to run it in a particular year.
5. The topic of the Competition is: 'Cutting-edge issues in Australian environmental or climate law'. While submissions to the Competition may focus primarily on international environmental or climate law, to be eligible to win a prize, essays must make an explicit connection between their analysis and Australian domestic law.

6. Essays should be 2,000 to 8,000 words. Essays either side of this word limit will not be accepted. Footnotes and bibliographies are not included in the final word count.
7. Essays should meet the highest standards of integrity, and be fully and accurately referenced (AGLC format for referencing is preferred). **Each person submitting an essay must declare that the essay is the person's own original work.** By submitting an essay, participants agree that NELA may conduct an integrity check for copyright infringement or plagiarism.
8. An essay that is submitted to the Competition must be accompanied by a separate cover page giving the author's name, enrolment (including evidence of enrolment, see rule 2), the authors' contact details and a declaration of integrity (see rule 7). The essay itself must not include any information that identifies the author, so that it can be anonymised for marking.
9. The deadline for submission of essays will be 5pm (AEDT) on the second Friday of December, each year, and essays received after that deadline will not be eligible to be considered for the prize.
10. Essays must be submitted through the NELA website, at: <https://www.nela.org.au/events/nela-essaycompetition/>.
11. Eligible entries will be reviewed by a panel of experts against the following criteria:
 - 11.1. *Novelty*: does the essay address a cutting-edge issue and/or contribute a novel perspective or analysis to the environmental or climate law literature?
 - 11.2. *Argument*: is the argument clear, compelling, well-developed and supported by evidence?
 - 11.3. *Clarity and structure*: is the essay written clearly and concisely, and organised in a logical and effective way?
 - 11.4. *Accuracy*: is the essay presented neatly and legibly, with few or no content, typographical, grammatical and referencing errors?
12. While the large majority of essays submitted to the competition are typically sole authored, where students co-author an essay during their studies, we are open to considering these submissions on a case-by-case basis. Prior to submitting a co-authored essay, please reach out to the NELA Education Portfolio at education@nela.org.au.
13. The outcome of the Competition will be announced in the first quarter of the year following the submission deadline. The decision of the judging panel is final.
14. Subject to rule 15, the author or authors of the Winning Essay or essays will each receive a prize of AU\$500, free registration for a national NELA event, and a one-year NELA membership.
15. All authors of a Winning Essay will be offered support to revise their work for publication in an academic journal such as the *Environmental and Planning Law Journal*, a practice-focused journal such as the *Australian Environment Review*, or in one of NELA's publications; and/or to present on their essay topic in a NELA webinar.
16. The judging panel may decline to award prizes in its discretion.

17. Authors of a Winning Essay must agree that if their essay is published (through any avenue, in any forum), that its publication will be accompanied by an acknowledgment that the essay was NELA's prize winning essay in the Competition in the relevant year.
18. NELA reserves the right to vary these Rules from year to year. The current Rules will be published on NELA's website.