

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Senator Urquhart asked the following question at the hearing on 13 May 2015:

CHAIR: How was that information given to them?

Ms Quinn: We made phone calls to each of the Environmental Defenders Offices on the day that the MYEFO announcement was made, and that was followed up with a letter emailed on that day and then sent in hard copy.

CHAIR: Are you able to provide the committee with a copy of the letter that was sent?

Ms Quinn: If the committee is okay, I think I will just need to take that on notice, just to make sure. I think we probably have to check with the recipients of the letters before we could release them, but I have got no problem with the content being—

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

A request for permission to release the letters that were sent to all Environmental Defenders' Offices on 17 December 2013 has been sent to all organisations.

Examples of the letters that were sent are provided at Attachment A.



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

13/15568-02

17 December 2013

Office Coordinator, Environmental Defender's Office of Northern Queensland Inc.
Suite 1, Level 1, 96-98 Lake Street
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Dear

**Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia and Legal Aid Queensland and
Environmental Defender's Office of Northern Queensland Inc. (Service Agreement)**

**Commonwealth Grant Agreement between the Commonwealth represented by the Attorney-
General's Department and Environmental Defender's Office of Northern Queensland Inc
(Grant Agreement)**

We refer to the above two agreements. In this time of fiscal constraint, the Australian Government sees the provision of enhanced frontline legal services to disadvantaged members of the community as the first priority in facilitating access to justice, and accordingly has decided to:

1. not extend the Service Agreement beyond its current term, which is due to expire on 30 June 2014, and
2. cancel the Grant Agreement in accordance with subclause 19.1 of the General Grant Conditions (the Conditions), which form part of the Grant Agreement (see paragraph headed 'Scope of this Agreement' of the Grant Details).

With respect to the cancellation of the Grant Agreement, we advise that due to this change in government policy the Commonwealth is cancelling the Grant Agreement effective immediately.

Pursuant to subclauses 19.2 (a) and (b) of the Conditions, we request that you stop the performance of all your obligations with respect to the Activity (see paragraph B of the Grant Details), and take all available steps to minimise loss resulting from the cancellation.

This letter constitutes written notice in accordance with subclause 3.2 of the Conditions.

We advise that in accordance with subclause 19.3 (a) of the Conditions we are currently assessing what part, if any, of the Grant may be due and owing to you under the Grant Agreement.


Yours sincerely

David Fredericks
Deputy Secretary
Civil Justice and Legal Services Group



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

13/15568-02

17 December 2013

Principal Solicitor, Environmental Defenders Office (ACT) Inc
Level 1, 14 Childers Street
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Dear

**Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia and Environmental Defenders Office (ACT)
(Service Agreement)**

**Commonwealth Grant Agreement between the Commonwealth represented by the Attorney-
General's Department and Environmental Defenders Office (ACT) Inc (Grant Agreement)**

We refer to the above two agreements. In this time of fiscal constraint, the Australian Government sees the provision of enhanced frontline legal services to disadvantaged members of the community as the first priority in facilitating access to justice, and accordingly has decided to:

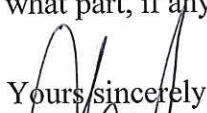
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Yours sincerely

David Fredericks
Deputy Secretary
Civil Justice and Legal Services Group



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

13/15568-02

17 December 2013

Principal Solicitor, Environmental Defenders Office (Tasmania) Inc
131 Macquarie Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear

Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia and Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania and Environmental Defenders Office (TAS) Inc. (Service Agreement)

Commonwealth Grant Agreement between the Commonwealth represented by the Attorney-General's Department and Environmental Defenders Office (Tasmania) Inc (Grant Agreement)

We refer to the above two agreements. In this time of fiscal constraint, the Australian Government sees the provision of enhanced frontline legal services to disadvantaged members of the community as the first priority in facilitating access to justice, and accordingly has decided to:

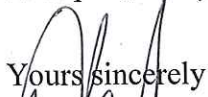
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Yours sincerely

David Fredericks
Deputy Secretary
Civil Justice and Legal Services Group



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

13/15568-02

17 December 2013

Coordinator/Solicitor, Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc
Level 1, 408 King William Street
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear

Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia and Environmental Defender's Office (S.A.) Inc. (Service Agreement)

Commonwealth Grant Agreement between the Commonwealth represented by the Attorney-General's Department and Environmental Defenders Office (SA) Inc (Grant Agreement)

We refer to the above two agreements. In this time of fiscal constraint, the Australian Government sees the provision of enhanced frontline legal services to disadvantaged members of the community as the first priority in facilitating access to justice, and accordingly has decided to:

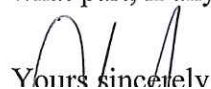
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Yours sincerely

David Fredericks
Deputy Secretary
Civil Justice and Legal Services Group

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Senator Waters asked the following question at the hearing on 13 May 2015:

Senator WATERS: I am interested in the specific examples, because having worked in that sector for almost ten years, there was no campaigning that was not law-reform proposals. I do not believe the Attorney ever worked in a community legal centre, but I would love to be corrected. I am struggling to understand what behaviour he is objecting to?

Ms Quinn: As I said, Senator, I cannot really speak for the thoughts of the Attorney-General, but if I could take that on notice we could consult on that point.

Senator WATERS: Yes. I think we would all be very interested in that, because I am at a loss to understand what on earth he is talking about.

Ms Quinn: I am happy to take that on notice.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The department has consulted with the Attorney-General's Office and advises that there is nothing to add beyond what the Attorney has previously said publicly, including in previous Estimates hearings.

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 13 May 2015:

Senator SINGH: If you could take that on notice—specifically, on what advice was provided to the minister about the level of saving being made through choosing EDOs as a reason for cutting their services.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The department provided analysis and advice on how the required level of savings could be achieved. This included the fact that removing all EDO funding would deliver a total of \$11.25 million over four years.

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 13 May 2015:

Senator SINGH: I think I am right—I do not want to paraphrase you—that what you are saying, then, is that the department could not suggest any other specialist public interest environmental law resource in the Northern Territory capable of dealing with these issues.

Ms Quinn: Not that I am aware of, and I am happy to take it on notice to have a look. All I am saying is that I am only aware in any detail of the services that we do fund. We do not fund a comparable service in the Northern Territory, no, but I cannot speak with great authority on there not being another service.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Any of the Commonwealth funded community legal centres in the Northern Territory would not be prevented from taking on matters relating to environmental law, recognising that their priorities may be on other issues.