

ANNUAL REPORT



Arid
Lands
Environment
Centre

20
22

Our Mission

Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) is Central Australia's peak environmental organisation, defending Australia's iconic desert country for over 40 years.

We empower people by sharing knowledge on how to live sustainably in the desert.

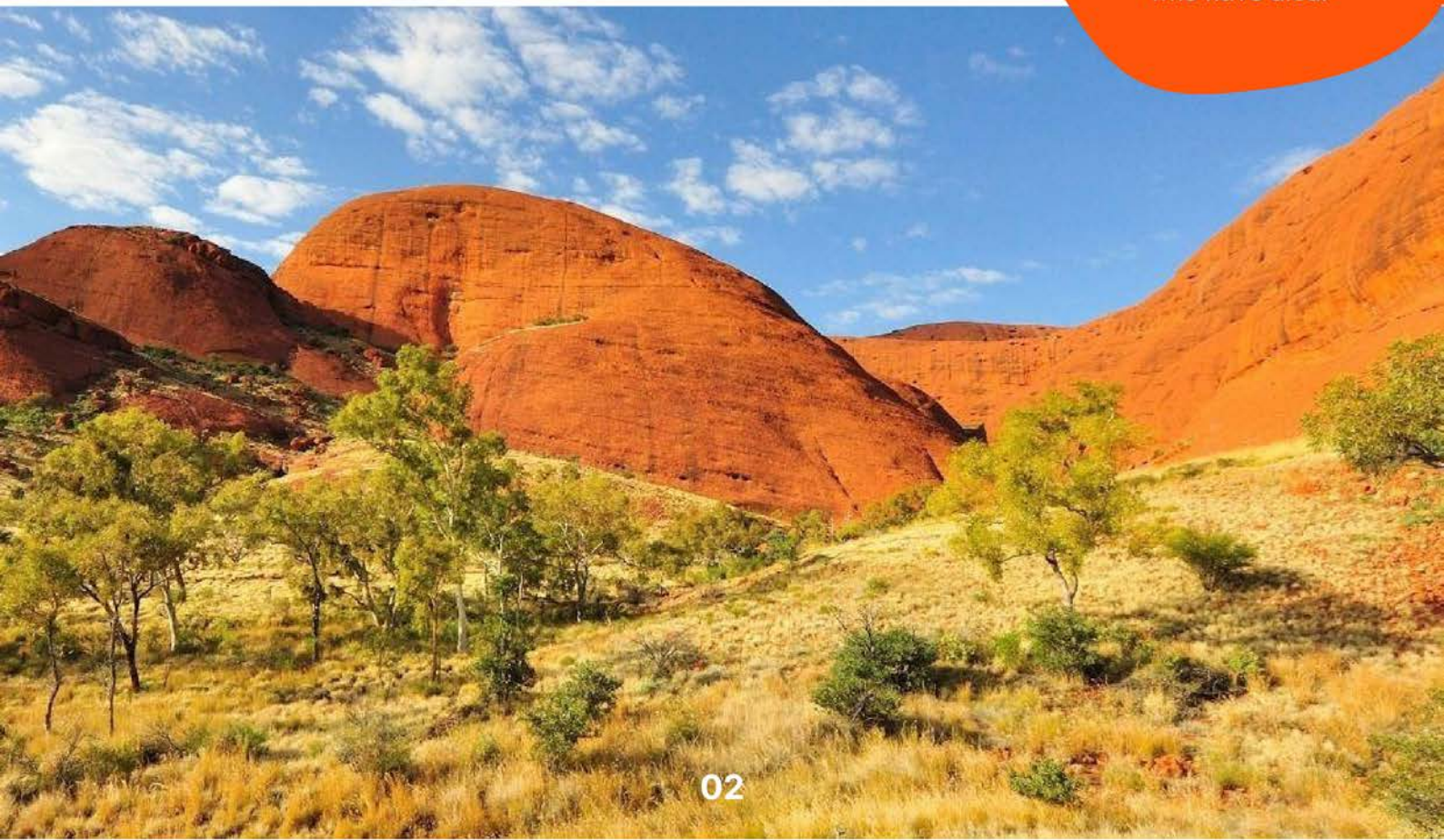
We inspire, engage and lead local people to take action for the environment, advocate for nature and strong environmental laws.

Acknowledgement of Country

ALEC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we work on and their vital role in caring for country for many thousands of years, now, and into the future.

We acknowledge First Nations Elders past, present and emerging and recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following document may contain images of people who have died.



Contents

| | |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 05 | 2020-21 Highlights |
| 06 | Where we work |
| 07 | About us - Our strategy, vision, goal |
| 08 | Message from the Chair |
| 10 | Message from the CEO |
| 12 | We stand for arid lands |
| 22 | Build people power |
| 26 | We are stronger when we work together |
| 37 | Our people, our power - thanks! |
| 38 | Looking Ahead |
| 42 | Governance |
| 44 | Financial report |

This report covers our activities for the 2021-22 financial year and aims to demonstrate the variety and impact of ALEC's advocacy, campaigning, policy and community education work

It highlights the incredible energy that ALEC and its members, alongside many other groups and organisations, bring to the challenge we face together - protecting people and nature in the arid lands and beyond.

ALEC is an accredited charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. In addition to private donors, ALEC has been fortunate to receive funding from the Northern Territory Government.

We welcome feedback regarding the content of this report and our activities generally. Responses can be directed to communications@alec.org.au or by calling (08) 8952 2497.



Cover image: Singleton Station: 4km from the Fortune Agribusiness proposed borefield lies beautiful sandplain country dominated by groundwater dependent ecosystems like ghost gums and blood woods. These GDEs will likely be destroyed if the development proceeds. Photo: ALEC

This page: Buffel grass infestation at Ilparpa Rd Alice Springs. Photo: ALEC

Highlights from the year

We fought back against buffel

ALEC was part of a community effort to raise the profile of the buffel grass invasion, its threats to ecological and cultural values and the many ways these can be reduced. It starts with weed declaration!

We maintained the rage against fracking

ALEC testified before the Senate inquiry into oil and gas exploration and production in the Beetaloo Basin. Alongside our partners we made fracking an Alice Springs Federal election issue.

Singleton Station water licence court proceedings

ALEC started court proceedings against the NTG over the largest ever groundwater licence. This threatens a vast area of shallow groundwater which supports sacred sites and marvellous ecosystems.

Arid Edge Environmental Services

Collaborated with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Councils and community groups for a more liveable and food secure Central Australia.

Eastside and Westside community gardens flourished

And Food for Alice and the Harvest café grew in popularity and attendance.

A grid of the future is on the way

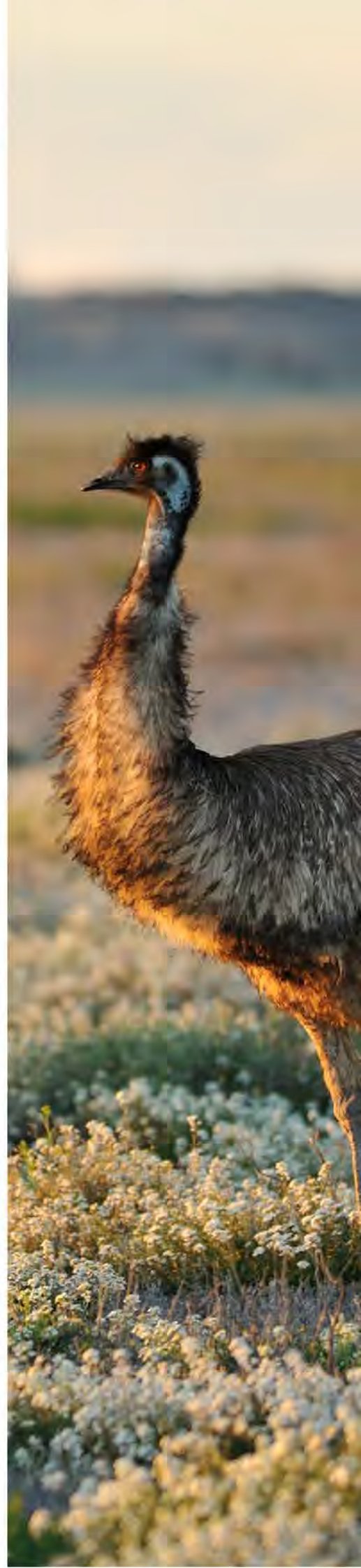
Fifty households and businesses with existing solar and batteries joined the NT's first Virtual Power Plant (VPP) trial.

We celebrated some wins

Alongside Environment Centre NT and the Environmental Defenders Office, we stopped significant changes to the Water Act which had been put forward without consultation.

ALEC's submission was one of many during consultation for an NT Parks Masterplan. This led the NTG to acknowledge that people want their parks to stay and biodiversity and cultural values respected and protected.

The central Australian community engaged strongly during consultation on the NT Strategic Water Plan. ALEC highlighted issues of trust, lack of comprehensive water resources and safe drinking water act and urged for the adoption of water justice principles.



Where we work

Australia's arid lands are ecologically abundant and unique. They are full of life and spectacularly complex. The arid lands Aboriginal custodians comprehensive knowledge of its resources and needs is central to this country.

From its beginnings in 1980, ALEC has grown as an organisation. ALEC aims to have a big impact in the desert region and nationally.

ALEC is made up of a network of local people and organisations who speak up and take action for the protection of water, climate, communities and desert country.



Our arid lands are increasingly under threat. ALEC campaigns to protect arid biodiversity from threats including land clearing, industrial-scale water extraction, feral animals and the spread of invasive species including buffel grass.



We are guided by its custodians. We advocate for investment in Indigenous rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas.



Central Australia is already experiencing climate change which disproportionately impacts Aboriginal people living in bush communities. A focus on equitable climate adaptation, hand-in-hand with emissions reductions, is critical to protect desert communities and ecosystems as life gets hotter and harder.



The Red Centre of Australia is a special place that is home to unique and diverse life **which needs to be protected for all our tomorrows.**

Our Purpose & Vision

To protect nature and support ecologically sustainable development in the arid lands.
Healthy futures for arid lands and people.

Our strategies

Demonstrate and advocate for environmental protection and ecologically sustainable living grounded in social justice and desert wisdom.

Catalyse and mobilise community action on environmental issues.

Respect, work alongside and be guided by diverse communities, cultures and organisations; we are stronger when we work together.

Ensure that ALEC is a resilient and dynamic organisation operating in a professional and stable framework.

Our 10 year goal

Australia's arid lands are biodiverse and resilient. These lands are our home and sustain a diversity of life and ecosystems.

Our goal is to protect our arid home and for ALEC to be locally and globally recognised as an enabler of sustainable living in a desert environment.

Our values

Innovation

New thinking, fresh ideas and creative solutions to transform livelihoods in the arid lands.

Courage

We listen deeply and we act boldly.

Collaboration

We cooperate, partner and collaborate to build relationships and achieve the best outcomes.

Integrity

Our commitment is real and demonstrated by our actions – we walk the talk.

A message from our chairperson

This past year at ALEC has been a whirlwind. We have seen changes in personnel, consolidated our purpose and activity, and built coalitions to stand strong against poor political decisions in the NT. We saw Jade Kudrenko step into the role of General Manager. A smarter and fiercer leader to manage this whirlwind of a year would be hard to find. She made sure ALEC charted a clear course for the future before leaving us at the end of the financial year. Her work will live on in the ALEC of the future.

Over this year, the Board has grown into a committed and sharply focused team and we have done a lot of work to ensure that ALEC can continue in a more sustainable way that will address our Strategic Plan. We are proud to have developed a new Ten-year Strategic Plan that is succinct and has consolidated our thinking about the future direction of ALEC.

Both Westside and Eastside community gardens are flourishing. A frenzy of volunteers has seen Food for Alice continue to provide an abundance of fresh, locally grown produce to so many. The queue stretches almost out the gate well before opening time each Saturday morning. The Harvest Café is also humming along and buoyed by so many generous volunteers. And, with the generous support of the Community Benefit Fund and the focused stewardship of Kaz, it is exciting to watch the development of Westside Garden.

Future Grid is an example of one of the many collaborations ALEC has managed so deftly throughout the year. The team worked tirelessly with the community to engage them in the plans for a virtual power plant. This collaboration has been particularly challenging, but it was finally successful, and this perseverance is what it takes to bring about social transformation.



Arid Edge Environmental Services (AEES) has had several challenging years: the impact of restrictions introduced in response to the COVID pandemic; the ever-changing reality of bush travel; a workforce in flux; and our inability to recruit a manager. Having said this, the team so capably supported by the ever steady, force for good, Ra, has continued to deliver a service where many couldn't. Finally, ALEC had to make the very hard and heart-wrenching decision to scale AEES down to ensure responsible governance and the longevity of the rest of the organisation.

Despite this being a year of consolidation for ALEC, our campaign work has continued with gusto and very smart and strong collaborations. We centred our campaigns on the impacts of climate change, ecosystem collapse and government reforms that in no way adequately address the scale of the emergency facing our precious planet.

Collaborations and alliances have been built across the NT to unite the many who are concerned about fracking and the level of destruction this mining method causes.

We stand alongside all those that are fighting this industry. Hannah working with the Protect Country Alliance has built strong and mutually beneficial relationships with key folk working on this campaign. We know, and act on the knowledge, that together we are stronger!

The NT has introduced massive regulatory reform with regard to the environment which has meant that the ever-hardworking Alex, has had to write an enormous number of submissions. He persistently reminds the NTG that ALEC will continue to scrutinise their work and decisions and hold them to account.

Of particular concern are the reforms introduced in relation to water use. Given life here in the desert is largely dependent on groundwater; it sustains everything human, animal, all ecosystems and sacred sites; ALEC is pulling out all stops to do everything it can to protect groundwater.

We are massively grateful to the Environmental Defenders Office which is working with us on a ludicrous water licence given for agribusiness on Singleton Station. This will see a legal challenge be brought to the highest court in the NT. Watch this space!

It is with such pride and admiration that I have spent yet another year leading the Board that governs the small but mighty force that is ALEC. Nothing does or will stand in our way as ALEC continues to defend Arid Lands and Peoples and speak truth to power.

Thank you to our membership; without you we would not exist. Also, I am so grateful for all people do to support us to keep up the good fight. There are so many ways you help - with your time, by engaging in campaigns, offering your expertise or financial contributions. All of it helps and know that none of it goes unnoticed. On this note, I would like to acknowledge the tireless generosity of the members of the ALEC Board. It is such a pleasure to work with such caring, smart and generous humans.

Barbara Molanus
ALEC Chair



A message from our CEO

What an incredible privilege it has been to lead Central Australia's peak environmental organisation. The first day of this period, before I could even get my feet under the desk, the team had me hosting a webinar on the Senate inquiry into \$50 million of federal handouts for fracking in the Beetaloo Basin with Senators Waters and Thorpe and our Campaigner Hannah. That first day certainly set the tone for a year of strong collaborations, taking big arid lands issues to the national stage and at a pace that didn't let up.

Wrestling with the big challenges that threaten healthy futures across the arid lands, is complex and fraught with external influences. For small grassroots organisations with limited resources these threats can seem insurmountable. However year after year ALEC speaks truth to power and changes the destructive course before us.

It is not all big wins and the wins are shared with our partners. But this small organisation has a lot of incremental wins to celebrate. Guided by the ALEC 2021-2031 Strategic Plan, the team of staff and volunteers have tenaciously protected our arid home and enabled sustainable living in a desert environment.

Alice Springs Future Grid Project is a great example of how real impactful change can be complex, even frustratingly so. Achieving the Territory's 50% by 2030 renewable energy target in Alice Springs requires innovation at scale across multiple organisations, garnering this transformation amongst energy suppliers, government, industry and the community is complex.

Originally due to be complete this year, the project partners have worked together through numerous hurdles, subsequently the project has been extended and ALEC has renewed our contract to deliver the community engagement dimension of this multifaceted, impactful project.



The massive ground swell of community concern over the unsustainability of billion litres of precious groundwater being gifted by the NT Government to private enterprise, has driven our Protect Water, Stop Singleton Campaign. Bringing together ALEC supporters and water experts from across the country this campaign has elevated the issue to the highest court in the Territory.

This case has highlighted the little protection and even disregard that current NT water policies and plans have for natural and cultural water values.

ALEC will continue to challenge a system that permits massive drawdown of aquifers sucking groundwater dependent ecosystems dry. This is not what sustainable development looks like.

These ecosystems are critical refuges for wildlife and often special and sacred sites. They must be protected. Thanks to our friends at the Environmental Defenders Office who have been providing pro bono legal representation. With support from our members we will keep up this fight.

In the Territory gas companies backed by the Federal Government have doubled down in a last ditch attempt to open massive gas reserves in the Beetaloo Basin.

The strength of the Central Australian Frack Free Alliance, has placed people in Central Australia in a key position to ally with others across the Territory.

This grassroots movement has been highly connected. Barely a week would pass without a web of communications and activism from Central Australia to Darwin, Katherine, Elliott and many places in between. Led by our Frack Free Campaigner ALEC has been standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies in the Protect Country Alliance.

We would have preferred to have spent more time proactively approaching our strategic goals, however a significant portion of our energy was necessarily focused on responding to a tidal wave of policy reform from the Territory Government and barrage of dirty initiatives like the 'gas-led recovery' at the federal level. We have had to invest more time than we wanted to, trying to stop bad policy and greenwashing. Renewing our contract with the Territory Government to deliver policy services and leveraging this modest funding with supporter donations has enabled us to engage the community and key stakeholders with a huge number of submissions to reform initiatives.

The committees and members of the Westside and Alice Springs Community Gardens are leading the way in local food security and community led action in greener living. The long running Food For Alice continued this year in a slightly new iteration but still delivered regular, accessible options for locally grown food. The Harvest Cafe operating during the hours of Food For Alice has drawn new crowds, generating new energy and enthusiasm for gardening, food security and community connections. Just as the gardens flourish with tending, these initiatives benefited greatly from some key leaders and a swag of volunteers.

Coming through pandemic, ALEC was not immune to the stresses felt across the country. With the temporary JobKeeper federal support provided in the previous year drying up, cashflow for ALEC's enterprise arm Arid Edge Environmental Service (AEES) became increasingly challenging. Amplified by recruitment issues and contracts still impacted by remote travel limitations, the first half of this period provided significant viability challenges.



Weighing up the undoubtedly excellent environmental objectives of AEES and the highly valued team of staff, the Board made a tough decision to scale down AEES. This placed significant stresses on the dedicated AEES staff who persevered through a very hard year. Following principles of good governance for the not-for-profit sector this was the best path to ensure the ALEC could remain viable and able to deliver our core functions.

The board must be commended for their solid governance and successful recruitment efforts resulting in a streamlined change of leadership. The many changes this year provided the impetus to look inward and reflect on ALEC's sustainability and to consolidate. As a result this year saw the; implementation of a new organisational structure, update of our accounting systems and processes, refocus on core functions, office upgrade to make the building wheelchair accessible, reduction of rental overheads with the consolidation of the ALEC, Future Grid and AEES offices back into one location at Gap Road.

As I leave ALEC at the conclusion of this financial year I'm grateful to have experienced the incredible resilience of this small but mighty organisation that inspires, engages and leads local people to take action for the environment.

Jade Kudrenko
ALEC CEO



We stand up for arid lands

We advocated for stronger arid zone
environmental protections and
**challenged the NTG's water
allocation decisions in court**

Photo: ALEC team, board members and Environmental Defenders Office lawyers at the Singleton water licence court case

Policy Advocacy

Through our policy work, ALEC is working to protect water, biodiversity and climate, so that our communities and ecosystems can live sustainably in the arid lands.

ALEC monitors the laws, policies and developments that impact the diverse landscapes and communities of Central Australia and the arid zone. This is a critical role providing independent oversight and scrutiny over Government decisions and policies, acting as a key safeguard for environmental protection in the Northern Territory.

ALEC promotes positive policy reform in key areas which seek to strengthen environmental protections across the arid zone. We advocate for a regulatory environment and ecologically sustainable development that is in the public interest, is transparent and accountable, and reflects best-practice in protecting environmental and social values.

What we're fighting for

Policy is foundational to ALEC's environmental advocacy. Renewed pushes to 'develop the north' and prioritise short-term economic growth has meant the Territory's environment is increasingly under threat. From the largest groundwater licence in Northern Territory history, to exploration ramping up in the Beetaloo Basin and land clearing rates rising markedly.

ALEC's Policy and Advocacy team is standing up to protect Central Australia's unique and diverse environments.

We are working hard for buffel grass to be declared a weed in the Northern Territory, for greenhouse gas emission offsets to be real and result in a genuine offset of emissions, that our mining laws are strengthened, for best-practice, for climate considerations to be embedded into all planning decisions, for climate adaptation to be a priority of government and that our water governance regime is fit-for purpose and trusted.

ALEC strives for its policy work to be accessible, place-based and a vehicle for change.

Left: Buffel fires on the Tanami Rd threaten existing woody vegetation and ecosystems. Photo: ALEC



Our submissions

Commenting on policy provides the community an opportunity to be involved in local decision making, and is vital to good policy-making.

ALEC has had a very busy year in the policy space, writing a total of 25 submissions (a total of 222 pages) across:

The impact of policy submissions is amplified by strong community voices. ALEC worked with Letters for the Environment Central Australia to jointly produce 3 case cards. These were placed in cafes around town to help community members write or colour in their own letters on important environmental issues.

Alex and Evie Rose wrote a 37 page submission on the Northern Territory's Strategic Water Plan, comprehensively unpacking the structural issues with water resource management and governance in the Northern Territory, as well as around the provision of safe drinking water.

See ALEC submissions and learn more
www.alec.org.au/policy_advocacy



Gas (8)



Water (5)



Climate (2)



Pastoral/
land clearing/
agribusiness
(4)



Weeds and
parks (3)

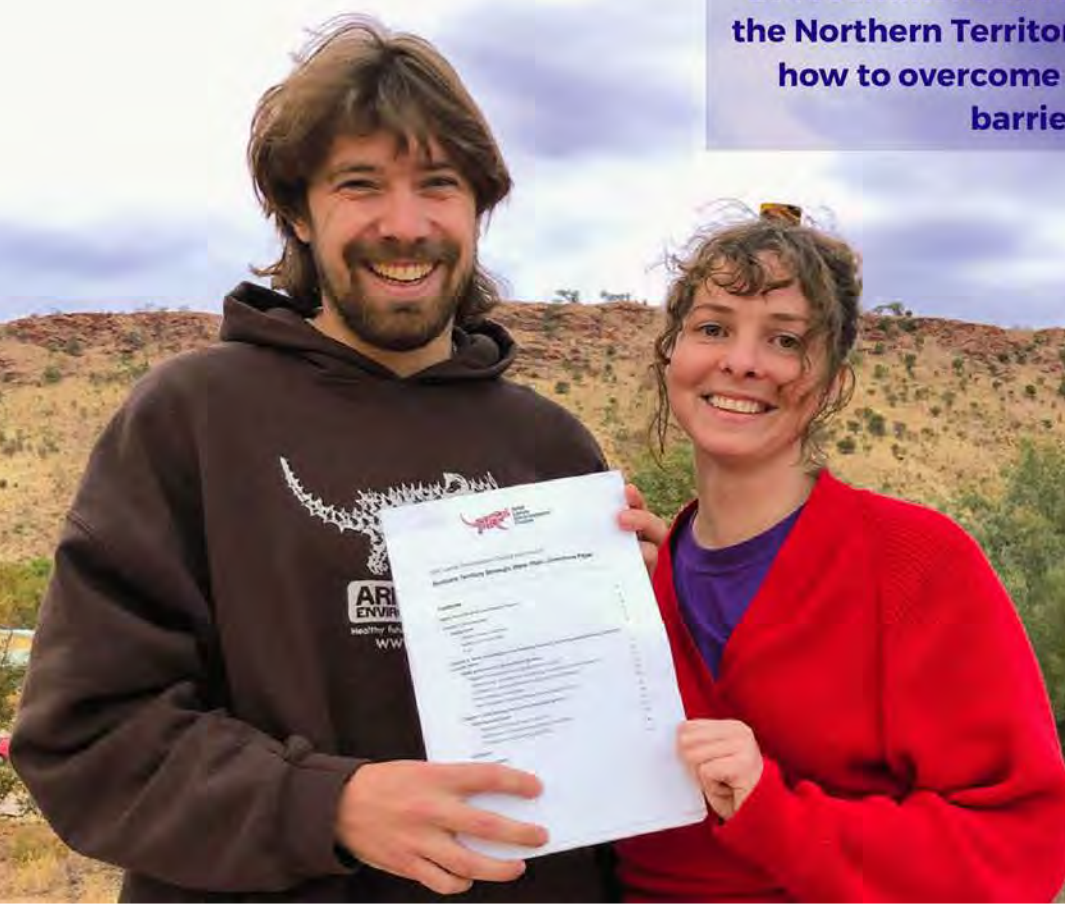


Mining/
infrastructure/
planning (3)

The Northern Territory government provides funding to the Arid Lands Environment Centre to have policy and research capacity to engage and contribute to the Northern Territory Government's environment reform program.



23 recommendations were made to the Northern Territory Government in how to overcome many of these barriers.



Protecting water

Water Reform

We know that the Territory's water laws and governance arrangements are not fit for purpose. They are broken and in urgent need of overhaul. Water law experts have characterised the Territory's water laws as 'amongst the worst in the country'.

Our campaign

To overcome these structural issues ALEC has advocated for major changes to how water decisions are made.

ALEC has advocated for water justice principles to be integrated into Territory water reform. This vision was developed alongside ECNT in our joint submission to the Productivity Commission around National Water Reform. These principles centre notions of distributive, procedural and recognition-based justice.

They are, that:

1. Traditional Owners and their representative institutions are centred in all decision making around water management and use;
2. Water values of ecological, cultural and social significance are recognised and protected;
3. Basic water needs are met for all;
4. Water resource management is inclusive and participatory;
5. Water is recognised as a public good that should be looked after.

ALEC has also been advocating for:

1. An overhaul of the Water Act 1992;
2. Scrapping the Water Allocation Planning Framework and its arid zone rule;
3. The development of a Safe Drinking Water Act, including legislated minimum standards;
4. Establishing catchment based-management of waterways; and
5. Establishing an independent water commission to oversee water planning decisions;
6. Making decisions based on evidence, science and precaution.
7. It is a comprehensive list, but these are essential steps in providing water security now and into the future. The NT's water must be protected.

Our impact

ALEC alongside land councils, Environment Centre Northern Territory and the Environmental Defenders Office stopped the NT Government from making significant changes to the Water Act in late 2021, without consultation.

This was a major win to have these changes scrapped.

Singleton Station

Judicial review

For the first time ever, in February 2022, ALEC commenced court proceedings against the Northern Territory Government over the largest groundwater licence in Northern Territory history at Singleton Station.

The case continues. It was not a simple or easy decision for ALEC to make. ALEC first questioned the water licence in October 2020. Then, alongside the Central Land Council (CLC) and Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) we contested the licence before the Water Resources Review Panel, which resulted in the licence being reissued by the Minister on the 15th November 2021.

With nowhere else to go, ALEC decided to take a stand to protect the Northern Territory's water and landscapes. ALEC is due to appear in court in September 2022.



Photo: Alex and Jade submitting the ALEC affidavit

The Singleton Station water licence is representative of so much that is wrong with how ecological and cultural values are 'protected' in the Northern Territory.

Our water laws are not fit for purpose.

Singleton Groundwater Licence is one of Australia's largest horticultural projects in a region with little horticultural development.

Over the projects lifetime a trillion litres of water will be given away by the Northern Territory Government.

This project threatens:

40

sacred sites

8

threatened species

50m

groundwater table lowered

30%

groundwater dependent ecosystems destroyed

000's

tens of thousands of tonnes of salt brought to the surface every year

Climate justice

Greenhouse gas offsets policy advocacy

ALEC helped strengthen the NT Government's Greenhouse gas offset policy through supporting community input into policy drafts and meeting regularly with policy writers within the department.

We hosted an information session and submission writing workshop when the draft policy was released and worked with an alliance of climate concerned groups across the Northern Territory and nationally to hold the Northern Territory government to account on the inadequacies of the policy through media stories and public meetings.

While not the policy we wanted a measurable success was the invented category of "indirect" offsets being removed from the policy.

Senate inquiry into oil and gas in the Beetaloo Basin

Jade Kudrenko testified at the Darwin hearing of the Senate inquiry into Oil and Gas in the Beetaloo Basin in March 2022, bringing Central Australian concerns around the risks fracking poses to water and climate security to the inquiry and National attention.

Jade spoke alongside a broad group of stakeholders including Traditional Owners, scientists and lawyers. Fracking campaign coordinator Hannah Ekin also contributed to the media on the inquiry, including writing an op-ed on the outcomes of the Darwin hearing.

Climate justice alliance steering committee

ALEC has continued to participate in the Climate Justice Alliance Steering Committee which is an alliance of social and community services, unions, Aboriginal-controlled organisations and environment. We are working on building capacity so this work can be actively resourced.



Photo: ALEC team (left) together with teams from Environment Centre Northern Territory and the Environmental Defenders Office after taking part at the Beetaloo Senate Inquiry in Darwin

Healthy country, healthy ecosystems

Buffel

Buffel is the greatest invasive species threat to ecological and cultural values in Central Australia.

Buffel became a central pillar of ALEC's policy and advocacy work in the 2021/22 year. Better management of at risk areas and landscape-scale solutions are essential, if we realistically intend to protect arid zone ecosystems and turn around the fortunes of many threatened species.

ALEC participates on the Alice Springs Regional Weed Reference Group and frequently makes submissions on weeds and biodiversity where buffel is a key focus. At the Territory level declaring buffel a weed is a minimal step the Northern Territory Government could take. This would be a step towards parity with the approach taken on gamba grass in the Top End.

There is a great opportunity for national coordination and commitment around buffel. This is where ALEC's advocacy is focused. ALEC is collaborating with experts across the NT, SA and WA, from land managers to academics.

ALEC is raising the profile of issues on the ground. We want to see Commonwealth and NT action. For example weed declaration in the NT, and national recognition of buffel as a Weed of National Significance, strategic planning and targeted funding and research.

ALEC is proud and committed to its work around buffel. It is a scourge to the arid lands, and threatens much of what makes Central Australia so special.



Parks Masterplan

The Northern Territory is developing a 30-year Masterplan for Parks. ALEC engaged thoroughly in this process advocating for greater evaluation of the Parks estate in informing future management and greater focus on key threats to parks (biodiversity decline, key threatening processes, extinction and resourcing issues).

Territorians love their parks and a 30-year plan needs to be ambitious. ALEC was pleased to see an immensely improved ambition in Parks master planning as a result of strong community feedback.



Aerial photo from the 1970's of the deliberate planting of buffel grass in the south of Alice Springs

Arid Edge Environmental Services

Key Projects 2021-22

One way in which ALEC has been able to demonstrate best practice and initiate change is through Arid Edge Environmental Services, delivering great projects on a fee for service basis.

Arid Edge Environmental Services (AEES) provides expert environmental service and design solutions across the arid zone and dry tropics of Australia. In the last financial year AEES completed the following programs:

6

Landscape
Design &
Construct

2

Conservation
land
management

3

Food
security
program



Arid Edge Environmental Services

Landscape Design & Construct

Town camp community gardens

Since 2019, AEES has been working with Tangentyere Council to complete landscaping works at town camps with community centres. Town camp residents were consulted together with Tangentyere employees to finalise a landscape design that meets the needs of residents in their community centres.

In July 2021, AEES completed the landscape design for Inarlenge/Little Sisters Town Camp through consultation with Town Camp residents and in August completed the landscape build.



AEES has now completed landscape designs and builds in:

1. Anthelk-Ewlpaye/Charles Creek
2. Ewyenper-Atwatye/Hidden Valley
3. Ilperle Tyathe/Warlpiri
4. Inarlenge/Little Sisters
5. Nyewente/Trucking Yards
6. Yarrenyty Arltere/Larapinta Valley

To prepare the gardens for summer, AEES worked with town camp residents and Tangentyere workers to plant summer crops, repair irrigation and set summer rates, build shade structures and mulch crops at Anthelk-Ewlpaye/Charles Creek, Ilperle Tyathe/Warlpiri and Inarlenge/Little Sisters town camps in November and December 2021.

AEES looks forward to continuing working with Tangentyere town camps in 2022, with exciting projects planned to grow knowledge and skills for residents and workers in food production.

Arid Edge Environmental Services

Conservation land management

Palm Valley Land Management

This project aims to protect the threatened Red Cabbage Palm (*Livistona mariae*) mainly at Palm Valley but also some other locations around Finke Gorge National Park (FGNP). This was done by removing remove grassy weeds to allow juvenile palms seedlings a chance to grow while also reducing the dangerous fuel loads that threaten the palm trees.

ALEC and the Arid Edge Bushcare Team are grateful for the opportunity to work with our clients Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) and the Parks and Wildlife Commission Northern Territory on this great project.

Over two weeks of work, the AEES Bushcare Team completed chemical treatment and physical removal of invasive grasses within red cabbage palm colony in Palm Valley. This work was undertaken by the Arid Edge Bushcare Team alongside both Finke Gorge National Park Rangers and employees of TNRM.

Outputs:

Engagement of Bushcare team

285 Hours worked by Bushcare Team on ground at Finke Gorge National Park





Build People Power

ALEC catalyses and mobilises
**community action on environmental
issues.**

Working with the community toward the grid of the future



ALICE SPRINGS
FUTURE GRID

The project

Alice Springs Future Grid is a collaborative project focused on removing barriers to further renewable energy generation in the Alice Springs power system in order to achieve the Northern Territory Government's target of 50% renewables by 2030. It brings together local organisations and interstate experts to model, trial and investigate what may need to change in the Alice Springs electricity system, with ALEC leading the community engagement component.

In order to accommodate more renewables into the local electricity system, the challenges of grid stability need to be overcome. The key way for the community to be involved in this transition through the Future Grid project was by participating in the NT's first Virtual Power Plant (VPP) trial, referred to as the Solar Connect VPP.

The past year focussed on bringing together a cohort of participants with eligible solar and battery systems and working with project partners to prepare for the launch of the trial. The VPP technology will better manage the storing and sharing of energy with the grid. ALEC ran community events, information sessions, and surveys and worked closely with local installers to share information about our electricity grid and how to get involved in the trial.

Outcomes

The local community were keen to participate, but as with any new technology, the VPP trial initially found challenges in finding and recruiting participants with eligible systems.

ALEC's Community Solutions team worked closely with project partners, local installers and solar households in the recruitment and onboarding stages.

50 households and businesses with existing solar and batteries successfully joined and the trial, which is set to go live in late 2022.

CSIRO assists the Future Grid project with knowledge sharing and feeding back the challenges and outcomes to the Australian Renewables Energy Agency (ARENA).

The Alice Springs Future Grid Project is led by the Intyalheme Centre for Future Energy, on behalf of Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA). Alice Springs Future Grid is supported by ARENA, the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government.

*The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government, and the Australian Government does not accept responsibility for any information or advice contained herein.

Left: ALEC Future Grid team at a VPP participants house



Campaign in Focus:

Fracking

ALEC has campaigned to stop fracking in the Northern Territory since 2011, working alongside local, regional and national organisations including the Lock the Gate Alliance, and supporting the organising efforts of local community group Central Australian Frack Free Alliance.

This year, our community engagement and advocacy focused on making fracking an election issue in Alice Springs during the federal election, building stronger relationships with affected community members in the Beetaloo, and growing community awareness of the amount public money the government are giving away to fracking companies.

Senate Enquiry

ALEC GM Jade testified at the Senate Inquiry into fracking in the Beetaloo Basin, speaking alongside Traditional Owners, pastoralists and

tax transparency advocates among others. The Senate inquiry was originally formed to examine how a controversial \$21 million grant was given to oil and gas company Empire Energy. The company, which has links to the Liberal Party, is operating in the Beetaloo Basin.

However, the hearing became a broader forum, focused on the deep and broad public opposition to fracking among affected communities across the NT. For more information see this article on the Senate Inquiry Hannah wrote for [Green Left](#).



Photo: Oil and gas lobby group APPEA are questioned by Senators in front of a packed conference room in Darwin.

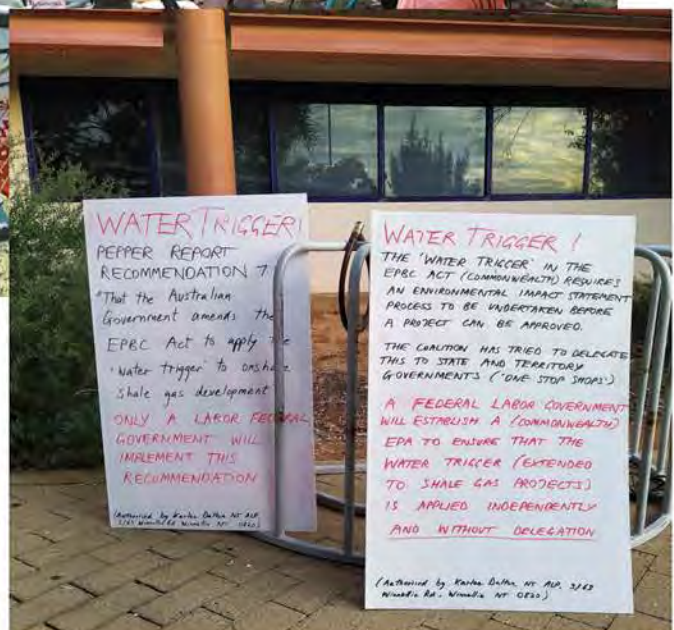
Our work with CAFFA

ALEC Supported Central Australian Frack Free Alliance's federal election campaign. Highlights included a campaign launch attended by more than 100 people and all candidates apart, from Country Liberal Party's Damien Ryan.

National media noted fracking as a key election issue in Alice Springs with Labor committing to a Federal water trigger for shale gas on election day.



Labor Lingiari Candidate Marion Scrymgour's position on fracking is questioned at the CAFFA election campaign launch



Labor make the unusual move of hand writing a policy announcement - these DIY coreflutes appeared on election day at the Charles Darwin University voting booth.



We are stronger when we work together

ALEC respects, works alongside and is
**guided by diverse communities,
cultures and organisations.**

Photo: Ray Dimakarri Dixon and band onstage at Nguku Festival

Water is Life

ALEC supported Mudburra Elder Ray Dimakarri Dixon to organise a Water (Nguku) themed festival in Kuluminindi/Elliot, one of the communities most affected by fracking.

Running this festival is a way of bringing the people together, healing divisions and gently reminding people what's important - country, culture, the next generation.

The festival was a success and will hopefully continue annually.



Arid Edge Environmental Services

Food security program

Arid Edge works in food projects through designing and constructing good gardens, and implementing community food garden projects.

Amern Mwerr: Good Food program

First established in Utopia in 2009, Amern Mwerr aims to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables through building and maintaining food

gardens, growing skills in harvesting and cooking fresh produce and improving nutrition and health education to encourage healthy choices.

Lunches made **400**

Children attending **80**

No. of days **15**



To complement the Amern Mwerr Good Food Project, every school holiday AEES completes a cooking program with kids in Utopia.

Based in the commercial kitchen at Arlparra, kids from across the homelands cook lunch and afternoon tea for all the participants of the school holiday program.

Activities:

In the reporting year, AEES completed three weeks of cooking programs during the school holidays. AEES conducted lunch cook ups with kids, delivering lunches and afternoon teas for kids at basketball courts, softball practice and at the Homelands Centre.

ALEC and the Arid Edge team are grateful for the opportunity to work with our client Urapuntja Aboriginal Corporation on this great project.



Arid Edge Environmental Services

Food security program

Nyirripi food garden

The Nyirripi Food Garden was completed in July 2021. The food garden is on community land that is leased by Central Desert Regional Council.

The water connection is from Nyirripi School with the support from the Department of Education.

No.
activities
conducted

6

Children &
teachers
participating

80

Open garden
activities
conducted

15

Arid Edge Environmental Services (AEES) completed two weeks of garden activities in Nyirripi.

Our aims

To continue building the confidence, knowledge and skills of school students, teachers and families in food gardening, in order to increase ownership over and sustainability of the food garden.

ALEC and the Arid Edge team are grateful to the Northern Territory's Primary Health Networks Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Department which make this great project happen.



Building a Mparntwe/Alice Springs Community Garden Network

Inspired by the success of Alice Springs Community Garden, Centralian Middle School (CMS) contacted the Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) in 2019, with the idea of offering a parcel of school land to be developed as a second community garden.

The idea of a new community garden supported long held interest in developing a network of food gardens in Mparntwe/Alice Springs and a successful application was made to the NT Community Benefit Fund in 2020.

The original application required considerably more funding than was ultimately allocated but nonetheless still allowed ALEC to deliver on key objectives including establishing a new community garden in Gillen (Westside Community Garden – see page ?), supporting existing and emerging gardens, broadening community

engagement in the gardens and improving the long term sustainability of the gardens – acknowledging though additional sources of funding are still required.

ALEC is incredibly grateful for the stellar work of Garden Network Coordinator, Kaz, who was hired to deliver this project and to all of the volunteers to who put enormous effort into both of the community gardens all year round – it is 100% true that neither would exist without the support of the dedicated community of Mparntwe/Alice Springs.

This project was proudly sponsored by the Northern Territory Government through the Community Benefit Fund Major Grants program.



Westside Community Garden

A year of growth

Nineteen months after its inception the Westside Community Garden is now an actively managed green space flourishing with both people and produce.

A range of strategies were used to increase engagement with our richly diverse Mparntwe communities of interest. These include school and youth groups, First Nations communities, ethno/culturally-specific groups, and NT corrections populations.

We have seen improved community knowledge about our gardens, increased input and active participation or attendance at garden events, tours and workshops. Garden membership has grown to 20 members as well as up to 20 volunteers participating in working bees.

This project would not have been possible without our partnership with Centralian Middle School Board and the NT Department of Education who have offered the land to the Mparntwe community.

The establishment of Westside Community Garden was supported by the Northern Territory government through the Community Benefit Fund Major Grants program including the establishment of the site, governance arrangements and initial community engagement activities.

Additionally:

- ALEC received support from the Commonwealth Government through the Stronger
- Communities Programmes Round 6 to install irrigation at the Westside Community Garden.
- A generous donation made by Sydney Giving Circle members was used to purchase and install a composting toilet.
- A small grant through Australia Post's People of Post grant program was used to purchase essential tools for Westside Community Garden.
- A series of Wicking Bed Workshops were sponsored by Bendigo Bank

**Become a Garden member or
come along to a working bee:**

www.westsidecommunitygardenalice.com.au



Meeting our values

The creation of a culturally safe and sustainable arid lands garden that nurtures the development of a local food secure community.

Eastside Community Garden

It was another busy year for the Eastside Community Garden as work continues to meet the Garden's vision of growing healthy gardens for the Alice Springs community. The Garden's slight name change acknowledges that Alice Springs is now lucky enough to have two community gardens, the Westside and Eastside.

The Garden once again expanded with an increase of garden beds for communal and private use. There are now 48 plots being leased and over 50 people with General Membership to the Garden. The Committee regularly completed plot audits which assists people leasing plots to increase productivity and decrease garden waste.

Twice-weekly working bees, Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings, were critical to sustaining the Garden's overall health and productivity. Immense thanks to Bruce and Marg for their working bee leadership. Working bees sustain the Garden's health and provide learning opportunities and community connection for everyone attending

Garden goals

The Garden is looking to secure funding for a 'Shed' infrastructure development on the site which would provide space for workshops, education, meeting area and plant propagation. This infrastructure development will allow the Garden to continue to work towards its goals of:

1. A sustainable community garden - socially, culturally, environmentally, and financially
2. Garden infrastructure that meets the needs of today and tomorrow
3. A skilled and knowledgeable community demonstrating sustainable, best practice gardening in Alice Springs

The 2022 Committee welcomed a significant growth in new committee members and celebrated the growth in Garden leadership. The Committee is focused on succession planning, increasing the number of participants in working group (also known as PODs) and increasing community participation and access to the Community Garden.

As Bruce Simmon's says 'there is more work to be done, yet so much wonderful work has already occurred.'

Community projects

When you head down to the Eastside Community Garden on a Saturday morning you witness people's desire for green spaces, community connection, caffeine and fresh locally grown produce. The Food for Alice produce market and Harvest Café has seen significant growth in popularity and attendance in 2021/22 period. Weekly people lining up in anticipation of the market and café each morning.

These two projects role model what is possible here in the arid zone.

The growing of bountiful produce through hard work and commitment to local produce and of course community building, where working together builds collective experiences and turns ideas in realities.

These projects create community connection and builds community resilience, something which is critical in this changing world.

These projects help fundraise for the Eastside Community Garden and promote ALEC's vision and values

Eastside Community Garden

Food for Alice

Each market morning from 7:30am the volunteer team are busy ensuring everything is set up for a smooth market experience for all. Checking prices, remembering how to spell kohlrabi, ensuring the full range of herbs has been picked, purchasing produce off local suppliers, teaching new volunteers how the point-of-sale machine works, putting out the flower display.

From picking produce Friday and Saturday morning, setting up the space and updating price the list on Friday, physical movement of all the produce Saturday morning, selling produce and packing down, each week the market eight volunteers to make it all happen.

Food for Alice is a massive collective effort and thank you each and everyone who contributes their time.



Warmest thank you to Marg, Meg, Jenny, and Bruce for their leadership, enthusiasm, and determination to make this the best market possible. Their weekly toil of growing, harvesting, setting up, picking to customer demand, and packing down has been significant and critical to the markets success.

Marg, Jenny and Meg are each are highly engaged with customers, providing advice and inspiration for people to grow their own produce, finding produce growing in the garden to pick to customer demand and always looking at ways to improve the market.

Meg's flowers are a constant top seller with a throng of customers who come to the market specifically for her bouquets. Marg's coordination of suppliers ensures the market has a wide range of produce for sale in addition to working tirelessly to make the market a standout experience for everyone.

Thank you Kim McKay for doing all the thankless tasks, keeping the communal spaces spruced up for the community, growing significant crops of garlic to meet customer hunger for flavour and cleaning the toilet each week.

The team of volunteers:

Robyn, Pam, Peter, Loren, Jack, Wendy, Tamara, Elizabeth, Layne, Roy, Chloe, Melissa, Jana, Christabelle, Fiona, Bec, Eliza and Felicity.

Thankyou to Meg for making the recipes cards in 2022, customers have appreciated having recipe cards to match their purchases of daikon, lemongrass and more.

Thank you to our regular suppliers who have brought their produce to the market to meet the demand for fresh local produce: Rodney the Happy Farmer, Bruce the Lettuce Guy, Kim from the date farm, Sarah and Veronika for their sprouted greens, and Iris and Westside Community Garden for their pumpkins and watermelons and a special thank you to all those people who have donated their beautiful citrus and excess produce from their plots.

Eastside Community Garden

Harvest Cafe

The Harvest Café has doubled its customer base in the 2021 to 2022 period, from a daily average of 30 customers seeking coffee and baked goods to an average of 60 customers in that period.

This is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the Harvest Café team creating a location of social connection and community participation.

The café volunteer crew create this vibrancy all the while serving espresso coffee and homemade cakes.

A massive thank you to Marilyn O'Keefe for her leadership and determination to make the café a vibrant hub of community connection, for customers and volunteers alike. Thank you to Haydn who has shown great leadership in providing the highest standard of drinks to café customers, greatly expanding the customer base. Haydn has lead the café in creating high quality service along with developing the distinct style and vibe of the café. 2022 see's Haydn finishing Year 12 and yet Haydn's commitment to the Café has been unwavering. 2023 will see Haydn setting off to travel and the whole Garden community wishes Haydn the very best!

Thank you to all the café volunteers over the year: Dani, Penny, Franca, Meghan, Eliza, Flora, Sarah, George, Marg Carew, Joanna, Christabelle, Maddi, Marg McHugh, Glenda Gleeson, Wendy, Roxanne, Annie, Lyn, Lucy, Amanda, Rita, Nick, Jorja, Emily, Thanks to the volunteers who on countless times have stepped in to help crew the café at the last moment.

Thank you to Susie Gregory for coordinating the cake roster, ensuring a bountiful supply of freshly baked homemade baked goods to be serviced along side the coffee.

Thank you to Veronika, Lili, Jazzy and Ace for the leadership roles in ensuring the morning run smoothly.



Thank you to all the bakers:

Sally, Scott, Meg, Joanna, Penny, Kundia, Heather, Jo, Roxanne, Khim, Annie, Marg, Dash, Dira, Amanda, Nick, Elizabeth, Veronika, Dorothy, Kay, Scarlet and Tam, Clare, Armani, Katrien, Joanna, Loren, Maddie, Tabita, Wendy, Lis and Debby.

Thanks to our local band, Little Things for warmth of music on a Saturday morning

Thank you Lyn for stepping in to provide critical support to Haydn as the café increased its customer base and of course many thanks for the loan of the espresso machine which makes this all possible.

Thank you Allan for providing so much of the back end support, lighting the fire on those relentless frosty mornings, coordinating with the band, making sure all facilities are working smoothly for the community and volunteer crews.

Thanks to our local suppliers: Duyu Coffee and Red Centre Honey.

And finally, massive thank you to each customer who has come down to participate in the market and café. Your participation is testament to the value of these projects and is deeply a part of the success of everyone's work.

Without you seeing the value in these wonderful projects there could be no success.



Creating
**community
connection**
and building
**community
resilience**



EcoFair 2021

ALEC held its thirteenth Ecofair across the weekend on the 6-8 August 2021, in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

Fifteen events were planned across four COVID friendly locations Olive Pink Botanical Gardens, Alice Springs Town Council Lawns, Eastside Community Gardens and Westside Community Gardens. (Ultimately twelve events occurred as three were unfortunately cancelled due to COVID disruptions.)

Ecofair kicked off at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens on the Friday with a live ABC broadcast, outdoor cinema and presentations.

On the Saturday, activities at Olive Pink continued with buffel busting supported by Alice Springs Landcare, the ever popular Central Australian plant sale and a bush food and bush medicine workshop with Traditional Owners from Akeyulerre Healing Centre.

Eastside Community Gardens also played its part on the Saturday with market stalls and a guided tour of the community garden with local gardening experts. Ecofair stalwart Costa Georgiadis's presence was undiminished, despite being restricted to on-line participation.

On the Sunday a panel discussion was held on the Alice Springs Town Council Lawns exploring the future of housing, health and water under Climate change. Ecofair's focus then shifted to the Westside Community Gardens for a composting workshop and wrap up party

ALEC received support from the Commonwealth Government through the National Science Week grant program to run the 2021 ECOfair program of events. ECOfair 2021 was also proudly sponsored by Yeperenye Shopping Centre and the Alice Springs Town Council.

ALEC also acknowledges Olive Pink Botanical Gardens, Alice Springs Landcare, ABC Alice Springs, Alice Springs Baptist Church, Akeyulerre Healing Centre as well as Red Kangaroo books, Geoff Miers' Garden Solutions and Alice Springs Desert Park in kind contributions. ALEC is incredibly grateful also for the many volunteer contributions which are essential to bringing a rewarding but logistically challenging event to fruition.

Ecofair 2021 was proudly supported by:



Thank you to the community

We would like to thank the hundreds of people who supported us in our fight to protect nature and the climate. Whether you volunteered your time, donated or took action in campaigns. Together you helped to power the Singleton Station water licence opposition, rallied for a solar-powered future without dirty fracking and contributed to building a thriving, caring and more sustainable desert community.

ALEC is a membership organisation joining together its **diverse individual members to speak as a strong and trusted voice for the desert country.**

**Be part of the community taking action to
protect our arid lands:**

www.alec.org.au/become_a_member



Major donors

ALEC would like to thank our donors, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for your dedication to protecting nature and our climate.

Desert Defenders

ALEC extends our thanks to all of our Desert Defenders whose monthly donation provides critical funds to keep ALEC standing up strong for the desert country and supporting communities to take action.

Learn more about being a Desert Defender
www.alec.org.au/desert_defenders

Organisations

We'd like to thank our local businesses including DuYu Coffee Roasters, The Bakery, Lhere Artepe, Red Kangaroo Books, Geoff Miers' Garden Solutions, Alice Springs Desert Park for their support this year.



ALEC touchpoint supporters

Thanks to these businesses for hosting ALEC's donation tap points enabling customers to donate \$5 directly to ALEC:

- The Bakery
- The Base Cafe
- Alice Springs Cinema
- Jump Inn



Partnerships and alliances



The Protect Country Alliance is a strategic network of community representatives and organisations forming a united front against fracking in the Northern Territory.



The Lock the Gate Alliance is a national grassroots organisation made up of over 120,000 supporters and more than 450 local groups who are concerned about risky coal mining, coal seam gas and fracking



Central Australian Frack Free Alliance is a grassroots community group with the goal to protect our water, health, community and country by opposing unconventional gas extraction in the NT



Australia's biggest alliance of environment groups, protecting the laws that protect the places we love.



Environment Centre Northern Territory is the peak community sector environmental organisation in the Top End of the NT.



The Boomerang Alliance, made up of 55 of Australia's leading community and environment groups, is driving the behavioural and systemic change required to deliver the social, economic and environmental benefits of a zero-waste society



Community organisation ensuring the Territory's Top End water, rivers, climate and eco-systems are protected for future generations.

Australia's biggest alliance of environment groups, protecting the laws that protect the places we love.

Looking ahead

Adrian Tomlinson
ALEC CEO appointed Sept 2022

Our 2021-2022 Annual Report describes a year of consolidation and holding the line for justice in solidarity with the custodians of these lands. The year ahead is characterised by urgency and scaling up of action, based upon our communities' collective power.

Before looking forward I would like to acknowledge two great contributions. Arid Edge Environmental Services is winding down after many years of demonstrating how to do great environmental works and expanding ALEC's reach. I am heartened that many of the stars of Arid Edge Environment Services plan to stay working in the community. I urge readers to continue to access the skills that these great individuals have to offer.

Also our previous general manager Jade Krudenko has stepped down. Jade was a wonderful advocate for the environment in any setting, bringing bravery and energy to the ALEC leadership, including challenging the unconscionable Singleton Station groundwater licence.

Climate change is here. Following the extreme heat in 2018 and 2019, last year Alice Springs experienced food shortages as parts of the Stuart Highway in South Australia were submerged by floodwater. Remote communities like Ampilatwatja also became isolated for extended periods, with food shortages. It can be assured that these impacts reverberated throughout the environment.

In the year ahead ALEC will act on climate change by strongly campaigning against new sources of emissions from the Beetaloo and holding the line on gas extraction in the Amadeus basin. We will continue to oppose the escalation of clearing of native vegetation and advocate for decent fire management. We will maintain the focus on reducing demand through our continued involvement in Future Grid and the virtual power plant and advocating for real zero carbon emissions.



ALEC will focus is on justice and equity in access to clean energy alternatives and climate adaptation. We will advocate for building resilience for the climate changes that arid land now inevitably face.

The threats to the arid land ecosystems and biodiversity are now existential. Recent research reports that the western and central deserts, and tropical savanna ecosystems are collapsing. Arid lands are in an environmental and biodiversity state of emergency. The causes are numerous, including pastoral activities, spread of invasive weeds like buffel grass and the impacts of introduced feral animals.

In the year ahead ALEC will act to protect ecosystems and biodiversity through targeted campaigns for buffel grass, championing dingoes as a keystone species and good choices on land uses and land management. ALEC will continue to support the Indigenous Desert Alliance.

Another major threat is the unreflective "growth at any cost" subtext in the Territory Economic Recovery plan which underlies Northern Territory government decision making. This is used to justify the continuing public subsidies for unsustainable projects such as fracking in the Beetaloo Basin and expansion of irrigated horticulture. Both may increase the gross product in the short term, but at untold cost

In the year ahead ALEC will advocate for better policy and decision making. We will advocate for strong environmental protections in policy by participating in policy development processes, writing submissions and supporting community action. Our focus is on all tiers of government. The Northern Territory must not be a National environmental laggard. ALEC will continue to work to improve failing laws and regulation.

We know sustainability needs an active community. ALEC is a community organisation. We have ready made examples of the power of community organising with the Central Australia Frack Free Alliance (CAFFA); and the way in which communities and partner organisations have rallied together in 2021-2022 to oppose the Singleton project and buffel grass invasion, respectively. In the year ahead ALEC will continue to support community gardens, Food for Alice and the Harvest Cafe, and hold events like Ecofair, which build and enrich the community. ALEC aims to build its community organising capacity so that the many voices and groups working together are amplified and have access to the resources they need.

The custodians of our lands have always made clear that healthy Country is essential for healthy culture and people. ALEC will be guided by the Traditional Owners on what true caring for Country looks like and continue building relationships with individuals and support Aboriginal led organisations.

The natural environment supports all human activity. In the year ahead ALEC will engage beyond the environment sector to encourage every sector to play its part. From health to art to tourism.

The year ahead may seem daunting, but it is truly exhausting to stand by in this time of environmental crisis. There are also game changing opportunities. For example, the increasing support indigenous rangers is an opportunity to restore sophistication to caring for Country; and investors and grant makers are increasingly funding organisations and solutions which offer hope.

The arid lands community has a long history of standing up when the situation demands. If ever there was a time to stand up and speak out it is now. Every opportunity must be taken now, before the window closes completely.

ALEC stands well placed to play an even bigger part. We have a talented and energetic board matched with great staff and all importantly our supporter base in the arid lands community.

Your support through membership provides us with the critical social licence and funds needed to resource these activities. We also welcome volunteers and ideas. ALEC's supporters are a diverse group with some truly remarkable experience and skills. ALEC is a small team facing a monumental climate and biodiversity crisis, if you want to volunteer, have a skill, idea or resource which you would be willing to share, this year ahead is the time to act. Please, get in touch.





Our Governance

The success of every organisation depends on good leadership and sound governance.

At ALEC, we are fortunate to have a Board who embody our values and believe wholeheartedly in our vision of a healthy future for arid lands and people.

Our Board

ALEC is a not-for-profit incorporated company and is governed by a Board of Directors.

Our Board provides strong governance and ensures ALEC does effective work in an ethical and transparent manner.

We acknowledge the significant, voluntary contributions of the Board and the broad range of expertise, interest and dedication that they bring to ALEC's purpose and strategic direction.



Barb Molanus
Chair



Roxanne Highfold
Deputy Chair



Deborah Mason
Treasurer



Isobel Milnes
Secretary,
Public Officer



Bruce Simmons



**Emma
Buckley Lennox**



David Jagger



Sasha Kiessling



Paul Ah Chee

Treasurer's report

Merit Partners were again appointed as auditors for the financial year 2021/2022; this is their fifth audit report for ALEC members.

ALEC again appointed the Verve Group as bookkeepers for the 2021-2022 financial year. Our Operations Manager, Roz Walden, has been working closely with Verve throughout the year to improve our financial management systems and to bring some of the bookwork back in house. This work will continue into the 2022-2023 financial year, giving the board and CEO timely access to more accurate and comprehensive financial information to inform strategic decision-making.

This year, ALEC also engaged Verve Group to prepare our financial records for audit. The audited financial statements show ALEC's overall operating result to be a net deficit of (\$166k), compared with a (\$14k) deficit the previous year. Total equity has decreased from \$448k in 2020-2021 to \$282k in 2021-2022. Whilst this still has the organisation in a secure position, it puts ALEC facing the toughest financial outlook it has had for quite some time.

One key change worth noting is the decrease in unallocated funding (funding not tied to project outputs). This includes a reduction in donations and the cessation of pandemic support programs (E.g. Jobkeeper). The board and staff have been working with a fundraising expert to analyse trends in our funding and develop a more strategic approach to increase donation and membership income in 2022 – 2023 and beyond.

This financial year, the board also made the difficult but necessary decision to close the doors on the brilliant work of Arid Edge. The pandemic exposed some significant risks its operations posed for ALEC as a not-for-profit organisation. Taking this decision has had a significant impact on finances as income was reduced abruptly without time or ability to scale down operational costs. However, the risks associated with continuing Arid Edge operations, especially given ALEC's inability to recruit a new Arid Edge manager, warranted this tough decision.



The board and management are incredibly grateful to the Arid Edge team as they continue to work tirelessly to complete and deliver outstanding contracts. We anticipate Arid Edge will wind up officially in December 2022 and look forward to hosting a celebration of all that the team achieved over the years.

The covid pandemic really shaped the 2021-2022 financial year for ALEC with pandemic support such as Jobkeeper ending but Omicron was just getting started. In addition to the challenges it posed to Arid Edge, more broadly, the pandemic deeply affected ALEC's ability and confidence in hosting events, getting out and about and engaging with members, which no doubt has decreased our ability to showcase our work and gain financial and membership support.

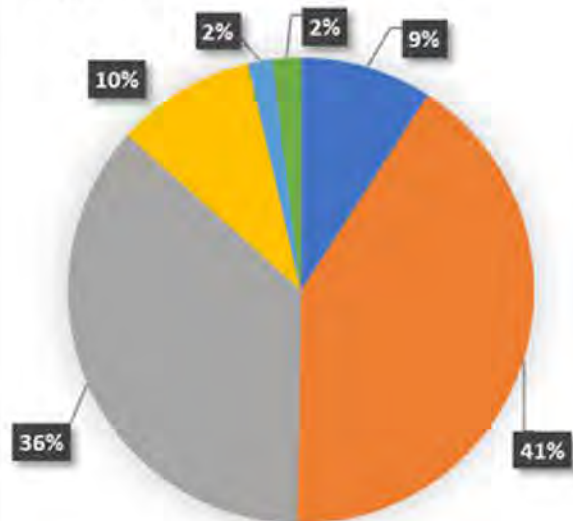
Like most businesses and not for profits across the nation, ALEC is under significant pressure and we continue to be enormously grateful to our members and the Alice Springs community for their philanthropic donations. We'd also like to thank the volunteers who also invest a great deal of time and efforts into the success of ALEC.

The outlook for the financial year 2022/2023 is still challenging for ALEC. The new CEO, with support from the board will implement strategies to boost income via grant applications and a program of fundraising activities to boost donations and to carefully monitor and manage expenditure.

The urgency of effective environmental action needed in the arid lands, and ALEC's role as the peak environmental advocacy organisation in Central Australia, continues to put ALEC in a good position to increase its project grants and donation income in the next year.

Deb Mason | Treasurer

Income

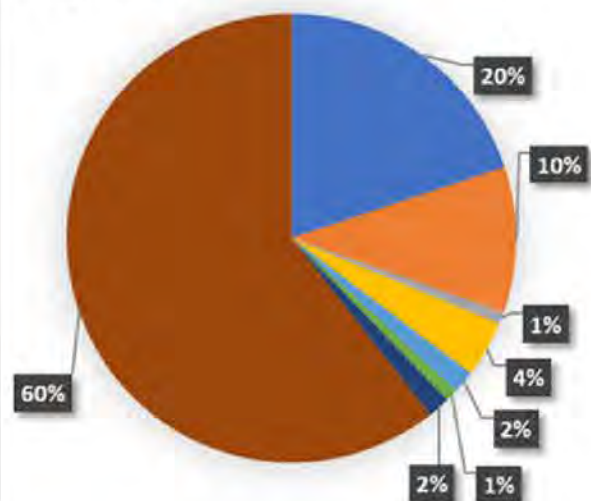


| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| NT Government Grants | \$100,000.00 |
| Project Grants | \$447,691.00 |
| Earned Income | \$396,527.00 |
| Donations Received | \$105,865.00 |
| Membership & Fee | \$18,410.00 |
| Other Revenue | \$21,517.00 |

Total Income

\$1,090,010

Expenditure



| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Cost of Service Delivery | \$249,561.00 |
| Management & Operational cost | \$131,779.00 |
| Campaigns, Events & Promotions | \$10,934.00 |
| Accounting & Audit | \$51,033.00 |
| Depreciation | \$20,397.00 |
| Motor Vehicle | \$11,250.00 |
| Grants Repaid | \$20,140.00 |
| Staff Costs | \$760,941.00 |

Total Expenditure

\$1,256,035

Statement of Changes in Equity

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Balance at 1 July 2021 | \$448,913 | Balance at 1 July 2020 | \$463,422 |
| Net surplus/deficit during the year | -\$166,026 | Net surplus/deficit during the year | -\$14,509 |
| Balance at 30 June 2022 | \$282,888 | Balance at 30 June 2021 | \$448,913 |



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**Arid
Lands
Environment
Centre**