



Environment and Conservation Organisations of NZ Inc

Annual Report August 2013- July 2014

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**ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS OF NEW ZEALAND INC
2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

1.0 Introduction

It is with pleasure that we present the annual report for the period November 2013 to August 2014, prepared by the members of the ECO Executive with the help of ECO's new and much appreciated Executive Officer, Michael Pringle.

The 2013 ECO AGM gave the Executive Committee the priorities of:

A External Priorities

Collaborate, co-ordinate and catalyse:

1. Antarctica and Southern Ocean
2. Coal, oil and gas mining
3. Marine and fisheries management
4. Climate change
5. Open society, participation, due process and Aarhus Convention
6. Election issues – Vote for the Environment - political party positions
7. Exotic Forestry
8. Environmental Management including RMA and EEZ legislation

B. Internal Priorities

1. Developing plan over the next year to increase ECOs funding base;
2. Strategic assessment of ECO including agreed tasks from the Conference Discussion (regional wananga; ECO Structure; Treaty Partnership and Wai262; Electronic Forum; and Review Office Arrangements)
3. Strengthen use of internal communications
4. Strengthen the network functions of the umbrella
5. Engaging with Maori AND Wai262
6. Capacity building

2.0 External Priorities, Policy and Working Groups:

Working with these directions in successive Exec meetings and correspondence, an ECO Exec planning Retreat at the end of March 2013 at Plimmerton, the ECO Executive arrived at the following working groups, with all of the external priorities outlined above folded into working groups, as outlined below.

The Executive discussed the AGM priorities and the continuing issues that ECO works on, and the need to draw in more people from the membership and the wider community so that less of the load of the working group work lands on the Executive Committee.

We agreed on seven External Working Groups and four that are “internal” but some, like the Engagement with Maori and Wai26 group, actually straddle both internal and external matters.

ECO Policies

Following the discussions of the 2013 AGM and a day long Policy Workshop in February 2014, ECO also developed a slate of policies for promotion. These both inform and draw on the work of the working groups and remain a work in progress and are presented again to the 2014 Conference. Jenny Baker has worked through several decades of ECO policy and Cath Wallace and Barry Weeber and others – subject to the will of the AGM, have a programme for further collating and integrating this work with the current policy positions.

External Working Groups:

We circulated for comment from the membership and friends the intended nature and scope of the working groups and we are very grateful to those who responded. The exec was also carrying the responsibility for the on-going work, so the reconstitution of the working groups is a work in progress. We list below the working groups, and then the proposed scope of each, but with the caveat that the scope allows but does not necessarily indicate that extensive work will be done on each element. Working group leaders are crafting or in some cases have crafted their proposed activity plan, but the pressure of work has meant that some are essentially still working on their previous basis and new people are still being recruited and work plans developed. We are very grateful to those who offered comments and suggested members for the working groups. We are still open to hearing more. Cath Wallace is the vice-chair policy, and is the contact point for working groups.

The External Working Groups are:

Working Group 1: Improved environmental management and laws.

Working Group 2 Title: Conservation, Biosecurity and Biodiversity

Working Group 3: Marine and Fisheries

Working Group 4: International, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

Working Group 5: Climate Working Group

Working Group 6: Open Government and Participative Society

Working Group 7: Policy and Promotion of our vision for NZ and the wider environment.

2.1 Working Group 1: Improved environmental management and laws.**Scope/Terms of Reference:**

- 1) Environmental law and policy; environmental governance and management arrangements and practice;
- 2) RMA, Local government, [crosscuts with EEZ& Continental Shelf Act]
- 3) Land use and land use impacts including agriculture and forestry, catchment management;
- 4) Roles of the agencies, institutional arrangements, EPA, Parliamentary Commissioner, MfE, local government agencies, tangata whenua roles and responsibilities, interaction with the public and iwi.

- 5) State of the Environment Reporting and indicators; supplements to GDP for national and regional reporting.
- 6) Other related legislation and land use management.
- 7) Water, dams and irrigation, water pollution, water flows [but ECO not taking a major lead in this area].

Specialist sub-working Groups:

Exotic Forestry including Forest Stewardship Council, NZ Forests Accord, Plantation standards.

Mining and related minerals activity including coal, lignite, gas, oil, minerals, Crown Minerals Act & minerals Programmes; Seabed minerals activity – also in the marine working group.

This working group interacts particularly with the climate change, marine and fisheries, and conservation, biodiversity and biosecurity working groups

Activity Report:

Reflecting the following priorities from the AGM of 2013:

2. Coal, oil and gas mining
7. Exotic Forestry; 8. Environmental Management including RMA and EEZ legislation,

ECO continued to engage with the Crown Minerals Act and minerals programmes and we submitted on the Trans Tasman Resources (TTR) iron sands seabed mining application to the EPA, and the Chatham Rise Rock Phosphate application which has yet to be heard. We have lent our voices to the debate on oil and gas exploration and extraction, and the implementation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act changes which is highly problematic for submitters, albeit, the TTR case has so far been successful.

We continue to engage with groups dealing with minerals activities that impact the environment and with the government for its disappointing law changes and extraordinary Minerals Programme ministerial statement.

We have continued to engage – where there were opportunities – with the discussion on the Resource Management Act, particularly but not only, the proposal by government to remove or modify crucial Principles from Section 7, and to insert other principles that undermine the environmental intent of the RMA. The Minister for the Environment found time to brief those who paid \$10,000 to attend meetings of the Cabinet Club, but was “too busy” to meet ECO to discuss RMA-related matters.

The Ruataniwha dam hearing process and the withdrawal of DoC submissions laid bare for us the difficulties faced by the local submitters and the pressure being put to bear on DoC to curtail its voice when economic interests are powerful.

On Exotic forestry, Bill Gilbertson is running the subgroup on this, and has devoted much time to reviving the Environment Chamber of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), to get agreement of the Environment chamber for the admission of Nga Uri o te Ngahere Trust, and to get the process for engagement with the other chambers on the Standards Development Group sorted out. This is to implement the new FSC international Standard compliant NZ standards. He sought fundsek funds for the work of the Standards Development Group environmental chamber representatives.

ECO applied without success elsewhere for a grant for ECO to develop guides and other resources to help guide local communities to engage with forestry activities under the FSC. We have not had the resources to engage in any of the specific forestry company certification audits.

ECO also input into the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Primary Industry national forestry standards template discussions but we have heard nothing for some months now.

Jenny Baker completed the case study discussion paper on the Ngunguru forestry case and that is now on ECO's website. Not all contributions to this case study actually appeared, so what we have is a partial assessment of the Hancocks forestry practice with the FSC Principles and Criteria, which regrettably, does not always measure up to these.

2.2. Working Group 2 Title: Conservation, Biosecurity and Biodiversity.

Scope/Terms of Reference:

- 1) Biodiversity and Biosecurity issues – in association with marine, climate and other relevant groups.
- 2) Engagement with the Department of Conservation (DOC), the NZ Conservation Authority and Boards and conservation or biosecurity relevant agencies including MPI and Biosecurity NZ. Matters re local government and central government funding
- 3) Biodiversity conservation and associated plans and tools eg NZ Biodiversity Strategy or the Biodiversity National Policy Statement or whatever emerges in the national template.
- 4) Protected areas, protected species and ecosystems.
- 5) Pest plants and weeds, diseases, control of threats, eg. pest control.
- 6) Some aspects of land and water management and impacts.
- 7) Community conservation and restoration initiatives or collaborations. Co-management and co-governance, partnerships for conservation.
- 8) Heritage, including city and urban heritage.
- 9) Aspects of Regional / Unitary authority work
- 10) Some aspects of international biodiversity, conservation and biosecurity management and governance.
- 11) Tangata whenua roles in governance and management, initiatives and partnerships.
- 12) New organisms, alien species, GM, nanotechnology, etc.

Activity Report:

To the extent our timetables allowed, ECO has attended consultations with DoC, but has been unable to engage to the extent we would like with the new arrangements that DoC is putting in

place regarding partnerships and its greater emphasis on working with business and recreational and conservation groups, though we have done what we can.

We have applauded the DoC plan to tackle the mast year pest animal explosion, and have participated in efforts to understand and to spread community awareness of Kauri die-back.

ECO made submissions on the Review of the Conservation Boards and on some of the Conservation Management Plans and other conservation planning documents.

ECO continues to be an “outer group” member of the Land and Water Forum, LAWF, and we were unimpressed by the government’s water standards. ECO is not able to devote a lot of resources to this vital matter, but we salute the work of Dr Mike Joy and Fish and Game in pressing for better water quality standards and protection of aquatic species and ecosystems.

We have had a vigorous unresolved internal debate about how we should proceed on the question of protected species cultural harvest and how to engage more effectively with Maori and to gain and lend support to Maori conservation efforts, and to work within co-governance and partnerships and the Treaty of Waitangi.

We have had some engagement with the kiwis for kiwis ecosystem and kiwi protection work-shops, and would welcome more input from groups with conservation practice roles.

Work for genuinely protected areas at sea – including in the EEZ and on the high seas and areas beyond national jurisdiction – has continued, but in relation to New Zealand we still have not seen a new or revised Marine Reserves Bill appear, conservation is still not a grounds for marine reserves, and we still await genuine protected areas in the EEZ. ECO has worked with the High Seas Alliance and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and IUCN and is grateful for their work, especially that of Duncan Currie in the international forums.

Also discussed in the context of Working Group One, we have engaged on the government’s attempts to demote conservation and underfund conservation, and to place decision making on minerals activity in conservation areas partly in the hands of the Resources Minister and the designation of conservation status of land into the hands of the Cabinet rather than the Minister of Conservation.

2.3 Marine and Fisheries

Scope/Terms of Reference:

- 1) Inside Territorial Sea, in EEZ, on Extended Continental Shelf, and in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).
- 2) Marine management, marine spatial planning and protection;
- 3) Marine ecosystem-based management, species protection and management of human impacts; Oceans Policy.
- 4) Fisheries management, Quota Management System, methods to reduce impacts of fishing.
- 5) Seabed minerals activity.

This group needs to intersect with the ECO International and Antarctic and Southern Ocean Working Group, the Environmental management and law group, and with the wider ENGO marine and fisheries groups, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, and the High Seas Alliance.

Activity Report:

Barry Weeber has carried the bulk of the work on ECO's input to the New Zealand quota system and other fisheries management and fisheries science working groups, which are legion and include deep water, middle-depths, inshore and shell fisheries; the Aquatic Environment working group, the Antarctic working group of MPI, and more. He is also part of the Hauraki Gulf spatial planning group working group on Fish Stocks (with Clive Monds) and the Aquaculture.

As indicated above, ECO has been part of the international effort to develop governance and protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), which is led by Duncan Currie for the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition.

ECO continues to follow a number of international fisheries agreements. We have been represented at the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Organisation meetings (SPRFMO), and we have welcomed the activities of member bodies such as Greenpeace and others which are following others agreements and negotiations, such as the South Pacific Fisheries Forum, the West and Central Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation and others.

2.4 Working Group 4: International, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

Scope/Terms of Reference:

- 1) International bodies and agreements with implications for conservation and the environment, including the Convention on Biodiversity, pollution and dumping agreements, and other specifically environmental or conservation agreements, but also including trade and economic agreements or protocols where these have implications for the environment.
- 2) International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) matters (in association with relevant other working parties). IUCN Governance, Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP).
- 3) Governance and management of human impacts in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean including Antarctic Treaty System matters, invasive species, protected areas, species protection, marine management (in association with the Marine and Oceans group), IUU fishing.
- 4) Key issue is marine protection in the Southern Ocean and Ross Sea and fisheries management.
- 5) Earthlaw and related issues.
- 6) Sustainability and Rio+20 – Diana and Betsan.
- 7) Marine and high seas, UNICOPOLOS, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, Seabed mining, other international marine.

Activity Report:

ECO continues to press for the implementation of a range of international agreements and when timetables permit, attends briefings and de-briefings related to a range of international agreements.

Catherine Iorns-Magallanes organised, in her professional capacity, the Earthlaw Conference in Wellington in February 2014, and ECO had a significant presence at that conference.

IUCN's work covers a wide range of matters and ECO has been involved as a member of IUCN in both governance issues (Cath Wallace) and policy and conservation practice issues. Individual members of the ECO Executive hold office or membership in IUCN expert commissions, including Diana Shand who chairs a subcommittee of the Commission on Environmental Economics and Social Policy (CEESP), Catherine Iorns-Magallanes who is on the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL), Cath Wallace, Barry Weeber, Diana Shand and others who are part both of CEESP and of the World Commission on Protected Areas and other matters. ECO continues to participate in the New Zealand IUCN Committee and the work of that Committee.

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean work continues, and the push for a network of marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean proceeds. Barry Weeber is a board member of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, Cath Wallace is a member of the ASOC Council. Both continued with a range of engagements on Antarctic matters and Barry Weeber will attend the SCAR open research meeting in Auckland immediately after the ECO conference.

ECO has also engaged with the International Maritime Organisation processes on the Polar Code and measures to ensure fishing vessels are covered by international environmental and safety rules.

Betsan, Diana and Catherine Iorns-Magallanes have worked both together and separately on environmental justice and other matters in the Pacific, at large internationally and in other spheres to promote the sustainability agenda and just outcomes.

2.5 Working Group 5: Climate Working Group**Scope/Terms of Reference:**

- 1) Climate change, energy, transport, agriculture and forestry as they relate to global change.
- 2) Work for the decarbonisation of New Zealand – future pathways to a climate-responsible development track, press for NZ to develop a national low carbon development plan.
- 3) ECO recognises several other organisations are working in this area, we agree to complement that work.
- 4) Work with other organisations including those in the Climate Defence Network, ECO members and contacts, concerned Tangata Whenua organisations and wider coalitions on:
 - i) Promotion of policies and attitudes to reduce carbon emissions and to foster carbon sinks and reservoirs.
 - ii) Decarbonisation of New Zealand – future pathways to a climate- responsible development track.

- iii) Work on solutions and submissions on climate change, energy and related land use including agriculture, forestry, biodiversity and soils.
- iv) Communicating climate and energy policy and promoting behaviour change.
- v) Promotion of protection of native biodiversity and social justice in the pursuit of climate policies.
- vi) Ocean acidification and a precautionary approach to geoengineering.
- vii) Critiquing NZ government reporting to the UN etc;

Activity Report

ECO submitted on and met with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change team that visited New Zealand to review New Zealand's 6th National Communication on greenhouse gas emissions control and New Zealand's First Biennial Report. The failure of New Zealand to cut emissions, to implement effective measures or to work cooperatively internationally for the substantial cutbacks in emissions is a major disappointment.

ECO attended Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) working group reports and we await the further reports that are still to come. The unequivocal human impacts on climate and the urgent need to reduce emissions is of vital concern. We have joined in the thinking and requests for re-gearing the economy and consumption and production to decarbonise the economy. This time last year we were still hoping coal mining would be turned down on the Deniston Plateau. Instead it was permitted. The demise of lignite mining and slowdown of coal mining has been a blessing as markets turned down sharply for coal. Policy however remains fixated on extractivist growth with little regard for the climate.

The rise of Generation Zero and 350.org over the last few years has been an important development in the climate change domain, and one we welcome. We work with these and a range of groups including Greenpeace and others, including Coal Action and groups focused particularly on the mining of oil and gas.

In February, at the Earthlaw Conference, ECO coordinated a special appeal to assist the Kiribati family and their lawyer who took a case for them in their appeal for refugee status from the effects of climate change. This legal action was ultimately unsuccessful, but we felt it was important that others assist them and stand beside them in their quest for climate change impacts in the Pacific to be recognized.

2.6 Working Group 6: Open Government and Participative Society

Scope/Terms of Reference:

These are now proposed as:

Promotion and defence of:

1. Democratic principles and processes,
2. Indigenous Rights within Aotearoa with respect to te taio
3. Freedom of organisation and expression,
4. Public participation and engagement,

5. Privacy and freedom from undue intrusion of the surveillance of the State and other agencies or corporations for individuals and civil society, and
6. Good governance, especially as these relate to environmental responsibility and environmental rights in New Zealand/Aotearoa and overseas.

Amongst the specific issues of interest are:

7. Timely disclosure of information to the public.
8. Containment of executive power.
9. Advocacy for institutions that help maintain an open society, and for their funding – e.g. Ombudsman’s Office, Official Information Act, the Waitangi Tribunal.
10. Advocacy for due process in Parliament and elsewhere.
11. Constitutional issues and constitutional reform.
12. International dimensions of these issues including Aarhus Convention, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), alternatives to GNP/GDP (with Working Groups 4 or 1)

Proposed Terms of reference

1. To communicate and educate regarding the importance of a healthy democracy for good environmental governance and management.
2. To act as a watchdog on the health of our democracy as related to the governance and management of the environment - including access to environmental information, participation in environmental decision making, transparency of environmental decision-making, and appropriate review procedures for government decisions regarding the environment, and the protection of indigenous rights and kaitiakitanga functions.
3. To document ‘democratic deficit’ in relation to the governance and management of the environment.
4. To promote goals and governance that enhance the health of our democracy.
5. To link with organisations, tangata whenua and others interested in open democracy within NZ/Aotearoa.

N.B. as with many groups, the work of this Working Group potentially intersects with the work of all the other Working Groups. Its particular role is to focus on meta/systemic/generic issues or trends rather than the specific issues relating to participation, information, process etc that are the concern of the other Working Groups.

Activity Report

ECO has worked with a range of civil society organisations to promote the restoration of democratic processes that have been eroded, the openness of society and of government, while resisting the surveillance society and other activities that “chill” freedom of expression and organisation.

We participated in several workshops on this, most recently the Wellington workshop conference *Democracy, Ethics and the Public Good*, organised by Jan Rivers and others, hosted at St Andrews on the Terrace.

Prior to the last ECO annual conference ECO made extensive submissions on the GCSB and related Bills. We have been dismayed by the recent revelations that the SIS appears to have been used as a partisan tool for political purposes, as revealed by Nicky Hager's book, *Dirty Politics*.

We are also concerned that the attack politics reported there will also chill citizen participation, freedom of speech, and political participation, including voting. ECO supports "get out the vote" campaigns, whichever party may be the recipient of votes so mobilised.

ECO is developing policy in the remit of this working group to extend our concerns about good governance to due process for tangata whenua as well as broader community participation.

2.7 Working Group 7: Policy and Promotion of our vision for NZ and the wider environment.

Scope/Terms of Reference:

- 1) Development, coordination and consolidation of ECO Policy;
- 2) Non-partisan policy advocacy. Non-partisan campaign to promote our policies, and our vision for New Zealand.
- 3) Promotion of ECO's goals and objectives, networking, democracy, due process, public participation and policies from other working groups.
- 4) Working with the other environmentally inclined policy, practice and messaging groups.
- 5) A messaging campaign based on NZ values as these relate to the environment and our sense of fair play, due process, de-normalisation of environmental harms and fossil fuels.
- 6) Getting to grips with evidence on how to understand and shift attitudes, behaviour.

Activity Report

ECO has worked hard in this area, in combination with the groups that share our interests in understanding New Zealanders' values, how people respond to different pressures and messages.

ECO hosted an invitation only policy workshop in February 2014 as part of the Earthlaw conference to develop our thinking (with members and experts) for our policy and legal agenda. That meeting was offered the ECO policy paper which had been put in draft to the ECO 2013 annual conference and which drew on that conference's deliberations. The policy paper was further developed and amended in the light of the discussions in February, and at the EXEC retreat in March 2014. Jenny Baker has collated a good many of ECO's policy decisions going back over the decades, and we plan to review, revise and revamp these policies over the forthcoming years.

Working in a coalition with other groups and consultants, ECO has co-funded consultants to examine the values that New Zealanders hold, the relationship of values to attitudes and behaviour significant to environmental problems and preferences for actions and policies.

We have informed ourselves somewhat more as to what motivates – and demotivates - environmentally significant behaviour, including reducing adverse impacts, promotion of positive and effective messaging, and motivating people to act in environmentally positive ways, such as supporting conservation and energy re-gearing. We have sought out experts and research in these areas. Particular thanks to the experts and researchers involved.

We await with interest the outcome of the court case over the Electoral Act which the Electoral Commission's ruling that non-partisan issue based campaigning has triggered.

Work in this area continues.

3 Internal Priorities

3.1 Working Group 8: Engagement with Maori & Wai 262

Activity Report

There has been significant activity on the Treaty of Waitangi in the past year, with proposals for changes to the Constitution and corresponding draft guidelines and protocols for ECO engaging with tangata whenua/Māori.

The proposed changes to the Constitution are to achieve a reconciliation between the current environmental goals of ECO and the stated subordination of the Treaty to these goals. A proper understanding of the Treaty and of tangata whenua/Māori environmental interests, including the widely recognized concept of kaitiakitanga, mean that the wellbeing and sustainable management of environment and ecosystems for the purpose of achieving ecological integrity is a shared priority.

The proposed change to the Constitution takes this approach, upholding environmental priorities with provision for tangata whenua/Māori and non-Māori member contributions to determining ECO positions and policy. Proposals for constitutional changes have been submitted for attention at the 2014 AGM.

At the 2013 AGM, the Engagement with Maori and Wai 262 working group agreed to give further impetus to the Treaty within ECO. The Constitutional proposals and the draft Protocols were developed by Pakeha and Māori members of the Working Group. These two documents have been circulated amongst the Executive and members for comment. Environmental Futures has also supplied proposed changes to the constitution. Betsan Martin, co-chair of ECO since March and chair of this working group has done much work, assisted by Garry Watson and others.

3.2 Developing a plan over the next year to increase ECOs funding base;

It was envisaged this plan would go beyond the current annual approach involving two annual appeals, a street appeal in Wellington and applications for grants. While revising this funding approach remains of prime importance, Exec has first faced recruitment of a new Executive Officer, completed late May, and restoring office operations. As a consequence this plan has been delayed although a new volunteer assisting in the financial committee gives us much hope there will be a substantial start to this very soon. In the meantime grant applications have been made for individual projects, unfortunately without success. The annual Street appeal produced reduced results compared with previous years despite Elizabeth Lee's excellent organisation.

3.3 Strategic assessment of ECO including agreed tasks from the Conference

Six members of ECO members and/or the Executive, Steffan, Elise, Graham, Garry, Catherine, and Diana, expressed interest working with Exec in promoting regional wananga or gatherings. The success of the 2013 Arthur's Pass Summer Gathering was seen as worth repeating. Graham and Lyn Pearson and Catherine Chueng have discussed the possibilities in the Wanganui-Taranaki area with Diana and it is intended work on this should continue. Further work is intended to consider how to support seed funding for such gatherings, and establish protocols that will give some clarity as to how the Exec and the regional protagonists can work together for mutual benefit.

3.4 Strengthen use of internal communications

Elise and Barry's work to improve the functioning of the Website Members' Electronic Forum has been thwarted by the difficulty of dealing with spamming. Furthermore, it was not clear that this approach was genuinely attractive and useful for Members. Discussions seldom eventuated as hoped, although if the system had over some the spamming problem it could have been promoted much more. Other options were advised.

Work on improving communication within the Exec and for Members has resulted in the introduction of *Loomio* as a tool. This is decision-making software to assist groups with collaborative decision-making processes. While Exec is still experimenting with this, most recently and with some success in the development of the Open Government Participative Society Working Group Terms of Reference, it seems there is potential to use this tool for consultation with Members, for example on submissions. Another communication innovation has been the development of a fortnightly ECO-Alert which has brought brief alerts and items of interest to Members or localised groups of Members through the electronic news brief – *Tieke*.

3.5 Strengthen the network functions of the umbrella & Membership Liaison

Since the last ECO AGM, Exec has reviewed and revamped its membership liaison and networking. Diana Shand has worked tirelessly to contact member groups and much work has been done on our databases.

Since the Planning Weekend at the end of March 2014, the responsibility of networking per se has been assigned as a Vice-Chair portfolio responsibility. Diana Shand has undertaken this work. She proposes this continues as a priority with communication, policy consultation and guidance and regional gatherings being key focii for the coming year.

The May appointment Michael Pringle, our new Executive Officer, who has familiarity with many of the new software and other tools, has also powered this revamp. He has initiated the email newsletter *Tieke* to members and friends, discussed above, and helped us to find new tools for working together. We look forward to member bodies and Friends joining us in our Working Group and other work. The ECO Executive seeks feedback on measures to improve our liaison with members and Friends and potential members and Friends.

ECOLink (both in hard and electronic copy and electronic Eco-Alerts, *Tieke*, will be regular and with increased effort to reflect Members' interests and input.

3.6 Capacity building and ECO Structure

This has been a crucial concern in the last eight months. Replacing the Executive Officer has been of the highest priority and the decision has been made to reduce the hours and use the budget to pay an improved hourly rate, which also meets the current Living Wage levels. It was seen this approach also allowed flexibility which might attract someone with higher qualifications. This approach attracted high quality applicants and a highly successful conclusion in which ECO has welcomed Michael Pringle to our midst. Already his professional approach and expertise has brought major improvements to our systems.

We recognise further work needs to be done in reviewing our Office set-up with its extraordinary resource library of documents. Unfortunately few people today use the Resource Centre as it was once used, as electronic documentation and databases have made it almost redundant. How to retain this perhaps unique resource of environment/conservation history needs consideration. And also to be considered is the desirability of moving to a more congenial space in an NGO hub. Cost and moving issues have to be weighed.

Capacity building has also extended to consideration of skills in Exec itself and a gap-analysis of the skills and capacity within the Committee. At the Planning weekend the workload was spread by means of a major restructure of responsibilities, following a year's work consulting and proposing on this. The restructure comprised defining and assigning Communications, Policy and Networking responsibilities and gearing the organisation to bring in new skills and involve members through the Working Groups. The Working Groups themselves were strengthened by ensuring improved focus and commitment by means of requiring Terms of Reference and a Plan of Action to be produced by the Chair. Working Groups can be drawn from empathetic experts even outside Membership or Friends of ECO. The working of Working Groups are the responsibility of the Exec Committee and regular reporting required (under the Policy Portfolio).

3.7 Communications

ECO has an expanding presence online. Barry Weeber has kept ECO visible, interesting, informative and civil online with regular pertinent posts on ECO's facebook site, and commentary and links to new scientific, policy reports, information and other relevant material. ECO now has 1149 followers on Twitter and 973 likers on Facebook.

ECO main website has had some changes in the last year but further development has been limited due to lack of funds.

ECO marine site SeaNet is offline after problems with hosting by Wellington Community Net. It is the intention to bring the site back online in the coming months, but we will need funds to up-date it to reflect the many changes to marine law consequential on the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act, the work of the EPA, and other changes.

ECOLink was delayed this year because of overload from ECO's other work, and the press of revamping ECO's work on so many fronts. We apologise for that, but hope the July 2014 edition was informative and enjoyed.

Tieke is the new ECO fortnightly email newsletter to ECO members and Friends. We are very grateful to Michael Pringle for this timely information and communication with members.

4.0 Activities: Ongoing liaison

4.1 Meetings with government agencies

ECO has met with a range of Government agencies over the last year including:

- Ministry of Primary Industry – as part of the shark and seabird National Plan of Action, and the Environmental Group; and the Forestry National standards template.
- Department of Conservation in the ENGO liaison process and conservation meetings.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – on Antarctica, TPP processes, IWC, and South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO)s.

4.2 Participation in external Working Groups

ECO was a member of:

- The plenary group of the Land and Water Forum
- Various Fisheries Working Groups and plenaries
- The second round of Proposed National Environmental Standards on Plantation Forests working groups.
- Sub-Antarctic Marine Protected Areas Working Group.
- National Plan of Action on Seabirds Implementation Group
- National Plan of Action on Sharks Working Group
- NZ Rio+20 NGO Platform.
- Union and civil society - Environment liaison meetings
- A Community – University liaison forum supporting an application for a United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise in the Waikato
- Thar Working Group

4.3 Non-governmental and international organisations

ECO is a member of the following:

International

- The Antarctic and Southern Oceans Coalition (ASOC)
- The Antarctic Oceans Alliance
- The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC)
- High Seas Alliance

New Zealand

- New Zealand Committee of IUCN-NZ
- Association of Non-government Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA)
- Climate Defence Network (CDN)
- Coal Action Network Aotearoa (CANA)
- Wild Rivers Coalition
- The 2precious2mine coalition
- The Forest Stewardship Council New Zealand Environment Chamber
- The NZ Forest Accord.
- An alliance of groups working on marine issues.
- An alliance of groups working on forestry issues.
- NZ Shark Alliance

As well as these, ECO maintains relations with a range of other New Zealand and international organisations on many domestic and international environmental and conservation and public

policy issues. We also field and respond if we can to numerous requests for assistance, information and networking from school students, tertiary students, those seeking internships, and members of the public and media, as well as officials who want guidance on which ENGOs are interested in different topics.

4.4 Meetings with Ministers and MPs and other elected representatives and Submissions to Parliament, to government agencies and consent and EPA hearings:

ECO has met with a range of MPs from across the political spectrum in the last year.

ECO submitted to government agencies, Ministers, Select Committees on a range of different matters and legislation.

4.5 Fellow NGOs, the public, academics, communities

ECO is in near constant contact with like-minded non-government organisations on virtually every issue we work on. This is for the most part, mutually supportive and helpful.

It is common for ECO to receive inquiries of many kinds from the public, from interested individuals and from school and tertiary students, academics and from media and film makers. We respond as we can and do our best to help with these inquiries, to point people in the right direction, provide information and contacts for them or to provide clarity as to which agencies or processes they might engage with.

Helping communities facing problems, often attacks on their environment that other groups may have faced, is one of our areas of work. We do not have legal and financial resources to offer but we are committed to helping to the extent our resources permit.

5.0 Activities: Outreach

5.1 Publications

The quarterly newsletter *ECOLink* was published in November 2013 and in July 2014. There was a long delay in *ECOLink* publication in part due to the long period without an Executive Officer and the overload on Executive members. ECO hopes to publish at least two additional *ECOLinks* before the end of the year and catch up with producing four in each year.

5.2 SeaNet

The SeaNet website is in need of updating to reflect the legislative changes since it was developed. The website has been affected by problems with hosting of the Wellington Community Net and is consequently off-line. ECO intends to get SeaNet back up and updated as soon as resources allow.

5.3 The ECO Website update

As reported above, ECO has an expanding presence online. ECO main website has had some changes in the last year but further development has been limited due to lack of funds.

ECO now has 1149 followers on Twitter and 973 likers on Facebook.

5.4 Media and public commentary

ECO produced several media releases in the last year and is often contacted either for direct media comment or for guidance as to whom media should contact. We have interacted with both domestic and international media in this way.

ECO has also advised several film makers about material they are working with.

ECO has done less media work this year, partly because of the overload of Exec members and the large amount of internal discussions and reorganisation, and partly because of the unavailability at times of spokespeople due to geographical locations.

5.5 Projects - Communications Hub, Kete, website, GIS training

The ECO database and GIS training modules have been produced and are now live on the website, thanks to the work of Elise Smith. ECO would have liked to have organized a number of workshops/hui around the country to inform and assist members, friends and colleagues in the use of GIS for projects. To date we have not received funding to move this project on further. The Exec would like to thank Elise Smith for her work on this project and bringing the online material to fruition.

5.6 Submissions*

ECO made the following submissions over the year July 2013 – August 2014 including but not limited to:

The Health and Safety Reform Bill, 9 May 2014

Environmental Reporting Bill April 2014

Kaikōura (Te Tai-o-Marokura) Marine Management Bill 17 April 2014

Trans-Tasman Resources South Taranaki Bight Offshore Iron Sand Project Marine Consent Application, 17 December 2013

The Chatham Rise Rock Phosphate sea bed mining application to the EPA.

Review of the Conservation Boards, to the Minister for Conservation.

Numerous fisheries and sharks related matters to the Ministry of Primary Industry.

*[Note that this list is incomplete – apologies, we will complete it later].

5.7 Summer Gathering

The late AGM in 2013, delayed due to Wellington earthquakes, meant that there was no opportunity to organise a Summer Gathering earlier in the year. This may be possible in future years and ECO would welcome offers from members to host such a gathering.

6.0 Administration and Governance

6.1 ECO Executive Committee

The members of the Executive Committee during 2013/14 included:

Bruce Anderson (to take over as Treasurer, coopted to the Exec in July 2014)
 Tony Dean (ATLA, Wellington; Treasurer)
 Zoe Heine, Wellington (Admin coordinator from March 2014, Wellington)
 Catherine Iorns Magallanes, Wellington
 Chris Livesey (coopted to the Exec in June 2014, Wairarapa and Wellington)
 Betsan Martin (ECO Co-chair from March 2014 (RESPONSE, Wellington))
 Fred Murray (Friends of Lewis Pass and Hurunui Catchment, Christchurch)
 Diana Shand (*ECO Vice-chair*, Christchurch and Wellington)
 Elise Smith (Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society, Taranaki, resigned July 2014)
 Gary Watson (Nga Uri o te Ngahere Trust, Torere, East Coast)
 Cath Wallace (*ECO Co-chair to March 2014 /ECO vice chair from March 2014*) Whenuakite, Coromandel Peninsula and Wellington, Environmental Futures))
 Barry Weeber (*ECO Co-chair*, Wellington & Tairua, Environmental Futures)
 Rick Zwaan, (Organisation Secretary, Gecko, Wellington)

We regret that Elise Smith resigned from the Executive Committee due to over commitment in July 2014, and we wish her and her various organisations well for the future.

6.2 ECO Volunteers

Many thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their time and expertise to help ECO over the past year:

- Elise Smith for her work on the ECO website
- Betty Weeber, for helping with our newsletter mail-out
- Michelle Vetal, for assisting with administration tasks
- Elizabeth Lee for organising the Wellington Street Appeal and editing ECOLink
- Treasurer Tony Dean for expert advice on the accounts and Bruce Anderson's further insights and recommendations.
- Jenny Baker for her excellent work helping with policy and the huge task of completing the Ngunguru Report.
- Zoe Heine for her coordination of ECO's administrative committee and much other work.
- The various Wellington Friends and others who volunteered during the Street Appeal
- Quentin Davies, ECO's honorary solicitor, who, as ever, gave us invaluable support.
- Jim Baltaxe for IT support.
- All those who contributed to submission writing, particularly Barry Weeber, Cath Wallace, Diana Shand, Betsan Martin, Fred Murray, Zoe Heine.
- The volunteers who produce ECOLink, including Barry Weeber, Elizabeth Lee, Betty Weeber and a range of other volunteers.
- All those who attended meetings in and out of Wellington with officials, Ministers and MPs, industry reps and fellow non-government organisations.
- Nate who has helped in many ways on many tasks.
- The entire Executive Committee, most of whom have worked long and hard.

6.3 ECO Administration

ECO farewelled Debby Rosin from the Executive Officer position at the 2013 Annual conference and she left Wellington and ECO for a new life on some land near Palmerston North in December 2014. She has helped out intermittently with knowledge of ECO's systems as the interim Executive Officer grappled with the backload in the office.

In March 2014 Alison Davis joined us as interim Executive Officer, and she rapidly restored order after the gap, helping ECO on many fronts, including her ecological specialist knowledge and her expert administration.

Michael Pringle was appointed in late May from a strong field of applicants, to the permanent position of Executive Officer. He was inducted into the ECO position by Alison, and has proved to be both resourceful and extremely well organised, with his experience in communications and working tools vastly helpful.

Zoe Heine in March 2014 took on the task of managing ECO's administrative committee and related matters and has streamlined our meetings and other aspects of our work.

Since Michael Pringle started we have installed a new online database, CiviCrm, which maintains the records of Friends and Members as well as those of other environmental organisations around New Zealand. We have a new accounts system, Xero, and we have started using an online discussion tool, Loomio, for internal and working group discussions. We are looking at the future of the resource centre and what we can do with the library and archives.

7.0 ECO Members and Friends

7.1 ECO Membership

As usual ECO's membership ebbed and flowed with some organisations completing their mission or simply choosing to move on, and others joining, some new, some old. The recession has made it difficult for most organisations and we have noticed a net decline of membership. ECO now has the following member organisations, with at least one membership application pending.

Appropriate Technology for Living Association

Auckland Civic Trust

Bay of Islands Coastal Watchdog

Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc.

Baywatch Hawkes Bay Environment Group

Buller Conservation Group

Clean Stream Waiheke

Climate Justice Taranaki

Coal Action Network Aotearoa

Conscious Consumers

Coromandel Watchdog of Hauraki

Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society

EcoMatters Environment Trust
Engineers for Social Responsibility
Environmental Futures Inc.
Far North Environment Centre
Friends of Golden Bay
Friends of Lewis Pass and Hurunui Catchment
Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay
Friends of the Earth - NZ
GE-Free New Zealand
Greenpeace NZ
Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet
Initial Volco Trust
Island Bay Marine Education Centre
Kaipatiki Project
Lincoln Environment Group
Marlborough Environment Centre
National Council of Women of NZ
Nelson Environment Centre
Nga Uri o Te Ngahere Trust
North Canterbury Branch Forest & Bird
Orari River Protection Group
Pacific Institute for Resource Management
RESPONSE Trust
Save the Otago Peninsula
Soil and Health Association of NZ
South Coast Environment Society
Students for Environmental Action
Surfbreak Protection Society
Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch
Sustainable Whanganui Trust
Te Aroha Earthwatch
Thames Coast Preservation and Protection Society
Wellington Botanical Society
Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club
West Coast Blue Penguin Trust
West Coast Environment Network
Whaingaroa Environment Centre
Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust

7.2 Friends of ECO

The number of subscribing individual supporters or 'Friends of ECO' is approximately 130. The Executive would like to expand the number of Friends of ECO over the coming year. We have rather higher numbers of friends and followers on Facebook and Twitter as reported above. We value you all and would love to extend our networks.

8.0 Finance

8.1 Overview

Tony Dean (Treasurer), Bruce Anderson (Incoming Treasurer), Barry Weeber and the Executive Officer comprise the Finance Committee which reports to the administration committee. Tony has devoted years to ECO's accounts and we are enormously grateful for his work. Bruce Anderson, who has a high-powered accounting and auditing background, has agreed to take on the Treasuring and financial reporting role – subject of course, to the will of the AGM.

The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements are presented separately.

We are grateful to Gillian Cross, who does a professional review of ECO's annual accounts.

8.2 Fundraising, Grants and Sponsorship

ECO conducted a Street Appeal, organised by Elizabeth Lee, and has regular contributing automatic payment contributors. We apply for grants, usually for specific projects and are delighted to report that the Methodists provided a grant for ECOLink and other communications. Our other applications for grants were unsuccessful. ECO received sponsorship from GascoigneWicks for the ECO conference, and has received a number of donations from Friends and others, but we still need to build up funds and a capital fund.

8.2.1 Sponsorship

ECO received sponsorship for ECOLink, as reported above, the funding from WWF for the Digital project, and assistance for last year's Annual Conference and this Annual Conference from GascoigneWicks of Blenheim.

8.2.2 Donations, grants, gifts and fundraising

ECO received \$16,280 from WWF's Conservation Innovation Fund, over 2 years to set up an e-learning website with modules for communities and individuals to learn how to use GIS data mapping for conservation projects. This can be found at www.elearning.eco.org.nz.

ECO also receives a variety of general donations and auto-donations. There are 28 auto donors who contribute through regular automatic payments. We are grateful for the support of all donors and particularly to the auto donors since continuing funds are critical to the operation of ECO.

ECO continues its fundraising partnership with online research panel Buzz Channel Ltd.

Overall, ECO had just sufficient income from donations and fundraising in the 2013/14 year with heavy subsidies from Exec members, and we are thankful to those who have contributed. However,

ECO remains significantly under-funded and desperately needs financial help to cover increasing costs. Donations of time, expertise, and money and in-kind contributions are greatly appreciated.

9.0 Outlook for the coming year

As an organisation, ECO has several challenges ahead. Most of our member organisations feel themselves to be under considerable stress with the intensification of environmental problems, a lessening of the funding available, and a climate of unconcern from the government about many of these pressing issues.

Our organisation has survived and thrived for 43 years, but we need to reconsider, reconfigure, adapt, renew and change. The ECO Executive has further considered how to tackle these challenges.

We will consider and debate policies and pathways for the future and will work to fit form to function.

The upcoming year, 2014-2015 takes us through the current election and beyond. It is the time to raise issues and policies with political parties and to try to influence all parties on their environmental and associated policies, and raise issues with the electorate.

ECO will need help to gear up to face the challenges ahead. It would be great to have new people to bring new skills, ideas and energy to our work.

