



**Centre for  
Ecological  
Learning** inc.

TO: Inquiry Committee of the Parliament of Australia  
RE: Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations  
DATE: 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017

**Submission to the inquiry into the administration and transparency of the Register of Environmental Organisations and its effectiveness in supporting communities to take practical action to improve the environment.**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

The principal purpose of the Centre for Ecological Learning Inc is for the provision of information and education about the natural environment, and for the promotion of ecologically sustainable principles. We are located in the Bellingen Shire on the Mid North Coast of NSW, and we have over 50 members annually who range in age from 14 to 60.

The Centre for Ecological Learning has been providing a comprehensive environmental education program of nature camps, public events, and workshops for both youth and adults since its inception in 2012. In the past year alone we have held a youth eco-leadership retreat, 3 youth bush skills camps, and a “Deep Ecology” adult retreat. In addition, we run a highly popular local environmental youth group (Bellingen EYE- Environmental Youth Experience) which holds fortnightly gatherings for youth, in which they learn about environmental issues, plan bush camps, bushwalks, and other outdoor activities, and participate in gardening and bush regeneration activities.

In 2015, we received a \$50,000 grant for the NSW Youth Opportunities program in support of our “Eat the Street” program for youth, which sees local young people designing and creating edible organic food gardens in the main street of town.

We encourage our members and supporters to advocate for the protection of the natural environment in our local region and throughout Australia. We believe that the young people and the adults of our community, our region, and our country need reconnection to wild places, as well as education about issues such as biodiversity loss, climate disruption, and plastic pollution in order to help create a healthy future for the planet.

The Centre for Ecological Learning has just registered with the Australian National Charities Commission and intends to begin actively fundraising through soliciting tax deductible donations. Up until the present, our activities have been funded by grants; however, as our activities become more popular, and grants harder and harder to win, we will need to turn to funding by donation. Without the tax deduction the organisation would find it much harder to raise money to fund our work.

The Centre for Ecological Learning reports to donors in our annual report and in our fortnightly newsletter.

The Centre for Ecological Learning would be very concerned if the Committee proposes making the administration of the Register more complex, or limiting its right to pursue its educational objectives.

Please call me on 0423 362 844 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Lisa Siegel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Siegel  
Secretary  
Centre for Ecological Learning Inc

**Centre for Ecological Learning Inc**

**abn 37 164 705 030**

**[www.cel.org.au](http://www.cel.org.au)**

**[info@cel.org.au](mailto:info@cel.org.au)**

**0423 362 844**

**PO Box 528**

**Bellingen NSW 2454**