



## Abbott's cruel cuts to community environment legal services

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Community and environment legal centres around the country are reeling from the news of an immediate end to federal funding announced by the Abbott Government late yesterday.

"It's one thing for the Abbott Government to say they want the country open for business. It's another thing entirely to try to strip away the community's avenues to seek legal help to protect their local environment, and that's exactly what the Coalition has done today," says Lawyers for Forests Vice President, Lauren Caulfield.

"Lawyers for Forests joins a chorus of condemnation from every corner of the country in response to these reckless cuts to community legal services. The Environment Defenders' network provides essential services to individuals and community groups seeking legal advice on environment issues of concern, such as the protection of endangered species in local areas.

"Mining companies, logging companies, governments and developers are equipped to spend astronomical amounts on legal fees. No amount of chook raffles and lamington drives will allow communities to raise the funds necessary for the legal advice and representation needed to stand up for our local environments.

"This comes less than a week after the Abbott Government began unravelling national environment protection laws, with COAG approving the transfer of essential environment decision-making powers from the Commonwealth to the states.

"In a time of threatened species crisis and sweeping attacks on our environment and environment laws, we need the Environment Defenders' network now more than ever.

Despite these transparent efforts to impose fast-tracked developments on communities that don't want them, we will continue to support the great work of EDOs in every corner of the country, who in turn support communities everywhere."

Nine Environment Defenders' Offices around the country provide much-needed advice, support and representation to communities across Australia concerned with protecting local environments.

For more information please call:

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