




INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

Annual Report 2013-14





Australia's incredible ecosystems and amazing wildlife, like this Humphead Wrasse, deserve the strongest possible protection from dangerous invasive species.

Photo: flickr-brewbooks

President's report

The past year has been very productive for the Invasive Species Council. Andrew Cox has done an outstanding job as CEO, making good progress on many fronts.

The Board has also been hard at work, and most board members do some 'hands on' work to support the organisation, in addition to providing essential governance and leadership. The Board has identified three key priority areas: capacity, fundraising and communications. Each of these areas has been progressed and, if we continue to enhance these areas, will build a stronger organisation to advocate into the future.

Capacity

The Invasive Species Council is a national organisation and the only environmental non-government organisation undertaking advocacy on the huge threat of invasives. Across the country community groups, land management authorities, indigenous land managers are fighting to control outbreaks of invasive species. Yet there is less than one full-time EFT staff member paid to advocate on this issue.

It must be said the council has an extraordinarily high output, given our low level of resourcing. We have an extremely professional team of staff and contractors paid for entirely out of fundraising income. In the past year we have resourced a part-time CEO, and contractors Carol Booth (policy and research), Tim Low (research) and John Sampson (communications). We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our personnel for the excellent work they do.

This year we started the process of thinking more strategically about how to support the growth of the council so that it has better capacity to progress our goals.

One way is to increase in kind support provided by organisations that share our goals. We are very grateful to have made an arrangement for free desk space with the Victorian National Parks Association, in addition to the free meeting facilities Ecology Australia continues to provide.

Fundraising

Integrally linked to capacity is fundraising, given that we are completely funded by donor income. The Fundraising Committee, consisting of board members Lone McLean, Ivan Kolker, myself and Andrew Cox, has been working through the strategic approach we take to fundraising.

Our efforts have borne fruit, with increased support from major donors and regular monthly donors. We have continued to enjoy the support of some very loyal and committed major donors and foundations while welcoming several new donors. Thank you in particular to the Mullum Trust, the Paddy Pallin Foundation, Garry White Foundation, Tracker Foundation, McKinnon Family Foundation and Curlew Foundation.

Communications

Over the past year the council has increased the number of people receiving our communications, and the quality of our communications. Feral Herald continues to be a popular source of information about invasive species and is now integrated into our website, which was updated and now both looks better and is easier to navigate. Our social media presence has grown. We were particularly proud of the success of a Facebook posting on the black-spined toad threat, which reached 8600 people!

Conclusion

Organisationally we have seen movement in the right direction over the past year. We will continue our efforts into next year and hope we can slowly but surely build the council into the force it needs to be.

Thank you to the office bearers and other board members for all your hard work throughout the year.

Esther Abram, President

CEO's report



During 2013-14 we made headway in a difficult political environment to improve policies, laws and institutions that reduce environmental threats from invasive species. The highlight was the establishment of a Senate inquiry into preventing new invasive species that harm the natural environment. The inquiry was in direct response to our evidence of repeated failures of Australia's biosecurity system and limited Parliamentary scrutiny.

A high priority was to take advantage of the opportunity to improve NSW's laws and policies relating to invasive species. We assisted the weed management review by the NSW Natural Resources Commission (NRC). We also led environmental sector advocacy on NSW's draft biosecurity law. We were very pleased with the resulting NRC recommendations including a permitted list approach to weed prevention, a general biosecurity obligation and a statewide oversight committee. We are hopeful the NSW government will eventually adopt these recommendations.

The Invasive Species Council has contributed to several other federal and state processes:

National

- Contributing to the terms of reference for the new threatened species commissioner.
- Membership of the Stakeholder Engagement Consultative Group.
- Input into the draft national environment and community biosecurity RD&E strategy.
- Contribution to a proposal to prepare a threat abatement plan dealing with invasion of escaped garden and aquatic plants.

State

- Providing input to Victorian and Queensland government draft laws.
- Responding to a WA inquiry into hunting.
- Raising awareness about rising feral horses and feral deer numbers across eastern Australia.

New partnerships were developed with the Weed Society of Victoria, the Council of Australian Weed Societies, the Australian Wildlife Management Society and the Invasive Animals CRC project – Facilitating Effective Community Action – run by the University of New England.

During the year we released results of our online survey of 800 organisations involved in tackling invasive species across Australia. We measured \$76 million in yearly voluntary effort and \$92 million in yearly paid effort. The yearly value of the entire community sector effort was estimated to be at least \$600 million while the effort from all sectors was valued at least \$1.6 billion.

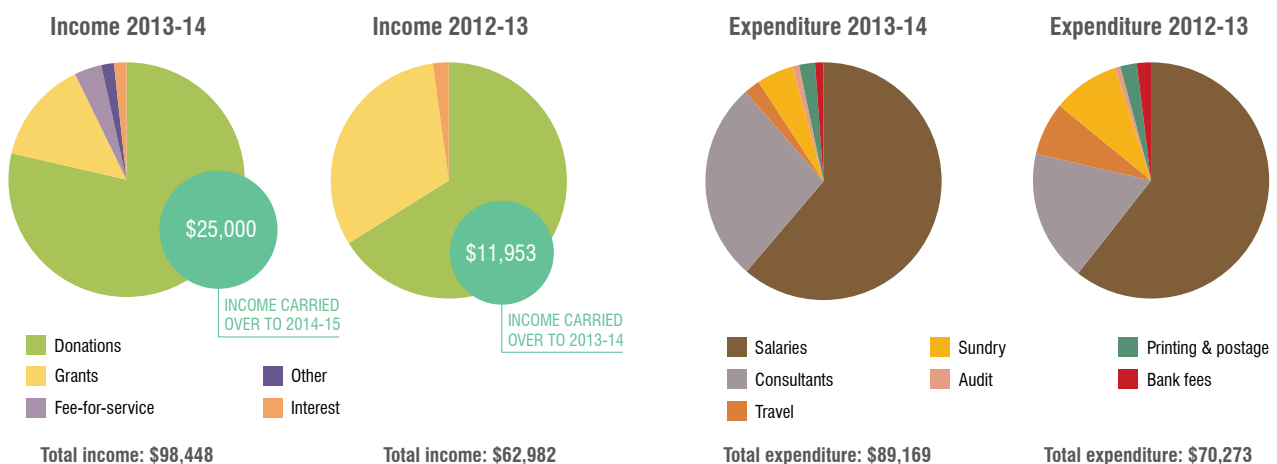
Paddy Pallin stores throughout Australia made Invasive Species Council the recipient of donations through its 'Don't bag the environment' promotion and distributed our 'Keep your gear clean' educational brochure.

I am deeply grateful to donors, staff and the board for their support, which makes our work possible.

Andrew Cox, CEO



Yearly income and expenditure



Contact

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