

# <email media>

Submission No. 2

## email information services

Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage  
Inquiry into Environmental Employment in Australia  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Secretary

RECEIVED

23 JUL 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Wednesday, July 17, 2002

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find enclosed our submission to the inquiry into 'Environmental Employment in Australia' being conducted by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage.

Our small business, Email Media, is the publisher of 'NRMjobs' - Australia's award-winning environmental job vacancy advertising service.

This submission is three main parts:

- (1) an offer to allow free use of our NRMjobs data set of advertisements for genuine, 'public interest' research into national and regional environmental employment trends
- (2) some general observations about the environmental jobs sector in Australia
- (3) a specific complaint about a competition issue affecting the sector

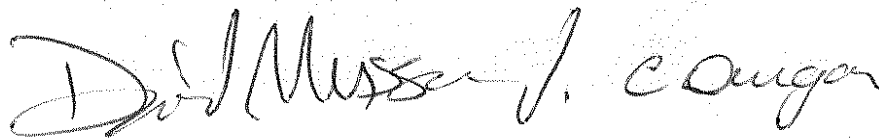
Part 1 is chiefly in response to the Committee's fifth and final term of reference: requiring it to enquire into and report on "Information and reporting systems that would support the uptake of environmental goods and services to enhance overall business performance and development of the sector."

Part 2 aims to cast some light on the first four of the Committee's terms of reference (ie: the environmental jobs sector's economic contribution, potential growth, barriers and policy needs).

Part 3 relates to the Committee's second, fourth and fifth terms of reference (barriers, policy measures and business performance).

We are happy to appear in person before the Committee (either by teleconference, or in person at a sitting in Adelaide) if it would help your deliberations.

Thank you for considering our submission.



(David Mussared & Chris Duigan)

---

## Who are we?

---

Email Media is the publisher of NRMjobs – a weekly email bulletin which advertises job vacancies and other opportunities in the environment, water and natural resource management field in Australia and New Zealand.

NRMjobs now has more than 13,000 email subscribers. It has been published every week since October 1998, and typically carries between 15 and 25 job advertisements a week (which are also reproduced on our website at: [www.nrmjobs.com.au](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au) ).

Email Media is a small, home-based business, owned and run by husband-and-wife David Mussared and Chris Duigan in the Adelaide Hills. David and Chris have won numerous business and environmental awards for NRMjobs, and for various other communication projects in the environment area.

Email Media donates \$5 from every paid advertisement on NRMjobs to community environmental groups and projects.

For more information, please see our website: [www.nrmjobs.com.au](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au)

---

## Part 1: An 'environmental jobs' index?

---

Over the past four years, our email service NRMjobs has published approximately 3,000 job vacancies in the environmental area, covering all States and Territories of Australia (and, more recently, New Zealand).

We believe these job advertisements — which are in a standardised format and stored electronically — comprise a valuable data set which could be used for monitoring and analysing trends in environmental employment in Australia into the future.

Email Media is willing to make these advertisements (past and future) available at no cost for genuine 'public interest' research into environmental employment trends.

This offer is conditional on the advertisements being used only for this purpose (ie: not for any commercial, 'value-added' or 'data mining' purpose without our permission), and on reasonable acknowledgement being given as to the source of the data. There has already been some interest in using NRMjobs advertisements for research, and we have provided copies of past advertisements to two university researchers (at Flinders University, and Charles Sturt University).

We believe the data set of advertisements could be used to build a robust 'Environmental Jobs Index', which could provide valuable information for monitoring environmental jobs, such as:

- where (geographically) environmental jobs are being created
- what kinds of jobs are being created
- what education and training levels are involved
- what salaries are being offered
- comparisons between States and regions, private and public sectors etc.
- trends in job numbers (if appropriately calibrated)

---

## Part 2: Some comments about environmental jobs

---

Drawing on our observations of the environmental jobs sector over the past four years, we are able to make the following comments:

- Environmental jobs are a major and growing source of employment in Australia (which often offer lucrative, fast-track career paths).
- A disproportionately high number of environmental jobs are located in rural and regional areas.
- Many environmental jobs are highly paid, and require high educational standards (and there are severe shortages of qualified people in some skill areas).
- Australia's environmental workforce is highly mobile across State and regional boundaries, and between institutions. That said, it is important to recognise that:
  - (a) As a rule of thumb: environmental employees will move readily from a rural area in one State to a rural area in another States (and from an urban area in one State to an urban areas in another State). However, environmental employees are much less likely to move from urban to rural areas, even within their own State.
  - (b) There is a problematical reluctance by skilled professionals to relocate from urban to regional areas where their skills are most needed
- The environmental sector is very technologically advanced, computer literate and comfortable with Internet usage.
- Working conditions in the environmental sector are characterised by flexible conditions; short-term contracts; innovative employment arrangements etc (arguably more so than in other industries)
- Direct employment by State and Federal agencies accounts for only a small proportion of environmental jobs (although indirectly many other jobs originate in some form with government).
- Existing government-sponsored training schemes tend to greatly under-estimate the levels of skills now being demanded by the environmental jobs market (there is a disillusioning mismatch between trainee's expectations and the market reality)
- Overall, the environmental sector in Australia is much larger, more dynamic, more innovative, more professional, more mature and more complex than is generally understood, and it already represents a substantial (but largely unrecognised) proportion of national GDP.

---

### **Part 3: A frustrating competition issue**

---

Over the past four years, our efforts to develop a service advertising environmental job vacancies (NRMjobs) have been hampered by a frustrating competition issue, which we believe is costing taxpayers many millions of dollars a year in wasted expenditure.

Federal, State and Territory Departments and agencies (and also some local governments) regularly tell us that they are required by law to advertise all job vacancies with particular newspapers, even when advertising in those newspapers is less effective and more expensive than the alternatives.

We are told frequently by advertisers that "We know we will get the best response from NRMjobs, and that will fill this position through NRMjobs, but we are required by law to advertise in the [NAME] newspaper, even though it costs 10 times more".

What this means is

- (1) there is now a guaranteed flow of advertising revenue from government agencies to Australia's largest newspaper proprietors (regardless of the effectiveness of the advertising)
- (2) an unknown amount of taxpayers money is wasted every year on unwanted and unnecessary newspaper advertising
- (3) new competitors (like our business) are always treated as an additional advertising cost, not a true alternative to newspaper advertising.

We have tried repeatedly to get to the bottom of this issue, and have yet to find any piece of legislation or any regulation in any jurisdiction which formally requires public service agencies to advertise with particular newspaper outlets. However, there continues to be a wide-spread belief among public service Human Resource departments in all jurisdictions that they are legally required to advertise all vacancies with particular newspapers.

We tried to raise this issue in the context of the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Broadcasting Services. We argued that, whether or not it is true, this perception represents an unfair barrier to fair media competition, and promotes an unhealthy relationship between government and particular media outlets — and that it should be addressed as part of any wider competition reforms in the media industry. The Commission's only response (delivered verbally during hearings, but not in its written report) was that it would take a much larger business than ours to challenge and change this barrier (see: [www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/broadcst/subs](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/broadcst/subs) & [www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/broadcst/trans](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/broadcst/trans)).

We raise this issue again here because we believe it represents a major barrier to future free and fair competition in advertising environmental (and other) jobs in rural and metropolitan Australia.

## <NRMjobs> puts something back

### Our environment levy

NRMjobs donates \$5 from every paid advertisement to community groups and projects in the natural resource management and environment area.

Donations, of up to \$500 each, are targeted at groups and projects unable to access other funding.

### How to apply for a donation

For a donation application form, send an email saying 'form please' to:

[mussared@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:mussared@emailmedia.com.au)

(include a fax number if you'd prefer the form by fax).

## <NRMjobs> covers:

- Landcare • Natural Resource Management • Irrigation • Biodiversity • Environment • Ecology • Salinity • Weeds & Pests • Vegetation • Greenhouse • Forestry • Sustainable Farming • Bushcare • Wetlands • Environmental Management Systems • Ecologically Sustainable Development • Freshwater Ecology • Rivers • Floodplains • Carbon Sinks • Land Rehabilitation • Soil Contamination • Agricultural Extension • Water • Wastewater • Drainage • Conservation • Erosion • Soils • Research & Development • Communication • Regional Boards • Environmental Science • Riparian Management • Land Management • Geomorphology • Hydrology • Integrated Catchment Management • Land and Water Conservation • NRM Policy • Revegetation • Groundwater • Recycling • Acidity • Sodicity • Agronomy • Renewable Energy • Emissions • Parks & Wildlife • Environmental Engineering • etc

### Contact details:

<NRMjobs> is brought to you by Email Media

phone: 08-8388-5608

fax: 08-8388-5372

email: [adverts@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:adverts@emailmedia.com.au)

web: [www.nrmjobs.com.au](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au)

postal: PO Box 212, Aldgate SA 5154

Now you can find  
email subscriptions

Let us help you change  
15 years of NRMjobs  
but nothing else is changed

# <NRMjobs>

Advertising opportunities

In Australia's Natural

Resource Management

(NRM) sector:

- > jobs
- > consultancies
- > grants
- > tenders
- > awards
- > scholarships
- > contracts

ATTACHMENT TO SUB NO. 2

— [www.nrmjobs.com.au](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au) —



# What is <NRMjobs>

NRMjobs is a once-weekly email bulletin which advertises opportunities for paid work in the natural resource management, environment and water field in Australia.

Receiving NRMjobs is free, but there is a charge to advertise.

More than 10,000 people now receive NRMjobs every week. NRMjobs advertises job vacancies, consultancies, tenders, scholarships, grants, contracts and awards.

## Who are we, & why did we change our name?

NRMjobs is brought to you by Email Media, a small business owned by David Mussared and Chris Duigan in South Australia.

NRMjobs (which used to be called LAMNads) changed its name because we no longer have any links to 'Land and Water News' (LAMN).

## How to advertise on <NRMjobs>

### > How to place an advertisement

To place an advertisement, simply email the text you require to:

[adverts@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:adverts@emailmedia.com.au)

(or fax it to: 08-8388-5372).

We will edit the text into our format (at no extra charge) and return it to you for approval. No artwork is needed.

### > How much will it cost?

Advertisements on NRMjobs cost \$165 each (including GST). An advert can be up to 180 words long (not including the title).

### > What is the deadline?

The deadline for NRMjobs advertisements is 1pm each Wednesday (to be issued around midnight the same night).

### > How to pay

We will invoice you by post (credit card and EFT payment available).

## How to subscribe to <NRMjobs>

### It's simple, and it's free

To receive NRMjobs for free every week, just send a blank email to this address:

[nrmjobs-subscribe@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:nrmjobs-subscribe@emailmedia.com.au)

To stop receiving 'NRMjobs', send a blank email to this address:

[nrmjobs-unsubscribe@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:nrmjobs-unsubscribe@emailmedia.com.au)

**NB: If that doesn't work, send an email saying 'subscribe NRMjobs' (or 'unsubscribe NRMjobs') to: [adverts@emailmedia.com.au](mailto:adverts@emailmedia.com.au)**

### New, easy-to-search website

You can also search our website for all current jobs and other opportunities which have been advertised on NRMjobs.

Just visit:

— [www.nrmjobs.com.au](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au) —

And click on the 'Search' button.

### Any queries?

Please call us on 08-8388-5608 if you have any queries.

