

# Friends of the Earth Brisbane

## Annual Report 2012-13



**mobilise • resist • transform**

# A snapshot of our work

Working with  
Torres Strait  
communities on  
climate  
adaptation

Working with  
Carteret Islanders  
around climate  
displacement

Advocacy against the  
recommencement of  
uranium mining

Raising awareness on  
coal and CSG impacts  
on the reef through  
the Reef Walk

Supporting the fight  
against mining the  
Bimblebox Nature  
Refuge

Supporting  
communities to  
oppose the  
Wahdoan megamine

Standing up  
against CSG  
developments on the  
Darling Downs

Working against  
dredging in the reef  
and Gladstone port  
expansions

Raising  
awareness on coal  
dust health issues

# Our Principles

Friends of the Earth Brisbane is a community-based social change cooperative working on local, regional, national and international issues.

We are working towards the creation of an ecologically sustainable and socially just society through community action.

- We recognise the interdependence of all life on earth
- We uphold the principles of nonviolence
- We acknowledge the rights of all indigenous peoples to self determination
- We acknowledge and abhor the past and continuing dispossession and marginalisation of the indigenous people of Australia and of other indigenous peoples throughout the world
- We reject patriarchy and any other form of elitist hierarchy in our society
- We reject racism, sexism, colonialism and all other such forms of discrimination and oppression
- We acknowledge, respect and value cultural diversity and different knowledge systems
- We support the concepts of intergenerational equity and intragenerational equity (supporting the rights of communities to pursue their own development path without compromising the opportunities of other communities or future generations to pursue their own development paths)
- We do not endorse political parties
- We aspire to achieve egalitarian participation in work and decision making within the cooperative
- We work cooperatively using a consensus model
- We individually and collectively take full responsibility for ourselves and for the consequences of our actions
- We recognise non violent direct action as a legitimate tool to achieve our vision
- We seek to develop a community of activism based on nurturing and respect for members and for the public at large
- We actively encourage skill sharing
- As part of our insistence on transparency of process and organisational honesty and integrity, we critically evaluate our processes and activities
- While acknowledging our agreement to join Friends of the Earth Australia Inc., we remain a self managed, independent cooperative.

Friends of the Earth Brisbane acknowledge that we work and live on the traditional lands of the Turrbal and Jagera peoples. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge their Elders, past and present.



# Interested Followers / Directors

FoE Brisbane has a 'non-hierarchical' management structure where every active member has equal say. The Board of Directors (colloquially termed "interested followers" as opposed to "bored directors"), on the other-hand, is responsible for the legal and fiduciary compliance of FoE. The Board undertakes to make sure that campaigners can get on with the charitable and campaigning work of the organisation.

Kim Stewart, Wendy Flannery, Bradley Smith and Kristy Walters were the directors for this year and quarterly directors meetings were held.

Kim recently retired as a director after three years of service. Kim brought passion and skill to the board over these three years and has made a generous contribution to the organisation. The board would like to thank her for her tireless work and we look forward to campaigning alongside her for many years to come.

This year was one of new growth for the organisation, with new grants, projects and volunteers. After a taxing year of moving and renovations last year, our focus has now returned to campaigning with vigour. We're also happy to now be sharing our new office with two like-minded organisations - Beyond Zero Emissions and Lock the Gate. It's been wonderful working along side these groups and watching the Friends of the Earth office become a hub of energy and ideas.

Looking forward, the board recommends that further work is done in 2013-14 to make our policies and procedures available and accessible to all of our volunteers and workers. These ensure that our campaigns continue to run smoothly and safely.

**Kristy Walters, Kim Stewart, Wendy Flannery, Bradley Smith - FoEB Directors**

## Membership

FoE Brisbane is a member based co-operative and our membership is central to our operations and legitimacy. FoE has several levels of membership, and we are excited to welcome several new members into the fold this year.

We are pleased to see an increase in yearly donations, including an upgrade from some one-off donors into providing recurring donations to support FoE's work.

Aside from growing our profile in campaigning, social media and in distribution of our newsletter, we are liaising with other organisations to develop strategies for encouraging grass-roots people to join and support us and our work.

Franklin Bruinstroop - Membership Officer



# Peace, Anti-Nuclear and Clean Energy

The ongoing active members of the PACE collective are Franklin Bruinstroop, Jack Ingram, Kim Stewart, Rosemarie Severin and Robin Taubenfeld. In 2012-13, we also welcomed two new regular members, Allie Davis and Adam Sharah.

PACE activists have been involved in various peace-related work – playing key roles in the 2013 Peace Convergence against the Talisman Sabre war games, supporting the establishment of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network and various other work, including supporting peace tours and radio programs. We also prepared a significant report into the environmental and social impacts of US bases and military activity in Australia, available via the FoEB website.

PACE members also act as the Qld spokespeople on general nuclear issues, campaigning actively against the recommencement of uranium mining in our state, as well as supporting national and international campaigns such as Fukushima solidarity events and actions, the Hiroshima Day commemoration, the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance and the campaign against the proposed national nuclear waste dump.

We also co-ordinated the publication of a collaborative report exposing the risks of opening an uranium industry in Qld, tabled in the Qld Parliament by MP Jackie Trad. PACE also drafted QLD Uranium-Free Charter (yet to be finalised) and supported initiatives to employ a Qld Uranium campaigner to support campaign across Qld.

In our work on Food Irradiation we worked closely with other groups in lobbying government and developing a submission on the proposed irradiation of tomatoes and capsicums. We are also monitoring and responding to the phase out of certain pesticides and the government's endorsement of irradiation as an "alternative" to chemicals.

We have been involved in forums, action, media and support for the recognition of First People's sovereignty including participation with the Brisbane Aboriginal Tent Embassy and its initiatives.

PACE members continue to play key roles in maintaining FoE Brisbane as members of the board, in areas of policy development, as website and media producers and contributors, and also as stall holders, cleaners and general dogs bodies!



# Climate Frontlines / Tulele Peisa

The most significant development in the past year has been the adoption of a new program initiative, "Climate Advocacy with and for Torres Strait Islander communities", enabled by a grant from the UNESCO Australia Committee, and with Kate Morioka taking the leading role. After initially building links with Brisbane-based elders, Kate and Uncle Thomas Sebasio made a first visit to the Torres Strait in early July to establish relationships with relevant bodies there and in Cairns. Kate has since negotiated the management of an existing website on climate change in the Torres Strait

[www.torresstraitclimate.org](http://www.torresstraitclimate.org) for news, project updates and stories. Two community meetings are being held in Brisbane in October, one specifically for Brisbane-based Torres Strait Islanders, and the other designed to generate greater public awareness and involvement. The second visit to the islands will be in January 2014, during the season of extreme weather events and efforts are being made to involve a media team in this visit.

New Melbourne-based member Claire van Herpen is following up initiatives already being taken to begin developing policies and procedures for addressing the needs of Pacific Island communities who have to start planning for resettlement now, especially those who have to move beyond their national boundaries. Research includes the Nansen Initiative and the Kiribati government's "migration with dignity" policy, as well as the 2013 UN General Assembly High Level dialogue on migration. In the near future some members will be meeting with the coordinator of the Kiribati Australia Nurses Initiative (KANI), seeking an assessment of the program for future advocacy efforts. Links are also being

developed with a number of international networks focusing on climate change related migration issues. In collaboration with Cam Walker and Claire van Herpen, Climate Frontlines conducted an intensive mini media campaign for World Oceans Day, 8 June.

We were successful in obtaining a small grant from a church-based organisation to enable the production of IT resources on Pacific and Torres Strait climate change, using material from previous meetings and workshops and resources provided by Tulele Peisa during Wendy Flannery's visit (see below). Nathan Renault has expressed interest in producing these materials.

In June-July Wendy Flannery spent 2 weeks with Tulele Peisa, the Carteret Islands relocation program at the first site, Woroav village, in Tinputz, Bougainville. As well as gaining an in-depth and historical understanding of the overall program and of appropriate follow up support, Wendy was able to provide assistance with a number of specific tasks to do with planning and funding applications. (A preliminary report of the visit is available on request.) A significant development in the program has been the forging of direct links between affected communities seeking relocation options. In October 2012 Tulele Peisa hosted visitors from a native Alaskan community and from outlying islands in the Manus Province of PNG. The Tulele Peisa website has been successfully migrated to the FoE Australia website and will now be accessible with the revised domain name [www.tulele-peisa.org](http://www.tulele-peisa.org). Two offers of updating/managing the website have, unfortunately, remained unfulfilled.



Some of the Brisbane-based Torres Strait Islanders meeting to discuss the new Climate Frontlines project supporting efforts to address the impacts of climate change in the Torres Strait.

# Six Degrees Coal and Climate

The Six Degrees collective is a dedicated team working towards the end of fossil fuel extraction (particularly coal and coal seam gas) and a just transition to renewable energy in Queensland. Tackling one of Australia's main sources of anthropogenic climate change is the impetus behind our work. Over 2012-13, we have seen a significant reduction of investment and development in coal mining in Queensland as a result of the global economic downturn, and a major upsurge in the number of groups working against coal and coal seam gas developments in the state. It's an exciting time.

Working within the confines of a new LNP State Government has presented some unique challenges, but also some great opportunities; early this year we celebrated the protection of the Felton Valley from coal mining after a five year campaign with our friends at Friends of Felton. Working in coal-affected communities was a large part of our work in late 2012, the collective was part of organising in the Surat Basin strategy and planning days, as well as being involved in the partial follow-up around the Wandoan case work.

The collective (and Friends of the Earth Brisbane) breathed a big sigh of relief when the Land Court refused Xstrata's

application for costs against us, and we are pleased that the mine looks like it will not be going ahead in the current economic climate. With the Oakey Coal Action Alliance, we also raised a banner on top of the Jondaryan coal dump, highlighting the health impacts of the dump for town residents and getting widespread local media coverage.

In 2013, Six Degrees has begun to shift our focus from regional campaigning to urban education campaigns. We started a Brisbane community organising campaign on coal trains and dust and have participated in Senate inquiries on coal dust. We also held lobbying meetings with state and federal MPs. The group has collaborated with and supported the UQ Environment Collective (under the banner of the Research Integrity Coalition) on a campaign against an industry funded and controlled coal seam gas research centre at The University of Queensland.

Recently, we have rolled out a series of stunts against Aurizon, Queensland's coal haulage company, regarding their role in opening up the Galilee Basin. Our work over the next year is likely to focus on the role of Aurizon as the lynchpin in opening up the Galilee Basin to export, and also on the financiers and investors in this region.



# Brisbane NVDA Climb Team

## A Project of the Six Degrees Collective

In 2013 a proposal was floated within Six Degrees to create a Non-Violent Direct Action climb team. The overall objective of establishing the climb team was to inject skills into environmental organizations in Queensland to achieve high profile direct action that will bring about a transition away from fossil fuel dependence in the state. This will be achieved through on-going actions involving climb skills that will greatly increase the effectiveness of protests and direct action in gaining media attention and disrupting key infrastructure that is impacting negatively on the environment.

Training commenced in mid-2013 with 13 activists having undertaken 12 weeks of training in:

- Rope Skills - (climbing fixed ropes)
- Abseiling
- Vertical Rescue
- Being familiar and comfortable operating at height in unfamiliar locations under pressure.

By the end of 2013 the team will be capable of carrying out direct actions which may include hanging banners off prominent landmarks in Brisbane, occupying critical infrastructure or setting up forest sits to disrupt land-clearing and mining operations.

This team is funded purely by donations - if you are interested in donating, visit:  
[www.givenow.com.au/foesixdegrees](http://www.givenow.com.au/foesixdegrees)



# 2012-13 Financial Report



**Kristy Walters -  
FoEB Finance Officer**

Our finances appeared to improve significantly this year, with operational costs minimised and campaign and operational incomes improving. Big news this year were various grants that we secured from several sources, and expenditure of \$4000 to assist in the set up of the climb team.

The reduction in expenditure is largely due to the renovations being completed last financial year. Also importantly, as campaign activity has increased, our organisational expenses have been kept low for several reasons. Firstly, the importance of Reverse Garbage's ongoing support by donating our office space rent-free cannot be understated. Secondly, generous volunteer contributions to book-keeping and office management minimise our admin costs. Finally, our IT costs are reducing due to our new VoIP telephone system, Google providing pro-bono IT

services and volunteer work on developing websites.

While Friends of the Earth is running extremely cheaply, our campaigns are in a stronger financial position than last year. It is foreseeable that with a focus on fund-raising efforts we'll have more opportunities to employ people to build the impact of our campaigns in 2013-2014.

Our auditor is unchanged from last year, Jason O'Connor CPA, registered Company Auditor No. 353931. Jason's excerpt from our financial report is provided below.

## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT (continued)

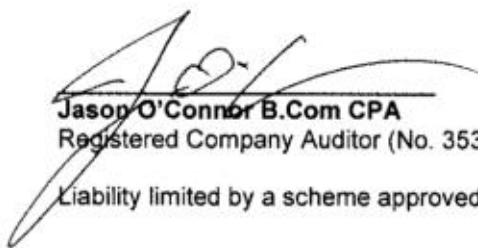
### Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

### Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of the Friends of the Earth-Brisbane Co-Operative Limited;

1. presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of the Friends of the Earth-Brisbane Co-Operative Limited as of 30 June 2013 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements; and
2. I certify that I have received all the information and explanations required and in my opinion, the prescribed requirements of the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects.

  
**Jason O'Connor B.Com CPA**  
Registered Company Auditor (No. 353931)

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October 2013.

# Our thanks to...

FoE Brisbane would like to thank our wonderful Interested Followers, our Finance and Membership Officers, Reverse Garbage for their incredible and ongoing support and being a bountiful source of useful campaign materials, the Sunrise Project for supporting the Reef Walk 2013, the Australian High Commission for UNESCO for supporting the Climate Advocacy with and for Torres Strait Islander Communities, and all others who have contributed to the organisational work of FoEB over the last financial year.

We would especially like to thank Brisbane-based Torres Strait elder, Uncle Thomas Sebasio,

who has been instrumental in helping the collective forge strong links with Torres Strait Island community members and representatives.

We would also like to thank our ongoing donors and financial supporters. Without their assistance, we would not be able to achieve much of the work we do.

Many thanks to the PACE collective, Wendy Flannery, Bradley Smith, Steve Skitmore, Derec Davies, Kim Stewart, Ivan Mort and Franklin Bruinstroop for their work on the content of the Annual Report. Thanks to Steve for the layout and Brad for the technical assistance and Scribus training!



**Friends of the Earth Brisbane**  
20 Burke Street, Woolloongabba, Qld, 4102  
Ph 07 3171 2255 | [office.brisbane@foe.org.au](mailto:office.brisbane@foe.org.au)