

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING LAW CAREERS GUIDE 2012

FOREWORD

As I write this foreword, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference is taking place in Doha, Qatar. The task facing the negotiators is formidable in the face of recent data suggesting that our capacity to limit global warming to 2°C is rapidly diminishing given the current rate of greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, a temperature range of between 4.2 and 5°C by the end of the century is more likely.¹ If this prediction becomes reality the results will be potentially catastrophic: heatwaves and droughts will become more prevalent and prolonged; sea levels will rise leading to coastal and, in some instances, sovereign, inundation; food will become more scarce; natural disasters will increase in frequency and intensity; and the rate of species extinction will accelerate, leading to irreversible loss of both terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

But it is not too late. Significant mitigation of the effects of global warming remains achievable through technological, social, political and, importantly, legal innovation. This innovation requires a generation of environmental and planning lawyers with the necessary commitment and, above all, passion, to meet the demands posed by a century in which the world's population will continue to increase while our natural resources continue to diminish. Both locally and overseas, therefore, legal practitioners are needed that have skills and expertise across a range of different legal areas. This is because there is, in truth, no single field of study comprising environmental and planning law. Rather, administrative law, commercial law, criminal law, constitutional law and human rights – at both private and public, and domestic and international levels – are all incorporated within its rubric.

It is the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of environmental and planning law that makes it so stimulating and rewarding as a career. There are few, if any, legal endeavours that can offer so much by way of depth and breath within a single discipline. This diversity is directly reflected in the myriad of career opportunities available to environmental and planning lawyers today.

It is for this reason that this publication is such an invaluable resource for anyone contemplating a career in environmental and planning law. Whether your pursuit is private practice or public policy, as the guide demonstrates, opportunities exist for young environmental and planning lawyers to achieve tangible and enduring outcomes that will, it is hoped, ultimately benefit everyone.

¹ G Peters, R Andrew, T Boden, J Canadell, P Ciais, C Le Quere, G Marland, M Raupach and C Wilson, "The Challenge to Keep Global Warming Below 2°C", *Nature Climate Change* (2012 Macmillan Publishers Limited), p 2.

The NSW Young Lawyers Environmental and Planning Law Committee are to be congratulated on their initiative in undertaking the research and compilation of this current guide. I commend it to anyone with an interest in environmental and planning law.

9 December 2012

**The Hon Justice Rachel Pepper
Land and Environment Court of New South Wales**