

**About Dr Ted Christie, Sustainable Development
And Environmental Dispute Resolution** (Revised 22 January 2025)



“We no longer destroy great works of art. They are treasured and regarded as priceless value. But we have yet to attain the stage of civilization where the destruction of a glorious work of nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest or a species of mammal or bird, is regarded with equal abhorrence.”

Aldo Leopold (1949)

Environmental dispute resolution should not be seen as the sole province of law - nor as the exclusive domain of science. Rather, there needs to be a more effective integration between *science* and *law*, facilitated by the accepted principles and concepts for *ADR* and *effective public participation*, within the framework of sustainable development.

***Dispute resolution processes
should not only preserve or enhance relationships
between competing interests
but also facilitate public trust and confidence in Government:
How can this be best achieved?***

In this regard, Dr Ted Christie has adopted an interdisciplinary approach for environmental dispute resolution.

This approach is based on accepted pathways for resolving environmental disputes and goals of effective public participation.

For example:

- (a) *Finding sustainable solutions that are amongst the best of the options available and secure as much value as possible for competing interests;***

- (b) Equitable outcomes which minimize the extent to which environmental costs and benefits - ecological, economic, social, cultural - are shared disproportionately between competing interests;**
- (c) In order to meaningfully involve the community in resolving conflict, dispute resolution processes should proceed on the basis that power be fairly balanced between competing interests.**
- (d) Outcomes must be based on reliable and relevant scientific information; information that is freely available and, in a form, understood by competing interests.**
- (e) To ensure viable decisions can emerge and be implemented requires all competing interests to be identified from the outset - and then meaningfully involved in the problem-solving process.**
- (f) To reduce conflict between competing interests, the problem-solving process needs to be transparent and responsive to the needs and concerns of competing interests e.g. by Government willing to share its power by adopting ADR processes as a joint fact-finding and problem-solving pathway.**
- (g) Facilitating trust-building with Government requires the public participation process to provide those who must live with the outcome with a sense of ownership in the ultimate decision made i.e., by recognizing the legitimacy of their needs and concerns.**

Conclusion

Resolving complex information conflicts and divergent scientific opinion, features of all public interest environmental conflicts, requires a process that facilitates collaborative involvement of all competing interests, trust in process and a sense of ownership in outcomes.

[READ MORE...](#) on environmental conflicts and public participation goals

