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How Environmental Lawyers Cope with Challenges in Nonprofit Legal Centers

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SIT Study Abroad

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How Environmental Lawyers Cope with Challenges in Nonprofit Legal Centers

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ISP Ethics Review

(Note: Each AD must complete, sign, and submit this form for every student's ISP.)

The ISP paper by Rachel Cohen (student) does conform to the Human Subjects Review approval from the Local Review Board, the ethical standards of the local community, and the ethical and academic standards outlined in the SIT student and faculty handbooks.

Completed by: Peter Brennan

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Program: Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action

Date: 17/12/2018

Abstract

Amidst our environmental crisis, environmental lawyers at nonprofit legal centers (NPLCs) play an important role in advocating for, revising, and enforcing the environmental laws which shape human behavior as it relates to environmental health. With a goal of protecting the environment and public interest through the law, these lawyers deal with few resources and personal environmental concerns in addition to all the common challenges of lawyering such as long hours and general stress. Due to their unique position in protecting the future of our environment's health, it is essential that environmental lawyers at NPLCs can sustain their motivations to do their work.

To gain insight into how they sustain this stamina, I interviewed 12 lawyers with experience working at community legal centers or public interest legal practices in Australia. The focus questions, 'What are the difficulties of being an environmental lawyer at a NPLC?', and 'How do environmental lawyers who work at NPLCs stay motivated and cope with such difficulties, if they do?' guided my research.

The responses revealed emerging themes in common challenges, motivators, and coping mechanisms that environmental lawyers at NPLCs experience. Generally, lack of funding, unjust degradation of nature and communities, and environmental laws geared for development rather than environmental protection caused interviewees to feel a lack of ability to make real change. Despite these challenges, it was helping clients and communities, gaining personal satisfaction, and fulfilling personal passions that motivated them most to stick with their jobs. Additionally, working with a supportive group of passionate and dedicated environmental activists kept interviewee's spirits high while the structure of the NPLCs allowed for a noncompetitive yet productive atmosphere. In addition to coworker support, participants best coped with the challenges of their jobs by aiming to separate their work life and personal life by spending time with loved ones, exercising mind and body, and spending time in nature. Overall, the data exposed a general resilience in environmental lawyers and their preference for working in the nonprofit space because, generally, it best aligned their values with their work.

Keywords: Environmental lawyer, community legal center, public interest legal practice, nonprofit.

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Common abbreviations:

NPLC: Nonprofit Legal Center

EDO: Environmental Defenders Office

CLC: Community Legal Center

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1. Introduction

Environmental lawyers are in a unique position in our environmental crisis; They have the expertise and status to reform, advocate for, and enforce the federal, state, and local laws which frame human behavior as it relates to the environmental crisis, for better or for worse. They have a big task and responsibility on their hands; as environmental law consultant Gerry Bates argues, “there is a role for environmental law in formalizing and implementing the vital links between ecology and economics—and it is the role of the environmental lawyer to ensure that this occurs” (2002, p. 19).

My research explores the experiences of lawyers who prioritize protecting the environment and protecting people from environmental harms. They take on cases in the public interest (i.e. a new development project clearing forests in their area, threatening wildlife, air quality, etc.) as opposed to cases in someone’s private interest (i.e. your neighbor wants to cut down a tree on your private property). One prominent nonprofit legal center (NPLC) in Australia, the Environmental Defenders office, aims to protect the environment through law. Its mission is to provide best practice public interest legal services, advise communities about their legal rights, and engage in policy and law reform to improve environmental laws (Environmental Defenders Office, 2015, p. 2).

1.1. Nonprofit legal centers vs. private firms

It is worth noting that there are also environmental lawyers who work with a different focus, using their training and expertise to advocate for new or expanded mining approvals, developments, and projects of the like. These lawyers typically work at private law firms whose priority is not the genuine protection of ecosystems and their inhabitants. My study focuses on 12 lawyers who work at a variety of NPLCs, including community legal centers (CLCs) and public interest legal practices, as well as one lawyer who has experience working at a CLC but left. The term ‘environmental lawyer’ in this report refers to those lawyers whose priority it is to protect the environment through law. I had not initially intended to interview only NPLC lawyers until they turned out to be the ones to respond to my outreach efforts and agree to be interviewed.

1.2. Lawyers and stress

Lawyers in general experience high levels of stress due to many challenging aspects of their occupation, from long hours and little vacation time to the adversarial nature of lawyering and the pressure of upholding the law. There are many books and journals on the topic of mental health in the law profession in general, such as “Coming Out in the Classroom: Law Professors, Law Students and Depression” (Clarke, 2015, p. 403-415), “Lawyer Distress: Alcohol-Related Problems and Other Psychological Concerns among a Sample of Practicing Lawyers,” and more (Beck, C. J., Sales, B. D., & Benjamin, G. H., 1995, p. 1-60). There is even an American organization called Lawyers With Depression which provides resources for lawyers to seek support for their well-being and calls for the entire law profession to work harder at prioritizing lawyer’s well-being (Lukasik, 2018); However, it appears that a similar office is lacking in Australia. According to Roy Morgan Research, legal, social and welfare professionals are the third most likely profession in Australia to have experienced stress from 2013-2014, with 35% of workers reporting stress (2014). Amiram Elwork, director of the Law-Psychology Graduate Training Program at Widener University in Pennsylvania says, “by definition, the adversarial system is conflict ridden, and conflict creates certain types of emotions like anger, guilt and fear, which cause stress... there is a lot of data to demonstrate that chronic negative emotions are bad for you” (Pirtle, 2006, p. 35).

1.2.1. Environmental lawyers, nonprofits, and stress

Lawyers who are working to protect the environment encounter all of the challenges of general lawyering all while feeling deep concern for the planet’s health and the interests of clients who have become victims of environmental related harms. Additionally, for those working at NPLCs, they deal with smaller staff, less pay, and fewer resources. It’s safe to say that environmental lawyers have the odds stacked against them regarding their mental health, yet it is so important that their mental capacity to do their work is upheld. It is therefore important to investigate the details of how environmental lawyers are coping with the challenges associated with their jobs and how they stay motivated despite these challenges, if they do. Subsequently, knowledge of the techniques environmental lawyers employ to cope with the challenges they experience may reveal helpful techniques or gaps in the

ability of lawyers to cope with the demands of their work. There is a lack of recent data on this topic, while the environmental law profession continues to grow, justifying the space for my study on this topic.

1.3. Overview of environmental crisis and policies in Australia and internationally

We are evidently at the crux of an environmental crisis. Already due to our current global temperature increase of approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels, we experience more frequent and extreme weather events and higher rates of species extinction coupled with, so far, an international failure to create and enforce adequate responses. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Global Warming of 1.5°C report confirms that “current national pledges on mitigation and adaptation are not enough to stay below the Paris Agreement temperature limits and achieve its adaptation goals” (2018, p. 17). The report and its accompanying Summary for Policymakers outline the dangerous and irreversible impacts that global warming beyond 1.5°C will have on our planet’s ecosystems and all who inhabit them in as little as 11 years (IPCC, 2018). Climate change is the result of human activity, and as the IPCC reports suggest, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, global temperatures, and poverty necessitates updated policies that will facilitate a shift in human behavior to become compatible with the earth’s ecological limits (2018). As the partial authors, advocates, and enforcers of these policies, lawyers play a significant role.

1.3.1 Australian attitudes about climate change and environmental law

Australia faces its own unique set of threats to the health of their environment, including massive mining interests, new fracking approvals in Western Australia, bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, human population increasing, higher density in cities... the list goes on. While these physical threats to the environment are massive, society’s attitudes toward these problems are what really decide the response to such threats. Australian attitudes about the environment play a role in the shaping of environmental laws by telling the government which issues most citizens are concerned about and which they wish the government would act on. Roy Morgan Research in 2017 prepared a report for World Wildlife Fund Australia called

Australian Attitudes to Nature, which reports historic trends in people's attitudes regarding the environment (Bagga, 2018, pp. 1-96). These data show that from September 2007 until September 2011 during the global financial crisis, the amount of people who thought that we need to act now to control environmental problems and the amount of people who considered themselves environmentalists at heart steadily declined (Bagga, 2018, p. 18). These trends signify that "in the backdrop of the financial crisis and other economic concerns taking precedence, environmental concerns take a backseat" (Bagga, 2018, p. 19). Since the end of the financial crisis, the amount of people who feel that we need to act now to control environmental problems has significantly increased and in March of 2017, 81.3% of the sampled Australian population felt an urgency to act on environmental problems (Bagga, 2018, p. 19). Moreover, the amount of people who felt that threats to the environment are exaggerated steadily decreased (p.19). Additionally, 84% of Australians would be in support if their state governments acted to stop excessive land and tree-clearing, (Bagga, 2018, p.32). Most recently in December 2018, Australian students nationwide took to the streets during school to demand that their government act on climate change. With so much public support for increased environmental action, why aren't there stricter environmental laws and policies in Australia?

1.3.2 Federal government's role in environmental law

The Australian government previously acknowledged the need for environmental action, evident in its adoption of the international Paris Agreement. Federal leadership in Australia in 2015 saw Prime Minister Tony Abbott readily committing to emissions reductions, but he has more recently revoked his endorsement of the international commitment because he didn't anticipate "how the aspiration targets... would become binding commitments" adding that "the impact of emissions policy on economic outcomes 'wasn't widely grasped'" (Murphy, 2018, para. 2-4). This federal leadership stance matches the findings of the WWF study; when financial outcomes are threatened, environmental action and, more specifically, environmental policies, are put on the backburner. For environmental lawyers whose role it is to uphold the law, protect the environment, and protect

communities from environmental harms, when federal leadership on environmental matters is constantly fluctuating, their jobs likely become much more difficult.

According to the Institute of Public Affairs which tracked growth of federal environmental legislation over time by counting the number of pages administered by federal environmental departments, generally Australian federal legislation has seen growth in a steady upward trend, with close to 0 pages in 1971, just over 2000 pages in 1996, and nearly 5000 pages in 2016 (Begg, 2017, p. 3). However, more pages of legislation don't necessarily mean more environmental protection. Time and time again, development project, coal mines, fracking approvals, and decisions are made in Australia with the legislative blessing of the Australian government. How can a government that acknowledges the threats of climate change and that represents a body of people, the overwhelming majority of who want climate action, still approve of such decisions despite the negative environmental and social impacts that they will have?

1.3.3. Environmental law case in Australia

There have been many significant environmental law cases in Australia which altered the direction of environmental law in the country as well as proved the power of lawyers in protecting the environment. Former CEO and principal solicitor of EDO New South Wales (NSW) Sue Higginson told the story of defending the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association in the Hunter Valley region of NSW against Rio Tinto, a mining company who sought to expand a coal mine into the Warkworth Sands Woodland that they had previously agreed to protect forever due to its unique ecological value (2018, pers. comm.). Sue explained, in 2010 when the government changed the rules to allow Rio Tinto to mine the Woodland, the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association with the help of EDO NSW worked together to prove that on environmental grounds, the woodland ecosystem was so unique that mining it would cause its extinction off the face of the earth. Sue continued to explain, on economic grounds, they proved that Rio Tinto had overstated the amount of jobs the mine would create by nearly 17,000 jobs. Additionally, on social grounds, the community provided evidence of social impacts that would result from the mine including noise, dust, and more. Sue told,

“for the first time ever in NSW, after the government had approved a coal mine, we managed to show in a court and get a decision from the chief justice of land and environment court to say, ‘No, actually the economic benefits of this extension don’t outweigh the environmental harm and the social harm that will come from this mine....’” (2018, pers. comm.).

Sue describes this moment as a remarkable win that made people rejoice and say “wow, the law is remarkable.” In the end, the government revoked certain accesses that made it possible for EDO to challenge the mining approval, and went ahead and approved the extension of the mine again. Sue told,

I started to realize how vulnerable our environmental laws actually are, and how really you can have environmental laws that protect the environment and that give communities access to the courts to enforce those laws and uphold those laws, but at the end of the day, the community can win three times in courts and then members of parliament and government can actually just change those laws just enough to let one development through” (2018, pers. comm.).

Cases like this expose some of the ongoing battles with environmental decisions in Australia as well as the role that environmental lawyers play in defending communities and ecosystems from harm.

1.4. Sustainability and environmental lawyering

Sustainability comes into the conversation in two ways here. A simple dictionary definition for sustainability, “the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level” helps to depict these two ways. First, environmental lawyers play an important role in determining the sustainability of Australia by shaping way that Australia responds to threats of climate change going forward. In his book “Australian Environmental Law: norms, principles, and rules” author Douglas Fisher writes, “Sustainable development is emerging both as a principle of international law and as the strategic direction of environmental law in Australia” (p. 157). Australia strives for ecologically sustainable development, and evident in their adoption of the UN’s 17

Sustainable Development Goals which outline hundreds of policies that would help lead the country to sustainable functioning, law and policy are very important tools to move toward a responsible maintenance of resource use (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018, pp. 115-119). If Australia is to stick to these goals, then lawyers are necessary in cases like the Warkworth Sands Woodland and so many others to protect the environment and reduce emissions while moving toward independence on fossil fuels. Second, sustainability comes into play in a lawyer's ability to sustain their well-being and maintain motivation to do their work. The national task force on lawyer well-being in 2017 summarizes this well:

“To be a good lawyer, one has to be a healthy lawyer. Sadly, our profession is falling short when it comes to well-being... Too many lawyers and law students experience chronic stress and high rates of depression and substance use. [This is] incompatible with a sustainable legal profession, and they raise troubling implications for many lawyer's basic competence. This research suggests that the current state of lawyers' health cannot support a profession dedicated to client service and dependent on the public trust” (Buchanan & Coyle, 2017, p. 1).

Since lawyers play an important role in the ability of Australia to respond to threats of climate change going forward and achieve sustainability, it is pertinent that their mental health and capacity to do their work is sustained.

2. Methods and Ethics

Intensive interviewing was my sole research method as it most effectively answered my initial research questions, ‘What are the difficulties of being an environmental lawyer?’, and ‘How do environmental lawyers stay motivated and cope with such difficulties, if they do?’ For a full interview guide, see appendix A. I aimed to interview people practicing environmental law because they would have the experiences necessary to best answer these questions and thus my target interview subjects were Australians who had experience practicing environmental law. At the inception of the project I did not distinguish between CLCs and private firms to maximize the target interview audience. I further specified my study questions after it became apparent that almost all the lawyers who agreed to participate in my study were working at NPLCs. My data therefore really answered the questions, ‘What are the difficulties of being an environmental lawyer at a NPLCs?’, and ‘How do environmental lawyers who work at NPLCs stay motivated and cope with such difficulties, if they do?’ I interviewed 12 people with experience working at NPLCs.

2.1. Making contacts

Beginning this project with zero environmental lawyer contacts in Australia, I employed various techniques to find people to interview. At the onset of the project, I asked my professor and advisor, two people who I felt knew a breadth of Australian professionals, if they knew any Australians practicing environmental law. They provided the name of my first interviewee, Sue Higginson, former CEO and principal solicitor at the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) in New South Wales. After interviewing Sue Higginson, I asked her if she knew of other environmental lawyers who I could contact for an interview. I used this technique with the first half of people that I interviewed. These methods of making contacts were effective but did not substantiate the total amount of people I needed for my research.

I also reached out to university level environmental law professors who provided the names of a few environmental lawyers who I interviewed. I also did simple internet searches for “environmental law firms” and contacted a myriad of offices including multiple EDO offices, Environmental Justice Australia (EJA), Lawyers for Forests, the Queensland Environmental Law Association, the National Environmental Law Association, and several private firms that advertised

environmental legal services on their websites. Calling people or their office was the most effective way to get a response. Most of the parties I found through this internet search did not reply to my repeated emails and utilization of the 'contact us' pages embedded in their websites.

I used my LinkedIn profile to reach out to numerous other LinkedIn members whose profiles matched the search 'environmental lawyer Australia.' I invited roughly 30 lawyers to connect with me on LinkedIn by sending each a short message introducing myself and my research. For those who responded, I followed up with an email or phone call to set up a date, time, and platform to conduct the interview. This tool was quite effective in finding interviewees, as it helped me connect to 6 (50%) of my interviewees.

2.2 Location & use of online platforms

I aimed to interview lawyers across states and the ability to connect online made this possible. Out of the 12 interviews, 5 were conducted in person and 7 were conducted over the phone, over Skype meetings, over Zoom, or over Facetime. These techniques allowed the interviewees and myself to remain in our local areas during the interview. These techniques made it possible for me to interview people living and working in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales, and Queensland. While online platforms helped me interview a wider net of people, I did notice that lawyers tended to share more during the in-person interviews.

2.3. Ethics

I submitted a research application for review of human subjects to the Local Review Board (LRB) on 24 October 2018 and the LRB granted approval on 28 October 2018. After we scheduled an interview, I emailed lawyers a blank copy of my consent form and ensured that they signed it and sent it back to me prior to the start of the interview (see appendix B). I used the model in the ISP handbook to assist with the creation of my ethics form (SIT Study Abroad, 2018, pp. 90-92). After interview subjects sent the consent form back to me, I signed it as well and kept the copy on my password protected laptop.

During one day, I interviewed several lawyers in person while visiting one of the CLCs for an afternoon and afterward realized that this was an opportunity for participant observation. Under the impression that I did not need informed consent for participant observation in a private office, I made a participant observation framework and filled it out from memory of what I had observed when I was at the office. This participant observation would have supplemented the 12 interviews; However, it later came to my attention that since I had neglected to acquire informed consent prior to the participant observations, I could not use the data from this and deleted it from my laptop. I therefore relied on intensive interviewing as my sole research method which was sufficiently effective to answer my research questions.

Many of the lawyers who participated in my research requested to remain anonymous. The names and occupations in Table 1 have been agreed upon by the interviewees and the data used in this report has been approved by them prior to the report's submission.

Table 1. List of interview subjects, their occupation, and date interviewed.

Name	Occupation	Date Interviewed
Sue Higginson	Public interest environmental lawyer, former CEO and principal solicitor of EDO New South Wales.	15 October 2018
P2	Solicitor from a CLC	6 November 2018
P3	Solicitor from a CLC	6 November 2018
P4	Solicitor from a CLC	6 November 2018
P5	Solicitor from a CLC	6 November 2018
P6	Lawyer who formerly worked on the board of a CLC	9 November 2018
P7	Solicitor from a public interest legal practice	21 November 2018
P8	Solicitor from a public interest legal practice	22 November 2018
P9	Solicitor from a CLC	27 November 2018
P10	Solicitor from a public interest legal practice	28 November 2018

P11	Solicitor from a CLC	28 November 2018
P12	Solicitor from a CLC	30 November 2018

2.4. Creating interview questions

I designed an interview guide with 5 main questions that most directly and objectively answered my research questions, with probes to make sure that the questions were answered as thoroughly as possible (See appendix A). I aimed to learn about each interviewee's personal journey to becoming an environmental lawyer, the challenges they experienced in the environmental law profession, how they cope with those challenges, and what motivates them to keep on doing their job. I did background internet research on each interviewee prior to the interview through their organization's website and/or through LinkedIn. This technique helped me to better understand their answers to my interview questions because I had some idea of their job title and specific interest in the environmental law field (i.e. law reform solicitor, community outreach solicitor, mining, water law, planning, etc.).

2.5. Recording and transcribing interviews

At the onset of each interview, I asked the interviewee if it was okay with them that I begin recording. All interviewees agreed, and I used a voice recording app on my password protected smart phone. After each interview, I uploaded the audio files to google drive to move them to my laptop, downloaded them, and used the online transcribing tool Otranscribe.com to type up the transcripts. Otranscribe.com allows the scribe to slow down the audio, making the process of transcribing the interviews a much easier. The audio files were not saved to Otranscribe.com. I then uploaded the transcripts into individual files on Google Docs and shared them with each interviewee for them to access and edit for accuracy if they wished. During most of the interviews, I also took notes in my notebook labeled 'confidential.'

2.6. Analyzing the data

I used qualitative analysis of the interviews by looking for emerging themes. I compiled a series of tables with individual tables for each emerging challenge, motivator, and coping mechanism and copied and pasted quotes from each interview transcript that fit in respective analysis categories. I went through each transcript

twice to ensure I had a good understanding of which themes the answers suggested and to aim for a thorough analysis. I then counted the number of responses in each emerging theme to discover which challenges, motivators, and coping mechanisms arose more frequently for lawyers and therefore which were the most apparent and worth sharing. I also counted the number of lawyers who reported experiencing each challenge, motivator, and coping mechanism.

3. Results & Discussion

To begin to analyze the interview transcripts, I organized subjects' responses into emerging themes in the categories of the common challenges that they experience in their jobs as environmental lawyers (see Table 2), what motivates them to keep on doing their job (see Table 3), and the coping mechanisms they employ in attempt to keep their mental and physical capacity sustained for their jobs (see Table 4). The order in which the tables are displayed is respective to the order in which I asked the questions during the interviews. I organized Tables 2, 3, and 4 into the number of times that the challenge, motivator, or coping mechanism was mentioned in interviewee's answers and the number of interviewees who experienced each because both results show significance. The number of interviewees experiencing each challenge, motivator, and coping mechanism show how common each is experienced across the entire sample of interview subjects. The number of times each challenge, motivator, and coping mechanism was mentioned may suggest the degree to which lawyers experience each, i.e. the more times someone during the interview mentioned experiencing private interest's influence over government decisions, perhaps the more strongly this challenge affects them. Since the number of interviewees who experienced the challenge, motivator, and coping mechanism is a more concrete discovery, I've chosen to use this category as the main source of analysis and support it with the number of times it was mentioned.

3.1. Emerging themes in challenges

Table 2. Emerging themes in the challenges that environmental lawyers face due to their jobs.

Type of challenge	Example quote	Number of times mentioned	Number who experience challenge
Lack of funding & resources, low wages	"We're also hideously under resourced so we all work really hard" (P12). "The wages are pretty low as well which makes it difficult to support your family" (P2).	26	11
Unjust degradation of	"It can be disheartening to have to tell people that the law isn't on their side and that logging of a particular area is entirely lawful, the loss of	13	7

nature and communities	habitat of a species that they care deeply for is entirely authorized by the law” (P12).		
Laws made for development/ geared against environmental protection	“Most of our laws in NSW and Australia that we call environmental laws are in fact really development facilitation laws where you consider the environment in what you’re doing” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).	18	6
Large time commitment, deadlines	“They’re really long hours especially because I care about it, and anything you care about you just want to put a lot of time into. So, I’m not getting a lot of time off at the moment” (P5).	8	6
Examples of burnout	“I really got very disheartened because we got a bad decision... I lost complete faith in the legal system and litigation and that’s why I went overseas and studied something completely different because I was a bit fed up. It was only 2 years into working here” (P3).	6	6
Being called names, lack of respect from others	We’re often cast aside as sort of hippy lawyers that just get in the way of development and encourage protesters. There’s just this huge misconception of what we do and the value of it” (P7).	7	6
Lack of ability to make real change	“And you do all that you can but it’s ultimately in the hands of government and the environment has never been a priority for government” (P9).	9	5
Slow progress of law	“[Law] was very slow-moving from my experience. It was not very proactive” (P6).	8	5
Difficulty of school	“I thought to myself, ‘Oh my god I don’t think I can go to Uni and get a law degree.’ that all seemed just far too hard and complicated” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).	3	3
Private interests influencing government decisions	The mining company would say to the consultants, “assess this application,” and basically the undertones of that would be “make this look like the impacts are going to be as less as you possibly can and that the economic benefits are going to be so high that any decision maker is going to have to say yes to this” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).	9	3
Adversarial nature of lawyering	“We thought we had really great legal grounds, and then at the hearing we were just watching our experts get destroyed by very, very good barristers. And that’s their job, hats off to them for being so exceptionally good at it. It was really demoralizing just to watch, let alone the poor experts up on the platform” (P5).	2	2

Note: for a more comprehensive display of responses, see appendix C.

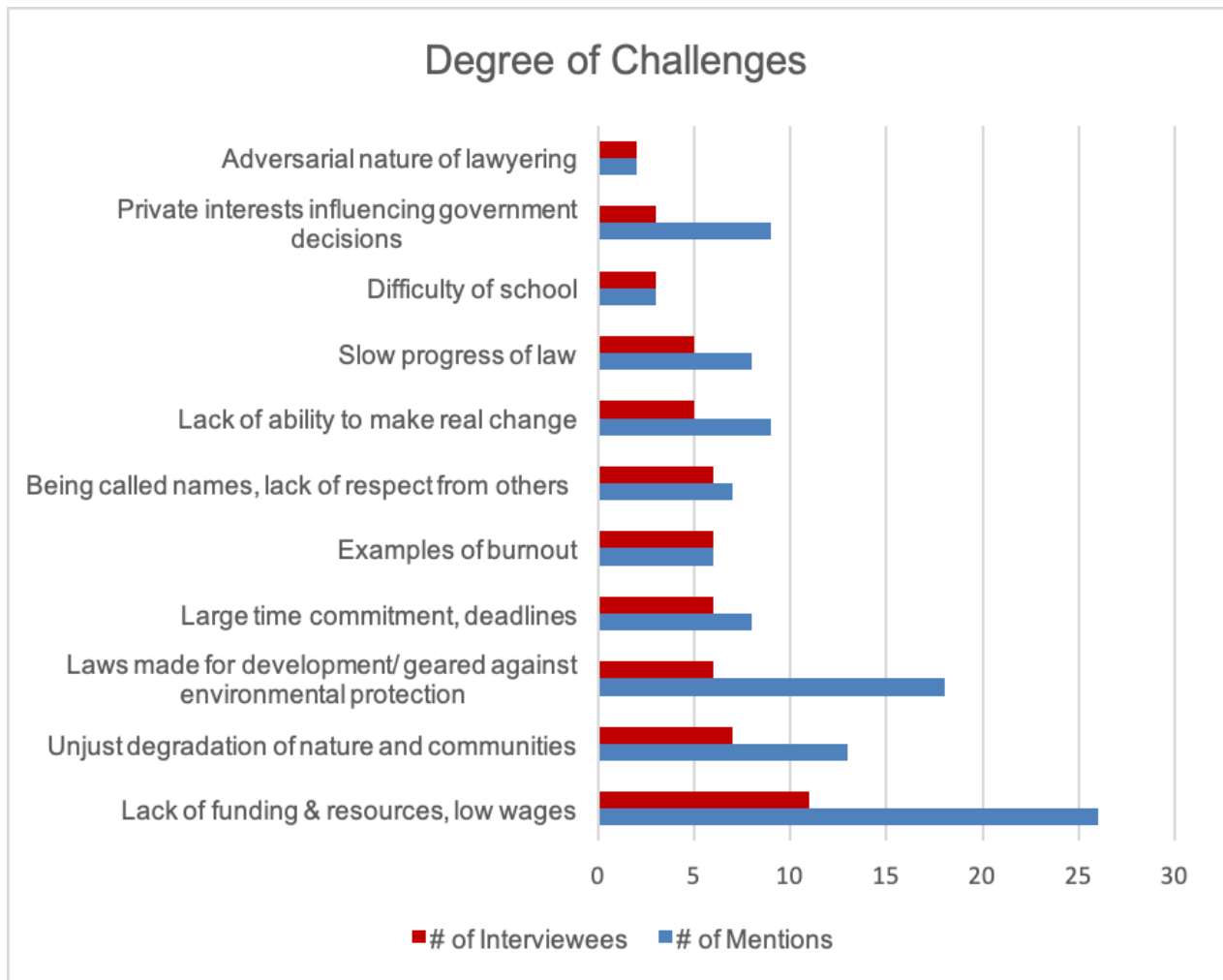


Figure 1. Number of interviewees who reported experiencing each challenge and the number of times the challenge was mentioned.

3.1.1. Lack of funding, resources, low wages

The most common challenge reported among the interview subjects with 91.6% feedback was the trouble with finding funding and being under resourced. This challenge causes many secondary challenges, including low wages, a larger time commitment, and an inability to take on every matter than a community member brought to the organization. As nonprofit organizations, these legal centers spend a considerable amount time raising funds from private donors and philanthropic funding, occasionally hosting events to attract potential donors. The legal centers involved in my research had small staff teams, ranging from 2 people to 12 people. With the demand of trying to raise funds, they therefore have more work to do and have less time to spend on everything else. One interviewee summarized this challenge well by saying,

“We're also hideously under resourced so we all work really hard. It's quite draining knowing that if you can't help people, often they don't have anywhere else to go, and so you feel kind of an obligation to go above and beyond as much as you can and that can be quite exhausting” (P11).

Additionally, lack of funding and the nature of working for community sector rates means that lawyers who work at NPLCs generally make smaller wages than they would if they worked in private practice. As one lawyer put it, “The wages are pretty low as well which makes it difficult to support your family” (P2). This aspect of working as a lawyer in a NPLC is especially challenging because it signifies to environmental lawyers who have worked for years to become experts in their field and who are doing work for the benefit of entire communities and the planet itself that their work isn't worth a high paying salary. A journal article called “Attitudes, Ideals, and the Practice of Environmental Law” from 1991 told that a first-year associate in a private firm can expect to earn \$120,000-\$140,000 while a first-year attorney with a government or similarly a public interest/nonprofit legal center can expect to earn at most \$60,000 (values adjusted for inflation) (Wakefield, p. 188). Worth noting, these monetary values were sourced from American jobs.

In 2013, the federal government cut \$10 million that used to go to environmental CLCs. One solicitor working at a CLC said the reason no longer receive funding is because a lot of the work they do challenges government decisions; however, equally, welfare CLCs and legal aid CLCs challenge government decisions and therefore she doesn't “really buy the argument that the fact that environmental organizations challenge government decisions is what distinguishes [them] from other services that do receive commonwealth support” (P12). She continued, “It's a frustration that government doesn't recognize the value of it and did previously so it's definitely a change in position that they don't see environmental justice in the same kind of category as other access to justice services.”

Due to their lack of funding, one lawyer commented on how being underfunded meant that she was only offered 6 months-1 yearlong contracts for her job. “It's just a really uncertain kind of field to be in,” she said, “But that's to be

expected because where's the money going to come from, you know? The environment isn't going to pay for its own protection" (P11). This echoes Wakefield's report which describes that while private firms can use their budgets to interview law students in the semester before they graduate, public interest legal centers "may lack the funds to personally interview promising students, and their budgetary schedules prevent making early offers," confirming that the job uncertainty of working for a CLC hasn't changed over the last 38 years (1991, p. 188).

Environmental lawyers' biggest motivation is helping clients and communities (see Table 3) yet their lack of funding makes it so that they can't help everyone who needs low cost legal advice on environmental matters, which makes it understandable that funding is their most commonly experienced challenge. One lawyer explained, "Because we don't have the funding, we can't do as much as we walk to do. We can't help as many people as we want to help because we have a limited amount of staff, limited volunteers" (P11).

3.1.2. Unjust degradation of nature and communities

Unjust degradation of nature and communities is something that all people have the potential to be challenged by and that all environmentalists are likely to feel upset by, however environmental lawyers deal with this challenge very frequently as their job essentially relies on defending people and nature from what they feel is unjust treatment. Many of the lawyers are people who have a deep love for nature and feel a strong need to protect it. A lawyer from a public interest legal center described how "What we talk about is scary. We deal with pollution and pollution is hard to talk about because it is about death, it is about disease" (P8). Another spoke about how "It can be disheartening to have to tell people that the law isn't on their side and that logging of a particular area is entirely lawful, the loss of habitat of a species that they care deeply for is entirely authorized by the law" (P5). This challenge is specific to lawyers who are defending the environment and communities from environmental harms.

Research conducted in 1991 on environmental lawyers and students explored the debate between lawyers who prioritize loyalty to their clients and those who prioritize the welfare of society, finding that first year law students felt that environmental lawyers owe a primary obligation to society, and that each

subsequent class showed more people feeling a primary obligation to their client (Wakefield, 1991, p. 196). It also found that out of all different types of practitioners including public interest, solo practice, government, large firm, and small firm, public interest lawyers reported the highest ratings of feeling that their primary obligation is to society over the client (1991, p.197). Wakefield noted that many public interest attorneys had trouble answering this question, that some refused to answer and others said both (1991, p.197). I would argue that most of the environmental lawyers I interviewed feel a primary obligation to society or both society and their clients, because the best interests of their clients are also in the best interests of society. Wakefield depicts this slightly differently in his findings, saying that while his respondents' primary obligation was to their clients, their client's primary obligation was to society, and therefore their obligations were ultimately to society (1991, p. 200). By defending the broader environment and aiming for environmental protection, lawyers' interests clearly lie with society as opposed to solely feeling an obligation to their clients.

3.1.3. Laws made for development/ geared against environmental protection and private interests influencing government decisions

Laws made for development or against environmental protection was the third most prevalent challenge, with 6 (50%) lawyers reporting it and mentioning it a total of 18 times. While only half of the lawyers reported feeling challenged by the nature of Australia's environmental laws being geared against genuine environmental protection, the fact that it was the 2nd most mentioned experience out of all challenges, motivators, and coping mechanisms speaks to its intensity. Sue Higginson elaborated on this challenge, describing environmental laws as "developing in this constraint of not what best laws look like," but rather "how can we factor in the environment and not slow down economic progress?" (2018, pers. comm.). In particular states including South Australia and NSW, lawyers who experienced this challenge generally felt that the government's prioritization of development and economics over environmental protection made for very few avenues to challenge decisions, forcing lawyers to turn clients away because there were simply no legal pathways to challenge (P9).

Private interests influencing government decisions and Australia's environmental laws being designed against environmental protection relate to the slow progress and time consuming nature of law and to lawyers feeling they can't make a real difference. On the other hand, The Institute of Public Affairs reported that the nature of Australian environmental laws is that they are so complex that they discourage major projects from applying for government approval (Begg, 2017, p. 5). This report progresses to define the problem of red tape in environmental regulation, listing several examples of iron ore and coal mining projects that required thousands of separate approvals, with the Adani coal mine project in Queensland preparing an Environmental Impact Statement that's over 22,000 pages and encountering more than 10 legal challenges since it began the approvals process 7 years ago. It is inconclusive whether the laws are geared for development and against environmental protection, and may be true that these alternative perspectives expose that environmental laws don't necessarily make it easy for development projects nor environmental protection attempts to be approved by government.

3.1.4 Lack of respect from others

I did not expect that lack of respect for environmental lawyers would be such a common finding, however 6 lawyers reported this is a challenge. It was mentioned 7 times in total, suggesting that while it's a challenge, it is not an immensely troubling one. Lawyers reported being referred to as "green terrorists," "sniveling bed-wetting grubs," and "hippy lawyers that just get in the way of development and encourage protesters," "radical," "inappropriate and trying to drive the economy into the ground" (P2, P5, P12). Lawyers described how these examples of retribution were perpetrated by local newspapers, the rest of the profession of lawyers in general, and government, depending which party leads the government. This public misconception about the value of environmental lawyers' work is certainly degrading.

3.1.5. Examples of burnout

6 lawyers mentioned burnout in their interviews, and each mentioned it only one time. Notably, I never asked the interviewees were directly about burnout, I only questioned them about what challenges they experience in their jobs and how they cope with the challenges and stay motivated. Activist burnout is "the inverse of the

activist persistence or activist sustainability” that is “debilitating or long-term” (Chen & Gorski, 2015, pp. 368). This is important because this means that burnout was common enough that 50% of the lawyers brought it up without being provoked, suggesting its significance in their experiences. Additionally, the fact that each only mentioned burnout one time may show that they are uncomfortable talking about it. One lawyer commented on how “the renowned mental health issues for lawyers in Australia” are understandable because of “the stress involved in lawyer work, the high stakes game,” and “a lot of competition within law reputationally” (P7). 2 other lawyers mentioned knowing environmental lawyers who had experienced burnout with one saying,

“people feel like they have to spend every waking moment of every second trying to save these precious last valuable elements of nature that we have, that they don’t look after themselves and their relationships and all those things that enable them to sustain that in the long run” (P3).

The same lawyer mentioned how his colleagues work so hard because they care about their clients and want to do a good job, and he often feels the need to tell them to work less hard and take some time off “so that they can sustain themselves and so they can relax and not burn out and not stress out because otherwise they’ll just thrash and burn” (P3).

3 lawyers admitted to experiencing burnout themselves. After losing a case in which she was defending farmers, one lawyer said, “I lost complete faith in the legal system and litigation and that’s why I went overseas and studied something completely different because I was a bit fed up. It was only 2 years into working here” (P5). Another left law completely after one year working in a legal practice, because all she saw were “holes in the legal system” and that “the whole system was working against [her]” (P6). The third said, “It has at times been very stressful and it did actually take a toll on my health earlier this year” (P9). One lawyer mentioned talking with “people who, for the last 30 or 40 years of their lives, have been fighting for the same thing and they’re just so jaded and so tired and so demotivated. They’ve lost the belief that justice will be done” (P8). It was unclear whether she was talking about fellow environmental lawyers or clients.

It's no surprise that environmental lawyers at nonprofit firms have experience with burnout. One study that explored burnout in social justice and human rights (SJHR) activists found that 77.3% of participants reported a deterioration of their physical health due to their SJHR activism and 72.7% suffered emotional or psychological health problems from their SJHR activism (Chen & Gorski, 2015, p. 375). 50% of my participants mentioned how their work causes physical and/or mental health problems either in themselves or their colleagues. Additionally, a study on environmental and other nonprofit activists in 2003 indicated that the average tenure of nonprofit organizations is roughly 6 years, with burnout being one of the highest-ranking reasons for leaving (Kovan & Dirks, p. 100).

3.2. Emerging themes in sources of motivation

Table 3. Emerging themes in what environmental lawyers' motivators.

Type of motivator	Example quote	Number of times mentioned	Number who experience motivator
Helping clients and communities	"If you feel like you've helped someone out of a bad situation, then you feel good about yourself. You feel like you're making a difference, you've improved someone's life" (P3).	19	10
Personal satisfaction	"It's interesting work. It's intellectually very challenging. You feel like you're on the good side as opposed to the bad side. There's a lot to be said for that" (P7).	15	9
Fulfilling personal passions	"I just found my passion, I was doing what I absolutely loved to do and I was allowed to do it in a way that was quite obviously building a social purpose and a public interest purpose in the exercise of law" (P5).	9	6
Coworkers	"It really does help and it's very empowering to work with a bunch of really connected people who are like, 'let's do this'" (P2).	10	6
Awareness of the problem, educating others	I think it comes from a compelling understanding of what's going wrong, why we're not getting it right, and because for whatever reason it is, I'm somebody who can see solutions" (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).	9	6
Children, grandchildren	"I have nieces who I delight in and the idea that I want them to enjoy the life they I have enjoyed and the quality of the environment that I have enjoyed, that's a motivator" (P12).	6	6
The availability of	Part of me thinks, if there had been no alternative, I would be sitting in here with those young people saying, 'We're all in this	14	6

solutions to climate issues	together. There was nothing else we could do. This is the fate of ours.' But it's not! There have been alternatives all the time. We didn't have to make these decisions. We didn't have to take this course, and in fact, the only reason we took this course is because some reckless scientifically illiterate people are forcing this course upon all of us. And that motivates me really strongly" (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).		
Love for nature	And the biggest motivator is just that I love the environment and [my state's] environment and doing anything you can do maintain it as best you can, that's a motivator" (P11).	6	5
The work itself is stimulating	"The diversity of the job generally is very stimulating. I feel like I'm constantly learning" (P4).	5	4

Note: for a more comprehensive display of responses, see appendix D.

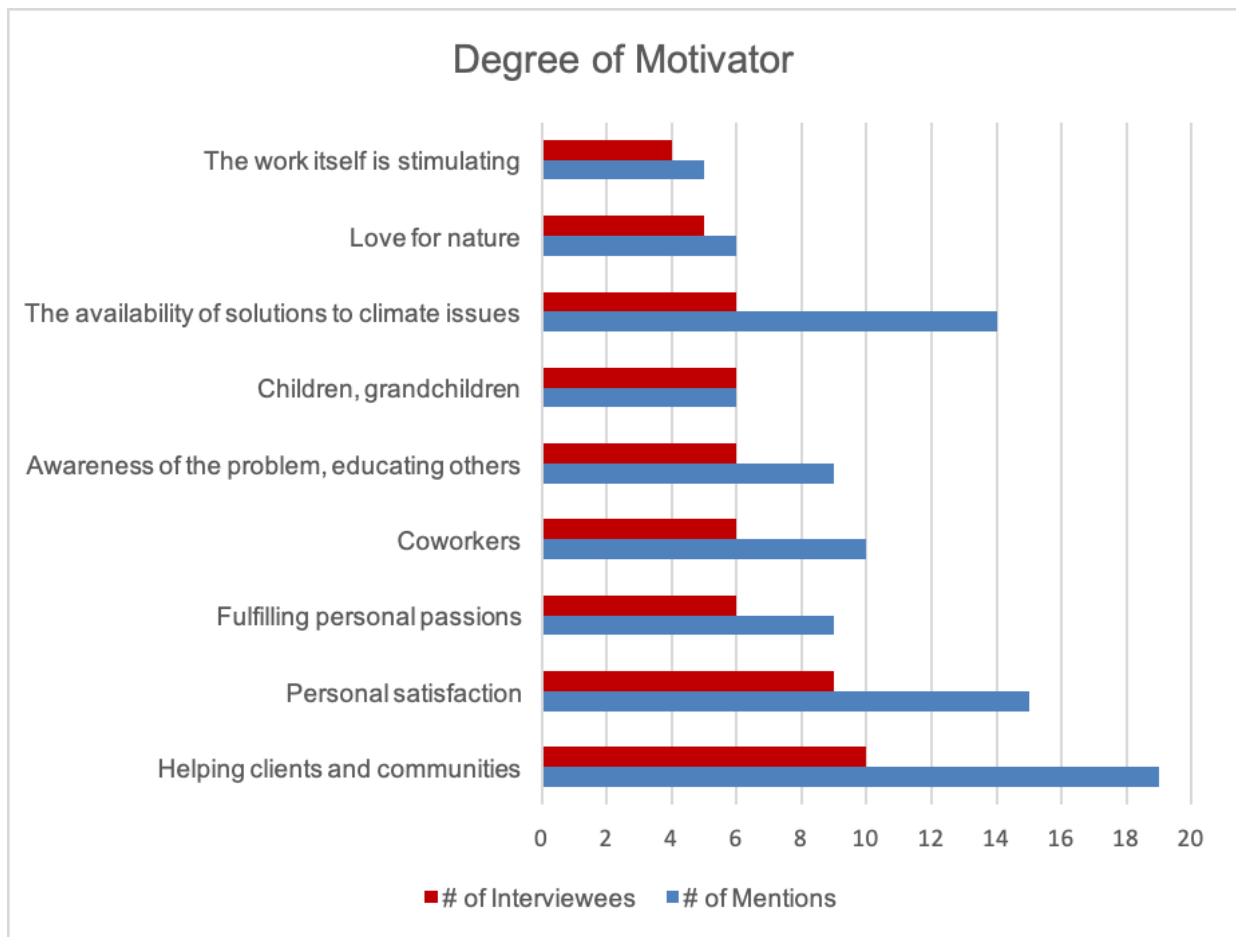


Figure 2. Number of interviewees who reported each motivator and the number of times the motivator was mentioned.

3.2.1. *Helping clients and communities*

The most common motivating factor for environmental lawyers to do their work was the feeling of knowing that they helped their clients and their communities fight against environmental harms and government decisions that would cause them harm. 10 participants (83.3%) said that helping their clients and their clients' communities was a motivating factor, and it had a total of 19 mentions. I believe that this motivator is connected to the challenge 'unjust degradation of communities' because lawyers who are upset by these injustices are therefore motivated by the people who are negatively impacted by the injustice and who are dedicated to achieving a more just outcome for all. A common trend was that without the help of the NPLCs, their clients wouldn't be aware of their rights and wouldn't be able to afford private sector rates, which can charge thousands of dollars per hour. Those who felt motivated by this expressed feeling inspired by their client's commitment, such as, "Often they put their lives on hold and risk their own livelihoods to do what they would like to do to protect not only their own little patch but a bigger patch" (P9). Feeling motivated by helping people helps fit environmental lawyers into the broader group of SJHR activists, because they are working directly to achieve social justice and help people access their legal rights. The purpose of one of the CLC's free advice line is "to create an empowered body of people so they understand how they can actually engage, if they can engage, what their rights are to protect their land, what their rights are to seek compensation, what their rights are to limit environmental damage..." (P4). This finding fits environmental lawyers into the broader context of SJHR research by viewing them as activists.

3.2.2. *Personal satisfaction, fulfilling personal passions*

The top 3 motivators were helping clients and communities, gaining personal satisfaction, and fulfilling personal passions, all of which are connected. Lawyers generally felt personal satisfaction because they were helping people and helping the environment, which both gave them personal satisfaction because they felt like they were doing the right thing by their communities, and it fulfilled their personal environmental passions. Personal environmental passions, including a love for nature, caused one lawyer to want to do everything she could to protect it. She described,

“I decided that I was going to dedicate my entire career to environmental law. I didn't see the point in utilizing those skills for anything other than protecting the environment because if we can't access water, if we can't grow our food, and if we can't breathe clean air, what's the point of anything?” (P8).

Wakefield's 1991 study on environmental law found that both environmental law students and environmental lawyers themselves ranked personal satisfaction as their primary reason for entering the field (p. 178). In my analysis, personal satisfaction was the second biggest motivating factor. However, if I were to include helping people and communities into the same category as personal satisfaction since helping people and communities did give all 10 of those lawyers some personal satisfaction, personal satisfaction would by far be the biggest motivator. Similarly, fulfilling their personal passions gave all lawyers who reported experiencing this motivator some sense of personal satisfaction as well. I chose to separate these findings to give more specificity to the findings. Additionally, Wakefield's findings regarding personal satisfaction signify why people were motivated to pursue environmental lawyering in the first place, while my findings show that environmental lawyers stay motivated to keep doing their jobs because they continue to feel personal satisfaction. Therefore, despite all of the challenges that my interviewees felt from working as an environmental lawyer, environmental lawyers in NPLCs feel so much personal satisfaction that it helps them continue to be motivated to do their jobs.

3.2.3. Coworkers

Coworkers were a significant motivator for 6 (50%) of lawyers and they mentioned it a total of 10 times, marking its significance. By 'coworkers,' lawyers referred to the people who work in their offices as opposed to clients that they serve. Doing anything difficult is easier when you have people working alongside you, and the lawyers felt that their likeminded, passionate, and dedicated coworkers helped motivate them to do their own work, too. They said it's "very empowering" and "hugely motivating" and "such a pleasure," to name a few positive things they said, to work with their colleagues (P2, P4, P5). Coworkers were a motivation as well as a

coping mechanism (see Table 4), showing their significance in lawyers' ability to sustain motivation to do their jobs.

3.2.4. Awareness of environmental problems, availability of solutions

While only 3 people were motivated by what they felt to be the high availability of solutions to environmental problems, they mentioned it a total of 14 times. These people were highly motivated by the fact that there are numerous solutions available to alleviate our environmental issues. For example, one lawyer mentioned how most people, including some environmentalists, aren't particularly interested in her work because they think environmental issues are too big and there's no point in trying to tackle them. She stressed, "It is great to actually know that that's not true... There's always change happening as a result of information being provided to the right people and then as a result of that change occurring, that will protect or does protect the environment" (P2).

The availability of solutions as a motivator often went hand-in-hand with lawyers being motivated by their awareness of environmental issues and their desire to educate others. One lawyer said she was motivated by her "compelling understanding of what's going wrong, why we're not getting it right... and [my ability to] see solutions" (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.) and another said his "good understanding of what's happening to our world" motivates him to "want do everything [he can] in a bad situation" (P3). Their awareness of the problems coupled with the availability of solutions gives them hope for the future of environmental health; "I've got a really strong hope that as time goes on, there will be more and more awareness and more funding given to the sector so it can prosper more and do everything it needs to do" (P11).

3.3. Emerging themes in mechanisms to cope with challenges

Table 4. Emerging themes in coping mechanisms environmental lawyers employ to manage the challenges of their jobs.

Coping mechanism	Example quote	Number of times mentioned	Number of interviewees who use mechanism
General resilience to challenges	"For the last 5 years working in a very unfunded organization and trying to achieve something for South Australia's environment, I'm finding that really difficult but I'm hanging in there" (P9).	11	7
Spending time family, friends, pets	"In terms of mental health or looking after myself it's really just downtime with my family, honestly the best way I look after myself is taking my dog for a walk" (P6).	8	7
Coworker support	"It is a lovely, lovely workplace. We take time to check in with each other to see how we're going so if I've had a particularly rough day or rough night, and a lot of us do have kids, so we get that stuff" (P2).	8	7
Meditation, exercise, creative expression	"I exercise every working morning. I admit it's kind of an obsession now. If I don't do it I feel really awful. So that's like normal exercise and then I do a lot of yoga and I meditate every day. So between all of those I find they keep me pretty sane" (P5).	4	4
Separation of work and personal life	"So putting some really strong boundaries around time management was really important for me and leaving work early, not taking work home, not working on the weekend" (P8).	6	3
Spending time outside	"I'm an avid hiker so any chance that I get to be hiking in the wilderness somewhere or camping by a river...Allowing myself that honesty to go, I really like it when the sun shines on me or I feel the wind in my hair and that I feel like I'm part of the world and that I'm doing my job to protect it" (P6).	4	3

Note: for a more comprehensive display of responses, see appendix E.

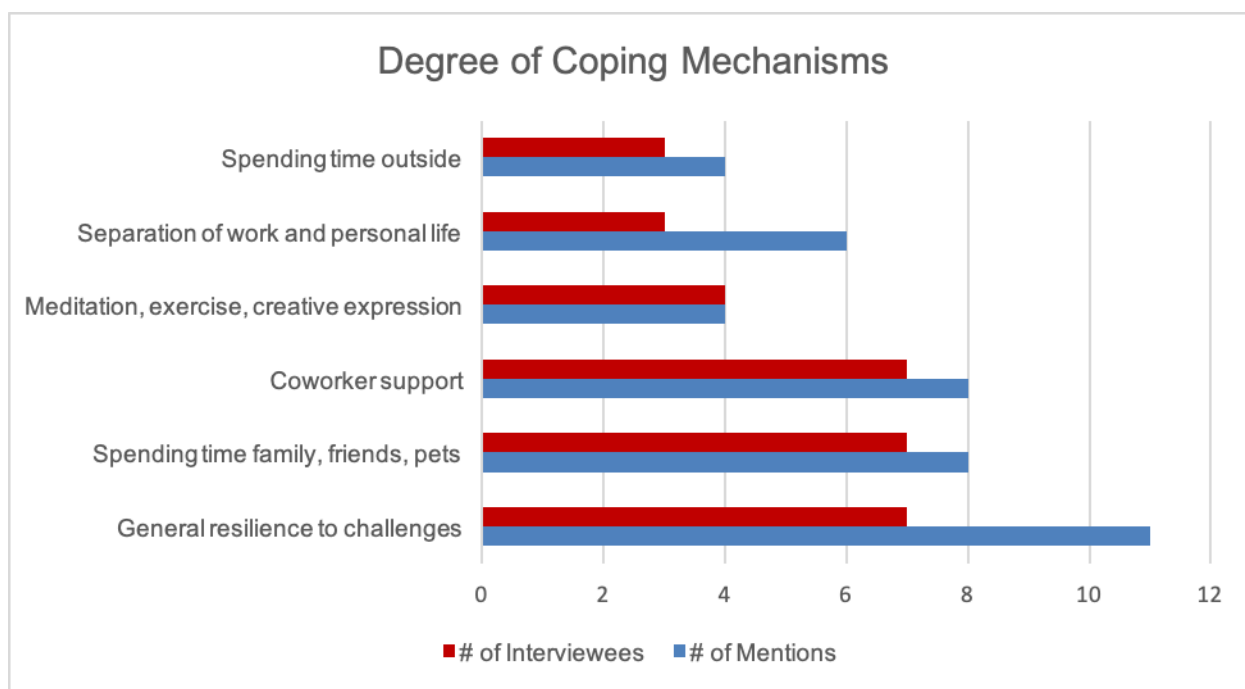


Figure 3. Number of interviewees who reported each coping mechanism and the number of times the coping mechanism was mentioned.

3.3.1 General resilience to challenges

One interesting theme that emerged in 9 (75%) of the lawyers' answers was a general resilience to the challenges they experience that didn't explicitly reference another coping mechanism but more so point to a common demeanor of environmental lawyers. This is to be expected because 11/12 of them are still working as lawyers and therefore must be resilient against the challenges they face to some extent, however it is significant because it shows that the positive, rewarding aspects of the job outweigh the challenges for 75% of them. While they have the option to work elsewhere based on their years of experience and high level of education, their resilience helps them continue to work at a NPLC where they make considerably less money. Many of them, after telling me about the challenges they face as a part of their work, said things like "oh well, I'll keep doing it!" (P3) and "I'm finding that really difficult but I'm hanging in there" (P9). See more examples of this general demeanor of resilience in Table 5. Certain quotes such as, "I am relatively easy going so I don't feel that I struggle to cope very often" and "I am quite laid back. It actually takes quite a bit for me to get stressed" may suggest that a certain type of personality is common in environmental lawyers (P12, P2). Another common theme

in this category of resilience was that the work is really hard but it's the only work worth doing and they don't plan to stop anytime soon.

Table 5. Responses that show resilience in environmental lawyers.

Emerging theme	Quote		
Examples of resilience	<p>"There's this kind of level of personal insult I wasn't quite prepared for... So I think that's another thing I find quite difficult. I think some people are a bit more resilient, like water off a duck's back but I get upset by that, but oh well, I'll keep doing it!" (P3).</p>	<p>"But it can be, there are those days when you're tired or you haven't slept well or something and you're trying to do this brain bending sort of thing to get a legal argument together which can be kind of exhausting but then when you do it's incredible" (P6).</p>	<p>"It's hard to do the work-life balance life thing I think because I feel that there's not that much time and we need to make a real difference now. That can be hard but at the same time I think it's better to be involved and doing something about it" (P2).</p>
	<p>"Not many lawyers get time off or do normal working hours anyway and don't work in areas that are very soul-fulfilling. I'm much happier doing this kind of role and doing really long hours than not" (P5).</p>	<p>"For the last 5 years working in a very unfunded organization and trying to achieve something for [my state's] environment, I'm finding that really difficult but I'm hanging in there" (P9).</p>	<p>"I am quite laid back. It actually takes quite a lot for me to get stressed. It can be a good and bad thing" (P2).</p> <p>"I am relatively easy going so I don't feel that I struggle to cope very often" (P12).</p>
	<p>"There really aren't any downsides. Even when I talk about really small minor, like even just, 'oh it's difficult to get to work with all my kids,' like it is difficult to get to work but it is easier than most other jobs, probably" (P2).</p>	<p>"I guess I've just accepted that we're doing everything we can and I put everything into what I can do. In terms of having to say no to people, I just accept that we're helping everyone that we can and it's not my call, it's my senior solicitor's call so I just trust that he knows what we are doing" (P11).</p>	<p>"There are some people who you just have to accept are who they are so don't waste your time with them is probably a good thing to learn. And you can only learn that by doing. It's not something that you can automatically identify who's worth your time and who's not. I think the point at which you recognize that there are some people that you just have to accept aren't ever going to be on your team, that's actually quite empowering to realize that and not let it get to you that you haven't changed their mind" (P12).</p>

Another unexpected emerging theme showed resilience in which interviewees compared their jobs at NPLCs to the prospect of working other jobs, especially that of working at a private practice (see table 6). This section suggests that not only are environmental lawyers willing to take on the challenges of being an environmental lawyer at a NPLC, but they actually prefer to accept these challenges than to compromise their morals by doing something else.

Table 6. Responses in which lawyers compare their jobs to alternatives.

Comparing lawyering at their NPLC to other jobs	<p>“The third thing that just keeps me going is I know that there are massive forces out there that are working for themselves that have vested interests, that don’t love the planet, don’t understand how it works, and don’t see the necessity to protect it” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.)</p>	<p>“Happily, everyone in the office works for the community sector rates rather than private practice rates so it costs us probably a quarter of what it costs a big law firm to do the same job. We go toe-to-toe with big law firms in litigation in the federal court but it costs us a lot less because everyone’s putting the time and effort for free or reduced rates” (P3).</p>	<p>“If you’ve just made some rich person more money, and I know from experience they don’t thank you for that because that’s the job they paid you for, that, yeah, you have a nice car and you have a nice house but you don’t ultimately feel satisfied by that. And that’s the path I saw in private practice. I saw the partners in the law firm who had lots and lots of money but they didn’t have good relationships with their family or their children. I don’t think they were ultimately happy. And yet when I work in community sector with people who are getting half or less than what they get in private practice, they’re the nicest bunch of people you’ll ever meet and they’re all compassionate and caring and our clients are really appreciative, most of them. Because they know that we’re working hard for next to no money. It feels rewarding and satisfying, so that helps as well a lot” (P2).</p>
	<p>“Some private practices are more based around competition and success and I think those environments can be quite corrosive because people inside the office are working against each other, whereas in our office, it’s more like whoever needs help the most, we direct resources and help each other out and that’s sort of reciprocal. There’s not that sort of nasty, back-stabby, competitive sort of environment” (P4).</p>	<p>“I did a Master’s degree in culture and development studies, so it was like anthropology and development and realized how complicated a sphere that is to work in in terms of who are you actually supporting; whose interests are you helping when you’re doing development work <i>really</i>? Are we just perpetuating capitalism and imperialism and what not? So, I came running back to the law after doing that and I’ve been in law reform ever since that and I love law reform” (P5).</p>	<p>“I feel pretty privileged and blessed to be working where I am. I think that if I was working for a corporate law firm it would be completely different. It’s difficult now but [working for a corporate law firm] would be impossible I think without a full-time nanny, which I don’t really want to have” (P2).</p>
	<p>“Very important to just balance your personal life and your work life, which is something we’re probably a bit better at here, too. Australian firms especially in private practice, especially the young lawyers, they drive them really hard and I think there’s a real problem with that work-life balance question. We’re more mindful of that here. Most people here work here part-time and have families so everyone’s kind of mindful of that reality” (P8).</p>	<p>“I think we do a lot more with our money than most government departments” (P10).</p>	<p>“I think lawyers in private practice where you’ve got clients with a lot at stake financially or reputationally or whatever, in private practice I think client relationships can be very difficult. We have kind of a different set of clients and it’s more of a partnership model so our relationships with clients are usually really good. It’s one of the counterbalancing factors to the stress” (P7).</p>

3.3.2. Coworker support

Coworkers support was a common coping mechanism for lawyers experiencing challenges, with 9 (75%) lawyers listing that the nature of their offices and coworkers helped them cope with the difficulties of the job. For some lawyers, they appreciated being able to directly speak with their coworkers about what they

were going through. P7's take encompasses the benefits of being able to talk openly with his coworkers as well as the way the structure of their office makes for a comfortable working environment:

“You can talk to people here quite readily about challenges and issues, legal ones, personal ones, whatever, to some degree. It's a quite comfortable dynamic here, it's not highly competitive. It's not everyone trying to climb to the top and become partners because, well, we don't have partners.”

This quote depicts how the fact that his office is a nonprofit legal practice helps him, and likely helps his coworkers too, cope with challenges they face because they don't have partners. Previous research on SJHR activists tells that a common cause for burnout is infighting in their organizations and being undermined by colleagues (Chen & Gorski, 2015, p. 377). There were zero examples of infighting in any of the interviews I conducted. Perhaps, environmental NPLCs are able to avoid infighting because they maintain a structure in which they work together and support each other when needed. One lawyer reported how if she has too much work to do, she sometimes asks her colleagues if they have the capacity to take it on—she does the same for them (P8). Another lawyer said if he needs to work from home one day, his leave is not questioned... that there's flexibility and “People work from home, they work remotely, they go and look after their kids if they've got sick kids” yet they still manage to get a lot of work done (P7).

3.3.3. Other coping mechanisms

Spending time with family, friends, and pets was one of the most common things that interviewees named as a coping mechanism, however this is not unique to environmental lawyers. The lawyers themselves noted this by saying things like, “[I cope by] spending time with family and friends... just what normal people do” (P10). Spending time with family, friends, and pets does fit into another emerging coping mechanism, the act of separating one's work and personal life. Only 3 people mentioned this separation specifically, but they mentioned it 6 times in total. Combining separating work and personal lives with spending time with family, friends, and pets gives a total of 14 mentions. While lawyers generally aimed to

separate their work life and personal lives, some reported having trouble with this because their work life crept into their personal lives. One lawyer gave the example of friends texting him when new land was recently approved for fracking in Western Australia (P10). A few others spoke about how the obligation they felt to help as many people as possible caused them to work overtime which crept into what otherwise would have been time at home with family (P8, P9). Donald Snow argued that environmental leaders need to be “strong, refreshed, spiritually active, and overwhelmingly positive in their outlook” to be the most effective (1992, p. 190). Snow went on to argue that many environmental activists refuse to accept leaves of absence as a coping mechanism (p. 190). None of the lawyers I interviewed reported taking vacation or long leaves of absence at all. Perhaps their shorter times spent with family, friends, pets, and time spent in nature act as small leaves of absence for them to stay refreshed and positive about their work.

One third of the lawyers I interviewed also mentioned some form of exercise, mindfulness techniques, or creative expression that helped them manage the challenges of their work. From daily exercise, yoga, and meditation to belly dancing and writing, lawyers used these external activities to destress from their jobs and keep their mental capacity to keep going back to work. There is an emerging body of literature on how mindfulness practices have positive and sustaining effects on SJHR activists (Rogers, 2014) yet only one lawyers mentioned meditation and yoga. With only one third of lawyers tapping into these destressing outlets, there is much room for improvement.

4. Conclusion

The findings from my research exposed the first-hand difficulties environmental lawyer at a NPLCs experience, the most prominent of which is finding funding, with 91.6% experiencing this challenge. The lack of federal government funding in environmental NPLCs as well as the time-consuming nature of fundraising has several negative side-effects, including low wages and large time commitment due in part to being able to employ smaller staff teams. Fewer environmental lawyers reported experiencing the challenges of private interests influencing government decisions, but they felt this challenge considerably strongly because they felt it undermines their ability to make real change. 50% of environmental lawyers also felt unable to make real change because of the challenge they experience in which the environmental laws in Australia are not designed to protect the environment, but are instead geared to maximize development projects and economic outcomes. 50% of the lawyers reported being negatively affected by a public misconception of their work, with communities, media, government, and other lawyers viewing them with less respect than other types of lawyers, namely than those lawyers in private practice. 50% (6) of participants mentioned burnout, with 25% (3) experiencing some form of burnout themselves, but only one chose not to return to legal practice afterward. Environmental lawyers at NPLCs are especially susceptible to burnout because of the immense pressure they feel to uphold the law and protect the planet and people, coupled with a lack of resources to do so. The second most reported challenge (58.3%) was dealing with the unjust degradation of communities and their environments.

Despite these numerous and intense challenges that have the potential to cause real psychological upset, the participants maintained a demeanor of general resilience. They often listed the challenges of being an environmental lawyer at a NPLC and then described how they were hanging in there and not going to give up. Additionally, much of their resilience seemed to come from comparing their job at a NPLC to other alternatives; they expressed that they preferred getting paid less and dealing firsthand with challenging topics such as people becoming diseased by pollution and maintaining their moral compass and environmental/social justice values rather than compromise those values for a higher paying job at a private firm.

The other most common coping mechanism they reported was aiming to separate their work life from their personal life, most reporting that they cope by spending time with friends, family, pets, in nature, and utilizing physical exercise and/or mindfulness exercises. However, some lawyers had trouble completely separating their work lives and their personal lives, with their work tending to creep into their personal lives.

While unjust degradation of nature and communities was upsetting for environmental lawyers, it also motivated them to do keep on doing their work in the hopes of continuing to succeed in achieving justice. Environmental lawyers' biggest motivation (83.3%) to continue doing their work was knowing that they were helping their clients and communities access their rights and defend them against environmental harms. The second most common motivator was personal satisfaction from their work, mostly from thinking that this job is the only one worth doing because it aligns their personal values with their work (75%). Similarly, fulfilling their personal passions through their work was motivating for 50% of participants. Lawyers in NPLCs were very much aided by their coworkers, with 50% reporting the passion and dedication of their coworkers as a motivator and 58.3% listing coworkers as a coping mechanism due to the supportive atmosphere and camaraderie in their offices. An awareness of environmental problems coupled with the existing availability and readiness of solutions to the climate crisis was also motivating for 50% of participants since they know solutions exist and are implementable. 50% also reported being motivated by future generations, including their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

4.1 Recommendations for further study

My first recommendation to anyone who wishes to study this topic further would be to gather demographic data during the interviews and explore the challenges, motivations, and coping mechanisms of environmental lawyers over the years that they have worked in the profession. Perhaps their challenges, motivations, and coping mechanisms change over the course of their profession.

Another recommendation for further study is to conduct all interviews in person or, if necessary, make the video/phone call interviews longer than 30 minutes, as lawyers tended to go into less detail during the phone interviews and kept their answers more at the surface level. Perhaps because I was a stranger to

them asking about their personal feelings and opinions about their career, they felt apprehensive to share more openly.

As James Wakefield asked his participants directly about whether they had experienced burnout in his study “Attitudes, Ideals, and the Practice of Environmental Law,” further research could directly ask my participants or other environmental lawyers if they had any experience with burnout. Additionally, like how Wakefield compared the experiences of lawyers across different types of firms, I would recommend doing a comparison of the challenges, motivators, and coping mechanisms of lawyers working in NPLCs and lawyers working in private practice. After learning about how NPLC lawyers are happy in their jobs partially because they’re *not* compromising their morals by working in private practice, comparing lawyers’ job satisfaction at these different firms would be quite interesting.

Another suggestion for further research is to survey the general mainstream population on their perception of environmental lawyers. Just having the title of ‘lawyer’ holds some weight in society as generally people trust lawyers as educated people who are sworn to act ethically and advocate for justice. Amid our environmental crisis, it’d be interesting to learn how the rest of the population feels about the profession.

One interviewee had a unique appreciate for environmental protection because she grew up in an area surrounded by coal mines. She felt inspired to work to protect other communities from similarly harmful decisions and reported having more power as a lawyer when she worked on cases in her home area because of her ties with the local community. A recommendation for further study is to interview environmental lawyers or other social justice lawyers who are working directly in their own home community and see how the challenges, motivations, and coping mechanisms that they experience differ from those working outside of their home community... i.e., how does connection to sense of place inform an environmental lawyer’s job satisfaction, challenges, motivations, and coping mechanisms?

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview guide (note: questions in bold were asked at every interview)

- 1. Can you take me through your journey to environmental law and what you're doing now?**
- 2. What are some of the challenges you experience as part of your job as an environmental lawyer?**
 - a) What are the other challenges?**
 - b) Do you experience any challenges on a personal level?**
 - c) Do you experience any challenges with the environmental laws themselves?**
- 3. How do you stay motivated to continue doing your job?**
 - a) What inspires you to do your job?**
- 4. How do you cope with those challenges?**
 - a) Do you employ and specific coping mechanisms to deal with the challenges of your job?**
5. What do you think are the rewards of doing your job?
5. What is your opinion on the role of environmental policy in our state of the world today?
6. Was there a time when you knew environmental law was the right or wrong career for you?
7. What was your schooling experience like when you were pursuing your law degree?

Appendix B: Blank consent form

Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study

My name is Rachel Cohen, I am an undergraduate student with SIT Study Abroad. As a part of my sustainability and environmental action program in Australia, I am undertaking an independent research project which involves interviewing environmental lawyers to learn about their job experience and how they find motivation. Before a lawyer agrees to participate in this study, they should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Participation in this study will involve the following:

- Signing this consent form.
- We will discuss how the participant would like to be named/described in my research paper and this name/description will be adhered to in my records.
- The participant will be interviewed one-on-one by me. I will ask about 5-7 questions about the participant's experiences in their law profession.
- The interview can take 30 minutes- 1 hour.
- I will be conducting interviews over the course of the month of November 2018.
- The interview will be recorded on my fingerprint-protected phone.
- I will type a transcript of the interview which will be shared with the participant during the month of November 2018 and kept on my password-protected laptop.
- The information gained from this interview will be used to write a research paper which will be submitted for an undergraduate class. It will also be included in the program library and may possibly be published on the internet. It will also form part of a short oral presentation that I will make to my class. The information gained from this interview may also be used for an informational pamphlet to be used in high schools and universities in Australia which will intend to inform students about the experiences of environmental lawyers in Australia today. It may also be used for a senior thesis at my home university, the University of Delaware in the U.S.
- All parts of the paper which are attributed to the participant will be shared with them prior to final submission of the paper.

Risks:

- There is a risk of emotional distress and discomfort when answering questions. This distress shouldn't be more than the participant experiences in their day-to-day lives.
- There is the risk of a breach of confidentiality which is why I will keep all interview recordings and transcripts on my password protected devices and will adhere to the requests of the participant regarding how they would like to be referred to.
- There is a risk of embarrassment or retribution from the participant's employers, community, colleagues, etc. It will be my utmost priority to adhere to the wishes of the participant and keep the interview records confident in an effort to minimize these risks.

Benefits:

- I will provide a digital transcript of the interview on Google Docs to the participant.
- Otherwise, participation in this study may not benefit the participants directly. However, the knowledge I obtain from your participation and the participation of other volunteers may help us to better understand the state of environmental law and policy today and if written up into an informational pamphlet for high school and university programs, may inspire students to pursue environmental law.

Confidentiality:

- You have the option of either remaining anonymous or of having your contribution to the study acknowledged.
- If you choose to remain anonymous, the information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to myself. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Participation:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate.
- If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time. You may also decline to answer any specific question.
- If you withdraw from the study at any time the information already obtained from you will be destroyed.

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this research study.

Subject's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Responses to the question 'What are the challenges that you experience as a part of your job?' organized by emergent theme.

Emerging Challenge	Quote			
Lack of funding & resources, low wages	<p>"The resourcing issue means that there's a lot of shadow work in terms of just organizing travel. I do a lot of work which junior lawyers or support staff would do. That kind of tends to creep into my day to day, and then might mean that I need to work longer hours" (P10).</p>	<p>"It's just a really uncertain kind of field to be in. But that's to be expected because where's the money going to come from, you know? The environment isn't going to pay for its own protection" (P11).</p>	<p>"The wages are pretty low as well which makes it difficult to support your family. I find it difficult to support my family on my income" (P2)</p>	<p>"Because we don't have the funding, we can't do as much as we walk to do. We can't help as many people as we want to help because we have a limited amount of staff, limited volunteers" (P11).</p>
	<p>"It's a frustration that government doesn't recognize the value of it and did previously so it's definitely a change in position that they don't see environmental justice in the same kind of category as other access to justice services" (P12).</p>	<p>"We're also hideously under resourced so we all work really hard" (P12).</p>	<p>"I think you can be very worn out by the demands e.g. to be on top of your area of law, on top of clients wanting action, not having the resources to deal with it. I've put in a lot of volunteer hours on top of my paid hours and that has stresses and strains on my home life as it would for anyone in that situation, I think" (P9).</p>	
Unjust degradation of nature and communities	<p>"I was basically hell-bent on public interest environmental advocacy because so many of these decisions are made that impact on communities and people that care deeply about not just the environment but their communities as well, and slowly but surely those rights are being eroded" (P8).</p>	<p>"Barriers within the legal system prevent clients from accessing justice. For many clients across [my state], Australia, and internationally, the prospect of being financially disadvantaged through court's orders if they're unsuccessful is a pretty common barrier" (P9).</p>	<p>"It can be disheartening to have to tell people that the law isn't on their side and that logging of a particular area is entirely lawful, the loss of habitat of a species that they care deeply for is entirely authorized by the law" (P5).</p>	<p>"And the other thing is that what we talk about is scary. We deal with pollution and pollution is hard to talk about because it is about death, it is about disease. You've got to walk this fine line between helping people understand what they're exposed to but also empowering them at the same time to do something about it" (P2).</p>

<p>Laws geared for development/ Laws geared against environmental protection</p>	<p>“The legislative framework isn’t particularly strong in terms of environmental laws. So all that we can do is uphold the laws as they are and when they’re very weak, the clients can often be quite frustrated that what they see as an unjust outcome is still a lawful outcome so we’re still bound by the laws as they are and that can be quite frustrating both for us personally but also in explaining to the clients why what they see as the right thing is actually not protected by the law” (P12).</p>	<p>“The problem that I have directly experienced first-hand is that parliaments will also manipulate laws, not just make laws, they will manipulate their own laws to facilitate environmentally harmful decisions” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).</p>	<p>“It seems at the moment I think one of the key issues with environmental protection is just the fact that financial outcomes, economic outcomes are valued over the environment and there’s a competition between the two” (P3).</p>	<p>“There’s a lot of barriers and a lot of bars to using the law to protect the environment. It’s an incredibly difficult pathway, the courts haven’t got these wide-open doors and the laws are not necessarily fit for purpose if what you’re looking to do is protect the environment. In fact, most of our laws in NSW and Australia that we call environmental laws are in fact really development facilitation laws where you consider the environment in what you’re doing” (P9).</p>
<p>Lack of ability to make real change</p>	<p>“[Law] was very slow-moving from my experience. It was not very proactive. It didn’t feel like it was addressing the social, societal, or sustainability issues I was interested in” (P6).</p>	<p>“At the time, you know, where I was, some of the legal things, the most you could do was tweak an environmental impact assessment” (P6).</p>	<p>“And you do all that you can but it’s ultimately in the hands of government and the environment has never been a priority for government” (P9).</p>	<p>“There definitely times that you feel like you’re not really making a difference and you’re kind of stuck in a system that isn’t helpful and you’re really just making sure people understand what the laws are, but until the laws are improved, you’re not going to get environmental outcomes that they’re looking for or that you’re hoping for, so that can be disheartening” (P12).</p>
<p>Being called names, lack of respect from others</p>	<p>“[The rest of the profession] thinks a lot of the time that [environmental lawyers] are choosing to do the work that we do because we can’t do commercial law. I think that a lot of people think that if you’re a good lawyer you’ll be in commercial law. So I find there’s a bit of a perceived view that environmental lawyers are less respected in the field, I think. But I think that comes with being in a community legal center in particular” (P11).</p>	<p>“The other frustration is constantly being painted as activists. We are expert lawyers. We’re trying to uphold the laws that we have, it’s not actually an activist act, or if it is, there’s absolutely nothing wrong with activism in that sense. There’s the idea that you’re somehow radical and inappropriate and trying to drive the economy into the ground or whatever it is, that’s been my experience. No matter how moderately you express your concerns and you follow all the processes that the law sets down, if the government doesn’t agree with the position that you’re advocating, then you’re painted as kind of a radical hippy. It can be frustrating to have your ideas dismissed out of hand like that” (P12).</p>	<p>“It’s exactly the same job [I was doing when I was working for developers] but when I’m helping the community access their environmental rights I’m portrayed as the villain of society by those vested interests. So I think that’s another thing I find quite difficult” (P2).</p>	<p>“They publish front-page articles in our one and only newspaper, attacking us calling us ‘green terrorists,’ for trying to get access to the law, you know? They call us ‘sniveling bed-wetting grubs’” (P2).</p>

Appendix D: Responses to the question ‘What motivates you to keep doing your job?’ organized by emergent theme.

Emerging Motivator	Quote			
Helping clients and communities	<p>“There’s a lot of reward in helping people who can’t otherwise access the law. I personally think that a lawyer is in the service industry. You’re there to help people and if you’re not helping people I think you’re missing the point of being a lawyer” (P2).</p>	<p>“We’re also representing clients and that’s it’s nice to have that interaction with people who want to do more about climate change and are willing to give up their time and trust us” (P7).</p>	<p>“And helping other people protect what they love, as well, is really nice. We have a lot of community groups that come to us and they want to help and it’s really nice to be able to help them because they don’t know what to do without our advice” (P11).</p>	
	<p>“It can be really hard but when you do get those wins when you have achieved something for the community to help them be healthier and safer, that’s extraordinary. That feeling is really humbling and really motivating and really inspiring that you can be a part of that and helping to empower people is really powerful and is really motivating and it happens all the time, probably more than we give ourselves credit for because we are kind of always onto the next thing once we’ve had that little win (P8).</p>	<p>“If you feel like you’ve helped someone out of a bad situation, then you feel good about yourself. You feel like you’re making a difference, you’ve improved someone’s life” (P3).</p>	<p>“Listening to people who are passionate about their environment. Often putting their own well-being and their financial well-being on the line. I think it is the people that inspire me because often they have faith in us. They have other demands on their time and demands on their resources and they choose to fight for their environment, I think that inspires me all the time” (P9).</p>	
Personal satisfaction	<p>“I feel incredibly fortunate working for this organization that is comparatively tiny but does amazing work against some opponents that have very deep pockets. I feel very proud to be part of a network of organizations that are clever and think laterally and look for cost effective solutions to what could be” (P4).</p>	<p>“It’s interesting work. It’s intellectually very challenging. You feel like you’re on the good side as opposed to the bad side. There’s a lot to be said for that” (P7).</p>	<p>“If I thought I wasn’t helping or if I thought other people would do my job better which they may at the end of the day, but if I thought I wasn’t providing a service or a value then I wouldn’t do what I was doing, I’d probably try and make more money and donate it to people who could” (P10).</p>	<p>“It’s really quite empowering to be in a movement that is so well-coordinated and to be part of actually doing something about climate change particularly. Seeing the impact that our actions are having rather than being from the outside looking in or thinking, ‘we’re not going to be able to do anything, it’s all a waste of time, everyone’s going to die’” (P2).</p>
Fulfilling personal passions	<p>“I just found my passion, I was doing what I absolutely loved to do and I was allowed to do it in a way that was quite obviously building a social purpose and a public interest purpose in the exercise of law” (P5).</p>	<p>“We work pretty hard here and one of the great things about this area of law is that I don’t have to tell anyone in my office to work harder because they all care about the result and they care about the people they work for and they want to do a good job” (P2).</p>	<p>“I genuinely love what I do. I have the theory that you have your personal values and then you have your professional values and if you’re fortunate enough to actually work where they overlap you’re actually incredibly lucky because getting up each morning is really easy because you know you’re going to go to work each day and do something that is valuable” (P4).</p>	
Coworkers	<p>“The people who work here, they’re just such passionate and dedicated incredible people. It’s such a pleasure to work with them and learn from them. Especially their advocacy styles, each of them has very different advocacy styles and how they get power when they’re working on things. They’re style of working to achieve successes. They would be a huge motivation” (P5).</p>	<p>“We’re not doing enough to get to where we need to be so that can be really hard and really disheartening but it really does help and it’s very empowering to work with a bunch of really connected people who are like, ‘let’s do this’” (P2).</p>		<p>“I really enjoy working with clever people who figured out clever and creative ways to help us and our clients achieve their goals when it comes to protecting and enhancing the environment” (P4).</p>

Children, grandchildren	“I’m a grandmother and I really, really, really, really, really want my grandchildren’s children’s children to have the fun and experience and joy of feeling safe in their environment, feeling comfortable in their environment. When I was a kid and I had a growing awareness about the environment, it was protecting trees from being pushed down. The problems now are so much greater and so much more significant. It doesn’t matter how many bulldozers I stop today, the temperatures are rising so those trees won’t be able to survive” (Higginson, 2018, pers. comm.).	“I have nieces who I delight in and the idea that I want them to enjoy the life they I have enjoyed and the quality of the environment that I have enjoyed, that’s a motivator” (P12).	“You can say you’re doing good things. I can say to my kids this is what I do, even if it’s not working very well” (P7).
		“Just on a personal level, seeing my daughter grow up and now at 15 years of age she’s interested in the same sort of issues I’m interested in. To see that she’s going to have to deal with these issues with the rest of her generation is pretty important to me” (P9).	“I think the thing I most often come back to is, ‘what do I want to tell my grandkids? What do I want to say I did?’ I don’t want to be the person who just gave up, even if we don’t avoid the worst of climate change or don’t prevent a lot of species loss and all these things we’re trying to do, I want to look back and say I tried” (P2).

Appendix E: Responses to the questions, ‘How do you cope with the challenges of your job?’ and ‘Do you employ any specific coping mechanisms to keep your mental capacity to do your job?’ organized by emerging theme.

Emerging Coping Mechanisms	Quote			
Spending time with family and friends	“Having good friends who will listen to you bleat on about what a shitty day you’ve had, that kind of thing. Friends who are completely separate from it who you can be distracted by or just let you rant for a bit and then you can have a drink and talk about something completely different” (P12).	“Investing in your personal relationships is always really good...being a good partner, being a good sister or brother, being there for people and investing in those personal relationships and making sure there’s a balance between work and your personal life is really, really important” (P8).	““A few of [my coworkers] really love their dogs so occasionally they’ll bring the dogs in when there’s a big storm and they’re too scared at home so they’ll bring their dogs into the office, that sort of stuff” (P2).	
	“In terms of mental health or looking after myself it’s really just downtime with my family. Honestly the best way I look after myself is taking my dog for a walk” (P6).	“I’ve got lovely kids and all that stuff is useful” (P7).	“I guess it’s having time with family and friends” (P9).	“And spending time with family and friends” (P10).
Coworker support	“Just generally a pretty supportive caring nice bunch of people. It helps that our CEO’s very much of that ethos and so I think that sets the tone for the office. It’s certainly about relationships and family and friends and compassion and sharing those things first, and then we still do really hard work, but it has that foundation of a supportive environment”	“It is a lovely, lovely workplace. We take time to check in with each other to see how we’re going so if I’ve had a particularly rough day or rough night, and a lot of us do have kids, so we get that stuff. We’re very careful and respectful of each other’s families as well which I think is really important”	“Working with those lawyers here whose motivations were very similar to mine, knowing that I could utilize my legal skills in such a way, with such talented intelligent people is massively inspiring as well... It feels like some kind of weird family in a way which is great” (P8).	“You can talk to people here quite readily about challenges and issues, legal ones, personal ones, whatever, to some degree. It’s a quite comfortable dynamic here, it’s not highly competitive. It’s not everyone trying to climb to the top and become partners because, well, we don’t have partners”

	(P3).	(P2).		(P7).
Meditation, exercise, creative expression	<p>"I exercise every working morning. I admit it's kind of an obsession now. If I don't do it I feel really awful. So that's like normal exercise and then I do a lot of yoga and I meditate every day. So between all of those I find they keep me pretty sane" (P5).</p>	<p>"In terms of stress generally, I've always dabbled in sport and exercise and fitness and that kind of stuff. That's just from a wellbeing point of view, that stuff's pretty crucial I reckon" (P7).</p>	<p>"I think for me personally, I've got this whole other life that's more creative and engaging in that and making sure that that is fulfilled as well is really important. I write and I'm a belly dancer. Heaps of fun, very grounding" (P8).</p>	<p>"I try to get in a bit of exercise at times as well but it is tricky" (P9).</p>
Separation of work and personal life	<p>"I make sure that I leave the office at 5:30. The world's not going to end if I leave work on time, you know? And that took some time to cultivate" (P8).</p>	<p>"Just getting out and doing stuff that's completely different."</p> <p>"It is important to have interests outside of the law and just be with likeminded people who understand what you're going through perhaps and being able to share that" (P9).</p>	<p>"So, putting some really strong boundaries around time management was really important for me and leaving work early, not taking work home, not working on the weekend" (P8).</p>	<p>"I probably don't engage outside of work as much in the environment space, volunteering and events, so yeah. You just try and strike a balance like any normal human" (P10).</p>
Spending time outside	<p>"But when I get out there, when I get out into, say, some of the old growth forests of [my state] and you work with the people and have represented the people that have protected that, that's incredible. Being able to look over a particular area of the environment somewhere in Australia and know that you've safeguarded it is massive. It is the most incredible feeling. I don't even know if there's any kind of word for it. And it is massively humbling. The work that [my organization] has done in [my state] in particular to safeguard and to clean up certain areas has been extraordinary and then you go out there and you spend time in it" (P8).</p>	<p>"I'm an avid hiker so any chance that I get to be hiking in the wilderness somewhere or camping by a river. I live near Port Phillip Bay, so spending as much time as I can in the environment (P6).</p> <p>And sometimes just the joy of the wind on my face is enough. Allowing myself that honesty to go, 'I really like it when the sun shines on me or I feel the wind in my hair and that I feel like I'm part of the world and that I'm doing my job to protect it.' Little things, taking some joy in seeing the beauty in little things is really important for me and my mental health" (P8).</p> <p>"I like to spend time in the outdoors, walking" (P7).</p>	<p>"I'm a 5-minute drive from the beach and there's a beautiful walk through mangroves which some people think is a swamp but it's not, it's glorious and to be 5 minutes out of the city and just surrounded by trees and ocean. It sounds like such a cliché but just getting the fuck away from people and being around nature and just the peacefulness of animals, that's what helps me" (P6).</p>	