

Issue #77 November 1999

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Back from the wilderness...

Chain Reaction returns

Cashing in your woodchips

Who invests in forest devastation?

Follow the yellow cake road

Jabiluka, Beverley, Roxby Downs, Lucas Heights

Overviewing the nuclear industry in Oz

Globalising grass roots

Ricardo Navarro in Australia for the FoE International AGM

Catching up with FoE Australia campaigns

chain reaction

The national magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia

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committed to the preservation,
restoration and rational use of the
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independent FoE member groups
throughout Australia. FoEA
campaigns locally, nationally and
internationally as part of FOEI. All
member groups are united in their
belief in an environmentally sustain-
able and socially equitable world
where social justice and
environmental issues cannot be
separated.

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Friends of the Earth Australia is comprised of the 13 Friends of the Earth local member groups. Members of Friends of the Earth local groups are automatically members of Friends of the Earth Australia.

If you wish to become a member of FoEA, contact the Friends of the Earth member group closest to you for membership details.

Guest editorial

A lot has happened for Friends of the Earth since the last *Chain Reaction* magazine was published in December 1996. These past two years have seen the national network evolve in many ways. What was largely a collection of independent local groups has become increasingly a coordinated national organisation, with a stronger national presence and more groups active at the local and state level. This has occurred at a time where many established environment groups have been experiencing stagnant or declining membership.

FoE Australia is unique in the Australian environment movement, in that it is a collection of autonomous local groups which form a federation, which is the national organisation. There is no central office and decisions are made via consensus at the biannual national meetings. FoE is currently composed of 13 local groups and these groups are based in capital cities, regional centres and rural areas.

FoE is also well known for its strong political perspective and commitment to social justice. This was highlighted during the national debate over whether Telstra (the national publicly owned telecommunications authority) should be partially privatised in order to fund components of the federal government's environment program. FoE's strong position in opposing the Telstra sale earned it enemies, but also greater numbers of allies. It helped increase FoE's profile among the trade union and other progressive sectors of the community.

There has also been substantial changes in the national structure of the federation over the past three years. While there has always been a history of local groups cooperating on specific campaigns, it was only in 1995 that FoE formalised the idea of national campaigns. At the present time there are six such campaigns: wetlands, uranium, Sharing the Land (focused on

Cam Walker
National Liaison Officer
Friends of the Earth Australia

land & rights issues for Indigenous people), Sustainable Australia, forests, and the Ogoni/Shell campaign.

The development of these campaigns, where local groups agree to work at both the local and national level, has allowed for greater effectiveness and campaigning ability and helped enhance the sense of FoE being a national- and locally-based organisation.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of the federation is the presence of friends in remote areas and smaller towns where there is not the likelihood of there being sufficient numbers to form a group. Loss of the traditional funding (through the Grants to Voluntary Conservation Organisations Program administered by Environment Australia) forced the organisation to a long-overdue analysis of its sources of funding and the creation of a number of strategies to provide long-term, ongoing and diversified funding.

FoE has assessed its structure, with the creation of a national vision document and the beginnings of a strategic plan for the next 10 years. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of FoE has led to the creation of various working groups, including: gender, structural issues, fundraising, constitution and membership development. Increased use of electronic mail in recent years has helped create greater cohesion among the groups (spread from south western, Western Australia to Maryborough in mid-north Queensland) and a stronger sense of being part of a national federation.

Many of the newer groups have already hosted a national meeting. A number of new groups have become established over the past two years, including Armidale on the New Eng-

land Tablelands, Brisbane and Jervis Bay. Recently, a long-established group in Bridgetown, WA

in true style, FoE did much of the 'behind the scenes' work of the Jabiluka campaign, including much of the organising of buses to the blockade camp, and continues to be fundamentally involved in the campaign. The other key events for FoE in 1998 have been the hosting of the FoE International annual general meeting and the second Global Survival and Indigenous Rights conference, both to be held in Melbourne in late November. Although FoE Australia has been active within the FoE International network since it joined in 1974, the last few years has seen a steadily increasing level of involvement in global activities.

This has been facilitated by FoE Australia's membership of the FoE International executive committee and also increased interest among FoE Australia campaigners in the international campaigns. FoE International is similar in structure to its member group in Australia. It is a federation of independent groups that meet certain membership criteria and agree to work on issues of shared interest. This makes it unique among the global environmental non-government organisations which tend to have centralised structures.

A secretariat, based in Amsterdam, provides support to FoE member groups and, combined with the executive committee and the coordinators of the international campaigns and programs, provides leadership and direction at the international level without undermining the campaigning of national groups. With more than 4,500 local groups comprising the federation, FoE International is a remarkable example of local activity with a strong global perspective. FoE currently has member groups in 58 countries and continues to grow each year.

Editorial

Chain Reaction has been an institution in the Australian environmental movement since it was first published in 1975. Over the years it has focused on providing in-depth discussion and analysis of environmental and social issues which are under-represented or misrepresented in the mainstream media. It has provided a forum for provoking debate, encouraging involvement and improving communications between various groups within the environmental movement, nationally and internationally.

Chain Reaction earned the respect of the environmental community due to the dedication of its former editors and contributors—it is no small undertaking to attempt to live up to these standards. In continuing *Chain Reaction* we have made a commitment to be accurate, informative, reliable and timely. We aim to create a site for discussion that appeals to, and inspires, Friends of the Earth members as well as other environmental groups and sympathetic

members of the public.

Friends of the Earth Australia member groups are united in their intrinsic belief in an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable future. As an information arm of this network, we will ensure the content of *Chain Reaction* reflects this philosophy and creates links between grassroots and international issues.

In the current Australian political climate it is easy to become disillusioned, as we seem a nation bereft of leaders with vision or understanding of the threats which face the earth and our communities. We are witnessing the continued expansion of the nuclear industry in Australia (see pages 8-17) and the devastation of our wetlands and native forests (pages 34 and 40). Internationally, the World Bank is investing in projects which contribute to climate change (page 20) and widespread mining operations are still destroying the environment and cultures of many nations (page 24).

We don't want *Chain Reaction* to

become a compendium of gloomy forecasts of the future. Rather, we hope that it can be instrumental in bringing alternatives and solutions to the forefront of environmental debates. There are positive outcomes also, such as the progress in the implementation of the Cape York Regional Agreement (page 37), the success of community waste minimisation strategies in metropolitan Sydney (page 46) and, as Daniel Voronoff rightly points out in his article on uranium (page 14), following the October 1998 federal election the Coalition government has a greatly-reduced majority, providing some scope for progressive changes nationally.

Like our predecessors, we are heavily constrained by our lack of finances and assets. Any contributions in the form of donations of office equipment (we need a computer, a printer, a fax, a modem and answering machine) will be greatly appreciated. Spread the word to subscribe. Talk about *Chain Reaction* with your friends, work mates and family. The more people who read *Chain Reaction*, the more likely we are to succeed in influencing public opinion, galvanising public support for issues vital to the long-term well-being of our local, national and global environment.

We welcome feedback and comment regarding the new *Chain Reaction* regarding anything from content to style. We're currently in the process of establishing an office in Ross House, Melbourne CBD, but can be contacted c/o FoE Fitzroy for the time-being. We look forward to your support. Enjoy the mag, and look out for issue number 78 in March 1999.

Tristy, Anna, Barbara, Kulja
Editorial team

Cover photograph

The picture used on the front cover was supplied by Melbourne photographer Andrew Marshall.

Andrew traveled to the Jabiluka blockade in August 1998.

The photograph was taking during the Hiroshima Day action at the mine site. Activists walked from the camp to the mine site at 6 am and, on the anniversary of the bomb being dropped at Hiroshima, everyone lay down and observed a 5 minute silence.

Andrew said the 'silent presence' was a powerful message to the miners who were at the action with bull-dozers.



Prestigious awards acknowledge activists

This year, half of the six prestigious Goldman Environmental Awards were presented to activists engaged in struggles against mining.

Berito Kuwar U'wa (Roberto Cobaria) was awarded for leading his tribe, the U'wa, in their ongoing struggle with Occidental Petroleum in Columbia. The U'wa have threatened collective suicide if Occidental moves forward with plans to drill on



their traditional homelands. Atherton Martin was honoured for his leadership in defeating mining giant BHP's plans to open a copper mine on the Caribbean island of Dominica. Martin successfully organised grassroots opposition to BHP's plan for a mine which would have devastated 10 per cent of the island.

Sven 'Bobby' Peek was recognised for having brought together racially divided groups in order to challenge the mining industry and government regulators in the heavily-industrialised refinery regions of South Africa.

The number of Goldman Awards that went to mining activists this year illustrates the continued threat of large-scale mining worldwide, and honours the relentless efforts of grassroots activists to challenge the industry's unsustainable practices. The FoEI mining campaign congratulates this year's recipients and stands in solidarity with their struggles for more socially just and environmentally sustainable communities.

Source: LINK May-June 1998

Monster-merger, only Antarctica safe from world's largest mining company

British mining giant Rio Tinto recently merged with Australia's CRA to form the world's largest mining company, with more than 200 subsidiaries in over 40 countries. With the exception of Antarctica, Rio Tinto is now present on every continent.

Several Rio Tinto projects have been subject to opposition from human rights and environmental organisations, including Friends of the Earth, groups in several countries. FoE England, Wales and

Northern Ireland (EWNI), for example, has campaigned against Rio Tinto's vast coastal mining project in Madagascar since the tragic accidental death of FoE EWNI campaigns director Andrew Lees in 1995. Lees was on a field trip in Madagascar to examine the potential impacts of this mine, which will produce ilmenite, a mineral sand used to make whitener. FoE EWNI has continued Andrew's work by maintaining pressure on Rio Tinto to behave more transparently and responsibly in this remote area.

Deep-sea exploitation

Manganese, nickel, cobalt and copper deposits lying on the bottom of the sea are new targets for mining companies to exploit. The International Seabed Authority (ISA), set up under UN law, is currently working on a seabed mining code to regulate these activities to be adopted in August. The ISA has already authorised exploration contracts to investors in several countries.

Source: LINK May-June 1998



Activists forced the postponement of the Melbourne annual general meeting of North Ltd shareholders in November.

In Sydney, activists gained entry to the North Ltd shareholders meeting and bombarded the directors with enquiries regarding the companies activities, forcing question time to be cut short.

In January of 1998, Rio Tinto and the Malagasy government signed a mining establishment convention, signifying that national mining laws have been amended in order to accommodate the project. The scheme will be largest-ever mining operation in Madagascar. Yet Rio Tinto has been careful to distance itself from the project, insisting that excavation and even the decision to mine remain years away.

Source: LINK May June 1998

Net effect: paranoid in Port Douglas

Australia's Plastics and Chemical Industries Association has been warned growth in the use of the Internet

poses a threat to industry profits in a climate of growing environmental activism. United States Chamber of

Commerce vice-president, William Kovacs, was speaking at the association's convention in Port Douglas and told delegates the biggest threat to plastics and chemicals, and perhaps all industry, is the ability for anyone to disseminate incorrect information cheaply to the entire world.

He says the use of the Internet by extreme environmentalists and greater amounts of public disclosure law will create fear and allow the sabotage of some of the world's biggest most powerful industries.

Mr Kovacs warns that when the tide changes against industry, industrialised nations will act like countries dominated by religious fundamentalists.



Fool on the Hill snubs UNESCO

Environment minister Senator Hill demonstrated a contempt for the international community and internationally recognised environmental standards when he made a commitment that the Jabiluka uranium mine would proceed even if the Kakadu National Park was placed on the 'World Heritage in Danger' list by UNESCO in December.

Senator Hill has also said the UNESCO mission is unnecessary.

In its time in the Northern Territory the mission heard evidence from the Australian Academy of Science to the effect that the mine is under-designed, the water management system would not work properly in the extreme dampness common in the Northern Territory and that contamination would reach the Ramsar-registered wetlands.

Sydney anti-uranium campaigner, John Hallam, said the mission was shocked with what they saw in the Northern Territory where it was confronted with convincing and solid arguments for listing Kakadu as World Heritage in Danger.

'They have heard evidence from Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney that the mine threatens the most ancient archeological site in Australia. They have heard evidence from the Traditional Owners of the Jabiluka site that the project threatens their culture, which is the most ancient on the planet. And they have heard evidence from former UNESCO consultant Peter Hitchcock that there are severe inadequacies in the environmental assessment process, and that the Jabiluka mine together with other possible projects such as Koongarra will threaten Kakadu's unique natural and cultural heritage values. And they have taken what they have heard most seriously.'

Source: John Hallam, Friends of the Earth Sydney

Desperately seeking support

Dear Humbold,

Centro Humboldt, a Nicaraguan environmental organization, in view of the latest occurrences against our organization for having denounced the Korean lumber company SOLCARSa two months ago which was closed by the Supreme Court of Justice in February of 1998 due to its illegal plywood operations and for cutting down the forests of indigenous communities. The Koreans created the new company named PRADA SA, now with the face of a Nicaraguan company. Our organisation discovered the illegality of their actions and denounced them to the press. We demanded that the corresponding authorities suspend the activities of the company.

Today the authorities are maintaining an administrative silence and the company has continued to work illegally for over a month. We the member organisations of the Forest Network of Nicaragua continue to apply pressure against these illegal measures and we will not stop because the truth is on our side.

Nevertheless, the company filed a legal suit against Centro Humboldt on the 15th of August, accusing us of damaging insults to a Nicaraguan enterprise (Pedro Blandon Moreno). We then introduced an appeal to the suit a week ago. However the judge rejected it. We do not doubt now how the power of money is working in this case. We have also been victims of slander by the company in paid spots in the press, and by persecution against colleagues of our organisation.

Therefore, we are asking for your signatures or your message of support as we face this situation. This is the first time in the history of Nicaragua that a transnational company has sued an organisation. We ask that members of your organisation or those who are clear about the challenge of confronting the powerful to pledge your support, knowing that our power is not money but the truth.

You may send e-mails to our office, or via fax at + 505 249 2903 or + 505 2600136. Centro Humboldt

Climate change causes tragedy in Central America

Human contributions such as large scale clearance of forests, international debt and possible human-induced climate change, caused the horrific scale of the Central American hurricane disaster to be far worse than it need have been, according to Friends of the Earth International.

Hurricane Mitch struck Honduras in November 1998 killing hundreds of thousands of people. Survivors face a future without crops, adequate medical aid, and in many instances, clean drinking water.

FoEI is demanding urgent international action including the cancellation of third world debts and major cuts in the release of climate changing gases.

Central America once had about 500,000 km² of forest cover, by the late 1980s this had fallen to an estimated 90,000 km². Thirty per cent of Honduras' forest has been lost since 1960 with more than 800 km² being lost every year to ranch land, banana plantations, small farms and fuelwood collection. The expansion of fruit plantations is partly a result of the need to earn foreign exchange to repay debt.

The combined debt of Honduras and Nicaragua is \$US10.1 billion requiring that 20 per cent a 39 per cent, respectively, of each country's earnings be spent on debt repayment every year.

FoEI believes the severity of recent rains is almost unprecedented and fits predictions of the consequences of human-induced climate change.

Source: Friends of the Earth International

When the workers say yes to the earth...who can say no?

Currently representatives from green groups and union have been meeting to initiate an all unions green caucus. The green union will be non-factional and non-interventionist but will allow for greater co-operation between environmental groups and industry. The caucus presents an opportunity for formally opposed sectors of the community to come together and find solutions to our modern ecological crisis. It provides a fresh look and a new vision that will seize opportunities.

The caucus hopes to provide unions with an international database

which will provide current environmental information and encourage contact and integration between union, environmental groups, scientists, academics and community activists. The union hopes to provide support and direction to potentially huge industries such as solar technology.

Initiators of the Earth Worker Union include Dean Mighell, Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, Leigh Hubbard, Secretary of Trades Hall, Loris Duclos, Australian Nurses Federation Member and Aunt Betty Kind, Dhaurwurrong Elder. Cam

Walker, Friends of the Earth representative commented that the importance of the union was that it created a united force.

'Conservationists and unionists are natural allies. Both the environment and worker rights are suffering because economic rationalism tells us that only profits matter, that all other values are irrelevant to the dominant model.'

For more information contact: Earth Worker, PO Box 2027, Lygon Street, North Brunswick VIC 3057. Source: Earth Worker, Volume 1, Issue 1, April 1998.

Three-eyed deadly delicacy

Flounder, sole and mussels in Britain's largest estuary are contaminated with levels of radioactive tritium hundreds of times higher than expected. Tritium is discharged in the Severn Estuary by a factory in Cardiff run by Nycomed Amersham to make isotopes for the pharmaceuticals industry. British government scientists had assumed that the concentrations of tritium per kilogram of fish in the area would be the same as those in each litre of seawater.

But scientists at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) have found that this assumption was mistaken. Although levels of tritium in the seawater are less than one hundred becquerels per litre, those in flounder, sole and mussels were hundreds of times higher.

Although the reasons for the high levels of contamination are still under investigation, MAFF and environment agency scientists suspect that the precise chemical composition of some of the 700 tritium compounds manufactured at the Cardiff plant somehow made it more likely that the fish would eat them.

MAFF was alerted to the problem last year by Barry Lambert a radio biologist at St Bartholomew's medical school in London who has been studying tritium emissions. He says that people eating large quantities of fish from the Severn Estuary could receive a quarter or more of internationally accepted dose limits from this source alone.

Source: New Scientist 31 October 1998.

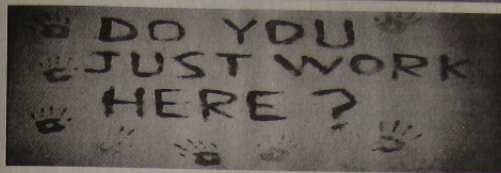
Scientists claim no hope for forest hot-spots

Attempts to save most of the world's tropical rainforest are doomed to failure and should probably be abandoned, claim a group of scientists from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy who have mapped tropical deforestation 'hot spots' for the first time.

The report, which was published this month, comes from the research centre's Tropical East Coast System Environment Observation by Satellite project, which monitors deforestation in detail from space. Their conclusions on their selected areas were dire. They claimed there is no hope of stopping deforestation by logging companies and farmers in major rainforest regions such as Indonesia or much of the Brazilian Amazon. Parts of the rainforests of the central Amazon Basin, Congo and New Guinea might be saved, however, and priority should be given to identifying and protecting areas of high biodiversity in these zones.

Tim Whitmore, a forestry scientist from the University of Cambridge, and one of the team who compiled the report, named the Indonesian island of Sumatra as the hottest of the deforestation 'hot spots'. An island twice the size of Britain, it has lost virtually all its lowland forests in just 25 years. The team found that the driving forces behind the deforestation differed between regions, with South East Asia using the land for commercial crops, Brazil using the Amazon for cattle pastures and central Africa being dominated by logging companies.

Source: New Scientist, 31 October 1998



Dividends equal destruction: shareholder activism

More and more campaigners are adding the tactic of shareholder activism to their repertoire. Buying even a single stock allows activists access to corporate shareholder, who can then be educated about corporate environmental and human rights violations. To date, pressure from the inside has been a successful strategy for forcing certain concessions from companies. In recent months, human rights and environmental activists from around the world have taken their grievances with multinational oil and mining companies into the corporations' annual shareholders' meetings.

In Washington DC, speeches on the company's Nigerian operations by an exiled activist, human rights advocates and shareholders forced Mobil to agree to urge the country's military government to release jailed labour leaders. At Freeport McMoRan's annual meeting in New Orleans, CEO Jim Bob Moffet grudgingly listened to shareholders' concerns about human rights abuses connected with the company's Grasberg gold mine in Irian Jaya. Rio Tinto's shareholder meetings in both London and Melbourne were heavily attended by activists, including union representatives, and 'stakeholder' reports were widely distributed. At Arco's meeting in the US, a university student spoke out about the company's investment in Burma, which is currently under military dictatorship while the elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains under

house arrest. At Occidental Petroleum's meeting in Los Angeles, an U'wa leader from Colombia spoke to shareholders and sang a creation song about the earth, moon and stars. Occidental plans to drill for oil beneath the sacred land of the U'wa in the cloud forests; the tribe has threatened to commit mass suicide if the project goes ahead.

Source: LINK Project Underground May-June 1998



Fighting an uphill battle. Forest activists around the world continue to protect their native forests despite claims that their efforts are futile.

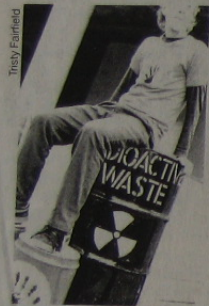
THESE PICTURES

NATIONAL FOREST UNION

Reclaim the future

Friends of the Earth anti-uranium campaigner Sarojini Krishnapillai explains the importance of continued opposition to nuclear industry activities

Tosky Fairfield



Sarojini Krishnapillai
FoE Fitzroy Anti-Uranium Collective

the blockade grew as the Australian government's disregard for environmental and human rights safeguards became more apparent. The granting of environmental approval for the Jabiluka project by Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill, despite contrary advice from his own department, exemplifies the Federal government's attitude to its obligation to protect Kakadu's natural and cultural significance.

Mirrarr are continuing their fight to protect their ancestral homelands by pursuing a range of legal and international activities. Mirrarr representatives will be attending the World Heritage meeting in Kyoto. This follows the visit to Australia by a high level World Heritage Bureau delegation in October 1998, to investigate the threats posed to Kakadu by the Jabiluka development and to determine whether Kakadu should be placed on the World Heritage in Danger listing.

Eight months, almost 3,000 people and 527 arrests later, the Jabiluka blockade packed up at the end of October 1998. Located about 17 km from the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine, the camp was the focus of much activity throughout 1998. The camp was established in March following the invitation by the senior Traditional Owner of the Jabiluka region, Yvonne Margarula.

"Mirrarr people have fought to protect country and people from uranium mining for many years. Now we are defending our country against the proposed Jabiluka development. We invite you to come to our country to join the struggle to uphold the cultural and environmental values of Kakadu," Yvonne Margarula said.

Despite an incomplete and inadequate approvals process, mining proponent Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) began construction at Jabiluka in June this year. During July almost 600 people from all over Australia (plus international visitors) were at Jabiluka camp. Support for

The Federal Coalition government got a taste of what most Australians think of its pro-nuclear push with the overwhelming response to the national anti-Jabiluka campaign. With the re-election of the Howard government, anti-nuclear activism needs to again step up a gear. The proposed Beverley uranium project (located in South Australia's far-North) is likely to receive Commonwealth approval by the end of 1998. This is despite project proponent Heathgate Resources (100 per cent owned by United States nuclear utility General Atomics) operating a 'trial mine' at

Beverley since 2 January 1998—six months before even a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released. The Honeymoon proposal, also operating without Commonwealth environmental approvals, is similarly set to be approved in the coming months.

The Jabiluka campaign drew thousands of people on to the streets around the country, in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Byron Bay, Lismore, Wagga Wagga, Newcastle, Wollongong, Perth, Darwin, Canberra and Hobart—all of which have groups working on Jabiluka, land rights and uranium issues. The Coalition government's push for new uranium mines, plans for a replacement research reactor at Lucas Heights and the proposed radioactive waste dump in South Australia will be met with opposition at every step along the way. Australian anti-nuclear activists are looking to their European counterparts to see how, after years of constant opposition, nuclear power is on the wane. Germany has committed to a complete cessation of nuclear power dependence over the next decade, withdrawing a number of reprocessing contracts and giving hope to Australian activists campaigning for European nations to boycott Australian uranium.

Friends of the Earth Fitzroy will be hosting the Nuclear Free Australia Forum (5-6 December 1998) to consolidate the work of a burgeoning anti-nuclear movement, develop strategies for action and determine how to further strengthen the indigenous, environmental, international and economic strands of Australian anti-nuclear campaigns. Please contact FoE Fitzroy for more information on (03) 9419 8700.

Hiroshima Day Action



Photographer:
Andrew Marshall

All photographs were taken at the Hiroshima Day action at the Jabiluka mine site.



How on Earth?

An historical account of Jabiluka

John Hallam
Uranium activist, FoE Sydney

The Jabiluka uranium deposit is one of the largest uranium deposit in the world, with 90,000 tonnes 'mineable reserves' of uranium in roughly 20 million tonnes of ore. It is exceeded in size only by a deposit in Canada, and by the world's largest uranium deposit, the Roxby Downs deposit, which at around 360,000 tonnes is the largest on the planet by a factor of three.

The Jabiluka deposit joins the Ranger and Koongarra deposits located in Kakadu National Park. Technically, the Jabiluka project isn't 'in' the park, since the mining leases in which the Ranger, Jabiluka, and Koongarra uranium deposits are situated were excluded from the park at the time that Stage 1 of the park was proclaimed in 1982. However, the land covered by the mining leases is just as environmentally sensitive and valuable, just as wild and beautiful, and just as archaeologically, culturally, and spiritually valuable as the rest of Kakadu National Park. In the words of uranium campaigner Dave Sweeney, 'It's got the full trifecta—it's a uranium mine, an Aboriginal Land, in a national park.'

Kakadu National Park—one of only 19 places on the planet that are registered as being of World Heritage value under both the natural and the cultural criteria of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. (Over 100 places are registered as being of World Heritage significance altogether.) In fact Kakadu National Park is registered as of World Heritage value under two cultural criteria, and under three natural criteria. All that is usually required for it to be registered as World Heritage is one criterion.

The Kakadu escarpment and its rock shelters were used by Aboriginals for 60,000 years and they painted literally thousands of pictures in sheltered

places. These now constitute the largest and best-preserved body of rock art in the world, dating from 20,000BC to the present.

Aboriginal rock art sites at Nourlangie Rock, close to the Koongarra uranium deposit that French company COGEMA wishes to develop, and at Ubirr, are currently accessible to tourists. However, much of the heritage value of Kakadu is due to some 196 known art sites (there may be more) on the area of the Jabiluka Mining lease itself.

In the late 1960s uranium was discovered at the Ranger site near the sacred mountain of Mt Brockman by Peko-Walsend and Electrolytic Zinc in cooperation with the Atomic Energy Commission, at Jabiluka by Pancontinental Mining Co and Getty Oil, at Koongarra by Noranda of Canada and at Narbarlek in Arnhem Land by Queensland Mines.

An environmental inquiry, the Ranger uranium inquiry, the largest, longest-running, most controversial, and most detailed in Australia's history, was held over 1975-77 to determine what the future of the region should be. It was made memorable by the participation of Friends of the Earth, which showed that 'a mob of hippies' could get the better of big men in expensive suits with expensive lawyers, and make fools of them. Essentially, the Ranger Royal Commission as it was titled, refrained from recommending outright that uranium mining take place. Instead, what it did was to specify a series of stringent conditions that would have

to be satisfied if uranium were to be mined, without saying that it should be mined.

Crucially, the Ranger inquiry recommended that the land of the region be given legally to the Aboriginal people who had been living there since time immemorial, and then leased back to the national parks service as a national park.

While the Ranger inquiry had been fair and just, what followed was anything but. After 1977, Ranger uranium mining, which became Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), forced Aboriginal owners of that land to negotiate an agreement whereby the Ranger uranium deposit could be mined. The Northern Land Council was told that if it did not negotiate to allow mining to take place, the entire Land Rights Act could be abolished. Mining commenced in 1982. Later on, the Northern Land Council was to sue ERA, claiming that the entire agreement was null and void because it had been bought about by 'unconscionable conduct' and was the result of duress, not choice.

In 1982, Pancontinental Mining by a mixture of trickery, bribery, and standover tactics, forced an agreement to allow mining from the Mirrar people. The words of the then senior traditional owner, Toby Gangali, 'I can't fight any more' were interpreted as 'consent'. The current traditional owners have led the fight to prevent the Jabiluka mine.

Pancontinental Mining sold its interest in the Jabiluka deposit to ERA which immediately started lobbying the then Labor government to allow it to mine, contrary to Labor Party policy. When, in 1996, the Coalition government was elected, preparations to mine started immediately.

Interviewed immediately before the

1996 election that made him Prime Minister, John Howard was asked if he would allow mining to take place in Kakadu. His thoroughly dishonest reply was that he thought that environmental considerations would rule it out. He was then the first to claim that the mining leases, while completely surrounded by Stage 1 of Kakadu on all sides, were not 'in' the national park, they were merely surrounded by it.

Since that time, the fight to save Kakadu from mining not only at Jabiluka, but also at Koongarra, has taken on global proportions.

In 1997, a group of students went up there to mount a protest. In March 1998 this became the 'blockade' of the mine site, at which around 500 people have been arrested.

The most recent event in this struggle was the 'strong country' celebration, when some 100 people wearing John Howard masks trespassed on the mining lease and were arrested, giving their names to arresting officers as 'John Howard'. This event got photographic coverage in newspapers in Germany, Sweden, and Lithuania. Previous protests at Jabiluka have been dramatic and confrontational, with complaints of police violence and unfair tactics such as pouring out drinking water belonging to protesters in 40 degree heat. These tactics have resulted in complaints to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Tribunal and to Amnesty International, as well as in a very large number of very angry faxes from Japan, Europe, the United States, and New Zealand, to the Jabiru Police station and to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Protests have also been held in Australia's major cities, with large protest marches being staged in Sydney and Melbourne at regular intervals. In Sydney confrontations have taken place in front of the head offices of

Energy Resources of Australia, while in Melbourne, the offices of ERA's parent company, Norths Limited, (which is also responsible for major woodchipping operations and an environmentally disastrous gold mine) have been occupied twice.

At a political level, the Greens, the Australian Democrats and the Australian Labor Party have pledged to stop the mine, though there has been some hesitation on Labor's part, with the party wanting to afford 'natural justice' to ERA.

The fact that the Labor Party narrowly failed to win the election has led the Government to claim that it has a mandate not only for the Jabiluka project, but for 26 new uranium projects, largely in Western Australia.

In fact, it has absolutely nothing of the kind. Jabiluka is opposed by 67 per cent of the Australian electorate, and actually supported by a mere seven per cent.

The Jabiluka Project has been opposed by a resolution in the European parliament (which this author helped draft), by another resolution in the Australian Senate and by protest actions in Tokyo, Osaka, Seoul, Bonn, Antwerp, Toronto, and Saskatchewan.

The Mirrar people, Traditional Owners of Jabiluka, wrote to the World Heritage Bureau and Committee, asking that the Kakadu National Park be placed on the list of 'World Heritage in Danger', as a result of the impact of uranium mining.

Their letter was followed by a letter to the same effect signed by every environment group in Australia and by a large number of overseas groups. At the last meeting of the World Heritage Bureau, in Paris, Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula, Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation director Jacqui Katona, and Wilderness Society Campaign Director Alec Marr were present and lobbied bureau members to place

Kakadu on the 'in danger' list. At the same time, the Bureau's fax machines in its Paris office were jammed by an 'unprecedented' amount of correspondence asking for the same thing, from groups from India to Japan to Europe to Brazil.

As a result, the World Heritage Committee sent a High Level Inspection team, led by its chairperson Professor Francesco Francioni and the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Berndt Von Droste, which after a postponement by the Australian government, arrived in late October 1998. The inspection team will prepare a report and recommendations that will be presented to the next meeting of the Bureau and Committee in Kyoto in late November/early December 1998. We are asking everyone who can, to write or fax Professor Francesco Francioni and Von Droste, at the World Heritage Centre in Paris, (+33 1 456 85570) asking them to list Kakadu as World Heritage in Danger.

If listed, Kakadu will join the ancient cities of Jerusalem and Dubrovnik, the Yellowstone and Everglades National parks in the US, the Royal Palaces of Abomey in Benin, the famous Polish salt mine at Wieliczka, Angkor Wat, Timbuktu, and many other wonderful places which are in the process of destruction.

The nuclear fuel cycle begins in places like this, owned as Kakadu is by indigenous peoples, it passes through the stage of use in reactors represented by Temelin, Mochovce, and R4K2, and then ends up as either high level nuclear waste or weapons—which are also tested on indigenous peoples' land, or will be disposed of on the land of indigenous peoples (or at Gorleben). The fight to save Kakadu from uranium mining won't go away.

The scars don't show

Gavin Mudd explains the environmental consequences of In Situ Leach Uranium Mining

Gavin Mudd
FoE (Fitzroy)/ACF

The alternative mining technique of In Situ Leaching (ISL), often referred to as Solution Mining, is becoming an increasingly favoured method for the extraction of uranium across the world. This is primarily due to its low capital and operating costs compared to conventional mining. However, little is known about the environmental performance of these facilities worldwide, and to date companies have been able to exploit this lack of knowledge to promote the method as 'environmentally benign'.

Friends of Earth (Fitzroy) and the Australian Conservation Foundation commissioned myself, as an Environmental Hydrogeologist, to study the performance and environmental impacts of ISL mines worldwide, in order to contribute to the debate about current ISL uranium mining proposals in South Australia and to critique industry justifications of the ISL technique. The report, released in July 1998, counters the misinformation being circulated by the mining industry regarding the safety and impact of the ISL technique.

The ISL process involves drilling a series of groundwater bores (or wells) into a uranium deposit, injecting and extracting corrosive chemicals to dissolve the uranium *in situ* within the ore zone, and attempting to control their movement in order to pump back the uranium-laden solutions. The method can only be applied to uranium deposits located within a groundwater system or confined aquifer, commonly in palaeochannel deposits (old buried river beds).

Although the ISL concept is presented in simplified diagrams by the nuclear industry, the reality of many geologic systems is that they are

inherently complex and not easily predictable—a fact readily demonstrated by any of the standard groundwater texts. One of the most difficult problems of an ISL mine is what they term an 'excursion', where the toxic and dangerous mining solutions escape outside the active mining zone, and thereby the ability of the mine operators to control the movement of those solutions is much more difficult. Cleaning up excursions can be technically 'challenging', and can lead to direct contamination of surrounding groundwater.

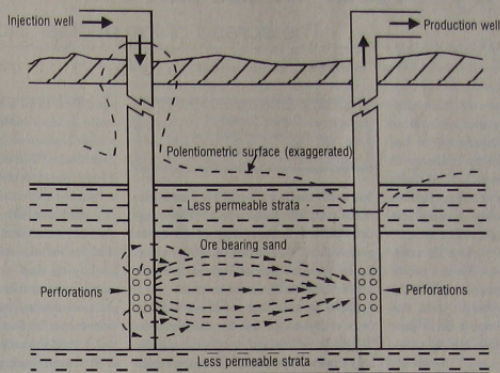
There are a range of options for the chemistry of the mining solutions. Either acidic or alkaline chemical agents can be used in conjunction with an oxidising agent to dissolve or solubilise the uranium from its mineral state to a soluble or water phase. Typical oxidising agents include oxygen or hydrogen peroxide, while alkaline agents include ammonia or sodium-bicarbonate or carbon dioxide. The most common acid used is sulphuric acid, although nitric acid has been trialled at select sites or in laboratory tests.

The chemistry used is one of the most critical aspects in determining potential environmental impacts and long-term changes to groundwater quality. The use of acidic solutions will mobilise high levels of heavy metals, such as cadmium, strontium, lead and chromium among others, while alkaline solutions tend to mobilise only a select few heavy metals such as selenium and molybdenum. The ability to restore the groundwater

to its pre-mining water quality after ISL mining is arguably easier at sites that used alkaline solution chemistry, although by mid-1997 the regulators in Wyoming, USA, were yet to receive and review the full-scale restoration of groundwater quality at many former commercial ISL mines. Despite this fact, there have also been recent amendments to the licences at ISL mines undergoing decommissioning in Texas where cleanup standards were relaxed (for example: Clay West, Holiday and O'Hern) due to the difficulty of returning the pre-mining environmental quality to the groundwater system that was mined.

A review of the available literature on ISL mines across the world, compiled for the ISL report, can easily counter the many myths promulgated about ISL uranium mining. Whether one examines the USA, Germany, the CIS and associated states, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Australia or new ISL projects emerging across Asia, the truth remains the same—the ISL technique merely treats groundwater as a sacrifice zone. The natural geologic controls that prevented migration of uranium and heavy metals before ISL mining are removed by the nature of the mining process, and the conditions after mining persist that allow enhanced migration of radionuclides and heavy metals.

The problem remains out of sight and therefore out of mind. The use of sulphuric acid solutions at ISL mines across Eastern Europe, as well as a callous disregard for sensible environmental management, has led to many seriously radiologically and heavy metals-



contaminated sites. Perhaps the most severe example can be found at Straz pod Ralskem, where up to 200 billion litres of groundwater is contaminated. Restoration of the site is expected to take several decades or even centuries. Many recurring environmental problems of solution escapes (excursions) and difficult restoration have also been documented at ISL sites across Texas and Wyoming in the USA. A detailed review of many of these ISL projects is presented within the report.

Australian mines have experienced the same problems associated with ISL mining as other sites around the world, especially at the controversial Honeymoon deposit in South Australia during pilot scale trials in the early 1980s and at Manyingee in Western Australia through 1985.

The Honeymoon pilot project used sulphuric acid in conjunction with ferric sulphate as the oxidising agent. The wells and aquifer experienced significant blockages due to the minerals jarosite and gypsum precipitating, lowering the effi-

ciency of the leaching process and directly impacting operational capacity as well as leading to enhanced excursions and environmental problems. The aquifers in the vicinity of Honeymoon are known to be hydraulically connected to aquifers used by local pastoralists for stock purposes.

The election of the Howard Coalition government to Federal parliament in Australia in March 1996 saw the resurrection of the Honeymoon Project in 1997 by Canadian Southern Cross Resources. The new owner of the nearby Beverley deposit, Heathgate Resources (a fully owned subsidiary of nuclear multinational General Atomic of the USA), established Beverley as a prospective new uranium mine following the controversial Jabiluka proposal in 1996. By 1998 new trials 'mines' were established at Honeymoon and for the first time at Beverley. Heathgate have finally released their Draft and Supplementary Environmental Impact Statements for the proposed Beverley Uranium Project and are keen to establish an operating

uranium mine as soon as possible. The new Honeymoon EIS is due any day. Both companies are refusing to rehabilitate their sites after mining and the state and commonwealth regulatory bodies continue to believe the weak arguments promulgated by proponents.

The ISL report, 154 pages in total, documents all of the above in detail with extensive use of graphics and diagrams as well as clear and concise text. The report is written to be understandable by all interested persons and should provide a good critique of potential hydrogeological issues at other uranium mining operations. The report is available (for a small fee) in hard copy or electronic Acrobat format. For those interested in a copy, please visit and follow the links:

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~seaus/>

The technique of In Situ Leach Uranium mining is not controllable, is inherently unsafe, is unlikely to be able to meet 'strict environmental controls' and is *not* an environmentally benign method of uranium mining.

If I only had a brain

The spread of the nuclear industry in Oz

With the return of the Coalition to government there is no impediment at a Federal level to the expansion of the nuclear industry in Australia. Development of Jabiluka continues; the expansion of operations at Roxby Downs is nearly complete; dozens of uranium deposits around Australia have been marked for environmental impact assessment; a radioactive waste dump is proposed for Billa Kalina in South Australia; and the approvals process advances for a new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights. Arguably, these events signal the greatest growth of the nuclear industry in Australia since the bomb was dropped at Maralinga.

This circumstance represents a significant challenge to environmental and indigenous solidarity activists and demands some considered planning to map out a coordinated response on a national and international level. With this in mind, Friends of the Earth Fitzroy will be hosting a Nuclear Free Australia Forum in Melbourne on 5-6 December. We invite all concerned activists to attend. Here is a summarised update on the recent state of play in the nuclear industry around the nation, and some comment mooted in the spirit of suggested directions.

Nuclear waste dump

The process of evaluating the need and placement of a nuclear waste dump has been progressing for nearly a decade. The evaluation process has mostly focused on site selection and predictably shies away from examining the justification for the waste dump.

Australia produces about 60 cubic metres of radioactive waste annually. Over the past 40 years Australia has accumulated nearly 3,500 cubic metres of low level and short-lived intermediate level radioactive waste, and 200

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Anti-Uranium Collective
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300 cubic metres of long-lived intermediate and high level waste.¹ These figures exclude radioactive tailings waste generated by uranium mining which takes the amounts of wastes into the hundreds of millions of tonnes.²

These wastes are produced mainly from radioisotope use for diagnosis in hospitals, or medical or other research, and the contamination of instruments and other materials such as disposable protective clothing which arise as a result. There are also significant quantities of intermediate and high level wastes generated by the research nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights, for example, 1,600 highly radioactive spent fuel rods which are yet to be adequately stored.

The proposal, largely driven by the Department of Resource Sciences, offers a series of flimsy rationalisations for a remote nuclear waste dump. 'Community concern' a euphemistic phrase which does not at all reflect any community input is commonly cited, and works mainly as a ruse for hospitals and other research facilities to cheaply dispose of their nuclear wastes. Typically, it is argued that institutions which create the nuclear waste should not be burdened with the responsibility of safely storing it and for this reason it should be disposed of in a remote region. Invariably this will mean that another small, under resourced, probably Indigenous community, will be the recipient of the nation's nuclear wastes.

Phase three of the Site Selection Process, after a 'rigorous evaluation of the Australian continent against a set of technical and social criteria' has

identified Billa Kalina in South Australia as 'a suitable region' for the proposed National Radioactive Waste Repository. This area of 67,000 square kilometres stretches from Cooper Pedy to Maree to the south of Woomera. The proposed method of disposal is 'near surface', a commonly used technique of shallow burial, with nothing more than packaging and a few layers of soil, maybe some concrete, to shield radioactive contents from people and the environment. In fact the bureau openly states that the proposed design will not even prevent leakage of water. Nor will it prevent human, animal and plant intrusion.⁴

Under the prevailing ideology of economic rationalism, concerns for the bottom line have clearly over-ruled attention to impacts on the health of nearby communities and environmental contamination. There are some concerns that the repository may be privatised and that the national facility could become the basis for an industry which accepts international nuclear waste.

Friends of the Earth has always advocated that the remote disposal option amounts to irresponsible abandonment of radioactive waste. Rather, institutions which create the waste should be responsible for its safe storage. This will encourage waste minimisation and the adoption of alternative technologies. Transportation of wastes to remote areas only enhances dangers by exposing communities along the route to risk of spillage due to accidents. There is a need on behalf of these organisations to frankly acknowledge that some of the isotopes, even if they are in small quantities, are poisonous for hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. This will require the fostering of a long-term guardianship culture based on sound

expertise to prevent the wastes from becoming bio-available.

A new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights

The approval process for a new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights is well underway. Once again due process of impact evaluation is designed more to exclude the concerns of local residents and other critics and enhance the probability of a research reactor being built in Western Sydney.

The current research reactor was supplied by the British government to Australia in exchange for allowing the use of sites around the continent for nuclear weapons testing and other military experimental use of fissile materials. It is reaching its use-by date and will have to be decommissioned within the next five years.

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) currently administers and runs the Hi Flux research reactor and are arguing strongly, with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Safeguards Office, for a new facility to be built. Their primary arguments revolve around the need to provide radioisotopes for medical diagnosis and a range of other research and industrial applications for the local and possibly international market.⁵ However, the facts cast doubt over these 'altruistic' reasons, given that there is a glut of radioisotopes on the world market and that significant advances have been made in alternative technologies which can provide them.⁶ ANSTO argues that the facility will provide training and expertise in nuclear technology, a spinoff being the ability to make an effective contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The proposed reactor will cost in excess of \$500 million and it has been argued that the concentration of this resource in one field of science is un-

reasonable: we can send scientists to train at overseas nuclear facilities at far less expense. Further, this resource could provide much needed research dollars for installing cyclotron and other non-fissile technologies that can produce medical isotopes much more cleanly.⁷

Our contribution to nuclear disarmament and global security in general is best made by employing more effective diplomatic engagement. Indeed, a nuclear reactor will only add to a sense of regional insecurity as it is a potential source of weapons production.⁸ None of the reasons against the new reactor have been properly addressed and local public opinion polls regularly show that the proposal is deeply unpopular. A stark example of how local feeling is sidelined is shown by the \$6 million given by the Federal government to ANSTO to help it prepare its Environmental Impact Statement advocating the reactor, whereas funding has been flatly refused to community groups to prepare an independent assessment.⁹

Uranium mining

Uranium mining has long been Australia's most significant contribution to the nuclear industry. We have the world's largest reserves, however most of it is undeveloped and our market share does not reflect what the mining industry regards as the 'bonanza potential' of this mineral.

The fact that Australia supplies the raw material for the most lethal industrial process known to humanity has come into prominence once again with the push to develop the Jabiluka deposit in Kakadu National Park. The combination of clear and unequivocal Mirrar opposition, that Jabiluka is a uranium mine and that the development threatens the unique cultural and natural values which underpins World Heritage Listing have helped to catapult the issue into prominence.

The Jabiluka development was made possible with the election of the Coalition to government in 1996 when they declared that uranium was to be treated like every other mineral and that proposals would be assessed on individual 'environmental and economic merit'.¹⁰ It is also made possible by layers of social, institutional and legislative instruments which have been progressively devised to dispossess Aboriginal people from their land for the past 200 years. It remains necessary for environmentalists to maintain and enhance this perspective as we address the push to expand the uranium mining industry by the current government.

The cultural and historical conditions at Jabiluka are found throughout Australia, making Indigenous communities vulnerable to corporate machinations of any kind, be they uranium miners or otherwise. The corporate impact of uranium mining on, for example, the Kokotha people and Arabunna people of South Australia is a recent manifestation of a continuous process of dispossession. The fact that Western Mining Company exercises a virtual fiefdom over Kokotha and Arabunna country is made possible by legislative measures such as the Roxby Downs Indenture Ratification Act, giving WMC powers to proceed with impunity and secrecy. Similar circumstances are well advanced for the Andymathanya community who are now host to the Beverley and Honeycomb pilot uranium mines and are likely to be replicated among the Martu communities of Western Australia. All of these developments are made possible by the fundamental human rights abuse of dispossession: uranium mining is another manifestation and instrument of this historical transgression. As environmentalists we must proceed from a recognition and analysis of this historical context, that the survival of Indigenous commu-

If I only had a brain

nities with uranium on their land is under threat not only because of radioactive contamination, but because of the historical and political exercise of power which allows radioactive exposure to occur.

There is nothing particularly new in these statements, Friends of the Earth recognises and supports Indigenous sovereignty, activists regularly travel to country and meet with communities, some of us have long-standing friendships and working affiliations. The barriers to working closely and effectively with Indigenous communities are not just cultural, but more often revolve around the dire lack of resources to do so. Hopefully as activists come together to fight the expansion of uranium mining we can put in place resources which are specifically allocated for the purpose of facilitating face-to-face communication and ideally long-term support for communities to fight back. It is incumbent on Friends of the Earth to convince other environmental organisations which take up the fight against uranium mining that these resources should be made available as a matter of the highest priority. We should promote the

understanding that our ability to end uranium mining rests on our willingness as a movement to support Indigenous rights to country. Indeed, this is the case for any environmental struggle. What we must avoid is that by ignoring this perspective we become part of the problem, by not acknowledging and actively addressing the historical context and its instrumentalities we risk acting disrespectfully towards Indigenous people and disadvantaging what may become an important social alliance between environmentalists and the people whose country this is.

Post election

The news is not all bad. The re-election of the Coalition to government is a disadvantage but isn't a great surprise. Perhaps of greatest immediate significance in this arena is the loss of the West Australian Greens Senate seat which will have real impacts upon resources and access for non-government organisations.

Quite apart from Dee Margetts being a strong voice in the Senate on the issues of uranium mining, the nuclear industry and land rights. The fact remains that the Coalition is a very much

reduced parliamentary force. Their majority is based on a slim margin which is a ripe opportunity for the anti-nuclear campaign to exploit. It remains our task to target communities in marginal seats and inform them of developments in the nuclear industry. By encouraging and supporting local activism we will be able to raise the profile of the issue, and sensitise Members of Parliament to the probability that the nuclear option is an electoral liability. In combination with other campaign tactics this can play an important part in slowing approvals processes as key government decision-makers become aware of the electoral disadvantages pro-development policies will create. It also fulfils the ongoing need for environmental organisations to maintain and extend outreach and involvement, and raise their profile as a demonstrably active part of the community.

International trends

There continues to be good signs worldwide. The nuclear power industry continues to decline, the option is widely regarded as too expensive and dangerous. In Germany, the newly formed coalition between the Greens and Social Democrats is based on the condition that the nuclear industry will be phased out, effective immediately. This has resulted in the cancellation of re-processing contracts worth US\$1.4 billion with France and the United Kingdom. It also strengthens the likelihood of giving teeth to a European parliamentary resolution banning the import of uranium from sources which involve human rights abuses on Indigenous people. Both French and German nuclear utilities import uranium mined at Ranger in Kakadu and Roxby Downs in South Australia.

The London-based Uranium Institute, a nuclear industry funded lobby group, announced that uranium prices will continue to decline for the forese-



Sandy Schellema



Sandy Schellema

able future due to the surplus of fissile materials from decommissioned nuclear weapons.¹¹ This casts umbrage over the medium and long-term viability of the uranium industry, which in conjunction with campaigns targeting shareholders and institutional investors, has real potential to halt the industry in its tracks. The news certainly undercuts the 'bonanza' propaganda emanating from the mining lobby of late, and should give heart to those activists who thought the fight was over because mine infrastructure is being developed or expanded.

Nuclear free Australia forum

Now is as good a time as any for activists and organisational representatives to come together with a view to sharing information and mapping a common direction. At the very least the forum should provide a real opportunity to enhance communication between groups and affirm ways in which we can compliment our strengths and minimise weaknesses. It is our hope that the forum will be a step towards well resourced support of Indigenous communities under the hammer from uranium mining and add further momentum to growing anti-nuclear activism in Australia. See you there!

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Nuclear Free Australia Forum 5-6 December 1998 Melbourne

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Cost: Saturday & Sunday, \$18 concession, \$30 waged
One day only: \$10 concession, \$20 waged
Please register by 23 November 1998

When monetary logic doesn't make sense

Ricardo Navarro in Australia for the FoE International AGM

At the recent Working Group for Indigenous Populations at the United Nations, Melbourne-based aboriginal activist, Mick Dodson, commented that the most beneficial and uplifting aspect of the gathering was to be together with indigenous people from all over the world, united and exchanging ideas. The people wore different clothes, spoke in different languages or with different accents and their homes had different names. But the stories and the sufferings were the same. We were all part of a world community...spanning the planet. We had gathered there united.'

Anna Burlow

The Friends of the Earth International (FoE) AGM holds the same insights and presents the same opportunities for environmentalists around the world. With over 40 delegates representing 35 countries, predominantly from South and Central America, East and Western Europe and East Africa, the FoE AGM is an important opportunity to consolidate, to exchange ideas on effective campaign actions, to discuss issues in a forum that provides a diversity of ideas and perceptions and ultimately to see that around the world we are all united in a common cause.

Although environmentalists have always been aware of the 'bigger picture', the importance of 'globalising' our efforts and campaigns has become imperative. With the advent of transnational corporations, the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment and increased government cooperation, it is necessary for our local, national and international environmental campaigns and groups to link their efforts. The beauty of environmental globalisation is the consistent emphasis on the individual at the 'grass roots' level.

If anything, FoEi can be a shining example to corporate and government entities that excluding the individual and community does not have to be a prerequisite of the globalisation movement.

However, Cam Walker, National Liaison Officer of FoE Australia, observes that

gatherings such as the AGM are essential for Western environmental groups in understanding that, although there exists a common cause, the contexts in which other FoE groups fight in, often against the same transnational corporations, are very different. Essentially, Walker feels that groups like FoE Australia deal with the 'nice' side of corporations because they are bound by rules and regulations. Environmental groups in other countries predominantly deal with corporations which lack such control, and within political environments that deal harshly, often violently, with activists.

'We are dealing with the same beast under radically different circumstances', Walker said. He argues that the more this imbalance is understood and addressed in campaigns internationally, the more pressure corporations will be under to ensure equitable relationships with FoE groups globally.

Ricardo Navarro was one of the many guests visiting Melbourne both for the Indigenous Conference and the AGM, both held in mid-November 1998. As a Goldman award winner for environmental work, Navarro heads the CESTA institute in El Salvador and his work is concerned primarily with ecological sustainability.

CESTA was founded in 1980, in the midst of the Salvadorean civil war. Its mandate is to carry out 'multi-faceted programs focusing on public education, political change and community development'. Navarro sees the FoEi AGM as 'essential' to CESTA's work

'On the one hand it provides us with knowledge and expertise, on the other hand the environmental struggle in El Salvador sometimes needs international solidarity to discourage violent reactions that might occur in El Salvador', Navarro said.

Navarro considers the development of agreements such as the MAI as attempts to impose the logic of money, worldwide. He

argues that monetary logic is the most pervasive force against the environment and the community because of its 'egotistical, individualistic, opportunistic nature' and short-sighted reliance on tangible gains.

'Monetary logic contradicts the logic of nature and the result is inevitable crisis such as global warming,' he said.

El Salvador has not only been ravaged by monetary logic but also the effects of militarism, yet CESTA's programs have been a success, and eagerly embraced by the communities involved. It promotes alternative ways of achieving sustainability like the development of soya beans which provide an alternative food source and rejuvenate the soil. In Toluca beach, CESTA has devised a project to protect and rehabilitate four species of marine turtles by involving the local community which traditionally hunted the turtles and collected their eggs. CESTA's programs are successful because they are tailored very much towards a specific community and their needs. CESTA operates with the knowledge that '...a dividing point in the search for sustainability can be local empowerment where communities can feel, each time, more the owners of their own destiny'.

Navarro regards the focus on the community and the grass roots level as essential, yet he has successfully incorporated global involvement in the CESTA organisation.

With the British Columbia Sierra Club in Canada, CESTA has developed GAIA, a group which is predominantly concerned with establishing human and financial links with groups internationally. GAIA has enabled a vast amount of cooperation between El Salvador and Canada, including the creation of 'donation day' during which Canadian workers donated one day's salary for funding CESTA's Reconciliation Forest— a commemoration to the civil war and to future development of ecological sustainability. This cooperation is integral to CESTA's aim because it wishes to generate a

multiplier effect of activism by involving various facets of the community whether they be business, corporations or unions, and educate them to identify the link between their actions and the environment around them. Navarro wants to 'convert the ecological movement into a political force' by integrating ecological sustainability in to everyday life, the decisions we make and the people we support.

Ricardo Navarro spoke on global issues and sustainability at the FoEi AGM. Copies of his speech and other delegates speeches are available at the FoE Fitzroy Office.

FoE International Mission Statement

Friends of the Earth International is a worldwide federation of national environmental organisations. This federation aims to:

- Protect the earth against further deterioration and repair damage inflicted upon the environment by human activities and negligence.
- Preserve the earth's ecological, cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Increase public participation and democratic decision-making. Greater democracy is both an end in itself and is vital to the protection of the environment and the sound management of natural resources.
- Achieve social, economic and political justice and equal access to resources and opportunities for men and women on the local, national, regional and international levels.
- Promote environmentally sustainable development on the local, national, regional and global levels.

Friends of the Earth International has a democratic structure with autonomous national groups which comply with the guidelines established by the federation. Friends of the Earth member groups are united by a common conviction that these aims require both strong grassroots activism and effective national and international campaigning and coordination. They see Friends of the Earth International as a unique and diverse forum to pursue international initiatives, taking advantage of the varied backgrounds and perspectives of its members.

By sharing information, knowledge, skills and resources on both the bilateral and multilateral levels, Friends of the Earth groups support each other's development and strengthen their international campaigns.

The two faces of the World Bank

Climate Change Briefing

Dr Frances Macquire



A crucial world climate summit was held in Buenos Aires on Monday 2 November 1998. The summit is known as COP IV, the Conference of Parties. The details of the discussions were technical and complicated, but the results of the COP IV summit are vital to the future security of the planet. Failure to stop climate change will produce disastrous effects across the world.

Discussions at the COP IV centred around Carbon Trading, Sinks (natural resources such as forests), the Clean Development Mechanism established under the Kyoto agreement, the World Bank and a review of commitments of industrialised countries.

Friends of the Earth International was a major presence at the conference. Below are the World Bank briefings prepared for COP IV by Dr Frances Macquire of FoE.

Dr Francis Macquire calls to the World Bank to account for its investment strategies.

'We must ensure that the policies and operations of the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions take full account of climate change...'

G8 Summit Communiqué 17 May 1998

'The Bank has not succeeded in systematically integrating global environmental objectives...nor has it taken meaningful action to reduce its traditional role as financier of fossil fuel power development.'

Study of the Global Environment Facility's Overall Performance 2 March 1998

The world's rich industrialised nations are trying to avoid domestic action on cutting greenhouse gas

emissions and are expecting to be bailed out through emission credits bought from other countries. At the same time they are fuelling climate change by making fossil fuel use the path of least resistance in these same countries via low-interest loans and guarantees provided through the World Bank.

Friends of the Earth International urges the bank to steadily disengage from investments in conventional fossil fuel exploration, exploitation and use.

The World Bank must create disincentives for fossil fuel use and stronger incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy use to ensure that developing countries are given the capacity to pursue clean, safe and renewable energy paths.

In Kyoto, in December 1997, the world's rich industrialised nations agreed to act to prevent dangerous climate change. Now, the world's richest nations are threatening to derail the Protocol unless poorer, developing countries cut their consumption of fossil fuels as well.

A number of countries, and in particular the United States, have been making these demands while trying to avoid tough domestic action to cut emissions, preferring instead to trade emission credits. The rich nations want to buy emission credits from other countries such as Russia and the Ukraine, as well as making use of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in deals with developing countries.

At the same time the US, along with the other G8 nations, is fuelling climate change through the World Bank, which since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit has spent \$12.4 billion on gas, oil and coal projects in Russia and developing countries.² The greenhouse gas emissions produced by World Bank projects financed since 1992 (9.9 billion tonnes)

will, over their lifetimes, be more than three times the output of greenhouse gases from all OECD countries in 1995 (2.7 billion tonnes of carbon). This is hypocrisy. Regrettably, a similar story can be told about other major G8 institutions such as export credit agencies and the other regional development banks. But the World Bank's record is of particular concern.

Research carried out by the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network and the International Trade Information Service established that nine tenths of World Bank fossil fuel investment ends up enriching multi-national corporations based in the G8 nations, such as Amoco, Chevron, Exxon and Mobil. These companies are leading lobbyists (through the Global Climate Coalition) in resisting official action on climate change, particularly in the US. Despite the insistence by the US that countries such as China take on legal obligations to reduce climate changing pollution, one third of the World Bank's fossil fuel lending during the last year has been spent on coal- and diesel-fired power plants in China. The World Bank's China portfolio for 1992-1998 will eventually emit at least two billion tonnes of CO₂.

Section two

So the rich nations are trying to avoid domestic action, and are expecting to be bailed out through emission credits bought from other countries while fuelling fossil fuel use in these same countries.

Environmental criticism of the World Bank's performance has been growing for 15 years, during which time its loan portfolios have not improved by much. Even the bank's official history acknowledges that its response to environmental criticism often has taken the form of announcing new policies

that are infrequently enforced.³ In fact, the bank is even stepping back from its environmental policy commitments as it reduces its investments in environmental projects, weakening the role of its environmental department and downgrading certain environmental policies to non-binding good practice.⁴

The World Bank is mandated to tackle poverty and promote sustainable development, yet many of its loans are for projects that involve unsustainably managed natural resource extraction or pollution generating projects, such as coal-fired power plants or roads; in some cases, it opts for these more environmentally destructive projects while the private sector is financing more environmentally benign options. The structure and operations at the bank demonstrate that it is not interested in promoting truly sustainable development and a less carbon-intensive future.

Furthermore, because energy delivery on a *per capita* basis is not an explicit goal of the World Bank's energy strategy, those most in need of energy are the least likely to receive it. While the world's poorest people reap few of the benefits of fossil fuel projects, they are the ones who pay the highest prices in terms of resettlement, environmental degradation and police harassment. This is evidenced by several recent claims filed with the World Bank Inspection (see, for example, the case study on Singrauli, India).⁵

There are legitimate concerns that World Bank's financing of fossil fuel projects to the tune of millions of dollars per year is neither a prudent nor effective use of bank resources. The 1998 'Study of the GEF's Overall Performance', 2 March 1998 concluded that:⁶

'Continued financing by the World Bank for such projects (as conventional fossil fuel generation) is inconsistent with mainstreaming of the global environment in the bank's

regular operations.'

One of the main roles of the World Bank Group in the energy sector should be to support investment in more efficient, low-emitting energy systems that will prove of lasting value in the environmentally-driven energy markets of the 21st century. At least two billion rural poor cannot meet even their basic energy needs (cooking, heating, lighting). In many places, renewable forms of energy are the most promising, and least environmentally damaging, of the energy options in providing for their energy needs, even leaving aside larger environmental benefits. While the bank likes to focus on the rural poor rhetorically, its portfolios tell a different story.

The bank has drawn up six guiding principles for energy investment.⁷ These principles are outlined below:

1 Mainstream renewable energy policy in the energy and environment sector dialogues with client countries.

2 Identify climate friendly options in the World Bank Group portfolio through rigorous greenhouse gas accounting at the investment level.

3 Integrate climate change externalities in the bank's Economic and Sector Work, and Country Assistance Strategies as appropriate.

4 Promote market transformation mechanisms to facilitate market entry of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

5 Implement a strategic partnership with the Global Environment Facility to leverage expanded investment in renewable energy.

6 Subject to agreements reached in Kyoto, and Bank Board approval, assist in the development of an efficient and equitable international carbon offsets market, and explore the potential for carbon emissions abatement via voluntary contribution mechanisms.

Boost to renewables

In order for the World Bank to 'mainstream renewables' an innovative renewable energy investment program is needed which would reverse the current imbalance between the amount of money spent on fossil fuels compared to the amount spent on renewables. Such a model has been suggested by Denis Hayes, former director of the federal Solar Energy Research Institute.⁸

'A \$5 billion World Bank program to invest in solar cells could do for this technology what Defence Department procurement did for computer chips. The World Bank could offer to invest in \$1 billion worth of solar cells at a price 25 per cent below last year's average retail price. Next year, it should offer to invest in another \$1 billion worth if the solar industry can lower its price another 20 per cent. The following year, it should invest in another \$1 billion worth, but only if the industry shaves off an additional 20 per cent. In the final year of the program, the bank should invest \$2 billion worth, but only if the industry can pare a final 20 percent off the cost. In just a few years, such a program would drive down the cost of solar cells to roughly one third of what they cost today. At that price, solar energy would be commercially viable for a significant number of new electrical applications worldwide, an annual market worth scores of billions of dollars.'

The World Bank, along with other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) as 'lenders of last resort', and as banks for 'reconstruction and development', are mandated to accept larger risks than commercial banks.⁹ This means that the MDBs are in a prime position to lead the way in developing renewables and promoting the transition to sustainable energy markets.

Rather than rising to the renewables challenge, the World Bank is focussing its attention more on developing a carbon offsets market under Joint Imple-



The two faces of the World Bank

mentation and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Diverting World Bank activities into the creation of such a market will not directly ensure greater energy supply to the world's poor and may not necessarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Friends of the Earth International believes that the World Bank should not be allowed to house or operate any part of the CDM's financial mechanism, given the large conflict of interests in its own portfolio.

CASE-STUDIES

Exxon-Shell Pipeline Project in Chad-Cameroon.¹⁰

The World Bank is deciding whether to grant US \$115 million in loans to secure the construction of a 650 mile (1,050 kilometre) pipeline in Chad and Cameroon, West Africa. A consortium of oil companies, led by Exxon, is financing the project and is made up of Exxon (40 per cent), Shell (40 per cent) and Elf Aquitaine (20 per cent). The estimated cost of the project is \$3.5 billion, which is 20 times the budget of Chad. With an expected production of 225,000 barrels of oil per day, and a 25 to 30 year lifetime, this will be the largest construction project in sub-Saharan Africa.

Exxon has said that World Bank's financial participation in the project is a pre-requisite for going forward. The World Bank's financial backing would enable the companies to attract investors, allow access to lower interest loans and raise the project budget needed.

The proposed pipeline passes through, or close to, important ecological areas that are home to indigenous peoples and endangered species. The development of the pipeline will allow the distribution and consumption of 650 million barrels of crude oil, yet the environmental assessment prepared by Exxon does not include an assessment of potential greenhouse emissions associated with the project. Indeed the World Bank's environmental team, unfortunately a powerless group within the bureaucracy, has unanimously rejected the Environmental Impact Assessment as incomplete.

While Exxon claims that benefits for Chad and Cameroon will amount to \$8.5 billion and \$900 million respectively, there is no evidence that profits from the pipeline will be invested in projects aimed at sustainable development or poverty alleviation. The Exxon-Shell pipeline will divert World Bank money from much needed health, education and poverty alleviation projects.

Azerbaijan-Early Oil Development.¹¹

The Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) was established in 1994 to develop the Azeri, Chirag and Guneshli fields in the Caspian Sea. These fields hold an estimated 4.1 billion barrels of oil. Costs are estimated at \$7.4 billion.

Investors, including BP (17.1 per cent), Amoco Corp (17 per cent), Exxon (eight per cent), Unocal (10 per cent), Amoco, Exxon, Unocal (US), Lukoil (Russia) and the Turkish Petroleum company, are seeking financing to the tune of £200 million from the World Bank through the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The Project involves refurbishment of an existing oil platform, construction of oil receiving terminals on the Caspian sea coast of Azerbaijan and on the Black Sea coast of Georgia and completion of two oil export pipelines. Production is expected to reach 105,000 barrels per day (bpd) by the year 2000. Environmental and social concerns include existing oil contamination of soil, surface water and ground water, oil spills, impacts on significant natural habitats and worker health and safety.

Singrauli, India.¹²

Residents of Singrauli, India filed a claim to the World Bank Inspection Panel on 2 May 1997 challenging a \$400 million bank loan to the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), the bank's largest beneficiary in the world. According to the claimants, the World Bank has failed to adhere to its policies regarding involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples, environmental assessment, participation, supervision, monitoring and consideration of economic activities. Many of the families have been resettled on multiple occasions, destroying their agricultural and subsistence lifestyles. Allegations of repression and human rights abuses have been levelled at the NTPC project.

The World Bank must reorient funding away from fossil fuels and towards renewables to ensure that developing countries such as India and China are given the capacity to pursue non-fossil fuel intensive energy paths.

In order to address the threat of climate change Friends of the Earth International urges the bank to steadily disengage from investments in conventional fossil fuel exploration, exploitation and use, and to set benchmarks for doing that.

BENCHMARKS¹³

1 An overarching policy goal should be to bring clean energy services to the approximately two billion poor people, mainly in rural areas, who presently lack them. During the next 10 years, the World Bank Group should:

2 Systematically shift its energy-related lending portfolios and operations towards environmentally sustainable investments, targeting energy efficiency, conservation, demand-side management, co-generation and renewable energy as primary tools to achieve sustainable energy project lending.

3 Restore a clear benchmark for renewable energy lending that existed in earlier drafts of the strategy paper. It should set a target of 20 per cent by 1999 of its total energy portfolio for investments in alternative and renewable energy, demand side management and energy efficiency programs, with a subsequent increase of 10 per cent per year after 1999.

4 Calculate the full life cycle of greenhouse gas emissions associated with all its lending, not just from power plants, which amount to less than an estimated 10 per cent of energy-related emissions and potential emissions.

5 Take immediate steps to reduce portfolio carbon emissions by at least 10 per cent per year. The decline in carbon emissions should be reported in an annual global carbon emissions report, which calculates carbon emissions resulting from the bank's portfolio of all power, transport, forestry, and fossil fuel related projects.

6 Shift the transport portfolio away from roads and highway construction to traffic demand management, road safety, rail, public transportation, and projects that benefit non-motorised transport users who are often the poorest segments of society.

7 Include in all its contracts a legally binding obligation to restore areas degraded by oil, gas and coal development by the corporations or public entities that are responsible.

8 Develop an open, transparent process for reviewing energy elements of each country assistance strategy.

9 Shift the bank's role away from establishing a market for carbon credits.

10 Implement a carbon offset program for its own energy projects. This would induce much more sustainable energy development by incorporating the costs of environmental externalities into bank lending.

11 To avoid fuelling climate change and locking developing countries and transition economies into carbon-intensive futures, the bank should not invest in:

A infrastructure for, or extractive projects in, frontier or primary tropical, temperate or boreal forests. Extractive projects include both underground resources such as oil, gas and minerals and surface resources such as timber

B projects in, or impacting areas listed on, the United Nations list of National Parks and Protected Areas, or Nature Reserves/Wilderness Areas, National Parks or National Monuments or proposed nature sites

C projects that involuntarily resettle more than 500 people. According to its own assessment, the bank's record on successfully resettling affected communities is a failure.



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A sweet victory: Placer Dome Quits Costa Rica

The news is short and sweet: Placer Dome, one of the giants of the mining world, has been forced to leave Costa Rica. Those responsible for Placer Dome's withdrawal are the communities located in Costa Rica's northern territory, the National Front Against Open Pit Gold Mining, AECO/FoE Costa Rica and Friends of the Earth International.

Since the beginning of this decade, transnational mining companies have swarmed into Costa Rica as part of a new cycle of mining. This mass migration has been met with increasingly strong opposition by affected communities, and as a result, open pit gold mining has become one of the country's most controversial and hotly debated issues.

Increased awareness about the problems associated with open pit gold mining led to the 1996 foundation of the National Front Against Open Pit Gold Mining, a coalition which brings together more than 60 campesino, ecologist, indigenous, religious, human rights, student and women's groups. Friends of the Earth has played an integral role in the development of this powerful grassroots coalition.

One of the most worrisome developments in Costa Rica has been the Las Cruces project, developed by Canadian transnational Placer Dome, one of the four largest gold exploitation companies in the world. But on 5 May 1998, Placer Dome officials publicly announced their decision to abandon gold mining activities in Costa Rica's northern territory, citing only financial reasons. Enthusiastic community and coalition members believe that the main reason for the company's

departure is the strong local, national and international resistance to the project.

Of course we should be aware that this significant victory represents just one battle in an ongoing struggle. The withdrawal of Placer Dome, far from being a definitive solution to the problem, leaves many unanswered questions. The future of the Las Cruces project and the role of the Costa Rican government are unclear, as Placer Dome intends to assume the right to sell its concessions to other companies.

LINK FoE Costa Rica

Junin resistance continues

The Junin people of Ecuador, the recipients of the 1997 FoE Award are engaged in a struggle against two mining companies, Japan's Mitsubishi and CODELCO of Chile. In May 1997, Junin community members occupied a local copper mining camp in an attempt to reclaim their homelands and livelihoods. This resulted in three campesinos being charged with sabotage, terrorism, robbery and destruction with maximum penalties of up to 16 years in prison. However, thanks to pressure from local populations and human rights and environmental groups, it appears that the case will be dismissed.

Mitsubishi is currently prepared to begin work, and on numerous occasions has threatened to militarise the area if opposition to the mining continues. But the Junin are standing steadfast by their pledge to protect their homelands and forests. They have rejected the economic benefits promised by the mining companies, preferring to maintain their self-sufficiency. Their exemplary resistance has catalysed a national debate on mining as well as significant international support and awareness.

*LINK FoE Ecuador/
Accion Ecologica*

A people mined: Marinduque island

In March of 1996, a tunnel leading from a converted tailings pit belonging to the Marinduque Copper Mining Corporation (Marcopper) leaked into the Boac river system of Marinduque Island. More than three million tonnes of waste were discharged, affecting over 20,000 people living in the 27 barangays (villages) dependent on the river for their agricultural, household and personal needs. The disaster focused international and national attention on the plight of the residents of this area, who have put up with Marcopper's irresponsible operations since the 1960s.

The Marcopper fiasco triggered widespread concern over the social and ecological impacts of large-scale commercial mining operations, and prompted the government to review the implementation rules and regulations of the 1995 Philippine Mining Act so that 'a disaster of such proportions would not be repeated'. The mining industry was quick to mobilise its vast resources to counter public opinion against mining, extolling the virtues of the mining sector and its contributions to national development. Marcopper downplayed the incident as an unfortunate accident which should not overshadow the benefits they had provided for the island: electricity, employment and so forth. Placer Dome, the Canadian mining corporation which then owned 40 per cent of Marcopper, offered to go beyond its legal responsibilities in rehabilitating the damage suffered by the communities. The department of environment and natural resources promised to prosecute the erring company and its negligent officials expeditiously.

More than two years after the disaster, however, the state of Marinduque remains virtually unchanged. The river that gave life to

the island's communities now runs full of mine tailings. The water that does manage to flow amid the waste is laced with toxins so potent that residents have reported skin irritations following mere contact. The river offers no relief from the current drought, which has been worsened by the *El Niño* phenomenon. The expected onslaught of the rainy season threatens to flood the residents from their lands. The bay near Boac town, located two hours from the spill area, has turned into a body of mud, and fisherfolk must go progressively further out to sea for their daily catch.

Meanwhile, distribution of compensation to the residents has been insufficient and slow. The criminal cases filed against Marcopper officials for violating pollution laws and the national water code have been dismissed under questionable circumstances. Still pending are the cases against Marcopper for violating the mining act and for criminal negligence, both likely harder to establish than the previously dismissed cases. Placer Dome has since divested its shareholdings in the company and has become less active in rehabilitation and compensation efforts. Amid all of this, Marcopper is floating the idea of reopening its dangerous Boac mine

*LINK André Ballesteros,
FoE Philippines*

Best practise mining in Norway?

'ABM is welcome', read a recent headline in local newspapers in Kirkenes, a small town in northern Norway. Inhabitants of this town were employed by the state-owned Syd-Varanger ASA company's mines and processing plants since 1906. In 1997, when the Norwegian government decided to rid itself of the non-profitable company, the mine

was shut down. Several hundred workers lost their jobs, and the local FoE group began to identify the environmental legacy of over 90 years of mining and processing operations.

Soon afterwards, big news arrived: Australian Bulk Minerals (ABM) expressed interest in starting up mining operations again in 1999. The company presented a pilot study and organised a meeting to give residents the feeling of being involved, and also to counter criticism aired on television about the mine's environmental impacts.

Local environmentalists are concerned that ABM has not provided sufficient evidence that it will take environmental issues into account in its operations. Chairman Gordon Toll claims that 'best practise environmental management' will be used and that ABM will adhere to international standards. But what does this mean?

A previous agreement made by ABM concerning new mining operations in Tasmania secures its immunity from responsibility for past damages. Why is the company so keen to take over former mines? Does this make it easier to hide ongoing pollution? Will this project allow ABM better access to other resources in the region? Unfortunately, most Norwegians are too delighted with the plan to follow up with these questions.

Although we have no illusions about stopping the project, we feel



that ABM must proceed only after agreeing upon very clear environmental responsibilities.

*LINK Astrid Sween,
FoE Kirkenes, Norway*

Philippino farmers resist mining

When more than 99 per cent of residents have signified opposition to mining operations, does this not indicate social unacceptability? Not necessarily. The farmers of the Nueva Vizcaya region in the Philippines are learning that social acceptability, as defined by the government, is determined exclusively by bureaucrats and mining corporations.

In October of 1997, a referendum was held in eight barangays in Kasibu Valley, Nueva Vizcaya to determine whether the communities agreed to the continued operations of Dalton Pacific Resources, an Australian mining firm, in their area. A total of 2,133 residents voted against Dalton Pacific, while only 11 voted for the company.

The referendum was initiated by Kasibu Intertribal Response for Ecological Development (KIREDE) in response to a challenge by local government officials to prove that the majority of local citizens were opposed to the mining operations.

KIREDE, which in the local dialect means 'power', is led by Kasibu Valley barangay officials who have consistently expressed opposition to Dalton Pacific's mining activities.

Dalton Pacific has been exploring for gold in Kasibu Valley by way of mining claims which they acquired from the original owners, including the father of the municipal mayor. If the company's

assessment of its exploration findings prove feasible, extraction and development operations are expected to begin after the necessary clearances have been obtained.

The affected communities are composed of farmers, most of which are indigenous Bugkalots, and migrant Ifugaos, Ibalois, and Kalingas who live from the cultivation of rice, vegetables and bananas. Dalton Pacific's operations threaten not only their lands and livelihoods, but also their health and their environment. Their lands border upon the site of another controversial mining project owned by the Australian Climax-ARIMCO. This mining company has been granted a Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA), which permits exploration and mining rights to more than 32,000 hectares in the Didipio Valley in Nueva Vizcaya.

Realising that these giant mining operations will displace them from their communities and lands, native and migrant indigenous peoples have come together to express strong opposition in various creative ways. KIRED has lobbied local government officials, sent numerous petitions to the regional mines director and launched an education campaign on mining to consolidate popular opposition. Local NGOs, including human rights and church-based groups, have supported these initiatives. The barangay councils have issued resolutions opposing Dalton Pacific as well as other mining applications in the area.

Yet according to the Philippine government and the Dalton Pacific mining company, this resistance is no less than social acceptability.

*LINK André Ballesteros
FoE Philippines*

Lignite digging poisoning the Rhineland

In the German Rhineland, local action groups are struggling to put an end to the opencast mining of lignite. Fifty villages and the homes of nearly 30,000 people were destroyed prior to 1985, and current plans will wipe out a further 18 villages over the next 50 years. Large areas of natural forest and marshes of high ecological value will be ruined. Furthermore, each tonne of mined lignite requires nearly 3,000 cubic feet of valuable groundwater to be pumped out.

Approximately 90 per cent of current lignite production is used to produce 30 per cent of total German electricity demand. However, due to the inefficiency of lignite-fired power stations, more than 60 per cent of the energy contained in the mineral escapes unused into the atmosphere. An energy policy directed at energy saving and renewables would, according to FoE Germany and other environmental groups, render lignite practically superfluous.

Although German law requires compensation for 'interventions in nature and countryside', the ecological value of the old landscape is forever lost to the lignite mines. In addition, the mines will ultimately be refilled with polluted slag, and Rhine water will seep in to fill the excavated lignite holes. These gigantic lakes, potent mixtures of contaminated mining wastes, will be true reservoirs of poison.

*LINK Dorothea Schubert
FoE Germany and
Maria Hooghiemstra FoE*

Mining nightmare in Spain

Environmentalists' worst nightmare came true on 25 April 1998 when Spain was hit with the most catastrophic ecological disaster in the country's history. An accident at the

Swedish Boliden corporation's mining site in Aznarcollar, Andalucía turned the Doñana national park, Europe's most important wetland and biological reserve, into a virtual wasteland.

The accident followed nearly seven years of protests and unresolved legal actions by environmental groups against Boliden's unmonitored open pit pyrite mining activities. The walls of a pyrite settling pond burst, discharging five million cubic metres of toxic mud into a nearby river which flows into the Guadiamar. Within a matter of hours, the Guadiamar, the national park's main water supply, had a pH level high enough to kill all living organisms in the river.

The following day, with the spill approaching the outer limits of the park, three barriers were erected to prevent the toxic mud from entering the heart of the park and to divert part of the spill along the Guadiamar towards the sea. The diverted waters, at this stage more diluted, entered Lucio del Cangrejo, an area of immense ecological value and a vital feeding ground for migratory birds. Fishermen from the town of San Lucar de Barrameda protested the diversion due to the potential effects on their fishing grounds to no avail.

As days passed, clearer reports about the extent of the disaster began to emerge. The spill is now estimated to be 60 kilometres long, extending from Aznarcollar to the barriers, and it has been ascertained that the toxic mud is composed of a rich cocktail which includes cadmium, nickel, magnesium, iron, mercury and zinc. Between 2,000 and 5,000 hectares of farmland have been contaminated, and fields are covered with a 50-centimetre-thick layer of toxic sludge.

Measurements taken by environmental groups have shown that the main aquifer in the Doñana national park has also been contaminated by

an unknown quantity of heavy metals. Authorities have energetically denied this claim due to their unwillingness to acknowledge the possibly greater extent of the disaster. Although impending autumn rains could have a devastating effect if the area is not cleaned up, the decontamination process is proceeding at a very slow pace. Accusations and denials appear daily in the newspapers, although neither the regional government nor the ministry of environment has admitted negligence.

Results of a 1993 inspection of the mine by the Andalucian environment agency were never made public. However, a section of the report was leaked, and several bold local environmental groups exposed the poor structural conditions of the settling and waste ponds. Additional reports that several local chemical companies were dumping their industrial waste into the ponds, complaints filed by environmental groups, and accusations by a former Boliden employee about the dangerous state of the mine were all ignored by the company and the regional authorities.

The Doñana disaster has highlighted the urgency of revising Spanish mining legislation. Negligence on the parts of the regional government and the national environment ministry in investigating the claims indicate that short-term economic gain still plays a much greater role than do environment and human safety issues. If Boliden's mining activities had been properly monitored, the Spanish taxpayer would never have had to pay for this great catastrophe, and the Doñana national park would not be in such a vulnerable position.

*LINK William M Caycedo
FoE Spain*

Teaming up against TVX

Kasperske Hory is a tiny township in southwest Czech Republic, some 10

miles from the German border. Hidden between the hills of the Sumava mountains, it lies within one of the most valued, and most protected, nature areas in Central Europe.

Not surprisingly, Canadian company TVX Gold's exploration and mining project in Kasperske Hory has met with widespread opposition. Although the underground gold mine itself would not cause significant environmental harm, many problems would arise in relation to the resulting waste and especially connected to the tailings pond. Waste would be dumped into a valley within the nature park, resulting in the total destruction of this area. The high arsenic concentration of the waste deposits is another risk associated with the mine.

Opposition to the mine has united local communities, environmental groups, experts and environmental protection authorities as well as the general public and a number of prominent government and opposition politicians. To date, not a single politician in the Czech Republic has publicly supported the project.

TVX has hired the infamous public relations agency Burson-Marsteller in an attempt to change public attitudes and dissolve cohesion within the community. The joint TVX/Burson-Marsteller smear campaign has focused on the mayor of Kasperske Hory and the town council—both of which play crucial symbolic roles in the national opposition to the project and are legally empowered to prevent it. Admittedly, Burson-Marsteller has done its job quite well. Its unscrupulous campaign is full of dirty personal attacks and sophisticated and well-directed propaganda, and is combined with offers of financial support to the local people to supplement the promised economic gains from mining.

FoE Canada and FoE Czech Repub-

lic are running a joint campaign focused on providing information to TVX investors. Canadian media and international business and mining press have also been targeted in an attempt to highlight not only the project's environmental and social impacts but also associated financial risks due to the mine's uncertain future. In addition, FoE Czech Republic has been working together with local people in order to neutralise TVX/Burson-Marsteller public relations activities and is coordinating a national campaign against the project.

*LINK Vojtech Kotecky
FoE Czech Republic*

Catching the Millenium Bug

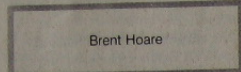
How the Year 2000 bug will affect the environment

Over the past few months, awareness of the potential impacts of the impending 'Year 2000 problem' or Millennium Bug has been rapidly increasing in business circles, with figures such as Maurice Newman, Head of the Sydney Stock Exchange, speaking out about the possibility of a 'Y2K'-induced recession, a series of authoritative articles in *The Economist* and a regular column by John Macleay in the business features section of *The Australian*.

The emerging consensus is that while the uncertainties are large, this is likely to be a far more serious problem than popularly believed. It is high time that the environment movement focused some attention on this issue, and particularly the threats posed to the environment from disruptions to computerised systems due to the year 2000 date recognition problem. These principally stem from possible pollution incidents resulting from the almost certain widespread failure of 'embedded systems' in automated industrial processes.

A separate problem from the more well known difficulties of computer software recognising the turn of the century, malfunctioning embedded microprocessors controlling all manner of valves, pumps, sensors and other industrial applications have the potential to wreak havoc. For instance, major oil companies have publicly admitted they are likely to be able to fix only 30 per cent of embedded systems on their off shore drilling rigs. Refineries, factories, smelters, and all kinds of manufacturing plants are potentially at risk.

The problem is not that these embedded chips are difficult to replace, assuming (boldly) that the



Brent Hoare

company responsible for making them still exists, continues to support the product, has stocks available and suitably qualified technicians to install them. The difficulty is that there are enormous numbers of such systems (25-50+ billion in the United States alone) and conservative estimates indicate that just five per cent are date dependent, and these are generally very poorly documented. This is an inventory problem, of almost unimaginable 'needle in the haystack' proportions.

The cold hard fact is that most companies have started far too late to have any real hope of addressing the issue in the time remaining. Although the Environment Protection Authority in New South Wales is aware of the issue at some level and has written to licensed premises to remind them of their liability for pollution incidents caused by year 2000 computer failure, little attention has been paid to the many thousands of smaller unlicensed premises. While again acknowledging the uncertainties about how the impact of the year 2000 problem will be felt, the range of potential impacts is vast, and many 'worse case' scenarios are gaining increasing levels of recognition from a wide range of sensible and authoritative figures.

A proper recognition of the precautionary principle demands that the full spectrum of possibilities be brought to public attention and the appropriate response strategies be vigorously debated. Although space prohibits more than a cursory indica-

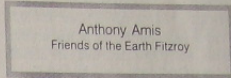
tion of some potential problems, it also needs to be recognised that there is significant doubt that critical infrastructure and utilities will pass the deadline without serious and prolonged disruptions. It is hard to do more than speculate about the potential consequences of failures in the telecommunications, power, water, sewage, transport, fuel supply or financial services sectors, but given the magnitude and scope of the possible implications it is imperative that the issues are faced.

With less than 14 months to go, contingency and disaster recovery planning need to receive the highest priority from all sectors of society. With danger comes opportunity and while the dangers are large, the year 2000 problem also presents many exciting opportunities to move towards a more sustainable, less technologically dependent economy. If there is a significant and prolonged disruption of information technology-dependent systems, it is difficult to see how the high division of labour we currently enjoy will be maintained, and in the emergence of local economies supplying products to meet local needs may become very important.

For the moment however, the Internet remains the best source of information about the year 2000 problem, and an investment of just a few hours research into this issue is an extremely wise option (try your local library). Several sites offer a Y2Knews alert service, which is a great way to stay in touch with the latest developments and emerging trends. If you are aware of an Australian discussion list of Y2Kissues, or would like to join one, please contact the author: (+61)-02-4782-6883 or burramys@hermes.net.au.

Cashing in your woodchips

Who is investing in woodchipping Australia's forests?



Anthony Amis
Friends of the Earth Fitzroy

Woodchipping is the highly destructive arm of the timber industry. The timber industry across Australia is woodchip-driven with 90 per cent of harvested timber in places such as East Gippsland and Tasmania being woodchipped. The bulk of the woodchips coming out of Australian forests are exported, primarily to Japan, where they are converted into paper products. Woodchipping and timber harvesting in general, is highly damaging to the environment. Impacts on native wildlife, soils, waterways and a host of other issues can all be traced to the conversion of forest areas into 'woodchip farms'. Woodchipping of sawn timber quality timber has severely impacted on rural employment with job losses associated with mill closures, now becoming common place. Remarkably, rural communities, fuelled by the rhetoric of industry front groups still point the finger at conservationists as being the cause of the job losses, when the real culprits are the multinational companies and woodchip mills who basically have a 'cut and run' mentality.

All of the multinational companies rely on investors to survive. Without investors timber companies would find it impossible to finance new industry developments. The timber industry also gains vast financial support through government subsidies (National Forest Network has a list of over 20 timber industry subsidies). Without the support of tax payers, woodchip companies would be left high and dry. It is ironic that in a time of economic rationalisation, timber companies still rely on government handouts to survive.

The rapid escalation of the woodchipping industry has coincided with the rise of superannuation funds. Increasingly, investors are targeting

workers to fuel the woodchip machine, along with seemingly innocuous funds such as Occupational Health and Safety and Transport Accident insurance. It seems extremely strange that, although 80 per cent of the Australian public disagrees with export woodchipping, these same people are helping fuel woodchipping investment through their retirement nest eggs and motor vehicle registration et cetera. It could be said that very few Australians in some form or other are not financially assisting in the destruction of some of the most beautiful forest ecosystems on earth. Indeed, it could be said that everyone in one form or other is connected to the 'woodchipping monster' and increasingly it is almost impossible to escape its clutches. Investment managers must bare much of the responsibility for these problems. Through their ignorance of environmental matters, they are fuelling forest destruction from behind their desks in capital cities around Australia and the world. Whole ecosystems are being destroyed at the whim of fund managers working with the full cooperation of government agencies. It is a depressing sign of the times that people who hold so much 'power' are so blinded from the reality of their destruction and the pain and suffering that they are wreaking on the earth.

In the past two months NFN-Melbourne with financial assistance from FoE Fitzroy Forest Network has been researching the major investors in six major companies woodchipping Australia's forests. This study has barely scratched the surface of the investment puzzle, but nevertheless is the first

The major woodchippers Wesfarmers

Logging approximately 900,000 tonnes Karri, Jarrah and Marri forests of Western Australia.

Amcor

Australia's only fine paper manufacturer, logging 500,000 cubic meters of timber per year from the Central Highlands, Strezleckis and Gippsland regions of Victoria and buying over 300,000 tonnes of woodchips from North Limited in Tasmania, mainly for their photocopy paper, Reflex. Amcor also own 50 per cent of Kimberly Clark Australia sourcing chips from the Otways and Central Highlands. Amcor have recently announced that they will also be involved in the destruction of the world's tropical rainforests by importing paper pulp from Indonesia.

North Limited

The largest hardwood woodchippers on the planet, sourcing approximately 2.6 million tonnes of hardwood and 200,000 tonnes of softwood from Tasmania. North is also behind the push to mine Uranium at Jabluka in the Northern Territory, currently the site of a huge Aboriginal and green blockade. Interestingly, North's Chairman, Michael Deeley has been appointed Chairman of Parks Victoria, President of the Victorian Environment Protection Agency Board and is President of Greening Australia.

Boral

The second largest woodchippers in Australia, logging forests in Tasmania and Northern New South Wales,

amounting to over 1.5 million tonnes per year of export woodchips.

Fletcher Challenge

New Zealand based multinational which bought out Australian Newsprint Mills in 1997. Currently logging 500,000 tonnes of plantation and 'regrowth' forests around the Florentine Valley in Southern Tasmania, logging plantation pine in North Eastern Victoria and South Eastern NSW, as well as logging in New Zealand and old growth forests in Canada.

CSR

Logging vast radiata pine plantations in South Western Victoria and South Eastern South Australia. CSR is currently suffering from a consumer boycott on their products due to their plans to site a toxic dump near the town of Werribee. It has also experienced two spills of Copper Chrome Arsenate at Mount Gambier and Dartmoor in the past two years which have seriously jeopardised water supplies to these towns. CSR uses massive amounts of herbicides on plantations.

Harris Daishowa

One hundred per cent owned by the Japanese 'sogo shosa' Itochu, was not researched due to lack of relevant information from Japan. Harris Daishowa sources almost one million tonnes of woodchips from South Eastern NSW and East Gippsland and has long been a huge problem for forest activists in Australia.

Large domestic woodchippers such as Marbut-Gunnerson, Gunns, Hyne & Sons in Queensland and Calco in Victoria were only glanced at in this study.

Marbut-Gunnerson is controlled by the Gunnerson family, one of Australia's wealthiest families. Thorry Gunnerson is, among other things, President of the National Association of Forest Industries and is Chairman

of the Board of the World Forestry Centre in Portland, Oregon. He is also a Director of Midways woodchip mill (which exports more than 400,000 tonnes per annum) as is his brother Peter, who plays an active role in both NAFI and the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, both large importers of rainforest timber. Gunns in Tasmania exports 400,000 tonnes of woodchips.

The investors

Banks

Not surprisingly, banks dominate the top of the investor list. Banks hide their investors' identity behind a smokescreen of nominee shareholders. Nominee shareholders are people in whose name shares are registered but who are only a nominee or trustee for the beneficial shareholder, so concealing the latter's identity.

This makes it almost impossible to investigate the real power holders in certain companies. Nevertheless, the banks are working on behalf of these investors and could certainly do without the attention of boycott campaigns targeting them. Custodian Nominee companies are paid an administration fee to look after these assets. We understand that the fee is something like 0.5 per cent, possibly meaning that Westpac is getting something like \$10 million from woodchipping company investments.

Westpac

Of the banks, Westpac heads the list with almost \$2 billion tied up in six of the companies studied. Westpac Custodian Nominees, which comes under Westpac Financial Services, head the shareholders for Amcor, North, Boral and CSR. (Incidentally Westpac Chief Executive Officer, Bob Joss, has been estimated to be worth \$40 million).

ANZ

The Australia and New Zealand Bank

is the second largest of the bank investors, with about \$1.3 billion tied up in the companies concerned. Interestingly, in a letter dated 13 August 1998 from Judith Swan, ANZ National Manager Customer Liaison, Ms Swan claims 'Our subsidiary, ANZ Nominees, provides custodial services (and therefore appears as the registered holder) for offshore fund managers investing in the Australian market'. One wonders just who these overseas fund managers are. Prudential Insurance Company of America for instance is attempting to start a consortium with Australian superannuation fund managers in the purchasing of Victorian Plantation Corporation. It would appear that American firms are 'eyeing off' Australian forests.

National Australia Bank

The National Australia Bank ranks third, with just over \$1 billion invested. Of note with the NAB is the fact that no less than eight of their directors are also directors of woodchip, paper or packaging companies. Those directors being Mark Rayner, Sir Bruce Watson and Peter Cottrell (Chairman of Boral) from Boral; Brian Loton and David Allen from Amcor; Michael Deeley Chairman of North; David McFarlane Chairman of Spicers Paper (42 per cent owned by Amcor) and Graham Krahe from Southcorp.

The Commonwealth Bank

The Commonwealth Bank ranks about 17th with investments of about \$235 million. Also of interest is the influx of North American banks such as the United States's two largest banks—Citicorp (\$246 million) and Chase Manhattan (\$987 million). These banks could be pressured by activist campaigns in North America.

Nevertheless, the banks are working on behalf of these investors and could certainly do without the attention of boycott campaigns targeting them.

Loans and financial assistance

It should also be noted that the banks provide financial assistance and loans to smaller woodchipping companies. For instance ANZ Bank has assisted: Calco in logging the Otways, Midways (Victoria's only woodchip mill), TJ Andrews and Hallmark Oakes (each chipping about 800,000 cubic metres of timber from East Gippsland), Gunns in logging Northern Tasmania, Thomas P Clark in logging Tasmania and the Strezlecki's in Victoria.

The NAB has assisted: Misal Technology and Brunts Logging (both chipping enormous amounts from East Gippsland), Boral, ANM, Victree in clearfelling the Otways for plantations, Hyne & Son logging South East Queensland.

Westpac has invested in Hallmark Oakes and Brunts Logging.

The Commonwealth Bank has provided assistance to Harris Daishowa and TJ Andrews. Andrews has also had help from Esanda Finance, Caterpillar and Harris Daishowa.

Superannuation

Another major player with investment in woodchipping is the use of workers' superannuation. It is crucial that conservationists start to target these major superannuation funds. In a letter dated 8 October 1998, from Westpac Chairman John Uhrig to Native Forest Network, Mr Uhrig claims that 'A good deal of the securities held by Westpac Custodian Nominees are the superannuation investments of many Australians. As you know, the policies of successive governments encourage Australians to save for their retirement through corporate, industry and public superannuation funds, and these funds invest in a wide range of assets including Australian shares. A large number of these funds seek the security of a bank-owned custodian to hold the physical assets of the fund, for the

protection of the fund members'.

Workers at the present time have very little say in where their superannuation is directed. It would be extremely useful to broaden our alliances to key unions that are perhaps unwittingly having their workers invest in such environmentally destructive companies. Many of the investors listed rely on superannuation funds to keep them afloat. For instance, Queensland Investment Corporation deals with superannuation from public service employees and building workers in Queensland. SAS Trustee Corporation does the same for public servants in New South Wales, the major workers represented being teachers. Victorian Superannuation Board manages the superannuation for many public servants in Victoria including teachers, transport workers, Melbourne Water and Port of Melbourne Authority staff. It would appear from looking at their investments that environmental considerations are non-existent. If they were then they certainly would not be investing in North Limited.

Money sourced from the Transport Accident Commission and Victorian Workcover is managed by Victorian Funds Management Corporation, which uses the National Australia Bank as its Master Custodian. North Limited must be very pleased with this outcome, with its Chairman is also sitting on the board of the NAB. How many Victorian motor owners realise that North Limited is benefiting from their Transport Accident Insurance?

Personal investment

Australians have tripled their ownership of shares in the past 10 years. Perhaps as many as one in five Australians directly own company shares, with these holdings representing about one third of the market itself. Many people invest in woodchipping companies and banks that in turn invest in woodchipping companies. For instance,

in 1997 the Commonwealth Bank had 275,204 shareholders, Boral 153,597, CSR 142,771, Westpac 137,728 and Amcor 124,934. It is crucial that green groups embark on a strategy that takes investors away from the environmentally irresponsible to those that are environmentally responsible. Through the efforts of our campaigning, consumers must not only steer away from brand names that are bad (such as Reflex copy paper) but investors must be made to question investing in the companies that are associated with that brand name too. A successful boycott campaign could scare potential investors away from a company because of fears of inadequate rates of return and bad investor publicity. If the company is doing the wrong thing then it is our job to pressure investors to keep away, to press the warning button so to speak.

It is crucial that conservationists start to target these major superannuation funds.

The 36 major investors in woodchip companies in 1997

The companies investigated: Amcor, Boral, CSR, Fletcher Challenge, North Limited, Westfarmers.

Explanation of valuations

Please note that the following figures are rough estimations of the total amount of money invested in each company. Very basically this list was formed from the top 20 shareholders of each company with the share price at the writing of the annual report multiplied by the number of shares held. The company name and the approximate amount of money invested in the six companies investigated is written in bold. The second line gives further breakdown showing the amount of the investment, the corresponding number indicates that companies position as a top 20 shareholder.

Cashing in your woodchips

For example: Westpac Custodian Nominees: \$1.934 billion Amcor 1 (\$515m) et cetera, means that Westpac Custodian Nominees invests \$1.934 billion in the six companies investigated. Further, it invests \$515 million in Amcor. The numeral '1' following Amcor indicates that it is the largest shareholder.

Share value of the companies at the time of their 1997 annual report: WESFARMERS (\$13.25), AMCOR (\$8.30), NORTHS (\$4.70), BORAL (\$4.0), CSR (\$4.75), FC. *(Fletcher Challenge shares are divided into four categories: Energy \$4.92, Building \$2.83, Forests \$1.60, Paper \$2.83. Energy was not included in this breakdown).

1. NZ Central Securities Depository: \$2.6 billion
Fletcher Challenge invests \$2.6 billion in building, paper and forests. The company is involved only with Fletcher Challenge.

NZCSD is a nominee company owned by the 'Austraclear' clearing system operated by the Reserve Bank of New Zealand. Austraclear is a means for companies (such as banks, insurance companies, et cetera) that own shares in many different companies and are regularly buying and selling them, to avoid certain formalities for example delivering and registering all the share certificates and other documentation. Instead, the shares are held for trust by the NZCSD. The banks still legally own and control the shares.

2. Westpac Bank: \$1.934 billion

Westpac Custodian Nominees invests \$1.906 billion Amcor 1 (\$515m), North 1 (\$420 m), Boral 1 (\$347 m), Wesfarmers 3 (\$67 m), CSR 1 (\$533 m), Fletcher Challenge 10 (\$24 m) Westpac Life Insurance Services Limited invests \$28 million. Boral 19 (\$28 m)

3. WFCL Investments Pty Ltd: \$1.587 billion
Wesfarmers 1 (\$1.587 m). Note that Ultimate Holding Company Westralian Farmers Co-op Ltd run by five directors of Wesfarmers is also linked to Gresham Partners, investment bankers)

4. ANZ Nominees Ltd: \$1.267 billion
Amcor 2 (\$305 m), North 2 (\$292 m), Boral 2 (\$243 m), Wesfarmers 11 (\$20 m), CSR 2 (\$407 m)

5. NATIONAL Nominees Ltd: \$1.048 billion
Amcor 3 (\$224 m), North 3 (\$231 m), Boral 4 (\$220 m), Wesfarmers 5 (\$41 m), CSR 3 (\$283 m), Fletcher Challenge 6 (\$49 m)

6. CHASE MANHATTAN Nominees: \$987 million
Amcor 4 (\$198 m), North 4 (\$230 m), Boral 3 (\$232 m), Wesfarmers 6 (\$28 m), CSR 4 (\$279 m), Fletcher Challenge 11 (\$20 m)

7. PERPETUAL TRUSTEES AUSTRALIA Ltd: \$501 million
Perpetual Trustees Nominees Ltd invests \$315 million Amcor 9 (\$95 m), North 5 (\$99 m), Boral 11 (\$45 m), CSR 10 & 11 (\$76 m), Fletcher Challenge 13 (\$15 m) Perpetual Trustees Aust Ltd: \$84 million North 16 (\$36m), Boral 16 (\$31 m), CSR 17 (\$27 m) Perpetual Trustee Co Ltd: \$75 million (Subsidiary of Perpetual Trustees Australia) Amcor 17 (\$45m), Boral 17 (\$30 m) Perpetual Trustees Vic Ltd: \$12 m Fletcher Challenge 17 (\$12 m)

8. AUSTRALIAN MUTUAL PROVIDENT Society: \$487 million
Amcor 8 (\$101 m), North 8 (\$58 m), Boral 6 (\$78 m), Wesfarmers 2 (\$68 m), CSR 6 (\$116 m), Fletcher Challenge 4 (\$66 m)

9. SAS Trustee Corp: \$452 million
(State Superannuation for Public Service Employees in NSW - Trustee Corp managed by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell) Amcor 10 (\$81m), North 7 (\$61m), Boral 7 (\$61m), CSR 5 (\$144m), Wesfarmers 4 (\$50m), Fletcher Challenge 5 (\$55m)

10. QUEENSLAND INVESTMENT CORPORATION: \$438 million
QIC is the State Superannuation for Public Service Employees in Queensland Amcor 6 (\$127 m), North 9 (\$44 m), Boral 5 (\$84 m), Wesfarmers 8 (\$24 m), CSR 7 and 13 (\$120 m), Fletcher Challenge 7 (\$39 m)

11. BANKERS TRUST Australia Ltd: \$299 million
(see 1997 Amcor Annual Report) Amcor (\$299 m)

12. PENDAL Nominees Pty Ltd: \$291 million (Bankers Trust connection)
Amcor 5 (\$157 m), North 10 (\$35 m), Boral 10 (\$51 m), CSR 15 (\$31 m), Wesfarmers 18 (\$9 m), Fletcher Challenge 20 (\$8 m)

13. MLC Limited: \$266 million (Owned by Lend Lease Corporation)
Amcor 19 (\$40.7 m), North 6 (\$85 m), Boral 9 (\$54 m), Wesfarmers 10 (\$21 m), CSR 9 (\$48 m), Fletcher Challenge 12 (\$17 m)

14. PERMANENT TRUSTEE COMPANY Ltd: \$258 million
Permanent Trustee Co Ltd: \$156 million, Amcor 7 (\$119 m), Boral 13 (\$37 m) Permanent Nominees (Aust) Ltd: \$59 million (Subsidiary of Permanent Trustee Co Pty Ltd) North 13 (\$27 m), Boral 15 (\$32 m) Permanent Trustee Aust Ltd: \$43

million (Subsidiary of Permanent Trustee Co Ltd) North 14 (\$27 m), Wesfarmers 13 (\$16 m)

15. CITICORP Nominees Pty Ltd: \$246 million
Amcor 11 (\$81 m), North 11 (\$31 m), Boral 8 (\$54 m), Wesfarmers 17 (\$13 m), CSR 12 (\$34 m), Fletcher Challenge 8 (\$33m)

16. FLETCHER CHALLENGE Employee Share Purchase Schemes: \$238 million
Fletcher Challenge 2 (\$238 m)

17. COMMONWEALTH BANK: \$235 million
Commonwealth Custodial Services Ltd: \$99 million. (Parent Commonwealth Bank) Amcor 14 (\$65 m), CSR 14 (\$34 m), Wesfarmers 9 (\$22 m), Fletcher Challenge 14 (\$13 m) Commonwealth Life Ltd: \$44 million (Subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank) Wesfarmers 15 (\$8 m), CSR 20 (\$21 m), Wesfarmers 16 (\$15 m) CBA Nominees Ltd: \$23 million North 18 (\$23 m) The Commonwealth Superannuation Board of Trustees: \$28 million North 12 (\$28 m) Commonwealth Superannuation Board of Trustees No 2: \$15.9 million Wesfarmers 14 (\$15.9 m) Commonwealth Super Board: \$12.2 million Fletcher Challenge 16 (\$12.2 m)

18. MAPLE-BROWN ABBOTT Limited: \$170 million
(see North Ltd Annual Report) North (\$170 m)

19. AUSTRALIAN FOUNDATION INVESTMENT Co Ltd: \$151 million
Amcor 12 (\$76 m), Boral 18 (\$28 m), Wesfarmers 12 (\$17 m), CSR 19 (\$30 m)

20. NRMA Investments Ltd: \$138 million
Amcor 13 (\$69 m), Boral 12 (\$44 m), Wesfarmers 7 (\$25 m)

21. FLETCHER CHALLENGE employee unit trust: \$125 million
Fletcher Challenge 3 (\$125 m)

22. HKBA Nominees Ltd: \$106 million
Amcor 16 (\$46 m), CSR 8 (\$50 m), Fletcher Challenge 18 (\$10 m)

23. National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Ltd: \$72 million
Amcor 18 (\$43 m), CSR 16 (\$29 m)

24. Prudential Corporation Australia Ltd: \$58 million
Amcor 15 (\$46 m), Fletcher Challenge 15 (\$12 m)

25. GIO Personal Investment Services Ltd: \$57 million
Amcor 20 (\$31 m), Boral 20 (\$26 m)

26. Bond Street Australia Limited: \$36 million
Boral 14. (\$36 m)

27. Victorian Superannuation Board Ltd: \$33 million (Teachers Superannuation in Victoria)
North 17 (\$24 m) Wesfarmers 20

28. Vic Workcover Authority Limited: \$31 million
North 20 (\$22 m), Fletcher Challenge 19 (\$9 m)

29. Transport Accident Commission: \$27 million
North 15 (\$27 m)

30. Citibank Nominees NZ Ltd (TENZ): \$26.6m
Fletcher Challenge 9 (\$26.6 m)

31. Zurich Australian Life Insurance Limited: \$25 million
CSR 18 (\$25 m)

32. The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd: \$22 million
North 19 (\$22 m)

33. Wesfarmers Superannuation Pty Ltd: \$15 million
Wesfarmers 15 (\$15 m)

34. Cotswold Investments Pty Ltd: \$8.9 million
Wesfarmers 19 (\$8.9 m)

35. Suncorp Insurance and Finance: \$6.5 million
Wesfarmers 18 (\$6.5 m)

36. Warbont Nominees Pty Ltd: \$5.5 million
Wesfarmers 19 (\$5.5 m)

Preventing wetlands becoming wastelands



At the January 1998 Annual General Meeting of Friends of the Earth Australia it was decided that the wetlands campaign would no longer be a national campaign and that instead I would continue as a national wetlands spokesperson. Wetlands issues have been a part of many FoE campaigns though they have been the focus of only a few. For example Jabiluka, as FoE people would be well aware, has an anti-nuclear focus, but it is also a wetlands issue because of the effects uranium mining will have on the World Heritage and Ramsar listed wetlands of the Kakadu National Park. For those not familiar with Ramsar, it is an international convention for the conservation of wetlands of significance. It was originally established to promote protection and management of wetlands that were significant as waterbird habitat but has since expanded its terms of reference to include factors such as ecological significance for other fauna and flora and biogeographical importance.

FoE Australia: specific wetlands campaigns

FoE Australia indirectly through campaign networks such as the anti-nuclear and arid lands collectives, and directly through the advocacy work of individuals such as Kari Giles, Cam Walker and myself are currently in-

Stephen Baker
Wetlands Spokesperson,
FoE Australia

involved in campaigns aimed at addressing:

• Lack of specific Ramsar management plans for many Ramsar sites in Australia.

• Lack of political will to nominate significant sites to Ramsar, in particular where there is industry resistance to nominations.

• Reluctance of governments to regulate activities of industries that impact wetlands.

• Lake Eyre Basin issues. For example:

1. over-grazing pressures in the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Area (and potential irrigation threats)
2. oils and gas exploration and mining in the Coongie Lakes region
3. degradation of mound springs due to groundwater removal to support the Roxby Downs uranium mine run by Western Mining Company
4. lack of community consultation particularly with Indigenous groups and conservation non-government organisations
5. lack of industry accountability

• Degradation of the Coorong Ramsar Area due to inappropriate develop-

ments which are opposed by the Indigenous Traditional Owners.

• Uranium mining in Kakadu National Park which is World Heritage and Ramsar listed, and is opposed by the Indigenous Traditional Owners.

• The need for greater consultation with scientific stakeholders, conservation NGOs and Indigenous people in management processes.

Lake Eyre Basin

The important wetlands associated with this central Australian region are: Cooper Creek, Coongie Lakes Ramsar Area, Innamincka Regional Reserve, Lake Eyre National Park, Mound Springs and Goyder Lagoon on the Diamantina River.

FoE Australia has a long history of involvement with the Lake Eyre Basin having campaigned on various issues for approximately 15 years. We have been, and continue to be, active in catchment management processes, lobbying for World Heritage nomination for sections of the basin, joint campaigning with Arabunna people for the protection of Mound Springs and groundwater resources, protection of natural and cultural heritage and Ramsar issues in the basin. Currently we are one of a group of conservation NGOs involved in the preparation of a Coongie Lakes Ramsar Management Plan.



34 Chain Reaction Summer 1998/99

Coorong Ramsar area

The Coorong is a large estuarine system at the mouth of Australia's largest river, the Murray River. It is an important waterbird breeding and feeding area with many migratory species, some from as far away as Siberia and central Asia. We have been active in supporting the aspiration of the Ngarrindjerri people in their opposition to inappropriate developments inside the Coorong Ramsar area.

Kakadu

Making submissions to government environmental assessment processes. Liaison and networking with other member organisations of the Jabiluka Alliance, a national-based campaign alliance led by the Mirrar people, traditional owners of Jabiluka country. Initiation of liaison with international environment organisations to coordinate international support actions, lobbying of European parliament and other national parliaments, targeting of nuclear corporations and utilities which source Kakadu uranium. Initiation of national and international corporate campaigns aimed to sway shareholders and other investors in the principle corporations involved. A non-violent direct action blockade of the Jabiluka mine development for eight months, to recommence during the 1999 dry season. On-going direct actions at corporate headquarters and grass roots campaigning.

Long-term commitment

Wetland campaigns mean long-term commitments. FoE Australia has been involved in promoting a World Heritage nomination for parts of the South Australian section of the Lake Eyre Basin for more than 10 years. Given the reluctance of current governments to nominate the wetlands, due to a massive lobbying campaign by agribusiness and large mining inter-

ests, it is unlikely we will see a nomination for at least another 10 years. In Kakadu, FoE Australia has directed its campaign efforts towards preventing the opening of the uranium mine at Jabiluka and the phase out of the Ranger uranium mine 22 km south. The campaign is 'for the duration' and involves close liaison with the Mirrar people and working within the national Jabiluka Alliance.

Many wetland issues affect Indigenous Australians and FoE Australia's commitment to supporting the aspirations and rights of Indigenous people is for the long term.

Achievements

Campaigning cannot succeed without networking with other conservation NGOs and I want to acknowledge the excellent working relationship we have with other conservation groups and individuals. I also want to acknowledge the excellent work done by the Mirrar, Ngarrindjerri and Arabunna people who work with the minimum of resources but the greatest of hearts, often against imposing odds.

Lake Eyre Basin

Working with local pastoralists we helped to prevent cotton development upstream of the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Area.

We were successful in promoting the development of a catchment management processes for the Cooper Creek and hopefully something similar will occur for the Diamantina River.

Through advocacy work, we have raised the profile of the need for greater natural and cultural heritage protection in the basin and as a result there has been increased government commitment to protect sensitive areas. Some examples are the provision of funding to fence off and create grazing exclusion zones around some important mound springs and some parts of the

Coongie Lakes, the provision of Federal Government funds to develop a Ramsar Management Plan for the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Area and, there are commitments by governments to involve Indigenous groups and conservation NGOs in the Ramsar management process for the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Area.

Coorong Ramsar Area

We helped get commitments from State and Federal governments to involve Indigenous groups and conservation NGOs in the Ramsar management process for the Coorong Ramsar Area.

Kakadu

The campaign has successfully engaged the mine development process at every stage. FoE Australia has made strong submissions during the environmental assessment phase which influenced Environment Australia's (Commonwealth environment department) finding that the proposal was 'seriously deficient'. A national campaign including broad-based community support and activism focused on a blockade of the mine development has raised the issue profile to national and international levels. A massive lobbying campaign supported by the FoE Fitzroy Anti-Nuclear Collective and John Hallam, of FoE Sydney, may result in Kakadu being placed on the World Heritage In Danger list which would be a massive embarrassment for the Federal Government and a very useful aid in the campaign to stop Jabiluka.

Despite the re-election of the pro-development Coalition to government there is strong opposition to the mine which continues to grow.

FoE Australia and the Ramsar Convention

Ramsar has been where I, as a FoE Australia spokesperson, have been most active. By the way, Ramsar is not an acronym it is the name of the town

Preventing wetlands becoming wastelands



in Iran where in 1971 inter-governmental representatives first met to sign the international convention for conserving the world's important wetlands. This convention was thereafter known as the Ramsar Convention.

Wetlands are a major focus of Friends of the Earth International which has a wetlands campaign co-ordinated out of Spain. FoE International, through William Caycedo of FoE Spain and Melissa Marin Cabrera of AECO, Friends of the Earth Costa Rica, are hosting the Non Government Organisations Pre-Convention meeting. It will convene at the 7th meeting of the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands Contracting Parties (COP 7) to take place in Costa Rica in May 1999. I am hoping to attend that meeting to present the Australian position in regard to Ramsar, a position, I add, that will have a distinctly FoE perspective.

Under the Ramsar Convention there is a Federal Government obligation to protect important wetlands, even those

not listed as Ramsar sites. This makes the Convention a very useful tool for environmental activists and advocates in attempting to achieve better management of wetlands.

From our experience in Australia, governments are failing in their commitment to requirements under the Ramsar Convention particularly in regard to new nominations, management plan processes and involvement of community in management. At Costa Rica, FoE Australia would like to see discussion on the mechanism that would promote greater accountability of government and industry to the community and especially to Indigenous groups and conservation NGOs sectors of community.

FoE wetlands campaign—where to now?

As I said at the beginning of this article, there is not a national FoE Australia wetlands campaign, but we do work on wetlands, some of us more

directly than others. There is plenty to do even if we do not have a national campaign. What needs to be done ranges from grassroots activism on FoE campaigns such as that aimed at stopping Jabluka through to writing scientific reports and Environmental Impact Studies submissions. Sometimes there are specific projects, for example FoE people have in the past been involved in flora and fauna studies of mound springs and floodplains associated with the Lake Eyre Basin. There are Ramsar and catchment management plans that we can have input to. We need people to work on positions and policies that we can use domestically or take to international forums like the Ramsar meeting that will be held in Costa Rica next year. There is the never ending need for people that can lobby politicians and there is even the possibility for FoE to get involved in ecotourism to some of these sites we fight to protect.

One thing to think about is the second annual international day of action against dams and for rivers to be held on 14 March 1999. This day of action is organised by the International Rivers Network, which is an affiliate of FoE International. By the way although the title suggests very specific actions in regard to dams and rivers, the organisers are inviting people to include any wetlands-oriented actions they want.

If you are interested in being involved, contact me (Stephen Barker) on 0417 468 054 or via FoE Fitzroy. If there is enough interest it may be possible to resurrect the national campaign at next year's FoE Australia AGM in January.

From the burning embers of Howard's despicable Native Title legislation is a ray of hope for reconciliation in regional Australia. To the credit of the Native Title Working Group in Canberra, one of the few positives to come out of the Howard legislation, is the capacity for Regional Agreements to be struck between stakeholders in regional areas.

With the \$40 million commitment by the Keating government, and matched by Howard, in the lead up to the 1996 Federal election towards the implementation of the Cape York Land Use Heads of Agreement (struck between the conservation movement, the Cape York Land Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Cattlemen's Union) along with the completion of the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS), the Cape will be the first 'tab off the rank' with a Regional Agreement in Australia.

The prospect of an outcome which provides certainty for pastoralists from native title claims, while providing for access rights to Indigenous communities and the protection of natural and cultural values has been a long time coming, and has had to withstand destructive forces from all sides over the past two years.

The previous Borbidge National/Liberal Coalition launched and maintained an ongoing and strategically fought campaign to undermine the goodwill of stakeholders who had struck the Heads of Agreement.

To their credit, the Peninsula Branch of the Cattleman's Union has survived a vicious attack from the National Farmers Federation, the United Graziers Association and right wing elements of the pastoral industry which has been pushing for blanket extinguishment of native title over pastoral leases throughout

Meeting of the minds

Progress in the Cape York Regional Agreement

Gavan McFadzean

the native title debate.

Meanwhile the conservation movement, led by the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre and the Wilderness Society, have been engaged in a two-year campaign to prevent the Commonwealth's \$40 million commitment to the Cape being diverted away from a Regional Agreement outcome, to being frittered away in \$40 million worth of Landcare, through the Natural Heritage Trust.

With the election of the minority Beattie government, has come a three-year window of opportunity to install a Regional Agreement in Cape York, which could provide a living example to Australia that Regional Agreements, rather than extinguishment of native title rights, are not only achievable, but are the rational, and mutually preferable, alternative to long, expensive court battles and compensation payouts.

The Howard Native Title legislation allows for the States to implement their own legislation in which the State governments have the option to give legal recognition to Regional Agreements, such as the Cape York Heads of Agreement, through what is referred to as a Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement provides the parameters for stakeholders to negotiate land tenure outcomes across the region, as well as on a property-by-property basis between traditional owners, pastoral leaseholders and in the case of the Cape, conservationists.

The Beattie government will soon introduce Native Title legislation which will support and facilitate the

implementation of the Cape York Heads of Agreement.

The conservation outcomes for the Cape as a result are significant. The Cape York Land Use Strategy, finalised in May 1997, endorsed the Cape York Heads of Agreement as a means of resolving land tenure issues in the Cape. This includes as a priority, the execution of an assessment of the natural and cultural values of Cape York at a regional, national (National Estate) and international (World Heritage) level.

This is the first step towards achieving a major World Heritage outcome in Cape York Peninsula, after the voluntary acquisition of pastoral properties whose natural and cultural values are shown to be outstanding. These large protected areas would be jointly managed with traditional owners. Indeed, given Howard's native title legislation, a World Heritage outcome may be the only avenue open to traditional owners to reclaim large tracts of land under Aboriginal management for the protection of cultural values.

So here is hoping for a large protected area in Cape York, jointly owned and managed by traditional owners, and which gives a high level of protection to the superlative natural and cultural values of Cape York.

Environment Groups and activists will hear soon about how to join in an assist through a public campaign supporting a World Heritage nomination in Cape York. Stay tuned.

Gavan has been the Coordinator of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) for the last two and a half years, working primarily on the Cape York, Daintree and Great Barrier Reef campaigns, and is the FoE contact for Far North Queensland.

Towards a sustainable Australia

We, the minority of the world's population living in the affluent, industrialised countries (the North) have tended to consider that population growth in the less industrialised countries (the South) is the main problem facing the world in terms of environmental degradation and potential future resource scarcity. The response from countries in the south has been to challenge consumption patterns in the North. The 25 per cent of the world's population which lives in the 'north' consumes 75 per cent of the world's resources, suggesting that it is in fact we western-style consumers who are the biggest threat to the global environment.

Not much imagination is needed to image what will happen if the consumption levels of the southern countries equalled those of the rich industrialised countries. Even with zero population growth, the burden on natural resources would increase by a factor of three. The anticipated effects of this, such as an intensification of the greenhouse effect, a further loss of biodiversity, increased destruction of rainforest and increased pollution of oceans, would be dramatic. Our earth cannot support 10 billion wasteful western-style consumers, yet that is exactly where our present development course will take us.

We cannot enforce poverty on three quarters of the population for the sake of the planet, so how do we solve this dilemma in a way that avoids environmental problems and ensures a good quality of life for people in southern and northern countries alike?

Friends of the Earth has developed a Sustainable Societies Program to address these issues at local, na-

By John Hepburn

tional and international levels. For the past six years, Friends of the Earth in Europe has been running a Sustainable Europe Campaign. The broad aim of this campaign has been to develop a 'greenprint' for a sustainable society and to develop practical, achievable strategies for moving towards sustainability.

Environmental space

There are many definitions of what might constitute Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and in many ways it is a 'beast that has never been seen'. As a result, a number of models have been proposed to more clearly understand our environmental impact and to provide some idea of what long-term 'sustainability' might look like. In Europe, Friends of the Earth has used the concept of 'fair shares in environmental space'.

In practical terms, environmental space is the total amount of energy, non-renewable resources, agricultural land and forests that we can use without causing irreversible environmental damage or depriving future generations of the resources they will need. The amount of environmental space is therefore limited by the carrying capacity of the earth.

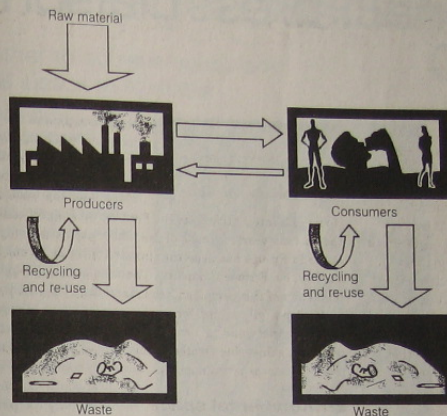
The amount of environmental space consumed by average consumers in each country can be measured in order to make comparisons with what is considered to be 'sustainable' and to make comparisons between different countries. Fair shares in environmental space are worked out by dividing the sustainable global

availability of energy and resources by the expected world population for a given year. In a fair and sustainable world, each country would consume more or less the same amount of resources relative to its population size. Actually working towards achieving fair shares in environmental space means that Australia and other developed countries will have to make large cuts in resource use in order to make room for sustainable development in the southern countries. This does not mean compromising our quality of life. It does however mean using resources much more efficiently and de-linking our idea of 'quality of life' from 'quantity of consumption'.

Resource efficiency

There are many possibilities for increasing the efficiency of resource use. In the past, the primary focus of industry cost reduction programs has been to increase labour efficiency. In a country faced with persistently high unemployment and increasingly unacceptable costs associated with resource extraction, it makes little sense to continue with this strategy. A shift in focus towards resource efficiency and away from labour efficiency would provide social, economic and environmental benefits. Focussing on resource efficiency means using best practice technology and engineering excellence.

In many instances, resource use can be reduced by a factor of four (and in many cases by a factor of 10) simply by using best practice technology and energy efficiency measures. Resource efficiency should be integral at all stages of a product's life-cycle design, production, transportation and re-use/re-cycling.



Encouraging re-use of resources

Re-using resources effectively 'closes loops' so that the flow of resources becomes cyclical (re-cycling within the economy) rather than linear (producer - consumer - landfill). Tools such as Life Cycle Analysis and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can be used to ensure that producers take responsibility for their products throughout their entire life cycle—effectively encouraging them to consider re-usability in the product design stage.

Changing consumption patterns

Consumers and purchasers can choose to consider resource efficiency when making purchase decisions. This can in turn encourage producers to integrate resource efficiency measures into their product designs and production processes (it should be noted that the fact that prices generally do not reflect the true ecological costs stands as a significant barrier to consumer driven change).

Re-use opportunities—reverse garbage

The need to increase the efficiency of use and re-use of resources brings with it a wealth of opportunities. In Europe, large corporations are making large profits from re-use and recycling. There is no reason why community organisations in Australia cannot benefit from these same opportunities. There is an abundance of useful 'stuff' that gets disposed of to landfill in Australian cities, creating a real opportunity for arbitrage (taking materials from people who place little or no value on them, and selling them to people who place a higher value on them). This is essentially the principle that the Friends of the Earth Brisbane 'Reverse Garbage' project is based on (the name Reverse Garbage is taken from the Reverse Garbage Truck Co-operative in Sydney which has been operating a similar re-use project for more than 20 years). In December of this year we will be opening a warehouse to sell pre-consumer industrial discards to the public. Offcuts, over-runs, set up waste, re-

ject stock, packaging materials will be collected from a wide range of industries, to be sold to schools, kindergartens, colleges, artists, home-builders and the general public.

The FoE Reverse Garbage project fits into the context of the Sustainable Australia Campaign. It is an exciting project in itself and has much potential as a springboard into other related projects in areas as diverse as industrial ecology and community arts. It is anticipated that, once established, it will be able to provide significant funding for the Sustainable Australia Campaign as well as providing a practical vehicle with which to test sustainability initiatives.

The Sustainable Australia Campaign is being developed as part of the FoE International Sustainable Societies Program. For more information about the campaign, please contact John Hepburn at FoE Brisbane, PO Box 5702, West End, QLD 4101, telephone (07) 3846 5793, email: foebribsbane@eq.net.au.

National Forest Liaison

Chloe Beavers &
Cameron Price



FoE facilitates a national network of forest campaigning groups and individuals. We believe in the intrinsic value of all species and landscapes present on the Earth. We therefore wish to adopt systems of production that fulfil sustainable human needs with minimal impact on the natural environment. We are trying to protect high conservation value forests and promote the shift to an ecologically viable wood products industry.

We aim to preserve all the values of native forests in a way that ensures the continued healthy functioning of all of the processes of native forest ecosystems. It has been recognised that water, tourism, recreation, spiritual and ecological values of forests are being severely degraded by current logging practices. We are working towards the

transformation of the existing timber industry to one that is ethical, sustainable and intergenerationally responsible.

The transition to such an industry would necessitate the immediate withdrawal from ecologically significant forests and allow timber extraction only in areas modified extensively by recent human intervention, such as areas that have already been clearfelled. The timber removed should be processed to its highest possible value, creating products of the highest quality and longevity. Extensive forest rehabilitation program can provide employment, especially for rural youth. Displaced forest workers should be fully compensated and offered retraining in land rehabilitation or ecotourism.

We aim to achieve community empowerment by informing the general public about forest issues, giving individuals a vehicle to act on their concern for the forest, gaining the support of voters, consumers and shareholders, building alliances with Aboriginal communities, building strategic alliances with community groups, industries and other non-governmental organisations and encouraging the public to remove their support for destructive forest industries.

Contact your nearest Friends of the Earth and get involved in forest campaigning. Things you can do are many and varied: outreach and community education, non-violent direct action, economic intervention/boycott, networking, use of media, research and information provision, promotion of alternative industries, monitoring of forest practices, ecological surveys, use of the legal system, participation in government consultative processes and skill sharing and workshops.

For more information contact Cameron or Chloe at the National Forest Liaison Office at forestnat@foe.org.au or (03) 9654 1700.

Indigenous Solidarity Group

Working together to achieve social and environmental justice in Australia

The Friends of the Earth Indigenous Solidarity Group is dedicated to proactively promoting relationships between environmental groups and the Indigenous people of Australia. To this end, FoE activists, along with local Aboriginal activists and community organisers, have facilitated two international conferences attended by grassroots Indigenous activists from across Australia and around world. The conferences have provided an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to network and discuss the reality of the everyday issues that face them in their fight for land and the survival of their cultures.

The devastating environmental impact that is perpetuated by corporate and government interests on traditional Aboriginal lands has had, and continues to have, an equally devastating impact on Aboriginal lore, culture and spirituality. As the result of this indifference to their cultural values, many traditional grassroots Aboriginal people have become distrustful of the motives and the intentions of white Australians. Further to this, the ISG recognises that the environmental movement has often played a part in the dispossession by actively advocating the denial of Indigenous people their lands. The ISG seeks to play a part in healing these breaches by providing a forum for Indigenous people to express their concerns in a supportive environment.

The reality is that in many Aboriginal communities the fight to preserve the culture of Aboriginal Australians has transferred into a struggle for their very lives. In 1997 there were more than 34 suicides recorded among primarily young men in Western Australian communities alone. This is not including the well publicised 'Deaths in Custody'. Surely this is indicative of what is fast becoming a culture of despair, as Aboriginal youth struggles with the deeply ingrained racism and the lack of opportunity that they face as they grow up and attempt to live and raise families in remote areas of Australia. The

widespread abuse of alcohol, drugs, and sad instances of domestic and community violence are the direct result of the breakdown of Traditional Law and the imposition of European culture on Aboriginal people. The issue has transcended beyond just 'the treatment of Aboriginals'. The issue now is the death of a culture and the widespread death of Aboriginal people. This is a reality that the Australian public must face. When asked about the reasons and the solutions to this despair, Aboriginal elders have always indicated that the solution to the problem is the restoration of their traditional lands.

Rather than taking this issue seriously, the current Australian Government has implemented 'the 10-point plan' legislation that effectively denies Aboriginal people rights which were granted by the High Court and subsequently legislated into law by the previous Labor Government.

Over the next year it is the intention of the ISG to become actively involved in exposing the ongoing damaging practices that are being employed by corporations in their dealings with Indigenous communities. The ISG will achieve this by networking with Indigenous communities around Australia and providing political and logistical support.

The ISG is composed of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds comprising Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians whose ultimate goal is to see an end to the past and present genocidal practices that have plagued Australian history.

Gareth Devenish

The fight for Timbarra



Willow Alietto
FoE Armidale

On the Timbarra Plateau, corporate profits and mineral commodities have again been given precedence over conservation values.

Ross Mining is currently constructing an open cut gold mine, with the heap leach processing facility in an area home to 29 endangered species of animal, and several rare or endemic flora. In the process they will destroy Aboriginal artifacts and sites, irreversibly alter the landform and damage, beyond restoration, old growth forest, rainforest, woodland and wetland areas.

In recent Comprehensive Regional Forest Assessments carried out by National Parks and Wildlife the Timbarra area, 25 kilometers east of Tenterfield, has been assessed as having the highest conservation values possible.

Yet, not only is this mine, Poverty Point, going ahead but the company and others have plans to explore, and then exploit, further areas on the plateau and in nearby Boonoo, Forestlands, Ewingar, North Washpool, Girard and Gilgurry State Forests.

It is all part of recent moves by the department of Mineral Resources and the Minerals Council to increase mining exploration and development in New South Wales. A draft report produced for the recent Regional Forest Agreement negotiations by Bureau of Resource Services stressed the importance of the oil and gas reserves of the coastal and forest areas for the economical processing of the minerals of the New England Fold Belt (which includes Timbarra).

In recent negotiations, DMR clearly stated its desire to see many high-conservation value areas, including Timbarra, Carrai Plateau, Wild Cattle Creek, Gibraltar Range and Girard State Forests excluded from any form of reservation which would preclude access for mineral exploration and eventual mining development.

There comes a point where we have to accept that some things can never be dug up. DMR are not there yet. For Minerals Council, DMR, financial organisations and government, conservation always seems to

be a bonus rather than an imperative.

At a time when world scientists are calling for the protection of habitat, at Timbarra the state's largest known population of the endangered Hastings River Mouse is forced to coexist with the Poverty Point Gold Mine.

At a time when fresh, clean water is at a premium, we are allowing a cyanide heap leach on a wetland at the headwaters of pristine creeks and a major river system.

It is only through the dedicated work of activists and community members, on the plateau and elsewhere which has even caused the development to be challenged in any way. It is only through continued action and awareness raising that we can ensure that the destruction does not spread to other leases. The government keeps promising environmental protection, it releases great-sounding policies and signs international treaties like the Ramsar convention in Kyoto, yet it is up to the people, always, to make the government keep its word and act.

For further information on the Timbarra campaign, or other mining developments in the region, contact FoE Tablelands network, FoE Armidale, ph/fax 02 6771 1155, PO Box 1155 Armidale. Timbarra Protection Coalition C/o Big Scrub Environment Centre 02 662 1323.

Ross Mining's latest project will have catastrophic consequences for the tablelands

The New South Wales government has recently announced the construction of an East/West road tunnel under Sydney's CBD. The government claims the tunnel will reduce car travelling times between eastern and western and will eliminate gridlock in the CBD.

These claims are highly exaggerated. There may be some initial advantages for car drivers, but traffic problems will increase in surrounding suburbs and the time saved by travelling through the tunnel will soon be lost in the gridlock on the approaches to the tunnel. The main western approach to the tunnel is Victoria Road which often suffers gridlock as it passes through Rozelle and Drummoyne. The tunnel will increase traffic problems in both suburbs.

Victoria Road in Rozelle and Drummoyne is very dangerous with many road accidents. Many victims of accidents on Victoria Road are local pedestrians. The CBD car lobby is making conditions dangerous for people who simply want to walk around their home suburb.

Between 1971 and 1991 activity in the City of Sydney declined. The workforce declined from 230,000 to 190,000.

The first knee-jerk reaction to decreased retail sales is to increase the number of car parking spaces. It is doubtful if increased parking will have a significant effect in increasing retail sales, and more cars may even be counter-productive and reduce sales.

About half a million people enter the CBD each weekday but it seems many of these potential customers are not shopping in downtown Sydney.

It has been estimated that already 40 per cent of retail sales are made by CBD workers and there is big potential to increase sales to these workers. Workers mainly shop during the 12 pm to 2 pm lunch break and they would probably shop more if they did not have to do battle with crowded footpaths during lunchtime. Workers have one hour to go shopping and precious time is lost waiting at traffic lights. It would not be unusual for

workers to spend 10 to 15 minutes waiting at traffic lights during their lunch break.

Upgrading pedestrian facilities and reducing cars will greatly increase the retail turnover of the City of Sydney.

The construction of this tunnel is tempting but the advantages aren't there. The problems of the CBD will be shifted to the suburbs. There may be slight advantages in the CBD but it will be hell in Rozelle, Drummoyne and many other inner suburbs.

Friends of the Earth Sydney is promoting the introduction of a car-free CBD. We challenge the NSW government to produce a financial analysis of both their tunnel proposal and our car-free CBD proposal. Our initial studies show the car-free CBD has major financial advantages, especially to commercial interests in the CBD.

The NSW government has again supported car use in Sydney. Smog is increasing, traffic jams are getting worse, public transport is inadequate and the government's solution to these problems is another tunnel.

Tunnel vision

Ted Floyd
FoE Sydney



Community 1 Multinationals 0

How grassroots activism averted the implementation of the
Multilateral Agreement on Investment

Damien Sullivan
FoE Fitzroy

The failure of OECD's Multilateral Agreement on Investment is fantastic news for all people concerned with democracy, environmental and social sustainability. At their October meeting, representatives from OECD nations (the world's 29 richest countries) failed to set a date for future negotiations and signalled the likelihood that an international investment agreement would be taken up in the World Trade Organisation.

The implosion of the MAI negotiations has been encouraging for the international coalition of environment, labour, development and small business groups, which opposed the agreement. Designed by international business interests, including the powerful United States Business Council and representatives of OECD governments, the MAI would have greatly accelerated moves towards a single global economy where economics and the logic of the market prevail at the expense of community, environmental and cultural concerns.

Community groups and individuals across the world who opposed the agreement can take particular credit for its demise. Despite efforts by OECD, business and government leaders to keep details of the MAI secret, non-government organisations were able to open the agreement up to public scrutiny and develop a coordinated international campaign. All over the world anti-MAI campaigners tapped into the public disenchantment with the actions of governments which are pursuing economic rationalist, or neo-liberal, policies in conjunction with multinational corporations. The MAI tested the public's acceptance of economic growth and market 'efficiency' at the expense of democratic procedures, environmental and labour standards.

After a relatively slow start, the Australian campaign against the MAI received widespread public support from diverse sectors of the community. Trade unions, overseas devel-

opment, community and environment organisations were joined by small business, local government representatives and newly formed Stop the MAI groups. There were also numerous public interventions into the debate by retired high court judge Sir Anthony Mason and One Nation's Pauline Hanson. The government was obliged to alter its recently implemented treaty process and convene The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties before Australia had agreed to the treaty. Once convened, the committee was inundated with submissions and had received over 900 when it was postponed for the election. The committee's interim report admonished the government and treasury for failing to adequately investigate the implications of the treaty for Australia.

The international campaign against the MAI was able to pressure a number of governments into a rethink of the benefits of the agreement. France's withdrawal from negotiations before the October OECD meeting was a final signal that the agreement was unworkable and unpalatable. The United States and Canada were also exhibiting strong reservations. As MAI negotiations collapsed in the OECD, the Australian government finally deserted the agreement. The Assistant Treasurer, David Kemp, pointed to the need for increased transparency and the inclusion of environmental and labour standards in any future agreement. This comment is remarkable coming from a government who brought us the Waterfront dispute and is pushing through the Jabiluka uranium mine.

Most readers will be disappointed, but not surprised, to hear that there are already plans to push on with a similar agreement, incorporating aspects of the MAI, in the World Trade Organisation. While involving more countries than the OECD, the WTO has a great many problems, not least being that it is dominated by trade interests which prioritises economic matters above environmental and social con-

cerns. For instance, the WTO recently dismissed an appeal which sought to ban America from restricting the importation of shrimps captured by means which threaten endangered sea turtles.

The importance of the Internet in defeating the MAI has not gone unnoticed. Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper followed the lead of Canadian and English papers in pointing to the 'success of the first international protest movement conducted primarily via the Internet'. From the release of the draft MAI over the Internet by a Canadian NGO in January 1997 to coordinating international actions, campaigns and sharing information, the Internet has been significant in defeating the MAI. As with other democratic struggles, the Internet also provided an important point for the public to access information that would otherwise trickle through the mainstream media or be left out altogether. With any luck the public's interest in accurate, highly-relevant information available over the Internet may provoke a broadening of the mainstream media's attention. The tactical response by the international business community to use the internet as an organising tool will be important to observe over the coming years. As the MAI campaign has confirmed, while it remains reasonably democratic and accessible, it can provide an important tool for campaigners.

There is much to be learned from the success of the MAI campaign, particularly through using the Internet and developing our international networks and campaigning. In Australia there is an urgent need to develop a coalition from a variety of sectors to tackle the adverse effects of globalisation, including trade and investment liberalisation. There is also a significant need to map the detrimental impacts of globalisation and the free trade agenda and raise public awareness about these issues. The campaign against the MAI has provided a focal point for campaigning on these somewhat abstract issues, illustrating the potential to effect the global agenda when action is taken both locally and internationally.

How to form a Friends of the Earth Group

A five-step guide on how to become active in one of the largest environment networks in the world.

The FoE Australia network welcomes enquiries from groups which share a similar philosophy to the network and who wish to become active under the name 'Friends of the Earth'. Here are five basic steps for achieving this:

- 1 Have a committed group of people willing to be active in your region on a grassroots level.
- 2 Contact the National Liaison Office of Friends of the Earth.
- 3 Draw up a constitution to circulate to current FoE groups for approval (the NLO will help).
- 4 Provide a profile or outline of proposed activities of your group.
- 5 A ballot will be put to current FoE groups and when the ballot procedures have been followed your group will be notified of the outcome.

How does your garden grow?

Adam Chapman's projects teach householders the advantages and techniques of low-waste gardening

Tristy Fairfield

Imagine feasting on fruit from an 'edible fence' that drips with guavas and citrus fruit, or sipping a tea infusion made from home-grown native tea-tree leaves. You can virtually sit back and watch nature work its magic - there is no need to mow the lawn or water the flowers.

Gardeners in New South Wales are discovering the rewards of developing gardens based on Adam Chapman's principle of WATER (Waste Avoidance Through Ecological Redesign). The low-waste gardens, which reduce pollution and green waste landfill, have the added advantage of being low-maintenance and economical.

The production of a series of pamphlets, introducing the WATER philosophy to the community, has generated strong interest, with Chapman welcoming the unprecedented demand for his skills in educating and advising householders of the advantages of low-waste gardening.

Chapman has a solid background in organic horticulture and was in his final year of a Bachelor of Social Ecology at the University of Western Sydney when he joined FoE's waste minimisation campaigner John Denlay in putting together the pamphlets.

Combining knowledge of urban ecological design with WATER principles, he has also been able to incorporate his interest in bush foods and medicine to add another practical dimension to his low-waste garden system.

Chapman and Denlay were able to produce their pamphlets after they received a grant from the NSW's Waste Planning and Management Fund as part of an Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) initiative to reduce



Gary Brehler

waste in NSW by 60 per cent by 2000.

Per capita figures for NSW indicate that green waste (garden, food and wood waste) makes up 45 per cent of domestic waste in the state. In producing the pamphlets, Denlay and Chapman identified lawns and exotic plants as the major factors which contribute to domestic green waste. They sought to address these areas by presenting alternatives to traditional gardening methods and emphasising the benefits of the low-waste style of garden design.

Through the pamphlets gardeners are shown how to reduce green waste and minimise water consumption by replacing lawns with low water ground covers, recycling lawn clippings, substituting high-maintenance, water-consuming plants with drought-tolerant low-maintenance native species and by mulching and composting.

After undertaking extensive research into native species, Chapman has also designed tables which provided a guide to which low-maintenance ground covers, trees and shrubs are best for spe-

cific areas. Recommended species are native to the local area or region, produce minimal green waste, are as close to drought tolerant as possible and have edible and medicinal uses.

'I'm coming from the perspective that waste minimisation shouldn't be about collecting and processing,' Chapman said. 'It's more about people taking responsibility for themselves, recycling on-site.'

He is disappointed that the NSW Government has so far failed to aggressively pursue the EPA's 60 per cent waste reduction objective, and points to its failure to heed the State Waste Advisory Council's recommendation to stop green waste going to landfill. While the Government claims that there is not yet the industry base required for such a change, Chapman feels that the potential for avoidance and redesign has been overlooked.

Encouraged by the success of the initial printing, Chapman and Denlay approached Sydney's local councils and relevant industry groups asking them to fund area-specific reprints of the pamphlets. Bankstown Council and the Inner Sydney Waste Board accepted the offer and Chapman amended the tables to contain species native to each area.

During this time he also discovered that his ideas were gaining currency more quickly than he had realised. One regional waste board had borrowed heavily from the pamphlets and had only given a token acknowledgment to FoE. But after the indiscretion was gently pointed out an apology was immediately forthcoming and Chapman was even asked to create a low-waste demonstration site in the area.

While WATER is fueled by theory, people will probably remain uncon-

vinced until they see it in practise. That's where the WATER demonstration sites come in.

Using the entire back and front gardens of residential houses, the sites show the practical implementation of WATER. The first, in Maroubra, features a system to recycle laundry water by directing it through a sand filter to a 'rainforest' area in the backyard. Native bushfood rainforest species such as Davidson's Plum (*Davidsonia pruriens*) and Rosella (*Hibiscus tetrophyllus*) grow near a pond containing edible wetland plants including Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and Water Chestnut (*Eleocharis dulcis*).

Among the features of a Central Coast demonstration site are an edible ground cover of New Zealand Spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*), hardy coastal shrubs Grey Salt-Bush (*Atriplex cinerea*), Mountain Bush Tomato (*Solanum linearifolium*) and Native Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*) plus Native Pepper Vine (*Piper novae-hollandiae*), an edible fruit climber. A salt-tolerant windbreak has been established which incorporates coastal grevilleas, olives (one of the few exotic species that research has shown to be suitable for this type of garden) and calystamens. An 'edible fence' containing native fruits, has also become a dominant feature of the garden.

The NSW Government has expressed interest in the garden design projects and Premier Bob Carr, who lives locally, is rumoured to be officially opening this site in the near future. He has been spotted investigating the site, possibly attracted by the edible fence.

Chapman has used the sites to host two-day workshops, and is in the process of developing a workshop series for presentation through councils and learning institutions. The workshops are incorporated into 'Earthworks', a waste-minimisation program co-developed by Denlay. The workshops incorporate the principles of the



'Earthworks' program, and encourage people to go out and set up similar systems for themselves.

'We're trying to establish community-based action,' Chapman said, referring to the costs and time involved for an individual or family to establish a low-waste garden. 'Using the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) we can establish backyard self-sufficiency and sustainability for different members of the community.'

Channel 7 recently shot footage at the Central Coast demonstration site for inclusion in a segment on lifestyle program *Sydney Weekender* and several recent articles have been published about low-waste gardening and WATER. It is clear that interest in these issues is growing quickly.

Chapman was invited to speak at the Students and Sustainability conference in Tasmania this year and presented a workshop entitled Practical Methods for Redesigning Urban Ecology to the conference of Students Campaigning Against Multinationals (SCAM).

Following his guest appearances on gardening and environmental segments on NSW radio stations 2BL and Illawarra ABC, the Friends of the Earth (Sydney) office was deluged with requests for information. A columnist for new organic gardening magazine *Gardening Australia*, he has also had articles published in *Wellbeing* magazine. Chapman progressed through to the semi-finals of the 1998 Young Aus-

tralian of the Year Award in the environmental division.

Having recently received funding to undertake train-the-trainer courses for workshops, Adam also has made a submission to the South Sydney Waste Board for finance to enable him to write and publish a book on the topic of redesigning urban ecology.

Chapman believes the private sector, as well as public utilities, has the potential to benefit both economically and environmentally from the implementation of low-waste gardens. While most of the projects he's worked on to date have been voluntary, Chapman has established a business, Urban Ecologist, to provide consultation and advice on creating ecological design sites.

Adam is heartened by the success of low-waste gardening and the potential to reduce unnecessary waste and pollution, particularly in urban areas.

'I've had a hell of a lot of support from the local councils and waste boards and there is such strong community support,' he said. 'It's a new direction for waste minimisation. It just shows that we can change the way we do things and the way that we impact on the environment.'

Adam Chapman can be contacted on 02 9586 1437 or 02 9387 7105.

More detailed information on low-waste gardens is available on the Internet at:

<http://homepages.tig.com.au/~foesyd/SustainableConsumption/garden/gardenhome.html>

Reviews

Written and compiled by Beth Mellick

All books are available from the FoE Fitzroy Bookshop, 312 Smith Street, Collingwood, 3065. Telephone: 03 9419 8700 Fax: 03 9416 2081.



The Environmental Consequences of Growth

Author: Douglas E Booth
Publisher: Routledge

The Environmental Consequences of Growth considers the idea of steady-state economics as an alternative to a high-growth, environmentally destructive capitalist economy. Booth proposes theories on economic growth and environmental change, specifically looking at natural habitat loss, air, water and pollution. He delves into governmental environmental regulations and their relationship to these global problems. His analyses includes a new ethical approach to evaluating environmental impacts.

The Environmental Consequences of Growth is essentially a text for those studying environmental economics. It is, however, a clear and informative read for those interested in environmental sustainability.

RRP \$ 45.00

Saving the Environment

Author: Ted Trainer
Publisher: UNSW Press

Ted Trainer may be a familiar environmental and political author to many readers. Some people argue his latest work is much more accessible than his previous publications.

Trainer's book is one of a series called *Frontlines* which feature issues such as native title, digital broadcasting and the impact of gambling on Australian society. *Saving the Environment* critiques the government's environmental policies and ideology. Trainer argues that the emphasis on recycling programs are barely penetrate the surface of the real ecological problems in Australia such as poverty, development, globalisation, greenhouse, ozone depletion, forest destruction, loss of biodiversity and species. This is a short but informative read.

RRP \$9.95



The Green Cleaner

Author: Barbara Lord
Publisher: Wilkinson Books

The Green Cleaner is back in print. After being revised and expanded it is still retailing at \$7.95. At this price, *The Green Cleaner* is possibly the best book of its type on the market today. It offers simple and effective methods of cleaning around the home without the use of chemicals. *The Green Cleaner* re-establishes the practical cleaning qualities of vinegar, bi-carb, borax, lemon juice, methylated spirits, salt and water. At a time when Friends of the Earth is actively campaigning for ecologically sustainable societies, it is important to emphasise the need to reduce consumption and to change actions that lead to waste and pollutions. *The Green Cleaner* provides a practical means of achieving this.

Available in most major bookshops but you can also mail order from the Friends of the Earth bookshop. RRP \$7.95

Sustainable House

Author: Michael Mobbs
Publisher: Choice Books

Sustainable House is an inspiring and informative story on self-sustainability and efficiency. Mobbs turned his inner-city Sydney house into a self-sufficient dwelling. His family of four is self-sufficient in water, waste disposal and electricity generation whilst responsibly using recycled timbers, avoiding PVC and toxic chemicals. *Sustainable House* is user-friendly with numerous illustration and coloured photographs portraying every part of the house. It also discusses similar examples of self-sufficient and energy-efficient houses from other parts of Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. *Sustainable House* is a must for anyone interested in alternative technology.

RRP \$36.00



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Send us letters, criticism and any other items of interest. Please include photographs relevant to campaigns and issues.

Ideally photographs should be high quality, accurately labelled 35 mm and 120 mm transparencies and prints. Black and white or colour. All photographs will be credited. All originals will be returned on request.

All contributions are greatly appreciated by the *Chain Reaction* editorial team.

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If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools of water, its little pools of water and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it, and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball and at the creatures in the water. The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one, and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it. If the earth were only a few feet in diameter.

Text on a banner at the Jabiluka blockade

Author unknown