

FOE

SUMMER 1999

Newsletter



this issue:

- **FoE INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN MELBOURNE**
- **'NO DUMP IN OUR COUNTRY' - the campaign against the Billa Kalina radioactive waste dump**
- **THE SALE OF THE VICTORIAN PLANTATION CORPORATION - "This is the Liberal Government's brave new forestry world; where economic rationalism is the only investment factor considered."**
- **RECLAIM THE STREETS is back!!**

Friends
of the
Earth
Fitzroy

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Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy) meeting times

Collective meetings are held at the FoE offices, and are open to all people. Please ring if you want extra information.

- anti uranium - every wednesday, at 6.30pm
 - arid lands - ring for next meeting
 - bookshop - most thursdays, 2.30pm
 - food co-op - most wednesdays
 - forest network - every monday, 7pm
 - Indigenous solidarity - thursdays, 6 pm
 - office - most thursdays
 - transport - alternate tuesdays, 7pm
 - water - monthly, ring for details
- At night, enter via Perry street.

Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy) is an autonomous, community-based organisation working towards an ecologically sustainable and socially equitable future. It is affiliated with FoE Australia, a network of 13 groups, which in turn is a member of FoE International, which has member groups in 59 countries. Collectively, the FoE network is the largest environmental federation in the world.

This newsletter is produced 4 times a year and we welcome input from community and environmental organisations and individuals. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of FoE Fitzroy. Articles from this newsletter may be reproduced. Please credit the source and send us a copy.

FoE (Fitzroy) Pays the Rent to the Melbourne Aboriginal community.

This newsletter was produced by Saskia Adams, Christy Mannion & Cam Walker.

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Farewell to Neville and Beth

FoE news

FoE is very sad to have lost Beth Mellick and Neville Cooper to their long-awaited overseas travels. After doing a brilliant job of co-ordinating the FoE International AGM in Melbourne and keeping the FoE finances under control, Beth has decided to go travelling to Europe. She worked consistently on structural issues for both FoE Fitzroy and Australia, including the gender and sexual harassment policy. She was one of the co-ordinators of the upstairs office and dealt with volunteers, orientation, finances, fundraising, campaigning and other matters in a highly competent way. She has also been active in the Streets for People campaign.

Neville worked with forest network and the office collective, winning an above-and-beyond the call of duty award for tenacious phone bill invoicing. Nev also works with Channel 31 (the community TV station) and has been a key organiser in the TV teams which are as ubiquitous as the Police at almost all community rallies and protests.

Beth will continue to work with the FoE network while on their travels. We wish them the best and hope they come home soon!

Chain Reaction is back !!

With this issue of the newsletter you will find the first edition of Chain Reaction in more than two years.

We would like to welcome the new editors - Anna Burlow, Kulja Coulston, Tristy Fairfield and Barbara Kerr and wish them the best for the coming editions of CR.

We would also like to acknowledge the remarkable work and persistence of the previous editors, Clare Henderson and Larry O'Loughlan, who edited the magazine for more than 10 years. During their time at CR they created a niche for the magazine which was well respected and widely read and at the cutting edge of environmental and social issue reporting. Clare and Larry resigned from the position in December 1996.

Homepage

Many thanks to Helen Page, who has been looking after the FoE web site for the last 9 months. She has done considerable redesign work and it is now kept up-to-date. There are a number of new sections, including our current press releases, benefits, actions and rallies. We would suggest that anyone wishing to keep really up to date on our activities keep an eye on the page if they have internet access.

Active members needed

As always, we need extra people to get active with the office collective. In particular, people interested in:

- fundraising
- mailout - in particular, we need someone to take on the joys of co-ordinating the quarterly mailouts
- membership and database work
- general administrative support
- community outreach - stalls, publicity, info displays, etc.

Please talk with Cam or Damien in the office if interested.

"No radioactive dump in our Country"

KUPA PITI KUNGA TJUTA

"This is our old people's country. The proposed Billa Kalina National Radioactive Waste Repository site is located on my country. An area of 67,000 square kilometres has been earmarked for a site selection process. This will determine the placement of at least low level and intermediate waste from around Australia and quite possibly the world.

As an Arabunna and Kokatha woman I am a senior Aboriginal representative. I can talk about the country.

We are not greedy people, we just want to protect and make sure that our country doesn't become poisoned by the creation of a waste dump.

We want everyone, not just our Wadugubã (children) but everyone's Waduguba to share and jointly respect our country.

We still know where the women's sites are and we are concerned that our women's sites will be destroyed. We are also concerned that the country will become poisoned country like at Emu Junction and then at Maralinga where nuclear weapons were tested. Some of the people became sick after these tests.

The nuclear industry has helped to penetrate either directly or indirectly, acts of genocide upon Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) people from all over the world. Australia is no exception. Aboriginal land has been appropriated, cleared of its inhabitants and ruthlessly exploited by the nuclear industry. This includes nuclear weapons testing; military and space experimentation and the mining and milling of uranium.

I am scared that in time the government will neglect to look after the waste repository. It may leak and kill our animals - everything.

This is a problem for everyone: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. We should all join together to say no to the waste dump. Please join with us, the Arabunna, Kokatha, Antin Karinya, Yan Kuntjatjara. Kunga's who are speaking up strongly to say:

NO WASTE IN OUR NGURA (PLACE)!

Palya.

Rebecca Bear-Wingfield, Senior Aboriginal's Representative.

Background

Negotiations between Commonwealth and State governments for the establishment of a national radioactive waste repository began in 1979. In 1985 a national program of site selection for shallow burial of low level radioactive waste began. However until very recently no State or Territory government would agree to provide the site.

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources along with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) are the main Commonwealth agencies promoting the proposed national repository (Commonwealth carriage was originally through the Department of Primary Industry and Energy (DPIE)).

These agencies argued that a single national waste dump was needed to dispose of low-level radioactive wastes from hospitals and universities totalling about 60 cubic metres annually (about three semi-trailer loads). It is argued that medical and research institutions shouldn't be



Representatives from Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta at the Global Survival & Indigenous Rights conference, Melbourne, November 1998

photo: Natalie Moxham

burdened with the storage of these wastes. Further, it was maintained that a national dump would provide a site for the disposal of large quantities of soils contaminated due to experimentation, and would in future accept intermediate and high-level wastes such as spent fuel rods from the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor in Sutherland, in south western Sydney.

Present situation

To date public consultation conducted by the DPIE has focused on a national site selection process over three phases. The current disposal options are:

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.... "No radioactive dump in our Country"

shallow burial of low-level and short-lived intermediate wastes in a remote area. Despite analysis and criticism from environment organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace throughout the site selection process the push from the Commonwealth for the shallow burial of nuclear wastes continues.

In 1995 the Senate Select Committee into the Dangers of Radioactive Waste conducted a wide ranging investigation into the production, use, storage and disposal of radioactive wastes. The report "No Time to Waste" although recommending in favour of a national repository, found that shallow burial was an unacceptable form of disposal. Rather it recommended that: "a national above ground storage facility be established which has the capacity to take low, intermediate and high level radioactive waste." (1)

However, the Coalition government has dismissed these recommendations stating that: "For low-level and short-lived intermediate-level waste, international standards and practice clearly indicate that near-surface disposal is appropriate rather than storage..." (2) It also happens to be the cheapest way of putting out of sight and out of mind dangerous radioactive wastes.

Billa Kalina

On 18th February 1998, Senator Warwick Parer, then Minister for Resources and Energy, announced that a 67,000 square kilometre region in South Australia had been identified as the most suitable area in which to site the dump. The area was called Billa Kalina after one of the ecologically unique mound springs located in the Lake Eyre South region.

Billa Kalina also extends over the traditional country of the Kokotha people to the south and Arabunna people to the north. Rebecca Bear-Wingfield, an Arabunna and Kokotha woman and Senior Aboriginal Women's Representative of the Kunga Tjuta Kupa Piti has stated that the dump proposal is "an abuse of human rights which we will stop. Governments can't keep dumping their poison on us." We will make this a national and international issue." (3)

Drilling for site location and the Environmental Impact Assessment process should be finalised by the end of 1999. Despite the opposition of Arabunna and Kokotha people and environment organisations it is likely that the proposal will be given government approval. For this reason the Billa Kalina Alliance seeks your active support for this campaign. Only vigorous public opposi-

tion will prevent the further nuclearisation of Kokotha and Arabunna land (see pamphlet: Dispossession and Nuclearisation).

The Facts about Shallow Burial

The proposed dump is planned to be about the size of a soccer field. This will include trenches of less than 20 metres deep into which the waste will be placed, usually inside steel drums. The drums are then covered with concrete or rammed earth. (4)

The Bureau of Resource Sciences openly states that the proposed design will not prevent leakage of water, nor human, animal or plant intrusion. (5) Exact plans for the design are vague and will not be fully disclosed until after a site is selected. This stands in stark contrast to the Senate Committee Recommendation 18 which stated that: "the national facility will be adequately engineered to withstand all possible climatic conditions, no matter how unlikely." (6)

The dump will be covered by an 'institutional control period' of 100 years. This means that the operating agency is responsible under law for this period of time. It is also claimed that the dump will have an 'engineering integrity' of 300 years. However, small quantities of Radium and other alpha-emitters typically found amongst low-level waste have half-lives that extend far beyond these periods. The half-life of Radium 226 is 1600 years, and gives rise to Radon, a gas, and its decay products which are the principle agents of lung cancer in uranium miners. (7)

The fact that Radium decays into a radiotoxic gas would require that the repository have the technical means to isolate radioactive vapours from the environment. Near-surface burial will not provide for this in any way. Other likely wastes such as Americium 241 have a half-life of 432 years and decays into Neptunium 237, which has a half-life of over 2 million years again far exceeding control periods required under law. (8)

Recent studies have shown that radioactive contaminants can migrate in groundwater over long distances faster than originally thought. This highlights the dangers presented to communities living in arid regions who use groundwater for drinking.

Siting the dump in a remote area only adds 'the tyranny of distance' to an already complex problem of radioactive waste management. Difficulties such as maintaining communications, adequate expertise; service provision; security and travel each compound the human rights and environmental abuses shallow burial on Aboriginal land entails. In addition, radioactive wastes would be transported across the continent putting numerous communities en route at risk to accidental exposure and contamination.

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the second gathering in solidarity with Indigenous people and the earth
'Global survival & Indigenous rights', Melbourne, November 20 - 22, 1998

"Nuyumunda" - "beginning the process of coming together."

- Kevin Buzzacott, speaking at the conference

A call for * solidarity *
respect * justice * resistance

Report-back

The Global Survival and Indigenous Rights conference, held in Melbourne from November 20 - 22 was a huge success. Almost 500 people attended, representing Indigenous communities and organisations from around Australia, international non-government groups, environment and solidarity groups and many individuals.

This year's gathering (the first was in March 1997) was held at Pipemakers Park in Melbourne's inner west.

These meetings are forums for grassroots activists to meet to share information and develop strategies for alliances and specific campaigns. The vast majority of speakers are Indigenous (a small number of non-Indigenous people spoke at this year's forum) and, with a substantial audience, they also provide a useful forum for Indigenous people to reach a supportive national and global audience.

Key highlights of this year's gathering included:

- The presence of a large contingent of women from Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta (SA), who are resisting plans to turn part of their traditional lands into a radioactive waste dump had a dramatic impact on the gathering. Their remarkable strength was truly inspirational and has already translated into a considerable boost to the campaign to oppose the Billa Kalina waste facility.

- A number of women from the Ngarrindjeri Nation in South Australia made the journey to Melbourne again this year to talk about their ongoing campaign to defend their land and culture in the face of plans to build a bridge at Kumarangk (Hindmarsh Island).

- A recurrent theme was the need to recognise traditional lore/law and Indigenous decision-making structures. This was highlighted by the resounding support for using the Treaty process in Australia and elsewhere to acknowledge pre-existing Indigenous Sovereignty. The first resolution passed by the conference was "that we move to self government by Natural Lore and the TREATY

process be used by Friends of the Earth (FoE) to facilitate at local, regional, national and international levels, with international protection."

This statement was moved in the understanding that the Indigenous Lore/Law of any country holds the key to achieving sustainable land management and just societies in that country, and that the Lore /Law in all countries applies to both indigenous and non indigenous societies.

International speakers covered diverse areas. They included Cole Clark (Four Winds Foundation); Marvic Leonen from the Philippines, who spoke on legal support for Indigenous communities; Roy Taylor (the North American Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Project); and Gabriel Rivas Ducca (Costa Rica) and Ricardo Buitron (Ecuador) who



Gabriel Rivas Ducca (FoE Costa Rica), Ricardo Buitron (FoE Ecuador), Matthew Abud (translating) & Danny Kennedy (Project Underground, USA) speaking on the third day of the conference.
photo: Natalie Moxham

talked about community resistance to transnational mining companies in Central and South America. The strong international presence gave a sense of context to the struggles being waged in Australia.

A theme of this year's gathering was "looking after country", which focused on land management issues. This included specific projects (such as the Wurundjeri Wardens Program, which seeks to involve non-Indigenous people in cultural site protection, and CoastCare/Coast Action) through Indigenous decision making structures (such as Pauline Gordon (Bundjalung, NSW) who talked about the

continued next page

conference report-back *continued*

example of the Bundjalung Elders Council, which is increasingly recognised by non-Indigenous entities such as local Government councils), to new models of enhancing environmental protection (such as the representatives from Girringun Aboriginal Elders Reference Group QLD, who spoke about a project which aims to protect significant wetlands through the Native Title process).

Destructive projects and developments were also a focus of discussion: sand mining on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island, QLD), uranium mining and its impacts on Indigenous lands and people in South Australia, and gold and other mining in Western Australia. Nonita Morse Diop spoke about the campaign to oppose nuclear testing in Murorua, while Joan Wingfield spoke about the global dimensions of the nuclear cycle. However, there was also much attention given to the positive, community-controlled initiatives being organised by Indigenous communities: the homeland movements at Lake Condah Mission (VIC), north east of Alice Springs and South West Queensland; community-based tourism, sustainable business ventures and networks which allow for local communities to support each other in their struggles.

All in all there was a sense that progress had been made towards building a relationship between the Indigenous peoples of this country and non-Indigenous people who are concerned about the impacts of the consumer societies on the land and its people. This feeling was clearly expressed by Kevin Buzzacott (Lake Eyre Arabunna), at the wrap-up concert when he presented the gathering with a word in his own language, "Nuyumunda", which he told us, "means beginning the process of coming together", or "becoming whole".

Interestingly enough, although we have racked our brains we have been unable to think of an English equivalent. Reconciliation is a word that is bandied around by politicians and the like, however as Pauline Gordon so clearly put it: "Reconciliation means that you were together and that you have parted and that you are coming together again. We were never together in the first place."

While there were many solidarity and Indigenous support groups present, the mainstream environment movement, with a number of exceptions, was conspicuous by its absence. Given the focus on land management issues, this was a puzzling situation.

This year's gathering re-confirmed the need for regular forums where Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists can meet as equals to share information and support each other's campaigns. There has been discussion about another group taking on hosting the next gathering. FoE would welcome expressions of interest from an Indigenous or non-Indigenous group.

Global Survival & Indigenous Rights

We thank the **Wurundjeri people** for welcoming the event and the many speakers who travelled from all around Australia and the world.

The **steering committee** and other key Indigenous advisers (Aunty Betty King, Vicki Nicholson, Joan Wingfield, Sandra Onus, Theo Saunders) provided direction and support and we give our heartfelt thanks for their wisdom and insight.

We thank the many people, businesses and organisations who supported us financially, logistically, and through hard labour, in making the event such a success.

The **Principal sponsor** was the **Body Shop**. Their significant financial support allowed us to bring many more people to the event than would have been possible otherwise.



The sponsors were:

- Melbourne's Living Museum of the West Inc
- Abundance Fundraising (Saskia Adams and Meaghan Adams)
- Moreland City Council
- Darebin City Council
- Melbourne University Environment Collective
- 2% for Discipleship & Global Justice Committee (Uniting Church in Australia)
- Aboriginal Affairs, Albert Park
- Maribyrnong City Council
- RMIT Ecology Action Group

The proceedings of the gathering will be published over the next few months. The resolutions are posted on the FoE Fitzroy homepage: <http://www.foe.org.au>

The working group was Anthony Amis, Jacinta Dyson, Gareth Devenish, Julio Estorinho, Kasia Gabrys, Larry Walsh, Lee Tan, Mark Boyd, Melia Bugeja, Natalia Pereira, Ngami Grzesik, Russell Smith, Sarah Lowe, Saskia Adams, Talitha Daley, and Cam Walker. Many thanks to all who cooked, set-up the venue, drove buses (especially Troy and Tom, who get the awards this year), Matthew Abud for interpreting, and everyone else who helped out.

friends of the earth international annual general meeting

I don't think that any of us here at FoE Fitzroy could have imagined the magnitude of organising and running an international conference of this sort. In the first breath of this report, we would like to thank all those that were

involved, from cooking, to driving to the airport, to billeting delegates and generally helping out where possible. One of the greatest problems that we faced was a lack of labour and, therefore, we really appreciated the help that we did receive throughout the conference and during the preparations.

There were around 60 delegates who landed in Melbourne at all times of the day and night. Some countries sent more than one representative and there were a few countries in the international federation who were not able to attend. At the end of the conference, we received heartfelt

thanks from nearly all of the international delegates. They were particularly pleased with the organisation of the conference generally. Many were surprised that a group mainly staffed by volunteers and without funds supplied by the government, corporate sponsorship or private beneficiaries could have a conference of this size run so smoothly.

Many thanks to those groups that did give us monetary and 'in-kind' support, especially the National Union of Students, and the student unions from RMIT and Melbourne University.

One of the greatest compliments that came our way and that came our way very often was in relation to the catering. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in cooking the breakfasts and lunches during the week-long conference. Many delegates were very excited by the variety and the quality of the vegetarian food and many ventured to say it was the best food they had ever had at an International AGM of Friends of the Earth.



Vincenzo Franco (USA) and Roberta Cowan (FoE secretariat)

Beth Mellick

KEY RESULTS OF AGM

FoE's 27th Annual General Meeting, held from 24-28 November 1998 in Melbourne, continued the discussions started last year on the future direction of the federation. Three key plenary discussions

took place on the themes of Corporate Accountability/ Targeting transnational corporations (TNCs) for campaigns; Alternatives to Globalisation; and Grassroots Mobilisation.

The AGM agreed upon the need to target TNCs on the basis of the excessive power that they wield in the global economy and in our communities in a more coherent and strategic manner. It decided to identify a different 'corporation of the year' beginning at the 1999 AGM.

Several groups expressed the need for the federation to play a lead role in international non-continued next page



Vojtech Kotecky (Czech Republic), Sadhbh O'Neill (Ireland) and Janis Ulme (Latvia) photos: Linda Marks

FoE International - continued

government organisation (NGO) strategising about alternatives to the current economic system. It was widely felt that this work should take place within the framework of our work on sustainable societies. Discussions on grassroots empowerment resulted in a number of recommendations about how our international campaigning can be made more accessible to local communities. It was stressed that FoEI should focus not only on 'top-down' international campaigning, but should harness the capacity of our local groups and communities by adopting a more "bottom-up" approach.

Membership Changes

COHPEDA (Haiti) and Environmental Rights Action (Nigeria) were admitted as full members, while Global 2000 (Austria), Neo Ecologia (Greece) and Guamina (Mali) were accepted as associate members.

Overall, the number of full and associate member organisations rose from 58 to 59.

Campaigns in 1999

The AGM approved four program areas for the coming year:

International Financial Institutions (IFIs); Trade, Environment and Sustainability (TES); Sustainable Societies; and the Amazon.

Last year's successful work on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in the OECD will be followed up with monitoring of the WTO and other bodies likely to promote inequitable investment regulations.

There will be three campaigns next year:



Mirline Carvil & Jean Ferney Plou (Haiti), Deddi Vevri (Indonesia) and Andrea Durbin (USA)

Energy/Climate Change; Mining; and Wetlands. An important focus in FoEI's climate work will be the oil lobby, and an international day of action will take place on March 10. Further, FoEI is organising the NGO pre-conference for this year's RAMSAR Conference of Parties in Costa Rica in May.

International lobbying and advocacy work will take place in the areas of Antarctica; Biosafety; and Maritime issues. Proposals for activities on forests, corporate accountabili-



Hernan Verschuer (FoE Chile), Linda Marks (Fitzroy) and Oscar Rivas (Paraguay)

ty, biodiversity and biotechnology are anticipated for next year's AGM.

Discussions on gender at the AGM led to the formation of a gender working group and advisory council which will decide upon a plan of action to be presented at next year's AGM. The gender working group will use the Trade, Environment and Sustainability campaign as a test case for the mainstreaming of gender in FoEI campaigns.

Kevin Dunion was re-elected as FoEI Chairperson. The other executive committee members are Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Philippines, Switzerland and the United States.

The 1999 AGM will take place in Ecuador, and FoE US was nominated to organise the annual meeting in 2000.

Ann Doherty, FoEI



Friends of the Earth
Les Amis de la Terre
Amigos de la Tierra

Yorta Yorta Native Title Update

On Friday the 18th December, Justice Olney of the Federal Court gave his finding on the Native Title case of the Yorta Yorta people of the mid Murray region. This was a shameful day for the Australian legal system as the Yorta Yorta clearly maintain their links with their traditional lands. The judgement was clearly an attempt to 'liquid paper' the Yorta Yorta people out of existence, and hence their claim to their homelands. This finding also needs to be seen in the light of the moves by the Kennett government to introduce the Confirmation and Validation legislation at the state level. This will implement two aspects of the Howard governments 10 point plan, and can only be seen as a double edged attack on the rights of Indigenous people in Victoria. The day will surely be judged as one of absolute shame not only for Justice Olney but also the Victorian government, who steadfastly argued against the rights of the Yorta Yorta people.

To offer support to the Yorta Yorta: PO Box 27, Nathalia, 3638. Ph 03 - 58 693380, fax 03 - 58 693352

Statement from the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

"The Yorta Yorta people are an identifiable nation of indigenous peoples who arose from this very land. We are the survivors of ancestors who overcome tremendous odds to give us life and we owe them nothing but our total commitment to continue to defend our birthright and protect our country.

Following the decision by Justice Olney of the Federal Court on the 18th December 1998, the Yorta Yorta will lodge an appeal with the Federal Court on the 29th January, 1999.

In the 1930's, William Cooper, a Yorta Yorta statesman, and many other people declared that there was nothing for Aboriginal people to celebrate on Australia Day and declared it a "day of mourning". In 1999, the Yorta Yorta stand by this declaration.

We call on Australia to support the call for treaty with indigenous peoples of Australia to be formalised by the year 2001. Without recognition and justice there can be no reconciliation."

Indigenous solidarity

THE VICTORIAN LAND TITLE VALIDATION AMENDMENT ACT

The First Two Points of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan

The Land Title Validation Amendment Act has passed through both Houses of the Victorian Parliament and commenced operation on 24 November, 1998. By this legislation the Victorian Government has put into place the first two points of the

Howard Government's ten point plan: validation of intermediate period acts and confirmation of extinguishment of native title.

The amendments to the Commonwealth Native Title Act ("NTA") which passed the Senate in July 1998 and commenced operation on 30/9/98, allowed the State of Victoria to validate acts that it did on land previously subject to a pastoral lease or on land reserved for a public purpose, in the period between the commencement of the NTA (1/1/94) and the date of the Wik decision (23/12/96).

The Yorta Yorta land claim



It also enabled the States to "confirm" the extinguishing effects of so-called "previous exclusive possession acts", which the Commonwealth and the State, between themselves and without waiting for any court decisions, had decided already extinguished native title.

The Victorian Aboriginal community urged the State not to validate and confirm at all, but if it was to do so, that it should wait until a decision was handed down by the Federal Court in the Yorta Yorta case. However the State of Victoria ignored this request and validated and confirmed to the fullest extent allowed by the Commonwealth. The State has "confirmed" the extinguishing effect of a number of different types of interests in land granted by it over the last 150 years.

The folly of doing so has already been illustrated in the decision of the Federal Court on the native title determination application of the Miriuwung Gajerrong people of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This is the first contested determination of native title on the Australian mainland. The judge found that some of the leases referred to in the part of the Schedule relevant for WA had not, in fact, extinguished native title. The WA Government is just about to consider "confirmation" legislation similar to that already passed by the Victorian Parliament.

Source: Mirimbiak Yarbrier, 5 December 1998 (Mirimbiak Nations Aboriginal Corporation magazine)

HANCOCK BUYS A DUD. VICTORIAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT - AMONGST THE WORST IN THE WORLD!

On November 17th 1998, Hancock Timber Resource Group (HTRG), a subsidiary of the Boston based insurance company John Hancock Financial Services announced to the world that they had acquired the assets of the Victorian Plantation Corporation (VPC). In what is believed to be the largest timber sale in Australian history, HTRG paid \$352 million (US) for the timber rights on 160 000 hectares of land throughout Victoria. Ownership of the land will be retained by the state. HTRG, through its newly formed Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP), acquires a perpetual forest licence to grow and harvest timber as long as land use is restricted to plantation forestry and timber production. Hancock has formed a consortium with 3 Australian superannuation companies in the deal.

At least 40 000 hectares of this land is native forest, including 20 000 hectares in the Strzelecki ranges, 2 hours drive east of Melbourne. An interesting question is whether the state government, eager to sell the VPC, properly informed Hancock about the environmental significance of their acquisition. Either the state government were unaware when the sale was organised (highly unlikely), or backroom business deals were made, easing the way for this controversial deal. This must have included: knowledge about the systematic levelling of old growth forest and rainforest, due to these forests not being as economically productive as plantations; Lessening environmental regulation of logging companies by manipulating the planning process; turning once state owned forest into private land, where monitoring of environmental compliance is carried out by local councils who have neither the will nor resources to properly carry out this task.

Greater profits will result for logging companies who can cut costs by logging land that they shouldn't, thereby increasing the amount of genetically engineered trees they can grow per acre. Deals would also have involved leaving the Strzelecki forests out of all Regional Forest Agreement processes. Avoiding 'potential problems' with the Commonwealth government and avoiding public criticism of the process by not informing community and environmental groups about the deal.

This scenario has occurred. People will remember Jeff Kennett giving the 'thumbs up' for the Planthard mill which opened in Morwell in 1997. Australia's largest hardwood mill, Planthard was guaranteed over 100 000 cubic metres of timber per year from the Strzeleckis (as well as access to ex-SEC buildings in Morwell). Rumours suggest the owners of Planthard are in some way connected to Crown Casino, and workplace agreements at the mill are amongst the worst in Victoria. This is the Liberal Government's brave new forestry world; where economic rationalism is the only investment factor considered.

Friends of the Earth has witnessed some of the worst logging imaginable in the Strzeleckis, seeing many breaches to the Code of Forest Practices. A forester with many years



Victorian Plantation Corporation logging in the Strzelecki Ranges, late 1997

experience overseas who saw the logging, muttered it was the worst on the planet! The Strzeleckis are also home to the most genetically diverse Koala populations in Victoria. Koalas in the area are of national significance. All of these attributes, plus negative impacts on water quality and of soil loss, have been ignored in the sale of VPC to Hancock.

Local resistance to the sale is hardening. Hancock will be vulnerable to everything we can throw at them. Strong rumours exist that Hancock will be purchasing APP, the paper making arm of AMCOR, in the very near future. Amcor's Reflex copy paper is under consumer boycott.

Hancock and cultural genocide

Concern has been raised in Western Victoria about the sale

of VPC by members of the Kerrup Imara community. Kerrup Imara Elder Theo Saunders has for many years been extremely concerned about the alienation of Kerrup Imara land into pine plantations, "Pines with me, I would say throw them out! We need our own country! That's so important!" When questioned about the ecological effects of the plantations, Theo said "It's just so sad, because our country is gone! Our country is finished and all they want is these pines. Pines from Portland to Millicent and that is the hardest thing in regards to me as a blackfella, with regards to my country and how deep and deep into my own heart, this hurts".

With the alienation of land comes the alienation of indigenous people from their culture. As more land is converted into plantations, it becomes harder for indigenous communities to maintain a say in how that land is managed and maintained for future generations. In short, the plantation philosophy can, in no way, be separated from the cultural genocide of Aboriginal people.

About 52 000 hectares of Aboriginal land has been converted into pine in Victoria's south west since 1947; about one quarter of the state's total. Other major players include Auspine and CSR. Aboriginal people have not been consulted about the implications of the sale of their land to Hancock, Auspine or CSR. Governments and industry boast about this area being the green triangle, yet when touring through the area it is obvious that these plantations are little more than ecological deserts. Monocultures alienate the environment. Long term effects of herbicides such as Atrazine and Hexazone are ignored by both government and industry. There is real concern of these plantations self seeding into natural areas, affecting already threatened native flora and fauna. Friends of the Earth has already witnessed pines growing in the Lower Glenelg National Park.

Unbelievably, the federal and state governments want to treble the existing plantation estate by the year 2020, leading to further ecological destruction and the further alienation of indigenous people from their homelands.

Complain to:

Chairman of the Board, John Hancock, Mutual Life Insurance Company.

200 Clarendon Boston, MA, 02117. USA.

Anthony Amis

SUPERANNUATION & FOREST DESTRUCTION

Did you know that your superannuation and motor vehicle registration are helping to fuel the woodchipping of our native forests and the mining of uranium? (amongst other things) A look



Theo Saunders in a recently cleared pine plantation

through North Ltd (uranium miners and the largest hardwood woodchippers on the planet) 1997 Annual Report shows that the Victorian Superannuation Board (who manage the super for many public servants in Victoria, including teachers, transport workers etc) had about \$30 million invested in North Ltd. Queensland Investment Corporation, who manage state superannuation for public service employees in Queensland, had about \$44 million tied up in North Ltd whilst SAS Trustee Corporation (looking after super from NSW public servants) had about \$61 million invested. Money sourced from the Transport Accident Commission (your motor registration fees) and Victorian Workcover (occupational health and safety) is also invested in North Ltd. To further muddy the waters, Westpac Custodian Nominees, the largest investor in North Ltd (about \$400 million), also relies largely on superannuation. In a letter dated 8 October 1998, from Westpac Chairman John Uhrig to Native Forest Network, Mr Uhrig claimed that "A good deal of the securities held by Westpac Custodian Nominees are the superannuation investments of many Australians".

For more information contact FoE Forest Network.

Sadly, in November, long time bookshop co-ordinator Beth Mellick resigned her position. The bookshop is already missing her endless knowledge and experience. The new co-ordinator joining Judy Pine is Sarah Jones. Beth has worked hard to turn the bookshop into the successful and respected business that it is and the new co-ordinators are excited and ready to face the challenge of building on these solid foundations.

The Christmas period is the busiest of the year for the bookshop. The money raised from Christmas sales helps the bookshop survive financially during the much quieter winter months. For the Bookshop Collective this was a frantic period but we still had a ball ordering vast quantities of funky new giftware for Christmas. Perhaps the most challenging part of all was the stall preparation. As well as a number of event based stalls we also did regular weekend stalls in November and December at Acland St in St Kilda and in Williamstown. Not only are these important fundraisers they are a great opportunity for us to showcase ourselves in Melbourne areas where Friends of the Earth is less well known. Overall people's response to our stock, our book selection, our campaign material and more generally our presence was really positive.

Co-ordinating volunteers for both the shop and our stalls was one of the biggest challenges for the collective. A huge thank you to all the collective members, our volunteers and other FoE people who generously gave time and energy during this period. Please note, January and February are the times when many of our volunteers are away on holiday. If you are on a break from study, work or other activities this is the time when we need new recruits. So come in and join our fun gang. We encourage creative, enthusiastic people who want to offer new

BOOK REVIEW

Altered Genes

ed Richard Hindmarsh, et al.
Allen & Unwin \$24.95

This recent publication is composed of a series of articles by different authors with an interest in the history and current status of genetic engineering in Australia. In reading this book the question is raised, "Are we all merely puppets for Transnational Corporations wishing to push their products on to our producers and consumers, or will we behave as members of the 'clever country'?" The latter course of action will require careful and open debate to assess the social and environmental impacts of this science.

Our recent track record of open and honest debate on environmental and social issues is not all that flash, but it is hoped that an issue on this importance and magnitude does receive open debate prior to any decisions being made on the development and use of Genetically

Bookshop update

and fresh ideas.

BOOKSHOP STOCK UPDATE

PATCHES

We have a great range of patches in stock including:

"Free Parking" - available in pink and purple

"Plant the Planet"

"Friends of the Earth" - in funky rainbow colours

...and heaps more in a variety of designs and colours. At \$5.75 these are a great addition to clothes, bags, hats or anything else you can sew on to.

CANDLE HOLDERS

Double, single, tall short. These affordable black wrought iron candle holders are the perfect addition to anyone's mantlepiece or coffee table. And what a great prez for someone you dig.

CHOCOLATE CANDLES

Part of the gorgeous Conscious Candle range, these yummy chocky candles are irresistible. They are available in a pack of three at \$11 or individually at \$5.75. They make the perfect fun and sexy gift for Valentine's Day.

CALENDARS AND DIARIES

Have you got yours yet? You'll never follow through with those New Years Resolutions unless you get ORGANISED. Come and check out our great range including the 1999 FoE "Direct Action Calendar" for only \$12. As always you can buy your Moon Charts and Astrological Planting Guides from us.

Modified Organisms (GMOs) in this country. This book provides a lot of good information for anyone interested in this debate. Available from the FoE Bookshop.

Reviewed by Bob Donovan from the FoE Genetic Engineering Action Group

A book on Friends of the Earth

The first national meeting of FoE Australia was held on French Island in WesternPort Bay (then a proposed site for a nuclear reactor) in early 1974. Since that time, FoE has played a significant role in the environmental and social justice movements in Australia.

We are currently investigating ideas on writing a book on FoE, and would like to hear from you if you have archives (of all kinds), stories of your involvement with FoE, an interest in getting involved in the project, or ideas on finances.

Please contact Cam Walker at FoE Fitzroy.

anti uranium campaign

Nuclear Free Australia Forum Melbourne December 5 - 6

Over the first weekend in December, the Friends of the Earth anti-Uranium collective hosted a national conference to review the present nuclear expansion and develop campaign initiatives. Over 70 activists attended the meeting from across the country, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge. Presentations from indigenous representatives and active campaigners gave a clear picture of the nuclear story both nationally and internationally. With the expansion of mining in combination with plans for a new reactor at Lucas Heights and a waste dump in South Australia, the meeting was a timely opportunity to develop networks and campaign approaches.

For a copy of the meeting outcomes and ways to become involved contact the FoE office

The Anti Uranium Collective meets Wednesdays 6:30pm @ Friends of the Earth.

Bruce Thompson

A brief East Gippsland Campaign update

On Wednesday 27 January, actions were held outside the East Gippsland Logging (EGL) and Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) offices in Orbost. Unfortunately, the EGL office was closed, and the NRE action resulted in the customary meeting with the head forester. Coincidentally, one of the directors of EGL arrived at the NRE during the meeting. A notice of eviction was served on him (left under his windscreen wiper with a twenty-cent piece attached to an order for two tonnes of woodchips). This occurred on the day that The Age ran a front page story, based on a leaked memo, on the State Government selling woodchips for as low as 9c a tonne.

The catchment of Little Goolenook river, a tributary of the Goolenook river is threatened by future logging.

Recently, a number of survey / hairtubing expeditions have been undertaken in East Gippsland. Results are pending. Stalls were held at Mallacoota and Stratford. These have been excellent for community outreach.

More people are needed for blockades!

GOONGERAH ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

< geco@green.net.au > < http://www.geco.org.au >

Reclaim

The Streets

13th March 1999

Active Funky Folk are required to help take over a street for a day in the name of real progress

Streets For People Meet every Second Tuesday 6:30pm @ Friends of the Earth 312 SMITH ST. COLLINGWOOD

PH. 9419 8700



GUNNAMATTA BEACH PROTEST HIGHLIGHTS THE CONTINUING GOVERNMENT SANCTIONED DESTRUCTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.

Gunnamatta Beach in the Cape Schanck National Park is the Mornington Peninsula's most popular surfing beach. Each year it attracts hundreds of thousands of surfers, swimmers and fishermen who venture to its shores to enjoy the wild Southern Ocean swells. But Gunnamatta has another less attractive aspect - it is where the Melbourne Water Corporation discharge 45% of the cities sewage waste. Every single day of the between 350 and 600 million litres of semi-treated sewage and industrial waste are dumped into the ocean via the Boags Rock Sewage Outfall.

The Environment Protection Act 1970 (State Environment Protection Policy - Waters of Victoria, Schedule B) lays down in law water quality criteria which for example says, "Water shall be free of substances in concentrations which either individually or in combination, produce toxic effects or genetic damage to plants, animals, aquatic life or humans...". These may be comforting words written down in the statutes of law but for the health of Gunnamatta and other nearby beaches it is meaningless as the beaches adjacent to Melbourne Water's outfall (the area termed the mixing zone by Melbourne Water) have been exempted from pollution regulations under the act. In this way the State Government have washed their hands of any legal responsibility for the damage the outfall is having on the environment.

The outfall pipe itself spews out its load of poison directly onto an intricate ocean reef system. This inshore reef was the most productive in the area and has been for thousands of years, (evident by the largest Aboriginal shell midden on the Peninsula), a food bowl which has fed thousands upon thousands of families. In the 24 years since the outfalls inception the reef has been desecrated. Bull Kelp that once dominated kilometers in each direction, and a recent C.S.I.R.O. study found that up to 50% of seaweed species had also disappeared.

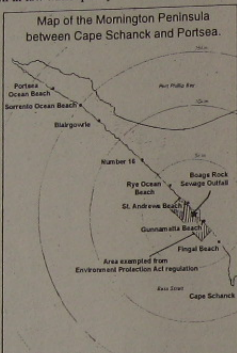
Over the years surfers have been struck down with illness and infections after surfing in or around the Gunnamatta Beach area, at the same time locals have been dismayed by a drastic deterioration in the fishing. All this understandably has generated a fair degree of anger amongst locals and users of the beach.

On November 29th last year thousands of concerned people, surfers, fishermen and locals gathered at Gunnamatta to protest at Melbourne Water Corporation's policy to continue to dump waste into the ocean. Speakers from environment groups and the surfing industry talked of the sheer insanity of disposing of toxic waste into the ocean. An Aboriginal representative Mr Robert Thorpe equated the destruction of the natural environment at Gunnamatta to the continued genocide of the original people of the land.

Melbourne Water Corporation make \$200 million a year profit from their sewage activities, which goes into the State Government coffers. Industry and domestic users of the sewers pay Melbourne Water for the right to dump their waste at Gunnamatta. The Melbourne Cleanwater Coalition believe this money should be going towards the cessation of the Gunnamatta Outfall. Melbourne Water should start immediately working towards alternatives to ocean dumping by separating industrial waste from domestic sewage (thus increasing the opportunities for land based disposal) and encouraging and promoting composting toilet and grey water systems. Melb. Water's efforts in this department so far have been taken as their charter is to profit by dumping sewage into the ocean and these alternatives compete directly with their profit making ability.

Unfortunately the response by Melbourne Water and the E.P.A. to the protest in November was a predictable denial that anything was wrong. Melbourne Water's Mr Tony Antoniou was quoted in "The Age" as saying of the Gunnamatta sewage effluent - "...you would think it was clear water." while the E.P.A.'s Rob Joy said the waters around the outfall were "safe for swimming and fishing." But to the thousands of people who ventured to Gunnamatta to see for themselves the effects of the outfall, Melbourne Water's words of reassurance would do nothing but further erode their credibility. The stinking grey/black water gushing from the pipe onto the dead reef certainly couldn't be mistaken for "clear water" and the furthest thing in anyone's mind was swimming or fishing.

Melbourne Clean Water Coalition - Ph: (03) 9598 0078
PO Box 2035, Hampton East, Vic 3188



Melbourne Water's Boags Rock (Gunnamatta Beach) sewage outfall in relation to popular swimming and surfing beaches.



MELB WATER



MELB WATER



Thousands gather at Gunnamatta Beach to protest Melbourne Water's policy of dumping poison into the ocean.

MELBOURNE WATER COVER UP ALARMING LEVELS OF "HORMONE DISRUPTOR" IN GUNNAMATTA SEWAGE EFFLUENT!

An Environment Impact Assessment carried out by the C.S.I.R.O. and released in draft late last year, has exposed major contamination of ocean waters around Melbourne Water's Gunnamatta Outfall of the toxicant Diethylhexylphthalate (DEHP). DEHP is a synthetic chemical used in the plastics industry mainly as a plasticiser in the production of PVC. It is listed in the WWF "List of Known & Suspected Hormone Disruptors".

Hormone or Endocrine disruptors are a group of particularly insidious chemicals that mimic naturally occurring hormone secretion in life forms and disrupt natural cell production and growth, they pass on to subsequent generations in reproduction, via the placenta and through breast milk. These chemicals also bio-accumulate (dramatically increase in concentrations) as they travel up through the food chain.

The Recommended Water Quality Criteria (Vic EPA, 1983) for DEHP is 0.15ug/Litre. The levels detected at 2 sites adjacent to the Gunnamatta Outfall by the C.S.I.R.O. study were 0.48ug/L and 0.71ug/L, 3 and 5 times above safe recommended levels. The study also detected DEHP in organs and tissue of ALL the fish they sampled in the area.

More disturbing is that even in lower than safe recommended or toxic levels these Hormone Disruptor chemicals can effect concentration, retention and learning abilities in children. They also impair reproductive cycles in fish by causing malformation of the sex organs.

Results of the C.S.I.R.O. Environment Impact Assessment for the Gunnamatta Outfall are supposed to be passed onto the public through "EMS", the Melbourne Water newsletter of the Effluent Management Study. In the November 1998 edition of "EMS", which claims to specifically give results of the Environmental Impact Assessment, there is no mention of the DEHP contamination nor are other negative findings such as, "...that the effluent kills 4 to 5 week old fish."

Melbourne Water are showing gross irresponsibility in withholding from the public the serious effects their sewage outfalls are having on our environment. This is probably not surprising for a corporation that makes \$200 Million a year profit by dumping poison into the sea.

Melbourne Clean Water Coalition
(03) 9598 0078
PO Box 2035, Hampton East 3188

Native forests under threat in Chile

After helping tear up the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest in the USA, Boise Cascade is now abandoning its mills and jobs in the United States and looking to the southern hemisphere. In Chile, they have plans to invest US\$180 million in a wood chipping and oriented strand board facility that would be the largest of its kind in the world. Company officials state that their next stop is the Amazon rainforests of Brazil.

The Boise Cascade project in Chile, dubbed "Cascada Chile", is so huge that it would double the rate of deforestation in Chile's temperate rainforests. Meanwhile, Chile's forests are already disappearing fast even without Cascada Chile. A Central Bank of Chile study states that with current methods of exploitation, all of Chile's native forests not set aside for protection will be completely degraded and deforested within 25 years.

In terms of global biodiversity, Chile's temperate rainforests are very important. Temperate rainforests originally only ever covered just 0.2 percent of the Earth's land area and today more than half are destroyed. Southern Chile holds more than one-third of those remaining temperate rainforests.

Scientists estimate that 90 percent of species found in Chile's native forests are endemic. The rare "siempreverde" coastal temperate rainforest found in the region threatened by the Boise Cascade mill has the highest levels of biodiversity of all of Chile's forests.

Boise Cascade's plans for Chile come on the heels of their recent episode in Mexico. Last year, they were finally chased out of Mexico's Costa Grande forests by local farmers protesting the effects of deforestation on their communities. Timber suppliers rebelled as a result of the protests and simply stopped supplying wood to the company.

Boise Cascade seemingly stops at nothing to get raw wood for its mills and the company perceives Chile as just another large source of cheap timber. In Mexico, Boise Cascade started its timber buying operations just months after Mexican police tragically killed 17 farmers and permanently maimed 23 others in an anti-logging protest.

But the people who live in southern Chile see their forests as more than just another source of wood.

Chile's tourism associations - national, regional, and local - all oppose the project because it will cause a decline in ecotourism. The Boise Cascade mill is set to be located near Puerto Montt, Chile, which is in the middle of Chile's Lake District and northern Patagonia. An international hot spot for eco-travel, one recent economic study estimates that revenue from tourism is seven times more important to the region than wood chipping operations.

Salmon companies are opposed as uncontrolled deforestation will damage the lakes, rivers, and streams of watersheds. One salmon company is located just 20 meters from the proposed port of the Cascada Chile mill and it states that emissions from the timber mill would contaminate their salmon farm.

Furthermore, it has been discovered that the proposed mill site for Cascada Chile lies above ancient artifacts that could prove to be among the oldest in the western hemisphere. Archeologists and Chile's National Monuments Council are filing lawsuits to protect these ancient remains.

Please write to: Mr. George Harad, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Boise Cascade Corporation, 224 E. Braemere Rd. Boise, Idaho 83702-1710

Source: Ecological Enterprises, gbarry@students.wisc.edu

.... "No radioactive dump in our Country" (from p.4)

Australia: global nuclear waste dump

The DPIE has already indicated that the proposed low-level dump will be up-graded to accommodate intermediate and high-level wastes. (10) Referred to as Category 5 waste this would include spent fuel rods from nuclear reactors. The DPIE has also indicated that, "responsibility for site management and security arrangements may include... Government, [or] private operator control..." (11)

A privatised nuclear waste dump in Australia was given greater credence when a promotional video of US nuclear waste management corporation Pangea Resources was leaked to the media after it had been leaked to FoE England. The video enthuses about the potential Australia has for being the world's nuclear waste dump. (12) Pangea Resources director, James W Voss later stated that, "those in industry that we have spoken to have expressed interest in Australia doing the right thing for the world to help rid the world of nuclear weapons and nuclear waste." (13) (emphasis added)

Robert Gallucci, US Special Envoy on Weapons of Mass Destruction has urged the Australian government to consider an international plan to establish a disposal site for the world's nuclear waste. He maintained that "Australia could play a pretty unique role," adding to our already "incredible history supporting disarmament causes." (14) Despite this, Government sources continue to deny that Australia will become the world's nuclear waste dump. However, the search for a low-level dump continues and once a site is established it will be a simple matter of up-grading the facility to take any form of radioactive waste.

Corporate links to Australia

Pangea Resources Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Golder Associates, an international employee-owned organisation of consulting engineers based in Seattle. Golder Associates have worked for many years on various nuclear waste disposal projects in the US, UK and Europe. It was closely involved with plans for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste at the Sellafield nuclear facility in the UK. These plans have been rejected by a planning enquiry after Friends of the Earth, England exposed flaws in the proposal. Golder Associates have offices all over the world, including Melbourne, Australia. There is speculation that Pangea Resources Ltd was set up to exploit the possibility of building the world's radioactive waste dump in Australia. Its establishment coincides with the issue of radioactive waste storage becoming increasingly difficult throughout Europe, Japan, the UK and US, for technical, economic and political reasons.

Building alliances

To answer this challenge, the Kupa Piti Kunga Tjuta have formed an alliance with like-minded groups and individ-

uals who are formulating the campaign to stop Australia from becoming the world's nuclear waste dump site. In Melbourne the Anti-Uranium Campaign and Indigenous Solidarity Group of Friends of the Earth are playing a key role working closely with Rebecca and the Kunga Tjuta. The proposed dump cannot be seen in isolation from the on-going pressures upon Indigenous people, their communities and land. The Kokotha and Arabunna people have suffered a long history of impact from the nuclear industry including the testing of nuclear weapons at Maralinga; the testing of military rockets at Woomera; the siting of Nurrungar, a US military communications facility; and the mining of uranium at Roxby Downs.

Similarly the proposed new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights in Sydney is intimately linked to the opening of a waste dump site. Without a dump to put the high-level radioactive wastes a new reactor becomes untenable. Although on January 18, 1999, ANSTO announced that "agreement has been reached with the French company COGEMA for reprocessing spent fuel" (15), less than a week earlier, COGEMA was notified that it was being placed under formal investigation - a step short of being charged - for alleged practices that "endanger the lives of others by exposing them to an immediate risk of death or injury." (16) This recent international development makes the situation more rather than less complex for any advocate for the proposed replacement reactor.

Activists from the Sutherland community and others associated with the campaign to stop the new nuclear reactor who attended the Forum are now co-ordinating campaign activities with the Billa Kalina Alliance that will highlight the links between these developments and the communities affected by them.

Join in! As with every social justice/environmental campaign, we need more people to get involved! Contact FoE, Fitzroy on 9419 8700 and speak to anyone from the Anti-Uranium Campaign or Indigenous Solidarity Group.

Daniel Voronoff

- 1 see Recommendation 17 pp xix No Time to Waste April 1996. Also 7.11 pp 132.
- 2 A Radioactive Waste Repository for Australia, Bureau of Resource Sciences, 1998 pp 3.
- 3 Rebecca Bear-Wingfield, Media Release, Wednesday 13th Jan 1999.
- 4 "Fact Sheet 9: What it will look like," Bureau of Resource Sciences, 1998.
- 5 A radioactive waste repository for Australia. Bureau of Resource Sciences pp 4.
- 6 Recommendation 18 pp xx No Time to Waste April 1996.
- 7 Issues Paper Number 6. Radioactive Waste Disposal in Australia. Dr Rod Panter, Science, Technology & Environment Group. Dept of Parliamentary Library, 1992 pp 3.
- 8 Ibid pp 20.
- 9 American Chemical Society, 11 November 1998.
- 10 A Radioactive Waste Repository for Australia, Bureau of Resource Sciences, 1998 pp 4.
- 11 Ibid pp 5.
- 12 Pangea Resources Promotional Video, 1998.
- 13 South China Morning Post, 12 December 1998.
- 14 The Australian, Tuesday 8th December 1998.

campaign updates & events

Nigeria: First, it was Shell....

Armed men on a Chevron aircraft followed by army soldiers on speedboats attacked Opia and Ikiyan, two villages in Warri North, on January 4, killing a number of villagers including Chief Agbagbadi of Ikiyan. The Warri region has been the scene of much strife in the last few months as communities have protested the environmental impact of oil drilling by companies like Chevron.

Source: *Environmental Rights Africa*

Japan's 'scientific' whaling

Japan has missed half of its scientific whaling season this year due to a fire on the fleet's main ship. However officials haven't ruled out catching their full quota of 440 minke whales.

According to an article in the Jan. 16 edition of *New Scientist* Magazine, critics say this 'hurry-up' whaling practice may blow arguments used to justify the program out of the water.

Although the Southern Ocean was declared a sanctuary for whales in 1994 by the International Whaling Commission, Japan's 'research' whaling is exempt from control because of a scientific research clause. Opponents allege that the 'research' is actually a commercial hunt in the guise of science.

After a few samples are taken, they point out, minke meat ends up in Japan's sushi bars.

The whaling season this year was put on hold after a Nov. 19 fire on a meat-processing vessel that forced the fleet back home for repairs. The fleet is now ready to return to the sea, after two months in Japan.

However, instead of halving the number of animals sampled because of the lost time, Japanese whaling officials say they still have the capacity to catch a similar number of whales this year as they did last season.

"If we reach Antarctica by the beginning of February, we could still do meaningful research," said Nobuyuki Yagi of Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Japan's justification for taking so many whales has always been that, to fully understand the ecology of minke whales in Antarctic waters, it needs to catch a similar number of whales from the same subgroups of the population each year.

The Japanese whaling fleet could easily take 440 whales before the season ends April 21, experts say. But many believe this could only be achieved if the whalers abandon the official plan to sample from each population subgroup. Bob Brownell of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, Calif., says: "The question now is: Can they keep to the sampling design?"

Britain, Australia and the United States are urging Japan to abandon this year's hunt.

Source: Beth Clark, Director, The Antarctica Project Secretariat, Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, 408 C Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002 USA tel: +1 202-544-0236 web site: <http://www.asoc.org>

Could Global Warming Reverse Evolution?

For 3.5 billion years, the Earth was dominated by so-called C3 plants, which photosynthesize molecules containing three carbon atoms. Between six and eight million years ago, Earth's vegetation changed radically.

So-called C4 plants, which produce four-carbon molecules and include numerous grasses such as sugarcane, began to appear in many areas.

As C4 plants came onto the scene, many of the planet's Miocene woodland were replaced by savannas and millions of mammals faded into evolutionary oblivion. According to the "savanna hypothesis," this plant revolution spurred our human ancestors to leave the safety of the forests and learn to forage on open grasslands.

"The earth is now a different planet," University of Utah geochemist Thure E. Cerling explained in "Science News." Cerling and others now believe that changing levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) are linked to the transition from C3 to C4 plants.

During the era of the dinosaurs, CO2 levels were as high as 1,000 parts per million (ppm), but some eight million years ago, atmospheric CO2 levels fell below 500 ppm. The result, "Science News" reports, was a "massive turnover in the type of mammals populating the continents - an upheaval that set the stage for the evolution of our ancestors."

While C4 vegetation now dominates the globe, C3 grasses still thrive in colder, wetter climates. But the world could be on the brink of another plant revolution. CO2 levels before the Industrial Revolution were 280 ppm. Today CO2 levels stand at 360 ppm and rising.

"By increasing atmospheric [CO2] concentrations, humans may be changing the Earth's atmosphere to conditions not favourable to a 'C4 world,' the world in which we originally evolved," Cerling states.

"Science News" shares Cerling's concerns. "Without massive cuts in greenhouse gas pollution - ones that far exceed the limits adopted in Kyoto, Japan - the concentration of CO2 is expected to climb above 500 ppm sometime in the latter half of the next century." When this happens, the world may shift back into a C3 world, "a regime [the Earth] has not seen in the last 8 million years."

Gar Smith, *Earth Island Journal*, Winter 1998, p. 13

campaign updates & events

LIABILITY FOR GLOBAL WARMING?

For the past decade a small group of physicists, funded partly by oil and coal companies, has been denying that the earth is being warmed by humans burning oil, coal and gasoline. In the face of overwhelming evidence, they have insisted that global warming may not be happening at all.

For evidence they have relied chiefly on satellite measurements of the temperature of the lower atmosphere, measurements that have revealed a pattern of cooling, not warming, during the past 20 years.

In 1998 Dr. Frank Wentz of Remote Sensing Systems in Santa Rosa, California, reported that those satellite measurements contain a systematic error. Everyone involved had neglected to correct for the fact that the satellites were slowly falling to earth, at about one kilometre per year. With the systematic bias corrected, the data no longer indicates that the atmosphere is cooling.

Now that the main scientific evidence against global warming has disappeared, it will be interesting to see what arguments the energy corporations come up with in 1999 to continue to evade legal liability for global warming.[1]

There is much to evade: 1998 was by far the warmest year recorded during the past 600 years (by thermometers, tree rings and ice cores) — nearly one degree Fahrenheit warmer than the second-warmest year, which was 1997. The extreme warmth of 1998 was accompanied by the following signs of "climate chaos": record-setting forest fires in Florida, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, and southern Europe; bush fires in northern Australia; floods and accompanying mudslides in California and coastal Peru and Ecuador (where 50,000 were left homeless); major flooding in east Africa;

Hurricane Mitch, which killed more than 20,000 people in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador and devastated the economies of central America; drought in New Guinea; intense drought and famine in southern Sudan; drought in central America that left the Panama Canal too shallow for many ships to pass through; failed coffee crops in Indonesia and Ethiopia; failed sugar and rice crops in Thailand; failed cocoa and rubber crops in Malaysia; cotton crop failure in Uganda; and warm ocean currents that reduced the Peruvian fish catch by 45%. [2]

"We favor the idea, floated early last year, to stop naming hurricanes after individual humans and start naming them after oil companies"

The New Scientist reports that "human disease is emerging as one of the most sensitive, and distressing, indicators, of climate change." As temperatures rise, mosquitoes that carry disease are moving into new territory. Dengue fever — also called "break

bone fever" because it is so painful — is spreading throughout the Americas and has reached Texas. In Kenya, the worst floods in years unleashed an epidemic of waterborne cholera; and in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi (headquarters of the United Nations Environment Program), mosquitoes are now transmitting malaria to humans.

We favour the idea, floated early last year, to stop naming hurricanes after individual humans and start naming them after oil companies. In place of hurricane Alice or hurricane Hugo, we would have hurricane Mobil and hurricane Exxon. A headline like "Exxon Kills 10,000, Leaves 50,000 Homeless" would have a certain salutary ring of truth to it.

[1] "Falling hero breaks sceptics' hearts," New Scientist, Vol. 160, No. 2165/6/7 (December 19 & 26, 1998, and January 2, 1999), pg. 32.

[2] Fred Pearce, "Can't stand the heat," New Scientist, Vol. 160, No. 2165/6/7 (December 19 & 26, 1998, and January 2, 1999), pgs. 32-33.

Source: Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly #634, 21/1/99. Produced by the Environmental Research Foundation, P.O. Box 5036, Annapolis, MD 21403-7036, USA. Email: rachel@rachel.org

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Friends of the earth Australia

FoE (Fitzroy) newsletter - late Summer 1999 - page 18

campaign updates & events

OTWAY FORESTS NEED YOUR HELP

Pristine cool temperate rainforest under threat Cumberland water catchment being logged - BLOCKADE NOW!
call OREN for details - 03 5237 7516
Website - <http://www.oren.org.au>

East Gippsland

There are ongoing actions in the forests of East Gippsland - contact FoE forest network or Goongerah Environment Centre for details - 03-5154 0156

Forest Festival: Feb 26 - Mar 3

Southern Tasmania

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For info or interest contact yakob on 0416 384 760 or the web site at www.zerkus.tss.org

"LIVING GREEN" HOMES TOUR - TORQUAY (VIC)

Spring Creek community house is conducting a two day informative tour of alternative lifestyles and sustainable living along the surf coast. April 24th and 25th. For further information phone Lyn Knight 03 526 13 832.

Wiseworld

- Melbourne's calender of Social Change events

Wiseworld is a new three monthly calender of environmental and social change events around Melbourne. It is being launched in early February and will be available from the FoE bookshop or directly from David Naylor - (03) 9523 2172. (www.borderlands.org.au/wiseworld)

International Solidarity

In the last FoE newsletter, everyone received a request from FoE Bangladesh for financial help for the victims of the terrible floods in that country. The anti uranium collective did something about it - we took up a collection. We managed to reach \$200. Fortunately, there was a delegate from Bangladesh at the FoE international meeting here. This was MF. Chowdhury. He is the Vice-Chairman of FoE Bangladesh and editor of the newsletter published in Dhaka by FoE Bangladesh. The money was presented directly to him at the conference. Well done FoE Melbourne. We need more international solidarity.

Bert King

FoE Fitzroy AGM

all members welcome
At FoE, 7pm sharp, Friday 12th March

Students & Sustainability

Richmond, western Sydney, 12 - 16 July.

Plenary sessions, workshops, field trips, actions, entertainment.
Venue - University of Western Sydney

Cost: \$90 student / \$120 waged - before 12/5/99 - includes accommodation, meals, transport.

Info - 02 4570 1317, SS99@uws.hsa.org.au

Stop Jabiluka uranium mine land rights now

stop the nuclear threat

RALLY

Palm Sunday
March 28

1:30pm, State Library
(corner Swanston & La Trobe Streets, City)

Organised by the Jabiluka Action group
(ph 9417 6660)

Rally endorsed by: Uniting Church, Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth, National Union of Students

After the rally, the Jabiluka Action Group invites protesters to camp overnight before launching a week-long

MASS BLOCKADE

at North Ltd, 476 St Kilda Rd
Mon March 29 - Thurs April 1

North is the parent company of Energy Resources Australia, the company mining at Jabiluka despite the clear opposition of the Mirrar Aboriginal people, and 67% of people in Australia.

In the middle of April, the federal Government will tell the World Heritage Bureau that Kakadu National Park should be not listed as "in danger", despite the impact of the Jabiluka mine.

The last week in March marks a year since a mass protest blockade was launched at Jabiluka. In the week leading up to Easter, join the 24 hour a day picket at North Ltd. Show North and the Government that if they don't stop the mine, then we can stop their "business as usual".

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campaign updates & events

VicRoads to send machines into the Mullum Mullum

The Koonung Mullum Forestway Association (KMFA) has received information that VicRoads intends to drill for geological samples in the bushland of the Mullum Mullum in the near future. It is likely that tracked vehicles will be used, and that a substantial area of the vegetation will be cleared to enable the machines to access the bush.

This is not preparations for the 'long tunnel' proposal which has been discussed in the local media - VicRoads has not changed its plans to bulldoze the valley's precious bushland for the next extension of the Eastern freeway.

The Mullum Mullum valley contains a vital stronghold of remnant vegetation in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, including the endangered Valley Heathy Forest vegetation class. It provides habitat for the Powerful Owl, koalas, platypus and kangaroo and an extraordinary diversity of bird life.

The KMFA and another local group, the Hillcrest Association, are seeking urgent negotiations with the relevant ministers. However, if the government continues with sending the machines in, we need to send a firm message that no damage to Mullum Mullum creek will be tolerated.

Now is the time to take action - please contact the KMFA indicating your availability to take part in peaceful action to protect the valley.

Send to: KMFA, PO Box 243, Mitcham, 3132, or call 9898 2220.

The 4th Mullum Mullum Festival

28 February - 14 March

A diverse program of guided botanical and ecological walks linking with outdoor music performances at various locations within the Mullum Mullum Valley. An opportunity to enjoy some of the best remnant bushland in Melbourne.

Walk leaders and topics include David Cameron - plant patterns, Damien Cook - ephemeral wetlands, Scott Baker - coastal trees, Darcy Duggan - habitat conservation, and Marilyn Gray - editor of *The Flora of Melbourne*.

• **Sunday 28th February, 1pm.** Bill Nicholson, elder spokesperson for the Wurundjeri Tribal Council will open the festival and make a welcome to Kulin land. At Schwerkolt Cottage, Deep Creek rd, Mitcham.

• **Saturday 6th March.** The Penguin Art & Music movement present the Avifaunal Urban Chillout - an afternoon of experimental, electronically manipulated bird calls and sonic vibrations.

• **Sunday the 14th March,** the festival moves downstream to Tikalarra Park, where the Mullum Mullum creek meets the Yarra River.

For a full festival guide please call 03 9654 0023



Join FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Membership includes this newsletter, membership of the FoE food co-op, and the national magazine, *Chain Reaction*.

Annual membership fees:

\$20 Low Income

\$40 Households

\$30 Waged person

\$50 Organisation

\$100 Supporting member Donation (please send receipt)

Is this a renewal? If yes, have you changed your address? (old suburb)

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone (.....).....

Date

Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy) has the following collectives and working groups which you may wish to join: anti uranium, bookshop, food campaign, Indigenous solidarity, forest network, arid lands, office, water.

Write, call, or drop in for details.

return to: FoE, Box 222, Fitzroy, 3065.