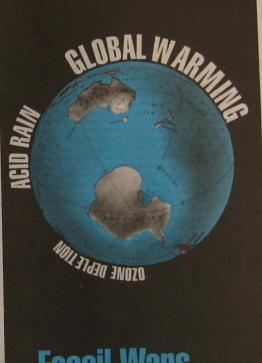
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There must be a better way



Director's Report

Karen Alexander

erican folk philosopher, Carl andburg, once said that one day here would be a war and no-one ould go. Sadly, this is not yet

The Gulf situation is the dominant topic of discussion at every dinner table. The horrors of war, the actual and potential human and environmental disaster, make us feel sick. There is a feeling of grief that, vet again, the human species has not been able to solve its problems without massive bloodshed and major environmental damage. Not only grief, but also a feeling of inadequacy, and alienation from the decision-makers who have led us into another war.

Why should ACF, an Australian environment organisation, make any statement about a war in the Middle East?

Firstly, environmental problems are no longer confined by national boundaries: Greenhouse, the ozone hole and the Chernobyl disaster have taught us that. The possible consequences of waging war on a powder-keg of oil reserves have been thoroughly documented by some of the world's leading scientists, to say nothing of the direct effects of bombing, a ground war and the largest oil spills in history.

Secondly, even if there are no direct environmental effects on Australia, shouldn't we, as world citizens, be concerned about the plant and animal communities of one of earth's extraordinary

areas? And can we possibly remain unconcerned about the area's human communities?

While strongly condemning the invasion of Kuwait by Irag, ACF has also been asking whether there may be "environmental"causes of the war and looking to see if there are any lessons there for Australia. It is hard to believe that the control of a major part of the world's oil reserves does not figure in the thinking of the US government. As well, the world community must surely question the morality of using resources for the manufacture of arms, let alone the morality of putting arms in the hands of a dictator.

If the world is to be a safer place, the distribution of natural resources must be more equitable - and this means leaving some for future generations and leaving some completely alone. We must also learn to use our resources much more efficiently, especially non-renewables such as oil. We could increase our own security by increasing our energy efficiency; and so could the US.

If the US had adopted an energy efficiency program similar to those of Japan and Sweden following earlier oil crises, maybe it would not have felt so strongly the need to control oil reserves in the Middle East in the current crisis. And maybe Hussein would not have had the leverage he knew he could exercise by moving in on Kuwait and OPEC.

These are fundamental issues which need to be addressed if we are to have a society which is ecologically sustainable - and this of course includes security from invasion,

By addressing these longer term questions via our Global Change program and the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) program, ACF will attempt to deter mine factors which, in some small way may help to prevent some of the causes of

ACF will also be pushing for a ceasefire and for the UN to convene a Peace Conference. Surely, the species that created Mozart and Michelangelo, that walked on the moon, that created the depth and beauty of an Aboriginal oral and painting tradition that brought forth the poetry and architecture of the Islamic world, can find a better way of solving power disputes than the killing, destruction and environmental risks currently occurring in one of the cradles of civilization.

What is most important is that we as individuals do not let the sense of powerlessness overtake us; for only then are we in fact powerless. Ask for more information on the origins of the war. Ask how Australia could help bring the parties to the Conference Table. Ask what programs the government has for energy efficiency, and what part Australia is playing in the arms trade. Demand answers from your Member of Parliament or the Prime Minister today.

Karen Alexander is ACF Environment Manager, and was Acting Director through January.



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Contributors note that it is the policy of CONSERVATION NEWS to use non-sexial, non-racist language. STATE OFFICES

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Sustainable energy research blocked

he Federal Government's recently announced grants for energy research and development appear to be biased to suppress the economic advantages of reducing greenhouse emissions. None of Australia's leading researchers into the costs and benefits of reducing emissions have been funded by the Energy Research and Development Corporation (ERDC).

The researchers in question have participated in major studies which show that Australia can substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save billions of dollars per year in the process. This year, at least four of these researchers submitted separate applications for further research to the National Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Program, All were knocked back.

This rejection comes just after scientists at the World Climate Conference strongly endorsed the earlier warning of the UN's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, that greenhouse warming will have serious global impacts. Even the Federal Government has recently agreed, subject to certain caveats, to adopt an interim planning target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One must ask whether our lead-

Students rally for peace in Melbourne last month

ing researchers are being rejected by the "energy establishment" so that the economic benefits of reducing emissions can be played down and genuine action delayed.

In addition, there are serious gaps in this year's funding of renewable energy. Although energy-efficient housing, solar heating and solar photovoltaic cells have been quite well funded, the two cheapest forms of "new" renewable electricity, windpower and solar thermal electricity, have received practically nothing. Moreover, energy from firewood, energy storage using hydrogen, alcohol fuels from crops and biogas received no funding at all.

In the long term, Australia has the prospect of becoming an energy-efficient society which draws all its energy from sustainable sources such as the sun and the wind. Unfortunately, the energy establishment appears to be delaying that transition. The coal and nuclear industries clearly have strong vested interests in suppressing research and development in this area. It is vital that bodies like ERDC which decide the funding of renewable energy research in Australia are protected from the influence of such interests.



prototype solar-thermal electric power station at White Cliffs, NSW. This promising system needs further funding before it can be mass produced.

Mark Diesendorf Global Change Program

Tertiary students gather to debate sustainability

ertiary students will hold a national conference on ecological sustainability at the ANU in Canberra from 24 - 26 April 1991.

The principle objective of the conference, which is the first of its kind to be held in Australia, is to give students the opportunity to voice concerns about inadequacies in environmental awareness, in the education system and in the student body.

Student representatives from every higher education institution in Australia have been invited to debate current environmental problems, curriculum development relating to ecological sustainability in all academic disciplines, and the role of the student body in addressing these issues.

Delegates will be selected from each

is hoped that every academic discipline will be represented. Workshops and panel discussions will encourage all conference delegates to participate in the formulation of resolutions to guide future action.

Speakers and workshop leaders will include representatives from environment groups, the Aboriginal movement, government, science, industry, media, education, business and student bodies.

The conference is supported by ACF, the Federal Government, ANU, and Questacon - The National Science and Technology Centre.

For further information, contact: The Conference Working Group, ANU c/- Dean of Science, GPO Box 4, Canberra 2601 Ph:(06) 494 354

campus by an open democratic process. It



t was good to come back to work after the Christmas break and find a pile of letters addressed to this column. For reasons of space, we can't publish them all . The following letter covers a frequently-asked question.

In recent months I have noticed the addition of an 'environmentally safe' range of household cleaning products to the supermarket shelves. Unfortunated as a run-of-the-mill consumer has led me to greet these with a jaded cynicism. These green bottles, green liquids, dolphin logos and oh-so-pure names like 'Environ' and 'Greenchoice' are really a bit too good to he true. Are these products as good as they are made out to be? I am reluctant to shell out extra cash for token efforts. Surely I am not the only one confused! Would an 'ACF News' or 'Habitat' evaluation of the

> Suzanne Wirges Scarness, Queensland

Your cynicism is probably justified! At this stage there is no legislation requiring that the contents of a product be listed on the packaging. If a product label claims biobreak down in the environment within 21 days. The remaining 20 percent consists of extenders, fillers, colourings and perfumes which are most probably pollutants. (The surfactant is the 'soapie' content, and is a by-product of the petrochemical industry. It is easily obtained, very cheap for the manufacturers and it 'foams' well, which impresses the consumer.)

ACF doesn't have the facilities to test products, so we have relied on the researchers from Choice manazine for information on cleaning products. Their February 1990 edition (pp 5 - 10) is worthwhile reading.

I feel that green products are a step in the right direction and with legislation planned to cover content labelling we will soon know what we are buying. In the meantime, if you use the cleaning methods set out in The Green Cleaner, you will save money, protect the environment and you can quietly ignore those who would confuse caring, aware people.

Address letters to "Safe Suds", ACF. 340 Gore St, Fitzroy, 3065. Barbara Lord is an ACF staff member and author of 50 Easy Things We Can Do To Save The Planet, The Green Cleaner , and The Green Workplace, which may be obtained from the ACF bookclub.

Draft wildlife legislation suppressed

SW Environment Minister Tim Moore probably wishes that he hadn't promised to enact laws protecting endangered species even if that promise did help the Liberals win office in 1988.

At first true to his word, Moore set the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to work on the legislation, and encouraged an effective public consultation process with environmentalists. But the resulting draft Endangered Species Conservation Act has caused such strife with Coalition natural resource ministers that Moore and his government now seem to be pretending that it doesn't exist.

The draft Act, which has been leaked to

the ACF and the Sydney Morning Herald, provides for 30-day stop-work orders to protect any land in NSW - public or private - where development work threatens endangered animals or plants.

It appears that National Party ministers, afraid that wildlife protection might restrict the development plans of land-owning supporters, refused even to consider the proposed legislation once the matter was raised for serious consideration. Caught in an impasse, the Coalition ordered NPWS not to release the draft Act and its associated discussion material, and Moore issued a press release stating that "no draft legislation had yet been prepared covering endangered species'

The draft Act has won widespread support from conservationists. It aims to conserve genetic diversity, prevent the extinction of any species or community of flora



NSW Environment Minister, Tim Moore

and fauna, provide for the recovery of endangered species, and eliminate or manage threatening processes. An Endangered Species Unit and a Scientific Advisory Committee would be established to identify endangered species and determine critical habitat and NPWS would have the power to issue stop-work orders to protect an endangered species or its habitat.

Since denying the existence of the draft. Moore has tried to pass responsibility for the protection of endangered species to the Federal Government. While distancing himself from the possibility of NSW legislation, he said that NSW would support the development of a national approach.

Moore's line is a little hard to believe. Constitutionally, it is the states

that control the main activitiesfor instance development and logging-that result in species becoming endangered. And Moore cannot be unaware that he is suggesting a national approach that already exists. In fact, the federally appointed **Endangered Species Advisory Committee** has called on the states to enact their own legislation.

The embattled Minister's moves are no more than an attempt to avoid conflict with the National Party. With over 96 percent of Australians supporting the protection of endangered plants and animals, he is losing not only an opportunity to carry out an election promise and the will of the electorate, but a chance to admirably fulfil the responsibilities of his office.

NSW Campaign Coordinator Urgent - Write to both the NSW Premier and Environ ent Minister (Nick Greiner and Tim Moore, Parlia ment House, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000) re questing that NSW leads with its own legislation and alling on them to support the Endangered Species Conservation Act.

CFC and halon 'bank'challenges recycling and disposal technology

are stored in existing equipment in Australia: estimates range from 20,000 to 80,000 tonnes. They are found in commercial and domestic refrigerators and air-conditioners: in fire extinguishing equipment and cylinders: trapped inside rigid insulating foams in buildings and cars. Worldwide, it is estimated that the equivalent of two years' global production of CFCs is "banked" in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment alone.

Developing a system to recapture them is a problem. For instance, most loss of CFCs from air-conditioners and refrigerators occurs as a result of leaks when seals wear out, during servicing, regasing or when old units are dumped. Tradespeople are increasingly being required to recapture, reuse and recycle CFCs but monitoring is virtually impossible.

The cost of recollection is another hurdle. Both industry and government are resistant to footing the bill for collection, transport, storage and final destruction of CFCs and halons. It's all too easy for individuals or industry to release substances into the atmosphere, rather than paying for their proper disposal.

Development of markets for recycled

ACF council will be reviewing the ACF's

Forward Plan in June1991, Members'

comment on the content and performance

of the Plan are needed, preferably by the

end of February. If you wish to participate

in the review process please contact Jackie

1991 Labour Day Concert-

Monday, 11 March, 8 pm at the Melbourne Concert Hall

"Working for a Sustainable Future"

Featuring Paul Kelly

Ticket available through Bass.

For further information contact 5jan Prior

Contribute to ACF's

Grimmer on (03) 416 1455.

Forward Plan

arge volumes of CFCs and halons CFCs, education, and financial incentives would encourage businesses and individuals to recapture and recycle CFCs. Financial incentives could take the form of bonuses on recaptured CFCs or accelerated depreciation on old plant. When CFCs and halons can no longer be reused, they must be destroyed.

> Alternatives to High Temperature Incineration are currently being developed in Australia, including a method for the chemical destruction of CFCs and halons. This involves a chemical decomposition process which changes CFCs and halons into harmless solid metal halides. Another method being developed by CSIRO involves plasma arc destruction. The arc reaches very high temperatures and completely decomposes the molecules, separating their constituent atoms and even changing the nature of those atoms by ionising them. This technology is applicable to other intractable wastes.

If these exciting developments are commercially viable, Australia may become a world leader in CFC and halon destruction technology. In the meantime, a workable national strategy for the recapture and recycling of these substances needs to be developed. Let's get behind it.

Carrie Sonneborn Global Change Program



Where to report illegal sale of CFCs and Halons

Most states have banned aerosols that use CFCs as propellants. If you spot any such products, please contact the relevant person in your State/Territory (details given below). Give the name of the product, the manufacturer, date purchased or seen, and the name and address of the shop. This information will help the state governments to monitor and prevent the sale of these ozone-depleting substances. Pharmaceutical products such as asthma inhalers and solvents (used primarily in the manufacture of electronic goods) are currently exempt, and may legally contain CFCs. Please don't report these!

Australian Capital Territory -Veronica Martiov, ACT Government, Ph: 06 293 5674.

New South Water - Frank Kernebone, State Pollution Control Commission. Ph; 02 793 0214. Northern Territory - Andrew Buick, Conservation

Commission: Ph 089 89 4466. Queensland - Nick Awdejew, Department of Environ-

ment and Heritage, Ph: 07 227 6847. South Australia - Alex Smith, Department of Planning and Environment, Ph. 08 216 7636.

Tasmania- Sally Shepherd, Department of Environment and Planning. Ph: 002 302 774.

Victoria - Gordon Ivancich, Environmental Protection Authority. Ph: 03 628 5673.

Urban bushland campaign for Brisbane

n the last eight years, 17% (4,470 ha) of Brisbane's bushland has been cleared. If current trends continue, up to 75% of the remaining bushland will be cleared in less than 30 years. Until now there have been no town planning mechanisms for the protection of bushland.

On Australia Day ACF's Brisbane Branch launched an Urban Bushland Campaign to educate residents about the benefits of having bushland in their city and about the vulnerable status of their local bushblocks. Petitions for a Conservation Zone and a Vegetation Protection Ordinance were circulated and people were encouraged to "sign-up" as protectors of their local bushblocks. Bushland protection is also a major focus of the Green Alliance, which is running a team of 14 candidates in the March Local government elections.

For further information call Giselle Thomas



Logging quotas guarantee resource insecurity

16 December 1990, Federal Cabinet met to discuss proposals being pushed by industry Ministers Button, Crean, Griffiths and Kerin to fast-track"resource security" legislation for the forest industry. This legislation would guarantee loggers access to forests, even if such access were later proved to be economically or ecologically detri-

Faced with strong opposition from ACF and other conservation groups, Cabinet deferred its decision on the matter till early

Meanwhile, the forest products industries, through their peak body, the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI). are applying pressure in Canberra. They are also lobbying the states, where they appear to be having some success. There is a proposal up for NSW; in Tasmania and Victoria, ipso facto resource security already exists.

The situation in Victoria's East Gippsland region illustrates the economic and ecological pitfalls of resource security. Last year, the Victorian Government guaranteed industry the right to extract 174,000

Summer Campaign Skills Camp

nat were 50 or so ACF members, friends and 20 children doing at a Baptist Youth Camp on Western Australia's South Coast? Campaigning of course!

Held over a four day period in January, the summer campaigning skills camp at Perkins Beach near Albany, was a huge

We enjoyed swimming, singing, walks along the beach and in the forest, dancing and slide shows in the evenings, volleyball, tai-chi and yoga sessions, and cooking and eating together.

Oh yes - what about campaign skills? The programme of workshops included sessions on sandmining, working with unions and the media, group facilitation skills, consensus decision making, deep ecology,

m3 per annum of hardwood logs from public forests. There is no incentive to use this wood as high-value timber. When demand for construction hardwood is low, only the highest quality logs are used as sawlogs; the rest, more than 50 percent of timber harvested, is destined for the chip-

Fifteen year licences, dividing the 174,000 m3 quota between success. il companies (while some small mills able to better utilise lower grade logs are not even given a look-in) were granted in November 1990. If, for some reason during those 15 years, the Victorian government is unable to provide the promised timber, it is committed to paying compensation to the companies involved.

The quota is supposed to be a "sustainable yield". It assumes the continuing availability of all forest currently outside National Parks and other reserves. It makes no allowance for the ravages of fire and assumes that no new reserves will be declared, regardless of environmental values. The calculation will not even allow for the widening of streamside reserves.



Australia's old growth forests while the Japanese market for woodchips remains strong. There is money in this high-volume, low-value turnover only because our public forests are priced too low. The forest industry gets the timber for next to nothing and sells it in bulk for a small profit at a low unit value.

It is up to the community to insist that forest product industries needing high volumes of wood grow their own in the form of hardwood plantations, based on ecologically sound principles. Then they will The forest industry's plan is to cut down have earned resource security.

Debbie Mc Ilroy



ACF members, family and friends at the January Campaign Skills camp held in W.A. and environmental campaigning. For the sessions which brought us closer together children there were art, craft and storytelling activities.

In workshop sessions on campaigning, the group laid groundwork for a strategy to protect D'Entrecasteaux National Park from sandmining. This will include organising a public meetings tour of the South West in the first half of the year.

The camp was a positive experience for many people who found that a good balance was struck between campaign briefing and

- not just as campaigners, members, nonmembers and councillors, but as people with a common care and love for the environment and each other.

Congratulations and thanks to Lawrence and Sonia Emery, Basil Schur and all the other people who contributed to the event. Keep an eye on your State Update for news of the next camp.

Janet Cohen State Liaison Officer

Radioactive sand mining risky business

ecent expansion of the minerals products of the mining process. Processed sands industry in Australia is mobilising opposition from envi- a wide variety of civil and military applicativists and anti-nuclear campaigners who zircon, rutile and monazite playing a vital are concerned that exploitation of the resource presents an unacceptable social and environmental risk.

climbing value of mineral sands exports and the development of new mining and processing techniques. This has led to an ates toxic and radioactive by-products investing in the industry and the number of ide. The processing of monazite produces exploration and mining leases being granted. Until five years ago, exploitation of the ore-rich sands occurred only on the coast. Recent exploration offshore and inland has resulted in the discovery of major deposits in NSW, Victoria, SA and WA, and large areas of Cape York peninsula have been as landfill on public building sites, includpegged for exploration.

The mining and processing of mineral sands has many adverse environmental and social effects. In areas of high conservation value, exploration alone can cause considerable damage. There is little evidence to support the miners' claim that natural ecosystems' can be rehabilitated once they have been mined: experience has shown that water pollution, soil erosion, reduced species variety and in some cases the complete destruction of ecosystems can result from mineral sands mining.

Of major concern is the radioactive nature of some sands and other toxic by-



DETAILS FROM:

VEEC Secretariat

ronmentalists, public health ac- tions, with the radioactive elements in role in the nuclear fuel cycle and weapons Wastewater and tailings from monazite

The expansion has been driven by the mining can remain highly radioactive for long periods of time. The processing of mineral sands and rare earth elements creincrease in the number of companies in- cluding sulphuric acid and sulphur dioxuranium, thorium and radon gas.

At present, the only method of disposal of the radioactive waste from mineral sands and rare earth processing is by shallow land fill. In the past, radioactive waste from mineral sands tailings dams has been used ing schools. Few precautions appear to have been taken.

Workers employed in mineral sand mining are exposed to high health and safety risks, with an increased risk of cancer (equal to that of a person who smokes two packets of cigarettes per day). This is due to the radioactive nature of the minerals and the lack of effective safety precautions and regulations. The risk of radiation exposure also applies to workers involved in the transportation of mineral sands and to communities close to mines and processing plants. Worker and community health costs are not accounted for by the industry.

The mineral sand mining industry receives numerous state and federal subsidies and the use of free rail, road and sewage infrastructure. Clearly this situation must be reviewed and the industry's value to the community reassessed. The current profitability of mineral sand mining is at least partly due to the fact that it has not been obliged to cover its environmental and social costs.

Anna Dawson Natural Resources Program

A network of people and organisations concerned about the growth of the mineral sands industry in Australia is currently being formed. Please call Anna Dawson on (02) 2522653 if you want more information or wish to become involved.



Attitudes can change: promotion photo distributed by the Australian Tourist Commission in the 1960s

IUCN calls for ban on **Antarctic mining**

he International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has called on the Antarctic Treaty Nations to permanently ban mining in Antarctica and institute a comprehensive and legally binding environmental protection regime. IUCN carries great moral, if not legal, force in the international community and its decision against mining undoubtedly played a role in the recent decision by the United Nations to support a permanent ban.

Further good news is that after concerted lobbying by environmentalists, President Bush has signed a Bill that bans any American company or individual carrying out mining activities in Antarctica, and brings all such activities under US environmental law. This follows moves by Australia and New Zealand to enact similar domestic legislation that excludes any mining activity in their respective Antarctic Territories.

While much yet remains to be done, we now have the first text of an instrument for environmental protection, and general agreement among the Treaty Nations for a 30-year mining ban. The nations have also agreed to establish a small secretariat, conduct more frequent meetings, and establish an Advisory Body to undertake environmental, scientific and technical

> Margaret Mc Donald Biodiversity Program

Fossil Wars

n January, the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and troduction to the future which the New World Order embodies Greenhouse energy conservation targets by 2005. "Achieving the target would require major changes to the structure of the Australian energy sector and economy, involving largescale fuel substitution or considerable changes to energy markets and pricing regimes," ABARE concluded. What has this to do with the Gulf War? Everything.

The Gulf War defies simple characterisation. In any case, such descriptions lead us away from speculation about the moral ambiguities and historical complexities of its origins, or the motives of its combatants.

It is not simply, as President Bush would have it, "a just war, of human dignity and freedom against tyranny and oppression"

Nor is it simply a colonial legacy; a clash between old and aspirant imperial powers; a fight between expansionist Iraq, the creation of Western arms traders and American foreign policy, and Western forces whose traditional sphere of influence it now

Nor is it a conflict set up to force the issue of Palestinian selfdetermination, though this may be a welcome outcome of Hussein's savage attempt to build populist support in the region.

All of these factors are alive in the conflict and at work behind the obscene images of children in gas masks, wounded civilians, burning oilfields creating midnight skies and oceans of thick black sludge, and the slick technologies of devastation.

Yet if one has to characterise this war at all, it is an old-fashioned war of plunder and resource control - an oil war - a war of selfinterest for America, and for Australia. This may be our best in-



A cormorant dving in the Persian Gulf last month: victim of the worst oil spill

In many senses, this war is a legacy of the 1980s. It has occurred present trends continue, Australia will meet only half its

because of the power vacuum the Reagan Administration created in the Middle East - which threw up Hussein - and, mainly, because of the US which the Reagan Administration bequeathed the 1990s desperate for oil as never before.

In an article in the New York Review (September 1990), former US Secretary of Commerce and Chairman of the Council of Foreign Relations, Peter G. Peterson outlined what - with bitter hindsight - can be interpreted as the underlying trajectory toward regional instability and US intervention in the Middle East.

Peterson writes of the failure of US energy policy a decade ago. scrapped by the Reagan administration in favour of deficit budgeting and old-fashioned patterns of industrial behaviour, including profligate fuel use.

An old-fashioned war of plunder and resource control

In the mid-1980s, only some 6% of US oil imports came from the Gulf. By 1990, this figure had risen to 28%, and it is projected requirements.

After the 1973 Oil Shock, Europe and Japan instituted tight energy policies and used high fuel taxes and energy research incentives to induce efficiency and reduce import reliance.

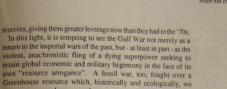
The US adopted the more immediately painless approach of simply paying market prices for fuel - low after the Oil Crisis passed and OPEC became disorganised - so that it could produce goods competitively for export and domestic markets. As a consequence. America with less than 5% of the world's population, now consumes one quarter of the world's oil - and uses 10% of it to fuel automobiles.

increasing trade deficit and a growing energy deficit.

As Peterson comments, for the US to trade its way out of its

commanding situation where they hold over 65% of the worlds oil

A well-known Cobb cartoon of the 70s; how much has changed?



reserves, giving them greater leverage now than they had in the '70s.

return to the imperial wars of the past, but - at least in part - as the

know we can no longer sanely use.

the limits to our domestic supplies.

In this light, it is tempting to see the Gulf War not merely as a

Where does Australia fit into the picture? Australia has adopted

an energy "non-policy" similar to that of the US in the 1980s. We

have been cushioned by low global prices and production from the

Gippsland Basin. And for over two decades we have known about

Yet with fuel taxes only marginally above the minimal levels

applied in the US, we have encouraged an accelerated rate of fossil

fuel use - even to the point of being a net oil exporter in the mid-

1980s while being aware that our domestic reserves were bound

to decline in the 1990s. Now, like the US - with profound structural

problems in our balance of trade, a growing deficit and energy-

inefficient industries and transport systems - we face the prospect

of a vast increase in our fuel import bill as we move into a steep

decline from oil self-sufficiency to global resource dependency.

Little wonder that we too are in this war, supporting the

resource-arrogant ally whose policies and behaviour we have aped

in the hope that the Alliance will secure a few more years of

irresponsible living. These are the deep, structural reasons for

What should our rational response be to this complex war?

Given these structural foundations for the conflict, what is required

for its resolution? How should we respond as environmentalists?

There is a need for international controls

over the allocation and use of fossil fuels

First, there are strong moral and - as recent events show -

environmental reasons for calling for an immediate cease-fire in

the War. Negotiations over Kuwait must include a commitment

to demilitarise the region, and democratise the region's countries.

There can be no peace without national self-determination. The

role of negotiator and conciliator is one which Australia is better

placed to perform - after the Kampuchean negotiations - than

many other nations, and is more appropriate than its present

The rest is harder. It is clear that the national economic needs

which in part underlie this conflict can only be tackled over time.

Apart from averting the immediate devastation of the Middle East,

there is a need for international controls over the allocation and use

of fossil fuels, and for international transfers of energy research

bellicose stance.

and conservation technologies.

committing Australian forces to the Gulf. The rest is cant.



Australia, too, needs desperately to turn itself around. It needs a strong fossil fuels policy which imposes a strict regime of conservation rather than pandering to the short-sighted rural, oil, transport and manufacturing lobbies, and forces the pace of research and investment in sustainable energy alternatives. Without it, in coming decades, Ausralia may be forced to behave even more abjectly on the international stage to overcome its growing economic weaknesses.

Peter Christoff

Peter Christoff is an ACF member, a member of the Rainbow Alliance, and the Assistant to the Commissioner for the Environment in Victoria.

ACF calls for international peace conference

CF has called on the Australian Government to do all in its power to stop the Gulf War. In a written statement to the Prime Minister and members of Parliament, ACF requested that Australia call for an immediate cease-fire and for an international peace conference to be convened by the United Nations. This conference would involve all interested parties, and would deal, among other things, with multilateral nuclear disarmament, chemical weapons disarmament and regional economic and environmental reconstruction.

The statement said that ACF rejected the view "that war is inevitable or is a satisfactory method for resolving social conflict" and that "Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is unacceptable in international law". Moreover, read the ACF statement, "the social and economic costs of wasting resources on war are unacceptable. This increases global inequities and compromises prospects for a peaceful and just settlement in the region."

ACF's position on the war is consistent with its existing policies on the need to develop alternatives to oil as a transport fuel, reduce climate change and prevent nuclear war. The disastrous environmental consequences of the war on its present scale are already evident. Scientists have warned that, in the worst case, regional cooling, general climate disruption and ozone depletion caused by war in the Gulf could harm food production in Asia and surrounding areas, putting billions at risk of starvation. In the longer term, global climate could be affected, with increases in atmospheric carbon from oil fires speeding up the Greenhouse Effect.

ACF policies on the ecological impacts of the military, in peace and war, will be further developed. Members' views are invited.

CONSERVATION NEWS, February, 1991-9

to reach 50% by 1995. Over the same time, US domestic oil production fell markedly, compelling it to import about half its oil

The US's short-term economic gains were eroded as other industrial nations, less energy-rich and not so wealthy, gained in competitiveness through increased energy efficiency. So, while the Japanese economy is now able to obtain 2.5 times as much output per barrel of oil, the US has locked itself into both an

deficit (now over \$US 100 billion per annum and inflated by the costs of this war) and accommodate an oil deficit which will worsen to \$US 60 billion by 1995 would require an increase in exports of over 50%. This has never been achieved in America's industrial history, and would involve a level of material production which is, potentially, environmentally devastating in its own right.

Even without this war, the OPEC nations are moving into a

Minutes of the ACF Annual General Meeting -1990

he Twenty-Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Australian Conservation Foundation was held at Victoria College in Malvern, Victoria, at 8.00 pm on Saturday, 8 December, 1990. It was attended by approximately 100 people.

Acting President, Bob Burton, took the Chair and opened the meeting. He read a letter from the President, Peter Garrett, outlining Garrett's experiences during 1990, his liaison with European, North American and Canadian environmentalists and his hopes for the Foundation in the coming year. The letter concluded, "Thope that you are able to find some time this weekend for dreams and visions, as well as practical concerns, for if these things can be expressed in a positive way, then hopefully this can inspire an organisation such as ACF and direct the nation."

Apologies were received from Peter Garrett, Barry Clugston, Peter Brotherton, Rick Humphries, Senator Meg Lees, Eric Cadzow, Sister Beverley Stott, Senator Zakarov, Marty Grieg, Henry Teltscher, Senator Sid Spindler and Dr Keith Suter.

The apologies were received on the motion of Peter Blackwell, which was seconded by Rob Gell.



Geoffrey Goode accepting honorary life membership of ACF: Photo by Caroline Hocking

Endorsement of Minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting

Two amendments were made to the minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting, as circulated to members in the March 1990 Conservation News: Geoffrey Goode was Treasurer of the Foundation for 12 years rather than 13; and Geoffrey Goode retired from the ACF Council rather than

The minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting, subject to the above amendments, were confirmed on the motion of Peter Blackwell, seconded by Milo Dunphy.

Adoption of the Annual Report and Financial Statements

The Annual Report and Financial Statements to 30 June 1990 were circulated with the November 1990 Conservation News.

Executive Director, Phillip Toyne, addressed the meeting on the events of the past year. He said that 1990 was a year of both good and bad decisions from governments on the environment. Disappointments were the results of the Joint Scientific Report on the South East Forests of NSW, later shown to be flawed by a computer bug, and the collapse of the Salamanca Agreement in Tasmania. Good news included the world heritage listing for Shark Bay in WA and the planning targets for Greenhouse gas reductions.

Toyne said that the ACF Youth Delegation to the Montreal Protocol meeting held in London in June 1990 was the highpoint of the year. The delegation, coordinated by Dallas Kinnear, was awarded the opportunity to address the Protocol meeting from the dais, the first time a youth delegation has been honoured with this privilege. He also commented briefly on ACF's attendance at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) General Assembly in Perth in early December, and on our participation in the Resource Assessment Commission Inquiries into Forestry and Kakadu (noting in particular the high standard of the ACF's submissions)

Sustainable Development Industry Works ing Groups.

Toyne commended the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of the ACE staff. He said that he was looking forward to the return of Peter Garrett and to work. ing closely with him in 1991.

ACF Treasurer, Peter Rawlinson, presented the Financial Statements to the meeting. He said that in the year 1989/00 the Foundation had had to meet several substantial costs, including the adoption of the Forward Plan, relocation of the head office in Melbourne and the federal election campaign. These items had contributed to the overall deficit but were "one-off"

More worrying was the failure of three appeals to meet budget. This trend was largely attributable to the country's current economic situation and it had meant the implementation of severe budget cuts. Rawlinson noted that the Forward Plan had expedited this process, allowing the National Management Team to recommend to Council and Executive, cuts which would have minimal impact on the work of the Foundation. He called on members to help ACF through 1991 by actively encouraging others to join and by selling raffle tickets.

In response to a question from Beverley Broadbent, Rawlinson reported that a Council sub-committee had been set up to address the issue of the postal ballot to amend the Constitution, and that issues considered to be contentious (such as the creation of employee/councillor positions) would be singled out on the ballot paper, allowing members the opportunity to vote for or against each of these issues.

Phillip Toyne clarified ACF's position on the High Temperature Incinerator (HTI), saying that ACF believed that high temperature incineration was the only effective and safe method of disposal for certain hazerdous waste. The Foundation supported construction of an HTI only after extensive community consultation and inand the Federal Government's Ecologically put. The ACF had been led to believe that this was the case with the decision to site the HTI at Corowa, and on discovering that this was not so, had withdrawn its support. Federal Minister for the Environment, Ros Kelly, had admitted to the ACF that the whole affair had been handled badly.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were received on a motion moved by Peter Rawlinson, seconded by Anne-Marie Delahunt.

Honorary Life Memberships for Aila Keto, John Sinclair and Geoffrey Goode The citation for honorary life membership for Dr Aila Keto was presented by Milo Dunphy. Keto became an ACF councillor in 1983 and Dunphy noted that it was a great loss that she did not stand for reelection in 1989.

Keto has been involved in the fight for protection of the Queensland rainforests since the early 70s. With her husband, Dr Keith Scott, she wrote the nomination for World Heritage Listing of Australia's Wet Tropical Forests which was singled out by Dr Jim Thorsell of the IUCN (referee to the World Heritage commission)as the most comprehensive IUCN had received.

The motion for honorary life membership was moved on a motion from Milo Dunphy, seconded by Beverley Broadbent and carried unanimously. Keto was unable to attend the meeting but in a letter addressed to the Executive Director, conveved her appreciation for the honour of the nomination, and her wish to further assist the Foundation in "responding to the formidable task it faces in the years ahead".

The citation for honorary life membership for John Sinclair was presented by Milo Dunphy. Sinclair was an ACF councillor from 1975 to 1989, serving as a Vice-President and member of the Executive Committee. He is probably best known for his long fight to protect Fraser Island from sand mining, a campaign run at great personal cost but a campaign he eventually won. The Weekend Australian named him Australian of the Year in 1977 for his outstanding work for conservation. His



son, John Sinclair Jnr, continues the fight conservationist like the other two nomifor Fraser Island (this time against logging) as President of Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO), a group founded by his father.

The motion for honorary life membership for John Sinclair was moved on a motion from Milo Dunphy, seconded by Adrian Jeffreys and carried unanimously.

In his response, Sinclair said that any personal tragedy he had experienced during this work had been far outweighed by the joys, the opportunities to learn and the wonderful people he had encountered. His only regret was the continued threat to the integrity of Fraser Island.

The citation for honorary life membership for Geoffrey Goode was presented by Geoff Mosley. Goode served as an ACF councillor from 1973 to 1988, and as the Foundation's Treasurer for 12 years. He has worked long and hard for the promotion and defence of the principles of democracy in all of the Foundation's workings, was instrumental in the re-drafting of the ACF's Constitution in 1973 and was the Foundation's resident legal advisor. Throughout his period as a councillor, Goode was also extremely active in optimizing opportunities for participation in the Foundation's work by its members. The motion for honorary life membership for Geoffrey Goode was moved on a motion from Geoff Mosley, seconded by George Heinsohn and carried unanimously.

In his response, Geoffrey Goode said that although he was not an "up-front"

nees, he enjoyed the background work he has done for the Foundation and looked forward to further helping the ACF.

Agenda Item No. 6

Sonia Orford, an ACF member and member of the Shoalhaven Branch, indicated that as one of the movers of motion 6a), she intended to move an amended motion. The amended motion was moved by Sonia Orford, seconded by Milo Dunphy and carried by the meeting:

"That the ACF include in the Year Two Action Plan of the current Forward Plan the establishment of an integrated marine national park to cover the waters of Jervis Bay and its hinterland. The object will be to obtain commonwealth, state and local government agreement in principle not later than 31 December 1991 to the boundaries of a Jervis Bay marine national park and the creation of an autonomous marine national park authority to develop a detailed management plan - this plan to come into effect not later than 31 December 1992,"

Dr Geoff Mosley, as one of the movers of motion 6b), indicated that he wished to put an amendment to the motion included on the agenda. The amended motion was put by Dr Mosley, seconded by Beverley Broadbent, and carried by the meeting:

"That every effort be made by Council to encourage membership participation in the revision of the policy statement on Resource Use and Population."

The meeting closed at 11.00pm.

NEW BOOKS

In recent years, the number of 'green' children's books has increased dramatically. In this Issue, we look at some of ACF's range. Each book has an environmental message presented In a unique way, and common to them all is a sense of fun and enjoyment.

One World

M Foreman: Andersen, 1990. 28pp, h/b, \$16.95. PP value=1/2

"One sky, one sun, one moon, one world", begins the story of a small girl and her brother who despoil a seaside pool of its wildlife to create a new world in their bucket. Foreman parallels the loss of beauty of the pool with the spoiling of the world at large. The children come to see the spoiling of the pool and make amends. Wonderful watercolour illustrations ac-

company the story. The Bush Alphabet

W Douglas: H&I, 1990. 30pp, h/b, \$16.95.

Many of Australia's commonest animals are illustrated in subtle tones in this book. Children will love it for its rhymes, animals and board game. Nature notes in the rear of the book should be accessible to the average 10 year old.

Good Planets Are Hard To Find

R Dehr et al: A&U, 1989. 40pp, p/b, \$7.95.

A colourfully-illustrated environmental information guide and action book set out in the form of a dictionary, with clear explanations of terms such as biodiversi-



ty, endangered species and spaceship earth. My Friend Whale

S James: Walker, 1990. 21pp, h/b, \$14.95. PP value=1 "How wonderful it would be to have a blue whale for a friend and go swimming together every night; and how sad if such a friendship ended, because the whale disappeared. This is more than a story. In reality also, whales may disappear. More than ever, the whales need friends"

The World That Jack Built R Brown: Andersen, 1990. 25pp, h/b, \$14.95.

PP value=1/2

A beautifully illustrated story based on The House That Jack Built, containing an important message about the destruction of the environment.

Battle For The Spinifex, Ma Supial's

A Garnett and K Kessing: Desert Graphics, 1990. 44pp, p/b, \$5.00. PP value =1/2

The battle relates to the coming of feral animals to Australia's arid regions and their effect on our native animals. An exciting play provides the main message and there are lots of written activities to help us learn more about Australia's native creatures. An excellent resource for teachers.

Caring For Our Country

ACF, NFF, Landcare Australia, 1989.49pp, p/b, \$20.00.

The nineties is the decade of landcare, so this educational resource kit has been produced for upper primary/junior secondary students to foster a greater awareness of landcare issues. Teachers will find this kit of great value. Contains a booklet, poster, and 44 activity sheets.

The Man Who Planted Trees

J Giono: Collins Dove, 1989. 51pp. p/b. \$19.95.

The inspiring story of a shepherd who planted thousands of trees. Over the course of time, his work turned a desolate region into rich forest and farmlands. Full-page pastel illustrations complement the text.



Please contact ACF Books Coordinator. Gary Wardrope, for further information on these and other environmental titles. Call now (03) 416 1455 (Toll free: (008) 338

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Students from Maryborough Technical College construct artificial nesting boxes. From left: Melissa Cloke, Kylie McGuinness, Sally Adlem, Belinda O'Conner (Year 8, 1990).



Teachers' Notes

By Peter Preuss

will help: eavy logging through much of Australia has resulted in a shortage of trees with hollows. As a

third of our forest dwelling birds 2. Don't use treated pine- it's poisonous. and over half of our forest mammals de-3. Waterproof paint or lacquer will make the nestpend on nesting hollows, it is little wonder box last longer. that wildlife diversity has been greatly re-4. Make the box and hole size to suit the animal

lege. Under the supervision of local ranger

Rob Brouwers, and teacher Russell Train-

or, students are constructing artificial

nesting boxes designed to provide homes

for a wide range of possums, gliders, bats

No longer will students of Maryborough

Technical College have to study animals in

artificial laboratory conditions with their

associated cruelty. They can now study the

breeding and populations of local species in

their natural habitats. The long term project,

sponsored in part by a Victorian Environ-

mental Education Council grant, will allow

a diverse range of mammals and birds to

breed in the Paddy's Ranges until the trees

The first group of 25 artificial hollows

was constructed in December1990. These

will be monitored by the students and more

boxes will be produced annually.

develop natural hollows.

and birds.

duced, even within state parks and forests. you wish to attract At Paddy's Ranges State Park, Victoria, 5. Place the nest-box where people and predators cannot reach it. this issue is being addressed by an innovative environmental education project con-6. Place the box where it is sheltered from direct ducted by Maryborough Technical Col-

The project presents a fine example to

other schools located near similar forests

and reserves short of natural hollows. Even

schools with remnant trees can provide

homes for possums, bats and birds by con-

structing nesting boxes. The following hints

1. Use solid timber to make your nest-box as

easily and chipboard will rot.

wood is a good insulator. Metal heats up too

sun and wind

7. Avoid putting nails into trees.

8. If you use wire to attach the box, make sure you put something between it and the bark, or you will ring-bark the tree.

9. If you use a hinged top you can look inside the box (until native animals have moved in)

10. You can discourage non-native birds from nesting in the box by removing their nesting material before they lay eggs.

11. Avoid disturbing the box once native animals have moved in.

More about artificial nesting boxes for wildlife can be found in the booklet Home is a Hole, available free of charge from the Healesville Sanctuary Education Service, PO Box 248, Healesville 3777. Ph: (059)

For information about Victorian Environmental Education Council Grants, contact Peter Preuss at the Melbourne ACF office. Ph: (03) 416 1455.

Lesson from history

Kevin Bligh ACF Councillor 1973-83 Bullcreek, WA

I was present on the day of the long knives on the ACF Council in 1973. As in any battle, both sides suffered.

I see no good reason why the offending proposals for the current constitutional amendments could not have been separated from the rest of the batch for voting on separately - as suggested by wizened ACF Councillors Coulter, Dunphy and Mosley.

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Wise appointment

Marilyn Palmer **Bunbury Branch ACF** Bunbury, WA

Our branch would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the ACF for its wisdom and foresight in creating the paid position of Branches Liaison Officer.

The appointment of Janet Cohen here in WA has made the whole ACF hierarchy and structure much more comprehensible, accessible and user friendly. I'm sure Janet herself deserves much of the credit, but well done to the ACF structure for this

Ecology University wonderful idea

Margaret Rose Kalamunda, WA

Margaret Dwyer's letter in your December edition I found most interesting and enlightening. What a wonderful idea! It does sound a bit like an "idealist's dream" as she states but maybe it could be achieved - A World University of Ecology, How can we best go about achieving this end? By we I mean an individual such as me? I will certainly show this magazine to as many people as I can, perhaps some (like myself) are unaware that US Naval Base at Subic Bay is to be closed!

HTI issue clouded by mis-information

Peter Brotherton Convenor, ACF Sustainable Technology and Employment Committee

Stephen Gulliford (CN, December 1990) suggested that ACF had not objectively considered the evidence on the safety of high temperature incineration (HTI) of intractable waste. I feel that this and other assertions made in his letter require a re-

His statement that the Taskforce recommended HTI 'since they were no doubt under political pressure to come up with something in the time allotted' is clearly false. Shortly after it was established, the Taskforce indicated to the sponsoring Governments that it could not and would not come up with a preliminary recommendation on disposal technologies in the time allocated. Consequently that work took about 45 percent longer than originally allocated.

I have spent much of the last six years looking at data on emissions and residues for a wide range of incineration processes (including hazardous waste incineration, municipal waste incineration, power stations, automobiles, woodfires, barbecues etc.). If we should oppose HTI absolutely on the grounds of the potential danger of its by-products, consistency would appear to require us to oppose all of these other incineration processes, which are very much more polluting as well. Even public transport would probably have to be restricted to rickshaws, pedicabs and yachts.

If we were to accept Samuel Epstein's blanket assertion that there is absolutely 'no basis or justification for using (HTI) whatever under any circumstances' what should we do about medical waste - bury it, re-use syringes and dressings, continue to use the current inadequate unscrubbed lower-temperature incinerators, or close down our hospitals?

Recycling of newsprint, which we have been actively and, I believe, quite rightly promoting, appears almost certain to require incineration of sludge from the deinking process. Should we therefore eschew newsprint recycling or, heaven for-

bid, landfill the residue instead?

ACF considered the issue of intractable waste management for two years before adopting an initial position in writing. That position has been reviewed on a virtually continuous basis in the ensuing four and a half years and has been amended on at least five occasions.

This is a complex issue which is readily clouded by mis-and dis-information (much of it well-intended) from an extraordinary range of sources. In such circumstances it is unsurprising, but still disappointing, that some people are able to very quickly adopt fixed and immutable positions.

There is no dispute about our common goal, which is to restrict future generations of these hazardous substances as completely and quickly as we can and to clean up the mess from past misadventure as safely as possible. ACF support for HTI is contingent upon cessation of the generation of intractable wastes.

However, there is not simply one correct road through the woods nor is it obviously helpful to impugn the motivations, integrity and intelligence of those exploring a different road from our own.

Leadbeater's Possum

In the article entitled 'Rare possum's habitat to be clearfelled' (CN November 1990 p4) an area of 100 square kilometres of 'Alpine Ash' was given as the remaining habitat of the possum, 75 percent of which was earmarked for clearfelling. In fact the area concerned is 10,000 square kilometres of 'montane ash'. Montane ash is made up primarily of Mountain Ash, Alpine Ash and Shining Gum

Correction

Paul Spencer's letter, "Severely upset about amendments", was published in last December's CN minus a line. Sorry, Paul! For the record, the second and third sentences should have read: "The choices that the membership are entitled to are all or none or SOME of the amendments. Obviously some of the amendments are excellent, but also it is obvious that some of the amendments are doubtful."

The Editor

ACF BRANCHES AND CAMPAIGN GROUPS

Atherton Tablelands Branch

he Atherton Tablelands Branch Yungaburra Market. has gained considerable acceptance in the local community in recent years as a source of infornation and support.

Local ACF members are active in areas like the oil pollution threat to the Great Barrier Reef, management of National parks, Land Care, and rubbish disposal. In 1991, aerial spraying and the abuse of agricultural chemicals, are also likely to become major issues for the Branch and the community. Branch activities include public talks, excursions, submissions to government and regular attendance at

VICTORIA

Albury-Wodonga Marty Greig (060) 215 837 (bh)or Environment Centre (060) 212 627 (bh) Ballarat

Barry Golding (053) 456 343 (ah) Diamond Valley

Lawrie Rigg (03) 434 6685(ah) or (03) 480 6699 (bh)

Gippsland David Haynes (051) 955 462 (ah) or Angela Gilbert (051) 746 037 (ah)

Mullum (Eastern suburbs, Melbourne) Peter Caffin (03) 801 4891 (ah) or Diana Haby (03) 890 5366 (ah)

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Sunraysia Mallee Lynda Prior (050)234473

an Denham (050)279 249 Wimmera

Daniel Waffler (053) 823 009 (ah) or Barry Clugston (053) 582 831(ah)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide Nele Findlay (08) 276 8652 (ah)

Unfortunately, the regional picture is somewhat gloomy. The coastal zone remains unprotected despite Goss Government promises. The Wet Tropics Rainforests remain unmanaged despite Goss Government promises. The McIlwraith Range National Park Proposal remains just that, a proposal - despite Goss Government promises for new National Parks on Cape York. The Cape York Space Port proposal is moving forward in the face of Aboriginal protests and the lack of a Cape York Land Use Study - yet another broken Goss Govemment promise. There is still no Govern-

ment decision on the Tully-Millstream hydro scheme, nor on energy conservation initiatives. State-wide, environmental values are being hijacked by politicking and an economic growth dogma.

The Queensland Government is pro-development and growth-orientated. Natural resources are being used as capital for this growth, rather than being managed for sustainable use. The conservation movement must work to emphasise the long term perspectives of sound environmental management.

ACT

Canberra Caroline Le Couteur (06)2823579(ah)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Bunbury

Adrian Colley (097)215 384 or Marilyn Palmer (097) 218 148 Collie

David Churches (097) 342 405(ah) Perth

Garth Kelsey (09) 22944597 (ah) South-Coast Branch Lawrence Emery (098) 451 042

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Mary River Magdalena Steffens (071) 29 2211 Gold Coast

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Hunter Region Janet Murray (049) 690 662 (bh) or (049)

57 1126 (ah) Illawarra

Lynda Kriflik (042) 941441(ah) Sydney

Ian Landon-Smith (02) 487 3411 (ah) Shoalhaven

Pat Van Steenwyth (044) 23 2138 Northern Riverina

Brony Mason (069) 75 9338

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- confact with like-minded people through ACF Branches and Campaign Groups, an active role in protecting the environment, satisfaction of knowing you are part of a national body that works to protect the environment.

3

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