

Issue #80 Spring 1999

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chain reaction

The national magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia

Alliances: The culture of co-operation

Cape York Peninsula's historic land use agreement
Challenging the myth of jobs vs environment
Green groups and green politics

Global partnerships:
Reflections on the Ok Tedi mine campaign
Raising awareness of GMO foods

When Theology meets Ecology
Queer, Green and Proud

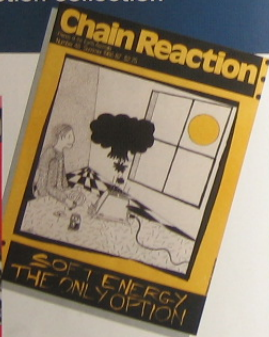
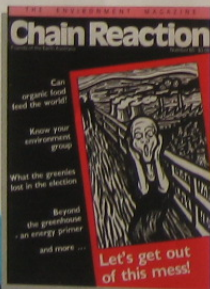
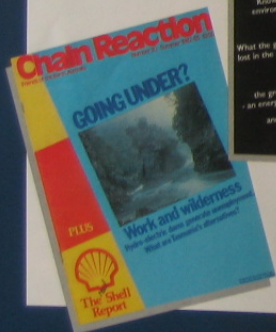


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Cover Photograph



Andrew Graham

Andrew is an ecologist who has been involved with a range of research and conservation projects in South Australia. The Spiny daisy (*acanthocladium dockeri*) was originally discovered in 1860 by Dr H Becker, and was until recently presumed to be extinct. It has been rediscovered in the mid North of South Australia.

The Chain Reaction editorial team thanks Stan Jackson, Emma Gibson, Andy Lewis, Sally Johnson, Angelique Burlew, Nina Cunningham and The Print Managers for all of their help.

Back cover lettering (*earth our sacred site*) taken from a banner at a march against mining in National Parks, W.A. 1991.

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committed to the preservation, restoration
and rational use of the environment. FoEA
comprises 18 independent FoE member
groups throughout Australia. FoEA
campaigns locally, nationally and
internationally as part of FOEI. All member
groups are united in their belief in an
environmentally
sustainable and socially equitable world
where social justice and environmental
issues cannot be separated.



Working together with other groups or individuals to achieve common aims seems logical. There is more energy, more ideas, the potential to motivate one another, more contacts and more pressure brought to bear on those who make key decisions.

Different sectors of society have different reasons for wanting to achieve environmental protection. A battle to prevent forest logging, for example, may include environmentalists concerned about climate change and loss of biodiversity, deep ecologists who believe it is ethically wrong to impact on other species, locals concerned about the impacts on the water catchment, recreational fishers worried about the effect on nearby creeks and streams and decline in fish stocks, bird watchers, bush walkers, campers and eco-tourism operators.

It often seems that the 'cult of the individual' and the dominance of consumer society is undermining our ability to create meaningful change, to oppose transnational corporations and conservative governments. People justifiably become frustrated with the lack of responsiveness to their legitimate concerns. Fortunately, many concerned sectors of the Australian community have found ways to work together, in order to overcome the opposition they encounter to ethical decision-making which has as its primary focus a commitment to a sustainable, just society.

New tactics are needed by environment groups also. Many groups within the movement and elsewhere have recognised the need to work together for shared aims and objectives. This is a shift from the earlier model where there was a greater sense that individual green groups could achieve desired results simply through lobbying or having the right contacts in industry or government.

This issue of Chain Reaction seeks to

recognise the concept of 'alliances' in all its manifestations. It provides examples of different political movements working with the environment movement, such as the historic black/green/pastoralist alliance which culminated in the historic Cape York Land Use Agreement in far north Queensland and the development of Earthworker, which is creating constructive ways for green groups and unionists to work together. We invited Margaret Blakers, advisor to Greens Senator Bob Brown to share her thoughts regarding unity within the environment movement, and the relationship between green groups and political parties, particularly the Greens. Paul Collins, the renowned theologian and social thinker, explores the relationship between theology and ecology. While Shorona Mbessakwini notes that being 'Queer, Green and Proud' wasn't so much an alliance between different interest groups, as an alliance of different aspects of our identity'. Dr Helen Rosenbaum discusses her experience of working on the Ok Tedi campaign and considers how international and grassroots campaigns can work together more effectively. Each of the features indicates some way in which forming alliances can or has resulted in greater success for each party. We have tried to cover as broad a spectrum as possible, but of course cannot do justice to all the magnificent co-operative work which is being done by so many people within Australia and around the world.

Our hope is that issue #80 of Chain Reaction will inspire more individuals and groups to work together, although it is often difficult and frustrating. Ultimately, we are all working towards the common goals of ecological sustainability and social justice and united we can bring about the changes that are necessary to achieve this.



A modest proposal

Cam Walker

Guest editorial

The election of the Federal Coalition government in 1996 and the subsequent partial privatisation of the national telecommunications authority, Telstra, was a turning point for the environment movement. Like many of these moments, its significance was not apparent at the time.

Until 1996, most of the key activists within the movement had spent the better part (or all) of their activist lives under a Labor federal government. While this relationship had soured over the past half decade the reality of the Coalition taking power was unimaginable for many of us. The subsequent re-shuffling of power bases, pay backs, confusion about new relations and opportunities, and the attempts by all groups to redefine themselves under the new political reality highlighted the motives, politics and very soul of the movement. It was perhaps here that the original split between the nature conservationist and the social ecologist tendencies began. While we were all willing to 'give them a go' on environmental issues, there was a broader and very significant consideration which was conveniently side stepped by many of the groups. This was the fact that the entire Coalition environment platform was based on funding which would be sourced from the partial privatisation of Telstra. This was a thinly veiled device to achieve an ideological outcome privatisation of public assets by arguing that we could not 'afford' to fund environmental protection without the sale of Telstra. There was considerable debate within the National Environment Consultative Forum (NECF) which is the national grouping

of many of the major state and nationally based groups, about what position we would take. All were aware of the impacts of being seen to support the sale yet most in the hierarchies of the mainstream groups chose to ignore the ramifications of this. An attempt by FoE to galvanise a joint position at the NECF was actively undermined by some who felt there was more to be gained by aligning with the Coalition than siding with socially progressive forces opposing the sale.

In the history of the environment movement over the past 15 years, the strongest memories and victories come from the great mobilisations and popular campaigns of the 1980s. These include fights to save regions such as Terania Creek, the Franklin River and the Wet Tropics as well as direct actions in East Gippsland, South East NSW, at Roxby Downs and the struggle to save Tasmania's forests. In the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, however, many within the movement had increasingly 'professionalised' their campaign strategies and tactics. During this period relations with the government of the day allowed for substantial environmental victories. This set the mode of campaigning and lobbying for most of the national groups. A key focus of these activities was, of course, to influence decision makers, meaning that substantial resources were allocated for achieving this. The underlying assumption was the 'need' to appeal to middle Australia. In this sense the movement did not feel the need to move into other spheres of activity where other classes and especially communities of non-English speaking backgrounds were part of the

constituency. Given that there was access to government and there was increasing difficulty in mobilising large numbers of people, it made sense to engage in less labour intensive activity. The downside of this process was that there was less campaign activity focused on community education and mobilisation.

The large groups with offices in Canberra, whose bread and butter had been lobbying, either found ways to develop close contacts with the new government, or found new niches in which to exercise their campaign skills. An expanding opportunity was to develop closer relations with big business and transnational corporations. This was encouraged by two parallel and related developments; the ascendancy of an ideological drive to reduce the role of government in regulation and the tail-end of the early 1990s corporate environmentalism which is a combination of cynical greenwashing and legitimate attempts to reform capitalism from within. The rise of corporate environmentalism, due to responses to public concern coupled with the rise of a new generation of corporate management, who had sometimes more progressive attitudes to the environment, meant that there was plenty of opportunity to engage with business. This has taken forms as diverse as joint projects, consultations and non-governmental organisation verification of Corporate Environmental Reporting.

The 'traditional' environment movement, composed of national groups and the state-based conservation councils, has a combined membership of tens of thousands. It would be a

simplification to say that this movement represents only a middle class and Anglo, urban-based demographic, yet in terms of generalisations, it is not an unfair one. There have been a number of histories written of the environment movement in Australia in recent years which look at the political development of these groups: often what has been missing from these histories is the concept of what at one point was being referred to as the 'brown' movement—the large, scattered but growing numbers of community groups which have mobilised around localised or issue-specific causes. While there are groups which have been part of the mainstream environment establishment which have concentrated on urban issues, hazardous waste and incinerators, placement of noxious industry and the dangers of agricultural chemicals, there has often been a sense that these issues have been marginal to the 'agenda' of the movement, which has usually been focused on biodiversity and in more recent times, has also been giving more attention to 'sustainability'. A brief glance at the agenda items at NECF gives a sense of the concerns of the environment movement. One of the shifts of the past decade has been the

development of a broader sense of biodiversity away from having forests and scenically attractive areas as the main focus of the movement's activities. There have also been many groups which have worked on concerns broader than just nature conservation. The conservation councils with their representative structure, have long campaigned on urban and other issues. Groups such as the Total Environment Centre in Sydney, the National Toxics Network and Hazardous Materials Action Group have been pivotal and long-term players in 'brown' issues. There has also been a clear, but often not articulated, sense of there being a parallel entity or movement in its own right. It was perhaps the Oz Toxics conferences held in the mid 1990s that began to draw together these geographically separated and often issue-specific groups into a sense of being part of an actual movement.

In North America and elsewhere, there is a long and well-documented 'environmental justice' movement. This grew from the simple observation that a disproportionate number of unhealthy industries were in poor communities. Research into the location of dangerous industries, waste facilities and incinerators clearly showed that poor

anglo, Indigenous and minority communities were bearing the bulk of the danger from the industrial and consumer infrastructure which forms the basis of modern society. It is hardly a new observation to note that there are parallels here in Australia: from hazardous industry in Melbourne's inner west to plans to build a radioactive waste dump on the lands of Indigenous peoples in South Australia.

Reality is never as simple as theory. There can be little argument that poorer communities in Australia bear an unequal share of the factors that lead to decreased quality of life. This simple acknowledgement, and the natural rebellion against this reality, is at the core of 'environmental justice'.

We have not found a way as yet to address and work with the single issue and localised groups which have been forming over the past few years. As globalisation and all its ancillary changes at all levels of our personal and community lives set in we all create ways of dealing with these changes. For those of us concerned with the two central tenets of ecological sustainability and social equity, there are remarkable opportunities at the interface of the environment

movement, organised labour, other community groups and NGOs.

The existing environment movement is a diverse and loosely affiliated network of groups. A sense of 'movement solidarity' often means that the movement has a very low common denominator value in terms of joint positions. Some groups have chosen to align themselves with corporations and right wing governments in order to achieve specific environmental protection outcomes. The more progressive elements of the movement have an opportunity to consciously disengage themselves from these more

conservative elements and actively engage with other community constituencies. There is a need for the mainstream environment movement to seriously consider the ways in which these new environmental constituencies can be encouraged to become active within the traditional movement. There seems to be a growing sense of politicisation of many individuals within these groups. Publicly offering a clear alternative to conservative ecological deal-making would allow us to develop strong alliances and positions which are visionary and attainable. It would also force us as individuals and groups, to step forward into creating

a new world, where there is no need for an environment movement. If enough groups did this, the face of the environment movement would be radically and irrevocably changed. There are no guarantees that we would achieve better outcomes, certainly in the short term. However it would create many possibilities. To do otherwise means maintaining the status quo of hovering around the edges of reactionary political structures or actively embracing a political world view and corporations which are the antithesis of justice and sustainability.

Cam is the National Liaison Officer of Friends of the Earth (Australia).

earth news

SUCCESS FOR TIMBARRA – WATER MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

For the moment Timbarra has been saved from the ravages of Ross Mining's gold mine. On the 26 August 1999 AMP sold one million Ross Mining shares, perceived by many to be a show of dissatisfaction with the company. On the 27 August Ross Mining announced to the stock market a stop to mining activity at the site. The company cited the drop of gold prices, the high cost of ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and the extensive rain in the area.

The constant vigilance and confrontation of Timbarra activists has certainly hindered mine activity and influenced Ross Mining's change of mind. These campaigners have ensured that the plight of Timbarra has stayed in the conscience of all concerned Australians. Such awareness has resulted in a community 'bad faith' attitude that has permeated boardrooms, the stock exchange and the media making companies like AMP take notice.

The activists situated in the area however know that the vigilance cannot subside. The area is still contaminated with cyanide and toxins. The mine has been relegated to 'care and

maintenance' status with Department of Mineral Resource checks usually only occurring twice a year. Thus, in many senses the danger has now increased. Timbarra activists want to initiate Landcare funded rehabilitation of the area. Hopefully providing employment for the 70 workers unemployed for the closure of the mine. Such programs will build bonds within a divided community contaminated by cyanide, mercury and arsenic.

Many are determined to stay in the area and maintain their work through the Drake Environment Centre. Plans for summer 2000 include the development of an Australasian wide mining alliance, a tent embassy near the mine site with the local Indigenous communities and a diversion into forestry actions. The Malra and Boonoo Boonoo State Forests are adjacent to the mine area and have been identified by the NSW RFA Agreement as possible logging areas, putting campaigners on red alert.

For more information or before you head up to Timbarra contact:

Flame or Amber on (02) 6737 6795 or the Drake Environment Centre, c/o Drake General Store, Drake, NSW 2469.

HOWARD GOVERNMENT HIRES RIO TINTO'S MAIN MAN

The Federal Government of Australia has appointed Dr Robin Batterham as their chief scientific adviser for a three-year term.

Dr Batterham also holds the position of managing director of research and technological development for Rio Tinto. He has been employed by Rio Tinto for the past 11 years and will remain with the company while fulfilling his role for the Federal Government. Dr Batterham's role as chief scientific adviser will involve chairing the bi-annual Prime Ministers Science and Engineering Council and briefing the Prime Minister on scientific issues. Dr Batterham is also director of Rio Tinto subsidiaries Comalco Aluminium and Hismelt and a number of Co-operative Research Centres. A very busy man!

Source: *Mining Monitor*, Volume 4 Number 2 June 1999.

Become part of the world's largest federation of environmental organisations

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

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



National Liaison Officer contact:
(03) 9419 8700, e-mail: foef@foe.org.au

BIO-TECH COMPANIES' DAY IN COURT

The world's largest agricultural businesses Novartis, DuPont and Monsanto yesterday pledged to defend themselves against a potential multi-billion dollar anti-trust suit alleging they are tying up the world market for seeds and other agricultural products through their exploitation of biotechnology.

The Foundation on Economic Trends, the US based National Family Farm Coalition and other farm groups were preparing a US antitrust lawsuit expected to be filed in a United States Federal Court. The lawsuit, expected to coincide with the World Trade Organization's new round of trade talks on farm subsidies, food safety and Biotechnology could be the

biggest in legal history. The threat is also expected to involve the Anglo-

Germany's Hoechst AG and France Rhone-Poulenc SA. As well as fears over the environmental impact of genetically altered foods and crops, critics including NGOs and aid charities have expressed fear of the effects of GE seeds and foods. The only immediate casualty of the threat appeared to be Swiss life sciences giant Novartis, the world's biggest agrochemical company, whose shares dropped more than three per cent and affected the rest of the Swiss stockmarket.

Source: Reuters New Service

OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO DO A DNA TEST FIRST, MA'AM....

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

MANIFESTO 2000:

Thirty-three leading designers and seven magazines will launch a manifesto to fight the commercialisation of design. *Adbusters* magazine and six of the design industry's most influential magazines are launching *First Things First 2000* - a call-to-arms for creatives to invest their much-needed skills in projects outside the advertising and branding industries. The manifesto supports the separation of what is now one—commercialism and design.

The manifesto will reach an international audience through the pages of the *AIGA Journal* (New York), *Blueprint* (London), *Eye* (London), *Emigre* (Sacramento, CA), *Form* (Frankfurt), *Items* (Amsterdam) and *Adbusters* (Vancouver), and through campaign materials sent to leading design schools and organisations worldwide.

To view the *First Things First Manifesto*, visit <http://www.odbusters.org/>

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION OR WORLD TAKE OVER

Last year the Multilateral Agreement on Investments was defeated in the OECD. OECD Secretary General Donald Johnston identified public pressure and a lack of community consultation as reasons for the failure. The MAI has re-emerged as the General Agreement on Trade and Services. The GATS presents the same array of threats as the WTO, GATT and the failed MAI, affecting all facets of our daily lives, democratic processes and consumer choice.

The WTO governs trade between nations in accordance with the General Agreement on Trade (GATT). However, the *Sunday Independent* reports that the WTO is out to extend its powers and community groups, NGOs and individual countries are determined to stop it. The WTO seems to be on a crusade to increase private profit at the expense of all other considerations, including the wellbeing and quality of life of the mass of the world's people', says Ronnie Hall, trade campaigner at Friends of the Earth International. 'It seems to have a relentless drive to extend its power.'

Groups such as Oxfam and Friends of the Earth, through to small grassroots networks in the Third World, have signed a joint declaration to 'oppose any effort to expand the powers of the World Trade Organization', criticising its efforts to 'prize open markets for the benefit of transnational corporations at the expense of national economies, workers, farmers and other people'.

Yet beneath the WTO is a far more insidious secret bureaucratic body, the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This obscure body advises the WTO. However, its impartiality is massively undermined by its members who represent global food and manufacturing companies. According to sources the commission is more concerned with fixing prices and controlling world markets than serving the individual rights of consumers. It is the Codex Alimentarius Commission who in 1995 voted to adopt food standards that allowed the presence of growth-enhancing hormones in meat. A practise that the US has engaged in and that the

European Union has consistently opposed. Thus, the trade battle has been waged and the US has the WTO and commission supporting its practices.

Such liberalisation is resulting in a scenario of massive unequal wealth distribution and economic market control. The effect on environmental legislation has the potential to be detrimental. With the WTO already affecting clean energy legislation it could possibly extend sanctions to toxic waste dumping treaties, global warming treaties, endangered species statutes and other legislation that 'impedes' the free movement of trade. The same level of suspicion therefore, must be maintained when considering the GATS proposal.

For more information on GATS contact Steve Moran on (02) 6261 2980

Source: *Sunday Independent*, The Hidden Tentacles of the World's Most Secret Body, July 17 1999, London, United Kingdom. Check out the WTO at <http://www.wto.org> and read the 10 common misunderstandings about the WTO.



PHOTO: J. SPINNEY/REUTERS/WWW/12/2001

The Organic Federation of Australia has revealed that thousands of hectares of genetically engineered canola is being grown throughout Australia. Under the pretext of trials the canola seeds have been widely distributed. These so called "trials" are more like a general release. Mr Scott Kinnear, Chairperson of the Federation said. The implications for organic and GE-free canola trade are immense with the high possibility of contamination just as new markets in Europe and Japan open up for these thriving industries.

Contamination occurs through the transfer of canola pollen via bees. Transfer can occur as far as six or more kilometers endangering GE free status crops. Kinnear commented 'The buffer zones of 400 meters required by the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee are a joke! We expect there is already contamination of Australian canola, including organic canola'.

Apart from risks of contamination environmental risks to other flora and fauna species including humans has not adequately been assessed. The Organic Federation of Australia is calling for more independent and rigorous assessment, the establishment of liability for environment and economic damages and open communication concerning location and testing details. Kinnear comments that the impacts are severe to all sectors of the community and the Federation is 'outraged'.

For More Information: Organic Federation of Australia, 452 Lygon Street, East Brunswick, Victoria 3057, Australia



OVERPOPULATION

=

POVERTY

=

DEFORESTATION

A report by the Population Action International (PAI), a United States based non-profit organisation links overpopulation, poverty and critically low levels of forest cover. Deforestation caused massive degradation to water supply, loss of plants and animals and erosion thus reducing economic prosperity. The report found that a third of the world's population lives in countries with critically low levels of forest cover. These areas characterised by low living standards had 0.1 ha per person of forest. The number of people in this area currently 1.7 billion was predicted to triple to 4.6 billion by 2025. The report found that the amount of forested land per capita around the world had halved between 1960 and 1995 as the population leapt from three billion to 5.7 billion, while the consumption of wood products increased by 50 percent to 3.3 billion cubic meters a year. Population Action International is a United States non-profit organisation dedicated to voluntary family planning.

Source: The Age

MIM'S NOT MAKING FRIENDS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Australian mining company Mt Isa Mines (MIM) is under pressure to withdraw from gold exploration on the island of Panay as community protest grows. Community groups have harnessed support across the Philippines through rallies, concerts and a travelling cavalcade. The mine which is envisaged to be 100 per cent foreign-owned with 100 per cent repatriation of revenue until recovery of all costs will possibly receive a Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA). Such an agreement would provide MIM with outrageous priority rights including unencumbered rights to water and easement rights (allowing access to private lands) for construction and development. Such an agreement essentially offers nothing for the local people who are very much aware of the implications of the mine. Panay is a major sea-food resource for the Philippines and the environmental impacts on the industry as well as community health from such a mine have the potential to be detrimental.

Source: Mining Monitor, Volume 4 Number 2 June 1999.

BHP - Poisoned by its Past

At BHP's annual meeting in September 1999 environmental activists demonstrated their outrage at the company's poisonous activities by placing a banner weighed down with dead fish at the entrance of the Concert Hall venue.

BHP's efforts to promote itself as a 'changed' company to be judged by its future achievements rather than its past, were nullified when activists and shareholders demanded the company take responsibility for its toxic

operations in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Activists and a representative of Ok Tedi landowners called for the company to undertake a complete rehabilitation of the area contaminated by the Ok Tedi gold and copper mine in the Western Highlands of PNG, and for its Newcastle and Port Kembla operations in Australia.

BHP's disastrous environmental record at its Ok Tedi mine includes the contamination of the Fly River which affected at least one thousand

square kilometres of forest and the livelihood of more than 30,000 people.

Environment groups, including Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Mineral Policy Institute and Illawarra Dioxin Action Campaign, called on BHP to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the people affected by the disaster and eliminate emissions of toxic chemicals, particularly dioxin, at all BHP facilities.

Source: Greenpeace, Herald-Sun

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Shape Up Or Shipley Out.

NZ PM Secretly Supports Logging

The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mrs Jenny Shipley has been implicated in a scandal involving one of the world's largest public relations companies. Shandwick was hired by the country's state-owned timber company, Timberland, to persuade the public that its rainforest logging practices were sustainable and to gain approval for the expansion of its activities. The release of a new book, *Secrets and Lies*, co-authored by regular Chain Reaction contributor Bob Burton, reveals that Shandwick spied on green critics and targeted the funding sources of environmental groups. The book reveals that a central theme of Shandwick's PR strategy for Timberlands was to promote their 'green' credentials. Leaked documents show that Mrs Shipley's office, since she became Prime Minister and in her former capacity as Minister for State-Owned Enterprises, regularly provided Shandwick with information, which she denied in Parliament.

Source: The Age



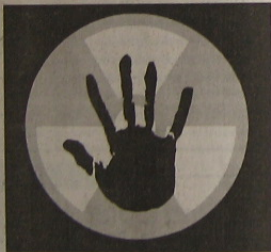
Australia Contributes to Japan's Criticality Crisis

The Tokaimura uranium processing plant in Ibaraki prefecture, Japan, experienced the worst type of nuclear accident on 30 September, 1999. 'Criticality' refers to the critical point at which a nuclear reaction starts. It was Japan's worst ever nuclear accident.

Officials advised all residents within a 10 km radius of the accident site to remain indoors until further notice. Japan's army, the Self Defence Force (SDF) was mobilised to control traffic and maintain public peace. Schools and roads were closed, and rail and bus services in the area suspended. Three workers at the plant were hospitalised and 150 people evacuated.

Friends of the Earth (Australia) called on the Australian government to suspend sales of uranium to Japan until a thorough safety review of all nuclear facilities has been carried out. Japan is one of Australia's major uranium buyers. Forty per cent of ERA's uranium sales are to Kansai Kyushu Shikoku Electric Power Company. This uranium is sourced from the Ranger uranium mine in Kakadu National Park.

FoE nuclear spokesperson Daniel Voronoff stated, 'Australia has a moral obligation to ensure our uranium won't end up poisoning Japanese citizens because of poor safety standards.'



Lyndon Schneiders

Shared Vision

Historic land use agreement on Cape York Peninsula

On Cape York Peninsula in far north Queensland, two contemporary political movements, one created by the British invasion of 1788 and one created in response to the environmental damage that was a result of that event, are endeavouring to reshape the future. Together with pastoralists and others, these groups are attempting to piece together a regional plan to enshrine the principles of ecological and cultural sustainability and to protect 'country'.

A black/green alliance has operated on Cape York Peninsula for the past 15 years. In retrospect, the coming together of these two movements has been fortuitous as community support for the protection of the natural environment and to remedy the horrors of invasion and dispossession has significantly increased.

I refer here to an alliance as a system of cooperative dialogue between different interests towards similar or common goals. I believe that an alliance can be formal or informal but is defined by regular communication and discussion about how to achieve common goals. There are differences between the interests of black and green groups even though there exists an extraordinary overlap.

Historically, green groups have primarily been concerned with the protection of the natural environment. For black groups, concern for caring for country is part of a larger agenda including the return of ancestral lands, economic development opportunities and the provision of basic health and education services. This reality provides numerous opportunities for the fracture of a black/green alliance.

On the Cape, these possibilities have emerged in response to black support for some mining projects and attempts to kick start the moribund pastoral industry. In these instances the groups have been able to agree to disagree and to continue talking to ensure that economic development projects have the highest levels of environmental care and provide maximum benefits to Aboriginal communities.

To help readers understand the dynamics of the formulation of the black/green alliance on the Cape, I have sought to identify a few key events that have marked the evolution of the alliance. These events, in the form of black/green campaigns to protect Shelburne Bay and the Starcke wilderness are detailed below.

What these campaigns and others have achieved is the formulation of a

set of principles that may have application elsewhere.

The first of these is the importance of maintaining regular contact. This involves not acting unilaterally when the latest crisis has arisen, but rather by talking through the issue and resolving to take a path that is beneficial to our respective objectives, getting back country and protecting the environment. To do so requires respect for each other and our sometimes divergent aspirations.

The second principle has been an acceptance that there will be times when our views about the best way forward will not be the same. While each movement is concerned with the protection of the land, green groups are not burdened with the social and economic imperatives that black groups must sometimes consider. There may



Graham Woibo, Tommy George and Peter Bully fishing on the Morehead river.

be differences of opinion concerning economic development projects that are likely to have a negative impact on the natural environment but which will deliver much-needed services and benefits to Aboriginal communities.

On the Cape, the groups have been able to walk together through this minefield and have laid the basis for a visionary new future for the region based on ecological and cultural sustainability. Increasingly many activists now contemplate the features of such an alliance following experiences with the Jabuluka campaign and as a result of the enormous public debate surrounding Native Title and reconciliation.

To understand what has happened on Cape York, it is first important to define which organisations and individuals constitute 'black and green'.

Over the past 20 years, the 'green' voice has been largely filled by a coalition of non-government environment groups including the Wildlife Preservation Society, the Wilderness Society (TWS), the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC). In regard to 'black' interests on Cape York, these include the Cape York Land Council, the Cape York economic and community development organisation, Balkanu, and local Aboriginal communities, families and individuals. The ATSIIC Peninsula Council was a signatory to the Cape York Land Use Agreement signed in February 1996.

Cape York: September 1999

In 1999, Cape York Peninsula, a biogeographic region covering an area of 137,000 square kilometres, is a place undergoing fundamental change.

For at least the past 20 years, pastoralism, the dominant European land use for a century, has been in severe decline. On the Cape, pastoralists do not have freehold title to properties, instead holding a variety of pastoral leases which, as the Wik case proved, enables the continued coexistence and exercise of native title rights.

Despite pastoral leases covering some 60 per cent of the Peninsula, very few

leaseholders return a profit and very few turn off cattle for market. Many pastoralists live in poverty and do not have access to quite basic community services. Nevertheless, the living standards of pastoralists far exceed those of the majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, who predominantly live on old church missions, often without access to rudimentary services or traditional lands.

Although mining for bauxite around Weipa on the west coast and sandmining at Cape Flattery on the east coast now dominate the regional economy, the desire to develop an alternative economic base to replace pastoralism has motivated government over the years to sponsor numerous dubious development proposals to 'kick start' the regional economy.

It has been black and green opposition to many of these schemes that has provided the impetus for the groups to come together and for government to accept, often reluctantly,

While each movement is concerned with the protection of the land, green groups are not burdened with the social and economic imperatives that black groups must sometimes consider.

that future land use on the Cape must be culturally and ecologically sustainable. An example of early green/black cooperation occurred in relation to proposals to sand mine Shelburne Bay.

Shelburne Bay

In the mid 1980s Queensland environmentalists became concerned by proposals to mine the white sands of Shelburne Bay on the east coast of Cape York. Shelburne Bay is an extraordinary place, its pure white sand dunes being likened to a 'snowfield in the tropics'.

On scrutinising the application to mine, it was noticed that the application claimed the traditional owners of the country, the Wuthathi,

were no longer in existence. In fact it transpired that while the Wuthathi had been forced off their land and dispersed, many Wuthathi still survived and wanted to be back on country.

Eventually, the Wuthathi returned to meet on country and decided to oppose the proposal to sand mine at Shelburne Bay. Green and black opposition meant the mining proposal eventually came to naught.

For green activists, the experiences of the campaign to protect Shelburne Bay marked the beginning of a realisation that the Cape was not in fact the last great unpeopled 'wilderness', but rather a precious and complex, peopled environment. A wilderness in the sense that colonial society had not obliterated the environment, but one which had been shaped by sustainable human management for millennia. In 1976 this realisation was still a decade away. In that year, ecologist Peter Stanton produced a report for the ACF that identified a number of areas on Cape York that would be suitable to be protected as National Parks.

It was the first great environmental audit of the Cape and it detailed a truly superlative environment. Almost unbelievably, here was an area of extraordinary biological diversity that had not been decimated by the impact of land clearing and pastoralism. Along its east coast there lay an extensive network of tropical rainforests. These undisturbed rainforests represent one fifth of all remaining Australian rainforests. There were massive wetlands, heathlands and numerous entire river catchments that had remained intact.

Understandably, many environmentalists did not want this vast wilderness to suffer the fate of the rest of the east coast, to be consumed in a wave of agricultural and industrial 'development'. Calls were promptly made for the area to be protected as a massive national park.

A battleground for Land Rights

Cape York has been the setting for seminal land and human rights campaigns. Beginning with the forced relocation of a west coast Aboriginal

community to make way for bauxite mining in the 1960s and including such battles a high profile dispute concerning Lutheran Church control of an Aboriginal mission in Hopevale near Cooktown and the frustrated attempts in the 1970s and the 1980s by Aboriginal leader John Koowarta and the Wynchanam community to purchase the Archer Bend pastoral lease, the struggle for respect and land has been fierce.

Many of the landmark High Court judgements, such as Wik and the

Green and Black

By the late 1980s it appears that most green activists understood that campaigns for the protection of Cape York were pointless unless Indigenous aspirations for land and human rights were also achieved. Not only had the dubious morality of Archer Bend led many to question the desirability of conservation being used as an anti land rights tool, but emerging scientific evidence clearly indicated that protecting this country in national parks, without ongoing traditional

During the late 1980s and early 1990s many important meetings were held between black and green activists. The results being the development of ground breaking agreements, such as the Yarrabah Agreement, which strengthened the ties between the groups.

Importantly, these forums provided the opportunity to discuss a raft of controversial subjects such as hunting and gathering in national parks, Aboriginal ownership and management of parks and the meaning of wilderness. At these forums, without the odious presence of government bureaucrats, common ground was possible and the foundations for understanding were laid.

Such was the new spirit of cooperation that by the early 1990s a coalition of green groups actively and successfully campaigned against a proposal by the Goss Government to create a national park over the McIlwraith Range on the east coast of the Cape which had not been discussed with the area's traditional owners.

Starcke

In 1993, an unusual advertisement appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. 'For sale, one quarter of a million hectares of prime coastal country on eastern Cape York Peninsula.'

Green activists associated with TWS in Cairns were deeply concerned about the fate of the property and wanted the state government to block the sale on the grounds of its environmental value. Cape York wilderness should not be for sale. Phone trees were organised, media strategies developed, funding sought. Before doing any of this, these activists did one very important thing—they visited the traditional owners at the Hopevale community. They briefed the elders on what was happening and they asked permission to campaign for that country.

Starcke was to be one of the quickest and most effective campaigns in the history of TWS. It was also to have a profound effect on many who became exposed to the unique black/green alliance and events such as the Starcke Roadshow.

The traditional owners of Starcke not



Bromley Holdings pastoral lease expires at the end of 2000

Koowarta case, originated in campaigns waged for equality and land by Cape York communities and representative bodies such as the Cape York Land Council.

At several points, the discredited Bjelke-Peterson government used professed concern for the environment to undermine land rights struggles. The most infamous being the decision to make the Archer Bend pastoral lease, in central Cape York, into a national park in an ultimately successful bid to stop John Koowarta and others from legally purchasing Archer Bend pastoral lease on behalf of their community.

management, was not the answer. The country was used to being managed and the people who had managed it wanted it back.

Around this time staff with the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service commented on the decline of a numbers of species in areas that were formerly grasslands and the encroachment of woodlands onto former areas of open country. They soon discovered that the change in traditional burning practices caused by the advent of pastoralism had fundamentally altered the ecology of the tropical savannah and was creating the conditions for species decline.

only approved of the campaign, but decided that they would lead a tour of the southern capitals to garner public support to stop the overseas sale of Starcke, protect its special environment and regain title to stolen lands.

It was a critical moment in black/green relations on Cape York and it involved a number of principles that have characterised the relationship since.

Firstly, it was agreed that the primary objective of the campaign was to regain ownership of the Starcke lands for its traditional owners. It was agreed that only after this objective had been effectively achieved would the two groups start to talk about conservation outcomes.

The second important outcome was the creation of the Starcke model of future land management. This model involved agreement that sections of the returned land would become so called 'Aboriginal National Parks'. The balance of the land would become Aboriginal freehold with conservation agreements negotiated between the state and the traditional owners over high natural or cultural conservation value areas. The so called 'Starcke model' of land settlements became the template for much grander proposals to buy out sections of the pastoral industry on the Cape.

Public support of the black/green campaign was so strong that by 1995, green and black groups came together to form the Cape York Indigenous Environment Foundation (CYIEF). This body was created for the purpose of raising funds to purchase pastoral properties of high conservation value.

Within a month of the launch of the CYIEF, the Goss government announced at the start of a state election campaign the proposed creation of the Cape York wilderness zone. This zone, based on purchasing pastoral properties along a 1,200 km coastal strip would be based on Starcke-type outcomes and would eventually see approximately one million hectares of country protected as national parks or returned to traditional ownership.

Pastoralists restore alliance - The Cape York Land Use Agreement.

Pastoralist backlash against the proposed east coast zone, particularly the State's decision to compulsorily acquire properties if leaseholders would not agree to sell, provided the conditions for the broadening of the black/green alliance to include the pastoralists.

Seemingly besieged by an unsympathetic state government and confronted by a formal alliance of green and black interests, in late 1995 pastoralists approached the Cape York Land Council and later the ACF and TWS to negotiate a 'peace plan'. The plan intended to end the fight and develop a regional settlement which would accommodate Native Title and land rights aspirations and provide a transparent process to identify and protect the superlative conservation values through the creation of a land buy back fund.

On the 5 February 1996, the Cape York Land Use Agreement (Heads of Agreement) was signed in Cairns by pastoralists, the Cape York Land Council, TWS and ACF. This agreement, which included joint support for World Heritage Assessment and eventual nomination, the recognition of Native Title rights, support for the creation of a \$40 million land acquisition fund to voluntarily purchase pastoral leases which would then be transferred to Indigenous ownership and the creation of an ecologically and culturally sustainable pastoral industry.

In the federal election campaign of March 1996, Labor and Liberal supported the Heads of Agreement. In 1997, the Heads of Agreement parties were honoured to be awarded the Group Reconciliation Award at the Reconciliation Convention held in Melbourne.

The election of the Borbidge Government in Queensland in 1996 saw the aspirations of the three parties sidelined.

Now, in 1999 the vision of the Heads of Agreement remains

unfulfilled. Black and green activists and campaigners continue to work closely together and remain in close contact with pastoralists. In May this year, all parties again came together, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the agreement.

Conclusion

After many years of talking and working together on Cape York, it appears that green and black have developed some parameters about their relationship. A strong shared understanding has been developed that while there are many occasions when the two will work together towards a common goal, there are also some occasions when they will have disagreements. They have kept talking despite these disagreements.

No one knows what the future holds on Cape York Peninsula, but the lessons learnt from Cape York are important. Together black and green have been a potent force for change. The relationship has been bound tightly through many years of working together. The groups have enjoyed periods of great success and progress, while at times suffering heartbreaking setbacks. All the while, they have stayed strong to the principles of 'caring for country' and have accepted that there are times when differences arise. Importantly, respect for the legitimacy of our two causes have kept the groups and the alliance, strong.

Lyndon Schneider is 31-years-old. He is an environmentalist who has been involved with the Wilderness Society for the past seven years. Since 1993, he has been part of a broad campaign to create a new future of Cape York Peninsula based on long-term protection of the region's remarkable environments and the promotion of Indigenous land rights, decision making rights and access rights.

The Wilderness Society - Brisbane Campaign Centre, 8/173 Boundary St WEST END 4101,

Ph (07) 3846 1420 Fax: (07) 3846 1620, www.wilderness.org.au.



Bob Morrish

Community Cooper-ation

Threats to the ecological integrity and natural values of Australia's inland rivers have escalated within recent years, demanding ever more constant vigilance and protection. The ongoing struggle to protect Cooper's Creek from inappropriate development, mainly irrigation has captured the attention, imagination and commitment of a great many Australians and visitors from overseas. It serves as a local and very public example of the emerging alliance of local river communities, conservationists, scientists and members of the wider Australian community who are working cooperatively to protect and preserve an acknowledged icon of Australia's natural heritage and history.

The following observations present a personal perspective and a brief account of the development of conservation alliances in the Cooper.

In September 1995 a public meeting in the small Cooper's Creek township of Windorah in western Queensland first learned that a group of NSW cotton growers planned a major irrigation development for the property 'Curravera' on Cooper's Creek. Such a development proposed a significant land use change in this arid area, from pastoral beef cattle grazing operations to irrigated cropping, involving a vastly increased water demand on which irrigation relies. A large proportion of residents of Windorah and people from the pastoral stations of the Cooper, in attendance at the meeting, were so alarmed by the proposal that they formed the Cooper's Creek Protection Group.

While none of the members of the

newly formed group had previous experience in conservation or environmental activism, we all recognised intuitively that the irrigation proposal raised environmental and ecological issues, as well as issues for the pastoral and tourism industries and local communities. Thus, the objectives we adopted were the promotion of ecologically sustainable management of the resources of the Cooper's Creek river system, including all related catchment areas and representation of the interests of landholders and residents who depended on the water flows and periodic flooding of the Cooper for their livelihood and lifestyle.

From the outset, members of the local community and the Cooper's Creek Protection Group realised that the ecological and conservation issues posed by the development proposals had far-reaching significance. We also realised that, although the people of the Cooper were steadfast in their determination to protect the river, which is the lifeblood of this arid region, we were relatively few in number and geographically dispersed over a very large area. 150,000 kilometers squared (half of the total catchment area) lies between Windorah, where the Barcoo and Thompson rivers join to form Cooper's Creek in southwest Queensland and Lake Eyre, the terminus of the system in South Australia. Therefore we recognised that support from a wide section of Australian people was a strategic imperative, and that media attention was absolutely critical to gaining such support.

The level of support from diverse

and numerous sections of the Australian community was heartening. It was a nice experience for an isolated outback community such as ours to discover that we were so tangibly a part of the wider Australian community and its aspirations for conservation and protection of Australia's natural heritage. It soon became apparent that the Cooper is in the hearts and minds of many Australians. It is a very real icon of Australian history and mythology, part of the Australian consciousness. With this realisation, and with such camaraderie with people all over Australia, the struggle to protect the Cooper has become a labour of love, a central sharpening and focusing experience akin to what the great American psychologist William James (brother of the novelist Henry James) called 'the moral



Inaugural meeting at Windorah

equivalent of war'.

Some of the many groups, and interests represented as supporters of Cooper's Creek include: pastoralists on the Cooper and across many regions of the Australian rangelands; the local communities of Windorah and Innamincka, the only two townships in the Cooper's vast expanse, tourists and tourism operators in the outback, four wheel drive clubs and enthusiasts, recreational fishing organisations, conservationists, scientists and people from towns, cities, and rural regions all over Australia. Some of our most committed supporters are people who live on other rivers already degraded by excessive irrigation development.

Throughout the campaign for the Cooper, the tripartite alliance between the Cooper's Creek Protection Group, the scientific community, and the conservation community has been a source of remarkable energy. It is widely commented on in the media, and is, I believe, an extremely liberating and empowering meeting of minds which confounds the old reactionary forces whose interests are best served by alienation and division of the Australian community.

The Windorah Workshop and Rally held in 1996 established the strength of the developing alliances for protection of the Cooper. The Windorah Workshop established a precedent for

similar collaborative approaches to arid river management and conservation. In July 1997, a scientific workshop at Hungerford, hosted by the Paroo River Association, provided a similar ecological perspective on the Paroo River. This the last arid river in the Murray-Darling system as not yet exploited by irrigation, but now under threat from irrigation development applications. The Windorah and Hungerford Workshops were recognised in recent ecological science literature

It soon became apparent that the Cooper is in the hearts and minds of many Australians. It is a very real icon of Australian history and mythology.

as models for community-driven, publicly accessible and transparent collaborative resource management partnerships between landholders, scientists, conservationists and the wider community.¹

The Windorah Workshop and the political rally resulted in an apparent capitulation by the Queensland National Party Government to the demands for protection of the ecological integrity of the Cooper. Subsequently this government reverted to old pro-development policies and issued an ecologically inappropriate Draft Water Management Plan for Cooper's Creek

in April 1998. Some of its shortcomings were recently demonstrated by an alarming new irrigation development application for the 'Currarvera' property using existing 'sleeper' irrigation licenses, the development of which is actively promoted by the Draft Plan. By this stage however, the Cooper Conservation Alliance had been augmented by continued contact with our supporters, and the Draft Plan and the new Currarvera development application were severely criticised in submissions from scientists, conservationists, community groups and individuals around Australia.

A decision on the ecologically unacceptable Draft Water Management Plan is due to be made by the current Queensland Labor Government soon and may be announced by the time this article is published. An ecologically responsible decision would allow the Queensland government to gain much respect within the broad Australian community, and would owe much to the efforts of all who form the Cooper alliance network. Should the decision be unsatisfactory, the alliance is strongly placed to continue the struggle.

1. Kingsford, Boulton & Puckridge, 1998.

Bob Morrish is a cattle grazer who lives near Coopers Creek in Western Queensland. Before this, he was extensively involved in university research and has a PhD in psychophysiology.

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Dr Helen Rosenbaum

Lessons from global partnerships

REFLECTIONS FROM THE OK TEDI MINE CAMPAIGN

Over the past five years, the globalisation of industry has been met by an increasingly globalised opposition. Community organisations from far flung corners of the world linked via email now impose transnational accountability on companies and are a formidable force to be reckoned with.

Email communication between non-governmental organisations in Canada and Australia enabled a Papua New Guinean landowner to present evidence four years ago at an environmental impact hearing held in Canada's arctic on a diamond mine proposed by BHP. The PNG landowner was from a village affected by BHP's controversial Ok Tedi gold and copper mine and spoke of what he saw as the company's blatant disregard for his environment and community. Although the diamond mine went ahead, it was subject to tighter environmental standards and was a lesson for the NGOs and corporations about the potential power and reach of community action.

High-profile campaigns run simultaneously in different countries and provide a powerful vehicle to raise issues, and to focus the hearts and minds of international communities and decision makers. The Ok Tedi Campaign provides a case in point. Spearheaded by the Australian Conservation Foundation in Australia and an alliance of NGOs in PNG including the Melanesian Environment Foundation, Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum and Greenpeace, it linked effectively with the legal battle by 30,000 PNG landowners to sue BHP in Victoria.

After three years of hedging and dodging, BHP finally gave in to the sway of public opinion and in 1996 settled out of court. A fantastic David and Goliath victory for those remote communities whose livelihoods were stolen by Ok Tedi's mine waste... or was it?

In November 1997 I visited the area downstream of the Ok Tedi mine in my capacity as Pacific Program Manager for International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). On the

townships of Kiunga and Daru, Women, the family food providers, have little access to the funds. As they are rarely permitted to travel, it is the men who most often make the trip to withdraw the money. By the time they return to the villages, the payments have usually been frittered away on beer and short-lived goods of limited usefulness.

The impacts of the mine have extended rapidly to the mouth of the Fly River. More than 180 kilometres wide, the mouth of this vast river is home to



ground, much confusion surrounds Ok Tedi's compensation payments. Landowners are unsure of their entitlements and no mechanism exists for ensuring fair distribution. Some villagers have 'worked the system' to get more than their share, while others who suffer damage miss out altogether. For those who have managed to get it, compensation is paid as instalments into family bank accounts in the

several thousand people living on three main islands. Traditionally reliant on subsistence agriculture and seafood, these communities live with a palpable fear. Changes are occurring to their environment which they do not understand and cannot control. They blame the pollution of their river for birth deformities, for the erosion of their beaches and the discoloration and malodour of their staple food, sago.

They blame it for the inexplicable disease and deaths of crabs and fish, for the increase in sand banks which makes travel by boat, their only mode of transport, very difficult.

When I visited Wabada Island in the mouth of the Fly River, the women requested independent scientific research to determine the toxicity of various types of seafood and information on how to process sago so as to reduce health risks. The sophistication of this request is a credit to the work of Ecoseeds, a small NGO based on the island of Daru, less than 150 kilometres from Australia's Cape York Peninsula.

With the support of IWDA, Ecoseeds has been working for the past three years on environmental projects in Western Province. The projects aim to raise the awareness of communities about the environmental and social impacts of large-scale resource exploitation and to increase the capacity of women to play an active role in community and government decisions about natural resource use. An important component has been training workshops for women's leaders on environmental education, lobbying and campaigning.

Women are disproportionately burdened by unsustainable development. As food providers they feel the brunt of soil and water contamination and deforestation. They experience increased workloads as their menfolk leave villages for logging and mining camps and they suffer increased rates of domestic violence and sexually transmitted disease when their menfolk return. Despite these responsibilities and impacts, women are often marginalised from decision making processes.

As a result of Ecoseeds work, women's leaders in PNG have mobilised their communities to campaign against logging. They have blockaded areas earmarked for logging, conducted peaceful demonstrations outside government forestry meetings and presented petitions to the national environment minister. Several forest areas have now been saved.

At workshops held by the women's leaders, communities are also

discussing the impacts of the Ok Tedi mine. The company has been brought to the negotiating table by villagers over the operation of its barge in the Fly River and the use of land for roadways. Requests are also filtering back from land holders to Ecoseeds for legal advice on how to sue Ok Tedi Mining Limited.

As someone who had dedicated four years to campaigning for the rights of these same land holders, I find these requests heart-warming and heartbreaking. The fact that they are made now, three years after the out-of-court settlement reflects the time required to develop community understanding and ownership of issues. An investment of time and effort that appears out of step with the perceived urgency of environmental campaigns.



It also suggests that the 'successful' Ok Tedi campaign was so remote and irrelevant to the lives of local people that they have not actually comprehended the passing of the legal battle that was their most likely window of opportunity. Indeed, one can only question the benefit to the local land holders of the out-of-court settlement, which included compensation payments and a belated commitment by BHP to waste management, in the face of the continuing and far-reaching pollution of the 1,000 kilometre Fly River system. This is especially so, as recent press statements released by BHP indicated

its desire to withdraw from Ok Tedi Mining Limited (BHP owns 52 per cent of shares, the PNG Government and a Canadian company split the rest) leaving the aftermath to the PNG government and local communities to worry about.

Perhaps the lesson of Ok Tedi is that the achievement of meaningful environmental and social outcomes requires a nexus between international high profile campaigns and the work of grassroots organisations who accurately understand the local situation. Without the understanding that comes with community development work, hard-won gains may be ephemeral and intangible to local communities.

As activists in developed countries we have a responsibility to examine our own agendas and motives, and whose interests we are speaking for and why. We have a responsibility to seek out the most appropriate partners for action and prioritise time and resources to develop relationships with them and an understanding of the sociopolitical context of their work. Most importantly, if campaign results are to be translated into meaningful outcomes for communities, we must be careful to listen and take our cues from them for our work. It may be that rather than grabbing the limelight for ourselves, the most useful work we can do is to assist local NGOs to develop the capacity to speak and act for themselves.

Dr Helen Rosenbaum is currently the Pacific Program Manager with International Women's Development Agency and Co-convenor of the Australian Greens (Victoria). She worked with the Australian Conservation Foundation from 1991 to 1996 as their Policy Analyst and Pacific Campaigner. During her last three years at the ACF she 'lived, ate and breathed' the Ok Tedi campaign and is still passionate about the plight of the Fly River and its communities. For further information about IWDA projects phone (03) 9650 5574.



Challenging the Myth of Jobs vs Environment

Dave Kerin

The early 1970s saw the Vietnam war raging, Australian draft resisters living underground and an alternative political culture which impacted radically on the wider community. The nature of democracy itself was being questioned. As part of this radical political culture the green ban was born. As you walk the historical green ban sites around Melbourne and Sydney, you can hear the echoes of voices raised in defence of our precious environment and heritage.

Back then voices were also raised in opposition to those engaged in defending their neighbourhoods, and to workers applying green bans. Developers employed thugs to work behind police lines. Bouncers and misguided karate practitioners intimidated, abused and attempted to bash workers and residents into silent acceptance of corporate fascism.

These differing paradigms clashed, and out of the clashes working people saved significant sites around Australia. The principle at issue was this: Do workers have a democratic right to make decisions about what we produce, whether we produce and the ways in which we produce? Or alternatively, was this right something which only belonged to the propertied, to people who owned commodities other than their ability to work, which they could sell in the market place?

Human history has established the issue of rights with certain criteria. People have fought wars involving the deaths of 60 million people, to establish

the fact (at least in theory) that people do not have a 'right' to oppress. Human struggle has seen an important criteria established which distinguishes between a right and a privilege; that is, if we expect that something should be granted to us as a right, then we cannot disallow others



the same thing, or it becomes a privilege.

And so the issue of the right to control work saw conflict on building sites, in parklands, in working class

neighbourhoods over low income housing, and at heritage sites.

The first green ban site in Australia, now called the Norman Lindsay Gallagher Park, in Park Street Melbourne, was won by industrial action which saw Norm Gallagher spend time in jail. This period set the scene for the coming struggles over a worker's right to make democratic decisions about their work.

Kelly's Bush and other parklands throughout Sydney remain intact due to workers asserting their democratic right to decide how, and to what purpose, their work is used. The Rocks and Woolloomooloo are still there to be enjoyed because this right was supported by the NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF).

The Queen Victoria Market's new renovations were part of the alternative development plan put forward by the Victorian BLF. It is still available to Victorians due to workers' actions.

From the mid seventies employers saw an opportunity to divide workers from environmentalists, and so began an internal conflict within the worker's movement which presented the problem as 'jobs versus environment'.

Prior to that, the issues revolved around a general principle of jobs and environment. Indeed when you look at the work engendered through the green bans, you see quite clearly the millions of hours of work which were created, and has been sustained, thanks to these actions. Compare this

to the thousands of hours involved in destroying a parkland in order to construct a concrete box. And let's remember that alternatives were always found, the concrete box in question was always built somewhere else anyway, if it was truly needed.

And so began more than two decades of interecine war, where two different forms of working class organisation were hurled at each other, manipulated by perceived friends, each losing by the very fact of separation from the other.

Solidarity and sustainability are inseparable.

Australian workers are ready once again to embrace this fact in growing numbers. Earthworker's time has come.

Earthworker was an initiative of the Electrical Trades Union, Friends of the Earth and the Rail, Tram, Bus Industry Union.

It arose out of discussions around the issue of union-green relations, the history of where we got those relations right, and an analysis of the points at which those relations broke down.

For many months the idea of Earthworker was talked about widely. Time was allowed for discussion around the jobs versus environment debate and a range of other issues affecting relations between the two social movements. Some people, understandably, even became

One of the first positions reached, the *raison d'être* for Earthworker, was that a phoney dichotomy had been deliberately created between workers/unionists and greens.

frustrated at the amount of time allocated to talking these things through.

However when you look at what has emerged from the discussion, real dialogue has actually started to occur where people are truly listening, rather than attempting to ram home their particular point.

Out of this atmosphere a new way of working is developing which relies on the best traditions of labour: solidarity, mutual aid and cooperation, combined

with the best traditions of the green movement: interconnection, inclusivity and openness.

One of the first positions reached, the *raison d'être* for Earthworker, was that a phoney dichotomy had been deliberately created between workers/unionists and greens. In establishing Earthworker the obvious was accepted, that the vast majority of active greens were unionists and/or supporters of unionism. Likewise the vast majority of unionists we knew were greens.

The acceptance of this overarching truth led to the establishment of the primary activity of Earthworker: to develop Agreed Lists between affiliates



BLF members protest in 1974.

from the green and union movements. These lists are to contain those things which can be jointly actioned.

There are, of course, areas of the traditional green projects which are still controversial. By developing the Agreed Lists, Earthworker's role is to create a working relationship within which discussion around differences of opinion and action can begin within a framework of solidarity.

Earthworker is also there to act as a conduit which allows for the dissemination of union ideas, articles and data throughout those green organisations which are affiliated, and also to promote the excellent work conducted by green organisations on the shopfloor. We are doing this by coordinating deadlines, organising for joint articles to be written when requested, and by generally cross referencing the publications of each movement. We have set the target of having the journals the journals of current affiliates cross referenced by November 1999. This entails making

available all the valuable union information about the looming battles against Reith's second wave to the green publications, and relevant green material to the appropriate union journals.

Currently there are 14 unions and three green organisations affiliated to Earthworker, and the organisation has a room at Trades Hall in Melbourne, above the bookshop. Apart from allowing, at last, for the natural greening of our union movement, Earthworker seeks to unionise the green organisations. Friends of the Earth has full union membership of its workers, and is campaigning within its membership for unionism. Environment Victoria is fully unionised.

As this project continues we are confident that unions and greens will become more closely aligned in our joint efforts to defend working people and the planet. We do this in full knowledge of the obvious truth that one cannot exist any longer without the other; that much of the damage to the planet will need to be consciously reversed by human hands.

The Solar, Wind and Water Industry Plan

One of Earthworker's first active initiatives was to suggest to industry unions that now was the opportune time to begin establishing a Solar, Wind and Water industry in this country.

Dean Mighell and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) and Craig Johnston and the Amalgamated Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) agreed to allocate a worker each, once a week, to work with a range of experts, academics and industry players to actually get such an industry on its feet. A major Agreed List item was up and running.

The action group has been functioning less than two months, and is now at a stage where it is beginning in-confidence approaches to industry which will lay the foundation for pilot projects, leading to a widespread growth in all aspects of alternative energy, including manufacture, installation, generation and distribution. We will be working
...CONTINUED PAGE 42



Paul Collins

When Theology Meets Ecology

From the standpoint of the Christian churches the news on ecology is reasonably good. Attitudes are changing and a renewed theology of ecology is emerging. The one thing that slows church people from placing environmentalism at the top of their ethical priorities is the insistence in Christian theology on the centrality of the human. The positive result of this is the church's emphasis on social justice. The negative side is a seemingly unchallenged anthropocentrism. What I want to do here is examine something of the emerging theology of ecology, which is increasingly influencing the Christian churches.

It was Lyn White's famous 1967 article blaming Judeo-Christianity for the dichotomy between humankind and nature that was a turning-point for traditional churches' approach to environmentalism. He argued that the theological insistence on the supremacy of the human over the rest of creation had caused a disjunction in the history of human thought and made Christianity a profoundly anthropocentric religion. At the heart of this disjunction is the notion that humankind is the one and only true image of God and that the natural world exists solely to serve us. While there has been much justifiable criticism of White's somewhat myopic focus on Judeo-Christianity as the sole cause of this disjunction, the fact is, that as Thomas Berry says, it is 'the pathos of the human' which still largely motivates Christians and our culture generally. Berry, a Catholic thinker who calls himself a 'geologian', rather than a theologian, points out that while we are deeply concerned with suicide and genocide, we simply ignore the

'biocide' which is occurring all around us.

However, there is increasing evidence that a new form of religious sensibility is emerging and is influencing the churches. I am referring here to the experience of 'transcendent presence' that can be discovered in the natural world, in the wilderness and especially those places less occupied and manipulated by us. You find this among some 'new agers' and in more



developed forms among many environmentalists. I don't think there is much evidence of it yet in the official church. However, the widespread interest in environmentalism within the churches, shows that many laity are well ahead of clergy on this issue.

Actually, the new religious sensibility is not so much the discovery of a 'new' form of spirituality as the revival and process of a deeply-rooted and very traditional apprehension of the transcendent. In biblical religion the wilderness plays a key role in the process of encountering and being tested by God. Moses, the Jewish prophet, and Jesus himself all seem to have a predilection for wilderness

places. It is there that they discover God. As Helen Waddell's book 'The Desert Fathers' shows this same predilection can be found among the Christian hermits and ascetics of the fourth and fifth centuries in Egypt and Syria. This reappears among the Celtic saints of the early middle ages who wandered over Europe seeking wilderness and companionship with the wild animals. They settled as far away as Iceland some 200 years before the

arrival of the Vikings, and may well have even reached North America.

The Christian tradition of discovering God in the wilderness continued throughout the Middle Ages and was only overshadowed from the 16th century onwards. But even in the modern era, the tradition of transformation in and by the wilderness was not entirely lost. For instance, in 1798 William Wordsworth (1770-1850) composed his *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*. Here there are genuine intimations of a sense of transcendent presence, but perhaps because of the lack of any true wilderness in England, or Wordsworth's own background and immaturity, the

feel for the infinite is weak. William James, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) gives a number of examples of what he calls 'cosmic mysticism'. But you get the feeling that James' examples are too pat and comfortable and lack the sense of fear and vulnerability in the face of the forces of nature. They also lack the sense of 'terror' or 'fear of God' that pervades the Bible's sense of entry into the presence of the transcendent.

As one walks alone deeper and deeper into an Australian cool temperate rainforest strange things begin to happen.

In contemporary Australia I have noticed that an increasing number of people have had experiences that are spiritual and can be interpreted as genuine encounters with transcendent presence. These Australian experiences are often less contrived and more open than those of previous times. They come loaded with fewer dogmatic or romantic presuppositions. The best element in the Australian approach is that it is usually more modest and is less likely to assume 'mystical' overtones.

The following passage was recently written by a perceptive Catholic priest after a long walk in the Tasmanian bush.

'As one walks alone deeper and deeper into an Australian cool temperate rainforest strange things begin to happen. Your perception is sharpened, the usual human defence mechanisms seem to slip away and often sexual feelings come to the surface. I suspect that this has more to do with an unconscious sense of biological connectedness with the natural surroundings than with sexuality as such. [It is significant that the struggle with gross sexuality often characterised the early spiritual development of the early Christian desert fathers and mothers in the fourth and fifth centuries.] As you continue deeper into the forest you can suddenly come across one of those

mystical places the unique unity and significance of which far surpasses the sum total of its parts. I will never forget coming once to a place like this in Tasmania. It was an extraordinary myrtle beech forest. As I moved into it I entered another time dimension. I suddenly realised that I was both vulnerable and afraid. There was nothing threatening me except the profound otherness of the place. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time I was deeply 'at home' and the acute juxtaposition of alienation and belonging was held together in a strange tense resolution. One gradually begins to perceive a kind of lurking presence in such places that is both personal and remote at the same time. The experience is oddly ambivalent yet deeply confirming. I am more and more convinced that you cannot conjure this up at will. It comes when it comes and it cannot be manufactured. It takes you out of yourself yet it gives you a sense of self. It reveals the depths of personal vulnerability and yet we emerge from it more at home with ourselves, more aware of our profound biological and spiritual unity with all that is. I came back alone to the car that day, both much more at peace with myself and more passionate than ever to stand beside and defend the natural world which had given me everything.'

To me the passage highlights the deep paradox that lies in the Australian bush. It is a strangely fearful place, yet there is absolutely nothing to fear from the shy and reticent creatures who live there. This is even true of our venomous snakes who retreat from us much faster than we retreat from them! Yet the bush retains a deep and integral sense of its 'otherness'. It somehow stands there in its vast timelessness seemingly ready to absorb you into itself. There is a sense of the permeability of time, especially when one comes on, usually suddenly, those remnants of Gondwana, the pockets of cool clarity filled with myrtle beech, sassafras, climbing vines, ferns and even ancient palms. Places like this



Relating to Nature

19th-29th October

This group exhibition by young Melbourne artists will show a diverse range of work that will endeavour to encourage a contemplation of the natural world and our involvement with it. Through individual explorations of natural themes the artists hope to regenerate a respect for and connection to nature in the face of environmental destruction.

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immediately put you in touch with a time long before our remote human ancestors emerged. The many shades of green and the shafts of light create extraordinary contrasts. These are complex, living cathedrals that for me more and more outshine Chartres and York Minster.

It is at this level of experience and reflection that the Christian tradition has the most to offer contemporary environmentalism.

Paul Collins is the author of a number of books including God's Earth - Religion as if matter really mattered (Harper Collins, 1995).



Margaret Blakers

Do you Know Your Greens?

An 'alliance' lies somewhere on the spectrum between working together co-operatively and becoming one organisation. It appeals to most people's sense that if we could just all work together, we could achieve much more.

The appearance of unity, without common purpose and clear process however, is ultimately far more destructive than apparent fragmentation. That is the lesson that should be drawn from the Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation (EPBC) Bill debacle, which was a watershed for the environment movement. It should prompt a thorough re-evaluation of how the various groups work individually and collectively. No doubt there is strength in unity, but not if the unity is false.

Even the idea of 'the environment movement' can no longer stand unqualified. According to environment minister Robert Hill, the 'real environmentalists' are those 'who want to get out and do works on the ground' (Hansard, 14/5/97).

Hill commented '...some 4,000 Landcare and community groups who are out there doing the good works on the ground now have become the leaders of the environment movement in Australia. That is something that Senator Brown hates but it is also part of the new reality.' (Hansard, 22/6/99)

Senator Hill applauds, the 'real environmentalists' and derides 'Senator Brown and a very small band of stragglers (who) feel in some way that their legitimacy in the environment debate is being overtaken by the hundreds of thousands of Australians who are out on the ground doing good

works.' (Hansard, 15/5/97)

These tired old warriors are fighting the battles of the past... That was the era of confrontation... The biggest change, of course, is community attitudes. The community is now much better informed. The community wants to act in an environmentally responsible way... The days when it was necessary to confront the community to try and achieve a particular environmental outcome are well past... Industry wants to adopt high environmental standards... Whether it is the building industry, the housing industry, the architects, the engineers or the miners, they are all working with us in the development of guidelines that record best environmental practice.' (Hansard 22/6/99)

In other words, the legitimate sector of the environment movement is that which works co-operatively with government and industry, as opposed to the activist groups and political parties which confront the underlying causes of environmental destruction, and use political and corporate pressure to challenge government and industry.

In fact the picture is more complex. The movement has grown and diversified dramatically over the past 10 to 15 years. Many groups shift between the two paradigms, and an array of new organisations have sprung up. Some provide services to the environment movement, like the Environment Defenders Office (EDO), EarthShare, and the Conservation Alliance. Some are specialist groups like the Mineral Policy Institute and Aidwatch. The Greens themselves are in some aspects a specialist group, focusing on parliamentary representation.

Other community sectors have a peak organisation—like ACOFA for the aid organisations, ACROSS for welfare groups. The environment movement has no such mechanism to identify or accredit its members (how would a Martian know that the Forest Protection Society is not what it seems?), nor to speak with a unified voice.



Groups have worked together in the past by coalescing around specific campaigns or choosing to work separately. This failed dramatically for the EPBC bill, which affects the whole

movement because it sets the national legislative framework. The attempt to maintain a unified approach, without sufficient clarity of process, made it possible for the splitters (World Wildlife Fund, Humane Society International, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Queensland Conservation Council) to break away at a moment of their own choosing, to maximise whatever gains for their objectives they perceived in the situation.

The splinter groups in effect abandoned their allies in the environment movement and formed a new alliance with the Democrats. The deal was revealed at a joint press conference with the Democrats and they supported the Democrats' decision to guillotine 511 amendments to the bill through parliament in little more than 24 hours.

The smugness of Robert Hill was something to behold. It didn't take long for him to start exploiting the split by adding the four groups to his list of 'real environmentalists'.

These are the groups that were once the supporters of Senator Bob Brown... They have obviously abandoned him as a failure, which is not surprising.' (Hansard, 24/6/99)

In particular, I note the comments of the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Trust (sic), which described the laws as 'a great step forward for environmental legislation' and went on to say, 'The bill was something conservation groups have been asking for some years now, and we thank the government for it'. ...One wonders what Senator Brown is doing in this place.' (Hansard, 24/6/99)

That is only the start. The government will have no compunction about using its financial clout to punish groups which oppose it, as the now defunct Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition and grey power groups found. Dependence on government funding already constrains some environment groups, and on the other

hand tying funding to processes entices others. The potential for the government to play groups off against one another is obvious. The wash-up from the EPBC bill and the run-up to the next federal election will both present plenty of opportunities.

The EPBC not only splintered the environment movement. Together with the GST package, and its \$3,000 million per annum diesel and petrol tax cuts for business, it clearly split the Greens from the Democrats for the first time on environment issues.

For the Greens, environmental consideration is fundamental (along with social justice, democracy and non-violence). Elsewhere around the world, the Greens generally have been the environment party. In Australia, until recently, that reputation was shared by the Democrats. The existence of both Greens and Democrats has caused some environment groups to go to extraordinary lengths in remaining even-handed between the two at election time.

The Greens are the political counterpart of those segments of the environment and other community movements which have a campaigning ethos, are not prepared to accept current economic paradigms, and take a global as well as local perspective. We are activists who work inside and

The EPBC not only splintered the environment movement....it clearly split the Greens from the Democrats for the first time on environment issues.

outside parliament. Green parties have sprung up independently in dozens of countries around the world, from Scotland to New Caledonia, from Mexico to Mongolia. Links among these

parties are strengthening rapidly. We are holding a meeting of Asia Pacific Greens in 2000 and a conference to form the Global Greens in Canberra in 2001. This international level of political organisation parallels the burgeoning networks of community organisations. The capacity to act globally, as well as locally, is essential against the power of global capital to exploit people and the environment.

Neither the ALP, which flirts with the

environment when in opposition, nor the coalition, adept at greenwash, can tackle the fundamental causes of environmental degradation. Both are part of what green theorist Dr Robyn Eckersley calls the 'super-ideology of industrialism', founded on a premise of unlimited economic growth, and human domination of the planet. More pragmatically, political donations ensure responsiveness by both sides of politics to the demands of industry. A document tabled by Bob Brown in parliament showed that on the very day—21 December 1994—on which export woodchip licences were renewed, amid huge controversy, woodchip corporations Boral, Amcor and Wesfarmers Bunnings, made donations totalling \$242,500 to the ALP and the Coalition. 'Do the big parties—the ALP and the coalition—really expect the average voter to believe that this is pure coincidence?' (Hansard, 22/3/99)

So, what of the prospects for 'alliances' between the Greens and community organisations? Excellent and essential, provided that the lessons of the EPBC Bill are learned and relationships are based on clear goals and processes.

If a relationship is to be long-term, it should be reflected in an organisational structure, like the coalition agreement negotiated between the Greens and their partners in government in Germany and other European countries; or like the links between the ALP and the unions.

There is no structural link between the Greens and community organisations in Australia. Thus, conservation groups for the most part are not members or affiliates of the Greens, nor vice versa. Neither side has any direct say in the policies or actions of the other, and should correspondingly not have expectations (for example about preference recommendations) that have not been negotiated.

This leaves a wide field for strategic alliances—shorter term relationships to achieve defined goals—within Australia and internationally. The Kakadu campaign, though failing to

.....CONTINUED PAGE 42



In Fine Forum

Serena O'Meley

A Model for Community Building

The Geelong Community Forum (GCF) is a community based initiative which draws together concerned people sharing a vision of an environmentally sustainable and equitable future for our region. The Forum exists to facilitate, empower, resource and link, existing and future groups and concerned individuals with the Geelong community - a network of networks - acknowledging and supporting community diversity.

The strength of the GCF model is that it can cover a broad range of environmental, social and political interests, at local, state, national and international levels, without having to be instant experts in any one area. The simple fact of bringing issues to the public's attention and providing basic assistance with accessing various political structures and alliances can lead to significant changes in public discourse and activity. The GCF is not a representative body, which has caused some confusion. This is related to misunderstanding about what community is, and how politics within a community work. To be quite blunt, there is no such thing as 'the community'. Communities are built out of relationships, shared goals, values and experiences.

It would be fair to say that the Geelong Community Forum has always existed, because there has always been a core of people in Geelong who care about the environment, employment, social justice and participatory democracy. The forum of today was born when one group of people came together to protect a section of remnant Yellow Gum vegetation on Harvey Block near

Bannockburn. The local water authority, Barwon Water, had decided to destroy 12 ha of this area to install a new sewerage system for the town.

The Yellow Gum ecosystem should have been protected under four sections of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. This was a site that should not have been touched, yet our entire system failed. Golden Plains Shire, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Barwon Water, Marie Tehan and the Minister for Infrastructure all failed to enact legislation, despite continuous lobbying by interested individuals and groups.

By July 1997 members or participants in the Bannockburn Yellow Gum Action Group included: the Friends of Bannockburn Bush, Leigh Landcare, Friends of Inverleigh Flora and Fauna Reserve, Friends of Point Lillias, Geelong Field Naturalists, Geelong Environment Council, Wainwrights Tree Environment Centre and the Otway Ranges Environment Network. Local farmers, school teachers, residents and many others also turned up at a blockade of the site or wrote to the newspapers, Barwon Water and to politicians. Although the campaign was unable to save the site, the Bannockburn Yellow Gum Action Group decided to continue its environmental campaigning. They organised the Geelong Environment Festival and established 'Barwon Biodiversity Watch' to monitor environmental impacts of proposed projects and to avert another potential 'Bannockburn'.

Several open meetings were held following the launch and it emerged

that there were far wider concerns in the Geelong region than just 'the environment'. We were all concerned about the direction the state and federal governments were taking with respect to many issues including: land rights, civil rights, youth issues, unemployment, privatisation, logging in the Otway water catchments, sewerage disposal and so on. A steering committee was formed, with solid union and political alliances, and plans were set in place to run a community conference to discuss these issues and more. Key local and Melbourne-based activists were contacted and agreed to help facilitate workshops or speak. Learning from past oversights, the steering committee set about to incorporate as the Geelong Community Forum Inc. Before the community conference could get underway many of the issues for which we were holding the conference demanded immediate attention.

It was the height of the Maritime Union dispute and it was obvious to many of us that the Federal government was misleading the public on key issues. The MUA was not getting a fair run in the local press and we felt that it was important that the union's views could be given a proper public airing. We quickly put together our first public forum. We not only invited key union leaders to speak—Mick O'Leary (MUA), Leigh Hubbard (Melbourne Trades Hall), John Kranz (Geelong Trades and Labour Council)—but we also gave a platform for our own members to express their views on the dispute including Ivan Verschuor (rank and file MUA), Kerri Erler (ALP preselected candidate for Bellarine),

Bill Deller (Progressive Labour Party) and Dan Dwyer (independent lawyer); the meeting was chaired by Serena O'Meley (student). After the speakers had finished the meeting was thrown open to questions and comments from the floor until everyone who wanted to had a chance to have their say. The forum was an outstanding success, not only for its place in the national protests against Peter Reith and Chris Corrigan, but also the opportunity it provided many people to have their views validated in a public arena, in some cases for the first time.

Planning issues also reached a critical juncture, with the City of Greater Geelong endorsing a proposal to construct an international watersports complex on the Belmont Common. This project will see the destruction of 6,000 trees, threaten the habitat of two protected species of bird, increase the incidence of blue-green algae in the water channel, expose anoxic and probably toxic landfill wastes, require the relocation of close to a dozen sporting and other user groups off the common, and can be expected to have a cost blow out amounting to millions of dollars. We facilitated a public meeting on this issue in June 1998 for the Friends of the Belmont Common, which attracted 600 residents. Despite this, the council has recently advertised a planning amendment for the scheme to go ahead. We expect the campaign to save the Belmont Common will become one of the biggest that Geelong has ever seen.

By the time of our conference we had already been lobbying our local councillors, running public forums, issuing our newsletter to a growing database and gaining frequent press attention. To some extent our activities superseded the need for the conference as we were well on the way to uniting people around those issues which we had identified as being important to the well-being of our community.

From the beginning of this year, the group worked toward more proactive campaigning. Through our national alliances we were able to have the Hon Paul Hellyer, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada come and speak on

globalisation, economic justice and democracy at a public forum. We assisted with the formation of the Osborne Park Association Inc and Friends of Osborne House to protect the historically-significant land and stables adjoined to Osborne House from a residential development. This

...there has always been a core of people in Geelong who care about the environment, employment, social justice and participatory democracy.

campaign culminated in a Heritage Walk and Picnic attended by representatives of over a dozen diverse organisations, from the Victorian and Australian Navy Leagues to the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative. We are currently contributing to the development of a Community Consultation policy for our local council, and have worked hard to ensure that Geelong is included in consultations on the West Regional Forest Agreement. We estimate that over 2,000 people have attended events in which the Geelong Community Forum has had a key organisational role, since our incorporation in May 1998.

We believe that our model is simple, effective and transferable to other communities and we are more than willing to assist other individuals and groups with setting up their own independent forum. Eventually these could network together on a State wide basis. The flaw in our model has been our naïveté in thinking that we could enter the highly constrained political space within Geelong and not meet with reasonably concerted opposition. We have had to act to ensure through our constitution that we cannot be hi-jacked by party political interests. We have limited access to office bearer positions to people who are not political representatives, and made sure that convenors of our public meetings are our own members and are independent. Our aim is to empower the community, not established political parties.

To truly encourage diversity, participation and equity, community forums need to be able to develop and draw on the collective wisdom of those who care about the future of our community. It is up to all of us to ensure that this happens.

If you are interested in forming a community forum, or would like more information about the Geelong Community Forum, please phone Stuart McCallum on (03) 5281 1601 or email Serena O'Meley at sophia@pipeline.com.au

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Monica Nugent

Ecofem in Action

The Jabiluka Campaign

On arrival at the Jabiluka blockade in June 1998, I was struck by the large numbers of women activists involved in the campaign. What was it about this particular campaign that drew so many women, not only to take action, but to lead it? It was primarily women, many of them young women, who occupied the leadership positions at Jabiluka. Yvonne Margarula is the senior elder of the Mirrar clan, representing 27 adults and a large number of children. Jacqui Katona is the chief executive officer of the Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation. Jayne Weepers, until recently the coordinator of the Northern Territory Environment Centre, has been a key figure in the campaign, and scores of other women have been involved in the running of the campaign and the blockade. Jayne, in her address to the Women's Network for Mirrar Women in

July 1998, attributed much of the success of the blockade to the action, 'people skills' and abilities of women. She suggested this enabled the campaign to reach people in a way that some other campaigns have failed to do.

The women's web

My observation that women were being drawn to this action, was reinforced by the arrival of 40 women on the Women's Bus, which was organised by the Women's Network for Mirrar Women. One of the activities these women organised was the creation of a Women's Web. This was a collaborative piece of community art which incorporated a weaving of rope, fabric, jewellery and artwork donated by the women in the camp, to be presented to the Mirrar women as a symbol of support and unity with their struggle. The gifts were woven around

a central quote:

'This we know, the earth does not belong to people, people belong to the earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the daughters and sons of the earth. People did not weave the web of life - we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the earth we do to ourselves.'

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism has been referred to as 'the third wave of the women's movement' — a description which indicates a sense that, like the first and second wave feminist movements, it is a mass movement likely to create significant changes for women. Noel Sturgeon, a US activist and ecofeminist academic, describes it as a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms. More precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorise injustices based on gender, race and class are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment.

Another aspect of ecofeminism is that it recognises that, for Indigenous people, the connection to land is essential to being, and to identity, therefore the interconnectedness between humans and nature and the intrinsic value of nature are true and must be emphasised. Ecofeminist theorists suggest that, because women, nature and Indigenous people are oppressed by the same forces of patriarchal capitalism they should unite to overcome that oppression.

Radical ecofeminist philosophy emphasises the interconnectedness of



JOHN WATSON

human life and the fate of the earth and embraces intuition, an ethic of caring, and we-like human/nature relationships. Web-weaving in anti-nuclear protests is an example of the repositioning of nature and women as powerful sources. The creation of the women's web at Jabiluka must surely be seen as an illustration of an ecofeminist element in this campaign.

What is exciting about the protest at Jabiluka and what makes it so interesting and important, is that it is one of the very few instances in which Australian Aboriginal traditional owners have worked alongside environmentalists. Together they attempted to overcome the capitalist forces which oppress and exploit both Aboriginal people and the environment. This unity was defined by the Mirrar invitation to environmentalists to live on their land while engaging in the protest.

In a reversal of typical Australian power dynamics, it was the Mirrar people who decided what behaviour in the camp was appropriate. Yvonne Margarula ensured that the Indigenous voice was clearly heard via her spokeswoman, Jacqui Katona. They set down guidelines for the camp, for example, no drugs or alcohol were permitted. All activists staying at the camp participated in an

induction and were issued with a 'passport'. Mirrar had to approve all protest actions on Mirrar land (and therefore the lease site). All members of the camp were expected to respect the cultural values of the Mirrar, and the guidelines set by them. If they didn't, they would be asked to leave. On the whole, the protestors accepted that they were on Aboriginal land. Their presence, both in the camp and at the protest actions, was a mark of their opposition not just to the mining of uranium in a national park, but also to the blatant disrespect for Aboriginal land rights shown by the mining industry.

These factors, together with the communal, non-hierarchical organisational structure of the camp seem to indicate that at Jabiluka, the most contemporary, progressive elements of ecofeminism were being practised. Ecofeminism seeks to breakdown the racist, dualistic thinking which has served capitalism in Australia so well. In that thinking, Aboriginal women are granted the lowest position in a hierarchy which values male over female, Western values over nature, and science over Indigenous knowledge. At the Jabiluka protesters camp, it seemed that those very women turned that hierarchy on its head, by leading a

protest supported by 67 per cent of the Australian public, and almost 75 per cent of Australian women.

Andy Smith, a Cherokee feminist and social justice activist, believes that ecofeminism must scrutinise colonialism as a fundamental aspect of the domination of nature because Indigenous people suffer the brunt of environmental degradation. If we want to ensure that colonial attitudes are not perpetuated, then we must also ensure that the voices of Indigenous women are heard directly.

At Jabiluka (an area excised from Kakadu National Park) surrounded by the staggering beauty of that World Heritage Area, the women were doing just that. Now that the camp is closed, we have to work to make sure the message is heard by a wider audience.

No means No - Stop Jabiluka!

Monica Nugent is an ACF member and a PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales, researching the green/black interface regarding conceptions of nature and wilderness. The alliance between Mirrar and green groups and the role played by ecofeminist thinking in the camp at Jabiluka is the central focus of her thesis.



Promoting Participation

Student involvement in the environment movement

Scott Alderson

It's a nerve-wracking experience when you walk on to a university campus for the first time, usually in Orientation Week. Feelings of intimidation and shyness jostle with excitement and mystery in a rush of neuro-muscular activity; 'Shit will I ever find my way around?' and 'I hardly know a soul'.

Then suddenly you have all this student political stuff, give-aways and events, all thrown in your face. Somewhere among all the student union handouts and first-week

enthusiasm is an environment stall. There, suddenly, you are confronted with a plethora of groups and issues all wanting your help. Good intentions prevail so you stuff your new 'showbag' to the point of splitsville, as it is already filled with promotional bullshit like Nescafé, free entry to dodgy nightclubs, beer tours, bottle openers, key rings, et cetera.

It is justifiable to look at the historic context of student activism and claim that there is a lot of apathy. There is no doubt that the student movement

has become more conservative and less active, because the potential energy has not been fully utilised. Basically this can be translated into a need to encourage more people into active participation. In regards to the environment, the lack of involvement can be put down to a few factors.

Primarily, the image that is portrayed in the media and the general fragmentation of the movement affects participation levels. In the mainstream the environment movement has been presented as radical protests and



PHILIPPE NICOL

arrests, which, to people fresh out of high school can be a little off-putting especially when they may not have access to information about why these actions are necessary. This situation is compounded when combined with a government hell bent on splitting the movement, which makes it all a bit confusing.

How do we avoid this? We must continue to support alternative media. Zines, internet, community stations and other pop culture avenues such as art and music. To achieve this effectively, groups must create a united front and pool resources to put out as much information as possible. It is the issues that are the most important, not who or how many people join which group. It seems the days are gone when rallies and megaphone-driven rhetoric will motivate people. It is often the same people and the same issues. On top of this, corporations have financed ways to combat some of the traditional campaign methods. A holistic approach is needed for true reform. We must now reach out in different ways to mobilise and then we can begin to put on bigger and better events.

Still, this doesn't address the need to get more people involved in the environment movement. The National Union of Students (NUS) is promoting the environment movement to students through its environment department and environment officers. The structure is growing steadily but needs to take further steps to be more successful in involving more people. It is important that students identify as students and recognise their role, even from an historic point of view, in shaping community views instead of being unquestioning consumers of mainstream culture. Therefore, it is important that groups start working with and pooling resources with the

NUS environment department. This structure has the potential to be a more powerful voice and valuable training ground for the environment movement.

University students that get involved with the environment movement and respective organisations, go outside the university structure, and this will not change. What has to improve is the participation on campus. With more people becoming involved with the

environment is through a verbal exchange of ideas. In the scenario of Orientation Week, many potential activists are deterred by the onslaught of information. The personal contact of a greenie activist sharing their knowledge and experiences is far more likely to contextualise the literature and inspire the reader to become active.

The Corporate Forests National Day of Action on 1 September 1999 was a



JOHN W. HARRISON

personal contact of collectives on campus, more people will go outside the university to become involved with various groups during their time as a student and ideally beyond that time. Campaigners that speak at universities usually end up bringing people to their campaign or specific organisation. I don't think the 'recruitment' mentality of some groups has been beneficial to putting across a united environment movement, instead it creates a divisive, self righteous image. Let people become involved and let them choose the groups and campaigns they want to become part of. Primarily we must get more people involved at the grassroots campus level.

Environment groups can distribute as much literature and information as they like, but it still remains that the best way to stimulate involvement in

great example of successful mobilisation of students and the linking of groups and campaigns nationally. For new activists it is very empowering to know that you are not alone and that people share the same goals and visions around Australia. It also passes on skills to students that they may not have had the opportunity to learn before. Hopefully this kind of resource sharing can be repeated in the future in all sorts of campaigns, and hopefully groups like Friends of the Earth will continue to support and work with NUS with the view of getting as many young people as possible involved and active in the environment movement.

Scott Alderson is the National Union of Students Environment Officer. He can be contacted on 0413 700 669

Queer & Green

Shorona se Mbessakwini

I'm a queer womyn amongst other things, so seeing my first Sydney Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras parade in 1997 was a wonderful experience. All those queers (were we calling ourselves that then?) parading, playing, watching, being queer and being out and proud, gloriously validating and joyous.

One of the highlights of the annual parade is Dykes on Bikes, a huge mob of lessos that ride motorbikes along the parade route to start the parade. I watched that and thought, 'Yeah! I want to do that'. Within seconds though I'd replaced the idea of me on a fossil-fuel-guzzling bad-ass motorbike, which I did ride a few years ago, with the image of me happily riding on my spunky-but-crappy old mountain bike with its basket, a bell that rings and things that make it look good like streamers in the handlebars.

That moment sparked Dykes on



Bicycles, Poofs with Pedals, Queers with Gears'. A queer, green and proud entry into the 1999 Mardi Gras parade. A mob of queer greenies riding our non-polluting transport before and during the parade. From that initial dream of riding my bike before the parade, I started to think excitedly about the possibilities and impacts of what we were doing; a bunch of greenie queers, doing what we do in the straight world, like Critical Mass, et cetera in and for the queer community; coming out in the queer world as greenies; coming out to the greenie crew as 'queers in the ranks'; meeting other queer greenies; greening the queer community which has often been noted for consumerist tendencies -the pink dollar that buys its way into mainstream acceptance and Mardi Gras; celebrating together; and showing our pride in both these aspects of our lives.

Unfortunately, to live my dream I had to organise it. It was a lot of work even to reach our humble beginnings, but well worth it. Being 'Queer, Green and Proud' wasn't so much an alliance of different interest groups as an alliance of different aspects of our identity. It felt for me like, for that moment, I was able to be more of who I really am than I usually can. It was about finding my mob and my place, or at least getting closer to it. It was a blissful and healing feeling, publicly connecting those two aspects of my identity and experience, and sharing that experience with a mob that I imagined to feel similar.

Pride is an issue that's well understood within the queer community. Herstonically, there's been a lot of shame and abuse put on us for who we are, and overcoming that legacy of homophobia and self doubt in our



own minds can be a huge task. It is a brave, and sometimes dangerous, thing to be 'out', and being out and having people cheering and waving is pretty damn good for you.

Having that experience has helped me to be a more self confident, and therefore a more energetic and active activist. What I'm trying to say is that dealing with our feelings and issues

a r o u n d

and sometimes feeling like not telling people that you are a dyke because it might undermine your position as a feminist, or vice versa. It is not talking about the important things happening around you to 'straight' queers.

So it's fantastic and much needed to be totally validated by being and saying who you are and having people feel totally comfortable with that and letting you know. A friend suggested that it would be great to have workshops about discrimination and a stated welcome to queers, and wimmin, Aboriginal people, differently-abled people, et cetera in green spaces. Maybe just a sticker or poster near the door or having queer magazines. It's about acknowledging and dealing with our internalised homophobia.

It would be great if there was a lot more green in the rainbow flag, no disposable packaging at queer events, smoke-free venues and more consumer/ consumption awareness. Sustainable homosexuality!

We're doing it all again at next year's Mardi Gras parade, with even more lovely queer greenies. I'd love to

contact with anyone interested in coming along. Contact me with your details and I'll e-mail/phone you when it gets closer to the time. Or just make a note of our contact details and remember it in January. All you'll need is a bike, wheelchair, rollerskates, et cetera and to be in Sydney at the end of February.

Being 'Queer, Green and Proud' wasn't so much an alliance of different interest groups as an alliance of different aspects of our identity.

Our contact is: shorona69@hotmail.com, or (02) 6685 5454.

A special welcome is made to queer boys because, as a queer womyn, I've naturally got more female contacts. We'd love to share the experience with our queer brothers.

namaste

DIKES ON BIKES ON POOFS ON PEDALS!!
QUEERS WITH GEARS!!

identity, finding support networks and making connections with 'our mob' is important work for an activist or anyone. It makes us better people and more effective workers and players.

extend our connections and get in

Mardi Gras pictures courtesy of Emma Kelly

welcome
to the co-op

a new way to shop

HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT: purchases are all shipped in a new way or in bulk or in full size. The way you shop at Friends of the Earth is similar to the general stores that sell you fresh food.

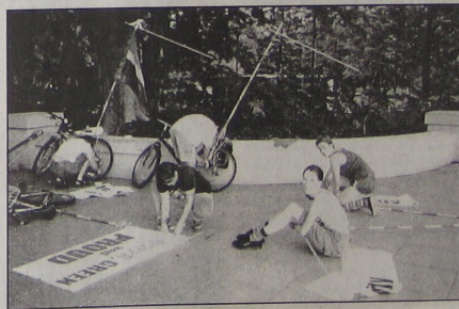
1. Please bring your own containers and bags to shop with. (Don't see what you need in our containers?)
2. Please wash your hands (this is important for fresh and organic and all crops).
3. Before filling a container check it is the size of the produce being brought. (We don't want to see you with a full container and no produce in it.)
4. Please write down the price of all the things you buy (this is important for our records).
5. Please bring or arrange when you shop for your container that is required for health and hygiene in the store.

We aim to provide a diverse range of products which are unprocessed (as whole, raw ingredients) and where, wherever possible, unprocessed.

Our particular emphasis is to provide natural and organically grown produce. We aim to stock produce which is grown or produced locally, preferably by small companies and producers.

By purchasing goods through our store you are not only helping yourself but also Friends of the Earth and the environment.

Friends of the Earth
134pm
Monday to Friday



It seems to get said a lot that we are social animals. That living in tribes or communities is natural and healthy for humyns, especially in terms of consumption, but I don't think that always resonates with people who are marginalised. Who wants to live closely with people that do not understand basic aspects of who you are?

It's not just about outright homophobia or unearliness: it's about never being sure that everyone around you feels comfortable. It is being hidden or left out when parts of your community want to appear acceptable to the mainstream. It's being an additional challenge to people who feel like their capacity for challenge is full.



Beth Mellick

Why Mother Nature is not an Ecofeminist

Just as the majority of poststructuralist and postmodernist feminist theories are multidisciplinary, complex and varied, similarly the ecofeminist movement exhibits these multi-faceted and multi-levelled characteristics. I will attempt here to partly discuss an ecofeminist argument that does not see the mother-nature link as a powerful or positive model for women, but rather as a negative alliance within our culture.

The ecofeminist movement emerged sometime in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to the need to look at environmental and ecological issues from a perspective based on feminist philosophies. An ecofeminist analysis of the environment recognises that the gendered structural inequalities of 'green' movements throughout the world as well as the abundance of philosophies and discussions on the environment by scientists and male theorists, must be challenged with the same vigour that the green movement itself seeks to challenge unsustainable environmental practices. This analysis looks at the link between the subordination of women and the degradation of the environment.

Many ecofeminist theorists and activists believe the major problem in analysing the degradation of women and nature is that women are linked with nature—this holds negative connotations for both. Women have long been associated with nature and this has been identified in literary works dating back to medieval times and beyond. Women's bodily functions were an area of theorisation and fantasy in literature, science and medicine, and often likened to, or theorised in relation



to, animals or mythical beings. Women have traditionally been seen as less rational and more bodily than men. The feminine is juxtaposed with the masculine, which is seen as more rational and less bodily.

This juxtapositioning is known as dualism. Many feminists consider dualistic conceptions as being at the root of western civilised thought. Philosophers throughout the ages have theorised about the world, societies and human beings by using dualistic models. Dualisms are the conceptualisation of social structures in two parts, with one part dominating the other. This is known as hierarchical dualism: culture/nature, public/private; mind/body, men/women, et cetera.

Theorists identify the superior side of the dualistic equation being aligned with men or the masculine. Within the majority of western philosophical texts, the superior side is related to reason and the inferior to nature and lack of reason.

To further illustrate how women are metaphorically linked with nature, consider expressions relating to environmental issues, such as: 'raping the virgin forest', 'mother nature', 'mother earth'. The implications of such terminology for women and their subjugation is that the earth is seen as in need of mastering and as being inferior to humans. Humans kill and eat animals, humans extract resources that are not replaced, humans destroy

or change the natural landscape which has adverse side effects for other facets of the environment. If women are seen as somehow closer to nature than men, this makes her less human and justifies her domination by men. The detrimental affects of the woman-nature link on women are directly related to the west's dualistic philosophies. As long as culture and men are on the dominant side of the equation, nature and women remain inferior.

Take mother earth as an example of a negative metaphor; the realm of the maternal is negatively viewed in patriarchal culture — housework and child-rearing are unpaid and relatively unappreciated economically. Women still earn comparatively less than their male counterparts, still fight for welfare rights, better child care facilities and child care in the workplace, and still do the majority of unpaid labour in society. In her book *Thinking the Difference*, Luce Irigaray discusses the ideology surrounding the realm of the 'maternal'. She believes there is a lack of recognition for mothers who produce life. Maternal ancestry is not recognised in our age and few theories centre around the mother/daughter relationship. Daughters are separated from mothers to enter male lineage and female ancestry becomes subsumed under men's. Consequently, the lack of recognition for the maternal realm may be linked to the lack of recognition for the earth. Both sacred entities that produce life. By metaphorically linking the earth with the maternal, they become mutually exploitative.

Some ecofeminists have been inspired by the women/nature link because it can provide a metaphorical analysis of a peaceful coexistence in a non-hierarchical world. However, in a so-called 'first' world, white, patriarchal, industrialised society, the woman/nature link does not embrace respect or divinity for females or the earth. The term 'mother earth', if used spiritually by these ecofeminists, only has meaning in cultures that do have spiritual ties with the earth. If mother earth was to be a positive symbol for ecofeminism, there would have to be a dismantling of dualism in order for women and

nature to both be highly valued.

The ecofeminist analysis that incorporates and celebrates the idea of women being closer to nature is problematic from a poststructuralist feminist perspective, and for many other feminist theories which reject the theory of biological essentialism. This view can dangerously assume that women are more biologically tied to nature through bodily processes like menstruation, lactation, childbearing and breast-feeding. Although men do not menstruate or bear children they do have other human biological processes like eating, sleeping, eliminating wastes, ejaculation which also tie them to the earth. Further, some women do not bear children or breast feed. Women who are not mothers are marginalised in this scenario.

Other ecofeminist analyses, however, do recognise that for many women in developing countries, ecological preservation is a necessity in their daily lives. The female perspective on environmental and ecological issues is not necessarily tied to their biological connection with the earth, but their daily experiences of depending on it for survival. Women's responsibilities vary from culture to culture but in most developing countries, women traditionally care for livestock, domestic animals and crops. They are in constant contact with the environment in order to collect items for everyday use and for the healthy sustainability of families and communities.

Nature is being steadily destroyed while globalisation and trade liberalisation policies are increasing. The poverty crisis in developing countries arises from the scarcity of arable land, water, food, fodder and fuel, combined with ecological destruction and inadequate development projects and strategies. Often the poverty crisis affects women the most. This is because they are the primary sustainers of life. If a water supply becomes contaminated, it is the women who must then search for new supplies and spend extra time in supplying it. In industrialised

societies, too, women are connected with environmental issues through social experience. The mothers, nurturers and carers are often the first ones to see the signs of pollution and destruction.

So, women do have a particular relationship with the environment but, as with most societal beings, it is their daily interactions with it that define it. Women are linked to nature through social conditioning. Women's link with nature enables them to give distinctive views on preservation and conservation. It is often women and children who are first affected by environmental degradation, especially in the so-called 'developing world' and their experiences must be incorporated into policies and structures aimed at rejuvenation, conservation and development.

For those ecofeminists or mother-nature philosophers who want to positively link women with the earth, the solution to overcoming the devalued link between the two is very much reliant on a breaking down of the dualistic mode of thinking through theorising about gender in different, more fluid ways. What is needed is an approach that sees women and men as a part of nature and as a part of culture. This anti-dualist approach resembles a flexible platform which does not force women into either a masculine model, thus denying any relationship with the earth; or a model that embodies only the 'earth mother' philosophy, thus aligning with nature and open for subordination.

Theorists whose work I've used include Susan Griffin, Elizabeth Grosz, Luce Irigaray, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, Judith Plant, Val Plumwood, Catherine Roda, Annabel Rodda and Alison Jagger).

Beth completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree and an Honours of Arts Degree in women's studies at La Trobe University. Beth worked for Friends of the Earth (Fitroz) for five years. She moved to England recently and was contracted short term by Friends of the Earth UK as an independent gender consultant, specifically preparing briefs and writing material on gender and trade.



Uniting to Oppose Genetically Modified Food

Dr Gyorgy Scrinis

The campaign against genetically modified foods has brought together a wide range of organisations and interests because these foods bring to the fore the full range of social and environmental problems that characterise the industrial food system. The introduction of genetically modified crops and animals threatens to entrench, intensify and exacerbate the ecological problems, social inequalities and power imbalances already associated with chemical-industrial agriculture and the industrial food system. These include problems such as chemical pollution, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, animal exploitation and suffering, patenting of seeds and animals, increasing concentration of land ownership and the squeezing out of small-scale farmers, widespread hunger in the midst of plenty, and the corporate control of the entire industrial food chain. The new biotechnologies not only threaten to intensify these problems and dynamics, but they also introduce distinctly new kinds of ecological and health problems, and new forms of social control. This includes new ways for agribusiness corporations to exercise control over farmers, and the prospect of an entirely new form of industrial pollution: genetic pollution.

listed above that already characterise the industrial food system, and which the use of GE technology threatens to exacerbate.

The broad range of concerns associated with GM foods has led to a broad range of groups actively

various groups range from simply calling for more comprehensive testing, regulation and labelling of GE foods to complete opposition to the genetic engineering of plants and animals.

While there have been active campaigns around GM foods in many



campaigning against GMOs - environmental groups, public health groups, consumer groups, scientists' and physicians' groups, farming and seed groups, animal rights groups, church groups, overseas aid groups, as well as a large number of organisations that have formed to specifically campaign on the issue of genetic engineering. The stances taken by these

countries for a number of years, the past two years in particular have seen an explosion of activity and a significant heightening of general public awareness of the issue. A browse at the number of sites on the world wide web on GM foods is evidence of the breadth of concern and activism taking place around the world. The greatest level of activity and opposition has taken place across Europe,

particularly in countries such as the UK, Germany and Austria.

In the UK, a series of incidents and government blunders have made GE front page news. A range of groups there have recently launched a Five Year Freeze campaign which calls for a five year moratorium on the development, importation, sale and patenting of all GM crops, animals and foods. This alliance was founded by groups such as Friends of the Earth, Genetix Food Alert, the Soil Association and the Women's Environmental Network, and is now supported by over 60 organisations. Such co-operation and alliance building has already achieved impressive results, with nearly all major supermarket chains and a number of large food producers indicating some degree of refusal of GM products, and the government struggling to justify its strong support for and close associations with the biotech industry.

In Australia, public awareness and organised opposition has also grown quickly over the past twelve months. For a number of years, groups such as Friends of the Earth, the Australian GeneEthics Network, Seed Savers, the Heritage Seed Curators Association, the Consumer Food Network, the Australian Consumers Association, the Natural Law Party, and the Organic Federation of Australia have campaigned on the issue. Much closer and more formal alliances are now also starting to emerge, including moves to establish an Australian chapter of the Five Year Freeze Campaign. While the Federal Government and its regulatory bodies, such as the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC) and the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA), continue to aggressively promote and defend GM foods, they are also being forced to respond to this mounting public concern and opposition.

This is particularly so on the issue of labelling. For years the government has been stalling on introducing food labelling regulations. The current regulations, formulated in December last year, have so many loopholes in them that virtually all genetically modified food products on sale do not require labelling. However, a strong and broadly constituted campaign over the past year has forced State and Federal

Health ministers to propose a new labelling regime which may be much more comprehensive. The all-important fine details of the new regulations won't be known until 22 October, 1999. Meanwhile some large food processors, while making it clear they have no problems with GM foods, have bowed to consumer concerns and have agreed not to use GM ingredients in some of their processed food products.

Gene technologies are

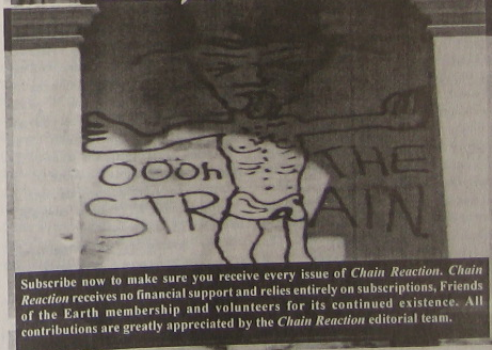
essentially being used to maintain, expand and further integrate the techno-industrial food system. Opposing GM foods therefore ultimately requires developing and supporting alternatives to the dominant structures and cultures of food production, distribution and consumption. In highlighting the already existing problems of the industrial food system, perhaps the issue of GM foods will also help to highlight the character and necessity of those alternatives.



Dr Gyorgy Scrinis is the author of 'Colonizing the Seed: Genetic Engineering and Techno-Industrial Agriculture', and campaigns with the Friends of the Earth (Fitroy) Genetic Engineering Group.

Break out of the mould...

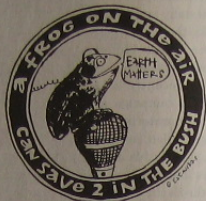
chain reaction



Earthmatters

The Community's Environmental Indicator

Juliet Fox



Frogs are 'environmental indicators', which means that they are often the first affected by environmental variation. Every week *Earth Matters* begins with the sounds of frogs and what follows their croaking is a look at the world's ecological concerns and the potential pathways toward change.

Distributed via the Community Radio Satellite service, the ComRadSat, *Earth Matters* is public and community radio's national environment program. The show focuses on environmental activism around the country and serves to provide a voice for progressive environmental campaigns, politicians, academics and grassroots activists. *Earth Matters* is currently broadcast in every state and territory in Australia on local public and community radio stations.

While some 'Men in Suits' claim that 'we're all environmentalists now', others see that ecological concerns continue to be marginalised by the mainstream media. Just consider for a moment how many weekly columns in our daily papers or television and radio programs are dedicated to environmental concerns. How many discuss issues such as urban air pollution, land clearing or even the ecological consequences of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization bombing of Yugoslavia? These are things that really do affect our lives and our future.

Look at the coverage accorded the recent dramatic changes to Australia's national environment legislation. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act has now been passed through the Senate and will have far-reaching consequences for the future regulation and protection of Australia's rural and

urban environments. Where is the ongoing indepth analysis which informs and encourages public debate on the issue?

While the campaign to prevent uranium mining at Jabiluka recently gained front page and lead story coverage, some of the more reputable national mainstream media outlets failed to accurately represent the decision by the United Nations not to



list Kakadu as In Danger. By leading with such statements as: 'the UN today gave the green light to the Jabiluka uranium mine in Kakadu' or 'environmentalists today conceded defeat following the UN decision not to place Kakadu on the in danger list ...' the mainstream press misrepresents important environmental processes and outcomes. Try telling the likes of the Mirrar traditional owners or committed campaigners such as Dave Sweeney that they have conceded defeat!

Then there's the public relations spin. The rise and rise of corporate and government greenwashing continues to work hard to convince us that mining really is environmentally friendly, and nuclear energy is the answer to our greenhouse gas

emissions. The domination of the media by companies and big business, means that by their nature, challenging the structures of society is never going to be on the top of their list of news breaking stories, or even soft features. In order for necessary and real environmental change to take place, significant challenges and changes need to be made.

Earth Matters has been broadcasting nationally for over three years now, and as well as challenging society's foundations, the show also provides a forum for environmental issues from a feminist perspective and seeks to prioritise Indigenous viewpoints. With economic rationalists at the helm and the warmest year on record just behind us it's extremely important that these viewpoints are disseminated as widely as possible. *Earth Matters* looks forward to expanding its listenership over the coming years and genuinely welcomes contributions, suggestions and feedback.

Earth Matters can be heard on 3CR in Melbourne Sundays 11 am; 2XX in Canberra Tuesday 10 am; 8CCC Alice Springs Sundays between 8-9 pm; 2NCR Lismore Friday 10 am; 5UV Adelaide Thursday 2 pm; 7LTN Launceston Monday 7:30 pm; 2MCE Bathurst Thursday 1:30 pm; 2BOB Taree Monday 1:30 pm TRPH, 6NR, 3HCR, 3MGB, 2NUR, 2SER, NAG Colac Public Radio and many more ...

Tel: 03 9419 8377

Fax: 03 9417 4472

Email: staff3cr@vicnet.net.au

Impact of the Individual

Helen Page

The reality that environmental problems such as the greenhouse effect, loss of biodiversity and soil degradation will eventually lead to global environmental crisis weighs heavy on the human conscience. The sheer size and complexity of these problems has created a sense of individual powerlessness. What can one person do anyway and where would I start?

In a world dominated by big business interests and a controlled media which promotes consumption as the dominant goal in society, it is no wonder that people feel confused and powerless. This situation has paralysed individuals and has had a tranquillising effect on society. Solutions to environmental problems are not simple, as the problems have been created by the fundamental attitudes and assumptions that form the basis of our society.

In order to achieve sustainable solutions these belief systems need to be challenged and this process must ultimately start with the individual. It is only with a sense of confidence, courage and empowerment that people can start to challenge the beliefs and assumptions that dominate their lives. The Worldwide Home Environmentalists' Network (WHEN) and home environmentalism

Home environmentalism is about starting with ordinary people and their everyday experiences. It starts where they are at.

WHEN Australia attempts to encourage home environmentalism by focusing on the issue of waste minimisation. Our major campaign 'Ban the Free Bag' highlights the overuse of plastic carry bags by representing them as a symbol of daily waste problems and society's predisposition towards disposable items. This campaign encourages people to ask themselves the simple question 'Do I really need a bag for that?'

It is from these seeds that WHEN hopes to create the growth of a wider environmental consciousness and participation in ecologically sustainable lifestyle choices.

From these small beginnings people begin to make the connection between their actions and impact they have on the environment. They are able to take simple positive steps towards changing their everyday habits and therefore regain a sense of control.

Through concepts such as 'Cradle to the Grave' - Lifecycle Analysis of a Product' WHEN attempts to raise awareness of the potential power of consumers to influence change. By being conscientious consumers we can; support sustainable agriculture by buying organic and biodynamic produce; protest against woodchipping by boycotting certain products and companies; reduce waste by joining a food co-op and choosing foods with less packaging; encourage ethical trade and condemn exploitation.

In order for real social change to occur on a broad scale it is important for people to get back in touch with their sense of control, gain confidence

and have the courage to turn awareness into action. It is not enough to be educated and aware, there needs to be a path and it must start with the simple realities that we all share.

Guidance, support and a sense of community helps to keep up the momentum that leads to social change. Becoming a member of an organisation like WHEN creates a voice for community concerns and a forum for active lobbying for change at all levels of society.

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Helen Page lives in Melbourne and runs the WHEN office from her home. She has been involved with WHEN Australia since 1996 when she received a grant to establish the WHEN Waste minimisation website (www.vicnet.net.au/~when) and has been busy ever since!



Chain Reaction Spring 1999

37



The Difference Between Life and Debt

Dave Collis

I wish you could see this great mystery - Earth and Sun and Moon. Midnight Oil

Jubilee 2000 is a movement to ease the unbearable burden of debt of the poorest countries on the earth. It has a lot to do with respecting the 'great mystery' of nature.

The statistics say we are in trouble: the four warmest years on record are 1990, 1995, 1997 and 1998. Scientific consensus about global warming is growing. Between 1990 and 1995, 65 million hectares of rainforest were destroyed in the developing world. This is an area 2.7 times the size of the United Kingdom, we now have less of the 'great mystery'.

These statistics point a finger of blame at Western financial institutions. Brazil and Indonesia are the world's fastest at bulldozing down trees; they are also the world's biggest debtors. This is not a coincidence.

Serious environmental destruction began in many developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Easy money was available from industrialised countries for 'development'. Much of it was spent on large dam projects, power plants and fossil fuel-driven industries which are of limited benefit to the poor, and damaging to the environment. As debts mounted, what poorer countries needed most was foreign currency to pay back their debts. One easy solution was to sell their natural resources for the hard cash they brought in and, simultaneously, cut back on environmental conservation programs. Developing countries have done this by: 1. Exhausting, contaminating and overusing land by intensively cultivating cash crops such as tobacco and coffee.

2. Allowing over-fishing of their waters, depleting fish stocks.

3. Allowing multinational companies logging rights to their forests and displacing traditional forest settlers.



The logic of environmental destruction runs unmistakably through our global economic systems of governance. The free market and its associated mechanism of external debt have no eyes to see the great mystery of nature. The World Trade Organization still talks in terms of 'resource management' with no mention of the relationship between humans and nature.

Jubilee 2000 seeks to break this cycle. We propose a one-off cancellation for the world's 52 poorest countries of the backlog of unpayable debts by the year 2000, under a fair and transparent process.

Such debt cancellation is desperately needed because our brothers and sisters in poorer nations will never repay their national debts. Zambia, for instance, has a foreign debt of \$790 per person. This is more than twice the annual income. They

spent more on debt service than on primary health and education combined. In the poorest countries around 11 thousand children die each day from poverty-related diseases. Their overall life expectancy is 26 years less than for residents of industrialised countries. More than 50 million children can not afford to go to school. For every \$1 that goes in aid from rich countries, \$15 comes back in debt service. Cancelling debt is not about charity but about justice. As Bono from rock band U2 argues, 'People don't want crumbs from the table. They don't want charity. They want to be at the table'.

At the G7 summit in Cologne in June 1999, the G7 nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United Kingdom) agreed to cancel US\$45 billion of poor country's debts. This represents an amazing change in attitude but in concrete terms does not offer much real relief since what has been cancelled is largely what was not going to be paid anyway. Jubilee 2000 in Australia is now calling on the Australian Federal Government to cancel the A\$88.6 million of debts owed to us by poor Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Vietnam. We are also calling on the government to push for greater debt relief through its position on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We would like to thank Friends of the Earth for its support of our push for debt cancellation. We are also grateful to the environment

.....CONTINUED PAGE 41



Environmental Justice and Community Campaigning

New directions for the environment movement

In a marked departure from more 'traditional' environmental campaigning, Friends of the Earth (Scotland) has begun to describe itself as an environmental justice organisation. Operating under the banner of 'no less than a decent environment for all; no more than a fair share of the earth's resources', the group has announced a new direction at a major campaign launch in Glasgow.

FoE Scotland has decided that it is time to 'take off the gloves' in the struggle for a clean and sustainable future. At its heart is the realisation that the poorest people in society tend to suffer most from the disadvantages of pollution, bad transport and sub-standard housing. Speaking at the launch of the campaign, which is calling for decent living conditions for all, the director of FoE Scotland, Kevin Dunion, said 'this is not going to be a respectable campaign, it is born out of a great deal of frustration and anger'.

'We are fed up listening to politicians and companies telling us that the environment is a middle-class preoccupation and that they have got better things to think about. The people who are living next to opencast mines and the stink of landfill sites are let down by that kind of

attitude. Of course, it is obvious that poor people live in poor conditions ... we want to expose what we all know is going on; that landfill sites, mines and polluting factories go where the land is cheap because the people there are considered cheap.'

The creation of the Scottish Parliament coincided with the 21st birthday of Friends of the Earth (Scotland) and was the occasion for the launch of the campaign. FoE has created a 16 point plan of action for the Scottish Parliament. This includes a call for a Freedom of Information Act which will allow local people to know why decisions have been made, a publicly funded advice service for people and communities fighting unwanted developments, and a right of appeal for the public against local authority planning decisions currently only developers can appeal.

FoE has recognised the advantages of working in formalised alliances. One recent example is the Greengairs Environmental Forum, a group of residents in North Lanarkshire who have been opposing the dumping of toxic waste in local landfill sites. With support from FoE, the group blockaded the Shanks and McEwan site last year, forcing a backtrack by the company and securing changes in the rules governing toxic dumping in Scotland.

FoE has adopted the concept of environmental justice from North America, where many campaigns have achieved local successes when predominantly black, other non-Anglo, Indigenous and working class communities have found themselves in the favoured locations of dirty industry.

The use of the environmental justice perspective is based on recognising two injustices: that communities who live with the worst environments tend to be those with the least power because of poverty, unemployment or isolation. At the same time, consumption of limited resources in the 'developed' countries is much higher than would be a fair share of 'environmental space', to the detriment of communities in developing countries and future generations.

For further details, check the FoE Scotland homepage: <http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk>



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCOTLAND



FoE International

FoE's mining campaign

The past six months has been busy for the FoE International mining campaign. The co-ordinator of the campaign, Gabriel Rivas Duca of FoE Costa Rica, was in Melbourne for the November 1998 IAGM. Just before the AGM, Gabriel was present at the Global Survival and Indigenous Rights conference and spoke at a plenary which discussed international resistance to mining.

After the AGM, he traveled to Sydney to meet with the Mineral Policy Institute. Gabriel visited the Newcastle area with MPI director Geoff Evans, to look at what is happening in the region as it moves into a post coal-mining economy.

Once back in Costa Rica, Gabriel started working on ways to support the actions of the Central American Mining Action Network (CAMAN).

Later in November 1998, Gabriel participated in the Global Workshop on the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in the World, held in San Jose, Costa Rica and organised with others by the IUCN-Dutch Committee, the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) and the Costa Rican Government. FoE groups from Paraguay, Chile and Costa Rica attended the workshop. The combined groups identified mining as one of the most important underlying causes of forest destruction around the world. After the workshop FoE organised a meeting with Costa Rican activists with the participation of Elias Peña from

FoE Paraguay, Hernan Verscheure from FoE Chile and Ricardo Carere from WRM-Uruguay, which works closely with FoE Uruguay. It was a good opportunity to share ideas and organise strategies.

On 24th March 1999, together with Oil Watch Mesoamerica, FoE organised a Central American Meeting on Oil Mining. Delegates from Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama participated. It was a good opportunity to discuss the impacts of mining in the region and to show the work FoEI and its groups do on the issue. As a result of this meeting, the Costa Rican Oil Resistance Network Against Climate Change - Oil Watch Costa Rica was born. In April 1999, a Central American Meeting on Mining was organised in Managua, Nicaragua. This was hosted by Centro Humboldt. In spite of the significant political difficulties in that country at the present time, the meeting was successful. Like earlier meetings, the broader issue of sustainability was addressed rather than just the immediate impacts of mining operations.

In May 1999, FoE participated in the 7th Conference of the Parties (CoP) of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, held in San Jose, Costa Rica; the last CoP was held in Brisbane in 1996, where a large FoE contingent was active. FoEI, represented by FoE Spain and FoE Costa Rica was the main



organiser of the pre-conference entitled the World Meeting of NGOs, Local Communities and Indigenous Nations and played an important role during the CoP. In June 1999 FoE participated in the People's Gold Summit which was organised by Project Underground (based in California) and a number of Indigenous organisations from United States. It was a remarkable gathering, where FoEI was represented by FoE groups from Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ecuador and Indonesia. An inspiring final declaration of the summit was published.

The mining campaign received funds from the Dutch IUCN to coordinate the campaign. Gabriel is working with a number of FoE groups which have expressed interest in becoming regional focal points for the mining campaign: FoE Congo, Czech Republic, Ecuador and the Philippines.

Significant events coming up are a number of gatherings of mining activists: one in Lima, one in Peru in September and another in Ghana in November 1999.

For further information, contact Gabriel Rivas-Duca, FoE Costa Rica.

Friends of the Earth Halcyon World Voyage ... what goes around, comes around.

In November 1999 the yacht 'Halcyon' will set sail from Dublin, Ireland destined for Vigo in the north of Spain on the first leg of the

Millennium World Report for Friends of the Earth. From Vigo, she will cross the Atlantic headed for South America. The crew of Halcyon will spend the next two years circumnavigating the globe. The aim of the voyage is two-fold: to raise funds for Friends of Earth and to write a series of first-hand reports detailing the work of FoE groups around the globe.

The organising group explains:

The Halcyon World Voyage is the result of years of pipe-dreaming and over two years of frantic planning and fund-raising. Much of our motivation derives from an aching desire for adventure but also the drive to widen our perspectives, take our own look at the realities of the world at the end of the Millennium and to offer others the opportunity to follow our journey via our website.

The voyage is perhaps unique in that, although experienced, we are not professional yachtsmen, marine biologists or research scientists, nor are we eco-warriors. However, we intend to be more than just floating reporters and will be spending as much time as possible actually working on the projects themselves in order to glean a true feel for what is being done. We are, in terms of our careers, two barristers and a teacher. We have no particular political agenda or bias, simply the wish to open our eyes wide and report what we see in honest, straightforward terms.

Interest in the project is burgeoning and the crew will create high-quality resources over the course of the voyage. This will include video footage, still photos and reports and personal journals which will be made available to primary and secondary schools worldwide via the website. It is expected that many people will follow the journey via the website, which will be updated on a weekly basis.

The crew of the Halcyon are seeking support from businesses, institutions

and individuals. Any extra funds will go directly to Friends of the Earth on completion of the voyage. If you have any queries regarding the project or you can help in any way please contact either the crew or Friends of the Earth at the following addresses.

*The Halcyon crew: Edmund Sweetman, Andy Lamb, Patrick Butler
5 Thornville Row, Leeds, LS61JN*

*email: worldvoyage@go.com
halcyon@scribe.demon.co.uk website
www.angelfire.com/uv/halcyon*

*Sandra Hesketh, Fundraising
Development, FoE England, Wales
and Northern Ireland. Phone 44 + 171
+ 566 1718, email: sandrah@foe.co.uk*

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movement generally, particularly World Wildlife Fund and Peter Garrett of the Australian Conservation Foundation for their support.

For more information about Jubilee 2000 or a copy of our letter-writing kit please contact the Jubilee 2000 head office:

*PO Box 289
Hawthorn VIC 3122
Ph (03) 9815 1677
Fax (03) 9818 3586
Email: tearvic@zeimail.com.au*

*Or see the UK website,
www.jubilee2000uk.org.*

*Dave Collis
Project Worker
Jubilee 2000*

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Chain Reaction is also received through a Friends of the Earth membership.
See back page for your closest local group.

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through issues around apprenticeship training as well, so that we pick up the new 'alternatch' modules which will be the basis for new workplaces within the burgeoning industry.

The green expertise out there within organisations like Friends of the Earth, and contained within the very practical efforts of progressive, consensus-based businesses like Gung Solar, has always been right about the need for a change in energy/power directions. Earthworker seeks to take the valuable work of organisations like these and build on that work, increasing its impact, opening doors for its information, placing information and communications into the hands of the right people, taking the heat out of jobs versus environment scenarios which have arisen due to misinformation and lack of vision.

As an all unions green caucus, Earthworker's role is to ensure that workers as the vast majority of the world's population, win the democratic right to have the dominant say in questions regarding the survival of our planet. Although Australia has had some of the finest minds working in this area for many years, we will not forget one of the fundamental union principles: that our, the ordinary

people's experience, is a true source of knowledge and wisdom.

At the moment 1,000 people a month in Victoria are enrolling in Energy Efficiency Victoria's Green Power initiative. People pay a voluntary premium on their energy bill in order to be able to buy green power. Clearly working people want to be able to make these decisions and choices.

So as a unionist in whatever capacity, as secretary, organiser, delegate or activist, please feel free to get involved. Even if that involvement is informed questioning, they could be the very questions which correct a mistaken view, or change an incorrect perception. Anyone out there with expertise and knowledge, or who knows of anyone in that category who may wish to work with the Solar, Wind and Water Industry action group of Earthworker, please contact us.

Unions and green organisations affiliated to Earthworker intend to see that the necessary industry infrastructure is in place, so that fellow workers and businesses can eventually buy their primary power from alternative sources. (Queries/suggestions/assistance to Dave Kerin

on 0417 607 011 or email: dave@etu.asn.au)

No Jobs On a Dead Planet Tour.

Earthworker plans to prepare for the new millennium with the 'No Jobs on a Dead Planet' tour in November 1999. It will be one week of activities which look at past successes, and a week which looks to a future based on solidarity with each other as workers, and with our planet.

The tour will consist of a journey around past green ban sites in Melbourne, the launch of the Solar, Wind and Water Industry Plan, a seminar which we hope will lay the foundation for some new sustainable directions in superannuation investment, and many more activities.

Earthworker is not here to repeat the work of existing green and union organisations. In fact it is constitutionally bound not to do so. Its role is to integrate the information and activities of each social movement into the other. To lay the basis for alliances which are open and not subject to destabilisation by vested interests. To build the work of each in the interests of all.

When the workers say 'yes' to the planet, who can say no?

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get the 'In Danger' listing, forced the Australian government to expend a vast amount of political capital, not to mention \$1 million or more, to head it off. It offered a glimpse of what could be done through conservation groups and the Greens working together in an international lobbying effort.

The next federal election, likely to be in spring 2001, is emerging as an opportunity for a co-ordinated campaign to make the environment a pivotal issue. That means getting early agreement on the key issues (commitments on forests and greenhouse as a minimum) and for environment groups to be prepared to rank political parties according to

action not promises.

The ALP, in opposition, is once more flirting with the environment. In WA they have promised an end to old-growth logging. Federally they put forward a 'greenhouse trigger' in the EPBC bill, which would have given the Commonwealth explicit power to control greenhouse gas emissions, had it not been defeated by the Democrats and Coalition. Apparent conflict between the Coalition and the ALP is about the only thing that galvanises media attention to the environment, even though it is always ranked in the top three or four most important issues in opinion polls.

Around the country, new activism is stirring - on forests, greenhouse, biodiversity, Kakadu, uranium mining, air pollution, GMOs...it is low key as yet, but bubbling.

The combination of activism and political movement is a potent brew. Senator Hill and his complacent colleagues may yet find, as the superb forests campaign in WA shows, that the community united behind a clear goal is irresistible.

Margaret Blakers is an adviser to Greens Senator Bob Brown, with a long history in the environment movement and none in politics before the Greens.



FoE Australia

Welcome to FoE (Northern Rivers)

FoE Australia welcomes the creation of a new group which will operate on the north coast of NSW. Because of the strong and active environment movement in the northern rivers region, FoE has not been active there in a concerted manner for many years. In recent times the creation of groups in Armidale and the broader New England tablelands has created a stronger awareness of FoE among activists in northern NSW. In July this year we received an application from a group based in Lismore. It was felt that there were sufficient 'empty' or partially empty niches within movement activity to encourage a FoE group there.

The new group has over 20 people involved in its activities already. It plans to campaign on the following issues: forests, mining, fair trade, self-sufficiency, Indigenous issues and land rights, Landcare, water, unemployment and livelihood issues, ecological sustainability and appropriate regional development, civil liberties, transport, wetlands, genetic engineering, community health and sustainable agriculture.

Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy)

FoE in Melbourne has been affected by the shifts in the political and cultural climate of environmental activism over the past few years. The policies of the Kennett government have been responsible for the creation of an unprecedented number of local community and environmental groups. These groups often exist outside the membership of the 'traditional' mainstream environment movement and represent a new manifestation of environmental activism. While many were created to oppose local unwanted or inappropriate developments, there has been a noticeable politicisation of many of these groups as they have been exposed to undemocratic processes and government intervention.

In an attempt to create better working relations with these groups, FoE Fitzroy has recently appointed two community campaigners who are responsible for liaison and campaign support for groups in suburban and rural Victoria. This will allow FoE to be far more strategic in the way it works with local community and environment groups.

Background papers

FoE Australia has produced six background papers over the past year. These aim to provide a grassroots and international perspective and context for Australian-based environmental activism. They often utilise campaign materials and positions developed by other FoE groups around the world. Topics of the first papers are: 'Against Nature' (an anti-green television program shown on ABC last year), 'Who's Woodchipping Australia's Forests?', 'New target of the death squads: the environmentalists' (from FoE El Salvador), 'Ecological debt; who owes who?' (focused on a joint statement made at a World Trade Organization meeting); 'War in the Balkans'; 'Reforming the global financial system' (based on the FoE International declaration at the Group of 8 meeting held in Cologne in June 1999).

The papers are available from the FoE Fitzroy homepage (www.foe.org.au) or by sending three standard stamps to the national liaison office (see contacts page). We are hoping to re-launch the FoE Australia homepage in the near future.



... it's hard to draw a forest and to make it look beautiful and to get it across - so much of the environment movement depends on those beautiful nature photos - you can say it's beautiful and you can show it's beautiful. In a cartoon it's a hard to capture that and make it feel beautiful and then if you draw a small person it just looks out of scale...

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, she had so many plastic bags she didn't know what to do



Judy Horacek

The unguarded moment

I used to worry that I was just telling people things they already know...but I think it gets back to something my friend and fellow cartoonist Jane Carafella said to me that the converted Carafella said to pray at...these are need temples to pray at...these are issues that people are talking about at home in their lounge rooms and they like to see people saying them publicly.

I think people like cartoons - they approach them in an unguarded way... they're so very simple yet they can convey very complicated ideas... You can employ devices like surrealism and irony and then everything will fall into place in people's heads. In some ways it's difficult to shrink it down, and you have to shrink it down. That can be good because ultimately you have to get down to the basic principle of the thing.



It gets a bit depressing doing cartoons about the environment you know, it's a denuded forest, acid rain...

SAYINGS FOR THE NINETIES

If it's worth doing, it's worth getting stressed about



Plenty more fish in the oil spill

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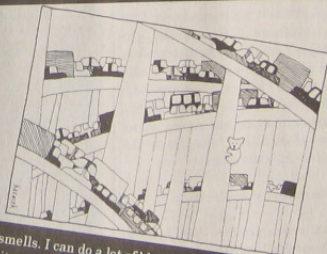
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...the thing about my environmental cartoons is that they're saying things that people on both sides believe. Even though some people are more concerned than others, no one's going to say 'forests are bad'. Most people will look at a forest and say 'don't knock it all down'. Although they might say 'forests are good, except when they get in the way of development'.

Judy Horacek is one of Australia's best-known female cartoonists. Her cartoons are published regularly in *The Weekend Australian*. She has four books of work published and her latest, *If the Fruit Fits* will be released in October 1999.



You can't draw smells. I can do a lot of black clouds in the sky to show pollution but then it seems a bit hackneyed I suppose...oh, and twee-ness - you can't just draw small cute animals saying 'my home is being destroyed', it's that whole anthropomorphism of animals...

Bushwalks of the Future



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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

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

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2252

humps not dumps

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