



30 years of
creative resistance

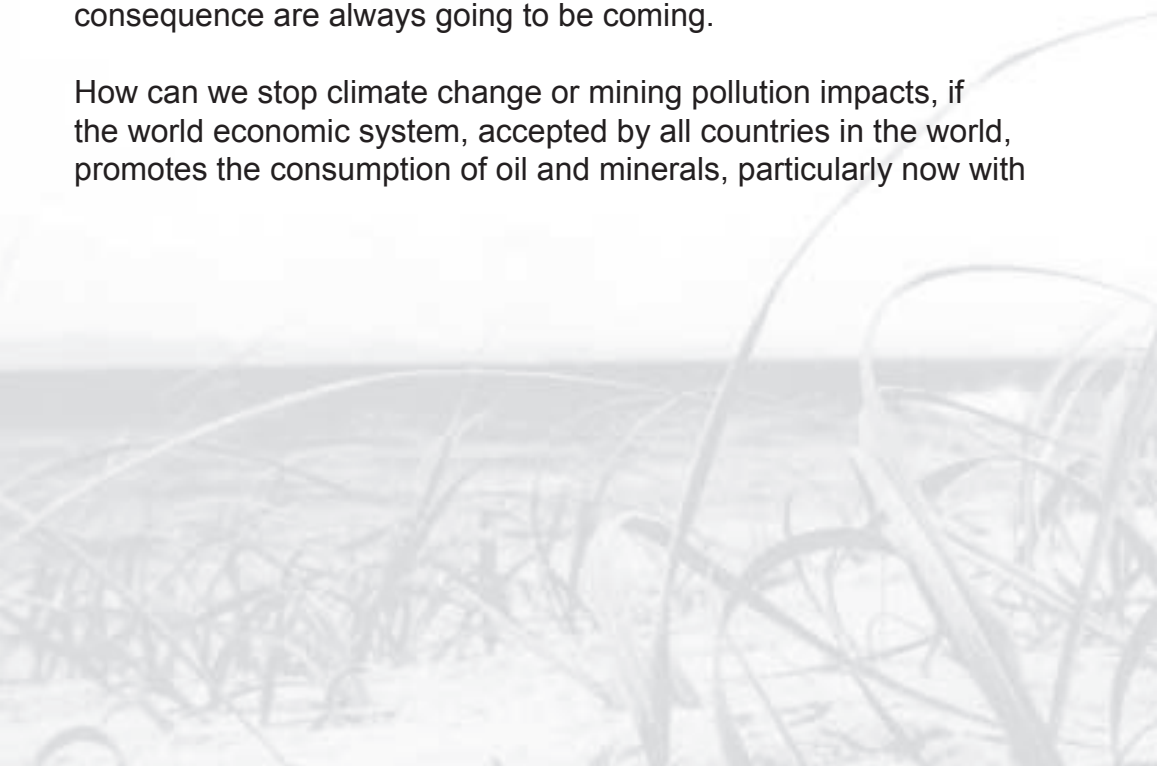
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AUSTRALIA

THIRTY YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Up to a few decades ago, many people in the world took the environment for granted. Forests, rivers, mines, the sea or the atmosphere, seemed to be infinite or at least too big to notice any impact due to human activities. This perception started to change in the second half of the twenty century, forests were despairingly, deserts were increasing, petroleum reserves will meet demand for just a few more decades, water is becoming a scarce commodity in many parts of the world and the climate is changing all over the world.

The deterioration of the environment is probably acknowledged by most people in the world and there has been considerable work in trying to reduce environmental problems. Massive reforestation programs are in place in many countries, ozone destroying chemicals are being replaced, cleaner productions methods have been implemented in many industries and many countries have environmental education courses in their schools. As important as all these programs might be, they are usually oriented to deal with the environmental damages, that is with the consequence. They are what we might call: impact reduction strategies; but very often they overlook the causes and if we do not deal with the causes, the consequence are always going to be coming.

How can we stop climate change or mining pollution impacts, if the world economic system, accepted by all countries in the world, promotes the consumption of oil and minerals, particularly now with



all the global agreements in trade and investment? What must be clearly understood is that the deterioration of the environment is the logical consequence of the economic system whose main objective is to generate and increase wealth for those who already have wealth. What is known as globalisation is a world wide movement oriented to maximise profits for the large transnational corporations, at the expense of the rest of society and the environment.

This state of affairs is what justifies and generates the need for environmental activism. The environmental struggle is not just a movement for restoration activities, it is mainly and foremost a movement to remove the causes of environmental deterioration. To see an organisation like Friends of the Earth Australia, engaged for 30 years in the struggle to remove the causes of environmental deterioration, generates hope for the world environmental movement and knowing that FoE Australia is a member of our network Friends of the Earth International is also a cause for pride for all of us. Congratulations FoE Australia, keep up the good work.

Ricardo Navarro
Chair
Friends of the Earth International

Acknowledgements

It seemed like a simple idea: to produce a book on FoE Australia to mark our 30th anniversary. But the more we dug for information, the more the story evolved. There is an incredible depth to the campaigns and people that have been FoE over these last three decades. This publication provides just the most basic of summaries of some of the campaigns and projects of FoE in Australia: there are many people, key campaigns and victories, and entire local groups missing. This is partly due to what was in the 'historical record', but mostly due to space constraints. We had a minimal budget for this project, which greatly influenced the overall size of the book. For the many errors, mis-spellings and omissions, I apologise: please send feedback, and we will endeavour to include your information in the second edition of this book.

Churning through old Chain Reactions, newsletters, endless files in various offices and talking with both old timers and newcomers has re-enforced yet again my immense respect for FoE, as a network and an organisation, and strengthened my commitment to this unique and remarkable entity. I need to pass on special thanks to Dave Sweeney for his help in this project and Natalie Lowrey and Valentina la Piana, who stepped in and took on design and negotiations with printers, in between all their other work at FoE.

Thanks to everyone who's been there over the years: its been an honour to work with you. Here's to another couple of decades of good work and even better outcomes!

Thanks to Anthony Amis, Peter Barker, Barry Brown, Roz Byass, John Englart, Geoff Evans, Ann Ferguson, Eva Haarburger, John Hallam, Adrian Hann, Dimity Hawkins, John Hepburn, David Hughes, Len Kanaar, Cathryn Kriewaldt, Sarojini Krishnapillai, Stephanie Long, Ila Marks, Linda Marks, Kathleen McCann, Christy Mannon, Eric Miller, Loretta O'Brien, Ricardo Navarro, Roman Orszanski, Jane Rogers, Domenica Settle, Rowena Shakes, Kim Stewart, Dave Sweeney, Lee Tan, Gillian Walker and Elizabeth Wheeler.

Thankyou to David Pope (Heinrich Heinz) for permission to reuse some of his cartoons that appeared previously in Chain Reaction magazine. David has some great books of political cartoons: see <http://www.scratch.com.au/> for details

Many thanks to Valentina la Piana for scanning above and beyond the call of duty and taking on production management, and to Elizabeth Wheeler for last minute, and massive, proof-reading.

'We do not forget, we remember. We do not stop, we continue. We dream and we struggle, we will not become tired'

-Friends of the Earth Costa Rica

This is dedicated to three friends we have lost in the struggle: Maria del Mar Cordero, Oscar Fallas and Jaime Bustamante, murdered in December 1994 for their activism. And to their comrades in Friends of the Earth Costa Rica, for their courage after this terrible act; they never wavered in their path or their work in spite of considerable ongoing risk to themselves.



Cam Walker
National Liason Officer
Friends of the Earth Australia
cam.walker@foe.org.au

**READERS ARE WARNED THAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS IMAGES OF
PEOPLE WHO ARE DECEASED**

INTRODUCTION

“One of the best things about FoE is its unending optimism. It approaches issues from as positive an angle as possible. It confronts and seeks solutions to what are literally some of the most daunting environmental, social and political threats faced by human society”

- CHAIN REACTION, 1986

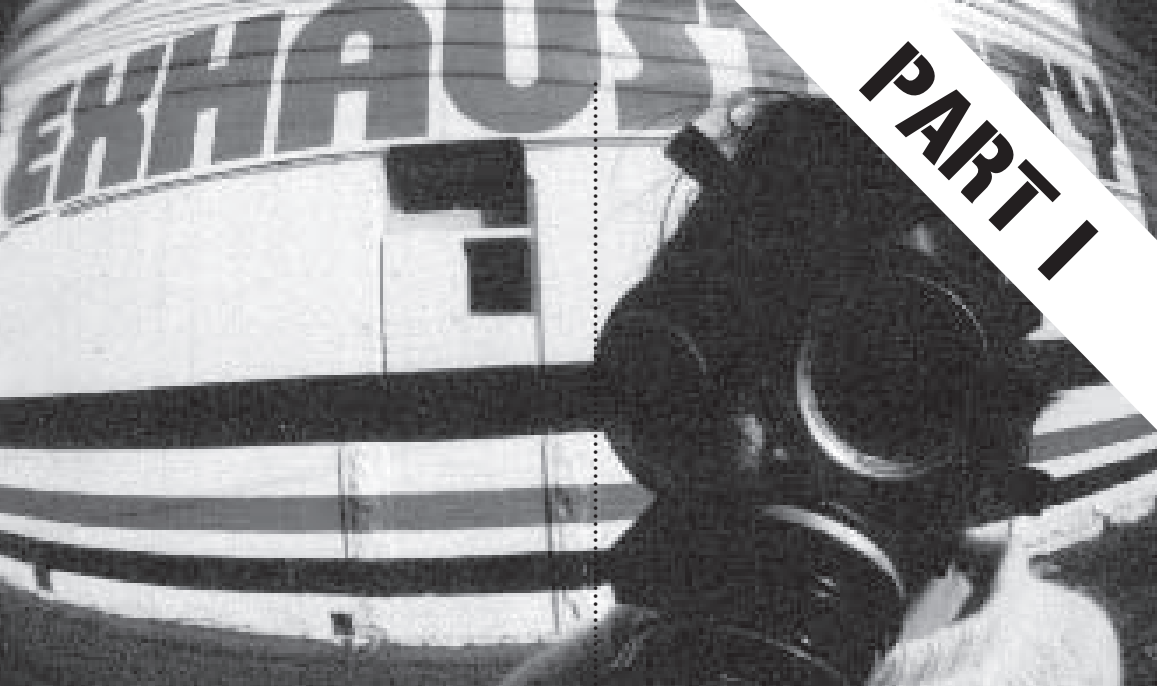
The optimism, courage and creativity noted by Chain Reaction in 1986 have been features of FoE's thirty year history. Whilst these are now organisational qualities, they have evolved from the contributions of thousands of individuals across Australia, in widely varied political, social and ecological contexts. This book is a tribute to those people, and a reminder of all that is possible and positive as we seek environmental justice and more sustainable and equitable global social systems.

The book begins with an overview of some of FoE's core philosophies and approaches, and then highlights some of its main campaigns and achievements in the context of wider political, social and economic issues. Local groups have been the mainstay of FoE's thirty years, and some of these groups are discussed in some depth. Chain Reaction,

FoE's national magazine, has been published over most of FoE's lifetime. Some of its rich history is also explored herein. As an organisation, FoE's structures and processes have evolved greatly over thirty years, and some of these are described in the section 'FoE Australia structure, decision-making and management'. As a national body of an international organisation, FoE has a broader structural context, so the final chapter looks at FoE International, and some of the significant international victories that FoEA is proud to be associated with.

For thirty years, FoE members and groups in Australia have been thinking globally, acting locally and working creatively for environmental and social justice.

HERE'S TO THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS!



PART I

FRIENDS of the EARTH in AUSTRALIA: A Brief Overview



Over thirty years, FoE has developed and held firm to some core philosophies and approaches, to the endearment of many and the frustration of a few (notably government). These have provided the foundations for FoE's grass roots community based activism and continue to guide our work today.

From its creation, FoE in Australia identified itself as a radical ecology group that recognised the need to move to sustainable and equitable social systems to be able to protect the environment in the long term. This meant that from its beginnings, FoE placed considerable effort on achieving this change rather than simply lobbying existing governments. In an article from *Chain Reaction* #24,



Occupying federal government offices in Melbourne, after the announcement of new wood-chipping licenses, late 1994

1981 Environment and the Economy, Anne Carson and Mark Carter outlined their vision of FoE and its place in the movement:

FoE has developed a broad analysis of environmental issues which is reflected in our research and campaign work.

The alternative we seek to implement is a sustainable society. This involves a reliance on the use of renewable resources which are equitably distributed. It involves the recognition that there is an inextricable link between people and the environment.

FoE recognises that organised resistance and action are necessary catalysts for economic and social change. Such action is essential if we are to achieve a sustainable society based on the equitable distribution of resources and power and recognition of the rights of all people.

To achieve the ends, Friends of the Earth is committed to a set of principals which guide our activities.

These include:

To recognise sexism by adopting a positive employment policy that guarantees at least 55% of positions are filled by women and, further, that these positions include those of a decision-making nature.

To remain non-partisan so that we will not be identifiable with any particular political party and can work to influence all political parties.

To encourage the autonomy of local groups so that they themselves can establish appropriate local campaigns, what positions they will take on the issues and how they will fight them.

An even more radical perspective was outlined by activists from FoE Canberra in a paper from 1984 entitled, 'A Strategy Against Nuclear Power' which described the need for a strategy which specifically sought profound change in society rather than just short term campaign goals.

"The goal of stopping uranium mining must be closely linked to the goal of basic structural change in the state, capitalism, patriarchy and the division of labour ... the broader objectives for an anti-nuclear movement must include mass participation in decision making rather than elite control, decentralising the distribution of political power into smaller, local groups, and bringing about self reliance based on environmentally sound technologies."

Today, FoE Sydney uses the phrase "*campaigning on environmental issues in their social, political and human rights context*" to describe its work and FoE's broad world-view. Some other local groups and the wider national network have adopted the terms 'social ecology' and 'environmental justice' to define FoE's political orientation. These terminologies reflect the types of issues that FoE works on, as well as the ways it works.

FoE believes that this understanding has become imperative in the early twenty-first century as the dominant economic and political systems continue to set working people against those working for environmental protection, and internalises profits while externalising the social and environmental costs of economic activity.

FoE has always been well known for its strong **political perspectives**. These have often meant that it has adopted campaigns not taken up by other green groups. For example, following the election of the Howard Coalition government in 1996, FoE ran a campaign opposing the privatisation of Telstra and spoke out on the blackmail inherent in linking funding of an essential portfolio (in this instance



Old growth Blue Gum growing in Flynn's Creek catchment, Strezlecki Ranges, Victoria

the environment) with the partial sale of a public asset (Telstra). FoEA lost its long standing federal funding shortly after this. FoE has managed to remain on the cutting edge of emerging themes; often identifying and acting on issues before they become mainstream. For instance, FoE began working on the health and ecological impacts of herbicide use in timber plantations at a time when most other green groups were uncritically advocating for plantations as a solution to the problem of native forest logging.

During the Balkans war of 1995, FoE highlighted the dangers posed by the use of depleted uranium weapons by the allied forces of the USA and Britain. In more recent years, it has started to lobby for the need for Australia to recognise climate refugees, those people who are being forced to leave their homes because of human induced climate change. FoE has worked closely with many Indigenous communities over the last three

decades. In Australia, FoE is committed to strengthening its already strong working relationships with Mirrar, Yorta Yorta, Kerrup Jmara, Kokatha and Kungka Tjuta people. Internationally, FoE has also supported **Indigenous struggles** in the Pacific, Latin America and elsewhere.

Alliance-based politics have been prominent in FoE's political agenda throughout its history – from helping to establish the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia in 1982 to taking a crucial role in the S11 alliance, which helped co-ordinate the massive protests against the meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Melbourne in September 2000. Maintaining good working relations with trade unions is also a hallmark of FoE's philosophy, as evidenced in FoE's efforts to help establish Earthworker, a green-trade union alliance in Melbourne in 1998.

Feminist thought has also been an important foundation for FoE's politics, a reality not always without internal conflict. Ecofeminist thought was especially influential in the late 1980s and early 1990s and for a time *Chain Reaction* magazine contained an insert called 'Ecofeminist Actions' produced by the Women's Environment Education Centre.

In the mid 1980s, following blockades at WMC Resources Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia, a number of FoE groups began using consensus decision making structures, and this model was subsequently adopted by the national Federation. These models were a product of the feminist orientated peace movement in North America.

FoE uses the **spectrum of tactics** of the environment movement – direct and indirect lobbying of politicians and other policy makers, community education, strategic alliances, consumer and shareholder activism, research and the use of direct action and civil disobedience.

FoE has often run innovative programs and projects. In the early 1980s, FoEM set up a low-energy advisory service,



Auntie Betty – Elizabeth King, long time adviser to FoE Melbourne, Kerrup Jmara Nation, Western Victoria

providing over the phone and face to face advice on everything from energy efficient appliances to solar design for new buildings. FoE has run 'exposure tours' of the nuclear industry in SA for well over 15 years, instituted a community ballot program in 1997 by setting up booths in suburban shopping centres to gauge the public's opinions on the nuclear industry and in 1999, instigated the Nuclear Freeways Project (NFW), which has systematically worked the inland route that radioactive waste would travel from the Lucas Heights reactor in Sydney to the proposed radioactive waste facility in SA. The NFW project has alerted local Shire Councils, emergency services, farmers, unions and the broader community to the threats posed by this transport.

A number of FoE local groups operate businesses and other ventures to raise funds and model practical examples of community owned sustainable business. These include a food co-operative, organic café and bookshop in Melbourne and 'Reverse Garbage' in Brisbane.

Under its international mission statement, FoE does not endorse people, parties or products. This means it does not engage in partisan electoral politics, although it

works with and lobbies various political parties as it needs to. While FoE remains independent of political parties, many key individuals and some local groups were involved in the creation of local Green party branches. In 1986, reflecting a broader internal debate, FoE Oakleigh in south eastern Melbourne stated that while in the short term the “Australian Democrats are our best pragmatic option, their union bashing is unacceptable.” The solution they saw was to advocate for the creation of a separate Greens party.

The bulk of FoE’s work is undertaken by local groups, with each responsible for its own structure, fundraising, campaigns and style of campaigning. This means there is considerable diversity between the groups and the model is based on the idea that local people will know best how to respond to local issues and problems. FoE’s support structure is accessible to smaller pressure groups, and offers guidelines and philosophies that help with the running of such organisations.

FoEA’s work is mostly done on a voluntary basis, and a large proportion of the active members of most groups are women. FoEA has proactive gender policies, and many of the local groups have similar policies in their constitutions. FoEA is committed to addressing gender through ongoing reviews of gender issues. It also has a policy of encouraging indigenous people and people from non English speaking backgrounds to apply for paid employment in the organisation. Largely as a result of lobbying by Linnell Secomb, FoEM adopted an affirmative action employment policy in the early 1980s, setting a ratio of women employees to men at 60:40.

FoE is perhaps best known for its long-standing work on uranium. It has campaigned against all aspects of the nuclear cycle since its inception, including the lean years of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when few other green groups maintained an interest in this issue. However, FoE in Australia also has a long tradition of working on ‘smoggy’ or ‘brown’

issues, including hazardous chemicals, waste minimisation, high temperature incinerators, urban transport and energy.

Issues have changed and evolved over the years, as individuals joined or left the Federation and external factors influenced campaign priorities. In the early twenty-first century, our key priorities continue to include civil and military nuclear issues, climate justice, food and sustainable agriculture, corporations, population and climate refugees, forests and plantations and on-going collaboration and engagement with a range of local, national, and international issues.



Anti-Nuclear, rally in Melbourne, mid 1980s.

Many groups have grown out of FoE over the years and literally thousands of activists have worked from there under many names and organisational structures. Some of these have included the ‘Ride Against Uranium’ (from Melbourne to Canberra in the late 1970s), the Movement Against Uranium Mining (MAUM), the Antarctica campaign, the Fund for Animals, Project Jonah, and various early forms of transport and bike advocacy groups including the NSW Bike Institute.

All of these diverse groups were originally FoE initiatives or based in FoE groups or offices. FoE was also instrumental in establishing Shareholders for Social Responsibility, attending the AGMs of large resource corporations and producing alternative reports on companies, outlining environmental destruction and abuses of communities and workers rights.



This group acted as an inspiration for much of the later shareholder activism. The Alternative Technology Association (ATA), which now produces *ReNew* magazine, grew out of FoE's campaigns when a group of people decided that there was a need for information on the practical side of alternate technology.

FoE has always had a tradition of supporting local environmental and community groups rather than simply running its own campaigns. This has meant that it has invested extensive resources into local campaigns without necessarily seeking or gaining widespread recognition for this work. This is a significant element of FoE's philosophy - it tends to work from a 'movement' perspective and sees the need for environmental and social justice groups to work in alliances rather than seeking to gain prestige and recognition for their own groups through individually 'badged' campaigns. This, and the fact that FoE seeks long term social change rather than just short term political outcomes, is part of the reason FoE has a lower profile than

many of the other national environmental groups. It is also part of the reason that FoE plays such an important role in the continuity of environmental activism in Australia.

In addition to the work carried out by the local groups FoE has always had a number of national level activities including national representation and lobbying positions, the national magazine *Chain Reaction* and national campaigns.

In recent years, FoEA has become considerably more active in the International Federation. FoEA has been elected to FoEI's Executive Committee, with Domenica Settle and Cam Walker sharing these roles and rotating attendance at international forums and meetings. FoEA is active in a number of the international campaigns and programs. It hosted the FoE International annual meeting in Australia for the first time in November 1998, which saw representatives from more than 30 countries attend.

PART II



ACTIONS IN CONTEXT: 30 Years Of Optimism, Courage And Creativity



The first Friends of the Earth (FoE) group in Australia formed in Adelaide in 1972, one of a number of organisations that grew out of a group called Social Action. In early 1973, FoE was established in Melbourne. These early organisations, based in the broad social movements that were forming across Australia and around the world, were products of their times.

The FoE group world wide was originally set up by David Brower and others in the USA in 1969, after David resigned from the Sierra Club (a large and mainstream nature-conservation orientated group) frustrated that the organisation would not tackle nuclear issues or work at the international level. Thus, from its beginning, FoE was international in its perspective and had a strong focus on social issues. The idea of an environmental network working on contemporary issues in new ways was clearly a timely one and groups quickly formed in a number of countries.

FoE was established in the early stages of the social transformation happening across Australia that had been influenced by similar movements elsewhere in the 1970s. There was a growing public awareness of ecology, the land rights movement was becoming increasingly militant and the NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) under the leadership of Jack Munday was profoundly changing the role of trade unions as it took a leading national position on a range of social and environmental concerns. The alternate lifestyle counter culture had held a number of enormous gatherings and the women's and gay liberation movements were prominent and dynamic.

Against this social backdrop, FoE, based on the concept of radical grassroots environmental action, took off like wildfire. FoE's origins contrasted some of the slightly older environmental organisations that were described in 1976 by FoE

activist, Neil Barrett as the "establishment, government-funded group(s) which sprang out of an older style, middle class movement". For many, the new network structure of FoE was important because it offered an alternative to the often hierarchical structures of many other national environment groups.

FoE is a prominent example of 'second wave' environmentalism. From its inception, it was very much a part of the broader social movements of the day, and political opinions and styles within the network were diverse. As Margaret Jones later commented in *Chain Reaction* magazine in 1982, "FoE appeared to me to be somewhat fragmented. Some campaigns were run on a liberal-authoritarian structure, while in others attempts at collectivism were made. Some argued that FoE's many varied campaigns required equally varied methods and that a uniform structure or commitment to an ideology would be repressive." While there was diversity of opinion and politics and some internal disagreements, FoE was firmly based in a broad, progressive, left tradition.

1970's

In the 1970s, a handful of key issues dominated FoE's national campaign work: the whaling campaign, global and local nuclear expansion, promoting renewable energy sources, the campaign to protect Antarctica and actions to highlight corporate power.

The FoE Australia network grew quickly from 1973 onwards. In particular the first bike ride against uranium, which converged on Canberra, built FoE's profile to such an extent that, in the words of *Chain Reaction* editor Richard Nankin, 'we now work in overcrowded offices, with people coming and going at all hours, the phones always ringing madly'.

In the first few years of its existence, FoE grew almost exponentially, and it probably took a few years for the network to develop an agreed structure that could cope with rapid growth while maintaining the independent local groups as the core of the organisation. FoE was, after all, more of a network than a single entity.

Uranium was a dominant issue throughout the 1970s. Massive anti uranium campaigning led to the ALP changing its policy from one that supported uranium mining in 1973 to one of complete opposition to mining, milling and export by 1978. In 1975, the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, commonly called the Fox Inquiry, was established. FoE's submission to the inquiry was 300 pages long and was praised by the Commission for its thoroughness. According to *The Age* newspaper, it was the FoE submission that "mostly shaped the major qualms expressed by the Fox report". It continued,

"at the moment, FoE could rightly claim to be the most potent environmental group in the country". Throughout the inquiry, FoE published *Uranium Deadline*, a six weekly 32, page resume of nuclear news and details on campaign activities. In 1976, controversial documents on uranium contracts were leaked via FoE to the Ranger Inquiry. The report of the Inquiry was presented in May 1977 and, despite the best efforts of FoE and many others, recommended that the Ranger uranium mine be allowed to proceed. The mine was opened in 1981 and remains a constant target for FoE activists.

The period from 1974 to 1977 saw particularly concerted action on nuclear issues. Alliances were built with trade unions and other social groups. In most states, FoE was involved in forging broad anti-nuclear umbrella organisations such as the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE). Uranium dominated national level activity with the Fox Commission's Ranger Inquiry, national ALP conferences, various state elections and a tour organised by FoE of the prominent renewable energy advocate, Amory Lovins.





In 1975, anti-uranium activists visited the Ranger Uranium mine site at Jabiru. Organised by the Environment Council of the Northern Territory, FoE activists made up the bulk of the team that toured the area, debated with the mining company and met with traditional owners.

Paul Marshall of FoE in Queensland later commented of a meeting with representatives from Oenpelli, *'the Oenpelli people present at the meeting were as pleased to hear of our efforts to stop uranium mining as we were to hear of their opposition to uranium mining on their land.'* The alliances and information sharing between greens and Indigenous communities now often taken for granted had their basis in these types of visits.

French nuclear tests in the Pacific in the mid '70s provoked strong community resistance in Australia and FoE was involved in an array of direct mobilisations and protests against the tests. Rolf Heimann took his yacht to join the protest flotilla at Muraroa Atoll. His book, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, was published by FoE and gives an insightful 'activist travelogue' of opposition to the testing

and deeper issues of cultural and political independence in the Pacific.

From 1977 until 1984 nuclear campaigner John Hallam worked from the FoE office in Melbourne, providing consistent input to all relevant inquiries relating to uranium. This included detailed critiques of the Jabiluka Environmental Impacts Statement (EIS) of 1978, the Koongarra project (1979), the Yeelirrie proposal put forward by Western Mining Corporation in WA and the Roxby Downs project in SA. In each of these, the reputation for detail established by FoE in the Ranger Inquiry was reinforced. These mining projects continue to be a focus of attention for contemporary anti-nuclear activists and the collective efforts are making a real difference – recent times have seen mining plans for both Yeelerrrie and Jabiluka halted.

While much attention was placed on official inquiries and processes, there was also a great deal of community mobilisation and direct action. The Fraser Government cancelled FoE's federal funding because it was involved in anti-uranium protests at the Glebe Island shipping terminal.

Apart from working on the direct impacts of the nuclear industry on Indigenous communities, FoE also developed links and found common ground with various communities across the country.

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act of 1976 was an important step forward in securing rights for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. FoE put submissions to various claims such as the Warlpiri and Kartangarurra-Kurintji claim, which was heard in Alice Springs in 1978. FoE argued in favour of the Tanami sanctuary being ceded to the traditional owners without any restrictions, stating that this would ensure good ecological management and recognition of Indigenous rights.

From its beginning, FoE identified over-consumption as a key driver of the ecological crisis. It was an early advocate of what came to be called the conserver society, a system that would prioritise 'being' over 'having' or consuming. This proposal is essentially based on the concept of the 'steady state' economy – an economic system that would find other indicators of health than just economic activity.

These views formed the basis for many of the later, although greatly de-politicised, concepts of sustainability. In an editorial in 1976, *Chain Reaction* magazine explained that *"underlying the nuclear debate ... there is the more fundamental question concerning the desirability or otherwise of continued economic growth, with its associated industrial expansion and rising levels of energy production. We argue that this growth ethic is one of the root causes of the environmental crisis"*. This understanding meant that FoE worked not only on immediate political campaigns but also used an approach that attempted to foster systemic and profound social change.

The international energy crisis, triggered by the OPEC countries increasing the price of oil in 1973, created space for serious discussion around renewable

sources of energy. FoE and *Chain Reaction* magazine in particular played a significant role in advocating for energy conservation, alternative energy sources and ways to restructure cities to make them less energy consuming.

In 1975, FoE campaigned against massive high rise developments in inner Sydney, in support of the famous Green Bans. FoE highlighted the fact that Sydney City Council supported the developments even though their own environmental impact assessments opposed them. Robert Tickner, convenor of the FoE urban campaign and later the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, announced a campaign to *"expose who was backing the council. The aim of this campaign [was] to obtain open government and responsible town planning in NSW"*. The Green Bans marked a highly successful and significant stage in the development of environmentalism, trade unions and broader social movements in Australia, and were responsible for saving large areas of Sydney from inappropriate development.

Protests against the supersonic and incredibly expensive airliner, Concorde, flared briefly. In 1975, FoE staged a 'sit-in' in the toilets at Melbourne airport during a visit by Concorde after the Coalition government breached federal environmental legislation by announcing a decision to allow Concorde flights into Australia before a final Environment Impact Statement had been produced. This simple action was met with a hysterical reaction – from the three families that control commercial media in Australia.

The Age newspaper ran an editorial urging FoE to *"step out of the toilets"* and the Federal Minister for Transport threatened to sue FoE for \$1 million over its leaflet 'British Airways is taking Australia for a ride'. The Concorde flights were never economically viable and the phenomenon of 'super sonic' travel was short lived.

CHAIN~REACTION



THE RANGER URANIUM BLUES.....

autumn 1976

vol.2 no.1

friends of the earth australia

\$1.00

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SERIOUS STUFF, THERE WAS FUN AND MUSIC

Some Recollections Of The Early Days Of FoEA

Geoff Evans

Geoff was FoEA National Liaison Officer, 1976-77

In the mid '70s I was studying environmental science and conservation at Canberra College of Advanced Education (later Canberra Uni). A group of us students decided we wanted to give voice to our alarm about the issues we were studying and the growing concern we had about the destruction happening around Canberra, including the clear-felling of the South East forests around Eden for woodchips and the rapid choking of Canberra's air by the car.

We visited Moss Cass, the Whitlam government's Environment Minister, Australia's first, and his staffer Peter Ellyard suggested that we form a FoE group because of FoE's growing reputation of combining militant activism for social justice with rigorous and credible research.

We formed a campus FoE group, and then found another already based out of ANU and so joined FoE Canberra.

The Radical Ecology conference, in Melbourne in 1975 was a key event that brought together environmentalists, unionists, scientists, socialists, anarchists, urban activists, hippie ratbags, students, to analyse and celebrate the global ecology movement, including the pioneering struggles of Australia's builders labourers' Green Bans.

The big eye-opener for me at the Conference was the emerging global struggle against the nuclear power, and Australia's connection through proposals to develop uranium mines in the Kakadu region of the NT.

The conference concluded with Australia's first street march against uranium mining, and we novices from Canberra were so fired up we leafleted all the passengers on the Inter-Capital Daylight train taking us back home, with what was possibly Australia's first mass leafleting on the uranium threat.

The Radical Ecology Conference was where we connected with Peter Hayes, Neil Barrett and others who coordinated the Melbourne and National office of FoE Australia out of a tiny house in MacArthur Place, Carlton.

The FoE Australia network was getting established, with groups forming in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth as well as Melbourne and Canberra. Even Darwin had a FoE group, with an outpost camp at the proposed Ranger mine-site occupied by a man known as Strider, who'd send regular despatches.

The FoE Melbourne office moved around the corner to a terrace on Nicholson St, Carlton and the legendary FoE food coop was established and *Chain Reaction* published.

The Bike Ride Against Uranium to Canberra was a major action in FoE's early days, challenging the Whitlam Government's flirtation with a uranium bonanza driven by the Minister for Energy, Rex Connor. Hundreds of riders rode up and down the Hume Highway from Melbourne and Sydney, holding meetings in small towns along the way, and eventually converging on Parliament House in mass demonstrations, and possibly Australia's first 'mass mutation', in which hundreds of us lurched across the frosty lawns of old Parliament House up the very steps of the venerable House.

FoE led the anti-uranium campaign nationally in its earliest days, and played a crucial part in bringing together a national coalition against uranium mining, which managed to hold the line on three mines for nearly 30 years. The uranium issue consumed much of the energy of our activists, but we still had time for campaigning against logging, freeways and whaling, and other issues.

I became the National Liaison Officer (NLO) after finishing my studies, and built from the ground-breaking work of David Allworth, who kept the best files and had the most persuasive phone-manner imaginable.

I moved from Canberra and based myself out of the FoE Sydney office, a three storey terrace in Crown St, Surrey Hills, leased by Robert Tickner, then an Aboriginal legal aid lawyer and soon to be Deputy Mayor of Sydney and later Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Hawke/Keating government .

My work as FoE NLO was greatly assisted by Tom Uren, then Deputy Leader of the Opposition and before that the inspirational Minister for Urban and Regional Development in the Whitlam government and prominent anti-nuclear and urban protection activist.

In the midst of the serious stuff, there was fun and music.

During the protests at the International Whaling Commission in Canberra in 1977 a 10-metre blow-up whale was floated on Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra only to be carried by wind across the Lake to land smack-bang in the middle of a freeway we were also campaigning to stop. The next morning the whale was inflated in the hotel hallway outside the rooms of the Japanese delegation (who were leading the charge to increase killing quotas) only to be brutally hacked to ribbons by hotel staff. By the afternoon hundreds joined a funeral procession through Canberras' Civic centre accompanied by a lamenting brass band.

FoE activists were also engaged in bitter struggle to drag the Australian conservation

Foundation (ACF) from a conservative, nature conservation-focused organisation to one that focused on a broader set of issues, and linked ecology with union, women, indigenous and gay struggles, and challenged the economic and political structures driving unsustainable lifestyle.

Many FoE Sydney activists were squatting in Darlinghurst, in soon-to-be demolished houses in the pathways of soon-to-be-built inner city freeways. Others were camped at the gates of the Lucas Height reactor. The nuclear campaign in Sydney reached its high point with the series of blockades of the wharves at White Bay, protesting shipments of yellowcake from Lucas Heights being secretly spirited out in massively guarded convoys of trucks speeding through Sydney's suburbs in the dead of night, only to be exposed by an elaborate network of activists alerted by the Lucas Heights campers, and mobilised through elaborate 'phone trees' that could get hundreds of protesters to the wharves within an hour.

In Darwin the wharfies had refused to load the first shipments of yellowcake from Ranger, and the Railways Union, after banning shipments from the Mary Kathleen mine in Queensland, led the campaign within the ACTU to stop new mines.

FoE Brisbane ran a food coop and urban eco-living centre in West End, and was organising bikeway and public transport campaigns and was heavily involved in the campaign for the Right to March and the Right to Organise and Protest. These were to uphold the democratic rights to protest uranium mining, abuse of Aboriginal, women and gay rights, union busting and other basic rights being stifled by the Bjelke Petersen government's campaign of mass arrests and fines of dissidents.

Yes, FoE in the '70s was an exciting mix of ecology, solidarity and sexual politics. It marked the 'punk era'. The spirit of radical grassroots education, organising and activism. What marked FoE's early days still lives on.

In 1976, there was a strong campaign against the Newport power station in Melbourne, where the State Government used the Vital Projects Bill to threaten trade unions opposing the project with fines of \$500,000. FoEM collaborated with affected unions, stating that the unionists had been “standing firm on Newport and the principle that it is every citizen’s right to clean air” (as well as throwing light on basic energy usage/ wastage).

Somewhere around 1975 or ‘76 the National Liaison Officer (NLO) position was created. David Allworth was the first person to fill this role, followed by Geoff Evans from 1976 to 1977. The NLO position was developed to facilitate communication between the local groups, help new groups to become established, and undertake political and administrative functions for FoE Australia.

In the 1977 barricades were thrown up on Alexandra Parade in the inner suburb of Collingwood (Melbourne) to oppose the construction of the F19 (later renamed the Eastern Freeway). With strong community support, this campaign was a key activity. In the same year, FoE Victoria was

for FoEM. When Fitzroy and Collingwood Councils, which strongly opposed the freeway extension, brought the issue to a head by narrowing the intended approach road to the end of the freeway, the State Government reacted “*furiously, by taking the road out of the councils’ control and calling in 400 police. The ensuing guerrilla war raged for six weeks, with residents making a significant impact on the Government and the police making 58 arrests and causing several very serious injuries to demonstrators*”.

(Chain Reaction, 1977).



Protests to prevent Jarrah forests being cleared for Bauxite mining, Western Australia, . May 1979



“Music on the Blockade’ F19 (Eastern Freeway) campaign, Collingwood, Melbourne, 1977



'At the Barricades' - F19 (Eastern Freeway) campaign

established, to better co-ordinate the activities of the many local groups across that state. An executive committee (ECOM) was set up to help co-ordinate activities, maintain links with the rest of the Australian FoE groups, and support new groups (general meetings of the combined local groups had ultimate decision-making power). Peter Veljens, Max Smart, John Andrews, Mark Carter and Linnell Secomb were appointed to the first ECOM. Neil Barrett, Alison Parks and Emma Young were also key people in the organisation at this time and contributed strongly in terms of organisational development during the first few years of FoE's operations in Victoria.

FoE was also growing beyond inner urban areas with groups forming across the country. As a blue collar mining town, Port Pirie hardly fits the bill as a traditional enclave of environmental activism. Yet a group of concerned people in the area got together to campaign on the radiation risks from the tailings dams and set up a FoE group in 1977. There had been very limited remediation of radioactive sites by the State Government and FoE felt that community pressure was required to force

the government to take responsible action. Among those who established the group were Ian Hall, Ally Fricker, Judith Sherry, Harm Folkers and Tinky Folkers and the respected FoE veteran Bert King. In 1981, exceptionally high tides breached the wall of the tailings dam and some materials were flushed out to sea. As a result of FoE's lobbying of the Minister of Mines and Energy, the dams were eventually stabilised in 1982 by being covered with a metre of slag from nearby mines. FoE then turned its attention to lead, as the smelter was too close to the town and posed a considerable health risk.

According to long term FoE activist Bert King, *"much controversy led to tighter controls over lead burning materials passing from the smelter into the town environs"*, which had been leading to *"lead absorption and especially, possible harmful effects on children"*. Bert summed up the approach of the group, which reflects a broader FoE perspective on campaigning by noting that *"the lessons were that citizens must join together at grassroots level on local issues [and] put pressure on politicians. FoE proved to be the medium for this."*

During this period, mining companies



Long term FoE activist Bert King

began to jostle for access to Antarctica - the 'last great wilderness'. International campaign activity focussed on gaining a treaty or convention that would stop any commercial operations on the continent. FoE published *Antarctica: World Law and the Last Wilderness*, by Keith Suter, and together with the ACF and other groups, formed ASOC - the Antarctica and Southern Oceans Coalition to co-ordinate international action to protect Antarctica. Antarctica is controlled by the Antarctica Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCP), a self-governing group that includes Australia.

There is a key treaty that governs activities in Antarctica, which deals with the treatment of animals. The ATCP attempted to establish a treaty to manage non-living resources: the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctica Mineral Resource Activities. FoE and other NGOs opposed this proposal from the start, fearing that it would allow a foothold for mining on the continent. The campaign, waged in the public realm in Australia and through international meetings where negotiations occurred over the treaty, was a success. The Madrid Protocol that followed banned mining for at least 50 years. A more narrowly defined treaty on mining was also

defeated in the late 1980s.

The campaign against commercial whaling in Australian waters was as successful as the one to protect Antarctica. FoE was one of the few official parties to the Inquiry into Whales and Whaling in 1978. Following the announcement that the last whaling station at Albany (WA) was going to close down, FoE campaigned for a whale sanctuary in Australian territorial waters, a ban on the import of whale products and for Australia to take a proactive role in international forums to secure global protection for all species of whale from commercial operations.



The anti whaling, campaign by FoE and other groups led to the end of whaling in Australia, 1970s.

THE WHALING CAMPAIGN

Dr. Peter Brotherton

The bike wheel was so mangled it could have made one of those impossible skid marks you see on 'Slippery When Wet' signs. For several years it hung on the wall of the Environment Centre of Western Australia, captioned 'In the memory of three Friends of The Earth who ran into each other 25 km north of Albany, 26 January 1976'. As it was my bike wheel, I remember that Australia Day much more clearly than my then lack of patriotic fervor would normally permit.

The three cyclists who collided so spectacularly were part of an 800 km protest ride from Perth to Albany, port of Australia's last whale-killing fleet. It was one of many actions undertaken by FoE until Australia stopped slaughtering whales in 1978.

FoE began in Australia in 1972, the year following the landmark United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at which the great whales became the unofficial symbol of humans estrangement from the planet. The initial concern over the plight of the whales came after populations and species were hunted to commercial and, in a few cases, actual extinction. However, as the campaign developed worldwide, this was profoundly influenced through growing understanding of the majesty and intelligence of these extraordinary creatures.

The first time I heard the sounds on the radio I had no idea what they were, but the longer I listened I grew more convinced that it was communication in an incredibly complex way. Upon learning that it was a humpback whale I knew I had to do something to help whales swim free of human tyranny (oh dear, not another one of those early 70's hippie conversion experiences!)

FoE established its whale campaign under the banner of Project Jonah. At quite an early stage we recognized that there were some people passionately concerned about the plight of the whales who weren't, unfortunately, in the least bit passionate about some of our other major campaigns, such as anti uranium. The game plan was to establish Project Jonah as a separate single-issue group, while FoE would continue to work on the issue as part of its broad suite of campaigns. I acted as coordinator for a couple of years while that transition occurred.

Over the next few years we did all the things you'd expect of an activist campaign: picketing whaling nations' consulates, dawn

services outside the Albany whaling station, displays and (limited) dialogue in the Albany town hall, media, education, petitioning, lobbying, bike prancing, and so on. By 1997-78, polls were showing around 90 percent of Australians opposed to whaling, although it was only about 50-50 in Western Australia - a long way from the vehement pro-whale sentiment there now.

The Fraser Government announced an Inquiry Into Whales and Whaling in 1978, and FoE was among the handful of official major parties to the Inquiry. Members of FoE Perth and then Chain Reaction editor Barbara Hutton were there in Albany on the freezing opening day of the Inquiry, when the whaling company announced it was going to shut down by the end of the year.

It got even better. FoE continued its active participation in the Inquiry as it moved to other cities, pursuing our other goals: a whale sanctuary within Australia's territorial waters, a ban on importing whale products, and for Australia to pursue with vigor the protection of whales internationally. The inquiry reported strongly along these lines and successive Australian Governments have adopted a pro-whale stance.

As witnessed at the recent International Whaling Commission meeting Adelaide in July 2000 the last vestiges of the commercial whaling industry are being clung to tenaciously in Japan, Norway and the North Atlantic, and the arguments seem not to have changed in 20 years. Distressing indeed, but I'm just optimistic enough to believe we can see the end of this industry from bygone centuries sometime in the next 20 years, although I fear it may be towards the end of that period.

Dr. Peter Brotherton is a Director of Sustainable Solutions Pty Ltd, an environmental consultancy specialising in energy and materials efficiency, greenhouse, eco-design, environmental education and public involvement processes. He is Vice-President of Australian Conservation Foundation. When his hair was brown and his body skinny, he worked for Friends of the Earth as an anti-nuclear/energy worker and National Liaison Officer.

Originally published in Chain Reaction, #83, Winter 2000

ANTARCTICA: No Cold War at the South Pole

Keith Suter

The future is never as bad as you fear and never as good as you would like. After 25 years of campaigning to preserve Antarctica as an international wilderness, the result is a good one. But we were hoping for an even better one.

In my Friends of the Earth books on Antarctica, I argue that Antarctica should be proclaimed as an international wilderness area, run under an international system, with no mining on the land and no oil drilling or fishing in its waters. After years of campaigning we have ensured there will be no mining or oil drilling in Antarctica, but the living resources in the Antarctic waters are still being over exploited.

Antarctica is controlled by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs), which is a self-governing group comprising the original claimants of the region, which includes Australia. All attempts to change this unique control system to create a more democratic International organisation have failed.

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources is a treaty which governs the treatment of the living animals in Antarctica, but it is not fully observed. When the ATCP's finalised this treaty in 1982, they decided to create one on non-living resources to be titled the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities.

FoE and other non-government organisations (NGOs) opposed this treaty project from the outset as it would have allowed a foothold for mining in the region. We were ultimately successful, when public opinion forced the ATCP's to stop work on the treaty and instead create the Madrid Protocol, which banned mining for at least 50 years (effectively forever).

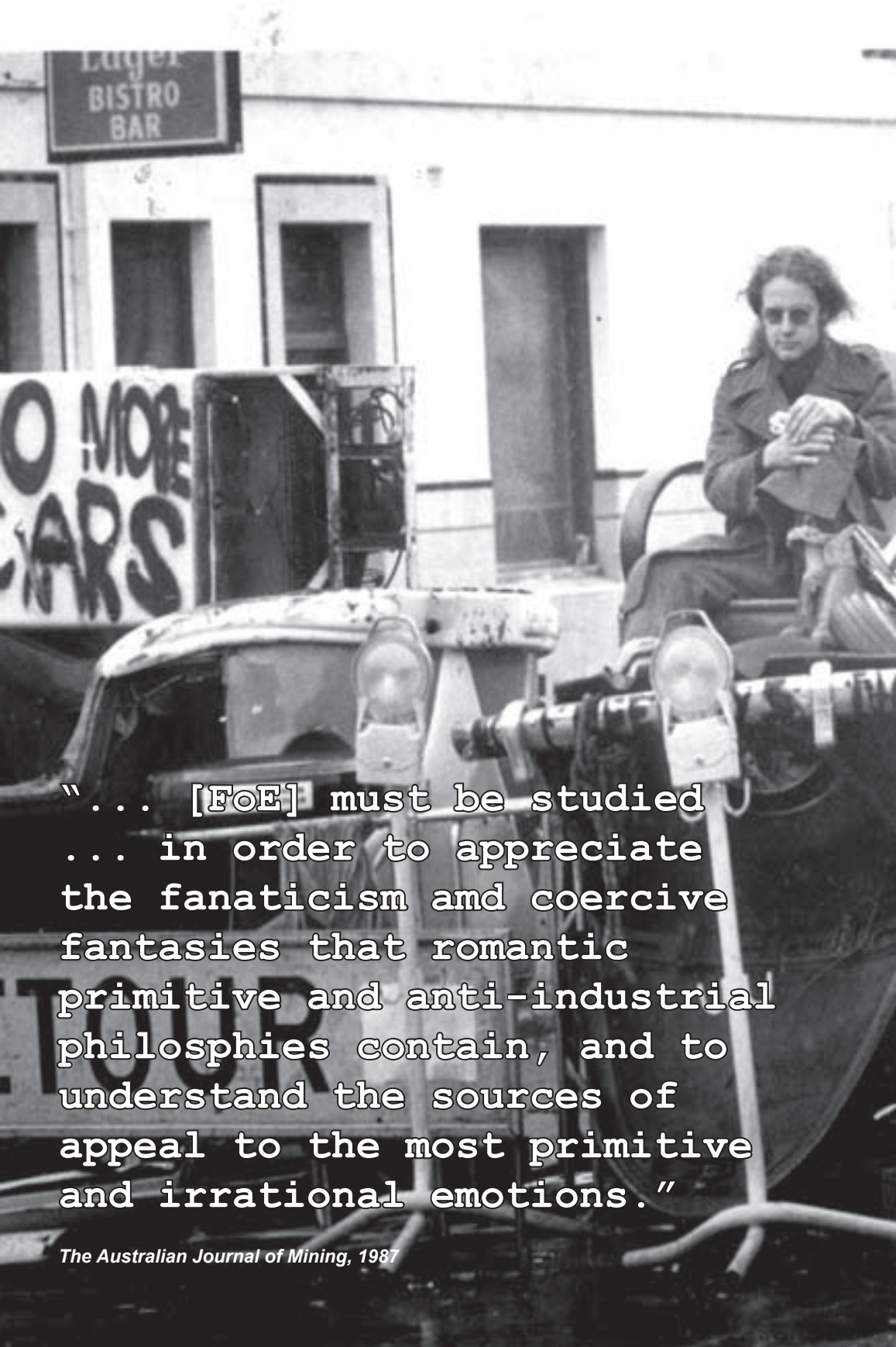
We were good opportunists. We knew how to make the most of each incident. The mining treaty is probably the best example of this. It had seemed at first that the mining treaty, opened for signature in November 1988, would go ahead. Its defeat was one of the environment movement's greatest successes in the 1980's.

FoE and other NGO's were able to make the Antarctic issue come alive. We were able to convince people that the ATCP's could not be relied upon to run Antarctica out of the public eye. This encouraged a new era of transparency in which governments were becoming accustomed to being far more accountable for their policies.

Antarctica remains a de-militarised zone, with no nuclear weapons, the military under civilian and scientific control, and probably far greater international co-operation than any other place on Earth. There was never a cold war at the South Pole. People learned to work together or they would perish separately.

There are still some challenges ahead, including the need to create a more democratic international system for controlling the continent. We also have to safeguard against its being 'loved to death' with too many tourists eager to visit it, but overall we can be pleased with our campaign. We may not have 'saved' Antarctica completely – but we certainly didn't 'lose' it.

Keith Suter was FoE (Sydney) International Law Adviser in the 1970s and 1980's and is the author of Antarctica: Private Property or Public Heritage? Originally published in Chain Reaction #83, winter 2000.



"... [FoE] must be studied ... in order to appreciate the fanaticism and coercive fantasies that romantic primitive and anti-industrial philosophies contain, and to understand the sources of appeal to the most primitive and irrational emotions."



The Nuclear Campaigns of the 1970's

A Personal Memory

John Hallam

I first became aware of FoE via Peter Brotherton in Perth about 1975. FoE was then largely known for its stand against nuclear power and the nuclear fuel cycle generally was responsible for bringing to Australia the 'General Electric Three', three engineers who had resigned over safety issues from nuclear reactor - manufacturer General Electric, and of course, Amory Lovins.

Lovins particularly impressed me with his technically detailed yet crystal clear analysis of nuclear power in particular and energy policy in general. I believe that the Lovins impact on energy policy will likely stand for many decades: already his predictions concerning nuclear proliferation in India, Iran and North Korea are all being proved correct and we are having to live with the dangerous consequences of ignoring his advice about the proliferative nature of nuclear technology.

What put FoE Australia on the map at that time came just a little later, with the Ranger Inquiry into nuclear power and uranium mining, which sat from 1975 till 1977.

I joined FoE in Melbourne in May 1977, as the second report of the Ranger inquiry was published. FoE's impact on that Inquiry via the efforts of people such as Wieslav Lihacz, Paul Marshall and Neil Barrett was profound.

The other major activity of FoE at that time which made a big impact on the consciousness of the activist community was the various bike-rides to Canberra where literally thousands of bike-riders made their presence and their opposition to the nuclear fuel cycle known.

The Ranger Inquiry was followed in quick succession by environmental impact statements (EIS) for a number of uranium mines, including the Koongarra Project, PanContinental's first Environmental

Impact Statement (EIS) for Jabiluka, WMC's Yeelirrie project in WA, the first EISs for Honeymoon and Beverley, the Ben Lomond project near Charters Towers in Queensland and finally in the early 80s an EIS for the largest uranium orebody on the planet at Roxby Downs. Most of these projects, with the exception of Roxby Downs and Beverley, have thankfully never seen the light of day.

Much of FoE's activity and most of my own work consisted of commenting on various uranium project environmental impact statements. Over time one can trace a process of consistent deterioration in the quality of EIS's and in the standards by which they were to be judged. The



overall quality of the EIS and the downright rotting of the EIS process was a major issue for FoE at the time. I clearly remember doing commentary on the first EIS for the Beverley in-situ leaching project which seemed unable to tell the difference between feet and metres, had columns that were supposed to add up but didn't and which claimed that 'clay confining layers' would prevent the escape of the leach solution despite a detailed diagram conclusively showing that the clay confining layers didn't exist. That particular EIS was unceremoniously rejected. I believe that it was due to FoE's efforts that the majority of those uranium projects proposed during the 1970s never went ahead.

A major factor in FoE's opposition to nuclear power has been the issue of reactor safety. The Browns Ferry accident in the USA in 1975, where two large reactors were brought close to meltdown due to a fire caused by technicians checking for air leaks with a candle, reinforced our belief that reactors were not safe. What really convinced the public that the likes of FoE were right in relation to nuclear power was the Three Mile Island accident of 1979.

I clearly remember the day it happened because I was in the FoE Fitzroy office when the phone rang. It was John Speight, the trade-unionist chair of the Movement Against Uranium Mining. I had not at that time looked at a newspaper or listened to the radio and did not know quite what to make of his urgent directions. *"Get yourself a newspaper immediately and I'm picking you up and taking you to 3CR"*.

I didn't even need to open the newspaper as the headline screamed in black letters

'Death Cloud Spews from Atom Plant, Women and Children flee'

I recall that the next week was basically interview after interview.

The Three Mile Island accident is largely forgotten now as it was eclipsed by the much more serious Chernobyl disaster. However it is good to remember that it did more than anything to halt the growth of the nuclear power industry, especially in the US. In Australia it cemented a public consciousness that anything to do with nuclear power was indeed bad news.

Three Mile Island was the first complete nuclear core meltdown in a full-scale power reactor and it happened in the USA where it received maximum publicity. Its regulatory and safety impact rippled out over the nuclear industry worldwide forcing increased attention to safety and ultimately crippling the industry.

CHERNOBYL

If Three Mile Island had crippled the nuclear industry, Chernobyl was perhaps the Coup de Grace.

When Chernobyl took place in April 1986 it violated everything that we as nuclear power safety critics had been taught or thought we knew about nuclear power plant safety. We would say that *'A nuclear power plant can undergo a core meltdown like Three Mile Island - but a nuclear power plant can't blow up like a bomb'*.

Seems we were wrong. Nothing prepared anyone for how bad Chernobyl was going to be, though a look at some of Andrei Tarkovsky's science fiction movies might have helped, with lots of deserted industrial wasteland and a spreading environmental catastrophe.

Chernobyl as a media story seemed to grow over a period of days, with reports of vast amounts of radiation coming out of Ukraine, the pinpointing of the radiation to a specific reactor, a mad scramble to find out about the RBMK reactor type and the discovery of International Atomic Energy Agency reports that vaunted the safety of this reactor type over that of the Pressurised Water reactor that had given us Three Mile Island.

I remember the attempts of the nuclear industry to portray Chernobyl as something that only the awful Russians could do and my own media interviews in which I pointed out that the lack of a containment was shared with roughly one third of US reactors, one half of all Japanese reactors and virtually all UK reactors, that the 'positive void coefficient' was a property of all Canadian reactors and that the graphite moderator was shared with all UK reactors, as well as some French and German ones.

It was in the days immediately before widespread access to email and the internet and the only way you could get hold of vital information was to go to the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's library and read the technical literature there. Much desperate cramming took place on Soviet reactor types in the immediate wake of Chernobyl with the nuclear industry trying to present the problems as purely Soviet or Russian ones, and with our role being to point out the fact that safety problems are inherent to the technology per se. The lesson was clear and needed to be communicated – Chernobyl was not a "Soviet" failure, it was a failure of the nuclear industry worldwide.

Much of this came in handy later on in 1996 and 1997 when I worked on safety issues in Russian reactors in Slovakia and Ukraine for Friends of the Earth International under the watchful eye of Paxus Calta. Our efforts on safety at Rovno and Khmel'nitsky induced the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to 'decide not to decide' on a \$1.2 billion loan package.

I believe that FoE's efforts in the wake of Chernobyl did much to ensure that domestic nuclear power will never be contemplated in Australia, and to reinforce the public antipathy to nuclear that already existed from Three Mile Island.

Worldwide, Chernobyl put paid to any immediate prospect that nuclear power would ever be a serious solution to

global warming, and I believe that public antipathy is so great that even now, moves to revitalise the nuclear power industry are doomed to failure – although as the industry gets more desperate its attempts to re-invent itself as an answer to greenhouse pollution are again on the rise.

Nuclear Weapons

FOE Sydney's first involvement in the nuclear weapons as distinct from the nuclear power issue came in 1995 when we essentially became the organisers for the 1995 Bastille Day Rally against French nuclear testing that attracted some 30,000 people.

Initially the rally was set up by a committee that met in the home of Jenny Black. There were in fact three organisers - Cameron Edwards from People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND), Jenny and myself, with Cameron the principal organiser.

Cameron decided to go to the United States in the middle of organising the rally and two weeks before it was due to happen and in time honoured movement fashion deputised me. As the principal organiser I had the joys of dealing with the police who were entirely reasonable and with whom I never had any problem and with Sydney Town Hall who were like a chapter out of one of Kafkas more demented novels.

The culmination came with being asked by the police to lead the demonstration away from the townhall. I had a teeny weeny loudhailer with a dodgy battery. I hadn't done this before. I had a dozen or so politicians to get behind a banner that had been placed where we thought the start of the rally would be but which turned out to be the middle.

Somehow, the politicians got behind the banner with Bob Brown and Peter Garrett shepherding people. In front there was a single police car and then more media than I had ever seen before. Then there

was me, walking backwards and petrified that I'd fall over a camera cable.

Then there was a huge banner with a dozen politicians followed by 30,000 people that seemed to go on forever.

The only thing that has beaten that event since was the march of 500,000 people that brought Sydney to a halt in protest at the Iraq war.

This was a spectacular introduction to the nuclear weapons issue, and over the years 1995 - 2000, nuclear weapons have come to dominate my own campaign activity.

From 1995 to 2000 FOE Sydney and FoE Australia did considerable lobbying work at a parliamentary level in which we managed to get the Australian Senate, firstly via Jo Vallentine and later via Lyn Allison to pass a series of resolutions urging the government to support a series of important international nuclear disarmament measures. This involved supporting the New Agenda Coalition in the UN General Assembly and the CTBT, and finally passing two resolutions urging that strategic nuclear weapons be taken off Launch-on-Warning status over the Year 2000 rollover.

What cemented a conviction that nuclear weapons are a clear and present danger and that they are indeed about the end of the world was working on an international campaign to take strategic nuclear weapons off Launch-on-Warning (LoW) status over the December 1999- 2000 (Y2K) rollover.

This campaign resulted in a letter to Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton from 520 organisations worldwide representing millions of people, the two above mentioned Australian Senate resolutions, and a unanimous resolution in the European Parliament urging that nuclear weapons be removed from LoW status.

Since that time FoE's nuclear weapons campaign has resulted in letters from millions of people to President Clinton

on Missile Defence - a letter that Clinton responded to two weeks later by actually announcing decisions that were more or less what we had asked for, but which have since been reversed by President Bush.

Further international letters followed to the Indian and Pakistani governments urging them not to incinerate each other, an 'early day motion' in the UK parliament (the most heavily subscribed early day motion ever) urging the same thing, and letters and motions on the US/ (DPRK) Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) nuclear standoff. There was also a massive letter in May 2000 addressed to every NPT signatory plus India, Pakistan and Israel launched in Canberra by Senators Brown and Allison and the current federal president of the ALP, Carmen Lawrence asking the last NPT Review to urge the nuclear weapons powers to abide by their Article VI obligations. And that was more or less the result that the last NPT Review came up with.

Current priorities are the upcoming (NPT) Nuclear Proliferation Treaty review (Year 2005), the upcoming session of UN General Assembly, North Korea, India and Pakistan and the possibility of renewed US nuclear testing.



THE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH RIDES AGAINST URANIUM

(1975-1977, 1981 & 1982)

John Englart



I grew up with the threat of global nuclear war. My father, as a member of the allied occupation forces, had visited Hiroshima and seen the nuclear devastation with his own eyes. As a teenager I participated in letter-writing, vigils and protests against the French Nuclear Tests at Moruroa Atoll. I remember the news in 1972 of the Greenpeace III being rammed, boarded and impounded at Moruroa by the French Navy. The following year saw a flotilla of peace ships picket downwind in the nuclear test zone: Fri, Spirit of Peace and Greenpeace III. They were met again by the violence of the French State, a precursor to French agents blowing up the Rainbow Warrior in 1985 in Auckland harbor.

I am not sure when I started attending meetings of Friends of the Earth and 'joined' the organisation. Sometime in 1975 is likely. I attended at least one meeting in an upstairs room in a terrace in Crown Street, Surrey Hills. The building later became the FoE Sydney office and bookshop. Robert Tickner, later a Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Hawke Labor Government, was at that meeting. The campaign against uranium mining was still in its infancy and was primarily about educating the community about the risks and dangers of uranium mining, and the nuclear fuel cycle.

I was never one of the 'core members' of FoE Sydney, being heavily involved in other radical grassroots activity, so I somehow missed being involved with the first Ride Against Uranium. This was held in May 1975 from Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney to Canberra and attended by about 150 riders. This ride and the subsequent rides in 1976 and 1977 were organised by Friends of the Earth and provided an opportunity for a national meeting to co-ordinate activity.

I first joined the ride in 1976. The ride was a moving joyous protest and celebration of the bicycle, and the potential for solar and renewable energy as opposed to the dangers of uranium, nuclear power, and nuclear weapons proliferation. It was a

festival on wheels, before the modern era of city critical mass bike rides and the 'great' touring rides now organised by Bicycle Victoria and other cycling organisations. We did street theatre in the Atomic Energy Commission Lucas Heights Visitor Centre, in front of wharfies on their smoko in Port Kembla, and on the streets and towns on route to Canberra. We convened public meetings wherever we could. It was a way to educate ourselves in energy use and environmental practice and engage with the communities we passed through.

Support vehicles accompanied the rides, to carry packs, food and cooking equipment, bicycle spares, educational materials, and to pick up anyone falling too far behind. While in Wollongong, local FoE activist Col Pollard and I attended a meeting with South Coast Trades and Labour Council Secretary, Merv Nixon. The Trades and Labour Council assisted the ride with a truck to help transport many cyclists up the steep Illawarra pass to Moss Vale. It was a concrete symbol of the growing concern in the labour movement about uranium.

By the time the ride reached Yass we were a dedicated team who talked politics, enjoyed doing rhythmic drumming rounds, and eating the great vegetarian food (while some of us also looked forward to a hamburger at the next cafe stop). Many of those over 18 attended pubs in the towns we stayed in to talk to the locals (mostly only men in the pubs) and sometimes to provide music and anti-uranium songs as entertainment. Music and songs were important to our movement, just as they have been important in many previous social movements and campaigns. Yass was where we met up with the Melbourne riders. It was a mingling of tribes who had been traveling for 9 days. A melting pot of music, food, politics, laughter and cycling stories. A cyclist's corroboree.





The May 1977 Anti Uranium ride to Canberra. The bike ride converged on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra



The final day of riding, from Yass to Canberra, was a mass of bicycles. In 1976, over 350 people had ridden from Melbourne, and another 70 from Sydney. Local cyclists from Canberra swelled the numbers further. It was a tremendous feeling coming over Commonwealth Avenue Bridge occupying the full three lanes of the road. The police had set up a road block, but cyclists simply raced across the lawns to set up the tents in front of parliament house, where we were welcomed by activists from the Aboriginal Embassy.

While in Canberra, there were visits to the Aboriginal Embassy on Mugga Way, protests in the public gallery of parliament, street theatre in Civic and on the steps of parliament, and a cycle tour of embassies engaged in the nuclear cycle, including the USA, Great Britain, USSR, Germany, France, and Japan. Evenings were spent around a campfire drum singing songs and talking to visitors and tourists. Even the odd politician came over the road to join us for a while: former Minister in the Whitlam Government, Tom Uren, came up to me and said we were doing a good job and to keep it up!

Melbourne always managed to have more riders than from Sydney, which

is surprising given the longer distance involved. The 1977 ride against Uranium from Sydney was large enough for three different routes. Riders from Melbourne also took different routes in self-sufficient decentralised groups. Eight cyclists were arrested when the cyclists arrived in Canberra due to confrontational tactics by the police. The ride was definitely proving popular and a powerful manifestation of the campaign to Stop Uranium Mining.

For three years no rides occurred, although educational activity and direct action protests kept the issue public. For example, in Melbourne there were demonstrations on East Swanston Dock of ships carrying yellowcake. In Sydney I was arrested during September 1977 in civil disobedience protests in the middle of the night at White Bay Container Terminal to stop the export of Uranium yellowcake. Late at night convoys of trucks with a police escort left the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor near Sutherland, and traveled at high speed through innercity Sydney. Several hundred people were mobilised by telephone trees and attempted to stop the trucks reaching the wharf through non violent direct action. Mass arrests and quite brutal police attacks on demonstrators occurred which made front page news not only in Sydney but around the world.

In late 1980 a couple of people who had organised the FoE Rides Against Uranium 1975-1977 - Mary Elliott was one - approached me about another bike ride. We felt the issues needed more public discussion and it was time for another ride. The 1981 Ride Against Uranium in support of trade union bans, Sydney to Canberra, didn't have endorsement of any environmental organisation, although FoE Sydney provided informal support. According to a leaflet, Cliff Dolan, President of the ACTU, spoke at the start of the ride in May 1981.

It was a smaller affair, about 30 people, but it was a cohesive group. The rides have never been solely about serious politics, there has always been an element of having fun and looking after ourselves and the environment. We traveled first to Lucas Heights, where we spent the night outside the AAEC Nuclear Reactor, then over the Blue Mountains and down through Oberon to Goulburn, Bungendore, Queanbeyan and Canberra.

Although it was a small group, there was great dedication. A permanent camp was setup on the parliament House Lawns called the Atom Free Embassy, which persisted through the Canberra winter until 71 police attacked and dismantled the embassy on July 31st 1981, using a 1932 ordinance for only the second time, in scenes slightly reminiscent of the removal of the Aboriginal Embassy in July 1972.

The Atom Free Embassy became an itinerant protest, but it had already spawned another idea: a World Bike ride for Peace, Disarmament and a Nuclear Free

Future, which later became known as the Woobora tribe. I was there when the idea of an epic anti-nuclear bike ride to Darwin was discussed, but never participated. The Atom Free Embassy travelled to Melbourne to protest outside CHOGM in October, and to Sydney for a one week vigil in Martin Place and the World Heritage Council meeting at the Opera House, to Adelaide to launch a boycott of BP, and even outside the UN building in New York. It used these events to promote the 6,000 km ride from Canberra to Darwin, via Brisbane, Townsville and Mt Isa: the start of the World Bike Ride.

In Canberra on March 6, 1982, Aboriginal elder Gabu Ted Thomas handed over a message stick to fifty cyclists in Canberra to take to the world. Women at an International Women's Day rally presented a scroll symbolising the opposition of women to war and violence. Five months later forty four cyclists rode into Darwin. My photo album that documented some of the rides against Uranium was carried on the ride. A couple of years later the album found its way, somehow, back to me. After Darwin ten cyclists went on to Japan visiting the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and attending a peace



The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power.

conference. Other cyclists travelled around south east Asia. In 1983 and 1984 the ride continued through Europe, with reports being published in *Chain Reaction* by veteran FoE Townsville activist, Paul Marshall.

Whether independently organised or under the aegis of an organisation like Friends of the Earth, rides against uranium continue to be held: from the Ride to Roxby (1984 - Sydney, Adelaide to Roxby Downs), to the Cycle against the Nuclear Cycle (1998 - Melbourne, Adelaide to Jabiluka Blockade). The rides are about providing an alternative vision. They are educative of both the participants and the people they meet and interact with. And they are about people taking personal responsibility for

their lives. They are both serious and fun. They are about living life and taking care of each other and the earth.

The original Rides against Uranium left a legacy of interest in cycling and cycle touring which is manifested in the non-political 'Great Victorian Bike Ride' and the anarchic convergence of cyclists as critical mass in our cities. I am proud to have participated as a lifelong Friend of the Earth.



Meeting Sydney and Brisbane Riders Here
 Mon 17th COOTAMUNDRA
 Sun 16th WAGGA WAGGA
 Adelaide and Perth Riders Join Us Here
 Sat 15th CULCAIRN
 Thurs Rest Day Here 13th and 14th ALBURY
 Wed 12th WANGARATTA
 Tues 11th BENALLA
 Mon 10th SEYMOUR
 Sun 9th KILMORE
 MELBOURNE
 Leaving City Square 12 noon
MAY 8

By-pass Home
 Hundreds Of Riders
 Riding On Canberra
CANBERRA
 Demonstration Of Alternative Energy

RIDE AGAINST URANIUM

STOP
 URANIUM MINING

MELBOURNE TO CANBERRA
8-19 MAY 76

ORGANISED BY
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
51 NICHOLSON ST.,
347 6630 **CARLTON**

1980's

In the 1980s, there was a shift to more targeted solidarity campaigning with the rise of the Food Justice Centre, the struggle against apartheid, links with liberation struggles in Latin America and elsewhere, and growing campaigning on Australian indigenous issues. With the backdrop of the cold war and nuclear proliferation, peace and disarmament issues received greatest attention during the later 1980s.

In 1982 there were 20 local groups and FoEA accepted a new constitution which acknowledged local groups as the focus of operations. This seems to mark a shift in the way FoE operated, away from a focus on national collaboration towards more locally focussed activity and greater

strategic engagement with other social movements.

Chain Reaction declared this a year of "gloom or guts" and Frank Muller noted that "there is a clear sign that the anti-uranium movement is entering a period of renewed activity and broadening support. There is a rising tide of concern throughout the community at the increasing likelihood of nuclear war. This will be an important new focus for the movement requiring some redirection". He noted however that there were also pressing domestic issues with two new uranium mines at Ranger and Nabarlek in the Northern Territory, and that this had a "dampening effect on the movement." But while the Fraser government was fiercely pro nuclear, there had still been substantial gains. He believed that the anti nuclear movement could refocus, consolidate and continue to move forward. He noted that the trade unions would be a very significant part of the struggle in the coming years.

Given the expansion of the nuclear industry in Australia and the global proliferation of weapons as a result of cold war tensions, there were widespread street level mobilisations and attempts to influence government wherever possible. Local councils were a focus of a campaign encouraging them to declare themselves nuclear free zones and FoE hosted the Nuclear Free Zones Secretariat for several years.



Shipboard protest against nuclear weapons, Melbourne, early 1980s.



Peace flotilla boat, protesting visits by US warships, Western Australia.

In the early 1980s plans to place nuclear weapons in NATO countries created an enormous resistance across Western Europe that reverberated here in Australia. It can be argued that the older anti uranium movement and the rising disarmament movements were similar and inter-connected, yet essentially different. In this simplistic analysis it can be said that FoE was more grounded in the anti-uranium movement.

FoE's most significant contribution to disarmament was based on the understanding that nuclear weapons needed to be sourced from radioactive materials (uranium) and the greatest contribution to world peace that Australians could make was to break their involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle. Hence FoE's campaign work aimed to halt the mining and export of uranium from Australia. The Hawke government was elected in 1983 on the back of the Tasmanian 'no dams' campaign. While initially proactive on a range of environmental issues, its policy was more mixed on the question of uranium mining. There was discussion at the FoEA national meeting in 1984 about the most effective way to influence

the party. Some felt that the best course was to become involved in lobbying ALP branches in order to help maintain grassroots opposition to uranium and to pressure the party leadership into actually implementing existing policy. Hawke was supportive of an extension of uranium mining and everyone knew they faced an uphill battle to stop the looming expansion of the industry.

In late 1983, barely nine months after it had been elected, Federal Cabinet voted to allow the development of the Olympic Dam mine at Roxby Downs in South Australia and the continuation of the Ranger mine in the Northern Territory (NT). This marked a departure from what many believed was stated in ALP policy – the phasing out of existing uranium mines and a ban on the establishment of new ones. Blockades followed, at Honeymoon in SA in 1982 and Roxby Downs, in 1983 and '84, organised by an umbrella grouping called the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia (CNFA). These actions concentrated on 'hindering and frustrating' work at the mine, in order to delay completion and to raise community awareness.

The Australian Mining Journal noted that FoE played a 'leading role' in these blockades. Through this time, the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE), originally set up by FoE and others in 1975, played a pivotal role in organising opposition to uranium mining in South Australia (SA). It wound up in 1987 after 12 years of existence and creative resistance. Indigenous land rights and impacts on groundwater from WMC's Olympic Dam mine have been continual and unresolved issues since the mine was opened. There were suggestions of 'back door deals' being done between the mine proponent, WMC (formerly Western Mining Corporation) and selected Aboriginal groups.

In 1984, the SA Government awarded the operators of Roxby Downs a special water licence that allowed the mine to extract up to 33 million litres of water a day from the Great Artesian Basin (GAB). Even at lower actual use rates, critics maintain this has been causing 'irreversible degradation' of the Mound Springs, a complex of unique arid zone wetlands created where the GAB comes to the surface near Marree in SA, and a general reduction in water pressure across the Basin.

In the Wimmera region of western Victoria, a subsidiary of CRA gained approval to begin the 'demonstration' phase of a major mineral sands mining project. This could have led to commercial operations covering more than 40,000 hectares of land, with huge impacts on land and both surface and ground water systems. FoEM worked with a broad coalition of anti-nuclear and environmental organisations and farmers groups to defeat the larger proposal.

In 1983, plans were also floated for leach mining of gold in Victoria. CRA and other mining companies were hoping to extract gold in 'deep leads' – underground ancient river beds, by dissolving the gold with chemicals, then pumping the slurry to the surface for processing. FoEM worked with the Aboriginal Mining Information Centre as part of a successful campaign to stop



The first blockades at Roxby Downs SA, 1983.

this destructive form of mining.

In 1984, the ALP government in Victoria, under the leadership of John Cain, signed a joint venture agreement with the multinational Alcoa over plans to build an aluminium smelter at Portland in the far west of the state. A site at Point Danger was selected on a section of coastal heathland and adjacent to the town itself. This area was of significance to the local traditional owners, the Gournditch-Jmara people. There was an occupation of the site from September 1980 and a successful High Court challenge, but sadly the site was bulldozed, Aboriginal artefacts were destroyed and the smelter was subsequently built.

Over this period, FoEM played a key role in a major community campaign that focussed on the impacts of lead petrol on children's health and mental development. This resulted in petrol with a decreased lead content being introduced in Victoria in 1983. At the same time, the Hazardous Chemicals Collective, influenced by a number of people including Clare Henderson, Clive Rosewarne and Paul Di Masi, campaigned on issues including the bulk chemical facility located at Coode Island in Melbourne's inner west and undertook ground breaking work on the threats posed by dioxins.

Issues of gender and sexism remained a constant theme within FoE in the 1980s. *Chain Reaction* acted as an important

forum where differing opinions could be aired. In a series of letters and essays, many women expressed opinions like that of Margie Kaye, who said *“the environment movement over the last 10 years has continually failed to examine sexism within its internal structures”*.

A number of women declared that the lack of action meant they would no longer work in the green movement. This debate helped fuel internal tensions. In 1982, Denise Chevalier wrote on behalf of FoE Collingwood *“we ... are not happy about several aspects of the latest Chain Reaction”*, highlighting the fact that *“many women ... feel insulted”* by an article by Kimberley O’Sullivan that said that sexist behaviour was rife in FoE and the broader movement. *“We, the women at FoE, have fought hard for what we have achieved. We have far more women than men working with us. The women are now at the fore in the decision making in all our campaigns”*.

FoE’s strong and growing emphasis on social justice was not appreciated by everyone, *“I am dismayed at the shift in CR from environmental towards social/ political issues such as feminism and homosexuality”* wrote one reader in 1983. However, in general there was a clear



LEAD FREE PETROL

The campaign to stop the addition of lead to Australian petrol was a major success for Friends of the Earth and its style of campaigning. In the space of two years, a community campaign, spearheaded by FoE and funded by local government, managed to completely reverse the situation relating to the sale of petrol in Australia. Despite extravagant lobbying by the oil and lead industries, environmentalists managed to stir public concern and persuade the federal and state governments to adopt a program involving the reduction of lead levels and the introduction of lead free petrol by mid 1985.

Friends of the Earth played a major role in co-ordinating the campaign nationally and producing educational materials for distribution. Stickers, booklets and multilingual leaflets were produced and widely distributed to child care organisations, local councils, governments bodies and the general public. A regular newsletter played an important role in keeping interested people informed of the latest developments in what turned out to be a very complex debate. FoE’s ability to mobilise people, to organise meetings, demonstrations and street stalls was very important in mounting a continuing campaign. The skills that had been picked up by campaigners on previous issues were vital to the success of the efforts to convey the anti lead message in the mass media.

This victory and the alliances built in reaching it, lead on to other campaign work, including lead in baby food, industrial pollution, indoor air pollution, occupational exposure to lead and the need for quick action on the reduction of lead levels.

From an article by Andrew Herrington, Chain Reaction.

sense that these issues formed a part of the 'core business' of what FoE should be doing. Perhaps the issue here is as simple as the observation that one magazine cannot be everything to everyone, and the same is true of any organisation. As a social justice environmental activist organisation, FoE attracted many people from the left; socialists, anarchists, former communists, proto-type greens and eco-feminists among others. Given the divergence of social movements that was happening throughout the 1980s, internal conflict and differences of opinion were only to be expected. This was a time when the women's, peace, environment, land rights and trade union movements were becoming increasingly isolated from each other. Although traumatic at the time, the fact that FoE continued to thrive in spite of this speaks volumes about the organisation.

In 1984, CR magazine organised a series of meetings aimed at discussing strategies for achieving a 'socialist ecology' (eco-socialism). A backdrop to these discussions was the meteoric rise and equally dramatic fall, of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP). The NDP was set up in June 1984 as a single issue party with the aim of giving 'concerned Australians an opportunity to show our politicians ... that priority must be given to nuclear disarmament'. Its key demands included:

- **Closure of all foreign military bases in Australia;**
- **Prohibiting the stationing of nuclear weapons or passage of nuclear weapons through Australian waters or airspace;**
- **Terminate all mining and export of Australian uranium.**

The ALP had recently re-endorsed its pro-uranium policy at a rowdy national conference where protest over this issue dominated the headlines when a surprise election was called for December 1984. The NDP attracted 10,000 members and

branches formed around the country. Through a combination of grassroots dynamism and the involvement of high profile Midnight Oil singer Peter Garrett as one of the Senate candidates, the NDP achieved remarkable media profile and national impact. It received almost 500,000 first preference votes for its Senate candidates and its first Senator, veteran activist and peace builder Jo Valentine, was elected in WA. As a consequence of a last minute deal that saw the ALP and the Liberals agree to exchange preferences, Garrett narrowly missed out on a Senate seat in NSW. Robert Wood became a Senator for the NDP and the FoE group on campus at Macquarie University worked closely with him on many issues relating to disarmament.

A national conference was called for the following autumn (April 1985) in an attempt to consolidate advances made in the election and clarify the NDP's party structure and policy. Many found this meeting confusing and disheartening and the Socialist Workers Party (the forerunners to the Democratic Socialist Party) was accused of trying to stack the meeting. According to Jonathon Goodfield of CR magazine, "*certainly their aggressive meeting tactics and presence as a voting bloc did little to ease tensions and allow open debate of differences*". Jo Vallentine and about 80 others staged a walkout on the third day of the meeting and eventually Vallentine, Garrett, Victorian Senate candidate Jean Meltzer and many others resigned from the party, with many accusing the SWP of a 'take over bid'. The SWP's Jim Percy responded by saying the split was over '*political differences in regards to strategies to achieve disarmament*'.

While many individuals felt greatly disillusioned by these events, others continued to explore non-party avenues for change and the notion of alliance building received prominent attention in the pages of *Chain Reaction* and among FoE activists. The future of the alternative and left movements was discussed at two conferences held in Sydney over

Easter 1986. The 'Broad Left' conference addressed the emergence of a 'more extreme and confident right wing in Australia and how the left could effectively meet this challenge'. The 'Getting Together' conference attempted to show "the common ground shared between the various faces of the alternative movements in Australia, and to find ways of using our common ideals to strengthen mutual support".

External influences also affected the organisation and broader environment movement in these years. On July 10, 1985, two mines exploded on the hull of the Greenpeace boat *Rainbow Warrior* berthed in Auckland harbour killing Greenpeace photographer Fernando Pereira. Green groups had to become more careful about infiltration and 'dirty tricks' campaigns. The threat of nuclear war continued and, as more activists became influenced by punk culture and disillusioned at the ability of mass mobilisations to have impact on big picture decisions, more spontaneous and disruptive actions such as 'Stop the City' protests started to occur.

In Melbourne, Young People Against Global Violence organised the first 'Stop the City', targeting the stock exchange, WMC and other sites to 'expose the role of financial institutions in their ... profitable business of militarism and oppression.' These actions were consciously anarchist in style and structure. Cold War conflicts and the threat of nuclear annihilation continued, yet these issues were seen by many in the broader community as either a remote threat or one about which they could do nothing.

In terms of global politics, the *Australian Journal of Mining* (AJM) suggested that in the struggle between the USA and the USSR, FoE was effectively on the side of the Soviet Union: "it is part of a network of peace organisations which regard the USA and the multinationals – and not the USSR – as the prime threat to world peace". The article failed to explain why FoE responded so strongly to the Chernobyl disaster

Public forum
**global perspectives,
local action**

Featuring Friends of the Earth (FoE) speakers from around the world, including:
Celeda Rice - Gabriel Rivis Ducos
United States - Andrea Durbin
Paraguay - Cecal Rivis
England, Wales & Northern
Ireland - Ronnie Hall
Ireland - Victor Khazon
Ghana - Theo Anderson

The forum is a unique opportunity to hear environmental & social justice activists from around the world.
Guests are encouraged to stay on for a cuppa and chat afterwards.
Full international annual meeting is being held in Fitzroy from November 26 - 28th. FoE has member groups in 38 countries and is the largest federation of environmental organisations in the world.

For more information
Friends of the Earth
PO: 2171-A-0201
TAXI 241(0201)
foefitzy@bigpond.com.au

Sunday 29th November
2 - 5pm @ Ecovarsity
Australian Conservation Foundation
340 Gore St, Fitzroy

In 1998, FoE Australia hosted the international network for the fime.

beyond claiming that previously FoE had viewed the Soviet nuclear program as being 'socialist' and therefore 'good'. The AJM's conspiracy theory approach to the role of environmental groups and particularly to FoE continued when the Journal also claimed that some articles in Chain Reaction contained 'many Soviet disinformation themes'.

As the decade wore on, waste minimisation in general and recycling in particular grew as issues. The FoE recycling campaign, through the efforts of Fran McDonald and Murray Keeble carried out excellent work in this area. The dominant campaign of the time focussed on demands to legislate for deposits to be paid on drink containers. South Australia

was (and remains to this day) the only state with Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) and the beverage industry fought a long and well funded campaign to ensure this situation continued. FoES mounted a strong argument about the employment benefits that would be created through good recycling and CDL, estimating that an extra 3,000 jobs would be created in NSW if CDL was to be implemented in that state.

FoEM established the Recycling and Employment project (funded by the Victorian Ministry of Employment and Training), which carried out research into the employment potential of recycling schemes. FoE campaigners remained cautious on the issue of a proposed litter tax put forward in 1984 because of the possibility that it would, in Richard Nankin's words, "victimise consumers" without "addressing the problems of wasted resources and energy and the serious disposal problems created by throw away packaging".

In approaching its campaigns, FoE consistently placed simple issues in a deeper context of consumption, social implications and political structures.



Urban or 'brown' issues were consistently covered by FoE activists during the eighties, while traditional biodiversity issues continued to dominate public debate. Ian Watson, in *Fighting for the Forests*, wrote that "urban issues have always been poor cousins in that family of issues which have pre-occupied Australian conservationists" but noted that "FoE, the most socially radical of the environmental groups of the 1970s and 1980s, regularly analysed major urban issues".

The profile of FoE started to wane in the mid and later part of the decade, partly as 'environmental' concerns became more narrowly defined. Forest campaigns were the dominant priority of much of the movement and received the bulk of media attention and funding throughout the 1980s and 90s. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society, through the brilliantly successful Franklin River campaign in 1983, transformed itself into The Wilderness Society (TWS), with branches across the mainland. In true form, FoE's main published contribution to the Franklin River campaign was a cover story in *Chain Reaction* on employment in Tasmania, which drew the conclusion that 'building dams destroys jobs in other sectors of the Tasmanian economy'.

As other groups gained profile on more popular and 'sellable' biodiversity issues, FoE continued to plough on



with its work on waste minimisation, uranium, hazardous chemicals and high temperature incinerators. Other groups that did similar work, particularly the ACF and Greenpeace, were large enough and balanced enough by their 'traditional' green campaigns that they were able to continue to build profile and influence while FoE's national presence waned.

They also had larger infrastructure, more aggressive membership programs and separate fundraising departments. FoE, in contrast, neglected to establish this type of infrastructure and prioritised decentralised action over consolidation of functions. It is interesting to imagine what may have happened if FoE had 'professionalised' its fundraising, lobbying, and membership development functions – as was happening elsewhere in the movement at this time – while maintaining its radical structures and politics.

In spite of decreased national profile and influence, FoE's campaign work continued to yield results. As one example, the efforts of David Vincent and others on recycling were significant. FoE was an early and consistent voice calling for the setting of national targets for a recycled materials purchasing policy.

As forest blockades at Nightcap, the Franklin, Daintree, Errinundra in eastern Victoria, and elsewhere captured the public's attention in the early and mid 1980s, some in FoE expressed concern at what they saw as a backwards step in the development of the environment movement in Australia. This related to a growing tension that saw middle class 'greenies' setting themselves against working class people from the timber industry.

In many ways, the conflict over forestry operations became the benchmark of what the broader community perceived as 'environmentalism' in the 1980s and much of the '90s. Some in FoE felt that direct action in the forests was 'anti worker', 'elitist' and 'highlighted the wider environment movement's lack of

strategy for social change, isolation from other social movements, and lack of understanding about the processes which bring about environmental destruction'. Faced with an increasingly disinterested and unresponsive Federal Government, many activists decided to focus the bulk of their attention on those implementing forest policies, rather than on those who were setting them.

Earlier class-conscious, socially engaged environmental activism, as epitomised by the Green Bans and Environmentalists for Full Employment, was increasingly being eclipsed by an apolitical analysis and middle class environmentalism. FoE grappled with these changes and sought to continue broad-based alliances outside the increasingly narrowly defined green movement.

Uranium mining operations at Ranger continued with FoE, the ACF and other groups keeping a watchful eye on



"FoE is one of the biggest pack of ratbags anyone ever put breath into. FoE is communist dominated and funded from Russia. Its aim is to disrupt as much of Australia as possible"

Councillor H M O'Halloran
Strathfieldsaye Shire, Victoria



Dave Sweeney talking at the FoE International meeting, Melbourne, November 1998

the situation until the mid 1990s, when plans to release contaminated water from tailings dams into the wetlands of the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park sparked broader community awareness. The Federal Government had denied a previous request in 1987 by Energy Resources of Australia to release contaminated excess water held on the mine site. This decision was widely regarded as an attempt to maintain the green vote in an election year. But, with the environment disappearing as a significant issue in federal politics, and many in the ALP believing that the green movement would have to remain closely aligned with the ALP because they had 'no where else to go', it was getting harder to achieve environmental outcomes.

This new announcement about the release of waste water helped refocus Indigenous opposition to the existing Ranger mine and raised concerns about future mining operations planned for the region. A new generation of Indigenous people were coming forward to campaign for their country, including John Christopherson and Christine Christopherson who spoke on behalf of their uncle Big Bill Neidjie.

hbDave Sweeney, an anti-nuclear campaigner with FoE Melbourne began to visit the region, laying much of the basis for the relationship that eventually manifested as the alliance between the Mirrar people and environmentalists that culminated in the famous blockade at Jabiluka in 1998. Dave, who had come

NUCLEAR EXPOSURE TOURS

Ila Marks

The first Nuclear Expose Tour was organised in 1990, six years after the Roxby Blockades of 1983 and 1984 where hundreds of people blockaded and hindered the establishment of Olympic Dam Operations, the copper/uranium mine at Roxby Downs in northern South Australia. During these blockades people had the powerful experience of seeing a uranium mine and listening to Aboriginal people who were opposed to the mine. Blockaders also had the opportunity of showing their opposition to uranium mining in creative, colourful and sometimes dramatic ways.

It was in this tradition that the idea of Nuclear Exposure Tours evolved. The Anti-Uranium Collective at Friends of the Earth organised the tours with the aim of letting people witness and experience the nuclear industry at first hand, to see and walk on the country affected, hear what Aboriginal people had to say, learn about the anti-nuclear movement and strengthen opposition to the nuclear industry. We wanted to give people the opportunity to support traditional owners in their opposition to the nuclear industry, for tour participants to return to their colleges, work places and communities with the story of their experience and to encourage them to play a role in the anti-nuclear movement.

The first tour was carefully planned and with members of the Friends of the Earth anti-uranium collective doing a "dry-run". Such a trip was not new; members of the collective had been visiting the Mound Springs area in northern South Australia and working with the Marree/Arabunna community since 1987. The Mounds Springs are 120 Kilometres north of the Olympic Dam copper/uranium mine at Roxby Downs. Water for the mine, metallurgy plant and town was, and still is, being taken from the Great Artesian Basin and unique springs have dried completely and others have had a drastic reduction of flow. A trip to the Springs area naturally led to a round trip to the Roxby Downs town, mine and tailings dam. Members of

the anti-uranium collective were becoming familiar with the springs and Roxby; this was another motivation for the tour, to share this experience with other people in an organised and constructive way.

The "dry-run" was important because permission was needed from traditional owners for camping in their country and information on culturally appropriate behaviour. They also needed to meet with communities they would be passing though to organise joint actions against nuclear activities in their areas. These included CRA's proposed mineral sands development near Horsham in Victoria and the Rare Earth Tailings dump at Port Pirie. Later tours took in the Beverley Uranium Mine and the Honeymoon Project, and at the invitation of the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, camping at Ten Mile Creek just out of Coober Pedy. In more recent tours the proposal for a low to intermediate level nuclear waste dump in the Woomera area has also become a focus.

In organising the tours we endeavoured to make them more than just an out-back adventure, we have organised public meetings on radiation exposure levels at the Roxby Downs Community Centre, leafleted the entire town on workers' and community health issues, produced a performance at the Woomera Primary School that involved all of the students as well as the people on the tour, and organised many stalls and actions with local environmentalists.

Following a tour in 1996 the participants formed a collective and organised the 'Roxstop Action and Music Festival' in 1997, where over 300 people gathered at Roxby to protest against the expansion of the mine. Here they hosted a public meeting attended by over 120 people with the United States epidemiologist Dr David Richardson as the key note speaker talking about his work and the effects of low level radiation exposure on nuclear workers. Roxstop also included an exhibition of paintings by the Melbourne Artist Lyn Hovey in the Roxby Library. After three days at Roxby the protestors moved to Alberrie Creek on Finnis Springs Station where a music festival was held over three nights to celebrate the Mound Springs, while during the day there were cultural

workshops and tours given by members of the Arrabunna community including Reg Dodd and Kevin Buzzacott.

In August 1998 the collective that had organised Roxstop received a fax from the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta saying, "*We're trying hard about this rubbish - the radioactive waste dump. We don't want that.... We want your help! We want you to come up here to Coober Pedy and have a meeting with Aboriginal people (and any whitefellas from here who want to come)*". In September that year a group of over 12 people travelled from Melbourne to Coober Pedy, held a public meeting on the dump and met with Aboriginal people.

Things did not always rum smoothly, one year we were stranded on the Borefield Road between the Oodnadatta Track and Roxby Downs with forty people and three buses for one night when the road became impassable due to rain. Another time at Mambury Creek in the southern Flinders Ranges emus raided our camp and scattered cereal, bread and fruit over the campsite while people were in Port Pirie at a protest. And there have been high-lights: the first time the Kungka Tjuta invited us to Ten Mile Creek just outside Cooper Pedy; the moon rising over Lake Eyre South; the leaflet on workers' health and the effects of exposure to low levels of radiation; protesting outside the Woomera Detention Centre; seeing the representatives of the Honeymoon Uranium Project squirm as participants asked questions about the chemical structure of the waste solution to be pumped back into the aquifer; and being warmly greeted by members of the Adnyamathanha community at Nepabunna even though we were four hours late.

There have been many great and rewarding outcomes from the Nuclear Exposures Tours, but what stands out and must be acknowledged is the strengthening of close working relationship between Aboriginal communities with both Friends of the Earth and many individuals who have taken part in tours. Every person who has gone on a tour has had an amazing, memorable, never-to-be-forgotten experience and many of the participants from various tours have made a considerable contribution to the anti-nuclear movement.

from a community radio background, also helped FoE's efforts to build strong relations with trade unions, other indigenous communities and other social movements that were resisting the nuclear fuel cycle.

At a time where there was limited attention on nuclear issues in Australia, FoE activists kept pressure on the domestic industry, focusing on existing mines in SA and the NT and highlighting various proposals to further expand the industry. Ila Marks, Linda Marks, Jan Whyte, Eric Miller and others from the Melbourne anti-uranium collective made regular trips to the region around Roxby Downs in SA, working with local traditional owners to catalogue the ecological costs of WMC's Olympic Dam mine, particularly the mine's voracious demand for ground water. They reported on the impacts on the Mound Springs, 'already degraded by pastoralists and poor management and maintenance in the past'.

In 1987, the ALP was re-elected to power, signalling an even harder and more limited path for achieving an end to Australia's involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle. FoE was excluded from negotiations between the party and environmental 'heavies' before the election and, given the political climate of the day, these meetings failed to secure any great advantage for the environment. According to many party officials, Bob Hawke was interested in the centre of the electorate, and felt he could take the support of the left for granted. Federal Cabinet seemed immune to any argument on the environment. In the days before the creation of a national Greens party, this again raised the possibility of a red/green electoral alliance that could potentially force the main parties towards an anti-nuclear and pro environment position.

1988 was the Bicentenary of European settlement of Australia and was marked by a year of major protests by Indigenous people and their supporters. FoE activist and poet John Renshaw labelled the Bicentenary 'the year of shame' and was

one of around 45,000 people who joined the survival day march in Sydney on the day of the re-enactment of the first landing of Governor Phillip at Botany Bay.

Around this time, three noticeable trends intersected to form a new and unexpected phase in the development of modern concepts of environmentalism. In a limited period, there was suddenly far greater media attention given to the environment, and this intersected with growing public awareness and concern for environmental issues, as well as with a growing number of famous people becoming vocal advocates for the environment.

These three interconnected phenomena created the brief wave of 'green consumerism' that marked the early 1990s. This 'third wave' of environmentalism was intensely non-political and primarily focussed attention, and hence 'blame', for environmental deterioration on individual consumption patterns. In this analysis, changing the purchasing choices of individual consumers was seen as the solution to environmental destruction.

While acknowledging the role of individual consumers as elements of both the problem and the solution to environmental deterioration, FoE cautioned against seeing this as being the core of the matter, as it potentially let big business and politicians 'off the hook'. FoE continues to argue that consumers' choices will always be largely dictated by the realities and options presented by the community and economy they live in. After a relatively short time, green consumerism subsided as a dominant force in environmental thinking. An unexpected benefit of this wave of concern was an unprecedented surge in membership of all green groups, including FoE.





1990's ... and into the new century

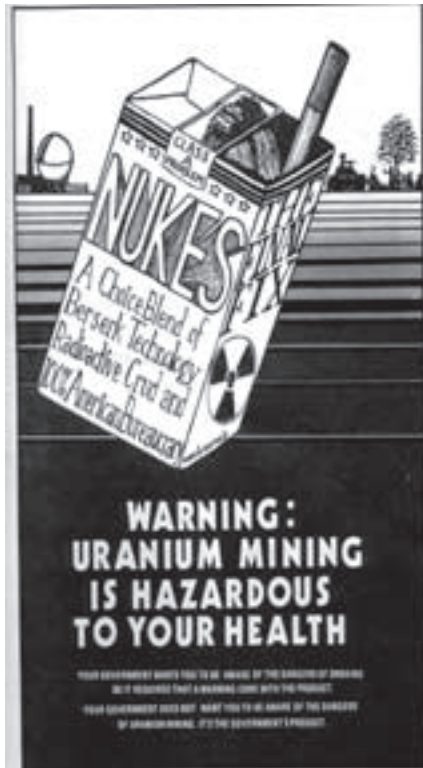
In the 1990s, nuclear issues continued to dominate, especially after the Howard government embarked on an aggressive expansion of Australia's nuclear industry following its election in 1996. FoE played a key role working with the Mirrar people to oppose the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine in Kakadu. Practical, campaign-orientated alliances with various Indigenous communities continued with campaigns against sand mining on North Stradbroke Island (Minjeribah) in Queensland and blockades of logging operations in western Victoria.

FoE's involvement in forest issues also became more prominent in this decade. In the early 1990s, FoE carried out extensive campaigns to ensure protection of high conservation forests around the country. This included helping to maintain the direct action camp on Fraser Island in the campaign that led to the end of logging on this island.

On a global level, as neo-liberalism entered a new phase with a systematic liberalisation of trade regimes, FoE's focus on trade issues grew dramatically, as did street level opposition to the structures implementing this agenda.

Community organising against corporate defined globalisation reached a high point with the massive protests against the World Economic Forum meeting held in Melbourne in 2000. Climate justice and climate change also became increasingly high profile campaigns in the later part of the decade.

A new round of international negotiations on trade occurred and FoEM took an active role in mobilising against these. FoEM was active in the successful campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which would have established a set of rules that would restrict what governments could do to regulate international investment and corporate behaviour.



In the early 1990s, the nuclear industry started to make public its plans for a long term storage site for radioactive waste, not only from Australia's research reactor at Lucas Heights, but also from nuclear reactors around the world. This issue simmered for the next decade, until plans by a company called Pangea Resources to locate a high level radioactive waste dump in Australia were leaked to FoE in England and then to FoE and other NGOs in Australia. This premature release of Pangea's plans led, soon afterwards, to the company closing its office in Australia. In terms of the national waste facility, both ALP and Coalition governments moved forward with plans for a low and medium level waste dump. In 1994, the Federal Government released a discussion paper outlining a selection process for the physical location of the waste facility. It identified eight possible locations. FoE and the ACF worked relentlessly to slow the process, using procedural intervention and external opportunities to highlight the flaws in the proposal, and calling instead for on-site, above ground storage of wastes.

Through his time as co-ordinator of the FoE Melbourne anti uranium collective and later as nuclear campaigner with the ACF Dave Sweeney has played a pivotal role in almost all anti nuclear activity from the late 1980s onward. FoE Melbourne activist Kathleen McCann, the designer of the anti-nuclear "Jabiluka" hand symbol, worked with Dave to increase FoE Australia's involvement in the FoE International network, attending FoEI meetings in Poland and Spain and acting as the International Liaison Officers for FoEA for many years.

Peace has always been a fundamental concern of FoE groups and in November 1991 the Australian International Defence Exhibition (AIDEX) was held in Canberra. Although billed as being in the business of selling 'defence equipment', this was effectively a trade fair for weapons manufacturers, and several thousand people demonstrated outside the National Exhibition Centre. Picket lines were established at all gates to the exhibition,

with each occupied by people of different political persuasions. As a result, tactics varied from classic Gandhian approaches through forest blockade tactics (tripods, etc) to stand up fights. The police presence was enormous. FoE did much of the organising of events and people from Melbourne helped co-ordinate actions at the blockades and run the camp established for the duration of the exhibition.

With a strongly non-violent, but non-dogmatic approach to actions, FoE was unpopular with some militant groupings and some practitioners of a narrowly defined 'orthodox' non-violence. FoE co-ordinated the 'environment action', which was called by some the 'non violent action' and which suffered from unsuccessful attempts to derail it. The AIDEX protest was important in significantly raising the profile of the arms industry, regional security and peace issues in Australia.

In the following year, FoE worked with a range of groups under the umbrella of the Disarm the Skies Campaign Coalition to organise actions outside the Aerospace Expo at Avalon, west of Melbourne ('AIDEX on wings'), handing out over 40,000 leaflets. In April 1993, a national protest action held outside the Nurrungar US base in the South Australian desert near Woomera saw close cooperation with the Kokatha traditional owners. It also increased public debate over the nature of our alliance with the USA and the deployment of troops to secure the base. This strong focus on militarism was influenced by many people including Dimity Hawkins, who co-ordinated the first ever banner drop off the Westgate Bridge in Melbourne in the build-up to the AIDEX actions.

In the early 1990s, a significant number of FoE groups were in rural areas, including Maryborough (QLD), Cessnock, Maitland, the Snowy Mountains in NSW, Willunga (SA) and Stanthorpe in southern Queensland. This was before the days of affordable, widely available internet access, and this geographical isolation



The 'Gungalidda embassy' outside the CRAAGM in Melbourne. 1994.

meant there was only limited connection between the groups. While there was a spirit of co-operation and a sense of being part of a national network, physical collaboration on specific projects was often quite limited. Despite this, FoE local groups carried out significant and often very diverse local campaigns, from physically blockading logging operations on Fraser island to the work of FoE Maitland in lobbying local councils on the need for municipal recycling programs and collecting, propagating, planting and maintaining indigenous vegetation.

In 1993, FoEM began working with Wadjularbinna, a Gungalidda woman from the Doomadgee community in the Gulf country of north Queensland. Many within the Gungalidda community were opposing plans by CRA to develop the Century Zinc deposit at Lawn Hill, about 250 kilometres north-northwest of Mt Isa. FoEM held actions outside the CRAAGM in Melbourne and raised the issue in the AGM itself as part of a campaign that ran for several years.

Largely through the efforts of Lee Tan, these campaign links developed into a broader informal alliance. FoEM activists subsequently helped establish the Bugajinda/ Moonlight outstation project which included the construction of basic facilities that allowed members of the Moonlight clan to visit their country on a more regular basis, acted as a base for a series of cultural exchanges and formed the beginnings of an eco- and cultural-tourism business.

AIDEX '91

Dimity Hawkins

(Australia's International Defence Equipment Exhibition) was billed by the defence industry and government as "the forefront of defence shows in the entire Asia-Pacific region". The Stop AIDEX campaign touted it as "Australians trading in death and destruction", certainly a little less of an up-pitch, but far more accurate.

AIDEX exhibitions were held in both 1989 and 1991, displaying wares from some of the largest and deadliest defence and offence contractors in the dead-heart of our very own capital city, Canberra. The '91 exhibition attracted a strong and sustained national focus of opposition and around 1,000 protesters to the huge 24 hour on-site protest camp from 22-28 November.

Context is everything and the context in this case was that AIDEX was held at the tail end of a year that had seen the first Gulf War rage short, sharp and furious across our TV screens and brought us marching to our feet (thirteen years later we are still marching to the same beat and the Iraqi people have endured twelve more years of continuing tyranny at the hands of their own leader along with sustained bombings and crippling sanctions from "coalition" forces before this current chapter in the sad tale).

It was also the year that saw the Dili massacre in East Timor. A nation whose plight was systematically ignored and belittled by the majority of our parliament and media, again in the name of that great political silencer, oil. For many, the Dili massacre brought to the fore the ugly and damning truth of the situation in Timor. (Again, how tragic that it took nearly another decade before the Timorese people could find freedom.)

With the Gulf War and the Dili massacre on our doorstep, many in the Australian community sat up and took particular notice of what our role was in warfare, both in our region and more generally. And generally, we didn't like what we saw.

FoE Melbourne played a big role in pulling together the response of people to AIDEX in '91, organising training and logistics as well as lobbying. Along with other anti-military groups around at the time, we held smaller protests outside of some of Melbourne's key war mongering institutions. We coordinated travel and sent a strong contingent to the protest in Canberra. There was even a huge banner drop off the Westgate Bridge with the simple message "Stop AIDEX".

AIDEX '91 was a huge success in that the Australian government and industry has never had the guts (or perhaps stupidity) to hold another exhibition of its kind so blatantly, even in these times when war mongering is seen as patriotic duty. However, AIDEX '91 also saw hundreds of people seriously wounded by the Australian Federal Police and hired security personnel. Several hundred official complaints (from broken bones, bleeding wounds, to wheel chair bound participants being thrown into the gutters) were made against the Australian Federal Police.

FoE has had a proud history in working on many issues and we should not forget that peace and disarmament have been some of the big ones. FoE Melbourne was seriously targeted, sustaining serious attacks, both physically and politically, for it's role in calling for a peaceful resolution of the Gulf War of '91.

The year following AIDEX'91, FoE Melbourne helped organise against the Aerospace Exhibition. This huge

exhibition, displaying aircraft and related technology, attracts weekend family crowds in their thousands, but also has a sinister underbelly displaying and selling military technology. In 1993, FoE Melbourne again joined with other national groups to organise thousands of people to attend a desert protest as part of the Close Nurrungar campaign, a desert-based US military spy facility, now obsolete and absorbed into Pine Gap. More recently, FoE helped coordinate the protests against the US spy base Pine Gap in 2002 and has been looking into the crazy missile defence proposal from the USA. And of course in the last few years FoE has joined with what many maintain are the majority of Australians who vigorously opposed the second Iraq War in 2003 and continue to do so as we go to print. FoE's participation in each and every one of these campaigns has been vital.

For many of us semi-old timers of FoE, all this anti-military, pro-peace rah-rah began with war and with the Stop AIDEX campaigns in either '89 or '91. Hours of footage exist on the 1991 campaign; stories abound; some scars may even still be evident. Ask around. FoE was there, as always. Flying the flag, never flagging.



Thousands of people descended on Canberra to shut down the AIDEX arms exhibition, 1991

Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 10 \$5.00



- **Roxby leaks**
- **Nuclear Tibet**
- **Privatising National Parks**
- **MOP-UP kicks the bucket**
- **Wildlife sell-off?**



**Government
holds
environment
to ransom**



In 1994, FoEM worked with the Kerrup Jmara community to set up a tent embassy in the main street of Portland, to protest endemic racism against the Aboriginal community and specific incidents of discrimination around policing and the provision of health services.

FoEA experienced a period of slow but persistent growth in profile and activity from about 1994. In recent years, FoE groups in rural and regional areas have become re-established including in Northern NSW, on the New England tablelands and at Stawell in western Victoria. Bridgetown – Greenbushes Friends of the Forests, a long established group working to protect native forests in south west Western Australia, joined the FoEA network in the late 1990s.

The 1996 Federal Election highlighted major differences between the approaches and values of key environment groups. Disillusioned with the ALP's inability to deliver on forest issues, The Wilderness Society (TWS) openly courted the Liberals, declaring the Coalition's announcement of its environment election promises, which were linked to the controversial partial privatisation of Telstra, a 'great day' for the environment.

The Australian Conservation foundation (ACF), with a broader social awareness and closer historical links with the Australian Labor Party (ALP), was more circumspect, labelling the policy as a mixture of 'the good, the uncertain, and the disappointing'. At a meeting with most of the key green groups in Canberra, FoE sought to unite the groups against the Coalition's approach, arguing that linking the partial privatisation of a public asset



FoE was one of the few green groups to voice opposition to the sale of Telstra.

with funding for environmental protection and restoration, was simply blackmail.

FoE also argued that the environment deserved core and assured funding, not drip feeds from asset sales. Although initially positive about this move, ACF later refused to sign a joint movement position. Unwilling to engage on potentially provocative social issues, some other groups argued that taking a position on the Telstra issue would be too difficult or simply that it fell outside their sphere of activity.

FoE was ultimately joined by the Arid Lands Environment Centre and the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra to denounce the Coalition's proposed environment package. A number of the national groups marked themselves as either being complicit in this 'privatisation by stealth' or completely lacking in social perspectives through their comments or positions at this time.

The director of the Surfrider Foundation stated '*(surfers) don't give two hoots about selling Telstra or economic rationalism, ...all we know is that we need money for the environment and we don't care how (the government) gets it*'. David Butcher of the WWF stated '*if it comes between telephones and the environment, I'd flog the phones every time*', and Alec Marr of TWS said '*it's an excellent package that deserves funding regardless of the sale of Telstra*'.



What makes these comments sadder in hindsight is the fact that the link between the Telstra sale and environmental funding was always artificial and later revealed as a 'cynical political fraud' by a senior government adviser who said that the link was created by Howard's staffers to make the sale more palatable.

The political trajectory of the Coalition's approach to the environment – that we 'are all environmentalists now' and just need to roll up our sleeves and get on with the job of ecological restoration – included re-casting the Peak Conservation Organisation. This was reconstituted as the NECF, the National Environment Consultative Forum, with an expanded membership of corporate funded and 'non political' organisations such as Keep Australia Beautiful and Clean Up Australia.

With the election of the Howard government, environment victories and gains through 'traditional' methods of lobbying the Federal Government became increasingly elusive. Many groups evaluated their campaign focus with some, for example the Wilderness Society, moving more towards investment-based activism and targeting the companies financing destruction of old growth forests. Others, including the ACF, expanded their contacts with the corporate sector, while some such as World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) and the Humane Society were able to develop useful links with the new government.

This period saw many of the larger environmental NGOs increasingly isolate themselves from broader social movements. As they sought 'unlikely alliances' with non-traditional partners and closer co-operation with various corporations, subtle political shifts became apparent. This was not uniform and certainly there were many exceptions to this trend. But it is clear that there was a pattern of increased collaboration between Environmental NGOs and corporations towards the end of the decade, a development that raised many questions about what environmental sustainability

meant and how we might be able to achieve it.

True to its political traditions, FoE was deeply suspicious of the motivations of some of the companies involved and the actual ecological value of many of the relationships forged during this period. Both bilateral arrangements between specific environment NGOs and particular companies, and the broader use of NGOs in verifying the environmental claims of companies, were considered to be problematic.

Journalist and commentator Bob Burton noted in an edition of *Chain Reaction* that focused on corporate engagement (#87) " ... often the tension between NGO's rhetoric of accountability and transparency, and the reality of passively engaging in corporate processes led to divisive internal conflicts resulting in the costly loss of staff and volunteers. Where once, independent campaigning would create conflicts with corporations, engagement transfers the conflict into and between NGOs."

More pointedly, Jim Green commented in the same edition that NGOs engaged in close collaboration with large corporations were actually "providing political cover for corporate polluters". On a simplistic level, some in the movement could and did dismiss FoE's concerns as being about 'old fashioned' views of the corporate sector. However, FoE's assessment of the dynamics that surfaced around the issues of corporate engagement focused on who the fundamental change agents in society are. It recognised that whilst many of those engaging had effectively decided that power rested with corporations, many others, who were more cautious about engagement, saw power as ultimately resting in the hands of communities. FoE argued that primary alliances between the environment movement and 'change agents' needed to be firmly focussed on community-based organisations.

While engagement can be seen as a pragmatic choice in a time of limited opportunity and hence just be considered

as a tactic amongst others, there were also philosophical underpinnings to this approach. The idea of 'green' or 'natural' capitalism gained considerable favour amongst some key individuals in the Australian environment movement and this helped create a political climate that encouraged collaboration rather than conflict with big business.

Reflecting growing links with a cross section of progressive unions and other social organisations, FoE joined with the Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Nursing Federation and others in 1998 to launch the Earthworker alliance. It aimed to be a 'non factional and non interventionist' forum to 'allow for greater co-operation between green groups and trade unions.' Despite building considerable momentum in its first few years, a serious conflict over forest issues following a forest workers union counter blockade of a green protest camp in the Otway Ranges in 2000 caused a dramatic loss of momentum from which Earthworker is yet to recover. The Earthworker project remains indicative of the types of initiatives and style of operation of FoE.

In another, FoE Brisbane was pivotal in the creation of the highly successful Brisbane Social Forums, which are modelled on the World Social Forums held each year.

In 2000, FoEA established its climate justice campaign. Since then it has played a significant role in highlighting the human dimensions of climate change. A key part of this work has been to include the equity aspects of the climate debate, highlighting the fact that poorer communities will bear a disproportionate burden of the social and economic costs of global warming.

In April 2001, FoE hosted an international seminar on the themes of climate justice and globalisation. The seminar featured Ricardo Navarro, the chairperson of FoE International, Patrina Dumaru of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre in Fiji, and Nnimmo Bassey the director of Environmental Rights Action/ FoE Nigeria. At this time, with a strong climate justice



Ricardo Navarro of FoE El Salvador. the chair of FoE International.

collective and Alan Hoban working as the FoE campaigner on this issue, a series of street events, public meetings and direct actions were held to highlight the human dimensions of climate change. FoE started combining the concepts of ecological debt into its work and began advocating for recognition of environmental (climate) refugees.

From 2000 onwards, FoE devoted even more attention to the ecological and social impacts of the establishment of plantations, including use of herbicides, impacts on ground water and other negative elements of this land use. For instance, in Western Victoria, FoE highlighted the fact that habitat of the critically endangered Red Tail Black Cockatoo was being destroyed by a company that was establishing plantations.



**A generous company
pouring its profits back
into the community.**



This critical approach was not appreciated by all green groups, but over the years these same groups came to support FoE's position, resulting in a more sophisticated and holistic position on timber production being adopted by much of the movement.

FoE also started to raise awareness of the threats posed by Copper Chrome Arsenate (CCA), the most common treatment for preserving softwood timber. After several years this started to yield results as the issue was finally taken seriously by other green groups, the broader community and relevant authorities. In 2003, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medical Authority announced that it intended to place a ban on the use of CCA in certain domestic situations because of health risks.

In August 1991, the bulk chemical facility at Coode Island in inner western Melbourne suffered a major fire and a toxic cloud descended over much of the city. An inquiry was held into the possible relocation of the facility to Point Lillias, a headland on Port Phillip Bay near Geelong. The situation was complicated by plans to locate a naval arms complex on the same headland, the East Coast Armaments Complex. FoEM worked with a range of other groups throughout the parallel state and federal inquiries into the re-location of these facilities under the banner of the Combined Environment Groups. FoEM argued that any decision on the Coode facility should occur within



In 1992, FoE Fitzroy launched its forest campaign.



FoE maintained a regular picket outside the state government department responsible for logging (DNRE).

a context that sought to achieve an overall reduction in the use of hazardous chemicals. In the end, neither facility was moved to Point Lillias. The Coode Island facility remains a danger to residents in the inner west suburbs of Melbourne and FoEM continues to work to highlight the costs and impacts of our chemical dependence.

Clare Henderson and Larry O'Loughlan were prominent national advocates of Right To Know (RTK) legislation in the early 1990s. RTK refers to the right of people to access information on the existence, quantities and effects of emissions from industrial activities. The call for RTK legislation was occurring against a backdrop of voluntary programs such as the 'responsible care' program initiated by the Australian Chemical Industry Council and was based on the correct assumption that large companies could not be trusted to manage their operations through voluntary disclosure programs.

FoEM began working on forest issues in 1992, when the East Gippsland Forest Network (EGFN) merged with FoEM. The EGFN had itself grown from Melbourne Rainforest Action Group in the late 1980s. The creation of the FoEM Forest Network and the energy of a new generation of activists resulted in more than five years of intense campaigning to protect Victoria's forests. Over the summer of 1993-94, FoEM joined the Wilderness Society and Concerned Residents of East Gippsland to form the East Gippsland Forest Alliance.



Action outside the state government forestry offices , 1994

The campaign was launched with a 'celebrate and defend' forests gathering in the Goongerah valley north of Orbost and featured a summer of actions in the headwaters of the Delegate catchment and elsewhere on the Errinundra Plateau. On-the-ground blockades and campaigning has continued in East Gippsland almost every year since that summer and these efforts have helped win considerable gains in terms of forest protection. The early years also featured the strong engagement of Forest Network activists such as Louise Matthiesson in the national anti woodchipping campaign. This period saw good collaboration with other green groups that enabled intense campaigning and lobbying of the Federal Government in the buildup to the annual renewal of woodchip licenses.

In 1996 John Fraser, some other activist working with FoEM Forest Network, and a group from GECCO 'discovered' the forests of the Goolengook valley in far east Gippsland - a rare combination of cool temperate and warm temperate rainforest adjacent to the Errinundra National Park. The following year Goolengook became the focus of Australia's longest running forest blockade. While some of the Goolengook forest has been protected through moratoriums because of the blockade and associated campaigning, sections are still being logged.

In 1994, FoEM helped establish OREN – the Otway Ranges Environment Network,

now the highest profile green group in the Otways and Geelong regions.

In 1996, it achieved the first prosecution for a breach of a logging permit on private land in Victoria at McCraes Creek, a domestic drinking water catchment east of the Dandenong Ranges. With the support of the Environmental Defenders Office, FoEM took a case to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, successfully targeting a timber company with links to a then State Minister in the Kennett government. This victory highlighted the scale of problems from logging on private land across the state, an issue at that time largely unmonitored by the environment movement.

The Forest Network's Anthony Amis spent much of the rest of the decade working to highlight often disastrous logging regimes on private land. He also relentlessly monitored forestry operations on the estate of the Victorian Plantation Corporation once it was privatised and sold by the Kennett government to Hancock's, a US-based insurance company in 1998. Anthony's work with community groups, especially in the Strezlecki Ranges, has produced some of the most significant environmental outcomes achieved in forest campaigning in Victoria over the past decade.

As a result of campaign pressure, Hancock's, a major player in the plantation forestry sector, eventually decided to seek independent accreditation of their forestry operations.



The use of pressure point tactics, 1994.

In 2003, they became the first large land manager to gain independent certification of forestry operations in Australia through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). FoEM continues to monitor this process and the broader timber trade.

In the first few years of the 1990s, FoE also started working on arid zone issues in a new way, with a stronger emphasise on land management rather than just localised impacts, largely at the instigation of Stephen Baker in Adelaide and Clive Rosewarne in Melbourne. The January 1993 FoE national meeting proposed the creation of a national arid lands coalition, which planned to help co-ordinate campaigning on the management of Australia's extensive arid zone rangelands and the Lake Eyre Basin.

The years under the Victorian Kennett State Government (1992-99) marked a time of significant community politicisation and unprecedented resistance at the grassroots level in Melbourne and across the state. In the early days, much of the community sector was overwhelmed at the sheer number of destructive social and environmental projects put forward by the Government. There were a series of remarkable 'general strikes', but these dissipated after the key organisers of these rallies, the leadership of Trades Hall, wavered.

In the next few years, what started as a variety of local campaigns against specific government projects, cut backs to services or policy decisions, increasingly merged into a broad-based and well connected movement. Campaigns were everywhere, from opposition to the siting of the Grand Prix car race in a public space at Albert Park, to the successful struggles against the proposed hazardous waste facilities at Niddrie and Werribee, and the occupations of Northlands and Richmond secondary colleges after they were 'rationalised' by the government.

FoEM played a significant role in many struggles, both in terms of physical involvement of staff and members in picket

lines and campaigns, and also in behind the scenes training in non violent action, police liaison, facilitation skills and other aspects of community organising.

FoEM produced the booklet *Environmental Justice: Community Campaigning in Australia* in 1999 as a contribution to the development of this new stage in Australian environmental politics.

In 1994, FoEM acted as a focal point for community opposition to the extension of the eastern Freeway into the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne. The Coalition Against Freeway Extensions (CAFÉ), consciously named to honour the earlier CAF – Citizens Against Freeways struggle of 1977, was formed after a transport seminar organised by FoEM and Greenpeace and drew together a range of individuals, students and public transport and local residents' organisations. CAFE activists blockaded road making operations on Alexandra Parade for over





a month. Perhaps the seminal moment in the campaign was an early morning raid by more than 50 police, costing over \$60,000, where VicRoads contractors cut down a series of 90 year old trees as the first stage of the actual roadworks. When this happened at dawn on a Sunday morning, local residents alerted CAFE activists, who were able to get to the site in time to save at least some of the trees. FoEM and other activists joined in a series of arrestable actions that obstructed road works. Eventually all but one person arrested during the campaign had their charges dropped.

Transport issues have been a common theme for FoEM activists with campaigns often concentrating on opposing unsustainable infrastructure such as freeways. Various FoEM campaigners supported locals by occupying trees in the Mullum creek valley in Ringwood to stop the Ringwood Bypass and campaigned for the light rail link from Melbourne to Doncaster, which had been promised by the State Government when it originally approved the Eastern freeway. In 1999, Streets for People was established as a new transport campaign at FoEM focussing on proactive, positive and creative action. In 1998, Streets for People organised the third Reclaim the Streets festival outside of the UK.

Transport issues have also been prominent in the work of FoES over the years. The group campaigned against most major freeway developments over the last 20 years, such as the Eastern Distributor Expressway. In 2000, FoES worked with other local and state groups to successfully advocate for the \$1.4B publicly funded Parramatta – Chatswood rail link.

1996 was a busy year for FoEM, with more than 50 direct actions organised by the group. One of the more dramatic of these was a blockade of the 'extinction express' – a train carrying whole logs from Bairnsdale in Gippsland to the Midways woodchip mill near Geelong for export to be used in paper production. FoEM worked with community activists from Geelong and the Otways to occupy the Midways woodchip mill on many occasions, raising awareness of the fate of our native forests being logged for woodchips. One of the less glorious moments in 1996 was when activists occupied a rice ship in the harbour at Geelong after local scouts identified it as being a woodchip ship – still it was a useful training exercise, and activists then spent much of the day halting production at the chip pile at the adjacent Midways site.

Friends of the Earth vs S.T.Y. Afforestation

Anthony Amis

On the 14th of December 1994, Friends of the Earth lodged an application for an enforcement order in the Victorian Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) against the logging company S.T.Y. Afforestation. S.T.Y. was partly owned by Roger Pescott*, then a Minister in the Kennett Government. FoE took this action because they believed that STY had breached a 1983 planning permit which allowed them to carry out commercial logging operations subject to seventeen special conditions in a gazetted town water supply catchment.

The private logging operations in the McCraes Creek catchment (Parish of Beenak in Victoria) severely breached buffer zones requirements, road infrastructure, drainage, stream crossings, logging out of season, slope restrictions and also failing to adhere to the forest utilisation plan. The McCraes Creek catchment at the time supplied drinking water to Emerald, Avonsleigh, Clematis, Cockatoo, Gembrook, Kallista, Macclesfield, Menzies Creek and The Patch.

The logging operation was found by Loris Duclos in February 1994, who at the time was employed by Friends of the Earth Water Collective to do a catchment audit of the Cockatoo Creek. During 1994 Friends of the Earth campaigners visited the land in question numerous times documenting breaches to the Code. Legal representation for Friends of the Earth was found through Chris Loorham of the Environment Defenders Office who, in turn, gained access to Stuart Morris QC and Michelle Quigley.

The case was heard on 4 and 5 September 1995 and a Tribunal inspection of the land in question

occurred on 7 September 1995. The case was eventually won by FoE on the 19th of October 1995, where an enforcement order was made by the Tribunal. Costs were eventually awarded against the Shire of Yarra Ranges - the supposed authority who had never even visited the site - and the company who eventually paid out approximately \$40,000. Apparently this was the first time in Victorian legal history that a logging company had been found guilty of environmental non-compliance. The story was covered by the ABC's 7.30 Report, The Age Newspaper and local newspapers. Legal representation for S.T.Y. was heard to say during the case that "These people (FoE) should be hung, drawn, quartered and shot!"

Following the drafting of the Order more problems emerged. It was soon evident that the company was neglecting its responsibilities concerning the Enforcement Order. Friends of the Earth was forced to do a flyover of the site in May 1996 to determine whether the details of the enforcement order were being met. Reports written for the company by a former head of the Department of Forestry stated that remedial work had been carried out, when FoE knew that this was not the case. After a series of further legal wrangling, these issues were not finally resolved until the AAT agreed to Amend the original Enforcement Order in December 1998.

*It has recently come to light that Roger Pescott is also a Director of Edlow International, the world's largest uranium broker since. Mr Pescott has been involved with Edlow since 1980. This was not known by FoE at the time of the STY case.

**A GATHERING IN SOLIDARITY WITH
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE EARTH**



**A CALL FOR SOLIDARITY, RESPECT,
JUSTICE AND RESISTANCE.**

A Gathering in Solidarity with Indigenous People and the Earth

Anthony Amis

In 1997 and 1998, Friends of the Earth Melbourne hosted two significant gatherings with Indigenous People. The first, held in March 1997 was entitled "A Gathering in Solidarity with Indigenous People and the Earth". The second, held in November 1998 was entitled "Global Survival and Indigenous Rights".

The idea behind the first Gathering came in June 1996 with the establishment of the Indigenous Solidarity Group (ISG). This group had three advisors, Elizabeth King (Kerrup Jmara), Lionel Foggarty (Wakka Wakka) and Joan Wingfield (Kokotha). The goal of the ISG was to provide a forum so that indigenous people could speak to non-indigenous people and educate them about the real history of Australia. The two day March 1997 Gathering was held at the North Melbourne Town Hall and was attended by about 150 people and featured 16 Aboriginal people from Australia and 12 speakers representing issues overseas. A large contingent of Ngarrindjeri women attended the Gathering to discuss issues relating to the Hindmarsh Bridge debacle. The key resolution for the Gathering was "this meeting recognises Aboriginal sovereignty and accepts the rights of indigenous people in upholding Customary Law in Australia."

Unfortunately for the ISG costs blew out by \$7,000 on the first conference due to complications of travel arrangements of people from the United States. Much of the work of ISG over the following months was spent fundraising to repay the money back to FoE. This was a serious hardship for those who remained with ISG.

In February 1998, the ISG then got a burst of energy with a number of new people wanting to get involved. The group again decided to arrange another Gathering for November 1998. This time the organising group was significantly larger and more time was spent planning the event. A great deal of support for the second Gathering came from Larry Walsh, who suggested that the Gathering could be held at Maribymong on the Grounds of Pipe Makers Park.

Over 500 people attended the Second Gathering over three days. The Gathering made a big impact with many doors being opened and featured more indigenous speakers from Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and international speakers from the United States, the Philippines, Costa Rica and Ecuador. Of special interest was the attendance of almost 20 Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta women from Cooper Pedy who were building momentum to stop the nuclear waste dump being proposed for their lands. The ISG was given only a day or so warning that the women were attending the Gathering. Remarkably as their train pulled into Spencer Street, local Wurundjeri dancers who were at the station for another arrival, did a welcoming dance for the Aunties.

Networking of indigenous and non-indigenous people at this gathering was very important. Many relationships were established at this gathering which in turn blossomed into important friendships. For many grassroots environmental campaigners this gathering was the first time many people had even met indigenous people, let alone heard such passionate and powerful speeches. Of special importance was the speech made by Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma, from the Gulf Country in Queensland, which had enormous emotional impact on all who heard it.

Arabunna man Kevin Buzzacott, speaking at the conference gave a word from his language to the ISG - the word 'Nuyumunda', which means 'Beginning the process of coming together/being whole.'

A recurrent theme at the Gathering was the need to recognise traditional lore/law and Indigenous decision-making structures. This was highlighted by the resounding support for using the Treaty process in Australia and elsewhere to acknowledge pre-existing Aboriginal Sovereignty.

A third ISG gathering was tentatively planned to go ahead - possibly in Brisbane in 2000, but unfortunately never eventuated. The stress of organising two Gatherings had taken its toll on the volunteers of the ISG and after a couple of months the ISG dissolved, although many of the people involved in ISG have continued to be involved in solidarity work with indigenous people. ISG had hoped that the Gatherings could be organised in a different area of Australia, however no one has, as yet, taken up that offer.



The first meeting of the Dharnya Alliance, Barmah forest, Victoria.

While FoEM had enjoyed intermittent contact with the Yorta Yorta Nation for many years, from 1997 onwards this connection became more regular and formalised. After the 1998 Indigenous solidarity conference hosted by FoEM in Melbourne, many delegates travelled to the Barmah forest to an Indigenous-only strategy session hosted by the Yorta Yorta community.

The relationship subsequently developed into one of FoEM's strongest. The core of the Yorta Yorta Nation's traditional lands are the Barmah and Millewa forests which cover around 70,000 hectares of flood plain on both sides of the Murray/Dhungalla River upstream of Echuca. The ecological values of the Barmah-Millewa forest are significant nationally and internationally.

It is the largest river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) forest in the world and it supports a range of species dependent on wetland habitats. Despite forced resettlements due to white government policies over the last two hundred years, some 4,000–4,500 Yorta Yorta still live locally. In 1994, the Yorta Yorta lodged a Native Title claim over the forests and other public land abutting the Dhungalla/Murray and Goulburn Rivers.

The claim failed in 1998, as did subsequent appeals to the Federal High Court in 2001 and 2002. However the Yorta Yorta struggle continued and FoEM members supported their (and other Aboriginal) land claims because they recognised the special ecological knowledge, skills and practices that indigenous peoples had developed within their local environments. FoEM members also recognised the importance of the human rights and social justice issues involved with such claims.

In 1997 and 1998, the FoEM Indigenous Solidarity Group hosted two national conferences; the gatherings in solidarity with Indigenous people and the earth. A large and diverse organising group hosted these grassroots events, which brought hundreds of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to discuss strategies and campaigns. A steering committee of Indigenous people, which included Auntie Betty King from the Kerrup Jmara people in western Victoria, Lionel Foggarty from the Wakka Wakka people of Queensland and Joan Wingfield from the Kokatha people of South Australia, provided political direction to the organising group.

The Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, senior Aboriginal women working in defence of their country in South Australia that is currently under threat from the proposed national radioactive waste dump, made the journey to Melbourne for the second gathering and developed a strong network



Rally in support of the Yorta Yorta native title claim, Shepparton, 1999

of campaign support that continues to grow today. In 2003 FoEM successfully nominated the Kungkas for the prestigious Goldman Environmental Award, commonly referred to as the 'green Nobel prize'.

When FoEM participated in a Yorta Yorta occupation of the Dharnya Cultural Centre in Barmah State Park in 1999, elders formally requested that FoEM assist them further in their main objective of regaining management of traditional lands. The FoEM representatives immediately grasped the significance of a request that might open the way for FoEM to support Indigenous justice in an area with strong ecological values. The Barmah-Millewa campaign was born, largely through the work of Peter Barker, who was a driving force in the development of the Barmah-Millewa collective from its formation through until the end of 2001. The Barmah-Millewa campaign had three explicit goals:

- 1. To achieve a joint management system over Barmah-Millewa as a means to achieving control over land that has been denied the Yorta Yorta through the courts;**
- 2. To sustainably manage the whole forest (both sides of the Murray/ Dhungalla) for the protection and conservation of its ecological and cultural values; and**
- 3. To gain real and diverse employment opportunities for the Yorta Yorta people. This campaign continued over the years and in 2004, the Victorian government launched a Co-operative Management Agreement with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to increase involvement of traditional owners in managing the Barmah forest.**



Monica Morgan and Henry Atkinson, Yorta Yorta Nation.



Indira Narayan and Lindy Orthia, Barmah Millewa collective, FoE.



Jono La Nauze (FoE) and Phil Ingamells, Victorian National Parks Association.





Barmah Forest "Thin Trees"

DRESS IN DIRTY JEANS AND DON'T SHAVE

Police Infiltration of FoE

From 1985 until 1992, undercover officers with the Victorian Police Intelligence Unit (at that point called the OIU – Operations Intelligence Unit) carried out covert operations which involved monitoring and infiltrating key community groups in Melbourne.

In hindsight, it all reads like a slightly strange Keystone Cops-type operation, with a specially adapted Holden panel van with darkened windows that would be parked near demonstrations and outside the offices of non-government organisations. Many files on individuals, subsequently leaked to *The Age* newspaper in 1997, were appallingly sloppy, with names, affiliations and actions incorrectly recorded. Often people who attended a single meeting of a group were identified as “group leaders” because they spoke at that meeting. Sometimes there were separate files for the same person simply because no-one bothered to cross reference shortened names with full names. But, of course, there was a more sinister undercurrent to this work.

According to *The Age*, the OIU went “far beyond its official role of openly liaising with community groups”. It monitored groups as diverse as the Wilderness Society, 3CR community radio, the Rainforest Action Group, the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties and FoE. It carried out electronic bugging and searches without warrants, as well as placing undercover police officers who, “using fake identities, ... penetrated conservation groups by posing as volunteers worried about the environment” (*The Age*, 1997).

FoE was one of those groups that received a lot of attention: the *Age* noted that the officers “were so successful at infiltration... that they helped staff their offices, maintained files and updated membership lists. One undercover officer even spent two days of police time helping

build shelves at the Collingwood offices of FoE. The group was so grateful it paid for a new blade for the electric saw the officer borrowed from a colleague in the covert OIU”.

Information gained by the OIU was shared with the national intelligence agency, ASIO and also Australian Army intelligence. The OIU later became the Protective Security Intelligence Group – PSIG – who were meant to destroy the hundreds of files on individuals. However, they were simply (and illegally) moved out of a police office and into a house in order to avoid them being destroyed.

This was not the first or last time FoE came under attention from security services. As early as the 1970s, the Victorian Special Branch was asked to “keep an eye on FoE” by steel and mining company BHP. An Inspector Norton reported on FoE activities to the company. And various companies, have placed people in the organisation. For instance, after a high profile campaign on beverage packaging, a company employee was told by the PR and advertising manager of Coca Cola in Adelaide to “attend F.O.E. planning committee meetings at the (Adelaide) university; to go dressed in dirty jeans, T-shirt and sandals, and not to shave” (*The Australian*, 6/11/1973).

What is perhaps saddest about all this is the fact that, as an open, grassroots organisation, FoE has nothing to hide.



SIGN Language



Kathleen McCann

In 1996 I was in Jabiru in the Northern Territory. A community campaign to stop further uranium mining in Mirrar country was on the rise. Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) already operated the Ranger mine surrounded by Kakadu National Park and were pushing the Mirrar people to agree to another mine on their traditional lands at Jabiluka.

Others in the room from FoE, ACF, ECNT and Gundjehmi were weighing up the pros and cons of a non-violent blockade as many of the procedural avenues of resistance were nearly exhausted. There was a need to galvanise the various pockets of support to form a collective force, in solidarity with and led by, the Mirrar Traditional Owners.

Throughout my involvement with FoE I have made banners, cartoons, stickers, posters and flyers to communicate our environment and social justice activities and aspirations. I had especially gravitated towards the anti-uranium cause, believing it necessary to begin at home to help stop the deadly spin-offs of the nuclear industry. It made sense to convince Australians that we should not be involved in any part of this process. This is where we dig up the uranium that ultimately generates nuclear waste, but by exercising our democratic rights it is also where we can hope to make a difference.

Sitting in Jabiru considering the images used before in anti-nuclear campaigns I thought of the Smiling Sun that originated in Europe and was adopted worldwide as a positive promoter of solar technology and a rejection of nuclear energy. Created in the seventies it maintained its cute "retro" appeal but its real strength was its collective use by the communities who fought the anti-nuclear fight. They had brought it to life. No one group was seen

to claim it once in circulation. The text encircling the graphic changed to suit the aspect of the campaign it promoted and appeared in many languages.

The graphic for the Jabiluka campaign needed to be simple and unmistakably reject the nuclear threat. It needed to be easily reproduced – by printers, campaigners, banner painters and kids. It needed to relate to the Traditional Owners story and to the anti-nuclear tradition. The colours of the Aboriginal flag, created by Harold Thomas in 1971, seemed powerful and logical, resonating a call for solidarity with the first nations of Australia. This choice was bolstered by the happy coincidence that the Smiling Sun shared the yellow, red and black and connected it to our own history in the environment movement. Respecting Harold Thomas's pivotal contribution to the symbolic heritage of Australia, Gundjehmi contacted him asking permission to build on this foundation.

That the representation of a human hand has universal symbolic power is evident in the earliest mark-making. Aboriginal hand stencils on the rocks of Kakadu are a testament to this, their unbroken significance a fact of life for the Mirrar and other Aboriginal people. Contemporary images of hands maintain their wealth of meanings and ability to communicate directly and the outstretched hand showing a palm denotes STOP in many cultures.

The idea of the inherent danger of the nuclear industry was easily gleaned from their own hieroglyphic for hazard, a divided yellow circle radiating out from a central core.

I put together the first version of the black handprint impressed upon the radiation symbol in a Jabiru room adjoining the blockade discussion and the image was immediately welcomed by those next door. It worked specifically for the Mirrar's struggle but its message was universal too - of community resistance and rejection of any nuclear threat: uranium mining, nuclear reactors, weapons and waste.

Originally the FoE Anti-Uranium collective made simple paper stickers and later more substantial campaign materials using the hand image and it took off from there. Requests came from far and wide to use the image in Jabiluka campaign paraphernalia, web-sites, publications and fundraising initiatives as the blockade



gathered steam. One of my proudest moments remains seeing the hand symbol unfurled on a giant banner dwarfed by Kakadu's overwhelming escarpment.

The image was progressively applied more broadly from domestic campaigning against reactors, dumps and other uranium mines to appearing on the sails of a Pacific peace flotilla and at actions in places as far flung as Argentina, the UK and the Netherlands.

The requests I made, as artist and copyright holder, were that:

- the hand image be used freely by community and campaigners in their anti-nuclear work but not for commercial benefit.
- the text encircling the design only contain campaign messages, not the names of specific groups in a branding exercise. The idea needs to be owned by the community, not for a single group to appropriate for their logo.

The power of the symbol has grown from its acceptance by people wanting to signal their support for Mirrar and for other anti-nuclear causes. It has become a vehicle for an unequivocal anti-nuclear message. Marcel Duchamp said "the creative act is not performed by the artist alone" and as the artist who developed the image, I know that mine was a small contribution to a huge collective creative effort. The recent reclaiming of Mirrar control of their land at Jabiluka is a stunning result of a hard fought campaign.

I designed an image but the anti-nuclear movement has taken the hand symbol and generated an icon – an enduring symbol of resistance and a simultaneous celebration of community.



**“We will fight to protect our country
this is a fact of life”**

Yvonne Margarella Mirrar Senior Traditional Owner





FOE

Dave Sweeney

From its earliest days FoE has been a tenacious and effective critic of the nuclear industry in Australia and actively supported communities opposing or impacted by nuclear developments.

In the 1970's FoEA was born out of concern over the human and environmental impacts of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. Thirty years down the track and the concern, commitment and creativity that motivated this original activity can be seen in FoEs current work against uranium mining, radioactive waste dumping, a planned new nuclear reactor in Sydney and the often forgotten but ever present threat of nuclear weapons.

The past three decades have seen FoEA activists involved in many of Australia's anti-nuclear processes and protests. In the 1970's FoE played a key role in the vibrant anti-nuclear movement and helped ensure that uranium mining became widely seen as a controversial and contaminating industry. FoE activists travelled the country to appear at every session of the Ranger Uranium Environment Inquiry - the Fox Commission.

When environmental and Aboriginal concerns were overridden and the Ranger mine was approved for development in the Northern Territory, FoE regrouped and took direct action to disrupt the mine and the subsequent export of uranium from ports around the country. FoE supporters jumped on their bikes and pedalled off to end the nuclear cycle, converging in a mass Ride Against Uranium in Canberra and helped to shape the nuclear debate through the production of such influential publications as *Red Light for Yellowcake* and *Ground for Concern*. FoE's detailed and scathing critiques of uranium projects proposed for other places in the NT, Queensland and West Australia

served to let the industry know it was in for a serious fight and the community know the reality of the secret silent poison of uranium mining.

In the 1980's FoE remained at the forefront of anti-nuclear politics and was an active part of significant community blockades at the South Australian uranium sites of Honeymoon and Roxby Downs (Olympic Dam).

As the actions of the Reagan Administration in the USA saw the Cold War get distinctly chillier, FoE mobilised around the massive Palm Sunday demonstrations and worked to highlight that the peaceful atom was a violent myth.

If any further proof of this position was ever needed the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986 provided it and led to renewed calls for an end to Australia's involvement in this toxic trade. FoE worked to expose the often hidden reality of Australia's military alliance with the US with regular protests and publications targeting the issues raised by US bases in Australia and the risks posed by visits of nuclear powered and armed warships.

FoE's commitment to education, information and community continued with the production of *The Nuclear Environment*, an important secondary school book and input to the national public radio networks greatly respected RadioActive show.

This decade also saw the uranium issue dominate many federal ALP policy forums and national conferences as anti-nuclear activists pushed for a strengthened position and resisted concerted industry pressure to remove restrictions on uranium mining.

The early 1990's followed the pattern of the preceding years with a strong focus on federal political policy positions and successful opposition to attempts to expand the nuclear industry through plans for a new nuclear

reactor or to introduce food irradiation. FoE continued to link its rejection of nuclear technology with a considered and credible call for the adoption of energy policies based on increased energy conservation and efficiency and the increasing use of renewable energy. The organisation also sought new ways to convey an anti-nuclear message, including through the Sustainable Energy and Anti-Uranium Services comprehensive web resource (www.sea-us.org).

In March 1996 the election of the aggressively pro-nuclear federal Coalition government saw a dramatic escalation in nuclear politics and activism in Australia. Policies, plans and blueprints previously long consigned to the too-hard, too-silly, too-costly or too-barking mad baskets were retrieved, repackaged and set loose. Uranium mines in Kakadu and South Australia, a new nuclear reactor in suburban Sydney, radioactive waste sacrifice zones in the Australian desert, food irradiation plants in southern Queensland and knee-jerk support for the dangerous and ultimately self-defeating politics of the Bush Administration.

FoEA groups and activists were at the forefront of spirited community resistance to this toxic tidal wave and have played a key role in deferring, delaying and derailing much of the federal governments atomic agenda. Bruce Thompson, Loretta O'Brien, Dimity Hawkins, John Hallam, Ila Marks, Eric Miller, Gavin Mudd, Daniel Voronoff, Len Kenaar, Bert King, Jim Green and Sarojini Krishnapillai are some of the many names written in bright lights in a parallel - nuclear free - universe.

This resistance has indeed been fertile and recent times have seen major rehabilitation works at the halted Jabiluka minesite in Kakadu, a commitment to rehabilitate and retire the Yeerlirrie site in WA, state anti-

radioactive waste dumping laws passed in WA and SA and groups ranging from FoE to the Country Women's Association mobilising to oppose the secretive transport of nuclear waste across NSW.

Nuclear issues remain a high priority and a key concern of FoE and the passion, optimism and commitment that launched FoE three decades ago continues today. Like asbestos and high tar cigarettes the gloss of the nuclear dream is tarnished and FoE is committed to seeing it ended and to helping build a nuclear free future.

The name says it all - Friends of the Earth, but FoEs of those who threaten or abuse it.



Picket outside North building during the Jabiluka campaign, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 1998.



March at the Jabiluka mine site, NT, 1998.

Friends of the Earth Sydney (FoES) was also notable among the big Australian green groups for its relentless campaigning on nuclear weapons, largely through the efforts of long-term campaigner John Hallam.

In the late 1990s, FoES campaigned with other groups to have Jabiluka placed on the World Heritage Committee's In Danger list because of the threat posed by the Jabiluka uranium mine. Working closely with Alec Marr of the Wilderness Society, John Hallam co-ordinated a global fax campaign that was instrumental in drawing the World Heritage Centre's attention to this issue. FoES was also responsible for resolutions on Jabiluka in both the Australian Senate and the European Parliament, and also for campaigns against the new nuclear reactor planned for Lucas Heights in Sydney's southern suburbs. In 1996, after a series of visits by nuclear powered and/or armed warships to the Port of Melbourne, FoEM sought a Supreme Court injunction to stop entry by a US nuclear powered ship, but procedural delays meant that the ship had docked before the matter could be heard.

A spin-off from the highly successful nuclear campaign was the international nuclear weapons project co-ordinated by Dimity Hawkins and veteran FoE campaigner John Hallam. Highlights of this campaign included the 1999 European Parliament resolution to take strategic nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert and numerous resolutions on nuclear weapons in the Australian Senate. Work included lobbying for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, the de-alerting campaign of 1999, work on the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review in May 2000 and continuing work on the 'nuclear blackspots' of India and Pakistan and North Korea. This involved close collaboration with international organisations especially the IPPNW, the World Court Project and BASIC.

FoE in Adelaide and Melbourne collaborated in an effort to gain World Heritage listing for the Lake Eyre Basin, worked with the Arabunna People's Committee (APC) on monitoring the impacts of uranium mining on the regions unique Mound Springs, conducted a feasibility study for a national park in the region and carried out field trips throughout the area. Ila Marks and Eric Miller were central figures amongst a group of anti-uranium activists that has continued run regular exposure tours to the region since the mid 1980s. Jan Whyte, of the Melbourne anti uranium collective, moved to Marree in northern South Australia. Her subsequent work with the APC helped facilitate productive relations between groups like FoE and local traditional owners over mining and land rights concerns.

Attempts by the Federal Government to facilitate the expansion of the nuclear industry did not all go to plan. Whilst in-situ leach (ISL) mining, a method of production rejected in a number of countries, was approved for use at the Beverley mine in South Australia, the plan to open a new mine at Jabiluka was halted through the resistance of the region's traditional owners, Mirrar, with the support of many thousands in Australia and around the world.

PARK LIFE

Living at the Jabiluka Blockade Camp

Sarojini Krishnapillai is a FoE member who lived at the Jabiluka camp for four months

“Colourful, creative, chaotic...camp life was anything but boring.”

Over 5,000 people made the trek to Australia’s Top End to put their bodies on the line to stop the Jabiluka uranium mine. Located inside Kakadu National Park, about 20 km from the mining township of Jabiru, the blockade kicked off in March 1998 and for the next eight months, the camp was home to people from all over Australia. Over 500 people were arrested – including the region’s senior traditional owner, Yvonne Margarula – as people stood up to protect environmental and indigenous rights.

Although the blockade was indeed exciting, there was much grunt work to be done behind the scenes, as Kirsten Blair points out:

“The first and most important task was getting the water supply organised. The site had a bore and tank leftover from its cattle grazing days. The bore cost \$5,000 to redrill and as the tank hadn’t been used for years, it needed some serious cleaning out. Katie Vallentine [from WA] and I spent two hot days (between downpours) chucking shovels full of rotten leaves and dirt over the 10 foot high sides. A messy but crucial job!”

As the camp got underway, arrests rolled on at the blockade site and the campaign to stop Jabiluka unfolded around Australia in legal, political, financial, community and international forums. Fundraising on an incredible scale – art auctions, raffles, benefit gigs, T-shirts, donations – ensured that the enormous costs of running the remote protest camp were covered.

Friends of the Earth in Melbourne played a pivotal role in mobilising and organising for the blockade. FoE’s ‘Direct Action Pledge’ garnered early support by asking people to pledge their physical or financial support for the blockade well before any action took place on the ground in Kakadu.

When the blockade began, FoE took on the mammoth task of organising buses to ferry over 1,000 people over 4,000km from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide to Kakadu.

The camp was a major logistical feat from start to finish – and every day in between. Keeping up to 500 people fed, watered and well, in the hot and humid conditions was a challenge, especially during ‘build-up’ - the sweltering lead up to monsoon season where humid temperatures topped 40°C. While conditions could be trying at times, most people immersed themselves in camp life with enthusiasm, resourcefulness and most importantly, humour.

In the lead up to the 1998 Federal Election, blockaders organised the “Strong Country Celebration”, and over 300 people arrived at camp for a week of actions. More than 100 people were arrested at the Jabiluka lease wearing John Howard masks. Down at the police station, police were frustrated as the arrestees all gave their names and addresses as “John Howard, Government House, Canberra”. Not so funny was election night, listening by radio to the results in the camp kitchen.

Communications were always a challenge – made easier (most of the time) by the CB radio set-up in the trusty “Radio Shack”. Radio ‘handles’ (names given to protect the operator’s identity) and encoded messages were at times more confusing to us than to the police listening into these conversations: *“Kakadu 444 this is Milk Crate to Bossy Boots, we are located at two-thirty, do you copy, over?”* Our suspicions were confirmed when the Jabiru police pulled over a car load of campers to do a ‘random’ roadworthy check and greeted each of them by their secret radio ‘handle’!

The camp's office was located within Jabiru Caravan Park, and buzzed with media releases, food orders, recently released arrestees and those seeking refuge in Jabiru. There was also a huge support base in Darwin, where many people provided a welcome bed and shower for those living long-term at camp, as well as enormous logistical and legal support. The camp itself became a tourist attraction to the many thousands of tourists who visit Kakadu National Park every year. Visitors included Japanese tourists whose country would have bought a large chunk of Jabiluka's uranium had the project gone ahead.

The key to the success of the camp (and ultimately the campaign) was the broad cross-section of inspired and passionate people involved - students, families, doctors, artists. Age was no barrier, a fact driven home by the arrest of 90-year old Alvie Booth at the Jabiluka lease in August 1998.

Everyday life at camp included cooking, painting banners, meetings, liaising with Mirrar and keeping in contact with groups around Australia working on Jabiluka. There were frequent concerts to amuse ourselves, eating meals together and listening to hilarious songs making fun of mining company ERA. Even the police were affected. After days of being at early morning actions officers could be heard humming the 'Kakadu Is Sacred' song as they loaded protesters into the back of divvie vans.

Life at the camp impacted upon many who lived there and created a new awareness in their 'everyday' lives back in the cities as Leanne Minshull explains:

“For many of us the blockade crystallised thoughts that had been lurking in the recesses of our minds. Living in camp made you responsible for every aspect of your day to day life and the consequences of all your actions. A return to ‘normality’ and a passive lifestyle was not an option and a whole generation of

Today, Jabiluka is effectively dead in the water as the Australian Conservation Foundation's Dave Sweeney explains:

“Negotiations between the mining company and the Mirrar on an Agreement making any future development at the site dependent on explicit Mirrar consent are well advanced and expected to be concluded this year. For the first time since white settlement the Mirrar's right to veto, control and manage developments on their land will be legally recognised. And people power made it happen”.



Over 5,000 people visited or lived at the base camp established near the proposed mine site and there were 527 arrests. The camp was set up in March 1998 at the invitation of the senior traditional owner Yvonne Margarula and blockades of the proposed uranium mine began in earnest when construction work began in June.

This campaign was especially significant for the sheer power of the blockades, the resolute determination of the traditional owners, and the control they asserted over the whole campaign. Given the determination of the Federal Government, which used all the resources it had to achieve its goals, the victory at Jabiluka is even more remarkable.

FoE activists played a fairly typical role during the blockade: taking on a variety of 'behind the scene' roles like co-ordinating buses for travel to Kakadu from capital cities and working in the kitchen at base camp. FoE played a key role in the protests against Jabiluka and helped take the message further by designing the anti-nuclear hand symbol, raising the issue's profile in the international NGO community, lobbying the European Parliament and nominating Yvonne Margarula for the FoEI Environment Award.

Meanwhile, the government continued to advance its plans to replace the aging nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights in suburban Sydney. In 1997, it made a political decision to build a new reactor ahead of any community or scientific consultation, needs assessment, siting alternatives or environmental studies. In July 2000, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) signed a secret construction agreement with an Argentinean nuclear company called INVAP.

An anti reactor campaign saw local residents join with the Sutherland Shire Council, FoE, ACF and Greenpeace in an attempt to stop the fast tracking of this project. FoE realised that traditional federal lobbying or use of the Senate alone would not be able to stall the development of this project. While working in alliances and being fully engaged in all procedural opportunities around the approvals process for the reactor, FoE also looked for other ways to impact on the development of a related national radioactive waste facility. The completion of this dump would be a prerequisite for the reactor to become operational as ANSTO's operations would contribute almost 90% of the waste that would be stored at the facility.

In 1999 FoE initiated the idea of working with communities along the possible transport routes between the reactor site in Sydney and the dump location in South Australia, and the Nuclear Freeways project was launched. Daniel Voronoff co-ordinated the initiative and, with a full scale mock radioactive waste canister constructed by the Ecological Designs Group, FoE activists started to visit communities from western Sydney to Broken Hill and beyond. The project aimed to alert these communities to the threats posed by the waste shipments and spark significant community resistance to the Federal Governments plans to transport and dump radioactive waste.

Bruce Thompson and Loretta O'Brien maintained this project for several years and their work led to the dump issue becoming significant in the NSW election in March 2003. The project also played a pivotal role in the resulting NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the nuclear related activities of the Commonwealth later that year. In early 2004, the Inquiry recommended that the transport and dumping plans could not be justified and should be abandoned.





August 2003: The first truck taking uranium back down the Jabiluka mine shaft. Friends of the Earth Australia played a key role in this successful campaign.

Photo courtesy of Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Nuclear FreeWays Campaign

Loretta O'Brien

The Nuclear FreeWay's (NFW) campaign was initiated in 1999 by Friends of the Earth's anti-uranium collective, principally following a proposal from collective coordinator Daniel Voronoff who had been researching international community responses to the transport of nuclear waste.

The campaign was developed in response to a Federal government proposal to transport nuclear waste across Australia and dump it at a centralised site near Woomera in South Australia. FoE's position has been that Australia should be progressive in the way it chooses to deal with nuclear waste; burying it in a shallow grave is short-sighted, transporting it halfway across the continent simply increases the risk of exposure in the event of an accident.

The project took its inspiration from a project in the United States called 'mobile Chernobyl' which towed a trailer with a replica of the Chernobyl accident to communities that were on the proposed transport route for nuclear waste in Nevada (NIRS Website 2004). FoE enlisted the support of a group of Melbourne artists, ESDG (Environmentally Sound Design Group) who built an impressive life-size replica of a nuclear "castor", a container for transporting high level nuclear waste as used in Europe. Nick Curmi of ESDG worked closely with Daniel to create a prop that could be towed behind a vehicle between communities and could be set up like an information caravan in towns to provide information about the campaign.

The campaign strategy was to travel along the transport route for nuclear waste, meet with local government and community representatives and encourage these communities to take a proactive stance of opposition to the transport of waste.

The first of six tours along the nuclear waste transport route began in 1999, the various

tours travelled between Sydney and Woomera along the two preferred routes for nuclear waste transport.

Towing a massive anti-nuclear trailer attracts a lot of interest. Ila Marks and Eric Miller parked it in a street in suburban Sydney and it wasn't long before the fire brigade arrived, responding to a call warning them that nuclear waste truck was parked in the street. The fire-brigade let them off with a warning. When NFW's was in the mining township of Roxby, WMC, the operators of the Olympic Dam uranium mine, had 24 hour security following the campaigners, including following FoE campaigner Bruce Thompson to the laundry mat to wash his socks. And of course there were the usual pull overs from the police, a regular occurrence.

The second tour was launched in Adelaide on World Environment Day in 2000. That year Adelaide hosted an international WED conference and the then Environment Minister Robert Hill was in town. By this time Daniel Voronoff had left FoE and Bruce Thompson and Loretta O'Brien were coordinating the project. They saw the Adelaide event as an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the nuclear dump issue and the castor was towed around to every major WED event or function.

One of these events was a tree planting. The FoE team split into two groups, one lot hid the trailer on a suburban street and while the other signed up as volunteers at the treeplanting mobile phones at the ready to call the others when the dignitaries arrived. When the officials arrived the castor team was notified and pulled the castor into a parking spot directly behind the speaking podium. Minister Hill was not happy to see the castor parked right next to the podium, and media shots showed him looking very uncomfortable with the anti-nuclear symbol directly behind his head.

Wherever the castor went, media was sure to follow, the prop provided an instant photo opportunity and gave campaigners a platform on which to relay concerns about the planned transport and dumping of nuclear waste.

The Nuclear Freeways campaign was highly effective at not only raising awareness of the issue along transport routes, but also generating action at the community level. Local government correctly represented this community concern. Many councils declared themselves nuclear free, others lobbied their local members, passed resolutions at state and national local government meetings and provided funding for the campaign. This local government opposition culminated in a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the issue in 2004. The inquiry found the waste dump project could not be justified and should be abandoned.

The NFW's campaign highlights FoE's commitment to grassroots campaigning.

FoE is unique in its focus on working at the community level to affect change. The connections generated by the NFW's campaign with rural communities are important, the campaign reveals not only how a community can act to stop the imposition of the nuclear industry, but presents a model for community action.



Eric Miller, Ila Marks and Daniel Vornoff, on the first Nuclear Freeways tour.

SENATOR THE HON NICK MINCHIN
Liberal Senator for South Australia

SOUTH
AUSTRALIA-
TOO GOOD TO
WASTE





BIG HILL

Gillian Walker

Perched atop Big Hill, in the western Victorian town of Stawell, is a small Grecian rotunda with a viewfinder to pick out the Grampians, the Pyrenees, the Black Range and the surrounding Wimmera landscape – a 360 degree view. Here, the local priest comes to write his sermons, lovers meet, dogs get walked, kids play and stargazers gather.

In July 1998 the people of Stawell woke up to find that the Hill, with its tradition as a Koorie look-out and its town-associations, was to be blown out of existence by Mining Project Investors, an agglomerate of Australia-wide entrepreneurs, and an American company, Pittson. A number of horrified citizens got together to fight this proposal, forming the Big Hill Action Group, under the leadership of former town councillors Barbara and Graeme Bennett. They uncovered the record of the Pittson company, which had had a mining dam collapse, causing the death of 127 people, and had committed 806 environmental violations in their "mountain-leveling" strip mining of the Appalachians. The company was well embedded in council matters and had the local newspaper on side. Things looked far from optimistic.

Nevertheless the Action Group opened a shop front on the main street to disseminate information and form a centre for letter writing campaigns, along with submissions to relevant organisations. The action group was also represented in the "community consultation" forums run by the Department of Infrastructure. Help came from the National Trust, the Victorian National Parks Association with Charlie Sherwin, the Australian Heritage

Council, the Victorian Field Naturalists and Harry Von Moorst, of Werribee fame. It was Harry who suggested that the group should approach Friends of the Earth, and this proved to be just the boost needed. Cam Walker, Anthony Amis and Damian Sullivan of FoE did further mining company research - Anthony in particular, produced a massively important document. Spearheaded by Anthony, FoE put in place letter writing campaigns both locally and overseas, and organised press releases and media interviews, as well as visiting Stawell with Damian to put heart into the battling locals. The group scored a visit from Caroline Hogg MLC, who gave sound advice and promised to spread the word.

By the time the Environmental Effects Statement process had finished, the story of Big Hill was getting out into the wider world. Friends of Albert Park, 3CR Broadcasting, and the Coalition Against Open Cut Mining joined in, sharing information and experience. Through all this Lesley Bennett (no relation to Graeme and Barbara) together with the late Bill Hall, local RSL president, kept in contact with Anthony and Damian, who arranged to have the issue covered on the "Insight" TV program in the run up to the World Economic Forum protests.

Finally, when the assessment and panel report came to light in November 2000, the mining project was stopped and the Hill, with its neighboring houses, was saved. Earlier, the action group with the help of festival lantern maker Graeme Dunstan, had constructed lanterns in a variety of shapes and carried them, lit, during one memorable march from the main street to the Hill's crown.

On receiving the final report, the Age newspaper published a photograph of Graeme and four members of the Action Group with their lanterns alight on the Grecian rotunda. There was symbolism there!

Amidst the thankfulness for a successful outcome and the acknowledgment of all the help from FoE and other organisations, there remained the sobering truth that mining companies never give up. Mining Project Investors, still linked to their American cousins, remain mining underground in the Stawell area, waiting and working for the relaxation of regulations which would allow them to once more threaten to wreck a town's history, environment and way of life. We all must look out for each other and for the environment not only of our own region but throughout the world. Mining companies have international links but so, in the name of humanity, do we.



Robbie Thorpe at the Corroboree for Sovereignty, Canberra, January 1998.

When it was announced that Melbourne's Crown Casino would host a regional meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in September 2000, FoEM played a significant role in organising community opposition to the event.

The WEF acts as an important forum for business leaders to discuss and advance plans for corporate globalisation and was considered by FoEM as being an appropriate target for non-violent action. Around 20,000 people joined the three day blockade of the WEF, and FoEM worked through both of the key organising groups, the S11 Alliance and AWOL (Autonomous Web of Liberation) in planning and staging the community protests. It played an important role in bridging between different groups of activists, carried out police liaison, created and maintained the 'green bloc' and provided a prominent media presence during the actions.

The first few years of the twenty-first century saw growing activity for FoE, even though the number of local grouped remains small. FoE Brisbane became an established member of the environmental community in that city and took on managing the national climate justice campaign. There was strong work on nuclear issues in marginal seats in Adelaide during the federal election of 2001, blockades of a gas fired power generator that impacted on endangered grasslands on the northern fringes of Melbourne, and the launch of a campaign to find non-native forest sources of firewood. Dimity Hawkins, Lisa Robbins and Kathleen McCann completed the innovative 'Forever Country' project for the Alliance Against Uranium Mining, with the production of a series of posters aimed at highlighting the impacts of the nuclear industry on Indigenous land and culture.

David Brower, the founder of FoE, died in late 2000, aged 88. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader said *"David was the greatest environmentalist of the 20th century.*

He was an indefatigable champion of every worthwhile cause in the last seven decades. His death is a tremendous loss."

With the Green Institute and Heinrich-Boll Foundation, FoE organised an international conference in Canberra to assess how far global environmental co-operation had developed since the first 'Earth Summit' was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Speakers included Wangari Maathai, an inspirational activist from the Green Belt movement in Kenya, and Bobby Peek of the South African environmental justice organisation, Groundwork. The general assessment of the delegates, who represented almost 60 countries, was that the situation was going backwards and that strong civil society responses were needed to overcome the negative influence of nations like the USA.

The 2001 federal election was characterised by the shameless promotion of racism and fear by the Coalition following the Tampa 'crisis' and saw the re-election of the Howard government. FoE joined with various community alliances, including Australians for Just Refugee Programs, to oppose these developments and to contribute to the thinking around the real issues behind global movement of people.

FoE's Environment and Population project sought to broaden this debate beyond a fixation on numbers of people by offering an anti-racist, internationalist perspective on ecology. This project created a considerable and disappointing backlash from some within the environment movement, further highlighting the difference between single issue and more socially inclusive environmentalism.

2002 saw the foundation of the Dharnya Alliance, a collaboration between the Yorta Yorta Nation and green and social justice organisations. FoE organised the first 'Barmah summit' and acted as secretariat for the Alliance, although differences of opinion between some of the green groups on social justice issues made it difficult to move forward on joint action.

Responding to the threat of a second Gulf war, FoE became a founding member of the Victorian Peace Network and was involved in anti-war rallies and organising throughout the subsequent invasion of Iraq. FoE joined with traditional owners to oppose a large open cut gold mine from devastating the area around Lake Cowal in mid west NSW.

The publication of *Population, Immigration and Environment* in early 2003 generated considerable feedback, both positive and negative, especially from other green organisations.

2003 witnessed the culmination of many years community-focussed campaigning with the closure and rehabilitation of the Jabiluka uranium mine. FoE's work along the proposed route of radioactive waste between the Lucas Heights reactor and the planned dump site in South Australia also saw positive outcomes. FoE was active, especially west of the Blue Mountains during the NSW state election, using the networks it had developed over the five years of the Nuclear Freeways project to ensure nuclear issues were firmly on the agenda of the Carr government.

The Kulini Kulini ('are you listening') camp at 10 Mile Creek near Coober Pedy saw more than 200 activists joining the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta for stories, strategy and ceremony. There were regular visits by FoE people to communities and lands affected by the nuclear industry, and a 'back to basics' approach to slowly raising the profile of nuclear issues in communities in Melbourne and Adelaide and thus building a grassroots response to these issues. FoE, with Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) and other local groups, launched the 'talking up Country' project that seeks to generate support for Yorta Yorta ownership of their traditional lands in northern Victoria.

That year also saw most campaign orientated groups, including TWS and FoE, were cut off from receiving administrative support through the Federal Environment Department as the Coalition escalated its attempts to de-legitimise and silence environmental critics.



Eileen Kampakuta Brown teaching Inma to the visiting women. Irati Wanti campaign.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)

In September 2000, the World Economic Forum (WEF), a group of the world's largest corporations and some of the richest people on the planet, met in Melbourne. Some 15,000 people came out to greet them, blockading their meeting for three days. The venue, appropriately enough, was the wonderful symbolic Crown Casino, on the banks of the Yarra River. There was months of planning, hundreds of meetings, until, finally the day arrived. The backdrop to these protests was the growth of the the global anti-corporate globalisation movement, and a strong sense that this was Australia's big day on 'the stage'.

6am, Monday, September 11th – s11. Finally, it's here. But its not as I had imagined. We hid under a giant banner, the rain literally pounding down on our heads. The cops had bolted for cover. The towers of the Crown Casino loomed over-head, faintly malevolent in the cold of pre-dawn Melbourne.

I peered out from under the banner and could count barely 200 people. Someone with a megaphone was berating people to start blockading, and some were obliging, stopping commuters on their way to work. I looked for an escape route, wondered if I could slink away, and felt a sudden and terrible panic. Had we totally misread the feeling of people towards the WEF, getting so caught in our own rhetoric that we hadn't realised that maybe no-one else would show? Rain kept hammering the banner. It was so cold. I tried to think of a positive media spin.

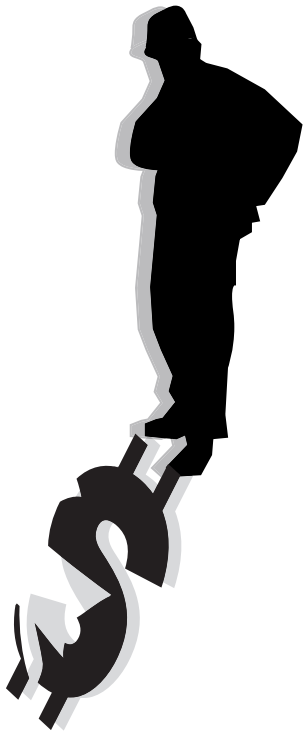
A couple of hours later, I walked the circumference of the Crown Complex, thousands of people cheerfully blockading every entrance. It felt like a giant film set, as I wandered from a Mad Max scene to Christians praying, to unionists talking to security guards, old fashioned communists alternating with skate punks. The sense of

theatre, goodwill and determination was remarkable. The sun started to come out. Even the cops looked happy. Maybe I won't get any ulcers, afterall.

The global mantra from that year goes 'Seattle, Washington, Melbourne, Prague'. It was a highpoint in the world wide mobilisations against corporate-defined globalisation, before the September 11 attacks on the USA and the second war on Iraq. And while Melbourne isn't as well known around the world as the others, the reality is that more than 15,000 people came out to blockade the WEF; not bad for a country of our size and population. Busloads came from Northern NSW, unionists from Sydney and Adelaide, forest campaigners from WA, delegations from rural towns. For months afterwards, in the most unlikely situations, people would say 'yes, I was there'. Despite what the *Herald Sun* said, it wasn't just the feral contingents, it was remarkably broad-based, diverse and determined.

In that time, we felt some of the most intense police violence Australia had seen for many years. Following a baton charge on the second evening, people with head injuries had to catch taxis to hospital because there were too many casualties for the ambulances to handle. We were, of course, vilified by the media (the Herald Sun, in particular, got very confused about the difference between news reporting and opinions). But we also felt incredible community support. A last minute decision to finish the blockade with a march through the city was an excellent move, and was more like a celebration parade than a street march.

FoE played a key role before, during and after the WEF protests. We worked to build alliances with the more conservative NGOs and collaborated on various pre-conferences, marches and events. We were a key part of the S11 alliance, the grouping



“Thank God
for Friends
of the
Earth”

Greens Senator, Bob Brown, 2004

of organisations that managed much of the logistics for the protest, from the stage to radio communications, and also engaged with AWOL – the autonomous web of liberation – a more amorphous network of activists who planned actions, events and infrastructure. Realising the fact that the media were beating up the possibility of violence, FoE initiated the idea of the Green Bloc, the picket of the Haig and Clarke street car-parks, which was an autonomous blockade under the s11 umbrella. Green bloc had been billed as a ‘disciplined, targeted non-violent blockade’ and this is what we delivered.

There was some controversy because of our decision to let off-duty workers out through our picket line. This was based on our assessment that blockading workers who simply wanted to go home did nothing to impact on the WEF delegates. FoE was at its best, with the building acting as a check-in point, and FoE people doing blockading, media, police and worker liaison, and endless mediation on the picket lines as well as acting as a link between the more radical and more conservative groups. And, throughout the blockades we articulated our vision of a just and sustainable future, not losing sight of the bigger picture.

There can be little doubt that the world is a different place from September 2000. It is unlikely that ‘summits’ of this type will keep going: the annual meeting of the WEF, held in January in the town of Davos in Switzerland, happens in incredibly tight security, and the World Bank, IMF and other international institutions can’t meet without mass movements and opposition. In this sense, Melbourne played its part in the movement that defined the last decade of the 20th century.

If we act as if it matters, and it doesn't matter,
then it doesn't matter. But if we act as if it
doesn't matter, and it matters, then it matters!



Our future! UNLESS YOU JOIN FRIENDS OF THE EARTH





*Steph Long, Kim Stewart
Friends of the Earth Brisbane*

Friends of the Earth Australia launched the Climate Justice campaign in 2000. Since that time the campaign has grown in profile and momentum both nationally and internationally.

Whilst the Climate Justice campaign is predominately focussed on the inequitable impact of climate change on vulnerable nations which are largely not responsible for the history of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere today, as well as strategies to gain 'climate justice'; the Climate Justice Tour had two more specific aims. Firstly, to highlight the ongoing fossil fuel addiction of the industrialised world that enables the ongoing human rights abuses which are

perpetrated virtually unchecked in oil-rich nations of the global South. And secondly, to raise awareness on the current and future climate change impacts on small island states of the Pacific. To do this we invited community leaders from Tuvalu, Samoa and Nigeria to spend two weeks in Australia to explain their experiences of climate change and the oil industry in a range of forums.

The Climate Justice Tour was a key activity of the campaigners workplan from the point in which Steph Long began working as the national campaigner (November 2002). The tour was originally framed as a 'travelling summit' based on the success of the Climate Justice Summit during climate treaty negotiations (COP 8) in New Delhi.

Whilst FoE Australia has worked on the issue of 'climate justice' for four years now, the tour was a strategic and very public declaration of the social justice issues of climate change. To date, science and economic issues, with limited acknowledgment of the social and human rights issues of climate change have dominated climate change debates in Australia.

Nnimmo Bassey, Siula Toloa and Fiu Mataese Elisara travelled through Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane taking part in twenty meetings and events.

Nnimmo Bassey was our guest from Nigeria who spelled out the impact of oil transnational corporations activities on people's lives and environment of the Niger Delta. This is the point of fossil fuel extraction and in the case of Nigeria people often live without potable water or reliable electricity – they live in energy poverty whilst oil accounts for over 90% of the countries source of income.

Siula Toloa outlined climate change impacts and awareness on the small island state of Tuvalu – which is actually a group of eight small atolls an average of 2.5 meters above sea-level. The rising sea has affected crop gardens and fresh water supplies, as increasingly there is some inland flooding during high tides that increases the salinity of soil and scarce ground water supplies. This is accompanied by the increasing severity of storms and drought periods, and at least one unexplainable freak wave, which damage coastal areas during a calm day without high winds. One small islet of Tuvalu, which was used for fishing and picnics, has already disappeared beneath the waves during a storm in 1997. So, rising sea's is not just the record-breaking flooding that occurred in the most recent spring tide; it is about the on-going water and food independence of over 10,000 people who have been living on Tuvalu for hundreds of generations.



EQUITY AND SURVIVAL

Climate change is a huge issue of inequity and survival for small island developing states.

Climate change in Australia has become a choice between coal and the survival of the Pacific.

It should not be an option that we become climate refugees.

As sovereign states we have a right to remain in own on lands with our own language and culture.

Fiu Mataese Elisara (Samoa)

Fiu Mataese Elisara's message throughout the tour was about spirit, obligation and equity that he clearly articulated as being separate from compliance. The expert advice of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change, which informed the initial design of the Kyoto Protocol, stated that the world needs to achieve 60% cuts on 1990 levels of greenhouse gases.

This has been overshadowed by the greed for profit and power by fossil fuel corporations and large industrial countries who after seven years are continuing to argue about 5.5% reduction targets on greenhouse gases. The world can comply with the Kyoto Protocol and this would be a good first step, but we should never believe that this compliance is enough to ensure intergenerational equity for the small island states of the Pacific.

Australia has been largely oblivious to the external effects of our highly consumptive lifestyles and carbon intensive economic system that has earned us the place as being amongst the highest per capita greenhouse gas emitters in the world. The external effects of climate change are often far removed from us, with a general perception that climate change is a phenomena that we have yet to experience – however there are threats to health, home, and culture that rising seas and fossil fuel consumption pose.

THE CHALLENGE OF ENERGY

In countries like Tuvalu the geography is challenging: in many places you can stand at the lagoon side of the island and see what is happening in the sea on the opposite side of the islands. In this context and similarly for many small island states, resources to adapt to climate change are limited and in particular the energy poverty that means communication is scarce and often unreliable, and health and education services are difficult to maintain. This is a double bind as energy (electricity) is an important means of addressing poverty and infrastructure strength, yet electricity from the combustion of fossil fuels (such as diesel generators which dominate on island states) is the major local source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Let there be no doubt, it is the unabated greed of the enriched industrial nations of the world that now threatens the sovereignty

of the people of Tuvalu, not the excessive use of air-conditioners and cars in Pacific Island nations.

In Nigeria, almost the opposite side of the world to Tuvalu, the oil that goes into products and fuels much of the world's energy needs is extracted from one of the most energy impoverished and conflict stricken continents on earth. Yet Nigeria was not always like this. Nnimmo Bassey explained clearly that corruption, environmental degradation, exploitation, violence and murder is a result of oil extraction at the hands of multinational corporations including Shell, Chevron Texaco and Exxon Mobil. Social, economic and environmental impoverishment has befallen the people of Nigeria since the first well was sunk in 1956. Since then the soil of the Niger Delta has been literally soaked with spilt oil and the blood of the Nigerian people.

Gas flares are a common occurrence in the Niger Delta as the oil corporations burn the associated gas that is extracted during the drilling process. Estimates are that gas flares from oil extraction create more greenhouse gas emissions than all other sources combined from Sub Saharan Africa.

The air has been ripped by the noise of gas flaring wasted by the oil transnational corporations, lighting up the night skies for over 40 years. The promise of riches brought by the transnational corporations has turned to ashes in the mouths and lungs of the Nigerian people. Literally thousands of lives have been lost.

SKIES ABLAZE AND RIVERS OF FIRE

When sometimes when you ask them [about oil spills] as they want to claim responsible corporate citizens, they will tell you that they clean the spills.

And how do they do it? They use the highest technology available using bucket, spades and shovels. When they are tired of scooping and shoveling, they set the very crude on fire.

That way you have the forest set on fire, we got even rivers set on fire. So when you come to the Niger Delta and you see a fire – do not run into the river!

Nnimmo Bassey (Nigeria)





time

the islands of tuvalu

“Climate change is our business....”

Most development in many developed countries is undertaken at the costs of the environment.

These countries are clearly denying the fact that it is our business to address climate change.

I say it is our business!

The small low lying island states dotting the major oceans of the Pacific, the Indian and the Atlantic are affected by adverse impacts of climate change. These small island states such as Tuvalu, contribute insignificantly to global emissions but suffers the most.”

Siuila Toloa (Tuvalu)

Fossil fuels have not brought wealth to the peoples of the Niger Delta. Nor has wealth been delivered to the Indigenous peoples of South America or Indigenous peoples of Canada and the USA. Fossil fuels will only continue to bring disaster and poverty to small island states of the Pacific – and likely the rest of the world - as climate change increases. The profit of the few yet again is selling the sovereignty of small island states and the ecological security of the world in order to gain unabated market access to oil, gas and coal.

Hope for the Pacific Island countries lies in rejecting the fossil fuel based development paradigm, and through the solidarity built between grass roots movements across the world, convincing industrialised countries to do the same. It is simply not appropriate for the small island countries to have our mal-development agenda forced upon them. It doesn't work for us, it won't work for them. It is economic and politics, not technology, that constrains the development of clean renewable energy provision. This will be an ongoing focus of our work in the climate justice campaign at Friends of the Earth!

www.foe.org.au/climate



FRIENDS of the EARTH Local Groups





Adelaide

The first FoE group in Australia was campus-based and formed in 1972 at Adelaide University (FoEAd).

This group campaigned on issues including waste, pollution, Coca Cola and French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Following a high profile campaign against Coca Cola, Gabriel Lafitte was employed by a public relations firm and assigned to infiltrate FoEAd in order to encourage activists in the group to accept money to stop campaigning against the steel company BHP.

BHP gave FoEAd \$3,900 to make a film about recycling, which FoEAd turned into an expose of the company itself.

In 1973, the Adelaide FoE group was visited by Peter Hayes from FoE Melbourne, which had permission from FoEI to use the name 'Friends of the Earth'

in Australia. Close co-operation developed between these two groups, and Friends of the Earth started to expand around the country.

In 1974, FoEAd was involved in discussions with the Australia Party and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union and established the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE), which was formally launched in March 1975.

In 1975, a separate, off-campus group was established in Adelaide. Early campaign activity of this group included Federal Government uranium inquiries and proposals to declare a national park in Kakadu in the Northern Territory, along with continued work on packaging.

In the 1980s, the Adelaide group set up an alternative to 'fast food': a 'slow food' café in Torrensville. In 1989, the group established itself as the Green Party of South Australia. Subsequently, a new group (FoE Nouveau) was set up and continues today. FoE Nouveau was heavily involved in green city activism, including the Green City Program, which focussed on city-wide sustainability issues for Adelaide, and helped initiate the Halifax urban development in inner Adelaide. It also campaigned on energy and nuclear issues and the protection of our often undervalued arid zones/rangelands.

The group on campus continued on and off for many years, concentrating on general awareness raising within the university community as well as a raft of targeted campaigns such as public transport, ozone depletion and global warming.

Friends of the Earth Adelaide University

Roman Orzanski

Possibly the first FoE group in Australia was that at Adelaide University. The early seventies were times of social upheaval, and many ideas were imported from overseas. In 1971, a University group called Social Action produced a number of major articles which appeared in the campus newspaper, *On Dit*, about waste, pollution, and the environment.

Social Action had subgroups and was active in a number of areas, yet there was enough interest to also form a Friends of the Earth Group. Information from overseas about happenings on the environmental front was circulated and soon there was a core of students concerned about the environment. From the first, FoE called itself a radical ecology group.

By March 1972 regular meetings of FoE were held under the auspices of Social Action/Abschol. A seminar was held entitled "Is technology a blueprint for destruction?" This concern with the effects of technology was an important part of questioning the purpose of universities. The proceedings were later published for distribution.

The First Campaign

Appropriately enough, the first target for FoE was waste from packaging and the litter created by disposable containers. The concern with packaging quickly led to the first King of Krap award, to Coca Cola. The award was announced in *On Dit* on April 11, and students were invited to collect empty coke cans and join in a march to the Coke factory on the Friday.

About 300 people took part. The offending items were returned, and the award presented to Coke. The threat to target polluters and undo their careful public relations work had an amazing effect upon the large packaging companies:

I found it very heartening to realise that within hours of somebody wandering around Adelaide University and seeing a notice stuck up saying FoE were going to organise a demonstration against Coca Cola in 10 days time and someone (either an employee, or a child of an employee of Coca Cola) rang Coke and within hours 20 top executives of six of Australia's largest companies all round the country were panicking. That's an indication of what it was like. People were flying to and fro. They didn't know what to do. They flew me over to Adelaide to see if I could head off the demonstration.

There were seven options open to them - ranging from one extreme from doing nothing at all, to at the other extreme preventing the march from ever leaving the University - and that was an option which they obviously regarded as just being perfectly normal within their capacity. They eventually decided to allow the march to occur and not to call the cops, but just make sure the cops were hovering in the background on the grounds that they've got a brand new plant on a major road out of town with acreage of glass on the front, which is operating eight hours a day, so three quarters of the entire week its unmanned. (Gabriel Lafitte, a former employee of Image Australia, which handled the steel can account, Interview in *On Dit* 1973)

A few weeks later after the visit to Coke, a similar march visited Parliament House, where cans were left on the steps and deputation went to chat to Glen Broomhill, then Minister for the Environment.

Steel Can Blues: FoE vs. BHP

After the assault on Coke, the Steel Can People, who were trying to promote a community conscious, responsible image for BHP (as a producer of steel cans), decided to try to tame FoE. They invited them to observe recycling operations and gave them \$3,900 to make a film about recycling. Ultimately, the film was a damning indictment of the whole steel can scam.

At the film's premiere, February 6 1973, FoE issued a detailed analysis of the lies and half truths told by BHP.

Gabriel Lafitte blew the whistle on the whole mess. He also provided a very interesting insight into the workings of large companies. The debate over cans continued well into 1974, when another demonstration was staged, this time with people dressed as Coke cans, in support of can deposit legislation.

French Tests in the Pacific and FoE Australia

June 1972 saw a focus on the French nuclear tests in the Pacific, with a double page spread in On Dit, a public meeting, and a march from Elder Park to the French Consulate. This was the first sign of FoE's concern with all aspects of nuclear operations.

At this time, the group at Adelaide Uni wasn't officially connected to FoE groups interstate or overseas. In 1973, FoE at Adelaide Uni was visited by Peter Hayes, from FoE Melbourne. He had permission from overseas to use the name Friends of the Earth in Australia, and was worried about the illegal use of the name. Close cooperation developed between the groups, particularly on the uranium broadsheets subsequently produced.

FoE Melbourne shared offices with Greenpeace Australia. In 1974, FoE groups around Australia organised the national "Greenpeace" actions against nuclear testing in the Pacific. Chain Reaction magazine started life as the Greenpeace Pacific Bulletin in 1974, with the idea of providing a united front against the Pacific tests.

RedCliff and Public Transport

1974 saw major campaigns on uranium, petrochemicals, and public transport. FoE continued to follow up issues such as RedCliff - a site on the Gulf which was proposed for a petrochemical plant. Considerable concern was expressed about pollution from vinyl chlorides during the processing. The campaign started in

July, with a series of broadsheets on Redcliff, which covered health and employment, effects on the environment, and 'Blue waters or Redcliff'!

About 200 people joined a protest march on 26 July, from the University to the State Administration Centre in Victoria Square, where further access was blocked by police. FoE also prepared a 15 page submission to the Redcliff Public Inquiry.

A public transport campaign developed which involved Friends of the Earth, the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union, Australian Railways Union, AFULE, the Cyclist Protection Committee, the Bowden Brompton Anti-freeway group, the Radical Technology group, and others. The campaign worked to protect and improve public transport with stated aims being:

'to upgrade public transport and encourage the use of bicycle transportation as well as opposing the construction of freeways.' Some activists got a car wreck, sprayed it bright yellow, and deposited it outside the State Transport Department in Victoria Square to highlight the dominance of the motor vehicle in transport planning. A request to University Council for more bike racks on campus brought the response, "*we don't want unsightly bicycles scattered around the place...*"

Anti-uranium campaigns

Late 1974 saw discussions with the Australia Party, and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union to set up a Campaign Against Nuclear Energy. FoE's uranium subgroup met regularly in January 1975 and public meetings were held at the Adelaide CAE. CANE was set up in the first week of March, and a workshop was held with Peter Hayes and Dr. John Coulter on March 15 on the problems associated with mining uranium. On April 19, CANE held a demonstration at Elder Park.

Nationally FoE groups participated in the anti-uranium bike ride. On May 20, 150 cyclists from around Australia converged on Canberra.

Everyone helped make the procession through the city to Parliament House one of the noisiest and most exciting ever. People had slogans on their clothes, or held up banners, or kept their bells and horns going, at the same time as shouting lines in unison with loud hailers. After all, they had collectively traveled over 25,000 miles to make a loud protest at the Federal Government's uranium policies (Survival, June 1975). They reached Canberra at 5pm, cycled through the city centre and arrived at Parliament House at 6pm, pitching tents for 24 hours of protests.

1974 and 1975 were the years of uranium protest: the Fox Commission, the Ranger Inquiry, the ALP National Conference, the State Elections and the Amory Lovins tour.

Off-Campus at last

March 1975 was the year FoE moved off-campus, and into an office in Payneham Road, and by July the office was staffed every afternoon according to a roster. During the year FoE prepared submissions to four inquiries: two on uranium mining, one on packaging materials, and one on the proposal for a National Park at Kakadu.

Easter saw the Radical Ecology Conference in Melbourne, organised by student groups, unions and ecology groups - 600 attended, 40 from Adelaide. As the FoE newsletter saidthe conference was optimistic and exciting because it revealed a substantial ecology movement whose members had similar basic beliefs.

Writers Note:

Not all the early seventies are well documented, nor all the documents well preserved. Even some of the dates mentioned above maybe incorrect. I have had to rely on human memory, a notoriously ingenious device, for some details. My thanks to Peter Bill, Sandy Pulsford, Ally Fricker, Anne McMenanim, Liz Osman, and Rob Ranzijin for filling in the gaps.

Originally published in Chain Reaction #50, 1987.



Brisbane

Folklore suggests the existence of a FoE group in Brisbane in the late 70s, however there is little information available on their work. It was re-formed in the early 1980s and campaigned for land rights and against repressive state legislation brought in by the Bjelke Peterson government. After this group also wound down, a couple of Brisbane activists campaigning in the early 1990s to stop logging on Fraser Island started a FoE group after a falling out with the established environment groups in Brisbane. A FoE Maryborough group (Maryborough is located close to Fraser Island) began at the same time and while this group did much of the physical blockading on the Island, the Brisbane crew raised funds, awareness and recruited blockaders to keep this successful campaign going. Following the cessation of the blockades, Brisbane FoE campaigned on several issues, but the group faded over the next few years.

FoE Brisbane (FoEB) re-formed in 1996, after a core group of activists involved in the campaign to stop sandmining on North Stradbroke Island decided they wanted a long term organisational base for their work. It is now a significant organisation within the environment movement in that city. John Hepburn, Ann Ferguson, Rowena Shakes and Andy Morison played a key role in establishing the group. In recent times, it has campaigned against genetic engineering, food irradiation, on nuclear and indigenous issues and had a Sustainable Societies collective.

FoEB initiated Reverse Garbage, a cooperative that collects and sells industrial discards that would otherwise go to landfill and has recently opened 'the Bicycle Revolution', a shop front that finds, fixes and sells old bicycles. FoEB also runs Papernet, a paper provision network that provides 100% post consumer waste recycled paper at low cost to businesses, groups and individuals. Reverse Garbage has since celebrated its fifth year of operation and has become a significant example of social enterprise, while also providing financial support to FoE Brisbane.

FoE Brisbane currently hosts the national climate justice campaign and the national environmental film festival, Wildspaces.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOE BRISBANE AND REVERSE GARBAGE

John Hepburn

In 1996, Consolidated Rutile Ltd gained approval to open a new sand mine on North Stradbroke Island. The minepath of “Ibis Alpha” would pass nearby to Ibis and Black-snake lagoons, threatening the fragile ecology and hydrology of these perched lakes. There was stong opposition to the mine from many of the local traditional owners, as well as from the wider community.

Over the next 18 months, there was a fierce campaign of community resistance to the mine, culminating in a blockade of the minesite that lasted for 7 days, followed by a 6 week long protest camp near the entrance to the mine. In the end, the mine went ahead, albeit with some tighter restrictions that would help to mitigate some of the worst environmental impacts.

After the campaign ended, some of the organisers decided that they wanted to try to build a grassroots campaigning organisation – so that next time a development like the new sandmine was being proposed, there would be some better infrastructure with which to build an effective campaign. A few years earlier, some of the group had looked into starting a local group of Friends of the Earth due in part to the long standing inspiration of FoE Melbourne as a grassroots campaigning organisation. So the group formed into Friends of the Earth Brisbane, and formally joined the Friends of the Earth Australia network.

One of the first questions was funding. How can grassroots organisations fund themselves without compromising their independence? FoE Australia had recently been cut from the federal GVCO (Grants for Voluntary Conservation Organisations) program due to their outspoken opposition to the privatisation of Telstra, so Government funding seemed fraught with compromises. Corporate funding was also ruled out for similar reasons.

One member of the group had been researching community recycling centres around the country, and, along with several new members

who were interested in recycling, set about the establishment of Reverse Garbage co-op. The idea for Reverse Garbage came from the Sydney based organisation of the same name. It is basically a re-use centre, where useful discards from industry are collected, sorted and displayed in a warehouse – to be made available for sale to the general public.

After 12 months of planning and research, Reverse Garbage Co-operative was established as a non-profit, worker managed co-op, with the overall objective of generating funds to support the campaign activities of Friends of the Earth Brisbane. A few months later, in March 1999, Reverse Garbage opened its doors to the public from a warehouse on Montague Road, West End, with the FoE office located in the house next door.

That year, Reverse Garbage won a local award for the “New Small Business of the Year”. It is now 5 years old, employs 5 people, turns over approximately \$250,000 per year and diverts around 100 tonnes of material from landfill each year.

It has also helped in the establishment of ‘The Bicycle Revolution’, a bicycle recycling co-op that operates from the old garage of the FoE house. The Bicycle Revolution also won an award for “New Small Business of the Year” in 2000. It now employs 2 full time bike mechanics and keeps hundreds of old bicycles on the road each year.

Friends of the Earth Brisbane, Reverse Garbage and The Bicycle Revolution are a practical expression of a FoE’s vision for environmental sustainability. They are a showcase of the creative re-use of wasted resources and have been an inspiration to many of the tens of thousands of Brisbane residents who visit each year. As well as the creation of sustainable, local alternatives, FoE continues to engage in public outreach campaigns on issues as diverse as sustainable agriculture, food irradiation and climate justice.

Maryborough

FoE Maryborough began on the mid north coast of Queensland in 1991 and continues to monitor threats to Fraser Island and the broader region. Although a number of green groups have laid claim to 'saving' Fraser Island, the role of FoE Maryborough has not yet received the recognition it deserves in the successful campaign to end logging on Fraser, the world's largest sand island. Activists Ross and Karen Daniel and Zephyr L'Green were pivotal in the group that kept the base camp on the Island running for a whole year of blockading. Without the blockades, there would have been far less pressure on the state and Federal Governments to end logging on the island.

Following the death of a young boy on Fraser Island as the result of a dingo attack in 2001, a State Government program to cull dingoes nearly eradicated the entire population. FoE Maryborough carried out a census of animals, lobbied State Government departments and worked with local traditional owners of the Island to ensure greater recognition of Indigenous rights to control and manage the island's natural ecosystems.



Melbourne



Melia Bugeja, FoE Melbourne Food Co-op.

The largest FoE group in Australia is based in Melbourne and was set up in 1973. FoEM (Melbourne) or FoEM has always been physically located in the city's inner north, moving through six offices over this time. The group changed its name many times to better reflect the geographical coverage of its campaign activity. It started as FoEM Carlton, then changed to Collingwood, then Fitzroy and finally FoEM in 2000. It also moved offices many times, starting in McArthur Place in Carlton, then Nicholson Street and 366 Smith Street in Collingwood.

Over that period, FoEM has been active in an extensive range of campaigns: on hazardous chemicals and community Right to Know legislation, brown coal development in the Latrobe Valley, genetic engineering, solidarity with the East Timorese struggle, food irradiation, anti-militarism, public transport and renewable energy, to name a few. In the 1980s, FoEM groups in Melbourne and elsewhere pioneered national work on recycling, waste minimisation and deposit legislation.

FoEM has run a food co-operative since 1975. Originally a 'dry foods' co-op, this is now the largest and one of the longest running co-ops of its type in Australia. It stocks minimally processed food, where shoppers bring their own containers, food is organic and locally grown wherever possible, and fairly traded. It now also includes an organic vegetarian café. The FoEM co-op is a bold and well regarded venture that feeds both body and spirit and Beth Cameron and Leanne McLean have been involved in its co-ordination for over a decade.



Bookshop, FoE Melbourne.

Since at least the early 1980s, FoEM has also run a bookshop, which continues to act as a high profile street level presence for FoEM in its local community and is an important outlet for campaign materials and ideas. The FoEM bookshop is an important source of specialist books and materials. It has also helped to shape how other bookshops, libraries and institutions approach and portray environmental issues and concerns.

FoEM ran a community arts space/gallery during the 1980s and early 1990s, providing an early and important Melbourne outlet for indigenous artwork from central Australia and the Kimberley. This was an accessible and welcoming venue for local artists and other community ventures, and the FoEM building – then at 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy – was a prominent part of Melbourne’s activist and cultural landscape.

Following a campaign against French nuclear tests in the Pacific, the Anti-Uranium Collective emerged in 1974. Its aim was to oppose Australia’s contribution to the nuclear fuel/weapons cycle: the mining and export of uranium. It now has 30 years of continuous campaigning to its credit and continues to form the core of FoEA’s national campaign activity.

In the early days, various people had considerable influence on how the group developed. A number of members of the Hayes family were significant and provided a strong tactical analysis of the role of FoEM in the broader environment movement. Neil Barrett, Richard Nankin and Alison Parkes were involved in *Chain Reaction* magazine, which was based in the Melbourne office. Denis Hayes, Jim Falk and Neil Barrett collaborated on the production of the book *Red Light for Yellowcake*, which sold over 35,000 copies. The ‘stop uranium mining’ stickers that were perhaps the quintessential slogan of the decade eventually sold more than 100,000. Les Dalton and Alison Parkes helped establish the Movement Against Uranium Mining (MAUM), while others initiated the first ethical shareholder

actions at the AGMs of mining companies MIM and Hamersley. Andrew Herrington was actively involved, especially in the development of the structure of the organisation. Alan Parker, Mick Harris and Jack Gildering were among those who pulled the Alternate Technology Association (ATA) together. Various bike related projects also worked from FoEM. In 1976, *The Age* newspaper described the FoEM office as a “barely furnished terrace house in Carlton ... there is no obvious indication that FoEM lives in at least 16 other countries, is represented on the UN Environment Program, and ... has so far gained support of not just the left wing unions but professional organisations and church groups ... the office workers are fairly young, well educated and poor”.

In the early 1980s, FoEM established a Food Justice Centre to work on plant variety rights at a time when patenting of seeds began to pose a grave threat to subsistence farmers around the world. Its other concerns included the use of harmful chemicals in Southern nations and corporate ownership and control of food. The creation of the Food Justice Centre marked a significant development in Australian environmental politics. Its emphasis on international solidarity, critiques of corporate power, and cross over into areas far beyond ‘conventional’ environmentalism was a living example of FoEM’s style of work. In 1983, the Food Justice Centre established an organic fruit and vegetable co-op that ran for about six years. The co-op aimed to provide organically grown food at reasonable prices, to improve the network between growers, distributors and consumers of organic foods, to work as part of the international campaign against the use of pesticides in agriculture and to produce materials about methods of food production and their impacts on both the environment and health.

From the 1980s, FoEM consistently worked to highlight the risks associated with the release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In 1995, it published Gyorgy Scrinis’ book *Colonising the Seed*:

genetic engineering and techno-industrial agriculture, which still stands as a significant critique of the role of the biotech industry in undermining ecologically sustainable and community controlled agriculture.

A Water Collective was established 1993 due largely to the efforts of Karri Giles. This group worked on big picture infrastructure developments, a Melbourne Water review of its sewerage strategy, trends relating to water, as well as many local issues. The Collective was explicitly bioregional in its approach, concentrating on the catchments of Port Phillip and Western Port Bays. It produced the book *Not Just Down the Drain*, which focussed on domestic re-use of grey water.

FoEM maintained connections with various Indigenous communities over the years. From the blockades against the Alcoa aluminium smelter at Point Danger in western Victoria in the early 1980s to the

current work with the Yorta Yorta nation to gain adequate protection for the Barmah and Millewa forests on the Murray River, these relations were (and continue to be) based around specific campaigns.

Through all this time, FoEM has been a vibrant centre of community-based activism, offering meeting space for other organisations, housing information, notice boards and an informal space to meet and a vast amount of direct support for local campaign efforts in Melbourne and around the state. Literally dozens of organisations have had offices in various FoEM buildings, from the Alternate Technology Association to the Fitzroy Rooming House Tenants Association and the New Left Party to the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group.



Mid 80s office life, FoE Melbourne campaigns office.



FOREST NETWORK

Anthony Amis

Our story begins with the formation of Melbourne Rainforest Action Group (RAG) in 1985. Partly inspired by, and reacting to, the Swiss activist Bruno Manser, our purpose was to highlight the social and environmental consequences of logging in the remote Malaysian province of Sarawak on the island of Borneo. The indigenous Dyak and Penan nations were having their land plundered and their culture and lifestyle destroyed so that Australian consumers could purchase poorly made, disposable furniture.

Between 1988 and 1992 we conducted many non-violent direct actions including 29 ship actions where we, as swimmers, kyakers, surfers etc., attempted to physically and symbolically blockade ships carrying the imported tropical rainforest timber on the Yarra River in Melbourne.

In the quest for alternatives we hoped that local forest management would provide a suitable alternative to imported tropical rainforest timber. The result was disappointing and in 1989-90 RAG joined protests against the logging of old growth forest at Brown Mountain in East Gippsland. Soon after, the interest in local forest issues saw a RAG collective form the Victorian Rainforest Sites of Significance Action Group. This collective was the beginning of the Forest Network (FN). Since then we have conducted hundreds of non-violent direct actions and helped to establish the Indigenous Solidarity Group and the Boycott Woodchipping Campaign.

In the summer of 1993 -1994, the network joined with the Wilderness Society and Concerned Residents of

East Gippsland (CROEG) to launch the East Gippsland Forest Alliance. More than 350 joined the Alliance at a gathering in Goongerah in East Gippsland, and direct action was started both in the forests of East Gippsland, and against the woodchip mill at Eden.

February 1994 also saw the infamous “pressure holds” action, where over 100 people converged on the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in East Melbourne. In an attempt to break the blockade Police from the Tactical Response Group used torture tactics on about 30 of the non-violent protesters. Pressure holds were inflicted in full view of a large media contingent. The results were front page newspaper headings for 3 days and saturated the media. Not only did the image in the *Herald Sun* win a Walkley Award for media photograph of the year, it was also used by the newspaper in its two page centrespread ‘Images of the Twentieth Century’ printed on December 31 1999. Activists successfully claimed compensation for the pressure holds in 1998 and the Victorian Police supposedly have stopped using these tactics above the neck.

Forest Network took part in hundreds of blockades and actions over the following years - with approximately 50 actions occurring in 1996. A key focus of the group at that time was the annual woodchip licence renewals. Action highlights must also include the action outside the Chairman of North Ltds’ house in 1997. A trailer of woodchips was dumped on his driveway by FN. In order to get to work, the disgruntled Chairman began

shovelling the woodchips onto his garden. After 15 minutes of physical exertion and with 90% of the woodchip pile remaining the Chairman then retreated back into his house defeated.

In the summer of 1994 FN was involved in the creation of GECO - Goongerah Environment Centre Office, which continues to be a hub in organising direct action protests in the forests of East Gippsland. During the summer of 1995 -1996, FoE joined local residents in the Otways in building a broad based local group, which went through a number of names: Forest and Land Action Group, Save the Otways, Friends of the Otways, and, finally OREN the Otway Ranges Environment Network. OREN is now the peak green group in The Otways region and has won a number of local victories including the creation of a 100,000 ha National Park.

FoE was also instrumental in getting the Goolengook Campaign started in 1996. This blockade eventually became the longest forest blockade in Australian history, lasting over 5 years. Thousands of people joined the blockade with hundreds of arrests occurring. At the time of writing Goolengook is under a logging moratorium.

In the late nineties, FN continued to liaise and be active in most other parts of the state where forests are under threat, including Central Victoria (Wombat forest), the Central Highlands, the Victorian Alps, the Western district, East Gippsland and the Strezlecki Ranges. FN has worked closely with Aboriginal traditional

owners to gain protection of forests in the South West of the state.

In working with regional groups, FN is mindful of the need to listen to local communities. It seeks to support local initiatives rather than drive local agendas. This is fundamental to a campaign perspective based on community empowerment. FN seeks to address all ecological issues in its campaigns. So, it does not make a blanket endorsement of plantations as a solution to the crisis in our native forests.

Since 1999 members of FN have been involved in highlighting plantation mismanagement throughout Victoria and have worked closely with Friends of Gippsland Bush, based in the northern Strzeleckis. We are currently working towards getting protection of 10,000 hectares of rainforest and associated forests in the Strzeleckis Ranges.

Since 2000 FN has been involved in internet monitoring of forest companies. Visits to these sites now exceeds 115,000 per annum.

The sites include:

Hancock watch

<http://www.hancock.forests.org.au>

Australian Paper

<http://www.australianpaper.forests.org.au>

Bad Developers

FN Website

<http://www.jeack.com.au/~martdy/>

<http://www.baddevelopers.green.net.au>

Good environmental outcomes will be complex and regionally appropriate: there is no single one size fits all

model. Fundamental to achieving a sustainable future will be a reduction in consumption patterns, ecological management of plantations, alternative sources of timber and fibre, and protection of all high conservation value native forests.

In 2004, Forest Network continues to campaign on the local, national and international levels through non-violent direct action, community education, GIS computer based modelling and building alliances with residents and community groups.

FoE aims to ensure protection of all high conservation and old growth forests, stop the export woodchip industry, promote alternatives and reduce paper consumption. As a working group of FoE, FN has a strong social justice perspective and seeks to work for a sustainable and equitable timber industry.



goolengook



GOOLENGOOK

John Fraser

Every once in a while, perhaps only once in a lifetime, something comes along that drives our involvement in the search for a better way of living our lives on this planet. For me, that moment came the first time I saw the forests of Goolengook. Goolengook forced me to let the issue deep inside my defences. While I can't speak for others, it became a campaign in which thousands of people came back again and again, and so I find it impossible to believe I was the only person who experienced it this way.

The forests of Goolengook contained, and still do contain, whole valleys where the rainforest is so thick it can take half a day to walk a kilometre. Valleys where the tree ferns are bigger than fully grown trees in more conventional Australian forests. The place is an absolute treasure trove of rare and endangered species including long footed potoroos, tiger quolls, and powerful and sooty owls. Forests that the Victorian government's own scientists described as the best opportunity in Victoria for the preservation of warm and cool temperate rainforest.

The resulting blockade started small, became very big, and then varied massively in numbers over a period of five years. Despite the many differences in opinions and priorities that do exist within the green movement, the blockade and associated political campaign, was an amazing example of collaboration between diverse groups and individuals. The work by GECO in handling the day to day logistics of maintaining the blockade deserves special mention here. The incredible perseverance of the activists who stayed during the logging of 2002, despite a horrific campaign of activist harassment on the part of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and the Victoria Police, is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

This perseverance paid off in the form of a government moratorium on further logging introduced in 2002. Although some incredible forest was lost to the loggers much of the forest may one day receive permanent protection. The fight is not over though, as the Bracks government can revoke this moratorium at any time, and a future liberal government could simply choose to ignore it. What we have with Goolengook is a partial win that many people said we'd never get. It's up to us all to convert this partial win into permanent protection.

THE CAFE CAMPAIGN, 1994

Domenica Settle

1994. VicRoads was planning to widen Alexandra Parade as part of their mission to pave the planet, the Coalition Against Freeway Extensions had sprung up to oppose the project and I was 16 - pimply, awkward and excruciatingly shy. A leaflet landed in the letter box at my parents house in Clifton Hill, a couple of hundred metres from where the Eastern Freeway ends and Alexandra Parade begins. I decided to find out more.

I dragged my parents along to the meeting it was advertising - after all, we were going to have to keep breathing the inner city air. Hundreds of us sat in the Collingwood Town Hall, while the CAFE representative explained that the road widening would be socially and environmentally damaging, would only move the bottleneck and create more traffic. The VicRoads representative got up and said... well it wasn't really memorable. But you didn't need to have finished high school to conclude that, rationally, the road widening was more than socially and environmentally damaging. It was a dumb idea.

CAFE built a symbolic barricade across the median strip and I wagged a morning of school to help maintain a community presence at the site (I wrote "family" as the reason on my late passes -- it sounds serious so no-one asks). I didn't realise it, but I'd accidentally become an activist.

As the campaign picked up momentum, we leafleted passing cars and did stalls in front of the local supermarket, Piedimontes. We maintained a vigil, calling the FoE office if we needed back-up on the one very precious mobile phone, which was a little larger than your average house brick. Hundreds of us rallied down Brunswick Street, a cardboard train dancing around at the front. We occupied the transport minister's office and hung "more public transport" signs on his Xmas

tree. CAFE members danced the heel-and-toe to block the bulldozers and were nominated at the Activist Awards for the most creative act of desperation. We started filling in the holes the bulldozers had made - long lines of people with shovels and buckets, working in the sun. It would have been a pointless activity, if it wasn't so symbolically important and damn satisfying.

We also started blockading bulldozers. (My father would make me a packed lunch and tell me to call him if I needed bailing out of jail.) The median strip had turned into a war zone of dust and heat and the roar of road-building machinery. Lee Tan -- five feet tall -- would walk up to the towering machines, smile sweetly and ask them to please stop work. Before they knew it, the bewildered driver would find themselves surrounded by members of the community practising non-violent direct action. The blockading dance had started:

1. **CAFE stops machinery, police are called**
2. **Police ask CAFE members to leave, CAFE discusses this**
3. **CAFE members refuse to leave**
4. **Police threaten arrest, CAFE discusses this**
5. **CAFE members (usually) leave, police leave**
6. **Silence**
7. **CAFE members suddenly reappear**
8. **Return to step one and repeat**



Blockading road works on Alexandra Parade, November, 1994



It was a useful blockading technique: non-violent direct wasting of police and construction workers' time.

But for all the community opposition, VicRoads was determined, and the police were on their side, not ours. One by one, they dragged us away.

In the end the road went ahead (congestion has long since returned to pre-1994 levels), leaving the effects of the campaign to appear as ripples in unexpected places. CAFE evolved into Streets for People, who did creative bike lane and pedestrian crossing actions

..... where there are now bike lanes and pedestrian crossings and organised the third ever Reclaim the Streets party/protest to happen outside the UK. As a spin off from CAFE, Critical Mass started in Melbourne - the monthly celebration of bikes as traffic. Some people involved in the campaign got jobs in transport planning, causing green transport ideas to pop up in the cracks in the bitumen. Others started introducing strange ideas like bike-riding and consensus decision-making into their workplaces. Lots went on to tackle other social change projects. I found myself travelling the world and running around in silly costumes trying to stop the World Trade Organisation and wondering why I didn't get a sensible job like my friends from school.

..... The Alexandra Parade campaign didn't stop the road, but change happens slowly.



Lee Tan

“Let’s chuck in some coins to try our luck in this week’s Tattsлото...”

That was the conclusion of an emergency FoE Strategy meeting to deal with the dwindling finances for the renovation of FoE’s new premises at Smith Street in 1993. At the time I was only several weeks into the part-time Office Co-ordinator cum FoE General finance co-ordination position, after my sea change decision to focus my time and energy into working for the environment and a socially just world. Prior to this, I had been working full-time in the corporate sector and a health institution.

That meeting did not leave me feeling helpless but it prompted me to ask what has led us into such desperation and why there were so little resources for good environmental causes. As it turned out, FoE was being gentrified out of Fitzroy into the neighbouring working class suburb, Collingwood. We got a filthy dilapidated building and we were on a warpath with the real estate agent staff assigned to the property. It took another year and a half to have the lease signed and sealed,

after he was sacked. The cheap lawyer recommended to us by the Fitzroy Legal Service died halfway through his assistance (through causes not related to the case). Finally, Frank, who kindly offered an hour a week (or month?) of his time helped us through the rest of the paper work. Frank was a God-send, although I could not recall if we had made a decision at Strategy to pray for an accountant. He turned up at a time when we were really struggling with tightening of legislation and guidelines for community organisations and professional advice was most needed.

After FoE was physically moved from its old premises, I returned to work after one week of study leave. The entire upstairs of the building was in mayhem, filled with rubble, building materials and off-cuts. Old furniture and files were stacked up ceiling high. The entire office staff and volunteers had taken leave to recuperate from the move. The phone rang but I could not get to it because it was buried amongst the piles of furniture. And the bank balance was down to 3 digits! I thought to myself then: *“We’ll be in the post capitalist state in no time!”*

Somehow we managed. We got volunteers to help with the ‘renovation’. All of a sudden I found myself turning into a building site supervisor. It was definitely a case of jumping in the deep end, often beyond the realm of my imagination when I took up the job at FoE. Nevertheless, I learnt to love all of these new experiences, not underestimating the stresses and worries we all went through after the move.

The thing I’m most impressed and fascinated about FoE is the resourcefulness and the resilience of its staff. FoE is almost entirely self-funded.

FoE adheres to a set of strict environmental and ethical standards, and this is not easy in a society where money is mostly generated through resource exploitation and an insatiable appetite for consumption.

For the next few years after the move, as Melbournians prepared for their annual post

Christmas exodus to their favourite holiday hideouts, a bunch of us die-hard earthlings gathered at the FoE Food Co-op to prepare for our catering fundraising expedition to the Down to Earth Confest alternative lifestyle festival to pay off the building debt.

That was the ultimate fund raising experience for me. I'm sure no one will dare contest if Ila Marks is awarded the Confest Fundraising Queen. She got us all organised – food supply, equipment, tents, menu and all, even dogs I think. And as we set out in our pooled cars toward the Murray River at the Victoria-New South Wales border, we also schemed on how to dodge the ticket collector at the gate (non-violently, of course, to keep pace with the spirit of this festival). This last plot is not part of Ila's plan but some of us reckoned if we are to work towards a post-capitalist society, then we might as well test it out at the Confest. The rest of the story I'll leave it with readers who've been to Confest to tell.

FoE is way ahead of time in terms of its vision. Whilst FoE struggles to get resources in an economy dominated by neo-liberals, it also dares to challenge the norm and works against many odds. I hope FoE's courage and uniqueness will be better understood and supported by the general public. An organisation like FoE is fundamental for a healthy democracy.

Lee Tan, long time FoE campaigner for Indigenous and Asian Forest campaigns and local indigenous issues.



Down to Earth Confest alternative lifestyle festival 1990-1991

Perth



Various groups have existed in Perth at different times. While FoE was prominent in WA in the 1970s and '80s, it has not had a strong presence in the capital for well over a decade.

In the 1970s, FoE Perth was active in the campaign opposing commercial killing of whales in Australian waters. In 1976, FoE activists, including Peter "Bro" Brotherton, organised an 800 km bike ride from Perth to Albany, home of Australia's last whaling fleet. FoE established its whale campaign under the name Project Jonah, which was intended as a single issue group within the broader FoE campaigns. Tactics included pickets, international lobbying, community education and applying pressure to the Australian government. The whaling campaign was one early point of international campaign activity and the FoEI Federation played a significant role in negotiations in the International Whaling Commission. At the domestic level, FoE played a key role in the Inquiry into Whales and Whaling. This Inquiry subsequently recommended a ban on whaling, with Australia ultimately banning whaling in 1979.

In the early 1980s Perth and Melbourne were the two largest FoE groups in the country.

Sydney

Friends of the Earth in Sydney (FoES) began on Sydney University campus in 1974.

More than any of the long-established FoE groups, FoES always worked on nature conservation and biodiversity issues as well as more 'traditional' FoE issues such as uranium, hazardous waste, waste minimisation and recycling.

Throughout the 1980s and '90s, FoES campaigned in defence of native forests, especially in the south east of the state.

In the late 1980s, with the release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to the environment at the Waite Institute in South Australia, FoES initiated a campaign on the implications of GMOs.

A number of campaigners from FoES were highly significant in the national waste minimisation and recycling campaigns.

Apart from advocating for waste minimisation legislation, David Vincent highlighted the PR tactics of the packaging industry in Australia and the role of industry associations in keeping Container Deposit Legislation (CDL), levies and other forms of regulation at bay.

Unfortunately, CDL was defeated in NSW because of the influence of industry. FoES worked within the Waste Crisis Network, a coalition of environmental groups, to lobby the Government to decrease the amount of garbage being produced across the state and played a key role in the creation of state-based legislation on waste minimisation.

It developed a comprehensive waste minimisation strategy that proposed a cradle to grave approach to products that would make industry responsible for the whole life cycle of the products it made.

Through the efforts of Dietrich Willing and others, FoES engaged on a range of greenhouse issues, including the National

Energy Grid proposal and energy efficient building codes for local councils. In the early 1990s, FoES was also involved in the Federal Government's Ecologically Sustainable Development process.

FoES campaigned extensively on inland river systems, including the need for environmental flows, restoring biodiversity in rivers, restoring natural characteristics of stream channels and maintaining the natural flow regimes in un-regulated rivers.

In 1994, FoES embarked on a project funded by the Sydney Water Board to develop community perspectives on water management in Sydney.

A recent campaign victory has been the re-creation of wetlands and restoration of indigenous vegetation along White's Creek in inner Sydney. Ted Floyd and others worked for several years to gain State Government and local council acceptance and funding to allow the first de-channelisation of an inner urban stream.

Willunga

FoE Willunga was set up in the coastal town south of Adelaide in 1984 and admitted to the FoE network in early 1985.

The group worked on a range of local environmental issues. It helped ensure protection of the Aldinga Reef (from runoff from adjacent farmland and roads) and Aldinga Scrub, a significant pocket of remnant bush in an area with very limited original vegetation.

It also helped with the re-creation of the Washpool, a highly significant coastal wetland. Apart from raising awareness about renewable technology for many years, the group was also instrumental in the development of some of the earliest large scale treatment and re-use of sewage for agriculture instead of traditional disposal of wastes through ocean outfalls.

Through co-ordinated work with the Kaurna people, the local traditional owners, FoE worked to secure protection for sections of the Tjilbruke Dreaming track that were threatened by development and other forms of interference. The track is the 'last complete dreaming track of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains with a complete song cycle to have survived European settlement'.

Gina Kellett and Dave Nurton were long standing and pivotal members of the group. While involved in revegetation projects in the hills to the east of Willunga, they became aware of continuing problems with soil erosion in gullies. They initiated a new system that utilised bundles of newspapers as biodegradable 'dams' that slowed water flow during rain, collected silt and, by providing a medium for seeds to germinate, helped in restoring groundcover and shrubs in the gullies.

Elsewhere

Thirty years is a long time in the world of community politics and social activism, and this book can only offer the briefest of snap shots of some of the longer running FoE groups and campaigns that have operated over this time.

Over the years there have been FoE groups in the following towns, cities and locations, as well as in others not recorded in *Chain Reaction*: Adelaide, Adelaide Hills, Adelaide Uni, Alice Springs, Armidale (NSW), Bathurst, Bendigo, the Blue Mountains, Black Rock (Vic), Burnie, Bonang (Vic), Ballarat, Bridgetown (WA), Brisbane, Callala Beach (NSW), Cooma, Collingwood, Cessnock, Canberra, Colac (Vic), Darwin, Eltham, Fitzroy, Flinders Uni, Frankston, Glen Waverly (Vic), Goulburn, Grafton, Gosford, Hobart, Hawthorn, Hurstville, Kiama, Kyneton, Lake Macquarie, Launceston, Latrobe Valley,

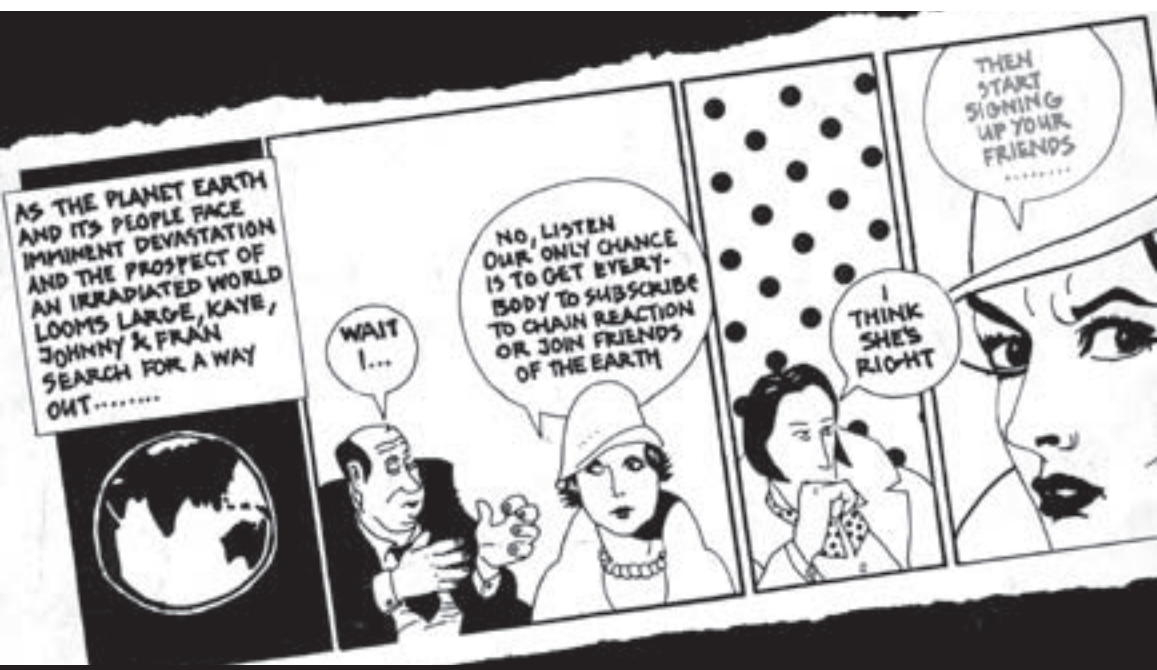
Lismore, Latrobe Uni, Jervis Bay, Mitcham, Manjimup, Melbourne, Mt Gambier, Maitland, Macquarie Uni, Mossman, Mullumbimby, Monash Uni, Nedlands (WA), Newcastle, Nowra, Newtown, North Yorke Peninsula (SA), NSW Institute of Technology, Ourimbah (NSW), Oakleigh (Vic), Port Pirie, Randwick, Ryde (NSW), Surrey Hills (NSW), St Andrews (Vic), Snowy Mountains, Stanthorpe (QLD), Sydney, Swinburne College (Vic), Seaford (Vic), Townsville, Uni of Sydney, Uni of New England, Uni of WA, Wollongong, Wodonga, Whyalla, Williamstown (SA), Willunga, and Yarrowonga.



"NGOs growing power over public policy makes them a serious challenge to representative democracy ... most Victorians would feel if there is something to complain about, it is the Friends of the Earth itself"

Herald Sun Columnist,
Andrew Bolt

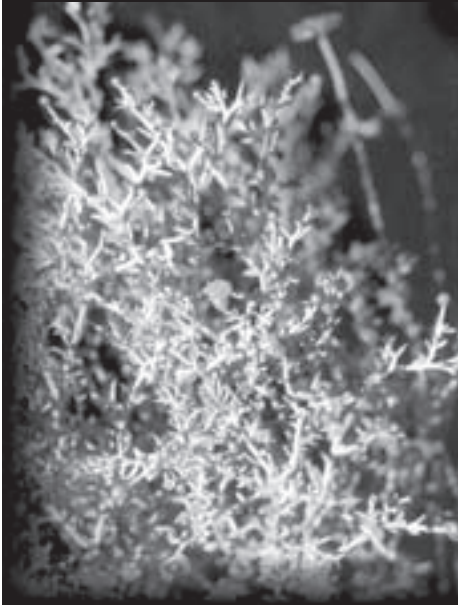
FoE Projects



"FoE is a watchdog for all those concerned about the destruction of our country, physically and morally, by imported pests and our own inveterate termites"

Patrick White, Australian Author, 1980s

chain reaction



The FoEA magazine Chain Reaction (or CR) began as the 'Greenpeace Pacific Bulletin' in 1974 as a combined effort of the developing FoE groups and Greenpeace who were collectively opposing nuclear tests in the Pacific.

It changed its name to Chain Reaction in 1975 and began its life as a foolscap, fordigraphed newsletter. Peter Hayes, Barbara Hutton and Neil Barrett were among the founding editors.

In later years, Neil recalled that 'in the heady days of May 1975, not one of the intense, hairy activists present would have imagined that it would still be going 25 years later ... The main energy came from Peter Hayes, one of those rare beings who could still think clearly enough to write a succinct report on an outrageous demo in some mining company office after two days without sleep'.

In its early editions, CR often had an emphasis on practical issues such as how

to build a wind generator, along with more theoretical and philosophical discussions and reports on campaigns.

After a few editions, it was decided to expand CR's anti-nuclear focus in order to become a national 'activist-orientated' environmental journal.

It described itself in 1977 as 'publishing feature articles and news on national and international issues and searching for the way towards a sustainable, convivial society which lives in harmony with its environment.'

That same edition reflected its activist base and orientation by publishing an apology for its lateness: 'absenteeism reached 100% during the Swanston Dock actions' where mounted police led a charge over the top of protesters sitting on a wharf beside a ship loaded with Australian uranium.

Commenting on the police's heavy-handed tactics at the protest, Chief Police Commissioner Miller said 'I'd use elephants if I had them'. These and other protests led to a partial victory when the shipping of uranium through Melbourne was halted.

CR continued to define its political position, which varied and evolved considerably as time went by and as different people worked on the magazine.

In 1978, the editors defended themselves from accusations that CR was a socialist rag: 'We do not follow any political party line. We consider people's welfare to be more important than economic development for its own sake – if that is socialism, then what is wrong with socialism?'

While some in CR and FoE have advocated for various forms of eco-socialism, the political culture of FoE has always ensured a deep scepticism of actual political parties and parliamentary processes.

The early 1980s seemed to be a time where the editors of the day had a very clear sense of the magazine, and both its and FoE's role in creating long term social

change. Mark Carter, co-founder of the Food Justice Centre, and Leigh Holloway oversaw production of a magazine, which carried a lot of big picture strategic debate, with sharp layout and often striking covers. Some of the most inspirational inserts and editions date from that time.

Under the editorship of Mark and Leigh and, slightly later, Linnell Secomb, CR continued its evolution towards an emphasis on social issues. Cover stories included food politics, workers' health, women's employment in the service sector and jobs in Wollongong. But there were clearly still differing perceptions of the role of the magazine.

At this time, Christina Melaluka of International Development Action in Melbourne commented, "*CR is the environment magazine that cares about people. They are concerned about trees because they are important for the well-being of people, not just for the tree's own intrinsic value, like so many greenies*".

However, this strong sense of direction appears to have been a significant problem for a magazine that was meant to be produced on a collective basis, while also acting as the 'mouthpiece' for FoE in Australia.

The recognition of CR as a service organisation seems to have been an attempt to resolve these tensions about the magazines role.

In later years FoEA clarified the fact that while CR was the 'flagship' FoE publication, it also had great value as a 'movement' magazine and hence should continue to run 'outside' material and perspectives rather than just being a propaganda machine for FoEA.

However, in the early 80s, there were considerable differences of opinion about CR. Denise Chevalier wrote in 1982 that significant national issues, especially nuclear concerns, were being "*ignored*" by the 'main anti nuclear magazine in Australia' and she took offence at the "*Marxist rhetoric*" of a cover story on Wollongong.

In 1982, a CR 'consultative group' composed of representatives from local groups was created to provide advice on the magazine as well as to find ways to increase frequency and consider changes to format and layout of the magazine.

With issue #29 (Spring 1982), there was a serious disagreement within the editorial collective over both design issues and the cover story, an article on the 'resource boom' which was creating casual and poorly paid jobs for women in the service sector.

Chain Reaction has been produced by an independent editorial collective, which has been based in various cities including Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

It was mostly based in Melbourne from its creation in 1975 until early 1989 when it moved to Adelaide.

It was formally recognised as a service organisation of FoEA in 1982 following conflict over the function and role of the magazine.



Image from Chain Reaction

In 1981, a faction of the editorial collective had moved office in the middle of the night to 'save' the magazine from those they regarded as not having the 'responsibilities we had to the wider national FoE and environmentalist constituency'.

This may have been due, at least partly, to the sheer size of the editorial collective: the winter 1981 edition of the magazine credited 45 people as being involved with editorial decisions.

These included a remarkable list of people who went on to become Senators, local councillors, authors and an adviser to Paul Keating. The treasurer of CR was to become the first energy minister in the Bracks' Government in Victoria.

Mark Carter later recalled that the decision to make the midnight move from the existing office in FoE to a separate location in Melbourne came about largely at his instigation.

He and Leigh Holloway were 'exasperated at [their] improvements in the magazine being frustrated and placed in jeopardy by the constraints and structures' of the larger collective that was producing the magazine.

After Mark and Leigh left, the CR editorial team continued to grow, with some long term members joining about this time.

These included Eileen Goodfield who dedicated more than six years of greatly



Eileen Goodfield, long term Chain reaction collective member, 1986.

valued service and insight to the magazine and to FoE.

CR's commitment to ensuring equal involvement by women and men in the collective included providing free child care to people working on the magazine. After the 'midnight move' from FoE Collingwood to a new office in Melbourne's CBD, a collective was also formed in Sydney, with joint administration between the two cities. In 1983, it was agreed that the Melbourne collective would take on all decisions on editorial content and policy.

In the 1980s, CR published a series of inserts on topical issues, from seed patenting to the Chernobyl disaster. Reflecting its immersion in the broader environment and social justice movements, it also regularly published 'activist contact' updates.

In 1986, Johnathan Goodfield resigned as one of the main editors after four years in the job, and a new collective, which included people who had already been involved in the group for some time, was established.

This team included people who then contributed several years of effort to the magazine, including Ian Foletta, Eileen Goodfield, Fran Callaghan, Clare Henderson and Larry O'Loughlan.

As the relations and communication improved, the collective moved from its Melbourne CBD location back into the FoE offices in Collingwood.

CR continues today as the official magazine of FoEA, while also providing an alternative media source for other social and environmental groups as well as the broader progressive and academic community.

Throughout its history, *Chain Reaction* has had a reputation for addressing issues before they become the subject of common debate in the environment movement or broader society.

One example of this is the debate over the use of the 'wilderness' concept in environmental campaigning; that is, whether wilderness actually exists in

Australia given Indigenous management of Australian landscapes for thousands of human generations.

It also helped raise awareness in the environment movement about counter tactics used by industry, including front organisations, PR and 'dirty trick' campaigns. Bob Burton contributed much of this ground -breaking work.

It gained notoriety in the 1970s and '80s for its 'leak bureau'. Documents detailing irregular, illegal or dishonest government or corporate practices were supplied to *Chain Reaction* by people working within these organisations and the magazine was a vocal advocate for the protection of "whistle-blowers".

In 1976, CR released secret files from Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd, which revealed a price fixing club and the fact that even mining companies were worried about terrorists obtaining radioactive materials for bombs.

A notable feature of *Chain Reaction* has been the fact that debate about 'internal' matters concerning the environmental movement debate has been published, and in many instances actively encouraged.

In the early 1980s, this included debates over feminism and socialism, and in the late 1980s, there was a brief but intense exchange over NVA or non violent action.

In recent years this has included issues of political positioning within the movement and corporate engagement. This encouragement of debate has not been without controversy: discussion about the role of direct action and tactics by some groups created heated responses in the early '80s, and in 1991 an issue of the magazine on 'corruption in the environment movement' generated a huge amount of angst and anger amongst a number of individuals and environmental groups.

In the late 1980s, CR secured a distribution agreement through newsagents with Gordon and Gotch, which saw circulation increase from 3-5,000 to 15,000.



Image from Chain Reaction

Apart from a brief period when a Victorian government grant allowed CR to employ three full-time staff for eight months, finances have always been tight.

In fact, a casual reading of the magazine suggests it has always been on the verge of imminent financial collapse, sustained only by its subscribers and the passion of the editorial team of the day.

The various pleas for help and subscriber ads are amongst some of the most creative design work that has appeared in the magazine.

Clare Henderson and Larry O'Loughlan were the longest serving editors and were involved in producing the magazine from 1986 to 1996.

When they moved from Melbourne to Adelaide in early 1989, the existing Melbourne-based collective disbanded. In the following years, Clare and Larry produced CR almost entirely through their own efforts although a number of people did work with them from time to time.

Celebrating 25 years of
Chain Reaction



August 5th 2000

Their final edition, in the year that the Howard Government was elected, was a scathing analysis of the Coalition's failure on environment policy and the 'clean and green' image it was trying to cultivate.

Its strong position on the partial sale of Telstra and images by left wing cartoonist, Heinrich Heinz, were a breath of fresh air compared to the timid green movement response to the new Government.

Under the editorship of Clare and Larry, the magazine reached another peak in its history as a magazine that ran contemporary, insightful commentary on national political and environmental issues.

The magazine had a brief period of non-production from 1996 until 1998, but apart from that has been produced consistently for almost 30 years, almost entirely through volunteer labour.

It was resurrected by Anna Burlow, Kulja Coulston, Tristy Fairfield and Barbara Kerr in 1998 with the first edition, appropriately titled 'Back from the Wilderness', taking an anti-nuclear and international focus.

The present CR production team is an independent collective that was based in Ross House in the CBD and now has an office in the FoE building in Melbourne.



WILDSPACES

FILM

FESTIVAL

Rowena Shakes

Wild Spaces is about our individual expressions and perceptions of Wild Spaces. It refers to the Earth's wild places. It refers to the infinite spiritual space inside all of us: the wild space that is not so easily found. Exploring the wild space helps us to keep in touch with the natural forces of the universe that are vital for each individual's spiritual, mental and social development.

Friends of the Earth's Wild Spaces Film Festival is Australia's only national film festival focused exclusively on environmental and social justice. It has

been organised by FoE since 2000, but the festival started back in 1993 as a public meeting on wood-chipping, organised for the Wilderness Society by independent filmmaker Gary Caganoff. It was held at the Teacher's Federation in Sydney and consisted of speakers such as Bob Brown (the then TAS Greens MP), Clover Moor (Independent NSW MP), Peter Thompson (Radio National) and Peter Treseder (a well-known adventurer). The night was used to launch "Tarkiner Paner", a film Gary Caganoff created for the World Heritage proposal of the Tarkine Wilderness in northwest Tasmania.

A similar meeting was organised again the following year at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney. These two public meetings were named Wild Spaces. It was only after the second meeting that the film festival idea began to take shape, with organisers realising the need for a vehicle that would carry all the environmental and social justice films that weren't making it into the mainstream media. Gary contacted festivals in Sydney and around the world, gathering information and sourcing films. It eventually took a year and a half to see the first 'Wild Spaces Environmental Film Festival', screened in a converted Warehouse in Newtown,

Sydney in June 1996. It attracted almost 600 people.

Word of the festival travelled around the country and within six months Wild Spaces had screened in Melbourne, Byron Bay and Newcastle. The 1998 Festival was held in Sydney at the Australian Museum and attracted over a thousand people.

The festival continued to grow and in 2000, Friends of the Earth Australia became the national co-ordinating organisation with the help of many environmental and social justice groups, student networks and individuals taking on the role of co-ordinating Wild Spaces screening events in their own regions. The national co-ordination of the festival was based in Melbourne from 2000 to 2002, and has been in Brisbane since 2003.

The festival continues to expand, and in 2003 there were over 30 screenings of the Wild Spaces program in all states and territories and covering a range of cities and regional centres. In early 2004 the decision was made for Wild Spaces to go bi-annual, allowing more time and energy to be put into the preparation and fundraising for the national festival.

Wild Spaces 2004

The 9th annual Wild Spaces Film Festival is seeking film entries for the 2004 festival.

The festival is Australia's only national environmental and social justice film festival and is presented annually by Friends of the Earth Australia.

Wild Spaces is currently looking for entries of films and videos of any style that have significant reference to environmental, social justice and human rights issues.

For more information and to download the film entry forms, check out www.wildspaces.foe.org.au or contact us on 87 3846 3793 or email wildspaces@foe.org.au

Film entries close at 4pm on March 31, 2004.

Send your entries into the Wild Spaces Office at:
PO Box 5702, West End, Queensland 4101

(Trophy made by Kylie Buske)

PART VI



FoE Structure



FOE AUSTRALIA STRUCTURE

DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT

FoEA is a federation rather than an organisation. Some groups have always co-operated with each other, while some have tended to work in isolation from the rest of the network. Over the years, national meetings have agreed on shared national activities, but it was only in 1995 that FoE formalised the concept and structure of its national campaign activity.

These are defined as campaign areas where two or more local groups agree to work together on specified areas of campaign activity, policy is developed, and the campaign proposal is approved at a national meeting. The first 'formal' campaigns were anti-nuclear, wetlands, arid lands and transport.

FoE has always placed great emphasis on its decentralised structure and there has been an inherent bias away from any developments that could lead to a centralisation of power. Given this, there have always been shared national activities and delegated areas of responsibility within the Federation.

National positions include the National Liaison (NLO) and International Liaison (ILO) officers (individuals nominated from within local groups who carry out specific administrative, communication, representation and campaigning work), national spokesperson and the national magazine *Chain Reaction*, which is an

independent service group. FoEA also runs both projects and campaigns at the national level. National spokespersons have been appointed since at least 1988. The NLOs are people who are put forward by local groups. At different times, a national liaison office has been hosted by a local group and offered certain support and co-ordination functions for the network.

People filling this role have included Nick Thieberger, Lorraine Grayson, Cathy Brotherton and Peter Brotherton. In the early 1980s, the NLO position was based in Perth but since about 1990, it has been based in Melbourne. In 1995 FoE created the regional contact position where individuals in regional centres and rural areas are able to operate under the FoE 'banner' without the need to develop a local FoE group. This allows the network to be active in remote and rural areas where there is a limited opportunity to establish a FoE group.

The first national FoE meeting was held on French Island in Victoria's Westernport Bay in 1974. At this time, the island was a possible site for a planned nuclear reactor. Since then FoEA has met on an annual basis in mid January with a different local group hosting each meeting. Meetings have evolved over the years. According to Joe Wachter, a FoE staff member in the mid '80s, early meetings were very informal: 'no specific policy is decided. The national meeting is mainly for an exchange of information'. Policy development and attention to national co-ordination became increasing priorities from the early 1990s. In 1995, with increased national activity and co-operation between the groups,

it was decided that two meetings a year were needed. The mid year meeting is used largely for skill sharing and campaign strategies, while the January meeting acts as an AGM. While a committee of management is appointed at the AGM, the Federation is essentially self-managed through the national meetings, with decision-making done by delegates who are sent by their local group.

In 2001, in another development of national structure, FoEA established the National Campaigns Reference Group (NCRG), which is composed of representatives from local groups. The NCRG is responsible for providing advice and support to the NLOs on broad political direction and campaign priorities, to facilitate capacity building of the member groups of FoEA, to add value to the work done by FoE International in an Australian context and to administer a small grants and loans program for FoEA.

One hallmark of FoE has been its emphasis on flat decision-making with the extensive use of non-hierarchical decision making structures. The 'membership' of FoEA is the local groups and while originally the organisation had worked on a 'one group, one vote' basis, with a simple majority carrying any particular decision, this changed in the 1980s to a consensus-based model.

FoEA's national meetings use a 'double consensus' decision making model with a provision for voting. Voting is seen as an option of last resort and it has been more than a decade since a decision has had to go to a vote. FoE places considerable emphasis on internal democracy and skill-sharing. Between the meetings, decisions are made via ballot. Where decisions are not unanimous and differences cannot be mediated by the NLOs, issues are referred to the next national meeting.

FoE Melbourne has traditionally been the most ideologically committed of the local groups to the principles of collectives and consensus: *"FoE began in Australia ... at the same time as 'new' ideas relating to*

ways of organising were being introduced from the west coast on the USA in particular. These ideas helped shape the new FoE. Collectivity had existed in various forms for centuries, but received new prominence in the sixties as the New Left and the feminists undertook reappraisals of the way organisations operate as part of their fundamental questioning of all aspects of society. FoE is one of the relatively few organisations that ... attempts to continually examine the way it operates in order to improve access to as many people as possible, especially those who are not white, wealthy and male." From *Chain Reaction*.

Since the mid 1990s, the FoE Network developed substantial policy documents and guidelines for national office bearers and campaigns. These are outlined in the FoE Australia handbook. The FoE constitution is seen as being the overriding policy document for the network. Local groups are expected to have their own constitution and to defer to the national constitution as an over-riding document. An international mission statement is also used as a guiding document.

Many FoE groups have formed and dispersed over the years since the early seventies. Often the smaller groups have relied on a small core group to keep going and when these fell below 'critical mass' the groups have folded. However, a number of groups including Adelaide/ Nouveau, Sydney, and Fitzroy/ Melbourne have been in existence for well over 20 years. Most groups rely on memberships, donations and fundraising or benefits for their core funding. Some also receive grants from various government departments or income from private foundations for long or short term projects and campaign initiatives. Individuals join FoEA by becoming a member of a local FoE group and FoEA has a long standing commitment to having members rather than just supporters (people who contribute funds to the organisation, with no other avenue to influence the direction of the organisation). Individuals can have

input to national decision making forums through being involved in their local group, who then send delegates to national meetings where decisions are taken.

Finances

From the early 1980s FoEA relied on a single administrative grant from the Federal Government for its funding. The loss of this allocation in 1996 following the election of the Coalition Government forced a long-overdue diversification of funding sources, and FoE's revenue is now based on donations, some project funding, an annual appeal and fundraising.

FoE INTERNATIONAL

FoE International (FoEI) was formed in Sweden in 1971, when groups from France, Great Britain, Sweden and the USA met as FoEI for the first time. Throughout the 1970s, FoEI continued to grow and when FoE Australia (FoEA) was established in 1974 it was accepted into the FoEI network in the same year. In the early 1980s the international Federation started to gain members in Southern countries (notably West Africa, Latin America and Asia).

As more groups from Southern countries joined, the politics and emphasis of FoEI were slowly transformed away from a Northern or 'First world' perspective to a more global view.

In 1982, FoE activists established the Pesticide Action Network (PAN), building on the work of FoE groups in Malaysia, Brazil and the United States. Today, PAN links 300 groups in around 50 countries to oppose the misuse of pesticides and genetic engineering. Destruction of tropical forests and the subsequent impacts on those Indigenous communities reliant on them became a central issue with the creation of a FoEI Forest campaign in 1985.

FoEI holds bi-annual meetings, each of which is hosted by a different member group. The first FoEI meeting held in a Southern country was in Malaysia in 1986. In late 1998, FoEA hosted the



FoE International meeting, Quito, Ecuador, 1999.

FoE International meeting in Melbourne, bringing a diverse cross section of the global network to the country for the first time.

FoE was one of the first environmental networks to become active in Eastern Europe. Its first member group in the East was Poland's Polski Klub Ekologiczny, which joined FoEI in 1985. In the mid and later part of the 1990s, FoE grew rapidly throughout Latin America and in 2004 is now building its membership base throughout Asia.

FoEI is currently the largest grassroots environment NGO Federation in the world with member groups in 68 countries. Around half of these are in the 'South' or majority world (formerly called the third world). FoEI has a democratic and decentralised structure, which is unique amongst the large international environmental groups, and the network embraces social as well as nature conservation issues. FoE represents the political reality of life in the South rather than just quality of life and biodiversity issues in the 'developed' world. An external review of FoEI in 1998 identified three

'streams' of thought within the Federation: nature conservation; eco-efficiency; and environmental justice. Recent years have seen a clear shift towards this third approach, with a growing emphasis on a 'social ecology' perspective.

Because of its political view, FoEI does not establish offices in countries in order to expand its network. Instead it seeks existing partners who meet certain criteria in those countries where there is currently no FoE member group. All of FoEI's 68 member groups have been established locally rather than simply being a branch or office established by an external organisation. As a result, the Federation is remarkably diverse.

To be eligible to join FoEI, a potential group must be a national group (only one member is allowed per country); be working on the key environmental issues in that country; have democratic, non-racist and non-sexist structures; and be independent from political parties and other affiliations.

The political structure of FoEI is based on democratic principles. All national groups

are independent. A secretariat based in Amsterdam helps with information flows and some co-ordination of activity; but local groups have their own membership, structures and funding sources. There are around 1,000,000 individual members and 4,500 local groups of FoEI, including the 12 local groups in Australia.

Decisions are made at the international meetings and an executive committee (with representatives from groups from around the world) has ability to make certain decisions on behalf of the network between meetings. A chairperson, nominated by national groups, is elected at the international meeting. The first chair from a Southern group is the current chair, Ricardo Navarro, of CESTA/ FoE El Salvador, who was appointed in 1996. Groups put forward proposals for international campaigns and projects at the international meetings and must have a cross section of groups from around the world actively involved.

Some significant campaign victories of FoE International have included: involvement in campaigns and national referenda in a number of countries in Europe that halted the expansion of the nuclear industry; the closure of a number of nuclear power plants; forcing the World Bank to cancel various projects, including large dams in the Amazon, which would

have displaced Indigenous communities; developing the Radio Amazonia program, which has installed more than 100 locally-controlled radio stations in Indigenous and forest-dwelling communities in the Amazon; highlighting and stopping many instances of illegal tropical rainforest logging, and significant campaigns at the international level on both ozone depletion and climate change.

FoEI sent a delegation to investigate the impacts of the first Gulf War on the environment and, by tracking and highlighting illegal waste shipments to Nigeria and other countries, has significantly influenced illegal waste dumping in Southern countries. In 1985, FoE was instrumental in securing an indefinite ban on dumping of nuclear waste at sea. FoEI is also recognised as having done ground-breaking campaign and theoretical work on sustainability. In recent years, several campaigns have achieved great success through targeting the financial institutions who provide funds for environmentally or socially destructive projects including large scale mining and forestry operations.

FoE Australia produces an annual summary of FoEI's key campaign achievements that is available from the national liaison office. For more details on FoE International see **www.foei.org**





FoEA: Thirty Years of Constant Environmentalism

Tim Doyle

I take it as a great compliment to be asked to contribute to this edition celebrating a generation of Friends of the Earth in Australia – though it does make me feel a little older. I've been a member of lots of environmental and human rights organisations; involved in campaigns from Antarctica to the Wet Tropics; from anti-nuclear issues to those of environmental justice and security in the developing world. Wherever I travel, the experience of FoE is remarkably diverse; but there are certain constant values which make profound sense to me. But before I talk about these constants, let me take you back thirty years to one of the first national meetings of FoEA on French Island in Victoria. The following quotation is taken out of the Summer 1975 edition of Chain Reaction:

The values of FoEA are already here, thirty years ago – and the resilience of these values, these constants, persist. First, FoE was never just a wilderness organisation. To FoE, nature was not ever a place which was separate from humanity; rather, our lives were an integral part of nature.

Second, nuclear issues were a shaping influence in the beginning, and they remain equally seminal now. With limited funds – after the current conservative government took away much of the money – FoEA still runs the best anti-nuke campaign in Australia. Jim Green, in Adelaide, and many others around the country do an outstanding job. At the moment, the threat to build a national nuclear waste repository in South Australia is immense. If future generations have any say in the years to come, this waste repository will go down in the annals of environmental infamy.

Third, at French Island, mention was made about class politics. The rhetoric has changed a little. It's not so fashionable today to admit to class-based analysis or

change in Australia. Leading media outlets tell us capitalism has won, so forget about socialist, feminist, or other models of alternative societies. But the real struggles between the haves and the have-nots have never been more important. With advanced and post-industrialism now globalising, its power has never been greater. And even conservative international institutions like the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) are willing to accept that the gap between those with secure access to resources, and those without, is growing at a startling pace.

Fourth, long before community became a buzzword, FoEA were actually doing it. When other green groups were playing appeal-to-elites politics, lobbying politicians when our parliaments still had lobbies (now there are back entrances), FoE was involved in mass mobilisation of the community: creating an environmental awareness for the first time; not just among the middle class, but amongst the trade unions, indigenous peoples and the less affluent.

The fifth thing I want to say about FoE is that they have never been bought. Yes, of course they have had to adapt their strategies in these neo-liberal times. But they have never been afraid to tell the powerful: 'but the Emperor has no clothes'. For that, they have made enemies, forceful enemies. They do not have a large subscriber base, but their activists are active and committed to their campaigns.

Sixth, FoE was never a hierarchic organisation. From the beginning its decision-making structures were inclusive. It was built on the premise that democracy – true democracy – does take time. Sometimes it does end up in a pillow fight. But the pillow fight is worth it. The bringing together of different interests actually does

lead to some form of wisdom: a knowledge that is suitable to identify and resolve environmental problems within a given social context.

Finally, even on French Island, FoEA had an internationalist perspective. Today, it has autonomous groups in 68 separate countries under its broad confederation. There is no other green organisation in Australia with this wealth of transnational knowledge, networks and perspectives. Whilst most Australian green groups can't see past the next domestic election, FoE has a longer term view, a global view of the future: a global view which values diversity - not just biodiversity, -but defends and celebrates the full gamut of humanity and 'other nature' across the earth.

FoE is not perfect. Tensions emerge from time to time, for example, in relation to the distribution of limited resources; or the recent increase in decision-making by email. The English-speaking medium of the internet speeds up and extends the diffusion of useful information. But this form of electronic democracy, though cheap and efficient, tends to lead to non-decisions – the path of least resistance; not to

mention that it often excludes the voices of the majority world: the less affluent world.

The future of FoE is an exciting one, though extremely challenging – as always. Its recent policy moves into climate justice and environmental security have broadened its varied platform even more. The next generation of FoEA activists will be even more transnational in their outlook; but will still seek the certitudes of home and community – a sense of place – which makes our shared lives sacred. Finding this right balance is our future task. We are not just consumers of this planet. We are Citizens, we are Friends of the Earth.

Tim Doyle is Associate Professor of Geographical and Environmental Studies at the University of Adelaide, and a long-time member of FoEA.



FoE AUSTRALIA TIMELINE

TIMELINE OF SOME SIGNIFICANT CAMPAIGN VICTORIES AND ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

1969

FoE established in the USA by David Brower and others

1971

FoE International established in Sweden, with member groups from France, Great Britain, Sweden and the USA.

Social Action formed on campus at Adelaide University. Its first campaign was on disposable packaging. This led to the creation of deposit legislation in South Australia.

1972

FoE Adelaide Uni was formed from Social Action.

Through the 1970s, FoE campaigned extensively on Antarctica and in the latter part of that decade, mining and drilling were banned on this continent.

1973

Peter Hayes from FoE Melbourne visits Adelaide. National network starts to form

FoE releases video of BHP dumping steel at sea with resulting national media coverage

FoE Melbourne shares an office with Greenpeace Australia, co-ordinating actions against nuclear testing in the Pacific

FoE draws attention to the environmental consequences of the Concorde

1974

Chain Reaction magazine starts (as Greenpeace Pacific Bulletin)

FoE Sydney established.

First meeting of FoE Australia. The meeting was held on the proposed site of a nuclear reactor on French Island in Westernport Bay, VIC, subsequently defeated.

1975

FoE groups moving off-campus.

Prominent US alternate technology advocate, Amory Lovins, tours Australia hosted by FoE

Until 1978: uranium moratorium; FoE heavily involved in organising mass demonstrations and a broad based campaign to oppose uranium mining

Food co-op founded in Melbourne

1976

FoE Sydney hosts tour by Dale Bridenbaugh, engineer with General Electric in the USA, on GE's nuclear safety problems.

Controversial documents on uranium contracts leaked through FoE.

1977

Ranger inquiry hearings; FoE publishes Red Light for Yellowcake.

Ride against uranium: Melbourne - Canberra

FoE works with local community to oppose extension of Eastern Freeway into inner Melbourne

FoE does extensive work on renewable energy options for Australia

Campaign on health impacts of lead, Port Pirie

Food co-op established in FoE office in Nicholson Street, Carlton.

1978

Formation of Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE) by the Communist Party of Australia, FoE and others.

1979

Due to intense campaigning by many groups, including FoE, the federal government places a total ban on whaling in Australian waters

Food justice centre established

1980

FoE sponsors visit to Australia by US consumer advocate Ralph Nader

FoE hosts the Politics of Food conference in Melbourne

1981

20,000 people march against uranium in Melbourne

A community campaigned spear-headed by FoE leads to a government decision to phase in lead free petrol by 1985

FoE, the Merchant Services Guild and other unions highlight the trial offshore dumping of waste from paper mills. Offshore dumping subsequently banned.

1982

Recycling campaign established in Melbourne, aimed at introducing national beverage container deposit legislation

Victoria goes nuclear free

The atom free embassy established in Canberra

First blockades at the Honeymoon uranium mine, SA

The world bikeride for peace from Canberra to Darwin, highlights Australia's involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle

Continued work on watch-dogging EIS's for proposed and existing uranium mines

Through the 1980s, FoE played a significant role in lobbying the ALP successfully over its nuclear policy

FoE Brisbane involved in community protests against retrogressive land rights legislation

FoE helps establish the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia (CNFA)

1983

US recycling expert brought to Australia to raise awareness of waste minimisation

With other groups, FoE campaigns successfully against leach mining in western Victoria

FoE campaign on dieback of native forests on New England tablelands, NSW

Fruit and Vegie co-op established in Melbourne as a project of the Food Justice Centre

Blockades start at Roxby Downs (Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia) and continue into 1984.

1984

Victory in seed variety rights campaign; the ALP policy stops short of allowing plant patenting for cereals

FoE campaign to halt sewerage outfall into Wimmera River, Victoria

blockades at Roxby Downs uranium mine

FoE tours international author Jim Harding (Tools for the Soft Path) to raise awareness of alternative energy sources

1985

Campaign against uranium mining in Kakadu

FoE Ryde (Sydney) discovers radioactive waste from CSIRO complex in drains in a recreation park in Sydney

1986

Campaign against visits by nuclear powered ships to Victorian ports

FoE Oakleigh saves a 14 ha strip of heathland (part of a system that once spread across Melbourne's sandbelt region) from being turned into a soccer ground

FoE and MAUM occupy the Uranium Information Centre in Melbourne

FoEI meeting held in a Southern country for the first time, in Malaysia

1987

Des Wilson, international campaign director of FoE England, visits Australia

FoE calls for moratorium on release of GMOs

1988

Australian Bicentenary; FoE supports actions against the celebrations, including the 45,000 strong march in Sydney on Invasion day/ Australia day

FoE campaigns against food irradiation and organises a national tour by Tony Webb, an expert on food irradiation

FoE produced 'soft energy' booklet on renewable energy

FoE Collingwood moves to Brunswick st, Fitzroy, where it operates a community arts space for the next 5 years. This gallery provides an early foothold for Indigenous art from central Australia and the western desert region

FoE Australian activists travel to the FoE International meeting in Krakow (Poland) – the first non government international environment conference held in the East Bloc

1989

Working with other groups as the Anti Uranium Coalition, FoE organises a national conference on the threats of nuclear power

Campaign on use of dioxins in paper and other consumer products

Campaign against photo degradable plastics (a short lived fad)

WIM 150: victory against mineral sands mining in Victoria

FoE hosts a series of national waste minimisation conferences during the late 1980s

Campaign lead by FoE leads to the introduction of Australian made recycled paper

1990

Year long blockade on Fraser island against logging of old growth forests hosted by FoE Maryborough and RAG plays a significant role in ending logging operations on the island

uranium shipments from Roxby Downs blockaded in Adelaide

First radioactive 'exposure' tour held to South Australia. These continue through the rest of the decade and educate many about the reality of uranium mining in Australia

FoE Melbourne starts to Pay the Rent to Aboriginal traditional owners

Soft energy group starts in Melbourne, researching and advocating for renewable energy
Campaign on greenhouse gas/ climate change starts

FoE launches proposal for national waste strategy (aiming at a 50% reduction by 2000)

1991

FoE supports campaign to stop establishment of McDonalds restaurant in Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

AIDEX; major protests in Canberra against the AIDEX arms exhibition; FoE acts as a supporting organisation of the protests

FoE heavily involved in community mobilisations against Australian involvement in Gulf War (building ransacked in night time break in)

1992

FoE Fitzroy moves to Smith St, Collingwood

FoE Sydney report 'Bring Back Returnables:' a significant contribution to debate on recycling

FoE campaigns against national electricity grid

Water campaign established at FoE in Melbourne

Coode island review; FoE involved in Commonwealth inquiry into the chemical storage facility

GMO campaign starts in Melbourne

World uranium hearing, Germany

FoE starts to question the idea of 'wilderness' as a concept

Campaign to gain world heritage listing for Lake Eyre Basin starts

1993

FoE International meeting held in Indonesia

Century zinc campaign in the Gulf region of QLD, alliances formed with Gungalidda community, actions held outside AGM of CRA in Melbourne

Forests campaign launched in Victoria; blockades launched in East Gippsland through alliance of FoE and other groups

FoE Australia commits to 'Paying the Rent' to Indigenous communities

National waste minimisation strategy launched

1994

FoE calls for labelling of GE food

FoE supports Kerrup Jmara community in establishing a tent embassy in Portland, Vic, to expose police treatment and racism in the region

Campaign to stop oil terminal in Western Port Bay, Vic

FoE a pivotal force in CAFÉ – Coalition Against Freeway Extensions, Vic

FoE hosts Shripad Dharmadhikary of Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Narmada Movement), India as part of the '50 years are enough' campaign, aimed at radical reform of the World Bank

FoE launches national wetlands campaign

1995

FoE highlights radioactive spill in Magela Creek, Kakadu

Successful campaign against re-siting of the East Coast Armaments Complex (ECAC)

French tests in Pacific – FoE plays key role in community mobilisations

McCrae's creek; first court case victory against logging on private land in Victoria

FoE blockades train carrying whole logs to highlight ecological and social costs of the woodchip industry

FoE helps establish Otway Ranges Environment Network (OREN)

1996

Coalition government elected; new alliances formed to oppose expansion of nuclear industry. FoE loses federal government funding

Ramsar conference on wetlands held in Brisbane; marks beginning of much greater involvement in FoEI network

North East Conservation Alliance (NECA) launched in Victoria after FoE initiative

Streets for people – transport campaign launched. Campaign analysis shows need for more inner city bike paths; when local governments refuse, FoE paints its own; quickly followed by formal recognition

FoE lobbies for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Paper boycott starts to build pressure for the production of Australian made 100% recycled paper

1997

First Indigenous solidarity conference held: ground breaking gathering of Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists from around Australia

Direct action pledge campaign gathers support for Jabiluka campaign

Community ballots held in shopping centres to determine the public's opinion on uranium mining (overwhelmingly opposed)

Alliance Against Uranium Mining formed in Alice Springs

FoE and other groups oppose sand mining on Minjeribah/ North Stradbroke Island, QLD

Goolengook forest in East Gippsland 'discovered' by FoE activists and becomes focus of national campaign

First action camp held at Jabiluka

Roxstop festival held in SA to highlight community opposition to uranium mining

FoE has success with ozone protection. The international campaign helps secure an increased phase out of methyl bromide

FoE hosts tour by exiled Ogoni person Komene Famaa from Nigeria, highlighting impact of Shell's oil operations on the Niger delta

1998

Jabiluka campaign; FoE works with traditional owners, ACF, Environment Centre of the Northern Territory and the Wilderness Society on national and international campaign; major blockade at mine site, with 5,000 people attending. FoE is responsible for a resolution on Jabiluka in the European parliament

Reverse Garbage established in Brisbane, diverting a tonne of 'waste' a week away from landfill

Earthworker, an alliance of trade unionists and environmental groups, established in Victoria

International community campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) successful

FoE hosts FoE International meeting in Melbourne – more than 40 countries represented

Resistance of Kupa Piti Kungka Tjutas, senior traditional women from Coober Pedy region in SA against proposed radioactive waste dump, gains profile and contacts through FoE Indigenous solidarity conference

FoE organises the third ever Reclaim the Streets outside of the UK

Victorian Plantation Corporation privatised: FoE starts new era in corporate campaigning with launch of Hancock watch website and monitoring of forestry operations

1999

Nuclear Freeway Project launched to generate awareness of proposed radioactive waste shipments through NSW and SA

Water campaign focuses on logging in Melbourne's domestic drinking water catchments

FoE supports traditional owners in blockading logging operations in the Cobboboonee forests, western Victoria

Railtrack, the company responsible for railways in England, cancels millions of dollars of contracts for Jarrah timber following FoE report showing that forestry operations were unsustainable

FoE initiates work on herbicides and plantation forestry

FoE co-ordinates global campaign to de-alert strategic nuclear weapons

2000

Wildspaces film festival becomes a FoE event

World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne, 15,000 people demonstrate against it

climate justice campaign launched; FoE starts to raise human rights dimensions of global warming

FoE involved in non proliferation treaty review conference

2001

FoE organises radiothon and other fundraising for communities impacted by earthquake in El Salvador

Barmah Millewa campaign launched

Kirthar National Park court case held in Pakistan – Shell withdraws from oil and gas project

Whites creek wetlands start to be re-established in inner Sydney after FoE campaign

2002

Pangea leaves Australia after attempting to establish a high-level radioactive waste dump. The proposal came into the public domain after a promotional video was leaked to FoE in the UK

FoE joins with other groups to commission report into probable impacts of climate change on Victoria

Reactor alliance formed to oppose new nuclear reactor in south western Sydney

Dharnya Alliance formed as a result of FoE campaign, linking Indigenous, social justice and green groups working for protection of the Barmah – Millewa, the largest Redgum forest system on the planet

FoE plays key role in UK, Brazilian and Canadian parliaments urging India and Pakistan to negotiate over nuclear escalation

2003

Jabiluka uranium mine closed and re-filled

NSW parliamentary inquiry launched into Commonwealth shipment of radioactive materials

Hancocks gains first ever independent certification of a forestry operation in Australia (through Forest Stewardship Council) after FoE campaigning

2004

Climate justice tour visits east coast of Australia, highlighting the impacts of global warming on Pacific communities

SOURCES

articles

Anon (1987); Know your FoE; the Coercive Utopians. *Australian Journal of Mining*, April 1987

Burgmann V (2003); *Power, Profit and Protest. Australian Social Movements and Globalisation*. Allen & Unwin.

Chain Reaction magazines, 1975 - 2003

Much of the information in this booklet comes from the special issue on FoE Australia in *Chain Reaction* number 70, January 1994. Dimity Hawkins edited that edition, and Clare Henderson, Larry O'Loughlan, Dave Sweeney, Kathleen McCann and Cam Walker all provided input.

Copies are available from the national liaison office by sending 3 x 50 c stamps. Copies of the 25th anniversary edition of *Chain Reaction* are also available from the same address for \$4.

Dodd, A (2000); Sparking a green Chain Reaction; *the Australian*, Aug 10-16, 2000

Doyle, T (2000); *Green Power: the environment movement in Australia*. UNSW Press

FoE International (2001); *Sparks of Hope, fires of resistance: FoEI celebrates the sustainable path forward*. 30th anniversary publication (available from : <http://www.foei.org/>)

FoE Melbourne info book, 1987

FoE Fitzroy/ Melbourne newsletters

Hill, B (1976): Worthy FoE for Uranium, *The Age*, 9/11/1976

Hutton, D & Connors, L (1999); *A history of the Australian Environment Movement*. Cambridge University Press

Lazaroff, C (2000); David Brower, environmental champion, dies at 88. Environment News Service, 6/11/2000

Marshall, R (1985); Friends of the Earth; eleven years of struggle for a safer and cleaner environment. In *Direct Action*, 13/11/1985

Nelson, A (2002/ 2004); Green Agency: a Friend of the Earth and the Barmah – Millewa Forest.

On Dit, Adelaide Uni newsletter, 1974 (?)

Watson, I (1990); *Fighting over the Forests*. Allen & Unwin.

Williams, P (1997); *The Victory; the inside story of the takeover of Australia*. Allen & Unwin

NB: All unreferenced quotes are from *Chain Reaction* magazine

SOURCES

images

Photos and graphics are drawn from various FoE publications and the organisations archives. We have made every effort to find the photographers and owners of images used in this book. However, most of the archives from the 1970s to the mid 1980s were poorly marked. If we have used any of your images without permission, we apologise. We hope to publish a second edition of this book, so please contact us if you either want acknowledgment in the next edition or want the image removed.

Uncredited photos are from the FoEM archives.h

Page ii-iii

- Beach image from FoE Brisbane climate justice campaign.

Page vi

- Photo: Anon

PART I

Page 1 (clockwise)

- 'Mask' - Urban pollution and livability became increasingly prominent issues in the late 1970s and 1980s. A successful campaign saw the phasing out of leaded petrol in Australia.
- 'Indigenous Solidarity Group' - Representatives from the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, at the Global Survival conference, Melbourne, 1998. Photo: Cam Walker.
- 'Kyoto' - FoE climate campaigners join the Melbourne Fringe Parade to get the message across, September 2001. Photo: Tristy Fairfield.
- 'George & John' - George Bush and John Howard, conspiring to screw the climate, 2001. Photo: Alan Hoban.
- International Women's Day - FoE Fitzroy activists in the International Women's Day march, 1992.

Page 2

- 'Woodchip' - With the announcement of new woodchip licenses in late 1994 (the annual 'Christmas present from hell'), FoE joined with other green groups to occupy the federal government offices in Melbourne.

Page 3

- 'Strezlecki' - Old growth Blue Gum growing in Flynn's Creek catchment, Strezlecki Ranges, Victoria. This was one of the many areas identified by FoE as being at risk of conversion to plantation. This pocket of remnant bush extended for 2 kilometres, wholly within a larger area of plantations, 2001. Photo: Anthony Amis.

Page 4

- 'Aunty Betty' - Aunty Betty - Elizabeth King, long time adviser to FoE Melbourne, Kerrup Jmara Nation, Western Victoria. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 5

- 'U Mines' - Through its 30 years, FoE has always campaigned against all aspects of the nuclear fuel. Rally in Melbourne, mid 1980s.

Page 6

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power outside Parliament House, Canberra.

PART II

Page 7 (clockwise)

- 'Reconciliation' - A FoE contingent at a Reconciliation march, 2000
- Photo: Anon
- Photo: Anon
- Photo: Anon
- "Nukes" Photo: Anon
- 'Jabiluka' - 2000 ended a high note, with several thousand people rallying in Melbourne to oppose the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine. Photo: Cam Walker.
- 'Campaign Against Freeways' - Eviction of community members from houses that were to be demolished
- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power
- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power
- Fishing in the Gulf Country. Photo: Lee Tan.

1970s

Page 9

- Chain Reaction magazine cover, September 1975.

Page 10

- 'Solar'

Page 12

- Chain Reaction magazine cover, Autumn 1976.

Page 15

- 'Jarrah Forests' - May 1979, protests to prevent Jarrah forests from being cleared for Bauxite mining, Western Australia.
- 'Music on the Blockade' - F19 (Eastern Freeway) campaign, Collingwood, Melbourne, 1977.

Page 16

- 'At the Barricades' - F19 (Eastern Freeway) campaign, Collingwood, Melbourne, 1977.
- Long term FoE activist Bert King, Fitzroy, Melbourne, 2004. Photo: Valentina la Piana

Page 17

- 'Whales' - Anti whaling action, late mid 1970s. A campaign by FoE and other groups led to the end of whaling in Australia.
- The last whaling station in Australia, at Albany, WA.

Page 20-21

- The barricades in Collingwood, during the F19 anti freeway campaign, 1977.

Page 22

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power

Page 25

- Image from Chain Reaction

Page 26

- 'The world bike ride for a nuclear-free future'. The threat of nuclear war hung like a cloud over the 1980s

Page 28-29

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power.

Page30

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power.

Page 31

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power.

Page32

- 'Bike Ride' - The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power.

- Leaflet for the FoE bike ride. Thanks to Adrian Hann.

1980s

Page 33

- 'Nukes' - Shipboard protest against nuclear weapons, Melbourne, early 1980s.

Page 34

- 'N Ship' - Peace flotilla boat, protesting visits by US warships, Western Australia.

Page 35

- 'Roxby Downs' - The first blockades at Roxby Downs, South Australia, 1983. Photo: Eric Miller.

Page 36

- Image from Chain Reaction

Page 38

- In 1998, FoE Australia hosted the international network for the first time, bringing representatives of around 40 countries to Melbourne.

Page 39

- 'World Car Free Day' Poster, 21 September, 2000
- Image from Chain Reaction #70, 1994. Heinrich Hinze.

Page 40

- 'Three Mile Island' - Eric Miller at a protest to mark the 10th anniversary of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island (USA), 1989. Photo: Linda Marks.

Page 41

- Dave Sweeney talking at the FoE International meeting, Melbourne, November 1998. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 44 (clockwise from main image)

- Benny Zable.
- Loretta O'Brien & Uncle Kevin Buzzacott
- Uranium Street, Broken Hill.
- Students action against the proposed radioactive waste dump during the FoE radioactive tour. Port Augusta, SA, 2001. Photo: Linda Marks.

Page 45

- Bikeride 1980s. Photo: Linda Marks.

1990s

Page 46

- Image from Chain Reaction

Page 48

- The 'Gungalidda embassy' outside the CRA AGM in Melbourne.1994.

Page 49

- 'Aidex' – Thousands of people descended on Canberra to shut down the AIDEX arms exhibition, 1991. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 50

- Image from Chain Reaction #76, 1996, shortly after the Howard government came to power.

Page 51

- Image from Chain Reaction #63-64, 1991. Heinrich Hinze.

- 'Telstra' – The Howard Government was elected in 1996. Funding for its environment portfolio was linked to a partial privatisation of Telstra, the national communications company. FoE was one of the few green groups to voice opposition to the sale. Shortly after, its ongoing funding from the federal environment department was cut. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 53

- Ricardo Navarro of FoE El Salvador, the chair of FoE International, speaking during a climate justice event, Melbourne, 2001

Page 54

- Main image from Chain Reaction #59, 1989. Artwork: Mandy Carter.

- Fosco Ruzzere, long term anti nuclear campaigner, FoEM.

Page 55

- In 1992, FoE Fitzroy launched its forest campaign with direct actions in East Gippsland. FoE also maintained a regular picket outside the state government department responsible for logging (DNRE). Melbourne, February 1994.

- Louise Matthesian at the occupation of the Commonwealth Offices in Melbourne after the announcement of the 1994 woodchip license renewals.

Page 56

- Action outside the state government forestry offices over destruction of old growth forests in East Gippsland, 1994. Photo: Cam Walker.

- Use of pressure point tactics at the same event.

Page 57

- 'Coalition Against Freeway Extensions (CAFÉ)' – Basing its name on the earlier resistance to the F19, based around CAF or Citizens Against Freeways, which opposed the Eastern Freeway in the late 1970s. For several weeks, CAFÉ blockaded roading operations on Alexandra Parade in Melbourne. A community info centre was set up on the medium strip of the Parade.

- Community members arrested on Alexandra Parade at a press conference, Melbourne's Magistrate's Court, after all charges against them were dropped.

- Obstructing bulldozers, Alexandra Parade, November 1994

- CAFÉ ended the years actions with a 400 strong street parade along Brunswick Street, Fitzroy to the road works on Alexandra Parade, lead by a cardboard tram. When building the F19 in the 1970s, the government had promised a light rail system, a promise never delivered. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 58

- Occupation of the woodchip pile, Midways woodchip mill, Geelong. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 60

- Artwork for the first Indigenous solidarity gathering, 1997. Mark Trinham.

Page 62

- The first meeting of the Dharnya Alliance, Barmah forest, Victoria.
- Rally in support of the Yorta Yorta native title claim, Shepparton, 1999. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 63

BARMAH FACES

- Monica Morgan and Henry Atkinson, Yorta Yorta Nation
- Indira Narayan and Lindy Orthelia, Barmah Millewa collective, FoE.
- Jono La Nauze (FoE) and Phil Ingamells, Victorian National Parks Association.

Page 64

- Barmah forest, Murray River, Victoria

Page 67

- Police at Royal Park pickets, 1999. Photo: Tristy Fairfield.

Page 68

- Kathleen Mc Cann, anti nuclear activist and artist.

Page 69

- The Stop Jabiluka image, design by Kathleen McCann.

Page 70 - 71

- Yvonne Margarula, Mirrar Senior Traditional Owner, with children.

Page 73

- Picket outside North building during the Jabiluka campaign, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 1998. Photo: Sarojini Krishnapillai.

Page 74

- March at the Jabiluka mine site, NT, 1998. Photo: Sarojini Krishnapillai.

Page 76

- Direct action at Jabiluka, July 1997. Photo: Anthony Proudfoot.

Page 78

- August 2003: The first truck taking uranium back down the Jabiluka mine shaft. Friends of the Earth Australia played a key role in this successful campaign. Photo courtesy of Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation

Page 81

- Eric Miller, Ila Marks and Daniel Vornoff on the first Nuclear Freeways tour, Broken Hill.
- Daniel Voronoff with the castor and the media in Mildura, 1999. Photo: Albert Arana.

Page 82

- Main picture: Michelle Matthews (ACF) during nuclear protest outside the office of Senator Nick Minchin, Adelaide, 2001.
- Inset: Loretta O'Brien, FoE nuclear campaign co-ordinator. Photo: Linda Marks.

Page 83

- 'Strong country' action at the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine, 1998. Photo: David Hannah.

Page 85

- Robbie Thorpe at the Corroboree for Sovereignty, Aboriginal tent embassy, Canberra, January 1998. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 87

- At the Kulini Kulini bush camp, Ten Mile, near Coober Pedy, SA, 2003.

Page 88

- Images from the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting, September 2000
- Daniel Voronoff and Emma Tucker.
- The 'Green Bloc' picket line

- The march that followed the 'Other Voices' conference prior to the WEF
- Gary Strecker and Bruce Thompson

Page 91

- Image from Chain Reaction #58, 1989. Artwork by Jo Waite.

Page 92

- Action to pressure the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the Russian government, 2004. Photo: FoE Europe.

Page 93

- Billboard Graffiti, Fitzroy, 2001.

Page 94

- Nnimmo Bassey, activist with Environmental Rights Action/ FoE Nigeria. Photo: Ben Moxham.

Page 95

- Cover photo from 'Time and Tide: the Islands of Tuvalu' by Peter Bennetts and Tony Wheeler, reproduced courtesy of Lonely Planet.

Page 97 (clockwise from main image)

- FoE Melbourne (then Fitzroy) building, 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, late 1980s. Photo: Cam Walker.
- The Perry street festival, a regular FoE community event in Melbourne.
- FoE Fitzroy activists, mid year planning weekend, Commonground community, Victoria, late 1980s.
- Shripad Dharmadhikary, from the Save Narmada Movement, India, speaking at a FoE rally against the World Bank, Melbourne, 1994. Photo: Clive Rosewarne.

Page 98

Cover of Chain Reaction

Page 101

Image from Chain Reaction

Page 102

- 'Bushfire dreaming', artwork by Elizabeth King, KerrupJmara. Designed for ISG Conference, 1998.

Page 104

- Various images from Fraser Island. Ross and Karen Daniel.

Page 105

- Melia Bugeja, FoE Melbourne Food Co-op.
- Bookshop, FoE Melbourne.

Page 107

- Mid 80s office life, FoE Melbourne campaigns office.

Page 108

- Tripods: from the bush to the city, forest network action in Melbourne, 1994.

Page 111

- All Goolengook images courtesy of the Forest network www.green.net.au/slide/gook.htm

Page 114

- Blocking road works, Alexandra Parade, 1994
- Obstructing dump trucks, Alexandra Parade, November, 1994. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 115

- Lee Tan, long time FoE campaigner for Indigenous and Asian Forest campaigns and local indigenous issues.

Page 116

- FoE ran a food stall at Confest, an alternative lifestyle festival, for many years as a major source of income. Confest 1990-1991.
- Geoff Evans at a International Whaling Commission meeting, late 1970s.

Page 119

- Cover image from Chain Reaction #56, 1988-89. Artwork by Jo Waite.
- Subscription form from Chain Reaction

Page 120

- Cover image from Chain Reaction #80, 1999. Photo: Andrew Graham.

Page 121

- Image from Chain Reaction

Page 122

- Eileen Goodfield, long term Chain reaction collective member, 1986.

Page 123

- Back Cover image from Chain Reaction

Page 124

- Poster celebrating 25 years of Chain Reaction, 2000. Artwork: Shamus Hoare.

Page 125

- Bird wing (Crimson Rosella), cover of Chain Reaction #81, 1999-2000. Photo: Catherine Sutherland.

Page 126

- Wild Spaces Film Festival Poster, advertising the 9th Annual Wild Spaces Film festival, 2003.

Page 127

- FoEA National meeting, Yambuk Indigenous protected area, western Victoria, January 2001
- Snow Gums, near Mt Hotham, Victoria. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 131

- FoE International meeting, Quito, Ecuador, 1999. Photo: Cam Walker.

Page 132

- "Nuke Road". Nuclear Highways Tour

Page 133

- The 1977 bike ride against nuclear power, Canberra.

Page 135

- Anti nuclear action, late 1980s. Photo: Linda Marks.

You make the difference

Join Friends of the Earth

:: community :: ecology :: solidarity :: justice ::



Help ensure FoE remains a vibrant and independent voice for social and environmental justice. You can give your support by:

- Becoming an **Active Friend** by giving monthly tax deductible donations
- Becoming a **Member**
- Giving a one-off **donation**

Please return to
Friends of the Earth

PO Box 222 Fitzroy 3065

Cheques payable to 'Friends of the Earth'

Name _____	Phone h) _____
Address _____	mobile _____
_____	email _____
_____	_____
PostCode _____	_____

Active Friends

Yes, I would like to make a monthly donation of:

- \$20 per month
- \$30 per month
- \$50 per month
- other \$_____ (\$10 min) per month

The donation will be:

- By direct debit from my bank account (this has the least admin fees!) - please fill in 'Direct Debit Details' below
- By going to www.egive.org.au - please return this form as well
- By credit card - please fill in the 'Credit Card Details' at the bottom of this form

I would also like to become a member An extra \$20 per financial year will go towards membership, this is not tax deductible. (credit cards only)

Direct Debit Details

I/We _____
(Given name) (Family name)

Request you, until further notice in writing, to debit my/our account described in the schedule below, any amounts which Friends of the Earth Inc may debit or charge me/us through our direct debit system. I/We understand and acknowledge that:

- The bank/financial institution may in its absolute discretion determine the order priority of payment by it of any moneys pursuant to this Request or any authority or mandate.
- The bank/financial institution may in its discretion at any time by notice in writing to me/us terminate this Request as to future debits.

The schedule (Please print clearly)

Financial Institution _____	BSB Number _____
Branch Address _____	Account Number _____
Name on Account _____	Your Signature _____

Membership

OR become a FoE member with a yearly membership payment:

- New Member** **Renewal**
- \$100 Supporting Member (\$60 tax deductible)**
- \$40 Waged Person** **\$50 Household**
- \$70 Organisation** **\$25 Low Income**
- One year** **Ongoing (credit card only)**

Donations

OR make a one-off donation

Donation \$_____ (thank you)
Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible

- Please send me information on FoE's bequest program**

Credit Card Details

Visa Mastercard Bankcard **Card Number:**

Card Expiry Date: ___ / ___ **Card Name:** _____

Cardholders Signature: _____

ABN 68 918 945 471