



CONSERVATION NEWS

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Greenhouse illustration by
Diane Worland

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Some like it hot



Bill Hare, ACF Research and Policy Analyst recently attended the International Panel on Climate Change, in Sweden. Here he reports on Australia's shifting greenhouse policy

As the Federal Government approaches its crucial decisions on greenhouse gas emission reductions targets, in particular the question of a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, key sections of government and industry are mounting a vigorous campaign to convince Ministers that such a move is against the national economic interest. The Government's resolve on the issue is collapsing as a consequence.

At the recent 4th session of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in Sundsvall, Sweden, it was apparent to many observers that Australian policy had shifted away from its alignment with a number of European nations, who have consistently advocated early action, towards the posture taken by the USA, which argues for further research and delay.

One of the key arguments used against establishing such targets for Australia is that we can help reduce global pollution by expanding our mineral processing and coal mining industry, because Australian coal is relatively clean. It is also argued that this expansion is essential for the health of the economy. Thus, it is claimed, the establishment of a CO₂ reduction target for the energy sector contradicts the national interest.

Setting aside the evident self interest in-

involved in this argument, I believe it is seriously flawed in economic terms and, if pursued as government policy, would expose Australia to grave economic risk.

Australia, as a resource dependent economy, is particularly vulnerable to a variety of long and short term economic pressures. When – not if – global moves to establish emission limits on greenhouse gases come into force, the industrialised countries will be required to comply. Australia will not be exempt from this under any conceivable international regulatory framework. As nations move to take action to reduce CO₂ emissions through energy efficiency measures, fuel switching and material recycling programs, the energy intensive commodity trade is likely to be one of the first sectors badly affected. In particular, Australia's coal trade is vulnerable, and I believe the first impacts of this could be felt by the mid 1990s.

With Australia likely to receive, at the very least, a CO₂ emissions cap within the next few years, the issues of Australia's overall energy efficiency becomes a key economic question. The more efficient we are, the more economic activity in the mineral processing sector we will be able to generate within our internationally set emission limit. At present, by OECD standards, Australia's energy efficiency is poor, and this is not just the result of having an energy intensive mining and mineral processing sector.

If we do not rapidly improve the efficiency of energy use in the Australian economy, Australia could find itself in a very weak economic position. An early move to establish a CO₂ emission reduction target for Australia, backed by policies to achieve this through energy efficiency

programs and the development of renewable energy systems, is thus becoming a major economic imperative. A 20 per cent CO₂ emission reduction target by 2000/2005 would be beneficial to Australia, both economically and environmentally.

In the context of likely international moves to limit greenhouse gas emissions, it would make a lot of economic sense for Australia to move ahead of the game, setting standards in advance of those currently applied in developed countries, and to adopt economic and technology development policies designed to reap the maximum benefit from the adjustment to a more energy efficient economy.

It is true that some sectors of the economy, notably the fossil fuel production sector, would suffer through these necessary adjustments. However, such adjustment will ultimately create both economic and environmental benefits for Australia. It is up to government to develop alternative opportunities, through long-term planning. □



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

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Cabinet opts for industry in south-east forests?

On the 14th September, Federal Cabinet allocated an additional fifteen coupes of forest – about a years supply of timber – for continued logging in the south-east forests of NSW.

Cabinet is due to further consider resource allocation and reservations for conservation early this month. Federal Resources Minister, Alan Griffiths, is understood to be pushing for the Government to make a long-term commitment (up to fifteen years) of timber resource to the logging industry. He is known to be seeking restriction of new national parks and reserves to as small an area as possible (a

maximum of 10 per cent of the south-east area) despite strong scientific evidence suggesting that much larger areas need to be protected to ensure adequate biological conservation and an ecologically representative reserve system.

ACF has been critical of attempts to lock large areas of the south-east into timber production before proper consideration of future national park boundaries occurs. In particular, such a long-term resource commitment would seriously undermine the current investigations by the Resource Assessment Commission (RAC). ACF Executive Director, Phillip Toyns, has argued that the Federal Government

should not pre-empt the RAC process by making long-term allocations now, but should only make the minimal allocation necessary to supply the timber industry for the next eighteen months, by which time the RAC will have reported to Government. Such allocations should preferably be made from outside the National Estate. This would allow for a proper system to be created, while maintaining timber supply, pending development of a timber industry restructuring plan to put the industry on a sustainable basis.

Paul Rutherford
National Liaison Officer, ACF

Bated breath for North Washpool forests

While the south-east forests of NSW continue to hit the headlines, conservationists are currently warding off stormy times in the unprotected rainforests and old-growth forests of North Washpool, in north-east NSW.

Court action by the North-East Forest Alliance (NEFA) against an inadequate Environmental Impact Statement by the NSW Forest Commission, has temporarily stopped further logging and roadworks in these forests, west of Grafton.

A decision in early September by State Cabinet guaranteed supply of rainforest timbers, despite objections from the National Parks and Wildlife Services and Tim Moore, NSW Environment Minister, who agreed the area was worthy of protection under the Wilderness Act. The area also contains sites of sacred and historical significance to local Aboriginal communities.

Please write to the NSW Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner (c/- Parliament House, Sydney, 2000), stating that there must be an immediate ban on this industry in North Washpool.

For more information, contact the NSW Environment Centre, 39 George Street, Sydney, 2000. tel: (02) 247 4206, or NEFA. tel: (066) 21 3278. □



□ cartoon by Philip Somerville

From the RAC Inquiry ...

The NSW Forest Commission clearly stated in its evidence to RAC on 3rd August, that its logging operations had never been sustainable, and were not expected to be so before the year 2000.

At the hearing, Dr Graeme Caughley, a RAC Commissioner stated that the Forestry Commission has never had a sustained yield operation going in the forests over which they operate. 'The Forestry Commission has allowed overcutting of its forests overall throughout its entire history,' he said. When asked if the Forestry Commission was on a sustainable yield now, Dr Johannes Drielsma, of the NSW Forest Commission said 'on a state-wide basis, I guess ... I would say that we are at the moment within something in the order of 10-15 per cent of it ... by the end of the century, we will be below that.' □



Pollution threatens the stability of our climate and biogeochemical cycles

□ Photo: courtesy of WWF/A. Linderheim/N

TARGET 2000: time is running out

The impacts of climate change could be even greater than previously believed, according to the findings of the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which met recently in Sweden. Despite this, the international community has so far failed to reach agreement on specific targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

One important step towards reaching international agreements on limiting greenhouse gas emissions is through setting domestic targets. This applies particularly to carbon dioxide (CO₂), as it alone is responsible for about half of all global warming.

So far West Germany and Denmark have set more stringent targets for reducing domestic CO₂ emissions from energy consumption than the Toronto target, which, in 1988, advocated a 20 per cent reduction by the year 2005. Austria, New Zealand and possibly Italy have adopted the Toronto target, while several other European countries have accepted less stringent reductions.

In Australia, Victoria has accepted the Toronto target, NSW and ACT have adopted it on an interim basis, while the Commonwealth Government has yet to accept a target.

CO₂ is produced by burning fossil fuels – coal, oil and natural gas – and by deforestation. By limiting CO₂ emissions,

through the efficient use of energy, expanding our use of renewable sources of energy from the sun and the wind, and by stopping deforestation, we could both reduce the pollution of our local environment (from fumes, traffic, acid rain and erosion) and protect the global atmosphere.

Studies in Australia and overseas show that meeting the Toronto target is actually less costly than continuing to expand energy supply*. It also has enormous potential to create jobs.

The pressure on the Australian Government against setting a target seems to come from mining and resource development interests. However, while CRA's own study into energy efficiency introduces massive increases in the price of fossil fuels and electricity, it says nothing of the cost and effectiveness of a progressive government-led campaign for energy efficiency, based on institutional changes, appropriate regulations, energy labelling of electrical appliances, making energy efficiency equally easy to finance as expanded energy supply, removing subsidies to grid electricity and the use of fossil fuels, educational programs and extension services.

There is a feasible path forward. If acted upon with resolution, it can preserve our planet's atmosphere, greatly improve local environments, provide new industries producing energy efficiency and renewable energy products and reduce Australia's foreign debt.

Mark Diesendorf
Coordinator Global Change Program

* see report on the study by Deni Greene, Conservation News, June 1990, and on the NIEIR report, Conservation News, September, 1990.

How you can help

Please write to the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, and the following Federal Ministers – John Kerin, (Primary Industries and Energy), Senator John Button (Industry, Technology and Commerce) and Ralph Willis (Finance) (all c/- Parliament House, Canberra, 2600) – urging that Australia set a target of 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2000. Also, express concern in your letter at the irrational fears which the mining and resource development industries seem to be sowing in the minds of government and the public. Send a copy to Ros Kelly, Minister of Environment.

For more information read
Global Warming
The Greenpeace Report
Jeremy Leggett (ed), OUP, 1990.
Available from
ACF Books. (see page 10)

Climate change spells end for many species

The effects of climate change on the natural environment and on biological diversity could be catastrophic, according to a Working Group (Impacts) report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Present indications show that the rate of change may exceed the ability of many species to adapt or migrate and many vegetation types and animal species may become extinct.

Vast shifts in climatic zones can be expected as a consequence of rapid climatic change induced by rising levels of greenhouse gases. Many species will be left climatically out of place and subjected to accelerated mortality.

Increases in greenhouse gas concentrations can directly affect ecosystem processes such as photosynthesis and decomposition, altering nutrient availability, reproduction and productivity.

The report stated that some montane and alpine climatic environments, such as those in Australia, could be virtually eliminated 'threatening the survival of the majority of present alpine species'.

Of further concern in this country, would be the higher survival rates for introduced species such as rabbits and foxes, adding to the pressure on medium-sized marsupials, already suffering the greatest rate of mammal extinctions in the world.

ACF is greatly disturbed by the report's findings. 'Millions of years of evolution and thousands of species are sliding away. Present extinction rates are well over 1,000 times more rapid than the natural rate, due to human activities,' said Mike Krockenberger, ACF's Biodiversity Program Coordinator. 'We cannot stand by and watch any longer, we must take the strongest action to slow this unnatural process.'

The report also indicated that there may be significant public health implications in Australia, resulting from global warming. It states that 'increases in rainfall and temperature in tropical regions ... could increase ... vulnerability to malaria, increase the incidence of epidemic polyarthritis, and extend the geographical area of endemicity of Murray Valley encephalitis virus and possibly the frequency of Australian encephalitis outbreaks, particularly at the southern boundary of the monsoonal influence'. □



Mountain pygmy possum. This tiny possum was first discovered in 1966. Prior to that it was only known from fossils. Found only in the Australian Alps it is seriously threatened by climate change. □ Photo by Jean-Paul Ferraro

Ready, set, go global

ACF's Global Change Program is now fully staffed with the appointments of Carrie Sonneborn, as Global Change Officer and Miko Kirschbaum, as Research Officer.

Mark Diesendorf, Coordinator of the Global Change Program, is confident that with this new team ACF is now fully equipped to pursue the formidable goal of cooling greenhouse warming and restoring the ozone layer.

In her position, Carrie will emphasize networking and liaison with community groups around Australia, on both greenhouse and ozone issues in general. She will also focus on specific projects to reverse ozone depletion of the upper atmosphere, thus complementing the work of Dallas Kinnear, ACF's Ozone Project Officer.

Miko will work at ACF two days per week on specific problems concerning transport and on reducing the emission of greenhouse gases which result from non-energy processes, especially farming and land-use practices.

As a means of keeping our readers up to date on the issues related to Global Change, Mark and company have produced several information papers, which are available from ACF's library at the Melbourne office.

The Global Change Program is situated in ACF's Canberra office. For further information ring (06) 247 2472. □

ESD: that elusive definition

Federal Government has recently set up nine committees will attempt to define 'ecological sustainable development' (now known in Canberra as ESDI) over the next twelve months. The environment movement has been invited to have two representatives on each of the committees. The national environmental groups – World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Wilderness Society (TWS) and Greenpeace, along with ACF, are considering the offer.

The committees cover different aspects of the economy: manufacturing, tourism, forestry, mining energy production and distribution, agriculture, fisheries, transport and energy use.

Other members of the committees include representatives from the states, government departments, unions, CSIRO and relevant industry and professional groups. We believe there should be a public consultation process which runs parallel to the committees. Also, given the high level of expertise necessary to contribute effectively to the committees, we will need adequate financing. □

SA Government 'mucks about' with High Court on Wilpena proposal

The SA Government seems set to sabotage moves by conservationists to air their concerns in the High Court with regard to development in Wilpena Pound in the state's foremost national park, the Flinders Ranges.

Undoubtedly, the Government's decision was cheered on by Ophix, the com-

pany which hopes to build the 4 star motel and extend camping facilities within the confines of the Park. But, as stated in *The Advertiser* in early September, 'the High Court does not muck about. It shrewdly vets those who dare ap-

proach; granting leave to appear is a sign of, at least, an arguable case'.

Following the High Court's decision in August, giving ACF and the SA Conservation Council (SACC) leave to present their case, the SA Premier, John Bannon, announced his intention in early September to introduce a Bill designed to pre-empt the High Court decision and to enable the proposed development at Wilpena to proceed.

The ACF and SACC describe this move as 'dictatorial'. 'How can the South Australian public trust the state legal system when the Government is prepared to introduce legislation at whim for "pet projects" such as the one at Wilpena. We simply cannot allow such a precedent to be set,' said Jacqui Gillen, ACF's SA Campaign

Coordinator.

The move will not only pre-empt the High Court appeal, but also the outcomes of the three significant election promises made by the Bannon Government last November; namely: the Statewide Planning Review, the Statewide Ecological Sustainability Review and the Statewide

Parks Management and Funding Review.

For over two years ACF has been contesting the SA Government's desire to allow this proposal to proceed. Conservationists now see the Wilpena Pound deci-

sion as much more than just a case of conservation going to the High Court. Should this project go ahead a precedent will be set for private developers to lease public land, and thus share the Government's immunity from the normal planning laws. This must be viewed as a matter of major significance on a range of issues related to the protection and management of national parks throughout the entire country.

YOUR LETTERS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED ACF calls immediately for people concerned about their democratic rights to write to the Hon. John Bannon, SA Premier, and Dale Baker, Leader of the Opposition stating your disapproval of the Government's decision to hijack conser-

THE CASE FOR CONSERVATION

In essence, the case to be presented by ACF and the SA Conservation Council is twofold. While conservationists believe the proposed tourism resort to be a major development requiring full consideration under the Planning Act, the Government has proposed that the buildings are no more than a 'management tool' given credence by way of a recent update of the Plan of Management for the Park. This brought forward the idea to build small towns inside parks that are not subjected to the normal planning and development requirements on the pretext that a small part (no more than 2 per cent) of their profit go toward the protection and management of the Park.

The other point to be presented is that the Supreme Court, having recognised that Ophix were the private developers responsible for the resort raised the issue as to whether a lease agreement between the developers and the government allows the developers to enjoy the same immunity as the government from their own planning requirements. Currently, the Government is arguing that Ophix are not required to meet the normal requirements of the Planning and Development Acts because they have signed a lease with the Government. Conservationists believe that this lease cannot be used as a means of allowing the developers to avoid their obligations to these Acts. □

vationists' moves to protect Wilpena Pound. Write also to the editor of *The Advertiser*, King William Street, Adelaide, 5000, and the editors of other major state papers. For more information, contact Jacqui Gillen, at ACF's Adelaide office, tel: (08) 232 2566. □

IN BRIEF

● Launch of landcare kit for students

A new kit designed to illustrate the principles and history of land management in Australia was launched by Victoria's new Premier, Joan Kirner, on 11th September in Melbourne. The kit, *Caring for our Country*, covers the history of European land management in Australia, and the causes of land degradation. The kit was jointly produced by ACF, National Farmers Federation and Landcare Australia. *Caring for our Country* is available from ACF's Melbourne office for \$20.00. For further information contact Peter Preuss on (03) 416 1455, [toll free: (008) 338 928].

● Antarctic Update

The Australian-French initiative for an Antarctic World Park recently received another boost with the announcement by the New Zealand Government that they are soon to introduce legislation into Parliament to ban mining in the Antarctic. This follows the then Prime Minister, Geoffrey Palmer's announcement that New Zealand would set aside the Minerals Convention.

In other moves Australia's Federal Government submitted on 1st October the World Heritage Nomination for the Sub-Antarctic Islands. This would provide World Heritage status for Macquarie Island and the Heard and MacDonal group which are regarded as key breeding refuges for birds and seals in the Southern Ocean.

● ACF Director on GMAC

ACF's Executive Director, Phillip Toyne, has been appointed to the Federal Government's Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC). A new subcommittee is expected to be formed to look at the environmental, social and ethical impacts of proposals, expanding the GMAC's work beyond its purely scientific advisory role. Phillip has also expressed interest in participating in the Live Release Subcommittee, which reviews proposals for deliberate release of live organisms for research and commercial purposes.

● ACF Christmas Holiday Raffle

Keep your eyes open for news about ACF's fantastic Christmas Holiday raffle, in next month's edition of Conservation News. □

Tas forest debacle threatens Accord

The Tasmanian Government has placed the Labor-Green accord in jeopardy by proposing a forestry strategy that is unsustainable and disregards conservation values. The strategy, which was developed without consultation with the Green Independents and environment groups, includes a massive increase in the state's wood export quota, permanent wood-production zones in wilderness, unsustainable cutting rates for sawlogs, and makes no provision to protect rare and endangered species.

'The Tasmanian Minister for Forests, David Llewellyn, has been badly advised about the environmental impact of the proposed forest strategy,' said Geoff Law, ACF Campaign Coordinator for Tasmania. 'The rate of cutting for sawlogs proposed by the Government is unsustainable and assumes the long-term destruction of forests on steep slopes and in National Estate Areas.'

Areas targeted for the proposed wood production zones include the East Picton and Jackey's Marsh - both named as protected in the Labor-Green Accord. Also threatened are the middle reaches of the Huon River, many of the highly visible slopes of the Great Western Tiers, and a number of areas proposed for protection by local communities.

Government support for the pro-industry strategy has broken its commitment to resolve the forestry debate by consensus and publicly abandoned the objectives of the Forest and Forest Industry Council. The Council, which comprised representatives from the Combined Environment

Groups (CEG), the Government and industry groups, was established in 1989 as a result of the Labor-Green Accord and the Salamanca Agreement. One of the clauses of the agreement committed the parties to negotiating a Forest and Forest Industries Strategy by 1st September, 1990.

The CEG called for an extension of time so the FFIC could review and collate the large amount of data recently presented to the Council by the numerous Council working groups. But the Government, without consulting the environmentalists, insisted on a result by 14th September. The CEG refused to sign the pro-industry strategy.

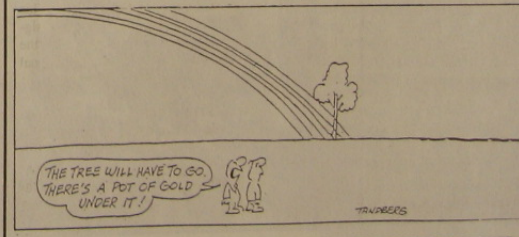
Following this debacle and concerning that the efforts of the Council working groups would be entirely wasted and the real issues buried, the CEG developed an alternative forest strategy drawing on the information that had been neglected by the anti-conservation faction of the Council.

Entitled, *A preliminary Forests and Forest Industry Strategy for Tasmania*, the CEG strategy aims at achieving ecologically and economically sustainable logging at the same time as protecting biodiversity and wilderness values. The Green Independents are insisting on standing by the terms of the Accord. This may lead to an early Tasmanian election. □

● *A preliminary Forests and Forest Industry Strategy for Tasmania* is available from the CEG at 132 /A, Davey Street, Hobart 7000, for \$10 including postage. It provides a comprehensive discussion on all aspects involved in the Tasmanian forest debate. □



2,500 protesters attend rally on the steps of Parliament House, Adelaide, against proposed development at Wilpena Pound. □ Photo: Lincoln Siliakus



'No deals with our land' say Umpila people

The McIlwraith Range region in far north Queensland includes the most extensive and pristine area of upland rainforest on Cape York Peninsula. Of equal importance it is here the opportunity exists for a language group of Aborigines, the Umpila, to retain control of and protect the integrity of their traditional lands.

A long history of competing interests from mining, forestry and land speculators have left the McIlwraith Range region in a vulnerable position. As outlined by the Rainforest Conservation Society in 1989, the area includes the traditional lands of the Umpila and Kaantju people, the entire Nesbit River catchment as a biogeographic and management unit, the habitats of many rare and migratory birds and other animals, and some of the most complex and impressive vegetation on Cape York Peninsula.

Less than one quarter of the Peninsula's rainforest is protected in conservation reserves. However, this did not stop the previous Queensland Government declaring the McIlwraith Range an "ex-national park proposal" in 1989 and invited applications for mining exploration.

The Aboriginal and Islander communities of Cape York Peninsula and the integrity of some of the largest areas of undisturbed ecosystems in the world's tropics are facing a crisis of sudden regional change through "development". The obvious protection for McIlwraith Range may appear to be its declaration as a national park, but it is important to realise that national parks are also regarded as development threats by Aboriginal people. To the locals, they are characterised by the lack of a defined process of discussion,

consultation and negotiation, which inevitably leads to the alienation of traditional lands.

The ACF believes that a new and creative approach is required to find a better and more appropriate form of protection than national park tenure, that recognises Aboriginal title to land. At Lockhart River recently, this position was endorsed by the inaugural Cape York Peninsula Land Conference of traditional landowners.

In the act of protecting the McIlwraith Range region, the opportunity exists for the Queensland government to lead Australia in establishing a world-class reserve based on agreement with indigenous peoples and principles of catchment management.

Conservation groups in Queensland support the implementation of a good pro-

cess as a priority, and to achieve some interim protection from mining and other damaging activities while proper consultation is undertaken, rather than allowing the end to justify the means. The ACF, the Queensland Conservation Council, the Wildlife Preservation Society and The Wilderness Society have called on the Government to honour their election promise to implement an ongoing process of consultation with Aboriginal and Islander people as a prerequisite to land use decision-making for land where traditional links exist.

However, it appears that negotiations have already taken place between the Environment Department, Department of Resource Industries and mining companies, without reference to the Umpila people, to concede important areas deserving of protection to the miners. "These people should not be making deals with our land", says Abraham Omeeny, an Umpila spokesperson. Even if a national park was declared, it would still exclude the coastal plains (for sandmining by Geo Peko and under lease to an American entrepreneur) and the headwaters of the Nesbit river (for goldmining by Gauvin Gold).

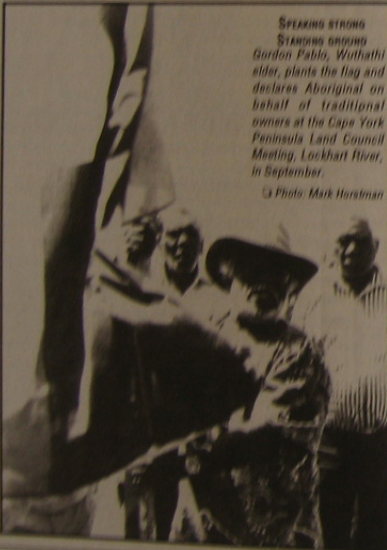
The long term security of McIlwraith Range depends on a stronger commitment from the government to reject extractive industries and commercial exploitation in the region. Further, the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS) must make policy involving Aboriginal communities that entails a review of land tenures and management planning, and an emphasis on the ownership of land within Aboriginal concepts.

The Queensland Government must develop proposals, legislation and procedures in conjunction with Aboriginal communities, and protect traditional relationships to land and nature conservation val-

ues with the most secure form of tenure available. The manner by which the Queensland Government deals with issues of development and conservation on Cape York Peninsula, and initially with McIlwraith Range, will set a political precedent for future involvement with Aborigines in Queensland, and the environment and land-rights movement in Australia.

Please write to Pat Comben, Minister for Environment and Heritage (160 Ann Street, Brisbane, 4000), stating that conservation plans for the McIlwraith Range region must not be finalised until full agreement is reached with the traditional landowners and mining excluded from the area.

Mark Horstman
Campaign Coordinator, Queensland



SPAKING STRONG
STANDING GROUND
Gordon Pablo, Wuthathi elder, plants the flag and declares Aboriginal on behalf of traditional owners at the Cape York Peninsula Land Council Meeting, Lockhart River, in September.

Photo: Mark Horstman

Aboriginal people and environment ACF appoints new Aboriginal Liaison Officer

'Greetings!

My name is Ros Sultan, and I've recently been appointed as Aboriginal Liaison Officer with ACF.

In Willmott held this position last year, working from ACF's SA office. I hope to build on the work that she began with Jane Ellis, by addressing a diverse range of issues which identify areas of environmental concern pertaining to Aboriginal people and our communities.

I will also be setting in place strategies for dealing with these issues, establishing an Aboriginal Consultative Group and initiating discussion with regard to policy while making appropriate contacts within the Aboriginal and non Aboriginal community, such as community based organisations, governments and unions.

I will be working from ACF's Melbourne office, and look forward to hearing from ACF members. Ring me on (03) 416 1455 [toll free (098) 338 928].

Photo: Janusz Molinski



New WA alliance rocks CALM to save forests

The WA timber industry must now face a powerful new alliance set on protecting WA's remaining native forests. The Western Australian Forest Alliance (WAFSA) was established in late August, and is made up of forest activists and conservation groups, all sharing the common aim of promoting ecologically appropriate forest management, while resisting timber industry efforts to exploit virtually all of WA's precious native forests for their timber resources. The Alliance will strongly encourage industry moves to change to plantation timbers, and aims to do everything within its power to support the industry along these lines in the future.

A priority of the Alliance is to campaign for the gazettal of all promised reserves and additional reserves in under represented ecosystems. WAFSA is concerned that a number of important areas of WA's forests have been identified for reservation for many years, but never gazetted. This is largely due to inaction by government, and opposition

from the timber and mining industries. Additionally, the immediate phase-out of logging from the remaining areas of old growth forests is considered essential by the Alliance. Currently, old growth forests comprise a small proportion of publicly-owned forests estates - that is approximately 23 per cent. This will decrease to less than 8 per cent (located within national parks and nature reserves) under the Department of Conservation and Land Management's (CALM) current timber strategy. This is clearly inadequate in WAFSA's view.

Substantial concerns exist regarding forest management practices and the over-emphasis on production forestry of CALM. The Alliance believes it is imperative that CALM be restructured to reflect these concerns and has called for an independent public inquiry to identify the necessary changes.

The Alliance fully supports an ecologically sustainable sawmilling industry. However, it also believes that little thought is currently being given to other

legitimate uses of forests, such as less destructive industries (eg: recreation), or the need to conserve the forest ecosystems in their own right.

Therefore, the Alliance plans to act as a media liaison group, facilitating the collection and dissemination of information while organising and coordinating forest campaign activities.

In the long term the Alliance believes that logging in state forests should be limited in extent, and restricted to very long rotation logging for specially timbers. The bulk of the timber produced in WA should come from plantations of fast growing and mixed species, with the overall timber demand having been reduced by more appropriate uses of this limited resource.

Overall, the Alliance believes that our society must change its attitude to forests - we need to shift from an exploitative approach to one based on understanding and caring for the natural environment.

Nali Blazek
Campaign Coordinator, WA

NEW BOOKS

Amongst this month's new books are two titles from Magabala Press, an Aboriginal publishing firm based in Broome, Western Australia. These two volumes: *Jilji - Life in the Great Sandy Desert*, and *Jalygurr - Aussie Animal Rhymes*, give a clear indication of the sophistication and artistry of recent Aboriginal publications.

If you wish to order any of the titles listed below, or enquire about others we may have in stock, please contact the ACF Books Coordinator, Gary Wardrope, at ACF's Melbourne office (340 Gore Street, Fitzroy, 3065). Your suggestions regarding new books on environmental issues are always welcome. tel: (03) 416 1455 (toll free: (008) 338 928).

Jilji: Life in the Great Sandy Desert

P. Lowe & J. Pike, Magabala, 1990, 147pp, \$39.95.

'The people of the sandhills led a life that was spare in many things...The smoke from their scattered fires was soon lost in the vast clear air.'

This must be one of the most beautiful books produced this year.

Until the early 1960s Aboriginal people in the Great Sandy Desert of North Central Australia maintained a traditional lifestyle, rarely, if ever, coming into contact with white people. The richness of their desert life is set against a stark landscape - vividly illustrated through the photography of Pat Lowe and paintings by Jimmy Pike.

Jalygurr: Aussie Animal Rhymes Poems for Kids (adapted from Kimberley Aboriginal Folk Stories)

P. Torres, Magabala, 1988, 33pp, paperback, \$6.95

This delightful and colourfully illustrated set of poems are written in both English and Yawuru, the language spoken by Aborigines from the Broome area in north-western Western Australia. It includes a glossary of Yawuru words and a simple pronunciation list. It is particularly suitable for younger children.

Australian Wetlands

A.J. McComb and P. S. Lake, A&R, 1990, 258pp, \$49.95

Australia's wetlands are remarkably diverse and are home to a wide and fascinating range of animal, bird, fish and plant life. Here, the authors and photographers have produced an authoritative and superbly illustrated account of these sometimes vast areas, ranging from alpine pools and rivers of the high country to the freshwater and salt lakes, estuaries and nearshore regions, including artificial wetlands, such as dams and reservoirs.



To order these books, send cheque with order to ACF Conservation Books, 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy, 3065. ACF members may deduct 10% discount on books only. Discounts do not apply to other ACF products.

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Australian Tropical Rainforests:

Science-Values-Meaning

L.J. Webb & J. Kikkawa (eds), CSIRO, 1990, 185pp, \$55.00

This volume is the result of a symposium at the 57th ANZAAS Congress, in North Queensland, 1987. It includes a description and interpretation of the evolution, biology and dynamics of Australia's northern rainforests as well as providing a range of viewpoints resulting from the symposium.

Bushwalking by Public Transport A Victorian Guide

M. Learmouth and J. Embury, 1990, 114pp, paperback, \$12.00

Twenty seven walks are included in this guide, enabling us to enjoy some of Victoria's unique scenery without polluting the atmosphere with carbon-dioxide. It gives public-transport planning hints, includes helpful maps, and provides advice on equipment and first aid.

How Safe Is Safe?

Radiation controversies explained

B. Lambert, Unwin, 1990, 275pp, paperback, \$24.95

This volume offers an explanation of radiation and its effects, especially in relation to radiation accidents which have rocked the world, such as Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. Government credibility is also assessed over radiation pronouncements to the public.

Toxic Cities

G.J. Smith, NSWUP, 170pp, paperback, \$16.95

Australian communities are faced with increased exposure to toxic chemicals from past dumping of wastes, tanker spills and industrial emissions. This book examines some of the legal, social and governmental implications of exposure to toxic chemicals in our society. □

WATCHING BRIEF

WATCHING BRIEF is Australia's only national current affairs programme covering peace and the environment. For one hour a week on over thirty public radio stations around Australia, WATCHING BRIEF examines the issues, the campaigns and the political context of the conservation movement. If you are concerned about the environment, tune in to WATCHING BRIEF.

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NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICY



Last year the Federal Government removed funding for drought relief under the National Disasters Relief Arrangements (NDRA), because of the widespread and systematic abuse of drought assistance. Consequently, John Kerin, Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, established a Task Force to make a comprehensive review of national drought policy. ACF's Natural Resources Coordinator, Jane Elix, is represented on the panel and has compiled this report.

MANAGING FOR DROUGHT

Recently, a new report called *Managing for Drought* was launched by the Independent Task Force established to review national drought policy. The report specifies that drought management is an integral part of sustainable production, and that assessing the impact of climatic variability is an essential part of property management. The general principles supported by the Task Force state that the management of land is a first priority, and should be based on a concept of land capability. Additionally, the Task Force indicates that managers need to understand the concept of risk, and that 'decisions should take into account the law of probabilities, even though there is always a chance of rain later in the season'.

The report proposes that assistance to producers during times of climatic stress should only be provided in an adjustment context, based on a loans-only policy, and should apply 'only when the risks involved begin to exceed those that can be reasonably addressed on a commercial basis'. However, there is provision for income support in rural households during times of extreme stress.

The industry adjustment measure will occur primarily through the *Rural Adjustment Scheme*. Part B of this scheme applies to carry on funding requirements where a significant proportion of pro-

ducers in a state or territory face financial difficulties due to causes beyond their control, including those due to climatic variability.

The Task Force also recommends that National Parks and nature reserves not be used for agistment purposes during periods of climatic stress, and that incentives be provided for producers to protect wildlife habitats from stock grazing and to participate in the formation of wildlife corridors. It asks that governments throughout Australia initiate joint programs to control those populations of feral animals which are more susceptible to eradication during periods of climatic stress.

In launching the Task Force report, John Kerin stated that it was 'stimulating and challenging'. He managed to contain his excitement however, by referring the report to a multitude of further Committees and working groups, saying 'I do not expect overnight changes in the agricultural sector towards a new self-reliant approach to drought management.' □

For copies of *Managing For Drought*, contact John Kerin's office in Canberra tel: (06) 277 7111, or the Australian Government Publishing Service.

NOTES

New team to spread environmental message

The creative genius of those two masterpieces of environmental journalism – Conservation News and Habitat Australia – is now all in the hands of two new editors. Merrilyn Julian has recently replaced Toly Sawenko as editor of Habitat. Toly, meanwhile, has been promoted to the position of Coordinator of Public Awareness – a new ACF program set up under the Forward Plan.

Nigel Eyre has taken over the task of editing Conservation News, the job which has caused me – your present editor, Angela Brennan – to leave the country.

Merrilyn's professional background has been in commercial publishing, mainly in London, where she spent many years before escaping to join the Greens in rural Devon. Since returning to Australia three years ago, she has worked with the Commission for the Future's Greenhouse Project and the Victorian Government's national park service.

She sees Habitat as one of Australia's most important forums for environmental debate, and hopes to bring to the magazine some of the broadly-based cultural perspective that characterises the European Green movement.

Nigel is trained as an ecological scientist, but was diverted by student newspapers into a career as a writer and editor, working most recently with *The Age* newspaper. Since joining ACF last July he has been investigating aspects of land degradation and sustainable agriculture.

He sees Conservation News as playing a dynamic role in environmental current affairs and aims to strengthen the ACF's national and international information networks. Besides concise news and analysis he aims to introduce a broad range of stimulat-



Some of the members of the Public Awareness Team: L-R: Merrilyn Julian, Prue Lamont, Deirdre Lawrence, Nigel Eyre.

□ Photo: Janusz Molinski

ing, member-oriented material.

The Public Awareness program is the information-education leg of the ACF. Along with the production of Habitat and Conservation News, it aims to promote environmental understanding in the Australian community, through the provision of information and education.

Peter Preuss will continue in his role as Education officer, Lesley Dalziel and Prue Lamont will maintain the Library and Information Services, while David Neilson will remain responsible for ACF's much acclaimed Wilderness and Desktop diaries, as well as designing catalogues and brochures for ACF. The whole kit and kaboodle is held soundly together by the secretarial and editorial support given by Deirdre Lawrence, who joined the Foundation in May. The Public Awareness Program will be based in ACF's Melbourne office. *tel: (03) 416 1455.* Your ideas and comments are most welcome. □

Community Energy Network

Wednesday, 24th October, 7.30 pm
This is the first meeting of the newly established Community Energy Network (CEN). Everyone is invited to attend.

By addressing energy issues now, we can ensure that there will always be cold drinks and hot showers. CEN has been established by four leading social and environmental groups, including ACF, in order to encourage informed community input into energy conservation and renewable energy issues.

At present, it is the only network of its kind in Australia. It strongly encourages other states to establish similar networks.

For further information regarding the meeting, or advice on setting up an energy network, contact Kerry Blakemore or John Pollock at the Conservation Council of Victoria. *tel: (03) 654 4833.*

More on the Staff front

Adrian Stevens has recently been appointed as ACF's National Liaison Officer.

Growing up in Wales gave him a lifelong concern for environmental issues. 'The destruction of the valleys by mines and industry desolated the beauty of the country and polluted the air, rivers and seas. The same industry placed great hardship on working people', he remarks.

As NLO, Adrian will be lobbying the Federal Government and liaising with environmental groups on issues of concern to the community at large. On top of the ACF list are greenhouse and ozone, ecologically sustainable development, biodiversity, forests and other natural resources issues.

Adrian has spent time as the ACT Regional Director of National Parks and Wildlife Foundation (NSW). He has also been involved in Aboriginal support work, human rights and Asia-Pacific solidarity.

Adrian works from ACF's Canberra office, and can be contacted on (06) 247 3013.

● Farewell Wendy

After five years with ACF, Wendy James has left us to take up a position as Enrolment Officer at Billanook College, just outside Melbourne. Wendy worked here in a number of areas before taking up the position of assistant to the Director, Phillip Toyne. She then moved on to the position of Council Coordinator.

We miss her, but wish her the best of luck in her new job.

She is replaced by Kerin Ord, who over the past year has become familiar with the curious machinations of the ACF Council.

Planning for Victoria's forests

The Forest Management Plans for Victorian forests are now being developed on a regional basis. For further information, contact Greg Barber, Conservation Council of Victoria, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000. *tel: (03) 654 4833.* □

Following their success in Sydney, The Good Wood Project, in association with ACF, presents

A GOOD WOOD SEMINAR for wood using artisans, architects, designers, builders, in fact anybody interested in the use of non-rainforest timbers in woodwork and building. The Seminar, including lunch, will be held in mid-November.

◆
If you are interested in attending, or would like more information, contact Tania Excel, at ACF's Melbourne office. *tel: (03) 416 1455.*



Fertility Control in Wildlife Conference

**International House
University of Melbourne
20 - 24 November, 1990**

◆
The second International Conference focusing on fertility control methods for wildlife.

The conference is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of various fertility control strategies suitable for specific habitats and to provide a forum for the discussion on valid and effective methods of stabilising wildlife populations.

◆
For more information contact The Conference Secretariate (Aust), Atkinson Conference Services, 43 Agnes Street, East Melbourne, 3002. *tel: (03) 654 7533; fax: (03) 654 8540.*

Better to burn it than bury it

High Temperature Incinerator approved for intractable wastes

The Joint Taskforce on Intractable Wastes has recommended a High Temperature Incinerator to be located in the NSW Shire of Corowa. ACF supports the establishment of the incinerator as part of a total management system for intractable wastes.

In a joint statement, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Ros Kelly, NSW Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore and Victorian Minister for Planning and Urban Growth, Andrew McCutcheon, assured that all public concerns regarding the incinerator will be met. To this end, an extensive community consultation process will be instituted in the Corowa area.

The Incinerator will be fully owned and operated by the Waste Management Authority of NSW, and international advertisements have been placed for consultants to perform an Environmental Impact Statement.

Intractable wastes are wastes from industrial processes for which there are no current environmentally safe methods of disposal. The Taskforce, set up by the Commonwealth, NSW and Victorian Governments in 1987, has identified about 93,000 tonnes of the wastes which must be destroyed.

Presently, intractable wastes are at best being stored, and at worst, in the past, placed in landfill. International experience has demonstrated that high temperature incineration results in virtually complete destruction of the waste, with the emissions being cleared to meet stringent standards.

The Ministers emphasised that 'in ten years, we expect we will not be producing intractable waste, and the incinerator will have destroyed what we have produced'. 'Destroying these dangerous wastes is by far the preferable alternative to putting them in a hole in the ground and hoping they will just go away', the Ministers concluded. □

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Genetic Engineering Inquiry extended

The Federal Parliament's Genetic Engineering Inquiry has been greeted with tremendous public interest despite minimal publicity. As a result, the cut-off date has been informally extended and relevant submissions which address issues outside the published terms of reference will be considered by the committee.

As an ACF member, you are encouraged again to have your say on genetic engineering. Commercial uses of this new technology are set to have dra-

matic negative impacts on our environment and society and we should all have a say on whether or not it is wanted. Your contribution need not be long or complex. ACF's Genetic Engineering Campaign Officer, Bob Phelps, in our Melbourne office, will gladly help you. *tel: (03) 416 1455.* Send your submissions to:

Paul McMahon, the Secretary/Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Parliament House, ACT, 2600.

LETTERS

Too many kangaroos in Hattah-Kulkyne

Ben Hall
Kerang, Victoria

Last week we camped at the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. The variety of birdlife and the filling of the lakes ensured our stay there was pleasant.

But being a farmer I will long remember the plague proportions of the Western Grey Kangaroos I saw there. To me it is clear, by the lack of plant regeneration and general ground cover the park is dangerously overstocked.

I thought a national park was formed to provide a home for all native species. Why should one species (kangaroos) be wrecking it for all the others?

The kangaroo problem can't be left for nature to take its course and wipe kanga-

roos out when the next drought comes along.

Because by then several other native species will have disappeared almost unnoticed due to the lack of the right native bush needed for their survival.

Hattah-Kulkyne National Park is an example of a degraded environment that needs more than just nature to heal the wounds, humans and now Western Grey Kangaroos are inflicting on it.

I feel the park should be harvested of all its Western Grey Kangaroos and any proceeds from this could be used to aid native plant regeneration in Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. □

Soya bean base could solve de-inking deadlock

Justin Moore
Hawthorn, Victoria

At the forefront of the deadlock on newspaper recycling is, it appears, the issue of de-inking the pulp and the impact of this on the environment. I think this impact could be substantially reduced by the use of soya-bean based inks. They are, it seems, biodegradable and perfectly adequate for newsprint.

An essential step of the recycling campaign should be to have the newspaper industry change over from the oil-based inks to soya-based inks as soon as possible. Whether the de-inking occurs in Albany, Melbourne, Sydney or all three, it will still be necessary to prevent it from further polluting water, a resource which may itself soon prove to be as difficult to find in sufficient quality as forests are now; the changeover should help avoid this pollution.

There is, into the bargain, a possible economic benefit, as using the home grown product, soya beans, instead of the

import, oil, would help arrest our foreign debt; and if all the ink ends up being imported then we'd be no worse off than now anyway.

But we must be aware that this is urgent; there is too much else to do: banning chlorine bleaching, making recycled paper compulsory in packaging, banning wood import and export, introducing some grading system on paper products to facilitate third generation recycling, and so on, and too many structural obstacles to conserve and recycling ventures for us to waste time in the blind alleys of technical problems which a little vision shows to have extant solutions.

I have no technical expertise in this area; but if there is a reason soya-based inks are not the solution that they seem, could it please be detailed clearly and openly; otherwise I think that the changeover to them should be placed at the top of the recycling campaign agenda. □

It used to be that science meant flying

David Erskine
Griffith, NSW

When I was a boy, science meant flying faster than sound, sending satellites into orbit, generating nuclear power and producing goods without human workers.

Nowadays, science means clearing up the mess made by unsophisticated people who have been let loose with the great powers made possible by science. This affects how people regard science and research.

Progress is more stimulating than damage control. Medicine improves, and people respond with a population explosion. Better ships are built, and people respond by threatening fish stocks with drift net fishing. Roads are built into the Amazon, and people respond by burning down vast tracts of forest.

The long-term future for any successful advanced society is stagnation at a very high level of wealth. An automated economy will generate enormous but stable output to be distributed among a small and stable population. This is the only workable formula.

Sophisticated societies are fragile structures, easily disrupted by unsophisticated people.

Social problems have become more important than production problems.

The main problem facing civilisation now is to defend itself from hillbilly demands for ever expanding populations and economies. □

Hume Highway goes walkabout

A mistake appeared in Tony Fletcher's letter *Highway travel highlights loss of trees*, in the June edition of Conservation News, inadvertently relocating the Hume Highway to central Queensland. The letter should read "... from the Hume Highway north of Tarcutta (southern NSW) and from the Bruce Highway around Mt Laram (central Queensland) ..."

The omission of the line does not affect the content of the letter, just the geography. It was a proofing error. □

ACF BRANCHES AND CAMPAIGN GROUPS

Collie's courage

Down in the south-west of WA lies the coal mining town of Collie, a town steeped in over a century's history of mining and the exploitation of the jarrah forest for timber and bauxite. The complexities of greenhouse gas emissions and a depleted ozone layer are not on the general agenda. The town is old, frequently dilapidated, lacking until quite recently in modern facilities. The townspeople rely on the local industries to survive.

Enter ACF Collie Branch. Paul Lavers, Convenor of the Branch, picks up the tale. "We are a small, enthusiastic group of local

residents. Some of us have been coal miners, others are still involved with the extraction of the 'black diamond' as it is termed locally. Some earn a living from the burning of coal in the 1040 MW Muja Power Station, central to power supply in WA, and others from refining bauxite to alumina. Through the courage of our convictions, we formed this Branch.

I am constantly confronted with the dilemma between my professional responsibilities and what I believe to be right. I am concerned at the contribution of coal to the greenhouse effect and the threat to the

Jarrah forest through bauxite mining—but how can I question these industries when my family's existence relies on my work at the local alumina refinery?

The environment movement is rightly calling for a change in Western society's way of doing things. But we must acknowledge there will be a cost. Collie residents believe the cost will be their community, their homes, and of those like them.

Only through diversification of Collie's economy can the town's sustainability be assured. Only through our efforts to teach towns like Collie to diversify their employment prospects can we hope to sustain viable conservation activity through branches like the Collie Branch of ACF. □

VICTORIA

Albury-Wodonga

Marty Gray (060) 215 837 (bh)
or Environment Centre (060) 212 627 (bh)

Ballarat

Barry Golding (053) 456 343 (ah)

Diamond Valley

Jann Lauri (03) 439 3460 (ah) or
Gerard Sutton (03) 439 4298 (ah)

Gippsland

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

Mullum (Eastern suburbs, Melbourne)

Peter Caffin (03) 801 4891 (ah) or Diana
Haby (03) 890 5366 (ah)

North East Victoria

Geoff Conway (057) 221 737 (ah)

Portland

Max Phillips (055) 233 023 (ah)

Sonraysia Mallee

Stephen Page (050) 234 554

Wimmera

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Bunbury

Adrian or Wendy Colley (097) 215 384

Collie

Paul Lavers (097) 343 512

Perth

David Bennett, (09) 387 2126

South-Coast Branch

Lawrence Emery (098) 451 042

NEW SOUTH WALES

Blue Mountains

Terri Hamilton (047) 824 554

Central Coast

Greg Roberts (043) 822 483 (ah)

Hunter Region

Janet Murray (049) 690 662 (bh) or (049)
57 1126 (ah)

Illawarra

Cheryl Aldrich (042) 291 625 (ah)

Sydney

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

Shoalhaven

Julie Hindlich (044) 460 314

Northern Riverina

Wendy Avery (069) 723 093

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Central Australia

Matthew Guggisberg (089) 526 782 (bh)

QUEENSLAND

Atherton Tablelands

Virginia Simmons (070) 958 302 (ah)

Brisbane

Ken Perkins (07) 857 4181 (ah)

Mary River

Magdalena Steffens (071) 29 2211

Gold Coast

Greg Owens (075) 386 877

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide

Nile Findlay (08) 276 8652 (ah)

ACT

Canberra

Kathryn Kelly (062) 825 366 (ah) or
(062) 893 191 (bh) or Mike McGrath
(062) 571 860 (ah) or (062) 976 144 (bh)



CAMPAIGN GROUPS

MELBOURNE

Cape York Campaign Group -
Margaret McDonald (03) 416 1455 (bh)

Membership Campaign Group -

Trish Brawn (03) 416 1455 (bh)

Tropical Forest Campaign Group -

Felicity Wishart (03) 416 1455 (bh)

BRISBANE

Cape York Campaign Group -

Mark Horstman (07) 229 7715

SYDNEY

Atmosphere Campaign Group -

Sue Salmon (02) 247 1497 (bh)

Forest Campaign Group -

Bridget Berry (02) 247 4285

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Lesueur Campaign Group -

Colina Keating (09) 368 1562

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