

Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 21 October-November 1980 \$120*

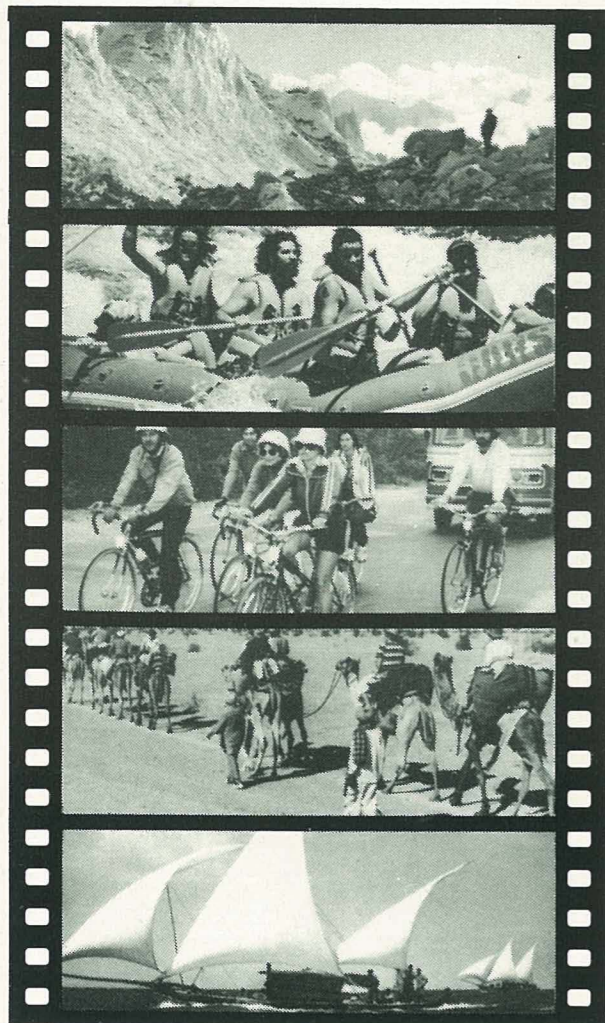


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THE GOVERNMENT Money, votes, words
PLANT PATENTING - REDCLIFF**

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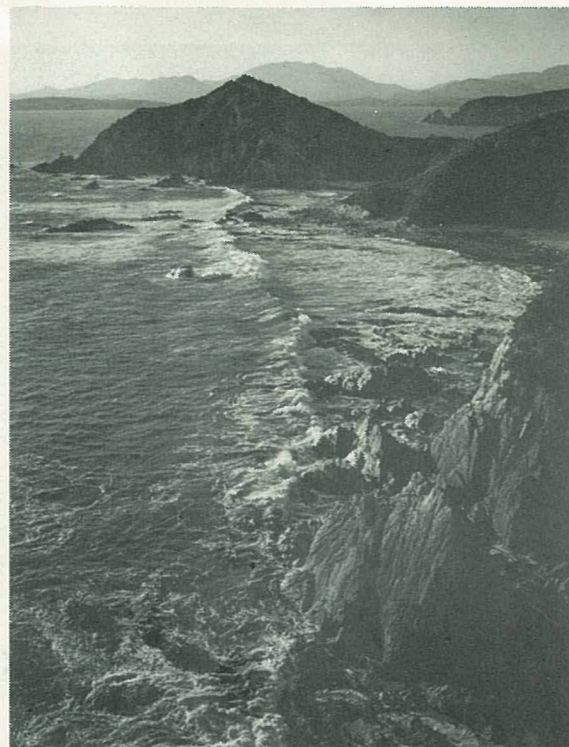
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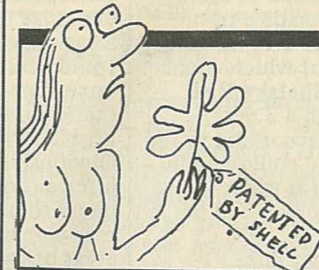
Chain Reaction

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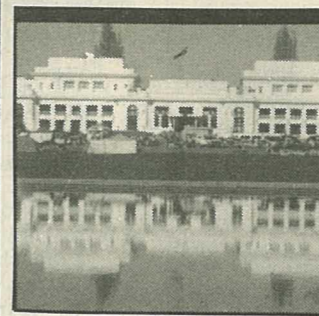
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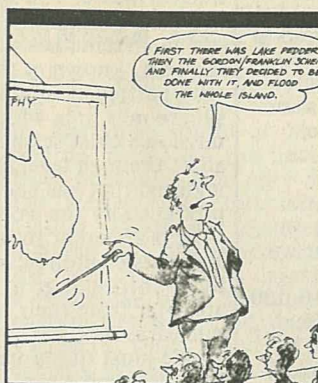
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Cover: *The Franklin River in South West Tasmania's proposed new Wild Rivers National Park.* Photo: Bob Brown. Design: Mark Carter.

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Contributions to *Chain Reaction* are invited. Please try to send items typed, on one side of the page, double spaced and with wide margins. Keep a copy for yourself. We do not have sufficient resources and people to return manuscripts. These few guidelines are to help in bringing out the magazine better and faster. The next edition will appear in early December 1980.

Chain Reaction is supplied to all members of Friends of the Earth in Australia (except in NSW) as part of their membership. For lists of state and territory groups and membership details see page 40. FOE (NSW) members are invited to become subscribers. Subscription details are on page 38. Responsibility for electoral comment in this edition is taken by Mark Carter and Leigh Holloway, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066.



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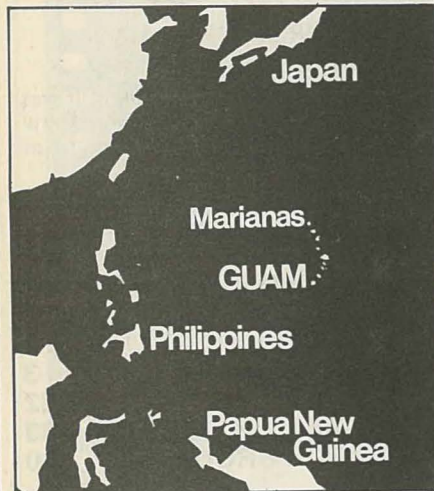
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LETTERS

NUCLEAR WASTE DUMPING

We send this letter to solicit your help and support. The small Pacific islands have little power: we have small populations and land areas. Our economic resources are limited. Our histories and even our existence are unknown to many people in the world. Our voice in world affairs is unheard.

This is why we need your help to combat one of the gravest dangers ever to face us. In February of this year we learned of a plan of the Japanese government to dump as many as 10,000 barrels of radioactive nuclear waste 600 miles north of Maug, an island at the northern tip of the Marianas Archipelago in the Western Pacific. And this



is just the beginning. Japan's Science and Technology Agency plans to embark on an extensive and on-going dumping program in this area.

Immediate protests from our island governments and citizens were lodged with the Japanese and United States of America governments and letters similar to this one were sent to groups which we felt could help us.

While we have received much encouragement from environmental and anti-nuclear groups, we still feel the pressure of the nuclear dumping plan bearing down on us with inexorable force. A news release of 20 June 1980, indicated that the Japanese government justifies the dumping plan by an international treaty which it has not yet signed but is rapidly preparing to ratify. Under the terms of the London Convention, the USA, Netherlands and Portugal have already dumped low level radioactive waste at sea.

One of our greatest disappointments, as residents of the USA territory of Guam, was to discover that amid our formal protests and requests for help from the federal government, a research ship, *Vema*, on a mission funded by the

US Department of Energy, was in our harbour. The mission of the *Vema* was to seek a sub-seabed location to store nuclear waste. The ship made a triangular sweep of a seabed area northeast of the Mariana Islands (of which Guam is a part) known as the Shatsky Rise with particular interest in a 3,600 square mile area which, according to the mission's chief scientist, "could handle all of the high level nuclear waste material that has been or ever will be produced by the world."

It is apparent to us that huge amounts of money are being invested by countries of great power to find areas far from their own shores to dump nuclear waste.

We must therefore rely on you to help us combat these plans. Our fragile ecosystem, our fish and reefs and our economic development are threatened. If leakage occurs, as it has in other sites, currents, winds and sealife will spread the danger far beyond the confines of the selected site. The environmental integrity of the entire Pacific Basin is at stake.

We ask you to help us; talk to people, write to your government officials, write to friends in Japan, organize protests, alert environmental groups and the media.

We are fighting enormous interest groups backed by powerful governments. Our only hope is a groundswell of public opinion and pressure.

Bob Mills,
Marianas Alliance Against
Nuclear Dumping in the Pacific.
Post Office Box 24714
Guam Main Facility
Guam 96921.

STUDY IDEAS INVITED

It's remarkable how slow social scientists have been to direct their research interests towards issues associated with the environment - especially so given the socio-political nature of many of the more intractable problems. I am a lecturer in Sociology, and so far only one student has written a thesis in our School with an environmental orientation. A look at the lists of theses (both Honours and Postgraduate) either completed or in progress at other universities in Australia shows a similar picture.

In order to try to stimulate more interest in the many immediate and pressing areas where sociologically-informed research might make a contribution, I am compiling a list of needed research projects which students could use to generate thesis topics. I would welcome hearing from any readers who know of (or can think of) specific research projects associated with environmental problems that I

could include in the list.

It always seems a waste to me to see students devoting time, energy and expertise to sterile exercises in order to gain academic recognition when they could achieve the same goal and at the same time make some contribution to the solution of the many pressing problems that confront us at present. Obviously, the longer the list of needed information and research, the more likely that more students will be persuaded to focus their efforts on areas of environmental significance, and I'd be pleased to hear of any suggestions readers might have, even if they are a bit unsure as to their direct suitability.

Go on - inundate me!

Thanks.

Bill Bottomley
School of Sociology
University of NSW
PO Box 1
Kensington NSW 2033

CHAIN REACTION

Just want to tell you how pleased I am with the newlook CR. For the first time in over a year I feel enthusiastic about showing it to friends, hawking it around shops etc. The latest issue in particular is exceptional. Full marks for design, layout, and content!

I especially appreciate:

- * Letters - a good way to indicate to readers, right from the start that they too are part of the communication process.
- * features like Resources, Power Politics, etc. which start to tie together developments spanning several States. I suggest further Resource articles on e.g. Forestry, with input from each State on the state of that resource in their own

... continued on page 38

LETTERS

You are invited to write to *Chain Reaction* with your comments and criticisms of articles or on other issues of interest to you. We are more able to publish your letter if it is under 250 words. Write today to the Editors *Chain Reaction*, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066, Australia.

ATTENTION: LIBRARIANS

The numbering of editions of *Chain Reaction* has changed. This, our twenty first edition is simply numbered 21, and future issues will continue from there. The volume system has been scrapped as it was no longer linked to the year of publication. Editors.

EARTH NEWS

Rock Against Racism



Veronica from the band No Fixed Address at the second Rock Against Racism concert.

With organisations like the neo-fascist National Alliance distributing racist literature in schools and Aboriginal land rights becoming a major national issue, there is urgent need for strong counter measures against racism. Rock Against Racism was formed with this in mind.

Several thousand dollars has already been raised in two successful concerts. Most of this money has been distributed between the Melbourne Aboriginal Emergency Fund and the Campaign Against Racial Exploitation. Other activities like Melbourne Aboriginal activist Peter Kanoa's trip to Noonkanbah during Court's paramilitary operation, have also been financed. Some money from the second concert will be used to subsidize a concert later this year and to produce anti-racist literature.

While most of the emphasis by RAR has been towards Aboriginal issues, which are seen as the most immediately urgent, the organisers hope to encourage the involvement of different national and racial groups.

RAR not only raises money but is also active. They were involved in

changing the name of Batman Park in Northcote, Melbourne to Wurundjeri Park, after the tribe who originally lived throughout the area.

Noonkanbah and Aurukun may make the headlines but there's plenty of oppression and prejudice aimed at Aborigines in the major cities as well.

Action: There's plenty to do setting up new groups interstate (one's underway in Perth) and helping organize concerts and other activities in Melbourne, so contact RAR at 33 Smith Street, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065. Telephone (03) 41 6318.

Dirt Cheap

Dirt Cheap, the film featured in the August/September *Chain Reaction*, will open in Melbourne soon at the Longford, 59 Toorak Road, South Yarra.

Make sure you see this "extraordinary study of Australian society" (*Sydney Morning Herald*). After Melbourne it goes north for use by Aboriginal communities.

For inquiries about sales contact Marg Clancy, 46 Forsyth Street, Glebe, New South Wales 2037. Telephone (02) 660 2713.

Nylex leaves a bad smell

Chronic pollution from the big Nylex plastics factory in Mentone, south of Melbourne, has raised the ire of local residents. Not only do the wastes smell but some 10,000 kilograms of toxic material are discharged into the air of what is largely a residential area. These discharges are permitted under Victoria's weak pollution licensing system which is administered by the Environment (Non) Protection Authority, a branch of the Ministry of Conservation.

What has particularly angered the residents is that two chemicals, vinyl chloride and di-iso-cyanates, are being emitted without licence and contrary to the provisions of the draft EPA Air Quality Policy. The vinyl chloride monomer is widely known as a powerful carcinogen and

its discharge has been banned in North America. The di-iso-cyanates group, is extremely toxic.

So far residents have succeeded in forcing a review of the Nylex licence and have gained strong local support to force the company to install pollution control equipment.

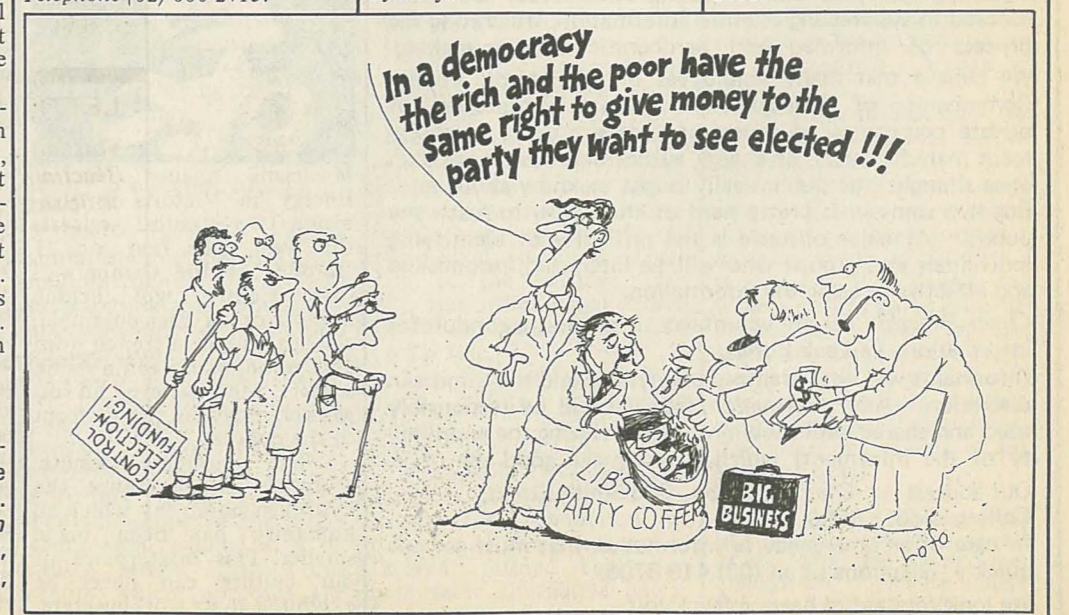
Sexual harassment

The Working Women's Centre in Melbourne is launching a campaign to fight sexual harassment in the workplace. They see a need to change legislative structures so that they provide protection against sexual harassment and to encourage women to take action at work. They have posters available for display in work areas.

Radio Fallout

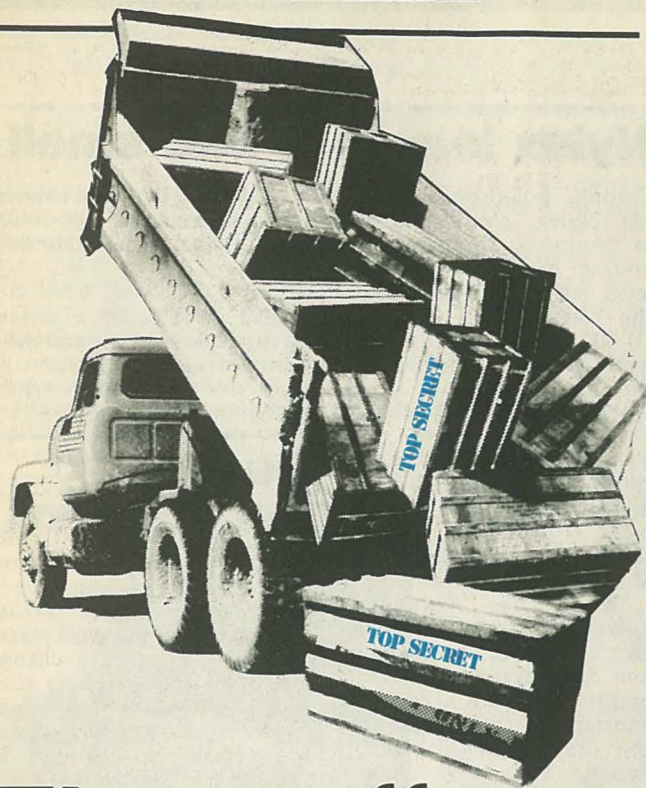
Radio Fallout is now broadcast on 107.5 2SER FM in Sydney, Thursdays at 8.20 pm. It reports the latest on uranium mining and alternative energy, and includes *Sunspot*, interviews and 'what's on' in and around Sydney.

For more information contact the Working Women's Centre, First Floor, 258 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000. Telephone (03) 654 1228. Other groups active on this issue are Working Women's Centre, Top Floor, 31 Gilbert Place, Adelaide 5000. Telephone (08) 212 3722, and Women's Co-ordination Unit, Premier's Department, Fourth Floor, 233 Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000.



Earth News

We greatly need your contributions - concise, and where possible with visual material. Write to the Editors, *Chain Reaction*, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066, Australia.



Tip us off

Given the way things are in government and industry, a great deal of information vital to the interests of the community never gets out. Some of it is simply not noticed by interested people because of limited circulation and some of it is, of course, purposely withheld.

Friends of the Earth's *Chain Reaction* believes that those who anonymously leak relevant information perform a public service of the first rank. In their absence, bureaucratic secretiveness and corporate self-interest too often succeed in suppressing essential information, frustrating the process of informed and democratic decision-making. We believe that many employees of the Atomic Energy Commission, of 'independent' national laboratories, of private companies, of government departments, of equipment manufacturers, of energy authorities, have more than once thought 'the public really ought to know about this'. But it is sometimes pretty hard to know how to reach the public. A major obstacle is the difficulty of identifying individuals and groups who will be interested, responsible and effective in using the information.

Chain Reaction hereby volunteers to serve as a conduit for information — a Leak Bureau.

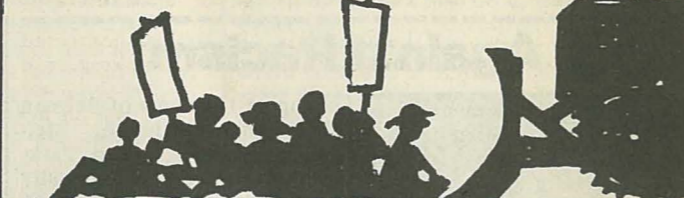
Informants will be guaranteed anonymity and the utmost discretion. Any information received will be responsibly used and shared with other groups (preserving the anonymity of the informant) which might make good use of it.

Our address is: *Chain Reaction*, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, 3066.

In case of an emergency or information that must get out quickly, telephone us on (03) 419 8700.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Locals confront miners



Local residents have forced the delay of sand mining operations at Middle Head near Macksville on the north coast of NSW. In March they confronted a company bulldozer on the beach front and halted mining. The company,

Mineral Deposits Ltd, the sand mining unit of Utah Mining Australia Ltd, maintain they have the necessary leases and development consents but residents are seeking an environmental impact study.

Nuclear-free Pacific

A national Nuclear-Free Pacific Forum will be held in Sydney on 26-28 September as a follow-up to the significant and productive Nuclear-Free Pacific Conference held in Hawaii last May.

The forum is to be attended by Pacific Islanders from the recently independent Vanuatu, Hawaii, Palau in Micronesia and French Polynesia. A tour of four Pacific people is planned for the

weeks following the forum so if you've missed the forum catch the public meetings and other activities planned in most capital cities.

For more information contact Nuclear-Free Pacific Forum, PO Box A243, Sydney South, New South Wales 2000. Telephone (02) 26 1701, or Melbourne (03) 41 6898, Brisbane (07) 221 0188, Adelaide (08) 233 5155, Canberra (062) 47 3046.

MANE goes classical



Musicians Against Nuclear Energy in Victoria is organising two classical concerts this year. The first, on 21 October at the Camberwell Civic Centre, will include items from a bass ensemble, classical guitar, a french horn duo, oboe, piano and a string sextet. Alex Grieve, an organiser, explains the concept of the concert;

"The supreme kinetic sculpture is of course the hydrogen bomb, by which all humanity has been made smaller. This 'masterpiece' of our culture can never be exhibited in its working state,

if for no other reason than that the audience/participants would be in no condition to appreciate it. Musicians and artists conceive their works as vehicles of energy and social comment. In choosing the program we are fully aware of the part played by musicians in protesting, through music, against uranium mining."

The second concert, on 27 November at the Kew Civic Centre, will use the skills of orchestral musicians, (many from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), singers and narrators. Part of the presentation will take the form of a satirical opera, bound together by narrative, song and music. It will provide informative entertainment concerning the nuclear industry; exposing the deceit and double talk of the Government and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and will attempt to cover Aboriginal land rights issues.

Land Council stops talks

The recent decision of Land Councils to call off mining negotiations of Aboriginal lands until a settlement of the Noonkanbah dispute is reached, has dealt its first blow to mining interests.

An important meeting concerning negotiations between the Oombulgurri Aboriginal community and CRA which was due to be held on 10 September was called off.

Mr Darryl Kickett, Chairperson of the Kimberley Land Council, confirmed that the meeting with CRA had been cancelled. "This will be the first opportunity to demonstrate that we meant business when all the Land Councils decided last Wednesday (3 September) to break off negotiations with mining companies until a settlement of the Noonkanbah dispute is reached."

Mr Kickett had contacted an Oombulgurri spokesperson who confirmed that the Land Councils' decision was in accord with wishes of the community.

The meeting was to take place involving representatives from the Oombulgurri community, the Kimberley Land Council and CRA. It was intended to negotiate an extension of time for CRA's permit to seek diamonds on the reserve.

Rainforest Action Centre

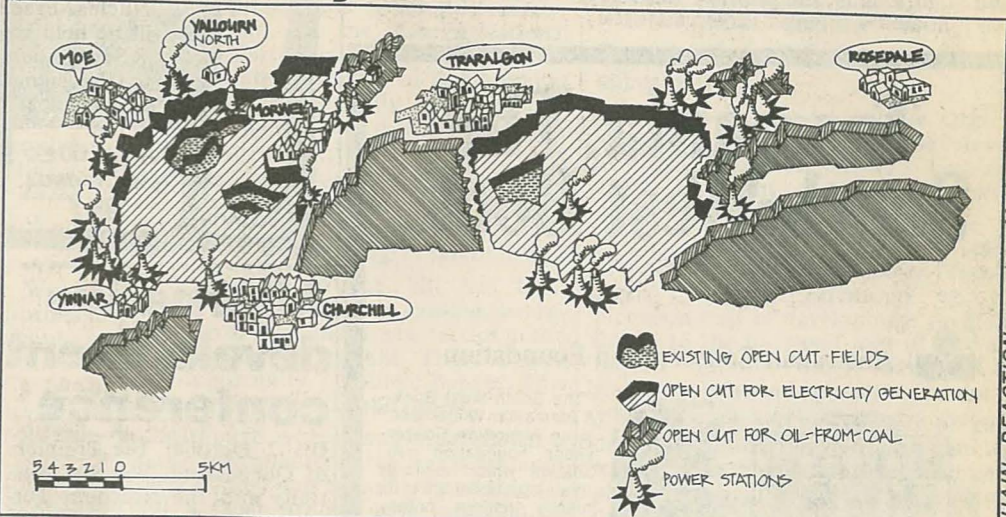


The Rainforest Action Centre has just been established in

Sydney to oppose the destructive logging policies of the New South Wales Forestry Commission. A high priority of the Centre will be researching alternative employment projects for the industry.

For more information contact the Rainforest Action Centre, at Total Environment Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney 2000. Telephone (02) 27 4714 or (02) 233 5388.

Latrobe Valley decimated



Latrobe Valley (Victoria), from Moe to Rosedale — twenty one new power stations proposed.

Plans are now public which show that the Victorian State Electricity Commission and foreign energy companies intend destroying the entire Latrobe Valley. If their plans proceed the Valley will become the most intensive energy production area in the world.

The Latrobe Valley contains an estimated 35,000 million tonnes of economically recoverable brown coal and a possible further 70,000 million tonnes that might be recoverable in the future. At present there are four power stations with a total capacity of 3,000 megawatts of power. Loy Yang will add a further 4,000 megawatts. The full scope of the SEC's plans were revealed in a recently leaked Task Force report which proposes the construction of a further

twenty-one stations, each with a capacity of 2,600 megawatts, by the year 2050.

Such a monumental construction programme would leave the Valley in ruins, pitted by two enormous open cut mines over fifteen kilometres across and up to 200 metres deep. Yallourn has already been evacuated and demolished to allow expansion of the existing open cut, and other larger towns could be condemned to a similar fate.

The SEC will put their plans before a (rubber stamp?) Parliamentary Enquiry in early 1981.

Meanwhile German and Japanese companies are preparing for production of refinable oil from coal and of "solvent refined coal", an exportable alternative power source for industry. The ex-

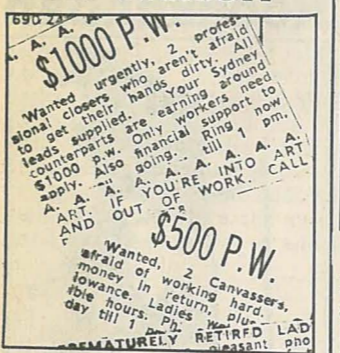
port of much of the production will be demanded by the companies before investing in the massively expensive plants.

An announcement on the oil from coal plants is due later this year.

To meet this threat a wide range of Victorian environment groups have formed a working group to produce a report on the Valley and wage a campaign to stop the destruction. The working group see the plans as a mindless attempt to exploit the available resources quickly, selling energy at ridiculously low prices for export in any form possible.

Action: Join the working group and find out more from Friends of the Earth, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, Victoria 3066. Telephone (03) 419 8700.

Job Watch



Ever seen those ads in the Situations Vacant columns that offer: "\$200+ pw for good looking guys and gals, must be hardworking and enjoy art and travel, no door-to-door, car essential". Suspicious, to say the least... the Unemployed Workers Union estimate that ads like these make up about 20% of the job market!

Job Watch is a group set up to investigate phony job offers and other dubious employment practises.

Action: If you've had some first hand experience in being ripped off by an employer and are prepared to document it or if you'd like to work on this campaign then contact Job Watch. Telephone (03) 481 1155.


Gay conference

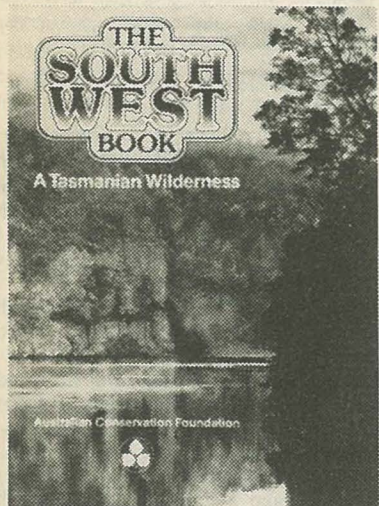
The Sixth National Conference of Lesbians and Homosexual Men happened on the last weekend in August. It took place in sunny, windy Sydney at Sydney University. Over five hundred people attended. At the National Conference of Lesbians and Gay Men held recently in Calgary, Canada, only seventy-five people attended. Indeed the large number of gays attending the conference bore out the theme of 'Gays Taking the Offensive'.

Overwhelmingly the conference supported Aboriginal land rights and the thirty-five hour working week

demand, as well as concerning itself with sexism, discrimination in employment and other diverse issues important to gays. There was evidence of rising antagonism towards businesses taking over and de-politicising gay events — such as the Mardi Gras in Sydney, to commemorate the birth of the modern gay movement. And while support was strong for *Gay Community News*, a Melbourne-based monthly produced by gays, there was vigorous criticism of the very sexist *Sydney Star*.

Tasmania. The South-West Book.

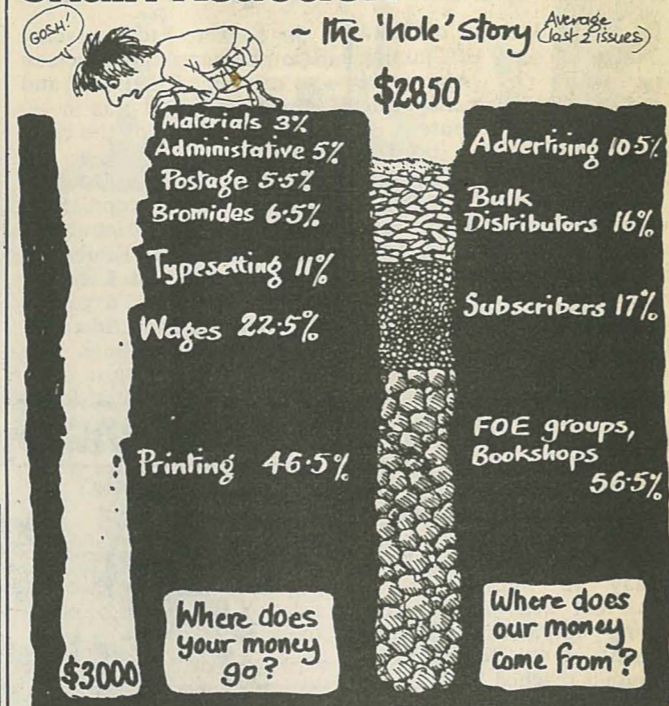
 Australian Conservation Foundation



"The South-West Book—A Tasmanian Wilderness" is an Australian Conservation Foundation publication which explores this magnificent area: its history, geology, botany and zoology, its present uses and the plans that may change it forever. Sales of the book help support the ACF's work in Tasmania. Of 300 pages, 210 mm x 280 mm, enhanced by approximately 400 photographs, maps, drawings, diagrams, 23 colour plates and a colour map of the South-West, it is the first major source book on the area. "The South-West Book" is available from bookstores or direct from the ACF. Recommended retail prices: \$12.70 paperback, \$17.99 hardbound.

MAIL ORDER TO Australian Conservation Foundation
672B Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122.
Please send me copy/copies of The South-West Book.
Hardbound \$17.99 () Paperback \$12.70 () Postage included.
Cheque/Money Order for \$..... is enclosed, payable to "A.C.F."
Name.....
Address.....
Postcode.....

Chain Reaction



Alternative development conference

On 2 October the Premiers of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and tourist interests will meet in Cairns for a conference on Northern Development. The main topics for discussion are tourism, trade and resources.

Aborigines and conservationists in northern Australia fear this 'development' will mean throwing open the remaining wilderness areas and aboriginal reserves to tourism and mining. So, an alternative conference, Development without Destruction is planned to coincide with the Premiers' meeting. It is hoped that Aborigines and environmentalists can work out a common strategy.

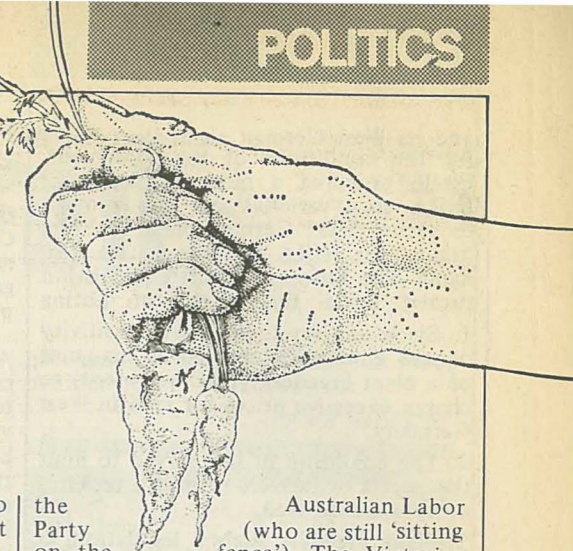
Donations are urgently needed to cover the costs of flying speakers from remote areas to the conference. Information is available from the Aboriginal Mining Information Centre, 5 Candy Street, Northcote, Victoria, 3070 Telephone (03) 419 8700.

Noonkanbah



Demonstrations of support for Noonkanbah Aborigines were held nationally between 11-17 August. In Melbourne hundreds of people participated in two rallies during the week and set up an 'oil rig' (above) and held a vigil at St. Pauls Cathedral in the city centre during the weekend.

Seven seedy stories



By Mark Cole

Exciting new developments have recently occurred in the campaign to stop plant patenting in Australia. Opposition to the bill within Australia has caused the Minister for Primary Industry, Peter Nixon, to again defer its introduction into Federal Parliament. Internationally, prominent plant breeding and farmer organizations have opposed plant patenting for major crops.

National Developments

The Minister for Primary Industry could gain no consensus of opinion on the proposed Australian legislation when State Ministers of Agriculture met in Brisbane during the first week of August. Previous meetings of the Agricultural Council had endorsed the principle of plant patenting. At this meeting Ministers from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland expressed doubts about the scheme being of any benefit to Australian broadacre farming. Ministers from Tasmania and New South Wales found the 'Plant Varieties Act' politically unacceptable at the moment.

Mr Nixon announced that the bill would be tabled in the autumn session of Parliament next year and it would sit

for a period of at least six months to allow for national debate. If after that period the Agricultural Council (comprising state & federal Ministers of Agriculture and Primary Industry) could still not give its wholehearted support to the scheme the bill would either be shelved or dropped.

An analysis of developments over the last six months draws four conclusions:

1. Peter Nixon is not nearly as enthusiastic about the bill as his predecessor, Ian Sinclair. If the Liberal/National Country Party Government is re-elected this year the character of development in 1981 will be highly dependent on who is given the primary industry portfolio.
2. Since the scheme requires approval of all states, state Ministers of Agriculture and their political power bases are important targets for lobbyists.
3. Opposition to the bill has been highly effective so far in causing government to at least adopt new tactics in the presentation of the bill. There is now the opportunity of public debate. This must be exploited to the fullest.
4. Although with this new deferment a battle has been won, the war is far from over. If the bill is to be defeated there is still a need for intensive lobbying of state ministers, farmer organizations and

the Australian Labor Party (who are still 'sitting on the fence'). The Victorian rural conference of the ALP in August passed a motion condemning the principle of plant patenting for food and grass crops but the NSW Conference of the ALP gave the scheme tacit approval with some amendments. The Australian Democrats are opposed to plant patenting.

International Developments
Food and Agriculture Organisation opposition.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has released a policy memorandum (28 February 1980) on plant patenting. It lists a number of concerns:—

1. The negative effects of plant breeding in the private sector (encouraged by plant patenting) eg, the increased cost of development programs linked to the increased cost of seed and related imports which have led to grossly unbalanced agricultural imports'.
2. "In an increasing number of cases developing countries have been required to pay royalties for varieties the germ plasm of which originated within their own borders."
3. "The commercialization and subsequent commercial competitiveness resulting from the system of plant breeding encouraged by plant patenting has led to intensive breeding of new varieties on a limited genetic base, resulting on several occasions in widespread disease epidemics.
4. "(Plant patenting) has in fact contributed to an excessively monopolistic atmosphere in plant breeding in developed countries which has had negative effects on the complex structure of international plant breeding. An important example of such negative effects recently encountered by the FAO and the UN system has been the restriction of the free exchange of some categories of germ plasm"

Investigation by the European Court Commission

The European Court has recently intervened as a matter of 'public interest' in the agreement between the French plant breeding institute (INRA)



Rice plants being examined in the specially prepared Shell rice fields at Kakegawa.

and its West German agent Kurt Eisele. By the conditions of the agreement, Eisele procured a monopoly over all INRA corn varieties and was allowed to secure West German plant breeders 'rights' for INRA varieties in his own name. The European Court Commission turned aside the agreement noting:

1. Eisele's ability to use the exclusivity of sole agreement (ensured by his grant of a plant breeders 'right' or patent) to charge excessive prices for seed in West Germany.

2. The condition of sale served to limit the access of farmers to useful varieties of hybrid corn seed.

3. Plant breeders 'rights' legislation in providing the opportunity for 'rights' holders to determine the condition of sale has led to vertical integration in the seed industry including seed multiplication and final sale to farmers.

Regarding the role of transnationals in the European seed industry following the widespread introduction of plant patenting system in Europe the court commented:

"Profit margins in recent years have enabled the largest of these private breeders to control or take over production of the varieties they exploit. On the world market, this trend is reflected in the recent acquisitions by Sandoz Ciba-Geigy, Shell and other groups of majority holdings in large American breeders and, hence, in their European agents and subsidiaries, a further illustration of the interest which major international groups are showing in the seed industry.

Farmer organisation opposition

The National Farmers Union of Canada is opposed to plant patenting. Recently the Natural Farmers Union of the USA (300,000 members) has come out in opposition (albeit 10 years too late!). The NFU of USA has been dissatisfied in

(a) the rising cost of seed in the years since the Plant Varieties Protection Act was passed in the USA and

(b) with the relative disinterest in disease and pest resistance breeding amongst private breeders.

In its report to Congressional hearings on the USA system the NFUs spokesperson commented:

"The Office of Technology Assessment reports that many of the new varieties certified by major seed companies during the ten years since the passage of the Plant Variety Protection Act produce higher yields but are more vulnerable to pests and disease. . . . Insect resistance has not been a significant component of commercial breeding programmes and none of the new commercial wheats have resistance to Hessian Fly. . . . The Office of Technology Assessment report that the assumption that commercial seed companies could do the necessary plant breeding research while maintaining pest resistance has proven incorrect."

President Carter's Commission on World Hunger

The Commission's report entitled *Overcoming World Hunger: The Challenge Ahead* released in March 1980 refers to the relationship between genetic vulnerability groups and plant patenting.

It states: "according to the National Academy of Science, many of our food crops are 'impressively vulnerable' due to their lack of genetic diversity. This vulnerability has been given a big boost by plant patenting laws on Europe, these laws have created so many legal nightmares that the Common Market is now outlawing many unpatented varieties."

International breeding stations

The International Breeding stations for new improved varieties of corn, wheat and rice have all publicly stated their opposition to plant patenting. The Nobel prize-winning director of CYMMIT (the wheat research station in Mexico), Dr Norm Borlang believes that 'if the patent system becomes widespread, the future of international co-operation in the development of improved varieties would be seriously threatened'. Their particular concern is the restrictions placed on the exchanges of germ plasm and scientific information which follows as a result of plant patenting laws.

International pressure to gag Australian debate

Dr. Erna Bennett of the crop ecology and genetic resources unit of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations was stopped from visiting Australia and Russia this September.

Dr Bennett, an outspoken critic of plant patenting was 'censored' by the Director General of FAO after the West German government threatened to withdraw their finding of FAO of her tour went ahead.

Seeds Action Contacts

Queensland: Action for World Develop-

ment, Ken Butler, (07) 221 9398, Richard Giles, (071) 94 2243.

Western Australia: Brett Glossops, 10 Bath St, Wembley, 6014; Friends of the Earth, (09) 321 5942.

New South Wales: Plant Diversity Protection Committee, (02) 27 4714; Food Justice Centre, (02) 264 8037; Camden Haven Organic Gardening Society, c/- John Skelton, Illaroo Rd, Lake Cathie, 2446.

South Australia: Action for World Development, c/- Leonie Swift, 60 Henley Beach Rd, Mile End, 5031; **Tasmania:** Tasmanian Conservation Trust, (002) 34 3552; Organic Farming Group, c/- Mrs Joan Bell, The Valley, Derby, 7254; Self Reliance Seeds, PO Box 96, Stanley, 7331.

ACT: Citizens Action for Science and Environment, Environment Centre, PO Box 1875, Canberra City, 2601.

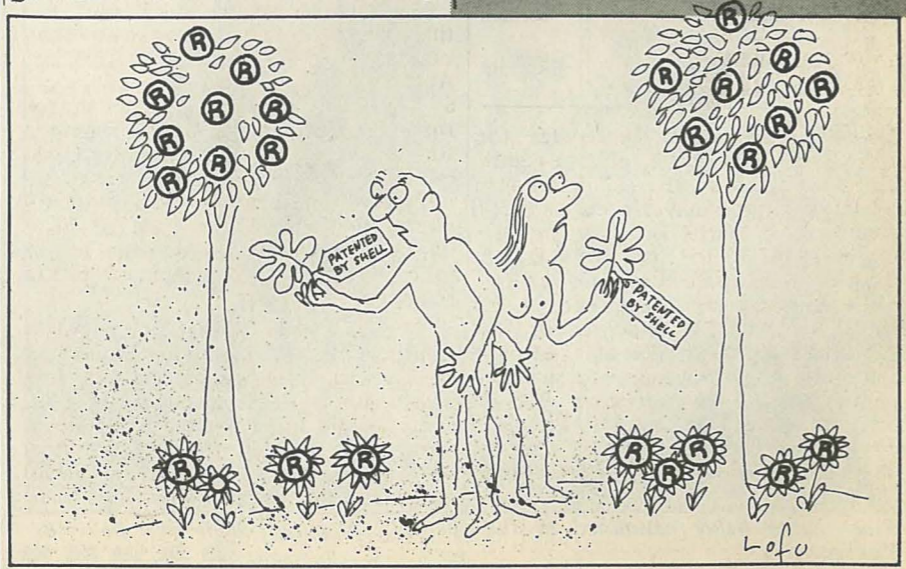
Victoria: Food Justice Centre, (03) 419 8700; Ballarat Seeds Action Group, (053) 35 7444; Upwey Seeds Action Group, c/- Mrs Keane, 6 Chosen Ave, Upwey, 3158.

Now Ian Sinclair, Government Leader, is free of sessions at Central Court in Sydney, he'll be interested to learn of a copy of a letter which came to *Chain Reaction*.

Dated 15 November 1977, to Dr E T Edwards, Secretary, Industry Committee for Plant Breeders Rights, PO Box 573, Chatswood, 2067. It reads: "Thank you for your letter of 3rd November forwarding a cheque for \$250.00 towards the National Country Party of Australia campaign funds. Your donation is very much appreciated and in due course an official receipt will be posted to you. Kind personal regards, Yours sincerely, Ian Sinclair."

No doubt Ian was pleased to receive this just prior to the last election. We wonder what this industry group might give towards helping democracy this year. The patenting issue has come quite a way since late 1977.

(Lofo's comment - page 3).



Budget fine print

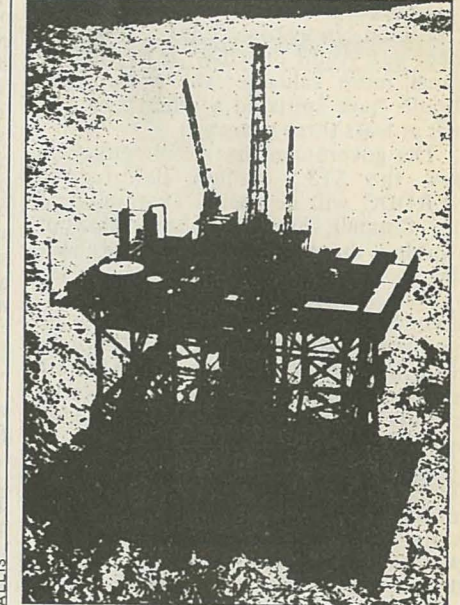
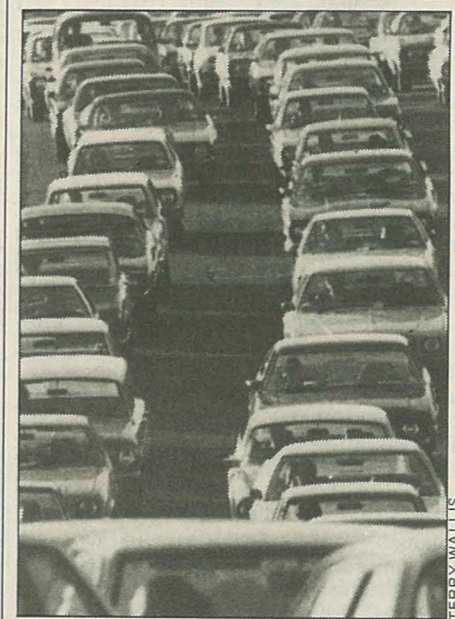
The Press called it a 'no-change', 'status-quo' Federal Budget. But tucked away in this over 1000 page document is evidence of definite policy trends in expenditure areas bearing directly on the quality of Australia's physical and social environment. *Chain Reaction* asked several people involved in environmental affairs to look at changes in Government spending in 1980-1981.

industry is operating 11% below capacity nationally. Home costs are rising rapidly, especially in the capital cities; and there is widespread dislocation of people resulting from structural change in industry.

lic transport. Overall spending on roads has increased about 10% a year.

Andrew Herington

Frank Muller



Transport

Increases in overall expenditure on road and rail transport in this year's Federal Budget fail to keep pace with the expected rate of inflation. The most adverse impact is on urban public transport and country rail services.

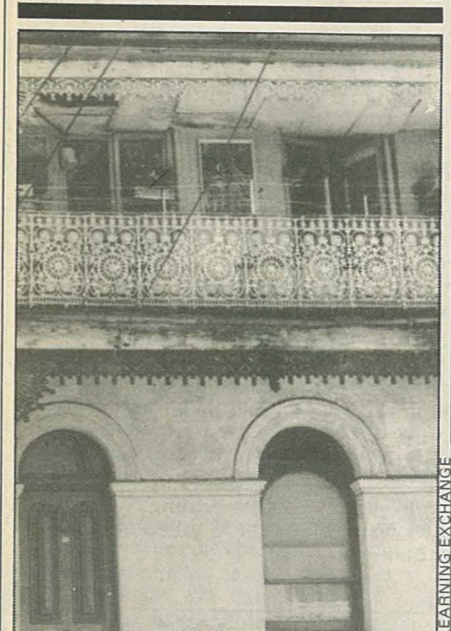
The good news of the Budget was that the co-ordinated pro-roads lobby campaign run by industry groups and Automobile Associations failed to get a significant increase in funding for roads. In fact funding has been pegged for the next 5 years to only maintaining real values. This is a major rebuff to the industry groups and demonstrates that the Government is aware of the strong public reaction that would follow total abandonment of public transport.

The bad news is that urban public transport has not made any ground on the savage cutbacks of the last few years. Since 1976 spending on public transport has dropped 55% in real terms and will be \$45.5 million this year. In contrast, spending on urban roads in the same period has only dropped 30% to \$121.8 million - three times the level of expenditure on pub-

Energy

Everybody living in Australia must by now be aware that taxes levied on the extraction and use of crude oil and petroleum products now constitute a very important part of total Australian Government revenue. This year the levy on crude oil and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) is estimated to yield \$3,157 million, royalties on Bass Strait oil and natural gas production \$61 million, and excise on petrol, distillate and aviation fuel \$924 million. These three sources of revenue combined are expected to provide 12% of total federal government receipts, compared with 10.9% last financial year and only 8.5% the year before that. The coal export duty is expected to yield an additional \$90 million.

Expenditures on energy related activities is of course very much less. The National Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Council (NERDDC) is to receive \$13.5 million to disburse, compared with an allocation of \$9.1 million last financial year. There is \$1 million for the so-called National Energy Conservation Publicity Campaign (the same as last year) and a new item of \$1 million for what is called "a new energy policy information program to explain the government's



Housing

Net payments to the States for housing in 1980-81 are only one-eighth the amount they received six years ago. Housing outlays have been reduced from 3.9% of total Federal budget outlays in 1974-75 to 1.0% in 1980-81.

There has been a dramatic reversal in the allocation of housing funds to the States. In 1974-75, under Labor, the States had available 73% of total payments for use in housing programs and spent 27% in debt servicing. But in 1980-81 under the Coalition, the debt servicing has risen to 73% and the net amount of usable funds has dropped to 27%.

Yet over 1% of Australia's population are homeless; and the home building

policies on, and increase community understanding of, the use and pricing of energy resources." I expect that most readers of *Chain Reaction* will be pretty sceptical about the contribution this particular expenditure of public funds is likely to make to help the Australian community deal with the real energy problems facing this country.

Another new item, \$0.5 million for a "National Industrial Energy Management and Audit Scheme," is potentially much more valuable; the government should have initiated a scheme of this sort at least three years ago.

The government has no direct say on how the \$13.5 million allocated to NERDDC will be spent. That is up to the Council, and the next round of awards is due to be announced by about October. Environmentalists have in the past been critical of the way NERDDC funds have been allocated, but there are now signs that the Council has begun to recognize the importance of research into the environmental and social consequences of energy related activities. What is still missing is recognition of the importance of providing funds for community groups who wish to take initiatives of their own to move towards more efficient, resource conserving patterns of energy use. The interests in these projects that have already set up, notwithstanding the absence of support from public funds, show that demonstrations effects are at least as important as mass media advertising in spreading energy awareness through the community as a whole. And of course community projects have important extra benefits in providing employment, opportunities to learn new skills, and so on.

Funds for the day to day operating costs of the Department of National Development and Energy are \$10.9 million in 1980-81, which in real terms is just slightly above expenditure in 1979-80. As is well known, the Fraser government, since it came to office, has deployed a policy of severe restraint on the numbers employed in the Public Service. The result has been under-spread administrative inefficiency and the neglect of many important activities. In National Development and Energy the consequences of inadequate staffing have been an almost total pre-occupation with day to day "crisis management" and the neglect of policy analysis and planning. This is one reason for the inadequacy of the present government's energy policy, and the situation seems certain to continue.

Government expenditure on energy related activities goes far beyond general administration and support for research, but the other expenditure is more difficult to pin down. Most of it can be classed under the heading of assistance to industry. It includes funding of

\$14.9 million for the Bureau of Mineral Resources (no real increase on last year), part of which is related to non-energy mining, and \$1.1 million for the Joint Coal Board.

Far more important are so-called taxation expenditures, that is the cost, in the form of revenue foregone, of special concessions which reduce the tax payable by companies engaged in certain specified activities. These concessions are commonly regarded as incentives for companies and with individuals to spend their money in particular ways. An important array of taxation concessions is directed towards energy extraction industry, particularly oil exploration and production. In his speech, the Treasurer, Mr John Howard, said: "The total cost to revenue of those incentives in 1979-80 was at least \$50 million and this figure is expected to rise as industry takes increasing advantage of them."

Part of this sum results from the elimination of sales tax on non-oil fired heating and industrial equipment, in order to encourage the substitution of coal, gas and solar energy for oil. This measure was introduced in the 1979 budget and its value was estimated to be about \$16 million by the Myers Committee Report on Technological Change. That leaves a sum of at least \$36 million which went for research and administration. With taxation concessions, the government never sees the money at all, but concessions are just as much a form of government expenditure as direct outlays. The amount of money involved puts the lie to arguments that public funds should not be risked on activities like oil exploration. Large sums of taxpayers money are being spent, but in the form of direct gifts, rather than equity which would give the community a share in the great profits that result when exploration is successful.

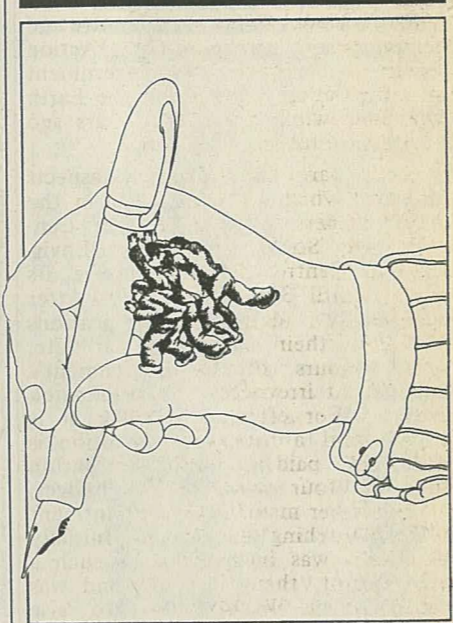
The government also pays out very large sums in the form of subsidies to certain consumers of petroleum products and electricity. The petroleum products freight subsidy scheme, which helps country consumers, is expected to cost \$123 million in 1980-81. The decision on whether people living in the country should be subsidised is of course a political one, and there may be strong reasons for doing so. But a subsidy on the use of petroleum products is a crazy way of doing it. Not only does it encourage use of petroleum products, contrary to government policy, but it also discourages local initiatives, particularly with regard to ethanol production, by artificially lowering the cost of competing fuels bought from the large cities. Certain users of LPG, mostly country dwellers, are also subsidised in their use of this fuel. The

cost of this subsidy is estimated to be \$25 million in 1980-81.

Residents of the Northern Territory receive from the Commonwealth government a very large subsidy on the cost of electricity. This is estimated to be \$48 million in 1980-81, equal to about \$2000 for each electricity customer in the Territory last year mainly to oil exploration companies. As the quotation from Mr Howard indicates, the sum will probably be much greater this financial year; Esso-BHP will be particularly large beneficiaries as they are currently making major new investments in production equipment on the Bass Strait oil fields.

Quite obviously, these "hidden" expenditures of public funds are far greater than the direct expenditure items.

Hugh Saddler



Environment Groups

This year's budgetary allocation to voluntary conservation organisations was again \$35,000. Adjusted for inflation this represents a 10% fall from last year's allocation and a 52% fall since 1975. This figure is the first official government response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Environment's recent call for a significant increase in grants.

A look at the breakdown of this total is also revealing. I can only offer last year's figures, as individual organisations won't know their allocation for some time. A drastic adjustment to last year's allocation is not expected.

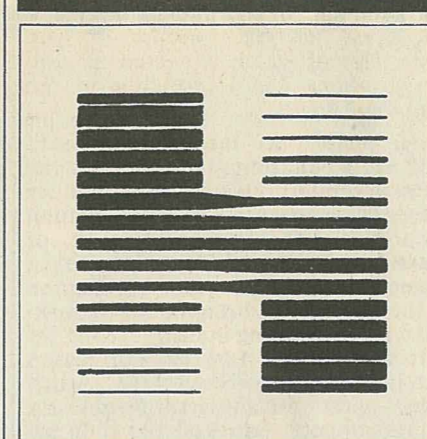
The Australian Conservation Foundation had \$100,000 (or 28.6% of the total). Seven State and Territory Conservation Councils received \$115,415. Seven Capital City Environment Centres shared \$90,885 (for a minimum of 14 employees, plus rents, phones, running expenses, etc.). \$44,200 was divided between seven other organisations of which the industry-supported Keep Australia Beautiful Council received by far the largest share, with \$15,000. Most of the rest of this \$44,200 went to State National Parks Associations (including the South Australian Nature Conservation Society). The other \$17,100 went to five regional councils and environment centres - three in Queensland, one in Tasmania, one in northern New South Wales. It is important to remember that two of Australia's most vigorous and progressive Environment Centres - Sydney's Total Environment Centre and Melbourne's Environment Action Centre - receive no government assistance at all. Friends of the Earth lost their whole grant two years ago for political reasons.

There are administrative aspects however, which do not appear in the budget papers. In 1978-79, the Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre did not receive its money until 30th June, 1979. After increasingly desperate applications they got their money a year late, within hours of the government's returning it irrevocably to consolidated revenue. For effective planning, it is crucial that a three-year allocation is made, and paid in a lump sum within three or four weeks of the budget.

The other major fly in the ointment is the 'matching' requirement. Initially the grant was independent of such a requirement, then a 2:1 demand was placed on us. We now have to raise a dollar for every dollar given us. In a sense this is not relevant, in that we would have to raise the money anyway. However, aside from the totally indefensible principle of placing any such penalty on voluntary community groups (no other voluntary sector carries such a proviso on its grants), there are more insidious aspects. Again, used against my own Centre two years ago. In that year, our grant was reduced from \$16,000 to \$11,450. The excuse was that we would no longer be able to match the higher level (a piece of crystal ball gazing quite unsubstantiated by the facts, incidentally). And, of course, a grant once pruned, will not regrow.

In summary, even a liberal democracy has an obligation to support efforts of autonomous citizens' groups to improve their 'quality of life', however they perceive it. In a just society, the question would not even be asked.

Ian Fraser



Conservation Programs

At first glance, the Budget seems to have given environment and conservation programs a healthy boost, with an increase of 27% in real terms to \$18.9 million. However, the bulk of the increase went to two regions - the uranium mining area of Kakadu in the Northern Territory and the Great Barrier Reef. They received \$11.8 million, or 62.4% of total allocation.

While the increased funds are welcome, areas have been bypassed in the increase and programs have been left to wither due to the effects of inflation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service received \$2.36 million more than in 1979/80, but research projects into whales, endangered species, national parks, feral animals and conservation matters of national concern must all vie for a portion of a meagre \$0.2 million.

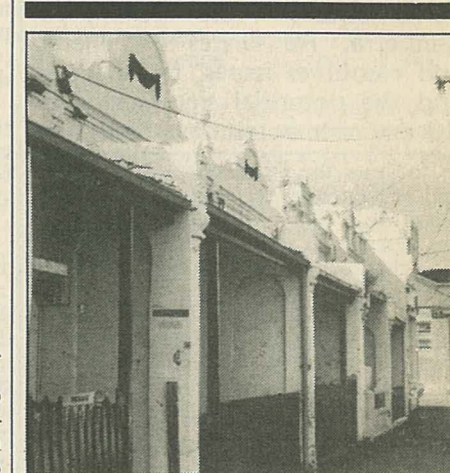
Funds for Marine Quality Assessment and Air Quality Assessment have been maintained at roughly comparable levels to previous years, \$0.11 million and \$0.14 million respectively.

Hazardous chemicals funding has not been fully used in the past two years, having a short-fall of 40% last year.

National Estate funding received a savage cut last year and has risen slightly to be only 72% of 1978-79 levels. The government has given \$0.8 million to Tasmania for Port Arthur restoration but this is a finite scheme and funding for the National Estate will continue to fall further behind because of inflation.

The Australian Heritage Commission, the Government's policy adviser and administrative body responsible for the National Estate, has been allocated \$639,000 in 1980-81 compared with \$519,200 in 1979-80.

The Government has forsaken last year's budget commitment to give \$0.404 million to the States for the purchase of land for natural conservation under the States Grants (Nature Conservation) Act. This year the scheme will only give \$0.020 million - a drop of 95%. This signals the death knell of a most important program for habitat protection.



Urban & Regional

Total outlays on urban and regional development are \$64.8m. This represents a 10% decrease in real terms on last years expenditure. It is less than one fifth (17.5%) in real terms of expenditure in 1974-75. The proportion of total budget outlays accounted for by urban and regional development has declined from 1.15% in 1974-75 to 0.18% in this budget.

The budget's provision for urban and regional development does little more than meet commitments which remain from previous Labor Government programmes. The main areas of expenditure are growth centres (\$23.6m), land commissions/urban land councils (\$17.5m), urban rehabilitation (\$4.9m) and other urban development and amenities (\$9.0m).

The allocation for *growth centres* consists mostly of capitalised interest on past advances to the States for Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst-Orange and Macarthur. The only new advance is \$5.0m for Albury-Wodonga.

The allocation of \$9.6m for *decentralization assistance* is a 16% cut in real terms on last year. This program is not based on overall framework of regional planning and is largely another form of industry assistance.

Frank Muller

Political resources

In the second of *Chain Reaction's* special reports on this year's national election Paul Pedevrexakis reports from the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra. He writes on energy and resources issues, the election and the potential significance of the environmental movement.

In June the Department of Industry and Commerce released *Major Manufacturing and Mining Investment Projects* which provided the first insight into the coalition government's election strategy. The booklet set out in broad terms the expected expenditure of the major corporations in Australia in the foreseeable future. It was hailed by the Government as evidence of the success of its policies — foreign capital was about to flood into Australia to "develop" our resources.

Unfortunately for the government, the release of the booklet was overshadowed by the announcement that the Pagewood car manufacturing plant was to be shut down. However, the government hoped that the bad news would soon be forgotten, and ministers could then get on with the business of hailing their success in attracting the \$29 billion worth of "development". But another cloud quickly dulled the scene. The usually reliable Liberal Party backers, the Australian Industry Development Corporation, pointed out that the figures were rubbery — there was much double counting, with mutually exclusive projects being counted as if they would all go ahead. Criticism of the booklet has continued to focus on this aspect — namely there is not going to be \$29 billion worth of investment, there's only going to be \$26 billion or \$14 billion or whatever.

But the critics all assume one thing, that is that the "development" is in itself a "good thing".

In fact from an environmental point of view much of the "development" will be a disaster. In addition, the overseas capital will considerably reduce Australia's control of its natural resources. The massive export of minerals will improve the balance of payments; the consequent revaluation of the dollar, will bring doom to Australian manufacturing industry.

It is probably for this last reason that the Melbourne-based AIDC, which largely relies on manufacturing industry for its support, criticised the Industry and Commerce booklet.

Among the projects listed in the booklet are, of course, the uranium mines in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The operation at Ranger by Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (EZ Industries, Peko Wallsend, Japanese and German consortium) is described as a \$320 million project which aims to produce 3,000 tonnes of yellowcake per year, with provision for expansion to 6,000 tonnes.

The Pancontinental Mining Ltd/Getty Oil Development project at Jabiluka is described as a \$384 million development, while the Noranda Australia Ltd Koongarra project (smack in the middle of the Kakadu National Park) is listed as \$70 million plus. Altogether the \$775 million to be invested in these projects will — according to the booklet — employ 1,200 people when the projects reach full production — a mere drop in the bucket when compared with Australia's overall unemployment problem.

In this period of massive unemployment the government is using the lump sum investment figures in its campaign, hoping that the people will believe that jobs are being created and the needed economic miracle is being performed. In fact an economic miracle is being performed; it is this: naturally occurring Australian resources are being shipped out of the country, after a concerted effort has been made to destroy the

environment in which they occurred, by foreign corporations which take their profits and run. And, all this is being done with the consent — indeed encouragement — of the Australian government.

Could there be better evidence for conviction as collaborators than this?

But what of the Labor Party as a government? Well it can be safely said that Labor would be better — not much, but better nevertheless. A significant number of people in the ALP do not identify with the foreign corporations. If for no better reason than the poor one of nationalism, the ALP will move to place some restrictions on foreign capital.

Others will oppose them, favouring development at all costs.

A number of parliamentary members of the Labor Party are also solidly opposed to uranium mining for various reasons: because of the waste and environmental pollution problems, because of the connections of the nuclear power industry with the nuclear war industry and because of their belief that a truly socialist society must be based on soft technology.

Again others will oppose them. The best known of these is Mr R J Hawke, the member elect for Wills. Similarly Labor front bencher, Mr Chris Hurford, is known to support uranium mining.

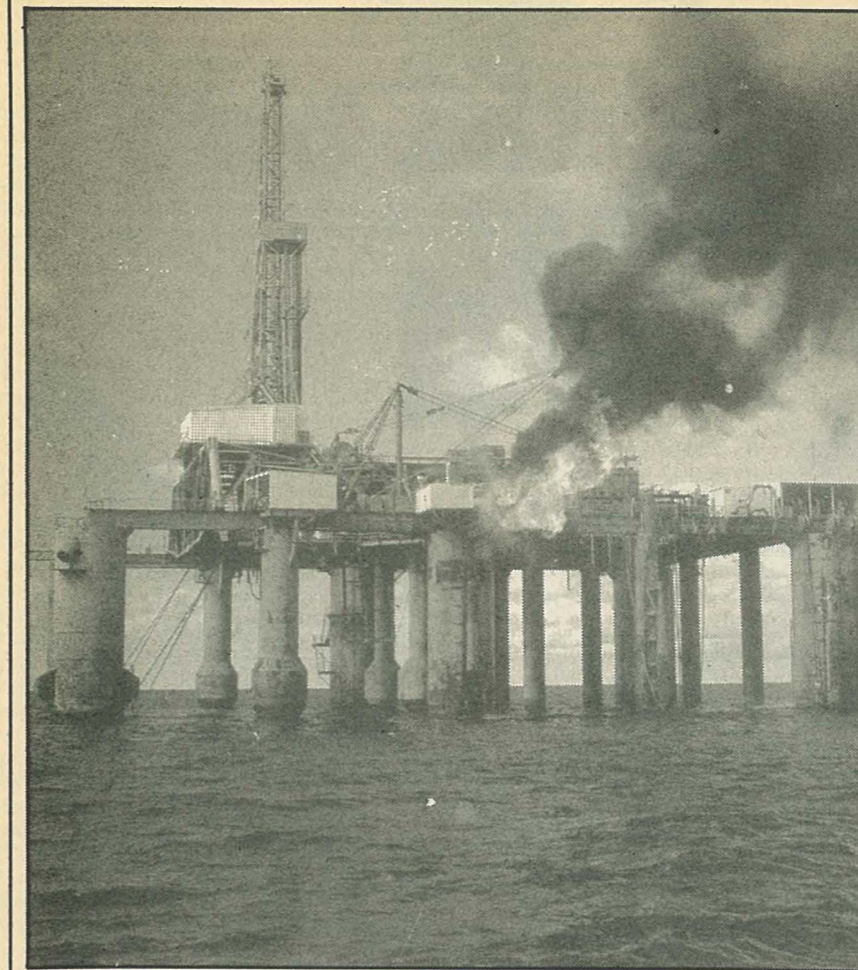
The encouraging aspect, however, is that the Left, led by Mr Tom Uren, has pushed so successfully on the uranium issue that it is highly unlikely that ALP members who favour uranium mining will dare lift their voices on this issue during the campaign.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bill Hayden, and the Shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr Paul Keating, are the two key figures in the ALP on the uranium issue. Hayden has made some strong statements which the environmental movement must hold him to.



FOE

"... it can be safely said that Labor would be better — not much, but better nevertheless."



AGPS

Drilling rig during a production test, North West Shelf.

"I want to assure you that there is only one Labor Party policy in relation to the mining, processing and export of uranium", he told a Sydney uranium rally on 3 December, 1979.

"I want to assure you that there will be no dilution, no equivocation, no hedging in relation to that policy. Our policy, as I am sure most of you know, contains three essential principles of action: a moratorium on the mining and treatment of uranium; repudiation of any contracts undertaken by non-labor Governments in relation to the mining, processing and export of uranium; and prohibition of the mining, processing and export of uranium. We are firmly committed to all of those three key principles of action", he said.

A major success for the Labor Party in this election could be interpreted as an endorsement of that uranium policy.

But much depends on the conservation movement keeping the heat on. The environment, unfortunately, is not being promoted as a major election issue. The environment movement must be held largely to blame for this. No effort as yet has been made to poll candidates to determine their attitudes on environmental issues: We need to know the individual candidates' attitudes to uranium mining, the proliferation of aluminium smelters around the country, lead in petrol, the preservation of wilderness areas.

A survey on these issues, similar to those conducted by the Women's Electoral Lobby would at least raise the environment as an issue again. A ticket rating the candidates according to their stand on the environment could then be prepared and distributed at the booths.

If there is not sufficient time for this then environmentalists must throw off their fear of party politics and simply come out with an endorsement of the Labor Party.

Although Labor's chances have improved lately, the ALP is still the underdog and needs all the help it can get.

If a Labor government were elected a problem would remain: Labor has no strategy to counter the massive reaction of the large corporations against any attempt to control them.

The Liberal/National Parties face no such problems as their members almost totally identify with the aspirations of big business. Consistent with this, big business has been given a freer and freer hand. No environmental inquiries have been held on the massive aluminium plants to be set up around the country: export controls on aluminium have been eased as have requirements on Australian equity participation. The North West Shelf gas project has received export approval and if the Rundle shale oil project reaches full production the fuel oil may well be exported.

There has been little organised public opposition to the massive exports of the mining industry. Occasionally one hears grumbling that our heritage is being sold off, but there is little questioning of the massive consumption of resources.

The one area where the community has been stirred up — and which will be an election issue — is that of petrol pricing.

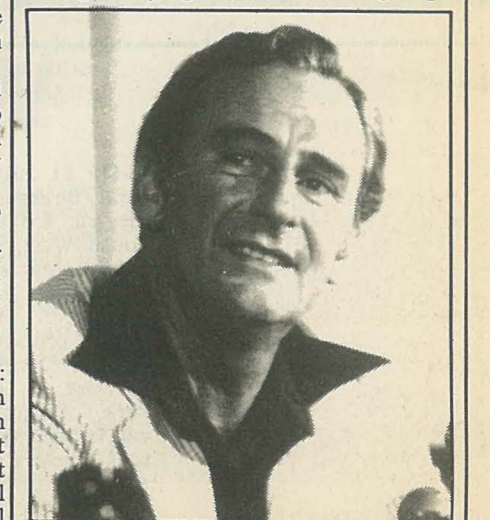
Here the Labor Party has made much ground. But some criticism of this policy has come from some conservationists who believe that a high price will conserve the scarce resource. From an egalitarian point of view, the idea of using price to ration scarce resources must be unacceptable. But the Labor Party has a major task ahead of it to implement a transport policy which would significantly reduce our consumption of liquid fuels.

Under the present government's policies, the relatively poorer sections of our community who live in such places as the outer western suburbs of Sydney, and are forced to travel by car because of lack of alternative transport, are paying massive taxes to the government through the mechanism of the oil levy.

On the other side of the coin, the Labor Party aims to solve some of the problems concerning liquid hydrocarbons in Australia by setting up a Hydrocarbons Corporation which will become directly involved in exploration.

Neither party will consider the question of "development for whose sake?" in the months coming up to the election.

The Labor Party requires only a 4.6 per cent swing to be elected — and its conscience can always be pricked by strong lobbying from concerned groups.



Hayden — no dilution of uranium policy



By Bob Brown

Sunshine Falls Gorge: site of the proposed Gordon-above-Olga dam.

South West Tasmania

What really happened

On 11 July 1980, the Tasmanian Government, besieged on the one side by the Hydro-Electric Commission wanting to flood the South West, and on the other by enormous public pressure to protect it, opted for both a Wild Rivers National Park and a hydro-electric scheme.

The proposed Park will include the Franklin and Davey Rivers catchment and double the size of the present South-West National Park. An unbroken series of National Parks will extend from Cradle Mountain to Precipitous Bluff with a total area of some 9,000 square kilometres (see map page 17).

The hydro-electric scheme, which leaves the Franklin intact, involves a dam across the

Lower Gordon River, above its junction with the Olga River. It is termed the Gordon-above-Olga scheme.

Partial victory: What is saved?

The 11 July decision was a 'thumbs down' for the Hydro-Electric Commission's proposed Gordon-below-Franklin dam, the most destructive development conceivable in the South West wilderness. Despite the Gordon-above-Olga replacement, it is a partial victory for conservationists. In its 50 year history, the HEC has never had a project altered, let alone rejected. Furthermore, the proposed Park will take no less than five other dams from the HEC drawing boards: the Franklin

dam just downstream of the Great Ravine, one across the Davey River in the Davey Gorge, two on the Jane River upper gorges and an upper Franklin dam at the Irenabyss chasm. It also puts paid to a mining exploration application over most of the Franklin-Lower Gordon wilderness by the giant multinational Amoco, and should end plans for extended forestry operations in the Franklin basin. (But, mining and forestry activities still threaten South-West wilderness areas outside the proposed Park.)

In a tiny state, with only 250,000 voters, an estimated 80,000 letters opposing the HEC scheme swamped State Parliament House in the weeks before 11 July. This was the climax of a long public campaign. It strengthened the hand of a few well-informed and determined Tasmanian Government members, and helped sway enough undecided members to win the day for the Franklin and Davey Rivers.

Democracy — the power of the people to determine their individual and communal destinies — is so often being sold out to non-accountable corporations such as the HEC and its multinational supporters. Nevertheless this campaign showed that a well informed public can sometimes still force politicians to reject the unpopular dictates of huge corporate bodies.

After hearing of the new National Park decision, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society's exhausted workers sat back for the first time in months. They knew, however, that the victory had its inevitable political price: Tasmanian Government backing for the Gordon-above-Olga Scheme. At times it had seemed an impossible dream that the Franklin would be saved. Yet it was always an absolute political reality that the Government, if it did say 'no' to flooding the Franklin, would feel compelled to hand this consolation dam to the enormously powerful HEC.

Gordon-above-Olga: What is threatened?

While less extensive than the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme, the Gordon-above-Olga option is a disaster in itself: it would take a bite from the heart of the Lower Gordon region that would virtually split the South-West wilderness in two — despite the proposed Park. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society has opposed this scheme since it first surfaced as a real alternative in 1979.

The plan proposes a single rockfill dam nearly 100 metres high across the Lower Gordon River in the Sunshine Falls Gorge. The site is 20 kilometres upstream of the HEC's preferred Gordon-below-Franklin dam, and so avoids the Lower Franklin and the intermediate section of the Gordon River (see map).

However, the scheme would involve a quarry, site roadworks, construction village and powerlines, and a 47 kilometre access road across the wild Wilmot and Doherty's Ranges. Together, these works would effectively ruin 500 square kilometres of the South-West wilderness.

Over 100 square kilometres would be flooded, including Australia's most abrupt and exciting riverine chasms, the Gordon Splits. Before 1928, when explorers Abel, Sticht and Harrison reached the Splits, it was thought the Gordon must flow underground in such rugged terrain. Sticht was astonished: "In the Splits the flood water mark is easily one hundred feet above summer level of the river.

How wonderful must be the sight of this river in flood . . . words can scarce describe the glory of the place . . . the first Split consists of two basins connected by three chambers and is most striking, being overhung by a cliff. The water is very deep. The second Split is covered with huge rocks and whirlpools . . . in time to come they will be visited by thousands of people annually."

The Gordon-above-Olga dam would also submerge the Abel Gorge (the third Split) further upstream, and the Orange and Albert River basins.

To the north, it would flood the lower Denison River with its two major gorges and the Denison Split, and the lower Maxwell River. This area contains extensive forests of Tasmania's unique Huon pines, some of which are over 2,000 years old. The dam waters would flood back to the Truchanas Huon Pine Reserve, the largest remaining stand of these ancient giants, putting them at risk of fire from the inevitable barbecue and beer can revellers visiting hydro lakes. (Olegas Truchanas, explorer and photographer, made the first canoe trip down the Lower Gordon in 1958. He died on the river in 1971 whilst



Huon pines in the Truchanas Reserve.

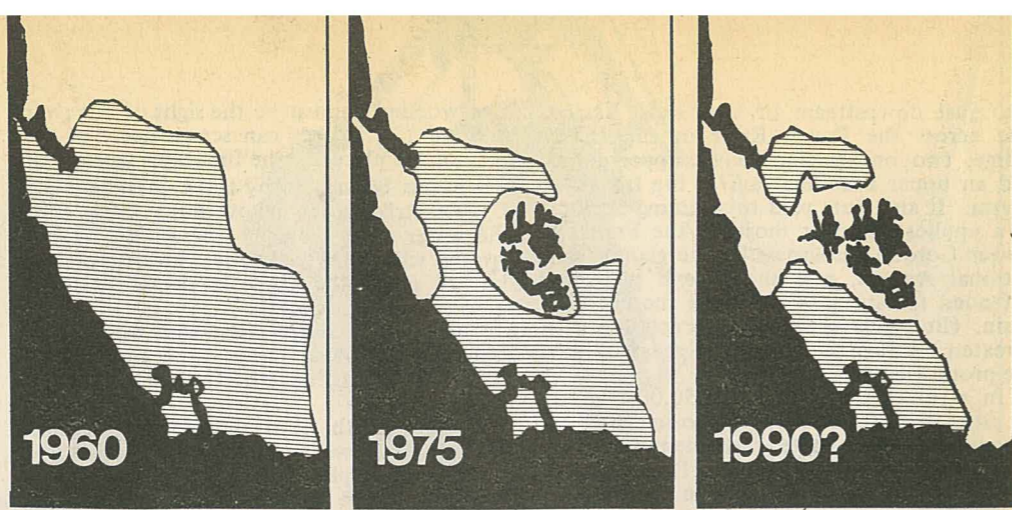
The Gordon-above-Olga works would effectively ruin 500 square kilometres of the South-West wilderness.

attempting a second trip to photograph the river so he could help draw public attention to the threat of further hydro-electric schemes.)

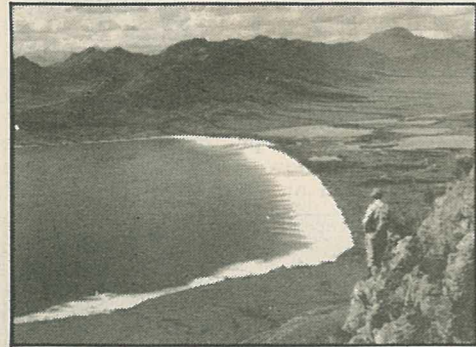
Energy-wasteful

The scheme would be an extravagant disaster environmentally. It is also unnecessary. It would produce a maximum of only 119 megawatts of electricity, providing less than four years of Tasmania's increasing demand, if the HEC's predictions are correct: that is, four years uptake in a power-wasteful society in exchange for an ancient, natural region which would be lost forever.

The Gordon-above-Olga scheme's tiny output may be compared with the 1,800 megawatts from the Torrens Island gas fired station in Adelaide, the 2,100 megawatts of the Vales Point black coal station near Sydney or the 4,000 megawatts of the Loy Yang



The vanishing wilderness



Lake Pedder - destroyed by earlier development, 1972

brown coal station in the Latrobe Valley near Melbourne.

An energy efficiency package proposed by the University of Tasmania's Department of

Environmental Studies would provide 150 megawatts more cheaply by: offering incentives for energy conservation in homes; utilisation of Tasmania's annual 800,000 tonnes of wood wastes; and a campaign to stop wastage in the State's electricity-intensive heavy industries.

The campaign

Meanwhile, no Tasmanian politician has ever set foot in the area to be inundated.

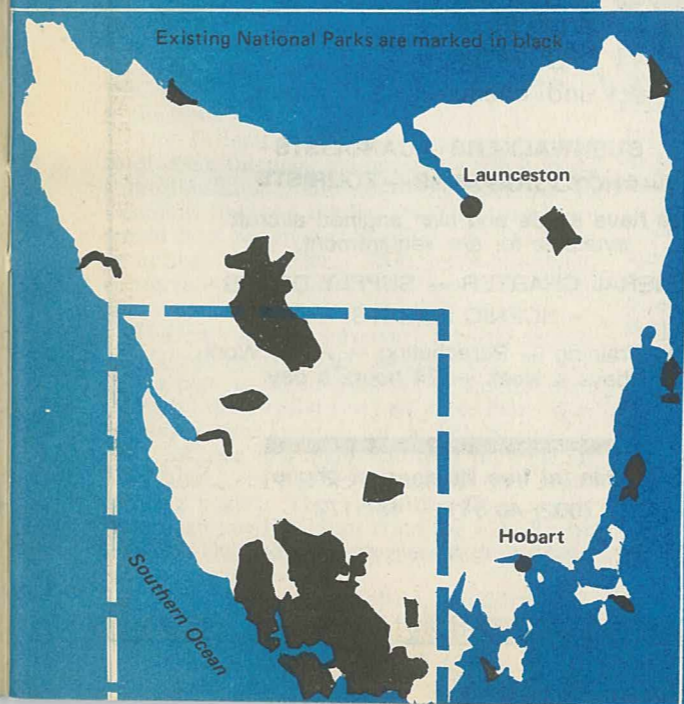
An informed nation would not support the Gordon-above-Olga proposal which threatens to destroy so much for so little. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society strategy now, as with the Franklin campaign, will be to inform Australians, and our politicians, of the damage the scheme would cause to the South-West and to promote the power alternatives.

... continued page 19

Tasmania's South West

- Forestry Concessions
- BOUNDARY OF AREA LISTED ON NATIONAL ESTATE REGISTER
- BOUNDARY OF PROPOSED WILD RIVERS NATIONAL PARK

CHAIN REACTION map by Rolf Helme



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The Federal Government's inaction

While the Federal Government said nothing and did nothing to help save the Franklin, its intervention is vital if the Gordon-above-Olga scheme is to be stopped.

And there are good grounds for intervention. On 8 July 1980, the whole South-West was gazetted as a National Heritage area, giving the Federal Government responsibility to protect the region. Moreover, the present Liberal/National Country Party Government came to power in 1975 with a policy of financial assistance for Tasmania to protect the South-West — a policy Mr Fraser has reiterated this year.

In 1975, the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Billy Snedden, said his federal colleagues shared his view "... that it is important that early action be taken to preserve this area". He added that "... the Australian people will be asking [Tasmanians] to forego revenue that might otherwise flow from unchecked development of the area in order to preserve for the nation an area considered of immense national significance".

More importantly, he said that federal assistance to support enlargement of the South-West National Park should take two forms: firstly, "... direct aid in preparing management plans and implementation of them, and the provision of technical facilities and appropriate scientific personnel to assist in the maintenance program"; and secondly, "... a measure of compensation for development opportunities foregone in respect of electricity generation, mining and forests".

The Coalition Federal Government must be held to the promises of its 1975 policy, making possible a South West free of the Gordon-above-Olga scheme. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation recently recommended that an inquiry be conducted into the future of South West Tasmania. Their main reasons included:

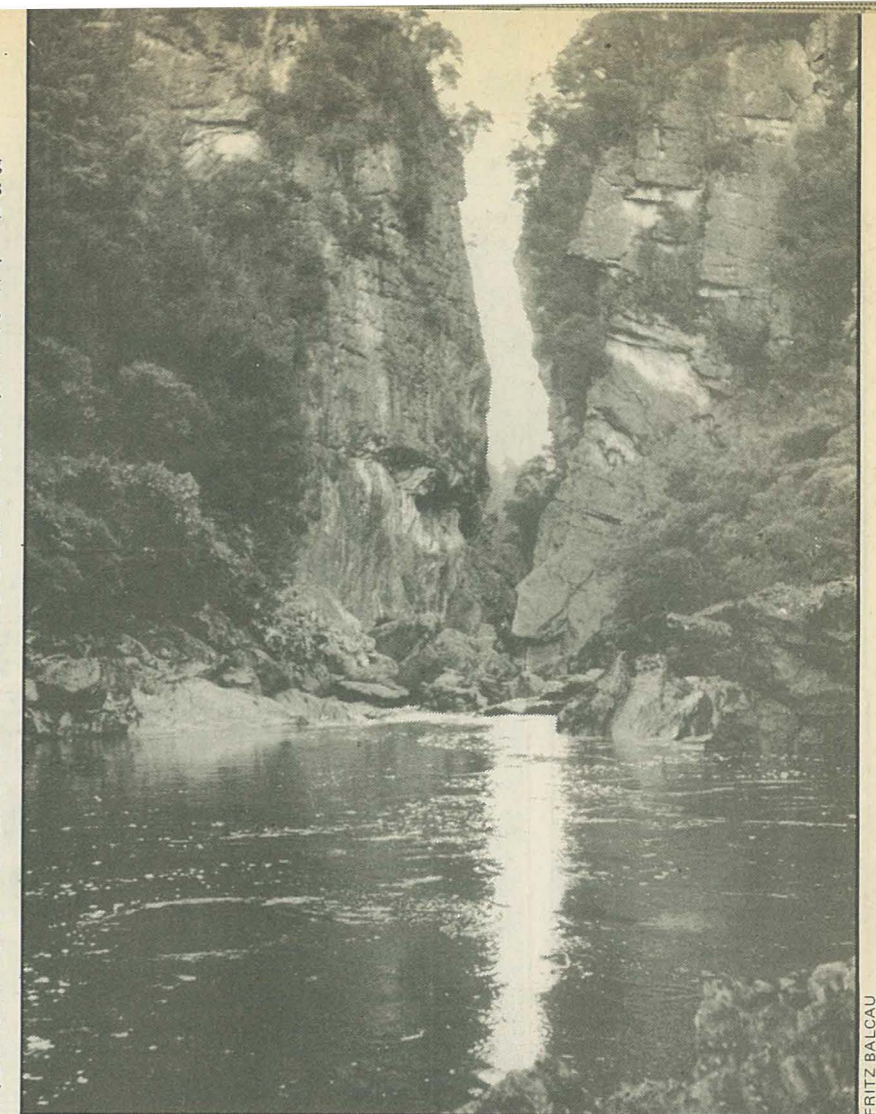
- No extensive open inquiry has been undertaken into the alternatives.
- South West Tasmania is an area of national significance and warrants Federal Government involvement.

Such an independent inquiry is urgently needed (hopefully with the full co-operation of the Tasmanian Government) before the HEC get underway with further road building in the South West.

The Federal Government set a precedent in offering financial aid in 1973 when it made a multi-million dollar offer of assistance to Tasmania to save Lake Pedder. This time there would be a far greater likelihood of Tasmania accepting an offer. The pride-blinkered, conservative old guard of Tasmania's Parliamentary Labor has retired.

The crux of the conservation battle against the Gordon-above-Olga scheme will be the HEC's plan to bulldoze a 47 kilometre road through the wilderness to the dam site, beginning this Summer or in the Spring of 1981. There is a major onus on the Federal Government to intervene before that road-building begins. The Tasmanian Government has moved one HEC foot from the Wild Rivers Region. The Federal Government should help remove the other.

Meanwhile, woodchippers, woodpulpers, miners and, inevitably, the HEC (on the King,



The First Split, Gordon River

FRITZ BALCAU

The Federal Government's
intervention is vital if the Gordon-
above-Olga scheme is to be
be stopped.

Huon and Upper Gordon Rivers), are moving in to exploit other unprotected tracts of the South-West wilderness.

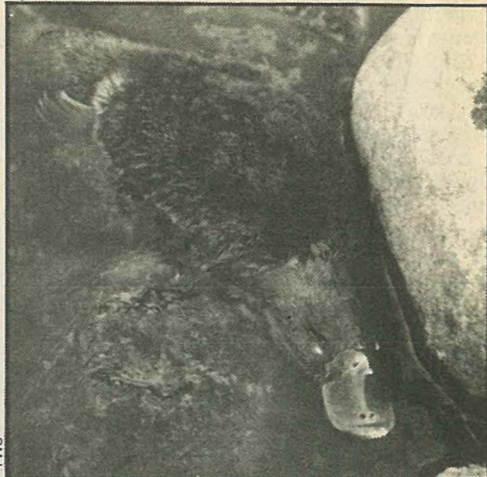
Tasmania's wild and scenic areas are a priceless natural asset of international importance. Besides ourselves, they belong to countless future generations and to the wealth of our fellow creatures which inhabit them. It is time the long term value of the wilderness was realised and put before the conventional, short term greed for electricity, tinsel and paper bags.

The Campaign

The strategy to meet the threat of the Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme was two-pronged: to inform the public and politicians about the extraordinary natural value of the



6 June 1980, Hobart: Save the Franklin rally. The Gordon-above-Olga scheme would flood the habitat of platypuses and other native species



NPWS/TAS

THE MERCURY
CABINET TO BACK THERMAL POWER
TASMANIA'S NEWSPAPER

Tuesday 8 June
The Hobart Mercury

THE MERCURY
CABINET GIVES HYDRO GO AHEAD
TASMANIA'S NEWSPAPER

Wednesday 9 July

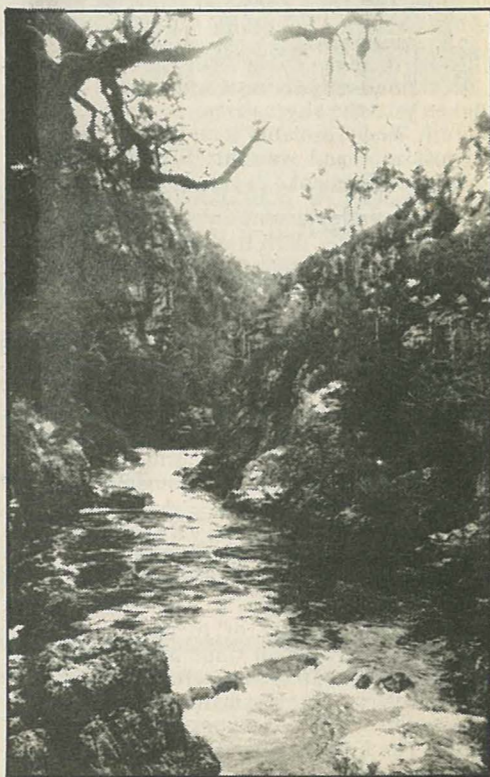
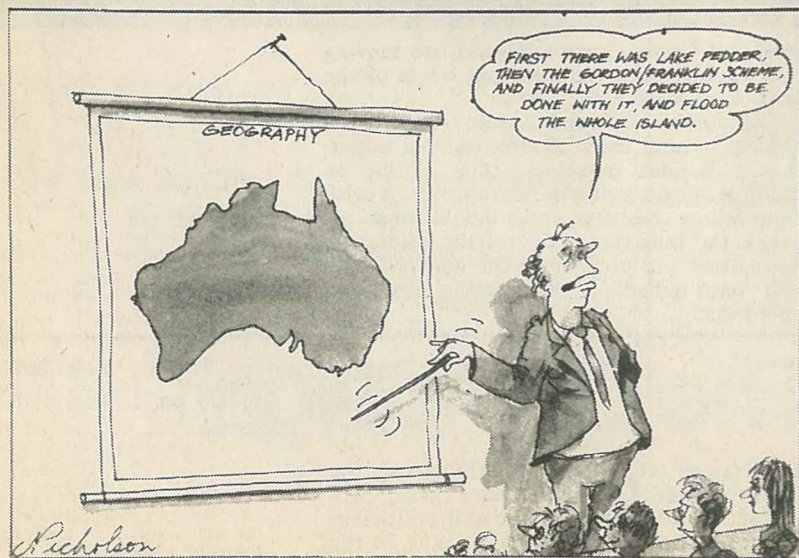
THE MERCURY
STATE BODIES AT ODDS ON SW
TASMANIA'S NEWSPAPER

Friday 11 July

THE MERCURY
FRANKLIN SAVED IN POWER DECISION
TASMANIA'S NEWSPAPER

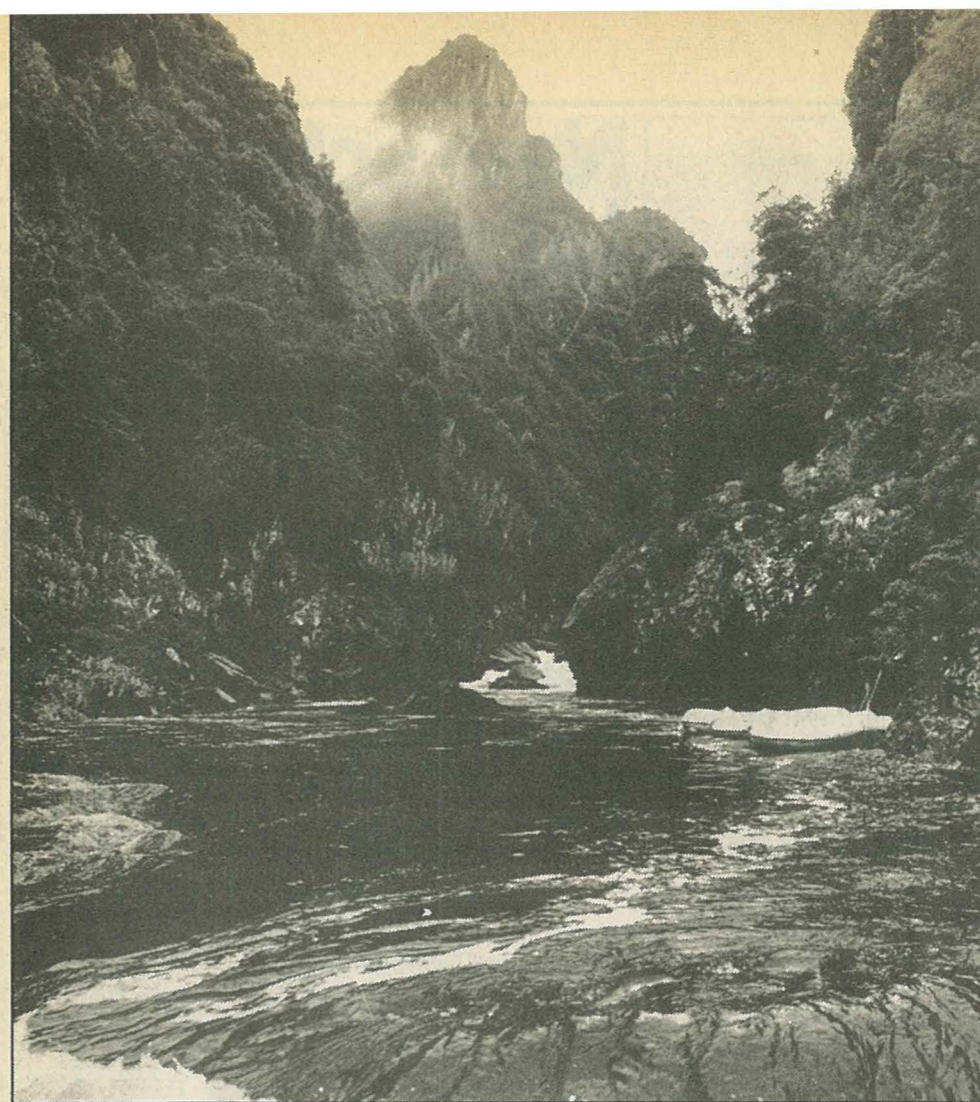
Saturday 12 July

The week the Franklin was saved the Tasmanian Parliament received 33,000 letters.



PETER DOMBROVSKIS

The Franklin River: saved



In the Great Ravine, Franklin River

Resources available
(Contact your local TWS office see page 23.)

16mm films:
The Last Wild River, 28 min.
A raft trip down the Franklin.
South West Tasmania: A Wilderness in Question, 43 min.
Explores the issues of hydro



SMS

region (until 1977-78, most people had never heard of the Franklin River) and to offer good alternatives, in particular an energy efficiency plan, to the hydroelectric proposal. However, history indicated there was no hope of stopping the HEC's scheme. Not a single politician, in either house of Parliament, had ever voted against a Hydro-Electric Commission.

Yet the strategy worked. Films, photographs, newspaper articles and public meetings gave Tasmanians a counter-argument to the HEC's proposals. Whilst the Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme was replaceable, the unique wilderness was not.

On 6 June 1980, Tasmania's response to the campaign culminated in a rally and protest walk in Hobart by some 10,000 people (the equivalent to a turn out of 200,000 in Sydney or Melbourne).

Yet just a few days later, the arch-conservative Liberal Party voted unanimously to flood the Franklin. With the Labor Government's cabinet and caucus meetings due from 8 to 11 July to determine government policy, the campaign to save the wild rivers reached a new climax. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society now had twenty full-time volunteers working around the country - some for upwards of 100 hours a week. Hundreds of others were giving all their spare time, and the Society's membership of 2,000 was kept informed of the urgency of the situation. Direct lobbying of the press and politicians was intensified to meet the challenge from the Hydro-Employees Action Team which formed

in alarm at the drift of political support away from the HEC's favoured Franklin-Lower Gordon proposal.

Television and full-page press advertisements, and news coverage of the 'crisis' dominated Tasmania's thinking. The unions and multinationals alike came to the support of the HEC. The final week was chaotic.

The Premier, Doug Lowe, having been 'unavailable' for at least a dozen major meetings organized by the Wilderness Society, including the rally of 10,000 spoke reassuringly on Monday 7 July to a rally of 250 HEC staff members outside the Cabinet offices. With the HEC Commissioner, Russell Ashton, giving frequent 'advice' to Cabinet, a precedent was set when a conservation representative was allowed ten minutes to state our final case directly to Cabinet. But Cabinet could not decide whether to adopt the HEC's favoured \$1.4 billion integrated Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme. After marathon sittings on the Tuesday and Wednesday, it passed its dilemma on to Caucus (all 22 Labor members of Parliament).

Meanwhile, the avalanche of mail opposing the scheme increased. Some 50,000 letters had arrived at Parliament House in the preceding weeks and the rate now approached 10,000 per day. Torn by the conflicting pressures during the week, Doug Lowe is said to have changed his support from a coal-fired thermal power station plus hydro scheme, to the HEC's Franklin-Lower Gordon plan, and finally to a combination strategy of energy

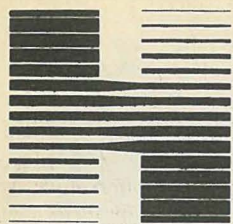
electric development and forestry in Australia's last temperate wilderness.

The Franklin - Wild River, 43 min. A raft trip down the Franklin with Dr Bob Brown, of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, showing the magnificence we lose when rivers are dammed.

The Spirit of Olegas, 50 min. ABC A Big Country series. Why Wilderness?, 15 min. excellent film produced by Seymour High School. Time for Reflection, short film on the Lower Gordon.

35mm films:
Franklin River Journey, Tasmanian Film Corporation. Shows the fantastic scenery of the Franklin area. May be available in 16mm soon.

Audio Visuals
The Franklin River, 1978, 100 slides or 50 slides with cassette outlines the jobs, costs, energy arguments. Jobs and Energy in Tasmania, an audio visual on energy issues in Tasmania produced by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, 20 mins. The Splits (provisional title) an audio visual on the magnificent Gordon Splits area - to be flooded if the Gordon-above-Olga dam proposal goes ahead - is being produced. Available soon.



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1981—N.S.W. WILDERNESS CALENDAR

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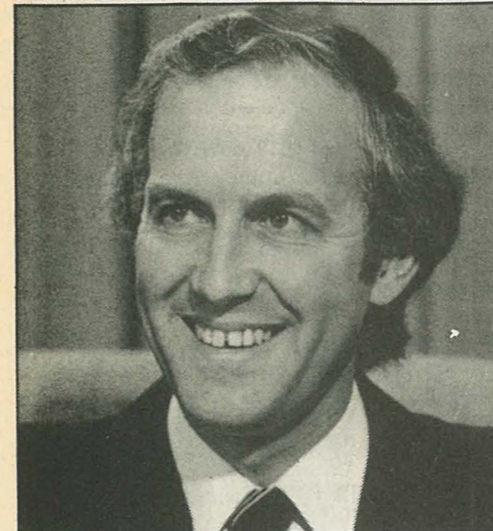
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conservation plus the Gordon-above-Olga scheme.

In the end, it was the determination and educated argument of as few as six younger members of the Caucus, together with some confusing and contradictory arguments from Russell Ashton, which won the day for the Franklin. Even so, it is said that at 11 am on Friday 11 July, the vote would have been to flood the river. The 3 pm final Government choice was a package: to create the Wild Rivers National Park, to embark on an energy conservation strategy while using coal to replace oil burned in industry, and in favour of the smaller Gordon-above-Olga hydro-electric option.

Without the conservation groups' long campaign, the Franklin-Gordon scheme would have proceeded in 1979, and the road to the Gordon-below-Franklin damsite would be



Doug Lowe, Premier of Tasmania

complete with damworks underway and a works village established near the Franklin damsite on the Middle Franklin. The whole northern section of the South-West wilderness would be in ruins.

Now a large central part of the region will become a National Park.

Yet legislation for the government's package must get the approval of the Legislative Council — a 19 member Upper House with a history of extraordinary conservatism and support for the Hydro-Electric Commission. This Council is under great pressure to reverse the government's rejection of the Franklin-Gordon combined scheme. Senior HEC staff members are lobbying individual members of the Council. An astonishing coalition of pro-HEC stalwarts — from former premiers Eric Reece (Labor) and Angus Bethune (Liberal), to Lake Pedder-flooding former HEC Commissioner Sir Alan Knight, and present senior Liberal spokesperson for the HEC Robert Mather — has formed the Association of Consumers of Electricity (ACE) to fight the government's legislation.

However, even the HEC's opinion polls show a great majority of Tasmanian's oppose the damming of the Franklin. The Legislative Council will be under strong public pressure to endorse the Government's proposals and the legislation ought to be through Parliament before the end of this year.

Dr. Bob Brown is Director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.

Over to you...

There has been a lot of talk in the press that the South-West Tasmania wilderness has been "saved". As is obvious from the accompanying article, this is not true.

Several points should be borne in mind about the Tasmanian Government's July announcements:

- These are only State Government policy decisions. They must next be passed by both Houses of Parliament. The very conservative Tasmanian Legislative Council may reject the legislation. There is strong HEC and industry pressure for a reversal, and the Legislative Council has in the past always listened sympathetically to the HEC.
- There has been no Environment Impact Statement on the proposed Gordon-above-Olga dam. The Government may even proceed without one.
- The Forestry Commission has an interest in several areas of the new National Park and may vigorously oppose the Park proposal.
- Several mining and mineral exploration permits inside the South-West are current and conservationists cannot object to such permits through the Courts.
- The Tasmanian Government has, as yet, made no move to ask the Federal Government to stand by its 1975 policy and more recent statements, to provide funding for alternatives to the scheme.

What you can do

1. FIND OUT ABOUT THE ISSUES from your local Tasmanian Wilderness Society office, lend a hand if you have the time.
2. TALK ABOUT THE ISSUES with your friends. Borrow a film, arrange a speaker.
3. WRITE LETTERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER and to your Federal MP showing your concern and interest in the South West and ask for a full inquiry. Note especially that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation has recently recommended that there be an inquiry into the future of South West Tasmania.
 1. No extensive open inquiry into the alternatives has been undertaken
 2. South West Tasmania is an area of national significance and warrants Federal involvement.

NB: The week the Franklin was saved, the Tasmanian Parliament received 33,000 letters! You CAN influence a decision.
4. WRITE TO THE NEWSPAPERS.
5. JOIN THE TASMANIAN WILDERNESS SOCIETY and/or GIVE MONEY. TWS is not funded at all by any Government; it relies on donations and sale of material. Donations of \$2 or more to the Australian Conservation Foundation are tax-deductible. Make cheques payable to ACF and send to 672B Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn 3122 with a note attached saying that you prefer the donation to be used to support TWS.

Information

Call your local TWS office for up-to-date information on the campaign and what you can do. Literature and T-shirts, car stickers, badges are available for sale. Speakers can be arranged.

Tasmanian Wilderness Society directory

Tasmania:
129 Bathurst Street,
Hobart.
Telephone (002) 34 3970
(002) 34 5566

c/- Environment Centre,
103 Wellington Street,
Launceston. (003) 31 8406

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Western Australia:
Tom Hogarth,
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or PO Box 31,
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MR THOMSON

Who is David Thomson?

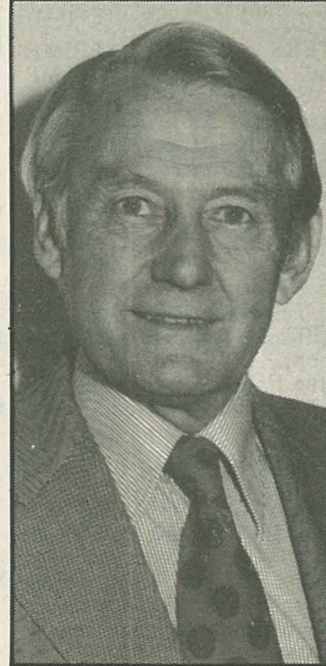
Not the highest profile Member of Parliament that's for sure.

Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, appointed David Thomson as Federal Minister for Science and the Environment on 7 December 1979. Thomson is a National Country Party member of the House of Representatives for Leichhardt (North Queensland) and has been in Parliament since 1975. He is not a member of the Cabinet.

Some observers have not been highly impressed by Thomson's Ministerial performance. An *Age* executive wrote of him: "It was almost unbelievable the way he managed to foul up a simple piece of legislation such as the Whaling Act. His responsibility for a politically sensitive issue such as the Barrier Reef is a great worry. He makes even Jim Webster look good." Webster, his predecessor, was sent to New Zealand as Australia's High Commissioner, after a Ministerial performance not to the satisfaction of the Government.

An education which included time at Scotch College in Melbourne and at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, was followed by thirty years in the Army and a period running a motel near Cairns, Queensland.

He is the eleventh Minister for the Environment since the portfolio was created in 1972. It is a portfolio that has seen an extraordinary turn-over of Ministers, but generally ranks well towards the bottom of the list.



David Thomson

In this exclusive *Chain Reaction* interview Earl Moorhouse speaks with the Federal Minister for Science and the Environment, David Thomson. They discuss the achievements of Thomson's brief period as Minister, various environmental problems facing Australia, international issues and the role of non-governmental environment organisations. Specifically the Minister comments on South West Tasmania's wilderness, the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island and uranium mining.

Though our request for the interview had been before the Minister for months, Mr Thomson finally only made 25 minutes available for the discussion at Parliament House. It's hardly as if he is the media's most sought after public figure.

David Thomson is a man of little power within the Liberal and National Country Parties Government — and perhaps that's why he equivocates on almost every question. One could be excused for sometimes getting the impression his perception of issues is somewhat narrow and/or he does not know what he is talking about. But that's fine.

Or is it?

You have been Minister for Science and the Environment since December, 1979 — that's just over 9 months. What do you see as your major achievements during that period?

I suppose the major legislative achievement was the Whale Protection Bill, and there's been a lot of activity on the Barrier Reef. I live on the Barrier Reef and I'm deeply involved personally in that. There's been the Plan of Management for Kakadu National Park which I think is a significant step and has been done fairly quickly for a major park, and which I think is a good start to managing that very marvellous area. We've spent quite a lot of money on south-west Tasmania trying to get a resources study done there. That's a difficult area as you probably know for Commonwealth relations, but at least we've said that if the Tasmanian Government wants help to get a significant national park in that area, they've only got to ask for it.

So the initiative has got to come from that side?

Yes, well, it's very difficult. Land-use is the constitutional right of the States and you do have problems. We're trying to do things by negotiation rather than by confrontation — getting the Great Barrier Reef nominated for the World Heritage List, as an example. Negotiation rather than confrontation, getting the agreement of the two Governments concerned.

What do you see as the major environmental problems facing Australia?

Well, the major one is the protection of the Barrier Reef, I'm very determined about that. I think we've got to make sure that all our resource developments are being done with proper

"I think our attitude toward the whaling problem could be taken as a general attitude which we would take if it was pertinent"

regard to the protection of the environment, and that's a big issue for the '80s, I think. The World Conservation Strategy — with that we've got to get a national strategy and I must say I'm very pleased with the response we've had so far from non-government organisations, from the States, from industry. Some States, Western Australia for instance, have set up a special group to deal with this and that's very pleasing indeed. But it will take time. The plan for the national conservation strategy is to have a seminar towards the end of 1981 which will try to sort out all the ideas, and at the end of 1982 to hold a full conference to really agree on a draft.

These will be national conferences?

Yes, a national seminar to start with. You see, it's difficult because the action to be taken is mostly at State

level and so what we'll aim at is to try and get agreement from all States and from all the conflicting interests, to get a national strategy. Now it may be there are some areas in which we won't reach agreement, but I would think the way things are going we might reach agreement a great deal. We mightn't get all we want to start with; we'll go on working till we get a real national strategy.

Do you have any short-term or long-term solutions to some of the major problems you see arising. You mentioned the mining of resources and seeing that environmental standards are not exceeded.

I think the example there is the Kakadu National Park and the very stringent restrictions we're placing on uranium mining. This year, for instance, we're spending \$7 million just on control measures and investigating measures, and I hope that will become a model of how development and conservation can, perhaps, be reconciled. Because it is a magnificent area and I've looked around fairly carefully and it seems to me we can mine uranium — fortunately only a small area is affected — and in the end there will be very little sign that the miners have been there.

The controls you've mentioned, are they simply guidelines that are laid down?

Oh no, they're much more than that. There's an organisation called the Supervising Scientist for the Alligator Rivers Region. He is a statutory authority charged with the job of making sure, first of all setting standards, and making sure those standards are maintained.

It's an ongoing inspection then?

Oh yes, every step that is done . . . for instance, let me give one, the Ranger tailings

dam I suppose is a major one. They were going to release the tailings, water from the tailings dam, every wet season. Now the Supervising Scientist has got them to rethink on that and there will be no release of water from the tailings dam which is being redesigned. And so the tailings water won't go into the water system. He's designed the system.

Because the Commonwealth doesn't have a Department of Mines, but the State does, those sorts of jobs will be done by the Northern Territory Government, paid for by the Commonwealth. I think they're getting 3½ million dollars this year for regulatory services. A lot of people are critical of what's happened at Kakadu because it's emotive — uranium mining will destroy everything. Uranium mining is probably one of the least destructive because it takes such small areas.

What role do you think Australia should be playing on an international level as far as environmental problems are concerned?

Well, we play quite a role — whales is an example we're quite proud of. We're very active in the International Whaling Commission and I think we played a big part in the meeting in July this year. It's just fortunate we got our Whale Protection Bill in because we could say our hands are clean and we've now banned it worldwide as far as Australians are concerned. It was touch and go, as you probably realise, getting it through but we got it through exactly as we wanted it.

I wondered if you had a particular approach on international issues.

I think our attitude towards the whaling problem could be taken as a general attitude which we would take if we could, if it was pertinent.

I think the protection of Antarctica is a good example.

"...we can mine uranium... only a small area is effected."

Yes, the protection of marine living resources, we signed the Treaty last week, and now that they've all signed the Commission is going to be located in Hobart. I would think we'll get more and more deeply involved in Antarctica and the protection of it and doing research. There's much to be done there, we're spending a lot more money on Antarctic research, we're spending a lot more on marine science. It's, I suppose, the major expenditure in this year's budget, marine science.

What is your attitude towards non-governmental environmental organisations? Do you see them as helpful to you as a Minister, or do you see them as nuisances?

I see most of them as helpful. We encourage them to take part in conferences. For instance, Project Jonah has had a very active part in the International Whaling Commission and they had a dele-

gate and an observer in London.

From Australia?

Oh yes, from Australia. More and more we're encouraging non-government organisations to take an active part because there's a great deal of expertise and interest which I think we should mobilise.

Have you found them particularly helpful in any particular sphere during your short term of office?

Well, the one I've had most to do with was Project Jonah. They were first class. We had non-government organisations at the Antarctic Marine Living Resource Conference in Canberra last March-April. We had a whole seminar, a separate one, for non-government organisations for discussions on the World Conservation Strategy. My last visitor before you was Geoff Mosley, for instance, of the ACF. There's a constant interchange which I encourage. It's a good thing. I might not always agree with them, there'll always be points of conflict of course, but that's fine. The fact that we might not agree does not mean they're not good and not necessary.

There was a recommendation by the House of Representatives standing committee on Science and the Environment about south-west Tasmania. Have you accepted the recommendation, or what is the situation?

The situation is that the Commonwealth can only be involved if there is a direct Commonwealth interest. They say we should apply the Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act. Now that Act can only be applied if there is a direct Commonwealth and so far there isn't a direct Commonwealth interest. There's a great deal of indirect Commonwealth interest, but direct Commonwealth interest means financial involvement, export permits which are of course not appropriate in that case — the Fraser Island example — but I think it was a pity perhaps that that report took a confrontational approach rather than one of negotiation. Because land use is State's constitutional right and they have to ask before we can assist.

Has there been any reaction from Tasmania?

ney General announced that. There will be no change in the status of Fraser Island? No.

You mentioned you had a particular interest in the Great Barrier Reef. Are you satisfied with the way that has developed?

I'm very satisfied. I think the system is good. There's a lot of uninformed criticism and I'm very critical of some of it. We're moving to declare marine parks in the area. Unlike a marine park inland, a marine park at sea is one to be used. It is used all the time, it's used by tourists, fishermen, commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, by scientists, by people just wanting to go and look, so what we're doing is moving to declare marine parks and manage them.

There'll be a series of marine parks?

Oh, there'll be a number of them. The first one's been declared and the zoning plan has been tabled in Parliament. It's been a great success. It's got to lay for 20 days...

I have no worries about it, I don't think it's going to be challenged by anyone because it's been a great success. One of the problems we've got in the Barrier Reef is that we decided we're going to involve people, the public, in public comment and we've had exhaustive public comment. There have already been two public involvements in the Cairns section and a lot of submissions have been made. And we're going to call for some more once we've decided on the boundaries. We have a problem which someone suddenly discovered. In the Cairns section, the Reef comes very close to the coast, and we found when we came to the detail of the western boundary that there were problems. We thought about declaring the boundary at low water mark, but if you do it at low water mark every boat ramp, every mooring, every entrance to every harbour would be in the marine park. That's obviously impractical, so we've said to the Marine Park Authority, please go off and by the 7th of November give us some recommendations for the western boundary, where should they be, so the Reef can be protected. It would

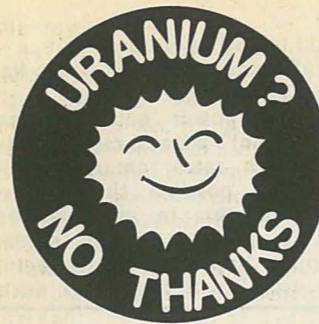
Is there a timetable for the

promulgation of these different parks?

No, there's no definite timetable. I would think that the Cairns section would be proclaimed by the end of this year, and I suspect we will go much faster after that. The two most complex ones are the ones most used and that's Capricornia and Cairns. As we go further north towards the Torres Strait it will be much easier. I would think the Reef east of the Whitsunday Islands would be easier because it's well out and the islands are not on the Reef; they like to think they are, but they're not. I would think we'd go faster. There are enormous complexities of fitting in all the different uses and protecting the Reef. You've got to find out the scientific facts of the area, what needs to be protected, where can you fish without damaging the Reef, where should you stop fishing altogether, how many tourists should you allow. We'll go as fast as we can but I'm not even going to guess at a timetable for the Reef. The Marine Park Authority is growing fast, in size, but we don't want a great bureaucratic incubus. It's going to be streamlined.

Are there any lessons to be learned from past environmental conflicts like Lake Pedder or this Black Mountain controversy here in Canberra?

Yes, I think there are lessons to be learned in all these areas. I hope we've learned some of the lessons from Lake Pedder, although that's not the Commonwealth, that's the States — it's mainly the States. Rum Jungle was a disaster with Commonwealth involvement, I hope that will never happen again. Mount Lyle, Tasmania. I would have thought if we were starting Mount Lyle all over again we certainly would not have let it go to where it is now. It's just destroyed the countryside. It's a moonscape. We've learned a tremendous amount and I think it's true to say most people doing developments in Australia now are much more conscious of their environmental responsibilities because of organisations like your own, ACF and all the multitude of environmental groups. It seems to me it's becoming much easier to administer environmental legislation



What we can now do to stop uranium mining

The discussion in the last issue over the future tactics of the movement happened to appear at the same time as a meeting was held in our small country town which intended to launch a local campaign for the district to be declared a nuclear-free zone. Unfortunately the meeting was quite unsuccessful in enthusing such a community action. I think this small failure in Balingup might provide us all with a lesson.

Apart from the freezing temperatures in the village hall that wintry night, the reason why the gathering was so ineffective in arousing a warm response was due to a tactical error which, in good faith, the organisers committed. This was their overriding concern that the evening should appear to be an "information night" only, one which would present the facts fairly and unemotionally to enable people in the audience to make up their minds what the "truth" was about nuclear energy.

This sounds very laudable in theory but in practice it bears little correspondence to the reality of activism. Most of the audience, and of course the organisers themselves, were there that cold night because they had already decided

that they did not like nuclear power. To pretend that it was still an open question was a hypocritical procedure. And because this false objectivity did not relate to the genuine feelings of the gathering, these remained unexpressed.

The basic point that is to be learnt from this example is that we should not be ashamed of emotions. Objective facts alone will never change the world if they are allowed to be divorced from the subjective feelings which endow those facts with their full meaning. When it is said that the movement is too emotional, do not capitulate to this criticism and try to falsely stifle honest feelings about the nuclear industry. Those feelings are our strength, not our weakness. If we are dealing with an emotional topic this is not an indication that is therefore frivolous — on the contrary it rouses the emotions just because it is serious. Those people who extol the need for facts without feelings are themselves a part of the world view that we are fighting against. Theirs is the cold and perfect rationality of the concentration camp or atomic warfare. This is the philosophy of "objectivism".

It is a sad but true decision, as leader writers in *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* often begin their apologies for the present government, that there is little if anything that can be done to stop uranium mining.

For a start it is already happening, and for seconds the union movement is so split on the issue as to make any attempt to work through the industrial wing of the labor movement positively counter productive.

There is also little chance of rousing the masses, and even if that occurred it may be equally counter-productive in that it would provoke the government into taking "strong measures" — probably with the support of the silent majority, which includes many

of the workers in the industry.

But while mining may go ahead, the prospects of export can be made more difficult. While the government is all but certain to win the next election in the House of Representatives, there is a real chance of a deadlock in the Senate — if there is a high vote for the Australian Democrats.

As a Labor voter it pains me to say it, but on the subject of uranium (though on little else) the Democrats are probably tougher than anyone else. I have been asked to be positive: the most useful and pragmatic anti-uranium stance I can see is a strong vote for the Democrats in the Senate election. It won't stop things, but it might slow them down.

STRATEGY

Ideas and options for the future of the anti-nuclear effort in Australia. *Chain Reaction* presents a second group of views on what we can now do. You are invited to write in for our next edition with your ideas...

Christine Sharp

Christine Sharp has been working with the Western Australian Campaign to Save Native Forests.

Mungo MacCallum



Mungo MacCallum is a freelance journalist working from the Parliament House press gallery in Canberra.

Peter Brotherton



Dr Peter Brotherton is Manager of the Environment Centre of Western Australia.

Information: Those most optimistic that uranium mining can be stopped are those most involved in the fight against it. Many people not involved full-time have lost confidence. Why are full-time activists more confident than ever? Has the struggle driven them demented, or are they failing to communicate some vital knowledge? The amount of information circulating within the movement is remarkable but more attention needs

to be paid to getting it out.

Our information should direct itself to at least 3 questions:

1. Is nuclear power necessary (anywhere, anytime)? Witness rapidly falling energy growth rates; detailed studies demonstrating possible three to six-fold improvements in gross National Product to primary energy demand ratio, rapidly improving relative economics of established renewable energy

Nic Maclellan

Nic Maclellan is an editor of Farrago, the University of Melbourne's students newspaper.

The first thing to do is give up the myth that the Government and uranium corporations are going to change their minds and admit the error of their ways. Uranium mining is only going to stop when we stop the mining: when the nuclear industry is made too unprofitable for the people who are trying to benefit from it.

The next thing is to direct our resources and energies in areas that, in

many cases, have already been contemplated or initiated, but never fully developed. To avoid problems created by centralisation in a widely based movement, the uranium issue must be continually linked to other struggles and other campaigns both in Australia and internationally.

Trade union work: Developing contacts and information with the labour movement, particularly at rank and file

Joe Camilleri



Dr. Joe Camilleri is Convenor of the Movement Against Uranium Mining (Victoria) and a Senior Lecturer in Politics at La Trobe University.

The key to success is unity: a united, and publicly apparent, stand of all committed groups, in support of the trade unions and aborigines, against uranium mining.

The tactics of industry and government are nothing new — just the old 'divide and conquer', putting one community group against another, and particularly against trade unions. The nuclear industry's best pal is the monopoly media, — with its strategy of silence in this election year. As communication is essential to an informed and organised campaign, we must cease to depend on the monopoly media. Instead, we should build networks,

communicating across environmental, peace, health, civil liberties, women's church, aboriginal, and other groups. Freedom of information and public interest groups especially, could help to link us with each other, and with community groups internationally.

Our task is to communicate information on events, research, and anti-nuclear activities here and overseas.

The Movement Against Uranium Mining offers a lead in co-ordinating an election year campaign — 'Stop Uranium Mining: Stop Nuclear Madness' — to be initiated at a mass rally in Melbourne on 3 October. This united rally, a focus for public action,

Noel Wauchope



Noel Wauchope is the Women's Electoral Lobby spokesperson on nuclear power.

Over the last five years the anti-uranium movement has concentrated its efforts on one social grouping or another in the expectation or hope that it would successfully prevent the mining and export of uranium. The environmental movement, the ALP, the unions, Aborigines in the Northern Territory, have, at different times, been seen by different sections of the movement as holding the key to the anti-uranium struggle.

It is now clear that no strategy based solely or even primarily on one of these groups is likely to succeed. Environment groups have certainly done a great deal to educate the public about the problems and hazards of nuclear power. The shift in ALP policy has been instrumental in politicising the issue. Similarly, trade union initiatives have helped to keep uranium mining in the news and the prospect of union bans, however remote, has given added bite to the campaign. Aboriginal land rights, on the other hand, have brought home the moral dimensions of the question and the destructive effects of uranium mining.

However, none of these groups, if taken in isolation, can be expected to

win the day. Success will ultimately depend on a large collective effort. For this reason it is now urgent that the anti-uranium movement re-establish itself as the broadest possible coalition, reaching out to every remotely sympathetic group in the community.

What is needed is a new and imaginative programme of outreach emphasising not only the health hazards and economic irrationality of the nuclear option, but the right of all citizens to participate in the energy decisions which will vitally affect their lives.

In the case of Victoria, we will need to extend the nuclear free zones campaign, intensify our programme of education, expose the nuclear implications of the State government's energy policies, and revive the network of anti-uranium groups and organizations throughout the state. A concerted programme of action during the election campaign coupled with an effective mass mobilization on 3 October, should provide the basis for a more self-confident movement able to wage the long and difficult struggle needed for final victory.

technologies.¹

2. Can we afford it? Any conservative up for election knows the value of asking "Where's the money coming from?" Nukes cost the Earth.

3. What are the risks? Anyone with half a brain and half a care is scared shitless by a nuclear power but some believe (reluctantly) that there is some fundamental law of growth economics that leads inevitably to nuclear power. If we demonstrate to believers in

growth² that there are sound economic and technical reasons for not going nuclear we can scramble their brains long before we mention "bomb", "melt-down" or descendants.

Involvement: The various Nuclear Free Zone campaigns provide the most encouraging current models. Links forged with local government should be followed up to see if they will assist in the promotion/organisation of renewable energy projects (these are

achieving great success in, e.g., New Mexico). More high quality displays should be constructed and kept continuously on library, circuits, etc. **Determination and Organisation:** Our actions must be geared fairly strongly towards ensuring hopeful outcomes in state/federal elections in the 1982-85 period.

We can only lose through our own (lack of) doing. After all we've got all the right arguments, so they can't have all the power.

level, is of primary importance, as only the union movement can physically stop uranium mining and transport. Divisions in the union movement (and even within particular unions) over uranium mining make it vital to put more energy into relevant organisational work and information gathering: **Attacking corporate power:** This can be focussed through the union movement, but other activists have an important

role to play in research and publicity about the uranium corporations. Tactics such as occupations, share action groups, the ANZ campaign, etc. are important, but must be linked to a wider analysis of the restructuring of the Australian economy, the role of transnational capital and attacks on the labour movement.

Community support: As well as re-creating active opposition to uranium

mining we need to reinforce the general public feelings against the dangers of nuclear power. This especially involves rebuilding the network of information gathering and sharing that has fallen in a hole since Three Mile Island. **Land Rights:** The threat to aboriginal land rights must be reemphasised, and the issue of land rights and mining highlighted in other areas (eg: Noonkanbah).

is an opportunity to link groups with each other, and the public, and to strengthen the anti-nuclear network.

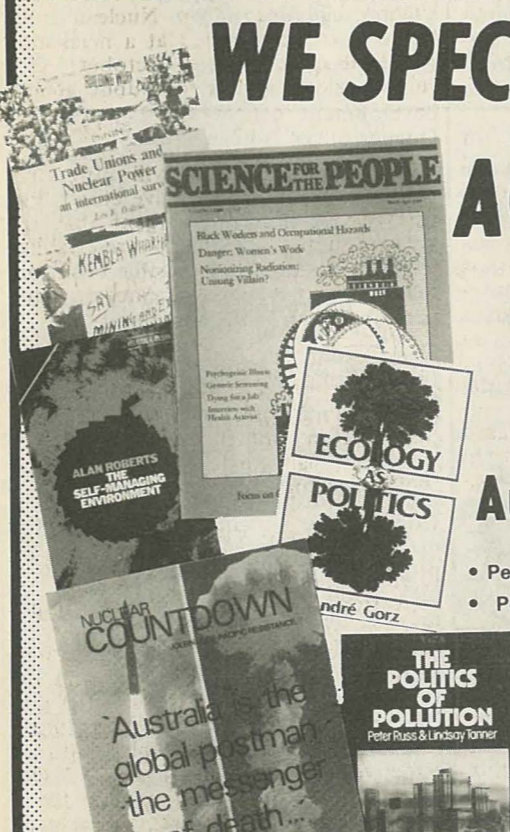
Ongoing campaigns include, nationally, the fight for justice for the veterans and communities affected by the Maralinga bomb tests, publicising the risks of low-level radiation, especially to women (who are doubly susceptible), and opposition to nuclear

and enrichment plants in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland.

In Victoria, Philip Sutton has initiated the campaign to change the State Electricity Commission Act, to stop their nuclear plans — a campaign involving resistance to the aluminium industry, and the development of nuclear power and aluminium smelter at

Portland. This, and the ongoing Nuclear-Free Zones Movement, provide a specifically Victorian focus. With the Citizens Energy Inquiry currently underway in Melbourne and other positive actions, Victorians can participate now in planning for a nuclear-free state, along the lines of California.

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Saving the suburbs

Good news comes too rarely. But here Sally Gilbert reports on an exciting new project in Brunswick, an inner northern suburb of Melbourne. It will comprise community gardens, and workshops, a city farm, environmental displays, a low energy-use building, a community meeting place, a tree farm, productive botanical gardens and recreational parkland.

The Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies project was begun in 1978 by a number of groups, notably staff and students of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology environmental design course, members of the Brunswick Unemployed Group, Brunswick Secondary Schools, Brunswick City Council and other local groups. They met with the intention of examining problems faced by the Brunswick community, particularly those of an environmental and social nature, and to formulate and carry out solutions that would involve a sound ecological basis, the creation of job opportunities, and an active community participation.

Brunswick's problems are all too clear: heavy pollution from traffic, narrow streets, dense housing, a large and varied migrant population (with associated language problems), and high unemployment, all of which serve to depress and fragment the community.

It was realized that solutions were not simple, nor were they the traditional kind. Different notions of work needed to be re-examined, new educational programs and new technology had to be developed, and at the same time potential for community involvement had to exist.

The CERES committee drew up an impressive project, called an urban field station, which combines all the above ideas. The objectives of the project were formulated and include:

- to develop a city farm and environmental community centre, for action, education and research.
- to stimulate and support employment in the areas of environmental design and its implementation and community environment work.
- to explore types of work which are more self-managed, less exploitative and more community needs-based.
- to develop training programs to facilitate this kind of work and to widen choices of both new and alternative career pathways.

In mid 1979, the Brunswick City Council offered CERES the use of a 10 acre 'wasteland' site beside the Merri Creek. There was also a possible adjoining 5 acres owned by the Country Roads Board. The specific activities planned for the Merri Creek site are:

- the reconstruction of this site into an attractive amenity for Brunswick for recreational education.
- the establishment of a centre for stimulating energy conservation (of electricity, gas, oil, petrol) in the community, as well as research into

new energy conservation techniques (eg. using the Sun and wind) and on related environmental problems.

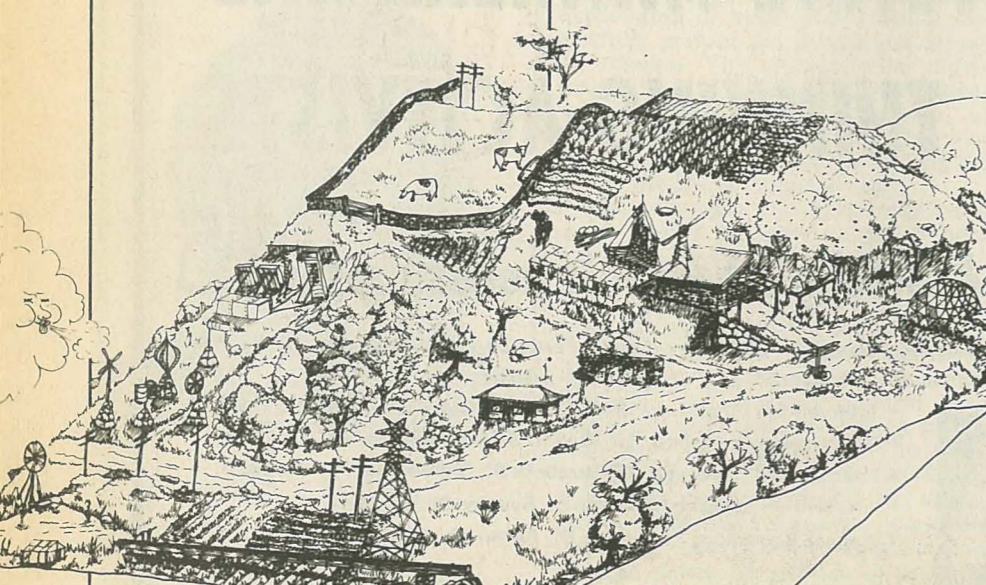
- the provision of facilities for use by inner urban schools for practical projects in botany, ecology, energy studies etc., and facilities for RMIT environment design course (and other similar courses).
- the provision of facilities (eg. workshops, sheds, greenhouses) to extend the productivity of the site and assist employment programs.
- the creation of an active community centre as a meeting place for groups concerned with environmental issues, as an information centre, as allotments for community gardens etc.
- an examination of the possibilities for community recycling of reusable waste, particularly the possibility of establishing a community composting system.
- the development of the tourist potential of the project to assist in its funding, to stimulate the local economy and to ensure wide public education.

The money needed for the CERES project has been obtained from various trusts and other organizations. For example, the R E Ross Trust has made \$5,000 available, the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence \$2,000, the Victorian Employment Commission \$37,000 (for the employment of a training and development officer for 2 years), the Queens Silver Jubilee Trust \$5,000 (for young farmers to co-ordinate and organize equipment), and also grants from the Community Youth Support Scheme and the Brunswick Community Garden. More funds are still urgently required.

The future looks bright for CERES. A spokesperson for CERES, Jenny Evans, told me that landscaping and tree-planting (by students of Melbourne University and the RMIT) are now beginning. At the same time, publicity for the project is being increased, with speakers informing schools and community groups, information and activities being organized through the media, and detailed documents on the project are being published. And, with luck, good weather and hopefully more money, building will begin in October/November, involving tertiary and technical school students, apprentices, and voluntary (many of whom are unemployed) and community service labour.

Contacts: Dr Chris Ryan (lecturer, RMIT environmental design) and Neville Stern (project officer, Brunswick Unemployed Group) at 184 Victoria Street, Brunswick, Victoria 3057. Telephone (03) 387-3620.

Artists impression of fully developed project.



Importing pollution

The concept of establishing a petrochemical plant in South Australia was first raised in 1969. Multi-national chemical giant Dow has released an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) on such a plant at Redcliff in Upper Spencer Gulf. David Hartley, committee member of Greenpeace, Adelaide, filed this story for *Chain Reaction*.



The envisaged plant will use hydrocarbon fractions from the Cooper Basin gas shelf and brine from Lake Torrens to produce chemicals for the manufacture of a wide range of plastic products, as well as caustic soda for use in the aluminium industry.

Unfortunately, the EES fails to meet its purpose in providing sufficient information to the government to ascertain the project's acceptability on environmental grounds. It is an inaccurate, incomplete document which proposes illegal pollution, a situation highlighted by Ralph Nader when he said that Dow regards countries like Australia as "pollution havens" due to weak environmental laws.

The EES fails to comment on the unique character of Redcliff's flora and fauna and even states that no unique species are found there. The Department of Fisheries has claimed no less than four newly-discovered species at Redcliff; other departments have found an endangered species of plant and the southern-most habitat of the Chirruping Wedgebill there.

Divergence of the supplying pipelines to Whyalla would require only \$13m more; negligible to a company paying \$1,000m for the completion of the

plant. However, as the Department of Mines and Energy has stated, Redcliff was chosen as the site for the plant primarily because it is the most economically viable place to put it. Consequently, the fact that the ecosystem is probably the most fragile in the state must be viewed as a secondary consideration, based on a monetary saving of less than 1.5% of the total investment.

One of the products from the plant will be ethylene dichloride (EDC). This toxic, mutagenic and suspected carcinogenic substance will be shipped to Sydney to be made into PVC. Dow dismisses the possibility of an EDC spillage by ship collision or grounding as "quite remote", but a Marine and Harbours officer has said "tankers will have awful problems staying out of trouble" and H S Green, Professor of Mathematical Physics at Adelaide University, has commented that a tanker accident is "inevitable".

No reason is given why PVC cannot be manufactured on site - obviously an environmentally safer procedure than transporting EDC more than a thousand kilometres by sea. As a spill of this substance could wipe out marine life in the Spencer gulf for 200 years, this method of transportation is clearly questionable, but Dow gives no alternative.

During start-ups or shut-downs of caustic scrubbing, emission of poisonous chlorine gas will exceed national pollution standards. This standard will again be violated every time a dump scrubber emergency occurs.

The EES also states that little work has been done on temperature inversion effects at Redcliff. When these occur, workers will be exposed to toxic and sometimes carcinogenic gases. Compensation claims of occupational cancer from the plant are unlikely to succeed as the latency period of cancer is about twenty years, and Dow has a company policy of destroying workers' records after ten years.

Dow intends discharging one million

cubic metres of water a day into the surrounding seagrass beds, the nursery area for whiting and garfish. They admit they do not know what the "critical thermal maximum" temperatures of the eggs of these species are, or the effect of turbulence on the mortality of the eggs and larvae. The entire fishing and prawning industry in the gulf will be under threat.

What then, are the benefits of the plant? The government will receive money, Dow will make million-dollar profits and naturally transfer them back to its parent company in the USA. Because of the capital-intensive cost of bidding a petrochemical plant, each of the 481 permanent jobs created will cost more than two million dollars each; hardly a panacea for unemployment. Dow's power plant will use one-fifth of Adelaide's total electricity demand.

Are the risks involved too great to site the plant at Redcliff? Is Dow's reputation as the filthiest polluting company in the USA relevant? The government says no. Economic growth transcends this.

But growth for the sake of growth is, as Bertrand Russell once said, the ideology of the cancer cell.

A booklet *Dow Chemicals - Redcliff Petrochemicals Plant* by John Layfield for the Environment Action Centre is available. For copies (@ \$1 each, posted) write to the EAC, 118 Errol Street, North Melbourne, Victoria, 3051. Telephone (03) 329-5519.



POSITION VACANT

Friends of the Earth seeks a Uranium Co-ordinator to help organise members and others on the uranium issue. Key tasks will be advising on the development of FOE's uranium campaign strategy, involving people in the production for publications, media statements, research etc.

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Redcliff - site for a petro-chemical plant

ADVERTISER

Film

The Chain Reaction, a Palm Beach picture, now showing in Hoyt's cinemas.

This is "an action-packed, horror thriller" according to Margaret Roberts, of Palm Beach Studios. Her colleague added that it is "the working person's *Dirt Cheap*".

Heinrich, a nuclear scientist, is terminally exposed to radiation when



Heinrich

an earth tremor fractures storage containers at an atomic repository in Central Australia releasing nuclear waste into the artesian water table.

Realising the repository's operators will attempt to cover up the fatal spill, Heinrich escapes to warn the public. Disorientated, in the throes of a gruesome radiation death and pursued by the repository's security team Heinrich comes across Larry and Carmel Stilson, holidaying in a dead-end mountain valley.

Meanwhile, the sinister decontamination workers have closed off the valley in an attempt to contain the radioactive waste. They surround the Stilson's weekend for their endeavour to seize and silence Heinrich.

There's the usual car chase and big smash.

But the nuclear waste cannot be contained!

The Chain Reaction of contamination . . .

Essentially it is about the dangers of the nuclear industry and it presents those strongly. It shows that nuclear

accidents do happen, such accidents present a major hazard to the community, innocent people do suffer, and the nuclear industry will go to any length in seeking to stop the public being informed.

But sexual politics come into it, of course, and it is on this level that the film is unimaginative and disappointing. There is the usual hulk Larry and leopard-skin outfitted Carmel — dressed, as Hoyt's blurb puts it, to emphasise "her physical appeal". She is the sensitive one, in helping Heinrich, and Larry the courageous one. Seen it all before?

I talked with Ross Thompson (Heinrich) about the film. Hoyt's described him as "an anti-nuclear activist". He says that "people in positions of power don't know where they are leading us". Ross feels that such leaders deny the possibility of death, and this is especially true of males. No doubt he is right.

So many films make no attempt towards any link with important and real political questions, let alone take a half reasonable position on them. I feel that *The Chain Reaction* is, to this extent, partly refreshing and worth encouragement. It is certainly not going to make any easier the push for uranium and nuclear development.

It does more to reach the average Space Invaders player than the anti-uranium movement these days.

Leigh Holloway

Books

Who Asked Us?

Coal, Power, Aluminium — the Hunter Region's Only Future?

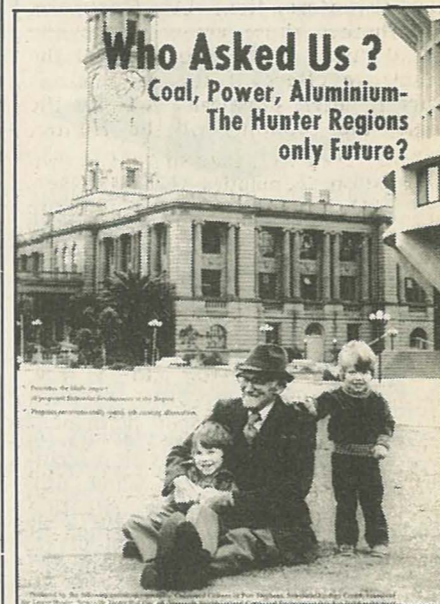
Edited by David Phillips and David Ross. Published jointly by: Concerned Citizens of Port Stephens, Newcastle Ecology Centre, Friends of the Lower Hunter, Newcastle Trades Hall Council, Newcastle Neighbourhood Centre and Environmentalists for Full Employment; August 1980, 60 pages, \$2 (booklet).

The publication of *Who Asked Us?* is a notable contribution to the increasing, and increasingly forceful, debate on the future of the Hunter region. The decisions to be made regarding the expansion of the aluminium industry, and the consequent expansion of electricity generation in the region, will fundamentally affect the characteristics of the Hunter valley. Indeed, the decisions are of national significance.

Those who favour expansion of the aluminium smelting industry have a

simple argument. The Hunter, in common with many other parts of Australia, has a substantial, and chronic, unemployment problem. It is socially desirable to create new jobs. The smelting of aluminium uses large blocks of electricity so the availability, and price, of electricity is a major determinant of smelter location. The Hunter has vast quantities of coal suitable for electricity generation. This coal can be used to entice smelters into the Hunter and so reduce unemployment.

My summary of the argument for development of the industry puts the



emphasis where its political proponents have put it — on jobs. I do not question their good faith. I do doubt their judgement. I believe that the New South Wales Government's encouragement of aluminium companies is a response to an unacceptable employment situation in the Hunter valley. I believe that it is an inappropriate response which may actually exacerbate the present problem. It may lead to a net loss of jobs.

One of the major problems in determining the desirability of expansion in aluminium production is the lack of any comprehensive study of the total proposed development. In due course each aluminium company will produce an environmental impact statement, restricted to its own proposal. The Electricity Commission will, presumably, produce an impact statement relative to each power station; the Water Resources Commission relative to each dam. It is not clear that anybody will have the responsibility of examining the total picture.

I read *Who Asked Us?* with mixed emotions. One of them was anger. Anger that it should be left to a group

of voluntary workers to attempt the first comprehensive survey of the social, environmental and economic consequences of the course upon which we are set. Their facts and figures will be challenged. I claim no expertise in the area but over recent months I have read a lot about the consequences of the resources boom. So far as I can judge, the information is correct.

However, the booklet may contain errors of detail. If so, let critics recall that the authors of the book had no help from the public authorities who ought to be collecting and publishing accurate information. Let them also ask whether those errors vitiate the central thrust of the booklet: that the cumulative effect of the proposals is likely to alter, drastically and for the worse, the economy of the Hunter.

Who Asked Us?, analysing the known information, concludes that taxpayers are subsidising the aluminium companies, which are predominantly overseas owned, to the tune of between \$55 million and \$75 million per year (p 16). How does a State Labor government justify such a subsidy to the multinationals?

Expressing the matter another way, the annual subsidy represents between \$20,000 and \$27,000 per permanent direct job. As a community we would be better off if we simply paid 2,768 people a bargain rate of say \$300 per week? Consider how many jobs could be created by this level of recurring annual expenditure.

The Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Council of National Trusts and the Australian National Parks Council recently put to the Federal Government a proposal for the creation of a Conservation Employment Scheme.

After some investigation, and I hope realistically, we estimated the cost at \$12,500 per employee per annum. At this rate the subsidy to be paid to the aluminium companies would employ 4400 to 6000 people. Moreover, that new employment would be predominantly of unskilled people. In terms of jobs for money the government's policy seems to make no sense at all.

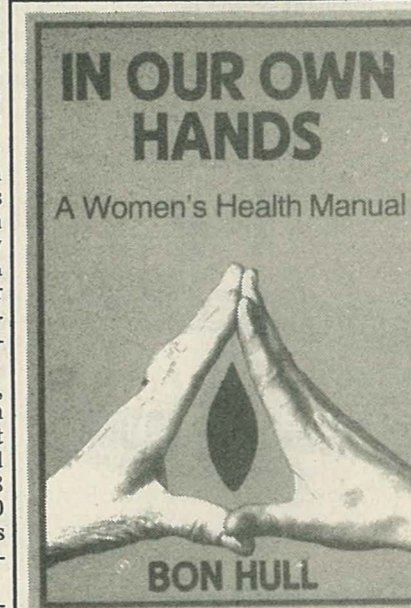
In my discussion of employment I have not mentioned the schemes discussed in the booklet — notably an intensive development of solar energy and tourism. This is not because I disagree with what is said but merely because I can add nothing useful, other than to commend those sections to the most careful study by those who are concerned with this very real social problem.

The issues raised in *Who Asked Us?* should be crystallized, and the facts established, at a general enquiry into

all the aluminium smelting. Until that enquiry is complete, no work ought to proceed, no commitments ought to be made. On behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation, and I believe many thousands of concerned citizens, I call on the NSW Government to establish such an enquiry.

Murray Wilcox

Murray Wilcox is President of the Australian Conservation Foundation. This is an extract from his address at the launching of Who Asked Us?



In Our Own Hands, A Women's Health Manual by Bon Hull, Hyland House Melbourne, 1980, 244 pages, \$7.95 (paperback).

Bon Hull has been politically active for many years in the area of women's health. Her book is impressive evidence of the vast knowledge and experiences she has exchanged with other involved women in that time.

There have been several, excellent books produced by women, such as the classic *Our bodies, Ourselves*, which through spreading knowledge have enabled women to regain some power over our bodies. Bon Hull, with the full support of the Boston Women's Health Collective, has written such a book, and one which is specifically relevant to Australian women. In particular, her familiarity with our various health institutions, drug companies and medical procedures is extremely useful. Her book also updates its forerunners by further exploring areas such as vegetarianism and women's health, alternative treatments, and political/medical controversies such as the DES

tragedy and the Prostaglandin story.

I feel the book leans away from a primary emphasis on the self-health approach, and towards the case for a more informed and assertive use of the traditional health establishment. But Bon doesn't ignore the realities of such a choice —

"(Our) medicalised society is a drugged, isolated and controlled society; the only beneficiaries are drug companies and a passive medical profession. They both reap great benefits, while more and more professional workers are needed to cope with the results."

Individual chapters cover birth control, menstruation, pregnancy, menopause, abortion, vaginal infections etc. They are written to cover social attitudes to the different areas, relevant biological and medical information, and cautions against the misogynist, sometimes dangerous, medical establishment treatments and attitudes.

I do have some criticisms. Once again specific lesbian health concerns are not mentioned, which is a frustrating omission in such books.

(For more information consult *Lesbian Health Matters*.) It would have been very useful too, to include some information regarding health insurance for women. The book is also quite Melbourne-oriented in its list of contact points and addresses (in fact the address for Melbourne VD clinic is out of date).

But *In Our Own Hands* is definitely a sizeable contribution to a feminist knowledge of the health-care system and a definite weapon against it.

Philomena Horsley

The Heritage Hoax, Control of Private Property by Progressive Legislation by C E Pinwill. The Institute of Economic Democracy, Ravensbourne (Qld), 1980, 20 pages, \$1.50 (booklet).

It is hard to know whether the League of Rights seriously dislikes the Australian Heritage Commission Act or rather took offence at the association of names with one of its Western Australian front organisations, namely The Australian Heritage Society. To really understand this book one needs to read the rather solid book, by Andrew Campbell (the former Office of National Assessments man), on the 'League of Rights'.

The League, a radical right-wing political organisation has been attempting for many years, through a variety of fronts to take over right-wing but mainstream organisations such as the Country Party, now in some places called the National Party.

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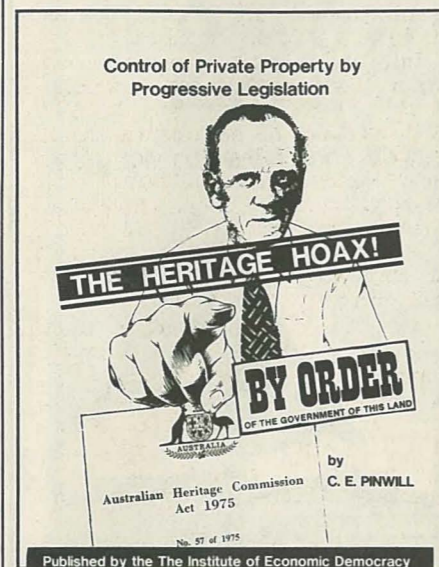
FOOD VERSUS FUEL
The author's appendix burst. But we will have the story next time.

AND we're working on others! (See above re our plea for financial support for special investigations.)

REVIEWS

In any case they seem to have seized on the Australian Heritage Commission Act as a way of demonstrating, particularly to country people, their anti-socialist stance. They do this through the old 'straw-man' technique of setting up a home-made bogey and then blowing it to pieces.

This pre-occupation with the politics of the League of Rights is not through paranoia but simply because this booklet, *The Heritage Hoax*, is more about the political stance of the league, masquerading under the guise of the Institute of Economic Democracy in this particular instance, than it is about the environment or the protection of it. This booklet sets up a scenario which



links Karl Marx, Sir Paul Hasluck, Dr H V Evatt, the Fabian Society and Dr H C Coombs to demonstrate that there is a world wide conspiracy to deprive western nations of their property rights and socialise the means of production. Somehow or other the Australian Heritage Commission is seen to be at the cutting edge of this process.

The case of the wicked socialists introducing 'heritage legislation' is bolstered, according to the booklet, by the statement "In Victoria there is no heritage legislation . . .". The author seems to have missed the fact that the Victorian Historic Buildings Preservation Act of 1974 both precedes and is arguably tougher than any of the other state or federal legislation. The quality of the arguments and the so-called 'facts' are amazing, and the booklet reveals a lot more about the League of Rights and their modus operandi than anything else. Their exhortation for disrupting the business of the Australian Heritage Commission and the proposal to 'heavy' members of parliament make interesting reading.

Anon.

Environmental Philosophy, edited by Don Mannison, Michael McRobbie, and Richard Routley. Department of Philosophy, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, 1980, 385 pages. \$4 (paperback).

Be warned. *Environmental Philosophy* is not the kind of musing on the wonderfulness of nature that so often goes under this name. It is philosophy in the professional manner, consisting of attempts by a number of Australian philosophers to get deeper into the ethical and conceptual issues raised by concern for the environment. It is not easy reading, for the authors demand a lot from their readers. But parts of it, at least, are worth the effort.

The book consists of papers read at two philosophy conferences held in Australia in 1977 and 1978, plus one or two additional papers. On the international academic scene, Australian philosophers like John Passmore, Richard and Val Routley, and perhaps I may immodestly mention myself, have been prominent in philosophical debates over the extension of our traditional 'human chauvinist' ethic to take in other species at least, and perhaps — as the Routleys urge — inanimate natural objects as well. So it was fitting that conferences should be organized to bring all this activity together, and useful that the papers read at these conferences should be available at what is, nowadays, a very reasonable price.

The main reason the book is as long as it is, is that Richard and Val Routley have been allowed an inordinate amount of space. They have two papers, each of around 100 pages, which together make up more than half the book. The first argues for the kind of all-embracing ethic mentioned in the previous paragraph, while the second advocates a self-managed, libertarian society which, the Routleys say, will have less impact on the environment than a capitalist society. The topics are important, and the arguments challenging, but the thought did occur to me, in ploughing through these essays, that authors so concerned to save our forests from the paper manufacturers might have made a bit more of an effort to be brief.

The other papers are much shorter and generally less demanding. Robert Elliot's 'Why Preserve Species?' will trouble many environmentalists, because while Elliot is clearly opposed to human exploitation of the environment, he does not see how the value of preserving species can be defended, except in terms of the good consequences of so doing. Don Mannison and John McCloskey are still more

critical of many of the assumptions that lie behind talk of an 'environmental ethic'. There are two forceful papers by Robert Young, one arguing for a 'no growth' economy, and the other suggesting that the world population problem is serious enough to justify, in certain circumstances, the use of compulsory sterilization. There are brief critical replies to both of Young's papers, as there are to some other essays in this collection.

To those who are not academic philosophers, much of the volume could seem too abstract, and the differences of opinion mere hair-splitting. That would be a pity, for the issues are

ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY



real enough, and any environmentalists who want to get more deeply into the intellectual basis of their activities would gain by spending some time with this book.

Peter Singer

Bicycle Transportation for Energy Conservation, by the USA Department of Transportation, 1980.

What a contrast to the Australian situation is this report submitted to the President and Congress in the USA.

The report, as is common in government documents, is very wordy but it covers the subject thoroughly, identifying the problems and putting forward plans for solving them, such as:—

- Improving operator awareness, teaching children in schools to ride responsibly, and in obedience of road laws, while also providing education/training schemes for adults.
- Planning the integration of the bike into public transport with secure storage facilities at terminuses and stations.

- Looking into design criteria and standards of pedalled vehicles.
 - Eliminating road hazards such as poorly designed gratings, broken road edges etc. etc.
 - Producing cyclists route maps showing safer, easier ways to a destination.
- Most importantly, in my opinion, there are plans to attack two most worthwhile areas of safe bicycle use —

Implementing motorist information programs. While motorists would be affected by a broad-based public awareness program, they have special information needs that must be addressed in a more targeted program. The delivery of information to motorists should begin when they prepare to obtain licenses and should continue throughout their driving careers.

Information related to bicycle operation and road-sharing techniques should be included in drivers' education curricula and in state-issued drivers' manuals. Licensing written exams should have questions related to motorist-bicyclist interaction. Behind-the-wheel training should include practice in scanning for bicycles, evaluating bicyclists' behaviour, and sharing the road with a variety of vehicles.

An ongoing campaign to provide all motorists with information related to bicyclists' use of the roadway should be initiated. Such information could be distributed through flyers enclosed with license renewal and vehicle registration letters, and through media campaigns directed specifically at motorists.

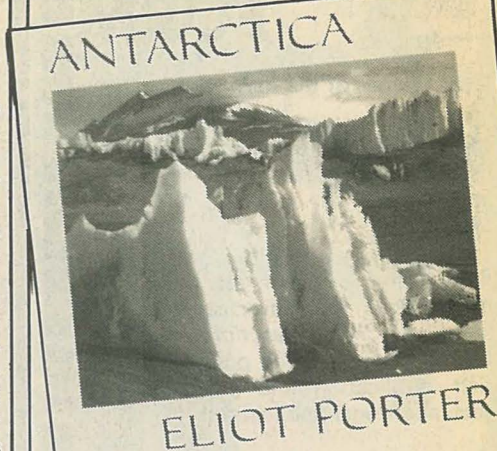
The lack of expertise at engineering and planning level is summed up under the heading **Lack of Skills and Knowledge.**

"Those organisations and individuals that do consider bicycle transportation are often unaware of the state-of-the-art in bicycle program development and implementation. As a result, poor quality facilities and programs are sometimes produced.

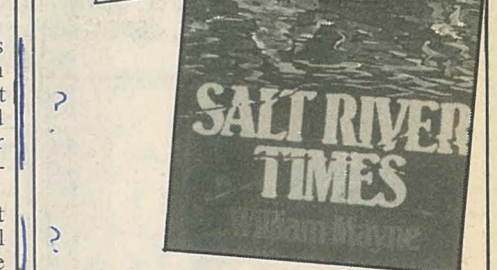
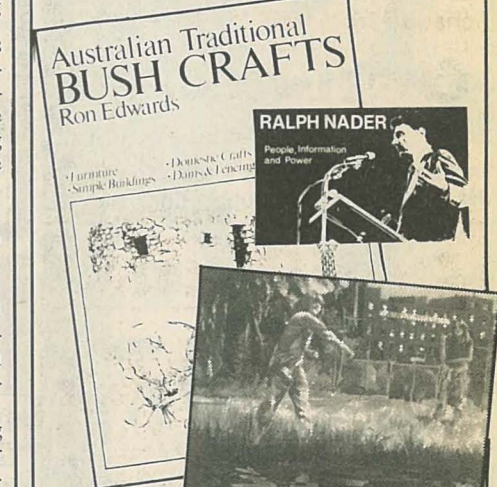
One cause of this problem is that most professionals receive no formal training in bicycle transportation are often aware of the state-of-the-art in bicycle program development and implementation. As a result, poor quality facilities and programs are sometimes produced.

One cause of this problem is that most professionals receive no formal training in bicycle transportation. For example, in a recent review of 21 college transportation textbooks, most of which were geared toward civil engineering, 15 of the textbooks contained no mention of modern bicycling transportation. Of the remaining six texts, five gave brief attention to the negative aspects of bicycling that, in the opinion of the authors, prevented it

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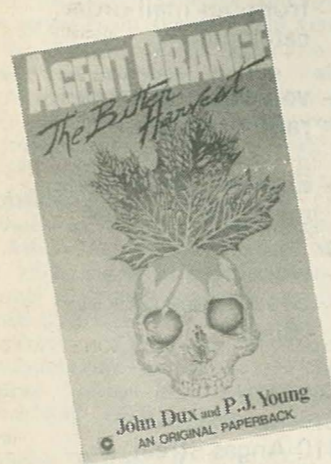


from being a "real" transportation mode. Similarly, bicycling is usually not included in the curricula of other involved professionals (police officers, etc.) The few professional, in-service training programs that are currently available, cannot provide sufficient information to the large number of professionals that are, or should be, involved in bicycle transportation programs. Finally, there is also a lack of accepted guidelines for selecting the appropriate bicycle facility treatment or program."

Unfortunately we have a similar situation here in Australian Universities, along with unsympathetic government ministers. The report goes on to talk of funding requirements, tables of bike use, potential use, energy savings etc. Thus it seems the US may consider the bicycle a serious and valid contribution to transport. How long will it take Australia to do something as significant?

Mick McKeon

People interested in obtaining a copy of the report can write to the Cyclists Action Group at 1A Packer Street, Murrumbidgee, Victoria 3163, or 2 Bardsen Street, Cortisloe, Western Australia 6011, enclosing three 22c stamps for one copy, or \$2.00 for five copies to cover costs.



Agent Orange, The Bitter Harvest by John Dux and P J Young. Coronet Sydney, 1980, 285 pages, \$4.95 (paperback).

Agents Orange, Blue, White, Purple, Pink and Green - the lethal rainbow of plantkillers imported to Vietnam by the American military. But the history of 2,4-D and 2, 4, 5-T begins at least thirty years earlier than Vietnam, and the users of these defoliants include Australia and England, as well as the USA military. But the history of to peaceful, domestic farmers.

During these past thirty years there have been people who have displayed

similar, identifiable symptoms, ranging from nausea to blindness and cancer, some of whose children have suffered from congenital illnesses or deformities. These people have been of diverse backgrounds - farmers, workers in chemical factories, and those who were in the Vietnam war. They have all at one stage come into contact with 2, 4-D or 2, 4, 5-T. Scientific tests on animals have indicated that these chemicals are carcinogenic, and mutagenic. Yet it is still possible for some government officials to say that the evidence of the harm caused by Agent Orange is "inconclusive". It is "circumstantial", and, they say, one can't extrapolate from effects on animals to the consequences for humans.

This book, is a presentation of "evidence". It may still be "circumstantial", but it is such that it can not be ignored. The authors present historical and scientific data about 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T, as well as individual accounts of affected people - including, Australian and USA ex-servicemen and North Vietnamese civilians who were living in the sprayed areas. It manages to raise a number of complex and related social, political and moral issues concerning the uses of science and technology, the lack of information available to the public, and most importantly, the horrific ramifications of biological and chemical warfare.

Margaret Jones

Vegetarian Baby by Sharon Yntema. McBooks Press, 1980, 224 pages, \$5.95 (paperback).

Advertised as the first complete source book for the vegetarian parent, this would make an ideal gift to grandparents who doubt the nutritional value of a vegetarian diet. Details of babies brought up vegetarian in other cultures provide background to discussions of nutritional requirements of pregnant and lactating mothers and subsequent requirements of children up to two years. I recommend this book for its recipes, ranging from homemade milk substitutes, to full nutritionally balanced meals.

Sue Beale

Eating at Home, A comprehensive guide to Melbourne food shopping by Jamie Anderson, Greenhouse, Melbourne, 1980, \$8.95 (paperback).

Tells lots about staples like apples and potatoes, but goes on to purple cauliflower and squab. Where to get good tucker and when. Recommends the Markets, especially Victoria Market. A delightful book for people who like to eat and happen to be in Melbourne-some few million of us. LH

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LETTERS

From page 2.

- area.
- * Strategy: a brilliant way to personalise an issue, uranium mining, which is losing energy at the moment and for many people (e.g. especially in Tasmania) has become just too remote/abstract to get active around.
 - * Knowing what's planned for the next CR.

Di Elliffe
Hobart Tasmania

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I read your article 'The great Australian food abundance' in *Chain Reaction* Vol. 5 No. 3 1980 and I quote:

"Research and publish information on the environmental effects of modern agriculture in Australia. There is an area which has been neglected for too long – partly because the damage being done is far too subtle. Too often we read American publications and just assume the situation is similar here – it isn't"

Would you please specify why – "It isn't"?"

As far as I know our world and the living entities in our world, be it microbes, worms, plants, or animals or humans, have been created according to one single pattern – basic rules are all the same. All need air to breath, warmth, energy or muscle power, water (50% to 95%) plus some food and the correct environment to live – all growth organic or biological, has to follow a "cycle of life" or a "wheel of life" set by nature, wherever we are on this globe on land or water.

All nature's offspring in this globe's wonderful creation has to obey these laws, rules or principles of nature.

You do not do a good service to the USA researchers, who are truly teaching various US Universities about their findings of "compost and worms" – much of which can be found in *Compost Science/Land Utilization* a 2 monthly US magazine which is leading the way worldwide.

B C Hoff
Mt. Yokire, Western Australia

Ian Pausacker responds:

I am surprised at B C Hoff's reaction – I in no way intended to deprecate the efforts of USA researchers. My comments were directed at Australian researchers, to try to stimulate research into more ecological farming methods here in Australia. Our farming methods are often different to those used in the USA. We have more dryland farming and less use of irrigation. We have more rotation of crops with legume based pastures instead of using chemical nitrogen fertilisers. We have different climatic conditions, less domination of agriculture by companies, smaller farms, and proportionally more farmers. These (and many other) differences make it essential, I still maintain, for detailed Australian work in this field to be conducted.

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Current objectives

To assist workers to investigate their own industry, the locality where they live and work, the particular economic, political and social problems that they face. Assist trade unions to develop alternative programs to mobilize in defending the living standards, jobs and rights of their members.

Methods

Industry projects involving the on-going investigation of particular industries with regard to the threat of unemployment, introduction of new technology and work methods designed to reduce the power of workers within the work process, foreign take-over etc. A continuing overall analysis of the Australian economy and related social issues from the point of view of working people. Study programs for rank-and-file activists in the Labour Movement. Research projects on Australia's role in the Asia-Pacific region, the impact of new technology, industrial legislation, etc.

Resources/services available

Transnational Brief – a monthly bulletin which provides the Labour Movement with an on-going, accurate and informed analysis of national and international political-economic trends. TNC Reportback – TNC produces a number of publications on important issues including *Labour and the Economy*, *Undermining Uranium* and *The Job Killers*.

Labour Movement Education – the TNC is able to assist unions and activists by providing speakers, films and slide shows. TNC also organizes workshops and conferences on questions of importance to the Labour Movement – e.g. the run-down of manufacturing industry, the political economy of the energy industry, industrial democracy.

TNC Enquiry Service – investigates queries from members on all subjects of interest to the Labour Movement.

A leaflet, *What is the TNC?*, is available on request.



Friends of the Earth (Burnie)
PO Box 350
Ulverstone
Tasmania 7315
Telephone (004) 31 6364

Current objectives

Maintaining local interest in the uranium issue. Preservation of Tasmania's remaining wilderness areas intact and free from further intrusions from hydro-electric, mining, and forestry developments. Encouraging a more rational and orderly approach to town planning in North-West Tasmania.

Methods

FOE Burnie is actively engaged in a wide range of environmental issues, seeing its main role as raising awareness of such issues in a rather conservative part of the country. Methods employed include use of the local media, conventional lobbying of politicians, holding public meetings with guest speakers, films or slides and occasional "less conventional" media events.

Past activities

A campaign to highlight the undesirable environmental effects of several local industrial plants, selling "alternative postcards" which detailed the various noxious pollutants emitted and showed their ugliness.

Organisation of public objections to the siting of a proposed housing estate at a popular local beauty spot (it collected a state record number of objections).

Marches and demonstrations to protest against mining and export of uranium.

Future Plans

Campaigns to have local councils, and eventually the State Government, declare nuclear-free zones. An attempt to have the Leven Canyon area in North-West Tasmania declared a national park.

Help needed

Primarily, more members, to share work of letter-writing, and organisation of events.

Resources/services available

Mutual support and assistance; distribution of *Chain Reaction* and local FOE newsletter; a small but useful collection of environmental information.

ACTION GUIDE



Aboriginal Mining Information
Centre
5 Candy Street
Northcote Victoria 3070
Telephone (03) 419 8700

Current objectives

Primarily to service the Aboriginal communities affected by mining development. Secondly, to engage in a public education campaign on issues of government and corporate responsibility, to recognise the rights of Aboriginal peoples to own and control their traditional lands. Thirdly, to counter propaganda of the Australian Mining Industry Council, a group lobbying against Aboriginal Land Rights.

Methods

Monitoring the movements of mining companies, researching the impact of mining and informing Aboriginal communities. Attending company annual general meetings to ask questions on social responsibility.

Past activities

A working group responded immediately to the police state tactics of the WA Government and the consequent drilling on Noonkanbah by holding two demonstrations and a 3 day vigil at St. Pauls Cathedral in Melbourne. Produced a Noonkanbah poster and leaflet and raised approx. \$2,000 which was sent to the Kimberley Land Council.

Future plans

Involvement in the alternative Development Without Destruction Conference in Cairns early October 1980 to be held concurrently with Peterson /Court Conference on Development. Production of a series of posters and leaflets and resource material on mining activities and Aboriginal Rights.

A Black Educational Resources Kit for schools is already under way.

Help needed

Researchers, writers, fund raisers, paper clippers and typists. We need your proxy to attend Company Meetings. Donations to carry on our work.

Resources available

A bi-monthly newsletter. Basic mining industry publications, files on companies and industry and on Aboriginal communities affected. Speakers available. Badges and stickers for sale.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH MEMBERSHIP FORM

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I have access to these resources which may be of use to FOE

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Return to your nearest state group (see list right).

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BATHURST: Sandy Ruecroft, 155 Piper Street, Bathurst 2795.

BLUE MOUNTAINS: John Baker, 94 Waratah Street, Katoomba 2780.

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GRAFTON: Celia Smith, 29 Banksia Street, Grafton 2460. Telephone: (066) 44 5405.

LAKE MACQUARIE: Tony Dybell, 27 Martin Avenue, Floraville 2280. Secretary Mrs J Pearey, PO Box 187, Toronto 2283.

LISMORE: Norm MacKay, C/- Northern Rivers CAE, Lismore 2480.

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NOWRA: P Auld, PO Culburra, 2540.

RANDWICK: 129 Boyce Road, Maroubra 2035. Telephone: (02) 349 7263, (02) 344 7269.

RICHMOND: c/- John Smith, Scheyrille Campus, Hawkesbury Agriculture College, Richmond 2753.

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NORTHERN TERRITORY

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QUEENSLAND

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MANLY: PO Box 20, Manly 4179.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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PORT PIRIE: Ms Ali Fricker, C/- PO Box 7, Port Pirie, 5540. Telephone: Port Germein (086) 34 5269 or Bert King, 143 Balmoral Road, Port Pirie 5540. Telephone: (086) 32 1173.

TASMANIA

HOBART: C/- The Environment Centre, 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart 7000. Telephone: (002) 34 5543.

BURNIE: PO Box 350, Ulverstone 7315. Telephone: John Gillett (004) 35 7384.

DEVONPORT: PO Box 613, Devonport 7310 and MAUM, 6 Eugene Street, Devonport 7310. Telephone (004) 24 5396.

LAUNCESTON: Launceston Environment Centre, 103 Wellington Street, Launceston 7250.

VICTORIA

VICTORIAN RESOURCE CENTRE: 366 Smith Street, Collingwood 3066. Telephone: (03) 419 8700.

BENDIGO: PO Box 60, Eaglehawk, 3556.

ELTHAM: Robyn Frazer, PO Box 295, Eltham 3095. Telephone: (03) 439 1452.

GLEN WAVERLEY: Rob Martin, Telephone (03) 88 3784 or Mick McKeon 6 Fellows St, Hughesdale. Telephone (03) 56 3243.

HAWTHORN: Rob Harris, 30 Harts Pde, East Hawthorn 3123. Telephone: (03) 82 8800 or Ray Radford. Telephone: (03) 819 4105.

LATROBE UNIVERSITY: Environment Resource Centre, LaTrobe University Union, Bundoora 3083. Telephone (03) 478 3122 ext 2456.

MITCHAM: Kevin Smith, 17 Belevra Avenue, Vermont 3133. Telephone: (03) 874 6049.

MONASH UNIVERSITY: CRAC, Monash University Student Union, Wellington Road, Clayton 3168. Telephone: (03) 541 3141.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PERTH: C/- Environment Centre, 537 Wellington Street, Perth 6000. Telephone: (09) 321 5942. 321 2269

NEDLANDS/CLAREMONT: 28 Everett Street, Nedlands 6009. Telephone: *(09) 386 1522.

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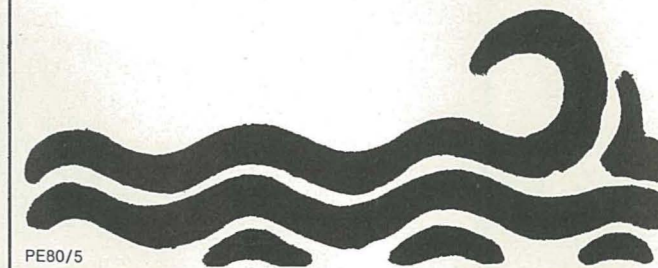
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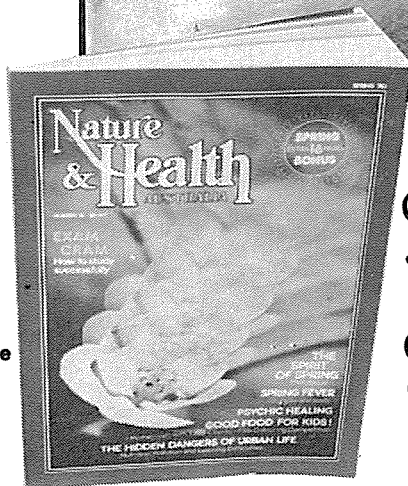
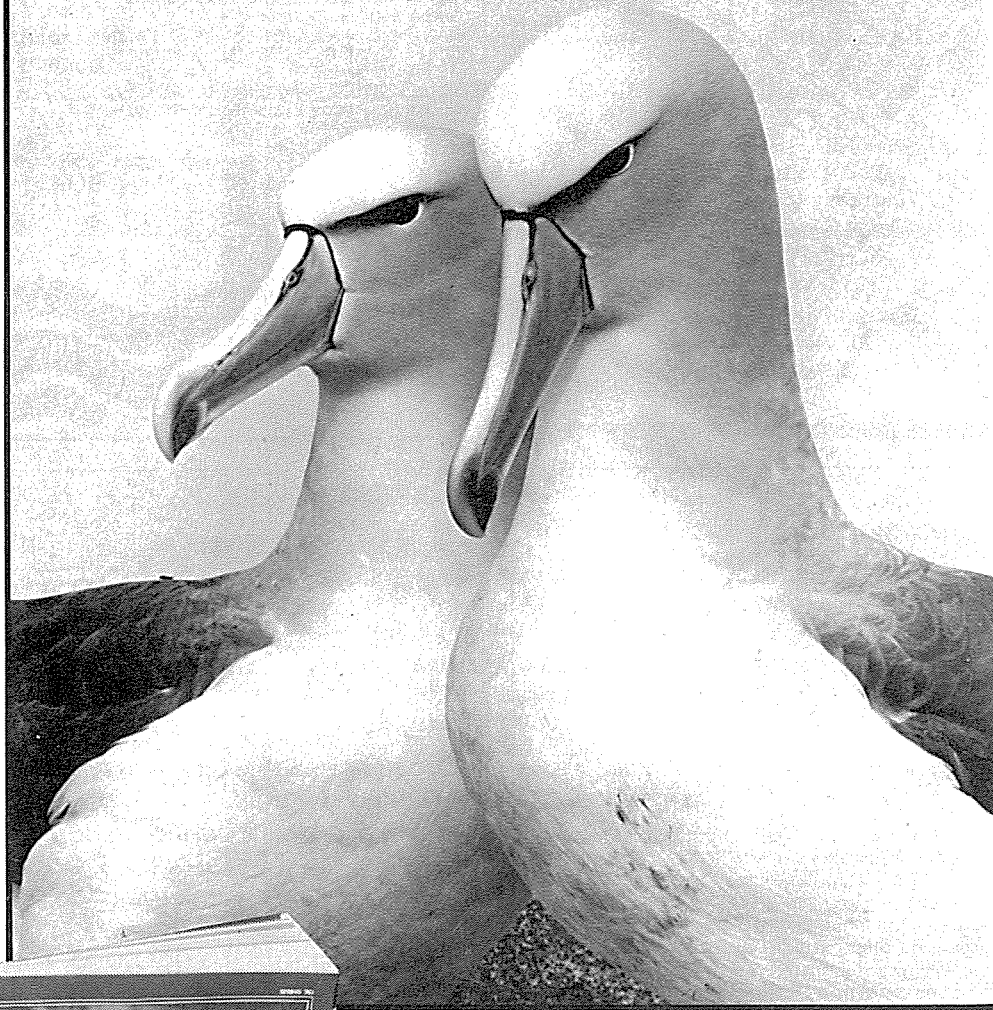
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