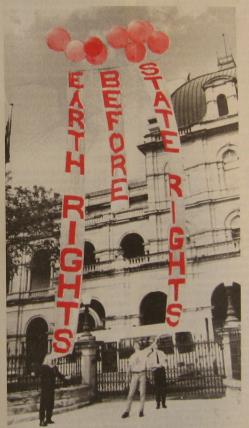


## **CONSERVATION NEWS**

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

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Photo Queensland staff summarise ACF's response to the 'New Federalism': outside the Premiers' Conference in Brisbane last Actaban

# Loggers' "Resource security" a misnomer



Executive Directors By Phillip Toyne

e Foundation is now committed o a year long involvement in the Federal Government's Ecologically Sustainable Development process. Together with Greenpeace and World Wide Fund For Nature, we will be providing two 'Greens' on each of eight different industry working groups to devise strategies aimed at producing economic activity without the enormous environmental costs seen to date.

Running in parallel with these groups is a National Population Council reference. to look at the population issue 'from the perspective of the impact on Australia's economy, environment, human service delivery, infrastructure, social equity and international obligations'. This important exercise offers an opportunity to explore the links between population and ecological sustainability. As a member of NPC, I way, am a member of the working group producing the report.

With these vital studies in train, I am disconcerted by vigorous moves on the part of industry ministers Button, Kerin. Griffiths and Crean to rush through Cabinet support for 'Resource security legislation'. The aim is to lock in Commonwealth support for mines, pulp mills and other resource ventures, by providing 'fast our environment when its protection is track' or 'once only' approvals from the Federal Government, which will be followed by blanket approvals for the life of the project.

Pressure to adopt this measure comes from the NSW and Tasmanian Governments, who in turn have been pressured by the forest industry. This follows vitriolic attacks on the Australian Heritage Commission and its register of National Estate which the forest industry claims to be an inhibition to investment and development.

We have put to the Ministers and to Mr Hawke our implacable opposition to such a 'carte blanche' approval. We object to public assets being offered to private companies at heavily subsidised rates, over years or decades, without the right of public review or scrutiny.

I have said, with feeling, that no measure to come before a Hawke Cabinet poses such a wide ranging threat to the natural environment. We will know before Christmas whether a full scale battle is on our hands. I remain optimistic that Cabinet will decide against this option, which they must see will be controversial, if only because it will torpedo the Ecologically Sustainable Development process before it gets under

I cannot leave you without commenting on our finances.

A succession of our recent appeals have failed to reach their targeted budgets and we are in urgent need of your support. Tough economic times are with us and we appreciate how hard it is to respond to frequent calls for money. It is equally true that such times pose the greatest threat to treated as an unaffordable luxury. The resource security legislation is a predict-

We do need your help, and we greatly appreciate it. We have moved to spread the load by expanding our products marketing through establishing ACF 'mini shops' inside Esprit clothing stores. The first opened in Melbourne in November and we hope to have them in 22 outlets by the end of next year. Hopefully, they will prove to be major contributors to our campaign fi-



Readers who have access to the environmental computer network, Pegasus, are encouraged to send letters and news about local environmental issues to the CN mail box, "acfen". Pegasus is a wonderful source of international and local environmental information and a great way to communicate with like-minded people. To enquire about joining, contact Pegasus Networks, Byron Bay (066)8-56789.

The next issue of Conservation News will appear as scheduled in February. However, due to budget cuts, there will be no March issue.

The ACF's latest publication, "The Ecological Future of Australia's Forests" is now available. Price \$12.50 postpaid from: ACF 340 Gore St, Fitzroy 3070. Call Carolyn Pickburn on (03)416 1455.

## Another summer in the shade

lap on your 15 plus sunscreen and a hat, and avoid exposure between 11am and 2pm when the sun is strongest. A deep hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica is again expected this year, probably occurring in late November through December. The occurrance of such a large ozone hole for two years in a row is unusual. Normally the size of the hole fluctuates on a biennial cycle, becoming larger on odd numbered years. This is thought to be controlled by wind patterns which bring ozone from the trop-

Scientific evidence pointing strongly to the increased concentration of CFCs and HFCs in the upper atmosphere as the cause of the change in the cycle, was reported to the Ozone Protection Consultative Committee, held in Hobart in November.

Industry wants to replace CFC's with HCFC's - a slightly different chemical that



destroys less ozone than CFC's and can be used in most existing equipment and processes. But HCFCs still deplete the ozone layer and are a powerful global-warming

More pressure and assistance is needed to encourage local industry to begin using non-ozone destroying alternatives to

CFC's and HCFC's - many of which already exist- and to develop new ones. This could open up new industries and markets, and benefit Australia's economy.

But, in the meantime - stay in the shade!

Carrie Sonneborn Global Change Program

## Message from the ACF Staff

like to thank members and supporters for their generosity and commitment throughout 1990 and wish you all a happy and successful

1991 is likely to be a testing year, full of change. The world-wide recession will challenge many preconceptions about how life should be in Australia - and there is likely to be more belt-tightening. The positive side of the recession is that people will be looking more carefully at how they invest their time and energy. ACF staff and members share a common vision - a world run according to ecologically sustainable principles where the environment is protected and humanitarian values prevail. Now is a time when the minds of millions of Australians are open to change for the better. Let us take full advantage of this opportunity.

On the down side, ACF's financial situation is not good. As you know, ACF depends on members and supporters for 90 percent of its income and no one has much

n behalf of ACF staff, we would money to spare. The recession has meant ceive a free ACF Wilderness Diary. that returns on our fundraising activities have been lower than usual. We have cutback all we can without actually dropping campaigns, but unless the trend is reversed, 1991 may see us unable to pursue vital campaign issues. Below are some suggestions for how you can help, without dipping further into your financial re-

Many thanks and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

> Phillip Toyne - Executive Director, Karen Alexander - Environment Manager, Rhonda Morris - Marketing Manager.

Encourage a friend to join ACF. If each of our members encourages a friend or workmate to join the Foundation, the ACF would increase it's income by more than a third. Simply use the Gift Membership Coupon on the back of this newsletter. Remember that every new ACF member signed before 31 January 1991, will re-

Sell ACF raffle tickets. The income from our raffle tickets is a major source of funds. The prizes are excellent, and the money for every ticket you sell to your family, friends and workmates, goes to help protect the en-

Organise a fundraising occasion Now that we're in the party season, consider organising one of your Christmas, New Year, or Australia Day office functions as a fundraiser for the ACF. Even small donations per head will add up. If you wish to organise a function or benefit through your workplace or club let us know. We may be able to provide an ACF guest speaker. World Environment Week in June 1991 could be a good time for this.

Donate goods and services. Perhaps your workplace can donate goods or services to the ACF during 1991. Printing and photocopying are especially needed.



he tradition of Christmas means families and friends getting together to celebrate.

My dish-washer (human male species) has never been too delighted with using plain pure soap, so for the sake of peace and the environment, I concocted this mixture using Lux soap flakes - a very pure soap

Bring two cups of soap flakes to the boil in two and a half cups of water. The washing soda is optional but it softens the water. Only boil for a few seconds; then tip the mixture into an old litre a cardboard litre milk container. The mixture will set quickly into a solid soap. Spoon or out into a soap saver like the one Grandma used to use. These are not yet available at supermarkets but can be bought for around \$2 at speciality kitchen shops and some hardware stores. The dish-washer is sure to be delighted, as this mixture froths up well and is very

For those of you with a dishwashing machine, try place of your environment-harming powder. It won't hurs the machine and it cleans the dishes well. Use vinegar in the rinse aid container or mix it in with the hicarbonate of soda to clear away any fine particles of soda. Have a happy and ecologically safe Christmas.

I am putting my house up for sale and have a stain on the ceramic shower base. The last time I used a commercial mould/file cleaner the fumes sent mereeling. Do you know of a Green alternative? Jenny, Ivanhoe, Victoria

That stain is a build up of soap scum and will come of easity if your use a metal scourer, blearbonate of sods, and a little elbow grease.

Do you know a cheap, environmentally friendly way. to polish glass- I like my glass tables smear free? A little fussy, Rose Bay, Sydney

This is an easy one borrowed from my grandmother. Use water dampened newspaper with a little vinegar on it. The water wels the table, the ink from the newsprint cleans, and the vinegar helps evaporate the residue quickly. The result -no more smear and plenty of reflection. Barbara Lord works for ACF and is the author of 50 easy things we can do to save the planet" "The Greencleaner", and "The Green Workplace". Address letters to "Safe Suds", ACF, 340 Gore.

## **Know your paper**

as many as their products as they can. While it would be batter if manufacturers accurately escribed the proportions and sources of fibre in so called "recycled" product what exactly is meant

a Post-consumer waste paper - Paper collected

Pre-consumer waste paper - Offcuts collected rom printers and envelope manufacturers, which

. All broken paper- Offcuts and leftover produced within the paper mill and put back into the

Cotton Linters - A waste product from the cotton ndustry often included in paper.

Of these, only the first can legitimately claim the title recycled". Paper made using pre-consumer waste or other waste products like cotton linters, are terable to paper made entirely from virgin fibre but it makes no sense to describe it as recycled. By definition "recycled" means that the product has already been through at least one cycle of use his consumers. ACF attempts to obtain products that use the maximum post-consumer waste. Paper like APM ReRight is good because it is made completely from post-consumer waste and so takes large volumes of paper out of the waste stream.

#### Does ACF practise what it preaches?

CF is taking a leading role in promoting increased paper recycling, with the twin aims of minimising waste and taking pressure off our forests. From time to time, members and supporters ask whether we practice what we preach in this area. The answer is, we are certainly

All waste office paper from ACF's national office is collected for recycling. Newspaper and cardboard is also col-

Our photocopiers and printers use only 100 percent post-consumer recycled

Vertical files and new orders of standard envelopes are made for recycledpaper - we are changing over as stocks runout - and we are looking for a source of recyclable window-faced envelopes and biodegradable adhesive labels for envelopes.

Conservation News is produced on 80 percent APPM recycled paper. It will be switched to ReRight as soon as it becomes technically possible to use this paper on a web press - probably within-



We are continuing to push for Australian production of a coated paper which includes post-consumer waste. With present technology, accurate colour reproduction demands the use of coated, bleached stock. For colour printing, we hope soon to be able to use a coated stock made from plantation-grown timber, bleached by a chlorine-free process.

Barly next year, Habitat will introduce a recycled stock for its non-colour pages and then move to a coated recycled stock as soon as a suitable product is available.

Our tea room prohibits disposable cups, and our toilets have cloth towels and toilet paper made from recycled paper,

Victorian Campaigns

## Green tips for Christmas

As we approach Christmas and the holiday period, our lifestyles change and new challenges confront us. Here are some ways to ensure we have an environmentally friendly Christmas,

Resist the use of disposables Where possible avoid the use of throwaway plates, cups, tablecloths and that most decadent invention, the disposable camera. Disposable nappies can be difficult to get rid of on holiday trips and are no more convenient than a sealed bucket with cloth nappies. Buy environmentally sound Christmas gifts, Obviously products purchased through the ACF catalogue help our cause - call Nicole or Shelley on (03)416 1455 for a catalogue or to place your orders. In Sydney call at one of our two ACF shops. Other organisations, such as the Wilderness Society, have retail outlets which stock gifts that promote conservation. Gifts you make yourself are often the most appreciated - try using recycled materials. Avoid over-packaged gifts and those made from rainforest timbers. For battery operated toys and appliances, try to obtain rechargeable (Arlec) or mercury free (Varta) batteries. A wide range of cards made from recycled paper is now available. The same applies to wrapping paper, Re-use wrapping. Christmas decorations and wrapping paper should be kept for re-use next year, where possible. Recycle the tree! Buying a eucalypt in a pot with a view to planting it in your garden



after Christmas is a great idea. Community Aid Abroad sell Christmas trees in some states and these are a good option. If you have a potted pine, leave in the pot - don't plant it out, Go 'Green' on Holldays. Make on Organic Gardening, available from the sure all appliances (fridges, hot water ACF bookshop). Let the lawn die off, and units) are turned off before you go away. choose native plants that can cope with our Consider a rail-based holiday or take the dry climate. Plant frees for shade. Avoid most fuel efficient vehicle possible. Many air-conditioning, either in the home or the people own cars with the power for towing, car - it's a big energy user. or four-wheel drives, that they only really need on annual holidays. For the rest of the And when you wake up late on New Year's year they are lumbered with a fuel-inefficient vehicle. It may be financially and environmentally preferable to hire the vehicle you need for the holiday period.

Get Into summer conservation. Avoid excessive water use in your garden and mulch to conserve soil moisture (newspaper can work well-see Peter Bennet's book

Day, don't forget to recycle all the empty bottles - and the corks through Safeway stores!

Peter Allan

#### "Caring for our country"

Project material and activities designed to get Australian school children thinking about landcare issues.

> Teacher's kit with over 40 student activity sheets, full colour historical poster and more. Available from the ACF Price \$20.

> > Call Peter or Anna on 416145:

#### 'Life.Be in it' and ACF: campaign for 1991

he Australian Conservation part of the campaign. The full colour calenmulti-media 'Life be in it' campaign next year. Called Every Little Bit Helps' the campaign is a joint effort between 'Life. Be in it', ACF and the celebrities will help promote 'Every little Earth Communications Office.

The campaign will promote twelve themes in 1991- one for each month. These include the need to care for the wilderness, the need to recycle and the need to ensure we have clean air and water. The first two are "Get Fit Month", and "Clean Water Month<sup>a</sup>

The 1991 'Life. Be in it' calendar will be

Foundation will be involved in a dar features the monthly themes and suggests related activities. It will be available free across Australia.

A number of well known Australian bit helps' which also has the support of New Idea, Channel Nine and Austereo.

Spokesperson Ross Woodward said There's no doubt that people have woken up to the fact that we face huge problems this campaign will help tell them what they should do as individuals and our message is that every little bit helps." ...

#### Increased support for **Antarctic World Park** proposal

he Australian and French Govemments are gaining increasing international support for their joint proposal to make Antarctica a World Park and exclude all mining activities from the continent.

The idea of making Antarctica a World Park is irresistible - it means conserving our last continental wilderness for its wilderness values, giving full protection to the flora and fauna, and creating an area of peace, free from all military activities.

The World Park proposal emphasises limited scientific research, particularly cooperative projects between scientists of different nations. Such research could provide us with crucial markers of climate change and pollution levels. The research that takes place in Antarctica will also provide valuable biological monitoring data which could be used to develop strong environmental guide-lines for all activities in the region.

Mining is ruled out because companies could not ensure that accidents like the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska would not occur. Miners would also require extensive on-shore development in ice-free areas, where bases and wildlife already compete for very limited space.

The Antarctic Treaty nations have agreed to hold a Special Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in November 1990 to discuss appropriate measures for comprehensive environmental protection. It has become increasingly clear that current mechanisms within the Treaty are just not adequate to truly protect the Antarctic environment.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the peak international environmental group (of which ACF is a member), held its annual Conference in Perth in November. On the agenda was discussion of a new conservation strategy for Antarctica. IUCN members also debated the content of their Antarctic campaign for coming three-year period.

> Margaret McDonald **Biodiversity Program**



Dr Dedee Woodside with endangered species ,Macrocarpa gigas - the Ghost, or False Vampire Bat

## Miners threaten carnivorous bats

tion of the endangered status of the Ghost Bat (Macroderma gigas), conservationists in the Northern Territory are having a hard time convincing their State Government and a local mining company that the species' existence would be threatened by a proposed gold exploration program. Also known as the false Vampire Bat, the rare creature is Australia's only carnivorous bat and has exceptionally sensitive hearing.

Following the controversial destruction of the Ghost Bats' Mount Etna colonies. Australia's known population of the species is estimated at between 4000 and 6000. Of these, 1500 roost in the Kohinoor adit at Pine Creek, two hours' drive south of Darwin. An adit is a horizontal entrance or passage in a mine. The Kohinoor adit is also a breeding site for the bats, which require very precise conditions of temperature and humidity in order to raise their

The Kohinoor adit dates from the first gold rushes of the late 1800s. Over the past 30 years the Pine Creek area has again been mined extensively for gold. A number of local ecologists believe that the adit serves protection of the Kohinoor Adit. as a refuge for bats expelled from other

espite growing national recogni- roosts in the region as a result of mining

The local gold mining company, Pine Creek Goldfields, intends to carry out an extensive exploration program involving the noisy process of percussion drilling. The company, after correspondence and meetings with local conservationists, has decided to postpone the program until the Ghost Bats' breeding season is over and the baby bats have learnt to fly. They have also undertaken to fund research and monitor the likely impacts of the explora-

In the light of the continuing decline of biodiversity in Australia, any mining activity in the vicinity of the Kohinoor adit poses an unacceptable risk. Conservationists are not confident that the state government will have the will to make the area a reserve, free from further exploration and mining, should gold be found.

Concerned ACF members may write to the Northern Territory Conservation Minister, Mr Steve Hatton, GPO Box 3146, Darwin, 0801, and to the General Manager, Pine Creek Goldfields, PO Box 66, Pine Creek, 0847, calling for complete

> Sue Jackson Top End Branch

## Aborigines show the way in catchment management

orth Queensland Aborigines are taking the initiative to protect the Mitchell River catchment, one of Australia's largest river systems The Mitchell River rises on the Atherton Tablelands, just inland from Cairns and flows west across the Cape York Peninsula to the Gulf of Carpenteria. Its catchment of 72.000 square kilometres, is larger than Tasmania.

Kowanyama is the first Aboriginal community to operate an independent Ranger Service and develop its own land management by laws. It conducts helicopter surveillance of the catchment's waterways which are funded by visitor camping fees. The community, particularly the elders,



Kowanyama ranger, Walter Parry

have begun to realise that there is a broader perspective to what white man calls environmental management. If they are to save

the beautiful lands of the Mitchell River. there is a need to look beyond the boundaries of their tribal lands.

In June this year, Kowanyama hosted the Mitchell River Watershed Management Conference. Grazing, mining, conservation, fishing and agricultural interestsmet to discuss the question of the long term management of the river and the resources of its watershed. Sandy Booth, Director of the Soil Conservation Service of NSW and Professor David Whitener, a Squaxin Indian representing his Tribal Council and the Northwest Indian Fishery Commission, provided broader interstate and international perspectives.

The Mitchell River Watershed Management Working Group is taking a co-operative approach to management. The primary aim of the Group is to build up mutual trust and to bring about sensible management of water resources.

The Mitchell River does not have the compounded problems of the already badly degraded east-coast rivers. Some say it is a relatively untouched system, but warning signs have not gone unnoticed by the aborigines. The tribal elders plan to forestall the degradation that has occured due to unplanned development, in the Murray-Darling Basin catchment and in other watersheds world-wide.

### Ballarat 'quinea pig' for uranium campaign against coal

forcing a schism in the mining industry, with uranium interests blackening the image of coal in a bid to capture the hearts and minds of the growing body of Australians concerned about the greenhouse effect.

The attempted 'greening' of uranium is part of a move to force the Government to open the doors to additional mines. The opening shots were fired in Ballarat, with the Uranium Information Centre taking out a series of hard-hitting advertisements in local newspapers and following up those ads with public presentations.

The ads portray coal as a dirty fuel that contributes enormously to the Greenhouse effect and global warming. Uranium, on the other hand, is presented as clean, safe and environmentally friendly.

Industry observers believe that the Ballarat campaign was either a pilot program for a national anti-coal campaign, or an attempt to gather positive grassroots feedback to bring into the debate about the Three Mines Policy.

Predictably, the virulent anti-coal campaign has drawn sharp criticism from the coal industry. Denis Porter, chief economist for the New South Wales Coal Association, says his organisation does not

ressure from conservationists is want a public brawl but if forced, would launch an anti-uranium campaign.

This raises the ironic prospect of an alliance between the coal industry and conservationists against nuclear energy and ura-

Derek Hampson, director of the Uranium Information Centre, says the Ballarat campaign has generated strong interest in schools and civic groups. He denies that the ads were a prelude to a national campaign against coal.

Hampson said his organisation had focussed on Ballarat because they had not been able to afford a comparable campaign in the big metropolitan newspapers.

Marketing experts are skeptical. Ballarat is often used by advertising companies and pollsters for testing new products or measuring the popularity of new concepts. This is because it is a clearly defined market, well serviced by its own print and electronic media.

Other favoured sampling areas in Australia are Adelaide and Newcastle, but neither of these places would have been suitable - Adelaide because of its proximity to Roxby Downs uranium mine, and Newcastle because of its strong links with

#### ACF opens shop in Melbourne

ACF now has a retail outlet in Melbourne. The shop, which is the first in a chain of 25 ACF shops to be opened within Esprit stores throughout Australia, is at 527 Chapel Street, South Yarra.

Esprit are known for their efforts to establish environmental awareness within the clothing industry. The stores are an answer to calls from ACF members and supporters for a retail outlet for ACF products which until now have only been available through the mail-order catalogue.

Products carried include diaries, calenders, recycled stationery, fountainpens, and an extensive range of books Lowell Sanborn on the environment.

## Editorial

n 1991, water resource issues are likely to be prominent on the political agenda. The rural crisis, the threat of drought and accelerating land degradation will help put them there. Hotly disputed will be the price paid for water and the justice of water subsidies. Less palatable to government and industry will be serious examination of the costs of water use, not just to the end user, but to the community and environment. Urbanites may have to get used to using less water and paying more for it. In turn, rural and urban industry must face the fact that some of their

practices are detrimental to the long-term security of Australia's water

Water quality is an issue capable of unifying the interests of city and country people, and bringing home to urban Australians the severity of the rural crisis. Already, in some urban centres the tap water is undrinkable. Our most economically critical watersheds are suffering the cumulative effects of two centuries of abuse. Irrigation and clearing has proceeded without accounting for the impact on water tables. Millions of hectares of prime farming land in the Murray-Darling Basin are threatened by salt and nationwide, streams are used as convenient drains. Clearly, the need for 2 profound change in Australia's water management practices is urgent.

It is to be hoped that in 1990, debate about the price of water will go beyond sectional trade-offs and lead to serious public consideration of the future of our catchments and the industries and communities that depend

on them.

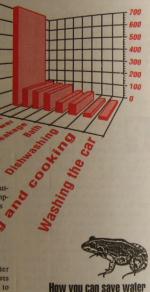
## **Water use in Australia**

ater supply in Australia, the dryest continent, has always been problematic. Australian rivers are small by world standards. The Murray and Darling rivers, our largest drainage system, carry only onethird of the Rhine's flow, and one-twentieth of the Mississippi's. Much of our water is brackish and there are considerable seasonal variations in the flow of most Australian streams. Many population centres are remote from the major water sources, so expensive delivery systems are required. Storage is also a problem: the land is often too flat for the construction of reservoirs and the hot, dry climate causes water to evaporate quickly from dams and other open reservoirs

Total water use in Australia has been estimated at 17.8 million megalitres per year- a daily use of 3500 litres per person. Of this, 74 percent is used for irrigation and a further eight percent for other rural purposes. Ten percent is for personal use in

cities, and eight percent is used by industry. In the cities, personal water consumption averages 400 litres per day. There is considerable varation across the country according to local climate and season. For example, average use in Brisbane is 649 litres per person, per day, compared to 343 litres in Melbourne. Daily water use in Perth is 490 litres per person, per day, rising to 1300 litres in summer.

An average Melbourne household which contains 3.2 people, consumes 1300 litres of water a day during summer. A little over half that total, 700 litres, is used to maintain the garden, while a further 120 litres are used to flush the toilet: 110 litres are used in the shower; 60 litres in the bath; 60 litres in dishwashing; 15 for washing the car and 20 litres for drinking and cooking. The remaining 105 litres are lost through leakAverage domestic water use in Australia: Litres per household, per day



#### **How you can save water**

Don't leave taps running. Buy water efficient shower heads - see ACF's product catalogue. Install half flush toilets

Plant native gardens that require little water Use shade trees to minimise garden water loss

Replace lawns with beds and paving Buy a water conserving washing machine - some brands use only half as much water as others

**Upstream** ≠ downstream: the politics of rivers

in Australia, the competing authority established by the boundaries of state, shire and private property often works against ecologically efficient land management. This is nowhere more evident than in the Murray River catchment where severe degradation has occured since European settlement. Clearly, natural resource management systems need to be based on natural boundaries — on the blogeographical characteristics of the land. But such systems are not easy to establish in a culture dominated by entrenched sectional interests. ACF Rural Liaison Officer, JASON ALEXANDRA, is a member of the Murray-Darling Basin Community Advisory Committee. Here, he describes some of the problems facing the Murray region and the urgent need for cooperation in finding a solution.

ecent efforts to implement an integrated management system for the Murray-Darling Basin through the activities of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission are a clear recognition by Federal Government of the need to realign political boundaries when it comes to managing natural systems. If the Murray catchment and the industries and communities that depend on it are to remain viable, local interests must learn to respect the ecology of the entire

The Murray is Australia's greatest river, rising in the hills of the Great Divide and flowing over 2590 kilometres before reaching the sea at Adelaide. The catchment of the Murray-Darling river system includes one seventh of Australia - over a million square kilometres - and includes large areas of, Queensland, NSW, Victoria. SA and the ACT. More than 20 major rivers drain the Basin, supplying water to 16 cities, including Adelaide and Canberra. Over three million people depend on this huge river system for water, and the Basin is the source of over one-third of Australia's agricultural production.

The history of European interaction with the Basin has been one of rapid development and exploitation, which has proceeded without regard for the complex interrelationship of water, soil and vegetation. Now, 200 years later, the entire region is threatened by salinity, erosion and deteriorating fertility. The farmers, and the governments who encouraged them to irrigate and clear their fields, did not foresee the consequent degradation of the Basin's environment and natural resources. And in the absence of a bio-regional understanding of the Basin's ecol-



ogy and hydrology, some of the effects of clearing and irrigation on watertables would have been hard to predict. For example, clearing of native vegetation in the Victorian highlands has contributed to the rising groundwater and salinity problems on the Riverine plain to the north.

Now that the interrelationship between soil, water and vegetation is better understood, it would be inexcusable not to modify land management and development accordingly. The history of ad hoc development without due consideration for downstream ramifications must cease. What happens in any part of the catchment affects the entire river system. Clearly, the management of water quality - controlling salt, nutrients, turbidity, and industrial and agricultural pollutants - on a basin-wide scale will require coordinated action. Appropriate assessment mechanisms for all current and future development proposals within the catchment must be devel-

oped as a matter of urgency. For example, plans to construct dams and feedlots, expand irrigation, clear extensively in the Upper Darling, or develop new industrial and urban infrastructure must come under scrutiny to determine their impact on water quality.

Ultimately it is the value urban and rural Australians place on fresh water that will determine the rigour of our pursuit of sound catchment management practices. The severe economic consequences of continued land and water degradation throughout the Murray-Darling Basin have driven State and Federal Governments to unprecedented levels of cooperation in the formation of the Ministerial Council and Community Advisory Committee of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. It is to be hoped that the urban and rural communites involved will support the initiative, and that a new era of land management will result.

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Sheep cull can help control land degradation

stralia has too many sheep ossibly, 50 million too many. Most of these, perhaps all, will be shot over the next six months by wool producers facing their lowest returns in decades and a four million bale plus wool stockpile; more than a year's production.

Farmers don't like shooting sheep and urban dwellers see nothing but senseless waste in the slaughter, especially when most animals end up in lime pits. But from a conservation viewpoint, the current need to rapidly de-stock vast areas of farmland is a blessing in disguise.

After two good seasons, Australia is inline for a dry summer. Already, fodder-rich paddocks are starting to wilt, and with the prospect of an El-Nino-inspired drought looming, the summer of '90 -'91 could well be long, hot - and perfect for wind and the Murray Darling Basin. This is to be water erosion.

Climate aside, no-one really knows if (the current flock size). Some conservationists have suggested that Australia's carrying capacity is 130 million, but CSIRO scientists from the division of wildlife and ecology argue it will take another two to three years of research to speak with any authority. Even with such doubts, it is fair to assume that the nation has too many hard-hooved animals for the be, over the medium term, both economigood of the environment.

ACF has recently lent its support to destocking the Box Ironbark hill country of sector alternative uses for marginal coun-



applauded, but much more can be done.

Distastful as the sheep cull no doubt is, Australia can sustain 180 million sheep it is a practical solution because of its potential long-term benefits in the fight against land degradation. Greens can and should make farmers and graziers think about why the national flock is too large and what can be done to stop it getting that

Now is the ideal time for people to spread the message that lower stocking rates can cally and ecologically productive.

Now is the time to explore with the rural

try, and to strengthen the links forged by ACF's alliance with the National Farmers' Federation on land degradation.

At some point the Green debate in this country has to become more sophisticated. Green advocates and farmers have to develop greater understanding and explore the areas where agreement can be reached; where both groups can help each other.

The sheep cull is an ideal place to start. As the corporate managers would say, it's a win-win situation. We shouldn't waste it. Peter Fray

Peter Fray is co-author of The Vanishing Continent, Australia's Degraded Environment, published recently by Hodder and Stoughton.

### NSW Government policy fails to protect coast

ne NSW Government's new coastal policy, released last September, is unlikely to prevent the inappropriate development and creeping urbanisation which is the biggest threat to the coast.

The policy contains few initiatives and is significantly weakened by the use of mechanisms such as 'guidelines' and 'recommendations', which do not require local councils and developers to comply.

'Coast' is defined by the policy as one kilometre inland, which does not cover

vital coastal systems such as estuaries, coastal lakes, lagoons and wetlands. Environmentally-damaging practises such as the construction of canal estates, sand mining and subdivision will be allowed to continue, with limited constraints.

The most effective way to protect our remaining natural coastal land is to expand existing coastal and marine parks. If you would like to seethis, write to Premier Griener demanding a coastal policy which genuinely protects this magnificent part of our natural heritage.



orth Stradbroke Island is situated ust 40 kilometres from the Brispane city centre. One of several major sand islands on the southeast coast of Queensland, it has an area of 27.250 ha and a permanent population less than 3000. Of these, around 10 percent are aborigines. The island is very beautiful and attracts many tourists. Spectacular surf beaches stretch for 35 kilometres along the eastern coast which is cocooned by rocky headlands at Point Lookout. The west coast is wave-protected and is a popular boating and recreational fishing area. Several fresh-water lakes occur on the island. The sand dunes are covered by dense

vegetation, with eucalypts, cypress pines, ti trees and banksia predominating.

The battle of the island's three aboriginal communities to preserve the ecological values, cultural heritage, and tranquillity of their traditional land has been frustrating and long. Sand mining began on North Stradbroke in 1950. Today, Consolidated Rutile and Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI) have some 65 percent of the island under sandmining lease. Opinions on the revegetation program run by the miners vary. It is considered the best in the world by the miners. However, erosion has been a problem, and in 1982 a massive landslip dumped tonnes of mined sand onto mangroves and seagrass beds in Moreton Bay. Another shortcoming is that the revegetation has not always comprised local species, so the genetic diversity of the island's flora has been altered.

Environmentalists and Aborigines have joined forces to counter the latest threat. The Queensland Government and the sand mining companies have been negotiating a 'conservation package' for North Stradbroke Island. ACI wants a 1.15 kilometre sand loading conveyor belt and jetty facility in the sensitive Myora area, and extra sand mining leases close to the new loading site. In return ACI will relinquish one existing lease to extend a national park.



A sand mining dredge working the beach front on North Stradbroke Island

## **Paradise mislaid**

However, the conservation values of the land to be traded are of lesser significance than the land ACI wants. Of the five leases requested by the mining companies, one runs through a fish habitat reserve; one overlaps a wildflower reserve; one covers the headwaters and catchment area of the Myora wetlands; and another is uncomfortably close to the Blue Lake National Park. Moreover, the Myora wetlands and swamplands are an important cultural site for the Aboriginal Community on the island and include sacred sites that are an integral part of their heritage. The 'national park' lease to be relinquished by ACI does not compensate for the loss of these significant areas. Commercial and recreational fishing - mangrove loss affects the fish

The management of North Stradbroke Island has been dominated by extractive industries to the detriment of its environment and the lifestyle of its inhabitants. In planning the islands future, ecological and social systems need to be given as much emphasis as purely financial considerations. The sand miners' 'conservation package' must be reassessed on the basis of a review of alternative sites through an enlightened environmental impact study process involving consultation with all relevant interest groups.

Rosey Crisp

Seminar on Endangered Species Legislation

The Seminar will examine current legislation and proposed initiatives to develop a nation-wide endangered species and habitat strategy. Sydney. Monday 10 December, Royal Botanic

Enquiries: Jackie Wurm (02) 261 3599.

National Labour Day Song Awards Two awards are being offered for original songs relating to working life and trade union issues along the theme of Working for a Sustainable Future.\*

Melbourne, Closing date: Friday 8 February, 1991. Enquiries: Sian Prior (03) 662 3511.

#### Seminar on ESD

The seminar will address the term 'Ecologically Sustainable Development' and examine the social, economic and political ramifications in straight forward terms.

NSW. Saturday and Sunday 23/24 February 1991. Newcastle University, Hunter Valley. Enquiries: Malcolm Martin (049) 388065.

#### One Billion Trees

Greening Australia is raising money for the planting of trees through the sale of 'Tree Certificates', available at State Bank for \$5.

Tropical Environment Summer School Two week intensive courses (Masters level) and three day courses are being offered addressing a range of current environmental issues. Townsville, January-February 1991, James Cook University of North Queensland. Engiries:

Harry Abrahams (077) 81 4831.

### NEW BOOKS

As is usual at this time of year, we have many more more exciting new titles than we have space to describe in this column. David Suzuki's new book, "it's a Matter of Survival", based on his popular radio series of the same name is essential reading. "The Australian Food Additive Decoder" is handy translator of food additive codes perfect for avoiding the more toxic products when shopping and a great gift.

#### Fraser Island and Cooloola.

J Sinclair (text) and R Morrison (Photog): Weldon, 1990. 256pp Price \$39.95

Fraser Island and nearby mainland Cooloola - the Great Sandy Region together form the greatest sand mass in the world. Breathtaking aerial and ground photographs highlight the fragile nature of this region which continues to be threatened by logging, mining and inappropriate tourism.

#### It's a Matter of Survival. A Gordan and D Suzuki: A & U. 1990. 278pp

Despite the bleak scenario they describe of rising sea levels, food scarcity and millions of homeless, the authors remain optimistic about the future. This is dependent upon tough choices that must be made about the world's energy consumption, fossil-fuel exhaust emissions, wilderness destruction and population

#### The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics.

R Nash: Prima Vera/TWS, 1990.290pp Price

With a foreward by Bob Brown, this book discusses various aspects of the rights of nature through philosophical, legal and theological arguments. Viewed from an American perspective, Nash shows how an expanding concept of rights came to include women, indians, labourers, blacks and endangered Species, and that this path has also been followed by Australian community groups and lawmakers.

#### The Rest of the World is Watching. C Pybus and R Flanagan (eds): Sun, 1990, 271pp

The title, a quote from Christine Milne, sums up the importance of the green experiment in Tasmania, culminating in the Greens' rise to win the balance of power in 1989. Collected here are the thoughts of Green activists, politicians, commentators and writers, providing an insight into this Tasmanian movement.



#### Trees for Rural Australia KW Cremer (ed): Inkata/CSIRO, 1990.455pp Price

A comprehensive and well illustrated reference dealing with all aspects of choosing and planting trees in rural Australia. Covers choice of site and species, protection from weeds, pests and the elements; maintaining, thining and harvesting plantations. An excellent tool for anyone concerned with tree-planting projects.

#### The Australian Food Additive Decoder Kr K Short: Dynamo House, 1990. Price \$6.95

FOOD

ADDITIVE

DECODER

An easy to use pocket-guide to the food additives found in processed foods. The purpose of each additive and its relative health risk can be quickly referenced on a color coded wheel.

#### Save the Dolphins.

M Donoghue and A Wheeler: H&S, 1990, 119pp

Both a celebration of the wonder of this creature and a plea to save its many endangered species. Superb photographs illustrate the dolphins' freedom but also document the various threats they face, such as, wall of death'nets, hunting, and pollution

#### Green Connections.

Conservation Council of Victoria, 1990. 103 pages price \$7.00

A full list of environmental groups in Victoria. Do you want to help save the Ninety-Mile Beach, become involved with Project Joah or join Friends of the Prom. Provides phone numbers, meeting times and other relevant information.

Please contact ACF Books Coordinator, Gary Wardrope, for further information on these and other environmental titles. Write to ACF's Melbourne office, 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy 3065, or phone (03) 416 1455 (Toll free: (008) 338 928).

## Send cheque with order to ACF Conservation Books, 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy, 3065, ACF

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#### WATCHING BRIEF

WATCHING BRIEF is Australia's only national current affairs programme covering peace and the environnent. For one hour a week on over thirty public radio stations around Australia, WATCHING BRIEF examnes the issues, the campaigns and the political context of the conservation movement.

If you are concerned about the environment, tune in to WATCHING BRIEF.

#### BROADCAST TIMES

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WATCHING BRIEF is one hour long, except: (1) - first half hour only (2) - second half hour nly (r) - repeat \* - included in the local gramme, PMO (Programme Material Only) laterial is played at unspecified times throughout day. WATCHING BRIEF can be contacted on tel: (03) 417 7304

## **Green grants for schools**



Teachers Notes

By Peter Preuss

school grants program was a major initiative of the Victorian Environmental Education Council (VEEC) this year. Some 80 schools around the state received between \$2,000 and \$5,000 each to support environmental education projects.

Some very exciting projects have resulted. with recycling programs, alternative technology activities and landcare support projects being established by schools throughout Victoria. Successful grant application tended to be for projects and activities which some way or another went bevond the school, involving the broader local community or cooperation with other schools.

The most exciting projects are those

which, as a result of the 'seeding' grant will grow and become self-funding. For example, the students at Merivale Primary school in Warrnambool, angry over the Council's decision to scrap a paper recycling program, set up their own paper recycling business. A \$2,000 grant helped the school to found the Triple R Paper Company -the name stands for "Reduce - Reuse - Recycle". The school curriculum, (art, maths, english, economics, science) is now very much tied into the business of recycling paper. Students transform waste paper into beautifully coloured stationery, and other products which they sell to re-invest in the company.

paper for recycling

A country mile down the road, the

Warmambool Primary School has received a grant to build a greenhouse. Already very active in community landcare and regeneration projects, students can now propagate their own indigenous seedlings.

A third project brings the local secondary community school into the picture. Its students are collecting seeds from endangered indigenous plants of the region - this involves lots of tree climbing! The rare seeds will find themselves sprouting to life in the Warrnambool Primary School greenhouse before being planted out with

the protection of a Triple R paper company recycled newspaper mulch pad.

With the help of children from these three schools, the local community and the VEEC seeding grant, the bald hills and erroding dunes of the Warrnambool district may yet be returned to their natural state. Projects like these are being instigated Merivale Primary School students collect throughout the state. Most will

become self-funding and self-generating, providing examples to other schools and community groups that have not yet attracted funding.

Another round of Victorian environmental education grants will be available early in 1991. This time, money will also be available for non-school based environmental education projects. Contact me at the ACF Melbourne office for further details (03) 416 1455.

Interstate members may like to put pressure on their state education departments. Tell them about Victoria's Environmental Education Grants and lobby for similar initiatives.

#### Severely upset about amendments

Paul Spencer. Alphington, Victoria

I am severely upset about the treatment of the members by the ACF managment in regard to the presentation of the ammendments to the ACF Constitution. The

choices that the membership are entitled to are excellent, but also it is obvious that some of the amendments are doubtful. How dare the ACF proceed with this arrogant take it or leave it attitude. Its like inviting guests to a dinner and then demanding that they eat every single scrap on their plate, or leave without eating at all.

When it becomes apparent that a large number of members have not bothered to vote, I suggest that it will represent members who are severely pissed off with the ACF. Unless the ACF gets in touch with its membership it will continue to make mistakes like that at Corowa. I urge members to voice their disapproval at the forthcoming AGM.

The ballot has since been declared invalid. See November CN, page two.

## ACF should reject high temperature incineration

Dr Stephen Gulliford Corowa, NSW

While as an ACF member I totally support much of the excellent work ACF does, I am becoming increasingly encerned at ACF's position in support of the High Temperature Incinerator (HTD).

Jane Elix reported how ACF still "maintain that high temperature incineration is the safest way" to dispose of the intractable

It astounds me that ACF can still say this, despite the considerable evidence to the contrary from the US, EPA Advisory Board, from researchers and from case histories of other HT Incinerators around the world.

The Task Force in recommending incineration has largely ignored or glossed over many of the dangerous defects in HTI. These problems on toxic stack emissions, fugative emissions, residues and totally inadequate monitoring and control procedures are well documented. No wonder the US, EPA advisory board say "EPA should evaluate the possible long-term consequences to human health of a continuing program of hazardous waste incineration".

Perhaps the Task Force can be partly excused for recommending HTI since they were no doubt under political pressure to come up with something in the time allotted. The ACF should know better. I had thought the ACF to be an astutely aware and critical animal. Why then has it chosen to blatantly ignore the huge and growing technical evidence against HTI?

My only explanation is that unfortunately ACF has also become one of those lumbering political animals for whom political honour is more important that an about face.

However an about face is exactly what is required. Financial support for alternative technological research and safer storage facilities in the interim should be the number one priority.

Dr Samual Epstein on his recent visit to Australia said "it (HTI) is an inherently unsafe and unforgiving technology for which there is absolutely no basis or justification for using, whatsoever, under any circumstances."

The ACF should reconsider their position on High Temperature Incineration in Australia.

#### Convert US bases into world ecology University

Margaret Dwyer. Balmain, NSW

The conversion of the US Naval Station at Subic Bay in the Phillipines into a World University of Ecology seems like an idealist's dream, especially if one knows that the US Base occupies over 12000 acres of long established tropical rainforest and marine habitats where many species, now rare, survive. Moreover, the rainforest is relatively undamaged and occupies some twothirds of the leased site.

Hearnt of the plan from two of its proponents during their visits to Australia in September. It seems to me that, if conservationists around the world supported the scheme, such a World University of Ecology could become a reality.

A Phillipines Government Council for the conversion of the US Bases has been in existence for some time. The 'Sydney Morning Herald' Sept 15, 1990, p13 published a report from Washington saving that, owing to the end of the cold war, the US is ready to begin phasing out its military bases in the Phillipines.

The rainforest and marine habitats within the Subic Bay Naval Station are ideal for a "debt for nature" swap. This would involve International environment groups and universities buying discounted Phillipine foreign debt papers; these papers could then be exchanged for rainforest land to be protected by the International group in collaboration with the University of the Phillipines and other Fillipino part-

#### Correction

Joan Staples was not ACF NLOwhile coordinating the Greens' election campaign in Tasmanian, as was implied in November CN due to an editorial error. She was ACF NLO from 1983 to 1987. The Minister assisiting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women is Wendy Fatin, not Latin. My appologies to all concerned.

# New branch for the wild north

ACF branch has been estabished in the Top End of North Australia. The branch will encompass the region from Darwin to Tennant Creek in the Northern Terri-

There has been considerable support amongst members for the need to create a branch that can attempt to address some of the problems facing the Top End, increase local community awareness of environmental issues and ensure that our voice is heard in policy formulation occurring in the southern states.

VICTORIA

or Environment Centre (060) 212 627 (bh)

Marty Greig (060) 215 837 (bh)

Barry Golding (053) 456 343 (ah)

Albury-Wodonga

**Diamond Valley** 

There are a host of environmental problems facing the Top End including uranium mining, land degradation, pollution from mines and management of National Parks and nature reserves. With a Government whose leader opens a mining industry conference with the proud claim that "the NT is a quarry and cattle-run for the rest of Australia" you can see that we will all have our work cut out for us.

The ACF Top End Branch will hold its first Annual General Meeting on Thursday 7 February 1991, at eight pm in Room Six, Building 18 at the Casuarina Campus of the

bearers will be elected. During 1991, the branch will be holding monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month.

## Keep this date free

ACF's 25th Birthday celebration picnic Sunday 24 February, 1991

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#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Adelaide Nele Findlay (08) 276 8652 (ah)

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

Lawrie Rigg (03) 434 6685(ah) or Illawarra Lynda Kriflik (042) 941441(ah) David Haynes (051) 955 462 (ah) or Angela Sydney

Gilbert (051) 746 037 (ah) Mullum (Eastern suburbs, Melbourne) Shoalhaven

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

Geoff Conway (057) 221 737 (ah)

Max Phillips (055) 233 023 (ah) Sunraysia Mallee

Lynda Prior (050)234473 Jan Denham (050)279 249 Wimmera

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

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Adrian Colley or Marilyn Palmer (097) 218 148

David Churches (097) 342 405(ah)

Garth Kelsey (09) 22944597 (ah) South-Coast Branch

Lawrence Emery (098) 451 042

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

Blue Mountains Terri Hamilton (047) 824 554 Central Coast Greg Roberts (043) 822 483 (ah) Hunter Region

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

Pat Van Steenwyth (044) 23 2138 Northern Riverina

Brony Mason (069) 75 9338

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Central Australia Matthew Guggisberg (089) 526 782 (bh) Top End David Cooper (089) 812532 (ah) Sue Jackson (089) 855240 (ah)

#### QUEENSLAND

Atherton Tablelands Virginia Simmons (070) 958 302 (ah) Brishane Ken Perkins (07) 857 4181(ah) Mary River Magdalena Steffens (071) 29 2211 **Gold Coast** Greg Owens (075) 386 877 Kakadu Sue Clough (03) 726 5245 (ah)

### ACT Caroline Le Couteur (06)2823579(ah)



#### **CAMPAIGN GROUPS**

MELBOURNE Cape York Campaign Group -Margaret McDonald (03) 416 1455 (bh) Membership Campaign Group -Trish Brawn (03) 416 1455 (bh)

#### BRISBANE Cape York Campaign Group -Mark Horstman (07) 229 7715

SYDNEY Atmosphere Campaign Group -Sue Salmon (02) 247 1497 (bh) Forest Campaign Group -Bridget Berry (02) 247 4285 WESTERN AUSTRALIA Lesueur Campaign Group -Colma Keating (09) 368 1562



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Offers applies to full membership and is not available to concession members.

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Complete and return the enclosed order coupon (see inside) or call the raffle hot line on (008)338928 or (03) 416 1455.



Drawn: 8 February, 1991. Please note: we cannot mail raffle books out to you after 4 January, 1991. "Unfortunately SA law prevents its residents from selling raffle tickets.

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