

October/November 1993



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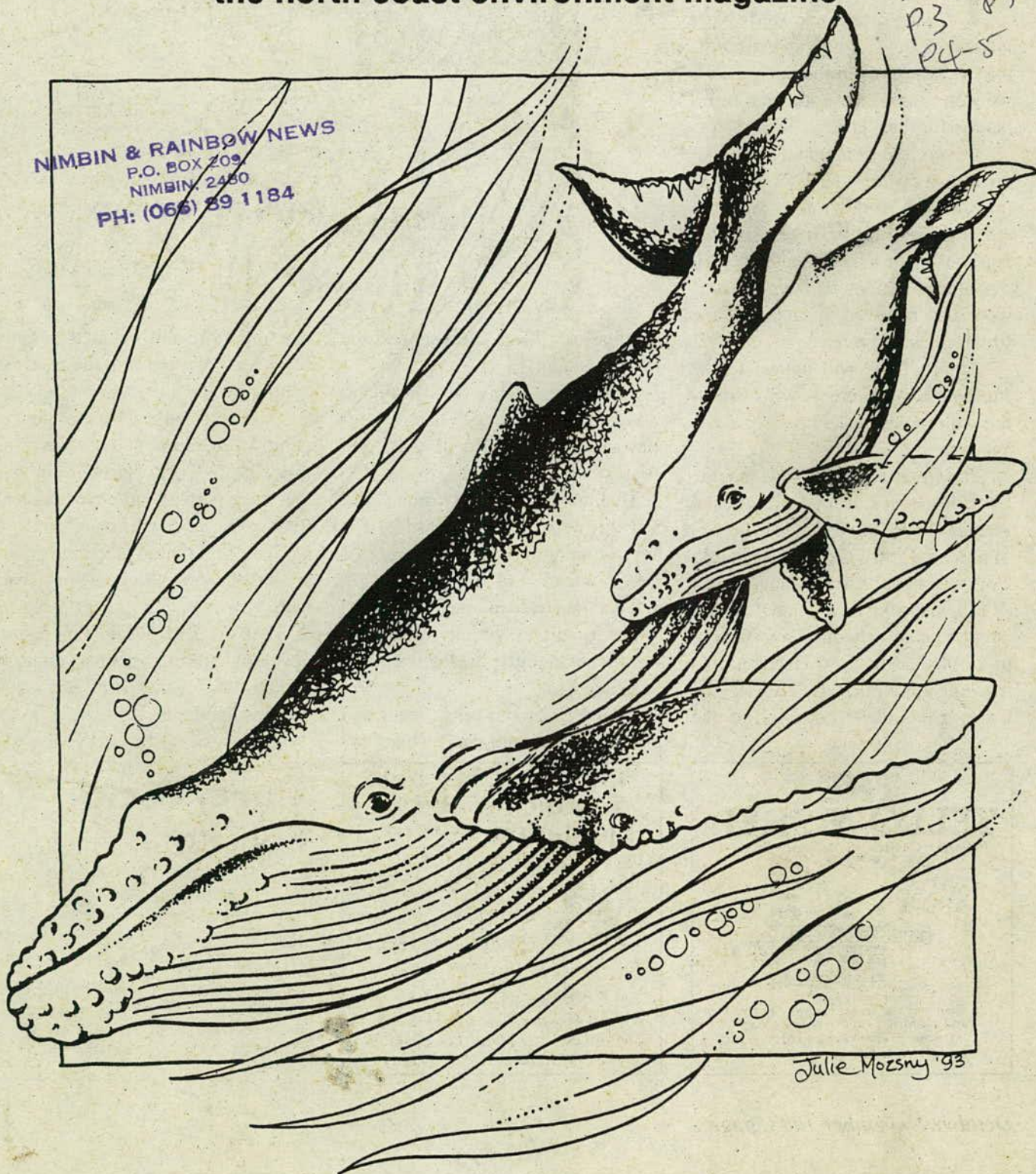
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THIS ISSUE: ● Coffs outfall - court result, ● NEFA Peace Plan
● How safe is *Dolphin Safe?*, ● Contaminated land still on sale.

the north coast environment magazine

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Julie Moesny '93

Look At Me Now Headland Outfall- Court Case Winning or Loosing?

The Coffs Harbour Environment Centre lost its court case over Look At Me Now Headland, but: "it was an extraordinary decision, even though we lost, we won", said Dee Wallace spokesperson for the CHEC.

"Every environmental issue that came up we won." All disputed questions of fact in this matter were resolved favourably to the Coffs Harbour Environment Centre Inc. All disputed questions of law, bar one, were also resolved in favour of the Environment Centre.

"The CHEC will appeal to the supreme court where we will be dealing with issues of the law", said Ms Wallace.

The Court made findings that the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 21 (LEP21) was made in breach of numerous provisions of the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan (REP), all of which related to the environmental or heritage significance of Look-At-Me-Now Headland. In reaching these findings of breach, the Court concluded (contrary to the

submissions of the Minister and the Local Council):

1. That Look-At-Me-Now headland was a significant area of natural vegetation for the whole of the north coast of NSW.
2. That the Council and Minister did not zone the Headland for environmental protection, but for development.
3. That the Headland had scenic and visual qualities which made it a significant topographic feature of the coastline.
4. That LEP21 did not protect and preserve those significant features and

that therefore the Council and the Minister had ignored them in rezoning it.

5. That the Headland was an item of natural, ecological and aesthetic significance to Coffs Harbour and was therefore part of the environmental heritage of the north coast.
6. That LEP21 diminished and downgraded the protection of the Headland.
7. That the LEP21 did not restrict development to minimise environmental risks or the visual impact on the Headland; and



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The pesticide reduction program

In response to a growing concern within the community about the potential dangers and effects of 'pesticides' on human health and in the environment, the Pesticide Reduction Program, (PRP) has been formulated to give local councils across Australia a means by which they can adequately start to address these concerns. By participating in the PRP, councils will be taking a responsible role in pollution prevention.

The term 'pesticides' in this program relates to herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, termiticides, cleaning agents, rodenticides and the full range of potentially toxic

substances used to control or kill all types of 'pests'.

Many environmental, scientific and medical researchers have wanted pesticide reduction to be not just on the agenda for discussion, but a necessary step that must be taken as soon as possible to prevent

more pollution or human health problems from continuing to grow at an alarming rate. Time is of the essence. This program has been formulated in an attempt to gain a firm commitment by local councils to take the first step towards acknowledging their duty

to long term reduction in pesticide usage.

Many groups of concerned individuals have constantly been requesting a phase-out or ban on aerial spraying of pesticides. The PRP will finally address this issue. Councils who sign the PRP will be urged to observe "the precautionary principle" and to act with all due care to respect the rights of those unfortunate people who may already be suffering from immune system, depression or chemical sensitivity and cannot afford the health risk associated with further toxic exposures.

source: TAG Inc
for more information
contact PO Box 410,
Dorrigo 2453.



else does the Australian Koalas Foundation do??

would get royalties."

So what is the Australian Koala Foundation doing?

The AKF wants to set up a Koala Atlas using donated computer software to map sensitive koala habitat along the Eastern Coastline which they will sell to Councils.

Why are they duplicating work being carried out by the National Parks & Wildlife Service? For whose benefit?

"This year Brownies all over Australia raised \$60,000 for the AKF.

School children throughout the country have sold gum leaves and worked hard to raise funds for the AKF," said Ms Arnold.

"The AKF has done a great job marketing the koala, in chocolates, on rice packets, dolls, souvenirs, selling its logo to business", she said. "In fact marketing seems to be the primary focus of the Foundation.

"The AKF needs to be made accountable to the public for its funds, its focus and its direction.

"The koalas are too important to

be left to a high profile Foundation which, on the face of it, is cashing in on the koala, not only in Australia but internationally.

"There is no evidence that the AKF has saved one square inch of habitat anywhere, much less responded to requests for help which would have directly and immediately saved koalas at risk.

for further information call:
Sue Arnold 066 853633





AN AGRICULTURAL DAM...

On Thursday May 6th, at a meeting of Nambucca Shire Council, RossCo Earth-moving principle and employees awaited their fate over the construction of a dam (lake) on a property approx 15km west of Bowraville on the North Arm Road.

Mr Ross has a contract to excavate an agricultural dam on this property (owned by Mr Robert Argent). He is also contracted to supply dam spoil material to Cooks Constructions Pty Ltd who won the contract on the deviation of the Pacific Hwy at Allgomeria. Construction of the dam and sale of the spoil together represent a million dollar plus venture. At the meeting, Council was considering a move at halting the operation until a formal Development Application (DA) was submitted.

RossCo had argued that a DA was not required because the project was

primarily for the construction of the dam for agricultural purposes with disposal of the spoil ancillary to the dam construction. (Loophole).

Council first moved to require a DA for the project after a private "in-committee" debate in mid-April. It changed its mind with a 5 to 4 vote to rescind the original decision at a special meeting after RossCo presented Council with legal opinions and a letter from the Deputy Director of the State Planning Dept, Mr Sam Haddad, stating that if the project was subsumable a DA was not needed.

The legality of the decision was of main concern to Crs Orrego and Mayze. Cr Orrego said, "the facts and the degree of excavation mean that the extractive activity is a use independent of a dam and must therefore be the subject of a DA and EIS."

"We're not trying to stop the project, we are just trying to uphold the laws of the country," Cr Mayze said.

No EIS had been prepared for this construction despite the fact a ground water excavation had been applied for. Despite assurances from Water

Resources that no up-creek properties would be adversely affected in regard to water levels, there is fear that this large scale gravel extraction below river level will create a change in the overall river levels and flow, especially while the dam is filling and during irrigation by the landowner. Impacts on the environment could be caused by the creation of a dam which will be much larger than necessary for agricultural purposes. (Mr Argent is also subdividing his land).

The amount of material to be extracted and sold off is estimated at 40,000 cubic metres to be moved over a period of 17 weeks at least.

Water Resources, at an on-site meeting, did say that "down-river landowners would experience alterations in river flow". It is feared by landowners, that in the case of a major flood and the river returning to its original course, the dam wall will collapse and these properties be adversely affected by large quantities of silt.

The issue of the dam originally came before Council when RossCo volunteered to provide grading of a

Richard Laxton

B.Comm ACA (NZ)



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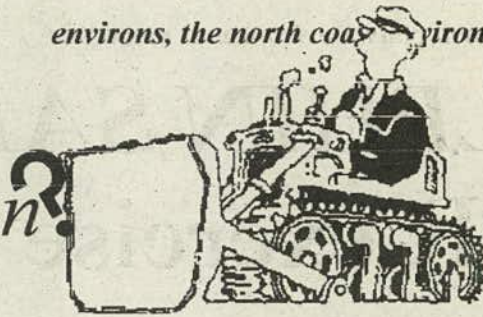
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or is it gravel extraction?



gravel section on North Arm Road to minimise disturbance to residents during haulage operations. RossCo did not seek permission for the project because they said "we did not require it". RossCo believes had it not acted responsibly and circumvented disturbance to neighbours the council would never have become involved.

Had a DA been required, it would have brought the project to a halt resulting in RossCo not being able to meet the contract to provide gravel and stone spoil for the highway project and would have left RossCo open to be sued for substantial damages for failing to fulfil their contract.

There was no advertisement in the Public Notices column in the local paper or any notification whatsoever to inform residents of the project. The only 'right thing' that RossCo has done is to attempt to grade the gravel road and their methods of doing that leave a lot to be desired. The double bogey trucks are doing an incredible amount of damage to both the gravel and tarred sections of the road. It is supposedly up to council to fix the road at the ratepayers expense whilst RossCo contributes no money to council.

The residents of North Arm Road are fed up with travelling in fear on

the road which has claimed one very serious accident involving a gravel truck and car. There have been many other near mishaps caused by drivers only concerned as to how quickly they can get the gravel out. A large school bus also uses this road.

There is a draft LEP going through the state Planning Dept which will change the requirement of a DA if the excavated material is going off the property to be sold. There will be opportunity for the public to read and comment upon it when it goes on public display in a month or so before it is approved.

S Van den Broek

Book review:

THE SEED SAVERS' HANDBOOK

by Michel & Jude Fanton

If you belong to the Seed Savers' Network you'll know what a marvellous job Michel and Jude have been doing to preserve biodiversity by encouraging people to save seeds of edible plants - some handed down for generations.

This beautiful book, illustrated by Alfredo Bonanno, tells you all you need to know to grow your own vegetables and herbs and save your seeds for next years crop. There's an alphabetical list of 117 vegetables, culinary herbs and edible flowers,

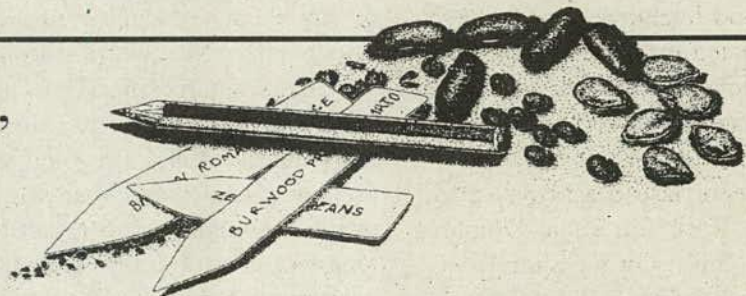
explanations of botanical names, notes on cultivation and propagation, saving the seed, how to store seed, as well as recipes and much more. The pollination table tells you which plants cross-pollinate, whether by wind or insects, how long you can safely store your seeds - even how many seeds to the gram - 1 broad bean seed or 40,000 mint seeds!

Whether you're a practising Permaculturist, a keen gardener, or about to start growing you own food, this is one of the most essential

reference books available. Where else can you find information on growing Basella, Bok Choy, Chilacayote, Guada bean, Luffa, Mizuna, Okra and Peruvian Parsnips - to mention just a few of the more unusual varieties. The usual vegies are all there too!

Contact Michel and Jude Fanton direct to order your copy.

Available for \$23 postage paid from The Seed Savers' Network, Box 975, Byron Bay NSW 2481.



DOLPHIN SAFE TUNA

..a PR exercise

On most supermarket shelves these days, tuna cans are marked as "dolphin safe". For the unsuspecting consumer, the purchase of this item is preferable to those that are unmarked, which consumers rightly suspect to be the product of destructive practices of the big tuna fishing companies.

"'Dolphin safe' is a PR ploy used by the powerful tuna industry that encourages reckless, uncontrolled fishing in most of the world's oceans and contributes to the growing global fisheries crisis," according to Traci Romine of Greenpeace. A program by tuna corporations to label canned tuna "dolphin safe" may have begun with good intentions, but has been manipulated into a sophisticated public relations "greenwash" campaign to mislead consumers, Greenpeace argues.

In a report issued last month titled, "In the Race for Tuna, Dolphins Aren't the Only Sacrifice", Greenpeace exposes the global environmental destruction to a vast array of marine creatures, including dolphins, that is caused by the unregulated and uncontrolled worldwide commercial tuna fishing fleets. The report, which sets forth a far-reaching package of reforms for the tuna industry, comes in the midst of a major United Nations conference on the crisis in the world's fisheries.

"Companies are exploiting the public concern for dolphins, without supporting the meaningful reforms necessary to rectify destructive tuna

fishing practices on the world's oceans", commented Romine.

According to the report, commercial tuna fishing, as it is currently being practised around the world, is part of a destructive trend in industrialised fishing - a trend that is contributing to the global destruction of marine life, the environment and human coastal communities.



Based upon research of tuna fishing in all of the world's tropical oceans, the report explains how purse seine fishing practices are used to target tuna, but also net - and kill - dolphins, whales and sharks in the process. Kilometre and a half-long tuna nets set on objects floating in the ocean can capture up to 40 other types of marine species in one set, most of which are then discarded.

In only one case has this rapacious industry been brought to public scrutiny: That of the plight of dolphins caught and killed in tuna nets in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. This attention forced the countries involved - the United States, Mexico and other Latin American and South Pacific nations - to develop an international program to control the Eastern Pacific fishery.

As the Greenpeace report shows, dolphins and a host of marine crea-

tures are still dying in tuna nets in alarming numbers, and that the term "dolphin safe" does not mean environmentally safe. Dolphins are, in fact, only one of the hundreds of species including sharks, sea turtles, other fish and sea birds at risk from commercial tuna fishing nets. Bycatch of non-tuna species is wasteful and destructive to the marine environment. In addition, juvenile tuna are now being caught and thrown over as waste at an ever-increasing rate.

"Dolphin safe" labelling of tuna cans is misleading for another reason: No regulations exist to require independent monitors to verify that tuna is caught in a dolphin-safe manner. What monitoring does occur has proved difficult and imprecise, with vessel inspections taking place primarily on land, not at sea.

"Tuna are a global species... crossing entire oceans in a matter of months", the report says. "Tuna fleets are global. Tuna money is global. Tuna management is not global. Unfortunately, tuna fishing is managed, where it is managed at all, in a fragmented and parochial manner, with little formal information exchange among the various management institutions."

Greenpeace concludes that global action is urgently needed to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the industry. The industry needs to be made internationally accountable both to the public and a global fishing management regime based on scientific stock assessments.

Greenpeace boycott of Norwegian products

NORWAY: WHALING AGAIN



Norway has recommenced commercial whaling in July this year it has defied the 1986 ban on commercial whaling, still upheld, by the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

Norway has an appalling history with respect to whaling and Greenpeace has claimed that since 1900 more than 350,000 whales have been butchered by that country, including almost 1000 since the International Whaling Commission implemented a worldwide ban on commercial whaling in 1986.

In the past year, Greenpeace activists have confronted Norwegian whalers at sea, staged demonstrations around the world, met Norwegian officials, lobbied the European Community to prevent Norway from becoming a member while it is whal-

ing, and much more. Now Greenpeace is organising an international boycott of Norwegian products. Everyone who cares about the future of these magnificent creatures could join in the boycott and spread the word.

Greenpeace has chosen to focus on Norwegian fish products as they are such an important export for Norway. "We know how effective a boycott can be. In 1989 Greenpeace supporters boycotted Icelandic fish produce in protests at Icelandic whaling. Iceland has not killed any whales since then."

Norway's insistence on killing whales has caused threatened trade sanctions by the US. Under the Pelly amendment, President Clinton can impose sanctions against Norway. He has until early October to make a decision. The Pelly

amendment targets any country that "diminishes the effectiveness of an international conservation agreement", even when it is acting within the letter if not the spirit of the law. The sanctions can be applied to any product, but in whaling disputes they have been restricted to fish. In the 1980's, the US banned imports of fish from Japan after Japan defied the IWC moratorium.

Some Norwegian companies would be hurt by an American boycott; one has already lost business worth \$7 million because of pressure from anti-whaling groups. The company plans to sue the Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, in the American courts for damages caused by her pro-whaling policy.

Fish products account for 14% of Norway's ex-

ports (excluding oil) and most go to other European countries. John Frizell of Greenpeace says British companies, which together buy nearly half of Norway's exported prawns, have cancelled contracts worth \$3.75 million, while German importers and retailers have cancelled contracts worth more than \$30 million.

Here in NSW, the Ulitarra Society says: "We must keep the pressure on Norway until they abandon this course. The message is simple: check the label, if it comes from Norway, DON'T BUY IT. You can also help by visiting the managers of your local supermarkets and telling them of your decision and your reasons.

sources: Greenpeace, Ulitarra Society, New Scientist No 1888

Bellingen Recycling Scheme

A co-operative effort

In October 1991 a meeting was held between the Recycling Committees of the Bellingen Environment Centre and Bellingen Shire Council. As a result of that meeting, kerbside pickup of recyclables commenced in June 1993. Residents of the townships of Urunga, Bellingen and Dorriga now have the opportunity to dispose of newspaper, glass, plastic and metal in a responsible way.

The scheme works on the "user pays" system. A small additional garbage levy pays for weekly pickup of recyclables from residents who have weekly kerbside garbage collection. Residents were issued with a fifty litre receptacle to be placed next to their bin on collection nights. These are collected by the garbage contractors and taken to the Raleigh Waste Management and Recycling Centre (formerly Raleigh Tip), where they are sorted and processed.

The Bellingen Environment Centre has contracted with the Shire to manage the Raleigh tip for a period of four years. The Centre is now run as a business enterprise and is managed by the Recycling Committee of the Environment Centre. Marie Callinan, Stuart Halford and Martin Hogan all have lifetime experience in the private sector and are well qualified in their fields. They volunteer their time and expertise.

The primary motivation of the enterprise is concern for the environment, unlike most businesses whose primary motivation is profit. Like

any business enterprise this one needed capital investment - \$100,000 was the initial figure. Bellingen Shire Council, representing residents, invested \$50,000 in building and landscaping, as well as the considerable expertise of Bob Burgess from the Health and Building Department. The balance was contributed by private investors with environmental concerns and was used to purchase plant and equipment.

The business initially depends upon receiving clean recyclable materials from residents, either by weekly pickup or delivery by out-of-towners. Three people are employed on Department of Employment Education and Training subsidy schemes and work up to thirty hours per week processing the goods received. The Management Committee are more often than not to be found working there and volunteers lend a hand too (we could always do with more!).

At the moment any shortfall between sales of goods and expenses incurred is met by private funds, however, turnover will increase as more

recyclables are generated. The Centre is capable of processing a much larger amount then will be generated locally and supplies will be sought elsewhere.

In time the enterprise will be profitable and profits which eventuate will be re-invested in the Centre or in the community via the Environment Centre.

Our Recycling Scheme is an enterprise which has drawn upon both public and private funds, and upon expertise from both sectors - a co-operative effort. Neither industry or government at any level can be expected to take sole responsibility for recycling. The ultimate responsibility is with us, the consumers, who use, and often abuse, our natural resources.

The scheme represents a voluntary approach by the community who can invest in the business of recycling by contributing time, energy, or funds, and by sorting and sending as many clean recyclables as possible.

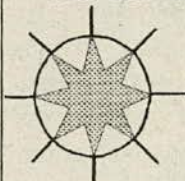
by Pamela Kerr, Recycling Education Co-ordinator, Bellingen Council and Environment Centre.

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NEFA Proposes



The North East Forest Alliance has released a peace plan titled "The Way Forward" by Dailan Pugh. Sent to a lot of politicians and all agencies concerned, it details a proposal to resolve forest conflicts in north east NSW and to ensure land use and resource allocations are undertaken in an open and balanced manner. "This isn't a program 'take it or leave it'. We want it to be negotiated upon", said a NEFA spokesperson.

"The divisive disputes over the use and management of public forests have gone on for too long. They can now only be solved by adopting an assessment process which environmentalists, the timber industry and the public can have confidence in as 'fair and genuine'", said Dailan Pugh, spokesperson for NEFA.

Mr Pugh said that to achieve a resolution of over a decade of disputes, NEFA had proposed to the Fahey Government that a balanced steering committee for north east NSW be established and funded. He said the proposal met the obligations

of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on the Environment (IGAE), the National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) and Agenda 21.

He said that this steering committee would:

- Oversee the collation of all required natural resource data;
- establish an adequate reserve system;
- identify constraints to be applied to harvesting of forests not required for the reserve system;
- compile an accurate inventory of available timber resources;
- allocate those resources to industry with consideration of community preferences.

"The steering committee is proposed to be comprised of representatives from Federal and State Government agencies, conservation groups and the timber industry. The principal requirement is that there be equal representation from conservation interests and those who profit from resource use."

Mr Pugh said that the proposal also entailed:

- balanced panels of experts to guide the process;
- local advisory panels to ensure the wishes of local people are properly accounted for; and

Peace Plan

- a complementary process to address Koori people's concerns.

"It's well past time that a process is adopted that is based on a full and proper scientific assessment of all interest groups' concerns. The Greiner and Fahey Governments have signed agreements to resolve forestry disputes and establish a 'comprehensive adequate and representative reserve system' but have utterly failed to implement them. We are demanding an open and transparent process.

"The Forestry Commission EIS process has failed to be impartial, open or to undertake adequate assessments. Despite these failings and its history of unlawful action, the Commission is attempting to make final decisions on forests' use. The Commission is setting the stage for decades of ongoing costly disputes and the loss of priceless old growth forests," he said.

Mr Pugh said that in 1989, then Minister for Forests, Garry West, had promised to establish a balanced committee in north east NSW, but had failed to deliver.

"We have given up waiting for the Government to develop a proper process and so have prepared this considered and detailed proposal for them. Should the Fahey Government reject this proposal they will send clear messages to the people of NSW that they will not honour their agreements; have no commitment to balanced, open or scientifically valid assessments; and would rather another decade of costly, divisive and escalating disputes", Mr Pugh said.

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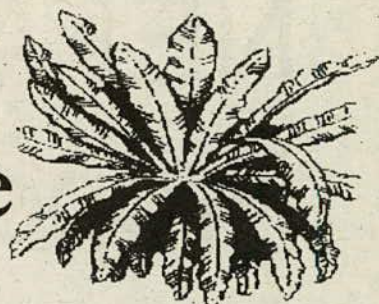
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WORLD HERITAGE

Rainforest Bungle



The re-nomination of NSW rainforests for listing on the World Heritage Register was an international embarrassment to Australia following the release of a report by the international supervising agency, the World Heritage Bureau of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), by the North Coast Environment Council Inc.

"The IUCN returned the nomination for further work, criticising the Australian government for its piecemeal approach to identifying potential sites and for omitting known rainforests which would qualify for listing", said North Coast Environment Council President, Mr Terry Parkhouse.

Sites named by IUCN but omitted from the NSW nomination are:

- the Richmond Range;
- Carrai Plateau and escarpment near Werrikimbe National Park;
- Mount Seaview Nature Reserve linking areas;
- the western slopes of Mt Hyland;

- Barrington Tops plateau links and extended boundaries.

The IUCN also sought advice as to 'any other additions' which might be identified and included.

Mr Parkhouse said that there were other known rainforest areas which would qualify for World Heritage Listing if only they were properly located and assessed.

"The omission of important NSW rainforest areas from the NSW re-nomination was a deliberate political act by then Premier Greiner, in breach of the much touted Inter Governmental Agreement on the Environment (IGAE). Unfortunately instead of ensuring that NSW did the right thing, the Commonwealth effectively condoned and repeated these breaches", he said.

"When the NSW rainforest re-nomination, in conjunction with Queensland was first proposed, the NSW National Party, who continue to oppose the Wran Government's landmark 1982 Rainforest Decision, rebelled", said Mr Parkhouse.

"Greiner and then Minister Tim Moore subsequently agreed that the NSW re-nomination would be strictly limited to ensure that there was no broad re-assessment of the location and conservation values of the state's rainforests.

"A political directive was issued from NSW Cabinet office to National Parks and Wildlife Service that it could only include:

- recent additions to the National Parks rainforest estate; and

- Forestry Commission rainforest Flora Reserves that were immediately contiguous with the already listed rainforest areas."

Mr Parkhouse said that National Parks and Wildlife Service were given no additional money to complete the re-nomination and had a political deadline imposed on them by the NSW Cabinet Office.

"The then Forestry Commission of NSW sought to continue to hide from international recognition, important rainforest areas within State Forests which were of World Heritage quality but which it still has ambitions to log.

"The result was that instead of being based on sound biology, a political nomination was orchestrated to suit the NSW National Party. It was then rushed to IUCN by a federal Labour government desperate to clear its desks and appear 'green' before the 1993 federal election", he said.

"Politics have ensured that this NSW nomination lacks scientific credibility. The myth that all the important NSW rainforests have been found and saved has been perpetuated at home - but this claim hasn't washed in the international scientific community."

"The process of rushing through a political nomination breached the IGAE and its Schedule 8, which requires public consultation on nominations and the preparation of an 'indicative list' for future nominations", said Mr Parkhouse.

Mr Parkhouse said that before the NSW re-nomination had been final-

ised, the North Coast Environment Council had warned Federal Environment Minister, Mrs Ros Kelly, of the NSW government's breach of the IGAE and its manipulation of the World Heritage process.

"Mrs Kelly refused to enforce the IGAE and require full public consultation and competent biological review. She did not require Commonwealth government agencies to comprehensively review the Queensland nomination and NSW re-nomination, with the result that significant rainforest areas identified by the Australian Heritage Commission such as North Washpool, were not in the Australian government's nomination", he said.

Mr Parkhouse said that the IUCN committee had expressed concerns about the proposed name 'Central Eastern Rainforest of Australia' and asked for a more explicit name to be suggested.

It had also recommended the deletion of the Ilika Nature Reserve Rainforest from the nomination and had commented on the lack of coherent argument for the proposed areas under criteria (iii) of the World Heritage Register: 'superlative natural phenomenon, formations or features, including outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems or areas of exceptional natural beauty'.

from NCEC

NEFA: Doing forest assessments

The North East Forest Alliance and the North Coast Environment Council are currently undertaking a trial old growth forest assessment. NEFA has been lobbying for old growth forest assessments to be done and initiated this process in an attempt to identify the values of such an assessment to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, and in the hope that it would get the process started as soon as possible in NE NSW.

NCEC has provided financial assistance for the research work on the 'Wild Cattle Creek Old Growth Assessment' in an area of 18,000 hectares of state forest near Dorrigo. Megan Edwards has produced some very impressive documentation which should prove invaluable in making submissions on old growth forest assessment.

NEFA employed a professional to interpret aerial photographs and draw boundaries around patches of forest that are structurally similar. Each patch was given a four numbered key that identified its structural



maturity. This key contains information about the percentage of canopy cover (ie how dense the canopy is), and the relative densities of senescent, mature and regrowth trees. This information was compiled into a map.

Groundwork was then done to truth the mapping process. This enabled the different structure types identified to be amalgamated into relevant categories such as eucalypt plantation, regenerating forest and old growth forest. At this stage the map is a provisional draft and much work is still to be done. The next stages involve overlaying other maps and information such as: forest types, logging history, fire history, topography and fauna records, and interpreting how this information correlates. This process will assist in identifying areas of high conservation significance in Wild Cattle Creek State Forest.



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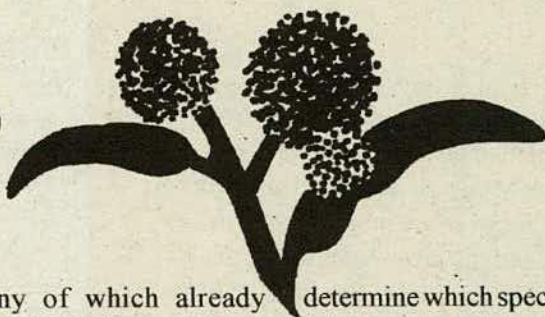
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Aussie wattles could help feed the world



The seeds from Australian wattle trees could be a major source of food for the world, according to CSIRO scientists, Dr Chris Harwood and Dr Alan House.

The two Canberra scientists are co-editors of a new book: 'Australian Dry-Zone Acacias for Human Food' which describes how wattles could be used to grow food in famine-stricken, semi-arid developing countries.

"Aborigines in central Australia have used acacia seeds as a seasonal food for

thousands of years," Dr House said. "Very recently there has been a renewed interest in bush tucker - including wattle seed flour - in Australian gourmet circles.

"To date Australian plants really haven't contributed much to the world's dinner plate. Despite our rich heritage of native flora only one Australian plant - the macadamia nut - is grown widely as a food crop.

"We believe there is great potential to use wattle seeds to help alleviate hunger in semi-arid countries,

many of which already grow Australian acacias on a large scale for firewood and as windbreaks around crops."

Chemical analysis of acacia seeds showed that they were very nutritious - they were rich in protein, carbohydrate and fat. Already one taste trial in Africa had shown them to be highly palatable to local people.

The Australian Tree Seed Centre (part of CSIRO's Division of Forestry), is working with specialist laboratories in Australia and overseas to

determine which species of Acacia are most nutritious and to make sure they contain no toxic substances. CSIRO is also working with researchers in Africa to test growth and seed production of different Acacia species in different African environments.

"The seeds must meet international standards if they are to be widely accepted as a human food," Dr Harwood said. "Our tests so far have been very encouraging."

CSIRO Press Release.

Phosphates get the treatment

Phosphates in NSW rivers and dams are acknowledged as the critical factor in causing algal blooms. The two major sources of phosphates are the fertiliser superphosphate, and household detergents. The draft Blue Green Algae Task Force addressed both sources by recommending the Department of Water Resources suggest more efficient ways of spreading fertiliser to farmers, and called for the banning of phosphates in detergents.

The Department has begun an extension program designed to change the timing of fertiliser broadcasting and raise the consciousness of the farming community. It also met with detergent manufacturers and phosphate suppliers. The phosphate suppliers objected to a ban, so the

department duly recommended to the Minister for Natural Resources, Ian Causley, he call for a limit of 5 grams per 100 ml. The call was welcomed by the Murray Darling Basin Commission, as it is better than nothing at all.

Friends of the Earth has recently called for an effective ban on phosphates in detergents in submissions made to the NSW Blue-Green Algae Task Force and the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts Inquiry into Water Resources- Toxic Algae.

An example of an effective ban is in Ohio which straddles Lake Erie, one of the Great Lakes on the border of Canada and the USA. There, a phosphorous management strategy has been in place since 1972. In 1983,

a target load of 11,000 tons of phosphorous per annum for Lake Erie was determined by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

It was estimated that if all major municipal wastewater treatment plants were discharging at 1 milligram per litre, the total phosphorous load would be 13,000 tons per annum. To meet the target, Ohio had to effectively ban phosphates in detergents. Legislation was enacted in 1988 limiting phosphates in detergents to 0.5 grams per litre by 1990, ten times less than what Ian Causley has called for.

In NSW, only three sewage treatment plants remove phosphorous. Implementation of a phosphorous ban in NSW would have a marked effect on the quality of our waterways.



only diluting the toxics

incinerated, that would only change its state and the fumes given off would be far more dangerous, storage is the only method presently available," he said.

"Dispersion or dilution which seems to be what Coffs Harbour Council is doing would not be the first choice of this Department nor is it favoured by the EPA. At best it's only an interim option", said the Director.

The experts, from diverse backgrounds, are in agreement that spreading contaminated soil about is not the answer. In fact, spreading the contamination and building houses on top of it can only make decontamination more difficult, if not impossible, in future.

The speculators developing contaminated land depend on the steady stream of disenchanted people moving out of Sydney and Melbourne to escape the pollution, urban sprawl and crime resulting from rapid and unplanned growth in those cities. They don't realise until too late that they have jumped out of the frying-pan and into the fire.

In fact, environmental scientist, John Ross, claimed that many homes built in Coffs Harbour from the 1970s onward have been built on contaminated land. "The Council is the land manager and knew, or should have known, that this land was contaminated. The unfortunate people who bought these homes are only now learning they have been living on



contaminated land. They have been kept in the dark about the contamination, the fallout is going to be enormous and the legal cost to Council, and that means the residents, will be staggering as the victims look to the courts for compensation," he said.

"Parliament should move to immediately close the loophole that speculators are using to disperse contaminated soil or to mix contaminated soil with clean soil. We saw in the case of lead contamination that

the level that poses great harm to our children has been found to be less than half the level that had previously been considered safe.

"It is likely to be the same with arsenic, a toxic heavy metal that, according to the US Environment Protection Agency, is known to cause systemic illness and cancer, and a toxin to which children are particularly susceptible.

"Animal tests have shown arsenic to be teratogenic, that is, it causes damage to the unborn foetus and breathing dust which contains arsenic leads to an increased risk of lung cancer. For these reasons the Dutch have set the investigation level for arsenic in soil to 30 ppm (parts per million) and the clean-up threshold to 50 ppm, which is half the level considered safe in Coffs Harbour," said Mr Ross.

from Richard Clowes,

Coffs Harbour

Editor's Note:

Coffs Harbour City Council includes the following standard condition on 149(5) Certificates:

"Extensive tracts of land within the city have been used for banana growing and other agricultural pursuits. It is possible some of this land is contaminated with chemical residues to a level exceeding levels regarded by the EPA as safe for particular development. Prospective purchasers should make their own enquiries on this subject concerning the property the subject of this certificate."



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The Australian Chemical Trauma Alliance

Poisoned people help themselves

The Australian Chemical Trauma Alliance (ACTA), is a support group for people who have been affected by chemicals. It is operated by volunteers and has a nationwide membership including medical and legal professionals. ACTA's services include counselling, advice, information and introductions between members for mutual support. ACTA is also concerned with educating and publicising to promote the interests of its members and to help limit the spread of chemically induced illness. A newsletter, "Update" is circulated to members bi-monthly.

While there are several organisations whose aims

are extroverted, dealing with issues such as environmental pollution and preservation, the Alliance is inwardly focussed, concerned exclusively with the welfare and well-being of survivors in the aftermath of chemical contamination. Unfortunately, because the media is heavily into drama, it is only events such as chemical spills, fires or explosions that are deemed newsworthy. Fleeting attention is given to the human component in these incidents. As a result, the long term consequences of human contamination are only occasionally glimpsed, which has led to the term "iceberg syndrome" being coined by chemical victims, who are only too aware that

the public sees just the visible tip of a human tragedy of monumental proportions.

Since there are no germs to signify its presence, this disease is not easily or readily identified by doctors. Consequently, sufferers are often tagged as malingerers or as being in need of psychiatric help. These views are naturally reflected by the lay community with destructive impact on the chemically ill, who find themselves stranded without sympathy, support, or recourse to the law for compensation in the absence of medical testimony.


ACTA has researched the situation vis-a-vis the outlook for chemical victims in other developed

nations. While it is true that there is still a great deal of resistance to recognising chemically induced illness as a legitimate complaint by vested interests (insurers, 'insurance medical specialists', employers, etc), it is also a fact that great progress has been made, particularly in the USA and Canada, where recognition by governments and their agencies has led to new precedents being established in the treatment and support of the chemically affected. It is now a question of getting similar initiatives introduced into Australia.

*for information contact:
Peter Harding, President,
ACTA.*

Phone (067) 255 521

It Runs a Koala Marketing Operation ...but wha

 **A**ustralians for Animals Coordinator, Ms Sue Arnold says there is growing concern over the activities of the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), being expressed by grass roots groups up and down the East Coast.

"We know what the AKF doesn't do," said Ms Arnold. "Here's a list:

- The AKF does not fund koala hospitals or carers.
- The AKF does not fund acquisition of habitat. (We've lost count of how many groups have asked the AKF for

funds to acquire sensitive habitat).

- The AKF does not fund or take legal action to save koala habitat.
- The AKF does not recognise the effects of logging on koala habitat in the North East and South East forests.
- The AKF does not fund community groups.
- The AKF ignores the failure of Governments to set up properly enforced managements plans, and the need for legislation to protect koala habitat.
- The AKF believes the issue of

AKF wanted to patent the word Koala!

whether Victorian koalas should be culled or not "should be discussed behind closed doors".

- Ms Tabart is on record at the AKF conference this year saying that: "the AKF wanted to patent the word *koala* so whenever it was used, the AKF



8. that each of these failures was a breach of the Government's planning law for the north coast, contained in the North Coast REP.

In all, the Court found that the Council's LEP for the Headland breached five provisions of the North Coast REP.

According to Tim Robertson, environmental lawyer: "So far as my researches go, no court has ever found more breaches of the law by a local environmental plan.

"None of the breaches are technical: each goes to the environmental significance of the Headland and is based upon the expert evidence of the Headland's natural, scientific and visual significance, which the Court accepted."

Having found these breaches, the Court concluded that they were of no legal consequence because the Minister was free to depart from the REP in making the LEP. It was a case of non-compliance with the REP's planning controls which required certain actions to be taken in the preparation of the LEP.

"The Court's finding that a breach of an REP by a Minister is of no legal consequence is plainly incorrect. The REP binds the Minister, it is a document expressing legal obligations and the Minister is not above the law. This finding is contrary to the fundamental legal principle of the rule of law and if followed would render nugatory the system of environmental and heritage protection for the coast and hinterland of NSW." wrote Tim Robertson.

Tim Robertson notified the CHEC that in the circumstances, an appeal had excellent prospects for success.

The Deputy Premier, Mr Armstrong, recently announced in Coffs Harbour that a Commission of Inquiry will proceed over the Look At Me Now Headland outfall issue. A poll of residents of the northern beaches will be held on December 11. "It is like having conscription after the war is over - there is no point of having a poll because it is not binding, further there are still two matters before the Courts", commented Ms Wallace.

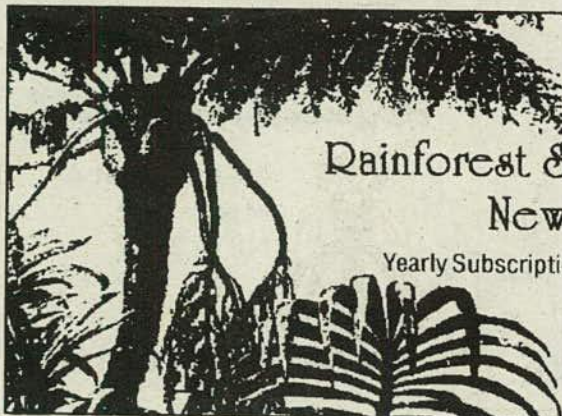
New Antarctic Ozone Low



Preliminary ozone values from the British Antarctic Survey Faraday station (65 south, 64 west on the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula) show average ozone values dropping from around 280 DU on August 1st to around 230 DU on August 11th. At this stage of the season the observations are made using zenith skylight and I would estimate the likely error as being around 10%.

Data from our long term record for the station indicate normal values of around 330 DU for this period (with a range of 280 DU to 380 DU), compared to an average of around 250 DU this year, giving a reduction of about 25%. The daily mean value on August 10th is the lowest August daily mean value ever recorded at Faraday.

by Jonathan Shanklin, via
Pegasus conference: *en.climate*.



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Len 1 Edited

Coffs contaminated land plan...

Amidst much fanfare and media hype Coffs Harbour City Council claimed to have overcome soil contamination problems that had been holding up growth in the region.

The claim was made at the launch of a new subdivision located on ex banana land at Coffs Harbour, and attended by Member for Coffs Harbour, Andrew Fraser, and Mayor John Smith.

Council's Environmental Health officer, Stephen Sawtell, said Council was tired of waiting for the State Government to draw up guidelines on how to deal with land contaminated by pesticides so had decided to go it alone.

"We had been trying to get information from the Government for fifteen to eighteen months, we wanted to know what to sample and how to sample it.

"The only answer from Government was to take the contaminated soil to a land-fill site, or cover it with a metre of fill. Both options were not achievable, just too expensive for developers," he said.

Mr Sawtell declined to go into the detail of the clean up, but said it involved ripping up the contaminated soil, mixing it with uncontaminated soil on the site, and then inverting the lot so the contaminated soil was underneath.

He admitted this did not decontaminate the site, but did dilute the contamination to a level where it did not exceed the level set by the

Government, and allowed land-owners to develop the land rather than sue for damages.

"We can't quarantine contaminated land, most of the town is built on land previously used for agriculture, so how do you tell someone they can't develop their land when there are houses next door? Many people have their life savings tied up in this land."

A spokesperson for the Coffs Harbour Environment Centre, Ms Dee Wallace, said there were 700 contaminated homesites already identified in Coffs Harbour and the mapping had only just begun. "No one really knows how many there really are or how to handle it, all these people have houses built on contaminated land and they won't be able to sell them if this gets out."

A bio-chemist and recognised authority on contaminated land, Dr John Pollack, believed Council was taking advantage of a legal loophole in order to sweep the issue under the carpet and protect their backsides.

"Coffs' method of clean-up is merely a means of dispersing hot-spots and allows the lifting of chemical control orders to avoid litigation, it does nothing to address the problem," he said.

Director of the Department of Agriculture, John Williams, claimed management strategies for old agri-

“how do you tell someone they can't develop their land when there are houses next door”

cultural sites was a difficult problem, "Bio-remediation, where we use bacteria to break down chemicals, is showing some promise in the laboratory, but getting it to work in the field is proving difficult, it's not yet commercially available."

"However, arsenic, which is the main contaminant, is a heavy metal and not remedial. It can't even be



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MEETINGS

Annual General Meeting NVCA

To be held on Saturday October 16 at 7pm at the Bowraville Pioneer Community Centre

Starts with the election of office bearers followed by supper (bring a plate) and a social get-together of environmentally conscious people sharing ideas, goals, problems, solutions, etc.

HELP PLEASE!

The NVCA is in urgent need of money to fund our endeavours for a better environment. Your donation of \$5 or more will enter you in a draw for PRIZES

1st: Lunch or Dinner for Two. Value \$40, a DJ's Cafe, Bowraville

2nd: \$20 Open Order from Sunflowers Health Foods, Macksville.

Donations will be accepted at Sunflowers or DJ's Cafe or can be posted to NVCA PO Box 123, Bowraville, NSW 2449.

Prizes to be drawn at the AGM, October 16.



What's New in the NVCA library

NSW TREE PLAN:

*The NSW Tree Forum,
July 1993, 44 pages*

The NSW Tree plan is the result of many months of consultation with community and landcare groups. The Tree Forum, an initiative of the NSW Government, is a group of representatives from Departments of Conservation and Land Management, NSW Agriculture, NPWS, Forestry Commission, Local Government Association and Greening Australia (NSW).

Basically, the Plan provides an overview of:

- i) historical changes in vegetation cover
- ii) the value of trees for specific purposes (eg: as habitat for native

animals and plants, in water catchments as protectors of water quality, preventing land degradation, etc). Most importantly, the Plan provides strategies for managing and protecting the remaining tree cover, and provides a commitment to identify problem (degraded) areas and repair them by revegetation programs.

Most of this material is commonsense, and has all been said before. What is encouraging about this document is that it provides target dates for actions. To provide just two examples: the Tree Forum aims to oversee the development of a system for classifying and monitoring statewide changes in vegetative cover by June 1994, and to develop and disseminate lists of potential funding sources for tree projects by December 1993. Many other positive, concrete actions are proposed, and if only for this reason, the document is worthwhile.

A copy of the NSW Tree Plan is available for loan from the NVCA library.

COTTON FACTS

At least 25% of all the insecticides sold worldwide in the late 80's were used on cotton, even though cotton is grown on less than 3% of the world's crop land. The Union Carbide plant at Bhopal in India was producing carbamate pesticides for the cotton crops in 1984, when toxic gas escaped, killing at least 2,500 people.

Growers of organic cotton in California are producing about 2.5 bales an acre which is comparable to the yields of the chemically intensive crops. More is grown in Arizona, Texas, Tennessee and North Carolina with good yields. Naturally coloured varieties of cotton in browns and greens, with fibres suitable for machine weaving, are now available in the US.

The brown fibre gets richer with each washing and the process eliminates toxic dyes. The Australian cotton industry uses almost 5,000 tonnes of endosulphan a year. Yet this is banned or restricted in Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, India, Israel, The Philippines, Sweden and Thailand.

Fewer than 50% of the cotton pesticides applied from crop-dusting aircraft ever land in the target area, even in good conditions. It's no wonder that rural residents are concerned about the impact on themselves, their families and the environment.

source: ANEW PAC Newsletter Dec 92. via Nimbin News.

Are elections the ultimate in democracy?

The belief that electoral politics is the same as democracy is deep seated. It is held by people across the political spectrum.

To be sure, there is much dissatisfaction with electioneering. Politicians are sold like breakfast cereals; personalities dominate over issues; attention to the supposed whims of swinging voters takes precedence over wider issues.

Furthermore, it probably doesn't matter too much who is elected, since the programs of the major parties are so similar. In any case, much policy is made and implemented by government bureaucrats who are not up for election.

The solution to such problems is usually seen as electoral politics with a new content: better candidates, new parties, fairer procedures, a better-educated electorate. The major problem is seen, not as the electoral system itself, but as the people who are elected and the policies they implement.

Is there any alternative? We have all been taught that representative democracy is the best political system available. Perhaps it is time to question that postulate.

Of course, many on the left want to abolish private ownership of capital. But how are decisions to be made in a democratic socialist society? Parliamentary democracy? Workplace councils? It's hard to know, since

there has been so little discussion of systems of decision-making suitable for a socialist society that is not run by party elites.

natives that can coordinate activity in a large and complex society with strong differences of opinion.

John Burnheim has proposed a comprehensive alternative in his book

Is Democracy Possible? Burnheim proposes to get rid of politicians and governments altogether and replace them with decision-making groups of randomly selected citizens.

Random selection has a long history as a democratic technique. It was used by the ancient Greeks and is used today for selecting jurors.

Burnheim introduces some variations on the jury system. Most importantly, he proposes that there be a whole network of groups, each one dealing with a particular policy area in a local area, such as schooling, transport, industry and waste disposal. This would be quite different from the present system in which politicians are expected to make decisions on all possible issues.

Burnheim suggests that group members be chosen randomly only from volunteers for that group. In this way, education policy in different regions, for example, would be decided by different groups of citizens chosen randomly from those who specifically nominated for that group.

The random selection principle could easily be designed to give a representative cross-section of the



In many social movement groups, such as feminist and environmental groups, consensus decision-making has been developed to a fine art. But using consensus techniques in larger groups, involving tens of thousands of people or more, is a daunting prospect even for the advocates of this approach.

There needs to be much more discussion of participatory alternatives to representative democracy - alter-

Perhaps there is no ideal way to organise society, but certainly the present system is not the ultimate

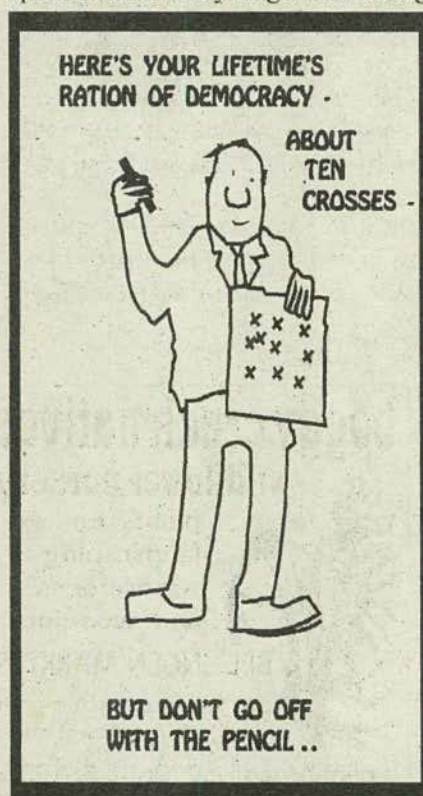
population, such as equal numbers of women and men, proportional numbers of minority groups, etc.

An advantage of this system is that political wheeling and dealing would be reduced. Lobbyists would have a harder time applying pressure to decision-makers, especially as terms of office would be strictly limited.

But would randomly selected citizens do a good job? Some cynics might suggest that they could hardly do worse than present politicians. Fortunately, there is evidence available. For over a decade, two independent teams of researchers have been studying the possibility of policy making by randomly selected groups of citizens.

One team, based at the University of Wuppertal, Germany, has used "planning cells" to look at energy policy, town planning and information technology. The other studies have been done at the Jefferson Center in Minneapolis, USA, using what they call "policy juries" to examine issues such as water pollution from agricultural run-off.

The randomly selected citizens on the planning cells and policy juries hear testimony from experts and advocates of different views, and then spend their few days together making



a collective judgment on the issue at hand. The results are encouraging. The group members quickly become very knowledgeable about the issues, take their tasks very seriously and, when more than one group is used, arrive at fairly consistent results. Furthermore, the group members become committed to the decision-making process.

Back in Australia, Canberra-based researchers Fred and Merrelyn Emery have done pioneering work on

random selection and democracy, especially in its application in industry. It has long been known that productivity and job satisfaction can be increased by greater worker participation. Random selection is one way to do this.

Burnheim decided that his alternative is so different from representative democracy that he calls it by a different name: demarchy. It involves a dramatic shift in thinking. And long before it can be implemented on a wide scale, it requires much more development and experimentation.

One objection often made against participatory democracy is that everyone can't be an expert on every issue, hence everyone can't participate in an informed way. Demarchy overcomes this objection, because most individuals can, if they wish, become knowledgeable about a few subjects and nominate for the relevant groups. They can then rely on others, as we presently do, to make sensible decisions on other issues.

As well, the usual processes of public debate, protest and mobilisation of opinion could continue. Randomly selected individuals, unlike elected politicians, can claim no mandate for their positions. This, along with strictly limited terms of office and restriction to a single area of policy, means that the corruptions of power would be greatly limited.

Perhaps there is no ideal way to organise society, but certainly the present system is not the ultimate - even if progressive parties were elected to government. The challenge for a society is to be more than a static democracy, but to continually be in the process of democratising itself.

by Brian Martin
from *Greenleft Review*,
via *Pegasus*.

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This Month's Cover... Whales

Every year when the time comes for the whales to make their annual winter journey up our coastline, from the icy Antarctic waters to the warmth of the seas off Fraser Island to give birth, I remember the first close sighting I had of one of these enormous mammals. During my early teens my family moved to Cronulla, a beachside suburb of Sydney, and because we had an extensive view of the ocean from our lounge room window, my father bought a small but powerful telescope. Many hours were spent peering through it looking for whales "blowing", or if you were extremely lucky, seeing one breach - leaping out of the water and back in again with an almighty splash. One year a mother and her calf ventured right into the entrance of the Port Hacking River. Crowds of people lined the southern point of the Cronulla Peninsula to watch mother and calf playing together, so close to the shore that some of the more senseless onlookers were able to throw stones at them, until someone in the crowd threatened to throw THEM into the water!

My cover drawing is of a Humpback Whale & her calf. When the calf is born its mother pushes it to the surface to breathe. It then finds one of its mother's nipples & suckles her rich milk. A whale calf feeds from its mother for more than 10 months. Adults feed mainly on krill - small shrimp-like animals - and small fish, which they strain through the baleen - a fringe of hairs on the horny plates they have instead of teeth.

Humpbacks have a strange haunting song, consisting of melodic whistles, squeaks & grunts which can last up to thirty minutes. Recordings have been made of these songs & incorporated into beautiful music for meditation and relaxation - I've been listening to it as I write this!

Julie

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Environs is published every other month on a voluntary basis to bring together reports from a large number of environmental organisations. Many groups are affiliated with Environs, including the Bellingen Environment Centre, and the Nambucca Valley Conservation Association.

Editorial contributions are welcomed. They should include the authors name and phone number and should be sent by mail to: Environs, PO Box 123, Bowraville 2449, or by fax to (065) 647 808, or by email to: peg:environs. Subscriptions are \$12 for 6 issues. Advertisements may be lodged with Julie Mozsny by phoning (065) 695 360. Editorial for Environs is by Carol Margolis and the Environs team. Layout and typesetting is by Mike Holland. Cover artwork is by Julie Mozsny.

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