GREEN

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The Magazine of the Australian Greens

The Big Melt: Australia's Greenhouse Shame

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The Everlasting Daisy Bracteantha viscosa is available through the Victorian Indigenous Nursery Co-operative, a project funded by The Ethical Investment Trust. Photographer: Frances Cincotta. Subject to terms and conditions. Government Fees and Charges may apply. Bendigo Bank Ltd ABN 11068049178. MG43

SPRING 2000 - ISSUE 3

GREEN

The Magazine of the Australian Greens

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Contributions welcome, 500 words or fewer, and please provide a graphic. If sending on disk, save as a text file or email to above address.

Next deadline: February 1.

FEEDBACK #1

I just read my Winter 2000 *Green* magazine. It is bloody excellent.

Gurmet MS Sekhon
Melbourne
Victoria

FEEDBACK #2

It's impossible for our party to proceed politically beyond its current status in Australia without taking steps to be more inclusive. A reliance on branch meetings provides a claim to being a 'grass roots' organisation, but unavoidably excludes a majority from input.

A national magazine is a great first step in enlisting the participation of all members. It would be great to think that through its pages we could address some of the disparate views within the Green spectrum. At present the claims we make about consensus rely on a tacit commitment to unity rather than real substance.

Patrick Hockey
Warnambool
Victoria

VICTORY FOR OUR NORTHERN FRIENDS

Dear green friends,

I have good news to share. Taiwan's finance minister has announced his decision to abandon the construction of nuclear power plant #4. Although this decision still needs to be approved, Taiwan's President Chen is anti-nuclear too. So the announcement yesterday is a real significant one.

Thank you all for your concern and help.

CY Kao
Taiwan

[Abandonment of the project followed strong, sustained opposition by green groups in Taiwan. The Taiwan government says it will lose around $3 billion, adding around 3% to Taiwanese power bills for five years. Ed]

A DISAPPOINTING RESULT?

We have just had local government elections here in Brazil on October 1.

The Green Party (Partido Verde) made small progress. Not as good as we expected. We got 13 mayors and more than 300 council persons elected.

Viana
Curitiba, Brazil

[We also received a beautiful letter from our friends in Mongolia, representing nomadic herdspeople, who have one person elected to their national revolutionary government. Ed]

HARD TIMES IN SERBIA

We write to inform you that on October 17 the *Green Union of Serbia* decided to demand from President Kostunica that he amnesty all political prisoners from Milosevic's gaols: Albanians from Kosovo, Serbs and all the others, no matter what their nationalities or political opinions are.

We sent this statement to news agencies and to President Kostunica, but (to our knowledge) no media published it.

The media and parties still react in old fashion ways, as they did under Milosevic. They publish only statements from the strongest parties.

We also issued to news agencies our comments on a new electoral law that will favour major parties against the small ones, this to be implemented at the next election (for a republican parliament). Again, no media comment.

For us (the Greens) I do not see any differences in behaviour of media 'before' and 'after' Milosevic so far.

But, we will continue to keep trying to inform the public of Serbia about our activities

Best wishes to you!

Borisa Antonijevic
Green Union in Serbia

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Then write to us!
But please keep it short and to the point.

If we need to shorten letters or edit them for clarity or to correct grammar, our policy is to strictly preserve the writer's intent.

Send letters to:
The Editor, *Green*
PO Box 173, South Hobart, Tasmania 7004
Email: <greenlink@trump.net.au>

Deadline for next edition: Feb 1

PLUG FOR 'RECONCILIATION DAY'

We wish to voice support for Sean Curley's (Greens Social Justice Spokesperson, Queensland) proposal to drop the Queen's Birthday public holiday and replace it with *Reconciliation Day*.

New Zealand has *Waitangi Day* to celebrate its nationhood and to draw Maori and Pakeha (whites) together. We need such a day, to acknowledge the wrongs of the past, to take pride in the progress we have made towards reconciliation, and to build a strong foundation for future relationships.

I look forward to a time when respected Melbourne-based New Zealand journalist, Helen Brown can find it in her heart to write more positive things than the following about race relations in Australia:

"Sometimes I wonder what these Australians were doing while the rest of the world was developing a racial conscience. Were they sunning themselves on surf beaches while Martin Luther King was making those heart-wrenching speeches? Surely they can't all have been at the horse races for the entire duration of apartheid in South Africa?

Often, when the question of Aborigines is raised - and God knows it's avoided as conscientiously as a snake in the desert - I get the feeling I'm talking to people from the pre-Kennedy era.

Perfectly decent folk in every sense - except for their shocking attitudes towards indigenous Australians".

Leigh Warren
for *Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation*
Redcliffe Branch
Queensland

THE VEGGIE VAN

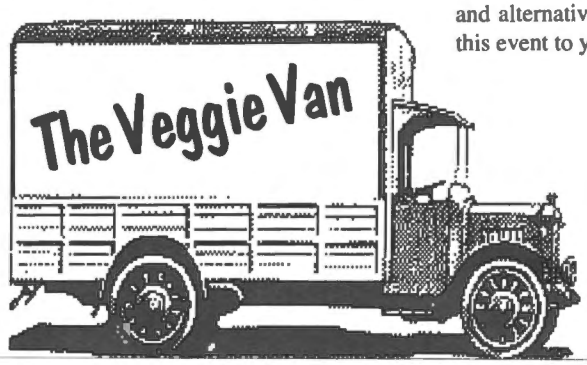
Around three years ago I saw a TV story about the efforts of a young journalist, Joshua Tickell, to promote the use of bio-diesel fuel (produced from vegetable oils, including used frying oils) by travelling across the USA in a specially modified mini bus, the 'Veggie Van'.

I have kept contact with him ever since and have just learned that he and his van will be undertaking a tour of the Eastern States of Australia during the first two weeks of this coming January.

According to Mr Tickel, biodiesel is the only alternative fuel that works well in diesel engines – which is where most transport pollution comes from.

In the wake of recent debates about fuel prices and alternative fuels, I thought I would draw this event to your attention.

Chris Tooley
Windsor
Queensland



[The city of Phoenix, Arizona, now uses the fuel to power its school buses. You can find all about the Veggie Van on the internet <www.evoyage.org>]

ABOLISH THE STATES

It was wonderful to be involved (I was a Green candidate) in the downfall of Jeff Kennett last year. The political lessons were important to me and may be of potential use to the whole party.

My press releases promoted all the 'normal' Green policies but I also added a new ingredient to our cocktail. To quote:

"$30 billion could be saved every year by the abolition of state governments. I would urge people to read the book 'Abolish the States' by Rodney Hall. The book argues that $30 billion would be saved annually by the creation of smaller, more democratic and more economical regional governments."

I hate seeing battlers kicked around by constant cuts to government services. That extra $30 billion would pay for vastly improved health, education, community and environmental services"

Note that the eventual abolition of the states is already policy – see Greens national policy program.

It was the above policy that generated most community support during my campaign. Numerous people made very enthusiastic and supportive comments about the wasteful irrelevance of state governments. This could be a great winner for us!

On a related policy front, I joined the Greens mainly due to their brilliant social and economic policies – especially the *Guaranteed Average Income* (GAI). I truly believe this GAI policy could win us the votes of many battlers and social security earners..

Ecological taxes would raise untold billions in revenue each year and could become another vote winner. People hate pollution and environmental vandalism; voters would be glad to see bad businesses punished and good businesses rewarded via genuine tax reform - unlike the GST.

If the Greens are to grow we must expand well beyond just being known as an environmental party and become much more connected to the concerns of low-income battlers and social security earners. There are potentially millions of votes to be garnered for a Greens party with close links to ordinary Aussies.

Stuart Kingsford
Social Welfare Spokesperson
Victorian Greens
Tootgarook, Vic.

[You can contact Stuart at Ph 03 5985 8486
Email <stuartkingsford@hotmail.com>]

NO MORE HOT AIR

As this edition of *Green* goes to print the nations of the world are gathering in the Netherlands for the UN Climate Summit – perhaps the greatest opportunity yet to push the world away from fossil fuel and towards renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In the spotlight is Australia, per capita the world's worst emitter of greenhouse gases. The nation which, with great pride and oodles of money, has just pulled off the 27th Olympiad. The nation which, with no pride at all, has blown its Greenhouse target by over 200 percent already.

It's now three years since the infamous Kyoto summit – where the Australian delegation, led by Senator Robert Hill, shamefully lobbied, cajoled, intimidated, smokescreened, stymied and blackmailed its way through, finally blocking the negotiations altogether. There was almost no world agreement at Kyoto – thanks to Australia.

It was only to stave off such an embarrassing non-outcome that the nations of the world caved in, in the closing minutes, granting Australia a more-than-generous allowance to grow its greenhouse emissions by 8% by 2010 – much to the shock and chagrin of tiny Pacific island states and third world ambassadors.

Will our government disgrace itself again in The Hague this month, as it did at Kyoto? Will we apologise to the world for our out-of-control, greenhouse emissions? Will John Howard's master tactician, Senator Hill, shame us again? Can he badger his way through world leaders once more?

Or have the nations of the world wisened up to Australia's game play.

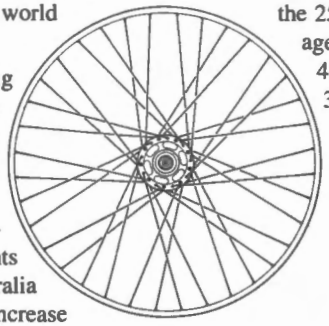
For a background to this vital debate, see our cover story, pages 7 – 10.

And please don't stop there. Climate change has to become a hot federal election issue. It's time for all concerned Australians to take action on climate change, in big ways and small. You can be sure The Greens will be in there with you.

The Editorial Collective

BIKES ON THE MOVE

Here is an addition to the item in *Green* #2 showing the spiralling growth in world bicycle production.

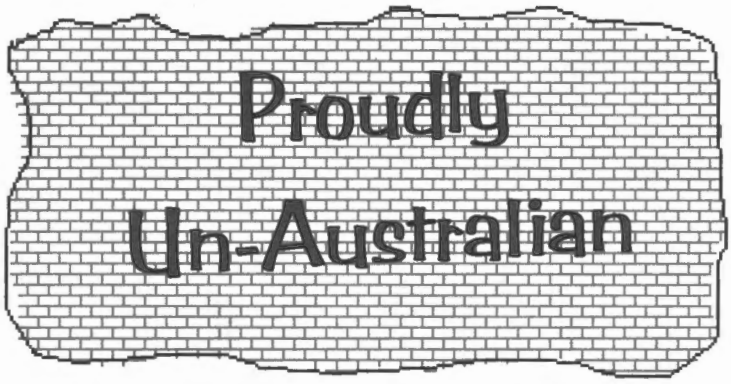


Not only are bicycles being produced in ever greater numbers, more importantly they are being ridden in greater numbers too.

During the past six years (1994-1999) the number of participants in recreational cycling in Australia increased by 54%. The biggest increase over the period was a whopping 110% in the 25 to 35 year age group. Other age groups (15-24, 35-44, and over 45) all showed increases of over 35%.

The above figures are extracted from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Tim Stredwick
Huon Valley
Tasmania



Defiant graffiti outside Crown Casino, September 13

THE WTO SCAM

A UN-appointed study team has labelled the World Trade Organisation a 'nightmare' for developing countries and has suggested the WTO should be brought under the UN's purview. The team dismissed the WTO's open trading dogma as based *"on grossly unfair and even prejudiced"* assumptions.

However, the report stopped short of recommending that trade rules should be linked to human rights, labour and environmental standards, as espoused by anti-globalisation groups.

'The Effect Of Globalisation On Human Rights' was written by two jurists, J. Oloka-Onyango of Uganda and Deepika Udagama of Sri Lanka.

Reuters, August 15

[See our report, pages 20 - 21, on the effects of globalisation on world poverty]

DISGUSTING WEALTH CRIMINAL POVERTY

"The net worth of the 225 richest people in the world now equals the combined income of the poorest 2,600,000,000 – ie 47% of the world's population."

UNDP's 1998 Human Development Report

RICH GETTING RICHER

Ratio of the average corporate CEO's pay to the average employee's pay:

In 1978... 60 to 1
In 1997... 189 to 1

In 1999 the average CEO of a major corporation grew to 475 times that of an average blue-collar worker and six times the average CEO pay check in 1990.

Worldwatch Institute
August 2000

AFRICA IS DYING

The recent International AIDS conference in Durban reminds us that Africa is dying. The HIV epidemic raging across Africa is now taking some 6,030 lives **each and every day** – the equivalent of 35 fully loaded Concorde jets crashing with no survivors.

This number is expected to double during this decade. In Botswana, which has the highest infection rate, 36% of adults are HIV positive. Barring a medical miracle, some African countries will lose up to one third of their adults by the end of this decade.

Imagine the media coverage if the casualties were Caucasian!

LIFE IN BURMA

Meanwhile life in Burma remains extraordinarily dicey. Access to the World Wide Web is strictly banned, and unauthorised use of a modem is punishable by 7 to 15 years in jail.

In May this year, communications minister Brigadier-General Win Tin ordered that 'outsiders' be *"stopped from making illegal use of international telephone and email services."* There are only 1,000 email accounts in the whole country.

Says a government representative, *"As soon as we find a way to keep out the undesirable elements, we will make the internet available."*

BURMA FORUM <www.burmaforumla.org/>
FREE BURMA <www.freeburma.org/>

THEY ARE DIFFERENT!

An Australia-wide survey has apparently discovered that 73% of Labor voters like to eat meat pies while only 47% of Liberal voters do. Of those who do like pies, 65% of Labor voters prefer tomato sauce, while only 47% of Liberals do.

Meanwhile, asked their views about mandatory sentencing, 68% of respondents from both camps either expressed ignorance of the issue or were non-committal.

SO... WHAT IS NEWS?

"We paid $3 billion for these television stations. We'll decide what the news is. News is what we say it is."

David Boylan, of the Murdoch media empire.

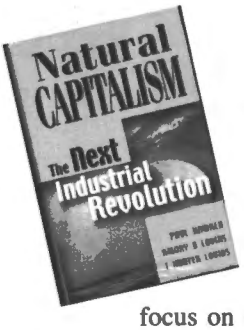
[The Observer, London, July 5, 1998]

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

"The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum – even encourage the more critical and dissident views.

That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate."

Noam Chomsky



A 'MUST READ'

'Natural Capitalism. The Next Industrial Revolution'

Here is a blueprint for a new industrial revolution, redesigning business to eliminate waste, focus on services not goods, and start to restore the planet. Definitely worth a look, especially for the hundreds of practical examples.

By Paul Hawken, Amory B Lovins and L Hunter Lovins. Earthscan Publications, 1999.

[There's a web site too: <www.naturalcapitalism.org>]

MISCHIEVOUS MILLIONAIRES

September saw the launch of a mischievous lobby group in Victoria calling itself the *Australian Millionaires Party*.

With slogans like *'Tax The Poor' and 'Corporations Are People Too'* they made quite an impression on the slightly confused crowd at s11. I doubt we've seen the end of them.

DO YOU EAT IODISED SALT?

Iodised salt may have caused a dramatic drop in men's sperm counts since the 1950s, according to a report in *New Scientist*. This is because iodine deficiency, although known to stunt brain development, also appears to boost sperm counts

The study showed a sharp drop in sperm levels in humans around 1960. Rats bred and raised on low-iodine diets ended up with significantly larger testicles and produced more sperm than did normal rats.

<www.newscientist.com/news/>

ASTONISHING WIND POWER GROWTH

We are now getting glimpses of the new energy economy in the solar rooftops in Japan and in the wind turbines scattered across the European countryside.

Denmark now gets 10% of its electricity from wind. For Schleswig-Holstein, the northernmost state in Germany, it is 14%. For the industrial province of Navarra in Spain, it has jumped from 0% to 23% in just three years.

Meanwhile, a survey by the US Department of Energy indicates that three states – North Dakota, Kansas and Texas – have enough harnessable wind energy to satisfy the nation's entire electricity needs.

While oil and coal use have expanded by just over 1% a year since 1990, the use of solar cells has expanded by 16% pa and wind power by a prodigious rate of 26%.

Worldwide, the wind power potential is several times that of hydro power, which now supplies just over one fifth of the world's electricity.

Worldwatch Issue Alert #3
<www.worldwatch.org/>

LOSS OF LANGUAGES

Whilst the atrocious rate of species extinction in Australia is common knowledge, most Australians are blithely ignorant about the huge loss of human diversity that is occurring in our nation.

Early colonisers wiped out more than 150 indigenous languages in Australia. And the sounds of silence continue their downward slide to this day. Australia has more languages on the brink of extinction than does any other nation in the world.

140 of the world's 426 'nearly extinct' languages are Australian. By comparison, Africa has 39 and Asia 59.

There are some 6,000 languages in the world, most of them in sharp decline. If current rates of attrition continue, some 80% of them will be extinct or nearly extinct by the end of this century.

In many cases only a handful of elderly speakers now remain. An estimated 52 languages have only one native speaker left.

Source: Ethnologue: Languages of he World, 14th edition.

Send overconsumers a reminder that they're living off the backs of future generations.

On Nov 24 people are urged not to be good consumers and buy nothing for the day. An international campaign by *Adbusters*.

<www.adbusters.org>

WHERE 2 NOW?

Where 2 Now? is a new release from *Red Hot Green Black*, a non-profit group set up to raise awareness and funds for indigenous and environment issues.

51 tracks on three CDs. For the price of just one CD, you get a lot more than just a warm fuzzy feeling.

Available at all good music outlets through Oracle Records 07 3856 2788

GOOD LORD!

For those who didn't know it the British Greens have a their own Lord, in the House of Lords.

Lord Beaumont of Whitley, who left the Liberal Democrats to join the Green Party because of the Lib-Dems' enthusiastic support for globalisation, is leading the UK Greens' anti-globalisation campaign – highlighting the devastating effects of globalisation on small farms and employment in Britain.

QUOTES FROM THE NADER CAMPAIGN

"There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship."

"Whoever wins, you lose. "

"If you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you've always got."

CRAZY CLIMATE FACTOIDS

- Glaciers atop the European Alps have lost half their volume since 1850.
- A quarter of the sea ice around Antarctica has disappeared, with the most dramatic losses starting in the late 1950s.
- More alarmingly, North Greenland's ice cap is thinning by about 2.5 centimetres a year.

Vital Signs, 1998- 1999

LOOK TO GREENLAND

Climate scientists are looking at Greenland with special foreboding. There's a huge amount of ice there. As a recent edition of the scientific journal *Nature* reported, if Greenland's glaciers were to melt sea levels would rise by up to seven metres. The last time that happened average world temperatures were just two degrees higher than they are today.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

"Stabilising CO2 levels sufficient to avoid dangerous climate change would require developed countries to reduce emissions by about 90%"

Scientific evidence given to Australia's Senate Inquiry into Australia's Greenhouse Response

...AND EVEN THEN

"Sea level will rise by about 0.5 m during the next century, and continue to rise for 500 to 800 years longer even if atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are stabilised."

Scientific evidence given to Australia's Senate Inquiry.

With thanks to Jill Redwood of CROEG.

HANSARD HANDY

No national paper covered the *Renewable Energy Bill* debate as it raged in the Senate *(see report, page 28)*. But the Hansard (the written record) of all debates is as close as your computer. Senate debates go online just a few hours after the event.

For the politically fixated, the Senate is broadcast on ABC radio's PRN network on Tuesdays and Wednesdays if parliament is sitting (the House of Representatives goes to air on Mondays and Thursdays). Question time is at 2.00pm. Our weekly Greens' question is at about 2.25pm on Tuesdays.

By the way, petitions are no longer read out in the Senate. The big parties sideswiped them three years ago.

[The Hansard website: <http://wopablue.parl.net/hansard/index.htm>]

CREATING A NEW ORDER

"There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who would profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from their adversaries and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it."

Machiavelli, in 'The Prince'.

FOCUS

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Big Melt – Australia's Shame

COMPILED BY CHRIS HARRIES

with grateful acknowledgements to Climate Action Network, Margaret Blakers, World Rainforest Movement, Friends of the Earth, Jorge Da Silva, Larry Lohmann and Senator Bob Brown.

Watching TV news during the past two years I have often times gasped, seeing world history unfold. Devastating fires incinerate forests in USA, Canada, Indonesia, Brazil; record floods hit Mozambique, Sweden, Italy while Mongolia, India and north Africa suffer terrible droughts; killer mudslides bury tens of thousands in central America; huge typhoons hit eastern Russia.

All this a visible testament to global warming, staring us in the face. The world now has 25 million 'environmental refugees', driven from their homes and land by natural disasters.

Every month new discoveries hit the news: Arctic ice cap dramatically thinning; Himalayan glaciers reduced by 40%; signs that the immense Greenland ice sheets are melting.

Meanwhile, it seemed that the ponderous, ever-cautious scientific community will still be debating whether or not global warming is happening even as the waters of the Atlantic Ocean lap at the potted plants in the lobby of the Trump Plaza.

Well, all that changed late last month. The world's top 2,500 climate scientists have at last proclaimed it to be a non-debate. The uncontestable fact is climate change is here, and we're living in it. After decades of rancorous debate only the most doctrinaire diehards still dispute that global warming is happening.

Munich Re, the German big daddy insurance company, keeps count. Insured losses from climate disasters cost the company a near record $US22 billion last year. The annual cost of natural disasters has tripled since the 1960s.

Jumping ship

Seeing the writing on the wall, one-by-one the world's most powerful fossil fuel corporations BP, Shell, Dupont and Ford have resigned from the 'carbon club' *(Global Climate Coalition)* which specialised in spreading disinformation and stymying climate negotiations. Not hard to see why! Tobacco giants had been sued $billions for undertaking similar activities.

World's forests imperilled

But all is not well. In the world climate negotiations this month rich countries like Australia are working overtime to try to shove the burden of climate action onto the world's beleaguered forests.

Now turn overleaf to find out how this assault is being planned.

Australia's Environment Minister, Robert Hill, is used to getting his way. Even his harshest critics admire his native cunning, his ability to manipulate people, his dogged perseverance.

Mr Howard's most reliable minister, Hill is an able 'numbers man', renowned in world forums for his ability to garner voting support even when world opinion is stacked against him. Within Australia he has shown great dexterity in 'divide and rule' – splitting and manipulating environmental groups, currying favour with 'soft' groups while keeping harder groups out in the cold, fund-starved and locked out of the 'information loop'.

Using his superlative techniques of obstinacy and manipulation, Hill has overcome insurmountable obstacles, like winning Australia concessions to increase greenhouse emissions; like ensuring the go-ahead of Jabiluka; like pushing through his regressive *EPBC Act*. As federal minister he has overseen, with impunity, the most calamitous land clearing rampage in the nation's history... and so it goes.

But the signs are that Mr Hill has burned too many fingers along the way. Despite furious worldwide lobbying, his preferred candidate for the IUCN lost out badly to Christine Milne *(see story page 28)*.

Robert Hill will be at this month's *World Climate Summit* yet again with a sinister agenda – to make sure Australia uses every crafty loophole possible to get out of greenhouse compliance. If he gets his way, it will be Australia's native forests that will suffer the most.

FOCUS

The Cheat's Charter
Why 'sink forests' are a farce

The solution to climate change is quite simple: substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and replace them as quickly as possible with environmentally-friendly sources of energy. However, a number of industrialised governments, with Australia at the helm, are opposing this approach.

Instead they have been busy inventing clever schemes which avoid the real issues. Among the cleverest is the creation of a global 'carbon market' involving the use of forests as 'sinks'. This shonky scheme is ubiquitously called the 'Clean Development Mechanism' and it will have profound effects on forests the world over (including our own).

'Kyoto Forests'

Suddenly industry has discovered how extra profitable trees can be. The resulting 'Kyoto forests' will be tree plantations – millions and millions of hectares of them. They're already mushrooming in places like Uganda, where 8,000 people from 13 villages have recently been displaced by 'sink forests' foisted on them by Norway.

The carbon market also allows forestry corporations to 'green' their image by making them appear to be helping to mitigate climate change. And the reward for countries squirreling away carbon in their biospheres will be permission to emit more CO_2 by burning fossil fuels.

Rich governments like it because it is an easy and cheap way to avoid greenhouse emission cuts, while some desperately poor governments see it as a means to earn a little cash, as a sort of carbon garbage dump service.

SO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH CARBON SINKS?

The main problem with 'forest sinks' is that give the impression of doing something when the net effect is to make the problem worse.

The reasoning for them goes like this: the world's climate would benefit by cutting down mature forests, converting the wood into durable products and replanting the clearfelled area with rapid growing tree species. The plantation trees would act as 'sinks' for many years, until they reach maturity.

With thanks to Jill Redwood of CROEG

So what's the problem? Plenty of things.

1) The sums don't add up. Planting trees rather than reducing fossil fuel emissions will not save the global climate.

This is because some 4,000 billion tonnes of carbon in fossil fuels are still under the earth's surface – that's more than ten times the amount of carbon stored in forests. It is scientifically proven that the biosphere is unable to store all the carbon we could release.

2) The whole 'carbon sink' theory has been shot to pieces by science.

The prestigious *International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis* (IIASA) has studied the 'sink forests' theory in detail and its report has totally debunked it, saying: *"If they plant sink forests and make inflated claims for them, they know it will be impossible to either prove or disprove these claims. It really is a cheats charter."*

Another major study at the *Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry* (Germany) has shown that mature forests are far better than plantations at ridding the air of carbon dioxide.

By way of example, what happens when a 'Kyoto forest' is incinerated by wild bushfires – like the recent immense forest fires in the US...? So much for the sink theory.

3) Large-scale plantations are already a threat to communities and forest ecosystems the world over.

The implications for forest peoples, biodiversity and sustainable development will be very grave indeed.

'Kyoto forests' will usurp much needed agricultural lands, replace valuable ecosystems, deplete water resources, worsen inequity in land ownership, lead to evictions of local peoples and undermine local forest stewardship practices.

Says Phillipino activist Raymond de Chavez. *"Profits will be made even as countries disappear under water or entire native populations lose their lands. It's obscene,"*

Moreover, carbon plantations will result in little revenue for host countries, while awarding rich countries huge gains via carbon credits. It's been called 'CO_2lonialism'.

> ***"The Kyoto agreement will be impossible to police. The much-hyped agreement, designed to save the planet from humans, is a cheats charter."***
>
> New Scientist
> August 2000

In Conclusion

As New Scientist concluded in its August edition: *"The message... seems clear. Science is not yet up to policing a system of greenhouse gas targets that includes the biosphere. Until it is, the only viable Kyoto protocol is one that relies solely on slashing the world's use of fossil fuels."*

Carbon sinks will just enable rich countries like Australia to increase the very fossil fuel emissions that are at the root of climate change. The world's looming climate disaster can only be averted if ordinary people put pressure on their governments to stop playing climate games.

FOCUS

Australia at the forefront What we can (must) do

Australia is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, being already arid, hot and having a very long coastline. Our ecosystems are especially vulnerable owing to their evolutionary isolation.

Scientific studies show we are likely to experience:

- more frequent and severe El Nino events.
- accelerated bleaching destroying much of the Great Barrier Reef by 2040. (High sea temperatures have already resulted in mass bleaching and death of coral in 1998.)
- 66% less snow by 2030. No snow fields by 2070.
- severe bushfires across the nation as forests become drier and hotter.

Robert Hill's lament that Australia's economic growth makes stemming our emissions difficult is baseless. As Friends of the Earth points out, there is no reason for economic growth to be linked to greenhouse emissions.

In 1999, world emissions dropped by 0.5% while the world economy expanded 2.5% in the same year. In 1998, China's economy grew by 7.2% while its emissions dropped 3.7%.

Wayne Thomas

What Greens are doing

Australia's climate policies **can** be reformed if there is the political will. The German Greens, who are in government coalition, are showing exactly what can be done.

Germany has an 'ecology tax' on fossil fuels, but it does not end there. It has also guaranteed a minimum price for wind generated electricity, which has resulted in Germany quickly overtaking Denmark to have the highest rate of wind generation in the world. More than 25,000 people are now employed in the wind industry there.

And Germany's *100,000 roofs* program launched in 1998 has led to investment by Shell/Pilkington in a solar cell manufacturing facility that will be the world's largest.

New national laws have also given a guaranteed 0.99 Deutschmark per kilowatt hour for solar electricity – making solar power cost competitive with other forms of energy for the first time anywhere in the world.

Energy policy is central to Green politics in all parts of the world with innovative legislation and other reforms being heralded – like the NZ Greens' *Energy Conservation Act*, like the work Green councillors are doing in Newcastle, like Bob Brown's *Sun Fund Bill* and his attempt to force the Howard government to include a 'greenhouse trigger' in federal legislation.

But in Australia it's an uphill struggle. Real reform will need political will, and that requires strong public pressure. In an election year this means Australians have to persuade both the government and opposition to dramatically change their attitudes.

Where to find out more

Climate Action Network

This is the Australian connection to the worldwide *Climate Action Network*, active in all continents. A great one-stop shop for local and global climate information, action alerts, even weather changes you can expect in your locality.
<http://www.climateaustralia.org>

World Rainforest Movement

For in-depth analysis of forests around the world you can go no better than WRM, a consummately organised groups based in Uruguay.
<www.wrm.org.uy/english/climatechange.htm>

IIASA

If you want solid technical detail on why 'forest sinks' can not work, then go to this professional site.
<www.iiasa.ac.at>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

http://www.ipcc.ch/

Friends of the Earth

<http://www.foel.org/campaigns/ClimateChange/indexcc.html>

Worldwatch

<www.worldwatch.org>

Australian Greenhouse Office

Find out what our government is doing. Read between the lines for what it's not!
<www.greenhouse.gov.au>

Got carbon to sell?

Then go to this corporate e-commerce site – designed to help companies and nations trade greenhouse emissions credits.
<CO2e.com>

FOCUS

Fuel Cells

AUSTRALIA'S BRIGHT ENERGY FUTURE

Most Australians have vaguely heard about fuel cells, but are not aware they are about to conquer the world. **Jorge Da Silva,** a WA-based mechanical engineer, has a passion for renewable energy systems. 'Forget about wind, tides, solar... the holy grail of renewable energy is the Methanol Fuel Cell,' he says.

Imagine a car battery. But instead of storing electricity, this 'battery' actually generates it. Through one pipe we feed the fuel (practically any fuel). Through another pipe we feed air. The Fuel Cell generates electricity directly by oxidising, or chemically 'burning', the fuel. For green transport, just add an electric motor, and you're off. No noise, vibration or smoke.

How it works

There are two clever components in the fuel cell – a special membrane and a catalyst.

The membrane sits between the anode (+) and the cathode (-). The fuel enters the anode side where a catalyst changes its molecules to ions. The membrane allows only the electrically charged fuel ions to cross to the oxygen side, and so creates a voltage difference between the anode and the cathode - ie electricity.

If you want to learn more about fuel cell technology a website that is worth a visit is <http://www.ballard.com> a Canadian company at the forefront of fuel cell technology.

The race is on

Early fuel cells (using hydrogen) were not very practicable. However, exciting new technologies have opened the door to using liquids, like methanol or ethanol. What's the big deal about liquids? It is simply the ONLY convenient way to store energy for cars, buses, trucks, ships, and planes.

These developments are sending shock waves throughout industry and the race is now on to get fuel cell cars onto the market. Several car manufacturers expect to launch such cars in 2004 - 2005. Prototypes of cars and buses already run in several cities.

Greenhouse friendly

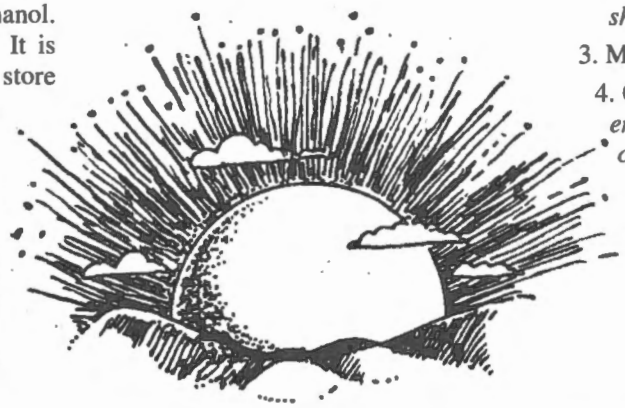
To stop adding CO_2 to the atmosphere we have to start using fuels which are made from plants that can be readily harvested and regrown (ie the Closed Loop Carbon Cycle).

So, in the next few years a Methanol Industry is going to develop in leaps and bounds, and it will start taking market share away from the oil, coal and gas multinationals.

(Of course, the oil industry is going to react. There are already plans to develop fuel cells that run on petrol – technically difficult because petrol is a nasty combination of more than 50 different chemicals – but that can never be greenhouse friendly.)

The other good news about fuel cells is their superb efficiency. Your existing car will run at 15% - 35% efficiency. The best turbo diesels achieve about 50%. Fuel cells are already demonstrating efficiencies of 50 - 60 % and improving.

Then there are miniaturised fuel cells (powered from refillable methanol cartridges) to be fitted to small appliances that now use batteries. Motorola already has a one-cubic-inch fuel cell which can power a mobile phone.



Using plant residues

In a few years, the world is going to need millions of tons of methanol, made from (biomass) plant residue, to supply the emerging fuel cell market.

New research on methanol production is focusing on low-moisture plants and woody residues using the Syngas process. Yield rates are about 400 litres of methanol per tonne of feed material, giving farmers around $A58 per tonne.

But we need research programs in place now to find out, for instance, which plants to use and to ensure only sustainable agricultural practices are employed.

Opportunities for Australia

What is Australia doing about the coming Methanol Revolution? Are we in the race? Or, in time, will we have to buy American or Japanese methanol plants to provide power generation and fuel for our nation's vehicle fleets?

Australia is the ideal candidate for methanol conversion. A typical farm, equipped with a small plant, could easily produce enough methanol to supply electricity to the homestead/sheds as well as fuel for tractors, trucks and cars. (Yes, existing engines can be readily converted to run on methanol).

And if Australia jumps in early it can not only become energy self-sufficient, we can be in a good position to generate four huge export markets within 4 – 5 years:

1. Fuel cells *(for engines of all types)*
2. Methanol conversion plants *(in all shapes and sizes)*
3. Methanol itself
4. Conversion kits *(for the millions of engines which will need to be converted from petrol to methanol).*

Opportunities like this don't come along often.

The writer, Jorge Da Silva, can be contacted at <jorge@mydesk.net.au>

Australian Greens
Green Party News

A very busy year ahead for all!

BY GREENS' NATIONAL CONVENOR, CATHERINE MOORE

Greetings to all Greens and readers of *Green*. As of the national conference in Adelaide I am the new convenor of the Australian Greens and am looking forward to the busy year ahead.

Firstly, a big thank you to Stephenie Cahalan, who has moved onto other important activities – like getting Bob Brown re-elected to the Senate whenever the next federal election may be (roll on fixed parliamentary terms!). Thanks also to the other outgoing office-bearers for the work they have done.

Introducing the other new office-bearers.....

• Greg Buckman is continuing in the job of Treasurer – for which we are extremely grateful as he has been doing such great work.

• Stu Cook has taken on the job of Secretary and is also getting the website and email lists in order.

• Gosta Lynga, we are all very pleased to see, is continuing with the job of Policy Co-ordinator.

• And welcome to assistant convenor Indra Esguerra and assistant secretary Allison Foster.

While thanking people, I can not miss the South Australian Greens, who put on a thoroughly enjoyable and successful national conference in August. It's always a lot of work to organise such an event, so I hope those involved have recovered and are not too exhausted to carry on with other Green work. It was great to see so many new faces at the conference, as it was to see all states and territories represented, including WA. We still, as always, look forward to welcoming the WA Greens as an affiliated body of the Australian Greens.

And last but not least (with apologies to anyone I've missed) is the big thank you due to Pat Mackle and *Avant Card*, who continue to generously support The Greens by producing some wonderful cards for us and by buying large numbers of *Green* to give away.

How can you get involved?

Talking of Green work, there are always lots of things to be done, and I want to take this opportunity to try to encourage people who might not want to come to meetings to become involved in some other way.

For example, policy updating and drafting is an ongoing process, and I just know there are lots of Greens out there with expertise and/or a passion for different issues. Why not contact the Policy Co-ordinator or your state representative on the policy Co-ordinating group (contacts for office-bearers and state committee representatives appear on page 18) and have some input from the comfort of your home?

If policy isn't your thing, there's always fund - raising to be done. At the national conference, we agreed to set up the *Asia-Pacific Fund* - specifically set up to assist Greens and green causes in this region. Further, we are presently setting up the *Green Foundation*, which will fund educational and other activities specifically related to the environment.

And of course we are moving ever closer to the exciting *Global Greens 2001* event, for which we will need much more in the coffers than we have at the moment.

So where will the money come from, and how can people help?

We hope to raise some through donations from ethical companies (not the sort you read about in the last issue!). But there are other smaller but equally as important activities which will also help us meet our targets. These include cards, blank inside but suitable for Christmas, which are available in small and large numbers and which not only support the Global Greens but can also be a fund - raiser for local groups who buy them.

We would like to have a national raffle, to be drawn at the Conference, and are looking for someone to organise it. And of

Stu Cook (Australian Greens Secretary)

Kate Walsh (Youth spokesperson)

Gosta Lynga (Policy Coordinator)

Marg Blakers (Global Greens Conference Organiser)

Greg Buckman (Treasurer)

course, any money that state or local groups, or individuals, want to throw the Australian Greens' way will always be much appreciated and put to very good use.

Global Greens 2001

If anyone reading this would like to help in some way, however small, with *Global Greens 2001*, please do not hesitate to contact Margaret Blakers, who is working full-time on this event and who I'm sure would be very happy to delegate some of the large number of jobs she is undertaking. Again, some of them can be done from home. And ongoing thanks of course to Margaret, who is doing such a great job getting the conference happening.

Federal election looming

The federal election looms, so opportunities for involvement will not diminish once *Global Greens* is behind us. State and territory groups no doubt do not need reminding that it is time to select Senate candidates (and I know that in some places at least this is done or already happening).

We also need candidates for many House of Representatives seats, to help raise the profile of the Greens in local areas. Being a candidate can be lots of fun, and is not always as daunting as it might at first seem, so I'm making a special plea here, especially to women, to think about seeking pre-selection to stand in your local area and encourage local groups to set pre-selection in motion.

Local Greens to meet in Canberra

We've moved the December council meeting to Canberra, to coincide with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Conference, which we are hoping will be well-represented by the more than thirty endorsed Green (and an unknown number of small-g green) councillors from around Australia.

Looking forward to seeing more new faces, along with the old ones, at this meeting.

Stay Green!
Best wishes
Cath

Forthcoming national meetings of the Australian Greens

2,3 December	National council, Canberra
19,20 May 2001	National council, Melbourne
24-26 August 2001	National conference, Sydney
December 2001	National council, Tasmania
May 2002	National council, Perth

FOR THE RECORD

Did you know the Greens have a national archivist?

Colin Smith's job is to sort and sift our documentary leavings and to keep what matters in the long term – safe, retrievable and available. The result will be a collective memory.

You can help Colin by sending any records (policies, election ads, significant correspondence) that you think the party ought to keep – local, state, national.

He will be able to help you when you can't find that thing you remember we once had. Or if you want to go on a retrospective fishing expedition. Or if you really want to do some serious historical research.

You can contact Colin on 02 9887 9227 (ph/fax), email <aesthete@labyrinth.net.au> or write PO Box 649 Glen Waverley 3150.

Send consignments to him c/- the Victorian Greens office (address on page 18). (If sending a consignment, let him know it is coming).

Join The Greens!

The Greens is the only truly progressive party left in Australian politics, why not invest in the future by becoming a member?

You can become a member by either:
- filling out this coupon or
- by joining 'on-line' through the Greens website: <www.greens.org.au> (go to your state or territory).

For information about membership phone 1800 017 011. Members in Tas, Vic, SA and ACT will receive *Green* magazine as part of their membership.

Please send me a Green Party membership application form.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

State.....P'code.....

Phone Work (....).....Home (....).....

Send to your local state or territory party office (addresses listed on page 18).

Green Party Highlights Australia

Just about every month around Australia there's an election or an opinion poll involving The Greens, but all too often only local people get to hear the results. To help cure this, from time to time we will carry summaries of elections and opinion poll results.

Recent Opinion Polls

National opinion polls have The Greens on 3 to 4% (up from 2.2% in the last federal election) and showing signs of overhauling the Democrats as Australia's third political force. (The Democrats are on 4 to 5%).

In **Western Australia** opinion polls have The Greens on 6.5% after winning 5% in the seats they stood in in the last state election held in 1996.

In **Tasmania** opinion polls have The Greens around 16% after winning 10% in the last state election held in 1998.

Recent elections

South Australia: In May local Greens stood for five councils. The elections gave the SA Greens their first elected representative, Joy O'Brien, who polled 12% (Burnside). Other inspiring results were Michael Pritchard's 19% (Mitcham), Heather McDermott's 19% (Holdfast Bay) and Deb Cashel's 18% (Charles Sturt).

Victoria: In a state by-election (Benalla) held in May Greens polled 2% and their preferences were decisive in delivering the seat to Labor. In a federal by-election (Isaacs) in August, Greens polled 10% of the vote, well up on their 2% in the 1998 federal election.

Tasmania: The then convenor of the Tasmanian Greens, Trish Moran, polled 28%, in an upper house seat (Wellington), outpolling the Liberals and well up on The Greens' previous results in the seat. In council elections held in October The Greens look like winning a number of seats around the state.

Northern Territory: Andy Gough polled 6% of the vote in a state parliament by-election (Port Darwin) in March.

NSW: On July 29 The Greens' Dr Judy Greenwood won 21% of the primary vote, winning another Green seat in Randwick City Council and bringing the number of local Green reps in NSW to 27.

Forthcoming elections

Election	Likely date
Federal election	July/August or Nov/Dec 2001
Western Australia	December 2000 to March 2001
ACT Assembly	20 October 2001
South Australia	Sept/Oct 2001
Queensland	Middle of 2001
Northern Territory	Early to mid 2001
Tasmania	2002
Victoria	November 2002 to September 2003
NSW	March 2003

Visit Australia's premier progressive political site

www.greens.org.au

110,000 visits per month & growing

The Australian Greens' website is so informative BBC's Educational Service has added it to its list of educational websites telling people about Australia.

From our global site you can connect to sites for each state and territory, to Senator Bob Brown's website and to the *Global Greens Conference* (GG2001) site.

How easy! Whenever you feel the urge you can find out what is happening in the Green world within minutes – sent direct to your home computer.

GET OUR MEDIA RELEASES BY EMAIL

Simply go to <www.greens.org.au> and sign up to the 'Greens-Media' opt in email list.

JOIN A DISCUSSION GROUP

You can join any or all of the Australian Greens discussion groups or mailing lists at: <www.altnews.com.au/Greens/>

You can enlist to any of our Activist lists online. You can talk with other members about party policy, about green global events, about current issues.

You can discuss current and future campaigns of the Greens, send out Green-friendly action alerts, discuss global Greens issues or discuss the *Global Greens 2001* Conference and the global charter.

GREENS PARTY

This is the (members only) area for discussion of Green principles, the philosophy that binds us together and issues such as the party's policies.

GREENS YOUTH

And there is the discussion area for the *Greens Youth Network* which has formed campus and community activist groups.

So, why not add <www.greens.org.au> to your favourite bookmark list in your browser?

"The political party for the whole Earth"

Australian Greens

Reports from State &Territory Parties

Qld Greens putting pressure on Beattie as elections draw near

State elections in Queensland are due in the June – September period next year. In preparation, we have targeted a number of key seats in Brisbane, the far north, and in the Gold Coast region. We intend to concentrate our resources into just a few seats where we can be seen to be effective – though should candidates come forward with branch endorsements we may contest a broader range of seats. In 1998 we stood 46 candidates in the 89 state seats. This was exceptional and is not likely to be repeated this time around.

There are very good grounds for putting pressure on Qld Labor. Their record on the environment, particularly on land clearing, could hardly be worse. They are at present very vulnerable, with a one seat majority, and with electoral rorting issues within the party being before the courts and getting a lot of media. If they want the Green vote, then they need to earn it over the next eight months with a lot more than empty promises.

We are running an on-going campaign on the land clearing issue and we are using this issue, and other social justice and environmental issues, as material for local campaigning leading up to the state election.

In the background, the Qld Greens now have office space at the Grass Roots Centre, 237 Boundary St, West End, Brisbane. The office is staffed three to four days a week, principally by our Treasurer John McKeon. We are looking for people to drop in and for volunteers to help out. There is a great deal of work to be done, particularly in the area of focused fundraising, to support our electoral campaigns.

Hope to see you there!

Richard Nielsen
Deputy Convenor

It's elections, elections and party building in Jeff Bracks' Victoria

We haven't had an election for nearly two months!

After the state election in September 99 and five by-elections since then, the last few months have been our first chance to take a breather.

The most recent by-election was held in the federal electorate of Isaacs – a long bayside seat, which meant it was possible to campaign on the beach. A nice change. The Liberals didn't nominate as Isaacs is safe ALP, so the most interesting battle was going to be between us and the Democrats who traditionally do well in the area. Our candidate was Mary Hutchison, a mother of three and student rights campaigner.

One of the major focuses of our campaign was raising awareness of GE foods. The highlight of this was Mary handing out leaflets on a Saturday morning with her media coordinator dressed up as a giant tomato. The campaign was a huge success with Mary polling nearly 10% of the vote, coming in third behind the Democrats on 17% – quite an achievement for Mary, as a first time candidate, and her campaign team and supporters.

The Victorian Greens are now in a party building phase for the first time in a long time. The new state council and office bearers are settling in and we've launched a membership drive and a program for establishing liaisons with community groups/unions etc.

The atmosphere down here is interesting. The Steve Bracks' bubble has well and truly popped and the expression 'Jeff Bracks' is entering the Victorian progressive vocabulary. S11 was a fantastic triumph for peaceful opposition/demonstration/ celebration versus the drivers of corporate globalisation. I'd also like to thank all the Greens who came to Melbourne during S11, our numbers were fantastic and the Greens were the only political party to have parliamentarians on the ground for the three days.

We are of course looking towards the federal election. With the campaign experience we now have in Victoria there is a tangible feeling of confidence about what we can do.

Daniel Scoullar
State Convenor

Election guessing games in WA as Greens field strong teams

The Greens (WA) are gearing up (still!) for the forthcoming state election.

Without fixed term government we still have to play the Richard Court guessing game – ie second guess when the election might occur.

At this stage (still some weeks from the actual campaign) we expect to field the largest number of candidates for any election we have ever contested. At the time of writing we have 14 upper house candidates (across the 6 regions) and 36 lower candidates (across the 57 Legislative Assembly seats). Come the election we will probably field 15 upper house and 45-50 lower house candidates, giving us Greens the same statewide coverage as the Labor and Liberal parties get.

All this augers well for the state campaign and for next year's federal campaign.

The big issues in WA still remain forests and health services, but the finance brokers scandal won't go away. This alone would probably be enough to bring down the government, but, with our gerrymander, it remains unlikely WA will see an effective change in government.

Elections aside, the viability of the Derby Tidal Power plant remains a significant problem for us, with the original proposal amounting to little less than a dam on tidal estuarine systems. Coupled with uncertain job prospects in the regions this proposal does not seem to deliver the promise of its makers.

Stewart Jackson, Secretary,
The Greens (WA)

Andy Gough and Ilana Eldridge from the Northern Territory Greens

Looking forward to our fifth birthday and two big elections.

The SA Greens have enjoyed the opportunity to organise this year's Australian Greens' national conference. We celebrate the fact delegates attended it from all states and territories. We thank all conference attendees for their parts played in making the conference a success. Perhaps it was helped by William's food and SA wines!

DAGS (*Direct Action Greens*) is a new subgroup organised by some SA Greens to perform exciting actions on topical issues. This group performed a daring and well-reported banner drop at two locations in Adelaide to coincide with the Anti Nuclear Dump rally and media associated with it. They meet regularly to determine interesting and innovating actions.

We are preparing now for our own agm, then we plan to get into election mode and pre-selection of candidates for both state and federal elections. Yes! We have the luck of facing two elections within a few months of each other.

Finally, by the time this is in print we will have celebrated our FIFTH birthday. Does this mean we now are ready to enter the BIG SCHOOL? After the next elections we hope so!

Deb Cashel

Strict new electoral laws in NSW boosts Green membership!

Recent changes to state electoral laws have focused The Greens NSW on gaining new financial members in order to meet the strict new requirements.

A registered political party must now have 750 financial members, who must all be on the electoral roll and who must individually complete a state electoral office registration form.

While these new requirements have led to an increased administrative burden for us, support from members and supporters has been overwhelming. Financial membership has grown by close to 50% and this has also led to the formation of several new local groups.

On the legislative front, The Greens have continued to promote social justice and ecological sustainability in parliament. The Greens MPs have moved scores of amendments to dozens of bills over the year and have achieved a great deal of success.

The government is currently re-working the entire water management scheme for NSW. The Greens are working to promote ecologically sustainable water management and ensure environmental flows. Many Greens local groups have focused on this Bill as it is will impact heavily on rural areas as well as set precedents for water management in other states.

The so-called NSW Labor government is pushing yet another privatisation. This time they are seeking to privatise the profitable NSW freight rail service, *FreightCorp*. The selling of *FreightCorp* would have a negative impact on jobs, rural services, the economy and environment. We have produced campaign material, toured country areas, met with unions and have been instrumental in establishing an inquiry into the sale.

The recent Adoption Bill 2000 overhauled adoption laws but reinforced homophobic and discriminatory laws. The Greens moved amendments to the Bill in order to provide equal treatment for all families but Labor, Liberal and the Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile) combined to defeat our proposals.

Many Greens members from across NSW travelled to Melbourne for the protest against the World Economic Forum. Greens played a significant role in the actions and many members gained widespread local media coverage. Several local groups have also held s11 video showings that have been very well attended.

Jamie Parker

Tas Greens pivotal as Tasmania goes GE-free

Thanks to an impressive campaign (too many names to mention) the number of endorsed Greens elected to local councils in Tasmania has just shot up from two to five.

Newly elected are:

Mary O'Doherty (Huon Valley),
Patsy Jones (Hobart City), and
Simon Baptist (Kingborough).

The Greens ran a responsible campaign by making their political alignment clear, unlike many so-called 'independent' candidates. We stood 25 candidates, a few of whom polled really well but just missed out on being elected.

Our candidates campaigned on a variety of pressing issues such as the contentious *Southwood* export woodchip mill (proposed for the southern forests) and forestry plantations encroaching on prime agricultural land and native forests.

GE-Free Tassie

Following a year of parliamentary and street campaigning, the Tasmanian government has responded by declaring a 12 month moratorium on GE crop trials throughout Tasmania.

Our elected state member, Peg Putt, has been, as usual tireless as effective leader of the opposition, keeping the Bacon government on its toes. After Peg tabled a motion calling for a parliamentary committee of inquiry into gene technology, the minister relented and set in train a select committee to examine the issues. Peg is on it, and it's due to report by March 30.

To date, Tasmania is the only state to declare a moratorium on GE crop trials while the government formulates its position. However, with enormous corporate pressure being applied on the Tasmanian government, there is till a long way to go before the moratorium has a chance of being permanent. We have much hard work ahead of us.

We will continue to campaign for an ongoing ge ban on all crops. Our stance has received significant community support.

Greens were also very active recently at the international *Timber Certification Conference* (the government is trying to pass off our forest practices as sustainable!). There was a huge turnout at a rally outside of the conference & excellent media coverage.

Membership of the party has grown to just under 300 and the party is polling well at about 16%.

We've had a successful year of rebuilding and consolidation and will go into the coming year full of confidence.

P.S. Don't miss the Liffey Gala Picnic

Our Liffey fundraiser all-day picnic on Sunday November 19. Bob Brown's house is just 1km beyond the Liffey Tea Rooms. Bring all your own tucker and utensils. Fires, toilets, freshwater and camping (come Saturday if you wish) are available. Adults $10 per head. Children free. Everyone is welcome, but please don't startle the platypuses.

Te Tangi o te Kakariki*

[* The call of the green parakeet]

Here's a quick round up of what's been happening with the Kiwi Greens during the first nine months of having seven Green MPs in parliament. We've had both formal and informal success stories.

Formally, the Greens had considerable influence on the setting up, terms of reference and membership of the *Royal Commission into Genetic Modification*. And the only political party to be granted 'interested person' status, which means the right to cross-examine other submitters. We also got two other parliamentary inquiries set up – one inquiring into organic agriculture and one looking at international human rights.

The first Green Act was also passed – the *Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act,* initiated by Green co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimmons as a private member's Bill in 1998. Rod Donald's Bill on local government electoral reform – the STV system – went to select committee. Keith Locke's Bill to remove the Crown's prerogative to make international treaties made a timely appearance just as the government was shoving through a free trade treaty with Singapore with undue haste.

The Greens also scored a New Zealand first by securing a $15 million *Green Package* in the first Labour/Alliance coalition government budget. The money will finance smoking cessation programs, legal aid for environmental groups, support for environment centres, the new energy efficiency program, more biosecurity inspections and conservation awareness programs, pilot work on alternative national accounts and environmental reporting, certification for organic growers, a pesticide reduction program and a ministerial advisory committee on complementary and alternative health therapies.

Informally, the Greens haven't given up direct action. They have been out on the streets drawing attention to traffic congestion and pollution, the dangers of genetic engineering, the cruelty of sow crates and the stupidity of the Waikato water pipeline which would take polluted water from the Waikato river 100 km north to Auckland.

MPs Sue Bradford and Nandor Tanczos represented the NZ Greens at the s11 protests in Melbourne and Greens joined the protest against WTO boss Mike Moore's visit to Christchurch in August.

Organisationally the party took a step forward in January with the formation of a Maori group, *Te Roopu Pounamu*. The group is working towards increasing the party's Maori content and profile.

However, the imbalance between the well-organised parliamentary wing (29 secretarial, research and media staff) and the poorly-organised non-parliamentary side (one part-time administrator) is a matter of concern. The position of *Party Development Co-ordinator* first advertised in June remains vacant – applications from Australia are welcome!

Christine Dann

Green
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

[The NZ Greens have a well organised website: <www.greens.org.nz>]

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A Peoples' Globalisation

BY BEN OQUIST, REPORTING FROM THE CROWN CASINO ON SEPTEMBER 11

"Those on the barricades at Crown Casino at s11 were dubbed simply as 'anti-globalisation' – a cheap shot, because most of them, like the Greens, are, in fact, internationalists. People striving for a peoples' form of globalisation."

Bob Brown speaking at the S11 protest in Melbourne.

Photo: William Smith

Critics of s11 lined up to shoot down what was probably Australia's most significant protest since the Franklin Dam blockade. A few 'progressive' journalists echoed this bias, like Tim Colebatch *(The Age)* who slipped into near hysteria, comparing the protesters to the Burmese military!

It was similar amongst politicians. And it was those on the Labor side who sounded more panicked in their attacks. Premiers Steve Bracks and Bob Carr and Labor's supposed intellectual conscience, Mark Latham MP, seemed bent on outdoing each other with over-the-top rhetoric.

"Young people should not protest", chided Labor's shadow minister Martin Ferguson. Instead they should stay at home and study because globalisation produces winners and losers and by studying you can make sure you are a winner! And the losers? No mention of them from the leader of the ALP's parliamentary left!

It would have done them all good to come down and talk to the 1000s of the protesters outside Crown Casino who they vilified. Most of them were true internationalists. Keenly aware of problems outside Australia, eager to promote global solutions to the planet's and humanity's crises. Far more coherent than what is usually discussed in Australia's often insular and parochial media.

The critics of the S11 protests did not use the occasion to promote a new form of globalism – one dominated by people instead of corporations. The Greens did. Here's the start of what a Greens vision of globalisation might look like:

• **Globalised environmental regulations.** The Greens in the Senate have proposed a system whereby Australian companies operating abroad would be subject to the same environmental regulations that apply to their projects in Australia. This way disasters like the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea would never be allowed to occur again.

• **Globalised human rights.** While the Howard government seeks to wind back our United Nations responsibilities we actually need to extend the range and scope of the UN human rights and treaty system. Bob Brown's private members bill to ban mandatory sentencing sought to invoke international human rights obligations in Australian law.

Increased global rights for refugees and asylum seekers. Increased rights for refugees and asylum seekers in Australia. While the federal government and ALP champion the rights of global capital to move freely, they have passed draconian law after draconian law – Australia is one of the only countries in the world with mandatory detention for onshore asylum seekers.

• **Globalised financial regulation.** A global Tobin-style tax on foreign currency transactions, which would raise billions of dollars and would provide a check on the excessive financial speculation that makes a casino of many countries' economies.

• **Globalised corporate accountability.** Increased global accountability of a corporation's activities – wherever they may be operating. Australia must find new ways of taking responsibility for the actions of its corporations when they operate overseas. So that, for example, labour rights are protected when an Australian corporation moves its manufacturing offshore.

• **Global Democracy.** While western countries are touted as the cradles of democracy, a few rich countries (representing a small percentage of the planet's population) and their corporate backers dominate the world's financial and political institutions. The Greens champion democracy from the grassroots to the global scale. This means giving a new global democratic voice to the vast majority of the world's people who live in the developing world.

[Ben Oquist is media adviser to Senator Brown in Canberra.]

For further information about the s11 protests and aftermath, including a declaration issued by Green MPs, check out the Australian Greens website:

<www.greens.org.au>

or the general s11 site

<www.s11.org>

You can contact the Victorian Greens s11 coordinator, Chris Chaplin. at: <chrisjen@techinfo.com.au>

Globalisation - poverty friend or foe?

BY GREG BUCKMAN, CO-EDITOR OF *GREEN*

September saw massive protests in Melbourne and Prague against the World Economic Forum and meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These followed earlier tumultuous protests against World Trade Organisation, World Bank and IMF meetings in Seattle and Washington.

The protests pitted angry people-in-the-street against the captains of industry and their government backers. In all cases protestors argued globalisation is driving more and more people to the wall. The captains of industry retorted that globalisation is the only hope for world poverty. Even the leader of the inspiring 1968 'Prague Spring' anti-communist uprising, Vaclav Havel (now President of the Czech Republic), gave this defence of globalisation.

So, who is right? Is globalisation a devil or a saint for poverty?

Global Poverty

There are two major minefields one has to step through when analysing the effect of globalisation on world poverty. 1) Many people draw a distinction between poverty and inequality. 2) It is impossible to know what would have happened if there had never been any globalisation of the world economy (particularly given that the industrial revolution gave the world high growth well before globalisation did).

Globalisation took off in a big way in the early 1980s. Since then inequality around the world has gotten worse and poverty has remained at horrendously high levels.

On the inequality front:

• In 1960 the richest 20% of the world's population earned 30 times the income of the world's poorest 20%. By 1995 they were earning 82 times as much.

• In 1976 Switzerland was 52 times richer than Mozambique. By 1997 it was 508 times richer!

On the poverty front:

• The World Bank estimates that about 3 billion people – about half the world's population – live on $US3.00 per day or less. This level of poverty is extraordinary given that the average per capita income earned around the world has doubled since 1960.

• Of those 3 billion poor, about 1.2 billion are living in extreme poverty – on less than $US1.50 per day or little more than we would spend on a loaf of bread. Poverty remains a massive problem in Africa, in particular, where most of the sub-Saharan population ekes out a subsistence living. Africa is likely to account for an increasing share of the world's poverty in decades to come.

• In 1996 the club of developed economies, the OECD, adopted the goal of halving extreme global poverty by 2015. At the moment there's insufficient political will to make this happen.

The Greens at the s11 protest
Photo: Colin Smith

However, there is some hope. The number of people living on $US1.50 or less hasn't changed much over the past decade, resulting in a slight decrease in the proportion of very poor in the world. And there have been some large gains in the fight against poverty, with greater inroads being made during the past 50 years than the previous 500 (this is unsurprising though given that little economic growth was experienced in the world until the industrial revolution took off in the mid 1800s).

Also child death rates have halved since 1960 while world malnutrition has been cut by a third. And there have been some winners during the period of globalisation, particularly in Asia, home to about two-thirds of the world's poor, where poverty has more than halved in the last 30 years.

Factors that have held back improvements in third world poverty include a continuing reliance by most developing countries on increasingly less lucrative raw materials for most of their export income and the ongoing burden of more than $1,000 billion of foreign debt largely incurred when raw material prices were high.

Although private sector investment in developing countries has increased tenfold since the mid 1980s, most of it went into a select few countries like China, Mexico, South Korea and Brazil, leaving nearly all developing countries in the investment cold. Normally foreign aid would be expected to make a difference but total world aid fell from $US60 billion in 1990 to $US55 billion now, most of which is either politically targeted or tied to trade deals and/or debt servicing. Only the Netherlands and Sweden meet the United Nation's recommended aid benchmark of 0.7% of GNP (the rich country aid average is only 0.22% of GNP).

Beyond a certain point all these factors make increasing inequality self-perpetuating.

Globalisation - poverty friend or foe?

Australian Poverty

Globalisation first hit Australia in a big way when our dollar was floated (sunk ?) in December 1983 and, like the world at large, we have become a much less equal society since.

The top 10% of earners in Australia saw their incomes increase by 12% between 1986 and 1996 and the richest 20% of Australians now earn 48 per cent of our national income and own more than half the national wealth! The really big losers during the period of globalisation, however, have been the middle class and men. Between 1982 and 1997 the proportion of Australians receiving between 50 and 150% of median income (currently $28,700pa) fell from 71% to 60%. Most women leaving this 'hollowed out' middle class increased their incomes, but about half of all men saw their incomes decrease.

Like world inequality, poor income distribution in our country feeds off itself as rich people invest part of their increasing incomes to become ever-richer, something the poor can never hope to do. Rich people also have greater access to new technology like the internet.

And poverty is becoming increasingly locality-based in Australia with country towns, most parts of South Australia and Tasmania and outer metropolitan Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane becoming low-income centres.

In 1973 Professor Ronald Henderson headed the first major poverty inquiry in Australia. Henderson first defined a poverty line in our country and felt that it should be adjusted over time to reflect changes in income inequality. In 1973 he identified 20.7% of Australian households as being "very poor" or "rather poor".

Using the same measures, adjusted for changes in average household earnings since, 30.4 % of Australian households in 1996 were very poor or rather poor. This means 50% more households than in 1973, in our so-called 'fair-go' society, are poor (although the percentage is lower if you adjust Henderson's poverty line just for inflation).

Australia now has one of the most unequal distributions of income in the developed world. The head of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Michael Raper, says *"the rich are getting richer and while the poor haven't got poorer, they have become more numerous"*.

But, like global poverty, there are some glimmers of hope. During the period of globalisation Australia does seem to have become better at managing poverty even if more and more are falling into it. Between 1986 and 1996 the poorest 10% of Australian households increased their incomes by 32%. This was mainly due to more generous and better-targeted welfare. Better targeting towards poor people has also extended to what is known as 'the social wage', ie non-cash benefits like publicly funded education and health.

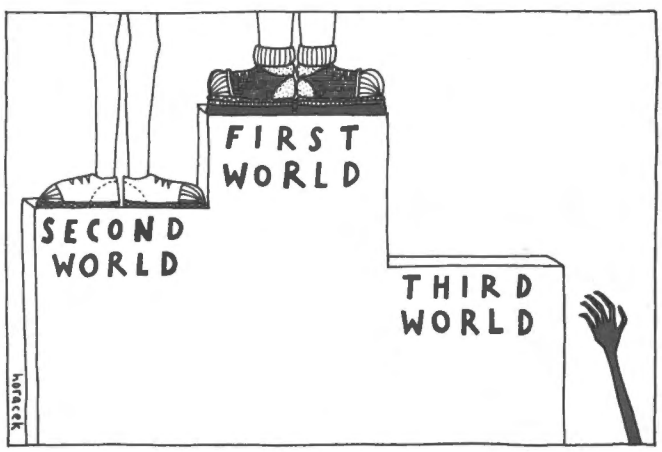
The causes of Australia's increasing inequality are complex. Our tax system doesn't always help, however. Our the-more-you-earn-the-higher-your-tax-rate income tax system has a healthy effect on income distribution but superannuation tax breaks for the rich, the generous tax treatment of dividends and capital gains, negative gearing and property tax loopholes as well as the recent GST income tax breaks and the absence of inheritance tax all work against egalitarian distribution of income in our country.

Conclusion

Basically about half of the world's population and about a third of Australia's are poor and the gaps have gotten larger during the period of globalisation. The one positive has been that even though the gap between the rich and poor has increased the number of people around the world in poverty hasn't necessarily climbed.

Most businessmen and finance ministers attending the global economic forums in Seattle, Washington, Prague and Melbourne want globalisation without rules. Before globalisation came along some economies like Albania tried to survive without any engagement with the outside world. Both of these extremes are naïve and unfair. In between are people like Indian activist Vandana Shiva and ex-ACOSS president, Julian Disney, who are not calling for an end to globalisation but say it needs many more rules.

Another middle option is the economic ideal first popularised by Fritz Schumacher of economic 'self reliance', an ideal once espoused by many Green parties (the theory being that dependent economies can't engage with the world economy on their own terms). The world probably needs a mix of both globalisation-with-rules and national self-reliance but at the moment we are living in the extreme of a lawless globalised international economy made up of lots of economies that are dependent on it. There is therefore no reason for the protests to stop.



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Ethics and Surrogacy

How should society deal with the ethics of biological research and social engineering?

Kerrie Tucker (ACT Green MP), **Roland Manderson** and **Allison Foster** make a case for informed debate in a political environment devoid of thoughtful leadership.

Position Vacant

Altruistic Surrogate Mother

As the successful applicant you:

- will be referred to as 'the surrogate'.
- will have a fertilised egg, the genetic material of the commissioning parents, implanted in your uterus.
- should be willing to submit to several attempts before implantation of embryo is successful.
- should be willing to be guided by commissioning parents on medical procedures & tests for health of foetus.
- should expect to give the child up after it's born.
- must accompany the commissioning parents (genetic parents) to counselling, which may be at the clinic where the procedures will be performed.
- will be the legal mother of the child once a child is born unless a parentage order is sought from the commissioning parents and you agree to this order.
- understand that any agreement prior to this parentage order is in no way legally binding.
- will be the legal mother when the child is born, if for any reason the commissioning parents change their mind (perhaps the child has a serious disability or some other event has changed the situation for the commissioning parents).
- will understand that there is no requirement on the commissioning parents to take any responsibility for the child.

Many aspects of our lives are significantly affected by – in fact determined by – technology. Technological developments can have positive consequences, but they can also be environmentally and socially disastrous. The internal combustion engine and high yielding hybrid crops are two obvious examples.

Now that assisted reproductive technology has become a growth industry, two important issues are rapidly emerging. The 'creation' of human life for a range of purposes poses multiple ethical dilemmas for society. And investing such huge resources, often to benefit the most affluent sector of the population, creates further social dilemmas

1. A question of ethics?

The recent instance of a US couple creating several in-vitro embryos, and then choosing to implant the one with genetic resources most likely to save their other ailing child, is a particularly stark example of the ethical dilemmas this technology raises.

The fate of the embryos created but not implanted, raises further issues: can they be used for medical research, should they be stored and for how long, and how can they be disposed of?

2. A question of resources

To make matters worse, such medical science is inevitably expensive. High-tech interventions take dollars away from preventative and primary health care.

Is there a point at which we need to draw the line? What restraints are possible?

It would be sensible for society to carefully consider these implications **before** developing such technologies. But clearly that is not always possible. After all, there was considerable research into cloning in Australian universities before we all learned, with some public consternation and uncertainty, about the birth of 'Dolly' in the UK.

While an ethics committee presumably approved the Australian research it fell far short of informed public discussion prior to the event. And university ethics committees, despite their apparent status, can hardly be described as accountable.

Should research be restricted?

A second option is to restrict freedom of research until society resolves the issues. Sitting in judgement on basic research is a questionable activity in any event. But in an era of reduced government support, with universities increasingly reliant on corporate funding for their research, this approach may merely eat away at the level and quality of research within the public domain. Meanwhile, global dimensions of research and funding rule out effective overall control.

So... if we accept the fact that technological change is being led by research and development, society needs to become much more sophisticated at processing the implications, and at an equal pace. Our thinking and discussion must start at the research stage, and continue to develop as innovation confronts us in our daily lives.

Thinking on the run!

In other words, it is inevitable that ethical positions (if we are to find them at all) have to be shaped on the run. Therefore, we need regulatory and monitoring frameworks in place, so that we can understand the impact and consequences of technology on individuals and the society at large, to inform our position.

What follows is a real life example. How would a caring Green government deal with such an issue?

"Our thinking and discussion must start at the research stage and continue to develop as innovation confronts us in our daily lives."

A Case study

THE CHILD WITH TWO MOTHERS

Two cases of 'altruistic surrogacy' have been well publicised in Canberra recently.

In each case, the couple created an embryo in-vitro. These were then successfully implanted into the mother's or father's sister. However, the resulting baby is legally the child of the 'birth mother', not the genetic mother and this 'identity' issue caused considerable agitation in the second surrogacy case.

The first case occurred under last minute changes to a Bill for Artificial Conception in 1996. The original intent of that Bill was to ban surrogacy altogether. However, following approaches from the intending parents, ACT Chief Minister Kate Carnell reworked it to allow nonbinding agreements for so-called altruistic (non-commercial) surrogacy.

In response to the problem of identity, ACT's Chief Minister introduced a second Bill this year which simplified the process of transferring legal parenthood – by adoption of the child from the birth mother to the genetic parents. (A hallmark of this government has been such ill-thought-out, last minute changes.)

A dangerous presumption

We can, as a society, just presume that such a technological advance 'makes everything better' – as expressed by the Chief Minister in the debate. But this is a dangerous presumption.

In the first instance, even the notion of altruism was contestable, as emotional pressure can never be ruled out in friend or family situations.

More importantly perhaps, the meaning of 'parenthood' was never explored. In this situation, two women contribute biologically to the creation of a child. Could the child just have two mothers? Would foster arrangements or sharing be more appropriate than the current all-or-nothing legal ownership situation?

Countless other issues should have been closely examined. Instead, the arguments in this case were repeatedly framed as all about 'little Sean' and 'little Kylie'. Entertaining tabloid journalism perhaps, but such non-debate of the substantive issues is clearly inadequate.

Certainly the interests of the child should be paramount, but there are many unresolved questions regarding the rights of other people involved, as well as broader questions for society.

What should have been done?

In the ACT Assembly debate in August, we referred to the UK's *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority*. This body has legislated responsibility for the enforcement of a code of practice, collects comprehensive data across the field and closely monitors the impact of assisted reproductive technology on participants over the long term.

We argued that it was poor practice to pass the ACT legislation without having such safeguards and regulation in place- and without a strategy (including the comprehensive oversight and data collection) to inform our ethical position. Unfortunately the Chief Minister's Bill was passed with the support of both Liberal and Labor.

Ironically, the specific issues concerning surrogacy had previously been referred to the ACT Law Reform Commission (in December 1998) although no resources had been allocated for that work! But we are pleased that at least the surrogacy debate has resulted in a government undertaking to fund the commission to do the work. We can expect a paper within two years.

In summary

One thing is sure. In the near future society will rapidly be confronted by more and more complex ethical dilemmas such as these.

As the UK authority shows, there are models we can use to assist our community to better prepare for them. While there are no easy or obvious answers, we should at least dedicate the resources necessary to match medical science with social and legal research to encourage and inform debate.

DO YOU

recognise
the birds

in
your garden

can you
recall

the colours
of the sea

have you
noticed

the different
clouds above

will you
hug a tree

are you
here
or not.

Will Fraser © 2000

****

Will Fraser is a Sydney based poet who, we think you will agree, writes superb prose and poetry on the subject of 'the human condition'.

Green is looking for a progressive author or publisher who would consider publishing an anthology of Will's poems, alongside photographs etc in a suitable publication, as a collaborative effort.

If you can help, please contact the editors of *Green, email: <chrisharries@trump.net.au>*

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Does Labor deserve Green preferences?

BY DREW HUTTON,
CO-CONVENOR OF AUSTRALIAN GREENS PREFERENCES COMMITTEE

Kim Beazley is probably a nice man with an affable manner and a jolly sense of humour. In that respect, he stands in marked contrast to that mean-minded, ultra-conservative, Philistine, John Howard.

Nevertheless, when the federal election comes around in about eight months time, I'm going to have some difficulty arguing that the Greens should give preferences to Labor ahead of the Coalition at that election. (We have the option of not declaring preferences.)

Why? Because Kim Beazley heads a party that, when faced with the option of undertaking a path of environmental reform going into the next election, chose instead to adopt policies that will radically increase Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and hand over many of our ancient forests to the woodchippers.

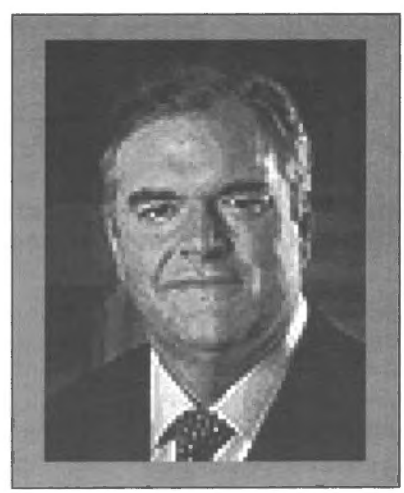
As well, in opposition, they have supported the Howard government's authoritarian Defence Bill and undermined attempts to get progressive native title regimes throughout Australia. In fact, at this year's ALP national conference, Kim Beazley made only very brief mention of indigenous issues and did not mention the environment at all.

There is, of course, a range of positions in The Greens and among supporters on this issue. Some argue we should **always** give preferences to Labor, because the prospect of a conservative government is too appalling. A slightly less absolutist argument states that we should give preferences to Labor because this Howard government is so bad.

These same arguments are heard around the world wherever there are effective Green parties. For example, many politically progressive figures in the USA agued that the Greens' presidential candidate, Ralph Nader, was a 'spoiler' in that election and could take enough votes away from the Democrats' candidate, Al Gore, to allow the conservative republican, George Bush, to be elected. That argument was even more heated in the US because there is no preferential voting – Nader voters were not able to give their second preference to Gore.

Nader answers these criticisms by pointing to the extent to which both major parties are tied to big business and to globalised corporate interests. He adds that there is a desperate need to have more in politics than merely *"one party with two heads"*.

Greens also need to ask themselves the question: *"If the more progressive major party is always going to get preferences, where is the leverage for getting policy outcomes?"*



"Kim Beazley heads a party that, when faced with the option of undertaking a path of environmental reform going into the next election, chose instead to adopt policies that will radically increase Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and hand over many of our ancient forests to the woodchippers."

Progressives inside the ALP (and some in social movements) argue that we should be working on the inside. That is, we should either join the ALP and work to change it or we should do the hard work of lobbying and policy development and pressuring it from the outside for better outcomes. There is obviously some middle point here but I have seen too many progressive people become marginalised inside the ALP or start looking far too much like their opponents to ever seriously consider joining the ALP.

I have also yet to hear a convincing argument for putting all your eggs into one basket – ie work for an ALP victory whether or not they have delivered the policy outcomes you might have expected.

My point is, if we are always going to give our preferences to Labor, then we should reconsider whether we really want a Green party. I am one of those Greens who believe that, one day, there should be Labor-Green coalition governments but the current Australian Labor Party is a long way away from having policy positions that would make such an alliance feasible.

The only way to forge new directions in global politics is to have radical Green politics which raises the difficult questions that no other party will raise, whether they be Liberal, Labor or Democrat.

And... while talking about the Democrats... that party's support of the GST, the Coalition's industrial relations legislation, the *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act* and its recent support of legislation which declares the burning of woodchips from native forests as renewable energy makes it difficult for the Greens to justify giving them preferences as well.

[NOTE: 2001 is a federal election year, where Greens around Australia will be helping to make decisions on how the party issues its preferences]

FROGG WATCH

BY MARGARET BLAKERS,
GLOBAL GREENS CONFERENCE ORGANISER

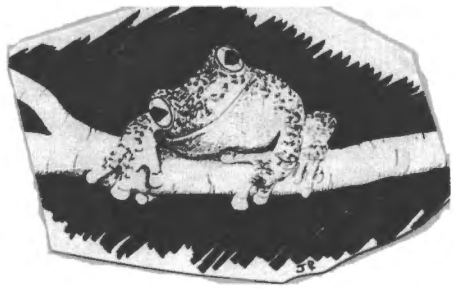
Have you registered yet?

Global Greens 2001 is just five months away. Your once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet international Greens from the Americas, from Asia, from Europe and, hopefully, from the African continent.

With worldwide protests against corporate globalisation, *GG2001* seems more timely than ever. Will the World Bank and IMF be blockading the Global Greens?

Our *International Reference Group* is busy working on the draft *Global Greens Charter*, which should be out for comment by the time this appears. The group has three representatives each from Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Asia-Pacific. From our part of the world, they are Christine Milne (Australia), Bum Yalagch (Mongolia) and Cheng-Yan Kao (Taiwan).

Five wonderful groups of musicians will donate their services for the Global Greens Gig at the National Folk Festival on the Sunday night of the conference – Stiff Gins, Xenos, Bruce Watson, the Fagans and Tulipan. And five excellent photographers and artists have donated images for the Christmas cards – many thanks to Cath Moore, Dave Watts, Mike Leonard, Judy Horacek and Rob Blakers/ TWS, to Matt Kelso for photography and to Goanna Print who are sponsoring the printing.



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Thanks to all you FROGGs for your much appreciated donations, to Petar Johnson for our great website and to the ever-generous and friendly Pat Mackle and *Avantcard* who have printed thousands of postcards for *GG2001* and the *Global Young Greens* – what a fantastic advertisement both for the Greens and for the events!

With such a wealth of talent and goodwill to draw upon, a global movement of Green parties and political movements has to be pretty irresistible, don't you think?

PS. Congratulations to the Spinifex People of Western Australia who have been successful in having their native title to their land in the Great Victoria Desert recognised by consent. A painting made during the process will become a poster for *Global Greens 2001*.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Do register NOW – next year may be too late.
2. If you're short of Christmas cards, we've got some gorgeous ones for you to buy. Ring or email for details and to order.
3. If you're coming, do book accommodation soon because it's Easter and hotels and motels will be full.
4. Please do keep in touch. Visit the *GG2001* website to get the latest news.

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Council needs its Greens.

BY SAM BYRNE
SAM IS ONE OF THREE GREEN COUNCILLORS ON MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL
IN SYDNEY'S INNER WEST

I returned to my home town of Sydney at the beginning of 1998, having finally decided to put down some roots, commit to a community and get active. Overseas I had never felt able to fully participate politically and this had always frustrated me.

Already a Green foot soldier come election time, it still took me a few months to finally get along to my first Inner Sydney Greens group meeting. They are a great bunch and it was the right time for me.

Before long, I was helping to coordinate our local 1998 federal election campaign. The state election followed early in 1999 and then suddenly, after someone pulled out, people began to look at me to be a council candidate in September last year. The rest is history!

My first year as a Green councillor has been a wonderful whirlwind honour. A steep learning curve combined with the late night crafting of press releases (and articles!), the constant juggling of council, work, friends and family, dozens and dozens of meetings and thousands of pages of documents. My day job really does get in the way sometimes!

Dealing with planning and development, community services such as childcare and neighbourhood centres, and environmental management (just for starters) council is very close to the community. Having a Green on council brings boundless opportunities.

A little victory this year came when the majority Labor councillors planned to axe the Council's budget for bike routes. We helped to spark a huge community

campaign. It became clear to these councillors, bombarded by hundreds of phone calls, emails and letters, how the community felt. The budget was saved.

I've gotten to know so many people around here and so much more about this little corner of Sydney while promoting Green policies and philosophies at every turn. In Marrickville, The Greens are part of the furniture.

I know some of you live in far less Green-friendly areas and face more undemocratic electoral systems, but I'd still cheekily like to call on all Greens in other states to get out there and match our 27 NSW councillors! Local government is an important rung on the grassroots democracy ladder, and I believe our best chances for lower house breakthroughs will come through local government when future Green mayors run.

The Inner Sydney Greens and their councillors are here rebuilding the sense of community, standing up for residents and defending their urban environment. We are growing day by day.

The Numbers

Marrickville, a traditional Labor Left stronghold, is a very good area for The Greens. North Ward is really a safe seat – our primary vote hit 25% at the last election. In the state election we polled 11.5% there, the highest for any lower house electorate.

A Green councillor was first elected to Marrickville in 1991, a second was elected in 1999, then a third councillor joined the party recently, after a long and close relationship with the Greens.

At the last election Labor secured a clear majority on council through a hidden preference deal with the Liberals. The Liberals ended up with nothing in return, so The Greens are the opposition in Marrickville.

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Email: <sam@ausisp.com>

'Doing politics differently' in ACT

BY KERRIE TUCKER
KERRIE IS THE GREENS' ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE IN THE ACT'S LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

I was first elected, along with fellow Green Lucy Horodny, in 1995. Then, in 1998, I was re-elected, but we lost the second seat by a couple of hundred votes.

We were very inexperienced in that first term and there were painful lessons. Despite inexperience and 'not having the numbers' we had, and still have, significant influence in the Assembly and broader community debate. Thanks to the amazing, committed people working in our offices, the support and expertise in the party and our friends in the community, we have managed to make this contribution, while staying reasonably sane – most of the time!

We've had to play the game of opposition politics while still keeping a good working relationship with our political colleagues. This is particularly important in a small parliament with a minority government. I find myself passionately opposed to some MPs one moment, then working cooperatively on another important issue the next. 'Doing politics differently' requires a lot of soul searching.

Private Members Bills

We have been quite successful in introducing Private Members Bills and lobbying other MPs for support, with the result that:

- builders must now provide waste management plans to ensure recycling of construction waste.
- the number of poker machines in the ACT is capped.
- government agencies and Territory Owned Corporations must include ESD activities in their annual reports;
- all dwellings in the ACT have their energy efficiency rating disclosed to potential buyers and renters.

- development applications have expanded third party appeal rights.
- guiding principles of the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission include harm minimisation and public interest.
- there is greater public accountability for the clean up of contaminated sites in the ACT.
- firewood sellers must be licensed and comply with a code of practice.
- battery farming of hens is to be phased out.

We have also had varied success working with other MPS to amend or sink government Bills when necessary.

Committee work

Committee work is a less adversarial forum. In the single-house ACT Assembly, committees perform crucial scrutiny and research. They also allow community members and service groups to have an open say on matters affecting them.

In my first term I was chair of the Social Policy Committee and currently am chair of the Education and Community Services Committee.

This work has given us the opportunity to raise the Greens' profile on important social issues and to link up with many individuals and community organisations in Canberra.

Progressive policies

Informed by our networks, The Greens have put forward a range of motions in the Assembly to challenge various government decisions, or to send government proposals to committees for review. As a result, we have had considerable influence in environment protection, gambling, planning, disabilities, mental health, drug law reform, indigenous issues, education and poverty. We have argued strongly for a progressive approach to policy development and economic management, challenging both the 'left' and 'right' of the ACT political spectrum.

I have also raised national and international issues of environment, trade, investment and human rights. Too often the other MPs haven't seen how global events relate to the local situation. The Greens have been the strongest voice by far on these issues.

I have been looking forward to the next Assembly, when we hope to build on our work with more Greens members.

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Email: <tucker@act.gov.au>

Bob's Back Page

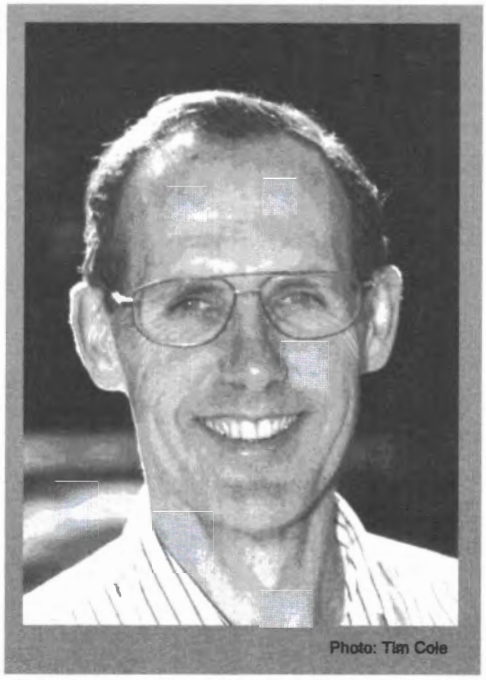
Photo: Tim Cole

World Wide Fiend

Some fiend has revealed details of *World Wide Fund for Nature's* sponsorship deal ($500,000 over the next 5 years) with the Shell Oil Company in New Zealand. WWF is considering offering Shell a place on its board. Why not? Toyota already has one.

You may remember that in 1995 the Nigerian poet Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with seven fellow environmentalists, was executed after his campaign against Shell's oil pipeline in the Ogoni homelands. Afterwards, facing a hail of world criticism, Shell contacted WWF to thank it for its consideration in such awkward times: *"We very much appreciate your balanced stance,"* Shell wrote, *"as you can imagine your approach is very welcome to us at the moment."*

But with the new deal, WWF-New Zealand's chief executive has written to Shell fretting that *"there is a possibility of some adverse reaction to (our) association having an increased profile"*.

It's tough when good friends have to worry about being seen together in public.

Friends in need

On the other side of the globe, in Jordan, at the *World Conservation Union* elections for two places on its world council, WWF-Australia was courting other friends. It backed the Howard government's choice, a Mr Tanzer, and lobbied against the Wilderness Society's candidate, Christine Milne.

WWF gave Mr Tanzer two pre-ballot interviews, but Christine had none. Instead WWF relied on "staff feedback" to the effect that Ms Milne *"had not always been a friend of WWF"*.

So the bookies had Mr Tanzer at London-to-a-brick-on. However, WWF-Australia and Mr Howard's emissaries missed the bus with a lot of the 3000 delegates. Christine topped the poll, while Mr Tanzer came in a dismal last. Congratulations Christine.

Forest furnaces furore

In Canberra, Labor joined the Democrats to pass Mr Howard's *Renewable Energy Bill*. The bill classifies the burning of native forest woodchips for electricity as 'renewable' or eco-friendly. The Democrats opposed this contentious clause, but **blocked** my Greens' amendment to insist on a federal environment impact assessment of woodchip furnaces. Then they voted **against** our amendment to raise the target for renewable energy (from sources like wind and solar) from 2% to 10% by 2010. (The average aim of other nations is 7.4% and for Denmark it is 20.3%.)

Burning possums with your toast

First cab off the rank to exploit the *Renewable Energy Act* will be *Forestry Tasmania*. It plans a 30-megawatt woodchip furnace at Judbury in the Huon Valley south of Hobart. The furnace would burn 300,000 tonnes of woodchips cut out of the wild forests in the Huon, Picton and Weld River catchments each year. The aim is to sell the electricity via the proposed *Basslink* (Bass Strait cable) to Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney as 'renewable'. Far from being eco-friendly, *Forestry Tasmania* clearfells, firebombs and poisons (with 1080 for browsing wallabies and possums) the wild forests.

So unsuspecting mainland consumers will be burning trees, eagles nests and pygmy possums as well as their morning toast.

Flagging change

In November the Senate will debate our motion for a referendum to get an identifiably-Australian flag. Flags matter. In London on October 7, two Tibet warriors climbed on to the balcony of the Chinese Embassy and ran the brilliant Tibetan flag up its flagpole. Too late, the Chinese authorities ripped it down. A day or two later our Greens motion, to support West Papuans flying their Morning Star flag, was blocked in the Senate. But, with the support of at least 8 other MPs, I have set up a *Friends of West Papua* group on Capitol Hill.

DS on GE

On his website Dick Smith says that *"if Australia can continue to produce genetically unmodified crops, it will ultimately give our farmers a real advantage and possible point of difference on the world markets"*. I also have a note from Dick saying that *"I believe Tassie will get a real marketing advantage from remaining GE Free!"*.

Exactly. I'll be moving for states and localities to have an 'opt-out' clause in the GE bill, due in the Senate before Christmas, as well as for a national 5-year moratorium

S11 ethics

Melbourne's Steve Shepherd is amongst a big number of protesters who wrote to me after s11: part of his note goes: *"I just want to thank you for the principled position you took in attending the s11 protests and addressing the Blockaders. As one of the Blockaders, I can tell you it was a great morale-booster to have the Greens down at Crown Casino. Previously a life-long ALP voter, I will not be voting for that bent and broken party of hacks ever again"*.

Sunny days.

Charlie Perkins
1936-2000

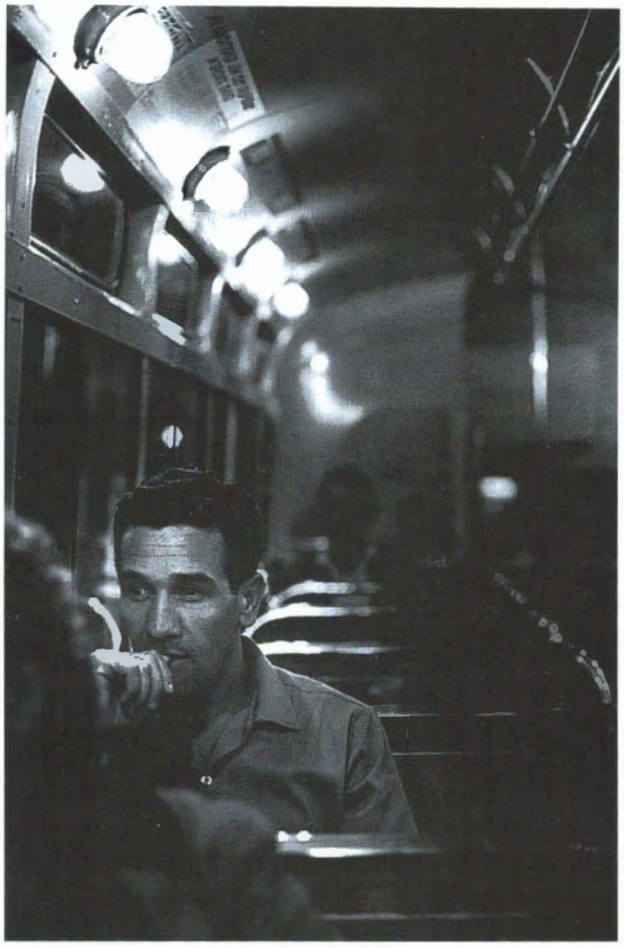

Photo: Robert McFarlane (from 1964)

"I am a descendant of a once proud tribe from Central Australia - the Arrernte people. Today we number very few and own nothing. We cringe like dogs at the prospect of the 'White backlash'. We pray eternally that the White authority structure will not turn on us and impede what little progress we have made. We ask for land rights with tongue-in-cheek knowing full well in our hearts that the land belonged to us in the first instance. We stagger and stumble into eachother in confusion when our identity is contested and thus allow ourselves to be moulded by others. Our land, our pride and our future has been taken away from us and our people buried in unmarked graves. We wander through Australian society as beggars. We live off the crumbs of the white Australia table and are told to be grateful. This is what Australia Day means to Aboriginal Australians. We celebrate with you but there is much sadness in our joy. It is like dancing on your mother's grave."

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