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The Magazine of the Australian Greens

Winter 2003 Issue 11
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WINTER 2003 – ISSUE 11

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Editorial

As the last issue went to press we were still hopeful that the war on Iraq would be averted.

We hoped the voice of millions of people worldwide saying 'no to war' would be heard and heeded. Unfortunately not.

Our last back cover captured the beautiful, bright and hopeful mood of the pre-war peace rallies.

This one highlights a sad reality of the war we didn't want.

It is not easy to see disturbing images but our hopes for change cannot ignore reality.

More importantly we need to push these stark realities into the minds of decision-makers – to let them know the consequences of their decisions.

This edition reflects Greens activity around Australia. There are reports on election campaigns at local and state levels. Policy debates are signalled. State and Territory reports show campaigning and structural development among Green branches.

In response to comments about the need for longer articles in this *Green* we feature a longer essay on the nature of the Greens.

It and other contributions note the challegenes and the enormous capacity of the Greens to respond. Go the Greens!

Clare Henderson and Brian Hoepper

The Green menace!

The Greens are going to come under more attack as we get bigger and continue to challenge the system.

We've seen elements of that in the past. *Business Review Weekly* ran a front page with the words 'Green Menace' emblazoned across a picture of Bob Brown in 1996 when he first stood for Federal parliament. The *Financial Review* recently wrote an editorial calling our policies 'Weapons of mass destruction trained on the economy'.

These kind of attacks are going to come thick and fast for the Greens.

We've come from a largely volunteer base, and now have seventeen MPs around the country. We get significant public funding and we need to use that money in a professional manner.

Unfortunately, a large amount of time in politics is spent fending off attacks, sometimes unreasonable attacks, and that defence work – putting out bushfires from our critics – is going to be a much bigger part of our job, and it needs to be done professionally.

We will be mindful of the way policies can be twisted by an unfriendly media. The media frenzy about our drugs policy during the last New South Wales state election shows how we can be unfairly attacked. We will word our policies more tightly to prevent that so easily happening in the future.

There's nothing wrong with the principles of our policies, but as we grow bigger and are under more scrutiny, we will make sure the t's are crossed just perfectly.

We will improve our capacity to campaign nationally. The Cunningham by-election, where Michael Organ was elected, was run as a local rather than a national campaign. And while it was a local by-election, it was nationally significant. Our ability to have Bob Brown in the electorate was pivotal. We won in the end because of a great local candidate and a great local campaign team. But we almost didn't win and there was some resistance to putting more of the Greens' national resources into the campaign.

An ongoing fully resourced national campaign office would help us with these campaign hurdles.

The challenge to all our members, however, is to not 'leave it to the politicians'.

In fact the long-term strength of the national party depends on a strong party structure and office co-ordinating the 6000+ members' input and interests to balance the rapidly growing influence of our elected MP's offices.

Ben Oquist, Adviser to Senator Bob Brown

This is an edited version of an interview on Background Briefing, ABC Radio National in June 2003 about the Australian Greens.

Letters & opinion

Prayerful peace poem

My mother recently forwarded to me a poem written by her father in 1943. It is a real call for peace, and I feel it is very relevant to these times.

He was himself a WW1 veteran, having served in the Army Medical Corps on Gallipoli, and in 1943 he was still grieving the death of his eldest son, David, a private in the AIF killed in active service in Palestine in 1941 and he was also no doubt praying for the safe return of his second son, Brian, then serving in New Guinea.

Interestingly, the campaign in the Middle East in 1941 was, I suppose, about protecting British interests, including oil, and the action in which David was killed was, I have been told, actually against the Vichy French. One of the many bizarre ironies of the war, since the French were supposed to be our allies.

Isabel Shapcot

A Prayer

When mankind has stayed
this killing
And hate has spent all
power to fight
When the million weeping
women
Quiet their sobbing through
the night
When the greatest of the
nations
Lusting neither power nor
gold
Have been moved to seek
together
What is wrong, and what is
right,
Then, ah then, - tho' scarce
dare hoping,
We, the ones of lesser clay
Pray that they, so feebly
groping,
May be shown a better way

Lloyd Hodge

Kris Hanna's decision

I refer to *Green* issue 10 in which a great deal of reporting was devoted to the Kris Hanna defection from the ALP to the Greens.

I take issue with the SA Branch in supporting Kris Hanna's move to remain in parliament.

Kris Hanna was elected by the people as a member of the ALP. He clearly has the right to defect and join the Greens. However he should resign from parliament and submit himself again to the people by way of an election as a Greens candidate.

Comradely.

Ben Kelly
Brunswick VIC

Green vision

Congratulations to Clare and Brian, new co-editors of *Green*. I read issue 10 made from recycled-sugar-cane-waste cover to cover TWICE!

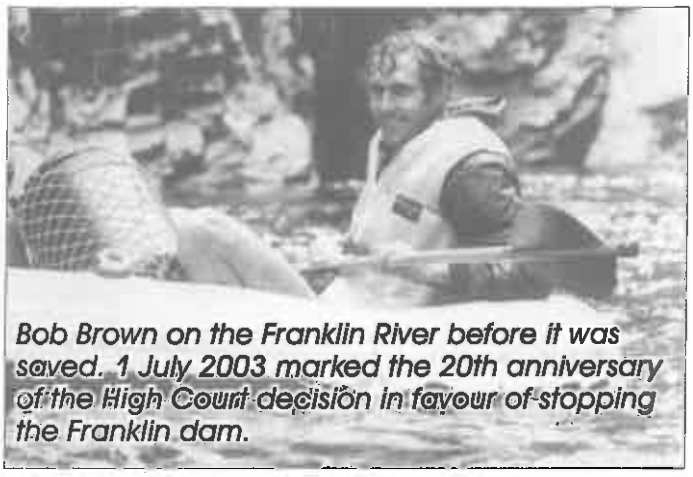
What a great picture of the Canberra ParliamentaryGreen Team on the inside back cover ! Now THAT is a vision for a future national govern ment of Australia! What a fabulous potential front bench.

The outside front and back cover was filled with vibrant, colourful Greens supporters spreading that message of hope in their own communities.

This is a vision that is slowly but surely coming to fruition as more and more people come to see the light: as cronyism continues to stalk the ranks of Liberal and Labor politicians and corruption walks with big business both here and around the world.

The Greens offer hope for the environment, hope for diversity of cultures, hope for our children and theirs, hope for world peace, hope for a truly sustainable and ethical economic system!

Thanks for the wonderful,



Bob Brown on the Franklin River before it was saved. 1 July 2003 marked the 20th anniversary of the High Court decision in favour of stopping the Franklin dam.

sincere and insightful articles. I look back to Bob Brown's lonely vigil on Mt. Wellington in Hobart, when a US nuclear ship was docked in Hobart back in the early 1970s and I first heard about a green vision for the future, and I can see that the Australian Greens have really come of age. This is due to those who fundraised and kept up the struggle.

Congratulations! What a party!!

Rosemary Farrell
Mt. Hicks, Tasmania

Word limit?

Why the limitation of 500 words for articles to *Green*?

I would propose that there be no word limit to allow for thorough and detailed debate in the magazine.

Tim White, Torrensville, South Australia

[A longer feature article is introduced in this issue---Eds]

War in Iraq

Let me add to Scott Burchill's list of reasons for staying out of war on Iraq. First some history.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Australians fought in the Boer War in South Africa and the Boxer Rebellion in China. Just after the First World War Australian troops fought in the Soviet Union as part of Winston Churchill's attempt to 'strangle Bolshevism in its cradle'. Australians fought in the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency, the Vietnam War and Gulf War 1.

Australians, then, have a history of fighting in wars which were none of Australia's business. Nobody as unimaginative as our current prime minister could remotely conceive of departing from this ugly tradition. Nonetheless it should be ended. Staying out of war in Iraq would be the beginning of a very desirable end. Instead it seems we are locked more firmly than ever into following America blindly.

Some say we need to fight in America's wars because 'Australia cannot defend itself'. If I understand such people they are assuming that if Australia is invaded the USA will come to our help out of gratitude for services rendered. The assumption is complete nonsense. No nation ever sends troops to help another out of gratitude for past services.

Still there is hope. New Zealand also has a history of fighting in wars which were none of the nation's business, but stayed out of this one. Australia followed New Zealand in giving women the vote. Perhaps we will follow New Zealand in staying out of wars which have nothing to do with us.

Vernon Terrill
West Footscray, Victoria

Greens breakthrough in NSW politics

The 2003 NSW election saw one in twelve voters choose green. In addition for the first time in a NSW state election the Greens had a major impact on the policy debate.

JOHN KAYE

On 22 March 2003, more than 320,000 people across NSW voted Green – this equals one in every twelve NSW voters voting Green.

Consequently Ian Cohen and Sylvia Hale were elected to the Legislative Council. Together with sitting MP Lee Rhiannon, Ian and Sylvia now form the largest non-major party block in the Upper House.

Our vote almost trebled the 1999 election result. In three lower house seats Greens candidates came second on the two-party preferred vote. In one of those seats, Port Jackson, we came within five per cent of toppling the sitting ALP member.

Not only did we continue to expand our appeal in our inner-Sydney and coastal heartlands but we also made significant inroads into Western Sydney and Western NSW. Rusted-on Labor voters, disgusted with the continuing corporate take-over of the ALP, voted Green for the first time in large numbers.

The success of the election for the Greens, however, cannot be measured solely in terms of record numbers of Greens voters or the increasing Greens presence in State parliament. For the first time in a NSW state election, the Greens had a major impact on the policy debate.

Our campaign focus on smaller class sizes in public schools was a key factor forcing both the ALP and the Coalition to promise reductions in class sizes in the early years of schooling. The incoming Labor government has already begun work on delivering this massive educational advantage to our young people. Further, the scandal of state funding of wealthy private schools was comprehensively exposed by the Greens election campaign.

Never again will the major parties be able to accept campaign donations from real estate developers without significant public scrutiny, thanks to the Greens' campaign highlighting this corrupting activity.

Icon forests have been saved and the curses of land clearing and genetically engineered crops have at least been slowed, due to the work of Greens candidates in making the protection of our rural and natural environments a key issue in the minds of voters.

Greens policies were able to offer a real challenge to the 'law and order' auction of tougher penalties and harsher sentencing.

Three weeks before the election, the Murdoch media launched a scurrilous and deceptive front page attack on the Greens implying that our drugs policy was a 'secret plan' to supply ecstasy over the counter. The *Sunday Telegraph* article opened the floodgates on a series of assaults on Green policies, from sources including the Christian Democrats, the Coalition, the Democrats, the private school lobby and a variety of fundamentalists.

Because the Greens stood firm and did not waver in the face of this barrage, we earned the respect of voters and went on to do extraordinarily well.

Even those who did not vote Green recognised that we stand for much more than poll driven policy and media baron appeasement. Perhaps our greatest achievement is to change the way the community thinks about how it is governed and what it ought to demand from a political party.

It is a tribute to the courage and integrity of our 93 lower house candidates, 21 upper house candidates and 5,000 campaign workers who stuck with the Greens through tough times that the Greens are now a major force in NSW politics.

Sylvia Hale, Bob Brown and Ian Cohen on the night of the NSW election - 22 March 2003.

John Kaye was NSW Greens 2003 State Election Campaign Coordinator.
Contacts: 0407 195 455 or john@nsw.greens.org.au

Australia's first Green Mayor

Greg Barber has been an active Greens member for 10 years. In March 2003 he was elected mayor in the City of Yarra, an inner Melbourne municipality.

GREG BARBER

In the City of Yarra, the Greens are the Government. The high profile we have taken since our election 12 months ago means that for better or for worse, we are held responsible for everything that happens here. We are responsible for a $78 million budget, providing a vast range of services, roads, parks and childcare centres. If there is a crack in the footpath and someone trips over it, it's our fault.

This has brought the Greens high exposure and created a need for a much higher level of discipline in the way we approach policy, preselection, campaigning and the interaction of the party with its elected representatives.

Running a council is at times mundane, but the ability to create solutions at the local level is anything but. Half of the world's population now live in cities and that proportion is set to keep growing. If we don't get cities right, humanity and the planet are in deep trouble. We don't yet know what this future will look like, but it won't be a return to some pastoral idyll.

These days Government is a bad word. We now have a generation of politicians who don't believe in government. They want to be in power but they don't want to be in government.

Yet the case for government has never been stronger. All the things government is supposed to do, like protect the environment, reduce inequality, make the 'public good' investments on which the rest of the economy depends, on all those measures, things are getting worse.

The good news is that the interrelationship between social and environmental problems means the right solution creates many unexpected benefits.

Belo Horizonte in Brazil turned its street scavengers into the official council contractors for rubbish removal. They used to drag carts around the city, sleeping underneath them at night and were seen by middle class residents as part of the problem, that they were human rubbish themselves. There are now 235 members of the cooperative, sorting 500 tonnes of recyclables per month coming in from a network of 300 collection points.

The program has created concrete job opportunities and led to a significant reduction in alcohol-dependency, robbery and criminal offences among the street scavengers. Literacy courses for adults and an annual street scavengers' carnival are among the extra-curricular activities resulting from the project. They did it in ten years and the ongoing subsidy to the program is about $US40 thousand per year.

Local leaders cannot avoid their people or their problems and so they must find solutions. The idea of small government, which really means weak government, has failed. The leadership and innovation on turning this around is not coming from state and federal governments. It is coming from local governments and particularly Greens in local government.

Greg has a background in activism including with the Tenants Union, Bicycle Victoria and the Medical Association for Prevention of War. He has a Bachelor of Science and Masters of Business Administration. His contacts are 03 9205 5055 or barberg@yarracity.vic.gov.au

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

Access to the law
First time council assistance for our local community legal service

Bike budget
Increased four-fold to $160 000 in 02-03. Will be $270 000 in 03-04

Community grants
Over $200 000 to small groups who do good in the community.
Support and assistance for sex workers in local brothels

Community input
Developed four community advisory committees - Environment, Planning, Community Development and Parking

Consultation
Street plans prepared before major road works or street tree changes
Local residents meetings in each ward to raise and deal with issues

Crack down on rogue developers
Prosecuted 25 cases for planning and building breaches and probably 10-15 cases in coming months

Neighbourhood houses
Increased core funding by 50%

Public and low cost housing
Supporting Neighbourhood Advisory Boards so public housing tenants can have their say
Speak out on rooming house closures
Supported low cost housing project with planning approval

40% streets have no trees
Planted 1500. Master plan for planting 13 000 over ten years.

Tidy parks
More maintenance in our green space
Less herbicides in park maintenance

Free Education: a Green dream not a pipe dream

The Greens have a fully costed draft policy to reform higher education in Australia. Green members are asked to help promote this package leading up to the next Federal election.

JUANITA WHEELER

The Greens' higher education policies, including the abolition of HECS and the forgiving of all existing HECS debt, present an excellent opportunity for the Greens to capture the hearts and minds of aspiring Australians and their families.

The misconception that free tertiary education is unaffordable, unachievable and unworkable, which has been the argument of both the Liberal and Labor parties, was dealt a significant blow during a Senate Estimates Committee meeting on 5 June 2003.

Responding to Senator Kerry Nettle, the Department of Education's Bill Burmester agreed with The Greens' calculation that it would only cost approximately $1.8 billion dollars to abolish student fees. This amount is less than the $2.4 billion the 'hamburger and a milkshake' four dollar tax cuts, announced in the 2003 budget, will cost the nation.

Anticipating the rhetoric of the major parties – that Australia simply can not afford a free education system – the Greens released a fully costed draft higher education policy on 4 June. The Greens' policy shows that free education in this nation is not a pipe dream, but that it is the Green dream.

Funds necessary to deliver the reforms – which are not limited to fees but also seek to address quality, equity and accessibility – shall be derived from a number of sources including the diversion of the tax cuts, reversal of recent reductions to corporation tax rates and rejection of proposed tax reductions for multinationals.

The Greens' package recognises higher education as an investment in the future of our nation, and is diametrically opposed to Government reforms announced on budget night. The Government reforms include:

- allowing universities to allocate up to 50% of all university places to full fee paying students (that is, students who can afford to buy their way into university rather than gain a place based on academic merit);
- allowing universities to increase HECS charges by up to 30% for all university degrees excluding teaching and nursing;
- introduction of a loans scheme for students to access full fee paying places, imposing 3.5% interest on top of the annual CPI adjustment, which in real terms could see an interest rate in the vicinity of 6+% p.a.
- a loan cap of $50,000 despite 'élite' degrees such as medicine, veterinary science and dentistry running at over $100,000 (one degree at the Uni. of Queensland is currently $144,000). This, in effect, prevents individuals relying on these interest-accruing loans from undertaking 'élite' degrees.

Greens are currently taking our higher education policies out to the people of Australia. The opportunities that will arise from the Greens' strong, progressive and socially just stance on this issue should not be understated.

To assist or for updates, contact greenstudents@optusnet.com.au or Senator Nettle's office.

Juanita Wheeler is Higher Education spokesperson for the Queensland Greens.

Greens launch Higher Education campaign

Greens Education Spokesperson Senator Kerry Nettle has announced the Greens campaign and tour to coincide with the Senate inquiry into higher education funding and regulatory legislation.

"I will be visiting campuses in every state and territory to help mobilise students, staff, parents and community members to defend the universality and accessibility of our public university system.

"I will be producing my own range of materials, to counter Dr Nelson's propaganda, in order that the community can get an understanding of the impact of these 'reforms.'

"Public education is under continued threat from this government, the work of this inquiry will confirm that fact," Senator Nettle said.

"Already community feedback reveals a deep anger at this Government's cost shifting onto students and their families.

"The public is happy to pay for the universal, free (to the student) public education system that this country deserves. This is the strong feedback that we are receiving, but the Minister does not want to hear.

"The Greens are particularly concerned about student poverty, industrial relations and the attack on academic freedoms, as well as the continuing injustice of the user-pays system."

Sharing the work

What are the implications for Australia of a 35-hour week. Will a legislative model work? Will it impact on economic growth? Will it reduce unemployment?

REBECCA MINTY

"We used to read predictions that by the year 2000 everyone would work 30-hour weeks, and the rest would be leisure. But as we approach 2000 it seems more likely that half of us will be working 60-hour weeks, and the rest of us will be unemployed. What's wrong?"

William Bridges
Fortune Magazine 1996

Australia currently faces a paradox relating to work: there is persistently high unemployment, and yet many of those with jobs are working longer hours then ever before. Both unemployment and overwork cause many problems in society – from the income inequality, poverty, and depression caused by unemployment to stress, health problems and on-the-job accidents caused by overwork.

The principle of work sharing emerged in the late 1970s as a response to these concurrent problems. It is based on the idea that if those employed full time worked less, there would be more jobs for the unemployed. The most widely advocated work-sharing policy in Australia to date has been working time reductions and the introduction of a 35-hour week.

Reducing standard work-time to 35 hours has the potential to significantly alleviate overwork in society. However, in terms of employment creation, it seems that work sharing is not the panacea that it first appears. At both a theoretical and empirical level, there are doubts about the employment creating potential of work-time reductions – one of the critical reasons being the importance of the fixed labour costs faced by firms. Fixed costs mean employers would generally prefer fewer employees working longer hours than a larger workforce working fewer hours. Hence additional costs to firms resulting from work-time reductions mean that employment gain is unlikely, thus casting doubt on the effectiveness of the policy as a whole.

Recent work-time reductions in France (where the standard working week was reduced to 35 hours from the year 2000) have coincided with some unemployment reduction. Exactly how much of this can be attributed to the 35-hour week is difficult to ascertain, as many other factors (such as strong economic growth and other government policies) were important in generating jobs. Caution should also be exercised in extrapolating French results to the Australian context, as the political, social and economic climate differs to varying degrees.

Based on theoretical predictions of questionable employment gains and the uncertain results from France, legislated work-time reductions are not an advisable policy path for Australia. Even if reducing working hours could guarantee more jobs, the heavy regulation necessary to enforce such a law would not sit comfortably with Australia's current industrial relations environment.

Australian workers stand to benefit more from optional work-time reductions – a small but realistic means of addressing the problem of overwork. Coupled with serious employment creation programs, voluntary reductions might constitute a significant contribution to addressing the overwork/unemployment paradox facing Australia.

Rebecca Minty was an ANU intern with Senator Kerry Nettle's office.

SHARING THE WORK - RESPONSE

Rebecca Minty was an intern from the Australian National University with Senator Kerry Nettle's office in 2003.

Rebecca's project was designed to assist Kerry's office to develop practical measures that could be pursued through Parliament to implement Greens policy in support of reducing working hours and through this, creating paid jobs.

Greens policy of a four-day working week, notwithstanding Rebecca's conclusions, remains valid and vital if our society is to respond meaningfully to the problems of scarcity of paid work for many and overwork for others. One of the particular problems we face is that, according to ACTU research, as many as one-third of employees who regularly work long hours are on low wages.

Rebecca's conclusions have highlighted some structural issues that pose challenges: the financial disincentives of on-costs for hiring additional employees, the culture of deregulation in our IR system, and how to enforce work-time restrictions.

None of these hurdles are insurmountable but they require creative thinking. For example, can we use the taxation system to address on-costs and what is the best way to do this? How do we convince the ALP and the Australian Democrats to support a return to regulation for the purpose of advancing social justice?

We trust that Rebecca's work will stimulate discussion in the party about finding the best legislative means of implementing Greens policy.

Rebecca's full report is available from Senator Nettle's office:

Level 12, Commonwealth Parliament Offices
70 Phillip Street Sydney NSW 2000
(GPO Box 36, Sydney NSW 2001)
Tel: (02) 9241 6663
Fax: (02) 9241 6690
senator.nettle@aph.gov.au

Funding the greens

The Greens' electoral fortunes may be rising, but this tends to increase financial pressures on the party.

GREG BUCKMAN

Over the past three years the Greens' national membership and share of the national vote has trebled. It is probably tempting then to think that we are like rock stars watching our song climb the Top 40 in the knowledge that riches lie ahead. If only it were so. In reality our growth has caused more financial angst, not less. This is mainly because our increased popularity has meant increased expectations which nearly always mean increased spending.

The Greens' two most significant sources of income are membership fees and state and federal electoral funding (only Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory do not have public reimbursement of some or all state and territory election expenses).

As these expectations have grown so too have our costs of administering membership and running our capital city party offices. Two years ago we only had three paid staff in our capital city offices around the country, now we have eight.

We are also spending a lot more on our state and federal election campaigns to make sure every voter seriously considers the option of voting Green. On top of this we now rent more office space, have more telephone lines, spend more on campaigns and generally have increased costs of communication and administration. And we have plans to improve on all this in the future.

Generally our expectations nearly always stay somewhat ahead of our resources and it is always a challenge to make them match. So, if anything, things are now more difficult for the Greens, financially, than they have ever been before and our growth has brought lots of new challenges.

Greg Buckman is Treasurer of the Australian Greens

How to make money out of Australian politics

Australia is increasingly adopting a US-style election culture where money is all-powerful. If you were running a course on how political parties can make money in Australia these are the steps you would probably take your students through. The Greens have high funding ethics so we'll be wagging this course.

Step 1. *Make the voters pay.* Democracy is a product, right? So why shouldn't voters pay for it? In Australia they do. Taxpayers will pay nearly $2 for most number one votes they cast in the next federal election. The Labor and Liberal parties each got about $15m from public funding from the 2001 federal election. The Greens opposed the most recent expansion of this public funding scheme.

Step 2. *Get in bed with big corporate donors.* If your party's policies are pro-business (and whose aren't these days?) then your fundraising might as well be too! In the election year of 2001-02 the Labor and Liberal parties each got over $10m from corporate donors. Property and construction companies can be particularly generous. In 2001-02 Westfield gave $300,000 each to the Labor and Liberal parties while Leighton Holdings and Lend Lease both gave to the Liberals. The NSW Greens are proposing that political donations from property developers be banned.

Step 3. *Set up front organisations to hide donor identities.* Letting people know who your backers are is damn inconvenient. With this in mind major political parties have set up front organisations. The Liberals have the Cormack and Free Enterprise foundations while Labor has Labor Holdings and Labor Resources that eagerly receive donations from discreet donors.

Step 4. *Be on the list of regular donors.* Some companies give to everyone so make sure you are on their list. Companies like AMP, Coca-Cola, Coles-Myer, ANZ, Lion Nathan and Optus all regularly contribute to the Liberal, Labor and Democrat parties. Last year the Greens knocked back donations from Lion Nathan.

Step 5. *Hold dinners for the filthy rich.* Labor, the Liberals and the Democrats all hold dinners where you pay thousands of dollars to attend. A few years ago Kerry Packer's PBL company booked an entire table at such a Democrat fundraiser.

Step 6. *Get corporate sponsors to pay for things you were doing anyhow.* Why do something for nothing? Get corporate sponsors to pay for it! Deloitte Touch Tohmatsu sponsored the Liberal's Millenium Forum and the Democrats invite corporations to pay more than $2,000 a head to attend their annual conferences.

Australian Greens
Green Party News

Processes, discussion and politics in the Greens: the challenges of party growth

NATIONAL CONVENOR'S REPORT

The ongoing growth in membership and support for the Greens across Australia is solid confirmation of the policies and direction of the Greens. it comes, however, with challenges. Not only do we face more hostile media and angry opponents in other parties (not least amongst the so-called Left of the ALP), but we have to face the difficulties of expanding our party and its activities to cope with the influx of members.

The number of branches or local groups around the country has been increasing, but in some areas they are not fully developed. For this reason, not all new members can be immediately contacted and personally welcomed into the party because we just don't have enough experienced members to do all that work. That means that new members, as well as long-term members, need to be pro-active in getting involved, taking the initiative themselves to find ways to become more involved.

There is a variety of gateways to activity in the Greens. Some new members may want to take part in the full range of debates at the local level, but many members would prefer not to be involved in all organisational discussions. Therefore, we are trying to have more political discussions and educational activities, so that all our members can be informed on key political issues.

Despite the influx of new members, we would like to improve the composition of the party. Some important sectors of the broader society are not well represented in our ranks. For example, in some areas our members are not as young as they used to be (!). We are thinking about the best way to get more of our young voters and supporters into active party work. I'm sure that they would find it more attractive if we could develop a younger cultural network than we have at present.

In many ways the Greens are breaking new ground. We don't have a lot of models on which to base our organisational structures and we have to do a lot of thinking to develop our policies. On the other hand, there is a long history of progressive activism and organisation that we can draw on and many of our new members can contribute with experience gained in campaigns and trade unions.

We are now updating a large number of our national policies I hope that members around the country will get involved in examining and contributing to policy development in the next few months. Don't forget the annual National Conference to be held in Canberra 10-12 October. All members are invited to attend to enjoy the range of debates and workshops to be held there.

Paul Petit, National Convenor

GREENS GET TOGETHER

National Conference
11-12 October 2003, Canberra

National Council 2004
13-14 March 2004
10-11 July 2004

Greens national policy review now underway

The eight policy review areas are:

Defence	Environment
Economics	Foreign Policy
Education	Health
Energy	Welfare

To get involved in the policy review process, people should contact:
Ray Walford (raywalford@bigpond.com) or
Peter Christoff (peterac@unimelb.edu.au).

Busier than ever after election

Our party office is experiencing a steady increase in activities: growth in membership; more phone and email enquiries and political actions. Our volunteer staff and two employees (one person for four days and another for three days each week) are just coping with the increased demand. This reflects our next big challenge: to maintain democracy and efficiency in a rapidly growing party.

Labor made a number of public policy commitments during the NSW state election but not surprisingly the Carr Government has already started to back away from its promises. One of Labor's policy announcements was a moratorium on GE crops, but recently passed legislation gives the Minister for Agriculture the discretion to permit trials of GE crops that will effectively break the moratorium. Greens MPs opposed the bill but were defeated.

The Government has also announced that it intends to legislate to delay local government elections, due in September 2003, until March 2004. That is not a problem in itself, but the Bill also contains provisions which would allow councils to weaken the proportional representation component of local elections by changing the number of councillors without having to go to a local referendum. An undemocratic form of election, which is high on the agenda of some councils, is the two councillors per ward system which means that if a ticket wins 50 per cent of the vote after preferences are distributed, they will win both the seats in the ward. Local Green groups and our state parliamentarians are vigorously campaigning against this and trying to ban the rigged system.

At the end of May we contested the election for the seat of Londonderry which had been delayed because a candidate died on the day of the general state election. Greens candidate Alan Quinn polled 7.2 per cent which maintained our state-wide vote and doubled the Londonderry vote of 1999. This was an excellent result because western Sydney is not a strong area for our party. The seat contains a large bushland area, the ADI site, where Sydney's last wild emus and kangaroos live. Labor and the Coalition have agreed to development on the site by a company which donates to both political parties. Our results in booths near the site were excellent and reflected the strong campaign by the community and Greens to save the area.

Greens in western Sydney have been active by campaigning against Collex's huge domestic waste transfer station at Auburn which will receive all of Sydney's garbage. The state Labor government has given the go- ahead for this development. Greens have produced and distributed leaflets in four languages to help build the campaign.

Two federal issues which have produced action from our membership are the threat to Medicare, and the Howard Government's anti-worker legislation. The Marrickville Greens have kicked off a campaign to Save Medicare and have produced pamphlets and cloth banners such as 'Save Medicare – The Greens' and 'Save Bulk Billing – The Greens'. If any group wants to buy some of this material contact the NSW office.

Some members have joined workers on a picket line at Arncliffe in Sydney's south at the Maurice McMahon tin can factory. The workers are paid poorly and the company refuses to allow them to negotiate collectively. They have been on strike since March over the employer's attempts to force them into individual contracts refusing their right to have a collective union agreement registered in the Industrial Relations Commission.

There is further evidence that Labor is alarmed by the rise of The Greens. Now in state parliament Labor is attempting to reduce the number of staff and office space of our Green politicians. Labor realises that The Greens are able to make the most of a few representatives and scarce resources and it is really an act of desperation from which we should take great encouragement.

Geoff Ash, Convenor

Branch dynamism

The Queensland Greens are facing three elections in the next twelve months – local, state and federal – and we have begun policy development, preselection and campaigning processes for each. We have also begun a constitutional review brought on, as in all other parts of the country, by the challenges of enormous membership growth. Currently we have 900 members and 18 branches or branches-in-formation.

Many of our branches are very active. In the anti-war campaign our members played a leading role both statewide level and at the local community level in regional centres like the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast, Fraser Coast, Townsville and Cairns. Local branches are also campaigning hard on such issues as land clearing, Indigenous justice, the Great Barrier Reef and dams. We are also contributing strongly to the Australian Greens campaign against the Federal Government's proposed changes to higher education with a statewide tour of university campuses by two of our younger campaigners – Juanita Wheeler and Michael Kane – coming up in July.

The increase in membership, and the large numbers of new members who have little background in politics, prompted the idea of having a leadership camp. This was held in April at the Tallebudgera Recreation Centre was attended by over 40 members. We hope to have

such camps as an ongoing part of our yearly program.

Our Fraser Coast branch mounted a strong state by-election campaign in Maryborough in April, taking our vote up to 3.5 per cent in one of the most anti-Green electorates in the state. Congratulations to our candidate Dean Pratley and branch members and a special thanks to the New South Wales Greens for their valuable assistance.

Drew Hutton, Convener

Gathering strength

This unique part of Australia has unique issues for us. With a small population, the NT is still relatively undeveloped but this is rapidly changing. The NT Greens are working to help stop inappropriate developments and industries and we are working on building up our membership base. It's great to see members regularly coming to meetings. In the near future we plan to form a students' Greens Club at the Uni and hold a fundraising film night.

One of our issues is the protection of Darwin Harbour. This relatively pristine harbour contains the largest stand of ecologically valuable mangroves in the NT, corals, diverse sponges and endangered dugongs, dolphins, and turtles. We lodged a submission and spoke before the Darwin Harbour Management Committee calling for the creation of an EPA, a Marine Protected Area and for more scientific research to be conducted since very little is known about the harbour's ecology.

We also want to prevent the construction of the huge Conoco-Phillips LNG (gas) plant in Darwin Harbour. This project is a huge environmental and security risk. Our position is that the proposed site is not suitable, and that any gas industry development in Darwin should be a part of a comprehensive greenhouse gas emission management plan. Much of the NT has a perfect climate for solar and wind energy, however the Labor government is still supporting the development of projects using non-renewable energy sources. Thanks to our Greens Senators for moving a motion in the Senate against the proposed LNG plant, highlighting the seriously flawed nature of the assessment process, particularly in relation to its environmental impact.

As part of the Darwin NoWar Committee we have helped organise, and spoken at, many peace rallies over the last 7 months. With an attendance of 250 people the 1 December peace march was, on a per capita basis, very successful and one of the largest rallies the NT has seen. But then 500 showed up in February and 2,000 people marched through Darwin on 15 March. A huge success! More recently we had good coverage of Green triangles on ABC TV news on 20 May at a demonstration for Aceh outside the Indonesian Consulate.

Some other campaigns that keep us busy are drug issues (harm minimisation) and promotion of renewable energies (through participation in the NT Greenhouse strategy and the national Mandatory Renewables review). We've held a stall at NT University and written to local politicians and rung talkback radio about Container Deposit Legislation (the government abandoned its own proposal). NT Greens will use the current reviews of the planning regime and the land clearing controls to oppose the highly controversial plan to clear huge areas of the Daly River Basin for export pastoralism. We're also participating in the review of the NT Electoral System, improving our website and developing local policies which address the concerns of the Territory's large Indigenous Australian population.

David Pollock, NT Greens Environment Spokesperson

The value of activity groups

I have been elected as State Convenor after Patricia resigned due to ill heath. Patricia saw the SA Greens through a period of massive change and development. Where we are now is a tribute to her energy and commitment. And, she is looking much healthier after even a few weeks out of this job.

One of the success stories in Greens SA has been the setting up of activity groups. These are groups of members which focus on particular issues. Currently the groups are *Social Justice*, *Environment* (with a number of sub-groups), *Education, International Issues, Industrial and Economic*, *Health Welfare and Wellbeing*, and *Arts and the Media*. These groups have been examining submissions to various inquiries in their areas of interest, developing policy and in some cases providing the activist base from which various events are organised. They also provide a great resource to our MP Kris Hanna. While they have been a great success, now we have the challenge of perpetuating the initial enthusiasm and really building the activity groups into a long-term effective part of our party structure.

Drew, Convenor

Local government successes, and more

Since autumn, the Victorian Greens have had a number of successes at the local government level.

Firstly, in local government elections held in March, we were rewarded with two new Greens councillors in

the City of Maribyrnong: Janet Rice and Colleen Hartland. Janet got an amazing 43 per cent primary vote, Colleen got 17 per cent and several other Greens narrowly missed out on being elected in Maribyrnong. Throughout the rest of the state we did very well with an average primary vote of around 10 per cent, in line with our previous state election vote.

Our second major success was the appointment of the first ever Greens Mayor in Australia – Greg Barber in the City of Yarra (an inner Melbourne municipality covering suburbs such as Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy). Greens hold only four out of the nine seats in Yarra council so getting Greg up as Mayor was a great result.

A good deal of effort has been going into working groups which are looking at everything from promotions, ethics, IT, policy, internal communications and decision making, and animal welfare, to name a few.

The Victorian Greens membership is stabilising at around 1800. We are still receiving around 10 new members per week.

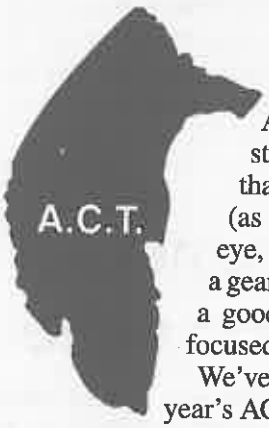
Greens volunteers will be ringing our members soon and encouraging them to join our direct debit scheme which we have called the 'Greens Future Fund'. We are hoping that lots of members will be prepared to make a small regular donation of $10 a month or more, so we can cover the Party's administration costs, and enable donations and elections funding to be directed exclusively to election campaigns.

A public meeting during reconciliation week in Melbourne heard the Victorian indigenous people speak about their frustration with our State Labor Government, which despite having control of both houses of parliament, has done very little to address the issue of land rights. The Victorian Greens have members who are working on indigenous issues to support justice for Indigenous Victorians.

Adrian Whitehead, Convener

Greens in the ACT were very active against the war against Iraq. This is a scene from a rally on 13 March outside Parliament House which had been planned to be held at the National Press Club. However, the PM (speaking at the press club) saw it as a security threat, so it had to be moved!

Focusing closer to home



After the maelstrom of protests, stalls and other anti-war activities that kept us busy, focused, growing (as ever) and very much in the public eye, the ACT Greens have stepped down a gear. In coming months we'll be putting a good deal of energy into some party-focused projects.

We've started planning in earnest for next year's ACT election where we aim to see at least three Greens elected. We're opening up all ACT Greens policies for review over the next six months, and have started seeking candidates. Being prepared early means that as the election approaches we'll be presenting our message in the community, not debating what it should be. A snazzy new Green Scheme brochure went out to members in June, and we're optimistic that our growing membership will chip in to fund our office and campaigns.

Kerrie Tucker and her team in the ACT assembly are never far from the action. They have been negotiating hard on improvements to the Territory's planning system to allow well-planned high density living in targeted areas while preventing a return to the worst of open slather urban redevelopment.

Kerrie also had the honour of being threatened with legal action by Federal Territories Minister Wilson Tuckey. Her crime? Supporting the Aboriginal Tent Embassy after it was the victim of an arson attack which destroyed photos, documents and artefacts from the 31 year old Embassy's collection. Continuing his relentless campaign against the Embassy, Mr Tuckey argued that the Embassy education centre, gutted by arson, was a safety hazard and should be removed. Kerrie passed the hat around to pay for a temporary fence to keep school groups and tourists safe, and what was the response? Threats of legal action and a dawn raid by police to remove the fence. Strange days we live in…

The brochure for the Australian Greens national conference to be held in October in Canberra is included with this edition of *Green*. Plans for the conference are well under way. It's likely to be the biggest conference to date, and we're aiming to make it a great event, not only for the formal delegates, but for all the others who come. This year there'll be a range of special topic meetings on the day before the conference. Check the website – act.greens.org.au/conference – and we'll see you in Canberra in October!

Dan Rosauer, Convenor

Reviewing for a stronger future

Whilst enjoying a lull in what, for some of us, has felt like a very long period of continuous electioneering, Tasmanian Greens remain active on a number of fronts. We are using the opportunity to take stock of where we are and plan for a future which takes account of the significant changes, the broadening of the Green agenda and the growth that we have all experienced recently.

To this end, we have commissioned an external consultant to review our structure, finances, resources and decision-making processes and by the time you read this, the Review will be well underway.

We will also have conducted a 2-day conference [over the weekend of 5-6 July] based on the theme of 'Working Together to Achieve Green Outcomes by 2008'. The objectives of the Conference are to identify:

- What the party should seek to achieve by 2008;
- Why this is the appropriate approach to take;
- Who will be responsible for which aspects of the program; and
- In conjunction with the Party Review, establish how to achieve these goals in respect of organisational structure, financing, staffing etc.

Members submitted more than thirty papers addressing their views on the Conference themes and these formed the basis of the work of the Conference. It was gratifying to note that registrations exceeded the capacity of our venue well before the Conference date.

In anticipation of a possible double-dissolution election, we have nearly completed preselection of candidates for both the Senate and House of Representatives. Irrespective of when an election is called, we believe that we should be prepared and that our candidates may benefit from an extended period of profile building should the Parliament run full term. The party will also benefit from having a larger pool of public spokespersons being able to draw on their standing as endorsed candidates in seeking access to the public airwaves.

Finally, we have recently moved to new premises in Hobart. We are now at 230 Liverpool Street Hobart [mail and telephone addresses remain as they were]. Following on from the success that has been achieved by Bass members in Launceston, we now will have the capacity to undertake some commercial activities from our office as well as having reasonable office, storage and meeting facilities. Call in and see us if you are in Hobart.

John Dodd, Convenor

June National Council meeting highlights

The Australian Greens National Council met in the NSW Greens' Sydney office in Erskineville 21-22 June 2003. Here are some highlights:

- Melanie Ross from the Northern Territory attended, representing a revitalised and growing Territory party with members from across the Territory.
- There are now over 7,200 Australian Greens members.
- The Western Australian Greens will vote on whether or not to join the Australian Greens in July and August. If 75 per cent or more of Westralian Greens agree to join, their party will be officially welcomed into the national Greens party at the October conference.
- The process of preparing for the next election has begun. The National Election Campaign Committee (affectionately known as the NECC) has representatives from each state and territory, Greg Buckman, the national treasurer, represents the Australian Greens and I am convenor. Set dates for elections, such as in ACT and NSW, make a lot of sense; currently we are planning for a Federal election which could occur any time between July 2003 and mid 2005!
- National policy review is underway, with an extensive review and updating of our policies occurring in working groups and at state and territory level. All our policies are on the web; this is your chance to have some input into our greenprint for Australia. Friday of the national conference (10 October) will be dedicated to discussing those policies ready for ratification, and the national council meeting in March 2004 will ratify the rest.
- The National Conference will be held Friday to Sunday October 10-12 at CIT in Reid (Friday) and Rydges Eagle Hawk Convention Centre (Saturday-Sunday). Details are in the accompanying brochure. Your early registration will help us plan a better conference and the organisers of the Thursday workshops would like to know if you plan to attend.

Deb Foskey, National Secretary

Global Greens news

Keep up to date on Global Greens

To keep up with Green happenings around the world, sign up to Global Greens news by sending an email to global_greens_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. These snippets come from recent issues.

Global anti-war meeting in Jakarta

One hundred activists from 24 countries met at a Global Peace Movements Conference in Jakarta in May 2003 where they produced the Jakarta Peace Consensus, the DECLARATION OF UNITY. Here are some excerpts.

- We declare the war and invasion of Iraq to be unjust, illegal and illegitimate and call on the international community to condemn this US-led aggression.
- We note with concern the growing militarisation of the world, which is expressed both in open and covert wars and the proliferation of US military bases, increasing military expenditure and military operations.
- We call for global disarmament. In particular we demand the decommissioning of all nuclear weapons. We support the call for the Middle East to become a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, not least in Israel, the state with the most destructive capacity.
- We believe that a world free of war, exploitation, inequality, poverty and repression is possible. We see the reality of this alternative visible within the growing movements of youth, women, workers, students, migrants, the unemployed, human rights and peace and justice activists and citizens who are bringing their spirit, energy and work together in the fight for genuine peace based on global justice for all the world's peoples.

Greens in Hunger Strike Against GM food

Three hunger strikers in the Phillipines have ended their month-long fast. "We have done everything that is humanly possible to stop the poisoned seeds of genetically modified corn from being planted in our farms," stated Robert Verzola.

Last December, President Arroyo approved the proposal of US-based Mosanto Corporation to sell genetically modified corn seeds with *bacillus thuringienses* which is meant to destroy corn borers.

The agriculture department has a contract with Mosanto to buy genetically modified corn seeds for free distribution to farmers. "This is what we call the unholy alliance between the government and Monsanto," said Verzola.

The campaign will continue in Congress where a bill was filed to stop the spread of genetically modified food products.

Adapted from Gulf News, Manila May 21, 2003

Saemangeum

The Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (Friends of the Earth Korea) seeks support to save 40,100 hectares of coastal wetlands. The tidal flats are one of the world's major sites for migratory birds and home to rich sea life harvested by the local population. 81.6 per cent of the South Korean public opposes the massive land reclamation project to turn the area into farmland.

To persuade newly elected President Roh Moo Hyun to halt the project, four religious leaders launched the '3 steps 1 bow' campaign in March 2003. Two Buddhist monks, a Catholic and a Protestant priest journeyed by foot over 310 km from the Saemangeum tidal flat to the capital city of Seoul. Please send a letter by post or email to:

The Honorable ROH Moo Hyun,
President of the Republic of Korea
Cheongwadae, 1 Sejong-no, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-820,
Republic of Korea
email: webmaster@president.go.kr
yang0303@president.go.kr
Copy to: Kim, Yeon Ji KFEM/FOE Korea
251, Nuha-dong, Jongro-Gu, Seoul, Korea 110-042
email: kimyj@kfem.or.kr

The EU's GATS water requests June 2003

EU trade negotiators are using the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to open up the water sectors of 72 member countries, including developed, developing and least developed countries, for the benefit of Europe's private sector water industry.

The EU sees GATS as "first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business, and not only for business in general, but for individual service companies wishing to export services or to invest and operate abroad".

The world's top two private sector water companies are European: Vivendi and Suez (both French) control 70% of all private water services between them. The third largest is Thames Water, now part of German utilities conglomerate RWE. GATS promises these companies access to new markets and enhanced rights.

In many countries, although the involvement of foreign multinationals has raised water tariffs far beyond the reach of poor households, GATS commitments make it impossible for governments to reverse the liberalisation.

There has been massive opposition from across the world to the EU's GATS water requests. Even parts of the private sector water industry have spoken out against the inclusion of water in the GATS negotiations, and developing countries such as South Africa have called for water to be taken out of GATS altogether.

Deb Foskey, International Secretary

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For further membership information phone 1800 017 011

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Address .....

.....

.....State ..... Postcode .....

e-mail .....

Post or fax to your local State or Territory party office (p15)

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Symbols and substance: finding the right mix

As the Greens become a larger party we face new challenges. Our growth opens up the possibility of enhancing and promoting our substantive policy base. Our job is to maintain our focus, independence and coherence so we can take the opportunities that lie ahead of us.

GREG GEORGE

What are we? A single issue movement, or a collection of such? An independent voice for the disaffected of the moment, or a long-term political and social alternative?

Our recent growth and prominence leads many inside and outside the Greens to the expectation that the party can now represent the broad public interest across the spectrum of issues and on that basis achieve a role in government.

This requires a lot from us. Challenges include leaping ahead of the impasse brought about by the convergence of policy between the ALP and Coalition. We have to respond to evident needs amongst a much larger segment of the electorate than is accounted for by our existing social movement base.

The positive signs are there. For example the breadth of Greens policy is evident in our current policy review. The core policies selected as prime focus areas signify much, especially the inclusion of Defence, Economics, Welfare, Health and Foreign Policy, along with the equally valid (but no more so) Environment, Energy and Education.

The Greens have always been broadly based, not just at the Charter level but with some good detailed policies beyond the environmental. We usually blame the media for not picking those up. Now the media is hungry for the Greens to come out in the non-standard policy areas, though their hunger is often wolf-like rather than genuine curiosity. In any case it is now solely up to us to launch broader agendas.

The Greens showed what we can do when we developed far-seeing taxation policies before the 1998 GST election. We did it by putting time and money into a research effort and into vigorous, tough discussion. We gained scant public recognition but the work done is still there to capitalise on.

The Greens do not have to change anything to continue to play our accustomed roles. They are worthy roles – defending natural areas, opposing harmful development and providing an outlet for people engaged by an issue. This is part of our soul. But we need to do more so that we can be recognised as standing for more.

The Greens want to be seen to warrant support at all levels of government in our own right, to provide an alternative on all issues, in all assemblies.

Symbols and substance

There are risks in the attractive easiness of rhetoric, symbol and gesture. That approach has more to do with maintaining group identity and providing a symbolic interaction with supporters than it has to do with articulation of substantive matters.

It begins with genuine emotions but tries to mobilise them into an ongoing commitment that actually needs to be sustained by a capacity to think and reason.

Values and moral force are foundational to the Greens' project. Without such feelings nothing would be happening. Without them there would be no point in the Greens trying to achieve a pragmatic means of bringing such values into the ordering of our social world. So I am not making a puritan denial of the expressive element in our politics or a denial of the power of symbols. But we want people to have a conscious awareness of motivating values, not just offload their resentment through us. Undoubtedly we will make gains from the latter at times. They will not necessarily last. Trying to repeat those gains may tempt us to waste and cheapen those values, to engage in simplification; or worse, to get mixed up in hypocrisy and illusions.

The public have a good nose for this

in politics. Even when, in our eyes, the public accommodates conflicting impulses themselves – say, opposition to refugees *and* opposition to the Iraq war – they will come down hard on us for inconsistency or opportunism.

An emphasis for instance minimizing the horrific nature of the Iraqi regime and its involvement in WMD (the only regime to use them since Nagasaki) or the argument that involvement in the war was wrong because it put Australia at risk of terrorism detract from what should be our focus.

Nor should we let an illusory veil of pacifist sentiment sanctify our stand. Our demand for, then support of, intervention in East Timor fits with the Military Enforcement Action item in the Greens' Peace and Security policy. In doing so we accepted the possibility of killing. Similar situations are easy to imagine. (This is not to set aside all long-range peace-creating aims in that policy.)

Currently there is a strategic review of Australian defence policy, released in February 2003. The Greens have got to gain an understanding and be able to articulate a response.

Australia has always been the plucky little sycophant in foreign policy rather than the imperial master. Even so it matters a lot whether the Greens support the White/Dibb 'Defence of Australia' position (a sort of fortress Australia line) or the aggressively argued new position which claims to deal with terrorism and WMD. This new position, I suspect, is designed to fit in with US plans. But the old position favours very expensive navy and air force technology and is an obstacle to an army capacity to play a peace-keeping role overseas. East Timor really stretched the ADF. On the other hand it is hard to resist the argument that terrorism is in fact the primary risk for Australians. However, the defence preparation for that should be home- based. Defence Minister Robert Hill is sitting on the fence at present. The Greens would probably put up an entirely different position but we have to know what we are putting it up against.

Even to oppose the current program of increases in defence spending (in order to yield a 'peace dividend'), we have to be informed. The point is that the Greens have to do better than just state an anti-war position or long range peace-loving ideals.

This hightlights the need for a different campaigning culture and policy articulation. Is it really that stark? The German Greens found it so. In coalition with the SDP they had to take a position on intervention in the Balkans.

The ALP will have to lose more elections before it returns to a social democratic agenda, so the idea of coalition may seem fanciful just now. But our alignment with them when they are worthy of it is the likely future. In the meantime our job is to maintain our focus, independence and coherence, and to ready ourselves for such a future role.

Interests and breadth

I mentioned conflicting impulses amongst Australians. One example is the conflict between a materialist obsession and an anti-materialist impulse to defend quality in living. In recent survey work by Clive Hamilton of the Australia Institute 80 per cent agreed that Australians are too materialistic and that there is not enough emphasis on the things that really matter.

Michael Pusey's *The experience of middle Australia: the dark side of economic reform* confirms that people are aware of how the market has intruded into their private lives. And they don't like it! They complain that the lower order value, money, has displaced things that should be valued more highly – anxiety-free recreation, time with family and friends, community connectedness and the like.

Pusey's work makes it clear that the middle 70 per cent of Australians are still very angry about the shift of wealth into corporate hands and the fact that both major parties made that shift possible. Those Australians will be attracted strongly to what is fresh, clean, honest, up-front and genuine. If we forego ideology and talk in terms of the actual stream of life, we stand to seize that ground.

The Greens' social movement origin is rich in ideas and rugged campaigning ability. However this can also lead to a potential narrowness of vision as these movements, connected one to another by profound basic values, often resolve into sectional interest groups. The Greens adapt these sectional demands to fit within an overall moral shift that is governed by the public interest.

We are making an overall case for a radical revaluing of society's priorities, the most radical aspect of which is that human values rather than market values are the parameters within which governments must work. Pusey is telling us that 'out there' they see it that way too. All we have to do is reach out, beyond our comfort zone and symbolic foundation, and get there first.

This is an excerpt from ***The Greens: pragmatic radicalism: a discussion paper*** *prepared for Queensland Greens leadership camps. Greg George has been a social activist since the 1970s. He was a founding member of the Queensland Greens in 1985 and has been a Greens' election candidate.*

Giant protest for the giants

Greens Senator Bob Brown joined a Wilderness Society rally to protect the giant trees of Tasmania's Styx Valley on 13 July 2003.

The march was held in the Styx Valley's forests in central Tasmania, two hours drive from Hobart, to protest against logging, burning and 1080 poisoning of the forest eco-systems.

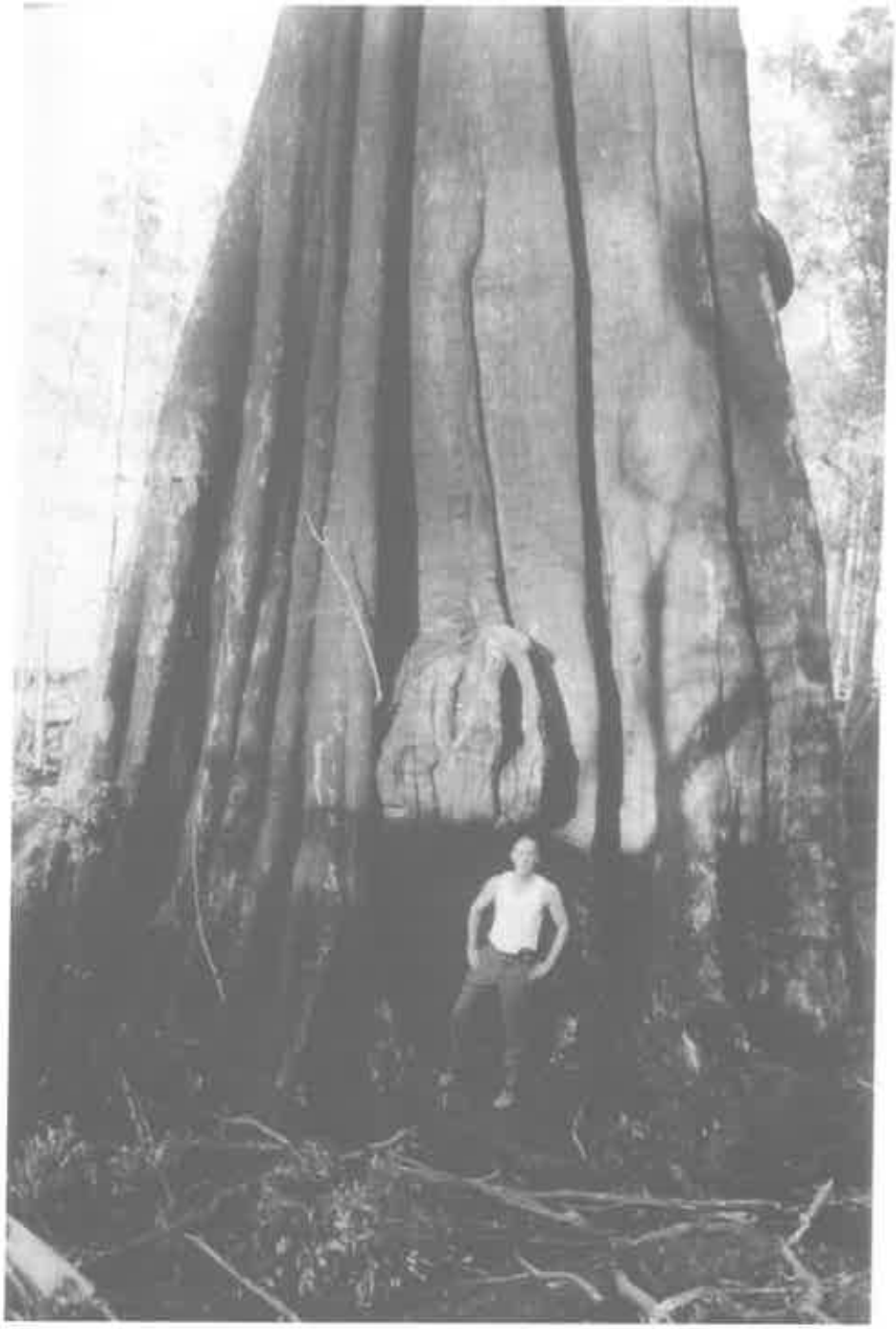
"Awareness around Australia is growing that Tasmania's old growth forests and their wildlife, which are of international significance, are being destroyed at the greatest rate in history under Mr Howard's authority," Senator Brown said.

Thousands attended the rally in wet and muddy conditions. Addressing the crowd from a giant tree stump, Senator Brown called on Prime Minister John Howard to intervene.

"Twenty years ago Bob Hawke used the powers of this great nation, given through the Constitution and with the people, to protect the Franklin," Senator Brown said.

"John Howard, Simon Crean, use your power to protect the Styx, the Tarkine ... the great forests of Tasmania and 20 years from now you too will say we were 100 per cent right."

Senator Brown said the campaign needed to go, as the Franklin did, to the hearts of 20 million Australians.



Bob Brown at the base of El Grnade, an 80m eucalyptus regnans (swamp gum) in the Styx Valley. In April 2003 this tree was damaged, possibly killed, by a Forestry Tasmania "regeneration" fire.

ANOTHER KICK FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

"The Australian Council of Social Service has revealed that up to 80,000 unemployed people are missing out on assistance because of problems with 'automated referral' and the new requirement to register with only one Job Network agency", Greens' MP Organ said on 3 July 2003.

"ACOSS tells me that up to 700,000 people are being sent two 'automated letters', one telling them which agency they have been allocated to the other directing them to attend an appointment with that agency."

"This impersonal and demeaning system is already causing problems with letters incorrectly addressed, or referring unemployed people to Job Network agencies they have never heard of, making it inevitable that people will face penalties when they fail to turn up for appointments they know nothing about"

"Unemployed people are individuals and are entitled to be treated as such. John Howard needs to listen to ACOSS and to accept that personal interviews and direct approaches from Centrelink would be a far more effective approach".

"The unemployed need help, not more bureaucratic hurdles", Mr. Organ said.

Michael Organ 02 4283 7300

Organ sole dissenter on ASIO Bill

Cunningham MP Michael Organ was the only dissenting voice during debate on the Howard government's amended ASIO Bill in the House of Representatives today.

"While the amendments from the Senate address some of the concerns the Greens have had with this legislation since its introduction, the fact is that this Bill still represents one of the most serious affronts to civil liberties in our country's history", Mr. Organ said.

"The Greens do not agree with the government and the opposition on the need for such draconian measures and for such an attack on our basic civil liberties despite the realities of the post-September 11 environment. ASIO already has the necessary powers to ensure the security of this nation and of our people."

"I wonder what kind of Australia we as politicians are creating by the passage of this Bill. We are being asked to put our faith and trust in ASIO and intelligence agencies under a new legal regime."

"Frankly, on past performance, I believe this is a dangerous path to take and I therefore - while supporting the amendments - must oppose this Bill", Mr. Organ concluded.

Howard, Downer not believable on WMD – Bob Brown

It is not believable that Minister Downer was not briefed by his department about US State Department doubts over weapons of mass destruction (WMD) claims. Greens Senator Bob Brown said in July 2003.

"The buck stops with the minister who did not seek a full briefing," Senator Brown said.

"In the wake of the children overboard affair the excuse of any minister not to seek a full briefing is invalid.

"The real question is not why ONA and the Foreign Affairs Department did not tell their ministers but why Howard and Downer did not insist on full briefings before continuing to make WMD claims," Senator Brown said.

Further information: Ben Oquist
02 277 3170 or 0419 70 40 95

Making the Senate irrelevant — a joint approach

If John Howard's plans for joint sittings of the Senate and House of Representatives without a double dissolution election came off, there would be little point to the Senate at all.

If his constitutional proposals were in place now his plans for Medicare, higher education, Telstra, media ownership would, without amendment, already be law today.

All pieces of legislation introduced by the Government would find their way (with a three month delay) to a joint sitting and would pass completely unamended.

The PM has his plan but the ALP has theirs too. Simon Crean welcomed the opportunity to discuss Howard's ideas while NSW Bob Carr gushed in giving the PM unqualified support.

Meanwhile in the Senate, Robert Ray and John Faulkner's proposals to gut the Senate went unnoticed. Their proposal to remove the Senate's power to block supply and budget bills would, according to advice from the Clerk of the Senate, mean the government would simply put a budget item in every bill again making the Senate irrelevant.

The ALP's broad support for the Prime Minister on his Senate plans makes for a dangerous mix. We have seen what can happen when the major parties join together to gain political advantage. Luckily, unlike changes to the electoral system rushed through parliament by Labor and Liberal in Tasmania designed to get rid of the Greens, any move to change the Senate's powers would require a referendum.

The real reform our democracy requires is proportional representation for the House of Representatives. A measure of how undemocratic our system is the fact that only once since 1951 has a Government been formed from a party or parties that achieved a majority of the vote.

In the last 30 years the Senate has passed 5,400 government bills blocking less than three per cent. Meanwhile in the current parliament there are over 50 private members bills of which 100 per cent have been blocked by the Government, elected with only 43 per cent of the vote, in the House of Representatives.

Ben Oquist
Adviser to Senator Bob Brown

PBS and GE labelling laws threatened by US Free Trade Agreement

The Howard Government is putting Australia's scheme for affordable medicines and labelling laws for genetically engineered food at risk with the proposed United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Australian Greens Senator Kerry Nettle said on 23 July 2003.

"The Howard Government claims that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) will not be scrapped as a result of a FTA, but refuses to exempt the PBS from the negotiations," Senator Nettle told a rally in Sydney.

"We know that US drug companies are pressing for changes to the PBS pricing mechanisms, which would result in Australians paying a great deal more for prescription medicines.

"The Australian Government has withheld from the Senate documents relating to the PBS and the FTA negotiations, claiming it is not in the public interest to release the security classified cables.

"Public interest demands that the Australian Government exempt the PBS from the negotiations to ensure all Australians can obtain essential medicines at affordable prices.

"Public health and consumer choice also require that Australia's GE labelling laws are not removed or weakened.

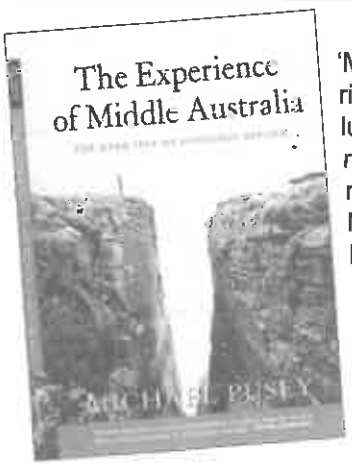
"The US is the largest producer of GE products. Multinational GE companies have bullied the US into denying consumers the right to know whether food contains GE ingredients by opposing proposals for GE labelling laws. They are now trying to bully Australia into doing likewise.

"The Australian Greens demand that the Howard Government put Australia's interests first, open the negotiation process to public scrutiny and refuse to trade away vital services and protections for Australians."

Further information: Elise Staples 0408 713 253

The Greens will support each other personally and politically with friendship, optimism and good humour, and not forget to enjoy ourselves in the process!

Global Greens Charter, Canberra April 2001



'Middle Australia wants other riches than money. It has a lurking suspicion that economic reform involves highway robbery of human values. Michael Pusey and his team have unveiled a fascinating insight into the hidden Middle Earth of Australian thinking.'

Bob Brown

Senator Kerry Nettle addresses the Senate

Green viewpoint

Health and higher education were the target of the Howard Government's user pays approach in the last Federal Budget. The Government wants to shift the cost of higher education away from the Government and on to the shoulders of potential students and their parents. The Government's reform will ensure that universities and the increased employment opportunities offered to students who attend will only be available for the elites of our society and working class families will no longer be able to send their children to university.

The Government also wants to shift the costs of healthcare on to the wallets of the low-income earners who do not qualify for a healthcare card but who may be chronically ill or have children that are often sick. The Greens believe quality healthcare and bulkbilling in particular should be available for all Australians not just those with healthcare cards. We do not want the universality of public healthcare destroyed. The Greens want to see Medicare not just defended but expanded to cover dental care and more mental health services. Our public health system needs the $2.3 billions of taxpayers' money that this government pours into the private health insurance industry every year.

An arrogant Howard Government wants to make the Senate irrelevant and grab more power for the major parties. The Greens continue to defend our democracy and the role of the Senate. We need to keep up the pressure up over the coming months as Howard continues to 'Senate bash' his way to a potential double dissolution election.

Senator Kerry Nettle, Australian Greens

Disarming Iraq

As the leaders of the war against Iraq move their rhetoric from certainty to hope on the matter of finding weapons of mass destruction it is timely to look at some impacts of "disarming" Iraq.

One of the enduring images of the war on Iraq is that of Ali Ismail Abbas who lost both arms after a US missile obliterated his home and most of his family, leaving him orphaned and badly burned.

'It was midnight when the missile fell on us. My father, my mother and my brother died. My mother was five months pregnant,' said Ali.

Despite his tragedy, Ali is luckier than many. His plight received international attention and he subsequently received significant medical and financial assistance.

Behind his story are many others which remain untold.

The Iraq Body Count project estimated the civilian death toll at between 5570 and 7243. This project aimed to establish an independent and comprehensive public database of media-reported civilian deaths in Iraq resulting directly from military actions by the USA and its allies in 2003.

The number of dead Iraqi soldiers is unpublished and possibly will never be known. After the first US incursion into Baghdad on 5 April, a US Central Command spokesman said between 2,000 and 3,000 Iraqi fighters were believed to have been killed. Military analysts say these figures are estimates complicated by the fact that many soldiers were buried in unmarked graves and others covered by rubble.

Then there are the wounded, like Ali. There are many children who suffered from the war but who did not receive the attention and support that Ali received. Again, total numbers of the wounded are estimations. Not all were treated in hospitals. Estimates in early April 2003 by the UK Guardian newspaper were 1,400 Iraqi civilians killed and 5,103 injured.

One phase of the war may now be over but the killing and wounding has not finished. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has assessed that the problem of explosive remnants of war (ERW) is acute in Iraq. ERW describes a wide range of explosive munitions remaining in an area after the end of a conflict. It includes everything from artillery shells, grenades, mortar and cluster bombs to rockets and missiles.

Johan Sohlberg, the ICRC's regional ERW adviser, considers the situation in Iraq the worst he has ever encountered: "Piles of ammunition, mines, small arms and weapons are littering the country. Most of them are in industrial areas but they can also be found in playgrounds, schools, construction sites and garbage heaps along the road. They constitute a permanent threat to the population, especially children, who are unaware of the danger: they continuously come into contact with them, play with them and risk getting maimed or killed."

The ICRC is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on an awareness campaign on mines and ERW. Information sessions have been organised and posters and leaflets are being distributed to Iraqi Red Crescent branches in southern Iraq where most incidents have occurred.

One part of the explosive remnants of war are unexploded portions of cluster bombs. The US dropped nearly 1,500 drops of cluster bombs during the air campaign. It did not specify the number of ground-launched cluster munitions. Britain's Ministry of Defence revealed that the British army's artillery fired more than 2,000 cluster munitions around Basra, while at least 66 cluster bombs were dropped by the British air force.

Cluster bombs disperse hundreds of bomblets that in turn shoot out shrapnel over large areas. The group Human Rights Watch believes that the use of cluster munitions in populated areas may violate the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks contained in international humanitarian law. There is a failure rate for cluster munitions which means that there remains hazardous, explosive "duds" even after the attack is over.

The US and Britain both used depleted uranium in Iraq for its armour-piercing ability. The amount used has not yet been revealed. The US argues that depleted uranium presents only a small risk. Iraqi scientists and epidemiologists, however, have pointed to a range of health effects which followed the 1991 Gulf War and attributed these to depleted uranium including increases in the number of cases of leukemia, congenital anomalies, cancers (including previously rare cancers), and spontaneous abortions. Some of these are the immediate effects of exposure to radiation. Other impacts may not be seen for generations.

Although Ali's plight is tragic, it is not the end of the tragedy of the war in Iraq. There are many other children of tragedy and adults who will not receive the individual attention that Ali has received. There will be more tragedies due to the explosive remnants of war and there will be long-term effects following the use of depleted uranium.

A green thread for ten years

Peg Putt is the Greens parliamentary leader in Tasmania. She became involved through campaigning against the Wesley Vale woodchop mill. She shares her story of ten exciting, fascinating, frustrating, tough and proud years.

PEG PUTT

I've just notched up my tenth year as a Greens MP in Tasmania. Surprising for someone who never seriously contemplated getting elected in the first place.

Plans for a woodchip mill on the Huon River triggered my involvement in Tassie politics. A successful campaign on that ended in 1989 and I took paid work in the conservation movement.

Then followed the collapse of the Labor–Green Accord over Labor's ditching their undertakings to restrict woodchipping – there were five Greens Parliamentary members holding the balance of power, including Bob Brown and Christine Milne. An election was called in January 1992 and Bob asked me to be his running mate.

How could I refuse to help this man? I'd once thought it would be a privilege just to meet him, now I was thoroughly challenged, but determined to defend against attempts to snuff out Green politics in the island state.

The five Greens were re-elected, but within a year Bob announced his retirement from Tasmania's House of Assembly and I was elected in his stead.

Luckily, with experienced Greens around me, I had plenty of help in settling into the parliamentary role.

The hardest thing was becoming public property. That, and learning to communicate the Greens' message in succinct and catchy sound bites. There is a serious dimension to cultivating oneself to engage, not frighten away, potential supporters whose judgements are based on inputs from content, to style, and image.

I toured Japan with Aboriginal activist Jim Everett, raising awareness about the woodchipping destruction of our forests for pulp and paper, thoroughly upsetting the likes of North Ltd, and making important Indigenous connections.

Stormy times returned to Tasmanian politics when the 1996 election produced a hung parliament. We had won four seats and found ourselves in the 'balance of power'.

Labor had most seats but stubbornly refused to take up its responsibility to form government, browbeating the electors for having got it wrong, and insisting that they would only govern in majority. This left the Liberals with the next highest number of seats to govern.

Recognising that we must work with the configuration electors had determined we indicated that we would allow Liberal budgets to pass, would not vote 'no confidence' except in the case of gross mal-administration or impropriety, but that on all other matters the outcome would be determined on the floor of the House.

I found this an exciting and fascinating but frustrating period. Minority government without arrangement can be wearing, because our views on absolutely every matter to come before the Parliament were crucial to the outcome – except in the case of the natural environment when Liberal and Labor combined to beat us every time!

During this period we finally achieved reform of Tasmania's laws which outlawed homosexual sex, and a Parliamentary apology to the stolen generation.

A proposal to privatise the Hydro (our electricity utility) which we wouldn't support caused the Liberals to run to an early election. But not before supporting a Labor Bill to rid the Parliament of the Greens. This was by cutting the number of Parliamentarians so that the new quota for election (we are elected by

proportional representation) was just higher than the record Green vote. This was sold as a money–saving measure and its effect of excluding minor parties was denied.

So in 1998 I scraped back in as the only remaining Greens MHA. There followed a tough four years. Pushing issues where the other two parties had a unified position and I was the only Parliamentary opponent I earned the tag of the 'real opposition'. The spread of pokies and the need for a GE-free Tasmania became our new hot issues. I maintained a focus on social justice, the environment, and the economy.

Last July we dared to dream of a comeback and made it happen. We reached higher and got the vote to elect four Greens again. I'm now proudly the Leader of one of two Opposition parties in the Tasmanian Parliament. I feel privileged to represent so many fine people and grateful that my working life is dedicated to peace, democracy, social justice and the environment.

Peg Putt is the Greens Opposition Leader in Tasmania

Bob's Back Page

Highland fling

In winter 1990 I visited Scotland's central mountains, the Cairngorms, to help locals in their successful campaign against a set of pylons proposed in the wild Lurchers Gully. I ended up with icicles on my beanie. The seven seat win by Scotland's Greens in last month's elections came at the expense of anti-national park Labour MPs, and now the Cairngorms National Park may be extended by 70,000 hectares. That should send a ptarmigan or two into a fling.

El Grande

Global headlines (including front page of London's Observer) followed Forestry Tasmania's burning in April of the world's biggest flowering plant – a eucalyptus regnans tree 80 metres high and 20 metres round and called 'El Grande'. I moved for a Senate inquiry into this environmental scandal, supported by Kerry. But the Democrats, Labor and Liberals voted the motion down, variously indicating there were other forest inquiries, too many inquiries or just a complete failure to comprehend why anyone would care.

1 July 1983

The first of July 2003 was the 20th anniversary of the High Court ruling in Brisbane, four judges to three, that stopped the Franklin dam. Our flight from Melbourne to Brisbane, the previous day, was struck by lightning. I didn't sleep till 5am. In the court, Margaret Robertson flipped a coin: 'it's tails, so we'll lose'. I asked her to flip it 3 times. 'Its 2 heads, so, we'll win!' And so we did. There was pandemonium. Flying home, Qantas attendants gave us free champagne and, at our stop in Sydney, scores of TWSians were at the airport shouting and holding up well-worn No Dams banners with glee. 'This morning' a westie woman told me, 'I heard the neighbours screaming and I began screaming too!' They had heard the 11o'clock 'Franklin Saved' radio news flash. People danced around Australia. And these days Strahan and Queenstown, the epicentre of the protests FOR the dam, are dancing too, as tourism fuels investment and jobs based on the saved wilderness. In 1981 a commentator said that it would be 20 to 30 years before we knew what was right – to dam or not to dam? Well, TWS and the Greens were right and saved Tasmania from a multi–billion dollar dam mistake!!!

Bag of bits and pieces

The government has responded to our campaign for a levy on Australia's six billion annual plastic bags with a plan to ban them altogether – whizzo!!!

Labor has emulated our sign-Kyoto bill in the Senate with one of its own in the House – little bewdy!!!

Our battle against the ASIO bill just about busted it in the Senate – oh so close!!!

The Greens' Bali Senate inquiry set up in March (Mr Downer called it a 'stunt') is uncovering some stunning secrets – pow!!!

Labor voted down our Senate inquiry into Iraq's WMD saying they had a better inquiry plan – but they've tripped up badly!!!

Kerry and I voted alone for Mr Costello's $4 tax cut to be diverted to a $1.4 billion spending boost for hospitals and schools – which is what the polls show most Australians want!!!

Guantanamo. Baxter. Nauru.

"I hold this slow and daily tampering with the brain to be immeasurably worse than torture of the body, because its ghastly signs and tokens are not so palpable to the eyes and sense of touch as scars upon the flesh, because its wounds are not upon the surface and it exports few cries that human ears can hear."

Charles Dickens writing on solitary confinement.

Ingrid

Some news on our kidnapped Columbian Greens heroine Ingrid Betancourt: the FARC guerillas say she is aware of all the efforts made for her and these have brought her 'enormous comfort'. FARC reiterates it will only release Ingrid and fellow Green Clara Rojas in exchange for imprisoned guerillas. We have now had two Senate motions calling on Prime Minister Howard to contact President Alvaro Uribe Velex to urge him to do more for Ingrid. But Mr Howard has done nothing. Please phone, fax or email him urging that he intervene to help Ingrid and Clara win their freedom.

Spring melt

Soon the snow will melt, the rills will rush, and the buttercups will spread their shiny gold petals to the sun. After 14 years of penning bits for *Daily Planet* and *Green* I wonder about letting go and watching the flowering of other fresher items in *Green*.

Enjoy a blooming wonderful Spring! My warmest thoughts to you all.

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