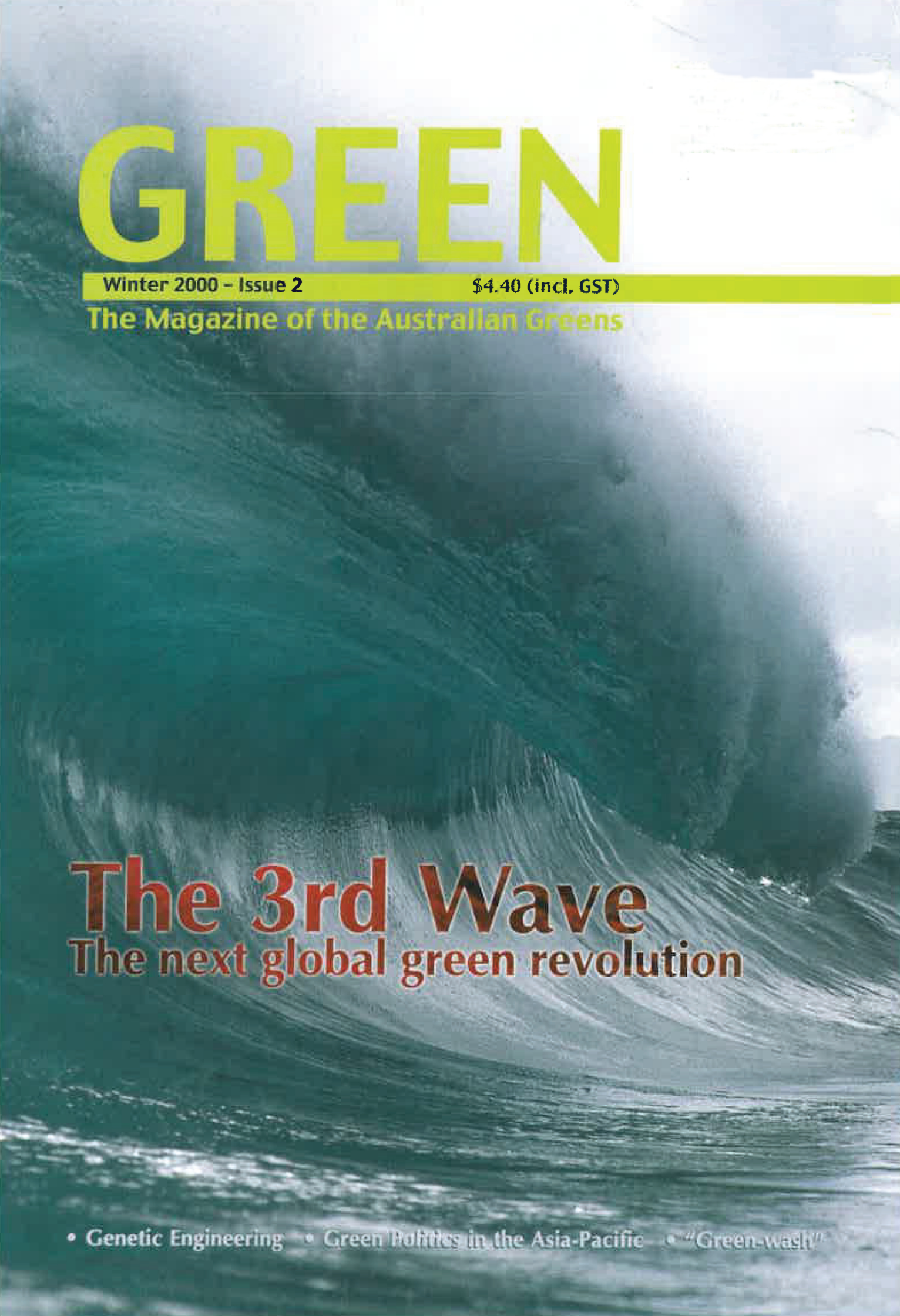
GREEN

Winter 2000 – Issue 2 $4.40 (incl. GST)

The Magazine of the Australian Greens



The 3rd Wave

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- Genetic Engineering
- Green Politics in the Asia-Pacific
- "Green-wash"

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WINTER 2000

GREEN

No. 2

The Magazine of the Australian Greens

Australian Greens

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MANAGER/ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
Green,
PO Box 173
South Hobart
Tasmania 7004
ph (03) 6224 3541
Email: <chrisharries@trump.net.au>

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

Next deadline: October 1.

Cover photograph by Jon Frank from his new book "Waves of the Sea" (available from Surfing World (ph (02) 9977 6449).

A WELCOME READ

I was extremely pleased this week to receive Issue #1 of *Green* . It was an excellent read and I've already used extracts from the Corporate Welfare feature article in a Letter to Editor of my local paper.

Green will undoubtedly become a vital resource for members and supporters.

Stuart Kingsford
Rye, Victoria

WOW!

Just finished reading *Green* which Margaret Blakers gave to me in Canberra when I was down popping in on Bob Brown last week. Wow, wow wow: I just have to tell you, its fantastic, I poured over and soaked up every word – at last a publication from the heart that spoke sense to me!

When I reached Stephenie Cahalan's article re the green party highlights I had tears streaming down my face, I really felt that after years of just having hope that at last things are finally changing in our world.

Running a small business and trying to keep it ethical is hard; I imagine its 10 times harder in politics, so the Greens are the only choice for me. I am so happy to hear that its a growing force!

Pat Mackie
'Avantcard '
Sydney

RETURN-TO-SENDER!

The federal government has spent over $400 million to try and make a really bad idea, the GST, sound like a good idea.

Included in this sum is $10 million for a mailout to every Australian household. If you don't want to be told how to think and could find around 10 million better ways to spend $10 million (like housing the homeless, feeding the hungry, improving health care, repairing the education system) then do something about it. When you receive your glossy tax-for-the-rich promo, mark it: *Return to Sender*, then add something witty like:-

- Moved to a country with a fairer tax system
- Occupant deceased: the GST killed me
- NO MORE JUNK MAIL!
- Stick your filthy, capitalist, economic rationalist crud up your... !
- If I wanted ultra right-wing propaganda, I'd buy the Daily Telegraph!
- Tax the rich, not the poor!
- Flat tax for a flat world
- Tax system faulty, returning for a replacement

(Thank you to the anonymous sender. Ed)

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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

Send letters to:

The Editor, *Green*
PO Box 173, South Hobart, Tasmania 7004

Email: <greenlink@trump.net.au>

Deadline for next edition: Oct 1

YOUNGER SPIRITS NEEDED

A challenge for The Greens is to encourage young people to be involved in decision making structures and campaigning. Although people under 25 make up the largest voting demographic for The Greens, (a steady 7% according to the Morgan Polls), this is inversely reflected within the party. Just have a look at the average age of our elected representatives and office bearers to illustrate my point.

If we are to tackle this problem and invest time in our future, we will need a resurgence of trust and vigor aimed at our young people and their issues.

Kate Walsh
Sydney, NSW

[Kate is co spokesperson of the NSW young greens]

ABC MISREPRESENTS YOUTH

On May 30 a film called *Riots of Passage* was screened on ABC television. The film grossly misrepresents work undertaken by myself and other members of *Justice for Young People.*

In 1997 we were involved in campaigns for youth rights and against police violence. Many of our actions and meetings were filmed by the filmmakers who had indicated their interest in making a documentary about our work At no stage did I give permission for a documentary to be made about me and my personality. We were given to understand that the film would be about real issues associated with our campaigns.

Riots of Passage is outdated and misrepresentative of the work we undertook in 1997. We are proud of the campaigns we organised, and object to the distorted presentation ABC viewers were given.

The ABC and film makers were asked to withdraw the film, to cut sections out of the film that trivialise and distort the issues, or for a disclaimer to be screened at the start of the film. A number of people asked for their names to be removed from the credits as they were disgusted with the final product. The ABC refused all these requests.

None of our members nor my family endorse this film. The goodwill that was shown towards filmmakers Russell Vines and Sonya Armstrong has been abused and the ABC is complicit in denying my rights not to have my life and work misrepresented.

Kilty O'Gorman
Sydney

[If you would like information about the campaigns of Justice for Young People, you can contact them at ph 02 9281 5100 Email <kilty@justiceaction.org.au>]

FROM AN ANTARCTIC ISLAND

Mid winter greetings from snowy Macquarie Island! Hope you can join us at least in spirit *(for the Winter Solstice celebrations)!*

It is even more wonderful here than ever, with a shining white mantle on the hills, right down to the beach - even if the sub zero temperatures mean that our water supply is frozen solid so we are out of showers for the present. The seals and penguins don't seem to mind and continue to entertain us, especially the sub adult male seals which are currently ashore and spend their time mock-fighting, rearing up on their tails in a ponderous by surprisingly elegant slow motion ballet.

Did you here we have found grey petrels nesting on North Head for the first time in over 100 years? It demonstrate the value of the cat and rat eradication programs.

The GG charter is on its way - I'll get it finished before I head out into the field this week.

Louise Crossley
Macquarie Island
Southern Ocean

[Louise is a former Greens Senate candidate and previous convenor of the Australian Greens. Now a Station Leader on Macquarie Island, she has been whiling away her idle hours working up a draft charter for the first ever gathering of global greens GG2001. See page 17]

C'MON AUSSIES

Agrichemical giants have planted 2,000 hectares of herbicide-tolerant GE canola in 200 secret 'test' sites in Australia. Farmers are not told that the seed is genetically modified. Neighbours are also not being told and local councils don't even know where the sites are.

Australia can develop an enormous, profitable clean, green market, but we must stop this contamination immediately! State governments who want to opt out of growing GE crops are being thwarted by the federal government.

Partial or complete bans on the commercial growing of GE crops are in place in Austria, Luxembourg, Italy and Greece. Britain has a formal moratorium until 2003. France, Italy, Denmark, Greece and Luxembourg are to block any new licences until new regulations are established – which could take years. We need to follow these countries' leads and not allow this exploitation of our farmers and our land. Once released, these GE organisms can never be recalled.

Kathy Harris
Port Jackson, NSW

CORRECTION

Sorry folks, in *Green #1* we gave you the wrong figure for corporate donations to political parties between 1992 and 1998. The actual total was $63 million, not $2.7 million. (The ALP received $15 million. The Coalition was presumably even more happy with their $48 million.)

Australia's most generous corporations include seven banking/finance companies, five construction companies and four mining companies. The four biggest woodchippers are there (Amcor, Wesfarmers, Boral and North), who collectively donated $2.8 million.

And an apology from Bob Brown's office. The discussion paper *'Democracy for Dollars'*, still hasn't made it to his web page, but it is coming. Probably in July.

Bob Browns website can be found at:
<www.greens.org.au/bobbrown>

IGNITING THE FIRE

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all those who sent their bouquets, critical feedback and helpful suggestions following the launch of *Green #1* in February.

We dedicate this second edition of *Green* to Judith Wright, poet, humanist, environmentalist and tireless champion of Aboriginal reconciliation. Her life was a phenomenal dedication to all these things. To the very end she eloquently spoke for her beliefs, taking a lead in the huge reconciliation march across Sydney harbour just two months before her death. What a fitting finale to a remarkable life!

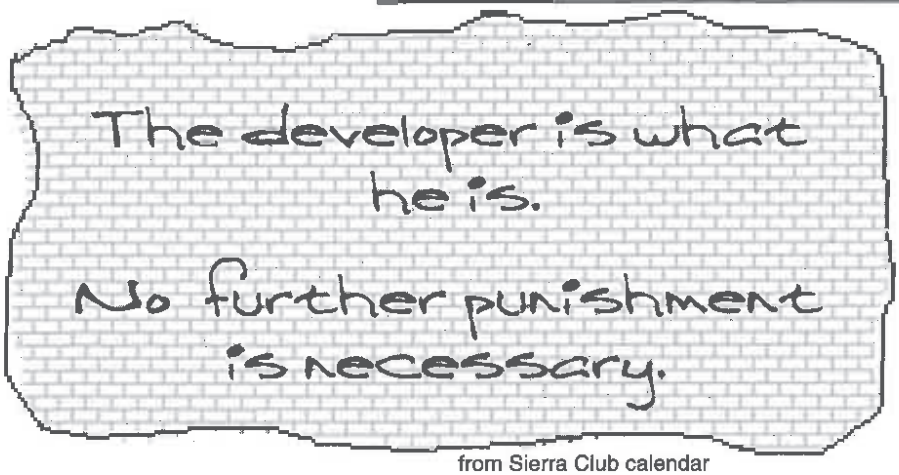
Six years ago Judith wrote: "*What has happened to the fire in the belly of the conservation movement?*". She was alarmed at the sudden collapse in the profile of environment in national affairs – while destruction was going on all around. At that time, Australia's major conservation groups were all suffering financial crises and organisational upheavals. Media interest in environmental issues had markedly waned.

Indeed, Australia had witnessed two wild surges in environmental activity and media interest, each followed by a prolonged trough. One occurred in the early 1970s, coinciding with Lake Pedder, Green Bans, the Whitlam government and publication of the *Limits to Growth*. Another occurred during the 1980's coinciding with high profile national campaigns to protect the Daintree, the Franklin River and other areas as World Heritage reserves.

Are we now on the verge of a 'Third Wave'? There is a strong belief in environmental circles that things are on the up again. All signposts are pointing that way. Our cover story (p7) in this edition explores this phenomenon in greater depth.

Are **you** ready to brace yourself for action?

The Editorial Collective



from Sierra Club calendar

ARE HUMANS HISTORY?

A creator of the information age has turned prophet of doom with a warning that humanity could be extinct within two generations.

Self-made 'new technology' millionaire, Bill Joy, famous for having developed Java script internet technology, has published an easy-to-read article in *Wired* magazine that takes a brutally honest look at where modern technologies are taking us.

Joy says: *"21st century technologies - genetics, nanotechnology and robotics - are so powerful that they can spawn whole new classes of accidents and abuses . . . "* One of his fears is genetically engineered viruses against which people have no defence.

Given his hi-tech background Joy is uniquely placed to pass judgement. He says most new technology is economically, not humanely, driven and that their imminent ability to self-replicate could literally mean that they will take over. Scary stuff. Joy concludes that the only alternative is to *"limit our pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge"*.

It's a consummate 'the emperor has no clothes' piece that jolts the reader into thinking honestly about our technology-driven future. Essential reading.

Available online from: <www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy.html>

SEND US YOUR BEST

Have you got a choice website? Next edition we hope to include a list of everyone's best sites bearing alternative news. Email your choice sites to <greenlink@trump.net au>

ADBUSTERS

Meanwhile, a number of readers have spontaneously recommended the *Adbusters* site (<www.adbusters.org>). A fabulous group, *Adbusters* are part of a new wave of 'media activism'. Two of their current campaigns are interesting for us:

1. Voter Nader campaign
2. A joint campaign with Greenpeace attacking Coke's bad greenhouse activities.

You can get that at <www.cokespotlight.org>.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mongolian Green Party was founded in 1990 right after multiparty democracy was opened up there. Although it has no elected parliamentarians as yet it is already part of a ruling coalition.

And, if you thought Mongolia to be a backward country, all the land is publicly owned and it has exemplary environmental laws (it has the legacy of a socialist country).

A tour guide, Olzod Bum-Yalagch, plans to run for office next year to represent the Greens. His constituency comprises nomadic herdspeople on the Mongolian plains.

SMART BUSES

Los Angeles buses may soon become the envy of car-bound commuters as they manage to hit every green light on their route. An electronic transponder that shortens red lights and causes green lights to stay green longer is at the heart of a test project. The goal is a 15 to 25 percent savings in travel times.

FARMING THE WIND

Harnessing the wind has become increasingly profitable for farmers, so much so that a farmer in Iowa who leases a quarter acre of cropland as a site for a wind turbine can typically earn $2,000 a year in royalties. That same plot can produce only $100 worth of corn, in a good year.

The American Wind Energy Association reports that the cost of wind-generated electricity has fallen from 38 cents per kwh in the early 1980s to just 3 to 6 cents today – and it is still declining.

<www.worldwatch.org/chairman/index.html>

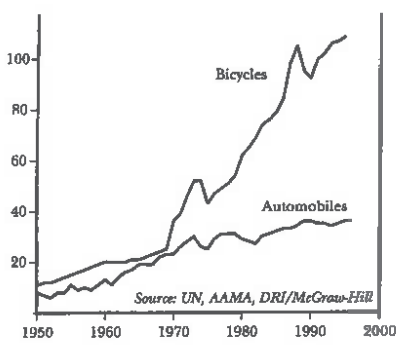


Figure 10–4. World Bicycle and Automobile Production, 1950–96

POSITIVE TRENDS

Amongst all the negative world trends we hear about it is all too easy to overlook the positive ones. So, take a look at these graphs. World bicycle production is outstripping car production by a huge margin. And installed wind generator capacity has gone ballistic. High-efficiency light bulbs are on a similarly explosive upward path.

(Source: State of the World Report 1998, Worldwatch Institute)

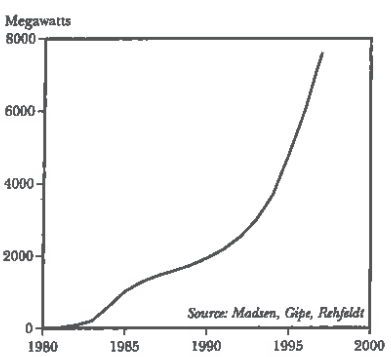


Figure 10–6. World Wind Energy Generating Capacity, 1980–97

MORE POSITIVE NEWS

After a century-long build up in cigarette smoking, the world is finally turning away from cigarettes. In 1999 cigarettes smoked per person declined by more than 3 percent – a trend being driven by a deepening awareness of health issues, rising cigarette taxes, aggressive anti-smoking campaigns and a decline in the social acceptability of smoking.

Worldwide usage has dropped from the historical high of 1,027 cigarettes per person (1990) to 915, a fall of 11 percent. Smoking is on the decline in nearly all major cigarette-consuming countries, including such bastions of smoking as France, China, and Japan.

Worldwatch Institute <www.worldwatch.org/chairman/issue/000509.html>

THEY'RE ALL DOERS!

There's a distinguishing feature about candidates who stand for the Greens. They are all doers.

Take Peter Singer, former senate candidate in Victoria, a long time animal rights activist and ethicist.

Peter has since taken up a post at Princeton University, New Jersey and has become something of an instant household name over there.

His rise to fame followed an article he wrote for the New York Times in which he told Americans they should give away all income above a necessities-covering $47,000 per year. Every $200 spent on non-necessities effectively ends up killing a child somewhere in the world.

That little blast resulted in the New York Times receiving 800 letters, a near record, and most of them supporting Singer. Aid agencies received a rush of donations in response to his article.

ROBBER CAPITALISM

"In 1996, I had a choice between the communists coming to power, or robber capitalism. I chose robber capitalism."

Russian, Anatoly Chubais (one of the creators of modern Russia), speaking out regretfully after his resignation from the government.

THE WRONG GUY

When a strong smell of marijuana smoke wafted through the NZ parliament recently all fingers pointed to Nandoor Tanczos, the dread-locked Green Rastafarian, elected to office in November.

Turns out the real culprit was none other than a staffer of the conservative party.

Despite his unconventional appearances, Nandoor is a serious, visionary politican. Asked by media if he smokes dope in parliament, his reply: *"I wouldn't degrade the smoking experience"*.

NOBODY WANTS IT

A controversial plan to use Russia, a country struggling to cope with the consequences of its aging nuclear arsenal, as a storage depot for 10,000 tonnes of the globe's spent nuclear fuel is being actively developed in Washington and Moscow. Five countries – Taiwan, South Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands and Switzerland – have expressed interest in sending the wastes to the proposed dump.

With its economy in a parlous economy, Russia is desperate for foreign exchange and is taking the proposition seriously.

<www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/international/story/0,,329797,00.html>

CANADA KEPT BIG BROTHER FILES

The Canadian government, responding to a public outcry, has announced it is to dismantle its vast database containing up to 2,000 pieces of information on certain citizens.

The issue came to prominence over a year ago when Canada's Green Party leader, Joan Rusow, found herself tagged by the government's 'spy agency' as a security risk. She later managed to get hold of her 'threat assessment dossier' including photos and vital statistics. That scandal forced an official inquiry into the spy agency's operation.

CLEANING UP POLITICS

The US state of Maine has introduced a novel system to clean up political corruption. 115 candidates for political office, about a third of those in the race, are getting all their campaign funding from the state.

Only candidates who pledge in writing not to receive private donations (such as from corporations) are eligible for the public funding scheme.

STATE OF THE WORLD

GLOBALISATION: In 1970, the number of transnational corporations worldwide was 7,000. In 2000 there are around 60,000.

GLOBAL WARMING: In 1970, the cost of storm damage around the world was estimated at under $1 billion dollars. In 1999 it was over $90 billion.

From Earth Day report, Friends of the Earth, April 20

In the first eleven months of 1998, weather-related losses worldwide totalled $89 billion. 32,000 people died and 300 million were displaced from their homes. This was more than the total losses experienced throughout the 1980s.

Paul Epstein, Harvard Medical School

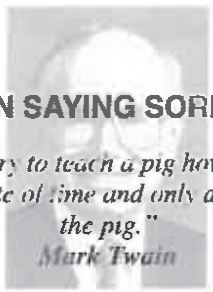
AFRICA: Before the onslaught of AIDS, life expectancy in Zimbabwe was 65 years. In 1998, it was 44 years. By 2010, it is projected to fall to 39 years.

Lester Brown, co-author of State of the World 2000

ORGANICS: Mexico now has some 10,000 organic farms on 15,000 hectares of land, most of them run by small farmers.

NETWORKING: The number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working across international borders soared during the last century, climbing from just 176 in 1909 to more than 23,000 in 1998 – forging powerful cross-border political alliances.

World Watch Institute



ON SAYING SORRY

"Never try to teach a pig how to sing. It's a waste of time and only aggravates the pig."
Mark Twain

GENE THERAPY #1

Campaigners are heralding a victory in the fight to stop big business exploiting plants and genes at the expense of poor people in the developing world.

The European Patent Office has revoked a patent granted six years ago on an antifungal product, which uses seeds from the neem tree grown widely in India.

The neem tree has been used for centuries as a medicine, insecticide and contraceptive. The granting of the patent was challenged by Green party politicians in the European Parliament and other pressure groups.

BBC <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_745000/745028.stm>

GENE THERAPY #2

Another great moment in gene technology: Canadian scientists have successfully implanted spider genes into a herd of goats, resulting in the production of elastic goat milk. The product can apparently be used for sutures and other applications such as coverings for swimming pools.

The developers estimate the technology has a potential market of $2 billion. Both the US and Canadian military have expressed interest in using it for making anti-ballistic defence systems.

United Press International

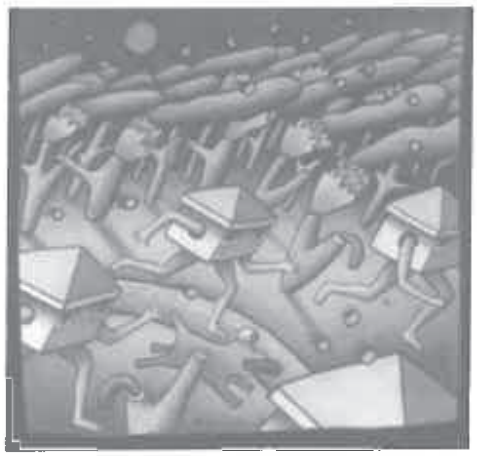
TOO MUCH CHOICE?

Researchers have confirmed the suspicions of shoppers – modern living has left many lost in a bewildering snowstorm of choice.

A consumer group, *The Future Foundation*, says its research shows the revolution in consumerism has failed to enrich our lives, but has caused confusion and anxiety as people struggle with the mind-boggling array of options available

Two decades ago the typical British supermarket was stocked with 5,000 different lines. It now boasts 40,000 separate products, including 400 brands of shampoo and nearly 100 different types of toothbrush. While 20 years ago buying water may have seemed absurd, Sainsbury's Leeds store now boasts a staggering 101 lines.

Source: The Guardian



(Graphic from Avantcard)

BURNING FORESTS

Forest protectors, lookout!

The burning of woodchips from Australia's wild forests will be subsidised and called 'renewable' if the Howard government's Renewable Energy Bill is passed as written.

Forest corporations which oversee the destruction of the most massive forests (and therefore carbon banks) in the Southern Hemisphere will be able to consider energy production as a subsidised forest by-product.

WHY WE ARE HERE

Because the world we had imagined,
the one we had always counted on
is disappearing
Because the sun has become cancerous
and the planet is getting hotter.
Because children are starving
in the shadows of yachts and economic summits
Because there are already too many planes in the sky.

This is the manufactured world
you seek to codify and expedite
We are here to tell you
there is something else we want to buy

What we want, money no longer recognizes
like the vitality of nature,
the integrity of work.
We don't want cheaper wood,
we want living trees.
We don't want engineered fruit,
we want to see and smell the food
growing in our own neighbourhoods.

We are here because a voice inside us,
a memory in our blood, tells us
you are not just a bank, or a fund,
you have become the blind tip
of a dark wave which has forgotten its source.
We are here to defend and honour
what is real, natural, human and basic
against these rising tides of greed.

We are here by the insistence of spirit
and by the authority of nature
If you doubt for one minute the power of truth
or the primacy of nature
try not breathing for that length of time.

Now you know the pressure of our desire.
We are not here to tinker with your laws.
We are here to change you, and ourselves
from the inside out.
This is not a political protest
It is an uprising of the soul.

(Please keep, recycle or give away)

[The above was written by an anonymous poet at the time of the Seattle demonstrations.]

FOCUS

Brace Yourself for the Big One!

Photo: Jon Frank

For green activist the 1980s were euphoric. Marked by a string of heady campaign victories, sustained media profile, growing activism memberships, high donation profiles.... we thought the wave would never break.

Well, it did.

By comparison the 1990s have been deadening. Citizens everywhere, alienated and overwhelmed by the rapid onset of globalisation and economic rationalism, retreated to safe corners of their everyday lives. Governments and oppositions learned to conjure the environment game, giving the populace a false sense of security. For activists groups its been a hard slog in difficult times.

So, what does the future hold?

One person who should know is the worlds best known environmental advocate, David Suzuki. On his recent visit to Australia Suzuki peppered his lectures with this confident prediction *"Be patient, the drought is over, all the signs are that a third wave of environmentalism is upon us. Be ready for it"....* Well, here is why we should.

FOCUS

From birth scream to global government

BY CHRISTINE MILNE

Christine Milne gained notoriety for her campaign to stop a proposed polluting pulpmill and is former parliamentary Leader of the Tasmanian Greens.

There are few occasions in a lifetime when you have a sense that you are experiencing a profoundly important moment in world history. The December 1999 *Battle of Seattle* was one of those experiences. Not just another outburst of protest directed at the World Trade Organisation, it was the birth scream of a newly emerging global consciousness.

In spite of parliaments around the world being reduced to rubber stamps, corruption wherever you look, big business making extravagant profits, and ordinary citizens being beaten and gassed for non violent protest, what is clear is that people in increasing numbers are determined to passionately campaign for something better.

As the march of global capitalism tramples on democracy, on human rights, on environmental and labour laws, there is a parallel uprising in the world activist community. It knows that the consciousness we have delivered on unsustainability will not be the consciousness which saves the planet from ecological disaster.

Conversations

Globalisation requires conversations about the future to be global in their scope. So what we are witnessing is an epochal shift in the balance of power between government, civil society and the market. In the absence of global governance, these conversations will be increasingly between multinational corporations and NGOs. Values and ethics will be firmly on the agenda. But so too will be the capacity of the multinationals to co-opt the conversations to their own ends.

In the vacuum of inadequate global governance structures, it would be a mistake to think that national governments are irrelevant. Until the emergence of a Federal Global Government, national governments will have to act on the fallout from this global showdown. Hence a new values-based politics which strengthens democracy is imperative. That is why Green politics has such a critical role to play.

Historians will come to recognise Seattle as the place at which civil society demonstrated its emergence as a major force in global decision making. It will be seen as the watershed of a new set of beliefs and values, which will see ecological sustainability increasingly dominate global thinking.

But will it drive the collapse of materialism as the dominant cultural philosophy of the 21st Century? A big question, but who believed that communism would collapse in the last gasp of the 20th Century?.... those committed enough, from within its strictures, to work for its overthrow.

The 'Third Wave' of Environmentalism is building.

The signposts are everywhere

The first bombshell came when activist networks halted the first attempts to get the Multilateral Treaty on Investment implemented. This totally unpredicted victory stunned world financiers and set the scene for further victories.

Here is a glimpse of the numerous 'signposts' pointing to the emerging new political wave.

- Global market research, released in Canada, shows that public concern for environmental issues is rapidly getting back onto the radar screens, with a predicted peak in 2002.

  The public usually goes through three phases on any given issue:

  - Basic awareness (seeking sensation, entertainment)
  - Paying attention (seeking information)
  - Coming to Judgement (seeking progress)

  Evidence is that the public is now paying attention and is seeking multiple sources of information, having lost confidence in single sources.

- The first worldwide edition of *Time Magazine* hit the streets in April/May. It's focus, 'How To Save The Earth' included editorial opinions *Time* would never have uttered 10 years ago.

- After their loud criticism of WTO in Seattle, Malaysia's Martin Khor (Third World Network) and India's Vandana Shiva

participated in the January 2000 World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland – the first time that radical critics have been invited to join this exclusive gathering of global business leaders.

- Meanwhile, Czech President, Vaclav Havel has offered to organise a discussion forum between protest groups and executives before

FOCUS

How will the Third Wave be different?

the IMF and World Bank meeting in September 2000 – an attempt to mediate with protest groups planning huge demonstrations.

- President Clinton announced in April that US foreign (fiscal) policy is to be radically restructured to put environmental concerns at the top of the agenda.
- In July, the United Nations Development Program (under pressure from NGOs) cancelled plans to create a Global Sustainable Development Facility – a proposed 'partnership' between the UN and 15 multinational giants including Dow Chemicals, Rio Tinto, and Novartis.
- Mass protests in countries all over the world are opposing genetic engineering. Like Genoa, Italy, where an International Biotechnology Conference at the Genoa Trade Fair was overrun by opponents of GE crops. And India, where the livelihoods of millions of farmers are threatened by GE and crop patenting.
- Major demonstrations against sweatshops (ie the use of virtual slave labour in third world countries to produce consumer goods) at university campuses across the US and in Britain this year. Hundreds of students arrested.

  Targeted companies, like Nike, have lost out as new purchasing guidelines are drawn up by university local, state and federal governments.
- Growing army of Greens and other progressives elected to parliaments around the world, driving initiatives like Germany's decision to turn its back on nuclear energy and to aggressively promote renewables.
- Unlikely personalities are sounding warning signs about the future.

  - Like financier George Soros, who has withdrawn from his high profile career and is now spending billions of dollars promoting democracy in the developing world.

  - Like Jin Takagi who turned his back on a high flying career in the nuclear industry 22 years ago and established in 1998 the *Tokyo School for Alternative Scientists* to help citizens grapple with real issues facing our society.

  - Like computer millionaire, Bill Joy, who is calling for a non proliferation treaty on dangerous technologies such as genetic engineering.

Strong Focus on Runaway Corporate Power.

As the power of business around the planet has grown, so too has interest in corporate governance: ie the exercise of power by and over corporations.

Social and environmental issues are now moving rapidly to the corporate mainstream. Stakeholders are transferring their interest from the fallout of corporate activities to the fat cat directors who make the decisions.

The new focus on corporate power has led to a rapid growth of the ethical investment sector as civil society makes judgements about good or bad corporate citizenship.

So fiercely will be the public demand for social and environmental accountability that this decade we shall see many multinationals calling for new international governance systems. Having spearheaded deregulation, privatisation and trade liberalisation, many of these companies find themselves now operating in markets which have nonexistent governance.

How unsettling, in the face of scrutiny, if there is no one to blame but yourself. How vulnerable your share price to a global boycott and consumer campaign.

Welcome the decade of debate about governance.

Wide Diversity of Opposition

Opposition forces are becoming increasingly diverse – not just people from left and green fringes. People alienated by globalisation come from across the spectrum, as even the Pauline Hanson factor has shown.

People who demonstrated in Seattle came from trade unions, churches, environmental groups – many groups opposed to each other but united in opposition against global corporate power. Their strength is their diversity and the unpredictability of their capacity to come together.

Speed of Information Exchange

Multinationals have been able to play countries and communities off against one another by relying on the ignorance of each as to the other's position. The internet and email means that every activist group in the world is now in a position to get its message out almost instantly to a global audience, making every boardroom and every share price vulnerable.

The proliferation of *"What Nike, Coke, McDonalds, Gap, Shell don't want you to know"* internet sites means that corporations can no longer control information relating to themselves.

Greenwash

Governments everywhere are reading the public's heightened awareness. An early governmental response is to use green rhetoric in place of policy (see Greenwash article P 19).

A prime example: the Australian Greenhouse Office has a huge budget whilst Australia's policy settings relating to global warming are abysmal.

Green Activist Communities Split Into Two - Reasonable and Unreasonable.

- Governments pick out 'soft' greens, give them a helping hand by bringing them into decision making, give them privy information and stacks of money to do 'tame' work. Those campaigning for fundamental reforms are locked out and pitted against the former. This divide-and-rule strategy was superbly played by Senator Hill with his *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Bill* last year.
- Enter the strategy of replacing the now discredited endless consultative processes of the 1990s with supposed peer group assessment. And the emergence of what Tasmanian environmentalist Chris Harries describes as the *Non Government Bureaucrat* (NGB). The use of these supposedly arm's length analysts gives a veil of legitimacy to outsourcing of regulatory functions, once the preserve of government.
- The Labor movement's failure to let go of industrial age thinking will be apparent for another decade or so as it struggles for post industrial relevance.

Whilst on the one hand it mouths concern for environment and social justice, it is equally dedicated to supporting the anti-environmental culture of corporates like mining and logging companies. Thus the Labor movement tries to protect union members from prosecution (for violence against forest protesters) by prevailing

upon the ideological commitment of greens not to take unionists to court because *"we are all on the same side."*

Proliferation of PR Industry

Corporations operating in the developed world will increasingly change strategies from the now discredited, heavy-handed instruments of SLAPP suits, dirty tricks, intimidation and front groups like the former Forest Protection Society.

They are moving to a much more sophisticated use of third party allies: *"If you don't believe us then perhaps you will listen to..."* Their new weapon is a new breed of environmental-cum-social justice 'consultants'. These are often former activists with **street** credibility who are used to blunt the criticisms of hardline environmentalists. Does anyone spring to mind?

These people are the new face of environmentalism, thoroughly trained in communication and personal presentation, they supply the PR spin for the corporate sector. More insidiously they become suitable candidates for the *Non Government Bureaucrat* watchdog positions – which the corporates argue eliminate the need for government regulation.

Now that everyone is an environmentalist (some 'more reasonable' than others) winning the hearts and minds of the public is as much about perception as reality. The line between co-option and cooperation is already blurred.

This phenomenon threatens to be a major source of disillusionment and distraction for the activist community in the coming decade.

Major New Developments

- These are no longer being defended on the grounds they do minimal damage to the environment. The new strategy is to sell them on the grounds that they just have to go ahead in order to save the environment. People who oppose the development are labelled as despicable environmental vandals.

Queensland just has go ahead with its major new gas pipeline from New Guinea to in order to limit Greenhouse emissions, says Premier Beattie.

"The original Lake Pedder must not be restored because 4000 platypus would die" screams the pro dams lobby (falsely).

- Meanwhile business groups (notably farmers and fisheries) that have devastated the natural resources on which they rely are increasingly calling on environmental groups to assist with restoration programs.

FOCUS

Summing it all up

The open world economy rests on shaky ground. None of the old certainties apply.

Seattle was the wake up call for the world's multinational corporations and the global trade structures that support them. How they respond is as much up to us as it is to them.

Our activism must be aggressive and insightful because the multi national forces of corporatism will regroup and they will be clever at finding ways to try to control the new conversation between themselves and NGOs as they launch their next attacks.

We must catch the third wave of environmentalism and ride it enthusiastically all the way to our preferred future.

Emerging youth culture is driven by strong values

BY KATE WALSH

Kate is co-spokesperson of the NSW young greens

Independent media sites - crashing corporate websites - live forest blockades on the net - global days of action - cheeky media stunts and solid international networks are only a few of the tools in a young activists handbook of today.

With the move away from the identity politics of the late 80's and 90's, young people are more focused on the impact that global issues have on both local environments – both social and ecological . This is a small but very significant shift.

The goal posts have moved over the past few years with the importance of the nation state diminishing. The influence of multinationals and media moguls are increasingly invading our everyday lives and public spaces. This shift in focus in now echoed in activism everywhere – young people don't storm parliament, they occupy ERA or crash the Westpac website to raise awareness of an issue.

Right now is the perfect time to launch a global party. Global networks of young people and activists are solidifying and being regularly reflected in campaign strategies.

Wild Young Greens with Bob Brown in old parliament house, Canberra

Australian Greens
Green Party News

The Greens looking forward to 2001

BY GREENS NATIONAL CONVENOR, STEPHENIE CAHALAN

The last few months have seen some formative and exciting developments for the Australian Greens. The success of the Asia-Pacific workshop (see pages 22 & 23) in Brisbane has energised and inspired all who participated and has laid the foundations for a global network of Greens that promises to flourish as we approach the Global Greens 2001 Conference *(GG2001)* and beyond.

Not only was the Asia-Pacific Workshop an excellent way to connect with other Green parties and Green political movements in our region, it was an invaluable 'dry run' for *GG2001* in terms of logistics.

Next year's conference will be about six times bigger in terms of numbers and languages, so the challenge is a big one. The committed efforts of the Queensland Greens were vital to the success of the Asia-Pacific Conference as will the energy of the ACT and other states for *GG2001*. So we are sending out a big invitation to all Australian Greens to get involved and help make the gathering in Canberra next Easter happen.

A new office

The April national meeting agreed that the Australian Greens would support the establishment of a national office. It will be initially shared by the ACT Greens, Australian Greens and Global Greens, then turned over to the ACT and Federal elections next year... and we're open to applications from the Martian and Jovian Greens too.

Working in the new office will be Margaret Blakers, taking one year's leave from her job at Bob Brown's senate office. We are so excited to have Margaret convene the conference, and after the seamless running of the Asia-Pacific workshop, the *GG2001* is sure to go like a well-oiled machine with her at the helm.

Party Nuts and Bolts

Communication

The Australian Greens' 1800 phone number will now be answered at the new Canberra office. For the past year that, and most email inquiries, have been answered by Robyn Evans from the Victorian Greens. Robyn will continue to act as the administrator for the emails which we are really grateful for, as it is a really big task.

GST exasperation

Following many hours of pondering, perplexion and exasperation wading through the GST mire, the Greens finances are well on the way to being prepared for July 1. Thank you to all state treasurers and the Australian Greens treasurer, Greg Buckman, for their help in getting through this minefield. The Australian Greens and state Green parties are organising to be registered with the taxation office with ABNs in various ways.

The GST is going to catch many charity groups and non-government organisations on the hop and will further stretch the resources of so many important NGO's who rely on voluntary labour. The Greens are grateful to have Greg taking care of this thorny issue, but it highlights the need to have watertight financial administration in the future.

Elections

The federal government is steadily moving into election mode and so too are the Greens. A Preferences Working Group was established at the April national meeting and Drew Hutton (Qld Greens) will be acting as the key preferences coordinator. Preference trading is

Be active! Come to the national conference. Contribute to policy. Think of standing as a Greens' candidate. Join in the fray.

a critical, if contentious, part of every election, made more difficult for the Greens – given that our choice is often not which parties we prefer, but which parties offend us least with their environmental and social policies! Drew will be relying on communication from local and state parties about their local political environment to help the Greens make the right choices in allocating preferences.

Candidates

Now is the time to be identifying and nominating candidates for the Senate and House of Representatives. Anyone who is interested in nomination for candidature should contact the convenor of their state group.

It seems that the Greens across Australia are constantly embroiled in electioneering with an endless run of bi-elections in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Victoria and upper house elections in Tasmania. Greens at a local government level are going from strength to strength with Joy O'Brien's success in South Australia (see state round ups, next pages, for more).

National Conference

Australian Greens

August 25 - 27

Adelaide

All Greens welcome to attend.

Phone Jane Barton (08) 8449 5180(h)
or Deb Cashel (08) 8353 1524(h).

These meetings are a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow Greens from all over the country and to trade ideas and experiences on campaigns and policies. Our strength lies in our networks. A great illustration of this is the coordinated campaign that is growing between West Australia, South Australian and NSW Greens on the issue of nuclear waste dumps and reactors.

Party Policy Platform

The policy group continues to revise and update policy. We rely on the input of states and individuals with expertise in relevant fields to contribute to the policy devising process by contacting Gosta Lynga at <gosta@interact.net.au>.

Being seen

Wherever a major environmental or social issue has been debated over the past months, the Greens have been there (and usually right from the early days of the issue!)

Just some of the places you would have seen the Green triangle popping up are:

- Mandatory sentencing rallies in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart, Darwin, Perth
- Forest and RFA rallies in Hobart, Burnie, Launceston, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra
- Reconciliation marches in Brisbane and Sydney
- GE-Free protest in Hobart
- Environment Day Rally in Adelaide
- Olympic protests at Bondi beach

The Greens don't wait for an issue to become newsworthy to lend their support, the Greens help the issue make the news.

Keep up the amazing work everyone!!

Stephenie

Join The Greens!

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

You can become a member by either:

- mailing this coupon to your local state/territory party (addresses on page 18) or
- by joining 'on-line' through the Greens website:

<http://www.greens.org.au> (go to your state or territory).

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

Please send me a Green Party membership application form.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

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

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

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

Green Party Highlights Worldwide

GREENS TRIUMPH IN LONDON

Elections for the Greater London Council (GLC) in April were an unmitigated disaster for pragmatic Labor Leader Tony Blair and a great boost for the British Greens, who got three of their members elected.

The left-leaning GLC was disbanded by Maggie Thatcher during her reign as PM and its full restoration was a key part of Blair's election plank.

All well and good, but Mr Blair did not count on his Mayoral candidate, the popular Ken Livingstone, ditching the Labour party and standing as an independent instead. To stick it up Blair's nose even further, Livingstone then advocated a vote for the Greens! (He had become miffed, amongst other things, about the Blair government's attempts to privatise the famous London Underground.)

Ken Livingstone, the non-Labour mayor of London

Livingstone now enjoys the mayoralty, his progressive agenda supported by elected Greens. Labour and the Conservatives hold nine assembly seats each, so the Greens have an important role in preventing the big two from using wrecking tactics to paralyse a Livingstone administration.

Incidentally, Labor lost 573 council seats throughout Britain and lost control of 15 councils.

NUKES TO CLOSE IN GERMANY, BUT...

The German Greens continue their tumultuous history. Party leaders were stung in March when the Grande Dame of the party, 75 year-old Marianne Fritzen, who embodied the party's protesting spirit in her decades-long struggle against nuclear power, quit the party. Five others went with her.

The German Greens have enormous power, as part of the ruling coalition, but, unable to call all the shots in government, they are paying a heavy price for their balance-of-power status.

Riding high with nearly 15 percent in polls two years ago, the Greens' support has fallen to under half that. More recently their problems have been eased by the historic deal struck between industry and the government in June, whereby Germany is to close down all its 19 nuclear power stations within two decades. This makes Germany the first leading industrial country to renounce atomic energy.

The Greens had made closure of all nuclear power stations a central demand when they entered the coalition with the Social Democrats in 1998. But many fear that the agreement still sells them short.

In further bad news for De Grunen, polling shows that the German public strongly opposes the Green-inspired 'ecology tax' on fossil fuels which pushes petrol prices up. The party is losing voter support in this 'autobhan' society where numbers of car users continue to grow annually.

NZ GREENS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The NZ Greens, who have seven elected members and the balance-of-power, are enjoying record support. A national poll in March showed their support at 7.3%, up from the 5.2% they recorded in the November elections. Over half those polled saw the Greens as a positive influence on the country.

And in May, the NZ Greens scored their first major legislative success when their Energy Efficiency Bill was passed into law. Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons had previously introduced it in 1998, getting a hostile reception from the then government. The new Act sets up a statutory Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

The NZ Greens website is <www.greens.org.nz>

The Nader Campaign

Unsafe at any speed

Fighting gross political corruption and locked out of the presidential candidate debates, the Green's candidate, Ralph Nader, is running his best race ever.

Polling shows Nader has the highest nett credibility rating of all presidential candidates. He is running a grass roots campaign, visiting all states with hard hitting campaign speeches, hitting out against corruption and corporate power.

With Gore and Bush nearly tied in the polls, there is growing concern in the Gore camp that Nader will take Gore's votes and cause a major upset for the Democrats. Nader is unmoved, saying *"the distinction between the Republican and Democratic Parties is becoming increasingly blurred. The two have merged into one corporate party with two heads wearing different makeup"*. (Remind you of two parties we know about?)

Gore's campaign has also been undermined by the decision of some environmental organisations like the Native Forest Council (NFC), to back Nader instead of the Democrat candidate. Says NFC's Tim Hermach *"When a Republican is president, conservationists act like savage Rottweilers. Put a Democrat in the White House and they become obsequious lap dogs, grovelling over a few meagre crumbs."*

Check out the Nader campaign at: <www.votenader.org>

Australian Greens

Reports from State Parties

Reconciliation Day in Brisbane – the people lead the way

70 000 took to the streets in Brisbane on June 4 in a show of support for the Indigenous people of this great country, a very public statement that young and old wish to be reconciled with the oldest, continuous living culture on Earth.

The experience was one of the most moving in my life. This day, and the March in Sydney, will be recalled as events that marked the coming of age for Australia, because it takes a depth of spirit and confidence to commence this journey. Take a bow Brisbane and Sydney, you have done yourselves proud. I believe that the Greens should develop a proposal to drop the Queen's Birthday public holiday and replace it with Reconciliation Day.

Health cuts continue

Last year the government posted a budget surplus of $227 million. As at June this year, we have a six week waiting list for radiotherapy cancer treatment. Which means we have 250 people whose treatment is deliberately delayed, the longest waiting list in Australia. Ironically, there was no waiting list for this treatment in the early 90s, however, Labor's Public Sector Management Commission review of Queensland Cancer Services, concluded that the no waiting list was "a sign of an inefficient service". Incidentally, the Premier, who recently had cancer treatment, did not have to wait, he can afford access to a private health provider.

Rail job cuts too

On June 5 the Premier conceded that his government would not achieve its stated goal of 5% unemployment (it's currently running at 8.1%). He blamed everything from GST to the declining Australian dollar. What he won't admit to is that his government is about to cut 600 jobs from Qld Rail, the start of a major job shedding push. All this at a time when we need to be investing in commuter rail infrastructure to relieve the pressure of our congested roads and city living spaces. By the year 2011 the population of SE Qld may will be in excess of 3 million, putting an extra 589 000 workers on the roads who will need to transport to work daily.

Sean Curley
Social Justice Spokesperson

NSW Greens busy with Reconciliation, Railways and Review of the Electoral Act

Local groups through New South Wales have been working on many issues, including overdevelopment, forests, salinity, public transport, industrial relations and campaigning for reconciliation.

Many of our members participated in the historic Corroboree march over the Harbour Bridge. It was a truly exhilarating experience with hundreds of thousands of people adding their weight to the cause of reconciliation. This symbolic action built on the work of many local groups and members who have been working in their communities to promote understanding and justice.

Railways success

Securing the Parramatta Chatswood rail link, the largest single public expansion of the rail system in NSW as been secured after The Greens won key concessions from the government. The $1.5 billion project will link Parramatta in western Sydney to Chatswood on the Northshore. The project is close to 90% underground with over 27 kilometres of new track, 5 new stations and 7 upgraded stations.

Concerns were raised about the impact of a rail bridge over a recreation area in Lane Cove National Park. The Greens developed a policy that sought compensatory land and the protection of related bushland. We secured 2.8 hectares of ecologically valuable bushland to be added to the national park with the added advantage of the compensatory land also blocking a planned urban freeway! The Greens also won a legally enforceable agreement from the University of Technology (Kurringai) to protect the extensive areas of urban bushland around the new station that is planned for the campus.

Supporting new members

Recent changes to electoral legislation require that The Greens NSW must have at least 750 registered members who must individually complete and return an electoral office form. This process has lead us to implement an improved membership system that includes a membership kit, a membership card, a members space on our web site and an improved database.

As an organisation committed to grassroots democracy we have recognised the need to provide the resources that empower and inform members. We look forward to growing in the future and supporting an active and informed membership.

Jamie Parker

Forthcoming national meetings of the Australian Greens

August 25-27 2000	National Conference, Adelaide
December 2,3 2000	National Council, Melbourne
May 19,20 2001	National Council, Canberra
September 2001	National Conference, Sydney

Tasmanian Greens' local government campaign is in full swing

Two years ago Green candidates broke the ice and won two local government seats. This year, much better organised and fielding teams across the state, we look set to win far more. Our recent showing in the upper house seat of Wellington in Hobart, where we gained 28% of the primary vote, bumping the Liberals into third place and forcing the Labor incumbent to preferences, augurs well.

In keeping with our policy of moving Green meetings out of the cities, Annual State Conference will be held at *Mountainside*, Golden Valley, on August 11 & 12. Billets will be available locally and there is accommodation aplenty 20 minutes away in Deloraine. Local friendly sawmiller Kim Booth's band should ensure that the Saturday night rocks! Enquiries to 03 6236 9334.

Forest plantations are a big issue at present as *North Ltd* and other giants scramble to buy up some of Tasmania's best farming land at prices farmers find difficult to resist. Townships are depopulated, rural jobs disappear and farmhouses etc are obliterated by the bulldozers so the big companies can pay lower rates on the 'unimproved value', thus undermining local councils' income and local infrastructure. The Greens have become a parliamentary conduit for local groups who oppose this blight on our landscape and rural lifestyles. Meanwhile *Forestry Tasmania* continues clearfelling old-growth forests for yet more plantations.

GE is a hot potato for our 'talk big, do nothing' government. A GE-free Tasmania could build on its clean green image to sell to growing anti-GE markets. Despite increasing pressure from the Greens in parliament and from the highly effective party-supported grassroots group *GE-Free Tasmania*, and despite a strong anti-GE message from its own public consultation process, the government dithers.

Other hot issues include a company proposal to run half-hourly helicopter flights from the heart of Hobart's historic port area, the environmental and economic threat of Basslink (proposed power cable across Bass Strait) and protecting the forest giants of the Styx Valley. Meanwhile a plan to land tourist helicopters into sensitive world heritage wilderness cleared the first planning hurdle when the 'experts' chose to ignore overwhelming opposition from the public consultation.

Trish Moran
State Convenor

Victorian Greens Score Well in Local & Bi Elections

The big news from Victoria was yet another case of 'so near so far', when Janet Rice missed out on being elected to Maribyrnong council by just 28 votes. While this adds to the frustration of four other teasingly close local council results, and our narrow miss in the Constitutional Convention there were more positives than usual this time.

For a start Janet scored 28% of the primary vote, topping the poll. As far as we are aware this is the first time an Australian Green has done this for a single member electorate. Even more astoundingly Janet scored 100 more primary votes than the ALP endorsed candidate in Footscray, one of the safest Labor seats in the country. She also outpolled the Liberal candidate from the last state election. Despite this she was defeated by a combination of preferences and around 100 Donkey votes, which eventually elected the ALP candidate.

Five other Green candidates ran in the March local elections which covered around half the state, some achieving impressive results in difficult areas, but none came close to winning.

In the Benalla bi-election Janet McKenzie won 2% of the vote, but her preferences were decisive in election of the ALP's candidate, who took this staunchly National seat by just over 200 votes. Benalla is not a strong area for the Greens and two relatively progressive independents scored 14% so the primary vote is better than it looks at first sight. A number of people who did not vote Green commented on Janet's strong performance.

Stephen Luntz

One great win, two near misses, in SA

We have been celebrating our first ever electoral victory!! On May 17 Joy O'Brien was elected to the Burnside Council, running on a local environment platform. Joy is the first ever Green to be elected in any South Australian election.

Of her win Joy said, *"I am committed to retaining the heritage and character of the Burnside district. Development and profit must not come at the cost of local living standards. I will also be working to bring social justice and environmental issues to prominence at a local, state and national level."*

Joy was one of seven Greens running in the party's first local government campaign. The Greens SA have contested two federal and one state election in the party's four and a half year history.

Our candidates averaged approximately 20% of the primary vote over six council districts. Two other Greens, Deb Cashel (Charles Sturt) and Michael Pritchard (Unley) narrowly missed election by just 31 and 35 primary votes respectively.

The win has boosted morale considerably as well as giving us the opportunity to hone campaigning skills.

Today Burnside council, tomorrow the world!!

Jane Barton

Campaigning inside and outside in the ACT.

In the Assembly, Green MLA Kerrie Tucker has been championing an ethical and sound approach to internet gambling – focusing on problem gambling, regulatory costs and broader social and economic impacts. She garnered support to have the issue referred to the Gambling and Racing Commission, including a moratorium until its findings are debated. Unfortunately Labor weakened Kerrie's motion through amendments but at least groundwork will be done before the government promotes another gambling opportunity.

Kerrie has also introduced a *Victims Of Crime* amendment bill to try to ensure everyone has equal entitlements (the existing scheme creates two classes of citizens).

There is strong community feeling against a proposed freeway through parkland, and the Greens have been instrumental in having the matter referred to committee – hopefully we will win this one.

It has been budget time here with the usual estimates examination of government expenditure. The budget was paraded as a shift towards developing the Territory's *Social Capital*, with identified social capital initiatives totalling a grand $3.5 million! At the same time we are witness to the government's $17 million investment in a Super V8 car race, and an impulsive $10 million in Australia's next third airline.

New national research proves that air pollution in winter is worse in Canberra than in any major capital city owing to wood heating and our inversion layer. Canberra's not a good place if you are weak in the lungs... and all those politicians have nothing to do with it.

Outside the Assembly we are campaigning on world trade and world economic issues, forests, and genetic engineering, Burma and a National Sudan Day at Parliament House. An exciting move for us is getting a new office (yet again). This one is bigger and sunnier, and has enough room to hold general meetings.

Roland Manderson

NT Education Minister deals a quirky hand?

Country Liberal Party MP, Chris Lugg, made some outrageous claims about the Stolen Generation recently. He labelled it *"a fraud. contrived by Aboriginal activists and their supporters and legal advisers"* with a main purpose being the *"obtaining of large amounts of money"*. And he drivelled on about the *"sympathies and biases"* of the 'Bringing Them Home Report'.

All the more appalling is that these words were being uttered by the Minister for Education. What must our children be learning about Australian history?

On the subject of education, let's take a peek at the NT parliament. Of the 18 CLP members, only seven have any kind of tertiary qualification, and only two of those hold Cabinet portfolios. None of these MPs has any kind of qualification in law. Indeed, not even the Chief Minister or his Deputy/Treasurer have tertiary qualifications. Denis Burke seems to think that his 'simple, average Territorian' image is a winner with Territorians, and indeed his pleas of ignorance and inexperience seem to have saved his behind on more than one occasion.

Smelling a new CLP campaign of black bashing in the air, I was pleased when the Chief Minister at least 'rebuked' Mr Lugg's opinionated speech and endorsed the government's position, recognising the reality of the Stolen Generation.

Mr Lugg's outburst became even more bizarre when he claimed they were not actually his own words, but that of a 'constituent'. The unsuspecting 'constituent' then became extremely indignant and defensive about being dragged into the public limelight. Cowboy diplomacy, NT style!

It is to our shame that agents such as Chris Lugg lay claim that the Stolen Generation issue is fraudulent and motivated by financial gain. No amount of money can give back somebody's family and childhood or their sense of identity.

Andy Gough

It's Full Steam Ahead for Looming Elections in WA

The Greens (WA) are now in full election mode, with a State Election to be held within the next 10 months (more likely in the next six). Candidates have been selected for all six Upper House Regions, including our three sitting Members. Preselections for Lower House seats are also proceeding apace, with hopes high of fielding candidates in over 40 of the 57 seats.

Greenhouse is also a big issue in WA, with Giz Watson MLC combining with Bob Brown to embarrass both the state and federal governments over CSIRO predictions on WA's weather. South West WA (where 80% of the population lives) can now expect a rise in temperature of around 2-5 degrees, and a fall in rainfall of 10-30% - as if it wasn't hot and dry enough already!

The other great bugbear of agricultural Australia, salinity, has also been in WA papers, with Chrissie Sharp MLC launching The Greens (WA) *Salinity Discussion Paper*. It is becoming increasingly clear that only drastic action across the agricultural heartland of WA will halt the steady loss of land to salt. It is also increasingly clear that the major parties have few ideas and even less will to tackle this critical issue.

Uranium is still a huge issue, with an ongoing community campaign to stop the placement of a waste dump in, or the transport of waste through, WA. GE foods continue to cause concern, with a growing awareness of the dangers, not just to health, but also economically of having GE agriculture in WA.

Forests remain very much on the agenda in WA. The pro-logging are regrouping and are now intending to field or support candidates across WA, in opposition to the newly formed *Liberals for Forests*. At the same time, the ALP has recently announced large sections of South West forests would be designated national parks should they win the next election – we shall have to wait and see if this is a core promise or not!

Stewart Jackson
Secretary

FROGG WATCH#

(# Friends of the Global Greens)

BY MARGARET BLAKERS

Moving to Canberra to focus on the *Global Greens 2001 Conference* was climatically challenging – ploughing into giant waves made the boat four hours late across Bass Strait. Then for the first time in decades Canberra enjoyed snow in May (maximum temperature of 4°C on the Sunday of the Reconciliation march). But, we've found an office in Civic, close to Kerrie Tucker's.

The Asia-Pacific workshop was an exciting prelude to *GG2001*. Everyone wants to come again. The Mongolian Greens have already contacted colleagues in Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. An email from Satoko Watanabe, a member of Japan's Rainbow and Green network says *"I am having hectic days in Japan, missing the memories in Australia. I can hardly wait until Global Greens 2001"*.

Bob Brown made a flying visit to Berlin in late May, including meetings with the Heinrich Boll Foundation. They have offices all around the world to promote the green cause and are considering a *Rio + 10* workshop in conjunction with the Global Greens conference. This would be part of the lead up to the 10th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

The *GG2001* Conference will be the centrepiece of two weeks of activities, starting with the first ever meeting of the *Global Young Greens* in Sydney on 6th April, and including a workshop on 'alliances' in Sydney, a multi-cultural experience in Melbourne, visits to the world's tallest hardwood forests in Tasmania, and seminars on nuclear waste and forests in WA.

And if there's too much talk, join in the music and dancing at Australia's national folk festival which is on in Canberra at the same time.

You can join the action!

- Fundraising – can you help raise funds so delegates can come from developing countries? (We are getting a kit ready for local groups.)
- Translation – are you fluent in a foreign language?
- Going overseas? – can you help publicise the conference amongst Greens overseas?
- Visit our new office at Level 4, Scott House, 219 London Ct. Canberra

Phone: (02) 6247 6305

Email: <conference2001@global.greens.org.au>

Website: <http://www.global.greens.org.au>

Australian Greens

CONTACT LIST

Office of Senator Bob Brown, Australian Greens contacts.

OFFICE OF SENATOR BOB BROWN

Address/contacts: GPO Box 404, Hobart, Tasmania 7001. Ph (03) 6234 1633 (Hobart office), (02) 6277 3170 (Canberra office), fax (03) 6234 1577 (Hobart office), (03) 6277 3185 (Canberra office). Email: <Senator.brown@aph.gov.au>

Website: <http://www.greens.org.au/bobbrown>

PARTY WEBSITES

Australian Greens: <http://www.greens.org.au> (has links to each state and territory party website).

Global Greens: <http://www.global.greens.org.au>

PARTY 'PHONE & EMAIL ENQUIRIES

Telephone enquiries about the Australian Greens:
Ph 1800 017 011 (toll free).

Email enquiries about the Australian Greens:
<frontdesk@greens.org.au> (national and international enquiries).

The toll-free telephone number and the email address provide information about membership of the Australian Greens and the party in general.

PARTY OFFICE AND POSTAL ADDRESS

Postal address of the Australian Greens:
GPO Box 1108, Canberra, ACT 2001.

Office address of the Australian Greens:
Level 4, Scott House, 219 London circuit, Canberra.
Ph (02) 6247 6305, fax (02) 6247 6455.

CONTACT LIST

Australian Greens

Office bearers, working groups & state/territory parties.

OFFICE BEARERS

Convenor: Stephenie Cahalan, 22 Sofala Avenue, Lane Cove, NSW 2066. Ph (02) 6277 3170 (w), (02) 9427 2916 (h), 0417 699 917 (mobile). Email: <convenor@greens.org.au>

Deputy Convenor: Catherine Moore, Charleys Forest via Braidwood, NSW 2622. Ph (02) 4842 8055 (h), 0411 288 057 (mobile). Email: <deputy_convenor@greens.org.au>

Secretary: Allison Foster, 59/12 Oliver Street, Lyneham, ACT 2602. Ph (02) 6257 8786 (h). Email: <secretary@greens.org.au>

Treasurer: Greg Buckman, 8/10 Saunders Crescent, South Hobart, Tasmania 7004. Ph (03) 6224 3541 (h/w). Email: <treasurer@greens.org.au>

WORKING GROUPS

Policy group: Gosta Lynga, 89 Warragamba Avenue, Duffy, ACT 2611. Ph (02) 6288 7009 (h) . Email: <gosta@interact.net.au>

Internet group: Chris Heppel, c/- NSW Greens: GPO Box 1220, Sydney, NSW 2001. Ph (02) 9519 0877, fax (02) 9519 2177. Email: <chris@wild.net.au>

Global Greens conference steering committee & international coordination group: Austra Maddox, 5 Albuera St, Hobart, Tasmania 7000. Ph (03) 6223 2981 (h).

Green Youth Network: Mat Hines, c/- Tasmanian Greens, GPO Box 1132, Hobart, Tasmania 7001. Ph 0409 416 832 (mobile). Email: <youth@tas.greens.org.au>

Archivist: Colin Smith, 10 Driftwood Drive, Glen Waverley, Victoria 3150. Ph (03) 9887 9227 (h), (03) 9249 1270 (w). Email: <aesthete@labyrinth.net.au>

National magazine: Chris Harries (editor), 195 Waterworks Road, Dynyrnne, Tasmania 7005. Ph (03) 6223 4653 (h). Email: <chrisharries@trump.net.au>

STATE / TERRITORY PARTIES

New South Wales

Party office location (address): 79 King Street, Newtown, NSW (GPO Box 1220, Sydney, NSW 2001). Ph (02) 9519 0877, fax (02) 9519 2177. Email: <greens@nsw.greens.org.au>

Convenor: Jamie Parker, c/- Office of Lee Rhiannon, Parliament House, Sydney, NSW 2001 . Ph 0407 869 249 (mobile), (02) 9230 2138 (w). Email: <jamie.parker@parliament.nsw.gov.au>

Victoria

Party office location (address): 1st floor, 377 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria (PO Box 12543, A'Beckett Street PO, Melbourne, Victoria 8006). Ph (03) 9602 1141, fax (03) 9602 1655. Email: <greens@vic.greens.org.au>

Convenors: Daniel Scoullar, 35 Twin Creek Road, Upper Pakenham, Victoria 3810. Ph (03) 5942 7265 (h) 040 228 265 (mobile). Email: <daniel@lostchild.com>
Gurm Sekhon, 33 Barkly Street, Fitzroy North, Victoria 3068. Ph (03) 9482 9357 (h). Email: <gsekhon@member.greens.org.au>

Queensland

Party address: PO Box 5763, West End, Queensland 4101. Ph (07) 3289 8171, fax (07) 3257 1609.

Convenor: Lenore Taylor, 11 Aroona St, Durack, Queensland 4077. Ph (07) 3372 8566 (h). Email: <bracey@one.net.au>

Australian Capital Territory

Party office location (address): Level 4, Scott House, 219 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT (GPO Box 2019, Canberra City, ACT 2601). Ph (02) 6247 6305, fax (02) 6247 6455. Email: <act@greens.org.au>

Convenor: Indra Esguerra, 8 Gould Street, Turner, ACT 2612. Ph (02) 6257 9664 (h), (02) 6262 8488 (w). Email: <indra@effect.net.au>

Tasmania

Party address: GPO Box 1132, Hobart, Tasmania 7001. Ph (03) 6236 9334. Email: <party@tas.greens.org.au>

Convenor: Trish Moran, 1/23 Randall Street, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005. Ph (03) 6223 1546 (h). Email: <convenor@tas.greens.org.au>

South Australia

Party office location (address): 1st floor, 149 Flinders St, Adelaide, South Australia (PO Box 3094, Rundle Mall, South Australia 5000). Ph (08) 8224 0468. Email: <enquiries@sa.greens.org.au>

Convenors: Jane Barton, 40 Derby Street, Semaphore, South Australia 5019. Ph (08) 8449 5180 (h). Email: <convenor@sa.greens.org.au>
Mark Moran, 38 Brown Street, Semaphore, South Australia 5019. Ph (08) 8449 1348 (h).

Northern Territory

Party address: PO Box 3818, Darwin, Northern Territory 0801. Ph (0418) 821 960.

Convenor: Andy Gough, c/- Northern Territory Greens, PO Box 3818, Darwin, Northern Territory 0801. Ph (08) 8985 4401 (h), 0418 826867 (mobile). Email: <andy@nt.greens.org.au>

Western Australia

(not formally affiliated with the Australian Greens)

Party office location (address): 4/439-441 Albany Highway, Victoria Park, Western Australia (PO Box 737, Victoria Park, Western Australia 6979). Ph (08) 9470 9227, fax (08) 9470 9537. Email: <GreensWA@argo.net.au>

Convenor: Paul Llewellyn, RMB 1016, Lapko Road, Denmark, Western Australia 6333. Ph (08) 9848 2015 (h). Email: <solar@denmark.net.au>

Government Greenwash

BY BEN OQUIST

Ben Oquist is Bob Brown's media adviser.

World Environment Day this year presented the Howard government with a curly conundrum. On the one hand it was to host a swag of international environmental dignitaries on that day in Adelaide (this year's official host city). Yet Australia's environmental credentials are in tatters, at home and abroad. All the portents were there in Adelaide for a public relations nightmare.

Indeed it would have been, save for a well known corporate technique. *Greenwash*. The art of turning the tables. Spit and polish, a good dose of spin and a goodly sum of money can do almost anything in the PR game. It's a technique well honed by corporations. Now to this, add politicians and governments. And in this art, the Howard government has been a very fast learner.

What is Greenwash?

"The phenomenon of socially and environmentally destructive corporations, attempting to preserve and expand their markets or power by posing as friends of the environment."

(As described by a US-based institute.)

The government had to come up with a Good News Story to take the focus away from its appalling record. And fast.

Enter *Ecos Corporation*. The government hands *Ecos* a cool $155,000* to coordinate a brand new initiative to coincide with W.E.D. – the 'Prime Minister's Environment Awards', to be unveiled with much fanfare in (yes, you guessed it!) Adelaide.

Never heard of before, the PM's 'awards' were unveiled via a whole page 'advertorial' in *The Australian* on April 4. Winners were to be unveiled just two months later. They can really act fast when they have to!

Despite the fact that some of the winners were worthy recipients, Blind Freddie could tell what the awards were designed to do. To divert attention from our appalling environmental record.

The World Environment Day fracas aside, the Howard government, under Hill's guidance, has been using Greenwash effectively through other ad campaigns.

Witness its Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) program. The Howard government has attempted to use NHT, set up from a small part of proceeds from the sale of Telstra, as its central environmental plank, all the while accelerating environmental destruction in the key areas of Greenhouse, logging of old growth forests, air pollution and land clearing.

The NHT has been in large part tainted and discredited by being used to fund non-environmental projects like dam repair and agro-forestry. With no independent board distributing NHT funds, it is open to accusations of political pork barrelling.

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These problems haven't stopped the government repeatedly running TV ad campaigns promoting tiny NHT projects in an attempt to win green cred.

Greenwashing Australia's environmental problems will, of course, achieve nothing, except give a competitive advantage to corporations that 'do it well' and extra votes for governments that can pull it off.

Green gloss will not help the nation make the crucial decisions we need to protect this fragile and beautiful continent in the long term. No amount of slick ads and corporate spin will hold back sea rises. The real danger is that green gloss without action will dull community initiative, prevent hard environment decisions being made and then leave each subsequent generation with an even tougher task to try to achieve sustainability.

[* Information obtained from questions asked in the Senate by Bob Brown]

The Inside Gos on Ecos

Ecos Corporation is arguably the hub of corporate Greenwash in Australia. As its website says it *"provides strategic support and advice to corporate clients and partners seeking commercial advantage through a focus on sustainability."*

Ecos' clients have included:

- the Mineral Council of Australia
- Monsanto;
- DuPont USA
- Placer Dome - owners of the controversial Porgera mine in PNG;
- Western Mining Corporation - owners of the Roxby Uranium mine in S A
- Boral Australia - NSW woodchipper.

Note: The CEO of Ecos Corporation is Ben Woodhouse. Woodhouse is from the Dow Chemicals stable – 31-years as Vice President and Global Director of Issues Management. The field of 'Issues Management' developed a large proportion of today's greenwash techniques.

GE Foods

Consumer voices are making a difference.

BY KATHY HARRIS, PORT JACKSON GREENS (NSW)

"Ignorance produces no opinion.
Knowledge produces opposition".

Patrick Holden (Director of the Soil Association UK)

Knowledge about GE foods is spreading and consumer rejection of it is having profound impacts in many countries around the world. There is much, much work to be done, but here is some good news!:

• In New Zealand, Jeanette Fitsimons (Green Party Co-Leader) coordinated the collection of 92,000 signatures on Green petitions resulting in the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into GE.

• US corn exports to the EU (European Union) have fallen from $360 million a year to near zero, while soybean exports from the US have fallen from $2.1 billion annually in 1996 to $1.1 billion in 1999. GE grain that is still being imported into Europe is primarily for livestock feed. This option is fast disappearing as supermarket chains insist on GE-free fed livestock. Meanwhile Brazilian exporters are doing a brisk business selling GE-free soybeans to European buyers and organic food is booming.

• On May 18, 2000, the Tokyo Grain Exchange soy futures market began for the first time to offer wholesale traders a choice of GE or non-GE soybeans. On the first day of trading, non-GE buyers committed to 914,000 tons, compared to only 364,000 tons for unsegregated (GE-tainted) US soybean futures. The Deutsche Bank has developed a two-tiered marketing system, with the premium going to non-GE crops.

• Japan dropped a regulatory bombshell in mid-April when the Health Ministry announced that from 2001 agricultural producers must screen imported genetically modified (GM) foods for potential food allergies and other health hazards. In addition new mandatory labelling rules on GE food ingredients coming into force next April in Japan will have a major impact on the marketplace.

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• In South Africa, Woolworths has pulled known GM foods from its shelves in response to consumer demands.

• Even in the heartland of biotech, consumer aversion to GE foods is increasing. Since July 1999, a number of major US food corporations, including baby food giants Gerber, Heinz, and Mead-Johnson (infant formula), pet food purveyor Iam's, corn chip king Frito-Lay, and several sizable supermarket chains, Whole Foods, Wild Oats, and Genuardi's, have announced plans to go GE free.

• Agri giant Monsanto announced in early May that it is closing down its NatureMark plant in Crystal, Maine, a transgenetic laboratory that had been producing Bt potatoes since 1992. (Bt potatoes are gene-spliced with the soil bacteria, Bacillus thuringiensis, to repel the Colorado potato beetle.) Earlier this year, Monsanto laid off 20 of the 30 employees in their other Bt potato lab in Idaho. Bt potatoes thus join the growing obituary list of Monsanto's GE foods. America's and Canada's leading potato buyers, including McDonald's, McCain's, Burger King, Frito-Lay, and Procter & Gamble, are eliminating Bt potatoes from their brand-name french fries and potato chips. *"We have to respect the preferences of our customers, and both the domestic and global restaurant chains which we serve have asked us to exclude these potatoes,"* said a spokesman for one of McDonald's largest suppliers.

• Anti-GE shareholder activism in the US has increased considerably in the past six months. According to the New York Times: *"Twenty-one resolutions calling for restraints on the use of GE ingredients are on the annual meeting agendas at some of America's leading food and seed manufacturers this year, up from zero a year ago."* As activists point out, once a company faces opposition from 10-15% of its shareholders on an unpopular position such as using GE ingredients in its products, it will usually change its company policy.

This is not the time to consume GE foods!

Become part of the consumer voice.

Don't

- **Don't** buy foods labelled *"Made in Australia"* as they contain imported ingredients which may be GE
- **Don't** buy unlabelled processed foods from the USA
- **Don't** buy processed foods (unless labelled GE/GM free) that contain soy, corn/maize, canola, cottonseed, potatoes, sugarbeet, fructose, glucose, dextrin, dextrose, margarine, hydrolized vegetable protein, emulsifiers (322, 433, 435, 471, 481), maltodextrin, caramel, shortening, thickener, starch, vegetable fat, vegetable fibre, vegetable oil, vegetable gum (415), colour (150, 160a and b), food acid (270), whitener, antioxidants (304, 306, 396), flavour enhancer (621), xanthan gum, annatto, glucono-delta-lactone, glycerine, lactic acid, lecithin (E322), lycopene, mannitol, MSG, beta-carotene, Vitamin C, Vitamin E (tocopherols).

Do

- **Do** buy products labelled organic, biodynamic(BD), GM or GE free, and *'Produce of Australia'*.
- **Do** speak to the management of your supermarket, ask them to source GE-free products. Also, letter-writing campaigns are enormously successful. Never feel powerless! It only takes one supermarket to change and the others will follow.
- **Do** write to your agriculture minister, the premier and other state and federal ministers, voicing your concerns. As this goes to print federal parliament is due to vote on the Gene Tech Bill and labelling (hopefully!) in July.
- **Do** call and write to the companies whose products you consume, request that they guarantee you in writing that their products are GE-free – otherwise you & your family will not buy that brand.
- **Do** speak to everyone you can about the problems – friends, neighbours, etc. Less than 15% of consumers are aware that the majority of supermarket foods already contain GE ingredients.
- **Do** keep informed. There are many good websites, eg
  <www.purefood.org>
  <www.bio-integrity.org>
  <www.ozemail.com.au/~confoodnet>
- **Do** buy a GE-free food guide from:
  Gene-Ethics Network, 123 Keen St, Lismore 2480 or <genethics@start.com.au> or view the website: <www.nor.com.au/environment/genethic>.

Want more information on actions you can take?
Contact the author at:
<kathymharris@hotmail.com> or write PO Box 418 Haberfield NSW 2045.

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The Asia-Pacific Green Politics Workshop

BY GREG BUCKMAN
CO-EDITOR OF *GREEN*

Some came from rich countries. Some from poverty stricken ones. Some from democracies. Some from cultures where political corruption is daily fare. Amongst them they spoke more than 16 languages. A hugely rich and varied tapestry, they came mostly as strangers, wondering who they were to meet and how they would get on. Whether they would be understood.

These were the 40 rag tag representatives of 12 different Green movements who flew into Brisbane in April for the first ever gathering of Asia-Pacific Greens. And they got on like a house on fire. There is an indomitable Green spirit spreading right around the globe which defies, even revels in, political variety, languages and human culture. Wherever they come from, Greens are stamped as kinfolk, bonded by a celebration of global diversity and by their common struggle to act and think locally and globally in the planet's defence.

Delegates at the Asia-Pacific Green Politics Workshop

Building federations

In an increasingly interconnected world, dialogue between different national Green parties has become essential and regional federations of Green parties have been set up in recent years to oil the wheels of communication in Africa, Europe and the Americas... but none in our part of the world. The Brisbane meeting (made possible through generous sponsorship from the Swedish Green Forum and the German Heinrich Boll Foundation) changed all that.

Greens came to Brisbane from New Caledonia, New Zealand, The Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mongolia, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Nepal, East Timor and Australia. Elections are a relatively new phenomenon in some of their home countries. Suspicion of 'money politics' and gender discrimination are major barriers to political involvement in some, while in others voter apathy is a major hurdle.

A sharing of their enormously different experiences and backgrounds made up much of the workshop. Despite these differences, several common threads emerged from the various reports. In particular:

- Greens are more successful at recruiting women than are other parties,
- coalitions in government can be dangerous, and
- even though Green parties are keen to establish credentials in social justice and economic policy areas, they still need to keep the environment a top priority.

Common issues were also explored through workshops held on Asian/indigenous cultural values, global warming and the organisation and funding of Green parties and movements.

A defining difference was the presence or absence of formal Green parties in the various countries represented. Mongolia, Taiwan, Nepal, New Caledonia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia have formal Green parties. Japan, South Korea, East Timor, The Philippines and Thailand have Green 'movements' but, as yet, no formal parties. This made the immediate establishment of an Asia-Pacific federation problematic but the workshop did agree to immediately establish an Asia-Pacific Greens Network with a view to establishing a federation of Green parties (with Green movements as associate members) at next year's Global Greens Conference *(see page 17)*.

The workshop also endorsed resolutions calling for the establishment of a transaction tax (the Tobin tax) on all international money exchanges and the immediate World Heritage listing of the coral reefs of New Caledonia.

By any measure the Brisbane Workshop was a huge success. It generated a great amount of energy and enthusiasm that seems certain to have a lasting effect. Only the Greens, who celebrate diversity rather than running away from (it as so many other parties do) could make a bounding success out of such a diverse gathering.

The Asia-Pacific Green Politics Workshop

Green Politics in New Caledonia

Representing Les Verts Pacifique (from left): Rick Anex, Bruno and Junko Van Peteghem and Jacques Hermoud

Junko and Bruno Van Peteghem, Jacques Hermoud and Rick Anex are from the New Caledonian Greens, *Les Verts Pacifique*. Although New Caledonia enjoys a reasonably high standard of living, thanks to French management of the country it retains a strong 'frontier' philosophy with all-powerful mining, agriculture and fishing interests dictating much of the economic direction of the country. Not surprisingly, most locals are reluctant to criticise the resource industries on which their jobs depend and media coverage of issues that aren't in the best interests of the dominant resource industries can be difficult to find.

It's not all doom and gloom on the Green/environment front in New Caledonia though. Daunting political hurdles have not stopped the emergence of a network of grass roots environment organisations in the country, enhanced by the creation of *Les Verts Pacifique* two years ago.

But the going can be very tough for anyone who dares question the dominant development philosophy. A few years ago Bruno and Junko successfully challenged in French courts the development of a new hotel in a unique part of the country only to see their house burnt down in retaliation. Twice!

A campaign tool increasingly being used to help re-direct the country's development is to attract outside interest in issues there, as is currently happening with a mounting international campaign for World Heritage listing of New Caledonia's unique coral reefs.

In tandem with tackling environment issues *Les Verts Pacifique* is now concentrating on local government elections to be held next year. Hopefully the party will become an inspiration for more Green parties to take root throughout the Melanesian and Polynesian Pacific.

Green Politics in Japan

Satoko Watanabe, who represented the Rainbow and Green Japan Network

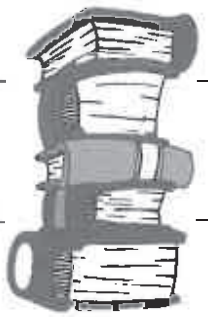
Satoko Watanabe, an elected local government representative from Japan, exudes a quiet strength. Although Japan has similar material trappings to Australia its politics could not be more different. Japanese men dominate politics in a big way and it's still very tough for women to get elected there. Satoko is typically the only women in her prefecture of 45 members.

On top of that, major parties in Japan have enjoyed a long-standing stranglehold on national politics, which often turns ugly through the influence of 'money politics'. Major corporations frequently buy off politicians and you need a treasure trove of money to run in national elections in Japan, as in the United States. The net effect of these influences is a deep cynicism about politics by voters – many citizens don't bother to vote and are reluctant to get involved in political issues.

There is no Green party in Japan at present but Satoko is part of *The Rainbow and Green Japan Network* formed two years ago. This is a network of citizens and elected members (of councils and prefectures) who want to push Green political ideas. Local government is becoming increasingly powerful, so the network reaches out to a dynamic part of the nation's politics.

In Satoko's prefecture, industrial waste has been a long-standing issue. After the second world war Japan placed a lot of blind faith in industrial development, resulting in extensive dumping of industrial waste. In Satoko's prefecture half a million tonnes of industrial waste was dumped on a previously pristine island during the 1970s, at taxpayer's expense. Her prefecture now wants to rewrite history by cleaning up the island and making sure that waste is dealt with sustainably in future.

Although sober about the hurdles in the way of Green politics in her country, Satoko is confident it will increasingly take root, hopefully leading to the creation of a Japanese Green Party.



BOOK REVIEW

BY GREG BUCKMAN
CO-EDITOR OF *GREEN*

A History of the Australian Environment Movement (2nd Edition)
Drew Hutton, Libby Connors
Cambridge University Press
1999
$29.95 324pp

Considering the many landmark battles the Australian environment movement has been involved in, its deciding influence in several state and federal elections and its combined membership of more than a third of a million, it is surprising that no biography of the movement has been published before now. However, when one considers how large and complex the movement is and that, in the eyes of many, environmentalism has probably only recently been ranked as 'proper history' it is perhaps understandable that no-one has hitherto taken on the task.

Drew Hutton and Libby Connors bravely took to the challenge with considerable inside knowledge (both are members of the Queensland Greens which Drew has been a coordinator of), about 50 interviews with key players and what appears to be a dauntingly comprehensive literature search. The book has notched up healthy sales and is currently being reprinted for a second edition.

The book mainly focuses on 20th century environmentalism in Australia, with a refreshingly broad interpretation, taking in nuclear and urban issues along with the more familiar pollution and wilderness ones. Its main thesis is that for much of the last century campaigning in Australia was largely carried on by recreational and quasi-scientific organisations such as bushwalking, ornithological and field naturalist groups who politely and very discreetly lobbied relevant powers. All that changed, however, with the campaigns to save the Great Barrier Reef (from oil drilling), Colong Caves (in the Blue Mountains, from limestone mining) and Lake Pedder in the late 1960s as well as the Green Bans of the early 1970s. Suddenly environment campaigning was all about winning the hearts and minds of the media and suburban voters, often involving confrontational protest. Around this harder edge large environmental organisations and lobby groups eventually formed.

Especially given the challenge they set themselves Hutton and Connors have written a comprehensive history that deserves the popularity it has enjoyed. It does have some weaknesses, however, perhaps accentuated by the enormous pool of history it was trying to summarise. At times the text becomes a bit too academic (*"instrumentalist logic"*, *"normative dimension"* etc), occasionally it makes some over-generous generalisations (*"the goal of environmentalists – to incorporate environment protection into the very fabric of Australian political culture – was within reach by 1990"*) and it doesn't give much consideration to where the movement is heading – conjecture that the authors are well equipped to handle. Are we, for instance, likely to see more Franklin River campaigns? Or has protest, in general, and environmentalism, in particular, become so institutionalised and familiar that campaigns of that size are destined to be the exception?

Drew Hutton

These are minor glitches though in a great book that every member of the Greens should read. Another book in the same vein, *Battle for the Bush*, is currently being penned by ex Australian Conservation Foundation director, Geoff Mosely, and promises to be an interesting complement to Hutton and Connor's opus.

Award for Kids Books

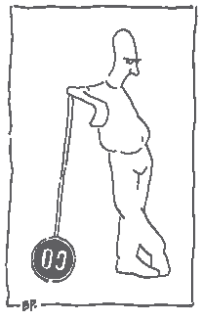
"Humans Please be kind to all Bush Creatures and don't pull flowers up by the roots."

1st page of the Australian classic 'Snugglepot and Cuddlepie' (1916)

White occupation of Australia has been marked by a history of beating the land into submission. Yet, ironically, conservation values have been an inherent part of Australian children's literature ever since the first Australian Childrens' book was published in 1841.

To help sustain this tradition, The Wilderness Society established the Environment Award for Children's Literature in 1993 and the 2000 award has been awarded to Narelle Oliver for *'Sand Swimmers: The Secret Life of Australia's Dead Heart'* and Jill Morris and Sharon Dye for *'Mahogany the Mystery Glider'*.

For a list of these and other great green books for kids, check out this website: <www.wilderness.org.au/bookaward>



Do you remember when...?

BY MAX BAHRFELDT

I am just old enough to remember the days when the milkman came door-to-door with a cart full of large milk cans. With a big scoop he would put the milk in a pan my mother kept for the purpose.

The milk came from small local diary farmers and had been processed in the local factory. There were no milk cartons, not even milk bottles. And milk did not have a brand name. Milk was simply milk.

Today we find two brands of milk in our store. That seems fine if you don't look below the surface. More competition, lower prices. You have heard it all before. But when you then see trucks of both brands on our main highway passing each other – one going North and one going South – some of us may begin to realise that today's economic system encourages an unbelievable waste of energy.

But wait, things will get worse!

Federal governments of both persuasions have endorsed what is known as the National Competition Policy. As part of this policy soon one of the last vestiges of 'the old way of thinking, the national dairy industry, will be transformed by Dairy Deregulation.

The plan will see thousands of small dairy farmers across Australia rationalised out of the industry. It will allow milk companies to sell their milk anywhere they like and may gradually lead to two or three multinational dairy companies distributing all milk around Australia from Victoria and New South Wales.

Who are the people in favour of this? Surprisingly, many small farmers because they will receive a lot of money to leave the industry. The bigger farmers want it too because they will sell more milk.

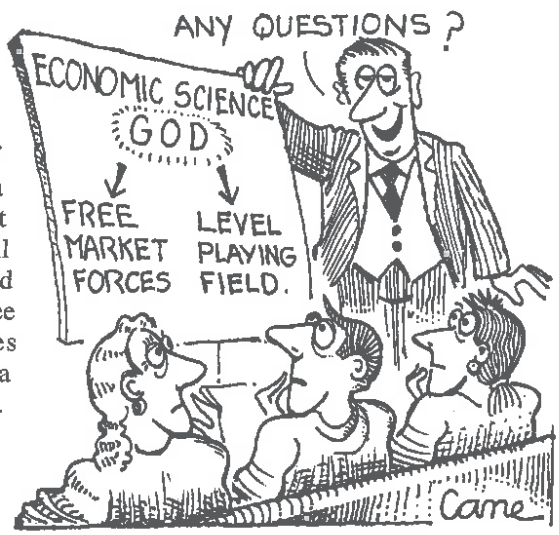
You may say: *"But won't more efficient production lead to lower prices"*. Think again. Who will pay for the compensation packages the farmers will receive ? Some experts predict an eleven cents increase in the price of a litre of milk!

Only a few politicians are concerned about what will happen with rural communities once the money has been spent.

Only Green politicians seem to be concerned that sustainable development and efficient use of energy do not count in current economic thinking.

What can you do? Well, aside from voting Green, think Green with your purchasing dollar. Choose your brand of purer better milk – from a local factory not owned by one of the multinational companies. You will feel good about it.

And you may even taste the difference!



Two Woodchipping Poems

(i)

Why can't we leave what's left of the
forest as it is, with the
Old trees
Only doing what they've always done -
Doing it for themselves, and for all who
depend on them for life?
Chainsaws mean death to so much
that
Humans don't yet value, because
In our quest for wealth, we are
Prisoners of our own greed,
Persecuting ourselves by forgetting
that we are not
Independent of
Nature but inextricably tied,
Growing with the forest that gives us
nourishment.

(ii)

When we have chopped and chipped
the last of the
Old trees, and turned them into
disposable
Objects to be used once and then
Discarded, we can take the empty
space that for so long was home to the
plants and
Creatures who depended on the
diversity of the forest for their survival
and
Heap it up with
Infinite
Piles of rubbish, the
Produce of our
Increasing
Negligence and
Greed

by Catherine Moore

Greens and Community Representation.

BY PAUL THOMAS
PAUL IS GREEN COUNCILLOR FOR HUON VALLEY COUNCIL, SOUTHERN TASMANIA

I never dreamt of political office in any shape or form. I thought that only community leaders ran for elected positions and I certainly wasn't one of them.

My metamorphosis occurred four years ago, following the amalgamation of three Councils, Cygnet, Huon and Esperance – giving rise to a full nine-seat council election.

In 1996 no councillor was representing or taking an appropriate position on issues of concern to Green voters, so State Green MP, Mike Foley, suggested a prominent local Green person should try for election. I helped him search, but we couldn't find anyone fitting that description. I filled the vacuum. I didn't have the ideal credentials... but I was Green.

First success

In 1996, 14 candidates stood for the council's nine seats. I was the eighth elected, winning just 6% of the primary vote. (I was not then officially endorsed as a Green.)

Then in 1998 the Tasmanian Greens adopted a policy to formally endorse candidates for local government elections – a bold step because, while local government is riddled with conservative members neither the Labor nor Liberal parties officially endorse candidates.

Second success

I was up for re-election in March 1999 following a further attempt at amalgamation of local councils by the then Liberal government.

This time I stood as part of the Green Community ticket. Only four positions were to be filled. We attracted 25% of the primary vote! It was enough to see me elected for a four-year term (instead of two). Deidre Wilson in Clarence Council (Hobart's Eastern Shore) and I thus became the first councillors in Tasmania to be officially labelled 'Green'.

The value of local representation.

Having a Green on council has been valuable for the local community. Whilst sometimes isolating and challenging for me, it has added an alternative Green voice to debates. Local government is supposed to be consultative and representative of all, but far too often it is driven by the business end of town.

By consulting with my community, council officers and fellow councillors, I have had reasonable success on council. I have certainly brought issues to the table for discussion that would otherwise have been ignored, shunned and denied access. For example, my council would not have moved to keep ships carrying nuclear waste cargo away from our coastline nor would it have been forced to take an anti GE food/ crops position.

My vote was also crucial to supporting a change to the popular election of Mayor (previously appointed) and Deputy Mayor. Now the state government is on track to legislate for the popular elections of council mayoral positions throughout Tasmania.

Being in there means Greens have a say on all issues that impact on the local community – including issues about local jobs, amenities for young people, community services for everybody, streetscape and transport. A Green taking a role in these 'people' issues helps to develop a new political culture where local communities expect councils to be responsive to them.

Our local group publishes our own local newsletter (circulation of 400) and this has been very successful in giving my local community information about issues going on 'behind the scenes'. It will be a valuable tool in helping to get more Greens on to Council when the next round of elections is held in October this year.

I reckon having another Green or two in the chamber will make our council meetings much more enjoyable.

Paul Thomas's contacts are:
82 Randall's Bay Cygnet Tas 7112
Ph: (03) 6297 8135 Fax (03) 6225 2627
Email: <thomopaul@hotmail.com>

Building Community Involvement in WA

BY GIZ WATSON
GIZ IS ONE OF THREE GREEN MPS ELECTED TO THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

My foray into politics began officially in 1996 when I was elected to the WA Upper House – elected by proportional representation. However my political career probably started at school where I opposed what I felt were injustices in classroom or playground.

Coming from a family background where expression of social and environmental viewpoints, even as children, was encouraged, the path I followed has inevitably been one of political activism. This included protesting at the anti-Vietnam war rallies in the 1970s and being at the forefront of opposing clear felling of the jarrah forest for bauxite mining.

In the early 1980s I trained nonviolent direct action groups in the UK for peace camps, including the now famous Greenham Common, and I was a campaigner for community housing in North London.

I was born in the UK in 1957 and migrated to Western Australia with my family ten years later. In 1981 I graduated from Murdoch University with a Bachelor of Environmental Science.

In 1992, following a career change to carpentry and the building trade, I was one of only three women registered builders in Western Australia. However, I returned to full-time conservation work as WA coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Community Network in 1992 and fought for the conservation and promotion of WA coasts and oceans.

As a representative of the North Metropolitan Region in the Legislative

Council, my constituents number over 350,000 and it is my aim to improve involvement by this community and to use their knowledge and concerns to influence my decisions and to guide policies. My task is to provide a conduit between the constituents and the parliamentary process.

Over the past three years I have been involved in a broad range of interests and responsibilities, and have played an active part in determining the outcome of a number of issues before the parliament and in committee hearings. Some of the issues are:

Ports: I successfully moved an amendment to the new Port Authorities Act to require port authorities to produce Environmental Management Plans for each port.

Abortion: I played a vigorous part in the historic liberalisation of WA's abortion laws.

Bushplan: Most recently I moved an urgency motion in the Legislative Council to have remnant bushland in the metropolitan area protected immediately by rezoning of all areas identified as Bushplan sites.

Nuclear Waste Dumping: In close cooperation with community and anti-nuclear activists we forced the Government to accept legislation prohibiting the dumping of International nuclear waste in Western Australia.

Domestic Violence: I'm part of a multi-parts committee working to make domestic violence laws stronger and more effective.

New Bills: I will introduce two new Bills in the next couple of months. The first to prohibit uranium mining and the construction of nuclear facilities. The second is to encourage responsible cat ownership and reduce the impact of cats on the natural environment.

I am also a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation that reports on numerous pieces of legislation including the sentencing matrix, rights in water and irrigation, child welfare, forensic evidence and many other Bills before the Council.

Giz Watson's contacts are:
Giz Watson MLC
339 Oxford St
LEEDERVILLE WA 6007
Ph: (08) 9201 0582
Fax: (08) 9201 0583
Email: <gwatson@mp.wa.gov.au>

Bob's Back Page

Minotaur Hill

Woops! A charming and erudite host of the pre-World Environment Day bash in Adelaide on June 4 was Don Burke of *Burke's Backyard*. In inviting environment minister Robert Hill to the podium he had a slip of the tongue: *"Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome the federal minotaur, er, minister, Robert Hill"*.

The Minotaur, was the Cretan monster with a bull's head which was fed human flesh. Robert Hill dines out on environmental blancmange instead. Neither he nor Prime Minister Howard lived up to the day by making any announcement about protecting the environment. Mr Howard has achieved one vital goal however - his government, he said, had set out *"to build concern for the environment"*!

Firebombing Forests

In Berlin for a world congress on Tibet in May, I caught up with the German Minister for the Environment, the Greens' Jurgen Trittin. Minister Trittin and his staff were astonished at a photo portfolio, provided to me by the Wilderness Society's Geoff Law, showing the firebombing of Tasmania's wild forests.

Germany, a world leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is troubled by the Australian government's efforts to allow polluters to avoid controls provided they invest in carbon sinks (plantations). What the Germans had not known was that the Howard government has authorised the woodchipping and burning of the biggest carbon banks in the Southern Hemisphere, our tall eucalypt forests and rainforests, to make way for plantations.

Christine Milne will be at the next world conference on global warming, in The Hague in November, keeping up the flow of information. For his part, Robert Hill will be facing a 'please explain' for his government's firebombing exploits.

Election tensions bound to rise

While opinion polls produce snowflakes in the hell of politics, the Bulletin's Morgan Poll shows a solid lift in the Greens' nationwide support to 4 percent. The Democrats are down to 5.5 percent and One Nation to 4.5 percent. On a two-party preferred basis, Labor is on 57.5 percent and leads the Coalition on 42.5.

The figures do more than point to John Howard's downfall as Liberal leader before polling day in the second half of next year. They show that the Greens' preferences are vital. Labor knows it and promises me that it will take a 'whole of government' approach to the environment, then adds 'except for the forests'. It badly wants the Greens preferences and under estimates how much we, amongst other things, want an end to old-growth woodchipping. I tip tensions will rise.

Meanwhile, the government has all but given up on its Senate-blocked Regional Forest Agreement Bill. It seems content with the loggers having got half the legislation via the Democrats-sponsored Environment Protection Act.

Artists win

When desperate artists appealed to us for help against government legislation which aimed to take away tax-deductibility for their rent and equipment, we responded with appropriate amendments which the Democrats and Labor have backed. An average artist's income is $10,800. The government's miserly aim was to stop artists (who often supplement their income by driving taxis or waiting on tables) from deducting costs unless their income from art topped $20,000. This would have been enough to knock out many a budding Van Gogh or Miles Franklin. Our office has received a bunch of lovely letters thanking us for helping them out.

Mandatory Sentencing

The Government has copped out of its responsibility to end mandatory sentencing in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. But the campaign has got Labor on side. We must expect a Beazley government will legislate to override these racist laws. Just as reconciliation is not reconciliation without a treaty, so justice is not justice with laws which breach basic international treaties. The Greens will continue to set the standard for giving Australia's First Peoples their just recognition, rights and rewards.

Bradford calls in

The effervescent Sue Bradford, the New Zealand Greens MP who for years has been a prominent campaigner for social justice, in particular for unemployed people, called to see us in the Senate when visiting Canberra last week. She also came along to the demonstration for human rights in the Sudan, which our ACT MP Kerrie Tucker helped organise outside Parliament House. Sue says that the Kiwi government, with Greens support, is about to drop the *'work for the dole'* scheme which is, it seems, a trans-Tasman failure. Her six fellow MPs are also going very well.

A final word from William Blake

> *"The tree which moves some*
> *to tears of joy*
> *is in the eyes of others*
> *only a green thing*
> *that stands in the way."*
>
> 23 August 1799

Sunny Days,

STOP PRESS

Digital Debacle !

BY BEN OQUIST

The government's new digital TV bill (one the most important, in terms of shaping public life and entrenching the major corporate interests) passed in the final session of the Senate with only the Greens arguing for the open approach – more operators, more options for viewers, less control by the existing 7, 9, 10 owners.

The ALP and Democrats largely let the government get its way – new entrants to digital TV, through datacasting, will be severely restricted in what they can broadcast. This suits the existing TV barons.

At the 11th hour the government invited the ALP for a cosy lunchtime chat. The result: an instant ALP backflip, meaning that the ABC and SBS will be banned from showing sport and drama on their multi-channels. Senator Brown told parliament that Kerry Packer could not have written the amendment better.

Shareholder Democracy

But the ALP and Democrats did back a Greens motion disallowing Mr Howard's attempt to skittle the rule which allows 100 shareholders the right to demand a general meeting to question their corporate board. A small win for democracy in the marketplace!

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BIG GREENS WIN IN MEXICO!

Dear Green Friends.

Greetings from Mexico.

We are very happy to announce the victory of the *Alliance for Change* in Mexico. The two party alliance (*Green Ecologist Party of Mexico* and *National Actiona Party*) defeated the official party that had been ruling for more than 70 years.

With this historic victory the Green force advances in Mexico and in the world.

Mexico's new president Vicente Fox won with 45% of the votes, whilst the alliance got almost half the legislators in the upper and lower chambers.

This will give to the Mexican Greens at least 23 MPs (6 senators and 17 deputies) and we will probably negotiate positions in the executive government.

We want to share this victory with all those who supported the alliance and the Mexican people. We will keep on working with more strength in favour of mother Earth. Green Victory.

Green Ecologist Party of Mexico
Mexico City

[The Mexican Greens now have a difficult task ahead of them in an awful political environment. We extend them our best wishes. Ed]

Australian Greens

Cover Design by Peter Whyte
PH: 03 02 31 0440

Cover Photograph by Jon Frank