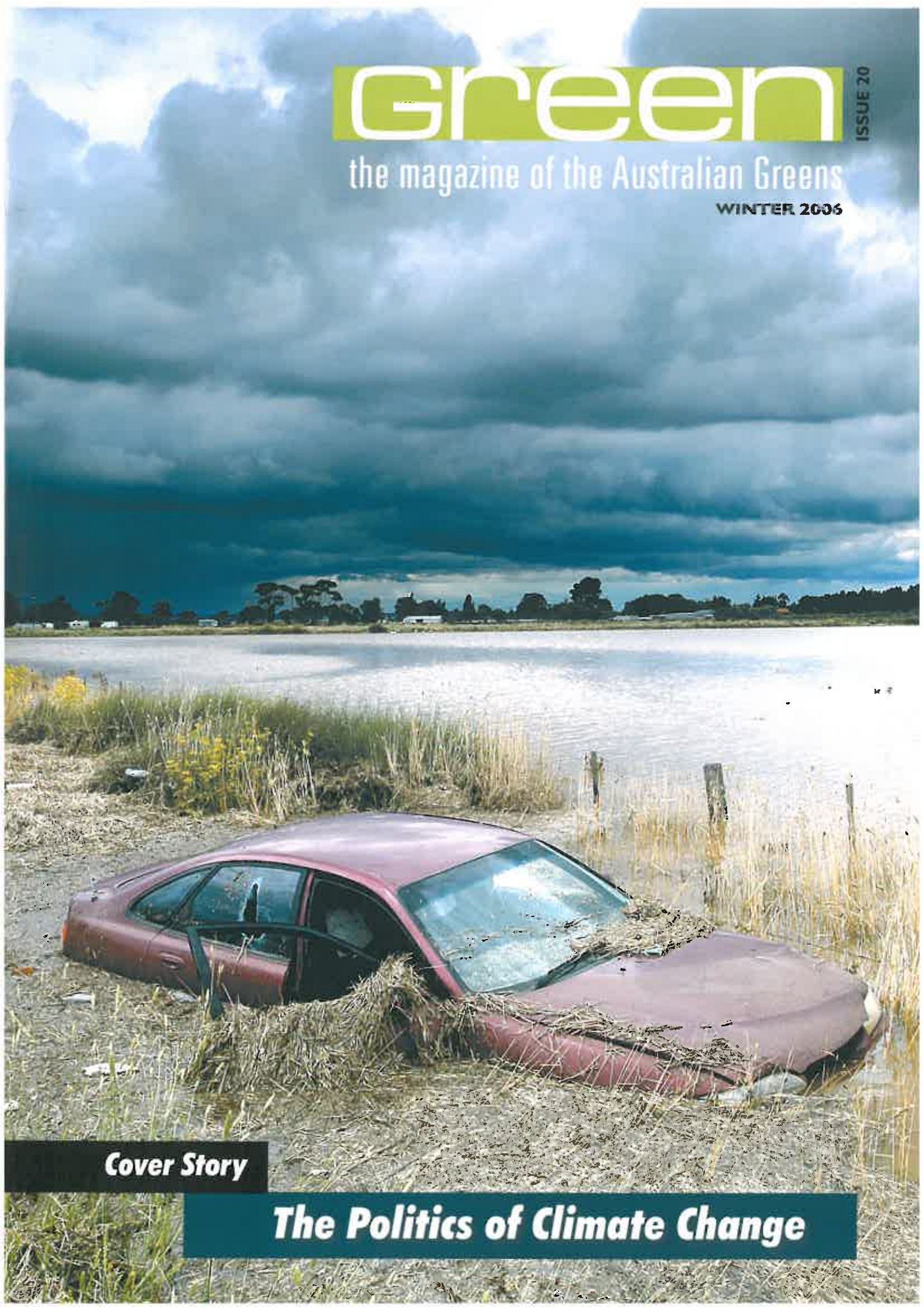


Green

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WINTER 2006



Cover Story

The Politics of Climate Change



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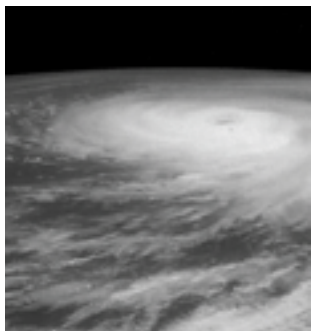
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Please provide a graphic if possible. Send article in body of email or as an 'rtf' file to Co-editors at greenmag@greens.org.au

Deadline for copy for Issue 21 'Energy' – 16 October 2006

editorial

Many Greens think that the defining element of their politics is their party's maintenance of certain principles and values in contrast to the abandonment of such values by the major parties. This edition of Green challenges that view by posing the Ecological Imperative as the factor that will dominate politics in the 21st century.

The Greens have arrived on the political stage at a moment in history when ecological crises are beginning to enter the popular consciousness through dramatic examples of climate change – hurricanes, droughts, flooding, species loss, landscape changes and so on. Of course, there are still many on the political Right who are in denial about climate change. Many others believe that, if we leave market forces free to do their job, all will be solved. On the political Left there are those who are so entrenched in class politics or a narrow humanism that they can't see beyond the latest industrial relations battle. However, as our main contributors to this edition point out, the world is presented with major ecological threats – from the global to the local. These threats are both immediate and long-term and will require radical policy and institutional changes.

Our writers, however, also point out that these threats can equally be seen as prompts to creative action. We can develop models of development that present attractive solutions. We can have prosperous economies; we can have liveable communities; we can have resilient in-

stitutions and international equity; and we can do these things while implementing strategies to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Barrie Pittock's essay analyses the need to underpin greenhouse gas reduction strategies with mechanisms for international equity – both for principled and pragmatic reasons. Elsewhere, Pittock has argued that policy makers need to approach their task of implementing successful policies for greenhouse reduction in a rigorous and open-minded fashion. They need their judgments unclouded by bias and prejudice, a challenge taken up by Christine Milne who argues here for a comprehensive transitional strategy to a 'carbon-constrained' economy. Peter Newman examines how urban planning can combine the goals of greenhouse gas reduction and enriched community living. And Jeremy Buckingham, writing as a councillor in the inland New South Wales town of Orange, discusses the challenges of climate change in rural Australia. He highlights the need to direct adequate resources to where climate change is often most clearly felt – at the local level.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Green and please let us know what you think.

Brian Hoeppe and Drew Hutton
Co-editors
greenmag@greens.org.au

**Next edition #21: Spring 2006 - Cover story: 'Energy'.
Deadline for submissions 16th October.**



letters to editor

Joining the Fourth Estate!

Re: the moving out of Green from its membership base to inform the wider Australian Green movement ... By joining the Fourth Estate in this manner The Greens can beat the notorious indifference of the political press through competition - competition through leadership and not by coercion and deception.

As for the dogma of 'Right' and 'Left' ... does the wider Green movement know, as party members do, that the Greens went way beyond this thirty years ago with their international foundation 'value' of grassroots participatory democracy?

In all, the magazine belonging to the members of the Australian Greens has made a good start of explaining to the wider activist movement that, globally, the principles of the Greens act together in this way - 'No Planet without Peace'; 'No Peace without Justice' and 'No Justice without Democracy'.

Well done!

James Hill,

Ipswich QLD

Sleeping with the enemy' revisited

Graeme Drysdale's letter ('Sleeping with the enemy?' - Issue 18) does have some merit. Our Party's association with any organisation must be tempered with wisdom.

However, featuring Greg Combet's important article (Issue 17) was our Party's official endorsement of the pragmatic consolidation of opposition to Howard's unethical 'WorkChoices'. It is a clear invitation, picked up by millions from differing backgrounds nationwide, to partake in what is indeed a united and principled stand via the positive 'Your Rights At Work' campaign (www.rightsatwork.com.au). There is no evidence of demand for a blanket endorsement of the ACTU's oft embarrassing associations with other political parties or organisations. Our error would be to dissociate ourselves from this crucial

campaign simply because some participants in the labour movement don't presently share our views. Furthermore, our notable absence from the very positive public rallies and campaign would be interpreted by the electorate as ambivalence or maybe even support of 'WorkChoices', disenfranchising future Greens' votes that would have otherwise been guided by our presence and initiative.

Senator Siewert's positive focus on this campaign for the Greens has paid off. Those Greens and non-Greens members who attended the November Day of Action at Melbourne's Federation Square will not soon forget the raucous cheers of thousands when Bob's smiling face and words of wisdom for the campaign were telecast nationwide on various giant video-screens. The juxtaposition of silence that greeted poor old Beazley's words cannot be lost on anyone.

It is clear that by our presence in this campaign, we can assist in affecting the change that the Australian public is looking for. The only way to affect change in society is to participate in it - standing on the periphery as an omniscient yet inactive oracle is tantamount to irrelevance.

Andreas Bischof,

Altona Meadows VIC

Eco-spirituality

I very much enjoyed the article by Noel Preston 'Reflections on eco-spirituality' in the last issue of Green magazine.

As well as my full time job I teach a Spiritual Growth and Meditation Course. During the course (30 lessons in total) I mention the Greens; I do not force my views but just tell people that I feel that if you live by the values of my course (or any spiritual way) then the Green party is the only party that 'feels' right. We meditate for peace, for mother nature, and for all living beings to know that we all come from the same source, that of Unconditional Love.

If we remembered to use the simple phrase 'what would love say or do now' the quality of our experiences

within the process would change for the better because we would be consciously aware of how we would respond. We would employ our power of choice.

The world would be in a much better state, and I believe that love would vote Green.

Christopher Parker,

Cairns QLD

Grassroots communication

I share Geoff Ash's concern that many members may feel disconnected from the national organisation.

I think the best way to engage and empower the grassroots members would be to allow them to receive Green magazine automatically as part of their party membership and to regularly refer matters which national council cannot agree on to the full membership through regular postal ballots.

Geoff Ash's own organization - the NSW Greens - recently voted not to have NSW members automatically receive Green magazine and this appears to be in conflict with membership entitlements outlined in the national constitution. Postal ballots of all members are also explicitly provided for in the national constitution, so it is puzzling why some of the state organisations do not support these provisions.

These are two easy solutions to allow grassroots members to communicate more effectively with one another instead of being limited by their party at state level.

Libby Connors,

Toowoomba QLD

***Letters to the Editor may be edited for length. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Greens.**

snippets

**Bellinghen Ecohouse**

A success story emerges from picturesque Bellinghen shire on the NSW north coast. In 1999 Ecohouse took over the entire resource recovery operation of the Shire Council. Ecohouse had begun six years earlier as a tip-shop venture. Its innovative system of recycling, reuse and green waste has reduced landfill by 20 per cent. Ecohouse is good at value-adding – checking, repairing and selling white goods, bicycles, lawnmowers, antiques and furniture. Because almost every shire resident visits the site at some stage, Ecohouse has an educational role too. And, in a shire with high unemployment, Ecohouse is a reminder of the economic, social and personal benefits of labour-intensive work. It now employs eleven people fulltime in a shire of only 12,000!

www.eco-house.com.au

Biofuels 1

Biofuels may have been unknown to most Australians until recently but it's been a different story in Brazil. The Brazilian government started promoting biofuels in the 1970s with tax breaks and mandatory fuel blending quotas. By the mid-1980s ethanol-fueled vehicles accounted for 96% of total car sales! Then came falling oil prices and soaring sugar prices. By 1997 sales of ethanol-fuelled vehicles plummeted to under 1%! In 2003 Brazil began encouraging flexible-fuel vehicles capable of running on almost any mixture of petrol and ethanol. In 2005 these vehicles captured half the market.

www.worldwatch.org

Biofuels 2

In 2005, world biofuel production surpassed 670,000 barrels per day, the equivalent of about 1 percent of the global transport fuel market. Although oil still accounts for more than 96 percent of transport fuel use, biofuel production has doubled since 2001 and is poised for even stronger growth as the industry responds to higher fuel prices and supportive government policies. 'Coordinated action to expand biofuel markets and advance new technologies could relieve pressure on oil prices while strengthening agricultural economies and reducing climate-altering emissions,' says Worldwatch Institute President Christopher Flavin.

<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/4079>

Biofuels 3

A British government report in late 2005 claimed that the rapid expansion of biofuel production could cause serious environmental damage. It pinpointed problems with increased sugar cane and palm oil plantings to supply the biofuel industry. Friends of the Earth reported that 87% of recent deforestation in Malaysia resulted from clearing of forest for palm plantations. George Monbiot wrote in the Guardian that 'the biodiesel industry has accidentally invented the world's most carbon-intensive fuel' – a reference to the effects of clearing and burning forests. Monbiot concluded that 'trying to meet a rising demand for fuel is madness, wherever the fuel might come from'.

www.monbiot.com

**A beautiful book!**

Coming in October 2006 – 'The World Heritage' – a book featuring spectacular color images and maps, together with descriptive text and historical quotes on more than 800 World Heritage sites in over 130 countries. The Canadian publisher Patrick Bonneville is a Greens supporter. North American price US\$45.

www.worldheritageboutique.com

Stealing the election

The latest article on the Jounospeak website canvasses arguments that Bush's election in 2004 was achieved through fraud. It draws on a piece by Robert Kennedy Jr published in Rolling Stone. The article starts with reference to inexplicable differences between exit polling and the actual results declared. The discrepancies were highest in seats expected to favour Democrat presidential candidate John Kerry (which in turn were often seats with high Afro-American and Hispanic populations).

For opposing views on Robert Kennedy Jr's claims, see www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/1970/ and www.mysterypollster.com/main/2006/06is_rfk_jr_right.html

Earlier postings on Jounospeak deal with East Timor, John Howard, poverty in Australia, Indigenous education and the affluence/waste connection in modern western societies.

<http://www.whitepage.com.au/jounospeak/>

**Courage in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe is a dangerous place to be a dissenter. But the 2005 election prompted an imaginative, loose-knit and courageously humorous movement to challenge the dictator's position. Called Zvakwana (meaning 'enough is enough'), its messages popped up everywhere – on leaflets, or in messages scrawled on circulating banknotes or popped into matchboxes. Zvakwana distributed thousands of 'revolutionary condoms' with 'Get UP, Stand up' emblazoned on the packaging! For Mugabe's birthday they encouraged people to send him 'Happy Retirement' cards to signal his reaching a 'best before' date. The Zvakwana website group went quiet after the election, but other bloggers are keeping the idea alive in cyberspace.

www.zvakwana.org

'When men refuse to fight ...'

For the first time, a soldier from Britain's elite SAS has refused to go into combat and has left the service on moral grounds. In March 2006 - after three months in Baghdad - Ben Griffin told his commander that he was no longer prepared to fight alongside American forces. He said he had witnessed 'dozens of illegal acts' by US troops, claiming they viewed all Iraqis as untermenschen - the Nazi term for races regarded as sub-human. Griffin, 28, said the American military's 'gung-ho and trigger-happy mentality' and tactics had completely undermined any chance of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi population. Griffin had expected to be courtmartialled but instead was discharged with a testimonial describing him as a 'balanced, honest, loyal and determined individual' who had 'the courage of his convictions'!

The science of climate change

Most of the information on this page has been culled from the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report, expected to be published during the first half of 2007.

Climate science has progressed in several important areas since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its Third Assessment Report in 2001, and the emerging picture is increasingly worrying.

As described in a recently published science update 'Stronger Evidence but New Challenges: Climate Change Science 2001-2005', there has been progress in two fundamental areas of research – assessing the extent to which the climate will change as a result of increasing greenhouse gas concentrations, and observing and analysing the impacts of these changes. The results strengthen the imperative to urgently reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. The latest update points out:

- As a result of improved quantification methods there now appears to be a greater risk that that the upper bound of 5.8 degrees C, projected by the IPCC's Third Assessment Report, will be reached or exceeded by 2100.
- The cooling effect of aerosols (small particles such as soot, dust and sulfates) is greater than previously thought. Aerosols tend to scatter incoming sunlight and mask the warming effect of greenhouse gases. A future reduction in aerosol concentration resulting from improved pollution control is expected to worsen global warming.
- The Arctic is now projected to be ice-free during summer by the end of the century. The ocean waters revealed by the retreating ice absorb sunlight and warm relatively quickly, especially compared to highly reflective ice.
- There will be increased warming from emissions of carbon and methane from the biosphere – for example, from forest fires and the decomposition of vast amounts of vegetation currently frozen in the Tundra.

The report also describes observed climate change impacts. These include:

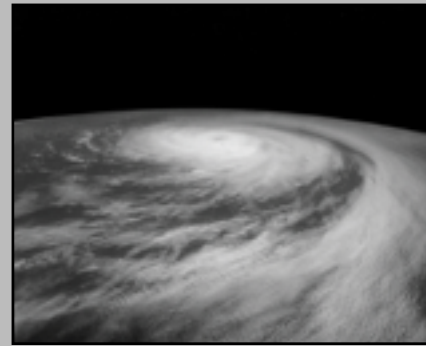
- Increasing frequencies of extreme events such as heatwaves and major storms,
- Rising sea-levels and increasing ocean acidity.
- Drying trends in many parts of the world, though yet to be conclusively linked to the enhanced greenhouse effect, may be due to the warming of surface water in parts of the Pacific Ocean.
- The probability of abrupt changes in ocean circulation patterns remains uncertain. Evidence in the North Atlantic and the Southern Ocean points toward weakening ocean currents.

Perhaps the most alarming area of research progress has been studies of the effect of warming on plants and animals. Frequently observed effects include:

- The earlier breeding of birds.
- The earlier arrival of migratory birds.
- The earlier shooting and flowering of plants.
- The earlier spawning of amphibians.
- More and more observations of terrestrial species shifting towards the poles and upward in elevation to stay within preferred temperature ranges.

Based on these observations and estimates about ecosystem adaptive capacity, some ecologists have estimated that the maximum extent of climate change that can be tolerated without significant loss of biodiversity is 1.5C above pre-industrial levels and a limit to the rate of climate change of below 0.5C per century. This is particularly alarming given that the probability of constraining the global temperature increase to even 2C is very low. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment published in 2005 projects that habitat loss and climate change will lead to significant irreversible loss of biodiversity this century.

The report 'Stronger Evidence but New Challenges: Climate Change Science 2001-2005' can be downloaded from <http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/science/publications/science2001-05.html>





International equity and climate change

BARRIE PITTOCK

The American ethicist Thomas W Pogge of Columbia University argues that there are three basic reasons why increased inequity should concern us:

- 1 A duty to help people in distress.
- 2 A duty to oppose and reject systems and institutions which lead to or perpetuate poverty and from which we benefit.
- 3 Prudential considerations that others being poor may make us worse off (in the long run, for example, through loss of trade, instability, cross-border migration pressures, radical movements, and even terrorism).

These reasons suggest a need for concern about inequity and poverty in general. Regrettably however, they have not been persuasive enough to make rich countries substantially eliminate inequity and poverty so far. Indeed, the percentage of rich nations' GDP being devoted to non-military aid has in recent decades significantly decreased. Nevertheless, it is worth looking closer at these reasons for concern in the narrower perspective of climate change. The first reason is a positive duty to help people in distress. It is taught by all the world's great religions, but is usually followed only by some people in some cases: we quickly become overwhelmed by the needs of others and tend to close our eyes and ears except to those nearest to us... That is why the Parable of the Good Samaritan is so powerful in Christian thought.

The second duty is a more stringent negative one: not to uphold injustice, and not to contribute to or profit by the unjust impoverishment of others. Here the moral duty is plain, but recognising when we are indeed upholding unjust systems, and profiting by them, is more difficult and may be contentious. Pogge develops a detailed set of criteria for determining when such unjust systems and institutions exist, including a shared institutional order that is shaped by the better-off and imposed on the worse-off, the possibility of an institutional alternative which would reduce the inequity, and the absence of other explanations for the inequity.

Applying these ideas to the question of climate change impacts, it is plain that continued and indeed increasing emissions of greenhouse gases are leading to increasing inequity, and that the developed nations are the main emitters historically, and on a per capita basis for the foreseeable future. This is historically the result of institutional arrangements that have allowed unrestricted emissions, with no strong incentive to reduce our reliance

on carbon-intensive industry and development. Clearly, with the advent of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol there is an alternative institutional arrangement which seeks initially to limit emissions, and which foreshadows attempts to greatly reduce them. This would lead to a reduction in climate change and thus in the additional inequity increasing emissions would otherwise cause.

On this analysis, the second reason clearly applies: developed countries actively contribute to a system that increases inequity, and they have historically profited by it through the provision of cheap energy and higher living standards. Again, the real problem for most people in rich countries is to realise the extent of their complicity in increasing inequity. This is a matter for analysis and education. This concern for justice does motivate many people in developed countries, notably the churches and others of religious faith. Groups such as the Evangelical Environmental Network and What Would Jesus Drive campaign (which campaigns against the growing use of 'gas-guzzling' recreational vehicles) base their position squarely on a Biblical understanding of justice, concern for the poor and stewardship of God's creation. ...

The third reason for concern about growing inequity is a more selfish one, justifying moral action (according to the first two reasons above), 'only' because reducing the hunger and poverty of others may increase our wellbeing or security.

'Nevertheless, in a world where profits and security are higher priorities for many in positions of power than altruistic moral conduct, prudential arguments may in the end be the more powerful for many decision-makers. Moreover, they need not exclude the moral arguments, but merely reinforce them.'

So what are the prudential reasons for seeking to avoid an increase in inequity due to climate change?... Development has already been historically slowed in countries exposed to climatic disasters, such as Bangladesh (floods and typhoons), Mozambique (floods), several Pacific islands (tropical cyclones), and Honduras, Haiti and other Caribbean countries (hurricanes and floods). As this increases with climate change, more aid will be needed

and more forced migration will occur for environmental and economic reasons.

Outbreaks of SARS and other diseases (for example malaria and dengue fever), transmitted internationally by air transport, illustrate the threat from these and other possibly climatically-induced disease outbreaks. The uncontrolled transmission of diseases may well increase with increased climate change and sea-level rise induced cross-border migration, especially if it is unofficial or illegal, that is, not part of a regulated immigration or refugee program. The problem of economically- and environmentally-forced migrations, both internal and across borders, is increasing. A paper presented at the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration in 2003 states:

Addressing humanitarian crises involving mass migration is integral to maintaining international security and sustainable development. This is particularly the case post-September 11, when it has become apparent that such countries as Afghanistan that experience prolonged humanitarian emergencies can too easily become breeding grounds for terrorism.

Of the world's 19 megacities, 16 are situated on coastlines, and many will be vulnerable to sea-level rise, as will many other people living on low-lying islands and coastlines. A one-metre rise in sea level would displace tens of millions of people in Bangladesh, Vietnam and elsewhere. Who will accept responsibility for them? Considering the possibilities, Molly Conisbee and Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation (UK) write:

The spectre of wholesale relocation of populations raises fundamental questions about citizenship and nationality. Once land has been lost, will residual nationality be able to persist, or does there need to be a new category of 'world citizen'? Could such a status be created in acknowledgement of the fact that climate change is a collective problem and requires a collective solution?

These are not going to be easy questions to address, but they will increasingly be consequences of climate change.

There will always be radical groups and individuals bent on extremism and anti-democratic behaviour, often wedded to some extreme ideology. However, poverty and

a sense of inequity, injustice and hopelessness open up grievances in the broader population and create fertile ground for recruitment to radical groups. This occurs not only among the poor, but also among the richer and better educated elite, who for idealistic reasons identify with the poor and the oppressed...

It is not stretching things too much to see that such instability and extremism may be exacerbated by an increase in poverty and inequities associated with climate change and climatic disasters, especially if they can plausibly be blamed (at least in part) on the rich. This is hardly in the interests of the rich, although many in rich countries do not seem to see the connection. A lot has been written about 'environmental security'. This means different things to different people. To some it is ensuring that each country secures its environment by military means if necessary, for example to protect water supplies or prevent mass movements across borders. To others it means demonstrating the inadequacy of a purely military approach to security in the face of environmental threats

that cross borders, such as acid rain, oil spills or climate change. Environmental issues, and particularly climate have little respect for borders, although some countries will be more seriously affected than others. In an increasingly globalised economic system, climate changes that adversely affect sections of the human race are likely to adversely affect the rest of us eventually, so we all have a stake in environmental security. The UNFCCC concept of 'dangerous' levels of climate change encapsulates the idea. Just because we may be rich does not mean we are immune from the effects of climate change.

Barrie Pittock led the Climate Impacts Group in CSIRO from 1990 until his retirement in 1999, has since been a major contributor to reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited a

book *Climate Change: An Australian Guide to the Science and Potential Impacts for the Australian Greenhouse Office* in 2003 and written *Climate Change: Turning Up the Heat* (CSIRO Publishing, 2005).

This article is an excerpt from *Climate Change: Turning up the Heat*

Climate Change: An Australian Guide to the Science and Potential Impacts, ed. Barrie Pittock (1.4Mb): free from <http://greenhouse.gov.au/science/pubs/science-guide.pdf>.

Climate Change: Turning Up the Heat, Barrie Pittock, 2005: free first chapter and endnotes from <http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/4992.htm>.



The transition to a sustainable, carbon-constrained future for Australia

CHRISTINE MILNE

In 2006, more than three decades after climate scientists started ringing the alarm bells about global warming, Australia shows few signs of even beginning to grapple with the scale of the global warming challenge. Our greenhouse gas emissions, already the highest per capita in the world, are increasing rapidly and there remains a complete absence of any serious policy measures to reverse this growth trend.

The Howard Government's objectives over the last ten years have evolved from obfuscating the science to manufacturing the appearance of serious Government action on emission reduction – while at the same time undermining the global climate-treaty negotiation process, supporting high emission industries and leaving the renewable energy industries to founder.

National Action on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Australia desperately needs an integrated Energy, Industry and Employment Strategy to deliver energy security and the deep emission cuts needed to address the urgency and severity of human induced climate change.

We need to define our common goals to guide policies, motivate individual action and provide investment certainty. First, Australia needs to decide what we regard to be 'dangerous anthropogenic interference' as described in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In other words, how much global warming are we prepared to accept? This is an important decision because it will establish our position on future global emission reduction treaties and guide the setting of near, medium and long term emission targets that ensure that Australia contributes equitably to the global emission abatement challenge.

'Australia desperately needs an integrated Energy, Industry and Employment Strategy to deliver energy security and the deep emission cuts needed to address the urgency and severity of human induced climate change.'

How much warming we are prepared to accept will be a social/political decision that is guided by scientific advice. Climate scientists themselves are typically at pains to avoid commenting specifically on this decision because it is fundamentally one about how much society is willing to pay to avoid climate change impacts.

There has been a tendency by environment groups and some governments to adopt a global 2 degrees C warming as the upper limit. This may prove be a suitable policy goal, but three issues are worth considering. First, the figure appears to come out of Europe, a continent with very different climate change vulnerabilities. Certainly 2 degrees C of warming may have strongly negative impacts on rainfall in many areas, as well as the particular ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef, the Wet Tropical Rainforests, Kakadu for example. Second, there has been no process of public consultation on this matter. It may well be, for example, that Australians would prefer to pay more in order to constrain warming to a less risky 1.5 degrees. Last, with current emission growth trends and policy setting it looks unlikely that global temperature increases will be constrained to 2 degrees.

Action on four fronts

Action needs to occur simultaneously on four policy fronts.

Energy Efficiency is the easiest and most obvious. All of the 'no regret' emission reduction options - the ones that save money - should be implemented as quickly as possible. We need to set a national energy efficiency target and set higher minimum appliance standards, roll-out better technology and persuade individuals to modify behavior and consumption habits. Straightforward, but Australia lags badly in this area. The Commonwealth Government sympathizes with the economic rationalist view that energy efficiency gains are hard to find because 'rational' individuals or businesses will have already made any changes that return a financial gain. Even when companies identify energy efficiency gains through mandatory audits, the government refuses to mandate their implementation.

Avoiding making our current situation worse should underpin policy. All new infrastructure, from power stations to buildings, should be designed to assist the shift towards a low-carbon future. This means, for example, no new traditional coal-fired power stations. Power stations are designed to run for at least 50 years and any traditional coal-fired power stations still running in 2050 will greatly increase the cost of achieving the deep cuts in emissions. It also means that new buildings and

houses should be super energy efficient. There are some promising State Government initiatives in this area in spite of the recent backflip by the NSW Government on its Building Sustainability Index.

Australia needs a national rethink on the design of its cities and the initiatives needed to address congestion, air pollution and mobility. Cities and urban planning should be on the federal government's agenda. Freeway construction should give way to rail with investment in public transport, and higher mandatory vehicle fuel efficiency standards prioritised.

We must make the transition from very high to very low carbon intensity – a process guided by the establishment of emission targets. A wide range of approaches can reduce emissions from each major source – heat and electricity, transport, waste management, industry, agriculture and land clearing. The most important policy principle is that we need to move away from voluntary to mandatory changes. Voluntary measures don't work – we simply aren't that altruistic. At a time when business is calling for regulatory certainty there will be little political pain associated with developing a reasonable plan to share the cost of the transitions that need to be made.

The single most important policy will be putting a price on carbon, the pricing of greenhouse gas emissions. Options include a carbon tax, an emission trading system or a combination of the two. While a carbon tax can be effective and is administratively simpler, the principle advantage of emission trading is that it provides environmental certainty. It provides a high degree of control over the future emissions. This is very important to give Governments the confidence to agree to national emission goals internationally. The second major advantage is that it achieves a given amount of emission abatement more cheaply than a tax. This is because emissions trading allows abatement to occur wherever in the economy the cheapest option exists. Nonetheless, emission trading

schemes are complex to establish and there is devil in the detail. It's clear the trading scheme running in Europe has a number of design problems resulting from political compromises that have substantially reduced its effectiveness to date. These problems are being addressed, however, and the lessons of the EU are already influencing discussions about future schemes – including in Australia where State Governments are currently considering mutually acceptable trading scheme designs.

While it is unlikely that the States will succeed in establishing their own emission trading scheme in the face of a hostile Commonwealth Government, the ongoing dialogue is important because it may substantially hasten the design and implementation process once there is a change in leadership at the Federal level. Coming to terms with the complexities of emissions trading is critical for the Greens because when this debate really gets going there will be many competing stakeholders advocating for concessions and loopholes. We must advocate for an effective and equitable design and the optimum policy mixes of trading and taxation and regulation. A firm regulatory hand is reasonable given that industry has been expecting the imposition of a price on carbon for almost a decade.

Conclusion

Australia is a long way behind where we need to be globally and nationally in terms of emission trends, clarity about policy objectives, and the implementation of the policies themselves. Urgent action is required to quickly reduce emissions and to begin the shift towards a sustainable, carbon-constrained future. For the parliamentary process to catch up to the community on climate change, the Greens need to be at the forefront of the policy debate.

Christine Milne is an Australian Greens senator for Tasmania and Vice-President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.



Transport planning and greenhouse

PETER NEWMAN

The politics of greenhouse tends to focus on electricity and industry rather than transport. However the high proportion of greenhouse gases due to mobility (25% in Australia) means that reducing transport fuel should be a high priority for the short and long term future. This is even more obvious now that petrol prices are such an issue and the production peak of global oil seems to have happened.

Planning can help considerably in reducing transport fuel as an engineering approach which only improves vehicle efficiency falls prey to the Jevons Effect – increasing efficiency just leads to greater use. This has been the experience of the past 30 years as vehicles have been improved (apart from 4WDs) but with relatively cheap fuel people have just driven more and more as cities have built around the car. Only sustainable planning can break this spiral by reducing car dependence and reducing the need to travel.

Our studies of cities and transport fuel around the world have demonstrated a strong relationship between transport fuel and urban density as well as other features of car dependence (Newman and Kenworthy, 1999; Kenworthy, Laube et al, 1999). Within the planning fraternity some have suggested the dominant factor is not density but public transport services (Mees, 2002).

A recent study at ISTP (Chandra, 2006) casts light on these issues by comparing transport fuel use (converted to greenhouse gases) at the local government level in Sydney and Melbourne. These patterns are compared to density of residents (in urbanized land), density of jobs, a mix of the two called activity intensity (people plus jobs per ha), permeability (the number of intersections per ha), distance to the CBD, and a new measure called Public Transport Access (which measures the area of a local government that is well served by public transport).

The results show the following:

1. Distance to the CBD is the dominant factor (this explains 70% of the variance in Sydney and Melbourne).

This means that a policy of building closer to the city will be the most important thing that can be done to respond to the problem of car dependence and its climate change/oil outcomes. Of course the Distance to the CBD contains within it a number of other parameters but it offers a simple way to look at the first cut on the issue. Indeed it is possible to make an easy calculation based only on where a development is located to predict its per capita greenhouse gases from transport. The formula is $y = x/10 + 3$, where y is the transport greenhouse gas in kg of CO2 per person per day, and x is the kilometres from the CBD. The formula was found to hold in Perth as well as

Melbourne and Sydney. It demonstrates very clearly that no matter what income levels people have in Australian cities it is where they live which will mostly determine their transport fuel use. The ex-urban areas like Blue Mountains and Mornington are a little harder to predict as they come out much higher than their distance alone would suggest, probably as they have so few services.

What this means in policy terms is that redevelopment closer to the city is always going to save transport greenhouse gas use compared to development on the fringe.

2. Activity Intensity (population and jobs per ha) explains 56% of Melbourne's variance and 71% in Sydney.

The stronger relationship in Sydney is perhaps due to its bigger variation in density across the city. The central areas of the City of Sydney and Melbourne with their activity intensities of 100 and 330 per ha respectively have very low fuel use; the City of Sydney has less transport fuel use than in Hong Kong (the lowest in our global sample of developed cities) as it is a dense, walking city. Inner suburbs like those in the Cities of Leichhardt and Port Phillip with activity intensities of 71 and 74 per ha have transport fuel use similar to European cities as they are compact transit cities where most urban services are close by. Outer suburbs are similar in activity intensity (from 10 to 20 per ha) and travel to car dependent suburbs anywhere, and are in the range of US cities. Ex-urban areas as explained above are between two and ten times higher on a per capita basis in per capita travel than the rest of the urban areas. When all these transport vs activity intensity graphs are compared, there seems to be a threshold of around 35 people and jobs per ha below which car dependence seems to be in-built – at present our new suburbs rarely reach 12 per ha.

What this means in policy terms is that we need to focus development into centres and corridors with sufficient density to overcome car dependence. This does not mean we bulldoze the suburbs but that we provide these centres and corridors across our cities to enable more people to have access to a lifestyle that does not require a car.

3. Public Transport Access is just as important in explaining travel patterns with 61% in Melbourne and 58% in Sydney.

The areas in Melbourne that have access to quality public transport (defined as not requiring a timetable, i.e. 10-15 minute services, and having evening and weekend services) follow the train and tram lines and some new bus lines. Those who live in such areas are fortunate to have options that most others across the city do not. This

can be seen to explain the broad sweep of travel and shows how important it is to provide more people with this option of service if the mould of car dependence is to be broken. The link between the activity intensity and the public transport access parameters is obviously close.

What this means in policy is that there is no way to overcome car dependence without improving public transport services. This requires money from government. When it happens, the centres and corridors that the public transport runs down will begin to attract the density they need. The transit egg for the density chicken is better than the other way around.

The Australian city needs to come to grips with car dependence for many reasons – including climate change. The policies set out in each of the current Metropolitan Strategic Plans now completed on each city, are aligned to this objective. All of them make a core issue out of reducing car dependence. All of them are emphasizing redevelopment over new fringe development. All of them focus development on centres and corridors to enable both the density and the public transport services to be more viable at achieving reductions in car dependence. Now we have to implement them.

The reality is that none of them will work unless an infrastructure package is included with the Strategy. This is now the case in Perth where the new rail project has enabled the city to create a major modern rail system that is 180 kms long with 72 stations. The centres that are now following this transit system are changing the culture in Perth as they are much more akin to the 35 per ha density that is required and the market is

loving this option. Brisbane has recently joined Perth with a commitment to two new rail projects one to the Sunshine Coast and one to Springfield at a cost of \$3 billion. Centres are being planned to build around these lines. Melbourne's \$10 billion infrastructure package will revamp a tiring train and tram system but it does little for people in the two thirds of Melbourne not served by rail (though some better bus services are long overdue). Even the new suburb of Aurora which was planned to take 10,000 households with a rail centre at its spine, will now just be a car dependent suburb. Sydney has an \$8 billion rail plan to link the new growth area suburbs in the west but no real commitment yet to build it. Adelaide has its new trams and is looking to see how they could be extended to the suburbs.

We now know what to do in our Australian cities to save them from excessive car dependence. Federal commitment to helping fund this would help enormously as the kind of visionary and transformative rail projects needed to change the way we build do not come cheaply. Even the US has such a Federal fund and about 100 US cities are building rail. We also need to get behind the commitments made in each Australian city to build ways out of our car dependence, especially by redeveloping closer to the city and making new transit-based centres and corridors throughout the suburbs. Each one of these centres and corridors will need detailed planning to make them urban habitats that are walkable, green and attractive.

Peter Newman is Professor of City Policy at the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University.



GLOBAL WARMING: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FEEL THE HEAT

JEREMY BUCKINGHAM

The international nature of the discourse on climate change is a reflection of the pressing need to address at a global level the catastrophic ramifications of radically altered weather patterns, more frequent and extreme weather events and a hotter Earth. Predominantly overlooked in that dialogue is the disastrous effect climate change is already having on communities and on the front line of government, local government.

In a political climate dominated by economic rationalism, local governments throughout Australia are already staggering beneath the increasing weight of unfunded burdens prescribed by state and federal governments; governments determined to absolve their responsibility and shift the cost of providing essential infrastructure and services to a local level. Unfairly derided as the realm of 'rates, roads and rubbish' modern local governments provide and facilitate social services such as meals on wheels, migrant support, palliative care, affordable housing, crime prevention, and are expected to seamlessly and sustainably manage water, waste, emergency response, transport and planning. In NSW alone the Local Government Association estimates one third of local governments are economically unsustainable and that tens of billions of dollars are needed in the short term to build and maintain critical infrastructure and establish a viable economic footing.

How then, in this already adverse climate, will local government meet the emerging challenges of climate change? What impact will climate changes have on its capacity to deliver the services and utilities our communities need and expect? A CSIRO report for the Australian Business Roundtable predicts that declining precipitation over much of Australia will exacerbate existing challenges to water availability for commercial and residential uses. Other changes in climate extremes - such as tropical cyclones and heat waves - will degrade Australian infrastructure and public health through (for example) increased energy demands, and maintenance costs. The federal government's own department of Environment and Heritage also thinks the outlook is grave. Its white paper 'Climate change: risk and vulnerability' (2005) warns:

Dams could be susceptible to extreme rainfall events if these exceed historical design standards. Dam overtopping and failure can have catastrophic effects in terms of human and economic losses...The Australian Government's Disaster Mitigation package should also be informed by climate change risks. Consideration of the greater risk of heat stress and the ageing population might be relevant to the thinking of future emergency services needs. Local government will have an important role to play in designing and delivering adaptation options for urban system.

Unfortunately these crises are no longer in the realm of speculation and conjecture; community and local governments are dealing with climate change today. Many councils are renewing their dam safety standards and spending large amounts on integrated water cycle, flood plain and risk management strategies

'In 20 minutes the Molong creek went from cracking, bone dry to a 50 metre wide torrent. No one had ever seen anything like it before.'

The summer of 05-06 was hotter and drier than any before and a case in point. In my region, western NSW, we witnessed many troubling developments in terms of extreme climate variability:

- A number of hospital wards and aged care facilities were closed until emergency air conditioning was installed after acutely ill and elderly patients suffered heat stress.
- Molong, a small community of 2000 people in the central west of NSW, knows all too well about climate change and extreme weather events. On November the 9th 2005, after suffering 5 years of chronic drought, Molong received 160mm of rain in 2 hours. In 20 minutes the Molong creek went from cracking, bone dry to a 50 metre wide torrent. No one had ever seen anything like it before. Half of the town's businesses were inundated and destroyed; most were uninsured. The town and people may never recover.
- Further south in the NSW southern highlands the city of Goulburn continues to battle for its very existence. Pejar dam, the city's main water supply, is at 0% capacity and total capacity is well below 30%. The city has been on level 5 water restrictions for 2 years and if winter rains do not fall the city of 25,000 faces total shutdown within a year. Recently federal Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for water, Malcolm Turnbull, belatedly announced a \$50,000 grant to 'identify long term solutions to Goulburn's water supply.' Too little too late from a government that has been amongst the most intransigent global warming sceptics. Estimates are that an emergency pipeline or water recycling facility will cost \$20 million dollars and that the city may face water delivery costs of \$100,000 a week.

In highlighting these examples I recognise that they are not beyond the threshold of natural variability. What I am suggesting is that we can expect more of these

types of incidents if governments do not act now. These examples highlight the risk of inaction and the enormous socio-economic costs facing all government from extreme weather variability and events. Ask the mayors of New Orleans or Innisfail if cyclonic storms put a hole in council budgets. Who will pay for infrastructure upgrades? Who will pay for risk management strategies? Who will pay for increased insurance costs? Who will pay when foreseeable disaster strikes? The coal industry? Our federal and state governments? Us?

The burden of climate change will be borne by local communities and ultimately individuals.

Jeremy Buckingham is an Orange city councillor and Greens NSW Rural Affairs spokesperson.



The Greens are staring down one of the most politically significant challenges we have faced. In less than 18 months time Greens party members around the country will be riveted to television screens, listening to radio broadcasts, obsessively refreshing live Internet updates - or a mixture of all three. We will be waiting in strained anticipation to see if we have been successful in wresting the control of the Senate away from the Coalition.

Be under no misconceptions; it is an enormous task, and the 18 months will flash by, unless we conscientiously extract the maximum benefit from every day.

Howard currently controls 39 of the 76 Senate seats. If the Coalition retains its current seats, it will continue its tyrannical control and desecration of our democratic processes. If it loses one Senate seat, Family First's lone Senator Steve Fielding will hold the balance of power. Hence, in order to rescue the Senate in 2007, the Coalition must be reduced to 37 seats. This assumes that no additional Family First Senators will be elected – which is by no means a certainty.

Success requires that the Coalition not win four of the six available Senate seats in Queensland as it did in 2004. It must also be contained to only two of the six Senate spots in two states, or in one state while simultaneously losing a Senate spot in the ACT.

This is not inconsistent with our strategic plan, which aims for the election of six Greens Senators in 2007. We should not be overwhelmed by the challenge, as it is achievable. But we must act now. Time is of the essence and there is much to do. Three key factors which will determine our success or failure are communication, organisation, and participation. All three are inextricably linked.

The success of our internal communication processes is crucial. They will determine how effectively the members at the grassroots level are informed of the campaign goals, strategic goals and the current issues on a day-to-day basis. They also provide a mechanism for feedback from members active in campaigns and actions in their local area. Good communication is vital if all members are to be engaged.

The strength of our organisational capacity will determine the level of support, guidance and advice the organisation can provide to candidates, campaigners, and members.

Finally - but arguably most importantly - comes participation. We regard ourselves as a participatory organisation. I know that many party members participate enthusiastically and effectively. Between now and the election, all 9,000 of us need to commit our energies to the national campaign. That campaign – expressed as action at national, state, territory and local levels – is the key to convincing Australian voters to 'rescue the Senate'.

Together we hold the key. If you have been inspired enough to read this, please take the extra step and contact your branch, local group, state or national office and ask what you can do today to start working on the campaign to rescue the Senate.

I'll see you on election night
(I'll be the one obsessively clicking 'Refresh')



Juanita Wheeler with Bob Brown

Juanita Wheeler
National Convenor, Australian Greens

'Humanity, decency and honour in Australian politics'

'Taking their own lives was not necessary but it certainly is a good PR move to draw attention.'

This is what Colleen Graffy, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State said when three wretched, desperate inmates, who had been locked-up illegally for half a decade by the US Army in Guantanamo Bay, tied their bed sheets into makeshift nooses and hanged themselves.

Have you ever heard anything so vile broadcast on Australian radio? The cynical inhumanity of this remark is truly breathtaking. Whoever thought after Iraq that US foreign policy could plumb lower depths?

In response to this rank, contemptible propaganda, what did we hear from the Howard Government? Silence (of course). What about Kim Beazley? Silence (of course!)

So who *did* speak up? You guessed it. Only Bob Brown. Thank goodness for the Australian Greens.

The Australian Greens are the only political force standing up to preserve any sense of humanity, decency and honour in Australian politics while the Howard government abandons truth, human rights and the Australian sense of a fair go.

This moral desertion pervades everything the Howard government does. President Yudohyono doesn't like it when Australia accepts West Papuan refugees? No problem, we'll just scrap what's left of refugee rights with one more offshore sleight of hand.

Howard's abandonment of decency has become so blatant, so brazen, that some of his Government members have even dropped the pretence of Orwellian doublespeak used so cynically by their master every day at media doorstops ('WorkChoices will give employees a brighter future').

So we can now watch ministers like Amanda Vanstone being upfront on national television about, for example, the Government's shameless subordination of human rights to the diplomatic cocktail circuit. In June the ABC's Kerry O'Brien asked Vanstone whether Australia



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was pandering to Indonesia with tougher laws against asylum-seeker laws. Vanstone replied: 'it is indisputable we've taken into account the concerns of Indonesia'.

Why are they able to admit to these things so freely? Because they know a weak-kneed corporate media will let them get away with it. In most other countries with free press, this interview would have made the front page of commercial newspapers. Not in Australia. The Government also knows that the official Labor opposition is weak and hopeless. It wedges Labor almost at will. This sad state of affairs makes our job as Greens – the real opposition – that much more important.

Happily our efforts are bearing fruit. The Australian Greens are enjoying record polling. The last three AC Nilson polls showed us at 11%. More Australians are recognising what the Greens have to offer - compassion, decency, truth and strength.

The challenge now is to build on this growth ahead of the Federal Election, likely to be in October next year. The National Election Campaign Committee (NECC) is already preparing for the election and things are going well.

Senators Brown and Nettle will be up for re-election. With our polling at 11%, five Senate seats are winnable. With Senators Siewert and Milne already there, imagine - say - seven Greens in the Senate and possibly the balance of power!

These are exciting times ahead. Your membership of the Australian Greens has never been more important – why not get your friends to join?

ACT *Planning Ahead*

Last edition I reported that we had started work on a three year ACT plan, taking in two elections and working in with the national strategic plan. This is now finalised and due for endorsement at our June general meeting. The plan identifies goals, actions and activities for the next three years. Activities will be based on or linked to specific campaigns, to draw public attention to our policies and to issues we consider particularly significant.

Our team in the ACT Assembly has been busy. They had a victory recently with the ACT government backing down on its plans to re-plant pines in the lower Cotter catchment. Re-planting pines would have no real economic benefits, do long term environmental damage, compromising water quality and recovery from future fire or weather events. It was actively opposed by Greens MLA Deb Foskey, environmental scientists and conservationists. It took two years and considerable pressure to put off the planting in lieu of adequate research and highlighted how important it is that government consult with experts in the community.

Our team has also been heavily involved in another issue, unresolved as I write... the recent sale of the Narrabundah long-stay caravan park and pending eviction of its 200 residents. The park was sold to local charity Koomari for a 'peppercorn' fee five years ago and recently sold by them to Consolidated Builders Ltd for \$2 million. Following an extensive campaign Koomari offered to undo the deal but the builder has turned this down.

This emphasises the need for much greater ethics in corporate social responsibility and for businesses to consider the social impact of their decisions and accept moral responsibility for them.

Helen Woittiez: *ACT Greens convener*

SA *A landmark election!*

South Australian Greens are really firing up at the moment! At the March 18 State election we elected our very first Green to Parliament, Mark Parnell MLC. Mark has already established a visible Green presence in Parliament House and we have created an impressive website for him at www.markparnell.org.au. But we're not resting on our laurels.

Our federal election preparation is well underway and we will soon have a team of Senate candidates. We are also preparing for local council elections in November, which will be a particular challenge for us. Although political parties often run campaigns in council elections,

council candidates don't normally disclose their party memberships, so residents are usually unaware of which party they are voting for. This calls for a totally different style of election campaign. We are getting plenty of interest from potential candidates and of course we will let you know the results.

We recently doubled our office space and this will come in handy for a frenzy of campaigning for the next 12 months or more.

Our Party Education Program is stimulating some education and debate among our members, with Senator Kerry Nettle lending some of her expertise for a June discussion about independence for West Papua. Not only that, we are also gearing up for an exciting Greens National Conference to be held in October in Adelaide, the City In A Park. Please get in touch with us early to arrange accommodation or if you need any advice. We can't wait to see you!

Zane Young: *Assistant Convenor, Greens SA*

TAS *In the wake of electoral success*

I am delighted to report that, despite a very negative campaign run by both the Labor and Liberal parties in conjunction with a number of other more shadowy organisations, the Tasmanian Greens held all four of our seats in the Tasmanian lower house in the March election. We followed up with excellent showings in the two upper house seats we contested in May, polling 26% in Wellington (an electorate centred on Hobart), and 18% in Rowallan (a rural electorate which includes the northern midlands and central highlands). Perhaps the most exciting thing to come out of the 2006 election season was a surge in our membership. We now have more than 1000 members, with around 100 of these joining in the space of eight weeks. We plan to send a survey to all members later in the year, with the aim of identifying the interests and skills of members and encouraging them to get involved in the party. This survey will coincide with the members' ballot to ratify our new constitution.

Our local groups continue to thrive, with planning underway to purchase a mobile office (caravan!) for use in the north and northwest of the state. Local fundraising continues apace - a highly successful art auction was held last month, and more events are planned over the winter.

Karen Cassidy: *Convenor, Tasmanian Greens*

VIC *An historic opportunity*

On 8 June Bob Brown launched our eight lead candidates for the new Victorian upper house regions (UHRs) on the steps of Victorian parliament. This was an historic occasion for Victoria - with voters electing five members by proportional representation to each new UHR at the 25 November state election, it will be our first real chance to elect Greens to the Victorian parliament.

The Greens have been a positive force for democracy, social justice and the environment in the Australian Senate and in the state parliaments of NSW, WA, Tasmania and SA. We are looking forward to adding to that positive force in the Victorian parliament.

Our lead upper house candidates are Jennifer Alden for the Northern Victoria Region, Greg Barber for the Northern Metropolitan Region, Louis Delecretaz for the Eastern Victoria Region, Colleen Hartland for the Western Metropolitan Region, Bill Pemberton for the Eastern Metropolitan Region, Sue Pennicuik for the Southern Metropolitan Region, Jim Rehier for the South-eastern Metropolitan Region and Marcus Ward in the Western Victoria Region. With candidates already pre-selected in many of the 88 lower house districts and more to be preselected soon, the campaign is gaining momentum around the state.

Key issues for the campaign include fast, frequent and well-connected public transport, better health services for all Victorians, revitalising the education system, reducing the number of pokie machines, action to halt climate change, protection of our water resources and transition from destructive logging in our old growth forests, rainforests and water catchments to tourism and job-rich, high-value, plantation based forestry.

Sue Pennicuik: *Convener, Australian Greens, Victoria*

WA *Two major campaigns*

Party Matters: After the last Federal election our membership went through the usual post-election decline but we are now happy to report that the slippery slide has been reversed and membership is rising again.

One of the problems we have in WA is the vastness of our northern and eastern region and the difficulties of engaging and communicating (constitutionally) with our members in the 2.4 million sq km that make up the Kalgoorlie electorate. To address this, proposals have been drawn up to amend the constitution.

We have also moved into our new larger office (same building) on the ground floor with better public access. The office certainly has a much more pleasing feel to it. Environmental and Heritage issues: There are currently two major campaigns that many of us are involved in. One is the use of Barrow Island, an 'A' Class Nature reserve, for the Chevron Texaco Gorgon liquefied gas plant. The EPA has said no to the project and the State Government has indicated that it will override the EPA. The other issue is further industrial expansion on the Burrup Peninsular. The Woodside Pluto liquefied gas development is the next cab off the rank. The Burrup and the Dampier Archipelago contain the world's largest galleries of petroglyphs (rock carvings). There are possibly a million petroglyphs dating back at least 20,000 years. Already the State has allowed the destruction of more than 10,000 items.

Robin Chapple: *Co-convenor, WA Greens*

JOIN THE GREENS

To become a Greens member either:

- Fill out and return the coupon to receive a membership form in the post OR
- Go 'on-line' to the Greens website: www.greens.org.au and select your state or territory

For further membership information call **1800 017 011**

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guest green

Janet Rice

Janet is one of those strong, principled campaigners who, after years of being frustrated by governments, decided that Greens had to have their own political voice. Consequently, she was one of the founders of the Greens in Australia and has been a stalwart of the Victorian Greens since their inception in 1992. She is currently the Mayor of the Maribyrnong City Council in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne.

Janet began her environmental campaigning in 1983 firstly with the Conservation Council of Victoria and then in Victorian forest campaigns. I first heard of her when she was a campaign worker and coordinator of the East Gippsland Coalition from 1985 to 1990 with many in the environment movement admiring the work she did gaining protection for the East Gippsland forests. It was during the 1990 federal election – the so-called ‘green’ election – that Janet realised the need for a Green party and that the real motivation for major parties in implementing good environmental and social policy would come if they were in danger of losing seats to Greens candidates.

Janet did much of the hard work leading up to the formation of the Victorian Greens in September 1992, was on the state executive from 1992 to 2002 and was state convener in 2002-2003. From 1992 to 1996 she also worked as Ride to Work Co-ordinator with Bicycle Victoria. In the late nineties she stood as a Greens candidate in several elections, including two unsuccessful bids for Maribyrnong Council in 1997 and 2000. She finally won her ward of Saltwater in 2003 along with another Green, Colleen Hartland. Janet's main focuses were on achievable policies for more sustainable living, especially in the area of transport, and effective community involvement in Council's activities and decision making. One consequence of the increased focus by Council on sustainable transport was that Maribyrnong received the highest funding ever given to a council under the state government's Travelsmart scheme. Janet is also Chair of the Metropolitan Transport Forum, which comprises 16 out of 31 Melbourne councils working together to promote sustainable transport.

With her re-election to council in 2003 Janet was elected as Mayor (despite being the only Green on a council of seven) and under her leadership the council has extended the work of engaging the community in the work of sustainable development. The Municipal Association of Victoria recognized her with its 2006 fellowship to look at overseas cities that were doing a good job in

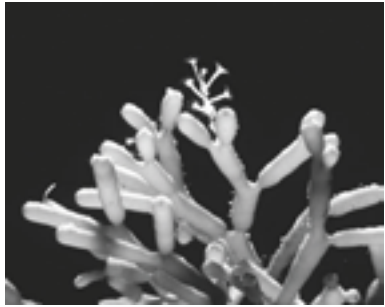


sustainable transport. Her trip took her to such cities as Portland (Oregon), Vancouver and Toronto in Canada as well as European cities such as Amsterdam, Hamburg, Copenhagen and Stockholm. Janet reckons a key difference between these cities' transport policies and our own is having Greens in government for long periods of time with the political will to implement good policies. She says forget all the furphies about our cities not being dense enough or not being able to afford good public transport and cycling facilities – the key difference is determination and leadership.

Without the efforts of people like Janet Rice the Australian Greens would not have been formed. Without the work she and others like her are doing in local government, the work of grassroots engagement in the great project of sustainability would be much less developed.

Janet Rice spoke with ‘Green’ editor Drew Hutton

snippets

Deep sea bottom trawling

Politicians arriving at Canberra Airport in June were confronted by a massive and challenging billboard. Erected by the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, it featured a photo of endangered coral being thrown from a bottom-trawling vessel in June 2005. The text read 'Stop deep sea destruction. Support a global moratorium on high seas bottom trawling'. You can see video of deep sea life and bottom trawling on the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) website. <http://www.savethehighseas.org/video.cfm>

*See what you missed*

Those lucky enough to be in Sydney on 9-11th June could have enjoyed the first-ever National Greenbuild & Eco Show Exhibition & Conference. The event showcased leading brands and services relating to Green building, renewable energy systems, sustainable living and permaculture. It also focused on national environmental and conservation initiatives and celebrated World Environment and World Ocean Day. Find out more, including plans for the 2007 event, at <http://www.ecoshow.com.au>

*Global wind power*

Global wind electricity-generating capacity increased by 24 percent in 2005 to 59,100 megawatts. This is a twelvefold increase from a decade ago, when global capacity

stood at less than 5,000 megawatts. Wind is the world's fastest-growing energy source with an average annual growth rate of 29 percent over the last ten years. In the same period, coal use grew by 2.5 percent per year, nuclear power by 1.8 percent, natural gas by 2.5 percent, and oil by 1.7 percent. <http://www.earthpolicy.org/Indicators/Wind/2006.htm>

Iranian women's protest attacked

On Monday, June 12 hundreds of Iranian activists – mainly women - gathered in Tehran to call for an end to discriminatory laws against women. They demanded equality before the law, the banning of polygamy, an increase in the age of legal responsibility to 18 and the reform of employment laws which disadvantage female employees.

They were attacked by police who used pepper spray and batons to beat the peaceful demonstrators, injuring one woman and detaining dozens more. Reports indicate that 70 protestors were detained and interrogated; although most have apparently been released. In the days leading up the demonstration, authorities harassed and arrested many prominent women activists, and threatened to close organizations supportive of the rally. <http://action.humanrightsfirst.org/campaign/IranWomen?rk=Op22hAF1PjzKW>

A democratic audit of Australia

The Democratic Audit of Australia is an Australian National University web-based project designed to 'assess Australia's strengths and weaknesses as a democratic society'. Two of the papers on the site are by prominent authors who've written in recent issues of Green magazine. You can read Marian Sawyer's explanation of the Australian audit and Joan Staples' analysis of how Federal Government policies towards NGOs are undermining the democratic process. <http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/>

Italian Greens in government

In the recent national elections the Italian Greens gained 783,944 votes (2.05%) and secured 15 parliamentary seats. The Greens are now part of a diverse coalition L'Unione that has formed the new national government. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_general_election%2C_2006

What's going on!!!

The New York Times reports that major US corporations (Wal-Mart, General Electric, Shell) are asking the US government to impose mandatory carbon caps on busi-

ness! It doesn't necessarily mean that the CEOs have been converted to the Greens agenda! Some businesses stand to gain. If they can keep their carbon emissions below the caps they can 'sell' carbon credits to companies that can't. As well, companies want some certainty about future regulatory regimes, rather than second guessing what the government might do eventually about climate change. Still, the environmental consequences could be laudable, irrespective of motive.

Help save the USA!

Just launched is the International Endowment for Democracy (I.E.D.), committed to 'democratic nation building' in the USA (and ironically appropriating the same 'democratic nation building' term that Bush and the neo-cons apply to their efforts in Iraq and elsewhere). Directors include Gore Vidal, Ramsey Clark, Immanuel Wallerstein and other dissenting luminaries. The website includes an appeal to the peoples of the world for help (!) and, interestingly, an extensive library of readings on critical democracy. www.iefd.org

Books and bullets

Australian academic Dr Colin Butler is calling on colleagues to boycott journals published by well-known company Reed-Elsevier. Colin is publicizing Reed's paradoxical (hypocritical?) position as both a publisher of professional journals and – through Reed Exhibitions – a promoter of some of the world's largest arms fairs! Other critics of Reed-Elsevier include Nobel Laureate writer J. M. Coetzee and the British Medical Association (whose Lancet is published by Reed-Elsevier). A letter signed by numerous British medical leaders juxtaposed Reed-Elsevier's 'groundbreaking work on the effect of conflict on public health, including a major 2004 study of civilian deaths in Iraq' and its being 'connected to the profits of the global arms trade'. The letter described 'cluster bombs openly on display' at one Reed fair! <http://cage.ugent.be/~npg/elsevier/>

700 Days in El Salvador

That's the title of Michele Gierck's acclaimed book about her 'unexpected journey from the suburbs to a guerilla war'. Kirsty Sword Gusmao describes it as 'a compelling and moving read' and Tim Costello endorses it as 'a great read which captures the soul of the place and the heart of its people'. \$25 (incl postage) from Michele at PO Box 6176 Hawthorn West VIC 3122. A percentage goes to an ecological project in El Salvador.

After Tsunami

We sit on this humid steamy verandah
Stories from women with dark ringed eyes
'Buddhist feast day; in our nighties, cooking.
Four times more women died than men.
Couldn't climb coconut trees, legs wrapped in saris.
Stopped for children, mothers and fathers.
Doors and gates locked – for security
on the day when the big wave came.'

'First wave dumped a load of fishes!
We rushed to pick them up.
We ran laughing into the empty sea.
Tourists rushed for cameras.
Some went upstairs for videos.
Second wave came big and noisy.
We screamed, men climbed coconut trees.

Third wave came black and smelly.
Greedy wave came back.
Rushed back to sea carrying our bodies.'

All around rubble, rough graves, bowed bodies.
Rags of clothes still hang in the trees.
Fishing boats miles in shore rock oddly in the wind.
Small working boats are back at sea.
Woman harvest on the shore;
Fearful of sudden noise.
Counting children, checking where is Grandma?
Sleep in pajamas saris only for the days.
We let our girls wear pants and run and climb.

'Boys and men ride the new NGO bicycles.
Widowed men use aid money to buy new wives!
Some married unwilling sisters.
One man says 'I learned the washing takes all day.
On a concrete slab beside the road with one tap.'
'I never knew how productive my wife was -
Until the day the big wave took her away.'

Grandparents, toothless struggle to take up childcare.
'Our children are naughty now, no homework,
Scream in terror all night long, no mum to hug.
Don't play at the sea anymore.
Don't like their new mums and kick up a fuss for aunts.
New babies are born and old kids scream.
Teenagers complain and yell for radios and TV.
The NGOs come with big boxes of new things.'

Kantha Shakthi women, sing to us-
A bouquet each and betel nut.
Social mobilisers visit villages often.
IWDA had little money to give beside big NGOs.
Social mobilisers come with understanding, rich with time.
Share the anguish, harrowing stories.
Give back ideas laced with tiny threads of hope.

Coleen Clare





Indonesia and the environment: a view from West Papua

DAVID NEILSON

At its foundation, Indonesia was a country full of idealism. The nation of Indonesia was to be an example of how to successfully rid a nation of the stain of colonialism and provide for the on-going welfare of all its inhabitants. The environment was not a factor in Indonesia in 1950. But, as in most of the countries in the world at that time, development was supposed to benefit those in local areas as well as the nation as a whole.

This changed in October 1965 when General Suharto gained control of Indonesia. Under Suharto environmental sustainability was considered less important than increasing real incomes. The environment was there to be exploited. West Papua and Kalimantan were seen as limitless. Their peoples were seen as primitives easily moved aside in the name of 'pembangunan'.

As the power of Suharto grew, the environmental problems worsened. Funds set aside for reforestation and land care were used to fund Suharto-related businesses and Javanese transmigrants. Businesses such as the Freeport mine in West Papua were taxed on their environmental degradation, but - according to a contact who dealt with the collection of these taxes - they were rarely paid on time.

In 1994 I saw one Indonesian-owned forestry concession located inland of Jayapura, near Lereh. We were taken to see the seedling nursery. The officials admitted that seedlings took two years to grow to the point where they could be replanted. The nursery was said to contain 5,000 seedlings, of which 3,000 were fruit trees such as mangoes. 2,000 were of the hardwoods being cut in the area. But 2,000 trees were being cut every month! The nursery was clearly for the benefit of the transmigrants who were being settled at the logging sites, and of brief, but uncritical, visitors.

In Manokwari I breathed air so thick from forest fires - lit to clear rainforest for farming - that you could carve it. In Sorong I travelled in a plane whose pilot couldn't tell if the island below was an airfield or, as it turned out at the last second, bare rock.

'In Manokwari I breathed air so thick from forest fires - lit to clear rainforest for farming - that you could carve it.'

In a housing development near my former home in Jayapura, there was a sago swamp in a natural basin. This swamp was cleared and people moved into cramped but cheap housing. At first there was no problem. Then the roads flooded. Walls and floors were raised. The road was resurfaced. Some houses were abandoned. More houses were built on higher ground. The ditches in the new subdivisions were reinforced to allow the water and refuse to drain away faster. But, in mid-1999, there was a huge storm. Half the houses in this complex were flooded, as well as the only access road. Months passed before the water level fell to the point where the road could be used again. Malaria increased as mosquitoes bred in the stagnant water. The government gave people handouts and they were compensated. Half the houses were permanently abandoned. But there was no local follow-up - notwithstanding a few newspaper articles - to ensure that the problems of drainage and waste disposal were being dealt with.

Indonesia's forests and lands are still extensive and can be restored or maintained in a natural state. But the will to change does not exist. No one wants to be the first to do something risky that may result in civil disturbance, economic downturn or failure.

The twin arguments that the Indonesians use - 'You destroyed your environment, so how dare you lecture us!' and 'We are still developing!' - need to be placed within a global environmental and socio-political context. The world is too small to let anyone get away with what the Indonesians are doing. One day soon we will regret that we did not pressure the Indonesians to restrict the use of mercury in their mining operations in Sulawesi, to end the destruction of the forests in West Papua and to clean up the poison-filled air of their cities. Even if we won't act in the interests of Papuans and Dayaks whose forests are being stolen and whose minerals and fish are being sold cheaply, then we should act in our own self-interest.

After all, we all breathe the same air, drink from the same water and swim in the same seas.

David Neilson lived in Jayapura, West Papua, from 1992 to 2000.

Selling the Snowy - or rescuing the Senate

BOB BROWN

In March, with just 24 hours notice, the government rushed motions through the Senate and House of Representatives to privatise Snowy Hydro. Only seven Senators - the four Greens and three of the Democrats - opposed the motion. In the House the two NSW independents - Peter Andren and Tony Windsor - did likewise. So, of the 216 members of Parliament, only 9 voted 'no'.

There were three essential factors working to produce this overwhelming support for the sale.

Firstly, surprise. The Prime Minister and his Minister for Finance Nick Minchin pushed the motion through the separate chambers in 24 hours. This cut out any chance of a Senate inquiry or public debate. They knew that public opinion, if given oxygen, would be explosive.

Secondly, the Beazley Labor Opposition complied and backed the privatisation. If this was the on the premise that, as the lemma Labor government in NSW had instigated the sale, federal Labor should follow, it was a mistake.

Had Mr Beazley opposed the sale of the Commonwealth's 13% share, the sale of the 87% held by NSW and Victoria could and would have gone ahead, while federal Labor would have been free to criticise Mr Howard's later backflip on the sale. Labor seems to have given up on the Senate since the government took control and, too easily, it gave up on the Snowy Hydro sale as well.

Thirdly, the Press Gallery missed the importance of the issue to the Australian public. A notable exception here was the Sydney Morning Herald's Alan Ramsey, who wrote a biting opinion piece on the Parliament's pre-emptory passing of the motion.

However, out in real Australia, the word had passed around. Senator Bill Heffernan, who has been a long-term advocate of good water catchment management - and the Snowy Mountains are Australia's most vital high rainfall catchment - became a lightning rod for dissent inside the government. Labor backbenchers at state and federal level were stung by the growing public alarm. A packed public meeting in Cooma, chaired by its feisty Mayor Roger Norton, showcased public anger at the impending sale.

I asked prominent Melbourne barrister, Brian Walters SC, to give me his opinion. It was stunning. He wrote that the sale of the Commonwealth's 13% of Snowy Hydro shares required a

bill passing both Houses and Parliament and gaining Royal Assent. As it was, the sale would be illegal. Senator Minchin refused to produce any contrary legal advice. I sent Mr Walters' advice to the Australian Stock Exchange and wrote an ultimatum to Mr Howard warning that the sale would be challenged in the High Court if he did not come back to Parliament to get legislative approval. In the NSW Parliament's Legislative Council, the Greens' Sylvia Hale demanded and got 1500 documents with embarrassing revelations about the lemma government's sale motivations and processes.

Just two weeks before the June sittings of the Senate, Senator Minchin announced that he would produce validating legislation. The Greens moved for a Senate inquiry. Independents Andren and Windsor met the Prime Minister who, with mounting party pressure from Heffernan and the Nationals, now faced a humiliating defeat in the Senate. He took the bitter pill and on Friday 2nd June pulled the plug on the sale. Within two hours the NSW and Victorian governments had also backed down.

People power and a watchful non-Labor opposition in both houses of the Parliament had combined to bring down the big parties' privatisation chariot. Saving the Snowy Hydro from privatisation will boost public campaigns against other attempts to privatise water supplies in Australia. It will also give great heart to citizens fighting other high-handed government decisions dropped without warning on communities who deserve proper consultation - such as the thousand or more farmers fighting the Beattie government's unnecessary dams on the Mary and Logan rivers in Southeast Queensland.

But it would be foolish to think the Snowy win marks a seachange in Australian politics. To different degrees, the Coalition and Labor are tied to an economic irrationalism which says that the market knows best. That the unelected Stock Exchange is a better judge of community welfare than the elected Parliament.

A lot more water will flow over the dams before the power of public interest matches the power of corporate opportunism enough to prevent the sell-off of more public utilities. Medibank Private is next in line for sale by the Howard government.

A linchpin to halting privatisation - or, at least, ensuring fair public scrutiny before assets are sold - is the rescue of the Senate from government control. The voters can take that option at the election in 2007.

Senator Bob Brown is Parliamentary Leader of the Australian Greens.



The war on Iraq: disastrous policy, disastrous outcomes

ROD BARTON

'Is that all there is?'

You might be forgiven if you thought that these were the words from a popular song by Peggy Lee, but they were actually the words (or something very similar) that I was told our Prime Minister John Howard uttered after he was briefed by Australian intelligence shortly before the 2003 Iraq war. At that time President Bush was claiming that Iraq was a 'grave and growing danger', while the UK was telling the world that Iraq's weapons put us all just 45 minutes away from doom. But Australian intelligence was telling Mr Howard something very different about Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction.

To understand why there was such a divergence of views and why Australian intelligence agencies differed, it is instructive to look at what the United Nations weapons inspectors believed.

UNMOVIC

From 2001 to early 2003, I was an advisor to Hans Blix, the Executive Chairman of the UN Monitoring and Verification Commission. UNMOVIC had a massive database on Iraq, equivalent to over a million pages collected by its predecessor organization during seven years of inspections after the first Gulf War in 1991. Gradually the inspectors were sifting through this material to assess what weapons, if any, Iraq may have retained from that war, and what disarmament tasks remained to be completed. Their conclusion was that Iraq may have had a small number of old weapons now of uncertain reliability. But with few delivery systems these would not constitute a serious threat. However, if they existed, Iraq would need to destroy them to comply with Security Council resolutions.

A more difficult challenge facing the inspectors was to determine whether Iraq had restarted its weapons programs after inspectors were kicked out of Iraq in December 1998 following the US/UK bombing campaign Desert Fox. UNMOVIC's sources of information after 1998 were very limited and although 'member states' of the UN were encouraged to share their intelligence, in practice little of any significance had been received.

All that changed after the terrible events of 9/11. World politics shifted and the US now had a number of countries in the crosshairs. Iraq was identified as part of the Axis of Evil in President Bush's State of the Union address on 29 January 2002 when he told a frightened nation that 'Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade'

'Intelligence' without evidence

The problem for the CIA was that in early 2002 it did not have any reliable intelligence to support the President's statement. It did however have a number of rather dubious sources that were feeding them stories of renewed weapons programs. In its enthusiasm for support of the Administration, doubts evaporated, or at least were suppressed. The CIA now accepted - from defectors or dissidents - almost any information on WMD. This new 'intelligence' was gratefully received by the Administration and by September 2002, a National Intelligence Estimate was pieced together that had very firm conclusions. It stated that:

Iraq has continued its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs in defiance of UN resolutions and restrictions. Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons as well as missiles with ranges in excess of UN restrictions; if left unchecked, it probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade.

Iraq has largely rebuilt missile and biological weapons facilities damaged during Operation Desert Fox and has expanded its chemical and biological infrastructure under the cover of civilian production. [emphases mine]

These very definitive statements greatly puzzled us in UNMOVIC; we had seen no evidence that would support them. We therefore asked the US to share their intelligence with us and although the CIA declined to give us any detail, we were given a list of almost 50 sites that supposedly would lead us to hidden stockpiles or production equipment. When inspections resumed in November 2002, the inspectors worked steadily through this list, visiting site after site over a three month period. However, except for one site where some technical nuclear documents were found, none of the CIA information proved correct. Under other circumstances, the CIA might have been expected to question their sources and revise their assessment. Instead the US criticized UNMOVIC inspectors and made personal attacks against Hans Blix.

The CIA had got it seriously wrong, but the real problem was that US policy had galloped far ahead of the intelligence. For a variety of reasons, the Bush Administration had decided in early 2002 to depose the regime in Iraq and to justify it with the threat that Iraq's WMD posed to the US and the world. From then on, the intelligence scrambled to catch up.



In Australia

The situation in Australia was very different. Unlike their US counterparts Australian intelligence assessments were not too far off the mark and to a large degree paralleled what UNMOVIC believed. Thus for example in December 2002, the Defence Intelligence Organisation reported that with respect to Iraq's WMD 'there is no known chemical weapons production' and 'no known biological weapons production since 1991 and no known biological weapons testing or evaluation since 1991'.

'The CIA had got it seriously wrong, but the real problem was that US policy had galloped far ahead of the intelligence.'

It is true that towards the end of 2002, the Office of National Assessments in the Prime Minister's department was more upbeat than DIO but it too qualified its assessments by outlining the inherent uncertainties. Essentially, both organisations were reporting that Iraq posed no threat. It is little wonder therefore that Mr Howard reportedly asked 'Is that all there is?'. However this did not stop the government supporting the US in its disastrous war on Iraq.

By the end of 2004, the governments of the Coalition of the Willing finally seemed to accept that there was no WMD in Iraq but were now justifying the war by arguing that it brought democracy and human rights to Iraq. The war may have freed Iraq of one form of tyranny in the person of Saddam Hussein, but instead of democracy, it had brought other forms of tyranny: instability, violence, civil war.

Human rights

As for human rights, the US violates these in its treatment of Iraqi prisoners. I have seen evidence to indicate that some prisoners are subjected to systematic beatings, exposure to extreme heat or cold, sleep deprivation or some other form of physical and mental abuse. This is not simply the mistreatment of prisoners by some rogue soldiers as occurred at Abu Ghraib, but is authorised in an attempt to extract information. And it still continues. In these respects it is more sinister and of more concern. The practice is in fact torture as defined by the UN Convention Against Torture which the US only ratified with 19 exceptions and 'interpretations'. And it parallels worldwide practices by the US of rendition and maltreatment of prisoners elsewhere including Guantanamo Bay.

Australia, as part of the coalition, has a responsibility here. We cannot just be a member of the coalition when it suits us. Our government should, in the strongest terms, make it clear to our American allies that the practices of rendition, detention of prisoners without trial and torture are unacceptable. Anything less, and we too are culpable.

Rod Barton was a former DIO director of intelligence on WMD, a UN weapons inspector from 1991 to 1999, a special advisor to Hans Blix, and the senior advisor to the CIA in 2003/4 in the hunt for Iraq's missing weapons. He has recently written a book *The Weapons Detective (Black Inc)* about his experiences.

Illicit drugs - Policy bogey man or another political Tampa

RICHARD DI NATALE

It has been an enormous year for illicit drugs. A rise in opium production in Afghanistan, a global methamphetamine epidemic, a debate over the dangers of chronic cannabis use, and a number of Australians arrested overseas in high profile cases. Schapelle Corby, the Bali Nine, Michelle Leslie and most recently the tragic hanging of Van Nguyen mean that the issue of illicit drug use has continued to demand national attention.

Despite presenting a rational, evidence based position on illicit drugs during the 2004 federal election, the Greens were pilloried by the tabloid press. There has been significant debate within the Greens about how to approach this issue but one thing we all agree on is that we must be better prepared for such an attack in the future. It is an issue dominated by misinformation, propaganda, fear and half truths so the first step in this process is to ensure that we arm ourselves with some basic facts.

Drug trends

Globally, there has been a rise in opium production from the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) due to the fall of the Taliban. In Australia, however, heroin supply from the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand) - Australia's major source of heroin - has decreased significantly. Although this has resulted in a significant decrease in heroin overdose deaths, the news is not all good. The decrease in heroin use has been associated with a corresponding increase in methamphetamine use, almost certainly due to a substitution phenomenon. The use of ecstasy (and pills purporting to be ecstasy) has also increased, particularly among young people, while the proportion of cannabis users appears to have decreased significantly in recent years.

Harm Reduction

Rising patterns of drug use are a cause for concern because all drugs, both legal and illegal, have the potential for harm. There is the potential for overdose with illicit opiates such as heroin due to the unpredictable nature of the dose. There is the risk of idiosyncratic and toxic reactions, which although rare compared with the frequency of drug use, can cause harm in some individuals. The sharing of needles - sadly still common among some injecting drug users - is

associated with the transmission of blood-borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C. More recently the possibility of an association between chronic abuse of potent cannabis strains and psychosis has been described, although this potential link requires further research. Finally, substance dependence can develop after frequent drug use (not after first time injection as is sometimes assumed), which impacts negatively upon the lives of many people.

As Greens, we have a responsibility to implement measures that have been proven to reduce these harms and are based on the best available evidence. We must avoid hysterical, simplistic responses. Instead we should demonstrate that we understand that illicit drugs are not homogenous and require different responses. The harm reduction approach, which is already an important tenet of Australia's response to illicit drug use, is just such an approach.



'We must avoid hysterical, simplistic responses. Instead we should demonstrate that we understand that illicit drugs are not homogenous and require different responses.'

Harm reduction evolved in response to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users during the 1980s to reduce harms to both injecting drug users and the wider community. These harms include the social and economic costs of illicit drug use, the legal costs associated with the justice system and the impact upon basic rights such as access to health care and social services. Harm reduction recognises that despite the risks associated with drug use and despite our best efforts, some people will not stop using drugs. Given this undeniable reality the primary objective of harm reduction is to reduce the harmful consequences of

drug use, rather than focusing solely on reducing drug consumption and supply.

The harm reduction approach includes a number of complementary strategies. These include the provision of information and counselling to drug users, the provision of drug treatment and drug substitution services, peer outreach programs and the provision, distribution and disposal of clean needles and syringes. More recently it has included access to safe injecting rooms and medically prescribed heroin to registered users.

All of these approaches are supported by concrete evidence. Needle and syringe exchange has been shown in a number of studies to decrease the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C and other blood borne viruses. The evidence is also clear that drug substitution treatment (such as methadone and buprenorphine) for heroin-dependent individuals reduces the risk of overdose death and has beneficial impacts upon health, employment and general well being. The evidence is also mounting that, where they have been introduced, safe injecting rooms and heroin trials have produced positive outcomes for individuals and the broader community.

The common retort that such measures 'send the wrong message' or encourage drug use is simply not accurate. The published literature is clear and unambiguous on this point. The introduction of harm reduction measures such as needle and syringe exchange and safe injecting rooms is not associated with an increase in drug use. In the same way that we do not deny smokers access to treatment simply on the grounds that this would send the wrong message, we cannot and should not deny drug users access to interventions that save lives.

Law reform

The drugs policy that emerged from the Greens national conference in November 2005 recognises the importance of treating illicit drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal one. As a result the Greens continue to advocate for the replacement of criminal penalties for personal drug use with a system of civil sanctions, while continuing to support criminal penalties for the commercial supply of illicit drugs. This is not as radical as it might seem. The Western Australian and South Australian governments have already done this with regard to cannabis law and, despite abolishing criminal penalties for personal use, the prevalence of cannabis consumption in Australia is at its lowest level than in over a decade. This experience suggests that the argument that abolishing criminal penalties sends the wrong message doesn't wash.

The Greens have also called for the establishment of a drugs policy research institute to evaluate further changes to the current policy framework for illicit drugs. As Greens we accept that sound evidence rather than sensationalist headlines is the cornerstone of good public policy. So we must be prepared to support any regulatory measures that are proven to reduce harms.



Public support

Many of us worry that we might scare off potential voters by advocating for such 'radical' policies, particularly in light of our experience during the last federal election. It is a valid concern but not entirely justified. We would have a heroin trial in Australia, with significant public support, if it were not for the intervention of the Prime Minister in 1996. Cannabis reform in WA and SA was introduced with significant public support and federal and state governments currently fund a number of harm reduction interventions (needle and syringe exchange, drug substitution etc.) throughout Australia with strong bipartisan support. These policies exist because many Australians are directly affected by the harms associated with illicit drug use (some of which are a direct consequence of the current regulatory framework) and they understand that these policies have saved lives.

Illicit drug use is an issue that is likely to continue dominating the national agenda for the foreseeable future. While the government is likely to ramp up the 'Tough on Drugs' rhetoric, the Labor party is again split over the issue. We can be certain that they are unlikely to invite a campaign on an issue that is, at its core, about fundamental human rights. Rather than being the policy bogey man that some of us fear, a strong, principled, and evidence based position on illicit drugs has the potential to be another political Tampa.

Dr Richard Di Natale is a Public Health Specialist with the Australian International Health Institute and Health Spokesperson for the Australian Greens (Victoria).

Counterpoint

The article 'Rethinking ideas' by David McKnight in Green #19 provoked some lengthy and varied responses. Here we publish □ the Australian Greens website www.greens.org.au.

Max Bound

I agree with David McKnight that ecological sustainability is essential. But David's statement that 'The economic battle is not to redistribute wealth to create equality nor to abolish the market but to make the economy sustainable' is profoundly mistaken.

We need people's movements and legislative action by Governments, not to abolish markets, but to curb the power private corporations currently have. This, plus an end to the promotion of consumerism, and greater equity for all in a peaceful world are essential to achieving ecological sustainability.

We must restore political processes which once gave people some control via elected Governments, and democratic mechanisms which give people a say in what is produced and how it is produced and distributed.

J. R. Saul's last book and ideas promoted by Paul Hellever highlight a drive to take us back to Dickensian times. The current attack on unions and work place rights, the destruction of the Amazon Forests and Green House Gas proliferation are all aspects of the destructive character of modern corporation-controlled capitalism.

As Dr Peter Hay puts it '... the market cannot adequately value ecological goods ... because it cannot recognise ecological imperatives' (Hay 2002:204) - a point made also by H. E. Daly. In his last book, Nugget Coombs dealt with the need to change lifestyles and to reject consumerism. David McKnight's' article in Green magazine makes a similar point. But the important difference is that Coombs recognized the damaging logic of an economic system driven and governed by the drive for private profit.

Clare McCarty

Why was David McKnight's article considered important enough to place prominently in our National Magazine? My own view is ... that some parts confirm the obvious, others are wrong and the rest takes us backwards. ...

'The clash between labour and capital is not fundamental to a Greens analysis of the world' claims McKnight. Read the Charter: it states that 'We aim to transform the political, social and economic structures that oppress people...'. I think the relationship between labour and capital, and its superstructures, are central to this ...

Again, McKnight asserts that for the Greens, 'The economic battle is not to redistribute wealth to create equality nor to abolish the market but to make the economy sustainable'. Read the Charter. It says 'to break down inequalities of wealth and power which inhibit participatory democracy' and 'to introduce measures that redress the imbalance (in Social Justice) between rich and poor'. ... The free market is anathema in every way. It is about individualism, competition, consumerism, exploitation of people and the earth.

McKnight ... castigates us for using terminology that 'straitjackets new thinking into old categories'. Read the Charter. You will find no old categories there. On the contrary, while the ideas expressed derive from, or are transformations of, important concepts from the past they

are expressed within a new Greens philosophical framework. What is more, their achievement will bring about greater, more radical change than we have seen in history so far.

Christopher Nagle

The environment has no a priori political association. Concern for it has had connections across the entire spectrum of political opinion.

My guess is that there is at very most a twenty year window of opportunity left before irreversible damage to ecological systems starts to inflict large scale demographic collapse within our own species. Even if I am being an overly pessimistic panic merchant, I do not think we have enough time left to indulge the left. Greens have no option other than to win over Capital ... to attempt to build an at least socially uncontroversial Green consensus across the whole of society, including and in particular the administrators of the economic system

Only by convincing the people behind the facades of Capital that their system is too expensive to run; that its ecological, existential and cultural costs can no longer be borne; that their system will collapse disastrously and ignominiously unless they start to retreat from the consumerist paradigm right now; that their children will be every bit as much victims of failure to do this fast enough as everyone else's; and most importantly, that it is in their purview to redefine economic activity, standards of living and wealth in order that they can survive and prosper without having to destroy their own and our future; then and only then might anything major start to happen.

Capital has a monopoly on virtually all the resources needed to successfully negotiate the very bumpy and dangerous post-consumerist road. Without not just the co-operation of Capital, but its leadership out of the cul-de-sac we are heading for, we might as well put our heads between our knees and wait for the lights to go out.

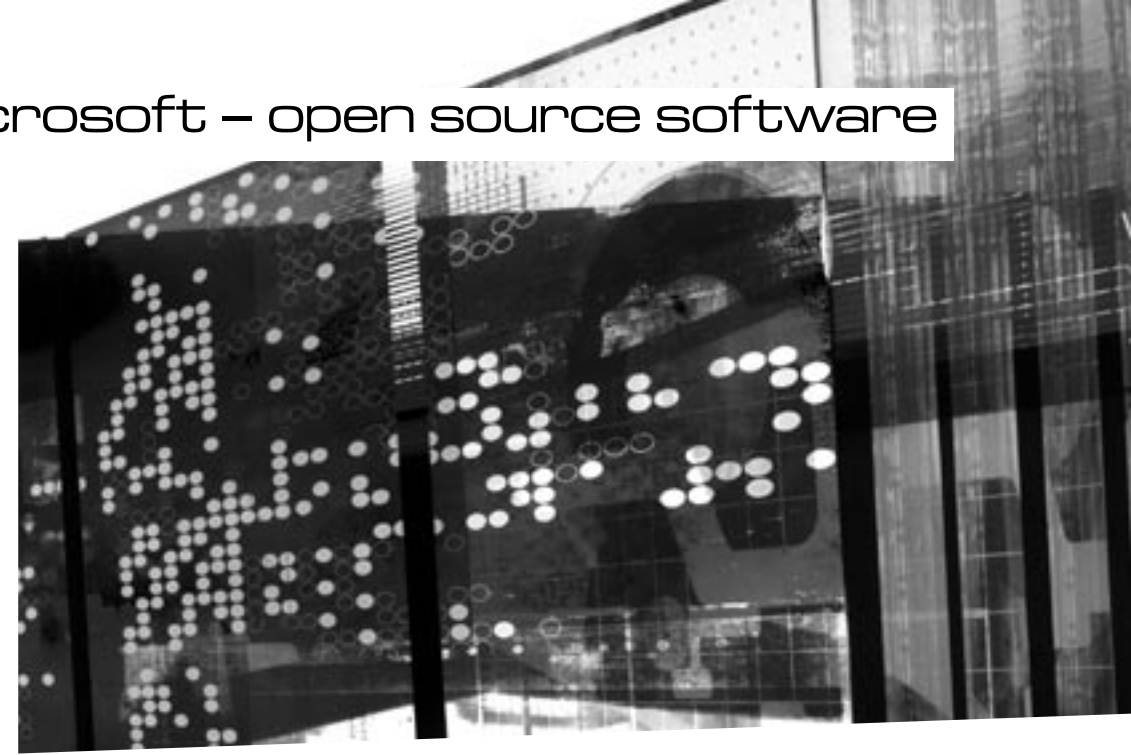
Jeff Richards

I agree with David McKnight's assertion that the Green movement exists as a distinct political tradition. One would encourage Greens to draw ideas and inspiration from that history while maintaining an open interest in other political traditions. The dialogue and arguments about what to do are healthy and essential.

I think that Dave McKnight is slightly off the mark with his suggestions that Greens can 'draw on conservative attitudes and instincts as a way of re-thinking political ideas and their political appeal'. For a start, the most significant question the Greens have to deal with is not the polity's conservatism, it is rather the tendency to populist reactions. Populism is an unstable mix of conservatism, liberalism and socialism. It is populism that poses the great challenge for Green politics. Second, one needs to be very cautious about adopting conservative values. I am astonished that McKnight can refer to conservative philosophers like Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott without reminding readers that at the core of their politics was a loathing of popular sovereignty (the 'excesses' of the masses) in favour of the power of elites.

Beyond Microsoft – open source software

JESS HODDER



'Control of technology resources in the coming decades will likely matter as much as control of natural resources has in the last century.'
(Open Sources 2.0 – Chris Di Bona et al)

In the current technology age, information is being held in a precarious position. The majority of us are using Microsoft's applications (including Word, Excel, and Internet Explorer) to read and edit our files. But what would happen if Microsoft suddenly went bankrupt and did not release any new versions of Office? Or - a more likely scenario - what would happen if Microsoft decided to not allow its new version of Office to open all of your old spreadsheets? You would have to choose between deleting all of those files, never to see them again, or remaining stuck in the past just so you could open your old files.

The best way to combat the vendor lock-in described above is to use Open Standards. Standards define how different file formats (.doc, .xls, .html, etc.) are constructed. A proprietary standard can only be inspected and altered by those licensed to do so, yet they may change it at will. However, anyone can inspect, criticise, or suggest enhancements to an Open Standard and any changes must be made by consensus. A current popular Open Standard is the Open Document standard, which is an alternative to Microsoft's proprietary standards. Open Documents are used by Open Office as well as other applications.

'We wouldn't allow Nike to manufacture our merchandise, so why would we let Microsoft control our electronic infrastructure?'

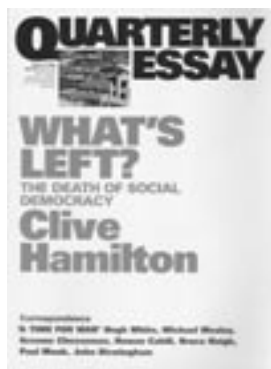
Similar to Open Standards, Open Source Software is software that is 'open' or 'free' for anyone to inspect and/or modify. Whilst it does not have a completely universal definition, Free or Open Source Software can be described as follows: when someone writes a program, they must freely release and distribute the source code. If anyone else then in turn modifies this 'free' source code, they in turn must also freely release and distribute their modifications. This continues so that the source code is always 'free' and anyone is able to read it and modify it.

The practical effect of releasing the source code means that the project has the potential to turn into something that is extremely collaborative. Additionally, if someone sees something useful in one 'free' program, they are then able to use it in a different 'free' program, saving them from having to reinvent the wheel - and increasing productivity.

Two examples of open source software are the Linux operating system and the Firefox web browser. Because they are both 'free' for anyone to test and modify, they have been written so that they are much less susceptible to viruses and other malicious attacks. It could be argued that Firefox only has 10% of the market share and therefore isn't as big a target for attacks as Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Linux and its web server (Apache), however, host over 60% of all websites, but it is Microsoft's IIS web server that suffers by far the most attacks against web servers.

We wouldn't allow Nike to manufacture our merchandise, so why would we let Microsoft control our electronic infrastructure?

Jess Hodder is a member of the Victorian Greens IT Working Group. The group hopes the IT policy prepared for their state election will become the basis of a national Greens IT policy.



What's Left? The death of social democracy

CLIVE HAMILTON

Quarterly Essay 21, 2006, \$14.95

Clive Hamilton gives an inspiring critique of what is wrong with much of contemporary Australian progressive politics. But the weakest conclusion of Hamilton's essay is his claim that 'all of this points to the need for a new political party'.

The Greens vote has been steadily growing over the last decade and there is no sign of that trend in support wavering. With this vibrant and growing force of Australian politics, Hamilton's analysis of the Greens is way too brief.

Firstly his charge that the Greens emphasis on environmentalism limits its appeal is an old analysis. Mandatory sentencing, the Tampa, the Iraq War and West Papua to name a few have put paid to those arguments.

Secondly Hamilton's claim that the eventual departure of Bob Brown will test the enduring appeal of the party - while obviously true - does not consider the growing experience and skill of new Greens operating in state and federal parliament.

Hamilton's third argument that Greens activists are ideologically wedded to fringe politics and work against broadening Greens appeal is actually the Greens challenge for the future - how to move from a protest, activist-based movement to a real power party.

The Greens great challenge remains to convince Australia that they will deal effectively with real national power and deliver real progress towards a humanitarian and environmental society.

Ben Oquist

This is an edited version of a piece first published in Quarterly Essay by Black Inc.

Here's a taste of what our reviewers have said. You can read the complete reviews on the Australian Greens website: www.greens.org.au



Australia Fair

HUGH STRETTON, 2005

UNSW Press, Sydney, 304pp.

RRP \$39.95

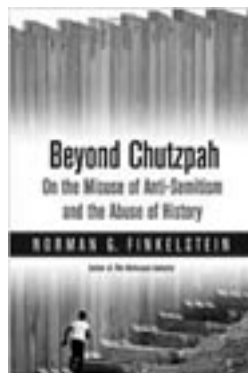
The kind of balance, sweet reasonableness and clear-thinking that is so characteristic of all Hugh Stretton's work, and so prominent in Australia Fair, is exactly what the Greens need in order to offer something better than nostrums from our rostrums.

The overall theme of the book is equality and fairness. There are chapters on housing, health and education, children, natural resources, work and a chapter on retirement, super and student incomes. Any one of these chapters offers meaty discussions relevant to the Australian Greens policies under revision right now.

There are four big picture chapters. 'Strategy' is particularly useful as it roughs out a costing of a big shift, though I think he underestimates the infrastructure needs. We need to be doing this - to rough out costings of our policy proposals, and then adjust them until they are fiscally responsible.

Stretton stands for the ordinary joys of life; of families, of backyards, of good work, of comfort, of recreation, of civility. We need to take this to heart, given our tendency (to adapt Manning Clark) to become the new 'straighteners' rather than the 'enlargers' we should be. We need to connect with ordinary life ... to arrive at better solutions that will actually get up.

Greg George



Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History

NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN, 2005

Verso, \$32.95

ISBN: 184467049X

The already polarised and overheated debates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been rekindled by the bête-noire of many in the Jewish community, Dr Norman Finkelstein. Beyond Chutzpah is a no-holds-barred attack on two recent books by Professor Alan Dershowitz - Why Terrorism Works and The Case For Israel.

The first part of Finkelstein's book tackles the early history of Palestine and Israel's creation. Beyond Chutzpah then turns its attention to the delicate topic of the 'new' anti-Semitism. Finkelstein offers a fresh slant on how definitions of anti-Semitism have been stretched by pro-Israel lobbyists to muzzle criticism of Israel. But claiming that the rise of anti-Semitism masks 'an unprecedented assault [by Israel] on international law' (p.45) is an exaggeration. Whatever Israel's violations of international law have been, they pale into comparison with what has transpired in Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and the Sudan.

The most convincing section of Beyond Chutzpah discusses Israeli actions in the Occupied Territories. Finkelstein provides a systematic corrective to Dershowitz's benign account of many of Israel's operations in the West Bank and Gaza.

Finkelstein's approach, however, is marred by his tendency to view the Palestinians, particularly its ineffectual leadership, as passive victims of Israeli 'brutality', and never holds it to account for continuation of the conflict

Kevin Judah White

Last Bastion

Our beautiful Australian coastline traces out beaches, cliffs and rugged mountains from one gorgeous headland to the next. In the name of progress, governments leap at chances to support developments of such locations. They do so in 'our name': to facilitate better usage; to ensure that users pay; and to maximise potential. Within a generation some places have become so exclusive that only the wealthy can afford their beauty; some past havens have become urban jungles; and some places have become homes to communities divided in ongoing struggles to stop senseless destruction of national icons. Numerous coastal towns now crush, under their own weights, the original beauties that they sought to exploit. We can't let this happen on the Wilderness Coast of southeast Australia.

From Cape Howe, on the NSW Victorian border, for 50km north to Eden, and for 180km southwest to Lakes Entrance there is no artificial interference with ocean swells, currents and sand flows. There are instead deeply loved locations along the way, free for all to use: swimmers, walkers, boaties, surfers, whale watchers, bird observers and fisherfolk. Few places are as user friendly to every one of these groups as Bastion Point near the mouth of the Mallacoota Inlet in the heart of the Wilderness Areas. The recently gazetted 'shared zone' recognises traditional uses of this area by prescribing sensible distance limits for boats to launch while safely allowing for nearby swimmers and surfers. For Bastion Point protects a small beach from the

notorious seas of the Bass Strait. It is also a headland that is home to ancient middens and extensive aboriginal cultural sites.

Bastion Point is both an idyllic home beach to many and a traditional holiday destination for thousands as it has been for generations. Yet, claiming to address fears of hypothetical, safety-related law suits, the East Gippsland Shire Council, with the support of Craig Ingram MLA for East Gippsland, proposes to carve a road through the middens, blast the natural rocks that form the swimming cove, dump tonnes of rocks into the ocean as a protective sea wall, and thereafter dredge a channel through the existing surf break. In sheer disbelief, townsfolk and visitors cry: 'What for?' Some of the town's abalone divers, not all, also favour the proposal, though for forty years licensed divers have successfully reached their abalone quotas in calm-weather launches. And therein lies an obvious concern: if the weather is too rough or the swell too big to launch from the existing boat ramp, the seas will rarely be safe for small craft. While failing for many years to upgrade the current well-used boat ramp, Council has effectively scare-mongered on safety. Its proposal boasts ninety percent usability, thereby attracting extra boats, in apparent ignorance of the safety disaster of easier access into rough seas. Another option, clearly, must be pursued. Help us, please.

Friends of Mallacoota

<http://www.savebastionpoint.org>



Bob's back page



With Glenda Pickersgill on the Mary River protest. The river is home to the rare and ancient lungfish.

8.5 percent

The Australian Greens is now the clear third force in Australian politics. The Neilsen poll has us on 11%, Newspoll 7% and Morgan, 7.5% - average 8.5% and solid. We are maturing as a national organisation. The decision to formalise the Parliamentary Leader position (in November) and a national members' register for our Canberra head office (in July) are great steps forward. My special thanks to Mark Jeanes whose year of service as our first National Officer has done so much to strengthen the Greens and to guide our way forward.

Senate selection

It is the season of selection of Senate candidates for the Greens in each state and territory. Here are a few points to consider. All of our senators must be first rate performers, capable of a strong presence in the Senate and in the media. We should maintain strong female representation and also look to recruit young MPs with high potential. Ideally, the candidates will win support from that next 10% of voters who might vote Green but aren't yet sure. They should enjoy hard work - long days, difficult subjects, and the tirades of opponents. Experience in business, the activist non government sector or the wider world - and a good sense of humour - are real pluses.

Beetles at Bondi

Special thanks to Talan Atkins and Margaret Blakers for our jazzy Sunday fundraiser at Sydney's Bondi Pavilion in June. It was to raise funds for our huge challenge to Forestry Tasmania's logging of critical wildlife habitat in the Wielangta (pronounced why-langta) Forest on Tasmania's East Coast. Find out more at www.on-trial.info. The case culminates in a three day hearing in Hobart's Federal Court on 29 - 31 August and has ramifications for all Australia's rare and endangered species. If you would like a Wielangta Stag Beetle brooch, try your local Greens shop or my office. They are \$10.00 each and proceeds help pay the court costs.

Cry from the heart

Herman Wanggai, a spokesman for the 43 West Papuan asylum seekers, was jailed twice by the Indonesian military before reaching Australia. He joined a delegation to Parliament House and here is his plea for West Papua:

We have maintained our dignity in the face of oppression, insult and prejudice. So many of our people have

suffered and died. They will continue to suffer and die under the Indonesian military regime occupying our land. But we won't stop our struggle for justice. We look to God and we look to people of goodwill like yourselves and pray you hear our cry.

My former media officer, Ben Oquist, has teamed up with philanthropist Ian Melrose to campaign for the West Papuans' freedom.

Lake of fire

The elders of the Exclusive Brethren sect have warned me of the Biblical 'lake of fire' if Greens' social policies aren't dropped. Exclusive Brethren members have run expensive anti-Green campaigns in New Zealand and across Australia, most recently in Tasmania. My motion for a Senate inquiry into this sect, its members who are political activists, any connections with the Howard government and family excommunications, will be voted on in August. Exclusive Brethren's Elect Vessel is businessman Bruce Hales, who lives in John Howard's electorate of Bennelong in Sydney. He is said to be the spiritual descendent of St Paul, though he is a lot wealthier. Ex-Exclusive Brethren members, who remain caring and intelligent Christians, have contacted me with harrowing stories of the Exclusive Brethren's impact on their lives. Exclusive Brethren members aren't allowed to vote or do military service. Meanwhile, Amanda Lohrey's excellent and reassuring *Quarterly Essay*, 'Voting for Jesus' is in your bookstore or newsagent. And talking of such, have you caught up with *The Monthly Magazine*. It rates AAA for Australian current affairs and opinion.

Global Greens

I've set up a Global Greens account at Bendigo Bank to receive one percent of my senatorial salary. If you would like to join me in funding international Green link-ups in this globalizing world, just call my office for the account details.

Dam Madness

With Prue Cameron, I visited the flood areas behind Premier Beattie's proposed dams on the Mary and Logan Rivers. What blinkered thinking. Brisbane should, instead, lead the world in water conservation policy - it's cheaper, creates more jobs and would be a boon to the export of water-savings technologies.

Many thanks,

Bob



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in a better
world*



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"Like water, be gentle and strong. Be gentle enough to follow the natural paths of the earth, and strong enough to rise up and reshape the world." - Brenda Peterson

