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The

# Potoroo

Review

\$1.30

No. 195

Environment East Gippsland

## OLD GROWTH GAMES

**After the 2006 elections, John Thwaites and Steve Bracks promised to protect East Gippsland's old growth while not reducing what was there for loggers to cut - an impossible task.**

John Thwaites put a couple of industry supporters in charge of this little job. Meanwhile, other logging lobbyists were demanding more areas of old growth be given to them, including the logging of Special Protection Zones. EEG wrote to the Minister warning them not to go near this option. We received a non-committal reply.

Then Premier Bracks and Minister Thwaites bailed out together and left the mess in the hands of the new Premier, John Brumby, and Minister, Gavin Jennings.

The maps of areas planned for protection were either given to the logging lobbyists to fill in, were not double checked by botanists, or both. Almost all the ones west of the Snowy River are absolute struggling rubbishy sparse regeneration that even the loggers would sniff at. It's THAT bad.

Brumby and Jennings have been cautious about changing these areas on the map. But if they leave them as they are, there is ample evidence that their 'significant stands of old growth' are in fact dapped-out

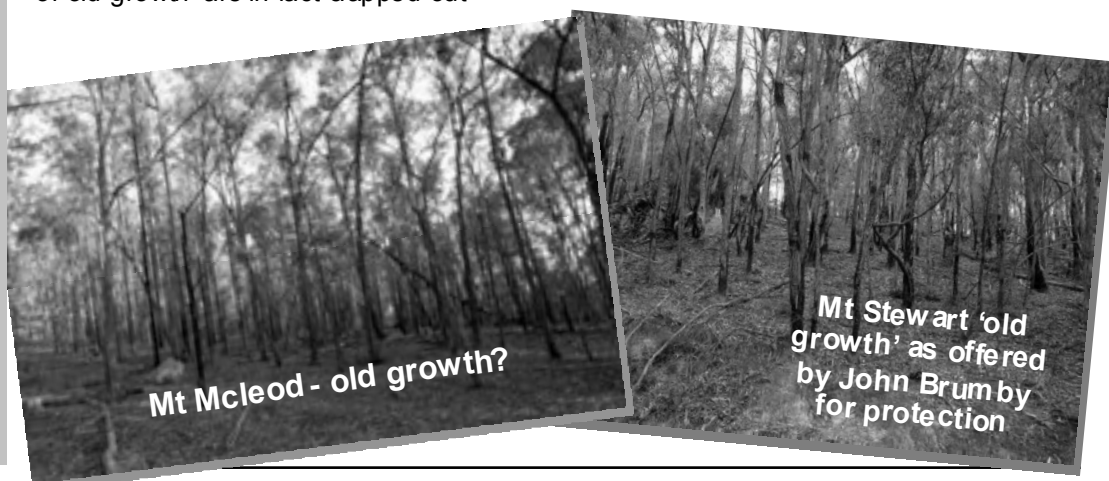
regrowth that is both grazed and burnt. John Renowden from the VNPA spent many weeks up in East Gippsland documenting and photographing these disconnected patches.

The Brumby government has to stop playing tootsies with the dedining but demanding woodchip-driven industry and protect forests. The ALP can no longer keep protecting the industry that destroys critical carbon sinks for a handful of jobs, especially while it also burns millions of tonnes of coal.

We would love to see Gavin Jennings and John Brumby do a turnaround and reassess Victoria's forest destruction in light of the urgent climate crisis.

If you'd like to ask them to get serious about this, please write to them c/- Parliament House Spring St Melbourne or [john.brumby@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:john.brumby@parliament.vic.gov.au) or [gavin.jennings@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:gavin.jennings@parliament.vic.gov.au)

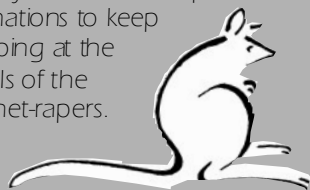
Jill



# The Potoroo Review

This is the newsletter of Environment East Gippsland, Australia's longest running forest campaign group. We bring you the facts about forests and the environment that rarely make it to the mainstream media.

We never worry about biting the bureaucracy's hand as it never feeds us. That means we rely totally on membership and donations to keep nipping at the heels of the planet-rapers.



Membership - \$15 or \$12 conc. (includes newsletter).

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Tax deductible donations can be sent to us at the above address made out to EEG. Receipts will be issued promptly.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Potoroo is an endangered 'mini kangaroo' which survives in East Gippsland's forests. It eats fungus, so digs a lot of dirt, and like us, is often threatened by loggers.

Articles which appear in the *Potoroo* are the opinions of the authors' and not necessarily those of EEG.

Printed on Recycled Supreme 100% - made from 100% post consumer waste, de-inked and bleached (chlorine free process).

## Winter greetings -

I've been enjoying the Wintry weather lately, wood fire in the evening, silvery frosts in the morning, softer sunshine and even the strong winds that make the landscape come alive with tree tops swaying and bowing. As a wise person once said - there's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.

## By-election

This issue is about a month behind schedule. Thank ex-Senator Peter McGauran for that. He bailed out of Gippsland after 25 years when the Nationals lost power last November. I got myself caught up in the Federal by-election campaign during May and June. More on that later, but election campaigns are often hard and fast and much more stressful than day to day forest campaigning.

## Potoroo goes electronic

If people would like their Potoroo sent as a huge PDF file via email instead of, or as well as, their hard copy, please let me know (see email just to the left there). As the EEG office has now upgraded to satellite broadband (*but it's still solar powered*) you can now read your Potoroo 2 weeks earlier than normal.

## Membership gets modern as well

We are finding more and more people don't have cheque books what with new fandangled web banking, B Pay, Pay Pal, and various other virtual money exchanges. So - after much investigating by Treasurer Trevor and Web-boss Joe, we've worked

# Jill's Jottings



out that we can put a PayPal button on our website for you to renew membership or donate a few dollars. This will be coming very soon if it's not already there by the time you receive this newsletter. Cheques are still happily accepted as well.

## Cooridnator's limits

I hate to say this but the demands of the campaign, the farm and the business are not easing off. So something has to give. The business is running at half throttle as it is, the farm is holding together with bailer twine and no 8 wire but the forest-saving is the thing that can never be economised. Well ... two things might change there. Unless there is some more help (on farm or in office), the Potoroo could be scaled back to one issue every 4 months, and the Easter Forests Forever Camp let go. Very sad I agree. Unless someone reliable would like to organise the advertising, bookings and camp set-up, it could fold. Let me know if you can think of anyone who'd like this job organising the next camp (\$500 payment). Meanwhile - here's a little winter rhyme ...

Stay warm ... and bug-free,  
enjoy a storm ... and hug a tree

Jill

**New email for EEG :**   
**eeg@eastgippsland.net.au**

## Eco-shout

Eco-shout is designed to be a catalyst to action for groups and individuals involved in the environment in Australia. The Eco-shout website receives over 150,000 hits a month and is the first point of contact for many tertiary students looking to work on or start their own environmental project. You can list an organisation or campaign, post an

event, job vacancy, new volunteer opportunities or use their car pooling system. All these services are free. Alternatively, you can become a member of Eco-shout. Membership for small environmental organisations is \$90 a year. To become a member, email membership@eco-shout.org or go to www.eco-shout.org.

# Victoria's forests - globally carbon rich

**The rich, wet undisturbed forests of Victoria hold over 2,000 tonnes of carbon per hectare in the above-ground biomass.**

These are astronomical numbers that are far larger than the 90 tonnes the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was using as the default value.

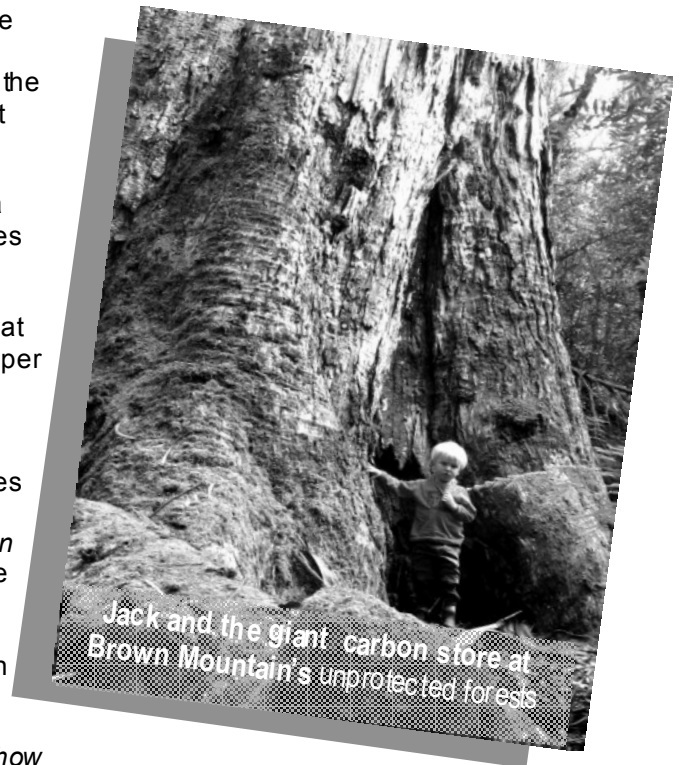
The forests of SE Australia, Tasmania and Queensland have an extremely important carbon offset role in a country like Australia, which is one of the biggest coal and iron ore exporters anywhere on the planet.

Professor David Lindenmayer from the ANU says that governments need to rethink the way we use and abuse our

forests very quickly, because the carbon value of those forests may well far exceed the value that we're going to get from selling them to a pulp mill.

Dr Lindenmayer had done a rough calculation from figures used by Westpac Bank and AGL of a very cheap \$19 a tonne for carbon. Multiply that by 2,100 tonnes of biomass per hectare in a wet forest in Victoria, then times that by 200,000 hectares of just the tall wet ash forest and it gives you a number close to \$8 billion (*eight thousand million dollars!*). The royalties to the Victorian government from those wet forests in the Central Highlands are tiny in comparison.

Radio National's *Science Show* 7.6.08 / Jill



## Pulpmill backer backs out

In May, ANZ told Gunns it won't be funding its \$2 billion pulp mill in northern Tasmania. ANZ has been Gunns' main banker for 22 years but was facing a volcanic reaction from customers and shareholders if it helped get the mill built. This announcement was quite a body blow, but Gunns grimaced and said there were plenty of other financiers just itching to throw money at their project. Macquarie Bank was reportedly considering involvement.

In this world of time-sensitive projects, on the global it's possibly snookered. Timber analyst, Robert Eastment of IndustryEdge, believes it will be a challenge to achieve funding for a project this size in the current international credit climate.

Sydney businessman Geoffrey Cousins is also warning of a public backlash against companies that help Gunns fund the pulp mill; even international lenders will spark a hostile reaction if they fund the mill. He said the protests against the Gunns mill were probably almost more widely reported in the London newspapers than they were in Australian newspapers.

Gunns was aiming to start mill construction this winter.

The Age, 23.5.08

## Skills shortage threatens forestry sector

A critical skills shortage is threatening the future of the wood and paper products industry. A plantation company, ITC, said foresters, saw doctors, wood machinists, harvesting machine operators as well as general tradies like electricians, engineers, fitters and truck drivers were all hard to find. This worker drought even includes a lack of administration, accounting, management and marketing people. That's been fairly obvious for years in the native forest sector though. It's hardly surprising that young people don't want to study forestry just to then help cut forests down.

The ITC head blamed the jobs shortage in part to "the 'demonisation of the industry' by more radical parts of the green movement." But he also admitted the high wages in the mining industry also made it hard to attract workers. Plantation logging is becoming more technically advanced, so employees need more sophisticated skills.

With the maturation of plantations and the opening of more processing plants, the plantation industry is set to grow, but not without workers.

The Age, 23.5.08

# A sorry state of forest affairs

**Sponsored and praised by logging unions and supporter groups like VAFI, Australia's State of the Forests Report 2008 was launched at Bairnsdale's Auswest sawmill in late May - a pertinent location.**

Intended to be "an essential reference for policy makers and the wider community," the five-yearly forest audit reads more like a marketing brochure pitching pro-logging views, decorated with poor science. It urges us to "use Australian forest products with pride" whilst delivering the bad news in a most auspicious way.

## **Forest loss - not from logging!**

We are assured that previous, bad surveying tools "largely explain" the shocking 10% 'disappearance' of remaining forests in the last five years and reassured that "little of the (15 million hectares discrepancy) has to do with real forest loss".

The 200,000 hectare ruin of old growth forests since 2003 is blamed on fire damage, disease and some "re-mapping" (post clear-fell?), admitting dismissively that "logging is also a contentious issue".

Regardless of 'reclassification of forest types', 'boundary adjustments' or 'remapping', we have 10% less forest than we all thought. Does this mean that Regional Forest

Agreements, logging plans and sustainable logging standards have been falsely based on gross over-estimates...or heinously breached?

The government wasn't worried about over-logging and wobbly estimates because, allegedly, in the states where 'sustainable forest management' standards were crook, "remedial action was taken".

## **Logging not seen as a loss**

Clearfell logging was rarely used as an example of forest disturbance and there are no real figures representing the loss of forest due to commercial logging. Instead, a conservative estimate of a quarter of a million hectares lost per year between 2000 and 2004 is given, "due mainly to clearing for agriculture and urban development".

Of Australia's forests, 76% remain unprotected from clearing. Of what little is left of our irreplaceable old growth, 'sustainable' logging is allowed to scrap another third. Just how they can sustain 400 year old forests on 50 year rotations they don't explain.

The number of known forest-dwelling threatened species increased to 1,315 [from what?], "predominantly" due to impacts caused by "introduced species and unsuitable fire regimes". No mention of clearfelling or prescribed burns as an impact, as it was rationalised that some species "occur so rarely in the wild that it is not possible to assess their sensitivity to logging".

The report sets forth a counterfeit argument that carbon emissions caused by logging a forest will be benevolently offset by the remaining forests.

Despite the report's attempted trade-off between ecology and economics, the report's figures reveal that plantations are more economically valuable for logging and that native forests are more valuable left undisturbed, for biodiversity conservation, carbon storage, fresh water/air supply and social/cultural dependencies. The report also mentions briefly (though without emphasis or detail) that undisturbed, healthy forests have industrial/ economic values too.

*Carmen Bytes*

## **Blue gum farms awash with jobs**



There are 1,000 jobs vacancies on offer in logging that are secure, well paid and conflict free.

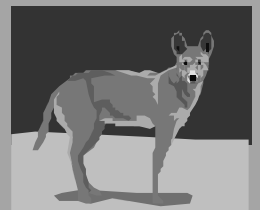
Labourers, fallers, truckies, admin. staff, logistics, mechanics, engineers and supply staff are all needed to get the plantation industry running in Western Victoria. Trees are now mature and screaming to be processed but there is a shortage of workers. The Southern Grampians Shire needs to import the skills and is looking as far afield as WA. Maybe Michael O'Connor could stop carrying on about preserving a few jobs knocking down native forests and help to settle his union members over in the west.

ABC regional radio 5.5.08

## **Wild dog group urges end to aerial baiting trials**

The North-East Wild Dog Management Group says recent trials of aerial baiting show no evidence that it is effective and recommend that it be stopped. The Minister has agreed. This is great news. They also recommended more research on the effectiveness of 1080.

It's a shame that an unknown number of non-target species and endangered quolls have probably been poisoned while this costly trial was carried out, more to silence noisy farmers than to achieve any useful outcome.



ABC 26.5.08 / Jill

# STRZELECKI deal was a dud

You might have seen the government telling us they protected 20,000 ha of South Gippsland's long-suffering forests. There are only tiny remnants left of this once vast expanse of tall wet forest that supported the tallest trees on earth.

Conservationists down that way mapped out what they call the Cores and Links in 2001 - the bits left in the Strzeleckis that are critically important for protection. As part of this latest 'protection' deal, 1,500 ha of Mountain Ash forest inside the 8,000 ha of Cores and Links will be clearfelled, mainly for woodchips, over the next 20 years. Only after the logging companies have pocketed their profits, the 8,000 ha will then be fully managed as a reserve.

The Kennett government leased South Gippsland's public forests to the Hancocks plantation company in 1998. They were meant to only log the state-owned plantations, not the rare public forests. However, due to

deliberately mis-defining regrowth ash forests as plantation, Hancocks has logged them for years, against government policy but with government approval. They have been shameless about this. Even the government experts in the Land Conservation Council told Mr Kennett that these forests were in fact FORESTS, not plantations.

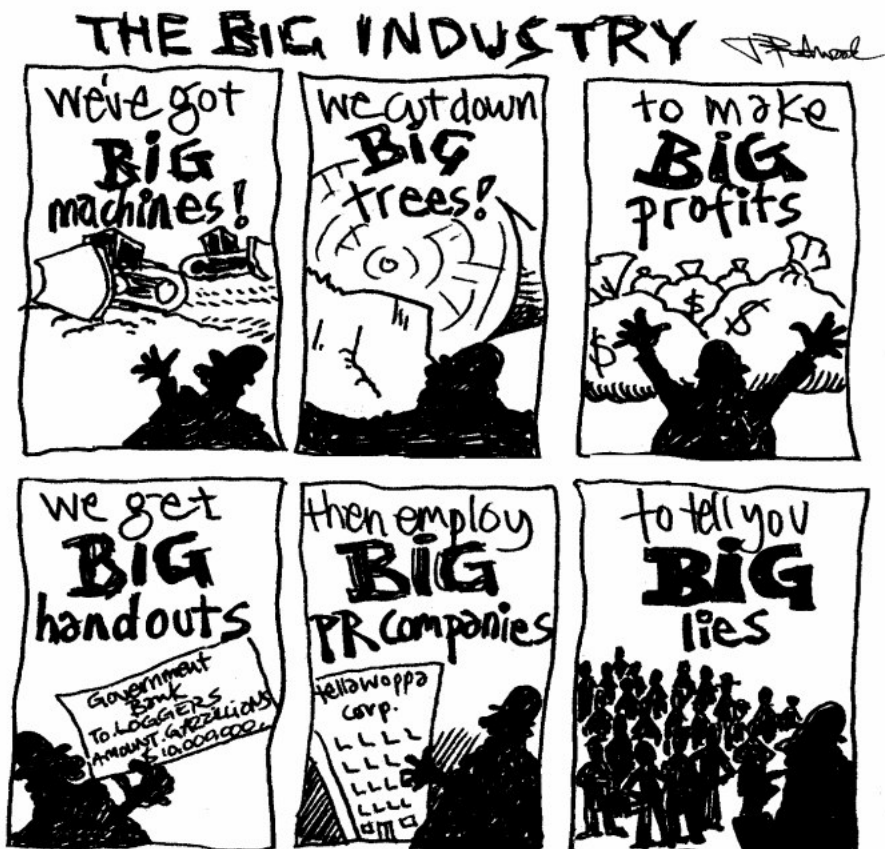
It has been government policy for years to outlaw clearing of native forests to replant a commercial plantation. In June this year, Mr Brumby formalised this very activity as a 'conservation win'. About 12,000 ha of forest that Hancocks said it didn't ever intend to log anyway will be put into some sort of reserve. The important 8,000 ha of Cores and Links will still have 1,500 ha cut down over the next 20 years in this plan. Then the area should finally get protection. What a 'win'. At least they have agreed to buffer the rainforests with 60 metre buffers when they log inside the proposed reserve.

The government's Green Paper on Biodiversity was being paraded around the state while it made this sneaky deal on forests.

Environmentally concerned voters are exasperated by similar announcements - whether it's bay dredging, the desal plant, gas plant on the Snowy estuary, bulldozed firebreaks in parks, massive burns, or old growth logging ... it all comes with huge spin to cover the ugly reality.

With this agreement, Hancocks will retain the rights to any future carbon credits from the protected areas. The Strzelecki Cores and Links reserve will be managed by Trust for Nature, which is unusual. Why not a gazetted park? The government says the proposed areas 'offer mandated protection'. We're not sure what this jargon means. Is it for sure or is it just 'maybe'?

*Jill / Save Our Strzeleckis Coalition / Govt media release 30.5.08*



## self-interested...

Dmitry Orlov sums it up so well: "Are we going to continue destroying the planet, just to be somewhat more comfortable for a little while?"

Our answer from the couch is "Yes! Yes! Give me more - now!"

## ...plague species

Around 97% of the mammalian flesh on the planet is either human flesh or the flesh of other mammals domesticated by humans.

Professor Tony McMichael

Nature and Society Forum  
24/4/08

# Victoria's endangered species dizzy from political spin

**Out of the blue came an announcement at the end of June that three endangered species will gain some protection in Gippsland and the North East by 75,000 ha of reserves.**

Despite other enviro groups singing the government's praises we were a little more careful (being hardened sceptics). When we looked into this we found that 65,000 of the 75,000 ha were already in parks and reserves.

There is still some good news though. The declining population of Baw Baw Frogs have gained 5,500 ha and the endangered Leadbeaters Possum in the Central Highlands seems to have gained an additional 4,000 ha.

The Long-footed Potoroo in East Gippsland does not appear to have won any new habitat above existing reserves and Parks. We're still not sure about North East's forests.

The endangered Spot-tailed Quoll, Gippsland's three large forest owls - the Masked, Sooty and Powerful, and our old growth are hopefully next in line for recognition and let's hope, decent protection rather than re-branding existing reserves as new owl refuges. These and other species' habitats are currently being clearfelled with full approval of Mr Brumby.

## **Conservation announcement with no public input**

Environment Minister, Gavin Jennings, said the "package of measures" - (whatever they are), "came after detailed consultations between the Department of Sustainability and Environment and VicForests." But they didn't consult any environment groups. The government's media statement said it was nice to see the logging and conservation sides of government working things out (!) "...while also giving the timber industry greater certainty with a steady, sustainable supply of timber from Victoria's eastern

forests." This is the bit we don't like the sound of. Just what have been the secret trade-offs to keep the industry quiet for the new 10,000 ha? When do we hear about this side of it? Or - being even more cynical - was this new branding of existing reserves simply a means to give the logging industry more more more while giving us diddely-squat?

The government must expect this response after having badly scarred us and our forests for the last 30 years.

## **Rainforests**

This promise was hard to be joyous about. Gavin Jennings said, "... *this action statement will ensure they (rainforests) will be better protected from fire, land clearing, timber harvesting and road impacts and weed invasion.*" But **have a look at the story on** page 9 of dodgy rainforest identification and therefore clearing. This latest rainforest protection mainly deals with the threat of myrtle wilt in the Otways - almost 20 years after it was identified as a threat.

The June EPA annual logging audit report showed that breaches against protected rainforests were STILL the most common breach of the logging code.

However it's great news for the little frog and the 'Leddies'. Let's hope they keep hanging on.

Jill

## **The top 100 endangered mammals**

This global list features some of Gippsland's very own threatened mammals. The Zoological Society of London calls them EDGE species - *Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered* mammals.

Coming in at 28 is our Mountain Pygmy Possum - on the edge of its melting alpine habitat. Then there's the Central Highland's Leadbeater's Possum at no. 54, being pushed over the edge by ceaseless logging and DSE's endless firebreaks. At no. 70 is our Long-footed Potoroo, hanging onto the edge of its forested home as it's bulldozed down. Then along with many other rare animals, comes the Indian Rhino at 74, African Elephant at 77 and Blue and Fin Whales at 88.

Sadly, only one third of the top 100 EDGE mammals are receiving active conservation attention. The disappearance of these species would also mean the death of an evolutionary history that they represent.

*Zoological Society of  
London*



# Trying to mix woodchips and water

In April, Peter Campbell from EEG attended a 'Stakeholder Reference Group' meeting, as part of the government's "Wood and Water Sustainability Assessment Project". It was as we expected - a poorly devised process to maintain the status quo.

The group is to look at options to address water loss due to logging in catchments. It was a promise by the Bracks government in its 2004 report "Securing our Water Future Together". It was also to provide studies and investigations but they remain unfinished.

EEG's concerns about the process include:

## 1. Information not available

The following three inputs are now well overdue for release:

- Timber substitution studies
- Hydrological studies
- Water quality review

We were informed that they were "very close to being released". But this was also the case last year. The process should not continue without them.

## 2. Conflicting criteria

The criteria listed were in conflict. It wants logging to:

- \* *aim to improve water yield;*
  - \* *work within existing government policy; and*
  - \* *ensure that current government log supply commitments are met.*
- Increasing water yield while maintaining the over-logging of critical habitat are at odds. Also - "aim" does not mean "achieve".

They also want logging options to include:

- *phasing out of logging;* (later changed to phasing 'down' ...)
- *a reduction of the net area of logging following the expiration of current legal obligations;* (ie reduce logging once the best areas have been trashed)
- *substitution of native forest logs with plantation logs;*
- *substitution of forest logs inside the water catchment with forest*

*logs outside the catchment;*

- *thinning;* (ie treat forests as monoculture plantations)
- *various logging rotation lengths*

The government wants to sell logs to Maryvale's woodchip mill for years to come, thereby protecting commercial interests. However, the error in promising those log volumes in the first place should be reassessed.

## 3. Poor options for managing forests

Various logging options were tabled, but none suggested ending logging by 2010. Peter stated that this option was essential. The government had raised community expectations by its commitments in their '02 and '04 reports on water.

We were told that the 2010 option would be "assessed but not presented to government". Peter reiterated that it must be.

## 4. Carbon storage in forest

The carbon sink issue was only looked at in a minimalist way - and only tree trunks were counted. Peter pointed out that carbon storage in forests included understorey, tree roots, sub-soil life and humus.

## Boycotting the process

The process is structured to keep the logging industry happy. A letter was sent to DSE outlining EEG's concerns and that we will not participate further if an option for stopping logging in catchments by 2010 is not included. The Wilderness Society, The Central Highlands Alliance and the ACF are also set to boycott this seemingly pre-determined set-up. Our points of concern and the serious failings of this process have been ignored.

Protecting forests to increase water yields is essential in all Victorian catchments including East Gippsland, Central Highlands and the Murray Darling basin. If they don't include the 2010 deadline for logging option and

release the long-overdue promised reports, EEG will have 'input' from 'outside' - via community campaigns.

A Victorian logging industry justifications for logging catchments is almost exactly the same as the current government position. Suggested considerations in any review also seems remarkably similar. A coincidence? Have a look for yourself -

[http://www.vafi.org.au/documents/VAFIseminar30Mar06combined\\_000.pdf](http://www.vafi.org.au/documents/VAFIseminar30Mar06combined_000.pdf) (a 3mb PDF download)

Peter Campbell / Jill

## Logging in catchments is bad because:

- water is lost at about a litre a second but only 15% of the wood is used for timber (2% for high value products) and 85% is woodchipped
- it is feeding the 'need' for the desalination plant (which will cost \$9,000 per ML) as well as the controversial north-south pipeline (diverting from the Murray Darling system to Melbourne)
- endangered Leadbeater's Possum habitat is being destroyed
- the government is not honouring its '02 and '04 commitments
- there is a stealthy conversion of forests into plantations
- the government is ignoring the public and doing deals with industry.
- Climate change has reduced autumn rainfall into water catchments by 40% across Victoria since 1950.





# Shorts



## Councils want logging stopped

Total population represented in a position opposing the logging of catchments is **1,221,650** people living in Melbourne and regional Victoria - and growing.

That's 12 councils all up so far. Thanks to: City of Yarra, City of Bayside, City of Boroondara, City of Kingston, City of Port Philip, City of Melbourne, City of Knox, City of Moreland, City of Whitehorse, Shire of Yarra Ranges, Cardinia Shire and the Maroondah City council.

*Peter Campbell / Sarah Rees*

## Deer hunters ♥ pests

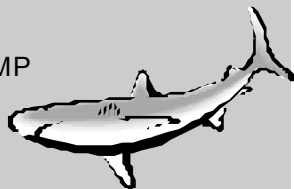
In mid June, the Supreme Court handed down a decision against the Australian Deer Hunters Association and ordered them to pay costs. The ADHA took the State Government to the court over declaring the Sambar deer a pest and open to be shot at any time. The Association wanted them protected with a set open season. The members and branches of the ADA, who might never have agreed to take court action, will now have to help pay the court costs.

*Gippsland ABC*

## Boycott shark fin eateries

Shark finning is banned in Australia. The fins are cut off live sharks which are then thrown back and left to die. However, we import thousands of kilograms of dried shark fins every year from countries that have not banned shark finning. This means Australia is still responsible for thousands of mutilated sharks. Sharks are long lived and reproduce relatively late in life. With shark populations plummeting worldwide the Qld Government is considering a commercial shark fishery in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. All Australians have been urged to boycott shark fins and shops selling this dish to help stamp out this brutal practice.

Sue Pennicuik MP  
12.6.08



## "Killer cornflakes"

Climate change may lead to a rise in aflatoxins in cereal crops. Aflatoxins occur in peanuts, but scientists are now looking at aflatoxins in other crops, particularly maize. They predict it could be the most potent liver toxin ever recorded. The effects of mycotoxins have been known since the Middle Ages, when rye bread contaminated with ergot fungus caused mass hallucinations, manic depression, gangrene, abortions, reduced fertility and painful, convulsive deaths when the bread was eaten over a long period of time.

The most important group of mycotoxins in Australian maize is aflatoxins that thrive in warm moist conditions and attack stressed plants.

*Nature and Society Forum via  
[www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au)*

## Gum-ho!

With maniacal haste, proposals for extensive Red Gum logging on private land in NSW are being approved. In just six months, the Department of Environment and Climate Change has approved the logging of 35,182 hectares of Red Gum forests on private land. That's 10 times the area logged each year on public lands in the region! This amounts to the equivalent of 280 football fields of Red Gum approved for logging every day for the last six months.

The gung-ho approvals allow industrial scale logging and patch-clearfelling in sensitive Red Gum ecosystems, including vast blocks along the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers, sensitive wetlands that are already severely drying up, and the habitats of the iconic, endangered Barking Owl and Squirrel Glider. More info: [www.redgum.org.au](http://www.redgum.org.au)

*National Parks Association /  
Carmen Bytes*

## Upside of Crisis

When Soviet Union support of Cuba collapsed in 1989, there were serious food and fuel shortages. From 1991 to 1995, Cubans got only about 1800 calories a day and walked or cycled their way around. As a result there was an average drop in body mass index of 1.5 in the whole population. Obesity rates halved and in the following years deaths from diabetes fell by 51%, coronary artery disease dedined by 35% and stroke by 20%.

*New Scientists 12.4.08 via NSF*

## Plastic bags or petrol

The International Energy Agency estimates the plastics and packaging industry now gobbles up around 8% of total global oil production.

*The Age 30.6.08*

DON'T BE A RATBAG!



TAKE A STRING BAG!



# Wielangta

## injustice

**We were holding our breath on the outcome of Bob Brown's Wielangta High Court appeal application. It would have had a positive spill-over for the survival of our own threatened species in East Gippsland. But the collusion between the Howard government and Tasmania's corrupt influence has sentenced Australia's nationally threatened, forest dependent species to the gallows.**

Over the last three years, Tasmania's Wielangta forests have been 'exhibit A' through several court cases to test the effectiveness of the Federal endangered species act (EPBC). The Act specifically states it doesn't protect any threatened species in an area covered by a Regional Forest Agreement (RFA), because the RFA is meant to protect them.

### Species protected on paper

In 2006, Bob won the original Federal Court case challenging the EPBC Act, by proving that the RFA does not in fact protect three endangered species in the Wielangta area. After Bob's court win, Prime Minister Howard and Premier Lennon altered the Tassie

RFA to agree that, despite the court finding, it really DID protect the rare species (even while logging their habitat). Forestry Tas. appealed the 2006 Federal Court decision to the Full Federal Court whilst the words of its RFA were being rewritten. Consequently, Forestry Tas. won their appeal and Bob Brown applied for an even higher appeal to the High Court.

### High Court makes low decision

In late May, the High Court rejected Bob Brown's application and refused him 'leave to appeal'. In plain language, they said his arguments weren't strong enough to waste the High Court's time in looking at it further. In a 2 – 1 split judgement, the court effectively ruled that this RFA alteration, which has no parliamentary approval, overrode the original judgement that agreed the species were threatened by logging.

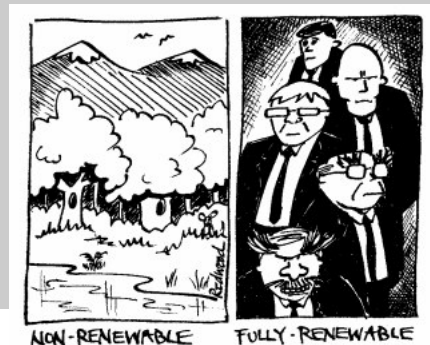
Justice Kirby dissented from the majority. He questioned whether the RFA is meant to protect endangered species in reality, or whether it is just a set of words to make "bureaucrats feel good".

The Howard-Lennon change to the words in the Tassie RFA pulled the rug from under the court process.

Prime Minister Rudd and Peter Garrett can and should have stepped in to save species being hounded to extinction. Bob now faces costs of some \$200,000 from the Full Court proceedings in 2007. After this decision was handed down Bob Brown said:

*"This appalling decision means the environment in Australia has no legal protection - in fact the law is protecting the destruction of threatened species"*

Jill/ Liz



## Rainforest protection fails again

Last Easter, three EEG members entered a beautiful rainforest and old growth area in the Bonang River catchment on the Errinundra Plateau. It was being logged. They found what they considered illegal logging of a buffer, which should have been protecting the rainforest in the gully. Morally, a chainsaw should never have come near the entire area but we can only argue with what's considered 'legal' by our government.

Foresters, not botanists, mark out these areas. We alerted the DSE manager in Orbost, Steve Henry, who's also a biologist. He agreed to check out our concerns and visited the area about a week later. In the past, these breaches seemed intentionally lawless but now they're mostly due to incompetence and not knowing what a rainforest is.

A directive was given in 2004 by DSE's 'Director Parks and Forests Stewardship', Ian Miles, to trial a new way of identifying rainforest. All of Gippsland was to adopt the use of a plant key to help identify rainforest. The staff and foresters were obliged to use this system when there were any uncertainties or disputes. Steve Henry didn't use it and went by the old, redundant definition.

His report found that no breach had occurred. We questioned the easily-confused identification between a rainforest eco-tone (change between rainforest and eucalypt forest) and a mixed forest (eucalypt forest with rainforest understorey). An eco-tone is unprotected and used as a buffer. A mixed forest is protected and should have a buffer of its own. No wonder foresters are able to identify

these rainforests to suit their needs. VicForests benefits financially from logging - the more trees logged, the more profit. It is also in charge of tagging areas to log. This is like putting Japan in charge of protecting whales.

The government's own EPA logging audits have consistently found that regulations for rainforest protection are the most frequently breached of all the logging rules. There is an urgent need to adopt the plant key system as the only method for determining rainforest. Having trained botanists on the job rather than tree-counters would also help. The need for sub-catchment protection of rainforest, rather than 20-40 metre buffers, still appears to be a long way off though.

Jill

# EPA Environmental Pollution Apologists

City and country residents have had to cope with choking air during April as DSE lit up over 150,000 hectares of healthy forest in its 'management burns'. The EPA does not take air quality readings in regional areas - they don't want to know how bad it is. In the city a reading of 150 is considered poor. These smoky fires, which contribute thousands if not millions of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to the greenhouse problem, were pushing air quality readings above 237 in Melbourne. Imagine what the rural areas were measuring!

The EPA is meant to deal with serious air pollution, but with government generated pollution, they simply suggest people stay indoors and take their medication! The EPA warned of bad air quality for days on end. Smoke mixed with pollution is a toxic cocktail that can cause burning eyes and severe respiratory problems.

*We meet with the bureaucrats*  
April is the traditional choke and gasp month for many locals. Native species lose their ground cover, habitat and food source. With a lack of anything resembling ecological concern, EEG and the Bairnsdale-based Gippsland

## *Lazy rednecks rule*

We didn't get any argument against our point that the local 'rough and ready' culture was a major problem - both in and outside the department. But when these attitudes are overlayed on top of burn plans that are merely a numbers game, the damage is multiplied. They told us they hoped that new codes and plans will solve this - but people don't read codes and management protocol goes by the wayside amongst testosterone-fuelled mates. We translated the bureaucratic speak into something like, "Govt policy is driven by a bunch of redneck whingers who won't take responsibility for their own assets and property." It was clear that

towns and that the rest be managed for ecological values only. We also suggested that the DSE burning program money would be better spent encouraging people to look after their assets themselves rather than expecting the landscape around them to pay the price.

## *Check it out for yourself*

That was on a Friday. On the Monday, I had a call from our local fire officer inviting me to witness them burning the wet forests of Waratah Flat / Wrong Creek the next day! Not quite the response I was after for these sensitive areas.

To give him credit, our local Bendoc fire officer has some



Habitat trees burnt and fallen at the Sardine Creek burn near Goongerah in autumn

Environment Group organised a meeting with the chief of Land and Fire Management, Alison Stone, in early April. Alison came from Melbourne, two head guys came from Traralgon and a smattering of local fire managers attended.

Our arguments and photographic evidence of cowboy mismanagement couldn't be denied. They did admit there had been stuff-ups in the past - both during '03 and '06 fires, as well as general fire-fighting routines, but we were assured it wouldn't happen again (we heard that after '03).

ecological considerations were not getting much of a look-in and that the burns are politically driven by a handful of noisy backward farmers worried about their fences.

## *Burn near towns, leave the wet forests alone*

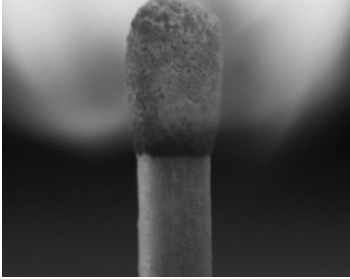
We can understand the need to burn near town boundaries that could be vulnerable in a big fire, but to torch every forest miles from anywhere is insanity, especially when those forests are ecologically sensitive to regular burns and tend to be wet and fire-proof with a healthy damp understorey. We suggested they have regular burns (zone one) near

grasp of the importance of leaf litter and the connected workings in the forest. He does try to minimise the damage and only burn what is dry, but we still have problems with the choice of areas - Waratah Flat area is not a forest that needs torching, however sensitively.

While we are told that environmental care is a part of fire plans, we are also told that larger areas will be burnt annually. DSE will not be happy until they have turned every forest into a sea of bracken under struggling blackened tree trunks with no soil life and no biodiversity.

Jill

## THE BLITZ BURNING GAMBLE



In late June, the government enquiry into bushfires (how many is this now?) recommended to State parliament to triple its burn program to almost half a million hectares annually. This would be a gamble, a waste of money and ultimately counter productive.

Governments should instead be funding programs to help landowners and townships be better

prepared to withstand fires rather than using slap-dash plans of torching thousands of hectares of forest in the vain hope it might stop a big one. It's a popular method not based on science, and achieves little. More emphasis should be given to personal protection measures and carefully burning some areas.

The tripling of burns from 150,000 ha a year to 440,000 ha has been shown to be pointless. Recently control burnt areas didn't slow or stop the last two drought induced fires in '03 and '06.

Funds used to employ hundreds of people to burn public forests in a one-size-fits-all blitz-burn plan, would be better spent helping landowners be fire-ready. In an age of escalating climate extremes, retaining the millions of tonnes of carbon in the soil and understorey and protecting the damp, fire-resistant forests would be a more sensible gamble. The big fires of '03 burnt just over a million hectares. Plans to deliberately burn half a million hectares a year will be adding more fuel to the fire by drying out large areas of damp healthy forest.

Some places still need to be burnt but these must be carefully chosen, not just draw circles on a map regardless of forest type or necessity. The forests are too precious to use as political vote-catchers. We are gambling with an immensely important part of the water and carbon cycle.

*Jill*

## Pollie-logger love-in

What a spectacle we had during the Gippsland by-election campaign. All candidates (except the Greens) were grovelling in front of the logging and coal industries. Michael O'Connor (CFMEU) huffed and puffed on radio for one 30 second news grab and the next day pollies were buckling at the knees pledging their loyal devotion to logging and coal burning.

The, Nats, ALP and Liberal Parties all ignored the wishes of the wider electorate and fell in behind the two worst climate destroying industries in Australia.

The CFMEU also demanded that any carbon-trading scheme would not affect their jobs. They know that forest protection is THE most effective measure that can be taken to reduce CO2. Gippsland's coal industry is also demanding that any new carbon trading scheme exempts them!

Brendan Nelson said the Labor party was hijacked by greenie latte sippers that find it fashionable to attack people who work in the logging industry. There was certainly no sign of that as the ALP disappeared up the backsides of the forestry union.

EEG, GEG and the Latrobe Valley Climate Action group sent an environment questionnaire to all five candidates three weeks before the election. Only the Greens responded. So we appropriately beat the others up in the media. They'd thumbed their noses at thousands of voters, not just three enviro groups.

There's been no change of attitude towards our environment since Ironbar Tuckey was in control. The ALP sacrifices our forests as union pacifiers and exchanges for political donations. The only thing that's being 'sustained' is the parties' submission to the logging industry.

*Jill*

## Gippsland by-election

Regardless of what political party you support, the June by-election was a chance to raise important environment issues including forests.

But the Gippsland media is so stuck in the conservative *mould* that the Greens candidate, Dr Malcolm McKelvie, was mostly ignored by local media - despite a barrage of damned good media stories and

comments on everything from coal and GM to mental health, new fuel prices and the Lakes. The cut-through recognition issue was the knock-back by the Rural Press Club to allow Malcolm to speak at their forum! This angered supporters of all parties.

Bob Brown also visited in the last week to raise the issues of climate, coal power vs renewables, and forests.

EEG's environmental questionnaire to candidates exposed the lip-service paid to the environment by the big parties.

The Greens' vote went up to 7.2% from 5.3%. That's a 30% increase in the primary vote; small but growing. This region is forlornly conservative but we managed to force the major parties to show their grubby brown colours under their green rhetoric.

*Jill*

# THE CARBON CAPTURE JUGGERNAUT

**Governments and big polluters are claiming to be able to "solve" the global warming problem by capturing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and burying it in a big hole a mile underground, hoping it will stay there forever. The plan is called CCS, short for "carbon capture and storage".**

This would be the largest hazardous waste disposal project that humans have ever undertaken, and among the most dangerous as well. A large leak could be as dangerous as a leak of nuclear fuel.

A Greenpeace report states that, even if it works, it will arrive too late to do any good. Here's why:

1. CCS wastes energy and water. Capturing carbon dioxide will consume 10 to 40% of the energy produced by a power plant. This means that, on average, CCS would need a fifth power plant built for every four that are used to do CCS. Thus CCS requires, on average, 25% more coal mining, transportation, and waste disposal than non-CCS power plants. CCS would also increase the water requirements of power plants by 90%.

2. CCS is expensive. It will double the cost of a power plant and will increase the cost of electricity by between 21 and 91%. Worse, CCS will divert funds away from renewable energy sources and energy conservation projects, which will achieve results faster and at lower cost than CCS.

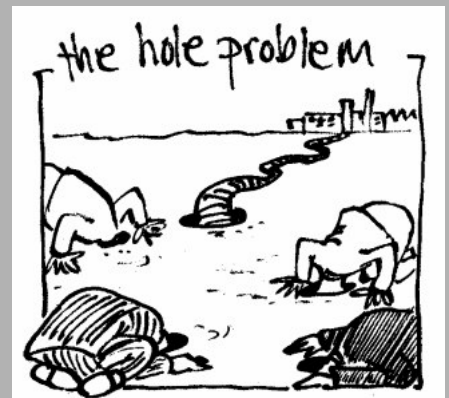
3. CCS is uninsurable. A large leak of CO<sub>2</sub> could kill vegetation, animals, and humans over a fairly large area. Industry is already angling to get taxpayers to shoulder the liability. With some 6,000 CCS burial projects

required to make a significant dent in the CO<sub>2</sub> problem, chances of serious mishaps will be likely.

4. CCS is still many years away. The most optimistic industry plans say CCS could begin in 2020 - too late, but most experts say CCS won't be available until 2030 to 2050.

In the US, Obama and McCain are both enthusiastic supporters of coal with CCS tacked on. So their coal industry will be sitting pretty, if precariously, on a CCS promise.

*New York Times* 23.4.08 /  
Greenpeace / Jill



## LOGGING INDUSTRY IN CLOUD CARBON LAND

They never give up. Our logging industry is now saying it needs to be a major player to help solve Australia's climate change problems. They claim our forests - that they plan to keep cutting down - could absorb 20% of the planned 60% target to cut emissions by 2050. How so?

A confidential document from the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) sent to Kevin Rudd suggests they get together and set up a cosy team. No doubt it would include a bus load of spin doctors and a few public relations firms to fabricate stories about the climate benefits of logging.

They say that dearfelling, woodchipping, mashing up the younger stuff for biofuel production and then ferociously burning whatever carbon is left on site would help reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. Just don't mention the pollution to the atmosphere via burnt or rotted waste paper, cars' exhausts and fire smoke. Oh - and they threw in the 'indigenous economic development' line just to show how 2020 they are.

NAFI also wants all governments to pledge their never-was-commitment to the 1992 National Forest Policy Statement. This actually said governments would protect all valuable conservation and old growth forests immediately. But of course it didn't; all it did was protect the people who destroyed these very forests through the woodchipper-friendly Regional Forest Agreements.

If Rudd goes along with this one,

he'll lose every point he's so far scored by supporting Tibet and saying 'sorry'. If you get a chance - please tell him.

Kevin.Rudd@aph.gov.au

Jill / *Age & Sydney Morning Herald*  
17.5.08.



# How do I silence thee? *Let me count the ways*

The public relations elite are brainstorming ways to keep what they call the "crazy little old ladies" and "gays who do naughty things to whales" quiet. Industry and government representatives have paid \$600 each to learn the tricks of the trade from Canadian PR consultant, Ross Irvine, the self-styled Svengali of anti-activist activism.

Irvine graced our shores with his presence in April 2005, running a seminar for the Public Relations Institute of Australia. In attendance were 29 people, including then Federal Treasurer Peter Costello's adviser, as well as PR reps from Rio Tinto, Shell, Dow Chemical, Avcare, the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Dairy Australia and Bayer. Irvine's trip was funded by the Institute of Public Affairs, a group which lobbies against the activities of non-profit and non-government organizations (ie. community and environment groups).

Irvine's reputation preceded him. His outlandish claims include calling

sustainability an "extremist position", and labelling corporate responsibility "a weakness". According to journalist Katherine Wilson, who was at the workshop, most of those in attendance shared Irvine's views. The group apparently spent most of the seminar discussing the best ways to silence public opposition to their various destructive but profiteering causes.

So what ingenious methods have this motley crew settled on? Irvine told the group the way to go is to "fight networks with networks". Astroturfing - the creation of bogus "community" groups to endorse industry practice - is high on his agenda. He also encouraged his avid listeners to think of activists as the "enemy", as much of a threat to industry and government as your run of the mill terrorist.

Irvine's pupils put forward strategies. They also suggested publishing bogus 'research' to back up industry claims and even considered "working out ways to break the law" to avoid, for example, conducting environmental impact statements.



These sinister methods have been practiced in this country for years but experts say astroturfing is on the rise. As a result, political debate is being hijacked by industry PR.

Activists beware. As though the battle to challenge industry and governments wasn't enough, if your voice is now heard, it may be drowned out by someone who'll convince the public that you're a dangerous "tree-hugging, job-destroying, baby-eating, terrorist".

Loni Cooper / Jill

## **\$3 million to count PNG's forest carbon**

The Rudd Government will give \$3 million to projects that hope to one day help Papua New Guinea reduce logging. Under the PNG-Australia Forest Carbon Partnership, Australia would assist PNG to 'monitor forest carbon'. They hope it will give them data to use in future international forest carbon markets.

Penny Wong 23.4.08 / Jill

## **\$100 million to count Tanzania's forest carbon**

In April, Norway also offered \$100 million (rather than \$3 million) to

the east African country, Tanzania, to reduce deforestation. Norway, the world's number five oil exporter, plans to make its economy "carbon neutral" by 2030, partly by buying emissions quotas abroad to offset its own greenhouse gas production.

Norway will support research, education and the development of pilot areas for reducing deforestation. It will also help develop ways to measure the amount of carbon captured by forests.

It's estimated that greenhouse gas emissions from logging in Tanzania are about 100 million tonnes a year, roughly twice as much as Norway's annual emissions.

Reuters 21.4.08

## **FEEDBACK**

Dear Editor Jill.  
What a ~~godsend~~ jillsend is Potoroo. I have advised all my fellow Senators to subscribe.

Last edition had me laughing all the way to Canberra. Much better than crying!

Best wishes, Bob



**In a positive move by the Brumby government, plantation companies may have to pay for the water their thirsty trees soak up which would otherwise flow into streams and rivers. The idea is worrying plantation growers across the state, from the Strzeleki to south west Victoria. Charging for the rain that is soaked up on private property before it reaches streams could be controversial and have wider implications - let's hope.**

Where trees are purposely planted for cutting down every 12 - 20 years to profit the owner, they should be slugged for water use (unlike orchardists). Where there's urgent need for reforestation in areas like the Murray-Darling Basin, trees planted and left unlogged would mean a net-benefit in time.

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**A fast growing tree crop - regardless of the name the government gives it - robs about a third to a half of the normal water that would flow into streams**

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Now - let's see Mr Brumby use this same logic on the thick regrowth that their native forest logging creates. The fast growing sappy young trees that replace a native forest after clearfelling resembles plantations in every way

but name. Every year, thousands of hectares of mature forest are bulldozed and burnt in the hope that strapping young trees will grow back. Over the last 40 years of clearfelling mature public forests, the regrowth has sucked our water catchments seriously dry.

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**When native forests are cut down every 20 - 80 years to grow a new crop of trees, it keeps our catchments and streams in permanent drought. Overlay climate shift on top of that and we're in deep trouble.**

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A fast growing tree crop - regardless of the name the government gives it - robs about a third to a half of the normal water that would flow into streams compared to a mature growing forest. Stable older forests actually store, filter and release water. But young trees consume vast amounts until they slow their growth at around 80 years old.

Mr Brumby could get really water-smart and just stop all logging in sensitive water catchment areas. After all, you can't drink money.

Jill / Sunday Age 11.5.08

## The Ruddy Budget

We would love to have a reason to praise our governments occasionally. But while the corporate pillagers pull their strings, it won't happen.

The first Rudd/Swan Budget didn't go anywhere to meet the urgent challenge of climate change. Rudd is spending \$44 on defence for every \$1 spent to tackle climate change. He's offered \$28 to fossil fuel subsidies for every \$1 to climate change. The farce they call 'clean coal' is being given \$2 for every \$1 for research into renewables. On top of that, the funds to run the Department of Environment have been cut by \$50 million from last year. Mr Rudd has also favoured road transport and coal export infrastructure above rail and non-road transport.

Why have successive governments never been able to control the fossil fuel industry? Maybe because it is a major lobby group with plenty of buying power.

Jill

## NAFI head moves on

Did the ex-CEO of the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI), Catherine Murphy, decide to go down with the Howard ship? She certainly had quite an 'in' with the upper levels of the Howard government during her three years in the CEO's seat. There is now a guy called Allan Hansard running the show. He was previously the deputy CEO of NAFI and before that, CEO of Tree Plantations Australia.

Hansard's aims are to convince the public that logging and forestry are part of the solution to climate change. He wants the wood products industry to be more "cohesive" and wants everyone who ever touches wood or paper, from dozer drivers to newspaper sellers, to buddy-up. They know the rough logger image is bad PR, but they don't understand that the community doesn't swallow the lies VAFI tries to feed it.

NAFI/Chipstop/Jill

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## Running short of loggers

VicForests is trying to find about 55 loggers and 75 truck drivers to tender for 1.6 million cubic metres of Victoria's publicly owned 'log product' - also known as forests - for the next one to five years.

Newspaper advertisement

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# Cobboboonee Forests protected

In November '06, the State Labor Government made an election promise to protect the much-neglected Cobboboonee forests of western Victoria. That promise is now being fulfilled. And it looks like there are no strings attached either!

A Bill has gone to

Parliament which should go through and will protect 18,500 ha in a new National Park and an area of 8,700 ha will have lesser protection as a new bulldozer-free zone called a Forest Park (firewood, posts and poles can still be cut though).

The Park will join onto the 26,000 ha of the Glenelg National Park reuniting the river heathlands and forests of the Glenelg-Hopkins catchment. This poor catchment has been 87% cleared and the remaining 13% is critical habitat for Barking,

Masked and Powerful Owls as well as Bandicoots and Long-nosed Potoroos.

Congratulations to Geraldine Ryan and the many people who have worked hard for years to have these beautiful remnant forests protected.

Jill



## Prince Charles on forests

Even Prince Charles is now saying that stopping logging of the world's tropical rainforests is the single greatest solution to climate change. Rainforests provided the earth's "air conditioning system" he said. Sadly, he didn't mention that temperate forests are just as important as tropical.

He said it was "crazy" the forests were worth more "dead than alive" to the world's poorest people (and even some of the obscenely rich, Charles). He even said that forests store carbon in their wood and *in their soils*, something few heads of state recognise (btw -his Mum is head of State of Australia).

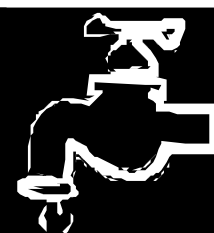
The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (2006) said forest destruction accounts for about 18% of the human output of CO<sub>2</sub>.

It was heartening to hear Charles tell the world that stopping logging would be the easiest and cheapest way to help in the battle against climate change, rather than waiting for new technologies that might pipe CO<sub>2</sub> down holes.

This Prince is absolutely right about deforestation being the single greatest cause of climate change; it's not CO<sub>2</sub> output from fossil fuels that's the worst planet roaster, but knocking down the world's lungs and then burning them.

BBC News 15.5.08 / Jill

## Costly gamble with water could sink us



State government projects to secure the basic stuff of life - water - include an estimated \$3.1 billion Wonthaggi Desalination Project, a \$1 billion Food Bowl Modernisation program and the \$625 million north-south pipeline, which will take water from the Eildon Reservoir to Melbourne (plus the recent Federal plans to have a plan).

As we know, estimates more often than not blow out up to five times the original figure. The problem with less costly and more sensible options is that they can't be put into a package for the much-loved public-private partnership and flogged off to a foreign multinational. These projects will be a burden to taxpayers but a boon to private enterprise.

There are a range of cheaper alternatives, including water conservation measures we've not yet looked at, bans on logging in catchment areas and collecting stormwater and roof runoff, which could supply Melbourne with water at a fraction of the cost of the government's chosen options.

They would also reduce the burden on the dying Murray River.

The water that might be produced by the Wonthaggi desalination plant for Melbourne on a "take or pay" contract would be for 30 years. This would be under a public-private partnership and will provide a third to the volume of water currently used by Melbourne. But it will cost four times as much. In non-drought years, it will be pumped back into the ocean because it can't be stored, but will still be paid for. The large amounts of energy needed to process the salt water is another issue again.

A doubling of Melbourne water bills within a couple of years is proposed to finance this. However, if they stopped logging in catchments, we would automatically have one third of the water the desal plant hopes to supply. Recycling for industrial use and household water tanks would provide a lot more as well. And, of course, stabilising the human population.

The Age 7.5.08 / Jill



# URGENT!

They now want to burn our forests to make electricity!



# STOP PRESS!

On July 3rd, the Federal government released a discussion paper on the expanded renewable energy target. Both options presented would see native forest logging "waste" defined as renewable! Currently both NSW and Victoria exclude native forest waste as a renewable biomass for power generation. If this policy is accepted, it will sink what's left of our forests. Woodchips are considered 'waste' and 'residue' despite them accounting for 80-90% of what is taken from a forest. Comments are being sought now.

You can get the paper at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/renewabletarget/consultation/pubs/ret-designoptions.pdf>

Or just send in comments regardless. Don't let the word submission put you off. It's just a fancy word for a letter.

Comments should be forwarded to the **Renewable Energy Sub Group Secretariat** by **30 July 2008** at: [ret@climatechange.gov.au](mailto:ret@climatechange.gov.au)

Extract from the options paper:

## **2.2 Eligible sources**

... a list of eligible renewable energy sources and technologies ... include wind, solar, hydro, wave, geothermal and biomass sources, such as

*crops, plantations and forests, and the biomass components of municipal, agricultural and manufacturing waste streams. Specific conditions are placed on the eligibility of some sources. For example, the MRET allows native forest biomass as an eligible fuel subject to this biomass being a harvest residue or processing waste, with further conditions around the harvesting operation.*

Stakeholders' views are sought on the treatment of renewable energy sources and technologies, including the treatment of forest biomass and solar water heaters.

Jill / Harriet

## CONSERVATION LAND COVENANTS

These are a voluntary agreement made between a landowner and Trust for Nature to permanently protect the natural, cultural or scientific values of your land. They are legally binding so that any future owners must also protect the values of the land.

Properties can be divided into zones so that some areas are fully covenanted and some have different conditions placed on them to allow for farming etc. Covenants can be amended as

needed to account for new buildings, a dam and so on.

They are free to the owner as Trust for Nature bears all the legal fees for preparing the covenant. The Trust also offers advice on flora and fauna management, weed and vermin control and help with management plans.

If you want to know more about rate rebates, increasing the value of the property, fire prevention, and other aspects of covenanting land, have a chat with Max James at TFN on 5153 0457 or visit [www.tfn.org.au](http://www.tfn.org.au).



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