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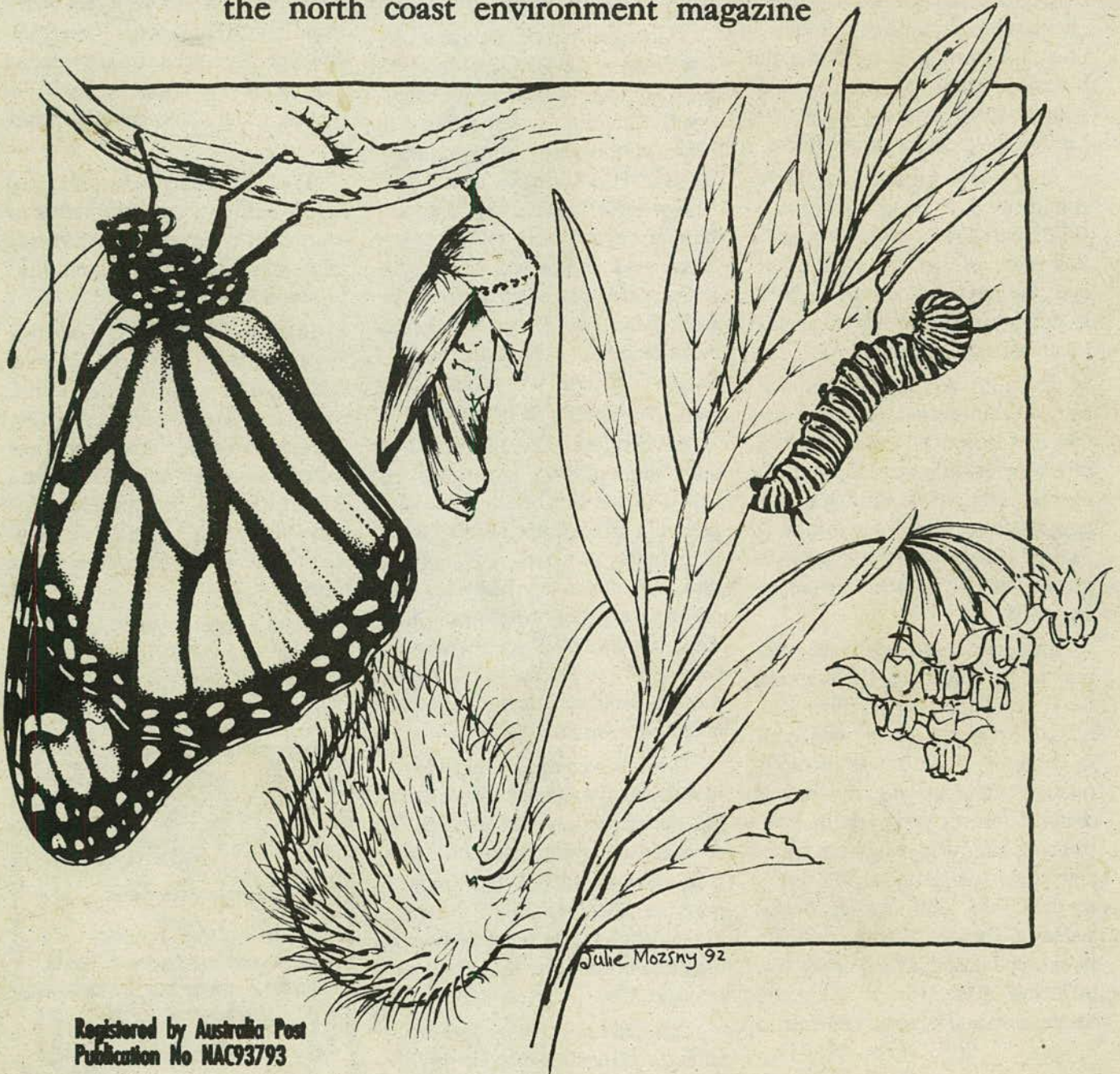
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Environs



IN THIS ISSUE:- TAG wants Parathion ban, Disposable nappies, Chernobyl, Ecologically Sustainable Development, Noxious weeds

the north coast environment magazine



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Wild Cattle Creek State Forest

Mixed result from impact statement

...a step forward in liaison practices between environmentalists and the Forestry Commission. ...survey appeared to be a token gesture

by Cath Eaglesham

1000 year old Brush Box tower overhead, a thick carpet of mulch lies underfoot. Birds call to each other, the Dorrigo Waratah is in full bloom, the scarlet flowers contrasting with the many shades of green. You can feel the presence of this forest.

Progressive logging was due to commence in Compartment 546 of Wild Cattle Creek State Forest on the fourteenth of January 1992. However, the Forestry Commission failed to comply with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The EPA Act requires the Forestry Commission to examine and take into account all matters likely to affect the environment. Section 112 of this Act prohibits roading or logging in compartments where to do so "would have a significant environmental impact", without first preparing an EIS.

The issue was brought to the attention of the Bellingen Environment Centre which acted by drafting a letter to the regional forester with a list of demands. A letter was promptly returned the following day by the regional forester notifying the BEC that no roading or logging would commence in Compartment 546 unless the BEC had been advised. It also stated that fauna and flora work would be carried out and invited one or two members of the BEC to work in a harmonious and voluntary manner to

conduct the flora and fauna surveys with the Commission.

A date for discussions with representatives of the BEC and the Forestry Commission was set for February 6. This was a step forward in liaison practices between environmentalists and the Forestry Commission. However, the Commission's fauna and flora survey appeared to be a token gesture as four days and one consultant to carry out studies was quite inadequate. The "Flora and Fauna Assessment in NSW State Forests - Survey Guidelines" (York et al 1991), were not followed in this instance.

Environmental Consultants carried out a study of the Compartment on behalf of the BEC over a two day period. A more comprehensive study is definitely required. A number of rare and endangered species are present or are likely to be found within the compartment. These include the Glossy Black Cockatoo, Peregrine Falcon, Paradise Riflebird, Spotted-tailed Quoll and Koalas.

The whole compartment is dominated by many rainforest species forming the understory and part of the dominant tree layer. Some of the Brush Box trees are aged 1,000 years or more and one, measuring 3.3 metres in diameter is quite outstanding and therefore of state environmental significance.

This area is a recognised koala habitat and requires broader wildlife

studies to be carried out. The forest is rich in birdlife and Arboreal mammals. It is the home of the Tiger Quoll and the Southern Angle-headed Dragon. It is a prime habitat for a number of rare and endangered species.

The Compartment was first logged in 1934 and has been lightly harvested a few times. The forest has retained its original structure in most areas of its 159 hectares.

If anyone is interested in visiting this forest it is easily accessible via Cedar Road, Moonpah Forest Drive, near the old tramline, via Dorrigo. The outcome of the compartment lies in the hands of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, following the revision of Schedule 12 and the new legislation due to be released later this month.

Write a letter to the: Director of National Parks, PO Box A96, South Sydney 2000.



Disposable nappies:

A health hazard to baby and the environment

‘Rubbish tips are not designed to contain human waste’

Approximately one mature pine tree produces enough paper pulp for about 500 disposable nappies. With 460 million used on babies within Australia in just one year that means a million pine trees worth of disposable nappies are thrown out each year in Australia.

In actual fact disposable nappies are not disposable. It is estimated that the decomposition of the nappies will outlive the person that wore them. It may take up to 500 years for them to break down.

Most disposable nappies end up at the tip. Rubbish tips are not designed to contain human waste. Most manufacturers state on disposable nappy packets that any solids should be tipped off before disposal. However the combination of infant faeces and the super absorbency of disposable nappies makes this difficult.

American research indicates that there may be a risk of contamination of groundwater from leachates from

disposable nappies in landfills. Most babies are vaccinated with live polio virus and are the most efficient carriers of enteroviruses. These viruses are contained in faeces and may survive for several weeks in landfill sites.

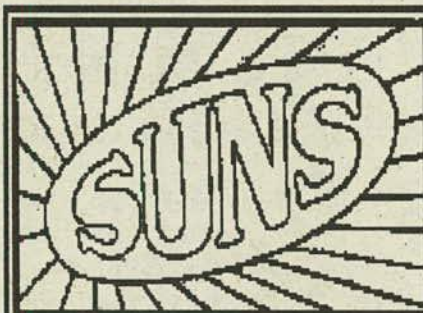
Most babies are vaccinated with live polio virus and are the most efficient carriers of enteroviruses. These viruses are contained in faeces and may survive for several weeks in landfill sites.

Disposables are made of layered wood pulp which is frequently produced using chlorine bleaching. The bleaching produces dioxins which have been linked with health problems such as birth defects, organ damage and cancer.

Dioxins do not break down readily and are therefore a great hazard to the environment. Dioxins accumulate in the food chain and are environmentally dangerous from their manufacture right down the line to their possible 500 years breakdown period.

Cloth nappies last longer, can be cleaned without bleaches and are 100% biodegradable. And cheaper in the long run. What will these adults of the future think of their parents damaging the environment and risking the health of their babies because they are too lazy to wash up after their children or not concerned about what their children will be faced with in the future.

by Stephanie van den Broek (with facts extracted from The Big Scrub Newsletter)



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Groundsel Bush: does it deserve noxious weed status?

The Caldera Environment Centre (CEC) is based in Murwillumbah. And its members, people in the Tweed River catchment area, are concerned about the spraying of Groundsel, a declared Noxious weed.

The CEC has found that large scale spraying of any particular area, usually creates hostility from people living in proximity to the spraying area. In effect, they

feel it is bad mannered to use a means of eradication that may endanger their own health and that of the environment. None of the sprays currently used by spray gangs or indeed, those currently marketed, have been proved safe.

Whilst the CEC understands the needs of broadacre farmers to ensure Groundsel does not overrun pasture,

it states that it is now necessary that the costs of cleaning watercourses fouled with chemical runoff; ill-health of bystanders including the sprayers; poisoning of non-target flora and fauna, be added to the overall costing of the proposed spraying job. By cost-

mittee of the CEC at the first heavy rains after spraying.

The CEC feels Groundsel bush eradication should now be limited to the more environmentally benign cut and swab methods rather than spraying. Whilst even this technique is not

ideal they offer it as an interim compromise. The Gall wasp provides some control.

The CEC

thinks that the Noxious Weeds Advisory Council should have Groundsel Bush removed from its list of noxious weeds. Spokesperson, Paul Hopkins says "Groundsel is not toxic to cattle or other herbivores and the Dept of Agriculture and Dairy/Beef Cattle Experts say that Groundsel is readily eaten by cattle in a pasture situation without any perceived ill effects. In fact some herbals

they feel it is bad mannered to use a means of eradication that may endanger their own health and that of the environment

ing in this way, farming systems that are now evolving as organic, area and labour intensive, and that harmonise with the proliferation of native flora and fauna, will be considered more often by rural landowners.

A spray program will be monitored in the catchment area watercourse by the Poisons Watch Com-



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Groundsel is used as an excuse by Far North County Council Weed Inspectors to gain access to properties in order to search for Cannabis. Groundsel Notices are used as political tools against *New Settlers*, and the law is applied in a very discriminating way.

list groundsel as a beneficial herb providing iron in the blood.

"Groundsel on flat or medium grades can be readily mown by a tractor. Any pasture on the far North Coast must be mown at least twice a year to remain viable in the long term. Crofton Weed, Cats Paw or Mist Weed and Camphor Laurel are a bigger threat to pasture than Groundsel.

"On land which is too steep to mow with a 4WD tractor, Groundsel provides an important pioneer nursery function helping to stabilise erosion prone slopes whilst trees become established.

Groundsel plays a part in serial succession, where the bush, by providing bio-mass and shading the soil, prepares the soil for the next stage of forest regeneration. Leaf and woody tissue is returned to the soil as humus, building soil fertility. Other Weeds such as Camphor Laurel and Potato Vine are a much greater threat to the local, native ecosystems. Groundsel

is rarely a climax stage weed and is easily shaded out by saplings and more mature trees above 4 metres high.

"Groundsel is used as an excuse by Far North County Council Weed Inspectors to gain access to properties in order to search for Cannabis. Groundsel Notices are used as political tools against "New Settlers", and the law is applied in a very discriminating way.

"Time and money spent in attempted Groundsel control is misdirected in a state dedicated to the "user pays" principle".

The Caldera Environment Centre is interested in people's comments on Groundsel. Contact: Caldera Environment Centre, PO Box 90 South Murwillumbah. Ph (066) 721121

from: TREE - The Tweed River Environment Echo -the Umbrella Newsletter of Tweed Environment Groups Jan-Feb 1992 edition.

Bottle bank for Bowraville?



Nambucca Shire Council's Recycling Committee is continuing to be active. At their last meeting they decided to try to get bottle banks into Nambucca Heads and Bowraville. They are writing to the Nambucca Chamber of Commerce and the Bowraville Urban Committee with a special offer. If these bodies can raise \$900 each from the community and community groups then the committee will match that with another \$900 from Council's recycling budget and so enable each town to have the two needed bottle banks - one for clear glass and one for mixed coloured glass.

If you are a member of a community group in either town and can donate any amount to this cause please contact the above bodies and ask others to do likewise.

The recycling committee will also be calling for new members for 1992 so keep an eye on the Guardian News if you would like to be involved.

Lyn Orrego



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Letters to the Editor

Cargo Cults

The Cargo Cults of Melanesia make fascinating reading. Most people have heard of them and many have the vague notion that the cult is a primitive religion found mainly in Papua, our near northern neighbour.

But this is not so, cargo cults are a recent invention, first gaining prominence in Vailala after the First World War and growing stronger after World War Two to be one of the fastest spreading religions of all time.

The founder of that first cult, an old man named Evara, prophesied that a ship loaded with gifts would come if his followers would build a jetty. This was later changed to an aircraft and airport to keep pace with technology. While the message varies from cult to cult, the common theme is that of ecstatic possessions and promises its devotees gifts of fabulous wealth and material goods from a ship or 'plane crewed by ancestral spirits.

These cults start when a prophet turns up, seemingly out of nowhere. Followers are set to work building a jetty or airport to receive gifts to be brought in by gods who are often said to be white, with names like John Smith.

When the cargo fails to materialise on time, the prophet steals away, usually much richer than when he came, and the cult dies out until the next prophet arrives.

We can laugh at these cults and pass them off as the superstitious beliefs of stone-age people. But who can

forget the infamous "All the way with LBJ" and the offer, not of money, but the sacrifice of hundreds of young Australian's lives in the jungles of Vietnam, or the sending of warships to the Gulf, to curry favour with an American president?

Coffs Harbour has an ideal climate for such cults to thrive:

- high unemployment, high prices, and low wages make a normal standard of living and saving impossible for many,

- hair-brained and crooked schemes using the terms "Development, Growth and Tourism" as bait have given these a bad reputation and left many locals licking their wounds,

- claim that manufacturing industry is unsightly, polluting, and "bad for tourism" by these prophets, who favour creating wealth by illusion such as paper shuffling or real estate speculation.

- and those who raise their voices against these cults are set upon by the prophets with all the fury of born-again fundamentalist zealots at a theological debate.

Calls have recently been going out from a new group of prophets, exhorting the faithful to prepare to receive boundless wealth and material possessions. All we have to do is build an international airport at Coffs Harbour, give them \$2 million for advertising and promotion over the next four years, then sit back and watch the gods, bearing money, arrive in their big silver birds.

Richard Clowes (066) 533591

Book review

A Dictionary of the Environment

'A Dictionary of the Environment: a practical guide to today's most important environmental issues' by Steve Elsworth. Published by Paladin Press. 516 pages

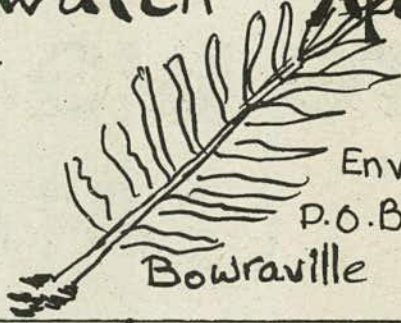
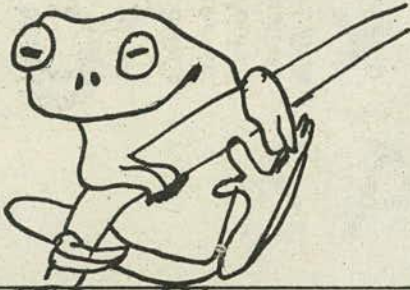
As its title suggests, this is a reference book about issues of environmental concern. The author describes it as having been written for people who know they don't like nuclear power but can't remember why! A diverse range of issues are covered - from acid rain and animal welfare to smoking and species extinction. Each topic is given a separate chapter, with tables and graphs, cross-referencing, reference to articles and books for further reading and contact points for organisations able to provide further information.

This is an ideal book for use in school projects, but also provides an interesting read for its own sake, as the text is well written without being overly technical. The book's only drawback is its origin in the United Kingdom, so that some of the data, for example, is not relevant to Australia. However, since most of the issues covered are international/global, this is a minor drawback.

A Dictionary of the Environment is available for loan from Nambucca Valley Conservation Association's Library.

by A Pope

Environmentwatch April 1992



Environs
P.O. Box 123
Bowraville 2449

Stormwatch						
Wed 1	Thurs 2	Fri 3	Sat 4	Sun 5	Mon 6	Tues 7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Streamwatch

Forestwatch

Wildlifewatch

Name :
Address :

Are we killing GAIA?

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Environs needs information on your local streams, forests, wildlife and rainfall. Not only to monitor changes for the better or worse but also to back campaigns and submissions to government. We would also suggest that you refer local environmental destruction to responsible local councils and State Departments.

Please fill in the monthly calendar (overleaf) with details of the following:-

Stormwatch: Consistent records of the influence of deforestation on the storms which preceded the annual dry season in August-November are not being kept. Anecdotes suggest these were more frequent before 1945 when heavy logging of the steep up-river slopes began.

Please enter your total monthly rainfall overleaf. Record thunderstorms with date and the rainfall for each storm.

Streamwatch Please note any changes in level, turbidity, algal growth or water quality in your nearest stream. Please also note any relevant environmental disturbances such as logging, bushfires, drainage, road building, gravel extraction etc.

Forestwatch Current logging practices and burning off threaten the future of our forest ecosystems. Any notes should give date and indicate slopes, forest name and/or compartment number as well as extent and nature of disturbance. Dated and identified colour photos are important and complaints to politicians and the Commissioner of Forests may have a cumulative effect.

Wildlifewatch Many forest species are endangered. Recorded sightings of animals (native or feral) will be useful in assessing the health of forest ecosystems. Do not forget the reptiles, also the frogs, fish and invertebrates which live in the streams.

Please return this information to:

ENVIRONS, PO Box 123, Bowraville, NSW 2449.

Seeing the light on energy conservation

Parks and reserves recognised by council



Bright Idea to Cut Power Bills

Electricity users will be able to slash hundreds of dollars off their power bills by switching to a new environmentally friendly light bulb. And to encourage households to turn on to the new globes, Sydney Electricity and Phillips are offering consumers \$5 cash-back on each lamp bought between now and May 15.

The bulbs cost between \$25 and \$32 each, but are five times cheaper to run and last eight times longer than ordinary incandescent light bulbs. Consumers can cut \$50 a year off their electricity bills and one 15 watt bulb will prevent 475kg of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.

The Daily Telegraph Mirror 30/1/92

Nambucca Shire Council now has a Parks and Reserves Committee which meets every two months to suggest and discuss what areas of Council's land may need tree planting, landscaping or maintenance. The Council now employs a Parks Ranger with horticultural qualifications.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 8

at 8.30am at the Council Chambers. Members of the public can come along as observers. If you have any ideas for any park & reserve areas that need improving you can contact the Engineering Department at Council or any of the committee members who are Councillors Orrego, Mayze, Teasel, Moran and Graham.

Lyn Orrego

Conservation department muzzles scientists

The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands has prevented its scientists from speaking to the media after they alleged that the East Gippsland forests were logged without adequate ecological studies.

Scientists say their reports were changed to al-

low logging or road construction to go ahead.

Dr. John French, a spokesperson for United Scientists for Environmental Responsibility and Protection (USERP), said the Government was using science for political ends.


Dr. French also criticised the standard of the

surveys, which the Government has said protect areas of significance and endangered species. He described the flora and fauna surveys as superficial and "political documents" that would not be given the time of day by reputable scientific journals.

Dr. French said the scientists' group was concerned that government scientists were not free to comment on their work and disseminate their research as can CSIRO or University scientists.

from: National Newsletter - USERP, Nov 1991

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TAG Supports ban on Parathion

Parathion is one of the international Dirty Dozen

The North Coast Toxin Action Group (TAG) is supporting the proposed inquiry and withdrawal from sale of the pesticide parathion by the Victorian Minister of Agriculture.

Concerned for Victoria's reputation for clean produce the Victorian Minister of Agriculture has acted and called for an immediate Inquiry into parathion's safety.

Spokesperson for TAG, Ms Grinter, stated that the recent action was brought about by the lobbying of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Workers Union and was another example of the total failure of Australia's pesticide

regulations to protect the community.

"Parathion in its various forms is still registered for use in NSW on a wide variety of crops including fruit trees, vegetables, ornamentals and pasture. Many, many of these crops

How is it that parathion is still used in Australia when even third world countries such as El Salvador have the sense to ban it?

are grown on the North Coast and farmers and fruit pickers should be aware of the dangers and be calling for its immediate ban in NSW.

"Parathion is one of the international Dirty Dozen and is banned or not

registered in over 20 countries. How is it that parathion is still used in Australia when even third world countries such as El Salvador have the sense to ban it? The developed world gave this chemical the "thumbs down" years ago,

yet here in Australia we allow industry to continue to make profit on the demise of our rural workers.

"Already this year, 2 parathion poisonings requiring hospitalisation have occurred and industry still tries to use the old excuse,

"misuse by farmers". I don't think the rural community will accept that any more. Parathion is rated as extremely hazardous by the World Health Organisation and causes severe acute and chronic health effects including tumours and other cancers, mutations and adverse reproductive effects in test animals" Ms Grinter said.

TAG calls on the NSW Minister of Agriculture to follow the example of Victoria. Alternatives do exist to parathion's use and the continual risk to rural workers cannot be tolerated on the basis of economic rationalism.

Women for the Environment

Are you worried about the environment? Are you also concerned that women have almost no say in the decision-making processes that affect us, the lives of our families and the survival of this planet? Well, I am too!

For a long time these concerns have been making me angry and anxious.

Most of us are so busy working inside and/or outside the home, that we don't have a great deal of spare time to find out about the problems that surround us - let alone act on them. How do we solve this?

It is here that I wish to write about an idea that I have - for a women's environment network - and I

seek feedback from anyone interested in its development.

The objective of this network is to link women to focus on a specific environmental action and empower women. This will be achieved using various methods which recognise our different lifestyles, needs and values.

For the busy individual the network will send information each month detailing an effective action requiring no more than twenty minutes. It will include: the issue, background/research, names of participating networks and contact numbers.

The network will grow and adjust according to

Government planning strategy for the North Coast

...a recipe for disaster?

A Department of Planning document called "Prelude for a Planning Strategy for the North Coast" forecasts a doubling of the present North Coast population by the year 2016. The North Coast Environment Council's (NCEC) President Terry Parkhouse said these figures are a developer's dream and a residents nightmare.

"Sydney and its suburbs are becoming uninhabitable with pollution of air, water and soil because the health of the environment has been ignored for so long. The Department of Planning proposals make all the same mistakes and are a recipe for the rapid degradation of this Coast's values.

"The so called Planning Strategy has no basis in research of the capacity of the North Coast to sustain such a huge population and plainly ignores real limits to massive growth such as land contaminated by toxic chemicals and the habitat of

The so called Planning Strategy has no basis in research of the capacity of the North Coast to sustain such a huge population

rare and endangered plants and animals."

Concerns over the planning document prompted the NCEC to seek a meeting with the Planning Minister Robert Webster on Fri-

day 31 January. As the Minister was unavailable the Council's executive met with Deputy Director of Planning Neville Apitz. The NCEC insists that impacts on the natural environment, transport, energy, water resources, sewerage

disposal methods, agriculture, horticulture, tourist industry and unemployment were ignored.

Mr. Parkhouse stated "In most North Coast cities and Shires demand for water already exceeds supply and sewage treatment works are expected to work beyond their design capacity, especially during the peak holiday season."

Mr Parkhouse said that The Deputy Director of Planning claimed that the document was for "discussion purposes" and was an attempt to make local councils and the public begin to think about the problems associated with population increase.

Mr. Parkhouse said "rather than provoking thought the so called planning document had prompted Councils to push through more ill conceived subdivisions and developments. In contrast with the difficulty NCEC experienced with the Planning Minister, the shadow Minister for the Environment Ms Pam Allan met with the NCEC and listened to their concerns. She suggested further meetings on the North Coast with a view to promoting a more holistic and practical approach to planning, seeking to implement realistic planning parameters to solve such problems as sewage disposal and water and transport.

"The North Coast is a favourite holiday area for Sydney residents and they will not be very happy to leave one mess in Sydney to come to a continuation of it on the North Coast. They want clean beaches, uncrowded roads, unspoiled bush for their holidays and this planning strategy is not likely to provide it." said Mr Parkhouse.

people's needs and involvement. The most important thing is that we act together to achieve environmental change (hopefully at policy level) and that we become empowered through our achievements.

by Jane Bending

ci - Women for the Environment, 72 Charles Street,

Northcote, 3070. or phone (03) 4824618.

from "Network" the quarterly newsletter of the Rural Womens Network, financed by the Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs, Victoria. Summer 1991.

ESD

Policy makers look to the future

‘ this is an ambitious plan
and will mean some pain. ’

We know that the planet is threatened and that this fragile continent has been mistreated. The question now for you, me and the policy makers, is how to find a sustainable future, a world with enough resources for our children.

Many governments are moving towards that goal. The Australian Federal Government has taken a giant step by establishing an ecologically sustainable development (ESD) process.

A powerful message is that we should aim to leave a world for our children as good as, but preferably better than, we found it. The world is our inheritance held in trust for those who follow. This theme was highlighted by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Its 1987 report “*Our Common Future*” called for a global push towards sustainability. Some conservationists dispute the need for economic growth as part of that goal.

The Federal Government responded to the Commission’s report in June last year with an ESD discus-

sion paper. From that, positive action is flowing: nine groups, established by the government are examining how to put industry on a sustainable basis. This is an ambitious plan and will mean some pain. They will strike problems in changing attitudes and practices. For instance will it require an end to growing crops or grazing stock on ravaged land? Does reducing Greenhouse gas emissions mean restricting the use of petrol engined cars? And what about setting pollution standards for industry which could push up the price of everyday super-market items?

will it require an end to growing crops or grazing stock on ravaged land?

There are major political problems ahead with no certainty the government reports from these groups will be implemented. The groups comprise people with diametrically opposed views. It’s hard to see miners and greens reaching agreement. Officials say the groups have been surprised how much common ground has been found but the crunch will come when the final reports are due.

The groups have to carry the community with them on the “road to greenness”. People can see results from recycling, with recycled writing paper on the market, but it’s harder to

say if there is a long term view, such as a community consensus on bearing the costs and sharing them equitably.

A better future is something the next generation will see, but we have to pay the price now and that cost could be lower living standards for all. And there is the problem of political compromise. Will politicians have the guts and foresight to make the tough decisions?

The reports set out where we are now and where we need to be to achieve sustainability. Each report nominates the key issues, offering practical policy approaches and identifying as accurately as possible what costs are to be faced. The themes of the work emerged at the second mass gathering in foggy Canberra in late June. The meeting examined issues which did not fall neatly into the ambit of any group, such as population, intergenerational equity and urban planning.

As the path becomes clearer, the major questions to be resolved are overcoming the political obstacles and being prepared to pay the price. The ESD process shows we are able to face the issues, and we are taking the first steps towards a sustainable future. But the bottom line is, are we willing?

taken from an article by Ross Peake in 21C The Magazine of the Commission for the Future, Winter/Spring 1991



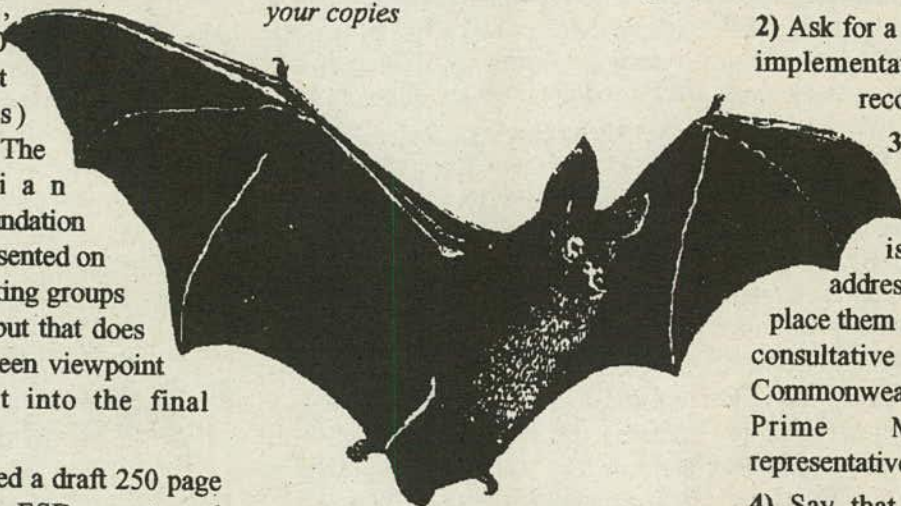
Ecologically Sustainable Development — what ACF thinks of the reports

‘major weaknesses and, as a whole, reflect lack of vision’

The Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) reports have been released after nearly a year of discussion between government, industry and NGO (non government organisations) representatives. The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) was represented on all the ESD working groups except Forestry but that does not mean the Green viewpoint always made it into the final documents.

ACF has issued a draft 250 page evaluation of the ESD reports and process. It says that the reports contain some valuable recommendations which amount to a genuine step forward. However, they also have major weaknesses and, as a whole, reflect lack of vision. ...

A detailed analysis of the ESD reports and an ESD Information Kit are now available. Call the ACF/WWF ESD Unit on (03) 426 0355 for your copies



ACF suggest that you write to your politicians stating some of the following points:

1) Congratulate the Federal Government for its work so far on Ecologically Sustainable Development. Say that the challenge now is to develop a process

which can take the ESD exercise successfully into 1992, moving it from discussion to implementation.

2) Ask for a clear timetable for implementation of the ESD recommendations.

3) Suggest the urgent need to identify ESD issues not so far addressed or resolved and place them on the agenda of a consultative forum involving Commonwealth Ministers, the Prime Minister and representatives of key interests.

4) Say that a broad-ranging community consultation and education campaign is warranted in view of the significance of the ESD issue to Australia's future and the substantive outcome of the ESD final reports.

from Conservation News, December 1991.

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Boycott Malaysian timber

Save the Penan ...do not buy their home!

North Coast environment groups condemn Malaysia's rainforest logging

At present Australia imports around 100 million dollars worth of rainforest timber from Malaysia annually. Most of the timber is coming from the small eastern state of Sarawak where native tribal people have been blockading the logging roads for over 5 years in defence of their rainforest home.

This united call by North Coast Environment Groups is in response to Malaysia's continued wanton destruction of its rainforest and the recent arrests of Penan people and the destruction of some of their blockades.

Last week, faxes from Sarawak sent to the NVCA said that helicopters, bulldozers, a 100 police and the army had been sent to the largest and longest running rainforest blockade of 500 Penan at Long Ajeng. This blockade has been going for 8 months and it appears that the authorities have orders to destroy it with as much force as is necessary, which includes the use of firearms.

On the fifth of February Mutang Anderson, the Director of Sarawak Indigenous Peoples Alliance, was ar-

rested under Malaysia's Internal Security Act. This Act allows police to detain and interrogate a person without reason or trial. It is believed he is being used as bait to convince the Penan to dismantle existing blockades and not erect any more.

This blockade at Long Ajeng was visited by North Coast film maker Dean Jefferys 7 months ago and is now the focus of a documentary called "The last stand for the Penan".

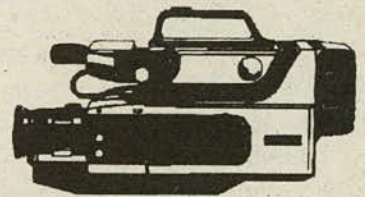
Dean Jefferys said, "This really is the last stand for the Penan. I know they are counting on people from the outside to help immediately to put pressure on the Malaysian government so they will recognise the indigenous peoples rights to their land. They also want people to stop buying and using the timber from the rainforest which is their home and way of life.

Environment Groups on the North Coast of New South Wales which include Nambucca Valley Conservation Association (NVCA), Bellingen Environment Centre, Coffs Harbour Environment Centre,

Rainforest Information Centre, Clarence Valley Environment Centre, the Big Scrub Environment Centre and Byron Bay Environment Centre have united in a call to boycott the use of rainforest timbers. They are also calling on concerned citizens to contact the Malaysian High Commission in Canberra on 06 2731543 to voice their concerns about Malaysia's rainforest destruction.

For further information contact Brenda at the Rainforest Information Centre Lismore (066) 218505

Dean's



Videos

- **Last Stand for the Penan** (20 min documentary) plus a recently made video about East Timor (\$30)
- **Chaelundi and the South East Forest and East Gippsland Forest protests** for \$30 (40 min)
- **Gulf Peace Camp and The Consequences of The Gulf War** (a 50 min video for \$30).

These videos are available by mail order from *Groundswell Books*, PO Box 5292, West End, Qld 4101. (The \$30 includes postage)

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What are the banks growing?

Department of Water Resources to study vegetation on river banks

The use and management of native vegetation for riverbank stabilisation and ecological sustainability

The Department of Water Resources is currently undertaking an inventory of riparian vegetation on North Coast streams from the Manning Valley north to the Tweed Valley. Funding for the project will be provided by the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (LWRRDC). The project will involve the compilation of species lists, an assessment of the soil binding capacity/stabilising potential of each species, and locating and documenting rare and endangered riparian flora.

Using this information and other information obtained from community groups, government departments and other interested bodies, educational material will be produced in the form of a video and valley specific educational kits.

Major themes expressed in the video and valley specific educational kits will include:

1. Species types, planting methods, erosion control techniques, and care and maintenance of trees for riverbank revegetation.
2. The role of vegetation as a wildlife corridor for native fauna, and food and habitat source for native fish.
3. The role of vegetation as a buffer-zone to protect stream water quality (for both human and non-human users) and reduce sedimentation.
4. The benefits of insectivorous bird species, associated with riparian vegetation, in the control of insect pests.
5. The use of vegetation in the reduction of riverbank erosion and floodplain stripping and the associated economic benefits.
6. Agroforestry as an economic incentive for revegetation.

Educational material will be sent to Landcare groups, TCM Committees, landholders, TAFE colleges, schools etc. and will be free of copyright and available to any interested person.

The loss of ecological sustainability, genetic and habitat diversity, and water quality, of the riparian corridor through vegetation destruction, erosion, and sedimentation is a major

environmental issue of the North Coast.

The Nambucca Valley Conservation Association has already offered the assistance of some of its members who are familiar with riparian vegetation in different parts of the Nambucca Shire.

If anyone else feels they may be able to contribute to this worthwhile project they are invited to contact Allen Raine at the Department's Grafton Office on (066) 420568

The Coffs Harbour Environment Centre informs us that the Water Resources Commission has commenced a study of the Orara River. The study will not collect new data, but rely on existing documentation and information. If you have documented evidence of problems with the river and catchment then please make it available to the Centre to submit to the Commission.



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Chernobyl - the world was sold a lie

‘Just as quietly as the dust settled, a silence swept over the panicking media, government and public service’

Six years ago in Chernobyl a nuclear power station exploded. “Since this accident, politicians, scientists and the international nuclear lobby has been busy, pushing the consequences of this catastrophe under the carpet” says atomic physicist Vladimir Tschernosenko in an interview “*The lies and legends of Tschernobyl*” by the West German magazine “*Der Spiegel*”.

After the enormous explosion, a radioactive dustcloud rose up as high as the stratosphere and started its deadly journey all around the world. Dust from it settled quietly on forests, fields and cities, poisoning people, animals and drinking water reservoirs.

Just as quietly as the dust settled, a silence swept over the panicking media, government and public service. The West German government’s so called “Plan for Protection in Cases of Catastrophe”

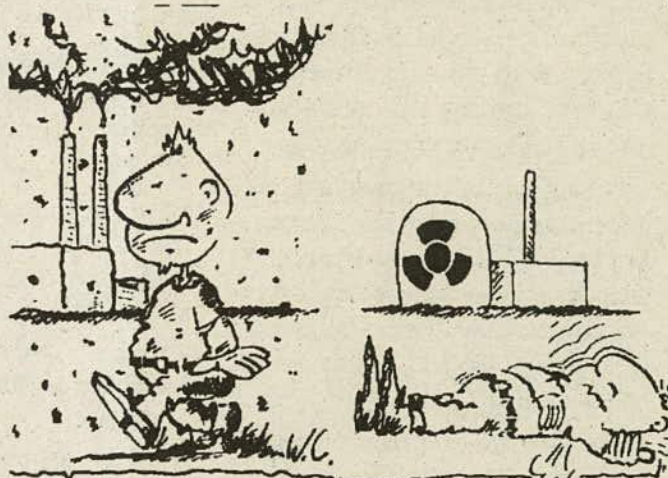
prevents the media from publishing anything about accidents of this kind, it hinders Parliamentarians from asking questions and excuses Governments from acting. All to avoid panic. These sorts of rules and regulations are there to protect... whom?

Soviet communist party leaders and authorities who had access to reliable sources of information at the time immediately recognised the danger. A few hours after the explosion they fled the area and even Kiev itself. Only after having also helped their own relatives to leave, was an evacuation ordered of 49,000 people in Pripjat - a workers village 3 km away from the reactor. This was 36 hours after the explosion.

At the same time Clean-Up Commandos got drawn into the area: nurses, electronic engineers, miners, drivers and soldiers. All helpers were volunteers or, like the soldiers and nurses, on duty. 20,000 people came into the irradiated area and worked there over the following weeks, or even months, and risked their lives

by cleaning up as much as they could. Many lost their lives, and continue to lose them now, from diseases caused by radiation.

“In reality there was no method which could have brought the exploded reactor, let alone the whole situation, under control”, says Tschernosenko, a nuclear physicist,



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who helped in the area and is now fatally ill.

Psychiatric studies have been done on 304 children and adults who were in the irradiated area; their symptoms include: difficulties in memory and concentration, lack of adaptability, tendency to angry outbursts and extreme mood-changes. Professor W.Kandraschenko, from the University of Minsk called these "Signs of developing dysfunctions of the brain", and he could show these defects using electroencephalograms and other computer technologies.

The nuclear power station accident at Chernobyl is in it's dimensions and consequences one of the biggest catastrophes in human history. The radiation figures of this catastrophe are only now, six years later, being published. In the West Germany alps (the highest mountains between Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Austria), a radiation level of 30.000-45.000 becquerel was recorded.

These areas are, if we believe the published maps, are not habitable any more. Overall, West Germany had (has) 95 percent of its land heavily contaminated (2001 or more Becquerel).

(Becquerel: the new SI unit for the measurement of the activity of a radioactive substance. One Bq is equal to one disintegration per second. The becquerel replaces the Curie).

This is only in West Germany. What France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Greece and all the other nearby countries received has not been researched in this study. In Russia itself, where the outfall hit hardest, over 1.5 million becquerel per square metre, over a much greater area than officially admitted

Jadrichinsky, a Soviet atomic security expert mentioned in his book: "Chernobyl Insight from the Inside" "80% of the reactor fuel - 160 tons (of a total 192 tons) radiated into the air and soil. The meltdown caused 6.4 billion curie to escape, one curie per head of the world population. It will take 1000 years for the radiation to be reduced to a thousandth part.

Still the International Atomic Energy Office tries to quiet critics and ignore studies; no wonder, for the reactor manufacturers in the west would like to continue business for the next few decades.

57 nuclear reactors are working in the eastern European countries, and not one is up to the minimum standard of technology," complains Eberhard von Koerber, boss of the West German energy-concern, Asea Brown Boveri (ABB).

"Chernobyl can happen again any day", says Koerber.

Translated from "Der Spiegel" Jan 1992 by D Waldorf



Nambucca Valley Reforestation Society
is holding its annual



Saturday March 28 at Mackay Park,
Lanes Bridge, Bowraville 8.30am to 2pm

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Phone Ron Hawkins on 647461 for further info

THIS MONTH'S COVER

Danaus plexippus - Wanderer or Monarch Butterfly.

A newly emerged orange and black Wanderer butterfly drying its wings, while a larva feeds on Milkweed, an introduced plant, some varieties of which contain chemicals that give protection to the butterflies. The toxic cardiac glycosides make the butterflies unpalatable to predatory cats and birds.

In North America, the original home of the Wanderer, this protection is extended to the Viceroy butterfly, a non-poisonous look-alike. This is known as Batesian mimicry, after HW Bates, the 19th Century English naturalist who first put forward the theory. In Australia we have an example of Batesian mimicry with the related Lesser Wanderer (*Danaus chrysiippus*) and the Danaid Eggfly (*Hypolimnas missipus*).

Wanderers have a relatively recent history in Australia. They are believed to have reached Hawaii around 1845, although there is a recorded sighting in 1840 in New Zealand, and the first reports in Australia are Sydney 1856, Brisbane 1870, Melbourne 1872.

If you search carefully around Milkweed or other plants growing in close proximity, you may find a beautiful green pupa with gold spots and a black and gold band. I have carefully cut the piece of plant with pupa attached and taken it inside to see the butterfly emerge. When its wings have dried I gently transported it outside.

Environs

the north coast
environment news
magazine

Environs is published every month on a voluntary basis to bring together reports from a large number of environmental organisations. Many groups are affiliated with Environs, including the Ballingen Environment Centre, and the Nambucca Valley Association.

Editorial contributions are welcomed. They should include the authors name and phone number and should be sent to: Environs, PO Box 123, Bowraville 2449. Subscriptions are \$12 for 12 issues. Advertisements may be lodged with Lyn Orrego by phoning (065) 647-478. Editorial for Environs is by Carol Margolis and the Environs team. Layout and typesetting is by Mike Holland. Cover illustrations are by Julie Mozney.

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