Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

P. O. Box 428, DAYLESFORD, Victoria, 3460

Inaugural Meeting **Sunday 6th September 1998**

at the Commercial Hotel, Ararat.

[Initiated by the Wombat Forest Society]

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

'phone No.

Betty King - **Dhaurt-Wurrong Aboriginal Elders Corporation**
c/o Post Office, PORTLAND, 3305 5521 -
[redacted]

Sandra Onus - **Dhaurt-Wurrong Aboriginal Elders Corporation** *(C. 100 members)*
3 Portland Court, PORTLAND, 3305 5521 -
[redacted]

Megan Rowsell - **Portland Field Naturalists Club**
RMB 3575, Potts Road, HEATHMERE, 3305 [redacted] -
[redacted]

Doug Phillips - **Portland Field Naturalists Club** *(C. 50 members)*
124 Cape Nelson Road, PORTLAND, 3305 5523 5840

Geraldine Ryan - **Environment Victoria** *(C. 80 groups)* *Fax.:* [redacted] -
[redacted]
10 O'Connell Street, NORTH MELBOURNE, 3051 [redacted] -
[redacted]

Dave Munro - **Hamilton Field Naturalists Club** *(C. 40 members)*
Friends of the Grampians *(C. 70 members)*
P. O. Box 11 DUNKELD, 3294 [redacted] -
[redacted]

John O'Bree - **Friends of the Nyah Forest** *(C. 90 members)*
P. O. Box 217 SWAN HILL, 3585 5032 1134

Jacquie Kelly - **Friends of the Nyah-Vinifera Forest** [redacted]
102 Beveridge Street, SWAN HILL, 3585 H.: 5032 1488

Eileen McDonald - **Victorian Apiarists Association** *(C. 500 members)* *Fax.:* 5472 3472
RSD McKenzies Hill, CASTLEMAINE, 3450 *ph.:* 5472 -
[redacted]

Gavin Jamieson - **Victorian Apiarists Association - Melbourne section** 5330 5708
P. O. Box 666 BALLARAT, 3353 A.H.: 5335 -
[redacted]

E-mail :

[redacted]

Jane Marriott - Stawell and District Conservation Group *(C. 30 members)*

Tim Anderson - Wombat Forest Society *(70+ members)*
P. O. Box 428 DAYLESFORD, 3460 'phone / fax.: 5348 - 1148
RMB 3113 WHEATSHEAF, 3461 5348 - 1141

Peter O'Mara - Wombat Forest Society
1 Second Street, HEPBURN SPRINGS, 3461 5348 - 1154

John Endacott - Wombat Forest Society
RMB 4468 Sutton Park Road, NEWLYN, 3364 5345 - 7370

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

Inaugural Meeting **1:30 p.m.** **Sunday 6th September 1998**

at the Commercial Hotel, Ararat.

DRAFT MINUTES - For correction

1. - APOLOGIES :
-Anglesea & Airey's Inlet ..... (ANGAIR)
-Otways Region Environment Network (O.R.E.N.)
-Loris Duclos (Wombat Forest Society)
-Madeleine Bodenham (Wombat Forest Society)
-Charlie Sherwin, V.N.P.A. (Victorian National Parks Association)
-D..... .....?
.....? Community
-Kay Aldridge, Hamilton.

2. - INTRODUCTION : (Peter O'Mara - Wombat Forest Society)

3. - BACK-GROUND EXPLANATION : (Tim Anderson - Wombat Forest Society)

1. -During our Lobbying in Canberra (June 1998) in preparation for the impending R.F.A. Wombat Forest Society floated the concept of this Regional Network to unite all forest campaign groups, We have been encouraged by Government Authorities to form this Regional Network.
2. -Western Victoria needs such a group as its forests are the most deserving of Regional Forest Agreement attention. as they are the most degraded in the State.
3. -There is a recognition in Government circles of the general lack of knowledge of the forests of Western Victoria.
4. -This lack of knowledge is a matter of concern. In late 1995 the then Minister David Beddall approved an E.I.S. for the Midlands FMA (Forest Management Area). This unfortunately co-incided

with the introduction of the R.F.A. programme, so the Midlands E.I.S. was put on hold.

5. -Midland Logging consortium in 1992 was issued with a 15-Year licence

6. -All groups should be lobbying Canberra for local Issues to be dealt with during the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement process.

7. -W.F.S. has lobbied for Professor Brian Turner (A.N.U. Forestry) to conduct a review of the Sustainability Modelling (of projected sawlog yields) for the Midlands F.M.A.. W.F.S. believes that current Midlands forest management is NOT sustainable. The WFS has specifically asked for this to be considered in the scoping of the studies needed in the West Vic RFAs.

8. -There are broader implications for the State's forests in comparison with management of the Midlands F.M.A.. If DNRE claim their management of the Midlands F.M.A. is "world's best practice" and no-one in the Midlands area believes this, what does this say for the rest of Victoria's forest management?

9. -Western Victoria has a good chance of getting a good conservation outcome from the R.F.A. process.

10. -The R.F.A. is potentially a good assessment process, but the Federal Government has allowed the Victorian Government too much freedom to run the R.F.A. programme.

11. - In East Gippsland DNRE, the Timber Industry and the Conservationists are all ignoring the R.F.A.. There have been some forest coupes closed to the public since the signing of the East Gippsland R.F.A..

12. -In anticipation of the formation of this group, and on behalf of W.V.F.N., the Wombat Forest Society has recently applied for funds under the R.F.A. Participation Funding Grants.

4. - Meeting Format : (Peter O'Mara)

A. Around-the-room introduction from each delegate to briefly outline their main concerns.

B. Proposed that the meeting then break into two groups, one for general brainstorming, the other to work through the details of Incorporation of the group. There was brief discussion about the need for this. Some suggestion that a pro-forma "Group Incorporation" is much simpler, quicker and cheaper than the conventional Incorporation of Associations routine. Gavin Jamieson informed us that LandCare groups can complete this process in about ten minutes. Is this fast-tracking applicable only to LandCare groups? Geraldine suggested that incorporation may be effected under the umbrella of Environment Victoria

John Endacott to investigate and complete formalities.

C. Selection of an Appropriate Name for the group.

D. Setting of Shared Objectives

4. A. Delegates' Concerns :

1. - Sandra Onus. South-west aboriginal concerns for the forests in total, probably concerned with similar issues to other groups' concerns. Particular concerns regarding animals, aboriginal sites. Believe that aboriginal communities must be consulted regarding all development. Here to support W.V.F.N.

2. - Doug Phillips. South-west forests, Portland area. ? down to 21%. Concerned about habitat fragmentation. Powerful Owl and Yellow-bellied Glider both threatened. Significant lack of research on forests and their Flora & Fauna. Portland Field Nats. have applied for R.F.A. Participation Funding Grants. Serious concerns that while R.F.A. process is under way modification of the environment will continue.

3. - David Munro. Particular concerns regarding the area between the Grampians National Park and the Black Range (near Stawell), a very degraded area. Here to observe, and support the W.V.F.N.

4. - Geraldine Ryan. Has been in contact with the Portland Field Nats. She expressed the fear that although the State Government appears to consult widely with the community it is easily swayed by the Timber Industry, and the final R.F.A. outcome may be very unsatisfactory from an environmental or community viewpoint. It is interesting to note that there are two private (land-holders / investors ?) who are interested in western Victorian plantation sites. [Gavin Jamieson informed us that there is a target of 20,000 ha of plantation development over the next two years. (who by / for ?)]

4. A. 5. - Jacquie Kelly. Of serious concern is the belief that the Redgum forests will now be excluded from the Western Victorian R.F.A., but on the map they are included in the WVFPN.. Two years ago their community's concerns resulted in the formation of their group. DNRE is in serious breach of its own codes and conditions. There is no DNRE Management Plan, but the Department. is trying to cobble together an interim plan. There is a contradiction in DNRE objectives : the need to conserve forests, and the need to oversee their commercial exploitation. Friends of Nyah-Vinifera Forests want a Flora & Fauna Survey of professional standard conducted before all logging exercises. F.N-V.F. want their forests included in the W.V.R.F.A..

6. - John O'Bree. Loggers were granted a 15-year Licence. Coupes average 34 ha. 2400 trees taken from coupes (what is the average stocking density per coupe or per ha.?) Their group has a strong interest in Flora & Fauna issues. A once-healthy forest is now not so. There is a Native Title Claim to be fought out in a court in future. They (F.N-V.F.) would like to see Native Title Claims used as a weapon up and down the river. Their previous President has tried to get a declaration of wetland status for their forest, but the loggers claimed that because it was dry for some part of the year that they could log it when it was dry! The Government is shifting

the goalposts. (Q. Gavin Jamieson : is the forest on the W.V. R.F.A. Scoping map?)

4. A. 7. - Betty King. All groups need to get into the Government when there is a problem, and fight hard!

8. - Jane Mariott. Box-Ironbark forests are the main concerns of her group. Firewood cutting and Mining are the major threats. They are trying to get their forests' status up-graded to give some protection from mining and firewood extraction. Present at this meeting to support the formation of W.V.F.N..

9. - Eileen McDonald. Apiarists have been lobbying for years for preservation of forests. As a matter of commercial interest bee-keeping, although small, is a valuable industry. The East Gippsland R.F.A. gave apiary a very low priority. It should not be forgotten that apiarists pay rental on forest beehive sites. Eileen's husband has two sites at Mt Cole, for which he pays rental to DNRE; but has discovered that they have both been subjected to clearfelling, and are now unusable. All groups need to be united to defend forests.
(Jane Marriott : can't support honey bees in native forests. But this raises the important issue of the potential differences and diversity within the W.V.F.N.. Can the Network function effectively whilst accommodating the autonomy of member groups to represent their own sectional interests? The meeting seemed agreed that all groups have sufficient concerns for the future health of their forests that these common interests can overcome the divergence of views.)
(Tim Anderson : Regarding the East Gippsland R.F.A., Apiarists' economic arguments were ignored.)

10. - Gavin Jamieson. Apiary is worth $15 - $18 million per year. There are many problems with DNRE'S management / administration. DNRE cannot officially comprehend the difference between the bee-keeper's place of residence and place of production.

4. A. 10. (continued) Midlands F.M.A. maps are less accurate than L.C.C. maps published 20 years ago. Several other examples of bureaucratic and policy ineptitude.

4. C. Selection of an Appropriate Group Name

A brief discussion resulted in the agreement that John O'Bree's suggestion be adopted and the word "Protection" be inserted in the formative title; that is : the organisation be called **the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network.**

General Discussion :

There were some good points made in general discussion :

- National parks must be preserved .....

- Economic arguments are often a good way of getting / holding the attention of the politicians and administrators; and it may be helpful for member groups to get relevant organisations in their communities to prepare economic analyses of the relative impacts of

Preparation is the key to developing sound arguments which will influence the decision-makers. Now is the time to start this process rolling in your local sphere of influence. Good luck.

NEXT MEETING : SUNDAY 1ST NOVEMBER, 1998;
@ HALL'S GAP

1:30 PM
NORVAL CONFERENCE CENTRE

1 Kilometer South of Hall's Gap
Dunkeld-Hall's Gap Rd.

The cost for hire of the room at the venue is $40. Could each group please kick in some money for the hire on the day.

Thanks to David Munro, Hamilton Field Naturalists for organising the venue.

Notes taken and transcribed (and interpreted) by John Endacott

R.M.B. 1462 Sutton Park Road,
NEWLYN 3364
(03) 5345 7570

Re.: Draft Minutes

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network
Inaugural meeting, Sunday 6th September 1998,

Dear Member Group Delegate,

Attached please find a copy of the Draft Minutes from our recent meeting. Thank you very much for attending, we think it was very worthwhile. The standard of the discussion was inspiring.

I hope these Draft Minutes are a satisfactory representation of the afternoon's proceedings. If you have any disagreement with these notes please put them in writing - on this Draft will do - and return them to me by the end of September, so all reps can receive their copies well before the next meeting. Remember that there are many groups which were not represented at this meeting, and they need to

receive the Minutes A.S.A.P., so they can arrange for their delegates to attend the next meeting.

I apologise if my note-taking was inadequate, or if my interpretation of these discussions is off-target. Please correct me if I have erred, and fill in the gaps where my notes have failed. Under topic 4. A. (Delegates' Concerns) please be critical of my record of your group's concerns. If you would like to expand the summary of your main concerns, please return your amendments to me, and I will include them with the qualification that they are supplementary to the meeting notes.

The 'Shared Objectives' require feedback. I expect that there will be considerable correction needed to refine them to an acceptable standard. I have had to extrapolate from the brief points which were discussed at the meeting, and I have tried to develop appropriate language to reflect my understanding of the thrust of the discussion. Please comment on the intent, concepts, expression, and order of the points.

Thanks very much, and hope to meet you again at the next meeting in November,

PS: If you believe that we have missed something that should be included please phone John. If you are happy with the tendered minutes don't phone.

Cheers,

John Endacott
12-IX-98

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network News Update

- A package of RFA material has been mailed to the WVFPN from the Forest Task Force. The material includes some glossy booklets and a 5 minute video. This should be passed around the member Groups. I will put it in a post-box and send it to one group first. If that group can look at the material etc and then mail it on to the next group on the list. (chain letter style).
- Also in the mail out is an explanation on Participation Grants. As the Federal Election has been called, all Government Agencies are in care-taker mode. The Grants are therefore on hold until after the Election.
- I have spoken to Phil Fitch about a delegation of WVFPN Groups going to Canberra. Phil was a bit daunted at the possible numbers,

but recognises the positives from +the visit. We discussed the best time for the visit. With the Federal Elections and the settling in period post-election, October would not be very productive. Early to mid November is looking likely.

- The media response from the formation of the Network was good and more groups have made contact, and are interested in joining.
- Rumours have continued over adjustments to the West Victorian RFAs. Some preliminary talk has apparently been held between State and Federal Agencies/ Governments? over splitting the West into two sub-Regions. The Western Highway would be the basic boundary. The forests to the South would be done next year - 1999 - (these have Export Woodchipping in them.). The North would be done the following year. There are plus and minuses to this idea.
- I have made it quite clear to the Feds that the conservationists should be involved in these talks, and future talks on this and any other alterations to the West RFAs. Unless we are involved at all levels of the RFA process, we can legitimately label the exercise as tokenist. The Forest Task Force has given an undertaking to include us.
- In talks with the Federal Environment Minister in Daylesford this week, Senator Hill was not aware of moves to change the West and agrees that we need to be involved.
- Historic joint letter of concern between the Wombat Forest Society, all the sawmills of the Midlands FMA and the logging syndicate was signed in Daylesford last Tuesday 15th September. The letter details significant questions over almost every aspect of DNRE management of the Midlands and State Government Funding. (copy included). Witnessing the signing was the Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill, local Federal Member for Ballarat Michael Ronaldson and State Members of Parliament. This letter must be a lever to question DNRE's management of all of Victoria's forests. The DNRE have proclaimed the work it did two years ago in the Midlands, as the best work it has ever done. Why is the Timber Industry and the WFS forced to produce this letter?

Member Groups Upcoming Events

The Otway Ranges Environment Network is holding a

Picnic in the Otways
Picnic without a Permit
Saturday 10 October, 1998.

OREN is asking people to meet at the Apollo Bay foreshore (next to the surf lifesaving club) at 11:00 AM. The convoy will then proceed into the Seaview Ridge Forest Operations Zone, for a picnic in the Otway native forest and a day of fun.

It is outrageous for DNRE and the State Government to have introduced the Permit Zones. It robs Victorians of the right to free and open access to OUR own forests. The Picnic without a Permit is a great idea and should be supported.

Global Survival & Indigenous Rights.

The 2nd Gathering in Solidarity with Indigenous People and the Earth.

All people Welcome

November 20-22, 1998.
To be held at an outside venue in the Melbourne region.

Contact: Friends of the Earth
Indigenous Solidarity Group.
312 Smith St. Collingwood. 3065.
PH: 03. 9419 8700.
E-Mail : foefitzroy@peg.apc.org

See Web site : http://www.foe.org.au

Notify us of activities your group is having.

WESTERN VICTORIAN FOREST PROTECTION NETWORK inc.

PO Box 428
Daylesford. 3460
PH/Fax 5348 1748
ASN: AOO37400L

MEETING DATE: 1st November, 1998

ATTENDANCE

Tim Anderson	Wombat Forest Society
Peter O'Mara	Wombat Forest Society
Loris Duclos	Wombat Forest Society Tambo & AG
John Gray	Stawell Field Naturalists Friends Of The Earth
Dave Munro	Hamilton Field Naturalists
Jacquie Kelly	Friends Of Nyah Forest
Jason Jackiel	South West & Wimmera Cultural Heritage Program (Ballarat)
Doug Phillips	Portland Field Naturalists
Helen Phillips	Portland Field Naturalists
Simon Birrell	Otways Ranges Enviroment Network

1. Welcome

Facilitator, Peter O'Mara welcomed everybody and ensured that all attendants had been noted & handouts distributed. Meeting asked to consider any further agenda items to be added.

2. Apologies

Geraldine Ryan, Gerry Higgins, Kay Alridge, Sam & Yoshi Spears, Neil & Jane Marriett, John Endacott, Gavin Jamieson, Eileen MacDonald

3a. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

Jacquie Kelly expressed her uncertainty of the final Aim & Objective (No. 23) formulated at the previous meeting. Tim Anderson said that it could perhaps be omitted as the Aims & Objectives were not yet finalised. Meeting decided to look at Aims & Objectives as an agenda item.

b. Motion For Previous Minutes To Be Received

Moved by Dave Munro
Seconded by Tim Anderson

4. Correspondence

Letter from ANGAIR to join WVFPN and cheque for $50

AGENDA

* RFA'S ARE HERE

Tim Anderson spoke to meeting about the immediacy of the RFA's. The Federal Government has been in caretaker mode during elections. The Western region likely to be spilt up North/South - Box Ironbark (North)
Foothill Mixed Species (South). Boundary maps still to be finalised but high on priority list. Tim had contacted Steve Watts (Dept Prime Minister & Cabinet/ Forest Task Force) to say that greens must be adequately consulted before the RFA boundaries are finalised. Steve Watts indicated that he would present this to next meeting. Also Tim had spoken to Senator Hill, who gave commitment that the community should be included in the RFA process.

*CONTEXT CONSULTANCY (MONETRY POLICY FOR DATA BASE)

Tim Anderson had contact from Context Consultancy. Context Consultancy who has been employed by the State/Federal Governments to run the Heritage Assessments in the RFA process. Context Consultancy asked Tim for listing of contact groups within the Western region who should be included in these RFA Assessments. Tim was concerned about handing WVFPN lists to a private organisation, but also indicated the importance of contributing to an open and shared process. Meeting decided that we would provide our contacts lists to Context Consultancy and ask for a possible donation to help in operating costs of the group given that they are a contracted private organization.

* CANBERRA TRIP

Tim Anderson spoke to Phil Fitch & Steve Watts re: WVFPN making combined trip to Canberra to lobby RFA process. They suggested that the group wait until the Department's agenda & Assessment meetings completed. Meeting agreed. Also new Federal Minister, Wilson Tuckey has a supposed open door policy. Loris Duclos had already asked her local member to arrange a meeting with Minister Tuckey and encouraged all other groups to do so also.

* WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY LETTER

Tim Anderson explained process of the unique WFS/Sawmillers letter collectively expressing serious concerns for the management and funding of the Wombat Forest. Letter received newspaper (incl. The Age) and radio coverage. Already groups in Gippsland have approached Tim Anderson about a similar joint response for the management issues in their local forest. Industry knows RFA's have dollars attached and that there will be no money available after the RFA process. Jacquie Kelly wanted to know more about sustainable yields and how to obtain the necessary information. Simon Birrell indicated that he had some of the yield figures that she required.
The World Wide Fund for Nature had contacted the WFS about running the Australian field trials of the Forest Stewardship Council. The first meeting of towards this was held in Hepburn Springs on Wednesday Nov 10. This meeting was attended by WFS, other environmental groups, sawmillers, CFMEU, FPS,VAFI, Contractors, Shire and members of the public. We heard about the FSC concept and all involved are taking the information back to their interest groups and will decide whether to take this to the next stage.

*ECONOMIC VALUES OF FOREST

Doug Phillips is concerned at the inappropriate royalty figures for the Portland area and their obvious effect on sustainability outcomes. Loris Duclos said that she had a copy of the early documents that established the original woodchip licences in these areas. She would contact Andrew Morrow (DNRE/Portland) as he was involved in this process.

*FINANCES

Peter O'Mara (Treasurer) told meeting of $60 incorporation fee & need for membership contribution to cover ongoing costs. Meeting decided that a $20 membership/donation would be asked from each group toward these costs with a provision for any group not able to pay. A letter would be sent out to all contact groups. $20 received by the Portland Field Naturalists. ANGAIR, (Anglsea/Airey's Inlet Environment Group sent a $50 donation and a letter expressing the groups desire to be a part of the Network.

* FRIENDS OF THE EARTH ARTICLE

Tim Anderson asked for all groups to consider the F.O.E. article to background themselves on how the Kennett Government has manipulated the Forest issue.

* RFA EXCLUSION

Jacquie Kelly expressed concerns of the Nyah Forests exclusion in the RFA process and asked WVFPN to write a letter re: Why? Tim Anderson agreed to do so after Jacquie sent the relevant information. Loris Duclos suggested to contact Julie Constable (Strezlecki Group) as they are fighting a similar battle.

* MINUTES

Peter O'Mara asked that the recording responsibility of each meeting minutes be shared amongst attending groups. on a rotational basis. Nominated group will be required to scribe meeting, have minutes typed and distributed to all attendants & interested groups. Costs will be covered by WVFPN. Meeting agreed.

* HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Aboriginal community groups need to contact Heritage co-ordinator for their particular area to ensure participation in the Heritage Assessment process.

* AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Jacquie concerned of the difficulty of belonging to a group without finalised Aims & Objectives. Tim Anderson said that Aims & Objectives still in informal format. Peter O'Mara suggested that the group would be better to consider finalising these at next meeting due to time considerations and absence of our Public Officer, John Endacott. Meeting agreed to make this the first Agenda item for next meeting.

* OTWAYS UPDATE

Simon Birrell said that they had had a busy month due to court case challenging the Government legislation restricting access to the forest. Final decision held up Government position and further court action abandoned due to financial considerations. The OREN group held a picnic day in restricted area with 200 people in attendance. OREN group putting together detailed appraisals of yield estimates and comparative outcomes. Meeting decided to have a Group Update at the beginning of each meeting.

8. CLOSE

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

I have received a letter from Environment Victoria regarding the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network . The letter expresses some misgivings that EV has for the Network. The Wombat Forest Society is very disappointed with EV's position on the Network. The letter deals with concerns over the role of the WVFPN, and simplistic and worrying views of the RFA process and their role in them.

Included with the letter is a funding brief that is from a third party, that EV is supporting. My concerns with this funding proposal is that:

a. it is from two people aiming to have involvement in Victorian RFAs, proposing to criticise, liase, update, analyse, determine strategy, lobby and gain media. The funding proposal finishes by saying "If necessary the Project can be used to discredit and undermine the RFA process."

It would be unacceptable for a peak group like EV to be backing a funding proposal that has a stated possible purpose to disrupt and undermine a process that member organisations are actively participated in.

b. Friends of the Earth have now released a letter revising its position on the submission. FOE has stated that as the proposal is aimed at at least two RFA regions (Gippsland and Western Victoria), that Cameron and Cloe must contact groups in these regions and discuss the funding proposal and see that it is not working against regional group's RFA work.

I have had two discussions with Cameron over the proposal and expressed the Wombat Forest Society's disappointment that Cameron had not had the decency to contact us to discuss whether their proposal could be strategically useful. (Cameron has been a member of the WFS, and it is through WFS contacts that he was introduced into the peak environment movement.)

Cameron made a commitment to send me a brief outline of what they had in mind so I could include it with this newsletter. It has not turned up. I can only put forward my belief that this is only a funding proposal aimed at paying wages to Cameron and Cloe. The WFS believe that if money is to made available to subsidise people to work within the RFAs, that it should go first to the regional groups who have dedicated members devoting many hours/days/weeks towards the protection of their region's environment. The money should not go to two city-based people wanting to create an income for themselves.

It is obviously up to each of your groups as to how you play the RFAs.

The reason that the Wombat Forest Society set up the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network was not to set up a body that lobbies for member groups, each one of you are the best to do this and I expect that we will be all flat out with our own local approach. The Network is aimed at bringing a collective wealth of contacts, networks, expertise, knowledge, wisdom,, skills, research and sharing that money can not buy.

Western Victoria is the most degraded and deforested part of the State. Many forest types already fall far short of the 15% pre-1750 vegetation types. Water and Tourism and Bio-diversity are strong competing values for our forests. We want, and demand resource equity between timber and non-timber values.

Between us we can get the best RFA outcome in Australia.

Who is in or out, strengthens or weakens the conservation movement. The timber industry and its allied organisations as well as Government bodies, have paid experts presenting their views and expectations. We in the conservation movement don't have the funds to match this.

The Western Victorian RFA is interesting because of the enormous size, this means that there are many groups operating on behalf of the forests (I have identified over fifty so far). This could be our greatest asset.

The old "united we stand, divided we fall" saying is worth considering.

If while we all individually work through the RFA process, we can also gain assistance from other groups going through the process, I believe we can get a positive and proper outcome to the West RFA.

With EV's policy of 'no logging in native forests' being used as means for EV not participating in the RFAs, The WFS believes that with this approach EV is failing as a peak group.

The WFS advocate a case by case policy on logging.

After a recent trip to the forests around Portland by myself and Loris Duclos, we have stated in the media, that we believe on what we saw of the forest and the forest management operations, that the Portland FMA, or much of its forests, are so a degraded and marginal, in terms of its ability and potential to produce sawlogs, that it is questionable to call these forests commercially viable.

It is time that the forest campaigns move beyond just 'reserves' as the answer. This is to simplistic and fails forests where (like it or not) logging does take place.

The Timber Industry Strategy, the Code of Forest Practice, and a raft of Federal requirements, means that resource equity should be vigorously and properly applied to productive forests. All we are arguing is for what they are meant to be doing.

The WFS campaign has highlighted the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's outcome driven, in-house approach to multiple value forest management.

While it must be very hard for groups based in the city to keep up with what really is happening in each region and where groups are, in their local lobbying, until EV broadens its mind and works strategically with regional groups instead of being a hindrance, we are loosing much potential.

I have written to the Executive of EV asking for a meeting with the executive, to discuss the future of forest campaigns and the RFAs. Representatives from each of your groups would be welcome.

WESTERN FOREST NETWORK

MEETING DATE: 1st November, 1998

1. Welcome

2. Apologies

3a. Matters arising from previous meeting

b. Motion for previous minutes to be recieved

c. Delegation of next meetings minutes

4. Correspondence

5. Agenda....items to be added

* RFA's are here

* RFA Social Assessments (mid-Nov)....Loris Duclos

* Context Consultation (Monetry Policy for Data Base)

* Canberra Trip (re:RFA's)

* WFS Letter

* New Federal Minister

* Finances....incorporation $72....Peter O'Mara

* RFA Assessment Meeting

* Aims & Objectives....John Endacott

* Others

6. General Business

7. Next Meeting Schedule

8. Close