20/11/2002

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: Joanne Duncan	FROM: Loris Duclos
COMPANY:	DATE: 20/11/2002
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☐ URGENT ☐ FOR REVIEW ☐ PLEASE COMMENT ☐ PLEASE REPLY ☐ PLEASE RECYCLE

NOTES/COMMENTS:

HI ALL,

PLEASE FIND BELOW A FEW WORDS ABOUT JOANNE.

REGARDS
LORIS

Since her time in opposition Joanne Duncan has proven herself to be a passionate political champion for the Wombat Forest. Joanne has facilitated Wombat Forest Society access to state government and has been prepared to go toe to toe with all sides of politics on this issue. Joanne's hard work has helped to deliver a reduction in sawlogs, the removal of woodchipping by the end of the year, and a shift to community forest management in the Wombat Forest, this is a huge environmental win for our region.

Loris Duclos

Wombat Forest Society

15 KING ST DAYLESFORD 3460
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Liberals Forest Policy . 12 Nov 2002

Me

From: "Duclos" <LorisDuclos@bigpond.com>
To: <vicforests@yahoogroups.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 12 November 2002 2:41 PM
Subject: [vicforests] liberals forest policy

Hi all,
Below is a copy of the State Liberal Forest Policy, its very dodgy, but worth a read for those going along to meet the candidates sessions.
Regards
Loris

The Liberal Plan to Protect Victoria's Forests
>
> The Liberal Party is committed to a long term and sustainable forestry
> industry in Victoria based on the harvest of both regrowth forest and
> plantation timber.
>
> The Victorian timber industry is valued at around $1.8 billion and is
> responsible for the direct and indirect employment of over 10,000 people,
> mostly in rural and regional Victoria.
>
> It is an important part of the Victorian economy and needs certainty.
>
> The Bracks Labor Government has demonstrated during the last 3 years, that
> it is not committed to the industry's ongoing sustainability.
>
> It is not committed to its future.
>
> Labor's short term, politically driven approach does not give Victoria's
> timber workers and communities the security they must have.
>
> The Labor Government's disregard for the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA's)
> which it signed in 2000 and its refusal to commit to long term timber
> licences has driven new investment from the industry.
>
> Labor makes decisions without consultation and without notification. Its
> February 2002 sustainable yield announcement and its sudden moratorium on
> logging in Goolengook just days before announcing the 2002 State Election
> caught everyone by surprise.
>
> Labor believes that short term replacement jobs in regional cities can
> replace sustainable timber jobs in local communities.
>
> Labor is plain wrong.
>
> A Liberal Government will return certainty to the Victorian timber
> industry. It will not allow politics to take the place of good policy and
> scientifically based decision making.
>
> The Liberal Party recognises that the timber industry needs resource
> security, a secure and sustainable yield rate, security of volume, and
> security of timber quality.
>
> A Liberal Government will work with the timber industry, local communities,
> conservationists and the Federal Government to better manage Victoria's
> forests, using science as the basis for its decisions. It recognises that
> sustainability of the industry is the only approach.
>
>
> Regional Forest Agreements
>
> Victoria's five Regional Forest Agreements were signed after many years of
> consultation and debate.
>
> These 20 year agreements, made between the Federal and State Government,
> will provide long term resource and investment certainty for the timber
> industry and the regional communities that depend upon it. The RFA's also
> establish a world class forest reserve system.

>
> The Regional Forest Agreements placed over 75% of Victoria's forests in
> conservation reserves. These forests are not available for harvest.
>
> Only around 0.3% of State Forest is harvested each year. It is harvested on
> a long term, sustainable rotation as it should be.
>
> Now the Labor Government is shredding its RFA commitments.
>
> Two of the RFA's - West Victoria (which includes the Otways and Wombat) and
> Gippsland, were signed by the Labor Government in March 2000.
>
> At the time, Premier Bracks said: "the agreement was reached after a
> community and stakeholder consultation process unprecedented in the
> development of Victoria's prior three RFA's." (Source - Government Press
> Release - 31/3/00)
>
> Its policy to cease logging in the Otways by 2008 is based on politics not
> science. Its real policy is to cease native timber harvesting in Victoria
> completely.
>
> A Liberal Government will support the 5 Victorian Regional Forest
> Agreements signed with the Federal Government. It will immediately
> introduce legislation to give effect to them, as has occurred in Tasmania
> and New South Wales.
>
>
> Old Growth Forest
>
> By proper management of Victoria's regrowth forest resources, the Liberal
> Party will increase the amount of old growth forest in the State.
>
> We will protect existing old growth forest and identify potential areas of
> developing old growth forest. We will nurture these areas with pest
> control, fire protection and disturbance regimes.
>
> A Liberal Government will initiate an immediate review of all old growth
> forests with a view to minimising the harvesting of old growth on the basis
> that:
> - there be no net loss in hardwood timber supplies and no job losses;
> and
> - any old growth removed from timber production be replaced with timber
> sourced from high quality or mature forest from the non-park reserve system
> or from hardwood sawlog plantations.
>
> A Liberal Government will realise the potential to double the amount of
> reserved old growth forest through management plans in conservation
> reserves.
>
>
>
> Wombat Forest
>
> The Liberal Party recognises the special nature of the Wombat Forest and
> accepts that the current levels of timber harvesting in the Wombat Forest
> are unsustainable.
>
> The long-term future of sawlog harvesting in the Wombat should however be
> based on the outcome of scientific analysis and properly conducted research
> and investigation.
>
> Recently, the Federal Government proposed a strategy for an expert review
> of the sustainable yield in forest areas, including the Midlands and
> requested the Victorian Government to accelerate its timeframe for the
> proposed Statewide Forestry Resource Inventory. This inventory is needed to
> ensure that wood licence decisions planned for 2004 are made on a
> scientific basis.
>
> The Labor Government failed to respond to the Federal Government's offer.
>
> A Liberal Government will immediately accept the Federal Government's offer
> to contribute to the cost of assessing, on a scientific basis, the
> sustainability of Victorian forest management areas and fast-track that

> review.
>
> The Bracks Government's February 2002 Our Forests Our Future document found
> that the Midlands FMA was sustainable at reduced levels.
>
> A Liberal Government will ban clear felling in the unique Wombat Forest and
> work with the industry to establish better and more effective forest
> management and wood utilisation plans in areas of special significance and
> move to group selective logging.
>
> In moving to group selection logging, a Liberal Government will ensure that
> the safety of contractors and forestry workers will not be compromised and
> that regeneration of the forest resource is implemented in accordance with
> world best practice.
>
>
>
> Better Forest Management
>
> The Liberal Party is committed to a higher standard of forest management
> practices and to a regime which improves the sustainability of Victoria's
> regrowth forests.
>
> The focus of timber production from regrowth forests must be on maximising
> value adding, jobs and economic activity in rural and regional Victoria.
>
> While woodchips are the natural by-product of timber harvesting, the
> regrowth timber industry must be sawlog driven.
>
> A Liberal Government will accelerate the certification of Victoria's
> forests under the newly established Australian Forestry Standard, which
> recognises high quality sustainable forest management.
>
> A Liberal Government believes the timber industry must be sawlog driven.
>
> A Liberal Government will appoint experienced and qualified officers to
> ensure that every log that can be used for sawlog is used for sawlog, and
> that no sawlog quality timber is woodchipped.
>
> A Liberal Government will ensure that Victorian forests are certified under
> the Australian Forestry Standard.
>
>
> Plantation Timber
>
> The Liberal Party is committed to the ongoing development of plantation
> timber resources in Victoria and the long term use of plantation timber as
> the primary source of woodchips.
>
> The Liberal Party will integrate the Government administration of
> plantation and regrowth forest timber to provide more consistent advice and
> industry management.
>
> The Liberal Party will work with the Plantation Timber Industry to identify
> an appropriate industry assistance program to encourage commercial
> plantation start-ups, improve infrastructure near plantations, and improve
> education and training to ensure the availability of skilled workers.
>
> A Liberal Government will review land use planning processes to ensure
> support for plantation growth.
>
> A Liberal Government will develop an industry plan to encourage
> value-adding of timber resources, particularly in the "Green Triangle" in
> the south-west of the State and promote Portland as an export hub for these
> value-added products.
>
> A Liberal Government will commit to a transition program which moves
> towards the long term use of plantation timber as the primary source of
> woodchips.
>
> A Liberal Government will promote and facilitate the development and growth
> of hardwood plantations for sawlog harvesting.
>

>
> Forest Worker Safety
>
> Timber workers and contractors are entitled to a safe and secure work
> environment.
>
> While the Liberal Party recognises and respects the right of lawful protest
> and will not interfere with that right, it also recognises the danger
> caused by unlawful activities in the forests.
>
> A Liberal Government will protect forest workers by enforcing the law.
>
>
> Sustainable Yield
>
> The Labor Government's February 2002 Our Forests Our Future policy, with
> its cuts in sustainable yields, sent shock waves through the timber
> industry and timber communities.
>
> Despite the plethora of reviews and committees conducted by the Labor
> Government, there was no consultation with the Federal Government or the
> industry before this decision was taken.
>
> Our Forests Our Future stopped investment in the local timber industry dead
> and drove major investment out of Victoria.
>
> The industry requires a secure land base and security of resource as a
> basis for new investment which will secure the future of rural jobs and
> communities.
>
> The Liberal Party commits to creating a climate of certainty for the long
> term security of timber resource. It commits to making decisions based on
> sciene.
>
> The Liberal Party is committed to better management practices which improve
> the quality of resource for the future.
>
> Future decisions on sustainable yield must be scientifically based and
> verified by an independent panel of experts. These experts will include
> forestry experts from tertiary institutions and the CSIRO.
>
> A Liberal Government consult with the timber industry on sustainable yields
> and will properly compensate timber workers, timber communities and
> licensees in the timber industry who may be adversely affected by any
> future changes.
>
> A Liberal Government will accept the Federal Government's offer of funding
> to review forest sustainable yields, including funding made available from
> the Forest Industry Structural Assistance Package, as soon as possible and
> implement an accelerated timeframe for reporting on sustainable yield in
> the Midlands and the Otways Forest Management Areas as a priority.
>
>
> Timber Licensing
>
> The Labor Government's current timber licensing and management regime has
> created a crisis of confidence in the Victorian timber industry.
>
> The lack of industry consultation and absence of security for timber
> licensees has seen investment cease and millions of investment dollars go
> interstate.
>
> A Liberal Government will deliver certainty to the industry and community
> over access licences and will provide the industry with a transparent
> pricing system.
>
>
> Printed and authorised by B Loughnane
> Liberal Party of Australia, Victorian Division
> 104 Exhibition Street, Melbourne 3000
>
>

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY inc.

Wild and Wonderful Wood and Water Work and Wildlife

Media Release

Tuesday July 29 1997.

Contact: Tim Anderson.
Ph: 0353 481141.

WOMBAT STATE FOREST ON THE BRINK OF RUIN BY 'B-GRADE' FOREST MANAGEMENT.

The Wombat Forest Society has been forced to run its first 'forest action' today at the Premier Mr Kennett's launch of Black Forest Sawmill's 'Ossie Oak' flooring, in response to mounting community anger over the continuing destruction of the Wombat State Forest. The WFS has been getting feedback from numerous people across the region, with strong 'timber' backgrounds, that some parts of Timber Industry have been 'crowing' that they have got the WFS under control. Not so.

This 'Action' does not break a commitment the WFS has of 'No Actions' in the bush against the workers, who are just people going about their work.

The WFS has believed that open dialogue between the players in the debate over the Wombat State Forest could achieve common understanding and potentially the best outcome for the forest. The WFS has supplied Mr Proctor (Manger Black Forest Sawmill), and the Victorian Association of Forest Industries with its research, concerns and conclusions, as well as inviting these players to our Forest Forum and Committee meetings.

"The problem is that it has been all 'take' and virtually no 'give' from these sections of Industry." said Tim Anderson. President Wombat Forest Society.

"Ever since the formation of the Wombat Forest Society four years ago, the Committee Members of the WFS have had people with many generations of involvement in the local timber industry continually tell us that 'the problem with the Wombat is that Black Forest Sawmill's B-Grade License (B-grade are the biggest and the best logs in the Wombat) could be in excess of what the Wombat Forest can sustainably supply. This has forced the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to cut significantly more forest each year in order to supply the quota it is obliged to meet."

Black Forest Sawmill is also the major local share holder in the controversial export woodchipper Midways. As more forest is cut to supply Black Forest's B-Grade logs then obviously more waste is generated to feed Midways' woodchipper.

"It is therefore morally outrageous for Mr Kennett to be launching Black Forest Sawmill's 'Ossie Oak' range today." "Does the Premier endorse the blatant and wholesale destruction of the Wombat State Forest, to the detriment of all its other

legitimate values? Some of the products launched today come from B-Grade logs. If Black Forest's B-Grade quota is unsustainable, then the Premier could be accused of supporting unsustainable forestry practices"added Mr Anderson.

One of the most important roles the Wombat Forest plays for Victorians is as a vital water catchment that gives rise to six of Victoria's rivers. The north side of the Wombat gives rise to the Loddon, Coliban and Campaspe Rivers supplying irrigation water to Victoria's 'Food Bowl'. To the south the Moorabool, Werribee and Lerderderg Rivers supplying the drinking water for the rapidly expanding western growth corridor for Melbourne including Melton and Bacchus Marsh as well as Geelong. Eighty percent of the forest is gazetted catchment.

The DNRE, in response to pressure from the WFS, produced the Lerderderg Report in 1995. This report was hailed as proof that the logging practices in this catchment was ok. Dean Haywood,a statistician from Monash University, who was involved in a lot of the original data sampling used in this report, has analysed the report and its methodology.

Mr Haywood's critique concludes ... " The Lerderderg report claims that water yield and water quality have not been affected by logging but these claims are based on a flawed methodology which has included the inappropriate use of a number of statistical techniques with inadequate data. The conclusion made in the report have not been adequately satisfied and consequently the report lacks credibility."

Mr Haywood goes on to say .. "The public are entitled to have concerns about environmental matters fairly assessed by Government Departments. The Lerderderg Report is not a fair or balanced examination of the matters raised by the Wombat Forest Society."

Mr Anderson claims that. "The WFS was proven correct in its claims that the Wombat was being cut unsustainably, with the DNRE's announcement last year that it would be cutting the sustainable yield for the region by 17%. "

"The WFS's research has shown that the revised susutainability model is still grossly flawed. The Wombat is to be cut on a seventy year rotation, which breaches the Code of Forest Practices. These vital catchment values of the forest should mean the rotation should be around one hundred years... We have reports to show that the regeneration stocking rates measurements are not consistent with recognised methodology. The WFS has commissioned reports that show the flora and fauna requirements are not being met."

"The harvesting model the DNRE has projected for the next thirty years can only described as 'Fantasy Forestry', with yield expectations thirty per cent above what could be realistically expected."

The Wombat Forest Society is putting the prescribed sections of the timber industry on notice. If they want the style of 'action' held today to be a common event, directed at the major players, then proceed as you are. The WFS has based its campaign on well-researched arguments that industry is on record as sharing. There has been nothig but silence from Black Forest Sawmill and VAFI . These concerns `seemingly ignored in the pursuit of the B-Grade log and feeding Midways with logs that in the past been denied to local sawmills. The WFS reiterates its policy of no action against the workers.

The Wombat is not a B-Grade Forest and the community demands A Grade Management for all its values as set out in the Timber Industry Strategy. The Wombat Forest Society is demanding an independent and non-DNRE influenced assessment of the protection of ALL non-forestry values in the Midlands Forest

Area. An independent assessment into the Log Grade availability in the forest and access for all sawmills, and the resignation of Richard Rawson, Director of Forest Services for DNRE, when the WFS's claims are proved.

Wombat Forest Society inc.

10 Howe St. Daylesford..

P.O. Box 428

Daylesford. 3460

Ph. 03 5348 1748.

WFS Forest Forum March 23rd 1996

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MARCH 1996

Greetings. I'd like to tell you something about the Wombat Forest Society and why we have concerns for the welfare of the Wombat State Forest.

The Wombat Forest Society has over 300 members and a support base of 1200, giving it a considerable presence in the region. Last year the society successfully lobbied the Federal Government for an end to export woodchipping from the Wombat, a factor publicly acknowledged by Minister Faulkner and the Member for Burke, Neil O'Keefe. That achievement is a two edged sword, however, and does little more for the forest than provide a breathing space, time to consider some 'value-adding' job providing, sustainable alternatives.

The Wombat Forest Society was incorporated less than two years ago, at the urging of experienced forest workers who realized that the forest was in danger of being logged out in just a few years. In fact DCNR's logging records show that the Department had vastly overestimated the amount of timber available on a coupe by coupe basis, and so had to log very much larger areas to obtain sufficent timber to meet contracts for sawlogs.(Timber taken for woodchips is also standing timber, not heads and residual timber from the forest floor, as the advertisements claim. Much of the timber taken for woodchips, 'E' Grade logs and larger residual roundwood, can be, and is, used by local mills for pallets etc.) The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources admits to a conservative figure of 'about' 50 tonnes/hectare, or 90,000 tonnes annually, left *on the ground* as 'waste', even after the firewood cutters have worked the coupes over. These heads and branches, sometimes reaching many metres above the ground, and the 'residual logs' remain as bushfire fuel ringing Daylesford, Trentham and other forest towns. Local pony clubs have told us that they can no longer ride through the forest because of the tonnes of timber left lying on the ground.

The Wombat Forest is known and visited by a growing number of Australians and overseas visitors. The Wombat is a working forest because it is essentially 100 year old regrowth, which, generally, needs to be thinned and felled to be healthy. The Society strongly believes it should be logged. But sustainably logged. The Society also recognises that sustainable logging means it will be necessary to restructure parts of the industry, hence its initiative in laying the groundwork, over a year, for the New Work Opportunities Scheme, now drawing together the society, industry, mill owners and workers in a committee guided by the Chairman of Commissioners for Hepburn Shire, Noel Harvey.

The Wombat is unique with the five major rivers of crucial importance to Victoria that rise in it: the Coliban, with the Campaspe and the Loddon forming north flowing rivers central to the Murray Darling system. The Lerderderg flowing south east, the Moorabool and the Werribee flowing south to Port Phillip Bay. The headwaters of most of these rivers have recently been heavily logged and more heavy logging is planned, especially for the high rainfall headwaters of the Werribee, against specific advice from water instrumentalities. The Department's recent study on the Lerderderg, used as a benchmark by DCNR, has been shown by independent studies to be seriously flawed.

As the Community Consultative Committee will know, 80% of the mineral springs in Australia are in the Daylesford region. The Springs Recharge Areas are on forest ridges that are continuing to be clearfelled: clear felled in one and two stages. The Department makes much of this 'two stage clearfelling': shelterwood 1 and shelterwood 2. However, logging practise has been so out of control in recent years that only 11% of the area logged in the next three years will be shelterwood 1. This is cowboy forestry.

March 1996

The crest of the Great Dividing Range provides important Recharge Areas for the mineral springs, 4-4[illegible] kilometres away. The Recharge Areas have been recommended for National Estate listing, and are now under consideration. However the DCNR Wood Utilisation Plans indicate that logging will be concentrated in these areas, although the impact of such operations is poorly understood. DCNR executives andforesters are even ignoring evidence published by Andrew Shugg, their own expert in the field. The community is becoming aware that the mineral springs, the touchstone for the prosperity of the region, are being put at risk due to intensive forestry affecting soil structure and in turn water flow. We know committee members of the Chamber of Commerce are concerned,and are continuing discussions with, among other hydrologists, our committee member Loris Duclos.

Last year DCNR promoted an information kit for schools and tourists which contained a number of misleading statements. The kit stated unequivocally that DCNR was logging 400 hectares per annum in coupes of from 5-40 hectares. This was shown to be demonstrably untrue when under the Freedom of Information of Act, confirmed by figures from the Board of Trade, we were sent information that DCNR was felling 2,000 hectares (net) per annum, in coupes of 120 hectares and more - which will join up to make super coupes twice and three times that size.With no credible research into the effect this will have, and is having, on flora and fauna, despite clear requirements in the Code of Forest Practice, the devastation is intense. If this committee is not aware of what is happening, we will willingly take you on a study tour through the forest to see and understand for yourselves what is taking place now, and what kind of treatment is planned. People we take on bus and 4WD tours into the forest are appalled by the trashing of this magnificent resource. Vast areas of the Wombat now appear like clearances for suburban subdivision, the headwaters of one river is now fields of bracken, some coupes have regrowth as thick as a wheatfield, others are dead and burnt. These are not isolated occurrences. There is little evidence of a well cared for multi-use forest.

The Department claims a felling cycle of 80-120 years, but it is logging a 34,000 hectare forest at an average rate of 1,800 hectares a year, all but 89% of which is essentially clearfelling (DCNR now admits that shelterwood 2 amounts to clearfelling, and, years too late for the essential wellbeing of the forest, has announced that it will not cut coupes of 100 hectares any more if they are 'new coupes' which, of course, excludes the majority of the forest which has already been cut over once!) This rate of felling, and it's not just a single year 'blip', as a spokesperson for VAFI told 'The Age', it is immediate past, present and future policy: it is the standard. This policy gives a turn around rate of 20-25 years and will produce a sapling forest, a 'pulpwood plantation'. Viable and diverse understorey ceases to exist, and fauna are slaughtered; most fauna can not 'go somewhere else and come back later' as a DCNR forester told 'The Advocate."

The recent Draft publications from DCNR are in many ways comprehensive and well intentioned, and not simply PR exercises. However, the out of date graphs, (which do not include data post 1993, when shelterwood 2/clearfelling *escalated by over 800%* - figures obtained under Freedom of Information legislation) innaccurate, self-justifying statements by DCNR executives, internally developed computer sequences, and very colourful, but misleading, maps, do not suggest that DCNR has any intention of logging the Wombat sustainably as a wild and wonderful multi use forest.

THE ONLY MAP THAT IS *REALLY* WORTHWHILE , AND THE MAP THAT THE DEPARTMENT REFUSES TO PUBLISH, IS THE MAP SHOWING ALL THE COUPES THAT HAVE BEEN LOGGED, ONCE AND TWICE OVER, DURING THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, AND THOSE WHICH WILL BE LOGGED IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS. THAT IS THE MAP THAT SHOWS THE TRUE EXTENT OF THE TRASHING OF THE WOMBAT.

Dr Brian Turner, Department of Forestry, Australian National University, reviewed DCNR's methodology in developing the Draft Forest Management Plan and and stated that he found it appropriate. However, Dr Turner noted that there was room for improvement in several areas : *"IN PARTICULAR THE ESTIMATION OF FUTURE GROWTH, THE SHELTERWOOD MODEL AND SITE VARIATION."* The Society endorses Dr Turner's concerns.

The Society has made a point of talking to all players with an interest in the forest. The local millowners are concerned for the continuity of their resource base, some have installed expensive kilns. The CFMEU is concerned, and the executives of CSR at Bacchus Marsh, who source pulpwood in the Wombat and employ over 200 people. We have held discussions with John Slorich, Manager of Midland Logging, and with the executives of DCNR, with operators of businesses drawing tourists to the region- the fastest growing tourist region in Victoria, 'The Spa Centre of Australia' where you are advised to boil your water. We have had two meetings with Minister Coleman, and with Michael Ronaldson. We have taken Federal and State politicians, both Liberal and Labour, into the Wombat. We have taken the Democrats. We have held working meetings in Canberra. A recent full page photo-story in the 'Geelong Advertiser' dramatically emphasised the extent of the trashing. ABC-TV's '7.30 Report' ran a story last year, and Channel 9 filmed quality sawlogs being chipped by Midways, the export woodchipper. (Midways newspaper advertisements deliberately lied to the children they were aimed at, claiming Midways did not take standing timber.) Wombat overlogging was a front page picture story in the 'Herald-Sun'. Many people continue to express their concerns about the forest through the national, regional and local papers, and on radio. Politicians of both major parties and representatives of the timber industry were at our AGM just a week ago. People are aware of the problem. Now we need to properly address it

The Wombat Forest Society Committee has no axe to grind, we would all rather be doing something different with our lives. But we wish to have a forest to share with our children and grandchildren.With the kind of committee activities that I have mentioned, a committee working full time in their spare time while raising families, working, building houses and so on, needs strong personalities to keep up the pace. There are of course disagreements. It is part of life in committees.

A difference last year, essentially to do with whether the Society was primarily a 'green group', and therefore tending to alienate some of those whose cause we championed, or a 'community group', and should therefore be looking more to local issues, was in the press. I was overseas at the time so on my return was in a position to broker both sides.

That dispute has been properly resolved and a united committee, elected by the Society membership, now shares the profound forest knowledge and understanding of Tim Anderson and Loris Duclos, the experience of John Endacott and the dedication of Isobel Esmore, with input from new local committee members. The Committee is keen to work with yourselves as seminal representatives of the community, in resolving Wombat Forest issues, and eventually wider issues concerning the environment.

We feel that although it is most important for the Society to continue to be represented at Federal and State level, it is at the Regional and Local level that the Wombat Forest issue will be ultimately resolved. The alternative is to be be once again faced with a 'Ruined Forest', but ruined to a greater extent than 100 years ago, as the forest is now three and four cuts on: nutrients are depleted, there is less forested area in the region, more demands on the forest, more demands for water.

We have a very short time to dramatically modify current DCNR Policy here in the Wombat. We invite you all to actively participate in the Town Meeting on Saturday March 23. Thank you.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

Wild and Wonderful Wood and Water Work and Wildlife

March 25 1996.

To: Ms Jane Carter.
International Conference on Certification and Labelling of Products From Sustainably Managed Forests.

From: Tim Anderson.
[redacted]
Daylesford. 3461.
Ph: [redacted].

Dear Jane,

with reference to our phone conversation on having the Wombat Forest Society included in your upcoming conference on Certification and Labelling of Sustainably Produced Forest Products.

For around ten years now there have been concerns being raised from a number of sectors of our community on the practises within the Wombat State Forest , which falls within the Midlands Forest Area of Victoria. Most of these concerns have come from the timber community and the environmental community. The region has a history of timber production dating back to the middle of last century where it supplied the gold boom, especially Ballarat. The Daylesford region has also had a long history with tourism , primarily based around the regions Mineral Springs. Eighty percent of Australia's mineral springs are situated in this area. The Daylesford region is currently the fastest growing tourist region in the State, with people coming here for regeneration of the body and mind. The township of Daylesford is surrounded by the Wombat State Forest. This has meant that proper management of our natural resources is vital to our areas prosperity always.

Just over two years ago a meeting of timber families, some third and fourth generation Wombat timber workers , and some of the areas conservationists. Both groups essentially after the same end, a forest that was being managed in a way that forever would provide high quality timber products an efficient utilisation of the residual wood and a protection of the areas unique flora and fauna and bio-diversity. Add to the equation that eighty percent of the Wombat is proclaimed water catchment, with five river systems rising in the forest. The south flowing rivers supply the western expansion of Melbourne and will need to supply the western growth corridor of Melbourne into the future. The northern flowing rivers , the Coliban the Campaspe and the Loddon , all supply water into Victorias irrigation system, with the Loddon River one hundred percent allocated. The Loddon River is also one of five river systems that the Federal Government is studying for salination. A unique group was formed that night, adversaries in most forest debates,. coming together to protect the long term interests of the Wombat Forest.

In that two years the Wombat Forest Society has amassed a huge resource base on the issues. We have undertaken many public forums to encourage debate

and broaden the public awareness of the forest. We have undertaken to inform what we call middle beurocracy on the forest to ensure that these bodies and individuals all understand the range of issues at stake in future management decisions. We have taken out countless school groups to examine the Wombat and its management.We have commissioned a Landsat Image of the forest and carried out interpretation os this. The WFS is currently have a National Estate Listing of our Mineral Springs and their Recharge Areas, some of which fall within the Wombat Forest.

Agro forestry is an industry that is in the early stages of establishment inthe region with joint ventures being heavily promoted at the moment.

The WFS has always been at the cutting edge of the forest debate believing that consultation not confrontation is the road to achieving the best possible outcome for all players. To this end the WFS has initiated and designed a New Work Opportunity Scheme that is a pro-active move to having some much needed thinning of regeneration that has come up too thick, to carry out some reforesting and regeneration interpretation sites in our town supply catchment for Central Highlands Water and as the participants will gain their Forest Operators License and be future timber workers, the WFS is designing into the training some educational components that will see these people carry out their work within forests with a knowledge of the environmental assets of the forest and work in such a way as not to compromise them.

The WFS is currently working on an information sharing basis with the Victorian Association of Forest Industries. We have stood in coups with VAFI's Managing Director Norman Huon. VAFI's Forest Manager John Wright and leading local sawmillers discussing what has been done, what should have been done and what needs to be done better.

The WFS has had a number of meetings with the union and local worker groups and have a healthy relationship there.

The WFS has commissioned a Fauna Assessment from Monash Universities Barry Trail, and Linchon Kearn a respected Flora expert . These reports where done in consultation with local Flora and Fauna experts and have provided some most important information.

The WFS has run Wood and Water field days to get all the players from the water perspective to focus on past management practises and the future issues with regard to water , both surface and ground. Included at these have been Don Owen , Community Consultant to a number of East Coast of Australia Water Boards, and Tim Fisher, Australian Conservation Foundation.

We successfully last year presented enough evidence to the relevant Federal Agencies to have Midway Wood Products (export woodchip) remover from the Wombat and a fast tracking of the Federal Comprehensive Regional Analysis, to enable all of the values of our region to be assessed by the Federal Agencies to be properly valued and each given their due and place .We have established a good rapport with a number of these agencies.

On Saturday March 23 we held a public forum to bring together all the players and the community to discuss the present draft Midlands Forest Management Plan, currently open to public comment from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It has certainly been my experience over the last two years and more , that people and groups associated with the debate have felt at odds to the opinion of other groups. Yet when you talk to all these players you hear that

essentially we all want the same thing with minor differences of degree around the edges. We ran the forum in such a way as to enable everyone to put together their points of view and the points of view of other people. We had people come from Kerang representing down stream water customers , we had various Field Naturalists, VAFI representatives. Sawmillers, Union , Workers, Bill Caruish CSIRO Forestry Div Canberra flew down, Federal Government member, Chief Commissioner for Hepburn Shire Noel Harvey, Chamber of Commerce representatives, DCNR, Anthony Amos Native Forest Network City of Ballarat etc.

The workshop proved to be an outstanding exchange of quite diverse points of view, innovative Silvicultural Systems proposed and cutting edge Harvesting Techniques discussed. It is a credit to our community and the other people who attended , that issues that are else were ripping communities apart , are able to be discussed in such a mature way in our region. After the day both Bill Caruish (CSIRO) and Anthony Amoss (Native Forest Network) came up and commented that this level of debate was the most advanced they had seen in Australia.

It was at this workshop the three different people informed us of the conference you are running and that we should be there given the level of the debate. Certification is certainly something that the WFS has been investigating and we have been consulted for recommendations of local operators for inclusion in the Good Wood Guide.

Having read a bit on the sort of prerequisites that are usually sought for groups to accredited for Labelling and Certification Assessments, I feel that the Wombat Forest Society is perhaps in a prime position with good links to out Local Timber Industry, Department of Conservation and Natural Enviroment, Victorian Association of Forest Industries, Local Government, State and Federal pollies, Peak Green Groups, ACF, Friends of the Earth, Native Forest Network, Landcare, CSIRO, Heritage Commission. Commonwealth EPA,ANCOR,CMFEU, CSR Hardboards Bacchus Marsh to name a few.

One of the people to express interest in our attending your conference was Geoff Proctor, Manager of Black Forest Sawmill. This mill has been at the forefront of high value adding , especially with Messmate as seen in the furniture of Nicholas Dattner. Geoff has been invited to attend but cannot make it. He has asked the WFS representative to take samples on their behalf and to talk of what he's doing. The WFS and the local Industry is about to look at some marketing ideas for greater appreciation and utilisation of the Wombat's timber resource.

I am sure that if you phoned either ; John Wright VAFI Forest Manager, Bill Caruish, CSIRO Forest Division Canberra, Bob Graham DCNR Vic , South West Forest Manager, Tim Fisher Australian Conservation Council, Anthony Amoss, Native Forest Network, Friends of the Earth Melb, Noel Harvey Chief Commissioner Shire of Hepburn, Geoff Proctor , Manager Black Forest Sawmill Woodend, John Corrigan Eureka Timber Ballarat, George Howard , Leonard's Hill ,third generation Wombat Forest timber worker, that all these people would verify our bonafides and a few might comment on the success our Society has had by taking a new approach to the debate on future forest management.

I hope this thumb nail sketch of what the Wombat Forest Society is about will be enough information for your organisation to decide to include us as one of the participants in what surely is one of the most powerful tools for ensuring future sustainable management of our forests.

Yours Sincerely.

Tim Anderson.

p.s. Our organization had the misfortune to receive some rather bad press as a result of our former Director Alan Gray"s behaviour in Canberra last year at the National Breifing of the DFA Process. Mr Gray was told by his committee to go to the briefing and to observe and to fact find and not to lobby. Mr Gray thought he was above taking direction from his committee and behaved in a way that potentially could have jeopadised alot of good work being done by members of theWFS. Our Societies Members and the broader community were outraged by the undisciplined and childish behaviour of Mr Gray. The Sociteies members called an early AGM and Mr Gray took the option of resigning before he faced the members. The Wombat Forest Society is a committed anfd proffesional group setting a new standard in the debate on the future of our forests.

5·4·1996

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

Wild and Wonderful Wood and Water Work and Wildlife

PRESS RELEASE. *April 5 1996.*

The Wombat Forest Society and parts of the broader community are appalled with Hepburn Chairman of Commissioners Noel Harvey's press release in the Advocate last week asking for Midway's to be let loose in the Wombat again. It also reflects a simplistic understanding of the debate over management and utilisation within the Wombat and whoever is feeding our Chief Commissioner his figures is either sadly misinformed or perhaps indulging in mis- information.

Midland Logging's own figures state that Midways took approx. 20,000 tonnes a year in waste. They paid at the gate around $25 a ton. This means that the income to the timber workers and royalty is only around half a million dollars a year, a long way short of Mr Harvey's 1.3 million dollars. Similarly, Mr Harvey states that Midway's removal from the Wombat costs Geelong $2.4 Million. Midway's get around $75 a tonne on the ship, 20,000 tonnes by $75 equals $1.5 million, Midways is also a consortium and so alot of its profits actually go to shareholders all over Victoria.

Mr Harvey also talks of all the waste left on the forest floor. The reality is that the thousands of tons of wood rendered useless by DC&NR's recent regeneration burns is from coupes that Midway did take woodchip from, the reality is that Midway only took the material that suited their hip pockets and failed to adequately clean up the waste . If we are to have a second woodchipper in the Wombat it should be on the basis of them cleaning up the forest floor . Midways even used to send logs back on timber trucks if it didn't suit their greed for premium product. The Wombat is too important as a multi use forest , to have this type of player involved. Midway's also has quite a bad name within the timber community.

It is worth noting that the last 'Democratically' elected Council we had written to the Premier on behalf of the Wombat Forest Society asking for an independent inquiry into the Wombat and expressed concern over Midway's role in the forest (Advocate July 27 1994).

It is a shame to have the debate on the forest pitched at such a simplistic level, the level of waste from logging is a result of the Silvicultural System used. The Timber Industry, Timber Community, Wombat Forest Society and a number of other players in the debate , all see the Shelterwood System as a failure and are looking at other systems that may be more appropriate, when the final system or systems are settled on the calculations can be made of sawlog to residual ratios. CSR, Bacchus Marsh employs over two hundred people, surely if we are talking jobs and multipliers and money ,then CSR must be looked after first. If there is then further waste lets look at marketing options to get all the waste off the forest floor not just the small portion Midways took to line their pockets.

What the previous Federal Govt gave our area was a breathing space, based on the evidence of questionable sustainability, the Wombat as a vital catchment for town and irrigation, the Mineral Springs and the Natural Setting of

the areas' Tourism, whose value in employment and economic terms leave the dubious dollar values quoted by Mr Harvey for dead. The Federal RFA process has been fast tracked for the Midlands Forest Area, this will allow all of the values to be properly assessed and the economic pie properly divided.

Hepburn Shire's involvement in the Timbertown Association was sold as a means of getting extra funding for road maintenance , yet we see Mr Harvey peddling the barrow of a Midways. Is this what the community wants? The Timbertown Association has its roots in the extreme of the timber lobby. The Wombat Forest Society has always maintained that the debate should be local. We don't wish to see the sort of anger in our community that we see in East Gippsland. The WFS has stopped outside forest groups having 'Actions' in the Wombat, always believing that the timber workers are just people making their living.

Does the community and particularly the businesses enjoying the successes of the tourist boom want Hepburn Shire and Mr Harvey to be the mouth pieces and lobbyists for the pulp sector of the timber industry? The debate is a complex one. The sustainability numbers still do not add up. The future of our sawmillers and CSR are very important to this area and their economic value are much more vital for our economy than the very questionable export woodchippers' Midways, who have been captured on video chipping sawlogs .

Contact for Media Release : Tim Anderson
48 1141.

[redacted]
ESSENDON 3040
[redacted]

The Secretary,
Wombat Forest Society,
DAYLESFORD. VIC.

Dear Sir,

I write to express my disappointment on reading in 'The Age' of 27th January, 1996 that Mr Alan Gray has decided to stand as an Independent for the seat of Ballarat in the forthcoming Federal election.

The article describes Mr Gray as 'the former Director' of the Society but, because of his close association, during which time he has done great work for its cause, his name will be still inevitably linked with the Society.

As the seat of Ballarat cannot be won by an Independent, the fact that Mr Gray indicates that he will probably give his preferences to the Liberal Party cannot help but give the Society a political affiliation by default. I find this development very disturbing as I feel it to be a very serious disadvantage to any society of this type. Instead of being able to recruit members solely on the basis of their strong wish to contribute to the Society to help protect the forest from further incursions of woodchipping companies, the political affiliation, even though not immediate, could deter many from joining.

When I read the article in 'The Age' today I had a cheque made out and ready to post to renew my subscription to the Society. I am extremely sorry that I no longer feel I can support the Society due to this new circumstance.

Yours faithfully,

F J Kelly

COPY

To Merv Collins
From Robin Ramsay

Feb 3 1996

Dear Merv

Greetings. I dropped in to Michael Ronaldson's office yesterday, and heard myself being introduced to you by the receptionist as a representative of the Wildlife Protection Society.

Let me clarify:

- I am Director of the Wombat Forest Society. The previous Director, Alan Gray, recently retired from that position to stand as a Green Independent for Ballarat in the forthcoming election.

- The Society has 2200 members and supporters, and strong links with the community.

- The Society was instrumental in establishing the New Work Opportunities Committee in Daylesford. This Committtee is chaired by Hepburn Shire Commissioner Noel Harvey, and its members are Norm Huon of VAFI, John Slorich of Midland Logging, local timber mill owners, and the Wombat Forest Society. We have a good working relationship with with DCNR and the CFMEU. I understand from Amanda Vanstone's launch of you campaign that work opportunities feature strongly in your platform.

- In concert with Michael Rolandson we have had meetings with Minister Coleman to discuss the sustainability of current logging practises in the Wombat.

- The Society's Committee successfully lobbied the Federal Government for an end to export woodchipping in the Wombat.

- The Wombat Forest Society will hold its Annual General Meeting in February 23.

- I have sent the attached fax to Senator Kemp. The WFS Committee would very much like to meet and discuss these issues when he visits Ballarat. Given the importance of this electorate, and the particular relevance of our position to Coalition policy, we would also appreciate a statement from him regarding his position on the issues raised in the fax, to present to the membership and public on February 23.

I look forward to hearing from you, and can be reached on mobile :015 501 031

Kind regards

Robin Ramsay
Director

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY inc.

Wild and Wonderful Wood and Water Work and Wildlife

COPY.

TO: RICHARD RAWSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR , FORESTS SERVICE

OCTOBER 28

FROM: ROBIN RAMSAY

DEAR RICHARD

GREETINGS. RECENTLY YOUR BALLARAT OFFICE KINDLY MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SOCIETY YOUR MOST RECENT PRESENTATION SET OF FIGURES AND GRAPHS ON PROJECTIONS FOR THE MIDLANDS FMA, FOR A MEETING AT OUR ROOMS WITH SENIOR EXECUTIVES OF VAFI AND BLACK FOREST SAWMILLS. DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS TELL US THAT THIS PRESENTATION IS BASED ON THE VERY LATEST TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER IMAGING.

TODAY A MEMBER OF OUR EXECUTIVE PHONED BRUCE KILGOUR TO POINT OUT THAT THERE SEEM TO BE MAJOR POLICY CONTRADICTIONS IN THE PRESENTATION. APPARENTLY THESE HAD NOT BEEN NOTICED BY ANYONE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT.

THERE ALSO APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANT ERRORS IN CORRELATION BETWEEN YOUR FIGURES AND GRAPHS.

THIS QUESTIONABLE 'WOMBAT WOOD' PRESENTATION FOLLOWS SOON AFTER YOUR 'WOMBAT WATER' PUBLICATION, THE DISCREDITED 'LERDERDERG REPORT'.

THE COMMUNITY URGENTLY NEEDS UNEQUIVOCAL EVIDENCE THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF MANAGING THE MIDLAND FORESTS, AND HAS THE SENSITIVITY AND RESOURCES TO DO SO.

HAS YOUR BEGUILING INVITATION TO MEET, OF SOME TWO MONTHS AGO, QUITE FADED AWAY?

KIND REGARDS

ROBIN RAMSAY
DIRECTOR

CC: MINISTER, HON.MICHAEL RONALDSON

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