WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

PO BOX 51, TRENTHAM, 3458

NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES
MR NICK MURPHY
CES BALLARAT
18TH JAN '95

DEAR NICK,

RE: DRAFT PROPOSAL BY WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY TO SPONSOR NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES SCHEME.

THE WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY IS A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATION FOCUSSING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION. ISSUES COVERED INCLUDE FOREST SUSTAINABILITY, TOURISM AND POTENTIAL ECOTOURISM, WATER CATCHMENT PROTECTION, MAINTAINANCE OF INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY, REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. AS PART OF IT'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY THE SOCIETY IS INTERESTED IN TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ADDRESSSING THESE ISSUES.

RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY THE GROUP THUS FAR HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR A LOCALISED HANDS ON APPROACH TO LAND REHAHBILITATION AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION. AS A PART OF THE SOCIETIES ACTIVITIES WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH MR NEIL O'KEEFE FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BOURKE WHO HAS ADVISED US THAT OUR PROPOSALS COULD FIT INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES SCHEME.

PROPOSAL 1:

A DAYLESFORD BASED PROJECT FOCUSSING ON CATCHMENT RELATED ISSUES. A POSSIBLE SCENARIO IS THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE "WOMBAT ENVIRONMENT CENTRE" TO FACILITATE AND PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES AND RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS.

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT A PRACTICAL COMPONENT WOULD ENTAIL IDENTIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED AREAS WITHIN THE CATCHMENTS SUCH WORKS AS WEED ERRADICATION, REVEGETATION, STABILISATION OF STREAMS AND PROTECTION OF WETLANDS. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY HAVE EXPRESSED TENTATIVE INTEREST IN ASSISTING WITH A PROJECT WITH THESE AIMS AND WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ON GROUND ASSISTANCE AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISE. SIMILAR ASSISTANCE WOULD BE SORT FROM THE MURRAY GOULBURN WATER AUTHORITY AS THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NORTH FLOWING CATCHMENTS AND THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN THEIR POLICY GUIDELINES.

NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES PARTICIPANTS WOULD GAIN EXPERIENCE IN THREE KEY AREAS

1. BASIC OFFICE SKILLS
2. LAND REHABILITATION
3. COMMUNITY EDUCATION
4. RESEARCH/DATA COLLECTION

THESE SKILLS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPANTS LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ESPECIALLY IN THE FAST GROWING AREA OF ECOTOURISM. A POTENTIAL MARKET ALSO EXISTS LOCALLY FOR CONTRACT LAND REHABILITATION WORKS ON BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND. FURTHERMORE PARTICIPANTS WOULD BECOME WELL VERSED IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND FULFILL THE NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY EDUCATORS.

PROPOSAL 2

A TRENTHAM BASED PROJECT FOCUSSING ON FOREST MANAGEMENT. IT IS ENVISAGED THAT PARTICIPANTS WOULD UNDERTAKE PRACTICAL WORK IN THE FOREST WHERE LOW INTENSITY METHODS OF HARVESTING ARE NECESARY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. THIS MEETS LONG TERM TIMBER INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE SAWLOG INDUSTRY FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS REGION. THE ASSISTANCE OF THE LOCAL TIMBER INDUSTRY WILL BE SORT TOGETHER WITH ASSISTANCE FROM DC&NR. RETIRED TIMBER WORKERS IN THE TRENTHAM AREA HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BECOMING MENTORS FOR SUCH A PROJECT.

NEW WORK OPPORTUNITY PARTICIPANTS WOULD GAIN EXPERIENCE IN THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS

1. BASIC FOREST MANAGEMENT
2. LAND REHABILITATION SKILLS
3. FOREST OPERATORS LICENSE
4. FOREST RESEARCH/DATA COLLECTION

PARTICIPANTS MAY BE ABLE TO ATTAIN A FOREST OPERATORS LICENSE AND GIVEN THE GROWTH IN PRIVATE FORESTRY IN THE REGION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNIES SHOULD INCREASE IN THE FUTURE.

THE SCHOOL OF MINES AND INDUSTRY, BALLARAT IS WELL PLACED AS THE LOCAL TAFE COLLEGE TO PROVIDE THE EDUCATION COMPONENT OF BOTH PROPOSALS MENTIONED ABOVE. TENTATIVE ENQUIRIES HAVE PROVEN VERY POSITIVE WITH ALL KEY SKILLS COVERED BY RELEVENT SUBJECTS CURRENTLY TAUGHT AT SMB. COLLEGE STAFF HAVE OFFERED ASSISTANCE WITH COURSE DESIGN WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD GAIN RECOGNISED QUALIFICATIONS.

THE WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY HAS A BROAD SKILLS BASE TO DRAW ON AND AN ENTHUSIASTIC MEMBERSHIP TO ASSIST WITH THESE PROPOSALS. THE NEED FOR CATCHMENT PROTECTION HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED IN RECENT TIMES BY NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS INCLUDING BLUE-GREEN ALGAL BLOOMS, SALINITY, MAINTAINING STREAMFLOWS ETC. THESE PROPOSALS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BENEFIT NOT ONLY THE IMMEDIATE AREA BUT DOWNSTREAM USERS BOTH DOMESTIC AND AGRICULTURAL IN FIVE OF THIS STATES MOST DEGRADED CATCHMENTS.

THE SOCIETY BELIEVE THAT THESE PROPOSALS FIT INTO BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR CATCHMENT AND LAND PROTECTION AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO ENLISTING THE SERVICES OF DC&NR, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WATER AUTHORITIES, LANDCARE GROUPS LOCAL INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITY.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

TIM ANDERSON
[redacted]

LORIS DUCLOS
[redacted]