ENGAGING PEOPLE IN GREEN CAMPAIGNS

By Jo Mackay
Auckland Regional Council

My presentation to the 2002 ECO conference outlined some social research undertaken by the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) in March 2002, which aimed to measure people's attitudes and behaviours in relation to the environment, or being “green”. In particular, the research told us how many and what types of people recognise environmental problems, are aware of the environmental effect of what they do, act to improve the issue, and are committed to their actions or open to changing them.

Why is the ARC interested in people's environmental attitudes and behaviour? We are interested in changing people's attitudes and behaviour to be more environmentally friendly. We regard our role under the RMA as not just environmental regulators and monitors of environmental quality, but as advocates for improvement, which includes using tools such as education and the provision of positive incentives to change people's behaviour.

The ARC has launched a public education campaign called The Big Clean Up, which we are encouraging households to participate in. Through direct mailouts to participating households, we encourage people to make environmentally friendly changes to their lifestyles. The actions that we are promoting aim to improve air and water quality, and to teach the public about the conservation of resources, and about parks, biosecurity and biodiversity.

Motivating the public behind issues such as air quality in Auckland not only has led to more people tuning their cars, but also has given the ARC more bargaining power to lobby for institutional changes, such as better fuel specifications, where big gains can be made. The campaign is as much about using public pressure to make institutional changes as it is about raising awareness and encouraging people to make personal changes to their behaviour.

The phone research covered a random sample of people aged 15 or over. There were 408 interviews in Auckland, and 107 in the rest of the country.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with statements about the environment that were read to them (see below):

| Agreement/Disagreement with environmental statements |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| People need to live together with nature in order to survive | 43 | 41 | 35 | 31 | 16 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| Balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset | 47 | 46 | 38 | 35 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 12 | 9 |
| When people interfere with nature, often produces disastrous consequences | 30 | 30 | 26 | 19 | 13 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| The earth has a vital amount of space and resources | 51 | 46 | 39 | 31 | 19 | 14 | 18 | 14 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| People are seriously abusing the environment | 38 | 33 | 30 | 23 | 16 | 11 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| There are limits to growth beyond which our society cannot expand | 32 | 27 | 21 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| We're getting close to limit of number of people earth can support | 31 | 26 | 21 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| To maintain healthy economy, we need to stimulated business growth | 38 | 34 | 29 | 22 | 16 | 11 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| People have right to modify natural environment to suit their needs | 47 | 42 | 36 | 30 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 12 | 9 |
| Plants and animals exist mainly to be used by people | 51 | 46 | 39 | 31 | 19 | 14 | 18 | 14 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| People don't need to adapt to natural environment because they can remade it to suit their needs | 31 | 26 | 21 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| People were created to rule over rest of nature | 47 | 42 | 36 | 30 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 12 | 9 |

Note: Balance to 100% is assumed 'don't know'
Based on their overall responses, respondents were grouped into five categories:

“Dark greens” – 10% in Auckland and 13% of the rest of the country are entrenched in considering the environment in everything they do.

“Greens” – 22%/19% are comfortably committed to considering the environment in everything they do.

“Potential Greens” – 29%/36% currently consider the environment some of the time, but are open to being more green. (38% of 40-49 year olds, and 38% of people in the upper socio-economic group were in this category)

“Ambivalent Greens” – 10%/7% currently consider the environment some of the time, and are ambivalent about being more green (17% of 20-29 year olds were here)

“Easy Greens” – 22%/20% consider the environment only when it’s reasonable or practical, and are committed to this lifestyle

“Slipping Greens” – 5%/2% say they consider the environment, but are not committed to doing so.

This is heartening: what we can see is that there is a big chunk of people potentially available to shifting to being more green. The research found that all types of people (old, young, different ethnic groups, male and female) were in all categories, and there were only slight biases of certain demographic groups in some of the categories.

They were also asked whether they had undertaken some specific actions, either in the past year or at every opportunity (see graph 2 and 3):

Most people recognise recycling as the major action they can take. Improving recycling is the easy part. Actions such as buying ir recyclable packages, or buying in bulk, or concentrated forms or refills, are barely recognised as solutions.

Through “The Big Clean Up”, the ARC will be focusing on each issue with a specific promotion, one at a time. The next promotion, starting in October, will be on stormwater and water quality. Early next year, the Ministry for the Environment and other regional councils will join with us to launch a nationwide campaign around “reducing waste”.

The waste campaign next year will aim to raise levels of awareness of some solutions to the problem. The research gives baseline levels against which we can measure the success of the campaign.

The survey also asked detailed questions covering attitudes and behaviour relating to: reducing rubbish, traffic congestion and using public transport; conserving energy and water resources; and water quality and stormwater; enjoying outdoor and heritage sites; air quality; household safety; and planting native plants.

As an example, this is what respondents said about reducing waste:

71% (60% outside Auckland) say it’s a major issue
72% suggest more recycling facilities and bins
14% suggest more composting
9% suggest buying recyclable packaged goods
6% say it’s the duty of manufacturers
6% say get rid of plastic
3% say they want more government initiative
3% suggest reusing plastic bags
1% suggest bulk buying

Copies of this presentation are available for anybody interested.
Messages to the Government

By Cath Wallace
ECO

ECO welcomes the new government and indeed all the MPs elected, particularly the new ones. Here we identify some key issues that concern the environment movement and in many cases concern other non-governmental organisations.

Strengthening the Community and Voluntary Sector

Initiatives to strengthen the community and voluntary sector from the NGO community itself particularly the Association of Non-government Organisations of Aotearoa, ANGOA, and the Ministry of Social Development have resulted in a report He Waka Kotua: Joining Together on a Shared Journey. It was published in August 2002 by the Community-Government Relationship Steering Group, chaired by Dorothy Wilson.

The environment sector has been largely absent from the discussions. ECO has for a variety of reasons found it difficult to engage with and other environmental organisations were also absent. We attended a final meeting before the Steering Group reported to Minister Steve Maharey. It is notable that the Ministry for the Environment, DoC, Ministry of Fisheries, MAF and MED have not been part of the thinking that has been brewing in other parts of the public sector. They are now seeming out of step with the social sector in their attitudes to the voluntary sector. ECO will watch closely to see how the Government implements the recommendations and how Government departments react.

Freedom of dissent and political organisation

First and most fundamental to a democratic society is the need to ensure freedom of peaceful dissent, open government and unobstructed access to official information. ECO and its member organisations are increasingly frustrated and angry at official attitudes to the inclusion of the public in discussions of policy prior to Cabinet decisions. The idea that public input improves decisions has faded.

Many officials appear to believe that they are justified in withholding official information prior to decisions. This is not so – and Cabinet itself cannot alter the Official Information Act provisions that no class of document is to be regarded as unavailable. The present government has done much to put Cabinet papers on the web and to make them available (as with the Oceans Policy postings) but it has a depressingly controlling attitude to information prior to decision making. Even seasoned officials are falling into the habit of mind that Cabinet can require that information be withheld prior to decisions.

We remind the government and officials that the Official Information Act presumes that information is available and that there is no class of document that can be presumed to be secret. The grounds for withholding information under the Act are limited and have to be considered in each case. We recommend that the Office of the Auditor General undertake regular audits of government agencies for their timeliness and compliance with the Official Information Act.

The extension of the powers of the security and intelligence agencies has continued to erode, over the last three years, the rights to peaceful dissent and to privacy. Pressures further to erode freedoms of political organisation and dissent have intensified because of the "threat of terrorism" – but in many parts of the world, the “threat of terrorism” is being used as a cover for cracking down on political freedoms and rivals and for pursuing hawkish agendas. The cure is likely to be worse than the disease.

The non-partisan nature of environmental non-governmental organisations

ECO, like many other environmental non-governmental organisations is politically non-aligned. We reiterate this and urge all MPs to understand that the environmental NGOs are independent of party politics and should not be treated as though we are aligned with any particular party.

We were particularly shocked by the way Nicky Hager’s expose of the GE maize decision making was portrayed as a Green party initiative. Nicky Hager is well known to the Prime Minister and other ministers as an independent researcher and part of the non-aligned non-partisan environment movement. Those of us who are non-partisan guard that independence jealously – we are unimpressed by partisans who try to emesh us in party politics rather than debate the real issues. There are several politicians from various parts of the political spectrum who seem to find it easier to dismiss us as aligned with the other fellows than to focus on the environmental issues we raise.

Oceans Policy

Pete Hodgson remains the Oceans Policy minister, but the officials’ team co-ordination has been moved from Hodgson’s office, where Carolyn Risk (previously of Mtish) coordinated the work, to the Ministry for the Environment where Lindsay Gow, more seasoned in major policy reform, will drive the reform. There appears to be some loss of momentum as the new

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arrangements take root: but the change is apparently because of concern that the reform process was too slow. It is clear that the forces of conservatism are still alive and well. Chief

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NEXT STEPS OF OCEAN POLICY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Integrated management - developing decision-making and administrative models across different activities</td>
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<td>* Holistic management - taking into account both:</td>
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<td>- the biophysical characteristics of the marine environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>- the range of values held by New Zealanders in relation to that environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Decision-making models - determining when, how and by whom decisions are made and implemented (nationally, regionally, locally)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Compliance and enforcement - developing models and encouraging voluntary compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Treaty of Waitangi - addressing the Crown’s Treaty responsibilities in relation to the marine environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Information Management - identifying information needs and developing information management models</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Monitoring and measurement - monitoring the implementation of information systems, measuring results, and making changes to the system as required</td>
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Executive of affected agencies are to check each move of the new team – an arrangement seen by some as an essential involvement to keep them committed to change, but by others as a gatekeeping device fatal to serious change.

Minister Hodgson allowed previous officials to embed a “rights based” approach into the Oceans Policy development and has continued to stress this approach in subsequent speeches. This is an ominous and ultimately naïve approach which paves the way for those who want to alienate public control of environmental protection and management of natural resources.

Fisheries management

Fisheries Minister, Pete Hodgson, has made some improved decisions during his first two and a half years. He has protected 19 sea mounts, two to prevent the continued destruction of West Coast North Island Hector’s dolphins and has moved to slow the rate of over-fishing, in particular of orange roughy. But he has yet to change the culture and direction of the Ministry of allowing fishers to develop fisheries plans which he will approve or reject but will not alter. The rest of us are to be supplicants to the industry who will hold the pen. Ostensibly the plans will be checked against “standards and specifications” set by the Ministry – but its lack of capacity or commitment to environmental matters provide no reassurance.

The cabal of industry and Ministry staff who developed the original “Project X” (as they called it) plans under previous Minister Luxton for devolution of fisheries management to the industry has become more entrenched in recent years than ever. Michael Arbuckle, previously of the Southern Scallop Enhancement Company and now National Manager Fisheries Management at the Ministry, was one of the key industry people pushing for devolution to the fishing industry.

Hodgson, struggling with the regulatory framework by which the Ministry does its business, is apparently susceptible to this pressure since it has been sold to him as a way of inducing greater compliance with fisheries management and reducing Ministerial involvement.

The industry and Ministry pro-industry zealots have used hired gun imported academics to persuade the Minister to buy their line. Regrettably neither the industry nor the academics seem to care for the environment or for the legitimacy in a democratic system, of non-harvesting interests, those concerned about the environment and the public, being reduced to making submissions to the industry.

These measures to alienate from public control essential development of plans for a publicly managed environment and resource are extreme – and unacceptable. It has largely escaped public notice. It will be a major issue this parliamentary term for the environment movement to make it clear to the government that such “devolution” is not acceptable and that other solutions must be found to the mess that the industry and Ministry of Fisheries have engineered.

In many respects the Ministry of
Fishing is like the old NZ Forest Service: it has a view of the world not found in any other public agency. It seems unable to conceive of non-lethal uses of fish and is convinced that it must manage only for harvest. Such a view of an environment and natural resource is 19th century, not 21st century – and dangerous to both the environment and the fish. It may be that the only solution will be to hand over the overarching decision functions of the Ministry to an agency that knows that resource managers must manage for non-extractive as well as extractive uses and values.

Threateningly to environmental values, Pete Hodgson appears to be beguiled by the “rights based” rhetoric of the fishers and their Ministry friends. At a recent international fisheries economists’ conference in Wellington, largely organised and controlled by elements of the fishing industry and their harvest focussed, “rights based” friends in the Ministry, there was much comment on the cosy relationship between officials and industry. The agenda of the industry and Ministry became clear.

What they want is to expand their command over the sea from having rights to go fishing, to having rights to the space in the sea. This represents a colossal privatisation and grab for wealth and power – one to which unfunny politicians could well be persuaded to agree. Those who value the environment should be very, very worried.

We who are concerned for the environment have pressed the Ministry to manage fishing and its impacts with regard to the environment on which it impacts and to take a more spatially based management approach rather than be focused on single fish stocks. The environment is supposedly to be given more attention, and an Environmental Management Strategy is being drafted: but the Ministry shows little commitment to it.

Decision making in the Ministry shows little sign of reflecting the Minister’s intent. A recent example is the approval of an exploratory prawn trawling operation over an area larger than the South Island on the Chatham Rise, Southern Plateau and Challenger Plateau with no environmental assessment and with virtually no conditions to control benthic impacts – which are notoriously damaging to sea-floor communities.

In the last few months industry strategists have adopted the language of spatially based management but with the intent of bending it to their own ends. They want rights to marine space so that aquaculture, marine reserves and any other users of the marine environment will have to have their consent first. They are dead against marine reserves. It they manage to persuade the politicians to give them spatially defined rights then they can demand compensation if any are proposed.

Existing rights held by fishers are confined to rights to go fishing for certain quantities. The rights carry with them obligations to comply with environmental controls. What has happened though is that the industry has accelerated the Ministry into regarding environmental and future-generation regarding aspects of the Fisheries Act as mere frippery to be ignored and dismissed as “the religious bits” of the Act.

The Court of Appeal has already ruled that talk of “property rights” is always constrained by obligations to sustain the resource and to protect the environment and that the legal mechanisms for this are part and parcel of any entitlement (see Snapper 1 Court of Appeal Decision). Despite this, the industry is intent on persuading their Ministry friends – with the help of certain consultants – to extend their rights to space. They are now pressing for this in the context of both fisheries plans and the Oceans Policy. The industry is recruiting to this campaign Maori commercial fishing interests and looking to customary fishers, who already have a spatial focus and some colour of right – as natural allies.

Environmentalists and the public will have to speak up to prevent this massive property grab or we will find that not only is the sea alienated from our ownership and control but so are environmental protection measures such as marine reserves or marine mammal sanctuaries.

During the time of the Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson being in charge, no marine reserve proposals have gained the required concurrence of the Minister of Fisheries. The Ministry has worked hard to block them, even arguing at times that iwi who co-sponsored the marine reserve application did not know what they were doing and had to be protected by the Ministry refusing agreement.

Pete Hodgson successfully insisted that natural values of native forests should be respected. It is extraordinary that he seems unable with the fisheries portfolio to understand the importance of public control over natural resources and the environment and that the non-extractive values and environmental values should be both recognised and protected, as should the public’s right to be part of decision making.

**ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change and energy issues are major issues which will need to be dealt with by the Government. Pete Hodgson is again the Minister in charge of Climate Change and the Minister of Energy.

The Government has yet to announce its final climate change policy but is pursuing legislation to allow New Zealand to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Despite claims to the contrary by business groups, this convention has already been ratified by 95 countries and needs the ratification of Russia and Poland or Russia and a combination of other countries who are small emitters to come into force. This is likely to happen early next year. New Zealand needs to develop a pro-active policy for responding to the challenge of climate change and reducing our demands on fossil fuels.

The key issues for the Government are:

1. Whether it will establish an early carbon charge, rather than waiting until 2008, so as to set the right early incentives to get consumers to move away from a fossil fuel use;

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2. Whether the Government will adequately fund the climate change strategy and the energy efficiency and conservation strategy and the waste strategy. Because the government has gone for a range of funds to subsidise industry effort, the total cost of the programme is estimated at around $100 million per year. This may sound large but it is about the cost the painted apple moth eradication and it would take over 8 years to equate to the cost of buying back Air New Zealand.

3. How much renewable energy obligation the government may require in its energy efficiency and conservation strategy. The proposed renewable energy obligation in the renewables strategy is 25-55 petajoules. It is critical that this strategy does not become sidelined in a debate focused on new fossil fuel powered generation.

Other challenges to the Government are to avoid compromising other conservation obligations at the same time as promoting renewable energy. The Government should not be stampeded to change the Resource Management Act to assist renewable or other energy supply.

The end to Maui gas field creates many challenges and opportunities. The firm decision of the Minister of Conservation, Chris Carter, to oppose changes to the Conservation Act to facilitate the flooding of an ecological area on the West Coast for a Dobson hydro power station is welcomed. In the same way coal or more thermal generation is not the answer to New Zealand's energy future.

Everyone recognises that energy use is poor in New Zealand and that greater energy efficiency is needed. Officials assess that most business could cut their energy costs by a conservative 20 to 30 percent through cost effective energy efficiency measures. Poor insulation of water heaters, homes and offices mean we waste much of the energy we use. The failure of the Building Industry Act measures and the building industry to grapple with energy efficiency has been a major failing in the last 10 years.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act has created new opportunities but New Zealand needs to move away from its fixation on low priced energy. New gas will be more expensive than Maui. The addition of phased-in carbon charges balanced with widespread energy efficiency programmes and strong energy efficiency standards could lead New Zealand to an alternative future as a high energy efficiency user and allow the reduction in thermal generation and more wind power.

Resource Management

The Government has yet to front up with the funds to adequately implement the Resource Management Act. A range of industry groups have been braying for changes to the Act to limit public involvement. What is needed is the development of strong national standards and national policy statements.

Since the RMA was passed in 1991 only one national policy statement has been created. The current government has dragged the chain over the development of a national policy statement to protect biodiversity and no national standards have been advertised. We hope that the Ministry for the Environment's new CEO Barry Carbon commitment to the national standards will be implemented and not lost in the rush to appease some businesses concerned over the RMA.

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Six weeks to save the world?

Report on the 2002 Vote for the Environment Campaign

By Jon Terry
Vote for the Environment Goups

This was the fifth Vote for the Environment campaign, which has been run every election since 1990 by a coalition of national environment, conservation and recreation groups comprised this year by ECO, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) and Greenpeace. The campaign started in late June after the snap election was announced.

How the campaign worked

Fundamental to the campaign was the production of three distinct publications: the Charter, the questionnaire and the results brochure. The 16 page Charter sets out the key principles and policies that the Vote for the Environment coalition considers should be adopted by all political parties. Seventy six questions on 51 policy issues related to the charter were then made into a questionnaire which was sent out to the main political parties. A results brochure was then produced based on the replies to the questionnaire, parties' parliamentary voting since 1999 and a study of each party's environmental policies. This was released in the week leading up to the election to let our member groups and the public know where each party stood on a range of environment, conservation and recreation issues.

Events as they unfolded...

ECO conference forum

To get the ball rolling, environmental spokespeople from each main political party were invited along to a forum at the ECO annual conference held at Massey University's Wellington campus (28 June). Each party spoke on aspects of their environmental policy and then fielded questions from the floor. Six speakers attended, and the evening was well

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charied by Cath Wallace. This event kicked off our campaign and served to get it into the minds of the parties in preparation for filling out the questionnaire.

From left: Cath Wallace, ECO (Chair), John Wright (Progressive Coalition), Robert Reid (Alliance), Ruth Dyson (Labour), Jeanette Fitzsimons (Greens), Wayne Chapman (United Future New Zealand) and Nick Smith (National). Photo: Jon Terry

Charter

A great number of hours were put into the development of the Charter with many different member groups and individuals being consulted for comment. Unfortunately there was little time to promote the Charter before the results of the questionnaire were released. The Charter is expected to remain a "live" document until the next election, as it remains a useful tool for future political lobbying. The Charter was launched on 4 July at Turnbull House on Bowen Street near Parliament.

From left: Coalition spokespeople Cath Wallace (ECO), Barry Weeber (Forest and Bird) and Barbara Marshall (Federated Mountain Clubs). Photo: Jon Terry

Questionnaire and results brochure

Only four parties (Labour, Greens, NZ First and Progressive Coalition) managed to respond to questionnaire. A dedicated team of six toiled away over the weekend before the election and the results brochure was released to the media on Tuesday morning and posted, emailed and hand delivered to everyone we could think of or afford to send it to, to get to them a day or two before the election.

Finally, after six weeks of frenzied work, it was time for everyone to take a well-earned rest on election night, plonk down in front of the TV with some friends and watch the events of the evening unfold...

So how did the parties rate?

Rating was made more difficult since only half of the parties responded to the questionnaire. However, other sources of information were also utilised such as parliamentary voting on environmental (and anti-environmental) legislation over the last three years, political speeches and environmental policy takes from party websites.

Ranked based on the scale of one to five kiwi. The Greens ranked 5 kiwi, Progressive Coalition 4, New Zealand First 3, Labour 3, Alliance 3, United Future 1 and Act ranks a kiwi drumstick. Check out the results brochure on the website: www.environmentvote.org.nz

This was advertised at every opportunity. The website holds good promise for future elections. Nick Young (Greenpeace NZ) can take all the credit for getting this established and adding information at key times.

The next parliamentary term

Following the election, letters have been sent out to each MP asking for a meeting with Vote for the Environment representatives to discuss aspects of the Charter.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who worked on the Charter (many of whom I am not aware of) and all other aspects of the Vote for the Environment campaign

Also thanks to:

Forest and Bird: Barry Weeber, Geoff Keey, Eric Pyle, Kate Mitcalfe

FMC: Barbara Marshall and others

Greenpeace: Glyn Walters, Nick Young (website), Robbie Kelman

ECO: Cath Wallace, Elizabeth Lee, Joe Buchanan, Emily Bailey, Quentin Davies, Richard Frizzell
New face at Greenpeace

By Glyn Walters
Greenpeace

Greenpeace New Zealand’s new campaign manager, Glyn Walters, is a former forests and roads campaigner. Some may remember him as communications officer for Greenpeace during the tumultuous times of the Moruroa campaign 1995 to 1997.

Glyn was raised in Somerset, England, twenty-five kilometres downwind from the Hinkley Point nuclear power station, during the Cold War years of the 1980s.

“On top of that, our woodlands were being decimated by Dutch elm disease - I well remember the stark outlines of dead trees everywhere - so naturally I became an environmentalist.”

Glyn has environmental science and Spanish degrees and spent a year in Guatemala researching tropical forest destruction and alternative rainforest products.

He worked for Friends of the Earth UK from 1990 to 1993 and was also a university lecturer in environment and development studies, later becoming a freelance journalist and helping set up the alternative news magazine Squall in London in 1991. “I got really fired up by the Tories’ over-the-top road-building plans and am proud of the work we did to bring that madness to a screeching halt.”

Glyn says he is excited to be back at Greenpeace and to find the organisation in such strong heart.

“Amongst other things, next year we are going to do some cutting-edge campaigning on toxics, GE and climate change and I’m looking forward to pushing a few boundaries,” he says. So, watch for changes!

Contact: gwalters@nz.greenpeace.org

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ECO CONFERENCE 2002


By Emily Bailey and Joe Buchanan
ECO

The ECO annual conference went ahead in Wellington this year and received around 80 attendees despite the wet and windy conditions so typical of that month. The conference stretched across the weekend of June 28 to 30 and was held mostly at the Mt Cook Massey University Campus with the last day held at Tapu Te Ranga Marae in Island Bay.

Highlights of the conference were Clive Hamilton’s talk on “Progress’ and Well-being”, the political forum on Friday night, Saturday’s fieldtrips and the big dinner at Tapu Te Ranga on Saturday night.

Conference topics this year were very policy based with the elections looming on the horizon and several major issues needed to be worked through: climate change, fisheries management and the Vote for the Environment Charter. Other topics discussed were genetic engineering, green tick certification, environment & economy, risk assessment, action and conflict resolution. The ECO AGM was also held during the conference on the Sunday at Tapu Te Ranga Marae.

The conference was a success. It provided a much needed discussion forum for New Zealand’s environmental groups and a chance for many of us to finally meet in person or catch up with acquaintances.

A big thank-you goes out to all the exec members that came together to help organise things this year and to Christine Lee and Greta Carney for the wonderful food and drinks. We hope to see everyone again next year but preferably without so much rain!

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CONFERENCE 2003

Yes, it’s time to start thinking about next year’s conference, before the usual end-of-year merry-go-round of activities starts up. This year it was in Wellington because of the general election, but in 2003 it can be held outside a main centre. Please could everybody put their minds to a suitable venue, remembering that it is best to be in a fairly accessible place with reasonable public transport systems to get there, and onsite accommodation if possible. Suggestions: maraes, Scout camps, Christian camps, holiday parks (as in Nelson in 2000). As it will be once again in winter, give the holiday camp possibility careful consideration, as some places though cheap, easily accessible and in other ways ideal, can be miserably cold in the mid-year months.

Send your bright ideas to the ECO office, and if you have leaflets or brochures of suitable venues, send them along too.
Précis of the Keynote Address Given by Dr Clive Hamilton at the ECO Annual Conference, June 2002

By Elizabeth Lee
ECO

“Growth, its influence and dominance in our society, and its effect on the natural environment”

As the title of his speech suggests, Clive Hamilton, The Australian Institute had bitten off a large chunk of material to talk about. Clive renewed an enormous number of the things that have been changed by human activity over the past few hundred years. He stressed that we cannot go on the way that we have been doing in recent decades, as if the resources of the world, and the ability of the natural world to recover from human depredation, were limitless.

“We’re often told and it’s simple to believe, that we can have it all - economic growth and the environment if we do it cleverly. It’s a convenient view for politicians and business people who say they’re committed to sustainability. But there is certainly a conflict between economic growth and environmental protection.”

Clive went on to say that although the people who use natural resources complain that environmental protection measures will be enormously costly to businesses, in fact the losses are generally quite small and short term. This is because there are always investment opportunities elsewhere if a particular activity is restricted or forbidden.

The loss to the investor is only what is lost for the short time that the money is not invested. In fact, the profit from the alternative investment may in the long run be greater than it would have been for the restricted activity.

Those who bear the greatest loss from industries closing down or shifting elsewhere are not the capitalists, but the workers who either lose jobs or must move to where the work has gone. Sadly, these people often blame environmentalists, for it is the opinions and actions of the latter that often seem to be the cause of industries closing down or relocating.

Benefits of Regulation

Clive said studies suggest that countries which have tight environmental regulations do not suffer economically in comparison with those that have lax regulations. Even official conservative organisations agree with the findings of the studies. Further, there is evidence that the first movers to comply in the countries that tighten up their environmental standards enjoy significant economic advantage as a result.

In the 1970s Germany introduced regulations to protect water and air quality. The result was that the first in the field to develop environmental control technologies, was able to capture the lion’s share of the international market for these. Countries slower off the mark now envy Germany, which exports the pollution technology it developed to solve its own problems at home, to the rest of the world.

An example of an industry that adapted quickly to environmental regulations is the power industry in the United States, which used to burn coal and such products to produce electricity. Burning coal produces sulphur dioxide (SO2), the principal cause of acid rain. Government regulations put a cap on the amount of SO2 that could come out of a power plant, and introduced a system of purchasable permits to emit each tonne of SO2. Despite dire predictions that this would be ruinous to the industry, the price of the permits to pollute never rose very high, and it is now hovering around $US120 per permit, certainly not a ruinous price.

The odd thing is that industries will rise to the challenge when it’s a question of money. In order to reduce the cost to their bottom line, business will find much better, cheaper ways to reduce pollution when the law requires them to do so and makes them pay for what pollution they do cause. So not only did these industries manage to contain by a huge amount the economic cost to themselves, but also SO2 emissions ended up being 30% below the maximum allowed under the law. Everybody was better off.

It is an irony that environmentalists have much more faith in the market system than the ideological upholders of the free market, for while the latter paint a picture of doom and gloom if restrictions are introduced, the former cheerfully assume that the business community will find ways of reducing costs even more than anyone can imagine.

Low-costed Protection

Nonetheless, despite the evidence that the real cost of environmental protection is not great, and that there are long-term advantages of reducing environmental impact, there remains a belief amongst politicians that environmental laws will have a serious impact on the economic growth rate. Libertarians who resist limits to what they can do in the market place seem to have substituted environmentalists for Communists as the most subversive

—Continued over page

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threat to the rights of private property owners; the devils threatening the free market.

Growth Fetishism

Clive spoke of “growth fetishism,” the political and ideological force that leads to an obsession with economic growth. This has seriously held up what to do about global warming, he said. That this is a terrifying threat to the future of the world is verified by the conclusions reached in the various reports of the UNIPCC, a panel of the world’s top climate scientists.

Climate Change

At the end of 1997, after nearly ten years of tortuous negotiations, the rich countries of the world agreed to the Kyoto Protocol which would see them reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 5% over a ten to fifteen year period. This was a significant first step toward the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. However, no sooner had the Protocol been formulated than the fossil fuel producers launched an attack upon it. They demanded this and that modification of its requirements, which will mean that when implemented the Protocol will result in virtually no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the rich countries at all.

The reluctant fossil fuel producers have strong allies in the rich countries who believe that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will lead to a curb on the rate of economic growth. Conservative economists in the rich countries have constructed complicated economic models to show how bad the effect of enforcing the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol would be on the rate of growth. These economists have omitted to take account of factors such as the ability of industries to adapt, simply by being more energy efficient, and to develop new energy technologies.

Despite what politicians and the conservative economists say, the actual cost of reducing emissions is miniscule — in fact, the GNP of the United States would be reduced by only 1% by the end of the first commitment period, in 2012. That the US baulks at taking positive action because of such a small sacrifice is taking the obsession with growth to an absurd degree — given that the alternative is the high probability of environmental catastrophe being visited upon the earth.

Humans and the Planet

Forty years ago, humans used only 10% of the earth’s plant-based production. At present, we use 40% of it, and if we carry on at this rate, in thirty-five years time we will have used up 80% of the plant productivity of the earth.

There has been a transition in the last one hundred years from a world that was relatively empty of human activity to one that is practically saturated by human activity. Very few areas remain wild and impenetrable, and our wildernesses must be “managed” to prevent them being overrun by human activity. Even Everest and the Antarctic are brightened by the attentions of tourists and expeditions.

Clive expanded on the theme of Western intervention to tell of a visit he made a few years ago to a logging operation in the very remote centre of Borneo. After a whole day of exhausting travel, the group at last arrived at nightfall at the logging headquarters, to find the Indonesian forestry workers gathered around watching “McGyver” on satellite television. The cultural implications of this sort of imperialism are saddening, and there’s no escape from it anywhere on earth any more.

Environmentalists need to consider the loss of cultural diversity and to confront the question of whether our standard of living can be maintained in a world of finite resources.

Obsession with growth

Clive noted psychological processes that drive the obsession with growth. Something about life in the last couple of hundred years, probably a loss of intimate connection with the natural world, has led us to see the natural world as nothing more than a resource for items of material consumption.

Day after day, every time we turn on the television or glance at the junk mail in our letterboxes, we are told that this is the way to happiness in life, consuming and acquiring material things. This is predicated on the belief that we gain fulfilment and contentment from consumption activity, and we try to fill the frightening emptiness inside by more and more consumption.

Although environmentalism has good practical and utilitarian reasons for caring for the environment, at a deeper level its philosophy rests on an understanding that we have consumed far too much for far too long in a vain attempt to achieve heaven on earth. In fact, we are destroying our relationship with the natural world, which is perhaps the only thing that can really give heaven on earth.

From this point of view, whether or not the natural resources we use to create material goods are finite, is irrelevant, for if there actually were an infinity of resources we would just infinitely extend the period during which we delude ourselves with the belief that the path to happiness lies in the accumulation of goods. The fundamental distinction between standard economics and the emerging discipline of ecological economics is the recognition of deeper relationships than the simple “user, used and usable” relations that exist between people and things in the standard economic model.

“Instrumentalism” is the name given to the very particular philosophy of values that is the basis of the current dominant economic thinking. Instrumentalism see things as valuable only insofar as they satisfy human desires, so the natural world is valuable only to the extent to which it can be used to generate material goods and services. Environmentalists have challenged that thinking by saying that the natural world has intrinsic value, and that, because of this, its unrestrained exploitation cannot be justified, since intrinsic value is being destroyed in the pursuit of purely “value-added” activities.

Clive noted how eco-feminists regard the separation of humanity from the natural world and the ability of humanity therefore to regard it as an economic resource which is there for our exploitation.

Implicit in this world view, which is very much that of western civilisation, is a dualism with culture on one hand
and nature on the other; reason and economics, balanced against emotion and nurture; maleness against femaleness. Culture, that has been contructed by the male, is masculine, superior, rational and ordered, while nature is female, subordinate, chaotic and tribal.

The eco-feminists argue that this is not only an anthropocentric view of the natural world, but specifically a male-centred view, and that is why environmentalism, which challenges this view, really is a very fundamental threat to the ideology of conventional economics. So, while there is simply the very practical reason that we'll run out of resources if we keep on driving the earth so hard, environmentalism has identified a deeper underlying philosophical reason for changing the way in which we conduct our relationship with the natural world.

Sickness of affluence

There is no doubt that the emphasis on growth has been very successful, in that it has raised the standard of living of most people in the world by a factor of three or four in the past five or six decades. We now have a level of material affluence beyond the dreams of our grandparents - but are we any happier and less anxious?

Surveys of groups of people done in the US over the last few years suggest that they are considerably less happy now than they were some time ago. Even on very high incomes, people said that they could not afford to buy everything that they really need, that they could not acquire much more than the basic necessities - this in the richest nation in the world. They should, Clive commented, go and tell that to the average East Timorese.

It is true that in the rich Western countries there are some people who are really struggling to keep their heads above poverty level, but in general we live in an age of abundance. Rather than focusing on those who are deprived, we should look to what the environmentalists are saying, which is that in our world we have too much materialism and too much exploitation.

The sicknesses which undermine our ability to be happy are those of affluence, not of deprivation - too much food, not enough exercise, epidemics of gambling and retail therapy and rising levels of psychological problems. In fact, the WHO predicts that five of the ten dominant diseases in the year 2020 across the world will be psychological ones - major depression, bipolar disorder and so on. We need a reorientation of our thinking so that we get a better view of what is really happening in our society, and then we can go forward into the future.

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Book review: “Killer Algae - A True Tale of a Biological Invasion”

By Alexandre Meinesz

University of Chicago Press, 1999. Translated by Dan Simberloff

By Joe Buchanan

ECO

Alexandre Meinesz's story of the invasion of the Mediterranean by a little known tropical green alga turns a marine biosecurity issue into a political/ecological thriller that out-does the imaginings of Michael Crichton. From his early discovery of a small patch of Caulerpa taxifolia on the sea floor outside the Oceanographic Museum in Monaco to his horrified observations of a rapidly spreading menace that soon covered four thousand hectares, Meinesz relates a sorry story of political inaction, scientific obscurantism and bureaucracy that blocked any response to the threat.

Meinesz’s attempts to alert authorities to the dangers posed by Caulerpa were met with charges that he was an alarmist: seeking publicity and funds for his laboratory. Embarrassed by the alga's escape from the prestigious Monaco Oceanographic Museum, various members of Europe’s scientific elite claimed that the alga was harmless, or beneficial, or that it had been misidentified by traditional taxonomists and only genetic analysis could confirm its identity. A decade passed and the alga continued to smother the Mediterranean marine flora. Since the publication of the book, Caulerpa taxifolia has been discovered in California, Florida and Australia. In California attempts are being made to eradicate the alga - with some success, but officials in Australia and Mediterranean countries have abandoned any hope of eradicating C. taxifolia.

In New Zealand the trade in Caulerpa for aquariums has been banned and the Ministry of Fisheries has circulated information sheets urging reporting of any sightings - measures praised by Meinesz. This book is a primer on marine biosecurity threats: both on the devastating ecological impact an invasive species can have and on how political expediency and shoddy science can undermine control measures.

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NEW POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT

The key positions in the Government relevant to the environment and conservation and their ranking, in addition to the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, are listed below.

KEY MINISTERS:
Helen Clark - Prime Minister
Dr Michael Cullen (2) Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Revenue
Jim Anderton (3) Minister for Economic Development, Industry and Regional Development
Phil Goff (5) Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Jim Sutton (7) Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Biosecurity and Trade Negotiations. Minister for Rural Affairs
Pete Hodgson (9) Minister of Energy, Fisheries Research, Science and Technology, Crown Research Institutes, Convenor, Ministerial Group on Climate Change and Minister in charge of Oceans Policy.
Associate Minister for Industry and Regional Development and Foreign Affairs and Trade.
Margaret Wilson (10) Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations.
Parekura Horomia (11) Minister of Maori Affairs, and Associate Minister of Fisheries and Forestry
Hon Trevor Mallard (8) Minister for the America’s Cup, Associate Minister of Finance.
Lianne Dalziel (12) Minister of Commerce.
Hon Mark Burton (14) Minister of Defence, State Owned Enterprises [Responsible for all SOEs except TVNZ Ltd], Minister of Tourism
Paul Swain (15) Minister of Transport, Associate Minister of Finance, Revenue and Economic Development and Minister for Small Business
Marian Hobbs (16) Minister for the Environment, Associate Minister for Biosecurity, Minister of Urban Affairs
John Tamihere (19) Minister for Land Information, Associate Minister of Maori Affairs, Commerce and Small Business
Chris Carter (20) Minister of Conservation and Local Government
MINISTERS OUTSIDE CABINET:
Judith Tizard (21) Minister of Consumer Affairs, Associate Minister for Transport, Associate Minister of Commerce, Auckland Issues
Tariana Turia (22) Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, associate Minister of Maori Affairs (Social Development)
Marry Duynhoven (26) Associate Minister of Energy.
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY:
Mita Ririnui is Under Secretary to the Minister of Conservation and Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations.
PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARIES (PPS) TO MINISTERS
Tim Barnett, MP will be Parliamentary Private Secretaries to the Minister of Justice on human rights issues, and to the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.
David Cunliffe, MP will be PPS to the Minister of Finance and of Revenue, and to the Minister of Commerce.
PARTY SPOKESPEOPLE:
The relevant Party spokespeople from non-Government political parties are listed below.

Green’s spokespeople:
Rod Donald (Co-Leader and Musterer): Commerce, Sustainable Development (shared with Jeanette) and Trade
Mike Ward: Local Government (Assoc) and Tourism.
National spokespeople:
Shane Ardern: Conservation, Biosecurity, and Associate Agriculture
Gerry Brownlee: Energy and Local Government
Brian Connell: Forestry
Phil Heatley: Fisheries
Hon Roger Sowry: Deputy Leader and Transport
Dr Hon Nick Smith: Environment
United:
Gordon F Copeland: Finance, Revenue and Charitable and Voluntary Sector
NZ First:
Brent Catchpole: Environment, BioSecurity, Tourism, Transport
Pita Paraone: Fisheries
Edwin Perry: Conservation
Mita Ririnui, MP Parliamentary
JimPeters: Local Government and Regional Development

ACT:
Gerry Eckhoff: Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Biosecurity, Rural Affairs, Land and Land Information, and Tourism

SELECT COMMITTEES MEMBERS:
Members of key Select Committees
which have dealt with environmental legislation and their party affiliations are listed below.

Local Government and Environment: Shane Adern (N), Larry Baldock (UF), Rick Barker (L), John Carter (N), David Cunliffe (Deputy Chairperson, L), Jeanette Fitzsimons (Chairperson G), Ann Hartley (L), Nanaia Mahuta (L), Jim Peters (N), Hon Dover Samuels (L), Hon Ken Shirley (ACT), and Lindsay Tisch (N).

Primary Production Committee: Hon David Carter (Chairperson) (N), Dr Ashraf Choudhary (L), Clayton Cosgrove (N), Gerrard Eckhoff (ACT), Ian Ewen-Street (G), Phil Heatley (N), Janet Mackey (L), Hon Damien O’Connor (L), and R Doug Woolerton (NZF).

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee: Tim Barnett (L), Hon Peter Dunne (Chairperson) (UF), Martin Gallagher (L), Graham Kelly (Deputy Chairperson) (L), Keith Locke (G), Dr Wayne Mapp (N), Ror Mark (NZF), Matt Robson (L), and Dr the Hon Lockwood Smith (N).

Transport and Industrial Relations Committee: Peter Brown (NZF), Deborah Coddington (ACT), Helen Duncan (Chairperson) (L), Hon Harry Duynhoven (L), John Key (N), Lynne Pillay (L), Hon Roger Sowry (N), Hon Judith Tizard (L), and Mike Ward (G).

Commerce Committee: Gerry Brownlee (Deputy Chairperson) (N), Brent Catchpole (L), Darren Hughes (L), David Parker (L), Mark Peck (Chairperson) (L), Hon Richard Prebble (A), H V Ross Robertson (L), and Hon Maurice Williamson (N).

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY INDULGES POLLUTERS

The Climate Change policy announced by the government in November will not do enough to slow greenhouse gas pollution and is too, little too late.

The Policy should instead introduce pollution charges in late 2003, much sooner than the proposed 2007. The earlier date would allow New Zealand to get a head start on the control of greenhouse gases emissions which will be cheaper in the long term and for the sake of promoting energy efficiency which New Zealand needs more than ever with the expected exhaustion of the Maui Gas field in 2005.

ECO has been told that the policy reflects a deal done by Helen Clark, Michael Cullen and Paul Swain and the Greenhouse pollutants’ coalition, the Greenhouse Policy. Coalition, in December 2001.

The policy proposals issued in November failed to reflect widespread public concerns about the need to take early action and to take effective action soon, not later.

The Greenhouse Policy Coalition, apparently persuaded the senior ministers to postpone carbon charges until 2007, well beyond the term of the current government. They extracted huge concessions for farmers with exemption from methane charges and for the big polluters with Negotiated Agreements which are better called “pollution indulgences”.

Suggestions of incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are a violation of the polluter pays principle which NZ is supposed to be committed to both via its membership of the OECD and the Rio Earth Summit.

The public and environmental groups are sick and tired of the government indulging environmentally damaging commercial interests over the public interest and the interests of the future.

Cath Wallace

MARINE RESERVES BILL SUBMISSION

Submissions close on the Marine Reserves on 31 January 2003 with the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. This Bill which rewrites the Marine Reserves Act was tabled in Parliament just prior to the election. Further information will be printed in the next issue.

GOVERNMENT WAVES GREEN FLAG AT GE

Public discussion paper on changing operation of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisation Act for New organisms has been released by the Minister for the Environment, Marian Hobbs. The discussion papers follows some of the proposals of the Royal Commission on Genetic modification.

The first part of document proposes changes to:

• speed up the importation of “low-risk genetically modified organisms” to Institutional Biological Safety Committees;
• allow the conditional release of genetically engineered organisms so as to speed up release of GE material.

changes to the grounds for the Minister for the Environment to call-in an application for a HSNO approval.

Part A briefly looks at the issues around liability for adverse effects from GE material but proposes no changes.

Strangely there is no discussion in the document over the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol, which establishes international rules and controls over trade in living marine organisms, applying a precautionary approach and allowing countries to apply more restrictive rules.

Part B of this document discusses other changes to the HSNO Act. This includes changes to controls on animals in zoos and controls on hazardous substances.

Written submissions on this discussion paper are requested by Friday 15 November 2002. Submissions should be sent to Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10-362, Wellington. E-mail submissions can be sent to HSNOamend@mfe.govt.nz.

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Now RMA Website

A new website has been created to guide community groups as to how to use the RMA. It can be found at www.rmaguide.org.nz.

Funded by the Ministry for the Environment it was created by Raewyn Peart working for the Environmental Defence Society.

This site contains information to assist people and community groups to more effectively participate in processes under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The site contains information on:

- A background to the RMA
- The role of statutory bodies
- Planning documents
- Resource consents
- Processes under the RMA

How individuals and organisations can effectively participate in RMA processes

Practical examples of documents which you will need to prepare (which can be downloaded in Word format), including submissions on consents, plans and appeals

Detailed information on some specific environmental issues including landscape, biodiversity and coastal management.

Where you can get further information and assistance

The site is supported by a search facility. For the more complex procedures flow charts have been drawn so the stages and timing of events can be seen.

Copies of some of the standard RMA forms are also available on the site again in files that can be downloaded and used directly.

There are over 100 pages or documents on the site so it is resource rich. There are several ways of navigating the site and lots of internal cross links so the information is easy to find.

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