



ENet News

Newsletter of the Bega Environment Network

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www.enet.thebegavalley.org.au

SPRING 2007

Editorial

The Bega Valley Shire Council, in making unwarranted pro-development decisions may be short sighted, stupid, wrong, ignorant or reckless. But this does not necessarily make it corrupt.

It is entirely possible that these decision makers could be genuinely and honestly short sighted, stupid, wrong, ignorant and reckless.

It is disappointing when campaigners who run into a brick wall from Council, State Forests or other Government bodies resort to personal attacks, rather than getting on with their campaigns.

Incidentally, we note that Eurobodalla on 29 September became a nuclear free shire.

That excellent decision came about on the casting vote of the Mayor.

Does this make it corrupt? ◀



CHIPSTOPPER is at:<http://www.chipstop.forests.org.au/cs%20winter%202007.pdf>

From the President

Over the last 20 years the Enet has achieved much and had significant influence on environmental awareness and practice in our south east corner.

We've worked hard to extend the National Park reserve system, increase water awareness and conservation, protect our coastal ecosystems and waterways, ensure sensible infrastructure and town planning and involve community in the political process.

Following consolidation into the present premises, the Enet is in a great position to continue and even extend its good works in the south east.

Involvement in the Enet has fluctuated over the years.

Attendances at recent monthly planning meetings have been small though consistent, with a dedicated group keeping the Enet ticking over.

Although we are currently operating

at less than full capacity, what is fantastic is that the Enet has helped spawn and continues to support an array of local environment and community groups, offering the anchor of a meeting space and facilities and a banner for smaller more temporary groups and individuals to use.

In any organization it is vital to engender new involvement, new blood and energy.

After several years in the role of Enet President, I've decided to step aside and get on with other aspects of my life.

Over the last 20 years each Enet President has brought they're special touch to the Enet and there is certainly plenty of scope for who ever takes up the baton, to do creative and positive work for our environment and community.

So I heartily encourage all Enet members to consider taking a turn at this important and rewarding role.

With thanks
Colin Sagar

**Are you enrolled to vote? Check at:
<https://oevf.aec.gov.au/>**

Inside...

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What should The Greens do about Preferences?

Hands up if you think that the most important thing that The Greens can do in any election campaign is decide on how to allocate their preferences!

If you believe that, you may be in the majority, but perhaps it is time to think again.

In every election this question comes up and every time it is contentious.

Will The Greens recommend that voters allocate a preference to Labor? Will they preference an independent? Will they leave it up to voters to make up their own minds?

Given that one of the four basic principles of The Greens is "Grassroots Democracy", should they be trying to tell voters what to do with their preferences at all? Or could it be that all this discussion is a complete waste of time anyway?

For an issue that raises more passion – ranging from anger to despair - both inside and outside The Greens at every election, it may surprise many of us to learn that most people completely ignore the how to vote ticket anyway.

We are all experts on voting be-

cause we all do it. We all think we know how people behave in the polling booth, but do we?

Could it be that all the time, emotion, petrol and printing costs spent on preferences might be better applied to something else? The Victorian Electoral Commission last year decided to find out and actually scrutinized what people did with their preferences when it came to voting.

Their aim was to find out how many followed the how to vote tickets.

The VEC examined all formal ballot papers for their conformity to how to vote cards in 8 Victorian state electorates in the 2006 election.

For The Greens, less than a third of voters followed the ticket and we have no way of knowing how many of these would have voted that way regardless of what the HTV card said. For some of those who were apparently faithful to the ticket, this would have been just coincide.

Some probably did not even know or care that their vote was the same as that recommended on the HTV.

The basic finding of the Victorian analysis was that the smaller the

party, the less likely the voters were to vote according to the ticket.

However, even the major parties have a low rate of adherence to the party ticket.

No party had even half of its voters follow its ticket. Labor had the highest conformity with 49%.

People Power, perhaps not surprisingly had the lowest with 11.8%.

The VEC analysis also suggested that where even a major party is weak, its followers are less likely to follow the ticket.

The usual arguments about preferences are raging again this year as we approach the coming federal election, so we would do well to reflect on these findings. ◀



Results of the Victorian Electoral Commission survey.

	ALP	ALP%	Lib	Lib%	Nat	Nat%	Green	Green %	Family-First	FF%	People Power	PP%	Socialist	Soc%	Ind	Ind%
Brunswick	7815	49.2	2612	45			2874	29.1	37	6.6	129	25.5	223	34.6		
Gippsland East	2119	52.4	4169	55.1	3447	52.8	345	20.2	352	31					5252	38.2
Mildura	577	27.2	1281	34.8	4959	38.7			215	18.9					3188	27.9
Melbourne	6735	47.6	2694	38.4			2521	29	84	16.9	35	6.7			171	19.7
Northcote	10196	58.2	2142	42.1			3790	41.5	124	11.6					139	27.2
Richmond	7301	49.1	1918	30.1			2409	30.5	64	14.4	16	3.2			480	26.6
Rodney	1867	32.3	4916	48.5	6004	47.1	147	14.4	313	29					176	16.6
Shepparton	2847	46.1	4976	57.9	8439	53.6	292	19.2	178	27.8						
TOTAL	39457	49	24708	45.7	22849	47.8	12378	31	1367	20.8	180	11.8	223	34.6	9406	32

Consuming Australia – the high price our environment is paying for our spending

Bega Valley residents generate less greenhouse pollution and use less water than their city counterparts, but should we be proud of this?

People living in Australia's wealthiest inner-city suburbs are responsible for more than double the amount of greenhouse pollution than households in less affluent areas, because of their high levels of consumption, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has revealed today.

The Consumption Atlas is a new interactive online tool that allows Australians to view the greenhouse pollution created by households in their suburb.

The Atlas shows that the more things people buy, the greater their contribution to climate change.

ACF is encouraging householders to be smarter with how they spend their money, and consider the impact of their purchasing behaviour on the environment.

"Over consumption is costing us the earth," said Chuck Berger, ACF's Director of Sustainability Strategies.

"Use of electricity in the home accounts for just 15% of the greenhouse pollution each of us creates. The majority is created indirectly from the production and transportation of all the things we are buying."

The Consumption Atlas shows households in areas straddling the harbour in inner Sydney and the banks of the Brisbane River in Queensland are the country's biggest greenhouse polluters.

These areas are closely followed by the inner suburbs of Canberra; Woolahra and Mosman in Sydney; Southbank and Docklands in Melbourne; and Fortitude Valley and Newstead in Brisbane.

The lowest greenhouse polluting Australian households are in Tasmania, in the Derwent Valley, Kentish and Brighton areas.

"Everything we buy has an impact on the environment, as all things demand energy, water and other natural resources to produce. People can

-	Bega Valley	State average	National average
Water use per person per year	620,000 litres	740,000 litres	722,500 litres
Greenhouse pollution / person / year:	16.9 tonnes	19.31 tonnes	18.9 tonnes
Eco-footprint Hectares / person / year	5.75 hectares	6.33 hectares	6.4 hectares

make a difference to their individual contribution to greenhouse pollution by buying less, wasting less and choosing products that last,"

Mr Berger said.

Food and consumer products, such as clothes, appliances, furniture and electronics often require large amounts of energy, water and materials to produce.

"It is better to spend more of our money on services - from sporting event tickets to massages - because services in general demand fewer resources than goods.

"There is the bonus that services tend to be more labour intensive or, in other words, more jobs are being created per dollar output."

The Consumption Atlas - www.acfonline.org.au/consumptionatlas - is based on research by the University of Sydney's Centre for Integrated Sustainability Analysis and was assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

The Atlas uses the typical purchasing habits of each suburb in Australia to calculate the impact this consumption is having on the environment, from greenhouse pollution to water use and land disturbance.

"The households with the biggest environment impact are high income earning, inner city, small or single-person households," said Chris Dey at the University of Sydney.

"While inner city households have better access to public transport and are less car dependent, with their higher incomes, they typically buy more things and travel by air more often.

But, having a high income doesn't have to have a high impact on the environment: all of us must consume smarter and more sustainably. Expenditure on energy efficient appliances and cars, on well-designed and insulated houses, and on services rather than goods, can significantly reduce your eco-footprint," he said.

Luckily for Tasmania and the Bega Valley, the massive emissions generated by the woodchipping industry don't count against them.

That pollution is ascribed to end users, mostly in Japan, just as Australia's coal exports don't count against us. ◀

<http://www.acfonline.org.au/consumptionatlas>



The Bega Greens

The Bega Greens are in campaign mode in preparation for the coming federal election.

Can you help?

The Greens meet on the second Thursday of the month 5pm at the Enet centre.

64923134

PO Box 797, Bega NSW 2550

<http://bega.nsw.greens.org.au/>

The Forest Wars. Judith Ajani

Judith Ajani's new book "Forest Wars" has been well received and is stimulating debate on this perennial issue. That alone makes it an outstanding achievement. Anything that can spark media interest in an issue that has been around for more than 35 years is a remarkable accomplishment.

The book examines the history of native forest logging and plantation development in a political and economic context. It analyses the role of industry bodies such as National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and Timber Communities Australia (TCA) in repeatedly stymieing attempts to make the transition from native forests to plantations.

The basic thesis is that the native forest sector has been propped up – for a variety of reasons – when Australia's domestic and export wood markets could be supplied by plantations. This is documented in meticulous detail, more detail at times than even some active campaigners would want. The factors propping up the native forest sector are union influence on the

ALP and the lobbying power of the industry organizations NAFI and more recently TCA.

The solution, Dr Ajani argues, is to stop propping it up and to allow the plantations to supply industry, with more processing within Australia. This thesis is very attractive, but ignores one simple reality, the industry wants both, and the market is big enough to accommodate both.

One forest campaigner recently likened the analysis to the dynamics of a pub.

Imagine a big crowd of drinkers who are used to drinking beer Brand A. Someone tells them to stop drinking Brand A, and make the transition to Brand B instead.

Nobody should be surprised if the drinkers keep on guzzling Brand A, especially if it costs less than half the price of Brand B, a superior, but more expensive product.

With more drinkers arriving in the pub, all the beer of both Brands A and B will be sold anyway, so the brewers don't necessarily get too hung up about the competition.

The same dynamic has been playing out in the woodchipping/ timber indus-

try.

For the buyers of woodchips, it is not a question of native forest or plantation, they want both and they are increasingly getting both.

If the Japanese didn't take the native forest chips, the Chinese would.

The Forest Wars makes an important contribution to the debate on native forest woodchipping, but it does not deal with two huge issues: climate change and certification (see *accompanying article*), either one of which alone has the potential to end native forest woodchipping.

In the final chapter on "solutions", surely there was a place for an examination of the climate change issue in particular.

The greenhouse impacts of intensive logging are immense and have the capacity to be a circuit breaker where all other campaigning strategies have failed.

Nevertheless, the book is a most welcome and valuable addition to our sum of knowledge about the ongoing tragedy of woodchipping of our native forests. ◀

- Harriett Swift

The woodchipping industry and 'certification'

Certification is a system of labeling timber products to certify that they have been "sustainably" produced. It hit the news recently when Woolworths was caught out selling toilet and tissue paper which falsely claimed to have Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

FSC is the oldest and most reputable certification scheme.

In Australia it has never been applied to native forest products and without a major about face, hopefully never will. FSC has its critics, but it is generally recognized as fairly rigorous and the mass scale export woodchip industry has zero chance of ever achieving it. With woodchip buyers in Japan starting to demand certification as a prerequisite to a sale, the Australian industry was faced with a real problem which had the potential to finish it off. The Japanese industry functions as a

cartel, which about 10 years ago recognized a need to be seen as "sustainable" for marketing and quality reasons.

These happily coincide with green concerns. Plantations produce a more desirable woodchip than older, darker native forest wood so it makes sense to use it, unless it costs too much. Responding to this, the Japanese paper industry has introduced environmental policies which superficially look quite advanced and if applied conscientiously pose a real threat to Australian woodchippers.

Nippon Paper, for example, for 5 years now has had a policy that by 2008 all of its woodchips will be either from plantations or from "certified" forests. This was potentially dynamite. At the time it was announced, no native forests in Australia were certified and no certification scheme existed which could apply to native forests.

With no prospect of getting FSC, Aus-

tralian woodchippers had no choice but to dream up their own scheme, the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS). Fortunately for them, the Federal minister at the time was the rabid Wilson Tuckey, who was more than willing to help them.

They were looking down the barrel of exclusion from their biggest market. Over the past 4 years we have seen a desperate scramble by State Forest agencies to develop a scheme of certification (the easy bit) and to have this recognized by the Japanese as acceptable (the hard part).

The AFS scheme mean means business as usual in the forests and it is run by loggers true to the Wilson Tuckey tradition. Board members include Catherine Murphy of NAFI, Hans Drielsma the extremist ex-State Forests CEO now with Forests Tasmania, Mike Bullen of ForestsNSW and CFMEU hard man Michael O'Connor.

(Continued on page 5)

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUE?

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO US. YOUR FEES HELP US PAY SOME OF OUR BILLS AND KNOWING THAT WE HAVE SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY HELPS KEEP US ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT OUR WORK.

MAKE A RESOLUTION TO KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE OR GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP TO A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER.



(Continued from page 4)

It would be hard to assemble a madder crew together in one room.

Just before Christmas last year the south east NSW woodchipping industry breathed a sigh of relief. In a quiet, wholly unreported achievement, Forests NSW and South East Fibre Exports got Australian Forestry Standard certification.

A few months earlier, the Japanese had announced that they would accept it, but it is not too late to reverse them. It would not exist without Government backing.

These two events are the most serious of any in the years since the RFAs in determining the future of Australia's native forests.

Even with all the resources of Government and industry, getting AFS certification was not a painless bureaucratic hoop to jump through.

And getting the Japanese to accept it was harder still, although countless letters to Nippon Paper asking them to reject it did not elicit a single reply.

Failure to cook up a certification scheme acceptable to the Japanese would have seen the industry in dire trouble.

Chinese buyers would probably have filled the gap, but their prices are much lower and could have pushed the industry over the viability edge.

The Government has now funded NAFI to "sell" the AFS scheme to China, no doubt as insurance in case that country ever gets squeamish about taking 'uncertified' chips.

Labor has promised even more millions to keep up this propaganda efforts if it is elected. ◀

- Harriett Swift



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Flying and Greenhouse

With a mean household income of just \$697 a week, most Bega Valley residents don't have to feel too guilty about their greenhouse emissions from aviation.

Even so, some of us do occasionally fly and may be concerned about the emissions we cause.

Criticisms of flying seem to be based on an underlying assumption that an individual has a certain environmental allowance and that certain behaviours are de facto spending over the allowance.

George Monbiot, the author of the book *Heat* and a renowned environmental activist and writer, recommends a carbon ration for consumers, traded on a free market with the poor and the efficient selling to the rich.

Monbiot writes that every sector can achieve cuts in greenhouse gases except for aviation and that individuals must give up the right to fly.

He speaks of love miles, the distance we travel to visit friends, relatives and partners as something that has to be stopped.

If your brother is getting married in Darwin, you should not go. When David Suzuki was at Toronto's Pearson Airport last year in transit and speaking on the radio about air pollution, one of the callers said him a hypocrite because he was flying.

Suzuki's travels take him all over the world to speak on environmental issues; Paul Hawken, author of the *The Ecology of Commerce* and the more recent book *Blessed Unrest* praises Suzuki for his environmental leadership for the last forty years.

However, Monbiot says "flying dwarfs any other environmental impact a single person can exert."

Monbiot says that "On a return flight from London to New York, every passenger produces roughly produces 1.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide: the very quantity we will each be entitled to emit in a year once the necessary cut in emissions has been made." Monbiot's suggestion merits a lot of thought.

However, Monbiot is applying a future carbon quota as if what we must adopt it now without any changes in

society or in the transportation system.

Right now, we don't have individual carbon quotas any more than we have limits on how much wealth (or water, food, etc) one person has compared to others.

The Kyoto protocol does not specify what countries (never mind what individuals) have to do to meet their targets but allows them the maximum flexibility to meet their targets at the lowest cost possible while meeting economic and social goals.

Aviation is a particular concern because the targets under the Kyoto Protocol cover domestic aviation but do not include international air (and marine) travel because there was little acceptance of their allocation to particular countries and existing agreements limit the control countries can exercise over foreign airlines.

With enough political will, future international agreements could lead to controls of aviation emissions.

Applying Monbiot's approach at the time of the Montreal Protocol might have resulted in his advising individuals to give up using all refrigerators and freezers because CFCs in the appliances were causing ozone depletion.

A global ban on refrigeration would have eliminated ozone depletion more quickly than the phase out that was adopted, but would have caused other problems such as the spread of disease and spoilage of food and medicine. Instead of a ban on CFCs, society as a whole worked towards finding solutions through regulations, research, technology, market instruments, international phase-out schedules, environmental labelling and yes, some of what Monbiot is doing, making people aware of the need to change their behaviour, for example giving up aerosols activated by ozone depleting substances.

The phase-out of ozone-depleting substances was done in stages through global collaboration and education, with the most cost-effective actions taken first and with further amendments to the Montreal Protocol.

We can learn from the CFC phase-out, even though it is not yet fully re-

solved, and apply much of that experience to the climate change problem. Individual action is important. If you don't feel a strong need to go somewhere, don't (whether you are flying or not). All kinds of options may be possible including buying carbon offsets as a last resort.

Passengers

On the bright side, electronic ticketing has been a winner. By March 2007, 79% of tickets were e-tickets with a target of 100% by the end of 2007. Full e-ticketing is expected to save 50,000 mature trees a year or five square kilometres of forest. E-ticketing includes passengers not having to bring tickets to check-in, email confirmation of tickets, and eliminating costs associated with lost tickets. Savings of \$3 billion annually have also been achieved. ◀

- Gallon

Ozone hurts plants' ability to reduce global warming

Preventing catastrophic climate change has a lot to do with how much carbon can be removed from the atmosphere by oceans and land-based sinks.

Plants and soil store about a quarter of human emissions of carbon dioxide acting as a sink to keep the greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere.

Findings from three UK research institutions published in advance by the journal *Nature* indicate that ground-level ozone, a common component of smog, suppresses the growth of plants by disrupting photosynthesis. Ozone in the high levels of atmosphere, stratospheric ozone or the ozone layer, protects the earth from solar radiation but ozone in the lower levels, the troposphere, the first layer of the atmosphere, is a threat to human health and the environment. Tropospheric ozone is a direct greenhouse gas but this study concludes that ozone's indirect effect on plants may raise the average global temperature more than its direct effects.

(Continued on page 7)

In brief

Disposable chopsticks

China uses ten billion boxes of disposable wooden chopsticks domestically and exports six billion using up 1.3 million cubic metres of China's forests. A 5% consumption tax is being imposed to discourage the use of disposable chopsticks. A significant input in the Japanese paper industry is disposable chopsticks.

Perverse System Effects

China has taken steps to ban logging of trees from natural forests but its wood manufacturing industries have a growing demand for wood. As a consequence, this is increasingly imported. China has now be-

Bega is tops for atheists

It may not feel like it, but the Bega Valley Shire is home to more atheists than any other shire in the Eden-Monaro electorate.

Recent census data gives some insights into life in our region.

While the Bega Valley Shire wins on absolute numbers, Palerang just pips us in percentage terms. ◀

come the largest market for illegally logged material and has taken some steps to require suppliers to provide assurances about sustainable forest sourcing. ◀

LGA

Bega Valley 22.10% 6,876

Bombala 11.80% 300

Snowy River 17.50% 1,255

Eurobodalla 19.10% 6,683

Cooma Monaro 14.80% 1,437

Palerang 23.20% 2,855

Tumut 10.40% 1,123

Tumbarumba 13.20% 468

Queanbeyan 14.70% 5,294

Eden-Monaro 18.50% 24,972

Australia 18.70%

"no religion"

Media: protection money

A full page advertisement in the Eden Magnet costs \$945. For the past few months, South East Fibre Exports (owners of the Eden chipmill) has sponsored a full page ad in the Magnet **every week**.

The page, "Looking back at Eden proudly sponsored by South East Fibre Exports, part of the local community" consists of a blurred reproduction of an old front page of the Maggot, more often than not unreadable because it is so blurred.

The headlines frequently extol the virtues of woodchipping.

At the bottom of the page we read: "We're proud to support our community. At South East Fibre Exports our

business is based on wood.

As the focus moves increasingly to renewable resources wood fibre is sharp in that focus. Which is good news for Eden and SEFE because SEFE is a wood company.

South East Fibre Exports, growth and regrowth for the Eden region." Indeed.

The cost of this advertisement, probably discounted because it is a weekly feature is probably between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year.

This must be almost enough to pay a substantial part of the editor's wages. A nice regular earner and it fills up a page with little or no effort on the paper's part.

What does SEFE get for this public service, apart from the gratitude of

the Eden public?

One suggestion is "protection." It may be pure coincidence, but since this advertising feature commenced, the Maggot has not run a single line about conservationists, blockades, protests, woodchipping (apart from statements from SEFE) with the exception of one week when the editor was on holiday.

It has run a single article announcing the selection of a Greens candidate for the federal election, but has managed to miss everything since.

CHIPSTOP a few years ago made a complaint of bias against the Magnet to the Australian Press Council, but gave up after more than two years and after the Press council lost the file. ◀

(Continued from page 6)

This study concluded that near-surface ozone reduces the ability of plants to store carbon dioxide.

Some plants are more sensitive to ozone than others with the study presenting two scenarios of low and high sensitivity to ozone. Plant productivity was reduced by 14% and 23% respectively.

Near-surface ozone has doubled since 1850 due to human impacts caused by industries, vehicles and forest burning. In some areas, near-

surface ozone concentration is above 40 parts per billion ppb, which is expected to be widespread by 2100 with some areas having levels higher than 70 ppb.

This increase of ozone in the future will reduce crop yields and plant growth. North America, Europe, China and India will be most affected.

Dr. Stephen Sitoh of the Met Office Hadley Centre stated in a joint press release from the three organizations that climate models haven't taken

sufficient account of the chemistry in the lower atmosphere.

Previous models have included the benefits of global warming on plants such as plants putting on more growth when CO2 levels are high. This study predicts that trees planted to offset carbon emissions from aviation (or other travel) may not be as good as effective at locking up as much carbon dioxide as previously thought. ◀

- Gallon

The Environment Network
PO Box 797
BEGA 2550

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Diary dates:



September

- 3 *National Landcare Week*
- 5 *Enet meeting 12.30pm*
- 7 *National Threatened Species Day*
- 8 *National Sustainable House Day*
- 13 *Greens mtg 5pm*
- 16 *International Day for the Protection of the Ozone Layer*
- 28 *Save the Koala Day*
- 11, 25 *BVSC meeting 2pm*

October

- 3 *Enet monthly meeting 12.30pm*
- 8 *National Weedbusters Week*
- 15+ *National Water Week*
- 22+ *National Bird Week*
- 11 *Greens mtg 5pm*
- 9, 23 *BVSC mtg 2pm*
- 24 *International Disarmament Week*

November

- 1 *World Vegan Day*
- 7 *Enet monthly meeting 12.30pm*
- 8 *Greens mtg 5.00pm*
- 13,27 *BVSC mtg 2pm*
- 18 *World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims*
- 26+ *World AIDS Awareness Week*

December:

- 2 *National Ocean Care Day*
- 5 *Enet monthly meeting 12.30pm*
- 10 *International Human Rights Day*
- 13 *Greens mtg 5.00pm*
- 11, 25 *BVSC mtg 2pm*

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