

# Australia becomes ecologist police state

*A "New Age" of environmental law is being imposed on Australia. (The first article on this issue appeared in our Nov. 27 issue.) Nigel Gleeson reports.*

In the past 5-10 years, the destructive power of the environmental movement in Australia has stretched its gangrenous tentacles across the entire Australian continent in an unprecedented burst of legislation. This has been brought about through a series of laws, committees, land zonings, environmental acts, restrictive legislation, and the growing presence of an environmental "New Age" religion fostered through every form of public education.

The Decade of Land Care Plan 1992 New South Wales (DLCP) is a typical platform policy of these environmental laws in Australia; it's like an environmental constitution. This plan, the same as all Australian environmental laws, is written in such a way as to leave every statement or section of law open to a vast array of interpretations and double meanings by those who use it. To say the least, the government definitions of key words such as "cooperate," "encourage," "educate," and "promote" tend to carry overtones of a dictatorial police state.

The stated objective of the DLCP is: "To increase community understanding of land use people must be made aware of their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions." However, this fails to make it fully clear that it doesn't only mean environmental responsibilities, but legal responsibilities and consequences as well.

## Education and job training camps

The DLCP says it needs "to promote education at all levels on sustainable land use." Recently, the prime minister requested a report on the education system from Laurie Carmichael, president of the Communist Party of Australia and a leading figure on the National Bureau of Employment, Education, and Training and the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning. He responded by saying that all children should be put into education and job training camps. This is the government definition of education. The report was accepted, but hasn't yet been implemented.

This plan also adopts the idea of encouraging land owners to cooperate in developing systems so that "experience and knowledge can be shared and agency officers can more easily work as a team to develop overall strategies." This typical manipulation of words and definitions is part of the government's common practice of deceiving the general public as to what these laws really entail.

Community management committees and land-care

groups are an integral part of this plan, and are made up of people in the community who have nothing better to do than get involved in running other people's affairs, namely environmentalists. Funding for these bureaucratic leeches is acquired through a system of new environmental land taxes, which will be imposed on top of already-existing taxes that are crippling businesses. Anyone who believes that the public will gain any control through these groups is unfortunately a victim of government manipulation and deceit. Each community group is answerable to a body in government that in turn is answerable to the National Parks and Wildlife bureau, and therefore answerable for the 3,000 international agreements and treaties, including United Nations charters and treaties, which have been signed by Australia since 1975.

## 'Big Brother' is watching

These community groups are allowed to implement their destructive operations beyond private land into forestry, mining, and other resource areas. "Land-care groups are not restricted to working on land they own."

In a move reminiscent of Stalin's Soviet Union, the DLCP has claimed that land use is the responsibility of the whole community and everyone must be encouraged to participate in local regulatory bodies, meaning that Australia will introduce some sort of government farming cooperative system as was done in the U.S.S.R., to be controlled by a system of community policing under a crime-reporting phone-in scheme that is already in place. To add to this system of community spies is a plan to introduce an environmental police force consisting entirely of the younger generation, similar to the Brown Shirts of the Nazi era. Under this system, agency officers have the power to intervene in any situation, through these local community bodies, and implement whatever actions they think necessary under the wide range of interpretations afforded by environmental legislation.

The dictatorial mentality of this environmental gestapo and the Australian government is shown clearly in one of the more sinister policies of the Decade of Land Care Plan which states that monitoring of people's attitudes allows for future government action to promote behavioral change. In areas needing research, it says, there are "new methods of community education, and farmer motivation and education." To quote the DLCP: "Achieving this vision involves changing the attitudes and behaviors of all sectors of the community—

sometimes only a little, sometimes a great deal. To know whether the Decade of Land Care is moving in the direction of its overriding vision, it will be necessary to chart community attitudes and behaviors."

The plan is reevaluated every three years so that controls over the individual are periodically tightened.

The worst aspect, however, is that laws enacted to fulfill the requirements set out by the plan make the DLCP look lenient.

The Wilderness Act 1987 No. 196 New South Wales is a good example of the manipulative ability within the guidelines of government policy.

The Wilderness Act states yet again the need "to promote the education of the public in the appreciation, protection, and management of wilderness." These educational programs are clearly defined in this act as whatever activities the director of National Parks and Wildlife considers necessary to change the behavioral attitudes of the people. Also very clearly defined is the power of the director to carry out any actions that he considers necessary in carrying out directions from the minister for environment. A person reading this act soon begins to wonder who this almighty director is, who seems to be able to instigate any actions or restrictions he wishes.

### The wilderness czars

This all-powerful director can declare any area a wilderness whenever he wishes, providing he is of the opinion that the land is or can be restored to an unmodified state, or is an area he thinks is needed for the management of wilderness, regardless of how developed the area may be.

But the director is not the only person empowered with such far-reaching authority. The act also allows for "any person, body or organization, including a statutory authority," to nominate any area of land to be declared as wilderness, "even though it is not the owner of the land concerned."

A wilderness nomination that is defeated through costly legal procedures (by some miracle that has never happened to date), can be renominated instantly. This leads to the situation where someone may nominate a farmer's land for wilderness set-aside simply because he or she doesn't like the farmer or from other personal motivation. The director, by law, must act on any of these nominations within two years, while any nominations that have passed through government and have been declared wilderness have generally always been enlarged by the director.

While it is under nomination, an area cannot be developed or modified, which means that a farmer can be restricted from developing his land indefinitely simply through a running series of nominations. The definition of development is another example of how the laws are interpreted. The Wilderness Act says that the definition of development in the act means: a) the erection of a building in that area; b) the carrying out of work in, on, over or under that area; c) the use of that area or of a building or work in that area; and d)

the clearing of vegetation in that area.

The management of wilderness areas is further defined as restoring and preserving "the capacity of the area to develop without human interference." The director can also restrict access to part or the whole of these areas whenever he wishes.

The New England Wilderness Nomination, implemented by the Armidale Wilderness Society, which consists of four young, inexperienced university students and an older colleague, covers an area of approximately 250,000 acres, taking in huge tracts of private property, perpetual leasehold land, and vast timber and mineral resources.

The Armidale Wilderness Society requests in this nomination "that all logging, roading, clearing or any other proposed development cease," until the director has assessed the area.

They also say that "any areas that *adjoin* the wilderness that are undisturbed by modern activity, or are capable of regenerating to this state within a reasonable time period, or that are essential for the management of the wilderness, should also be included within the nomination." Their idea of a reasonable time period is the lifespan of the longest-lived species of tree in the area.

Part of the management practices recommended by the Armidale Wilderness Society includes that all trails and roads within wilderness areas be closed and allowed to revert to forest, while no controlled fires are to be lit, and any fires that do start be allowed to burn uncontrolled. The society clearly does not have any experience in land management, as is evident in these two recommendations.

The nomination concludes that "isolated wilderness areas are vulnerable, that no one wilderness area is sufficient, and that migratory species need a chain of wilderness areas along the entire forest system," which runs 2,000 miles from Cape York in northern Queensland to Victoria in the south. The Armidale Wilderness Society also nominated 225,000 acres for the proposed Werrikimbe Wilderness and 500,000 acres for the Macleay Gorges Wilderness, for a grand total of just

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under 1 million acres to date. One might suggest that it would be easier to set aside those areas not to be nominated, but the fact that those areas might be owned by drug traffickers and politicians could prove too embarrassing.

### Closing off production

The nomination of wilderness areas is only one of the multiple environmental laws that assails primary producers in Australia. The Endangered Fauna Act New South Wales, among others, doesn't even require the zoning of land to be able to destroy primary producers. Under this act, primary producers are required to carry out environmental impact studies whenever they wish to develop their resources, which still adheres to the definition of development as stated earlier. To carry out one of these studies requires a Aus \$200 application fee and an overall cost of Aus \$10,000 and up, with no limit. These costs are not recoverable if it is deemed that there will be an impact on the environment. If an endangered species or a likely habitat for an endangered species is found in the area, then the area will be closed to all production.

If a grazer (rancher) happens to accidentally kill or take a plant or animal considered part of an endangered species, he faces a fine of \$100,000 and two years imprisonment. This is another example of the ability to

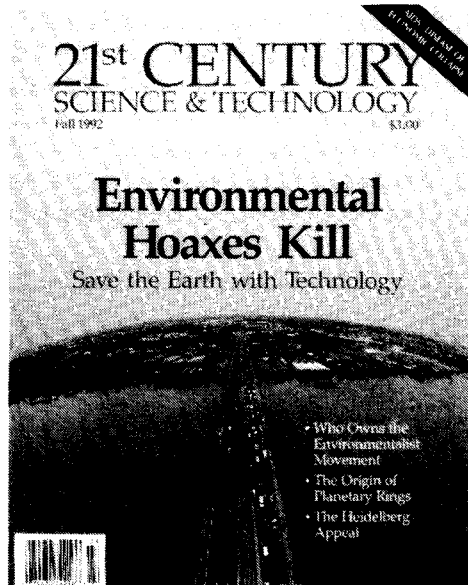
interpret these laws as suits: the occasion. The definition of "take" is: "Take, in relation to any fauna, includes hunt, shoot, poison, net, snare, spear, pursue, capture, disturb, lure or injure, and without limiting the foregoing also includes significant modification of the habitat of the fauna which is likely to adversely affect its essential behavioral patterns."

To ensure that these laws are facilitated, the director has been given the power to issue stop-work orders that come into effect immediately and require no prior warning that could possibly avoid loss of capital outlays on a condemned project.

Another form of environmental legislation, called Total Catchment Management (TCM), presents an interesting idea on policing of these laws: "One approach taken to control natural resources degradation is to use regulations and legislation which tell people what to do and how to manage their land. Punishment is part of this approach and those not obeying the law are prosecuted. The Environmental Offences and Penalties Act 1989 is one example of this method."

"TCM takes an approach based on cooperation. The basic assumption in TCM is that landowners and users will generally try to do the right thing, particularly when there is peer group pressure and agency commitment.

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