

ENVIRONMENT

The Newsletter of the Environment Centre NT (ECNT)
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July / August 2004

Daly at the crossroads

Minister accuses ECNT of being "mischievous or ignorant"

The Daly River Community Reference Group (DRCRG) is now in the final stages of writing its report to the NT Government based on the last eight months of meetings and debates.

The DRCRG was established at the end of 2003 by Chief Minister Clare Martin in response to community opposition to Government department's plans for a major expansion of landclearing and water extraction in the Daly region.

The DRCRG, made up of approximately 14 people representing various interests and stakeholders and chaired by Rick Farley, has been useful in bringing to light our almost complete lack of knowledge about the Daly river ecosystem and how to plan for ecologically sustainable development.

Scientists recently provided the DRCRG with a 35 page summary of key knowledge gaps in the Daly, as well as papers highlighting the lack of a comprehensive environmental monitoring system and serious flaws in the data on water flows.

The DRCRG has also highlighted the lack of appropriate integrated natural resource management and water

allocation legislation and planning processes that can be used in the Daly.

All of this confirms just how crucial it is that no new large scale landclearing applications or water licences be approved in the Daly catchment. There is no way that such expansion could be said to be sustainable or of overall economic benefit to the community.

There is strong support on the DRCRG for an extended moratorium on landclearing and water allocations, as well as legislative reform and the creation of appropriate planning processes and management bodies.

New clearing approved

In the meantime, government agencies have taken advantage of the ambiguity that surrounds the existing moratorium on subdivisions and landclearing in the Daly.

At the start of the DRCRG process the Chief Minister announced a moratorium on approvals for more landclearing in the Daly. Although the DRCRG was promised a map showing exactly where the moratorium started and ended, no such map was ever provided.

While the government has been happy for the public to believe that the moratorium

covers the whole of the Daly catchment, as it logically should, the Pastoral Lands Board and DIPE have decided that it only applies to a small part of the Daly catchment - an area known as the 'focus area'. No government document states that the moratorium is restricted to the 'focus area', nor that it covers the whole catchment.

When the Environment Centre NT objected to the recent approval of two new landclearing operations in the Daly catchment, Lands Minister Dr Chris Burns responded with a terse media release accusing ECNT of being either "mischievous or ignorant" - a classic case of blameshifting.

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Glyde Point industrial development:

ECNT urges government rethink

The environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed massive industrial estate on the pristine coastal and marine environment at Glyde Pt, 40km NE of Darwin, is now being worked on somewhere in the bowels of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (DIPE).

The project, if approved, will involve clearing several thousand hectares of rainforest, mangroves and woodlands, as well as dredging a new port and in-filling 1,500 hectares of marine environment.

The development is supposed to cater for future gas-related industrial projects such as smelters, chemical factories, etc.

ECNT and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) have written to the Chief Minister urging a government rethink on this project:

ECNT and AMCS request of the Martin Government:

We request a public strategic review of the gas-related industrialisation of the NT, conducted by a government-appointed Panel or Commission, that documents the full range of environmental, social, cultural and economic issues, and makes recommendations on how to optimise the benefits and minimise the costs and impacts. This process needs to take place before any approvals are given for further speculative developments such as Glyde Point.

Greenies turning BLUE!

Look out treehuggers, the fish lovers are coming through!

Adele Pedder, AMCS

The felling of a tree is very visible destruction and can threaten to occur in your backyard. However, the offshore slaughter of 1000's of sharks for their fins or the destruction of a seagrass bed most often occurs unseen. 'Out of sight, out of mind' so the saying goes. Conservation and management of the marine environment has historically received too little attention in government, community and environmental movement spheres. The Northern Territory is the worst culprit of all Australia.

But things are changing! Recognition of the threats facing our oceans is on the increase and changes within the environment movement are testimony to this. This years National Environmental Conservation Forum saw marine campaigns surge to the forefront of Australia's conservation challenges alongside treeclearing and climate change.

Further, the National Marine Campaigners Workshop at the beginning of the month saw more than 40 marine greenies come together to strengthen the national movement, a gathering somewhat larger than ever before in Australia.

History has shown, from the Franklin to Jabiluka, that it is the environment movement that affects change by bringing issues into mainstream society. The expansion of the marine greeny movement is very encouraging and we may very well soon see the marine environment receiving the attention it deserves. Go the fishes!

Glyde Pt; photo Jacinda Brown

Fixing up the mining mess: Rehabilitation bonds for NT mines

The Environment Centre has finally received information on the amount of rehabilitation bond held by the Government for each (major) mine in the NT – both closed mines and currently operating mines. The information was produced in response to questions asked on our behalf by Independent MP Gerry Woods MLA. Below is the table provided by the Department of Mines.

Closed mines	Security	Department's comments
Annie mine	\$5,000	---
Brocks Creek	\$500,000	Bank guarantee
Cosmo Howley/Burnside	\$50,000	Bank guarantee
Gecko (see Warrego)	---	See Warrego
Merlin	\$175,000	Bank guarantee
Orlando	\$20,000	Bank guarantee
Rustler's Roost	\$1,500	Cash
Sandy Flat (see Redbank)	---	See Redbank
Tanami JV (see Granites)	---	Included in Granites security
TC8	\$6,000	Cash
Warrego	Rehab deed trust fund; Value: \$4,500,000	
White Devil (see Warrego)	---	See Warrego
White Range	\$10,000	Cash
Woodcutters	\$2,200,000	Bank guarantee
Mt Todd (Yimuyn Manjerr)	Trust fund	Approx \$200,000 remaining from \$900,000 bond
Operating mines	Security	Department's comments
Alcan Gove	\$2,000,000	Held by Commonwealth <u>NT bond under negotiation</u>
Chariot	\$75,000	Cash
Gemco	\$12,000,000	Bank guarantee
Groundrush (see Granites)	---	Included in Granites security
McArthur River	\$3,872,025	Bank guarantee
Mudtank	\$15,000	Cash
Ranger	\$38,847,481	Rehab Trust Account: Comm
Granites	\$11,828,649	Bank guarantee
Toms Gully	\$20,000	Cash
Union Reefs	\$500,000	Bank guarantee

Although the NT government says it is now a "requirement"¹ that all mines have rehabilitation bonds in place, it is very unclear just how the amount of those bonds is determined, how and when they are accessed, and how secure some of the bonds are in reality. As you can see, some are very small and unlikely to cover the costs of rehab.

This is very important because to the extent that the community is repeatedly told how beneficial mining is to our economy, this benefit is undermined(!) if the mining companies leave behind a legacy of environmental damage that the community has to pay to fix up (as is the case at Mt Todd where it is estimated there is a \$20 million rehabilitation debt that the public will probably have to pay).

¹ Under Section 166b of the Mines Act, the Minister for Mines "may" require a security from a mining company for rehabilitation. The form and amount of the bond is up to the Minister's discretion.

Tiwi logging: the plot thickens

"Aggressive expansion" proposed

The Sylvatech Pty Ltd forestry project on the Tiwi Islands is looking to expand - massively!

According to a newspaper advertisement placed in the *Australian* on 29 May 2004, the company wants to recruit "several young, energetic professional foresters" to facilitate its "aggressive expansion program" on the Tiwi Is.

Currently Sylvatech has NT and Commonwealth government approval to destroy approx. 25,000 hectares of beautiful old growth forest on Melville Is for woodchip plantations. Now it wants to establish "**up to 100,000 hectares of short rotation plantation**".

The plantations are a monoculture of the exotic *Acacia mangium* species, being grown for woodchips to export to Japan.

The Environment Centre is very concerned about the impacts of the existing operation, let alone a four-fold "aggressive" expansion. We are very concerned that the local Tiwi Indigenous communities are not being fully informed as to what Sylvatech's plans are and what the impacts will be on their environment, economic future, culture and lifestyle.

The NT Government, which has backed this project, needs to step in to ensure that the Tiwi community, and environment, are protected from aggressive woodchip corporations whose plans may hold little long term benefit to the community while doing massive harm to ecosystems and sustainable development opportunities.

A brief history of Australian environmentalism

1770

English botanist Joseph Banks, traveling with Captain Cook, sets foot on Australia at Botany Bay. His landing party clashes with Indigenous residents, and wounds several. Later the same year Captain Cook collides with Great Barrier Reef. Cook writes of Indigenous Australians, "*they seemed far happier than we Europeans...they live in a tranquility which is not disturbed by the inequality of condition. The Earth and Sea of their own accord furnish them with all the things necessary for life.*"

1788

English government establishes Australian colony to dispose of poor Britons. No official recognition of the rights, or even existence, of Indigenous Australians, and little appreciation of the richness and vulnerability of the continent's natural environment. Cattle and sheep, cats and dogs introduced.

1790

First legislation to protect specific native wildlife species (on Norfolk Island). In following decades a number of Acts are passed to protect specific species.

1836

Charles Darwin arrives in Sydney on the *Beagle*. Upon leaving he writes, "*Farewell Australia! You are a rising child, and doubtless someday will reign a great princess in the South; but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret.*"

1837

New colonist Mrs Georgiana Molloy commences documenting the extraordinary floristic diversity of a small part of the south west corner of Western Australia – and is led to a sense of reverence by its beauty, in contrast to Banks and Darwin who were both generally dismissive of the Australian landscape and flora.

1857

Eugene von Guerard, a migrant from Austria, paints the forest at Ferntree Gully in Dandenong Ranges, Victoria.

1861

This painting inspires probably Australia's first environment campaign when the art critic at the *Argus* newspaper in Melbourne, James Smith, commences a campaign to prevent the logging of Ferntree Gully forest.

1866

German biologist Ernst Haeckel coins the term 'ecology' (not in Australia).

1878

Nature lover R M Collins, born into one of Queensland's oldest pastoral families, begins campaigning for creation of McPherson Range (Lamington) National Park after visiting Yellowstone in USA. He is elected to Qld Parliament in 1896 and campaigns for legislation to establish national parks, finally adopted in 1906. Qld national parks campaign carried on from 1908 by Romeo Lahey, son of timber mill manager.

1879

Australia's first national park declared: Royal NP, south of Sydney.

1880

Victorian Field Naturalists Club formed.

1886

The Heidelberg school of painters (Roberts, McCubbin, Streeton), start traveling out into the bush to paint nature. Their paintings help change the way Australians perceive nature and natural landscapes, building on the earlier work of Glover, Martens, Chevalier, von Guerard, Pignuenit and Buvelot. Artists continue to help colonial Australians come to terms with Australia through the work of Heysen, Preston, Namatjira; Nolan, Boyd and Drysdale.

1909

David Stead, father of Christina, co-founds arguably Australia's first environment campaign organization: the Wildlife Preservation Society, in Sydney.

1932

Myles Dunphy forms National Parks and Primitive Areas Council in NSW to campaign for protected areas.

1937

Sydney novelist Eleanor Dark writes "*Sun Across the Sky*" – dealing with the clash between local residents and a property developer in a small seaside resort. Also in **1937**, Philip Crosbie Morrison, the 'voice of nature', commences long career of journalism and broadcasting on the environment. His "*Wild life*" radio show, initially to run for 6 weeks in 1938 in Victoria, ends up running for 20 years, goes national, and becomes one of the most popular shows ever on Oz radio.

1946

Judith Wright, born 1915, publishes first book of poetry. Wright goes on to become a leading conservationist, as well as poet. In 1954 she co-founded the Queensland branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society and went on to lead successful campaigns for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and many other Qld environments...

*Listen, listen
latecomers to my country...*

1962

Rachel Carson publishes "*Silent Spring*" in USA.

1963

Yolngu traditional owners from Gove in NT present bark petition to Federal parliament in Canberra opposing proposed Nabalco (now Alcan) bauxite mine. Justice Blackburn subsequently (1971!) rules that the Yolngu TO's do not have a 'proprietary interest as understood by our law'. Mining proceeds.

1964

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) established in Canberra by a one thousand pound grant from Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies.

1965

Vincent Serventy films Australia's first TV nature series – "*Nature walkabout*" – in the Northern Territory.

1966

Vincent Lingiari and other Gurindji stockmen and TO's commence strikes on Wave Hill and Newcastle Waters pastoral leases in NT.

1970

Liberal PM John Gorton offers financial assistance to conservationists to help put their case for the

protection of Great Barrier Reef to Queensland Royal Commission. Reef campaign succeeds. Also in **1970**, trade unionist Jack Munday teams up with three Sydney women to place the world's first 'green ban' on proposed destruction of Kelly's Bush for housing development. Green bans and Munday become internationally famous.

1972

Aboriginal tent embassy set up in Canberra, prompted by anger over non-recognition of Aboriginal Land Rights in the Yolngu case. Still going 30 years later!

1972

Flooding of Lake Pedder in south west Tasmania proceeds despite national campaign in opposition. United Tasmania Group, Australia's first green political party, established in response to damming. Independently, Dr Bob Brown, newly arrived in Tasmania and working as a doctor in Launceston, places an advertisement in the *Australian* and three Tasmanian newspapers likening the flooding of Pedder to the killing of the last Thylacine and the genocide of Tasmanian Aborigines.

1975

Campaigns against woodchipping, and subsequently bauxite mining, in WA's native karri and jarrah forests take off. Original campaigner Dr Beth Schultz still campaigning for WAs forests in 2004.

1976

Liberal PM Malcolm Fraser shuts down sand mining on Fraser Island after a long campaign by environment group FIDO lead by John Sinclair. Fraser Island becomes a national park shortly after. Also in **1976**, Bob Brown rafts the Franklin River; helps form the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS); and fasts on top of Mt Wellington in Hobart to protest against visiting US warships.

1979

Seminal Terania Creek nonviolent protest campaign against logging of NSW rainforests, leads to creation of 6 new national parks and Premier Wran's decision to ban rainforest logging.

1982

The Franklin blockade. 1,200 arrests; dam stopped in 1983.

1983

Environment Centre NT is formed.

...late **2004**: Australian and world political and business leaders realize this can't go on and, finally listening to the people, announce an end to global pillage and pollution! And the rest is history...

Reference

Almost all entries are derived from the highly recommended book: "**Ecological Pioneers: A social history of Australian ecological thought and action**", Mulligan M. and Hill S., Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Compiled by Peter Robertson and all errors in translation are his.



ECNT LAUNCHES NEW MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

I am pleased to announce the launch of ECNT's new monthly giving donation program. This is a worthwhile opportunity for people to contribute to the valuable work of the Environment Centre and support the NT environment.

Many of our supporters have already expressed an interest in making a greater financial contribution to the Environment Centre, in addition to or instead of their current membership. We feel our new monthly giving facility will offer both the ease and security necessary to make this a viable option.

The monthly giving program is different to annual membership:

1. Your membership offers you voting rights at our AGM, receipt of our regular newsletter, the opportunity to join our management committee, access to our library as well as updates on campaign and social events. Membership statistics provide a quantitative measure of our public support.
2. The monthly giving program does not offer membership but does offer access to our library, newsletter and information about campaign and social events.

We fully encourage people to participate in both the membership and monthly giving programs as a way of enjoying the benefits of both as well as strengthening ECNT's voice in the political arena.

What is the monthly giving program?

The monthly giving program is designed to generate untied funds for campaigns and infrastructure. It will provide us with greater financial independence and scope to lobby where it matters. In essence, it means supporters can donate an affordable amount on a regular, monthly basis throughout the year then claim it all back via tax returns. It's a very simple and rewarding process.

The benefits for you are:

the peace of mind that you're helping us throughout the year and that once it's set up you don't have to think about it; you can donate a larger amount overall without the worry of affording a lump sum;

it's up to you how much you donate over and above the \$15 per month minimum (equivalent of two cups of coffee a week). since the program is 100% tax deductible, you can claim the entire amount back via your tax return. You are indirectly diverting more Commonwealth funds into protecting your local environment.

it's financial recycling, making your money work for you and

the environment. Consider it a loan that demonstrates to the government your financial commitment to the environment.

The benefits for ECNT are:

with a steady calculable income we can plan further ahead and work more strategically; greater income through untied funding means we can invest in areas most needed at a particular time, including campaigns and infrastructure; your increased support gives us a more powerful voice when campaigning on issues of concern to all of us.

The Federal government has made recurrent core funding for environment groups like ECNT a real uncertainty and seems determined to financially stymie the Australian environment movement. The monthly giving program is a tried and tested method of ensuring ECNT can work towards financial independence so we can continue to stand up for the environment despite the whims of political parties.

How do I join up?

There are a couple of ways you can join up:

1. You can set the process up quickly yourself via our secure server. Just go to www.ecnt.org and follow the links to the monthly giving program. (This option will be available in the very near future). There you will find more information about the program, different payment options and our Security and Privacy Policies.

You can complete our online form with your contact and relevant payment details.

2. I will be sending a letter to members with a sign up form. Just enter your details and post or fax the form back to me and I will set it all up for you. Or call me on (08) 8981 1984 or email me at ecntadmin@octa4.net.au with your name, phone number and address details and I will phone you back to get your bank or credit card details (please don't email your credit card details to us as email is not secure). In each case you will be able to track the transactions on your bank statement each month.

Whichever way you choose to join up you will receive a letter from ECNT outlining details of your personal arrangement and your information will be stored securely and in line with current privacy regulations.

We hope you will participate in this new and exciting program and look forward to discussing it with you further.

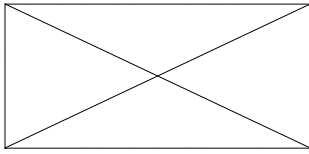
Gill Ainsworth, Office Coordinator

WELCOME TO SHEILA CARROLL, ECNT'S NEW BOOKKEEPER!

ECNT staff and management committee are delighted that Sheila has come on board and wish her a very warm welcome. Sheila brings a great deal of experience and enthusiasm to the role, having worked extensively with non-profit community groups in a variety of sectors. Sheila is a keen environmentalist and wildlife carer as well as proud mum to her recent NT Police graduate daughter.

Sheila replaces Penny Pretty who kept ECNT's books for the last couple of years. We would like to thank Penny for all her past work and hope her move to Hobart was successful.





COOLmob lives!

National Cool Communities – the sad news

In sad news for the national Cool Communities program, it seems, at this stage, that the federal government will not continue to fund Cool Communities. However, efforts continue in trying to persuade the government to change its mind and with a new Environment Minister, some hope remains.

The Facilitators' positions were extended to the end of August to help wrap up the programs and this is what I have been employed to do.

NT Cool Communities – the good news

In good news for the NT however, the NT government has allocated \$150,000 to Cool Communities. The exact nature of this project is yet to be determined, but it is expected that the money will be split between COOLmob in Darwin and the Desert Knowledge Australia Cool Communities project in Alice Springs. COOLmob will therefore continue to exist and to grow without funding from the federal government.

Environmental Excellence Award

In other good news, COOLmob, as well as Desert Knowledge Australia Cool Community, recently received Power and Water's Environmental Excellence Award! As well as the award, we have received a grant from Power and Water to subsidise 50 home audits!

Website and database

COOLmob's on-line emissions tracking database is now up and running! This is a very exciting and easy to use database which enables households to track their emissions and cost savings by simply logging onto their personalised secure accounts and entering their vehicle odometer and electricity meter readings on any particular date. Round 1 households are now also being invited to start using the database too.

Community awareness campaign

COOLmob will shortly be utilising some community service announcement opportunities to help us recruit households and educate people about how they can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We will have ads on television, radio and in newspapers. Look out for the ads soon!

Greenhouse Friendly Habits Booklet

To compliment the successful *Greenhouse friendly hardware* booklet, we are in the process of writing a new booklet about greenhouse friendly *habits*. This booklet will be about how households have changed their behaviour around the home as well as their commuting habits. We would love to hear about how you and your household have modified your behaviour to reduce greenhouse gas emissions- what worked as well as what didn't! We're not just looking for stories from 'environmental angels' just stories that others can learn from (or laugh at!). If you have a story you would like to share, please phone me on 8981 2532 or email coolcdarwin@inet.net.au

Farewell and thanks to Ian

Cool Communities Facilitator Ian Lillington returned to South Australia in late June and has a position working for the Australian Conservation Foundation. Thanks Ian for all your hard work helping make COOLmob such a success.

Join Now!

So, with all this happening, if your household is not already a "cool household," it's a great time to join and take advantage of a \$10 household audit (free to concession card holders) that will not only help you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, but probably save you money too! If you are already a cool household, please spread the word of the benefits of joining to your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues!

Thea Bray - Cool Communities Facilitator

Chief Minister comes for lunch

On Wednesday 4 August ECNT staff and some Committee members hosted an informal lunch with Chief Minister Clare Martin and Environment Minister, Marion Scrymgour in our office. It was a valuable opportunity to talk to the CM in an informal setting, allowing us to acknowledge the positive things being done by the Government, while also highlighting other areas where ECNT holds concerns.

We believe we have taken first steps in gaining possible extra financial support as well as beginning a dialogue on matters where we see the need for stronger government action. Ms Martin, while making clear her view on several matters where we differ, indicated she is open to hearing our ideas and willing to consider information which we make available to her.

On the whole it was a relaxed and enjoyable occasion, which we completed with a gift of out Weeds Book and this photo.

Top row, from left: Marion Scrymgour; Thea Bray; Di Koser; Clare Martin; Gary Scott. Bottom row: Peter Robertson; Jo Kieboom with Casey; Lauren Flannery, Gill Ainsworth.

Bits and Pieces

Darwin Council goes green

Darwin Council has unanimously passed the Environment Management Plan (EMP) and the Environmental Management System (EMS) which will determine how we best protect and enhance our environment well into the 21st century.

Darwin City Council approved \$100,000 for a EMP in July 2003, however due to staff turnover there has been some delays in developing a strategy to implement an EMP. This situation has now been remedied and we have a strategy for the development of an EMP and an EMS that will be actioned by the 19th Council.

The EMP for the City, which allows for continued community input and consultation, will benefit the natural and built environs of Darwin by:

- * identifying priority environmental issues,
- * allowing for the targeting of strategies and action where they are most needed,
- * facilitating the development and implementation of Action plans which will protect our environment and way of life into the future.

The EMP will be prepared by Darwin City Council with the help of residents of Darwin to protect, rehabilitate or improve our waterways, bushland and other environmental features well into the future.

To finalise the EMP Council will ask all residents what they value about Darwin's environment from recreational opportunities to historical and/or cultural sites. The EMS will be an effective and efficient management tool to reduce the environmental impact of Council operations and to improve environmental performance in all aspects of Council's business activities.

Council will enter into an extensive community consultation phase to generate as much public input as possible.

Oil chief raises greenhouse fears

The head of one of the world's biggest oil companies has revealed he fears for the planet's future if carbon dioxide emissions cannot be controlled.

The new chairman of Shell, Lord Ron

Oxburgh, says he sees very little hope for the world unless carbon dioxide emissions are dealt with. He told the *Guardian* newspaper the consequences resulting from the current level of emissions cannot be predicted and are "probably not good".

A spokeswoman for Shell says while the company agrees with Lord Oxburgh's concerns, **it has no plans to enhance its greenhouse gas reduction program.**

July 30, 2004; the Independent/UK

Disaster at Sea: Global Warming Hits UK Birds

by Michael McCarthy

Hundreds of thousands of Scottish seabirds have failed to breed this summer in a wildlife catastrophe which is being linked by scientists directly to global warming.

More than 172,000 breeding pairs of guillemots were recorded in the islands in the last national census, Seabird 2000, whose results were published this year. This summer the birds have produced almost no young, according to Peter Ellis, Shetland area manager for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Martin Heubeck of Aberdeen University, who has monitored Shetland seabirds for 30 years, said: "The breeding failure of the guillemots is unprecedented in Europe." More than 6,800 pairs of great skuas were recorded in Shetland in the same census; this year they have produced a handful of chicks - perhaps fewer than 10 - while the arctic skuas (1,120 pairs in the census) have failed to produce any surviving young.

It is believed that the microscopic plankton on which tiny sandeel larvae feed are moving northwards as the sea water warms, leaving the baby fish with nothing to feed on.

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Antarctica: the only place to live

Antarctica is likely to be the world's only habitable continent by the end of this century if global warming remains unchecked, the UK Government's chief scientist, Professor Sir David King, said last week.

He said the Earth was entering the "first hot period" for 60 million years, when there was no ice on the planet and "the rest of the globe could not sustain human life". The warning - one of the starkest delivered by a top scientist - comes as ministers decide next week whether to weaken measures to cut the pollution that causes climate change, even though Tony Blair last week described the situation as "very, very critical indeed".

Sir David said that levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere - the main "green-house gas" causing climate change - were already 50 per cent higher than at any time in the past 420,000 years. The last time they were at this level - 379 parts per million - was 60 million years ago during a rapid period of global warming, he said. Levels soared to 1,000 parts per million, causing a massive reduction of life.

"No ice was left on Earth. Antarctica was the best place for mammals to live, and the rest of the world would not sustain human life," he said.

Geoffrey Lean, Environment Editor, News Independent 02 May 2004

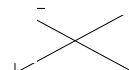
GM crops linked to rise in pesticide use

Eight years of planting genetically modified maize, cotton and soya beans in the US has significantly increased the amount of herbicides and pesticides used, according to a US report which could influence the British government over whether to let GM crops be grown. The most comprehensive study yet made of chemical use on genetically modified crops draws on US government data collected since commercialisation of the crops began.

It appears to undermine one of the central selling points of GM farming - that the crops benefit the environment because they need fewer manmade agrochemicals.

Charles Benbrook, the author of the report, found that when first introduced most of the crops needed up to 25% fewer chemicals for the first three years, but afterwards significantly more. In 2001, 5% more herbicides and insecticides were sprayed compared with crops only of non-GM varieties; and in 2003 the estimated rise was 11.5%.

John Vidal, 2004, The Guardian



IMPORTANT DATES TO KEEP:

Sat & Sun 14 & 15 August; ECNT Camping trip to Glyde Point

Saturday 14 August: Flying Fox Festival, Katherine

Sunday 15 August:; Kultura Day 2-8pm @ Botanic Gardens

Saturday 28 August: CoolMob stall @Parap Markets

Tuesday 7 September; Glyde Point Action Group Meeting 5.30pm @ ECNT

STALL VOLUNTEERS

A FUN AND EASY WAY OF PROTECTING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

We are looking for volunteers to run campaign-focused stalls at markets & upcoming Festivals.

IT INVOLVES

Selling merchandise and discussing local issues with the public

YOU WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

Dress up as a pig-nosed turtle, work with children and travel to festivals outside Darwin for FREE.

So, if you have a few spare hours that you are willing to dedicate to a worthwhile cause, then call Ren on:

(08) 8941 7439 or 0438 052 760

Or email: featheren@care2.com

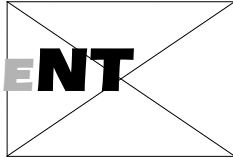
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The Newsletter of the Environment Centre NT

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