Fighting for the Forests

A History of
The Western Australian Forest Protest Movement
1895-2001

Ron Chapman BA (Hons)

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University

2008
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Ron Chapman
Abstract

This thesis complements and extends Hutton and Connors' research on forest protest contained in their study of the Australian environment movement. As the first comprehensive study of Western Australian forest protest the thesis analyses the protest movement's organisation, campaigns and strategies. Its central argument is that the contemporary Western Australian native forest protest movement established a network of urban and south-west activist groups which encouraged broad public support, and that a diversity of protest strategies focused public attention on forest issues and pressured the state government to change its forest policies.

The thesis identifies two distinct periods of protest activity in Western Australia. During a first period of protest from the 1890s, conservationists used non-confrontational strategies to campaign for the protection of areas of native bushland, and the formation of Western Australia's first nature conservation groups in the early twentieth century laid the foundations for a contemporary forest protest movement. A second period of protest from the mid-1950s comprised five evolutionary phases of growth specific to Western Australia: a formative phase from the mid-1950s until the late 1960s when conservation groups combined to save areas of urban bushland; a transitional phase in the 1970s when forest activists adopted more assertive forms of protest; a collaborative phase during the early 1980s when the protest movement achieved some success through exploiting a political alliance with the state ALP; an expansionary phase in the late 1980s with the spread of forest protest groups in the state's south-west; and a final confrontational phase throughout the 1990s.
when frustration at state government inactivity over forest protection resulted in an intensive forest campaign which employed both non-confrontational and direct action strategies.

The Western Australian forest protest movement was characterised by its ability to continually adapt its organisation and strategies to changing social and political conditions. This flexible approach to protest not only led to victories in the Shannon River Basin, Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve and old growth forest campaigns, but also transformed forest protest into an influential social movement which contributed to the downfall of the Court Liberal Government in 2001.
Acknowledgments

I wish to thank in particular Dr Beth Schultz of the Conservation Council of Western Australia for sharing with me her valuable recollections of over 30 years of forest protest in Western Australia and for allowing me access to both the Conservation Council's and her own extensive archives.

I would like to thank the staff of the State Records Office of Western Australia and the Battye Library of West Australian History for their help during the research for my thesis. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Grant Stone for providing access to archival material stored at the Murdoch University Library.

Especially, I wish to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Lenore Layman, for her guidance and encouragement.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to all those members of the Western Australian forest protest movement who readily allowed me access to their private archives and agreed to participate as interviewees.
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Maps</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature Review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 An Emerging Protest Movement</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 The 1950s and 1960s: A New Movement Forms</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 The 1970s: A Time of Transition</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 The Early 1980s: Negotiation and Collaboration</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 The Late 1980s: An Expanding Movement</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 The Early 1990s: Protest Escalation</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 The Late 1990s: A Triumphant Movement</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9 Conclusion</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Jarrahdale Timber Mill c.1890.</td>
<td>Jarrahdale Heritage Society, Weedon Collection</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Timber workers at Jarrahdale c.1890.</td>
<td>Jarrahdale Heritage Society, Weedon Collection</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Mrs Bessie Rischbieth.</td>
<td>Daily News, 21 April 1964.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Shirley Strickland, Vincent Serventy and Bessie Rischbieth meet together in 1959.</td>
<td>Battye Library (State Library of Western Australia).</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>John Chester twenty years after the Bunbury bombing.</td>
<td>West Australian, 20 December 1996.</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Wagerup protesters gather outside Yarloop courthouse.</td>
<td>Daily News, 6 February 1979.</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Poster advertising second Wagerup occupation.</td>
<td>Mahon archive, Battye Library (SLWA).</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Anti-bauxite mining protesters at the second Wagerup occupation.</td>
<td><em>West Australian</em>, 29 May 1979.</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Peter Dowding receives the Tree Charter from participants in the Great Walk.</td>
<td><em>West Australian</em>, 15 April 1988.</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Robert Daubney celebrates the lifting of the blockade on his dairy farm with a glass of milk.</td>
<td><em>West Australian</em>, 8 February 1995.</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Perth people march along Barrack Street to protest against logging Western Australia's old growth forests.</td>
<td><em>West Australian</em>, 20 February 1995.</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Luc Longley and forest protesters at Giblett block.</td>
<td><em>Manjimup-Bridgetown Times</em>, 3 September 1997.</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Poster advertising Giblett forest rescue video and slide nights.</td>
<td>Conservation Council archives.</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>West Coast Eagles coach Mick Malthouse admires a karri tree in the forest near Northcliffe.</td>
<td><em>West Australian</em>, 4 June 1998.</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The quality of photographs reproduced in this thesis varies considerably. While the best quality images have been obtained, it has not been financially possible to acquire copies of originals from newspapers and other collections.
List of Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 2.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 3.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 4.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 5.</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Location of proposed jarrah reserve.</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source: Jarrah Reserve: A Proposal for a major reserve in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Western Australia, Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.), 1980, p.18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 6.</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Location of the wood chip licence area in the south-west of Western Australia.</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source: A. and J. Conacher, Environmental Planning and Management in Australia, OUP, 2000, p.20.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 7.</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Sites of forest protest action around Northcliffe during the 1990s. Source: Patricia Crawford and Ian Crawford: <em>Contested Country: A History of the Northcliffe Area of Western Australia</em>, UWA Press, 2003, p.197.</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 8.</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Regional Forest Agreement boundary. Source: <em>Towards a Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia</em>, Joint RFA Steering Committee, 1998, p.57.</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Australian Conservation Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALCOA</td>
<td>Aluminium Company of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BES</td>
<td>Blackwood Environment Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGFF</td>
<td>Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>Department of Conservation and Land Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE</td>
<td>Coalition for Denmark’s Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSNF (WA)</td>
<td>Campaign to Save Native Forests (Western Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCG</td>
<td>Leeuwin Conservation Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Regional Forest Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFDF</td>
<td>South-West Forests Defence Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWS (WA)</td>
<td>Tasmanian Wilderness Society (Western Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WACAP</td>
<td>WA Chip and Pulp Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAFA</td>
<td>Western Australian Forest Alliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

For over a century Western Australians have been protesting against the destruction of their forests, from the muted voices of early conservationists who sought to protect specific areas of native bushland to the more vocal cries of present-day activists who campaigned to save the state's old growth forests. Yet apart from accounts of a few isolated campaigns there are no published works that provide a comprehensive study of the native forest protest movement. Forest protest is an important topic in Western Australian history, particularly through its transformation into a dynamic social movement that was able to influence changes to the state government's forest policies.

This thesis examines the operations of the forest protest movement across the period from the origins of early protest in the 1890s to the ending of old growth forest logging in early 2001. It explores the movement’s structures, workings, campaigns and strategies. The thesis does not attempt to provide an overall explanation for the cessation of old growth forest logging in Western Australia although its analysis of the protest movement throws considerable light on this question. This introductory chapter will place the history of Western Australian native forest protest within a broader framework of Australian environmentalism.

There are differing accounts of the foundation of the Australian environment movement and of the relationship between early conservationists and modern
activists. In *Spoils and Spoilers* (1992) Geoffrey Bolton observed how a conservation movement began in the mid-nineteenth century with calls for wildlife protection in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria and increased demands for areas of bushland to be set aside as national parks for public recreation. He argued that the movement that emerged between 1880 and the 1930s was paradoxical insomuch as a predominantly urban and suburban population had called for the protection of areas of undeveloped bushland. In contrast to the early nineteenth century, when the bush was seen by most colonists as a hostile environment to be tamed for economic gain, by the early twentieth century an increasingly vocal minority had begun to challenge the continuing exploitation of the environment for productivity and had started the fight to preserve areas of the Australian bush in their natural state.  

The argument that the Australian environment movement began in the nineteenth century is supported by Drew Hutton and Libby Connors. In *A History of the Australian Environment Movement* (1999) the authors explored the historical development of the environment movement as a social movement and argued that a movement for conservation existed beside the labour, women’s and peace movements of the late nineteenth century and that, while the character of the movement changed, there was historical continuity from its origins to the more recent movement. Like Hutton and Connors, this account of the Western Australian forest protest movement is also placed within the theoretical framework of social movement theory where social movements comprise organisations and events that are united by a common identity and
where 'a shared sense of moral outrage builds participant identity, commitment and solidarity'.

In their study, Hutton and Connors identified two major waves of Australian environmental activity: the first, from the 1860s until the Second World War, comprised four thematic mobilisations centred around scientists, utilitarians, adventurers and urban reformers, and a second wave from the post-war years to the present which was triggered by new threats to the environment from the resource extraction industries. While the first wave conservationists tended to support the political culture of their day and employed only non-confrontational strategies such as lobbying and holding public meetings, they were successful in broadening debates and developing campaign techniques that carried forward to the later movement.

Elim Papadakis, in *Politics and the Environment* (1992), argued that the genesis of the Australian environment movement occurred even earlier, suggesting that the desire to protect native flora and fauna for aesthetic, ecological, scientific and utilitarian reasons was present from the earliest days of white colonisation. He cited the efforts of Governor Hunter in 1795 to halt the destruction of trees along the Hawkesbury River as evidence of a utilitarian concern to protect supplies of timber for the navy and to prevent flooding and destruction of property. Like the previous writers, Papadakis emphasised the importance of the mid to late nineteenth century in the formation of groups dedicated to environmental protection. He observed that the majority of early conservationists were from urban middle-class backgrounds and that the first
organizations such as the Royal Societies and wildlife protection societies successfully employed strategies of government lobbying, public education and information gathering that established precedents for future campaigns. Papadakis supported Hutton and Connors’ argument about the historical linkage between colonial and modern conservationists by observing how earlier calls for the preservation of areas for aesthetic, ecological and scientific purposes were reflected in arguments for environmental protection expressed by the contemporary environment movement.⁶

In a more recent publication, The Politics of the Environment (2001), Neil Carter, like Hutton and Connors, argued that in most industrialised nations two distinct waves of pressure-group activity could be identified. He agreed with Hutton and Connors over the emergence of a ‘first wave’ of activity in the late nineteenth century which saw the formation of conservation groups concerned with the protection of wildlife and the preservation of natural resources. Carter, however, located the second wave of activity in the 1960s, and identified this period as the foundation of the modern environmental movement through the proliferation and increasing size of protest groups.⁷

This view of the 1960s as a pivotal period in the evolution of modern environmentalism is supported by Mathew Trinca and Andrea Gaynor who, in Country: Visions of Land and People in Western Australia (2002), identified the 1960s and 1970s as an era when a fresh mood of ecological awareness resulted in people around the world calling for a halt to environmental exploitation. They argued that in Australia it was the fight to save the Great Barrier Reef
from mining in the late 1960s that heralded the start of a 'new wave' of environmentalism.⁸

Thus, while there are differing judgements of the exact origins of the Australian environment movement, the literature supports the view that there was some continuity between the early conservation movement and the later environment movement, even though the challenges were markedly different. This thesis will argue that in Western Australia the native forest protest movement comprised two periods of protest activity. The first from the 1890s, with early signs of public anxiety at the destruction of the forests for commercial purposes, and a second from the 1950s, with the formal organisation of protest groups that employed non-confrontational strategies.

The period immediately following the Second World War witnessed a transition from the earlier to the later movement and again there is a difference of interpretation over which factors stimulated the transformation and when it occurred. Hutton and Connors divided their post-war ‘second wave’ movement into four distinct phases. The first, from immediately following the Second World War until 1972, saw a revitalisation of the environment movement to cope with new challenges stimulated by post-war economic growth and technological advancement. It was during this time, Hutton and Connors have argued, that conservationists became radicalised through a realisation that traditional strategies of lobbying and letter-writing were ineffective against the demands of powerful companies and that they had to address their arguments directly to the Australian public.⁹ The second phase,
from 1972 until 1983, saw the emergence of a new generation of environmental activists who adopted a tougher approach to campaigning using strategies of non-violent direct action.\textsuperscript{10} Between 1983 and 1990 the environment movement attempted to consolidate its victory in the Franklin campaign by professionalising its organizational structures with a division occurring between those who strove to influence government policy by skilful lobbying and becoming partially institutionalised and a more radical stream who were more sceptical of political alliances and established an independent Green party.\textsuperscript{11} A final phase in the 1990s saw a decline in the movement's influence and witnessed a struggle between the environment movement’s attempts to promote ecologically sustainable policies and governments dedicated to continuous economic growth at the environment’s expense.\textsuperscript{12}

In *Power, Profit and Protest* (2003), Verity Burgmann placed the origins of the contemporary green movement in the early 1970s with the formation of groups such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and through the impact of major campaigns such as Lake Pedder and the Green Bans movement. Unlike the previous writers, she did not see any link between the earlier and later environment movements, and simply observed that the earlier ‘first wave’ environmentalists identified by Hutton and Connors and even those in the immediate post-war period were ineffective through operating in a political environment that largely ignored them. It was during the 1970s, Burgmann argued, that the green movement emerged as both a cause and an effect of expanding environmental awareness and by the end of the 1980s became an important political force.\textsuperscript{13}
The formative influence of the 1970s on the modern Australian environment movement was supported by John Dargavel who, in *Fashioning Australia’s Forests* (1995), argued it was during that decade that significant numbers of Australians began to value the forests for their existence and the spirituality of wilderness areas. He identified the fight to save Tasmania’s Lake Pedder as a turning point for the movement, when strategies of passive persuasion within a conservationist framework gave way to an era of environmentalism characterised by political activism. Dargavel further argued that it was the environmental movement that set the public agenda on forest issues from the 1970s by ensuring that established notions of forest use became open to public scrutiny. While the 1970s acted as a springboard for the Australian environmental movement, it was also a time of rapid expansion, when the movement formed a variety of groupings and alliances and adopted a more radical approach to protest action.

Rather than seeking to identify the modern environmental movement’s development in terms of its campaigns, organization and strategies, in *Green Power* (2000), environmental historian Timothy Doyle offered an alternative approach by dividing the movement into three periods of environmentalism since the 1960s, with each stage defined in terms of its relationship to the dominant political ideology and the strategic responses from the environment movement. According to Doyle, the first period from the late-1960s to the mid-1980s was shaped by a prevailing ideology of unrestrained use that viewed the non-human world only in terms of its economic value to humans. It was the environmental destruction wrought by that ideology which caused
environmentalists to react and led to the formation of the modern Australian environment movement. Doyle observed how the movement was able to reactivate the strategies and networks established at Lake Pedder and Terania Creek during the 1970s for the campaign to save the Franklin River in the early 1980s. A second phase of environmentalism from the mid-1980s until the early 1990s was dominated by a philosophy of sustainable use that sought to achieve a balance between human demand and the need to protect the environment. During that period environmentalists attempted to influence and initiate changes to environmental policies from within the institutions of government. Doyle identified a final period of development from the mid-1990s during which an ideology of wise and sequential use placed environmentalists in direct confrontation with the government and corporate sectors.16

The literature thus contains different interpretations of the Australian environment movement's transformation into a modern social movement and how it developed over time. Hutton and Connors identified four phases of post-war environmental movement development: a radicalisation of the movement from the end of the Second World War until the early 1970s as a reaction to new challenges to the environment from economic expansion; a more aggressive movement and a recourse to non-violent direct action strategies from the early 1970s until the early 1980s; the emergence of a more professional and partially institutionalised movement between 1983 and 1990; and a final 1990s phase when the environment movement's influence waned in the face of governments dedicated to economic growth. Both Burgmann and Dargavel
emphasised the importance of the 1970s in the evolution of the contemporary movement and argued that it was during that time that environmentalists began to exert their influence by refining their organization and strategies. Doyle, on the other hand, located the movement’s modern origins in the 1960s, with three periods of growth that were defined by its responses to changing political attitudes towards the environment.

The evidence presented in this thesis will show how the Western Australian forest protest movement was more closely aligned with the model presented by Hutton and Connors in terms of its historical continuity from the nineteenth century. However, while Hutton and Connors divide the post-war environment movement into four phases of development, this thesis argues that in Western Australia the post-Second World War contemporary forest protest movement was characterised by five evolutionary phases of protest activity: a formative post-war phase from the mid-1950s until the late 1960s when Perth conservation groups combined and used non-confrontational strategies to save areas of urban bushland; a transitional phase in the 1970s when dedicated forest activist groups formed and adopted a more assertive approach to protest which resulted in the use of non-violent direct action strategies; a collaborative phase during the early 1980s when the protest movement achieved some success by adopting strategies of negotiation with the state government; an expansionary phase in the late 1980s which saw the growth of a network of protest groups in Western Australia's south-west; and a final confrontational phase throughout the 1990s when frustration at the state government's failure to protect the forests resulted in an intensive campaign of direct action protests. Furthermore, the
thesis argues that, as opposed to Hutton and Connors' observations about the Australian environment movement's declining influence during the 1990s, for the Western Australian forest protest movement the decade was a time of intense activity with the formation of the Western Australian Forest Alliance, continuous forest blockades, south-west local protest actions, and successful campaigns against the Regional Forest Agreement and to protect the state's old growth forests.

Writers have observed that the Australian environment movement’s organisation and strategies have been influenced by particular campaigns. In *Groundswell: The Rise of the Greens* (2002), which traced the growth of the Greens as a force in Australian politics, Amanda Lohrey, like Dargavel and Burgmann, emphasised the impact of the Lake Pedder campaign in the early 1970s on the foundation of the modern Australian environment movement and drew an analogy with the relevance of the 1890s shearer’s strike on the formation of the Australian Labor Party. The failure to save Lake Pedder provided the motivation for the formation of the world’s first Green party, the United Tasmania Group, and heralded the start of the movement’s efforts to effect change as a political actor. While the Lake Pedder campaign generated the movement’s initial impetus, Lohrey argued that it was the Franklin River blockade that propelled ecological politics into the mainstream.

Like Lohrey, Tasmanian activist and academic Cassandra Pybus also stressed the importance of Lake Pedder for Australian environmentalists. In *The Rest of the World is Watching* (1990) she explained how the Lake Pedder campaign,
while initially regarded as a failure, became a powerful symbol that provided inspiration for many activists who became prominent figures in the environment movement and in Green politics. The later campaigns to save the Franklin River from being flooded and to oppose the construction of a large export pulp mill at Wesley Vale not only strengthened the Green movement in Tasmania but also attracted nationwide attention and support. On reflection, some activists believed that the failed Lake Pedder campaign was necessary in order to provide the foundation for later successes.\(^{19}\)

In their study *Wilderness as the Sacred: The Franklin River Campaign* (1989), Gary Easthope and Geoff Holloway also argued that the campaign to save Lake Pedder was the major turning point in the development of the modern Australian environment movement because it constructed a central political strategy that was used subsequently by activists: continuous pressure on the federal government to preserve areas of wilderness by emphasising the moral argument that the protection of those areas for future generations took precedence over other considerations.\(^{20}\) They observed how, as a social movement, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society waged a successful campaign to save the Franklin River by effectively using visual images to convince the public that the south-west wilderness was a ‘sacred place’ that needed saving. Easthope and Holloway believed that the style and quality of the wilderness images used in this strategy reflected the influence of the Society’s association with the United States Sierra Club.\(^{21}\) Richard Flanagan and Cassandra Pybus pointed out, however, that the strategy of using visual imagery to influence public perceptions of wilderness was not an innovation and that the late
nineteenth century Tasmanian photographer J.W. Beattie had already established a tradition of propagandist photography to promote conservation and tourism in the state. The Franklin River campaign provided many strategic lessons for Western Australian activists and the exploitation of visual imagery, particularly that of clear-felled areas of old growth forests, played a major part in the 1990s forest protests.

The fight to save the Franklin River not only illustrated the value of ‘wilderness’ as a powerful strategy for environmental activists but the action also contained tactical implications for the conduct of future campaigns. In her paper *Out of the Wilderness for the Wilderness Issue?* (1984), Penny Figgis explained how the Franklin River campaign changed the politics of the wilderness issue by breaking down many of the prejudices that were barriers to informed discussion. This, she believed, was accomplished mainly through an intensive public education campaign that ‘marketed’ a positive concept of wilderness by exploiting media interest and persuading the public and politicians to visit areas of natural beauty. The Franklin campaign produced a more sophisticated approach to the media, with activists trained in writing press releases and conducting media interviews. Campaigners were encouraged to modify aggressive behaviour in order to present a more conservative image that would have a better chance of generating sympathy from ‘middle Australia’. Good quality, well-researched material was used to support arguments with the adoption of a positive, constructive approach rather than a simple negative reaction. Figgis argued that the mixture of grass roots and elite-based strategies used in the Franklin campaign resulted from the influence of a rising
number of politically aware young activists who did not have the tentative approach to government lobbying adopted by previous generations. Many of the strategic initiatives used in the Franklin River campaign were employed in Western Australian forest protest actions.

Hutton and Connors claimed the Franklin River campaign signified the Australian environment movement’s ‘coming of age’. The massive publicity surrounding the river blockade had projected an image of environmentalists fighting to save the wilderness, with the action successfully mobilising thousands of activists and supporters around Australia. Furthermore, it had developed the movement’s skills and resources to the extent that environmental issues had been forced into the mainstream of the country’s political life. Most significantly, Hutton and Connors observed how the Franklin campaign illustrated the capacity of the environmental movement to forge links with political power – in this case a sympathetic, newly-elected federal Labor government – and that this in turn encouraged an optimistic belief among environmentalists that, if they could professionalise their operations and organise further mass campaigns, they had the potential to influence election outcomes and achieve major gains.

The willingness of the Franklin campaign environmentalists to seek an accommodation with the new federal Labor administration demonstrates how contemporary activists employ a form of 'self-limiting radicalism' which Jean Cohen argues recognises the failures of revolutionary Marxism and seeks to 'renew a democratic political culture and to reintroduce the normative
dimension of social action into political life.'  

Burgmann, however, considers that, while negotiation with political power might be appropriate at times, the environment movement exerts its greatest influence when it employs 'sustainable activism'.  

Jan Pakulski also argues that, while the green movement will negotiate a partial accommodation with Western political institutions, it will continue to carry out its operations outside the realm of parliament.  

This thesis will demonstrate how a political alliance between the forest protest movement and the newly-elected Burke Labor Government in the early 1980s contributed towards victories over the Shannon Basin and the Lane-Poole Reserve and how, like the Franklin campaign, this raised hopes within the protest movement that further successes would follow.

Although the Tasmanian campaigns undoubtedly exerted a major impact on the growth of the Australian environment movement, protests in other states further strengthened the movement’s organisation and expanded its strategies. The New South Wales and Victorian Green Bans movements during the 1970s were unique insofar as they were the first time in an industrialised country that a workers’ union had agreed to form an alliance with ordinary citizens and withhold its labour to protect portions of urban bushland and inner-city heritage areas from destruction. In Green Bans (1978), Richard Roddewig observed how feelings of powerlessness against the rapid pace of development and the inability of the political process to represent their points of view forced people to form residents’ action groups and unite with the Builders Labourers’ Federation to preserve their local environments. Roddewig believed a number of social and political factors coincided to promote the growth of the Green
Bans movement: a strong public reaction against intensive urban development, an influential radical left wing in the labour movement and a tradition of using strike action for political ends.\(^{28}\)

Hutton and Connors considered the Green Bans movement’s most important legacy was to introduce legislation in New South Wales that enabled people to participate in environmental decisions that affected their daily lives.\(^{29}\) In a recent paper *Unions and the Environment* (2002), which considered initiatives to create green employment in Australia and overseas, Verity Burgmann argued that affiliating with unions to achieve environmental objectives, such as occurred during the Green Bans campaigns, should remain an important strategy of the environment movement.\(^{30}\) Burgmann’s argument became relevant for Western Australian activists during the late 1990s when lobbying the union movement was an important strategy during the latter stages of the campaign to end old growth forest logging.

The fight to save an area of rainforest from logging at Terania Creek in northern New South Wales during the late 1970s saw the introduction of non-violent direct action blockading in Australia’s eastern states as a protest strategy by rainforest conservationists. In *Fighting over the forests* (1990), Ian Watson explored the complex relationship between conservationists and timber workers. Adopting a class analysis, Watson argued that the campaign to save Terania Creek emerged as a middle-class battlefield where the intellectual resources of the protesters and not physical force provided the keys to success. He maintained that the protesters were able to use their superior intellectual skills
to their advantage by exploiting political and media networks, presenting well-researched and articulate arguments and co-ordinating and organising actions to ensure maximum media exposure. Burgmann supported this view, pointing out how the new social movements were populated by a ‘new middle class’ which was characterised by the possession of ‘intellectual capital’.

Like Figgis’ observations of the Franklin River protesters, Watson noted how strategies employed at Terania Creek were also influenced by a blend of middle-class professional moderation and more emotional and spontaneous expressions of direct action. In the case of Western Australian forest protest, however, this thesis will demonstrate support for Timothy Doyle’s argument that a class-based analysis is an inadequate way of explaining the Australian environment movement insofar as the diversity of the movement’s individuals and ideologies extend beyond the boundaries of any particular class or interest group. Hutton and Connors saw the Terania Creek blockade as radically altering the nature of conservation campaigning through using non-violent direct action strategies to ‘stage’ protest actions that invited media and public attention and by providing an organisational blueprint for other direct action protests. This thesis will show how some of the strategies used at Terania Creek, such as non-violent direct action and media exploitation, had already been used by Western Australian forest activists in the late 1970s.

Plans by the Victorian government in the late-1960s to develop 40,000 hectares of the Little Desert in western Victoria as farmland sparked a campaign 400 kilometres away in Melbourne. Eight metropolitan conservation groups
combined to form a Save Our Bushlands Action Committee to save the area. In her comprehensive account of the campaign, *Defending the Little Desert* (1998), Libby Robin saw Little Desert as a ‘watershed’ for the conservation movement in that, like a division between river systems, it marked a dividing line between an older generation of conservation campaigners and the more overt strategies adopted by 1970s environmentalists. She supported this view by observing that the Little Desert conservationists reflected a different conservation tradition by using tactics of negotiation, lobbying and public meetings as distinct from the later strategies of direct action and confrontation. Rather than opposing the political system and seeking to attack it, the majority of the campaigners believed in the system and sought to persuade politicians and bureaucrats that the farmlands scheme was not viable. Robin argued that the Little Desert campaign coincided with and supported changes in ecological consciousness that were occurring at that time when people began to question the ethics of utilitarian approaches to conservation. In contrast to the failed Lake Pedder campaign, she believed Little Desert acted as a symbol of reassurance to the environment movement that political pressure could be successful.36

Hutton and Connors supported Robin’s assertion about the transitional nature of the Little Desert campaign, observing that in many ways the action represented the first-wave movement’s last mobilisation. However, in their view, the campaign’s major achievements had been to increase government accountability and public representation on land conservation issues and to heighten environmental consciousness in Victoria that in turn resulted in the rapid growth of the state’s environmental movement.37 These writers’ views of
the late 1960s as a transitional period for the Australian environment movement will be supported in this thesis by evidence which shows how, at that time, the Western Australian forest protest movement’s strategies of passive dissent were replaced in the 1970s by more radical tactics of direct action.

The fight to save Queensland’s Great Barrier Reef from mining and oil drilling in the late 1960s and early 1970s was inspired by similar motivations to the Lake Pedder and Franklin River campaigns. The Reef was a national icon that held a spiritual and emotional attraction for many Australians and there was a strong desire among environmentalists to protect its natural beauty for future generations. In her account of the campaign *The Coral Battleground* (1977), Judith Wright described a utilitarian ethos that also prevailed in Western Australia. Notions of ‘progress’ were defined in terms of an expanding resource extraction industry that was supported by wealthy private interests and a sympathetic state government. A difference was that in Western Australia it was not drilling a coral reef for limestone and oil that provided the threat to the environment but the destruction of the state’s native forests for bauxite and wood chips. Wright observed how, as in Western Australia during the 1970s, conservationists who banded together to save the Reef were labelled as nothing more than a fringe element who were out of touch with the wishes of most Queenslanders. She showed how activists were able to transform the battle to save the Reef into a controversial public and political issue through the application of a range of protest strategies which included presenting scientific evidence at Select Committees, initiating legal challenges, lobbying parliamentarians and unions, and mounting an intensive public and media
campaign that included the first use of car bumper stickers in Australia. Wright viewed the threat to the Great Barrier Reef and the campaign to save it as one small part of a much broader issue about protecting the future of the planet.39

Hutton and Connors identified three tactics used by the environment movement in the Great Barrier Reef campaign: a ‘first-wave’ movement strategy of lobbying politicians and bureaucrats through persuasion that proved ineffective, a massive public education and media campaign, and a legal argument about jurisdiction over the area of the Great Barrier Reef. It was the second strategy, the growing public hostility to drilling the Reef, that they argued provided the necessary reprieve for conservationists, while agreeing with Wright that this was assisted by public reaction to pollution from environmental disasters in Australia and other parts of the world at that time.40 This thesis will demonstrate how, as in the Great Barrier Reef campaign, public education and media exploitation emerged as prominent strategies in the fight to save Western Australia's native forests.

The ability to create and co-ordinate urban and rural networks of forest activists is an important characteristic of the contemporary Western Australian forest protest movement, and the organisation and effectiveness of those networks will be a major focus of this thesis. In Green Power (2000), Timothy Doyle used the mid-1980s campaign to protect north Queensland’s wet tropical forests as an example of how a movement’s networks combined and operated. He identified a web of twenty-five groups and organisations involved in the wet tropics campaign that provided a bond between the different groups even
though there was no overriding common goal. The primary aim of the networks, Doyle argued, was to collate and disseminate essential information which improved the campaign’s overall organization by helping to avoid duplication, create strategies through collective knowledge, and foster an awareness among group members that they were part of a broader and more powerful social movement. While network information was communicated in a variety of forms, such as written correspondence, newsletters and personal contact, regular telephone link-ups became important through enabling network members to discuss resource allocation and plan campaign strategies. Lohrey believed Doyle’s idea of how these different networks intermeshed to form a social movement provided an explanation for the growth of a powerful ‘political constituency’ of grassroots groups, such as the Australian Greens, that cut across class and socio-economic divisions.

The accounts of these eastern states campaigns not only offer explanatory frameworks for the modern Australian environment movement’s organisational and strategic approaches but also contain parallels with native forest protest in Western Australia. Tasmania’s Lake Pedder and Franklin River campaigns illustrated how the impact of ‘wilderness’ imagery could capture public imagination and showed how the application of direct action strategies not only attracted media attention but also strengthened movement solidarity. As well as emphasising the need for a sophisticated protest organisation, the Franklin campaign showed the potential for movements to achieve real success through forming alliances with sympathetic political administrations. The Terania Creek action in New South Wales illustrated how ‘staged events’ such as forest
blockades could attract widespread media attention and the Queensland wet tropics campaign demonstrated the complexity and fluidity of activist networks and their role in maintaining essential communications links between campaign participants. Like the Franklin River campaign, the fight to save Queensland’s Great Barrier Reef showed how it was possible to harness public sentiment over images of Australia’s natural heritage and transform a local concern into a national issue. However, while these campaigns contained lessons for Western Australian forest protesters, this thesis will show how in some instances Western Australian activists were themselves the innovators.

Throughout its history the Australian environment movement has been characterised by the energy and enthusiasm of its leaders. In her recent study *Green Power: Environmentalists who have changed the face of Australia* (2006), Christine Williams examined the lives of twenty prominent conservationists who have influenced the development of Australian environmentalism. She argued that the biographies revealed how a culture of ‘green consciousness’ was created through the involvement of a group of committed activists and that this new sense of consciousness had not resulted from any radical element but had been constructed from the voices and actions of articulate and ‘reasoning’ Australians. Williams believed the individuals in her book crystallised significant stages in the evolution of the environmental movement by reflecting growing public perceptions that the natural environment should be protected as an asset for future generations.44
In their study of the Australian environment movement Hutton and Connors also showed how it was the actions of individuals which inspired others and led to the movement’s expansion. They singled out New South Wales bushwalker Myles Dunphy as one of the key figures in their ‘first wave’ of Australian environmentalism, arguing that it was his ability to transpose the physical and aesthetic enjoyment of the bush into a conservation philosophy and his leadership in organising popular recreational walks that made him the founder of the modern bushwalking movement. Dunphy’s greatest achievements arose from his desire to ensure areas of bush were preserved for public enjoyment and resulted in him providing the driving force behind the creation of the Greater Blue Mountains, Southern Blue Mountains and Kosciusko national parks.

Timothy Doyle observed how environmental campaigns produced people from a variety of backgrounds to provide inspiration and leadership. These included the Great Barrier Reef campaign, in which poet Judith Wright co-founded the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) and was instrumental in saving the Reef from mining, ‘alternative lifestylers’ Nan and Hugh Nicholson who became centrally involved in the Terania Creek forest conflict, and unionist Jack Mundey, who attempted to instil environmental consciousness into urban developers. Bolton believed Mundey’s early life in the tropical landscape of North Queensland could have influenced his concerns about urban pollution in Sydney and a realisation that underprivileged people were not adequately protected by town planners.
In *Patriots: Defending Australia's Natural Heritage* (2006), William Lines argues that the actions of Australian conservationists represent the expression of a more embracing notion of patriotism that drives them to defend their country's natural heritage against the unrestrained destruction of governments and developers. Lines further argues that leading conservationists such as Milo Dunphy and Judith Wright were successful not only through their persistence, tenacity and political skills, but also because of a sense of patriotism that was grounded in their awareness of the land as a living reality.  

While there were many individuals who made significant contributions to the growth of the Australian environment movement, in recent times it has been Greens' leader Bob Brown who has arguably exerted the greatest influence. Several writers have discussed the significance of Brown’s role in the Franklin River campaign in the early 1980s. Hutton and Connors observed that, while thousands of activists took part, it was Brown who was at the summit of the campaign. They viewed Brown as a contradictory person who appeared modest and unassuming, yet also as one who possessed an acute awareness of campaign strategy and of his own ability to motivate and inspire masses of people. It was his sense of generosity and personal integrity, they argued, that resulted in him becoming the campaign’s central unifying figure. A recent biography, *Bob Brown: Gentle Revolutionary* (2004) by James Norman, supported this view of Brown as a person who was able to combine modesty with personal magnetism by recounting how activists in the Franklin blockade commented on Brown’s ability to bring calm and order to a situation by simply being there.
In Easthope and Holloway’s view, Brown’s willingness to forsake his career as a doctor, to sell many of his possessions and to rely on the charity of his followers in order to devote his energies to the Franklin campaign defined him in Max Weber’s terms as a charismatic leader who dedicated himself solely to the success of his cause.\textsuperscript{52} Lohrey, however, argued that Brown’s plain speaking and image of ordinariness, although giving an impression of truthfulness and integrity, reflected the very opposite of charismatic leadership. While Hutton and Connors’ identified Brown’s apparent contradictions, Lohrey contended that his conservative image and stern public demeanour suggested that radicalism and respectability could somehow co-exist.\textsuperscript{53} Figgis also emphasised the crucial role of strong leadership in mounting successful environmental campaigns and believed that, without Brown’s guidance, the outcome of the Franklin River action could have been markedly different.\textsuperscript{54}

This thesis will argue that, from its origins in the 1950s, the contemporary Western Australian forest protest movement was characterised by a succession of influential protest leaders. The thesis will demonstrate how networks of experienced activists directed and co-ordinated a series of urban and rural forest campaigns.

Although campaigns and leadership were crucial factors in enabling the Australian environment movement to refine and streamline its organisation and strategies, the movement was also inspired by broader international environmental issues, particularly that posited by American marine scientist Rachel Carson in her book *Silent Spring* (1962), who warned about the
damaging effects of synthetic chemicals on the natural environment.\textsuperscript{55} Hutton and Connors believed the book’s influence for the environment movement arose not only from its attack on the chemical industry but also from its ability to provoke a worldwide debate over the indiscriminate use of pesticides.\textsuperscript{56} In terms of Australian forest protest it was environmentalists Richard and Val Routley’s \textit{The Fight for the Forests} (1973) that provided a major stimulus for the forest protest movement. The Routleys argued that the decision to establish an intensive timber industry and promote a forest products export trade would exert severe pressure on the country’s limited areas of natural forest. They further argued that those entrusted with the management of the forests were heavily influenced by the demands of the wood production industry.\textsuperscript{57}

Dargavel thought the impact of \textit{The Fight for the Forests} lay not only in its attack on the environmental effects of intensive forestry but also in its challenge to the entrenched ‘wood production ideology’ of the nation’s foresters. He argued that, more than anything else, it was the book’s influence that moved Australian environmental issues onto the public agenda and signalled the start of the forest contests.\textsuperscript{58} Agreeing with Dargavel about the book’s importance for the environment movement, Hutton and Connors asserted that the publication represented the first clear expression of the battleground between conservationists and the timber industry and observed how subsequent campaigns to save native forests continued to emphasise the conflict between wood production forestry and conservation values.\textsuperscript{59}
Like Hutton and Connors’ central hypothesis concerning the reasons for the development of the Australian environment movement, this thesis will show how in Western Australia the forest protest movement was also influenced by the appearance of new threats to the environment and the experiences it gained from various campaigns. More specifically, the thesis will argue that the successful Western Australian forest protest movement was characterised organisationally by an inclusive approach to dissent which encouraged broad public support and participation through an expanding network of metropolitan and south-west forest protest groups, and in its strategic initiatives by its ability to employ a diversity of non-confrontational and direct action strategies aimed at both maintaining public focus on forest issues and sustaining continuous pressure on the state government to change its forest policies. It will further argue that the post-Second World War contemporary protest movement was defined in terms of five distinct phases of protest activity that were specific to Western Australia. The thesis will examine how a succession of strong leaders was able to co-ordinate a metropolitan and rural network of activist groups to combat threats to the state's forests from mining and wood chipping, and consider what internal characteristics gave the movement its strength. An analysis of some important campaigns will demonstrate how the movement formulated its strategies and offer a comparison with tactics employed in other Australian states. Finally, the thesis will consider the major factors that enabled the forest protest movement to succeed in some campaigns yet be unsuccessful in others.
The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 comprises an introduction and literature review which places the Western Australian forest protest movement within the broader context of Australian environmentalism. Chapter 2 examines the protest movement's first period of activity from its genesis in the 1890s, when individuals began protesting about the destruction of the state's forests, until the early 1950s when conservation groups protested about the environmental effects of rapid post-war development. Chapter 3 identifies the start of a second period of protest from the mid-1950s and considers how the campaign to save King's Park and the formation of the Nature Conservation Council influenced the movement's early growth. Chapter 4 examines how the 1970s heralded the formation of dedicated forest protest groups and a transition from non-confrontational forms of protest to the employment of non-violent direct action strategies. Chapter 5 demonstrates how, during the early 1980s, the city-based protest movement intensified its use of the legal system as a protest strategy and was able to exploit its influence within the state Labor party to protect two specific areas of native forest. Chapter 6 observes how the focus for successful protest activity shifted away from Perth with the formation of organised and effective local protest groups in the state's south-west. Chapter 7 examines how, in the early 1990s, protest groups united to combat increasing pressure on the forests, and how frustration at the protest movement's inability to halt further logging in the south-west prompted a return to strategies of direct action. Chapter 8 considers the factors that enabled the forest protest movement to create a climate for victory in the forests campaign. Chapter 9 contains the thesis conclusions.
ENDNOTES

3 ibid., p.5.
4 ibid., pp.15-19.
6 ibid., pp.65-69.
8 Andrea Gaynor, Mathew Trinca and Anna Haebich (eds), Country: Visions of Land and People In Western Australia, Western Australian Museum, 2002, pp.4-5.
10 ibid., pp.125-127.
11 ibid., pp.165-168, p.223.
15 ibid., p.162.
20 Gary Easthope and Geoff Holloway, ‘Wilderness as the Sacred: The Franklin River Campaign’, in Peter Hay, Robyn Eckersley and Geoff Holloway (eds), Environmental Politics in Australia and New Zealand, Board of Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, 1989, pp.189-190.
21 Easthope and Holloway, Environmental Politics in Australia and New Zealand, pp.196-199.
32 Burgmann, Power, Profit and Protest, pp.18-19.
33 Watson, Fighting over the forests, p.92.
34 Doyle, Green Power, p.5.

ibid.


Williams, *Green Power*, p.54.


Lohrey, *Quarterly Essay*, pp.75-76.

Figgis in Mosley and Messer (eds), *Fighting for Wilderness*, p.239.


Dargavel, *Fashioning Australia’s Forests*, p.163.


ibid., p.15.
Chapter 2

An Emerging Protest Movement

Map 2.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 2.
This chapter examines the forest protest movement in Western Australia from its origins in the 1890s when individuals began protesting against the escalating destruction of the state’s native forests until the early 1950s, when conservation groups started to protest about the effects of post-war development. During this first period of protest, concerns for the preservation of the native environment resulted in the formation of three prominent conservation groups – the West Australian Natural History Society (1904), a Western Australian branch of the Australian Forest League (1913) and the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club (1924). In contrast to the larger and more vocal orientation of current protest movements, these organisations focussed their concerns on the destruction of native habitats as an unfortunate by-product of colonisation and sought to protect native flora and fauna through the creation of nature reserves. The demand for timber, both domestic and external, and the consequent growth of timber companies combined with a government administration seeking economic development, muted those early voices of dissent.

The chapter will support Hutton and Connors' argument about the Australian environment movement;¹ that, in this first period of protest, there were some elements of protest activity that carried through to a second period of protest which began in the 1950s. Specifically, the early conservation groups collaborated with each other and used non-confrontational strategies such as political lobbying and letter-writing to protest against the destruction of the state's native forests. A tradition of strong leadership was established, and the groups were aware of the strategic importance of public education and gaining the support of influential figures.
The attitude of Western Australia’s early colonists to their new environment was influenced by their British colonial inheritance. The conquest of new lands called for the submission of the natural environment to the demands of its new owners. This cultural and ideological transplantation produced a number of views on how the land should be used and managed.

**Changing Attitudes**

During the early nineteenth century most European settlers regarded the Australian bush as a barrier to progress. The fact that the majority of the colonists came from urban backgrounds and lacked an appreciation of the unique characteristics of the Western Australian environment compounded their adversarial approach to the land. It was the ignorance and short-sightedness of the settlers during the colony’s early years that de Garis argued established a pattern for the way Western Australians would continue to treat their environment.2 These observations about the inexperience of Western Australia’s first colonists are supported by Cameron, who further argued that the failure of the Swan River Colony to conform to pre-conceived expectations of a fertile land with rich soils was an important influence on the formation of the colonists’ responses to their new land and that inadequate planning and isolation from the eastern colonies provided additional obstacles to achieving their ambitions.3

While, on the one hand, the forests were seen as a hindrance to settlement, their potential as a commercial resource had also been recognised. Captain James Stirling extolled the virtues of the area’s timber to attract investment and settlers
to the Swan River Colony. During an exploratory visit to Geographe Bay in March 1827 he observed: ‘Wood is here abundant for the use of Ships...’, and speculated on the possible export of timber to Asian markets.\(^4\) In October 1828, after discussions with Thomas Peel, an Association was formed:

...to send labour and capital assets to the Swan where food, livestock and raw materials of all kinds would be produced on land converted from its virgin state, and exported to bring them a return.\(^5\)

During a later visit to Geographe Bay in 1838, Stirling pronounced the trees of the karri forests to be ‘of the finest description for shipbuilding’.\(^6\)

Attitudes towards Western Australia’s native forests at the time of British colonisation reflected both nostalgia for an English cultural tradition and a colonial desire to exploit the forests for a domestic, and possibly export, timber trade. Heathcote has argued that, while Europeans possessed an aesthetic appreciation of the Australian landscape that was represented by pockets of open woodland and native grass which provided fleeting reminders of home, by 1870 the dominant perspective was a materialistic view of the bush as a commodity for commercial exploitation.\(^7\) Mills suggested that the lack of conservation principles in the early years of the Swan River Colony derived from the conflicting interests of the rich and the poor. On the one hand, wealthy landowners acquired huge tracts of land which they attempted to transform into an English landscape and, alternatively, poor men indiscriminately felled timber to make a living. Additionally, Mills argued, the industrial revolution resulted in the exploitation of land and resources for commercial speculation.\(^8\) The enormity of the impact of European colonisation on the land was emphasised by Powell, who argued that between 1788 and 1914 the Australian environment was
‘irrevocably’ changed to the extent that complex ecosystems were destroyed or modified and exploitative attitudes towards nature became firmly entrenched.9

One of the major causes of the indiscriminate clearing of Western Australia’s forests during the early years of colonisation was a widely held belief that the forest was an inexhaustible resource that would quickly regenerate. A further misconception, which promoted the idea of widespread forest clearance, was the notion that the density and maturity of the trees signified rich and fertile soils that would be suitable for European-style agriculture. By the time those assertions were found to be incorrect, considerable areas of ancient forest had been felled or ringbarked and burnt.10

As well as suffering from misuse through human ignorance, the forests were placed under further pressure during the late 1860s and early 1870s when the Western Australian government offered long-term timber leases or ‘concessions’ over large areas to entrepreneurs in return for a substantial investment. This period marked a turning point in the history of the forests with the industrialisation of the timber industry through the introduction of large commercial sawmills.11 Dargavel has argued that, while an increase in railway building during the 1880s and the economic impact of the 1890s gold rushes produced a boom in the timber industry, it was the impact of international demand from the 1890s that resulted in Western Australia becoming the supplier of 70-82% of the Australian colonies’ timber exports.12 (See figures 2.1 and 2.2)
Figure 2.1. Jarrahdale Timber Mill c.1890. Source: Jarrahdale Heritage Society, Weedon Collection.

Figure 2.2. Timber workers at Jarrahdale c.1890. Source: Jarrahdale Heritage Society, Weedon Collection.
Although it appeared that the forests faced a bleak future, the latter half of the nineteenth century was also a time when a much broader philosophical debate was taking place in the industrial world over human attitudes to nature.

In 1864, George Perkins Marsh, an American lawyer and diplomat, published *Man and Nature*, which comprised a study of the relationship of humans to the natural world. Marsh’s central hypothesis was that the balance of nature was being disturbed to the detriment of humanity. In the preface Marsh stated:

```
We have felled forest enough everywhere, in many districts, far too much. Let us restore this one element of material life to its normal proportions and devise means for maintaining the permanence of its relations to the fields, the meadows, and the pastures, to the rain and the dews of heaven, to the springs and rivulets with which it waters the earth.13
```

David Lowenthal has argued that this book was the first to oppose the myth of the inexhaustibility of resources and that it exerted an immediate influence over human attitudes to the land and its uses. Marsh believed tree cover was of fundamental importance and considered that the indiscriminate felling of trees caused serious environmental harm, such as soil erosion and impoverishment. He concluded that people must not only appreciate the consequences of their actions towards the natural world, but also learn how to restore and preserve it.14

Lewis Mumford considered Marsh’s work to be so significant that in his estimation it represented ‘the fountainhead of the conservation movement.’15

Even in remote Western Australia the beginnings of concern for the forests’ future became apparent in the 1870s with the first expressions of public anxiety about their exploitation.
In November 1874 the *Fremantle Herald* newspaper stated its objections to the alienation of the colony’s forests for the benefit of ‘alien capitalists’ who monopolised the timber trade and depleted the colony of a valuable resource. The writer said it was a mistake to assume the jarrah forests were inexhaustible, and criticised the actions of companies that:

...having no interest in the colony, conduct all their money transactions on the principle of getting as much out of the bargain as they can, and will when all is exhausted, leave behind them a treeless, heat producing desert and seaboard.16

Similar concerns about the impact of commercial exploitation on the forests had already been expressed in New South Wales in 1869, when a correspondent observed:

The devastating axe of the timber-getter has made dire havoc amongst the cedar brushes and where a few years ago immense quantities of the wood were to be found there is not now a single tree worth cutting...They destroy young trees too, with the most culpable carelessness, and...care not a button how many young trees they destroy in cutting down an old one.17

An indication of changing official attitudes towards the forests was demonstrated by the decision of the Western Australian government to call upon the Government Botanist of Victoria, Ferdinand von Mueller, to conduct a survey of the colony’s forest resources. Moore has pointed out that Mueller, an eminent natural scientist and arguably Australia’s first conservationist, provided encouragement for the formation of the West Australian Natural History Society, later to become the Royal Society of Western Australia.18 Mueller’s report, published in 1879, advocated measures to protect the colony’s native forests:

...as nowhere, not even in the most extensive woodlands, can the supply of timber from natural forests be considered inexhaustible, a rational far-seeing provision for the maintenance (if not for the enrichment) of its forest-treasures is needful for West Australia, however indiminishable [sic] these may appear at present...Wise statesmanship does not expect to raise extensive incomes from forest lands without re-
voting at least a portion of the funds so obtained for renovating, or for enriching to some extent, the very forests which yielded the revenue...19

Despite growing concern about the condition and management of the forests, there was continuing resistance on the part of the colonial government to take positive action. In 1882, the Surveyor General, Malcolm Fraser, still maintained that in his opinion ‘the untouched forest area of the Colony is so great that no anxiety need be felt as to the supply falling short for very many years to come.’ While acknowledging that ‘waste of our timber is at present enormous’, he could ‘see no means or system employed, no method adopted or followed to prevent this waste.’20 It is possible that the reason for Fraser’s inactivity with regard to forest conservation at this time was, as Carron suggested, due partly to a lack of revenue, but mainly to a persisting view that the relative size of the timber industry at that time compared to the immensity of the forests suggested an almost inexhaustible supply of resources. An additional factor was a slump in the industry during the 1880s, caused chiefly by a lack of rail transport and of substantial capital investment.21

Notwithstanding the complacency there were some signs of government concern about forest depletion by the 1890s. In 1895 the Forrest government employed J. Ednie-Brown, who had wide experience as head of forest services in South Australia and New South Wales, to report on the extent of the forests in Western Australia and to recommend how they could best be conserved and utilised. Ednie-Brown’s subsequent report identified changing attitudes towards the forests. He believed that the value of the forests was becoming recognised and they were not simply regarded as an obstacle to settlement. He recommended a
change of direction for forest management that included a conservationist approach:

…I do not think that the management of State Forests should consist in principally trying to make as much out of them as possible. This, in my opinion, should be a minor matter entirely, and always subservient to the more important one of efficient conservation and permanency.22

Unfortunately, Ednie-Brown’s report and recommendations did not prompt an immediate government response. Carron believes that Ednie-Brown, by over-estimating the total area of forest at 8 million hectares, may have unwittingly contributed toward the inactivity through providing evidence to support the myth of an unlimited resource – a mythology that a reform-resistant administration was only too willing to embrace.23

At this time there was also growing public awareness of the continuing depletion of Western Australia’s forests. The West Australian newspaper pointed out that, although timber supplies were ‘by no means inexhaustible’, there was no restriction on the size of trees to be felled and no measures in place to prevent the reckless waste.24 Criticism was levelled at the past practice of letting out vast areas of forest for a nominal rental and it was realised that, if the forests were to endure and achieve their full market potential, it would be necessary to ensure that timber was cut selectively and areas of regeneration protected.25 An item in the Bunbury Herald bemoaned the lack of a proper forest administration and conservation policy and appealed to the government to ‘save our forests, which are at present being shamefully despoiled and sacrificed to the exigencies of trade.’26 The article provoked a response from the Minister for Lands, who decided to write to the Indian Government for advice on conservation, as he
concluded ‘there is a need of more vigorous action being taken in regard to conserving our timber.’

Towards the end of 1902, concerns about a lack of proper forestry legislation and management culminated in the establishment of a Royal Commission, the terms of reference of which included an investigation into the depletion and waste of native forest timber and recommendations regarding legislation to protect future supplies. The Commissioners comprised five parliamentarians and one scientist. Its chairman, Charles Harper, was Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and, like fellow Commissioner William Atkins, a member of the Forrest group. Other Commissioners included Sir Newton James Moore, a soldier and Liberal Party MLA for Bunbury, and Robert Hastie, the Labor Party MLA for Kanowna. The Commission’s final member, William Fitzgerald, a geologist and botanist, was a frequent contributor to the West Australian Natural History Society’s annual journal. In its final report the Commission observed:

State acquiescence in the destruction of good timber only because the export trade demands it, is a crime against coming generations; and any attempts to increase the export in the interests of foreign companies, or with the object of inducing more men to join in timber getting at the expense of posterity, needs wise resistance.

The Commission further stated that effective forest conservation was not possible until forest lands were placed under the statutory control of an adequately resourced Forests Department. Once again, however, little action was taken by the government apart from the appointment of a Forests Advisory Board which was dissolved in 1908. More positively, within a forest protest context, it was during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that three influential forest conservation groups evolved in Western Australia.
The late nineteenth century witnessed the formation of a number of societies and field naturalists clubs throughout Australia that were dedicated to the preservation of native flora and fauna. These included the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (1880), the Field Naturalists Section of the Royal Society of South Australia (1883), the Royal Society of Queensland (1883), and the Natural History Association of New South Wales (1887). While the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club was not formed until 1904, the Royal Society of Tasmania (1829) had been calling for flora and fauna reserves since the 1840s. In common with Australia's eastern colonies, the period also saw the foundation of Western Australia's first organised conservation group.

A Natural History Society had been formed in Western Australia in 1891, and was primarily concerned with a scientific appreciation of the colony's flora. The Society's president was the colony's premier, Sir John Forrest, and its patron the Governor, Sir William Robinson. At its monthly meetings scientists and amateurs presented a variety of papers pertaining to natural history. In 1904 the Society decided to expand its field of interest to include other areas of natural history in addition to botany. The Society became the West Australian Natural History Society, later the Royal Society of Western Australia, and incorporated the Mueller Botanic Society, which had been founded in 1897. It stated its objectives as:

…the study of Natural History, to be promoted by periodical meetings, conversaziones, field excursions, the formation of a library, and the issue of a journal.
By incorporating the earlier Mueller Botanic Society within its ranks the West Australian Natural History Society sought to gain further scientists as members in order to establish itself as a ‘useful and influential scientific Society’.35

An examination of the Society’s membership records reveals its elite status. In 1906 the Western Australian governor, Sir Frederick Bedford and Lady Bedford were joint patrons, with Dr Charles Riley, Bishop of Perth, president.36 The Society’s journal for 1908 lists a total of 47 members who largely comprised members of Perth’s professional and scientific community, including: J.B Cleland, Government Bacteriologist; E.A. Le Souef, Director, Perth Zoological Gardens; A. Gibb Maitland, Government Geologist; and E. S. Simpson of the Perth Geological Survey Department.37 In terms of forest conservation in Western Australia, the Society was important through the influence of two of its key figures.

A prominent member in the advancement of the Society was its secretary, Bernard Woodward, who was also a curator, and later director, of the Western Australian Museum. Woodward, who promoted the formation of the Society, played a major role as secretary of the earlier Natural History Society in its campaign to protect a flora and fauna reserve at Pinjarra, arguing for its designation as a National Park in the face of continuing pressure from timber interests. A study of the Pinjarra reserve campaign demonstrates growing animosity between those concerned with the area’s preservation and the government department responsible for its protection.
A 65,000 hectare flora and fauna reserve at Pinjarra had been declared in February 1894 by the Western Australian government in response to a letter to Premier John Forrest from A.F. Robin, the honorary secretary of a sub-committee of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, enquiring what measures were being taken in the colony to preserve native species. A sense of the reserve’s fragility in the face of prevailing attitudes to land usage can be gauged from a cautionary letter to Woodward from Robins at the time of the reserve’s declaration, advising:

...that you should secure the vesting of your reserve in trustees in perpetuity. Our sad experience with forest and kindred reserves leads me to make this remark. The great and wise democracy generally regards all such reserves as practically useless and of merely sentimental value.

While the Pinjarra reserve remained virtually undisturbed for several years, pressure was eventually exerted on the government to accede to the demands of the timber trade. When asked to declare his views regarding the cutting of timber on the reserve, C.G. Richardson, Secretary, Woods and Forests Department, said he failed to see why timber on the reserve should be preserved as the block contained a large quantity of valuable, mature trees that should be logged. He rationalised that the timber would deteriorate if left standing and risked being consumed by bush fires.

It was evident that illegal timber cutting had been taking place on the Pinjarra reserve. In July 1903, the Royal Commission into Forestry requested that instructions be issued to prevent cutting of timber on the flora and fauna reserve. On hearing of this request, Premier James said he was under the impression that timber cutting on the reserve had long ceased and that, as he had
refused permission for Whittaker Bros to cut timber, he had assumed others had
also stopped. The Premier said he agreed with the Commission that the reserve
should not be logged.42

A member of the 1903 Forestry Royal Commission, William Fitzgerald,
protested to the Premier in November 1904 about the action of the Woods and
Forests Department regarding the reserve. He pointed out that the area had been
set aside for a specific purpose, and that, as nothing had been done to revoke the
terms of the reservation, no permits should be issued to remove timber.
Fitzgerald complained that the Pinjarra reserve was being exploited through
‘being worked under one of the crudest systems of royalty...’43 When it was
suggested the area be designated as a national park, the Acting Inspector-General
of Forests, C.G. Richardson, again voiced his opposition to its conservation,
stating that in his opinion:

...it would be a most unbusinesslike policy to lock up such a large tract
of valuable timber for the mere preservation of native fauna and flora
when a large amount of revenue could be obtained if the area were
thrown open to timber cutting.44

Despite petitions and lobbying by influential members of the West Australian
Natural History Society that included Anglican Bishop Charles Riley, the reserve
was sacrificed for the exploitation of its material wealth and, on 4 April 1911, its
purpose changed from the preservation of native fauna and flora to timber for
government requirements.45

The history of the Pinjarra reserve not only provided an early example of the
rising conflict between the interests of conservation and those of the Forests
Department, but also represented the growth of the powerful influence of
industry on environmental politics. It demonstrated how a government, which was initially persuaded to adopt a conservationist approach to the environment, became susceptible to the growing demands of the timber trade and gradually compromised its original position. Most significantly, the failure of conservationists to protect the Pinjarra reserve had revealed the limitations of early protest strategies. As Moore argued, conservation at the time was not an important issue and, while the West Australian Natural History Society adopted persuasive tactics such as petitions, submissions and personal representations, it was unlikely that the ‘gentlemen’ of the Society would have organised a public campaign to pressure the government to change its mind.46

Conservationist J.G. Hay, who had been involved with Woodward in the attempts to save the Pinjarra reserve and became the West Australian Natural History Society’s acting honorary secretary, emerged as one of Western Australia's most influential early conservationists. Prior to his move to Western Australia in 1907, Hay was employed as an official with the New South Wales Lands Department and this enabled him to gain valuable experience during the creation of Australia's first national park at Port Hacking in 1879, later the Royal National Park, and also through pursuing his own conservation projects which resulted in the creation of two public parks in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.47

Following a visit to the Stirling Ranges early in 1910, Hay submitted a proposal to James Mitchell, the Western Australian Minister for Lands, recommending that the area be dedicated as a national park for the enjoyment of future
generations and urged immediate action to preserve the area before it was developed. While Hay initially proposed a reservation area of 327,000 hectares, pressure from settler groups resulted in a significant reduction, so that in June 1913 an area of 109,000 hectares was finally gazetted as national park.48

In a recent study, Joseph Christensen argued that Hay’s 1911 speech to the West Australian Natural History Society, in which he called for ten per cent of the state’s farmland to be retained as virgin bush for the protection of native birds, defined him as the first conservationist in Western Australia to publicly question prevailing ideas of ‘progress’.49 Christensen concluded that Hay was a paradoxical figure who echoed earlier European romantic attitudes to nature yet was also a pioneer of later environmental activism through his commitment to conservation and his challenge to the dominant ethos of destruction.50

The West Australian Natural History Society provided a forum for voicing public concerns about environmental issues, such as that raised by Mr G.F. Berthoud, manager of the State Farm, Hamel. In July 1909 Berthoud wrote to the Society deploring the destruction of native forests through the expansion of settlement, and asked:

So far, what is being done to assist nature, to recuperate and replenish with young trees, the areas now being denuded of their natural timber? And what steps will the State Government take to provide for the timber wants of a rising nation? Upon the S.W. Hills much valuable timber is unnecessarily ring barked and destroyed...is it not now wiser for us to cultivate the higher ideals, and relegate mere money making to a secondary place in our thoughts.51

While the Society’s correspondence thus revealed individual concerns at the destruction and waste of forest timber as a consequence of industrial and pastoral
expansion, it also protested as an organisation against some proposed land uses by writing dissenting letters to public authorities. These protests included registering concerns at the depletion of native fauna due to the destruction of bush in the Stirling Ranges, an objection to proposals to introduce non-native species into King’s Park, and opposition to a scheme to use areas of the Cape Le Grand/Recherche National Park for grazing purposes, with a plea that ‘the present generation should preserve this area, with its unique fauna and flora, for the benefit of future generations.’

Although the West Australian Natural History Society and the later Royal Society of Western Australia were primarily concerned with non-confrontational lobbying to preserve the state’s native flora and fauna, the Pinjarra reserve and Stirling Range campaigns both contained early evidence of conservationists’ willingness to canvas the support of prominent personalities as a strategy to achieve their aims. As Moore observed, Hay was not simply content to write a letter proposing the reservation of the Stirling Range, he also realised that he needed the endorsement of influential public figures such as Sir John Forrest, Winthrop Hackett and Cecil Andrews.

**The Australian Forest League**

The formation in 1913 of a Western Australian branch of the Australian Forest League saw the creation of the first organisation in the state dedicated specifically to the protection of native forests and acknowledged by Lane-Poole, the Conservator of Forests, as ‘the only society in WA founded with the avowed
object of assisting in the preservation of the nation’s forest land. The aims of the League included:

The education of the public by all possible means to a realisation of the value of forests and of the evils resulting from their destruction, so that eventually A Forest Consciousness shall be created in the public mind.

While the League promoted an appreciation of the ‘value’ of the forests, its motivations were not founded purely out of a desire to preserve the forests as a value in themselves. There was the qualification that ‘they must look at this question not merely from the sentimental standpoint but also from the economic side.’ It also appeared that the Western Australian branch may have been reluctant to pursue forest issues energetically, and adopted a compliant attitude towards government agencies through fear of causing ill-feeling. When called upon by the Deputy Conservator of Forests to describe the activities of his organisation, J.S. Ogilvie, the Honorary Secretary, commented:

So far as I can judge, the West Australian Branch of the Forest League is the only one in Australia that is really alive and doing some useful work. In the other States, the League has not always been on the best of terms with the local Forest Department, for it has from time to time offered criticism of forest management that did not meet the approval of those in authority.

Although little evidence remains of its membership and support levels, some idea of the philosophy and motivations of the Western Australian branch of the Australian Forest League can be gauged from the few copies of its quarterly journal *Jarrah*, published between 1918 and 1920 and edited by the Honorary Secretary, J.S. Ogilvie, who emerged as the driving force behind the organisation. The publication represented the League’s major protest strategy against the destruction of the forests and was significant in providing an early example of the use of the print media by a conservation group to educate the public about particular environmental issues and to canvas support for its aims.
While in a preamble to each edition the journal stressed its position as a non-political publication, it also welcomed ‘the assistance of patriotic politicians in its propaganda’.  

A continuing theme of the journal was the arousal of public sensitivities to the need to preserve the wealth of the forests as a national asset, and to criticise government attitudes and policies. The publication called for the eradication of the notion of forest inexhaustibility and a demand for a proper Forests Act ‘to put the forests on a permanent basis as a source of national wealth’. The 1918 Forests Bill was criticised for its inability to control the activities of sleeper-hewers, with observations that parliament, rather than taking the opportunity to conserve ‘a great national heritage’, was instead ‘providing effective means for the destruction of that heritage’. Further criticism was levelled at Premier Mitchell’s 1920s Group Settlement Scheme, which was seen as promoting settlement at the expense of the forests. It was argued that any reduction in the state’s forest areas, particularly those containing valuable export timbers of jarrah and karri, would not be in the national interest.

The life of the Western Australian branch of the Forest League was short. Although advertised as a ‘quarterly’, the period between the final two editions of Jarrah expanded to eight months, and in 1935 it was observed that the Western Australian arm of the League ‘had become extinct’.

Why was there such government apathy towards forest conservation in Western Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Bolton
asserts that while a more enlightened attitude towards Australia’s native forests was emerging in the late nineteenth century, with South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania establishing forestry administrations, this did not readily translate into official forest policy in Western Australia due to a pre-occupation with land clearance and commercial production.\textsuperscript{63} Additionally, Robertson argued there were two main reasons for the inactivity in Western Australia: first, the head of the Forests Department, C.G. Richardson, had little interest in shielding the forests from commercial exploitation and, second, the ‘public conscience’ had not yet been fully awakened to its responsibilities to protect the forests.\textsuperscript{64} This observation on Richardson’s ineffectiveness is supported by Carron, who noted that there was little ‘progressive forestry’ during his 17 years as department head.\textsuperscript{65} While it has been shown that there were a few isolated voices raised in concern at the lack of adequate protection for the state’s forests, protest at the time was ineffective against government support for an expanding timber industry.

Until the First World War the Western Australian government adopted an ambivalent attitude towards the state’s native forests. Although the importance of conservation to the survival of the timber industry had been recognised, albeit grudgingly, successive governments were reluctant to implement a practical forest management policy. This inaction was largely born out of a sense of complacency over the inexhaustibility of timber supplies and a belief that the practice of forestry would jeopardise the progress of agriculture.\textsuperscript{66} During the war years several factors combined to change that attitude.
In 1914, the renowned scientific forester, David Hutchins, was asked by the Western Australian Government to write a report on the state’s forests to be included in a book he was writing on forestry. According to R.T. Robinson, Minister for Woods and Forests:

"It was this report that finally decided the Government of the day to appoint an expert forester to take charge of the forests of the State, and to advise as to what course should be pursued in order to establish them, and the timber industry dependent upon them, on a sound basis for all time."

Additionally, during the war period, there was an increasing demand on local hardwood timber, with the result that conservation of this valuable resource became an issue of importance. There was also a movement by other Australian states to adopt forest conservation legislation and to have qualified foresters oversee its application. During the period between the two World Wars official policy towards Western Australia’s forests was dominated by two prominent figures who held diametrically opposing views about forest management and land use.

**Conservation versus Destruction**

The appointment of C.E. Lane-Poole as Conservator of Forests from 1916 to his resignation in 1921 marked a watershed period for forest conservation in Western Australia. Lane-Poole was a professionally trained forester who had graduated from the National Forestry School at Nancy and had extensive experience in South Africa and Sierra Leone. Immediately after his appointment, Lane-Poole carried out a survey of the state’s forests and began a reorganisation of the Woods and Forests Department. His report for the year ended 31 December 1917 confirmed that previous estimates of the size of the
jarrah forests had been incorrect and that probably not more than two million acres remained. The dramatic reduction, he stated, was due to the indiscriminate and uncontrolled cutting of timber by sawmills and sleeper hewers, and he deplored the fact that the findings of the 1903 Royal Commission on Forestry recommending a reduction in timber cutting had been disregarded. He argued strongly for a change in attitudes towards the forests that would recognise their value for the future:

For many years past Western Australia has been engaged in destroying an asset which is clearly the property of the nation, that is to say, the property of all future generations...Forests instead of being regarded as assets were looked upon as irritating excrescenses [sic] on the face of the earth to be sawn up, ring-barked, or otherwise destroyed to make room for the settler.

The culmination of Lane-Poole’s efforts to change attitudes towards forest conservation and to implement sound forestry practices crystallised in the 1918 Forests Act, which was designed ‘to provide for the better Management and Protection of Forests.’ When presenting the legislation to Parliament in September 1918, the Minister, R.T. Robinson, referred to the ‘slough of apathy’ that had characterised past approaches to forestry and the mining of timber at the expense of future generations. He admitted that for over two generations ‘we have been misled by politicians and administrators, who have considered our timber resources inexhaustible’, and that it was now necessary to consider how much forest could be cut without endangering future supplies. The four main provisions of the Act would be: the permanent reservation of prime timber for forestry; the restriction of timber cutting to a quantity that the forest would be capable of naturally reproducing; carrying out silvicultural operations to promote regeneration; and the formation of pine plantations to meet the demand for softwood.
After the legislation’s enactment Lane-Poole sought to convince people that the interests of forestry and land settlement were not mutually exclusive, but dependent upon each other, and that it was a question of determining the ‘best use’ to which each type of land could be put. He was critical of the waste and destruction of fine timber and, reflecting on the export of jarrah for railway sleepers, asserted that the ‘prostitution of one of the finest of the world’s hardwoods for such a use is to be deplored...’75 Unlike many of his contemporaries, Lane-Poole was not averse to publicly voicing his opinions on forest conservation and criticising past practices. In a reply to an enquiry from a member of the Australian Forest League regarding forest policy he stated:

...during the interregnum between the death of Mr Ednie Brown and my arrival here, a period of something like 15 years, no settled policy existed in regard to the forests, or, if one did exist, it certainly was a policy of drift...There has been great exploitation, not always conducted with wisdom nor with consideration for the future...76

Lane-Poole’s forthright approach to forest management, and the introduction of more stringent regulations regarding felling, caused considerable antagonism. His views also clashed with those of Premier James Mitchell, who regarded the forests as obstacles to land development.77 However, it was his objections to the destruction of the forests by large sawmills and the extension of leases to the powerful Millars combine that ultimately led to his resignation.

In 1920 Lane-Poole observed that the state sawmilling permit areas were being exploited ‘with a maximum of waste and without any view to the future’, and that this was also true of the operations of private firms in the jarrah forests.78 Commenting on the government’s agreement to extend the leases on Millars' timber concessions he said:
The decision thus arrived at will have the effect of definitely postponing the inauguration of sound forestry methods until the expiration of the period extension of the larger part of the leases, that is about 1931. At the present rate of cutting...there will be little or no virgin forest left in Western Australia by the time these rights expire...There remains to-day only 350,000 acres of virgin jarrah forest, and practically all of it is already granted to sawmillers and will be cut out in ten years’ time.79

The forest policy of Western Australia, Lane-Poole concluded, was undergoing a crisis, and without the support of the government threatened ‘to become a total wreck’. He believed the answer lay in removing the management of the forests from political interference.80

Despite many disappointments Lane-Poole remained optimistic. His report for the 1920 British Empire Forestry Conference in London contained a prescient message for the future of the forests:

It is true that trees today have no votes, but when the people develop a forest conscienteness [sic] the position will be entirely altered, and they themselves will see to it that the forest policy is maintained and the forests are used for the benefit of the community as a whole for ever, and not for the benefit of the few sawmillers, timber hewers, and timber merchants of to-day.81

Paradoxically, the tensions generated by Lane-Poole’s criticism of government policies had the positive effect of raising levels of concern and stimulating a change of attitude towards the forests. One of his parliamentary supporters, L.G. Pickering, moved in the Legislative Assembly that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the workings of the Forests Act and the extension of Millars’ timber leases and concessions.82 The ensuing Royal Commission, instituted at the direction of the Premier, examined over 100 witnesses, including Lane-Poole, who said that, while he agreed the Millars’ combine had brought substantial capital into the country, the forest practices they had been allowed to use had caused losses far in excess of their value to the state.83 Lane-Poole
caused further controversy when he charged Premier Mitchell with misleading the public over Millars’ concession and lease arrangements. Among its conclusions, the Commission recommended that the system of lengthy concessions and leases be replaced by the issuing of permits but ‘permit areas be extended where conditions made that necessary for profitable cutting’. In 1921 Lane-Poole resigned following disagreements over the Western Australian government’s decision to extend leases and concessions to the Millars’ timber consortium at the expense of smaller sawmillers.

The importance of Lane-Poole’s influence over the future of Western Australia’s forests stemmed from the decision to appoint him as Conservator of Forests at that particular time in the state’s forest history. Until 1916 approaches to forest conservation had been apathetic. Voices of dissent had been suppressed by governments that were sympathetic to the wishes of the timber trade. Not only did Lane-Poole possess the energy and determination to steer forest policy in a new direction but, more importantly, he was also a conservationist who was appointed to a position which gave him the power and opportunity to influence government thinking. Through innovative legislation and a systematic classification of the state’s forest lands he attempted to strike a balance between the principles of forest conservation and the demands of industry and agriculture. The message proved too strident for his political masters.

**Group Settlement**

As well as marking the resignation of Lane-Poole as Conservator of Forests, the year 1921 also heralded the start of a period that had further devastating
consequences for Western Australia’s forests. Premier James Mitchell’s Group Settlement Scheme was promoted with the dual purposes of increasing immigration and developing large expanses of land for dairy farming. Subsidised migrants were recruited from the United Kingdom with a promise that, after clearing their blocks of native vegetation, they would own their own farms. The area to be cleared comprised some of the best jarrah and karri forests in existence.87

The dominant view, held by both Group Settlers and the government, was that clearing the forests represented progress and all that had to be considered was the cheapest and most efficient method of achieving that end. In her study of group settlement in the Northcliffe area Patricia Crawford argued that the language of the settlers when describing the destruction of the forests suggested that they believed they were waging war on a natural phenomenon they found threatening and wished to subdue.88 This warlike attitude towards the forests can be readily observed from contemporary accounts.

Thomas Doyle, who observed land clearing at the Margaret River Group Settlement during the early 1920s, expressed admiration for those who were adept at killing trees:

The next stage was to do the ring barking and in the early stages with those twenty-five acres, they did sap ringing, not ring barking. They cut right in till they got into the heart wood in each case round about and the tree would die, start to die in twenty-four hours...We hadn’t had any experience in this line of course and in three days there was the leaves turning from green to dying off, a marvellous thing the way that was done.89
The association of tree felling and a decimated landscape with the bringing of human social order becomes evident in the reflections of Phillip Blond, who grew up on a Group Settlement in the Willyabrup-Miamup area:

It was a strange feeling to see the blackened, ash-covered ground and the occasional upright tree in the clearing surrounded by a wall of forest trees and undergrowth which had not yet felt the axe of civilisation.90

A few voices were raised in protest. One correspondent in the *Daily News* asked why the Lands Department wished to destroy Western Australia’s valuable forests and believed the Group Settlement Scheme had been implemented without sufficient planning. The land selected, it was argued, was not suitable for farming:

It is purely forest country. Nature intended it for such, and why should we waste thousands of pounds trying to turn it into an agricultural area, and probably cause the ruin of the whole of this country, which will happen if the trees are destroyed.91

By the middle of 1924 there were serious concerns over the financial viability of the Group Settlement Scheme, with many settlers abandoning their holdings and others accumulating large debts. A Royal Commission was instituted to enquire into all matters pertaining to the Scheme, its final report comprising a detailed criticism of Group Settlement. The Commissioners found the most serious aspect of the Scheme had been the settling of inexperienced migrants on areas of poor land.92

Although Group Settlement had been severely criticised, a new agreement at the end of 1925 provided for shared subsidies between the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the state. While the new arrangements provided renewed optimism, they also increased the pace of land clearing, and many settlers took
the opportunity to augment their income through contract clearing. The result was that vast areas of land were quickly denuded of vegetation.93

During this period tree felling had also become a public spectacle. Dick Sproge, a timber worker at the State Sawmills concession at Pemberton, announced his intention to lop a karri tree while suspended some 120 feet above the ground:

At 2pm on Sunday Sproge, amid the clicking of scores of cameras, swung himself on to his ladder and climbed nimbly to his narrow platform 115ft from the ground... For forty minutes Sproge’s axe swung...before the familiar rending noise of the falling tree announced that the man had succeeded...A few moments later he was on the ground, shaking hands with acquaintances and accepting the plaudits of the crowd.94

The Conservator of Forests was so impressed with Sproge’s performance that he requested copies of photographs of the event.95

Group Settlement continued until the late 1930s, when disputes between the settlers and the banks over repayments finally forced many holdings to be abandoned and later absorbed into War Service Settlement schemes. It was estimated that during the period 50,000 acres of karri forest had been destroyed.96

In summary, the Group Settlement Scheme represented a renunciation of the responsible forestry practices advocated by Lane-Poole. Whereas he had argued for a sustainable approach to Western Australia’s forests that was removed from political interference, Group Settlement was a scheme devoid of conservationist principles and which employed an adversarial approach to the environment. Although the Scheme did contribute towards increasing the area available for
farming and encouraged the provision of a transport infrastructure, the overall outcome was the destruction of huge areas of forest for little or no return.

**The Western Australian Naturalists' Club**

The third prominent conservation group of this period, the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, was founded in 1924. A formalisation of the Club’s aims in 1936 stated:

> The objects of the Club shall be to study and encourage the study of Natural History in all its branches, and to endeavour to prevent in every way the wanton destruction of our native Flora and Fauna.  

During its early years membership was small and consisted mainly of natural scientists. A forestry and botanical section was formed in 1935, with Colonel Goadby acting as the official leader of the group.

An examination of the Club’s correspondence reveals non-confrontational forms of protest similar to those employed by the Royal Society. There was disapproval of the proposed alienation of King’s Park for a hospital because it was considered that the Park represented ‘one of our first assets – a healthy open space, and sanctuary for animals, birds and plants within the confines of the city.’ Like the Royal Society, the Club protested against ‘the planting of exotic trees’ within the Park. A preoccupation with the preservation of native flora and fauna was apparent in an address by the Club’s President, C.G. Hamilton, who pointed out:

> …the deplorable fact that much of our native life is still being ruthlessly destroyed in a manner which could be prevented, or at least delayed. If this destruction is permitted to proceed unchecked it will not be so very long before some of our most wonderful and unique natural beauties will be entirely lost to future generations.
Evidence of a reciprocal relationship between the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club and the Royal Society was apparent in a 1949 letter from the Club to the Royal Society requesting support to lobby members of Parliament for greater protection of flora and fauna and observing that ‘we feel your organization has aims similar to ours.’ This correspondence is significant in demonstrating collaboration between early Western Australian conservationists and the use of political lobbying as a legitimate protest strategy.

Despite the negative impact of the Group Settlement Scheme on Western Australia’s forests, two external influences combined to slow down the rate of depletion. Firstly, the depression of the early 1930s caused a dramatic fall in the price of forest products and led to widespread unemployment. During the next decade, thousands of men were employed on rehabilitation work and the planting of pine forests. The expiration of concessions and leases also provided an opportunity to monitor supplies of timber in accordance with a policy of sustainable yield. Secondly, while timber was in great demand during World War Two, with Western Australia being the only state with an excess of timber for export, a depletion of forestry personnel for war service and a reduction in export markets for sleepers led to a decrease in production. After this brief respite, pressure was again placed on the forests, with the advent of a post-war building programme, a supply of migrant labour from Europe, and the introduction of mechanised equipment for felling.

While demand for timber fluctuated considerably during this period, voices of protest from concerned groups at the destruction of the forests could still be
heard. In July 1937, the Perth branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union drew attention to the depletion of bird life caused by indiscriminate land clearing. It requested that the Minister for Lands set aside reservations for the protection of native flora and undertake reafforestation operations on each land holding. Similarly, in July 1950, the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club expressed concern at the contraction of the habitats of native fauna and flora due to settlement and asked the government to set aside sanctuaries ‘before it is too late.’ The rapid pace of post-war construction sparked a plea from the Country Women’s Association who, in September 1953, argued for the immediate setting up of native flora and fauna reserves ‘in view of the large scale developmental programme on which the Government is embarking.’

Early forest protest in Western Australia reflected changing attitudes towards the environment. Initially, protest was directed at the depletion and waste of trees as a valuable material resource and at the export of timber outside the colony. Although the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the growing influence of more enlightened environmental philosophies and small concessions by government to appeals for native flora and fauna protection, the emergence of influential timber consortiums and the imperatives of land settlement compromised any attempts to implement effective conservation policies. While the influence of Lane-Poole was crucial in providing the basis for a sound forestry administration and in stimulating public awareness of the value of forests for future generations, the circumstances surrounding his demise and the devastating effects of the ill-conceived Group Settlement Scheme both provided
examples of the continuing tendency of governments to sacrifice conservation for the sake of political and economic advantage.

The emergence of early conservation groups in Western Australia supports Hutton and Connors’ observations that late nineteenth and early twentieth century campaigners, who were predominantly well-educated professionals, reacted against the destructive consequences of industrial expansion by employing non-confrontational protest strategies to challenge authorities. Several characteristics of these first period protest groups and their campaigns can be identified in the contemporary forest protest movement. The Pinjarra Reserve campaign provided an example of the emerging conflict between conservationists and logging interests and reflected the capacity of the timber industry to influence the state government’s forest policies. The groups demonstrated their ability to collaborate with each other on issues of mutual interest, and the Pinjarra and Stirling Range campaigns both illustrated the importance of strong leadership in the persons of Woodward and Hay. Early non-confrontational strategies such as lobbying, petitioning, letter-writing, public education, group collaboration and canvassing the support of influential figures all featured as tactics in later forest campaigns. Ultimately, it was the concerns about forest depletion expressed by the early conservation groups that were the forerunners of the collective voices of organised protest that would emerge in the 1950s and 1960s.
ENDNOTES


12. *ibid.*


27. Minute from Minister for Lands to Under Secretary for Lands, dated 29 August 1901, Forests Department file, ACC 934, SROWA.

28. *Journal of the West Australian Natural History Society*, No.1, May 1904, No.2, May 1905,
No.3, August 1906.
30 ibid.
31 Carron, A History of Forestry in Australia, p.144.
38 Letter from A.F. Robin to Premier Sir John Forrest, dated 17 July 1893, Lands and Surveys file ACC2507/93, SROWA.
40 Minute from C.G. Richardson, Secretary, Woods and Forests Department, to R.C. Clifton, Under Secretary for Lands, dated 6 March 1903, Lands and Surveys file ACC2507/93, SROWA.
41 Memorandum from Minister for Lands to Premier, dated 7 July 1903, Lands and Surveys file ACC2507/93, SROWA.
42 Minute from Premier to Minister for Lands, dated 10 July 1903, Lands and Surveys file, ACC2507/93, SROWA.
43 Letter from Mr W.V. Fitzgerald, Aberdeen Street, Perth, to Hon. The Premier, dated 3 November 1904, Lands and Surveys file, ACC2507/93, SROWA.
44 Memorandum from Acting Inspector-General of Forests, to Under Secretary for Lands, dated 1 April 1908, Lands and Surveys file, ACC2507/93, SROWA.
45 Lands and Surveys file ACC2507/93, SAWA, quoted in Portraits of the South West, p.130.
46 Moore in de Garis, Portraits of the South West, pp.129-130.
47 Joseph Christensen, 'The Romantic Figure of Jose Guillermo Hay, an Early Western Australian Conservationist', in Early Days: Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.), Volume 12, Part 5, 2005, pp.488-505.
48 Moore, in de Garis, Portraits of the South West, pp.130-135.
49 Christensen, 2005, pp.9-10.
51 Letter from Mr. G.F. Berthoud to B.H. Woodward, dated 8 July 1909, Royal Society of Western Australia correspondence, 1908-1912, Battye ACC2722A/9 MN673.
52 Minutes of a meeting of the Royal Society of Western Australia, 8 March 1921, Battye ACC2722A/3 MN673.
53 Letter from S.A. Terrill, Hon. Secretary, Royal Society of Western Australia to J.E. Watson, Secretary, King’s Park Board, dated 21 October 1946, Battye ACC2942A/36, MN673.
54 Letter from S.A. Terrill, Hon. Secretary, Royal Society of Western Australia to Minister for Lands, dated 20 November 1950, Battye ACC2942A/36 MN673.
55 Moore, in de Garis, Portraits of the South West, p.131.
57 West Australian, 27 September 1913, p.10, in file ‘Australian Association for the Advancement of Science - Conservation of Forests’, ACC934, item 776/13, SROWA.
58 ibid.
59 Minute from J.S. Ogilvie, Hon. Secretary, WA Branch, Australian Forest League, to C. Hill, Deputy Conservator of Forests, dated 5 June 1920, Australian Forest League Correspondence, ACC934/470, SROWA.
61 Jarrah: The Official Journal of the Australian Forest League, Perth, Western Australia, Vol.1
Letter from Dr C.S. Sutton, Hon. Secretary, Australian Forest League to Hon. Secretary, WA Naturalists Club dated 17 April 1935, Battye MN563 ACC2419A/18. The formation of the Tree Planter's Association of Western Australia in 1936 aimed to fill the void left by the demise of the Forest League. However, following a recess during the Second World War the Association found it had lost many of its supporters and the organisation disbanded in 1951.


Mills, in Dell, B (et al. eds), *The Jarrah Forest*, p.274.


ibid.

*Forests Act, 1918*, No.8 of 1919, Assented to 3rd January, 1919.


Letter from C.E. Lane-Poole, Conservator of Forests, to Dr C.S. Sutton, dated 20 December 1920, file on ‘Australasian Forestry League Correspondence’, ACC934, SROWA.


ibid., p.25.


*Daily News*, 8 February 1922, in Forests Department file on Royal Commission on Forestry, ACC934, SROWA.

*Daily News*, 9 February 1922, in Forests Department file on Royal Commission on Forestry, ACC934, SROWA.


Letter to the Editor, ‘Timberjack’, *Daily News*, 4 April 1922, p.6, in Forests Department file ACC934, item 93/22, SROWA.
94 Western Mail, 9 February 1928, Forests Department file, ACC934/401 SROWA.
95 Letter from Conservator of Forests to Mr R. Whiteford, dated 7 March 1928, Forests Department file, ACC934/401, SROWA.
97 Rules of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, 3 April 1936, Battye, Cabinet 574.9941 WES.
99 Minutes of a Meeting of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, 24 June 1927, Battye MN563, ACC2419A/1.
100 Minutes of a Meeting of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, 3 June 1932, Battye MN563, ACC2419A/2.
101 Minutes of a Meeting of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, 6 April 1934, Battye MN563, ACC2419A/2.
102 Letter from WA Naturalists’ Club to Royal Society of WA, dated 8 April 1949, Battye MN673, ACC2942A/37.
104 Letter from C.F.H. Jenkins, State Secretary, Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, Perth, to Minister for Lands, dated 13 July 1937, Department of Lands and Surveys, ACC2507/93, SROWA.
105 Letter from Miss B.A. York, Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, West Perth, to Premier, dated 15 July 1950, Department of Lands and Surveys, ACC2507/93, SAWA.
106 Letter from State Secretary, Country Women’s Association, Western Australia, to Premier, dated 28 September 1953, Department of Lands and Surveys, ACC2507/93, SROWA.
Chapter 3

The 1950s and 1960s: A New Movement Forms

Map 3.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 3.
A first period of forest protest in Western Australia was important in establishing
the first conservation organisations that employed non-confrontational strategies
to campaign for the preservation of native flora and fauna. However, while
there was evidence of some collaboration, the groups tended to pursue their
objectives separately. During the 1950s and 1960s protest groups collectivised
their activities to strengthen their argument for nature conservation. Although
protest was focused principally on urban campaigns, opposition to bauxite
mining in the early 1960s signalled the start of broader concerns to protect the
state’s forests.

A campaign to preserve the natural vegetation of King’s Park during the mid-
1950s marked the start of a second period of forest protest in Western Australia
with the emergence of co-ordinated and organised protest activity and, although
dissent continued to be expressed in a non-confrontational manner, tactics
expanded and diversified. While the King’s Park campaign provided a model for
co-ordinated action, it was the formation of the Nature Conservation Council in
1967 which marked a significant turning-point for the Western Australian forest
protest movement through establishing an umbrella organisation for the state’s
conservation groups. The Council not only provided a forum for dialogue
between the groups but also promoted the sense of collective identity that Hutton
and Connors argue to be such an important element in the construction of a
modern social movement.¹ The beginning of the second period of protest also
provides early evidence of the importance of key leaders in driving campaigns
and organising protest activity.
Pressure on the Forests

The period immediately following the Second World War exerted a formative influence on the direction of forest protest in Australia. Hutton and Connors have observed that rapid post-war economic growth combined with improved technologies resulted in human intrusion into new and remote areas and that this in turn produced a fresh awareness of the threat posed by environmental degradation.2 This increased pressure on the environment can be readily observed in the case of Western Australia’s forests.

In its annual report for 1949/1950, the Forests Department noted a change in orientation of the timber industry from supplying large section timber for overseas export to small-section cutting for domestic house-building. By 1950 the number of timber mills had increased from 134 pre-war employing 3,188 men, to 250 mills employing 4,109 men, with 61 of the mills located within a 25 miles radius of Perth.3 In 1951 a sharp increase in timber production took the total volume to its highest since 1928. In his report, T.N. Stoate, the Conservator of Forests, expressed concern at the increasing number of sawmills and felt ‘there is already more sawmilling capacity in the State than the Jarrah and Karri forests can support continuously.’ His anxieties about future supplies of forest timber were reflected in the observation:

It is of interest that, for the first time in Australia’s history, enquiries have had to be made overseas for vital supplies of railway sleepers. The paucity of Australia’s timber supplies is slowly becoming apparent.4

Despite the Conservator’s concerns, four years later the Forests Department reported a ‘record production’ of almost 19 million cubic feet of timber and argued that ‘a more optimistic view may now be taken of the capacity of State
Forest to produce in perpetuity’ through the expansion of pine plantations, the dedication of additional lands as state forest, and a revised assessment indicating ‘a greater forest capital in the far south than had previously been thought.’ This optimism over the supply of forest timber appears to have been short-lived. Answering a question in Parliament in September 1958 on the effects of an increasing population on timber supplies, the Minister for Forests estimated that, if the state’s population reached one million over 25 years, ‘we will need more than our present timber production from native forests for our own requirements’, and advised against the irresponsible and self-interested release of valuable forest areas for land selection.

During the early 1950s, the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club became increasingly concerned with the effects of urban expansion on native flora and fauna, albeit from an aesthetic rather than environmental viewpoint. A letter from the Club to the Under-Secretary for Lands denounced the ‘unfortunate practise’ of clearing land to the edges of roads, and complained that ‘With this interesting nature cover removed, the countryside loses in interest and becomes very monotonous travelling for the tourist.’ It was requested that consideration be given ‘to the retaining of at least a chain of natural bush on the sides of roads in new areas being opened up.’

There were later signs, however, that the Club’s national body had begun to realise the broader implications of the post-war boom and anticipated that more sophisticated arguments and strategies would be necessary to combat the new threats. In a 1957 circular, the Federation of Field Naturalists’ Clubs of
Tasmania suggested that a booklet entitled ‘Why Conservation?’ be produced, with the objective of providing ‘protesting clubs’ with reference material in order that they may ‘readily put forward clear and convincing reasons for conservation.’ The circular observed:

The commercial interests put forward very specious arguments in the press and elsewhere to attain their desired ends and those who protest do great work in countering those arguments but, so often, individual members of the protesting clubs find that in private and public discussions they need some quick reference...

This correspondence provides an early example of co-ordinated planning for protest action and collaboration between national and state organisations.

**The Tree Society**

Mounting concern over the ceaseless destruction of trees, combined with a lack of any organisation dedicated specifically to their protection since the demise of the Western Australian branch of the Forest League, resulted in the formation of the Tree Society of Western Australia in 1956. According to the Society’s first President, Neville Roennfeldt, the organisation was formed ‘because a number of citizens of this State felt so strongly about the growing despoliation of our countryside that they came together to present a united front to this National problem.’ The original idea for the establishment of the Society came from Women’s Service Guild President, Mabel Talbot, who believed that there was growing public concern over the destruction of native forests and that it had become necessary to have an organisation to deal specifically with that issue.

The Society’s membership was broad and included a number of professional foresters. Its main objectives were to promote an appreciation of trees in the
state, and to encourage the public to lobby for the preservation of particular trees and reserves. While branch members were concerned with local campaigns, the Society’s executive attempted to convince people of the wider implications of its cause:

The message of conservation must be preached to all that we meet. The generation that is here today, and especially the young generation that follows must receive it to ensure that we, as a Nation, do not continue in the folly of destroying forever our most precious heritage.12

A desire for future generations to adopt a more enlightened approach to the natural environment emerged as an integral part of Tree Society philosophy. The formation of the Junior Tree Society in November 1959 aimed at fostering a caring attitude towards the environment in the minds of the young, and was one of the most successful ventures of the Society, mainly because of the promotion of the Junior Tree Society in state schools. In late 1971, the Tree Society Review noted the Junior Society comprised 320 schools and 33,210 junior members.13

John Thomson, a forester with the Forests Department, became the first general secretary of the Western Australian Tree Society and formed 33 country branches during the late 1950s. He was particularly interested in the education of schoolchildren in the value of the forests, and, with the approval of the Department, toured schools in the state talking to children about tree conservation.14 Two thousand new child members promised ‘to protect trees, shrubs, and gardens in my district’ and to ‘save bushland and wildflowers wherever possible and encourage the planting of more trees.’15 The environmental message was further advanced through the celebration of Arbor Day,16 when schools were encouraged to plant trees to shade and beautify their
grounds and when members of the Tree Society would talk to children about the value of trees and forests.\textsuperscript{17}

While the Tree Society attempted to exert its influence over both urban and rural areas of the state, it had its greatest successes within the metropolitan area. Typical activities aimed at protecting roadside verges and preserving trees in suburban areas, such as a group of mature elm trees in William Street, Perth,\textsuperscript{18} and an avenue of Sugar Gums in Bay Road, Claremont.\textsuperscript{19} One of the most notable public campaigns occurred in 1961, when the Society called a public protest meeting to object to the bulldozing of mature native trees in The Boulevard, Floreat Park, in order to plant a war memorial rose garden. The position of the Tree Society was clearly stated by the State President, Peter Thorn: ‘What a colossal mistake to uproot WA Jarrah trees to plant English roses as a memorial to Australian soldiers, what imagination!’\textsuperscript{20} Eventually, after a ‘lively protest meeting’ of ratepayers, Perth City Council abandoned the idea of a rose garden in favour of ‘a memorial garden of native trees and shrubs.’\textsuperscript{21}

Although the Perth activities of the Society had an impact, albeit a minimal one, there was a perception among some members that urban issues were overshadowing broader environmental concerns. John Thomson finally resigned in 1961 because he believed the organisation was interested in saving trees only in Perth and neglected country areas.\textsuperscript{22} This view was well-founded. In 1967 members voiced the complaint ‘that the concern of the Society was directed to preservation within the metropolitan area rather than State-wide conservation.’\textsuperscript{23}
Save King’s Park

For many Perth people King’s Park was ‘the people’s park’, the attraction of which lay in its preservation as an area of natural beauty within the city’s environs, where visitors could appreciate the beauty of the state’s native flora which had supposedly been preserved for all time. When, in 1954, Perth City Council announced its intention to build an Olympic swimming pool in the park, the proposal provoked an immediate response from a group of Perth citizens - most notably the Women’s Service Guild, led by Mrs Bessie Reischbieth, arguably the pioneer of environmental activism in Perth. (see Figure 3.1.)

Figure 3.1. Mrs Bessie Rischbieth. Source: Daily News, 21 April 1964.

Bessie Rischbieth was an important early Australian feminist and social activist. She became involved in the women's suffrage movement after attending a conference in London in 1908 and became co-founder of the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia in 1909 and co-founder and president of the Australian Federation of Women Voters from 1921 until 1942. Rischbieth's
influence was not limited to women's movements. She became a prominent social activist involved in issues such as the Aboriginal Rights movement, urban planning, and conservation of the natural environment.

A meeting of the Guild and the Naturalists’ Club was convened in October 1954 ‘to discuss suitable action to take to protest against any alienation of land from King’s Park Reserve for suggested Olympic Pool.’ The meeting decided to write to other Perth organisations to seek support for opposition to the pool, and to obtain publicity in the local press. These resolutions are significant in demonstrating how protest groups at the start of the second period of protest in Western Australia appreciated the strategic importance of establishing mutual support networks and using the media to publicise their cause. One month later this early initiative resulted in the formation of the Citizen’s Committee for the Preservation of King’s Park, later to become the Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River. It was the first organisation in Western Australia’s history formed specifically for a single environmental campaign.

A clear declaration of the Committee’s position was contained in a resolution adopted at a conference on the King’s Park issue convened by the Women’s Service Guilds in September 1956. While the organisation welcomed the establishment of an Olympic Pool and Aquatic Centre, it was ‘implacably opposed’ to its location in King’s Park. The conference resolved:

...to prepare a plan of action to preserve King’s Park for the recreation and enjoyment of all citizens for all time without destroying in any way the beauty of its natural growth and flora, which is indigenous to Western Australia and not known to any of the other States of Australia.
As the campaign gained momentum, so the number and type of strategies employed to defeat the pool proposal increased. While protest groups adopted some of the tactics that had been employed during first period campaigns, such as lobbying parliamentarians and writing to the press, they also used local radio for publicity, held public meetings and appealed to the public for funds. Mrs Rischbieth, who spearheaded the movement against the pool, also wrote to various department stores in Perth, requesting permission for her members ‘to use one of your principal entrances to display and distribute pamphlets, and answer enquiries concerning the King’s Park Aquatic Centre controversy.’ Unfortunately for the campaign all her requests were denied as being contrary to companies’ policies.

A major obstacle for the King’s Park protesters was the *West Australian* newspaper’s support for the pool proposal. A frustrated opponent wrote to the Committee complaining: ‘I find it increasingly difficult to get the “West” to print anything opposed to the pool in the Park.’ In an editorial, the newspaper exhorted the Legislative Assembly to decisively pass the King’s Park Aquatic Centre legislation, believing that:

> The question of an Olympic Pool is merely a test case. It offers the opportunity of establishing a principle for the beautification and landscaping of the State’s most magnificent park in a way which will open it to maximum public access and, at the same time, enhance the prospects of expert care of the indigenous flora.

The eventual success of the anti-pool campaign resulted not only from the combined efforts of two major interest groups – the women’s lobby and nature conservation groups – but also from the influence of prominent public figures, notably Olympic athlete Shirley Strickland and naturalist Vincent Serventy. (see
Figure 3.2. Describing her motivations for supporting the protest, Strickland said she thought it was necessary to convince people and authorities that King’s Park had a value in itself and could not simply be cleared for development. She believed that a time comes when you have to say ‘Stop – this is not going to happen’, and the King’s Park issue was such a time.32

Figure 3.2. Shirley Strickland, Vincent Serventy and Bessie Rischbieth meet together in 1959 before taking part in a deputation protesting against the King's Park Olympic Pool plan. Source: Battye Library (State Library of Western Australia) 7560B.

Reflecting on the reasons for the campaign’s success, Shirley Strickland believed it was a combination of a pre-existing emotional attachment to the Park and the fervour of the campaign. Her support involved particular personal sacrifices:

I’m sure my stand there lost me a lot of friends...They saw me as a sporting person – they didn’t realise that I was also an environmentalist.
It [King’s Park] survived because we generated so much emotion over it.  

Strickland’s impact on publicity for the campaign can be appreciated from headline reports of her attendance at a protest meeting, during which she accused Lord Mayor Howard of delaying release of plans for the pool so that the public would be forced into accepting the King’s Park option as the Empire Games drew closer.

The struggle to preserve the indigenous flora and fauna of King’s Park contained a number of implications for future forest protest in Western Australia. For the first time there occurred a mobilisation of influential members of the Perth community, mainly women, who were prepared to take a united stand over a specific issue of nature conservation. It was an early example of the type of campaign within which, as Hutton and Connors argue, ‘a shared sense of moral outrage builds participant identity, commitment and solidarity.’

Most significantly, the King’s Park controversy motivated groups to band together and form an organisation dedicated specifically to an environmental cause. Although the tactics employed during the campaign were non-confrontational, they became more diversified. The sympathetic involvement of a national sporting figure in the debate provided an example of the use of celebrity status as an effective tactic to gain sympathy for the cause. This strategy featured prominently in later Western Australian forest campaigns.
In a historical context the King’s Park campaign heralded a break with the first period of protest identified in this thesis. Gloria Butcher, a Chairman of the Conservation Council, reflected in 1973:

Western Australia’s conservation history may be said to have expanded from purely scientific and natural history circles to the realm of the ordinary citizen and layman in 1954, when a citizens’ committee was formed to prevent the building of an aquatic centre in Perth’s only bushland park. This battle lasted five years and was successful.36

While the campaign was a victory for Western Australia’s fledgling environmental protest movement over a single emotive issue, it was a growing sensitivity to the impact of post-war resource development upon the landscape that provided the stimulus for a broader response to the destruction of the state’s forests.

**Mining in the Forests**

Although deep mining in Western Australia’s forests had been practised on a small scale since the 1920s, surface mining had been restricted to tin and gravel extraction, and small mineral-sand operations.37 In June 1961, the Brand Government announced plans to construct a $5 million alumina refinery at Kwinana, which would process bauxite mined in the Darling Range, approximately 50 kilometres south-east of Perth. Mining operations would be conducted by a new enterprise, Alcoa of Australia Pty Ltd, and the bauxite transported to Kwinana on a specially-constructed rail line. The company would be granted a bauxite mineral lease over an area of 2,799 square miles, with additional temporary reserves over 2,739 square miles. Charles Court, Minister for Industrial Development, believed the project would become much larger and bring millions of pounds of wealth into the state.38 The venture was reported in
the media as a further stage in Western Australia’s industrialisation that would stimulate employment and overseas investment, a *West Australian* newspaper editorial assuming that ‘the State’s interests in timber and water conservation will be safeguarded in the big areas reserved.’

The announcement immediately provoked concerns from a variety of perspectives about the effects of bauxite mining on the forests. Dr Joe Gentilli, a geographer from the University of Western Australia, believed that the extraction of bauxite by quarrying or scraping away the surface of the land would have a serious effect on the jarrah forest and cause accelerated water run-off. He called for Alcoa to disclose its methods of bauxite extraction, and for detailed reports from government experts on the likely effects of the exploitation. A correspondent from Cottesloe, D. McMillan, believed officials who opposed the project had been silenced, and commented:

> It is one thing to develop natural resources, but in a country already overstocked and overcleared such further widespread denudation deserves close and protracted scrutiny before it is too late.

The Western Australian Naturalists’ Club informed Premier Brand that, while the Club welcomed new industry, the proposal to mine bauxite in the Darling Range had produced misgivings and suggested a public statement on the effects of bauxite mining should be made by a responsible authority. The Club advanced aesthetic as well as ecological arguments:

> ...we feel that the public at large would welcome reassurances and detailed statements from the government as to what will be the consequences of the mining operations. We ourselves, of course, are primarily concerned with the effects on scenery and landscape and the effects on the native flora...The removal of the surface cover must completely alter the plants which grow on it...we feel that this is contrary to public opinion...Gravel workings near main roads and the quarries in the Darling Scarp are already becoming major eyesores.
Others voiced concerns about jobs and the local economy. Raymond Tilley of the Associated Sawmillers and Timber Merchants feared that mining in the forest could jeopardise the interests of the timber industry and threaten the livelihood of timber workers.\(^{43}\) A Jarrahdale resident, J. Darcey, sought an assurance that the project would be in Western Australia’s long-term interests, and called for a clear statement from Minister Court on the terms of the bauxite agreement, reminding him: ‘It is not only overseas investors who have a stake in the resources of this State.’\(^{44}\)

The debate in the Legislative Assembly over the *Alumina Refinery Agreement Bill* raised further misgivings over mining in the forests, despite assurances from the Minister that the effects would be minimal.\(^{45}\) A.M. Moir, Labor MLA for Boulder, was concerned that mining would not only produce conflict between the mining and forest industries, but could also destroy areas of forest forever, with minimal economic return to the state.\(^{46}\) The Labor MLA for the south-west electorate of Warren, J.N. Rowberry, was sceptical of assertions that the mined areas would regenerate, and expressed disbelief that the Conservator of Forests had agreed so readily to the proposal:

...I find it very difficult to reconcile the Minister’s statement that the present-day Conservator of Forests is entirely amenable to the destruction of one of our best prime forest regions...here we propose to destroy our jarrah forests—which are unique to Western Australia, which grow nowhere else in the world—for a common mineral that is found all over the world.\(^{47}\)

Despite the voices raised in concern, bauxite mining officially commenced in Jarrahdale in July 1963 with local support. The first mining operation involved clearing 55 acres of mill timber and topsoil, with the remaining forest being cleared and burnt. Serpentine-Jarrahdale Shire Council’s President G. Ladhams
represented local feeling as he saw it: ‘It is gratifying for our district to be connected with such a project...It is something from which we must all benefit either directly or indirectly’.48

The granting of permits to mine in forest areas favoured mining companies or consortia rather than individuals. An application by Wesley Moore to mine bauxite on reserved land at Donnybrook was refused because the land contained ‘a good quality jarrah forest’, which would be reserved for timber purposes.49

On the other hand, objections by the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club to the pegging of 77 mineral claims by mining company Kennecott Explorations in the South Yilgara area were ignored by the Forests Department.50 The Club took the opportunity to voice its protest at the inadequacy of the *Mining Act*:

> This blanket application for mining claims over large areas is a symptom of the unsatisfactory and anachronistic state of the present Mining Act. The Act was formulated at a time when conservation was not even thought of in this State, and is now becoming increasingly out of touch with present-day attitudes.51

The bauxite mining issue also provoked action by local community groups. Roleystone residents lobbied parliamentarians to protest against ‘a new and vigorous bauxite search’ in the Darling Range, which resulted in the local Shire Council lodging objections against mining company Singlex Pty Ltd, which planned to mine over 706 acres of land.52 In response to the concerns, Mines Minister Griffiths merely advised people ‘in the middle of a bauxite pegging rush’ not to be unduly disturbed by the activity.53

There were also signs that some Western Australians were willing to adopt a more aggressive stance against mining companies. A. Evans of Clackline
protested about the mining of bauxite on the Dryandra Reserve at Narrogin, and declared a willingness to directly confront the new threats to the environment:

I joined the army to prevent foreign troops from despoiling my land, and now have to fight to preserve it from a fifth column within Australia. I would like to join up again in this battle of the dollar; so give me a gun and let’s get started.54

The introduction of bauxite mining into Western Australia’s forests in the early 1960s produced some new considerations for environmental groups. Firstly, mining operations were to be conducted on a large scale by national and international companies.55 Secondly, the overt nature and scale of the operations provoked debate over the environmental consequences of forest mining. Thirdly, there was a demand for public disclosure by companies and government of the likely effects of mining on the forest and, finally, the period saw the growth and consolidation of the relationship between the state government and mining companies.56

The Power of One

While bauxite mining provided the stimulus for increased public anxiety over the effects of rapid industrialisation on the environment, there were also those who, like Woodward and Hay’s first period campaigns to conserve the Pinjarra Reserve and the Stirling Ranges, fought individually to ensure that certain areas were protected for all time. Graeme Rundle57 visited the gorges in the Hamersley Ranges in the mid-1960s as part of his work with the Department of Main Roads, and became concerned about the environmental impact of mining for iron ore. He discovered that the Academy of Science had recommended a national park be established in the Ranges and decided to begin a personal campaign to ensure that this took place.58
His tactics comprised lobbying influential parliamentarians about the need to preserve the Hamersley Range gorges for future generations and gaining support from environmental groups such as the Naturalists’ Club and the Tree Society. His efforts were successful, and in 1969 the Hamersley Range (now Karijini) National Park was established. On reflection Rundle believed the Park was created as the result of a ‘bureaucratic mistake’, because a number of iron ore agreements had already been approved within the area:

The reaction of the government of the day, when they found out what they had really done – they had just created a national park over what they felt at the time was prime iron ore country – was to say we’ll have no more national parks.

Perceived threats to Western Australia’s forests from mining operations during the early 1960s prompted some individual expressions of dissent and signalled an expansion of protest beyond areas of urban bushland. The latter part of the decade saw the introduction of a proposal that would have far-reaching implications for the Western Australian forest protest movement.

**Waste for Wood Chips**

In his 1960 annual report, W.R. Wallace, the Conservator of Forests, drew attention to the fact that approximately 50 million cubic feet of forest waste became available every year and suggested there was sufficient scope for ‘other types of wood-using industries in the State.’ He was convinced that a wood pulp industry would be established, with marri providing the major source of raw material, and estimated that the Pemberton area could supply 825 tons of marri per day for one hundred years without affecting the sawmilling industry. The Conservator’s observations proved prophetic, for in 1967 the Japanese expressed interest in obtaining supplies of Western Australian wood chips for the
production of paper pulp. Similar proposals were also submitted to New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.  

During that year the Western Australian government invited proposals for the establishment of a wood chip export industry in the south-west, which would involve cutting and shipping 500,000 tons of wood chips a year from state forests.  

After considering submissions from Bunnings and its main rival contender, Britain’s Hawker Siddeley Company, the government finally announced in October 1968 that it had granted Bunnings the concession for a wood chip mill to be located at Diamond, near Manjimup. In June 1969, the state government signed an agreement with the W.A. Chip & Pulp Company Pty Ltd and Bunnings Timber Holdings Ltd, to establish the $11 million industry, with Bunbury as the export harbour.  

In comparison with the reaction in eastern Australia, the introduction of a wood chip industry into Western Australia was notable for the absence of dissenting voices. When, in late 1967, the New South Wales government announced an agreement with the Australian-Japanese company Harris-Daishowa to supply pulpwood from state forests at Twofold Bay for export to Japan as wood chips, the decision ‘sent shock waves through the conservation community’, and ‘triggered a conservation explosion’. Graeme Rundle identified several reasons for the absence of any protest against wood chipping in Western Australia in the late 1960s. First, there was no group dedicated specifically to protect the forests. This chapter has observed that the Tree Society tended to limit its focus to urban tree campaigns and failed to broaden its strategies to
encompass rural areas of the state. Second, at that time the Australian Conservation Foundation had limited influence and there was no environmental legislation to cover forest protection. Finally, Western Australia’s geographical isolation contributed towards the failure of eastern states protests to influence any similar action in the west.67

At the time of the Western Australian agreement there was little regard for the impact wood chipping would have on the forests and the environment. The local press described the venture as ‘a much-needed shot in the arm for the Manjimup district’, and one which ‘had almost overnight wiped out the feeling of insecurity that had developed in the Warren area in the past few years.’ The potential benefits of the wood chip industry were extolled: sawmilling would be increased by one third almost immediately; the marri timber that would be used had been of no economic value; and the cleared land could be re-afforested with pine.68

Similarly, the debate in state parliament over the Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Bill revealed no concerns over the environmental impact of wood chipping. Charles Court, the Minister for Industrial Development, stressed the potential economic benefits of the industry to the state – a similar pronouncement to that he had made on bauxite mining some eight years previously. He emphasised the impetus the agreement would give to the timber industry and to employment opportunities, arguing that the state would benefit through ‘the fact that large areas will be cleared and this will permit reafforestation with other species which will have a greater role to play in the future.’69 The Labor
Opposition’s position was stated by H. D. Evans, MLA for the electorate of Warren, who later became its spokesman on agriculture, lands and forests:

The Opposition supports this Bill and I might add that there is not one single individual in this House more pleased than myself to see this present move initiated...The importance of the wood chip industry cannot be overstressed. Coming as it does, to the south-west at this time it could provide the economic breakthrough that has long been awaited.70

The introduction of an export wood chip industry into Western Australia in the late 1960s did not produce any initial outcry from the state’s environmentalists. During a period of instability and uncertainty in the south-west timber industry, wood chipping was promoted as an exciting venture that would reinvigorate the local economy and labour market. It was only after the industry began operations in the mid-1970s that the impact of wood chipping on the forests became apparent and provided the motivation for concerted protest action.

The Nature Conservation Council

While Graeme Rundle’s campaign to protect the Hamersely Ranges provided an example of what could be achieved through individual vision and persistence, it was during the mid-1960s, as Kylie Elston observed, that Western Australia’s conservation groups realised that their urban focus had detracted from broader issues and that threats to the environment had become so compelling that a united stance was necessary.71 Public concern was increasing over an acceleration of land clearing in the wheatbelt, a concentration of polluting industries at Kwinana, and the expansion of bauxite and mineral sand mining operations in national parks and state forests.72
Three prominent groups – the Tree Society, the Wildflower Society and the Naturalists’ Club – were communicating regularly and it was suggested that delegates from each organisation should meet monthly to discuss common issues. As a result of this proposal, the Nature Conservation Council of Western Australia held its first meeting on 27 April 1967 at the Tree Society headquarters in South Perth, with representatives from six organisations: the Society for the Preservation of King's Park and the Swan River, the Naturalists' Club, the National Trust, the Wildflower Society, the Tree Society and the Junior Tree Society. Shirley de la Hunty (formerly Shirley Strickland), who was President of the Tree Society and originally conceived the idea for a monthly meeting of groups, explained how this occurred:

When we’d come up with some problem, some issue that we needed to address, we would say, well, what do the Naturalists think about this, what do the Wildflower Society think about this, and we’d invite them to confer with us and see if we could get together on some of these because a lot of the issues overlapped...and that’s when I formed the concept of having a separate organisation, where these emerging environmental groups would meet separately, rather than the long, drawn out process we were involved with. We could get the whole thing coming together. The discussion place would be there, and they would discuss it and we’d come up with some sort of a common tactic or common information-gathering, and that formed the Conservation Council. It was my particular concept of doing that.

The value of the monthly Council meetings, de la Hunty believed, was that they provided the opportunity for anyone who had an interest in an environmental issue to contribute towards a ‘common discussion point’.

The main objectives of the Nature Conservation Council, later to become the Conservation Council of Western Australia, were the adoption of a nature conservation code by the state government, the establishment of a Nature Conservation Authority for policy implementation, and the co-ordination of
activities of organisations interested in nature conservation. As the Council expanded to embrace a total of 21 groups by the mid-1970s, its objectives correspondingly increased to include liaison with national and international bodies, the promotion of environmental education and research, and lobbying for action by ‘appropriate authorities’ on agreed policy.

Several key figures contributed to the early development of the Council. Gloria Butcher, an active member of the Women’s Service Guild and the Society for the Protection of King’s Park and the Swan River, became the Nature Conservation Council’s Honorary Secretary in 1967. In his study of the Council’s early history, Ian Monk described Butcher as a charismatic leader who transformed the organisation into a vigorous action group. He argued that her dominance was such that ‘for a while, the council was mainly an expression of the needs and aspirations of one person.’ Monk considered her greatest abilities to have been a capacity to influence politicians and industry through reasoned argument and using the power of education to instil conservationist ideals and values.

The Council’s first President, John Oldham, was a landscape architect who became an activist during the mid-1950s when, as a member of the Tree Society, he fought for the protection of trees in suburban streets and played a prominent role in the battle to save King’s Park from development. His involvement with the National Trust provided him with an awareness of wider conservation issues and with an appreciation of the need for conservationists to broaden their horizons and fight for issues that exceeded the interests of any single group.
While Butcher and Oldham were the driving force behind the Council, there was, as Monk points out, a nucleus of prominent conservationists in Western Australia who were keen to contribute their particular expertise. Dr Vincent Serventy was one of the state’s most influential naturalists and an active conservationist on both the east and west coasts of Australia. Shirley de la Hunty and Rica Erickson both understood the scientific implications of environmentalism - de la Hunty through her training in nuclear physics and Erickson through her work as a naturalist. According to Monk, there were also those who lent their support for a variety of reasons – farming families who had an affinity with the bush, members of the affluent middle-class who were keen to preserve the landscape for their holidays, and those who simply appreciated areas of natural beauty.

In the late 1960s the Nature Conservation Council embarked on a strategy to establish an agency within government that would express environmental viewpoints and sympathies. It launched an ambitious campaign to induce the state government to establish a Ministry of Conservation, which would address the contentious issues of land clearing and agricultural expansion and the protection of conservation areas from mining exploitation. Graeme Rundle explained the success of this campaign in terms of the combined talents of the different groups:

A number of the member bodies had the sort of people with special flairs... we had a Tree Society that was good at administration, and we had a Naturalists’ Club that had articulate people.

The centrepiece of the campaign was the drafting of a Conservation Bill of Rights. The document called for the creation of 20 million acres of additional ‘A’ Class Reserves, a guarantee of the inalienability of existing reserves and their
protection from mining, and the retention of wilderness areas ‘in their natural state’.

In March 1970, conservation groups took part in a protest march on state parliament to present the ‘Bill’, and a petition containing 13,000 signatures. Placards carried by the marchers included ‘Reserve Not Reclaim’, and ‘Save Our Forests’. While there is wide disparity over estimates of the numbers attending – from 250 to 15,000 - the march was significant in providing early evidence of public protest against the damage to Western Australia’s forests.

It soon became apparent that the campaign had been influential in prompting a shift in both the major parties towards accommodating the concerns of a growing environmental lobby. In October 1970, Premier Sir David Brand, introduced his Liberal Country Party coalition government’s *Physical Environment Protection Bill* which proposed to create a Department of Environmental Protection and a Physical Environment Council that relied on ‘co-operation and goodwill’ rather than coercive powers. While the bill successfully passed through parliament, it was not formally proclaimed before a change of government, and in 1971 the new Tonkin Labor government introduced stronger legislation to establish four environmental bodies: a Department of Environmental Protection, an Environmental Protection Authority, an Environment Protection Council, and an Appeals Board. The EPA was required to take positive action on environmental issues, to set standards for environmental protection, and to provide avenues for public consultation and appeals.

In summary, the formation of the Nature Conservation Council in 1967 proved a definitive moment for the organisation of environmental protest activity in
Conservation groups realised that, while each had its own message to deliver, their voices were more likely to be heeded if they sounded in chorus. They had begun to appreciate that, although each group was keen to promote its own particular cause, there were many areas in which interests overlapped. They were all united in a concern to protect the natural environment from the effects of rapid post-war development.

As in the rest of Australia, the post-war industrial boom years in Western Australia were important through their influence on the future direction of forest protest. Increasing sensitivity to the consequences of rapid urban development initially found expression through campaigns to save isolated areas of urban bushland and native trees, and ultimately led to the formation of the Tree Society. The campaign to save King’s Park from development as an aquatic centre heralded a movement towards collective protest activity. The issue galvanised Perth’s conservation groups into combined action and this, in turn, led to a refinement and expansion of their organisation and strategies. Most importantly, the campaign effectively thrust conservation into the public foreground and removed it from the exclusive domain of scientific and naturalist elites.

With the establishment of the Nature Conservation Council, later the Conservation Council of Western Australia, environment groups were provided with a medium through which they could discuss issues of common interest and consolidate their efforts to present a united stance against the increasing demands of government and industry. This collective approach became a hallmark of the
forest protest movement in the succeeding decades. The emergence of prominent leadership figures such as Bessie Rischbieth, Mabel Talbot, Shirley Strickland, Gloria Butcher, John Oldham, John Thomson and Graeme Rundle continued and expanded the tradition of leadership that was established by first period conservationists Woodward and Hay.

A fledgling forest protest movement had formed during Western Australia's post-war period of economic and industrial expansion. The 1960s also produced the two elements that would accelerate and expand the movement – forest mining and wood chipping. Most significantly, these issues also stimulated the transition of forest protest strategies from traditional expressions of peaceful dissent to more radical forms of direct action.
ENDNOTES

2 *ibid.*, p.98.
6 *Western Australia Parliamentary Debates (WAPD)*, Vol.149, 4 September 1958, pp.590-591.
7 Letter from Secretary, Western Australian Naturalists’ Club to Under-Secretary for Lands, dated 26 June 1953, Battye ACC 2419A/29.
8 Circular from Federation of Field Naturalists’ Clubs of Tasmania to WA Naturalist Club, dated 16 October 1957, Battye ACC 2419A/31.
9 *The Tree Society Review*, No.1, April 1958.
12 *The Tree Society Review*, No.1, April 1958, Message by Neville Roennfeldt, President.
16 Arbor Day originated in America, and was first observed in Nebraska in 1872. The first observation of Arbor Day in Australia occurred in Victoria in 1909. In Western Australia Arbor Day has been celebrated annually on the first Wednesday in July, since its Incorporation in the 1919 *Forest Act*. *The Tree Society Review*, May 1972, p.3.
17 *The Tree Society Review*, No.16, September 1971, p.4.
19 The Tree Society Review, October/November, 1958.
20 *The Tree Society, Floreat Branch, Minute Book*, Record of Meeting on 11 May 1961, Battye MN763, ACC4778A/1.
23 *The Tree Society, Floreat Branch, Minute Book*, November 1967, Battye ACC4778A/1.
25 Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River, Minutes, 18 October 1954, Battye MN 875 ACC 3046A/30.
26 Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River, Minutes, November 1954, Battye MN875, ACC 3046A/30.
27 Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River, Transcript of Conference, 3 September 1956, Battye MN 875 ACC 3046A/2.
28 Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River, Minutes, 6 August 1957, Battye MN 875, ACC 3046A.
29 Society for the Preservation of King’s Park and the Swan River, Correspondence, September 1957, Battye MN 875, ACC 3046A.
30 Letter from T. Talbot Lodge to Miss Talbot, Committee Secretary, dated 25 September 1959, Battye MN 875, ACC 3046A/2.
33 *ibid.*

94
Graeme Rundle, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 December 2003.
ibid., pp.37-38.
Chapter 4

The 1970s: A Time of Transition

Map 4.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 4.
The start of a second period of forest protest during the 1950s and 1960s had contained some key events that were of fundamental importance for the growth of the Western Australian forest protest movement. The formation of the Tree Society and the Nature Conservation Council provided conservationists not only with forums for discussion but also the organisational frameworks within which they could plan their activities and formulate strategies to further their aims. Additionally, the action to save King’s Park from development gave activists the opportunity to obtain practical experience in a major campaign and resulted in groups combining their activities and creating new strategies to gain public support. However, while the creation of these organisations and their activities were significant, their focus was chiefly on urban issues, and it was not until the 1970s that protest groups were formed with the broader and more specific objective of protecting Western Australia’s forests. Although some influences from the early post-war protest groups, particularly organisations such as the Nature Conservation Council and prominent conservationists such as Graeme Rundle and Shirley de la Hunty, carried through to later decades, it was the 1970s, as Hutton and Connors point out, that provided a time of opportunity for the Australian environment movement, when a new generation of activists adopted different strategies and a more forceful approach to campaigning.  

This chapter will examine how mounting concern over increased threats to Western Australia’s forests resulted in the adoption of a more assertive stance from some conservationists and how this led to the formation of two dedicated forest protest groups that adopted markedly different approaches to achieving their common goal of protecting the forests from destruction.
will be argued that, during the 1970s, threats to the forests from mining and wood chipping stimulated a transition, whereby non-confrontational expressions of dissent were expanded and supplemented by more aggressive strategies of non-violent direct action which were designed to maintain public attention on the need to protect the forests.

**Winds of Change**

Changes in approaches to forest protest in Western Australia during the early 1970s occurred both as a reaction to state government inactivity over forest conservation and as the product of a number of broader social and political forces. It was a time when an incoming federal Labor leadership promised radical reform and when the impact of the anti-Vietnam marches was still fresh in the minds of activists. Most significantly, environmental groups in Perth were provided with the infrastructure within which they could interact and co-ordinate their activities.

Evidence of rising concern for the environment during the early 1970s becomes apparent from Western Australian Naturalists’ Club correspondence. Replying to an enquiry about feelings towards conservation in Western Australia, L.E. Sedgwick, the Club’s secretary, commented that, while the general attitude seemed to be one of complacency, over the previous two years ‘the concerned minority has greatly increased in numbers, and has become very much more vocal than ever before.’ Sedgwick further observed that affecting an interest in conservation had become almost fashionable in middle-class circles and that
schools had begun to place a greater emphasis on ecology, as opposed to anatomy and physiology.²

Patricia and Ian Crawford noticed how the early 1970s also produced changes in the way the land was represented in philosophical and verbal terms, with ‘conservationist’ replacing ‘naturalist’ as a description of a person concerned with the protection of flora and fauna and ‘environmentalist’ signifying a person who adopted a broader conception of global interrelatedness. The terms ‘wilderness’ and ‘green’ also became more prevalent.³ In the state parliamentary papers dealing with the 1969 wood chip legislation, the terms ‘conservation’ and ‘environment’ were not used at all, whereas in the 1973 amending legislation the two words appeared 38 times.⁴

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Australian environmentalists were aware of a need to streamline their communication networks through the formation of co-ordinating councils and to establish bases from which to organise campaigns. This resulted in the formation of Conservation Councils in Victoria (1969), South Australia (1971) Queensland (1970) and Western Australia (1973 - formerly the Nature Conservation Council).⁵

The 1972 election of the Whitlam Labor government raised high expectations that environmental protection would be absorbed into the political mainstream. In Western Australia the federal government’s 1974 funding initiative for the establishment of Regional Environment Centres laid the foundations for the organisation of environmental activism in Perth. The Environment Centre in
Wellington Street became the home for several organisations, including the Conservation Council of Western Australia, the Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA) (CSNF), Friends of the Earth, and the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy. The Centre provided not only the infrastructure for the organisation of co-ordinated protest action but also a social milieu that encouraged group members to feel they were part of a dynamic movement for change.

At this time there were also signs of growing environmental awareness and collective activity in rural areas of the state. The Leeuwin Conservation Group was founded in 1970 by local citizens of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River who wished to protect the Blackwood River from sand mining. During the 1970s the group expanded its activities to lobby for selections of Crown Land to become National Parks. Barry Blaikie, a foundation member, explained that the main reason the group was formed was to ensure that members of the community were kept informed about local developments and their possible impact on the environment. He recalled that during the early 1970s the group focussed on gathering information rather than taking any form of direct protest action.

Activists were also inspired by events occurring elsewhere in Australia. The Green Ban campaign in New South Wales during the early 1970s, which resulted in an alliance between environmentalists and trade unionists to preserve areas of urban bushland from commercial development, resonated in Western Australia. A public meeting in Perth Town Hall in August 1975 organised by the Campaign to Save Native Forests called for the implementation of a union green ban to
prevent the Manjimup Wood Chip Project from going ahead. This decision resulted in the CSNF requesting the Western Australia Trade and Labor Council to consider taking industrial action. While the Council voted in favour of union measures to prevent over-cutting of native forests, no action was taken because of strong opposition from the Timber Workers Union. A further formative influence on the growth and character of environmental activism in Perth during the 1970s was the anti-Vietnam War movement. Andrew Thamo, a founder member of the CSNF, was actively involved in that campaign and considers it to have been ‘a very important component for all of us that actually formed the nucleus of what was to become the Campaign to Save Native Forests.’

One of the most visible indications that attitudes towards environmental protest in Australia were changing occurred on 17 October 1973. Criticism of the Australian Conservation Foundation’s conservative approach to environmental issues and particularly its perceived inactivity in the struggle to preserve Tasmania’s Lake Pedder resulted in the resignation of seven councillors, including one from Western Australia, and in the organisation’s radicalisation. The councillors who resigned issued a report explaining that the profound changes to the organisation brought about by the influence of the Lake Pedder Action Committee activists led them to believe they could no longer represent their electors. Graeme Rundle, who at the time of the meeting was a State Councillor to the Australian Conservation Foundation, said the changes that occurred with the election of more campaign-oriented members exerted an influence in Western Australia:
The sorts of campaign innovations which came out of fighting for Lake Pedder were also relayed through the Western Australian membership of the ACF back into the Western Australian conservation community, and that included eventually the Conservation Council.\textsuperscript{16}

The formulation of new approaches towards forest protest in Western Australia during the early 1970s occurred both as the result of rising concerns over the impact of industrial expansion on the state’s forests and from much broader influences, such as opposition to the Vietnam War and the eastern states’ green ban campaigns, that prompted a more assertive style of activism. The decade’s early years also provided the stimulus that galvanized the Western Australian forest protest movement into concerted action.

**Chipping Away the Forest**

State government records provide evidence of a growing crisis over the demands placed upon forest resources. The annual report of the Forests Department for 1970 voiced concerns over mining expansion in the forests:

> The current level of mining activity in forest areas is of major concern. The over-riding powers of the Mining Act in respect of State Forests and timber reserves which date from the early days of gold mining coupled with the marked increase of mining activity, has given rise to the greatest threat the forest estate has experienced...more than half the area of State Forest is subject to some form of mining claim or tenement.\textsuperscript{17}

The 1970 report observed that, while it was first estimated that bauxite mining at Jarrahdale would result in an annual loss of 14 hectares of forest, the mine had expanded to the extent that 121 hectares were lost every year. The Department’s anxieties over the decline in forest areas, however, reflected a desire to protect a valuable industrial resource for production forestry rather than any overriding concern for forest conservation.\textsuperscript{18}
In October 1974, the member for Warren, the Hon. David Evans MLA, elicited an acknowledgement from the Minister for Forests that the state’s hardwood forests had been over-cut for some time in order ‘to support the established industry.’ Further questions revealed that the level of over-cutting had not been reported in the Department’s annual reports. Paradoxically, the practice of over-cutting the forest was occurring at the same time that the Forests Department was promoting the concept of sustainable forest management. The state government’s attitude was characterised by a reluctance to implement measures to reduce the level of timber cutting in the face of timber industry demands, even though it was aware that over-cutting was taking place and that the forests were being depleted.

Federal and state governments did not expect that the exporting of wood chips would cause serious conflict in Australia. The venture was seen by them as a logical extension to the prevailing ethos of development and one that presented several attractions: it would boost employment in rural areas, it could lead to the establishment of a pulp and paper industry, and by making the forests more productive it might lead to high profits for exporters. Some foresters argued that wood chipping would be beneficial for the health of the forests.

The presentation in August 1973 of the Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act Amendment Bill by the Tonkin Labor Government and its subsequent implementation, however, provided the catalyst for the adoption of more confrontational forms of forest protest in Western Australia and indicated that attitudes towards the forests were changing. As the result of a $200 million
export contract for the supply of wood chips to Japan, the Bill sought to raise the volume of timber cutting to 670,000 tons per annum, with a further anticipated increase to 750,000 tons. The wood chips would be supplied over a period of 15 years.\textsuperscript{23} While Alexander Taylor, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Development, assured parliament that the Environmental Protection Council and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) had expressed satisfaction at the adequacy of measures designed to protect the forest environment,\textsuperscript{24} the EPA’s Interim Report, dated three days after the debate in state parliament commenced, concluded that insufficient knowledge was available about the wood chip proposal for it to receive unqualified endorsement.\textsuperscript{25}

During the Bill’s preparation there was official concern at possible public reaction to the introduction of an intensive wood chip industry into Western Australia and the apparent haste to approve the agreement. An Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Forests Department in June 1973 anticipated that the announcement of the project would provoke a ‘strong adverse reaction’ from some sections of the public and that recreational users of the forests would be concerned when they were refused access or viewed ‘any recently clear cut or slash burnt area.’\textsuperscript{26} During a meeting held at Parliament House, Canberra, in July 1973 to discuss the Western Australian wood chip project, Dr Moss Cass, Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Conservation, said that, while the Japanese had delayed the project for over six years and were now anxious to sign the contract without delay, there was concern that the issue ‘has not been aired sufficiently in public’.\textsuperscript{27} A Commonwealth parliamentary working group was established to examine the economic and environmental aspects of the export
wood chipping industry. The group recommended that, due to ‘the large degree of uncertainty surrounding the environmental impacts of the woodchip industry’, alternative or amended strategies for the management of wood chip areas should be investigated as soon as possible.28

Prior to the Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act Amendment Bill debate in state parliament there was growing opposition to the establishment of a wood chip industry in Western Australia and consideration of organised protest action. The Tree Society of Western Australia called for members' views on wood chipping and its possible impact on the forests, stating that the organisation had received several letters from people who had been refused the opportunity of voicing their opinions in the press.29 One newspaper correspondent deplored the ‘crashing silence from conservationists and environmentalists’ over the issue, and believed the real impact of wood chipping had been ignored by environmental protection authorities.30 John Thomson, an ex-forester with over 50 years’ experience, was angry at the proposal to clear-fell the karri and marri forests and said he and other foresters felt they should organise with other people to protest against the impending destruction.31

Letters of support from eastern states organisations demonstrated the broader concerns about wood chipping. Ecology Action in Sydney intended to publish evidence of forest destruction from wood chipping and its implications for Australia.32 A local forest action group in Queensland offered its support and described the tactics members had employed during a successful anti-wood chip campaign. These had included writing letters to newspapers, obtaining
statements of support from prominent academics and conservationists, hiring an aircraft to fly local councillors and politicians to demonstrate the effects of wood chipping on the forests, and organising film evenings.\textsuperscript{33}

The \textit{Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act Amendment Bill} passed smoothly through the Legislative Assembly, with Opposition Leader Sir Charles Court assuring the Minister for Development that the Opposition did not wish to delay the legislation. While acknowledging that there had been increased interest over the environmental protection aspects of wood chipping, Sir Charles rejected the fears of ‘ecologists and environmentalists’ that the impact of a wood chip industry on the forests had been insufficiently researched.\textsuperscript{34} The Legislative Council debate, however, revealed growing anxiety over the impact of a wood chip industry on the forest environment. F.D. Willmott, Liberal MLC for the South-West, read out a letter from the Wildflower Society expressing its concern about the proposed wood chip industry and requesting that the proposed Act include safeguards to protect indigenous flora and fauna, control salinity and erosion, promote species regeneration, and preserve areas of native flora for posterity.\textsuperscript{35} Country Party members T.O. Perry and F.R. White both felt that insufficient time had been given to research on the impact of intensive wood chipping on the state’s native forests and that the Bill was being rushed through parliament before enough information was available for the matter to receive proper debate.\textsuperscript{36} Additionally, T.O. Perry quoted a Forests Department ‘summary sheet’ advising staff to expect a ‘strong adverse public reaction’ to the wood chip industry proposal following similar experiences in the United States, New South Wales and Tasmania. He further advised members that some
apiarists had approached him asking about the effect wood chipping would have on their industry.\textsuperscript{37} Despite the several concerns, the \textit{Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act Amendment Bill} received assent on 9 October 1973.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{The Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA)}

While the impact of intensive forestry practices such as wood chipping was becoming a subject for not only public criticism but also professional critique on a national scale,\textsuperscript{39} in Western Australia it was the implementation of the 1973 \textit{Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act} and its effect upon the south-west forests that motivated the formation of a dedicated forest protest organisation in early 1975. The Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA) (CSNF) initially comprised a small group of student activists who intended to purchase a block of land near Manjimup and became concerned at the destruction of forests in the area through wood chipping.

Andrew Thamo, a founder of the group, recalled that he had become involved in student activism while at university and had always wanted to live in the bush. He and some student friends decided to look at prospective areas of land in the south-west and finally purchased a block of land in what they thought would be an isolated area of forest. After a visit to the block, one of his friends told Thamo about the effects of the wood chipping in the area, and the group decided that, if they wanted to live in the forests, they would have to organise a campaign against the wood chip industry. According to Thamo, that decision signalled the start of the CSNF.\textsuperscript{40}
While the initial members of the CSNF comprised only the shareholders in the Manjimup block of land, the group realised that in order to provide an effective opposition to wood chipping they needed to attract membership from other organisations. They contacted the Conservation Council and other groups, including Habitat Action and the Sporting Shooters Association, and invited those who were interested in the campaign to attend a meeting. The group also attracted support from a group of printers at the *West Australian* newspaper, notably Lloyd Thomas, Joe Sullivan and Ian Black. Thamo recalled that at the meeting some reservations were expressed at the political nature of the group, especially when some who attended introduced themselves as communists. He believed the meeting was significant in expanding the campaign beyond the interests of a small group of student activists.41

After its foundation, membership of the organisation broadened as other environmental groups pledged their support. A packed meeting in Perth Town Hall in July 1975 showed that the campaign’s stance against wood chipping was gaining considerable public sympathy.42 Prior to the meeting the group stated it was not totally opposed to wood chipping and clear-felling, but objected to the scale of the proposed operations and the likely effects on the forest environment. It called for a moratorium on wood chipping while an expert commission, with representation from both forest industries and the public, investigated how to best use the forests for the benefit of the whole community.43

From the outset, the CSNF recognized the need to present a cogently persuasive argument against the effects of wood chipping and this resulted in the
compilation of a detailed submission in 1975 to the Australian Senate Standing Committee on the Social Environment, which had been tasked with enquiring into the impact on the environment of the wood chip industry. The submission comprised a detailed analysis of the anticipated threats to the forest from intensive wood chipping, and argued that the Manjimup project had received hasty approval, without proper regard for the environmental consequences. The CSNF called for the excision of the Shannon River Basin from the wood chip area, a reduction in the tonnage of export timber for wood chips, and the initiation of a Royal Commission or similar inquiry into forest management practices and the needs of present and future generations with regard to Western Australia’s native forests.44

As part of a strategy to project its message to a wider audience, the group presented its arguments against the wood chip industry in an eight-page broadsheet, which was both innovative and influential, and prompted people to join the organisation.45 The publication communicated the salient points of the CSNF’s submission to the Senate Standing Committee in an attractive format, with illustrations, photographs, maps and cartoons, and invited attendance at a public meeting in Perth Town Hall. The broadsheet presented the CSNF’s case against wood chipping in terms of its detrimental effects upon the diminishing areas of Western Australia’s forests. The campaign argued that intensive forest logging would threaten water supplies through increased salinity and promote the spread of dieback disease, and that clear-felling of large areas of forest would be highly destructive to native flora and fauna.46 One year later, the group produced a similar broadsheet, this time calling for a halt to the Manjimup
project and publicising a demonstration on Perth Esplanade to support proposed trade union action against wood chipping.47

Christine Sharp decided to join the CSNF after being impressed by the arguments against wood chipping presented in the campaign’s first broadsheet and then attending the Town Hall meeting. With an academic background in politics and some current affairs radio interviewing, Sharp volunteered to become the organisation’s first media officer. Over the next two years she oversaw an expansion of the CSNF’s media coverage, particularly on radio and television, but recalled that the *West Australian* viewed the organisation as ‘somewhat below par’ and seemed to exercise a form of ‘intellectual snobbery’ against it. She saw the reaction against the CSNF during its early years arising from the political challenge that the organisation offered:

> The environment had been considered a scientific issue, a management issue, and not a political issue, *per se*, and that was what was new, so that from the very beginning the CSNF was political in their methods...They were using a lot of science, and good science, but it was that political edge to it which was very new and very radical, and challenging for the establishment.48

Both Andrew Thamo and Christine Sharp emerged as key figures during the CSNF’s early development, with each offering contrasting yet complementary approaches to the group’s organisation. As a committed and experienced student activist with local knowledge, Thamo was able to provide the practical leadership required for co-ordinated protest action. Sharp’s political and media background enabled her to place the campaign in a much broader context and to position the group as the focal point for the anti-wood chip movement.
While public meetings in Perth afforded an opportunity for the CSNF to argue its case and gauge levels of support, a gathering in the south-west provided an early indication of the tensions that would arise between timber workers and environmentalists. At a meeting in Manjimup in August 1975 convened by members of the local branch of the CSNF, the organisation faced a barrage of questions from the Institute of Foresters, who received encouragement in its arguments from local people who supported the wood chip industry. Police were called when hecklers disrupted the meeting.\footnote{49}

There were also signs that the group’s anti-wood chipping campaign was effectively moving forest issues to the forefront of political debate. Arthur Tonkin, the Opposition spokesman for the environment, said he believed ‘amateur’ protest groups such as the CSNF were providing a valuable service through promoting environmental protection, raising an awareness among Western Australians of the value of their forests, and challenging corporations whose only motive was profit maximisation. Premier Court, on the other hand, said he was concerned that, if federal funding were used to support environmental organisations, ‘the money could be used by irresponsible groups to disrupt the activities of government planning projects.’\footnote{50}

The CSNF was aware of the need to keep the anti-wood chipping campaign in the public spotlight and expanded its strategies by creating a number of stunts to attract media attention and maintain public focus on the forests. On Arbor Day, a member of the group, dressed as a tree and wearing a slogan, intruded on an official ceremony, emphasising the point that planting one tree did not
compensate for the destruction of a forest. The incident was reported by Perth news media that evening.\textsuperscript{51} In November 1976, members of the CSNF organised a march through Perth, protesting at a state government decision to allow wood chipping in the Shannon Basin. A simulated petition was burnt outside Parliament House.\textsuperscript{52} The group also attempted to raise public awareness of forest issues by conducting tours of the south-west, during which visitors were invited to compare the natural beauty of the forest with the uniformity of pine plantations.\textsuperscript{53}

In late 1977 the CSNF’s campaign received a boost when internationally renowned economist and environmentalist Dr E.F. Schumacher accepted an invitation from the organisation to visit Western Australia to support the cause.\textsuperscript{54} After presenting a lecture at the University of Western Australia in July, Dr Schumacher acted as narrator during the making of the film \textit{The Edge of the Forest}. In the film Schumacher used the south-west forests as an example of prevailing attitudes towards precious resources and argued for a reversal of increasing environmental deterioration through the adoption of widespread tree planting.\textsuperscript{55}

Although the CSNF’s initial target was the wood chip industry, it soon realised that the wood chip issue was only part of a much broader and more complex environmental debate,\textsuperscript{56} and later widened its focus to lobby for a change in forest management away from commercial exploitation towards a greater emphasis on conservation and community benefits. This change would involve a reversal of the decline in forest areas through improved reafforestation, the
creation of additional reserves and national parks, and a programme of community education.\textsuperscript{57}

By the late 1970s, the CSNF was able to present a cogent expression of its objectives, organisation and methods. It described itself as ‘a fast-growing, voluntary, non-politically-aligned group of people from all levels of society’, whose intention was to prevent or limit the destruction of Western Australia’s native forests. Although records of numbers do not appear to have survived, membership was drawn from ‘top professionals and schoolchildren, scientists, doctors, housewives and battlers’, all of whom shared a common concern for the forests.\textsuperscript{58} While the CSNF had office bearers, which included a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary, it considered itself to be non-hierarchical, and ‘more concerned with getting things done than with rigid formalities.’ The group intended to achieve its objectives by ‘reasonable non-violent means’, and to fully utilise the talents of its members. Its strategies would include written submissions, lobbying politicians, the publication of articles and broadsheets, use of media, film-making, non-violent demonstrations and occupations.\textsuperscript{59} At its Annual General Meeting in December 1979, the CSNF elected Barrie Margettes as President, with Malcolm Trudgeon and Annette Horsler as Vice-Presidents. The meeting was told that, out of a total income of $24,915, the CSNF had expended $23,018.\textsuperscript{60}

At the decade’s close the CSNF had identified five major threats to Western Australia’s forests: pine afforestation, which involved a planned clearing of 180,000 hectares of forest; clear-felling for wood chips and saw logs at the rate
of 3,500 hectares per annum; bauxite mining in the jarrah forest, with the potential destruction of 400,000 hectares over a period of 70 years; clearing for public utilities of 10,000 hectares over the next 10 years; and extensive clearing for agriculture and other mining operations. The organisation sought to alert the public and its own members to the impending dangers, organising public lectures at the University of Western Australia and flights over the jarrah and karri forests, including Alcoa’s operations in the northern jarrah forest.  

The South-West Forests Defence Foundation

The style of campaigning adopted by the CSNF was oriented towards employing highly-visible strategies which were designed to attract public and media attention and thus maintain a focus on the need to protect the forests. While many environmentalists initially supported the CSNF in its campaign, there were some who believed that the expansion of wood chipping could be halted through the application of a different strategy. The South-West Forests Defence Foundation (SFDF) was formed in late 1975 by a group of environmentalists who were convinced that the Manjimup wood chip project could be stopped only by means of a legal challenge.

Beth Schultz was born in Queensland and moved to Western Australia in 1970 after living and studying in France and the USA. A former academic, with a PhD in romance languages, she also studied law at the University of Western Australia and practised for several years before working full-time for the Conservation Council where she served as president from 1992-1995. It was the introduction of wood chipping into Western Australia in the early 1970s that
drove Schultz to become a forest activist and a founding member of the Campaign to Save Native Forests and co-convenor of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation. Schultz's academic background, organisational ability and legal skills would see her emerge as a key leader in the Western Australian forest protest movement.

During the latter part of 1975, Schultz attended a CSNF meeting and had a conversation with beekeeper Wayne Ridley, who thought that wood chipping might be unconstitutional through interfering with the state’s water supplies. This suggestion gave her the idea of forming a separate group to investigate the possibility of mounting a legal challenge to the expansion of the wood chip industry. After obtaining advice from Peter Johnson of the University of Western Australia Law School, the SFDF held its first meeting in December 1975.62

The other co-convenor of the SFDF, Arthur Conacher, was a geography lecturer at UWA, and had already voiced his strong opposition to the commencement of the wood chip industry. His public accusation that the Environmental Protection Authority supported the industry and had whitewashed its environmental assessment of the Manjimup wood chip project attracted an angry response from the organisation’s Director, Brian O’Brien, who expressed regret that Conacher had published his views in the media and believed his observations demonstrated a lack of professionalism.63
After receiving strong support for his stance over the wood chip issue, Conacher decided to become actively involved, and collaborated with Schultz to found the SFDF, with the prime objective of taking legal action to halt the establishment of the wood chip industry. In common with the CSNF, the group aimed at achieving maximum publicity through both the electronic and print media. While SFDF members presented a more conservative image than their CSNF counterparts, both groups were united by a desire to protect Western Australia's forests.

Conacher identifies the 1970s as a key period in the evolution of forest protest in Western Australia, during which the forest protest movement was forced to become more professional by having to ensure that all the facts it presented to counteract official arguments were correct. He derived personal satisfaction from being involved with people who had ‘good sets of values’ and were not motivated purely by self-interest.

In January 1976, the SFDF sought to develop a legal case against wood chipping, which relied on defining the anticipated damage to the forest environment caused by the wood chip project as an ‘actionable nuisance’, and thus forming the basis for two constitutional challenges. The organisation also sought and received support from other groups, including Ecology Action, Sydney, and the Environmental Law Reform Group in Tasmania.

While the use of legal action to defeat wood chipping remained a core component of SFDF strategies, the group decided to make full use of the talents
of its members. Unlike the CSNF, which was aligned to the Labor Party and more overtly activist, the SFDF comprised mainly middle-class academics and professionals from Perth’s western suburbs. The strong academic base of the SFDF was reflected in the production of incisive and analytical publications to argue its case, with the bulk of the research and writing carried out by the Foundation’s Co-Convenors. In February 1976, the SFDF published a comprehensive appraisal of the Manjimup wood chip project, and later that year submitted a detailed analysis of forest management practices, concluding that the Forests Department had failed in its role as custodian of the state’s forests. The publication in May 1979 of the Foundation’s evidence proving non-compliance by the Forests Department with measures designed to minimise the effects of the wood chip industry on the environment, resulted in a visit to the licence area by the Senate Standing Committee on Science and the Environment to verify data in the SFDF report.

Schultz remembers that the SFDF's criticism of the Forests Department resulted in newspaper journalists, particularly those from the West Australian, adopting an 'indifferent if not hostile' attitude towards forest conservationists. Those journalists that were supportive suffered for voicing their opinions. She recalled that Daily News reporter George Williams visited the karri forests around Manjimup and Pemberton to investigate the SFDF's claims about timber wastage and logging taking place near river and stream reserves. According to Schultz, Williams' extensive article in the Daily News supporting the SFDF's allegations against the Forests Department affected his career and he was never again given a 'good' assignment.
By mid-1976 the Foundation’s activities had expanded to include public education, political lobbying, and surveillance of the woodchip industry. Similarly, its objectives had broadened to calls for the implementation of a land use plan for the south-west forests, a comprehensive review of the woodchip industry, and the reservation of mature karri forests in secure areas. The organisation also saw a steady rise in membership during its first two years, from 364 in January 1976, to 1,000 in October that year, and 1,159 by December 1977.

Although the CSNF and the SFDF were characterised by their adoption of different campaign strategies, they were united by the common goal of stopping the Western Australian woodchip industry. This agreement resulted in a willingness to collaborate on certain issues, such as the submission to the Trades and Labor Council for a green ban on wood chipping. The groups appealed to different types of people and, while some would join both groups, others would join only one because they could identify with its image and methods of operation.

By mid-1977, however, the SFDF faced a number of internal challenges. In July, Arthur Conacher decided to resign as president due to work commitments and Beth Schultz was appointed to the position. The organisation had applied for incorporation in order to take legal action against wood chipping, but this had been refused by the state Attorney-General. While the Foundation had over $2,000 in funds, the costs of appeals against the decision imposed a substantial drain on these finances. An appeal to the Supreme Court of Western Australia
failed on the grounds that the *Associations Incorporation Act* gave the
organisation the right to ask for incorporation but not the right to be granted it.
Les Stein of the University of Western Australia Law School considered the
group had a valid case for incorporation and recommended an appeal to the High
Court, but this would cost $10,000 that would have to be found through fund
raising. An application had been made for legal aid but the chances of this being
granted did not appear promising.\(^{80}\)

After a two-year struggle, the Foundation found its constitutional argument
against wood chipping had been ruled invalid, its application for legal aid had
stalled and the costly appeal to the High Court against a government refusal to
grant the organisation incorporation had failed.\(^{81}\) The decision to refuse
incorporation was seen as an example of political interference by the Court
Liberal Government in order to avoid legal challenges against the wood chip
industry.\(^{82}\)

Despite the difficulties, the SFDF increased pressure on the Western Australian
government to change its policies towards the forests. At its second annual
general meeting held in December 1977, the Foundation resolved to request the
state government to establish a properly constituted inquiry into native forest
management, which would cover recommendations for an integrated land use
plan after consultation with government departments, conservations groups and
members of the public. The organisation further urged the government to amend
the *Forests Act* in order to apply multiple use and sustained yield principles to
forest management, and to preserve forest eco-systems through the creation of parks that would be reserved from timber cutting.83

The anti-wood chip campaigns of the CSNF and the SFDF also stimulated the formation of a counter group whose members had a vested interest in supporting the establishment of a wood chip industry. In mid-1976 a group of south-west timber workers, merchants and professionals initiated the Save Our South West Campaign the purpose of which was ‘to counter the damaging propaganda of opposition groups’. Clear-felling, they argued, was an established practice that helped the forest to regenerate, and wood chipping assisted this process. Campaign supporters, based in Manjimup, asserted that the CSNF was driven by politically motivated radicals who were not really interested in the preservation of the forests. They sought to secure the livelihood of timber workers through the promotion of multi-purpose forest management, calling upon people to ignore those who spoke ‘from the remote cloisters of the universities’ and support those who knew best how to protect their forest heritage.84

**The Bunbury Wood Chip Terminal Bombing**

The wood chip issue not only provided the impetus for the creation of Western Australia’s first organised forest protest groups but also was the target for the expression of an extreme form of direct action. Early on 19 July 1976, two hooded men attempted to blow up the main loading gantry at the Bunbury wood chip terminal. One bomb exploded, causing damage to the conveyor system, while a second device, which was designed to destroy the waterfront gantry, failed to ignite. Prior to the explosion, the men had overpowered a security
guard at gunpoint and, after setting the devices, had left him tied up in his car at Australind.85

The event prompted declarations of outrage from government and industry. Premier Court regarded the bombing as an act of terrorism rather than protest, that would delay rather than halt the progress of wood chipping in Western Australia.86 G.W. Kelly, of the Forest Products Association, said ‘pseudo conservationists’ in the anti-wood chipping campaign could not escape responsibility and believed the incident resulted from extremists who had ‘inflamed emotions with a campaign of bitterness and hatred, divorced almost entirely from the truth’.87

In the local press the bombing heightened the intensity of the wood chipping debate. The West Australian believed the action could only harm the cause of conservation and that West Australians should consider the climate created by violent protest and where it might lead them.88 One correspondent voiced the frustrations of many who felt that the destruction of large areas of native forest was itself ‘an appalling act of violence against the environment’, and could understand how a minority could resort to violent action as the only means of gaining a hearing.89 The SFDF reacted strongly against the assertion by G.F. Kelly of the Forest Products Association that extremist members of the anti-wood chipping campaign had influenced the Bunbury bombing and called for specific evidence to substantiate the accusation.90
The incident produced mixed reactions from local environmentalists. While the actions of the bombers aroused spontaneous expressions of sympathy from some members of Western Australia’s forest protest groups, both the CSNF and the SFDF disassociated themselves from the action, and the prevailing view was that the bombing had been detrimental to the furtherance of their cause. On the one hand, there was a perception that the incident reflected to some extent the public reaction against wood chipping, while it also had the effect of associating the entire forest protest movement with extreme forms of direct action.

During their investigations police discovered seven cartons of gelignite in an area of Glenoran State Forest near Manjimup. They also seized a Valiant Galant station wagon that had been hidden in the forest. Shortly after this discovery, John Chester and Michael Haabjoern, who both lived on a farming community outside Manjimup, were charged with causing the Bunbury explosion. At their trial in October, Chester and Haabjoern faced five charges relating to the bombing: stealing $1041 worth of detonating equipment, rendering a night guard incapable of resistance, causing an explosion likely to cause injury, placing an explosive substance with intent to damage property, and depriving the night guard of his liberty.

Neither of the bombers appears to have been associated with any formal environmental organisation, and both seem to have acted from personal motivations. Haabjoern stated:

My concern towards the destruction of our environment was the motive for my participation in the events to which the charges relate...it was a once only venture on my part and was done in the hope of forestalling operations of the said company for a period, until the public could be
made aware of the threat to our native forest and a more enlightened and moral legislation could be introduced concerning the timber industry.95 Chester said he was prepared to die for the forests in order to preserve nature for his children.96 (see Figure 4.1.)

Figure 4.1. John Chester twenty years after the Bunbury bombing. Source: West Australian, 20 December 1996.
Although both men were subsequently convicted, and sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment for causing the explosion, the imposition of a minimum non-parole period of only 10 months attracted considerable criticism. Mr Justice Jones said he had been satisfied that Chester and Haabjoern had both been motivated by an ideal which arose from their deep concern over the destruction of the forests caused by wood chipping. He explained that he was moved to impose the minimum term because he believed both men had come to realise that the end did not justify the means, and that their type of action would not achieve the objectives they sought.\(^{97}\) As the only proven example of 'ecotage' on a large scale in Australia,\(^{98}\) the case raised the novel question of whether the bombers’ idealism mitigated their offence or aggravated it through using deliberate violence as a direct threat to democracy. In its appeal, the Crown argued that Justice Jones had taken too great an account of the men’s idealistic motivations and had not reflected society’s need to condemn such violence and to deter others from committing similar acts. A majority of the Full Court agreed to leave the maximum sentence at seven years, yet increase Chester and Haabjoern’s minimum sentence to three-and-a-half years.\(^{99}\)

The campaign against the wood chip industry exerted a definitive influence on the development of a forest protest movement in Western Australia. While, as has been noted in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the initiation of a wood chip industry into Western Australia in the late 1960s had attracted little opposition from conservationists in comparison with the reaction in eastern Australia, by the mid-1970s the dynamics of forest protest had changed. People had become concerned at the implications and effects of intensive wood chipping and the
reaction against it provided the stimulus for the creation of two groups specifically dedicated to forest protest. Although the groups were unable to halt wood chipping, their campaigns resulted in the emergence of more aggressive and innovative strategies and, most importantly, the construction of two co-ordinated and professional organisations.

The Bunbury terminal bombing demonstrated the emotive power of the wood chip debate to arouse a violent form of activism. However, the response of the forest protest movement to distance itself from the incident also shows that it was only willing to express dissent by lawful means. By rejecting a violent approach to protest the movement was exercising a form of 'self-limiting radicalism' whereby it was content to exert its influence within the structures of liberal democracy. Another threat to the forests in the late 1970s created the conditions for a further escalation of protest.

**The Battle Against Bauxite Mining**

While the threat to the forests from wood chipping had provided the stimulus for the formation of Western Australia’s first dedicated forest activist groups in the mid-1970s, conservationists soon realised that they had to expand their focus and strategies in order to protect the forests from the potentially damaging effects of increased mining activity. In July 1975, the Tree Society wrote to Premier Court, urging him in the public interest to refuse applications to mine the Ludlow tuart forest for minerals. Three mining companies had pegged claims covering the tuart forest between Busselton and Capel; however, objections to the mining had been lodged by the Forests Department, the Tree Society, the
Western Australian Naturalists’ Club, the Conservation Council, and the CSNF. Perth’s *Daily News* newspaper noted the irony of the fact that, while the Forests Department and the CSNF had been in opposition over the wood chips issue, they now appeared united in a common cause.102 It was emphasised that the Ludlow forest comprised the only surviving pure tuart forest in the world. The mining applications were subsequently refused.103

In a visit to Perth, Dr Geoff Mosley, Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, voiced his concerns over the protection of Western Australia’s forest reserves against mining. While the areas were supposed to be protected, Dr Mosley said it was possible for the state government to change the status of those areas without the gazetted amendment being challenged in parliament and the public being made aware of what had occurred. He believed there was a need for greater protection of forest reserves through the introduction of legislation that would increase public attention and ensure that their status could be revoked only by Act of Parliament.104

When it became apparent that an expansion of bauxite mining was proposed for the Darling Range, the Fremantle City Council passed a motion raising concerns that the Court Government was pressing ahead with mining before environmental reports were made public. The motion called for the government to reconsider any decision to proceed with mining until after the public had been given ample time to consider the implications for the environment.105
Christine Sharp recalled that the CSNF’s decision to broaden its campaign to focus on the impact of bauxite mining was prompted by comments made to her by Dr Syd Shea, the future executive director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, but who in the late 1970s was a senior employee of the Western Australian Forests Department. She explained that, prior to an interview with Dr Shea for her thesis on the Shannon Basin, he had asked her why the CSNF was not protesting against the proposed expansion of bauxite mining, which he regarded as ‘ecological suicide’. According to Sharp, Dr Shea’s remarks motivated her and Andrew Thamo to initiate a CSNF-led campaign against bauxite mining. In February 1978 the CSNF produced a four-page broadsheet as part of its strategy to warn people of an impending threat to Western Australia’s water supply through increased salinity caused by the state government’s plans to allow Alcoa to expand its bauxite mining operations in the jarrah forests. The publication advertised a public meeting in Perth Town Hall to discuss ways to prevent the expansion and to force a review of the company’s existing operations.

The CSNF was supported in its campaign by the SFDF, which produced a publicity leaflet voicing its opposition to any expansion of bauxite mining in the state. As well as drawing attention to the detrimental effects of bauxite mining, such as threats to water quality, the potential spread of dieback disease, and inadequate environmental assessments, the organisation also drew parallels with previous mining operations. It pointed out that in 1961 politicians assured West Australians that the effects of bauxite mining would be minimal, with only 10 hectares of forest cleared annually, whereas the current proposal involved the
annual clearing of 270 hectares. The conclusion was that politicians’ assurances in 1978 were worth no more than those given in 1961.108

Prior to the introduction of legislation in the Western Australian parliament to allow Alcoa and Alwest to open new bauxite plants at Wagerup and Worsley, the CSNF commenced an intensive campaign. Sharp said the CSNF had come to realise the strategic advantages of starting a campaign early:

I learnt from that initial wood chipping campaign the importance of getting in on an issue before it has been finalised…acting when the door is ajar rather than when the door is slammed closed.109

Circulars to group members and volunteers urged participation through a variety of activities, including lobbying members of parliament, distributing broadsheets, pasting posters, and encouraging attendance at film evenings and social functions to support the campaign and raise funds.110 On the opening day of the debate on the bauxite legislation in state parliament, the organisation planned a ‘salt assault’, during which a quantity of salt would be placed on the steps of Parliament House to remind parliamentarians of their responsibility to protect the state’s forests and water supplies.111

At this time the CSNF received support from various quarters. The Western Australian Division of the Institute of Foresters opposed the expansion of mining in the Darling Range, saying that ‘the risks were too great and the consequences too serious.’112 The state Labor Party called for a Royal Commission into Alcoa’s bauxite mining proposals and vowed to oppose the bauxite legislation if environmental reports were not made available.113 Citing a lack of adequate legislation to protect the jarrah forest, the Tree Society called for a moratorium
Dr Geoffrey Mosley, Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, said he believed Western Australia’s bauxite legislation typified the problems facing Australia’s conservation movement and believed the haste with which the bill had passed through parliament demonstrated the government’s disregard for public opinion on environmental issues.

While protest groups mounted a vigorous campaign aimed at persuading the state government to halt the proposed expansion of bauxite mining, the level of pressure exerted by the groups could not match the powerful economic arguments of the mining companies. Mr Walter Kommer, General Manager of Alwest, pointed out that if Australia was slow to develop mining then other countries would take advantage in order to supply world markets. While acknowledging that bauxite mining would disturb the environment, he argued that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, believing that, while the environment would be different after bauxite mining, it would be ‘aesthetically more pleasing’.

During the bauxite legislation debate in state parliament, the CSNF established a protest camp at Mt William, 110km south of Perth, at the site of the proposed bauxite mine near Wagerup. While the establishment of the camp was successful in attracting prominent media coverage and generating publicity for the anti-mining campaign, press reporting was negative, noting that the camp had attracted ‘seasoned campaigners’ from other environmental causes, and that ‘ironically’ some were drinking from aluminium cans.
The decision of the CSNF to oppose an extension of bauxite mining operations prompted strong criticism from the state Liberal government. The group’s arguments were denounced by Premier Court as being based on distortion and slanderous accusation. He considered the organisation posed more of a threat than mining by threatening the livelihood of thousands of workers.118 Graeme MacKinnon, the Minister for Conservation and the Environment, thought the CSNF’s claims on salinity were exaggerated and believed the group’s actions represented a desperate effort to revitalise the organisation after its anti-wood chipping campaign had stalled.119 The Tree Society wrote to Colin Porter, the Director of Conservation and Environment, objecting to his reference in the media to a ‘fifth column’ of environmentalists who were opposed to industrial expansion.120

During the late 1970s, two of the state’s environmental organisations faced funding cuts that were interpreted as government efforts to restrict their activities. In December 1977, it was reported that the Conservation Council of Western Australia had its federal grant reduced by $4300 and threatened the closure of the Council’s office in Wellington Street. The organisation’s treasurer, Barbara Arthur, said the reduction in funding combined with the state government’s refusal to support the organisation could be seen as attempts to weaken the Western Australian conservation movement.121 In May 1978, the Tree Society had publicly criticised the environmental report for the Wagerup alumina project.122 It was reported in July that the state government had decided to stop making grants to the organisation.123
Some measure of the effect of the CSNF’s strategies to raise awareness of the possible damage to the forests from the bauxite campaign can be gauged from the Legislative Assembly debate on the Alumina Refinery (Wagerup) Agreement Bill. H.D. Evans, the Opposition spokesman on agriculture, acknowledged that the group had been active in voicing its concerns over the potential impact of bauxite mining on Western Australia’s fragile environment and believed the CSNF expressed the beliefs held by many other people in the state. He further noted that the Tree Society, while not ‘spectacularly active’, had a large membership of intelligent people who held similar fears to those expressed by the CSNF and who believed further investigation into the effects of bauxite mining on the environment was necessary before the industry should be allowed to expand.124 Despite the reservations, however, the Alumina Refinery Agreement Bills successfully passed through parliament.

During the late 1970s the bauxite mining issue emerged as a major area of contest for Western Australia’s forest protest groups. There was a perception that the Court Government had succumbed to pressure from mining interests to expedite the Wagerup and Worsley legislation and had ignored the potential impact of an expansion of bauxite mining in the Darling Range. The campaign demonstrated the continuation of a more confrontational style of activism and the willingness of groups to collaborate against a common enemy.

**The Wagerup Occupation**

When it became apparent that the Western Australian government was determined to proceed with the expansion of bauxite mining, the CSNF realised
it was necessary to adopt more aggressive strategies. In mid-1978 two American Quakers visited Perth to conduct a series of workshops on protest based on the Quaker philosophy of non-violence and several of the younger CSNF members attended. As a result of the workshops, a recommendation was made that the group should hold a non-violent occupation to protest at a further extension of mining in the jarrah forest through the building of Alcoa’s third alumina refinery at Wagerup. In June 1978, the CSNF held its first training weekend at Wellington Mills, during which guidelines and strategies for non-violent civil disobedience were formulated.

The latter half of 1978 saw a period of mounting tension between the Western Australian Liberal government and the forest protest movement. The SFDF had decided to extend its activities to include the northern jarrah forest and formed a special sub-committee to examine the effects of bauxite mining. After examining Alcoa’s Environmental Review and Management Programme for the Wagerup project, the organisation recommended that the refinery should not proceed and that Alcoa should limit its operations to the established alumina industry sites at Kwinana and Pinjarra. In conjunction with the CSNF, the group hired the Perth Town Hall in August for a week of activities entitled ‘A Forest Affair’, during which photographs, displays and films were used to increase public knowledge about the forests and what was happening to them. The week’s activities culminated in a ‘Darling Range Parade’, where various environmental groups marched with placards calling for a public enquiry into bauxite mining.
As part of its campaign against bauxite mining, the CSNF formed a research group to substantiate the organisation’s claims about the adverse effects of mining on the forests. A submission to the Environmental Protection Authority criticised Alcoa’s Environmental Review and Management Programme for the Wagerup project, arguing that the document failed to recognise the environmental implications of intensive bauxite mining, and exhibited ‘a disgraceful disregard for the environment and people of Western Australia by Alcoa’. A further study examined the energy utilisation of the alumina industry in Western Australia and concluded that the industry placed excessive stress on local energy resources and that the expansion of alumina production would exacerbate the problem.

Both the CSNF and SFDF expanded their media campaigns, with warnings that the state government was ignoring the opinion of experts and jeopardising the future of Western Australians. Alcoa published an advertisement showing the transformation of the Jarrahdale bauxite mine site into a public recreation area as an example of the company’s caring attitude towards the environment. The CSNF and SFDF retorted with a full-page advertisement which showed a photograph of an Alcoa bauxite mine site near Dwellingup and asked the question: 'Anyone see a jarrah forest around here?'. The Tree Society observed that one isolated area of rehabilitation by Alcoa did not represent the real impact on vast areas of forests and their complex ecosystems.

Premier Court appealed to the public to stop the ‘noisy campaign’ by militant conservationists that had produced a crisis threatening the state’s economy and
future prosperity. The growth of dissident groups became such a serious concern to the government that consideration was given to the establishment of a Directorate of Public Safety to contain the rise of civil disorder.

During November 1978, the CSNF drew up plans for a non-violent occupation of Alcoa’s proposed new alumina refinery site at Wagerup. The group justified its decision to adopt tactics of civil disobedience by stating that all legal avenues of protest had been exhausted and it had become apparent that politicians viewed the forests as expendable and disregarded public concern. Since the campaign could not condone violence, those volunteering to participate in the occupation would be required to undertake non-violent civil disobedience training to be conducted by a specially formed ‘Non-Violent Action Group’. During four training weekends in December 1978 and January 1979, potential occupiers studied the history and philosophy of non-violent protest, group decision-making, and participated in role-playing. The group also viewed films of non-violent occupations at Seabrook, USA, and Whyl, West Germany, in order to gain some appreciation of what lay before them at Wagerup.

The proposal to utilise tactics of civil disobedience for the occupation at Wagerup caused anxiety within some sections of the CSNF about the impact of the strategy upon the overall campaign. During a meeting of the group, members were asked to consider whether the escalation of the campaign into civil disobedience was appropriate when other methods and tactics were still being employed. The possibility of losing some public support was also raised, with the observation that critics of the organisation would be provided with
'plentiful ammunition'. Concerns were also expressed that the core group of activists dedicated to non-violent civil disobedience would deplete the human resources of the organisation for other actions and that the Wagerup occupation could involve a considerable financial burden in fines and litigation expenses. It was emphasised that occupiers would have to exhibit a ‘high level of moral purpose and resolve’ as they could face high personal costs, which might include possible criminal convictions, police abuse, loss of jobs and physical violence.139

On Saturday, 3 February 1979, sixteen members of the CSNF climbed past a gate into the site of Alcoa’s proposed refinery at Wagerup and thus began the first occupation of a site in Australia utilising tactics of non-violent civil disobedience.140 Immediately prior to the occupation a rally of some 300 supporters were addressed by Alan Tingay, CSNF president, John Dawkins, Labor MHR for Fremantle, and Jack Evans, state president of the Australian Democrats. A proportion of the crowd comprised members of the Down to Earth Association, who had attended a conference and festival on alternative lifestyles at Nanga Brook the previous weekend and decided to support the action.141

During the first two days the occupiers of the site remained unchallenged, as Alcoa decided to halt operations over the weekend. The protesters demanded that the project be suspended and called for a federal public inquiry into the bauxite industry in Western Australia. While not offering violence, the occupiers intended to disrupt operations when work resumed by obstructing roads, machinery or fuel supplies.142
Jane Hutchison, a politics lecturer at Murdoch University, recalls that she first became involved in the forest protest movement in 1978, and believes this occurred largely through the influence of her parents, who were politically active and sympathetic to conservation issues. As a member of the CSNF who took part in the first Wagerup occupation, Hutchison said the objective of the protest was to occupy the site for as long as possible and to gain maximum publicity. The main purpose of non-violent civil disobedience, she explained, was to ensure that public attention was kept focused on the ‘cause’ and not the ‘protest’. Hutchison argued that the Wagerup occupation demonstrated a controlled and disciplined approach to protest through ensuring that those who participated were vetted and properly trained before the action began and that one person was designated as a media spokesperson. While some members of the CSNF thought the protest would result in a backlash against the organisation, she judged the action to have been successful by increasing publicity for the campaign against bauxite mining and demonstrating the group’s resolve over the issue.143

The Wagerup occupation was remarkable not only for the establishment of a benchmark for non-violent protest in Western Australia, but also for the exploitation of the media. Neil Bartholomaeus became actively involved in the conservation movement in 1974 and emerged as one of the key figures in the CSNF. He acted as the organisation's spokesperson for five years and played a prominent role in the 1981 Jarrah Class Action.
As the CSNF’s media spokesperson at the time of the Wagerup occupation, Bartholomaeus recalled that the action generated considerable attention as that particular method of protest had not been employed before. He said one of the group’s main objectives was to attract as much publicity as possible through using the media effectively. In order to achieve this aim, Bartholomaeus organised media workshops prior to Wagerup as part of the group’s overall campaign strategy.144

During the afternoon of 5 February 1979, twelve protesters were arrested by police and later charged with obstructing a lawful activity under Section 67 of the Police Act. The charges were subsequently dismissed after it was established that, while Alcoa had been given oral approval, the company had not received written authorisation for its operations from the state government.145 (see Figure 4.2.)

Figure 4.2. Wagerup protesters gather outside the Yarloop Police Court.


The CSNF capitalised on the publicity generated by the Wagerup occupation and published a broadsheet explaining why it had been necessary for activists to
occupy the site and place themselves in jeopardy. Their actions, it was stated, arose from a desire to protect the interests of present and future West Australians and to take a ‘moral stand’ over the expansion of bauxite mining. The state’s forests, water catchments and resources were being handed over to multi-national companies and this, the CSNF declared, posed a threat to everyone. The publication called on the government to abandon the construction of the Wagerup refinery and to conduct a full public inquiry into the alumina industry.146

During April 1979 the CSNF conducted further training weekends for a planned second occupation of the Wagerup refinery site, with an appeal for participation from those who were ‘prepared to make a moral stand against the machinery of the multi-nationals’. Those members who had previously been reluctant to take part were urged to commit themselves to attend the final training session on the weekend of 5-6 May.147
On Saturday, 26 May 1979, the second anti-bauxite mining protest organised by the CSNF began at Wagerup. (see Figure 4.3.) After assembling outside the Waroona Hotel and watching a street theatre performance, about 200 demonstrators were addressed by organisers of the campaign. At around noon, 25 members of the group scaled a fence and entered Alcoa’s bauxite refinery site. Like the first occupation, the group remained undisturbed over the weekend. When Alcoa commenced work at the site on Monday 28 May, 23 of the occupiers were arrested after forming a human blockade to prevent earthworks operations being carried out. (see Figure 4.4.) The demonstrators were convicted of obstruction but the convictions were subsequently quashed because of the Crown’s failure to demonstrate that Alcoa was acting under a state licence.
The organisation and activities surrounding the second Wagerup occupation formed the basis for a documentary that illustrated the organisation and strategy of the CSNF during its campaign against bauxite mining. The film *Wagerup Weekend* followed the protesters through a role-playing practice session prior to the Wagerup demonstration and contained discussion amongst group members of preparations for action at the site. Interviews revealed a sense of unity and belonging to a common cause: ‘Feel proud of everyone here – feel that we’re doing something that’s right – something that needs to be done – everybody supports each other.’ One young female protester who was arrested told of her fear during the protest:

I stood at the side of the bulldozer but in front of it, it just kept on coming towards me...I felt like running away, I was just so frightened. But I thought this is really what I’m here for and I just had to stay there. I can’t run now, if I just stay here he’ll have to stop. And eventually, when the mud got half-way up my leg he did stop. It was just such a terrifying thing but I knew that I had the power, and that if I just stayed there and could withstand the terrifying experience of having this bulldozer coming right at you then eventually he would stop and that’s exactly what happened.151

While not actively involved in the physical occupation of the Wagerup site, Christine Sharp and Andrew Thamo were both instrumental in the organisation of the events. Sharp recalled that the forest protest movement during the 1970s was important as the first mass environmental protest issue in Western Australia and for establishing a new era during which forest protest became part of the political landscape:

What was new was that this was an environment movement, it wasn’t a socialist movement...effectively it was a new movement in that the focus was on the protection of the environment, and that was something very new in Western Australia...and we were at the very forefront of that.152
Thamo considered that, while the Wagerup occupation was an important event in the evolution of the Western Australian forest protest movement, he believed the main activity had begun to occur in the political arena.\textsuperscript{153}

The failure to successfully prosecute any of the Wagerup occupiers resulted in the introduction of new legislation to protect development projects from disruption by protesters. Premier Court believed the government had a responsibility to take action to prevent ‘protesters, malcontents and others’ from disrupting projects that were essential to the nation’s economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{154} Under the \textit{Government Agreements Act, 1979}, people who hindered or obstructed activities being carried out under agreement with the Western Australian government would in future be liable to a $5,000 fine or 12 months’ imprisonment.\textsuperscript{155}

Threats to Western Australia’s native forests from the expansion of wood chipping during the early 1970s provided the catalyst for the creation of two dedicated forest protest groups which in turn resulted in an expansion and intensification of forest activism. The groups applied different strategic approaches to forest protest, with the CSNF employing more confrontational forms of activism such as demonstrations and staged events, while the more conservative SFDF relied on detailed submissions and legal challenges to present its arguments. Most importantly, the formation of the two groups afforded people alternative means through which to express their dissent.
Despite the differences in their forms of protest, both groups were united in a common aim to protect Western Australia’s forests and, in some instances, they were willing to collaborate in furtherance of this objective. Through the use of a diverse range of tactics, the groups succeeded in using the media to focus attention on the forests and projecting the issue of forest protection as one worthy of public and parliamentary debate. Like many protest groups, the success of the CSNF and SFDF depended on the dynamism of leaders such as Andrew Thamo, Christine Sharp, Beth Schultz and Arthur Conacher, who were instrumental in framing the groups’ characteristically different approaches to forest protest.

Reactions against the potential environmental damage to the jarrah forest from bauxite mining during the late 1970s further transformed the forest protest movement. It was the Wagerup occupation that completed the transition of forest protest from conventional forms of dissent to more explicit and confrontational strategies of direct action. Most significantly, the decade witnessed the emergence of native forest protest as a cohesive and dynamic social movement that promised to exert an increasing influence on Western Australia's political landscape.
ENDNOTES


8. ‘Leeuwin Conservation Group Inc.’, application for membership, Hogarth private archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


13. ibid.


15. ‘How the ACF was Taken Over – A report to ACF Members on the events of 17 October 1973, by the Seven Councillors who resigned on that day’, Shirley de la Hunty, private archives.


18. ibid., p.11, p.14.


24. ibid., p.2863.


27. ‘West Australian Woodchip Industry’, minutes of a meeting with Dr Moss Cass at Parliament House, Canberra, 3 July 1973, Environmental Protection Authority file, State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA), AN 102/2, ACC 3121.


SFDF Newsletter, February 1980, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.


‘What’s Wrong with Woodchipping’, SFDF leaflet, Battye ACC.4543A/30-4.

Letter from Leslie A. Stein to Australian Legal Aid Office, Fremantle, dated 20 January 1976, Conacher archives, Battye ACC 5792A/90.


South-West Forests Defence Foundation, Minutes of General Meeting, 6 July 1977, Conacher archives, Battye ACC 5792A.


SFDF Newsletter, May 1978, p.4.

Forest Breeze: Official newsletter of the Save Our South West Campaign, 15 July 1976, p.1; ‘To all true friends of the forest’, Save Our South West Campaign, publicity statement, October 1976, Conacher archives, Battye ACC 5792A/132.


ibid., 20 July 1976, p.3.

ibid., p.6.


ibid., p.6.


John Chester, quoted in Patricia and Ian Crawford, Contested Country: A History of the Northcliffe Area, Western Australia, University of Western Australia Press, 2003, p.159.


ibid., p.42.


Letter from Lilian Callow, State Secretary, Tree Society, to Premier Sir Charles Court, dated 25 July 1975, SROWA, ACC 5932/11.


West Australian, 16 October 1975.


Our Water Threatened, Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), February 1978.

SFDF Publicity Leaflet, 1978, Battye PR 9419/1.


Letter to Members/Volunteers, 18 March 1978, Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.


West Australian, 26 April 1978.

Chapter 5

The Early 1980s: Negotiation and Collaboration

Map 5.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 5.
Although the strategies of non-violent direct action employed at Wagerup were still fresh in the minds of activists and were used effectively during eastern states actions such as Terania Creek and the Franklin campaign, in Western Australia at the start of the 1980s forest protest groups shifted away from strategies of overt physical protest. A new orientation provided an early example of the ‘liberatory and corporatist tendencies’ that Hutton and Connors argue occurred within the Australian environment movement from 1983 to 1990.¹ There was a noticeable move towards organisational professionalism, utilisation of complex and intensive research, employment of legal advocacy, and ongoing criticism of government environmental policy and forest management practices. At this time the forest protest movement reflected the dilemma identified by Beder, in which environmental groups had to decide whether or not they should continue to use direct action to further their cause, or whether they should risk compromising their position by entering into negotiation with government agencies.²

Whereas the final images of the 1970s were those of physical confrontation, the early 1980s saw the employment of a range of non-confrontational tactics aimed at both generating pressure on governments to conserve Western Australia’s forests and elevating forest issues as an area of priority within state politics. The 1983 election of an apparently sympathetic Labor government and the fulfilment of two key election pledges raised expectations that real progress could be made on conserving the state's forests. However, while on the one hand the 1980s was a decade of growth and optimism when activists sought to thrust forest issues into public prominence and convince people that conservation of the state's forests deserved their attention, it was also a time of mixed success,
when a series of major campaigns tested the movement's organisational strength
and the effectiveness of its strategies.

This chapter argues that the early 1980s was a watershed period for the Western
Australian forest protest movement, during which new activist strategies and
political turbulence combined to produce a shift in the dynamics between forest
protest groups and powerful elites. The chapter examines how, at the start of
the decade, the involvement of Western Australian activists in Tasmania's
Franklin River campaign established valuable communication networks and
provided organisational and tactical guidance for the conduct of local protest
actions. It argues that, while legal challenges failed as protest strategies, the
protest movement benefited from considerable media exposure. Most
importantly, the chapter argues that the forest protest movement's two major
victories in the 1980s occurred as a result of the success of urban-based forest
protest groups in employing effective political negotiating strategies that
influenced the inclusion of specific forest conservation policies within the
Western Australian Labor Party's policy platform and ensuring that those policies
were implemented when the party won government.

**The Franklin Campaign in Western Australia**

In June 1979, Tom Hogarth, a student at the University of Western Australia,
decided to apply to the Tasmanian Wilderness Society executive to 'revive' the
Western Australian branch of the Society which had previously existed on an
informal basis. Following the success of several slide shows about western
Tasmania he had organised during the previous year, the level of attendances and
the extent of public interest in Tasmania, Hogarth believed a ‘small but keen’
group could be established, and requested information on the availability of
Tasmanian Wilderness Society publicity material.³

The Tasmanian Wilderness Society had been founded in July 1976 to oppose a
threat to the south-west Tasmanian wilderness posed by a proposal to dam the
Gordon River below its confluence with the Franklin.⁴ During the late 1970s
and early 1980s, the campaign to save the Franklin River transformed the
Tasmanian Wilderness Society into a national organisation, with branches
opening around Australia. It also succeeded in placing wilderness preservation
firmly on the national political agenda.⁵

Hogarth had worked in Tasmania before returning to Perth and had been a
foundation member of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society at its inaugural
meeting at Bob Brown’s house near Launceston. The Western Australian
branch of the Society was created to lend credence to the expansion of the
national campaign and as part of an overall strategy to establish branches in all
Australian capital cities. Most people joined the group because they had been
walking or climbing in Tasmania and had developed an emotional attachment to
the central and west coast. According to Hogarth, the prohibitive cost of air fares
to Tasmania at the time tended to restrict membership to the more affluent.
Initially the Western Australian group comprised 30 to 40 members, with about
10 being actively involved.⁶
As branch secretary, Hogarth immediately began organising an active campaign, seeking ideas from members and emphasising the need for urgent action to save the Franklin. Supporters were invited to attend regular meetings and to bring along their friends. Those working in Perth were asked to distribute pamphlets and to attend slide shows and film evenings. The Society’s newsletter ‘Freecurrents’ was widely distributed, with invitations for contributions and suggestions for improvement. Representatives to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser sought the intervention of the federal government to preserve Tasmania’s south-west as a World Heritage and National Heritage Wilderness area.

The local branch gained from being able to draw on the expertise of the Society’s central organisation in Hobart, which issued guidance on the logistics of establishing a Tasmanian Wilderness Society branch and advice on meeting procedure, bank accounts, fundraising, lobbying, stunts, and branch initiation. At the height of the Franklin blockade the branch was kept informed of progress by regular bulletins, which included reflections on training and preparation, appraisals of operations and tactics, and thoughts on future directions.

By August 1980, Hogarth was able to report to the Tasmanian Wilderness Society National Meeting that the membership and activities of the Western Australian branch had increased beyond expectations and that a core of six central group workers provided logistical support through donating the use of telephones and other facilities. Media coverage had expanded, with publicity on the ABC and the Western Australian Institute of Technology radio station 6NR.
Letter writing and film nights were regarded by Hogarth as the group’s most successful campaign strategies.11

The profile of the Western Australian Branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society was enhanced in July 1981, when one of its members, Peter Robertson from Dalkeith, decided to raise funds and public awareness of the Franklin campaign by cycling from Perth to Hobart across the Nullarbor Plain.12 Robertson, a farmer’s son and originally from Kojonup, was concerned about increasing levels of land clearing during the 1970s, and it was this, combined with a growing sensitivity to environmental issues, that influenced his decision to become involved in the movement to protect Western Australia’s forests. In the late 1970s he joined the Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA) and the Wilderness Society, and had taken an active part in the 1979 Wagerup occupation to protest against bauxite mining in the jarrah forest. Along with Beth Schultz, Robertson would emerge as a prominent figure in the Western Australian forest protest movement through his abilities as a campaign strategist and media spokesperson. After successfully completing the 7,000 kilometre trip to Hobart, which he described as ‘uneventful, just long and quite lonely’, Robertson said he received a positive response from the media and was able to ‘spread the wilderness message’ over more than twenty newspapers and radio stations, and five television stations.13

As the campaign to save the Franklin gathered momentum, the local Tasmanian Wilderness Society branch produced publicity leaflets that explained to Western Australians why they could not afford to ignore what was happening in
Tasmania. The Society argued that legal and environmental precedents established during the Franklin campaign would have future implications for the conservation movement in Western Australia and that Tasmania’s wilderness areas were not solely the property of that state but rather part of a broader national heritage. It further pointed out that the construction of a dam to flood the wilderness area would be built partially with money from Western Australians through federal taxation. Electors were urged to voice their opposition to the Gordon-below-Franklin dam by writing to state and federal politicians.  

Basil Schur, who in 2005 was Projects Manager for Green Skills in Denmark, Western Australia, had been an active member of the CSNF during the 1980s. In December 1982 he went to Tasmania and joined the Franklin River blockade. Schur remembers ‘cross-fertilisation’ between environmental groups in eastern and Western Australia and recalled that the tactics of non-violent direct action, imported from the United States and used by members of the CSNF during its occupation of Alcoa’s Wagerup bauxite refinery site in early 1979, influenced the strategies employed by the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in the Franklin campaign. Before leaving to take part in the blockade, Schur undertook a course of non-violence training in Western Australia.

The political impact of the Franklin campaign and its influence on the election of the Hawke government in 1983 have been subjects of a number of studies. Hutton and Connors argue that the campaign’s effects were twofold: firstly, on a constitutional level, to confirm the Commonwealth government’s external affairs
power to intervene in state government issues to protect areas of conservation value that are World Heritage listed, and secondly, to increase the environment movement’s awareness of its capacity to exert substantial political influence, particularly within the Australian Labor Party.\textsuperscript{17} Political scientist Amanda Lohrey views the Franklin River blockade as a defining moment in Australian political history, when the Wilderness Society campaign thrust ecological issues into the political mainstream by galvanising national public opinion and, for the first time, empowering a green organisation to play a key role in determining the fate of the major parties.\textsuperscript{18}

While the impact of the Franklin issue may not have exerted as great an influence on Western Australian electors as those in the eastern states,\textsuperscript{19} the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (WA) campaign, driven by the enthusiasm and leadership of Tom Hogarth, contributed towards the overall organisation of protest in Western Australia. The campaign succeeded in two important areas. The establishment of regular communications with the Tasmanian Wilderness Society's central organisation in Hobart consolidated links with eastern states environmental groups and provided valuable guidance on strategies and tactics to be employed in the local campaign. Additionally, the group's public education strategies stimulated a broader sense of environmental awareness among many Western Australians.

After the success of the Franklin campaign, the 1980s saw a gradual expansion of Tasmanian Wilderness Society (WA) activities. Besides maintaining a campaign office in Perth, the branch opened a retail outlet in Fremantle. In
1989, the national organisation placed Western Australia on a shortlist of campaign priorities, with Peter Robertson appointed as the state’s campaign officer. Robertson said he was particularly concerned about proposals for mining in National Parks, and sought the support of the Western Australian community for the proper protection and management of the state’s wilderness areas. The decade ended with the Society participating in a procession through Perth streets to the Premier’s office, calling for the declaration of Mt Lesueur as a national park in the face of threats from mining interests.

The fight to save Tasmania's Franklin River motivated an energetic Perth-based campaign that provided local activists with invaluable campaign experience, albeit eastern states-based. Western Australia's two dedicated forest protest groups, along with others, soon found themselves organising and devising strategies in renewed opposition to the threat to the forests that had inspired their foundation.

**Wood Chipping**

The early 1980s saw an intensification of the campaign against wood chipping in Western Australia’s south-west forests, particularly in response to the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s intention to seek an increase in its export quota of wood chips. The campaign demonstrated how, during the early 1980s, the forest protest movement employed non-confrontational strategies aimed at maintaining a public focus on forest issues by educating Western Australians about the need for forest protection and using the media as a forum to stimulate debate.
As part of their campaign strategy, protest groups continually reminded the public about the debilitating environmental effects of wood chipping and, in January 1980, members of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation (SFDF) invited journalist Andre Malan from the *West Australian* newspaper to accompany them on a tour of the karri forest. During the visit, Malan was able to observe the impact of clear-felling on the forest:

> It is not always a pretty sight. The sombre majesty of the forest is shattered at intervals by a flattened landscape churned up by tracks of bulldozers and strewn with the stumps and sawn-off logs of huge trees.22

During the two-day visit, SFDF members pointed out instances where aspects of the Forests Department’s clear-felling operations had not complied with environmental impact recommendations, with the Department admitting that there had been ‘some oversights’. Malan, however, was not entirely convinced by the SFDF’s arguments. He concluded that, while SFDF monitoring of the wood chip industry effectively reduced opportunities for excesses that would damage the environment and increased public awareness of ‘a unique resource’, the organisation’s case was weakened by its unsubstantiated claim that the Forests Department was unaware and unconcerned about the impact of its forestry practices.23

A further tactical initiative by the SFDF at this time was the introduction of conducted weekend trips to the Pemberton area, with the object of exposing members of the public to the ‘shock therapy’ of visiting areas of wood chipping operations. Foundation members would be on hand to explain aspects of forest management, and to foster an appreciation of the reasons for protest actions. Organisation members were encouraged to persuade supporters of the wood chip
industry to participate in the tours. By July 1980 four weekend trips had been held and, while exact numbers of those who participated are not known, SFDF members described those who visited the clear-felled areas as 'sympathetic but with little inkling of the full extent of the disaster'. 24

In May 1980, the SFDF learned from a ‘leaked’ state government document that in November 1979 the WA Chip and Pulp Company had applied for a 50% increase in its export wood chips quota, comprising 150,000 tonnes of jarrah sawmill residue and a further 200,000 tonnes of other material. The Company had obtained approval for the first portion of the increase from the federal Minister for Primary Industry.25 As a consequence, the Conservation Council pointed out to the federal Minister for Science and the Environment that the Western Australian government had apparently supported the request without following guidelines established for the variation of export licences, which required the application of social and environmental impact studies.26

In response, the Federal Minister stated that the Western Australian government had asked the WA Chip and Pulp Company to prepare an Environmental Review and Management Programme on its proposal, and on this basis his department did not consider an Environmental Impact Statement was required. While the initial 150,000 tonnes of sawmill residue had already been approved, there was provision for review of the approval after the Environmental Review and Management Programme had been considered.27 The Conservation Council subsequently registered its concern at the ‘illogical and unacceptable’ procedure that permitted approval for increases in wood chip production prior to the
preparation of environmental reviews and impact statements, and requested that these studies be available for public scrutiny and comment before approval was granted.28

The WA Chip and Pulp Company’s application attracted protests from other groups. The Tree Society believed there had been insufficient public debate over the proposal to expand wood chip exports and was concerned that the increase would deplete timber stocks for the home market. Furthermore, considering the lack of adequate jarrah and karri forest parks in the state to protect the species for future generations, the Society could see no justification for additional exports.29

Reacting to the proposal, the CSNF emphasised the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s greed for profits, drawing attention to the fact that, while the Company’s 1975 licence allowed it to export 750,000 tonnes of wood chips annually for 15 years, the Company now wished to chip a further 350,000 tonnes of material after only five years. The group alleged that in approving the initial component of 150,000 tonnes the state government had manipulated the truth by presupposing the outcome of environmental reviews.30 The CSNF considered the threat to the forests from the significant expansion of wood chipping to be a major challenge for the ensuing year.31 A four-page broadsheet alerted the public to the fact that over three-quarters of the state’s native forests had been cleared in less than 150 years, and argued that, unless new policies were implemented immediately, by the year 2000 most of the state forest in the wood chip lease area would have been clear felled.32
The selection of the wood chip issue as a subject for debate on a 1982 edition of Robin Williams’ *Science Show*, reflected the ability of Western Australia’s forest protest movement at that time to thrust the controversy onto the public platform. The programme examined three questions: whether trees were being cut down faster than they could be replaced; whether or not saw-log quality timber was being wood chipped; and whether there was evidence that the state’s taxpayers were benefiting from the wood chip industry. In seeking answers to these questions, the programme also demonstrated the increasing power of the forest protest movement’s anti-wood chipping campaign.

On the programme geographer Arthur Conacher argued that the Forests Department believed the forests were its possession to exploit for timber production, whereas they really belonged to the people of the state. Conacher contended that, rather than providing economic benefits, the wood chip industry had cost the state $9 million through subsidies to the Forests Department and for infrastructure, with timber industry employment falling by 1,000 workers between 1970 and 1980. Ex-forester John Thomson related his personal experiences regarding the waste of timber resources, alleging that timber mill quality logs had been used for wood chips.

In response, Bruce Beggs, the Conservator of Forests, agreed that the forests were being over-cut:

> In any cut of an over-mature forest you will find that the level of cut is well in excess of the rate of growth. Regrettably, we have been imprisoned by our own jargon...and have referred to “sustained yield” when it wasn’t achievable in an old growth forest...There is certainly more wood being taken out from the hardwood forest at the present time than is being added to the forest capital each year.
Beggs emphasised that the Forests Department’s long-term objective was directed towards a sustained yield forest policy, with a reduction in cutting timed to coincide with increased production of pine saw logs. He refuted Thomson’s claims over chipping of quality timber, claiming there was no evidence to support the allegation.35

While the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s initial licence for the export of 150,000 tonnes of jarrah sawmill residue was not used because of the discovery that jarrah was not suitable for paper pulp,36 the intensification of the anti-wood chip campaign at this time further strengthened the forest protest movement's influence. The adoption of ‘persuasive’ as opposed to ‘confrontational’ strategies, such as encouraging visits to clear-felled areas of forest, were successful in generating sympathy by exposing both the public and the media to the stark environmental consequences of wood chipping. Most importantly, pressure on the state government over its decision to support the WA Chip and Pulp Company's wood chip licence application and the lack of an adequate public consultation and review process, ensured that the government and its agencies were aware that future actions would attract the scrutiny of an energetic Western Australian forest protest movement.

The Jarrah Class Action

At the start of the 1980s, the forest protest movement became aware of increasing threats to the environment and public health from the expansion of bauxite mining in the jarrah forests. Furthermore, frustration mounted at the state Liberal Government’s failure to listen to the voices of environmentalists
and the public over the issue and its refusal to conduct an inquiry into the bauxite mining and alumina industry. While the 1979 occupations of Alcoa’s Wagerup refinery site had generated considerable publicity for the plight of the jarrah forests, it had failed to halt the company’s operations or secure any concessions from the state government. These frustrations were further compounded by state government procrastination over the Conservation Council’s jarrah reserve proposal and the application of policies that embodied commitments to mining rather than conservation. As a result, the movement turned to one of its most controversial and confronting strategies.

In January 1981, Ross Lonnie, a Perth lawyer, was working in the United States representing Australian Vietnam veterans in a class action that had been initiated by American veterans against the manufacturers of the Agent Orange defoliant. Lonnie mentioned Western Australian environmentalists’ concerns over the effects of bauxite mining to the leader of the class action, Victor Yannacone, who had pioneered legal actions in the United States against companies whose practices affected groups of people rather than individuals. After Lonnie showed him some photographs of the impact of bauxite mining on the jarrah forests, Yannacone was shocked that Australians tolerated actions from American-based companies that would not be acceptable in the United States. After Yannacone indicated that a class action might be possible over the environmental effects of bauxite mining, a special meeting of the Conservation Council of Western Australia’s executive authorised him to act on its behalf. An initial sum of $10,000 was raised, with $2,000 from the Council, $3,500 from the Campaign to Save Native Forests (CSNF), and the balance from private
individuals. Although the CSNF was a major influence in initiating the action, that organisation’s failure to incorporate had prompted the Conservation Council to assume the leading role. Some saw this as a courageous move by the Council, particularly as the case could involve a heavy financial commitment.

In formulating the action, Yannacone could not rely on the applicability of United States environmental protection legislation in other countries. For this reason he decided to frame the case around anti-trust legislation, which made it an offence to combine or conspire in practices that restrained trade. The successful application of the legislation in an action brought by Westinghouse against four Australian companies had created the impression that United States courts would consider issues beyond its borders. The Western Australian class action would also provide ‘novelty value’ as the first by an environmental group outside the United States to be heard in an American court.

Neil Bartholomaeus, a CSNF member who had played a prominent role as media spokesperson at the Wagerup protest and was now president of the Conservation Council, assumed the leading role in the action and, in mid-February 1981, travelled to the United States to confer with Yannacone on preparation of the case. Although Western Australian forest activists had endeavoured to keep their plans confidential, media interest sparked by ‘environmental sources in the Eastern States’ fuelled speculation that the state’s environmentalists were planning legal action to shut down alumina exports to the United States. Perth’s *Western Mail* newspaper observed that the Conservation Council president had flown overseas and would not divulge the reason for his trip.
On 24 February 1981, the Conservation Council, as plaintiff, initiated a class action in the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, against the Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA), and the Reynolds Metal Company. The complaint was based on a doctrine of ‘equitable trust’, which held that a nation’s resources are held in trust for the public by the sovereign, and that no government could legislate away the public’s right to appeal against the misuse of those resources. Specifically, the complaint asserted:

...the rights of the people of Western Australia, not only of this generation, but of those generations yet unborn, to the full benefit, use, and enjoyment of the resources of the hydrosphere, atmosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere associated with the Darling Range Ecological System of the South-West Botanical Province of Western Australia, and the natural, economic, social, and societal systems operative therein and thereupon without degradation and damage attributable to the bauxite mining, alumina refining, and aluminium smelting operations of the defendants ALUMINIUM COMPANY OF AMERICA (ALCOA) and REYNOLDS METALS CO., their subsidiaries and joint venturers.43

The action sought judgements restraining the defendants from further bauxite mining, alumina refining and alumina smelting operations within the forests of Western Australia, unless and until it could be established that such operations did not damage or degrade the Darling Range Regional Ecological System of Western Australia, did not increase salinity, and did not encourage dieback disease. The complaint listed the names of 30 organisations as being affiliated and represented in the action by the Conservation Council.44

The five months between the initiation of the Jarrah Class Action in February 1981 and the court judgement in August produced one of the most turbulent and tense periods in the history of Western Australian forest protest and generated considerable publicity for the movement. From the outset, the Conservation
Council’s initiative attracted extensive media coverage. The American press described the action as ‘precedent-setting’ and ‘unusual’, with an Alcoa spokesperson expressing surprise that anyone would challenge the Company’s environmental record in Australia. National newspapers in Australia emphasised the potential impact of a successful court case on the country’s economy, with estimates that exports worth $300 million a year were threatened, and that Alcoa’s Western Australian operations could be shut down, with the loss of 20,000 jobs. In an editorial, the *West Australian* argued that the environmentalists’ action tarnished Australia’s reputation, and that they could not prevent the future development of the state’s resources.

An ABC *Four Corners* debate in March 1981 emphasised the division between the parties to the issue. While Senator Gareth Evans, the Shadow Attorney-General, acknowledged conservationists’ frustrations at the inadequacy of Australian law to resolve their complaint and control the operations of multinational companies, both state government and opposition representatives deplored the strategy of attempting to seek legal redress in the United States courts. In a radio discussion, ALP opposition MLA (Fremantle) David Parker, said he believed bauxite mining could take place without devastating important areas of forest and still be economically viable but this was not happening at the moment. While considering the Jarrah Class Action an inappropriate method of seeking forest conservation, he believed it was important in highlighting the need for class action procedures in Australia, and for greater control over bauxite mining.
Predictably, the state Liberal Government was outraged at the Conservation Council’s actions. Premier Court called on the conservation movement to ‘curb the extremists’ within its ranks or be discredited in the Western Australian community. He believed that environmental activists had misled the public, and likened the Jarrah Class Action to holding a gun to the head of 50,000 workers and families. Gordon Masters, the state Minister for Conservation and the Environment, called on the Commonwealth Government to stop funding the Conservation Council of Western Australia, arguing that public money should not be used to take legal action against an industry that provided almost 20,000 jobs.

Parliamentary debates illustrate the seriousness with which the Court government regarded the Jarrah Class Action and the anger the issue provoked. In the Legislative Assembly, Tom Herzfeld, Liberal, Mundaring, initiated a debate on the threat he believed was posed by environmental extremists in Western Australia. He argued that Neil Bartholomaeus was part of an international conspiracy to destroy western democracies. The affiliation of Western Australian environmentalists with overseas activist groups he regarded as a threat to the sovereignty of the state.

In April 1981, Premier Court moved the following motion in the Western Australian Parliament:

That the Parliament of Western Australia views with grave concern the action taken by the Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc. in launching in the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania a class action aimed at restricting and possibly crippling the bauxite/alumina industry in Western Australia...This Parliament deprecates the institution of this action which it believes is directed
against the best interests of the State of Western Australia, the livelihood of many thousands of Western Australians and the Australian nation...The elected representatives of the people of Western Australia in this Parliament assembled assert their right to determine what matters are in the best interests of the people of Western Australia and their right to make and uphold the laws of the State of Western Australia...54

Presenting the motion, Premier Court said he believed that, if the class action were successful, it had the potential to challenge not only the sovereignty of Western Australia but also that of the nation, and hence the economic development of the country. The Premier listed a number of threats posed by the action, which included threats to the future of an industry that had parliamentary favour, to the economic benefits conferred by the alumina industry, to the prosperity of south-western towns and to the two alumina refineries under construction.

In reply, the Leader of the Labor opposition, Ron Davies, said he wished to dispel any notion that the Australian Labor Party was associated with the class action, insisting that the Party was committed to a policy of opposing any attempt to interfere with the sovereignty of the Australian government. He said the opposition was, however, sympathetic to conservationists’ frustrations at the government’s insensitivity and failure to respond to their requests, and expressed the Party’s concern at the lack of any legal recourse in Australia through which environmentalists could present their case. Hendy Cowan, National Party, Merredin, argued that, while his party opposed the class action, believing that the issue should be determined in Western Australia, the fact that the action had generated considerable public support was an indictment of the parliamentary system. He stated that governments were too lenient in making agreements and that, as parliamentarians, they should be ashamed that conservationists were
given no opportunity to represent their views. After the defeat of an opposition amendment on party lines, the original motion was passed. The motion subsequently received the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

One of the major impacts of the Jarrah Class Action was the emergence of a split within the Western Australian Labor Party between those members who adhered to the party’s pro-development policy, and environmentalists, who opposed the expansion of bauxite mining. In early March 1981, Mike Barnett, the opposition spokesman on conservation and the environment, stated that the ALP had never opposed bauxite mining and would not support any move to close the industry. Neil Bartholomaeus, who had initiated the Jarrah Class Action while at the same time a prominent member of the ALP, became a target for criticism, with senior party members concerned that the action was becoming identified with the Labor Party. Gil Barr, secretary of the Australian Workers’ Union, said the Union objected to Bartholomaeus’ stance because it threatened the employment of its workers and asked how, as a member of the ALP’s industrial development committee, Bartholomaeus could attempt to stifle development. The division within Labor ranks was exploited by the Liberal government. In state parliament, Herzfeld suggested that the ALP was embarrassed at having Bartholomaeus as a member and that his activities might not be tolerated. ALP polarisation became complete when, in defiance of the parliamentary party, the state executive voted to support the Jarrah Class Action, with the executive’s conservation lobby arguing that multi-national corporations should be held accountable for their activities in the courts of their parent nations.
By the end of May 1981, the Jarrah Class Action had attracted the serious attention of the federal Liberal government. Peter Durack, the Attorney-General, said the government was ‘deeply concerned’, particularly regarding the implications of the action for the freedom of the Australian parliament to determine resource development policies. He advised that the Commonwealth government had already asked the United States government to intervene in the proceedings, and to consider the difficulties such action would pose for relations between the United States and Australia. On 8 June 1981 the Australian government, in consultation with the Western Australian government, filed an amicus curiae brief with the Pittsburgh District Court, challenging the jurisdiction of the court to hear the complaint, and submitting that ‘natural resource development and environmental protection within Australia are matters exclusively within the jurisdictional competence of the Australian nation.’

Reaction from the bauxite mining industry to the Jarrah Class Action was aimed at placing economic pressure on the state government. At Alcoa’s annual general meeting, company chairman Sir Arvi Parbo said the action by the Conservation Council displayed contempt for the Australian government, which had approved the company’s activities. He emphasised the great benefit of the industry to the nation and rejected the efforts of environmentalists to override Australia’s legal processes. James Vann, Alcoa’s general manager in Western Australia, suggested the Jarrah Class Action held frightening implications for Australian investment, given the country’s dependence on American capital, and voiced his company’s concern that a legal precedent could allow the American legal system to decide issues that should be decided within Australia. He called
for greater media coverage of the opinion of genuine ‘mature conservationists’, as opposed to those narrow-minded ‘callous environmentalists’ who tainted the conservation movement’s reputation through purporting to represent the general view. During the same week, Vann announced that Alcoa would not sign any contracts to purchase gas from the A$5 billion North-West Shelf offshore gas project until the class action lawsuit was settled.

While the Jarrah Class Action signified a departure from tactics of confrontational direct action, for the forest protest movement it also represented an innovative strategy that forced the state government and the mining companies to confront the struggle between the imperatives of intensive resource extraction and forest conservation. In practical terms the class action provided an opportunity for the forest protest movement to gather public support for the campaign to save Western Australia’s jarrah forests. Immediately following the initiation of legal proceedings, an international appeal for funds was launched at a public meeting in Perth Town Hall. The meeting, attended by over 700 people, heard guest speakers, including Vincent Serventy, explain why the action was being taken. The appeal sought to raise $100,000 to cover estimated legal costs, ideally by persuading one thousand Australians to donate $100 each. During March donations were received at the rate of $1,000 a day, and by the end of the month the Western Australian public had donated $27,000. By late May the fund had exceeded $50,000. At the campaign’s close, over 1,000 supporters had donated a total of $60,000, which left a deficit that the Conservation Council did not consider to be ‘debilitating’.

170
As well as appealing for donations, both the Conservation Council and the Campaign to Save Native Forests maintained constant pressure on politicians to support their action on behalf of ‘this class of concerned Australians’. Letters to parliamentarians lobbied for a public enquiry into the alumina industry, stronger environmental protection legislation, and reform of Australia’s legal system to enable concerned community groups to present their grievances as a ‘class’.70

The campaign was successful in attracting support from environmental organisations outside Western Australia. Two influential American groups, the Sierra Club and the National Resource Defence Council, offered their assistance71 and, in May 1981, the Australian Conservation Foundation decided to join the class action as a co-plaintiff. Geoff Mosley, the organisation’s director, said he believed that Australian citizens who were concerned about the impact of trans-national corporations’ activities on the Australian environment had the right to complain about those corporations.72 The Foundation pledged an initial contribution of $10,000.73

Although the forest protest movement was heartened by the level of support, allegations in the media that the Jarrah Class Action was being promoted by a small group of activists and that the issue had caused a rift within the environment movement were worrying. Alcoa general manager, James Vann, insisted that a serious split had formed between members of the Conservation Council, that the leadership did not speak for the collective membership,74 and that the action had been brought by a small group of people who were ideologically or politically motivated.75 The West Australian reported that the
class action had ‘raised wide dissension’ among Conservation Council members, and among groups associated with the Council. Additionally, the Western Mail described the Council as being ‘completely isolated’ over the issue, with little political, financial or grass roots support. Peter Brotherton, a member of the Australian Conservation Council Executive and manager of the Environment Centre of Western Australia, argued that the media allegations were fabrications designed to destabilise the campaign.

To counter the allegations of disunity, the Conservation Council of Western Australia unanimously passed a resolution stating:

...that this General Meeting of the Conservation Council condemns and deplores the misleading and mischievous speculation in the media that there are serious divisions within the Council over the Jarrah Class Action.

A further resolution expressed continuing support for the action, with 21 groups voting in favour, none opposed, and three abstentions. Neil Bartholomaeus, the Council’s president, said the show of solidarity refuted statements of a split within the Council and accusations that the action had been taken by a small clique.

There was, however, evidence that some environmental groups and individuals did not support the Conservation Council’s action. Ted Blythe, President of the Western Australian Division of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, reminded the Council that his organisation had abstained from the original motion to proceed with the Jarrah Class Action, and asked that the Institute’s name be removed from the legal complaint document. He considered the extensive publicity surrounding the action to be a potential source of
embarrassment and further requested that the Conservation Council forward a letter of apology to the National President of the Institute. While supporting the class action, the Tree Society observed that it was not consulted prior to the Conservation Council executive’s decision to commence proceedings. Prominent conservationist Harry Butler could not countenance the prospect of an American court exercising jurisdiction within Australia and decided to resign from all organisations that supported the Jarrah Class Action. He believed the action would divide the Australian conservation movement.

In the face of this opposition, the Conservation Council leadership remained resolute. On moving to Western Australia from Melbourne, Barbara Churchward became actively involved in forest issues during the 1970s after being impressed by the diversity and accessibility of Perth’s urban bushland. As Tree Society delegate to the Conservation Council of Western Australia, she became increasingly interested in environmental issues and was subsequently elected the Council’s secretary, assuming a key role in the Jarrah Class Action campaign. In a circular letter to affiliated groups she explained that the court action had been taken in order to force the United States to accept responsibility for the environmental effects of Alcoa’s operations and that the initiative had increased the awareness of Western Australians:

One consequence of the JCA is that the operations of the aluminium companies are now of concern to an increasing number of West Australians. They are questioning the ease with which the governments sign away the rights of the people to the benefits of a unique natural resource treasure – the Jarrah forest – in order to encourage multinationals to mine the Darling Range to produce one of the world’s most abundant minerals.
Churchward recalled that both Alcoa and the state government were 'horrified' at the audacity of the Conservation Council in initiating the class action and she believed the government regarded the action as undermining the agreement it had with Alcoa over bauxite mining.\textsuperscript{86}

Recalling the campaign as the first action of its kind by an Australian environmental group, Neil Bartholomaeus believes the Jarrah Class Action generated a high level of public opposition to bauxite mining expansion in Western Australia, with people deciding to support the court case who would not have considered taking part in non-violent direct action.\textsuperscript{87} He emphasised that a principal objective of the campaign was to highlight the fact that ordinary Australians, as environmentalists, could not seek relief on environmental issues on a class action basis within Australia. The Jarrah Class Action was, for Bartholomaeus, the ‘zenith’ of the Campaign to Save Native Forests’ activities.\textsuperscript{88}

On 9 July 1981, in the Pittsburg Pennsylvania District Court, Judge Maurice Cohill dismissed the class action complaint. The court held that it did not have subject-matter jurisdiction over the complaint, that the complainant had failed to state a cause of action under anti-trust legislation, and that the complainant had not stated a cause of action under Australian law.\textsuperscript{89} Bonyhady has argued that the class action was weakened through lawyer Yannacone’s attempt to base the action on anti-trust legislation. There was no allegation that the companies had ‘contracted, combined or conspired’ together, there was no proof that the companies had harmed the American economy, and there was no attempt to identify a market that had been influenced by anti-competitive conduct. The
case relied only on allegations of the detrimental effects of the companies’ operations on the Western Australian environment.\textsuperscript{90}

Although the Conservation Council seriously considered appealing the judgement, it finally decided not to proceed. Any appeal would have been restricted to laws that formed the basis of the February complaint and, as this had proved ineffective, it was agreed that resources would be better used in attempting to locate more appropriate legislation.\textsuperscript{91} Furthermore, the cost of mounting an appeal would have imposed an additional financial burden for a campaign that had already ‘placed great stress on the human and logistical reserves of the Council’.\textsuperscript{92} A measure of the effort expended on the class action can be gauged from the Conservation Council’s financial records, which show that, to the end of June 1981, the Jarrah Class Action Fund had received a total of $62,283.02, of which $51,292.64 was from donations.\textsuperscript{93}

Reaction to the court decision from the Western Australian state government and the mining industry was predictably one of relief. Premier Court interpreted the judgement as upholding the fact that foreign courts had no jurisdiction over the sovereignty of Australian parliaments. Alcoa affirmed the soundness of its environmental practices and believed the successful outcome would be a relief for its Western Australian employees.\textsuperscript{94}

The Jarrah Class Action emerged from a sense of frustration among forest activists at the inaction of the state government over measures to protect the jarrah forest and at the failure of Australian laws to provide an outlet for their
grievances. As a response to this sense of powerlessness, the initiation of the class action suit conforms to the reaction that Burgmann argues is typical of social movement development. Because the forest protest movement found that political authorities resisted its demands and were incapable of offering some form of redress, it felt compelled to resort to some form of protest. The identification of a common ‘enemy’, in this case, Alcoa’s bauxite mining operations in the jarrah forests, resulted in a campaign of collective action that challenged the state’s powerful elites. In increasing levels of practical support, particularly through substantial financial donations, with over 1,000 people contributing $60,000 to the Jarrah Class Action fund, the campaign also typifies Klandermans’ theory of participant mobilisation, whereby sympathisers are converted from a stage of ‘consensus mobilization’, or intellectual support, to that of ‘action mobilization’, when they are transformed into active participants, through donating money, time or skills.

The class action proved both confrontational and divisive. It was viewed by the state Liberal government as an audacious challenge to its authority and to Australia’s sovereignty – an opinion echoed by the federal government, the mining industry and the media. Equally, the state government’s position was influenced by the need to adopt a firm stance in order to placate the concerns of a major resource extraction industry. On a party political level, the issue polarised the Western Australian ALP, with the environmental lobby forcing a division between the state and parliamentary organisations. Evidence of dissent within the conservation movement over the court action was seized upon by bauxite
industry proponents in an attempt to weaken the campaign, forcing activists to defend their position.

While the Jarrah Class Action was ultimately dismissed and proved a failure as a protest strategy, nevertheless there were some benefits for the protest movement. The innovative tactic of seeking judgement on an Australian environmental issue in a United States court produced extensive media coverage, focusing attention on the threat to the jarrah forests. Furthermore, the class action drew attention to growing concerns over the control of trans-national corporations operating within Australia and the inability of the nation’s legal system to address the collective concerns of environmentalists.

‘Forests Forever’

Though smaller in scale, the ‘Forests Forever’ court action provides a further example of an attempt by the Western Australian forest protest movement to use the legal system as a protest strategy. As opposed to the class action, which aimed to restrict intensive bauxite mining in the jarrah forest, the 'Forests Forever' campaign sought to disprove media statements made by state government authorities and the timber industry that forest management practices such as clear-felling and prescribed burning exerted positive effects on the environment, arguing that this created a false optimism in the public mind about the future for Western Australia's forests.98

In 1979, the Forest Products Association of Western Australia and the Forests Department produced a film to counter public criticism of the timber industry.
The film *Forests Forever* was released in October 1979, and widely distributed in Perth and the state’s south-west. While critical of the film’s overall impression that the state’s forests had benefited and were flourishing because of sound forest management, activists were particularly incensed about the film’s claims in three key areas. Specifically, these comprised assertions that clear-felling could improve on natural processes, that prescribed burning caused no damage to forest ecology, and that the state’s reserves and national parks were huge areas of bushland that would never be touched.

As a result of these concerns, as well as concern over the potential effect of the film within the state’s education system, the South-West Forests Defence Foundation attempted to stop the film’s distribution or exhibition. The Foundation argued that the film breached Section 52 of the *Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974*, which states:

A corporation shall not, in trade or commerce, engage in conduct that is misleading or deceptive or is likely to mislead or deceive.

The SFDF remained unincorporated, and thus unable to take legal action in its own name, so Marlish Glorie, a committee member, acted as applicant in a representative action on behalf of the SFDF committee. As far as the SFDF knew, the case was the first of its kind whereby an Australian environmental group took action against industry representatives over claims made by them about the impact of their activities on the environment.

Because the Forest Products Association was also unincorporated, and the Forests Department, as a state government instrumentality, was outside the jurisdiction of the Trade Practices Act, the action was taken against the WA Chip
and Pulp Company, representing the Forest Products Association, and G.W. Kelly, the manager of that Association. In a ‘Statement of Claim’ filed in the Federal Court of Australia in November 1980, the SFDF Committee, through Marlish Glorie, sought a judgement that the film *Forests Forever* was misleading or deceptive or likely to mislead or deceive in that the beneficial effects of cool-season burns and clear-felling had not been verified, that there was false representation regarding areas of national parks and road and stream reserves, that, as opposed to remaining untouched, these areas were subject to prescribed burning and mining operations, and that the economic benefits of the Manjimup production centre could not be proved or disproved.103

The ‘Forests Forever’ court action was scheduled for hearing in the Perth Federal Court on 16 June 1981 – a date which forest activists noted as coinciding with the date of the commencement of the Jarrah Class Action in Pittsburgh, USA. Expert witnesses appearing on behalf of Marlish Glorie reflected the professionalism of the forest protest movement at that time. These comprised Dr John French, a CSIRO entomologist and forester from Victoria, Dr Alan Tingay, a Western Australian wildlife ecologist, and Dr Robert Whelan, a plant ecologist from Western Australia, working at the University of Florida. While the SFDF reported that it had managed to meet current expenses for the action, the organisation urgently requested additional donations from members and supporters to cover costs for the court hearing.104

The trial, conducted before Mr Justice Morling, lasted for nine days in June, which included two days to view the karri forest, and five further days in
September. The respondents in the action called eleven witnesses, comprising seven Forests Department officers, who included Bruce Beggs, the Conservator of Forests, Professor Eric Bachelard, a forestry professor from the Australian National University, Dr John Beard, chairman of the Forest Products Association, and two public relations staff.

Justice Morling handed down his decision in December 1981. He dismissed the application for declarations and injunctions, and awarded costs against Marlish Glorie. In summarising his decision, Justice Morling acknowledged the uniqueness of the case, commenting that he believed no similar action had been tried in Australia. He said that proof in the case depended on two questions: first, whether the film *Forests Forever* was intended to be exhibited in trade or commerce, and second, whether the film’s exhibition can be said to be misleading or deceptive. After considering the evidence, Justice Morling said he considered the film had been produced to protect the interests of the Forest Products Association and was thus exhibited in furtherance of trade or commerce.105

On the second question, however, Justice Morling believed the contentious statements in the film were merely expressions of opinion and, as such, were not misleading or deceptive:

I do not think that a statement is necessarily misleading or deceptive if it cannot be demonstrated to be correct beyond any doubt. Nor is it necessarily misleading or deceptive merely if it is not accompanied by words indicating that a contrary view is held by others.106
He asserted that when a statement is recognised as being an opinion, or a mixture of fact and opinion, the person addressed would understand that there was a possibility that a different opinion may be held elsewhere.

Beth Schultz, SFDF president, considered that the judgement presupposed a sophisticated audience that could distinguish between opinion and fact, and this was not the case. She believed that the authoritative role of the Forests Department in the production caused most viewers to accept the film as being factual. Although the action had been lost, Schultz observed that the campaign had resulted in some positive outcomes, including public evidence from Forests Department officers on forest management and policy which would remain on record for testing on future events. Summarising the implications of the case for Western Australia’s forest environment, she concluded:

The big gain that we made – any company in the future that makes a film of this sort or makes a statement of this sort will have to be very careful what it says, because if it says something that is false or misleading or deceptive there may well be someone who is ready to take them to court over it.

After the decision, wrangling over payment of costs continued for several months. The WA Chip and Pulp Company sought to recover $41,000 for legal expenses, however, as the applicant, Marlish Glorie, would be unable to meet those costs, the South-West Forests Defence Foundation offered $5,000 as settlement. After reducing its claim to $21,000 and then $10,000, the Company finally decided to accept the SFDF’s initial offer.

In the ‘Forests Forever’ court action the SFDF employed the strategy that had provided the basis for its formation – the use of the legal system to combat
threats to Western Australia’s forests. Like the Jarrah Class Action, although the case was lost, there were some benefits for the forest protest movement. As well as providing further media exposure that maintained public attention on the plight of Western Australia’s forests, on a broader scale, the use of litigation as a protest strategy in the Jarrah Class Action and the ‘Forests Forever’ court cases supported Hutton and Connors’ assertions of the conservation movement’s increased professionalism during the 1980s.\textsuperscript{111}

From the mid-1970s, Western Australia’s forest protest groups had maintained constant pressure on the state government and its agencies to preserve significant areas of forest from the encroachment of the mining and wood chip industries. It was not until the early 1980s, however, that they were able to mount two successful campaigns that not only provided inspiration and encouragement for forest activists after the failure of legal challenges, but also reflected the protest movement's orientation at that time towards strategies of negotiation and collaboration with authorities rather than direct confrontation.

**The Shannon Campaign**

The idea of protecting areas of native forest through their incorporation within parks and reserves has been a significant feature of approaches to forest conservation in Western Australia as elsewhere since the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{112} The creation of the Pinjarra flora and fauna reserve in 1894 marked the first real attempt in WA to preserve a large area of native bushland purely for its intrinsic value, even though the reserve was eventually sacrificed to the demands of the timber industry.\textsuperscript{113} In 1909 the Beedelup and Warren National Parks were
created in order that future generations could experience examples of virgin karri forest and, during the 1920s, a national park was established at Nornalup after the area became a focus for tourism. Between 1930 and 1969 there was little expansion of the conservation reserve estate in the south-west forests, and it was not until a 1970 campaign by the Western Australian Conservation Council that the newly-established Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) was prompted to take action in 1972 by establishing a Conservation Through Reserves Committee (CTRC) to examine the state’s reserve system and to report on proposals to expand it.\textsuperscript{114}

Occupying an area of approximately 58,000 hectares, the Shannon River Basin is situated between Walpole and Pemberton, and comprises 21,500 hectares of karri forest and a smaller area of jarrah and non-forest bushland. For conservationists the area represented a final opportunity to reserve an entire river catchment area in the state’s south-west that had not been the subject of intensive land clearing or logging.\textsuperscript{115}

The campaign to save the Shannon River Basin from exploitation has its origins in a 1974 Conservation Through Reserves Committee report, which recommended that clear felling should not be permitted in the Shannon River Basin during the first 15 years licence period of the Wood Chipping Agreement. It further recommended that, at the end of the 15 years moratorium, an area of karri forest should be set aside in perpetuity as a major conservation reserve and the area managed as though it were a national park. The Conservation Through Reserves Committee believed that the reserved area could provide a yardstick
with which to compare the effects of intensive forestry practices, such as clear felling and burning, on the karri forest, and recognised the area’s future economic potential as a tourist asset rather than a timber resource. Since their foundation in 1975, both the CSNF and the SFDF had urged the declaration of the Shannon River Basin as a national park and promoted the issue as one of their key objectives. Both organisations cited the Conservation Through Reserves Committee recommendations and drew attention to the depletion of the karri forests through wood chipping.

Bill Thomas, a foundation member of the CSNF and chairman of the ALP state conservation and environment committee from 1976 to 1986, believes it was the struggles taking place within the Western Australian Labor Party that provided the key elements of the Shannon campaign. The accuracy of this recall becomes more apparent when examining the political background to the Shannon debate. In September 1975, the Western Australian state executive of the ALP voted to initiate a new forests policy, and the party’s environment committee was tasked with preparing a report for endorsement at the 1976 state conference. Particular concerns had been expressed at the level of forest over-cutting, and the new policy included a proposal from the ALP state executive that the ALP support the creation of the Shannon National Park. The parliamentary party, however, feared that support for reservation of the Shannon would threaten the seat for Warren, held by Dave Evans, the Deputy Leader, and it was decided that the Shannon proposal would be opposed at the conference. Dr Syd Shea, who would later become the executive director of CALM but at the time was an
employee of the Forests Department and politically active within the ALP, moved the necessary amendment to block the Shannon recommendation.119

Reflecting on his decision to oppose the Shannon proposal, Dr Shea said that wood chipping had become a source of division within the ALP and he believed that, if the proposal was passed, it would signal the end of the saw-milling industry:

It’s ok to sit in Nedlands and pontificate about how important the forests are but there is some poor bastard down there who is going to have to live on $80 a week unemployment benefits with five or ten kids or some incredible thing, without a job. You’ve got to balance that!120

Furthermore, as a professional forester, he considered that the environmentalists’ representation of the Shannon Basin as a pristine total catchment area was technically flawed and that the Basin comprised several self-contained streams; therefore it was not necessary to reserve the entire area. Dr Shea concluded that, while his technical opinion played some part in the state conference overturning the Shannon proposal, there was also pressure within the ALP to abandon a politically sensitive issue in anticipation of a forthcoming state election.121

Arthur Tonkin, MLA for Morley, who chaired the ALP’s environmental committee, initially declared that the Party would support the Shannon proposal but subsequently shifted his stance after realising the political implications of the decision. He believed that south-west hostility towards the CSNF at the time over its stance against wood chipping and the potential electoral repercussions were both factors that generated opposition to the proposal.122 Finally, at the 1976 conference, the Shannon motion was defeated by show of hands, 105 votes to 48.123
Following the defeat, little progress occurred to protect the Shannon over the next four years. In its 1978 state platform, the ALP undertook to ensure that a management plan would be produced for the Shannon River Basin in order ‘to preserve the advantage of a contiguous reservation on a river basin scale’ but which would not exclude the area from timber production. While acknowledging the merit of reserving the entire Basin, the ALP argued that protecting the area solely for conservation would prejudice the application of multiple-use forest management practices.\(^{124}\)

At the 1980 ALP state conference, however, the Shannon reservation proposal was carried overwhelmingly. Bill Thomas attributed the change of heart to a greater level of sophistication among the Shannon’s main proponents. As the proposer, he was an influential trade union official able to lobby the union vote, and the seconder, Neil Bartholomaeus, was an articulate environmental advocate who had not been an ALP member at the time of the 1976 defeat. Thomas explained that after the 1976 motion defeat the CSNF had increased its influence through greater professionalism and that public sympathy for protecting the forests was increasing.\(^{125}\) The proposal to declare the 50,000 hectare Shannon River Basin a national park was included in the ALP 1980 state platform.\(^{126}\)

Despite this apparent victory for supporters of the Shannon proposal, the Western Australian ALP continued to vacillate on the issue. In September 1981, Brian Burke successfully challenged Ron Davies for leadership of the state parliamentary Labor Party. Echoing previous concerns, Burke became convinced that the Shannon issue posed a threat to Dave Evans’ seat of Warren,
and he proposed to allay these fears by removing the words “National Park” from the 1982 state conference platform. The CSNF lobbied ALP delegates attending the 1982 conference, urging them to support the retention of the 1980 policy commitment on the Shannon. It argued that reservation of the Shannon Basin would have no impact on jobs as employment within the timber industry had already declined by 41% since 1965. At the conference, the pro-conservation lobby supported by left-wing union members triumphed, and the ALP’s commitment to the Shannon National Park remained.

Neil Bartholomaeus has provided a personal account of the conflict that was taking place within the state ALP at that time. Bartholomaeus, a committed environmentalist, was a member of both the CSNF and the SFDF. He had also been a member of the Western Australian Liberal Party until he resigned after becoming frustrated at his inability to change the Party’s environmental policies. In 1978 Bartholomaeus joined the ALP, and in 1979 became the endorsed candidate for the seat of Mundaring. His support for the reservation of the Shannon Basin at the 1982 State Conference attracted criticism and threats of expulsion from the Party:

It was uncomfortable at that time being involved in environmental issues, personally uncomfortable, but you know you can either have an exciting life and attempt to change things, or a comfortable life...you can’t do both. I never really gave a lot of thought to not getting on with these things that we felt should be done, and we felt everything we could do should be done, and we pretty well did everything we could.

Bartholomaeus’ experience provides a further illustration of how the Western Australian forest protest movement was strengthened by a succession of prominent personalities and public figures who were willing to take a stand to protect the state's forests.

187
During 1982, the campaign to reserve the Shannon Basin gathered momentum. With a destabilised Liberal Party following the resignation of Premier Court in the previous year and a revitalised and supportive Labor Party, the forest protest movement was optimistic that success with the Shannon was within its grasp. In order to present their views on management of the south-west karri forests, and as a response to the Environmental Protection Authority’s call for submissions on options for the Shannon River Basin, the CSNF, SFDF, and the Conservation Council of Western Australia presented a collective proposal *Karri at the Crossroads* arguing for the conservation of the karri forest, based on principles of multiple-use sustained-yield management, with improved levels of forest reservation. The groups concluded that diversification of the south-west’s forest-based economy was essential in order to halt the decline in employment within the timber industry. While the creation of the Shannon National Park was a central feature of the proposal, the publication drew attention to the state government’s inability to protect forests located within national parks, which could be subject to mining and logging with parliamentary approval.130

Publication of the conservationists’ study generated greater public interest in the Shannon debate with group representatives given the opportunity to state their case on Perth radio station 6WF. Beth Schultz from the SFDF, Barbara Churchward of the Conservation Council, and ex-forester John Thomson participated in a discussion and talk-back programme debating the question whether or not Western Australia’s karri forests were being managed effectively. During the discussion, Churchward explained that the *Karri at the Crossroads* report had been produced as part of a strategy to stimulate public debate and
encourage people to make submissions on the future of the Shannon Basin. The report, she believed, provided a future perspective for the karri forest that was compatible with timber production while allowing for adequate conservation, and offered an alternative plan to that proposed by the Forests Department. The debate prompted a telephone response from Bob Bunning, general manager of the timber division of Bunning Bros Pty Ltd, who argued that 30% of karri forest had already been reserved in the Manjimup area and that further reservation would have a serious effect on forest industries.131

The tactics employed by the forest protest movement at this time, such as producing informed publications and participating in media discussion groups, continued to reflect a non-confrontational approach to protest which was aimed at persuading people to support forest protection. The Conservation Council invited the public to participate in ‘The Shannon Karri National Park project’, which it described as a ‘joint effort by the Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), Conservation Council of WA, and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation’. It appealed for generous donations to the ‘Shannon Karri National Park Fund’, and urged supporters to lobby politicians and write submissions to the State Environmental Protection Authority in response to a request for public comment.132

The campaign also attracted support from organisations in eastern Australia. The Victorian National Parks Association wrote to the Department of Conservation and Environment voicing its concern at the lack of adequate karri reserves in Western Australia and expressing support for the creation of the Shannon
National Park. A submission from the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in Hobart concluded that the Shannon campaign was vital in retaining a significant area of the south-west karri forests for present and future generations.

In November 1982, the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Environment released a report by Dr Peter Attiwill, a forester and plant ecologist from Melbourne University, who had been commissioned by the Environmental Protection Authority to undertake a study of present and proposed karri reserves, including the Shannon River Basin. On the basis of Dr Attiwill’s report, the State Liberal-National Party Coalition Government adopted six of the seven recommendations regarding management of the karri forests, but fell short of supporting the declaration of the Shannon River Basin as a national park on the basis that the area was in need of rehabilitation. While conservationists welcomed the adoption of the majority of the EPA’s recommendations regarding management of the karri forests, the reasons given for not reserving the Shannon Basin were regarded as a pretext to ensure the continued exploitation of the area by the timber industry. Forest activists were further angered by an announcement that the state government had decided to continue clear-felling in the Shannon Basin, using the excuse that parts of the forest were fire-damaged.

The election of the Burke Labor Government in February 1983 signalled the start of an intensive effort by Western Australian environmentalists to ensure the new administration fulfilled its pledge to create the Shannon National Park. Brian Burke’s pre-election policy speech had made no reference to the Shannon, or,
indeed, to the environment. In a meeting with the new Premier, representatives from the Conservation Council, CSNF and SFDF drew attention to impending logging in the Shannon Basin, and received an assurance that the state government intended to implement the ALP platform to declare the Shannon a national park. The Forests Department would be asked to formulate a management plan that would guarantee the timber industry alternative sources of timber.

Meanwhile, the fight for the Shannon continued in the newspapers. The SFDF called on the state government to direct the timber industry to leave the Shannon Basin, and on the timber companies to demonstrate some public spirit and concede the area to the people of Western Australia. Environmentalists emphasised the potential economic benefits of tourism and multiple-use forest industries, as opposed to the devastating impact of clear-felling and redundancies caused by new technologies. The West Australian newspaper sided with the timber industry, arguing that the state government would be foolish to alienate voters in the south-west, and that ‘controlled harvesting’ of the karri forests would protect the livelihood of timber workers. In an employee newsletter, the Bunnings Group of Companies stated its opposition to the proposition by ‘environmental pressure groups’ to create the Shannon National Park, believing the proposal would cause a dramatic reduction in the timber industry’s log resource. The Group invited comments from employees and suggested they communicate their feelings to parliamentarians, as it was important that the government receive input from the people most affected.
In October 1983, a public meeting, attended by 500 residents, was held in Manjimup to discuss the impact of a state government decision to close the Shannon Basin to logging. Premier and Minister for Forests, Brian Burke, failed to convince the meeting that there were valid reasons for the Shannon’s closure and angered the audience by referring some questions to CSNF President, Bill Hare. The meeting concluded with an overwhelming show of support for the Manjimup Shire Council’s opposition to the state government’s action in closing the Shannon to logging.144

To support its argument against the Shannon proposal, the Shire Council subsequently produced a brochure disputing conservationists’ assertions that the Shannon Basin was worth preserving and that tourism could replace the local timber industry. The Shire recommended that certain areas of the Basin should be reserved as “Forest Sanctuaries”, with the remainder managed by the Forests Department for commercial logging.145 The SFDF responded by circulating a letter to Manjimup residents, condemning the Council’s bias in favour of wood production and its apparent insensitivity to the area’s natural beauty. It further drew attention to inconsistencies in the Council’s argument: on the one hand the Shire argued that the Basin had been heavily logged and was not worth preserving, yet also stated that once ‘rehabilitated’, meaning ‘logged’, the area would be suitable as a national park.146

While the Shannon Basin’s environmental significance had been acknowledged through designation of some parts of the Basin as management priority areas, the CSNF argued that this did not guarantee long-term security and that there was
continuing pressure from within the state government and the timber lobby to prevent the Shannon being granted national park status. The group urged the Western Australian public to visit the Shannon Basin and experience its forests and then write a letter or submission to the Department of Conservation and Land Management, commenting on the proposed draft management plan for the area and stressing the desirability of national park status.\textsuperscript{147}

There was also evidence that Western Australians were becoming more sympathetic towards forest conservation. In July 1985, the Conservation Council of Western Australia commissioned a public opinion survey to determine what people thought about national parks and how much they knew about them. The results of the survey were compared with a previous study conducted in 1982, which had found that Western Australians felt that the loss of flora and fauna was the most important environmental issue at the time with the majority of people having little knowledge of how conservation reserves helped to prevent those losses. The later survey revealed that nearly 70\% of respondents considered national parks to be important or very important with most people understanding the role of national parks in protecting the natural environment.\textsuperscript{148}

At the 1986 ALP state conference following the re-election of the Burke Government, it was unanimously decided to upgrade karri forest conservation areas with a view to their establishment as national parks. The SFDF congratulated the ALP on its decision, considering that the move demonstrated the party’s genuine commitment to conserving the world’s only karri forest and
emphasising that only national park status would protect the Shannon Basin from plans to turn the forest into wood chip plantations.\textsuperscript{149}

In June 1987, the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Barry Hodge MLA, introduced a motion in the Western Australian Parliament to revoke part of the Shannon Basin as state forest, with the intention of creating the Shannon National Park.\textsuperscript{150} The debate in the Legislative Assembly produced accusations from the Shadow Minister for the Environment, Barry Blaikie, that the government had not fully considered the economic and social implications of the Shannon proposal, and that the decision to proceed had occurred because of the Labor Party’s association with radical extremists within the conservation movement. An amendment proposed by the Opposition to reduce the area of revocation was defeated and the matter passed to the Upper House.\textsuperscript{151}

The importance of the impending Legislative Council debate for forest conservation in Western Australia was recognised by the Australian Conservation Foundation, which saw the state government motion to excise the Shannon from state forest and declare it a national park as the culmination of a 13-year struggle to protect the karri forests. Conservationists organised a delegation and rally to lobby parliamentarians to support the motion.\textsuperscript{152} Although the Legislative Council debate proved an anti-climax, with the matter adjourned until spring to allow consideration of further public submissions,\textsuperscript{153} the impact of two developments during the intervening period exerted a crucial influence on the outcome of the Shannon issue.
In mid-October 1987, a committee of inquiry, established in August by the Minister for Conservation and Land Management to consider the implications of creating the Shannon River Basin National Park, delivered its findings. The committee, chaired by Department of Conservation and Land Management executive director Dr Syd Shea, concluded that plans to reserve the area as a national park had ‘scientific merit’, and that the reservation would have no long-term impact on the economic viability of the timber industry. Even more importantly, the National Party, which controlled the balance of power in the Legislative Council, indicated its willingness to compromise over the Shannon issue provided certain conditions were met. These conditions included an undertaking that the state government would underwrite any job losses that occurred in the Manjimup Shire as a result of the creation of the Shannon River National Park, the submission of annual reports to Parliament on effects on timber industry employment, and a guarantee that the Department of Conservation and Land Management would not purchase more private land in the Manjimup Shire for afforestation without obtaining the prior approval of parliament.

During the ensuing Legislative Council debate, Gordon Masters, Leader of the Opposition, said the Liberal Party recognised that the majority of people in the community were concerned about the environment but that, while party members agreed there should be a national park in the Shannon River Basin, they believed the area proposed by the government was too large. He urged the Liberal and National parties to reject the motion in its present form. Harry Gayfor, MLC, Central, said the National Party would support the motion only if the government
agreed in writing to the guarantees previously circulated. In response, Kay Hallahan, Minister for Community Services, said the government was happy to provide the undertaking. With National Party support, the motion of revocation that would open the way for the creation of the Shannon Basin National Park was finally passed.

The decision sparked a period of celebration for Western Australia’s forest conservationists. Letters of congratulations were forwarded to those who had supported the Shannon campaign. The Conservation Council commended the Burke Government for honouring its commitment and believed the decision reflected a far-sighted vision for the long-term interests of the community. Similarly, the Australian Conservation Foundation saw the decision as a victory for all Western Australians, and the successful culmination of 12 years of public debate. The crucial part played by the Western Australian National Party in passing the motion was acknowledged by the SFDF, which believed the declaration of the Shannon Basin National Park to be ‘the most important event in the history of forest conservation in Western Australia’. A response from Hendy Cowan, MLA, Leader of the Western Australian National Party, acknowledged previous representations to him from the SFDF on the Shannon proposal and conveyed the National Party’s feeling of pride at playing a leading role in the issue.

Despite the victory in parliament, the Shannon still occupied the attention of conservationists for a further year. Frustrations grew at what appeared to be government procrastination over the official declaration of national park status.
Criticism from the Australian Conservation Foundation attracted an angry response from Barry Hodge, who was ‘bitterly disappointed’ that the government’s commitment to the Shannon could be questioned after such a long and hard struggle. He explained that delays had arisen over the complex process of defining the area’s boundaries, however, the process was well advanced, and he undertook to have the park declared before the end of 1988.163 The revocation of those areas of State Forest that would become the Shannon Basin National Park was finally proclaimed on 16 December 1988.164

The successful campaign to protect the Shannon Basin karri forest contained major implications for the future of native forest protest in Western Australia. While the elevation of the Shannon to national park status had been an objective of the conservation movement since the mid-1970s, it was a sequence of events during the early 1980s that provided the impetus for an intensification of campaign activities. By that time, conservationists had increased their level of influence within the ALP to the extent that they were able to gain a firm commitment to preserve the Shannon. The installation of a sympathetic Labor Government in 1983 both enhanced the power of the conservation lobby and raised the profile of forest issues in the eyes of Western Australian electors. The relevance of the Shannon campaign for forest protest lay not simply in its ability to unite the movement over a common cause but, more significantly, in empowering the movement to negotiate within the state’s political arena from a position of strength.
Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve

While the early 1980s can thus be regarded as a pivotal period for the campaign by Western Australian conservation groups to protect the south-west’s karri forest, also at that time a parallel campaign was initiated to preserve a large section of the northern jarrah forest. Like the Shannon campaign, the jarrah reserve initiative provides further evidence of how the forest protest movement was able to achieve a successful campaign outcome by adopting strategies of negotiation within a changing political landscape.

The area concerned was located between Dwellingup and Collie (see Map 5.2.), and included the original 1894 Pinjarra Reserve, which was discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Some observers have suggested that the loss of this reserve to forest production in 1911 provided the inspiration for the 1980s campaign. Again, the jarrah forest campaign evolved through the activities of the Environmental Protection Authority’s Conservation Through Reserves Committee, which was tasked in 1972 with reviewing Western Australia’s nature reserves and national parks, and making recommendations for additional reserves and their use and management. The Committee divided the state into twelve ‘systems’, with the northern jarrah forest included in System Six. By the late 1970s, the Committee had made recommendations for all except Systems Six and Seven. The Forests Department was also developing a system of conservation and recreation Management Priority Areas to counter proposals for more national parks.
Map 5.2. Location of the proposed reserve. Source: *Jarrah Reserve: A Proposal for a major reserve in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Western Australia*, Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.) 1980, p.18.
Following recognition of the difficulties with resolving complex land-use issues, the Conservation Through Reserves Committee was replaced in 1976 by a System Six Committee, which had responsibility to systematically evaluate areas proposed for future conservation. The exclusion of conservationists from representation prompted criticism that the Committee reflected only the interests of the state government and industry. Input from community groups and the conservation movement was allowed only through the medium of public submissions.

In November 1979, the Conservation Council of Western Australia circulated a letter to various community organisations, seeking endorsement for a proposal from a ‘group of conservationists, academics and concerned individuals’ who were attempting to secure a Class A Reserve in the northern jarrah forest. The proposal was prompted by recognition of a need to preserve a representative portion of the state’s remaining jarrah forest for ‘science and posterity’, and to satisfy a demand for recreational space in the face of technological advancement and urban growth. The reserve would not only ensure the preservation of flora and fauna but also cater for scientific research, public education, tourism, recreation, and the provision of a ‘wilderness experience’. A published document setting out the proposal in detail formed the basis of the submission, and organisations were encouraged to allow their names to be included in order to demonstrate a broad spectrum of support. During succeeding months the Conservation Council worked on an authoritative document to provide a compelling argument for the establishment of the jarrah forest reserve. An inspired tactical manoeuvre added considerable weight to its case.
The month following the approach to community organisations, Bernard Mahon, the Conservation Council’s co-ordinator, wrote to former Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck about the jarrah reserve proposal suggesting that, if he felt inclined to support the idea by writing a foreword to the Council’s published proposal, his influence would provide a major boost to the project. In March 1980, Mahon reminded Hasluck of the suggestion that he write a foreword, stating he had been encouraged by his ‘known concern on environmental matters and especially with regard to our forests.’ Hasluck eventually agreed to write the foreword after voicing concerns over the need to obtain Forests Department and National Parks Authority support prior to the reserve’s declaration, and that the reserve would be free from external interests. His observations lent an influential voice to the Conservation Council’s campaign:

This booklet presents a proposal which deserves attention by everyone who loves the land in which we live and cares about its treasures. It also calls for fundamental reconsideration of the impact of development on the environment...The jarrah forest of the South-West of Western Australia is unique...If it is destroyed it cannot be restored. At best what is unique may be replaced by what is commonplace. At worst, we may see the desolation of a deteriorating environment...The concept of preserving the forest as a whole is put forward clearly and imaginatively for thoughtful consideration. It deserves close study and I trust that from that study all those who are concerned with one aspect or another of the problem will be able to join in a constructive effort...The full civilised man restrains his greed and looks for some other guide than his own appetites or his own material advantage.

The publication’s title page contained evidence of the forest protest movement’s continuing professionalism, with a statement that the work included contributions from ‘botanists, consultant wildlife ecologists, a research scientist, graduates and students in the arts, environmental science and anthropology’. 
In a comprehensive proposal, the Conservation Council suggested the consolidation of existing Forests Department Management Priority Areas to provide a reserve of some 77,000 hectares, with the main objective of preserving representative portions of the jarrah forest ecosystems. The proposal emphasised the requirement that the reserve be afforded the protection of Class A status, which could be revoked only by Act of Parliament. While acknowledging that other bodies such as the System Six Committee would be making recommendations for vesting and management, the Council argued that control of the proposed reserve should rest with a separate authority. It was felt that the National Parks Authority was ill-equipped to manage the reserve, and that the Forests Department’s management practices were ‘inimical to conservation’. The publication concluded with a list of 89 organisations that had endorsed, in principle, the proposal to create a major reserve in the northern jarrah forest.175

The release of the Conservation Council Jarrah reserve proposal in June 1980, and particularly the endorsement from Sir Paul Hasluck, produced widespread media interest. In an interview on television’s Nationwide, Norman Halse, President of the Council, said that the jarrah forest was not sufficiently protected by the Forests Department and that immediate action was necessary to guarantee legal protection from the Department’s forestry activities. Interviewer John Mills commented that, if Premier Court would not listen to the Conservation Council, he might be more inclined to listen to Sir Paul Hasluck’s comments in the foreword to the proposal document.176 During a radio interview, Gordon Masters, the Minister for Conservation and the Environment, said he was
disappointed that the Conservation Council had not presented the proposal earlier as part of the System Six study. When asked about the apparent contradiction between setting aside an area as a national park and then granting mineral rights, he replied that, while he believed national parks should be set aside and preserved as far as possible, the government had a responsibility to consider whether the development of resources would be of general benefit to the public. Masters said he felt that the needs of people took priority over the environment and there had to be a balanced approach to development.177

The Conservation Council publication effectively elevated the jarrah reserve proposal into a mainstream political issue and provided the forest protest movement with an opportunity to capitalise on enhanced public interest in preserving the forests. Conservationists were aware of the strategic value of Sir Paul Hasluck’s contribution to the campaign and expressed their gratitude to him for the nationwide interest that resulted.178 By mid-June, over 100 organisations and four of the five major political parties had endorsed the proposal. The Australian Democrats, the Conservation Committee of the ALP, and the National Country Party (WA) had given full endorsement, and the National Party provisional endorsement.179 The 1980 ALP state conference endorsed a platform that included an undertaking to ‘establish a National Park in the northern jarrah forest of not less than 100,000 hectares in extent.’180

Unfortunately, for forest activists, the mood of optimism generated by the initial public response to the jarrah reserve proposal was followed by a period of frustration at state government procrastination over the issue. The CSNF
believed the long delay in the release of the System Six recommendations was attributable to pressure from the bauxite mining industry to protect its interests in the jarrah forests, and that the Conservation Council's jarrah reserve proposal itself was, in effect, a compromise that attempted to mollify competing interests. It considered the Council’s proposal to protect only 7% of the jarrah forest was insufficient and that a much larger area should be preserved from mining and dieback disease. Finally, the CSNF believed there were indications that the state government had decided that the jarrah reserve would not become a reality despite widespread public support.\textsuperscript{181}

Release of the long-awaited Darling Range System Six report in April 1981 produced further disenchantment among environmentalists. The report was seen as subordinating environmental protection issues to the imperatives of industrial development, and endorsing the environmentally ineffective practices of the Forests Department. There were concerns that the report would be regarded by the state government as validation for its policies and practices towards native forests, and used as a ‘weapon’ against the environmental movement.\textsuperscript{182} Further dissension resulted from a decision by the Minister for Conservation, Gordon Masters, to withdraw the support of his Department for a Community Committee that had been established to promote discussion on the System Six report. While the Minister justified his action on the grounds of impartiality, the move attracted accusations that he was unhappy with environmentalist representation on the committee and was attempting to stall the discussion process.\textsuperscript{183}
In November 1981, the CSNF resorted to a strategy of non-violent direct action, and organised a rally at Parliament House to protest against the inadequacies of the System Six report and to promote the case for a jarrah national park, similar to the Blue Mountains National Park west of Sydney.\textsuperscript{184} The rally, attended by more than 500 people, responded noisily to Gordon Masters, the Environment Minister, when he argued that the state government had a favourable environmental record. Environmental activist Alan Tingay alleged that approximately 30\% of the northern jarrah forest had been set aside for bauxite mining and argued for the reservation of at least 10\% of the area.\textsuperscript{185}

Forest campaigners urged the public to pressure the state Liberal government into implementing the jarrah reserve proposal by presenting submissions on the System Six report before the 30 November closing date. The Conservation Council pointed out that, if the report’s recommendations were implemented, there would be no national park in the northern jarrah forest and offered to provide speakers to interested community groups. A suggested submission letter addressed to the Department of Conservation and Environment was circulated to encourage a large public response.\textsuperscript{186} In a specially-produced broadsheet, the CSNF called for greatly increased conservation and recreation reserves in Western Australia’s south-west forests and argued that within 70 years bauxite mining would have destroyed or degraded 400,000 hectares of the northern jarrah forest. While the Forests Department’s Management Priority Areas were supposedly designed to protect sections of forest for scientific research, water catchment, conservation and recreation, the boundaries could be altered through
pressure from the mining and timber industries, and they did not afford long-term security.\textsuperscript{187}

As was the case with the Shannon Basin, material progress on the creation of a northern jarrah forest reserve did not occur until the election of the 1983 Burke Labor Government, when conservationists called upon the ALP to honour the commitment made in its 1980 State Platform. Some indication that the issue was receiving early attention by the new government can be gauged from a response in Parliament from Brian Burke, Premier and Minister for Forests, who, when asked his government’s intentions, replied that the matter of a jarrah reserve was ‘under active consideration’.\textsuperscript{188}

In October 1983, the state government announced that it would establish a major jarrah reserve around the Murray Valley, initially covering 49,000 hectares, with a provision for further expansion. While three-quarters of the reserve would be zoned for conservation and protected from mining or timber extraction, these latter activities could be carried out in the remaining ‘recreation’ zone, subject to rehabilitation requirements. The creation of the reserve was promoted by the government as a demonstration of a consultative rather than confrontational approach to resolving issues of land use that reflected its commitment to both conservation and the interests of the hardwood timber industry.\textsuperscript{189} The Conservation Council gave qualified support to the decision. While applauding the government’s apparent recognition of the jarrah forest’s value for conservation and recreation, the Council considered the proposal to allow logging and mining in the recreation zone to be unacceptable.\textsuperscript{190}
In December 1984, Premier Burke announced the addition of a further 48,000 hectares to jarrah forest reserves between Mundaring and Bridgetown, boosting the total reserve to 96,000 hectares of prime jarrah forest. The largest reserve of 52,000 hectares, centred on the Murray River Basin, would be named the “Lane-Poole Reserve”, after one of the state’s most prominent foresters.191 The proposal to increase the overall size of the jarrah reserve attracted strong opposition from mining and timber interests, which believed the reservation threatened the long-term future of both industries. Subsequent negotiations achieved a compromise, whereby resource extraction companies agreed to relinquish part of their claims within the main reserve area and the state government reduced the amount of the area to be reserved.192

During 1986, public comments and submissions were invited in response to the Department of Conservation and Land Management’s proposed management plan for the Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve. The CSNF, which at that time described itself as ‘a voluntary conservation organization comprising approximately 500 members’, objected to the reduction in size of the reserve from the original proposal, and the allowance of logging within one section. The organisation believed that these concessions demonstrated the state government’s lack of commitment to jarrah forest conservation.193 In February 1987, nine reserves, comprising a total area of 51,600 hectares, and later collectively named the “Lane-Poole Reserve”, were accorded ‘A’ Class status and changed from state forest to reserves vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA).194
The Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve campaign further illustrated how, during the 1980s, forest protest in Western Australia was maturing into a co-ordinated and professional social movement. While the jarrah reserve publication was presented under the banner of the Conservation Council, the proposal originated from the combined efforts of several environmental groups and individuals who supported the central idea of preserving part of the jarrah forest for posterity. The subsequent endorsement of the proposal by over 100 community groups emphasised the sense of collectivism and enhanced public support that the campaign had generated. In summary, the Jarrah Reserve campaign was strategically successful through a combination of the forest protest movement’s capacity to present a cogently argued case that was supported by an eminent public figure and, like the Shannon campaign, the movement’s ability to capitalise on the election of a sympathetic Labor government.

The early 1980s marked a significant turning-point for forest protest in Western Australia. It was a time of optimism and opportunity that saw the protest movement adopt strategies aimed at persuasion and public education rather than direct confrontation. The foundation of a local branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in Perth to support the Franklin River campaign resulted in the establishment of valuable communication networks with Australia's eastern states and stimulated public awareness of much broader threats to the environment that were occurring beyond the boundaries of Western Australia. During the campaign against the expansion of wood chipping, the protest movement employed tactics aimed at raising public awareness of forest issues through media debates and forest visits. Although the Jarrah Class Action failed
as a protest strategy, as the first legal action of its kind brought by Australian environmentalists it attracted worldwide publicity about the threat to Western Australia's jarrah forests from bauxite mining. The campaigns to protect the Shannon River Basin and to establish a reserve in the northern jarrah forest were successful because of a change in the forest protest movement's strategies that led the movement to negotiate its position within a shifting state ALP policy platform and to hold the newly-elected Labor government to its commitments. Campaign leaders Tom Hogarth, Neil Bartholomaeus, Beth Schultz, Barbara Churchward and Bernard Mahon were representative of a succession of prominent forest activists who would continue to influence the organisation and strategies of the Western Australian forest protest movement.

Despite the failure of its legal challenges, the early 1980s demonstrated how the protest movement was able to achieve some successes by employing a combination of different strategies other than direct action to educate the public about the need to protect the state's forests and, most crucially, to strengthen its influence within the state ALP. Like the Franklin campaign in Tasmania, whose ultimate success followed the election of a federal Labor government, the Western Australian forest protest movement's successes in the early 1980s also resulted from the election of a sympathetic state Labor administration which, as Hutton and Connors have observed about the environmental movement, generated an optimistic belief that the Labor Party offered the best option for achieving good environmental outcomes. Both the major victories for the protest movement in the early 1980s related to specific areas of forest, and the campaigns were driven by well-organised Perth-based forest protest groups that
were able to exploit the favourable relationship they had cultivated with the new state Labor government. The late 1980s would not only challenge that relationship through testing the ability of those groups to influence the much broader subject of state government forest policy, but also herald the rise of an organised and effective forest protest network in Western Australia's south-west.
ENDNOTES


3 Letter from Tom Hogarth to State Executive, Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Hobart, Tasmania, dated 18 June 1979, Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


8 Letter from T.W.S. Hogarth to The Hon. J.M. Fraser, dated 13 May 1980, Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


10 ‘Blockade Bulletin No.1’, Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


14 ‘Why Should WA Be Interested In Tasmania?’, publicity leaflet, TWS (WA), 1982, Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


23 *ibid.*


25 *ibid.*

26 Letter from Norman Halse, President, Conservation Council of Western Australia, to The Hon. D.S. Thompson, Minister for Science and the Environment, Canberra, dated 4 June 1980, Schultz private archives.

27 Letter from David Thomson, Minister for Science & the Environment, Canberra, to Mr N. Halse, President, Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., dated 8 July 1980, Schultz private archives.

28 Letter from Barbara Churchward, Hon. Secretary, Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., to Mr J.L. Farrands, Secretary, Department of Science and the Environment, Woden, ACT, dated 10 September 1980, Schultz private archives; letter from Barbara Churchward, Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., to Mr B. Beggs,

Letter from Mrs. C. Hooper, General Secretary, The Tree Society, Claremont, WA, to Mr C.F. Porter, Chairman, Environmental Protection Authority, Perth, dated 24 July 1980, Schultz private archives.

CSNF Newsletter, July 1980, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.

CSNF Newsletter, November 1980, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.


Science Show, 13 July 1982, Churchward audio tape archives.

ibid.

ibid.


West Australian, 26 February 1981.


Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 November 2004.


Western Mail, 21 February 1981.

Jarrah Class Action Legal Complaint: The Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc. (Plaintiffs) v Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA) and Reynolds Metal Co. (Defendants), February 1981, p.48, Battye Q.347.73053JAR.

ibid., p.6, pp.49-53.


West Australian, 27 February 1981.


Radio 6WF, talk-back discussion, Churchward audio tape archives.

Western Mail, 21 March 1981; Fremantle Gazette, 29 April 1981, p.5.

West Australian, 7 March 1981.


ibid., pp.496-520.

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 7 April 1981.

Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 November 2004.


West Australian, 14 April 1981.


73 *West Australian*, 7 May 1981.

74 ibid.


76 *West Australian*, 23 March 1981.

77 *Western Mail*, 28 March 1981, 4 April 1981.


80 ibid.


82 Letter from J.E. Blythe, President, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, WA Group, to Mr Neil Bartholomaeus, President, Conservation Council of Western Australia, dated 25 March 1981, Battye ACC 4543A/37/7.


84 Letter from Harry Butler to Dr J.G. Mosley, Director, Australian Conservation Foundation, Hawthorn, Victoria, dated 26 March 1981, Battye ACC 4543A/37/7.


96 Conservation Council of Western Australia, circular letter dated 28 October 1981, Battye ACC 4543A/37/7.


100 Beth Schultz, interview with Peter Hunt, ABC radio, 1982, Churchward audio tape archives.


106 ibid., p.42.
107 ibid., p.43.
108 ibid.
109 Beth Schultz, interview with Peter Hunt, ABC radio, 1982, Churchward audio tape archives.
116 Conservation Reserves in Western Australia, Conservation Through Reserves Committee, Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia, 1974; Karri Forest Facts: Facts and Figures about Western Australia’s Karri Forest, South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc., October 1986, pp.53-54.
127 Memorandum from CSNF to 1982 ALP State Conference Delegates, Battye ACC 4543A/43/1.
133 Letter from Victorian National Parks Association to Mr Colin Porter, Director of Department of Conservation and Environment, Perth, dated 19 March 1982, Battye ACC 4543A/43/1.
134 ‘Submission to the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Environment on Karri Forests and the Shannon National Park’, Tasmanian Wilderness Society,
Hobart, 8 April 1982, Battye ACC 4543A/43/1.


South-West Forests Defence Foundation Newsletter, November 1982, Schultz private archives.

136 West Australian, 20 November 1982, p.3.

137 Australian Labor Party, WA Branch, Policy Speech, 1983 Election, Brian Burke, 7 February 1983, Parliament of Western Australia Library, 324.294107AUS.


139 West Australian, 31 March 1983; West Australian, Letters to the Editor, 21 April 1983, p.6.

140 West Australian, Letters to the Editor, 18 April 1983, p.6.

141 West Australian, editorial, 4 April 1983, p.6.

142 West Australian, Letters to the Editor, 18 April 1983, p.6.

143 West Australian, editorial, 4 April 1983, p.6.


145 Save the Shannon Sensibly, publicity brochure, Shire of Manjimup, 1984, Battye ACC 4543A/43/7.

146 SFDF circular letter to Manjimup residents, dated March 1984, Battye ACC 4543A/43/3.


157 ibid., pp.4935-4936.

158 ibid., p.4950.


160 ‘Shannon Decision Heralded as Victory for All West Australians’, news release, ACF (WA), Perth, 24 October 1987, Battye ACC 4543A/43/2.

161 Letter from Ian Maley, President, SFDF Inc. to Mr Hendy Cowan MLA, Leader of the National Party of Australia (WA), dated 26 October 1987, Schultz private archives.

162 Letter from Hendy Cowan MLA, Leader of the National Party of Australia (WA), to Ian Maley, dated 30 October 1987, Schultz private archives.


164 Government Gazette, WA, No.120, 16 December 1988, p.4868.


166 Lane Poole Reserve, Management Plan, 1990-2000, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth, p.4.

167 Established in 1976, the System Six Committee comprised six specialist committees tasked to assess submissions; provide an inventory of natural ecosystems and land uses; propose areas suitable for conservation and recreation; resolve land-use conflicts; and examine planning and


Letter from Bernard Mahon to Sir Paul Hasluck, dated 15 December 1979, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.


Jarrah Reserve: A Proposal for a major reserve in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Western Australia, Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.), 1980, title page, Conservation Council archives.

ibid.

Transcript of Nationwide television interview on the Jarrah reserve proposal, 9 June 1980, Battye ACC 4543A/44/6.


Letter from Bernard Mahon to Sir Paul Hasluck, dated 21 June 1980, Mahon, private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.

Letter from Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.) to The General Manager, Alcoa Australia (WA), dated 11 June 1980, Battye ACC 4543A/44/6.

Australian Labor Party, Western Australian Branch, 1980 State Platform, Section 52b, Battye ACC 4543A/43/8.


Interview with Alan Tingay, Nationwide, 29 April 1981, Churchward audio tape archives.

Discussion with Alan Tingay and Gordon Masters, Nationwide, 20 May 1981, Churchward audio tape archives.


West Australian, 5 November 1981, p.54.

‘Jarrah Reserve’, publicity leaflet, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Mahon private papers, uncatalogued, Battye Library.


Department of Premer and Cabinet, news release, 11 October 1983, Battye ACC 4543A/44/7; West Australian, 12 October 1983, pp.1-2; WAPD Vol.244, 12 October 1983, pp.3030-3031, pp.3035-3036.

‘Conservationists give qualified support to Jarrah Reserve’, Conservation Council of WA, media release, 12 October 1983, Battye 4543A/44/7.

‘Conservation Reserves in the Jarrah Forest’, media release, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 4 December 1984, Battye ACC 4543A/44/7.


Government Gazette, WA, No.11, 6 February 1987, pp.287-290; Lane-Poole Reserve

Chapter 6

The Late 1980s: An Expanding Movement

Map 6.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 6.
The early 1980s had been a period of optimism for the Western Australian forest protest movement. By that time it had emerged as a highly-organised and influential social movement that had devised a range of strategies to further its objective of protecting the state's forests. It had achieved two major campaign successes through influencing the state ALP's forest policy platform and maintaining pressure on the newly-elected Labor government to ensure it honoured its commitments. However, while the city-based forest protest groups were heartened by the Shannon Basin and Lane-Poole victories and had high hopes of further successes, the protest movement found that the state government was willing to compromise its position on forest protection in order to fulfil its commitment to the timber industry.

This chapter argues that a shift in the balance of successful protest activity occurred during the late 1980s when, in contrast to their earlier successes to protect specific areas of forest, Perth-based forest protest groups failed to extend their influence over the state Labor government's forest policy. The effectiveness of the city-based groups' strategies was tested in a campaign that not only caused some division within the movement but also demonstrated how earlier expectations of success were dispelled by a state government that had initially been supportive. The chapter will further argue that the forest protest movement's major successes during the period resulted from the rise of organised and effective local groups and campaigns in the state's south-west that employed non-confrontational strategies aimed at public education and media exposure.
The Campaign Against CALM

In April 1983, the incoming Burke Labor government established a Task Force on Land Resource Management, with the responsibility of reviewing land resource management in Western Australia’s south-west region. An interim report released in October 1983 recommended the amalgamation of the state’s Forests Department, National Parks Authority, and Wildlife Section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife into a Department of Natural Resource Management, with the administration of public lands divided into three parallel divisions of ‘production’, ‘recreation’, and ‘conservation’. The Task Force’s final report in January 1984 confirmed the proposal to amalgamate the three bodies to form a new body to be called the Department of Natural Land Management, to manage state forest and timber reserves, national parks and nature reserves, and wildlife generally. The three land-use divisions were abandoned and replaced by a focus on categories of land, such as national parks, nature reserves and state forest.

After studying the proposals, the Conservation Council of Western Australia wrote to ALP branches and members of Parliament, voicing its opposition in three key areas. First, it said that the Task Force’s assertion that the new department would eliminate wasteful overlap of functions was incorrect, with no evidence having been produced to support the argument. Second, it was inappropriate for a single government agency to exercise responsibility for both forest conservation and forest production, particularly with the numerical superiority and influence of ex-Forests Department staff within the proposed department. Finally, there were better options for the rationalisation of public
land management in Western Australia and amalgamation should be limited to the National Parks Authority and the Wildlife Authority.³

In July 1984, after having failed to secure various safeguards that would have rendered the government’s proposals acceptable, the Conservation Council requested ALP branches to raise the issue of the amalgamation at the September state conference. Concerned party members were encouraged to demonstrate their disapproval of the new body, now to be called the Department of Conservation and Land Management, by contacting the Premier and Ministers for Forests, Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Environment.⁴

The Conservation Council’s action prompted Premier Burke to write to ALP branch secretaries denouncing the Council’s ‘immature and unrealistic concept of Government administration’, arguing that the formation of the new department would result in greater efficiency and less duplication, which in turn would produce a major improvement in land management. The Premier observed that some members of the conservation movement had chosen to take their grievances to the Liberal Party, and that the Opposition would use this in an attempt to embarrass his government. He called upon branches to reject this attempt by the Conservation Council to discredit his administration.⁵

A coalition of groups was formed to oppose the Burke government’s proposals. These included the Tree Society, the WA Field and Game Association, Amateur Canoe Association of WA Conservation Committee, WA Speleological Research Group, the Western Australian National Parks and Reserves Association,
Denmark Environmental Group, and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation (SFDF). In a letter to the Premier, the groups supported the arguments raised by the Conservation Council and emphasised the inadequacy of public consultation over the proposed restructuring.6

Although in one sense the coalition of groups united the movement, the campaign also highlighted the growing predicament faced by the Western Australian forest protest movement during the early 1980s over the extent to which it was willing to compromise its position by entering into negotiation with the state government. Sharon Beder has argued this dilemma revolves around the incompatible differences that separate the ideological prisms of ‘light green’ and ‘dark green’ environmentalism, with the light green end of the spectrum accepting the possibility that involvement with existing power structures may enable environmentalists to initiate change and influence decisions. For dark green activists, however, there is no room for compromise, with a firm belief that green values cannot be traded away, and that reforms can occur only as the result of a radical paradigm shift.7 The light and dark green shades of environmentalism identified by Beder reflect the debate among modern social movement theorists about how modern movements are, on the one hand, anti-systemic through challenging political institutions,8 yet also build on a form of self-limiting radicalism whereby they attempt to exert their influence from within the structures of liberal democracy.9

In the Western Australian context, the difference between the two ideological approaches manifested itself in the polarisation that developed between some
members of the Campaign to Save Native Forests who were members of the ALP and willing to support the Burke Government’s proposals, and other activists who considered that the restructuring posed new threats to the state’s forests and refused to compromise their ecological values. The South-West Forests Defence Foundation believed the political aspirations of prominent ALP conservationists had hindered the progress of the campaign and that the credibility of the conservation movement might have been endangered through its identification with party politics. The Foundation argued that it had a duty to speak out clearly on conservation issues and to remain unencumbered by political loyalties. Beth Schultz recalled that the disruption was more obviously expressed when prominent CSNF members Neil Bartholomaeus and Bill Thomas supported the Conservation and Land Management Bill for the sake of their own political aspirations within the ALP. The disunity resulted in the SFDF combining with the Tree Society and other groups in an effort to defeat the proposed amalgamation.

Despite mounting opposition to the proposal, in August 1984 the Acting Premier, Malcolm Bryce, introduced the Conservation and Land Management Bill into state parliament, and explained that the Bill had been designed to fulfil three key objectives:

firstly, to ensure the security of tenure and purpose of lands which have been reserved for nature reserves, national and marine parks, other lands reserved for conservation and recreation and State forest and timber reserves...secondly, to provide a mechanism for public participation in land management policy formulation...and thirdly, to provide the legislative basis for an administrative system of land management which allows effective management of the public lands of Western Australia in the most efficient way.
He said the proposal to form an integrated land management department had received ‘broad support’ from a variety of interested groups and that the conservation movement would benefit through increased participation in policy formulation. The Acting Premier rejected the arguments that foresters were not capable land managers and that the production function of the department would conflict with its conservation responsibilities.\textsuperscript{13}

In response, Barry Blaikie, Liberal MLA for Vasse, argued that the government’s use of the acronym CALM appeared to be a misnomer, as the proposal was the antithesis of ‘calm’, and would result in the creation of a ‘mega-department’ that would create ‘mega-problems’ for land management in Western Australia. He observed that prominent ALP conservationists such as Neil Bartholomaeus, Alan Tingay and Bill Hare, who had been vociferous in opposing the state Liberal Government during the 1970s and early 1980s, were now silent. Furthermore, he claimed that the conservation movement now found itself ignored by a Labor government that had sympathised with it while in opposition. In a speech supporting the conservationists’ position, Mr Blaikie argued that the government had failed to provide conclusive evidence that forest management would be improved by the proposed system of centralised control and that there had been insufficient public and industry consultation.\textsuperscript{14}

In mid-November 1984, a Legislative Council Select Committee was established to examine the Conservation and Land Management Bill, requesting submissions by the end of the month. An urgent bulletin from the SFDF to its members and supporters called for the creation of an adequately funded National Parks and
Wildlife Department that would maintain the separation between conservation and timber production functions, and asked people to oppose the proposed amalgamation by writing directly to the Select Committee. Discussing campaign strategies at its December Annual General Meeting, the SFDF agreed that opposition to the CALM legislation had begun too late, thus emphasising the importance of ‘getting to issues early’. Further evidence of some internal division within the protest movement is apparent from an observation at the meeting that, while initially the Conservation Council had strongly opposed the proposed amalgamation, it now appeared to have adopted an ‘acquiescent attitude’, and that the state government’s intransigence had resulted in increasing conservationist support for the Liberal Opposition. Despite the efforts of forest activists, and following Select Committee endorsement, the Conservation and Land Management Act was proclaimed on 22 March 1985.

Reflecting on the failure of the campaign against the formation of CALM, the SFDF concluded that, while the conservation movement was united in its opposition to the department's creation, there had been some 'deep and disturbing divisions' over strategies to prevent it. Specifically, the organisation considered that the fragmentation occurred between ‘career conservationists’ who wished to adopt a conciliatory approach to the state government, and rank and file members who pushed for a more forceful and direct opposition. The SFDF concluded that the Burke Labor Government had proved as dictatorial as, if not more so than, its Liberal predecessors, and that its pro-conservation platform had apparently been abandoned.
Unlike the Jarrah Class Action, the unsuccessful campaign to prevent the creation of CALM provided few benefits for the Western Australian forest protest movement. The proposed legislation by the Burke Labor Government tested the conservation movement’s relationship with the ALP and forced a split that was essentially a contest between political aspirations and environmental values. On a more positive note, the campaign sensitised forest activists to the inherent risks of political alliances and provided the motivation for a prolonged critique of the new department’s forest policies.

Immediately following the enactment of the CALM legislation, the SFDF renewed calls on the state government to initiate a Royal Commission into forest management in line with its platform commitment. The call was prompted by the release of a report from the government-appointed WA Timber Utilization and Marketing Task Force, which called for increased protection and assistance for large timber producers. This recommendation was seen by the SFDF as an attempt by the timber industry to increase its profitability.19

As a result of mounting public concerns over CALM's functions and pressure from the forest protest movement, a Royal Commission was established to examine CALM's operational structure and forest management practices.20 In June 1985, the SFDF presented a submission to the Royal Commission observing that the establishment of the Commission indicated that there were serious misgivings about forest management in Western Australia. The submission stressed the organisation’s anxiety over the dominance of forestry and timber industry interests within CALM, despite assurances by Dr Syd Shea, the
department’s executive director, that policy formulation for conservation and production areas had been separated. Further concerns were held over the uncertainty within the new legislation’s statutory procedures for the creation of national parks, particularly those located within state forest.\textsuperscript{21}

The Department of Conservation and Land Management’s “Draft Regional Management Plan and Draft Timber Strategy” produced in April 1987 was designed to provide a plan for an efficient and sustainable timber industry within Western Australia. It was proposed that the quantity of timber supplied from state forest should be sufficient to meet local demand for wood at competitive prices, and also sufficient to meet export demands that would be of ‘economic and social benefit to the State and nation’. In order to meet these commitments, it was proposed that the proportion of hardwood logs processed to high value products be increased from 13% to 50% by 1997, and that exports of timber products increase from 10% of hardwood sawlog production by 1990, and to 30% by 2000. The strategy was based on assumptions that there was an equitable reservation of forest areas for conservation, recreation and timber production, that the forest would be managed under principles of multiple-use and sustained yield, that ‘harvested’ areas would be regenerated, and that the processing of logs from state forest would be managed to maximise the economic benefit to Western Australia.\textsuperscript{22} The proposals soon attracted a response from the forest protest movement.

While acknowledging that the draft strategy and plans contained some good points, such as converting significant areas of karri forest into national parks and
increasing royalties paid to the state by the timber and wood chip companies, the SFDF found that they failed to make sufficient provision for the establishment of conservation reserves that were secure from exploitation. The organisation believed that, in order to protect the forests for the future, logging should not take place until an area had been studied for its recreation, tourism and heritage values, that wood chipping should be limited to sawmill waste or logs from private plantations on cleared land, and that over-cutting and clear-felling must cease. Supporters were urged to lobby politicians and the Department of Conservation and Land Management to register their opposition to the proposals.23

The other major forest protest groups decided to combine their efforts, and in August 1987 the Campaign to Save Native Forests, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Conservation Council of Western Australia, and the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment published *Time for Change*, which summarised the groups’ responses to CALM’s Management Plans and Timber Strategy. In addition to supporting the SFDF’s arguments, the group called for increased effort by CALM to conserve Western Australia’s native forests, an expansion of the National Park, State Park and Nature Reserve system, and improvements to the regulation of the timber industry and forest management practices. The response also argued for greater involvement of the Environmental Protection Authority in controlling the operation of the state’s timber and wood chip industries.24
A major criticism of CALM’s approach to forest management, and a strategic target for protest groups, was the practice of clear-felling large areas of forest and then burning the cleared area to stimulate regeneration. In 1988, the Tree Society expressed its concern at the loss of species in Western Australia’s southwest forests, and argued that clear-felling resulted in a reduction in species diversity, extinction of some local species, and increased risk of spreading forest diseases. The organisation called for an intensive biological inventory study of all the south-west’s forested areas by an independent scientific body. At the same time, the effects of clear-felling were receiving increased media attention, with Denmark conservationists drawing attention to the logging taking place at Deep River, near Walpole – an area that had been nominated for National Estate registration because of its ecological diversity. Dr Syd Shea, CALM’s executive director, attempted to allay fears over the effects of clear-felling, describing conservationists’ claims of the threat to native species as ‘outlandish’, and insisting that there was no evidence that the growth rate of regrowth karri would decline but rather that it would increase by as much as 40%.

In mid-1989, Pemberton and Northcliffe residents met with national television journalists to protest against the impact of clear-felling on local areas of native forest. The meeting was viewed by forest activists as the latest expression of mounting opposition to CALM’s public land management in Western Australia, which they argued would increase now that the devastation caused by clear-felling was open to public view. State forest, they pointed out, did not belong to CALM or the timber companies, but to the people of the state, who had the right to object to what was happening and to demand changes.
SFDF activist Beth Schultz’ evidence to the 1989 Select Committee on Land Conservation catalogued some of the forest protest movement’s arguments against CALM’s management practices. She argued that the preponderance of foresters within the department had resulted in a bias towards production forestry, and that this had carried over into its conservation function. Schultz maintained that the wood chipping industry was influencing CALM’s forest practices and that over-cutting and clear-felling were occurring because otherwise there would be a shortfall in timber production. She believed that CALM’s venture into production forestry on private land was responsible for land degradation and cited an incident in which a Bridgetown farmer’s land had been eroded through the department’s indiscriminate use of heavy machinery.29

For the forest protest movement the campaign against the creation of CALM was the first major test of the movement's ability to influence forest policy since the 1983 election of the Burke Labor government and the Shannon Basin and Lane-Poole Reserve successes. The protest movement employed a range of tactics such as political lobbying, detailed submissions and media exposure to maintain constant pressure on the state government and the new department to adopt more environmentally sensitive forest policies. Its failure to prevent the creation of CALM or to influence the conduct of its forest management activities, however, demonstrated that, during the late-1980s, the movement's earlier optimistic expectations had been diminished and that there were limitations on the extent of the new state government's willingness to co-operate on forest protection. Furthermore, the campaign against CALM had revealed division within the protest movement over strategies. Some CSNF members, who were loyal ALP
supporters, accepted the new department's formation and sought to effect reform from within the state government, while others in the forest protest movement remained firmly opposed.

The Anti-Wood Chip Licence Campaign

Map 6.2. Location of the wood chip licence area in the south-west of Western Australia. Source: Arthur and Jeanette Conacher, *Environmental Planning and Management in Australia*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.20.
In September 1985, the Campaign to Save Native Forests received information that the federal government had negotiated with the WA Chip and Pulp Company to prepare an environmental impact statement in readiness for the company’s application for an extension of its Manjimup wood chip export licence which would expire in 1991. (see Map 6.2.) The CSNF recommended that the conservation movement should oppose the renewal of the licence on environmental and social grounds, or demand substantial modifications.\(^{30}\) Forest activists were advised that the WA Chip and Pulp Company was applying to export 750,000 tonnes of karri and marri wood chips annually for a further 15 years from 1991, and warned of proposed changes to the licence agreement that included the logging of mature and virgin jarrah and marri forests, both inside and outside the licence area, and a proposal to increase the number of immature karri trees being wood chipped.\(^{31}\)

The South-West Forests Defence Foundation campaigned against the export licence renewal in its June 1987 newsletter by alerting its members to the 'serious implications' of the proposal. Why was it necessary to renew the licences four years before they were due to expire? The organisation believed that the WA Chip and Pulp Company was seeking to preserve the security of the wood chip industry in the face of mounting public opposition. It also questioned why the licence application did not take into account CALM’s draft timber strategy and forest management plans and believed that the Western Australian public was unaware of important environmental aspects of the renewal proposal. The Foundation argued that there were several environmentally sound alternatives to the wood chip proposal such as using wood from saw mill waste and plantations,
recycling paper and wood products, and logging state forest only for Western Australia's needs. Members were urged to forward submissions opposing the wood chip licence renewal to the State Environmental Protection Authority and Premier Burke. In line with its main strategy of legal challenge, the SFDF also sought advice on whether or not the organisation would have standing to oppose the wood chip licence legislation through the court system. It was advised, however, that, due to a lack of any clearly defined course of action, the political system remained the better alternative for furthering the SFDF’s objectives.

As the time drew close for a federal cabinet decision on the export licence renewal, the forest protest movement directed its attention at state politicians. The CSNF highlighted the period between April and June 1988 as a critical time when members and supporters should attempt to influence the licence outcome. People in Labor electorates were urged to write to their local Members of Parliament, and those in Liberal electorates to Premier Peter Dowding, and the Ministers for Conservation and Land Management, and Tourism. The organisation also seized the strategic opportunity to exploit the support of one of its most prominent personalities. Comedian Spike Milligan, a CSNF honorary life member, released a statement in England to publicise his views on the wood chip licence renewal:

In the light of the increased world concern about destruction of native forests and trees, I am appalled at the Western Australian Government even considering the renewal of WACAP’s export wood chip licence. What these environmentally blind people are doing is throwing away their tomorrow and completely ignoring the needs of future generations. This is what brought about the disasters in places like Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and the Sudan. They blew their tree cover and are paying the price. Despite this knowledge, the Western Australian Government seem blind in the light of it.
In mid-April 1988, the federal Minister for the Environment, Graham Richardson, announced that, after examining an environmental impact statement prepared by the company, he had recommended to the Minister for Resources, Peter Cook, that the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s licence be renewed. It was claimed that the renewal would guarantee wood chip exports for a further 15 years, and ensure the security of 550 jobs in the $50 million a year industry. Richardson said his department believed that the ‘environmental consequences of the proposal can be minimised providing certain conditions are met’. In what appeared to be an effort to placate the conservation lobby, Cook said he believed there was a need to reduce the dependence on wood chip exports and proposed the introduction of a ‘forest accord’ between governments, the timber industry, the unions, and the conservation movement.36

The federal government recommendation attracted the attention of the Australian Conservation Foundation, which immediately called on Senator Cook to defer his decision on the wood chip licence renewal. The Foundation seized upon the Senator’s hint of a forest agreement and the fact that important environmental concerns had not been addressed as reasons for delaying approval of the wood chip licence. Furthermore, the organisation felt that the company and CALM had failed to provide essential information, such as whether or not cutting levels were sustainable.37 Urging Senator Richardson to reconsider his conclusion, the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment argued that the information supplied by CALM on which the recommendation had been made had minimised the impact of the greenhouse effect on climatic change, which in turn affected the growth rate of native forests. Although Dr Syd Shea, CALM’s executive director, said
his department was carefully monitoring the greenhouse effect, the Denmark coalition cited the statement of a CALM policy adviser, who had told a Busselton meeting that climatic change had not been considered when CALM had prepared its management plans and timber strategy.\textsuperscript{38}

The report and recommendations of the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority on the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s wood chip licence renewal application was released in July 1988. It concluded that:

\ldots the derivation of woodchips from low-grade logs from integrated operation in State Forest is environmentally acceptable as long as the conservation and amenity values of multiple use old growth forest in the Southern Forest Region and the salt sensitive areas of Jarrah-Marri forest in the Northern, Central and Southern Forest Regions are maintained\ldots that the derivation of woodchips from regrowth thinnings in State Forest is environmentally acceptable provided the Department of Conservation and Land Management’s normal harvesting prescriptions are maintained.\textsuperscript{39}

The Environmental Protection Authority's report further recommended that reviews and extensions of approvals for wood chipping should be linked to the ten-year review of the Timber Production Strategy and Forest Region Management Plans, and that the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s licence would thus be reviewed in 1998, and not 2006 as previously intended. Acknowledging the ‘philosophical difference’ between conservationists and forest managers that underlay much of the tension over forest issues, the report advocated continued use of consultative processes to reduce conflict.\textsuperscript{40}

While the forest protest movement recognised that the Environmental Protection Authority's report contained some positive recommendations for forest conservation, the findings produced a mixed reaction.\textsuperscript{41} Although the
Conservation Council of Western Australia supported the recommendation not to clear native forest on private land for wood chipping and to develop plantations on already cleared private property for wood production, it decided to appeal against the report on the grounds that the forests could not sustain the annual quota of 750,000 tonnes of chip logs permitted under the proposed 10-year wood chip licence. Further criticism was levelled at the contradiction between a call for research into the environmental effects of clear-felling on the one hand, and the endorsement of export wood chipping. The Council asked affiliated groups to lodge appeals against the report with the State Minister for the Environment, Barry Hodge, asserting that ‘combined action’ was essential in order to persuade the Minister to amend the conditions of the wood chip licence.\textsuperscript{42}

In a circular to forest activists, the Conservation Council asserted that many environmental scientists were prevented from publicising their findings because of government-imposed censorship.\textsuperscript{43} The claim echoed the Council’s support for Dr Graham Chittleborough, the Environmental Protection Authority’s Chief Research Scientist, who resigned in April 1987, after alleging that a conservation strategy and review paper he produced for the 'Department of Conservation and Environment' had been suppressed. Dr Chittleborough had argued that usage of Western Australia’s native forests exceeded sustainable rates, and concluded that in order to meet the demands of an ‘accumulated environmental debt’, the state’s population might have to accept some modifications to its living standards.\textsuperscript{44}

The Australian Conservation Foundation rejected the Environmental Protection Authority’s assertion that clear-felling forests for wood chips was
environmentally acceptable, claiming that there was no scientific evidence to support that view. In order to protect the state’s forests the Foundation believed it was necessary for the government to transfer the wood chip industry from the forests to a plantation-based strategy using already cleared land.\textsuperscript{45} While conceding that some of the recommendations in the Environmental Protection Authority's report relating to the use of plantations and forest resources were ‘praiseworthy’, the Campaign to Save Native Forests considered that the report, while appearing progressive, was a rhetorical attempt to divert attention away from the fact that Western Australia’s forests were being over-exploited and that conservation values were being ignored. The organisation called on the Environmental Protection Authority for ‘courage and commitment’ to take immediate action to protect the remaining stands of the state’s native forests and that this should include a full public review of CALM's draft forest management plans, a public inquiry into Western Australia’s timber industries, a restructuring of the export wood chip industry to ensure that only saw mill residue and plantation timber is used, and the rejection of any permanent use of native forests for timber production until the resource has been assessed for the risk of environmental damage.\textsuperscript{46}

As part of a strategy to increase public education and support for their campaign against the export wood chip licence renewal, the Conservation Council of Western Australia, the Australian Conservation Council, the Campaign to Save Native Forests and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation united under the banner of “The Combined Forest Conservation Groups of WA”, to arrange two public events. A weekend telephone “Forest Hotline” held over the weekend of
30-31 July 1988, and designed to provide members of the public with an opportunity to express their views about wood chipping and the logging of native forests, resulted in an average of 30 calls per hour, with people expressing strong concerns about the impending wood chip licence renewal. Politicians were urged to take notice of the ‘public outcry’ against the destruction of forests, and to consider the strength of the opposition when making decisions. The WA Chip and Pulp Company dismissed the phone-in as ‘unfair tactics’ that were designed to influence the federal Minister for the Environment against a ‘responsible and well-controlled woodchip industry’.

A public seminar “When the Chips are Down” held at the University of Western Australia in September 1988, was designed to allow all sides in the forests debate to air their views and was described by the Conservation Council as a landmark in the history of Western Australia’s conservation movement that heralded a fresh approach to public participation on controversial environmental issues. Subjects discussed included: the ownership and management of the forests, obstacles to a forest accord, and the difficulties faced by small timber millers. Speakers included academics, environmental scientists, conservationists, and timber industry representatives, and the seminar concluded with a public forum. Bunnings timber company decided not to send a representative as it believed advance publicity for the event indicated there would be little opportunity for an impartial and rational discussion.

The efforts of the conservation groups were to no avail, with the state Environment Minister dismissing appeals against the Environmental Protection
Authority’s report and insisting that wood chip operations could be compatible with forest management provided that tight controls were imposed to protect the timber resource and its long-term environmental value. The Conservation Council warned that the state government’s decision would be resisted by the conservation movement:

> We believe that the Minister for the Environment has lost touch with the electorate. He has severely underestimated the strength of public feeling about clearfelling and destruction of the forests of the south west. We find it incredible that a Labor Government cares so little for the future of Western Australia that it is prepared to allow the removal and export of its life support system at a time when much of the system is under severe stress.

The SFDF supported the Conservation Council’s scepticism over industry controls, alleging that the WA Chip and Pulp Company had already been breaching the terms of its wood chip licence by chipping timber quality logs, and that CALM’s executive director had failed to enforce the current licence conditions.

In an effort to capitalise on mounting opposition to the wood chip licence extension and native forest logging, the Conservation Council convened a public meeting in October 1988 to assess levels of support and consider the future of forest conservation in Western Australia. The meeting was attended by representatives of various conservation groups, including the CSNF, SFDF, Men of the Trees, and the Great Walk Network. It was decided to expand the campaign against wood chipping beyond the realm of the four major forest protest groups that had united for the "Forest Hotline" and "When the Chips are Down" actions, and to initiate a 'consolidated forest conservation movement' that included concerned members of the public and supporters of particular forest
conservation groups who would be encouraged to place their names on a formal roll as “Friends of the Forest”. A $2 donation would register support for ‘retention of mature native forests because of their importance for conservation and recreation’. Members were asked to write to the federal Minister for Resources, requesting him not to renew wood chip licences.54

Western Australian conservationists met in November 1988 with the federal Minister for Resources to discuss the proposed Forest Accord and the renewal of wood chip export licences. During the meeting, Roy Bate, the CSNF representative, called for a moratorium on the signing of wood chip licences as a demonstration to the conservation movement that the federal government was sincere in its desire for a Forest Accord. Craig Chappelle, from the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment, argued that people felt powerless because of the lack of an adequate mechanism through which they could represent their feelings on forest issues.55 Both the CSNF and the SFDF insisted that any Forest Accord agreement would depend on the outcome of wood chip licence applications, demanding a major revision of the renewal proposals to achieve reduced duration, decreased tonnages, phasing out logging in old growth forests, and transferring the resource base from native forests to private plantations. Additionally, the CSNF called for a major restructuring of Western Australia’s export wood chip industry, a full public inquiry into the industry and its forest management practices, and no allocation of native forests for wood production until the areas were assessed for their biological, recreational and heritage values.56
The close of 1988 was a period of confusion and mixed emotions for the forest protest movement. On 23 December, the state Minister for Conservation and Land Management announced that wood chipping in state forests would be phased out from the year 2000 and replaced by a forestation programme on cleared farm land. He said the decision had been made possible because of a restructured log-pricing system and the development of a technologically efficient timber industry based on value-added hardwood products and state government tree-planting programmes. The Minister believed the historic decision would strike a balance between forest conservation and ensuring the future of timber and wood chip industries.57

The Australian Conservation Foundation applauded the initiative as ‘a fundamental change in direction’ by the state government, believing that the move towards plantation forestry would provide a sustainable solution to the long-term problem of forest conservation. Similarly, the Conservation Council of Western Australia was delighted with the decision, and optimistic that it signalled ‘a new level of co-operation between the timber industry, the state government and the conservation movement.’ The organisation was pleased that at last the government was responding to widespread community concerns about forest management, and hoped that it would heed further recommendations from conservationists.58 Others were more cynical, believing the decision was politically motivated, after opinion polls showed that about 75% of Australians were concerned about forest conservation.59
Predictably, the plans to phase out wood chipping produced strong opposition from the timber industry, who believed the decision would see a return to the days when waste timber was burnt instead of being put to good use. John Oldham, managing director of the WA Chip and Pulp Company, said there would always be waste material after logging, and pointed out that, while conservationists had said they wanted full use of resources, the state government was now placing restrictions on how wood should be used. In a circular letter to members of parliament, the Institute of Foresters protested that the end of wood chipping would disrupt the economic structure of the timber industry, and result in a 30-40% increase in the price of house timber. The Institute argued that wood chipping was needed for efficient forest management, and that the industry was essential to ensure that ‘low grade trees or unsaleable species are not left to dominate the forest and inhibit regeneration.’

The mood of optimism among conservationists generated by the planned wood chip phase out was short-lived. At the end of December, the federal Resources Minister announced that he had renewed long-term approval for the WA Chip and Pulp Company to export wood chips at the rate of 900,000 tonnes per annum over a reduced licence period of 10 years. The licence would be subject to review after two years, and strict conditions would be attached to protect environmental values, encourage tree plantations and improve forest management practices. The Western Australian government considered the reduction of the licence period and the introduction of a two-yearly review condition would ensure that timber resources were utilised efficiently. It further believed that the implementation of a Forest Accord would accommodate the
interests of both the industry and the conservation movement and ‘enable all parties to make a direct contribution towards an agreement which will reduce conflict over the forests and protect both jobs and the forest’.  

The announcement prompted an angry response from members of the forest protest movement who were quick to point out that the licence renewal appeared to conflict with the state government’s intention to phase out wood chipping from the year 2000. The Conservation Council argued that the granting of the licence threatened the future of the south-west forests and vowed that the conservation movement would intensify its campaign to stop wood chipping and clear-felling in state forest. It thought the federal Minister’s announcement had been mistimed, considering the impending state election, and that politicians had underestimated the strength of public sympathy for the forests. The Council sought assurances when wood chipping would be phased out, and called for restructuring of the wood chip industry, with tighter controls over export licences.

Despite assertions from the state Conservation and Land Management Minister that the issuing of a new wood chip licence did not conflict with plans to phase out the industry, the state government’s ambiguous wood chipping policy caused confusion not only for the forest protest movement but also for the timber industry. Peter George, commercial manager for the WA Chip and Pulp Company, said there was widespread concern among timber workers over their employment and called upon the government to clarify the future of the wood chipping industry.
The campaign against the renewal of the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s wood chip licence emphasised the continuing conflict between the demands of a resource-dependent state economy and increasing calls from the forest protest movement for the conservation of Western Australia's forests. Like the campaign against the formation of CALM, the action reflected the failure of the forest protest movement to influence the state Labor government's approaches to forest management and to build upon the successes of the Shannon Basin and Lane-Poole Reserve campaigns. On a more positive note, the campaign to stop the renewal of wood chip licences once more demonstrated the ability of the movement to unite around a common goal and to employ non-confrontational strategies such as phone-ins, seminars and endorsements from prominent personalities to gain public attention and maintain a focus on the need for forest conservation. While forest protesters initially gained some satisfaction and encouragement from a belief that their campaign may have exerted some influence on the state government’s pledge to phase out wood chipping, the federal government's subsequent decision to renew the wood chip licence served only to create a climate of confusion and uncertainty.

Although campaigns against the creation of CALM and the granting of wood chip licences enabled activists to further expand their strategies and intensify their activities, both represented failures by the large city-based forest protest groups to combat the powerful timber lobby. It was the increasing threat to specific areas of forest in Western Australia's south-west that provided the catalyst not only for an expansion of the forest protest movement but, most significantly, for a shift towards successful regional protest action.
Denmark Protests

A campaign by Denmark environmentalists to prevent the introduction of an export wood chip industry into the area demonstrated how, during the 1980s, forest activists in the state's south-west began to organise around local forest issues and how those campaigns came to be driven by prominent leaders. Furthermore, the campaign illustrated evolving networks of co-operation and support between regional and Perth-based environmentalists and contained examples of the 'persuasive' rather than confrontational tactics that became a hallmark of forest protest during the 1980s.

The town of Denmark is situated some 400 kilometres south-east of Perth on the south coast and located on the eastern edge of the karri forest adjacent to the Walpole Wilderness Area. It is surrounded by areas of large native trees, especially jarrah, karri, marri, and red tingle, which can reach a height of 60 metres. The area is unique because many of the area's trees have managed to survive free of human interference.

Denmark's early progress stemmed from the opening of a timber mill on the banks of the Denmark River in 1894. When the hardwood karri timber was found to be particularly durable it provided the raw material for a variety of export products, which included railway sleepers and telegraph poles. During the late 1970s, a group of people in the area became aware of increasing threats to the local environment and decided to band together to protect it.
Alex Syme, a farmer from the state’s Wheatbelt, moved to Denmark in 1976 and was concerned at the high levels of salinity in the Denmark River. On hearing of a proposal to cut down areas of forest on private land to supply a wood chip mill, he decided to become actively involved in environmental issues. According to Syme, the Denmark Environment Group was formed in 1978, principally to enable local people to learn about the natural environment and take part in the debate on environmental management. The group’s formation was well-supported, with between 90 and 100 members. Its membership represented a broad spectrum of the local community, including newcomers to the district, long-time residents, academics and business people. Syme’s agricultural experience introduced a pragmatic approach to environmental issues:

I was looking at the countryside from a land management point of view...I probably was recognising mismanagement rather than any emotional connection.68

In 1985 members of the Denmark Environment Group were informed of a proposal by McLean Sawmills Pty Ltd of Denmark to establish an export wood chip industry in the region, based on the acquisition of logs from karri, jarrah and marri forests on private land. Farmers would be encouraged to replace the local species with eastern states eucalypts to ensure future supplies. It was intended that between 1,000 and 5,000 hectares of native forest would be felled each year. The logs would be processed at the local mill and transported to Albany for shipment overseas. The Company intended to apply for a federal licence to export 240,000 tonnes of wood chips annually.69

On hearing that the project was part of a Great Southern Region Economic Study, the group decided to formulate a submission. Citing past land
management practices, such as excessive clearing, that had resulted in soil erosion and increased salinity, their submission argued that the project should not proceed before an environmental impact study could show that there would be no environmental degradation. The group further proposed that, if the state government wished to promote a wood chip industry in the area, consideration should be given to providing direct assistance to farmers to establish plantations on existing cleared land and pasture. The group reinforced its opposition to the project in a critique of a state government study on the future of the Albany region that minimised the impact of wood chipping, expressing disappointment that the study had failed to recommend that an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Review and Management Programme on the wood chip proposal should be initiated.

The group was supported in its opposition to the McLean project by the Campaign to Save Native Forests (CSNF), which argued that the long-term environmental costs of the proposal would far outweigh any short-term economic benefit to a small section of private enterprise, and that any profits would be lost to overseas interests. The CSNF placed the issue in a broader context, asserting that the wood chip proposal would foreshadow further extensive clearing of native forests in the Denmark area and that publicly owned state forest would be under pressure for clear-felling.

The McLean wood chip project polarised the Denmark community. In November 1985, proponents of the scheme and supporters of Gordon McLean, the sawmill’s managing director, organised the town’s first street march. Over
100 people, led by Mrs Pat McLean, the manager’s wife, marched through the streets with posters and a loud hailer, exhorting observers to show support for Gordon McLean ‘who has supported this town for years.’ Prior to the march, Mrs McLean had cautioned the marchers to avoid ‘slanderous talk about the conservationists’, and to respect their right to an alternative opinion.74 Despite this warning, however, local environmentalists were offended at suggestions during the march that they questioned McLean’s contribution to the Denmark community and felt obliged to state that they fully supported the sawmill in its present role, but were opposed to the potential adverse environmental effects of the wood chip proposal.75

The demonstration of support for the McLean project fuelled further debate in the local press. A former employee praised the mill manager for his contribution to the town’s progress and believed a tree-planting project would greatly assist the unemployed in the district.76 Alternatively, Wallace Graham, the president of the Denmark Environment Group, pointed out that, although group members supported plantation forestry on land that had been cleared for farming and was relatively impoverished, they were horrified at the prospect of clearing away more native forest.77 A survey of local farmers showed that, while few were willing to support local conservationists’ calls to abandon the proposal, they were also unwilling to plant trees: ‘I can’t see myself planting a big karri hill back to trees when my grandfather worked his guts out to clear the land.’78
Denmark environmentalists realised that in order to mount an effective campaign against an increasingly powerful timber lobby they would have to combine their efforts. It was this decision in early 1986 that resulted in the formation of the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment. The new group comprised the Denmark Environment Group, Farmers for Forests Survival, Denmark Woodchipping Awareness Group, and the Denmark Community Tree Planters.79

Craig Chappelle moved to Denmark in 1981 as a journalist and is currently (2007) secretary of the Denmark Conservation Society, which was formed in 1990. He became actively involved in the formation and activities of the Coalition:

There were a disproportionate number of highly-intelligent, well-trained, well-educated, articulate people who were active in a whole range of different arenas...disproportionate for the size of the population. There was never any question of having to drag people up into the issues, the people that joined and got involved were aware of the issues from the outset.80

The Denmark community seemed to him evenly divided over the wood chip proposal, with some degree of support for the project based on community admiration for Gordon McLean, without any consideration of the environmental ramifications: ‘They thought Gordon was a nice bloke and deserved a fair go’. Chappelle recalled that in the early 1980s his interest in the environment had been stimulated by the Franklin dam case in Tasmania, and the McLean wood chip issue provided the incentive ‘to get off my backside and do something’.81

During 1986 the local campaign on the wood chip proposal gathered momentum, with both sides attempting to win over the local community. A saw-mill publicity campaign stressed the importance of forest products in daily life and
argued that its capacity to produce those products was being undermined by the
gross misconceptions of ‘radical conservationists’ who were seen by the
company as ‘the greatest threat to our heritage forests’. By opposing clear-
felling and regrowth, conservationists were depriving future generations of
timber supplies and denying struggling farmers the opportunity to capitalise on
their assets. As well, local environmentalists were ignoring the economic
benefits the wood chip project would bring to both the state and the region.82
In response, the Coalition for Denmark's Environment mounted a concerted
campaign focussing on the potential threats to the environment if the project
went ahead. The Coalition’s ultimate success in halting the project resulted
from the adoption of an intensive programme of public education through public
meetings, films, newsletters and news releases, that gradually convinced local
people that the McLean project posed a real threat to their wellbeing and that
they should take an active part in the debate. Rather than standing in front of
bulldozers, the Coalition preferred to ‘dig away at the foundations’.83

Brochures were produced to stimulate discussion on such issues as salination and
land degradation, the value of native forests, the social impact of wood chipping,
and whether or not farmers were likely to establish plantations on their land.
Alternatives to the project were suggested, such as the introduction of a pine
share-farming scheme on currently cleared land, value-added processing of saw-
milled timber for furniture manufacture, the establishment of a mill training
facility to develop a fine timber industry, and the expansion of tourism and
agriculture. The Coalition argued that the McLean proposal contained
environmental, economic and social threats to land and water resources, and that
there were other viable options that offered better employment and social opportunities for the area.84

While the Coalition remained the driving force behind the anti-wood chipping campaign, the group received strong support from larger organisations. Commenting on inadequacies within the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the McLean project, the Australian Conservation Foundation, in a circular to environmental groups, stated its intention to combine ‘with Perth and local conservation organisations’ to oppose the granting of an export licence. The Foundation appealed for assistance in persuading people to write letters and submissions.85 The Conservation Council of Western Australia was successful in its application to the State Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment for a Special Project Grant to assist in responding adequately to the Denmark wood chip proposal, and received a $4,000 grant from the 1985-1986 allocation for voluntary conservation organisations.86 A talk given by Conservation Council representatives to the Floreat branch of the Australian Labor Party elicited more support for the campaign, and an undertaking from the branch to lobby state and federal governments to refuse the granting of wood chip export licences.87

Throughout 1986 the Campaign to Save Native Forests (CSNF) demonstrated its support for the Denmark campaign by relentless media pressure. The organisation criticised the contradiction in the state government’s promotion of both export wood chipping and tourism for the south-west, pointing out that tourists did not want to see vast areas of native forests ruined by clear-felling for the wood chip industry.88 It raised doubts over McLean’s assertion that the
Company would plant more trees than were cut down and whether the firm would be able to resist a take-over from larger and more intensive wood chipping companies.\textsuperscript{89} In August, the CSNF presented a video entitled 'In Defence of Native Forests' to the Denmark public library. The video had been made by the organisation in response to the McLean proposal, and appraised the environmental problems the area faced if the project went ahead. It was intended to stimulate informed public debate, and invited people to consider alternatives to intensive wood chipping.\textsuperscript{90} Finally, in November 1986, the CSNF offered an initial response to the Environmental Review and Management Programme/Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by McLean Sawmills,\textsuperscript{91} emphasising the report’s admission that 10,000 hectares of native forest would be lost for ever and criticising its unsubstantiated claims about employment growth and the willingness of local farmers to establish plantations.\textsuperscript{92}

Like the CSNF and SFDF campaigns of the late 1970s, the Denmark Coalition realised that stopping the McLean project would require a credible critique of the wood chipping industry to educate people about the detrimental effects of the scheme on the local environment. The group decided to produce its own documentary. The film \textit{The Last Stand} demonstrated how wood chipping had already had a serious impact on the state’s native forests. The scale of the proposed project was represented as covering an area twelve times that of King’s Park, with plantations that would appear more like farms than forests. The argument that the scheme would increase local employment opportunities was countered by figures showing that, while log production in Western Australia
increased by 21% between 1964 and 1985, employment in the timber industry during the period decreased by 47%.93

The film’s greatest impact derived from interviews with representatives from both the timber industry and the Denmark community. Adrian Price, an ex-logging foreman with Bunnings, described the wasteful practices he had observed during his employment, and how good ‘millable’ trees were being turned into wood chips. Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, admitted that, while the amount of over-cutting of timber should have been less, over-cutting had provided a stimulus to the state’s economy. Local small business and crafts people voiced their concerns at the proposed project. An architect lamented the conversion of prime saw logs into wood chips, a tourist operator indicated a clear-felled area of forest that should have been a tourist attraction, and a naturalist warned of the impending threat to birds and wildlife.94

Strategically, the documentary proved a great success for the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment. Alex Syme believed the film played a major role in educating people about the environment, and recalled that copies of the video were purchased by the Education Department and shown in schools. He also remembered that the documentary was broadcast regularly on the Golden West Network, and was used in the education system on the ‘School of the Air’.95

The video film, directed by independent film-maker Frank Rijavec and co-written by Craig Chappelle, was launched in Perth by Shirley de la Hunty.96 An indication of the film’s impact can be gauged from an incident in Subiaco.
A viewing was disrupted when a person who introduced himself as Peter George, an employee of the WA Chip and Pulp Company, stood up and angrily questioned some of the assertions made in the documentary. He claimed that 50% and not 6% of karri forest was protected in reserves or national parks and alleged that sections of the film were outdated. Lively debate was central to the education process.

The campaign intensified during the early months of 1987, through the coordinated efforts of environmental organisations and from a sense that public opposition to the proposal was growing. In a joint submission to the Commonwealth Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment and the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority, the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Conservation Council of WA, and the Campaign to Save Native Forests, produced a response to McLean’s Environmental Review and Management Programme/Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The groups argued that:

The ERMP fails to address key issues, and presents a biased and incomplete assessment of risks and costs associated with the proposed McLean Forest Project. It contains crucial logical errors, contradictory claims and false statements. It should be rejected as an inadequate proposal document for an industry that would permanently damage the social and biological environment of the south coast region of Western Australia.

A separate submission by the South-West Forests Defence Foundation contended that the project should be rejected primarily because there was no market for a second export wood chip industry in the state and the proposed scheme would be detrimental to both the local environment and existing industries in the region. The Foundation argued that incentives should be provided to promote alternative,
environmentally responsible, industries, and that growing trees specifically to produce wood chips was ‘like raising sheep to produce daggy wool.’

Increasing local opposition to the proposal occurred partly through the ability of local environmentalists to cast doubt on the accuracy of data contained in McLean’s Environmental Review and Management Programme. The Coalition for Denmark's Environment was able to demonstrate that figures obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics by McLean to supposedly identify 144,000 hectares of forest had failed to distinguish between forest and uncleared land within the area, and that consequently the portion of land proposed for the wood chip project did not contain the amount of forest that the company claimed.

The Coalition organised several successful public meetings to promote its video, with an attendance on one occasion by prominent environmentalist Vincent Serventy. Proof that the Coalition’s strategies were taking effect was evidenced at a meeting of 350 Denmark electors, who resolved to oppose the McLean proposal ‘because of the threat the project was seen to pose to the way of life of the people of Denmark and the native forest of the region.’

During April 1987, environmentalists were pleased to observe that the McLean proposal was receiving attention in state parliament. A speech by Dr Carmen Lawrence, Labor MLA, Subiaco, on the issue of native forest conservation, referred specifically to the Denmark wood chip proposal. Voicing her opposition to the project, Dr Lawrence noted apparent inaccuracies in the Environmental Review and Management Programme that had been raised by conservation groups, and to the ERMP's failure to consider the scheme’s broader
social and economic costs. It was vital, she argued, to safeguard the remaining one-fifth of the state’s native forests:

We must slow down the exploitation of our forests and manage them in such a way that the next generation can have access to them for the purposes which all of us consider reasonable. Anything we can do to achieve that is worth considering. I oppose projects of any kind which do not take sufficient account of the long-term effects on this unique forest environment, and which prefer to see a short-term benefit rather than preserving our resources for posterity.103

The speech was welcomed by environmentalists, who believed it presented a forceful case for the conservation of Western Australia’s remaining native forests.104 Later that month, Dr Lawrence presented a petition to parliament opposing the McLean proposal.105

In June 1987, Barry Hodge, the State Minister for Conservation and Land Management and Environment, announced that the McLean wood chipping project at Denmark would not proceed. He explained that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) had found the proposal to be environmentally unacceptable. The EPA concluded that McLean Sawmills had overestimated the amount of private forest available, there was no guarantee that landholders would sell their resource, and logging on private property would produce unacceptable environmental impacts. Furthermore, the government had refused to supply additional timber for the project from state forest.106

Following the rejection, McLean Consolidated submitted a revised proposal, requesting a licence to export 60,000 tonnes of wood chips per annum using the waste material generated from the company’s logging operations in state forest, and excluding stands of native forest on private land. An EPA report found the
new proposal to be environmentally acceptable, provided no whole logs were chipped.\textsuperscript{107} An appeal by the Conservation Council of Western Australia to the Minister for Environment against the report on the grounds that the proposal had not been subjected to a full public review and that the forest could not sustain the yield required, was rejected.\textsuperscript{108}

The Denmark campaign against the introduction of an export wood chip industry evolved as a confrontation between the supporters of a well-respected local saw-miller seeking to maximise the profitability of the area’s timber resource and those who believed the environmental and social costs of his proposal were too high. In terms of the Western Australian native forest protest movement the campaign was significant not only in showing how forest activists in the south-west had begun to organise and co-ordinate protest action that was focused upon local forest issues, but also for demonstrating the employment and effectiveness of alternative strategies aimed at public education and persuasion rather than direct action. Alex Syme and Craig Chappelle had emerged as key local leaders who played crucial roles in co-ordinating group activity and formulating campaign strategies. Most importantly, the Denmark campaign provided early evidence of an emerging support network between regional forest activists and city-based environmental organisations.

In 1990, the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment was disbanded as part of a broader reorganisation of the area’s environmental groups. The Community Tree Planters had already decided to leave, and there had been some confusion in the local media when the Coalition for Denmark's Environment had been
mistakenly linked to the Liberal/National Party coalition. The Denmark Conservation Society was formed from the more activist members of the Coalition who wished to continue the campaign to preserve and protect Denmark’s unique environment.¹⁰⁹

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Groups

A Department of Conservation and Land Management initiative provided the impetus for a further expansion of native forest protest into regional Western Australia. The town of Bridgetown, located some 260 kilometres south of Perth, lies among the hills and forests of the south-west on the banks of the Blackwood River, and was first settled by colonists in 1857. As well as beautiful scenery, the area has rich farmlands, orchards, pine plantations and natural jarrah forests.

Mary Frith was educated in England and completed her tertiary education at London University, studying botany, zoology and geography. From 1955 she taught biology for three years at a school in New South Wales, and, after meeting her future husband, Jim, who at the time was a Western Australian agricultural scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, they both commenced farming a property on the outskirts of Bridgetown. In 1986 the Friths became aware of a proposal by the newly-created Department of Conservation and Land Management to grow pine plantations on private land. Believing that the initiative stemmed from CALM’s desire to avoid public criticism by reducing pressure on the local jarrah forests
and that it would provide economic benefits, they agreed to participate in the scheme.\textsuperscript{110}

Following the release of its proposed management plan for the forests in 1987, CALM encouraged the formation of community groups to discuss the plans and to work with the department on local forest management. A public meeting to discuss the forest proposals resulted in the formation of two local forest activist groups. Mary Frith and her husband were founding members of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest and Mary recalls that the group was initially formed to respond to CALM's forest management plans. Its initial objectives were to protect the forests and to increase public education about what was happening. From an original membership of between 20 to 30 people, the group gradually expanded its activities, and eventually became one of the state’s largest forest protest groups outside Perth, with about 150 members.\textsuperscript{111}

At about the same time, the Blackwood Environment Society was established by a group of local environmentalists who believed there was a need to expand activities beyond forest issues and to adopt a broader environmental focus. While there was significant cross-membership between the two organisations, each group was markedly different in its approach. Whereas the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest concentrated its efforts on ‘intellectual’ activities, which included political lobbying and public education on forest issues, the Blackwood Environment Society was orientated towards more practical work, such as establishing a local environment centre and promoting
recycling initiatives. Mary Frith believes that the existence of two environmental groups worked well, and that each complemented the other.\textsuperscript{112}

Although the two Bridgetown groups focused on environmental issues within their local area, there is evidence of an attempt to draw on the experience of the larger city-based organisations. Nick Dodson, the founder of the Blackwood Environment Society, wrote to the South-West Forests Defence Foundation to introduce his group and explain that it was concerned about improving the environment, particularly around the Bridgetown area, and seeking information about any of the Foundation's activities that might coincide with his own group's areas of interest. Dodson hoped that contact between the two groups would result in a 'positive exchange of ideas' and requested that the Foundation keep him informed of any specific projects that were planned for his area.\textsuperscript{113}

A major success of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest was a campaign to establish a jarrah reserve in the Dalgarup forest to the town’s south-west. This 3,500 hectares of jarrah forest had been identified as an area of high conservation value by the group as early as 1987, and became the subject of a protracted campaign to have the forest preserved. Members of the group conducted extensive research to record the area’s ecological value, lobbied politicians, and escorted visitors through the forest to increase public sympathy for their argument. Finally, in 2003, after 16 years of campaigning, the Dalgarup Forest was recommended for conservation.\textsuperscript{114} Mary Frith recalls that, while an early submission to CALM’s Nannup office to protect the area received a favourable response, the proposal was ultimately rejected by the department’s
executive director, Syd Shea, who claimed the forest was required for production forestry. She believes the campaign was ultimately successful because the group maintained constant pressure on authorities by lobbying and letter-writing, and through incremental conservation achievements, such as the Bridgetown Jarrah Park, which resulted in the protection of larger proportions of the jarrah forest.  

Some parallels can be drawn between the creation of the two Bridgetown-Greenbushes groups in 1987, and the formation of the Campaign to Save Native Forests and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation 12 years earlier. While on both occasions the groups emerged as the result of public concerns over what was happening to the forests, there was also a division over the type of campaign strategies to be employed. Like the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest favoured a more intellectual approach to forest activism, with public education and political lobbying playing a prominent role in their activities. The Blackwood Environment Society on the other hand, like the Campaign to Save Native Forests, adopted more practical and overt forms of activism, with focus on a more visible style of campaigning. As with their Perth counterparts, each group attracted different sorts of people, while some decided to support both organisations. Most significantly, like the city organisations, the two Bridgetown groups provided outlets for alternative expressions of protest.

The formation of the Bridgetown groups resulted from a desire by some community members to participate in decisions that would affect the future of the
forest environment. Protest groups and individuals in the south-west soon decided on a major strategic initiative that was aimed at both publicising their campaign to protect the forests and ensuring that the state's political leaders were made aware that forest conservation had become an area of real public concern.

**The Great Walk**

In March 1988, Denmark environmentalists consolidated their success in the anti-wood chip campaign by providing the focus for the start of the ‘Great Walk’, which was intended as a Bicentennial celebration of the environment. The event, organised by individuals from the south-west and supporters from Perth, again reflected the growth of networks between regional and city-based activists and how local communities in the south-west were organising themselves to protect the forests. Publicity brochures informed participants that the walk had been initiated by a group of people who were concerned at the diminishing areas of native forests and wished to promote a more caring attitude towards the forests in order to achieve a sustainable environment. The walk started from Denmark on 20 March, following secondary roads and forest tracks, and would culminate on the steps of Parliament House, Perth, on 14 April, when walkers would present a Tree Charter to Premier Peter Dowding.116

While the walk was supported by the Coalition for Denmark’s Environment, the event materialised through the work of individuals rather than groups. Craig Chappelle, who took part in the organising, found the experience personally fulfilling, strengthening his personal contacts and encouraging interaction with individuals whose ages ranged from infants to octogenarians and whose
backgrounds were diverse. As plans for the walk progressed, there was an awareness of growing social cohesion and sense of purpose:

There was a sharing of how everyone felt at the conclusion of the weekend’s work...there was a great respect and love coming through and people contributing their own strength and skill in their own ‘special’ way, was happening in a really remarkable manner—that the spirit of the people working together is going to carry the walk through all the difficulties that may and will rise up.

The Conservation Council supported the organisers by circulating leaflets to local councils, promoting the event as a celebration of the land’s gifts to Western Australians over 200 years, and calling for a commitment to replenish and restore that which had been taken over the years.

The 600-kilometre trek received extensive media coverage, with some walkers attempting the entire distance, while others completed different stages. During the walk, organisers called on people to join them at a cost of $5 a day, which included meals and child care services. Emphasis was placed on the fact that forest protection was the concern not only of forest activists but of ‘ordinary people...from all walks of life’ who cared about protecting the forests. The walk’s greatest public impact occurred at its conclusion when several hundred people marched along St George’s Terrace to Parliament House. Premier Dowding accepted a Tree Charter, which contained recommendations for conserving the environment. The Premier said the state government was proud of its record of forest management but believed there had to be a balance between conservation and jobs. Organisers hoped the Great Walk would help to make Western Australians more aware of their individual responsibilities towards the forests.
The Tree Charter presented to Premier Dowding contained specific recommendations regarding the state’s forests. These included the preservation of old growth forests, the moderation of intensive management practices, a review of the frequency and timing of prescribed burning, the instigation of research into forest ecology, and the provision of timber supplies from plantations on presently cleared land. The Charter concluded by urging the government to fulfil its obligations to educate Western Australians about environmental pressures and their solutions.123 (see Figure 6.1.)

Figure 6.1. Premier Dowding receives the Tree Charter from participants in the Great Walk. Source: *West Australian*, 15 April 1988.

The Great Walk provided some positive outcomes for native forest protest in Western Australia’s south-west. The participation of broad cross-sections of local communities reflected how the forest protest movement was becoming increasingly more inclusive and made authorities aware that concern for forest conservation was not the sole prerogative of small groups of activists but rather of a wider and more discerning Western Australian public. Most importantly,
for the forest protest movement, the walk showed that there was growing community reaction in the south-west against the destruction of the state's forests and that people were willing to band together to demonstrate their opposition.

The late 1980s contained some important implications for the organisation and expression of forest protest in Western Australia. The failed campaigns against the formation of CALM and the extension of wood chip licences both served to refine the protest movement's ability to offer professional criticism of the state government's forest policies and to employ strategies aimed at exposing Western Australians to the visual and environmentally-damaging effects of clear-felling. In the state's south-west, the successful Denmark campaign against the McLean's wood chip mill proposal and the Great Walk from Denmark to Perth both stimulated effective regional protest action through the employment of non-confrontational strategies aimed at convincing local communities that they should take action to protect the forests. The formation of two forest activist groups in the Bridgetown area provides further evidence of the expansion of the forest protest movement's network in the state's south-west and of how local people were not simply content to voice their concerns about forest issues but organised themselves for local protest action. Once again the period reflected the continuing importance of strong leadership, with Alex Syme, Craig Chappelle, Nick Dodson and Mary and Jim Frith emerging as key leaders in the growth of south-west protest activity.

In summary, for the Western Australian forest protest movement the 1980s was a decade of contrasts. While on the one hand it was a time of optimism and
enthusiasm fuelled by the successful Shannon Basin and Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve campaigns, it was also a time of disappointment, when high expectations were not realised and forest conservationists found themselves limited and constricted by a state government that had once been sympathetic to their cause. Furthermore, both the Jarrah Class Action and the campaign against the CALM legislation caused some disunity within the protest movement, with activists arguing over strategies and ALP supporters facing conflicting loyalties between their environmental responsibility to protect the state's forests and their political allegiance to the party. Ultimately, it was the forest protest movement's frustration at its inability to influence changes to the state government's forest policies combined with the expansion of organised and successful forest protest into regional areas that provided the momentum for the movement to consolidate its activities and consider a return to more confrontational expressions of dissent.
ENDNOTES

1 Interim Report to the Government of Western Australia by the Task Force on Resource Management in the South-West of Western Australia, Government of Western Australia, Perth, October 1983, Conservation Council archives.
3 Letters to ALP Branches from Conservation Council of Western Australia, dated 19 July 1984 with attached Position Papers, Battye ACC 4543A/21/4.
4 Letter from Michael McGrath (Director) and John Bailey (President), Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., to Ms Deidre O’Neill, Secretary, Mundaring/Eastern Hills ALP, dated 19 July 1984, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.
5 Letter from Brian Burke, MLA, Premier, to Secretary, ALP Mundaring Eastern Hills Branch, Darlington, WA 6070, dated 7 August 1984, Mahon private archives, uncatalogued, Battye Library.

6 WAPD, Vol. 252, 6 November 1984, pp.3496-3497.
10 SFDF Newsletter, September 1984, Editorial, Schultz private archives.
11 Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 November 2004.
13 ibid., pp.860-861.
15 SFDF, notice of Annual General Meeting and urgent communication, November 1984, Schultz private archives.
16 South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc., Minutes of Annual General Meeting held 5 December 1984, Schultz private archives.
17 Government Gazette of Western Australia, No.21, 15 March 1985.
18 SFDF Newsletter, March 1985, Schultz private archives.
21 ‘Submission to the Royal Commission into the Department of Conservation and Land Management by the South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc. - June 1985’, Schultz private archives.
23 SFDF Newsletter, May 1987, Schultz private archives.
24 Time for Change: Proposals for Conservation and Improved Management in the Forests of South-Western Australia, Campaign to Save Native Forests, Australian Conservation Foundation, Conservation Council of WA (Inc.), Coalition for Denmark’s Environment, August 1987, Battye Q.333.75TIM.
27 ‘Defending the people’s forest’, West Australian, 4 August 1988, p.10.
29 Transcript of oral evidence given by Beth Schultz, SFDF, to the Select Committee on Land Conservation, 19 December 1989, Schultz private archives.
The Real Forest News, CSNF, SFDF, Conservation Council of WA (Inc.), Australian Conservation Foundation (Inc.), Western Chapter, May 1987, p.3.

The Great Forest Sell-Out, SFDF Newsletter, June 1987.

Letter from Alex Gardner, Lecturer in Law, University of Western Australia, to Ms Beth Schultz, SFDF, dated 6 May 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/10.

CSNF News, April-May 1988, Battye ACC 4543A30/11.

‘Famous Comedian, Spike Milligan, Appalled at Environmental Blindness of WA Government’, media release, CSNF, 26 October 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/11.

West Australian, 22 April 1988, p.8.


ibid.


Message to Senator Graham Richardson, Parliament House, Canberra, from Combined Forest Conservation Groups of WA, dated 1 August 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/2.

WACAP press release, 1 August 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/1.

“When the Chips are Down”, publicity material, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Australian Conservation Foundation, Campaign to Save Native Forests, South-West Forests Defence Foundation, Schultz private archives.

Bunnings, news release, 1 September 1988, Schultz private archives.

Minister for Environment, media statement, 7 September 1988, Schultz private archives.


SFDF, media release, 8 September 1988, Schultz private archives.

‘Forest Campaign Consolitdates as Opposition to Woodchipping and Clearfelling Grows’, CSNF, media release, 6 October 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/2; ‘Friends of the Forest’, publicity material, Schultz private archives.

Draft Minutes of Meeting between Senator Peter Cook and Representatives of the Forest Conservation Group on Friday 18 November 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/8.


Institute of Foresters of Australia (WA Division), circular letter to all members of parliament in Western Australia, dated 29 December 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/30/1.

Minister for Conservation and Land Management, media statement, 29 December 1988, Schultz private archives.


Minister for Conservation and Land Management, media statement, 30 December 1988, Schultz private archives.

‘Government forest policy has both sides bemused’, West Australian, 17 January 1989.


Albany Advertiser, 12 November 1985, p.5.

Albany Advertiser, Letters to the Editor, 14 November 1985.


Albany Advertiser, 10 December 1985, p.17.

Alex Syme, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.

Craig Chappelle, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.

Some of the real facts about the use of our Timber Resources..., publicity brochure, McLean Sawmills Pty Ltd, undated, Battye ACC 4543A/30/12.

Craig Chappelle, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.


‘South Coast Woodchip Issue’, circular letter to SFDF from Australian Conservation Foundation, dated 1 January 1986, Schultz private archives.


‘WA Government Must Choose Tourism Not Woodchips’, media release, Campaign to Save Native Forests, 2 April 1986, Battye ACC 4543A/30/11.

‘CSNF Criticises Altered Denmark Woodchip Proposal’, media release, Campaign to Save Native Forests, 28 April 1986, Battye ACC 4543A/30/12.

‘Conservation Group Produces Video on Denmark Woodchipping’, media release, Campaign to Save Native Forests, August 1986, Conservation Council archives.


The Last Stand, documentary film, Coalition for Denmark’s Environment, 1986, Battye EO.181.

ibid.

Alex Syme, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.


Alex Syme, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005; Albany Advertiser, 8 January 1987, pp.1-2.


Albany Advertiser, 24 February 1987, p.3.


Letter from Barry Hodge, Minister for Environment, to Mrs B. Churchward, Conservation Council of Western Australia, undated, Schultz private archives.

Alex Syme, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.

Mary Frith, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 January 2005.

ibid.

ibid.

Letter from Nick Dodson, Blackwood Environment Society, to The Secretary, South West Forests Defence Foundation, dated 25 August 1988, Schultz private archives.


Mary Frith, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 January 2005.


Craig Chappelle, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.


Circular letter from Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc. to Shire Councils in the South-West, dated 14 March 1988, Battye ACC 4543A/49/8.

South Western Times, 24 March 1988, p.5.

Craig Chappelle, interview with Ron Chapman, 12 January 2005.

West Australian, 15 April 1988, p.3.

Chapter 7

The Early 1990s: Protest Escalation

Map 7.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 7.
While forest protest groups had already demonstrated an ability to combine to oppose bauxite mining and wood chipping, it was not until the early 1990s that the movement formally gathered its forces under a single forest protest banner to mount a concerted campaign against renewed pressure on Western Australia's forests. Increased community sensitivity to forest destruction resulted in the escalation of local forest protest activity in the state's south-west, with an expanding network of local action groups which formed to protect specific areas of native forest.

This chapter will argue that, during the 1990s, the forest protest movement gained support by combining a range of non-confrontational strategies such as lobbying, written submissions, legal challenges, public meetings and rallies with non-violent direct action that included forest occupations and blockades aimed at both maintaining the Western Australian public's focus on the forests and sustaining pressure on the state government to alter its forest policies. A comparison between the protest movement's first use of non-violent direct action strategies in the late 1970s and the resumption of direct action in the 1990s shows how the movement had developed and expanded over time. Whereas the 1978 Wagerup occupation had been organised by a single protest group, the Campaign to Save Native Forests, and had been directed against Alcoa's bauxite mining operations at one specific location, the revival of non-violent direct action in the 1990s was characterised by a multitude of forest actions in a variety of south-west locations that were co-ordinated by a highly-organised network of urban and rural forest protest groups.
The chapter will further argue that, while protest strategies were initially non-confrontational and directed towards opposing the state government’s forest policy and management proposals, frustration at the protest movement's inability to halt an acceleration of logging in the south-west forests during the early 1990s provided the catalyst for an intensive campaign of direct action aimed at saving Western Australia’s high conservation value forests. Additionally, the chapter will argue that the spontaneous organisation of south-west protest group activity to save local forests strengthened the forest protest movement and expanded its existing network of urban and rural forest activists.

**Western Australian Forest Alliance (WAFA)**

The formation of the Western Australian Forest Alliance in 1990 was important for the organisation of co-ordinated and effective forest protest action in Western Australia. While the state's forest conservation groups had discussed the possibility of amalgamating in the late 1980s and were aware of the advantages, such as ‘unity, efficiency and convenience’, no formal action was taken to combine their resources. Eventually, a gathering of 19 activists representing 12 forest groups met at Donnelly River in August 1990 and decided to form the Western Australian Forest Alliance. In addition to the Conservation Council of WA, the Campaign to Save Native Forests, the South-West Forests Defence Foundation and the Wilderness Society, the other foundation groups comprised the Australian Conservation Foundation (Bunbury, Collie, Perth, South Coast), Blackwood Environment Society, Coalition for Denmark's Environment, Dwellingup Greenbelt Committee, Friends of the Blackwood Valley, Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest, Warren Environmental Group
and the Sustainable Agricultural Research Institute.\(^2\) It was decided that the new organisation would be co-ordinated by a body of six people, consisting of three representatives from Perth metropolitan groups and three from country areas. The initial objectives of WAFA were: to ensure that forest ecosystems were adequately represented in conservation reserves, to promote ecologically sensitive forest management, to resist timber industry exploitation of Western Australia’s native forests and to encourage plantation forestry.\(^3\)

Beth Schultz, who was involved in organising the inaugural meeting, recalled that WAFA was formed after it was decided to initiate a specific forest campaign that would bring together groups and individuals and enable them to work around a co-ordinated strategy with specific timetables and objectives. She believes one of the main reasons for the group’s success was the geographical location of its key activists:

WAFA had the most marvellous luck in that every major town in the south-west had a one hundred per cent reliable, dedicated, forest conservationist, who ran a group to spread the load...it just turned out that there was one in Bridgetown, Margaret River, Pemberton, Denmark, Donnybrook.

According to Schultz, it was the network of local groups and the information they supplied to the city organisations that ultimately made the urban population aware of what was happening in the forests.\(^4\)

Schultz' observations about a widespread distribution of activists throughout the state's south-west can be readily observed from records of those attending WAFA's monthly meetings. In May 1991, for example, as well as representatives from the Conservation Council, the CSNF, the SFDF and the
Wilderness Society, those present included Jim and Mary Frith (Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest), Alex Syme (Coalition for Denmark's Environment), Andy Russell (Warren Environment Group), and Basil Schur (Australian Conservation Foundation South Coast). The September 1992 meeting included Stan Dilkes and Lyn Serventy (Leeuwin Conservation Group), Wendy Goodall (Crowea Committee), and Dave Swainston and Claire Johnson (Busselton Peace and Environment Group).

At its initial meeting, WAFA not only stipulated its overall objectives but also set specific goals that the organisation hoped to achieve over a 30-year period. Notably, the objectives contained a first reference to phasing out logging of ‘old growth forests’ within six months, with complete reservation within ten years. By the year 2020, it was envisaged there would be extremely limited logging in state forests, with the majority of timber produced from plantations of mixed species.

The formation of WAFA prompted media interest and timber industry concerns about violent confrontation. Timber workers attending a Manjimup rally were warned by Kalgoorlie MHR Graeme Campbell that environmentalists planned to close down the industry and that marchers should ignore taunts from forest protesters who enjoyed using violence. WAFA groups stressed their commitment to non-violence and an intention to work with the timber industry to ensure its survival through the promotion of plantation forestry.
Soon after its foundation, WAFA invited applications for the position of forest campaign co-ordinator whose duties would include co-ordinating forest protest activities, organising WAFA meetings, attracting and inspiring volunteers, and maintaining an effective network of forest conservationists. A $150 weekly wage was proposed for two days’ work each week, with an initial trial period of 20 weeks. Affiliated groups were canvassed for support and financial contributions. In 1993, Peter Robertson was appointed co-ordinator, and subsequently convenor, of WAFA. Robertson, who had a flair for devising campaign strategies, believed that, while the advent of new technologies such as emails, the internet and mobile telephones offered exciting embellishments to forest protest, non-violent direct action had proved effective over time and continued to be an essential strategy in any modern campaign.

The new organisation sought to broaden its influence and extended invitations to other groups, such as the Great Walk Network, the Jarrah Forest Action Group, the Leeuwin Conservation Group and the Walpole-Nornalup National Park Association, to join it in working towards the goal of protecting the state’s forests. Groups would benefit by sharing expertise and ‘creating a stronger voice with which to make media and political gains.’ The first edition of WAFA's newspaper, The Real Forest News, a four-page spreadsheet published in December 1992, drew attention to the Department of Conservation and Land Management’s proposals to clear-fell native forests for wood chips and charcoal. The publication urged individuals to donate to a ‘Stand Up For The Forests’ campaign, and write to Jim McGinty, state Minister for the Environment, to complain about the mismanagement of Western Australia’s native forests. By
this time the number of affiliated groups had risen to 17, with the addition of the Busselton Peace and Environment Group, Crowea Committee, D'Entrecasteaux Defence Group, Great Walk Network and Leeuwin Conservation Group.\textsuperscript{13}

WAFA meetings were hosted by the various south-west groups operating under the WAFA umbrella. During 1991 and 1992, the organisation met at Bunbury, Northcliffe, Bridgetown, Wellington Mills, Pemberton, Margaret River and Busselton, with a number of workshops held at other locations. An analysis of WAFA meeting minutes during the early 1990s shows attendances at meetings to have been uneven, with an average of 17 representatives present on each occasion. At the July 1993 weekend meeting at Balingup, for instance, when the forests campaign was gathering momentum, 30 people attended representing 10 different groups, while a meeting held on 26 November 1994 attracted only 12 members.\textsuperscript{14} The format and content of the Balingup meeting provides an insight into how the WAFA was developing into a well-organised and co-ordinated forest protest organisation. Each conservation group presented a summary of its activities since the previous meeting, with proposals for future activities. A ‘brainstorming session’ enabled individual group members to present ideas for collective discussion. This was followed by further group discussions on various issues, including strategies for the forest campaign, an appraisal of previous actions, the organisation of a training weekend on non-violent direct action and ideas for fund-raising activities.\textsuperscript{15}

The consolidation of forest conservation groups through the foundation of WAFA heralded a new phase in the concerted and energetic campaign to protect
Western Australia’s forests. Beth Schultz believes that the WAFA's formation played a key role in the 1990s forest campaigns by co-ordinating group activities and developing united strategies. However, while the creation of WAFA was significant, developments within the political arena added further momentum to the forest campaign.

**The Greens (WA)**

Like the Western Australian forest protest movement's decision to strengthen its organisation through uniting its activities, on a national level environmental activists were considering how they could combine their forces to increase their political influence. A **Getting Together** Conference at Sydney University in 1986 attended by over 500 representatives from a range of environmental organisations rejected a proposal to establish a national Green Party, largely because of differences in philosophy and strategies. Further attempts to form a national party in 1987 also failed. An initiative to combine the 'left and green forces' in Australia stalled because of disagreement over the inclusion of the word 'green' in the proposed party's title, and an attempt by Bob Brown to persuade Democrats leader Don Chipp to enter into an alliance with the Tasmanian Groups and the Nuclear Disarmament Party to form a national Green Party was rejected by the Democrats. Until the establishment of the Australian Greens in 1992, green groups continued to develop along state lines, with the formation of the Queensland Greens in 1985 and the South Australian Greens Party in 1989.
In late 1989 members of the WA Green Party and the Green Earth Alliance, which had itself resulted from an earlier merger of the Alternative Coalition, the Vallentine Peace Group and Green Development, commenced negotiations over terms for a possible merger. After a proposal was presented to both groups, it was decided to proceed with the amalgamation. The agreement stated that the Green Party and the Green Earth Alliance would merge to form a new political organisation called ‘The Greens (WA)’, and be publicly announced on 1 January 1990. The new party would be organised on principles of ‘grass roots participatory democracy’, whereby individuals would be encouraged to become involved in decision-making, thus avoiding a concentration of power among a few members. Similar to WAFA, all decisions, where possible, would be reached by a process of consensus.20

Christine Sharp had been involved in the Western Australian forest protest movement since the formation of the Campaign to Save Native Forests in 1975, and had taken part in the Wagerup action against bauxite mining and the campaign to create the Shannon National Park. She recalled attending a meeting that was convened to bring together people from the peace and disarmament movement and the environment movement in order to debate the idea of forming a Green political party in Western Australia. The principal objective was to create a ‘political engine’ that would advance a left-wing environmental agenda, which many saw as the next logical step in the development of the environment movement.21
After its foundation, the Greens (WA) was successful in maintaining continuous parliamentary representation. Jo Vallentine was elected to the federal Senate in 1984 as a member of the Nuclear Disarmament Party, and in 1990 became the first Greens member of the Senate following the merger of the Green Earth Alliance with the WA Green Party. After Vallentine’s retirement in 1992, she was replaced by Christabel Chamerette who, in 1993, was joined by Dee Margetts, the same year that Jim Scott was elected to Western Australia’s upper house. While Chamerette lost her Senate seat in 1996, that year saw the election of Christine Sharp and Giz Watson to join Scott in the Western Australian Legislative Council.

From the outset, the Greens promoted themselves as a political party that offered a different approach to politics, and an alternative to the two major parties. The party emphasised its commitment to the four key green principles of environmental responsibility, peace, social justice and participatory democracy. After her election, Greens (WA) Senator Christabel Chamerette said the new party was committed to changing the political system in order to give a higher priority to environmental issues. Chamerette believed that in Western Australia the party would provide a ‘community voice’ to challenge the dominance of two-party politics, and that this could be achieved by working closely with voluntary conservation groups.

Whereas the birth of WAFA in 1990 laid the foundations for a co-ordinated and highly-focused approach by forest activists, the formation of the Greens (WA) at that time provided Western Australian environmentalists with a political avenue
through which they could argue their case for the protection of the state’s forests. The importance of political party organisation had already been demonstrated on a federal level with the appointment in 1987 of Graham Richardson as the Hawke Labor government's Environment Minister. Despite angering conservationists through his recommendation to renew export wood chip licences in the late 1980s, discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis, Richardson's generally sympathetic approach to environmental issues and willingness to negotiate with the environment movement's leaders had resulted in some significant gains, such as listing North Queensland's Wet Tropics, Kakadu National Park Stage III and large areas of Tasmania's forests for World Heritage status. This combination of concerted group network activity and political organisation exerted a crucial influence on the conduct of the Western Australian forest protest movement's 1990s forest campaign.

**Media Wars**

In 1990 forest activists used strategies that exploited two media-focused events to both maintain public attention on the forests and to support its criticism of the state government and CALM's forest management practices. During March of that year the Forest Industries Campaign Association commenced a $1.2 million media campaign to convince the Western Australian public that the industry was using the forests responsibly. The newspaper and television advertisements, which came to be known as ‘classroom ads’, featured a teacher ‘educating’ the public about forest logging. The commercials sought to assure people that less than 30% of all public native forests in Australia was allocated for commercial forestry and that only 1% of that figure was logged in any one year, that the
majority of the remaining forest was preserved in national parks and reserves that could never be logged, and that the timber industry was sustainable through a regrowth cycle that ‘keeps going indefinitely.’ The advertisements argued that, if people knew ‘the real facts’, there would be no concern that native forests might disappear.25

Prior to the media campaign the Conservation Council had previewed the advertisements and believed that, as with the 'Forests Forever' legal action in the early 1980s, some of the content was open to challenge as false and misleading under the Trade Practices Act. The Council disputed the 30% wood production figure, claiming the figures should be reversed, with 30% in secure reserves and 70% available for timber production. Claims of a sustainable timber industry were rejected, the Council asserting that old forests were being cut down faster than young trees were maturing, and that mature forest ecosystems were being replaced with immature pulpwood plantations. Forest protest groups saw the media campaign as an expensive public relations exercise by an industry which was trying to preserve its economic prosperity in the face of mounting public concern at what was happening to the forests.26

On 21 March 1990 the South-West Forests Defence Foundation sought an injunction in Perth’s Federal Court under Section 52 of the Trade Practices Act on the grounds that the Forest Industries Campaign Association advertisements contained statements that were false, misleading and deceptive. The judge did not grant the injunction because the media campaign had almost finished but ordered an expedited hearing. The Foundation immediately began a fund-
raising campaign to cover the anticipated high legal costs. In a brief hearing on 26 October, however, both parties consented to the action being dismissed, with each responsible for its own costs.

Beth Schultz explained that the case had become ‘buried in paper’, with Forest Industries lawyers employing tactics that prolonged the action and escalated legal costs. As the South-West Forests Defence Foundation did not have the financial resources to engage in an extended case, it was decided to withdraw from the action and continue the fight in other ways. Schultz argued that the action partly succeeded in its purpose by showing that the facts in the Forest Industry media campaign were in dispute and forcing the industry to defend its position and alter the content of its advertisements.

Like the ‘Forests Forever’ legal action, the Forest Industries advertisements' case provided an example of the continuing use of the court system as a strategy to challenge perceived misrepresentations of the facts about Western Australia’s native forests. Again, while the action failed, there were some positive benefits, particularly media exposure, and making authorities aware that any public statements they made would be subject to the scrutiny of a vigilant forest protest movement.

Soon after the Forest Industries advertisements, the ABC *Four Corners* television programme screened ‘The Wood for the Trees’. The documentary alleged misuse and mismanagement of Western Australia’s forests and highlighted the destruction of native forests, the waste of quality wood, the
preferential treatment accorded to timber industry giant Bunnings Ltd and the failure of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) to properly manage the forests and the timber industry.\textsuperscript{29} The allegations contained in the programme sparked angry responses from the state government, CALM and the timber industry.

Responding to questions in state parliament during the two days following the broadcast, Environment Minister Bob Pearce said the programme contained many factual inaccuracies that were based on ‘bias, distortion and innuendo’. He was particularly concerned at the \textit{Four Corners} team’s videoing of CALM’s executive director, Dr Syd Shea, during a family function, and said he intended making a complaint to the national ethics committee of the Australian Journalists Association.\textsuperscript{30}

Following a request from the Environment Minister, CALM compiled an extensive critique of the \textit{Four Corners} programme in which it identified 44 alleged inaccuracies and presented the department’s response. The document claimed that CALM had been set up ‘as a whipping-boy for its extremist critics’ and that the programme was the result of a journalist hunting for a good story and ‘refusing to be distracted by facts or hamstrung by a sense of fair play.’ In a covering memorandum to the Environment Minister, CALM’s executive director speculated that the production of the \textit{Four Corners} programme shortly after loggers had mistakenly felled 86 trees in the Shannon National Park\textsuperscript{31} was not accidental. The memorandum’s concluding paragraph provides some insight
into the relationship between CALM, and more particularly Dr Shea, and the state Labor government at that time:

I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the Department to formally thank you for the vigorous, rapid and articulate support you gave us publicly and in the Parliament. I am sure that you have never doubted the loyalty and support of the Department to the Government’s policies on forest management and to yourself personally. I have to advise you that following the last few weeks’ events that if you ever are in a position where you have to walk over hot coals there are many people in this Department who would volunteer to go with you.32

In a memorandum to all employees, Bob Bunning, managing director of Bunnings Forest Products, refuted allegations in the Four Corners programme that the company had monopolised the Western Australian timber market, was subsidised by the state government, was wasteful and inefficient, and intimidated small saw-millers. He asserted the state's forests were managed 'with excellence' by CALM in a way that preserved forest values as well as timber production 'in perpetuity', arguing that the documentary's real agenda was aimed at discrediting CALM and the state government, and increasing the power of the 'preservationists' who, he believed, were intent on stopping the timber industry and any industrial development to which they objected.33

Predictably the Four Corners programme attracted considerable support from environmental groups with letters to the Premier and Environment Minister calling for a public inquiry into the state government’s and CALM’s forest management practices.34 When an ABC inquiry failed to substantiate the majority of CALM’s complaints of inaccuracies,35 conservation groups lauded the Four Corners documentary as a triumph for Western Australia’s environmental movement that confirmed allegations of CALM’s
mismanagement of the forests and the state government’s taxpayer-funded subsidy of the timber industry.\textsuperscript{36}

The reactions from the state government, CALM and the timber industry to the ABC \textit{Four Corners} programme revealed the sensitivity of those bodies to any threat to the stability of the timber industry and their willingness to support each other against what was perceived as a common enemy. For the Western Australian forest protest movement, the documentary not only generated considerable controversy and national media exposure but, most importantly, raised questions in the ABC-viewing public’s mind about the state government and CALM’s approaches to forest management, and the nature of their relationship with the timber industry.

\textbf{Mounting Frustration}

Government intransigence over the issuing of wood chip licences increased the forest protest movement’s frustration and stimulated protest action during the early 1990s. In December 1991 the Western Australian Forest Alliance called on federal Minister for Resources, Alan Griffiths, not to renew export wood chip licences to the WA Chip and Pulp Company because of continuing breaches of licence conditions. WAFA alleged that the company had carried out intensive logging in river, stream and salt risk zones without prior Environmental Protection Authority assessment, that chip logs had been removed from private property without authorisation and that there had been a lack of public consultation on research into the environmental impacts of wood chipping.\textsuperscript{37}
The Minister replied in April 1992 that WAFA’s request was received after licence approval had already been granted.38

Anger at wood chip export licence renewals motivated sections of the Western Australian forest protest movement to initiate actions to obstruct the industry’s operations. In early 1993, WAFA began organising a non-violent direct action protest to take place on 14 February at the WA Chip and Pulp Company’s Bunbury wood chip compound. A ship was expected to arrive that day to collect a cargo of wood chips, and supporters were advised that Perth activists were planning a large demonstration to meet the vessel. The action would occur on the wharf around the wood chip pile and in the water, and participants were advised to ‘act according to their consciences’, with a commitment to principles of non-violent action.39 During the action 29 protesters were arrested and charged with remaining on the WA Chip and Pulp Company's premises when they were ordered to leave after unfurling a large banner on top of a 30-metre high wood chip pile. The charges were subsequently dismissed because the prosecution failed to prove that the protesters heard the warning to leave the area. Activists believed their protest had succeeded in alerting people to the criminal destruction of native forests for wood chips.40

A further action held at Manjimup in July 1994 was designed to highlight the fact that wood chip licence conditions designed to protect National Estate forests were not being monitored. Thirteen protesters were arrested at Bunnings’ Diamond mill after sitting on railway tracks to prevent a wood chip train from loading. Those arrested included 72-year old Elaine Michael from Bridgetown
who said that, although she had always been a person who believed in doing things legally, her decision to break the law had been based on moral values and there appeared no other way to save the forests. The protesters were originally charged with the indictable offence of obstructing a train but the charge was changed to that of hindering a lawful activity. In September 1996 eight protesters were eventually convicted, although the magistrate declined to record any convictions. After the trial the protesters addressed the magistrate, explaining that they had become frustrated after failing to achieve protection for the forests by working within the law and felt that more dramatic action was needed to raise public awareness about the destruction of the forests for wood chips.

Federal government proposals to introduce resource security legislation prompted an angry response from forest protest groups. The Conservation Council pointed out that the timber industry in Western Australia already had protection under the state government’s 1987 timber strategy, with access to the forests guaranteed until at least 1998. Further legislation, it argued, would only ‘entrench the current wasteful, inefficient, heavily subsidised and unsustainable industry well into the next century’. Parliamentarians were urged to reject the proposed legislation. WAFA supported the Conservation Council’s position, arguing that resource security legislation would force the Western Australian government into legislative commitments to the timber industry that it would be unable to fulfil and would guarantee the destruction of the remaining areas of old growth forests. The organisation called on its members to write to the Minister for the Environment and the Premier and ask them to remove the threat to the
forests posed by the new legislation. Welcoming the legislation’s eventual defeat, the Australian Conservation Foundation believed a further threat to old growth forests had been averted and that governments should now work to protect Australia’s forests through promoting plantation development on already cleared land.

In mid-1991 the federal government’s Resource Assessment Commission released a draft report on its inquiry into forest and timber resources. The report received a generally favourable response from the Western Australian conservation movement, particularly its observations regarding the lack of evidence to show that the state’s forests were being logged on a sustainable basis and that priority was given to timber production at the expense of conservation and recreation. The Commission’s final report, however, was disappointing. It accepted assurances by forest management agencies that the forests were being managed sustainably and supported the continuation of wood chipping on economic grounds. Conservationists speculated whether additional evidence or political pressure had influenced an apparent change of opinion after the draft report.

The 1992 release of the Keating government’s draft national forest policy statement, which provided for the retention of Commonwealth powers to approve wood chipping from native forests, attracted further criticism from conservationists with the Conservation Council calling for the formulation of separate policies for forests and wood production, and a native forest protection policy aimed at preserving ‘all the biodiversity, wilderness and aesthetic qualities
of Australia’s remaining native forests. Similarly, the Wilderness Society argued that only the full protection of all native forests would ensure their ecological integrity, and that there was no economic justification to continue native forest logging.

In a letter to Prime Minister Keating, WAFA supported the other groups’ opposition to the draft policy but was prepared to accept logging over a 300-year minimum rotation, provided the forest ecosystem was preserved. WAFA appealed to the Prime Minister to reject the draft national forest policy. A National Forest Summit of conservation groups in July 1994 called in vain on the federal Environment Minister, Senator John Faulkner, to implement a moratorium clause in the final *National Forest Policy Statement* that required forest management agencies to ‘avoid activities that may significantly affect those areas of old-growth forest or wilderness that are likely to have high conservation value.’

On a national scale, the failure of the Keating Government to apply the *National Forest Policy Statement’s* guidelines regarding forest protection and the decision by Resources Minister David Beddall to renew all wood chip licences and increase the volume of exports to almost 7 million tonnes in 1995 provoked an angry response from the Australian environment movement. Prime Minister Keating’s hasty intervention to find a compromise that would lessen the political impact of the licence decision only increased tensions between conservationists and forest industry groups. The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society declared that there appeared to be little difference between
the two major parties on environmental issues and that the 1980s relationship with the Labor Party had effectively been destroyed.54

In Western Australia the Conservation Council regarded the licence renewals as a demonstration of contempt for the state’s native forests and vowed to overturn the decision, with ‘concerned people’ resorting to legal challenges and non-violent direct action.55 WAFA asserted that the licence decision not only condemned Western Australia’s old growth forests to further destruction but also made a mockery of the National Forest Policy Statement and effectively supported the state government’s exploitation of the forests.56 The West Australian newspaper adopted a neutral position. It argued that a broad range of supposedly ‘expert’ views had caused confusion and conflict over the wood chip licence issue, and that Australians needed to be assured that their forests were logged for economic benefit while still protecting their long-term future as a unique environment.57

At a Fremantle rally in January 1995 about 200 protesters heard Greens Senator Christabel Chamarette and rock star Peter Garrett speak out against the federal government’s wood chip licence approval. Senator Chamarette said the Keating government had pretended to be concerned about the environment when it suited its purposes but in reality had succumbed to a false economic argument that enabled the logging industry to continue its destruction.58 The broader national context of the movement to protect the forests was apparent in a Canberra rally later that month, when a reported crowd of 250 anti-wood chipping protesters demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's official residence against the wood
chip licence renewals. Wilderness Society organisers at the event warned that the federal government would become the target of a nationwide campaign unless it provided security for Australia's wilderness areas.\textsuperscript{59}

The federal government’s willingness to approve wood chip licence renewals, its failure to implement a clause within the \textit{National Forest Policy Statement} to protect areas of high conservation value, and the final report of the Resource Assessment Commission which supported a continuation of wood chipping, all caused frustration within the forest protest movement and stimulated protest activity during the early 1990s. These factors also strengthened a perception within the protest movement of federal government support for a tacit agreement between the Western Australian government, the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the logging industry to protect the \textit{status quo}. The challenge for the protest movement was to fragment that alliance and expose its weaknesses.

\textbf{Opposing Forces}

The early 1990s was marked by a sharp deterioration in the relationship between the forest protest movement and government authorities responsible for the management of the state’s forests. While various reviews and management proposals sought to balance the demands of intensive logging against increasing calls for forest conservation, it became clear to activists that, as in the late-1970s, government intransigence over forest protection demanded the application of more direct forms of protest.
In June 1990 the Conservation Council of Western Australia wrote to Premier Carmen Lawrence, expressing increasing frustration at the lack of co-operation between CALM and the Council on forest issues. While sympathising with the Council’s position, Premier Lawrence advised that measures were being taken to improve communications between the organisations, which included meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest, and a series of open forums to raise questions on forest management and policy. Premier Lawrence stated that the Council’s suggestion that CALM should be dismantled had made the formation of goodwill more difficult and that, despite their differences, the Conservation Council should ‘pursue a positive relationship with CALM’ and raise any further concerns with the Minister for the Environment.

Further evidence of mounting discord occurred in 1991 when the South-West Forests Defence Foundation compiled a report entitled *Use and Abuse of the Jarrah Forest*. The document argued that Western Australia’s jarrah forests had been heavily exploited since European colonisation, that the small area remaining was now under ‘enormous and increasing pressure’, and that its future should be determined by the people of the state. CALM, it alleged, had failed in its duty as the managing authority to engage in genuine public consultation and to provide full information about its activities. Those concerned about the future of the jarrah forest were urged to visit the forests, become involved in conservation activities and write to government bodies requesting the facts about forestry operations.
The report was launched in November 1991 by the WA Forest Alliance at a ‘Save the Jarrah’ night held at the University of Western Australia. Introducing the document as spokesperson for WAFA, Beth Schultz said the publication provided a realistic summation of the degradation of the state’s unique jarrah forest, and that it was intended as the focal point of a concerted campaign by conservation groups to ensure the jarrah forest was properly protected and managed.63 CALM’s executive director, Dr Syd Shea, said that there was no scientific basis for the report’s assertions, and that the jarrah forest was being used by the conservation movement ‘to satisfy their ideologically motivated desire to convince the community that the “sky was falling in”’.64

In February 1992 CALM invited public comment on proposals to amend its 1987 forest management plans.65 This seemingly innocuous request and its consequences would play a crucial role in transforming the strategic direction of native forest protest in the early 1990s by convincing forest activists that a negotiated solution on forest protection within the dominant political power structure was not possible and that, once again, it was necessary to adopt a more confrontational approach to protest.

Criticising the draft proposals, the Conservation Council saw little modification to CALM’s existing approach to forest management: wood extraction remained the dominant goal, wood chipping provided the driving force, and clear-felling and frequent prescribed burning would continue. The Council argued that implementation of the proposed management strategy would result in an intensification of wood extraction by reducing the amount of forest that was
protected in road, river and stream zones. Additionally, the issues of unsustainable logging, forest waste and the conversion of mature forest into immature regrowth had not been addressed. While welcoming additions to the conservation estate, the Council called for a moratorium on logging in all virgin forest and its protection in secure reserves, an end to clear-felling and a review of the royalty system with the removal of subsidies to wood extraction industries. WAFA observed that CALM's proposals to manage Western Australia's native forests provided no evidence of the availability of any additional forest resources or that the forests could survive any intensification of wood extraction and argued that unless CALM was willing to provide empirical data to support its assertions then the public consultation process would be meaningless.

Between 1989 and 1994 Christine Sharp served as a member of Western Australia’s Environmental Protection Authority. Shortly after her appointment she became concerned that CALM had breached a ministerial condition attached to the Environmental Protection Authority’s approval of its 1987 ten-year Forest Management Strategy. The condition stipulated that there should be no intensive logging of areas of jarrah that were designated as ‘salt risk zones’, which were those areas of forest that received less than 1100 millimetres of annual rainfall and represented the majority of the jarrah forest. Sharp has claimed that it was her persistence over this issue that eventually resulted in CALM being required to undertake the 1992 review, ostensibly to resolve ‘a number of outstanding statutory requirements’. CALM’s revised strategy intensified forest logging, resulting from its commitment to pre-existing timber contracts. She considered the only positive aspects of the Environmental
Protection Authority review of the proposals was the fact that CALM’s intentions for the forests were placed on the public record and that the EPA report stimulated an energetic response from forest activists. The Conservation Council was particularly critical of the EPA’s approval of CALM’s proposals after the Authority had expressed some misgivings, and considered both organisations exhibited ‘a reckless disregard for our increasingly valuable native forests, and a cavalier attitude to public opinion and public involvement.’

In late 1992, following the findings of the WA Inc. Royal Commission, Bob Pearce, the state Environment Minister, resigned and was replaced by Jim McGinty. The new minister decided to visit Kerr forest block to view and discuss the impact of clear-felling on the jarrah forest. Christine Sharp, who took part in the discussions, believes McGinty’s visit sparked a brief period of progress over the issue of increased jarrah logging with the establishment of a special Appeals Committee, chaired by Tos Barnett, to examine appeals that had been submitted in response to the EPA’s endorsement of CALM’s forest management strategy proposals.

WAFA welcomed the committee’s appointment, hoping that it would steer CALM towards managing the forests ‘for the real long term benefit of present and future generations of West Australians.’ In an extensive submission to the Appeals Committee, the Combined Forests Conservation Organisations, comprising the Australian Conservation Foundation (WA), the Conservation Council and the Wilderness Society (WA), called for the immediate protection of
high conservation value forests, timber industry reform and the restructuring of CALM into separate conservation and production agencies. The Conservation Council appealed to Premier Carmen Lawrence to ensure that her government did not submit to pressure from CALM and the timber lobby, urging her to make decisions for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The Barnett report, released in December 1992, contained some positive recommendations for forest protection and increasing CALM’s public accountability. The committee recommended that there should be no increase in cutting levels beyond those specified in the 1987 Forest Strategy, that CALM prepare and cost additional options for forest management, including the possibility of phasing out intensive commercial logging of native forests, and that a ministerial review should determine ways in which CALM could provide better public access to information and become more receptive to community input.

Initial optimism, however, once again proved to be short-lived. On 24 December, Environment Minister McGinty announced that CALM’s forest management proposals could proceed, subject to various ministerial conditions. These included a rejection of Barnett’s recommendation to restrict logging levels and a decision to form an expert scientific committee to consider long-term allowable cutting levels for the state’s native forests. Conservationists regarded the imposition of conditions as a dilution of the Barnett report’s main recommendations.
Tension between conservation groups and CALM further increased during early 1993 with allegations of suppression of scientific information. During the preparation of his report, Tos Barnett had observed ‘a climate of fear’ within the department, with CALM scientists reluctant to speak to him and doing so only after obtaining guarantees of anonymity. At the beginning of March, the Conservation Council produced three documents to support its claims that CALM’s executives censored departmental scientific research and silenced or ignored its own scientists when their findings questioned the Department’s forest management practices. The documents reported that the effects of climate change on forest ecosystems might reduce growth rates and force a reduction in cutting levels, that jarrah thinning was responsible for spreading dieback disease and that the felling of karri forests was threatening wildlife through habitat destruction. To support its allegations, the Conservation Council produced a selection of differences between ‘draft’ and ‘published’ versions of the documents and suggested that the evidence cast doubt over all CALM publications. Denying the allegations, CALM said the Council had taken statements out of context and apparently confused censorship with peer review.

The forthcoming state election prompted WAFA to initiate a ‘vote for the forests’ campaign, with the aims of promoting the forests as an election issue, lobbying politicians to accept the full recommendations of the Barnett report and supporting Greens candidates for the Legislative Council. Strategies included a mass distribution of ‘vote for the forests’ leaflets, the formation of electorate groups to promote the campaign and the organisation of public events such as speaking tours of the south-west, rallies and forest-based protests. During the
course of the campaign, WAFA criticised both major political parties for their failure to commit themselves to ecologically sustainable forest policies and their apparent disregard for the Barnett report’s censure of CALM’s management practices. The Conservation Council became concerned at ‘strong hints’ of a private commitment by Coalition parties to introduce resource security legislation to protect the timber industry and implement CALM’s 1992 forest management proposals.

Following the election of the Court Liberal Government in February 1993, WAFA questioned whether or not the new government would continue the historical pattern of forest destruction or grasp the opportunity to reform CALM and ‘do the right thing by the forests, timber industry workers, all other forest users, the wider community and future generations’. Conservationists had become disillusioned with Labor’s performance on forest issues since the 1989 election and initially welcomed the Coalition’s ‘ambitious and attractive environmental platform’; however, it soon became apparent that the new administration had reneged on its election promises and tended to revert to the environmentally irresponsible practices of the previous Court government during the 1970s.

The new Minister for the Environment, Kevin Minson, set up the ‘expert committee’ promised by his predecessor to examine the quantity of timber that could be extracted from the forests over a ten-year period. The committee was chaired by marine biologist Dr Tim Meagher. In a detailed submission, WAFA listed 21 key issues that it believed the committee had to examine in detail if its...
recommendations were to have any credibility. Those issues included CALM’s lack of public accountability, the need for an alternative forest policy that included an option for phasing out logging in old growth forests, breaches of wood chip licence conditions and the ability of the forests to provide for an intensive wood extraction industry. WAFA expressed concern at the committee’s lack of response to its requests to present evidence in person.87

The Meagher report, released in August 1993, provided further disappointment and frustration for the forest protest movement.88 Launching a 14-page WAFA analysis of the committee’s recommendations, Peter Robertson said Western Australians had been betrayed by the proposed forest destruction.89 WAFA concluded that the findings would result in a massive increase in the extent and intensity of logging in Western Australia’s native forests and a doubling of the number of logs to be extracted. As well, WAFA criticised the committee’s review process, alleging that it operated in secrecy, spoke mainly with CALM officials and timber industry staff, and ignored the views and expertise of forest conservationists. The Environment Minister’s statement endorsing the committee’s recommendations was presented on the same day as the report’s release, thus providing no opportunity for prior public comment, and was seen by WAFA as a declaration of political support for the interests of the timber industry.90

When it became apparent that CALM’s revised logging plans would proceed, the South-West Forests Defence Foundation once again resorted to the court system. In September 1993, the Foundation initiated an action in the Western Australian
Supreme Court against the Environment Minister, Kevin Minson, and one of CALM’s controlling bodies, the Lands and Forest Commission. The court action aimed to stop the implementation of CALM’s forest management plans by alleging that the organisation failed to conduct a proper review of the 1992 amendments to its timber strategy and that a considerable amount of relevant information was withheld from the public and the Environmental Protection Authority. The SFDF’s action was supported by EPA Chairman, Barry Carbon, and EPA member, Dr John Bailey, who both swore affidavits saying that CALM had failed to supply the EPA with important scientific information and misled them about logging intentions in high salt-risk areas of the jarrah forest. The Supreme Court decision, handed down in November, supported CALM’s public review process, stating that the organisation had no obligation to disclose information that was only in draft form. Commenting on the ruling, WAFA believed the court ruling provided CALM with an excuse to withhold information and diminished the accountability of governments and government agencies for their actions.

By 1993, the Western Australian native forest protest movement had become disillusioned with both major political parties who seemed intent on maintaining a strong alliance with the timber industry. Apart from the Shannon Basin National Park and Lane-Poole Jarrah Reserve successes during the mid-1980s, the relationship with the Labor Party, as Hutton and Connors have observed, had been less than satisfactory. Furthermore, it quickly became obvious that the new Liberal Government had no intention of modifying CALM’s proposals for an intensification of forest logging. When the protest movement realised that
persuasive arguments to protect the forests had failed, a sense of frustration and powerlessness translated into a concerted direct action campaign.

A Time for Action

Well before CALM began implementing its new forest management plans there were signs that local groups in the south-west were organising for a campaign of direct action. As early as January 1992, Northcliffe residents held a meeting with Perth activists to develop a campaign strategy to save Crowea forest block at Moons Crossing from logging. The area was a popular recreation venue where local people and tourists could swim, fish for marron and enjoy walking in the forest. The local community became angry when CALM bulldozed a logging road through the forest in preparation for clear-felling of karri and marri trees. Campaign organiser, John Croft, said public opinion had been ignored by authorities and there had been little opportunity for people to express their views about the use and management of the forests. As well as demanding the protection of Crowea forest, he called for a full public inquiry into the timber and wood chip industries and stated that his group was willing to use strategies of non-violent direct action to achieve its objectives.94

In June 1993, Balingup Friends of the Forest organised a rally in the town over mismanagement of local forests and throughout the south-west generally. People were angry at the ‘entrenched unwillingness’ of government agencies to accept accountability for their actions and to consider alternative options for the forests.95 A publicity poster for the rally emphasised the collective goal of activists to save the remaining areas of native forest and their determination to
succeed, promoting the rally as ‘a dynamic public event to capture people’s imagination, stir up their desire for change and show that we all mean business.’

The Balingup rally was attended by over 200 people, with representatives from the Greens (WA), the Wilderness Society, the Conservation Council and some of WAFA’s 20 groups throughout the south-west. The focal point was an action that stopped the wood chip train running between Manjimup and Bunbury. Activists climbed onto a loaded wagon and unfurled a banner written in Japanese which read “From Our Unique Australian Forests to Japanese Dumps”. Phil Gregory of Balingup said the wood chip trains had rumbled through the town for 17 years; people had finally decided that things must change and that they would not stand by and allow the forest destruction to continue. An opposing rally held at the same time by the timber industry-based Forest Protection Society highlighted the growing tension within south-west communities, with timber workers calling on the wood chip train’s driver to run down the protesters. The Balingup rally was especially significant in that it was initiated by local, as opposed to city-based, forest protest groups.

Further local action occurred in July, with south-west activists under the WAFA banner organising a rally at CALM’s Kirup office to protest against the new jarrah forest logging plans. WAFA supporters attempted to meet with CALM workers before the rally to inform them that, if the proposed plans were not withdrawn, concerned citizens would occupy the Kirup office and place it ‘under new management’. Media representatives were taken on a tour of the jarrah
forest to see the level of destruction, and experts explained other alternatives to logging.100 During an occupation of the CALM office, WAFA supporters announced a new mission statement for the organisation that called for ‘the development and implementation of strategies for the transfer of logging out of jarrah and jarrah-marri forests and onto tree crops and plantations’. A ‘Kirup Declaration’ criticising CALM’s forest management practices and calling for the withdrawal of its 1992 proposals was read out and forwarded to the Minister for the Environment.101

Meanwhile, the larger city-based organisations maintained pressure on the state government and CALM to suspend the proposed acceleration of logging activities. The Conservation Council revealed that it possessed photographic and video evidence of the ecological collapse of an area of jarrah forest at Admiral Road near Byford, following Alcoa’s bauxite mining operations, and intended showing its findings to a Dutch delegation visiting Western Australia who were seeking to ascertain whether or not the state’s forests were being managed on a sustainable basis.102 Following a successful campaign by Friends of the Earth activist Leone van der Maesen working in the Netherlands in collaboration with the Conservation Council, the Dutch government subsequently decided not to buy karri forest timber as it was not convinced that the ecological effects of CALM’s management policies on the forests had been sufficiently investigated.103 A circular from the Council warned potential overseas importers of state government attempts to market timber from Western Australia’s old growth forests as ‘ecologically sustainable’ or ‘environmentally acceptable’ alternatives to rainforest timber.104
Forest protest strategies in early 1994 were also aimed at soliciting broader political support for the forest campaign. Responding to a WAFA initiative, the Greens (WA) sponsored a national phone link-up between major forest activist groups in Western Australia and the eastern states to discuss campaign strategies and initiatives. Congratulating Dr Carmen Lawrence on her election to federal Parliament, WAFA invited her to address a meeting in Fremantle Town Hall to talk about the government’s role in protecting the state’s native forests and future forest policy directions. This was despite earlier criticisms by conservationists of the Lawrence Labor government's record on environmental issues and assertions that one of the reasons for her government's defeat was its failure to take the environment seriously. An invitation was also extended to Christine Milne, a Tasmanian parliamentarian and environmental campaigner. The meeting was promoted as the first major public meeting on Western Australia’s native forest crisis and ‘the springboard’ for local south-west campaigns to protect critical areas of old growth forest that were under threat from CALM’s new forest management plans.

It was also at this time that the protest movement directed its strategies at the federal government to convince it that federal intervention on forests was crucial. In Senator John Faulkner the movement believed it had ‘a new and rather more credible federal environment minister’ and thought it might have a greater chance of success with a re-elected federal Labor government that could be open to persuasion, rather than with a newly-elected state Liberal administration that appeared committed to preserving the interests of the timber companies. While acknowledging that some tension existed between sections of the forest
campaign and members of the Green Senate team, activists gave consideration to combining the protest movement’s resources with the influence of the Greens and Democrats in order to increase pressure on the federal government and force forest issues onto the political frontline.109

The First Blockades

Western Australian forest activists decided to increase the campaign’s momentum by taking non-violent direct action. The protest movement realised it was necessary to accelerate the forest campaign, not only to stop the intensification of old growth forest logging but also because the campaign had consumed the efforts of activists for an extended period of time without the definitive ‘emblematic victory’ that was essential to maintain enthusiasm.110 It had become obvious that neither the state government nor CALM was heeding the mounting voices of protest raised against forest destruction, and that CALM had begun implementing plans to log several forest blocks that were interim-listed in the Register of the National Estate. Conservationists argued that this planned action contravened the 1992 National Forest Policy Statement, which specified that there should be no ecologically-damaging activities in old growth and wilderness areas until their conservation values had been assessed and a ‘comprehensive, adequate and representative reservation system’ was in place.111 Activists began organising for a month-long forest blockade of Giblett, Hawke, Rocky and Sharpe forest blocks.

As the umbrella organisation for forest protest groups, WAFA assumed overall responsibility for organising the state’s first forest blockade, with co-ordinator
Peter Robertson developing campaign strategies. As a protest strategy, forest blockades had already proved effective in eastern Australia, particularly in the Terania Creek (New South Wales), Franklin River (Tasmania) and East Gippsland (Victoria) actions. WAFA and the Wilderness Society pooled their experiences to produce a strategic plan for the campaign. While acknowledging that the blockade alone would not protect the forests, Peter Robertson reasoned that it could provide a dynamic for change:

The challenge is to shape the blockade in such a way that the images, activity, energy, messages etc generated by and through the blockade highlight the ‘injustice and impropriety’ of what is happening and add to the community pressure on governments to change policy.\footnote{112}

The Wilderness Society believed the aims of the blockade should be to highlight the fact that logging of high conservation value forests was happening in contravention of the *National Forest Policy Statement*, that the logging resulted in a loss of biodiversity and wilderness, that heritage forests were being wood chipped, and that a symbiotic relationship existed between CALM and the timber industry that was facilitated by the state government through taxpayer-funded subsidies and low royalties.\footnote{113}

As had happened prior to the 1979 Wagerup occupation, participants in the blockade were required to attend non-violence training workshops. The sessions included training in Gandhian principles of non-violent action which contained ten basic rules for avoiding physical confrontation. These rules included the avoidance of provocative behaviour, seeking common ground to promote trust and understanding, and honesty about the campaign’s objectives.\footnote{114} A flow-chart illustrated how principles of non-violence could be applied to campaign
strategies, and provided guidelines for activists on how they should react to specific provocations by ‘opponents’.115

Prior to the commencement of the blockade, the forest protest movement employed strategies to ensure that the Western Australian public was aware of its campaign. The Wilderness Society published a 19-page booklet to highlight the issues on which the blockade was based, emphasising that the state government was logging areas of National Estate forest that contained unique wilderness that was vital to the survival of many endangered species of flora and fauna. People were urged to save the south-west forests by writing to politicians, joining protest groups and attending the blockades.116 In an appeal to the Premier and all members of state parliament for a moratorium on logging in high conservation value forests, WAFA offered to meet with parliamentarians prior to the campaign to negotiate a resolution of the issues.117

The forest blockade was launched at the end of May 1994 by WAFA and the Wilderness Society. Reflecting the protest movement's frustration, WAFA spokesperson James Duggie said the blockade was necessary because all other avenues of protest had failed to convince authorities to take action over the forests.118 An article in the *West Australian* raised fears that the blockade signalled a move towards the more aggressive styles of protest employed in New South Wales and Victoria, presumably forgetting the 1979 Wagerup protests in Western Australia during which forest activists employed non-violent direct action strategies to occupy Alcoa's proposed alumina refinery site.119
Some appreciation of the forest blockade’s professional and strategic organisation can be gained from the contents of a comprehensive 63-page handbook produced by WAFA and the Wilderness Society and issued to activists prior to the commencement of the blockade. The publication included information on peaceful resistance, non-violence theory, affinity groups, campsite locations, legal matters, relations with workers and police, and media liaison. All actions would be based on ‘affinity groups’ of between 10 to 15 people which would practise consensus decision-making and plan possible actions to carry out themselves or combined with other affinity groups. The blockade's co-ordinating collective was to be informed of all action proposals in order to co-ordinate the campaign.120

In an effort to minimise conflict between opposing groups, WAFA wrote to the Minister for Police, Bob Wiese, advising him of the campaign’s objectives and assuring him that the protest would be non-violent. WAFA expressed the hope that the police would take the necessary measures to ensure that those taking part in the action would be protected from harassment and violence, and suggested a meeting to discuss the issues involved.121

The timber industry was quick to respond. Information leaflets told workers that green activists wanted to stop logging simply because they opposed the industry operating in native forests and that delivery of logs to about 30 sawmills could be reduced or stopped altogether. The livelihoods of south-west communities would be threatened, with high unemployment, less revenue and families forced to leave the district. Timber workers were urged to contact their employer to
offer assistance to oppose the blockade. A rally was organised in Pemberton the day before the action commenced, with families invited to march in support of their communities and ‘tell the protesters to go home’. An estimated 1300 people attended the rally, which was addressed by politicians, the local shire president and a representative from the timber industry. Acting Environment Minister Paul Omodei told the audience the protesters should ‘bugger off’ and described the polarising effect of their actions on the local community as an act of vandalism. Manjimup shire president Ted Thompson looked upon the forests as ‘god given’ assets to the state and the shire did not want to see them locked up.

Western Australia’s first forest blockade started with a ‘Forest Festival’ in the karri forest near Pemberton on the weekend of 2-3 July 1994. The event included workshops on non-violence, guidance on developing affinity groups, briefings on the blockade and forest walks. All activists attending the festival and blockade were required to register before attending the various forest camps. The registration area also provided medical and child care facilities, and a special area for women.

Roger Cheeseman, a retired public servant who lived close to Giblett block, remembers that he became concerned about global pressure on the environment and, in a local context, related this to CALM’s activities that included logging interim-listed heritage areas which required federal government approval. He felt compelled to join the protest because ‘it was the right thing to do’, and
assisted with logistical support by allowing activists to use his home telephone and shed.\textsuperscript{126}

During the blockade, which ended on 30 July, four protesters were arrested in Jane Block after occupying a wooden tower they had erected over logging equipment. They were charged with hindering police and preventing a lawful activity. Conservationists considered the blockade to have been successful through gaining a reprieve for some areas of old growth forest and drawing public attention to the mismanagement of Western Australia's native forests.\textsuperscript{127} Most importantly, however, the blockade provided the forest protest movement with an opportunity to critically examine the effectiveness of its strategies and the efficiency of its internal organisation.

At its August 1994 meeting in Walpole, WAFA members evaluated the forest blockade, considering what aspects of the campaign had been carried out well and those that needed improvement. The meeting felt there was a lack of clear decision-making during the action, which caused some confusion and misunderstanding. Communication between the south-west camps and Perth also needed attention because of a lack of adequate information. Activists believed that affinity groups should be given a clearer idea of what was happening during a campaign and provided with more support to continue their efforts. The meeting agreed on the continuation of forest blockades as an effective campaign strategy but decided that the term ‘forest rescue’ could better describe that particular type of action.\textsuperscript{128}
Following the blockade, the protest movement devoted its energies to maintaining the momentum of the campaign and keeping public attention focused on forest issues. Two local activists decided to demonstrate their personal commitment by ‘fasting for the forests’. Seventy-two year-old Elaine Michael from Bridgetown, who had been arrested at Manjimup in July while trying to stop a wood chip train, began a hunger strike outside Parliament House in Canberra to persuade the federal government to implement the moratorium on forest logging contained in the 1992 *National Forest Policy Statement* and to permanently protect all forests of high conservation value. Michael said the hunger strike was a last resort because she believed people needed to do all they could to ensure the forest heritage was passed on to future generations. At the same time, Philip Gregory from Mulallyup also commenced a hunger strike on the steps of state parliament. After meeting with Premier Richard Court and Environment Minister Kevin Minson and failing to persuade them to stop logging in old-growth forests, Gregory believed his hunger strike had been successful in highlighting the government’s intransigence over the issue. Greens (WA) Senator Christabel Chamarette commended the two hunger strikers for risking their health because they could no longer stand by while the country’s native forests were destroyed for short-term profits.

During August and September the protest movement organised a number of events to further maintain public attention. Only two days after the blockade finished, an estimated crowd of around 2,000 people assembled in Forrest Place in the largest rally for the forests seen in Perth. The event had been organised to coincide with a meeting of federal Cabinet in the city. Environment Minister
John Faulkner was given a large number of petitions, letters and pledge forms calling for an end to wood chipping and logging in high conservation value forests that had been collected during the blockade. At the beginning of September, a rally in Fremantle organised as part of a ‘National Day of Action’ against logging in old growth forests attracted between 750 and 1,000 people. Workshops conducted by WAFA at this time included sessions on media interaction, communicating with politicians, relations with unions and resolving conflicts over logging.

In early October 1994, WAFA and the Wilderness Society commenced the second part of its non-violent protest. Called ‘Forest Rescue’, the campaign would continue until the end of December and was aimed at preventing federal government renewal of wood chip export licences. The resumption of direct action provoked anger among timber communities, with Save Our South West group spokesperson Trish Townsend commenting that the return of the protesters would be an unwelcome intrusion and asserting that the earlier forest blockade had strengthened local people’s resolve to support the timber industry and protect their livelihoods.

At the start of the campaign, bulletins advised activists that protest actions would be held in forest areas from Balingup to Albany, with training in direct action taking place on private land at Northcliffe. Supporters were asked to give their time to help with the action by staffing community information posts, painting banners and attending organised events. People were urged to write letters to Prime Minister Keating and the Western Australian government, suggesting
alternatives to wood chipping and emphasising that old growth forests were irreplaceable.¹³⁶

During the three months of the campaign, hundreds of people visited the forests and witnessed the impact of clear-felling. Many protesters endured hardships and risked personal injury and prosecution during actions designed to stop the construction of logging roads and logging operations. Extensive media coverage ensured that images of forest destruction and protest activity were continually kept in the public eye.¹³⁷ Although WAFA viewed the forest rescue campaign as a success by continuing to focus public attention on forest mismanagement and provide positive opportunities to effect change,¹³⁸ its overall objective to secure protection for the forests from wood chipping was not achieved. The federal government’s subsequent decision to renew export licences not only attracted condemnation from the forest protest movement but also strengthened its determination to continue strategies of non-violent direct action.¹³⁹ While both the forest blockade and the forest rescue campaign comprised numerous actions in various south-west forest locations that were co-ordinated by the large urban-based forest protest groups, the following case-study provides an insight into how local communities in Western Australia’s south-west were also forming organised groups and devising strategies to protect areas of forest that they regarded as valuable parts of their local natural heritage.

Jane Block Protest

John Taylor had lived in the Northcliffe area since 1977, and worked as a timber faller for the Western Australian Forests Department, then as a contract faller for
Bunnings. Over the years he became concerned that timber from the forests was not being utilised for its true value and this concern stimulated his interest in forest conservation. In December 1994 Taylor observed that bulldozers were clearing bush for a logging road in Jane block, which was near his property. Concerned residents organised public meetings and in January 1995 formed the Friends of Jane forest protest group. Capitalising on his forestry and conservation experience, the group persuaded Taylor to become its first president and media spokesperson.\(^{140}\)

Jane block was within ten kilometres of Northcliffe and became an icon and a 'rallying point' with which local people identified. Taylor believes it was this factor that attracted people to the campaign. Although some residents were not prepared to take direct action, such as lying in front of bulldozers, they believed a line had to be drawn somewhere and, for many, Jane forest was their 'line in the sand'. He recalled membership at the time of the protest consisted of a nucleus of approximately 150 people, drawn from a broad cross-section of the Manjimup shire community. While the group's initial focus was on saving Jane block, its overall objective was to promote the conservation of the state's south-west native forests.\(^{141}\)

As the Crawfords observed in their history of the Northcliffe area, while there was some friction with city-based activists, locals played a prominent role in the Jane block protest and many of the tactics they used, such as hiding in the bush during logging operations and erecting tree platforms, had been employed in
eastern states campaigns, and were employed during other south-west forest actions.\textsuperscript{142}

Map 7.2. Sites of forest protest action around Northcliffe during the 1990s.


One of the keys to the success of the Jane forest campaign was the telephone network of local activists that played a vital role in ‘getting bodies on the ground’, as well as providing both emotional support and a regular flow of
information so that everyone knew what was happening. Several forest blocks around Northcliffe became sites for local protest action throughout the 1990s. (see Map 7.2.)

While, on the one hand, the formation of the Friends of Jane group and the campaign to save Jane forest united sections of the Northcliffe community, the issue also provoked anger and conflict. During a meeting in late January 1995, when it was decided to form the protest group and commence forest action, timber workers argued their right to continue logging. Heated exchanges occurred between timber industry supporters and those opposed to logging in high conservation value areas such as Jane block. The meeting was attended by more than 50 people, including local farmers, business people, tourism workers and families. During an earlier protest action in Jane block, activists claimed they had been abused by a bulldozer driver clearing a road through the forest, and that he had tried to run them down.

Robert Daubney’s ancestors came to the Northcliffe area during the 1920s as group settlers, and he and his wife Alison run a dairy farm close to Jane forest. He said the local forest had always been part of his life and everyone thought it would never be logged because it was in a reserve. When he saw bulldozers clearing a road in the forest, Daubney and his wife attended a meeting and joined the Friends of Jane group to oppose the logging and protect the block. Many people were opposed to the practice of clear-felling, and objected to the fact that intensive logging would not provide any financial benefit to the local community.
In February 1995, timber workers blockaded the Daubney's dairy for five days after they allowed protesters to camp on their land.¹⁴⁷ (see Figure 7.1.) Daubney believes those who picketed his property were encouraged to do so by timber industry management and that their action backfired by providing Australia-wide publicity that helped the anti-logging protest. He recalled that the campaign not only polarised the Northcliffe community but also divided families, with wives of some timber workers appreciating the long-term benefits of protecting the forest.¹⁴⁸ In an article in the *West Australian*, Claudette Rickman, a local poet and writer, described how she and her daughters joined the fight to save Jane forest against the wishes of her husband who operated the wood chipper at the local mill and feared he might lose his job.¹⁴⁹

According to Daubney, the most positive aspect of the Jane block protest was that it made local people aware that they could do something to stop their forest being logged. He believes the campaign succeeded not only because of the combination of an efficient network of Northcliffe activists and the organisational and strategic support provided by Perth and Denmark protest groups but also because authorities underestimated the strength of local feeling and emotional attachment to Jane forest.¹⁵⁰ The South-West Forests Defence Foundation managed to obtain a Supreme Court injunction to stop further industrial activity in the forest after challenging CALM’s right to log the area. A Supreme Court action and High Court appeal delayed logging further and eventually helped save the forest.¹⁵¹
Figure 7.1. Robert Daubney celebrates the lifting of the blockade on his dairy farm with a glass of milk. Source: *West Australian*, 8 February 1995.

The campaign to save Jane forest provided an example of how the impending destruction of a cherished symbol of a community’s natural heritage alerted people to authorities’ apparent disregard for local conservation values, and motivated them to organise concerted protest action. It also demonstrated how accelerated logging activity in the south-west generated friction between conservationists and timber workers, to the extent that communities became internally divided. The Jane forest action showed how, during the early 1990s, country and city-based protest groups were increasingly combining their energies and activities to develop a more generalised and inclusive forest campaign. Most significantly, the campaign provided further evidence of an escalation of forest protest in the state's south-west during the early 1990s with the organisation of
co-ordinated community protest action and the application of a constellation of protest strategies aimed at protecting local areas of forest.

**Court Battles**

During 1994 and 1995 two innovations enhanced the forest protest movement’s strategy to mount compelling legal challenges against authorities. In July 1994, Perth lawyer Peter Rattigan and other members of the legal profession decided to establish a legal support group to assist WAFA in its campaign to blockade logging operations in the south-west and to preserve the forests. Initially operating out of Greens Senator Christabel Chamarette’s office, the group won injunctions to stop logging in several forest blocks. The group believed it could best assist WAFA by offering legal advice to those involved in direct action and providing representation during court appearances. Additional support would involve examination of forest management legislation to ensure proper compliance by authorities and assistance with applications for judicial review of administrative decisions.¹⁵²

The formation of the Western Australian Environmental Defender’s Office (EDO) in November 1995 further consolidated support for the forest protest movement from the legal profession. The Environmental Defender’s Office was established by lawyers who were concerned that the public interest on environmental issues was not adequately represented. Its objectives included empowering communities to protect the environment through legal processes, promoting environmental law reform and educating the public about the legal system and environmental law. As a non-profit organisation the Environmental
Defender’s Office called for voluntary and financial support from concerned environmentalists.\textsuperscript{153} It subsequently produced a handbook for forest activists that provided information about relevant offences, the powers of CALM and police officers, action to be taken if arrested, and court procedures.\textsuperscript{154}

These developments in legal support combined with CALM’s increasingly visible activity in the forests provided incentives for local protest groups to initiate court action as a strategy to delay logging in four forest blocks: Kerr near Balingup, Hester near Bridgetown, Jane near Northcliffe, and Sharpe near Walpole. The groups initially involved in the actions were the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest, the Friends of Jane, the Balingup Friends of the Forest, and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation.

In October 1994 about 30 Balingup residents commenced a blockade of Kerr forest. As the only unlogged forest close to the town the area held great ecological significance for the local community. The Balingup Friends of the Forest group claimed the block was of high conservation value, that CALM had contravened the \textit{Wildlife Conservation Act} by failing to protect rare species, that it had failed to consult the local community, and that it had also breached ministerial conditions regarding logging in high salt-risk zones. As a result the group sought the assistance of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest, an incorporated organisation, and through them was successful in obtaining a Supreme Court interim injunction to prevent CALM’s logging operations. The groups interpreted this as a victory for the local community and
the forests, and as an initial step in challenging the authority of powerful government agencies.155

The following month, Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest members and supporters held a picnic in Bridgetown’s Hester forest to protest against plans to log the area. The group was angry about a lack of community consultation over the block’s future and CALM’s ignorance about recommendations that Hester forest should be designated a conservation park and only logged over a 300-year rotation to maintain its ecological sustainability. Three days after the picnic CALM workers carried out a ‘dawn raid’ and commenced logging operations, using three contracted tree fallers and no machinery. Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest members and local residents reacted quickly. At 2.30pm on the same day an interim injunction halted CALM’s activities and the department agreed not to continue logging until court action was finalised.156

On the Easter holiday weekend in April 1995 CALM contractors bulldozed a logging road into Sharpe block near Walpole. The 5,800-hectare forest contained areas of old growth karri, jarrah, marri and tingle forest and was interim-listed on the Register of the National Estate. CALM claimed that the logging was essential to provide supplies of karri logs to Bunnings sawmill at Pemberton.157 The South-West Forests Defence Foundation subsequently obtained a Supreme Court injunction to prevent further logging operations pending legal action.158
CALM’s incursion into Sharpe block provoked an immediate response from environmentalists. Greens (WA) Senator Christabel Chamarette described the road clearing operation over the holiday weekend as ‘outrageous’ and said the action ran contrary to CALM’s commitment to protect biodiversity by encouraging the spread of dieback disease and destroying the forest without having conducted surveys to determine its ecological significance.159 The Western Australian Forest Alliance thought CALM’s actions resulted from a ‘misguided frenzy’ that was driven by its commitment to provide old growth forest logs to the timber and wood chip industries. It intended to present legal and scientific arguments why logging should not proceed and believed the Western Australian people would not stand by and see Sharpe forest destroyed for wood chips.160

At a Western Australian Supreme Court hearing in May scientists gave evidence to support the South-West Forests Defence Foundation's case for an injunction to prevent the destruction of forest in Sharpe block. These included Dr Barbara York Main, University of Western Australia Zoology Department, Dr Pierre Horwitz, Department of Environmental Management, Edith Cowan University, Dr Giles Hardy, Murdoch University, and botanist Dr Arthur Weston.161 Although the Supreme Court did not grant an injunction to prevent logging, the scientific evidence presented by the South-West Forests Defence Foundation resulted in Justice Henry Wallwork not approving clear-felling and burning in Sharpe forest block because of the possible adverse environmental consequences. The Foundation was given permission to make a further application and continue proceedings in the Western Australian Supreme Court. Conservationists
believed the decision cast doubt on CALM’s clear-felling practices and opened the way for public and legal argument over the issue.\textsuperscript{162}

In 1996 the South-West Forests Defence Foundation and Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest successfully challenged CALM’s attempts to prevent the legal actions over the four forest blocks from proceeding. The Supreme Court supported the right of conservationists to continue their case on a matter of public importance.\textsuperscript{163} Following the decision lawyers from the newly-formed Environmental Defender's Office visited the disputed forest areas and conducted a ‘forest litigation workshop’ with protest groups to discuss the forthcoming legal challenge.\textsuperscript{164}

The appeals to halt logging were heard by three judges of the Supreme Court in June 1997. Points contested by the conservation groups included a determination of whether or not conservation groups had legal standing to challenge government contraventions of environmental law, whether CALM had a duty towards ecological preservation in state forests, whether conservation groups had a legal right to be consulted over logging plans and whether CALM had responsibilities with respect to the Wildlife Conservation Act. Apart from a decision recognising that all the groups, except Friends of Jane, had legal standing the court ruled in favour of CALM’s forest operations. The judges found that CALM was not bound by the \textit{Wildlife Conservation Act} to protect native animals in general but only to protect endangered fauna, and rejected the claim that conservation groups had a legitimate right to be consulted. The
judgement also found that CALM had broad discretion in implementing its management plans, provided it acted in good faith.165

While welcoming the judgement on legal standing, forest protest groups interpreted the Supreme Court decision as confirmation that the public had little control over CALM’s forest management practices and logging operations, and that concerns could be addressed only through government bodies and not the legal system.166 Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest president Jim Frith said CALM was apparently allowed such leeway in interpreting its forest management plans that they became meaningless. The Bridgetown community felt powerless because it had been ignored during the public consultation process over CALM’s management proposals and now the courts had failed to address its concerns.167

The South-West Forests Defence Foundation and the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest subsequently decided to lodge an application for special leave to appeal to the High Court of Australia on the grounds that the Supreme Court erred in deciding that CALM’s executive director could exercise discretionary powers outside the jurisdiction of the courts, that CALM was not subject to the *Wildlife Conservation Act* with respect to native fauna and that conservation groups were unable to ensure CALM conformed to any Ministerial conditions imposed upon it.168 In April 1998 a four to one majority of the full bench of the High Court sitting in Hobart ruled that the case was not an appropriate one for the granting of special leave to appeal.169 Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes said the court decision vindicated CALM’s ability to
sustainably manage the state’s forests while conservationists believed the judgement emphasised the fact that CALM was not obliged to comply with its own management plan and that its practices remained open to question.  

While failure to obtain a sympathetic judgement in the nation’s highest court raised questions about the effectiveness of expensive litigation as a useful forest protest strategy, like the Jarrah Class Action and the Forests Forever court actions in the early 1980s, there were some positive outcomes for the forest protest movement. Julie Webb and Ian Barns have argued that, rather than being a costly failure, the High Court action succeeded in highlighting CALM’s legal obligations towards the forests and acknowledging the importance of the forest groups’ challenge. Furthermore, the court cases gained conservationists valuable time in which to initiate other protest action and generate public support. Mary Frith of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest agreed, pointing out that, while forest protest groups did not win the court case, they and the forests were ultimate winners because during the four years of legal action CALM’s logging operations stalled and she believed the public became more sympathetic.

Marching for the Forests

By 1995, the forest protest movement was heartened by opinion polls that showed increasing support for forest protection with 44% of Western Australians strongly opposed to logging in ‘natural’ forests compared to a national average of 33%. The surveys were interpreted by conservationists as confirmation of federal and state government failures to consider the democratic wishes of
Australians for the sake of placating a greedy timber industry.  Mounting sympathy for saving the forests and frustration at government inaction resulted in the application of protest strategies designed to demonstrate mass public support and force authorities to reconsider their position. The actions not only escalated the forest campaign but also created a climate for confrontation.

Following a warning by police in late January 1995 that feelings would be at ‘flashpoint’ at a timber workers' rally in Perth, Western Australian forest activists decided not to mount a counter-protest action. The event had been organised in response to the Keating Government’s procrastination over wood chip licences and threats of job cuts in the south-west timber industry. Three weeks later WAFA organised a ‘Rally to Keep Our Forests’ on Perth Esplanade with the object of convincing people that the forests could be saved without reducing employment. The rally, attended by an estimated 10,000 people, was viewed by organisers as a clear message to governments that Western Australians wanted old growth forests protected. (see figure 7.2.) Seventy-two year-old Ray Hilton, who attended his first protest rally, believed it was a case of 'stand up and be counted' for the sake of future generations before it was too late. The Perth rallies echoed demonstrations in eastern states' capital cities with logging trucks surrounding Parliament House in Canberra and 10,000 people marching through Melbourne to protest against wood chipping. A further 8,000 people attended rallies in Adelaide, Brisbane and Canberra to protest against the Federal Government’s decision to renew export licences for wood chips from Australia’s native forests.
In an effort to avoid confrontation WAFA set up a ‘jobs hotline’ to talk to timber workers about the industry’s future. Peter Robertson believed conservationists and workers should be able to talk to each other and reach a solution. He warned, however, that WAFA would not compromise its position when faced with ‘the extraordinary self-serving alliance between some politicians, CALM, and the big woodchip companies’ whose objective was to ensure the continued access of large timber companies to the dwindling areas of old growth forests. Robertson said there was a need to identify and exclude from discussion those organisations that benefited from spreading fear and distrust, thus opening the way for constructive dialogue with those who genuinely wanted to achieve an amicable resolution to the deadlock.\textsuperscript{179}
Forest activists were mindful of the need to keep the attention of city people focused on the forest campaign. On ‘anti-woodchipping day’ in April 1995 several events were staged in Perth to coincide with activities in 30 other cities around Australia and throughout the world. Commuters travelling to work saw banners erected over freeways calling for a halt to wood chipping. Motorists indicated their support by flashing their lights and waving. A lunchtime funeral procession in the city mourned the destruction of the forests and loss of wildlife habitats through logging. In August shoppers at Garden City were confronted by a 70 metre-long karri tree banner designed to show people the size of trees being cut down for wood chips. A further WAFA initiative involved canvassing those businesses that ‘display the hallmarks of an environmentally aware company’ for financial contributions towards the forest campaign.

Also in 1995 the federal government introduced plans to implement a national forest management and conservation policy through ‘deferred forest assessment’ and ‘regional forest agreement’ processes that depended upon co-operative arrangements with each state. WAFA was apprehensive about the possibility of federal and state government collusion that would result in minimal public consultation and provide further encouragement for CALM and the timber industry to continue wood chipping in old growth forests. In response, WAFA, prompted by principal organisers Patrick Weir and Maggie Burke, decided to hold a major public event ‘The Big Forest Rally’, aimed at influencing politicians and demonstrating mass support for forest conservation.
Organisation of the September rally not only provided further opportunities for the forest protest movement to consolidate its activities but also demonstrated increasing urban community concerns about the fate of the forests. In Fremantle, organisers from the Wilderness Society noticed that people who had not previously been involved in environmental issues were now prepared to take a stand over the forests and were volunteering practical help in areas such as stage lighting, catering, and making banners and t-shirts. The rally was promoted as an ‘environmental fun day’ for the family, with bands, dance groups and theatre performances.184

The rally on Perth Esplanade, attended by an estimated crowd of over 10,000, was believed to be the largest gathering of environmentally concerned people in Western Australia’s history. Addressing the rally Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown, said Western Australians were calling on the Court and Keating governments to end wood chipping of high conservation and wilderness forests, and warned that failure to heed the message could result in them both being ‘clear-felled’ at the next state and federal elections.185 The Conservation Council believed the massive show of support marked a turning-point in the forest debate by demonstrating that Western Australians were passionate about protecting their forests from wood chipping and that henceforth government decisions would be closely scrutinised.186

While the early 1990s signified a period of unification for the Western Australian forest protest movement, it was also a time of mounting frustration over government inactivity to protect the state’s forests. The failure of authorities to
implement *National Forest Policy* guidelines to safeguard high conservation value forests and the continuation of clear-felling for wood chips despite rising public opposition resulted in activists utilising strategies of non-violent direct action. New strategies of forest blockades, forest rescues and hunger strikes combined with well-established tactics of court action, mass rallies and political lobbying to ensure that the forest campaign remained in the public spotlight. Most significantly, the formation of organised protest groups in the state's south-west to protect local areas of native forest expanded the protest movement's activist networks and stimulated a broader level of public support and participation.

Although the momentum of the forest campaign increased considerably during the early 1990s, efforts to secure long-term protection for Western Australia’s forests had reached an impasse. The federal Labor government continued to approve export wood chip licences and the state Liberal government and CALM maintained their commitment to the timber industry. By the mid-1990s, however, the protest movement had convinced many Western Australians that a valuable part of their environmental heritage faced imminent destruction and that their elected representatives were doing little to ensure the forests were adequately protected. The movement was on the threshold of converting an enlivened public sensitivity into a dynamic force for change.
ENDNOTES

1 SFDF Newsletter, November 1988, Schultz private archives.
2 SFDF Newsletter, September 1990.
6 Minutes of WAFA Meeting, Margaret River, 12-13 September 1992, Conservation Council archives.
8 West Australian, 4 September 1990, p.15.
9 ‘Funding Proposal to Appoint a Forest Campaigns Co-ordinator in WA’, undated circular, Conservation Council archives.
10 Peter Robertson, interview with Ron Chapman, 24 November 2003.
11 ‘Western Australian Forest Alliance - Communication No.1, September 1990’, Conservation Council archives.
12 WAFA circular to prospective member groups, 30 June 1992, Conservation Council archives.
13 The Real Forest News, December 1992, Western Australian Forest Alliance.
14 Minutes of WAFA General Meeting, Balingup, 3-4 July 1993; Minutes of WAFA meeting held in CWA rooms, Bridgetown, 26 November 1994, Conservation Council archives.
18 ibid., p.228.
23 The Greener Times, January 1993, p.15.
25 West Australian, 21 March 1990, p.31.
26 Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., media release, 4 March 1990, Conservation Council archives; Daily News, 8 March 1990, p.11.
30 WAPD, Vol. 283, 19 June 1990, pp.2288-2290;
32 Responding to a question from Barry House, Liberal, South-West, the Environment Minister admitted that 86 trees were inadvertently felled in the Shannon National Park while a fire boundary was being prepared, WAPD, Vol.282, 30 May 1990, p.1541.
33 Four Corners: The Expose Exposed: CALM’s Reply to the ABC Four Corners Attack (The Wood for the Trees) 18 June 1990, Department of Conservation and Land Management WA, 27 June 1990, Battye Library Q634.92FOU.
34 Memorandum from R.G. Bunning, Managing Director, Bunnings Forest Products Pty Ltd, to all Bunning Employees, dated 20 June 1990, State Records Office of Western Australia, (SROWA) CALM file ‘Response to Four Corners Programme’, CON 6029, WAS 2087.
Dr Carmen Lawrence MLA, Premier, dated 28 June 1990, Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.

Letter from Dr Carmen Lawrence MLA, Premier, to Dr Philip Jennings, President, Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., undated (July 1990), Hogarth archives, uncatalogued, Murdoch University Library.


‘Comment on South-West Forests Defence Foundation Document “Use and Abuse of the Jarrah Forest” from Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director, Department of Conservation and Land Management’, news release, 6 November 1991, Conservation Council archives.

*Management Strategies for The South-West Forests of Western Australia – A Review, Draft – February 1992*, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, WA.


‘Vote for the forests – A proposed election strategy for WA state election to be run by the WA Forest Alliance’, WAFA circular to members and supporters, 12 January 1993, Conservation Council archives.


*The Greener Times*, February 1993, pp.2-4.


‘Submission to Expert Committee from the WA Forest Alliance’, 7 May 1993, Conservation Council archives.

Report of the Scientific and Administrative Committee inquiring into aspects of Conditions Set Pursuant to the Environment Protection Act 1986 for the proposed Amendments to the 1987

89 The Greener Times, October 1993, p.8.


95 ‘Friends of the Forest everywhere...High Time Protest’, publicity poster, Conservation Council archives.


97 ‘Loggers’ Axe Splits South-West Town’, West Australian, 21 June 1993, p.3.


100 ‘Conservation Council uncovers ecological disaster in jarrah forest’, media release, 7 October 1993, Conservation Council archives.


102 ‘International attempts to market Western Australia’s unique hardwood timbers, karri...jarrah...marri...wandoo...as replacements for rainforest timbers’, circular to forest activists and conservationists, 3 November 1993, Conservation Council archives.


104 Letter from Peter Robertson, WAFA, to Dr Carmen Lawrence, dated 15 March 1994, Conservation Council archives.


108 ibid.


111 ‘South-West Forest Blockade – The Wilderness Society’s Thoughts on Strategy’, undated paper, Conservation Council archives.


115 Letter from Peter Robertson, WAFA, to The Premier, The Hon. Richard Court, Perth, 27 June


‘Greenies take leaf from radical book’, West Australian, 1 June 1994, p.11.


Letter from Peter Robertson, WAFA, to The Hon. R. Wiese MLA, Minister for Police, West Perth, 15 June 1994, Conservation Council archives.


‘Save Our South West – March and Rally – Pemberton this Friday July 1 1994 at 2pm’, poster, Conservation Council archives.


‘Forest Blockade 94’, activists’ handbook.

Roger Cheeseman, interview with Ron Chapman, 4 October 2005.


‘Minutes of WAFA Meeting held at Walpole Youth Hostel on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st August 1994’, Conservation Council archives.


West Australian, 30 August 1994.

Forest Campaign Bulletin, WA Forest Alliance and the Wilderness Society, September 1994, Number 2, p.3.

ibid., p.5.


The Greener Times, January 1995, p.3.


ibid.

Patricia Crawford and Ian Crawford, Contested Country: A History of the Northcliffe Area, Western Australia, University of Western Australia Press, 2003, p.205.


Alison and Robert Daubney, interview with Ron Chapman, 5 October 2005.

West Australian, 8 February 1995, p.7.

Alison and Robert Daubney, interview with Ron Chapman, 5 October 2005.


Alison and Robert Daubney, interview with Ron Chapman, 5 October 2005.


‘Sharpe forest block: backgrounder’, information sheet, WAFA, July 1995, Conservation
Council archives.

158 ‘Supreme Court injunction halts Sharpe forest destruction’, SFDF media release, 18 April 1995, Conservation Council archives.


160 ‘Campaign to save Sharpe forest will continue’, WAFA, media release, 25 April 1995, Conservation Council archives.


162 ‘Supreme Court decision on Sharpe sets precedent’, SFDF media release, 7 June 1995, Conservation Council archives.


165 West Australian, 18 June 1997, p.3.


168 Manjimup-Bridgetown Times, 30 July 1997, p.5.


170 West Australian, 8 April 1998; Manjimup-Bridgetown Times, 8 April 1998, p.3.


172 Mary Frith, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 January 2005.


178 West Australian, 27 February 1995.


184 Fremantle Herald, 16 September 1995, p.4.


Chapter 8

The Late 1990s: A Triumphant Movement

Map 8.1. Western Australia - areas of significance discussed in Chapter 8.
During the early 1990s the Western Australian forest protest movement had strengthened its organisation and networks, largely through the formation of WAFA and an escalation of protest activity in the state's south-west. This allowed it to mount an intensive and co-ordinated forest campaign that capitalised on mounting public dissatisfaction with the Western Australian government's failure to protect the state's high conservation value forests.

The late 1990s marked the zenith of forest protest in Western Australia. This chapter will argue that during this period the forest protest movement used a diversity of non-confrontational and direct action strategies to create the dynamics for victory in the forest campaign. More spectacular direct action protests in the forests and staged events in Perth increased media exposure and maintained public attention on the need to take action to protect the forests. By exploiting the support of high profile figures, sporting personalities and identifiable groups, the protest movement continued to transform forest protest from a minority group activity to a mainstream public issue. Most importantly, the tactical decisions not to participate in the RFA process and to focus on a campaign to save Western Australia's old growth forests gave the forest protest movement the freedom to attack the credibility of the state government's forest policies while at the same time focusing its strategies on exploiting an emotive public issue that was attracting increasing support.

**Empty Promises**

While the forest protest movement was disappointed at the lack of federal and state government initiatives to protect Western Australia’s forests during the
early 1990s, the election of the Howard federal Liberal government in 1996 on a strong environmental platform seemed to offer some hope for conservationists. A $1.15 billion five-year plan entitled ‘Saving our Natural Heritage’ released by Shadow Environment Minister Senator Rod Kemp at the start of the election campaign was promoted as a ‘historic commitment to dramatically improve the state of the Australian environment’. Among many environmental initiatives, a future Howard government promised to protect high conservation value native forests and establish a sustainable value-adding timber industry with a greater emphasis on plantation and farm forestry. Commenting on the Liberal-National Party Coalition’s victory, conservationists reminded politicians that environmental promises had played a significant role in securing the federal election outcome and called upon the new administration to honour its commitments.

The timber industry soon began to apply pressure on federal Environment Minister Robert Hill. In April 1996, Wesfarmers managing director Michael Chaney sought an early agreement to obtain a ‘second stage woodchip export licence’, arguing that unless this was granted, Japanese customers would be forced to seek alternative supplies and that his company’s ability to supply their future needs would be threatened. Concerned at disagreement and delay over national forest policy, Chaney later requested Prime Minister Howard to intervene personally in order to resolve a matter of ‘immediate financial concern’, expressing an expectation that the timber industry’s hostile relations with the previous federal Labor government over forest issues would be exchanged for a more co-operative approach.
Events during the latter part of 1996 confirmed conservationists’ fears as to the extent of the timber industry’s influence over the new federal government’s forest policy. In July, federal Primary Industries and Energy Minister John Anderson announced a Cabinet decision to allow a 20% increase in annual wood chip exports and a new three-year licence system to provide ‘greater certainty’ for the logging industry. Further supplies of wood chips would be available from private native forests which had been cleared for hardwood plantations. The Conservation Council of Western Australia released a federal government document which revealed that wood chip exporters Wesfarmers/Bunnings and Whittakers had applied for a 41% increase in wood chip export quotas from the state’s native forests, which would increase annual exports from 860,000 to 1,210,000 tonnes, largely from old growth karri and marri trees.

Finally, in November, the federal government issued new wood chip export licences which allowed for the export of 19 million tonnes of wood chips from Australia’s native forests over three years, comprising an annual average increase of 10%. In Western Australia the decision allowed Wesfarmers/Bunnings subsidiary the WA Chip and Pulp Company to increase its exports by 20% to 900,000 tonnes a year, and prompted plans for expanded operations in the Albany and Bunbury regions. Minister Anderson said the new licences were designed to restore confidence in the native forest-based timber industry.

Reactions from Western Australian conservationists to the wood chipping expansion reflected their sense of frustration and betrayal. The Conservation Council expressed outrage at the Howard government’s wood chip policies,
which it said demonstrated contempt for strong public opposition to native forest wood chipping. The Council believed the licence decisions were influenced by timber industry pressure on the state and federal governments, and that increased wood chipping would result in massive clear felling operations which ignored the potential of an expanding tourism industry and the ability to transfer wood production from native forests to plantations.\textsuperscript{10} Greens WA Senator Dee Margetts warned that conservationists would exercise vigilance to ensure licence conditions were not breached, arguing that the new wood chip regulations were economically, environmentally and socially illogical because they ignored practical alternatives and would encourage the destruction of bush on private farmland.\textsuperscript{11} Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown asserted that Prime Minister Howard had assumed predecessor Paul Keating’s mantle as ‘Australian champion woodchipper’.\textsuperscript{12}

The federal government’s approval of a further expansion of wood chipping in Western Australia’s forests left the protest movement experiencing similar disillusion and frustration to that which followed the movement's initial optimism about the Burke state Labor government in the early 1980s. Once again this demonstrated that there were limits to how far governments were willing to co-operate with conservationists over measures to protect the forests. The forest protest movement, however, was conscious of its ability to persuade a significant number of Western Australians that their forest heritage faced imminent destruction and was convinced that the time was right to mount an intensive forest campaign. It was at this time that the movement experienced some division between those activists who wished to adopt a more forceful
response to the expansion of wood chipping and others who proposed alternative strategies that relied on persuasion and argument rather than confrontation.

While forest protest in Western Australia during the 1990s was influenced primarily by the activities of the Conservation Council, the WA Forest Alliance and the Wilderness Society, there were some conservationists who sought to change government forest policy from outside those three major protest organisations. Reflecting on his experiences as a forest activist in the Campaign to Save Native Forests, Basil Schur thought there was a tendency for forest protest groups to become inflexible and adopt an adversarial stance that failed to take into account changes in the political and social landscape. He believed that there was a need to adopt a more pro-active approach, which moved the economy in a new direction away from a focus on primary forest industry towards areas such as tourism, plantation forestry and value-adding forest products.13

Schur’s observations regarding the need for an alternative approach to forest protest were reflected in the publication in late 1996 of *A New Forest and Timber Industry Policy for Western Australia* by an ‘independent, informal, voluntary group’, which comprised Philip Achurch, Dr Kathleen Chindarsi, Dame Rachel Cleland, Jim and Mary Frith, Paul Llewellyn and Dr Henry Schapper. The four-page document visualised Western Australia with an efficient timber industry sustained by farm forestry and plantations, and with publicly-owned native forests dedicated principally to nature and wilderness conservation. These objectives would be achieved through an expansion of private plantations and forestry on cleared farmland, the establishment of an agency to manage state
plantations on a commercial basis, the cessation of logging, clear-felling and wood chipping in native forests, and the reorganisation of the Department of Conservation and Land Management into a nature conservation agency. The group anticipated that its proposals would result in a more efficient timber industry with increased employment opportunities and environmental benefits such as reduced salinity and protection of forest biodiversity.\textsuperscript{14}

Prior to the new policy’s launch in November by Dame Rachel Cleland, production of the document caused dissension within the forest protest movement. At a Margaret River meeting of the WAFA in October, Jim Frith said that the forest policy proposals were presented by a group that was independent of any other organisation and the document was not available for modification by WAFA or the Conservation Council. Beth Schultz, representing the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, said she had withdrawn from participation in the new policy initiative because she disagreed with the wording of the proposals and felt her views had not been sufficiently taken into account.\textsuperscript{15} Mary Frith recalled that the production of the new forest policy revealed divisions between the more militant members of the forest protest movement and those seeking to present alternative strategies to direct action. She believed this friction resulted in WAFA’s lack of support for the proposals, with people ‘pulling in opposite directions’.\textsuperscript{16} Ultimately, this moderate approach to forest protest failed to make any impression on the strategic direction of the movement, which launched a more aggressive campaign to protect the forests.
Buy-Pass Bunnings

Coincidental to the release of the ‘independent’ group’s timber policy, WAFA commenced a major protest in response to the federal government’s approval of increased levels of wood chip exports. Initially the campaign focused on Wesfarmers/Bunnings, as the company which sought to gain financially from the wood chip export market. In early November 1996, forest activists protested outside Wesfarmers' annual general meeting in Perth to voice their opposition to federal government approval of record levels of wood chip exports from Western Australia’s old growth forests. The protest also marked the launch of a national consumer awareness campaign aimed at Bunnings stores around the country, with the objective of reducing demand for jarrah and karri timber.17

Western Australian actions against Bunnings stores commenced in April 1997, with the launch of the ‘Buy-Pass Bunnings’ campaign outside the company’s Wembley complex. The public was invited to join members of the Wilderness Society and WAFA to hear forest talks, watch street theatre and give their support to saving the forests from wood chipping.18 Over the following year Wilderness Society members in Perth, together with forest activists in Albany and Denmark, distributed pamphlets and spoke to shoppers, with nearly 10,000 people signing pledges not to shop at Bunnings until the company stopped wood chipping native forests. Donations attached to the pledges totalled in excess of $5,000.19

After learning that Bunnings was submitting an application to supply jarrah timber for the construction of facilities at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the
Conservation Council wrote to the Olympic Co-ordination Authority arguing that, while the Games were being promoted as being ‘environmentally-friendly’, the use of jarrah would be seen as an endorsement of forest management practices that ignored the unsustainable levels of logging in Western Australia’s remaining old growth jarrah forests. As a result the Authority changed its tender documents to exclude jarrah in preference for recycled timber.

The Wesfarmers/Bunnings campaign included new strategies that were designed to undermine the power of the large timber companies. During 1997 the Wilderness Society facilitated the formation of Wesfarmers Investors and Shareholders for the Environment (WISE). The group described itself as an association of Wesfarmers/Bunnings shareholders who were concerned about ethical investment and the environment. They believed that the profitability and image of the company would ultimately suffer if it continued its destruction of Western Australia’s old growth native forests to produce low-grade export wood chips.

At the Wesfarmers’ annual meeting in November 1997, chairman Harry Perkins observed that some forest activists had purchased one share in the company in order to dominate the meeting and further their political aims. Peter Rattigan, a Cottesloe lawyer and WISE organiser, challenged Wesfarmers’ wood chipping operations and opposed a proposed pay increase for the company’s non-executive directors, arguing that Manjimup mill workers were living on starvation wages after being forced to accept a pay cut. The purchase of Wesfarmers shares by activists mirrored the 'shareholder rights' strategy adopted
by New South Wales environmentalists between 1969 and 1971 during their successful campaign to save the Colong Caves from limestone mining by Commonwealth Portland Cement.\textsuperscript{24} However, while the forest protest movement's energies were directed at persuading people to boycott the company which profited most from the wood chipping industry, state government action to expand forest logging activities prompted an intensification of direct action protest.

**Giblett Forest Rescue**

In early 1997, despite representations from conservationists, community leaders, scientists and the tourism industry, the Department of Conservation and Land Management announced plans to commence clear-felling of Giblett forest near Pemberton. The area had been proposed as a national park and was listed on the interim register of the national estate. It was also one of the few remaining areas of old growth karri forest that had not been extensively logged.

In response, WAFA and the Greater Beedelup National Park Society called on the public to support a campaign of protests in the forest which would include acts of civil disobedience. People were invited to register for non-violence training prior to their participation. It was anticipated that the Department of Conservation and Land Management would declare Giblett forest a ‘Temporary Control Area’, ostensibly for public safety reasons, which meant that any person entering would commit an offence. If this were the case, activists would defy the regulation by entering the forest, with a rally and non-violent protest actions targeting any road construction or logging operations.\textsuperscript{25}
At the campaign launch in April, Peter Robertson said the protest would not have been necessary if the state government had not succumbed to the demands of the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the forest timber lobby. Robertson insisted that, by ignoring viable commercial alternatives to intensive logging, such as the forest plantation and tourism industries, the government was creating a new crisis for south-west communities.²⁶ The Forest Industries Federation warned green groups to exercise restraint, urging them to resolve issues through forest agreement processes and avoid actions such as blockades and challenges which disrupted timber operations.²⁷

Commencement of logging at the end of April signalled a mobilisation of activists for the Giblett forest rescue campaign. Australian Democrats Senator for Western Australia, Andrew Murray, was dismayed that operations had begun, and encouraged members of the public to attend a weekend protest rally in the forest.²⁸ The Wilderness Society urged its supporters to take part in a range of activities which included a bus tour to Giblett forest to observe logging activities, raising public awareness through talk-back radio and staffing the Perth Giblett rescue office.²⁹ About 130 people attended the weekend forest rally at the beginning of May, which marked the start of activists’ attempts to halt or delay logging operations using strategies of peaceful direct action.

The 1997 Giblett campaign contained a number of strategies which influenced the organisation of subsequent protest actions. During the first week of activities Chris Lee, a philosophy student from Margaret River, became the first activist in Western Australia to protest against the logging of old growth forests
from a tree platform. It was 30 metres above the ground attached to a 400 year-old karri tree. Lee said the decision to erect the platform was made when loggers commenced scrub-rolling the bush and claimed the new tactic resulted in increased support for the forest campaign. He believed the platform represented a powerful yet peaceful tool and that the Giblett protest had become a symbol for the broader issue of seeking changes to forest management practices. During five weeks on the tree platform Lee kept himself busy operating a message centre and using a mobile telephone to talk to the media and the public. Further platforms were quickly erected over succeeding weeks. Like forest blockades, 'tree-sitting' had already featured as a forest protest strategy in eastern Australia in campaigns in East Gippsland and Tasmania.

Former West Coast Eagles footballer Craig Turley’s decision to join the protest and demonstrate his support by spending a weekend on a tree platform not only provided a boost for the Giblett forest rescue but also signified a continuation of the forest protest movement’s strategy of using prominent public personalities to gain support – a tactic that had its genesis in the 1950s when Olympic athlete Shirley Strickland joined the campaign to oppose the construction of an Olympic pool in Perth’s King’s Park. Beth Schultz recalled that Turley, a known supporter of the forest campaign, was invited by Peter Robertson and herself to occupy a tree platform in order to increase publicity for the Giblett action and that this event was the start of a deliberate strategy to involve other high profile figures in protest action in the late 1990s.
The success of public personalities, particularly sporting figures, as a tactic in protest actions became even more obvious in September 1997, when Chicago Bulls basketball player, Luc Longley, also decided to join Giblett activists and spend time on a tree platform to register his objection to clear felling. His involvement generated considerable media exposure for the campaign, with newspapers publishing photographs of Longley standing prominently in the centre of an excited group of conservationists beneath a ‘Giblett Will Stand’ banner.34 (see Figure 8.1.)

![Figure 8.1. Luc Longley and forest protesters at Giblett forest block.](image)


The protest movement was able to exploit Longley’s participation.35 Singer John Williamson also visited the Giblett camp and entertained an enthusiastic crowd with anti-wood chip songs.36
While not as visibly effective as tree platforms and the involvement of sporting personalities, a political development at the start of the Giblett campaign added further strength to the protest movement’s strategic capabilities. In May 1997 Dr Christine Sharp took her seat in the Legislative Council as the Greens (WA) member for the South-West Region of Western Australia. Reflecting on her motivations for seeking election, Sharp said she was passionate about forest issues and held a deep concern about high forest logging levels. Her decision to enter parliament was based on a desire to change government forest policy and to continue the work she had been unable to complete during her term with the Environmental Protection Authority. Sharp recalls that her Balingup electorate office became one of the focal points for the south-west forests campaigns.37

During their eight-months occupation of Giblett block, forest activists found themselves largely unhindered by authorities, thus enabling them to install a well-established forest camp. Furniture, board walks, shelters and shelves were manufactured from felled timber, with further refinements including a portable generator and composting toilet.38 Protesters published a news sheet, the Giblett Free Press, which contained information and advice on subjects that included action to be taken if Giblett forest was declared a Temporary Control Area, legal rights if arrested, and requests for equipment, supplies and job volunteers. The publication provided an insight into life at the protest camp.

The past few weeks have seen the sunshine and the drying ground but once again the rain comes in...The regrowth itself is taller, not much but enough to know the resilience of the earth, our mother. The people are more confident and things are a little easier now than in the depths of June...Firewood was gathered before breakfast this morning by six people and two dogs. Two loads in time for this afternoon’s rain...The office is fitted out and is running well. The printer has a problem but otherwise things are fine. Having the telephone one hundred yards
away from the office is frustrating... A gas oven is under repair. Hopefully it will work, certain people have been hanging out for scones, others for veggie lasagne...

The news sheets also reflected the amicable ‘working’ relationship which had developed between activists and some police officers and Department of Conservation and Land Management staff.39

Once again local resident Roger Cheeseman played a key role in the campaign’s organisation, by not only providing practical support for the protesters but also ensuring the action received extensive media coverage through his role as president of the Greater Beedelup National Park Society.40 Cheeseman recalled that the 1997 Giblett rescue differed markedly from the 1994 occupation. Whereas he judged the earlier action to have been relatively 'low-key' and ultimately a failure as the area was subsequently logged, the 1997 'rescue' was more intensive, with a greater resolve shown by activists and the innovative use of tree platforms playing a major part in gaining publicity for the protest. He believes authorities were reluctant to remove the protesters through fear of an adverse public reaction and that the ultimate success of the Giblett rescue campaign resulted from the emergence of charismatic leaders, such as Chris Lee, and the ability of the 1997 protesters to maximise media attention.41

Because of his stance over protecting the forests, Cheeseman and his family became the target for demonstrations of community opposition to the Giblett occupation. The ostracism of his daughter at Pemberton District High School resulted in her transfer to East Manjimup Primary School, and even there she was still taunted about her ‘greenie father’. Other acts of intimidation included death
threats, telephone harassment and motor vehicles playing ‘chicken’ by driving towards them on a collision course before swerving away.\textsuperscript{42}

As a key strategist for the Giblett rescue campaign Peter Robertson had to ensure that the protest did not lose its momentum if a Temporary Control Area was enforced by CALM, thus rendering activists liable to arrest. Contingency plans which aimed at maintaining the element of surprise and capturing public imagination included blockading roads, dispersed re-occupations inside the forest, mass civil disobedience at the control area boundary, and non-violent direct action in Bunbury and Perth. Robertson believed these actions would ensure the continuation of the demonstration of a collective commitment to the forest and maintenance of a ‘steady, dramatic and deeply embarrassing spotlight on the planned logging of Giblett’.\textsuperscript{43} A ‘schematic guide’ produced by Robertson at the time located the ‘unholy alliance’ between the Western Australian state government, the Department of Conservation and Land Management and Wesfarmers as the central focus of WAFA’s forest campaign.\textsuperscript{44}

Surprisingly, Giblett was not declared a Temporary Control Area and the forest occupation developed into a stand-off between activists and authorities, providing valuable time for the protest movement to consolidate its position and generate further public support. Roger Cheeseman believes the state government was sensitive to growing sympathy for the forest protesters and had decided to tread carefully in order to avoid any adverse public criticism.\textsuperscript{45} By mid-August, the Giblett rescue was viewed by many conservationists as one of Western Australia’s most effective forest campaigns. Activist Joy Van den Haak
believed it was succeeding because it made people aware that the government had failed them and provided a means for democratic expression. Perth newspapers became more sympathetic, commenting on the protesters’ resolve and high spirits in the face of extreme hardship and their defiance of the Court government’s hope that the winter would freeze them out. Video and slide presentation nights were organised in Fremantle and Perth, during which films of the Giblett rescue were accompanied by ‘informative and inspirational talks on the campaign’. (see Figure 8.2)

![Figure 8.2. Poster advertising Giblett forest rescue video and slide nights.](source: Conservation Council archives)

The confidence and enthusiasm generated during the Giblett action inspired other protest activity. At the end of August a ‘Jarrah Forest Embassy’ was opened by the Friends of the Greater Kingston Forest in an effort to save an area of old
growth jarrah forest situated about 30 kilometres south-east of Bridgetown. Using strategies employed at Giblett, protesters occupied a tree platform 20 metres above the ground alongside a large jarrah tree. Camp co-ordinator and consultant conservation biologist Dr Jean-Paul Orsini said the group wished to educate the Western Australian public about the catastrophic effects of intensive logging and clear-felling on the jarrah forest, and invited people to visit Kingston and witness the destruction for themselves. After four weeks the group believed it had achieved its objectives, and decided to revert to less confrontational actions such as exploiting the media and lobbying politicians. Non-violent direct action would recommence if logging resumed.

More aggressive forms of direct action took place at Manjimup and Bunbury. In September about 30 activists blockaded a wood chip train at Bunnings’ Diamond Chip Mill near Manjimup by chaining themselves to machinery, forcing the mill to close down for eight hours. Other protesters climbed a wood chip pile and erected banners. The action was directed at the state government’s decision to extend chip log supply contracts until 2003. During the protest four activists were arrested and charged with preventing a lawful activity and resisting arrest. A further protest in early November was planned from the Giblett forest rescue camp. Over 100 activists prevented wood chips being loaded onto a Japanese ship at Bunbury port, with some protesters chaining themselves to a conveyor belt 50 metres above the ground. The ‘rescuers’ also occupied a wood chip train which was unloading and carried out further protest activities on the water. Three activists were arrested and charged with trespass. An article in the West Australian again indicated changing media attitudes towards the protesters whom
they now described as having progressed from being ‘cheeky radicals’ to ‘highly organised activists’ whose actions at Bunbury and Manjimup demonstrated their determination to prevent the needless destruction of the state’s old growth forests.54

While the Giblett forest rescue provoked predictable opposition from timber industry workers and supporters, the occupation also prompted the emergence of an energetic women's pro-timber lobby group. In early June eleven members of the Forest Protection Society carried out a ‘real protest’ near Big Brook Dam, Pemberton, in opposition to the Giblett block protest. The women occupied a tree platform 12 metres above the ground. They argued that tourism and the environment were not threatened by logging and that the forest was not disappearing. At a pro-timber rally in the Pemberton Community Centre the women were presented with flowers and certificates for their protest action.55

In state parliament, Bernard Masters, Liberal, Vasse, presented a ‘grievance’ from a group of women calling themselves ‘real forest protesters’, who were concerned about the threat to 20,000 timber industry jobs and the livelihood of south-west communities. They argued that the high moral stance adopted by radical conservationists ignored the fact that the forests were a renewable resource which provided an income for thousands of families.56 Robert Martyn, a Pemberton resident and timber worker for over 30 years, believes the women’s protest played an important role in representing the views of timber workers. While many male timber company employees felt restricted about expressing their opinions, the fact that wives and girlfriends of workers were free to
demonstrate as they wished provided one avenue of release because ‘they couldn’t be touched’.  

Pressure mounted on the state government to end the seven months’ occupation of Giblett forest. A rally of 400 timber workers and supporters in Manjimup united in a call for authorities to remove the protesters. Forest Protection Society spokesperson Trish Townsend believed that local community concern about job security had reached crisis level and there was a risk that people would take matters into their own hands. Manjimup shire president Keith Liddelow said that local residents were annoyed by the prolonged occupation and believed politicians had failed the community by allowing the protest to continue. Sensitive to increasing local discontent the government sought ways to force the protesters to leave Giblett forest.

In early December 1997, Department of Conservation and Land Management executive director Syd Shea asked his department to evaluate the fire threat imposed by the presence of ‘large numbers of protesters’ occupying campsites in Giblett block during the summer. The ensuing report concluded that the department could not guarantee the safety of the protesters during periods of high fire danger and there was no alternative other than evacuating them. The day following the report Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes requested the Conservation Council to ask the Giblett protesters to leave the area because of fire and safety hazards. Edwardes also advised the Forest Protection Society of the government’s course of action and reaffirmed its commitment to the timber industry and its employees.
Following intensive negotiations between forest activists, the Manjimup shire council and CALM, the Giblett forest rescuers agreed to leave the forest after receiving a written assurance from the Environment Minister that the block would not be logged before winter 1998. Both the protest movement and the timber industry claimed the decision to vacate the forest as a victory. Activists believed their campaign had succeeded in winning a reprieve for Giblett block while the Forest Industries Federation saw the withdrawal as a back down by the protesters, praising timber workers for their restraint in the face of provocation and disruptions.

The withdrawal of activists from Giblett was carried out in a spirit of cooperation and celebration. Prior to leaving the camp, protesters held a ‘ceremony’ attended by local police Inspector Steve Roast, who had acted as mediator during negotiations, and CALM manager Peter Keppel. During the proceedings activists received a letter from the Environment Minister confirming the halt to logging in Giblett forest and then continued on to the main camp where the crowd and media representatives watched tree-sitters abseil down from their platforms. In an effort to improve relations the Manjimup Shire Council invited two representatives from the Giblett camp to talk to members of the council, tourism operators, and agriculture and forestry representatives. Activist Chris Lee summarised the feelings of protesters prior to leaving Giblett forest:

On our last night in the forest we had a beautiful heart circle, where we talked about experiences of the last eight months and what we will carry with us from this campaign. This campaign has been unique in the way that we have combined heartfelt grassroots activism with political action, real heartpolitics in action, and we feel empowered and willing
to continue the campaign to end the woodchipping of our precious old growth forests.\textsuperscript{64}

The Giblett forest rescue was an important campaign which provided a model for native forest protest during the late 1990s. Activists occupied an area of forest for an extended period during which they were able to establish a well-organised camp and reinforce their unity and sense of purpose. They also gained some degree of acceptance from local police and CALM staff. Tree platforms were a spectacular and highly successful form of protest that attracted extensive media attention, while the support of two sporting personalities maintained public focus on the fight to save the forests from wood chipping and clear-felling. The action was successful in gaining valuable breathing space that ultimately saved Giblett forest from logging.

\textbf{The Regional Forest Agreement}

While the Giblett rescue provided a blueprint for future forest campaigns, it was the debate over the Regional Forest Agreement which supplied the momentum for an escalation of protest activity. Under the 1992 \textit{National Forest Policy Statement} signed by the federal and Western Australian governments both governments agreed to establish an assessment process that would enable them to formulate a single agreement to meet their obligations towards forests within a specified region. Comprehensive regional assessments prior to the agreement would involve the collection and evaluation of data on the environmental and heritage significance of forests. Relevant state agencies, together with the Australian Heritage Commission, would co-ordinate the assessment of information following community and industry consultation.\textsuperscript{65}
In August 1996 federal and state politicians hosted public meetings in Perth and Manjimup to launch the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process in Western Australia. Representatives of several member groups of WAFA, including the Conservation Council, attended. Following the meetings both these organisations and the Wilderness Society declared that, unless the RFA process was altered, they would advise their members not to participate. The Conservation Council’s proposed revisions included representation on the RFA steering committee, access to government databases and information for Council representatives, full involvement of independent scientists and the continuation of a moratorium on logging in National Estate forests. When their proposals were rejected the three organisations decided to operate outside the RFA process and take their case directly to political parties, politicians and the Western Australian public. Beth Schultz recalled that, while the decision not to participate had been difficult, it was evident that the federal and state governments were acting in bad faith by excluding the community from representation on the steering committee. She believed the process was controlled by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, an organisation which lacked credibility because of its history of censorship and intimidation.

Following the decision not to participate in the consultation process, the forest protest movement decided to expose the Regional Forest Agreement as an expensive sham which mocked public participation and was designed to preserve the status quo. Conservationists argued that federal government decisions to allow mining in conservation reserves and the extension of wood chip export
licences from one to three years indicated the willingness of authorities to disregard the guidelines contained in the 1992 *National Forest Policy Statement* on which the proposed RFA was based. It was further alleged that federal and state governments and the timber industry fostered a ‘hidden agenda’ to manipulate the RFA process in order to convince people that Western Australia’s native forests had been properly assessed and were being logged on a sustainable basis.69

An intensive lobbying campaign to educate politicians and organisations about the RFA’s deficiencies was initiated. Prior to the ALP’s National Conference in January 1998 the Conservation Council and WAFA urged delegates to draft or support a motion condemning the Western Australian Regional Forest Agreement and the continuing destruction of the state’s old growth forests.70 In early 1998 Beth Schultz of the WA Conservation Council, David Mackenzie from the Wilderness Society and Peter Robertson of WAFA arranged a meeting with Dr Geoff Gallop, Leader of the Opposition, and Dr Judy Edwards, Shadow Environment Minister. During the meeting the three organisations attempted to convince the state Labor party that it should not support the Regional Forest Agreement and compared the differences between the open and inclusive approach adopted by the New South Wales ALP government and the restrictive and exclusive attitude of the Western Australian Coalition government and the Department of Conservation and Land Management.71 A letter from WAFA to organisations and people concerned about the RFA argued that the proposed agreement failed to provide adequate protection for old growth forests and that
CALM was manipulating the consultation process by withholding information, using unreliable data and restricting opportunities for public comment. In late 1997 WAFA became aware of satellite imagery which had been prepared by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Activists decided to use the imagery as part of their strategy to oppose the RFA by visibly demonstrating the extent of forest destruction. When the Conservation Council managed to obtain 12 images at a cost of $650 it was decided to organise a ‘Forests in Focus’ tour of 12 south-west centres to display the photographs. The images were created from three separate satellite photographs taken at different times and transposed over each other to show changes in forest cover since 1990. Conservationists argued the images showed massive vegetation loss due to logging practices, and that federal and state governments intended to suppress the information until after the RFA had been signed. As well as exhibiting the satellite images, WAFA used the tour to present its draft proposals for a genuine conservation reserve system for the south-west forests. CALM’s executive director Syd Shea denied his department had restricted the images’ release, saying they had been displayed on a public office wall.

The protest movement’s campaign against the Regional Forest Agreement caused anxiety within the pro-timber lobby. In February 1998 the Australian Workers Union, the Forest Industries Federation and the Forest Protection Society wrote to the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, John Anderson, voicing concerns that the creation of new forest reserves would mean
lost jobs, and stating that, unless an ‘industry enhancement option’ was included within the terms of the RFA to provide job creation and timber industry development opportunities, then the three organisations would withdraw from the RFA process. The groups observed that, unless a broad range of strategies was considered, it would be clear that the RFA process was an attempt to reduce the area of forest available for multiple use management and that ‘protest and dissent’ was more effective than compromise and co-operation.76 WAFA subsequently learned that the RFA proposals had been amended to include a more ‘industry-biased option’.77

In May 1998 the Joint Western Australian-Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement Steering Committee released a public consultation paper to assist the community to provide input into the development of the RFA for the state’s south-west forests. The document stated the RFA’s intention:

...to provide stability through the establishment of a sustainable resource base for industry, while at the same time ensuring the protection of Australia’s biodiversity, heritage, old-growth and wilderness through a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system and complementary off-reserve management.78

In order to achieve this objective the RFA would identify and conserve areas required for a forest reserve system (see Map 8.2.) and provide for ecologically sustainable forest management and the long-term stability of the forest and its associated industries. The final agreement would define joint commitments by the federal and state government to forest conservation, forest use and forest-based industries for a period of 20 years. Written submissions were invited by 10 July.79
The paper’s release provoked strong criticism from the forest protest movement. An initial response by WAFA cited 14 major failings in the document. These included the presentation of biased options that would result in ongoing destruction of high conservation value forests, exaggerated employment and economic costs of forest protection, misleading statistics, proposals to log areas of forest in national parks, failure to consider industry restructuring and a disregard for the ability of plantation forestry to meet the state’s timber needs. Jim Frith of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest said the paper was deliberately vague about which areas of forest would be logged and believed this was a deliberate ploy to conceal what was really happening.
Employing a strategy that the protest movement had used consistently since the mid-1970s, WAFA decided to counter the RFA consultation document with its own plans for a forest conservation reserve system and sustainable timber production industry. A four-page spreadsheet released at the time of the RFA paper included proposals for selective logging based on ecological value, an efficient plantation industry, promotion of furniture and fine woodcraft industries, and the development of eco-tourism. WAFA argued that the proposals would see 60% of state forest remaining available for sustainable logging, with the balance added to the reserve system.82

The increasing public debate over forest protection generated by the RFA consultation paper and the protest movement’s campaign against the proposals attracted the attention of a prominent Western Australian sporting personality and provided activists with a powerful strategic opportunity. In June 1998, during a television interview, West Coast Eagles football coach Mick Malthouse said that he supported former Eagles player Craig Turley, who had taken an active part in the Giblett forest rescue, and that the issue of forest destruction in Western Australia was more important to him than his job or friendships with politicians. He considered wood chipping an act of vandalism for quick profits and an indictment on the state government and CALM, the name of which he saw as representing 'almost a contradiction in terms’. Realising the strategic
advantage of Malthouse’s comments for the forest campaign, conservationists persuaded him to travel to the south-west for media interviews which featured on that evening's television news. A photograph of Malthouse admiring a karri tree subsequently appeared on the front page of the *West Australian* and in a feature in the *Australian Magazine.*

Widespread media coverage of Malthouse’s stand intensified the friction between timber industry supporters and conservationists. Premier Richard Court defended CALM, advising Malthouse to talk to its staff and gain a better understanding of forest management practices. Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes requested that CALM provide a full briefing to Malthouse, urging him to make a submission to the RFA process. The National Association of Forest Industries said that the football coach was ignorant about forest science and had a moral obligation to appreciate the opposite side of the issue. Many West Coast Eagles supporters in the south-west said they would cancel their club memberships, with Manjimup timber workers symbolically burning a club flag.

Community division over Malthouse’s sympathy for the forest campaign was reflected in letters to the *West Australian* newspaper. While some correspondents praised his stand as courageous and admirable, others saw his comments as unsportsmanlike and ill-informed.
Figure 8.3. West Coast Eagles coach Mick Malthouse admiring a karri tree in the forest near Northcliffe. Source: *West Australian*, 4 June 1998.

Malthouse’s statement resulted in the protest movement implementing a strategy of persuading identifiable groups to unite in opposition to the Regional Forest Agreement. Patrick Weir and Maggie Burke contacted several prominent Western Australians who later met at the home of Dame Rachel Cleland to support Mick Malthouse and to launch their own campaign to stop old growth forest logging. Those attending included Olympic gold medallist Shirley de la
Hunty, fashion designer Liz Davenport, Subiaco and Fremantle mayors Tony Costa and Richard Utting, Murdoch University’s Professor Peter Newman, environmental research scientist Dr Graham Chittleborough, and obstetrician Dr Harry Cohen. The group intended to influence public opinion over the RFA prior to the deadline date for comments. Shirley de la Hunty believed that the involvement of people with high community status was most important for the progress of the forest campaign because, without their participation, there was a risk of activists being discredited as ‘ratbags’.

Dr Bill Castleden, a retired surgeon living in Margaret River, responded to a request from the Conservation Council to organise a group of 28 doctors who would be willing to identify themselves in the media as being opposed to the Regional Forest Agreement. In a full-page advertisement in the West Australian newspaper the doctors asserted the spiritual and cultural significance of old growth forests for human health and voiced their opposition to the ‘senseless destruction of this beautiful and irreplaceable community asset.’

The advertisement resulted in the formation of Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests with Castleden as co-convenor. He said the group was apolitical with the single objective of saving Western Australia’s old growth forests.

We were trying to tell the government of the day that it had got this wrong, it wasn’t listening to what most West Australians wanted, it had got it wrong and it needed to put it right...We were trying to represent the 80-90% of West Australians who wanted the old growth forest preserved, we were just trying to be a voice for them as they weren’t having a voice.
While the doctors’ group was informally organised and did not hold meetings, membership escalated from the initial 28 doctors to over 200. Castleden recalled that the group was important not only in providing additional financial support for the forests campaign but also in demonstrating to the government that some Western Australian professionals were concerned about the need to preserve the remaining areas of old growth forests. Identifiable groups became a prominent feature of the forests campaign, and included Men and Women in Suits, Lawyers for Forests and Sporting Elites.

The involvement of sporting personalities, prominent community figures and professionals in the forest campaign provided a boost for the protest movement. Andre Malan, a well-known journalist for the *West Australian*, observed that a growing number of influential people like Malthouse were questioning how the state’s heritage forests were being managed and that it had now become not only acceptable but even respectable to be ‘green’. The forest protest movement had gathered momentum and began to look unstoppable. Beth Schultz recalled that the support of Mick Malthouse, who was seen by many at the time as a ‘folk hero’ in Western Australia, marked a turning-point in the campaign.

By the close of 1998 the forest protest movement's inclusive strategies aimed at encouraging broad participation in protest action were beginning to have an effect on the course of the forest campaign. David Mackenzie grew up in Sydney and came to Western Australia in 1992. Soon after his arrival he decided to resign from his job with a resources company and become a full-time volunteer with the Wilderness Society. In 1998 he became the Society's state co-
ordinator. Mackenzie ascribed his passion to protect the state's forests as arising from a desire to change an outdated culture of corporate greed that he believed to be responsible for forest destruction. He considered the involvement of public figures to have been crucial in helping to make the forests debate a socially acceptable subject for discussion and emphasised the protest movement's success in expanding the forests campaign by helping people express their own form of protest.

It seemed that as we held more rallies, as we had more public spokespeople such as Mick Malthouse, as we had the EPA come out and give very black and white views on what the future of our forests was going to be under the logging intended by the Premier, Richard Court, the more we won over the middle ground, the more I think we started to occupy the mainstream...there were a lot of people in the mainstream who wanted to help out but they didn’t have an avenue, they didn’t feel comfortable going down to the forest strapping onto a dozer...people shouldn’t need to step outside their comfort zone to express their support for old growth forests, and so what we did was create comfort zones which were right for certain demographics.94

Research into the various influences that persuaded the Perth public to support the forests campaign found:

...that creating a range of different supporter groups from different strata of society, maintaining their separation from conservation groups through distinct ‘branding’ and enlisting the support of high profile personalities from different walks of life constitutes a significant element in a successful campaign strategy.95

During late-1998 the forest protest movement directed its strategies at convincing Western Australians to reject the Regional Forest Agreement. A series of full-page newspaper advertisements contained comparison photographs of old growth forest and areas that had been clear-felled, arguing that the proposed arrangement would allow unsustainable logging practices to continue for a further 20 years. Members of the public were urged to write to politicians and ‘stand up and be
counted’ at a rally for old growth forests at Perth Concert Hall’s riverside forecourt.  

The July rally, attended by an estimated 10,000 people, was addressed by Professor Harry Recher, an eco-management lecturer from Edith Cowan University, who told the gathering that most scientists in Australia opposed old growth logging but were employed by government, and were afraid to speak out. He said the RFA was not scientifically based because governments had no information on the effects of logging in old growth forests. Organisers believed the rally’s high attendance showed that the RFA’s function to resolve community conflict over forest issues was not working. At the rally, Patrick Weir launched a new group, Campaigners for Ancient Forests, which ran bus tours to the forests and persuaded well-known personalities such as Sister Veronica Brady to become actively involved in the forest campaign. 

The protest movement received further encouragement from the timely release of two state government reports. Shortly after her election to state parliament, Christine Sharp chaired an all-party standing committee inquiry into ecologically sustainable management and future use of Western Australia’s state forests. The committee’s terms of reference covered seven separate areas and, in August 1998, it released its findings on the RFA. The report was critical of many aspects of the process. It contained 22 recommendations which included suggestions that the draft RFA be released for public comment and EPA assessment; that in order to avoid any conflict of interest CALM be replaced as lead agency in the RFA process; that the state government establish an accord
process to enhance public transparency and understanding; that the RFA allow timber harvesting levels to reflect sustainable forest management principles; and that the process consider the RFA’s impact on other forest-related sectors such as tourism, agriculture and the plantation timber industry.99

Sharp recalled that the committee decided to release the RFA section of its inquiry in order to submit its recommendations before the agreement was finalised. She believed that the state government needed to adopt a more consensus-based approach towards the RFA, otherwise the process would not work, and considered the main problem to have been the conflict between increasing public demands to protect the forests for their intrinsic value and CALM’s demands to exploit the forests for their commercial value.

The problem at the end of the day was that there was an agenda for CALM, and the agenda for CALM was quite simply to protect existing contracts...CALM could not afford to allow a lot of new reservation of main belt karri, the lovely tall trees that the public so adored which was driving in many ways the public side of the campaign, because if they allowed too many of them to be locked up then they wouldn’t be able to meet the contracts...that was what the real story was – defending the status quo.100

Conservationists welcomed the committee’s recommendations as a valuable contribution towards resolving the forest conflict by expressing community concerns about the RFA process.101

In December 1998 the state Environmental Protection Authority released a report in relation to the Regional Forest Agreement comprising a progress report on the Department of Conservation and Land Management’s compliance with its forest management plans. The report revealed how CALM had breached or failed to comply with several ministerial conditions governing its forest management and
logging activities, confirmed extensive over-cutting of jarrah sawlogs, criticised its lack of knowledge of sustainable forest practices and identified conflicts of interest and administrative anomalies within the department.\textsuperscript{102} The forest protest movement regarded the report as further evidence of CALM’s lack of accountability and confirmation that its forest management was unsustainable. As a result of the findings conservationists called for a judicial inquiry into CALM’s organisation and management, a moratorium on logging of high conservation value forests and replacement of the RFA process with an accord process that would involve all forest interest groups.\textsuperscript{103}

The perceived mishandling of the RFA public consultation process by the Court Liberal government was exploited by Labor. Opposition Leader Geoff Gallop said the government had failed to involve all the stakeholders in the debate and the proposals had not been subjected to peer review, with the result that the RFA had become a secretive process that lacked credibility. He argued that Labor’s five-point plan, based on transparency and full stakeholder participation, would ensure certainty and sustainability in the management of Western Australia’s native forests. The plan included a moratorium on logging in high-conservation value old growth forests, an independent audit of the draft RFA, the introduction of an industry development and worker assistance fund, an open inquiry into the Department of Conservation and Land Management and a review of timber royalties.\textsuperscript{104}

In April 1999 the protest movement became aware that the signing of the RFA was imminent. Although the state government refused to release the draft RFA
for public comment, leaked documents suggested that, while there would be almost 150,000 hectares of new reserves, the agreement failed to adequately protect a significant proportion of the state’s old growth forests. In an effort to challenge the government’s apparent disregard for public opinion and to protect significant areas of old growth forest Greens MLC Dr Christine Sharp introduced a Private Members Bill to require that the RFA was presented to the parliament for approval. If her proposed *High Conservation Value Forest Protection Bill* was passed a temporary moratorium would be placed on identifiable areas of high conservation value forests. Sharp said the Bill would ensure that the RFA was subjected to the usual processes of parliamentary scrutiny and ratification for an issue of ‘extraordinary community concern’ which had produced over 30,000 submissions.

After successfully passing through the Legislative Council, the debate over the Bill in the Legislative Assembly provided valuable insights into changing perceptions of forest protest in Western Australia and Labor’s future forest policy intentions. Phillip Pendal, Independent Liberal, South Perth, observed that protesters were no longer marginalised people from the ‘fringes’ but comprised mainstream Western Australians who found themselves adopting a position that a generation ago was regarded as radical because they felt they had to take a stand against an agreement the contents of which had been kept secret from them. He believed the change had occurred firstly because the RFA lacked transparency, secondly because values and attitudes had changed to the extent that people no longer believed it was necessary to log forests excessively and,
finally, because people felt they had been betrayed by successive government failures to honour commitments to manage the forests sustainably.\textsuperscript{107}

Geoff Gallop, Leader of the Opposition, said the Labor Party supported the Bill because it provided an opportunity to protect Western Australia’s remaining old growth forests, offered a degree of accountability to the Regional Forest Agreement process and allowed a re-examination of the government’s approach to timber industry restructuring and worker assistance. Most significantly, he announced the Labor Party’s commitment to end old growth forest logging and asserted that this would be a major issue at the next state election.\textsuperscript{108} The circumstances surrounding the achievement of this key policy decision by the Labor Party will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Opposition’s environment spokesperson, Dr Judy Edwards, observed that forest protest activity had escalated as a result of the RFA. She argued that any agreement which disregarded the thousands of people who had protested and which locked 100,000 hectares of forest into a 20-year logging programme deserved to be scrutinised by parliament.\textsuperscript{109} Alan Carpenter, ALP, Willagee, prophesied that if parliament ignored public demands to save the forests, this failure would have an impact on the government at the next election. Following an intense and prolonged debate the Bill was lost on party lines.\textsuperscript{110}

Christine Sharp believes that, although her proposed Bill did not succeed, the debate in the Legislative Assembly in front of a packed public gallery was important in demonstrating to the government the high level of community
interest in the forest debate. She considered the decision of Bob Wiese, a National Party member, to ‘cross the floor’ and vote with the Opposition to support the Bill, to have been politically significant in showing that the debate had raised the level of consciousness of some members of the government and that there was some disunity over the forests issue within the coalition.\footnote{111}

On 4 May 1999, Premier Court announced that the Western Australian and federal governments had signed a Regional Forest Agreement for the management of the state’s south-west forests as part of a national plan for ‘balance, certainty and sustainability in forest management’. The agreement would conserve an additional 45,700 hectares of old growth forest, with more than two-thirds protected in reserves. Premier Court said that, while the debate over the RFA had been difficult, the government had sought a balanced outcome that would protect the future interests of all Western Australians.\footnote{112} In response, Leader of the Opposition Geoff Gallop said that the signed agreement was a tragedy for Western Australia and that the government had produced a recipe for continuing conflict over the future of the state’s old growth forests. He alleged the agreement was the result of a secret deal within the coalition that left 102,000 hectares of old growth forest available for logging and ignored the future interests of timber workers.\footnote{113}

The Regional Forest Agreement’s release attracted condemnation from the forest protest movement. Conservation Council vice-president Beth Schultz said the agreement was a sell-out to the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the wood chip industry, and that the only certain outcome was
an escalating campaign to protect Western Australia’s precious old growth forest. Peter Robertson of WAFA said that, while the RFA had ostensibly set aside large areas of forest, these were areas of woodland that the timber industry did not want, and the best stands of tall forest, including 90% of the production karri forest, had been handed over for clear felling and wood chipping. Wilderness Society spokesperson David Mackenzie saw the RFA as a ‘calculated slap in the face’ for Western Australians and particularly south-west communities who depended on the forests as a tourist attraction.

The Australian Workers’ Union, on the other hand, regarded the RFA outcome as a significant victory for the state’s conservationists, with an additional 150,000 hectares of forests placed in reserves and no longer available for logging. It claimed that the reduction in resources through ‘unreasonable demands by greenies’ would result in job losses and uncertainty, and criticised conservationists for remaining outside the RFA consultation process. The Manjimup Chamber of Commerce and local council argued that the RFA offered a chance to unite timber communities by providing economic security and stability after a period of disruption.

Immediately following the RFA’s signing the state government and the forest protest movement campaigned to support their respective arguments. Full-page advertisements in the West Australian newspaper by the federal and state governments attempted to convince the public that the RFA had managed to strike a balance between the demands of the tourism and forest industries by providing 12 new national parks and a $41.5 million industry development
Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes said the creation of new conservation reserve areas reflected the concerns of community interest groups and assured people that the RFA would protect the livelihoods of forest workers while at the same time conserving the natural environment for future generations.

A full-page advertisement by the Conservation Council, WAFA and the Wilderness Society, also in the West Australian, displayed a large photograph of a clear-felled karri forest to emphasise the fact that 90% of Western Australia’s original old growth forest had already been destroyed and that, under the 20-year RFA, one-third of the remainder would be lost forever. The advertisement listed six areas of high conservation value forest which were scheduled for destruction and urged people to contribute financially towards the forest campaign and to attend a public action meeting at the end of May. In its quarterly publication, the Forest Times, WAFA contrasted the 'community’s vision' for the protection of all Western Australia’s old growth forests through the establishment of a sustainable timber industry based on plantations and regrowth with the 20-year RFA that gave the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the timber companies time to log all the remaining old growth forest for export wood chips, charcoal and sawn timber.

A “Reclaim Our Forests” rally at the Perth Entertainment Centre was attended by an estimated crowd of 5,000 people who heard speeches from politicians, environmentalists and public figures who voiced their opposition to the RFA and support for the forests campaign. Speakers included Opposition Leader Geoff
Gallop, Australian Democrats MLC Norm Kelly, Independent MLA Dr Liz Constable, Greens (WA) MLC Dr Christine Sharp, Dame Rachel Cleland and West Coast Eagles coach Mick Malthouse. Professor Harry Recher from Edith Cowan University said the Regional Forest Agreement had failed to achieve its objective of producing a ‘comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system’ and was simply a political exercise designed to guarantee resource security for the timber industry. State Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes later admitted that over one-third of the one million hectares of reserves classified under the RFA were not forested areas and comprised other vegetation such as swamps, sand dunes and cleared land.

It was at this time that the forest campaign received valuable support from some new members of a broadening forest protest movement. Dr Keith Woollard, a Perth cardiologist and ex-president of the Australian Medical Association, recalled that several of his friends and colleagues who were Liberal supporters had become frustrated at their failure to persuade the federal and state governments to adopt a more environmentally responsible approach to Western Australia’s old growth forests. As a result, the Liberals for Forests group was formed with the objective of persuading the Liberal Party to formulate an old growth forests policy which would improve its chances for re-election. Woollard recalled that the group comprised mainly disenchanted Liberal supporters with an initial membership of around 3,000. He also recalled that the group succeeded in providing Liberals with an avenue through which to register their opposition to the Court government’s forest policies and in demonstrating that people could be Liberal and also protect the environment. Although
Liberals for Forests was self-funding and held only one revenue-raising event, Woollard said the media publicity for the forests generated from the group’s name was invaluable.125

While Premier Court initially remained unimpressed with the new group and urged Liberal supporters to work for change from within the party,126 an editorial in the *West Australian* newspaper suggested that the potential electoral damage of Liberals for Forests might have proved the decisive factor in the government’s decision to accord such a high priority to a reassessment of the RFA. The editorial also observed that the state government had become ‘trapped between its own political and contractual pressures and what have become increasingly non-negotiable demands by even moderate conservationists’, and warned that the Premier’s attempt at appeasement would fail to restore the mainstream coalition support that had been jeopardised by the RFA process.127 The *West Australian* editorial provides further evidence of a more sympathetic approach adopted by the news media towards the forest protest movement which had become apparent during the 1997 Giblett Forest Rescue. This contrasts with the oppositional stance taken by Perth newspapers in the late 1970s as observed by Beth Schultz in chapter four of this thesis.

By mid-July 1999 opposition to the RFA could not be ignored and the state government decided to re-examine the terms of the agreement. At the end of the month Premier Court announced a revised forest plan which would phase out logging in old growth karri and tingle forests by 2003 with the loss of an estimated 1,500 jobs. Additionally, the government planned to spend millions of
dollars buying back timber contracts in order to meet its reduced logging target.  

The decision served only to worsen the government’s position. Prime Minister Howard expressed anger over plans to drastically reduce karri logging from 175,000 cubic metres to 50,000 cubic metres a year by 2003 while federal Forestry Minister Wilson Tuckey criticised the state government for reneging on the RFA’s commitment to provide 20 years’ resource security for the timber industry. The Forest Industries Federation considered the job losses a ‘disgrace’ and believed the RFA amendment would result in further confrontation. Trish Townsend from the Forest Protection Society accused the Premier of capitulating because of a fear campaign among city electors orchestrated by sports stars, doctors and lawyers. Conservationists vowed to continue the fight to bring about an immediate end to all old growth forest logging.

In September 1999 the state government further attempted to placate public criticism of its forest policies and management practices by announcing that work would start immediately on the re-organisation of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Introducing the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill into state parliament, Minister Edwardes said the government had heeded community concerns at the perceived conflict of interest between CALM’s conservation and commercial activities, and was determined to introduce a new forest management regime into Western Australia. The Bill proposed the establishment of a Conservation Commission to be the advisory and policy development body responsible for monitoring and auditing
the management practices of a revamped Department of Conservation and a newly established Forest Products Commission. A separate Forest Products Bill would effectively separate commercial forest management responsibilities from conservation objectives.  

The RFA process had provided the catalyst for an intensification of forest protest activity in the late-1990s. As Jean Hillier observed, while the RFA was a debacle that provoked an assault on the state government’s legitimacy and transformed the forest from ‘an entity of nature’ into ‘a compromised product of society, shaped by power, coercion and resistance’, the process had the positive effect of stimulating a challenge to the extent of the government's domination and control over the forests. By using strategies designed to increase public support and participation in forest protest, such as professional critiques, media advertisements and public rallies, and particularly through the exploitation of prominent personalities and identifiable groups, the protest movement succeeded in undermining the credibility of the RFA and the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Beth Schultz recalled the decision of conservationists to remain outside the RFA consultation process as a successful strategy that left them free to attack the proposed agreement and expose its lies and dishonesty.  

Wilderness Society co-ordinator David Mackenzie saw the RFA as exerting a positive influence on protest activity by creating a deadline for action, thus increasing the momentum of the forest campaign. He judged the involvement of public personalities to be significant through demonstrating that the message to save the forests had broadened and was coming from a different direction.  

382
“It’s the Old Growth, Stupid!”

In early 1998 the forest protest movement decided on a strategic initiative that
defined the final stage of the forest campaign. The Conservation Council, the
WAFA and the Wilderness Society held a meeting with communications advisor
Guy Grant who suggested that the campaign should coalesce around the single
message of saving old growth forests.\textsuperscript{135} Grant based his suggestion on an idea
that had been used by United States' President Bill Clinton, who had employed
reminder signs displaying the message “It’s the economy, stupid” to maintain his
focus on a central presidential election issue. Accordingly, Grant produced
some display signs for the forest protest movement saying, “It’s the old growth,
stupid”.\textsuperscript{136} The idea was to evoke a powerful sub-conscious imagery such as
‘fantastic old trees, bark falling off the trunks, curtains of moss, cool wind
blowing in your face’. Most importantly, activists believed that saving all old
growth forests was an achievable common goal that all the groups could work
towards.\textsuperscript{137}

In a 1997 study, Richard Lamb and Colleen Morris recognised the potential for a
richer interpretation of the worth of forests through a greater appreciation of their
cultural value to communities. Lamb and Morris conducted qualitative research
to determine the ‘identifiable values’ of old growth forests, including
comparisons between forest management and community views on the spiritual,
aesthetic and symbolic value of forests. They concluded that the concept of ‘old
growth forest’ was a cultural construct that derived from a variety of community
interpretations and beliefs, some based on subjective experience, and they argued
for a greater consideration of social values when identifying areas of forest for reservation.\textsuperscript{138}

The strategic decision to focus on old growth forests resulted in a conflict between conservationists and the state government over the interpretation of what constituted 'old growth forest'. The Conservation Council accepted the 1992 \textit{National Forest Policy Statement}'s definition of old growth forest as:

...forest that is ecologically mature and has been subjected to negligible unnatural disturbance such as logging, roading and clearing. The definition focuses on forest in which the upper stratum or overstorey is in the late mature to overmature growth phases.\textsuperscript{139}

In April 1999, the WA Forest Alliance alleged that the state government and its agencies had falsely claimed that almost 60\% of Western Australia’s old growth forests were protected in reserves by applying a narrow definition of ‘old growth forest’ which minimised the area of forest to be protected.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Wattle Block Protest}

The campaign to save Western Australia’s old growth forests led to an expansion of direct action strategies and an escalation of forest and city-based protest. Violent confrontations between activists, government authorities and timber workers at Wattle forest near Walpole provide some insights into the stark realities of grass roots forest activism and the motivations of those who participated in old growth forest rescue actions. The events also demonstrated how the state government's procrastination over the future management of Western Australia’s south-west forests created an atmosphere of frustration and a climate for confrontation.
Wattle block comprised 3,000 hectares of old growth karri forest which formed a natural link between the Shannon and Mount Frankland National Parks. The area was interim heritage-listed and had been identified in the Regional Forest Agreement process as potentially in need of permanent protection. When the Department of Conservation and Land Management began logging the forest in late 1998, forest activists established a camp on the South-West Highway from which they mounted protest operations in an attempt to save 70 hectares of forest from destruction and thus preserve the ecological integrity of the wildlife corridor. In order to do so, protesters intended to disrupt and delay logging operations while at the same time generating maximum publicity for the fight to save old growth forests.

In addition to occupying tree platforms and hiding in the bush to hinder authorities, activists also employed more confrontational strategies designed to both demonstrate their determination and maximise media attention. The construction of “dragon cars” or “dragon flies” to block access roads involved burying old motor vehicles and machinery parts in a metre-deep hole which was then covered in concrete. A cylinder was set in the centre to allow a protester to insert an arm and “lock-on” by means of a dog collar attached to the wrist.141

In November 1998, a *Sunday Times* front page article further demonstrated the Perth print media’s growing sympathy for the forest protest cause. A large picture of a young male activist chained to a tube set in concrete at Wattle block depicted 'the face of a war being waged in the South-West forests'. The article described how 'Rare and endangered red-tail black cockatoos screamed
mournfully overhead, adding to the protest over the clear-felling of this ancient forest.\textsuperscript{142} (see Figure 8.4.) Many activists risked serious injury by locking themselves to machinery. Leigh Maddock from Fremantle, spent ‘six uncomfortable hours’ locked onto a bulldozer with thumbcuffs until workers released her by removing a section of panelling. She said she carried out the action because she wanted to preserve Wattle forest’s magnificent karri trees as part of an integrated forest reserve system and was angry that CALM had ignored recommendations to conserve the area. Maddock said that, as well as taking physical risks, protesters were making personal sacrifices, such as incurring debts to pay fines, in order to save the forests.\textsuperscript{143}

University student Lauren Caulfield said she became involved as a WAFA activist in the Wattle block campaign shortly after leaving school because of her interest in issues of environmental and social justice. She recalled that it had been a deliberate decision to establish the Wattle camp next to the main highway because clear-felling operations were taking place nearby and tourists could stop and see what was happening. While the protesters were drawn from a broad range of backgrounds and age groups, Caulfield said many of them were young people because living in the bush demanded a reasonable level of fitness. She said activists decided to employ a wide range of direct action tactics such as tree-sits, road blocks, sit-ins, tripods and machinery lock-ons because this made it more difficult for authorities to predict protesters’ intentions.\textsuperscript{144}
Figure 8.4. Wattle block protest. Source: Sunday Times, 29 November 1998.
Caulfield said the Wattle protest was typical of several similar actions in the south-west forests during the late-1990s and that each day’s activities were planned during a ‘circle’ meeting each evening. The sessions were designed to provide individual empowerment, to avoid hierarchies and to resolve conflicts. She recalled that meetings would usually commence with a debriefing of the current day’s events followed by brainstorming to formulate strategies and discuss the most appropriate tactics for the following day. Once a consensus had been reached, activists would spend the night preparing for the various actions. This might involve digging holes for car bodies, preparing for a tree-sit or erecting a tripod.145

By the time timber workers arrived to commence logging on the following day each activist had been designated a specific role, such as police, industry or media liaison. Those participating in direct action were paired with ‘buddies’ to ensure safety and mutual support. After activists informed industry staff of the day’s actions, local police would usually be called upon to respond after conferring with timber workers and protesters. Caulfield observed that, by the end of 2000, police had formed a dedicated forest task force which included a special equipment trailer designed to counter forest actions. Activists taking part in the protests were normally arrested and charged with offences, such as hindering a lawful activity or trespass. She said protesters were willing to be arrested because the action represented a challenge to the injustice of the state government’s and legal system’s approval of a timber industry which did not have public support.
While acknowledging that the maintenance of daily direct action protests was repetitive and demanding, Caulfield believed the actions were successful in the short term by temporarily stopping forest logging and, in a broader context, by providing dramatic media exposure and increasing public interest. Summarising the significance of the south-west forest rescues for the forest protest movement she concluded:

I think that the blockade camps and direct actions, individual direct actions, in the south-west provided a really important heart and soul of the campaign for many people. I think that they also provided a really important source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{146}

By December 1998 over 50 people had been arrested at Wattle block as direct action protests intensified.\textsuperscript{147} In January 1999 timber workers arrived for work after a three-week Christmas break to find activists on access roads chained to concrete blocks and car bodies, and others suspended from tripods. Logging machinery could not be used while police attempted to remove and arrest the protesters. An offer from Department of Conservation and Land Management workers to temporarily cease logging activities if the protesters moved was rejected by activists who repeated their demands for a moratorium on all old growth forest logging.\textsuperscript{148}

Six months of mounting tension came to a head in August 1999 when the Wattle protest camp was attacked by 40 pro-loggers, some wearing balaclavas and carrying baseball bats, axes and sledgehammers. The group set fire to a caravan, threatened protesters and trashed the area. A \textit{Sunday Times} photographer was led away by the attackers and had his film destroyed.\textsuperscript{149} (see Figure 8.5.) Timber worker Robert Martyn, who took part in the Wattle camp attack, explained what motivated the violent action against the protesters.
Frustration had really got to breaking point and it was a statement...when you go for weeks on end – they’re stopping trucks from coming in, they’re stopping trucks from going out, they’re in the bush where you’re supposed to be working and so you can’t work – it was company policy that we were not allowed to touch them so frustration got the better of us...they pissed us off so we thought it was about time we pissed them off.150

Seven Manjimup people were eventually charged with riotous behaviour over the attack, while a further two residents were charged with criminal damage by fire and riotous behaviour relating to both the camp incident and a petrol bomb attack on a Northcliffe craft shop owned by a local conservationist. Angry timber workers demonstrated outside Manjimup police station, claiming that police had targeted local people who had ‘cracked after years of pressure’ while ignoring protesters who camped illegally in the forests. A “Double Standards Community Fund” was set up to raise money for legal fees.151
Attempts to apportion blame for the incident soon followed. State Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes accused federal Forestry Minister Wilson Tuckey of inflaming timber workers by warning that anarchy would result if the protesters were not removed. Conservationists also blamed Warren-Blackwood MLA Paul Omodei, who had warned protesters that, if violence occurred, they would have only themselves to blame. Wilderness Society co-ordinator David Mackenzie and Wattle camp activist Emma Belfield alleged that local police were made aware of an imminent attack but failed to act. Manjimup shire president Keith Liddelow said most of the local timber community knew about the planned attack on the camp and were keen to participate while Trish Townsend of the pro-logging Forest Protection Society confirmed that the attacks had involved loggers and local people in an action designed to present ‘a united front against the greenies’.

The West Australian considered that the violence had occurred partly as a result of the state government’s inability to amicably resolve the forest conflict and believed that, if it was shown that timber workers had carried out the attack, they would have damaged their own cause rather than that of the protesters.

Although the destruction of the Wattle forest camp was not the only act of violence against protesters, the incident was important in generating more media exposure and support for the forest protest movement. Christine Sharp saw the attack as one of the most significant events of the late-1990s in swinging...
public sympathy in favour of the forest blockade camps. Bill Castleden from the Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests group regarded the timber workers as ‘pawns’ in the hands of the state government and the timber industry. Conservationists viewed the assault on Wattle block as part of a broader campaign to silence debate about the forests by those who purported to represent the interests of timber workers and their families but really sought to preserve the status quo through ‘churning out misinformation, creating a climate of fear, polarizing communities and demonising “greenies”’. 

Action in the Cities

Coincidental to the actions in the south-west forests, the forest protest movement intensified the old growth forests campaign in urban centres by organising a number of rallies and staged events to maintain public attention and educate city people about what was happening in the forests. Parliament House became a popular venue for demonstrations as the protest movement increased pressure on politicians to end logging of old growth forests. In early 1998 WAFA and the Great Walk Network announced a week long “Big Forest Party” outside parliament to protest against further clear-felling. Members of the public were invited to visit or camp at the site to express their support and lobby parliamentarians. Activities included speeches, petitions, readings, music, barbeques and slumber parties, with a march and rally at Supreme Court Gardens on the final day.

Later in the same year the Wilderness Society declared Parliament House a Temporary Control Area, thus ‘banning’ parliamentarians from entering or
risking a $2,000 fine. The action was designed to replicate the Department of Conservation and Land Management’s attempt to enforce a Temporary Control Area on Lane and Wattle forests by arresting and fining forest rescuers fighting to save old growth forests. The Parliament House action was ‘enforced’ by a broad range of Western Australians as a demonstration of the strong public reaction against old growth forest logging. Wilderness Society co-ordinator David Mackenzie said barring politicians from parliament was no more ridiculous than excluding Western Australian people from their own forests.159

A rally at Parliament House in March 1999 reflected mounting opposition to old growth forest logging among influential Western Australians. The gathering of an estimated 5,000 environmentalists, doctors, business people and council leaders presented a seven-point conservation plan to Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes. The proposal included an immediate moratorium on logging of high conservation value forests and compensation payments for workers affected by cancelled timber contracts. Retired surgeon Malcolm Hay said he believed public servants were afraid to speak out for fear of losing their jobs and that he was prepared to go to prison if necessary to stop logging in old growth forests.160

One year later the Parliament House protests were continuing, with around 2,000 people demanding a halt to old growth logging. Surgeon John Hanrahan, who addressed the crowd, believed the broad spectrum of people attending the rally reflected the massive change in community attitudes that the state government could not afford to ignore. WAFA convenor Peter Robertson said that, unless
the Court Government did the right thing and imposed a moratorium on old growth forest logging and restructured the timber industry, Western Australians would make the forests an issue at the following year’s state election.\textsuperscript{161}

In addition to protests at Parliament House the forest protest movement staged a number of attention-grabbing publicity stunts that were designed to maintain public focus on the continuing destruction of Western Australia’s old growth forests. WAFA carried out a dawn raid on Forrest Place in the centre of Perth and erected a five-tonne karri stump from Giblett forest. Three activists locked themselves to a metal rod in the stump, releasing themselves only for meal and toilet breaks. Via Stidwell from the Friends of Giblett group commented that, while conservationists could not afford to mount an expensive advertising campaign like the Forest Industries Federation, the visual effect of a karri tree stump in the city was an effective way of educating people and gauging public opinion about forest issues.\textsuperscript{162}

During 1998 Christmas festivities Wilderness Society supporter Rowan Logie carried out a “Santa Claus” protest from a tree in Kings Park with the message that Santa’s best present to the people of Perth would be a moratorium on logging the south-west’s old growth forests.\textsuperscript{163} Forest activist Michael Quinn climbed to the top of Barracks Street Arch. After unfurling a large banner displaying the message “If the RFA stands the karri will fall” he moved the Arch flags to half-mast and waved at motorists.\textsuperscript{164} A group of nine protesters paraded naked through Perth city centre with the slogan “Stop stripping our old growth forests” painted on their backs and bottoms and on a banner carried in front of
them. A similar protest was staged in Bunbury during a meeting of state cabinet when three members of the group No Unnecessary Destruction of the Environment (NUDE) stripped off to remind politicians that the south-west was being stripped of its old growth forests.

Figure 8.6. Forest protesters in Perth's Plaza Arcade. Source: *West Australian*, 11 December 1999.

Public opinion polls during the late-1990s demonstrated mounting public support for forest protection. A June 1998 survey revealed 87% of Western Australians disapproved of clear-felling the state’s old growth forests. A further survey in September 1999 commissioned by the Conservation Council showed that the figure for those opposing old growth forest clear-felling had risen to 91%, those disapproving of old growth forest wood chipping from 83% to 92% and those against logging old growth forests from 74% to 82%.
The organisation of both forest and city-based campaigns received a boost in early 1999 with the opening of the Lorax forest rescue centre in Fremantle. Founded by a group of four women activists committed to preserving Western Australia’s old growth forests, the centre aimed at providing information and more opportunities for people to become actively involved in the forest campaign. Activities included weekly workshops on forest issues, blockade strategies and individual protest options, with more ‘hands on’ activities such as painting banners, printing T-shirts and collecting donations. The Conservation Council declared its support for the Lorax centre, viewing it as an ‘inspired initiative’ that offered young people a worthwhile cause on which to concentrate their energies and thus make a valuable contribution to society.

Lauren Caulfield, who was involved in the organisation of the centre, recalled that the Lorax was born out of the 1998 forest blockades and from the need for a central liaison point between the city-based and the south-west campaigns. From its initial function as a blockade co-ordination centre, Caulfield said the Lorax expanded its activities into areas such as legal support, rally organisation, forest bus tours and public education. She believes the Lorax was important in offering a welcoming contact point which encouraged people to seek more information about the old growth forest campaign and provided a working environment for grass roots forest activists.

A “Fremantle Forests Rally” in September 1999 organised by the Lorax attracted an estimated crowd of 7,000 people who marched through the port city’s west end to protest against the destruction of old growth forests. Mayor Richard
Utting placed the issue in a local context, comparing forest logging to destroying Fremantle’s heritage for the sake of providing jobs for bulldozer drivers. Emma Belfield from the Lorax centre, who had been present at the Wattle block attack, was lauded as ‘one of the brave ones on the front line’. In 2001 the Lorax group won the citizenship category of the Western Australia Youth Awards for its initiative in addressing the old growth forests as a community issue.

The air of excitement and jubilation at the Fremantle rally reflected the mood of optimism that gradually spread throughout the forest protest movement as a result of the successful anti-RFA and old growth forest campaigns during the late-1990s. This situation had occurred largely as the result of two crucial strategic decisions. First, by choosing to remain outside the RFA consultation process the movement remained free of government manipulation and was able to set its own agenda. Second, the decision to focus on the single message of saving old growth forests attracted the support of a majority of Western Australians. These factors combined to produce a diverse campaign that intensified and expanded pressure on the government to adopt a fresh approach to the conservation and management of the state’s native forests. As Christine Sharp observed: ‘There were that many fires starting that it was difficult for the government to hose them all down’. Unfortunately for its own survival the state government’s attempts to strike a balance between its commitments to the timber industry and the demands of an increasingly vocal conservation lobby proved to be all too late.
Fallen Trees, Fallen Government

In May 1999, at Western Australia’s ALP conference, Opposition Leader Geoff Gallop won endorsement for a policy to end logging in all old growth forests when existing contracts expired in 2003. Gallop said the new policy provided voters with a clear choice between the two major parties at the forthcoming election. Federal Opposition Leader Kim Beazley said the state Opposition Leader had staked his leadership on the forest issue and had won the critical vote convincingly. Bill Castleden of Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests recalled that forest protest groups had been lobbying the ALP and the unions in an attempt to persuade them to protect the state’s remaining old growth forests.

It was important that the union movement told Gallop they weren’t going to cause havoc if Labor changed its policy...Gallop and his advisors understood clearly that the public wanted the forests protected, that it would be a good political move in the run-up to the election...they didn’t dare if the unions were going to kick up.

The unions were finally persuaded to support a phase-out of old growth forest logging.

Tim Daly was secretary of the Western Australian branch of the Australian Workers Union at the time. He explained that the union agreement with the ALP Opposition to cease logging in old growth forests was reached after two centre faction unions, the Transport Workers Union and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, combined with the influential left faction unions to achieve the required numbers. Reflecting on the reasons for the decision Daly considered that, while some left faction unions had a philosophical opposition to old growth forest logging, it was the desperation of Western
Australian unions to remove the Court Liberal Government which supplied the real impetus to support the policy. He said the issue provided the public with a distinction between the two major parties and Opposition Leader Geoff Gallop managed to convince the unions that the proposal to stop old growth forest logging would attract votes.\(^{177}\)

During 2000 the forest protest movement co-ordinated election strategies which sought to isolate the Liberal Party as the only party unwilling to promise protection for old growth forests.\(^{178}\) In November the Conservation Council, the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, the WAFA and the Wilderness Society launched “A Vote for the Forests” campaign in marginal electorates such as Darling Range, Joondalup and Alfred Cove with the objective of persuading voters to support parties prepared to halt old growth forest logging.\(^{179}\) A four-page colour brochure showed dramatic pictures of lush old growth karri forest at Boorara and the same area after it had been destroyed by clear-felling operations. The publication stated that, of seven political groups, only the Liberal Party supported a continuation of old growth forest logging and that the election result would decide the fate of the south-west forests. The ALP had by then committed itself to immediately reserving 340,500 hectares, or nearly 99%, of old growth forests and to create 30 new national parks and two new conservation parks. Electors were urged to lobby political candidates to ascertain their position on old growth forest protection and to make donations to a “Save the Forest Fund”.\(^{180}\) The South Coast Environment Group, based in Walpole, developed a visionary 'Walpole Wilderness' protection proposal. Led by Donna Selby and Rob Versluis, the group persuaded the ALP to adopt this as part of its policy to
protect Western Australia's old growth forests which it took to the 2001 state election.\textsuperscript{181}

Although the Liberals for Forests group was not founded with the intention of forming a political party, when it became apparent that the Court Government would not change its policy and continued to refuse to protect all old growth forests, the group decided to field candidates at the state election.\textsuperscript{182} The decision met with predictable opposition from the state Liberal Party which successfully challenged the group’s right to use the name “Liberals for Forests” on voting papers, arguing that it would confuse voters.\textsuperscript{183} While the group planned to contest several lower house seats, the electorate of Alfred Cove offered the best chance of success. Keith Woollard recalled that, although the area was ‘true-blue Liberal’, it was vulnerable to a challenge from an independent Liberal because people were unhappy with the Court government’s forest policy and the local member, Fair Trading Minister Doug Shave, was unpopular.\textsuperscript{184} In June 2000 Woollard’s wife Janet, a former Australian Nursing Federation president, nominated to contest the Alfred Cove seat as an independent.\textsuperscript{185} When her chances of victory received a boost following the ALP candidate’s withdrawal, Janet Woollard stated that, unless Premier Court ended old growth forest logging, he would not have her support to form a minority government.\textsuperscript{186}

The Liberal government’s intransigence over its old growth forest logging policy also prompted the Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests group to canvas its members about their willingness to become involved in the election
campaign in order to protect the forests. Out of a membership of over 200 doctors 50% said they wanted the group to become actively involved, and this resulted in ‘massive donations’ in response to the survey.\textsuperscript{187}

In the February 2001 state election the ALP defeated the Court Liberal government by a margin of seven seats with the aid of Greens and One Nation preferences. The three Greens Legislative Council members, Christine Sharp, Jim Scott and Giz Watson, were re-elected and joined by Robin Chapple and former Senator Dee Margetts. They would hold the balance of power in the upper house. Of the eight seats contested by Liberals for Forests the group polled an average 10.6% of the vote with Janet Woollard polling well enough to be elected as Independent member for the lower house seat of Alfred Cove. In some constituencies anti-logging parties polled as high as 30%. The Greens (WA) won 8% of the vote – two points higher than at the 1998 Senate election.\textsuperscript{188} On 1 March 2001, almost three weeks after the election, Western Australia’s new Premier, Geoff Gallop, stated that all logging in old growth forests had ceased.\textsuperscript{189}

The election outcome raised two important questions: how significant was the old growth forest campaign in securing Labor’s victory and what were the implications of the election result for the future of the forest protest movement in Western Australia? Immediately following the election Premier-elect Geoff Gallop reflected on the reasons for the ALP’s success:

I’m certainly of the view that our strong position on the old growth forest helped enormously in the course of the campaign, because it was a clear defining issue and I think certainly there was a very strong support for us on that.\textsuperscript{190}
While the ALP victory had been greatly assisted by One Nation’s decision to allocate its preferences away from sitting members, Greens MLC Giz Watson argued the vote for ‘environmentally progressive parties’ such as the Greens and Liberals for Forests was greater than that for One Nation and reflected a growing community recognition of environmental issues.191

Polling place feedback also suggested that the forests had been a prominent topic of concern among voters together with coastal planning and salinity.192 Data from the *Australian Election Study 2001* showed that, compared to other Australian states, higher percentages of Western Australian electors considered environmental issues to be extremely important to them when they were deciding how to vote.193 A brief on the Western Australian 2001 election produced by the Parliament of Australia Politics and Public Administration Group in March 2001 concluded that:

> The logging of old growth forests was also an important electoral issue that had an impact upon the direction of preferences from the Greens and the Liberals for Forests and ultimately contributed in a significant way to the demise of the Coalition Government.194

Christine Sharp, who retained her Greens upper house seat, considered that Geoff Gallop’s commitment to end old growth forest logging was an astute evaluation of the enormous popular appeal of the forest movement and that it was this promise which contributed towards the ALP’s electoral success.195 Liberals for Forests president Keith Woollard recalled that the ‘magic words’ during the 2001 election were ‘old growth forests’. He believes the most significant achievement of his group was saving Western Australia’s old growth forests by helping to get the Labor government elected.196 In her inaugural speech in state parliament,
Janet Woollard reflected on her motivation to stand for election and the group’s success:

I ran for Parliament because Keith, my children and I – like 80 to 90 per cent of the population – are opposed to the continued wasteful logging of our old-growth forests. Liberals for Forests was formed to help stop the logging. We thought we could put pressure on the Liberal Party to change its policy and, initially, had no intention of running candidates for Parliament. As the state election drew nearer, we were faced with the reality that the Liberal Party was not taking us seriously and was calling our bluff. We responded by calling its bluff, and fielded eight candidates, none of whom had any previous experience in running for Parliament. The Liberal Party’s lack of vision and lack of responsiveness to community wishes on this issue was reflected in an overwhelming expression of support for the protection of our forests, not just in the seat of Alfred Cove, but also in many other seats. The election was a win for people who care about the environment.  

While the old growth forest campaign had exerted considerable influence on the state election outcome, the election result itself contained broader implications for the forest protest movement both locally and nationally. Amanda Lohrey believed the Western Australian election result signified that the environment had become a prominent political issue. In the Bulletin, Fred Brenchley argued that the old style of bridging the gap between environmentalists and the timber industry through deals between government, industry and unions was gone and that the Liberals for Forests group had clearly demonstrated an emerging need for social inclusiveness on environmental issues. The Sunday Age’s Claire Miller interpreted the election results as signifying the emergence of a new Australian environment movement that displayed typical social movement characteristics within which ‘different elements of Australian society are spontaneously self-organising around a set of common aims’. While Miller believed the significance of ‘amorphous’ groups such as Doctors and Liberals for Forests was difficult to assess, she identified the fundamental commonalities of a
desire for real environmental reform and a belief that the major parties had failed
to prevent the increasing degradation and exploitation of natural resources.\textsuperscript{200}

In contrast Judith Ajani has argued that the importance of Labor's policy
commitment to halt old growth forest logging as a factor in securing the 2001
election victory was overstated, as Premier Court had already set in motion plans
to substitute native forest woodchipping with production from plantations.\textsuperscript{201}
While it is true that at the time of the Regional Forest Agreement's signing
Premier Court had announced his government's commitment to establishing new
timber plantations,\textsuperscript{202} during the state election campaign the forest protest
movement showed that, rather than increasing its investment in a sustainable
forest plantation industry, the Court Government was continuing to support the
logging of old growth forests.\textsuperscript{203} Evidence therefore supports the importance of
the issue on Labor's election victory.

Protest organisers reflected on the reasons for the campaign’s success and its
impact on the forest protest movement. Wilderness Society co-ordinator David
Mackenzie thought the old growth forest campaign in Western Australia
contained elements that differentiated it from protest activities in Australia’s
eastern states. These included the mobilisation of mainstream community
support; the emergence of identifiable groups such as Doctors for Forests and
Lawyers for Forests, which ultimately inspired the formation of similar groups in
eastern Australia; the organisation of co-ordinated group protest under the
umbrella of WAFA; a lack of serious internal division; and the emergence of key
leadership figures in city and country areas who were able to formulate strategies
and direct protest actions. Most significantly, he believed the campaign’s ‘residual effects’ provided inspiration and motivation for present-day forest activists.204

While acknowledging the importance of Labor’s election victory for the future of the forests, Beth Schultz from the Conservation Council observed that, in adopting the RFA definition of old growth forest, the ALP had excluded areas of high conservation karri forest which were worthy of protection. She vowed that, until the state government implemented its commitment to ecologically sustainable forest management, the forest campaign would continue.205 Peter Robertson of WAFA considered that, although the old growth forest campaign had resulted in a change of government and a more enlightened forest policy, there would always be an important role for forest protest in Western Australia to ensure that the public was kept informed and the state government held accountable for its actions.206

From a regional protest perspective Mary Frith recalled how she had witnessed considerable changes in state government and community attitudes. She believed the relationship with CALM had turned ‘full-circle’ over the years. While initially, during the late 1980s, the department was friendly and helpful, confrontation over logging native forest areas during the 1990s produced considerable friction. A more sympathetic attitude became apparent after changes to CALM’s executive and following the election of the Gallop Labor Government in 2001. Frith also observed a dramatic improvement in relations with the shire council and the local community over the years.
We’ve made the point that we’ve got something to offer, and I think the community has changed accordingly. We are no longer *persona non grata*, and that’s nice.\(^{207}\)

During the late 1990s the Western Australian forest protest movement created a social and political climate for success. This resulted from the movement’s ability to strengthen and streamline its own internal organisation and group networks while at the same time applying its strategies to exploit growing public dissatisfaction with the state government’s failure to protect the south-west’s high conservation value forests. The co-ordination of most forest protest activity within the bounds of WAFA promoted a sense of strength and unity while the forest rescue camps provided personal inspiration and group solidarity. More aggressive direct action strategies in the forests, such as tree platforms and machinery lock-ons and expanded urban protests, maximised media attention and maintained public focus on the forests.

The election of Christine Sharp as Greens MLC for the South-West provided a political avenue for forest protest groups, and initiatives such as the *High Conservation Value Forest Protection Bill* generated intense parliamentary and public debate over forest conservation. Furthermore, lobbying by forest protest groups of the ALP and the unions had contributed towards the adoption by the ALP of a policy to end old growth forest logging if it won government. Most significantly, the protest movement's strategies encouraged broad participation in the forest campaign, including the active involvement of sporting personalities, high profile public figures and identifiable groups and this, in turn, transformed forest protest from a fringe radical activity to a mainstream issue worthy of public support. The period emphasised the important roles played by Beth
Schultz, Peter Robertson and David Mackenzie in co-ordinating campaigns and directing strategies.

Two key tactical decisions had provided the impetus for an intensive and diverse forest campaign which exerted relentless pressure on the state Liberal government and ultimately contributed towards its downfall. First, the choice to remain outside the RFA process left the protest movement free to mount a campaign that exposed inadequacies within the proposed agreement and the community consultation process while at the same time damaging the credibility of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Second, the movement's focus on the single emotive issue of saving Western Australia's old growth forests attracted massive public support and prompted the formation of several influential groups, most notably Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests and Liberals for Forests. The ensuing 2001 Labor election win on a platform of halting old growth forest logging also represented a victory for the Western Australian forest protest movement.
ENDNOTES

1 The Greener Times, March 1996, p.3.
2 ibid.
6 The Greener Times, August 1996, p.3.
11 West Australian, 1 November 1996, p.7.
12 West Australian, 12 July 1996.
14 Achurch, P. et.al., A New Forest and Timber Industry Policy for Western Australia, November 1996, Frith private archives.
15 Minutes of WAFA meeting held at the Matan Galleries, Margaret River, 19 October 1996, Conservation Council archives.
16 Mary Frith, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 January 2005 and telephone conversation, 26 January 2005.
19 Wildernews, Spring 1997, p.5.
20 Letter from Peter Robertson, Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc., to Mr Vince Chaplain, Olympic Co-Ordination Authority, Sydney Olympics, 30 June 1997, Conservation Council archives.
23 ‘Wesfarmers under fire at meeting’, West Australian, 6 November 1997.


Letter from Peter Robertson, WAFA, to Mr Thomas E. Perrigo, National Trust of Australia, West Perth, 5 February 1998, Conservation Council archives.

Minutes of WAFA meeting, Denmark, 6 December 1997, Conservation Council archives.


West Australian, 23 February 1998.

Letter from Tim Daly, Secretary, Australian Workers Union, Cam Kneen, Executive Director, Forest Industries Federation (WA) Inc., Trish Townsend, WA State Coordinator, Forest Protection Society, to the Hon. John Anderson, Minister for Primary Industries & Energy, Parliament House, Canberra, 11 February 1998, Conservation Council archives.


Towards a Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia: A Paper to Assist Public Consultation, Commonwealth of Australia and Western Australian governments, 1998, p.3.

ibid., pp.1-3.


The WA Forest Alliance proposal for a comprehensive, adequate and representative forest conservation reserve system and sustainable timber production in WA, spreadsheet, WA Forest Alliance, 1998.


The strategy was not new. It had been employed by New South Wales environmentalists in the late 1960s when groups of Catholic priests, medical doctors and architects signed petitions to save the Colong Caves in the Blue Mountains. See, Hutton and Connors, A History of the Australian Environment Movement, p.116.


West Australian, 19 June 1998, p.32.

Bill Castleden, interview with Ron Chapman, 6 October 2005.

ibid.


Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 14 October 2005.


West Australian, 6 July 1998, p.3.

Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 14 October 2005.

Report of the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development in Relation to Management of and Planning for the Use of State Forests in Western Australia: The Regional Forest Agreement Process, Report 2, Legislative Council of Western Australia, August 1998,
pp.6-9.

100 Christine Sharp, interview with Ron Chapman, 3 October 2005.


104 ‘Secretive process fails our forests’, *West Australian*, 17 February 1999, p.16.


108 ibid., pp.9145-9147.


111 Christine Sharp, interview with Ron Chapman, 3 October 2005.

112 *WAPD* 4 May 1999, pp.7756-7758.

113 ibid., pp.7758-7760.


116 ibid., p.5.

117 ibid., p.1.

118 *West Australian*, 6 May 1999, p.28, p.34.


120 *West Australian*, 17 May 1999, p.6.


123 *West Australian*, 15 July 1999, p.3.


125 ibid.


129 ibid., p.1, pp.6-7.

130 Minister for the Environment, media statement, 10 September 1999, Conservation Council archives.


133 Beth Schultz, interview with Ron Chapman, 14 October 2005.


135 ibid.


137 David Mackenzie, interview with Ron Chapman, 14 October 2005.


145 ibid.
146 ibid.
150 Robert Martyn, interview with Ron Chapman, 5 October 2005.
154 Patricia Crawford and Ian Crawford, *Contested Country: A History of the Northcliffe Area, Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, 2003, pp.211-233.
156 Bill Castleden, interview with Ron Chapman, 6 October 2005.
157 *The Greener Times*, September 1999, p.3.
165 *West Australian*, editorial, 24 August 1999, p.16.
168 ‘Summary of a survey into Western Australian opinions of the logging of old growth forests’ by AMR: Quantum Harris, June 1998, Conservation Council archives.
169 ‘Summary of a survey of the opinions of Western Australians about old growth forests’ by AMR: Quantum Harris, September 1999, Conservation Council archives.
170 *Fremantle Herald*, 17 April 1999.
175 Christine Sharp, interview with Ron Chapman, 3 October 2005.
177 Bill Castleden, interview with Ron Chapman, 6 October 2005.
178 Tim Daly, interview with Ron Chapman, 5 April 2006.
180 Minutes of WAFA meeting, Margaret River, 12 August 2000, Conservation Council archives; *West Australian*, 20 November, 2000, p.3.
185 *West Australian*, 3 June 2000.
186 *West Australian*, 7 November 2000, p.10.
187 Bill Castleden, interview with Ron Chapman, 6 October 2005.
189 ‘Labor delivers on promise to end old-growth logging’, media statement, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 1 March 2001.
197 Dr Janet Woollard MLA, Member for Alfred Cove, Parliament of Western Australia, Inaugural Speech, Address-in-Reply Debate, Legislative Assembly, Tuesday 22 May 2001, extract from Hansard.
202 WAPD, 4 May 1999, p.7758.
203 Forest Times, Autumn 2000, p.2, WA Forest Alliance; 'Mr Court won't listen', election spreadsheet, 2000, WA Forest Alliance, Wilderness Society, Conservation Council of WA.
206 Peter Robertson, interview with Ron Chapman, 24 November 2003.
207 Mary Frith, interview with Ron Chapman, 10 January 2005.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

During the period between the 1890s, when conservationists first sought to protect specific areas of native bushland, up until the successful campaign in the late 1990s to save the state's old growth forests, the Western Australian forest protest movement was transformed into a dynamic social movement that occupied an important place in Western Australia's social, political and environmental history. The transformation occurred as the result of a gradual expansion and refinement of the protest movement's organisation, networks and strategies. A succession of strong activist leaders stimulated the movement's growth and influence.

The contemporary Western Australian forest protest movement was characterised by an inclusive approach to dissent which encouraged wide public participation by providing outlets for different expressions of protest through an expanding network of metropolitan and regional forest protest groups. By employing a range of non-confrontational and direct action strategies, the forest protest movement ensured that public attention remained focused on forest issues and that pressure was maintained on the state government to alter its forest policies.

There were two periods of protest activity in Western Australia. During an initial period from the 1890s until the early 1950s individuals began protesting about escalating destruction of the state's native forests and the first nature
conservation groups were formed. A second period of protest from the mid-
1950s saw the emergence of the contemporary forest protest movement which
comprised five evolutionary phases of protest activity: a formative phase from
the mid-1950s until the late 1960s, when Perth conservationists combined to
protect areas of urban bushland; a transitional phase during the 1970s, when
dedicated forest protest groups formed and employed strategies of non-violent
direct action; a collaborative phase in the early 1980s, when a conciliatory
approach to a sympathetic state government resulted in some successes; an
expansionary phase during the late 1980s, when a network of protest groups
was established in Western Australia's south-west; and a confrontational phase
throughout the 1990s, when the forest protest movement conducted an intensive
forest campaign using both non-confrontational and direct action strategies.

It was during the first period of activity that a tradition of forest protest was
established in Western Australia. Although the main focus of the early
conservationists was limited to calls for the protection of flora and fauna
through the creation of conservation reserves, some features of their
organisation and strategies carried over into the second period of protest.
Specifically, these early protesters, who were mainly well-educated
professionals, used non-confrontational strategies such as political lobbying,
letter-writing, public education and attracting the support of influential figures
to campaign for the conservation of specific areas of native bushland and
against the destruction of trees, which were regarded as a valuable resource.
The first conservation groups collaborated with each other on issues of mutual
interest and both the Pinjarra and Stirling Range campaigns illustrated the
importance of strong leadership figures such as Bernard Woodward and J.G. Hay. Additionally, there was evidence of an emerging conflict between conservationists and timber industry interests.

The campaign in the mid-1950s to save the native vegetation of Perth's King's Park from development as an aquatic centre was a landmark event. It heralded the start of the formative phase of a second period of forest protest during which the movement began to co-ordinate and combine its activities for specific campaigns. While protesters continued to employ non-confrontational strategies such as lobbying and letter-writing that had been used during the first period of protest activity, tactics expanded and diversified. The use of local radio and public meetings was designed to attract public attention and support, and the involvement of Olympic athlete Shirley Strickland in the campaign signalled the introduction of a strategy aimed at exploiting the influence of celebrity status to gain sympathy for a cause.

While the King's Park campaign and the formation of the Tree Society in the 1950s signalled a move towards combined protest action, the formation of the Nature Conservation Council, later the Conservation Council of Western Australia, in 1967 provided conservationists with an organisational framework within which to plan their activities and formulate strategies. Prominent figures such as Bessie Rischbieth, Mabel Talbot, Shirley Strickland, Gloria Butcher, John Oldham, John Thomson and Graeme Rundle extended the tradition of leadership that had been established during the first period of protest.
The introduction of bauxite mining in the 1960s and of wood chipping in the mid-1970s not only posed new threats to Western Australia's forests but also stimulated the transition to a much broader forest campaign and the adoption of a more assertive stance by some conservationists in the 1970s. The different strategic approaches adopted by the two dedicated forest protest groups formed in the mid-1970s - the Campaign to Save Native Forests and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation - illustrated how protest strategies were expanding. While both organisations included non-confrontational strategies from the first period of protest, the Campaign to Save Native Forests employed more confrontational forms of activism such as public demonstrations and staged events. The more conservative South-West Forests Defence Foundation relied mainly on detailed submissions and legal action to further its cause. Most significantly, the two groups offered people different avenues through which to express their opposition to forest destruction. The success of both groups depended on key leadership figures such as Andrew Thamo, Christine Sharp, Beth Schultz and Arthur Conacher.

The 1979 occupation of Alcoa's Wagerup alumina refinery site witnessed a transition from the use of conventional protest strategies to more confrontational forms of non-violent direct action aimed at maximising media exposure and attracting public attention. The innovative strategies used at Wagerup were later employed in eastern states campaigns at Terania Creek and the Franklin River. While the Bunbury wood chip terminal bombing generated publicity as the most violent action in the history of environmental protest in Australia, the Western Australian forest protest movement
disassociated itself from the incident, regarding the bombing as the work of extremists who had damaged the forest campaign.

During the early 1980s new protest strategies and political upheaval caused a shift in the dynamics of forest protest that resulted in the movement employing strategies of negotiation and collaboration with government rather than confrontation. Several factors contributed towards the change in orientation. The Western Australian forest protest movement realised that in order to increase public support and influence the introduction of legislative changes to protect the forests it had to professionalise its organisation and maintain ongoing criticism of the government's forest policies. Furthermore, the protest movement recognised the potential of non-confrontational strategies aimed at persuasion and public education rather than direct action. Most importantly, the election of a sympathetic state Labor government raised expectations that significant progress on forest issues was possible through the political system.

Initially, the strategy of exploiting the protest movement's favourable relationship with the state ALP proved successful. Both the Shannon Basin and Lane-Pool Reserve victories resulted from the movement's ability to ensure that the ALP remained faithful to its election pledges when it achieved government in 1983. Coincidentally, at that time, success in Tasmania's Franklin River campaign had also followed the successful election of the Hawke federal Labor Government.
As well as celebrating two victories, the forest protest movement also expanded its activist network and range of strategies. The formation of a Western Australian branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society to support the Franklin River campaign established valuable communication networks with eastern states' activists and guidance for the formulation of campaign strategies. During its ongoing campaign against wood chipping, the protest movement increased its efforts to raise public awareness about forest issues through organising forest visits and participating in media debates. Legal challenges became a hallmark strategy of Western Australian forest protest and, although the innovative Jarrah Class Action and the 'Forests Forever' cases both failed, activists considered them to have been successful through generating media attention and focusing public attention on the threat to the forests. The organisation and strategies of the protest movement continued to be influenced by a succession of strong leaders such as Tom Hogarth, Neil Bartholomaeus, Beth Schultz, Barbara Churchward and Bernard Mahon.

The period of optimism following the 1983 election of the Burke Labor Government was short-lived. Failed campaigns against the formation of the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the extension of wood chip licences both illustrated how the state government placed its commitment to the timber industry above its concern for forest protection. While unsuccessful, both campaigns strengthened the protest movement's ability to present professional critiques of government forest policies and to expose Western Australians to the effects of clear-felling large areas of native forests.
The failure of urban-based forest protest campaigns in the late 1980s marked a shift in the balance of successful protest action. It was the rise of organised community-based protest activity in the state's south-west to protect local areas of native forest that resulted in a significant expansion of the forest protest movement's activist networks. The successful campaign against the McLean's wood chip mill in Denmark, the Great Walk from Denmark to Perth, and the formation of activist groups in Bridgetown and other centres all demonstrated how local communities organised themselves for protest action and, like Queensland's Great Barrier Reef campaign in the late 1960s, employed non-confrontational strategies aimed at attracting media attention and educating people about threats to their local environment. Prominent leaders such as Alex Syme, Craig Chappelle, Nick Dodson and Mary and Jim Frith were key figures in the protest movement's expansion in the state's south-west.

In contrast to a decline in the Australian environment movement's influence during the 1990s, forest protest activity in Western Australia was intense. Increasing frustration at its inability to change the state government's forest policies combined with a strengthening of protest networks through an expansion of organised forest protest into the state's south-west resulted in the Western Australian forest protest movement consolidating its activities and returning to more confrontational expressions of dissent. During a final phase of activity the protest movement created a social and political climate for success by unifying its organisation and combining a diversity of non-confrontational and direct action strategies aimed at both convincing the public
that the forests were worth saving and applying pressure on the state government to protect them.

Several of the forest protest movement's organisational and strategic initiatives coalesced during the final confrontational phase of activity in the 1990s. The formation of the Western Australian Forest Alliance united the network of urban and rural forest protest groups into a single force for organised protest action while the election of Christine Sharp as Greens MLC for the South-West provided an avenue into the state's political arena. Spectacular direct action strategies in the forests such as tree platforms and machinery lock-ons combined with staged events in urban centres to attract media attention and maintain public interest in the forest campaign. By continuing its strategy of encouraging broad public participation in forest protest activity, particularly through the involvement of sporting personalities, high profile public figures and identifiable groups such as Doctors for the Preservation of Old Growth Forests and Liberals for Forests, the protest movement effectively transformed forest protest into a mainstream public issue.

Reflecting tactics used during the New South Wales and Victoria Green Bans movement of the 1970s, the protest movement's lobbying of Western Australian unions contributed towards a commitment by the ALP to cease old growth forest logging should it win government. Most importantly, the strategy to focus on saving Western Australia's remaining old growth forests from destruction captured the public's imagination through exploiting wilderness imagery in ways that were reminiscent of Tasmania's Lake Pedder and Franklin
River campaigns. As well, the tactical decision not to participate in the Regional Forest Agreement process ensured that the protest movement remained free to direct an energetic campaign against the RFA and the credibility of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Campaign leaders Beth Schultz, Peter Robertson and David Mackenzie occupied key roles in the successful old growth forest campaign.

The contemporary forest protest movement in Western Australia was most successful when it was able to generate considerable public support over single emotive issues such as saving King's Park from development and protecting old growth forests from destruction or, as in the Shannon and Lane-Poole Reserve campaigns, it managed to exploit a favourable political relationship with the state ALP. The success of the urban-centred protest movement was limited by its inability to break the powerful economic alliance between the state government and the timber industry. It was the rise of organised forest protest action in Western Australia's south-west that reinvigorated the movement and increased the momentum of the forest campaign.

A tradition of forest protest was established in Western Australia in the 1890s. This thesis has examined the organisation, campaigns and strategies which transformed those first voices of protest into an influential social movement that succeeded in changing government forest policy to save the state's old growth forests. The contemporary forest protest movement's victory in 2001 reflected the refinement and expansion of its organisation and strategies which had occurred during its passage through five evolutionary stages. By adopting an
inclusive approach to dissent and expanding its activist networks, the movement encouraged broad public support and participation in its campaigns. The application of a diverse range of non-confrontational and direct action strategies ensured that public attention remained focused on the forests and that continuous pressure was maintained on the major political parties to adopt favourable forest policies. Ultimately, it was the forest protest movement's ability to convince Western Australians to take action to save the forests that resulted in its greatest triumph.
Appendices

Appendix 1

Chairpersons and Presidents of the Nature Conservation Council and Conservation Council of Western Australia 1967 to present

**Nature Conservation Council (1967)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Oldham</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>1967 - 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Oldham</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1970 - 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Butcher</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>1970 - 1973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conservation Council of Western Australia (1973)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Oldham</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1973 - 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Butcher</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1975 - 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Hussey</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>1975 - 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Hussey</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1976 - 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Ravine</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1977 - 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman Halse</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1978 - 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Bartholomaeus</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1980 - 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Churchward</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1982 - 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bailey</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1983 - 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Brotherton</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Jan-May 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Paterson</td>
<td>Acting President</td>
<td>May/June 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Taylor</td>
<td>Acting President</td>
<td>1985 - 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otto Mueller</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1986 - 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Churchward</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1987 - 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Jennings</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1989 - 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Schultz</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1992 - 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Cohen</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1995 - 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Graham-Taylor</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1998 - 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Cohen</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2001 - 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Graham-Taylor</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2002 - 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Jennings</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2005 - 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Harries</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2007 - present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Primary

Unpublished

Archival Sources

Battye Library of West Australian History

Royal Society of Western Australia: ACC 2722A, ACC 2942A, ACC 2419A.

Western Australian Naturalists' Club: ACC 2419A, ACC 2942A.

Australian Forest League: ACC 934, ACC 2419A.

The Tree Society: ACC 4778A.

Society for the Preservation of King's Park and the Swan River: ACC 3046A.

Conservation Council of Western Australia: ACC 3046A, ACC 4543A.

Conacher archives: ACC 5792A.

Mahon, B., private archives, uncatalogued.

Churchward, B., Glen Arden, Arden Road, Balingup, WA 6253.

Audio tapes and private archives, held at home address.

Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.), 2 Delhi Street, West Perth.

Uncatalogued archives.
Correspondence, Meeting Minutes, Information and publicity pamphlets.
de la Hunty, S.

Private archives, in possession of author at 47 King Jarrah Circle, Jarrahdale, WA 6124.

Frith, M. and J., Park Farm, Bridgetown, WA 6255.

Private archives, uncatalogued, held at home address.

Murdoch University Library

Hogarth, T., private archives, uncatalogued.

Parliament of Western Australia Library


Schultz, B., 91 Webster Street, Nedlands, WA 6009.

Private archives, uncatalogued, held at home address.

State Records Office of Western Australia

Department of Conservation and Land Management: ACC 5932, CON 6029.
Environmental Protection Authority: ACC 3121, ACC 3168
Forests Department: ACC 934, ACC 964.
Lands and Surveys: ACC 2507, ACC 2507.

Interviews and Personal Communications with the Author

Interview tapes in possession of the author at 47 King Jarrah Circle, Jarrahdale, WA 6124.

Blaikie, Barry, 2 June 2004.
Chappelle, Craig, 12 January 2005.
Castleden, Bill, 6 October 2005.
Cheeseman, Roger, 4 October 2005.
Conacher, Arthur, 1 June 2004.
Daly, Tim, 5 April 2006.
Daubney, Alison and Robert, 5 October 2005.
Frith, Mary, 10 January 2005.
Hutchison, Jane, 29 April 2004.
Mackenzie, David, 14 October 2005.
Martyn, Robert, 5 October 2005.
Robertson, Peter, 24 November 2003.
Rundle, Graeme, 10 December 2003.
Schur, Basil, 12 January 2005.
Syme, Alex, 12 January 2005.
Taylor, John, 1 October 2005.
Thamo, Andrew, 16 June 2004.
Thomson, Andrew, 23 December 2003.
Woollard, Keith, 29 September 2005.

Cheeseman, Roger, email correspondence, 20 October 2005.
Frith, Mary, conversation, 26 January 2005.
Mackenzie, David, conversation, 24 February 2006.
Rundle, Graeme, conversation, 13 November 2006.
Thamo, Andrew, conversation, 20 December 2006.

Published Papers and Reports

Government


Commonwealth of Australia and Western Australian governments, *Towards a Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia: A Paper to Assist Public Consultation*, 1998.


**Non-Government**

Achurch, P. et.al., *A New Forest and Timber Industry Policy for Western Australia*, November 1996.


Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), *Campaign to Save Native Forests: Commenting on ERMP/Draft Environmental Impact Statement of ALCOA of Australia regarding the proposed Bauxite Alumina Project at Wagerup, WA, 1978*, Mahon private papers.


Conservation Council of Western Australia, Inc., *Jarrah Reserve: A Proposal for a major reserve in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Western Australia*, 1980.


Environmental Protection Authority, Conservation Through Reserves Committee, *Conservation Reserves in Western Australia*, 1974.


*Jarrah Class Action Legal Complaint: The Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc. (Plaintiffs) v Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA) and Reynolds Metal Co. (Defendants)*, February 1981, Battye Library.


Western Australian Forest Alliance, *The WA Forest Alliance proposal for a comprehensive, adequate and representative forest conservation reserve system and sustainable timber production in WA*, 1998.


**Miscellaneous Published Sources**

*Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, Senate:*


*Commonwealth of Australia, Trade Practices Act, 1974, Section 52.*


*Journal of the West Australian Natural History Society*, 1904-1908.


**Statutes of Western Australia:**


*Western Australia Government Gazette.*

*Western Australia Parliamentary Debates.*
Western Australia Parliamentary Papers:

No.31, Report of Royal Commission on Forestry, 1922.

Western Australia Votes and Proceedings of Parliament:

Forests Department, Annual Reports
Royal Commission on Forestry, Final Report, 1904.


Films

Forests Forever, SBS Productions, 1979, Battye Library.
The Last Stand, Coalition for Denmark's Environment, 1986, Battye Library.

Media Releases

Australian Conservation Foundation
Bridgetown Greenbushes Friends of the Forest
Bunnings
Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA)
Conservation Council of Western Australia
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Greens (WA)
Minister for Conservation and Land Management
Minister for Conservation and Land Management and Environment
Minister for the Environment, Perth
Minister for Resources, Canberra
Murray, A., Senator
Parliamentary National Party of Australia (WA)
South-West Forests Defence Foundation
Tree Society
WA Chip and Pulp Company
Wesfarmers Investors and Shareholders for the Environment (WISE)
Western Australian Forest Alliance
Wilderness Society
Newsletters

ACF Newsletter
Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), broadsheets, 1975, 1976
Chain Reaction
CSNF News
CSNF Newsletter
EDO News
Environment WA
Forest Campaign Bulletin
Forest Rescue Bulletin
Forest Times
Friends of Giblett Newsletter
Giblett Free Press
Great Walk News
Green Left Weekly
Greener Times
Greens (WA) - Doing Politics Differently
Jarrah: The Official Journal of the Australian Forest League
Real Forest News
SFDF Newsletter
Tree Society Review
WA Wilderness News
Wilderness News
Wilderness WA Newsletter
Wildernews

Newspapers

Age
Albany Advertiser
Australian
Australian Magazine
Australian Financial Review
Bunbury Herald
Coastal Districts Times
Daily News
Denmark Bulletin
Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail
Economist
Fremantle Gazette
Fremantle Herald
Manjimup-Bridgetown Times
Manjimup-Warren Times
Melville-Fremantle Community
New York Times
Nova
Pittsburgh Press
South Western Times
Secondary

Theses


Unpublished Papers


Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), 'Energy requirements of the Alumina Industry in Western Australia', June 1978, Mahon private papers.


Campaign to Save Native Forests, 'Submission to the Lane-Poole Reserve Draft Management Plan', September 1986, Battye Library ACC 4543A.


'How the ACF was Taken Over - A report to ACF members on the events of 17 October 1973, by the Seven Councillors who resigned on that day', de la Hunty private papers.


Schumacher, E.F., 'Technology with a Human Face', introduction and transcript of a lecture by E.F. Schumacher, Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia, Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), Perth, July 1977, Conservation Council archives.


South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc., 'Submission to the Royal Commission into the Department of Conservation and Land Management by the South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc. - June 1985', Schultz private archives.


Thompson, H. and Tracey, J., 'Woodchipping in Western Australia: Timber Workers VS Conservationists', Murdoch University, Department of Economics, Working Paper No.135, 1995, Murdoch University Library.

Western Australian Forest Alliance, 'Submission to Expert Committee from the WA Forest Alliance', May 1993, Conservation Council archives.

Western Australian Forest Alliance, 'Analysis of the report by the expert scientific and administrative committee (the Meagher report) and the statement of the Minister for the Environment (the Minson statement) of 5 August 1993', September 1993, Conservation Council archives.

Wilderness Society, et.al., 'Why the Australian Labor Party should not support the WA Regional Forest Agreement process', February 1998, Conservation Council archives.


**Articles**

Anderson, I., 'Western Australia 'censored' forest reports', *New Scientist*, 6 March 1993.


Christensen, J., 'The Romantic Figure of Jose Guillermo Hay, an Early Western Australian Conservationist', *Early Days: Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.)*, Vol.12, Part 5, 2005.


Books


Cameron, J.M.R., *Ambition's Fire: The Agricultural Colonization of Pre-Convict Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1981.


Statham-Drew, P., *James Stirling: Admiral and Founding Governor of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, 2003.


