

Australian ecologists in land grab

New Age Gaia worshipers, armed with stringent environmentalist legislation, are driving farmers to the edge. Nigel Gleeson reports.

Backed by environmental regulations that are scarcely believable, the New Age panoply of Satanists, Gaia worshipers, and ecologists, armed with a list of endangered species, is threatening to take over the Australian continent. Australian farmers are fighting a losing battle for their properties, their rights, and the ability to feed and clothe their children. They are being driven to the brink of despair by continuous onslaughts from government bureaucrats and the environmentalists: Growing numbers, while fighting to make the next payment to the bank, have resorted to family suicide. In the last 12 months alone, 700 farmers committed suicide, either taking their families with them, or leaving them broken and destitute, in a country that seems to have no future in the sense that we have known it for so many years.

Australia has systematically signed away the rights of millions of its citizens in compliance with 3,000 international agreements and treaties, signed at environmental conferences, starting in March 1975, and most recently during the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in June. The proliferation of these treaties and laws is being used to grab Australia's resources and drive small businesses into bankruptcy, leaving the market open to foreign influence, that is, systematically destroying its primary producers and resulting in an accumulation of assets and wealth in a few international hands.

The 'New Feral' prince

The conservation movement and the "New Ferals," as angry citizens increasingly refer to radical environmentalists, headed by Britain's own, Prince Philip, are using these laws to lock up hundreds of thousands of acres through an expansionary program of National Parks, Aboriginal Land, Wilderness Areas, Wetland Areas and a multitude land zoning laws. By no coincidence, these areas take in our most abundant mineral, oil, and timber resources. These same areas are then proposed for placement on a World Heritage Listing. Once a land is so listed, it becomes fair prey as collateral for Australia's massive foreign debt, which is the second largest in the world. With only 17 million people in the country, Australia's debt is the highest per capita in the entire world. The country currently employs the policy of borrowing money to pay the *interest* on this debt.

Eventually, these resources will fall into the hands of

international corporations and be removed from sovereign dominion entirely under free trade practices, as is being done in New Zealand, where forests that were previously locked up are now being logged by foreign interests and shipped overseas. Meantime the international companies managed to destroy 8,000 jobs through restructuring of the privatized forest industry.

And Australia's farming? Production has fallen so dramatically over the last five to ten years that Australia has only 50,000 producing farms left and the farming population is decreasing at a rate of one family every three hours, as a result of environmental restrictions, bank manipulation, and outright seizures for national parks, wilderness, wetlands, and treaty-bound programs that simply lock farmland areas up with no form of management, as also specified in the Wilderness Act.

The penalties imposed by environmentalist legislation allow for an individual's assets to be frozen in anticipation of the cost of environmental restoration should his land be zoned under any or all of the myriad zonings that exist, with no limit to the fines.

Penalties as defined under one section of the Endangered Fauna Act allow for a person to be fined Aus \$100,000 and imprisoned for two years should he even accidentally kill or capture species listed as endangered. In the western districts, where the kangaroos are in plague proportions, landowners are required to apply for a restricted license to eradicate these pests. The owner has to buy tags from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and tag each animal that is culled; if a kangaroo is found shot without a tag, then the full force of the laws can be brought to bear on the landowner. Consider that there are 50 million kangaroos in Australia, which translates into the equivalent of three, giant, voracious rats for every citizen.

Whole towns abandoned

All private saw mills, small industries, mines, and small businesses are under direct threat through loss of resources and land zoning regulations that totally restrict the development, maintenance, and use of these very productive resources.

Productive mining towns have closed down over periods

of less than 12 months and become ghost towns. A good example of how this situation arises can be found on the New England Table Lands in northern New South Wales, Australia's most populated state. The principal mine, New England Antimony Mines, has large mineral resources in this area, including antimony and gold to which they have been denied access, because the deposits adjoin a National Park. The Parks Service refuses to allow them to build roads into the gorges to retrieve the ore from valuable deposits that are essential for continued operation of the mine. This mine injects Aus \$1 million into the local community every year, and without the ability to expand into new ore bodies, it will have to close down, taking with it over 100 jobs and numerous small industries, including local timber industries which are fighting to retain their resources, without losing their market.

Mines are not the only commercial operations on the environmentalist extinction list. The New Ferals are also closing down entire areas of the country to logging operations by imposing crippling environmental costs, through a law that requires Environmental Impact Studies and Fauna Impact Studies to ascertain what effect a particular logging effort will have on the so-called eco-system. If the area is found to be fragile under the definition of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, then it is closed to logging.

The law applies to more than just logging: These studies have to be carried out whenever a business wishes to develop or improve its natural resources. If a farmer wishes to build a fence or a dam, he must pay an application fee of \$200 to carry out an Environmental Impact Study. Once the application fee is paid, the study may cost the farmer anywhere from Aus \$10,000 to \$100,000, but there is no actual limit to the amount he may be forced to pay. Worse, an Environmental Impact Study carries no guarantee that he will be given permission to develop the area after the costs have been paid.

The gallows humor among many has it that the disruption of Environmental Impact Studies and Fauna Impact Studies will be the swift bullet to the head for many farmers suffering from the dreaded plague of Acute Income Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Manipulation of these laws is already happening: In Wauchope, a town in northeastern New South Wales a farmer was fined \$10,000 for failing to carry out an Environmental Impact Study when he removed a noxious weed from an old fenceline that he needed to repair. How did anyone know about this criminal weed removal? Anyone who wishes to claim a \$1,000 bounty can simply report someone else, for, say breaking environmental laws and engaging in anti-social behavior.

Who will see the striped quoll?

Even the tourist business won't benefit from the wilderness areas: A requirement for these areas is that all roads and access trails must be removed, and the entire area can be

locked up whenever the government wishes to do so, and has done in certain cases already.

On the Macleay River, also in northern New South Wales, a designated public road that had been in existence for 60 years was suddenly closed when the National Parks and Wildlife Department put a huge, reinforced steel gate across it, long before it got anywhere near National Park territory, in order to restrict access to the 500,000-acre Macleay Gorges Wilderness. (This area includes a formerly very efficient cattle-producing property of 96,000 acres.) When local people found they could no longer use this road, they brought a lot of adverse publicity to bear over the fact that the National Parks Service had illegally closed a public road. The gate was opened, but not removed.

These Wilderness areas are being nominated for wilderness assessment throughout the East Coast by New Age Gaia worshipers who want to turn this part of the country—the most populated in Australia—into some strange mythical world where they can proliferate. The pretexts for the nominations range from that of saving forest “eco-systems” and preventing land degradation to protecting endangered species, including the “powerful owl.” One of their favorite endangered creatures is the striped quoll, supposedly a cousin of the marsupial cat, a creature so rare that there has never been any actual recorded sighting of it. What is being done to “protect” this nonexistent creature, however, is very real. The Werrikimbe Wilderness, some 225,000 acres, is one of the many areas set aside to protect this and similar nonexistent beings. The U.S. equivalent would be to lock up Wyoming, Montana, and North and South Dakota to protect the legendary jackalope.

The New England Wilderness of approximately 250,000 acres was nominated for National Park assessment under the Wilderness Act of 1987, by four young environmentalists—Paul McCann, Michael Cunningham, and Theresa and Belinda Nano—along with an older colleague, Garth Barker. Not one of these misguided environmentalists has any experience in land management, or any other constructive field. These five eco-smitten environmentalists are all members of the Armidale Wilderness Society, in the town of Armidale on the New England Table Lands. A measure of their expertise is suggested in their nomination, that anyone allowed into this area should wipe his boots first so as not to carry non-indigenous plants into the wilderness. (It is not clear how they plan to inform birds of this danger, however.) They also suggest that one never walk along the same place twice, lest unnatural trails be created.

How freehold land is seized

Australia was settled as a convict penal colony for political dissidents and poor people who had stolen food to survive, and hence were branded as criminals. After a number of years in slavery, some of the survivors were allowed to select land to live on, so long as they developed it. The different land

titles that arose from this system varied from freehold land, which was privately owned and was given to the British captains, to Crown Lease, which was rented from the British Crown; the same process was undertaken in South Africa under the Dutch East India Company. Whereas freehold land is owned outright by the person who holds title to it, perpetual lease land belongs to the British Crown, but is a lease *forever*; the perpetual lease title has the same value as freehold land in that the lease title can be bought or sold at current market value.

This writer went to high school with Paul McCann, Michael Cunningham, and Belinda and Theresa Nano, during which time I also worked on my father's property. After leaving school, my brother and I bought half of my father's property; we worked this land for another seven years, eventually achieving a situation where we owed an insignificant amount of money, which we could pay off whenever we had to—only to find our property included within the New England Wilderness nomination. We now have a situation where the government will take 1,700 acres of lease land without paying any compensation whatsoever, while our remaining 1,000 acres of freehold land will be re-zoned wilderness. This latter will not only become unviable as an income source, but be a liability, as no one will buy it, while we are still required to pay taxes on it. A similarity would be if the government decided to declare your car unfit to drive and still charge you registration fees each year.

This is not an isolated incident. The Wilderness Act allows any person, regardless of qualification or background, to nominate an area for wilderness. Although this freehold land cannot be declared as a wilderness area and locked up without owner consent, it can be zoned as wilderness so that local government zoning laws come into effect. These zoning laws totally restrict stocking rates and stop all development in the area nominated.

The fact that a person's land has been nominated also has a devastating effect on market value: Who would buy land that has this threat hanging over it? Real estate agents in the Macleay district say these properties are now worthless. The government won't buy the properties, when it can simply restrict them to such a degree that the land becomes useless as an income producer, while at the same time the owner is still required to pay tax on it, often as not forcing him off the land by this method.

Perpetual lease land that has been worked by hand for generations to achieve its present state of development, and is still being built up generation by generation, has suddenly been carried off from the farmers and graziers (ranchers) by the environmental movement, for the stated purpose of allowing it to revert back to wilderness. To rub salt in the wound, farmers receive *no* compensation for loss of income and land, even though they had to buy it from the previous owner at market value.

People whose farms or businesses are under direct threat by this eco-fascist legislation are saying they will fight when the government moves to take their land without compensation. There have already been violent physical conflicts between these industries and the radical New Age environmentalists. In one case, when environmentalists were picketing logging operations at Mt. Kilikranke near Dorriggo, New South Wales in October, the police had to be brought in, to protect the environmentalists. Subsequently three locals were fined after reacting to provocations by these New Agers, who spat and kicked at them.

Profile of the 'New Ferals'

These New Age environmentalists have congregated in an area of northern New South Wales called Nimbin, where they practice the occult, witchcraft, and drug dealing. They are also connected to the international operations against Malaysia's Penan rain forest. In one instance, a group of them told the owner of a café in Kempsey, in New South Wales, that they were professional, paid protesters. They said they had been protesting in Malaysia and recently were brought in to New South Wales to take on the logging industry. (When the owner left the room, they attempted to sneak out without paying.) One tactic of these New Ferals—familiar to the U.S. eco-terrorist Earth First! gang—is to drive steel spikes into the trees so that a logger using a chainsaw or a timber mill worker in the mill will hit the spike, risking severe injury or death. Many of the major mills in these areas are installing metal detectors as protection.

When the New Ferals move into a forest, police are brought in to cordon off the area to prevent clashes and stop machine owners from going into the forest to retrieve their equipment before the Ferals destroy it. Most of these timber workers owe large amounts of money on their machinery and go bankrupt, when the environmentalists destroy it, all under police protection. The situation is becoming more explosive by the minute and violent conflicts, as happened at Dorriggo, are inevitable.

The label New Feral was attached because of the environmentalists' practice of smearing their own excrement over machinery and throwing it at passing logging trucks. One of the more endearing traits of the Ferals' protests is to sit their children in front of bulldozers and set sawmills on fire. The forests that are being closed up by the Ferals harbor some of the largest illegal drug-growing operations in Australia, and are the silent witnesses to the murder and torture carried out in connection with the dope trade.

Adding to the problems experienced by Australia's farmers is the flood of imports from Third World countries that use virtual slave labor under the banner of free trade. The environmental movement is pushing the trend for an Australian free trade alliance with Asia as part of the financial oligarchy's effort to create regional trading areas in Asia, Europe, and the Americas.