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THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

Inquiry into criticisms of Four Corners (18 June 1990)
by the W.A. Department of Conservation and Land
Management



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18 July 1990

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Office of the
Managing
Director

ABC House
150 William Street
Sydney 2011
Australia

GPO Box 9994
Sydney 2001

Tel (02) 339 0211
Fax (02) 356 5305
Telex 26506
Cable ABCOM

18 July 1990

Hon Bob Pearce MLA
Minister for the Environment
18th Floor
Allendale Square
77 St George's Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Minister

As you may recall, following the serious complaints about the Four Corners program "The Wood for the Trees" made by the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), Dr Shea, and by yourself, I instituted an inquiry into the matter.

The inquiry was conducted by the Assistant Managing Director, Mr Stuart Revill, who was assisted by the Acting General Manager, Corporate Relations, Mr Derek White. I now enclose a copy of their report. I have also written personally to Dr Shea about his particular complaints concerning the footage of his daughter.

You will see from the report that in two respects the inquiry found shortcomings in the program.

- In relation to point 18 of the CALM complaint an error was made. The program stated that "for years CALM denied this mill access to first grade logs". It should have stated: "For years, CALM's predecessor, the Forests Department, denied this mill access to first grade logs. This was rectified the year after CALM was established".
- In relation to point 42, it is acknowledged that Four Corners filmed Dr Shea with his daughter at his request, which was repeated on a number of occasions. The program did not identify his daughter. The ABC accepts that in the circumstances his daughter should have been identified in the program and that the words accompanying the film sequence may have been inappropriate. However, the ABC denies that there was any unethical personal attack on Dr Shea given his repeated insistence that he be filmed with his daughter and Four Corners expressed reluctance to comply.

The report also notes that balance does not mean that each and every controversial statement in a program must be followed by a contrary point of view. The Four Corners program highlighted some basic concerns in the community about the real value of the resource taken by the timber industry, and whether taxpayers in Western Australia were unduly and indirectly subsidising some timber companies. It is part of the ABC's responsibility to examine fundamental issues which, by the very nature of investigative journalism, become controversial and in their aftermath raise charge and counter-charge.

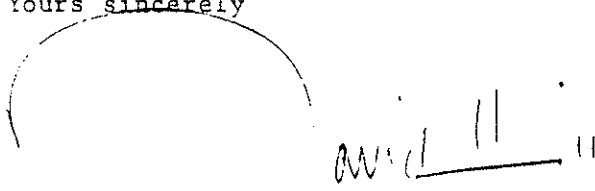
However, apart from the matters I have raised above, the inquiry found that Four Corners had not failed to maintain the standards expected of the ABC's news and current affairs.

Because of the considerable public interest in the matter, I am making this letter and report public.

In addition to this inquiry, there are three specific allegations of errors of fact which are being separately examined in accordance with section 82 of the ABC Act. I am advised that one matter has been concluded and that the examination of the others will be finalised within two weeks. You will be promptly advised of the outcome.

I realise that there will be continuing differences of opinion concerning this particular program, but would hope that they would not impede a more constructive relationship between the ABC and your Department.

Yours sincerely


DAVID HILL
Managing Director

Report of Inquiry concerning "The Wood for the Trees"

Four Corners 18 June 1990.

The Program

On Monday 18 June 1990, *Four Corners* presented a report entitled "The Wood for the Trees", which examined the economic basis of the timber industry in Western Australia. The program, prepared and presented by ABC Reporter Mark Colvin, raised questions about the price received by the State government for the timber resource it administers, and focused on the role of the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

The report featured interviews with the Executive Director of CALM, Dr Syd Shea, representatives of the major timber company, Bunnings Ltd, the Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Mr Phillip Toyne and others.

The Complainants

The Executive Director of CALM, Dr Shea, made two written complaints to the Managing Director on 20 and 21 June 1990 alleging bias, lack of professionalism and unethical behaviour. These complaints were more fully detailed in a document *Four Corners: The Expose Exposed* prepared by CALM and tabled in the West Australian Parliament by the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. R Pearce, on 3 July and subsequently forwarded to the Managing Director by the Minister on 4 July.

There were other complaints made by the Institute of Foresters (WA), the Victorian State Secretary of the Australian Timber Workers Union, and the Managing Director of Bunnings Ltd which alleged specific errors fact in the program.

Several Senators for Western Australia, forestry interests, including academics teaching forestry, as well as members of the public also wrote to complain.

The Complaints

The complaints fall into two groups: those alleging poor standards of journalism (including lack of balance), and those alleging particular errors of fact in the program.

The CALM document, *Four Corners: The Expose Exposed* provides the most comprehensive and specific grounds of complaint, and for this reason, this report aims to deal with each of the particular matters raised.

The alleged errors of fact have been dealt with in accordance with Section 82 of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act. Section 82 requires that where an allegation of an error fact in a broadcast is made to the ABC, the complaint must be referred to the Principal Community Affairs Officer (PCAO) who will determine whether an investigation is to be conducted. The PCAO, who is appointed by the ABC on the recommendation of the ABC National Advisory Council, makes independent inquiry into such allegations. If the PCAO is satisfied that the complaint is justified, the PCAO informs the Managing Director, and the Managing Director ensures that a prompt apology or retraction in appropriate terms is broadcast.

The specific complaints of errors of fact were referred to the PCAO, Ms Marilyn Stuart-Wright, for her consideration and investigation. In relation to the complaint from the Institute of Foresters (WA), the PCAO determined that the statement complained of was one of opinion by a participant in the program and was presented as such. Therefore the allegation that an error of fact had occurred in the program was not upheld. The other two complaints under section 82 are still under consideration.

The Inquiry

The inquiry, announced by the Managing Director of the ABC, Mr David Hill on 4 July, was conducted by the Assistant Managing Director, Mr Stuart Revill and the Acting General Manager, Corporate Relations, Mr Derek White. The Head of Legal and Copyright, Ms Judith Walker, assisted.

The inquiry examined the complaints made by Dr Shea in his letters and in the detailed CALM report. It reviewed the program, together with the transcript. *Four Corners* prepared a detailed written statement in reply to each of the complaints. The inquiry considered that submission in detail. It forms Appendix A to this report.

It should be stressed that the inquiry was one of review: it examined specific complaints, it considered *Four Corners*' responses and it determined whether the evidence on both sides disclosed any lack of professionalism. The inquiry did not attempt to examine the issues of forest management in Western Australia or to substitute its own opinions on the issues of controversy for those of experts or audiences. Nor did the inquiry deal with the complaints referred to the PCAO under section 82 of the ABC Act.

ABC Editorial Standards

The ABC's editorial and program standards are fully set out in the the booklet *ABC Editorial and Program Practices in Radio and Television*, which includes relevant sections of the ABC Act and ABC Board policy statements.

At the outset some important statements are worth reproducing: The first is from section 8(1)(c) of the ABC Act which reads:

It is the duty of the Board... to ensure that the gathering and presentation by the Corporation of news and information is accurate and impartial according to the recognized standards of objective journalism.

The ABC's Charter of Editorial Practice, approved by the ABC Board in July 1984, deals specifically with the issue of balance and impartiality:

4. Balance will be sought through the presentation as far as possible of principal relevant viewpoints on matters of importance. This requirement may not always be reached within a single program or news bulletin, but will be achieved within a reasonable period.

5. Impartiality does not require editorial staff to be unquestioning, or the Corporation to give all sides of an issue the same amount of time. News values and news judgments will prevail in reaching decisions, consistent with these standards.

The Board has explicitly recognised that :

3.3.2 Pursuing impartiality should not mean, however, merely an endorsement of the status quo. The Corporation is required to be innovative and to conform to recognised standards of excellence in the provision of information. The ABC must be something of a pace-setter in community discussion: not attempting to change community views and values but ensuring that Australians have an opportunity to be as well-informed and questioning about future issues as contemporary interests.

3.3.3 The ABC does not simply report; it also works within the best traditions of investigative journalism, to which it has made major contributions. While it remains independent of sectional interests, it will be placed systematically to pursue issues of public concern through innovative and reliable journalism: to contribute uniquely to the freedom of information that is essential to a democratic society.

[ABC Editorial and Program Practices in Radio and Television]

The ABC Board expects that its journalists will display the highest professional standards in their work, and that they will not allow their judgments to be influenced by pressure from political, commercial, or other sectional interests or their own personal views.

Program research must be meticulous and painstaking, and sources must be thoroughly checked before the ABC makes statements of fact.

The inquiry noted that balance does not mean, and never has meant, that each and every controversial statement in a program must be followed by a contrary point of view. Such an artificial procedure would interrupt the flow of discussion or investigation, and underestimates the intelligence of the audience.

The *Four Corners* program highlighted some basic concerns in the community about the real value of the resource taken by the timber industry, and whether taxpayers in Western Australia were unduly and indirectly subsidising some timber companies. It is part of the ABC's responsibility to examine fundamental issues which, by the very nature of investigative journalism, become controversial and in their aftermath raise charge and counter-charge.

It was important to distinguish between statements in the program which were made by the ABC, and other statements which were expressions of opinion by the participants in the program upon which audiences made their own judgments. It is essential the ABC should report the opinions of those involved in major public issues. It is the duty of the program, however, to identify commentators in such a way that it will be clear from what standpoint their opinions come. It is also expected that a program will explore the relevant viewpoints on matters of significance.

Findings

The inquiry found the *Four Corners* response dealt clearly and substantively with the complaints under review. The inquiry therefore attaches that response as Appendix A.

In two respects, the inquiry found shortcomings in the program:

- At point 18, set out in the *Four Corners* response (Appendix A), an error was made. The program stated that "for years CALM denied this mill access to first grade logs". This should have read: "For years CALM's predecessor, the Forests Department, denied this mill access to first grade logs. This was rectified the year after CALM was established."
- At point 42 in Appendix A, it is acknowledged that *Four Corners* filmed Dr Shea with his daughter at his request which was repeated on a number of occasions. It was an error not to identify Dr Shea's daughter, though it was an error of caution. However, the ABC categorically denies that there was any unethical personal attack on Dr Shea given **his** repeated insistence that he be filmed with his daughter and *Four Corners*' expressed reluctance to comply.

The Managing Director has written personally to Dr Shea (see Appendix B).

With these exceptions, the inquiry found that the *Four Corners* had maintained the standards expected of the ABC's news and current affairs. //

APPENDIX A

Response by 4 Corners to CALM Report: *Four Corners: The expose exposed*

The following response by 4 Corners addresses the complaints raised in the CALM report. The text of the program, as quoted in the CALM report, and the individual claims raised are reproduced in full. *Four Corner's* reply follows each point.

- Section 1 deals with the matters raised in the first section of that report, "CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS INVOLVING CONTACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT BY FOUR CORNERS"

- Section 2 deals with the claims raised in the section "REPLY TO ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE FOUR CORNERS PROGRAM ON 18 JUNE 1990".

CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The following section addresses claims made in the section "CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS INVOLVING CONTACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT BY FOUR CORNERS"

Claim 1. It is understood that prior to *Four Corners* coming to Western Australia late in May, a researcher with the production team spent two weeks in the State, but made no contact with CALM or the Minister's office during this period.

The ABC has also admitted having had a file in Sydney on CALM for nearly a year. Yet CALM, the major character in the story, was never consulted until 24 May 1990.

There was also a subsequent admission by the Vice President of the Conservation Council of Western Australia, Dr Beth Schultz, that she assisted *Four Corners* to set up the program.

Dr Schultz stated on the Sattler File (Radio 6PR) on 26 June 1990 that she gave *Four Corners* the names of people to contact, told them places to go and gave them documents.

2. CONTACT WITH THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR CALM, MR BOB PEARCE

On 23 May *Four Corners* contacted the office of the Minister for the Environment asking to speak to a member of the Minister's staff. A *Four Corners* representative said that he did not want to speak to anyone but the specified staff member.

He said that Four Corners did not plan to speak to the Minister.

3. CONTACT WITH CALM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DR SYD SHEA

On 24 May Dr Syd Shea (CALM's Executive Director) received a call from Mark Colvin, presenter of the program, who had arrived in Perth, requesting Dr Shea to be available for an interview later in the following week. When Dr Shea questioned Mr Colvin about the general nature of the program, he was assured that *Four Corners* would be doing an objective assessment of forest management and the timber industry in Western Australia. Dr Shea immediately offered him all the facilities of the Department to assist him with the project, and asked whether he had any material CALM had published on forest management in Western Australia. Mr Colvin said he had not and Dr Shea immediately agreed to forward to him CALM's Forest Management Plans and associated documents.

Dr Shea suggested it would be useful that he and Mr Colvin meet before he visited the Southern Forest so that Dr Shea could make arrangements to meet with staff of the Department at Manjimup. Mr Colvin advised he was about to leave for Manjimup and would not be able to take up the offer. Dr Shea assumed that this initial visit to Manjimup was in the nature of a general reconnaissance. However, as the discussion progressed, it became obvious the *Four Corners* team would actually be filming the story on this visit. After Dr Shea ascertained this, he suggested pleasantly to Mr Colvin that he must have already arranged some interviews. He reluctantly confirmed this. Dr Shea then suggested that the people he would be interviewing must be Mr Alex Syme from the Denmark Coalition for the Environment and Mr Tony Drake (Mr Syme is an author of the document entitled "Towards a Forest Accord in Western Australia").

Mr Colvin somewhat bashfully agreed that they had prearranged interviews with these people. Dr Shea then suggested it would be very valuable for him if he made contact with Alan Walker, CALM's Regional Manager at Manjimup, to assist him achieve his stated objective — "a balanced and fair story".

A series of documents — including the State's Forest Management Plans, the Timber Production Strategy, articles on the State's 100 million tree planting program on cleared agricultural land, the Forest Conservation Strategy, a recently published book on rare and endangered flora in Western Australia, the State's Submission to the Resource Assessment Commission, articles on the Department's award-winning wood utilisation process VALWOOD, a draft of a paper on royalties in Western Australia and other articles — was couriered across to the ABC that afternoon.

On Monday 4 June the *Four Corners* researcher, Mr Ray Moynihan, was contacted and invited to lunch with Dr Shea. He initially agreed and then subsequently phoned to say that he couldn't make lunch but that he would meet with Dr Shea in his office. Mr Moynihan was given a general briefing on forest issues in Western Australia by Dr Shea for a period of approximately an hour and a half. During this period of time, Mr Moynihan constantly reassured Dr Shea that the *Four Corners* team would be presenting a fair and balanced assessment of forest issues in Western Australia.

The *Four Corners* crew filmed in the Manjimup area on Friday 25 May and remained on location in Manjimup until Friday 1 June.

The *Four Corners* team, when they returned to Perth, arranged to interview Dr Shea on Foundation Day, 4 June. The interview lasted from 8.30 am to 12 noon. Prior to the interview they were shown the film

segment that Professor David Bellamy had produced on the karri forest as part of a promotion of the State's proposal to plant 100 million trees on cleared agricultural land (the Tree Trust program). Dr Shea attempted on numerous occasions to interest the *Four Corners* team on the plantation program which had been initiated in Western Australia and which was strongly supported by Professor David Bellamy. *Four Corners* was provided with a copy of the tape of this Bellamy segment and subsequently written confirmation that the tape was owned by the Minister and that they had exclusive right to use it up until the *Four Corners* program was shown.

At the completion of the interview, the *Four Corners* team requested the opportunity to take some general vision of Dr Shea and if possible his Minister. Dr Shea had a commitment to attend a world environment day function in Cannington with his Minister and reluctantly agreed that they could attend to take general vision shots. He made the proviso, however, that since his Minister had not been advised that *Four Corners* would be at the function, that he should not be subjected to a surprise interview.

4. CONTACT WITH CALM REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANJIMUP

Despite his assurances that he would contact Alan Walker on the following day (25 May), when Mr Colvin arrived in Manjimup he did not do so. When this became known a letter was sent to the hotel where the crew were staying repeating the offer of assistance of the staff at Manjimup.

The first contact from the *Four Corners* crew in Manjimup came late on Friday evening with a request to Mr Walker to arrange for them to film tree felling and logging operations. This was arranged for early on Monday 28 May.

Following the field visit to film logging operations on 2 May, Alan Walker persuaded Mr Colvin to attend a detailed briefing over two hours on the evening of 28 May. Several CALM Regional staff outlined the Department's role objectives and management practices in the southern forests. At this briefing Mr Colvin also agreed to accompany Mr Walker to a range of forest sites to file examples of CALM's forest management practises. This was arranged for Thursday 31 May.

An itinerary for the field visit with CALM was drawn up on 30 May and a copy delivered to Mark Colvin. Only two of the eight arranged sites were actually visited. Mr Colvin stated that the crew had made another commitment that afternoon which they had to honour.

Although the opportunity was presented in the field to film the Big Brook Forest and Big Brook Dam to illustrate regrowth forests and multiple use management, the crew refused to film this site claiming that they did not know how they could fit it into the story.

The crew also refused to film at the Gloucester Tree site which illustrated CALM's management of forest recreation sites and the contribution to tourism in the southern forest.

Included in the itinerary was a visit to Big Brook Forest where CALM's ecology research officer in Manjimup, Grant Wardell-Johnson, was on hand to explain aspects of CALM's wildlife research program in karri regrowth forests. This visit was cancelled by Mr Colvin, who later, on ABC Regional radio (18 June 1990), claimed that scientists in CALM were reluctant to come out and speak because they were afraid of retaliation against them.

On 31 May *Four Corners* was invited to film CALM's Wood Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey. The Centre won the 1990 Government Technology Gold Award, a National award, for CALM's innovative VALWOOD process. This process turns waste wood into high quality timber products (see Appendix 23). *Four Corners* refused to film at the Centre.

As a follow-up to the briefing on 28 May some data was sent to Mr Colvin confirming some of the relevant points. Included in the data provided was a summary of the Karri first grade sawlog allocations to timber companies for 1989 and 1990. The summary showed that Bunnings' entitlement was 76% in 1989 and 73% in 1990. This data was to be compared with the statement in the document "Towards a Forest Accord in Western Australia", which stated that Bunnings has exclusive access to over 90% of the first grade karri resource. Despite being provided with this data, Mr Colvin still made the assertion during his subsequent interview with Dr Shea that Bunnings had access to over 90% of the karri resource.

Reply CALM's "CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS..." at the beginning of the document is so scattered with subjective descriptions as to bring its own credibility into question. Dr Shea does not suggest, he suggests "pleasantly". By contrast, Mr Colvin does things "reluctantly" and "bashfully". In addition, the CALM account also contains a number of serious factual errors.

The allegation that a researcher spent two weeks in WA before the *Four Corners* team arrived — with or without contacting CALM — is totally without foundation. The researcher travelled to Perth with the other members of the *Four Corners* team.

Four Corners has not "admitted" to keeping a file on CALM for nearly a year. *Four Corners* has

been collecting clippings, documents and other information about the South West Forests for more than a year, in the same way it keeps research files on a wide range of subjects, many of which never get filmed. It is not *Four Corners'* practice to contact the subject(s) of every such file on the off-chance that a story might someday be done. We acknowledge CALM's co-operation.

Dr Beth Shultz did give the *Four Corners* team some names, documents and advice.

Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director of CALM, also gave the team names, advice and documents. So did others. The normal modus operandi of a TV documentary team is to collect such information from interested parties on all sides of a topic.

The *Four Corners* researcher who contacted the Environment Minister's office did NOT say that *Four Corners* did not plan to speak to the Minister. X

According to CALM's account, "Despite his assurances that he would contact Alan Walker on the following day (25 May), when Mr Colvin arrived in Manjimup he did not do so". In fact, the *Four Corners* team arrived in Manjimup at 11.30 pm on the night of Thursday 24 May. They left the hotel early on the morning of Friday 25 May to film in the forest. When Mark Colvin returned to the hotel in the afternoon to call Alan Walker, he found a letter from Mr Walker chiding him for not having rung already. He rang in the late afternoon of 25 May, not the late evening as alleged.

The itinerary offered by Alan Walker on 30 May was, simply, impossibly long. Mark Colvin explained this to Mr Walker and the itinerary was renegotiated on the phone. Walker conceded that he was more used to the speedier and less painstaking filming methods of news crews than to the slower documentary style of *Four Corners*. Colvin also pointed out that *Four Corners* would have access to shots from CALM's own promotional video—which was in fact, used in the eventual program.

The reporter explained that *Four Corners* had been filming with Bunnings for the previous three days, and the filming had taken longer than expected. At Bunnings' instigation, the crew had agreed to film for a further afternoon so as to depict the Bunnings Manjimup processing centre. Therefore, only half a day was available. In the event, the crew did visit more than two sites, contrary to CALM's assertion. They also interviewed Alan Walker. The sites at Big Brook and Gloucester Tree were rejected as illustrating tourism, when the subject of the film was the economics of timber production, and because the cameraman and producer judged them to be uninteresting subjects for a documentary sequence.

The *original* itinerary included the meeting with Grant Wardell-Johnson. When the itinerary was renegotiated with CALM so as to fit into the time allotted, Alan Walker agreed that he was able to cover the relevant areas of forest ecology in an interview. He subsequently did so.

On the afternoon of 31 May, Mark Colvin received a letter inviting him to the Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey. He had already explained to Alan Walker, and he now explained again, that the crew had to be in Perth the next day to interview Bob Bunning — an interview which Mr Bunning, who was about to go on holiday, could not change. There thus was no time available for the visit to Harvey. If the invitation to visit the Centre had been extended on 24 May, when *Four Corners* spoke to Dr Shea, or at any time in the following 4-5 days, the team might have been able to fit the visit in. CALM was well aware of the crew's time commitments.

Mark Colvin did *not* make "...the assertion during his interview with Dr Shea that Bunnings had access to over 90 % of the karri resource". What he did ask was: "But how could Bunnings have got where it is now, to 90% dominance of the hardwood market, without subsidy of its raw material?"— a question based on independent market analyses of Bunnings's position. For example, in September 1989, the stockbrokers D.J.Carmichael & Co advised clients: "Bunnings, the largest hardwood sawmiller in Australia, dominates the Western Australian hardwood industry with approximately 90% of the market".

FOUR CORNER'S & "THE EXPOSE EXPOSED"

The following section addresses CALM's numbered points.

Claim The *Four Corners* team came to Western Australia on 24 May 1990. Their program went to air on 18 June 1990. In that time they spoke to only two CALM staff but to many more of CALM's critics, who received the great bulk of the program's time.

They interviewed Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director of CALM, for about three hours; they used barely two minutes of this time.

The following is a point-by-point analysis of moments in the program in the order in which they occurred.

Reply CALM's "Reply to allegations made by the *Four Corners* Program.."(p.8) begins with two egregious errors.

First, "The *Four Corners* team came to Western Australia on 24 May 1990. Their program went to air on 18 June 1990. In that time they spoke to only two CALM staff.....". To refute this it is only necessary to turn back a page and a half, to CALM's 'Chronological sequence' (at p.6), to read "...on 28 May, Alan Walker persuaded Mr Colvin to attend a detailed briefing over two hours on the evening of 28 May. **Several CALM Regional staff outlined the Department's role, objectives and management practice...**" (stress added). In addition, the *Four Corners* team spoke to a range of other CALM staff during preparation of the film. Most of them were only prepared to comment off-the-record about the issues being examined. We continue to honour those undertakings, a normal practice in journalism.

Second, *Four Corners'* interview with Dr Shea covered approximately one (1) hour of film. CALM's video of the interview must prove this. The figure of three hours can only be arrived at by including the total time taken up negotiating with Dr Shea about whether his daughter could be in the shot, whether the interview would be inside or outside, time taken to light and prepare the interview 'set', a viewing of advertisements by David Bellamy, time for the changing of film magazines, time to pack up after the interview, etc.

1. **Andrew Olle: But will David Bellamy eat his word? After that world premiere of his latest role, as spokesman for the Western Australian Government, some of his old friends in the conservation movement might suggest the pop botanist can't see the wood for the trees.**

Claim Dr Shea was keen to provide the opportunity for *Four Corners* to see Professor Bellamy's statements on forests because Professor Bellamy had been such a strong advocate of the Government's Tree Trust program, which Dr Shea regarded as a major achievement in Western Australia.

Olle's description of Professor Bellamy as a "pop botanist" is not only belittling, it is strange. Mr Philip Toyne, the President of the Australian Conservation Foundation (who later appears in the interview), heads an organisation that publishes a magazine called *Habitat* which in its April 1988 edition described Bellamy somewhat more respectfully as "an internationally recognised British botanist and environmental campaigner."

Reply "Pop botanist" is a perfectly reasonable journalistic description of someone who has become world-famous for popularising botany. It is not, nor was it intended to be, belittling. We are after all talking about a man who makes TV programs and TV commercials, as well as being a noted environmental campaigner.

Andrew Olle's speculation about David Bellamy eating his words is supported by Prof. Bellamy's subsequent remarks on ABC Radio News (27/6), and as quoted in the *West Australian* (29/6), critical of the use of his TV advertisements by the industry organisation, the Forest Products Association, and his reported assertion that the advertisements were not made to validate the management of Western Australia's forests.

2. **Mark Colvin (*Four Corners* reporter): "Karri and Jarrah are dense strong hardwoods, timber, a valuable cash crop for those who can harvest it.**

Claim Colvin's comment does not recognise that timber is a valuable renewable commodity which is required by Western Australians for building houses and making furniture. Currently Western Australia cannot supply sufficient timber to meet its own needs.

If local timber is not available, timber will have to be imported, thereby exacerbating our balance of payment problems and contributing to further pressure on those rainforests of the world which are not managed on a sustained-yield basis.

Reply The quote from Mark Colvin's script is a plain statement of fact, and nothing in CALM's reply refutes it. The reporter's statement makes no comment, either directly or by inference, on whether "...timber is a valuable renewable commodity..." etc, etc (p.9).

3. Murray Johnson (Art Gallery owner): We have just one chance at this resource ..., and at the moment we are mining it, we are quarrying it.

Claim When you mine something it is gone. Western Australian forests are not gone — they are managed on a sustained yield basis. There is significantly more timber grown than is harvested .

Mr Colvin was provided with a copy of the Government's Timber Strategy which clearly sets down the principles under which the multiple use forest is managed. One of the key principles is that "the harvest from the forest will be regulated to levels that can be sustained indefinitely" (Timber Production in Western Australia, p. 2).

Reply *Four Corners* is being attacked for a statement of opinion made by a critic of CALM, not by the reporter. The statement, in this case, introduces the question of whether old growth is being "mined" or "quarried". Mark Colvin's script, both before and after the quote in question, does not endorse this claim but makes it very clear that this is a central issue of the film: "It's not a simple fight about whether or not to log. It's an argument about how to manage the forests — how to balance logging with tourism, and how much to charge for the timber that is logged. It's about whether clear-felled areas like this, however densely replanted, can ever really replace the natural forests that were there before".

4. Johnson: We're really using it [timber] in a very inefficient way. We are sending railway sleepers to England in mature jarrah, it's madness.

Claim Timber quality varies. Wherever possible, and according to the quality of the timber, the material is used for the maximum valued product. It would be stupid for the sawmillers or the Department to do otherwise.

Colvin was offered the opportunity several times to examine the Department's revolutionary and award winning utilisation technology, but he declined .

The proportion of Western Australian sawn timber produced as sleepers in 1988-89 was 8.9%. Approximately half were used in Western Australia.

CALM is promoting the use of alternative timber for railway sleepers, such as treated pine, and is experimenting with techniques such as dowling to enable low grade wood to be used as sleepers.

Reply CALM's response concedes the factual truth of the statement: mature jarrah is being exported as railway sleepers.

5. Colvin: Pieces of jarrah, the same size of this, are being burned in a new silicon smelter.

Claim At this point, the program showed a crafted wooden vase, implying that the creation of the smelter would threaten resource available for craftwood. In fact, the availability of jarrah craftwood in the southwest far exceeds demand. No jarrah timber which is needed by the craftwood industry is being burned in the silicon smelter, nor is any material being used in the smelter which could be used for sawlog production.

The silicon smelter is a new industry in south Western Australia using silica and waste timber to produce silicon metal for the computer industry. Current estimates of residual material in State forest indicate they will last at least 300 years at the silicon smelter's present approved level of production even if no trees grew over that period.

Reply Again, CALM's response constitutes an admission of the plain factual truth of the sentence in question. Pieces of jarrah of the size in question are being burned in the new smelter. The inference drawn by CALM does not arise from the broadcast.

- 6. Colvin: "Bunnings and its woodchip arm, WACAP, stay on top, because of a cosy relationship with the State Government, and that its profits are subsidised by the West Australian tax-payer."
Three areas of subsidy were mentioned by Colvin: cheap rail freight from Westrail, poverty level wages to timber workers and cheap timber royalties.**

Claim The economics of rail freighting woodchips was extensively and publicly debated some 15 years ago. The question of timber royalty rates is discussed in detail under items 14 and 15.

The Government openly subsidises all industries in Western Australia by providing supporting infrastructure such as ports, roads *and* railways.

The timber industry would prefer to transport its timber products using public roads. However, the community of Western Australia prefers to separate the transport of timber from other road users, preferring to use the rail system.

Timber workers in Western Australia are covered by a State award which is higher than the Federal award covering timber workers in other States. For example, in WA wood machinists (tradesmen) receive a total wage of \$409 per week, whilst those in Victoria and Tasmania receive \$393.80. In addition, WA timber workers are paid on a par with other workers (e.g. toolmakers under the WA Metal Trades Award). It is interesting that the ABC team did not include Dr Shea's response to the question about the workers being on "poverty levels":

ABC INTERVIEWER: They're not far off the poverty line — do you think you're really doing them a favour by continuing to prop up the industry?

DR SHEA: ... The thing that I don't want to do is put them on the dole and not only remove a significant portion of their salary, to remove their dignity and pride.

Reply Recent official examinations of the Australian transport industry have raised the issue of infrastructure as a source of hidden subsidy. Hence, for example, the Interstate Commission's recent recommendation that road trucks are undercharged for the use of roads by tens of thousands of dollars. The issue of the Westrail line to the south-west was introduced with this in mind, and constitutes a legitimate point for economic discussion.

The reference to timber workers' wages was included after discussions with the ACTU, unions involved, and individual workers in the industry. The script compared their award not with other timber industry awards but with all awards. The workers referred to are, by comparison with the national average weekly wage, lowly paid. *Four Corners* research indicated that many had incomes below the Henderson poverty line.

- 7. Phillip Toyne (Australian Conservation Foundation) claims that the timber industry is a disaster for the proper ecological management of forest, ... and for the economy of the South-West.**

Claim *Four Corners* did not request Toyne to present any data to back up either statement, but simply accepted it uncritically. Nor was Toyne asked about likely effects on the south-west economy should the timber industry be required to close down in native forests, which is the view of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

A scientist was made available to the *Four Corners* team to discuss forest ecology, but they declined to interview him. Numerous publications were provided on the ecological research that has been carried out in the forest by CALM and its predecessors but none was referred to.

Reply The statement by Philip Toyne is not "accepted uncritically", but presented as the opinion of a senior representative of the Australian environmental movement. The program did feature responses by CALM on forest ecology.

The interview with a CALM forest ecology scientist was offered as part of an extensive itinerary, involving about ten proposed locations, on a day when it was explained to CALM that the *Four Corners* team had only the morning to spare (see also page 9). The eventual filming schedule was

arrived at without noticeable protest from the CALM officer involved (Regional Manager Alan Walker), and there was certainly no special emphasis placed by CALM on the importance of interviewing the person in question. In fact, Mr Walker told our reporter that as Regional Manager he was qualified to answer questions on a broad range of subjects, including, as the program demonstrated, forest ecology.

- 8 **Toyne stated that "at the same time as you're seeing this vast increase in resource going into export woodchip, you're seeing a massive decline in local jobs as local sawmills have closed."**

Claim *Four Corners* accepted this simplistic assertion quite uncritically, but the figures are incomplete. In fact, over the 20 year period to 1985 there was a decline in employment in the sawmilling industry. This resulted from closure of mills (as a consequence of Government policy on sustained yield harvesting levels), increased mechanisation and modernisation of mills and the transfer of many jobs off the mill site. At the same time there has been a substantial increase in employment in the value-adding sectors of the timber processing industries. For example during the last 10 years employment in this sector has increased by 24%.

In fact, there is no relationship between employment levels and the advent of the woodchip industry. Prior to this industry, the wood that it now uses was burnt. The woodchip industry employs 353 people. Colvin failed to query Toyne's attempt to try to connect the advent of the woodchipping industry with employment in the sawmilling industry, which are not connected.

Reply This statement does not represent *Four Corners'* assertion, but that of the ACF.

Four Corners' research indicated that an overall decline in timber industry jobs had occurred over the last two decades. The parallel between this decline and the increase in export woodchipping, however, is a matter of opinion. It is open to the ACF to draw this conclusion.

9. **Colvin: "Now for the first time, ... the economics of the forest are to be scrutinised by an independent umpire" [the Resource Assessment Commission].**

Claim The *Four Corners* program did not show the part of the interview with Dr Shea that addressed this question: "What I can say is that we strongly support the Resource Assessment Commission because it brings a degree of objectivity and professionalism in this debate which hasn't been there in recent times." CALM welcomes the enquiry by the RAC. Whilst the environmental aspects of forest management have been scrutinised and approved by the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority on two separate occasions over the last 15 years, this will be the first occasion on which we will be able to present resource and economic data to an independent enquiry.

Reply A statement of fact. CALM seems to assume that TV documentaries are made by interposing responses from all interested parties after every significant statement. This is not, and has never been, the case for *Four Corners* or any other recognised documentary-maker.

10. **Toyne: "Part of the black hole that constitutes the CALM accounts since they amalgamated their forest activities with the super department, including conservation, is that we don't know what the taxpayers of Western Australia are paying by way of subsidy."**

Claim All CALM's financial dealings are scrutinised by the Treasury and the Office of the Auditor General; they are published in an annual report which is available to every taxpayer, and they are presented to Parliament. The results of all timber sales by auction or tender are publicly available. In addition, a press release is made after each timber sale giving details of the successful company and the prices.

The Department's revenue derived from timber has increased from \$17.165 million in 1984-85 to \$52.709 million in 1988-89. Ninety six percent of the Department's revenue came from royalties and other charges made on the timber industry.

Expenditure in 1984-85 on establishment and tending of forests was \$7.517 million and in 1988-89 was \$12.674 million and \$16.839 million on servicing commercial operations compared with \$3.304 million in 1984-85.

The Department's total revenue from timber has increased by about 325% in the five years since CALM

was formed. The increased cost of establishing new forests was only \$5 million. The large increase in commercial operations was due to a change in Government policy whereby CALM is progressively assuming control of all logging operations.

Reply *Four Corners'* research into the facts confirmed that, as Phillip Toyne suggests, the accounts provided by CALM to the public do not reveal how much the taxpayers of Western Australia are paying by way of subsidy. CALM spent \$86.187 million in 1988-89. Its revenues from timber, according to its own figures, were \$52.709 million. The accounts are not broken down in such a way as to show the amounts paid for the Conservation and Land Management functions respectively. Not unless CALM further breaks down its costings to show how much of such expenditure also goes towards commercial forestry will the public be able to judge whether the government is charging a realistic price for the resources it grows for the timber industry.

11. Toyne: "... in the decade prior to that amalgamation in the mid-80s Western Australians contributed \$100 million by the way of subsidies through the Forests Department to the [timber] industry and there is absolutely no indication that the figure has declined and is likely to be still in place today.

Claim Toyne was not required by *Four Corners* to explain the basis of this assertion. Colvin simply accepted it uncritically and treated it as gospel. CALM is not aware of any direct Government subsidy to the timber industry. In the five years since CALM was formed timber royalties have been increased by up to 500% and revenue to the Government from the timber industry has increased by about 300%. Money spent by CALM on reforestation and forest protection is greatly exceeded by the value of the resulting forest.

Reply Toyne's assertion about the facts relating to the decade prior to amalgamation was indeed checked by reference to Forests Department annual reports.

The program contains no assertions about direct Government subsidies to the timber industry; it is concerned with indirect subsidies.

12. Johnson: "The fault is definitely with Government, to give our timber resource, at a subsidised rate, to a private concern who uses the wood much less efficiently than other milling methods that are available."

Claim This is simply a repetition of earlier points (see items 4 and 6). An interesting example of the bias in the program was allowing a CALM critic two opportunities to say the same thing.

Reply As the question of indirect subsidies was a central issue in the film, there is no reason why this statement by Johnson of his view should not have been included in this way.

13. Johnson: Bunnings are "paying around a third for the wood, about a third as much as the local Australian-owned small mills will pay".

Claim At this point and at other points during the program no distinction was being made for prices paid for different grades of logs. Premium logs, which are the cream of the logs produced, obviously attract a higher price than first grade logs.

Royalty reviews carried out in 1986 and 1989 have established new levels, considerably higher than previous levels. The new levels (called "target royalties") are being phased in. Royalty payments by all sawmills, including Bunnings, will be phased in by 1 January 1992.

The Western Australian State Government decided to phase in target royalties to protect the local timber industry, particularly the jobs of timber workers. This decision also had the effect of minimising an increase of timber imports into the State.

In addition, Bunnings have agreed during the phasing in period to make a major contribution to timber research and improved utilisation of sawlogs. For example, Bunnings has made a multi-million dollar investment in new sawmilling technology which has allowed the utilisation of small-diameter karri regrowth thinnings as sawlogs which were previously used for woodchips.

No company is paying the target royalty for allocated first grade logs yet. However, an increasing proportion of logs are sold by auction or tender rather than being allocated. The upset price for tenders or auction is the target royalty. In almost all cases bids above the upset royalty have been received (, The

CALM Briefing Paper on timber royalties, provides more details).

Reply The film indeed did make the distinction between different grades of logs, both in the reporter's script and in a comment by a Bunnings official.

Four Corners research revealed instances where first grade logs were fetching approximately three times as much at auction as the prices Bunnings pays.

14. Colvin: Prices [for logs] are the closest secret in the south-western timber industry. No member of the public has even seen the list of what Bunnings pays CALM for its full range of logs.

Claim The results of all public timber sales are published, including those won by Bunnings. One member of the public (Tony Drake) who made an enquiry on this question, was given a written statement of the royalties paid by Bunnings for allocated logs, in October 1989. In a letter published in the *Warren Blackwood Times*, the Acting Executive Director of CALM publicly offered any enquirer full details of royalties at that time: "... there are no secrets on log royalty. I am happy to provide any enquirer with information about the royalties paid by any timber company in Western Australia"

There are numerous prices for logs in Western Australia because of the large number of species and the large number of different grades of logs within each species, and when increasing proportions of the resource are put on the open market by tender or auction as different prices are struck. The basic royalty structure was provided to the *Four Corners* team. As noted above there is no constraint on any individual obtaining information about the price paid by any company for any log. The *Four Corners* team could have had this information hand-delivered to them.

CALM's policy is that log prices are *not* secret. Colvin did not seek any information from CALM on this issue before making his assertion.

Reply The bulk of timber sales involving CALM and Bunnings (which is to say the bulk of timber sales in the South-West) have not been public. The fact is a minority of timber goes to public auction. Most of Bunnings' timber is covered by private contracts not made public by CALM. The assertion that "The results of all public timber sales are published" is therefore irrelevant.

What CALM does publish is a list of *target* royalties, but the program was concerned with the prices *actually* paid. Tony Drake's inquiry referred only to a single grade of Karri logs. In this instance, CALM's reply revealed that Bunnings were paying substantially less than the target royalty for this particular category of the resource.

This letter to Tony Drake was the *only* such example turned up by *Four Corners* research, and being highly limited in scope did not even approach being a "list of what Bunnings pays CALM for its full range of logs". *Four Corners* did ask for such a list, and was told it was not publicly available. *Four Corners* research indicates that there is *still* no such list available to the public. *Four Corners* would welcome its publication as evidence of the claim that "there are no secrets on log royalty".

15. Colvin: For first grade karri logs, the largest royalty is \$34.00 a cubic metre. The few logs that go to auction fetch up to \$70.00, but that Bunnings pays CAL only \$25.32 cents for each cubic metre it buys".

Claim The target royalty for karri first grade logs is \$38.50/m³. For reasons already explained, Bunnings (and all other companies) do not yet pay this target royalty. Furthermore, different grades of logs are being compared in Colvin's analysis, but he fails to mention this. Bunnings take a lower quality (smaller diameter) first grade log than any other sawmiller.

Reply CALM is, to put it politely, fudging the issue. CALM's own tables show that the target royalty from July 1 1990 is \$34.00, as the program stated. The figure CALM quotes, \$38.50, is the target for January 1992.

16. **Colvin: Tony Drake says he can get 60% [recovery] out of a log that you [Bunnings] only get 40% out of.**

Claim While higher recoveries are usually achieved by small labour-intensive sawing techniques, the average difference is much less than alleged by Drake. Most large modern mills achieve a 60% or better recovery from high quality first grade karri sawlogs. However, because these mills also take low quality and small sawlogs, their average recovery comes down to around 45%. Mr Drake has recently made public some of his own recovery figures: from all logs sawn in his mill, the average recovery ranged from 35 to 38%.

If requested to do so by the timber industry CALM would be pleased to participate in a properly designed large-scale trial to settle this allegation once and for all. Such a trial must take into consideration not only recovery rates but the type of product that is being produced from sawn timber and in particular the proportion of sawn timber that can be used for value-added products such as fine furniture timber. It is also of little use having a high recovery rate of a product which cannot be sold.

Considering that one of the focal points of the *Four Corners* story was supposedly utilisation, it is strange that they refused on three occasions to view the utilisation research that was being carried out. Nor did they show the major point that Dr Shea made in his interview about utilisation:

"But see, the real argument is not about percentage recovery of sawn timber. You see the real argument is putting value on that beautiful hardwood, and the good news is that that's happening in Western Australia.

"And the reason why it's happening is because we have been able to give security on the one hand to those who want the jewels of the forests and national parks, and security to the timber industry, the large ones and the little ones, because that's enabled them to invest in the new technology, the exciting new technology which is producing furniture grade timber from our hardwood forest.

"And if you really want to talk about employment, a number of people working in this industry in a creative way, if you want to talk about export income, then give us the encouragement to proceed along the way we're going, because it's in value added products that we're going to succeed in achieving the best for the timber industry in this State.... In the last five years, we've reduced the cut-over area of forest by 40% by improvement in utilisation."

Reply The program's intention was to open up the question of utilisation — not to settle it with a definitive test. That is what was done. The allegations about utilisation were raised, and put to Bunnings. This is an issue which principally involves two parties: Bunnings, which asserts its own superiority in use of timber; and Tony Drake, who challenges that. It is difficult to see why CALM is raising the matter, and even more so to understand why they should focus on a question spoken by the reporter rather than what the answers revealed.

The allegation that "*Four Corners* refused on three occasions to view the utilisation research" apparently refers to an invitation extended — on the afternoon before the team left the south-west — to visit CALM's utilisation research centre. *Four Corners* explained to CALM on more than one occasion that there was simply no time left in their schedule, although if the invitation had been extended earlier they may have been able to include the filming opportunity.

17. **Beth Schultz (WA Conservation Council): There is a forest reference tree there, its' HY over 89 over 1. It's clearly marked, there's a forestry white X painted on it, which shows that they knew where it was too. And then you drive from that down to the boundary, using a map, and it's about 750 or 800 metres south of that tree to where the boundary would be, just simply using a map and an odometer.**

Claim CALM's position on this incident of tree felling in the Shannon National Park has always been that the catchment boundary is extremely difficult to locate in the field. No-one can be certain about the precise location of the watershed boundary unless an accurate cadastral survey is completed. A letter from a licensed surveyor (Mr J.H. Towie) confirms the difficulty of establishing the precise boundary. For example:

"As the watershed has never been established by ground survey, but interpolated from small scale aerial photography, probably of a map scale of 1:25,000 at the best, the likelihood of ground survey coinciding with the map position of the watershed is extremely unlikely."

Reply CALM again fails to give any satisfactory answer to the question of why the forester in question failed to make use of the nearby forest reference tree. The point made by the film is clear, and yet to be refuted. Lay people who visited the site found no difficulty in locating the boundary; why did the "experts" get it wrong?

If the answer is that they were trying to find the catchment boundary without an "accurate cadastral survey", then why not revert to the other and more obvious method of referring to the department's own reference markers?

- 18. Colvin: "For years, CALM denied this [Tony Drake's] mill access to first grade logs. When the rules finally changed, Tony Drake tested the first batch of seven he was allocated".**

Claim The first part of Colvin's statement is false. The Department of Conservation and Land Management was formed in March 1985. Middlesex Sawmill (proprietor Tony Drake,) won a parcel of first grade and second grade logs at auction in 1986. Following the Timber Strategy (1987), CALM commenced negotiations immediately with all registered sawmills regarding future contracts of sale for log supplies. Middlesex Sawmill signed a contract of sale with CALM in March 1988. First grade sawlogs were supplied to Middlesex Sawmill as part of this contract of sale.

Since the Timber Strategy CALM has entered into 250 individual contracts of sale with sawmills resulting from allocations and public auctions and tenders.

Reply *Four Corners* admits an error. The sentence, "For years CALM denied this mill access to first grade logs" should have read, "For years CALM's predecessor, the Forests Department, denied this mill access to first grade logs. This was rectified the year after CALM was established".

- 19. Colvin: CALM breached its own Forest Regulations by allowing logs to be removed without having been properly branded.**

Claim "Chalk branding" of logs is a common practice in Western Australia. Not only are there several instances each year of fallers requiring a replacement branding hammer (through loss or excessive wear), but many previously branded logs are docked on the landing, requiring additional chalk branding. When a faller has mislaid his branding hammer, CALM gives permission to mark the logs with chalk.

Reply "Chalk branding" may be a common practice, but it is not one sanctioned by law. A hammer brand is harder to remove or alter than a chalk brand, which is easily washed off and replaced. The rules reflect this. As the program stated, the Forest Regulations do not allow chalk-branding. The Executive Director of CALM ought to know this. In the program, however, he flatly denied that it was a breach either of the Act or of the Regulations.

- 20. Colvin: Western Australian forests have natural predators as well as human ones. This fungus, *Armillaria luteobubalina*, is well known to some as karri dieback". It thrives on the dead timber that's left after logging and there's concern about its effect on young karri trees in regrowth forests.**

Claim This is a throwback to another ABC "in-depth investigator", Mr Peter Hunt, who coined the term in an Earthworm program over two years ago.

Interestingly, the CSIRO, in response to a query from Dr Shea about this interview, raised concerns about the Earthworm program concerning the use of emotive words and "misunderstanding perhaps combined with a small amount of editing of the original discussion."

Reply The *Four Corners* reference to *Armillaria luteobubalina* as being "known to some as karri dieback" arose from conversations with scientists and conservationists, not with Peter Hunt of ABC Radio. Hunt was not consulted about the production of the *Four Corners* film.

Peter Hunt is, however, an award-winning ABC environmental journalist whose program "Earthworm" has a wide following among Radio National listeners around Australia. It is odd that CALM should suggest that association with Peter Hunt in some way indicates unreliability.

- 21. Colvin: "Jarrah dieback has already ravaged huge areas. He then displayed a map of State forest on which large circles were marked which indicated that nearly 70% of the forest has been "ravaged" by the disease.**

Claim The scale of the map displayed by *Four Corners* was very misleading. Detailed and accurate maps could have been provided by CALM had they been requested by *Four Corners*. Such maps were not requested. Approximately 187,200 ha (10%) of State forest and timber reserves are affected by dieback. Not all of this has been "ravaged" by the disease. In many cases only some species in the understorey are affected.

Reply The claim that "the scale of the map displayed by *Four Corners* was very misleading" is a case of CALM shooting itself in the foot. The map shown on screen by *Four Corners* was based closely on the map on page 21 of CALM's Research Bulletin No 3, November 1989, "Jarrah Dieback".

CALM's response that "approximately 187 000 ha (10%) of State forest and timber reserves are affected by dieback" is itself misleading, since it appears to exclude National Parks and unvested Crown land.

On Page 3 of CALM's Research Bulletin on Jarrah Dieback, (September 1989), we find that "By 1977 an estimated 280 000 ha of Crown land was infected, increasing at the rate of 20 000 ha/year (Shea 1978)". And from page 58 of the 1982 Working Plan, "To date some 223 000 ha of State Forest are known to be diseased....A survey has shown that it may not be possible to prevent the disease entering a further 119 000 ha of forest that are downhill from existing infections".

- 22. Colvin: There seems to be gaping holes in the administration of the quarantine laws. Whatever the regulations say, the policing of the rules has big problems.**

Claim The primary benefit of the quarantine program has been that it has enabled CALM to control the main agencies spreading dieback and to minimise access to quarantined forest.

Nearly a million hectares of State forest in Western Australia have been quarantined since 1977. The quarantine areas are crisscrossed by a maze of thousands of forest, public and farmer access roads. CALM does its best to maintain the security of these areas, but it is not always easy to keep up with the vandals.

Reply In CALM's words, "it is not always easy to keep up with the vandals". In *Four Corners*' words, "Whatever the regulations say, the policing of the rules has big problems".

- 23. Colvin: All the indications are that the rules, which are supposed to prevent the spread of dieback further through the forest, are being continually ignored and flouted. [An example was shown of a machine crossing a quarantine boundary without washdown.]**

Claim The machine shown on the program was operating within dieback-free forest under permit in dry soil conditions and in an area of non-susceptible vegetation. Under these conditions washing down is simply not within even CALM's stringent hygiene rules. In fact, dust could be seen rising from the machine's wheels on the *Four Corners* film — clear indication to any experienced person that a washdown was not required.

Furthermore, the CALM staff working within the quarantine area had an official permit to do so. The ABC personnel did not.

CALM takes its responsibilities to observe dieback rules very seriously. All operations are subjected to a management and hygiene test to ensure dieback is not spread.

Reply The sentence quoted refers to *one* site in the forest: the incident referred to by CALM occurred at *another* location and on another day. The difference was clearly defined in the film, and the two sequences were screened separately.

CALM's point deals with dieback control at the site of the illegal logging in the Shannon National Park.

CALM says: "The machine shown on the program was operating within dieback-free forest under permit in dry soil conditions and in an area of non-susceptible vegetation". *Four Corners* responds: The soil conditions were not dry. Despite the dust seen rising from the machine's wheels, the subsoil was wet. The machine is clearly seen carrying clods of damp earth into a Quarantine (Disease Risk) Area. Even had the soil been quite dry, CALM's defence does not stand up. The Southern Forest Region Industry Control Specification states that: "In dry-soil conditions a dry cleandown, a shovel, hard broom and/or compressed air to clean the above standard is preferred".

This was not done. The area the vehicle was entering was jarrah forest, which *by definition* is not "non-susceptible vegetation" when considering jarrah dieback precautions. Again, according to the industry control specification: "All plant & equipment must be clean before leaving roads to enter the forest in dieback-free forest areas".

There is a suggestion that ABC personnel were within this quarantine area without an official permit. This is untrue. The ABC vehicle did not enter the quarantine area.

If, however, the latter allegation refers to the reporter's piece to camera (a separate sequence in the film), then the accusation is patently absurd, as the following quote from the transcript demonstrates:

"I really shouldn't have been able to do that. Where I'm standing now is an unrestricted access area. Anybody can come and go. But behind me there is a Disease Risk Area, DRA, the bureaucrat's euphemism for what they used to call quarantine. Now this gate here is supposed to be padlocked at all times, especially to stop the logging trucks coming and going. But as you can see it's been ripped out and not too recently by the looks of it. All the indications are that the rules which are supposed to prevent the spread of dieback further through the forests are being continually ignored and flouted."

24. Colvin: "More than a century of logging has made massive inroads into the karri and jarrah forests." [Pictures shown of recently clearfelled areas.]

Claim Colvin's implication is that WA forests are disappearing as a result of logging. This is untrue. Over the last 150 years large reductions in forest areas have been the result of agricultural and urban development, not timber cutting. Many forests regrown after logging are proposed by conservationists to become national parks — for example, the beautiful Boranup karri forest, which was clearfelled and regenerated approximately 100 years ago. The Australian Conservation Foundation said about this area of forest: "that ... it should be recognised for ... its ... outstanding biological values and represent a secure and more adequate reserve system for the forest of the central area". In fact, this area of forest is being included into the national park. Very large areas of jarrah forest cut-over and regenerated in the 1920s and 1930s have been included in the Lane Poole Reserve, one of the south-west's most popular forest recreation areas.

Although Colvin was taken to a superb 60-year regrowth forest near Big Brook, he declined to film it.

Reply First, the implication that WA forests *are* disappearing as a result of logging was not drawn. This can be seen when the sentence in question is restored to its context: "More than a century of logging has made massive inroads into the Karri and Jarrah forests of the south west. CALM's policies now *are* designed to make sure that more than enough trees are planted to replace any timber taken. In fact they're going further, with big efforts to reforest cleared land. But the debate is about what they plant in its place" (stress added).

Second, the issue here, as throughout the film, was the cutting of old growth or "virgin" forest. No-one the *Four Corners* team spoke to, including foresters, scientists, conservationists and CALM officials, said anything to deny the proposition that "more than a century of logging has made massive inroads into the karri and jarrah forests". CALM says that "over the last 150 years large reductions in forest areas have been the result of agricultural and urban development", yet figures in CALM's own 1987-1997 Regional Management Plan show that only 33% of all land in the Southern Region is privately owned.

To quote CALM's own Timber Production Strategy, in the Northern Jarrah Forest, "There are no significant areas of original forest, except those in national parks or conservation reserves, which have not been cut for timber. The remaining old growth usually consists of individual residual trees or groups of trees once marked for retention or that were unsuitable for milling".

CALM today regards 150 000 cu/m per year as a sustainable yield. Figures supplied by CALM to the *Four Corners* team showed that in the decades after WW2, commercial logging took 200 000 cu m of timber per year, peaking in the seventies with yields of 300 000 cu/m per year. This information, which was included in the *Four Corners* script, indisputably represents "massive inroads" into the old-growth forests.

Third, the *Four Corners* team was taken to Big Brook. It was shown a cleared recreation area and artificial dam, including a gravel track for disabled people in wheelchairs. The team explained, not for the first time, that this and the adjacent Big Brook Forest represented, in film terms, recreation and tourism, and that this was not the subject of their story.

25. Colvin: "CAL scientists say a third of forest birds need hollows, which only form in trees 120 years or older, yet the policy is to log after only 100 years."

Claim Colvin asked CALM's Regional Manager Alan Walker at interview about CALM's policy to log after only 100 years. The substance of Walker's answer, which was not used on the program, is as follows:

"CALM's strategy to provide habitat for hole nesting species is to provide an extensive network of unlogged strips and patches throughout the karri forest. The road, river and stream zone network provides the primary nesting site habitat and subsequent opportunity for species recolonisation into adjacent regrowth forests. Additional habitat zones are provided through 'special care buffer zones' retained around rock outcrops, swamps, woodlands, wetlands, large trees and steep slopes."

Even in the case of the karri forest, no regrowth areas in State forest have reached 100 years in age. The oldest substantial areas being managed for multiple use (including timber production) are only 60 years old. Over the next 40 years there will be ample opportunity to extend the rotation age for karri to 120 years or more, if research shows this to be necessary to prevent bird species becoming endangered. CALM is conducting research into these issues.

Colvin failed to mention the extensive network of unlogged reserves throughout the forest and which provide old growth habitat for wildlife. Nor did he give CALM any credit for establishing them, or for conducting research into forest wildlife and its conservation, or for retaining habitat trees in cutover jarrah forests.

Reply *Four Corners'* statement (again, factual and accurate), was made following conversations with scientists inside and outside CALM. Despite Alan Walker's assurances, those scientists remain concerned about the loss of numbers in birds and mammals as a result of clearfelling. They are even more concerned about the effect on the remaining fauna in wildlife corridors of CALM's thinning of Road, River and Stream Reserves.

26. Colvin: The Department [CALM] was formed in 1985. It put the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the same roof as the Forests Department. CALM's critics say the interests of the environment have never recovered.

Claim Significantly, *Four Corners* did not show the section of the interview where Dr Shea specifically dealt with the question of an integrated agency.

Colvin did not put "the critics" on camera, name them, or provide a single fact or piece of evidence to support this assertion. Nor did Colvin seek alternative views. Nor did he mention the many positive things CALM has done in the environmental area, e.g. the establishment of numerous new national parks and the State's first marine parks, the appointment of scientific and ecological officers to regions and districts all over the State where there were none before, and a major commitment to ecological research and consultative management planning.

In reply to questions from a Select Committee on Land Conservation, Mr Norman Halse, Chairman of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and a previous president of the Conservation Council of Western Australia, stated:

"CALM's dual roles in managing the conservation estate and State forests for timber production are not considered to be incompatible. These two roles would only be incompatible if CALM were given a further responsibility to meet a specific part of Western Australia's timber requirement. In the absence of such a responsibility CALM manages the forest in the best way for long-term production and multiple use and then makes available the timber production from such management.

"The combination of nature conservation activities with the other duties of CALM means that expertise and information on nature conservation is easily available within the organisation and is applied everywhere in its management activities."

Mr Halse has issued a press release condemning the *Four Corners* program.

Reply That is what CALM's critics say.

Nor is there any secret about who CALM's critics are; they comprise many of the major environmentalist organisations in Western Australia and, judging by correspondence received at *Four Corners*, a range of private individuals as well.

- 27. Alex Syme: From the formation of CALM the number of employees consisted of about 1400 employees from the Forests Department, and only around about 100 people from National Parks and Wildlife and Fisheries and Fauna ... the Department is dominated by production forest thinking foresters.**

Claim Syme's figures are almost correct. At the time of amalgamation the number of people employed (including part-time employees) by the three component departments were: Forests Department 1311, National Parks 102, Wildlife 73, for a total of 1486. Of this total fewer than 7% were professional foresters.

The total number of staff with forestry training (professional and field staff) was only 345, or 23.7.

Of the 429 new employees hired by CALM since 1985, only 13.5% are foresters.

Of the 218 professional (university trained) staff employed currently by CALM, 135 have degrees other than forestry (e.g. zoology, botany, environmental science etc.) and some forestry trained staff have second degrees in other disciplines.

CALM manages more than 18 million hectares of land in Western Australia on behalf of the people of Western Australia. It does not determine the land management policy or land management objectives. Ultimately these are determined by the Government. The CALM Act provides for the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and the Lands and Forest Commission to submit the management plans for these lands and waters to the Government for approval. The Act also has a statutory requirement for public participation in the land management planning process.

The Statutory bodies under which CALM operates are the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA) and the Lands and Forest Commission (LFC). The NPNCA has a membership of 14, only three of whom are foresters; the LFC has one forester out of three members. The CALM Corporate Executive has a membership of 10, of which five are foresters and five are not. Of the 45 senior management and scientific positions in CALM, 20 are trained foresters and 25 are not.

Not all foresters think in terms of timber production. Many foresters in CALM specialise in ecology, research, recreation, education, environmental protection, fire management and park and reserve management.

Reply As CALM concedes, Syme's figures are broadly accurate.

Four Corners spoke off-the-record to a number of CALM employees — including scientists and foresters — who backed up the view that the Department was oriented towards production forestry, and who said, regardless of numbers, that the key positions were occupied by people for whom timber production, and not ecology, was the highest priority.

- 28. Syme: They've taken away a small quantity of jarrah for sawlogs. They've taken away almost all the marri [sic: karri] trees for woodchip logs, and left an awful lot of good timber that's going to be burnt and wasted.... The trees that are left standing, as you can see, are dying. They've been poisoned.**

Claim In any industry there are low grade and high grade products — apples, for instance. There is a special problem in forest management. Low grade logs, if left standing in the forest, impede the regeneration of a new forest after logging and result generally in a less productive forest.

Historically forest managers have removed low grade logs in a number of ways, including ringbarking and felling.

CALM is constantly trying to develop new markets or new products so that this material can be used. In the meantime, cull trees (small or ill-formed trees which no sawmiller can utilise and which are competing with retained "crop trees") must be removed in order to ensure that a productive forest develops in the future.

CALM's goal is to phase out this operation through further improvements in timber utilisation.

Reply CALM's response does nothing to rebut the truth of anything said in this extract.

29. Syme: The total area of forest logged each year is around 300 sq km [in jarrah]. As a result the old forest will soon be gone.

Claim Colvin did not query and apparently did not check these figures. In fact, the total area of jarrah logged in 1987 was around 18,500 ha (185 sq km), in 1988 was 24,000 ha (240 sq km) and in 1989 was 15,300 ha (153 sq km). About a quarter of these areas required post-logging treatment (jarrah stand improvement) to enhance naturally occurring jarrah regeneration.

The Timber Strategy (Figure 4(b), page 44 and Figure 6(b), page 51) indicates that old growth in multiple use State forest will still be available until at least the year 2035. A substantial area of old growth forest will continue within the reserve system for ever. The figures as shown in the State Government's submission to the Resource Assessment Commission are as follows. In the karri forest 46% of old growth forest is in national parks (or forests to become parks or reserves under the original management plans). For the jarrah forest the equivalent figure is 30%, and for wandoo the figure is 70%. For the karri forest an additional 24% is within road, river and stream zones which are not planned to be clearfelled.

Colvin was given a copy of these documents but failed to check Syme's facts in them. Nor did he question Syme over his incorrect data. This contrasts oddly with his sustained and eager hounding of a typing error in a 1988 CALM document.

Reply *Four Corners* did check Mr Syme's figures from documents publicly available.

Careful scrutiny of CALM's own 1988-89 annual report, at p.36, shows that 29,786 hectares or 297.86 square kilometres of jarrah were logged.

The figure of 24,000 ha (240 sq km), which CALM now quotes, ignores the figures of 765 hectares (7.65 sq km) in the "Forest Improvement Rehabilitation Scheme", and 5,131 hectares (51.31 sq km) in the category of "Jarrah Stand Improvement"—the category which specifically covers the location where the interview in question was filmed.

Mr Syme's total of "...around 300 sq km.." is thus correct.

Mr Syme's claim about the fate of the old forest was his opinion.

30. Syme: "This particular coupe here is an area which has originally been left as a corridor for wildlife between two of the coupes you can see on either side of it, and they've taken it out."

Claim Apart from some carefully designed research areas, no areas nominated as wildlife corridors have been clearfelled. The coupe shown on film looked like Thompson 4, part of a contiguous area which is being harvested and regenerated at planned intervals. The strip shown was never designated as a wildlife corridor. Colvin made no attempt to verify Syme's assertion with CALM, but accepted it quite uncritically.

Reply Under the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for West Australian Chip & Pulp (WACAP) by the WA Forests Department, which cleared the way for woodchipping in the 1970s (and which has yet to be superseded in practice), in each forest block 20% was to be left unlogged and that would consist of corridors for wildlife. This has not always happened, as the segment demonstrated. CALM's reply draws a veil over this by introducing the irrelevant concept of "areas nominated as wildlife corridors" (stress added).

31. Colvin claims there is deep disquiet in the scientific community about a CALM proposal to log in previously sacrosanct road and river reserves.

Claim In December 1987 the Regional Management Plan for the Southern Forest Region stated in part (p. 11) that:

— No changes will be made to the existing system without evaluation and approval by the EPA.

— The zones will not be subjected to clearfelling.

— However, selective cutting in the zones, which has been practised throughout the period since the EIS was approved, will continue. (This refers to the thinning of even-aged regrowth stands which originated from clearfelling and regeneration 50-odd years ago.)

— There will be no decrease in the area of the existing road, river and stream zones.

This information was provided to *Four Corners*. It was not used.

What has been said publicly many times is that the road reserve system is twice what was legally required by the EIS. The proposal to do some selective logging, if approved, in the 'road, river and stream

reserves refers to the additional 200 metre width which would be added to the legally required road, river and stream reserve system.

Reply CALM's defence has *not* reduced the disquiet in the scientific community. The statement is true and factual as it stands.

CALM's reply fudges the issue by referring to the 1987 Regional Management Plan.

CALM's March 1988 review of the Road, River and Stream Zone system *does* propose to clearfell in the zones. Under this proposal, the reserves would be reduced from 200 to 100 metres in the case of rivers, and from 400 to 200 metres in the case of roads.

32. **Dr Chittleborough: "I can't imagine scientists within CALM saying that they understand the ecosystem enough to manage it."**

Claim In a subsequent interview with ABC Regional Radio Bunbury, Colvin said that CALM scientists were reluctant to speak to him for fear of retribution to them or their families. Yet Mr Colvin declined to take the opportunity to interview a CALM scientist working on karri forest ecology.

CALM does not claim to know everything about forest ecosystems. Nor can it close down the WA timber industry till it does.

CALM and one of its predecessors (the Forests Department) have studied the effects of forest management on flora and fauna since 1970. Since that time there have been detailed single species studies on rare and endangered species (e.g. the woylie, numbat and tamar). A series of plots with detailed recording of the effects of different fire regimes on plants have been in place since 1970. There are in place detailed long-term studies of the effects of felling and regeneration on karri forest bird communities. Studies of communities of forest birds and animals have also been done in relation to fire in both the karri and jarrah forest. There have been a series of plant and community ecological studies both in the jarrah and karri forest. There are also several studies completed and ongoing by non-CALM scientists, including work on species such as the chuditch, the karri mud minnow, hollow nesting species and nutrient cycling. None of this was referred to by *Four Corners*.

In addition, biological surveys in the forest were started in 1970 and have been ongoing, particularly in the karri region. From these the distribution of vertebrate species is well-known and is documented in Forests Department Bulletin 94 of 1985. These studies contributed to work on the location and establishment of a series of conservation reserves called National Priority Areas for flora and fauna. Under CALM most of these have since become gazetted as national parks and nature reserves or are proposed to become parks and reserves. This was not mentioned by *Four Corners*.

One of these areas is the Perup State forest, where the best populations of some of the rare and endangered species such as the woylie, tamar, numbat, chuditch and western ring-tail possum exist. Perup is used for the continued development of management techniques for these species. The management has been so successful that the Perup is one of the best areas where significant mainland populations of these species exist, and it is to be declared a nature reserve. It is also used to run courses on wildlife ecology, and very popular University extension courses are held there each spring and autumn. *Four Corners* did not refer to the Perup.

Over 150 scientific publications deal with karri biology and ecology. A list is published in *Landnote* 8/86. A further 100 references or so on fire effects in south-west forests have been recently listed in a review by Christensen and Abbott.

Reply As the film showed, but CALM's reply fails to mention, CALM's Alan Walker believes that "25 years of research" are enough to provide a scientific guarantee that "there is absolutely no cause for concern in respect to the conservation of flora and fauna". Dr Chittleborough's response reflected the views of a number of scientists who spoke to *Four Corners*, and who felt that such a statement represented a degree of hubris on CALM's part.

The alleged refusal of an interview with a CALM forest ecologist has been dealt with at point 7 above.

33. Colvin: Whatever the scientific arguments, money talks louder. The need to feed the timber industry appetite for wood is bound to be a driving force in CALM's thinking about how to manage the forest.

Claim Colvin makes the assumption that CALM is "driven" by the timber industry to feed it with wood. But the community, through the Government, determines the level of timber produced in the forests. In addition, CALM is required *by legislation* to responsibly manage State forests to produce timber on a sustained yield basis. This timber is an important commodity used by Western Australians for building houses, furniture, railways, etc. Colvin's view that CALM is simply feeding an "industry appetite" demonstrates a muddled approach to economic and social issues.

If Western Australia does not produce its own timber, it will have to import it, with serious economic consequences. Sawn timber imports into Western Australia in 1989 exceeded 92,000 cubic metres. This was an increase of 123 on the previous year.

Reply Items 33 and 34. The statement dealt with in point 33 is clearly justified by the quote from Dr Shea referred to at point 34. CALM's response to the timber industry's appetite for wood is demonstrated by the quotation from CALM News. CALM's reply skates over Dr Shea's denial that he ever wrote this.

34. Colvin made use of Dr Shea's quote in CALM's newsletter which stated that CALM's contractual arrangement with the timber industry was forcing it to consider logging in the road, river and stream reserves.

Claim See the answer to item 31.

Reply See response to item 33

35. Colvin: The glossy image CALM shows the world is one of openness and accessibility. In real life, the Department maintain an iron grip on information. Even the Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra watch-dog on our natural treasures, can't get the data it needs.

Claim In a press release the Australian Heritage Commission has comprehensively rebutted the statements made in the *Four Corners* program. In his letter to Dr Shea, the Commission's Acting Director, Mr Gerard Early, said about the program: "I was dismayed to see the reference to the Australian Heritage Commission. About the only accurate comment was that we declined to be interviewed."

Reply It is not *Four Corners'* normal practice to reveal sources of off-the-record or unattributable information. However, when the sources reveal themselves, and when they do so as in this case with a flat denial which impugns the integrity of the program and its journalists, *Four Corners* is left with little choice.

The facts are that *Four Corners* had extensive and repeated conversations with the Australian Heritage Commission, and the references in the film to the AHC were based accurately on conversations with two senior officials of the Commission. ***They supplied the information which the Commission is now denying.*** The program rang them back more than once to check what was off the record and what could be used unattributed, and was told, "You can use all the information you've got from us, just don't quote us."

To quote from Mark Colvin's shorthand notes of a conversation with the senior of the two officials, who was making it clear that an on-camera interview would not be possible:

"One problem is that [Commission Head] Pat Galvin and I are going to be out of town on the day. I have spoken to Galvin about it and on that basis we decided not to do the interview. If you had rung in two months time, we would probably do it. We are involved in negotiations with CALM, and I think our relations may improve, so we are reluctant to do anything too obvious which could get in the way of that. We've been waiting two years, and eventually we will probably speak out. You do have to understand that CALM don't make it easy for anyone who speaks out against them. That's why we're treading so carefully."

According to notes taken by researcher Ray Moynihan of a conversation lasting some thirty minutes with the other senior official, the Australian Heritage Commission "wanted to assess a large number of nominations", but the Commission was "getting no information from CALM" to

help do this. Mr Moynihan was told the Commission was "concerned about the area of remaining old growth forests". The AHC official said the situation "...is a constant bother" and that the lack of information about areas to be assessed had been "...going on for years." This detail was provided as background. Ray Moynihan put it to the official that the AHC was "...fed up..." with the situation as he believed this to be an accurate summation of their discussion. In response he was told that the Commission was "close to saying all this" but was still trying to negotiate with CALM.

Asked about the Commission's position, in subsequent telephone and face-to-face interviews with Moynihan, the more senior of the two officials did not contradict the substance of what his colleague had said.

In a face-to-face interview in Canberra, this official told Moynihan: "For two years there has been no information from CALM" to help the Australian Heritage Commission assess the areas nominated for the register. He said Western Australia was a "different situation from all other states", and that there were "consultants in every other state". However, the official made it clear he was reluctant to make the comments publicly because he was worried about upsetting CALM. These statements were presented to Ray Moynihan as a situation which was causing concern and frustration to the Australian Heritage Commission.

Following the program and AHC's subsequent press release, the Executive Producer of *Four Corners*, Ian Macintosh, rang Gerard Early in Canberra on June 21st and read him quotes from the notes of Colvin and Moynihan. Mr Early confirmed that the conversations had taken place with the two officials. However, he disagreed with *Four Corners'* conclusion that the Commission was "angry" with CALM.

The AHC's press release also claimed *Four Corners* had implied that Paul Llewellyn was speaking on behalf of the Commission. That is not true. The script and the interview with Mr Llewellyn clearly described past events — for example "Paul Llewellyn was one Heritage Commission consultant who tried...." and "....[his report] was supposed to be a document directed to the Heritage Commission....". In short, Mr Llewellyn's past role as a consultant to the Commission was not misrepresented. Mr Early conceded as much in his conversation with Macintosh.

The AHC's press release further asserts that: "Office footage was also represented as being the Commission's premises in Canberra". This, too, is wrong. The office footage in question, from a CALM video, began with the CALM narration: "CALM has adopted a consensus approach, recognising that success depends upon community support..." and continued under Mark Colvin's voice, in the following three sentences, which referred to CALM's handling of information. At the end of these sentences the receptionist on the CALM video was clearly heard to answer: "...Good afternoon, Conservation and Land Management...".

The AHC's claim about the function of the Register of the National Estate is dealt with in point 36 below.

Since Mr Early's covering letter to CALM, only now made public, says "...About the only accurate comment was that we declined to be interviewed...", *Four Corners* has been left with no choice but to clear the program's name by making these conversations public.

36. Colvin: But you've [Dr Shea] told me what the Australian Heritage Commission say you can do is within the law. What I'm saying is, common sense surely would dictate that if it's part of the National Heritage, you wouldn't go in and clearfell it.

Claim CALM has never clearfelled any areas which are on the register of the National Estate.

Mr Gerard Early in his press release said: "Listing of a place in the Register is essentially an alerting mechanism by which the special heritage values of a place are brought to the notice of decision-makers, planners, owners and the general community. The Register is not a land management system."

Reply The logging discussed here took place in forest *interim* listed by the Australian Heritage Commission. Because of the difficulties and delays revealed to *Four Corners* by the AHC, it is quite correct to say that it is not *on the register*. But that's hardly the point.

As to the Commission's press release, *Four Corners* did not say the Register was a land management system. Clearly making a distinction between *the law* and *a common sense expectation*, *Four Corners* legitimately asked why the area had been clearfelled.

Importantly, however, Dr Shea was able in the program to put his view on this question.

- 37 Colvin: The Australian Heritage Commission is still trying to improve relations with CALM. *Four Corners* understands, however, that the Commission has been waiting for two years for information on areas in the south-west The Commission is concerned, angry and frustrated over delays in cooperation from CALM.**

Claim Colvin did not identify the person who made this statement. However, in the media release on 19 June 1990 by the AHC, Mr Early stated that the Commission was particularly disappointed with the allegation made on national television, because he had "specifically rejected it when it was put to him by the *Four Corners* team".

Mr Early also said: "There is no denying that there have been differences of view between the AHC and CALM in the past. However, the two organisations continue to discuss a range of issues of mutual concern including forestry matters."

Reply See 35.

- 38. Colvin: John Briggs and John Leigh are CSIRO botanists who compiled Australia's most comprehensive and respected Register of the country's rarest flora. But publication of their major reference work was held up for 18 months because CALM wouldn't cooperate. Only Western Australia insisted on putting in its own lower estimates, for endangered and vulnerable plants.**

Claim It is strange in a nation that the Prime Minister says needs to become "clever" that a taxpayer-funded organisation should deliberately attempt to destroy the cooperation between two significant scientific organisations. The very essence of the cooperative Research Centre initiative announced by the Prime Minister was to overcome the geographical and institutional barriers that have prevented Australia capitalising on its intellectual excellence.

Four Corners' allegations have been comprehensively refuted by Dr John Stocker, Chief Executive of the CSIRO, in his letter to Dr Shea:

"A careful reading of the transcript will show that while the *Four Corners* reporter may have claimed that obstruction from CALM has been a problem, no such intention could be ascribed to the CSIRO scientists concerned. In some instances comments by CSIRO scientists were taken out of context.

"I regret the distress which the program has caused to you and CALM scientists and assure you that I and the CSIRO scientists concerned in the program value CALM's cooperation highly."

The formal investigation of this program should determine when the CSIRO scientists were interviewed. Quite clearly Dr Shea was set up for this question as is indicated in the transcript of his interview.

Western Australia has had endangered flora legislation since 1980. We were the first State to have such legislation, and until Victoria passed their Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act recently we were the only State in Australia with such legislation. CALM has the best database on endangered flora anywhere in Australia and has readily provided all its data (except the exact locations of declared endangered plants) to the CSIRO for publication. Locations are provided for research purposes only; exact locations of endangered plants are not published to prevent illegal exploitation by seed collectors or damage by over-visitation. CALM has carried out extensive surveys of endangered plants in Western Australia over the last 15 years and has recently published a book (*Western Australia's Endangered Flora*) which provides details on all declared rare and endangered plants. CALM has also recently published a management program for all declared endangered plants in the Northern Forest Region and is developing similar programs for the other forest regions. Colvin's insinuation that CALM is secretive in this regard is ridiculous.

There was an extensive period of consultation between CSIRO and CALM scientists over this issue. One reason for CALM's caution (not secrecy) is that the term "endangered" has a specific legal meaning in our legislation and this is not the case in other States.

Reply The CSIRO, like the Australian Heritage Commission, may have its own reasons for denying in the wake of the program that there have been problems with CALM. The facts are that the *Four Corners* team spoke on a number of occasions with the two CSIRO scientists interviewed, including, of course, extensive conversations on the day of the interview. *Four Corners* was also given a clearance by the two men's superior officer to conduct the interview.

The CSIRO says that "while the *Four Corners* reporter may have claimed that obstruction from CALM has been a problem, no such intention could be ascribed to the CALM scientists concerned". The full transcript of the interview, as printed below, demonstrates conclusively that the scientists did in fact have this intention. It also gives the lie to Dr Stocker's assertion that comments were taken out of context. The interview was edited in accordance with *Four Corners'*

normal procedures.

(Full CSIRO interview transcript begins)

- Q. Well John [Leigh] how important is it when you look at specimens like this to know whether they are extinct or rare or ... the other distinctions - how important are the distinctions?
- A. Well I think the distinctions are very important because by their very nature they automatically imply a time span and also a sense of urgency. For example, it's very important that we should try and find any of the species which we have categorised presumed extinct. Over the years 3 or 4 of those have been found because people have gone back to the regional localities, often found out from these herbarium sheet data. The other thing is the endangered species are likely to become extinct between 10 to 20 years if remedial action isn't taken. And so those probably are our number one priority species. There's also another important group of threatened species which we've categorised as vulnerable and those could become extinct in 20 to 50 years. There's slightly less urgency about those ones.
- Q. Now we would expect I suppose that scientists would agree on what fairly precise categorisations like that actually mean - did this happen with Western Australia?
- A. Well we have had some difficulties. There is an international union for the conservation of nature which has defined a number of these categories - endangered, vulnerable, extinct, etc. And those are very well understood and we have been using those nationally since 1979 when we published our first list and again in 1981 and those are readily understood and we have given explanatory notes on how they should be applied. So we really haven't had much difficulty, and they were used in Western Australia previously.
- Q. Has any other State had any other problems with them?
- A. No they haven't.
- Q. John Briggs, you .. were involved with the toing and froing with Western Australia - just what happened that caused the hold ups?
- A. Um...well I guess the problem arose when CALM suddenly notified us that they had introduced a new set of minimum search time criteria which we had to prove surveys of rare species had met before they could be allocated to one of the categories and we had a lot of difficulty actually proving that we had met some of these minimum search time criteria because we rely on a lot of assistance from botanical people throughout Western Australia ... for example, outside the Department (coughs) and sometimes that ... um...we ... their information is accumulated over you know several decades and it's very hard to actually quantify how much time has been spent on one particular species and therefore whether it would meet CALM's criteria. So because we often couldn't prove that it met these new criteria CALM insisted that they should be regarded as poorly known.
- Q. And these new criteria of CALM's were they much tougher than the internationally accepted criteria?
- A. Yes I think they are and we have...certainly have sympathy with the need to have stringent search times for species which are going to have legislative powers applied to them. But they were much more rigorous than we have been applying Australia wide really...
- Q. And more rigorous than any other State was applying?
- A. Well yes in a way in that there were set guidelines and one had to prove that one met them. Now we will not code anything vulnerable or endangered unless we have good evidence that that is the case. Um, and we certainly have quite a large number of species in the list coded poorly known because we don't feel enough information is known. But ... with many species we feel there is sufficient information available to reasonably allocate a conservation code. And we believe it's better to make the assessment on the best currently available information and if necessary modify the codings if new information comes to hand that would suggest a change in coding is warranted.
- Q. So what was the result on your publication of their new conditions?
- A. Well we were endeavouring to find solutions to this problem and I ... I guess it held the publication up for about 18 months trying to find a solution...
- Q. 18 months of work?
- A. 18 months...well not full time work, but certainly 18 months of ... correspondence and endeavouring to prove that we had the evidence that species should be coded here into categories.
- Q. Well John Leigh, what was the end result? You've got tables here where there are figures for what Western Australia thinks and figures for what you think - is that satisfactory?
- A. Well it was the compromise that was arrived at at the end. I mean one of the other important changes and differences between what we did with all the other States and the Northern Territory and Western Australia was that we were requested not to publish information relating to the reserves and the reserve status of many of the Western Australian...oh all of the West Australian species. Whereas in fact we've given that information for all the other States.
- Q. So the result is that you've got these columns of blank spaces?
- A. That's right...and we have a dual code also for Western Australia. We indicate clearly those species which they believe are poorly known as opposed to the code which we've applied which is ... equivalent to the code we've used throughout the ... throughout Australia.
- Q. So what's the consequence of that? I mean ... is that a satisfactory state of affairs? You described it as a compromise, were you happy with the compromise?

A. *Uh, well we were happy to see the publication published because there were many other States wanting this publication out. This is used as part of the planning processes in other States and many of the ... the last list was published in 1981 and people were very anxious that this list should come out so they could continue to use it.*

Q. *So it's important, it's not just a scientific document, it has real practical value?*

A. *Yes it has real practical value. It relates to the planning and environmental impact statements throughout Australia. For example, if a species is categorised nationally as endangered then that particular area on which that species grows should receive special attention and development should be planned sympathetically.*

Q. *So if there are blank spaces on huge amounts of information, if there are disagreements about what's endangered, what's rare, what's ... extinct - then that's going to have practical effects too?*

A. *Yes I do believe so. For example we believe that the species which are coded as endangered and vulnerable in West Australia should receive the highest priority for survey and research.*

Q. *And instead there's ... there's argument and debate about them?*

A. *Well for example they've categorised over ... we ... there are approximately 1400 species listed as rare or threatened from Western Australia and over a 1,000 of those have been categorised by CALM as being poorly known. Now we believe that the information is perhaps not as deficient as that.*

Q. *And if they are classified the way you have them classified then they'll obviously have to get more attention than they're getting now?*

A. *Well we would hope that would be the case.*

CUT

CAMERA ROLL NO. 3 - SLATE NO. 6

Q. *What's the international significance of what we're talking about - are we just looking at a little local problem or is it something that is more important on the world stage?*

A. *No it's very significant indeed. Uh, the West Australian flora is very unique indeed and ... there is a world monitoring unit, conservation unit, based in Cambridge in the United Kingdom and they keep a list of species throughout the world which are threatened and it's fairly significant that some 15% of the species which they have recognised ... come from Australia and almost 45% of those species are West Australian in origin.*

Q. *So if there's a difference of opinion between Canberra and Perth that can have some significance?*

A. *Well it has a world significance really. These are not only West Australian species, these are world species.*
(end of transcript)

CALM requests, at p.37, that the formal investigation of the program determine when the CSIRO scientists were interviewed. The answer, as shown by *Four Corners* travel records, dates on sound-sheets, etc, is that they were interviewed on the 7th June, after the team had returned from the West. The allegation that Dr Shea was "set up" is therefore demonstrably false.

39. Colvin: "Briggs and Leigh quote figures that 15% of the world's endangered plants are in Australia and 45% of these are in the West. Obstruction from CALM is a real problem."

Claim As the *Four Corners* program concentrates on forest management in the south-west forests, it's a pity Mr Colvin did not also say that only 9 out of 238 declared endangered plant species in Western Australia occur in State forest in the Southern Forest Region, and none of these is threatened by logging and regeneration. The *Four Corners* team was given a copy of CALM's publication *Western Australia's Endangered Flora*, but did not refer to it on the program.

CALM has never been "obstructive" over this issue. This assertion by Colvin is totally unsubstantiated.

Reply The reporter's statement is a fair paraphrase of the final section of interview quoted above. To quote again:

"...it's fairly significant that some 15% of the species which they have recognised come from Australia and almost 45% of those species are West Australian in origin.

Q. *So if there's a difference of opinion between Canberra and Perth that can have some significance?*

A. *Well it has a world significance really. These are not only West Australian species, these are world species".*

Or, as Mark Colvin's script put it:

"Briggs and Leigh quote figures showing that fifteen percent of the world's endangered plants are in Australia — and forty five percent of those are in the West. Obstruction from CALM is a real problem".

CALM may disagree, but it should take up any such disagreement with the scientists concerned.

40. **Colvin: "CALM even sees basic definitions through timber coloured spectacles."**
 He quoted a misprint in a CALM document which gave the definition of a mature forest as being the state at which the stand best fulfills the main purpose of loading onto a haulage vehicle.

Claim In view of the large amount of editing carried out (the total time given to Dr Shea was two minutes out of a total of three hours of recorded interview) it is amazing how Colvin dwelt on this question in his interview with Alan Walker.

Walker explained a number of times that the incorrect definition of a mature forest was the result of a typographical error. On the same day he showed the relevant pages to Colvin, clearly demonstrating the misprint. Despite knowing this, Colvin still made his false assertion that CALM sees basic definitions through timber-coloured spectacles. Appendix 15 shows the correct definition as printed in the Southern Forest Regional Management Plan (1987). It also shows how the typographical error was made.

Even CALM's Ranger Roopaw (a regular commentator in CALM's inhouse paper) has been moved to make a comment about the significance of typographical errors to in-depth current affairs reporters.

Reply Before broadcast, the *Four Corners* team made a careful examination of the document attached by CALM as Appendix 15. The team noted that the glossary in CALM's 1987 management plan contained a number of definitions *not* included in the 1988 document. The 1988 document, on the other hand, contained a number of entries which do *not* appear in the 1987 glossary. The Department's assertion that a typist made an understandable error while simply transcribing from one to another was therefore questionable. The fact remains that the definition *was* printed in CALM's Road, River and Stream Reserve Report, which, typist or no typist, was presumably proof-read before printing. Previous publicity given elsewhere to the resulting "definition" has undermined CALM's credibility.

Four Corners' decision, therefore, was to let the viewer decide by running the reply of the officer concerned at length. If CALM feels it was less than satisfactory, perhaps it should discuss the matter with him.

41. **Drake: Well, I mean, if the Government was silly enough to be so radical as to do it all in one hit, I mean, it might happen, I mean the worst that would then follow, would be that you'd have hundreds of people unemployed for a few month, until CALM decided to sell that wood to some new industry people, who would then re-employ the ones that were put off work.**

Claim After his interview with Dr Shea, Colvin edited out Dr Shea's reply to a question as to why the Government does not put all the timber on the open market.

ABC INTERVIEWER: The Government doesn't put the timber that it puts on the market on the open market.

DR SHEA: But it does, it does put a significant proportion of the timber on the open market over periods of time.

For example, I've just told you that we had two massive tenders for regrowth karri — that's the new forest.

But you see, if we put all of the timber on the open market tomorrow, we would do what happened — what happened in North America on the west coast, is that we would get extraordinarily good prices for a year, then the whole industry would become chaotic, and there would be massive unemployment.

What we've chosen to do, and I think you'll agree, is something which is an intelligent way of approaching the situation, is to have a blend of the existing system of allocation with increasing proportions over time of the resource being put on the market.

You see, Mark, it would be easy for me to take the easy route out, and say "the simplest solution to this problem is not going to any complex calculations — we'll just throw it all on the market".

But by doing that I would create chaos — I wouldn't suffer — ABC journalists wouldn't suffer, but ordinary people down in those towns who depend on their jobs for a stable timber industry would be out of a job.

Now, I'm not prepared to do that.

Reply Mr Drake's opinion is his own, not that of *Four Corners*. However, it is also clear that he was referring to a "worst case" situation and it was therefore unnecessary to include further comment on the issue. The timber industry, the unions and the government have all previously stated clear views on the consequences of such changes.

It is not the practice of *Four Corners*, or other documentary makers, to slavishly run statement and counter-statement to every issue raised in a particular program. This approach is clearly covered in the ABC's Charter of Editorial Practice.

42. The *Four Corners* program made several personal attacks on Dr Shea, the Executive Director of CALM; specifically that he is the real power within the forest industry, and that he has a politician's knack of kissing babies when there is a camera about.

Claim When he made these voiceover remarks, the reporter neglected to mention that the baby was Dr Shea's and that Dr Shea had been asked to pick her up for a general vision shot.

This unethical personal attack on the Executive Director of CALM provides an indication of the motives and modus operandi of the *Four Corners* team.

This incident has been fully documented in an official complaint to the Managing Director of the ABC.

Reply *Four Corners* filmed Dr Shea with his daughter at his request, repeated on a number of occasions. It was an error not to identify Dr Shea's daughter, though it was an error of caution. However, the ABC categorically denies that there was any unethical personal attack on Dr Shea given his repeated insistence that he be filmed with his daughter and *Four Corners'* expressed reluctance to comply.

43. Colvin contradicted Dr Shea's claim that a Commissioner and his staff from the Resource Assessment Commission were impressed by what they saw in the forest. In support Colvin used a quote from a RAC letter: the Resource Assessment Commission has not yet reached a conclusion or issued a final report on the way in which the forests are managed in Western Australia.

Colvin goes on to say: When the RAC spotlights the forests of the South-West, CALM is going to have to justify its logging policies, like it or not.

Claim Following is the full record of the interview with Dr Shea as it relates to the Resource Assessment Commission.

ABC INTERVIEWER: The Resource Assessment Commission has got the spotlight on you at the moment, and their particular interest is whether it is economically worthwhile to keep on cutting down the forest, to keep on managing them the way you are.

What's your answer to them? What's going to be the thrust of what you say to them?

DR SHEA: What I can say is that we strongly support the Resource Assessment Commission because it brings a degree of objectivity and professionalism in this debate which hasn't been there in recent times.

The second thing I will say to you is that the Resource Assessment Commission has already been over here and has acclaimed our forest management.

The third thing I would say to you, is that we have made our submission to the Resource Assessment Commission, we've put all our cards on the table, and we believe because we've achieved those very very significant increases in prices of logs, and because of our efficiency that it is an economic proposition.

As I said to you, we're not talking about "small cheese" in this State. We're not only talking about an incredibly important reserve for tourism which has two million visits in the forests in the South-West.

We're also talking about an industry, which over the next ten years, will invest more than 200 million dollars and will yield to the State more than a billion dollars.

So, we believe the economics are right, but certainly we will welcome the Resource Assessment Commission's detailed and objective analysis and we hope that you mirror the analysis that they are going to do in your TV program when you show it.

ABC INTERVIEWER: The Commission is only in the preliminary stages of its investigations — it seems

remarkable that you say they are acclaiming your forest management at this stage.

Dr SHEA: Certainly when we talked, we've had the Resource Assessment Commission, not all the Commissioners, but a Commissioner and their staff, and we took them through the forest, and much of the forest that you saw today, they acclaimed what they saw.

ABC INTERVIEWER: They acclaimed it?

Dr SHEA: Yes.

ABC INTERVIEWER: You have the seal of approval -

Dr SHEA: No we haven't -

ABC INTERVIEWER: From the Resources Assessment Commission.

Dr SHEA: - not in writing, we have their verbal thanks and congratulations on what was shown, and also their appreciation of what's being done.

In a letter to Dr Shea from Mr Alex Nicholson from the Resource Assessment Commission he documents the attempt by the *Four Corners* researcher to trick him into making a damning statement about Dr Shea's response to the interviewer's query about the RAC. This is another example of the duplicity practised by the *Four Corners* team.

Reply

Dr Shea did NOT say that the Commissioner and staff of the Resource Assessment Commission were "impressed" by what they saw in the forest. He said they "acclaimed" it. He said it not once, but twice. Then, when challenged, he confirmed that this was the word he meant.

"Acclaim", according to the Macquarie Dictionary, means "To salute with words or sounds of joy or approval; applaud."

Neither the Resource Assessment Commission nor its staff have "acclaimed" CALM's forest management.

The *Four Corners* researcher did not try to trick anyone into saying anything. He read to Richard Mills of the Resource Assessment Commission the relevant portion of the transcript, and asked for a response. He was given the following quote, which he wrote down carefully in longhand:

"Some of the RAC Secretariat visited WA and said there were some things CALM was doing which were innovative, but RAC has not yet reached a conclusion or issued a final report on the way in which the forests are managed in WA."

The *Four Corners* team assessed this statement, concluding correctly that it did not amount to "acclaim".

44. Colvin concluded the program by saying "What CALM is going to have to prove is that pouring millions of dollars of tax-payer's money each year into a giant State-subsidised timber company is the right way to manage the precious hardwood resources of Australia's south-west".

Claim

Nowhere in the program did Colvin prove his assertion that CALM pours millions of dollars into the timber industry, or any timber company in Western Australia.

There is no Government subsidy to the timber industry in Western Australia known to CALM. The cost of reforestation and forest protection by CALM is more than covered by the value of the asset created and returns from log royalties.

When CALM was formed in March 1985 to manage some 18 million hectares of public land in Western Australia, one of the first tasks it was given by the State Government was to institute a series of land management plans incorporating full public participation. CALM decided that the areas of highest priority were the south western forests.

Public comments were invited on a draft set of management plans, then analysed and acted upon. Three management plans, one for each Forest Region, plus the WA Timber Strategy and other supporting documents, which would govern the management of the State's conservation, recreation and timber production activities within forests for the next 10 years, were then prepared. They were approved unanimously by State Cabinet in December 1987.

These far-reaching documents have been hailed by the former Federal Resources Minister, Senator Peter Cook, as being a model for Australian forestry. On the one hand the timber industry has been prepared to invest \$200 million in new equipment, while on the other it has been able to pay a three-fold increase in royalty as revenue to the State. This is not a subsidy.

Concurrently, a secure suite of reserves which protect and conserve all the major forest ecosystems has been established.

Colvin made no mention of the system of forest management employed in Western Australian forests. Instead he implied throughout that CALM was secretive, all-powerful, probably corrupt as well as totally incompetent in its work. He proposed no solutions.

Reply The subsidy issue has been dealt with adequately at point 10.

CALM's expenditures exceeded its takings from timber in 1988-89 by more than \$33 million. Expenditures on non-forestry areas — Environmental Protection, Recreation & Tourism, Information Services, Natural Disasters, and the WA Herbarium — came to just over \$8.5 million. Nowhere, in the past or now, has CALM demonstrated that its timber operations make anything but a loss. This, as the story made plain, amounts to an indirect Government subsidy.

Bunnings is acknowledged to be far and away the biggest buyer of timber from the South-West and certainly benefits as the result of government support of the timber industry.

At no time did *Four Corners* imply that CALM was either corrupt or totally incompetent. It did question (i) CALM's willingness to provide certain information to interested bodies like the Australian Heritage Commission and the CSIRO, and (ii) the exercise of its responsibility for some aspects of timber management.

Office of the
Managing
Director

ABC House
170 William Street
Sydney 2011
Australia

GPO Box 9994
Sydney 2001

Tel (02) 3390 211
Fax (02) 356 3305
Telex 26506
Cable ABCOM

18 July 1990

Dr S Shea
Executive Director
Department of Conservation and Land Management
Western Australia
Hackett Drive
CRAWLEY WA 6009

Dear Dr Shea

Thank you for your letters of 20 and 21 June concerning the Four Corners program "The Wood for the Trees". I have made enquiries about the matters you raised and am able to reply to the points about which you expressed concern. To avoid duplication, I will deal with the specific issues you raised in the second letter, since the first is rather general in nature.

Your complaints centre upon the use of a shot of you holding your daughter at a public function, and the statement that you have "the politician's knack of kissing babies when there's a camera about."

I am assured that Four Corners filmed you with your daughter at your request, which was repeated on a number of occasions. The program did not identify your daughter. The ABC accepts that in the circumstances your daughter should have been identified in the program and I acknowledge that the words accompanying the film sequence may have been inappropriate. However, the ABC categorically denies that there was any unethical personal attack on you given your repeated insistence that you be filmed with your daughter and Four Corners expressed reluctance to comply.

I understand that the incident arose out of a sequence of events which it is important to recount in some detail.

I am informed that you were accompanied to the interview by two public servants, a Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) video team, your wife and child. On Four Corners' arrival you sought a number of requirements as to the conduct of the interview. You wanted it filmed in the park outside your office, so as to suggest an image consistent with conservation; you insisted that the CALM video team record the interview "for training purposes"; and you wanted to be interviewed with your child sitting on your knee.

Because of noise from a boat yard next to the park, and because the interview was to take an hour on film, the Four Corners' team persuaded you, with some difficulty, to talk to them in your office. The team ensured that you would be seen with a background of the thick foliage of a tree outside the window so as to meet your concerns about a 'green' image.

Four Corners also agreed to your requirement that the CALM video team record the interview, although this created technical difficulties, and the video camera's noise was occasionally audible on our tapes.

You were, I am informed, dissuaded again from doing the interview with the child on your knee. If this request was, as you suggest, a joke, then it was a frequently-repeated one. Four Corners say you raised the subject, in a way interpreted as serious, about a dozen times in the course of the morning. The team had to explain to you that, among other things, the presence of a wriggling child can be distracting and can destroy continuity in a film interview.

The interview finally completed, the team accompanied you to a function being attended by your Minister. Beforehand you had stipulated that the team should not interview the Minister, nor approach him for an interview. While this seemed somewhat unusual this stipulation was agreed to.

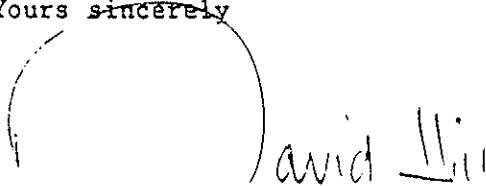
I note you say that "...it was gracious of me to allow them to go to Mr Pearce's luncheon". In fact I understand it was not a luncheon but a public function at which Mr Pearce addressed parks volunteers and which was open to the public and the media. Being a public holiday and a slow news day, there were, in fact, other media there.

Four Corners did not know that your wife and child were again going to be present. It was their clearly-stated intention at this function to film you interacting with the Minister, other public officials, and the public. I am informed that you understood this. The Four Corners' team was carrying out this work when you objected to our camera and tape-recorder turning as you talked to the W A Education Minister. When you objected the team readily agreed not to use the shot but asked, if that was ruled out, what it could film you doing.

It was at this point that having been asked previously by you, the Four Corners team suggested this would be a suitable moment for you to be seen interacting with the public and, if you still wished, with your daughter. The team then filmed the shot to which you now object. It is true that the script did not identify the child as your own.

Finally, I note that you claim that Mark Colvin's interview with ABC Radio in Perth was "scurrilous". However, I have been assured that the sequence of events outlined in the interview conforms with the sequence of events as experienced by the reporter, producer, cameraman and sound-recordist involved and which has been set out here.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Hill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of a large, hand-drawn circular scribble.

DAVID HILL
Managing Director