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MEMBER GROUPS

Australian Conservation Foundation • Blackwood Environment Society • Busselton Peace & Environment Group
• Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest • Campaign to Save Native Forests • Crowea Committee •
Coalition for Denmark's Environment • Conservation Council of WA • D'Entrecasteaux Defence Group
• Dwellingup Greenbelt Committee • Friends of the Blackwood Valley • Great Walk Networking •
Leeuwin Conservation Group • South West Forest Defence Foundation • Sustainable Agriculture
Research Institute • The Wilderness Society • Warren Environmental Group



7th April, 1993

Dear CALM Employee,

The Conservation Council of WA has released evidence of CALM managers' censorship and suppression of important forest research.

The Minister for the Environment and CALM spokespersons have called this censorship 'routine peer review'. This is not so. It is clearly a systematic suppression of information that calls into question CALM's preferred forest management practices.

There is now a concerted attempt to justify the censorship retrospectively on the grounds that the science of the original papers was, allegedly, flawed.

We have checked the changes made, and we have checked with some of those involved in the external peer review process. All the evidence confirms the accusations. The acceptability of the actual science has been independently confirmed, as has the censorship. We would welcome the opportunity to go through with you, in detail, the pre-publication changes made to the published research paper, and to show you copies of two suppressed research papers, all of which had been through an external peer review process.

We know the three reports that have been released are only the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, we have evidence that other CALM research papers and publications have been censored or suppressed.

CALM did not make available any of the censored reports to Mr Tos Barnett during his review of CALM's forest management proposals. Nevertheless Mr Barnett's report identifies major concerns about the impacts of CALM's logging and burning. Mr Barnett also disclosed that a climate of fear exists within CALM. Not surprisingly, attempts are now being made to discredit both Mr Barnett and his report.

It is essential that CALM maintains an active and critical scientific research programme. It is also essential that all information derived from the programme is freely available to the scientific community, the government, and the public.

At present there is only limited research taking place. To make matters worse it appears that this research is routinely censored.

The need for information from reliable research is crucial in light of the government's appointment of an 'expert scientific committee' to advise it on a long-term allowable cut from our native forests.

We are aware of the difficulties encountered by people who are believed to have passed on information to the public via the conservation movement.

We are also aware of the recent 'interview' process conducted by Minister Minson, involving the authors of the reports released so far, and have expressed our grave concerns about how it was conducted and the credibility of its alleged outcomes.

Contrary to statements made in some quarters, WA forest conservation organisations have not at any time attacked the integrity of the individual scientists involved. We will however continue to condemn the censors.

A climate wherein individual departmental employees may be subjected to victimisation and intimidation cannot be tolerated.

Wafa supports the efforts of those within CALM seeking to ensure the professionalism and public accountability of the organisation. We therefore offer the following suggestions to CALM employees:

- * contact Isla MacGregor of United Scientists for Environmental Responsibility and Protection (USERP) Intellectual Suppression Working Group on (002) 446 892;
- * contact Brian Martin of the network for Intellectual Dissent in Australia (IDiA) on (042) 213 763 or 287 860;
- * contact Helen Attrill of the Civil Service Association on 323 3804 or (008) 199 910;
- * contact Brian Burdekin of the Human Rights Commission on (02) 229 7600;
- * send more information to conservation organisations;
- * contact the Minister and/or the media as a united body.

We hope you will read and discuss this leaflet with your colleagues, and consider the merits of the suggested actions.

Western Australian Forest Alliance