



2006  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
Rydges Southbank

A PRESENTATION BY  
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TO THE AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT  
FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
SEPTEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 2006

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# SAVING AUSTRALIA'S FORESTS/COMMUNITIES

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## **SLIDE 1**

In preparing for today I seriously considered what I thought you would want to hear and then I considered what it was that I wanted to tell you and what impression that I wanted you to go away with at the end of the day.

The first thing that came to my mind was a question. “What was it that got me believing in Jennifer Marohasy when she addressed the TCA conference in Launceston a couple of years back”? The answer was that Jennifer left me with a feeling of ‘its not over yet’ - her enthusiasm was contagious. not like measles or chicken pox but contagious in that I, like the 300 people in that room that day, felt we had received a shot in the arm that enabled us to continue the great work for rural communities and hopefully spread our disease.....no not disease but our good news to everyone that mattered. And in the scheme of things everyone matters!! So here I am about to deliver to you today what my views are on saving our forests and everyone and everything that surrounds and is dependent on them!!

## **SLIDE 2**

Definitions are always a good item to start with:-

Forests: Oxford Dictionary: Large area of Trees and undergrowth – plant with trees

Forests: Australian Governments: An area, incorporating all living and non living components that is dominated by trees.

Forests: TCA: are not just trees but also the communities and people.

Multiple Use Forests: managed for a range of values including timber production, water supply, conservation, recreation and environmental protection. Also includes protection of vulnerable communities.

## **SLIDE 3** Pic of active management

In order to ‘save the forests’ we need to save the communities that are reliant on those forests at the same time.

The old adage of locking it up and throwing away the key in order to save things has over decades proven to be non productive.

What we need to be looking at and addressing is active management.

Active management means that we need to work with our resources proactively in order to maintain them for the benefit of all concerned.

We need to look globally and act locally for our future generations.

Currently 21% of our continent is covered by trees this equates to about 12 rugby fields of forest for each Australian – one of the highest percent per person in the world!

66% of Australia's world heritage rainforests reserved are right here in Queensland. More than 35% of Tasmanian native forests are already in formal reserves.

#### **SLIDE 4**

Triple bottom line reporting, i.e. reporting and being responsible for the management of our resources through the environment, through social impacts of our communities and the economic outcome for our health and well being, is vital in the overall scheme of our forests and natural resources.

However I could go one step further and quote from a recent book I came across by Jonathon Porritt titled *Capitalism As if the World Matters* – Porritt examines the five basic steps to reporting which are as he sees it:

1. Natural Capital (environmental)– also referred to as environmental or ecological capital is any stock or flow of energy and matter that yields valuable goods and services. It incorporates several categories some of which are renewable eg timber, grain, fish and water.
2. Human capital (social) – consists of health, knowledge, skills and motivation all of which are required for productive work. Enhancing human capital through such things as education and training.
3. Social Capital (social) takes the form of structures, institutions, networks and relationships which enables individuals to maintain and develop their human capital through partnerships and be more productive.
4. Manufactured Capital (Economic & Social) comprises material goods such as tools, machinery buildings and other forms of infrastructure.
5. Financial Capital (economic) which plays an important role in our economy by reflecting the productive power of the other types of capital and enables them to be owned or traded.

Because forests are such emotive issues it is easy to forget the triple bottom line and only concentrate what is immediately prominent in our every day lives. But the time has come or I should say is well overdue for us to consider all aspects of our forests and its subsequent industries.

Through the work that organisations such as AEF, TCA, AFG A3P and NAFI are doing I believe that we are collectively saving our already extremely well managed forests and communities in a collaborative manner and trying desperately to adhere to a sound reporting system, whether it be the triple bottom line or the quintuple bottom line!

## **SLIDE 5**

If I can take you back a decade or so ago, Australia embarked on a world class process that was endorsed at the time by State and Federal Government. This process was called the Regional Forest Agreement process and delivered a world class reserve system and a viable productive forest management system that would be healthy for us all. I should add at this stage that the Queensland and Western Australian Governments later decided to walk away from this process.

During this very long drawn out process the timber dependant communities suffered huge productive resource losses, with millions of hectares being locked away and not available for production. Governments of the day decided that it was more important to lock forests up rather than actively manage them for the future. This process, I would like to say achieved a solid balance of reservation and production but in fact many of those forests that were taken from the communities have subsequently been destroyed by wild fires or have had no further examination to see whether they are actually being preserved or have been left to die a natural death due to lack of management.

I am not proclaiming that there should be no forests set aside for the aesthetic values. I am however proclaiming that this all needs to be kept in perspective to ensure that we have a well balanced environment. For example NSW is currently undergoing a review of their Private Native Forest Code of Practice and it is evident that through active management we can achieve outcomes that clearly define the elements of environmental, social and economic benefits.

## **SLIDE 6**

### **PERSPECTIVE AND HISTORY**

In the last 200 years around European settlement and with a land mass of 768million hectares we have experienced more than just a few changes:

The area of forest back then was around 240million hectares roughly 1/3 of the continent.

There were no areas reserve and there were no plantations.

By 1992 80million ha had been converted from native forest to a combination of land uses including: roads, dams, cities and agriculture. This by my calculation is about 40,000ha per year and even this process has slowed in recent years. 'Conversion' to agriculture still continues at close to 20,000ha per year.

It should also be noted that by 1992 the area of forest reserved had grown from zero to 11million ha. While this was happening a meagre 1 million ha had been established as plantation resource.

From 1992 to now:

Over the past 14 years reserves have doubled to over 23million ha. Conversion to agriculture exceeds 2.5million ha. Pine plantations grew to 1.1 million has and hardwood plantations grew to around 70,000ha.

## **SLIDE 7**

What does this all mean?

Australian roads take up over 4million ha and our dams more than 51/2 million ha, mine sites around 71/2million ha.

Leaving cities and towns, power stations, train tracks and terminals, gas, water and phone lines all to one side we have only converted about 10% of the area covered by roads, mines, dams etc.

This is not a large percentage in anyone terms.

If we are to deal with the trade deficit from forest products, which is in excess of \$2 billion, we must be allowed to expand the plantation resource to a level that can achieve a sound secure outcome.

## **SLIDE 8**

Back to the topic:

Saving the forest means getting back to basics and getting our head around what is required for us to be a truly sustainable nation and a progressive one on a world scale.

Our population has grown and our everyday requirement for forest based products has grown right along with it. **Saving forests has to incorporate saving our timber dependent communities.**

Even though statistics vary we can safely assume that more than 95,000 people are employed in our industry and the flow on from this is much much greater. It could be estimated that there are around 500,000 people that rely on the forests to feed their families and sustain their local communities.

We need to look at the bigger picture, decide what we want and also decide how we can achieve what we want. Address issues that will deliver a secure future for our environment and communities. Address the skills shortage that currently faces us and do something active about it.

The key word here is active!!

## **SLIDE 9**

The supposed warm fuzzy feeling that people, especially those in our cities, have about our forests needs to be on a realistic level. Nothing can be saved for the future without looking after and tending it with good solid plans and active management.

In order to save the forests we need to save the people and timber communities right along with it.

Identify the key components and incorporate them into our everyday lives.....i.e. ensuring that our regional schools, hospitals, small businesses, transport operators, fuel suppliers etc are all a part of the greater forest management practices.

To close I reiterate that it's not just about trees it's about people and communities as well as the environment.

Jill Lewis



# Saving our Forests



Presentation to Australian Environment Foundation

Brisbane 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006

By Jill Lewis, CEO Timber Communities Australia

# Definitions

- Forests: Oxford Dictionary : Large area of Trees and undergrowth – plant with trees
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# Active Management



# Responsibilities

- Triple bottom line
  - Environment, Social and Economic
- Quintuple bottom line
  - Natural, Human, Social, Manufactured and Financial

# Regional Forest Agreements

World class reserve system and a viable production management system



# Perspective and History

- European settlement land mass 768 million ha
- 240 million ha of forest
  - 1/3 of the Continent
  - No reserves, No plantations
- By 1992, 80 million ha converted
  - Reservation Zero to 11 million
- From 1992 to now
  - Reserves doubled to >23 million

# What does all this mean?

- **Roads** = 4 million ha (ABS)
- **Dams** = 5.5 million ha (ICOLD)
- **Mines** = 7.5 million ha (Leases)
  
- **Forest** = 10% of area covered by Roads, Mines and Dams

# Back to the Topic

- Back to basics
- Population Growth
- Employment and Skills shortage
- Active Management



# Conclusion

- Its not just about trees
- Its about people
- Its about communities
- Its about the environment
- Its about the economy

Timber Communities Australia

**Jill Lewis**  
**Timber Communities Australia**  
**June 2006**

I am the daughter of a Queensland sawmiller with two grown children, Daniel and Greta.

Timber has always been and will remain in my blood.

I have a keen interest in Natural Resource Management.

People and rural communities are my passion. I strongly believe in a voice for rural and remote regions.

I believe in Community Consultation and that they should not just be words but actual actions. Community concerns are vital to the ongoing development of regions.

I have facilitated meetings and delegations between community people and Industry and Government at all levels. Recently most of these meetings have dealt with Change in Landscape activities and management, ie Changes from routine agricultural activities to plantation establishment. This is not always easy for rural landowners.

As CEO of TCA I have helped the organisation go from a Native Forest based organisation to that of a whole of industry organisation, thus incorporating plantation establishment. water issues, soil, bio energy, and general value adding within the industry, focusing on social impacts of the communities that rely, to varying degrees, on our forests and forest products.

I am a lobbyist for rural people concentrating on timber families and timber communities.

In recent times we are definitely noted as being the peak community lobby group. At State Government level but more importantly at Commonwealth Government level.

I will be here as long as there is a need for an honest, united community voice.

- Member of National Rural Womens Advisory Group, Commonwealth Government-current
- Member of National Indigenous Forest Industry Strategy Advisory Group, Commonwealth Government– current
- Steering Committee member of Impacts Of Plantation Forestry Over Time – A Social Study.
- Advisory Council for Forest Industries Structural Adjustment Program -Current
- Nominated for Telstra Business Woman of The Year Awards – Community Organisation 2004
- Member of National Forest Educators Forum - ongoing
- Member of the National Water Initiative Industry Working Group – ongoing
- Member of National Industry Communications Group
- Nominated for the Telstra Rural Women’s Awards
- Listed in the Who’s Who of Australian Women
- Member of Forest & Wood Products Council