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Taming the Panda

The Relationship between WWF Australia and the Howard Government

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Summary

Non-government organisations (NGOs) enjoy higher levels of public trust than most other institutions, much higher than governments and businesses. Perceptions of NGOs' independence and commitment to principle place a large responsibility on them to maintain their autonomy, and their high public credibility explains why governments work hard to win public endorsement from them for their own policies. Where that is not achievable, governments may attempt to undermine and discredit them (p. 1).

Because their supporters see their independent advocacy as an indispensable counter to the influence of business and the tendency of governments to do little while pretending to do a lot, environment NGOs are especially sensitive to any suggestions that they have become too close to government (p. 2).

For several years there has been widespread concern, expressed mainly in private, that certain environment NGOs have become too close to the Federal Government and, in doing so, have eroded the effectiveness of the movement as a whole. The activities and policy positions of the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF Australia) have attracted most criticism. This paper assesses whether WWF Australia has provided a disproportionate level of public support for the Federal Government and its policies, thereby sacrificing its independence in exchange for more government funding and greater access to government (p. 3).

WWF Australia and the EPBC Act

Measured by turnover, WWF Australia is the country's second largest environment organisation after Greenpeace. It presents itself as an independent, supporter-based, practical and professional environment organisation focused on achieving tangible conservation outcomes by working collaboratively with all stakeholders (p. 4). A central aim of WWF Australia's strategy is to engage with industry and governments. Its method of campaigning and apparent lack of discrimination in choosing partners differs from most other large environment NGOs engaged in advocacy work and means that it is usually more willing to accept incremental change (p. 5).

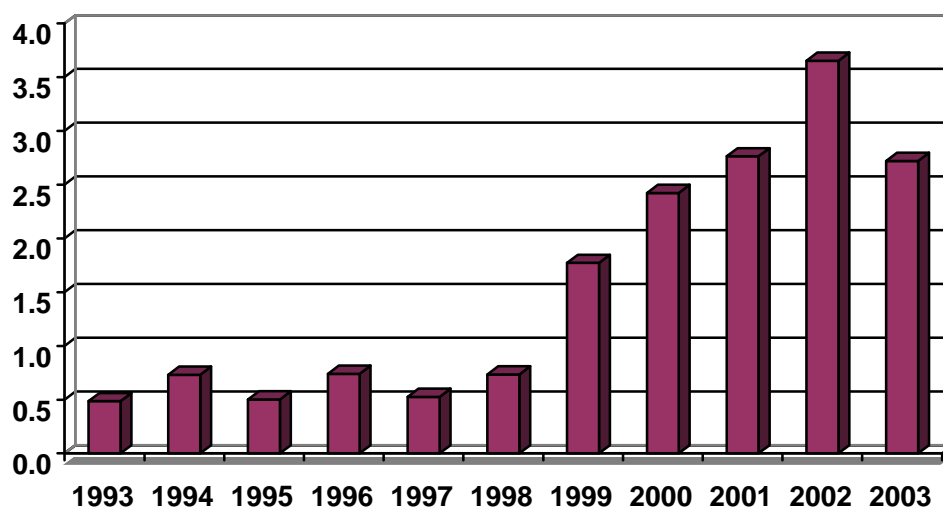
While WWF Australia appears to have had a close relationship with the Howard Government since the 1996 election, the events surrounding the enactment of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) were a turning point. This Act brought wide-ranging changes to Commonwealth environmental laws and there was sharp disagreement amongst the larger environment groups about the merits of the legislative changes and whether the Bill should be publicly supported by them. The endorsements of the Act provided by WWF Australia - joined by the Humane Society International (HSI), Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) - contrasted with the often scathing criticisms made by opponents of the legislation, including the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), The Wilderness Society (TWS) and Greenpeace (p. 7).

Not long after the legislation was enacted, people associated with WWF Australia, QCC and TCT were appointed to serve on Federal Government environmental advisory committees and WWF Australia (in conjunction with HSI and TCT) was awarded a contract to disseminate information about the Act amongst environment NGOs (p. 9).

Howard Government support for WWF Australia

Over the last 11 years WWF Australia's total revenue and expenditure have risen by more than 500 per cent. In the early and mid 1990s annual revenue of the organisation was around \$2 million; by 2002/03 it had grown to around \$11 million, much of the increase attributable to Federal Government largess which shot up in 1999 and continued to grow for several years afterwards - see Figure S1 (pp. 10-11). While Federal Government grants to WWF Australia were increasing, grants to ACF and TWS, organisations more critical of the Howard Government's environment policies, fell (p. 12)

Figure S1 Growth in WWF revenue from government sources 1992/93–2002/03 (\$m)



WWF Australia's support for the Howard Government

A detailed analysis of the public statements made by WWF Australia and other environment organisations about the Howard Government's major environment policies (particularly around the time of their announcement) shows the following.

1. WWF Australia's comments are almost uniformly favourable, and often highly complimentary, to the Howard Government.
2. WWF Australia's position is frequently at odds with those of other major environment groups such as ACF, Greenpeace, TWS and state conservation councils.
3. Other major organisations are sometimes critical and sometimes supportive of Howard Government policies (p. 14-16).

The evidence suggests that WWF Australia can usually be relied upon to praise the Howard Government's main environment policies, while other organisations are more likely to provide an independent assessment (p. 16).

The Government's response to climate change is one issue where WWF Australia has been willing to criticise the Government publicly. For example, it recently described the Government's Energy White Paper as an 'environmental failure'. However, WWF Australia's criticism of the Howard Government's climate change policies has been more muted than that of most other groups as illustrated in its recently released election policy document which, in sharp contrast to the position of all other major environment groups and WWF International, does not include ratification of the Kyoto Protocol as a priority (pp. 16-17).

In recent years, WWF Australia has bestowed on the Government several awards for its environmental achievements, including three 'Gift to the Earth Awards' (p. 17).

The Howard Government has frequently used WWF Australia's name and public statements to promote its environment policies. To illustrate, since the Government came to power in March 1996, at least 64 press releases published by the Environment Ministers have mentioned the names WWF Australia or WWF. Only 20 press releases issued by the Environment Ministers mention Australia's other large environmental advocacy groups - ACF, Greenpeace and TWS (p. 18). The references to WWF Australia are all neutral or positive and, in a significant number of instances, the WWF name and its statements have been used to add credibility to the Government's policies. By contrast, of the 13 press releases that refer to ACF, six are highly critical of the organisation (pp. 18-22).

Implications

The weight of available evidence, although much of it circumstantial, suggests that there are strong grounds for questioning whether WWF Australia can legitimately continue to describe itself as independent (p. 27). The loss of independence is of considerable importance as it undermines WWF Australia's role in public debates about Government policy and raises questions about whether it has misled its supporters and the general public. Because the public is justified in asking whether the opinions and activities of other groups are influenced by governments and businesses, the standing of all environment NGOs in the community could be jeopardised.

While WWF Australia's actions are of concern, possibly of greater interest to the broader community is the manner in which the Howard Government has used public resources and the trust the community places in NGOs for political purposes. In order to promote its policies and environmental credentials, the Government has relied on WWF Australia's name and public statements. In addition, it appears to have used public funding in its attempt to influence the actions of an NGO (p. 27).

This report is not an analysis of WWF Australia's method of operating. Rather, it is an analysis of the extent to which WWF Australia remains an independent organisation as represented to its supporters and the wider community. Organisations that begin to see the world through the eyes of governments risk losing their capacity to make dispassionate assessments of what is in the interests of the environment (pp. 27-28).

1. NGOs and independence

Non-government organisations (NGOs) play an essential role in modern democratic practice. They represent marginalised and stigmatised groups, contribute to informed and robust public debate, provide both feedback to government on the effects of policy and a means whereby citizens can express their concerns more effectively than individuals can, and finally they counter-balance the interests of business in the political process (Maddison *et al.* 2004).

Formed by groups of citizens who come together for a common purpose, they differ fundamentally from public service agencies which serve the government of the day, and business groups which are devoted to protecting and enhancing the interests of their shareholders. As this suggests, the political independence of NGOs is central to their *raison d'être*. 'Independence' is easy to define in principle but often difficult to negotiate in practice. Yet the perception of independence is crucial to the integrity and long-term survival of NGOs. Surveys have repeatedly shown that the public invests a much higher level of trust in NGOs than in politicians and businesses. According to the results of one comprehensive global survey:

Consistent with previous research, the current poll shows that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the most trusted and global companies are the least trusted of the seven institutions tested.¹

In the words of one commentator, 'the evidence suggests that the public invests a great deal more trust in NGOs like Amnesty and Greenpeace than in politicians or business people' (Elkington 2001). For this reason, the public is unlikely to support an NGO that is seen to be the lap-dog of either business or government. This is why some businesses engaged in environmentally damaging activities fund front organisations that appear to be independent community groups, and why those groups collapse when the subterfuge is uncovered (see, for example, Stauber and Rampton 1995; Beder 2000).

It is quite possible for NGOs to foster relationships with governments and businesses and continue to retain their independence, although it is more difficult to maintain the *perception* of independence. Money flows influence perceptions heavily. It is legitimate for citizens, supporters, journalists and others to ask 'Where does the money come from?' as there is a natural suspicion that whoever pays the piper calls the tune. NGOs must therefore give careful consideration to accepting money that might be seen to be tainted or have strings attached. The strongest taint attaches to money from funding sources that are believed to have objectives that are contrary to those of the NGO. These difficulties have been highlighted by the relationships that some environment NGOs have developed with businesses (Beder 1998, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Doyle 2000; McEachern 1993).

NGOs engage in both service delivery and advocacy. Each of these roles has come under scrutiny in recent years. Some NGOs engaged in service delivery have taken on the management of large government contracts that have seen several of them operate increasingly on a business model. Commentators have argued that they have lost sight

¹ Results of a Globescan survey reported by World Economic Forum, 'Update: Public trust is recovering', Press release, Geneva, 31 March 2004

of their original charitable purpose as a result and have become little more than arms of government.

But it is their advocacy role that has been the subject of special concern. A recent report by The Australia Institute documented the methods by which governments in Australia, and especially the Howard Government, have attempted to silence their critics through various methods - defunding, threatening withdrawal of financial support, intimidation and undermining the public reputation of NGOs and their senior staff (Maddison *et al.* 2004). Based on a survey of NGOs engaged in some form of advocacy, the report found that 90 per cent of respondents believe that dissenting organisations risk having their funding cut and three quarters (74 per cent) believe that they are being pressured to make their public statements conform to government policy. They express particular concern about attempts by the Howard Government to prevent them from speaking publicly.

The results of the survey suggest that social justice and welfare groups have been divided between those that have aligned themselves with the Federal Government (through, for example, accepting contracts to deliver services) and those that have remained more independent and critical. It is widely believed in the welfare sector that Mission Australia and The Salvation Army have become too close to the Federal Government. For several years, similar concerns have permeated the environment movement. The independence of environment NGOs is a particularly sensitive issue. Members and supporters often see their independence as an indispensable counter to the influence of corporations and the unwillingness of governments to take effective action to protect the environment.

Debate about the political independence of some environment NGOs began in the 1980s and early 1990s, with some believing that the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and The Wilderness Society (TWS) had become too close to the Federal Labor Government (Beder 1991; Doyle and Kellow 1995; Doyle 2000). However, since 1996 when the Howard Government came to power, the focus of the debate about environment NGOs becoming too close to government has shifted to a number of other organisations, particularly the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF Australia). In his book analysing the changing role of the environment movement, Tim Doyle has argued:

Since its election in 1996 the Howard Government has attempted to disempower the environment movement and to discredit its concerns in a number of ways ... [I]t has removed or reduced funding to its most vociferous critics such as the Friends of the Earth and the Australian Conservation Foundation, while additional funds and support have been directed to the politically palatable and more narrowly focused 'nature conservation' organisations such as International Humane Society (HSI) and World Wide Fund for Nature, and several of the more traditionalist conservation councils (Doyle 2000, p. 176).

In 2001, Andrew Clennell wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that:

The Federal Government has halved the funding of its biggest environmental critic, the Australian Conservation Foundation, while pumping millions into

the chief national group that supported its changes to national environmental laws in 1999.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which supported the Federal Government's controversial Environment Biodiversity and Protection Act [sic], has received more than \$2.5 million in the past two financial years from the Government's Natural Heritage Trust grants (Clennell 2001).

The implication of this article is that the Howard Government has provided increased funding for WWF Australia in exchange for its public support.

This paper seeks to examine the nature of the relationship between WWF Australia and the Howard Government. It considers the support, both financial and political, provided by the Federal Government to WWF Australia since 1996; the extent to which the Government has made use of WWF Australia to promote its own environmental credentials; and the support provided by WWF Australia for the Government's environment policies. The analysis raises questions about WWF Australia's claim that it is an 'independent conservation organisation' and 'committed to conserving the unique biodiversity of Australia and the Oceania region' (WWF Australia 2003).

The paper is divided into seven sections. Section 2 provides background on WWF Australia. Section 3 discusses the origins of the concerns about its relationship with the Howard Government. Section 4 analyses the financial benefits WWF Australia has received from the Howard Government. Section 5 examines the public statements WWF Australia has made in relation to the Howard Government's main environment policies, particularly at the time of their announcement. Section 6 analyses the extent to which the Howard Government has used WWF Australia's name and public statements to promote its environment policies. The final section draws some conclusions about the closeness of the relationship between WWF Australia and the Howard Government and the extent to which WWF Australia is an autonomous organisation that is capable of providing independent advice and public comment on the Howard Government's environment policies.

2. WWF Australia

WWF Australia is part of a global network of organisations that operates under the banner of the World Wide Fund for Nature or WWF. The original WWF entity, commonly known as WWF International, was established in 1961 and is based in Gland, Switzerland. Like most other national WWF organisations, WWF Australia is a separate legal entity from WWF International. It was established in 1978 and currently operates as a company limited by guarantee. One of the primary functions of WWF International is to set the broad policy direction of the national offices and to coordinate their activities. Therefore, while WWF Australia is a separate legal entity, it remains part of a coordinated network and is expected to work within the frameworks established by WWF International.

Measured by turnover, WWF Australia is currently the second largest environment organisation in Australia behind Greenpeace Australia Pacific (Greenpeace). In 2002/03, its revenues exceeded \$11 million and it employed over 100 people. The focus of WWF Australia's activities is on Australia but, like several of the larger environment organisations, it is also involved in projects in several countries in the Asia Pacific region, including Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

A distinguishing feature of WWF Australia is that it is involved in public advocacy and policy work, as well as program delivery for the Federal Government. This differs from most other large environment organisations in Australia, which tend either to concentrate on on-ground projects and program delivery or to engage in public advocacy and policy work. For example, Greening Australia, Birds Australia and Conservation Volunteers Australia are all devoted to on-ground projects and program delivery and have limited involvement in public campaigning and political advocacy. In contrast, ACF, TWS, HSI and Greenpeace mainly confine their activities to public advocacy and policy development activities.²

The most obvious reason for the traditional split in these functions is that organisations involved in program delivery are often dependent on government contracts and grants for their financial survival. Combining the two functions involves a significant risk that the independence of the organisation with respect to its advocacy role will be compromised and that, in the public domain, there will be a perception of bias in the views it espouses. However, some of the smaller advocacy and campaign-focused environment NGOs obtain a large proportion of their funds from government sources and suffer from similar concerns about independence and perceptions of bias in public debates.

WWF Australia describes itself as an independent, supporter-based and non-party political conservation organisation. Its 2003 Annual Report states (WWF Australia 2003):

² The majority of peak state and territory environment NGOs focus primarily on advocacy work. While most do engage in some service delivery activities, their participation tends to be limited. However, there are some exceptions. For example, both the Conservation Council of South Australia Inc and Tasmanian Conservation Trust Inc have received a substantial amount of money from the Federal Government under the Natural Heritage Trust to carry out various projects.

WWF Australia is part of the WWF International Network, the world's largest independent conservation organisation, working in over 100 countries and supported by more than 5 million people.

We are a not-for-profit, supporter-based organisation committed to conserving the unique biodiversity of Australia and the Oceania region, and finding solutions to the key environmental challenges facing the region today. ...

We are guided by the following principles. We will ... be global, independent, multicultural and non-party political.

WWF Australia's website contains the following statement concerning its campaigning and public advocacy work (WWF Australia 2004a).

We employ a working group dedicated to identifying political 'log jams' on major national conservation issues.

We look for new ways to better manage our natural resources, encourage governments to improve policy and legislation as our natural environment requires, and promote public awareness of the steps we all need to take for a healthier environment.

The campaigns working group includes scientists, economists, policy experts and lawyers, and works closely with our science and policy teams and our people in the field.

Our key aim is to develop science-based, economically viable solutions to major environmental problems. We do this by working with Australia's leading scientists, economists, policy specialists and industry leaders.

As the above extracts demonstrate, WWF Australia presents itself as an independent, practical and professional environment organisation focused on achieving tangible conservation outcomes by working collaboratively with all stakeholders. A central aim of WWF Australia's strategy in its public advocacy work is to engage with industry and governments. That is, it engages less frequently than other organisations in grassroots or publicity-focused campaigns and devotes more resources to negotiations with governments and industry and the publication of scientific reports. Further, as it believes its role is to broker what it sees as pragmatic outcomes for the protection of the environment, it is usually willing to accept small and incremental improvements in government policy and industry practices.

WWF Australia's method of campaigning differs from most other large environment NGOs that engage in advocacy work. ACF is probably closest in operational style, although it has made concerted efforts over the last decade to shift its focus away from government decision-making processes to other types of campaigning. Greenpeace, on the other hand, dedicates the greater part of its resources to publicity-focused campaigns and traditionally has had little involvement in formal government negotiation processes. TWS is more difficult to categorise. In the past, it has been involved in many government processes and built a close relationship with the Federal Labor Government in the mid 1980s, although it was much less close to state Labor

governments. However, more recently, most of its efforts have been channelled into grassroots and direct action campaigns.

WWF Australia's approach to advocacy and campaign work, particularly its close relationship with industry and government, has led one academic analyst to write:

There is some debate as to whether WWF is still actually part of the [environment] movement, or whether it has simply become a high-level, wise-use-style front group for industry (Doyle 2000, p. 80).

3. WWF and the EPBC Act

As we have already suggested, some have pointed to events surrounding the enactment of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as the origin of the close relationship between WWF Australia and the Howard Government. The events surrounding the passage of the EPBC Act were, for many in the environment movement, strong evidence that WWF Australia had become too closely linked to the Howard Government.

The EPBC Act brought wide-ranging changes to Commonwealth environmental laws. There was sharp disagreement amongst the larger environment groups about the merits of the legislative changes and whether they should publicly support the Bill and negotiated amendments. WWF Australia, Humane Society International (HSI), the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) and the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) supported the legislation,³ with WWF Australia describing it as ‘the biggest win for the Australian environment in 25 years’ (Hill 2000a and see next page), TCT calling it a ‘great step forward for environmental legislation in Australia’ (Hill 1999), and HSI stating that ‘this Bill will be the best of its kind in the world’ (ABC TV 1999). WWF Australia took the unusual step of placing a large display advertisement in *The Weekend Australian* to express its support for the legislation and trumpet its role in negotiating the outcome (see next page).⁴

These strong endorsements were in contrast to the often scathing criticisms made by the opponents to the legislation which included ACF, TWS and Greenpeace. In a joint press release, these groups described the legislation as ‘environmentally irresponsible’⁵ and, in a thinly veiled censure of the groups that supported the legislation and the Australian Democrats (who supported the legislation in the Senate), TWS stated the negotiation process and the outcome of the deal ‘heap[ed] shame on all those who have participated.’⁶ The opponents argued that the positive changes associated with the Act were relatively minor, that important issues (notably forestry operations, greenhouse pollution, landclearing and water extraction) were excluded from the scope of the legislation, and that the Act gave the Commonwealth too much scope to avoid having to protect important aspects of the environment.⁷

³ After internal ructions, within weeks the QCC withdrew its support for the EPBC Act. There was also serious disagreement within TCT about the organisation’s public support for the EPBC Act, including a clear affirmation that in future TCT must negotiate in coalition with other groups, including the ACF.

⁴ WWF Australia, ‘Another Environmental Solution from WWF’, *The Weekend Australian* (Advertisement), 3-4 July 1999, p. 14.

⁵ TWS, ACF and Greenpeace, ‘82 Reasons Why the New Environment Legislation is Bad for the Environment’, Joint Press Release, 20 June 1999.

⁶ TWS, ‘New Commonwealth Environment Legislation: Environmental Demolition’, Press Release, 23 June 1999.

⁷ See, for example, TWS, ACF and Greenpeace Australia Pacific, ‘82 Reasons Why the New Environment Legislation is Bad for the Environment’, Joint Press Release, 20 June 1999.

ADVERTISEMENT

ANOTHER ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION FROM WWF

You've probably read about the new environment legislation which was passed in Federal Parliament this week. This new legislation is the biggest win for the Australian environment in 25 years – one which WWF is proud to be part of.

Put simply, once this legislation comes into effect, Australia will have much stronger environmental protection.

The new laws will increase the Commonwealth Government's real ability to manage most of the major threats to the Australian environment – fishing, land clearing, water allocation, invasive species, and climate change.

For WWF, this is the successful culmination of years of advocacy for better national environment legislation.

With other major environment groups, we rejected the legislation in its original form. But we didn't stop at "just saying no".

Drawing on nearly forty years practical experience and our solid scientific knowledge, WWF campaigned hard for changes which would make the new legislation deliver real environmental outcomes – changes on which all major environment groups agreed.

The new legislation delivers at least 80% of the changes. Some people might tell you that 80% isn't good enough. But realistically, we know that this was the best possible solution – for now. **And we'll continue to fight for the other 20%.**

WWF's reputation internationally is based on being non-partisan. Our concern throughout has been for the environment – not for politics.

WWF, the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisation, has been developing solutions to environmental problems for nearly 40 years. In fact, WWF Australia is working on solutions while you're reading this.

If you want real environmental wins to continue, support WWF now.



Enclosed is my donation of \$.....

I want to pay by Cheque/Money Order (please make payable to WWF)

OR Visa MasterCard Bankcard Amex Diners

Card Number

Expiry/..... Signature

Name

Address

Suburb Postcode

Telephone ()

Send to World Wide Fund For Nature, GPO Box 528, Sydney NSW 2001

Or call 1800 032 551 or visit our website: <http://www.wwf.org.au>

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible, a receipt will be sent



WWF

support a solution

THE AUSTRALIAN

During the negotiation process, WWF Australia along with HSI, TCT and QCC, broke from the rest of the groups and supported the Democrats' amendments to the legislation. While other major environment groups called for more time both to consider the implications of the Bill and to negotiate improved legislation, WWF Australia supported the Government's guillotining of the law through Parliament.⁸ This resulted in a breakdown of relationships within the environment movement (see, for example, Middleton 1999). Virginia Young of TWS was quoted as saying:

A wedge has been driven into the heart of the environment movement. It's a tragedy and deeply distressing (Woolford 1999).

Not long after the legislation was enacted, employees of WWF Australia and TCT were appointed to serve on Federal Government environmental advisory committees. In addition, WWF Australia (in conjunction with HSI and TCT) was awarded a contract to disseminate information about the Act amongst environment NGOs.⁹ A similar pattern was witnessed in relation to the Heritage Bills in 2003.¹⁰ As with the EPBC Act, there was disagreement amongst the larger environment groups over whether to support the legislation. Again, WWF Australia, HSI and TCT supported the bills, while ACF and TWS were critical of their inadequacies. Soon after the Heritage Bills were enacted, experts associated with HIS and WWF Australia were appointed to the Australian Heritage Council.

⁸ Two weeks beforehand, HSI had joined other green groups in issuing a media release calling on the Government not to rush the legislation through Parliament (ACF, 'Environmental Reform Too Important To Rush', Media Release, 7 June 1999). On 22 November 1999, WWF Australia's Jamie Pittock wrote to *Mining Monitor* saying that use of the guillotine was 'essential' to get the Bill through Parliament.

⁹ WWF Australia, TCT and, until recently, HSI run a project called the EPBC Unit that is funded by the Commonwealth to disseminate information about the EPBC Act. Details of the EPBC Unit are available at: www.wwf.org.au/epbc. See also the response Senator Robert Hill, the former Minister for the Environment and Heritage, gave to a question on notice submitted by Senator Kerry O'Brien on 25 September 2002 (Hill 2002).

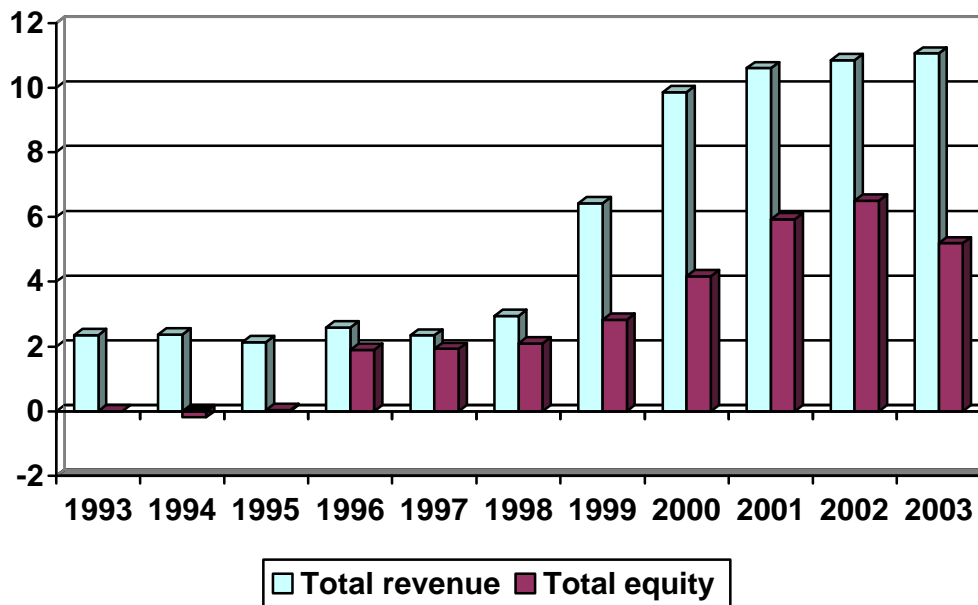
¹⁰ The Heritage Bills were three bills that made amendments to the EPBC Act and established the Australian Heritage Council, while dismantling the statutorily independent Australian Heritage Commission. The Bills are the *Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No.1) 2003*, *Australian Heritage Council Bill 2003*, and the *Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2003*.

4. Financial support for WWF from the Howard Government

WWF Australia has experienced considerable growth over the past 11 years. Its revenues and expenditures have increased by almost 500 per cent, its total equity has soared from being in the red in 1994 to a high of \$6.5 million in 2001/02, and its reserves have jumped from under \$400,000 in 1994/95 to almost \$5.5 million in 2001/02 - see Figure 1 (and Appendix 1 for further details).

A significant proportion of WWF Australia's growth over the past 11 years can be attributed to revenues from government sources (see Figure 2). Annual government grants to WWF Australia have increased by almost 500 per cent during the Howard Government era, rising from around \$740,000 in 1995/96 to a high of almost \$3.7 million in 2001/02.¹¹ In total, WWF Australia has received over \$15 million in government grants in the period 1996-2003, with almost \$13.5 million of this having been awarded between 1998/99 and 2002/03.

Figure 1 WWF Australia's total revenues and total equity 1993/94-2002/03 (\$m)



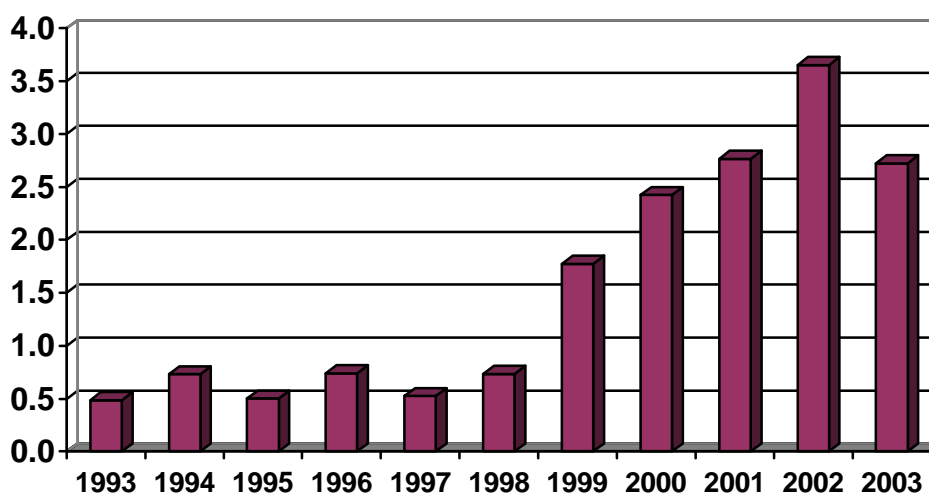
Source: WWF Australia, Financial Statements, 1993-2003.

As Figure 2 shows, government funding to WWF Australia more than doubled between the 1998 and 1999 financial years, rising from around \$740,000 in 1997/98 to almost \$1.8 million in 1998/99, a jump that coincided with the timing of the negotiations concerning the EPBC Act and its passage through Federal Parliament. Further, the level of government funding to WWF Australia continued to grow in the 2000, 2001 and 2002 financial years before falling from an historic high of \$3.65 million in 2002 to \$2.72 million in 2003. The reasons for the decline in 2002/03 are not wholly clear although it appears to have been caused chiefly by the completion of a number of large programs that were funded under the Natural Heritage Trust.

¹¹ Note that the Howard Government came to power in March 1996 and hence there was a small overlap in the 1995/96 financial year.

Although there was a small decrease in funding in 2002/03, there is no reason to believe that the Howard Government intends to make large cuts to the grants it provides to WWF Australia in the near future. In June 2004 alone, the Federal Government announced it would provide WWF Australia with \$200,000 to ‘identify and address gaps in community-based threatened species conservation work in priority regions’¹² and an additional \$66,000 to deliver ‘conservation results and strengthening policy at three priority sites in the Sulu Sulawesi Seas’ under the Regional Natural Heritage Programme.¹³ These announcements come on top of substantial ongoing funding for a number of other projects.

Figure 2 Growth in WWF revenue from government sources 1992/93–2002/03 (\$m)



Source: WWF Australia, Financial Statements, 1999–2003.

The financial data published by WWF Australia do not differentiate between Commonwealth, state and territory government grants and payments. However, publicly available information (see Appendix 2) concerning Commonwealth expenditure suggests the overwhelming majority of WWF Australia’s government grants since 1996 have come from the Federal Government.

Between 1998/99 and 2001/02, WWF Australia received a little over \$8.5 million from Natural Heritage Trust grants¹⁴ and approximately \$1.12 million from Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Programs and the Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) Program.¹⁵ From these sources alone, WWF Australia received a little over \$9.8 million Federal Government

¹² Hon Dr David Kemp, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, and Hon Warren Truss MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, ‘\$5.6 million for Innovative Environmental Work’, Press Release, 10 June 2004.

¹³ Hon Dr David Kemp, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Helping Hotspots in Asia and the Pacific’, Press Release, 29 June 2004.

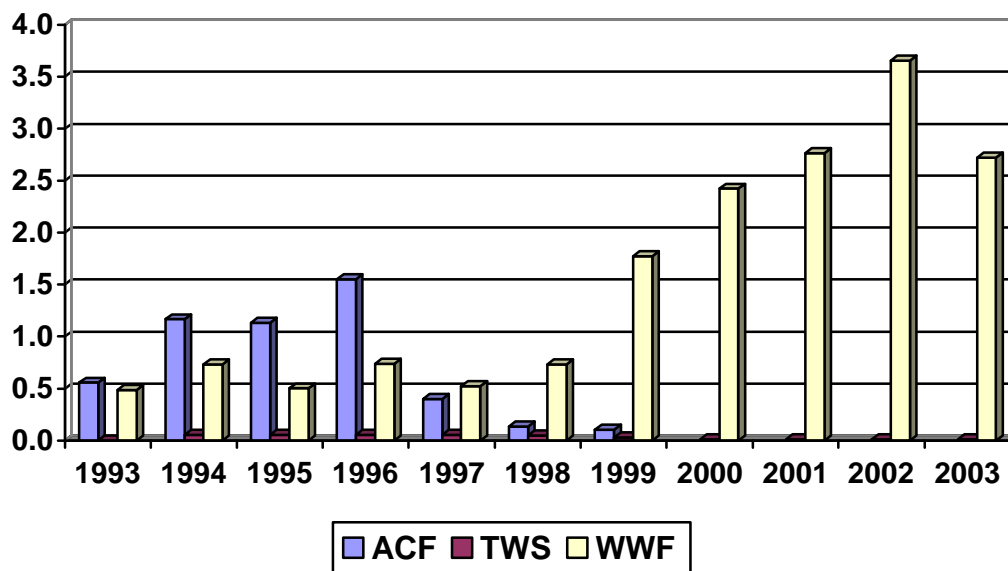
¹⁴ Details of the Natural Heritage Trust grants WWF Australia received from the Federal Government between 1998/99 and 2001/02 are contained in Appendix 2. Note, 1998/99 to 2001/02 were chosen as reference years because, at the time of writing, the Commonwealth had not published the 2002/03 annual report for the Natural Heritage Trust.

¹⁵ Details of the grants provided under AusAID programs and the GVEHO Program between 1998/99 and 2001/02 are contained in Appendix 3.

funding during this period. Total Federal Government funding allocated to WWF Australia during these years was \$10.6 million. In addition, the Federal Government has provided a number of grants to WWF Australia for which detailed financial information is not publicly available. For example, since 2000 the Federal Government has contributed an annual grant to WWF Australia in order to disseminate information about the EPBC Act to environment NGOs.

In order to place the grants WWF Australia has received from the Federal Government in perspective, Figure 3 below compares Commonwealth funding of ACF and TWS between 1993/94 and 2002/03 with that of WWF Australia (see Appendix 4 for further details). Greenpeace does not accept government funding as a matter of policy and it did not receive any money from any government over this period.¹⁶ Figure 3 shows that both ACF and TWS have received substantially less funding from the Federal Government than has WWF Australia. Further, while Commonwealth grants to WWF Australia have increased considerably over this period, those to ACF and TWS have dropped sharply since the Howard Government came to power.

Figure 3 Commonwealth grants to ACF, TWS and WWF Australia (\$m)



Source: Appendix 4

In summary, a significant proportion of WWF Australia's growth over the last decade can be attributed to the generosity of the Federal Government. Since March 1996 when the Howard Government came to power, government grants to WWF Australia have increased by almost 500 per cent and have totalled over \$15 million, most of it (almost \$13.5 million) being received after the negotiations concerning the EPBC Act commenced. The overwhelming majority of these government grants came from the Commonwealth. On the other hand, Commonwealth grants to environment groups less friendly to the Federal Government have been sharply reduced.

¹⁶ Greenpeace Financial Statements 1993-2003.

5. WWF Australia's support for the Howard Government's environment policies

This section reviews WWF Australia's public comments about the Howard Government's main environment policies and compares them with the public comments made by Australia's other large environment NGOs (excluding HSI and TCT). Table 1 reports the public comments of WWF Australia and other environment groups on a number of major policy issues since 1999.¹⁷

It is apparent from Table 1 that WWF Australia has provided favourable comments in relation to a significant number of the Howard Government's major environment policies, particularly post-1999. In general, these comments have been more complimentary than those of other environment groups and in some cases stand in stark contrast to them. In addition, there have been few instances where WWF Australia has publicly criticised the Federal Government's major environment policies, particularly at, or around, the time the policies have been announced.¹⁸ This contrasts with almost all other large environment organisations (with the exception of HSI and TCT), which have frequently been critical of the Howard Government's performance in addressing Australia's key environmental concerns.¹⁹

The rarity of public criticism of the Howard Government's main environment policies at or around the time of their announcement is noteworthy, as this is when the views of environment organisations on policy are most likely to be reported in the mainstream media. As a result, comments made at this time tend to be of political importance to the Government. In contrast, criticism coming well after a policy announcement, or appearing in non-mainstream forums, is less likely to have major political ramifications and is therefore less damaging to the Government.

¹⁷ References to all quotes in Table 1 are provided in Appendix 5.

¹⁸ WWF Australia has been critical of some of the Howard Government's minor environment policies. For example, in relation to the Australian Forestry Standard that the Federal Government launched in October 2002, WWF Australia stated: 'It doesn't pass the test in Brazil and the developing world, so how this government system expects that the market's going to stomach it happening in a developed country like Australia is laughable' (*Canberra Times* 2002). However, the WWF international network was a founder and strong supporter of the Forestry Stewardship Council, an alternative to the Australian Forestry Standard, as an accreditation system for forestry management.

¹⁹ The extent to which individual organisations have criticised the Howard government varies considerably. However, ACF, TWS and Greenpeace Australia Pacific have roundly criticised the Government's policies and lack of action in a number of areas. Similarly, the majority of state and territory conservation councils have voiced concerns about the environment policies of the Howard Government. Yet there is evidence to suggest the Howard Government has placed significant pressure on many NGOs, particularly through reducing, and threatening to reduce, government grants to silence its critics (Maddison *et al.* 2004).

Table 1 Comments by WWF and other environment groups on major Howard Government environment policies

WWF Australia	Other environment groups
<p>EPBC Act (June 1999)</p> <p>‘[T]he biggest win for the Australian environment in 25 years.’</p> <p>‘[T]he most significant legislative win for Australian conservation in 25 years.’</p>	<p>‘The legislation guillotined through the Senate will take national environment protection back to the sixties, not into the new millennium ... The process and the result of both these deals heap shame on all those who have participated.’ (TWS)</p> <p>‘This legislation is environmentally irresponsible ... Any Senator who votes for this unacceptable legislation in its current form will be supporting the degradation of Australia’s environment.’ (TWS, ACF and Greenpeace)</p>
<p>Heritage Bills (August 2003)</p> <p>‘These bills are a major advance over existing Commonwealth heritage laws ... We are looking forward to seeing an independent and reinvigorated Australian Heritage Council as a result of this new legislation.’</p>	<p>‘ACF today expressed disappointment that the Government’s heritage protection bills had passed the Senate without crucial amendments ... While there have been some improvements and there are some new tools for public use, we remain disappointed with the package of legislation as passed today.’ (ACF)</p>
<p>National Water Initiative Announcement (August 2003)</p> <p>‘This is the moment in time when the right people were in the right place with the right plan ... this is best news for all Australians for a long time.’</p>	<p>‘We’ve moved forward today - no doubt about it - but not as far as we were hoping ... this funding package starts the ball rolling, it stops well short of what’s required.’ (ACF)</p> <p>‘The Nature Conservation Council today criticised the National Water Initiative agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) as being woefully inadequate and failing to ensure the health of the ailing Murray River ... this package falls well short of that mark.’ (Nature Conservation Council of NSW)</p>

<p>Intergovernmental Agreement on the National Water Initiative (June 2004)</p> <p>‘WWF Australia congratulates the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Premiers for addressing the water needs of the eastern states ... Over the coming months WWF will be working with all governments to ensure the most strategic cost effective and valuable projects for all Australians and the Australian environment are delivered.’</p>	<p>‘COAG’s water deal is a halfway house: it lays the foundations for good water policy but provides no new money to get the job done.’ (ACF)</p> <p>‘It is appalling that after almost a year of negotiations, so little has been achieved for the environment ... The environment has been completely ignored in this current deal ... It is offensive to the community that the Government calls this commitment “a big win for our State”.’ (Nature Conservation Council of NSW and Total Environment Centre)</p>
<p>South-East Regional Marine Plan (May 2004)</p> <p>‘WWF Australia today welcomed the Commonwealth Government’s release of the South East Regional Marine Plan, as a “useful first step towards securing integrated management of all human activities in the marine environment covered by the plan”.’</p>	<p>‘[T]he plan ... (falls) short of the management reform and protection needed for our remarkable ocean life ... At best this a plan to create a plan ... It leaves uncertain the size and level of protection of marine parks and has no clear environmental accountability for ocean users.’ (ACF)</p> <p>‘There is a lack of detail in the final plan and few detailed commitments to conserve the southeast’s precious marine environment in marine protected areas.’ (Australian Marine Conservation Society)</p>
<p>Great Barrier Reef Re-zoning Plan (December 2003)</p> <p>‘A plan tabled in Federal Parliament today to create the largest network of marine sanctuaries on Earth has been called a stunning achievement by WWF Australia ... This is a win for all Australians ... WWF Australia congratulates Dr Kemp for his leadership’</p>	<p>‘This plan is a positive and necessary step but more needs to be done to protect the reef for future generations.’ (ACF)</p> <p>‘While the introduction of the RAP is a very important one for the long-term maintenance of the World Heritage Area, it is only one process ... Sadly, all these processes may be insufficient unless we can minimise the rate and magnitude of</p>

	global warming. All Australians must continue to lobby the Australian Government to recognise this real problem and act to mitigate it, something we have seen little of.’ (Australian Coral Reef Society)
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Source: Appendix 5

A more detailed analysis of the positions taken on major issues by WWF Australia and other environment organisations can be found in Appendix 5. Three observations can be made:

1. WWF Australia’s comments are almost uniformly favourable, and often highly complimentary, to the Howard Government.
2. WWF Australia’s position is frequently at odds with those of other major environment groups such as ACF, Greenpeace, TWS and state conservation councils.
3. Other major organisations are sometimes critical and sometimes supportive of Howard Government policies.

The evidence suggests that WWF Australia is inclined to praise the Howard Government’s main environment policies, while other organisations are more likely to provide an independent assessment.

WWF Australia has been willing to criticise the Government publicly about one issue, its response to climate change. Recently, it described the Prime Minister’s Energy White Paper, *Securing Australia’s Energy Future*, as an ‘environmental failure’ (quoted by Colman and McGarry 2004). WWF Australia was also a joint signatory to a document titled ‘Clean Energy and Climate Change Action Agenda’ (June 2004), which criticised the White Paper, saying it ‘contains no effective plan to cut greenhouse pollution, no long term target to boost renewable energy and no long term plan to control the spiralling pollution from the energy and transport sectors’ (Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy *et al.* 2004). However, given that WWF Australia has invested considerable resources in building its credibility on the climate change issue and that the Howard Government’s White Paper was so evidently in the interests of the fossil fuel industries – and was subject to strong and unequivocal criticism from all environment groups and the sustainable energy industry – it would have been anomalous, to say the least, for WWF Australia to have remained silent.²⁰

Moreover, WWF Australia’s criticism of the Howard Government’s climate change policies has been more muted than that of most other groups. For example, in a recently released policy proposals document for the forthcoming Federal election, WWF Australia failed to include the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol as one of the priority actions for addressing climate change, even though it is likely to be one of the key environmental issues in the election (WWF Australia 2004b). Similarly, in June

²⁰ In addition, the climate change unit of WWF Australia was established as a partially autonomous unit working closely with WWF International, which is a strong advocate of the Kyoto Protocol.

2004, WWF Australia published a document titled *Climate Change Solutions for Australia* that does not mention the Kyoto Protocol as being part of ‘the way forward’ (Colman *et al.* 2004). The failure to include the ratification of the Protocol in these documents conflicts with the position of all other large environment organisations which see ratification as a vitally important step in developing an international response to climate change.²¹ It also contrasts sharply with the position taken by WWF International, which regards ‘[m]aking the Kyoto Protocol international law ... an essential first step against climate change’ (WWF International 2004).

The failure on the part of WWF Australia to mention this issue is beneficial to the Howard Government as it is opposed to the ratification of the Protocol and it means that WWF Australia cannot be deemed to provide political support for the ALP which is in favour of ratifying the Protocol. It is also worth noting in this context that WWF Australia accepts large donations from mining companies, including Rio Tinto which has campaigned against the Kyoto Protocol.²²

In recent years WWF Australia, in collaboration with WWF International, has bestowed on the Howard Government at least three ‘Gift to the Earth Awards’, which are intended to recognise a ‘globally significant contribution to the protection of the natural world’ (WWF International 2003). The awards were granted for the Howard Government’s involvement in the Tri-National Wetlands Memorandum of Understanding between Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (presented in 2002), its declaration of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve (presented in 2003), and its involvement in the establishment of whale sanctuaries in the South Pacific (presented in 2004).

In summary, the evidence indicates that WWF Australia has provided a disproportionate level of public support for a significant number of the Howard Government’s main environment policies, that its criticism of the Government’s policies has generally been muted, and that it has played an important role in generating a positive perception of the Government’s environmental performance.

²¹ See, for example, ACF *et al.* 2004.

²² Anon 2000, p. 9.

6. The Howard Government's use of WWF Australia

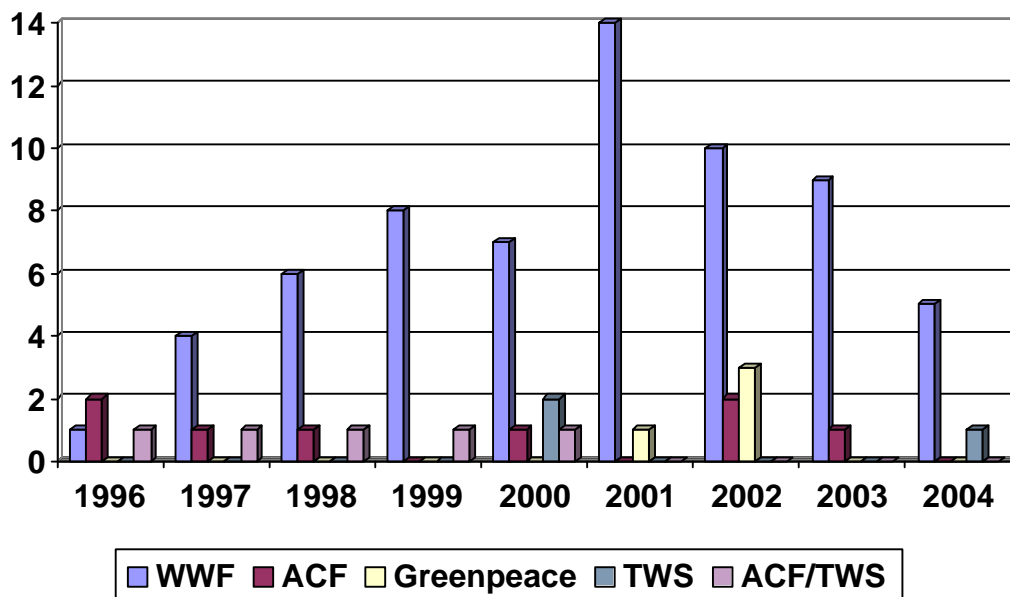
This section examines the extent to which the Howard Government has used WWF Australia's name to promote its own policies and silence its critics. In order to do so, we examine the use of WWF Australia's name and public statements in:

- press releases published by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage (hereafter referred to as the Environment Ministers); and
- speeches and other documents released by members of the Howard Government.

Press releases published by the Environment Ministers

Since the Howard Government came to power in March 1996, at least 64 press releases published by the Environment Ministers have mentioned the names WWF Australia or WWF.²³ In contrast, a mere 20 press releases issued by the Environment Ministers mention Australia's other large environment advocacy groups - ACF, Greenpeace and TWS. Eight of these relate to ACF, four to Greenpeace, three to TWS, and five relate to both ACF and TWS.²⁴ The distribution of these press releases is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Government press releases that mention various environment groups (no.)



Source: Environment Ministers' websites

The context in which the names of NGOs appear is perhaps more revealing. In the case of WWF Australia, the references are all either neutral or positive and, in a

²³ These figures have been derived by searching the Environment Minister's website (www.deh.gov.au/minister/index.html) and the personal archives of the authors. It is possible there are additional press releases that were not available from these sources (particularly joint press releases).

²⁴ Four of these also mention WWF Australia.

significant number of instances, the WWF name and its statements have been used to add credibility to the Government's policies. For example, the following extract appeared in a press release concerning the Threatened Species Network, a WWF Australia project funded by the Federal Government. The press release, published in September 2001²⁵ by the former Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Robert Hill, contains an introduction about the project by the Minister, followed by an endorsement of it by WWF Australia.

'The Threatened Species Network Community Grants, a joint initiative of the Federal Government's \$2.5 billion Natural Heritage Trust and the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), not only assist in saving our unique flora and fauna but also reward community groups with the recognition they deserve,' Senator Hill said. ...

WWF Australia Chief Executive Officer Dr David Butcher highlighted the importance of the Threatened Species Network Community Grants program in building community interest in conservation activities... 'The conservation work that is funded through this important partnership between WWF, community groups throughout Australia and the Federal Government is a vital step toward creating awareness of Australia's unique environment ... Conserving threatened species and ecosystems has been the foundation of WWF's work internationally for 40 years and WWF is pleased to continue this relationship with NT communities and the Natural Heritage Trust.'

Similarly, the following extract is taken from a press release concerning the Bush Brokers Program, which was published by parliamentary secretary Hon Dr Sharman Stone in October 1999.²⁶

Bush Brokers an innovative new Perth Bushcare project combining the expertise of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia hit the market today with the announcement of \$87,000 in funding from the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust ... This really is a case of thinking outside the box; looking at how business, conservationists and property owners can work collaboratively to protect Western Australia's unique native bushland into the next millennium. Congratulations to all those involved in putting this cutting-edge project together.

Earlier this year, in a press release concerning the 25th anniversary of the cessation of commercial whaling in Australia, the current Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Hon Dr David Kemp, stated:²⁷

Since coming to power, the Howard Government has also actively pursued whale sanctuaries and was today awarded a Gift to the Earth by the World Wide Fund for Nature for its efforts ... To be awarded a Gift to the Earth is a great honour. It boosts our resolve at a critical time.

²⁵ Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Commonwealth Support for NT to Protect its Unique Wildlife', Press Release, 7 September 2001.

²⁶ Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Bush Brokers on the Market', Press Release, 8 October 1999.

²⁷ Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Historic Anniversary to mark 25 years of Whale Protection in Australia', Press Release, 30 March 2004.

Also, in June 2004, the following statement appeared in a press release published by Minister Kemp.²⁸

Since 1996, the Australian Government has also increased marine protected areas in Commonwealth waters by a factor of ten to around 60 million hectares ... and been awarded two Gifts to the Earth by the World Wide Fund for Nature for marine reserves and South Pacific whale sanctuaries.

In relation to the Heritage Bills, a press release published by Minister Kemp stated:²⁹

The Minister also acknowledged the support of heritage bodies across Australia, including ... the World Wide Fund for Nature.

As the above extracts demonstrate, WWF Australia's name and public statements have been used frequently in press releases to assist the Howard Government to promote its policies and environmental credentials.³⁰ None of the press releases issued by the Environment Ministers is critical of WWF Australia. Of the thirteen press releases that refer to ACF, six are highly critical of the organisation³¹ and another is critical of a person associated with Climate Action Network Australia.³² The following extract from a press release published by Hon Dr Sharman Stone titled

²⁸ Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Australia takes lead on World Oceans Day', Press Release, 7 June 2004.

²⁹ Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Quantum Leap for National Heritage, Press Release', 21 August 2003.

³⁰ It should be noted that not all press releases that mention WWF or WWF Australia seek to use these organisations' names or public statements to market the Government's policies or environmental achievements. Several of the references merely alert the reader's attention to the fact that WWF Australia administers the program that is the subject of the release (see, for example, Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Funds to Protect Victorian Grassland Now Available', Press Release, 6 December 1999 and Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Urgent Appeal to Make Homes and Backyards Swift Parrot – Safe', Press Release, 16 September 1999). Further, four of the references relate to the GVEHO program, where WWF Australia is one of a number of organisations that are mentioned as being recipients of Government grants (see Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Environment Groups Share Almost \$1.7 million', Press Release, 25 December 1997; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, '\$1.7 Million in Grants for Environment Groups', Press Release, 1998; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Environment and Heritage Groups Share Government Grants of \$1.65 million', Press Release, 7 November 1999; and Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Environment and Heritage Groups Share \$1.5 million', Press Release, 15 December 2000).

³¹ Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, 'ACF Comments on NHT Ill-informed', Press Release, 18 February 2000; Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'No Cut to National Action Plan Funding', Press Release, 15 May 2003; Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'More - Not Less – Money for Natural Heritage Trust', Press Release, 14 May 2002; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Beattie's Hinchinbrook Backflip Embarrasses Labor', Press Release, 29 May 1998; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'ACF Wrong (Again) on Environment Law Reform', Press Release, 11 November 1997; and Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'ACF 'Misleading' on Kakadu', Press Release, 16 April 1996.

³² Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Claims Dismissed as False by Minister', Press Release, 30 October 2002

‘ACF Comments on NHT Ill-informed’ provides an indication of the nature of these references to ACF.³³

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Sharman Stone, today slammed the Australian Conservation Foundation comments on the achievements of the Federal Government’s Natural Heritage Trust, saying they were a bad case of sour grapes.

‘The ACF’s comments about the achievements of the Trust are ill-informed and out-of-touch with the real environmental work that is happening in grass roots Australia ... How the ACF could comment on a Report that hasn't been released yet is astounding ... Instead of making whingeing, ill-informed statements I suggest the ACF gets out of their ivory tower in Sydney and out into the real world. Clearly, they need to take a good, hard look at the results of thousands of hours of toil invested by local communities in the sustainable use and management our natural resources,’ Sharman Stone said.

The context in which ACF’s name and public statements are used in the remaining six press releases is neutral. Four of these relate to the GVEHO Program and another relates to a joint program between ACF and 3M.³⁴ The only reference that could be construed as being intended to provide additional credibility for the Government relates to a grant provided to ACF by the Commonwealth in 1996 to enable it to participate in the Regional Forest Agreement consultation process.³⁵

By contrast, none of the press releases issued by the Environment Ministers criticises TWS. However, with the possible exception of the press release concerning the Regional Forest Agreement consultation process, TWS’s name and public statements do not appear to have been intended in these press releases to promote the Government’s environment policies or performance.³⁶

³³ Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, ‘ACF Comments on NHT Ill-informed’, Press Release, 18 February 2000.

³⁴ See Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment Groups Share Almost \$1.7 million’, Press Release, 25 December 1997; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘\$1.7 Million in Grants for Environment Groups’, Press Release, 1998; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment and Heritage Groups Share Government Grants of \$1.65 million’, Press Release, 7 November 1999; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment and Heritage Groups Share \$1.5 million’, Press Release, 15 December 2000; and Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘3M Foresite: A New Environmental Partnership’, Press Release, 11 September 1996.

³⁵ Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Hon Marie Tehan, Victorian Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Hon John Anderson MP, ‘Proposals for an East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement’, Press Release, 10 October 1996.

³⁶ See Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment Groups Share Almost \$1.7 million’, Press Release, 25 December 1997; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘\$1.7 Million in Grants for Environment Groups’, Press Release, 1998; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment and Heritage Groups Share Government Grants of \$1.65 million’, Press Release, 7 November 1999; and Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Environment and Heritage Groups Share \$1.5 million’, Press Release, 15 December 2000; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘Hundreds of Australians Vie for Prime Minister’s Environment Awards’, Press Release, 1 June 2000; Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, ‘The Prime Minister’s Environment Awards Celebrate Australian Environmental Achievements’, Press Release, 4 June 2000; Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, ‘Antarctic Heart Wins Literature Award’, Press Release, 5 June 2004; and Senator

The situation with respect to Greenpeace is slightly different. It has been mentioned in only four press releases issued by the Environment Ministers. In one of these, the reference to Greenpeace is associated with an attack on a report prepared by a member of the board of the organisation that was published on behalf of a collection of NGOs.³⁷ On two other occasions, it appears Greenpeace's name and public statements have been cited to provide additional credibility for the Government's policies. For example, a press release concerning the South Pacific Whale Sanctuaries published by Hon Dr Sharman Stone in 2001 contained the following statement.³⁸

Dr Stone said that she was grateful for the support of environmental organisations including Greenpeace, the World Conservation Union, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Humane Society International and particularly the Pacific Youth Caucus on the Environment, at the Apia meeting.

The fourth press release that mentions Greenpeace concerns an international convention that included a representative from the organisation.³⁹

In summary, there is a marked disparity between the way in which the Environment Ministers have used the name and public statements of WWF Australia and their communications about other environment organisations. In many instances, WWF Australia's name and statements have been used to present the Government and its policies in a favourable light. By contrast, very little use has been made of the names and statements of Australia's other large environmental advocacy groups and in many cases the references have been associated with an attack on the relevant organisation, particularly ACF.

Speeches and other documents released by the Howard Government

The Howard Government's use of WWF Australia's name and public statements is not confined to the press releases of the Environment Ministers. Both have also been cited in a range of speeches, statements and documents published by Commonwealth Government agencies and Coalition Members and Senators.

References to WWF Australia's name and statements have been prevalent in Parliamentary debates and, in most cases, have provided credibility for the Government's position. For example, in a debate in the House of Representatives concerning the *Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Bill 1996*, Hon Bruce Billson (Liberal Member for Dunkley), stated:⁴⁰

Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Hon Marie Tehan, Victorian Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Hon John Anderson MP, 'Proposals for an East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement', Press Release, 10 October 1996.

³⁷ Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'In Reverse – No Forward Thinking', Press Release, 19 August 2002.

³⁸ Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, 'Major Boost for South Pacific Whale Sanctuary Following Regional Forum', Press Release, 24 April 2001. See also Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Australia Unconvinced by Latest Japanese Pro-Whaling Poll', Press Release, 24 March 2002.

³⁹ Hon Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'World Summit on Sustainable Development', Press Release, 19 August 2002.

⁴⁰ *House of Representatives Hansard*, 17 October 1996, p. 5724.

Most people who are genuinely concerned about the environment cannot overlook the fact that the environment went backwards while Labor sat and watched. The politics of punishment would probably ring true when the Labor people opposite looked at the Senate committee report and found that the World Wide Fund for Nature said of the Bill:

‘We feel that, in general terms, the thrust of the Natural Heritage Trust Bill is excellent for the environment.’

Similarly, in talking about a Government discussion paper concerning Australia’s Ocean Policy during question time in 1997, Senator Hill stated:⁴¹

Labor knocked this; they could not see any relevance, but it was heartening to see community interest groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature coming out and warmly welcoming our approach.

In 2000 when responding to a question without notice concerning the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, Senator Robert Hill made the following remark.⁴²

That call has been echoed by many environmental groups that have also swung behind the Prime Minister’s plan. The World Wide Fund for Nature put out a media statement entitled, ‘Government’s salinity and water quality action plan the only way forward’. It reads:

‘WWF Australia has welcomed the Federal Government’s new action plan on salinity and water quality as a significant step forward in developing a rational, strategic and coordinated approach to two of Australia’s most pressing environmental concerns.’

In addition, the Government used WWF Australia’s name and public statements on a number of occasions in Parliamentary debates in order to defend the EPBC Act. For example, Hon Bruce Billson MP made the following remark while discussing the legislation in the House of Representatives.⁴³

[I]t is with relief we are greeted with statements like this from the World Wide Fund for Nature:

‘For WWF, this agreement is the successful culmination of a decade of working for better legislation to protect threatened species and ecological communities, and four years of advocacy for better national environment legislation.’

Their bottom line is:

‘[The new laws] will leave Australia with significantly stronger environment protection.’

⁴¹ *Senate Hansard*, 4 March 1997, p. 1171.

⁴² *Senate Hansard*, 11 October 2000, p. 18295.

⁴³ *House of Representatives Hansard*, 29 June 1999, p.7781. See also *Senate Hansard*, 24 June 1999, p. 6306; and *Senate Hansard*, 24 June 1999, p. 6320.

That is from the WWF. Who would you believe? The member for Wills – the Big W from those opposite – or WWF?

The Howard Government also took advantage of WWF Australia's enthusiastic support of the new zoning plan for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. In this regard, Minister Kemp made the follow comments in question time on 3 June 2003 following the release of the draft plan.⁴⁴

I was also pleased to see that the World Wide Fund for Nature is reported as saying, 'We think it's a fantastic step forward.'

In addition, WWF Australia's name and public statements have been quoted in a number of public speeches presented by members of the Howard Government.⁴⁵ Senator Hill, for example, used WWF Australia's name and comments to promote the virtues of the EPBC Act in a speech given to The Sydney Institute in February 2000.⁴⁶

[D]espite the new EPBC Act running to some 534 pages, the more radical green groups could not find anything in it worth supporting.

The ACF, for example, attacked the new law as being a 'further fragmentation of environmental standards' and 'a victory for narrow-mindedness and evasion.'

But internationally respected groups such as the Humane Society International and the World Wide Fund for Nature disagreed with this extreme view and worked with the Government to amend the bill and see it passed into law.

The World Wide Fund for Nature went on to praise the new law as 'the biggest win for the Australian environment in 25 years.'

Several Howard Government Members and Senators (other than the Environment Ministers) have referred to WWF Australia's name and public statements in their press releases. For example, Hon Gary Nairn MP, the Liberal Member for Eden-Monaro, has associated himself with WWF Australia's work on native grasslands in the Monaro district. In a press released published in October 2002, he stated:⁴⁷

Federal Member for Eden-Monaro, Gary Nairn, has congratulated individuals and organisations involved in the Monaro Remnant Native Grassland Project which has just wrapped up.

'The work done under the direction of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Monaro Grasslands Advisory Committee has been excellent.' ...

⁴⁴ *House of Representatives Hansard*, 3 June 2003, p.15753.

⁴⁵ Note, it is impossible to obtain transcripts of all speeches made by Coalition members and senators. However, transcripts of a small number of speeches are published on Ministerial websites. See, for example, the website of the Minister for the Environment and Heritage (www.deh.gov.au/minister/index.html).

⁴⁶ Hill 2000a. See also, Hill 1996; Hill 1997; Hill 2000b; Kemp 2002; Kemp 2004a; and Kemp 2004b.

⁴⁷ Hon Gary Nairn MP, Federal Member for Eden-Monaro, 'Monaro Remnant Native Grassland Project Concludes', Press Release, 1 October 2002. See also Senator Ian MacDonald, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, 'New International Push on Illegal Fishing', Press Release, 10 June 2003.

The project commenced in 1996 after funding under the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust. Mr Nairn said, 'More than \$380,000 of NHT funding has been contributed to the project over the past six years. To get so many different sections of the local community involved in such a major conservation effort is fantastic.'

The Howard Government has enlisted WWF International's name in defending its forestry position on a number of occasions. The Forest Taskforce of the Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, for example, published the following statement in its August 1997 newsletter.⁴⁸

Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill welcomed praise by Dr Claude Martin, Director General of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - International, who said Australia's policy for the conservation of forest biodiversity significantly exceeded the WWF's minimum goal.

Australia has thrown its support behind the WWF's campaign for countries to conserve at least 10 per cent of each of their existing forest types in parks and reserves by the year 2000.

The WWF estimates that only 6 per cent of the world's forests are protected and biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate.

In contrast, Australia's nationally agreed benchmark criteria for a Comprehensive, Representative and Adequate Reserve system are 15 per cent of each forest type as existed before European arrival, at least 60 per cent of Old-Growth forest and 90 per cent or more of high quality wilderness.

Senator Robert Hill published a press release concerning the same incident titled 'Australia Forest Policy Praised by World Wide Fund for Nature', in which he stated that he 'welcomed the praise given by Dr Claude Martine [sic], Director General of the WWF - International, who said Australia's policy for the conservation of forest biodiversity in protected areas significantly exceeded the WWF's minimum goal.'⁴⁹ Similarly, the Minister for Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian MacDonald, published the following statement in a press release issued in March 2002.⁵⁰

The fact is, Australia has a commendable environmental record in forestry. Australia has twice the world average in percentage terms of native forests reserved. Australia exceeds the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) requirements for forestry reserves. Australia is a world leader in conserving forests.

⁴⁸ Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'WWF Praises Australian Forest Policy', *CRA Forest News*, No.5, August 1997 (available at: www.affa.gov.au (16 June 2004)).

⁴⁹ Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 'Australian Forest Policy Praised by World Wide Fund for Nature', Press Release, 24 June 1997.

⁵⁰ Senator Ian MacDonald, Minister for Forestry and Conservation, 'Howard Government Committed to Forestry Standard to Improve Exports', Press Release, 15 February 2002. See also Hon John Anderson MP, Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, 'Australia's Forests – the Path to Sustainability', Press Release, 7 August 1998; *Daily Telegraph* 2002; Hon Bob Baldwin MP, *House of Representatives Hansard*, 21 March 2002, p. 1873; and Senator Julian McGauran, *Senate Hansard*, 23 August 1999, p. 7471.

The Howard Government has capitalized on WWF Australia's name and statements in its attempts to isolate and discredit other environment organisations that have been critical of it. Senator Hill's descriptions of ACF as a 'radical green group' and WWF Australia as an 'internationally respected group' is typical of the manner in which the Government has tried to caricature and silence its critics by favouring some groups and using their support for the Government to discredit others. This is a well-understood tactic in the PR industry (Beder 2000).

From information on the public record, it appears the Howard Government has relied on WWF Australia's name and public statements as part of a strategy to promote its policies and environmental credentials, while also marginalising its critics.

7. Conclusions and implications

The evidence reviewed in this paper suggests the following conclusions.

- A significant proportion of WWF Australia's rapid growth over the last decade can be attributed to the generosity of the Federal Government with the bulk of this funding (almost \$13.5 million) being received after the negotiations concerning the EPBC Act commenced. By contrast, the Howard Government has sharply reduced funding for other environment organisations.
- WWF Australia has provided a high level of public support for most of the Howard Government's major environment policies, and any criticism has generally been muted.
- The Howard Government has frequently used WWF Australia's name and public statements in what appears to be part of a strategy to promote its policies and environmental credentials and to isolate and discredit environment organisations that have at times been critical of the Government's policies.

The weight of available evidence, although much of it circumstantial, suggests there are strong grounds for questioning whether WWF Australia can legitimately continue to describe itself as independent. The loss of independence is of considerable importance as it undermines WWF Australia's role in public debates about Government policy and raises questions about whether it has misled its supporters and the general public. Because the public is justified in asking whether the opinions and activities of other groups are influenced by governments and businesses, the standing of all environment NGOs in the community is jeopardised.

While WWF Australia's actions are open to question, possibly of greater interest to the broader community is the manner in which the Howard Government appears to have used public resources and the trust the community places in NGOs for its own political purposes. The Government has relied on WWF Australia's name and public statements to promote its policies and its environmental credentials. It also appears to have used scarce public resources in an attempt to influence the actions of an NGO.

The community expects politicians to engage in spin, but they do not expect the same of independent NGOs. Perceptions that major groups may have been compromised present a considerable challenge for the environment movement as a whole, threatening its effectiveness and credibility within the broader community.

This report is not an analysis of WWF Australia's method of operating, one that distinguishes it to some degree from other major environment groups but which is not a point of contention. It is an analysis of the extent to which WWF Australia remains an independent organisation in the way represented to its supporters and the wider community. The closeness of its relationship to the Federal Government is a matter of judgement for its board and senior staff. The trade-off for the benefits of substantial funding and access to senior ministers can be the loss of credibility, both of the organisation and the broader environment movement, and the creation of unnecessary conflict between environmental NGOs. More insidiously, there is a strong tendency

for organisations that become too dependent on the government (or, indeed, on corporations) to begin to see the world through the eyes of their benefactors. When that occurs, organisations lose their capacity to make dispassionate assessments of what is in the interests of the environment and thereby betray their purpose and their supporters.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 WWF Australia – Financial Data 1992/93-2002/03

	1993*	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Govt. grants	0.486	0.731	0.502	0.740	0.526	0.734	1.772	2.422	2.764	3.653	2.721
Non-govt. revenue	1.865	1.635	1.628	1.843	1.814	2.208	4.657	7.434	7.838	7.193	8.335
Total revenue	2.351	2.366	2.130	2.583	2.340	2.942	6.429	9.856	10.602	10.846	11.056
Total expenditure	(2.473)	(2.053)	(1.931)	(0.704)	(2.297)	(2.770)	(5.581)	(11.211)	(12.346)	(10.266)	(12.368)
Operating profit/loss	(0.122)	0.313	0.199	1.880	0.043	0.173	0.721	(1.355)	(1.745)	0.580	(1.312)
Total assets	0.720	0.500	0.579	2.381	2.372	2.469	3.268	4.552	6.535	7.239	5.768
Total liabilities	0.718	0.690	0.544	0.479	0.443	0.367	0.445	0.374	0.613	0.737	0.578
Net assets	0.002	(0.190)	0.035	1.901	1.929	2.101	2.823	4.177	5.922	6.502	5.190
Equity											
Reserves	0.634	0.363	0.387	1.940	1.806	1.999	2.544	3.676	4.906	5.450	4.222
Retained surplus	(0.631)	(0.554)	(0.352)	(0.038)	0.123	0.102	0.278	0.502	1.015	1.052	0.967
Total equity	0.002	(0.190)	0.035	1.901	1.929	2.101	2.823	4.177	5.922	6.502	5.190

Source: WWF Australia, Financial Statements, 1993 – 2003.

*NB: There is a discrepancy in the figures in the 1992/93 and 1993/94 financial statements concerning the financial situation of the organisation in 1992/93.

The figures presented here for 1992/93 are those contained in the 1992/93 statements.

Appendix 2 NHT Grants to WWF Australia 1998/99- 2001/02

Program name	Amount (\$)
Threatened Species Network 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	572,000 560,000 519,600 <u>612,400</u> 2,264,000
Management of Grant Funding under the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia (Endangered Species Program) 1998/99 1999/00	500,000 <u>500,000</u> 1,000,000
Threatened Species Network Community Grants Program 2000/01 2001/02	500,000 <u>521,512</u> 1,021,512
Co-operative Wetland Management Agreements in Outback Australia 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	124,000 184,600 <u>99,600</u> 408,200
Conservation Management of Productive Monaro Native Grasslands 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	81,718 44,407 74,080 <u>32,000</u> 232,205
Community Woodlands Conservation Project (1998/99)	12,000
Guidebook on Revegetation of Aboriginal Lands in NSW (1998/99)	62,979
Conservation of Endangered Darling Downs Native Grassland Remnants 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	39,633 27,800 66,200 <u>66,200</u> 199,833
South East Queensland Rainforest Recovery Project 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	192,710 105,000 54,450 <u>120,000</u> 472,160

Program name	Amount (\$)
Conservation and Restoring Riparian Habitats for Mary River Cod 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	31,050 62,100 50,100 <u>108,700</u> 251,950
South Australian Temperate Grasslands 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01	47,351 25,772 <u>24,854</u> 97,977
Conservation of Threatened Woodlands and Dry Forests by Management of Firewood (1998/99)	7,372
Management of Nationally Important Wetlands in Tasmania 1998/99 1999/00 2000/01	31,376 37,900 <u>39,700</u> 108,976
Conservation of Temperate Grassy Ecosystems in South East-Australia (1999/00)	500,000
Bush Brokers (1999/00)	87,500
Development of a Tri-national Wetlands Conservation Program (1999/00)	50,000
Conservation of Native Blue Grasslands and Biodiversity in the Central Highlands 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	102,200 104,220 <u>12,000</u> 218,420
Arresting Biodiversity Decline in North Central Region (1999/00)	28,900
Manage and Protect Eucalypt Woodlands in WA's Wheatbelt 1999/00 2000/01 2001/02	66,000 52,000 <u>107,650</u> 225,650
Best Practice Conservation of Native Grassland (1998/99)	20,000
The Paroo: Benchmarking Healthy Rivers and Wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin 2000/01 2001/02	30,340 <u>23,200</u> 53,540
Community Identification and Monitoring of Fishing Debris (2000/01)	30,000

Grassy Ecosystem Devolved Grants Program 2000/01 2001/02	460,126 <u>471,498</u> 931,624
Community Based Action at Australia's Nationally Important Shorebird Sites Project (2000/01)	325,000
Setting Conservation Priorities and Management Guidelines for South West Queensland Wetlands (2001/02)	70,400
Total NHT Grants	8,680,198

Sources: Natural Heritage Trust Annual Report 1998-1999, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Commonwealth of Australia, 1999; Natural Heritage Trust Annual Report 1999-2000, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Commonwealth of Australia, 2001; Natural Heritage Trust Annual Report 2000-2001, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Commonwealth of Australia, 2002; Natural Heritage Trust Annual Report 2001-2002, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Commonwealth of Australia, 2003.

Appendix 3 AusAID and GVEHO Grants to WWF Australia 1998/99 – 2001/02

Program	Amount (\$)
Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Program (GVEHO)	
1998/99	82,000
1999/00	77,900
2000/01	77,900
2001/02	<u>74,010</u>
	311,810
AusAid Grants	
1998/99	142,151
1999/00	164,135
2000/01	145,787
2001/02	<u>357,338</u>
	809,411
Total	1,121,221

Sources: WWF Australia, Financial Report, 30 June 1999; WWF Australia, Financial Report, 30 June 2000; WWF Australia, Annual Report, 30 June 2001; WWF Australia, Annual Report, 30 June 2002; WWF Australia, Annual Report, 30 June 2003.

Appendix 4 Commonwealth Grants to ACF, TWS and WWF Australia 1992/93-2002/03

	1993 \$m	1994 \$m	1995 \$m	1996 \$m	1997 \$m	1998 \$m	1999 \$m	2000 \$m	2001 \$m	2002 \$m	2003 \$m
ACF	0.558	1.167	1.133	1.55	0.401	0.138	0.107	0.099	0.135	0.062	0.109
TWS	N/A	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.05	0.03	0.015	0.0135	0.0135	0.0135
WWF	0.486	0.731	0.502	0.74	0.526	0.734	1.772	2.422	2.764	3.653	2.721

Source: ACF financial statements 1993-2003, and Mr D. Edwards (pers. comm.); WWF Australia financial statements 1993-2003; and Mr R. Hanson (pers. comm.) for TWS.

Appendix 5 Environment NGOs Public Comments About the Howard Government's Main Environment Policies

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>Natural Heritage Trust (1996)</p> <p>'We feel, in general terms, the thrust of the Natural Heritage Trust Bill is excellent for the environment.' (WWF Australia) Source: Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, <i>Report on the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Bill 1996</i>, Commonwealth of Australia, 1996.</p> <p>'The NHT provided opportunities for many people to attempt large-scale environmental programs for the first time ... but it's clear that those programs as individual programs will not solve the problems of large-scale land degradation and salinity.' (R. Nias, WWF Australia) Source: A. Susskind, 'Heritage Thrust', <i>The Bulletin</i>, 7 November 2001.</p>	<p>'ACF welcomes the five initiatives contained within the Trust. ... We believe these five initiatives address important and pressing environmental problems in Australia. ... If implemented, the initiatives outlined in the bill should achieve significant environmental gains in the areas of land and water management.'</p> <p>Source: Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, <i>Report on the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Bill 1996</i>, Commonwealth of Australia, 1996.</p> <p>'Despite strong community efforts the NHT is failing to deliver its stated environmental objectives and goals because of a lack of national leadership and strategic focus.'</p> <p>Source: ACF, ACF's Assessment of the Natural Heritage Trust: An Analysis of Mid-term Performance and Recommendations for Reform, June 2000.</p>
<p>Australia's Oceans Policy (1998)</p> <p>'Since it was first proposed WWF has been involved in the development of the Oceans Policy and is now working towards implementation. WWF believes that the Oceans Policy is capable of providing opportunities for delivering meaningful conservation in our precious marine and coastal environment. With strong legislation such as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) with which WWF has been engaged, we will continue to work to achieve the best results.'</p> <p>Source: A. Gilmour, 'Profile of Interests in the Region – National Oceans Office', in National Oceans Advisory Group, <i>Australian Oceans Forum</i></p>	<p>'Australian Conservation Foundation chief executive Don Henry said the policy was a good first step. "If today's policy is followed up by action that matches the words, there is a real chance we can turn the tide. Without action, the policy will amount to nothing more than a drop in the ocean."'</p> <p>Source: N. Mapstone, 'Australia to Protect Marine Environment – And Look for New Oil', <i>The Canberra Times</i>, 24 December 1998.</p> <p>'The Australian Marine Conservation Society welcomed the policy as a sign that the conservative Liberal-National coalition government was firmly committed to ocean preservation. "The Ocean Policy is a significant step forward and provides a useful framework for strategic, integrated planning and management of our oceans," the society said in a statement.'</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p><i>Report 2000</i>, National Oceans Office, 2000.</p> <p>‘...it was heartening to see community interest groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature coming out and warmly welcoming our approach.’</p> <p>Source: Sen. R. Hill, <i>Senate Hansard</i>, 4 March 1997, p. 1171.</p>	<p>Source: J. Nelson, ‘Australia Launches Ocean Protection Policy’, <i>Reuters</i>, 23 December 1998.</p> <p>‘Greenpeace said the policy fell far short of the vision and protection needed for our oceans.’</p> <p>Source: Australian Associated Press, ‘Fed – Oceans Policy Welcomed as a Good First Step’, 23 December 1998.</p>
<p>Measures for a Better Environment (1999)</p> <p>Note: The following extract relates to a joint statement issued by WWF Australia, ACF, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and TWS. This was the only reference we could find where WWF Australia commented on this policy announcement.</p> <p>‘Conservation groups have condemned the GST deal between the Australian Government and the Australian Democrats. They described it as highly damaging to the environment and an international embarrassment. In a joint statement, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Conservation Council of WA, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the Wilderness Society and the Worldwide Fund for Nature say the deal is inadequate. The groups say “Our analysis indicates that the Australian Taxpayer is being asked to provide an additional \$A2.8bn a year for air pollution, ill health and greenhouse gas emissions.”’</p> <p>Source: K. Middleton, ‘Tax deal damaging, say green groups’, <i>The West Australian</i>, 31 May 1999.</p>	<p>See adjacent comments.</p> <p>‘The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) president, Peter Garrett, and Greenpeace chief executive, Ian Higgins, have slammed the Australian Democrat’s deal with the Government, claiming that the diesel fuel rebate will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions.’</p> <p>Source: S. Anthony, ‘Democrats Tax Deal Harmful’, <i>The West Australian</i>, 5 June 1999.</p> <p>‘The president of the ACF, Mr Peter Garrett, reached into his rock repertoire to label the Government-Democrats package “dirty deeds done dirt cheap”. He said the modelling showed the tax changes would increase Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 1 per cent - making it unlikely that the Government could meet its commitments under the Kyoto agreement.’</p> <p>Source: T. Colebatch, ‘Tax Deal Will Boost Pollution: Greens’, <i>The Age</i>, 5 June 1999.</p> <p>‘The Australian Conservation Foundation and Greenpeace said that the package is [an] environmental disaster and should be rejected. ... “In the international arena of tax reform this package is a dud.”’</p> <p>Source: ACF and Greenpeace, <i>It’s a Dirty Deal</i>, Joint Press Release, 4 June 1999.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>EPBC Act (1999)</p> <p>‘This new legislation is the biggest win for the Australian environment in 25 years – one which WWF is proud to be part of. Put simply, once this legislation comes into effect, Australia will have much stronger environmental protection.’ Source: WWF Australia, ‘Another Environmental Solution from WWF’, <i>The Weekend Australian</i> (Advertisement), 3-4 July 1999.</p> <p>‘We believe, as the new Act sets out, a process led by the Environment Minister and involving greater Commonwealth participation through bilateral agreements will lead to better conservation outcomes on more issues, and in more places of more importance. ... Overall, WWF believes that the flaws and challenges posed by the legislation should not be considered in isolation from the positive enormous outcomes the new Act will deliver across a broader range of the most critical environmental issues. The bottom line in 1999 is that the environmental conservation movement must remain focussed on protecting the environment while following a solution focussed working philosophy. WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) Australia ... considers this hard fought Bill to be the most significant legislative win for Australian conservation in 25 years.’ Source: J. Pittock, ‘80% of What we Wanted – And they Call this a Bad Act?’ <i>On Line Opinion</i>, 15 July 1999.</p>	<p>‘The legislation guillotined through the Senate will take national environment protection back to the sixties, not into the new millennium. ... The process and the result of both these deals heap shame on all those who have participated.’ Source: TWS, <i>New Commonwealth Environment Legislation: Environmental Demolition</i>, Press Release, 23 June 1999.</p> <p>‘This legislation is environmentally irresponsible. ... The Bill may improve laws relating to endangered species, but many more species will become endangered as a result of this legislation.’ Source: TWS, ACF and Greenpeace, ‘82 Reasons Why the New Environment Legislation is Bad for the Environment’, Joint Press Release, 20 June 1999.</p> <p>“‘It threatens to unravel many of the significant achievements in environment law of the last two to three decades,” Connor says. ... “It should be providing a platform for the next 25 years rather than merely updating the past 25 years of legislation,” Connor says.’ (J. Connor, ACF) Source: S. Ryan, ‘Acting Natural’, <i>The Courier Mail</i>, 15 July 2000.</p> <p>‘The ACF ... attacked the new law as being a “further fragmentation of environmental standards” and “a victory for narrow-mindedness and evasion.”’ Source: Sen. R. Hill, ‘Environmental Cringe? Why Australia’s Environmental Achievements Receive More Recognition Abroad than at Home’, Address to the Sydney Institute, 10 February 2000.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ or NAP) (2000)</p> <p>‘While Greens Senator Bob Brown and others in the conservation movement were critical of the funding level [for the NAPSWQ], the World Wide Fund for Nature said it was a ‘significant step forward’ and the States needed to match the commitment.’</p> <p>Source: A. Clennell, ‘\$1.5bn for Salinity ‘Not Enough’’, <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>, 11 October 2000.</p> <p>‘[M]any environment groups ...have also swung behind the Prime Minister’s plan. The World Wide Fund for Nature put out a media statement entitled “Government salinity and water quality action plan the only way forward”. It reads:</p> <p>“WWF Australia has welcomed the Federal Government’s new action plan on salinity and water quality as a significant step forward in developing a rational, strategic and coordinated approach to two of Australia’s most pressing environmental concerns.”</p> <p>... The response has been good, reflecting strong community support for the actions that we are proposing. Surprise, surprise: of course, the only party out of step is the Australian Conservation Foundation. It can never bring itself to say a good word on any government plan.’</p> <p>Source: Sen. R. Hill, <i>Senate Hansard</i>, 11 October 2000, p. 18295.</p>	<p>‘On the upside, the National Action Plan commits to a new framework for Commonwealth and state government investment, based on national targets, improved monitoring and accountability, and improved capacity building and communication. The downside, however is that the NAP – \$1.4 billion in Commonwealth and state funds over seven years – is unlikely to deliver results quickly enough or on a large-enough scale to make any real difference. Meanwhile details of Commonwealth-State Agreements, salinity management targets, public consultation and participation, and accountability provisions for the program, are at best only sketchy at this stage.’</p> <p>Source: ACF, ‘Land Management – The Current Situation’, 1 August 2001 (available at: www.acfonline.org.au (16 June 2004)).</p> <p>‘The Conservation Council of SA today welcomed the Prime Minister’s statement on Salinity and Water Quality. ... “The PM’s model announced today, has the makings of a real solution. If he gets agreement through COAG, and it is implemented as a matter of priority with strict adherence to the targets, then it will justify a funding commitment of at least triple that which has been announced today – the bare minimum needed to really address these problems.”’</p> <p>Source: Conservation Council of South Australia, ‘PM’s Salinity and Water Action Plan’, Press Release, October 2000.</p> <p>‘The Federal Government’s new salinity agreement with Queensland is doomed to fail, as it does not tackle the state’s astronomical tree clearing rate, according to the Australian Conservation Foundation. “Land clearing is the cause of dryland salinity, yet the new Queensland-Commonwealth agreement over the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality relies entirely on the State’s existing clearing laws, that are allowing around half a million hectares of native bushlands to be bulldozed each year. ... Attempting to</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
	<p>tackle salinity without properly controlling land clearing is a waste of public money.”</p> <p>Source: ACF, 'Federal Salinity Plan Doomed as New Agreement Rubber Stamps Queensland's Tree Clearing Laws', Press Release, 7 March 2002.</p> <p>‘Conservation groups today expressed their dismay that the new salinity plan for Queensland had failed to include controls on landclearing [sic]. ... “Prior to the election the Prime Minister promised to end landclearing [sic] where it leads to land and water degradation. He has failed to deliver. ... The Federal Government has sought no provision in the plan for actually stopping clearing in salinity prone areas. Instead 162 million dollars may be wasted on more committees and more bureaucratic processes.”</p> <p>Source: QCC and TWS, 'Federal-Queensland Salinity Plan Ducks Landclearing Issue', Joint Press Release, 6 March 2002.</p>
<p>Declaration of Heard Island and MacDonal Islands Marine Reserve (2002)</p> <p>‘The Federal Government yesterday announced 6.5 million hectares would be protected, winning rare accolades from the environment group WWF, which described the move as one of the “most significant conservation decisions” taken in Australia. ... WWF Australia’s senior marine policy officer, Margaret Moore, said the reserve had set a precedent for marine conservation.’</p> <p>Source: A. Hodge, 'Antarctic Jewel Protected', <i>The Australian</i>, 10 October 2002.</p>	<p>‘The Federal government’s plans to proclaim waters around Heard and McDonald Islands a marine reserve will protect much of this remarkable marine ecosystem. ... Greenpeace lobbied for the highest possible protection – IUCN Category 1a (Strict Nature Reserve). During negotiations, we objected to trawling within the reserve and supported a balance between conservation and commercial values. The eventual compromise excludes fishing from the reserve. Disappointingly, the boundaries for the exclusion zone were reduced – despite scientific arguments recommending otherwise. However, Greenpeace successfully argued for these excised zones to be managed as conservation zones that will severely restrict trawling activities. After three years, the areas will be re-assessed for inclusion within the marine reserve.’</p> <p>Source: Greenpeace, 'Last Marine Wilderness Protected', 11 October 2002 (available at: www.greenpeace.org.au (21 June 2004)).</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>Proposed land clearing agreement between Federal and Queensland Governments (2003)</p> <p>Note: The following extract relates to a joint press release published by WWF Australia, QCC, TWS and ACF.</p> <p>‘Environmentalists have supported the proposal outlined today by Federal Environment Minister David Kemp and Premier Peter Beattie to rapidly end broad-scale clearing of remnant bushland in Queensland. “We congratulate the two Governments for working together to develop this solution. It is vital that they follow through and implement this package for the sake of all Queenslanders.”’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, QCC, TWS and ACF, ‘Proposed Land Clearing Solution Welcomed by Environment Groups’, Joint Press Release, 22 May 2003.</p>	<p>See adjacent comments.</p>
<p>National Water Initiative Announcement (2003)</p> <p>‘Today’s decision recognises the mistakes we have made and sets us on a new course. ... This is the moment in time when the right people were in the right place with the right plan. ... Australia’s environment and the economic future of regional communities is more secure as a result of COAG’s decisions. ... COAG’s historic decision means there is now real money for real water in real rivers. ...’</p>	<p>‘We’ve moved forward today – no doubt about it – but not as far as we were hoping. Returning the Murray River to health will be the litmus test for this plan. While this funding package starts the ball rolling, it stops well short of what’s required.’</p> <p>Source: ACF, ‘Good Start: More to be Done on COAG Water Plan’, Press Release, 1 September 2003.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>There will now be firm rules for returning water to over-allocated river systems to environmentally sustainable levels – this is best news for all Australians for a long time. All water users, including farmers, will now have perpetual access to a share of the water resource that will be available for consumption – this is great news for farmers and communities who depend on fresh water for their livelihoods.’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, '\$500 Million to Save the Murray-Darling "Real Money for Real Water in Real Rivers"', Press Release, 29 August 2003.</p>	<p>'The Nature Conservation Council today criticised a National Water Initiative agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) as being woefully inadequate and failing to ensure the health of the ailing Murray River. "Whilst the \$500 million package is a start, it fails to ensure the health of the Murray. ... The science is clear. The Murray River needs at least 1500GL or \$1.5 billion over 10 years to give it a moderate chance of survival. Clearly, this package falls well short of that mark. ... COAG seems to have failed the environment once again. It has secured water property rights for farmers without the necessary guaranteed safeguards for environmental flows and river health."'</p> <p>Source: Nature Conservation Council of NSW, 'COAG Fails Murray', Press Release 3 September 2003.</p>
First Step Decision on the Murray (2003)	
<p>Unable to find any public comment.</p>	<p>'Australian Conservation Foundation executive director Don Henry welcomed the first step towards restoring the river's health. But he urged Prime Minister John Howard and the state premiers to commit more funds and a further 1000 gegalitres of water for the river at next year's Council of Australian Governments meeting. Mr Henry said that 1500 gegalitres, the figure that the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists said was needed to save the Murray, was a little bit less than 2 per cent of the volume of water taken out of the river each year. "The expenditure of this money is good but let's not fool ourselves: the science is clearly saying it is only about a third of what is needed," Mr Henry said.'</p> <p>Source: A. Crossweller, 'Boost for Murray aimed at Key Sites,' <i>The Australian</i>, 15 November 2003.</p> <p>““This decision is a strong first step and will certainly help to improve the health of the 'icon sites'. The challenge now is to commit to returning the entire river system to health. ... 500 gegalitres over five years is a start but the science still says that the Murray River needs at least 1500GL over 10 years</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
	to give it a moderate chance of survival.” Source: Nature Conservation Council of NSW, 'Murray First Step Welcomed', Press Release, 14 November 2003.
<p>Heritage Bills (2003)</p> <p>Note: The following extract is taken from a joint press release issued by WWF Australia, HSI and TCT.</p> <p>‘Australia’s leading environment and heritage organisations have welcomed news of the deal and say the new bills will finally bring national heritage protection under the protective umbrella of the Commonwealth’s EPBC Act. ... “These bills are a major advance over existing Commonwealth heritage laws We are looking forward to seeing an independent and reinvigorated Australian Heritage Council as a result of this new legislation.” ... The Groups also welcomed the Howard government’s additional \$13.3 million dollars in the recent Budget for its new Distinctively Australian heritage initiative on the condition that this package of heritage legislation is passed.’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, HSI and TCT, ‘New Deal Will Boost Australia’s Heritage Protection’, Joint Press Release, 16 June 2003.</p> <p>‘The proposed regime constitutes a substantial improvement on that which operates under the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 and constitutes a momentous step forward for the protection and conservation of places of heritage significance.’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, HSI and TCT, ‘A New Commonwealth Heritage Regime’, 2003.</p>	<p>‘ACF today expressed disappointment that the Government’s heritage protection bills had passed the Senate without crucial amendments. “The Australian Heritage Council Acts are a shaky foundation for heritage protection and in some areas a backward step for our natural, cultural and Indigenous heritage ... The legislation white-ants the independence of the Australian Heritage Commission, politicises the selection process for places on the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists and removes key government decisions from scrutiny. While there have been some improvements and there are some new tools for public use, we remain disappointed with the package of legislation as passed today.”</p> <p>Source: ACF, ‘Senate Fails to Ensure Adequate Heritage Laws’, Press Release, 20 August 2003.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>Agreement with NSW Government to amend NSW land clearing laws (2003)</p> <p>‘The historic \$406.3 million pledge to end broad-scale land clearing and protect 1.2 million hectares of NSW bush is one of the nation’s greatest environmental decisions, according to WWF Australia. “Putting an end to broad-scale land clearing is the most crucial single action a government can take to fix our river systems, protect wildlife and manage salinity ... The NSW Government has delivered on its promises and WWF Australia looks forward to many years of working constructively with NSW farmers in maintaining and rebuilding our landscapes. The Commonwealth Government is also to be congratulated for joining the NSW Government in paving the way for these radical reforms.”’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, ‘The NSW Government Delivers \$406.3 million Radical Reform’, Press Release, 15 October 2003.</p>	<p>‘We welcome the decision by the government to end broad-scale land clearing, especially with the backing of \$406 million to ensure incentives programs, community capacity building and improved compliance. ... When implemented, this will be the single biggest gain for our land, our environment and the communities that rely on it.’</p> <p>Source: Nature Conservation Council of NSW, ‘End to Land Clearing Big Win for the Environment’, Press Release, 15 October 2003.</p> <p>‘We heartily congratulate the NSW and federal government’s commitment to end broad-scale land clearing in NSW and to support farmers with a \$45 [sic] million package. ... This decision is of enormous benefit for lands and people in NSW. We now call on the federal and Queensland governments to meet the challenge to extend those benefits to the people of Queensland.’</p> <p>Source: ACF, ‘NSW Land Clearing Deal Should Show the Way for Queensland’, Press Release, 16 October 2003.</p>
<p>Re-zoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (2003)</p> <p>‘A plan tabled in Federal Parliament today to create the largest network of marine sanctuaries on Earth has been called a stunning achievement by WWF Australia. ... “This is a win for all Australians. ... The new network of marine sanctuaries will result in very real and tangible benefits for the health of the Reef and its stunning wildlife. It will also secure the jobs of thousands of Australians who make their living from this great tourism</p>	<p>‘This plan is a positive and necessary step but more needs to be done to protect the reef for future generations. ... Increasing [green zones] to more than 30% is obviously a great improvement but leaves unanswered key environmental issues facing the Reef, such as land-based pollution, the effects of climate change and the threat of oil exploration offshore from the reef. ... We are also disappointed that some of the 53 areas identified by GRBMPA as “special and unique” have been given inadequate protection.’</p> <p>Source: ACF, ‘ACF Welcomes Increased Reef Protection’, Press Release, 3 December 2003.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>asset. ... Australians are blessed to be the custodians of one of the world's greatest natural treasures, yet up until now, governments haven't given the Reef the protection it needs." WWF Australia congratulates Dr Kemp for his leadership....'</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, 'A Great Barrier Reef Plan Win for All Australians', Press Release, 3 December 2003.</p> <p>'World Wide Fund for Nature Great Barrier Reef campaigner Imogen Zethoven says: "We can quibble over individual areas and we do, and we can agree with the scientists who say that 50 per cent protection would be better than 30 per cent, but at the end of the day you have to say that what the Government has achieved here is remarkable."'</p> <p>Source: P. Dickie, 'Great Barrier Breakthrough', <i>The Australian</i>, 4 December 2003.</p>	<p>'The ACRS supports the re-zoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.... While the introduction of the RAP is a very important one for the long-term maintenance of the World Heritage Area, it is only one process. ... Sadly, all these processes may be insufficient unless we can minimise the rate and magnitude of global warming. All Australians must continue to lobby the Australian Government to recognise this real problem and act to mitigate it, something we have seen little of.'</p> <p>Source: P. Hutchings, Australian Coral Reef Society (ACRS), 'Reactions to the GBR Proposals', <i>Waves</i>, Vol. 10 (1), Autumn 2004.</p> <p>'The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) applauds Minister Kemp "This action presents a very strong and positive new precedent for protecting Australia's coasts and seas."'</p> <p>Source: Australian Marine Conservation Society, 'Protecting Australia's Great Barrier Reef', Press Release, 3 December 2003.</p>
<p>Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (2003)</p> <p>'WWF Australia has welcomed a joint Australian and Queensland government plan to cut pollution flowing into the Great Barrier Reef from the catchment. The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan builds on the new Great Barrier Reef zoning plan which was tabled in Federal Parliament two days ago "Together, these two plans will build the health and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem. ... These complementary plans will have multiple and long-term ecological and economic benefits ... Premier Beattie and Dr Kemp deserve to be congratulated for tackling this serious and urgent problem."'</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, 'Second Big Win for Reef', Press Release, 5</p>	<p>'Environmental and farm groups today both welcomed the plan.</p> <p>"This plan starts the difficult task of repairing this problem and protecting our rivers, waterways, inshore reefs and seagrass beds," said Queensland Conservation Council coordinator Felicity Wishart.'</p> <p>Source: Australian Associated Press, 'Qld - Reef Rescue Plan Revealed', 5 December 2003.</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>December 2003.</p> <p>'Reef campaigner Imogen Zethoven says it is the second win this week. "We had a wonderful announcement on Wednesday about no fishing zone and now we've got a complementary announcement which protects the Great Barrier Reef catchment," she said.'</p> <p>Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC News), 'Reef Pollution Plan Receives Mixed Reaction', 6 December 2003.</p>	
<p>Announcement that the Federal Government would not contribute to Queensland land clearing package (2004)</p> <p>Unable to find any public comment.</p>	<p>'The Wilderness Society and the Queensland Conservation Council today expressed extreme disappointment that the Federal Government will not provide \$75 million to support Queensland's new laws to end land clearing. ... "The announcement on 3 March by Minister Truss that the Federal Government will not contribute its \$75 million to support the new laws means the Federal Coalition has failed a crucial test. Despite the expenditure of over a billion dollars in salinity and natural resource management, not one cent will be spent directly on bringing an end to clearing in Queensland."'</p> <p>Source: TWS and QCC, <i>Federal Coalition Fails Crucial Test on Land Clearing</i>, Joint Press Release, 4 March 2004.</p>
<p>South East Regional Marine Plan (2004)</p> <p>'WWF Australia today welcomed the Commonwealth Government's release of the South East Regional Marine Plan, as a "useful first step towards securing integrated management of all human activities in the marine environment covered by the plan. ... The challenge now will be to develop and build the right level of management and marine habitat protection into this new framework.'"</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, <i>Government Making Progress Towards</i></p>	<p>'ACF's Campaigns Director, said that the plan, the first major attempt by the Government to implement its widely acclaimed Oceans Policy, fell short of the management reform and protection needed for our remarkable ocean life. "At best this a plan to create a plan ... It leaves uncertain the size and level of protection of marine parks and has no clear environmental accountability for ocean users. ... ACF acknowledges the great amount of work that has gone into the Plan, but after four years the outcome is disappointing. There are some improvements from the draft, with some promising initiatives ... [b]ut</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p><i>Satisfactory South East Regional Marine Plan</i>, Press Release, 21 May 2004.</p>	<p>there is little detail and no clear indication of how these will be resourced.” Source: ACF, <i>Marine Plan Disappointing</i>, Press Release, 24 May 2004.</p> <p>‘The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) welcomes the Commonwealth Government’s release of the South-east Regional Marine Plan but believes there is still much to be done to ensure Australia’s oceans receive the protection they need ... [T]he Plan and the two examples of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are disappointing. There is a lack of detail in the final plan and few detailed commitments to conserve the southeast’s precious marine environment in marine protected areas.’ Source: Australian Marine Conservation Society, <i>Plan for Ocean Protection Needs More</i>, Press Release, 21 May 2004.</p>
<p>Securing Australia’s Energy Future (2004)</p> <p>‘Green groups accused the Howard Government of missing the point on climate change, with the World Wide Fund for Nature branding the energy package unveiled by the Prime Minister yesterday an “environmental failure.”’ Source: E. Colman and A. McGarry, ‘Howard is ‘Missing the Point’’, <i>The Australian</i>, 16 June 2004.</p> <p>Note: The following extract is taken from a joint statement issued by WWF Australia, Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Australian Wind Energy Association, Renewable Energy Generators’ Association, ACF and Greenpeace.</p> <p>‘The group agrees that the White Paper contains no effective plan to cut greenhouse pollution, no long term target to boost renewable energy and no long term plan to control the spiralling pollution from the energy and transport sectors ... The group is of the strong belief that the failure to calibrate the broad environmental and greenhouse impacts that result</p>	<p>‘The Prime Minister’s energy policy, delivered today, puts the lie to his environmental pretences and will only increase Australia’s dependence on fossil fuels, the major cause of climate change. ... “Today John Howard failed a crucial leadership test for the Federal Election. He is sending Australia’s energy future in completely the wrong direction and all Australians will suffer as a result. ... While the ALP’s policies on climate are a small improvement on the Government’s, both major parties have to significantly improve their climate policies in the lead up to the election.”’ Source: Greenpeace, <i>PM’s Energy Policy Fails Election Test</i>, Press Release, 16 June 2004.</p> <p>‘The Federal Government’s energy statement was pathetically inadequate and shamelessly pro-coal. “With the release of this policy the Howard Government continues to give the coal industry a free ride to the detriment of renewable energies and the health of the planet. This policy is window dressing and has no credible substance ... It is bad for jobs and bad for the environment. If it was serious about jobs, the Howard Government would have increased the renewable energy target to 10% rather than tossing more</p>

WWF Australia's public comments	Comments by other environment groups
<p>from continued and accelerated use of fossil fuel usage is at best outdated thinking and at worst shortsighted [sic] policy making.'</p> <p>Source: Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Australian Wind Energy Association, Renewable Energy Generators' Association, Australian Conservation Foundation, Greenpeace and WWF Australia, <i>Clean Energy and Climate Change Action Agenda</i>, 18 June 2004.</p>	<p>money to mates in the coal industry.'”</p> <p>Source: Environment Victoria, <i>PM's Energy Statement Shamelessly Pro-coal</i>, Press Release, 15 June 2004.</p>
<p>Intergovernmental Agreement on the National Water Initiative (2004)</p> <p>‘WWF Australia congratulates the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Premiers for addressing the water needs of the eastern states. ... WWF believes the following measures decided today will form the basis of a successful national water plan: statutory recognition for water will be provided to ensure environmental outcomes are met; establishing essential water accounting methods and standards; working to address over-allocation and overuse across the nation by 2010; and establishing a National Water Commission. ... Over the coming months WWF will be working with all governments to ensure the most strategic cost effective and valuable projects for all Australians and the Australian environment are delivered.’</p> <p>Source: WWF Australia, <i>WWF Australia Welcomes First Major Step to Fixing Australia's Water Crisis</i>, Press Release, 25 June 2004.</p> <p>‘COAG’s water deal is a halfway house: it lays the foundations for good water policy but provides no new money to get the job done, the Australian Conservation Foundation said today. “What we have here is half of what we asked for. The federal and state governments have acknowledged the importance of these issues but they have not offered up any additional money to get the job done,” ACF Executive Director Don Henry said.’</p> <p>Source: ACF, <i>Howard Fails Environment Test</i>, Press Release, 15 June 2004.</p> <p>“‘It is appalling that after almost a year of negotiations, so little has been achieved for the environment ... Users have been given security of access, extended water sharing plans and firm rules for trading. The environment has been completely ignored in this current deal. The best that the combined Governments could manage was a renouncement of the \$500M that was agreed to in August last year. It’s just not good enough. ... Under this current deal we will have to wait 10 years to see any water beyond the paltry 3% offered by the current water sharing plans. It is offensive to the community that the Government calls this commitment a big win for our State.’”</p> <p>Source: Nature Conservation Council of NSW and Total Environment Centre, <i>NWI = Death Sentence for NSW Rivers</i>, Joint Press Release, 25 June 2004.</p>	

Source: The information in the above table was obtained from searches of the relevant NGOs websites, Google Australia website (www.google.com.au), Australian Broadcasting Corporation website (ABC Online – www.abc.net.au) and Factiva.



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