Bjørn Storm
Lomborg replies to Critics at the Canberra Press Club

**ON BEING SELECTIVE WITH STATISTICS**
This is obviously always an issue. It’s certainly one of the more substantial criticisms that I’ve had. But the problem is that people don’t actually say where I’m selective. Statistics is about throwing away a lot of numbers in order to get a few numbers that will tell us an important trend. So, when I show you an average, on say food consumption in the developing world, you don’t see Burundi there with less, or Nigeria there with more. The problem is, if you start trying to say everything you lose oversight. So you really have to bring together the most important data. That is what I try to teach my students and what I’ve tried to do in my book. My critics really have to come up with better than just saying I’m selective.

**ON DEMOCRACY AND FALSE IDEAS**
It is very, very good democracy for politicians to follow what people want. So the whole debate should engage the entire population. But we are dealing with a lot of people who believe that things are going bad. And if that is wrong, there is a really terrible personal price to pay for it. So I think it is important to get a public debate on the extent that things are going wrong and the extent that things are getting better. For this, we need to get the data out and continuously confront people who say things are getting worse.

I was at the University of Queensland yesterday and a girl asked me, ‘how can you possibly say that things are better in the developing world? Would you go back to a developing world country and say, a hundred years ago you were worse off?’ My answer was yes. But much more. She was shaking her head while I pointed out that many children died within the first five years. They lived to only 20, 25 years on average, and virtually starved. Today they have literacy and they have food. Things are moving in the right direction. All the people who resort to name calling are betraying themselves. If they had good arguments they would come out with them.

There’s a famous quote from the Harvard Law School that says if you have a good case, pound the case, if you have a bad case, pound the table.

**BAD FAITH AND GETTING IT WRONG**
I think it’s incredibly important to say that people don’t act in bad faith. When business organizations go out and say, don’t worry so much about the environment, they might actually have a point. We should certainly listen to them. But they also have an interest, and we should remember that. Likewise, when Greenpeace go out and say, we’re all gonna die and we need to act now, they might be right too, and we should certainly listen to them. But they also certainly have an interest.

The problem is that while few people trust business organizations, most people actually believe Greenpeace over and above independent scientists, university scientists and public organizations. That, I think, is problematic.
Dr Jennifer Marohasy joined the IPA on 1 July 2003 as Director of the newly formed Environment Unit. She is a classically trained biologist who got her ‘hands dirty’ spending a total of seven years in Africa in search of biological control agents for some of Queensland’s worst rangeland weed species, and later as Environment Manager for Queensland Cane Growers.

During the 1990s, Jennifer published 12 papers in international and Australian scientific journals and 2 book chapters.

Taking up the position of Environment Manager with the $2 billion Queensland sugar industry in 1997 was a big change. Jennifer oversaw the development of an industry-wide best management programme, endorsement of the first commodity-specific code of practice under the Environment Protection Act 1994 (Queensland), development of submissions to government enquiries and assisted regionally-based officers develop plans and strategies, particularly in the areas of environmental management and pest management.

When the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) launched its Save the Reef Campaign on World Environment Day in June 2001, Jennifer experienced first hand what it was like to be at the wrong end of the stick when a global environmental organization with a multi-million dollar budget for an awareness raising campaign that includes vilifying your industry.

‘In the case of the WWF Save the Reef Campaign, science was continually invoked to give authority to the campaign all the while effectively creating a false impression of environmental harm. ‘I see many similarities between the Save the Reef and Save the Murray River Campaigns’ said Jennifer. ‘Not only do both campaigns involve the World Wide Fund for Nature and CSIRO, but they both falsely claim deteriorating water quality’.

Flagging the direction for the Environment Unit, Jennifer’s first paper with the IPA, Received Evidence for Deteriorating Water Quality in the River Murray, exposed the extent of the misinformation that has been peddled by the CSIRO Division of Land and Water. Jennifer investigated the extent of the problem of rising salt levels and found that the evidence did not support the claims of deteriorating water quality. The Murray Darling Basin Commission concurred, stating that average salinity had dropped over the last 10 years.

The IPA Environment Unit has focused on The Save the Murray Campaign, as it will potentially impact on a region that generates about 25 per cent of Australia’s agricultural production, and remove about the same amount of water as has been provided to the River system by the Snowy Scheme – the equivalent of three Sydney harbours’ full of water worth over $1.5 billion dollars. Jennifer’s concern is not that $1.5 billion is spent on the environment – but that if $1.5 billion is spent, it should be on something that does a lot of environmental good.

In response to her paper, the CSIRO website substituted the text claiming rising salinity levels with the bland, ‘Land and water resource managers in Australia are under increasing pressure to meet stringent environmental guidelines, and the health of rivers and estuaries is a key factor in the sustainable management of Australia’s natural resources.’

The Environment Unit has much work to do. Jennifer observes, ‘Why are resource managers under increasing pressure? Who determines the appropriateness of environmental guidelines? Shouldn’t we be able to trust what we read on the CSIRO website? At stake is our capacity as a nation to make sensible decisions on environmental issues.’

The Unit will continue its work in challenging the environment doom-sayers. An article has just been published in the December edition of the IPA REVIEW analysing the distortions in the Australian Bureau of Statistic’s 2002 state of Australia’s environment report, Measuring Australia’s Progress.

Jennifer has also just published an IPA Backgrounder, Myth & the Murray: Measuring the Real State of the River Environment.

Recent articles from the Environment Unit

**Received Evidence for Deterioration in Water Quality in the River Murray**

by Jennifer Marohasy

**Property Rights and the Great Barrier Reef**

by Jennifer Marohasy

**The Green Movement: Time to Get Serious**

By Mike Nahan

**IPA’s Submission to the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry into Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations**

by Jim Hoggett

**TOUCH DECEMBER 2003**

**Dr Jennifer Marohasy**
Bjørn on Priorities

‘Typically we make very, very bad investments in the environment when our primary policy focus is to save human lives. We must state what it is that's actually important, where it is that we should place our efforts, and make sure that we don't just do something that sounds good, that makes us feel good, but that actually has little effect in doing good in this world.’

Bjørn Lomborg
The Non Government Organization Project

The NGO Project has tackled a number of issues in the year, and will expand its horizons in 2004. The key arguments for the IPA interest in, and concern about, the NGO sector are the impact of participative democracy on representative democracy, and the need for an open relationship between government and NGOs. These arguments were set out in some detail in the foundation papers of the Project, *NGO Way to Go: Political Accountability of Non-government Organizations in a Democratic Society*, 2000, *Protocols with NGOs: The Need to Know*, 2001.

A concrete outcome of these papers is a contract with the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership to undertake a research study entitled, 'The Protocol: Managing Relations with NGOs'. The project aims to develop a 'trial protocol' for public disclosure of NGO standing with Government. A key objective of the project is to make information about NGOs that have relationships with Government publicly accessible. The report is due for completion by December 31.

The Project ventured to Washington DC in a joint conference with the American Enterprise Institute in June. The conference, 'We're Not from the Government, but We're Here to Help You. Non-governmental Organizations: The Growing Power of an Unelected Few' opened up a series of fronts to challenge the political activism of NGOs. Papers are available at www.aei.org, edited papers will be published next year by the AEI. The AEI also has an *NGOWatch* website which is worth viewing, as is the Capital Research Center site, www.capitalresearch.org, and their GreenWatch service, www.greenwatch.org.

The Project made a detailed submission to the Board of Taxation in October on the *Draft Charities Bill 2003*. It argued that charities – a major part of the NGO sector – have changed the way they do business. The work of charities is more ambiguously political than was once the case, indeed the very notion of a charity is problematic. None of this would matter if charity status did not carry certain tax assisted privileges. As it does, there is a need to clarify and delimit the definition of a charity. Ultimately, the combination of public assistance and a liberal attitude to the nature of charity work is best balanced by a disclosure by charities to donors of two key concepts, the efficiency of the charity and the nature of the work undertaken in the name of the charity. Disclosure to donors, not limits to non-partisan advocacy, is the answer to the scrutiny required for the public support of charity work.

In 2004 there will be two new Backgrounders, *Informed Giving*, and *NGO Capture*. The fundamental argument in *Informed Giving* is derived from the Charities submission. The answer lies in providing the donors to charitable NGOs with sufficient information. Each charity should supply information about its activities, and make this information accessible to all donors. The key pieces of information are the percentage of funds devoted to raising funds, a measure of the efficiency of the organization and the percentage of funds expended by whatever methods, including lobbying. Advocacy NGOs are vehicles for political activism, and, like political parties, there is a perpetual contest among the members to control them. Labor, Liberal and National party members, or more likely, former members will sometimes bewail the changes to their parties; that they are not representing the groups they once did, that their policies have changed, and so on. This struggle to capture the organization means capturing the label, and doing things under the label that may well vary from the original purpose.

The same struggle for control can be observed in environmental, aid, welfare, human rights and a host of other advocacy NGOs in the past decades. The capture of organizations, predominantly by the Left, as vehicles for ideologies at great variance from the original charter is a study worth undertaking. The project aims to report on this issue later in 2004.
IPA Backgrounder

THE AL-JAZEERA BROADCASTING CORPORATION

by Tim Blair
&
James Morrow

The ABC’s coverage of the war in Iraq was a war in itself—a war against pro-Western perspectives, with the points of view of those opposed to the conflict endlessly promoted above Coalition arguments. Journalists Tim Blair and James Morrow have compiled an exhaustive study of the ABC’s treatment of the war in Iraq. It makes damning reading.

A$13.20

IPA Backgrounder

AUSTRALIAN AID POLICY: A CASE OF LOSE/LOSE, NOT WIN/WIN

by Peter Urban

This Backgrounder identifies the objectives of, and constraints facing, Australia’s aid programme, analyses how we provide our aid and to whom we give it, and reviews the performance of the programme overall. It concludes that we need fundamental reform of our entire aid programme—both in terms of funding and in terms of AusAID’s structure and performance.

December 2003
A$13.20

IPA Backgrounder

MYTH & THE MURRAY: MEASURING THE REAL STATE OF THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT

by Jennifer Marohasy

Why was the Australian public misled into believing that salt levels are rising in the Murray River when salt levels have actually been falling at key sites for over 20 years? What is the real state of the river’s environment in terms of fish, red gums and water quality? Dr Jennifer Marohasy explores these issues in the context of what myth can reveal about our society’s preoccupations and prejudices.

December 2003
A$22.00
TILTING AT WINDMILLS
Even though the growth of wind generation has been rapid, the fact remains that wind supplies a trivial amount of the world's energy. So concluded Alan Moran in his submission, *Wind Power and Other Renewables* to the Review of the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000, May 2003. He explained, 'Wind is intrinsically less efficient than a more concentrated form of solar energy, like coal or oil, or than nuclear energy. It is akin to harnessing a hundred cats to achieve the same pulling power as a horse.

POWER CHANGE IN IR
The key recommendation of the Cole Commission to establish the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and give it powers co-jointly with the ACCC over aspects of the Trade Practices Act, will have fundamental ramifications for the carriage of industrial relations.

The IPA gathered a group of experts and major players to debate the proposal at an IPA Industrial Relations Conference, *The last frontier: Making industrial relations subject to the Trade Practices Act*, held in Melbourne on Thursday 22 May.

The seminar proved to be of vital interest to human resource managers, industrial relations advocates and many commercial lawyers, policy analysts, policy makers and business managers.

WELFARE BLOWOUT
Over the past forty years, spending on welfare entitlements has increased fivefold and the pressure for more spending will continue to grow. Amanda Vanstone, Minister For Family And Community Services, was outlining the nature of the welfare crisis in Australia at a Dialogue, *The Age Of Entitlement*, in Melbourne on Wednesday 4 June 2003.

The problem, she explained, was that the idea of entitlement is not confined to welfare, but to all areas of economic life. People want change for the better, but are outraged by any change that impacts on an entitlement.

JUDICIAL INTEGRITY
A breach of ethics can involve too close a relationship between politicians and the judiciary. And it is a problem that is not just confined to third world countries. So explained Judge J. Clifford Wallace from the U.S. Court Of Appeals at a Dialogue, *Standing For Something: Ethics In The Law And Judicial Integrity*.

The Dialogue was generously hosted by Mallesons Stephen Jaques in their offices in Melbourne on Wednesday 18 June 2003.

Judge Wallace warned that, 'In the broadest sense, it’s something which can affect the legal profession in Western nations, including Australia. He concluded that the legal profession should ‘stand for something’ rather than operate as moral relativists.

NO SCIENCE
The Great Barrier Reef was not under threat from agriculture, claimed Jennifer Marohasy in a speech to the Mackay Production Society’s AGM on 30 July. Speaking on *Property rights and the Great Barrier Reef*, she explained that ‘the restrictions being proposed by government under the Reef Plan are, at least in part, a consequence of a clever environmental campaign that generated over 7,000 new members for the World Wide Fund for Nature in 2001/2002.’ Environmentalists appeal to science for the authority it can give to an idea, but it is really ideology masquerading as science.

PRIVATE SECTOR
Can private profit seeking companies have a public service ethos? This is the question that Gary L. Sturgess, Executive Director, The Serco Institute, London, answered at a Dialogue entitled, *To Join Interest with Duty: Harnessing the Self-Interest of the Private Sector to Serve Public Ends*, held in Melbourne on 10 July.

Gary asked why it is that the public become concerned about the involvement of profit-making firms in the delivery of public services. With many outstanding examples, he gave many reasons why private firms do indeed seek to do public good.

SERIOUS TIMES FOR GREENS
Society has failed to impose accepted standards of representativeness, and deep Greens have exploited our tolerance, said Mike Nahan addressing the Victorian Farmers Federation 24th Annual Conference in Melbourne on the 22 July, 2003. His talk, *On The Green Movement: Time to Get Serious*, outlined how environmental groups claim to be, and are then given the status of, ‘representatives’ of the environment.

Activists, often with a hatred of commerce and modernity, have captured the institutions.

IMPOSSIBLE TASK
A farmer would need a team of biologists and botanists to be sure that he was not damaging or destroying individual plants of some listed species, explained Jim Hoggett in a submission to the IPA to the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry into *Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations* in July. Jim concluded that ‘we need to reorient our thinking away from prohibitions on activity towards a careful use of the environment’.

HOW TO MINIMIZE BUSHFIRES
There is in no doubt that there is a ‘need for prescribed burning’ if we are to reduce the massive bushfires like we had last summer, Peter Attiwill said in a submission to the House of Representatives Select Committee Inquiry into the recent Australian bushfires in Ballarat on 30 July. We now have the technology to manage fire in a way that maintains biodiversity and markedly reduces hazards to life and property. But first, we have to turn around the ideological opposition to prescribed burning.

RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENT
Environmental fundamentalism is driving policies that are eroding property rights through various
increasingly the regulatory burden, increasing the cost of production and restricting access to resource use, warned Jennifer Marohasy in a speech, *The Exploitation of Science for the Erosion of Property Rights*, at the AGM of Property Rights Australia in Roma, Queensland, on 5 August. These developments generally increase uncertainty and are not good for investment or business.

**Muddy Water ... and Facts**

To the claims that the Murray River has a major problem in deteriorating water quality, Jennifer Marohasy says that the facts do not support these claims, with salinity levels halving over the last 20 years. Dr Marohasy was giving the keynote address, *Received Evidence for Deteriorating Water Quality in the River Murray*, to the Second IPA Water Forum in Canberra on 25 August. Dr Marohasy suggested that we ‘have institutional failure of the highest order when both sides of politics eagerly sign up to a myth promulgated by our most respected research institution, the CSIRO.’

**Sunday in the Pub**

Our democratic system is changing from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy and this is giving power to new sets of players, particularly NGOs. Mike Nahan was speaking at the Liberal party’s *Sunday at the Pub* in Kew in October. He outlined the Liberal party’s *Sunday at the Pub* in Kew in October. He outlined Mike Angwin and Ken Phillips.

**Water and sustainability**

Our economic health is dependent on environmental sustainability, Jennifer Marohasy argued at a Victorian Liberal Party Forum, Parliament House, Melbourne on 17 October. Entitled *Water – Economic and Environmental Sustainability*, the issue of water use efficiency was discussed at length.

**Economic Freedom’s Importance**

Around 35 delegates from market orientated research institutes and think tanks from 16 countries in Asia attended the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation’s Fifth Economic Freedom Network Asia Meeting held in Jaipur, India, from 24-28 September. Some representatives from Europe, Africa, NZ and USA came. Mike Nahan was invited to speak on the Economic Freedom Index within the Australian context, in particular concerning economic policy advice and advocacy.

**Debate on Evidence**

There was a case for substantial intervention in, and resetting of, the research agenda in Australia said Jennifer Marohasy in a debate at the Sixth International River Management Symposium in Brisbane on 6 September. Titled, *Is there Sufficient Evidence to Warrant Substantial Intervention in and Resetting of the Natural Resource Management Agenda in Australia: The MDB and Great Barrier Reef*, Dr Marohasy argued that the independence of science needed to be re-established.

**Capacity to Manage**

Since the release of the IPA’s *Capacity to Manage Index* in December 2002, the term ‘capacity to manage’ has rapidly entered the thinking of business managers and regulators and has opened up a new area of debate. The Institute organized a half day seminar in Melbourne on 25 November, *Capacity to Manage Index: A New Diagnostic Tool*. There was an excellent line-up of speakers, including Richard Marles from the ACTU, Prof Richard Mitchell from the University of Melbourne, IR Consultant Mike Angwin and Ken Phillips.

**NGOs Taken with Salt**

An associational revolution has taken place over the last two decades with the growth in the size and influence of global NGOs. Don D’Cruz was giving a paper, *The Power of NGOs*, at the ‘Koooyong 200 Club’ in Melbourne on November, 2003. He went on to say that to many people, this development may be viewed as overwhelmingly good. But poor standards of transparency, accountability and governance within these organizations should be a warning for us to treat what these groups say with a grain of salt.

Continued on page 8 ...
blown Don D’Cruz
12.6.03 NGOWatch.org Iraq-Attack
Think Tank Turns Wrath on NGO’s
[NGO conference in Washington]
14.06.03 Herald Sun Acting smart on trade Alan Moran
16.06.03 The Age Watchdog’s ownership guidelines an impediment for the power sector
20.6.03 The Australian Aboriginal separatism has failed, so let’s stop funding it Gary Johns
20.6.03 ABC Radio Canberra Ross Solley discusses ATSIC Gary Johns
27.6.03 ABC Radio National Australian Magnesium Corporation Issue & Government role in assisting firms discussed Mike Naham
28.6.03 Herald Sun Melting Public Money Mike Naham
30.6.03 ABC Rural Radio, Mackay Property rights and the Great Barrier Reef Jennifer Marohasy
1.7.03 The Australian Watchdog whose bite was rabid Mike Naham
2.7.03 AFR Go with the flow on river management Alan Moran
3.7.03 Queensland Country Life Queensland sugar industry leader steps down [Jennifer Marohasy’s departure from Canegrowers to IPA]
3.7.03 ABC Radio, Tropical North Queensland Margaret El Sharmi Great Barrier Reef Jennifer Marohasy
4.7.03 AFR [Letters] [On Moran 2.7]
7.7.03 ABC Radio Riverina Water issues discussed with Alan Moran
8.7.03 The Australian Vehicle blocks hit head-on by dollar [IPA Capacity to Manage Index] Robert Gottliebsen
14.7.03 Herald Sun Into the fast lane Mike Naham
18.7.03 The Advertiser Who are charity donations really helping? Don D’Cruz
19.7.03 The West Australian WA gets its share of Canberra pie Mike Naham
20.7.03 The Advertiser [Letters] Don D’Cruz
22.7.03 AFR NGO’s must become more accountable Don D’Cruz
26.7.03 Herald Sun The great land grab Mike Naham
28.7.03 AFR Notebook A lot of talk on higher education and no real outcomes [John Roskam, IPA Review]
30.7.03 AFR Clothing industry has been stitched up Ken Phillips
30.7.03 ABC Radio Adelaide Richard Margettson Jennifer Marohasy
31.7.03 Environmental News Service (ENS) [IPA on NGOs]
31.7.03 West Australian In the name of charity, keep asking Don D’Cruz
31.7.03 SunRaisaya News Denise McCarthy on the received evidence for Deteriorating Water Quality paper with Jennifer Marohasy
2.8.03 AFR Just cause; push comes to shove for the helping hand Gary Johns
4.8.03 Canberra Times Prescribed burn-offs needed Peter Attwill
5.8.03 Herald Sun Our forest must burn Peter Attwill
6.8.03 The Advertiser Blazing a trail back to the future Peter Attwill
7.8.03 ABC Radio 3LO Tony Detroy discusses Foreign Aid and NGOs with Mike Naham
8.8.03 The Age ‘Charities’ that are really political lobbyists must be exposed Mike Naham
9.8.03 Herald Sun Power in ACCC’s hands Alan Moran
11.8.03 ConsumerFreedom.com [Report on Naham article 8.8]
12.8.03 WorkplaceInfo EA restrictions on management highlighted: study [Capacity to Manage Index]
12.8.03 Townsville Bulletin Breath of Fresh Air [Marohasy & Can Growers]
15.8.03 Radio National Rural Discussion on Electricity with Alan Moran
15.8.03 ABC PM Stephen Long discusses government policy toward ethanol industry with Mike Naham
19.8.03 Environmental Manager, Issue 450 [IPA and Marohasy work]
20.8.03 On Line Opinion Received evidence for deterioration of water quality in River Murray Jennifer Marohasy
25.8.03 Herald Sun Brack’s tunnel vision Mike Naham
27.8.03 Weekly Times CSIRO claims challenged [Marohasy] Peter Hunt
28.8.03 AFR Don’t give in to brand mail Mike Naham
3.9.03 Yarra Wonga Chronicle Murray River is healthy [IPA]
6.9.3 Herald Sun Free concerns are just myths Mike Naham
11.9.03 Queensland Country Life CSIRO credibility under fire [Marohasy] Michael Thomson
16.9.3 Sydney Morning Herald Another ‘heretic’ to be vilified Paddy McGuinness
18.09.03 AFR Energy market needs certainty Alan Moran
20.9.03 Herald Sun Lighter shade of green Mike Naham
20.9.03 Radio National Alexandra de Blas’ Earthbeat on improving water quality Jennifer Marohasy
27.9.03 The Australian The Bjorn Storm Leigh Dayton
29.9.03 QCL Queensland Michael Thompson with Bjorn Lomborg
30.9.03 AFR Best person to handle health’s heady brew Alan Moran
30.9.03 Radio 2QN Interview with Bjorn Lomborg
30.9.03 The Australian ‘Catastrophe’ overheated Bjorn Lomborg
1.10.03 ABC TV Landline Kerry Lonergan with Bjorn Lomborg
1.10.03 The Courier Mail Green ‘truth’ just a load of hot air Alan Moran
1.10.03 The Australian Earth to green Skeptic [About letters on Lomborg] Jennifer Marohasy
2.10.03 SMH Giving the lie to all that greenie gloom [Lomborg] Miranda Devine
2.10.03 ABC Radio Canberra Chris Uhmann with Bjorn Lomborg
2.10.03 SBS News Global warming poses no problems [Lomborg]
2.10.03 ABC Radio National Media Program Senator Alston’s record with Mike Naham
2.10.03 National Press Club Canberra Bjorn Lomborg
2.10.03 The Courier Mail The sky really is falling after all [Lomborg] Ian Lowe
3.10.03 ABC Sydney Sally Loane with Bjorn Lomborg
3.10.03 Radio 2GB Philip Clark interviews Bjorn Lomborg
4.10.03 Herald Sun Strong case for tax cuts Mike Naham
5.10.03 Channel 9 Sunday John Lyon interviews Bjorn Lomborg
7.10.03 The Bulletin Continuing Crisis [Lomborg in Sydney] Tim Blair
10.10.03 AFR Letters Before you lob bricks [Quiggan 9.10] Mike Naham
11.10.03 ABC Radio National Earthbeat Mark Horstman with Bjorn Lomborg