 Accord, Discord, Discourse and Dialogue in the Search for Sustainable Development


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Abstract

The thesis seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of interaction between the environmental and labour movements, and the conditions under which they can cooperate and form alliances in pursuit of a sustainable development agenda which simultaneously promotes ecological and social justice goals. After developing an explanatory model of the labour-environmentalist relationship (LER) on the basis of a survey of theoretical and case-study literature, the thesis applies this model to three significant cases of labour-environmental interaction in Australia, each representing a different point on the spectrum from LER conflict to LER cooperation, during the period from 1983 to 1996.

Commonly held views that there are inevitable tendencies to LER conflict, whether due to an irreconcilable "jobs versus environment" contradiction or due to the different class bases of the respective movements, are analysed and rejected. A model of the LER implicit in Siegmann (1985) is interrogated against more recent LER studies from six countries, and reworked into a new model (the Siegmann-Norton model) which explains tendencies to conflict and cooperation in the LER in terms of the respective ideologies of labour and environmentalism, their organisational forms and cultures, the national political-institutional framework and the respective places of labour and environmentalism therein, the political economy of specific sectors and regions in which LER interaction occurs, and sui generis sociological and demographic characteristics of labour and environmental actors.

The thesis then discusses the major changes in the ideologies, organisational forms and political-institutional roles of the Australian labour movement which occurred during the period of the study, and their likely influence on the LER. The two processes of most importance in driving such changes were the corporatist Accord relationship between the trade union movement and Labor Party government from 1983 to 1996, and the strategic reorganisation of the trade union movement between 1988 and 1996 in response to challenges and opportunities in the wider political-economic environment.

The research hypothesis is that the net effect of these changes would have been to foster tendencies towards LER conflict. The hypothesis is tested in three significant case studies, namely: (a) the interaction, often conflictual, between the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the environmental movement in debates around macroeconomic policy, economic restructuring and sustainable development from the mid-1980s onwards; (b) the complex interaction, involving elements of cooperation, disagreement and dialogue, between the environmental movement and the unions representing coal mining and energy workers in the formulation of Australia's climate change policies; and (c) the environmental policy and campaign initiatives of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union to improve workplace environmental performance and promote worker environmental education.

The case studies confirmed the research hypothesis in the sense that, whilst the LER tended overall towards greater cooperation in the period of the study, the Accord relationship and union restructuring process worked to slow the growth of cooperative tendencies and sustain conflict over particular issues beyond what might
otherwise have been the case. The Accord relationship served to maintain conflict tendencies due to the dominance of productivist ideologies within the ACTU, and the union movement’s perseverance with this relationship after the vitiation of its progressive potential by neo-liberal trends in public policy. The tripartite Accord processes institutionalised a “growth coalition” of labour, business and the state in opposition to excluded constituencies such as the environmental movement. This was partially overcome during the period of the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) process, which temporarily included the environmental movement as an insider in the political-institutional framework. The long-run effects of union reorganisation on the LER are difficult to determine as the new organisational forms of unions were not in place until almost the end of the period of the study. However, in the short term the disruptive effects of the amalgamations process restricted unions’ capacity to engage with environmental issues.

Pro-environment initiatives by the AMWU, and cooperative aspects of the coal industry unions’ relationship with environmentalists, reflected the social unionist ideology and internal democratic practices of those unions, and the influence of the ESD Working Group process, whilst LER conflict over greenhouse reflected the adverse political economy of the coal industry, but also the relevant unions’ less developed capacity for independent research and membership education compared to the AMWU. The LER in all three cases can be satisfactorily explained, and important insights derived, through application of the Siegmann-Norton model. Conclusions drawn include suggestions for further research and proposals for steps to be taken by labour and environmental actors to improve cooperation.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at this or any other university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Material in Chapter 3 of this thesis was published in my name, in slightly modified form, under the title “A critique of generative class theories of environmentalism and of the Labour-Environmentalist Relationship” in Environmental Politics, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 96-119.

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I wish to acknowledge a number of people and organisations in the Australian labour and environmental movements whose cooperation considerably improved the thesis. The Australian Council of Trade Unions and Australian Conservation Foundation generously granted access to their archives at the Butlin Archives Centre and the National Library of Australia in Canberra. The ACTU, the Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union allowed me access to their libraries in Melbourne and Sydney. The staff of the Butlin Archives Centre, the National Library and the VTHC and AMWU libraries were helpful and hospitable beyond the call of duty during my research visits. Peter Colley of the Mining and Energy Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union aided me greatly with CFMEU and ACTU documents and publications on greenhouse policy and the Ecologically Sustainable Development process. Peter was also generous with his time for interview purposes, as were Phillip Toyne and Mark Diesendorf, formerly of the ACF. Thanks are also due to Tom McDonald and Bob Henricks for offers of assistance which, in the event, I was unable to take advantage of. Deborah Vallance of the AMWU and Sue Pennicuik of the ACTU also helped out with copies of AMWU publications on that union’s environmental initiatives. Sarah Bloustein of Environment Australia kindly provided a copy of the seminal research report, *Metal Workers and the Environment*, prepared by herself and two colleagues from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1991.

Special thanks are due to the SEARCH Foundation and my mother for much needed loans when my research budget ran out, and to all the motorists who conveyed me for increments of the distance between Brisbane and Canberra, and back again, in my research trips of April and July-August 2003. Thanks are also due to the Office of Research at Griffith University for the Completion Assistance Scholarship which did more than merely assist the completion of the thesis. Daniel Franks proofread the final version of the thesis and I thank him for sparing me the worst consequences of my distracted mental state whilst writing and rewriting.

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As the late Ralph Miliband might have said, in view of the somewhat controversial nature of what follows I wish to state that I take complete responsibility for it myself.

Dedication

In the light of statements made by the Prime Minister of Australia at the time this thesis was being completed, I would like to dedicate the thesis to all those dedicated and caring people in Australia’s public education system, at primary, secondary and tertiary level, who have over the years made it possible for a working class kid from Reservoir, both of whose parents had left school by the time they were thirteen years old, to become a University Medallist and a Doctor of Philosophy.
### Abbreviations and Acronyms used in the Thesis

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABARE</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACA</td>
<td>Australian Coal Association</td>
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<td>ACF</td>
<td>Australian Conservation Foundation</td>
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<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>ADSTE</td>
<td>Association of Drafting, Supervisory and Technical Employees</td>
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<td>AEC</td>
<td>Australian Electoral Commission</td>
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<td>AEU</td>
<td>Australian Education Union</td>
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<td>AFMEU</td>
<td>Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union</td>
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<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Australian Greenhouse Information Service</td>
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<td>AGO</td>
<td>Australian Greenhouse Office</td>
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<td>AHC</td>
<td>Australian Heritage Commission</td>
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<td>AIRC</td>
<td>Australian Industrial Relations Commission</td>
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<td>ALAC</td>
<td>Australian Labor Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>AMC</td>
<td>Australian Manufacturing Council</td>
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<td>AMFSU</td>
<td>Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union</td>
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<td>AMIC</td>
<td>Australian Mining Industry Council</td>
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<td>AMIEU</td>
<td>Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union</td>
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<td>AMWSU</td>
<td>Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union</td>
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<td>AMWU</td>
<td>Australian Manufacturing Workers Union or Amalgamated Metal Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANF</td>
<td>Australian Nursing Federation</td>
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<td>AR</td>
<td><em>Australia Reconstructed</em></td>
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ARU       Australian Railways Union
ASE       Australian Society of Engineers
ATF       Australian Teachers Federation
ATWU      Australian Timber Workers Union
AWU       Australian Workers Union
BCA       Business Council of Australia
BLF       Builders Labourers Federation
BOP       balance of payments
BPEM      Best Practice Environmental Management
BUCU      Business Union Consultation Unit
BWIU      Building Workers Industrial Union
CAW       Canadian Auto Workers Union
CEPU      Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing and Allied Services Union
CES       Commonwealth Employment Service
CFC       chlorofluorocarbon
CFF       Commission for the Future
CFMEU     Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union
CFMEU (F) Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (Forestry Division)
CFMEU (M&E) Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (Mining & Energy Division)
CIS       Centre for Independent Studies
COAG      Council of Australian Governments
CPA       Communist Party of Australia
CSIRO     Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Commonwealth Department of Environment, Sport and Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>DITAC</td>
<td>Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>enterprise bargaining</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Enterprise Bargaining Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECWU</td>
<td>Energy and Chemical Workers Union (Canada)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIS</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Statement</td>
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<td>EPAC</td>
<td>Economic &amp; Planning Advisory Council</td>
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<td>ESD</td>
<td>Ecologically Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETM/s</td>
<td>Elaborately Transformed Manufacture/s</td>
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<td>ETU</td>
<td>Electrical Trades Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>E&amp;SD</td>
<td>Environment &amp; Sustainable Development (committee and policy of the ACTU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCCC</td>
<td>Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>FEDFA</td>
<td>Federated Engine Drivers &amp; Firemen’s Association</td>
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<td>FFPIC</td>
<td>Forest &amp; Forest Products Industry Council</td>
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<td>FIA</td>
<td>Federated Ironworkers Association</td>
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<td>FICA</td>
<td>Forest Industries Campaign Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIMEE</td>
<td>Federation of Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMMA</td>
<td>Federated Mining Mechanics Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPS</td>
<td>Forest Protection Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
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<td>FS</td>
<td>Future Strategies for the Trade Union Movement</td>
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<td>FSPU</td>
<td>Federated Storemen &amp; Packers Union</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAC</td>
<td>Industries Assistance Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Industry Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICEM</td>
<td>International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Institute of Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Industrial Relations Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>JVÉ</td>
<td>“jobs versus environment”</td>
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</table>
| J&E     | “jobs and environment” (as in “jobs and environment debate”’)
| J+E     | “jobs and environment” (as in “jobs and environment synergy”)
<p>| LER     | labour-environmentalist relationship |
| MEWU    | Metals and Engineering Workers Union |
| NAFI    | National Association of Forest Industries |
| NFFPUC  | National Forestry and Forest Products Union Council |
| NGAP    | National Greenhouse Advisory Panel |
| NGRS    | National Greenhouse Response Strategy |
| NGSC    | National Greenhouse Steering Committee |
| NIEIR   | National Institute for Economic and Industrial Research |
| NLP     | New Left Party |
| NMC     | new middle class |
| NSESED  | National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development |
| NSM     | new social movement |
| NSW     | New South Wales |
| OCAW    | Oil, Chemical &amp; Atomic Workers Union (US) |
| OPEC    | Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| PGEU    | Plumbing and Gasfitting Employees Union |</p>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>PIF</td>
<td>political-institutional framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPWF</td>
<td>Pulp &amp; Paper Workers Federation of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL</td>
<td>Resource Security Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>research and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCF</td>
<td>textiles, clothing and footwear</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>Trade Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGWU/T&amp;G</td>
<td>Transport and General Workers Union (UK)</td>
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<td>TLC</td>
<td>Trades &amp; Labor Council</td>
</tr>
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<td>TWS</td>
<td>The Wilderness Society or Tasmanian Wilderness Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWU</td>
<td>Transport Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>United Auto Workers (US)</td>
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<td>UMW/UMFA</td>
<td>United Mineworkers Federation of Australia</td>
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<td>UNCED</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States (of America)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USWA</td>
<td>United Steel Workers of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VBEF</td>
<td>Vehicle Builders Employees Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFT</td>
<td>Very Fast Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTHC</td>
<td>Victorian Trades Hall Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCED</td>
<td>World Commission on Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WfTE</td>
<td><em>Working for the Environment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>Worldwide Fund for Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War Two</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction and Methodology
1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Focus of the Thesis

This thesis is concerned with the possibilities for cooperation between the environmental movement and the labour movement in seeking to achieve sustainable development on a basis which also satisfies the social justice and employment concerns of labour. It seeks to answer the research question: what factors encourage cooperation or conflict between the two movements? Accordingly it studies and analyses interactions between labour movement and environmental movement actors in Australia from 1983 to 1996.

During this period Australia was governed at Federal level by the social-democratic Australian Labor Party (ALP), and saw significant changes in the roles, forms and trajectories of both the labour and environmental movements. The labour movement was a partner, along with the Labor Party, in an Accord on economic policy, and therefore was a participant in an unprecedented experiment with corporatism as the dominant mode of interest intermediation and public policymaking in Australia. Whilst enjoying an enhanced institutionalised role within political and economic decision-making due to the Accord relationship, the labour movement was nonetheless subject to crisis tendencies stemming from a combination of organisational weakness and decline, adverse economic conditions, and political developments. The rising influence of neo-liberal economic doctrine and “New Right” political forces were inimical to the labour movement’s social and economic policy agenda, and hostile to its role in the workplace and society in general. Thus
the history of the labour movement from the mid-1980s onwards is one of attempts at organisational and political renewal in response to these adverse political-economic trends and a changing industrial relations framework.

For part of this period, Australia’s environmental movement enjoyed unprecedented political influence, yet also faced fundamental difficulties. The election of the Federal Labor government was brought about in part by the first national electoral mobilisation of an environmental campaign coalition in Australia, formed to oppose construction of the Franklin Dam in the World Heritage-listed wilderness of southwest Tasmania. This movement supported the Federal Labor Party on the strength of its promise, which it subsequently fulfilled, to enact legislation overruling the Tasmanian State government’s decision to construct the dam. Like most other capitalist democracies, Australia experienced a rise in public concern for the environment during the 1980s. It also established discursive and policy-making processes in response to international environmental policymaking initiatives such as the publication of the World Commission on Environment & Development (WCED) report, Our Common Future. The processes led to the Rio “Earth Summit” in 1992, and the formulation of international responses to global climate change which culminated in Agenda 21, the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), and the Kyoto Protocol. In addition, environmentalism was politically salient due to the ability of national peak organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and The Wilderness Society (TWS), to intervene decisively in Federal and some State elections to deliver victory to the ALP in return for environmental policy commitments. This was later backed up by the ability of green candidates to direct their preferences to or from major parties. For a brief period this
culminated in the national environmental organisations enjoying an institutionalised role within the policymaking process through participation, along with unions, government and business, in Working Groups established to develop policies for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in key sectors of the Australian economy. However the enhanced political influence of environmentalists did not translate either into a fundamental shift of Australia’s economic policies, nor into reform of Australia’s system of government to institutionalise and operationalise an ecological rationality. The recommendations agreed to by the ESD Working Groups were largely not implemented due to political and bureaucratic resistance. There was also a counter-mobilisation by elements of business, the media, pro-development sections of executive government bureaucracies, and pro-development factions of the Labor Party and labour movement that led to a loss of environmental movement influence with the Federal Labor Government. Despite this support for environmentalist positions remained high amongst the general public, and the concept of sustainable development began to inform initiatives in civil society.

In this period the environmental movement’s interactions with the labour movement fell on a scale ranging from sharp conflict (in the case of forestry issues) to close cooperation (in the cases of manufacturing and public transport unions), with some significant cases which combined conflictual and cooperative elements. As previously noted, these interactions occurred in the context of changing political-economic conditions, as well as major changes in the organisational form, ideology and political-institutional role of the labour and environmental movements. In the case of the labour movement the two most important factors driving change were the Accord relationship and the union restructuring process which commenced at the
1987 Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Congress. The thesis therefore seeks to identify the influence of the Accord and union restructuring process on the labour-environmentalist relationship (LER) in Australia, developing and utilising a five-factor explanatory model from which one can predict causal relationships between such processes, the ideology, organisation and political-institutional role of labour, and the tendency of the LER towards conflict or cooperation. The model is also used to identify other influences on the LER in this period, and to predict the likely future course of development of the LER in Australia. Three significant cases are chosen for study. The first is the interaction between peak labour and environmental organisations in debates over the restructuring of the Australian economy, either in the direction of sustainability or in order to overcome conventional economic problems. The second is the role of coal industry unions and their relations with the environmental movement in the formulation of Australian and global climate change policies. Finally, the thesis examines the positive interaction between the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) and the environmental movement throughout the period of the study, culminating in significant initiatives by the union.

1.1.2 Thesis Structure

This thesis attempts two principal tasks. First, it surveys the extant Anglophone literature on the LER in Australia and internationally, and theoretical literature on wider issues and debates relevant to the LER, in order to construct a framework for analysis of the LER. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide an overview of Siegmann’s (1985) study of the LER in the United States and West Germany, and interrogate the five
components of Siegmann’s model of the LER in the light of other studies of labour-environmentalist conflict and co-operation and relevant theoretical literature. Chapter 2 critically interrogates Siegmann’s findings on the “jobs and environment” (J&E) problematique against literature on the political economy of the environmental crisis and the posited “jobs versus environment” (JvE) dichotomy. Chapter 3 surveys theories of purported class-political determination of the LER in relation to contemporary debates on the relevance of class analysis. Chapter 4 then surveys LER scholarship in relation to the influence on the LER of the other three factors identified by Siegmann; the organisational form of the labour and environmental movements, the national political-institutional framework (PIF), and the ideologies of the respective movements.

A recurring central focus in the literature on the LER is the relative significance of structural determination of interests, and of discursive creation of subject positions, in shaping relations between labour movement and environmental movement actors. It is frequently argued, or at least assumed, that structural economic and sociological factors would dispose the LER towards conflict. Conversely, it is argued that cooperative tendencies in the LER can be promoted discursively, or even that conflicts seemingly determined structurally are in fact created and can be overcome discursively. This theme will be touched on in Chapter 2 but addressed in depth in Chapter 4, with particular attention to the potential for labour and environmental actors, through discursive action, to transcend both conflict and instrumental cooperation between given “objective” interests, and achieve a radical-democratic counter-hegemonic alliance on the basis of a shared master frame including “sustainable development” discourses.
On the basis of this review, a new model of the LER is constructed, revising the model implicit in Siegmann to incorporate the insights of other LER scholarship. The new model allows a more fine-grained consideration of sociological and economic determinants than that provided by conventional “jobs versus environment” and “class conflict” hypotheses. It also takes account of how these determinants are not objective “givens” but are created and can be transformed by discursive practices. Finally, Chapter 4 briefly discusses how the model can be applied to studies of particular cases of co-operation and conflict between labour and environmentalists in Australia, and can also inform an assessment of the prospects for labour-environmentalist cooperation in general.

The second part of the thesis studies the interaction between the labour and environmental movements in aspects of the pursuit of sustainable development in Australia during the period of the Federal Labor Government, 1983-96. The explanatory model developed in Chapter 4 proposes that the LER will be influenced by the organisational form of the respective movement actors, their ideologies, and their respective positions within the national political-institutional framework. As noted earlier, during the period of the study the labour movement in particular underwent major and historic changes in relation to all three. Chapters 5 and 6 recount the history of the Accord relationship and the process of organisational change in the labour movement within a wider political-economic context which was adverse for unions in many respects, and analyses the likely influence of these processes on the LER given the changes they generated in the organisation, ideologies and political-institutional role of Australian labour.
Chapters 7, 8 and 9 then consider three significant case studies of labour-environmental interaction in the pursuit of sustainable development. Chapter 7 considers the relationship between the peak labour and environmental movement organizations in Australia in debates over policy solutions to Australia’s structural economic problems and their interaction with environmental policy debates, in particular the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) process. It pays particular attention to the potential and actual synergies in this period between the Australian labour movement’s discourse of economic restructuring based on interventionist industry policy and the Australian peak environmental organisations’ discourse of ecological modernisation, one of which was the ACF/ACTU “Green Jobs” project. The failure to fully realise the potential for a sustainable development synthesis of these discourses is analysed, being due in part to the persistence of conflict over forestry issues and the inability of the ACTU to integrate a strong sustainability perspective into its “mainstream” social and economic analysis, despite considerable environmental policy development and the establishment of an environmental committee.

Chapter 8 considers the role of the coal industry unions in the formation of Australia’s policies on global climate change due to the enhanced greenhouse effect, and their complex relationship with environmental actors. The major union concerned is considered likely, in the light of the explanatory model, to enjoy a cooperative LER given its internal democracy and strong social unionist ideology, although the difficult political-economic climate facing the coal industry and its workforce in the period of the study could militate against LER cooperation. The
union cooperated well with environmentalists on issues unrelated to climate change. It also achieved considerable agreement with environmental movement actors on policies to reform energy production and use in the ESD Working Group process, and on labour market programs to assist coal industry workers potentially affected by greenhouse response policies. However, disagreement persisted over the need and desirability of stronger greenhouse response measures which could entail curtailment of coal production and use, and coal industry employment, and a contingent industry defence alliance formed between the union and industry employers to resist environmentalist calls for such measures. Despite such differences, the union remained in dialogue with environmentalists and took a number of initiatives for environmental reform of the coal industry during the period of the study.

Finally, Chapter 9 considers the evolution of the environmental policy and, towards the end of the study period, the major environmental education and workplace reform initiatives of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and its precursors. Whilst the AMWU had a history of pro-environment policy positions and good relations with environmental movement actors, over time it not only expanded its suite of environmental policy but made considerable progress in integrating a sustainability commitment and perspective into its mainstream economic and industrial activities. The AMWU’s capacity for strong LER cooperation is analysed as stemming from a combination of its social unionist ideology, its democratic internal processes, and its strong capacity for and emphasis on independent union research and membership education on wider social, economic and political questions, which equipped it to respond effectively to the challenge of environmentalism.
Chapter 10 draws together the most significant conclusions from the preceding chapters in order to answer the research question and evaluate the trajectory of the LER overall in terms of the Siegmann-Norton model. It makes some conjectures of possible future scenarios for the LER and proposes some steps which could maximise possibilities for a cooperative LER. Finally it suggests a number of matters for further research.

1.1.3 The Place of the Thesis in the Literature on Environmental Policy-Making and Politics, and in Labour Movement and Environment Movement Scholarship

The thesis undertakes several tasks which have, to the author’s knowledge, not previously been addressed in academic literature on environmental policy-making and politics, and on the labour-environmentalist relationship. First, it brings together and reviews as much as possible of the extant Anglophone literature on the labour-environmentalist relationship, and synthesises an explanatory model of the LER drawing on this literature. Siegmann’s (1985) study, despite its considerable merits, is limited in several respects as a basis from which generalisations can be drawn to formulate an analytical model. It: (a) studies just two national jurisdictions; (b) is temporally restricted to the 1970s and early 1980s; (c) heavily focuses on the environmental politics of energy production and use; and (d) is arguably under-theorised (i.e. not obviously being informed by a political economy or political ecology perspective, imprecise in some of its sociological formulations, and not taking account of theoretical trends in critical theory, post-Marxism and discourse analysis which can assist an understanding of labour-environmental coalition
formation). The literature reviewed in the first part of this thesis analyses numerous labour-environmentalist interactions in national jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany and Brazil, and aspects of US labour-environmental interactions besides those studied by Siegmann. These studies collectively cover a greater temporal range (from the early 1970s to the late 1990s), cover dimensions of the LER not addressed by Siegmann, study the LER in a range of economic sectors (primary, resource-extractive, construction and manufacturing) and bring a range of theoretical perspectives to bear. The explanatory model which is derived by generalisation from studies of such a diversity of labour-environmental interactions is more robust, and more generally applicable, than one developed from a study of a small number of cases in one or two jurisdictions or industries.

Second, this thesis attempts to study and analyse labour-environmental interaction in the task of formulating and implementing the concept of sustainable development in the Australian economy and in specific resource and manufacturing industries. Much LER scholarship is concerned with labour-environmental cooperation or conflict in campaigns of protest and resistance against particular industries or projects which are seen to be environmentally harmful or inherently unsustainable (such as nuclear energy, motorway construction, siting of toxic waste facilities, and forestry in old-growth forests). Studies of labour-environmental interaction in pro-active campaigns for “production reform” (Schnaiberg, 1980), such as Adkin’s (1998a) study of the Canadian Auto Workers Union’s (CAW) initiatives to reform Canada’s motor vehicle industry and position its membership to benefit from a transition to more sustainable forms of transport, are less common. On the question of production reform in Australia, Penney (2001) and Crowley (1996) have studied
initiatives to create “green jobs” in Australia including the ACF/ACTU Green Jobs initiative which is discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis. However, these studies do not attempt a broader narrative of interaction between Australia’s peak labour and environmental organisations through the entire period of the Federal Labor government. There is also a rich literature on the ESD process, the formulation of Australia’s greenhouse response policies and associated debates in Australia, but little of it focuses specifically on the role of labour and its interaction with environmentalists in these processes. To the author’s knowledge, there is no study which explores the potential and actual synergies between the Australian labour movement’s agenda of economic restructuring based on interventionist industry policy and the Australian peak environmental organisations’ agenda of ecological modernisation. Chapter 7 attempts to fill this gap.

Similarly, Chapter 8 complements the work of Diesendorf (1998, 2000), Bulkeley (200, 2001), Christoff (1998) and others on the evolution of Australia’s climate change policies by considering the role of the relevant trade unions and their interaction with environmentalists in shaping those policies. Chapter 9 summarises the work of Bloustein (1991) and Coulthard (1994), which provided a substantial knowledge base on the challenges of environmental production reform in manufacturing, and the potential of manufacturing workers and their union to initiate such reforms. It also attempts an evaluation of the Bloustein and Coulthard reports’ main practical consequence, the environmental initiatives of the AMWU in the mid-1990s. It locates this in the broader historical context of the AMWU’s environmental policy development and campaigns throughout the Accord period and throughout the changes in union organisation and identity resulting from the
amalgamations process. It also seeks to relate the AMWU’s environmental initiatives to its long-standing commitment to a transformative political-economic programme centred on interventionist industry policy. In relation to all three case studies, this thesis is unique in applying a multi-factor explanatory model to attempt both to analyse them and to predict likely future LER outcomes.

The third point of original research is that, whilst there is a wealth of studies of the ALP/ACTU Accord, the union rationalisation process, and their consequences, few deal with their effects on the Australian labour movement’s capacity for coalition-formation with other social movement actors. Two of the most important predictions of what, in this thesis, is termed the “radical-democratic” critique of Accord corporatism and tripartism were, first, that the participation of the labour movement in corporatist and tripartite processes would entail the marginalisation of constituencies outside the three functional groupings of business, labour and the state, and, second, that it could lead to organised labour adopting or supporting policies hostile to the interests or goals of such constituencies. This thesis attempts to test those predictions in the case of arguably the most significant such constituency, the environmental movement.

Finally, the thesis overcomes a major weakness in the corpus of academic and general literature on the LER in Australia, namely the undue emphasis on cases which represent the extremes of LER cooperation and conflict. The New South Wales Builders’ Labourers’ Federation (NSW BLF) “Green Bans” are the subjects of several books, many theses and at least two films. Australia’s forestry and wilderness preservation disputes, environmentalist campaigns of protest against
native forest logging or projects such as south-west Tasmanian dams, and the bitter labour-environmental conflicts which they have generated, have also been extensively and intensively studied. The difficulty with the preoccupation with these cases is twofold. First, as Siegmann (1985) argues, labour-environmentalist interaction can occur along a spectrum ranging from extreme and open conflict to close alliances, with many possibilities in between. Some of the most theoretically interesting and practically important cases are to be found between the extremes, often involving complex combinations of conflict and cooperation. The involvement of coal industry unions in Australia’s greenhouse policy debates, discussed in Chapter 8, is an example of such a nuanced LER. More generally, it is a straightforward fact that the relationship of most Australian unions with the environmental movement does not and has not resembled either that of the NSW BLF or that of the forestry unions.

This leads to the second difficulty. The cases of the Green Bans and the forestry conflicts are not typical because in each case factors were, or are, at work which were, or are, peculiar to the groups of workers (in particular) and environmentalists involved, and to the times, places and political-economic circumstances of those instances. Some of these factors are identified in the extant literature and recounted in this thesis. It is hoped that the explanatory model of the LER developed herein can shed light on others. The point to make here is that atypical cases of extreme conflict or cooperation, shaped by highly case-specific factors, are a poor basis for generalisation about the problems and possibilities for labour-environmentalist interaction in general. The presentation and analysis of less extreme, more nuanced
cases in this thesis is an attempt to improve the breadth and the balance of literature on the LER in Australia.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 The Research Problem

The research problem, as originally formulated, posed the question: “Were changes in the political role, ideologies and organisational forms of the Australian labour movement due to the Accord and union restructuring process significant in shaping trends, either toward conflict or toward cooperation, in the labour-environmentalist relationship in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s?” The working hypothesis which was formulated, initially on the basis of Siegmann’s (1985) model, was therefore:

That the Accord process of the 1980s and 1990s, and the union restructuring processes of that period, would tend to strengthen tendencies towards conflict rather than co-operation in the labour-environmentalist relationship in Australia.

The subsequent literature review was not considered to warrant a fundamental revision of the research problem. Whilst the more sophisticated analytical model it yielded would enable (and require) a more fine-grained and nuanced answer to the research hypothesis than would Siegmann’s, it essentially confirmed Siegmann’s identification of movement ideology, organisational form and the political-institutional framework as significant causal variables.
A more difficult methodological issue was that of “measuring” the state of the LER and the strength of tendencies to conflict or cooperation. It is possible in principle to quantify these variables. Obach’s (2000) survey of State peak union council secretaries in the US, for example, asked them to assess the LER in their respective States on a four-point scale from 0 to 3, where 0 and 3 represented extremes of conflict and cooperation respectively. On the basis of responses to this and other survey questions, Obach constructed a regression model of the LER in the US. However, the difficulties of attempting quantification of the LER are also evident from this example. The actual state of the LER is purported to be measured by a single, readily quantifiable proxy variable, in this case the subjective perceptions of union council secretaries. Apart from particular problems in this example (response biases, mismatches between subjective perceptions and objective realities, etc.), there is the basic difficulty of determining a quantifiable proxy variable that can accurately represent the complexities of the LER. This is not really a single relationship between just two discrete entities of “labour” and “environmentalists”, but a complex web of interactions between the numerous organisations, groups, networks and individuals which make up each movement. Further, a quantifiable proxy variable would, by definition, represent LER interactions as quanta of instances of cooperation, instances of conflict, etc. As this thesis and the literature on the LER makes clear, discrete LER interactions vary greatly in their qualitative character and significance. A quantification of the LER via measurement of a proxy variable (e.g. numbers of unions adopting environmental policies) may find that instances of cooperation greatly outnumber instances of conflict. Yet one instance of conflict may be of greater political, economic, social or ecological significance than all the instances of cooperation combined. Further, the explanatory model proposed
in this thesis posits a number of causal variables which are themselves difficult to quantify, yet all of which would need some form of quantification to enable, for example, the development of a regression model of the LER. As with the LER itself, such quantification would often require the use of proxy variables which provide a distorted or incomplete representation of the reality which one is concerned with. Given the practical difficulties of quantification, and the likelihood that some of the most important and interesting aspects of the problem may not be captured accurately or at all by quantitative methods, it has been decided to attempt a qualitative evaluation of the state of the LER and its main trends in each of the three case studies, based on the evidence presented. This will necessarily entail an element of subjective judgement on the part of the researcher.

Finally, although the research problem identifies the Accord relationship and the union restructuring process as factors of particular interest, these were clearly not the only factors impinging on the LER in the period in question. The explanatory model developed in Chapter 4 allows such other factors to be identified and their influence considered. Additional levels of interest, and analytical complexity, arise from the fact that some factors of significance for the LER also existed in varying relations of causality to the Accord and union restructuring processes. To give one example, the particular form of social unionism practiced by the AMWU (with its emphasis on a strong independent research and educational capacity and its articulation of industry policy and social wage agendas with a transformative political-economic project), bore substantially both on the Accord and on the AMWU’s environmental initiatives in the 1990s.
1.2.2 Sources of Evidence and Authority

**Data Collection.** As already stated, in developing the explanatory model the thesis made use of prior research on the LER and related issues including the jobs and environment problematique, the sociology of the labour and environmental movements, and social movement theory. Chapters 5 and 6 on the ALP/ACTU Accord and union amalgamations processes made use of the rich research literature available on these topics, especially in the public policy and industrial relations field. The case studies in Chapters 7 and 8 relied, as background information, on existing published research in the environmental politics and policy field on the ESD process and the related process of formulation of Australia’s greenhouse response.

The principal form of primary evidence for the case studies was documentation produced and provided by the major environmental and labour movement actors involved in the cases under study, triangulated and supplemented where necessary by interviews and personal communications with individual participants, and contemporary media reports, as well as by the academic background literature on the ESD and greenhouse response processes. The researcher had access to material held in the archives of the ACF, ACTU and AMWU, the libraries of the AMWU and Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC), and the research department of the Mining & Energy Division of the Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU (M&E)). The ACF, ACTU, AMWU and VTHC were all happy to grant access to archives and libraries, and to provide publications when requested. In the case of the CFMEU (M&E), access to material was doubtless assisted by prior personal and political associations with the union’s National Research Director.
Almost complete collections of archives and publications were made available covering the period of the study, except for the ACF’s files on trade union relations for the period after 1991. The forms of documents utilized included: copies of the journals of the main organisations involved in the case studies; reports of major decision-making meetings published in the journals; internal and external correspondence and memorandums of the ACF and ACTU, including correspondence between these organisations and between them and the ACTU’s affiliates; minutes, books of conference proceedings and notes of meetings of the governing bodies of the ACTU, AMWU and ACF, and of the ACTU’s Environment and Sustainable Development Committee; office-bearers’ reports and background documents presented to meetings; educational publications, commentaries and submissions on climate change policy and the ESD process produced by the ACTU, CFMEU (M&E) and ACF; research reports produced by the ACTU, ACF and AMWU in connection with the ACF/ACTU “Green Jobs” project and the AMWU’s Working for the Environment project; policy documents and submissions on other political and economic issues which impinged on the LER; pamphlets and booklets produced by the relevant organisations on aspects of environmental, economic and sustainable development problems; and material from organization web sites. Interviews and personal communications were used to supplement the documentary research, principally in order to confirm or rebut inferences which could be drawn from the documentary research, and to clarify or complete the account of matters on which the documentary material could only provide an incomplete picture. Media surveys (principally of contemporary newspaper coverage) were also used mainly to supplement the primary documentary sources, except for two issues in which they
became the major source of evidence - the ACTU’s support for “fast-tracking” of resource-based projects in 1991-92, and the export woodchipping conflict of 1994-95.

Data Analysis. The choice of documentary research as the primary methodology, with interviews and media surveys as complementary, inverts the approach implicit in Yin’s (1984: 81) comment that the most important use of documents in case studies is to corroborate evidence from other sources such as interviews, observation and participant-observation. The approach used in the thesis can be justified primarily on practical grounds. The researcher is based in Brisbane, whereas most of the key individual participants in the cases studied are resident in other States of Australia, and often not in the capital cities, creating logistical problems of access to individuals, especially for in-depth interviewing. In addition, most of the events under study occurred at least ten years and in some cases almost twenty years prior to the research and writing of this thesis. The fallibility of human memory is a significant methodological drawback of the interview method, and some of the interviewees and personal communicants volunteered that they had difficulty recalling the events under study accurately at such a temporal distance.

Yin (1994) identifies the strengths of documentation and archives as sources of evidence as stability, unobtrusiveness (i.e. not created as a result of the case study, exactness (including in relation to details of events) and breadth of coverage over time. The principal weaknesses of these sources are potentially low retrievability, biased selectivity if collections are incomplete, reporting bias of the documents’ authors, and potential restrictions of access (Yin, 1994: 80). Retrievability and
access did not arise as problems in the research as all the organizations considered in the case studies granted open access to their libraries and archives. As already noted, incompleteness was also not a weakness except for the absence of the ACF’s files on trade union relations after 1991. The potential for author bias is obvious given the politically committed nature of all the organizations whose records were considered, and the sometimes sharp differences between them, especially the ACF and ACTU.

The research methodology seeks to overcome author bias first, by using documentary sources from each of the contending viewpoints in cases of LER conflict, and second, by interviewing key protagonists from either side to clarify facts and points of difference, check inferences drawn from the documents studied, and seek further information. The interviewees were Phillip Toyne, Executive Director of the ACF from 1986-93 (a period which included most of the events of interest in the case studies), Mark Diesendorf, who was centrally involved in the environmental movement’s contribution to Australia’s greenhouse policy response in the period of the Study, and Peter Colley, who was responsible for coordinating the involvement of the ACTU and the coal industry unions in both the ESD process and the formation of Australia’s National Greenhouse Response Strategy (NGRS). In the event, there was a high degree of agreement by protagonists on points of fact and on the nature of issues which were in dispute, even where the protagonists’ positions on those issues differed sharply.

In analyzing the data, use is made of, and empirical conclusions frequently referred back to, the explanatory model developed in Chapter 4, also utilising the theoretical framework outlined in the next section.
1.2.3 Theorisation of the Thesis: Political Ecology and Neo-Gramscian Theories of Hegemony

The theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis can be summed up in a paraphrase of Marx: people do not make history under circumstances of their own choosing, but they nonetheless make their own history. Whilst a range of theories have been drawn upon, both consciously and unconsciously, the two most significant are political ecology, and neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony and coalition-formation, specifically the radical-democratic theories of Laclau & Mouffe as applied to labour-environmental relations by Adkin (1992, 1998a) and Bantjes (1997).

Political ecology can be considered a deeper, ecologically informed form of political economy. The political economy perspective is summarised by Stilwell, in relation to his (1986) study of the ALP/ACTU Accord, as one which analyses cases in the light of:

*The interaction of capital, labour and the state in modern capitalism, taking account of relationships between economic, social and political issues. Applied to the Accord this does not exclude consideration of the concerns of neoclassical and Keynesian economists, e.g. its impact on relative prices and on the aggregate level of economic activity. However, it does help us to travel further towards an understanding of other aspects of the Accord, e.g. its significance in the redistribution of income, in affecting the incidence of industrial disputation, in changing the access of various sectional interest groups to the centres of economic and political power and in generating evolutionary changes in the general character of Australian capitalism* (Stilwell, 1986: 2-3).

Such a perspective clearly requires that account be taken of the economic structure of the society in which the cases being studied take place, its political-institutional framework, the dynamics of the national and global capitalist economy at the time of
the cases, the relative power and resources of the political actors under study, and their sociological bases, amongst other things. A political ecology perspective, whilst encompassing political economy, extends it to include an analysis of the ecological and biophysical context within which the cases take place, and the interactions of ecological and biophysical systems with economic, social and political processes. These interactions have been and are crucial in determining the nature of environmental political issues, environmental activism, and the LER in Australia. For examples of the political ecology approach see Walker (1994), Carden (1999), Formby (1986), Mercer (2000). Chapter 2 in particular deploys a political ecology approach (including the theories of Schnaiberg (1980) and Goodstein (1999)) to frame the debates over the “jobs versus environment” problematique and to introduce the Australian political-economic and political-ecologic context within which the cases studied took place.

Neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony and coalition-formation can be contrasted with, and arose in reaction to, structural Marxist theories whereby the “subject positions” of political actors are generated by objective interests within the political-economic framework, and their political practice consists in the pursuit of those structurally determined interests. The radical-democratic post-Marxism of Laclau & Mouffe (1985) strongly emphasises the role of discursive practice in constituting political projects and in creating political subjects which identify with those projects. Applied to labour-environmentalist interactions by Adkin (1992, 1998a) and Bantjes (1997), this entails a rejection of the view that labour movement actors embody an essential identity as “workers” pursuing a structurally determined interest in economic and employment goals which is antagonistic to environmental movement
actors’ interest in environmental protection and essential identity as “greenies”. Through discursive practices the goals and interests of each, and the relationship between them, can be reconceptualised and their subject-positions redefined to enable mutually beneficial cooperation and the definition of an identity, common to both, as citizens with an interest in sustainable development on a socially just basis. At the same time these processes will be the target of attempts at discursive disruption by business and state actors. They will also occur within structural political-ecologic contexts which may not be immediately amenable to discursive transformation. This theoretical perspective is elaborated in Chapter 4, and applied to all the case studies.

1.3 Summary

In summary, the theoretical framework for the thesis argues that structural and institutional factors influence, but do not determine, the behaviour of political actors. Further, perceptions of interest and the possibilities for action are also subject to discursive reconstruction, as is their structural and institutional context. This theoretical framework underpins the Siegmann-Norton model and its interpretation of the LER as subject to the interplay of economic, sociological, political, institutional and ideological variables. This Model is then tested by examining the actual trajectory of the LER in Australia during a period in which significant change occurred in respect of these variables. The methodological task is to assemble a picture of what happened in each of the three cases in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 from the raw material of documentation generated by the major labour and environmental actors.
Chapter 2
The Jobs and Environment Debate
2.1 Introduction

This chapter and the following two will begin by reviewing Siegmann’s (1985) findings on the LER in the United States and West Germany in relation to the proposed causal factors under examination in each chapter, and then interrogate Siegmann’s work, and the model of the LER implicit in Siegmann, against subsequent LER scholarship and other relevant literature. On this basis, conclusions will be drawn from which to derive a new model of the LER.

This chapter will first present Siegmann's findings on the jobs and environment (J&E) problematique, then examine literature on the compatibility or otherwise of employment and environmental objectives in advanced capitalist democracies, both in theory (e.g. Schnaiberg’s (1980) “treadmill of production”) and in practice (Goodstein’s (1999) study of the actual employment effects of environmental policies in the US). Contending attempts to explain specific instances of apparent “jobs versus environment” conflict in labour-environmental interactions will also be reviewed. The issue of how Australia’s specific political economy and political ecology have shaped the J&E debate in the period under study is considered.

The J&E debate recurs in virtually all extant literature on the LER. Some scholars argue that there is always an objective “jobs versus environment” (JvE) tension which tends to LER conflict. Others argue that this is merely an ideological perception or a ruse by political actors hostile to labour-environmentalist cooperation. This dyad does not exhaust the possibilities. It certainly does not sufficiently capture the essence of situations where the ideological perceptions of,
and political interventions by, labour, environmentalists, business, the state and other actors are critical in determining whether a jobs versus environment trade-off will exist or whether a jobs and environment synergy will prevail. Hence this chapter will foreshadow the view of many LER scholars that the J&E problematique can most fruitfully be conceived as an arena of discursive struggle between social actors including labour and environmentalists, each aiming to secure acceptance of one or other discourse about the compatibility of social and environmental goals, and to transform real political and economic relations in accordance with that discourse. This point is fully elaborated in Chapter 4. The conclusions of this chapter on the J&E problematique and its implications for the LER will be worked into a new model of the LER, proposed at the end of Chapter 4.

2.2 Siegmann and the “Jobs and Environment” Debate

Siegmann sought first to test the hypothesis that “The perception of a built-in dichotomy between employment and environmental protection has been a central source of conflict between labor and environmentalists in the past” (Siegmann, 1985: 37). This perception is embodied in widely encountered views including: that environmental protection directly destroys jobs; that environmental protection increases production costs and therefore discourages investment and/or renders firms and countries uncompetitive; and that pressures for productivity growth puts capital expenditure on wages in competition with spending on pollution abatement. Siegmann suggested that these arguments led to the argument that environmental
protection was most likely to be pursued successfully during times of high economic
growth, and thus suggested two further hypotheses:

The goodness of the LER correlates positively with economic well-being.

Given the difficult economic situation in [the US and FRG], the perception of a built-in dichotomy between employment and environmental protection. . . will persist and thus hinder effective cooperation in the future (1985: 38).

Siegmann recorded five main findings on the JvE hypothesis. First, labour and environmentalists agreed on environmental protection as a principal goal in both the US and West Germany. Conflict had occurred, however, over practical implementation in cases where labour was concerned about protecting existing jobs or where environmentalists had disregarded the immediate social or economic costs of environmental protection. Over time LER rapprochement had occurred as some trade unions had come to see environmental protection as a source of employment opportunities rather than a cost, and environmentalists had broadened their agendas to include social and economic concerns.

Second, there was in-principle agreement on employment policies between labour and environmentalists, but less agreement in practice over implementation. There were also considerable differences within each of the respective movements, with cooperation between some sections of the two movements on employment issues and conflict between some others. This reflected different views within labour about the effects of environmental protection on employment. Within environmentalism, it reflected differences over whether employment was a marginal or central concern,
and the willingness of environmentalists to support union demands which were not directly “environmental” (1985: 42-48).

Thirdly, Siegmann found that in both countries, corporations used the tactic of “environmental blackmail,” i.e. the claim that environmental regulation would force them to disinvest or retrench workers, and that labour rejected it as a manifestation of corporate power which it had to counter in its own interests as well as on environmental grounds. The West German peak union federation saw the issue as arising from the unequal economic and political power of capital and labour, and so the remedy was to be sought in improved job security through “co-determination” at the workplace entailing worker participation and access to company information. US unions sought to counter “environmental blackmail” through amending environmental legislation to compel disclosure of relevant company information (1985: 48-50).

Siegmann’s fourth finding was that attitudes to economic growth were a significant point of difference. Labour supported maximising economic growth in order to maximise living standards and employment. Environmentalists were fundamentally critical of the “growth paradigm,” in many cases extending this to a more fundamental critique of industrial society. The policies of both labour and environmentalists expressed a preference for “qualitative growth” and a reduction of “damage growth”, thereby anticipating the Brundtland Commission’s sustainable development commitment to “changing the quality of growth” (WCED, 1987: 49). When hard choices needed to be made, however, between growth per se and the
qualitative make-up of economic activity, labour emphasised the former whilst environmentalists emphasised the latter (Siegmann, 1985: 51).

Finally, Siegmann’s findings on the relationship between the LER and economic conditions were as follows. In West Germany, deteriorating economic conditions in the early 1980s were not accompanied by a deterioration in the LER, and whilst the available evidence was restricted to a few unions and cases, there were notable instances of convergence between labour and environmentalist positions (1985: 62-65). In the US, despite pressure from the Reagan government and business to relax environmental and pollution standards in response to recession, labour had generally not gone along with such calls, nor had LER conflict increased as the economy declined. Two notably pro-environment unions, the steelworkers (USWA) and auto workers (UAW), had also not resiled from supporting strong environmental standards in their industries; although, when this appeared to affect employment in particular enterprises the unions argued for a trade-off between short-term relaxation of environmental standards and long-term restructuring which would improve environmental performance. Environmentalists had also gone along with the trade-off (1985: 66-69). Siegmann also analysed the relationships over time between economic conditions, US Congressional voting patterns, and the lobbying efforts of US labour and environmental peak bodies. The analysis did not suggest a positive correlation between a co-operative LER and good economic conditions, and if anything suggested a strengthening of labour-environmental ties during periods of economic insecurity (1985: 69-74).
Siegmann’s overall conclusion was that, on balance, the evidence tended to refute rather than support the JvE or “built-in dichotomy” argument. It decisively refuted the hypothesis of a positive relationship between LER cooperation and economic conditions, and tended to refute the hypothesis that the perception of a “built-in dichotomy” would persist and hamper LER cooperation:

*The perception of a built-in dichotomy between employment and environmental protection. . . was undoubtedly the major reason for the labor-environmentalist conflicts in the past. . . beginning in the second half of the 1970s, this view was increasingly questioned”* (Siegmann, 1985: 180).

A subjective ideological perception of the compatibility of environmental goals with economic and employment goals, was “a necessary but not sufficient condition” for a cooperative LER. Other factors, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, could be expected to bear on the LER directly and also on the compatibility of environmental and employment objectives (1985: 182).

Siegmann discussed possible criticisms from supporters of the “JvE” argument, in particular that policy statements were a less reliable guide than actual behaviour, that the influence of economic conditions on the LER might have been indirect rather than the direct influence Siegmann sought to measure, and that the evidence was insufficient to reject the “JvE” hypothesis. Siegmann’s response was that the first two objections, if valid, could be explained by political, ideological and organisational influences on the LER. The third, if valid, would suggest the most appropriate conclusion was to leave the issue undecided and turn to other explanations of the LER (1985: 74-77).
2.3 Inventory of LER Scholarship on the “Jobs Versus Environment” Debate

2.3.1 Treadmill Reality or “Trade-Off Myth”?

The obvious question to ask about the J&E debate is whether a JvE trade-off objectively exists, both in general and in specific cases. Siegmann did not attempt to address this question in his study. He also had little to say about political economy, both of capitalist economies in general and of capitalism in specific times and places, as a factor in the LER. Other commentators address this theme in terms which bear directly on the issue of the reality of a JvE trade-off.

Schnaiberg (1980) argued that the major driver of environmental degradation in capitalist democracies is the “treadmill of production”. The “treadmill” combines the mechanisms of capitalist accumulation and crisis and consequent growth tendencies identified by Marx, with the pluralist political pressures for economic growth in capitalist democracies, especially under the class compromise of the post-World War II (WWII) era. The state, capital and labour each have specific stakes in production expansion. The state requires increased flows of revenue from the private sector through taxes in order to satisfy the demands of capital and labour for economic and social programs. Capital requires a growing market for consumption of its products, and sufficient profit to ensure company survival and future expansion. Labour requires increased job opportunities and wage income, and an improved quality of life both through consumption opportunities and public sector services. “Under ideal conditions, production expansion can lead to sufficient
economic growth to meet all the expectations” without a fundamental redistribution of wealth or economic power between capital and labour (Schnaiberg, 1980: 211). Hence the “treadmill” process entails the participation of organised labour in “growth coalitions” along with business and government (Schnaiberg, 1980: 220-247; Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994: 68-76). Labour is thereby complicit (albeit unknowingly or involuntarily) in environmental degradation resulting from the particular, chemical-intensive and energy-intensive model of growth in post-WWII capitalism, and thus at odds with environmentalists (Schnaiberg, 1980: 208).¹

Thus there is an objective JvE contradiction at the heart of modern capitalist democracy, although in an important qualification, Schnaiberg notes that capital-intensive production accelerates the treadmill and hence pollution, whilst labour-intensive production slows it (1980: 243). Schnaiberg does not conclude that the JvE tension in the treadmill leads inevitably to LER conflict, but rather that it requires a strategic approach to LER cooperation by environmentalists involving an appreciation of the structure of “growth coalitions” and the freedoms and constraints of its members. The environmental movement can neither ignore nor directly confront the growth coalition and labour’s role therein, but can seek to win over labour to support for “less environmentally pernicious and/or more socially beneficial” forms of production (Schnaiberg, 1980: 208).

¹ According to Schnaiberg, as well as the a priori interest of business in expanding production, “in most capitalist and socialist societies in the modern world, both labour and the state have been committed to production expansion and economic growth, and for quite sound social reasons. They have differed across countries and periods in how the surplus was mobilised, and how the new production surplus was allocated – but not in the desire to mobilise it for production expansion. The near universality of this economic growth coalition is a sobering reality that environmentalists have had to confront” (Schnaiberg, 1980: 208).
The treadmill of production is ultimately not a permanent fact of life but a political and economic construction by human interests which other social actors can deconstruct (Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994: 89). However, slowing and reversing the treadmill requires state action, which will only become politically feasible if there is a crisis of faith in the treadmill which could spur a challenge to the ideological hegemony of the treadmill model, and generate sufficient support for non-treadmill production. Several major tasks of “consciousness formation and sociopolitical mobilization” must be performed in order to “dissociate the natural desires of the bulk of labor for a comfortable life from the treadmill model for providing such a life,” namely: “(1) educating labor to the discomforts - the environmental hazards -- of the treadmill; (2) educating labor to the socially inefficient role of the state in its allocation of surplus to the treadmill; and (3) educating labor as to the alternatives to the present state-supported treadmill system” (Schnaiberg, 1980: 250).

One difficulty is that environmental issues can entail "jobs versus jobs" conflict, and intra-labour conflict (i.e. conflict between unionised labour, non-unionised labour, and potential workers). Some US proposals for green conversion of production had been opposed by organised labour even though they might have yielded a net increase in employment, because the new jobs were lower-skilled and in more competitive, less secure sectors. Further, the adverse environmental effects of production tend to primarily affect less organised workers, whilst the unionised suburban monopoly-capital workforce can afford private solutions to this problem (Schnaiberg, 1980: 240). This foreshadows the point implicit in Goodstein (1999) and Obach (2000), and elaborated in Chapter 3, that the political economy of particular sectors, and the occupational and demographic interests and culture of
particular groups of workers, may be more significant for the LER than "class" and "jobs" *per se*.

In discussing specific reform strategies for "*production reorganisation*" on a non-treadmill basis (ultimately leading to a social-democratic or even democratic socialist economy), Schnaiberg warns that any transition to an "*ecological synthesis*" will result in "*disruptions arising from treadmill disorganisation*" which must be addressed as a core component of environmental policy (Schnaiberg, 1980: 429). Simultaneous transformation of the entire economy cannot occur without social havoc which will disproportionately harm labour and the poor, yet a gradual transition which seeks to avoid social dislocation will be too easily reversible and not sufficiently rapid to avoid environmental disaster. Therefore Schnaiberg proposes a "*seriously reformist*" rather than revolutionary program which, whilst not assured of success, could win sufficient popular support in its own right to be politically feasible. It may also sufficiently raise the consciousness of workers and citizens to the fatal flaws of the treadmill to make more fundamental change a possibility (Schnaiberg, 1980: 430-434).

The overall conclusion from Schnaiberg's analysis is that whilst there is an objective JvE contradiction within the treadmill, whether this leads to LER cooperation or conflict is a function of *discursive* factors. If the treadmill logic remains hegemonic, labour will remain locked into the growth coalition and the LER will be conflictual. But if the tasks of "*consciousness formation and sociopolitical mobilisation*" are accomplished, the treadmill can be slowed or reversed, production can take non-treadmill directions and JvE conflict will disappear. The formulation of
"consciousness formation and sociopolitical mobilisation" as a basis for the LER resembles what Adkin (1998a) and others term "counter-hegemonic strategy", although there are subtle but crucial differences which are reviewed in Chapter 4.

The existence of an objective JvE contradiction is challenged by Goodstein (1999). Goodstein critically discusses a number of widely held views about the relationship between environmental and employment objectives, specifically that:

- At an economy-wide level [in the US], environmental protection has created long-run unemployment;
- Environmental protection has been responsible for large numbers of plant shutdowns and layoffs in manufacturing; and
- That environmental protection has led many US firms to flee to developing countries with lax environmental regulations (Goodstein, 1999: 1).

Goodstein’s survey of the available economic literature and research found that there was no JvE tradeoff at a macroeconomic level. The effects of environmental protection and regulation were minor compared to other factors including the monetary and fiscal policies of the state. On balance they were found to produce a slight employment benefit and economic stimulus due to the effects of public expenditure on environmental protection, corporate investment in abatement measures and accelerated technological innovation, the stimulus to the environmental protection industry, and the adoption of more labour-intensive production processes (Goodstein, 1999: 17-38).

Goodstein also found that whilst some plant closures and layoffs had occurred due to environmental regulation, these accounted for less than 0.1% of layoffs annually, a
fraction of those caused by relatively unproblematic business processes such as business failures, external competition, technological change, corporate restructuring, relocation, product changes, and seasonal variations in activity. The number of people laid off was also less than the extra jobs created by environmental protection, and minuscule compared to overall employment growth in the US (Goodstein 1999: 41-49).

Finally, Goodstein found that there were few examples of relocation of US plants to pollution havens. In general an environmentally induced capital flight had not occurred. This was because: the cost of environmental regulation was small compared to overall business costs (especially wages); costs were only one factor in relocation decisions; modern production technology obviates environmental compliance costs by incorporating pollution control devices to begin with; and environmental compliance could yield benefits outweighing the costs (Goodstein, 1999: 55-67, 171).

A key finding by Goodstein is that government and industry-funded macroeconomic modelling of the economic and employment effects of environmental protection had in all relevant cases grossly overestimated the adverse impacts. In thirteen cases of new national environmental laws, the models had overestimated compliance costs by up to 2900%, and in one case had predicted compliance costs where there were none! Such models had also predicted that proposed changes to the Clean Air Act in the early 1990s would cause a major economic downturn and from 200,000 to 2 million job losses. The recession did not materialise and less than 7000 workers required assistance because their jobs were affected by the new laws (Goodstein,
1999: 41-45). The models also usually inflated the benefits of environmentally contentious developments (Goodstein, 1999: 105-106). Such models are inaccurate because they proceed from unrealistic assumptions which militate against environmental protection and in favour of permitting “business as usual”, including that the economy cannot respond innovatively and flexibly to environmental regulation so as to minimise costs and create business opportunities, and that governments will pursue the most costly and least flexible means of implementing such regulation. They also fail to take account of the direct and indirect economic, social and environmental benefits of the regulation (Goodstein, 1999: 144-148).

On the other hand, Goodstein found that there was no strong case for a large overall employment gain from strong environmental regulation or an economy-wide shift to clean technology. As with the myth of a national JvE trade-off, the principal reason was that (un)employment levels are principally a function of the business cycle and government monetary and fiscal management (Goodstein, 1999: 114-136, 172). The mooted factors in a jobs and environment (J+E) synergy were considered by Goodstein to be of incremental benefit nationally, and to some extent merely involve a redistribution of work from region to region, or country to country. However, such synergies could be a significant element of job and enterprise creation in particular regions and localities (Goodstein, 1999: 130-136).

Goodstein devoted particular attention to the position of workers in the forest and coal mining industries, both of which had seen varying degrees of labour-environmentalist conflict. In both cases, environmental controversies (over preservation of old growth forests and over the Clean Air Act) occurred against a
backdrop of long-term employment decline through technological change and structural change in the relevant markets. Goodstein found that environmental protection did directly displace significant extra numbers of logging and mining workers. However, the much larger secondary job losses and regional economic decline predicted to occur as a result of immediate job losses and reduced logging or mining activity did not materialise. In most affected counties overall employment had grown despite loss of logging and mining jobs. Goodstein’s conclusion was that the “base” model of regional economies (whereby one key sector supports employment and investment in all others in the region) is flawed, and that predictions of large-scale secondary employment impacts should be ignored (Goodstein, 1999: 71-109). An important implication is that, whilst Goodstein’s work clearly rebuts a generic JvE explanation of conflict, it also points to the significance of sector-specific political economy and occupational interests of particular groups of workers as a factor in the LER.

Finally, Goodstein found that the subsequent employment history and economic well-being of displaced workers varied according to the overall state of regional economies, and the adequacy of Federal government retraining and income-support policies. Timber workers found themselves amidst a buoyant regional economy which enabled most to be re-employed, whereas fewer coal miners were able to find jobs in their depressed regional economy, and their new jobs paid much lower wages than coal mining. The usefulness of retraining and job-search programs was limited by the strict eligibility rules, time-limited nature and ungenerous levels of US unemployment benefits, which meant most displaced workers could not afford to take the time necessary for adequate retraining (Goodstein, 1999: 83-87, 98-104,
The political significance of this for the LER is that groups of US workers displaced for environmental reasons face much greater hardship with much less assistance, and therefore have more to fear from retrenchment, than their European counterparts who benefit from a more generous welfare regime. As a result, argues Goodstein, US workers are much more susceptible to “job blackmail” tactics by employers than European workers, and this is a key factor in the sharp LER conflict which arose in the US during the 1990s in relation to coal mining and logging, but which was absent during the same period in Europe (Goodstein, 1999: 175-177).

Schnaiberg and Goodstein offer differing assessments of the extent to which employment and environmental objectives come into conflict in industrial capitalism, and of the relative short-run costs and benefits to workers of environmentally driven reorganisation of production. Evaluating the correctness of these contending economic analyses is a complex question beyond the scope of this thesis. However the crucial point of agreement between Schnaiberg and Goodstein is that regardless of whether JvE is a reality of the treadmill of production or an ideological myth of anti-environmentalists it is not an inevitable and unchangeable driver of LER conflict but a political and ideological - in short, discursive - creation which can be deconstructed and overcome discursively. This theme is revisited briefly below, and in more depth in Chapter 4.

2.3.2 Treadmills and Trade-Offs in Australia

Schnaiberg and Goodstein caution against careless application of their general theses regarding the “treadmill” and the “trade-off myth” to specific economic sectors and
specific national and regional economies, and whilst the macro-level analyses of Schnaiberg and Goodstein are broadly applicable, at least as a first approximation, to discussion of the J&E problematique in Australia and its consequences for the LER, our analysis must take account of Australia’s specific political economy. There is now an extensive literature on this topic, and on the political economy of specific sectors within the Australian economy, especially as they relate to environmental and resource issues.

Whilst Australia, like the US, is an advanced and affluent industrial capitalist democracy, and has strong economic and trading links with the US, its economic structure is still significantly resource based. This reflects its origins as a source of raw materials for the British Empire, with a particularly heavy dependence on primary commodities as a source of export income. Further, there is a high degree of foreign transnational ownership and investment in the Australian economy. Also, Australia’s political regime since 1901 has been that of a polyarchic liberal democracy within the national and global capitalist economy, but with a particular form of Federalism which has fostered developmentalist tendencies amongst state governments whilst hindering efforts to ascribe responsibilities for environmental management between tiers of government, and to develop state capacities for environmental policy making and implementation.

The main features of Australia’s political economy were very significant for the LER, and the J&E debate, during the period of the study, but in contradictory ways, and different commentators and stakeholders were able to emphasise particular aspects in support of widely varying, often conflicting positions. The prominence of
environmentally contentious primary and resource-extractive industries in the Australian economy meant that interest groups in these sectors, including unions, exercised considerable sway in larger state and national associations (including the labour movement) of which they were part. It also meant that the rejection or regulation of projects in these sectors on environmental grounds came to be seen as having potentially serious economic and social consequences. On the other hand, a persistent concern during the 1983-96 period was that Australia’s economic structure as a commodity exporter with a relatively uncompetitive manufacturing sector gave rise to chronic economic problems including a worsening balance of payments and high structural unemployment. Some commentators sympathetic to environmentalism (e.g. Mercer, 2000: 57-61; see also Zarsky, 1990; Hare, 1990b) argued on this basis that a relatively rapid and major restructuring of the Australian economy away from a factor-driven to a knowledge-driven structure was desirable on economic as well as environmental grounds. Against this, pro-industry commentators and industry interests argued that for the foreseeable future Australia’s best economic prospects lay in downstream processing industries closely associated with Australia’s traditional resource-extractive sectors. They supported a continued high level of investment and activity in those sectors, and argued that demands for environmental protection and regulation posed a present danger to Australia’s national economic interest. This bifurcation of views marked both the debates on Australia’s macroeconomic future, especially as they impinged upon the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) process of 1989-92 (Harris & Throsby, 1998; Diesendorf & Hamilton, 1997), and sector-specific debates such as those on forestry and on Australia’s greenhouse response (see e.g. Bulkeley, 2001; Diesendorf, 1997).
These debates are central to the case studies considered in subsequent chapters of the thesis, and no judgement is ventured on them at this stage. However, if the debates are situated within an analysis of Australia’s political economy and developmental history, it can be argued that what might be seen as an objective JvE dichotomy is actually an artifact of the prevalence of a particular national developmental model, especially in the specific (mainly resource-extractive) sectors which have been the focus of environmental scrutiny.

A further difficulty in assessing claims of either a JvE conflict or a J+E synergy in Australia is the dearth of empirical studies of the employment effects of environmental regulation in Australia. Hence much of the J&E debate in Australia has centred on conflicting predictions of the employment impacts of proposed environmental protection measures, notably those of economic models. A literature search of Australia’s leading industry associations in environmentally contentious sectors, and of anti-environmentalist “think-tanks”, found numerous publications repeating economic modellers’ predictions of major adverse employment impacts of proposals for environmental regulation, but no reports assessing actual job losses from specific environmental measures (IPA, 2002; CIS, 2002; BCA, 2002; NAFI, 2002; ABARE, 2002). A reason for the dearth of such literature is that it is methodologically very difficult to distinguish the employment impact of environmental or other policy measures from the background of often more significant macroeconomic and technological determinants (Colley, 2002a; Stilwell, 1986). This reinforces both Goodstein’s argument that macroeconomic factors generally swamp the impacts of environmental measures, whether positive or
negative, and the argument that, rather than positing a generic JvE conflict, one should be alert to sectoral, regional and occupation-specific employment impacts of environmental regulation, and their consequences for the LER.

2.3.3 The Jobs-Environment Problematique in LER Studies

Most studies of the LER since Siegmann have had to deal with the J&E problematique at various levels of theoretical and empirical specificity. In their respective studies of the limiting cases of LER conflict and cooperation in Australia, namely forestry disputes and the Sydney “Green Bans” of the 1970s, Watson (1990) and Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) both seem to support the classic JvE arguments considered by Siegmann. Burgmann & Burgmann (1998), whilst clearly according a major role to discursive factors in the New South Wales Builders Labourers Federation’s alliance with environmentalists, also argued that the BLF’s environmental activism was aided by two aspects of the economic and employment context, namely the buoyant state of the economy at the time (including “over-investment” in the building industry) and the growing strategic power of occupational groups covered by the BLF due to technological change in the industry. In contrast, Watson argues that the JvE dichotomy took a hard form in relation to conflict between forestry workers and environmentalists in NSW due to depressed economic conditions in the late 70s and early 80s, structural weaknesses of the rural economy, the industrial weakness of forestry workers and their union, and the failure of conservationists to put forward practical alternative employment strategies for the forestry workers. In some cases such proposals were simply put forward as a tactic to reassure the public and politicians that workers’ interests would be protected.
Even when such proposals were well-researched and theoretically attractive, they typically failed either because they proposed re-employment of forestry workers in jobs for which they lacked skills or were culturally resistant to, or because they were unable to attract investment capital from local and regional entrepreneurs and financiers (Watson, 1990: 115-118).

Neither case conclusively supports a generalised JvE or economic-determinist explanation of the LER. Watson’s findings can be adequately explained with reference to the *sui generis* occupational interests and experiences of the affected workers, the political economy of the affected sector and regions, and the political failure of environmentalists to adequately take account of these factors. Conversely, whilst the economic power enjoyed by the NSW BLF can be accounted for in terms of the political economy of the building sector, and the occupational interests and culture of the workers concerned, the question must be asked why similar buoyant conditions in the building industry in other Australian cities were not accompanied by a comparably close LER (Roddewig, 1978).

Siegmann had noted the emergence of J+E initiatives and literature by unions, environmentalists, and academics during the 1970s and 1980s, including the work of Kazis & Grossman (1982), who characterised JvE as an ideological construct underpinning the capitalist tactic of “job blackmail,” and forming part of a general corporate and political backlash against social and environmental reform (1982: 69-97). This continues to be a standard tactic by corporations and their front groups in environmental hot spots such as forestry (Simon, 1998; Foster, 1993). Yet whilst Kazis & Grossman emphasise the spuriousness of corporate “job blackmail” claims,
a deeper implication of their analysis of the dimensions of corporate power is that 
JvE can be made an objective reality due to the power of corporations over 
investment (and hence job creation) decisions, and the ability of capital to move 
between jurisdictions and nations in search of the most favourable regulatory regime 
(Kazis & Grossman, 1982: 52-53). This is complemented by economic power, 
especially of large companies, which translates into political power, power over 
industry information, thereby frustrating attempts to show that environmental aims 
can be achieved without employment or economic losses, and power to set the 
agenda of public debate, both through direct corporate campaigning and through the 

Nonetheless, the J+E discourse has continued to be promoted, both as propaganda 
and as a practical program, by unions and unionists with a history of cooperation 
with environmentalists, such as the US Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union 
(OCAW), the UK Transport & General Workers Union (TGWU), the Canadian Auto 
Workers Union (CAW), and the Ontario Green Work Alliance ((Moberg, 1999; Keil, 
1994; Mason & Morter, 1998; Adkin, 1998a). A cautionary note is sounded by 
Mason & Morter (1998) who note that whilst the TGWU accepts ecological 
modernisation arguments about the positive synergies between clean production, 
efficient technologies and "green jobs", it is yet to be seen how the union will react 
when these policies run up against intractable ecological constraints which affect 
profitability (Mason & Morter, 1998: 19). On this point Adkin observes that by the 
mid-1990s the CAW was beginning to grapple with the possibility that reduced car 
usage and shift to other modes of transport would face its members with a stark 
choice between defence of industry or a pre-emptive strategy (Adkin, 1998a: 321-
323). Also, Paehlke (1998), reviewing the J+E literature of the 1970s, suggests that arguments about a J+E synergy rather than a JvE trade-off are still largely valid, but that what hadn’t been foreseen was the extent to which economic globalisation, restructuring and policies of public sector restraint would generate general job insecurity. This would foster resistance to environmental demands on the basis that, whilst any adverse employment impact of environmental measures is minor compared to the huge impact of recent systemic changes, the latter are commonly regarded as inevitable, whereas environmental policies are optional, and thus should be avoided if their employment impact is negative in particular cases. Therefore the jobs-environment dilemma could only be resolved by general programs for full employment, with work-time reduction combined with guarantees of employment security being Paehlke’s (1998) favoured response.

Other commentators on the LER emphasise the importance of struggle around conceptualisations of the J&E problematique in determining the state of the LER. Keil (1994) states that "there is a real and material tension between jobs and the environment in the capitalist economy" (1994: 15). The working class is at the centre of this conflict, both because employment of industrial workers is concentrated in environmentally damaging sectors, and because during the 1980s and 1990s industrial employment in the advanced capitalist democracies had declined for complex reasons (1994: 16). Yet whilst the JvE conflict can't simply be explained away, it can be conceptualised more productively to open up new paths for labour and environmentalism as an alternative to the "ecocapitalist agenda of a green recovery from the slump" (1994: 16). The key to this is recognising that a sustainable economy is compatible with full employment, and that environmental
protection and ecologically sound investment could create superior employment outcomes. Adkin (1992, 1998a, 1998b) provides a more thorough exposition of the importance of discursive struggle to reconceptualise the J&E problematique, and to contest corporate and state imposition of a false JvE antagonism. This issue, and other aspects of the potential and limitations of discourse analysis for informing LER cooperation, are explored more fully in Chapter 4.

On the other hand, the objective reality of job insecurity seems to be an endemic feature of forestry disputes, for reasons similar to those identified by Watson (1990). In British Columbia and the north-west USA, a JvE conflict exists in forestry communities as a consequence of the weakness of the unions and corporate restructuring of the industry which predates environmental conflicts, as well as wider political-economic relations beyond forestry communities. The highly contingent and insecure nature of forestry workers’ employment aggravates conflict in the LER both directly, and indirectly by contributing to the industrial weakness of the unions (Shantz & Adam, 1999; Burrows, 1998; Foster, 1991; Obach, 2000). Thus reconceptualising the J&E problematique in the forestry sector and successfully mobilising workers and environmentalists around such a reconceptualisation presents particular practical difficulties, but for reasons outlined by Obach and discussed in Chapter 3, it would be a mistake to generalise from the specific problems of forestry to the J&E problematique and the LER overall.
2.4 Conclusions

The foregoing review, together with Siegmann’s findings about the J&E problematique, leads to three main conclusions. First, the contention that there is, in general, an inherent JvE dichotomy, and that this inevitably pushes the LER towards conflict, is not sustained. Second, the potential for conflict or cooperation between environmental and employment objectives in particular cases will be a function of the specific political economy and political ecology of the sector(s) and region(s) concerned, and the position in the labour market of particular occupational groups (e.g. loggers and coal miners). Finally, the extent to which any such potential for conflict or cooperation is realised will vary according to the ability of labour, environmental and other political actors to intervene politically and ideologically, i.e. discursively, to promote or frustrate conflict or cooperation. This concurs with Siegmann’s findings on the significance of the political-institutional framework, ideology, and internal labour movement organisation, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3
A Critique of Class Theories of Environmentalism
and the LER
3.1 Introduction

The second potential explanation of LER conflict investigated by Siegmann was that it arises from a conflict of interests and of values between the labour movement’s constituency in the working class, and the environmental movement’s imputed constituency in the middle class. According to Siegmann:

*The average environmentalist, the argument goes, is better educated, has a higher income, works in higher-valued jobs, and is younger than the average union member. These differences, in this view, have exacerbated the conflicts between workers and environmentalists. The attitudes toward employment and environmental goals are believed to be decisively determined by one’s social base and, thus, have been significantly different* (Siegmann, 1985: 7).

It had also been asserted that “middle-class” environmentalism was insensitive to specific environmental problems facing workers or to the costs to workers of environmental solutions. It risked losing support by being seen as defending a vested interest, or was an excuse for defence of privilege and hence of no benefit to workers. Conversely, some commentators had typecast the working class as inherently selfish, materialistic and hostile to environmentalism (Siegmann, 1985: 86).

However, Siegmann found that whilst “The demographic and socioeconomic composition of the memberships of labor unions and environmental organisations has been different” these differences had not translated into significant conflict in the LER. Such dissensus as existed was not along traditional class lines but followed educational and generational lines, and also “occupational” lines insofar as these relate to the nature and circumstances of work rather than income and status.
differentials. They also were reflected in terms of preferences for conventional or unconventional modes of action to secure particular objectives (Siegmann, 1985: 182). Siegmann’s detailed findings and supporting arguments on this issue are reported, where relevant, in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The question of whether the environmental and labour movements have different class bases, or express the politics of classes, and whether this predisposes them to conflict, touches on some of the most fundamental issues in political sociology. According to Tranter:

_Interpretations of social and political movements as reflecting social cleavages, especially "class bases", have formed the backbone of political sociology. Accordingly, Western environmental movements are often explained in terms of their alleged class and generational bases_ (Tranter, 1996: 61).

The question of class theories of environmentalism and the LER is also a subset of debates about the continued relevance of the “class paradigm” in general in political sociology. Lee & Turner (1996) and Milner (1999) provide comprehensive overviews of historic and recent debates about theories of class, both as means of conceptualising social inequality in capitalist societies (“dimensional” class theory), and as explanations of the purported causal processes by which social structures give rise to collective political consciousness and action (“generative” class theories).

Therefore to abandon the concept of class determination of the LER, whether towards conflict or towards co-operation, is not a trivial matter. Yet class theories of environmentalism (and, by implication, of the LER) have increasingly been called into question for a variety of reasons. In particular, the thesis of class as a
determinant of conflict in the LER presumes a “generative” class theory. Yet, as several contributors in Lee & Turner (1996) make clear, it is generative theories of class which protagonists in contemporary sociological debates are least willing and least able to defend, even when they are able and willing to make a strong case for dimensional class theory. Further, the “class-conflict” theory of the LER requires not only that we apply a generative class theory to the role of the labour movement (a political movement established with the express intention of pursuing a class interest) but also with regard to environmentalism (a movement mobilising around moral values and beliefs with a *prima facie* universalistic character, and no intentional class agenda). However, it will be argued here that “generative” class theories of environmentalism, and of the LER as being shaped by convergence or divergence in the class interests and/or outlook of the respective movement constituencies, are not supported by the evidence. Particular cases of LER conflict or cooperation which seem to confirm such class accounts can be explained more satisfactorily in terms of *sui generis* occupational and demographic factors at a finer level of resolution than that of "class". Finally, identities other than class (e.g. gender) can also be significant determinants of the LER and deserving of further attention in LER scholarship.

### 3.2 Interrogating the “class-conflict” theory of the LER

The extent to which the 'class-conflict' explanation of the LER stands or falls with generative class theory becomes clear when we unpack the premises of this argument.
The 'class-conflict' hypothesis assumes:

(a) That the social base of the labour movement is in the industrial working class, and that this class is disposed to oppose environmentalism.

(b) That the social base of the environmental movement is in the middle class (or alternatively the 'new middle class'), and that the (new) middle class is peculiarly disposed to support environmentalism.

And that this divergence of interests of the respective class bases of the labour and environmental movements, and/or of their belief and value systems, leads them into conflict over environmental and resource-use issues. Thus the 'class-conflict' hypothesis does not simply posit that the labour and environmental movements each have a particular class character (which is within the realm of dimensional class theory). It also posits, or implies:

(c) that the industrial working class has an objective interest, as a class, in opposing environmentalism; or

(d) that the values and belief system characteristics of the industrial working class are unfavourable to environmentalism.

It further suggests:
(e) that the (new) middle class has a specific objective interest, as a class, in supporting environmentalism; or

(f) that the values and belief-system characteristic of the (new) middle class are conducive to support for environmentalism; or

(g) that the (new) middle class, even if it has no unusual interest in or propensity to environmentalism, enjoys certain material and cultural advantages which enable it to actively support environmentalism to a greater extent than other classes.

Finally, and crucially, it is argued that conflict or lack of co-operation in the LER is driven by the intersection of (c) and/or (d) with (e) and/or (f) and/or (g). All these premises imply a generative class theory linking structure with consciousness and political action. These assumptions are now examined in turn.

### 3.2.1 The industrial working class and the labour movement

If we take the labour movement to include (at a minimum) all unionised workers, the social base of labour is in the unionised work force, including blue collar and white collar workers, manual and intellectual workers, routine and creative workers, extractive, manufacturing, service and knowledge sector workers. Over time the restructuring of the workforce has tended to increase the proportion of white collar, service and knowledge sector workers. Another important trend is for such groups of workers to unionise, for their pre-existing professional associations to transform
themselves into industrially active trade unions, and for the unions and associations of these workers to amalgamate or federate with organisations of the industrial working class in larger unions or confederations. These trends are universal in advanced capitalist economies (Evatt, 1995: 107-109). Thus by 2000, despite trends of declining membership, the Australian Council of Trade Unions:

*Is able to speak on behalf of all workers including those in manufacturing, finance, government and the service sector generally. It includes trades, sales, clerical, technical and professional workers amongst its affiliated union membership*” (ACTU 2001a).

Therefore the social base of the labour movement as a whole is much wider and more diverse than an “industrial working class” of blue-collar manual workers in manufacturing and resource industries. Further, it includes a number of occupational categories in the services and knowledge sectors which are regarded in much of the literature as predisposed to pro-environmental stances and significantly represented or over-represented within the environmental movement - in other words, those occupational categories which are regarded as constituting the “*new (middle) class*” (NMC) or the section of it known as the “*humanistic intelligentsia*”. The literature on the NMC and its relationship to new social movements (NSMs) such as environmentalism is considered at length below, but the basic point is that the occupational and demographic profile of the labour movement is far too diverse to allow one to ascribe to it a uniform “class interest” or “class outlook”, at least in respect of environmental issues. Even if it were true that the “industrial working class” were unfavourably disposed to environmentalism, this would only account for LER conflict involving those elements of the labour movement which are based in this stratum – or, alternatively, that LER conflict could be expected to be restricted to them. This is a possible reading of Economou (1992b) and Watson (1990).
3.2.2 The industrial working class and environmentalism

The assertion of industrial working class hostility to environmentalism typically takes two forms. Firstly, that the industrial working class has a specific objective interest, as a class, in opposing environmentalism. Typically, this means that it has an interest in the continuation of economic activities which environmentalism seeks to curtail. Alternatively, it is asserted that the values and belief system characteristic of the industrial working class are unfavourable to environmentalism.

The former assertion is exemplified by Economou, who argues that the different class constituencies of labour and environmentalism in Australia have different relations to the dominant mode of production, in that the former is directly dependent for its wellbeing on the profitability of “the factory, mine or mill” (Economou, 1992b: 159) whilst the latter is not, and that the resulting divergence of interests has contributed to a conflictual LER in Australia’s major environmental disputes of the 1970s and 1980s. This argument essentially assumes the validity of the "jobs versus environment" (JvE) argument, and the conclusion reached in Chapter 3 can simply be reiterated here, which is that the JvE argument is generally unsound, although there is potential for LER conflict arising from the job insecurity of groups of workers in particular sectors. Economou implicitly concedes this, noting that Australia’s major environmental disputes have been over contending uses of resources in specific resource-based industries such as forestry, mining and pulp & paper.
The flip-side of the assertion of a working-class interest in opposing environmentalism is to deny that the working class might have a special interest in environmental protection, or that this can be a political mobilising focus. Thus Economou asserts that Australia has seen relatively little activity around environmental issues such as air and water pollution where working-class interests might be expected to coincide with environmental goals (1992b: 157). Against this, Burgmann & Burgmann note that the NSW BLF’s green bans were as likely to be used to defend working-class homes or environmental amenity as those of other classes (1998: 55-58). Keil (1994) stresses that "working class environmentalism" is concerned not only with the workplace but also with environmentalism as it relates to working class communities in all aspects, including ecological hazards affecting working class, urban, suburban and rural neighbourhoods, and the greater exposure of economically disadvantaged people (including racial and national minorities) to such hazards (1994: 18). Keil’s study of the Green Work Alliance, and the case studies by Estabrook et al (2000) and Heiman (1997) show that wider working class interests in environmental protection have been a catalyst for growing LER cooperation in Canada and the US.

The second assertion, that the values and belief system characteristic of the industrial working class are unfavourable to environmentalism, is rebutted by much social attitude research. Siegmann (1985) reported that research on US and West German public attitudes showed that trade union members were more supportive of environmental concerns than non-unionists and the general public. Whilst unionists in white-collar occupations were more sympathetic to environmentalism than blue-collar unionists, there were significant examples of blue-collar unions enjoying good
relations with environmental groups (Siegmann, 1985: 93-101). Recent work from Australia (McAllister et al, 1990; Papadakis, 1993; Tranter, 1996) finds that support for environmentalist positions is generally (although unevenly) high across socio-economic strata. Such disparities as once existed appeared to be flattening out during the 1980s and 1990s. The same studies found the industrial working class to be underrepresented amongst participants in the environmental movement, but in view of the findings on working class attitudes the explanation for this would seem to lie elsewhere than in notions of general working class hostility to environmentalism.

There have clearly been particular cases of hostility to environmentalist positions by working class people in particular localities, such as Tasmania in the 1980s (Hay & Haward, 1988), and particular occupations such as logging (Watson, 1990), as well as in the cases cited by Siegmann. However, to cite these examples in support of the “class-conflict” model of the LER is to assume what has to be proven - namely that these cases of LER conflict were caused by a clash of class interests and/or class outlooks. It is more plausible to accept that sui generis occupational interests and culture – or, as Siegmann (1985) found, the “nature and circumstances of work” of particular occupations - are the decisive factor. This is further supported by Obach’s (2000) survey of the LER in 47 US states which found that, whilst the LER was generally more cooperative than conflictual, there was a strong correlation between LER conflict and the percentage of the workforce employed in the forestry sector, and that states with substantial forestry sectors all reported conflictual LERs (Obach, 2000: 39-43). Commenting on the tendency to invoke LER conflict in forestry as proof of the “class conflict” model of the LER (as do Watson, Economou and,
implicitly, Hay & Haward), Obach argues that logging workers are not typical of blue collar workers in general, three key differences being that “1) logging is based upon direct resource extraction, 2) logging work is contingent [i.e. highly insecure], and 3) extractive industries tend to be based in more rural, isolated regions.” These atypical characteristics render logging workers “much more prone to conflict with middle class activists, and thus a poor case to use as a basis for examining class-cultural differences and labor-environmental disputes” (Obach, 2000: 237-238).

Thus we can accept both Watson’s finding that LER conflict over forestry was fuelled by a clash of outlooks, and particularly of conceptions of nature, between rural manual workers with little formal education, and urban, tertiary-educated knowledge workers. We can also accept Burgmann & Burgmann’s (1998) argument that the cooperative LER of the Green Bans was aided by cultural factors stemming from the nature of builders’ labourers’ work and the demographics of the union’s membership (mainly young, semi-itinerant males) which reinforced their outsider status and their receptiveness to a form of “social unionist” ideology. It is neither necessary nor plausible to ascribe the particular outlook and culture of either group of workers to the working class as a whole.

The need to consider sui generis occupational interests and culture in particular cases, rather than generalising at the level of occupational interests, is highlighted by national comparisons between LER outcomes involving workers in similar occupations, employed in the same industry (and sometimes by the same companies), in different countries. Thus Adkin (1998a) found the Canadian petrochemical workers and their union (the ECWU) to be antagonistic to
environmentalism during the 1980s and 1990s, while their US counterparts in OCAW were pacesetters in LER cooperation (Siegmann, 1985; Moberg, 1999, Estabrook et al, 2000). Earlier, one could note the striking contrast between Australian building workers' support for alternative social movements, and the hostility of their US counterparts to NSMs (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998; Siegmann, 1985).

### 3.2.3 Environmentalism and the Middle Class, Old and New

Numerous theories seek to explain the rise of modern environmentalism as expressing the interests or outlook of its imputed “class base” in the middle class, the “new middle class” (NMC) or an altogether new “new class”. Such theories are comprehensively reviewed and critiqued in Eckersley (1989), Pakulski (1991, 1993a) and Tranter (1996); see also Milner (1999).

Of these theories, structural Marxist accounts most clearly posit a “class-conflict” model of the LER (Beresford, 1977; Weston, 1986; Pepper, 1984, 1986, 1993; see also Enzensberger, 1974). Structural Marxist accounts of environmentalism regard the environmental movement as a “middle class” (Weston, 1986) or “bourgeois” (Beresford, 1977) movement whose objectives, analysis and methods reflect the interests and outlook of these classes. Opinions vary over the degree to which environmentalism is also sociologically constituted by the NMC as distinct from the traditional middle class and sections of the capitalist class, but structural Marxist accounts effectively assimilate the new to the traditional middle class for analytical purposes. As such structural Marxism differs from “new class” or NMC theories of
NSMs which emphasise the sociological distinctiveness of the NMC from the traditional classes of capitalism. Structural Marxism argues not just that “middle class” environmental movement participants are largely drawn from outside the working class, but that their objective interests and value systems are at odds with those of the working class, and that this is a source of political deficiencies in environmentalism.

Structural Marxist accounts generally don’t deny the reality of environmental problems or the legitimacy of environmental concerns per se, and none argue that overcoming environmental problems is not in the interests of the working class. Their criticisms of “middle class” environmentalism relate to failings in its analysis and prescriptions from a Marxist perspective. These include: failure to recognise the central role of capitalism (rather than industrialism or individual conduct) in environmental destruction; priorities for action (e.g. wilderness preservation) which do not reflect working-class interests; a preference for policy solutions which are incompatible with democracy and social justice (e.g. “free-market” environmentalism, authoritarian solutions to population problems); and a failure to appreciate the constraints imposed by capitalism on the ability of working class people to support or adapt to environmentally desirable adjustments to employment or consumption patterns. Insofar as these criticisms are valid and relevant to the LER, they actually point to environmentalist ideology as a key factor in the LER. They can only be cited in support of a class-conflict model of the LER if we assume what must be proven, namely that these ideological deficiencies are caused by the “middle class” base of the environment movement. Yet structural Marxists do not prove this thesis, and do not even agree on the causal mechanism.
Pakulski (1993a) says of orthodox Marxist theories of social movements that:

Analyzes using such a generative concept of class treat the issues of class membership and boundaries as relatively unimportant and often dismiss empirical evidence of the blurred nature of class divisions. The aim of such class analysis is not classification of occupational categories but identification of (allegedly objective and oppositional) interests, which are then causally linked with observable social conflicts and groups articulating them (Pakulski, 1993a: 134).

This criticism applies to the structural Marxist critics of environmentalism considered here, none of whom clearly define what they mean by a “middle class” or base their claims about “middle-class” environmentalism on primary empirical research. Pepper (1986) and Weston (1986) are content to invoke the research of Parkin (1968) and Cotgrove & Duff (1980) to support such claims (what these authorities actually found is considered elsewhere in this chapter). Pepper had earlier declared (1984: 173) that “The environmental movement is a defensive one, in which middle classes and capitalist entrepreneurs are attempting to protect their interests, which are increasingly threatened by the inherent contradictions in capitalism.” Yet this “selfish middle class” characterisation of the environmental movement is supported by little more than a selective rendering of Enzensberger’s (1974) more nuanced critique of political ecology. Beresford (1977) also relies heavily on a selective reading of Enzensberger, and eventually dispenses with the need for empirical substantiation altogether in favour of a kind of “reverse sociologism”, characterising the environmental movement’s class base as “bourgeois” on the basis of perceived failings in its ideology - “it does not fundamentally challenge capitalist power relations” (1977: 104) - and its “idealist” methodology. Weston (1986) goes further, suggesting that the “middle class” nature of British environmentalism is determined by, rather than determining, its ideology.
and practice, as an emphasis on nature conservationism and a “right-wing” pluralist ideology attracts a middle-class membership and prevents engagement with working-class concerns.

In summary, whilst structural Marxist critics of environmentalism offer various criticisms of environmentalist programs and ideology which may be germane to the LER, they fail to demonstrate that the environmental movement is in fact a “middle class” or “bourgeois” movement, and fail to establish a causal mechanism connecting such a class base of environmentalism with alleged ideological deficiencies. Therefore this case for a “class conflict” model of the LER clearly fails.

NMC and “new class” theories of the environmental movement and other NSMs proceed from the premise that these movements’ main social base is not in the contending classes of conventional Left-Right politics (i.e. the industrial working class, the traditional middle class or the capitalist class), but in the NMC, comprising a range of tertiary-educated occupational groups, which expanded rapidly in the decades following World War II, and many of whose members attained adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s (Parkin, 1968; Gouldner, 1979; Inglehart, 1977; Cotgrove & Duff, 1980; Cotgrove, 1982; Offe, 1985; Eckersley, 1989). The empirical underpinning of these theories is a range of studies (e.g. Parkin, 1968; Cotgrove & Duff, 1980; Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980) that found that NSM participants from the 1960s to the 1980s exhibited distinctive demographic and occupational characteristics including: high levels of formal education, particularly in the humanities and social sciences; employment in the service and knowledge industries
with relatively high occupational status but not necessarily high remuneration or economic/political power; relative youth; left-of-centre political leanings; and relatively high levels of secularism. These characteristics of educational status and occupational location are defining features of the NMC and, more specifically, of those occupations defined by Gouldner (1979) as the "humanistic intelligentsia".

The distinction between the humanistic intelligentsia and other fractions of the NMC has been highlighted in studies such as those of Brint (1984 in Kriesi, 1989), Kriesi (1989) and Skogen (1996). They found that of various occupationally defined fractions of the NMC, only the "social and cultural specialists" (Kriesi) or "humanistic/social intermediate strata" (Skogen) showed an unusually high proclivity for environmental and NSM activism. Kriesi also found that the other NMC fractions showed slightly lower potential for NSM mobilisation than fractions of the working class.

From a common empirical starting point, NMC theories of environmentalism vary widely, but all posit one, or some combination, of the following three basic explanations:

(a) that the NMC has a specific objective interest, as a class, in supporting environmentalism (the “interest thesis”); or

(b) that the values and belief-system characteristic of the NMC are conducive to support for environmentalism (the “values thesis”); or
that the NMC, even if it has no unusual interest in or propensity to environmentalism, enjoys certain material and cultural advantages which enable it to actively support environmentalism to a greater extent than other classes (the “advantage thesis”).

The “interest thesis” is implicit in the structural Marxist theories already discussed, in which NMC interests are effectively equated with middle class interests in general. More specific to the NMC is what Eckersley (1989) characterises as the “new middle class power base” theory. Proponents of this theory (e.g. Kristol, 1979; Berger, 1979; Thompson, 1999) argue that NMC support for environmentalism and other NSMs is a means to extend their power and career prospects in certain arms of the state. One variation of this argument is that environmentalist proposals which would result in an expansion of public sector activity, or have other redistributive effects, creates a material incentive for particular constituencies in the NMC to support such demands (Ward, 1983: 190; Gerritsen, 1990). Another is that the NMC will resile from supporting campaigns which could threaten this power base or career path (Frankel, 1987).

An alternative “interest thesis” is presented by Milner (1999). The NMC or “credentialled intelligentsia” is distinguished by its acquisition, through higher education, of legitimised cultural capital in the form of academic credentials. Therefore its primary class interest is in legitimising the authority and achieved status of credentialism, and delegitimising alternative claims to authority based on ascriptive categories of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. At the same time the NMC does not have an interest in challenging capitalism, as authority based on
property does not hinder that based on credentials. Therefore the class interests of the NMC find expression in the NSMs, and in a form of NSM politics which is antagonistic to Marxism and working-class struggle (Milner, 1999: 161-169). Significantly, Milner does not include environmentalism among the movements whose NMC support arises from class interest.

The “values thesis” is the concept most commonly encountered in NMC theories of environmentalism and the NSMs. The values which are held to typify the NMC are enumerated by Cotgrove & Duff (1980) in their outline of an “alternative environmental paradigm” and include: egalitarianism; collectivism; support for participatory, non-hierarchical and decentralised social structures; preference for non-material goals such as self-actualisation rather than material goals such as economic growth; preference for public interest rather than market outcomes; harmony with nature; belief in the intrinsic value of nature; limits to growth; emphasis on the rationality of ends rather than that of means; risk-aversion; and perception of limits to the powers of science and technology (Cotgrove & Duff, 1980: 27).

There are several competing explanations of why the NMC, and especially the humanistic intelligentsia, should support such values. Parkin (1968) argues that middle class radicalism is moral rather than economic in focus (cf. working class radicalism), seeking psychological satisfaction but no material rewards (hence “expressive”). It reflects a distinctive moral/political outlook. People with such an outlook tend to be attracted to welfare and creative professions which provide autonomy from capitalist economic relations and sanctuary from pressures for
conformity. Inglehart (1977) argues that the NSMs which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s represent the aspirations of the NMC to “postmaterial” values such as freedom, social justice and quality of life. Such aspirations arose from a combination of the economic security enjoyed by NMC people (including childhood socialisation in conditions of economic security in the early years of the “Long Boom”) and their exposure to the humanising influence of higher education. Gouldner (1979) argues that the distinctive values and beliefs of the humanistic intelligentsia arise from its participation in a “Culture of Critical Discourse” which disposes it to a range of left-wing and liberal political positions. Gouldner also argues that the humanistic intelligentsia experiences alienation and frustration due to the contrast between the highly skilled and responsible nature of its work, and its marginal status vis-a-vis the means of production and the political system. Hence involvement in anti-systemic movements represents a revolt against this class’s marginalisation by “the system”. A similar argument is presented by Parkin (1968: 34-40).

A neo-conservative version of the “values thesis” defines the NMC in terms of a shared anti-system cultural mentality. According to Bell (1976) the NMC can only be understood as such because of a lack of obvious correlation between its members’ social status and economic interests, and their political and cultural values. Bell sees this anti-system cultural mentality as deriving from Western intellectual currents which emphasise the sovereignty of individual judgement based on experience rather than the accumulated knowledge of institutions based on tradition. Berger (1979) likewise sees the essence of the New Class outlook as secular humanism arising from its members' occupational roles. Doherty (2002) and Kriesi (1989) note that
the experience of higher education, especially in the social sciences and humanities, is frequently identified as a causal factor in shaping the values of NMC members. However, Cotgrove & Duff (1980) argue that the causal chain runs in reverse because, for many social movement participants, a commitment to post-materialist and anti-systemic values predates their educational and occupational choices, and predisposes them towards careers in the humanistic intelligentsia. Skogen's (1996) findings provide some support for this argument.

The “advantage thesis” is most systematically expounded by Eckersley (1989) who, after discussing and rejecting versions of the “interest” and “values” theses, argues that support for environmentalism (particularly its radical varieties) is simply a rational and altruistic response to the realities of ecological crisis. The NMC is better placed than other social groups to comprehend the crisis (by virtue of its education and occupational locations) and to act on it (due to its relative freedom from market imperatives). In an argument with particular relevance for the LER, Eckersley states that:

Their relative independence from the vagaries of the market sector explains why the new class (especially public sector employees) are more inclined than the working class to be critical of the industrial system and actively involved in seeking reform (Eckersley, 1989: 222).

The other side of the coin is the question of what motivates NMC people to act on problems which don’t affect them personally. According to Galtung, this requires “both social knowledge and social compassion” which are associated with “a certain level of education, which would mean middle class and upper class people” but not “upper class people who, because of their resources, usually will be able to find a
solution for themselves or their families" (1986: 85). Yearley (1994) suggests that the importance of science for the “Green case” has sociological ramifications, as people in occupations requiring scientific training or the cognitive skills to appreciate science-based arguments are most likely to understand and be receptive to the “Green case”. Skogen (1996) points to another dimension of the “advantage” thesis, finding that the propensity of Norwegian school students to support and join environmentalist positions and groups is strongly correlated with the “cultural assets” of their background, measured roughly by the number of books in the parental home, and with which families of the humanistic/social intermediate strata are better endowed than other social categories.

The “interest”, “values” and “advantage” theses are not mutually exclusive. We have seen that higher education and an upbringing in families rich in "cultural assets" - both clearly advantages - are strongly associated with acquisition of the values distinctive of the humanistic intelligentsia. Another synthesis of the "values" and "advantage" theses is offered by Pakulski (1991), albeit in an argument which contests the idea that NSM participation expresses the interests or outlook of a class. Pakulski identifies three factors that could predispose members of the NMC to NSM values: generation, occupational “situs” and mobility. “Generation” refers to "shared exposure to formative events" - in this case the orientations of the generation born after World War II can be traced both to movement-generative conditions and to movement counter-cultures (Pakulski, 1991: 71-72). "Situs" refers to location within the social division of labour. NSM participants tend to come from occupations which enjoy high social status, and a high degree of freedom and autonomy which encourages anti-establishment attitudes, but are not central to the
political or economic power structure. “Mobility” refers to movement participants’ social and territorial mobility, leading to exposure to a broader range of social environments and freeing them from conformist pressures of the family, neighbourhood and local community, often by moving to big cities and forming networks of chosen friends. This enhances personal autonomy and renders them amenable to movement recruitment (Pakulski, 1991: 72-73).

What can be said about these NMC theories of environmentalism and their implications for the LER? First, insofar as the theories and evidence underpinning them identify a particular fraction of the NMC (the "humanistic intelligentsia") as strongly disposed to environmentalism, it recalls the point previously made in relation to the labour movement - that particular sui generis occupational and demographic cultures, experiences and interests, rather than "class" per se, may be of most importance for the LER, especially given the influence of educational, generational and (in Pakulski) geographical factors on the values and political commitments of the humanistic intelligentsia.

Second, recent research indicates that the thesis of an NMC base for environmentalism remains valid, but to some extent needs to be qualified. Offe (1985) showed that even in the 1970s and 1980s the core participants of the NSMs included, as well as the NMC, decommodified and peripheral groups such as homemakers, retired people, students and the unemployed, and sections of the traditional middle class, with various actual and potential relationships to organised labour. This qualification needs itself to be qualified by noting that homemakers,
students and the unemployed include former and aspiring future members of the NMC, and dependants of NMC members.

Further, whilst there is a predominance of NMC characteristics amongst core environmental movement and other NSM participants, a range of recent studies find that strong support for environmentalist positions is not confined to NMC groups. Whilst it has typically been found to be highest amongst the NMC, it has been relatively high across a range of occupational and "class" categories, (Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980; McAllister et al, 1990; Papadakis, 1993; Tranter, 1996). And there is some evidence from the 1980s onwards of a dilution of NMC dominance (Dalton, 1988 in Pakulski, 1993a: 142; Tranter, 1996; Pakulski & Tranter, 1998). Tranter (1996) found that whilst support for environmentalism in Australia was socially located, this was only so to a very limited extent, that it varied according to the aspect of environmentalism being considered, and that lifestyle and cultural factors, notably exposure to arts and literature during adolescence, may be more significant. A further study by Pakulski & Tranter (1998) showed no significant relationship between class location and environmental opinion in Australia (1998: 65, 68). Other findings of this study were that: "green" concerns (logging, wilderness conservation) were more significantly socially circumscribed by status and generation than were "brown" concerns (such as pollution and waste disposal); gender and urban location proved less weak predictors of environmental commitment than education; generational location continued to be a significant predictor of "green" commitment but not of "brown" commitment; but overall none of the social location variables considered, whether class, status or generation, were strong predictors of environmental commitment. Pakulski & Tranter explain these findings as being due
to the rapid growth of Australian environmentalism in this period which entailed a spread of active environmental concern through all social groups (Pakulski & Tranter, 1998: 68), a conclusion anticipated by Pakulski (1991), Papadakis (1993) and Norton (1996). However, the type of environmental commitment concerned may still be influenced by social location. Skogen (1996) cites Norwegian findings that people from working-class, farming, fishing and ethnic minority backgrounds were prominent in environmental groups addressing local problems or engaged in immediate environmental repair. Humanistic/social fractions of the NMC remained dominant in large-scale environmental organisations. This chimes with Norton’s (1996) study of environmentalism in Queensland which found impressionistic and anecdotal evidence that the spread of environmental activism to non-NMC groups had been manifest in local and issue-specific campaigns, but that the main environmental movement organisations remained populated by NMC members whose formative political experiences were in the NSM milieus of the 1960s and 1970s.

If these qualifications of the thesis of a NMC social base for environmentalism are accepted, they seem also to apply to the use of NMC theories to explain the trajectory of the environmental movement as a whole, and the LER. This does not mean that they cease to be valid as explanations for the NMC’s role as a component of the movement, and they must therefore still be discussed on their merits. However, these qualifications and the evidence on which they are based do require clarification of the sense in which the theory of an NMC social base for environmentalism remains valid. It remains true that the NMC (particularly the humanistic intelligentsia) is most strongly disposed to environmentalist sympathies
and especially to sustained environmental activism. However, the implicit assumption of the class-conflict model of the LER - that environmental concern is socially circumscribed to the NMC, and foreign to the outlook of other classes - seems to be refuted by most recent research.

We now turn to the three varieties of the NMC base theory of environmentalism. If the "interest thesis" is to be sustained, it is necessary to show not only that the NMC or its members stand to gain from policies or societal changes recommended by environmentalism, but that this is a prime motive for NMC support. The former proposition is only sometimes true, given the variety of environmentalist policy prescriptions. Whilst some such measures (such as expansion of environmental teaching and research in universities) would improve the career prospects and increase the influence of the NMC, others would not. For example, it is not obvious that policies to assist farmers in sustainable land management especially benefit the NMC. Further, the curtailment of particular industries for environmental reasons could *ceteris parabus* reduce state revenues on which much of the NMC depends, whilst creating competing claims on the public purse for compensating and retraining displaced workers. Policies for population stabilisation or reduction could reduce employment opportunities for the NMC in the teaching, academic and caring professions. More generally, as Eckersley suggests, a shift to a no-growth economy and decentralised small-scale conserver society with a minimal state would destroy the economic conditions for the NMC’s existence.

What could be argued is that the NMC does not have objective interests which are immediately threatened by environmentalist positions, whereas other classes,
including the working class, do. However, to the extent that this may be valid, it is arguably more satisfactorily explained by the "advantage thesis" as Eckersley suggests. As to the claim that the NMC’s involvement in environmentalism is motivated by the conscious pursuit of its alleged objective class interests in environmental objectives, there is simply no empirical substantiation, as opposed to polemical assertion, of this claim in the literature.

The "values thesis" – the idea that there is a characteristic set of values and beliefs associated with the NMC which informs NMC-based social movements and political interventions – has a solid empirical foundation. Further, these imputed NMC values, such as those synthesised by Cotgrove & Duff (1980) in an “Alternative Environmental Paradigm,” are clearly conducive to environmentalist positions and commitments. However, if adherence to these values is characteristic of the NMC it does not necessarily follow that the NMC has a peculiar or exclusive proclivity towards them. If environmentalism is expressive of such values then one inference from the findings of Tranter (1996), McAllister et al (1990), Van Liere & Dunlap (1980), Kriesi (1989), Pakulski & Tranter (1998), etc., could be that "new paradigm" values are becoming generalised to social groups other than the NMC.

Further, the values imputed to the NMC by the "values thesis" are by no means antagonistic to labour agendas or to working class interests or outlooks, nor should they be expected to lead the NMC or movements based on NMC values toward antagonism to the labour movement or the industrial working class. Indeed, there is a strong case for convergence on many issues. Offe (1985) reminds us that the agendas of the NSMs can be considered historically as the non-economic agenda of
the traditional socialist left, which labour-based parties neglected during the twentieth century. The “Alternative Environmental Paradigm” includes a range of economic value preferences which are recognisably labour-derived and left-wing. Thus, the “values thesis”, if accepted, does not imply support for the "class-conflict" model of the LER.

The "advantage thesis" is consonant with long-established findings that political and civic participation in general are correlated with advantages of education, information and mobility. Further, it enables us to explain findings that the NMC is overrepresented in environmental activism to a much greater degree than suggested by revealed relationships between social or occupational status and support for environmentalist opinion. This seeming paradox cannot be explained by the "interest thesis", which also fails to explain the universal nature of the goals of NSMs supported by the NMC – the "interest thesis" cannot explain politics which "is typically a politics of a class but not on behalf of a class" (Offe, 1985: 833).

On the whole, some combination of the "advantage thesis" and the "values thesis", linking the cultural and educational experiences and assets of NMC members to the development of pro-environmental and NSM values, combined with Pakulski’s (1991) analysis, seems the most promising explanation of their prominence within the environmental movement. However, if such a proposed theory is accepted, it must be acknowledged that it does not assume a generative class theory, in that it does not assume that the NMC has a particular interest in or propensity for environmental activism. It is just that members of this class, by dint of the life-chances and resources available to them, have greater opportunity to inform and act
on their environmental convictions than do members of other classes. Nor does it imply a general tendency to conflict in the LER, or more generally between NSMs and the working class. What it does do is point to the importance of dimensional class differences in determining the resources, and the options, available to stakeholders in environmental disputes, and thus of the potential for dimensional class theory to inform the praxis of labour and environmentalist protagonists once generative class theories of the LER are discarded. What it also suggests is that, insofar as differences in cultural assets do contribute to conflict on issues between workers and NMC-based environmentalists, these are within the power of the environmental and labour movements to redress by exposing their members to educational programs and movement counter-cultures which foster LER convergence.

3.3 Gender and the LER

Finally, sociological or demographic differences other than class, such as those of gender, race or nationality, can also be factors in the LER. The example of gender was considered by Adkin (1998a), who found that gender influenced the LER in the cases both of the hostility of the Canadian energy and chemical workers' union (ECWU) to environmentalists over toxics issues, and the Canadian Auto Workers union’s (CAW) pro-environment social unionism. Both unions covered predominantly male workforces and their leaderships were largely male dominated, although the ECWU was more resistant to women’s demands for increased representation and support than the CAW. The male petrochemical workers’ cavalier attitude towards potential hazards of their work, and towards community concern at its external consequences, was partly a function of simple “machismo” in
the face of health risks. It was also partly due to an internal culture which counterposed well-trained, technically skilled and “rational” male professionals who understood the safety issues of their industry against the “uninformed” and “irrational” citizens’ environmental groups and their (predominantly) female leaderships. Further, male breadwinner ideology and male workers’ aspirations to be “good providers” were seen by Adkin as factors inhibiting ECWU workers’ willingness to strike or to sympathise with environmental demands which might endanger job security (Adkin, 1998a: 320-321).

Gender also emerged as a factor within CAW (although not in its relations with external environmental actors), as the new committee structures CAW established to address environmental issues tended to be disproportionately filled by its female members whilst the established leadership structures remained male dominated. This gender difference fed into tensions between CAW Environmental Committees and local or regional executives over how seriously to treat environmental issues, although Adkin also notes that the male-dominated national leadership of the union tended to support the Environment Committees, and the women, in these arguments (Adkin, 1998a: 286-287).

Adkin’s study presents an interesting comparison with the environmental militancy of the unattached, mobile male BLF members described by Burgmann & Burgmann (1998), who were able to cooperate closely in the Green Bans with urban environmental groups, including those which were largely organised by women from upper-middle class backgrounds who were not in the paid workforce. This was partly a function of ideology, as the NSW BLF was led by a left-wing coalition
centered on those elements of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) most receptive to NSM concerns including environmentalism, feminism and gay liberation. The importance of gender in internal labour movement dynamics is the subject of an interesting literature (e.g. Pocock, 1997; Rowbotham et al, 1978). The identification of gender as a factor in the creation of labour and environmental identities adds to our understanding of two other influences on the LER: *sui generis* occupational interests and cultures of sections of labour, and the internal organisation of both labour and environmentalism. An exploration of why differences of gender composition occurs as a factor in the LER is well worth undertaking, although essentialist arguments about feminine proclivities for environmentalism are less plausible as working hypotheses than Pakulski's (1991) suggestion that high levels of female representation in the leadership and membership of citizens' environmental groups is a function of gender-based closure of the decision-making structures of established political parties and the labour movement, causing socially concerned women to converge in the less closed structures of new social movements.

### 3.4 Conclusions

An extensive review of the relevant literature yields four main conclusions. First, there is no reason to question Siegmann’s rejection of the hypothesis of an inherent tendency to conflict in the LER due to the different socioeconomic and demographic composition of the two movements. In particular, generative class theories of environmentalism, of the LER and of purported conflict tendencies in the LER are not supported by the available evidence. Second, the studies by Economou (1992b), Watson (1990), Burgmann & Burgmann (1998), Hay & Haward (1988) and Obach
(2000) confirm the significance of the occupational interests, outlooks and cultures of union members (defined in terms of differences in the nature and circumstances of work, rather than income and status) in shaping unions’ propensity to LER cooperation or conflict. Third, the review also suggests that the LER is influenced by the specific educational and generational demographics of unionists, and of environmentalists.

Finally, identities other than class can be significant for the LER. Adkin (1998a) and Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) strongly suggest the importance of gender, and gendered differences, as an influence on the LER. The “environmental justice” literature also emphasises the significance of race/ethnicity and culture as factors influencing the LER. Estabrook et al (2000), in a case considered in more depth in the next chapter, note that alliance-building between petrochemical workers and residents of localities surrounding petrochemical plants in Brazil was hindered by differences in the ethnic composition of the two constituencies. Another issue considered in the next chapter is the influence of ideology on the LER. Ideologies which incorporate exploitative attitudes towards non-human nature and prioritisation of economic goals over ecological values are a reflection of the Eurocentric and anthropocentric elements of neo-European cultures and societies such as those of Australasia and the Americas, and are frequently a source of conflict with aboriginal peoples in environmental and resource-use disputes. Whilst issues where differences between identities of race/ethnicity and culture were not significant for the case studies considered in this thesis, an explanatory model of the LER needs to take account of these factors.
The next chapter considers LER scholarship on three other factors identified by Siegmann as having significant influence on the LER: the political-institutional framework and the role of labour and environmental actors therein, internal movement organisation, and labour and environmentalist ideologies.
Chapter 4
Organisation, Politics, Ideology and the LER
4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have refuted the main hypotheses regarding structural economic and sociological determination of the LER (the "jobs versus environment" (JvE) and "class-conflict" theses). However, they also recognised the influence of economic and sociological factors such as sectoral and regional political economy, the occupational interests and culture of particular groups of workers, and the influence of identities other than class (e.g. gender). The literature review now turns to the influence on the LER of the other factors identified by Siegmann – the political-institutional framework (PIF), labour and environmental movement organisation, and movement ideologies. It proceeds through an interrogation and refinement of Siegmann's (1985) findings regarding these factors in the light of subsequent LER scholarship. Particular attention is given to the potential of discursive articulatory practices to take LER cooperation beyond instrumental cooperation between given “objective” interests into the form of a radical-democratic counter-hegemonic alliance of the labour and environmental movements. The conclusions from this interrogation and from the two previous chapters are combined with the model implicit in Siegmann’s study to propose a new explanatory model of the LER – the Siegmann-Norton model.
4.2 Movement Organisation and the LER

4.2.1 Siegmann and Internal Labour and Environmental Organisation

Siegmann (1985) found that the more democratic a union’s internal decision-making, the more probably and rapidly would alternative views amongst the membership be articulated within the union structure and possibly become incorporated in official union policy. Therefore if the membership of unions was more environmentally concerned than union leaderships, one would expect that unions with a high degree of internal democracy would enjoy a more cooperative LER than less democratic unions. Alternatively, if union leaderships were more strongly supportive of environmentalist positions than the membership, leaderships of less democratic unions would be able to pursue a more cooperative LER than in more democratic unions where the membership could constrain the leadership (Siegmann, 1985: 112-113).

In West Germany, LER conflict, especially on the question of nuclear energy, had been exacerbated by the highly centralized structure of the labour movement. West German unions operated within a highly centralized, disciplined and politically influential peak union structure. Their own structures were fairly similar, and included “restrictive mechanisms” which generally enabled union leaderships to dominate the formulation of policy, and provided the membership with few opportunities to influence union decision-making (Siegmann, 1985: 114-115). Union democracy was further inhibited by the role of works councils, which are enterprise-based committees comprising equal representation of management and
workers. The works councils tended to foster the formation of labour-management alliances and common perspectives on industry issues, including defensive responses to criticism by the environmental movement, and used their influence within the unions to promote these perspectives (Siegmann, 1985: 115-116).

As a consequence, during the 1970s pro-nuclear policies proposed by union leaderships, and strongly supported by works councillors from the nuclear sector, were constantly (re)affirmed by national conventions of relevant unions and the peak union council. Individual unions adopting an anti-nuclear stance, were subjected to unprecedented attacks by officials of the peak council and pro-nuclear unions (Siegmann, 1985: 120-123). However anti-nuclear union members become more vocal and organized. Many joined citizens’ environmental groups and formed a network of anti-nuclear rank and file groups. Thus the net effect of West German unions’ lack of internal democracy was to institutionalise conflict within the LER in the late 1970s, but also to foment conflict within labour and promote LER cooperation at an unofficial, grassroots level (Siegmann, 1985: 124).

Siegmann found that the structures of US labour were less centralised and more diverse that the West German. Applying a six-point test of internal democracy to unions with a history of co-operative relations with environmentalists, Siegmann found that such unions usually exhibited a greater than average, development of internal democracy (1985: 127-131). In other cases “Internal decision-making procedures of labour often did not allow for a fair treatment of environmental positions, and thus have contributed to the conflicts” (1985: 179). However, the decentralisation and diversity of US unions probably assisted the LER, as “deviant”
unions sympathetic to environmentalism on issues such as nuclear energy were not pressured to conform to the line of peak councils or a few powerful unions (Siegmann 1985: 183-184). As Siegmann did not conduct an investigation of environmental movement decision-making structures and their ramifications for the LER, his findings on the linkage between union democracy and a cooperative LER only paint half the picture.

### 4.2.2 Inventory of LER Scholarship on Movement Organisation

Subsequent LER scholarship has confirmed Siegmann’s main findings, but also produced a range of additional insights, which are now considered.

Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) stressed the linkage between union democracy and LER co-operation in their studies of the “Green Bans”. During the 1960s and early 1970s the BLF underwent internal reforms which emphasised participatory democracy, a process aided by the small size of the union which inhibited trends towards bureaucratisation. It was also reflected in the informality of the union’s internal culture and the absence of conspicuous status differentials between different constituencies of the union. The commitment to participatory democracy was seen by its activists as logically translating into action to challenge non-democratic development and investment decisions and decision-making processes in the wider society. Mason & Morter (1998) found a two-fold link - one straightforward, the other ironic - between union democracy and the LER in the UK Transport & General Workers Union (T&G). A democratic and decentralised structure enables the environmental concerns of T&G members to be translated into policy, as posited by
Siegmann. However, the former Conservative government’s attempts to curtail political unionism, by forcing the T&G to hold compulsory ballots for its leadership and the continued collection of political levies, had the opposite effect to that intended as the ballots returned the incumbent left-wing leadership and affirmed the political levies, thereby strengthening the democratic legitimacy of union political campaigns on environmental issues.

Conversely, a lack of democracy in environmental organisations is found by LER scholars to be a hindrance to cooperation and sometimes an active source of conflict. Mason & Morter (1998) found that differences arose between the T&G and some environmental groups due to the contrast between union democracy (seen as necessary to ensure an equal voice for all members and to achieve unity) and hierarchical environmental group processes (justified in terms of "strategic responsiveness"), and a failure of environmentalists to appreciate internal T&G democracy. Burrows (1998) also found that the lack of democratic or formally accountable structures in some environmental groups had hindered LER cooperation. One dimension of this was a lack of grassroots connections with local communities involved in environmentally contentious industries. This meant actions and strategies were pursued without regard for their impact on those communities. Shantz & Adam (1999) and Adkin (1992) saw a serious problem in North American radical ecology in the absence of activist organisations which were capable of mass collective action or collective social change strategies. Adkin (1992) related this weakness to elitist and fundamentalist ideologies, but also, in the case of Greenpeace, to that body’s structure as an elite cadre force rather than a democratic grassroots organisation, and suggested that an attachment to internally undemocratic
structures is ideologically associated with an aversion to cooperation with mass organisations such as unions.

Burrows (1998) also argues that LER conflict can stem from the tension between the representative nature of unions (which seek to organise and represent all workers in an occupation or industry as workers, and therefore must accommodate a range of views on environmental and other issues) and the nature of environmental groups as voluntary collectives of people with similar views. Disagreements can arise between the environmentally principled stances of like-minded environmentalists, and union policies which embody compromises which reflect the diversity of members’ opinions. Obach (2000: 119-122) argues similarly that environmental organisations with a narrow “organisation range” or issue focus will be constrained in coalition formation as they retain or lose membership support depending on how single-mindedly they pursue their narrow mission, whereas organisations with wider issue focus and membership concern will be more open to address the issues and concerns of other social movements such as labour. Adkin (1998a) correspondingly argues that greater diversity in the membership coverage of unions assists LER cooperation. In the case of CAW, amalgamations with other unions had expanded its coverage from vehicle builders to include workers in a range of manufacturing and transport occupations and industries. The specific interest the vehicle builders might have had in defending private car production was offset by the interests of workers in public transport operation and railway rolling stock construction, and the general interest of a diverse membership in anti-corporate policies for sustainable development.
Burrows also found that those Canadian environmental groups with ultra-democratic structures (based on consensus decision-making, rotating office-bearers, etc.) could be as prone to LER strains with representative-democratic unions as were their undemocratic counterparts. Burrows argues (as Mason & Morter suggest) that the problem is the difference in organisational forms and associated organisational cultures, which leads to a “culture clash” and consequent political misunderstandings between unions and environmentalists. This chimes with Siegmann’s (1985) finding of friction between structureless West German environmentalism in the 1970s and the centralised peak union council.

Other aspects of union and environmental organisation, besides differences in forms or degrees of democracy, can be significant for the LER. An overlap of membership constituencies is an aid to LER cooperation. Estabrook et al (2000) found that the US OCAW was able to build effective alliances with local environmental and neighbourhood groups in Louisiana because most of its members lived in neighbourhoods affected by petrochemical company activities. Its counterpart in Brazil could not do so because its members in the petrochemical plants lived outside the neighbourhood, and the locals themselves had less sense of “connection to place.” This was compounded by differences between the racial/ethnic composition of the petrochemical workers and that of the local residents. An overlap of leaders and key activists is also a critical factor. The presence of charismatic individuals with a foot in either movement, who could act as bridge-builders between them, was crucial to the success of LER cooperation in the Australian and North American cases studied by Estabrook et al (2000), Shantz & Adam (1999), Adkin (1998), Moberg (1999), Burgmann & Burgmann (1998), Bantjes (1997) and Obach (2000).
Another form of “bridge-building” can be provided by organizations in which labour and environmental activists come together (Obach, 2000).

The issue of “connection to place” and grassroots connections raised by Estabrook et al and Burrows points to another critical element of union and environmental organisation – namely organisational density and coverage. Simon (1998) and Foster (1993) found that the failure of unions and environmental groups to effectively recruit members from workers and citizens in North American forestry communities enabled forestry corporations and front groups to successfully rally local support and foster hostility between environmentalists and unions. This worked especially well given the lack of alternative, non-company sources of information about forestry issues in the forestry towns. Further, Shantz & Adam (1999) and Watson (1990) found that weak union organisation raised a fundamental barrier to the LER by making “jobs versus environment” an objective reality due to the inability of workers to refuse to co-operate with ecologically destructive company policies. Finally, as Adkin (1998a) has noted, conflict in the LER can be inflamed when a predominantly male union (or union leadership) comes into contact with predominantly female environmental groups (or leaderships). As explained in Chapter 3, in such cases the driving factor is the combination of attitudes amongst male unionists borne of particular kinds of gender socialisation, and of male privilege in the form of privileged occupational status and interests, privileged positions in the union, or both, and the associated claims to superior knowledge and expertise. These factors combine to produce a defensive hostility towards discourses which are seen to challenge hegemonic masculine identities and male privilege, and towards the (predominantly female) citizens’ groups which articulate them.
Six conclusions can be drawn from the literature on the influence of movement organisation on the LER. First, the quality of internal democracy in both labour and environmental organisations is positively related to cooperation in the LER. Second, differences in organisational forms and practices between environmental and labour organisations, and the consequent “culture clash” and misunderstandings, are a source of friction in the LER. It follows that LER cooperation would be more likely in environmental and union organisations of similar form. Third, the difference between the representative, interest-based nature of unions and the voluntary, conviction-based nature of environmental groups is a source of conflict. The larger the membership and the broader the base of concern of an environmental group, the more likely it is that LER cooperation would be achieved. Fourth, the more diverse the membership base of a union, the more likely the union would be to cooperate with environmentalism. Craft and single-occupation unions would be less likely to enjoy a cooperative LER than multi-occupation, industry-based and multi-industry unions. Fifth, overlapping memberships, activists and leaderships would facilitate LER cooperation, with a particularly important role being played by charismatic “bridge-building” leaders and key activists. Finally, strong membership density of unions and environmental organisations in workplaces and communities involved in environmental disputes is associated with a cooperative LER. Weak coverage, organisation and grassroots links are a factor in LER conflict, not least because strong unions are able to be environmentally progressive, whereas weak ones are not.
4.3 The Political-Institutional Framework (PIF) and the LER

4.3.1 Siegmann on the Political-Institutional Framework

Siegmann also considered the influence of political and institutional factors on the LER. Siegmann (1985) found that LER conflict had been sharp in West Germany, where corporatism was the dominant mode of interest intermediation and there was a strong labour-based party which was a potential or actual party of government within a strongly disciplined party system. Conversely, in the United States, a predominantly pluralist mode of interest intermediation and the absence of a strong labour party were associated with a higher incidence of LER cooperation. In West Germany the labour movement had been accorded an institutionalised and exclusive representative role on behalf of working people in both public and private policy-making bodies and corporations. This meant that it tended to act as a “factor of order” on issues outside its original brief of defending and promoting the specific interests of workers, or where there was likely to be an implicit consensus between labour, capital and the state. The West German environmental movement had no such institutionalised status in economic, social or industrial decision-making and acted as a countervailing power. Thus LER conflicts in West Germany in part reflected the tension between a “factor of order” and a “countervailing force”; in particular differences over nuclear power and energy issues between labour and environmentalism were overdetermined by their respective “insider” and “outsider” status within the PIF. The electoral politics of West Germany had strongly strengthened the “factor of order/countervailing force” dichotomy. The labour
movement enjoyed extensive access to the political process through the presence of a strong and disciplined labour-based party (the Social Democrats), which tended to act as a “grand coalition” with the conservative parties on resource-use and environmental questions. Environmentalists resorted to militant extra-parliamentary action as a consequence of lack of access to the legislature and government (Siegmann, 1985: 139). The formation of a national Green Party added a new dimension which, Siegmann speculated, had the potential both to promote cooperation and to exacerbate conflict in the LER due to the complex interplay between the Greens and SPD, their support bases, and other West German parties.

In the US, by contrast, the formal role of US unions in public policymaking was generally very limited, and there was no strong labour-based party. Labour was less integrated into the political system, and environmentalism more so, than in West Germany (Siegmann, 1985: 135-137). Thus the LER was more cooperative due to the lack of “insider/outsider” tension between their respective roles in the PIF. Further, the US political system is marked by a lack of strong party discipline in the legislature, and the tendency of interest groups to seek to influence individual congresspersons and senators, rather than parties. Both labour and environmentalists sought to influence Congress in this way, although such lobbying was only carried on by some unions and environmental organisations. Interestingly, the organisations most active in Congressional lobbying were also those most inclined to cooperate with each other. Congressional voting patterns showed a large overlap between those representatives sympathetic to labour and those sympathetic to environmentalism. Thus, whilst there was no labour-identified party in the US Congress, both labour and environmentalists were “established” in Congress via a
group of sympathisers (Siegmann, 1985: 140-142). At this level of the PIF there was no great dichotomy between the positions of labour and environmentalism. The US electoral system was also less subject to strong party influence, and more open to direct influence by interest groups and the public, than in West Germany. Both labour and environmental organisations had engaged in electoral campaigns in support of sympathetic candidates. Siegmann found that electoral politics had generally not been a source of LER conflict in the US, and regarded electoral politics as a potential area for LER cooperation (1985: 146-147).

A significant development in the PIF of both countries was the election of conservative governments in the early 1980s on platforms of economic deregulation, including weakening of environmental regulation, occupational health and safety (OHS) provisions and labour laws. This pushed both labour and environmentalists into opposition to the entire direction of Federal government policy, thus contributing to improved LER cooperation as both movements were forced to act as a countervailing (defensive) force in the changed PIF (Siegmann, 1985: 184-185). A final issue which Siegmann touches on briefly is the possible influence on the LER of the long-term decline of labour movement influence within the PIF due to declining membership and coverage. It could be conjectured that this could lead to a more defensive stance by labour including reduced enthusiasm for alliances with other social movements. Alternatively alliance-building could be adopted by labour as a strategy of widening its relevance and appeal. Siegmann did not attempt to judge which prospect was more likely.
4.3.2 LER Scholarship and the PIF

Siegmann touches on only some of the possible interactions between the PIF and the LER, and subsequent LER studies have greatly enriched our understanding. The “insider/outsider” configuration Siegmann found in West Germany in the 1980s corresponds closely to Schnaiberg’s (1980) model of labour’s complicity in “growth coalitions” with business and the state within the “treadmill of production”. Economou (1992b) strongly endorses the association of LER conflict with this PIF configuration. He argues that a major factor in LER conflict in the 1980s in Australia was the relationship of the labour movement to business and the state as a “social partner” under the political-institutional regime of the ALP-ACTU Accord, and its concurrence with business and the state on the need to promote economic growth (1992: 159-160). Mason & Morter (1998) and Adkin (1998a) report that the “inside/outside” dynamic can affect the LER at a “micro” level. In the UK, OHS issues are dealt with by bipartite processes involving unions and management, to the exclusion of external stakeholders concerned about the external environmental consequences of company activities. In Canada a similar dynamic applies through the less formalised co-option of ECWU into support for management decisions on OHS issues. This has led to LER conflict where unions and management agree about the safety of plant operation but surrounding communities disagree, as well as union hostility to opening up bipartite OHS processes to include environmentalist and resident group participation.

Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) confirm the link between LER cooperation and shared “outsider” status. In the political environment of NSW in the early 1970s, the
BLF and its prospective allies in the green bans movement (such as residents’ action groups) shared an experience of political closure due to the close and corrupt relationship between the conservative state government and business interests. Green ban participants, both union and non-union, cited the consequent lack of democracy and accountability in urban development and planning processes as a key factor forcing the adoption of the green ban tactic and the formation of alliances on that basis. Heiman’s (1997) study of labour-environmental partnerships for sustainable development offers a more recent example of shared “outsider” status favouring LER cooperation. During the 1980s and 1990s, the breakdown of the post-WWII “class-compromise” between capital and labour, led to the latter being shunted out of its “insider” position in growth coalitions. It found itself alongside environmentalists in confronting undemocratic corporate power as the common enemy of their respective goals of employment security and ecological sustainability. In response, progressive US unions including OCAW, the UAW and USWA had helped to form labour-environmental community coalitions deploying innovative strategies to rein in corporate polluters' power and intervene to establish democratic oversight of production decisions. This included "good neighbour" agreements, the repeal of corporate charters for delinquent corporations, and the imposition of social and environmental obligations as a condition of government assistance to corporations. Mason & Morter (1998) suggest that the hostile political environment facing the T&G in Thatcher’s Britain during the period of neo-liberal globalisation may have similarly forced a pro-environment response.

There are two other possible configurations of the “insider-outsider” juxtaposition of labour and environmentalism. Bantjes (1997) found that shared “insider” status
supported LER cooperation in the US state of Maine. The ability of labour and environmental actors to cooperate over chemical pollution and OHS issues was aided by a system of local government which combined participatory democracy with strong local legislative power. This enabled social movement actors in civil society to jointly define the terms of debate in such a way that labour and environmentalists could proactively promote, and secure the adoption of, “win-win” policy solutions to these issues. In an otherwise similar economic and ecological context, the state government of Nova Scotia was able to control the agenda in such a way as to define the toxic chemical and OHS policy problems on its terms, thereby pre-empting and ultimately preventing labour and environmentalists from finding common ground around “win-win” solutions.

The final possible configuration is where sections of the environmental movement acquire “insider” status within the PIF with labour as an outsider. Keil (1994) and Adkin (1992) both discuss the emergence of such a situation in Canada in the early 1990s. According to Adkin, the national environmental organisations in Canada were becoming partners in an emerging tripartite configuration with business and the state to formulate environmental policy as insider groups, confronting labour as an outsider group whose concerns were marginalised (Adkin, 1992: 137-140). The incorporation of “official” environmentalism was associated with an ideological drift from a social democratic orientation towards a rapprochement with neo-liberalism on the basis of eco-capitalist discourse. This discourse is incompatible with LER cooperation as it could neither address the social justice and democratic concerns of labour and other social movements, nor appreciate the deeper social roots of environmental crisis identified by more radical green discourses.
The relationship of the labour movement with strong social-democratic parties is also crucial for the LER. Economou (1992b) found that the economic policy Accord between Australian organised labour and the ALP was an impediment to LER cooperation. Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) suggest that a communist-led union like the BLF found LER cooperation easier than a Labor-affiliated union might have done. Mason & Morter (1998) report that the pro-environment T&G, whilst organisationally affiliated to the British Labour Party, had a strong tradition of political independence and policy opposition. On the other hand, Adkin (1992) found that one reason why joint labour-environmental political committees in Canada ran aground in the 1980s was the institutional connection between union leaderships and the New Democratic Party, and their resulting inability to support initiatives which potentially threatened its electoral priorities. This association with and support for the party-and-state-centred policy focus of official social democracy also created a tension between unions and formal environmental organisations on one hand, and grassroots citizens’ environmental groups on the other. Goodstein (1999) argues that the declining political fortunes of environmentalism in the US Congress in the late 1990s were due to the absence of a strong core of liberal Democrats in the Senate. This was a consequence of the political weakening of organised US labour, which had been a key support base for the liberal Democrat Senators and Congresspersons who, as Siegmann had found, had been the mainstay of Congress environmental support (Goodstein, 1999: 11-15).

Another important aspect of the PIF is the degree of freedom of action it offers labour and environmentalists, and the extent to which each can positively intervene
to shape public policy. Obach (2000) argues that the pluralist PIF in the US encouraged the proliferation of interest groups and social movements whilst limiting the influence any could exert on their own, thereby creating an incentive for coalition-formation. In the NSW "Green Bans" case, heightened strike activity and industrial combativeness in the building sector and the Australian workforce generally was facilitated by the judicial vitiation of the penal provisions of Australian industrial relations laws in 1969 (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1999: 13). This effectively removed legal sanctions against industrial actions which were not otherwise unlawful. Thus the industrial relations regime is an important aspect of the PIF.

Bantjes’ (1997) finding on the importance of Maine’s local democracy for LER democracy has already been noted. The successful LER coalitions described by Heiman (1997) were able to utilise peculiarities of the liberal US state such as the “corporate charters” which can be withdrawn due to popular pressure. Estabrook et al (2000) also found that the open liberal-pluralist state in Louisiana enabled successful labour-environmentalist political interventions against corporations. The authoritarian corporatist state in Brazil, which was closely allied with national petrochemical corporations, was closed to such interventions. This highlights how state structures are frequently not neutral in environmental and resource-use conflicts. Governments and state institutions can, both actively and passively, seek to undermine LER cooperation, attempt to co-opt one movement at the expense of the other, and prevent the consideration of policy options which meet the aspirations of both movements. Foster (1991) notes that Republican administrations in the US, in actively promoting intensive logging of old-growth forests, had suppressed policy
proposals from within relevant government departments which might have simultaneously satisfied the demands of forestry unions and environmentalists. Scholars of Australian political ecology such as Walker (1994), Walker & Crowley (1999) and Mercer (2000) have extensively analysed the developmental origins and biases of the Australian state. In particular cases Australian state institutions have been highly successful in co-opting unions into support for environmentally contentious proposals such as hydro-electric dams in Tasmania (Kellow in Walker, 1992).

Burrows (1998) stresses the importance of the media, which is a key element of the PIF in capitalist democracies. Due to a combination of factors (including corporate control of media by pro-development interests and certain conceptions of what is “newsworthy”), media coverage of the LER often focuses disproportionately on areas of conflict, and on elements of each movement least disposed to cooperate with the other, thereby reinforcing negative stereotypes. At the same time there may be little or no reportage or intelligent analysis of the diverse currents within each movement, of those labour or environmental movement activities or ideas most appealing to the other, or of successful LER cooperation. Of course, if labour and environmental actors accept the media’s presentation of LER cooperation as rare, difficult, and prone to degenerate into conflict, they will be less likely to attempt it or persevere with it.

Finally, some aspects of public policy were crucial to the LER. Specifically, Chapter 2 reported Goodstein’s (1999) finding that differences in the welfare and employment policy frameworks of Western Europe and the US have contributed to
differences in unions’ willingness to acquiesce in environmental protection measures which displaced workers. The welfare and employment framework is thus an important element of the PIF. The more generous and less conditional the welfare regime, the more likely that the LER will tend towards cooperation.

4.3.3 The PIF and the LER - Summary

We can summarise six main findings of this section. First, where labour and environmental movements occupy a relatively similar position within the PIF, the LER tends to be cooperative, albeit for different reasons when both are “insiders” than when both are outsiders. Conversely, the LER tends towards conflict when one of the two movements is an “insider” within the PIF and the other an outsider, especially as this is often associated with attempts by corporate and state actors to co-opt the “insider” movement into support for developmental agendas.

Second, the degree of openness and democracy of the state is, on balance, related to co-operation in the LER by creating opportunities for labour and environmental actors to intervene to shape policy problem definition in ways which avoid a zero-sum trade-off of their respective objectives, and to formulate “win-win” solutions. The freedom of political and industrial action available to environmental and labour actors is also positively associated with LER cooperation (e.g. a liberal industrial relations regime which allows environmental strikes and bans by unions). The degree to which the state is neutral or partisan on environmental and resource-use issues is an important influence on the LER, as pro-development state agencies exert
considerable power to co-opt one movement against the other, to suppress alternative
problem definition and policy formulation, and generally to promote LER conflict.

Third, the presence of a strong labour party, and the existence of close political or
organisational ties between it and the labour movement, can lead to conflict in the
LER, especially where LER cooperation would be on terms unfavourable to the
party’s political interests, or where the party is in government and presiding over an
unsustainable mode of development.

Fourth, the media, its control or lack thereof by pro-development interests, and the
manner in which it covers the LER can be a significant influence on the willingness
of labour and environmental actors to attempt LER cooperation.

Fifth, a relatively generous and unconditional welfare system, which expedites
employment adjustment for displaced workers, is more conducive to LER cooperation than an ungenerous and conditional welfare regime which sharpens
workers’ vulnerability to “jobs blackmail”.

Finally, the mode of interest intermediation is significant, in that corporatism has
tended to be associated with LER conflict whilst pluralism is often associated with,
or has enabled, LER cooperation. The qualification to this is that, in most cases
discussed in the literature the effects of the mode of interest intermediation are not
analytically separated from those of other aspects of the PIF, and there is little
available literature on the LER under forms of corporatism in which both labour and
environmentalism are insiders.
4.4 Movement Ideologies and the LER

4.4.1 Siegmann on Ideologies of Labour and Environmentalism

Siegmann identified labour and environmentalist ideology as a significant influence on the LER on both countries, albeit in more than one dimension. In West Germany its influence could be best understood, not in terms of the distinction between left and right, but in terms of the distinction between “old politics” and “new politics”, and specifically Inglehart’s differentiation between “materialist” and “postmaterialist” politics, with labour embodying the former, and environmentalism the latter (Siegmann, 1985: 159-160). In the US, the important distinction was between labour ideologies of “business unionism” and “social unionism”.

According to Siegmann, the West German labour movement’s Basic Program defined the unions as a force for democratic advance but also a pillar of the “democratic” social order. Over time West German labour prioritised its “social partnership” commitment over its nominally socialist goals, and some of its leaders explicitly proclaimed a “factor of order” function for labour along with business. (1985: 161-162). The ideological elements within West German environmentalism most significant for the LER were “postmaterialism”, a commitment to social justice as well as ecological concerns, and an “elite-challenging” rather than “elite directed” orientation. The latter entailed a preference for unconventional forms of political activity and a questioning of the legitimacy of the political system, which partly stemmed from its position “outside” the established political-institutional framework. One consequence of these ideological factors was the strengthening of
the “factor of order/countervailing force” dichotomy arising from the two movements’ differing roles in the PIF (1985: 161). Further, the “elite challenging”, unconventional modes of action of radical environmentalists were seen by labour as incompatible with the methods of compromise and negotiation through official and parliamentary channels which were the “proper” processes for solving policy problems, a view closely linked to labour’s “social partnership” ideology (1985: 168-169).

In the US, Siegmann found that the LER was strongly influenced by whether unions adhered to an ideology of “business unionism” or one of “social unionism”. “Business unionism” is a union praxis which appeals to workers on narrow, particularistic grounds and ignores concerns outside the immediate workplace. It maintains a sharp distinction between economic and political activity, seeks to be “non-ideological”, opposes attempts to politicise workplace and economic issues in ways which challenge the prerogatives of enterprise management and the capitalist system in general, and is distrustful of intellectuals (Piore, 1978, cited in Siegmann). These features of “business unionism” would discourage LER co-operation because a narrow conception of workers’ interests would preclude cooperation with other social movements. Further, a strict separation between “economic” and “political” spheres would artificially delineate production activities from their environmental externalities. The “non-ideological” aspiration would prevent cooperation with environmental groups which related their concerns to a wider critique of capitalism, and anti-intellectualism would preclude good relations with a movement comprising a high percentage of intellectuals and addressing complex problems.
“Social unionism”, by contrast, rejects the “economics/politics” divide and sees workers’ interests in the context of wider political, social and ideological questions. It is far less accommodating towards management and its prerogatives, seeks to organise and represent unorganised workers, and seeks alliances with other social actors around issues of shared concern (Logan & Nelkin, 1980: 8, cited in Siegmann). For these reasons social unionism is much more conducive to cooperation with environmentalists. US unions committed to social unionism often represented intellectual workers or included many such workers on their staff, and hence were comfortable with environmentalist intellectuals (Siegmann, 1985: 171-172). Importantly, Siegmann observed a close articulation between, on one hand, business unionism, a conflictual LER, and a sense of the common interests and goals of capital and labour, and on the other, social unionism, labour-environmental alliances, and an adversarial stance towards capital (Siegmann, 1985: 176-177).

Comparisons between the US and West German situations yielded the paradox that although a form of “social unionist” ideology guided the West German labour movement, the LER in West Germany had been more conflictual than in the US. Siegmann explained this paradox by arguing that West German unions, by virtue of their place in the PIF, could pursue many “social union” objectives on social and economic questions whilst remaining a factor of order on “new politics” issues where the materialism/postmaterialism division was salient. In the US there was a synergy between the position of the labour movement as a “countervailing force,” the consequent need to look for allies amongst social actors in a similar political-institutional location, and the ideology of “social unionism” (1985: 172).
4.4.2 LER Scholarship on the Role of Ideology

A review of LER scholarship largely confirms Siegmann’s findings on the role of ideology, as far as they go, but goes further both in adducing other aspects of the ideological dimension of the LER, and in rendering more profound Siegmann’s insights.

However, in relation to the J&E problematique, it has been suggested in Chapter 2 that this cannot be reduced to a dyad of an “objective reality” versus an ideological myth of JvE conflict. This is an arena of discursive struggle by labour, environmentalism and other social actors to define problems and solutions. Thus the issue of discursive struggle around jobs and the environment, and the related question of discursive reconstitution of labour and environmental identities, is an issue serious enough to warrant a section of its own, following this one.

LER scholarship confirms that some labour and environmental discourses are clearly more conducive to LER cooperation than others. On the labour side, the dyad: “business unionism equals LER conflict/social unionism equals LER cooperation” is endorsed a fortiori by Keil (1994), Moberg (1999), Heiman (1997), Estabrook et al (2000), Obach (2000), Mason & Morter (1998) and Adkin (1998a). Further, Obach’s (2000) study of variations in the LER across US states found that LER conflict was positively correlated with a history of union-business cooperation in the recent past, consistent with Siegmann’s finding and the other studies cited above.
However, not all forms of social unionism are equally conducive to LER cooperation. Estabrook et al (2000) note that the orthodox Marxism-Leninism of the Brazilian petrochemical union lent itself to an economistic militancy which rendered it unwilling to pursue environmental and community alliances at critical junctures. Shantz & Adam (1999) also argue that orthodox Marxist and ecosocialist perspectives are unable to fully consummate LER cooperation because they accept as fixed the subject-positions of “worker” and “environmentalist”, and accept human domination over nature as a prerequisite for socialist goals. Adkin (1992, 1998a) argues that the orthodox socialist/Marxist emphasis on the “centrality of class” is likewise an impediment to counter-hegemonic alliance politics. Shantz & Adam see anarchist and libertarian socialist ideology as potentially free of Marxism’s limitations in these respects. Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) see the influence within the NSW BLF of ideologies such as Eurocommunism, anarcho-syndicalism and “New Left” thought, which were sympathetic to new social movement concerns including environmentalism, feminism and gay liberation, as a prime factor in the success of the Green Bans.

The “business unionism/social unionism” dyad is seen by many authors as being reflected within the environmental movement. Thus Adkin (1992) and Keil (1994) are concerned at the influence within environmentalism of ecoliberal/ecocapitalist ideology which emphasises the power of market forces and economic instruments to achieve sustainability. Adkin and Keil both reject this core ecoliberal claim, arguing that the contemporary environmental crisis is deeply rooted in capitalist social relations. They argue further that ecoliberalism is unable to address the social justice and democratic concerns of labour and other social movements, and lends itself to
environmentalist involvement in tripartite alliances with business and the state at labour’s expense. These problems of ecoliberal/ecocapitalist discourse as impediments to the LER are also identified by Foster (1991, 1993), Shantz & Adam (1999), Heiman (1997) and Mason & Morter (1998).

However, ecoliberal/ecocapitalism is not the only green ideological current incompatible with LER cooperation. Obach (2000) located US environmental organisations on a spectrum, with, at one end:

*Organizations that maintain a very narrow focus on the protection of wilderness specifically... On the other end of the continuum would be what are commonly referred to as ‘environmental justice organisations.’* [Studies of labour-environmental relations in the US] revealed that organisations that had a more broadly defined agenda or that included the social impacts of environmental destruction were more likely to be involved in coalition activity with labor unions (Obach, 2000: 123-124).

Thus the “business unionism/social unionism” dyad within labour is complemented by a more complex set of dyads on the environmental movement side. Obach (2000) identifies an “environmental justice/land use” dyad, based on the issue-agenda of the environmental groups concerned. Overlapping, but not identical, dyads include “environmental justice/ecological fundamentalism” from Adkin (1992), and “environmental justice/environment without class” from Foster (1993) and Shantz & Adam (1999).

Examples of narrow environmental ideologies incompatible with alliances with labour include, first, the exclusive forests/wilderness focus of some environmentalists which is unable to engage with other environmental issues affecting human needs where LER cooperation is possible (Burrows, 1998); second,
"environmentalism without class" which is oblivious to social inequalities and their contribution to environmental problems, which in its liberal version is simply ecocapitalist, but which also has a “radical” form which writes off organised labour, the working class and the political Left as hopelessly compromised by materialism and consumerism (Foster, 1991; Carroll & Ratner, 1996; Shantz & Adam, 1999; Mason & Morter, 1998). Third, there is ecological “fundamentalism” which absolutely prioritises environmental concerns over social, democratic and human emancipatory aspirations (Adkin, 1992). Finally, the dominant ideologies of Canadian environmental groups such as the Canadian Greens and Greenpeace combine elements of ecological fundamentalism and “environmentalism without class,” and are fundamentally pessimistic about collective consciousness-raising or democratic political mobilisation, or alliances with movements such as labour which engage in such practices. These ideologies lead to reliance on a combination of militant exemplary action by a small cadre force (as with Greenpeace) and individual lifestyle change (Adkin, 1992).

The general problem is best summed up by Carroll & Ratner (1996), who argue that counter-hegemonic alliances between social movements such as labour and environmentalism are dependent on the sharing of a common "master frame" across movements. This provides both a way of understanding the causes of existing problems and injustices, and a core set of values that should inform solutions to those problems. A study of Canadian social movement activists showed that most activists in Canadian labour and environmentalism did not share a “master frame”. Not only did many labour activists not include environmental concerns in their frame of reference, but environmentalists gave a low or no priority to the values of
democracy, social solidarity and equality in their frame of reference. This “incongruity of social visions between labour activists and environmentalists. . . limited the extent to which either movement can break out of the ideological fetters of conventional discourse” (Carroll & Ratner, 1996: 429). More specifically, it had contributed to the deterioration of the LER in British Columbia’s forests. This dissonance of frames was even reflected in the differing language used by workers and environmentalists, such as when fishery workers describe as “pieces” the salmon which environmentalists describe as “icons” (Burrows, 1998).

References to “business unionist” and “ecocapitalist” ideologies lead logically to the perspective of authors such as Schnaiberg (1980), Adkin (1998a) and others that these are variants of the hegemonic ideology and model of development in capitalist democracies, and that the strength and the prevailing form of this hegemonic ideology can in turn affect the LER. Economou (1992b) argues that the tendency to LER conflict created by Australian organised labour’s incorporation in the Accord process was exacerbated by its synergy with ideological factors. These included New Right ideology and “trickle-down” economic theory, which politically and ideologically construct workers’ interests and the available means for their protection in terms incompatible with environmental goals. The disruptive influence of the “dominant social paradigm” on the LER is also noted by Formby (1993), Burrows (1998) and Simon (1998). Conversely, as Schnaiberg (1980), Adkin (1998) and others point out, subverting this hegemonic paradigm is a central task of labour-environmentalist alliances. Carroll & Ratner (1996) stress that one of their findings is that the common “master frame” which was shared by many labour and social movement activists was very much a “classical left” master-frame based on a
political-economic analysis of the causes of injustice, and social vision stressing economic equality, compassion, social solidarity and participatory democracy, albeit often combined with elements from liberal or identity-politics frames.

4.4.3 Ideology and the LER - Summary

The foregoing discussion suggests four conclusions about the role of ideology in the LER. First, LER cooperation is aided by acceptance on the labour movement side of ideologies of “social/movement unionism” rather than “business/corporate unionism”. It is further aided by acceptance of ideologies on the labour side which do not privilege economic over non-economic concerns, or class over other contradictions/interests in society. Second, LER cooperation is impeded on the environmental movement side by ideologies of “environmentalism without class,” whether liberal or radical, which do not engage with social justice or democratic concerns, do not recognise the social roots of environmental problems and do not include an egalitarian or solidaristic social vision. It is also impeded by environmentalist ideologies which absolutely privilege environmental concerns above social or democratic concerns, or which are pessimistic about the potential of mass collective mobilisation rather than individual lifestyle change to achieve sustainability.

Third, those labour and environmentalist ideologies that are least conducive to LER cooperation are variants of the hegemonic ideologies/discourses of industrial capitalist society, whereas those labour and environmentalist ideologies most conducive to cooperation are likely to be opposed to or subversive of the hegemonic
discourse. Finally, LER cooperation is aided by the sharing of a “master frame” between labour and environmental movement activists, which is most likely to embody a “classical left” sensitivity including a political-economic analysis of societal problems and a social vision emphasising equality, social solidarity, compassion and democracy.

4.5 Ideology or Discourse?

Whilst the foregoing discussion renders more profound the understanding of the role of ideology in the LER, a number of authors suggest that the task of coalition-formation between labour and environmental movement actors is best conceived as a process of discursive creation and struggle in which the political problem of sustainability and the means for its achievement is redefined, and the interests/identities of labour and environmentalism are transformed.

4.5.1 Jobs, Environment and Discursive Struggle

The conceptualisation of the J&E problematique as a struggle between contending “discursive myths” is theoretically underpinned by Bantjes (1997). Bantjes notes that the radical-democratic post-Marxism of Laclau & Mouffe (1985) strongly emphasises the role of discursive practice in constituting political projects and in creating political subjects which identify with those projects (in contrast to orthodox Marxism’s stress on the structural determination of interests and identities). Bantjes, whilst agreeing that the possibilities for discursive activity are much greater than conceded by orthodox Marxists, argues that Laclau & Mouffe are unclear about what
role (if any) they accord structure, including both economic/class (as in the respective interests of capital and labour) and political-institutional factors, in shaping political identities and projects. Laclau & Mouffe apparently assume that structure belongs to the realm of the “extra-discursive” within which political agents engage in discursive practice. Bantjes, however, argues that the equation of agency with the discursive and structure with the extra-discursive is a mistake. Social structures are also, ultimately, discursively created, albeit as Giddens (1981) argues, at a spatial or temporal remove normally beyond the reach of the discursive practices of political actors (Bantjes, 1997: 61-62). Further, Bantjes draws on Bourdieu (1989) to argue that discursive construction or transformation of constituencies is only likely when the “discursive myth” is consistent with “real relations” (i.e. structures and other spatially and temporally embedded realities). Thus whilst the construction of toxic chemical pollution as a “hazard” is discursive, one is more likely to be mobilised politically by such a discourse if one is affected by the pollution and/or if one lacks the means to evade the hazard, than if one is not affected or can evade it (1997: 63-64).

If we accept Bantjes argument, then the “JvE” trade-off is best understood as neither an “inevitable” and “objective” “reality” which must always limit the possibilities for LER cooperation, nor an “ideological perception” or ruse by corporations to prevent labor, environmentalists or the public from seeing the underlying harmony of jobs and the environment. Rather, the JvE trade-off and its alternatives (e.g. “J+E”) can be understood as contending “discursive myths” whose power to create, transform, unite or divide labor and environmental constituencies is related to the
capacity of social actors to bring “real” political-economic relations within the reach of discursive practices and subject to discursive challenge and transformation.

Virtually all LER scholars acknowledge the influence, and importance, of competing ideological perceptions of JvE tradeoffs and J+E synergies. Goodstein (1999), whilst rebutting the “trade-off myth,” acknowledges its wide currency and political effect; a poll in 1990 showed that one-third of the US workforce felt personally at risk of job loss due to environmental regulation, despite the minuscule actual significance of environmental retrenchments. Yet, as noted in Chapter 2, the power of the JvE “myth” is not only, or even primarily, a function of the quantity or quality of corporate propaganda in support of it. In capitalist democracies, corporate and state actors are often able to control the definition of policy problems, and the available solutions, so as to discursively construct employment and other social goals in opposition to ecological sustainability. Therefore countering the “JvE” argument is not simply a matter of propaganda struggle but of reconceptualising, or discursively rearticulating, the relationship between labour, environmental and other social goals to enable a convergence between them. This in turn requires the joint development by labour and environmentalism of a social and economic analysis of employment and environment problems, and of appropriate policies for ecologically sustainable full employment. Successful consciousness-raising and mobilisation around such policies requires an analysis of, and policies to tame, the undemocratic power of capitalist corporations and allied state institutions.
4.5.2 Labour, Environmentalism and Discursive Reconstitution of Subject-Positions in Coalition

Adkin (1992, 1998a), Carroll & Ratner (1996) and Keil (1994), amongst others, conceive of these tasks as constituting an anti-capitalist radical-democratic project in which labour and environmentalists play a central role as constituents of a counter-hegemonic alliance. Adkin (1992, 1998a) argues that the participation of labour movement and environmental movement actors in counter-hegemonic alliances also entails a transformation of their pre-existing identities as “workers” and “environmentalists” with particular interests in jobs and environmental protection in ways which establish new subject-positions with a shared interest in a counter-hegemonic sustainable development project. This theoretical formulation is supported by other LER scholars. According to Obach (2000), much political science literature on coalition-formation assumes a "rational actor" model in which organisations and groups with predefined and fixed interests cooperate to the extent that their interests overlap, or can be more effectively approximated by a mutually acceptable compromise. This conception of coalition-formation on the basis of shared pre-given interests sits uncomfortably with the argument of new social movement theory - and the reality - that the environmental movement is primarily driven by values (which are actually or potentially universal) rather than the instrumental pursuit of its members' interests (which are not), and that the labour movement is also capable of acting as a social movement rather than an interest group. Further, the orthodox model failed to account for a commonly observed feature of actual labour-environment interactions, namely the processes of "organisational learning" which take place on both sides.
Keil (1994) observed such a process at work in Canadian unions involved in Green Work Alliances, with traditional union concerns, such as industrial and locational health and safety issues, being reconceptualised as environmental concerns, in turn challenging the "nature conservationist" bias and disregard of human social justice concerns of middle-class environmentalism. This, argues Keil, shows processes of discursive articulation at work in the process of coalition formation, whereby the interests and identity - the subject positions - of labour, environmentalism and other allies are produced and transformed through discursive processes rather than being a pre-existing essence able to be deduced from "objective" class or economic interests (1994: 27-28). Burgmann & Burgmann (1998) observed this process at work in the Green Bans. The BLF’s use of Green Bans in support of residents’ campaigns tended to actively overcome the biases in favour of middle-class interests which may otherwise have existed in such campaigns (1998: 55-58). This was both because the green bans were as likely to be used to defend working-class homes or environmental amenity as that of other classes, and because the involvement of the union meant that opposition to particular developments was based on the social and ecological merits (or absence thereof) of land use options, rather than a localised NIMBY opposition to intrusion into a middle-class neighbourhood:

...it is most likely that the green ban movement did not merely neutralise the class effects of NIMBY politics but altered the balance so entirely that NIMBY politics was transformed in the process. ... (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998: 55).

The union was also transformed by these experiences. Whether, and to what extent, unions and environmental organisations were able to discursively redefine Australia’s economic and environmental problems in the 1980s and 1990s, and in the
process discursively redefine themselves as bearers of a larger project of social transformation for sustainability, will be considered in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

4.6 Conclusions, and the Siegmann-Norton Model

Siegmann's findings implied a five-factor model of the LER, but did not sufficiently define and operationalise all of the five factors. Table 4.1 describes the model that can be deduced from Siegmann.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Tendencies Encouraging Cooperation</th>
<th>Tendencies Encouraging Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic/Employment</td>
<td>• Undefined</td>
<td>• Undefined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demography/Sociology</td>
<td>• Higher formal education</td>
<td>• Lower formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Younger</td>
<td>• Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Occupation (undefined)</td>
<td>• Occupation (undefined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Structure</td>
<td>• Union democracy</td>
<td>• Union oligarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Union decentralisation or diversity</td>
<td>• Union centralisation or uniformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmentalist stability or formalisation</td>
<td>• Environmentalist “Structurelessness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in Political-</td>
<td>• Similar role of Labour &amp;</td>
<td>• Dissimilar role of Labour &amp; Environmentalism in PIF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Framework</td>
<td>Environmentalism in PIF</td>
<td>• “Factor of order” versus “countervailing force”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared opposition/outider status</td>
<td>• Corporatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pluralism;</td>
<td>• Labour as potential or actual party of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No strong labour party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>• Social unionism</td>
<td>• Business unionism;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Labour &quot;social partnership&quot; vs. environmentalist “elite-challenging”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Labour materialism versus environmental post-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>materialism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From Siegmann, 1985)

The model as it stands is clearly incomplete. As the question of economic determination is left unresolved, the economic tendencies to cooperation or conflict are undefined. The role of occupation as a component of demographic/sociological
determination is incompletely defined. Issues of substantive democracy in environmental organisations remain unexplored. The components of political-institutional determination are reasonably complete, but could be further developed. Finally, ideology is mainly defined only on the labour side, and then incompletely.

After interrogating Siegmann’s findings and implied model against other studies and relevant theory, it is possible to fill in the gaps in Siegmann’s model by incorporating the key findings from the literature in relation to each of the five variables in the model, and thus to derive a more elegant and sophisticated model of the LER in Australia. This model is shown in Table 4.2.

This model can now be applied to the case studies in this thesis to analyse the reasons why LER cooperation or conflict occurred in each case. It can also be used to formulate hypotheses about the trajectory of the LER in Australia overall in the period of the study, and to evaluate the actual course of the LER during that period. In practical terms, it can be applied diagnostically to specific environmental and resource-use conflicts in which both labour and environmental actors are involved, in order to identify which aspects of the situation contain the potential for LER cooperation, and which for conflict. However, whether labour-environmentalist cooperation actually occurs is not something that can be mechanically predicted from the model, as the achievement of LER cooperation, and the form it takes, is dependent on discursive praxis and struggle by environmental and labour movement actors, albeit within parameters which the Siegmann-Norton model can help to establish.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Tendencies Encouraging Cooperation</th>
<th>Tendencies Encouraging Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economic/Employment        | - No general or macroeconomic jobs versus environment conflict or jobs plus environment synergy  
|                             | - Most workers not affected by environmental regulation  
|                             | - Successful discursive intervention by labour and environmental actors to promote cooperation or prevent conflict where potential exists  
|                             | • May be jobs versus environment tension or jobs plus environment synergy based in local or sectoral political economy  
|                             | • Specific groups may be vulnerable within adverse labour market  
|                             | • Failure of labour and environmental actors to intervene discursively to avert conflict. Success of other (corporate) actors in exploiting conflict potential in particular situation |
| Demography & Sociology     | • Higher formal education of unionists  
|                             | • Younger workers in union  
|                             | • Occupation (nature & conditions of work)  
|                             | • Gender harmony/equity in participation  
|                             | • Lower formal education of unionists  
|                             | • Older workers in union  
|                             | • Occupation (nature & conditions of work)  
|                             | • Clash of genders |
| Internal Movement Organisation | • Union/Environmental democracy  
|                             | • Union decentralisation or diversity  
|                             | • Environmentalist stability or formalisation  
|                             | • Relative similarity of labour & environmental organisation  
|                             | • Broad union membership base  
|                             | • High union and environmental density in affected workplaces and communities  
|                             | • Strong unions  
|                             | • Overlapping environmental group and union memberships  
|                             | • Charismatic “bridge-building” leaders  
|                             | • Union/Environmental oligarchy  
|                             | • Union centralisation or uniformity  
|                             | • Environmentalist “structurelessness”  
|                             | • Dissimilarity of environmental & labour organisation & culture  
|                             | • Representative unionism versus voluntarist environmentalism  
|                             | • Narrow union membership base  
|                             | • Weak union and environmental presence in affected workplaces and communities  
|                             | • Weak unions  
|                             | • Little/no overlap of membership between movements  
|                             | • No “bridge builders”  
| Political-Institutional Framework | • Similar roles in PIF  
|                             | • Shared opposition/outsider status  
|                             | • Open/democratic state  
|                             | • Neutral state  
|                             | • Freedom of action of movements  
|                             | • No strong labour party or party/union ties  
|                             | • Generous welfare regime  
|                             | • Sympathetic media  
|                             | • Pluralism  
|                             | • Dissimilar roles in PIF  
|                             | • “Factor of order” vs. “countervailing force”  
|                             | • Authoritarian state  
|                             | • Developmentally biased state  
|                             | • Prescriptions on movement action  
|                             | • Close union ties to strong labour party  
|                             | • Parsimonious welfare regime  
|                             | • Hostile media  
|                             | • Corporatism |
| Ideology                   | • Rejection of “JvE”  
|                             | • Discursive reconceptualisation of “jobs/environment” problematique  
|                             | • Social/movement unionism  
|                             | • Non-economic social unionist ideology  
|                             | • “Elite challenging” unionism  
|                             | • “Environmental Justice” (egalitarian and solidaristic environmentalisms including, ecosocialism, ecoanarchism, radical democracy  
|                             | • Shared “master frame”  
|                             | • Oppositional/counter-hegemonic ideology  
|                             | • Acceptance of “JvE”  
|                             | • Acceptance of orthodox terms of “jobs/environment” problematique  
|                             | • Business/corporate unionism  
|                             | • Orthodox Marxism or Marxism-Leninism  
|                             | • “Social partnership” unionism  
|                             | • Ecoliberalism, exclusive nature focus, “Environmentalism without class”, ecological fundamentalism, pessimism about collective action  
|                             | • Lack of shared “master-frame”  
|                             | • Acceptance of hegemonic ideology  

(Norton 2004, from Siegmann, 1985)
Chapter 5
The ACTU-ALP Accord and Accord Relationship
1983-96
5.1 Australian Public Policy Under Hawke & Keating

The election of the Hawke Labor government in 1983 occurred at a time when the Australian public policy system was challenged by a complex set of economic problems and their consequences. Along with other capitalist democracies, Australia had experienced a severe and prolonged economic recession commencing in 1974. Unlike previous recessions, this was characterised by the problem of “stagflation”, or reduced economic activity combined with high levels of inflation. This meant that conventional reflationary macroeconomic strategies, based on a particular interpretation of Keynesian economics, were no longer considered appropriate. The policy problem posed by the crisis was that of how to restrain inflation without exacerbating unemployment (Head & Patience, 1989: 273-280; Emy & Hughes, 1988: 30-33, 48-49; Stilwell, 1986: 6-8).

The onset of the recession coincided with the tenure of the Whitlam Labor government, which attempted to pursue a program of significant social democratic reform. This earned it the enmity of a range of interest groups and forces, and compounded the unwillingness of conservative political forces to accept three years of Labor government after 23 years of Liberal Party/Country Party Coalition government. Whilst the recession was international in its origins and scope, triggered by the OPEC oil price hike of 1973, the occurrence of unprecedented levels of unemployment and inflation under a Labor government after a long period of prosperity presided over by conservative governments was portrayed by the Whitlam government’s opponents as due to its inappropriate and incompetent management of
the national economy. Whilst Australia was more successful than most developed economies in avoiding a dramatic economic contraction, the political strategy of blaming a national government for the recession proved effective. After the controversial dismissal of the Whitlam government in November 1975, the Coalition was returned to office with a landslide majority in the ensuing election, and re-elected with a barely diminished majority in November 1977.

The initial response of governments to the loss of confidence in conventional Keynesian policies was the embrace of monetarist economic policies which emphasised “fighting inflation first”. The goal of maintaining full employment, if not overtly abandoned, was redefined to mean keeping unemployment from rising above a “natural rate”. The main tools for such policies included real wage restraint, and restraining or reducing public sector expenditure. The Whitlam government’s last Budget in 1975 was influenced by monetarist concepts, and the conservative Coalition government of Malcolm Fraser attempted to pursue such a strategy more thoroughly. However, despite its intentions, public sector expenditure did not decline as a percentage of GDP, and the government's antagonistic stance towards the unions resulted in increased industrial conflict. In addition, the Fraser government’s policies generally failed to revive economic activity. Whilst inflation was reduced to 10 per cent, and a moderate recovery occurred in the late 1970s, unemployment continued to grow. Australia experienced a severe recession in 1982-83, with the cyclical economic downturn compounded by a global downturn, a second oil price shock, and a severe drought which depressed activity in the primary sector, and unemployment rose to over 10 per cent of the workforce (Stilwell, 1986; Head & Patience, 1979; Bell, 1997).
The period of the Fraser government also witnessed changes in the direction of the ALP. It was widely argued that the Whitlam government had contributed to its own demise through a combination of excessively rapid and extensive reform and lack of attention to economic management. This was contested within the ALP, but by the early 1980s its dominant groupings and leading figures generally accepted both the need to prioritise capital accumulation through “sound economic management,” conservatively defined, and the political imperative of reassuring the electoral “middle ground” that a future Labor government would be one of moderate and gradual reform (Hayden, 1982; Maddox, 1989: 64-69, 1996: 14-15; Battin, 1996: 94-97; Singleton, 1990; Gerritsen, 1986; Kelly, 1992: 19-33).

These trends came to bear the stamp of a discourse of “national consensus”. According to Stilwell (1986), the period of the Fraser government saw growing concern about social conflict, and particularly industrial conflict as a factor in economic problems. This was typically analysed as an outcome of the nature and culture of Australian unions and business management, and of Fraser’s deflationary economic policies which contributed to social tension. Hence ideas about ways of resolving conflict gained public attention, notably those of then ACTU President Bob Hawke in a series of Boyer lectures in 1979, and other statements by Hawke suggesting that a Labor government could achieve a national consensus between labour and capital, including through a summit of employers, unions and “other relevant bodies” to “draw together the parties to the industrial relationship and undertake the task of national reconciliation rather than the intensification of divisiveness” (Hawke, cited in Stilwell, 1986: 9). A similar emphasis had also been recommended by the Jackson Committee on Manufacturing in 1975, which
advocated establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms including the integration of the three tiers of government and creation of a network of consultative councils. Hence Hawke’s emphasis on national consensus was the culmination of a long-term trend, and the Accord became its main economic expression (Stilwell, 1986: 9-10).

As well as the cyclical macroeconomic difficulties and the crisis of Keynesian demand-side strategies which it shared with other capitalist democracies, the Australian economy suffered from specific weaknesses arising from structural imbalances and from entrepreneurial failure, as outlined in Chapter 2. These structural problems negatively impacted on employment outcomes, both directly and through the effect of Balance of Payments (BOP) constraints on economic growth.

Hence the principal policy challenge facing the Hawke Labor government from 1983 was to find a macroeconomic strategy which would restore economic growth and reduce unemployment without fuelling inflation or (from 1985 onwards) incurring a seriously negative BOP outcome. It saw incomes policy as the key to the achievement of non-inflationary growth, and saw agreement with the trade union movement on negotiating sustained but moderate improvements in working people’s incomes as central to incomes policy (McEachern, 1991: 19-23; Stutchbury, 1990; Gardner, 1990). The formalisation of agreement with the trade union movement evolved over the period from the 1979 ALP National Conference to the signing of the ACTU-ALP Accord in early 1983, but its origins can be traced back further to the experience of government-union relations under the Whitlam government. This process is described in detail in Section 5.2.1 below.
Despite some initial successes in economic performance which were attributable to the Accord, the Labor Government’s commitment to the Accord process and to the original Accord reform program was overshadowed by national and international trends which militated against progressive policy outcomes. The breakdown of the Keynesian consensus was followed in capitalist democracies by a sustained ideological offensive for a revival of “free market” economic prescriptions. These prescriptions emphasised privatisation of publicly owned assets and industries, economic and financial deregulation, de-unionisation of workforces and deregulation of labour markets, reduced public sector spending and welfare state provision, and reductions of taxes on personal and business incomes in favour of increased indirect taxation. The conservative governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and West Germany all embraced aspects of neo-liberal or “New Right” economic programs, and their advocacy was taken up by significant political forces even in countries governed by socialist or social-democratic parties. This eventually had significant consequences both for the direction of Australian public policy under Labor, and for the Australian labour movement (Jennett & Stewart, 1990: 1-13; Emy & Hughes, 1988: 80-100; Hughes, 1998: 7-17; McEachern, 1991; Battin, 1996: 107-125; Carman & Rodgers, 1999).

Finally, the structural weaknesses of the Australian economy culminated by the mid-1980s in a serious and growing BOP crisis. Whilst the original Accord may have provided a basis for overcoming these weaknesses in the medium- to long-term, it had not been designed to address or relieve the BOP crisis in the short term. The growing influence of neoclassical economic doctrine, combined with the weakening of a range of macroeconomic management tools due to deregulatory policies, meant
that the Federal Labor government became locked into strongly, and extremely “broad-brush”, deflationary policies as its standard response to the BOP crisis. This was inimical to the fulfilment of the ALP’s main commitments under the Accord and led to a serious recession in the early 1990s. The fate of the Accord, within this adverse political-economic environment, was to be revised through successive renegotiations in such a way as to minimise or abandon its original industry development and social policy commitments, accommodate the Federal Labor government’s embrace of neo-liberal economic doctrine, facilitate the abandonment of wage maintenance and equity via centralised arbitration in favour of “flexible” decentralised workplace-level bargaining, and secure the acquiescence of the ACTU and its affiliates in these goals.

This chapter describes the emergence of the Accord in the early 1980s, the debates in and around the labour movement about its desirability and feasibility as a labour movement strategy and a programme for social change, the nature of the relationship between the labour movement and the Federal government established under the Accord, the fate of the Accord through its several renegotiations in the shadow of neo-liberal hegemony and the resultant changes to Australian industrial relations. It analyses the impact of the Accord and Accord relationship on the political-institutional role, ideology and organisation of the Australian labour movement, and the consequences of these changes for the LER, as well as providing an environmental critique of the original Accord and its successors.
5.2 Designing and Debating the Accord

5.2.1 Prelude to the Accord – 1975-83

As already noted, the Accord was developed in response to both economic and political pressures, including the stagflation crisis, the political need to distance Labor from the Whitlam government, and the atmosphere of social conflict under the Fraser government (Green & Wilson, 2000: 108-110). However, it also arose from a recognition by unions that working class living standards had declined under the Fraser government. Wage gains achieved “in the field” were outweighed by income tax increases and “social wage” reductions due to deflationary fiscal policies with the losses falling most severely on the most vulnerable sections of the working class. Even the industrial wage gains were likely to be rolled back, and the unions’ position rendered vulnerable, in the context of economic stagnation and high unemployment (Bell, 1997). Consequently, the ACTU and its affiliates recognised that achieving sustained improvements in workers’ living standards, and other union goals, required pursuing both industrial and social wage issues “in a more complete policy framework” (Campbell, 2000: 49, see also Carmichael, 1982: 28-29).

The Whitlam government had come to office in a period of largely successful militant activity by the union movement which included the voiding of the "penal powers" provisions of industrial relations laws and opposing the Arbitration Commission’s role as an instrument of wage restraint. The onset of the recession required a response by the Whitlam government which would include agreement with the union movement on wages. However, such agreement was not
forthcoming; partly because “a complete reversal of attitudes by the unions was required” (Green & Wilson, 2000: 109) and because there was room for disagreement about the degree of wage restraint needed. Other factors included the decay of formal mechanisms for ALP-union consultation; Whitlam’s confrontational approach to party-union relations; and a complex combination of conflict between the personalities of Whitlam, Hawke and Industrial Relations Minister Clyde Cameron, and the respective interests in the labour movement with which they were associated. The Labor-ACTU split over wages policy extended to successful ACTU opposition to a Federal government-sponsored referendum to give it power to control wages. Whitlam and unions also clashed over the government’s plans for major tariff reductions which unions feared would destroy manufacturing jobs (Green & Wilson, 2000: 108-109; Singleton, 1990: 10-49; Bell, 1997; Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998).

By 1975, differences over wages policy were resolved by acceptance of centralised wage-fixing by the Arbitration Commission through quarterly indexation of wages according to inflation. However wage indexation was not instituted until 1976, after the Fraser government had come to power and commenced pursuing an aggressive posture towards the unions, including attempted legislative restrictions on industrial activity and oversight of internal union affairs (Green & Wilson, 2000: 110; Bell, 1997). The government believed that unemployment remained high due to a “real wage overhang”, and hence the Commission was constantly pressured to discount wage rises. Many unions continued to campaign for wage increases outside the centralised framework, and this process intensified after the Commission succumbed to government pressure to award partial indexation. These stresses ended in the
collapse of wage indexation in 1981, followed by a real wages “explosion” throughout the workforce in 1982. In December 1982 the Fraser government imposed a “freeze” on nominal wages, but its confrontational approach was discredited, having failed to achieve orderly and moderate wages outcomes (Green & Wilson, 2000: 110-111).

Within the ALP, the proposal for an incomes policy, to be developed “with the understanding and co-operation of the trade union movement” (ALP, 1979, cited in Langmore, 2000: 20-21) was incorporated within the ALP platform at the 1979 National Conference, providing a basis for consultation between the party and the unions. During the period of the Fraser government, relations between the ALP and the ACTU were overseen by the Australian Labor Advisory Committee (ALAC), a joint committee of the two organisations (Stilwell, 1986: 10-11). In 1980 the ALAC released a discussion paper on ALP-union relations which addressed a range of issues which were eventually incorporated in the Accord, including incomes policy, tax reform, work-time reduction, social wage improvements, “a national economic and social strategy,” controls on foreign investment and economic restructuring including industry development. The paper generally called for increased co-operation between Labor and the unions, and endorsed Hawke’s call for a national conference of unions, governments and employers to discuss Australia’s economic and social problems (Langmore, 2000: 22). In 1981 ALAC established a working party to develop these themes into a statement on economic policy, which was completed under the title “Statement of Accord” in June 1982, then further revised and presented in its final form - Statement of Accord by the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions on Economic Policy - to the Federal
Labor caucus and a Special Federal Unions Conference. The caucus adopted it unanimously, and the unions conference almost unanimously, in February 1983 (Stilwell, 1986: 10; Langmore, 2000: 22; Green & Wilson, 2000: 111). Under Hawke’s leadership, the ALP was elected to Federal government the following month.

On the union side, participation in the Accord involved a change in strategy by the historically powerful and militant left-wing blue-collar unions, principally the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry & Shipwrights Union (AMFSU, previously and subsequently the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, or AMWU) and the construction unions. The process of wage-setting in Australia historically entailed well-organised groups of workers in the strongest blue-collar unions achieving wage rises through industrial action “in the field”. This was followed by other unions and groups of workers lodging “catch-up” claims with employers and the Arbitration Commission to maintain wage relativities. The real wages increase throughout the workforce in 1981-82 had been the latest example of this pattern (Singleton, 1990: 58).

However, once the recession struck in 1981-82, only the stronger unions were winning such campaigns; in other cases employers successfully resisted strike action, whilst yet other unions and their members were increasingly reluctant to strike in a climate of high unemployment and job insecurity (Singleton, 1990: 57-58). This tension between the imperative to maintain and improve wages, and the industrial vulnerability induced by high unemployment, was resolved in different ways according to the industrial strength and militancy of the unions concerned. As the
recession deepened the priority for the union movement shifted to the defensive one of protecting their members against unemployment. One consequence of this was that some unions felt constrained to trade off working conditions and accept reduced hours for reduced pay in order to save jobs. However, the main shifts in the union movement generally, and amongst the most militant unions in particular, were towards: (a) a collective, movement-wide approach aimed at preserving the economic position of workers as a whole, rather than sectional militancy to advance the position of the strongest sectors; and (b) a heightened concern with equity, and in particular with the interests of low-income workers whose living standards were vulnerable to inflation, and those of the unemployed and socially disadvantaged groups who depended on the social wage and had been adversely affected by the Fraser government’s public sector cuts (Singleton, 1990: 53, 59-61). According to Singleton “This change in emphasis was the foundation for the broad-based incomes strategy which eventually led to the adoption of the Accord by the Australian trade union movement” (Singleton, 1990: 61; see also Carmichael, 1982: 28).

The AMWU played a crucial role in this strategic shift on several levels. The AMWU was pivotal to the success of any labour movement wages strategy, both because of its own industrial strength and because of its ability to influence the left wing of the union movement. Since this support was essential to the viability of any movement-wide strategy, the AMWU was well-placed to put its stamp on such a strategy. Singleton (1990) describes in depth the AMWU’s shift in emphasis from a priority on the industrial wage to an integrated strategy emphasising both industrial and social wage issues and employment maximisation. Singleton also touches on its role in linking the macroeconomic policy aims (particularly full employment) of the
original Accord with left-wing strategies for the restructuring of the Australian economy. On this question, "Structural and economic change was also having an effect on employment in Australian industry," the AMWU had come to see the opportunity for union intervention in industry development policies under a Labor government as "the only real vehicle open for them to act in defence of their membership" (Singleton, 1990: 149). The AMWU's combined concern for the social wage and for improved employment outcomes through industry development constituted a broad program to maintain its employed members' living standards whilst also protecting its unemployed members. In the process it would maintain the union’s industrial and political influence by securing its membership base. Thus the AMWU abandoned its initial opposition to a "social contract" in favour of supporting the Accord conditional upon the inclusion of industry development and economic planning provisions. It promoted the Accord throughout the union movement, and especially the union left, on this basis. The AMWU related its support for the Accord, especially its social wage, economic planning and industry development components, with its long-standing advocacy of an alternative economic strategy incorporating these commitments and its wider commitment to the socialist transformation of the Australian economy. This articulation, by AMWU leaders including Communists such as Laurie Carmichael and John Halfpenny, and by the Communist Party of Australia and its allies, was central to support for the Accord by those sections of the Left (Beilharz, 1986a: 9-10).

This debate, and its relevance to the LER, is explored in more depth in section 5.2.3. However, an important historical point is that those elements of the Accord most clearly associated with the possibility of transforming production in accordance with
social objectives (potentially including sustainability) were not part of the pre-
Accord discussions and early Accord drafts involving the ALP and ACTU
leaderships, were included at the last minute because of the political necessity of
securing AMWU support for the agreement, and can reasonably be assumed never to
have been a priority for the dominant forces in the ALP and ACTU who were
responsible for implementing, interpreting and redefining the Accord over time.
This is a crucial issue in considering whether expectations of achieving such goals
via "full implementation" of the Accord were ever realistic, and thus whether such a
strategy could ever have offered the prospect of "production reform" in the direction
of sustainability.

5.2.2 The Original Accord

The focus of the Accord was re-establishment of full employment as the paramount
objective of economic policy, and development of appropriate policies to this end in
four main areas of incomes policy: prices; wages and working conditions; non-wage
incomes; and tax reform and the social wage. The Accord also included eight
“supportive policies” covering job creation, health, education, occupational health &
safety, immigration, industrial relations, industry development and technological
change, social security, and Australian government employment. As such it was a

The original Accord committed to maintain real wages “over time” and provide
wage justice to employees through six-monthly full wage indexation and acceptance
that workers could share the fruits of increased productivity through increased real
wages and/or reduced working hours. Inflationary wage rises were to be avoided through a commitment by unions to “no extra claims” beyond centrally fixed wage movements except in special circumstances. Prices and non-wage incomes were to be restrained to roughly the rate of increase of real wages through establishment of a pricing authority and indirect legislative regulation of non-wage incomes.

The tax system would be reformed to reduce taxes for low and middle income earners, minimise corporate tax avoidance and tax excessive profits, and reduce the “relative incidence” of indirect taxation. The unions would be consulted prior to any general rise in taxation. The Accord also pledged the government to “aim to eliminate poverty” by measures including increased social security benefits and other social wage improvements to be achieved through expanded government spending on essential services and social infrastructure. However, the Government’s ability to increase expenditure would “depend considerably on the government’s success in achieving a non-inflationary expansion of the economy” (ALP/ACTU in Wilson et al, 2000: 292-294). Specific commitments included reintroduction of a national health insurance scheme, increased education funding and opposition to tertiary tuition fees, consideration of a national superannuation scheme, and increasing and reforming family benefits. The Accord sought to improve industrial relations through a review of Federal industrial legislation, including reform of laws relating to internal union affairs; establishment of employee rights to redundancy protection, and of worker and union rights to consultation regarding technological change; legislative reform to expedite union amalgamations; abolition of the Fraser Government’s Industrial Relations Bureau; and full consultation between employers,

On industry policy, the Accord recognised that Australian industry was undergoing a stressful process of structural change, made more difficult by inappropriate economic policies. A key component of the Accord’s industry policy and macroeconomic policy commitments was the establishment of tripartite committees and councils comprising representatives of unions, employers and government to determine policy and advise government at national, regional and sectoral levels. The Accord's industry development provisions, and their ultimate fate, are discussed in Chapter 7.

The original Accord contained few commitments directly related to environmental policy issues. The most substantial was an agreed "supportive policy" on OHS which proclaimed that:

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\text{there should be improvements in the quality of the working environment in Australia . . . that the work environment needs to be adapted and designed to suit the needs of people working in it; that employers have a basic responsibility to provide a healthy, safe and stress-free work environment [and] that workers have a right to know what hazards they are exposed to" (ALP/ACTU 1983 in Wilson et al, 2000: 301-302).}
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The development and implementation of policies based on these principles was to occur through the establishment of tripartite structures at Federal and State level and joint union-employer structures at local and workplace level. The policy made no linkage between workplace OHS issues and environmental issues in the broader community. Further, whilst it provided for extensive union and worker involvement
in workplace OHS policymaking and implementation it contained no provision for environmentalist or other community representation in the proposed tripartite and joint union-employer decision-making bodies. Indeed, one of the policy's planks could be interpreted as seeking to bring the entire area of chemical hazard regulation under tripartite control.¹

It is clear that the Accord's unproblematic acceptance of the need to promote economic growth, and its nomination of full employment as the "paramount objective of economic policy" - with no environmental caveats - would sit ill with subsequent public policy commitments to the principle of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) across a range of areas. By this benchmark, the original Accord is most notable for its omissions. It did not include environmental amenity or environmental rights in its definitions of the social wage; environmental taxes were not canvassed in the section on taxation reform; neither sustainable development in general, the promotion of particular sustainable industries or technologies, or the curtailment of unsustainable ones, were mentioned as aspects of industry policy; environmental aspects of population and settlement questions were not addressed under immigration policy; and environmental health issues were not mentioned in connection with health policy (ALP/ACTU 1983 in Wilson et al, 2000: 283-307).

Whilst one cannot fairly criticise the Accord or its authors in 1983 for failure to achieve 2004 standards of best practice, the fact remains that Accord Mk. I provided little basis on which its partners could either address environmental issues or engage with the emergent political challenge of environmentalism. The renegotiation of the

¹ This provision read “Licensing of new chemicals at national level, according to principles and criteria to be developed by the Tripartite [National Occupational Health and Safety] Commission, through the establishment of an Environmental Contaminants Authority (ECA) responsible to the Minister for the Environment” (ALP/ACTU 1983 in Wilson et al, 2000: 302).
Accord through subsequent "Marks" could, in theory, have overcome the original Accord's "sustainability deficit". However, all seven renegotiations omitted to do so, even after either or both Accord parties had established policies which could have provided a basis for agreed environmental provisions in later Accords, and despite environmental issues proving to have significant implications for macroeconomic, industry and employment policy. As Chapter 7 relates, the Ecologically Sustainable Development process, in which unions and environmentalists came together to formulate plans for environmental reform of industry, proceeded largely in isolation from Accord processes.

5.2.3 Debates around the Accord

A lively debate occurred inside and outside the labour movement regarding the character of the Accord, its likely consequences for the labour movement and its wider political, economic and social consequences. Whilst the Accord was the subject of debate and analysis throughout the life of the Federal Labor government, and subsequently, the debate was at its richest and most intense during the period from 1982, when the Accord was being formulated, to 1986, when the decisive shift in Federal government policy towards neo-liberal positions, which were incompatible with much of the original Accord, destroyed the assumptions underpinning “left” pro-Accord positions and, according to one proponent of these positions, destroyed the Accord itself (CPA, 1987).

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the key issues raised in these debates are, first, whether the Accord institutionalised the dominance within the Australian trade
union movement of economistic “labourist” discourses (Singleton, 2000), thereby contributing to conflict in the LER, or whether it enabled the trade union movement to transcend labourism and intervene in the “politics of production” in potentially transformative ways, hence favouring cooperative tendencies in the LER. Second, whether as a consequence it represented a move to a new form of movement-wide "social unionism" (favouring co-operative tendencies in the LER), or whether it represented a form of movement-wide "business unionism" with the trade union movement as a weaker "social partner" of governments committed to policies intended to increase corporate profits (favouring conflict in the LER). Finally, whether the Accord can be understood as a form of corporatism with labour as an insider and other social movements including environmentalism as outsiders (thereby contributing to conflict in the LER), and whether the Accord continued the exclusion of the concerns of particular movement constituencies (such as women and migrants) from labour movement and general public policy agendas, or whether it provided a vehicle for overcoming such exclusion. The different interpretations of the Accord, and their implications for the foregoing questions, are now analysed.

Sections of the political, industrial and intellectual Left believed the Accord offered the labour movement an opportunity to transcend a traditional "labourist" emphasis on wages and conditions and achieve a form of movement-wide social unionism contesting the “politics of production” (Dow et al, 1984; Ogden, 1994). It was argued that the Accord, if implemented, would give unions unprecedented power in economic decision-making, equitably redistribute wealth and income and restructure the economy in the interests of the working class. The most optimistic commentators regarded the Accord as a vehicle for achieving a transition to
socialism: "a powerful engine of socialist advance" (Mathews, 1986: 179). This position was advocated particularly strongly by unionists aligned with the Communist Party of Australia, especially AMWU leaders such as Laurie Carmichael and Max Ogden, as well as the CPA and CPA fission products such as the Association for Communist Unity and the Socialist Forum.

The Left pro-Accord case had a basis in the CPA’s strategy of “interventionism” developed through the 1970s and early 1980s, which argued that the labour movement and progressive social movements should intervene in struggles around current political and public policy issues in order to promote positions and arguments "that deal with current problems and yet challenge capitalist power and help to develop socialist consciousness." The strategy also called for intervention in policy-making processes and issues which have hitherto been regarded as the prerogative of business and the state, thereby challenging the authority structures of capitalism, patriarchy and other systems of domination (CPA, 1979).² The Left pro-Accord case also drew strongly on notions of “political unionism” and “democratic class struggle” developed in Sweden, and adapted from Swedish experience and popularised in the Australian labour movement by left intellectuals and union researchers.

A key premise of these discourses was the need for the labour movement to develop new structures and capabilities to enable it to successfully pursue such strategies, a point taken up by Ogden (1984) and Mathews (1986). Ogden argued that the

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² In one formulation of this position, the CPA stated that: “if the union movement takes a leading role in formulating policies to benefit the whole of the working class... and full participation, democracy and mobilisation is developed, then a challenge to the ruling class in Australia can develop with a socialist direction” (CPA, 1982 in Stilwell, 1986: 27-28).
success of the pro-Accord strategy would require a new kind of labour movement with a core of highly and broadly skilled activists capable of intervening in economic, political and corporate decision-making, and with “a far deeper theoretical and ideological understanding of the [Accord] strategy” (Ogden, 1984: 27). The ACTU and unions needed to change their decision-making processes to enable agreement on a strategic action program of several years’ duration with well-defined goals, timetables and agreements on priorities as a basis for unity. On the other hand, the Accord itself was expected to help to promote such a renovated labour movement. This was because the unions would be empowered to play a wider political role by the return to centralised wage fixing under the Accord (thereby freeing them from the “treadmill of wage struggle”). Further, the Accord and the related Hancock Inquiry into industrial relations had set in train reforms which would allow the unions greater freedom of action and expedite their amalgamation into a smaller number of larger, stronger units (Mathews, 1986: 180-182).

Two other nuances of the Left-pro-Accord case were, first, that the pro-Accord Left recognised the Accord as a corporatist political-institutional framework (PIF), and supported it on that basis. Thus Dow et al argue that “Corporatism represents an expansion, not a diminution, of democratic control of the economy. It represents an affirmation of the central significance of class politics in contemporary circumstances” (Dow et al, 1984: 24). Second, the pro-Accord Left’s support for the Accord was conditional on it actually functioning as a reforming and potentially transforming process, rather than an instrument for governments to discipline labour. Whilst critics of corporatism were wrong to argue that the latter outcome (as in the
UK in the 1970s) was the inevitable result of corporatism, the lesson of such examples is that labour movements should withdraw from corporatist processes “if real wages commence to fall or if governments abrogate commitments to expansionary policy, industrial restructuring and economic democracy” (Dow et al, 1984: 25). These caveats became pertinent from 1985 onwards.

According to Stilwell, the pro-Accord Left position was consistent with an interpretation of “the Accord as class struggle,” which saw the Accord as opening up the state to further struggle between and within classes. For instance, industrial capital wanted to reduce the Accord to a means of wage restraint, finance capital argued for deregulation to allow the Accord to work as an economic growth engine, the ACTU sought (at least initially) to have the initial commitments honoured, the unemployed wanted primarily to see the Accord’s full employment goal achieved, and some socialists saw the Accord as potential lever for extending planning and economic democracy (Stilwell, 1986: 35). Stilwell sympathetically criticised the pro-Accord Left case on various grounds. Firstly, it conflated conceptions of political unionism with conceptions of a democratic transition to socialism; and there was a need for caution about conflating unionism and socialism (especially given the ACTU’s non-socialist orientation), and about the “Swedish road to socialism” which had yet to reach its destination and was experiencing difficulties in Sweden itself (Stilwell, 1986: 27-28). Secondly, Stilwell argued that a common theme of the pro-Accord Left appeared to be “simple optimism” about the possibility of the Accord yielding benefits to the working class (Stilwell, 1986: 27-28). Yet, if an interpretation of the Accord as an arena of class struggle, or of social and political struggle more generally, is accepted, then Accord outcomes could be expected to
reflect the relevant balance of political and social forces in Australia under the Labor government, and the relative effectiveness of their contending strategies. Both Ogden (1984) and Mathews (1986) were highly optimistic about the Australian political situation of the mid-1980s, Mathews going so far as to claim that prospects for socialism were healthier in Australia than in virtually any other develop nation in the world (Mathews, 1986: 178). Neither anticipated an aggressive counter-offensive by business and allied political forces against the labour movement and Accord-related reforms. Events from 1986 onward were to cast grave doubts on such optimism. The other development not anticipated by the pro-Accord Left was the growth of political environmentalism as a first-order political force.

In relation to the LER, the Left pro-Accord case was problematic. On one hand it emphasised the development of a movement-wide “social unionism”, indeed a socialist political unionism. This was expected to be assisted by changes in the PIF (centralised wage fixing and greater statutory freedom of action for unions) and union organisation (e.g. amalgamations) which would enable the unions to address a wider social and political agenda. Further, Accord provisions for tripartite decision-making and worker/union participation in relation to industry development, technological change and OHS were seen as offering the prospect of non-market social (including environmental) considerations being brought to bear on production decisions.

On the other hand, the pro-Accord Left strategy contained serious potential obstacles to LER cooperation. It privileged the "class struggle" as the central focus, and the labour movement as the central actor, for achieving socialist transformation. Yet as
Beilharz (1986) argues, if unions claim to represent the general interest (including by claiming to act as the leading force for social transformation), does this not risk disempowering those excluded from unions, or marginalising their concerns? This recalls the premise of the Siegmann-Norton model that the PIF most often associated with LER conflict was the corporatist one where labour functioned as an insider and confronted environmentalism as an outsider group. Yet it was this framework which the pro-Accord Left promoted as the basis of socialist advance.

Another area of promise mingled with difficulty was the pro-Accord Left’s argument that the Australian labour movement required a more centralised national organisational form capable of strategic coordination of policy and action, combined with stronger local and workplace organisation, in order to perform the tasks required by political unionism and the Accord-focused strategy. The Siegmann-Norton model posits that LER cooperation is aided by a decentralised labour movement offering freedom of action for "deviant" pro-environmentalist unions. It could be argued that the loss of autonomy for individual "green unions" could be more than offset if the labour movement as a whole developed a strong commitment to sustainability as a core commitment of "political unionism". None of the authors surveyed (except, weakly, Mathews) was arguing this in relation to the Accord, however. On the other hand, Higgins (1985) argues that one of the objectives of centralised “political unionism” is to replace sectionalism and “militant particularism” by individual unions and groups of workers with a movement-wide commitment to a broadly conceived class interest framed in anti-capitalist and anti-systemic terms. The Siegmann-Norton model posits that breadth and diversity of union membership is a positive factor for LER cooperation. Thus a form of
movement-wide unionism which attempts to aggregate diverse worker interests into a “discursive myth” of an anti-capitalist class interest could offer more potential for achieving LER cooperation than a unionism dominated by disaggregated craft and occupational particularisms, especially those in which *sui generis* political-economic, demographic and cultural factors propend to LER conflict.

Finally, a key difficulty of the pro-Accord Left case, as of the Accord itself, was its assumption of maximising economic growth (and hence employment) as the central goal of public policy, and the *raison d’être* of the corporatist structures in which organised labour was to participate. Whilst, in principle, it could be argued that such a goal could coexist with a commitment to sustainability, in the early 1980s the discourses of sustainable development and ecological modernisation were in their infancy, and their potential relevance to the solution of Australia's economic problems was not part of union or left discourse on the Accord. The Accord's commitments to maximising growth, and the discourse of political unionism which underpinned the Left’s support for the Accord, neither incorporated non-traditional definitions of growth nor acknowledged environmental concerns as either a constraint or an opportunity.

The pro-Accord discourses were contested on the left by critiques which argued that it would compromise the labour movement's capacity for independent industrial campaigns, and was a tool to discipline labour in the interests of capital (McPhillips, 1985; Thompson, 1984). The Accord also represented corporatism in the worst sense, with the labour movement's participation in tripartite economic planning and management being at the expense of its political autonomy, disempowering other
constituencies such as women and youth, and likely to see it co-opted into complicity
with conservative Labor Government policies (Beilharz & Watts, 1985; Probert,
1986; Camilleri, 1987). Some supporters of the Accord acknowledged the
possibility of some of these outcomes if conservative interpretations of the Accord
prevailed (Dow et al, 1984; Stilwell, 1986; Tanner, 1986), an outcome which many
commentators in the later years of the Accord (Ewer et al, 1991) and afterwards
(Bell, 1997; Frankel, 1997) believed had eventuated.

A further body of criticism of the Accord came from feminists concerned at its lack
of commitment to feminist concerns and the interests of working women (Preston,
1983; Blackman, 1984; Probert, 1986). An additional theme in such critiques, which
dovetailed with the radical-democratic critiques, is that the privileged position of the
trade union movement in tripartite processes entailed the exclusion both of the
women's movement and of other movements and interest groups which represented
important feminist concerns not within the purview of organised labour. These
critiques, and their implications for the LER, are now discussed.

The orthodox Marxist critiques saw the Accord as a tool to compromise the labour
movement's capacity for independent industrial campaigns, and to discipline labour
in the interests of capital. Hence the Labor Party's support for the Accord was part
of a "ruling class policy," union support for it was class-collaborationist, and the
Accord was ultimately favourable to the interests of business as it sought to restrain
wages whilst increasing profits (Thompson, 1984; Cooper, 1984; McPhillips, 1985).
The empirical evidence for this proposition was the actual growth in real profits
during the first year of the Hawke Government, and the substantial shift in the
respective shares of profit and wages in GDP in favour of the former (Thompson, 1984: 14-15). Orthodox Marxist critics of the Accord seldom outlined an alternative strategy for the labour movement to that of participation in the Accord, although Thompson's remarks on the possibility of wage gains in the field implied that he favoured a return to conventional industrial militancy. Such a strategy was implicit in most such critiques of the Accord by orthodox Marxists and some unionists, with some Marxist parties articulating this call with the need for a revolutionary socialist strategy under the leadership of a revolutionary party.

Thompson rejected the left justification of the Accord as "part of an interventionist strategy" on the grounds that the "sincere trade unionists" who held this view had not understood that the function of the capitalist state was to "reproduce the social relations of capitalism" and that co-opting the most militant trade unionists into "consensus planning" was one means of achieving this goal, which had been applied in various countries (Thompson, 1984: 15-16). The process by which Thompson saw such co-option occurring was essentially similar to that identified by Panitch (1981) in his critique of corporatism. Panitch disputed views which sought to "extrapolate the struggle over incorporation of working-class organisations into the capitalist state, into a struggle within corporatist forms, if not to transform the state, then to enhance considerably working class power" (Panitch, 1981: 28) and which, according to some, created the possibility for socialist transformation. This perspective "assumes that the working class can unify itself hegemonically on corporatist terrain [and] fails to understand that corporatist political structures are a form of capitalist domination" (Panitch, 1981: 28). Any prospect of labour or socialist advance within such structures would see them either dismantled or
converted into mechanisms of repression, and one of the paramount features of such structures in practice is "their dissonance with rank and file activity and working-class power" (Panitch, 1981: 28). In most countries where the labour movement had entered into corporatist arrangements in the expectation of significant social and political gains in return for moderate wage outcomes, the practical result had been a demobilisation of the labour movements, serious reduction of real wages in some cases, the use of corporatist arrangements to administer economic strategies based on restoring growth by redistributing wealth in favour of capital, and eventually the resumption of traditional industrial militancy outside and against the corporatist framework. The tripartite industry planning structures had neither improved economic or employment performance, nor had changed power relations in favour of labour.Whilst noting arguments that outcomes in Sweden could eventually be more favourable, Panitch also remarked that the capitalist structural conditions which had led to labour's difficulties in other countries were present in Sweden (Panitch, 1981: 36-40).

Other variants of the orthodox Marxist critique came from minority currents within the CPA which, whilst differing on whether the Accord should be supported or rejected, agreed that the optimism of the pro-Accord Left (including the CPA majority) was unfounded. Whereas Thompson (1984) argued that the Accord prevented the labour movement making the best use of its strength, the CPA dissidents argued that their party's support for the Accord as a vehicle for "interventionist" mobilisation was fatally vitiated by the present reality of working class weakness. As the Accord was premised on the recognition that "objective conditions" during the recession did not permit unions to gain wage rises through
industrial struggle alone, it was even less likely that unions would have the strength to mobilise effectively around the wider political claims in the Accord. Further sources of weakness were: (a) that the elite-level negotiation of the Accord meant that most unionists had not even read the claims around which the pro-Accord Left expected them to be mobilised; and (b) that the Accord's guarantee of six-monthly wage indexation without the need to campaign would further demobilise the labour movement (Bartlett et al, 1983: 20). The more sympathetic critique of McCulloch et al (1983) argued that Accord initiatives for centralised wage fixing, social wage expansion and union participation in tripartite structures deserved support. The Accord overall and related labour movement responses were nonetheless framed within a "limited economic framework" of neo-Keynesian explanations of the economic crisis and strategies for macro-economic management, rather than a left framework for wider social change. Therefore, whilst denouncing or rejecting the Accord was "a sectarian response likely to isolate the...left as a whole" and whilst the Accord "may build short-term unity for the working-class and ameliorate the worst effects of the crisis," it could not "play a significant role in transforming the economic and social relations in which working people live. It is... an immediate defensive response, and not a strategy for socialism" (McCulloch, et al, 1983: 40).

Panitch’s critique, and others from an orthodox Marxist perspective, shared critical assumptions with the pro-corporatist Left in Europe, and the pro-Accord Left in Australia, about the centrality of the class contradiction to political and economic conflict in capitalist societies, and the primary role of the labour movement, as the organised expression of working class interests, in the struggle to transform and transcend capitalism. The point of difference was whether corporatist structures
provide the most promising framework for successful working class struggle, or a
dangerous means for its containment. The radical-democratic Left critique of
Accord-corporatism as exclusionary, and the feminist critiques of the Accord with
which it converges, are in a crucial sense more fundamental than the Panitchean and
orthodox Marxist critiques.

The radical-democratic critique argued that the institutionalisation of the organised
labour movement, under the leadership of the ACTU, as a partner of government and
business in tripartite and consensual policy-making structures entailed the
privileging of a particular section of the working class (employed unionised workers
and their organisations) and of its concerns. This would exclude (a) other sections of
the class which were either under-represented within the organised labour movement
(e.g. women and migrant workers) or not included within it (unemployed workers
and other welfare recipients, and non-unionised workers); and (b) other popular
constituencies which were not defined with reference to, or whose interests were not
shaped by, industrial and economic class struggle (e.g. environmentalists,
Aborigines). This exclusion extended to representative associations and movements
of these constituencies (Triado, 1984; Beilharz, 1986a, 1986b; Beilharz & Watts,
1983, 1985). Not only was it likely that the interests and concerns of excluded
constituencies would be marginalised in the deliberations of the Accord-based and
tripartite structures, the ACTU and organised labour could even become complicit in
policies detrimental to these constituencies (Stewart, 1985). As discussed below,
this danger materialised with the wage-tax trade-off of Accord Mark II which
preserved wage-earners’ take-home pay at the expense of closing off options for
social wage improvement.
More fundamentally, this body of anti-corporatist critique, anticipating the radical-democratic politics of counter-hegemonic alliances espoused by Adkin and other LER scholars, challenged the assumptions shared by left-wing supporters of corporatism and their orthodox Marxist critics. These were that the class contradiction is the central source of political conflict and social disadvantage under capitalism, that class-specific concerns should be the central goals of social transformation, and that the labour movement should be the agency, not only of workers’ emancipation, but of emancipation of political subjects outside the waged working class. The concept of the centrality of class struggle was flawed because: (a) it was simply not true that the wage labour-capital relation could be the explanatory key to the “complex nature of capitalist societies, and the complex and differentiated nature of social conflict” manifested in, amongst other things, the various social movements (Triado, 1984: 41); and (b) most actual class struggle in modern capitalism was *systemic* class struggle which merely sought a redistribution of the social product within capitalist social relations. It was not *political* class struggle which entailed a challenge to existing systemic power relations. Whilst political struggle had influenced the goals of many socialists, it was systemic class struggle which was increasingly typical of the actual practice and horizons of the labour movement (Triado, 1984: 42).

Further, according to Triado:

> if class struggle moves only along the axes of capitalism and industrialisation, emancipation is necessarily premised upon the greater democratisation of society. Socialism today... can only be understood as ‘radicalised democracy’. It is not empirically derivable from... a numerical, even preponderant working class presence within administrative bodies controlling production (Triado, 1984: 44).
Triado also argues that corporatism is fundamentally inimical to democracy in two related respects. One is that corporatist institutions are created to pursue public policy goals (primarily those of economic system maintenance such as growth, economic performance and industry restructuring) whose desirability is presumed in advanced by corporatist participants, and not subject to substantive challenge or debate; the role of the corporatist structures is to reach consensus on the means to these economic ends. Yet genuine democracy must enable debate about the ends of public policy – “the good life” – with consideration of all societal interests and perspectives, including conflictual ones. All such interests are affected by the decisions of corporatist bodies, yet many are often not represented therein. Related to this, the privileged representation of largely class-based functional groups within corporatist arrangements violates the “citizenship principle,” including the rights of all citizens to political participation, which is basic to democracy. Also, it entails the exclusion of “non-functional and dysfunctional interests” (“dysfunctional interests” being those which conflict with capitalist system-maintenance) from decision-making, along with the issues and perspectives, including environmental ones, which these interests present (Triado, 1984: 47; Beilharz & Watts, 1985a: 22-23).

The radical-democratic critique resonates with Stilwell’s criticism of "mainstream" advocacy of the Accord as a means of macroeconomic management and the underpinning assumption of a "national interest" which would thus be served. The "national interest" in economic recovery was assumed to be unproblematically common to employed and jobless, men and women, and skilled and unskilled workers alike. As well as possible green objections to maximising growth, Stilwell argued that the problem with this assumption was its neglect of competing class or
sectional concerns and the belief that good aggregate economic performance is good for everyone regardless of the distribution of the gains. This was clearly inadequate from a political economy perspective which stresses the connection between economic distribution, political conflict and social change (Stilwell, 1986: 26-27).

The feminist critique of the Accord combined aspects of the radical-democratic critique of the Accord with the argument that the Accord, despite its authors' intentions, failed to transcend the limitations of labourism. The main elements of this critique were that: (a) the original Accord lacked commitment to feminist concerns and to the interests of working women; and (b) the privileged position of the trade union movement in tripartite processes under the Federal Labor government entailed the exclusion of the women’s movement and of other movements and interest groups which represented important feminist concerns not within the purview of organised labour (Preston, 1983; Blackman, 1984; Probert, 1986). The prevalence of gendered conceptions of employment and workers’ interests was reflected in the Accord's implicit construction of men as bread-winners and women as home-makers, and its assumption of a gendered definition of the working class (Stilwell, 1986; Blackman, 1984). These weaknesses arose from historical patterns of male domination of the labour movement and the prevalence of gendered conceptions of employment and workers’ interests, in which the typical “worker” is a permanently employed full-time male worker in a blue-collar occupation in the manufacturing, construction, transport or resources sector, with a dependent spouse as full-time domestic worker and carer. Unlike other critiques of the Accord which saw its weaknesses primarily in its discontinuity with past labour movement practice, feminist criticism focused on the continuities it embodied,
notably its failure to challenge gender inequalities in Australian society and to break with male-oriented policies and practices in the labour movement. In short the Accord did not cause, but did embody and buttress, the patriarchal aspects of the existing order (Stilwell, 1986: 32-33). Thus the direct involvement of women in formulating the Accord was minimal due to male domination of the ALP and ACTU. Nonetheless, if the feminist critique is accepted (as it generally was, even by sections of the pro-Accord Left such as Mathews and the CPA), it is fatal to the pro-Accord Left’s assumption that the Australian labour movement, operating through corporatist processes, can be the agent of universal social emancipation, and that the interests and identities associated with subject positions such as that of women can be captured by producer group representation in tripartite structures.

The combined radical-democratic and feminist critique of the Accord, and more broadly of “labourism” and “productivism” bears substantially on the LER and the variables identified in the Siegmann-Norton model, as discussed in the next section.

The orthodox Marxist critique of the Accord and corporatism was not concerned with its implications for environmental policy or the LER. However, two of its key premises would, if true, suggest that the Accord would enhance conflict tendencies in the LER. These were, firstly, that union support for the Accord was based on an acceptance of orthodox capitalist arguments about the need to restore corporate profitability as a condition of economic recovery, and thus of the need for unions to refrain from industrial action which could disrupt the accumulation process; and, secondly, that union participation in the Accord placed labour in a position of weakness and subordination vis-à-vis the agendas of capital and the state. Put
simply, the argument was that the Accord was a form of movement-wide "business unionism" which accepted social partnership on the terms of business and the state, and accepted hegemonic ideology regarding the desirability or inevitability of capitalism and the need to manage it on its terms. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model the Accord would thus have been expected to foster LER conflict, especially where environment movement activity was significantly anti-systemic or seriously challenged the prerogatives of sections of business. However, the usefulness of the orthodox Marxist critique is limited both by its lack of attention to the LER and environmentalism, and by its failure to propose an alternative strategic perspective beyond reversion to traditional industrial militancy around economic issues, which in itself had little to offer the LER.

The radical-democratic anti-corporatist critique is more significant for the LER. As inclusion of the unions as an insider group under Accord arrangements was not accompanied by any comparable attempt to incorporate environmentalism, it reproduced the familiar LER-conflictual dyad of labour inside and environmentalism outside the PIF. More seriously, this counterposition would have remained even if labour's involvement in the Accord had satisfied the conditions set out by the pro-Accord Left, and consequently borne out its optimistic scenario of "socialist advance" through corporatism.

The pro-Accord Left provided no answer to the key questions raised by the radical-democratic critique. First, how could tripartite forums, which presumed in advance that maximum economic growth was unproblematically good as a public policy goal, accommodate perspectives such as environmentalism which questioned the
desirability, primacy and long-term viability of that goal, or proposed others which could not be reconciled with it in unmodified form? Second, how could a form of public policymaking based on producer group representation be reconciled with democratic demands based on the rights of citizenship, such as environmental rights and rights of participation in developmental decision-making? Third, how could a strategy of "socialist advance" based on the centrality of class accommodate the diversity of interests, issues and goals thrown up by new social movements expressing non-class interests/identities? These concerns, and Stewart's argument that the unions could become complicit in policies detrimental to excluded constituencies, apply with particular force to sectors with significant environmental impacts, where it could be posited that the unions, business organisations and government agencies represented in tripartite forums could collude in positions perceived to be beneficial to the industry, but inimical to the concern for sustainability of excluded constituencies and a broader public. This point is taken up in Chapter 7.

The feminist critique of the Accord and the labour movement enriches the radical-democratic critique by highlighting aspects of the Australian labour movement which may have impeded LER cooperation. These include the culture of uncritical solidarity which leads to hostility to the agendas of "outsider" constituencies such as environmentalists (Pocock, 1997; Lake, 1986), the gendered conception of the working class which valorises male blue collar workers in industries with high environmental impacts, and the long-standing dominance of such workers and their concerns within the trade union movement. The latter points suggest a potential for union leaderships representing small occupational categories of male workers in
environmentally contentious industries (such as forestry) to discursively construct the perceived threat to their interests from environmentalist demands as a threat to "workers" in general, and to win over the largely male ACTU leaderships during the Accord period to this perspective. This issue is also covered in Chapter 7. Finally, the feminist critique of Australian labour as patriarchal, and of the Accord relationship as reflecting this, suggests that Adkin's (1998a) analysis of gendered dynamics in the Canadian LER is also applicable to Australian cases.

5.3 The Accord in Practice, 1983-96

The following sections trace the evolution of the Accord, its renegotiations through several versions, and its fate in the context of overall Federal government policy in the 1980s and 1990s, with specific focus on its implementation and evolution in relation to: macroeconomic policy; wages and workers incomes; social policy and the social wage; industry and sectoral policy; the political-institutional role of labour; the organisation of labour in the workplace; and labour-capital relations. The specific attention paid by various Accord "Marks" to environmental issues and the LER will also be considered.

5.3.1 Accord Mark I, 1983-85

The Accord remained in its original form from the election of the Hawke government in March 1983 to its renegotiation in September 1985. Whilst the Accord represented a "bipartite societal agreement" (McDonald, 1985) between the ALP in opposition and the union movement, the Federal Labor Government had to
reconcile its Accord commitments with the need to develop relationships with other actors whose cooperation was required in macroeconomic management. Of these the most powerful was business. Thus the bipartite Accord began to be subsumed into tripartite processes involving the Federal government, unions and business (Stilwell, 1986).

The initial step in this process was the National Economic Summit held in April 1983, which brought together leaders of the Federal and State Governments, the ACTU, employer groups and others, with almost all participants being males representing powerful economic interest groups. The main focus of discussion was nominally employment, but in reality was wages policy. Whilst the Summit agreed on the need to simultaneously fight unemployment and inflation, all participants accepted that unemployment could only be reduced by a couple of per cent over a three year period. Apart from favourable media attention for the Federal Government, the Summit's main outcome was a tripartite agreement whose terms included the creation of a range of tripartite economic and industrial policy machinery, such as the Economic Planning Advisory Council and industry councils. The final Summit communiqué was couched in notably more conservative economic language, and included less definite commitments, than the Accord. The Summit outcomes also provided a politically saleable way for the Labor government to modify its election commitments, including postponement of tax cuts and re-establishment of an Expenditure Review Committee to trim public spending (Stilwell, 1986: 12-14).
The Hawke government pursued an expansionist macroeconomic strategy, underpinned by moderate wages growth, during the period of Accord Mk. I. The Accord lasted despite predictions of an early collapse, and the first three years of the Hawke government saw impressive economic performance compared with the Fraser years and other OECD countries, although commentators differ on the extent to which this was due to the Accord rather than factors such as the breaking of the drought, the concurrent economic recovery in the US and the stimulatory effects of the Fraser government's 1982 budget. Economic growth from 1983-84 to 1985-86 averaged 4.5% compared with negative growth in Fraser's last year, and unemployment fell from 9.5% to 7.9%. Industrial disputation declined as intended, and, as noted by Thompson (1984) and in line with the underlying economic strategy of the Accord, the share of profits in national income increased vis-à-vis wages (Stilwell, 1986; Bell, 1997).

Implementation of the Accord’s specific commitments was uneven, and the subject of political struggle and eventual retreat. Full six-monthly wage indexation was restored in September 1983, with allowance for additional wage rises based on improved work value. Against this the ACTU's claim for productivity-based wage rise was deferred to after 1985, and claims for work-time reductions below a 38-hour week would not be permitted. An early source of tension was whether and how the 9.1% decline in real wages due to the wage freeze would be redressed "over time" as promised in the Accord, with unions attempting independent action to this end being fiercely opposed by the ACTU and pro-Accord Left unionists (Burgmann, 1984: 91). Further, the Accord wage guidelines entrenched inequitable relativities, particularly those between predominantly male and predominantly female occupations which
undervalued women's work relative to work of comparable worth performed by men. Wage claims to redress this inequity were ruled outside the Accord guidelines by the Arbitration Commission (Willis & Wilson, 2000: 2; Burgmann, 1984: 91; Stilwell, 1986: 43-44, 54). Finally, when Medicare was introduced the Commission accepted the government’s argument that the subsequent wage adjustment be discounted for the benefit of Medicare (Stilwell, 1991: 34). Offsetting a social wage gain with a real industrial wage cut went beyond the Accord formula of trading social wage gains for industrial wage moderation, and established a precedent to be followed in subsequent versions of the Accord. These restrictions on wage movements contrasted with the weaker implementation of Accord provisions on prices and non-wage incomes. A Prices Surveillance Authority was established with an emphasis on moral persuasion and voluntary restraint rather than the regulatory powers called for by the original Accord, and Government policy on non-wage incomes consisted entirely of exhortations for voluntary restraint. Business ignored such calls by letting executive salaries rise faster than inflation, and only some professions acceded to voluntary Arbitration Commission assessment of fees and charges (Stilwell, 1986: 38-40; Stilwell, 1991: 34).

Implementation of the original Accord's social wage provisions was also incomplete, Social wage spending in the Federal budget rose in real terms from 1982-83 to 1986-87, but the picture was less satisfactory when specific items are examined. The establishment of Medicare was positive, but childcare funding and education funding failed to keep pace with demand, social security spending fell from 28.9% in 1982-83 to 27.6% in 1985-86, and social security spending other than on unemployment support fell from 6.9% to 6.7% of GDP in this period, trends which showed a
reluctance to address poverty through welfare measures. Also, the Hawke government's targeting of welfare expenditures, which it justified on efficiency and equity grounds, did little to relieve poverty, which would require a much more extensive program of redistribution (Stilwell, 1986: 71-75).

The original Accord created an expectation of progressive tax reform to secure trade union co-operation and attack poverty and inequality, but progress was slow until the national Tax Summit in June 1985, at which the government proposed a package based on a broad-based consumption tax to finance large income tax cuts for middle-income earners. The economic rationale for the package, which completely contravened the Accord, was based on neo-liberal arguments by Treasury. Business also supported this package in principle. Thus the agenda for the Summit was set, not by the Accord and the unions, but by the neo-liberal Treasury and non-labour interest groups. The Summit format also diluted the ACTU's preferential consultative status under the Accord (Singleton, 1990: 157-158). However, the government's preferred package was only workable if the ACTU would accept discounting of wages for the impact of the consumption tax on prices, which brought the Accord back to centre stage.

In the event the ACTU rejected wage discounting, and the combination of ACTU resistance, internal disquiet, and opposition from community and welfare groups, ALP members and sections of business, led the Hawke government to abandon the package at the Summit (Singleton, 1990: 159-163). The expectation of tax reform in some form was subsequently met by a series of measures including reform of sales tax, introduction of capital gains and fringe benefits taxes, lower marginal tax rates, a
slight increase in tax on profits offset by an end to “double taxation” of profits and
dividends, and proposals to ease poverty traps. Whilst their introduction was
accompanied by rhetorical reaffirmations of the centrality of the Accord to
government policy (Singleton, 1990: 162-163), their major consequence was to
provide the basis for the Accord’s renegotiation in ways which maintained the living
standards of waged labour, at the expense of social wage commitments and the
interests of those outside the waged workforce (Stilwell, 1986: 87).

Finally, industry policy proved a serious sticking point between the government and
the unions. Stilwell, writing early in the life of Accord Mark II, noted that it had
been the "Achilles heel" of Accord implementation, largely because of the hostile
influence of neo-liberalism (Stilwell, 1986: 89-90). It was also a "make or break"
area in terms of the strategy of the pro-Accord Left, because it was where the
development of tripartite machinery would be densest, it was a key area for
expansion of union involvement in the "politics of production", and it was pivotal to
the union Left's initial support for the Accord. These issues and their implications
for the LER are considered extensively in Chapter 7.

5.3.2 The Accord at Risk: Neo-Liberalism and the Balance of Payments Crisis

Whilst there continued to be criticism of the Accord from the left, and resistance to
Accord discipline from individual unions, the most fundamental challenges to the
Accord came from the rise of neo-liberalism in Australian public policy, and the
emergence of the BOP crisis.
Whilst the impact of neo-liberalism was first felt under the Fraser government, it came to fruition under the Federal Labor government in competition with the post-Keynesian expansionism of the Accord. The Hawke government implemented the proposals of the Campbell Inquiry (established by Fraser) to deregulate financial markets, float the Australian dollar on world markets, abolish exchange controls, open Australia's financial system to the world and thus expose the Australian economy to the test of global finance market approval of government policies, with the consequences of disapproval being capital flight overseas and sell-off of the dollar. The Hawke government also abolished interest rate controls and allowed foreign banks to operate in Australia.

The contest between the social democratic macroeconomic approach of the Accord, and the neo-liberal one of financial deregulation, occurred in the context of the BOP crisis, which had been developing from the early 1980s but came to a head during the Hawke government's second term. According to Bell (1997), central to the crisis was the tension between the Federal government and global financial markets over how fast the economy could grow. Increased economic activity in Australia worsens the BOP due to increased demand by firms and individuals for goods (especially elaborately transformed manufactures and capital equipment) sourced largely or wholly overseas. Other elements of the BOP crisis included overseas borrowing and debt servicing (principally in the private sector), and repatriation of profits by foreign investors (Bell, 1997: 145-151).

Although an interventionist industry policy as called for by the original Accord was essential to overcoming the structural weaknesses which underpinned the BOP crisis,
the Accord itself provided no tools for managing the crisis in the short-term (Bell, 1997: 145; Stilwell, 1986: 89-106). The problem was that the policies to which the Government resorted from 1985 onwards consisted of a range of neo-liberal measures and deflationary policies, adopted partly to reassure financial markets concerned about "big government”, which both exacerbated BOP problems and required the original Accord goals to be severely compromised. The first such attempt was the adoption of the economic "Trilogy", a commitment that taxation, public spending and the Federal budget deficit would not increase as a proportion of GDP. Such a commitment was irreconcilable with full implementation of the Accord, especially its tax reform and social wage provisions (Stilwell, 1986: 14-15). However, neo-liberal forces in Australian business, media and politics still called for a stronger neo-liberal line. Whilst this was occurring, the Australian dollar began losing value due to a sell-off based on perceptions of the structural weaknesses of the economy. The government's response to this was based on the theory that the A$ should be allowed to fall so that Australian exports would become progressively cheaper whilst imports became dearer, thus increasing the global demand for the former and reducing the local demand for the latter, until an equilibrium was reached at which Australia's trade balance would no longer be in deficit. An important consequence of this theory was that wages needed to be kept from rising in line with price rises due to devaluation. This converged with the concern of export-oriented capital that wage indexation was preventing it from taking full advantage of devaluation. Thus the agenda for renegotiation of the Accord in 1985 was over how to satisfy ACTU demands that workers' real living standards be maintained whilst achieving deflationary wage restraint.

5.3.3 Accord Mark II: A Wage-Tax Trade-Off

The renegotiated Accord, announced in September 1985, provided for a 2 per cent discount of wage increases in the April 1986 national wage case, to be compensated for by a tax cut designed to ensure that the value of after-tax incomes was maintained. The unions' 4% productivity claim would be granted in the form of a 3% occupational superannuation contribution (Wilson et al, 2000). Whilst the tax cut would maintain the living standards of those in work, in practice it was to be paid for at the expense of the Accord's social wage commitments, as it would be funded from “further restraint in commonwealth expenditures in 1986-87 and 1987-88” and the Trilogy would be maintained (Keating & Willis, 1986, in Wilson et al, 2000: 311).

Whilst Accord Mk. II was seen by government, business and the ACTU as a good deal at the time, concern was growing within unions and the political Left about the social wage constraints it entailed and the "rubberiness" of the original Accord commitments. The situation deteriorated in 1986 as the economy began slowing, the BOP crisis grew worse and other economic problems came to the fore, and in June 1986 Hawke announced a package of measures to address the economic situation. The September 1986 wage case was to be postponed and wage discounting was to continue, the promised tax cuts were deferred to December 1986, and the superannuation/productivity trade-off would not apply across the board but be negotiated on an enterprise and industry basis. This was a clear break with Accord Mk. II. Supplementary policies, including more public sector restraint and consideration of a "work for the dole" program, marked a further break with Accord
social wage commitments. The Hawke government's package failed both in policy terms and politically, as the dollar kept falling and the economy entered a moderate recession. On one side business and the financial press regarded the austerity measures as insufficiently stringent, whilst on the other unionists felt that workers were being asked to bear the costs of a crisis which was partly due to failure to implement the Accord's progressive commitments, especially on industry policy (Stilwell, 1986: 19-21; Bell, 1997).

The developments of 1985-86 voided the Left case for the Accord as a vehicle of social and economic reform, as both it and the Hawke government’s policies breached the benchmarks which Dow (1984) and other pro-Accord Leftists had set for union participation in the Accord. The logical conclusion was that it was time for the labour movement, or at least the left-wing unions, to withdraw from the Accord and pursue alternative strategies. Yet the ACTU, including the Left unions, remained committed to the Accord process despite their dissatisfaction with its outcomes, and the Accord, considered as a relationship between the labour movement and the Labor Government within the PIF, continued for the remaining decade of Federal Labor government. The reasons for the labour movement’s united resolve to persist with the Accord relationship are considered in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.3.4 Accords Mark III to Mark VII: Win-Win Bargaining For Productivity or Cost-Cutting and Profit-Taking?

The wage-fixing principles under Accord auspices departed further from original Accord principles at the December 1986 wage case which approved in principle a "two-tier" wage system. This laid the ground for a fundamental shift in industrial
relations which proceeded through subsequent Accord "Marks". The March 1987 wage case at which the details of the "two tier" system were agreed is taken as marking the commencement of Accord Mk. III, which centred on a flat $10 per week wage increase for all workers and a second tier of wage increases up to 4%, to be negotiated on an enterprise or industry basis on the basis of demonstrated improvements in efficiency and productivity through the elimination of "restrictive work practices". Bell (1997) notes that the creation of a 2-tiered wages system with a 2nd tier based on productivity bargaining meant that the Accord, from Mk. III onwards, had become a part of micro-economic policy, and that whilst the 2-tiered system was initially based on industry and award bargaining, it led logically to a focus on enterprise bargaining, and a questioning of the need for centralised union structures. Significantly, this was when the ACTU was adopting strategic documents, Australia Reconstructed and Future Strategies for the Trade Union Movement, which emphasised the need for more centralisation of Australian unionism. Stilwell (1991) notes another disunifying effect of the two-tiered system, namely a division between blue-collar and white-collar workers and their unions, as it was more difficult for the latter to demonstrate or achieve tangible "productivity gains" to be the basis of second-tier increases.

From here on, the history of the Accord relationship was largely one of ACTU-ALP negotiation and oversight of a transformation of Australia's industrial relations system, away from centralised wage fixing to regulated enterprise bargaining (EB), which entailed the trading of wage increases for productivity gains, with the award system providing a "safety net" for workers unable to benefit from such negotiations. Accords Mk. IV and Mk. V entailed wage/tax trade-offs, acceptance of employers’
demands for restrictive conditions for approving wage increases, and a transformation of second tier negotiations under the rubric of the “structural efficiency” principle and the associated process of "award restructuring", which were endorsed by the Federal Government as part of its approach to achieving "labour market flexibility". The structural efficiency principle, as envisaged by the Commission, had the merit of focussing on positive steps to improve efficiency and productivity rather than a negative focus on cost-cutting and restrictive work practices. On the other hand the emphasis on industry-level application of the structural efficiency principle was a further disaggregating factor, as the scope for productivity improvements and hence productivity-based wage rises varied greatly between industries (Stilwell, 1991: 37-39). The ability of workers to achieve second-tier wage rises also varied with their industrial strength, with unions such as the AMWU well-placed to achieve gains whilst others would have to wait longer and potentially miss out on second-tier increases. Despite concerns about concessions to employers and the position of lower-paid workers, Accord Mk. V was accepted by the ACTU and most unions, save for the pilots' union which struck unsuccessfully for claims outside the Accord guidelines (Stilwell, 1991: 39-40; Bell, 1997).

In 1991 the ACTU and Federal government agreed on Accord Mk. VI which introduced scope for enterprise-level productivity bargaining for over-award wage rises. The shift to enterprise bargaining became more pronounced because the complex interplay of the timing of a wage-tax trade-off and Commission approval of a two-stage wage rise resulted in an effective 14-month freeze on general pay increases. This made productivity, especially enterprise, bargaining the main avenue for groups of workers to increase their wages. For a time the Industrial Relations
In 1993 Accord VII was negotiated, promising safety net increases for low-paid and industrially weaker workers, and a shift to decentralisation through a combination of EB with a centralised "safety net" stream of wage fixing administered by the IRC. There was also to be a non-union "Enterprise Flexibility Stream", but after some dispute between unions, the employers, government and the Commission it was eventually agreed that unions could still be a party to agreements in the enterprise flexibility stream, even in non-union workplaces, and that such agreements would require Commission approval. The last Accord, Mk. VIII, was negotiated in 1995 but could not be implemented before the defeat of the Labor government in the 1996 election, which brought an end to the Accord relationship (Bell, 1997: 196-204).

5.4 Evaluation: Unions and the LER in the Accord Relationship

The apparent paradox of the Accord is that whilst the social wage and economic reform agenda of the original Accord had effectively ceased to exist by 1986, and its wages policy agenda, based on centralised wage-fixing, had begun to be abandoned by 1988, the Accord relationship survived through the life of the Federal Labor Government. The question this poses is why did the ACTU and (with very few
exceptions) all of its affiliates across the ideological spectrum persist as Accord partners after the original Accord reform agenda had been vitiated by neo-liberal trends in the Federal government and the wider political environment? In particular, why did left-wing unions such as the AMWU persist with the Accord relationship when all the original conditions and assumptions underpinning left union support for the Accord had ceased to apply? These issues are explored in more depth in Chapter 6.

Key questions derived from the Siegmann-Norton model are: how did the evolution of the Accord and the Accord relationship affect the labour movement's position in the PIF, its ideology, and its internal organisation, and how were these changes likely to have affected the LER? This recalls the questions raised at the start of Section 5.2.3: did the Accord institutionalise the dominance within the Australian labour movement of “labourist” discourses (Singleton, 2000), or did it enable the trade union movement to transcend labourism and intervene in the “politics of production” in potentially transformative ways? Did it represent a move to a new form of movement-wide "social unionism" or did it constitute a form of movement-wide "business unionism" with the trade union movement as a weaker "social partner" of governments committed to pro-business policies? Did the Accord position labour as an insider within the PIF, and other social movements including environmentalism as outsiders, and did it continue the exclusion of the concerns of particular constituencies from labour movement and general public policy agendas, or did it provided a vehicle for overcoming such exclusion? Based on the Siegmann-Norton model, the answers to these questions suggest that the LER would have tended to become more conflictual during the Accord relationship.
The answers to the first and second questions are provided by statements by leading figures on both sides of the Accord. In a famous address to the Business Council of Australia (BCA) in 1994, the Federal Treasurer John Dawkins stated that the BCA had been the dominant influence on the Labor Government's economic policies and that its research and intellectual approach underpinned Labor's "unashamedly pro-business reform agenda" (Williams & Ellis, 1994: 8). For political reasons, however, it was useful for the BCA's influence to not be advertised, and to be masked by having the BCA sometimes pose as a critic of Government policy, so as to help Labor maintain the support of its own constituency. Dawkins also suggested that the ACTU had been converted to a pro-business agenda within a few years of the Hawke government's election, and had been able to deliver the whole union movement in support. In 1987 the then ACTU President Simon Crean, was taken to task by representatives of the Australian Conservation Foundation about why the ACTU and forestry unions did not stake out a position on forestry issues independent and distinct from that of the employers. His reply was:

*When you look at industries in past three years that have successfully adapted to devaluation they have been industries where union and industry have worked together. So don't knock that... We want a balanced approach, but every industry where we've worked with them has benefited* (Crean in Balderstone, 1987a).

Beyond such quotes, the fact remains that the ACTU persisted in the Accord relationship and a supportive approach to the Federal Labor government when it was pursuing policies which were intended to, and did, redistribute the respective shares of wages and profit in national income decisively in favour of the latter (ABC, 2003; Carman & Rogers, 1999). And, as Chapter 7 will show, the ACTU and some major unions' responses to environmental issues in the late 1980s and early 1990s were
conditioned by a belief in the need to maximise economic activity by creating a favourable investment climate for private capital, if necessary at the expense of environmental and social regulation. Thus it can be said that the labour movement in the Accord relationship did decline into an ideology of movement-wide "business unionism" and of social partnership as a weak partner.

One consequence of this and of the marginalisation of the industry development and strategic economic planks of the original Accord, as will be shown at length in Chapter 7, is that the employment and economic goals of the labour movement became detached from any transformative agenda of engagement with the "politics of production". By the early 1990s, they were entirely dependent on securing a share of the benefits of increased private economic activity on terms determined by capital. Thus the upshot of the Accord relationship was that labourism remained largely unchallenged, and by the end of the Accord the labour movement as a whole (with some exceptions such as the AMWU) was further from engaging in the politics of production than it had been in the early 1980s.

The thesis of the Accord as a form of corporatism is, as we have seen, not seriously disputed either by supporters or critics. The radical-democratic critique - that it entailed the continued disempowerment, and exclusion from economic and social policymaking, of constituencies outside of or underrepresented within organised labour, capital and government - also seems largely correct. Some evidence of this is provided, both by the continuing under-representation of women in leading union structures throughout the life of the Accord (despite some special affirmative action measures from 1989 onwards) and by specific changes to industrial relations under
the later Accord "Marks" (specifically the shift to enterprise bargaining) which were agreed to without regard to their deleterious impact on women workers, who were concentrated in less well-organised and unionised industries. This was despite the identification of the relative non-unionisation of women as a problem in the *Future Strategies* document endorsed by the 1987 ACTU Congress. In addition to statistical evidence of a widening of the gap between male and female wages, the EB processes saw many cases of male-dominated workplaces agreeing to trade off leave entitlements and restrictions on working hours for pay rises in EB negotiations, despite the deleterious effect of losing these entitlements for women with domestic responsibilities (Pocock, 1997). Ironically, the ESD process - which overcame the corporatist exclusion of the environmental movement by bringing the peak national environmental organisations to the corporatist table with unions, business and the state, was itself to be criticised for continuing the exclusion of women, ethnic minorities and community groups (Diesendorf & Hamilton, 1997).

The final question which must be posed is what effect the Accord and Accord relationship had on the organisation and capacities of the Australian labour movement? The difficulty in answering this question is that whilst the greatest changes in the movement's history took place during the Accord period, they cannot only be analysed in terms of the Accord, but must be analysed as part of a complex dynamic in which the Accord relationship interacted with other processes driving political and organisation changes. This process is described in more detail in Chapter 6, but the most significant of these changes included a massive decline in union membership density, from over 50% of the workforce in 1982 to less than 30% by the time the Accord ended in 1996; the process of union rationalisation
which commenced with the decisions of the 1987 ACTU Congress; the enhancement of the central authority of the ACTU as a peak council vis-à-vis its affiliates, with the political corollary being the emergence of a consensual politics within the union movement which tempered any tendency which may have existed for Left unions to break out of the Accord once it had exhausted its reforming potential; and a decline in unions' capacity for workplace organisation, activism and negotiation during the period of centralised wage-fixing under the Accord, which placed unions under considerable pressure once the industrial relations system shifted to regulated enterprise bargaining in the 1990s (Mighell quoted in ABC, 2003). As Chapter 6 explains more fully, these tendencies were generally unhelpful to LER cooperation, although in different ways and on different time scales.
Chapter 6
Crisis and Change: Australia’s Union Rationalisation Process
6.1 Introduction

The period of the Accord relationship was also a period of historic change in the organisational form and processes of the labour movement in Australia. Three main changes can be identified.

First, the authority of the ACTU as a peak council was enhanced in determining labour movement policies and strategies. Related to this was the emergence of a cross-factional consensus approach to the development of labour movement policy and strategy amongst the leaderships of the ACTU and major unions. A consequence of this was a narrowing of the political space for the expression of alternative or dissenting views within the labour movement. Second, there was a long-term decline in union coverage of the Australian workforce, together with an erosion of the institutionalised role of unions in economic and workplace issues. Third, there was an intentional reorganisation of the Australian labour movement commencing in the late 1980s, centring on a strategy of amalgamations and rationalisation of union coverage of the workforce.

This chapter will track and analyse each of these trends of organisational change and their interaction with each other, and will apply the Siegmann-Norton model to assess their implications for the Labour-Environmentalist Relationship in Australia.
6.2 Centralisation and Consensus in the Accord Relationship

6.2.1 The Evolution of Australian Trade Union Organisation to 1983

The first unions and colonial and inter-colonial trades and labour councils in Australia were formed in the 19th century. A recession in the 1890s enabled employers to counter-mobilise against unions, usually with the assistance of colonial governments and their enforcement apparatus, inflicting heavy defeats on unions in four major strikes including the 1891 shearsers' strike (Evatt, 1995: 14; Briggs, 2002: 81). Australian unions responded to these industrial defeats by forming a political party, the Australian Labor Party (ALP). A commitment to compulsory arbitration as the preferred means of wage determination and industrial dispute resolution became ALP policy early on, and compulsory arbitration was enacted in several States and the Commonwealth in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1904, unions could be legally registered and recognised by Commissions, in which case they would be subject to the Act's provisions and forego the right to strike, or they could be unregistered and retain the right to strike. Under the new system union coverage of Australian workers grew to 28\% in 1911 and 52\% by 1921. The first federal union was registered in 1905, and federal unions grew to include 85\% of trade union members by the 1920s, a process which was aided by political radicalisation following World War One (Evatt, 195: 15-16). The first Australian unions had been craft-based on the English model, and the predominantly craft-based nature of Australian unions continued for most of the twentieth century despite calls for a shift to industry unionism. Nonetheless, "closer organisation" was
a central goal of the labour movement, and the formation of industry unions was one of the founding goals of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) on its formation in 1927.

Over the following decades, unions became larger on average, and unionism extended to white collar occupations, with white collar unions comprising over half of all unions by 1994 (Evatt, 1995: 17). However, the union movement remained organisationally fragmented until the 1980s, when a changed political and economic environment caused the labour movement to view amalgamations both more favourably and more urgently (Evatt, 1995: 18).

6.2.2 The Rise of the ACTU

The ACTU was formed in 1927 as a defensive response by contending union blocs to the hostile political and economic environment of the late 1920s, with an initial structure designed to limit its authority and autonomy vis-à-vis its affiliates and State trades & labour councils, and with a *modus operandi* which limited the new peak council to an "educational and guiding role" (Griffin, 1994: 82; Briggs, 2002: 82). The 1940s saw the ACTU grow and consolidate its membership and influence. By 1950 41% of unionists were members of ACTU-affiliated unions. The quantitative growth trend continued in later decades, with the ACTU representing 52% of unionists in 1957, 65% in 1965 and 79% in 1971. The growth trend was boosted by the affiliation of the Australian Workers Union in 1967, and the mergers of the three main white-collar union councils with the ACTU in the 1970s and 1980s (Briggs, 2002: 86).
Qualitative growth in the ACTU's authority was more uneven. The ACTU's refusal to sanction the 1949 coal strike by the Miners' Federation, and the resulting isolation of the Federation, contributed to the defeat of the strike, and convinced union leaders that the support of the ACTU was essential to secure the solidarity of the labour movement as a whole, without which major strikes would face heavy defeat and individual unions would be vulnerable to potentially disastrous government intervention. Following the coal strike the ACTU enacted Rule 13, giving it extensive control over disputes extending to more than one state, and used it to force an end to strikes by the mining and waterfront unions in 1951. However, the use of Rule 13 was successfully resisted by the metal unions, which effectively arrested the expansion of the ACTU's authority.

For the next two decades, the autonomy and capacity of affiliated unions to determine policy and pursue industrial campaigns was not seriously encroached on, and was enhanced by the economic conditions of the "Long Boom" which strengthened their bargaining position (Briggs, 2002: 78, 90-91). However, various political-economic trends during the 1970s and early 1980s caused the authority of the ACTU to be greatly enhanced without significant change in its formal legal and organisational relationship with affiliated unions. These trends facilitated the strengthening of the ACTU's authority during the period of the Accord relationship to levels comparable to those of the European union federations which had been able to sustain corporatist relationships. Griffin (1994) and Briggs (2002) identify several internal structural and political factors, and political and economic factors external to the union movement, which favoured enhanced ACTU authority in the Accord period, and Briggs also argues that the ACTU ascendancy could not have occurred
without pre-existing features of the Australian labour movement and its relationship with the state which created a *de facto* centralisation of power and leadership behind the formal and organisational fragmentation, which became manifest in the conditions of the 1980s.

The most obvious internal structural factor was the growing inclusiveness and representative status of the ACTU following the absorption of the white-collar peak councils, which by the mid-1980s meant that the ACTU represented almost 90% of trade unionists (Evatt, 1995). Also, Briggs (2002) argues that the formal organisational fragmentation of the labour movement masked the reality that effective political and industrial power was centralised in a small number of national unions whose policies, campaigns and gains set the pattern of industrial relations in Australia. These unions were the pacesetters, surrounded by a much larger group of smaller, weaker unions as "wage followers" dependent upon flow-ons through the arbitration system from the achievements of the big unions. This was compounded during the post-World War II period by the growing pre-eminence of federally registered unions, and thus of the federal arbitration system in setting wages and conditions, resulting in the rise of the largest national unions as the dominant force in the ACTU and the relative decline in the authority of State trades and labour councils (Briggs, 2002: 83). This concentration of power was further reinforced by a concentration of power within the large unions, as centres of strong workplace organisation within unions were usually closely aligned with union leaderships, in contrast to Europe where strong rank and file workplace organisation often existed outside the control of union officialdom (Briggs, 2002: 85-86). The centralisation of power in the leaderships of the large national unions came to be reflected in ACTU
industrial relations strategies in the immediate pre-Accord period. The ACTU based its strategies on achieving a consensus of the key leaders of large, powerful unions such as the AMWU, Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA), building unions, Storemen & Packers Union (FSPU), Transport Workers Union (TWU) and finance unions, whose political orientations covered the spectrum from left to right.

This process fostered a political development of great importance in enhancing the ACTU's authority - the decline of overt factionalism within the Australian labour movement and the emergence of a cross-factional consensual style of decision-making within the ACTU. This was facilitated by structural changes which ensured that union leaders from all major factions were included amongst ACTU office-bearers and represented on the ACTU Executive. Agreement between the key national union leaders and the ACTU leadership was the lynchpin of the cross-factional consensus. The emergence of the movement-wide consensus approach was necessitated by another key internal factor, namely development of a style of ACTU leadership in the 1980s which promoted concepts of "strategic unionism" and research-based policy development to underpin union strategy, of which the Accord was the first great example. If cross-factional movement-wide consensus was necessary for the success of ACTU strategies on traditional industrial issues such as wages and conditions, it was recognised as even more necessary for the successful implementation of more wide-ranging strategies and policies (Griffin, 1994).

Of the external political-economic factors, the key one was Accord relationship itself, which escalated the ACTU Executive and officers to the status of de facto negotiators on behalf of unionised and non-unionised workers alike, on both
industrial and social wage issues. The ACTU was accorded a gatekeeper role by the Federal Labor Government under the Accord, as it was expected to coordinate union policy and campaigns, and to screen access to government by individual affiliates, and was conferred exclusive rights to appoint union representatives to publicly funded organisations and advisory bodies (Griffin, 1994: 90-91). The ACTU was also assigned the role of enforcer of the Arbitration Commission's wage-fixing principles, which entailed the establishment of a more fine-grained machinery to ensure union compliance with central wage-fixing decisions under the principle of "no extra claims. . . except in special and extraordinary circumstances" (ALP/ACTU, 1983). The ACTU was delegated the responsibility of deciding which claims by affiliates fell within the ambit of "special and extraordinary circumstances," and which ones did not, in which case labour movement solidarity would be withheld from any affiliate pursuing such claims in the face of possible sanctions by the Commission and employers (Griffin, 1994: 92-93; Briggs, 2002).

The other key external political factor supporting the ACTU's ascendancy was the emergence of the New Right and the neo-liberal economic policy agenda in the mid-1980s. This caused most unions to curb the overt expression of discontent with Accord outcomes and the renegotiation downwards of the original Accord, and to rally behind the Accord relationship and the survival of the Labor government (and thus the authority of the ACTU) as preferable to the alternative of an overtly anti-union Federal Coalition government (Griffin, 1994: 91).

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model of the LER, the strengthening of the ACTU's authority and the emergence of cross-factional consensualism had the
potential to contribute to LER conflict in several respects. Firstly, one consequence of the enhancement of the ACTU’s authority and that of its major affiliates was a narrowing of political space for independent action by individual unions (Briggs, 2002; Tanner, 1986; Thompson, 1984). The Siegmann-Norton model suggests that this could limit the capacity of such unions to take innovative stances and action on the environment such as the NSW BLF's Green Bans. Secondly, the dominant discourses in the cross-factional consensus in the ACTU leadership included a strong commitment to maximising economic growth including in resource-based industries, and tripartite partnership (i.e. a "growth coalition") with government and business to achieve this goal. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, this was also a factor for conflict. Thirdly, according to Beilharz and Watts (1986) the cross-factional consensus came to incorporate a defensive political stance in support of the Labor government and the ACTU leadership against the New Right - the "discourse of labourism" - which was not favourably disposed to independent social movement activity or new political initiatives critical of Labor government positions as well as the New Right alternative.

Finally, the Siegmann-Norton model identifies a political “culture clash” arising from differences in forms of movement organisation as a factor in LER conflict. The centralised *modus operandi* of the labour movement under the Accord, and the acceptance of this discipline by virtually all unions, made for such a "culture clash" with the environmental movement. The formal peak environmental organisations had no power to control maverick protest activity by non-institutionalised and informally organised environmental groups (Doyle & Kellow, 1995; Offé, 1985), a factor stressed at interview by former ACF Executive Director Phillip Toyne (2003),
and lamented by ACTU and AMWU officials Bob Richardson (1987 in Balderstone) and Max Ogden (1989). It remains an open question what such a centralisation of power in the labour movement could mean for the LER if labour's dominant discourse was one of sustainable development and anti-environment unions were the mavericks.

6.3 The Crisis in Australian Unionism

Whilst the Accord period was a high water mark for the Australian labour movement in terms of its institutional role in the public policy process, it was also a period of growing and profound crisis. Despite an intense debate on the crisis and heroic attempts to find solutions, the crisis has persisted beyond the Accord period, and over time the terms of debate have shifted to the extent to which the major labour movement responses minimised the damage and prevented the crisis becoming terminal. The main elements of this crisis are now described.

6.3.1 Declining Union Coverage

The quantitative aspect of the crisis was the decline in the proportion and absolute number of workers who were members of unions during the 1980s and 1990s. The rate of union membership fell from 49 per cent in 1983 to 46% in 1986 (ACTU, 1987d: 15-17). Between 1986 and 1988 it fell from 46% to 42% of the workforce, this sharper decline being reflected in an actual fall in absolute membership numbers (Svensen et al, 2002: 6, 20). At this point the ACTU and its affiliates began to pursue the amalgamation and rationalisation strategy with particular urgency, as
reported in section 6.4. Nonetheless the trend of membership decline was to continue, as outlined in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Trade Union Membership and Density: 1976-2000.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members [millions]</th>
<th>Union Density [%]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Harcourt (1999), ABS Cat. 6310.0 (2000)*

6.3.2 Deunionisation of Key Constituencies

The aggregate decline in unionisation was compounded by a failure to attract and retain members in growth sectors of the economy, and amongst key demographic groups. The structural mix of employment in the Australian economy was shifting away from the manufacturing and resources sectors which had been the core of trade unionism, in favour of growth areas in the services and knowledge sectors, particularly the private sectors of these sectors. The problem was two-fold - the most rapid employment growth was in sectors with already lower union density, but also the steepest drop in union density between 1976 and 1988 (from 42% to 27%) had been in the most rapidly growing sectors - finance, property, business services, recreation and personal services (ACTU, 1987d: 15-17; Peetz, 1990; Svensen et al, 1999: 25; ABS 2000: 35).
The effects of restructuring were compounded by a shift away from permanent and full-time employment to part-time, casual, temporary and sub-contract employment. Workers in such forms of employment are typically more difficult to organise and to retain in one union. According to Apple (1998a), in traditional industries 90% of jobs were full-time, compared to 65% full-time in the services sectors, and the general trend was for a shift away from permanent full-time jobs in goods producing industries to part-time impermanent work in services. Another aspect of the structural shift was growth in women's employment, with the problem for unions being persistently lower rates of unionisation amongst women than men (Svensen et al, 1999), and the often correct perception of unions as unsympathetic and unresponsive to women's specific concerns (Pocock, 1997). The union movement was also dismayed by falling youth participation in unions, ACTU research showing that "many young people were fearful of unions and critical of their priorities" (ACTU, 1987d: 17-18).

6.3.3 Performance and Image Problems in Australian Unions

The problems of unionisation amongst women and youth were seen to be related to problems in the image and performance of Australian unions. The poor public image of unions, and weaknesses in union communications and media, were a recurring concern in this period (ACTU, 1987d: 20-21). There was also a growing recognition, by the ACTU and some affiliates, of inadequate provision of union services due to lack of resources, and the need to improve industrial services and provide services to fill gaps in public sector provision (ACTU, 1987d: 18-20). Further, the bargaining agenda of unions was often too narrow to encompass the full
spectrum of working peoples' interests in matters including job security and family leave which are of particular concern to women.

6.3.4 The New Right Offensive

Superimposed on these problems was the emergence of the New Right as a political and intellectual force. Its agenda included abolition of the arbitration system and award safety net, use of specific anti-union laws and other laws against unions, outlawing closed shops and preference agreements, promoting individual contracts, outlawing payroll deductions, promoting company unions and reducing unions' representation function. During the 1980s the New Right had primarily used novel legal tactics against unions in industrial disputes, but the Queensland Government's anti-union legislation of 1985, and international examples of legislative reductions of unionism by conservative governments in the US, UK and New Zealand, showed what unions could expect under future Federal and State Coalition governments (ACTU, 1987d; Colley, 2003). In the early 1990s these fears were realised, with Liberal or Coalition governments in several States legislating to restrict union activity and recruitment, and to deregulate workplace relations.

Thus in the late 1980s, a mood of crisis overtook leading unionists, with the publication of booklets with titles such as Can Unions Survive? (Berry & Kitchener, 1989) and articles in a similar vein in labour movement and left-wing journals (Palmada, 1988). The labour movement responded to this crisis with a range of political and organisational strategies, the most significant of which was the
wholesale intentional reorganisation of the movement on the initiative of, and partly in line with strategies of, the ACTU. Section 6.4 describes this transformation.

### 6.3.5 The Crisis and the LER

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, there is a positive relationship between unions’ organisational strength and breadth of coverage, and their freedom of action within the political-institutional framework, and their capacity for proactively pursuing alliances with the environmental movement. Accordingly an organisational decline in unionism and a climate of legal and legislative assault on labour’s freedom of and capacity for action would have hindered LER cooperation. At the subjective level, it can also be posited that the dominance of labour movement priorities by a crisis mentality and by strategies to meet the crisis could be expected to marginalise possible pro-environment initiatives by unions. Against this, it could be argued, and was argued by Siegmann (1985), that the crisis could have concentrated union leaders’ minds on the need to cultivate defensive alliances with forces such as the environmental movement. In addition, union initiatives on environmental policy could be a productive response to declining union appeal to key constituencies. We return to these themes in the next section, and in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

### 6.4 Union Rationalisation and Amalgamations

The process of extensive amalgamation and consolidation of Australian unions into a small number of "super unions" officially began with the endorsement by the 1987 ACTU Congress of the documents *Future Strategies for the Trade Union Movement*
(ACTU: 1987d), and *Australia Reconstructed* (ACTU/TDC, 1987). Some major
unions had supported such a strategy for some time; the AMWSU's 1982 National
Conference called for a single metals industry union, and for Australia's unions to be
combined into 15 or 16 industry unions, facilitated by legislative reforms including
lowering the voting requirements for amalgamation under the Conciliation &
Arbitration Act, and setting a minimum requirement of 10,000 members for a union
to retain registration (AMWSU, 1982: 125-126).

The leaderships of the ACTU and major affiliates expected that amalgamations
would enable the achievement of efficiencies of scale, greater organisational and
political strength, and enhancement of unions' capacities to recruit, service and
mobilise members, thus countering the trends of falling union density. It was also
argued that union amalgamation could be combined with a strengthening of
workplace union organisation and membership education which would enable
unionists to play a pro-active role in decisions about production and work
organisation in the workplace. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, if these
expectations were realised, the amalgamations process would foster cooperative
tendencies in the LER by enhancing the labour movement's capacity to engage in a
movement-wide "social unionism" focusing on the politics of production and capable
of challenging neo-liberal and corporate discourses such as "jobs versus
environment". However, critics of the union amalgamation process from the Left
and the Right argued that it would, in practice, render the trade unions less internally
democratic and less responsive to members' concerns (Ewer et al, 1991, Costa &
argues that union amalgamation was explicitly initiated in the context of a
generalised promotion of a "business unionist" perspective. If these criticisms are valid, then the Siegmann-Norton model would lead us to expect the union amalgamation process to foster conflictual tendencies in the LER.

6.4.1 The Accord and Union Reorganisation

The Accord committed the ALP to remove legislative barriers to amalgamation, and the Hawke government legislated to simplify the amalgamation process. Various government reports during the 1980s favoured industrial unionism, including the tripartite Hancock report of 1987, which nonetheless cautioned against attempting to force the pace of amalgamations by means external to the labour movement (e.g. through legislation) in the face of entrenched union traditions. The organisational fragmentation of Australian labour to this time is evidenced by the fact that in 1986 there were 326 registered unions, of which 163 were affiliated to the ACTU, varying greatly in their geographical scope (from national down to only part of one state) and their occupational coverage (from quite narrow craft bases to industry-wide coverage). Yet all had equal legal status, and guarded their coverage against competitors, which meant that in some industries workers could be represented by twenty or more contending unions, most of which would not be large or well-resourced enough to service them effectively (ACTU, 1987d). There were 155 unions with fewer than 1000 members each, accounting for only 1.7% of unionists, and 239 with fewer than 5000 members each covering 7.8% of unionists (Evatt, 1995). Barriers to amalgamations included the prevalence of craft or occupational unionism with strong tendencies for organisational self-preservation and a strong sense of craft or occupational identity amongst workers; ideological and demarcation
divides between unions in the same industries, and resistance by union officials to possible loss of status in amalgamated structures. However the main obstacle was that from the 1930s to the 1980s most unions were under no pressure to amalgamate either from internal difficulties or external threats, and the investment of resources and effort required to complete amalgamations was not seen to be justified by the potential benefits (Evatt, 1995; Briggs, 2002: 82-83). Impetus for consolidation of unions came from 1986 onwards with the BOP crisis, the end of wage indexation, the emergence of the New Right as a political and intellectual force, and as discussed in Section 6.3, recognition of the crisis in the labour movement. The publication of *Australia Reconstructed* and *Future Strategies*, and their endorsement by the 1987 ACTU Congress, occurred within this context, and largely in response to it.

### 6.4.2 *Australia Reconstructed*

*Australia Reconstructed* (hereafter *AR*) was the report of a study tour to several Western European countries by a joint delegation from the ACTU and the Trade Development Council. *AR* was a comprehensive statement of an interventionist economic and industry policy agenda which continued the economic and industrial policy prescriptions of the original Accord. The fate of this agenda is discussed in Chapter 7, so all that need be noted here is that as it ran directly counter to the neo-liberal momentum in Federal government policy, it was largely not implemented (Rafferty, 1997). However *AR* also stated a comprehensive case for reorganisation of the Australian labour movement. Whilst only two of *AR*'s 17 recommendations on union structure and strategies addressed amalgamations, it provided an important rationale for the subsequent amalgamation process.
AR called for the development in Australia of "strategic unionism", which it defined as centering on an expansion of labour movement concerns beyond a narrow focus on wages and conditions to a concern with wider social and economic issues, including a commitment to growth and wealth creation as well as distribution, and pursuing these concerns through "the generation and implementation of centrally co-ordinated goals and integrated strategies. . . sophisticated participation in tripartite bodies. . . strong local and workplace organisation; and. . . the extensive delivery of education and research services" (ACTU: TDC, 1987: 169).

A recurring theme in AR's discussion of strategic unionism was the importance that European labour movements which practiced it had placed on taking responsibility for maximising economic growth and international trade opportunities. They had won a role in societal decision-making through a sense of social responsibility and solidarity, and their involvement in all areas of public policy and administration had "enhanced their sense of realism and responsibility for the economy, industry and production" (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 172-173). One compromise they had made, which AR reported approvingly, was acceptance of legal and moral restraint of strike activity. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the authors and sponsors of AR saw strategic unionism in terms of the Australian labour movement becoming more securely entrenched as an "insider group" with business and government in economic decision-making, and as a "factor of order". At the same time, this emphasis coexisted with a desire to see unions expand their concern with the "politics of production", thereby arguably entailing a shift towards "social unionism"
rather than "business unionism". As with the Accord, AR and strategic unionism involved contradictory tendencies with respect to the LER.

AR argued that strategic unionism required structural and organisational underpinnings including high levels of trade union organisation, membership involvement and financial resources, extensive facilities and programs for membership education, and an independent research capacity, with strong national peak union bodies, highly centralised processes for bargaining and negotiation and peak council coordination of industrial campaigns by affiliated unions (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 175). At the same time, strategic unionism also required strong local and workplace union organisation, which in Europe was associated with institutionalised mechanisms of industrial democracy and "co-determination" in enterprises. This was important in maintaining the commitment of the workforce to production and achieving a high level of innovation and product quality. Finally, industry-based unionism was a feature of labour movements which practiced strategic unionism (ACTU/TDC 1987: 175-185).

AR concluded that the achievement by Australian labour of a capacity for strategic unionism would not be possible with its fragmented structure of 1987, and which was more like that of the UK than the Scandinavian countries. Australia needed a smaller number of larger unions with simpler structures, more cohesion and more scope for central co-ordination, so as to free resources, avoid duplication, and improve the range and quality of services. Such a well-organised trade union movement would be better placed to resist anti-union initiatives. At the same time, central co-ordination also required decentralisation and more resilient internal
processes as only strong autonomous grass-roots democratic activity can legitimate centrally co-ordinated action (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 190).

The imperatives of strategic unionism warranted forcing the pace of amalgamation, and so AR called for a movement-wide process of amalgamation under ACTU coordination, with the aim of having no more than twenty union organisations within two years (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 190). The initial goal was to be "industry group" and "large rational general" unions, as complete industry unionism would be unattainable, but such a move to fewer and bigger unions was still expected to offer many advantages. As a precursor to amalgamations, unions could establish jointly funded independent research units.

6.4.3 Future Strategies

Future Strategies (FS) had been discussed and endorsed by the ACTU Executive prior to the 1987 Congress. It began by surveying the changing and increasingly adverse international and national political-economic environment facing the Australian labour movement, and catalogued the symptoms of union crisis discussed in Section 6.3 (ACTU 1987d: 1-7). Detailed chapters of FS addressed organisational issues, demands on employers, legal and legislative issues (including responses to "New Right" attacks) and relations with government, but the primacy of organisational issues in FS was emphasised by four appendices containing detailed proposals for union amalgamations, a new organisational structure for the union movement, and a new structure for the ACTU (ACTUd, 1987: 11-58).
FS identified four priorities for the union movement to consolidate its organisational base: rationalising its structure, maintaining and improving channels of communication between unions and their members; effective recruiting campaigns, and a high level of industrial and general service provision to union members (ACTU, 1987d: 7). More generally, FS asserted that the solution to the union movement’s problems “seems obvious: unions need to amalgamate in order to form larger, more efficient, units! The most appropriate bases for each rationalisation appear to be broad industry categories” (ACTU, 1987d: 13)

Eighteen such categories were provisionally designated, and a proposal for restructuring along these lines outlined in Appendix 1 of FS.¹ Appendix Two outlined the concept of the organisational structure which the amalgamation process was intended to yield, the two most important aspects being, first:

- "Larger unions employing more people with responsibilities for direct contact with employees, offering more services, staff, and having the capacity to be involved in industry and national issues" and secondly;

- the ACTU "primarily based on providing industrial services to unions"

with a small, service-based Executive structure and staffing profile, whilst continuing to provide "a representative approach to filling

¹ The proposed industry groupings were: Textile, Clothing & Footwear; Shipping & Stevedoring; Rail & Tramway; Road Transport; Food & Transport; Airline Industry; Australian Public Sector Federation; Education; Post & Telecommunications; Printing and Publishing; Local Government and Services; "Large Union Amalgamation" (Australian Workers Union, Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union and Liquor & Allied Employees Union); Australian Government; Building, Construction & Timber Products; Retail & Clerical; Banking & Insurance; Health Industry; Metal Industry (ACTU, 1987d: 50-53).
positions. . . a co-operative and essentially consensus approach to determining strategy and policy; and the primary means for negotiating with government” (ACTU, 1987d: 54).

Finally, FS identified several economic and social challenges facing unions, which included: increased workforce participation by women; increasing concentration of corporate power; an aging population; technological change; pressure for greater investment certainty; increased education of the workforce; the need to maintain and develop manufacturing; the increased role of the services sector; wider concerns of trade union members; privatisation; potential for increased lack of concern for the disadvantaged and needy; internationalisation of the Australian economy; and youth involvement (or the lack of it) in unions (ACTU, 1987d: 41-49). The organisational measures proposed in FS, notably amalgamation, improved recruitment and communication campaigns, and increased service provision, were either explicit or implicit in the proposed responses to these issues.

FS is notable for the complete omission of environmental issues as either a trend requiring a union response, or as a concern which should be taken up in response to other trends. For instance, there is no mention of the environment as part of the "Wider Concern of the Trade Union Member” (1987d: 46-47), nor that union involvement in environmental issues might assist in recruiting service sector workers, women or young people. Nor did FS recognise that environmental considerations create constraints and opportunities for policies to develop manufacturing industry or intervene in technological change processes. Whilst Section 6.3.5 puts forward reasons, in terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, why
such an omission might be expected, it also offers Siegmann’s counter-argument that an embattled union movement might take up environmental issues in the search for allies. Perhaps the most important explanation in terms of the Siegmann-Norton model is the dominance of productivist and “social partnership” discourses within the ACTU at this time. This was reflected in FS’s call for "tripartite industry plans or direct agreements between unions and employers" (ACTU, 1987d: 44) to provide greater investment certainty, with no acknowledgement that this goal, and prior agreements to this end between unions and employers, may need to be qualified with respect to the social or environmental desirability of particular investments. Finally, AR had argued that a precondition for strategic unionism was a strong union capacity for education and research, but that the Australian union movement of the 1980s was deficient in this regard. If we accept the Siegmann-Norton model’s identification of collective intellectual capacity as a parameter of social unionism and thus a factor for LER cooperation, we would expect the Australian labour movement of this period to be limited in its capacity for such cooperation, even where the subjective desire existed.

Whilst AR had been the subject of debate and criticism in the labour movement, especially its left wing (Thompson, 1988; Flew, 1989), it was endorsed by the 1987 Congress with little dissent, and FS was endorsed unanimously (Davis, 1988: 122-123). The recommended restructuring of the ACTU Executive was implemented immediately, but the more far-reaching reorganisation of the Australian labour movement was slower to commence, and took several years to complete.
6.4.4 The Amalgamations Process in Practice: 1988 to 1996

The Federal Government enacted the *Industrial Relations Act 1988*, with the aim of facilitating union amalgamations by vitiating the requirement for 25% of members of both unions involved to vote in the amalgamation ballot; increasing the mandatory minimum size of registered unions from 100 to 1000 members; giving unions below this size three years to either grow to or amalgamate into an entity of above 1000 members on pain of deregistration; and granting the Arbitration Commission power to grant, or exclude unions from, coverage of workplaces affected by demarcation disputes (Dabscheck, 1995: 125-126).

However, union restructuring proceeded slowly between the 1987 and 1989 ACTU Congresses, with only eight amalgamations of federally registered unions occurring, (Dabscheck, 1995: 126). The slow pace of amalgamations contrasted worryingly with the acceleration of the negative trends identified by *FS*. This, and the disappearance from the public policy map of the interventionist economic agenda proposed by *AR*, meant that the former document's defensive rationale for union reorganisation now prevailed to the practical exclusion of the pro-active rationale for "strategic unionism". A sense of crisis was conveyed to the 1989 ACTU Congress in the reports and keynote speeches of Secretary Kelty, President Crean and, most starkly, Vice-President Tom McDonald, who introduced the Congress resolution to accelerate and expedite the restructuring process (ACTU 1989e) with the words:

*Our movement is in a deep crisis; we either improve our performance and reorganise, or we perish. Our movement is in serious decline; the majority of workers no longer support the trade union movement* (McDonald, 1989: 10).
The 1989 ACTU Congress resolution on "The Organisation, Resources and Services of the Trade Union Movement, 1989 Strategy" was carried with little dissent and unanimous Executive support. It committed the ACTU to "continue to encourage amalgamations and agreed arrangements between unions to refine union coverage" (ACTU, 1989e: 12) including through promoting discussions on amalgamations between unions, convening "urgent meetings" of unions in each industry group outlined in FS to devise a rationalisation plan, assisting unions with "appropriate structures and timetables, meeting statutory obligations" and producing pro-amalgamation campaign material, and pressing for legislation to expedite amalgamations. The ACTU was to play a greater role in resolving coverage and demarcation disputes, wherever possible seeking solutions based on "rationalisation of membership coverage through the exchange and/or transfer of membership" (ACTU, 1989e: 12).

Following the 1989 Congress the pace of rationalisation quickened, although by mid-1990 the proportion of ACTU affiliates engaged in merger negotiations or in actual merger processes was still less than half. The Federal government amended the Industrial Relations Act to raise the minimum registration requirement for unions to 10,000 members. Whilst this provision was subsequently found to breach the ILO Convention's provisions on Freedom of Association, and reverted to 100 members in 1993, whilst it was in effect it forced some unions into merger processes which continued after the legislation was amended (Hose & Rimmer, 2002: 535-536).

In practice the rationalisation process proved to be time-consuming and conflictual for the unions involved and for the ACTU. In May 1990 the ACTU Executive
adopted detailed guidelines for the amalgamation process, which identified twenty-one prospective industry-based or large general unions expected to result from a combination of amalgamations already decided upon and/or proceeding, and "potential amalgamations" to be considered. The Executive also agreed on a three-part categorisation of unions according to their significance within workplaces as either Principal, Significant or Other, to guide the rationalisation of unions in each workplace to no more than two or three, and encourage them to act as a single bargaining unit. The long-run aim of this was the establishment of a single union (based on the Principal union) covering each industry or occupation (ACTU, 1990c; 2002a: 2-3, 22-27). The proposed groupings had begun to depart significantly from the original commitment to industry-based unions in FS: for instance, it was no longer expected that the AMWU and FIA would merge as part of a metals industry union. The May 1990 and August 1990 ACTU Executive meetings recognised that the rationalisation process had led to many disputes as unions sought to position themselves to advantage and expand their influence, and that the ACTU policy on amalgamations had generally been ignored. The Executive warned that it would monitor unions' activities and intervene if necessary to rectify further breaches of ACTU policy on rationalisation.

Despite this warning, inter-union conflict and attempts to poach members and coverage of workplaces persisted throughout the rationalisation process (Dabscheck, 1995: 129-130). At the 1991 ACTU Congress, forty speakers in debate on the organisation and resources of the union movement either criticised the restructuring strategy or criticised other unions for poaching members. Two years later, ACTU President Martin Ferguson denounced affiliates for attempting to poach members
and wasting resources on legal and other tactics to this end, rather than recruiting and servicing new members, although this was couched in terms of criticising those unions for their failure to implement the ACTU strategy and their obstruction of those who were (Dabscheck, 1995: 130). Until 1995 much of the time of the ACTU Executive was taken up with convening meetings of unions to develop amalgamation plans, approving and expediting amalgamations, and resolving conflicts arising from the rationalisation process and from fears of membership poaching. For the unions themselves, the amalgamation discussions, negotiations, membership transfers, ballots, disputes and disputes resolution occupied much of their energies in this period.

However, despite the ongoing conflict, the ACTU’s 1991 and 1993 Congresses reaffirmed the restructuring strategy, with provisions to regulate competition between unions for coverage and resolve disputes, directing affiliates not to use the restructuring process to extend coverage outside their constitutional coverage or to enter into coverage agreements with employers at the expense of other unions, and authorising the Executive to strongly oppose breaches of these directives (ACTU, 2002). Amalgamations took place at an increasing rate during the first half of the 1990s, and most ballots strongly supported amalgamation proposals (AEC, 1995). Table 6.2 shows the changes in the numbers of federally registered unions, and unions overall, in the period from 1980 to 1996, and in particular the rapid change from 1988 to 1996 as a consequence of the amalgamations process. In addition to the trend revealed in the table, by 1996 members of federally registered unions

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2. Between 1988 and May 1993 the AEC conducted sixty-two amalgamation ballots, of which fifty-nine succeeded; forty-nine of these (including forty-eight successful ballots) occurred between 1991 and May 1993 (Dabscheck, 1995: 131; AEC, 1995).
represented 86% of all union members. In July 2003, the list of Registered Organisations at the Australian Industrial Relations Commission website listed 44 federally registered unions, of which 23 were the products of an amalgamation process.

Table 6.2: Federally registered and non-Federally registered unions, 1980-96.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federally Registered Unions</th>
<th>Non-Federally Registered Unions</th>
<th>Total number of unions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>325</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>324</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>172</td>
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<td>1983</td>
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<td>1984</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>142</td>
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</table>


Hence at one level the amalgamation process can be said to have succeeded. The number of unions in Australia had been reduced markedly in a very short time, and a relatively small number of very large unions formed with the consent of most of the
members of the unions concerned in amalgamation ballots overseen by the Australian Electoral Commission. However, in some important respects the restructuring project envisaged in Future Strategies failed to eventuate or to achieve all its aims.

First, several "super-unions" were created by amalgamations which occurred, not along industry lines, but on the basis of political or ideological affinity, or as a means for particular craft unions to preserve their identity as divisions of a polyglot general union with neither a common industrial nor a common political interest (Yates & Ewer, 1997). The tortuous history of amalgamations in the metals industry illustrates both these trends. In 1987 the AMWU approached the other metal industry unions seeking discussions about possible amalgamations. The Electrical Trades Union (ETU), Vehicle Building Employees Federation (VBEF) and Association of Drafting, Supervisory and Technical Employees (ADSTE) did not formally respond, whilst the FIA and Australian Society of Engineers (ASE) responded negatively. Reasons for the lack of interest in amalgamation included objections to the militancy of the AMWU and fears of being politically and industrially swamped by a much larger organisation (Campbell, 1988b: 31). Whereas the AMWU was Australia's leading left-wing union, the FIA was strongly anti-communist and prominent in the right of the labour movement. Subsequently the FIA amalgamated with the ASE in 1991 to form the Federation of Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Employees (FIMEE), which absorbed several smaller unions before amalgamating with the AWU to form a super-union of the Right, the AWU-FIMEE Amalgamated Union (Svensen et al, 2002). In the meantime the AMWU and ADSTE amalgamated in 1990 and subsequently merged
with the VBEF, Confectionery Workers & Food Preservers Union and Printing and Kindred Industries Union to form the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), a super-union of the Left. Throughout this period the AMWU and the FIA, and their successor organisations, fought bitterly for coverage of metal industry workers (Dabscheck, 1995: 129; Spooner, 1989), at one point requiring the ACTU Executive to adopt a detailed Code of Conduct to regulate competition and prohibit poaching between the two organisations (ACTU, 1991g: 10-12).

Meanwhile in 1992 the ETU merged with the Plumbing and Gasfitting Employees Union (PGEU), which had originally been identified by the ACTU as a potential amalgamation partner for a building and construction industry super-union. The subsequent merger product amalgamated with the Communications Workers Union of Australia, itself the result of combination between various unions in the postal and telecommunications sectors. The resulting Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing and Allied Services Union (CEPU), was identified by Hose & Rimmer (2002) as an example of a "multi-industry conglomerate formed from ideologically compatible partners" (Hose & Rimmer, 2002: 530). However, Yates and Ewer argue that the motive for this amalgamation was a desire to preserve the craft identities of the ETU, the PGEU and the postal and telecommunications organisations, which would have been submerged in genuine industry-based amalgamations as envisaged by Future Strategies (Yates & Ewer, 1997: 136). Thus it was also an illustration of the second main form of departure from the Future Strategies blueprint - namely "super-unions" taking a form which maintained pre-existing union structures as divisions within an overarching conglomerate structure, rather than fusing them into a unitary body. Such
conglomerations resulted from half of the federal union amalgamations between 1987 and 1996, were usually the result of factional political affinities, and were "easy to accomplish because unions were often able to retain divisional independence, with their own funds, officers and bargaining responsibilities" (Hose & Rimmer, 2002: 530). However, as Davis (1999) argues, the "economies of scale" argument assumed that such economies "flow from the ability of larger unions to share inputs by using a common pool of industrial staff, researchers, lawyers and administrative staff to service a larger number of members" (Davis, 1999: 9). Those mergers which maintained pre-existing staffing and officer structures in triplicate or quadruplicate, rather than pooling them, could not achieve efficiencies, economies of scale and freeing of resources in this way. Indeed, several unions and peak councils which reviewed their internal situation post-amalgamations found considerable diseconomies and financial difficulties, amongst other problems (Pocock, 1998b: 9-10).

The third kind of deviation was that several unions successfully maintained their identity either by not amalgamating (e.g. the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) and the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) or by only engaging in nominal amalgamations which were actually takeovers of small unions by a larger organisation which maintained its original identity (e.g. the Australian Education Union, the Shop Assistants Union, the Transport Workers Union; AEC, 1995). Twenty-one of the 44 federally registered unions as of 2003 fell into this category (ACTU, 1990; 2002a: 22-27).
The fact that widespread union amalgamations did occur in the context of the ACTU's restructuring project, but that the form of amalgamations substantially departed from the ACTU's strategy, can be explained by the influence of factors and motives driving amalgamation additional to those invoked in the ACTU's strategy. The pressure of declining union membership and thus of revenues, political and industrial influence and organisational capacity is widely identified in the literature as a stimulus for unions to seek amalgamations (e.g. Buchanan, 1981; Undy et al, 1981; Chaison, 1996) and was identified by Cameron (1998) as a major pressure for smaller manufacturing unions to amalgamate with the AMWU in the 1990s, as the alternative was extinction. Thus the organisational malaise and threatening external environment facing Australian unions would probably have provoked a heightened interest in amalgamations even without the ACTU strategy. The experience of amalgamations suggests that the domination of some mergers by political and organisational agendas rather than industrial affinities would also have been manifest in such a spontaneous merger wave, as would the tendency of those agendas to frustrate gains (e.g. "economies of scale" achieved by eliminating layers of officialdom) which might be achieved by truly industry-based mergers. On the other hand, it is also probably true, as Colley stated at interview (2003), that without the Future Strategies initiative of the ACTU in the late 1980s, the amalgamation process may not have commenced until after anti-union State and Federal legislation had begun to drastically erode union membership, resulting in post-amalgamation union organisation being far weaker than what has eventuated, and unionism ceasing to exist in many areas.
Major qualitative aims of the ACTU restructuring strategy also seem to have been only partially achieved. The *Unions 2001* report (Evatt, 1995), authored by several key supporters of the ACTU strategy, was ambivalent on whether the amalgamation wave had achieved greater efficiency, stronger workplace organisation, improved democracy and accountability, better union communication with members, more and stronger external partnerships, and better servicing of members. The report argued that the full realisation of these goals would only be achieved after post-amalgamation reorganisation of unions and in many respects were dependent on measures unrelated to amalgamation *per se* (Evatt, 1995: 45-68).

One key aim was the strengthening of workplace organisation, which according to McDonald (1995: 8-9) would also be accompanied by an increase in participatory democracy in unions, because grouping workers in different crafts and occupations together on an industry basis would create multi-skilled and knowledgeable collectives in workplaces with the collective intelligence to organise effectively and participate effectively in their union. The goal of better workplace organisation was undermined both by the failure of many amalgamations to be genuinely industry-based, and more seriously by the continuing trends of membership decline and failure to strongly unionise growth sectors, which persisted during and after the merger wave.

As to participatory democracy, surveys of union members indicate that most felt that amalgamation had not improved the quality of internal union democracy or their opportunities for participation. The 1995 Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey found that three-quarters of union delegates in amalgamated unions believed
amalgamation had not improved their say in union affairs, their contact with officials, or the union's capacity for recruitment or dealing with workplace issues, and that only 28% of union members felt that their union gave them a say in its operations (Pocock, 1998b: 22). *Unions 2001* noted that whilst 80% of unionists voting in amalgamation ballots were in favour, 20%, or about 200,000 workers, voted against on the basis of fears that the amalgamated union would be too large and remote. This was a source of potential dissent which needed to be addressed (Evatt, 1995: 43-44).

The trends of declining union membership density identified in *Future Strategies*, especially in growth sectors of the labour market, gathered pace during the restructuring process and have continued since its completion. A range of explanations have been suggested as to why membership decline has continued notwithstanding amalgamations, with some commentators even suggesting that restructuring has contributed to accelerating decline. However caution is needed in identifying possible causal relationships between the restructuring process and declining membership. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, the benefits which were expected to accrue from the restructuring process in terms of unions' recruiting and servicing members could only be expected once the process was complete. In the meantime, given the absorption of unions and their peak council in an inevitably inward-focused reorganisation process, there could be expected to be some short-run decline in unions’ capacities. Secondly, the labour market and the workforce continued to be subjected to powerful political and economic trends during the period of restructuring, and afterwards, which were unconducive to unionisation. These included an economic recession in the early 1990s, continued economic and...
employment restructuring which favoured growth in less unionised sectors and
decline in traditional union strongholds, hostile State government policies and
legislation in the first half of the 1990s, and hostile Federal government policies and
legislation from 1996 onwards.

The conjunction of these factors has been proffered as a strong argument that it was
a mistake to embark on the restructuring project at the time the ACTU and unions
decided to do so (Dabscheck 1995: 135). But this insight needs to be tempered, not
only by the views of unionists such as Cameron (1998) and Colley that
rationalisation "had to be done" (Colley, 2003), but by the argument already made
that, in response to these pressures, amalgamation would have been pursued
regardless of ACTU intentions, and perhaps with poorer outcomes than the
movement-wide strategy has delivered. At any rate, Australian union rationalisation
has happened, and its implications for the LER must now be considered.

6.4.5 Union Rationalisation and the LER

The Siegmann-Norton model suggests divergent possibilities for the impact of
rationalisation through amalgamation on the LER. The amalgamation process would
be expected to assist LER cooperation if it succeeded in creating stronger union
organisations with greater capacity to challenge hegemonic practices and discourses
such as conventional models of development which posit jobs against the
environment, and to assert an independent union position in cases of conflict
between industry and environmentalism. Also, the Siegmann-Norton model posits
that unions which are more diverse in the occupational and geographical base of
their membership would be more likely to embrace the membership's wider interest as citizens in sustainable development rather than sectional or local interests in maintaining unsustainable industries. On the other hand, insofar as the "super-unions" were more centralised and less internally democratic than their predecessors, the Siegmann-Norton model predicts that, unless a sustainable development discourse had already become dominant in the predecessor organisations, the post-amalgamation unions would be both more resistant to alternative perspectives emphasising sustainable development, and less tolerant of smaller groups of workers engaging in advanced policy development and activity on environmental questions. For example, it may have been difficult for NSW BLF-style Green Bans to have proceeded had their initiators had to win support or approval from a whole construction industry union such as the contemporary CFMEU.

Another question is whether those amalgamations which departed from the original ACTU script of industry unionism would be more or less likely to engage in LER cooperation than those which followed the ACTU strategy. For amalgamations which occurred on the basis of political or ideological affinity, this would probably be a function of whether the ideological affinity included a commitment to social unionism (as in the case of the post-amalgamation AMWU) or to business unionism (as in the case of the AWU-FIMEE). This issue is considered in Chapter 9. In amalgamations which preserved pre-existing union identities within a confederal arrangement (such as the CFMEU or CEPU), one would also expect the participating unions’ pre-existing orientations towards LER cooperation or conflict to carry over into, and only change slowly within, the eventual super-union. This is addressed in Chapters 7 and 8 in relation to different divisions of the CFMEU.
A final complication is that the post-amalgamation structures were not really "bedded down" until the very end of the Accord period, and so the effect of the final structures on the LER can only be assessed by studying the environmental role of the eventual "super-unions" in the years after the mid-1990s, outside the period of the study. However, it can be hypothesised that the actual process of rationalisation and reorganisation, involving as it did unions turning inwards and focussing much of their energies and imagination on internal reorganisation, would have reduced their capacity to be proactive on environmental issues, especially in concert with the effects of the pre-existing organisational weaknesses and hostile external environment to which the reorganisation process was a response.

6.5 Conclusions

The foregoing discussion of quantitative and qualitative changes in the organisational form of the Australian labour movement during the Accord period suggests some working hypotheses and open questions for assessment in the light of the case studies considered in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

First, the Siegmann-Norton model suggests that the enhancement of the ACTU's authority under the Accord relationship and the consequent narrowing of political space for the expression of alternative perspectives, could be expected to have contributed to LER conflict and restricted opportunities for LER cooperation. This would be especially so when combined with the ascendancy of a strongly productivist version of "social partnership" discourse within the ACTU leadership.
Such LER conflict tendencies could take more than one form. One possibility would be a general resistance by the ACTU and affiliates to the regulation or redirection of economic activity in accordance with a sustainable development discourse, if this was believed inimical to economic or employment objectives. Another could be that LER conflict in an environmentally contentious industry could become generalised to the peak organisations of the two movements if the ACTU were to support that industry in the name either of movement solidarity or of an uncritical commitment to maximising economic activity. Chapter 7 explores the extent to which both these forms of movement-wide LER tension occurred under the Accord relationship, and the extent to which the enhancement of ACTU authority under the Accord contributed to them.

Second, the Accord period was one in which underlying organisational weaknesses and incapacities of Australian unions were exposed and became worse, and which powerful external forces sought to take advantage of and intensify. The Siegmann-Norton model identifies union weakness and defensiveness as a significant factor in its own right in hindering LER cooperation. It is posited in Section 6.3 that this would only be intensified in a hostile external environment in which unions were often facing challenges to their right to exist in many workplaces, and in their legal and legislated role in society, which largely predated calls on their support by the environmental movement. At the same time, the subjective climate of crisis had potential either to marginalise environmental concerns within organised labour, or to concentrate union attention on them as a means of alliance-building and of winning kudos with important constituencies. This issue is explored in Chapters 7 and 9. Further, Australia Reconstructed and Future Strategies paint a picture of the
organisational incapacities of most unions in 1987, including implicit criticism of
Australian labour's weak or non-existent independent capacity for research and
membership education by comparison with Scandinavian and Central European
unions. If we accept this critique, we would expect most unions and their members
to lack the capacity for significant policy development, the strong research base and
the extensive knowledge of environmental issues affecting their workplaces and
industries which would be necessary for a cooperative LER when environmental
issues achieved salience in the 1980s. We would also expect the exceptions to this
rule to be those unions which had already achieved strength in research, membership
education and policy development on the pre-existing industrial, political and
economic priorities of the unions. This theme is explored in Chapters 7 and 9, and
largely borne out by the example of the AMWU.

Third, the timing of the union amalgamations process suggests that its likely long-
run effects on the LER would not be apparent during the period under study.
However the inward focus of unions during this process, and the consequent
debilitating effects on union capacities for addressing wider issues, would also have
hindered LER cooperation.

Finally, the effects of the organisational changes which occurred in this period also
need to be assessed in conjunction with wider political-economic and political-
institutional variables whose effects can be projected from the Siegmann-Norton
model. A major one is the effect of neo-liberal hegemony on the capacity of unions
and environmentalists to collaborate in generating mutually beneficial policy
alternatives. Another is the effect of changing industrial relations regimes and
legislation (especially the shift from centralised wage fixing to regulated enterprise bargaining) on unions’ freedom of action, and in creating both opportunities and constraints for union initiatives on environmental issues. A final variable is the influence of economic boom and bust cycles (in particular structural economic problems and the recession of the early 1990s) on union priorities and capabilities, and attitudes towards environmental constraints on economic activity. All of these themes are addressed in chapters 7, 8 and 9.
Chapter 7
The LER in Economic Restructuring and Sustainable Development Debates
7.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 and 5 reported that Australian public policy during the Accord period was preoccupied with the search for solutions to Australia's structural economic weaknesses. Consequently, both the labour and environmental movements came to discursively articulate their respective social and ecological agendas with proposed solutions to economic problems.

In the original Accord, the project of industry development and restructuring to address structural economic problems under the aegis of tripartite agencies was articulated with the Accord’s incomes policy, employment and social wage objectives. As reported in Chapter 5, it was seen by some as having socialist or social-democratic transformative potential. This theme recurred during the Accord relationship, although it became increasingly attenuated and marginal as neo-liberal hegemony was consolidated in Federal government economic policies. Also in this period, the national environmental organisations articulated their ecological agenda with economic analyses of particular industries which were the subject of environmental concern, with the aim of showing that environmental goals could be achieved in concert with improved economic and employment outcomes by restructuring such industries on an ecologically sustainable basis. During the sustainable development debates of the 1980s, and especially the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) process, this approach was extended to the Australian economy as a whole through the formulation of a sustainable development discourse. The goal of an ecologically sustainable society was
discursively linked to that of economic restructuring to overcome Australia’s chronic economic problems.

The Siegmann-Norton model posits that LER cooperation is aided by the reconceptualisation of the relationship between labour, environmental and other social goals to reconcile them in appropriate policies for ecologically sustainable full employment, informed by a joint labour-environmental political-economic analysis of employment and environmental problems. Given the development of alternative economic discourses by both the labour and environmental movements during the period of the Accord relationship, it can be posited that a strong labour-environmental alliance in Australia could have developed on the basis of a synthesis of their alternative economic strategies in a new discourse of "sustainable reconstruction". This chapter considers the extent to which such a project was attempted by the labour and environmental movements in the period of the study. It examines the specific issues and cases where this potential was realised, the reasons for their ultimate failure to realise the project on the canvass of the national political-economic "big picture" in the period of the Hawke and Keating governments, and the prospects for realising this project in the future.

7.2 The Union Agenda on Industry Development

7.2.1 Australia's Economic Weaknesses and Policy Responses Pre-1980s

As Chapter 2 reported, the economic structure with which Australia emerged from the colonial period was of the “dominion capitalist” variety in which export income
is primarily earned from agricultural and resources exports, with the role of manufacturing being mainly to produce for the domestic market. For much of the 20th century this was the public policy orthodoxy in Australia, together with a view that tariff protection, infrastructure provision and other forms of government assistance to industry should be provided unconditionally, rather than linked to achievement of investment or efficiency criteria by firms benefiting from such support (Ewer et al, 1987: 6-15). During the "long boom" of the 1950s and 1960s, manufacturing expanded its share of GDP and employment but its focus remained import substitution rather than exporting. Entrenched problems of irrational structure, inadequate scale and lack of export competitiveness were not addressed due to factors including inter-State competition, high levels of foreign ownership, government passivity and finance sector hostility. During the 1960s orthodox economists began promoting the doctrine that the weaknesses of manufacturing industry could be overcome by withdrawing tariff and other protection, and exposing it to market competition (Ewer et al, 1987: 16-18). The doctrine of "rationalisation-by-competition" first became public policy under the Whitlam Government, which reinvented the Federal Tariff Board as the Industries Assistance Commission (IAC), a body which became notorious for promoting "economic rationalism" within the Federal public service. Tariffs were reduced by 25% across the board in 1973, leading to significant retrenchments just as Australia was being drawn into the global recession of the mid-1970s.

The 1970s saw the start of a long-term decline in Australian manufacturing, with falling employment, a decline in its share of GDP, and lower rates of growth than in most developed economies in real manufacturing product and in the manufacturing
share of exports. Underpinning these trends was a decline in the rate of investment in manufacturing, and an ageing of capital stock. The poor performance of manufacturing exports could not be compensated for by agricultural exports (in which growth was stagnating) or resource exports (as commodity prices were falling). The overall consequences for the economy were reduced rates of growth and productivity, a worsening balance of payments (BOP), and sustained job losses due to the combined effects of deindustrialisation, de-laborisation and rationalisation (Ewer et al, 1987: 33-49, 83-95; Stilwell, 1986). The decline was met with inquiries which called for elements of selective interventionist industry policy to replace crude reliance on aggregate macroeconomic measures (whether protectionist or "free trade"); irresolute responses by Federal governments torn between neo-liberal doctrine and fear of the political consequences of its implementation; and ultimately heavy concentrations of unemployment in manufacturing industries and regions in the 1982-83 recession (Ewer et al, 1987: 23-51).

7.2.2 The Union Synthesis of Industry Policy and Alternative Economic Strategy

These developments drove the evolution of a sophisticated research-based union position on the regeneration of the Australian economy through interventionist industry policy, in which the AMWU played a central role. AMWU influence on the shape of the original Accord, in particular the industry policy component, evolved from its advocacy of a "people's economic program" from the late 1970s onwards. The AMWU's initiatives were not the only forays by unions into the "politics of production" in this period, but they were the most influential (Stilwell, 1986: 8; Stilwell, 2000: 195; Beilharz, 1986a: 9-10). The concentration of job losses in
industries where its members were employed\(^1\) focused the AMWU's mind on the centrality of full employment, and its structural economic preconditions, to the union's goals (Stilwell, 1986: 97). Whilst early versions of the AMWU's position foregrounded the role of transnational corporations and the Fraser government in Australia's problems, and emphasised socialism as the solution, over time the union's attention turned to economic analysis of causes of structural weaknesses in the economy. It began proposing more fine-grained solutions such as targeted investment allowances, public investment of venture capital and labour market planning (Ewer et al, 1987).

### 7.2.3 Accord Commitments on Industry Policy

As Chapter 5 noted, the Accord recognised that the structural crisis of Australian manufacturing was a major challenge to its full employment goal, hence industry policy was central to prices and incomes policy, not merely an add-on (ALP/ACTU in Wilson et al, 2000: 296-297).

The Accord rejected the “hopelessness” of relying on “market forces alone” and called for interventionist policies to achieve full employment. Central to these would be a “national economic planning mechanism in which the prices and incomes structure has a defined role” with tripartite bodies including a reformed Australian Manufacturing Council (AMC), an Economic & Planning Advisory Council (EPAC), and councils at regional, industry, company and workplace levels, integrated into the planning structure. Specific commitments included establishment

\(^1\) 152,000 net jobs in the metals and engineering sector between 1974 and 1983.
of a diversified manufacturing sector to reduce dependence on primary and commodity sectors, with increased manufacturing activity in “producer goods”; opposition to reductions in protection “in the foreseeable future”; improving the capital base; regulating and increasing the availability of investment finance; employment training programs integrated into planning processes; and coordinating the ministries covering economic planning, industry and trade (ALP/ACTU in Wilson et al, 2000: 295-298). Adjustment to economic restructuring was to be eased through job creation and labour market adjustment measures, stimulation of particular sectors, a review of the IAC and tighter regulation of transnationals (ALP/ACTU in Wilson et al, 2000: 298-299).

The Accord provisions on industry policy did not consider ecological sustainability, either as a constraint on the development or form of particular industries, or as a stimulus to new industry development. Nor did the tripartite structures provide for environmental movement or community participation. Given its overwhelming emphasis on the achievement of full employment through maximising growth, and in the absence of a union commitment to insert sustainability into tripartite deliberations, the Accord's tripartism carried a grave risk of institutionalising the "growth coalition" described by Schnaiberg (1980).

7.2.4 ACTU and Metal Unions’ Industry Policy Development

After the election of the Hawke Government the ACTU and the metal industry unions continued to develop their policies for industry development, supporting them with studies by union researchers and the National Institute for Economic and
Industrial Research (NIEIR). The 1983 ACTU Congress adopted the metal unions’ policy supporting selective industry assistance, and the ACTU relied on AMWU researchers to write its submissions on industry policy (Ewer et al, 1987: 100).

The most substantial union contribution to the debate came in 1984, through the Metal Trades Federation of Unions' *Policy for Industry Development and More Jobs*. This proposal called for a suite of measures for selective and strategic assistance to manufacturing industry to enhance its import-replacing capacity and export competitiveness. Stilwell (1986: 102) notes that the plan provided a clear exposition of the case for interventionist industry policy, and thus presented a striking contrast with Federal Government policy. It could nonetheless be criticised from feminist and environmentalist perspectives because of the lack of attention to the differential effects of the plan on the employment of men and women, and because of the potential environmental impact of development in industries such as heavy engineering. On the other hand, the Plan’s underlying economic theory could be extended to support a sustainable development discourse which emphasised the economic and employment potential of ecologically driven restructuring. This is because one policy consequence of the theory is that a nation's "comparative advantage" in particular sectors is “*not a static concept, as treated in neo-classical economics, dependent only on relative factor prices. . .*” but can be created by policies to develop and diversify industries (Stilwell, 1986: 98). Amongst other things, this means that Australia has greater scope to restructure to reduce dependence on ecologically high-impact sectors than is assumed by orthodox economic theory.
7.3 Accord Industry Policy Implementation and Non-Implementation

Whilst industry policy was seen by the pro-Accord Left as the element of the Accord with the greatest socially transformative potential, the effect of Federal Government industry policy fell well short of union aspirations, reflecting the hostile role of elements of the Federal economic policy bureaucracy wedded to neo-liberal doctrine, and the embrace of such theories by the government (Ewer et al, 1991: 76-77). By the late 1980s it had come to be regarded as the area of greatest "implementation deficit" and of subversion of the social democratic intentions of the Accord through neo-liberal influence on government.

7.3.1 EPAC, AMC, the Industry Councils and the Sectoral Plans

The Accord proposal to establish EPAC was endorsed by the National Economic Summit. EPAC membership included Federal Government ministers, and representatives of State governments, business, unions, farmers and community support groups (Stilwell, 1986: 182). However, EPAC was rapidly colonised by conventional economists who were able to impose their neo-liberal agenda on EPAC’s work priorities, policy advice, and recruitment of staff. The vitiation of EPAC was also supported by Treasurer Keating, who within days of the Summit sought to disassociate EPAC from any notion of "strong government interference in the economy" (Keating, 1984, in Boreham, 1990: 49), and subsequently denied EPAC access to Treasury budget estimates. The ACTU representatives' main task and achievement was to neutralise EPAC's advice, which was generally contrary to

The AMC had been established by the Fraser government in 1977 with a vague brief and little practical influence on policy. The implementation of Accord proposals for its reform was slow, and dogged by disagreements between the ACTU and the Federal Government over its role, structure and staffing. When it was reconstituted in 1984 its charter mixed free market, selective interventionist and blanket assistance policies, with their contradictions glossed over by homiletic references such as "the economic challenge facing the nation." The AMC was also hobbled by under-resourcing, inadequate support for its union members, and lack of power to implement industry policies developed by the AMC and its sectoral councils (Ewer et al, 1987: 123-126). According to Stewart, the AMC's main function was as a tripartite "talk shop" and advisory body within the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce (DITAC), and its policymaking role was further limited by the Government after 1987 (Stewart, 1990: 109-110).

Tripartite councils were developed in eleven industries, and their main initial task was to develop strategy papers for their industries. The councils developed plans for the steel, motor vehicle, heavy engineering and TCF industries, of which the first two were highly successful in regenerating those industries, and revised industry assistance arrangements in other industries such as shipbuilding. As discussed in section 7.4, the Forest & Forest Products Industry Council (FFPIC) also developed an industry plan. The councils lacked executive power to implement the policies
they developed, and so their implementation was dependent on personal contact
between the AMC and DITAC and bilateral negotiations between unions, business
and the government, and subject to the whim of ministers and their advisers. The
successful steel and motor vehicle plans were forced on government by the political
salience of employment issues in those industries and the regions in which they were
concentrated, but many industry policy measures were rejected because they
conflicted with the neo-liberal approach adopted by the government at its advisers'
behest. The councils' ability to influence government policy was further undermined
by older sections of the bureaucracy (notably the IAC) which developed policies
potentially destructive of the industries, which the councils had to divert time and
resources to refute (Ewer et al, 1991: 76; Stilwell, 1986; Stewart, 1990: 115;
Combet, 2002).

The experience of reform of the Trade Development Council (TDC) was more
positive. Its predecessor had been established in the 1940s as a bipartite body giving
business a direct influence on trade policy. By the 1970s the Whitlam government
reformed the TDC to provide for a union representative, which allowed unions
numerous avenues to influence policy, and in 1984 the Hawke government
established a tripartite Business Union Consultation Unit as a support and advisory
body to the TDC. In 1985, at the unions' behest, the TDC was reduced in size,
reorganised on a tripartite basis and the BUCU incorporated with it. It provided
research support both for union involvement in other tripartite processes, and for
joint government-union projects on industry development, and its personnel were
committed to the Accord and to union involvement in industry policy (Ewer et al,
1987). The TDC's most significant joint venture with the unions was the
ACTU/TDC Study Mission to Western Europe, from which arose Australia Reconstructed.

7.3.2 *Australia Reconstructed* and its Fate

*Australia Reconstructed* (*AR*) was the unions' most ambitious industry policy proposal, and their last great attempt, within the Accord relationship, to realise the linkage between interventionist industry policy and labour's wider transformative agenda. Whilst not stating the case for interventionist industry policy in as much analytical and theoretical depth as the Metal Unions’ plan, *AR* was broader in scope, being a plan for a new economic direction for Australia (Stilwell, 2000: 193-196).

*AR* sought to provide observations and examples of policies which had worked in other countries, distil common elements of successful policies, and show how they could be adapted in an Australian context. The countries studied were chosen on the basis of their success in overcoming BOP problems whilst achieving good employment, inflation and social justice equity outcomes. Common features of their success were tripartite cooperation around the aim of full employment, a stable economic environment achieved through incomes policy including centralized wage fixing, policies to support efficient industries and encourage restructuring, and direct measures to promote productive investment, including "collective capital formation" to finance equity and loans for new investment. The successful European countries and their union movements recognised international trade as a key to growth, and thus supported continuous restructuring strategically guided by targeted trade/industry policy (ACTU: TDC 1987: xii). Finally, *AR* argued that industrial
democracy was a precondition both for successful restructuring and for creating "production consciousness" amongst workers, as industrial democracy at enterprise level, complementing tripartite processes at higher levels, makes the most effective use of the skills and expertise of workers and unions.

On this basis, AR formulated recommendations on industry policies, wages, prices, the social wage, trade policy, education & training, equal opportunity, industrial democracy and strategic unionism, to be implemented under the aegis of tripartite agencies. These policies would be financed by forms of collective capital formation including a National Development Fund and a National Employment and Training Fund, sourced from superannuation funds and, if required, taxes on imports. These proposals were to be strategically geared towards “A central national economic and social objective” for Australia, which would be agreed on by government, unions, business and community groups, and centre on the aim of full employment and equitably distributed rising living standards, based on "the maximum possible level of economic growth" (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 195-205).

The reaction to AR from the peak business councils was uniformly hostile, whilst the media response ranged from lukewarm to denunciatory, with the main business weeklies ignoring it altogether. AR was criticised from the left on similar grounds as the Accord. From the standpoint of the Siegmann-Norton model the most significant criticisms were those which reiterated the radical-democratic critique, criticizing AR’s disregard for the gender divide in employment and the difficulties of AR for the environmental agenda (McDonald, 1988; Ranald, 1987; Caswell, 1988; Frankel, 1988). AR did not consider specific environmental issues, and some of its key
elements were inimical to sustainability. The clearest example was the call for a "national objective" based on the "maximum possible level of growth," unqualified by references to the qualitative composition of growth or to ecological constraints. Frankel (1988) argued that this warranted AR’s rejection, and ACF Executive Director Philip Toyne saw it as a point of serious criticism (Toyne, 1990: 27). The call to instill a "production consciousness and culture," without reference to the qualitative dimensions of or ecological conditions for production, sits ill with the need to foster a "sustainability consciousness" as a condition of ESD.

In the event, AR's vision came to naught. The Federal Government did not take its interventionist agenda seriously (Jones, 1997: 33), and the ACTU did not wish to campaign strongly for its full implementation for fear of putting the Accord, and therefore the Labor government, at risk. The unions campaigned for proposals on education, training and superannuation which were seen to be achievable, and acted themselves to implement the Report's proposals on union reorganisation, divorced from AR’s pro-active concern with "strategic unionism", as explained in Chapter 6. Commentators have offered various explanations for AR’s failure, one of which was that industry policy had not generally been an issue around which mass labour mobilisation had occurred, due to the generally weak state of workplace-level organisation and education. Indeed, AR's own critique of the structural incapacity

2. Other explanations of AR’s failure included strategic defects in the document itself, or in the strategy within which it was framed, the absence in Australia of the political and institutional conditions which permitted the success of AR-style policies in European countries, the fact that such conditions had only been achieved in those countries through sharp class struggle rather than the ACTU’s preferred “consensus” approach, and the ACTU’s assumption that the government could be rationally persuaded to implement AR without the pressure of political mobilization. For a detailed analysis of AR’s fate, see Jones (1997); Hampson (1996); Rafferty (1997); Stilwell (2000); Ewer et al (1991).
of the Australian trade union movement of the 1980s to practice "strategic unionism", and the radical reorganisation it recommended in emulation of the Scandinavian union movements, could be read as an implicit admission that the conditions did not exist for successful movement-wide pursuit of an alternative economic strategy based on interventionist industry policy. This suggests in turn that there were serious practical limitations, due to factors both internal and external to the labour movement, on its capacity to intervene in support of, or in alliance with, environmentalist initiatives for production reform.

7.4 The ESD Process - Sustainably Reconstructing Australia?

What was absent from public debate about AR at the time of its release was a recognition that industry policy could be used to initiate the economic restructuring required to achieve sustainable development, and that such restructuring could have the economic benefit of positioning Australia as a world leader in new environmental and environmentally friendly industries. The question of how Australia could be sustainably reconstructed, and under more democratic and inclusive auspices than that of tripartism, was placed on the agenda by the ESD process. This section will describe and analyse ACTU and union participation in this process, and the

3. According to Stilwell “Industry policy can also be a means of initiating the radical economic restructuring needed to achieve ecologically sustainable development. This is a particularly interesting possibility for Australia. Individual nations have developed a world reputation for particular products in earlier eras - Switzerland for watches, Sweden for furniture, Japan for motorcycles, Italy for fashion shoes - not so much because of a natural resource endowment but because of strategic focus in their industry development. Australia could also become an acknowledged world leader, and exporter, given the necessary institutional support for the development of key environmental industries” (Stilwell, 2000: 202).
interaction of unions with the environmental movement, including initiatives for
dialogue and cooperation, both inside and outside the ESD process.

7.4.1 Overview of the ESD Process and Its Fate

The ESD process began in a period of historically high levels of political salience for
environmental issues and political influence for the environmental movement. Initially this took the form of a series of spectacular victories in conflicts over nature conservation issues in alliance with pro-conservation groupings and individuals in the Labor Party, notably Federal Environment Minister Graham Richardson. However, the resultant political and community polarisation over environmental issues, including within the Labor Party, led the Hawke government to initiate a program of “meta-policy” and institutional innovation to routinise environmental policymaking and reconcile environmental and economic objectives and stakeholders. The most notable initiatives were the establishment of the Resource Assessment Commission and the establishment of the ESD Working Groups. The Hawke government sought to extend the corporatist approach to economic and social policy embodied in the Accord to environmental policymaking, involving and to a degree incorporating environmentalists in the same way as the Accord had involved unionists. The government also sought to deploy the concept of “sustainable development” to regain control of the environmental political agenda and provide a philosophical basis on which policy concertation could occur between the ESD stakeholders. Whilst the style of politics and policymaking embodied in the ESD Working Group process was not typical, and the outcomes were ultimately disappointing, the salient point is that, for a time, both environmentalism and labour
encountered each other as “insiders” in the PIF, which, in terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, could be expected to favour LER co-operation.

In 1989, the Federal Labor Government released a discussion paper on ESD, and invited public responses. Nine Working Groups corresponding to industry sectors were formed to consider the responses and develop recommendations which would form the basis for a National Strategy for ESD (NSESD). During the Working Group process additional working groups were established to consider "intersectoral" issues, and the Working Groups were asked to consider options to enable Australia to meet its Interim Planning Target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Working Groups comprised representatives of government agencies (primarily those with a developmental orientation), business, trade unions, environmental organisations (principally the ACF and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), and briefly Greenpeace), scientists and community groups. Whilst the Groups were numerically "stacked" in favour of advocates of existing industry interests, this was offset by Hawke's insistence that they arrive at their recommendations by consensus. In the event a high degree of consensus was achieved between environmental, union and business representatives, to which pro-industry government representatives deferred at the Working Group stages. The 500 Working Group recommendations, had they been implemented, could have achieved a significant shift towards more sustainable economic activity in Australia at a net economic benefit (Diesendorf & Hamilton, 1997).

However, by the time of the release of the Working Group reports in 1991, several factors were militating against a favourable outcome from the ESD process.
Business groups, sections of the media, and pro-development elements in the ALP and unions were campaigning to regain the initiative on environmental policy, highlighting the purported economic costs of environmental protection measures whilst questioning the seriousness or reality of environmental problems. This campaign was expedited by the onset of a severe recession which provided a pretext for deprioritising environmental concerns, and also by a change of key personnel in the Federal Government. Prime Minister Hawke and Environment Minister Richardson were replaced by successors with, respectively, less interest in the environment and in consensual policymaking as well as political debts to pro-development Ministers, and less clout in Cabinet (Dovers, 1999; Richardson, 1994).

As well as the improvident political and economic climate, the post-Working Group phase of the ESD process handed the recommendations, and further development of the National Greenhouse Response Strategy (NGRS) and the NSESD, to hostile sections of the bureaucracy, specifically 37 inter-governmental committees and the National Greenhouse Steering Committee. The transition from the relatively open and participatory Working Group stage to the closed inter-governmental committee stage was generally regarded as enabling a retreat from the hard-won union/business/green consensus on ESD recommendations. The committees diluted the Working Group proposals to conform to neo-liberal ideological preferences and a "business as usual" approach for industries with which the government representatives identified. Two notable trends were for measures involving strong government regulation and intervention to be replaced with reliance on market and self-regulatory approaches, and for an aversion in the final strategies to measures which could impose significant costs on particular sectors or regions, even if they created overall gains. The extent of the departure from the spirit of the Working
Group outcomes was revealed at a summit workshop of business, environmental, union and other ESD stakeholders in August 1992. Convened to discuss the draft strategies over three days, it collapsed on the first day due to union, business and environmentalist outrage at the failure of the strategies to incorporate their agreed positions, and the government's unwillingness to seriously consider the knowledgeable advice of concerned parties in formulating ESD policy. The Federal government nonetheless pressed on to formulate a NSESD and NGRS which represented even further departures from the perspectives of the Working Groups.

7.4.2 Labour-Environmental Discontent Prior to the ESD Process

During the 1980s, conflict between sections of the union and environmental movements over forestry issues had carried over into conflict over industry plans and the activities of tripartite councils in the forestry sector, with the ACTU and the Accord being implicated in support of the forestry unions and industry council. Conflict also arose in 1988-89 from the ACTU leadership’s view that "industry development" warranted the proposed Wesley Vale Pulp Mill in Tasmania. The forestry and Wesley Vale debates overshadowed the ACTU’s positive environmental initiatives during the 1980s. One was the adoption of a Resources, Environment and Pollution Policy in 1981. The ACTU also maintained its policy of opposition to uranium policy, but practical implementation of this policy was hamstrung by the refusal of unions actively involved in mining and related work to comply with the policy, and the maritime unions’ inability to sustain bans on handling uranium in the face of threats of legal action without active ACTU support (Burgmann et al, 2002). Other ACTU environment-related policies in this period addressed toxic chemicals
and radioactive substances (ACTU, 1985c), technological change (ACTU, 1985e: 115), job creation through capital works on “environmental facilities” (ACTU, 1983d: 23), and peripheral participation in development of the National Conservation Strategy (ACTU, 1982d).

Since the 1970s, environmentalist campaigns for forest and wilderness conservation had been opposed by an "industry defence" alliance of forestry companies and unions, State forestry departments and professional foresters associated with these groups (ACF, 1987; Watson, 1990; Burgmann et al, 2002). This alliance had engaged in increasingly overt political and public relations campaigning in defence of the industry, marked by strident anti-environmentalist rhetoric. In the immediate pre-Accord period, LER conflict had been particularly sharp in Tasmania due to trade union support for the proposed Gordon-Below-Franklin Dam. This was obscured by the subsequent famous case of LER cooperation when political Labor was helped to victory in the 1983 Federal election by the electoral intervention of a national environmentalist coalition, responding to Labor’s promise to invoke Commonwealth External Affairs powers to prevent construction of the Dam. One unanswered question is the extent to which the Tasmanian unions' animosity to environmentalism over the Franklin Dam conflict enjoyed sympathy from mainland union organisations and officials, and whether this carried over to contaminate other issues in subsequent years.

The forest industry defence alliance was effectively institutionalised in the operations and membership of FFPIC, which comprised representatives from unions and companies in the industry (including end users of forest products), State forest
services and forestry-related government departments, the CSIRO and an academic forestry economist (Penna, 1987; ACF, 1987: 76-77). In 1985 FFPIC released a Strategy Plan to achieve "a higher rate of growth in output and employment" in the industry (FFPIC, 1985 in ACF, 1987: 77). FFPIC saw the main condition for the success of the plan as being Commonwealth and State commitments to maintain and in some cases increase secure long-term wood supplies, which translated into opposition to any expansion of the National Parks estate, and no restrictions on logging operations in forest reserves of lesser conservation status. The ACF’s analysis of the Plan was highly critical on a range of economic and social grounds, but the main objection was its ecological unsustainability. This included its demands for continued guaranteed access to forests which the environmental movement wished to see preserved, and the FFPIC Plan's implicit assumption that Australians should be encouraged to consume more forest products in order to increase demand for the output of the industry (ACF, 1987: 81-82).

LER friction also arose from the overt political campaign by FFPIC and forestry unions, supported by the ACTU. In 1986 FFPIC initiated a "Public Awareness Campaign" to influence public opinion and government decisions in favour of industry positions. It established the Forest Industries Campaign Association (FICA) to raise and administer corporate funding for the campaign, which included television advertisements depicting stereotyped "conservationists" mindlessly opposing the reasonable approach of the industry. A contentious aspect of these activities was the role of Federal public servants in FICA and in the industry peak body, the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI). This activity was curtailed by the relevant ministers after complaints were received (ACF, 1987;
Penna, 1987). Subsequently, FICA spawned the Forest Protection Society (FPS), a coalition of industry, union and logging community interests which continued the pro-industry campaign along with NAFI.

As well as supporting and co-sponsoring FFPIC activities and media productions, forestry union and ACTU officials (specifically Bob Richardson and ACTU Secretary Kelty) endorsed the forest industry line of continued commercial logging of native forests. This included joint submissions, ACTU support for pro-industry rallies, pro-industry pamphlets by the ACTU and forestry unions, ACTU-sponsored media tours of logging areas, and ACTU co-sponsorship of the Forest Protection Society. Kelty and Richardson were laudatory of the industry and hostile towards the environmental movement. Union statements attacked environmental organisations and their forest policies in unrestrained language, often groundlessly as in the claim by a forestry union pamphlet that the ACF desired the destruction of the industry (PPWF/ATWU, 1985). The unions also repeatedly stated that "resource withdrawal" (denial of access to the wood resource due to forest conservation decisions) was the major cause of forestry job losses, despite economic analyses showing that some 98% of forestry job-shedding in recent decades had been due to technological change (Burgmann et al, 2002: 14). Decisions by Federal and State Labor governments to conserve National Estate forests in Tasmania, eastern Victoria and south-eastern NSW by declaring National Parks or nominating them for World Heritage status were also opposed by the ACTU.

The Accord was invoked in support of the ACTU's stance. Richardson, launching a joint ACTU-FICA plan for the industry, compared it with the successful Vehicle
Industry Plan (Richardson, 1987), whilst Kelty stated in 1985 that a joint industry-union submission to the Victorian government calling for continued native forest logging "meets obligations to the Accord" (PPWF/ATWU, 1985). A joint ACTU-forestry unions bulletin, Re-Growth, claimed support from the Accord's industry policy provisions, and a joint ACTU-forestry unions brochure on the Eden woodchipping dispute claimed that the Accord obliged the NSW Labor Government to encourage "the increased development of the forest products industries" (NFFPUC, 1988). This included continued logging of the Coolangubra and Tantawangalo National Estate forests, subsequently proclaimed National Parks by the NSW Labor government in 1995.

The forestry issue contaminated the ACTU’s responses to environmentalist initiatives for cooperation on other issues. In March 1987, Richardson had caused attempts at ACF-ACTU discussions on forestry to be aborted, despite previous assurances by Crean (Toyne, 1987a). In a meeting between Crean, Richardson and ACF officials, Richardson stated that "Our fundamental position is that unions aren’t going to talk about other issues unless we resolve the issue of resources threat" (Balderstone et al, 1987: 1), "resources threat" meaning conservation of forests. Correspondence from ACF Director Toyne to the ACTU and Federal government referred to “long-standing antagonisms between our organisations” (Toyne, 1987) stemming from forestry conflict, and in 1990 Toyne told a trade union forum that forestry conflict had "dominated our relationship with organised labour" (Toyne, 1990: 29). In 2003 Toyne confirmed at interview the role of forestry conflict in
prejudicing the LER between the ACF and ACTU across the board. Considerable
discussion took place within ACF about ways around the forestry-driven
antagonism, and of opportunities for co-operation with individual unions. In
November 1987 Toyne wrote to Prime Minister Hawke regretting that the unions had
"slavishly" adopted the industry position, and stating that the ACF's economic
analysis of the industry was intended primarily to provide a basis for discussion with
the unions about alternative plans for industry restructuring. He asked Hawke to use
his influence with the ACTU to establish a forum for union-environmentalist
dialogue on forest issues, and invited him to chair such a dialogue (Toyne, 1987c).
A similar request for assistance was put to Environment Minister Graham
Richardson (Toyne, 1987d).

The ACTU leadership's pro-logging stance distressed ACTU affiliates and elements
of its Executive. Toyne reminded Crean in March 1987 that he had been approached
by a large ACTU affiliate complaining about the peak-council's pro-logging line. In
June 1987, NSW Teachers Federation President Jennie George wrote to Toyne
stating that she had raised concerns on the ACTU Executive about ACTU/ACF
conflict over forest issues, and stressed the importance of both organisations keeping
lines of communication open. Teachers’ unions and other public sector unions were
prominent in this discontent. Ten unionists in the Commonwealth Employment

4. Toyne states that “During my time as head of the ACF I was very very strongly focused on what I
considered to be alliance building. . . and one of the attempts I made was to really try and press home
the need for a close link with the union movement. . . there was an ongoing and strong interest on the
part of some unions. . . But all of my approaches to the ACTU, initially with Simon Crean and then
with Martin Ferguson, were met with a great deal of, if not suspicion, then certainly ambivalence.
And I raised issues like greenhouse. I thought that was an excellent one for the unions to become
involved with, but I got the impression that it was always just a step too far for them to really forge an
alliance in the face of the opposition from the forest workers. And I think that flavoured all of the
relationships” (Toyne, 2003).
Service (CES) wrote to Kelty rejecting the ACTU’s "jobs versus environment" line based on their experiences in the CES, whilst Robert Bluer of the Australian Teachers Federation (ATF) privately advised the ACF on tactics for dealing with the ACTU (Salmon, 1988). Tasmanian union officials stated their disquiet with Bob Richardson's activities and their view that he was misrepresenting union policy for the benefit of woodchip companies (Long, 1987). In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, this shows the importance of "bridge-building" and, conversely, "bridge-burning" individuals in fostering LER cooperation and conflict. It also shows the extent of personal identification with the forestry unions' cause by ACTU leaders.

Inspection of ACTU Executive and Congress Minutes reveals no evidence of formal endorsement of the public statements and actions by ACTU officials, nor any policy resolutions which sanctioned the forest industry position. On 29 May 1987, Toyne wrote to Crean protesting ACTU support for a joint NAFI/FICA submission calling for the weakening of the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) Act, and asking for an explanation of how the ACTU decided on this stance (Toyne, 1987b). The ATF voiced similar disquiet about unilateral action by ACTU officials in a letter to Kelty asking which Executive resolutions authorised ACTU officials to attack the environment movement (Walsham, 1987). There is no record of Crean or Kelty providing an explanation in either case. According to Colley, this is typical of a modus operandi amongst ACTU officials whereby de facto stances on major issues are not decided openly through formal democratic structures which often don’t include “the real decision-makers,” but through private networking between key individuals (Colley, 2003). This is consistent with the Siegmann-Norton model’s
expectation that less democratic union organisational practices would be more conducive to LER conflict.

By mid-1987, the Hawke government's environmental platform and its relationship with leaders of the peak environmental organisations had become a central element in its strategy for the 1987 Federal election. Whilst ACTU officials such as Richardson claimed that Hawke had overestimated the political impact of pro-conservation policies (Richardson, 1987a: 24), by the time of the Federal election the ACTU was forced to go quiet on its joint campaign with the forest industry to weaken the AHC Act. Commentators were canvassing the possibility of the ACTU painting itself into a reactive role and being seen as "the new enemy of the environment - a sort of Liberal Party of the Labor movement" (Moore, 1987) if it failed to develop a more sophisticated relationship with the environmental movement.

The ACTU leadership’s interpretation of Accord commitments on industry policy also led to LER tension over the proposed Wesley Vale pulp mill. The strong environmental and community campaign against the mill, the demise of the project and the political consequences of the perceived "green victory" have been extensively analysed by other commentators (Pybus & Flanagan, 1990; McEachern, 1991; Economou, 1992a; Kelly, 1992; Richardson, 1994), and will not be recounted in detail here. The ACTU wished the pulp mill to proceed on the grounds that it would add value, through downstream processing, to a raw materials export, namely woodchips. Support for downstream processing projects was seen by the ACTU as a key element of industry policy. The Federal Government wished the project to
proceed subject to stringent environmental standards. In October 1988, the ACF wrote to the Federal Government expressing an "open mind" about the project provided strict environmental standards were met and wood sourced appropriately, but community opposition persisted on both environmental and economic grounds, and the ACF relented from its conditional willingness to accept the pulp mill as it refined its economic analysis of the project (Toyne, 1989).

After a tortuous approval process involving Federal-State tensions, the Federal Government’s insistence that the proponents comply with strong environmental standards which were nonetheless technologically attainable, and resubmit the project EIS to determine compliance with those standards, led to its abandonment. The ACTU was mortified, with Crean claiming that the decision “goes to the whole question of resource development and how serious Australia is about having an industry development strategy to correct its balance of payments problems” (Davis & Peake, 1989) and launching last-ditch campaign to revive the project (Davis & Young, 1989). The ACTU Executive passed a resolution expressing "dismay at the apparent inability of the Federal Government and the joint venturers to reconcile industry development and environmental issues," which it believed had put at risk prospective investment worth $13 billion in the forest products industry, and calling for the Government "to develop a clear set of environmental guidelines, based on adopting the best environmental standards in the world, against which State Governments and industry can assess industry development potential” (ACTU, 1989a: 18-19). This resolution introduced two themes which loomed large in ACTU environmental policy interventions and policy development over the next few years. One was the desire to encourage investment by providing certainty to industry and
protect it from ad hoc changes to project approval requirements. The other was a preoccupation with protecting the economic potential of the forestry industry, which was to repeatedly detract from the ACTU’s commitment to ESD and LER cooperation. The ACTU leadership may not have represented the united union view on this issue that it claimed to, as the AMWU’s Tasmanian Branch had opposed the Wesley Vale project on environmental and economic grounds (Metal Worker, 1989a: 10).

7.4.3 The LER in the ESD Process

During 1988-89, unions responded more or less positively to increasing public environmental concern, in some cases pursuing joint initiatives with environmental organisations, although friction continued over forestry issues. The ACF approached, and was approached by, sympathetic unions and unionists over possible joint activities, and had numerous internal discussions about strategies for alliance-building with unions around issues such as energy production and waste minimisation. In May 1988 ACF representatives discussed a range of issues with the ACTU's OHS Committee, after which the ACF proposed forming a joint working party to establish a work programme around one or several areas of shared concern (Toyne, 1988: 2). Subsequently Toyne wrote to Crean seeking union assistance in publicising the issue of land degradation. In the same year the ACTU Executive called for a programme of National Afforestation, seeing this as an opportunity for joint action with the environmental movement on an area of common concern (ACTU, 1989a: 35). In June and July 1989 ACF officials met with officials of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC), and building, plumbers, painters, transport
and education unions, to consider initiatives to establish networks of pro-green unionists, increase union awareness amongst environmentalists, formalise relations with the VTHC, and place environmental issues on the VTHC and ACTU agenda. In 1989 the ACF appointed Jonric Ridley as its Trade Union Liaison Officer.

ACTU affiliates were also pro-active in recognising environmental constraints and opportunities. In 1988 the VTHC combined with community environmental groups to persuade the State Electricity Commission to put new power lines underground rather than overhead and in 1989 established a Conservation & Environment Policy Committee and appointed an Environment & Sustainable Development Officer. The Victorian Branch of the Clerks Union launched a "Conserver Clerks" campaign around workplace environmental issues. The ACF and Australian Railways Union waged joint campaigns around public transport issues, whilst the Plumbers and Gasfitters and United Firefighters' Unions acted to ban the use of ozone-depleting chemicals in fire extinguishers. Building and maritime unions intensified their opposition to imports of tropical rainforest timber, and regional union organisations in Wollongong, Newcastle and the Latrobe Valley were active in community campaigns around the quality of the urban environment (McCollow & Ridley, 1991: 20). The AMWU undertook a range of activities, described in Chapter 9. In July 1989 the Transport Workers Union asked the ACTU to adopt a policy proposal on use of recycled paper by the ACTU and affiliates (Hodgson, 1989).

In line with this trend, officials of the ACTU and unions began calling for a substantial and strategic union response to environmental issues (Spellman, 1989). One factor in this shift in perspectives was the warming relationship between the
ALP and political environmentalism. An additional shock was the success of the Green independents in the 1989 Tasmanian State election, and the subsequent establishment of a Green-supported Labor minority government on the basis of the historic Labor-Green Accord. This Accord had been agreed to over the objections of the Tasmanian TLC and resource sector unions. Union reactions extended to a call for a Special ACTU Conference to formulate responses. The Tasmanian Labor-Green Accord and union discontent triggered debate at the highest level of the ALP, and the first signs of a reappraisal by the ACTU.

At the June meeting of the ALP National Executive, Graham Richardson had called for the ACTU to reconsider its stance on the environment given the likely political permanence of the issue, and also stated that the JvE argument had been exaggerated. Another Executive member described the ACTU's stance as "stupid", prompting an angry response from AWU general Secretary Errol Hodder (Clark, 1989). The clashes continued at the June 1989 NSW ALP State Conference, with NSW ALP Leader Bob Carr promising bold action on environmental issues and subsequently being criticised by Andrew Ferguson of the BWIU for inattention to working-class interests (Lagan, 1989). At the same Conference Richardson repeated his arguments to the ALP National Executive, eliciting a response by Kelty who announced that the ACTU would be expanding its policy beyond an emphasis on job creation and development to include conservation concerns. Kelty called for the Federal government to pursue an integrated strategy including environmental standards which were “the best in the world” but also providing certainty to investors and governments about “where development occurs, where protection of the environment occurs, where the Government clearly outlines what it wants for this
country” (Kelty in Larriera, 1989), rather than reacting to issues as they arise. As part of such an approach, the Federal government should assume powers currently assigned to States by the Constitution. Kelty’s statement was the first by an ACTU leader to embrace a conception of sustainable development, although Kelty “balanced” this advance in the same month by writing to Resources Minister Peter Cook demanding that there be a 12-month moratorium on further reductions in logging (Canberra Times, 1989: 1). However, by the 1989 ACTU Congress, the impetus for sustainable development was in the ascendancy.

The Congress adopted an Environment & Sustainable Development (E&SD) policy, drafted in consultation with conservation groups and Executive members from left and right factions (Colley, 2003; Cossar, 1989b; Moffet, 1989b). Congress delegates privately conceded that the policy was overdue as the ACTU had allowed itself to become irrelevant to the environmental policy debate (Moffet, 1989a: 1). Congress reports by Crean and Kelty, and the Executive Report to Congress on the economy, industry, trade development and the environment, all sought to frame the ACTU’s prospective environmental interventions within a strategic political and economic perspective. Kelty’s comments were the least defensive and most unqualified, relating the need for union activity on the environment to an enumeration of “Basic Aspirations of Workers” including “a clean, safe working environment” and “a clean, safe place to live” (Kelty, 1989a: 2). On industry development, Kelty favourably noted the existence of investment plans and opportunities in the resources and manufacturing sectors and in infrastructure (Kelty, 1989a: 4). However, such

5. The BWIU and FEDFA, ETU, Waterside Workers Federation, Miscellaneous Workers Union and Administrative & Clerical Officers Association also placed environmental policy motions on notice, which were incorporated in the final Environment policy.
investment “must be undertaken having the highest level of environmental standards in the world and we must merge a balanced industrial strategy with a balanced environmental strategy” (Kelty, 1989a: 7). The union movement had to overcome public perceptions of its lack of environmental concern by working with government, business and community groups towards a national consensus on sustainable development. Crean’s comments were more guarded, complaining about the difficulty of finding agreement with the ACF on working definitions of “balance” in forestry disputes, and reiterated union concerns about the need for clear approval guidelines to facilitate projects. Crean signalled union support for the concept of ESD, and supported the Resource Assessment Commission as a means to more effectively resolve differences between environmental and developmental interests (Crean, 1989: 13).

The Executive Report on the economy, industry, trade development and the environment reiterated Crean’s concern, framing the ACTU’s environmental agenda in terms of the need to expedite economic activity rather than a primary concern with ecological sustainability. It reiterated that whilst environmental standards for new projects had to be the world’s highest, they should also provide certainty to proponents to minimise the risk of losing such projects due to political vagaries (ACTU, 1989d: 2.41-2.42). As an example of what was at stake, the Report claimed that there was potential for $4 billion in new investment in pulp mills (ACTU, 1989d: 2.42). It asserted the need for a more active and strategic Industry Development Policy (ACTU, 1989d: 2.28) but whilst "the focus on Industry Development makes all the more urgent the need for unions to address the need for ecologically sustainable development" (ACTU, 1989d: 2.1) it did not identify
environmental industries as an area of opportunity. Areas for positive environmental intervention, given their importance for the urban working class, were: "waste collection, disposal and recycling as well as air pollution, traffic congestion and urban planning. . . and public transport" (ACTU, 1989d: 2.43-2.44). The final paragraphs of the Executive report expressed the tension within labour movement ideology between a conception of environmentalism as expressing a deeper critique of the failures of capitalism, and hence a central concern for labour, and a conception of dominant environmentalist trends as a passing fad peripheral to the class and economic concerns of labour.

The Environment and Sustainable Development (E&SD) Policy asserted the imperatives of ecological sustainability, whilst still seeking to relate these to economic and employment objectives. Its fundamental premise was that:

[The] long-term interests of workers and the community depend upon developing an economy which maximises job creation, job security and improves workers’ living standards while at the same time is environmentally sustainable for the future. . . Environment matters and their inter-relationships with employment and the economy are crucial to the interests of workers (ACTU, 1989c).

The policy addressed specific issues under the sub-headings of: Agriculture & Grazing, Endangered Species, Forests, Pulp & Paper, Standards for Processing Plants, Energy Generation, Transport, Mining, Antarctica, Education, Local Action and International. It emphasised the urgency of environmental issues and criticised Australian industry’s failure to take a number of achievable steps toward sustainability. The Policy also authorised the Executive to take actions including the formation of an E&SD Committee to oversee ACTU involvement in environmental policy debates. The policy’s final form was disputed by the Right and Left on the
Executive, the former wanting the policy to consist of broad guidelines, whilst the latter argued successfully for a more detailed policy on specific issues. On the issue of logging, the policy asserted that "a balance must be reached between maintaining a modern forest products industry and ensuring the long term ecological sustainability of Australian forests, particularly of native forests. . . where ecological sustainability cannot be ensured logging in native forests should be banned" (ACTU, 1989c).

The ACTU E&SD Committee was formed at an affiliates meeting in February 1990, and its membership and terms of reference ratified by the ACTU Executive in March 1990. It included representatives of the ACTU Secretariat, State Labour Councils, and unions with coverage in environmentally contentious sectors. The E&SD Policy authorized the Committee to take action outlined in the Congress policy on specific issues, conduct research and develop policy on the relationship between environmental, economic and employment issues, further develop the E&SD policy, and develop immediate initiatives for union action on environmental issues. The policy directed the Executive to "convene industry group meetings to consider policy and determine ongoing action at local and industry levels" (ACTU, 1989c), an action delegated to the E&SD Committee.

Early in its term the forestry unions intervened actively to put forestry industry positions to the Committee. Despite some unions’ support for environmentalist calls for a general ban on imports of tropical rainforest timbers, the E&SD Committee was persuaded to reject blanket bans whilst reserving the option of selective bans in cases of proven serious unsustainable practices. In June 1990, Pulp & Paper Workers
Union Secretary Chris Northover put to the Committee the industry’s position that there was $7 billion of prospective investment in Australia in forest industry projects which required resource security guarantees in order to proceed, and persuaded the committee to agree to a "special briefing on ecologically sustainable forest management" by FFPIC (ACTU E&SDC, 1990a). The forestry unions' commitment to ecologically sustainable forest management can be judged in the light of their subsequent suggestion that the Environment Policy be amended to delete the call for logging to be banned where it cannot be carried out in an ecologically sustainable manner (Northover, 1991). The development of sectoral strategies proceeded tardily, with only the transport sector unions meeting in the committee's first year to identify issues for action. This was an early warning of the real level of commitment to the environment which most unions could offer given their competing priorities.

On 25 June 1990 Hawke wrote to ACTU President Martin Ferguson inviting the ACTU to comment on the Federal Government’s ESD discussion paper and nominate union movement representatives to the nine Sectoral Working Groups (Hawke, 1990). The ACTU referred the latter task to interested affiliates: the forestry union was represented on the Forestry Working Group (Weaven, 1990c), the AWU secured representation in Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism, the AMWU in Manufacturing, the Municipal Officers Association and Public Sector Union in Energy Production and Energy Use, and the ARU on the Transport Working Group. The United Mineworkers Union (UMW) was initially only represented on the Mining Working Group until it replaced the public sector unions on the two Energy-related Working Groups (UMW, 1992; Colley, 2003). The unions also participated in the Intersectoral Working Groups on Economic Modeling and Greenhouse, via the
UMW and the ARU respectively. The E&SD Committee envisaged setting up a separate research secretariat, supported by Federal government funding, to coordinate its participation in the Working Groups (ACTU E&SDC, 1990b: 2). However, funding was not forthcoming and the ACTU’s participation was coordinated by Colley on secondment from the UMW. The ACTU subsequently complained that the lack of funding disadvantaged it relative to the resource-rich business groups and the environmental organisations which received $600,000 in Federal funding for the ESD process. A further consequence of the lack of funding was a loss of practical involvement in ESD by AMWU National Research Officer Nixon Apple, who was responsible for ACTU industry policy development (Colley, 2003).

The four national environmental organisations (ACF, WWF, Greenpeace and The Wilderness Society) produced a joint submission in response to the ESD Working Paper. The submission critiqued the neo-liberal assumptions and ecological blindnesses of the Working Paper in depth, outlined an ecological framework within which decision-making on economic and social development had to occur in order to be sustainable, stated the environmental organisations’ views on key policy issues in the ESD process, and articulated the sustainability agenda with the need for economic restructuring. In the process it contested "mainstream" approaches which combined neo-liberalism with prescriptions for maintaining a resource-based model of development (Hare, 1990b). The environmental organizations argued that the quest for ESD would provide both pressures and opportunities for Australia’s transition from a factor-driven to a knowledge driven economy. Pressures would come from the need to make existing industries more resource- and energy-efficient,
reduce wastes, and accept the discipline of environmental regulation. Opportunities would come from the emergence of "green industries", particularly high-technology and information based ones, providing products which would be required in an ecologically sustainable Australian and world economy. The ESD-driven restructuring would restore the external balance of Australia's economy and enhance its structural diversity, making it more resilient to external shocks (Hare 1990b: 43-48).

The ACTU produced no overall submission, but adopted guidelines for participation in the ESD process which injected an interventionist industry policy perspective. Elements of the ACTU's overall approach can also be gleaned from commentaries on the draft and final ESD Working Group reports prepared by Colley, the revisions of the E&SD policy at the 1991 ACTU Congress, and concerns expressed in the ACTU's submission to an inter-sectoral issues workshop in June 1991. The ACTU agreed with the environmental organisations in linking ESD to the economic and social case for restructuring. It reiterated that government had to intervene strategically to ensure that industry development occurred and appropriate regulatory and other measures were adopted, and argued that the goals of restructuring for ESD and achieving full employment were more likely to be realized in concert if ESD-related policies were "integrated with general economic policies via accepted planning mechanisms" (ACTU E&SDC, 1991b: 2). ESD could also stimulate industry development through growth opportunities in emerging green industries. The ACTU called for Australian companies to adopt Best Practice Environmental Management, and for best environmental practice in the economy generally, but with the proviso that this and other elements of industry policy should not put Australia at
a competitive cost disadvantage. Environmental standards had to be applied consistently and predictably through "a rational coordinated approvals process for new developments which minimises uncertainty and unnecessary delay" (ACTU E&SDC, 1991b: 2). Whilst unexceptionable in itself, this revenant of Wesley Vale subsequently took on a regressive form in the hands of the ACTU leadership.

Both the ACTU and peak environment groups formulated statements of ESD principles. Common to both were inter-generational equity, social equity, a precautionary approach, conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity, efficiency, resilience and a global perspective. The environmental organisations also posited constant natural capital, sustainable income, biophysical limits to resource use, quantitative development, pricing of environmental values, external balance and community participation as principles of ESD (Hare, 1990b: 6-16). The ACTU guidelines specifically canvassed the costs of structural adjustment, industry policy, and workers’ health and safety. There was relatively little substantive difference between the two movements on shared principles. Some principles asserted by one movement were not necessarily disregarded by the other, but were deployed in the course of their ESD Working Group participation rather than foregrounded. An important point of agreement was the shared commitment to social equity, including recognition of poverty as a driver of ecologically destructive behaviour, and an awareness of distributional consequences of ESD-driven restructuring. The ACTU argued that "If a decision is made that particular processes or certain industries are ecologically unsustainable then the costs of social and economic adjustment must be integrated into the decision-making process" (ACTU E&SDC, 1991b: 1), and must be treated as an integral part of achieving ESD and not left to the market to solve.
Planning and managing employment impacts should be a feature of ESD in any industry, the union movement must promote job creation, training and retraining in affected industries and the ensuing costs should be borne by the community instead of individual workers (ACTU E&SDC, 1991b).

Both labour and environmentalists had to contest the influence of neo-liberalism within the ESD Process, which according to the ACTU was manifest in the Draft Reports of the ESD Working Groups released on 7 August 1991. The ACTU’s summary of the Reports ruefully noted that "There is, in theory, substantial opportunity in the ESD debate to pursue an industry development line but this opportunity is disappearing" (UMW, 1991: 1) due to the reports' preference for "market-based solutions". Environmental movement participants also criticized government representatives’ fixation with market mechanisms, (Hare, 1991). In some cases this even led to labour-environmental-business alliances to beat down "market fundamentalist" opposition to desirable reforms (Diesendorf, 2003). The ACTU also criticized the draft reports and the ESD process for the under-representation of women and lack of attention to gender equity concerns, and for the lack of attention to developing mechanisms for cooperative dispute resolution over land access and claims. Other concerns included insufficient attention to labour force restructuring, OHS, education and training, social equity, and the human and social impacts and distributional consequences of ESD measures, and the Draft Reports’ tendency to see the interests of workers as marginal or a residual matter to be dealt with by the market, rather than an integral concern. These concerns were systematised in an ACTU Executive resolution of August 1991 enumerating these weaknesses (UMW, 1991).
The ACTU’s concerns about the implications of ESD for employment were also canvassed in a paper presented to an ESD Intersectoral Issues Workshop in June 1991. The perspective in this paper was more defensive and conservative than other ACTU and union interventions, and both the paper and some revisions of the E&SD Policy at the 1991 Congress revealed significant tensions and contradictions within the ACTU’s position. The paper tended to resile from a commitment to major economic restructuring through industry policy. It argued that Australia’s contribution to global environmental management required it to maintain and develop its energy-intensive industries; that in the short to medium term, Australia’s economic future lay in downstream processing of agricultural and resource products; and that success in this sphere was a necessary precondition for achieving the long-term goal of a strong elaborately transformed manufacturing (ETM) capacity (ACTU 1991a: 12). Therefore Australia should concentrate on “greening” of existing industries and those (mainly energy-intensive) industries in which Australia could excel. The paper accepted the likelihood of major changes in the composition of employment through ESD, and that ESD could have beneficial aggregate employment impacts. However it argued that effective labour market adjustment programs were necessary to minimise and equitably share the social costs of ESD restructuring, or else “there can be expected to be major union resistance to ESD policy initiatives that cause job losses in particular areas” (ACTU, 1991a: 16). Whilst positive outcomes were possible, the ESD process carried major risks including: deteriorating trade balance through curtailing export industries, unemployment caused by industry restructuring; lower wages and conditions through the shift from manufacturing to service employment; reduced living standards
through higher energy and resource prices, rural and regional decline, and increased costs to business and government due to environmental requirements (ACTU1991a: 20).

The 1991 ACTU Congress revised the E&SD Policy, and also adopted an E&SD Strategy to guide the union movement’s involvement in the ESD process and related debates. The policy and strategy, taken together, contained internal contradictions and tensions between proactive recognition of the need for long-term change in the structure of the economy and more defensive treatment of short-term economic and employment concerns. The revised policy bore the influence of the UMW’s greenhouse concerns and the ACTU’s employment concerns, with much of the new material dealing with greenhouse policy. The policy and strategy strongly supported the ESD process and the ACTU’s continued involvement therein. It affirmed general principles of ESD which largely overlapped with those proposed by environmental groups, whilst reiterating social equity, labour market adjustment and education and training as central ESD concerns. The policy also called for the development of ecological, social and economic indicators to measure progress towards ESD; a comprehensive policy for resolving land access issues in Australia; national standards and other reforms for EIA procedures, management practices and rehabilitation for mining projects and sites; and increased environmental research and development (R&D) funding by governments and business. It included a new section on the urban environment which included policies on urban planning, housing, transport, air and water quality, waste and recycling, and access to services. The policy was unequivocal about the need for “further economic growth as a
means of achieving full employment, improved living standards, addressing our trade deficit and fulfilling social needs” (ACTU, 1991m).

The policy and strategy expanded the existing Congress policy on “The International Dimension” to include sections of the ESD Guidelines which noted the inadequacy of purely national policy responses to global problems, the role of global inequalities and power relations in the environmental crisis, and the limitations on the ability of individual nations to pursue an independent economic course in the global economy. The strategy affirmed the need for Australia to maintain its natural advantage in resource-based and energy-intensive industries. This was offset by the section of the E&SD Strategy which recognised that "Australia must diversify its economic base away from a reliance on resource and energy-intensive industries if it is to have an ecologically sustainable economy" and that "environmental considerations may shorten the timeframe" within which this was to occur. Despite the ACTU's pessimism about the capacity of the ESD process to adequately embrace industry policy, the Strategy affirmed both “The need for interventionist industry policy to develop environmentally benign industries” (ACTU, 1991n) and the need for unions to pressure the Federal government on this issue.

The E&SD Strategy contained two provisions which aimed to address both the reality and the perception of LER conflict. It called for unions, in conjunction with environmental groups, governments, business and other interested parties, to develop a common vision of an ecologically sustainable future, to replace "the current project-by-project conflict" which failed to serve either ecological or economic imperatives. It also called for the ACTU's publicity and campaign work to inform
current and potential union members, especially women and young people, of the labour movement's role in "achieving harmony rather than conflict between workers and the environment" (ACTU, 1991n). These laudable aspirations were undermined by the inclusion of a full-page NAFI propaganda advertisement in the Executive Report to 1991 Congress, Together For Tomorrow, which failed to mention the environment as an area of strategic concern for the union movement (ACTU, 1991e). However, amendments by the forestry unions to endorse the FFPIC Industry Plan and abandon opposition to logging where this was not ecologically sustainably (Northover, 1991) did not get past the E&SD Committee.

At the conclusion of the ESD Working Group process, assessments of the process and outcomes were produced for the ACTU by the UMW, although there is no record of a formal Executive or E&SD Committee resolution endorsing these assessments. ACTU President Martin Ferguson, in a press release on the Sectoral Working Group reports, expressed disappointment that more common ground had not been achieved. He claimed that the Working Group process had not been very useful in developing solutions to Australia's economic problems, accusing both environmental groups and business of "lack of maturity in some cases" (ACTU, 1991o).

The UMW's commentary was more positive, although not without criticisms. It saw the ESD Working Group process as worthwhile, although not fully addressing the ACTU's interests, and a major effort would be required to develop an independent union position on the environment and development to avoid marginalisation of union priorities and pushing of unions into a defensive position. The Final Reports
were an improvement on the Draft reports, and many areas of agreement had been reached amongst Working Group participants. The Reports exhibited less narrow faith in market mechanisms than initially advocated by government departments, recommending a mixture of economic instruments, regulations and standards, institutional reform, infrastructure development, education and information strategies, and research and development. The recommendations took account, in varying degrees, of a range of limitations on the effectiveness of market forces (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 4).

The union commentary identified a tendency to understate the constraints on achieving sustainability, as major changes in industry will be required if environmental problems are as severe as described in the reports. The Working Groups also dealt unevenly with union concerns of employment and social equity, although some had called for interventionist industry and labour market programs if major adjustment was required. The economic modeling commissioned by the Working Group Chairs reflected "economic rationalist theories and social values" (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 6) which could unduly narrow policy options, to the exclusion of both labour and environmentalist concerns, if alternative approaches to the economics of ESD were not considered. The models were methodologically unable to model an economy undergoing major structural change, and likely to underestimate the costs of ESD adjustment. Finally, the Commentary reiterated criticism of the over-representation of the bureaucracy in the Working Groups, the

6. For example, the Greenhouse Report was considered a good overview of the nature of the problem and possible solutions, but it was criticised for underestimating the difficulties of meeting the Government's Interim Planning Target, and of taking a purely national approach to a problem which could only be addressed globally.
under-representation of women, the non-representation of Aborigines, and the under-representation of the unions relative to business and environmentalists.

The unions' commentary agreed with the joint ACF/WWF assessment of the ESD Working Group process and reports (Hare, 1991) that the process had been an innovative and worthwhile exercise. Both agree that positive outcomes had been achieved in terms of identifying issues and problems, and agreement on recommendations which would be both worthwhile in themselves and provide a basis for progress towards sustainability. Both movements criticised "a general lack of vision about the nature of an ecologically sustainable society, or in an individual sector" (Hare, 1991: 5); a tendency to lowest common denominator generalities rather than a consensus on specific measures in some working groups; over-reliance on voluntary and market measures rather than regulatory or interventionist approaches; over-representation of neo-liberal government bureaucrats, the exclusion of "those constituencies and interests not directly represented on the Working Groups" and the inadequacy of the public consultation processes (Hare, 1991: 3-4). Finally, both labour and environmentalists agreed on the need for ongoing, broader community consultation and education to further develop the consensus on ESD and oversee implementation of the Working Group recommendations (Hare, 1991: 7). They also agreed that there was a danger of the post-Working Group phase, dominated by government departments and inter-departmental committees, not carrying through the hard-won consensus of the Working Group phrase. This fear was realised before the end of 1992.
Neither the unions nor the environmental groups identified many serious points of disagreement. The UMW commentary incorrectly identified Energy Production as an area of disagreement because environmental group representatives were "unwilling to agree to or negotiate on" a range of "insurance" measures on global warming (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 1). The Final Report would not have included these measures had the conservation groups not agreed, and the ACF/WWF assessment states its support for these measures subject to qualifications. Although the environmental organisations did not participate in the Forestry Working Group, the UMW Commentary observes that significant disagreement with labour representatives would have occurred had they taken part. Nonetheless, the ESD Working Group process resulted in greater mutual understanding and common ground between labour and environmentalism than had previously been the case. Unfortunately, the key decision-makers in the ACTU had not been party to the ESD process, and throughout they persisted with stances not in spirit with the LER cooperation achieved in the Working Groups.

Another indication of the ACTU’s thinking on environmental and development issues came in August 1990, when it adopted a 16-point industry and trade development strategy, subsequently expounded in a book, *Australian Manufacturing and Industry Development: Policies and Prospects for the 1990s and into the 21st century*. This strategy is significant both for representing the most thorough incorporation of sustainability concerns into an ACTU document during the period under study, and also for showing the limits of, and constraints upon, more thorough assimilation of such perspectives.
The strategy reiterated the need to promote ETMs, develop high technology industry, enhance the service sector and increase these sectors’ shares of Australia's export income. Achieving these goals required a suite of industry policy measures including an improved research and development effort, education and training, regional and sectoral development plans, and strategic use of industry supply and government procurement policies. However, the plan retreated from overtly social-democratic elements of the 1984 metal unions plan and *Australia Reconstructed*, such as industrial democracy, a National Development Fund, strategic public control of investment and strong tax reform measures. It represented a shift to a less radical perspective for industry development when a serious commitment to ESD required a more radical perspective.

The Executive “vision statement” introducing the plan was significant, not for neglecting the environment, but for framing it as something to be "managed" in the course of achieving an economic vision, rather than the economic vision being couched within an ecological framework. Similarly, the plan also framed environment regulation as an issue primarily to be addressed in terms of its ability to expedite or hinder development, rather than making ecology the central concern. One of the Plan’s goals was to "reconcile the potential conflict between our industry development objectives and our objectives for protecting the environment" (ACTU, 1990e: 3). The Plan claimed that this “potential conflict” could endanger "projects of national significance" worth some $60 billion in 1990 (ACTU, 1990e: 53). Whilst not all of the projects would necessarily encounter such problems, the ACTU cited economic modeling showing that if 25% of these projects were curtailed due to environmental constraints, by 2000 Australia's GDP would be reduced by 1.5%, its
export income by 3%, there would be 25,000 more people unemployed, and Australia's net external debt in 2005 would be 22% higher than if all the projects proceeded (ACTU, 1990e: 55-56). The Plan qualified this gloomy scenario by noting that "Of course some of the projects should not proceed in any case" (1990e: 56) on environmental grounds, and that the economic modeling did not consider the economic benefits of avoiding environmental harm from the projects.

The Plan therefore proposed "a more pragmatic and optimistic approach" which would emphasise environmentally benign alternatives to some of the projects in question, and reiterated the arguments of the peak conservation groups (Hare, 1990b) regarding the economic benefits of environmental regulation (ACTU 1990e: 57). It recognised that projects at risk of cancellation could proceed with better environmental technology and management plans, or be replaced by environmentally benign developments (1990e: 58). Whilst the negative scenario was a serious danger to be guarded against, the Plan posited that the "pragmatic and optimistic approach" could be made to succeed through the kinds of processes being established through the ESD Working Groups, and through adoption of two proposals on industry development and the environment by manufacturing unions. The first, on standards for processing plants, included comprehensive national environmental guidelines and standards for new plants; comprehensive monitoring programs before and throughout the life of the plants; joint government and industry funded R&D Programs to monitor environmental issues; new technology and improving environmental standards in downstream processing; and examination of global demand for environmentally friendly products and technologies. The second proposal was for a National Development Strategy to position Australia to
participate in the growth trade in environmental industries and cleaner production, with the involvement of business, unions and environmental groups in developing and implementing the plan (ACTU, 1990e: 60-61).

Taken as a whole, the ACTU's 16-point plan was compatible with sustainable development. It substantially qualified the doomsday scenarios about the economic impacts of ESD measures, and put forward possibly the most sophisticated statement by the ACTU of the opportunities from ESD for "win-win" outcomes. Unfortunately, the subsequent behaviour of the ACTU and its leadership represented a bifurcation from the themes of the 16-point strategy, with the core leadership emphasising the economic and employment risks of project cancellations in its subsequent interventions on logging, resource security and fast-tracking, whereas the "pragmatic and optimistic approach" was manifested in the ACF-ACTU Green Jobs projects and other LER collaborations during the 1990s.

7.4.4 Unsustainable Development in the ACTU Mainstream

Whilst the ACTU's E&SD Committee was expected to, and did, inject "mainstream" ACTU perspectives on industry development and employment objectives into the ESD debate, there was no comparable injection of ecological concerns into ACTU leadership positions on matters with environmental implications, and in some key instances there is no evidence that such positions were adopted with any input from the E&SD Committee. The most striking examples of this were the ACTU's continued pro-logging campaigning during the ESD period including its intervention in support of proposed Federal Resource Security Legislation (RSL) in 1991, and its
advocacy of "fast tracking" of major projects in 1991-92, which entailed weakening of environmental assessment processes and endorsement of particular projects which could never have been accepted as ecologically sustainable.

In the period from the adoption of its Environment Policy in 1989 to the end of the ESD process and beyond, the ACTU leadership never resiled from its support for logging of forests of high conservation value and resistance to demands for their conservation. By February 1990, Kelty joined the forest industry to call for continued logging of National Estate areas in Victoria, and in the lead-up to the March 1990 Federal election the ACTU was concerned that the Hawke government's courting of the environmental vote was discouraging investment. Whilst most independent commentators agree that the Hawke Government's "green vote" strategy won it the 1990 election, this was contested by pro-development elements within the labour movement. Bob Richardson argued at the ACTU Executive that Labor retained marginal seats in south-eastern NSW on the strength of employment guarantees to forest industry workers, which it was obliged to uphold (Richardson, 1991a). As 1990 continued, so did disputes over forestry, with the ACTU leadership and forestry unionists promoting the argument, first propagated in FFPIC's 1988 "Growth Plan", that several billion dollars worth of forestry-based projects depended on guaranteed long-term access to the wood resource in order to proceed.

The Federal Government supported the principle of resource security for specific projects, but believed it could be achieved without legislation, and assured the ACF in December 1990 and February 1991 that RSL would not be introduced. NAFI claimed that almost $5 billion of forest industry investment potential would
disappear unless RSL was enacted. On 21 February ACTU President Ferguson wrote to Hawke, endorsing the NAFI claims, and threatening a union campaign against the government on the issue (Ferguson, 1991). On 12 March 1991 the Federal Government caved in to ACTU and industry pressure, and announced its intention to legislate for resource security for all new forest industry projects worth more than $100 million. The legislation was denounced by environmentalists, with Greenpeace and the Wilderness Society withdrawing from the ESD Working Group process, and ACF and WWF abstaining from the Forestry Working Group. Within the Federal ALP caucus, RSL was supported by pro-development ministers including ex-ACTU President Crean, but opposed by the Left. It was also opposed by Paul Keating who saw it as an economically irrational public subsidy to industry which set a bad precedent for other resource industries. The legislation was eventually defeated in the Senate through the vagaries of partisan politics, as the Australian Democrats and Green independents opposed it on environmental grounds, whilst the Coalition opposed it because it was insufficiently pro-development. Keating (who was now Prime Minister) was not committed to it and therefore saw no need to negotiate with either group of non-Labor Senators to ensure its passage (Henry, 1993: 177-181; Doyle & Kellow, 1995: 268-269). This was the end of legislatively mandated resource security, although State and Federal governments subsequently attempted to provide de facto resource security for industry through the complex Regional Forestry Agreement process, whose denouement lies outside the period of this study.

The ACTU leadership also attempted to secure resource development projects against environmental scrutiny and constraint through its campaign for "fast
"fast-tracking" of such projects. Again, is it questionable to what extent this campaign reflected ACTU policy. Whilst the 1991 ACTU Congress revised the E&SD policy, it also adopted a *Charter for Jobs* Policy and Strategy, reflecting the imperative of overcoming record levels of unemployment due to the recession. Neither the Policy nor the Strategy identified environmental standards *per se* as a factor contributing to the recession or unemployment, but identified a lack of predictability and certainty in such standards and approval processes as an impediment to potential investment (ACTU 1991d: 18).

Unfortunately, the ACTU leadership and pro-development members of Federal Cabinet parleyed these concerns into a discourse of economic salvation through "fast-tracking" of industry development and public infrastructure projects, with environmental and Aboriginal heritage protection being portrayed as major impediments. In September 1991 Ferguson claimed that "red, black and green tape" was hindering economic growth and that "the pendulum needed to swing back" away from an emphasis on environmental protection, whilst Kelty characterised the Federal Government's rejection of the Coronation Hill mine on Aboriginal heritage grounds as "a decision against jobs" (Kitney & Davis, 1991: 2). The ACTU compiled an extensive list of industry projects and public infrastructure developments which it wanted fast-tracked in order to attract billions of investment dollars and create hundreds of thousands of jobs (Kitney & Power, 1991; Livingstone, 1991). Some of these projects were environmentally uncontentious and even benign (such as new railways and water treatment facilities), but others were highly problematic environmentally contentious, such as pulp mills in Tasmania and on the NSW South Coast, the third runway at Sydney Airport, and the proposed
South Coast Motorway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast (Livingstone, 1991). The ACTU also reiterated the call for RSL to expedite forest-based projects. Many of the projects alleged by the ACTU to be impeded by "green tape" were actually not proceeding for non-environmental reasons. One example was a $1 billion titanium dioxide plant in South Australia which had received environmental approval at the time the ACTU presented its "wish-list", but which never proceeded due to a poor market outlook (Gambogi, 1996).

Partly as a result of the ACTU campaign, the Federal Government agreed to a formula for fast-tracking major projects, including the establishment of a "Major Projects Facilitation Unit" as part of its "One Nation" economic statement in February 1992. The Unit’s mission was to expedite the approvals processes applying to industrial projects worth more than $50 million. Environmental movement fears that this would result in a weakening of environmental assessment requirements and of rights of public participation appear to have been vindicated in the case of the large Macarthur River zinc mine in the Northern Territory. There the EIS was very poor, construction of the mine departed substantially from the terms on which it was approved, and Aboriginal land title rights were bypassed through special legislation (McCall, 1999; Boyle, 1993).

There is no record of the ACTU's E&SD Committee being consulted about or discussing a policy on fast-tracking, either of specific projects or in general, and whilst there appears to have been some discussion of the resource security and forestry issues, there is no evidence of a sustained debate leading to a decision. Colley observes that two aspects of the ACTU's functioning and internal culture may
have contributed to the ESD Committee's bypassing on such issues. Firstly, the members of the Committee from different unions selected issues for attention on which agreement was likely, and actively avoided discussing contentious issues. Secondly, as already noted, on what were seen as key issues by the ACTU leadership (such as resource security), decision-making did not take place in the committee structure, but through informal liaison between key individuals. This combination of arrangements enabled the E&SD Committee to accomplish considerable useful work on issues where unions agreed. However, it meant that ACTU stances on important issues with sustainability implications were not decided or discussed by the one ACTU body with a specific sustainable development mandate and relevant interest and expertise amongst its members, nor even decided with the aid of advice from that body.

7.5 ACTU-Environmentalist Cooperation and Conflict after 1992

After the conclusion of the ESD process, the organisational initiatives for cooperation by both the ACTU and the major environmental organisations began to wither. The ACTU’s E&SD Committee lapsed after 1993, Greenpeace did not renew its Trade Union Liaison position after that time, and the ACF’s Trade Union Liaison position was also not maintained. Nonetheless, one major and some minor examples of LER cooperation at peak national level occurred in this period, as well as another case of LER conflict - again over forestry - in the final term of the Federal Labor Government.
7.5.1 Green Jobs Project

The proposal for the ACF/ACTU Green Jobs in Industry Project arose from a joint ACF/ACTU investigation, was endorsed by the E&SD Committee in December 1992 and was launched in 1993. The Program was implemented by a joint ACF/ACTU Green Jobs Unit, established with Commonwealth Government financial assistance of $100,000 which enabled the employment of a small staff, augmented by the secondment of Nixon Apple from the AMWU to work part time on the project. The project was overseen by ACF Executive Director Tricia Caswell and ACTU Assistant Secretary Jennie George, with additional input from the Federal Government's Green Jobs Steering Committee comprising government and industry nominees (ACF/ACTU 1994: 5; ACTU E&SDC, 1992c).

The Green Jobs Unit's initial project was an "Industry Scan" of some 2000 companies to identify current and potential employment in green jobs and environmental industries. This phase of the project yielded a progress report in August 1993, and a final *Green Jobs In Industry Research Report* which identified significant growth potential in environmental industries, and whose key findings were published as a booklet. For the purposes of the Research Report the Green Jobs Unit focused on employment potential in five sectors: waste management and clean production, water and waste water, recycling, ecotourism, and renewable energy and energy efficiency. It found that during the late 1980s and early 1990s employment in these sectors had grown significantly, and that there was likely to be continued rapid employment growth, although from a fairly small base, in these sectors in coming years. The report also identified employment and training in environmental
projects and environment-related labour-market programs as a significant job creation opportunity. It found that a majority of large firms surveyed saw environmental concern as "an opportunity rather than a threat" (ACF/ACTU, 1994: 8), and documented initiatives by innovative employers to minimise costs, with an environmental benefit, by reducing waste and energy use. The Report also identified barriers to green jobs growth, including government failure to set strong (or any) environmental standards and targets for industry; limited availability of investment capital; inadequate research and development funding; low business awareness of environmental opportunities; and public policy trends (such as privatisation and deregulation of the energy sector) which undermined the potential for sustainable development. A range of recommendations to overcome these obstacles was presented (ACF/ACTU, 1994).

The second phase of the Green Jobs project entailed training and finding job placements in the five environmental industries for long-term unemployed people, and campaigning in conjunction with Greening Australia for the Federal Government to expand its environmental labour market programs. From 1994 until the Howard government began winding down Labor's green employment programs in 1996, the project assisted tens of thousands of unemployed people, particularly from disadvantaged groups. Another Green Jobs Unit program in this period was the Cut Waste and Energy Use initiative to help companies to reduce costs through reducing waste and energy use. With the withdrawal of government support after 1996, the Green Jobs Unit has continued on a much smaller scale as a consulting company advising private enterprise and state and local governments (Burgmann et al, 2002).
7.5.2 ACF/ACTU Charter and "New Visions"

In 1992 and 1993 the ACTU and ACF jointly signed off on an ACF/ACTU Charter, and a "New Visions" statement prepared by the Evatt Foundation and supported by a range of national peak community organisations. The ACF/ACTU Charter recognised the need for an ecologically sustainable Australia, and for synthesising economic, environmental and social considerations in developing policies for the future. It recognised that the two organisations had mutual concerns, but also that there were issues on which differences existed. It outlined fourteen points of agreement, the first being that the two organisations support each other and intended to co-operate as far as possible. The Charter declared mutual support for: ecologically sustainable economic growth; job security; green technology and green jobs; investment in accordance with ESD principles; conservation of biodiversity and endangered species; environmental management of land, waterways, coasts and the seas; global greenhouse emissions reductions; "better cities" with cleaner air and water and affordable transport; best practice environmental management in the workplace; maximum environmental awareness in education institutions and hospitals. Remaining points committed the ACF and ACTU to keep each other informed on matters of mutual concern, encourage joint projects, appoint union-environment officers and committees, conduct joint discussions and information exchange, and mutually encourage dual membership amongst their members. Finally, in case of differences the organisations were to seek early consultation to resolve them without confrontation (ACTU E&SDC, 1992d). The Charter was opposed by the forestry unions on the grounds that "ACTU Policy... does not extend to formal agreements with organisations campaigning against the interests of
particular affiliates" (Northover, 1992). In the export woodchipping dispute of 1994-95, discussed in Section 7.5.3, the forestry unions and their allies within the ACTU Executive showed that they did not consider themselves bound by its terms.

The "New Visions" statement committed the signatory organisations to social goals including full employment, economic and ecological sustainability, democratic values and social justice, celebration of cultural and ethnic diversity, reconciliation with indigenous Australians, human rights, ending of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, disability, age or religion, and non-violence. It also committed the signatories to ongoing dialogue and informal policy negotiations through a series of meetings (ACF et al, 1993). There is no record in either the ACF or ACTU archives of further outcomes from this initiative.

7.5.3 1994-95 Export Woodchipping Debacle

In December 1994 the Federal Resources Minister, David Beddall, announced a renewal of export woodchipping licenses which included approval of woodchipping in almost all of some 1300 areas of native forest of high conservation value which had been identified by the Federal Environment Minister, John Faulkner. This decision met with immediate active opposition by the environmental movement, and sparked a serious political crisis for the Keating government, both internally and in its relations both with the environmental movement and pro-conservation factions of the ALP, and with pro-forestry interests including the CFMEU Forestry Division (see Christoff, 1995; Williams, 1997: 130-135; Economou, 2000). Beddall's decision, and subsequent industry efforts to have the government "hold the line"
were supported both by the forestry union, and by Bob Richardson on behalf of the ACTU (Hawes, 1995; Boreham & Milburn, 1995; Montgomery et al, 1995). This campaign included information and lobbying activities in conjunction with NAFI, the Forest Protection Society and other industry groups; picketing of conservation group offices and Body Shop outlets; counter-picketing of environmentalist forest blockades; threats to picket the offices of pro-environment Federal Labor MPs; and threats to withdraw support from the ALP in the NSW State election due in March 1995 because of the pro-conservation stance of NSW ALP Leader Bob Carr. In addition the CFMEU (Forestry) took out newspaper advertisements attacking Senator Faulkner's advice as "bulldust", and joined industry groups in organising a blockade of Federal Parliament by forestry interests in February 1995.  

The CFMEU (F) was at odds with the anti-logging position of the CFMEU's Construction Division, which maintained that the Forestry Division had no authority to threaten electoral retribution as CFMEU electoral interventions were determined by the super-union's National Executive, not by Divisions (Coomber & Marris, 1995: 6). Other unions including the Australian Services Union and Australian Education Union (AEU) were unhappy with the Federal Government’s decision and the ACTU's apparent support for them (Thompson, 1995). The AEU National Conference in January 1995 condemned woodchipping, the Government's decision and Richardson's statements, and demanded that the ACTU Executive reaffirm

7. Richardson, for his part, responded to early moves by the Keating government to revoke some of the 1300 licenses in question by urging forestry operators not to hand back the licenses, and on February 1, during the blockade of Parliament House, said that forestry workers would continue logging the disputed areas if licenses were revoked, and warned environmentalists against forest blockades, saying “We are going into the forests in strength, and greenies better stay away” (Richardson in Thompson, 1995).
ACTU policy to phase-out logging of old-growth forests and call on the government to reverse its decision (Durbridge, 1995). The minutes of the ACTU Executive meeting where this was raised by AEU President (and subsequent ACTU President) Sharan Burrow states that an explanation was provided by Ferguson. However it does not disclose the content of the explanation. No resolution of the kind requested by the AEU was carried, nor is there any record of Ferguson or others in the ACTU leadership acknowledging that Richardson’s conduct was in breach of the ACF-ACTU Charter (ACTU, 1995a; ACTU, 2002n). ACTU assistant secretary Jennie George subsequently stated that the ACTU didn't have a policy on woodchipping but did support “moving logging out of native forests of high conservation value and placing more emphasis on plantations” (George in Thompson, 1995), and stated her personal opposition to the Beddall decision on environmental and industry development grounds (Rintoul & Hannan, 1995). As the debate dragged on, the ACTU's involvement became increasingly marginal, although the forestry union continued its pro-industry campaigning.

ACTU and ACF documents from early 1995 until the end of the Labor government and the Accord in 1996 reveal no subsequent engagement by the peak union body with environmental issues, and no significant formal contact between the two peak organizations. Doubtless this would have occurred between George and Caswell, and Caswell’s successor Jim Downey, over the Green Jobs Project.
7.6 Conclusions

At the level of peak organizations, the history of the LER in the sustainable development and economic restructuring debates in the period of the Accord relationship was, overall, one of missed opportunities and avoidable conflict. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, this can be attributed to a number of factors.

The obvious ones are the ACTU’s status as a political-institutional "insider" with business and the state in the Accord relationship; its acceptance of an ideology of "social partnership" with capital and the state in pursuit of maximising economic growth; and its failure to substantially modify this commitment in response to environmentalist critiques and challenges. These factors are particularly evident in the “fast-tracking” debate of 1991-92, the ACTU’s uncritical support for the industry line on forestry issues and in the Wesley Vale pulp mill dispute, and ACTU President Crean’s defence of union alliances with industry when challenged on this issue by ACF representatives (Balderstone et al, 1987). They were even manifest in a strategic document with potentially socially transformative ambitions, namely *Australia Reconstructed*.

However, such positions, and the ACTU’s pre-1989 backwardness on the environment, also reflected the influence of “productivist” and pro-development ideology within the labour movement. This was manifest in the political failure of key ACTU personnel such as Richardson, Kelty, Crean and Ferguson to seriously engage with sustainability or respond warmly to environmentalist approaches until forced by events to do so. It is also evident in the pro-development bias of
influential unions such as the AWU, and the legacy of LER conflict over forestry. The ACTU's leadership after 1989 remained largely in the hands of individuals who had been cold or lukewarm towards environmental issues, and/or with close links with the forestry unions. It was thus to be expected that atavistic tendencies would resurface under the pressure of specific conflicts in the forestry and resource development arenas, or the general pressure of the recession. This is what tended to occur with the ACTU's continued pro-logging position from 1990 through to the 1995 export woodchipping debacle, the resource security debate, and the ACTU's calls for resource development and "fast-tracking" to override environmental protection.

The mitigation of these political-institutional and ideological factors towards LER conflict was compounded by organisational factors. The enhanced authority of the ACTU during the Accord period, and undemocratic ACTU decision-making processes of the kind identified by Colley, meant that particular individuals in the ACTU leadership with pro-industry and anti-environmentalist agendas were able to exercise disproportionate influence on the direction of the ACTU and labour movement, despite formal policy commitments of a more pro-environment kind.

This raises the critical question of the priority accorded in "mainstream" ACTU forums to the work of the E&SD Committee and to development of a labour perspective on ESD. The ACTU’s adoption of the E&SD Policy was relatively belated, had seldom been presaged in policy discussions prior to the 1989 Congress, and was done in reaction to the initiatives of other actors including the environmental movement and the Federal Government. The sustainability
imperative was never theoretically worked into the ACTU’s "mainstream" industry development programs as a core concern, although the 16-point plan of 1990 addressed it competently at the margins. The ACF/ACTU "Green Jobs" initiative, whilst substantial, also did not represent a fundamental shift of perspective by the then ACTU leadership, which revealed its unreconstructed face in the export woodchipping debacle that began mere months after the final Green Jobs report was published.

However, as hypothesized in Chapter 6, the labour movement’s tardy and reactive response can also be attributed to a combination of pressures from an adverse political and economic environment, and pre-existing organizational weaknesses of the labour movement. The period of the rise of political environmentalism and the ESD process was also a period in which the ACTU and its affiliates were required to participate in the Accord processes, respond to the "New Right" attacks on unions, develop responses to the problems of falling membership and organisational decline, fight a rearguard campaign for social democratic economic and industry policy against the influence of neo-liberalism, deal with anti-union legislation by conservative state governments, and manage the difficult union rationalisation process. Prior to 1990 the ACTU had no structures or "in house" expertise for research, policy development and strategic intervention on environmental issues. Nor were most of its affiliates well equipped in this regard, in contrast to industry policy where the AMWU had the capacity to "think for" the entire movement. Those organisations which established environmental officer positions in the 1990s, such as the AMWU and VTHC, did so with the aid of Federal government grants,
and had to discontinue these positions after the Howard Government withdrew funding in 1996.

With the available resources of the ACTU fully stretched on previously determined "core" strategic priorities and on resisting threats which could not be ignored, its environmental activities depended on the voluntary activity of a few individuals who were not burdened with other demands. For example, Colley's coordination of ACTU activity in the ESD process was done in secondment from the Miners' Federation. The Miners' Federation's central role in the ESD process was welcomed by other unions (including those nominally represented on the E&SD Committee) as it lightened their load. Colley states at interview that for most people in the ACTU, the need to respond to environmental issues was:

> Basically another complicating factor. That's the simplest way to put it. Not outright hostility to it, but the union movement's always been characterised by having a huge range of issues in which it could get involved and not enough resources to do it. . . so the environmental issue was something else which was put on their plate, and they wanted to manage it, they weren't particularly keen on doing a lot of work when they had so much else on their plate. It's as simple as that. . . No-one had a problem with what I did on the ESD Working Group process. I think they were just happy that they weren't doing it (Colley, 2003).

The foregoing discussion leads to an ultimately optimistic conclusion. The negative relations between the ACTU (and some affiliates) and the environmental movement over economic and development issues in the period of the Accord relationship were due to temporally specific factors which can be, and in many respects may already have been, superseded. Since the Accord period the predominantly male ACTU leadership with strong pro-development sympathies and affiliations has been replaced by a leadership with a higher percentage of women and white-collar
unionists. This includes a President who had, as AEU President, contested the Ferguson/Richardson position on forestry, and a Secretary from the Maritime Union of Australia, which has a history of pro-environment activity. The sociological phenomenon of higher levels of environmental concern amongst younger generations is also likely to have its effect in generational change in Australian union leaderships. The corporatist Accord relationship between industrial labour and a Labor Government is not likely to be repeated (Combet, 1998). The debilitating transactional effects of the amalgamations process will also not be repeated, whilst the possible LER benefits of reformed union organization may be forthcoming.

The one outstanding area for attention is in improving unions’ specific capacity for environment-related research, policy development and interventions. The experience of the AMWU’s innovative environmental programs, discussed in Chapter 9, could provide an example to be followed by other unions and the ACTU. Ultimately this will probably requiring government funding and other assistance, and therefore the existence of sympathetic governments.
Chapter 8
The LER in Australia's Greenhouse Response


8.1 Introduction

The second case study of the LER in Australia during the Accord period concerns the relationship between the environmental movement and coal industry unions in the development of Australian policy responses to the enhanced greenhouse effect. This case is of interest both because of the intrinsic importance of the greenhouse issue, and because the LER in this case is subject to influences that, based on the Siegmann-Norton model, would be expected to produce tendencies both to conflict and to cooperation. Both such tendencies were evident in Australia's greenhouse policy debates between 1988 and 1997, as were initiatives by labour and environmental actors to manage the relationship in the direction of conflict minimisation. This case study also highlights the importance of discursive democratic policy-making processes - in this instance the ESD Working Group process - in fostering cooperation on the basis of the quest for win-win solutions to the jobs and environment dilemma.

This chapter introduces the main labour movement actors in the greenhouse debate, their history, structure, political trajectory and the political-economic challenges they faced during the period of the study, both in general and specifically in relation to Australia’s greenhouse response. From there the chapter provides an overview of Australia’s greenhouse policy debates during the period of the study, the interaction of labour and environmental movement actors in relation to greenhouse and related issues, and the development of the labour movement’s interventions on greenhouse policy (both inside and outside the ESD Working Group process). It details the high point of LER convergence on climate policy within the ESD process and the
subsequent tendencies to divergence over Australia’s intervention at the Rio “Earth Summit”, the carbon tax debate of 1992 and the formulation of the National Greenhouse Response Strategy. This divergence is due to the failure of the Federal Government to maintain ongoing discursive forums of the type provided, and called for, by the ESD Working Groups. After surveying a number of initiatives for LER cooperation on greenhouse, the chapter reviews the relevant unions’ intervention in the Kyoto Conference on climate change in 1997, and subsequent disengagement with environmental issues under the pressures of an adverse political and industrial climate after 1996. These developments are then evaluated in the light of the Siegmann-Norton model.

8.2 Labour Actors in the Greenhouse Debate

8.2.1 Social Unionism in Australia’s Coal and Energy Sectors

The union most centrally involved in Australia’s greenhouse policy response has been the Mining & Energy Division (M&E) of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). The CFMEU is a “super-union” formed through the amalgamation of several pre-existing unions in the building, construction, forest products, mining and energy production sectors. The CFMEU (M&E) covers workers in the mining and energy sector who had been members, prior to amalgamation, of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen’s Association (FEDFA) in the energy production sector, and the United Mineworkers Federation (UMW) in the coal industry. The UMW was itself the result of amalgamation of the Miners’ Federation and the Federated Mining Mechanics Association (FMMA) in
1989 (CFMEU (M&E), 2000), of which the Miners' Federation was historically the largest, strongest and most politically and industrially active in the coal industry.

The CFMEU is structured as a loose federation of the pre-amalgamation unions in building, forestry, mining and energy, whose political and organisational autonomy extends to the point where national offices of the different Divisions are housed in separate buildings. According to Colley of the Mining & Energy Division, this was a consequence both of the preference of pre-existing unions for amalgamations with other unions of similar politics and culture, and of a desire to avoid too close a relationship where residual political and cultural differences remained a problem (Colley, 2003). An important consequence, in terms of the application of the Siegmann-Norton model, is that the inclusion of the Miners Federation as a Division of the CFMEU did not entail any significant change in its ideology, political-institutional position or organisational structure. Another consequence is that the starkly different environmental positions and LERs of the CFMEU Divisions’ precursors carried over into the super-union, but without the serious internal dissension that may have emerged from attempting to thrash out a common line from those of the pro-environmentalist Construction Division, anti-environmentalist Forestry Division and moderately pro-environmentalist Mining & Energy Division.

The Siegmann-Norton model predicts that a social unionist praxis and a commitment to an anti-capitalist master frame will dispose a union to a cooperative LER. The history of the CFMEU (M&E) and its precursors certainly fits this description. The leadership of the Miners’ Federation had for decades consisted overwhelmingly of members of the Communist Party of Australia (Maher, 2000). The objects of the
union include a commitment to "work for the complete abolition of the present wage system and the substitution of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" (CFMEU (M&E), 1994b: 1), and it had a long history of promoting union involvement in campaigns for peace & disarmament, Aboriginal rights, gender and sexual equality and environmental protection (Ross, 1969; Thomas, 1983; Colley, 2003). The waning of CPA influence and generational turnover of the leadership saw communists making way for Labor Party and independent leftists with similar industrial and general politics, one of the core principles of which is independence from political parties and being “union first” rather than accommodating Labor government priorities (Colley, 2003; Maher, 2000). This had consequences for the union's position within the Accord relationship, which was generally more sceptical than most unions about participation in the Accord, and less compliant with “restraint” under Accord auspices. The union had also kept a greater distance politically from the ALP and Federal Labor government. In 1988-89 the union resolved to disaffiliate from the ALP (Maitland & Wilks, 1993), and some of its officials were involved in attempts to form new left-wing political parties and alliances. The union's “social unionism” orientation, including in relation to the environment, was maintained throughout the period of the study and through the changes of identity in the amalgamation process, albeit underpinned by a core focus on wages, conditions, job security and occupational health and safety, without which, according to Colley, the union couldn’t retain its members’ loyalty (Colley, 2003).

The CFMEU (M&E) comprises some 16,500 members in the coal industry, export coal ports, metalliferous mining, oil, gas and electricity production, and the stand-
alone coke industry. It covers 13,000 employees in the coal industry, which is almost 80% of the union's total membership and a large majority of the coal industry workforce. It is constitutionally able to cover any worker in the coal industry, is the only union which can represent all workers and is recognised as the "principal union" by the ACTU (CFMEU (M&E): 2000). The union's membership comprises mostly white males, with a lower percentage of members of non-English speaking background than the Australian average. There are very few women in the coal production sector, although the percentage of women in the union is higher in engineering and professional roles (Colley, 2003).

The structure of the CFMEU (M&E), described in Appendix 1, is highly democratic and provides ample opportunity for membership participation and presentation of alternative policy positions. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, this should encourage a cooperative LER. The basic unit of organisation is the lodge, covering all members in a particular workplace. The membership directly elects district officials, the National President, Secretary and Vice-President, and delegates to Central Council and National Convention (the national policy-making and governing bodies of the union). Any member can submit views and proposals for consideration by those bodies, and those views and proposals, and the decisions of those bodies, must be published in *Common Cause* (which also routinely publishes articles and letters submitted by members expressing the full spectrum of union opinion). Decisions of Central Council and National Convention must be submitted to the membership for ratification and only become union policy if so ratified. Central Council may conduct referendums of the membership on policy questions and must do so in order to raise special political levies (CFMEU (M&E), 1994b).
The amalgamation of the Miners' Federation with the FMMA to form the UMW, and the UMW amalgamation with the Building Workers Industrial Union to form the CFMEU, were endorsed by a large majority of members of the pre-existing organisations (AEC, 1995). However, significant minorities opposed amalgamation in all three ballots, and the mergers faced qualitative aspects of discontent stemming from traditional occupational rivalries and changes to work organisation in parallel with the amalgamations process. This was ultimately overcome with reasonable success in the CFMEU (M&E), aided by the fact that the Miners' Federation had itself been an industry union (Colley, 2003). A further complication was other unions’ attempts, sometimes in collusion with employers, to preserve or extend coverage in workplaces and industries in which the CFMEU (M&E) had been accorded principal union status (Common Cause, 1993e). One consequence was that the AWU initially became entrenched as the single union in metalliferous mining, but subsequently offered little resistance to deunionisation of this sector when the Coalition Government's industrial relations legislation allowed employers to bypass unions. In contrast, the CFMEU (M&E) maintained 85-90% unionisation in the coal sector (Colley, 2003). Whilst the amalgamation process occurred in parallel with the union's involvement in the ESD process and greenhouse debate, there is no suggestion by Colley or other union officials that the amalgamation process significantly detracted from the union's ability to intervene in these debates, or altered the character of its intervention.

1. The 1989 ballot on merger to form the UMW received an affirmative vote of over 80% of Miners Federation members voting and 65% of FMMA members voting, whilst the 1991 ballot on the merger to form the CFMEU saw a 68% "YES" vote. Subsequently, when the FEDFA and CFMEU voted to merge over 80% of the voting members of both organisations were in favour (AEC, 1995: 30-35).
8.2.2 Economic and Industrial Relations Pressures on the Union

The period of the case study saw growing pressure on the Miners' Federation and its successors from political and economic factors independent of greenhouse and other environmental issues. The long-term trend of employment in the coal industry is downwards due to technological change. In addition, the industry is subject to economic "boom and bust" cycles, although the cycle for coal is not in phase with that of the wider Australian economy because Australian coal production is primarily geared to the international market. Whereas coal industry employment was approximately 26-28,000 in 1987-88 (Colley, 2003), and 29,000 in 1990 (Colley, 1990: 16), it had declined to about 21,000 by 2003 (Colley, 2003; Maitland, 2003: 4). Further pressure on coal industry employment was created by the disorganised approach of Australian coal producers to the export marketing of their product during the 1980s and 1990s. This, coupled with collusive practices by Japanese coal buyers to keep prices artificially low, led to export prices for Australian coal being substantially lower than could have been achieved by a coordinated marketing strategy, and commensurately lower industry returns and employment levels. A union-led campaign to reform the coal trade in 1994, supported by community organisations including the ACF, resulted in a better organised industry marketing effort leading to an increase in coal prices and an extra $1 billion in export revenue (CFMEU (M&E), 1997). The situation finally unravelled when buyers' cartels pushed prices down to a point where marginal producers went out of business, with a consequent loss of 30% of coal industry jobs (Workplace, 1995: 16-20; Maitland, 2003).
Finally, the union and its membership have faced constant employer attacks on working conditions and union rights, and on industry regulatory structures. Aggressive deunionisation strategies were pursued by employers through the period of the study and beyond, especially when Coalition governments at State or Federal level encouraged this through legislation. Whilst the union was reasonably successful in beating back such attacks, there was a cost of resources and effort that could have been directed to other activities, including environmental initiatives (Colley, 2003). Coal industry wages are very high compared to most other occupations and industries, with most workers earning over $1000 per week and in some cases close to $2000 per week. The downside of this is that 40% of these earnings are the result of bonuses and other payments in recognition of the arduous nature of the work, and overtime in an industry with a higher percentage of employees working more than 49 hours per week than any other (44% of the industry workforce; Colley, 2003). Such working conditions also have adverse employment impacts compared with employing more people on shorter hours. According to Maitland: "If everyone in the mining industry gets pushed onto 12 hour shifts for 7 days at a time like some companies want then another 30% of jobs will go" (Maitland, 2003: 12).

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the unfavourable political economy of the coal industry, the embattled position of the union, and demographic characteristics of the union's membership (low levels of formal education, and concentration in regions narrowly and heavily dependent on the industry) would be likely to hinder cooperation, as would the difficulty of re-employing coal industry workers in occupations of comparable skill levels and reasonably comparable wages (Colley,
2003; Goodstein, 1999). These factors contended with the factors favouring cooperation in shaping the union's greenhouse stance.

8.3 The Climate Change Problem and Australia's Political Economy

The climate change problem is itself problematic for a number of reasons. First, whilst only a small minority of climate scientists query the reality of the problem, there has been legitimate uncertainty about its scale and the distribution of impacts, and thus the urgency of the need for action. Second, the causes of the problem are at the core of the conventional model of chemical-intensive and energy-intensive industrial development. Further, the effects of the problem are usually displaced from its causes in space, time and media, contributing to a politically, economically and ecologically complex interplay between the ultimately global nature of the greenhouse problem and the roles and interests of national and regional actors in relation to it. Aspects of this include differences in the contribution of different countries to the problem, and differences between countries and regions in probable climate change impacts, the costs and benefits of mitigation measures, and the costs and benefits of adaptation strategies. The global "North/South dimension" is highly relevant, as the countries of the North have caused most of problem to date, but countries of the South are where greenhouse gas emissions are expected to grow fastest in coming decades. These and other factors have created a situation in which emission reduction measures which are politically feasible will, at least initially, fall short of what is required to solve the problem. They are also central to the debate
about Australia's greenhouse response, and to the LER on climate change (see e.g. Leggett, 1990; Hatch, 1995: 416-419; Hamilton, 2001).

On a per capita basis Australia has the highest levels of greenhouse gas emissions of all industrialised countries, at 26.7 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per capita per annum (Hamilton, 2001). Australia’s high level of emissions is due to a combination of structural economic, demographic and geographic factors. These included heavy dependence on fossil fuels for energy production and transport; an energy-inefficient & energy-intensive economic structure; agricultural practices such as broad scale landclearing and large herds of grazing animals; and a growing population. Australia is also the world’s largest coal exporter, and energy-intensive industries such as aluminium, iron and steel production are a key source of export income (Colley, 1990; ACTU, 1992d). Participants in greenhouse policy debates diverge over whether these structural factors mean that Australia should commit to large cuts in emissions (given its large per capita contribution and energy-inefficient economy), or whether Australia should be set more lenient targets for emissions reductions (given its economic and social dependence on fossil fuels and energy-intensive activities).
8.4 Unions, Environmentalists and the Evolution of Australia’s Greenhouse Response

8.4.1 Australian and Global Greenhouse Responses and Sustainable Development

Global warming emerged as a serious public policy issue in Australia in the late 1980s. The primary focus of greenhouse policy during the period under study was the development of the National Greenhouse Response Strategy, and the formulation of Australia's stances on international climate change responses such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. This occurred in parallel with national and global policy development around the principle of sustainable development. In particular, the development of the NGRS overlapped with Australia’s ESD process. For a complete account of Australia’s greenhouse debate in this period see Diesendorf & Hamilton (1997), Diesendorf (1998), Harris & Throsby (1998), Taplin (1994), and Bulkeley (2000, 2001). The ESD Working Groups provided the main forum for dialogue between unions and environmentalists on greenhouse policy. As discussed in Chapter 7, during a crucial period in policymaking environmentalism and labour were able to meet as “insiders” in the political-institutional framework via a democratic discursive forum. This, according to the Siegmann-Norton model, could be expected to favour LER cooperation.
8.4.2 Environmentalist, Union and Government Responses Prior to the ESD Process

Prior to the late 1980s, both the ACTU and the Miners' Federation, and the environmental movement, had policies on issues relevant to climate change, but without identifying greenhouse as a specific problem. The ACF and other national environmental organisations had long been interested in the general questions of atmospheric pollution, sustainable production and use of energy, sustainable land use and sustainable industrial processes, all of which are aspects of the greenhouse problem. However, greenhouse and climate change as such was not a high priority for the movement. The first ACF Policy Statement to specifically address potential climate change from CO$_2$ was only adopted in November 1982 (ACF, 2001 [1982]).

The ACTU’s comprehensive *Resources, Environment and Pollution* policy of 1981 supported the development of renewable energy and energy conservation measures. It also included a substantial section on environment and pollution. The main specific environmental and conservation concerns related to petroleum and the need for its conservation, and opposition to uranium mining. The greenhouse problem was only noted in the context of the policy’s anticipation of, and strong support for, expansion of coal production and use, which it acknowledged would require attention to the consequent environmental problems including production of effluents, landscape impacts and CO$_2$ emissions (ACTU, 1981g). In the period between adoption of this policy and the 1989 Congress, ACTU policies on coal focused on the economic and social difficulties of the industry, and the need for interventionist industry policies to ensure its survival and growth, without addressing its environmental impacts (ACTU, 1987c: 1-2).
Global greenhouse policymaking began with the 1st World Climate Conference in 1979, which defined climate as a vital natural resource, and resolved that governments should "foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate that might be adverse to the well-being of humanity" (UNFCCC, 2004). The issue acquired urgency with the UN-sponsored Villach Conference in 1985, which reviewed and collated greenhouse-related scientific research and concluded that greenhouse-induced climate change was a potentially severe problem requiring a policy response. Following Villach, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Commission for the Future (CFF) co-sponsored the Greenhouse '87 and Greenhouse '88 "information events" in Australia; the former was a scientific conference which developed climate change scenarios with the aim of bringing the issue to the attention of policy-makers and the media, whilst the latter was a satellite-linked set of simultaneous public conferences in Australian cities in which some 8,000 people participated (Bulkeley, 2000: 36-37). During this period the CSIRO and CFF also established the Australian Greenhouse Information Service (AGIS) to promote public awareness of the issue. The AGIS Steering Committee included environmentalists, scientists, politicians, business people and members of other community groups, but no trade union representatives. The sole labour movement figure was Joan Kirner, the Environment Minister in the Victorian Labor Government (AGIS, 1989). Also, the list of sponsors of the Greenhouse '88 Conference Statement did not include any trade union representatives (CFF, 1988).

In 1988 the Canadian government organised the Toronto conference on "The Changing Atmosphere" with diverse international participation, which issued a "Call
For Action" for developed countries to hold greenhouse gas emissions to 1988 levels by 2000, and reduce them by 20% by 2005 – the “Toronto Target”. This target was politically rather than scientifically defined in order to symbolise the effort required to solve the problem, as complete stabilisation of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations would require more drastic cuts in emissions. In the same year, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to inform policymakers on the science and potential impacts of, and possible policy responses to, climate change. Prior to formal international agreement on emissions reduction policies in 1992, the Toronto Target was adopted, in more or less qualified form, as an interim planning target by several national governments (Bulkeley, 2000: 37-38).

In 1989 the Federal Government took a number of greenhouse policy initiatives. It commenced a national climate change program which included the establishment of the National Greenhouse Advisory Council and creation of a Prime Minister's Working Group which produced a discussion paper proposing a number of principles for a national greenhouse response strategy (NGRS). The ESD Working Groups were asked to report on options for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Two Ministerial policy papers, *Towards a National Greenhouse Strategy for Australia* and *Energy and the Greenhouse Effect* were produced by the Australian and New Zealand Environmental Council and the Australian Minerals and Energy Council in 1990. Together with the Prime Minister's Working Group paper, these provided an initial foundation for development of a greenhouse response strategy. Australian State governments endorsed the Toronto Target in various forms, and the Federal Cabinet adopted it as a national interim planning target, with the proviso that
Australia would not implement response measures “that would have net adverse impacts nationally or on Australia’s trade competitiveness, in the absence of similar action by major greenhouse gas producing countries” (DEST, 1996). The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to develop a NGRS guided by the target, incorporating the work of various Ministerial Councils, parliamentary committees and agencies and existing government initiatives. It took particular account of an Industry Commission (IC) report on costs and benefits of policy options for emission reductions, and the Greenhouse Report of the Chairs of the ESD Working Groups.

As noted in Chapter 7, during this period sections of the environment movement made overtures to the ACTU and individual unions on greenhouse-related issues. According to Toyne, the political rationale for such approaches was that the greenhouse issue offered the possibility of a win-win outcome in terms of employment and environmental goals through a shift to more atmosphere-friendly energy and transport policies, and that this positive experience could provide a basis for further LER cooperation on other issues (Toyne, 2003). The rail and public transport unions responded enthusiastically. Joint activities between the ACF and railway unions in this period included: a joint ACF/Australian Railways Union campaign opposing the proposed Very Fast Train route (VFT through East Gippsland, and calling for a full environmental assessment of the VFT project in general; presentation to Prime Minister Hawke of a joint ACF/ARU submission, Mobility and the Clean Environment, outlining a national rail strategy; co-sponsoring and organising a union/environment seminar in Sydney during September 1989, and ACF support for the ARU's "Back On The Rails" campaign (Toyne, 1990; Taylor & Toyne, 1989, 1990; Rutherford, 1988; Diesendorf, 2003). Diesendorf confirmed that
positive relations between the ACF and the ARU had predated this period and have continued to the present. However, prior to the ESD Working Group process there is no evidence of formal approaches by the ACF or other environmental organisations to the Miners' Federation on greenhouse, or vice-versa. According to both Colley (2003) and Diesendorf (2003), the ESD process was the first occasion for significant discussion between the Miners Federation and the environmental movement on greenhouse.

### 8.4.3 The Greenhouse LER Inside and Outside the ESD Process

The first intimations of the likely position of the Miners' Federation on Greenhouse came in a *Common Cause* article (1988a) reporting the warning by Federal Resources Minister, Senator Cook, of the threat to some $5 billion in coal exports posed by public concern about the greenhouse effect. Over the next two years the greenhouse problem was addressed in numerous *Common Cause* articles and editorials, and union statements. The common thread of these statements was that global warming, ozone layer depletion and environmental impacts of coal production and use were serious environmental problems. Further, growing environmental concern had to be acknowledged as legitimate by the union and coal industry. The union’s prime concern, however, was the threat to Australian coal exports, and thus to employment, from possible emission reduction measures and shifts to other energy sources. The union accepted that coal would come under close scrutiny due to greenhouse, and acknowledged the need to reduce environmental impacts of coal. It therefore supported the adoption of new "clean coal" technologies, minimising environmental impacts of mining, and insisted that companies meet their
responsibilities for site rehabilitation. However, the union also insisted that the coal industry was not the main source of the overall environmental crisis, and that its contribution to the greenhouse effect was both exaggerated and less than that of other industrial and resource-extractive activities. Union statements also emphasised the hazards of nuclear energy (a long-standing Miners’ Federation concern) and highlighted the danger of the greenhouse issue being co-opted by the nuclear energy lobby. In July 1989 the Miners Federation Central Council resolved, in the light of growing attention to coal in environmental debates, to direct the Central Executive to develop a draft environmental policy for the Federation, for consideration by the next Central Council (Common Cause, 1989b: 5; 1989d: 18).

The “Energy Generation” section of the ACTU’s 1989 Environment and Sustainable Development (E&SD) Policy reaffirmed the 1981 Congress decisions on energy conservation, the environment and pollution. It also identified fossil fuel use from power generation, private transport and industry as major sources of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions, acknowledged that Australia’s per capita CO₂ emissions were amongst the highest in the world, and recognised that the greenhouse issue “must be addressed nationally” (ACTU 1989c). It called for endorsement of the Toronto Target by Australian governments without caveats, and for specific measures including national standards for future power plants to optimise thermal efficiency and decrease CO₂ emissions; research into improved methods of electricity generation, transmission and distribution; energy pricing policies to encourage more efficient use of energy “including an energy conservation education program”; increasing funding into renewable energy; and an urban public transport development strategy for Australian cities. Other sections of the policy also referred
to the expansion of agricultural activities and the urban transport sector as major contributors to Australia’s greenhouse emissions.

The need for further development of the greenhouse policy was clear from the policy. It contained an obvious error (i.e. identifying brown coal, but not black coal, as a source of emissions). It did not address global action on greenhouse or the nexus between global and national greenhouse responses, and did not address the prospect of major industry restructuring or labour market adjustment under a strong greenhouse response scenario. Finally, it did not provide either a normative or a pragmatic framework for deciding between policy options with different combinations of economic, environmental and employment costs and benefits. The evolution of the unions’ positions in these issues is central to their subsequent role in Australia’s greenhouse debate.

In 1990 the UMW, was entrusted to represent the ACTU and develop its policies on greenhouse issues. Colley (of the UMW) was appointed to coordinate the ACTU’s involvement in the ESD process. He explains the UMW’s central role in movement-wide interventions on greenhouse in the following terms:

The ACTU, by and large... relies upon consensus. And part of that consensus decision-making is that by and large the unions are allowed to be responsible for their industry... it's accepted that forestry workers run the forestry line and coal miners runs the coal mining line (Colley, 2003).

During this period the union’s position crystallised around the following theme. First, environmental problems were real and the greenhouse effect required a policy response. Second, such a response must not, in the short to medium term, involve a
significant curtailment of Australian coal production and export. Third, there was considerable scope for environmental improvement within the operations of the industry on its current scale. Finally, whilst the winding-down of coal was a likely element of a long-term greenhouse response, its costs must be borne equitably by the community rather than disproportionately falling on mineworkers. Further, the union supported a united front with coal employers in defence of the industry against precipitate short-term greenhouse responses favoured by environmentalists. The union’s defence of the industry extended to opposing calls for a new WA power station to be gas-fired rather than coal-fired on the grounds that limited gas reserves would be better used as a substitute for petrol in motor vehicles (Common Cause, 1990b: 9). It also called for growth in Tasmania’s power demand to be met by new coal-fired generators rather than connection to the national grid. At the same time, the UMW remained committed to dialogue with environmentalists with a view to finding points of agreement on greenhouse policy and other environmental issues, and more generally to avoid a recurrence of the bitter conflict which plagued forestry issues.²

Two significant elaborations of the UMW’s position came late in 1990. The first, an editorial in the October 1990 Common Cause by General Secretary Tony Wilks, escalated the intensity of the union’s language and the extravagance of its assertions in defence of the industry and in criticism of environmentalists. Whilst Wilks’ overall stance was consistent with the union position noted previously, he went on to

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² Jonric Ridley, ACF Trade Union Liaison Officer, nominated the resource-intensive industries generally as posing the greatest difficulties for union-environmentalist co-operation, but noted that the ACF had had a number of discussions with the UMW, with the ACF putting to the UMW the need for a planned long-term strategy of vertical integration and diversification of the coal industry, the union being partly but not totally receptive to this position, and both sides being concerned to manage their interaction in a way which avoided forestry-style conflict (McCollow & Ridley, 1991: 20).
make the demonstrably untrue claims that transport and agriculture contributed more to greenhouse gas emissions than the coal industry did (in 1990 this was not true, as shown by Table 4 in Appendix 3), and that Australia's greatest contribution to greenhouse emission reductions would be to "boost our coal exports" as Australia's coal was cleaner than that of other countries, and to transfer Australia's coal technology to other countries. Environmentalists calling for cutbacks to the coal industry were "totally ignoring the facts" and were unwittingly bolstering the nuclear industry, the environmental debate was dominated by "extreme positions" of pro- and anti-development lobbies which would result in serious industry decline if not challenged. The UMW and the coal owners needed to develop a "united industry approach" to sustainable development which would include commitments to industry research and development, continued development of "clean coal technology," practically demonstrating the union's support for measures to alleviate and solve environmental problems, and demolishing coal's dirty image by promoting industry advances of which the public was not aware (Wilks, 1990).

In fairness, Wilks' call for a union-employer alliance to defend the industry was also a call for cooperation to reform the industry’s environmental record. It should be noted that when the Executive Director of the NSW Coal Association appealed to the inaugural national conference of the UMW for a united industry-union front on greenhouse, she was rebuked by conference delegates over the industry's failure to operate sustainably and adequately rehabilitate mine sites in NSW and Queensland.

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3. Whilst Australia’s black coal is “cleaner” than that of other countries by virtue of its low sulphur content and other impurities, this is immaterial to its relative contribution to CO₂ emissions. In fact Australian coal probably contributes more per unit burned to global warming as it produces fewer sulphate aerosols and thus causes less cloud formation, thereby contributing less to the “albedo effect” which causes global cooling to partially offset greenhouse-induced global warming.
However, the combative tone of Wilks’ defence of coal was repeated in a commentary on the 1991 ACTU Congress decisions on Environment and Sustainable Development (Wilks 1991b: 6).

The second major statement was a backgrounder by Colley which clearly articulated points of agreement and divergence between the union and environmentalists on the economic and policy aspects of greenhouse. Colley (1990) began by explaining the science of greenhouse, describing the importance of the coal industry in the Australian economy and summarising the global greenhouse policy regime and its prospects. Taking as given that the greenhouse problem was real and that remedial measures were needed, Colley reported that the union and environmentalists disagreed on the "key question" of "how much change should we undergo, and at what cost, for what ultimate goal" (Colley, 1990: 17). Colley acknowledged that environmentalists, employers and the union could agree on improved end-use efficiency of electricity usage; improved energy-efficiency of coal-fired power stations; encouraging renewable energy sources where economically viable; converting motor vehicles from oil to gas; improving the fuel efficiency of road transport; further development of rail transport; reafforestation programs and assisting other countries to improve their power generation efficiency. These measures, Colley argued, would constrain the increase in Australia's emissions by 2005 to 13% over 1990 levels, as against 37% under "business-as-usual".

However, unions and industry differed from environmentalists in believing that meeting the Toronto target (which was supported by the major environmental organisations such as ACF and Greenpeace) would require much stronger measures
than these. They believed such measures would include large increases in fossil fuel prices, closing or deferring a number of coal-fired power stations (with consequent mine closures), and expensive government subsidies for energy-efficient or renewable-powered equipment in industry. The consequences would include $18-30 billion in economic growth foregone to 2005, cuts in wages and living standards, loss of government revenue with cuts in social services, major regionally-concentrated job losses, and (if Australia's trading partners adopted similar response strategies) a worsening trade balance and even greater impact on mineworkers. According to Colley, the slight contribution this would make to reducing global greenhouse emissions could be outweighed by increases in other countries' emissions. The union and industry had actively lobbied the government against adopting the Toronto target, even with the major caveat.

Colley also argued that environmentalists and the Commonwealth Environment Department were excessively optimistic in their belief that the Australian economy could offset the costs of the Toronto target through alternative low-energy-intensive industry development. Whilst economic restructuring was desirable, it would "take a long time" and could not rapidly re-employ all displaced workers (Colley, 1990: 18-19). In making this point, Colley contrasted the rapid economic restructuring which environmentalists assumed could provide a basis for re-employment for coal industry workers with the slow progress actually made in progressing the ACTU’s industry development agenda, a theme he reiterated at interview in 2003.

In surveying the future for coal, Colley noted that regardless of whether the union's view or the environmental movement's view prevailed in the short term, the
inevitability of a greenhouse response means that: "It is clear that the coal industry is in for a difficult time in the coming decades. There will never be a return to full boom conditions" (Colley, 1990: 18). Further, Colley noted a number of economic and industry trends which would reduce the economic and employment position of the industry, such as increasing world energy efficiency, increasing cost-competitiveness of renewables and increasing capital-intensiveness of the industry. The likely long-term employment decline would, in turn, weaken the ability of the industry to convince the community to support its defence over greenhouse response policies which were ultimately inevitable in some form. Colley concluded that the union, whilst opposing precipitate short-term greenhouse responses, should attempt to anticipate long-term trends including those driven by environmental concern. It should also campaign to ensure that the economic and employment costs of greenhouse response policies were borne by the entire community, and for measures including comprehensive labour market programs to be adopted to protect mine workers.

The union's position of late 1990 remained fairly constant throughout the ESD and NGRS processes, but with a significant apparent departure from aspects of this position in the ESD Working Group reports which the ACTU and UMW representatives endorsed, as discussed in the next section. The UMW also carried its defence of the industry onto the global stage. In October 1991 UMW President John Maitland met with the presidents of the coal unions of the US, Great Britain, South Africa and Germany. Common Cause described this as a "very successful historic meeting" which "adopted a comprehensive policy statement that called for a more responsible and global approach to developing the earth's finite resources"
(Common Cause, 1991: 6). The meeting was "an historic breakthrough in international mining union relations" as until recently the two international coal union federations (the Miners’ International Federation and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions) had been prevented from cooperating by ideological differences. This indicated that environmental and resource-use issues had also fostered unity across Cold War ideological divides in defence of the industry. The policy statement endorsed by the meeting assumed that industrial development would create a greater demand for energy, which would require increased use of coal given the scarcity of oil and gas and the hazards of nuclear power. Environmental considerations mentioned included the need for international standards for environmentally conscious use of coal seams, and further development of energy efficiency and clean coal especially in developing countries. The main focus, however, was resource conservation and orderly development of coal mines and seams to replace the present "cut-throat development" of coal, artificially low prices, over-exploitation of some seams and premature abandonment of others.

The revised ACTU E&SD policy of 1991 was moved by the UMW and co-written by Colley and Peter Robson of the Community & Public Sector Union (Colley, 2003). It primarily addressed greenhouse policy under the heading of “Energy Production, Distribution and Use.” The policy acknowledged that fossil fuel burning for electricity production, along with private transport usage (due to car dependence and poor urban planning), were among Australia’s principal sources of

CO₂ emissions. It affirmed that “it is imperative that Australia acts to reduce its emissions of all greenhouse gases” (ACTU, 1991m). Any strategies to this end, however, should recognise that, whilst Australia had one of the highest per capita rates of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, Australia was nonetheless only responsible for 1.3% of global CO₂ emissions. Its ability to impact global emissions was therefore limited, and that as greenhouse was a global problem requiring global solutions, a multi-lateral rather than unilateral approach was to be preferred. The 1991 Congress policy endorsed the Federal Government’s Interim Planning Target, with the original caveats and the additional caveat that:

...measures which may have major implications in terms of cost or social dislocation should not be implemented in the absence of international agreement for all countries to act in concert. Should such international agreement be reached there will be a need to develop comprehensive labour market adjustment programs to facilitate the necessary industry restructuring whilst minimising the associated social costs (ACTU, 1991m).

The ACTU supported Federal government initiatives towards a global climate treaty, and called for immediate implementation of a range of low-cost measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, government funding of research into renewable energy and energy efficiency. It also supported a national approach to encourage improved performance in energy production, distribution and use in power stations, vehicles, building, plant and equipment and domestic appliances. Whilst a combination of pricing, taxation and regulatory measures would be required to reduce emissions, the policy argued that price measures alone would have adverse social equity implications, and that in many areas planning and regulation would be the “most effective and efficient” means to reduce emissions. Greenhouse issues were addressed further in sections of the policy dealing with urban planning, transport,
housing and pollution prevention. A specific concern in the section on "The International Dimension" was with Australia’s resource-based and energy-intensive industries such as aluminium and iron production. According to the ACTU:

_Australia has a natural advantage in resource based and energy intensive industries and it makes sense, on a global scale, for us to continue to fulfil that role. Not to do so would not only disadvantage our international trade at a time when we can least afford it but it may ultimately force other countries to engage in the same activity but in a less economically and environmentally efficient manner (ACTU, 1991m)._

This position, which had also been put in the ACTU’s submission to the 1991 ESD workshop on Inter-Sectoral issues, was to loom large in the union movement’s interventions in the period leading to the Rio Earth Summit of 1992.

### 8.4.4 The ESD Working Group Reports - A High Point of LER Convergence

Within the ESD process, greenhouse-related discussions were principally focussed in the Energy Use, Energy Production and Transport Working Groups. A “cross-sectoral” Greenhouse Working Group was established to bring together findings and recommendations relating to greenhouse from all the sectoral working groups, with the three mentioned being recognised as pre-eminent in this area. As many commentators have observed, a high degree of consensus was achieved between union, green, business and scientific representatives on recommendations for greenhouse responses, as well as on other issues dealt with in the Working Groups.

The ESD Working Groups approved a range of recommendations consistent with all the areas of labour-environmentalist agreement enumerated by Colley in 1990,
except that the Transport Working Group did not support a shift to gas-powered motor vehicles, which would be a less optimal use of natural gas than other uses in energy production (Diesendorf, 2003). The Working Groups also agreed on many measures which went beyond those initially identified by Colley as points of agreement (ESD Working Groups, 1991a: xxviii-xxxix; 1991b: xxvi-xxv; 1991c: xxxii-xxxxx).

A recurring theme was the need for more research into aspects of greenhouse policy, and recommendations called for studies to be undertaken into: options for reform of energy pricing structures to integrate full economic, social and environmental costs, having regard to equity issues; the relative merits and impacts of a carbon tax and tradeable emissions schemes to assess their feasibility as part of a combination of instruments to be implemented if warranted, and if international agreement was reached on a global response; "the costs and benefits of more intensive greenhouse gas abatement strategies to and beyond 2005 in the context of concerted international action, with particular emphasis on overcoming the data and methodological difficulties that have so far beset studies in this area" (ESD Working Groups 1991b: xxvi); analysis of Australia's best potential contribution to an international solution to greenhouse, including international collaborative research, research and development and technology transfer programs to developing countries; and potential employment impacts of greenhouse response and ESD policies.

Specific actions called for in energy production and use included: requiring energy utilities to adopt Integrated Least Cost Planning; decisions on the scale and form of recycling and waste disposal to be assessed for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas
emissions; promotion of commercial development of the gas sector, consistent with ESD principles; governments to internalise the environmental, social and health costs of pollution from energy production into energy prices, to the extent practicable. The Transport Working Group made extensive recommendations to encourage ecologically sustainable transport, urban planning and urban form, which would also achieve social amenity and equity goals. It proposed tax reform to encourage use of motor vehicles with lower fuel consumption; the provision of affordable housing (especially for low-income groups) accessible to public transport, employment and essential facilities, to minimise the need for travel; encouragement of traffic calming, car pooling and cycling; and provision of cycling infrastructure.

Overarching recommendations included accepting the need for "some action of an insurance nature" which would entail short-term costs, as part of a phased approach to greenhouse. Offsetting this, and reflecting union influence, the Working Groups also called for development of extensive labour market and industry adjustment programs in consultation with unions and other industry participants. Particular attention was to be paid to regional impacts, alternative regional development programs, retraining, alternative career paths, equal opportunity and wage levels, not just net job losses. Such labour market and industry development programs were to be seen as an integral part of environmentally-driven restructuring rather than compensation measures. Diesendorf (2003) recounted that this issue was seen by the union and environmental groups alike as a key point of agreement. The shared concern for a just transition was also reflected in calls for a "representative consulting group or process involving government, industry, unions and other stakeholders to examine the problems faced by the car industry, the road freight
industry, and others affected by proposed policy changes" to assist in the transition to ESD (ESD Working Groups 1991c: xl). Finally, there were a series of proposals for integration of decision making on greenhouse and ESD policy formation and implementation, which included the following commitment: "some ongoing mechanism for maintaining effective communication between industry, governments, conservation groups, unions and community groups is essential" (ESD Working Groups 1991a: xxxix).

According to Diesendorf and Kinrade (1993, cited in Diesendorf, 1998), the ESD Working Group recommendations on greenhouse could, if implemented properly, have enabled Australia to achieve the Interim Planning Target with some net economic benefit. This is contested by Colley (2003) and also by the ACTU commentary on the ESD Working Group reports (UMW/CFMEU 1992: 20). The salient point is that the trade union movement and environmentalists were able to agree on a range of measures which would make significant inroads into Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and which would, if successfully implemented, have placed Australia on track to comfortably meet its Kyoto Protocol obligations (as outlined in Section 8.7). Further, the recommendations included proposals for ongoing forums bringing unionists and environmentalists together, along with other stakeholders, both to oversee and review the ESD and greenhouse response processes in general, and to oversee the transition to ESD in specific sectors (e.g. motor vehicle production). Finally, the proposals for further research and studies to close knowledge gaps on the economic and social dimensions of achieving ESD and greenhouse emissions targets may have eliminated a significant source of ongoing disagreement between labour and environmentalists (namely differences over
incomplete and speculative assessments of the likely social and economic costs of greenhouse response measures).

In addition to agreement on specific policies, Colley (2003) and Diesendorf (2003) confirm that the experience of participation in a discursive forum such as the ESD Working Groups had a generally positive effect on LER cooperation, in line with projections from the Siegmann-Norton model. Whilst no formal commitments were given on either side to minimising differences or avoiding conflict, both sides desired to maximise agreement and felt that the ESDWG process expedited this. According to Colley (2003), whilst the UMW defended its members’ interests in the Working Groups, the language of debate was more moderate and the emphasis was on points of agreement rather than difference because it occurred in the context of dialogue. Diesendorf (2003) confirms this with a different emphasis, noting that the positions of the Working Group participants (including those of the union and environmentalists) began to diverge after the Working Group reports had been presented and the interest group representatives were no longer in dialogue with each other and subject to pressure from their constituencies which hadn’t been directly in dialogue, and which in the case of union and industry constituencies may not have liaised closely with their representatives during the Working Group stage. These comments suggest that the ESD Working Group proposals for ongoing forums at which labour and environmentalists could remain in regular communication would have seen further convergence between labour and environmentalist positions. As it was, these recommendations, like many others, were never given a fair chance, as explained in the next section, with one outcome being a partial reversal of LER convergence on greenhouse.
8.5 The Post-ESD Backslide

8.5.1 Industry and Bureaucracy Counter-Attack

The factors which undermined the outcomes of the ESD process described in Chapter 7 also militated against a favourable outcome on climate change policy. Industry groups and right-wing political forces began a concerted campaign to highlight the economic costs of mooted greenhouse response measures whilst querying the seriousness and reality of global warming as an environmental problem. The Industry Commission (IC) report, published late in 1991, was pessimistic about the likely economic and employment costs of measures to reduce emissions. It has been criticised for the assumptions involved in its modelling of the effects of greenhouse response measures, notably its failure to factor in the two most cost-effective emission reduction measures, energy efficiency and increased use of natural gas, and its simplistic assumption of a carbon tax as the principal emission reduction policy instrument (Diesendorf, 1998). Although the IC report and ESD Working Group reports were supposed to be complementary components of the development of Australia’s greenhouse response, the IC’s economic modelling implicitly assumed that the policies recommended by the ESD Working Groups either weren’t available or would not be pursued. It was also criticised for its failure to model the likely benefits of such measures, and the economic costs of inaction (Lowe, 1994; Diesendorf, 1997; Bulkeley, 2001). Nonetheless, the IC Report’s claims were heavily publicised and relied upon in the pro-industry campaign, along with similar conclusions from economic modelling of greenhouse responses by a range of think-tanks, of which one by London Economics, is discussed below.
By early 1992 the public greenhouse debate centred on competing economic models of the likely consequences of greenhouse emission reduction measures, the merits and likely effects of a carbon tax, and the position to be advocated by Australia at the UNCED Conference in Rio in July 1992. The carbon tax debate and the UMW/CFMEU role therein showed a tendency to convergence between the union and industry, to the point where the union appears to have joined the industry in resiling from outcomes to which it had signed off in the ESD process.

The Energy Production, Energy Use and Transport Working Groups had all nominated a carbon tax as a policy option to be investigated for adoption, subject to the achievement of an international consensus on a greenhouse response, but their recommendations went no further than calling for detailed studies of the merits and impacts of such a tax (ESD Chairs, 1992: 165). At this time the ACF did not advocate a carbon tax set at a level to internalise the environment externalities of fossil fuel use and thus substantially alter energy market behaviour through major increases in fossil fuel energy prices. It advocated a carbon levy which would not significantly affect energy prices but which would generate revenue to fund many of the “no-regrets” measures recommended by the ESD Working Groups. The official union position was one of retaining an open mind on this option, subject to social equity constraints (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 5). The modest and circumspect positions of the environmental groups and the ESD Working Groups - and of the official ACTU and UMW policy - were in contrast to the militant joint stance of the UMW and industry over the issue in 1992. As noted earlier, studies such as the IC report
predicting major economic and employment costs from a carbon tax were seized upon by industry groups to campaign stridently against the carbon tax proposal and strong greenhouse response measures generally (including any binding commitment to emission reductions at the UNCED Conference scheduled for July 1992).

One such study, by London Economics, was jointly sponsored by the UMW with petrol producers BHP and Shell, mining company CRA, the Australian Mining Industry Council (AMIC) and the Australian Coal Association (ACA). Wilks acknowledged that these were "strange bedfellows" for the union, and reiterated support for emission reduction measures such as energy efficiency, energy conservation, and new clean coal technologies which would "involve little or no burden," but added that:

> Our union makes no apology for it [the alliance with industry] whatsoever. The introduction of a carbon tax would be devastating for the coal industry and the UMFA is not about to stand idly by and see the seeds of destruction planted in our industry (Wilks, 1992a: 9).

A similar theme emerged in an article by Colley in March 1992 previewing the debate at the Rio Earth Summit on a global climate treaty. Colley criticised as "suicidal" advocacy by government departments of a binding commitment to emission reductions at UNCED. The article favourably surveyed the Industry Commission and other reports predicting economic doom from greenhouse responses, and cited a study by NIEIR which predicted more massive job losses from agreement by the developed nations to cut emissions than from unilateral action by Australia. According to Colley, combined lobbying by business and the union had led the Federal Government to adopt a "more rational line in international greenhouse negotiations" (Colley, 1992a: 14) including arguing for special
consideration as a highly fossil-fuel dependent nation, and for flexible responses (meaning, in practice, differentiated targets for emission reductions) in which nations mining "dirty low grade coal" would incur greater emission reductions than efficient "clean coal" producers like Australia.

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the union’s alliance with industry on these matters, and its uncritical endorsement of industry positions predicting doom from a strong greenhouse response, could be explained in terms of the adverse political economy of coal which led to a defensive position. Another factor could have been a specific weakness in union organisation, namely the lack of an independent UMW/CFMEU or ACTU capacity for original research on greenhouse policy issues. Colley’s material and other union statements in this period appeared to rely heavily on primary research from the industry and from industry-related government departments, all of which were strongly biased against recognising the problem or committing to strong solutions. In this instance the union’s ideological perception of a JvE conflict over greenhouse appeared to stem from an incapacity to question or contest the intensive industry and bureaucratic campaign to foster such an impression. The obvious contrast is with the AMWU’s well-developed capacity for research on industry issues (discussed in Chapter 9), which enables it to be independent and intelligently critical of industry and government arguments. This still leaves unanswered the question of why the UMW should have chosen to endorse the industry research reflecting the industry line, rather than research from environmental movement sources or environmental research consultancies which took a more optimistic view of the economic and employment consequences of greenhouse response measures. For this reason the adverse political economy of the
coal sector seems the most likely explanation of the union’s stance. However the point remains that, with a stronger independent research capacity, the UMW would have been better placed to develop an alternative position which, even if not converging completely with environmentalist perspectives, would have been both independent and critical of the industry line, and more amenable to LER cooperation.

The UMW’s stated positions on the carbon tax and the Rio Summit were difficult to reconcile with the recommendations on which it had signed off in the ESD Working Groups (i.e. to reserve a carbon tax as an option if international consensus on a strong greenhouse response emerged). It seemed opposed both to Australia contributing to such a consensus, and to a carbon tax under any circumstances. By the time of the UNCED Conference the Australian government's position called for all greenhouse gases, not just CO$_2$, to be covered by the Framework Climate Convention, and for special consideration of fossil-fuel dependent nations such as Australia - a position which, according to Wilks, was supported by the ACTU and UMW (Wilks, 1992c: 9). The UMW represented the ACTU in Rio, and worked with other national coal unions to produce an international union greenhouse policy. It provided two out of only ten international trade union delegates to the Summit, compared to some 30,000 drawn mainly from government, environmental and other NGOs and business. Commenting on this after the Earth Summit, Wilks noted that the trade union movement in Australia and internationally had a lot of catching up to do. It needed to develop a distinctive position on sustainable development which strongly addressed the social justice issues of developing world poverty and the need to avoid imposing a disproportionate burden of the costs of solutions on developed world workers. It also needed to effectively convey that position in national and
global forums on sustainable development (Wilks, 1992c). However, the final outcome of the Conference - adoption of a Framework Climate Convention with non-binding targets - was welcomed by the union, and a report on the Earth Summit by Colley contested the view of environmentalists that the United States had been the villain for obstructing a binding FCC (Colley, 1992b: 12).

8.5.3 The NGRS, "No Regrets" and Union Relapses

After the release of the IC and ESD Working Group reports, further development of the NGRS was referred to the National Greenhouse Steering Committee (NGSC). The NGSC developed a draft for public discussion and the final NGRS was adopted by COAG in December 1992 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992: 5).

The two trends identified in Chapter 7 were replicated in the NGRS. Measures which involved strong government regulation and intervention were replaced with market and self-regulatory approaches, and an aversion to any measures which were likely to impose significant costs on particular sectors or regions, even in the context of creating overall gains, was present in the final strategy. Diesendorf (1993, 1998) and Bulkeley (2001) identified a key philosophical shift as having occurred in the definition and deployment of the concept of “no regrets” measures as a first stage of greenhouse response. In the Working Group phase, “no regrets” referred to measures which would have net benefits, and no net costs, for the Australian economy as a whole. They could, however, involve economic and employment costs for particular sectors and regions which should be compensated for by offsetting gains elsewhere. In the NGRS the “no regrets” principle was explicitly
qualified and redefined to mean, effectively, that no net costs or burdens would be imposed on any single sector. This approach was regarded as catering to the demands of the resource-based industries, and effectively precluded many measures required to significantly reduce Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions. Bulkeley (2001) argues that such an interpretation of no-regrets is a significant departure from the perspective of the ESD Working Groups that “some industrial decline and closure, and some restructuring, would be necessary to achieve cuts in greenhouse gas emissions but that this would be countered by growth in industry orientated towards energy efficiency and renewable energy” (Taplin, 1996: 391 cited in Bulkeley, 2001: 161).

This reinterpretation of “no-regrets” appeared in the ACTU’s booklet, The Greenhouse Effect: employment & development issues for Australians (ACTU, 1992d). The booklet reiterated the ACTU’s opposition to unilateral action by Australia which could have adverse economic or employment consequences. It also stated that Australia’s greenhouse response should be part of a global response including Australia’s main trading partners, and should not impose disproportionate costs on Australia. It reasserted the importance of the energy sector and energy-intensive industries to the wider Australian economy, and that their contribution to employment and to export earnings had been under-estimated. Further, it claimed that imposing restrictions or costs on those industries could simply displace them, and their associated environmental problems, to other countries with less stringent environmental regimes. The booklet maintained that the employment impacts of policies to reduce Australia’s reliance on fossil fuels would be substantial, and that this issue had not been sufficiently considered by stakeholders in Australia’s
greenhouse debate. It also suggested that optimistic scenarios for Australia’s transition to a less resource-intensive, energy-efficient economy, favoured by environmentalists, had underestimated the potential costs and difficulties of such a transition, and overestimated the scale and promptness of the benefits.

The ACTU advocated a hierarchy of greenhouse response measures, beginning with “no regrets actions; those which have obvious benefits in economic, equity and environmental terms. . . and which can be implemented with minimal structural adjustment” followed by “insurance actions” and “major industry restructuring actions” that would be necessary if there was global agreement on a strong greenhouse response, but which would cause “immense” economic and social dislocation (ACTU, 1992d: 22-23). The similarity of the ACTU’s definition of “no regrets” measures to that in the NGRS is obvious. It is an example of the tendency noted by Diesendorf and Bulkeley for “no regrets” to be redefined as “no cost”. Also, the linkage of the strength of proposed actions in this hierarchy to that of global responses raises the question of the unions’ approach to actual attempts to agree on such responses, as already discussed. The redefinition of "no regrets" in the booklet represents a departure from positions which the union movement agreed to in the ESD Working Groups (including acceptance of industry restructuring provided labour market adjustment programs were in place). It also diverged from previous points of agreement with the environment movement. So did the listing of "insurance measures" as needing to be taken only in the context of international agreement on major emission reductions, as the ESD Working Groups resolved that some insurance measures would be necessary and justifiable immediately.
Commenting on the booklet, Wilks accused environmentalists of a "simplistic emotive response... a well-organised scare campaign" against resource industries. The implications of environmentalist calls for fossil fuel reductions were not understood either by the general public or even "our own members in the industry." The environmental movement was accused of wanting to phase out the coal and other resource industries within a generation; of advocating the “arbitrary destruction” of the coal industry, and the destruction of several industries through a carbon tax; and of failing to address the: “economic and social devastation the consequences of their demands would ensure” (Wilks, 1992d). Accordingly it was time the union "fought back” to “save the industry” (Wilks, 1992d).

Such claims were baseless, and clearly rebutted by the support of environmental movement representatives for ESD Working Group recommendations dealing with these issues. The irony of the UMW's employment concerns at this time was to become apparent in 2003. In a presentation to the Council for the Economic Development of Australia, CFMEU (M&E) President John Maitland compared economic modelling of employment impacts of various greenhouse responses against actual employment trends in the industry between 1991 and 2003, and concluded that:

> The bizarre thing... is that something approaching the first scenario of [job losses from] unilateral greenhouse gas reduction came true even though no greenhouse gas targets have been adopted. ... And that seems to be true right across mining and the fossil fuel industries. So there is no point in trying to scare this union about the employment impacts of Kyoto targets (Maitland, 2003: 12).

Wilks made a more reasoned statement of the union's position at its 1993 National Convention. He emphasised that environmental issues needed to be a central
concern of the union, and its resources committed accordingly. The union needed to further develop its interventions in environmental issues, to avoid "the danger of having our approach to the environment equated with that of the mining companies."

Two areas for attention were pushing companies to improve their environmental site management and rehabilitation, but also to "reason" with the environmental movement over new national parks which could close opportunities for new mines and employment. The overall thrust of the address was the need for the union to establish its distinctive position as a third force besides the "traditional opponents" of business and environmentalists (Common Cause, 1993d: 10). National Convention resolutions were passed calling for union lodges to establish Environment Officer positions, and directing the union to continue its involvement in environmental debates to "ensure that debate is balanced" in the light of "the potentially devastating impact that ill-informed, ill-conceived programs could have on the coal mining industry" (Common Cause, 1993e: 26; Wilks, 1993b: 8).

8.6 Other Coal Union Environmental Initiatives and Dialogue

Despite the union’s sometimes bellicose language, throughout this period communication in search of common ground continued between it and environmental organisations. Environmental activists continued to publicly play this up and warn against the perception of intractable conflict (Diesendorf, 1993b). Whilst the points of disagreement were clear, there were a number of instances of co-operation between environmentalists and greenhouse-sensitive unions, and the union took the following environmental initiatives in the period of the study.
8.6.1 Information Kit on Greenhouse

Late in 1992 the union published *Australian Coal and the Greenhouse Effect: An information kit for coal industry union delegates*, which provided a comprehensive and strategic overview of the greenhouse issue and its implications for the coal industry. Interestingly, this internal UMW/CFMEU resource for union activists was less defensive and more accepting of the inevitability of industry changes driven by greenhouse policy responses than were the public statements of the union in this period. The final section of the Kit reminded unionists that the political priority of the environment and the scientific reality of global warming would grow, that economic and technological change was likely to lead to relative decline in the position of the coal industry, that resistance to change was not a viable option, and that the industry and the workforce needed to be pro-active in finding ways to reduce greenhouse emissions (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 31).

8.6.2 Environment Officers at Mine Sites

The 1993 CFMEU (M&E) National Convention called on all Union lodges to establish Environment Officer positions, and seek formal recognition of such Officers by coal industry employers. In a subsequent letter to the employers' associations, the union stated that the Environment Officers would act as a focal point for UMW/CFMEU involvement in environmental issues at each mine site, and would be “critical supporters of the industry; defending the industry against ignorant people and constructively contributing to improved environmental
awareness and performance by both management and the workforce” (UMW/CFMEU, 1994: 1).

The union's national office subsequently produced a Kit for use by Lodge Environment Officers, discussed in Section 8.6.4. In 1994, the union noted misunderstanding and negative responses by employers regarding the Environment Officers, and produced an information pamphlet for the benefit of employers and lodges to clarify the role and requirements of the position, and guide both as to how best to support the Environment Officers.

8.6.3 Uniting Coal with Solar Energy

In 1998 the union distributed a paper of this name from the commercial arm of the Australian National University, Anutech. The paper discussed potential technologies which would combine solar energy with coal for energy production in ways which would reduce greenhouse emissions. Options included use of solar energy to drive steam turbines in conventional power stations, and using solar thermal technology to gasify coal, producing a fuel with lower emissions than coal (Comerford, 1998; Colley, 1998).

8.6.4 UMW/CFMEU Environment Kit

The Kit did not seek to provide a complete guide to environmental management and campaigns for improvements, but to provide Lodge Environment Officers with an overview of the issues and a guide to where to access detailed information. It
included a model environmental clause for enterprise agreements developed by the ACTU E&SD Committee, and an article on the challenge of ESD for trade unions. It also included copies of AMIC pamphlets on environmental management which, the union noted, were slanted to present the industry in the best possible light, but which were nonetheless useful in showing what the industry can achieve. A publication by Shell on the environmental aspects of coal mining and use, an analysis of trends in the economics of environmental management and mining employment, and a list of sources of further information were also included (UMW/CFMEU 1993).

8.7 The ACTU and CFMEU at Kyoto

In the period after adoption of the NGRS, the union was represented on the National Greenhouse Advisory Panel (NGAP), which was responsible for advising the Federal Government on the implementation of the NGRS (Colley, 2003). The NGRS failed to achieve significant greenhouse emission reductions (Hamilton, 2001; AGO, 2002). After the election of the Federal Coalition Government in 1996, the NGRS and NSESDD were largely abandoned, although some ESD principles were included in the Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The main focus of CFMEU and ACTU activity on greenhouse policy in 1996-97 was the negotiation of a binding treaty on emission reductions at the 3rd Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), held at Kyoto in November 1997. The need for such a protocol was recognised when it became apparent that the non-binding FCCC was not achieving greenhouse emission
reductions. During negotiations since the election of the Coalition Government, Australia had opposed proposals by the European Union (EU) and other parties for uniform binding emissions targets of a 15% reduction from 1990 levels by 2010. At Kyoto the Australian government argued for differentiation of targets to reflect “comparable sacrifice”, i.e. that countries which would find it more economically costly to reduce emissions would be allowed more lenient targets than countries which could reduce emissions economically. This was supported by the contentious use of economic modeling by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) claiming that binding uniform emissions targets would be economically ruinous for Australia. Australia also argued for inclusion of land clearing and changes in afforestation in determining overall emissions and targets for reduction, and for developing countries to also be required to make commitments to emissions reduction targets (Taplin & Yu, 2000b; see also Hamilton, 2001).

The upshot of the Kyoto Conference was that the final Protocol allocated Australia a generous target of overall emissions of 8% above 1990 levels by 2012, (compared with an overall reduction for developed countries of 5% from 1990 levels over the same period) and also agreed to the "Australia clause" whereby changes in land-use and forestry would be factored into the accounting of emissions and reductions, which as many commentators have noted means that Australia could meet its emissions target whilst continuing to increase emissions from transport, energy and industry (Hamilton, 2001). The figures in Table 4 of Appendix 2 show that using this method of accounting, Australia's overall greenhouse gas emissions could be considered to have increased by only 6% (approximately) between 1990 and 2000 despite energy-related emissions having increased by about 25%.
Kyoto once again saw a divergence between union and environmentalist positions. Australian environmental organisations argued for a treaty with uniform emission reduction targets for all developed nations (Hogarth, 1997c). Not only was the Australian government's argument for differentiated targets opposed, but according to some environmentalists there was a strong case for Australia to incur more stringent emission reduction targets given its high per capita emissions and its extensive unrealised opportunities for economically beneficial emission reductions through energy efficiency (Hamilton, 2001). Colley and CFMEU (M&E) General Secretary Bruce Watson represented the CFMEU and ACTU in lobbying at Kyoto as part of a small international union contingent (including representatives of the international energy union federation (ICEM), the peak union councils of the US, South Africa and Luxembourg, and coal industry unions from the US and South Africa). The unions' collective position was that the EU's call for uniform reduction targets of 15% were "arbitrary" and did not represent a "defined environmental goal" of a level of ambient greenhouse gas concentrations (Cunningham, 1997; Zinn, 1997). They also argued that a protocol which excluded developing countries from emission reduction targets would be unjust and unworkable as it would simply cause emission-intensive industries to move to the developing world with no environmental benefit (Zinn, 1997). Finally, they argued that the Protocol should aim to achieve its targets in a "socially just and cost-effective manner" (Colley, 1997b).

The Australian unions' position, whilst not identical with the Federal Government's, did inter alia entail support for the "comparable sacrifice" principle. According to Colley: The inevitable costs of reducing greenhouse emissions should be shared
equitably. . . this means that people in developed nations should all pay similarly for greenhouse gas reductions. Under the EU proposals, Australians will have to pay as much as 22 times what Europeans will have to pay to achieve the EU target (Colley, 1997b). At the same time, the CFMEU (M&E) was critical of both Labor and Coalition Federal governments for their failure to implement low-cost and economically beneficial response measures in energy, transport and land use, which had undermined Australia's international bargaining position (Colley, 1997b). After the Kyoto conference the union welcomed the Protocol as "an outcome that recognises that different nations play different roles and some can more easily reduce emissions than others" (Watson, 1998). Colley (2003) reiterated the union's support for Kyoto and for a global greenhouse emissions trading scheme as a means for achieving its goals, whilst Maitland (2003) stated that the union's view of the Kyoto targets is that "they are the current reality and should be accepted by Australia" despite being "crude, arbitrary [and] inefficient" because Australia would suffer more by staying outside of the Kyoto Protocol than by ratifying it (Maitland, 2003: 11). Despite generous treatment in the Protocol, the Australian government was refusing to ratify it at the time of writing, arguing that it would only ratify the Protocol if this was justified by a “national interest analysis”, and that in any case the Protocol would be ineffective because the US had refused to ratify it.

The Kyoto lobbying process was the last major foray by the union into greenhouse policy during the term of the Howard government. Since then the union has been forced to focus more strictly on the industrial interests of its members and its embattled industrial and legal situation. Long-term structural change in the industry is reducing employment, and thus the union's membership base (Colley, 2003;
Maitland, 2003). Further, the Coalition government's policies have reduced the institutionalised role of unions in economic and industrial issues, and in the coal industry the employers have pursued highly confrontational policies since the election of the Howard Government aimed at achieving de-unionisation of the industry. This, and the related fact that the Coalition government is not interested in the union’s position on the environment, has led to a deprioritisation of its activity on environmental issues (Colley, 2003).

8.8 Conclusions

A review of the role of the CFMEU (M&E) and its predecessors in greenhouse policy formation and debates between 1988 and 1997 lends itself to the following conclusions. At the start of this period there was a high degree of subjective commitment to a co-operative LER on behalf of both the union and the environmental actors concerned, and that this subjective commitment continued through the period. Further, throughout this period a number of factors identified in the Siegmann-Norton model - the roles of labour and environmentalism in the political-institutional framework, union and environmentalist ideology, and movement-organisational forms – would have been conducive to a co-operative LER. Union-environmentalist co-operation did occur on environmental issues in general, on environmental issues of particular concern to mine workers at their workplace and in their communities, in the greenhouse-related ESD Working Groups, and on greenhouse initiatives which did not impinge, actually or potentially, on future development and employment in the coal industry. However, on aspects of the greenhouse debate which did impinge, directly or indirectly, on the future of coal
and of employment in the industry, disagreement arose between the union and environmentalists. This translated into both union-employer alliances in defence of the industry against the perceived threat from environmental proposals, and union opposition to environmentalist positions on key aspects of Australia’s greenhouse response and international greenhouse stance.

A factor of particular importance for understanding the trajectory of the LER in this period was the difficult political-economic situation facing the coal industry during this period. In particular, the downward pressures on employment and conditions of employment in the industry, when overlaid on the effects of a more general recession in the Australian and world economy, lent itself to a defensive response by the union. Against this, the discursive forum created by the ESD Working Group process, which brought the union and environmental actors into the PIF as insiders for a brief period, was clearly conducive to cooperation in the LER on Greenhouse. This was manifested both in the shift of the union's position between its stated positions of 1990 and the recommendations it endorsed in the ESD Working Group reports, and the subsequent reversion to a defensive position once the Working Group process was over and no discursive forum existed for union-green dialogue. It was also arguably manifest in the moderation of the environmental organisations' demands and language during the ESD Working Group period. Finally, the failure of the Keating government to follow through on the commitments of the ESD Working Groups, especially on the creation of ongoing discursive spaces for union-environmentalist dialogue, must be regarded as a missed opportunity to encourage LER cooperation and minimise LER conflict through creation of a more favourable
PIF - this is ironic, considering the contribution of a deteriorating LER in the eventual demise of the Keating government.

Interestingly, whilst the election of the Howard Government has forced both the environmental movement and the labour movement into "outsider" status in the political-institutional framework, in the specific case of climate change policy this has not led to a renewal of the LER convergence of the ESD Working Group period when both movements briefly shared "insider" status. This suggests that it is simplistic to posit a correlation between a shared position in the PIF and a tendency to LER cooperation, without considering the nature of that shared position, and whether it provides opportunities and incentives for dialogue or whether it forces labour and environmental actors into a defensive "survival mode". Hence the Siegmann-Norton model is again confirmed in its identification of multiple significant factors whose interaction shapes the LER.
Chapter 9
The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Environment
9.1 Introduction

The environmental activities of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) and its predecessors warrant attention in a study like this on a number of grounds. The AMWU is the most significant Australian union with a continuing tradition of social unionism which includes a strategic vision for transforming the mode of production in a socialist direction. There are important similarities in its industrial and occupational coverage, and in its political history and trajectory, to the pro-environmental Canadian Auto Workers Union studied by Adkin (1998a). And during the period of the study the AMWU and its predecessors engaged in significant environmental initiatives and enjoyed unequivocally good relations with the environmental movement.

After discussing the history and development of the AMWU's successors prior to 1983, and summarising the amalgamation processes which culminated in the union’s current form, this chapter will describe and analyse the AMWU's environmental engagement against the expectations of the Siegmann-Norton model. Particular attention will be given to the development during this period of the AMWU’s environmental and environment-related policies, the degree of integration of such policies with AMWU economic and industry development policies, the Working for the Environment Project of the AMWU's Victorian Branch in the early 1990s, the AMWU's appointment of an Environment Officer in 1994, and the AMWU's participation in coalition activity with environmental groups and organisations during the period of the study.
9.2 Social Unionism in Manufacturing Industries

The AMWU is an amalgam of several pre-existing unions in manufacturing industries and occupations. The most significant of these organisations was the left-wing metal trades and engineering union which, from 1972 to 1990, was known as the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (or some variant of that name) and went by the initials AMWU. The political and industrial traditions of the former AMWU have likewise been dominant in the current “super-union”. The original AMWU was itself the product of amalgamations between the historically militant and powerful Australian Engineering Union, and unions of boilermakers, blacksmiths and sheetmetal workers. As Chapter 6 has described, the original AMWU aim of a single metals industry union fell victim to the predominance of political and cultural affinities over industry identities, which the ACTU's rationalisation strategy saw as the basis for the super-unions. On the other hand, whereas the confederal model of the CFMEU and other super-unions also departed from the original blueprint for “strategic unionism”, the formation of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union entailed a concerted effort to establish a unitary organisation which would subsume the identities of its predecessors. As discussed in Section 9.3, the choice of this form of rationalisation contributed to a level of internal friction between the AMWU’s Divisions which the CFMEU's looser structure managed to avoid, even though all the mergers which created the AMWU were supported by large majorities of the participating unions (AEC, 1995).

The history of the AMWU and its precursors, like that of the CFMEU (M&E), is rich in the social unionist tradition, and in terms of the Siegmann-Norton model is
propitious for LER cooperation. Like the Miners’ Federation, the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union had a long history of Communist leadership, with members of the CPA such as Carmichael and John Halfpenny still prominent amongst its leaders in the 1980s, although subject to the same process of attrition in favour of ALP and independent leftists as the Miners' Federation. The objects of the AMWU include commitments to "the control of industry in the interests of the community" and "the extension of co-operative production to assist in altering the competitive system of society for a co-operative system" (AMWU, 2003a: 15).

The continuing commitment to social unionism, from the AMWU of 1983 to the AMWU of 1996, is evident from the union's journal and proceedings of its biennial national conference. However, there are significant differences of emphasis from the CFMEU (M&E). Whereas the mining union's focus was principally on wages and conditions within their industry, and the economic outlook for coal and related industries, the AMWU's Conference minutes and reports, and major publications, indicate a more economy-wide focus. Further, the AMWU's Eurocommunist leadership and socialist commitments produced a quite different attitude to the Accord relationship than was the case with the miners’ union. It initially strongly supported the Accord, having stamped the original agreement with its transformative industry policy agenda. The AMWU's subsequent dissatisfaction with Federal Labor government policies and Accord outcomes was invariably expressed in strategic interventions within the Accord relationship, which utilised its capacities to shape wider labour movement strategies, its research capabilities and its ability to exploit the changing configurations of industrial relations under the Accord.
During the period of the Accord relationship the AMWU and its constituent organisations had experienced much the same trends of membership decline as the labour movement in general. The major factors driving this decline were the long-run decline in manufacturing employment due to structural change in the economy combined with the growth in insecure and contingent forms of employment. According to Oliver (1998), the main challenge to AMWU members in the metals sector in the 1990s was lack of job security, due to an increase in casualisation, contracting out, longer working hours and high unemployment. Apple (1998a) analysed these trends as part of a wider restructuring of the Australian economy away from "goods-producing" sectors including manufacturing, mining, construction, primary industry, power, gas and water, where employment was overwhelmingly full-time and relatively easily unionised, towards services sectors in which employment was more likely to be part-time and/or casual, and less easily unionised.¹

The Divisions of the AMWU are: the Metal and Engineering members, the original categories of workers covered by the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union, including workers in the metals trades and heavy engineering industries; the Vehicle Division, covering workers in the automotive industry; the Technical, Supervisory and

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¹ The AMWU had approximately 200,000 members as of the final amalgamation in 1995, declining to 172,112 in 1999. At the 1988 National Conference of the AMWU, whilst it was reported that absolute membership had grown by 4% since 1986 to some 164,000 (Campbell, 1988a: 25), it was also recognised that rates of unionisation were lowest and in most rapid decline among young workers, and that manufacturing had the lowest rates of unionisation of young workers (AMWU 1988: 153). Discussing the prospects of an AMWU-ADSTE amalgamation in 1988, Campbell suggested that the two unions covered 187,000 workers between them (Campbell, 1988b: 32); the actual amalgamation of 1991 created a union of 167,500 members (Coulthard et al, 1994: 2), and this was almost as many as the final AMWU had eight years later after amalgamation with the printing, vehicle, food and confectionary unions (Cameron, 1998). Manufacturing employment in Australia had fallen from 1.15 million in 1981-82 to 907,000 in 1995-96. Also, by 1996 26% of all employees were employed on a casual/temporary basis, and 5% worked for labour hire companies.
Administrative Division, covering workers in occupations including research and development, science, engineering and design, as well as technical, supervisory and administrative functions; the Printing Division, covering occupations in all physical aspects of printing, publishing and production of materials for printing and publishing; and the Food and Confectionary Division, covering workers in the food processing and preserving and confectionary industries (AMWU, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002; AMWU Vehicle Division, 2003). Because of the demographics of the industries which it covers, the AMWU has a higher than average percentage of members of non-Anglo-Celtic and non-English-speaking backgrounds. On the other hand its membership remains overwhelmingly male, with only 7% being women (AMWU, 2002). In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, other aspects of the union’s demographic profile suggest a propensity for pro-environment perspectives.

In 1983 the "old" AMWU comprised skilled blue-collar industrial workers, a category identified by Kriesi (1989) as "greener" than the general population. After the amalgamations the union's membership still consisted overwhelmingly of this category, but with an infusion of the scientific, technical and administrative intelligentsia from the former Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees (ADSTE), another category identified by Kriesi as having higher than average proclivities for environmentalism.

The 1995 post-amalgamation structure of the AMWU is very complex, and is described in full in Appendix 3. The AMWU's claims to a high level of internal democracy rest principally on its systems of rank and file elections of national and state officials and conference delegates, the high level of rank and file representation on governing bodies, the "bottom level" structures of shop committees, shop
stewards, and area, District and Section Committees, and a long-standing tradition of consultation with, and encouragement of discussion of issues by, the rank and file. Whilst these are significant, the AMWU's provisions for rank and file participation are less developed than those of the CFMEU (M&E). The AMWU does not require decisions of its National Conference and Council to be submitted to the rank and file membership for ratification, and does not empower members or union committees (other than National Council) to petition for referral of such decisions to the membership. Also the union newspaper is not formally required to publish all contributions on matters for discussion at State and National Conferences. The system of proportional representation used for electing AMWU National Conference delegates is less precise than in the CFMEU (M&E). The Divisions vary on these points, one example being the Printing Division's provision for referral of Federal Conference decisions to the membership for ratification, but none are as completely democratic as the CFMEU (M&F). The Divisions themselves enjoy less autonomy vis-à-vis the overarching AMWU structure than the CFMEU's Divisions enjoy vis-à-vis the CFMEU. Nonetheless, the AMWU does provide for a reasonably high level of internal democracy, evidenced amongst other things by keenly contested National and State officer elections at different times between tickets representing clear ideological alternatives. The early 1980s witnessed concerted attempts by a right-wing "Reform Group" to unseat the left-wing leadership of the old Metal Workers Union (AMFSU, 1984), whilst the first round of elections after completion of the amalgamations process witnessed keenly contested contests in several states and

2. A requirement for membership ratification of National Conference decisions existed prior to 1986 when the basic level of union organisation was the locality branch, but was deleted by the 1986 National Conference as part of an overall review of union structure which abolished the locality branch, but in compensation provided for National Conference agenda items to be submitted by grassroots union structures with the endorsement of any five members.
divisions, with the unseating of several incumbent officials and even entire State or Divisional executives (Jones, 1998: 13).

Three important and related dimensions of the AMWU's democratic organisation are its highly developed research capacity, its publications and its educational programs. The union's research office was established in the 1970s, and by 1988 had expanded to eight full-time researchers. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have highlighted different aspects of the AMWU’s research output, and its contribution to the policy development of the entire labour movement, especially on industry policy and alternative economic strategies. Its publications, commencing in the 1970s with *Australia Uprooted*, and continuing through to 2002's *Australia at the Crossroads*, conveyed its policies and research in popular form to its membership and a wider public. The union journal, formerly *The Metal Worker* and now *The Manufacturing Worker*, is notable both for coverage of a broad range of social and political as well as industrial issues, and for the wide spectrum of membership opinion which it publishes. Biennial National Conferences of the AMWU receive a detailed research report on the state of the Australian economy and labour market which informs Conference discussions, and is published in Conference proceedings. The research output and publications of the union are, amongst other things, an important component of its internal democracy, as are the education programs of the union, which include schools and seminars on union policy and issues for members, shop stewards and officials, introductory shop stewards schools, and the maintenance of full-time Education Officers in all states. This extended to its environmental activity in the 1990s, as the *Working for the Environment* Project's main outcomes were an educative guidebook and a series of
environmental education courses for shop stewards and activists, as discussed in Section 9.5.

In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the AMWU’s internal organisation can be expected to favour LER cooperation. To begin with it is generally democratic and open to membership participation and the presentation of alternative policy positions on issues. Further, the union’s research, publications and education programs both provided it with a capacity for strategic thinking and policy development in response to environmental issues, and would have empowered the membership to understand and respond to the challenges posed by such issues. As discussed in Section 9.5, the union’s practical environmental initiatives in the 1990s consisted largely of the extension of its research and educational capacities by the addition of a specific environmental and sustainable development focus.

9.3 The AMWU Amalgamations Experience

The amalgamations process which led to the AMWU is outlined in Chapter 6. It is likely to have been subject to similar kinds of resistance through inertia and "change fatigue" as identified by Colley in the case of the mining unions in Chapter 8. Like the mining union and CFMEU amalgamations, the AMWU amalgamation ballots revealed significant minorities voting against amalgamation, although interestingly there is little correlation between the degree of such opposition in the ballots, and the subsequent emergence of inter-Division friction. Whilst there was a 40% “no” vote amongst ADSTE members voting on amalgamation with the AMWU to form MEWU, and evidence of membership disaffection after the merger, the T&S
Division ultimately experienced little friction with the rest of the union (see AEC, 1995; Harris, 1992, 1994; Nicolaides, 1996: 24). The experience of amalgamation with the former Vehicle Builders Employees Federation, by contrast, was fraught with conflict over several years, with the Vehicle Division aggrieved by rule changes which it saw as reducing its autonomy and opportunities for democratic participation by the membership, and which were not submitted to the members for approval. The Vehicle Division also considered that the mooted benefits of amalgamation such as "economies of scale" had not been achieved, and disagreed with other Divisions (notably Printing) over whether the aim of amalgamation was a unitary or a confederal super-union (Buck, 1994: 26; Cahill, 1996: 19; Jones, 1996, 1998). This and other inter-Divisional conflict, which overlapped with outbreaks of factional disputation in some State branches (notably South Australia and Victoria) led National Secretary Doug Cameron to remind 1998 National Conference that the capacity of the union to build on positive achievements was undermined by political instability between Divisions, including those based on personal ambition and/or factional allegiances based on personal animosity (Cameron in AMWU, 1998: 8). Cameron’s assessment of the amalgamations was that amalgamation occurred because "apart we were in deep trouble. . . some of the amalgamation unions were in deep financial trouble and it was that fact that motivated some of the proponents of amalgamation" but "the reality of amalgamation has not matched its rhetoric or the theory of the amalgamation process" due partly to problems of "personalities, cultures and politics." The union had only had patchy success in consolidating the amalgamations, and needed to address the problem of sharply declining membership and "get back to the fundamentals of recruitment, industrial activity and ensuring the AMWU becomes a substantial force in Australian society" (Cameron, 1998: 1-6).
The emergence of the final super-union structure occurred too late in the period under study to say whether that structure would have been more or less conducive to LER co-operation than the structures of the predecessor organisations. The AMWU arguably became less democratic through the abandonment of the requirement for rank and file ratification of National Conference decisions, and through the relatively centralised form the amalgamated union took after 1995, but it had not become seriously undemocratic. What one can conclude is that the internal disruption and conflict associated with the amalgamations, combined with the decline in membership due to economic and labour market restructuring, would have had a detrimental short-term effect on the AMWU's capacity for all forms of proactive industrial and political action, including environmental activity. On the other hand, the failure of the union's original goal of a single metals industry union, and the eventual form the super-union took of a multi-industry merger of politically compatible partners, probably helped it to maintain a stronger pro-environment commitment than might have been possible had it merged with the conservative FIA and ASE, as originally planned.

9.4 AMWU Environmental Policy Development

The AMWU and its precursors had a history of strong environmental policy commitments throughout the period of the study. The union’s ideology and traditions of social unionism had already been manifest in its anti-nuclear and pro-peace activity prior to the Accord relationship. Its environmental policy development and activity, especially in the 1990s, continued this tradition, with AMWU environmental policies developed within a master frame of a critique of
capitalism and the anti-social and anti-environmental profit-maximising behaviour of large corporations.

9.4.1 AMWU Environmental Policy in the 1980s

Early in the Accord period, the union's emphasis was on anti-nuclear, disarmament and peace campaigns. The Metal Workers Union's 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990 National Conferences reaffirmed and updated the union's detailed policy of complete opposition to uranium mining and export and the nuclear fuel cycle, its call for a nuclear-free Pacific, and its support for peace and nuclear disarmament, and committed the union to specific campaign activities on these policies. One feature of these activities was the creation of an open collective for AMWU members, Metalworkers to Enforce Nuclear Disarmament, to campaign for the union's peace and disarmament policies. The anti-uranium and anti-nuclear commitments of the union dated back to the 1970s through its central involvement in anti-uranium campaigns and advocacy of anti-uranium policies within the ACTU and ALP.

The union's policies on other environmental issues also expanded over these Conferences. The 1982 AMWSU Conference endorsed the World Heritage Listing of the south-west Tasmanian wilderness and called for Federal Government intervention to block the Franklin Dam (AMWSU, 1982: 130); this, and the anti-nuclear policies, emphasised the potential of alternative and renewable energy production. The 1984 AMFSU National conference adopted policies on land degradation, vegetation clearing, water conservation (including a call for a National Water Conservation Commission), bushfire management, and a call for a continuous
Alpine Park in Victoria which would include cessation of logging in the Alpine Region. Most significantly, the 1984 National Conference called for preservation of Antarctica's wilderness character through World Heritage Listing of the entire continent, prohibition of minerals exploration and exploitation, prohibition of whaling and sealing and close environmental regulation of other commercial activities in and around Antarctica. It thereby anticipated the Hawke Government's successful campaign for the proclamation of an Antarctic World Wilderness Park with a 50 year moratorium on resource exploitation (AMFSU, 1984: 168-171; Doyle & Kellow, 1995). The 1986 National Conference ventured into the forestry debate with a resolution expressing concern for "the environmental and economic future of the forestry industry," condemning transnational companies for "negligent exploitation of Australian forests" and calling for a Joint Federal-State "open forest industry study" to maximise both employment and environmental outcomes. At the same time the policy asserted that forest industry development required "guaranteed security of resources" and that increased downstream processing of "timber resource" be encouraged to offset job losses which it was thought would result from reduction in woodchip quotas (AMWU, 1986: 122-123).

The 1988 National Conference expanded the suite of environmental policy by adopting resolutions supporting the phasing out of CFCs, and the construction of a high temperature incinerator to eliminate intractable wastes in a suitable site and subject to strict environmental safeguards, accompanied by enforcement of the "Polluter Pays" principle and a public education campaign to encourage industrial processes which do not produce such wastes. Support for a high temperature incinerator was also ACF policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but was
successfully opposed by other sections of the environmental movement who argued that such a facility would detract from the goal of forcing industry to cease production of such wastes. Finally, the last National Conference of the old AMWU, in 1990, adopted resolutions rejecting the Multi-Function Polis proposal on various grounds including the possibility that such a facility would include a nuclear industry and other environmentally harmful industries. It also opposed the Very Fast Train project as proposed whilst calling for a Land Transport Policy which remedied the neglect of rail transport and fully considered the environmental impacts of all land transport modes (AMWU, 1990: 139-144).

9.4.2 A Comprehensive MEWU Environment Policy

The AMWU-ADSTE amalgamation produced MEWU, whose first and last National Conference, held in 1992, greatly expanded and partially consolidated the union's environmental policy. It reaffirmed the pre-existing AMWU environmental policy resolutions on forestry, Antarctica (updated to welcome the declaration of the continent as a world nature reserve), and an Alpine Park. It also adopted an updated anti-uranium and anti-nuclear policy reiterating the union's refusal to cooperate in any way with the nuclear industry, and calling for the establishment of a National Energy Commission to plan Australia's energy production and use, increased funding for alternative energy sources, and public ownership of all major energy resources (MEWU, 1992: 149). The Conference also supported the Greenpeace campaign against Du Pont's continued production of ozone-depleting chemicals. However, the most significant initiatives were those which signified a closer integration of the environment into the mainstream activity and thinking of the union.
Firstly, the union adopted a comprehensive policy headed "A Sustainable and Livable Environment," which recognised the existence of a global ecological crisis. It enumerated various aspects of the crisis such as global warming, biodiversity loss and soil depletion, and proposed desirable environmental and resource-use reforms under the headings of agriculture and primary production; nature conservation; energy and industry; waste, pollution and hazardous materials; science, research and design; work; international strategies; political and legal reforms and ecological economic reforms (MEWU, 1992: 249-252). Some of the positions adopted in this policy were considerably greener than the positions of the ACTU and other unions centrally involved in environmental conflicts. For instance, it called for an end to National Estate logging and a shift to plantation-based forest industry (which also contradicted the old forestry policy which MEWU had taken over). Its energy policy called for encouragement of renewables and energy efficiency, but also for energy production from fossil fuels to be stabilised at existing levels, then cut back. Jobs and environmental protection were "so often falsely counterpoised" but really "go hand in hand" and can be achieved together through:

Measures such as progressive reduction in the average work week in step with the phasing out of unsustainable industries: encouragement and social investment in new industries: and changes in the nature of work (MEWU, 1992: 251).

The union also adopted a detailed social justice statement which included recognition of environmental needs as an element of a contemporary definition of social justice (MEWU, 1992: 168-170). The Economics section of the Environment Policy rejected GDP growth as the "sole or even main measure of human well-being" in favour of alternative measures which distinguish growth which is socially beneficial and ecologically sustainable from that which isn't. Critically, it also called
for governments to produce "eco-budgets" outlining the environmental impacts of economic and social policies and setting environmental targets; "industry plans to include environmental costs and objectives" and a "National development fund to help finance sustainable industries," with the fund to be sourced from environmental taxes and charges (MEWU, 1992: 251-252). The significance of the policy was thus not only its strong pro-environment commitments on contentious issues such as logging and fossil fuels, but its intellectual "mainstreaming" of sustainability by associating it with the union's industry policy goals. ³ The 1992 MEWU Conference also adopted a resolution on the Federal Government proposal for a Commonwealth Environment Protection Agency (EPA) which called for the EPA to operate under a set of legally enforceable national environmental standards, but also called for consultation with unions and consideration of their environmental policies to be a formal requirement of the EPA, and for the management structure of the EPA to include representation of the ACTU, the Principal Unions in industries involved with the EPA, and unions covering workers with relevant technical expertise (MEWU, 1992: 248-249).

Finally, MEWU adopted an action resolution which welcomed the initiatives of the VTHC and its Environment Committee in promoting union-environmentalist cooperation, and acknowledged the students from Monash University and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) working with the MEWU in LER-focused research. The resolution called for active participation of MEWU members in workplace environment studies, establishment of workplace consultative forums

³. It should be noted that the policy was not written de novo for the union, but was adapted almost verbatim from the policy platform adopted by the New Left Party (NLP) in 1990. The NLP was an attempt to create a successor to the Communist Party of Australia, and its membership in 1990 included activists and officials of the AMWU and ADSTE (Norton, personal observation, 1990).
to address workplace environmental impacts, and "the linking of environmentalists and Trade Unionists in common action wherever possible" (MEWU, 1992: 171). State Councils were exhorted to campaign in their states for initiatives similar to those in Victoria.

These policies, and their further development in the AFMEU and final AMWU, provided a strong master frame for the practical environmental initiatives discussed in Sections 9.5 and 9.6 below.

9.4.3 Further AFMEU and AMWU Environmental Policy Development

The 1994 AFMEU National Conference rationalised the union's Environment Policy by updating the action component to recognise the "Working for the Environment" Project, incorporating the Alpine Park policy in the general Environment Policy, and deleting the other stand-alone resolutions. Amongst other things, this had the effect of eliminating the ambiguities in the union's position on forestry in favour of outright opposition to native forest and National Estate logging. The Conference also adopted a series of action recommendations from the "Working for the Environment" report, which are outlined and discussed in Section 9.6. Finally, it adopted a Strategy resolution on the International Environment which committed the AFMEU to advocate, through the ACTU and international bodies, a global audit of energy and resource use, production of chemicals and pollutants, patterns of production, consumption and transportation of major commodities, and environmental assessments of major industries. This audit was to provide a basis for sustainable development strategies. The International Environment policy called for a global
redistribution of resources and consumption, and transfers of wealth and technology to developing countries, on environmental, social and economic grounds. It also called for strengthening of international environment agencies and agreements, development aid to be targeted to local communities rather than elites, debt-for-environment write-offs, and global co-operation to curtail population growth (AMFEU, 1994: 153-156).

The AMWU's 1996 and 1998 National Conferences fine-tuned and updated the policies developed at previous conferences to incorporate the previously separate calls for a National Energy Commission and public ownership of major energy sources. They also supported establishment of a National Pollutant Inventory, rejected attempts to link Commonwealth environmental funding to the privatisation of public utilities such as Telstra, rejected privatisation of natural resources such as water and energy, condemned the Federal Government's position on climate change, and called for legal reform to allow standing to citizens in environmental law. The prior commitment to transferring environmental policymaking power to the Commonwealth was deleted, probably in recognition that this would have regressive consequences in a period of Coalition Federal governments and State Labor governments, some of which were showing promise on environmental policy (AMWU, 1996: 107-111; 1998: 118-122). Action resolutions were adopted reflecting the changing fortunes of the "Working for the Environment" Project, discussed in the next section.
9.5 AMWU Environmentalism in Action

9.5.1 The AMWU and the ESD Process

As noted in Chapter 7, in its assessment of the ESD Working Group process the ACF singled out the AMWU/MEWU for special mention for the degree of unity it achieved with the environmental movement in the Manufacturing Working Group. The environmental movement representatives supported MEWU positions on interventionist industry policy, enhanced social equity and OHS issues, and also supported a series of recommendations inserted, at MEWU insistence, on employment and labour market adjustment issues, similar to those agreed to in the Energy Use Working Group. Union and environmental representatives also concurred on the need to foster new environmental industries and environmentally friendly industries, rather than simply "greening" existing industry. They also united in criticising the Federal government’s preference for market-driven restructuring rather than interventionist policy, the Final Report's failure to adequately address the need for, and means of achieving, a shift from a primarily resource-driven to manufacturing-based economy, and the generally undeveloped nature of the Final Report's recommendations (Hare, 1991: 104-160; UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 33-37). The convergence was touched on in the Economic Report to the 1992 MEWU National Conference, which reminded delegates that the "environment industry" was a $350 billion international industry that was:

*going to grow faster than any other industry in Australia for cleaning up the globe and in terms of pollution prevention, most companies will substantially expand their investment in those areas, and Australia is particularly well-placed to take advantage of that* (Apple, 1992: 60).
The most significant apparent area of divergence appeared to be the Manufacturing Working Group's recommendations on project approval processes, notably “Recommendation 31 - that approvals processes facilitate economic development and investment through efficient decision-making processes in a manner consistent with ESD principles” (ESD Working Groups, 1991c: xxxiv). This echoed the ACTU's position of 1989 and 1991 of calling for approvals processes with "world-class environmental standards" as a means of facilitating investment, but was condemned by the environmental organisations as a “Fundamental misunderstanding of the role of environmental assessment. . . Environmental impact assessment processes should have as their primary aim ensuring that economic activities are consistent with ESD principles. The facilitation of economic development and investment is a secondary consideration” (Hare, 1991: 121). However, the ACTU's overall assessment of the Manufacturing Working Group was that the divergence between environmental and union representatives' positions was "surprisingly small" (UMW/CFMEU, 1992: 37). The Manufacturing Working Group provided both the AMWU and ACF with "insider" status in the PIF and a discursive forum which enabled a meeting of minds on interventionist industry policy, in opposition to the "level playing field" position of the government representatives, which may not have occurred without the opportunity provided by the ESD process. In terms of the economic and sociological elements of the Siegmann-Norton model, the serious crisis and decline in manufacturing had not led to defensiveness on the union's part towards environmental criticisms of manufacturing industries. As this instance and others considered below demonstrate, the union recognised: (a) that large-scale job shedding was an ever-present reality in Australian manufacturing, dwarfing any hypothetical negative employment effect of environmental regulation, with
restructuring through interventionist industry policy being the only effective remedy; and (b) that environmental improvement and new environmental industries provided positive opportunities for productivity gains, industry development and employment creation at both the firm and industry level. Consistent with the Siegmann-Norton model, a combination of the AMWU's social unionist ideology and its long-standing research base on industry policy enabled it to discursively frame the jobs and environment problematique in a "sustainable development" discourse which emphasised environmental improvements as part of a solution to an employment crisis which existed irrespective of environmental constraints.

9.5.2 The Bloustein Report

The MEWU's substantial environmental policy surge of 1992 and thereafter followed, and was informed by, both its experience of the ESD process and a research report by three RMIT postgraduate students, *Metal Workers and the Environment* (Bloustein et al, 1991). The researchers interviewed 55 MEWU members, of whom one-third were shop stewards or workplace OHS representatives. According to the researchers, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted because “an entirely quantitative approach was inappropriate as the essentially subjective qualities of the subject under discussion could not be fully extrapolated from a statistically based measurement and analysis of the data” (Bloustein et al, 1991: 6).^4^ The sample was chosen through availability sampling techniques, with approximately fifteen workers chosen by either the MEWU shop steward or factory

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^4^ It should also be noted that the number of interviewees (55) from four workplaces in the state of Victoria, was only a small fraction of the MEWU’s national membership, which stood at approximately 170,000 at the time of the study (Campbell, 1992: 16; Harris, 1992: 52).
manager at each of four workplaces which responded positively to union requests that they participate in the study. Efforts were made to select interviewees from both genders and from a range of age groups, ethnicities, trades and length of employment at the workplace, although this was only partially successful due to factors beyond the study team’s control (Bloustein et al, 1991: 6-7).

The study found that MEWU members' awareness of environmental issues was generally low to moderate, but their interest in the environment was quite high (1991: 1). 45 of the 55 workers were concerned about at least one environmental issue, with over 50% mentioning pollution as an issue of concern, although only 12% were actively involved with an environmental campaign (1991: 15-16). Twenty-one per cent of the workers claimed a low awareness of the environmental impacts of their workplace, 51% a moderate awareness and 18% a high awareness, and 60% felt that they had not been adequately made aware of these impacts (1991: 16). Thirty-four of the 55 interviewed were aware of at least one environmental impact of their workplace, with 40% naming one issue, 28% two issues, 20% three and 12% four or more. These issues included chemical hazards, toxic fumes, epoxy resins, noise and trichloroethylene (1991: 17). Twenty-five per cent of members surveyed had taken action against employers for breaching Victorian environmental laws and regulations, with these issues mainly handled within the workplace by a shop steward (1991: 17). Fifty-three per cent were concerned about the workplace's impacts on the external environment and 45% were not concerned. Of those who were concerned, 53% were motivated by a perceived actual danger to themselves or their colleagues, 10% by a potential danger, and 10% by a general concern about the external environment. Of those not concerned, 53% stated that they were not aware
of any problems, whilst 33% were simply not concerned even if they conceded that problems did exist (1991: 18-19).

Table 9.1: MEWU members awareness of possible environmental initiatives in their workplaces, according to whether they were not aware, aware but not able to explain the issue, or aware and capable of offering an explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Not Aware (%)</th>
<th>Aware (%)</th>
<th>Aware &amp; Can Explain (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner Production</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Reduction or Minimisation</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 9.1 shows MEWU members’ awareness of possible environmental initiatives in their workplace. A much higher percentage were able to provide an explanation, as distinct from simply being aware, of recycling than of cleaner production initiatives, a finding which is probably explained by the fact that in 1991 recycling was a well-understood concept in public discourse, whereas discussion of cleaner production had been more limited and recent.

In relation to the union’s role on environmental issues, although 96% of MEWU members received union publications, only 60% read them and only 11% could recall reading an article dealing with environmental issues. When asked about the union's role in relation to workplace environmental issues, 14% saw it as having no role, 20% a role of "low" importance, 24% a moderately important role and 13% a highly important role (1991: 20). The study was equivocal on the extent of the
union’s influence on its members’ environmental attitudes. It opined that “the greater degree of personal involvement with the union, the higher the level of environmental awareness” (Bloustein et al, 1991: 29) but did not find sufficient evidence to quantify this relationship. It did not attempt to correlate interviewees’ responses with their formal union position (i.e. as rank and file members, OHS representatives and/or shop stewards) and also stated that “what was not apparent was whether workers that were in contact with the most aware shop stewards were themselves more aware as a result” (Bloustein et al, 1991: 29).

Some of the most interesting results concerned MEWU members’ attitudes to the environmental movement and their perception of the jobs and environment problematique. On one hand there was widespread acceptance of the JvE argument; 38% of members seeing environmental issues as a threat to jobs and 7% as initially job-threatening but as job-creating in the long term, with only 18% seeing them as a source of job creation, 26% as neither, and 11% unsure (1991: 21). Yet perceptions of the environmental movement were largely favourable. Eighty per cent of MEWU members surveyed could give a definition of the environment movement, 47% had a totally positive view of it, 40% a view which combined positive and negative perceptions, 9% a totally negative view, and 4% had no opinion (1991: 21). In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, this suggests that whilst a form of the JvE discourse retained support amongst MEWU members, it was no longer discursively associated with the perception of environmental advocates as hostile to workers’ interests. In other words, whilst many workers feared that environmental protection could cost jobs, they may have recognised that environmentalists did not want that outcome and were amenable to finding mutually beneficial solutions to the JvE problem.
9.5.3 The "Working For The Environment" Project

The Bloustein report had convinced the union that its membership was sufficiently interested in environmental issues to warrant a more extensive project to inform and empower union environmental activism. Accordingly MEWU, with the support of the VTHC, commissioned a research project and report, *Working for the Environment* (Coulthard et al, 1994; hereafter WfE). The project was carried out by a research team from the Monash University Graduate School of Environmental Science, and overseen by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of the union, the VTHC and Monash University.

The union's brief for the project was "to advise on ways in which members could initiate action towards achieving better environmental outcomes at their workplace" (Coulthard et al, 1994: 63). Whilst the focus was on workplace action, the project also sought to place the union's involvement "within a broad context of environmental, industrial and organisational change in order to provide a framework for action." This context included environmental policy within governments, unions and industry organisations, developments in industrial relations and economic conditions which could affect the union's capacity for action, trade union experiences with environmental issues, and developments in environmental practice such as "cleaner production" (1994: 63-64). The project methodology centred on qualitative research into the views of union members and shop stewards, obtained through questionnaires and seminars. During the course of this research it became clear, as the Bloustein report had intimated, that "before workers could
initiate environmental improvements in the workplace, they needed to be able to identify the relevant issues in their working environment" (1994: 67). The project brief was thus amended to address the need for awareness and identification of issues before action could be taken, with an additional outcome of the project being production of a manual for union activists, *A Guide to Identifying and Initiating Environmental Improvements* (1994: 68).

WfteE sought a path for the union "between principle and pragmatism and beyond the jobs-versus-environment debate" (Coulthard et al, 1994: 1), and that whilst acknowledging potential difficulties and some membership opposition, it proceeded on the positive assumption that the MEWU would be involved in environmental issues. The operative question was where and how this would occur. The manufacturing sector faced government and community pressure to improve its environmental practices, and there was a view that this would require changing management practices in the direction of greater employee responsibility and more flexible decision-making and working structures, creating greater scope for worker and union participation in environmental issues. This was an incipient articulation of the union’s long-standing commitment to workplace democracy with its emerging sustainable development discourse. Enterprise Bargaining Agreements were seen as a mechanism for achieving the desired changes (Coulthard et al, 1994: 2).

The report reviewed the shift in environmental management from pollution control approaches, as embodied in extant environmental regulation, to a proactive and holistic "pollution prevention" approach embodied in concepts such as cleaner production. It briefly enumerated international examples of the trends towards
sustainable development through proactive environmental management based on integration of environmental and economic desiderata, and incorporating concepts such as waste minimisation, cleaner production and Best Practice Environmental Management (BPEM) (Coulthard et al, 1994: 5-6). Whilst these practices were not yet typical in industry, they represented a trend which could develop. The environmental response of the international labour movement was likewise at a formative stage. Whilst the importance of the issue had been acknowledged, detailed policies were still in the process of being formulated. Overseas initiatives included: linking OHS and macro-environmental issues; environmental audits of industry with union involvement; diverting resources from military to environmental purposes; publishing policy and action guides for “greening” the workplace; "green" union-management agreements in the workplace; union-employer environmental policy development and committees; legislation for workplace environmental rights including the right to refuse work which created pollution problems; environmental whistleblower protection legislation; appointment of environmental representatives to monitor plant performance; strategies for toxics reductions and workplace clean-ups; Environmental Investment Funds; environmental information registers; and consideration of environmental concerns in deliberations of workplace co-determination structures, and in industrial negotiations (Coulthard et al, 1994: 7-8).

WfE saw growing opportunity for LER co-operation in Australia, evidenced by the ESD Working Group process, the ACTU’s ESD policy development, the ACF-ACTU Green Jobs project and joint charter, and the appointment of trade union liaison officers by environmental organisations. In Victoria, where the project was based, the VTHC had a history of environmentalist engagement dating back to its
opposition to the Newport power station in the 1970s, and since 1989 had established a Conservation and Environment Policy Committee, appointed an Environment Officer, and was developing a detailed environment policy. In terms of the Siegmann-Norton model, the VTHC was contesting the JvE both practically, through its involvement in the Green Jobs Councils, and discursively through its long-term perspective that the JvE opposition would be transcended by integrating new technologies with workers' skills base. An important strategy to this end was encouragement of successful examples of unions taking up environmental issues in workplaces. The VTHC sought to encourage this trend through publicising affiliates' environmental initiatives, educational activities and an annual Environmental Award (Coulthard et al, 1994: 13-14).

WftE saw elements in the PIF creating opportunities and problems for union environmental initiatives. Trends in corporate practice such as Total Quality Management and BPEM, and their relationship to environmental performance of firms, created scope for enhanced worker and union input into workplace environmental issues. The shift from centralised wage fixing towards regulated enterprise bargaining also offered unions the chance to press for workplace environmental improvements, OHS improvements and environmental training as aspects of structural efficiency and productivity bargaining (Coulthard et al, 1994: 16). However, the recession and the deregulation of industrial relations by the Victorian State government threatened to limit unions' ability to intervene for environmental improvements and induce management to relegate environmental concerns in the name of short-run cost-cutting (1994: 18-19).
WftE's review of MEWU members' and shop stewards' views on environmental issues found that most shop stewards saw the environment as an important and legitimate issue for the union to address. Most of them related workplace environmental issues to OHS in various ways, with a smaller percentage framing their support for MEWU environmental action in terms of an extended view of members' welfare, a form of local (i.e. workplace) action to address a global concern and a way of demonstrating the union's sense of social responsibility. Views varied on whether environmental action should be a core MEWU concern or something to be decided in the light of other priorities.

Shop stewards endorsed the union's judgement of the benefits of environmental initiatives. These included: keeping the union abreast of current issues along with governments and employers; producing improvements in workplace performance which could be used as a negotiating tool to improve wages and conditions and preserve jobs; creating employment opportunities from green technologies which could offset job losses elsewhere; targeting union environmental activity towards the membership's needs and ideas; and improving the union's image in the eyes of potential new members (particularly youth). On the other hand some shop stewards identified possible disadvantages including: added financial and workload burden on the union; diversion of resources from core concerns of members; potential for conflict with management and increased workplace tension; alienation of some members; and impacts on members of environmentally driven strikes, job losses and closures (Coulthard et al, 1994: 20-26). On the crucial question of jobs and the environment, the shop stewards overall saw the potential for both positive and negative employment impacts from environmental action, and even some concerned
about negative employment impacts acknowledged that these had to be weighed against the wider social benefit of environmental improvements. Interestingly, Goodstein's (1999) research on the employment impacts of environmental regulation were borne out by the shop stewards' and metal workers' experience. They confirmed that job shedding and mass redundancies for non-environmental reasons were commonplace in manufacturing and were a far more pressing concern for workers than possible environmentally-driven job losses (Coulthard et al, 1994: 27).

Workplace environmental issues identified by MEWU shop stewards were: hazardous materials; chemicals; waste/recycling; fumes and emissions; noise; energy use; use of raw materials; greening of the workplace; product and design. The union was already very active, and had achieved OHS and environmental gains, around hazardous materials and chemicals, waste reduction and recycling, workplace greening initiatives such as tree planting and outdoor recreation areas, and to a lesser extent energy use. Actions on fumes and emissions were mainly reactive, and few or no actions were reported or strategies in place to address noise, raw material use, and product and design. Nonetheless all these issues were recognised by shop stewards and WfIE as important areas for potential union action (Coulthard et al, 1994: 28-36).

WfIE then considered the influence of MEWU internal processes on its members' capacity for environmental activism. As might be expected from the Siegmann-Norton model, the influence was significant, and strongly related to benchmarks of union democracy and union organisational strength and capability. The four significant features were the role of shop stewards, workplace union structures, the
role of the MEWU as an organisation, and communication with and resourcing of members. Shop stewards cited training by the union, supplemented by their actual experience as stewards, as the basis of their ability and confidence to provide leadership on workplace issues. At the same time the success of workplace action also depended on the stewards' ability to communicate with and win support from the membership, and encourage the self-activity of the members. All workplaces had structures such as regular union/shop floor meetings, shop committees and mass meetings at which issues could be raised with the MEWU, which were beyond the capacity of shop stewards and members alone to address. There were no cases of environmental workplace issues being addressed through these processes, whose effectiveness was also limited by language barriers, working hours inhibiting attendance, complexity of issues and reluctance of members to voice concerns (Coulthard et al, 1994: 37-39).

The union's normal *modus operandi*, and the shop stewards' preference, is for responsibility for workplace action and negotiation to be devolved to the shop stewards and the members, with the role of MEWU organisers and officials being to advise, assist and provide resources to the stewards and members. Direct intervention by organisers and officials in workplace issues was seen as generally undesirable, and only to be resorted to when issues could not be resolved by stewards and members at the workplace. Attempts by organisers and officials to promote issues and campaigns from outside the workplace needed to be sensitive to members' wishes and were unlikely to succeed if the local shop steward was unsupportive. However MEWU organisers were generally highly regarded by shop stewards; this and their involvement in negotiating EBAs was seen as giving them
considerable scope to place environmental issues on the bargaining agenda. Shop stewards generally felt that organisers should be trained to provide support to workplace activists on environmental issues, including through consulting with shop stewards and educating and resourcing the members. Other roles suggested for organisers and officials in environmental activism included implementing union campaigns at State level, liaising with universities, environmental organisations and government departments, presenting arguments to members and managements, ensuring workplace compliance with MEWU policies, and liaising with and pressuring companies (Coulthard et al, 1994: 39-40).

Finally, shop stewards agreed that successfully taking a stand on workplace environmental issues required not just membership interest, but active and informed support. In the case of environmental issues, existing means of communication such as data sheets, lists of dangerous chemicals and hazardous materials, the media and information reports from overseas would need to be augmented by audio-visual aids, use of external consultants, in house training, non-technical written material, ready access to expert research material, awareness campaigns, suggestion schemes, environmental education for OHS representatives and management, and on-site facilities such as recycling bins (Coulthard et al, 1994: 41-43).

The MEWU’s ability to take action on environmental issues was also affected by external factors including the presence of other unions in the workplace and the MEWU’s relations with them; the effectiveness of existing OHS structures and their degree of integration with nascent workplace environmental structures; the shift to regulated Enterprise Bargaining; and the role of management. Management was
seen as having a potentially important role in working with the union to promote environmental awareness and improvements, but usually was content simply to comply with regulation rather than be proactive "beyond compliance" (an attitude shared by some shop stewards), and would only move on environmental issues under union pressure. Views varied on the extent of, and motives for, management support for possible environmental initiatives by workers. No workplace to date satisfied all the benchmarks of BPEM including company environmental policy, total quality management and other innovations in organisational systems, a "beyond compliance" approach to environmental regulations and more participatory workplace and organisation decision-making. Some firms were developing environmental policies, in some places systems innovations had addressed environmental issues, and firms utilising participatory decision-making enjoyed more harmonious workplace and union relations than more traditional hierarchical organisations, and these trends were perceived to be helpful to workplace environmental action (Coulthard et al, 1994: 44-53).

*Working for the Environment* concluded with a number of recommendations for action to implement the objectives of “[enhancing] the MEWU position as a leading-edge union and a contributor to innovation in environmental reform. . . [enhancing] the ability of the MEWU membership to identify and initiate environmental improvements. . . [and strengthening] the relationships between the MEWU and other organisations which can assist in achieving environmental reform” (1994: x-xii). Some proposals could be pursued by the union on its own, but others called for joint activity and research programs with environmental organisations (especially ACF and Greenpeace) and with universities. The most
important proposal was for the creation of a MEWU Environment Officer position to implement the Project's recommendations (Coulthard et al, 1994: x-xii).

Appended to the WftE report was a draft guidebook, *Working for the Environment: A Guide to Identifying and Initiating Environmental Improvements* (hereafter "the Guidebook"). This was revised and published as a separate booklet in 1995 (Pennicuik, 1995). The Guidebook included: a simple statement of why workers had both a responsibility and a right to take environmental initiatives in the workplace; an enumeration of Australia's principles of ESD; a brief introduction to key environmental concepts in industry (pollution prevention, waste minimisation and cleaner production); an enumeration of principal forms of land, water and air pollution, and the forms of environmental depletion they lead to; a pictorial description of major environmental issues in Australia in relation to manufacturing production and resource and energy use; a schema of resource flows, throughputs and processes in the workplace; an explanation of the principles of environmental impact assessment; and a series of practical tools for initiating workplace environmental improvements (Pennicuik, 1995).

The response of the union to the *Working for the Environment* report was strongly positive. The 1994 AFMEU National Conference welcomed the report. Funding was sought and obtained from the Federal Government to provide training for shop stewards in the use and application of the guidebook (AMFEU, 1994: 154). The production of the guidebook, the training activities and the creation of a full-time Environment Officer position were the major practical outcomes of the project. Sue
Pennicuik was appointed to the position, and the main AFMEU/AMWU activities under her direction are described in the next section.

9.5.4 The AMWU Environment Officer

The AMWU received a Federal Government grant to employ an Environmental Project Officer, and appointed Sue Pennicuik to the position, based in Melbourne, in September 1994. The activities of the Environment Officer initially included rewriting and adapting the Guidebook to render it in more user-friendly language and format for manufacturing workers, and visiting workplaces to advise workers and management on environmental improvements. Subsequently the Environment Officer conducted a series of environmental training schools for organisers, shop stewards and workers (Manufacturing Worker, 1995a). One such seminar in mid-1995 trained union negotiators in the integration of environmental performance with workplace reform through EBAs, and the reasons why environmental issues needed to be an element of every enterprise agreement. The course emphasised the need to link environmental performance with broader enterprise objectives, recognise the contribution of environmental performance to productivity and establish accountability for environmental performance. It also trained union negotiators to identify issues to be addressed in EBAs, including objectives/policy, communication/consultation, environmental improvement programs, workplace changes, accountability and sharing of benefits (Manufacturing Worker, 1995b: 14).

The Environment Officer also contributed articles to the union journal informing members of environmental issues and the union's activities around them. For
instance, in 1995 the AMWU and other unions lobbied the Federal Government to
honour its promise to establish a National Pollutant Inventory, and also conducted a
"Chemicals in the Workplace" campaign to inform members of the risks of
hazardous chemicals and their legal rights against employers on this issue, and to
pressure governments to enact stronger regulation of hazardous chemicals based on
national standards (Pennicuik, 1995b: 15). Finally, during the 1996 Federal election
campaign the Environment Officer conducted a public campaign against the
Coalition's linkage of funding of its environmental program with the partial
privatisation of the national telecommunications utility, Telstra, as showing a lack of
serious commitment to or understanding of the principals of sustainability, and as a
"one-off, band-aid approach" (Pennicuik, 1996b: 17). This also entailed a novel (if
mild) case of LER conflict, with the union reproaching those environmental
organisations, including the ACF, which had indicated support for this policy. One
ground for criticism was the policy’s lack of regard for social justice concerns, but
implicit in Pennicuik’s criticism was that the environmental organisations were
supporting a policy which entailed a weaker commitment to the environment than
the AMWU’s alternative proposal of using one-third of the profits of a wholly
publicly owned Telstra to fund environmental projects on an ongoing basis
(Pennicuik, 1996b: 17). This is the only instance the author is aware of where a
union came into conflict with environmentalists by being more pro-environment than
they were, but also underscores the Siegmann-Norton model’s identification of eco-
liberal ideology within the environmental movement as an impediment to LER
cooperation.
Whilst the Siegmann-Norton model predicts that shared outsider status under right-wing governments will create a tendency for labour and environmentalism to unite against a common foe, the post-1996 experiences of the AMWU, as with the CFMEU (M&E) show that the anti-union climate created by such governments can make it difficult for labour to spare the time, energy and resources to operationalise such unity. The labour movement's "insider" status within the PIF under the Hawke and Keating governments was the AMWU's access to funding to take environmental initiatives such as "Working for the Environment" and its spin-offs. The election of the Coalition government led to the cancellation of many Federal government grants to trade unions, and thus Pennicuik was retrenched as Environment Officer in April 1996. However she continued to act as Honorary Environment Officer for some two years thereafter, providing training to Victorian shop stewards, assisting members, officials and organisers on environmental matters, and contributing to the union journal on current environmental issues. Her last such contribution, written immediately after the Kyoto Conference, identified renewable energy as a major potential growth area for design and manufacturing employment, denounced the Federal Government's stance at Kyoto and the agreement it secured at the Conference. She counterposed the positive economic opportunities of renewable energy technologies with the fear that Australia could "continue to shackle ourselves and our economy to using and/or exporting those most polluting of materials: coal and uranium" (Pennicuik, 1998: 13). Whilst it is possible that this implicit condemnation of the CFMEU (M&E) and ACTU position was an expression of personal opinion, it was published under Pennicuik's title as AMWU Honorary Environment Officer, and no statements to the contrary from other officials were subsequently published.
9.5.5 Working and Bargaining for the Environment

One of Pennicuik's last acts in a paid capacity was to prepare for ACTU endorsement a set of draft Guidelines for environment clauses in enterprise bargaining, which were endorsed by the ACTU Executive in March 1996 (Mansfield, 1996: Pennicuik, 1996a). The matters to be covered by environmental clauses were summarised in the model Enabling Clause, a preliminary clause which would commit the parties to the EBA to develop and implement the environmental clause proper. These matters included establishment of an environmental committee with equal representation of management and unions, establishing and maintaining the rights of workers and unions to be informed and consulted, ensuring consultative processes for resolving environmental issues, committing management to an environmental improvement program, and basing environmental plans and policies on a precautionary and preventative approach to environmental improvement (Pennicuik, 1996a). The clause would also commit the parties to a "beyond compliance" approach to regulations and statutory requirements, and guarantee the right of workers to seek advice regarding continuing to work in conditions which did not comply with such standards. Three model environmental clauses were suggested: a Basic Clause, an Intermediate Clause and an Advanced Clause. The first two were designed to establish the policies and structures called for in the enabling clause, and the Advanced Clause was designed to reaffirm such structures and policies once they had been established and functioning for some time, and expand their scope and powers and the rights of workers thereunder, including establishment of an employer-funded Environment Officer position (Pennicuik, 1996a).
An internet search of EBAs in place in 2004 indicates that environmental clauses had been included in certified agreements with 17 employers out of 127 with which the AMWU was a party to an agreement (AIRC, 2004). This figure may be more impressive than it appears as many of these agreements included more than one union as parties, and covered workplaces where the AMWU would not have been the principal union or sufficiently influential to press its environmental agenda. Environment Improvement Plans have also been negotiated by the AMWU, one example being Ford Australia's joint union-management Environment Plan for its Geelong car building plant (Ford Australia, 2002).

### 9.5.6 Other AMWU Environmental Initiatives

Throughout the period of the study the AMWU took numerous other actions on environmental issues, broadly defined. A survey of articles in *The Metal Worker* and *The Manufacturing Worker*, and of union minutes, provides the following examples of AMWU involvement in environmental issues and campaigns. The union co-sponsored a report by the Public Sector Research Centre (1991), *Powering the Future*, which set out a plan for ecologically sustainable energy production and use in Australia. The AMWU publicly opposed the Wesley Vale Pulp Mill; the edition of *The Metal Worker* which reported this position also carried a related editorial by AMWU President Dick Scott exhorteding the union and its members to take up environmental issues. Other contentious projects opposed by the union included the Multi-Function Polis, the City Link Freeway Project in Melbourne and the relocation of the Coode Island chemical waste storage facility to Point Lillias, a RAMSAR-listed wetland, and the union supported the "Save Albert Park" and "Save Princes
Park" urban residents’ campaigns in Melbourne. AMWU members in the NSW State Transit Authority banned the use of paints containing chemical pollutants which could contaminate Sydney Harbour, and the union participated in a National Toxics Conference organised by Greenpeace, to try to build links with environmental groups addressing "brown" issues. AMWU members from the Technical & Supervisory Division were involved in research into the ecology of coral reefs. The union’s anti-nuclear commitment continued with the sending of two AMWU delegates to participate in Friends of the Earth's 1996 tour and protest action against the Roxby Downs uranium mine, and campaigning against the resumption of French nuclear testing in 1995. The union affiliated to the ACF, and contributed financially to ACF over and above affiliation fees. In addition, the AMWU journal provided publicity for initiatives by environmental organisations, including a Total Environment Centre Course for Environmental Campaigners in 1989, and a Greenpeace Rock Music Project in 1990. The journal also published articles and letters urging action on environmental issues such as the proposed Redbank Plains (Queensland) radioactive waste dump, food irradiation, Sarawak logging, ozone depleting chemicals, and hazardous chemicals disputes in various Australian cities (See Scott, 1989; The Metal Worker, 1989; Campbell, 1995; Manufacturing Worker, 1995c: 3; AMWU, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1996e; Pennicuik, 1996d).

9.6 Conclusions

The history of environmental activism, policy development, research and membership education by the AMWU during the 1983-96 period can be considered one of almost total LER cooperation. Furthermore, most of this history can be
explained by the Siegmann-Norton model. On the key questions of the thesis, specifically the influence of the Accord and amalgamation processes on variables identified by the Siegmann-Norton model, and thus on the LER, it is necessary to be somewhat agnostic. There is little evidence to suggest that the Accord relationship and the union’s role therein had any causal effect on the LER, either towards cooperation or conflict. A critic of the Siegmann-Norton model could, however, argue that the AMWU’s participation in a corporatist framework did not prevent it from successfully pursuing LER cooperation. What can be argued cogently is that those pre-existing features of the union’s ideology and organisation which guided its participation in and support for the Accord – its social unionism expressed in initiatives for interventionist alternative economic strategy, and its organisational capacities for research, membership education and publicity – also enhanced its ability to take environmental campaign and policy initiatives.

Whatever the long-run consequences of the post-amalgamation form of the AMWU, it was too early to judge, in the period of the study, whether this had improved or reduced its propensities for LER cooperation relative to its predecessor organisations. However, for reasons given in the next paragraph, one could expect a positive effect over time. Given the short-run disruption and internal conflict during the amalgamation process, combined with the external pressures on the union and reductions in its membership due to recession, manufacturing decline and hostile State government legislation, its environmental achievements in this period are even more meritorious than they would otherwise have been.
An important finding of the Bloustein and *Working for the Environment* projects, and the practical conclusion drawn by the AMWU from these projects, is that successful union activity on environmental issues requires an informed membership educated in such issues and the means for addressing them, and thus requires a union capacity for environmental education of its membership and a research capacity to support this. Indeed, it could be said that the AMWU’s initiatives of the early 1990s were only made possible by the prior existence of such an education and research capacity on other economic, industrial and political issues and an internal culture and level of membership consciousness on which the union’s environmental capabilities could build. If this is the case, it supports the conclusion, proposed in Chapter 6 and implicit in Chapter 7, that most Australian unions, at the time of the commencement of the amalgamations process in the 1980s, were not well equipped to intervene on environmental issues or sustain a high level of LER cooperation. This further suggests that insofar as the union rationalisation process enhanced the capacities of the unions which emerged from those processes, or sustained their capacities in the face of negative trends, it is likely to have been beneficial to the LER in the long run. If accepted, the conclusions from this survey of the experiences of the AMWU, and the case studies in Chapters 7 and 8, suggest the need to reassess the academic and popular perceptions of the NSW BLF and the Green Bans as the exemplars of LER cooperation and the preconditions for it. This is a matter to which we return in Chapter 10.
Chapter 10
Conclusion and Issues for Further Research
10.1 Conclusion

In Chapter 1 the following research hypothesis was proposed:

That the Accord process of the 1980s and 1990s, and the union restructuring processes of that period, would tend to strengthen tendencies towards conflict rather than co-operation in the labour-environmentalist relationship in Australia.

This does not necessarily equate with the hypothesis that the LER actually became more conflictual in this period. The overall trajectory of the LER is a function of the interplay of all the factors identified in the Siegmann-Norton model. Thus even if the LER became more cooperative in the period of the study, the research hypothesis could still be correct in the sense that the Accord and union restructuring processes prevented a greater shift in a cooperative direction which might have been caused by other factors, or maintained a higher level of conflict than would have occurred otherwise. It is in the latter sense that the research hypothesis is found to have been sustained.

This thesis contributes three original pieces of knowledge to the pool of studies of the LER. First, it has created a new model for analysis that goes beyond previous work. Second, it has gathered some original primary data from both movements. Third, it has synthesized the data and model into a unique analysis of the Australian situation.

On balance, the LER in Australia did become more cooperative during the period of the studies. The evidence presented Chapters 7, 8 and 9 shows a number of significant cases of environmental initiatives and policy development by the ACTU,
State TLCs and individual unions, joint ventures by union and environmental actors, and creation of union structures and programs to address environmental issues and educate unionists about those issues. The overall trend is one of growth in union involvement in environmental issues (albeit usually from a low base) and increasing interaction with environmentalists. The AMWU’s initiatives are perhaps the strongest example of this trend. The coal industry unions’ attempt to deal proactively and strategically with the climate change issue, whilst open to criticism for being insufficiently distinct from the industry line, is also a positive change from the defensive, reactive and “business as usual” approach which has marked the response of forest industry unions to forest and wilderness conservation campaigns.

The Siegmann-Norton model allows us to identify several factors which would have tended, and continue to tend, to favour cooperative tendencies over time. These include the ideological influence within unions of the growth of environmentalism in the wider society; the organisational influence of generational change amongst union officials, and declining membership forcing unions to consider environment activity as a recruiting “carrot” for key constituencies; and the sociological and economic influence of labour market and economic restructuring reducing the relative sway of workers and their unions in environmentally contentious industries, and increasing the proportion of women and knowledge workers in the workforce. Two other factors specific to the study period include: the creation of a political-institutional space (the ESD Working Group process) in which unions and environmentalists met as insiders and could engage in constructive dialogue; and the existence prior to 1991 of a strong pro-environment trajectory in the Federal Labor government (albeit politically rather than ecologically informed) to which the unions had to adapt.
Whereas the ACTU’s relationship with the environmental movement was almost uniformly antagonistic for much of the 1980s, by the 1990s a more nuanced relationship had developed with some significant examples of cooperation and joint activity combined with the persistence of conflict tendencies. The most notable of these were the intractable issue of forestry, the ACTU and affiliates’ enthusiasm for “fast tracking” of major resource-based projects, and their justifications for these positions based on underlying assumptions about economic and industry policies. This is where the influence of the Accord in hindering LER cooperation is most evident, particularly on forestry-related issues. The relevant industry council (FFPIC) institutionalised an industry defence alliance including the ACTU and forestry unions, with the ACTU leadership explicitly campaigning for the industry against the environmental movement on the basis of an interpretation of Accord commitments on industry policy.

More generally, ACTU perspectives on economic and industry policy in the period came to reflect an ideology of social partnership to maximise production. This was expressed in *Australia Reconstructed*, comments by Crean and Kelty in response to the Wesley Vale conflict, and repeated policy statements which saw the environment primarily as a potential source of constraints which had to be managed in order to provide a secure investment climate and facilitate new development. Recognition either that some forms of development should not proceed and should be opposed by unions in the public interest, or that sustainable development represented an opportunity for industry development and for engagement with the “politics of production”, was less often forthcoming. Chapter 5 reported the predictions of Triado (1984), Stewart (1985) and other critics of Accord corporatism that it could
lead to unions becoming complicit in alliances with business and the state against the interests of constituencies outside the corporatist triangle. These predictions were confirmed by the influence of the political-institutional framework of Accord tripartism, and the associated ideologies of social partnership and productivism, in sustaining and justifying ACTU and forestry union alliances with industry and sections of the state against environmentalist demands.

The effect of the union restructuring process on the LER requires a more nuanced analysis. The eventual outcomes of the process (fewer, larger unions with, in some cases, significantly changed structures) were not finalised until too late in the study period to enable detection of their long-term effects on the LER. The process itself, whilst in train, almost certainly restricted trends towards greater LER cooperation by absorbing union officials and activists in internal reorganisation and, often, inter-union conflict at the expense of outward-focused activities such as environmental policy development and action. However, if we accept as valid the analyses of Australian union weakness and incapacity provided in Australia Reconstructed and Future Strategies, and confirmed after the event by Cameron (1998) and Colley (2003), the reasons why the unions decided to reorganise are also reasons why we should not have expected a high level of engagement with environmental issues.

Conversely a union like the AMWU which was largely an exception to the rule of union weakness would also be exceptional in its capacity for environmental initiatives. The AMWU’s history of growing environmental engagement during the 1980s and 1990s confirms the Siegmann-Norton model’s identification of social unionist ideology, internal union democracy, and strong union organisational
capacities – in particular the AMWU’s capacities for research, education and publicity – as factors conducive to LER cooperation. Indeed, the Coulthard (1994) and Bloustein (1991) reports, and the union’s own initiatives in response to these studies, amply recognise the importance of the latter. In the case of the AMWU the particular character of its social unionism is also significant, in that the AMWU had since the 1970s developed a praxis which was not simply industrially militant or oppositional, but directed towards a proactive strategy for social and economic transformation. Thus the AMWU’s program for interventionist industry policy, located within this master frame, was amenable to convergence with the peak environmental organisations’ conception of ESD as entailing an ecologically driven restructuring which would also produce social and economic benefits. This confirms the importance of ideological factors, in this case a conviction of the possibilities for “win-win” scenarios, in fostering LER cooperation.

The coal industry unions’ involvement in climate policy was the most interesting case considered. LER cooperation was favoured by organisational and ideological factors – a high degree of union internal democracy, a strong history of social unionism in the industry, and a strong subjective commitment by the environmental movement to LER cooperation on the greenhouse issue. However conflict tendencies could be expected to arise from economic and sociological factors – the straitened political economy of the coal industry, the regionally concentrated nature of the coal and associated industry, and the demographic and occupational characteristics of the labour force which create particular difficulties for “just transition” strategies. On issues at one remove from climate change, and on climate change responses which did not require constraining or curtailing coal production
and use, a high degree of LER cooperation did exist. Strong greenhouse response measures which implied a long-run shift away from coal and winding down of the industry proved a sticking point between the union and environmentalists, and are likely to continue to be so. However the political-institutional innovation of the ESD Working Groups saw the differences narrowed when the union and environmentalists had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with an emphasis on achieving a consensus. Many of the outstanding points of difference between the CFMEU (M&E) and the peak environmental organisations involve complex technical issues of the economics of a transition to a more greenhouse-friendly energy regime in Australia and globally, and the technical dimensions of alternative approaches to emission reduction (i.e. “clean coal” versus a shift to renewables). These differences may well be able to be narrowed if discursive spaces are once more provided for the union and environmentalists, especially if supported by high quality independent research on the economic and technical issues at stake.

It should be reiterated here that a difficulty faced by the union in the later stages of the ESD and pre-UNCED debates was the lack of access to an economic modelling and research capacity independent of industry interests and pro-industry, economically orthodox sections of the Federal bureaucracy such as the Industry Commission. Another issue which may have influenced CFMEU (M&E) stances is that its form of social unionism is rooted in an industrially militant and oppositional Marxist/communist tradition. Commentators such as Hare (1990b), Diesendorf (1993, 1997, 1998, 2003), Hamilton (2001) and Goodstein (1999), who posit opportunities for positive social and economic outcomes from strong greenhouse response measures, do so on the basis of optimism about the possibilities for
ecological modernisation within capitalism, i.e. they are optimistic about the capacity of capitalism for flexible and innovative responses to environmental challenges (Goodstein, 1999: 144-148). It may be that the Marxism of Australia’s coal industry unions lent itself to pessimism about capitalism’s capacity to respond to greenhouse emission reductions without experiencing major economic and employment crises.

An issue arising from the literature review, canvassed explicitly in Chapter 7, and implicit in relation to all three case studies, is the extent to which the labour and environmental movements could have, and did, synthesise their respective discourses on restructuring through interventionist industry policy and on economic restructuring for sustainable development into a shared, potentially counter-hegemonic discourse. Recognition of the possibilities was stronger on the environmental than on the labour side of the engagement. In the case of the ACTU’s relations with environmentalists in the ESD and “big picture” economic debates, and in the coal unions’ involvement in greenhouse debates, the opportunities were missed, due to the union actors’ acceptance, with greater or lesser qualifications, of hegemonic productivist and orthodox economic discourses. The AMWU’s close alignment with the peak environmental organisations within the ESD Working Group on Manufacturing, and the subsequent extension of that union’s long-standing interest in “production reform” for social and democratic ends into environmental “production reform” through the Working for the Environment project and the Environment Officer’s initiatives, show a glimpse of the full potential for LER cooperation in this regard.
Two further questions are raised by this study. First, what is the likely trajectory of the LER in Australia in the short to medium term? Second, what steps can be taken by the labour and environmental movements, and other political actors, to maximise LER cooperation? On the first question, the subjective desire which the thesis discerned in both labour and environmental movements for greater cooperation is likely to persist and possibly strengthen. The extent to which such a desire will be realised will depend considerably on the external political context. The continuation in Australia of a conservative Coalition government at Federal level, which both movements confront as political-institutional outsiders, will tend to foster alliances in opposition. Such alliances could be expected to be largely defensive rather than as partners in a positive quest for sustainable development. Examples of such defensive campaigns include union support for the campaign against a nuclear waste dump proposed for South Australia (ACF, 2003a), Green Party solidarity with the Maritime Union of Australia against attempts to deunionise Australian ports, and union and environmentalist participation in coalitions opposing the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement (ACF 2003b). The case study chapters also noted that the Coalition government’s policies had restricted unions’ capacity for positive environmental activity and forced a change of focus to organisational survival. On the other hand, the ACTU and ACF have continued to cooperate in positive initiatives such as campaigns to reform corporate environmental practices beyond “Greenwash” (ACF 2002), and for company law reform to expedite ethical investment and exposure of unethical corporate behaviour (ACF 2001), and the ACTU has endorsed the ACF’s “Natural Advantage” blueprint for ecological modernisation of the Australian economy (Krockenberger et al, 2000). The Australian Greens have also supported teacher union strikes against the New South
Wales State Government, and initiated a campaign in support of union calls for industrial manslaughter legislation to enable criminal prosecution of employers whose neglect of occupational health and safety leads to workplace fatalities (Rhiannon, 2004a, 2004b).

However, expanded political-institutional opportunities for pro-active LER cooperation are likely to depend on a change of Federal government to one which is both more sympathetic to the demands of each movement and more likely to seek to involve both as PIF insiders. Another important determinant of the LER will be whether the Australian labour movement can turn around long-term trends of decline and marginalisation which, at the time of writing, were still much in evidence (Svensen; 1999; Svensen et al, 2002; ABC, 2003). For reasons outlined in the Siegmann- Norton Model, a weakening union movement would be less able, even if subjectively willing, to engage in effective LER cooperation. It would also be a less attractive and significant alliance partner for the environmental movement.

On the second question, one of the most important conclusions from this study is that trade unions, to be effective pro-environmental actors, require more than subjective political will amongst their members and leaders, and more than vigorous exhortation by environmentalists. The LER will benefit from a general strengthening of both labour and environmental organisation and coverage, and the development in each of research capacities, knowledge bases and education programs to engage with the concerns of the other. The AMWU’s initiatives under the direction of Environment Officer Sue Pennicuik show what is possible and necessary on the union side in this regard. Given the political difficulties
experienced by the former Federal Labor government when unions and environmentalists came into conflict over issues such as forestry (problems which have persisted for State Labor governments since 1996), and the promise shown by the ESD Working Group process, the union and environmental movements could be well advised to seek to persuade future Federal (and current State) centre-left governments in Australia to consider abandoning Accord-style tripartite processes in favour of multi-partite planning structures and processes for economic and industry reorganisation; and an institutionalised role for unions in environmental policy (as demanded by the AMWU) and for environmentalists in economic and social policy, as part of a wider project of democratisation of the public policy process.

10.2 Issues for Further Research

Finally, this study did not, and could not have, addressed all the areas for research that the author might have wished. The three cases studied were not the only examples of union-environmental interaction in the Accord period, and a different approach to the study of the three cases adopted here may also be fruitful. To take just one example, the focus of this thesis was on changes in the labour movement and their influence on the LER. The Siegmann-Norton model (or, indeed, any alternative model that other researchers may wish to propose) could also be applied to changes in the organisation, ideology and political-institutional role of the environmental movement in the period of the study, especially as it was a period of profound growth and change in Australian environmentalism.
A major question arising from this study is the long-run effect on the LER of the new super-union structures which were in place from the mid-1990s onwards. After almost a decade it may now be possible to begin to identify trends, although any such study would also need to factor in changes in other variables in the Siegmann-Norton model, notably the substantial PIF changes induced by the replacement of the Federal Labor government with the Coalition government in 1996.

The Bloustein (1991) and Coulthard (1994) studies provided a rich body of insights into the attitudes of manufacturing unionists from the AMWU towards environmental issues in their industry sector, with obvious practical spin-offs in the union’s subsequent initiatives. Other unions and interested academic researchers should consider collaborating in similar studies of workers in other industry sectors. A particular priority should be researching the attitudes of workforces in environmentally contentious sectors such as the coal and energy sectors, forestry, construction, other resource-based industries, and manufacturing workers in unions other than the AMWU. Such studies could be part of a wider program of studies of the environmental attitudes of trade union members compared with environmental group members, non-unionised workers and the general population, and surveys of unionists and environmentalists to determined the perceptions each constituency has of the other.

As noted in Chapter 2 there is a dearth of reliable empirical studies of the actual employment and social impacts of environmental policies and environmental protection decisions. A considerable effort should go into remedying this lack, into comparing the findings of such studies with the predictions of economic models, and
into factoring these into formulation of future environmental policy measures. LER interactions, and environmental and economic policymaking, will suffer as long as their economic “knowledge” base consists mainly of methodologically dubious and ideologically tendentious econometric models.

Finally, this thesis was never intended simply to be of intellectual interest. Finding ways to assist labour and environmental movement actors to achieve cooperation will be to the benefit of both movements. Most importantly, it will be to the benefit of present and future generations. The analysis in this thesis gives some hope that LER cooperation can be achieved and can increase in times to come.
APPENDIX 1: Structure of the Mining and Energy Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union

The CFMEU Mining & Energy Division Structure is based on seven "Districts", each of which is financially autonomous, with "relative autonomy" (CFMEU (M & E), 1994b) on district-wide industrial and political matters, and an executive and board of management elected by the membership. The seven districts are Northern (NSW), Queensland, South West (NSW), WA, Tasmania, NSW Energy and Victorian Energy. In all States except NSW the districts include workers in all industries covered by the union; the Northern and South West Districts cover coal, coke and metalliferous mine workers in those regions of NSW, whilst NSW Energy covers energy sector workers in that State. Within the District, the basic organisational unit is the lodge, covering all union members in a particular workplace.

Above the Districts there is a National structure comprising a National Executive and Central Council. The National Executive comprises the directly elected General President, General Secretary, General Vice-President and three Vice-Presidents elected by Central Council. Central Council is the management committee of the union, which meets twice a year and comprises the District Presidents, the National Executive, and rank and file delegates elected by the districts on a basis of one delegate per 2000 members or part thereof. Central Council may also convene a National Convention, comprising district delegates elected by proportional representation, and the National Executive, District officers and Central Councillors.
attending *ex officio*. The National Convention is the supreme policy-making body of the union.

All decisions of Central Council must be submitted to meetings of rank and file members of lodges for discussion and ratification, and only become official union policy if endorsed by a majority of members voting at such lodge meetings. Likewise, National Convention decisions must be submitted to Central Council for approval and subsequently to the rank and file for endorsement on the same basis as Central Council resolutions. The union journal, *Common Cause*, which is received by all members, is required to publish the agenda items for National Convention beforehand, as well as any views regarding National Convention business submitted by members, and any proposals by Districts and members for National Convention business. National Convention and Central Council decisions are also published in *Common Cause*. Central Council can also conduct special referendums of the membership to determine policy and must do so in order to raise a special levy. The empowerment of the rank and file is reflected in the Rules of the Union's Divisions, which require rank and file endorsement of all decisions of the Divisions' Boards of Management. The Constitution and Rules guarantee voting rights to all members at Lodge meetings and in referendums (CFMEU (M&E), 1994b). In addition to its formal mandate to publish all rank and file submissions on union business, *Common Cause* routinely publishes articles and letters submitted by the membership, expressing the full spectrum of union opinion.

The relationship of the Division to the CFMEU is as follows. The Division controls its own finances and decision-making structures. In the small districts of WA and
Tasmania, and in South Australia, it operates administratively as part of the CFMEU State branch along with members of other divisions. The General President and National Vice-President are joint National President and joint National Vice-President of the CFMEU, and thus are members of the CFMEU National Executive. The members of the Division's National Executive are members of the CFMEU's supreme governing body, the biennial National Conference.
APPENDIX 2: Inventory of Australia’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Australia’s total greenhouse gas emissions were 535.3 megatonnes CO$_2$ equivalent per annum in 2000 (up from 503.3 megatonnes in 1990), representing 1.4% of global emissions. However, on a per capita basis Australia has the highest emissions of all industrialised countries, at 26.7 tonnes per capita per annum emissions. Whilst Australia has lower per capita emissions from the energy sector than the United States and Canada, it has higher overall per capita emissions due to the large contributions of agriculture and of land-use change and forestry (136.4 Mt/annum in 2000), which in other countries are either minor contributors or even a net "carbon sink". Nonetheless, this sector's relative contribution to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions declined between 1990 and 2000, from 34.6% to 25.5%. On the other hand, emissions from energy production and use (including transport) increased from 298.7 Mt p.a. in 1990 to 371.8 Mt p.a. in 2000, an increase of 24.5%, in absolute terms, and an increase in energy's share of Australia's greenhouse emissions from 59.3% in 1990 to 69.4% in 2000 (Hamilton, 2001: 12-26; AGO, 2002).

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4, and Figure 1, show the composition, sources and main trends of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions since 1990.
Table 1: Australian net greenhouse gas emissions, 2000 (UNFCCC accounting).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenhouse Gas</th>
<th>Mt</th>
<th>GWP</th>
<th>Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO$_2$</td>
<td>379.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>379.9</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH$_4$</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>121.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N$_2$O</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO$_x$</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMVOC</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFCs</td>
<td>0.00015</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF$_6$</td>
<td>0.0$^{(b)}$</td>
<td>23900</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO$_2$</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO$_2$-e</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5$^{(c)}$</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CO$_2$-e</strong></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>535.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values may not add due to rounding. GWP = Greenhouse Warming Potential of gas where GWP of CO$_2$ = 1. Mt = Megatonnes. Mt CO$_2$-e = Megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. NMVOC = Non-Methane Volatile Organic Compounds. (a) CF$_4$(GWP = 6,500) and C$_2$F$_6$(GWP = 9,200). (b) Includes emissions from magnesium production but excludes emissions of SF$_6$ from electricity transmission and distribution. (c) includes confidential data on nitric acid and ammonia production.


Table 2: Australian net greenhouse gas emissions by sector, 2000 (UNFCCC accounting).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector and Subsector</th>
<th>CO$_2$</th>
<th>CH$_4$</th>
<th>N$_2$O</th>
<th>CO$_2$-e$^{(a)}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Mt</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. All Energy (Combustion + Fugitive)</td>
<td>339.2</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary Energy</td>
<td>261.0</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fugitive Emissions from Fuel</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Industrial Processes</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Solvent and Other Product Use$^{(c)}$</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agriculture</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Land Use Change and Forestry</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Waste</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Emissions</strong></td>
<td>379.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values may not add due to rounding. (a) Calculated using GWPs in Table 11.1. (b) Includes PFCs (aluminium), SF$_6$(magnesium production) and confidential CO$_2$ and N$_2$O data from ammonia production and nitric acid. (c) No emissions are included because emissions from the sector are not assigned a GWP. Details of these emissions are provided in the tables for Solvent and Other Product Use in Part B of the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2000. Source: National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2000, Australian Greenhouse Office, 2002.
Figure 1: Contribution to total net CO$_2$-equivalent emissions by gas, 2000$^*$. 

Table 3: Change in total net CO$_2$-equivalent emissions by gas, 1990–2000 (UNFCCC accounting).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenhouse Gases</th>
<th>1990 Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>2000 Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>1990 % of Total</th>
<th>2000 % of Total</th>
<th>Changes Mt</th>
<th>% Change in Emissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO$_2$</td>
<td>356.0</td>
<td>379.9</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH$_4$</td>
<td>118.9</td>
<td>121.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N$_2$O</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFCs and SF$_6$</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
<td>-76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO$_2$-e$^{(a)}$</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CO$_2$-e</strong></td>
<td><strong>503.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>535.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.3$^{(b)}$</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Includes confidential CO$_2$ and N$_2$O data from ammonia production and nitric acid. (b) According to the 108% Kyoto target accounting provisions, the change in emissions between 1990 and 2000 is 5%. Source: National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2000, Australian Greenhouse Office, 2002.
Table 4: Change in CO$_2$-equivalent emissions by sector, 1990—2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1990 Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>1990 % Total</th>
<th>2000 Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>2000 % Total</th>
<th>Change Mt CO$_2$-e</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Energy</td>
<td>298.7</td>
<td>59.35</td>
<td>371.8</td>
<td>69.46</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary Energy</td>
<td>208.5</td>
<td>41.26</td>
<td>264.0</td>
<td>49.32</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>12.22</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fugitive Emissions</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Industrial Processes</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>-14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agriculture</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Land Use Change and Forestry</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>17.07</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>-47.9</td>
<td>-55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Waste</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net emissions</strong></td>
<td><strong>503.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>535.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.3%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 3: Structure of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union

The Divisions of the AMWU are constituted under special rules adopted at the time of their amalgamation with the AMWU and its successor organisations. These rules vary from one Division to the next, and provide for the election of Federal and State office-bearers of the Divisions, the composition, method of election and powers of federal conferences, federal councils, state conferences and state councils of the Division, Divisional representation on National governing bodies, and internal governance of the Division. The variations in Divisional structures correspond to variations in the prior organisational forms of the pre-existing unions. The overarching structure of the AMWU consists of the following elements.

The National Conference, held biennially, is the governing body of the union. It comprises the members of the National Council, delegates of the metals and engineering members directly elected from each State on the basis of proportional representation (1 delegate per 3,000 members or part thereof) and representation of the Divisions by their State Secretaries and rank and file Division delegates elected on the same basis as the metals and engineering delegates. The Divisional delegates thus elected are also the delegates to the Divisions’ State or Regional Conferences. The National Conference has power to: determine general union policy; impose levies and penalties; direct the National Council concerning the national budget; hear appeals; consider any agenda item submitted by National, State/Regional and Divisional Committees, and by any five members in a workshop; determine the salaries and employment conditions of full-time officers; make and amend union
rules; and make and amend Division Rules subject to the consent of the Divisions. Recommendations on policy and rules changes for the National Conference are prepared by a number of issue-specific conference committees (AMWU 2003a: 29-34).

The National Council is the national management committee of the AMWU between National Conferences, and comprises the National President, National Secretary, Assistant National Secretary and National Organisers for metals and engineering members, the Federal officials of the Divisions, the general State Secretaries from each State, a combination of State Secretaries and rank and file State delegates of metals and engineering members, four regional Secretaries of the Printing Division, and a rank and file delegate from each of the Vehicle and TSA Divisions. The full-time National and Federal officials are directly elected by the membership. There is also a complex procedure to ensure that at least 10% of National Council members are women. The powers of National Council are to: interpret and enforce National Conference policy and rules; determine policy on matters not decided by National Conference; determine the annual budget and manage the business and finances of the union; appoint the editor of the union journal and control its editorial policy; submit any matter to the union membership for decision by ballot; similarly submit matters affecting particular States or Divisions for decision by ballot by members of the State or Division; negotiate amalgamation agreements; control and supervise the work of union officers and committees; manage the clerical and administrative staff; and call Special National Conferences. National Council may, on request of five members, make a decision by a complex system of "proportional representation" whereby Divisional and State representatives are allocated votes from a college of

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100 votes for each category of representatives in proportion to the numbers of their members. In formulating a budget the National Council must likewise allocate funds to States and Divisions in proportion to their membership, whilst ensuring adequate funds for national operations. A novel mechanism for accountability is the rule requiring National Council members to reply within fourteen days to correspondence from members with penalties for failure (AMWU, 2003a: 34-46).

The national officials of the Union are the National President and National Secretary (elected by the entire AMWU membership), the National Secretary and National organisers for metals and engineering members (elected by those members), and the Federal Secretaries/Assistant National Secretaries and Federal Assistant Secretaries/National Organisers of the Divisions (elected by the respective Divisional memberships). The Divisions also have other Federal officials (Presidents, Vice-Presidents, etc.). There is at least *prima facie* potential for conflict in the position descriptions of the Assistant National Secretaries and National Organisers, whose work is subject to direction both by Divisional governing bodies, and by the National Conference, National Council and National Secretary (AMWU, 2003a: 46-48).

The State levels of the AMWU are governed by State Conferences, State Councils and directly elected State officials whose functions, powers and methods of election are broadly analogous to those of their National counterparts, but which are subject to the overriding authority of National Conference and Council decisions (AMWU, 2003a). The State/Regional level of organisation also exists within each Division, with its form varying between Divisions, but with the Divisional State Assistant
Secretaries and State Organisers, like their National counterparts, subject to two masters (i.e. the State Conference, Council and Secretary, and the governing State Divisional bodies).

The workplace-level organisation of the union comprises shop committees including shop stewards and deputy shop stewards in "works and departments" where the union has members. Shop stewards or committees from several works or a department may elect one of their number as a convenor. The powers of shop stewards and shop committees are defined by State Councils subject to National Council approval, but include recruitment of members, collection of dues and levies, issue of receipts and union cards to members, ensuring compliance at each workplace with award rates and conditions and relevant legislation, monitoring changes in management policy, and alerting State officials to matters potentially leading to a dispute, which shall then come under the direction of State officials for negotiation and action (AMWU 2003a: 66-67). State Council may convene area committees of shop stewards within a given area, and also convene District Committees and Section Committees, respectively comprising representatives elected by members within a geographical area or within a particular trade or section (AMWU 2003a: 73).
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