

# **TERANIA CREEK RAINFOREST WARS**

## **BOOK LAUNCH**

**FRIDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2006**

The planet is an amazing place.

The last book launch I attended was Barry Jones' – "A Thinking Reed" – it's about his political life, a life with lots of wars in it.

Guess who launched it?

Malcolm Frazer! Not exactly on Barry's political team for most of his wars!

And so we are here – an old lefty teacher, unionist, environmentalist, who's worked in all kinds of places with all sorts of people – now working in forest industries where lots still fear to tread!

But not so NIGEL TURVEY. His preface introduces the book as "stories of the people involved.....hippy next to logger"

He sets us dreaming with his lucidity about the rainforests themselves and the Caldera, a place I know, my sister lived in Murwillumbah for more than a decade. I often spent Christmas there. She planted hundreds of rainforest trees.

Nigel takes us on a colossal journey, from Captain Cook to early settlement, agriculture, dairy, cedar cutters, supplying the WW2 effort and then through the blockades and grenades to protected forests and radically changed regimes of forest management, protection & production and baby boomers like us!

Like me, he talks of the divide between hippies/greenies and loggers and the echoes around the nation; political parties divided, city versus the bush, tree huggers Vs tree loggers.

His turn of phrase describes how the loggers lived how the protesters campaigned.

It was these very campaigns that set the scene for lots more of us to be involved in forest campaigns over the next 30 years, for me it was the 1990's.

By then change was afoot. National parks and reserves of all sorts were in place. But the tenacity, agility, the culture of protests were still, in essence, those established at Terania Creek – physical resistance, music, media, arrests, celebration of anti establishment values and life styles all around –helicopters hovering overhead and bulldozers droned to a halt.

In his chapter on “The Original Conservationists”, Nigel give some rare insights. The Forestry Commission in NSW had changed. By the First World War cutting down forests was no longer open slather, conservation played some part of the pattern of forestry, sawmillers were regulated. By the 1970's younger foresters were expected to be highly educated, some at the pointy end of technology and environmental knowledge.

But these changes were not fast or deep enough to catch the coat tails of the emerging environmental movement and urban public opinion. Trees became symbolic, totemic of a new era of respect for nature and new ways of managing resources, especially forest resources.

Pg 27. I quote Nigel “The political mood swung dramatically while the Commission remained static. The area of productive forest estate was reduced, the professional expertise of the “original conservationists” was permanently devalued and the reputation of the wider forestry profession permanently tarnished”.

Nigel covers very intense terrain, crosses the boundaries, describes wars about territory, resource, life style, values, jurisdictions, institutions, science, economics, jobs, production and consumption, the battle for the hearts and minds of the public.

He says in his last chapter “the war never truly ended” –

He is right! –

I must say in 2006, I think it is time the war ended.

I’m still asked “what’s an old trade unionist and greenie doing in a place like this, Victorian forest Industries”?

I think it’s time for claiming the victories of the forest campaigns for protection, knowledge, new management. We have a number of global crises especially climate change. Much of our forest is now protected. Trees store carbon as they grow. Forests in production also have their part to play in storing carbon – in the trees as they grow and the wood products we love and use and of course there are other values in these forests, biodiversity, recreation, tourism. If we’re clever we can help save the planet in lots of ways! Forest industries can play their part more easier than most resource and manufacturing industries. I love to be way beyond the Terania Creek Rainforest Wars!

I’d like to thank Nigel Turvey for detailing its history, telling the stories and making his insights so clear so we might go forward differently. It’s a wonderful, accessible, unique read! Congratulations to you Nigel and all who helped.