
**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
SCHOOL OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**

**INAUGURAL JACK WESTOBY LECTURE
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“A MAN FOR ALL FORESTS”

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Jack Westoby was born in Yorkshire on the 10th of December 1912, the second youngest of a family of 10 children. His closest relationship as a child was with his elder sister Ivy whose son Neville has just retired as Professor of Biochemistry at the Royal College of Surgeons.

Jack gained a scholarship to Hymer's College in Hull, Yorkshire in 1926. He was the prize science student and won the Lord Mayor's Prize for Maths and Physics. In the early 1930's he went on to the Hull University College, a small campus affiliated externally with the University of London, and gained a degree in economics. By then the depression had struck. His first job was as a trainee in a small office in Hull importing condensed and evaporated milk products. The firm fell on bad times and by 1936 Jack was on the dole. At the end of that year, he got a job as a railways clerk. Later in life he asserted that his ability to complete the Times crossword puzzle in under 20 minutes was gained sitting in the guard's van at the back of a train. He stood unsuccessfully as a Labour candidate for one of the Hull electorates. He attempted to join up during the War but asthma, which had bedevilled him throughout his early years and which was to continuously affect his health for the balance of his life, had him back in the railways.

In 1945 he passed the Civil Service exam, previously completing externally a course in statistics at the University

of London and found himself in the Statistics Department of the Board of Trade. There were four people in this new mini section. Their job was to tot things up rather than to analyse them and by chance he got the job of totting up the timber and pulp statistics for the United Kingdom. He very quickly decided that the figures meant something and started to look for the story that lay behind them. Because he was the only statistician working in timber within the Board of Trade, he was sent by the Board as a British delegate to the first European Timber Conference and made such an impression in Geneva that in 1952 he was recruited to the forestry section of the FAO.

He retired as Deputy Director of the Forestry & Forest Industries Division of FAO in 1974 but continued his interest in forestry and forest industry economics and in the politics of forestry, with particular regard to the needs of the developing world, right through to his death on the 11th of September 1988.

Throughout his life he had a very deeply felt concern for the poorest in society, particularly the poor of the developing world.

He and Flo Jackson were married in 1941. They first met in 1937. Their's was a 50 year love affair. They raised 2 sons, one of whom Professor Mark Westoby is here with us this evening.

They also shared together a commitment to socialism.

Jack's speeches were collected in a book edited by Alf Leslie **The Purpose of Forests, Follies of Development** (Blackwell 1987). At the end of his life as he became progressively stricken with motor neuron disease, he completed his magnum opus **Introduction to World Forestry** (Blackwell 1989) which was published after his death.

When I first saw Jack he was standing at the speaker's rostrum in a conference room at the FAO headquarters in Rome in the mid-1960's addressing the first meeting of the FAO World Wood-based Panels Committee which had been formed as a result of a Plywood Symposium held in Rome in 1963, the organiser of the latter having been the late Stanley Clarke, and which I had attended with Bill Gottstein. Jack delivered what I thought was the most brilliant analysis I had heard, up to that time, on wood-based panels in world trade. Not only was it intellectually challenging but it was also very witty. His presentation was riveting.

My subsequent recommendation that he be the Keynote speaker at the 1969 All Australia Timber Congress in Perth was enthusiastically taken up by Tom Bunning and that was how Jack Westoby first came to Australia.

In his Keynote Address to that Congress he gave a myopic industry a sharp environmental rap which in our hindsight and Jack's foresight accorded closely with the parameters of Montreal and Santiago-

"It is hard to reconcile the mess that logging operations leave with the claim that forestry gives aesthetic benefits; it is hard to reconcile muddy log landings in gullies with the claim that forestry improves watershed values; it is hard to reconcile slum sawmill settlements with the claim that forestry counters the

drift to the cities; it is hard to reconcile rusty galvanised iron mill buildings, with the image of a dynamic industry; it is hard to reconcile calls by industries for more government support for forestry with their opposition to royalty increases and government controls. Do these things happen in Australia? I suspect some or all of them do".

When he was asked to sum up at the end of the Congress, he asked us where were the young people, pointing out that the great discoveries in physics almost without exception had been made by persons 25 or younger, and as he looked around the hall he said-

"This is an old congress, and I think you ought to do your best to make sure that the next one is not an old congress. Some of you are directors, managers, etc. It will pay your firm better to have you spend a week on the golf course and send one of your youngsters here".

It was at this conference that the late Sir Alan Westerman, Black Jack McEwans's Head of the Department of Trade, had suggested to us that the Australian economy and the timber industry in particular needed to be dragged screaming into the 20th century, and that Australian industry seemed to be preoccupied building glass clad mausoleums for offices before the corporate body had been declared dead!

Jack spoke four times at that Congress, the last being a magnificent, audience rolling in the aisles, after dinner speech, full of wit, cricket talk and penetrating comments. It was a pity that so few of Jack's after dinner speeches have ever been recorded. The chorus to a long rhyming poem he recited at his own retirement dinner in Rome has survived-

“Did but wisdom come with wrinkles

*Did but folly flee with age
Then there’d be reason for rejoicing*

At the turning of the page”

(my wife tells me this was undoubtedly sung to the tune of “Cease Your Funning” from The Beggars Opera but unfortunately my voice does not permit me to try it!)

My real introduction to the bite of his wit came in a personal exchange at a lunch table in New Delhi in 1975 after he had retired. The occasion was a World Wood-based Panels Symposium. I was attending as an Australian delegate and as the Chair of the meeting, Jack as a Consultant. At this lunch in New Delhi Jack was telling me how he could not stay in India any longer. He felt that it was impossible for him emotionally to continue to take in the poverty and the exploitation which he saw all around him. He told me had to get out and leave and get back to Rome as soon as he could or he would lose his sanity. We spoke about how to reorganise the Indian economy.

India defeated him and he saw no form of social organisation which might bring socio-economic development and social justice to the country. I said “Jack what do you call yourself”? He said “I’m a democratic socialist”. I said “Well I reckon I’d call myself that too”. Jack bit back instantly “You wouldn’t even know what the words meant”. Somewhat rebuffed and slightly offended I said “Well Jack what do you think I am, what would you call me”? He said “You’re a capitalist with a conscience”.

His first book **The Purpose of Forests** was published in 1987 and on the 2nd of January 1988 I was in his home in London. He presented me with a copy and it has this inscription on the flyleaf, which he could not write himself because of his condition and which Flo wrote for him as he dictated it in a clear and firm voice, **“To A**

capitalist with a conscience, to our very dear friends Ann and Denis, the latter having been responsible for more of this than he perhaps realises, Flo for Jack, 2nd January 1988”.

The only reason I have told you all of this is to give you what I believe are my credentials for making this speech and possibly more accurately my reason for responding to the invitation extended to me by Peter Kanowski. I am not particularly well qualified to do so, certainly not in a professional forestry sense. I am not a professional forester - if anything I can describe myself as a heretic industrial chemist, one who has never practised his profession.

I have, however, had the opportunity of learning from a very great man and of having been stimulated by the friendship which he and Flo extended to me and to my family.

What makes Jack Westoby important? The fact that, more than any other person in the last 50 years, he understood the challenges facing world forestry, he anticipated the debate, predicted the controversies and articulated the solutions. His understanding of the challenges evolved from his belief (gained from those statistics in the 40’s and 50’s) that forests and forest industries were vehicles for human development, particularly Third World development. Jack was a humanist. He was firmly anthropocentric.

We are indebted to Alf Leslie for collecting and editing Jack’s articles & speeches gathered together in **The Purpose of Forests**. If you want a first class summary of Jack’s contribution to world forestry, you can do no better than read Alf’s foreword to that book-

“.... More importantly, however, he began to question his own concept of forestry in economic and social development; thence he was led to criticise the myopia of both forestry and modern

conservation, unable to see the people for the trees”.

In the foreword, Alf himself quotes from a speech of Jack's delivered in Lisbon in 1967 and not included in the collection-

“In the early days of my exposure to forestry, I had occasion to discuss forestry problems with very many foresters, foresters of every conceivable specialisation. Had I believed implicitly everything they told me, I would have been driven inexorably to the conclusion that forestry is about trees. But, of course, this is quite wrong. Forestry is not about trees, it is about people. And it is about trees only insofar as trees can serve the needs of people”.

and he repeated the last two sentences in that quote word for word when he spoke in India a year later.

If one is to follow the evolution of Jack's thinking, essential reading is his 1962 article published by the FAO, **Forest Industries for Economic Underdevelopment**, followed by his 1978 speech in Jakarta to the Eighth World Forestry Congress, **Forest Industries for Socio Economic Development**. Jack's chapter in the 1962 FAO publication is not light reading. It is a very structured statement and analysis of the role of the forest products industries in the economic development of a nation, opening up the subject with the comment-

“Forests are an important asset of a country's wealth - an asset that even very poor countries possess or could possess - for they provide a renewable raw material for a whole range of industries which have acquired great importance.....”.

and then after some fifty pages of careful econometric analysis, the concluding exhortation-

“Only concerted action on the part of all (government) departments can ensure that forest industries play their part in the attack on economic underdevelopment and that the immense contribution which forests, rightly used, can make to the development process is fully realised”.

By 1978 he was free of the shackles of FAO and he became more forthright in his public comment. There is a strong element of frustration or disappointment in his 1978 Jakarta address or maybe it was an opportunity to express his unfettered view of what was really wrong. He saw forests as a global resource and he saw them as a natural vehicle for relieving poverty not on a 'one hit basis' but as a resource sensitively managed for sustainability. As I have already stated, he entitled his speech **Forest Industries for Socio-Economic Development** while the theme of the Congress was **Forests for People**. He first defined the difference between economic and socio-economic development-

“A nation can be said to be developing economically if its capacity to produce goods and services is expanding. We can go

further and say that a nation is developing socio-economically if the goods and services which it is producing correspond to the real needs of its people, and if the expanded output of goods and services is so distributed that the most urgent of those needs are satisfied first, and in an equitable manner”.

In other words, socio-economic development has three elements: productive forces which are expanding, output

which matches real needs, distribution which ensures that real needs are met”.

What are real needs? He found no problem in defining them - ***“Real needs are first and foremost food; next clothing and shelter; then elementary health and education services”.*** He pointed out that just because a nation’s GDP had risen was no proof that the basic needs of the population were being met.

“For what use is it to double the number of hospital beds per million if all those extra beds are in the capital and are accommodating only expatriates and the indigenous elite”.

He referred to the FAO statistics showing that the removal of tropical hardwood logs quadrupled between 1950 and 1976 while the proportion of tropical logs processed in the source countries declined with the majority of the logs destined for the ***“wood hungry, affluent, industrialised nations”*** and ***“the contrast of affluence within many undeveloped countries, between the small ruling elite and the mass of the population, exceeds even the inequalities between rich and poor nations”.***

He agreed that all the underdeveloped countries had forest services but ***“woefully understaffed and miserably underpaid”.*** ***“Because they (the forest services) exist, exploitation is facilitated; because they are weak, exploitation is not controlled”.***

He concluded his speech with an emotional call to his audience-

“Forests for people: that is the theme of this CongressEvery forester must decide and, having decided, bear witness in word & deed”.

Jack was convinced that unless the forest was seen as having an economic value and as a renewable resource of economic value, it would inevitably be

destroyed. Land hunger and alternative agricultural land uses would see the forest eliminated by clearfelling and burning or shipped out as log exports. If the forest could not provide for the people, then the land would be used for other purposes.

After all that was why the magnificent tropical moist forests of the Atherton tablelands were cleared, and in Western Australia the largest flowering plant on the surface of the world, Eucalyptus Diversicolor, was ringbarked to allow soldier settlers to live in abject poverty on struggling dairy farms. ***“The stark white ringbarked forest all tragic to the moon”*** strikes a chord with all of us because we know that tilting line to be true.

He made two lecture tours “down under” as the expert from “up over” - in 1969 to Perth and 1974 to Melbourne and Canberra. The title of his 1974 Keynote Address at Forwood in Canberra was ***On Behalf of the Uninvited Guests.***

The ‘uninvited guests’ were the Australian consumer, the people of South-East Asia and the environmentally concerned Australian citizen. He deplored the fact that Australia was an under-consumer of forest products which coming as they did from an energy efficient renewable resource was a tragedy and due to shortsighted Government policies. In 1974 Australia was still a high tariff nation and the price of timber and panels was high. Jack thought the policy shortsighted and more than that morally indefensible in that it disregarded the need for the socio-economic development of the forest rich countries to our North and coddled both the Australian forest owner and the Australian converting industry. He started his speech referring to Kangaroo, the 1920’s novel by D H Lawrence (essential reading he thought for a visitor from ‘up over’) and quoted Harriet’s observation of Sydney’s “dog kennelly houses”. ***“Is this all men can do with a new country? Look at those tin cans”*** and

then in the body of his speech he further developed the theme of environmental concern quoting from an unnamed Australian poet-

“The valley is no longer a place of grace. Even the bellbirds have all pissed off”.

Prior to quoting those memorable two lines, he addressed himself to the foresters in the audience. He asked why did they feel it necessary to vindicate themselves and believed it was because they had been singularly remiss in efforts to inform the “concerned citizen” what they were doing and why they were doing it.

After the “bellbirds” he spoke to the “concerned citizen” -

What can you, as a concerned citizen, do? You can insist that your governments, all of them, systematically pursue the approach admirably outlined by Panel 3. You can insist that they set aside the resources for the research that is needed to fill the many yawning gaps in knowledge that must be filled if wise decisions are to be taken. And you can badger the forester to keep on explaining what he is doing, and why”.

Despite the title, the central message in hindsight in Jack’s Forwood speech was addressed very directly to the invited rather than to the uninvited guests and the need for a National Forest Plan.

“One fact of life is that Australia is a giant desert fringed by eucalypts and Australians, and some of these are inconveniently clustered. Geography imposes that,..... the plan must be partly conceived and largely implemented at a regional level. Generally speaking, this will mean at state level, though there are several

instances, such as major watersheds, where inter-state, and maybe super-state, machinery will be required.

But if geography imposes regional planning, I also firmly believe that geography, history and economics all require a national policy for the Australian forest resource. I take this as axiomatic and I do not propose to debate it. This means an all-Australian strategy and all-Australian goals. But another fact of life in Australia is its seven governments. This means that state strategies and goals for the forestry sector must be at least consistent with, and preferably part of, all Australian strategy and goals. This may mean adjustments at the state level, and some of these might be painful. And if any state proves recalcitrant, thereby prejudicing the future of Australia, then suitable sticks and carrots have to be devised”.

And rounding up with, for good measure

“.....It is my firm conviction that a nation which cannot find an identity in a common resources policy deserves to be considered a nobody among nations”.

Remember that Forwood was the first time that the six State forest services, together with the Commonwealth, had gathered with industry and the infant environmental movement in the same room to debate and expose their activities to criticism and to plan a future. Sure they had attended Timber Congresses but only as observers, in Forwood they were very much participants. Forestry was a State activity and the Federal Government’s only role was to provide funds out of the national coffers for plantations. Industry

and the environmental movement, for different reasons, were the enemies. Jack's comment was somewhat revolutionary!

At Forwood he also said, ***"I have yet to come across a case of sensibly planned, properly located, man-made forest that has not eventually paid off"***.

Inclusive language post-dated Jack despite the fact that Flo was a strong feminist so I hope you will accept this and a few other quotes in their ancient generic meaning!

Almost every speech Jack made and everything he wrote was aimed at foresters. He was angry at the near clear felling destruction of the tropical forests of the developing world for log exports with little local industrial development. He deplored the lack of national land use policies in developing countries and the neo colonialism of the developed world. He was essentially seeking the pathway of balance. Jack could be very trenchant when he saw selfishness and, in his view, misguided behaviour. He said:-

ON FORESTERS: ***"For centuries much of the work of foresters went into creating and protecting royal and princely estates, extinguishing every kind of common right in the forest"*** (Jakarta 1978).

ON INDUSTRIALISTS: ***"I may be cynical but I must confess I have no great faith in the will or ability of boards of directors to ensure that the public interest is made paramount*** (Melbourne 1974).

ON SCIENTISTS & PROFESSIONALS: ***"The fact that he sells his brain power to a private employer or government department for 35 to 40 hours per week***

..... does not absolve him of his responsibility towards his fellow citizens. He does not have to be a civic castrate (Melbourne 1974).

Again Jack obviously was not writing in the era of inclusive language!

ON ENVIRONMENTALISTS: ***"...the fundamental preservationists masquerading as conservationists, the ecological super optimists who, conceding that ecology does not have all the answers, are sure it will have them tomorrow and that therefore all we have to do is to stop the world from turning until the answers are ready"***.

and those of whom he did approve - ***"those serious and concerned groups, professional and among the citizenry at large who are convinced that many things can and must be done more sensibly than they are at present"***. (Canberra 1974).

He would also have approved of the opening phrases in the Brundtland Report to the United Nations-

"The Commission believes that people can build a future that is more prosperous, more just, and more secure We see the possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base. And we believe such growth to be absolutely essential to relieve the great poverty that is deepening in much of the developing world".

That report was published in 1987, a year before Jack died and as he was completing his own final words in his **Introduction to World Forestry**.

The last chapter in that book is entitled **Foresters & Forest Policies** -

"The men and women leaving forestry schools today may know a little less about tree physiology and wood anatomy than the generations which preceded them, but they have clearer ideas about what

societies want from their forests, and how those wants could be satisfied. Where the forestry curriculum has responded to changing needs, forestry education can be a valuable preparation for living in modern society, embracing as it does interrelations between people, the natural resources on which they depend, and technology”.

And with what little movement he had left in his finger he clicked his machine on to dictate his final advice to posterity-

“A clear forest policy is one condition of a truly social forestry. Forestry today must encompass the art and science of harnessing forests, woodlands and trees for human betterment. This is true for all countries, whether rich or poor, temperate or tropical, well forested or tree-barren. In every form of society and in almost every environment trees have services to render. Whoever controls the use of land, the way in which that land is used has an impact on the lives of others. This is particularly true of forested land. Where that impact may be adverse, either immediately or in the long term, it should be subject to social control so that the long-term community interest prevails.

That is why there can be no acceptable delimitation of ‘social forestry’ as a particular area of forestry science and practice. All forestry should be social”.

And those were Jack Westoby’s last words on the subject.

What then is the message that Jack Westoby has left us with:

- 1) Wood is good. It is one of the world’s great renewable resources.
- 2) Forests are for people - all the people; the people of this generation and the next and the ones after that.
- 3) Forests should be conserved and expanded for all their values and multiple uses be they - conservation of biological diversity, industrial water purity and watershed protection, air quality, non wood products, land rehabilitation or wood production - and that those values are important in as much as they serve people.
- 4) A national forest policy embodying those values is the mark of a prudent nation.
- 5) Forests are a major vehicle for socio-economic development.
- 6) National forest policies are determined by the political process, and best determined by the democratic political process, involving all the citizens and not just **“industries, forest owners, builders and birdwatchers”** so that the protection of all the values is considered and debated allowing the democratic political process to determine the weighting when the values compete.
- 7) Foresters have a special obligation to participate in and to inform the political process and to ensure that forests are managed for their socio-economic values.

Now how far has Australia advanced as a nation and as a microcosm of the global forest and forest products industry since the posthumous publication of Jack’s **Introduction to World Forestry** in 1989, and indeed since his visit to Australia in 1974.

First of all, I believe, that Australia has been 'dragged screaming into the 20th century', to use that phrase of Alan Westerman's. No longer is Australia a high tariff country. In 1969, when Jack challenged us with that statement, the tariff on plywood was 57 1/2% and on particle board 40%. Today it is 5%. Work practices have changed - the Hawke Labor Government introduced concepts of productivity which were accepted by the Union movement; our

currency has been deregulated; Trade Practices laws have been strengthened; the Australian Securities Commission has been given teeth and, for all its faults, the market economy within a strong juridical framework, is operating to the advantage of the country. However increased efficiency has landed us with a major problem, - unemployment. We have to find a solution to it. My belief is that it will be found through an educational system which fits our youth for the challenges of the 21st century, increased efficiency in our transport system, particularly our Ports, stronger export orientation within our secondary industries and the visionary integration of our natural resources with downstream processing for those same export markets.

Secondly we now have a National Forest Policy determined by our democratic political process and instead of being one of Jack's "**nobodies**" we have definitely become a **somebody**. The **National Forest Policy Statement** of 1992 bearing the signature of the Prime Minister of the country and of the six Premiers of the States and the two Chief Ministers of our Territories, witnesses that our Governments share a vision for forests, the characteristics of which are-

- the maintenance of the unique character of the Australian forested landscape and the integrity and biological diversity of its environment;
- an increase in the total area of forest;

- an holistic approach to managing forests for all of their values and uses so that we can optimise the benefits to the community;
- the expansion of a range of sustainable forest based industries founded on excellence and innovation and contributing to regional and national economic and employment growth;
- our forests and their resources being managed in an effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner with management responsive to the community;
- the Australian community having a sound understanding of the values of forests and sustainable forest management and being in a position to participate in the decision making processes relating to forest use and management.

There is much repetition in the NFPS between the vision and the goals. It is difficult to separate them. However in the repetition the values are reinforced. We would never have thought it possible 25 years ago. Jack Westoby's central theme at Foreword has been brought to reality and the

National Forest Policy Statement has become the driver for action that Jack foresaw.

In 1992 came Rio and after that Montreal and Santiago. Two important outcomes for forests emerged from the Rio Summit-

- the need to achieve the global sustainable management of all forest types was firmly established, and
- socio-economic development was re-emphasised as central to natural resource sustainability issues.

After Rio, an international seminar of experts on the sustainable development of boreal and temperate

forests was held in Montreal in September 1993. At the 6th meeting of the Montreal Process Working Group held in Santiago the 12 member countries - Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, the United States and Uruguay - defined the 7 basic criteria for sustainability. It was a decision which emphasised the need for balance. Originally we were measuring the sustained capacity of the forest to produce wood and then pre Rio the conservation of biological diversity seemed paramount and now the seven criteria make clear we are measuring the sustainability of the forest for all its values. Criterion 1 through to Criterion 5 are concerned with the health of the forest. They are:-

1. The conservation of biological diversity.
2. The maintenance of productive capacity of forest eco-systems.
3. The maintenance of forest eco-system health and vitality.
4. The conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources.
5. The maintenance of forest contribution to global carbon cycles.

At Rio the principles which subsequently became these criteria were agreed by all parties in the forest debate. However, I believe the landmark decision directly attributable to Rio was the recognition of the right of countries to sustainably use their forest resources for the socio-economic development of their people and this is embodied in Criterion 6 **‘the maintenance and enhancement of long term, multiple socio-economic benefits to meet the needs of society’**, echoing Jack Westoby’s theme - **Forests are for People**. Socio-economic development as a fundamental parameter of sustainable forest use was insisted upon by the developing nations at Rio and so the

role of forests in socio-economic development became firmly re-

established as a fundamental global principle of sustainable forest management.

Australia advocated the addition of the 7th Criterion that there be in the forest owning country **“a legal, institutional and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management”**. In other words, there be a rule of law within the country which supports the conservation and sustainable management of forests; a rule of law which prevents exploitation, encourages best codes of forest practice, clarifies property rights, and recognises traditional rights of indigenous people. All countries realised, that without an institutional and legal framework that made rights and obligations of forest ownership and forest access clear, community owned forests would be especially vulnerable.

We have, indeed, come a long way. We have reached a point where we have a national forest policy; we have determined the criteria for sustainable development and the research is well under way to identify the indicators which will allow us to ensure that each specific criterion is in the process of being met. The function of the indicators is to allow an objective assessment of the performance of forest managers against the values embodied in the criteria. We are amongst the world’s leaders in sustainability indicator research and it must not be abandoned. The prize for our nation is too great.

The stimulus given this work by the Forest & Wood Products Research & Development Corporation has been one of the Corporation’s more important initiatives since it was formed 3 years ago and it shows an opening of the wood products industry’s mind to the bigger picture. 30% of the Corporation’s research funds are now spent on resource improvement and the majority of that

on research in co-operation with the six State forest services on Montreal criterion indicators. Without sustainability there is no industry. This underscores the importance of the issue, for conservation, for wood production and for the whole community.

I think it was best expressed to me last year in Canada where I had the opportunity of speaking to government and industry and also in Mexico when I visited the headquarters of the Forest Stewardship Council - both visits as part of the process to warm me up for chairing the **International Conference on Certification & Labelling of Products from Sustainably Managed Forests** held in Brisbane. I learnt that Sustainable Forest Management is a process not a product and it is measurement and research driven. Manufacturing industry has a name for it. It calls it Continuous Improvement or CI.

When I got back to Australia it was expressed to me that sustainable forest management is a voyage and not a port. I believe if we think of it in that way a lot of the heat will go out of the debate. Jack Westoby pleaded for it when he said *"It is crying for the moon to stop the world from turning to freeze"*

the landscape as it is The trick is not to let any situation get past the point of no return, and not shut out important options for yourself and future generations".

At the International Conference in Brisbane there were 57 countries represented, as well as a strong representation from the Australian and the international conservation movement and Trade Unions and forest growers and from the international forest products industry. They met for four days. By the morning of the last day it looked as though they would never come to a final agreement. In the afternoon they did so and they achieved their consensus with a great deal of shared enthusiasm. The first resolution was

quite clear and unambiguous - sustainable forest management was the main goal shared by all participants.

I was impressed by the contribution from the International Labour Organisation and its trade union representatives, particularly the Canadian who, with articulate emotion, stressed the worker's commitment to sustainable forest management. His theme was that people who depended upon the forest for their jobs and upon the long term security of their converting industry, were eager to see the forest sustainably managed. Warren Ulley spoke for 10 minutes without a note in his hand.

The lesson from Brisbane was that when you brought people together where the personal integrity of the speakers was not challenged and where they were listened to for their intellectual input and rational debate took place, viewpoints changed and a common view emerged. It was a remarkable example of Hegelian dialogue - thesis and antithesis producing synthesis. It started off on the first day with a couple of artillery barrages in the shape of press releases, almost as though we were participating in a dialogue of the deaf. By the end of the four days, delegates had come to recognise common ground, had come to respect the integrity of each other without abandoning their own position.

The exercise was repeated in Canberra in November last year when there was a national conference **Assessing Sustainable Forest Management in Australia**. Many of the speakers with differing views had been present in Brisbane and it was as though tensions had been eased and understandings tentatively explored. Again, the integrity of each speaker was not questioned and the concept of workshop groups trialed so successfully in Brisbane again produced agreement on the objectives, that is the criteria, for forest management although the weighting to be given to each criterion and its

indicators was still the subject of vigorous debate.

In 1995, the Wood & paper Industry Strategy was announced. The Federal Government committed \$53M to ensure Regional Forest Agreements were developed quickly. RFA's are fundamental to the implementation of the National Forest Policy. They flow from the Comprehensive Regional Assessment scoping agreements which have been signed by all States. RFA's form the basis for achieving the vision of the National Forest Policy which is to satisfy the long term requirements of both conservation and industry - the retention of the unique character of the Australian forested landscape and of the integrity and biological diversity of its associated environment, together with the expansion of forest based industries founded on excellence and innovation and contributing to regional and national socio-economic development.

The first RFA in East Gippsland has been signed by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Victoria. Tasmania is well advanced and 'mirabile dictu' Western Australia is progressing well and New South Wales, both North East and South East, is under way.

Agroforestry and plantations are being given further impetus by the National Heritage Trust (the Telstra Fund). While the announcement of the Minister for Primary Industry & Energy on the 30th of July of a "2020 Vision" to triple the plantation area in Australia to 3 million hectares by the year 2020, with the strategy to be jointly developed by the plantation growing and processing industries and the Ministerial Standing Committee on Forestry, has large positive implications for both the environment and for socio-economic development.

Environmental degradation is threatening much of our agricultural land. The plan is to reverse that degradation with a massive program to plant carbon consuming, solar driven water pumps and so maintain the productivity of our agriculture and

simultaneously create the opportunity for new wood processing industries. The strategy will borrow many of its ideas from the success achieved by our Kiwi cousins.

The National Forest Policy has given us a vision. Native forests sustainably managed for production and environmental values with substantial areas set aside for nature reserves and protection forests plus 3 million hectares of plantations assisting to turn back land degradation and supporting industrial development. And it will be foresters who will be working in the frontline bringing this strategy to reality; it is they who will be involved in forestry research and in the management of our national forest estate whether it be native or plantation; it is they who will know the health of the forests; it is they who will be aware of the contribution which forestry can make to socio-economic development, and the foresters will have to make their voices heard. It is only by objective debate and communication that we will maintain the necessary political support. As Jack said, a national forest policy is fundamentally a decision best made by the democratic political process. And it is the clear responsibility of foresters, and for that matter environmentalists, industrialists and all concerned citizens, to participate in the debate.

The forest products industry in Australia is unrecognisable today from the industry which I first entered in 1951 or really in 1949, when I started as a technical assistant at the Division of Forest Products CSIRO in South Melbourne and indeed since Jack's speech **On Behalf of the Uninvited Guests** in 1974. It has been exposed to world competition, it now consists of a number of large commodity volume driven operations associated with a much larger number of small efficient niche manufacturers, the former mainly associated with the softwood industry, the latter with hardwoods. This does not say that there are exceptions - there are large hardwood sawmillers and there are

small softwood operators. The hardwood industry is becoming increasingly export oriented. The panel sector is exporting its product to the whole of the Asian Pacrim and to Africa and the Gulf. An industry with seven forest services supplying it and pursuing different policies, has been transformed into one which is vigorous, efficient, low tariff, import replacement and export oriented.

The paper **The Environmental Properties of Timber** by Ferguson, Ringman and others, commissioned by the Forest and Wood Products Research & Development Corporation, very clearly sets out the environmental advantages of timber as a renewable resource with a high energy conservation factor. One table shows the energy used to construct and maintain buildings with different wall materials. The ratio of the figures are, undoubtedly, well known to you. A timber frame structure uses about 22% of the energy of a double brick unpainted wall; 30% of the energy of steel frame with fibro cement cladding. I suppose the message I am trying to give to you is that it is an industry to which we can all be proud of belonging. It can serve the people of this country well and make a major contribution to the environmental and economic well being of our nation.

Some twenty five years ago I gave an address in a University of Western Australia lecture series on my personal vision for Australia. I entitled the address **One view from Within. Where?** and I said:-

“We have inherited a tradition of balance. A tradition with a clear respect for the rights of the individual and the needs of society - a regard for justice “.

In 1988 in the foreword to a book published to commemorate the 60th anniversary of my own company - the book being a set of botanically perfect wildflower paintings of the flora of Kings Park - I spoke of -

“a firm conviction that development and conservation of the world’s beauty and natural resources go hand in hand, success in achieving that balance requires research, prudence and a belief in the ability of mankind to manage and protect the planet”.

I have not changed my views, although I might today make my language more inclusive!

And so you have listened to the verbal meanderings of Jack’s “capitalist with a conscience”. Bear well in mind in evaluating my comments and casting judgement upon them, Jack’s own apologia-

“I have attempted to express my views pithily, but I should not wish them to be taken dogmatically. They are contributions to discussions - discussions which must come to involve very much larger numbers of people, if they are to generate effective action”.

and remember in making your judgement -

“Forestry is not about trees, it is about people. And it is about trees only insofar as trees can serve the needs of people”.

Time moves on and I am now seven years older than Jack was when he retired from the FAO. In the course of writing this speech, I have come to appreciate fully the meaning of his chorus as I am sure you have while you’ve been listening to me -

***“Did but wisdom come with wrinkles
Did but folly flee with age
Then there’d be reason for rejoicing
At the turning of the page”***