UNIVERSITY *of* York

This is a repository copy of *"Let this Forest For Ever Rest": Tracking Protest and Identity in Australia's Forests*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/140555/

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

White Rose
university consortium
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

"Let this Forest For Ever Rest"[1]: Tracking Protest and Identity in Australia's Forests

Exploitation of natural resources has long been a flashpoint for contention in Australia. This is clear in the case of forest management, where groups advocating protection have faced off against state and industry actors. The move towards multifunctionalism that recognises different values in the management of natural resources has led to a search for alternative solutions. In the case of forestry, introduction of Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) in the 1990s sought to devolve responsibility to the States, while striking a balance between economic and environmental considerations. The aim of this paper is to identify how forest activism has developed since the RFA process began and its significance in relation to changes in land use. The paper draws on a protest event catalogue of forest-related events over the 1997-2017 period to identify the intensity, tactics and location of such actions. The findings suggest that state action has reduced the intensity of contention, in line with changes in resource management practices. However, they also point to the importance of identity and its link to the social construction of resources in determining the ability of actors to de-escalate and find solutions.

Keywords: Australia, forestry, protest, natural resources, identity

Introduction

In March 2013 Miranda Gibson abseiled from her 60 metre tree-sit in Southern Tasmania after almost 450 days (Beniuk, 2013). This action took place in the Tyenna Valley, as part of an ongoing campaign against native forest logging in the state. Australia has seen numerous protests over forestry operations in the past four decades, but as conservation practices have changed, the focus and intensity of protest has also shifted. Attempts by both supporters and opponents of forestry to find a solution have at times been challenged by radical activism (see Cianchi, 2015), use of paid spies and informants (Dorling, 2012), and a general environment of antagonism between the pro-logging interests and 'greenies' (Paine and Kempton, 2008). In spite of the apparently intractable nature of the differences there have been some advances, primarily in the transfer of responsibility to the state level in the 1990s through Regional Forestry Agreements (RFA) (Lane, 1999). While the effectiveness of these agreements has been disputed (Davey, 2018; Lindenmayer, 2018) they signalled a shift in

---

[1] From banner on tree in Goolengook State Forest anti-logging protest. Trioli (1997)

relationships around forests and raise questions regarding attitudes to resource and landscape management.

Contention over the management of natural resources brings together competing claims around production, consumption and conservation (Bridge, 2009). Affolderbach (2011: 186) illustrates this point arguing the clash is intense in relation to 'resource peripheries, [as] conflicts arise between… controlling vested interests and community, environmental, and social interests'. This makes resource management a useful lens through which to consider shifts in land management practices and values towards multifunctionality (Holmes, 2006; Mather, 2001; Roche and Argent, 2015). Mulitifunctionalism has led to contestation over how resources are constructed, echoing Tuan's (1979: 389) claim that 'The space that we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with the individual and cultural group.' Forest management provides a vivid example of these differing perceptions, as environmental advocates clash with and contest meanings with industry and local communities reliant on economic benefits (on Tasmania see Beresford, 2015, Buckman, 2008; Cianchi, 2015), often excluding Indigenous rights and knowledge (Moorcroft and Adams, 2014; Pickerill, 2008). Attempts by the state to mediate and manage these competing views are challenged by the strength of identity amongst the actors involved (on collective identity see Hunt and Bedford, 2004; Klandermans et al. 2002). Examining patterns of forest protest can provide a means with which to consider the relationship between the intensity of contention and the success or otherwise of state intervention.

This paper considers the patterns of protest around the management of forest resources in Australia over the 1997-2017 period. Australia presents a valuable case for analysis given its federal structure, geographical diversity and ongoing tensions around resource management and exploitation. The aim of this paper is to identify how forest activism has developed since the RFAs were introduced and the significance in relation to changes in land use. The paper draws on a unique protest event catalogue to identify key actors (claimants and targets), locations and forms of action. The remainder of the paper is divided into five sections. The first section briefly outlines the historical roots and development of environmentalism in Australia. In the second section, the focus shifts to forest management in Australia, considering how the tensions between economic and environmental priorities have surfaced

and been managed. The methodology used to identify and catalogue the protest events considered in the paper is outlined in the third section. The fourth section draws on the protest event catalogue to consider the features of forest related protests over the 1997-2017 period. Finally, the paper examines the significance of the changes observed in relation to debates over land use and resource management.

Environmentalism in Australia

Environmental concerns have long featured in Australian life, motivating contentious and non-contentious actions aimed at preserving the physical environment. Smith (Smith N, 2011: 3) notes that 'Settler Australians have imaginatively identified with the particularities of the Australian biophysical environment to represent their collectivity to themselves and to distinguish themselves from Others.' This sense of belonging linked to the environment presents other challenges, as the object of concern is not immediately apparent and must be created. This is made clear by Christoff (2016: 1040) who argues:

> the conceptual and material distinctions between 'wild' and 'changed' nature blur into one of degrees of transformation or degradation determined by different types and intensities of human management and un/intended impact.

What is identified as being significant in the eyes of the society is shaped by ideas of nature that can devalue and exclude other perspectives (see Pickerill, 2018). Therefore to understand the significance of change in forestry management and contention it is necessary to consider the development of environmental concerns, seeing forests as indicative of resource management generally.

Environmental issues entered the Australian public sphere in the late 19th century, as the effects of colonial development began to be felt. Hutton and Connors (1999: 27) argue that 'the contradictions between professional scientific interest and rapidly disappearing habitats and species did eventually stir the colonial Australian scientific community.' Much action in this early period involved education and attempts to shape emerging institutional arrangements (Hutton and Connors, 1999). This meant that the primary focus was on conservation and preservation of the physical environment. Addressing the growth of the conservation estate, Smith (Smith N. 2011: 12) argues 'the renewed value placed in the nation's natural (native) heritage relied on the re-imagining of the bush as a recreational

space.' The extent to which environmental concerns were present was linked to the perceived usefulness and productive value of what was being protected.

The contemporary environmental movement, tackling broader concerns and adopting a more confrontational stance, can be traced to the 1960s. Campaigns over oil exploration on the Great Barrier Reef, the inundation of Lake Pedder in Tasmania, and clearance of land for farming in the ecologically sensitive Little Desert in Victoria all generated strong, collective opposition (see Buckman, 2008; Crowley, 1999; Hutton and Connors, 1999; Lloyd et al., 2017). The nature of the challenge was embodied in the case of Tasmania where the 'political culture… [was characterised by] authoritarian leadership, pro-development mindset, and a ready resort to sacrificing accountable government' (Beresford, 2015: 17). Environmental campaigns illustrated the tension between production and conservation. Hutton and Connors (1999: 124) illustrate the challenge, arguing that:

> The lesson of [the inundation of] Lake Pedder was that industrial development would not wait for gentlemanly agreements to be reached. Environmentalists had to learn to fight and fight with commitment.

This shift was reflected in developments during the 1970s as 'the picket, the blockade, the rally, and other confrontational activities [were established] as integral parts of green movement tradition and mythology' (Hutton and Connors, 1999: 126). The period was also marked by the formation of national groups such as the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) (Hutton and Connors, 1999), which 'marked the beginnings of the widespread legitimacy conferred upon environmentalism by the educated middle class of Australia' (Smith N., 2011: 12).

State attempts to manage tensions with the environmental movement during the 1980s led to some cooperation, as there were attempts to balance developmental and environmental considerations. Downes (1996; see also Dovers, 2013) argues this was reflected in the ecologically sustainable development process, whereby there was an attempt to depoliticise the environmental issues. Despite this opening, the resource-based sector continued to exert considerable influence (Hutton and Connors, 1999) and the government subsequently turned increasingly hostile, as 'the Howard regime [1996-2007] attempted to disempower and discredit environmental concerns' (Doyle, 2010: 155). This led to a situation where Christoff

(2016: 1036) argues 'Institutionalised processes of consultation, negotiation, and cooperation now occurred alongside community-based protests and public confrontations with resource industries, developers, and the state.' These developments echo Western environmental movements more generally, where 'process[es] of deradicalisation, oligarchisation, institutionalisation and professionalisation' have prevailed (van der Heijden, 1999: 201). In this context, governance is increasingly decentred with the state seen as 'an additional but often silent stakeholder' (Doyle, 2010: 159). Protest represents a way of challenging this shift and drawing 'public attention to environmental causes that would not occur through normal political processes' (Dalton, Recchia and Rohrschneider, 2003: 744). The paper outlines these tensions by examining contention and negotiation over forests in Australia.

Protest and Forest Management in Australia

The management of forest resources has been a key battleground in Australian environmentalism. Early campaigns around the preservation of forests for recreational purposes featured prominently in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Hutton and Connors, 1999). More recently, the 'intensification of resource extraction (mainly minerals and timber)… driven by rapid growth in export markets and changes in technological capacity' has seen contention increase (Christoff, 2016: 1037). These tensions have led to long and vigorous campaigns, drawing on a mix of conventional protest (marches, rallies, speeches) and more confrontational forms of direct action (blockades, occupations). Ricketts (2006: 76) argues this is related to a:

> sense of urgency that accompanies environmental campaigns [that] has frequently been the context within which activists have utilised direct action as a means of attracting attention, as well as aiming to achieve the more direct aim of physically stopping destruction in its tracks.

Such actions have the effect of 'contesting social identities that appear to be implicated in conflicting views', bringing pro- and anti-forestry interests together (Trigger, 1999: 164).

There was a shift in intensity from the 1970s, as events such as the four week blockade at Terania Creek introduced direct action and 'changed the nature of campaigning for nature conservation… [showing] the effectiveness of theatre in getting the conservation message to the public' (Hutton and Connors, 1999: 153; see also Buckman, 2008). Rather than appealing to the state, such actions took 'control of the meaning of the interaction between protestors

and the state… [helping] to complete the process of empowerment' (Ricketts, 2006: 78). Operating in this way was necessary to present claims in a context where regulatory agencies such as the Forestry Commission had arguably been captured by industrial actors (Hutton and Connors, 1999). In some situations, a confrontational stance was forced on activists, as Crowley (1999: 417, see also Beresford, 2015) argues in the case of Tasmania 'conservationists were themselves treated as democratic outsiders, restrained by the force of law from thwarting development goals.'

To deal with 'two decades of acrimonious and intractable contests over the use and management of the forests' (Dargavel, 1998: 25) the Federal government sought a mechanism to devolve forest management to State level. This approach also fits with Affolderbach's (2011: 202) claim that 'outcomes that are based on a balance of power are more likely to solve long-standing disputes even though they may not change underlying conflicting values and interests.' Clashes had involved 'area-specific conflicts' in forest regions as well as actions targeting the Federal government, which was perceived as more environmentally aware (Lane, 1999). Federal and State governments (excluding Tasmania) agreed a National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) in 1992, to be implemented through the creation of a series of Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) (see Davey, 2018; Lindenmayer, 2018). Lane (1999: 143) notes that the RFAs aimed at 'providing resource security, ensuring the conservation of important forest areas and mediating the tensions at different levels of government', attempting to balance environmental and socioeconomic demands, enabling multiple uses to co-exist.

The RFAs were structured around biogeographical regions within State borders to enable more holistic management (Dargavel, 1998). Defining 'old-growth forest' using scientific methods ensured biological concerns were addressed, but these were detached from meanings and values that underpinned the forest conflicts (Ford, 2013). Additionally, the biogeographic regions did not necessarily align with economic regions and labour markets (Dargavel, 1998). The predominance of forest exploitation historically had seen investments and communities 'locked-in', making change difficult. When the RFAs were negotiated, community input and participation by non-governmental organisations varied but was limited with 'final agreements… negotiated between Commonwealth [Federal] and State

governments officials.' (Dargavel, 1998: 29; see also Kirkpatrick, 1998). Beresford (2015; 108) argues that in the case of Tasmania 'public opinion was simply sidestepped and the already weak National Forest Policy was effectively ringbarked'. This approach is reflected in Lane's (1999) argument that the key purpose was to depoliticise forest management and reduce jurisdictional tensions.

With these limitations the RFAs were introduced, giving States implementation and management responsibilities. This resulted in differing outcomes, as States sought to address their own constituencies. Considering the RFA covering southwestern Western Australia, Houghton (2012) argues it failed to gain support due to the closed negotiation process. As a result, the incoming State Labor government scrapped the RFA in 2001 and introduced a far-reaching policy ending logging in all remaining old-growth forest, with dramatic effects on the regional economy. The New South Wales process by contrast involved a much greater degree of stakeholder engagement during the consultation process, with notable effects on the form of the final agreement (Ford, 2013). The effectiveness of the New South Wales and Victorian RFAs can be gauged from the fact that they were still in place in 2013 when replacements were being designed.

Forest conflicts have been particularly intense in Tasmania, so the RFA developed for the State covered the whole island. The relatively economically underdeveloped character of Tasmania and the abundance of old-growth forests means that forestry is a key industry. Addressing the tensions between conservation and production in the state, Beresford (2015: 125) argues that in the early 2000s 'Without access to native forests, including significant areas of the last remnants of the state's tall trees, Gunns' [Ltd] sawmill, veneer and woodchip operations would cease to exist.' The significance of Gunns Ltd for the State meant that the forest policy network was able to override ecological concerns over plans to build a pulp mill at Bell Bay in the north of the state (Gale, 2013). Such concerns could also be seen in the 1997 RFA, as Dargavel (1998: 27) argued the 'major reason for treating Tasmania as a single region would seem to have been the pressing political need to validate its woodchip exports and encourage pulp mill development.' As a result, the RFA was rejected by conservationists who demonstrated outside the State Parliament as it was signed (Buckman, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Gale, 2013).

7

The Federal government attempt to distance itself from forest management and let States take ownership was not possible in Tasmania. The 2004 and 2007 Federal elections saw old-growth logging and construction of the Bell Bay pulp mill emerge as key issues (Gale, 2013). Economic priorities dominated the State government approach to forestry, with close ties between the governing Labor Party and forestry unions in opposition to Federal stance in the 2004 election (Gale, 2013). The Tasmanian Forest Peace process in 2009 was an attempt to bring contending parties together to overcome entrenched hostilities and an absence of trust (Schirmer et al., 2016). The talks resulted in the Tasmanian Forest Agreement (TFA) in 2013, which Beresford (2015: 372-3) notes:

> paved the way for a smaller more sustainable timber industry in return for an extension of 170 000 hectares of the World Heritage Area and a cessation of protest activity.

The TFA was a short-lived victory, as it was legislated in 2013 and repealed the following year by the incoming conservative Coalition administration (Schirmer et al., 2016). These developments demonstrate the deep rifts in Tasmanian forestry and the prominent role played by politics in shaping outcomes.

While the TFA introduced an opportunity for compromise between economic and ecological values there were absences that limited its viability. Dare (2013: 603) argues 'Local government was excluded from the negotiating process, despite the current and potential impacts of the forest industry decline on their regions'. This exclusion of local government and non-organised actors can be seen as characteristic of forest management in Australia. Ford (2013: 39) notes these absences lead to 'Informal bargaining… [in the form of] lobbying, public education, boycotts, consumer campaigns, and direct protest and tends to be flexible and dynamic, with locations, scales and alliances shifting as needed'. Considering patterns of protest behaviour may therefore enable identification of areas of concern and possibly deeper issues around land and resource management.

Methodology

Protest is fleeting, lasting records and memorials are few, making the task of cataloguing such events difficult. Protest event analysis (PEA) provides a way to build a record by constructing search frames to examine official and unofficial sources to identify, code and catalogue events for analysis. Koopmans and Rucht (2002: 231) argue the strength of this approach is that it 'allows for quantification of many properties of protest, such as frequency, timing and duration, location, claims, size, forms, carriers, and targets'. The range of variables and the specificity of the search parameters enable data collection to be calibrated to target factors of interest. Tracking events over time enables the identification of changes in form, location and scale of protest at the movement level (Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003).

This paper draws on a dataset[2] of all stories reported in the main regional and national Australian newspapers and the Australian Associated Press (AAP) from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2017 (see Appendix for source details). The use of material prepared for other purposes can present a distorted view. This can be managed by assessing the quality and potential biases of sources to place them in the broader context (Earl et al., 2004). The focus in selecting sources was based on an attempt to ensure broad coverage was achieved. There are additional challenges regarding the representativeness of the method, as protest by its nature is intended to grab attention, so events that are not 'newsworthy' may be overlooked. Additionally, Waitt (1995: 305) has argued that 'the cultural evaluation of trees, the conflict between different interest groups and the immediacy of the [deforestation] process' make such issues more 'newsworthy'. For these reasons, it is argued that forestry issues are more

---

[2] The full dataset is available from: https://doi.org/10.15124/cbe8ad11-9921-4753-a2b5-620c9edd42f1

likely to receive attention and coverage, making PEA a viable method to assess broad patterns of action. It is also important to note that media's role in constructing '"reality" by selectively providing comment and information about the lives, landscapes and cultures of different social groups' (Waitt, 1995: 299) means their perspective can be important in shaping outcomes.

The search parameters used to construct the catalogue were deliberately broad in order to capture the widest range of events. A search was conducted using the terms "*environment**" and "*protest**", with "*" representing wildcard variations on the keywords. This search methodology has been validated in previous research on environmental protest in New Zealand (see O'Brien, 2017). The search returned 17938 stories. These stories were examined to identify those that related to environmental protest events and subsequently to identify forest protest events, resulting in 347 unique events. This includes events targeting native forest logging as well as protests over urban tree clearance, with the former being more numerous. Each event was coded to capture information on location, issue and level of focus, actors involved, and specific actions (up to four per event). The catalogue was then analysed to identify patterns in protest actions over the period, the findings of which are reported in the next section.

Australian Forest Protests (1997-2017)

This section considers how forest contention has developed over the 1997-2017 period. The focus is on events in opposition to forest exploitation and does not measure the countermovement or pro-industry events. Gale (1986) notes countermovements are significant in shaping the actions and opportunities open to movement actors. Actions such as a logging truck blockade in Melbourne (AAP, 2002) and motorcycle gang rally in support of timber workers in Tasmania (Dawtrey and Killick, 2013) illustrate the presence of countering actions (see also Buckman, 2008). However, the low number of such events identified during the construction of the catalogue may reflect greater access to decision makers, reducing the need for contentious actions.

The 1997-2017 period saw 347 protest events over forest management issues (Figure 1).[3] Events ranged from a 2004 march in Melbourne calling for an end to old-growth logging involving 'an estimated 15000 people… [on] World Environment Day' (Marino, 2004) through to a group of 15 obstructing a logging road in Tasmania in 2013 (AAP, 2013). Figure 1 shows that the number of events varied sharply over the period, with a shift in intensity over time. Following a surge in events in Victoria, primarily in East Gippsland, protest fell as the State government reviewed the management of rainforest resources under the Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production (Fyfe, 2003). Protests in other states and territories (except Tasmania) have been limited in number due to lower forest cover (Queensland (Qld) and South Australia (SA)) or attempts to manage resources to reduce exploitation (Western Australia (WA) and New South Wales (NSW)). It is also suggested the shift was supported by the introduction of RFAs, as participants turned to other channels to press claims.

---

[3] The coding captures the location of the protest event. Protest events in ACT concerned forests in other states. There were also protests over Tasmania's forests in other cities, particularly around Federal elections.

Figure 1 – Protests by State
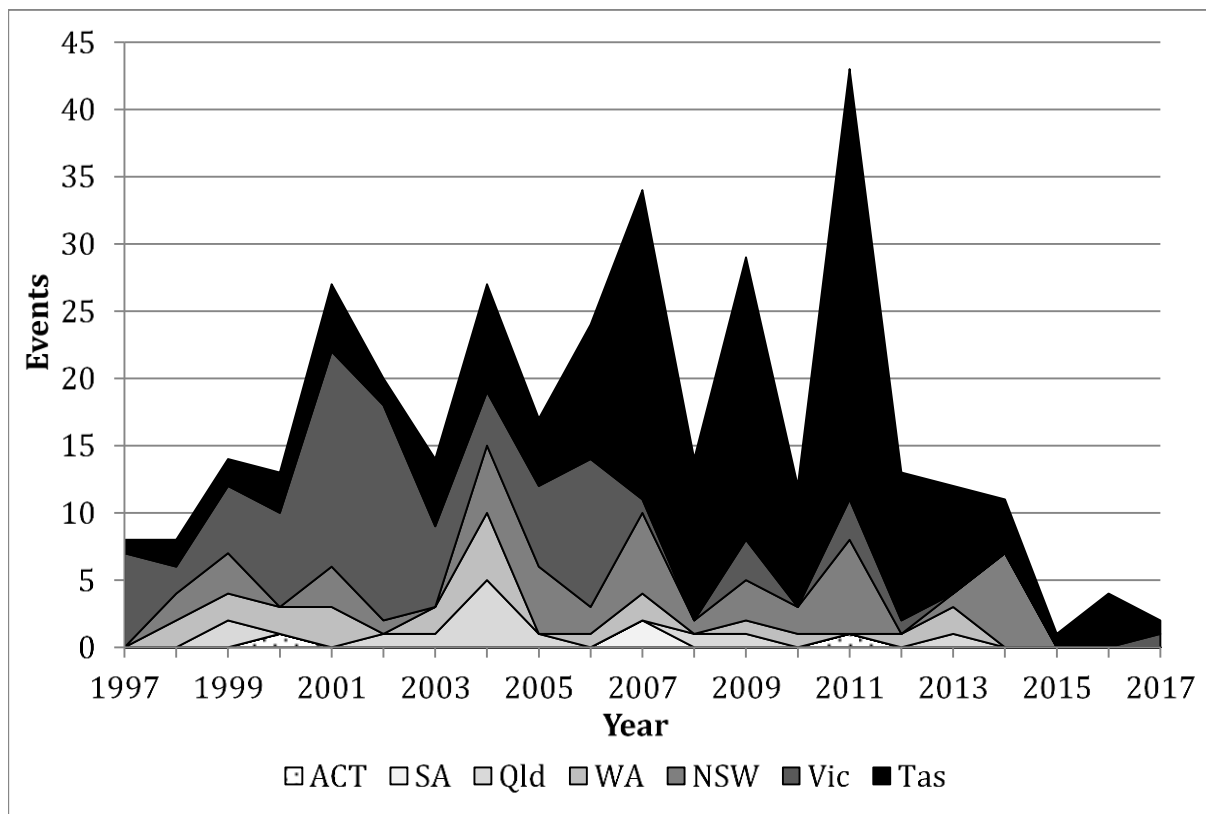
The most striking pattern in Figure 1 is the increase in events in Tasmania. As noted above, Tasmania has long been a site of intense struggles over natural resource management due to its rich endowment of such resources and relative remoteness (Buckman, 2008; Hutton and Connors, 1999; Gale, 2013). Protests recorded there involved numerous attempts to obstruct and prevent logging, as well as large gatherings aiming to highlight the damage in remote areas far from the view of the public (see Cianchi, 2015). Attempts to negotiate a forest peace deal from 2009 shaped some protest actions, but these efforts were countered by the planned Bell Bay pulp mill (Gale, 2013). The fall from 2012 reflects the fact that the relatively short-lived TFA may have reduced some of the tensions around forest management and opened new opportunities (Schirmer et al., 2016).

Examining the target of claims provides an opportunity to consider the broader pattern of protest to give some indication to what actors hoped to achieve. Table 1 shows aggregate categories of named targets in the event catalogue. Public bodies with responsibility for

resource management featured most prominently, due to their role in regulating and managing resources. The threat of regulatory capture (as noted by Hutton and Connors, 1999) also made them a viable focus of claims, as dramatically illustrated by the North East Forest Alliance occupation of the NSW Forestry Commission offices in 1992 (see Ricketts, 2006). Alongside regulatory bodies, extractive industry firms were a frequent target, as illustrated by the long struggle with Gunns Ltd in Tasmania (Gale, 2013). Where other firms were targeted, this involved actions to discourage retailers from selling goods made with native timber (Smith M., 2011) or banks from financing contested projects, such as the Gunns pulp mill (Zappone, 2007).

Table 1 – Target of Claims

Target	Number	% of Target	% of Total
Resource Departments	63	35.6	18.2
Resource Firms	45	25.4	13.0
Government	29	16.4	8.4
Minister for Environment	14	7.9	4.0
Other Firms	12	6.8	3.5
Political Parties	12	6.8	3.5
Other Departments	2	1.1	0.6
None	170		49.0
TOTAL	347		

When considering protest behaviour it is important to identify the range of approaches adopted. Table 2 summarises actions in Tasmania and Victoria as the states with the most protest activity, as well as forms in the other states and territories collectively. Demonstrational events were the most common form, with gatherings taking place in almost half of the events recorded. This can be linked to Tilly's (Tilly and Wood, 2009) notion of WUNC (worthiness, numbers, unity and commitment), as protest actors attempt to visibly demonstrate the significance of the claim being presented. Possibly characteristic of the issue is the high proportion of events that involved confrontational actions, particularly entering a restricted or private space and preventing access through obstructive behaviour. Examples included tree sits that blocked access to logging sites (Smith M., 2011), break ins at wood

processing plants that halted production (AAP, 2004) and occupations of office buildings (Clark, 2007). These are significant acts, as they break with accepted behaviour and force the target to acknowledge and deal with the claims being presented, often having to call for assistance to remove participants. The other point is that despite the confrontational character of these actions, the number of events that involved damage (as a form of violence) was minimal. There is also variation across the states and territories, as Victoria and Tasmania both saw a considerably higher proportion of confrontational actions, reflecting the more intense and sustained nature of the campaigns in these two states.

### Table 2 – Frequency of Action Type

		Tasmania	Victoria	Other	All
Appeal	Address	11.8[*] (20)[†]	9.0 (8)	15.7 (14)	11.7 (42)
	Present	1.8 (3)	0.0	2.2 (2)	1.4 (5)
Demonstrational	Gather	47.9 (81)	50.6 (45)	55.1 (49)	48.7 (175)
	Display	13.6 (23)	11.2 (10)	16.9 (15)	13.4 (48)
	March	7.1 (12)	6.7 (6)	3.4 (3)	5.8 (21)
	Perform	11.2 (19)	16.9 (15)	12.4 (11)	12.5 (45)
	Costume	4.7 (8)	2.2 (2)	6.7 (6)	4.5 (16)
	Meet	1.2 (2)	1.1 (1)	0.0	0.8 (3)
	Rally	2.4 (4)	0.0	1.1 (1)	1.4 (5)
Confrontational	Obstruct	42.6 (72)	46.1 (41)	37.1 (33)	40.7 (146)
	Chant	4.7 (8)	2.2 (2)	4.5 (14)	3.9 (14)
	Occupy	8.9 (15)	25.8 (23)	11.2 (48)	13.4 (48)
	Enter	49.1 (83)	43.8 (39)	37.1 (155)	43.2 (155)
	Camp	0.6 (1)	1.1 (1)	3.4 (5)	1.4 (5)
Violent	Damage	1.2 (2)	2.2 (2)	0.0	1.1 (4)
Actions (Total)		347	195	184	732
Events (Total)		169	89	89	347

[*] Percentage of events including particular action.

[†] Number of actions recorded, up to four per event.

Examining the character of confrontational actions and how these changed over time further complicates the picture. Figure 2 shows the number of events where 'enter', 'obstruct' or 'occupy' appeared, as well as the total number of events. There was a steady increase in number of events involving entry or obstruction in relative and absolute terms, peaking in 2011. This fits with the intensity of the forest disputes in Tasmania, especially as that state came to dominate the series after 2006. Viewed in light of the negotiated compromise, heightened contention in Tasmania could be seen as a direct representation of discontent. This is reflected in stories from the period highlighting tension between protestors and established groups such as the Wilderness Society and the ACF who supported the TFA (Dawtrey and Killick, 2013). The fall in confrontational actions may also have been influenced by the introduction of laws to criminalise protest that interfered with business activities (Ricketts, 2015).

Figure 2 – Confrontational Protest Forms
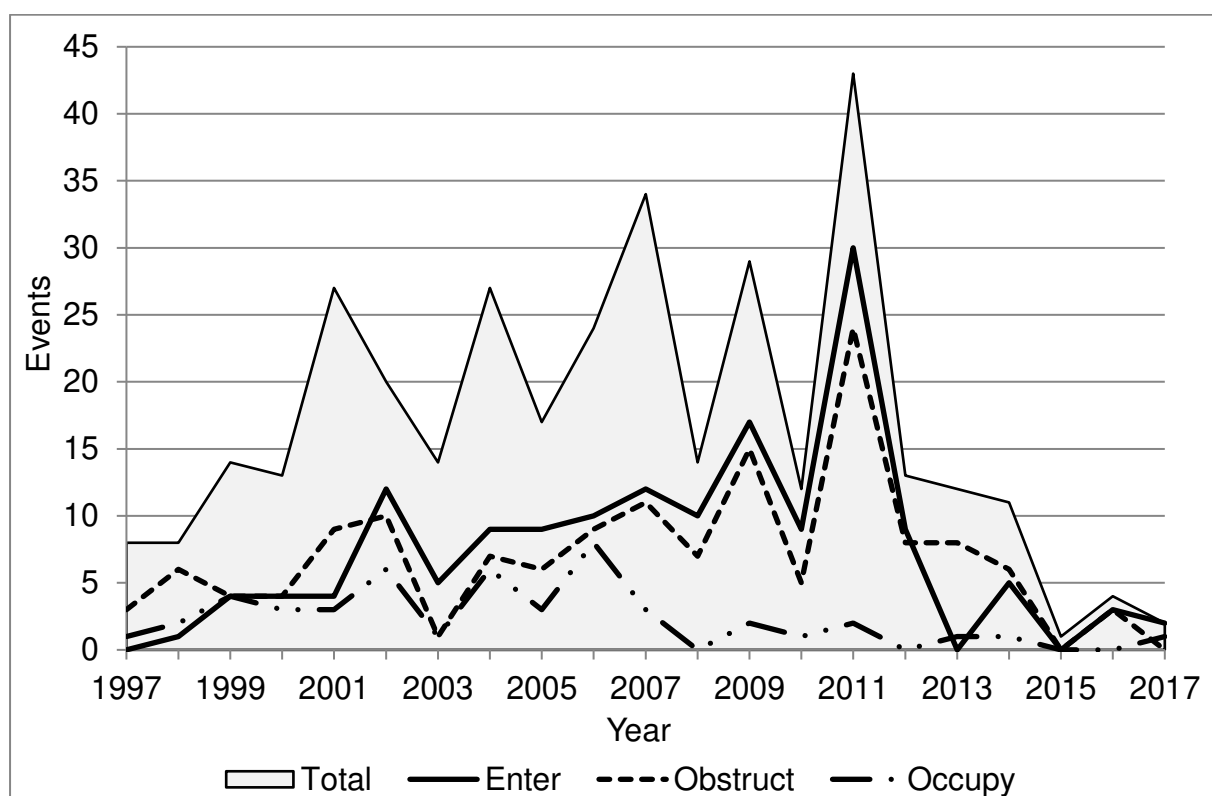
There has been a shift in the character and intensity of forest-related actions over the period. Decline in the number of events suggests that the issue of forest management has become

less overtly contentious. The experience of Tasmania could be seen as a partial exception, as inability to negotiate a compromise occurred alongside increased contention. Tasmania also highlights tensions within the movement as more radical actors were seen as threatening negotiated solutions (Dawtrey and Killick, 2013). This reflects an established division within the movement around the effectiveness of direct action (see Hutton and Connors, 1999). Another factor that needs to be considered is the relationship between protest and broader discussions concerning resource use and land management. The paper now turns to examine these issues.

Shifting Perspectives on Forest Management

The RFA process and shifts in the character of protest over the 1997-2017 period raise questions regarding natural resource management. Debates around productivism and multifunctionality point to a reconfiguration of land use and may help explain the developments observed. Mather (2001) characterises the transformation towards multifunctionalism as a move to view forests as places of recreation and environment, reducing the importance of production for economic purposes. This reflects the claim that there are a more complicated array of interests and relations in such a shift than can be captured by a move away from productivism (Argent, 2002). Argent (2011: 188) also argues that rather than being rooted:

> rural industries, land uses and communities are now firmly bound up within an expanding and overlapping mesh of networks governing their activities from a variety of scales, from the local through to the global

In recognising the more complex, networked relationships represented by multifunctionality Holmes (2006: 145) claims that the 'mix of production, consumption and protection goals' has shifted from the former as new values are brought to bear. Protest represents an attempt to contest and influence the direction of such shifts, with activists targeting specific sites of production as well as corporate actors operating at the national and international level.

Environmental movements have been important in contributing to a re-evaluation of this sphere. Lockie et al. (2006: 39) support this point by arguing that such outside actors are challenging 'previously hegemonic productivist discourses of the agricultural scientists and economists'. The effect is that 'previously unthought of, ignored, and excluded interests are

gradually but emphatically asserting themselves' (Argent, 2011: 183). Protest is an important tool in this context, as Buckman (2008: 123) notes:

> the public [in Tasmania] did not respond to issues of forest management. Campaigns such as those against the logging of Farmhouse Creek and Mother Cummings forests, however, showed they did take up on particular issues.

Engaging in radical environmental activities can therefore be seen as an attempt to press for the inclusion of underrepresented interests (Taylor, 2008). Cianchi (2015: 5) argues persuasively that radical environmental actions activated in such events, such as extended tree-sits or obstructive behaviour, demonstrate a connection with the nature that is being protected as 'an active, as opposed to passive participant in the construction and shaping of their identity and activism'. Such actions also reinforce the sense of collective identity among activists as 'shared meanings… are produced and reproduced, negotiated and renegotiated' (Hunt and Benford, 2004: 447). Considering forest protests as a form of contention over natural resource use brings to the fore questions regarding the interconnectedness of the physical environment and illuminates a more complex form of multifunctionality.

Such shifts have important implications for communities that rely on the economic benefits of resource extraction. Roche and Argent (2015) highlight this point, arguing that path dependence means that moving away from established economic practices will entail costs and generate resistance. Moving away from productivism has impacts on communities that rely on industry for employment and may lead to blame being placed on distant, urban participants (Mather, 2001; Kramkowski and Mulvihill, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Klandermans et al. (2002) note the importance of a sense of collective identity among rural communities that may be resistant to change and mobilise to prevent it. Overcoming these tensions is complicated by the role of identities in shaping behaviours, as both environmentalists and local communities are invested in maintaining them. The strength of identity and its impact is shaped by the context, as illustrated by the intensity of the conflicts in Tasmania. Buckman (2008: xv; see also Beresford, 2015) argues that 'In most parts of Australia the clash between humans and wilderness is at some remove from daily life but in Tasmania it is in your face.' The close co-existence of extractive industries and groups protecting the wilderness have led to 'brutal and bloody clashes… based on vastly different views of the meaning of wilderness' (Buckman, 2008: xvi).

Tensions around resource management are not intractable and their resolution will be determined by changes in the wider context. As illustrated above, forestry has been an area of significant contention, as supporters and opponents clash over the best approach to management. Forestry also represents an area where the shift away from production is clearly observed, as Mather et al. (2006: 444) note 'changes in that sector have been more pronounced than in agriculture.' The speed of change is itself a source of discord as communities are forced to adapt, causing disruption to established social and work patterns (see for example Onescu, 2015). As Affolderbach (2011) notes, collaborative approaches are necessary to overcome tensions and manage change. Gunton (2003) furthers this position arguing for the need to balance natural resource management to capitalise on competitive advantages, while avoiding economic dependence through overreliance. This appears to be borne out by the work of Curry et al. (2001) on Denmark, WA which found that the success of conservationist voices in demonstrating the viability of alternatives to logging old-growth Karri rested on cultural capital built over time in the community. These pressures are not unique to forestry, as they underpin the management of natural resources more broadly (see Bridge, 2009).

The case of Tasmania casts some of these developments in a new light, illustrating the complex challenges involved in changing land use patterns. Entrenched social and economic patterns have restricted opportunities to search for alternatives. This is the case even though as Buckman (2008: 121; see also Beresford, 2015) argues 'Getting too little in return for valuable natural resources is a common theme' in Tasmania, meaning a shift may be economically beneficial. However, Beresford (2015: 23) argues ideas of conservation 'clashed with the state's entrenched power elite, who continued to see in Tasmania the vision of industrialisation'. The pattern of protest suggests that the other States have found a way to accommodate the shift and reduce the associated tensions, as seen in WA (Curry et al., 2001; Houghton, 2012). In Tasmania, the combination of traditional and post-materialist identities, combined with the fact that 'the forestry industry controls large slices of the island' (Buckman, 2008: 119) meant that resolution of battles was much more difficult to achieve.

Conclusion

Contention around the management of natural resources continues to be an important feature of Australian society. This paper has examined the character and intensity of such conflict in the management of forestry resources. Recognising the contentious character of such resources, the Federal government attempted to devolve responsibility through the RFA process. This had the advantage of creating management that recognised biogeographical realities (Dargavel, 1998) while also providing opportunities to facilitate cooperation through negotiation (see Affolderbach, 2011). Although the RFAs are an imperfect tool, they provided an opening to resolve or reduce the intensity of long-running disputes in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia over forest management. By contrast, Tasmania saw heightened contention and repeated attempts to achieve a settlement agreeable to environmental and industry actors. The intensity of the conflict in Tasmania can be linked to the centrality of the forest industry, politically and socially, if not economically (Beresford, 2015; Buckman, 2008). The inability to resolve the underlying tensions has led to positions becoming entrenched in a way that was not observed in the other States, drawing the Federal government back in at key points.

Reflecting on the different experiences of the States in the area of forest contention, it can be argued that issues of identity and land use were central. Environmental activists present a view of how forests should be valued and protected (see Cianchi, 2015) that can also be seen as presenting a threat to established economic practices (Roche and Argent, 2015). Within the broader field, it is possible for these two groups to agree a compromise, as noted by Curry et al. (2001) in the case of Denmark, WA. Successful resolution of such conflicts requires effective negotiation and renegotiation of identity claims to find ground where contending groups are able to adapt themselves to the new reality. Economic and environmental claims are not necessarily antithetical, but in an atmosphere of hostility they can lead to entrenched positions that resist overtures. The case of Tasmania illustrates this point, as the polarisation of identities and claims on either side made negotiating a compromise difficult. This is even the case where the benefits of moving to a more preservationist stance appeared to make economic sense (see Buckman, 2008). Moving from a focus on production towards a more multifunctional land use system therefore rests on the ability to manage identity claims alongside more practical considerations around the economic-environmental balance.

References:

AAP. (2013) 'Protesters Target World Heritage Forests', *AAP*, 20 February.

AAP. (2004) 'Protest Branded Theatrical Stunt by State Govt', *AAP*, 16 February.

AAP. (2002) 'Loggers Blockade City in Protest', *AAP*, 6 February.

Affolderbach, J. (2011) 'Environmental Bargains: Power Struggles and Decision Making over British Columbia's and Tasmania's Old-Growth Forests', *Economic Geography*, 87(2): 181-206.

Argent, N. (2002) 'From Pillar to Post? In Search of the Post-productivist Countryside in Australia', *Australian Geographer*, 33(1): 97-114

Argent, N. (2011) 'Trouble in Paradise? Governing Australia's Multifunctional Rural Landscapes', *Australian Geographer*, 42(2): 183-205.

Beniuk, D. (2013) 'Tassie tree-sitter unsure of return', *Australian Associated Press*, 7 March.

Beresford, Q. (2015) *The Rise and Fall of Gunns Ltd*. Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.

Bridge, G. (2009) 'Material Worlds: Natural Resources, Resource Geography and the Material Economy', *Geography Compass*, 3(3): 1217-44.

Buckman, G. (2008) *Tasmania's Wilderness Battles: A History.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Christoff, P. (2016) 'Renegotiating Nature in the Anthropocene: Australia's Environment Movement in a Time of Crisis', *Environmental Politics*, 25(6): 1034-57.

Cianchi, J. (2015) *Radical Environmentalism: Nature, Identity and More-than-Human Agency.* Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Clark, N. (2007) 'Protesters Waylaid by Gunns Staff', *The Mercury*, 28 August.

Crowley, K. (1999) 'Lake Pedder's loss and failed restoration: ecological politics meets liberal democracy in Tasmania', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 34(3): 409-24.

Curry, G.N., Koczberski, G. and Selwood, J. (2001) 'Cashing Out, Cashing In: Rural Change on the South Coast of Western Australia', *Australian Geographer*, 32(1): 109-24.

Dalton, R., Recchia, R. and Rohrschneider, R. (2003) 'The environmental movement and the modes of political action', *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(7): 743-71.

Dare, M. (2013) 'Localism in Practice: Insights from Two Tasmanian Case Studies', *Policy Studies*, 34(5-6): 592-611.

Dargavel, J. (1998) 'Politics, Policy and Process in the Forests', *Australian Journal of Environmental Management*, 5(1): 25-30.

Davey, S. (2018) 'Regional Forest Agreements: Origins, Development and Contributions', *Australian Forestry*, 81(2): 64-88.

Dawtrey, Z. and Killick, D. (2013) 'Green Groups Distance themselves from Threat to Fragile Peace', *The Mercury*, 13 July.

Dorling, P. (2012) 'Spies eye green protesters', *The Age*, 7 January.

Dovers, S. (2013) 'The Australian Environmental Policy Agenda', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 72(2): 114-28.

Downes, D. (1996) 'Neo-Corporatism and Environmental Policy', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 31(2): 175-90.

Doyle, T. (2010) 'Surviving the Gang Bang Theory of Nature: The Environment Movement during the Howard Years', *Social Movement Studies*, 9(2): 155-69.

Earl, J., Martin, A., McCarthy, J. and Soule, S. (2004) 'The use of newspaper data in the study of collective action', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30: 65-80.

Fillieule, O. and Jiménez, M. (2003) 'The Methodology of Protest Event Analysis and the Media Politics of Reporting Environmental Protest Events', In: Rootes, C. (ed) *Environmental Protest in Western Europe*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 258-79.

Ford, R. (2013) 'Contested Social Values in Decision-Making for Australian Native Forests', *Australian Forestry*, 76(1): 37-49.

Gale, F. (2013) 'When Interests Trump Institutions: Tasmania's Forest Policy Network and the Bell Bay Pulp Mill', *Environmental Politics*, 22(2): 274-92.

Gunton, T. (2003) 'Natural Resources and Regional Development: An Assessment of Dependency and Comparative Advantage Paradigms', *Economic Geography*, 79(1): 67-94.

van der Heijden, H. (1999) 'Environmental Movements, Ecological Modernisation and Political Opportunity Structures', *Environmental Politics*, 8(1): 199-221.

Holmes, J. (2006) 'Impulses Towards a Multifunctional Transition in Rural Australia: Gaps in the Research Agenda', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(2): 142-60.

Houghton, D. (2012) 'Protecting Western Australia's Old-Growth Forests: The Impact of 2001 Policy Changes', *Australian Forestry*, 75(2): 135-42.

Hutton, D. and Connors, L. (1999) *A History of the Australian Environmental Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunt, S. and Benford, R. (2004) 'Collective Identity, Solidarity, and Commitment', in Snow, D., Soule, S. and Kriesi, H. (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 433-57.

Kirkpatrick, J. (1998) 'Nature Conservation and the Regional Forest Agreement Process', *Australian Journal of Environmental Management*, 5(1): 31-37.

Klandermans, B., Sabucedo, J., Rodriguez, M. and De Weerd, M. (2002) 'Identity Processes in Collective Action Participation: Farmers' Identity and Farmers' Protest in the Netherlands and Spain', *Political Psychology*, 23(2): 235-51.

Koopmans, R., and Rucht, D. (2002) 'Protest Event Analysis.' In Klandermans, B. and Staggenborg, S. (ed) *Methods of Social Movement Research*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Lane, M. (1999) 'Regional Forest Agreements: Resolving Resource Conflicts or Managing Resource Politics?', *Australian Geographical Studies*, 37(2): 142-53.

Lloyd, R., Newlands, M. and Petray, T. (2017) 'Coral Battleground? Re-examining the 'Save the Reef' Campaign in 1960s Australia', *Environmental Sociology*, 3(1): 54-63.

Lindenmayer, D. (2018) 'Flawed Forest Policy: Flawed Regional Forest Agreements', *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, 25(3): 258-66.

Lockie, S., Lawrence, G. and Cheshire, L. (2006) 'Reconfiguring Rural Resource Governance: The Legacy of Neoliberalism in Australia', in Cloke, P., Marsden, T. and Mooney, P. (ed). *Handbook of Rural Studies*. London: SAGE, pp.29-43.

Mather, A. (2001) 'Forests of Consumption: Postproductivism, Postmaterialism and the Postindustrial Forest', *Environment and Planning C*, 19(2): 249-68.

Mather, A., Hill, G. and Nijnik, M. (2006) 'Post-productivism and Rural Land Use: Cul de Sac or Challenge for Theorization?', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(4): 441-55.

Moorcroft, H. and Adams, M. (2014) 'Emerging Geographies of Conservation and Indigenous Land in Australia', *Australian Geographer*, 45(4): 485-504.

O'Brien, T (2017) 'Using Event Analysis to Examine Environmental Protest', *SAGE Research Methods*. [doi: 10.4135/9781526407023]

Onescu, J. (2015) 'Rural Restructuring: Community Stakeholders' Perspectives on the Impact of a Pulp and Paper Mill Closure on Community Relationships', *Rural Society*, 24(2): 177-99.

Paine, M. and Kempton, H. (2008) 'Police to probe attack footage', *The Mercury*, 23 October.

Pickerill, J. (2008) 'From Wilderness to WildCountry: The Power of Language in Environmental Campaigns in Australia', *Environmental Politics*, 17(1): 95-104.

Pickerill, J. (2018) 'Black and Green: The Future of Indigenous-Environmentalist Relations in Australia', *Environmental Politics*, 27(6): 1122-45.

Ricketts, A. (2015) Freedom from Political Communication: The Rhetoric Behind Anti-Protest Laws', *Alternative Law Journal*, 40(4): 234-38.

Ricketts, A. (2006) 'Theatre of Protest: The Magnifying Effects of Theatre in Direct Action', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 30(89): 75-87.

Roche, M. and Argent, N. (2015) 'The Fall and Rise of Agricultural Productivism? An Antipodean Viewpoint', *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(5): 621-35.

Schirmer, J., Dare, M. and Ercan, S. (2016) 'Deliberative Democracy and the Tasmanian Forest Peace Process', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 51(2): 288-307.

Smith, M. (2011) 'Forest Protest Targets Store', *The Mercury*, 13 August.

Smith, N. (2011) 'Blood and Soil: Nature, Native and Nation in the Australian Imaginary', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 35(1): 1-18.

Taylor, B. (2008) 'The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 2(1): 27-61.

Tilly, C. and Wood, L. (2009) *Social Movements, 1768-2008.* (2nd ed) Boulder: Paradigm Press.

Trigger, D. (1999) 'Nature, Work and "the Environment": Contesting Sentiments and Identities in the Southwest of Western Australia', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 10(2): 163-76.

Trioli, V. (1997) 'In Gippsland's Forests It is a Daily Battle of Wits and Tactics', *The Age*, 21 July.

Tuan, Y. (1979) 'Space and Place: A Humanistic Perspective', in Gale, S. and Olsson, G. (ed). *Philosophy in Geography*. Dordrecht: D. Riedel Publishing, pp.387-427.

Wilson, G. (2008) 'From "Weak" to "Strong" Multifunctionality: Conceptualising Farm-Level Multifunctional Transitional Pathways', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(3): 367-83.

Zappone, C. (2007) 'Protesters Make Green Point Clear to ANZ's Perth Meeting', *The West Australian*, 19 December.

Appendix: News Source, Availability and Circulation

Source	Start*	Circulation (2017) †
Adelaide Advertiser	1998	297000
The Age	1991	458000
The Australian	1996	339000
Australian Associated Press	1998	n/a
Courier-Mail	1998	370000
The Mercury	1999	52000
Sydney Morning Herald	1986	444000
West Australian	1996	380000

* First availability of electronic archive

† http://www.roymorgan.com/industries/media/readership/newspaper-readership

[accessed 19 August 2018]