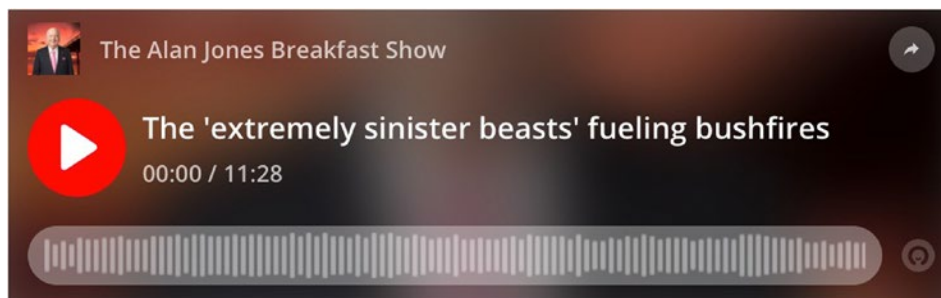


Alan Jones interviewing Jeremy Griffith on 2GB radio (Australia), 29 January 2020

An article by Jeremy Griffith in *The Spectator** about bushfires attracted great interest in Australia. As a result, Jeremy was interviewed by Australia's leading broadcaster Alan Jones on his top rating breakfast radio show on 2GB, during which Jones described Griffith's *Spectator* article as 'an outstanding piece...you've never heard that before ever'.

Listen to the radio interview here:



Transcript:

“ Alan Jones: As Jacob and I drove into Mogo [NSW south coast] there, and Dan and James, in their thousands were silent black sentinels, as we drove in. Sentinels to destruction. And in many ways these are the very agents themselves of that destruction: they're called eucalypts. They survive. No one else does.

In an [outstanding piece](#)* in the most recent *Spectator* magazine (18 Jan. 2020), Jeremy Griffith, an Australian biologist, the founder of the non-profit World Transformation Movement, has written a headline to his story: 'Eucalypts are incinerators from hell dressed up as trees'. Every farmer will tell you this, my old man used to talk about this years and years ago. Writes Jeremy Griffith: 'Evidence suggests that eucalypts originally emerged from our Australian rainforests and then quickly spread and conquered virtually the whole of Australia, with botanists recognising that every variety of plant community in Australia, be it heathland, scrub, open woodland or forest, is dominated by a variety of eucalypt.' And there they are, charred trunks, sentinels to the disaster they have helped create. As Jeremy Griffith says, 'Eucalypts are incinerators from hell dressed up as trees.' Now we've got to wake up before it's too late. It may be too late already. Jeremy is on the line. Jeremy, thank you for joining us.

Jeremy Griffith: Thank you very much, Alan. And wonderful what you're doing down there. Incredible.

Alan: Not at all. A brilliant piece of writing by the way. Look, without going into the biological language, these things can survive an intense fire that they've helped to create.

Jeremy: That's right. It's astonishing. It's almost an abnormal situation, what's happened. And that's what my article was trying to do. I mean, basically the drastic-ness of the management has to match the drastic-ness of the beast, as you've been calling it. And as I sought to make clear in that article, eucalypts are an extremely sinister beast. And you can't manage a problem if you're not facing it and understanding it. The full title was 'Wake up Australia! Eucalypts are incinerators from hell dressed up as trees'. And I mean, I love trees. I grew up in the central west and my parents are actually co-founders of the acclaimed Burrendong Arboretum, which is sort of a plant zoo near Wellington, in the 1960s; I carried buckets of water to the young trees when they were planting out that arboretum. So I love trees. But what you're experiencing down there and the whole of the East Coast, getting incinerated and these charred stumps and the horror of the lives being destroyed down there and the wildlife—it's all terrifying and we've got to do something seriously...

Alan: Absolutely, absolutely. Jeremy writes, and let me just quote what he said. He says that these things '**actively cultivate fire**'. Now you drive around here, they're everywhere. They're alive, they're standing up there, charred. He said, '**they [eucalypts] now have very waxy, oily flammable leaves which they're constantly shedding to accumulate beds**' on the floor of '**fire-fuelling litter at their base, and peeling bark that flies through the air as lit tapers to start new fires many kilometres ahead.**' That's that ember fire we're talking about. This is the problem. This is where it started, them and the stuff on the floor. He says, '**The Blue Mountains west of Sydney are so named because the oil in the eucalypts along the mountain range is constantly evaporating and creating a blue haze.**' Writes Jeremy: '**Eucalypts are essentially fire-fuelling incinerators that generate so much heat when they catch fire that when one burns its radiant heat evaporates the oils in the neighbouring eucalypts creating a flammable gas which ignites as a fireball**'—everyone here knows about that—'**and so the crowns of the trees explode with fire one after the other, triggering a 'crown fire'—a wave of exploding eucalypt canopies that race through the Australian bush like a tornado.**' Now Jeremy wasn't here. Note the language: '**tornado**', '**fireball**'. This is exactly what everybody says! Sounds as if a bomb was being dropped. This stuff, these things were just *exploding* and that's what happened here. Jeremy says, he refers to them as '**gasoline trees**'. Jeremy, I can't believe, I mean my father talked farmer's talk about this. When are we going to wake up?

Jeremy: That's the problem you know, our emotionality gets caught up in this and it spoils our clarity and we need a hell of a lot of clarity here to get this right. From here on there's got to be some really serious re-think and that has to begin with facing the truth of what we're up against. And that hasn't been happening and that's why I tried to write this article, to bring some clarity about it, you know.

Alan: Brilliant.

Jeremy: I mean fires in non-eucalypt forests, as I said in the article, are bad enough but eucalypt fires are frequent and ferocious and destructive that...

Alan: And these are eucalypt fires...

Jeremy: Yes!

Alan: These are eucalypt fires, they're everywhere! There's thousands and thousands of acres of this stuff. Jeremy writes this, he says, **'This extraordinary affinity with fire means eucalypts have to be viewed as extremely dangerous incinerators that must be kept away from residential and commercial zones.'** That doesn't happen! He's the first person I've seen articulate what my old man used to talk about when we were kids. Jeremy writes, **'(greenies should especially note this) we have to view eucalypts as being'**—now isn't this brilliant writing—**'as being like dangerous crocodiles planted tail-down ready to destroy lives and our world...with estimates of over a billion animals having been killed by this summer's fires'**.

Now Jeremy, we drove around yesterday and if you go to that website that I'm talking about, Alan Jones Australia (www.facebook.com/alanjonesaustralia/*) and see what [Jones's assistant] Nina has done, little did she know when she was shooting these pictures. There's the devastation. There's the crumpled corrugated iron and behind all these charred sentinels, they're still there, Jeremy!

Jeremy: Yeah, I mean it is a war zone, it's worse than a war zone. The emotional trauma and the devastation and the courage of people down there, just listening and watching your program last night, Alan, and the dignity of the people and it was just amazing. It's so impressive. But they need our concern.

Alan: Absolutely. I mean it is a tornado, an inferno, an inferno on their doorstep. Jeremy writes, **'eucalypt forest fires are so frequent ferocious and destructive'** that **'humans can't live near them, and they are an extremely dangerous habitat for wildlife.'** And he said what's never been said before: **'there has to be a complete change of mindset when thinking about eucalypts that recognizes their true nature'**. He said the **'reality is there should be legislation in Australia preventing eucalypts from growing in quantity near people'** and we **'need to enforce regular hazard reduction burns in eucalypt forests, otherwise the incineration of the whole east coast of Australia that we are experiencing will keep occurring, especially in times of extreme drought.'** He said: **'Eucalypts were planted overseas with gusto because they're fast growing and have hard wood but the world is starting to wake up to this 'crocodile' in their midst.'**

Well, I wonder if the world is starting to wake up because until you and I have spoken no one has ever spoken about this, Jeremy!

Jeremy: Yeah, well we love our eucalypts, but we've got to face the dark side of their nature and we've got to do it soon and there's obviously got to be a think-tank, some sort of assessment, a post-mortem of this terror, the destruction. And that has to begin with facing the truth of the sinister nature of eucalypts. They're not like other trees. They're very different and we've got to recognise that. I mean honestly, Alan, you know, how extreme the management has got to be...I mean obviously it makes sense that the whole east coast eucalypt forests have to be divided into smaller contained blocks of forest with big cleared areas between the blocks and then the blocks have to be monitored for fires by satellite, which people are suggesting, that are linked to rapid response firefighters.

But I'm honestly thinking that when we really get down to it and really face it, and think accurately about this, that...I mean it's like if you've got children, when they're naughty you put them in the naughty corner and I'm thinking we've got to put eucalypts in the naughty

corner. What I mean by that is we may have to accept that we have to revegetate a lot of our eucalypt forests with less fire-prone species and leave eucalypts in highly contained and controlled areas. That might seem drastic but I think that's the reality we'll eventually get to, to get this under control. Because every time there's a hot westerly and you get a dry summer and you get a spark somewhere along the ranges, the whole coast will explode.

Alan: Absolutely, up in fire, inferno, inferno. All right, Jeremy. Look I'm going to talk to Jeremy because this story has got to be repeated. I'm going to talk to Jeremy again tonight on television at 8:00pm so that Australia ... I mean we [Sky News Australia] get a couple of million people, but this story's got to be told across Australia. This is just an absolute exercise in ignorance. And this is not just one man on his own, Jeremy Griffith, he quotes David Bowman a forest ecologist at the University of Tasmania who asked, and we'll end here: **'What the hell of human beings done? We've spread a dangerous plant all over the world.'** And there we are, here. That was the bomb that you heard go off, from tree to tree to tree. Jeremy, thank you for your time and we look forward to sharing your thoughts again tonight. We'll speak then.

Jeremy: Thank you, Alan, and love to everybody out there that's in this fire zone.

Alan: There he is, thank you, Jeremy. Lovely fellow. And cop that, you've never heard that before *ever*. And it won't be repeated of course in the media either. News next. ”

The Alan Jones Australia Facebook page also featured a [link to the 2GB interview](#).*

Published by WTM Publishing and Communications Pty Ltd (ACN 103 136 778)
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 Email: info@worldtransformation.com Website: www.humancondition.com

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