

# SAVE COLONG bulletin

THE COLONG COMMITTEE • A National Wilderness Society

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## OF "SEMI-FRIENDLY ABORIGINES"

A question without notice in the NSW Legislative Council on 26th February brought forth a gem of wisdom from the Minister for Planning and Environment and Vice-President of the Executive Council, the Hon. Sir John Bryah Munro Fuller, MLC.

Sir John Fuller said "... I might repeat the question I put to a gathering not so long ago. I queried at what stage of development we should be in Australia at present if the first fleet had been met on its arrival by a band, not of semi-friendly Aborigines, but of ardent conservationists. ..."

The answer to this stupid question is obvious: The conservationists — like the poor semi-friendly Aborigines — would all be dead!

The significance of Sir John's attitude will not be lost on those who realise that he is the Minister responsible for the State Pollution Control Commission which is about to assess the Boyd Plateau pine planting project.

According to a Sydney Morning Herald profile (Wednesday, March 13, 1974) Sir John, a self confessed 'free enterprise feller' is a former Coolah Shire Councillor, former Vice-President of the N.S.W. Graziers Association, and former chairman of the N.S.W. Country Party.

As former Minister for Decentralisation he was responsible for promoting the Jervis Bay industrial city project\* and a proposed tourist development at Angourie on the N.S.W. North Coast — both areas of the highest scenic and recreational value and both the subject of park proposals.

Called upon to disclose his plans for Jervis Bay the Minister refused, because, he declared, to do so would enable land speculators to step in. But Shoalhaven Shire Councillors claimed that land speculators had been walking around the streets of Nowra with the plans under their arms for the previous six months. The people to whom Sir John was denying information were in fact the local residents themselves, their elected representatives in Shoalhaven Shire Council and conservation groups interested in conserving the area for the recreation of the population of industrial Wollongong. So in the public interest conservationists released Sir John's plan to the press.

The Minister reacted by ordering a police investigation. Presumably the police were to report how the public could possibly have secured documents commissioned by public servants with public funds in a major public planning project involving substantial areas of public lands. So for the first time in N.S.W. conservationists were subjected to questioning by detectives. But the inquiry came to nothing.

At Angourie Sir John put forward a scheme for tourist development involving alienation of public reserves and pollution of important waterways. The reserves were previously included in the Angourie National Park proposed by the Sim Committee and the waterways are elsewhere bordered by Angourie National Park.

Both the Jervis Bay and Angourie projects are not so much decentralisation as coastal sprawl! Both represent environmental degradation.

On the other hand the Minister made a welcome announcement on the 9th May regarding the Brooklyn Railway lands. Perched above Brooklyn with a dress circle view of the Hawkesbury River, these lands containing now redundant Railway dams attracted the desperate attention of Railway administrators. The Public Transport Commission proposed that half the area be added to Ku-ring-gai Chase and half be sold to subdividers. After a year in which the Askin government has ignored or brushed aside protests the new Minister for Environment has suddenly ruled that the whole area should be reserved for open space in the Hornsby planning scheme.

This decision, made by the Minister on the advice of the State Planning Authority, may be an important precedent for a Boyd Plateau decision. Suburban development above Brooklyn would have been the first major intrusion of development on the slopes of the Hawkesbury valley. The Minister was really deciding in favour of a consistently natural landscape along the Hawkesbury. That's what we want at Boyd Plateau, too.

\* See Special Publication of the Australian Littoral Society — "Jervis Bay — The Future?"

## THE A.P.C.M.(A) EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The following report of the Extraordinary (aren't they all?) General Meeting of the Blue Circle Cement Company appeared in the Australian Financial Review of Wed. March 27, 1974. Blue Circle for those who have forgotten, is Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Ltd. — a firm which successfully conspired with the NSW Liberal Government to take over public reserves on the scenic edges of Bungonia Gorge for limestone mining — in return for which they gave up their equally obnoxious lease over a public reserve at Colong Caves.

The Review's article is headed "Greenies worry about Bungonia and their 3.5c dividend."

Sentiments of "Save Bungonia Gorge" mingled with the more pecuniary "What about our dividend cheques?" as militant conservationists tackled conservative directors at the APCM extraordinary meeting yesterday.

APCM, or Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Ltd. as it is more lengthily known, had called the meeting to approve the proposed issue of shares to BHP and the acquisition of its subsidiary, Southern Portland Cement Ltd.

But the key points at issue in what was a lengthy and heartily entertaining meeting were:

- Whether the merger would save Bungonia Gorge (a potential limestone mining area in NSW) from quarrying by the cement companies, and
- What would happen to the dividends of the large number of shareholders who hold only one share in APCM under the new articles of association, also up for approval at the meeting.

The serious part of the meeting dealt, of course, with the resolutions to be approved, and the prospects for Bungonia Gorge. Less serious, in fact, comic, was the big dividend problem.

"... when one shareholder remarked that perhaps the company could pay the dividend in stamps (a suggestion which Sir Henry noted), another was moved to remark: "Bearing in mind, of course, that not all your shareholders are philatelists."

It was one of those meetings.

The Conservationists didn't have enough support to rebuff any motions — just enough to be able to ask the pertinent and (to the directorate) irritating questions.

Proxies backing the directors totalled 18,560,390 votes, a formidable percentage of the company's capital, which enabled Sir Henry to warn at one stage: "I am bound to say that if it (the motion) is defeated on a show of hands, then I will have to do something about it."

And on another motion which required a 75 per cent majority he asked, quickly, if there were any dissidents and then concluded: "There being no dissidents to the motion I declare the motion carried unanimously."

The second motion requiring a 75 per cent majority drew one dissident in the meeting of 25 or so shareholders — a conservationist whom Sir Henry recognised in his closing remark to the meeting: "I think it has been carried by the requisite 75 per cent majority. "Mrs. Eton, (Eden), you have distinguished yourself."

But while the meeting had its frivolous moments it held little joy for the conservationists, as Sir Henry refused to be drawn into any concrete statement on the Bungonia Gorge issue.

Asked about the issue, Sir Henry said: "Sometimes there are some areas of disagreement about the degree of our mindfulness.

"However, over recent weeks there have been consultations with Dr. Mosley (director of the Australian Conservation Foundation) and executives of APCM and SPC.

"And I don't think it could be said that Dr. Mosley's views have been received in an unsympathetic manner.

"Indeed, it might properly be said that the views he put were received with a great deal of sympathy.

"I think, because some of you belong to the ACF, that it would be in the best interests of everyone concerned in this exercise that Mr. Mosley continues to maintain his contact.

"I think this would be to everybody's advantage."

The ACF is attempting to save Bungonia Gorge near South Marulan in NSW from being mined for limestone.

It said in its submission to the Foreign Takeovers Committee, when it was considering the APCM and SPC merger: "There are some 300 to 600 million tons of commercial valuable limestone on the plateau which could be worked by a joint company without damage to the gorge.

(Both APCM and SPC have limestone mining leases in the area).

"If quarrying is confined to the plateau the companies will have many years of operation at South Marulan, even with a considerable increase in annual production.

"The Foundation believes the gorge to be a national asset which should be saved and it suggests that the Australian Government should resurrect company acceptance of the Adamson line (which formerly restricted quarrying to the plateau) as a condition of approval for a merger."

Asked what conditions the Foreign Takeovers Committee had put on the merger, Sir Henry said it was the duty of the committee to say yea or nay to the merger on the basis of foreign ownership.

"In this case it said yea," he concluded abruptly.

#### **Advice to Bungonia lovers.**

So stick to your single shares, supporters, and see whether you can't persuade some larger shareholder to give you his proxies for our next encounter with the Company.

*Meanwhile we suggest individual letters be written to your representatives in the Australian Government calling for sanctions against companies which abuse public parklands in the way these two companies have.*

The Australian Government is a large cement buyer. It could refuse to use cement from these companies or buy only a low quota from them. It may also refuse export licences. And it could take an extra careful look at the companies' tax returns and transport concessions.

In fact a review by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment of limestone mining around Australia is overdue. In addition to the assaults by Blue Circle and Southern Portland Cement on Public Reserves at Bungonia and Barkers Ck there are the limestone mining leases in Wombeyan Caves Reserve, NSW and the mining of Public Reserves at Mt. Etna in Queensland.

### SAVE THE BOYD PLANNING MEETING

On Thursday 14th March twenty one representatives of Conservation organisations met to plan further representations regarding Boyd Plateau.

At the end of the meeting the following letter was adopted. It was delivered to the Sydney Morning Herald by lunchtime the next day but has not been printed.

"Sir,

#### BOYD PLATEAU

"The Study lodged by the NSW Forestry Commission with the State Pollution Control Commission for a pine plantation at Boyd Plateau represents an all-time low in environmental impact studies."

"No plan of the plantation is shown to indicate where roads will go, or native growth be left, or swamps preserved. There is no study of the area by a zoologist, hydrologist, soil scientist, botanist, entomologist etc. The Forestry document is not a scientific statement. It is an unsupported expression of pine planting policy in general – a policy much in question, particularly since publication of "Fight for the Forests" by R. and V. Routley a few weeks ago."

"The fact that the Forestry study contains 6 pages of abuse of two conservation organisations further reduces its standing."

"The undersigned organisations unanimously hold –

1. That the whole of the Boyd Plateau (including Konangaroo State Forest) should be included in Kanangra-Boyd National Park.
2. Under no circumstances should there be a pine plantation on Boyd Plateau.
3. That Forestry proposals on the Boyd Plateau should be subject to a public inquiry – not the closed inquiry proposed by the State Pollution Control Commission.
4. That the present Forestry Study should be rejected and any inquiry deferred until at least 2 months after a proper environmental impact study has been made available to the public."

"We also believe that an independent public inquiry should be held into any proposal involving clear felling in a natural forest, whether it be for pine planting, chipmilling or saw logs."

"In NSW we have already lost 2/3 of our native forests. It's time to call a halt to the destruction."

LEN WILLAN

*Chairman Nature Conservation Council of NSW*

MARK WEATHERLEY

*Vice President, Central Regional National Parks Association of NSW*

MURRAY SCOTT

*Conservation Secretary, NSW Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.*

PAUL SCOBIE

*Acting Director, Total Environment Centre*

BRUCE VOTE

*President, Kameruka Bushwalking Club.*

COLIN BOYCE

*Secretary, Boyd Plateau Ecological Study Group*

MICHAEL SMITHSON

*Secretary, Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society.*

JIM SOMERVILLE

*Chairman, The Colong Committee.*

### THE FORESTRY STUDY – 'A HALF BAKED P.R. STATEMENT'

Senator Mulvihill quoted the Secretary of The Colong Committee on the subject of Forestry's Boyd Study in Federal Parliament on 11th October 1972. Apparently The Colong Committee, to whom a spade is a spade, described the study as a half baked public relations statement.

We found a much more polite, but even more damning assessment, in a submission lodged with the State Pollution Control Commission by Dr. P.C. Carolin and Dr. P.J. Myerscough. As readers will know these gentlemen are Professors in the Botany Department of Sydney University.

They wrote:

"Though the Forestry Commission's document was not prepared specifically as an environmental impact study and statement it seems that it may be intended to serve as such. On biological aspects it seems a pity that there is not a great deal more information in the document. In particular, there are no detailed lists of species of plants and animals with their distributions on the Boyd Plateau and no map or detailed description of the vegetation types present. This paucity of information in this regard makes it very difficult to assess the impact of implementing the proposal on the biological communities present. Also, it would be highly desirable to know the extent to which vegetation types and individual species which would receive high negative impacts exist elsewhere with some indication of their accessibility and prospects for remaining undisturbed there. The necessary additional information may already be to hand in the Forestry Commission and also might be obtainable from other sources."

*"For a decision on the proposal to be soundly based more data are required, possibly on all aspects except certain economic ones."*

## A SECOND FRONT FOR THE BATTLE OF THE BOYD.

On Friday, 29th March, The Colong Committee lodged the following application with the commission:

Dear Mr. Coffey,

**APPLICATION FOR SUBMISSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY OF LOGGING, CLEAR FELLING AND PINE PLANTATIONS PRESENTLY PROCEEDING OR PROPOSED IN THE WESTERN CATCHMENT OF THE KOWMUNG AND THE CATCHMENTS OF MURRUIN CREEK AND THE UPPER ABERCROMBIE RIVER, NSW.**

In accordance with the N.S.W. Government's Environment policy we apply for preparation of the abovementioned study by the N.S.W. Forestry Commission and any private firms involved.

This application is made by the Colong Committee on behalf of the following societies following a meeting of representatives on 14 March 1974:

Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W.	Kameruka Bushwalking Club
Central Region, National Parks Association of N.S.W.	Boyd Plateau Ecological Study Group
N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs	Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Total Environment Centre	The Colong Committee.

We will forward photographs of several areas in the western Kowmung catchment taken in the last 12 months. Logging, clearing and planting are proceeding rapidly in an arc around the south west edge of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park and are destroying valuable natural areas. These areas should be considered for addition to the existing Kanangra-Boyd National Park to give that park logical boundaries and to prevent deterioration of the quality of its waters.

We further apply as follows:

1. That the inquiry conducted by the State Pollution Control Commission be a public inquiry.
2. That logging and clearing for the catchments mentioned should be suspended by the Commission pending publication of the Commission's recommendations.
3. That this application be treated as urgent, involving as it does crown lands and scarce montane forest of the order of 100,000 acres.
4. That the Commission be allowed no more than two months to prepare its environmental impact study.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

*J.S. Somerville,*

Chairman, The Colong Committee.

## UNIVERSITY OF N.S.W. AND THE BOYD

'Tharunka' was the first newspaper to devote a full page to the Colong dispute. On March 20th it devoted a full page to the Boyd Plateau dispute. A further page was added on May 1st under the heading "Liberals Rape the Environment."

The last article was written by a new Colong Committee member, 1st year Science student, Stephen Myers. He has launched a drive at the university to recruit members for the Committee's passive resistance campaign. Hundreds have signed up already.

On May 8th three speakers addressed 150 students in the University's Clancy Auditorium on forestry issues. They were Dick Thompson (Secretary of Ecology Action), Milo Dunphy (for The Colong Committee) and Eric Coffey, Director of the State Pollution Control Commission.

**THE FIRST RUMOUR OF PINES ON THE BOYD CIRCA 1960**

The National Parks Association produced a report on Konangaroo State Forest Extended and Kanangra-Boyd National Park on 1st December, 1962.

Under the heading 'Pine Plantations' (p 14) the report states:

*"Two or three years ago two representatives of the Association visited a Forestry Officer at Head Office to discuss the cutting-over of parts of Reserve 67062 adjacent to Konangaroo State Forest, information about which caused astonishment and incredulity, but was said to be legal. Because of something heard elsewhere a question was asked about the possibility of pine plantations within Konangaroo State Forest. The reply given was to the effect that the matter had been considered but it was not intended to go ahead with pine on the Boyd. That decision seems to have changed since then: the Association has heard — unofficially — of the intention to plant Konangaroo State Forest to pine, progressively, probably in the same manner as in Jenolan State Forest."*

*"The Association has to presume that the decision to enlarge the State Forest means a decision to increase pine plantations progressively over the larger area. This is shocking in its implications because, whatever enlarged areas are finally approved and adopted, most of them will be converted from Reserve 67062, for preservation of native fauna and flora."*

**PARAMETERS FOR PINES**

The N.S.W. Forestry Commission has consistently argued that economic planting of *Pinus radiata* requires 30 to 35 inches annual rainfall.

This parameter was stated again in a document circulated to members of the N.S.W. State Council of the Liberal Party prior to its meeting of 29th June 1973. It spoke of

*".....the conifers need for medium depth well drained loam soils, annual rainfall of about 35 inches, freedom from intense frost and heavy snow which impose practical altitude limits of 3500 feet and the existence of certain nutrients in the soil, which if deficient, can be made up by fertilizer applications."*

But it was a different story from the Forestry and Timber Bureau in its evidence to the National Estate Inquiry.

*".....good quality high yielding softwood plantations can be grown on a much wider variety of soils in regions where the rainfall is as low as 25 inches per annum."*

And if 3500 feet is a practical altitude limit why is Forestry proposing to plant the Boyd Plateau which is almost all above 3500 feet? One suspects that the existence of a large lump of crown land is the parameter which really matters.

**THE NATIONAL PARKS JOURNAL**

The April 1974 Journal of the National Parks Association of N.S.W. is a winner. It takes a responsible but crusading line against the current excesses of forestry with the following articles:

'The Forestry-Conservation Dilemma', by John Dorman

'The Forwood Conference', by A.C.F.

'The Woodchip Export Industry', by Paul Scobie

'Three Million Acres of Pine, A Misallocation of Public Resources', by V. and R. Routley and an article on statements by the Minister for Conservation, Mr. G. Freudenstein, regarding pine plantation on Barrington Tops.

Like 'The Fight for the Forests' by the Routleys, the April 1974 Journal makes an excellent presentation to a Parliamentarian or a Public Servant. At \$5.00 per year the National Parks Journal and membership is one of the best conservation investments going.

**THINGS TO DO**

1. Ring Bruce Vote (31-7101) and offer to man the Boyd Vigil booth at Kanangra Walls one weekend.
2. Enrol in the Boyd Passive Resistance Campaign — (Box 122, University of N.S.W.)
3. Arrange for The Colong Committee to send a speaker on the Boyd to your society.
4. Present copies of the Routleys' book 'The Fight for the Forests' to your local parliamentarians.
5. Present copies of the April 1974 Journal of the National Parks Association of N.S.W. to your local parliamentarians.
6. Arrange 'no-nonsense' deputations to the N.S.W. Minister for Conservation, Mr. Freudenstein.

## SOME FORESTRY DEFINITIONS

"standing cellulose"	=	trees
"a decadent forest"	=	old trees
"a saleable stem"	=	a healthy tree
"forest improvement"	=	bulldozing, burning and planting a single species for a uniform tree crop
"creating an interesting recreational resource in juxtaposition to the National Park"	=	ditto, on Boyd Plateau

## AND FINALLY A NEW DEFINITION FOR YOU

"foresters" — men who can't see the trees for the wood

## PRESS CORRESPONDENCE ON BOYD

A slow correspondence has begun to appear in the Sydney Morning Herald. On March 18 Colong Committee Member and Solicitor, Terence Stern, called for a full public inquiry. On April 30, Chairman Jim Somerville achieved the August "Letters" columns — minus his last paragraph.

Then, on 6th May came the Minister's reply — a long letter hitting out at Somerville, the National Estate Task Force and, of course, Milo Dunphy.

The Minister has given Boyd lovers their opportunity to reply. Tactically he should have remained silent. Now he has escalated the debate. Each escalation makes it less possible for him to win.

## PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO DESTRUCTION OF BOYD PLATEAU FOREST

(Block letters please)

NAME .....  
 ADDRESS ..... Postcode .....  
 PHONES (home) ..... (work) .....  
 ORGANIZATION .....  
 AGE ..... SEX .....

## I offer the following assistance:

Days on Boyd Plateau ..... (state number of days)

(Tick where appropriate)

☐ Sitting in front of machinery    ☐ Providing meals    ☐ Providing transport

Type of vehicle available .....

Professional assistance: legal/medical/media/communications/organization: .....

A list of names, addresses and phone numbers of a group for whom I will act as co-ordinator is attached ☐

I understand the organizers will take all reasonable precautions to avoid injury to persons and/or property but I understand that they take no responsibility for same.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

POST TO THE COLONG COMMITTEE, 18 ARGYLE STREET, SYDNEY. 2000