

SAVE COLONG **Bulletin**

THE COLONG COMMITTEE • A National Wilderness Society

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BORDER RANGES, GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS, ALLIGATOR RIVERS – NEW PRIORITIES FOR THE COLONG COMMITTEE

Post-Boyd priorities were discussed at The Colong Committee's Meeting on 15th May and again at its Annual General Meeting on June 12th. Since its inception the Committee has concentrated on specific areas – a policy proved effective by success. There was little divergence of opinion and the above priorities were adopted unanimously.

BORDER RANGES NATIONAL PARK

The proposed Border Ranges National Park consists of Roseberry State Forest (Levers Plateau) and Wiangarie State Forest against the Queensland/NSW border. Levers Plateau extends along the southern side of the Macpherson Range from a point a few miles east of Mt. Lindsay to the vicinity of the Sydney-Brisbane railway line. Wiangarie State Forest extends along the border from this point and includes the Tweed Range, a southern extension of Lamington Plateau.

These areas constitute the last extensive area of rainforest in N.S.W. J.H. Calaby of the Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, describes the area between the Upper Clarence River and the Tweed Range as 'probably the richest remaining faunal area in Australia.' Over 48 species of birds have been recorded in the Wiangarie rainforest including the

- * Albert Lyrebird
- * Regent Bower Bird
- * Rufous Scrub Bird and the
- * Olive Whistler.

Of the 160 recorded aboriginal sacred sites in N.S.W., seven are included in the Border Ranges area. Uniting all these values is dramatic wilderness which has long deserved national park status.

Working on a \$5000 consultancy grant from the Australian Government's Department of Environment, Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd. has just completed a 'Border Ranges Proposed National Park Study.' Client for the study was the Border Ranges Preservation Society, a group of local people from towns such as Mullumbimby with whom The Colong Committee has now joined forces.

Dr. Len Webb, Chief of the CSIRO Division of Rainforest Ecology, Professor Ian Douglas (Geography, New England University), Dr. Jiro Kikawaa and Dr. Fred Bell (Geography, University of N.S.W.) have each called for a moratorium on logging in the Wiangarie rainforest. Yet the N.S.W. Forestry Commission whose stated aim is 'the conservation of rainforest, as rainforest for all time' continues its policy of logging the area.

Urban Systems Corporation found that 'the protective value' of the N.S.W. Forestry Commission's policy of 50% canopy retention has been seriously questioned. The rapid invasion of weed species such as Lantana has significantly reduced both the beauty and recreational potential of the area, as well as raising doubts as to the viability of rainforest regeneration in logged sections.

Elsewhere the study is even more categorical: 'Continued logging under the fifty per cent canopy retention technique, practised by the N.S.W. Forestry Commission, seems almost certain to result in the degradation of the rainforest as a national asset. Changing the structure and species composition of the forest disrupts the habitats of native wildlife ...' The study goes on to serious complications with erosion and flood problems, siltation and disruption of breeding grounds for marine life.

Urban Systems study concludes that a large part of the Border Ranges area forms an invaluable component of Australia's National Estate and that there should be early action towards establishment of a Border Ranges National Park. 'A moratorium on rainforest timber operations in the Border Ranges,' it says, 'should be urgently considered ...'

The Colong Committee has twice, unsuccessfully, applied to the N.S.W. Minister for Planning and Environment, Sir John Fuller, for an inquiry into the logging of Wiangarie. Urban Systems' report gives grounds for every conservation group in N.S.W. to write to Sir John proving that the Wiangarie issue is, in the terms of the State Pollution Control Commission Act, both 'major' and 'controversial.'

The Colong Committee is aware that the distance of Wiangarie from Sydney is something of a handicap. But this is far outweighed by the fact that our headquarters are situated between the Forestry Commission and Parliament House. We are therefore able to supplement the efforts of the North Coast conservationists who are handicapped by their distance from the State's seat of administration.

One of the first actions of the Committee was to commission Henry Gold to make a photographic study of the forests. A basic factual brochure on the lines of "Park or Pines" is also in preparation. There is a description of Wiangarie and Levers on page 3 of 'Save Colong Bulletin' No. 29. Copies of the brochure will be made available to societies in due course.

GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

This proposal was formulated by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council in 1932. Chairman of the Council was Harold Chardon. Secretary was Myles J. Dunphy. It is fully described in a special supplement of the Katoomba Daily published on August 24th, 1934.

The proposed park extends from Durambang and Boonbourwa (north of the Colo) to the vicinity of Wombeyan Caves in the south, and covers most of the forested country between the Cumberland plain and the Dividing Range. Some of the area, including Kanangra-Boyd, the Grose Valley, the Blue Labyrinth and the Wollongambe is already reserved, but much of it is still open to exploitation by miners, foresters, electricity authorities and the like.

Proximity to the vast urban populations of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the future population of the Bathurst/Orange Growth Centre continue to justify our claim that certain parts of the Blue Mountains are 'the most important wilderness area in Australia.' The accessibility of the Blue Mountains, their popularity, their appeal to outdoor recreationists and their place in Australian culture and history give us a favourable take-off position in this campaign.

THE KAKADU OR ALLIGATOR RIVERS NATIONAL PARK

The Alligator Rivers Region of Arnhem land which begins 150 miles east of Darwin can only be described in superlatives. According to the Alligator Rivers Environmental Fact Finding Study by CSIRO AAEC and the Australian Mining Industry Council it contains the most numerous and archaeologically significant series of rock paintings in Australia. More than 120 aboriginal sites are recorded, up to 25,000 years old. 'These represent the earliest known settlements in tropical Australia and they have provided the world's oldest evidence of the technology for grinding stone axes and the oldest grindstones in Australia.'

The CSIRO wildlife team described the vertebrate fauna of the Alligator Rivers Region as being 'very rich in species and as the richest fauna of any region in the Northern Territory, being matched in Australia only by some areas of N.E. Queensland.'

Of the insect fauna 4,500 species were recognised. Up to 50% of species in some groups are new to science.

The flora contains about 56% of species endemic to Australia.

The Environmental Council (N.T.) sponsored the visit of some 25 representatives of interstate conservation organisations to a symposium on uranium mining and the proposed Kakadu National Park. The symposium began on 7th July and ran for a week. Alex Colley represented The Colong Committee. Milo Dunphy represented Total Environment Centre and Stephen Myers represented Friends of the Earth. At the same time another Colong Committee member, photographer Dennis Ritson, was on a private visit to the area during which he obtained a photographic record for the Committee.

The symposium included one day of lectures from Darwin based scientists, then a half day discussion with senior staff at the Ranger uranium lease near Mt. Brockman. This was followed by several days of site visits to Oenpelli, Cannon Hill, Woolwonga, Obiri Rock, Nourlangie etc.

In a former visit by the Australian Conservation Foundation Dr. Geoff Mosley, Bill Walshe and Milo Dunphy had scaled the 600-800 ft. sandstone escarpment with the object of testing the area's potential for walking. During the symposium Alex Colley and Milo Dunphy were able to put the escarpment to a further test. In doing so they were also testing the proposed Management Plan for the park which relies wholly on vehicular access via a central road the full length of the park — a diagram which any bushwalker knows to spell the doom of natural values.

Alex and Milo walked from Koongarra (the Noranda site) about six miles across the savannah to Lightning Dreaming. Grazing buffalo proved unconcerned. Crocodiles in the Sawcut Creek waterhole gave no trouble. Next day the walkers climbed a cleft in the escarpment and proceeded on a s.s.e. course through one of the most intricate landscapes imaginable. Cirque after cirque of eroded rocks led up to a rocky ridge on the horizon. Corridors between rocks the size of houses led to little valleys between even bigger rocks. Sometimes the valleys were filled with figtrees and vine scrub, or they opened out to a vista of Desert Hakea or Callitris. Here and there the ancient sandstone became architecture with interior rooms, sets of freestanding columns, rows of monkish cells floored with white sand, groups of monoliths

Within two hours Alex found several small waterholes. Within 6 hours the two were turned back at the horizon ridge by 60 ft. to 90 ft. vertical rock faces and a vast jumble of fallen slabs, amongst which were many rock wallaby polishing places. Next day a flanking course was adopted without packs. It resulted in the find of two thirty feet deep waterholes and a series of perfect shallow pools ascending the cirques — But vine scrub and green ants barred the way this time.

These two hard hot days in the coolest season showed that free roaming bushwalking would be as difficult here as in parts of S.W. Tasmania. A percentage of parties would get lost in a situation where it would be practically impossible to find them. Some walkers would inevitably break legs and ankles. However a marked track, carefully sited could provide a wilderness experience of world stature, with rock architecture for camps and staggering changes of environment and wildlife every few yards. A track starting at Sawcut Creek could go over the escarpment into Deaf Adder Creek then up and over into Jim Jim Creek. The walking trail could be complemented by a riding trail along the lower edge of the escarpment linking back to park centre on the western boundary. Such a plan would avoid the trap into which many Australian parks have fallen — subjection to the motor car.

Members of the Symposium signed a statement calling for the Kakadu Park to include the whole catchments of the East and South Alligator Rivers — much more extensive boundaries than presently proposed by the Australian Government. In this the Symposium adopted the recommendation lodged by The Colong Committee with the Australian Government Inquiry into the Kakadu boundaries a few days before.

The Symposium also called on societies around Australia to join a nation-wide campaign against the mining, refining or use of uranium under present technologies, except for bio-medical purposes.

The Uranium/Kakadu issue will probably be the major environmental debate in Australia for the next twelve months. The new Minister for Environment, Mr. Berinson, has been invited to visit the area as the guest of the Environmental Council (N.T.) and A.C.F. Other conservation groups and individuals might consider backing up this invitation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE FORESTRY AGREEMENT ACTS

The Colong Committee and its supporting Societies cannot fail to be impressed by the large measure of agreement between the findings of this all party parliamentary committee and the case developed by The Colong Committee against the destruction of native forests. The Colong Committee made a lengthy submission to the Parliamentary Committee and was represented at the public hearing in Sydney. Its case originated in 1970 when it was a lone voice protesting against the proposed pine plantation on the Boyd. Although broadened to oppose the full Forestry Commission sponsored attack on native forests, The Committee continued to concentrate on the Boyd, because of the plateau's geographical position as the 'crown' of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, the imminence of its despoliation and its eminent suitability as a 'test-case'.

The Colong Committee's submission centred on the Boyd, but except for specific details it was the case against the destruction of native forests.

The Parliamentary Committee has supported not only most of the main points of our submission, but many other points used in our campaign but not repeated in the submission. Had The Colong Committee written a full critique of present forestry policy it could hardly have been more convincing than the Parliamentary Committee. Here are the Parliamentary Committee's recommendations in full:

- (i) *Immediate consideration should be given to providing financial assistance to the States for the regeneration of hardwood areas in a way that ensures the maintenance of forest diversity and other environmental values.*
- (ii) *A thorough independent analysis of Australia's timber should be conducted, taking into account all the variables mentioned by the Committee, and in particular the added yield of the native forest which could be gained by more effective utilisation.*
- (iii) *Australia's undedicated forests should be examined for their timber potential on a sustained yield basis and plans drawn up for their dedication as forest reserves.*
- (iv) *It should be basic to any future Softwood Forestry Agreements Act that a thorough reassessment be made every three years to ensure that the area being planted does not exceed the real needs of the nation.*
- (v) *Australian companies should be given greater encouragement and assistance by Government in securing long-term contracts for the supply of softwood from New Zealand.*
- (vi) *Money should not be loaned to the States for the planting of softwoods in areas where native forest is to be clearfelled, except where a thorough and stringently supervised independent research program has been conducted into the flora and fauna of that area, as well as its soil quality, and where the planting plan allows for their protection.*
- (vii) *Additional funds should be made available to the C.S.I.R.O. and other relevant bodies for research into the many areas of forestry management about which so little is known.*
- (viii) *Immediate steps should be taken to increase the funding for the comprehensive biological survey for the entire Australian continent.*
- (ix) *An immediate study should be carried out by a body such as the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to determine the economic viability of the softwood planting program, on both strict financial grounds and on the broadest possible cost/benefit grounds.*
- (x) *Requests for assistance by private interests should be referred to the Industries Assistance Commission.*
- (xi) *All States should seriously consider the implementation of a land usage surveillance plan similar to the Land Conservation Council of Victoria.*
- (xii) *An increasing proportion of the finance loaned to the States should be dedicated to the purchase of land already cleared for other marginal pursuits.*

- (xiii) *Financial assistance should continue to be made available to owners of agricultural holdings for the planting of small woodlots on their properties.*
- (xiv) *Plans for the plantation of exotic softwoods should be made available for public scrutiny. Full consultation and discussions should be held with interested parties before they are implemented.*
- (xv) *Greater encouragement should be given by the Australian Government for the dedication of more extensive areas of Australian native forests as National Parks.*
- (xvi) *The next Softwood Forestry Agreements legislation should cover a period of 10 years, with interest accruing from the commencement of the loan, and with deferral of repayments of instalments of principal and interest for 15 years.*
- (xvii) *Stringent conditions should be imposed upon the lending of Federal money to ensure that forestry management procedures designed to protect the environment are strictly observed.*

It is also of considerable interest to find that the Parliamentary Committee shares The Colong Committee's views on the N.S.W. Forestry Commission. The Report states:

- 142 *The Committee has stressed the importance of utilising marginal agricultural land rather than areas of native forest in the softwood planting program. Mention has already been made of the compliance with the former but the Committee believes that its criticisms of the clearfelling of native forest are particularly relevant to New South Wales. While the Forestry Commission of New South Wales accepts some responsibility for water catchment protection, it was evident from its submission and from evidence given, that flora and fauna values are given little consideration.*
- 143 *During the flight over the State's mountainous area the Committee saw little evidence of forestry management techniques employed to protect the environment. While it is true that slopes over 18 degrees may not have been cleared, clearfelling and windrowing had been carried out with only two aims, the ease of planting and the ease of harvesting. Windrows were seen to lie in straight lines regardless of contours and dry watercourses and gullies were filled with debris. Only the more permanent streams were protected by any border of natural forest. Plantations were large and no concessions had been made to wildlife by providing natural corridors between adjacent natural areas along which it could move.*
- 144 *The Forestry Commission emphasised its concern for thorough long term planning, but the Committee regrets that so little of this effort is being devoted to environmental matters. Surveys of flora and fauna are not carried out before clearfelling takes place and as far as the Committee has been able to determine the only research undertaken is that done at the University of New England where some projects are given financial assistance. Apart from foresters the Commission employs no-one with specialised qualifications in the environmental sciences.*
- 145 *Another shortcoming in New South Wales is the lack of public consultation in the planning process. The Forestry Commission publicises its plans but beyond that there is no avenue by which interested parties in the community can exercise an effective role. The State Pollution Control Commission carries out investigations where controversy arises or where a matter is referred to it by the Forestry Commission. As the Committee has stated elsewhere in this Report, there are better ways of involving the public and of making land-use decisions.*

Readers of the 'Save Colong Bulletin' will recall the Senate debate of August 15, 1973 on the Softwoods Forestry Agreement Bill. The debate centred on whether the State should ensure that planting each year was carried out in conformity with sound forestry and financial practices, or in conformity with sound forestry, *environmental* and financial practices. It was decided that environmental practices did not have to be sound, they merely had to be 'considered'. The Parliamentary Committee states that these provisions of the Act are unsatisfactory and that 'sound forestry practices' should be defined.

Two paragraphs of the report are devoted to wilderness preservation. 'The provision of national parks', the Report states, 'is partly aimed at satisfying this need (for wilderness) but the pressures being placed on national park areas, if they are not augmented, will soon prove as destructive as the development which might have occurred had they not been dedicated in the first place. It is essential in wilderness areas that there be no improvements, that they be roadless, and that they remain in their primitive state. Such requirements are incompatible with any development.'

If acted upon this Report will be a turning point in stemming the destruction of native forests. It should be compulsory reading for all our legislators.

GROWTH FOR GROWTH'S SAKE

The cult of economic growth, for long accepted by business interests as an article of faith, has now receded into the background. It never was accepted by economists, who insist that only efficient industries should grow. But it is still the creed of the foresters, who embrace it to justify their environmental onslaughts.

The recently published FORWOOD Report (Report of the Forestry and Wood-based Industries Development Conference, 1974) has produced a manifesto entitled 'The Production Forestry Development Plan', which recommends the accelerated expansion, with public assistance, of the forestry and wood-based industries.

The Colong Committee has unceasingly attacked the environmental degradation produced by modern forestry methods, which entail the destruction of native forests. It has also exposed the fallacy of the archaic balance-of-trade arguments used by foresters to justify their case for growth. Hugh Bannister, our Chairman, has introduced a new dimension to our case by questioning the industry's efficiency and its claims for massive assistance. This was effected by a submission, made as Chairman of the Wilderness Protection Committee, to the House of Representatives Softwood Agreement Inquiry. He has followed up this submission with another on behalf of The Colong Committee to the Australian Government. Titled 'The Case for an Industries Assistance Commission Inquiry into the Forestry and Wood-based Industries', it presents the case for a full economic inquiry by the I.A.C. at the same time as the Forwood recommendations are considered.

The I.A.C. was set up in January 1974 to replace the old Tariff Board. Its function is to hold public inquiries and make recommendations on the nature and extent of assistance to such industries as are referred to it by the Australian Government. Its charter represents a fundamental advance in recognition of environmental problems because the Commission is to rank 'conservation of the natural environment' equally with economic and social criteria when making its recommendations. The benefits of growth must therefore now be subject to economic, environmental and social criteria.

THE INEFFICIENCY OF FORESTRY AND WOOD-BASED INDUSTRIES

The 1973-4 I.A.C. Annual Report shows that wood and paper-based industries attracted \$165 million of effective assistance in 1969-70. The paper-based sector is about the same size and receives about the same amount of assistance as the motor vehicle industry, an industry whose efficiency has for long been of prime concern to Governments.

The Forwood report admits that it didn't look at the efficiency of paper-based industries, but, by a series of garbled arguments it manages to reach precisely the opposite conclusions to the I.A.C. Forwood claims traditional sawmilling is inefficient, whereas I.A.C. figures show sawmilling to be one of the most efficient industries in the manufacturing sector. The capital-intensive paper-board and manufactured board industries are presumed efficient, whereas I.A.C. figures show the opposite.

Recent experience supports the I.A.C. Many industries are in trouble at present, but the Tasmanian papermaker APPM must be in some of the worst trouble, because the Australian Government has granted it \$650,000 in cash in addition to special import quotas on competing products. In the A.C.T. the new plywood mill built by Integrated Industries Limited is shut down because it cannot compete. So much for employment opportunities!

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Although The Colong Committee has been primarily concerned with the destruction of native forests there are many serious environmental problems associated with pulp mills and the disposal of discarded paper products. The plans of the N.S.W. Forestry Commission for Bathurst and Tumut will be of particular interest. The following firms are now being considered for the Commission's hard-won pines.

- Allen Taylor & Co. Ltd.,
- Australian Newsprint Mills Ltd.,
- Bowater-Scott Australia Pty. Ltd.,
- Harris-Daishowa (Aust.) Pty. Ltd.,
- Kimberley-Clark Australia Pty. Ltd.,
- PGH Industries Ltd.,
- Pyneboard Pty. Ltd.

It is not hard to detect a preference for big polluting pulp mills to be located on the headwaters of streams which, in the Bathurst area, are long, sluggish, and of low volume. If any measure of protection is to be afforded to these streams further large scale financial assistance will be required.

SOCIAL COSTS

The Forwood report stresses the provision of employment as one of forestry's greatest benefits. If the industry is as inefficient as the I.A.C. report indicates, considerably more employment would be created by an equal investment in an efficient industry. Woodchipping has signally failed to provide stable employment for Tasmanians.

The Forwood Report admits that accident rates in Australian forests are five times greater than in Africa and ten times greater than in the U.S. Any social advantages of decentralisation are likely to be outweighed by the instability, bad working conditions, pollution and general loss of amenity associated with forestry and wood-based industries.

SUPPORT FOR INQUIRY REQUEST

Hugh Bannister's submission bore fruit in the recommendations of the House of Representatives Committee. The Committee recommended an immediate study, by a body such as the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, to determine the economic viability of the softwood planting programme. It also recommended that requests for assistance by private interests should be referred to the I.A.C.

REPORTS AVAILABLE

Copies of our submission to the House of Representatives Committee are available from The Colong Committee — price \$1. Copies of the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report may be purchased from the Australian Government Publishing Service, P.O. Box 364, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601 — price unspecified.

\$30 MILLION OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO ENCOURAGE FOREST DESTRUCTION

During the inquiry on softwood forestry held by the House of Representatives Standing Committee, the following exchange took place between Mr. K.H. Lamb, M.P. and Mr. Meadows of A.P.P.M. on the subject of the \$30 million Bell Bay railway:

Mr. LAMB — But it was not necessary for your operations for that railway to be built; it would have been built anyway, you believe?

Mr. Meadows — I am not sure about that, but negotiations were well in train.

Mr. LAMB — Well, are you more than icing on a cake or are you icing on a cake?

Mr. Meadows — We are the cake.

Mr. LAMB — So you are the reason for that railway?

Mr. Meadows — No, we are not the reason. The reason is developmental, particularly port development. Now that the railway is built we do place the vast majority of traffic on that line, but it was not built solely for us, it was not conceived for us.

Mr. LAMB — You might have been the determining factor though?

Mr. Meadows — It might have swayed the decision, yes.

IF IT'S A TREE, SELL IT

Another exchange at the inquiry went as follows:

Mr. KERIN, M.P. — Surely in Tasmania there are a lot of eucalypt forests that are really best left untouched?

Dr. Cunningham (Forestry Commissioner, Tasmania) — Best to leave untouched? There is a market for every tree.

THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

The Australian Heritage Commission Bill is the outcome of the work of the Committee of Inquiry on the National Estate. The central theme of the Committee's recommendations, quoted by Mr. Uren in his Second Reading speech of 14th May, was contained in its statement that

The Australian government has inherited a National Estate which has been downgraded, disregarded and neglected. All previous priorities accepted at various levels of Government and authority have been directed by a concept that uncontrolled development, economic growth, and 'progress' and the encouragement of private as against public interest in land use, use of waters, and indeed in every part of the National Estate, was paramount.

The Commission will advise the Government on all matters relating to the National Estate, and the views of the National Estate are to be channelled through it. It will compile a national register of places of historic and scientific interest (and, it is to be hoped, of wilderness areas) Ministers and Australian Government agencies will be required to look at the impact of their activities and to enable the Commission to comment.

Mr. Uren expressed the hope that State Governments would supplement the legislation. "This," he said, "would guard against the wilful and mindless pillaging of our National Estate."

In concluding his speech he stressed the fact that conservation is for everyone, but more especially for the less affluent, and as an example described the effect of developing the Blue Mountains Escarpment. He said:

A key part of our attitudes to the National Estate is the rejection of the widely-held notion that this is a middle class issue, that it has no relevance to most of the people. The forces which threaten the National Estate often bear most heavily on the less affluent groups. Poorer people suffer most intensely from the loss of National Estate features such as the parkland, familiar town and country scapes, even dwellings. They feel in much stronger measure the withering away of the physical environment into ugly and barren patterns. I give as one example the impact of the Blue Mountains Escarpment on the far western suburbs of Sydney. These are not urban areas graced by visual richness. For a number of reasons their development has destroyed the natural features of the Australian landscape without substituting any of the gentler features of urban life.

The main contact the hundreds of thousands of people in these suburbs have with our Australian heritage is the Blue Mountains escarpment. This feature of great natural beauty is clearly visible in much of the western part of Sydney. There is no other feature of natural or manmade beauty of the same quality in this vast part of the Sydney metropolitan area. Yet the escarpment is in constant danger of scarring by poorly planned development from both the public and private sectors. I have no doubt that the previous Government, with its defence establishments at Lapstone, certainly had a great deal to do with the scarring of the escarpment. Imposing this sort of blight on the escarpment would be a tragic loss to a large part of the population of Sydney.

I am sure this example can be multiplied many times from other cities and regions throughout Australia. Deprived community groups have not the same access as the wealthy to other sources of personal enjoyment and fulfilment. This is why it is often the less affluent who are most active in working to protect the best features of our heritage. The pillage and neglect of the National Estate diminishes us all in equal measures.

I also want to stress that we will seek the support of people of goodwill whatever their background to protect the National Estate and beat the bulldozer mentality that has disfigured our environment for so many years and particularly during the last quarter of a century when the Opposition was in Government. It had such negative policies. We will work with all who want to protect those parts of our heritage that have been created by man or nature and are unique or are things of beauty.

For this reason, the Government has been gratified by the support of some Opposition members for the concept of the National Estate and the programs we have begun to preserve and enhance it. I am sure we can work together to preserve things and places of great beauty for all Australians and for the Australians who follow us. I commend the Bill.

THE BURNING OF THE BOYD

On hearing that control burning was planned for the Boyd Plateau, Milo Dunphy and Alex Colley called on Mr. Ted Weir, Protection Officer of the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The effects of control burning on flora and fauna and on the Boyd Ecostudy, the degree to which control burning itself could be controlled, and its effectiveness in fire prevention, were discussed. The Colong Committee's representatives held the view that the first line of defence of urban areas should be precautions by individual landowners on the properties they owned. Where this was insufficient, areas bordering developed areas could be given strip protection. It was agreed that burning beyond these limits would reduce the intensity of some bushfires, but its purpose was obscure to the C.C. representatives, and it was suspected, to the Forestry Commission.

Mr. Weir said that burning was only carried out in accord with the wishes of locals. But what if there are no locals, as around the Boyd? Mr. Weir said that views of other interested parties, such as The Colong Committee, would be considered and said that the burning could be postponed. He agreed, it is gratifying to report, to a postponement for a year, during which the C.C. will be able to make further representations.

The C.C. representatives are still unable to comprehend what would have been protected by burning the top of the Boyd Plateau.

Many societies and individuals have protested this year against particular cases of fire hazard reduction. The Colong Committee recommends that a number of case studies be documented during the next six months in order that a concerted attempt can be made early next year to bring the incendiaries under control.

OFFICERS OF THE COLONG COMMITTEE

At the Annual General Meeting of The Colong Committee Ltd., held on June 12th, the following officers were appointed:

Chairman:	Hugh Bannister
Vice Chairman:	Milo Dunphy
Hon. Treasurer:	Charles Culberg
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Boyce
Hon. Assistant Secretary:	Roger Lyle

Other Directors are J. Somerville, A. Colley, M. Weatherley, E. Elenius, P. & J. Prineas, P. Millard, R. Hermann, S. Myers, L. Beck, T. Stern, R. Wood, B. Vote.

Mr. Hugh Bannister, our new Chairman, is an engineer by profession (B.Sc., B.E. (Hons)). He is also Chairman of the Wilderness Protection Committee and an ACF Councillor. He has been a member of the Committee since 1973. Hugh stood for election as an independent conservationist in the Hawkesbury by-election in February, 1973, gaining 3% of the vote. He took a prominent part in the Natural Gas Pipeline Inquiry and has prepared a number of submissions for authorities such as the S.P.C.C. and the Committee of Inquiry on the National Estate. His submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Softwood Forestry Acts is described in this issue.

MR. JIM SOMERVILLE

Jim Somerville, our second chairman after Jim Tierney ably occupied the Chair for three years, has been a worker for the Committee since its early days, and, we are pleased to say, will continue to be an active member. He is retiring from Qantas in the near future, and expects to do a good deal of travelling, but, wherever he is, he is likely to increase the scope of the Committee's knowledge and influence. Jim's hard work, ingenuity, enthusiasm and enterprise have been an inspiration to the Committee.

INFORMATION REQUESTED ON WALLERAWANG-SYDNEY WEST POWERLINE

Some time ago The Colong Committee and other organisations unsuccessfully opposed the application to build a 330 Kv powerline down the Cox's River Valley. The inquiry was held by the State Pollution Control Commission in camera and the route proposed by the N.S.W. Electricity Commission approved — straight through the cradle of the bushwalking movement and across some of the most well known Blue Mountains views. One argument used for the route was the existing fire trail network which, it was said, largely eliminated the need for additional access.

Reports are now reaching The Committee of a new route which has been blazed down Black Jerry's Range from Megalong Road to the Cox's River. A new bridge has been built over Cox's River just above Little River. From this point the blazes extend up the hill in the direction of Mini Mini Range.

A detailed report on these operations with siting shown on a map would be much appreciated by The Colong Committee.

The Secretary
The Colong Committee
18 Argyle Street
Sydney, 2000

Dear Sir,

* I enclose being my subscription to the Save Colong Bulletin.

I enclose being a donation to The Colong Committee's Fighting Fund.

NAME:
(Block letters)

ADDRESS:
(Block letters)

..... Postcode

SIGNED: DATE:

* Subscription Rate:

January—December	\$2
July—December	\$1