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THE COLONG BULLETIN

The setting aside of major remaining rainforests in New South Wales as National Parks is a significant act of reparation for past environmental misunderstandings and mistakes.

The forests are some of the last tangible reminders of the landscape as it was before 1788. With their monumental trees, predating the castles and cathedrals of medieval Europe, they provide a link for all of today's Australians with Ancient Australia.

Heritage Council of New South Wales
Annual Report 1985

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A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BORDER RANGES N.P.

In response to an invitation from the Senior Ranger, NPWS Alstonville to "get involved" in the planning for the Caldera Rainforest National Parks, Foundation members Jim Somerville and Alex Colley spent a week walking in the Border Ranges National Park, assessed

the facilities already provided and submitted a draft management plan to the Foundation. After discussion and amendment, it was sent to the NPWS. The plan is reproduced below both because of the importance of preserving the natural features of the park and for the information of those who visit it.

The park falls naturally into three sections, each of which merits distinctive management. These sections are:

Wiangarie Section
Central Section
Roseberry Section

WIANGARIE SECTION

As this is the section of the park to

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MR GRAY BULLDOZES ON



The Hon. Robin Gray, Premier of Tasmania, on his way to the National Estate (Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of "The Advocate, Burnie, Tasmania").

Until such time as the environmental problems relating to soil nutrients, wildlife preservation and conservation of genetic characteristics, as described in Chapters 4 and 5 are satisfactorily resolved, and with exception of proposed projects intending to use as chip material only waste from genuine sawlog operations, no licence for the export of woodchips be issued to new projects.

Recommendations of the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment 1976

In the wake of international publicity surrounding violent clashes at Farmhouse Creek, Tasmania's forests have a new lease of life.

Woodchip export-licences remain unsigned, and the indications are that the Federal Government could be reassessing its attitude towards

protection of Tasmania's wilderness forests.

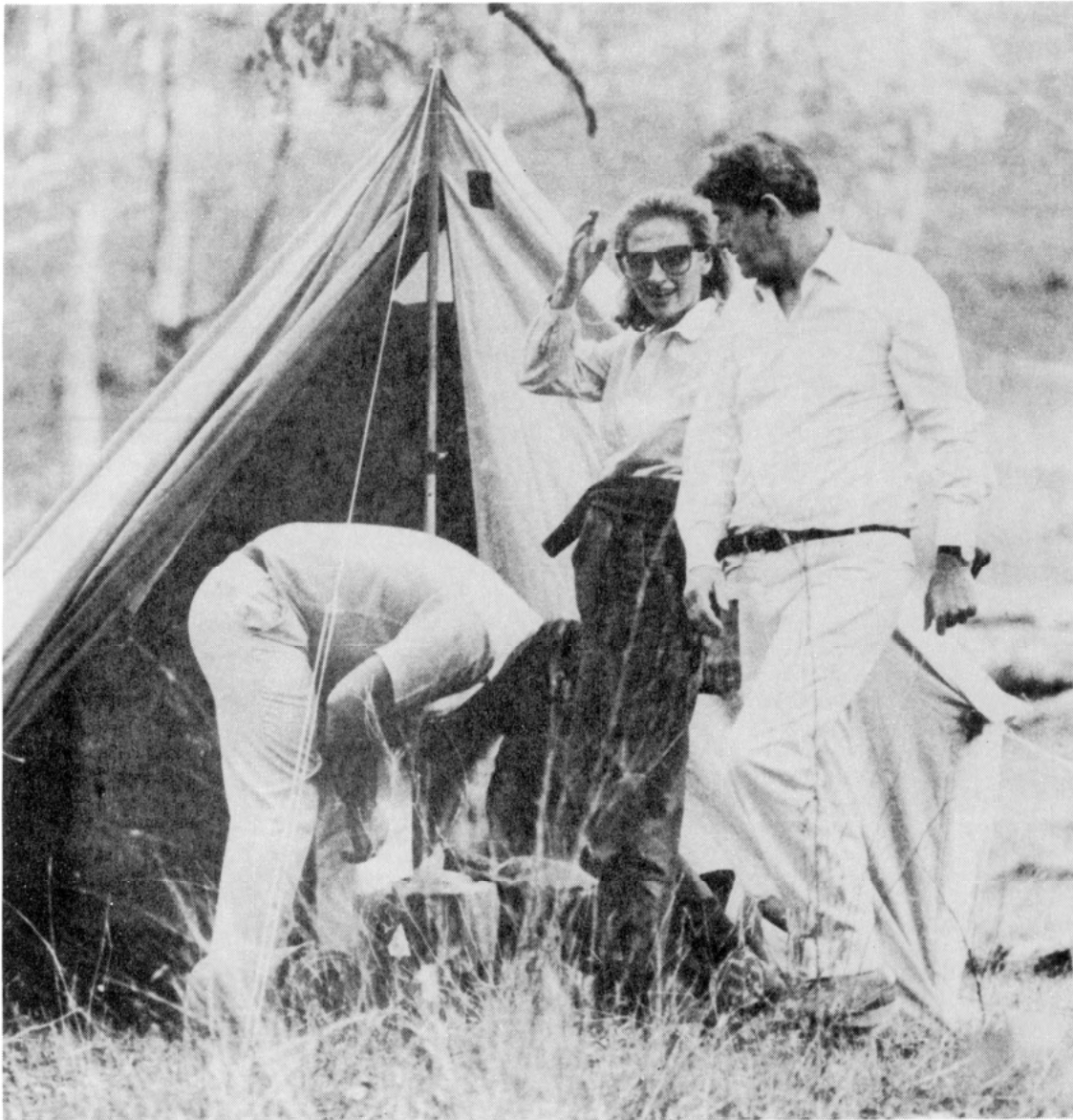
Robin Gray's confrontationist tactics have backfired. Earlier this year he refused to countersign a Federal-State agreement on woodchipping and logging because he objected to token Federal Government involvement in the logging of Tasmania's forests. His next mistake was prematurely to send the bulldozers into the sensitive Lemonthyme Forest near Cradle Mountain, and past Farmhouse Creek, in the South West, before the export-licences were signed, sealed and delivered. His final big error was to encourage violent confrontation. On March 7, police were ordered to stand by and watch while a specially-recruited gang of sawmill employees, tempers suitably inflamed by their millionaire bosses,

were bussed to the Farmhouse Creek work site to forcibly evict conservationists.

And so the battle for Tasmania's wilderness forests exploded on to TV sets across the nation. The aftermath has consisted of coverage on "Four Corners", "The Seven-Thirty Report", Channel 9's "Sunday" programme, and feature articles in *The Age*, putting the issue into perspective.

This has effectively postponed granting of the woodchip export-licences until the Federal Government and the Tasmanian Labor Party, anxious not to alienate still further the powerful environment movement, have found a way of dealing with the problem.

Geoff Law - ACF Newsletter May 1986



The Hon. Neville Wran, Premier of New South Wales, and his wife, Jill, enjoy walking and camping with conservationists in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park (Photograph by courtesy of the "Daily Telegraph")

THE WRANS BUSHWALK ON THE APSLEY

On the weekend of April 19 & 20 the Premier and Mrs Wran joined a bushwalking party to inspect part of the Apsley wilderness. The small party of walkers included several members of the Colong Foundation and a number of other conservation representatives. By Friday afternoon the party had made camp on the Apsley and time allowed a short walk to view Paradise Rocks, a spectacular outcrop that provides a dramatic backdrop to this part of the Apsley. A relaxed and informal atmosphere soon developed and was to be the hallmark of a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. The Wrans quickly settled into camp life with both Premier and Mrs Wran ready to be involved in meal preparation and other camp chores. It was one of those glorious clear nights when the stars are at their most brilliant and for the Wrans it provided their first opportunity to view Halley's Comet. This was followed by some lively campfire discussion which included woodchip and urban issues. On woodchip, the Premier indicated he was keen to see that the environment was not the loser, but he told us that solutions must be found for workers whose jobs are at stake.

On Saturday the party walked down river with some taking advantage of a superb day for a lunchtime swim. By the end of the day the Premier was looking a little tired. He told us that he doesn't find much time for exercise, but clearly in recent years he has developed an interest in the outdoors and enjoys the opportunity of swapping the hurly burly of Macquarie Street for the quieter pursuits of the bush.

At the end of the weekend Mr and Mrs Wran returned to Armidale for an afternoon tea organised by the local National Parks Association of NSW branch. Here the Premier announced the new Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Although the Park had been previously announced by the Government, it is one of the largest and most significant wilderness areas in the State, and the Premier said that he wanted to see the area himself. Much of the gorgeland is presently Crown leasehold, but the N.P. & W.S. is proceeding with acquisitions and the Government has indicated that funds will be forthcoming. It has been estimated that acquisitions for the Park may total in excess of four and a half million dollars.

A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BORDER RANGES N.P.

(continued from Page 1)

which most visitors will come by car, existing roading should be maintained to present standards.

Forest Tops and Sheep Station Creek camping areas are already inadequate to handle holiday campers. The large open area known as Border View should also be equipped with a shelter shed and developed as an alternate car camping area. It is unreasonable to specify Forest Tops as a camping area when visitors cannot erect their tents beside their vehicles. The present arrangement is frustrating for motorists staying overnight. There is no reason why Forest Tops should not be available to picnickers by day and campers by night, though most campers may prefer to camp in the dryer lowland eucalyptus areas. The Sheep Station Creek camping area is well laid out.

Grady's Creek and Brindle Creek walking tracks, although blazed and marked with plastic ribbon, are really suitable for experienced walkers only. Signs notifying this should be placed at each of the four entrances. It is suggested that the first kilometre of the Brindle Creek track up from the picnic area be upgraded to encourage non-bushwalkers to experience the rainforest unaffected by roadside weeds and traffic. More descriptive notices on trees and other plants would enhance appreciation of the forest. A minor annoyance is that the wood provided, being brought straight from the mill, is too green to burn.

CENTRAL SECTION

Lions Road through Richmond Gap is in good condition except for one small portion. Viewing the border loop could be one of the main attractions of this section, particularly if train times were displayed on a notice board, so that tourists could view trains negotiating the loop. Walks along the border fence could also be featured.

Parking space is inadequate at the Gap itself, but there is a small partly overgrown camping area on a creek about 150 metres from the Gap

which, if cleared, levelled and grassed would make an excellent combined picnic and camping area.

Walks both east and west from the Gap along the border fence provide excellent views and signs could indicate this. The well maintained track could be followed about 10km. to Lever's Plateau.

ROSEBERRY SECTION

This section is accessible to walkers only, and its essentially wilderness quality should be retained by preventing vehicle access. A safe road to Lever's would not only be an environmental disaster, but would probably cost the best part of a million dollars and be very expensive to maintain. As it may be some time before the management plan is complete, we urge that the whole of Roseberry be managed in a manner equivalent to wilderness.

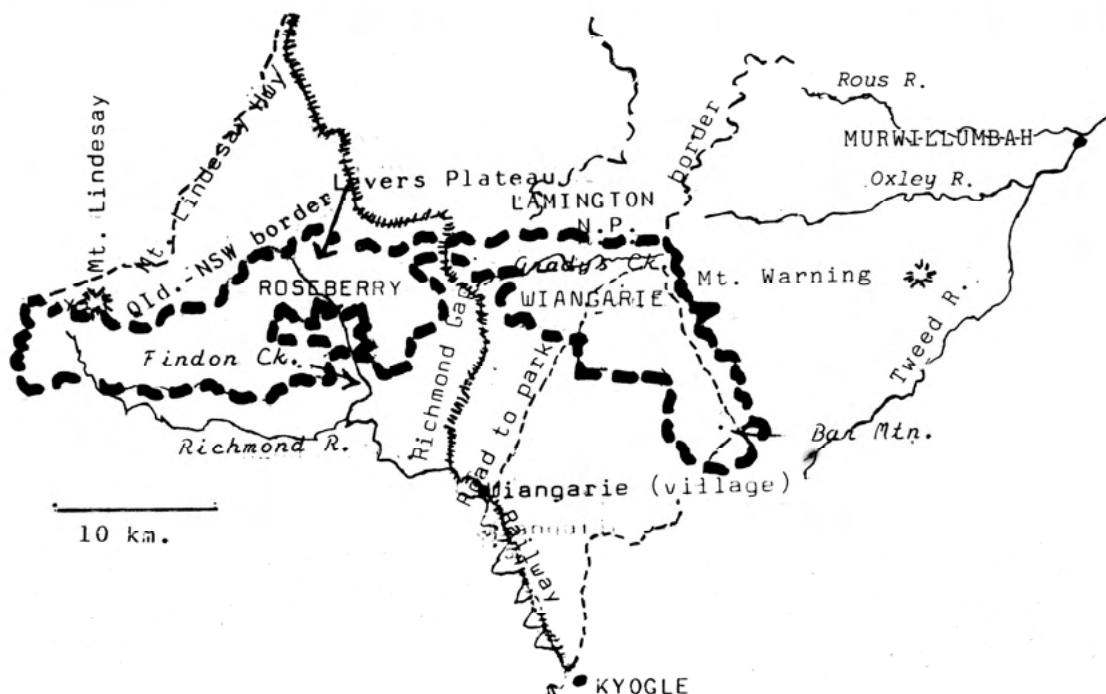
The track of approximately 11km, built by sawmillers, from J. Flower's property on Findon Creek to the border (known as Lever's Plateau track) was used by four wheel drive vehicles until a few years ago, but is now impassable. About 15 fallen trees, some over a metre thick, effectively close the track beyond Grassy Knob, which is in open eucalypt country about half way along the track. Wild raspberry, lantana and tobacco bush have almost closed the track along the sections where the open canopy admits the sun. The slashing of the weeds would,

however, be neither difficult or expensive and would convert the old track into a pleasant walking route. Use of the track would entail access through Mr. Flower's property. The Queensland ridge is negotiable, and the public road up Findon Creek possibly extends to the foot of the ridge, but some clearing and track work would be needed.

The old mill site within the park on Long Creek is accessible by public road. It is now leased to Mr. Ripps, but could become the camping area for the Roseberry section. There is a track up Long Creek, still in use by four wheel drive vehicles, which can reach the Eastern Ridge. The use of the track by vehicles would be incompatible with the wilderness concept, and we recommend that it be converted to a walking track, which could probably be extended up a ridge to Lever's Plateau, making a suitable loop when joined with the Plateau Track.

As the rainforest extends up to the border, camping sites on the Plateau are on the Queensland side. Although discouraged by the present owner (Ian Douglas, Melbourne barrister) there is a road easement adjacent to the fence which provides excellent camping. Walkers could be advised, by signs, of their rights in this matter and signs erected indicating the commencement of whatever tracks it is decided to open.

It is probable that the best presently available access is via the border fence



SKETCH MAP OF BORDER RANGES NATIONAL PARK

from Richmond Gap. It would also appear feasible to develop access from Mount Lindesay, provided a track could be cut below the cliff at Mount Glennie. From the contour map, it appears that Terrace Creek might provide easy access to the border. Water is available in Long Creek on the Plateau, and probably other places. Its location should be indicated.

In order that visitors could appreciate the forest it would be desirable to indicate routes to feature such as specimens of large trees. The fence could be crossed by means of stiles. It is very difficult to find any special feature in the forest without such guidance.

Looking to the future, a walking track might some day be provided along the Macpherson Range from Cunningham's Gap to Lamington. It is impractical to walk along the crest of the range, but a graded track might be constructed utilising parts of the border fence track.

BURNING ISSUES IN KOSCIUSKO

by Patrick Thompson

Prescription burning or so called "control burning" will no longer be permitted in Kosciusko National Park wilderness areas, according to the former Regional Director, Bruce Leaver of the NSW N.P. & W.S. (Mr Leaver recently took up a new appointment as Director of the South Australian N.P. & W.S.). Apparently, this welcome decision was a result of a letter from the Chairman of the Colong Committee to the Hume Snowy Bushfire Council. Mr Leaver said that our letter was the catalyst that enabled the Service to finally bring to an end the extensive annual aerial ignition of vast areas of wilderness in the Park. Prescription burning will now only be permitted where it is deemed necessary for the protection of lives and property.

The Colong Foundation has campaigned consistently over recent years about a number of management issues in Kosciusko National Park. Prescription burning in wilderness areas was one of these. There remain a number of other matters that still need to be resolved. The Bimberi and Goobarragandra wildernesses have still not yet been regazetted as wilderness, although it is understood that the Service is presently considering amending the Kosciusko Plan of Management to reinstate the Bimberi wilderness area.

The Goobarragandra (formerly called Fiery Range) wilderness remains the stumbling block for the N.P. & W.S. Just why this area was changed from being zoned wilderness in the original Plan of Management has never been made clear. The N.P. & W.S. have pointed to the fact that there is a travelling stock route which cuts its north-eastern corner and that powerlines skirt its eastern and western boundaries. The Colong Foundation believes that powerline and stock routes are completely inappropriate for national parks, and as such, should go.

Why is Goobarragandra so important?

The answer to this question is that it lies between two other wilderness areas - Bogong Peaks and Bimberi. Taken together, the three wilderness areas total some 150,000 hectares, which embrace the entire northern end of Kosciusko National Park and a large part of the neighbouring Namadgi National Park in the ACT. The only intrusions are the powerlines with their adjacent service roads and the travelling stock route.

As this issue of The Colong Bulletin goes to press, two matters concerning the future of Goobarragandra are taking place. The first is that the Ministerial Working Party on Wilderness is due to report to the NSW Minister for the Environment, Bob Carr. It is understood that Goobarragandra wilderness is one of the listed wilderness areas identified in the report. As well as identifying the wilderness, the working party has highlighted 3,400 ha of Goobarragandra that is presently in the Forestry Commission control. This area centred on Dubbo Hill was taken from Kosciusko National Park in 1974. The Commission is presently logging what once was public parkland. The need to act urgently on the future of this wilderness is therefore apparent.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "SUSTAINED YIELD?"

The Strategic plan produced by the Forest Products Advisory Council makes the following prediction:

Based on resource projections the availability of native timbers, primarily hardwoods, will decline at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent to the year 2000, representing a calculated decline in production of 400,000 cubic metres or 22 per cent below 1984-85

production levels.

It can be confidently predicted that the blame for the decline will be placed on the conservation movement rather than admit its real cause - over cutting of forests, stimulation of demand for timber and insufficient provision for the future.

The report calls for more of the same in the form of development of new domestic and export markets, development of new products, long term supply commitments with increase in wood supplies and woodchipping. Ian Penna, ACF forestry Research Officer, writes that:

Much of the cost is clearly to be thrown back on the public sector. The report does not provide any detailed analysis of the social, environmental or economic costs of the Strategy....National Parks, conservative management of production forests etc. are clearly regarded as an impediment to increased growth, prosperity, jobs etc.

(ACF Newsletter, May 1986)

**MR TIM MOORE, M.P.
ADDRESSES THE HOO HOO CLUB**

Colong Bulletin No. 42 and 43 carry a description of the "Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoo", which describes itself as the "Public Relations Department of the Timber Industry." Like the Klu Klux Klan, it began in the deep south of the United States, and calls itself a "fraternal order" and, in the U.S. Hoo Hoo members have rituals requiring them to wear toilet seats around their necks. Office bearers are 'snarks' or 'viceregent snarks'. Hoo Hoo clubs are 'jurisdictions'. Their emblem is a black cat with tail curved as in the figure 9.

Mr Tim Moore, M.P., Shadow Minister for the Environment, probably had these facts in mind when, before accepting, with commendable temerity, the invitation of the Grafton branch of Hoo Hoo to address it on World Forestry Day - March 21st - he inquired whether he would be tarred and feathered. Mr. Nick Greiner, M.P., Leader of the Opposition sent us a copy of the speech, which he says "sets out in unequivocal terms my personal commitment and that of the Party" on the rain forests/national parks issue.

In a recent visit to Paris, Mr. Moore discussed with the head of the World Heritage Division of UNESCO the Australian Government's application for the World Heritage listing on the NSW Rainforest National Parks. Both Mr. Moore and Mr. Greiner discussed the application with Dr. Jim Thorsell of the IUCN when he was in Sydney, and believe that it is obvious that the listings will be made at the end of November this year, "a fact that a future Coalition Government will have to face."

On the question of boundaries, there is a range of opinions within the Coalition Parties. "Some members" Mr. Moore said, "believe that the present boundaries are the correct ones from an environmental perspective. Other Members believe that, in terms of political reality, the lesson of the Queensland Government's humiliating backdown over Lindeman Island leads to the inescapable political conclusion that such alienation of existing National Parks is not possible. Equally, the position now is not whether the so-called "buffer" areas are too big or simply adequate for the purpose for which they are designed, but whether a future Coalition Government would be prepared to take upon itself the overwhelming opprobrium that would be attracted to 'rolling back' those boundaries as occurred in Queensland recently when its Government contemplated revocation of National Park status for Lindeman Island. In this political context, it should be noted that the Barrier Reef is also on the World Heritage list.

The Liberal Party considers that it is simply not realistic to believe that any future government, of any political complexion, in any State, would or should override or ignore World Heritage listings. Mr Greiner has asked me to inform you that a future Government led by him will not seek to excise from Rainforest National Parks areas to be logged.

To be locally specific, he has asked me to say that there is no prospect that the boundaries of the Washpool National Park will be shrunk to remove the eucalyptus hardwood forests that are contained in the buffer areas."

The Coalition also "believes that State Government, as a question of political priority, needs to pay greater attention to issues of re-plantings of eucalyptus forests and, if silviculturally

possible, appropriate rainforest species, and what suitable marginal agricultural land is regionally available for acquisition for this purpose." It is also critical of the inadequate budget provision for the administration of the N.P.W.S., and is committed to "increase the real level of expenditure on National Park management." It would pay fair compensation to property owners affected.

Mr Moore admits that the area of Rainforest National Parks is one where the Coalition parties have obviously disagreed, but he states that "Mr Greiner has asked me to clearly indicate that a Government led by him will not diminish the boundaries of National Parks in New South Wales, particularly the 'Rainforest National Parks.'"

TREES JUST LOGS

The National Party has re-affirmed its determination to destroy the timber in our parks. Its leader stated in the Daily Telegraph of March 18th that:

There is no way the National Party would agree to the locking up of essential timber resources inside National Parks. Areas of forest which have been carefully nurtured over the years by the Forestry Commission and which have been logged in the past should be available to meet the need of the people of N.S.W.

Descending to personal abuse, National Party M.P. Wendy Machin derided Milo Dunphy as being "convinced that possession of a spirit stove and a sleeping bag makes him a qualified environmentalist."

STATE OPPOSITION PARTIES AGAINST COLO DAMS

The Federal Treasurer has advised that the Labor Government in Canberra would not intervene to prevent the New South Wales Government raising money to dam the Colo River in the Wollemi wilderness", Tim Moore, M.P., Shadow Minister for Planning and Environment, said recently.

Although it would be vigorously opposed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Water Resources Commission continues to develop plans

for two major dams in the heart of the Colo River wilderness in the Wollemi National Park. The continuation of this planning is vigorously opposed by the New South Wales Opposition as we believe that any such dams would be environmentally disastrous - the view also taken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Mr. Moore said that he had arranged for Senator Chris Puplick, a Liberal Senator for New South Wales, to ask the Federal Treasurer to guarantee that, consistent with the stance taken by the Labor Government with respect to the Franklin Dam proposed to South West Tasmania, that no Federal approval would be given for the raising of loan funds to build dams in the Wollemi Wilderness.

The Treasurer has advised Senator Puplick that 'it would not be appropriate for the Commonwealth to take action' with respect to these dam proposals.

Whilst the New South Wales State Opposition does not believe that the Foreign Affairs power of the Australian Constitution should be used to override decision making of the States, the Treasurer's response over the prospect of dams in the Colo Gorge exemplifies the political hypocrisy of the Federal Government over environmental matters, Mr Moore concluded.

MAN MADE DESERT

The April Bulletin of the Australia-China Friendship Society reports that by means of aerial seeding a 10,000 ha oasis has been created in the Mongolian desert. The interest of this experiment to Australia is in what happened to the original ground cover if climate and soil were sufficient to support it? The answer, in all probability, is that the area was over-grazed. Similar action in our outback "deserts" might well have similar results.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS FORESHADOWED

When launching Heritage Week, the Hon. Bob Carr, Minister for Planning and Environment said that he had been asked by the Premier to set bold new goals to guide the Government's environmental performance over the next 10 years. These included:

The introduction of a Wilderness Act to ensure wilderness areas, inside and outside national parks, are protected for future generations.

The introduction of the endangered species legislation to protect threatened plants, habitats and animals which face extinction.

Further extension of national parks and nature reserves especially in arid and semi-arid zones in the west of the state.

Legislation to provide for conservation agreements with land owners to protect important natural areas in private ownership.

Careful planning of north coast developments to protect wetlands, catchment areas, headlands and forests to prevent Queensland-style development spoiling the N.S.W. coastline.

PURIFYING THE BLUE MOUNTAINS STREAMS

As pointed out before in these pages the water and sewerage problems of a city on top of a 1,000 metre plateau are acute and have never been faced. As the city grew pollution increased and every stream on the Blue Mountains causeway is now fouled. As Peter Maslen wrote in Bulletin No. 81 "The municipal works existing in the Blue Mountains are generally old-fashioned and overloaded. New works are being compromised in the interests of economics." Peter pointed out that the technique to remove at least 95% of organic wastes was available. The treated water would be suitable for garden and lawn irrigation.

In a paper soon to be released explaining the aims of its draft strategy, the Water Board attributes the sewage problems to the "outdated and rundown sewerage systems which it inherited when it assumed responsibility for water supply and sewerage in the Mountains in July 1980." The Board has already spent over \$37 million on sewerage of new areas and renewal and augmentation of old Council systems. It aims to sewer all urban areas and "recognises the special significance of the National Park, which calls for the highest feasible standards of pollution control."

In the next one to five years the Board will undertake urgent upgrading of existing treatment facilities, and in the next 5 to 10 years will switch to amplification and upgrading of treatment facilities. The cost of the remedial programme is likely to be more than \$100 million.

MEETING DATES

Colong Foundation meetings will be held at 18 Argyle Street, on June 12th, 26th and July 10th and 24th. All members and supporters are welcome.

FORM FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

To: The Treasurer
Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd
18 Argyle Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

I enclose \$5.00 being my subscription for all issues of the Colong Bulletin to the end of 1986.

I enclose \$ being a donation to the Colong Foundation's Fighting Fund.
I enclose \$ being an interest free loan repayable at 4 week's notice.
I have donated \$ to the Australian Conservation Foundation, expressing a wish that my donation be spent for the purposes of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. I would like the grant which this has enabled, to be allocated to the Colong Foundation's Fighting Fund/Investment Fund. (Please use form letter below).

NAME: (Mr/Mrs/Miss)
ADDRESS:POSTCODE:
SIGNED:DATE:

To: The Director
Australian Conservation Foundation
672B Glenferrie Road
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

I attach a donation to the Australian Conservation Foundation. I prefer that this donation should be spent for the purposes of
.....(insert name of your organization). I understand that this donation is tax deductible and therefore look forward to your receipt.

NAME: (Block Letters)
ADDRESS:
\$SIGNED:DATE:

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To: The Hon. Secretary
Colong Foundation for Wilderness
18 Argyle Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Date

I hereby apply for membership of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. I am nominated byand seconded by

(Note: If you are not personally known to the Foundation, the Hon. Secretary will nominate you and ask one of the directors to second your nomination. The signing of this application will be accepted as evidence of your support of the aims of the Foundation).

I subscribe to the Foundation's aim of preserving Australia's Wilderness remnants.

I accept the liability provided in the Colong Foundation's Articles of Association to guarantee \$20 should it be needed in the event of the winding up of the Foundation.

Enclosed please findfor \$20, being my membership subscription for the calendar year 1986. (Please note: membership fee covers Bulletin subscription).

Signed

FULL NAME: (MR, MRS, MISS)
ADDRESS
.....POSTCODE