



THE COLONG BULLETIN

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

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Among the 16 components of the Business Council's grand strategy for fixing up Australia by 2010, there's no room for a requirement that we avoid stuffing up the environment. And in this first scorecard, there's no assessment of whether we have or haven't been.

Apparently, the state of the environment is not something business should worry about. All that matters in the Council's vision is ensuring that concerns about the environment don't inhibit investment.

Ross Gittins, Editor, *S.M.H.*, on the Business Council of Australia's first report on the achievement of its goals for 2010.



SMH, 14/12/94

The Significance of Wilderness

At the beginning of every year the Colong Foundation asks its supporters to renew their contribution and their generous response enables us to carry on the fight for another year. It is therefore an appropriate time to describe the role of wilderness in nature conservation.

It is recognised by ecologists that the larger the area protected the more effectively wildlife is preserved. Professor Michael Archer, winner of the Mueller Medal, concluded that an area of approximately 300,000 square kilometres was required to maintain megafauna. He said that Australia must set aside 39% of its land mass in protected environments. To reserve such an area, except in deserts,

where wildlife is minimal, is impractical. The best that can be achieved, without large scale appropriation of rural land, is to preserve the larger remnants of the natural environment - i.e. wilderness. In NSW there are 76 national parks and 204 nature reserves. They are islands within a sea of developed land. Only five national parks - Blue Mountains, Kosciusko, Morton, Sturt and Wollemi - are in excess of 100,000 ha. That over 5% of the State is now reserved in parks and nature reserves is a notable achievement; the outcome of decades of campaigning by conservationists. These areas provide for

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St., Sydney. Phone 247 4714

PATRON: The Hon. Neville K. Wran, A.C., Q.C.

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DIRECTOR: Keith Muir

HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold

HON. AUDITOR: Arthur Andersen & Co.

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much enjoyable recreation, but because most of them are small, they provide only limited wildlife protection.

These facts are recognised in the recently published Draft Strategy of Australia's Biological Diversity, which states that biological diversity is best conserved in situ and calls for an adequate system of protected areas and the arrest and reversal of the decline of remnant native vegetation, though it considers wilderness may be of particular importance. The Strategy calls for community involvement, but doesn't advocate funding for community organisations. These objectives are to be achieved by the year 2000. However, unless the present destruction of remnant native vegetation is stopped, not much of it will be left by

2000.

In NSW at least the Foundation's Red Index has already identified most of the comprehensive and representative natural areas. Many of these areas have been researched and approved by the NPWS and the means of protecting them has been laid down in the Wilderness Act. If biological diversity is to be preserved, it is essential that these areas approved by the NPWS be declared and that the remainder be afforded interim protection while assessment proceeds. This will not happen unless conservationists have the means to continue campaigning and build public support to the point where governments act. That is why your contribution to the Colong Foundation is so important.

Donations

We gratefully acknowledge donations from the following supporters during the half year ended December 31, 1994:

Mr and Mrs J. Ambler, R.L. Badgery, C.D. Boyd, M. Cawte, Coast and Mountain Walkers, M. Colless, A.G. Colley, Dr P. Cook, I. Cox, C. Douglas, Dr G.E. Heinsohn, Dr J. Holt, Professor B. Marshall, Dr P.T. Millard, M. Plumridge, L. Sullivan.

Blue Mountains Environmental Issues

The Coalition of Residents for the Environment has convened a public forum on environmental issues in the Blue Mountains for the 1995 election.

It will be held on Wednesday, February 22 at 7.30 p.m. at the Civic Centre in Katoomba and Penny Figgis, A.M., Vice-President of the ACF, will be the first speaker and M.C. The Liberal candidate, Labor candidate Bob Debus, Democrat candidate Jon Rickard and Independent candidate Carol Gaul have been invited to address the forum.

Mobile phone telecommunication towers

Nearly every second person has a mobile phone and the technology's 30 metre tall transmission towers are popping up everywhere. Vodafone want eight towers in the Blue Mountains. Every company wants its own tower system and so you can safely add to Vodafone's eight the towers of its two competitors and get twenty four towers, quadruplicating the existing hardwire telephone system.

The industry's argument that the mobile phone system causes less environmental impact than the telephone wire or cable systems may be correct. It must be kept in mind, however, that this impact is added to that of the existing system.

The establishment of towers on remote and prominent mountain tops is the main environmental impact of mobile phones. The telecommunication industry is keen to explain that its 'strict' environmental standards require each tower to be painted 'evergreen'. This is about as far as its environmental performance goes.

The industry, which is under Federal jurisdiction, has been exempt from all environment and planning laws since 1991. Apparently the Federal Government forgot its environmental responsibilities when opening up the telecommunication industry to competition. Federal telecommunications policy focused almost exclusively on competition, not environment protection.

Federal environmental practices criticised

In November last year, the Victorian Parliament's Environment and Natural Resources Committee tabled a report highly critical of the Federal Government's environmental practices. The report found that the spread of mobile phone towers was uncontrolled and the State Government and local communities have no right of complaint.

The Committee recommended that the Commonwealth amend the *Telecommunication Act 1991* to:

- prohibit installation of tower facilities in wilderness areas;
- require that the installation of towers in national parks also should be prohibited unless approved subsequent to a full environmental impact report;
- ensure all telecommunication carriers comply with all State environmental protection and planning laws; and
- ensure systematic and public assessment of environmental and social impacts before any commitments are made to licence any new technology.

The Committee observed that vehicle-based and ship based satellite transmission-based mobile phone systems are now available. Thus the tower on top of the virgin Mount Imlay in south east NSW, installed for essential ship to shore communication, is unnecessary. The report found that satellite transmission based systems allow for efficient communications in remote areas and remove the need for towers in wilderness areas. The numerous and expensive mobile phone towers being constructed in remote areas may soon be made obsolete.

Water Board Corporatisation? *... just might work*

On Friday 2 December, the Fahey Government with the support of the non-aligned Independents, Moore, Hatton and Macdonald, passed the Water Board Corporatisation Bill through the Legislative Assembly. The legislation was passed after considerable amendment by social justice and conservation groups working co-operatively with Dr Macdonald, Member for Manly.

The new Corporation will be politically very difficult to privatise. Sale of shares to other than eligible Ministers is prohibited. Before the Act can be amended to allow for privatisation, there must be a public inquiry into the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of privatisation.

For the first time, the Water Board,

NSW's biggest polluter, has been set targets for pollution and sewage reduction. The adopted Corporatisation model also improves water conservation measures (at least 25% by the year 2000 and 35% by 2010), and preserves and extends powers to protect the catchments. The Act recognises the environmental protection powers to the Environmental Protection Authority, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Health and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, as well as a new beast called the Licence Regulator.

The Licence Regulator will report on the operating licence which contains detailed environmental, customer and other provisions. The Corporation's operating licence was tabled in Parliament and future amendments can be disallowed by

either House.

The Act makes the new Corporation subject to third party rights of appeal to the courts to restrain a breach of the Act. Public accountability, including holding its Directors personally accountable for the achievement of its social, environmental and economic goals, will help ensure that the Corporation protects the water cycle better than State Forests sustains timber yields.

Unlike the Hunter Water Corporation, the Minister responsible for Sydney Water will still have to answer questions in Parliament and the Corporation will remain subject to Freedom of Information, Ombudsman and ICAC legislation. The Corporation must enter into a Customer Contract, detailing rights to services provided. Customers have recourse to the courts if there is a breach of this contract.

The Sydney Water Corporation must reduce significantly by the year 2000 the combined environmental impact of the per capita use of energy and water supplied. Materials and substances discharged by the Corporation, including toxic chemicals, also must achieve pollution reduction targets. These reduction strategies should work synergistically, as water reuse is contingent on waste water being free of damaging pollution. The ultimate aim, to prevent all dry weather discharges, will be implemented progressively with 5 year re-use targets.

In the Parliamentary debate, the Labor Party, championed by the Member for Moorebank, Mr Craig Knowles, rejected the Licence Regulator approach. Labor considered that a licence regulator duplicated the role of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). The corporatisation of the Water Board was



Kanangra Deep – part of the Warragamba Catchment. Photograph by Henry Gold.

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too soon. The EPA's new operating framework, which would update pollution laws that are 30-35 years old, had not been established. Labor considered that placing the independent corporate regulator inside the new legislation may confuse the roles of the corporate operator and government regulator.

However, public accountability provisions and the requirement that Ministers regulating Sydney Water are not shareholders of the Corporation, should help ensure effective environment protection.

Many conservationists consider the regulatory provisions of the corporatised Water Board are a model that the EPA can adopt, rather than the other way around. The history of the EPA suggests it is an ineffective regulator of industry. The Corporation's Licence Regulator will be made up of consumer and conservation groups, and business and water conservation expert members. The provisions governing the pollution reduction are designed so that they can be readily adopted by the EPA when its legislation is updated.

The Sydney Water Corporation will eventually be licensed by the Department of Water Resources and environmental allocations of water for downstream environments will be required. Environmental impact statements will be prepared to establish the appropriate flow regimes for the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Shoalhaven and Woronora catchments. The former Water Board simply regulated its own water releases. It did not release water to the Hawkesbury-Nepean for ecological purposes.

Special Catchments

On the nature conservation front, the special catchment areas cannot be sold but can only be transferred to the Minister for the NPWS. These areas are virtually pristine bushland areas. Reduction of special area catchments will require an Act of Parliament.

The Parks Service and the Corporation have joint responsibility to manage these catchments and plans of management must be prepared. These plans must manage these catchments for ecological integrity. New leases and licensing must be consistent with the plan.

The special area catchments include three catchments at Woodford, Katoomba and Blackheath adjoining the

Blue Mountains National Park. Also included is the O'Hares Creek catchment which in the next decade will come under increasing urban development pressure. This catchment has very significant upland swamps and many plant communities poorly conserved inside the NPWS estate.

The most important special area catchments, however, are the magnificent Metropolitan water supply catchments of the Woronora, Cataract, Cordeau, Avon and Nepean Dams which mainly embrace old growth forest areas, totalling approximately 100,000 hectares.

Will it work?

Just how the Corporation will preserve the ecological integrity of its catchments and reduce the per capita environmental impact of its activities remains to be seen.

Much relies on the achievement of goals, objectives and targets. Even the plans of management for the special area catchments are ultimately up to the Government. Similarly, environmental impact assessment for water releases for the downstream ecology whilst mandated may not eventuate on time, like several now overdue forestry EIS's.

If Sydney Water Corporation fails to deliver on pollution reduction and water reuse it will be because of cost. Cost in terms of energy for proposed water pumping and treatment, and for new infrastructure. The drinking water treatment plant BOOT (build, own, operate transfer) schemes will prove to be an enormous expense that may cool public support for costly pollution controls.

Legislating waste reduction and reuse targets may prove more difficult than reducing water use. The infant water reuse industry will only work if it can supply water for less than the cost of drinking water. Removal of toxic chemicals in the waste stream is limited by technology as well as cost.

Dr Macdonald reported that 90 per cent of the Corporation's costs are due to water transfer and 10 per cent on treatment. Further costly transfer schemes are no solution. The costly pumping waste water over the Blue Mountains or to the Southern Highlands is a pipe dream. It would be better to pump treated sewage back into existing storages.

The future success of Sydney Water Corporation is up to citizens and ratepayers. We must report on the advice published by the licence regulator and lobby

Access to Morton National Park

There is little point in creating national parks if the public can't get to them. The Budawang Committee has written to the Premier on the subject of the Yadboro inholdings in the southern portion of the park as follows:

We have been urging the NPWS during the last 25 years to acquire these properties for management purposes and to stop private development...it appears that the Service has done little or nothing to gain access to the Clyde Gorge... The Forestry Department, at the request of the owner of the eastern bank of the Clyde, closed off Deadmans Gulph Road...

The public cannot get to the junction of the Clyde and Yadboro Rivers or Clyde Gorge or walkers coming down the banks of the Clyde River who would have to trespass on these private properties. Are we going to have an enclave at Yadboro who please themselves as to what buildings they erect without approval of three government departments, fell trees and stop access?

Parliamentarians to improve the performance of the Corporation through upgrading its operating licence.

The Government Pricing Tribunal is the other important avenue through which corporate performance can be influenced. Water reuse will only work if waste water is correctly priced to overcome reticulation costs of its supply. If pumping water from the Hawkesbury-Nepean remains cheaper than waste water reticulation, then the death of this river by 2011 is assured.

Gardens Of Stone National Park

— Stage One —

On Tuesday, 29 November, the Fahey Government with the support of Ms Clover Moore MP, resolved to revoke the Capertee State forest and parts of three other state forests: Newnes, Wolgan and Ben Bullen totalling 6,433 hectares. Speaking for the motion to revoke state forests to make national parks, the independent Member for Bligh, Ms Clover Moore MP, called on the Government to include Mount Airly in the proposed Gardens of Stone National Park. The Government's revocation motion was passed on the voices. The Labor Party expressed its opposition to the park but did not call a division on it.

The revocation was necessary before the Gardens of Stone National Park (and nine other national parks) could be Gazetted on the following day. A further 5,347 hectares of Crown lands were added to the Gazetted area, making the national park a total of 11,780 hectares in extent. The new park includes the Woolpack Rocks area that separate the Wolgan and Capertee Valleys and the forests below this rocky neck that link Wollemi National Park with Pantoney Crown Nature Reserve to the west. The headwaters of Coco Creek and the adjoining escarpments to the south also are now protected, as are Donkey Mountain in the middle of the Wolgan Valley and the Wolgan Escarpment, along Newnes Plateau.

The Colong Foundation's proposal of 18,030 hectares was reduced by the exclusion of the Airly Mesa and Rocky Creek canyon. The new park, however, now directly adjoins the Airly mesa and the Rocky Creek area is now surrounded on three sides by national park. Addition of these areas would be a practical next step to extend the national park estate.

Airly Mesa, a dramatic isolated mesa in the Capertee Valley, is threatened by

Novacoal's Mining Lease 1331 which embraces the western part of the mesa. If mining proceeds, the mesa's wind sculptured rocky turrets and garden grottos will be subject to substantial rock fracture and cliff collapse. The threats to Rocky Creek canyon arise from its potential for construction sand mining and new pine plantations, both environmentally irresponsible in the headwaters of the Wolangambe wilderness.

Labor's National Park Backflip

The Labor Party opposed the proposed Gardens of Stone National Park. Ms Pam Allan, the Shadow Minister for the Environment, spoke strongly against the motion to revoke state forests in the Western Coalfield, expressing concern for job losses and coal resources. Ms Allan reported "I have been delighted to say to a whole range of audiences over the past few weeks, including the Wilderness Society of Western Sydney, that though the Labor Party has found this a tough political issue, it has been prepared to bite the bullet and say that it stands for jobs ahead of national parks in this instance."

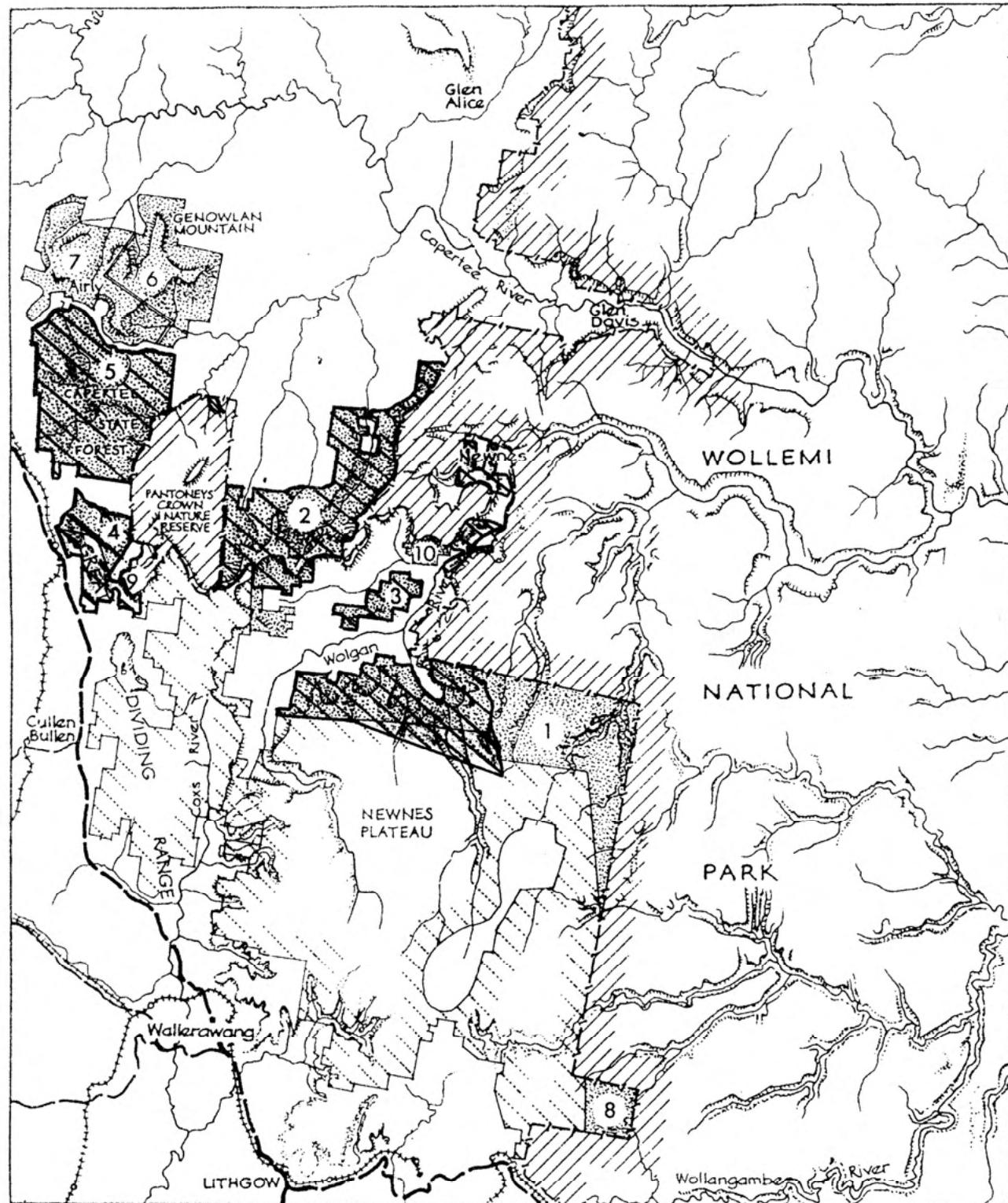
Mr Gaudry, Labor Member for Newcastle, demanded evidence that there was no economic timber or coal resources in the park. For once the Foundation agrees with the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Hon George Souris, view that "if the Opposition's amendment were taken at face value, the provision of the advice of the Minister for Mines (that no coal resources were affected by the park) would render the amendment no longer relevant".

Instead of withdrawing its embarrassing amendment, Labor supported its Member for Bathurst, Mr Mick Clough, MP and opposed this extension to the park system in his electorate. Of course no economic resources were threatened by a national park supported by the National Party.

The miner's friend, Mr Clough, considered that the Gardens of Stone National Park is only desired by conservationists who live in cities. He subscribes 100 per cent to the viewpoint

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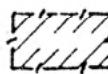




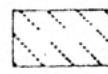
LEGEND



Area declared National Park



Existing National Park/Nature Reserve

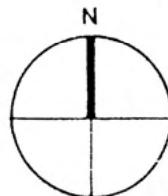


Investigation Area for further reservation



Clover Moore's National Park proposal

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GARDENS OF STONE NATIONAL PARK

Protection of Queensland National Parks

As a result of campaigning by the National Parks Association of Queensland, the Nature Conservation Act has been amended. Section 85, stating that 'An Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander may take, use or keep protected wildlife under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom' has been amended to provide that this section does not apply to the taking, using or keeping of protected wildlife in a protected area.

In Lawn Hill National Park Aboriginal protesters have camped illegally without payment of camping fees, erected structures, killed native wildlife and brought domestic animals into the park. As a result it is no longer safe to use water in the park and visitors will be asked to leave.

Better news from Qld. N.P.A. is that 47,330 ha has been added to Carnarvon National Park.

NCC Council Pre-election Environment Conference

The conference will be held at the University of Technology on Feb. 25th. Its purpose is to review the performance of candidates and parties prior to the NSW State election and determine what action environmental groups should take. For further information, including price, phone NCC at 247 4706

The Croobyar Abomination

The Croobyar logging operations have all the hallmarks of an absolute disgrace: yet another depressing example of how our public agencies are often among the worst environmental vandals... The forests are within kilometres of the South Coast's most prominent landmark, Pigeon House Mountain, and are within the catchment of Burrill Lake... If the NPWS cannot vigorously prosecute State Forests for this abomination, then any weakness in the law should immediately be dealt with. (Bob Beale - SMH, 7/12/94)

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories (GPO Box 787, Canberra 2601) advises that Australia's Greenhouse Gas Inventory has been produced. This is the first comprehensive account of Australia's greenhouse emissions and sinks. Further details available from the Colong Foundation.

The Reluctant Nation

Book review by Jim Somerville

When Philip Toyne gave up being Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, he spent the year 1993 as Visiting Fellow of the ANU's Australian Centre for Environmental Law, during which he researched and wrote *The Reluctant Nation*, which is sub-titled *Environment Law and Politics in Australia*.

It is a splendid book in every way and should be recommended reading for all those young people with a passionate interest in protecting our unique Australian environment.

Being a lawyer as well as a dedicated conservationist, Philip Toyne does an excellent job of explaining the continuing conflict between the States and the Commonwealth. Apart from the Introduction, each chapter is devoted to a particular campaign and the manner in which the conflict developed and was ultimately resolved. The seven most significant environmental battles in recent years subject to his perceptive analysis are: Fraser Island, Franklin Dam, the Tasmanian Forests, Queensland Wet Tropics, Coronation Hill, the McArthur River Mine and the Wesley Vale Pulp Mill.

Earlier in his career Toyne was closely

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expressed by the miners to "Let the bastards freeze to death in the dark".

In a subsequent media release, Ms Clover Moore described Labor's amendment to block the Gardens of Stone National Park as a political stunt. "The Opposition has demonstrated that it is ready to abandon its own park proposals when politically expedient. Labor's behaviour, including Mr Clough's knee-jerk reaction to parks, reflects badly on the fate of other conservation proposals."

Mr John McKel, spokesperson for the Bathurst Conservation Group also was quick to reply to Mr Clough's claims. He pointed to a previous election survey where Mr Clough supported a Gardens of Stone National Park.

Mr McKel revealed that many local groups in Lithgow, Mudgee, Bathurst and Orange supported the park, with over

involved with Aboriginals in the Northern Territory during the period of the controversial Uluru handover. He comments that "as well as being one of the most satisfying experiences of my working life, it was also one of the most stressful because of the vitriolic reaction of the Northern Territory Government...no tolerance is shown to those who hold views contrary to the mainstream white conservative Territorians." He refers to the bitter split in the conservation movement on the issue of handing over National Parks to Aboriginal groups - a division which is as yet unresolved in NSW.

Not surprisingly he concludes that the uncertainties and inefficiencies of the arrangements between the land-owning States and the Commonwealth are "deeply troubling." The book clearly illustrates the inadequacies of our current means of dealing with environmental issues. It is published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation because the author has been a regular contributor to Radio National's 'Green and Practical' Program on Saturday mornings.

Available from the Colong Foundation for \$16.95, including postage.

3,000 signatures to a pro-park petition coming from Bathurst alone.

The Colong Foundation is disappointed by Labor's performance on this proposal that was one of Labor's twenty national parks promised in the lead up to the last state election.

The Colong Foundation conducted a site inspection of the proposed park with Labor members Ms Pam Allan, Mr John Mills, Mr Craig Knowles, Mr Paul O'Grady and Mr Bryce Gaudry in 1993. Labor should have pursued their proposed park. If pressed perhaps the Government would have included at least the Rocky Creek section in the park. Whilst State Forests objected to the loss of the Rocky Creek section of the Newnes State Forest, there can be no doubt that any potential timber resource exists solely in the collective mind of State Forests, and not on the ground (which is mainly rocky pagodas and upland swamps).

The Management of the Royal National Park

When the Royal National Park, the world's second national park, was dedicated in 1879, Sir John Robertson, who proposed the park, described it as a breathing space for urban dwellers living in the unhealthy polluted conditions of the city. As the city has expanded and pollution increased, his description is even more apt today, when the Lord Mayor counsels the designing of city buildings to seal out cancer-causing traffic fumes.

The NPWS has released for comment a draft management plan covering the Royal NP and the adjoining Heathcote and Garrawarra Parks.

Because of its proximity to the metropolitan area, the Royal is subject to intensive usage. Some 3 million visits are made to the park each year. Although 94% of visitors are car borne, picnicking and swimming are very popular and some 44% of visitors do some walking. Special measures are therefore needed to fulfil the prime management objective 'the protection and preservation of the natural environment'. These include:

- Control of introduced species (including deer).
- No additional public roads and promotion of the use of public transport.
- Reconstruction of walking tracks.
- Camping in a number of locations, but no camp fires.
- Prohibition of horse riding and the use of bicycles on walking tracks.
- In the long term, elimination of power lines and other utilities.

In view of the usage pressure on the park, it is likely that most conservationists

would approve these measures. Few, if any, however, would approve the accompanying Cabins Conservation Plan.

When the Federation of Bush Walking Clubs succeeded in having Garrawarra dedicated in 1934, it went along with the NPWS policy of allowing the occupants to retain the 'shacks', as they were then called, during their lifetime, after which they would be demolished. After 60 years most of the original occupants are dead, but they were allowed to pass on the cabins to their relations and friends. The timber, fibro and corrugated iron structures have a limited life unless they are reconstructed as they decay. Their like is replicated in alternative life style and other areas throughout NSW. To conserve them, or protect them under the Heritage Act, as the owners want, and grant the occupants a virtually hereditary title, is directly opposed to the NPWS aim of "protection and preservation" of natural features and "the conservation of wildlife and natural biodiversity."



Legal Aid

Until a year or so ago the NSW Legal Aid Commission provided funding for those environmental cases which it considered had merit. However, National Party members strongly disapproved of Government money being used to question Government decisions, believing that politicians and bureaucrats never made errors of judgment.

Now, however, the Federal Attorney General (Mr Lavarch) has announced a plan to increase funding to State Legal Aid Commissions and to seek more control over the way the money is spent. An extra \$54 million will be provided in each of the next four years, some of which will be used for "test cases and large scale civil cases of national significance." Additionally, the concept of an Environmental Defenders Office, which was pioneered in NSW, will now be extended to all states and expanded to fund more public interest environmental matters.

Some change in procedures is certainly necessary.

In the past the environmental movement has won a number of important public interest cases in the Land and Environment Court, ensuring that our environmental protection laws are observed. The Federal Government must be congratulated on its recent decision.

During last financial year the sources of legal aid in NSW were: Commonwealth Govt \$39 Million, State Government \$19 million, Law Society \$13 million, Client contributions \$11 million and Other \$2 million. Criminal and family law and mental health accounted for most of the grants. Civil law received only 6%.

Meeting Dates

Meetings will be held on February 2 and 16 and March 2 and 16.

The Battle Royal Continues...

The controversy over urban expansion at Helensburgh adjoining Royal National Park continues to rage. The Member for Bulli, Mr Ian McManus, described the Commission of Inquiry on Helensburgh as unnecessary during a recent Parliamentary debate on the matter.

Mr Manus revealed that the Inquiry began in controversy with prospective parties to the Inquiry announcing that they were subject to civil litigation proceedings by one of the key property developers. These local residents of Helensburgh consider they are disadvantaged and were afraid to present their case to the Inquiry. The real fear these individuals experience arises from attempts to undermine their duty to speak out in defence of Australia's oldest park.

Those brave citizens have worked hard to defend Royal National Park from the spoiling effects of adjoining urban development. Their reward for this public service has been civil litigation, not for defamation, but for conspiring to damage the interests of a developer's company.

From this dismal beginning the Inquiry travelled on through endless submissions by the developers. The developers' consultants introduced a redesign of this urban development in the headwaters of the Hacking River. Yet despite spending over \$1 million on design, the developers have not proven their case that urban expansion will not cause "significant environmental degradation".

The decisive evidence came from three impartial and authoritative government departments: the Department of Water Resources, the Environmental Protection Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

None of these departments were persuaded that the development would protect water quality and avoid damaging the flora and fauna of Australia's most visited national park. The Helensburgh Commission of Inquiry was a waste of time.

It would be hard to find anywhere in NSW a place more unsuitable for urban

expansion, because of its proximity to Royal National Park, the Hacking River and Port Hacking estuary, and to the greenbelt which stands between Sydney sprawl and Wollongong.

The Government should support the Sutherland and Wollongong Councils by providing funds and the assistance of the EPA in implementing a staged enforcement program to remove all illegal land uses that are polluting the catchment headwaters of Australia's oldest national park. It should fund storm water controls and regenerate disturbed lands.

If urban development proceeds at Helensburgh then it is predicted that fauna species will be lost from the Park, common fauna species will become rare in the catchment, rainforest degraded by weeds and fire, the Hacking River become a weed infested ditch, Audley weir will be unusable for recreation and the NPWS will have to spend more of its limited funds attempting to manage these spoiling agencies.

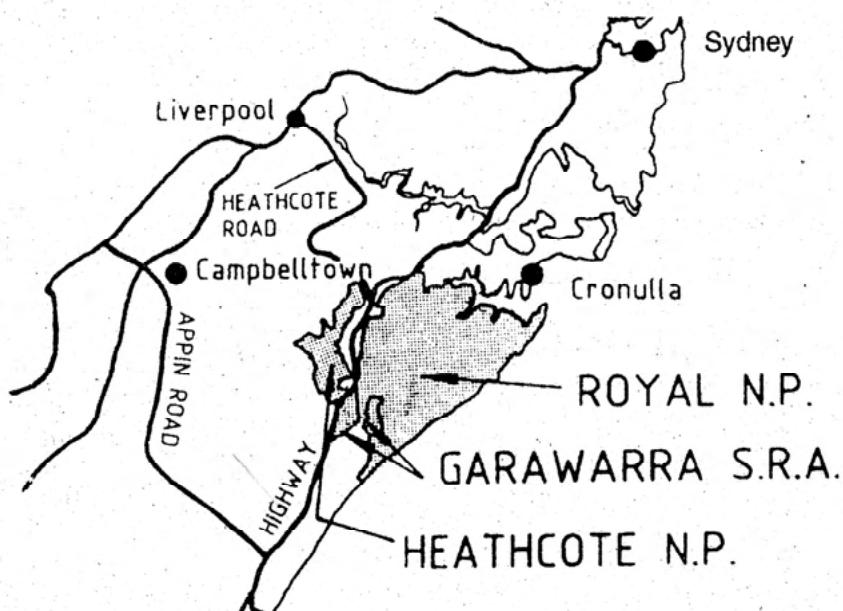
Mr McManus called on the Government to support Sutherland and Wollon-

gong Council's moves to restore and protect the Hacking River catchment and, most importantly, to rezone the land around Helensburgh for environmental protection, as recommended by the Wollongong Council.

In reply Mr Chris Hartcher accused Mr McManus of supporting urban development in Helensburgh before he became a Parliamentarian.

Mr McManus rejected this accusation claiming he was simply supporting development within the existing town and that a recent development that revealed that stormwater controls did not work had strengthened his opposition to development. He said that all the Liberal, Independent and Labor councillors on Sutherland Council are opposed to the proposed urban development adjoining Royal National Park.

Mr McManus called on the Minister for the Environment and the three Liberal Parliamentarians on the Sutherland Peninsula to work with him in convincing the Premier that the development must not go ahead.



Ten New NSW National Parks - One Small Step For Conservation

On December 1, 1994, the Fahey Government declared more than 70,000 hectares of new national park. While the Gardens of Stone National Park can only be described as a positive step that the Labor Opposition would not take, many of the other parks received only luke warm reception from the conservation movement, with Popran and Nangar National Parks being notable exceptions.

Mr Jeff Angel, co-director of Total Environment Centre, described the decision to declare the South East Forest national parks as sentencing some of the best old growth forests in Australia to death by woodchipping.

About 50,000 of the 70,000 hectares of proposed parks were comprised of the six new parks declared in the south east. These reserves were described by the former Minister for the Environment, Mr Tim Moore, as spaghetti-like. The new parks simply link existing national parks with thin strips of steep lands and unproductive forest types that the timber industry didn't want.

During the debate in the Legislative Council on the revocation of state forests for national parks, the Hon Jan Burnswoods MLC reminded parliamentarians that Labor supported a south-east forest park of 90,000 hectares.

"The Opposition does not believe that the pathetic bits and pieces of State Forests offered by the Government will do anything to conserve the precious south-east forests", she said.

Wilderness and NPA's new park areas minimised

The addition of Diamond Creek to Deua National Park is merely the last step in implementing its wilderness backdown announced on 9 September. The addition of Diamond Creek is the only threatened wilderness outside national parks to be protected by the Fahey Government's wilderness decision.

There are 9,500 hectares of the Deua

wilderness identified by the Parks Service that will continue to be logged. State forests within the identified wilderness areas of Washpool, Guy Fawkes, Binghi, Macleay Gorges, Goodradigbee, Nadgee and Binghi will continue to be destroyed.

The small coastal additions such as Cudmirrah and Conjola represent a back-down on the non-controversial parks proposed by the National Parks Association and Dr Peter Macdonald, Independent member for Manly, in his New Areas Bill.

Democrat The Hon. Richard Jones said that declaration of 2,000 hectares out of 7,200 hectares proposed by the Macdonald Bill only protected the Swan Lakes foreshores.

The substantial addition to Nangar National Park of 5,000 hectares of state forest, on the other hand, secures important ironbark forests in the central west of the state near Orange.

NPFS Ignored

Mr Jones considers that the Government appears to be completely unable to create a "comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system to protect old-growth forest and wilderness values" as required by the National Forest Policy Statement (NPFS) signed by Premier Fahey in 1992.

Forests like Ben Halls Gap State Forest, which is listed on the register of the National Estate and by the National Trust (NSW), and is a long-standing national park proposal, will not be revoked. Ben Halls Gap has tall undisturbed old-growth forest stands of messmate and mountain gum that are poorly represented in the National Parks and Wildlife estate, and is a key area which should be set aside from logging. He said the Democrats will continue to support moves by conservationists to protect all the old-growth forests of New South Wales as quickly as possible.

NCC Support for Colong Foundation

At the Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council, held on October 29 and 30, the following motions, submitted by the Colong Foundation, were carried:

That the NCC deplores the abysmal failure of the NSW Government to implement:

- (a) declaration in full of all 15 NPWS identified new wilderness areas;
- (b) the creation of Popran and Cudmirrah National Parks and a Nature Reserve at Ourimbah Creek, as announced on 27th May 1993;
- (c) a promise to ensure that, within the life of this 50th Parliament, plans of management are prepared and implemented for all National Parks and Nature Reserves;
- (d) an urgent review of the system of fines and its implementation under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act.

That the NCC calls on the NSW Government to keep and defend the Wilderness Act in its entirety and, under the Act, declare all wilderness in NSW by the year 2000.

That the NCC calls on the NSW Government to declare and enforce a moratorium on all activities threatening wilderness areas identified by the NPWS.

That the NCC calls on the NSW Government to, as a matter of urgency, establish, fund and implement adequate Plans of Management for all wilderness areas, through Management Plans for National Parks and Nature Reserves and conservation agreements, subject to public review, for land outside the NPWS system.

That the NCC calls on the NSW Government and the Civil Aviation Authority to prohibit all helicopter flights below 2000 metres above ground level over wilderness areas, except for those helicopters operated by essential services.

That the NCC ensure any follow up to the above motion by government express the rationale of the motion primarily in terms of nature conservation, particularly in terms of stress inflicted on native fauna and secondarily in terms of human recreation demands.

THE COLONG BULLETIN

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The Gloucester Walk
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SYDNEY NSW 2000



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Please remember us in your will. The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording:

'I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd..'

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Membership fee of \$20 covers Bulletin subscription. If you are not personally known to the Foundation, the 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.
Return to The Hon. Secretary, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St, Sydney 2000



The Treasurer
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The Colong Foundation originated as the Colong Committee, which was appointed in 1968 by a meeting of conservation societies to prevent the quarrying of Colong Caves. Shortly afterwards the Committee extended its objective to cover the saving of the Boyd Plateau from becoming the site of a 15,000 acre pine plantation. Both objectives had been achieved by 1975, when three new objectives were adopted. The first of these was the creation of a Border Ranges National Park, an objective which escalated to become the rainforest campaign. The other objectives were the creation of a Greater Blue Mountains National Park and a Kakadu National Park. The rainforest parks and Kakadu are now World Heritage areas, the Greater Blue Mountains Park is in being in fact, though not in name, and the Foundation is campaigning for World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains and the extension of the park system to include the "Gardens of Stone". The Foundation's proposal for a Wilderness Act was accepted in 1987. It has been supplemented by the Red Index of Wilderness, now being updated and extended to other states. A more detailed history of the Foundation is available in its introductory brochure.