



# THE COLONG BULLETIN

Bulletin 149

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

March 1995

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*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world... indeed it is the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead, quoted in  
Wambaliman, September 1994

*Most – if not all – Australia's protected areas exist as a result of lobbying by community groups.*

Report of House of Representatives  
Committee on the Environment,  
February 1993

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## Nature Conservation Record of the Fahey Government

**T**he Fahey Government has created and announced a number of new national parks and nature reserves. On December 1 1994 ten new parks were announced, covering an area of 70,000 ha. Of this 50,000 ha was in the south east. Though described by the former Minister for the Environment as 'spaghetti-like', they did link existing national parks by means of strips of steep land not wanted by the timber industry. The inclusion of the Foundation's Gardens of Stone proposal, opposed by the ALP, was welcomed, despite the exclusion of the scenic Mount Airly-Genowlan mesa. There were small coastal additions at Congola, Cudmirrah and Swan Lake. There have been several additions to inland reservations. The acquisition of the Schmidt property, which intruded into the Pilliga Nature Reserve, has preserved a large, now compact area, containing endangered species. Two large parks have been created at Nangar, near Orange and Gunderabooka, beyond Co-bar. These parks are very significant because it is only within large natural areas that endangered western species are

likely to survive. New nature reserves such as Horton's Creek (330 ha) and Khappinghat (367 ha) have been gazetted and there have been additions to existing National Parks such as Tarlo River (1315 ha) and Warrumbungles (620 ha). On December 9 last year 113,000 ha of wilderness was declared under the Wilderness Act. A 6000 ha Jervis Bay National Park has been promised.

Five million dollars has been devoted to a program of joint ventures with private landholders to invest in plantations. Perhaps the most progressive action of the Government was the 1994-5 budget increase of the current expenditure of the NPWS from \$43,903,000 to \$62,264,000 and capital expenditure from \$19,028,000 to \$27,341,000.

On the negative side, the abandonment of the National Forest Policy Agreement, as described in the next article, and the rejection of 667,000 ha of wilderness assessed by the NPWS, as described in Bulletin 146, were the worst features. (the latter resulted in a successful censure

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### THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

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## ALP Nature Conservation Record

The ALP has furnished the following summary of its record when in office between 1976 and 1988:

- National park area increased by 100 per cent;
- Increasing to one-third the proportion of NSW coastline in the park system;
- Expansion of the Blue Mountains National Park system including the 486,000 hectare Wollemi National Park;
- Mineral sands mining banned from coastal parks;
- Greatly expanded system of North Coast National Parks including Myall Lakes, Yuraygir and Bundjalung;
- New wilderness parks such as Wollemi, Deua, Wadbilliga and Yengo;
- The protection of our rainforests and the establishment of large rainforest parks such as Border Ranges, Nightcap, Washpool, Werrikimbe and Barrington;
- Australia's first Wilderness Act;
- Inclusion of Lord Howe Island, Willandra Lakes and Rainforests on the World Heritage List;
- Inclusion of State Recreation Areas as part of the national park system;
- The Metropolitan Parks Improvement Program to upgrade visitor facilities in the major parks serving Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

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motion against the Premier.) No plans of management have been made for the Greater Blue Mountains National Parks system. The Wilderness Fund remains empty. Gold dredging of the Sara River, in the Guy Fawkes Wilderness, was approved and the Bicentennial Trail bisects the Washpool Wilderness. In accord with the Government's program of ever increasing population, plans and preparations for the raising of Warragamba dam and the Welcome Reef dam went ahead. A Government Bill for a planned fire sale of Crown leasehold lands was defeated. Clover Moore's South East Forests protection Bill was defeated. Approval seems likely for the composting of 1,200 tonnes of horse manure per week on an inholding within the Wollemi National Park and helicopters reverberate over the Blue Mountains.

# The Woodchip Abomination

by Alex Colley

In June 1993 Australia ratified its commitment to the UN Biodiversity Convention, which committed the nation to identify and monitor components of biological diversity and establish and manage protected areas.

In December 1992 the Commonwealth and all the states except Tasmania signed the National Forest Policy Agreement. Its goal was to 'maintain an extensive and permanent native forest estate in Australia and to manage that estate in an ecologically sustainable manner so as to conserve the full suite of value that forests can provide for current and future generations'. The two principal objectives were 'the maintenance of an extensive native forest estate in Australia and the protection of nature conservation values, including old-growth values, and of forested lands for reserves for protecting wilderness'. Assessment of forests for conservation values, including old-growth values, and of forested lands for wilderness values, were to be undertaken as a matter of urgency and, until such assessments were completed, management agencies were to avoid activities that might significantly affect such areas.

These areas were to be protected by the end of 1995. The Minister for the Environment, Senator John Faulkner, reiterated these undertakings in speeches made on June 25 and September 29 last year and in a media release of November 2. The Draft Strategy of Australia's Biodiversity called for an adequate system of protected areas and the arrest and reversal of the decline of remnant native vegetation.

In accord with the above commitments, Senator Faulkner's Department identified 1300 forest areas for assessment.

On December 19, just before Christmas, the favoured time for making environmentally damaging commitments, the Minister for Resources, Mr Beddall, issued licences authorising woodchipping in most of the 1300 areas. The licences

approved exports of 6,725 million tons, an increase of nearly 30 per cent. They had been determined in consultation with the states. In NSW the licence issued to Harris Daishowa covering the south-east forests increased the tonnage and excluded only 29 areas, less than a sixth of the 177 high conservation value forests recommended for protection by Senator Faulkner. In the north-east forests Senator Faulkner's recommendation that woodchipping be excluded from 495 of the 1024 coupes scheduled for logging in 1995 was ignored. Commitment to the Biological Convention and the National Forest Policy was forgotten.

In response to the opposition of Forest Industries to any attempt to save the old-growth forests, Mr Keating reduced the number of forest areas available for woodchipping from 1300 to 509 and later, at the end of February, to 452. The executive officer of NSW forests, Mr Richard Stanton, said on February 10th that his organisation would allow logging in nearly all the 249 compartments in NSW which had been identified by Mr Faulkner as having high conservation value.

Both the Commonwealth and the States shared the odium of this political hypocrisy, no state more blatantly than NSW. Only Tasmania was honest. This state refused to sign the NFP Agreement, thereby plainly admitting its intention to continue hacking down old-growth forests.

There are two main reasons for the assault on old-growth forests. The first is the overcutting of native forests, as described in Resource Assessment Bulletin no. 2, which reported that 'Australia's native forests have been overcut in most states causing an impending shortage in the supply of hardwood sawlogs... Overcutting coincides with, and is caused by, the cutting out of most of the unreserved old-growth forest well before any signifi-

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## Three Wins for WPSQ

At its 1994 AGM the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland celebrated three campaign wins and a major financial turnaround. The threat of sand-mining at Shoalwater Bay was averted when a Federal Commission of Inquiry recommended that mining should not proceed. Submissions by WPSQ's Capricorn Branch and other conservation groups highlighted the area's rich biodiversity and the ability of its undisturbed dune system to filter and store massive amounts of fresh water. The Commission recommended that defence and conservation be given equal priority in management. Campaigning by WPSQ and the Rainforest Conservation Society succeeded in halting logging in the Proserpine-Mackay region. And Queensland has at last caught up with the rest of Australia by including third party rights in its environment legislation.

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cant number of regrowth sawlogs reach harvestable size'. The second main reason is the impending availability of plantation softwood, which is preferred by builders. Mr Justice Stewart, who headed the RAC Forest and Timber Inquiry, said in 1991 that, 'The traditional old-growth milling industry is unlikely to exist at anywhere near its present size beyond the next decade or so. Many of the mills dependent on old-growth will probably close and jobs will probably be lost. Second, those mills that can afford the switch to regrowth logs will face a log shortage caused by the old-growth having been cut out too rapidly... Australia is in the process of restructuring an industry that is labour intensive and based on old-growth forest to one that is equipment intensive and based on plantation softwood.' The forest industry is determined to cash in on the remaining hardwood resource while the market lasts.

The over-cutting of native forests is the reason for the determination of the forest industries to log and chip the last of the old-growth forests. This is highlighted by comparing the area of the 509 areas identified by Mr Keating with the area of the native forest estate. These figures were not revealed until Senator Coulter asked for them in parliament. The answer was 60,000 ha, which represents one fifteenth of 1 per cent of the forest estate. In NSW the identified areas would represent less than 1 per cent of the area of State Forests. Why cant sufficient timber be found in the remaining 3.4 million ha? Obviously because the remainder has been overcut and the identi-

fied old-growth forests are to be sacrificed.

The forest industry represents its plunder of the last of the old-growth forests as a means of maintaining employment. The employment so generated will last no longer than the forests. A well qualified observer of the recent timber industry blockade of Parliament House, Ted Mack MP, describes it as follows in the *North Shore Times* of February 8th:

*Among the many examples in recent years of stealing from future generations by asset selling for greed or stupidity, none is more blatant than woodchipping of native forests...*

*The recent blockade of Parliament House by the so-called 'Forest Protection Society' (a title that might make the Mafia blush in its crude hypocrisy) shows the lengths to which the industry will go.*

*Just on \$100,000,000 worth of huge trucks were massed to intimidate the Members of Parliament.*

*For three days, 200 or so MPs and 4,500 people who work at Parliament House were forced to run the gauntlet.*

*There was evidence that many of the crowd were company subsidised, with a percentage of rednecks in particular harassing women.*

*The demonstration meant nothing in the inevitable abandonment of woodchipping of native forests, but was a sickening display of money and aggression.*

The case for the logging of old-growth forests rests upon the maintenance of forestry employment. Provision of employment is the invariable justification advanced by development interests for whatever environmentally damaging activity they pro-

## Forests as Carbon Sinks

At the Greenhouse '94 conference in Wellington, Mr Upton, New Zealand Environment Minister, told the conference that New Zealand had decided that in meeting its international obligations to cut emissions, it would rely 80 per cent on carbon 'sinks', such as forests and 20 per cent on reducing emissions. 'It is not carbon dioxide emissions that matter', he said, 'The... reduction will in fact mean that our net emissions by 2000 will be 50 per cent below 1990 levels.'

However the soaring growth of New Zealand's pine forests would only buy the nation an estimated 30-40 years at current planting rates before the available forestry land ran out. For this reason NZ had committed itself to introducing a carbon tax if its efforts to reduce carbon emissions failed to work enough.

pose, whether it be the logging of old-growth forests, including rainforests, the flooding of lakes, mining in national parks, or the building of resorts in pristine natural areas. Reduction of employment is accepted if it makes or saves money, but not if it saves the natural environment. The NSW Government regards the reduction of employment in government enterprises as a notable achievement, but supports the logging of old-growth forests.

Because of technological change, increased efficiency and changes in consumer demand, employment is constantly being reduced in a wide range of industries. Except in times of recession displaced workers have been able to find alternative employment. Timber workers, however, face difficulty in finding alternative jobs because they work in small towns with limited employment opportunities. For this reason they merit special consideration if they are to lose their jobs in the public interest. Many could be employed in re-afforestation projects, surplus workers could be given redundancy payouts, as in many other industries. The acquisition of land and the establishment of plantation forests would require considerable funding, though it would be a sound long term investment. Redundancy payments, if necessary, could be reduced by the phasing out of the logging of native forests and non-replacement of workers leaving the industry. In NSW, which is spending \$1 billion on sporting activities and has a budget surplus of \$1.4 billion, funds could be found to employ or compensate the few hundred workers who might be affected by cessation of old-growth forest logging.



# The Restoration of Lake Pedder

*The Colong Committee joined in the campaign to save Lake Pedder in 1972. The Foundation is pleased to join in the new campaign which aims to restore the Lake. We have made the following submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment's Inquiry into the restoration proposal:*

**I**n this submission to your Inquiry, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness strongly advocates the restoration of the original Lake Pedder.

As the lake is now part of the Western Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, it is incumbent on the Commonwealth Government to rectify the outrageous action of the Tasmanian Government in creating the Huon-Serpentine impoundment twenty years ago and drowning the majestic scenic gem which is Lake Pedder.

The 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention' specify that 'superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance' must include areas that are essential to maintain these qualities. This guideline clearly dictates that the natural beauty of the original Lake Pedder must be revealed by the removal or side-lining of the Serpentine and Huon dams.

With its exquisite quartzite beach and backdrop of mountains, Lake Pedder is a landform unique to Australia and possibly to the world. This fact alone imposes a clear delegation of responsibility on the Australian Government, which has taken on the role of protector of the Western Tasmanian Wilderness, to restore the 'status quo'.

The survey by Professor Peter Tyler and the subsequent analysis by Dr. Kevin Kiernan of Deakin University (both of which are before the Inquiry), indicate that the physical features such as the beds of Lakes Pedder and Maria together with the lunette and drainage channels, are all in-

tact and only a few millimetres of easily dispersed silt covers the famous beach. Dr. Kiernan concludes that not only is the basin physically intact, but that no human intervention should be necessary for restoration after the basin is drained.

As the "Pedder Papers" indicate, the Hydro-Electric Commission, in order to avoid or delay the inevitable controversy, deliberately misinformed the general public.

The cost of alternative schemes which would save Lake Pedder were exaggerated and the claim that the power was urgently needed was wrong. Today a court of law would consider that such duplicity on the part of the Tasmanian Government constituted a denial of natural justice and rule in favour of the objecting plaintiff.

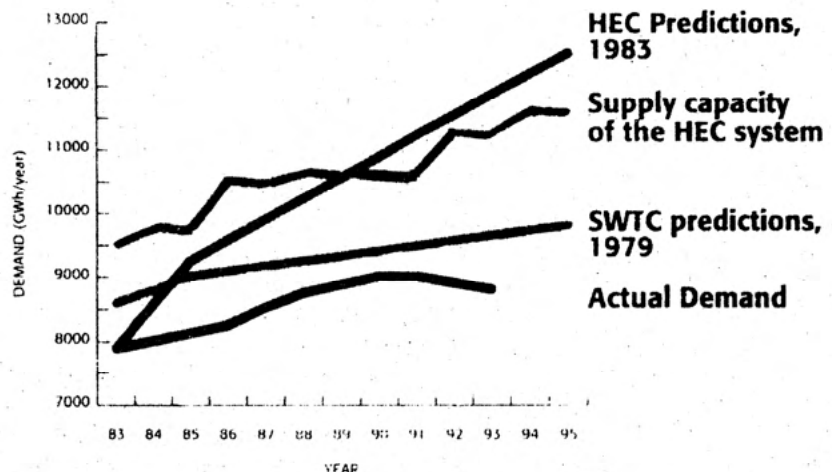
In order to test claims of financial loss as a result of restoration of the lake, your Inquiry should obtain from Comalco its long term plan for the operation of the Bell Bay aluminium plant. Similarly the National Grid Management Council should be asked to provide its plans for 'BASSLINK'.

The benefits from increased tourism should be assessed as an offset to any financial loss due to the restoration. Since the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics were placed on the World Heritage Register, Queensland has experienced a phenomenal increase in visits by overseas backpackers.

Because of distance and isolation relatively few backpackers visit Tasmania. However this situation would certainly change once the restored Pedder becomes famous as the only case in the world of a lake being drained in order to restore a superb gem of nature in a World Heritage area.

Finally, we urge that your Committee arrange to sit in Melbourne and Sydney as well as Hobart. Financial limitations and/or work commitments would prevent many who may wish to give evidence from travelling to Hobart. In any event, objections to the flooding were more numerous on the mainland than in Tasmania, so it is only right and proper that the undoing of this vandalism should be of national concern.

**GROWTH OF DEMAND FOR POWER IN TASMANIA—predicted and actual**



from *Wilderness News*, No. 137

# The World Heritage Significance of the

# Wollemi Pine

When the Wollemi Pine was discovered we asked Dr Geoff Mosley, author of our Blue Mountains for World Heritage proposal, whether the survival of the pine was due to the great age and stability of the Blue Mountains landscape and whether its discovery would promote World Heritage listing. In reply he contributed the following article which he sub-titled 'Another plus for Blue Mountains World Heritage listing':

**T**he discovery in October of a grove of twenty specimens of a previously unknown conifer in the Wollemi National Park is a definite feather in the cap of the claim that the Blue Mountains and surrounding sandstone plateaus should be inscribed on the World Heritage list. The trees, which are forty metres tall, were found by the canyoneer and national parks officer, Dave Noble, growing in a 600 metre deep very wet gorge.

I say 'feather in the cap' advisedly because the main World Heritage feature of the region is the sclerophyll flora characterised by such genera as *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* – the truly Australian flora which took over from the rainforests and conifers as Australia became drier over the last 200,000 years and, like a flood, covered all but a few of the areas capable of supporting trees in the last 10,000 years.

The Wollemi Pine, a gymnosperm, belongs to the much older era which preceded the development of the flowering plant and is therefore an undoubted relict of the ancient Gondwana forest which continued to dominate the Australian flora until the sclerophylls took over.

K.D. Hill, who is investigating the

plant at the National Herbarium after it had been passed on by Wyn Jones (Senior Naturalist at the NPWS), considers the Wollemi Pine to be a third genus of the *Araucariaceae*. It has, he says, distinct differences from the other extant genera of the family *Araucaria*. (cf. the Hoop Pine, Bunya Pine and Norfolk Island Pine) and *Agathis* (cf. Kauri Pine, of New Zealand) and appears to be most closely related to groups such as *Araucarioxylon*, with a fossil record in the Cretaceous and early Tertiary (50 million years ago). Perhaps the relatively slow rate of erosion of the sandstone plateau helped with the Pine's survival. One can only speculate on this, but certainly the damp, fire-proof canyon provided a refuge.

The *Araucariaceae* had a world wide distribution 200 to 65 million years ago before the great extinction of the late Cretaceous but after this it was confined to the Southern Hemisphere. The National Herbarium believes the new tree is so distinctive that it must have been an evolutionary line distinct from any surviving plant group for at least 65 million years.

There are other conifers with Gondwanan connections in the Blue Mountains, such as the Podocarps (e.g. *Microstobus fitzgeraldi* – also endemic to the region) and *Podocarpus elatus*, so why is the new find important for World Heritage?

While the main botanical theme of the nomination is the eucalypt dominated sclerophyll flora, the site is more complete for containing relicts of the earlier flora, including the rainforest patches found in sheltered spots and rich soils. The greater the representation of the whole biota the greater its capacity to

Wollemi Pine Leaves and Cone - drawing courtesy of Royal Botanic Gardens.



evolve through natural processes in the future.

Furthermore, the fact that only 20 Wollemi Pines have been found adds to the area's World Heritage value as the home of rare and endangered plants. Who knows what other secrets await in the relatively unexplored Wollemi country?

The timing of the discovery was appropriate. The trees were found just in time to be included in the final report of the Blue Mountains World Heritage assessment and in the conifer sections of the *Flora of Australia*. The Wollemi Pine will be scientifically named in 1995 in the Royal Botanic Gardens journal *Telopea*.

## TREE CLEARING FAR EXCEEDS PLANTINGS

At the Fremantle Greening Australia conference, Dr Michael Buxton, Victorian Environmental Protection scientist, said that Australia had one of the highest rates of indigenous tree clearing in the world.

We had already cleared over twice as much forest as that cleared in Brazilian Amazonia and more trees are cleared in Australia each year than are planted in a decade.

The 1994 Australian Inventory for the Estimation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions estimated the 1989-90 land clearance figure at 664,000 ha.

Total land clearance between 1983 and 1993 was 5.17 million ha including 1.5 million ha in NSW. Thirty seven per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions resulted from clearing.

# Party Nature Conservation Policies

On January 25th we wrote to the major parties and to Clover Moore requesting their policies on:

- ★ The declaration of wilderness areas assessed by the NPWS and the protection, until assessed, of other wilderness areas, as described in The Red Index;
- ★ The preservation of old growth forests in accord with the National Forest Policy and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity;

## Wilderness Declaration

The criteria of the Government to identify appropriate wilderness areas are as specified in the Wilderness Act (1987). The NPWS will continue to prepare assessment reports on proposed wilderness areas, which will be made available to the public for comment. Both the report and comments received will be used by the Government in the determination of wilderness areas. Those areas that have been nominated are still being assessed in a rigorous process, which involves a high degree of public participation.

In addition the Government is looking for opportunities to expand the national parks estate to complement the high quality reserves that are already conserved.

## Old growth forests

As a signatory to the National Forest Policy Statement, the NSW Government is committed to the implementation of the policies and strategies in the statement.

In NSW, under the Timber Industry (Interim Protection) Act (TI(IP)) 1992, a moratorium has been placed on logging activity in certain old growth forests within the State. These forests are considered to be of the greatest environmental sensitivity in the State. The moratorium on these forests is in place until comprehensive environmental assessment of the areas, in the form of environmental impact statements, is complete. Following this process, informed decisions about the future management of these forests

can be made.

The Fahey Government is committed to the development of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system. However, to date there has been no resolution with regard to the appropriate criteria, because of delays by the Federal Labor Government in progressing the issue. The Fahey Government will continue to lobby for an effective and rigorous process so that credible assessments can be made.

## Woodchipping

The Fahey Government is committed to the implementation of the NFPS, which calls for a comprehensive reserve system and methods for the sustainable use of forests in those areas that continue to be logged.

The Federal Labor Government has created a climate of complete confusion, having made three "final" decisions in less than three months, and has still not resolved the matter of woodchipping licences. In such an unstable climate, the State Government is not able to resolve the confusion that has been caused by Labor. The Fahey Government will co-operate with the Federal Government to undertake thorough assessments of the forests in NSW, and will continue to work hard to implement the NFPS.

## Preservation of Wilderness Areas

Wilderness will be managed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Wilderness Act (1987) and the NPWS

- ★ Woodchipping;

- ★ The preservation of wilderness areas from degradation by mining, off road vehicles, horse riding, live stock, resort development, prescribed burning and helicopter flights;

- ★ The raising of Warragamba Dam.

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Chris Hartcher, replied as follows on behalf of the Coalition:

## Field Management Policies.

Section 1.10.10 of the Service's Wilderness Policy states that;

*'a wilderness area should only be declared over land that is largely in a primitive condition as evidenced by the presence of a substantially unmodified native vegetation cover.'*

The policy also determines that wilderness areas should provide opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation and will exclude activities which diminish these opportunities and conflict with conservation objectives.

## Warragamba Dam

The raising of Warragamba Dam is intended as a flood mitigation measure only. The aim is to provide relief for 60,000 properties downstream of the dam by reducing the peak of any major flood. The proposal as it currently stands is designed to allow the gradual release of peak flows over a ten day period, so that any areas inundated as a result of the construction would only be covered with water for a maximum of ten days, often less.

However, the proposal is still only in draft state. The NPWS has indicated to the Department of Planning a range of issues that will need to be considered in the process of finalising the project and undertaking thorough impact assessment. You can be assured that the Government will ensure that any impact on the conservation values, and especially the wilderness values, of the affected areas of the catchment will be rigorously evaluated in the process.



**The Liberal and National Coalitions Environmental Policy released on March 11th failed to address Wilderness issues.**

### **The ALP Policy**

#### **Wilderness**

On March 10th Pam Allen, Shadow Minister for Planning and Environment, outlined the ALP policy as follows:- A Carr Labour Government will create seven new Wilderness areas and extend eight existing areas in the first year of Government. As the first step they will Gazette wilderness areas in National Parks. As well they will declare areas outside the park estate in which state forests have already declared no interest or which have already been set aside for environmental protection because they are too steep to log. The second stage of their plan will see other wilderness outside the national parks estate removed from the logging program in line with their forests policy. Once the moratorium is placed on the logging of these areas they will be assessed with a view to establishing an adequate, representative and comprehensive reserve system.

The NFPS states: Forested wilderness areas will be protected by a means of reserve developed in the broader context of protecting the Wilderness values of all lands. Under the ALP process wilderness areas currently not being logged - such as Chaelundi and North Washpool- remain off the logging program. Ms Allen said Labor would also pass legislation to protect and manage wild and scenic rivers. An independent wilderness inventory will also be undertaken in NSW.

(The ALP Wilderness Policy has been derived from the Colong Foundation Red Index - Ed.)

The ALP will create 24 new national parks (a complete list has been furnished) These parks will be funded by the use of \$50 million in environmental trusts.

#### **Old Growth Forests and Woodchipping**

A Carr Labor Government will shift the basis of the State's timber industry from logging old growth and wilderness forests, as defined by the National Forests Policy Statement, toward a reliance on plantation and regrowth logging. It is estimated that every hectare of plantation saves seven hectares of native forest from being disturbed.

This shift will occur over a realistic period, but without detriment to the protection of high conservation old growth and wilderness forests, and will involve transition arrangements to ensure an ongoing and viable timber industry in the short to medium term. A central objective of Labour's forest policy is to establish, and maintain, an efficient high technology and ecologically sustainable sawlog driven timber industry.

#### **State Forests.**

The first step in the management of our State Forests will be the identification, in conjunction with the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation reserve system, of those locations from which timber may be harvested.

Those areas which are identified to be placed in a comprehensive reserve system, under the NFPS, will be immediately removed from State Forests' management and transferred to appropriate conservation agencies.

Under a Carr Labor Government state forests in NSW will be unambiguously recognised as a public resource and, as a consequence, managed in the public interest. The Minister for Forests will be the "owner" of our state forests. The Minister's "ownership" will be on behalf of the citizens of NSW.

A Forestry Advisory Council (FAC) will be established by statute, to assist the Minister in the ongoing formulation, implementation and management of forest policy and will include:-

- One nominee from the Environment Protection Authority;
- One nominee from the National Parks and Wildlife Service;
- Two nominees from the Nature Conservation Council;
- Two independent scientists nominated by the Ecological Society of Australia.

#### **Plantations**

A Carr Labor Government will establish a landmark timber plantation strategy under a corporatised State Forests by:-

- implementing a hardwood plantation program with the objective of increasing State Forests target of 5,000 hectares per year in 1997/98 to 10,000 hectares per year;
- the enhancement of the existing share farming program for hardwood plantation;
- implementing a softwood pine plantation program with the objective of eventually doubling the existing area of 200,000 hectares of pine plantation

#### **Value Adding**

A Carr Labour Government will ensure that the industry has a long-term viable future by using better technology and value-added downstream processing to fully utilise the state's hardwood timber resources.

Value-adding initiatives will include kiln drying, ply wood construction, laminates, hard and medium density board production, furniture making and paper.

#### **Forest Management**

Forest Management Plans (FMP) will be established according to principles of ecologically sustainable development, and with community consultation, on a regional basis.

FMPs will be reviewed every five years with annual reports on the performance of all aspects of the FMP to be provided to the Forestry Advisory Council and the Minister for Forests, who shall in turn, report to Parliament. (Continued Page 11)

# FOXES AND CATS

## Destroyers or Scapegoats?

**B**y accident or deliberate introduction, a large and motley group of foreign animals and plants have made their way into Australia in the last 200 years. At various times the introduction of such bizarre things as monkeys and boa constrictors has been suggested or tried. Fortunately, only a number of these introductions did mate and multiply in the new southern land. The ones that did survive and thrive have done some infamously bad damage. Imagine inland Australia without rabbits, or the wetter country of southern Victoria without blackberry or ragwort?

However, despite the hype often surrounding their effects, introduced critters are not the root of all environmental evil.

Over last few years there has been a large amount of publicity about the effects of foxes and feral cats on our native animals. A number of media articles have hyped up the disastrous effects of feral predators. Federal and state governments are now spending millions on control programs aimed at foxes and feral cats. Strongly implied in much of this is that if we eliminate foxes and cats extinctions of native animals would be largely reduced.

Such publicity has certainly made an impact on many people. For several years I studied gliding possums and birds at Chiltern in northeast Victoria. A regular comment from local people living on the edge of the forest was the high density of cats and foxes in the Chiltern park and how they were wiping out the local native animals. The reality was somewhat different. In five years of regular work in the forest I saw one cat. Foxes were fairly common but so of course were native animals. My studies and those of others in the park indicated that only two species of native animals had populations which *might* have been kept low by foxes.

This was two out of the 200 or so different species of birds and mammals in the park.

Similarly with other areas and other species. There is very little evidence that cats and foxes are more than a localised problem. For most populations of native animals, foxes and cats are certainly not a threat. The predators either can't catch them (ever seen a cat catch a high-flying swift?) or the species as a whole can deal with the level of predation. Sick, old, young or unlucky individuals of, say, a population of ringtailed possums may lose out and get knocked off by a fox or a cat but there will still be many ringtails around to maintain the population. Populations of native animals can mostly deal with this predation in the same way they have been successful in surviving attacks of deadly and efficient native predators such as tiger quolls, powerful owls and dingoes.

There are two possible exceptions where foxes and cats could be a problem. In suburban fringes the sheer numbers of domestic moggies (and doggies) may wipe out populations of native animals that would handle lower levels of predation in undisturbed areas of bush. Sherbrooke Forest in the Dandenongs is an example where this may be occurring. The second potential problem is the effects of the predators on a small number of ground-living mammals and birds such as bandicoots, small rat-kangaroos and penguins. A few of these may be especially susceptible to being preyed on by foxes or cats and need special protection.

These species and these areas, however, are very much the exception. So why do individuals and governments target foxes and feral cats as environmental bogey-animals? The answer seems simple—foxes and feral cats are an easy scapegoat for problems that

people cause. Currently, the major threat to native plants and animals in Australia is the direct destruction of habitat. This is done by clearing or severe degradation of native vegetation for agriculture, mining, woodchipping and logging operations and by grazing by domestic stock.

These are all problems caused by humans and their industries. To stop or reduce these problems is difficult. It requires hard political lobbying and confronting people with the damage that their activities cause. It makes people angry and defensive. Blaming or killing foxes and feral cats doesn't threaten people in the same way.

It's of little surprise, therefore, that governments, both state and federal, are content to spend lots of money targeting a localised problem. Foxes and feral cats are the best type of scapegoats: no one likes them, and targeting them doesn't offend any human interest groups. Who better to carry the can for the perilous state of our threatened native animals?

*Our thanks to the Victorian National Parks Association and the author, Barry Trail, for permission to print this article from Park Watch, December 1994. It offers a strong reason for wilderness preservation. Foxes and cats and not as a rule found in timbered wilderness areas.*

**MEETING DATES**  
*Meetings will be held  
on March 30th, April  
13th and 27th and  
May 11th and 25th.*



# Australia's Population Carrying Capacity

**W**e have received a request for support of the House of Representatives Standing Committee's report on Australia's Population Carrying Capacity from Mr Gordon Hocking, Secretary of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Sydney Branch, and co-ordinator of the Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population campaign.

Australia already has a population policy. It is to constantly increase the population in order to expand markets and increase profits and real estate values. The environmental impact of this policy is not a consideration.

The report reaches no conclusion. It calls instead for the development of a range of options, but it does recommend that it should be borne in mind that every increase in population imposes social and environmental costs unless accompanied by resource restraint. It also recommends a move to lower levels of consumption.

The Colong Foundation entirely agrees that every increase imposes costs. These costs are both environmental, social and financial. More population means increased pressure on already depleted natural resources, in the form of land clearing, forest destruction, soil degradation, aquatic and atmospheric pollution, etc. This could be overcome by resource restraint, but it isn't and won't be unless taxation is increased. If there were resource restraint there would be no call for development of wilderness areas, nor would it become necessary to flood the Cox, the Kowmung and the Shoalhaven, as will be inevitable if population continues to increase. The financial and social costs are those of providing infrastructure for population increase instead of financing the restoration of our already degraded environment and providing social services for unemployed migrants.

In view of the Committee's admis-

sion that population growth increases social and environmental costs and its recommendation for lower consumption, the logical conclusion was that population growth, the main cause of increased consumption, should be halted. The Committee however, resorted to the all too familiar ploy of presenting a range of options, recommending further research and passing the decision to another authority, in this case a Commonwealth-State Ministerial Council for Population and Urban Affairs. Since the States, particularly NSW, are gung-ho on growth, the outcome is predictable.

The means of stabilising population is simple and obvious. Population due to natural increase will stabilise within a few years. Population growth can therefore be controlled by reducing immigration to the level of emigration, a policy which would cover the admission of immigrants on humanitarian grounds.

The Colong Foundation therefore suggests that those who support the AESP-ACF call for promotion of the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report draw attention to the above facts.

The fact that 90 per cent of the submissions received by the Parliamentary Committee advocated population stability or lower population growth, is proof that growth addiction is mainly confined to development interests.

(Further information available from Gordon Hocking, P.O. Box 70 Dural 2158)

*From a policy point of view, people are hell-bent on trying to avoid detail and taking clear-cut positions on key issues.*

Dr John Hewson 27/2/95

## THE FUTURE EATERS

Book review by Alex Colley

History is usually written as an account of human activities such as the rise and fall of empires and economic and social conflict and change. In his book *The Future Eaters*, Dr Tim Flannery has written the history of human impact on the environment as it affects Australia. As with other species, the future of the human race will eventually depend on its adaptation to the natural environment.

Australia, together with New Guinea and New Caledonia, is part of a landmass called Meganesia, which fragmented from Gondwana. Much of this once contiguous landmass is now beneath the sea. Human occupation has impacted on the biota of these three islands, as it has throughout the world. It has coincided with species destruction, in particular the disappearance of megafauna. There has been controversy as to whether such species loss was due to climatic change or human occupation. Dr Flannery points out that there have been 17 ice ages, but only the last one caused dramatic extinctions. It would be expected that climatic change, which occurred roughly contemporaneously, would affect fauna everywhere, but it didn't.

Fauna in newly occupied lands was highly vulnerable to human invasion, because it had no instinctive fear of this newly arrived weapon-equipped species. In Australia megafauna, such as the diprotodon, the giant kangaroo and the giant wombat, became extinct. In New Caledonia all the larger reptiles became extinct after the arrival of humans 3,500 years ago. In New Guinea few species have become extinct probably because of its forested landscape (wilderness?). In New Zealand the moa was soon wiped out, causing a food shortage which led to wars.

As a result of the loss of megafauna, uneaten vegetation built up and provided fuel for fire. The aboriginal use of fire mitigated its effects by substituting small, low-intensity fires for extensive burns. Dr Flannery recognises the effect of fire in reducing soil fertility, but believes its use is necessary to prevent the disastrous bushfires which occur as fuel builds up.

Part 3 of his book describes 'The last wave' – the arrival of the Europeans. This follows the line of his article 'Australia: Overpopulated or the Last Frontier' published in Bulletin 132. Failure to understand our poor soils and the El Nino Southern Oscillation caused 'an orgy of jingoistic nationalism' (which still surfaces) calling for population of up to 500 million. One geographer however, Griffith Taylor, predicted in 1911 that Australia might support a population of 19 million by the year 2000. This prediction 'viewed as being as outrageous as it was insulting', resulted in his being steadfastly refused a full professorial chair at the University of Sydney.

Dr Flannery is extremely critical of the Australian reserve system, which does not conform to the categories recognised by the IUCN. This, of course, is because the reserves consist mainly of the 'left-overs' from economic development. He is opposed to wilderness because wilderness, as defined by the IUCN, does not exist in Australia. 'The entire continent has been actively and extensively managed for 60,000 years by its Aboriginal occupants'. This view raises two questions; Do we continue to burn natural areas, thereby further reducing fertility? and how do we preserve what's left of the natural environment, modified or unmodified? It is only large reservations that provide habitat for an extensive range of flora and fauna. Their effectiveness is proved by the existence within them of many endangered species and even some previously believed to be extinct, such as the Wollemi Pine, Gilbert's Potoroo and perhaps even the Thylacine. It is probable that most of the world's wilderness remnants have been subjected to some form of 'management' by ubiquitous humanity.

There is another method of preservation for the inland – that adopted in Dr Walmsley's Earth Sanctuaries, within which feral animals are destroyed and native species are protected within fences. Fencing has long been used to exclude pests from rural lands and weeds within them eradicated. The same could be done in reverse for extensive wild life reservations, substituting native biota for introduced species. Perhaps the means to do so will sometime be available, but till then wilderness, which today is never pristine, is the best available habitat.

# Coalition Re-afforestation Policy

While the Keating Government has authorised the clear felling of a vast area of forests for woodchip export, the Coalition is at least considering a substantial re-afforestation programme. The Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mr Ian McLachlan AO MP, has committed the Coalition to the phasing out of woodchipping, but offers no commitment on maintaining forestry employment.

He has presented a discussion paper entitled 'A Clean Australia'. It states that the Coalition 'will bring about the cessation of broad acre land clearing in Australia, to be implemented upon achieving Government'. How this will be implemented in view of the fact that land use is a state, not a Commonwealth responsibility, is not explained. It is probable that the states would refuse to co-operate, as they have refused to honour the National Forests Policy Agreement.

Pointing out that under the Hawke Government's 'Billion Trees Programme' more trees will be lost than are planted, he commits the Coalition to a 'major revegetation program – not just a few acres here and there and not a program to rehabilitate the Billion Trees Program, the Save the Bush Program or the current Land Care Program... It is generally agreed that fifteen per cent of the cleared areas needs to be rehabilitated, which in most places will require significant revegetation. That means remedial action on ten million hectares of southern and eastern Australia within the next fifteen years. Without such action degradation will simply continue.'

The program promises 'fair and equitable compensation to land owners for loss of future income as

a result of land not being cleared' and 'incentives to land owners for expenditure on capital items' if the land owners donate land and labour for the program.

It appears that it depends on voluntary co-operation of land owners, who would be prepared to sacrifice the short term returns of grazing and agriculture for long term benefits. Land owners, most of whom depend on seasonal returns, would require very substantial incentives to cooperate voluntarily. Many whose land was badly degraded would not cooperate, necessitating land resumption if the program was to be effective. It is admitted that 'both the taxpayer and the owner must contribute'.

How this will be achieved is not explained. The coalition is opposed to a carbon tax, and is not committed to an environmental levy. It is opposed to increased taxation and committed to expenditure cuts. The program would cost many billions. How would it be financed?

The NSW National Party has promised \$19 million over two years in a package aimed at creating timber industry jobs, increasing hardwood plantation forests and increasing yield from regrowth native forests (does this mean clear felling?).

The statement by the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Mr Souris, that 'the increased plantation program and incentives for value-adding and new manufacturing can create 5,000 new timber industry jobs' is an admission that there are other means of maintaining timber industry employment than the logging of old-growth forests.

(from page 7)

A Carr Labor Government will appoint a Principal Forest Regulator to monitor the performance of State Forests, licencees and contractors in the implementation and operation of Forest Management Plans.

Within the context of the National Forest Policy Statement, a Carr Labor Government will systematically manage a transfer of logging from high conservation old growth and wilderness to plantation and regrowth forests in accordance with the following process:

- undertake a rapid evaluation of existing regrowth forests to determine their suitability as replacement resource for high conservation value old growth forests;
- urgently reschedule State Forests' logging programs, after taking advice from the NPWS and other agencies, to avoid logging and roading in high conservation old growth forests and identified wilderness areas pending the completion of an interim assessment process;
- issue an immediate direction to CALM and the Soil Conservation Service to fully implement and enforce all private land clearing and land protection controls, including the gazettal of maps for all protected lands.

### **Structural Adjustment**

Labour's industry adjustment funding package will ensure that no worker will be disadvantaged as a result of the transition from high conservation old growth and wilderness forest logging and plantation logging.

Workers affected by a logging moratorium or conservation decision will receive assistance under Labor's structural adjustment plan.

A fundamental feature of Labor's plan is enhanced training and retraining for employees currently in the timber industry, and where necessary, redeployment, relocation and redundancy for displaced workers.

Labor's firm commitment to timber industry employees includes:

- employment preference arrangements and re-deployment to other sectors of the industry, where appropriate, due to any necessary structural adjustments within the timber industry;
- residential accommodation relocation where necessary and appropriate;
- the provision of training for workers in the industry through TRAIN (the Union/Industry training company) and relevant training providers such as NSW TAFE (the provision of adequate training in the industry is currently severely lacking)

A Carr Labor Government will encourage cooperation within the timber industry to ensure redeployment and/or retraining opportunities for displaced employees.

Workers who chose to leave the industry will have first been given an opportunity for redeployment and/or retraining as outlined above.

Labor's structural adjustment funding program will provide for a redundancy package based on current timber industry redundancy agreements, for example, CSR, BTR Laminex and Corinthian Industries. A compensation tribunal will be established (similar to the Egg Industry Repeal and Deregulation Act 1989) for timber industry lorry owner drivers to determine the case, if any, in which compensation is to be paid to logging truck owner drivers who would be terminated or would have their earnings significantly reduced as a direct result of timber industry restructuring.

The Environment Trusts, funded from the trade waste levies Sydney Water collects from industry, will be the central financial source for funding of a timber industry structural adjustment package.

After allowing for commitments to other programs the Environment Trusts will provide \$35 million which will be committed to Labor's timber industry structural adjustment package in the first year.

In total, a \$60 million package will be allocated over five years on a statewide basis for timber industry structural adjustment.

Further, a Carr Labor Government will approach the Federal Government to seek funding assistance for industry structural adjustment in NSW, on a dollar for dollar basis, in the context of the Prime Minister's recent announcement to provide funding for such purposes. This would be in addition to expected funding from Federal Government labour market, retraining and relocation programs.

### **Woodchipping**

A Carr Labor Government will not renew any supply contracts for hardwood woodchips which are not based entirely on genuine hardwood sawlog residue and silviculture practices. Such practices will be stringently enforced and policed.

All export woodchipping will be phased out by the year 2000 or earlier if regional circumstances permit

### **River and Water Management**

The Sydney and Hunter Water Corporations' control of the water catchment will be transferred to NPWS ownership and management. This will protect the biologically rich metropolitan catchment areas behind Wollongong, part of the Barrington Wilderness and Kanangra Wilderness.

### **Biodiversity**

Labor will bring together the disparate survey and assessment efforts of government agencies in the field of biodiversity to establish a New South Wales Biodiversity Survey within the NPWS. The Survey will foster partnerships with universities, industry and the community to maximise the value and credibility of efforts to better understand the State's biodiversity. It will provide the continuity to monitor longer term changes in biodiversity, a more adequate basis for decision making and will emphasise access to information

(continued over page)



and co-operative partnerships in fostering and encouraging research. A Carr Labor Government will implement the National Strategy for the conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity

It will provide comprehensive threatened species legislation which will ensure the survival of threatened species has priority over economic interests, mandates recovery plans with timetables, retains NPWS licensing as per the Endangered Fauna Interim Protection Act process, and provide for wide third party rights of enforcement to ensure effective implementation.

There will also be consideration given to legislate to provide substantial incentives for private land holders to conserve and rehabilitate habitat for conservation of biodiversity, linked with the establishment of a comprehensive reserve system.

#### **Coastal and Marine Issues.**

The use of vehicles for recreational purposes on environmentally sensitive lands will be prohibited. Access will be confined to designated vehicular tracks in a way which does not conflict with the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

The Carr Labor Government has already announced plans to provide a boost in land acquisition funds of the NPWS to acquire sensitive coastal properties.

#### **Clover Moore**

Clover Moore has confirmed her support for the policies of the Colong Foundation on all the issues raised in our letter of 25th January. Her key priorities for the next parliament are:

- the proclamation of all wilderness areas identified by the NPWS
- immediate end to logging of high conservation value forests, a review of all woodchip licences.
- Finance for new eucalypt plantations, retraining and

compensation packages for all workers.

- Marine national parks with equal protection to those on land

Her initiatives during the 50th parliament included close liaison with the environment groups (particularly with the Colong Foundation), a private members Bill to protect the remaining forests of the south-east, environmental safeguards for the Water Board, an amendment to National Parks Legislation to protect the Gardens of Stone, the gaining of a commitment from the Minister for the Environment that the EPA Act would apply to hazard reduction burning (her amendment to place an environmental representative on the Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee was defeated), opposition to the Timber Industry Interim Protection Act, and to National Party forest Bills which would have severely impeded proper forest management, the moving of a motion condemning the Minister for Land and Water Conservation and the Minister for the Environment for their failure to implement the National Forest Policy and support of the motion which censured the Premier for reducing the area of Wilderness defined by the NPWS by 89%.

#### **Australian Democrats Party**

The Hon. Richard Jones has written as follows:

The Colong Foundation's aims have my full support, as you know. With regard to the specific points raised in your letter, the Australian Democrats

- support the declaration of wilderness areas nominated by the NPWS and the protection, until assessed, of other wilderness
- support the preservation of old-growth forests in accord with the National Forest Policy and the UN convention on Biological Diversity;
- support the preservation of Wilderness areas from the degradation by mining, off-road vehicles, horse riding, live stock, resort development, prescribed

burning, roading and helicopter flights.

- oppose the raising of Warragamba Dam;
- oppose the woodchipping of old growth and wilderness forests, and the export of those woodchips.

### **Wilderness Red Index**

A major principle of the Wilderness Red Index is to provide an objective Non-Government measure of the status of Wilderness in Australia. The information that is provided enables the many concerned with the environment, to remain abreast of the current status of the Wilderness areas. The Wilderness Red Index has recently been used to identify 1 million hectares of New South Wales that could be declared Wilderness Area without the loss of employment, and with minimum disruption to the lifestyle of those surrounding the areas.

To maintain this important work the Wilderness Red Index requires sponsorship. With the aid of organisations like The Australian Geographic Foundation and Wild Magazine this is taking place. Sponsors receive recognition in the Wilderness Red Index, along with other benefits. Any one requiring information regarding sponsorship or the Wilderness Red Index Please Contact Edith Taylor, Project Officer Colong Foundation

# SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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*Membership of The Colong Foundation for Wilderness covers Bulletin subscription fee.*

Non-members of the Foundation may subscribe to the Bulletin for a fee of \$10.00 (covers all issues of the Bulletin to 31/12/95)

### A BEQUEST

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  
Colong Foundation For Wilderness Ltd.,  
The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

The enclosed remittance or advice covers the item(s) indicated by a tick.  
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- ☐ Membership application (use form below) (N.B. Membership fee covers Bulletin subscription)
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NAME (MR, MS, MRS, MISS) \_\_\_\_\_

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AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply for membership of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.

I am nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

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

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

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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 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. Recent campaigns for "Gardens of Stone" and Nattai National Park have been successful. 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.

# THE COLONG BULLETIN

SENDER THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

The Gloucester Walk  
88 Cumberland St.,  
SYDNEY NSW 2000



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