



# THE COLONG BULLETIN

Bulletin 153

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

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*I have never before encountered such intense personal animosity, but the pain will be worth it if it leads to a viable industry.*

Mr. Col Dorber, representative of timber industry employers and a member of the National Party, who received death threats and was given police protection because of his support for the \$60 million plan to save old growth forests.

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## Deep in the A.C.R.O.N.Y.M. Jungle

**T**he decline in the number of people employed in logging from 20,000 in 1960 to 11,800 today is partly due to mechanical improvements, but largely due to the failure to implement sustained logging practice (as described in the 1992 report of the Resource Assessment Commission's Forest and Timber Inquiry). The reduction in employment has, of course, been for the purpose of saving money. Reduction in employment for the purpose of saving the natural environment is rejected by both Commonwealth and State Governments. If sustained yield had been maintained the timber produced from softwood plantations, together with that from native forests would enable all old growth forests to be preserved. Dr Judy Clark estimates that the output of plantation timber is already sufficient to enable the protection of native forests.

The Commonwealth Government however has, in response to growing pressure from the environmental movement, tried to preserve old growth forests and maintain employment. Its first step

was the National Forestry Policy Statement (NFPS) an agreement by state, territory and commonwealth governments, to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) system of forest reserves. In the following year it set up the Joint ANZECC/MCFFA NFPS Implementation Sub-Committee, for which the necessary seventeen letter monster has been reduced to JANIS. In 1992 and 1993 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment Recreation and the Arts (given the equine acronym HoRSCERA) held two inquiries. In 1992 the Prime Minister committed the Commonwealth to the National Reserves System Co-operative Program (NRSCP) which aimed to establish a CAR system by the year 2000. It is to be administered by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA) which is developing an Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA).

There is good reason for the policy

♦ continued on page 2...

### THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

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

DIRECTORS: Pat Thompson, L.C.P. (Chairman); Peter Maslen, B.Sc.(Eng), B.Sc.(Botany) (Vice-Chairman); Milo Dunphy, A.M., A.S.T.C. (Vice-Chairman); Alex Colley, O.A.M., B.Ec., H.D.A. (Hon. Secretary); Albert Renshaw (Hon. Treasurer); Tim Cadman B.A. (Hons), M.A. (Cantab.); Phil Millard, M.B., F.R.C.S.; Keith Muir, B. Nat. Res. (Hons); Peter Prineas, B.A., LL.B.; Jim Somerville, A.M., A.S.A.

DIRECTOR: Keith Muir

HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold

HON. AUDITOR: Arthur Andersen & Co.

◆ *continued from previous page...*

statements and investigative steps taken by the Commonwealth. Forestry is a state responsibility. It was therefore necessary to define policy objectives and secure the agreement of the states. There are many hundreds of old growth forests dispersed over a great area. The Commonwealth had neither the organisation nor the data base to locate and assess them, because land use is a state responsibility, so it had to rely on the states for the provision of this information. Only NSW has tried to provide it.

The task of simultaneously preserving comprehensive, adequate and representative forests, containing 15% of the pre-European extent of each forest type, containing 90% or more of high quality wilderness areas, including 60-90% of old growth forests, in reservations, and providing adequate protection for threatened species, requires much arbitrary definition and an unrealistically detailed research program. Since nearly all forests have already been logged, or clear felled, some lightly logged forests must be included as old growth. What intensity of logging is acceptable? Because of variations in geology, topography, rainfall and other environmental differences, no two forests are the same. Which forests are representative? Threatened species are rare, thinly spread and difficult to find. How do you know where they are? Which of the many hundreds of forest compartments answer to the multiple requirements? It is inevitable that the decisions reached on these questions will not conform to the ideals of all parties.

Even more difficult is the provision of finance for the task of training and re-employing displaced workers, compensating logging interests and enlisting the co-operation of all interests affected. That this seemingly impossible task has been accomplished and verified by the passage of the Forestry Reconstruction and Nature Conservation Bill, which provides for the expenditure of \$60 million on the preservation of old growth forests, another \$50 million on the creation of 24 new national parks and \$20 million on other environmental measures, is ample justification for the Premier's description of the Bill as "the greatest leap forward for nature conservation in the country's history."

The Bill also clears the way for the

implementation of the Wilderness Act, the Bill for which was introduced by Mr. Carr when Minister for the Environment. There can be no doubt that the criteria of comprehensiveness and adequacy will be best satisfied in wilderness areas, whether or not these areas can be assessed in detail, since these are the most substantial remnants of the natural environment, and it is in the larger remnants that endangered species are most likely to survive. By the same token forests contiguous to wilderness areas and national parks should also be preserved. Preservation should not be confined to NPWS assessed wilderness areas, but extended to all identified wildernesses as described in the Colong Foundation's Red Index. The criteria of representativeness will not, however, be fully satisfied by such reservations. In the vast cleared areas of the State only a few small remnants of the natural environment survive, and because of their smallness they are vulnerable to invasion by introduced species. In some regions they can be preserved only by fencing out predators and eliminating introduced species within the fenced area.

We hope too that the reserved forests will not be restricted to those identified by the bureaucracy. Nature lovers in voluntary conservation organisations often have a much better knowledge of old growth areas than the bureaucracy, and in a democracy, the wishes of the people should be met.

## Thanks For Bequest

**We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of a bequest for \$1,000 from the late E.W. Irwin, a long time member, who lived in W.A.**

It has been allocated to the Myles Dunphy Fund for investment. Revenue from this fund is a substantial and continuous addition to our income. The total amount of income from some of the fund investments already approaches or exceeds the capital.

The Foundation's reliance on donations, subscriptions and investment income enables it to devote its whole resources to wilderness preservation without expenditure on fund raising.

There can be no doubt that far into the future anti-wilderness interests will oppose wilderness preservation. As our Vice Chairman, Milo Dunphy, has said, 'There is absolutely no end to the proposals which developers, engineers and scientists have for the national parks of Australia.'

A bequest is by far the most enduring form of assistance to the Foundation and several members have notified their intention of making one. The means of doing so is outlined at the back of the Bulletin.

## RNP Heritage Items

I find Graham Quint's justification, based on heritage criteria, for retaining shacks in Royal National Park (*National Parks Journal* Aug. 95) hard to take seriously. If, as he claims, all these buildings qualify for heritage listing then surely any amateur built, second-hand structure right across the country deserves classification.

During its 116 years as a designated park, Royal National Park has seen many inappropriate land uses: logging, charcoal burning, sand and gravel extraction, a fish hatchery, military encampments, guesthouses and permissive occupancy dwellings (Parks and Wildlife Centenary issue, 1979). The shacks at Era, Burning Palms and Little Garie are in the latter category and should, like the others, be phased out as part of a long-term management policy. Certainly it can be argued that all the above uses are part of the Park's heritage, but any activity which is incompatible with the modern concept of a national park should be abandoned. No-one would suggest that the military camp site should be 'restored' or the gravel pits reopened. Are the shacks any different?

**Allan Correy, Senior Lecturer, Heritage Conservation Program, University of Sydney, in a letter to the October issue of the *National Parks Journal*.**

# The Abuse of Public Land

The Public Land Users Alliance, the backbone of which is the off-road vehicle and horse riding lobbies, in the spring edition of its journal, accuses the Colon (sic) Foundation of doing little or no actual conservation and says its activities often have a net detrimental effect on the environment. Despite the two exhibitions of wilderness assessments it says the wilderness areas assessments are the result of secret negotiations without public consultation and that, had Harther offered enough national parks, Milo Dunphy might have urged a vote for the Fahey Government.

In view of the latest motorcade demonstration by four wheel drivers held in the Blue Mountains on November 20th and their blazing of an illegal trail into Wollemi National Park, it is timely to recall the findings of the 1979 State Pollution Control Commission Inquiry into The Recreational Use of Off-Road Vehicles.

On Sunday 23rd Oct. hundreds of four-wheel drive owners formed a motorcade to protest against the NPWS closure of a track illegally created by four-wheel drivers in Wollemi National Park, within which is the State's largest and most pristine wilderness.

The evidence submitted to the SPPC Inquiry by the Colong Committee, the National Parks Association and other conservation bodies, was fully supported by all the authorities represented. The Forestry Commission, the Sutherland Shire Council, the NPWS and the Water Board were all opposed to the use of off-road vehicles in the areas they controlled. Mr. Morgan, representing the Crown Lands Office, said that it was the responsibility of his department to provide lands for recreational use and it would be prepared to set aside areas for off-road vehicle recreation. When asked what type of areas he had in mind he could nominate only gravel pits. Dr Gilpin, who conducted the Inquiry, assured the participants that their evidence would be 'read assiduously,' an assurance which the Inquiry report confirmed.

On the subject of wilderness impair-

ment the Inquiry found that:

*The use of vehicles in areas of high wilderness value, jeopardise wilderness qualities. The desire to explore and trail-blaze areas of virgin country can cause immeasurable damage to flora and fauna, cutting deep impressions as vehicles tyre-spin their way to gain traction over rough terrain. Narrow trails are widened, hillsides are rut scarred, erosion is initiated, reserves become and remain scarred, front-end winches ropescar and ruin vegetation, archeological relics are damaged and the possibility of fires is increased from vehicles and the activities of users of vehicles.*

The report recommended 'the adoption of a broad strategy whereby on the one hand suitable areas are set aside and managed for the use of off road-vehicles, while on the other sensitive areas are designated in which all, or certain classes of, recreational vehicle activity is prohibited.' Legislation to create 'no access' areas would serve to protect areas of nature conservation or wilderness value. The NPWS policy of excluding vehicles from wilderness areas, a policy formulated in consultation with the Colong Committee and other nature conservation bodies, effects the recommendation of the Inquiry.

In a media release dated Oct. 20, on the Wollemi trail blazing, the NPWS states:

The National Parks and Wildlife Serv-

ice has been forced to take dramatic action to close an illegal and dangerous trail created by 4WD users through previously undisturbed bushland. NPWS Executive Director (Operations), Alastair Howard, said the new track created after a private landholder closed the previous access, is extremely dangerous. 'A few gung-ho cowboys have ruined it for responsible 4WD ers by blazing an illegal trail round private property.' Mr. Howard said. 'This illegal trail is so steep that it would take up to 8 hours to winch a vehicle up a three kilometre section and the risk to life and property is obvious. The illegal trail also interferes with an essential fire trail through the park and its closure is supported by local fire control officers as a means of reducing arson.' Mr. Howard said boulders and mounds of soil have been pushed over the illegal track to stop its use and allow the area to revegetate. 'The damage done to the area is devastating and, in order to close the track and give it a chance to revegetate, we have also had to disturb adjoining bushland,' he said. Mr Howard also condemned plans by one small group to attempt to re-open the trail this week-end... 'A few people, for nothing more than personal interest, are prepared to ruin bushland, interfere with fire management and put personal property at risk by creating new trails wherever they please.'

*'Single file may be best when the track is well-formed and firm. However, in trackless country, vehicles travelling side-by-side may do less damage to vegetation which can tolerate only light traffic.'*

—HOW TO DRIVE THROUGH THE BUSH WITHOUT DAMAGING IT (as recommended in the Dunlop Tyres guide for 4WD owners).





# The Environmental Management of Mining

The Colong Foundation has been a leader in the campaigns against environmentally irresponsible mining, ranging from the Colong campaign of the sixties to the Wolgan Valley cliff collapses, mining in Kakadu and today the motion brought before the Nature Conservation Council on B.H.P.'s disastrous practices.

We were therefore pleased to read an article by Janet Epps, in the August Bulletin of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, which describes the growing environmental concern of the mining industry. This concern was further evidenced when we received from the B.H.P. their Draft Environmental Impact Statement covering the Eastern Gas Pipe Line, which, together with supporting papers, covering every aspect of the environmental impact, weighed 6.3 kilograms and measured 28 centimetres in thickness.

The theme of Janet Epps' article is that environmental responsibility benefits the mining industry. 'No longer is any place out-of-site-out-of-mind.' Examples of this are the Ok Tedi mine and the Ecuadorian claim before the U.S. courts that 500,000 people have been injured as a result of contamination resulting from oil and gas operations. Environmental lobby groups are credited with an 'enormous influence' on the global perception of government and corporate responsibility for land and environmental resource management.

Australia (no doubt in response to the campaigning of lobby groups) provides 'some of the best 'models' in terms of progressive, practically based approaches to the environmental management of mining and its regulation,' and 'this Australian experience, covering the management of every possible aspect of mine, land and regulatory management,' is now 'keenly sought by mine operators and regulators' in other countries. The author believes that this 'significantly enhances an Australian company's opportunities to operate in another country.'

After quoting the NSW Protection of

the Environment Act emphasizing the importance of attention to 'the precautionary principle - namely that if there are threats of irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation,' Janet Epps concludes that the minerals industry should 'establish its rightful place in society by not merely seeking technical excellence, but also by demonstrating the will to apply to community problems' its skills and resources.

The increasing awareness of the minerals industry of its environmental responsibility is proof of the effectiveness of the environmental movement's work, but there is still a long way to go, as Ok Tedi, the mining of Mount Airline and the spillage of rock from the Marulan limestone quarry into the Bungonia Geological Heritage area prove. The convoluted process which allowed the huge Bengalla opencut mine to go ahead in the midst of a prime wine growing area near Muswellbrook is a further example of environmentally irresponsible mining. A Commission of Inquiry ruled against it, but the Land and Environment Court recommended against the judgement. The Commission of Inquiry reconvened and reversed its previous decision. A new State Environmental Planning Policy, no 45-Permissibility of Mining - gazetted on August 4th 1995 stated that 'If mining is permissible on land with development consent in accordance with an environmental planning instrument if provisions of the instrument are satisfied, mining is permissible on that land with development consent without these provisions having to be satisfied and these provisions have no effect in determining whether or not mining is permissible on that land or to the determination of a development application for consent to carry out development for the purpose of mining on that land.' We will be pleased to award a free copy of the Colong Bulletin to anyone who can make sense of that.

## Forestry Economics

The great Australian Forestry Debate has been running for a quarter of a century but only recently has any attempt been made to quantify the extent to which the industry is subsidised.

Dr. Anthony Dragun of Latrobe University, using the limited statistical data available, stated in an ABC Earthbeat broadcast earlier this year that in 1994 in Eastern Australia (Qld, NSW, Vic., and Tas.) the statutory forest authorities had received \$110 million in royalties but spent at least \$250 million to produce this income.

The methodology used was ingenious. Dr. Dragun placed a value on all state owned infrastructure, such as roads, buildings and equipment and calculated the interest foregone on this enormous investment (as taxpayers' funds used to harvest timber result in less being available for education and hospitals it is only fair that the public forestry authorities should bear the interest on the investment). To this he added the regulatory cost and associated expenditures such as fire fighting, thus, by comparison with royalties received, revealing an annual subsidy of \$100 million; i.e. Australian taxpayers are paying to have their trees cut down.

The newly created State Forests was permitted by the NSW Government to capitalise past losses of \$460 million as 'formation expenses' - how semantically convenient! This massive sum was lost through their inability to manage a public resource which they were given free of charge.

### Meeting Dates

Meetings will be held on  
December 7th and 21st,  
January 16th and  
February 1st.

# Warragamba Catchment Management

In a letter to Milo Dunphy, Vice Chairman of the Colong Foundation, Paul Broad, Managing Director of Sydney Water, assures him that there is 'no dispute between us as to the paramount importance of maintaining the Blue Mountains area in its natural state, both as a place of great scenic beauty and as a preserve of nature and wilderness as free as possible from human interference. Nor should there be any dispute between us regarding the area's value as a drinking water catchment. International experts continue to express envy of our undeveloped water catchments and their bounty of relatively clean water compared to the contaminated harvest from drinking water catchments elsewhere.'

Support from the environment movement, he writes, encouraged Sydney Water to reformulate its catchment management regulations and the reaction of the environment movement and the bushwalking fraternity to the new regulation, which allows some greater freedoms to bushwalkers and other catchment users, particularly in regard to access and camping in schedule 2 areas 'was a surprise.'

On the subject of camp fires Mr. Broad wrote that 'Sydney Water has been advised that practitioners of minimal impact bushwalking prefer the use of fuel stoves to open fires as a technique for minimising their impact on the natural environment. Certainly in areas like Royal National Park where the number of visitations are high and firewood is at a premium, authorities have decided to prohibit open fires to prevent the supply of deadwood being exhausted and the destruction of flora by visitors seeking firewood which would follow automatically.....It may be that as a result of the wilderness identification process, the National Parks and Wildlife Service will decide that more lenient arrangements for approving open fires are appropriate, but in the mean time, it is not our intention to relax the regulations and give ap-

proval for open fires.'

On the subject of the enforcement of regulations, Mr. Broad writes that 'Sydney Water has no intention of implementing a more intensive policing and prosecution regime to deal with breaches of regulations. It is our intention to build on the good relationships already developed with bushwalkers and the environment movement to both ensure the good management of the water catchments and facilitate access for responsible bushwalkers to the natural areas which we manage.'

In reply Pat Thompson, our Chairman, wrote on behalf of the Colong Foundation:

'Firstly, I want to thank you for the friendly and reasonable tone of your letter.'

It was in such an atmosphere that our late Patron, Myles Dunphy, negotiated an arrangement with the Water Board under which bushwalkers have used much of the Warragamba Catchment for many years.

We were grateful subsequently for the Board's assistance with VIP inspection parties in the days of the proposal to mine limestone in the Colong Caves Reserve adjacent to the Kowmung.

We were disappointed recently that the former Board could not agree to the proposed consultancy on the catchment when a number of other consultancies were agreed with peak groups.

But Sydney Water's proposal to raise the height of the Dam is not a scheme which the Colong Foundation could ever accept. Nor are we happy about regulations severely restricting bushwalker use of about 300,000 ha of national park included in the catchment. If there was prior consultation about the new regulations we were not part of it.

If there are substantial studies showing that dispersed bushwalker use of the Kowmung River Valley is significantly reducing the water quality of the Kow-

mung then we expect Sydney Water to provide us with copies. Failing production of such studies we rely on our own experience which is that the Kowmung is the only relatively clean input into the impoundment, other major rivers such as the Nattai, Wollondilly and Cox being filthy from town sewage and town runoff.

To maintain the quality of the Kowmung River the bushwalking and conservation movements have been obliged to defeat:

- the world's largest cement company;
- the NSW Forestry Commission;
- the NSW Electricity Commission;
- and recently, Sydney Water itself.

These campaigns have involved hundreds of thousands of hours by citizen volunteers. It is not only illogical, but ungrateful of Sydney Water to maintain punitive regulations for use against members of the societies who have campaigned to protect the area since about 1930.

As to the prohibition of minor cooking fires, I enclose a copy of the Australian Conservation Foundation's Wilderness Visitors Code of Behaviour (1982). As you will see the Foundation supports responsible use of campfires in wilderness, stating that gas and liquid fuel stoves should be used (instead) during fire danger periods and where dead wood is unavailable.

Blockups of driftwood, 6 or 10 feet thick, are common along the banks of the Kowmung. The attempt to ban a few tiny fires when Sydney Water burns thousands of hectares each year is absurd.

The suggestion that gas or liquid fuel stoves be used adds unnecessary weight to a bushwalker's pack in this rugged timbered country. It may result in containers being discarded by the few careless users of the area, as occurs in some other parks.

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Use of a fuel stove limits a small party to cooking in one billy at a time, thus lengthening meal preparation. With a small fire 3 or 4 billys can be used at one time and the meal can be concluded within an hour.

If fuel stoves are to be mandatory some users will opt for petrol burning models because they boil a billy much faster than those burning butane. But petrol stoves are highly dangerous and some young bushwalkers may not be sufficiently cautious with them.

The Kanangra Wilderness can be cold and bleak at times and the warmth and light provided by a small fire makes it preferable to a fuel stove - particularly when wet clothes have to be dried. There is a deep-seated cultural delight in a fire - a part of the Australian wilderness experience which cannot be provided by a fuel stove.

The Colong Foundation has not campaigned for the Kanangra Wilderness in order that low density hardy outdoor recreation should be arbitrarily restricted as Sydney Water has done.

We will be campaigning for the Board's regulations to be redrafted. It is also our policy that the catchment should be transferred to NPWS - a policy which was unanimously agreed by the peak groups as their primary aim in undertaking amendments to the Water Board (Corporatisation) Bill under the previous government.

We have also written to the Hon. Peter Collins, Leader of the Opposition, inviting him to undertake an inspection visit to the Kowmung River in the near future. If he accepts we will be contacting Sydney Water to negotiate the necessary agreements.

# WILD ECONOMICS

***The 1993 State Forests report on the economic impact wilderness proposals completely ignored the subsidising of the timber industry by public authorities. Since then there has been little further comment from the anti-wilderness interests.***

**H**owever, the silence was shattered last month by the economic development officer of Hastings Council, Mr Trevor Sargeant. The local papers announced that timber mills and 650 jobs were in danger as sixty per cent of the resource was to be tied up. According to Mr Sargeant's report Commonwealth Government's deferred forest assessment areas, the NSW Government's forest shadowed thirty per cent reduction in saw mill allocations and Werrikimbe wilderness proposals were to blame.

Mr Sargeant's views are not supported by Mr Col Dorber of the Forest Products Association, and as a result of his lobbying, even the collective opinion of the State Opposition supported the Government's forest restructuring legislation. Mr Dorber wants loggers to be paid to get out of old growth logging, which is all but finished in NSW. The mill owners don't mind being paid for retooling saw mills for regrowth forests, hence the support.

Mr Sargeant's main campaign target is Werrikimbe wilderness. His report claims that the NPWS identified wilderness contains 7,100 ha of regrowth that could produce 77,700 cubic metres of timber a year! Fortunately a less than convinced

Hastings Councillor sought the opinion of Mr Tim Robertson, barrister, and occasional opponent of State Forests' old growth logging proposals.

Mr Robertson pointed out that 50 per cent of the forest in question is unloggable due to steepness and flora reserves. The yield from the area would be no more than 7,000 cubic metres if the optimistic annual growth increment of 1.7 cubic metres per hectare per year is adopted. The annual growth estimate was taken from high quality Blackbutt advanced regrowth plots measured at Kendall and Taree. Logging constraints were then applied to obtain a total yield for the remaining loggable parts of the wilderness area.

Mr Robertson reported that such a forest will produce \$200,000 in royalties per year, not the \$5 million claimed. It is probable that this is far below the level of public subsidy. Nor has allowance been made for the reduction in water yield caused by catchment logging. Adding the wilderness identified in the state forests to the Werrikimbe National Park would be a better use of these lands, protecting the steep headwater catchments and important wildlife diversity.

## ***Bushfires Start In Developed Areas***

On October 10th Pam Allan, Minister for the Environment, refuted the Farmers Association continual assertion that wilderness and national parks are a fire risk. She said that:

'Of the 830 bushfires which burnt during the January 1994 bushfires, less than 8 per cent were actually in national parks, which would suggest that perhaps the real fire risk lay not in the parks but in bushland elsewhere.'

'The figures also show that bushfires are over five times more likely to enter national parks from neighbouring properties than they are likely to leave national parks and move

on to neighbouring lands and these facts are supported by over a thousand bushfires during a five year period. Similarly out of 830 bushfires in 1994 only three were in declared wilderness areas, two of which were less than 10 ha and one of 1500 ha. Indeed a report commissioned by the Department of Bushfire Services released only this year, *Improving Fire Management in NSW*, examined all available fire records going back over several decades and found out that the areas at greatest risk of serious bushfires and serious damage were those areas of bushland which adjoined population centres.'

## **Politically Acceptable Logging**

Political parties are in almost complete agreement that, in order to combat erosion and salinity, much of Australia should be revegetated or reafforested. Nor can it be doubted that the sight, or TV depiction, of tree-felling and wrecked forests is repellent. The abandonment of logging in native forests, however, evokes strong opposition from those who gain a living in the industry. It is not politically practical to ignore this opposition. Hence the complex formulae evolved to retain at least some support from both sides.

A draft report prepared in the Prime Minister's Department accuses NSW of giving first choice of forests to State Forests "rather than selecting the best areas of each forest type from a conservation perspective." This view is shared by the North East and South East Forest Alliances, which say that the forests to be reserved are those left over after State Forests has allocated timber licences.

The State Government has announced the cessation of logging in all NPWS identified wilderness. The Colong Foundation has, however, identified from the draft Deferred Forest Agreement maps a number of compartments within these areas that have not been included. We have also detailed coupes identified for inclusion as deferred forest areas by Labor's Forest Policy but included in the State Forests harvesting schedule for 1995/6. We hope that these discrepancies they will be corrected by the Principal Forest Regulator and the Forest Advisory Council which Mr. Yeadon intends to appoint.

## **Too Many People**

Professor Erlich said that Australia should reduce its population to 10 million people. He pointed to the "huge problems" with soil erosion, overgrazing and the destruction of native vegetation and forests. "With 18 million people, Australia's environment is steadily running downhill. At 10 million people, you might be able to hold your own if you're really careful. This is a fragile continent....yet there are still idiots who say, "Don't worry, we can have 100 million Australians, look at the space we've got." Deborah Smith, S.M.H. 11/11/95

# **The Blue Mountains Environment Summit**

***One of the election promises of the Member for Blue Mountains, Mr Bob Debus, was to convene an environment summit. Opening the summit Mr Debus announced the NSW Government budget for the 1995-96 financial year contained \$5 million to commence a total stormwater management strategy and a further \$10 million for the strategy over the two subsequent years. The principle aim of the summit was "to formulate a practical plan of action to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Blue Mountains and mitigate the effects of past errors."***

**T**his heroic objective was tackled over two days by 120 people through various workshops. The major outcome of the summit was a resolution calling on Mr Debus to initiate a regional environmental planning process for the area covered by the Blue Mountains World Heritage proposal. A community steering committee will be established for this plan.

The Summit also resolved that the proposed plan set a boundary beyond which development will not be permitted. It defined high bushfire risk, the availability of sewerage and other services, suitability of soil and slope, vegetation and fauna characteristics, and hydrology as planning constraints that should determine the acceptability of residential and other development.

The Environment Summit called upon the Blue Mountains City Council to declare a moratorium over development of the rural-residential zone while a review of the zone is undertaken.

### **Planning Study Reviewed**

The Blue Mountains City Council has prepared another study of the planning problems of the Mountains. Keith Muir prepared a paper for the Environment Summit pointing out that the Council's

proposed planning measures would allow development to spread beyond areas with adequate sewerage services within the existing towns that are relatively safe from bushfire risk. Under the proposal residential development would continue less than a kilometre from the water storages which service the Blue Mountains townships.

Mr Muir reported that there are currently 14,000 residents without sewerage services and by the year 2021 the Council estimates that there will be 15,000 residents without sewerage services. This intolerable situation can be remedied by strong planning measures that are truly environmentally based.

### **Grass Roots Action**

The Colong Foundation strongly supports moves to institute a regional environmental plan. During the Summit pledges were collected to fund Mr Tim Robertson, Barrister, to prepare a strong planning instrument. This way local conservationists can advance a stronger planning instrument than would be possible if entirely reliant upon a bureaucratic process to prepare such a planning instrument.



# Enemies Of Progress

***Conservationists are inured to abuse from development interests seeking to profit at the expense of the environment and none are more inured than Milo Dunphy, who entitled his address to the dinner of the 'City in a National Park' conference at Katoomba "Enemies of Progress."***

**H**e commenced his address with the story of a landholder who, when he recognised Milo in a sketch being done by the camp fire, burst into profanity and said "I know him - that's Milo Dunphy - he's what's wrong with this country."

"Perhaps," Milo said, "the landholder had been reading Mr. Hugh Morgan's criticisms of environmentalists as 'socialist revolutionaries threatening sacrosanct private property.' At the same time Mr. Tony Grey of Pancontinental was describing us as 'establishment-bashing crazies.'"

"We never had to answer Hugh Morgan's abuse because the Australian Financial Review and some other mining industry executives called him 'an extremist' and launched into a discussion of the occupational health disasters of the Wittenoom asbestos mine, the Rum Jungle uranium mining debacle which they said took 30 years to rehabilitate and the Queenstown copper-silver mine in Tasmania which has turned the surrounding region into a lunar landscape and destroyed the King River."

Milo said that the development lobby is becoming more resourceful in its attack on 'enemies of progress' and its abuse more inventive. In the 70s a NSW Premier could visit bushland confident that the new national park he was about to dedicate, or the rainforest he was about to save, would be warmly endorsed by the majority of the people and even most of the media. The Herald environment correspondent, Joe Glascott, would have made much of the decision not to raise the Warragamba Dam, which saved 8 wild rivers and 7,500 ha of valley floor from inundation, but today the response to the Warragamba decision was condemnation of the Premier for the use of a helicopter for a day's walk down the lower

Kowmung River which his government had just saved and criticism of Milo for boiling a billy.

On the subject of the thousands of undeveloped blocks of private land around the outskirts of the existing towns in the Blue Mountains and extending out along the headlands, Milo, who was declared the Architect of the Decade for his architectural and town planning work, said "It will be a disaster for the Greater Blue Mountains Parks and for the Blue Mountains towns if those lands are developed. You need hundreds more enemies of progress here if you are to stop it happening. Bring back the Luddites!"

Concluding his address, Milo called for:

An act to allow the public to nominate areas of old growth forest for immediate cessation of logging and transfer to parks.

An act to contain the right of owners of the undeveloped sites of the Blue Mountain towns so that they cannot hold the Blue Mountains environment to ransom.

Of Hugh Morgan's view that private property is sacrosanct he said that it is not private property at Sydenham or Kurnell or Ryde that is sacrosanct but the private property of large companies.

"But what is really sacrosanct is the environment, including its natural systems and its native species. We can't put off any longer making laws which firmly establish the primacy of the environment over private profit and the empire building of bureaucracies.

"During the National Estate Inquiry sittings in 1973, Judge Hope often had to deliver a little address on the subject of private property: 'It was never true in English law' he would begin, 'that a person owned his land in all respects.' Then the judge would detail some of the duties a property holder owed to his neighbours,

the state, and the general public.

"The environmental emergencies of the present time require some extension of the responsibilities of a property holder to the state and the public. In our western lands one of these duties might be to preserve all remaining woodlands. In our forests an urgent obvious duty is to protect all remaining old growth. In the premature subdivisions of the Blue Mountains there is an imperative now not to develop.

The Blue Mountains has already set an example for the rest of NSW in the dedication and protection of national parks. Perhaps it can also bring about legislation which will solve the environmental challenges which are critical for the human and all other species.

## *The Unintelligent Apes*

**Few, if any, species wreck the environment which sustains them, but not so homo sapiens (so called). Pam Soper, Editor of Wambaliman, writes:**

- Baby dolphins dying because of human interaction
  - A plague of mice baited with strychnine from the air
  - Mahogany glider habitat flattened by the bulldozer
  - Blue-green algal blooms threatening water quality
  - Native forests subjected to the push, heap and burn, mentality
  - Salt intrusion in coastal areas
  - Rising water tables creating dry-land salinity
  - Rivers running dry
- and yet*
- 'they' say humans are the most intelligent creatures on this planet.



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

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### 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



# SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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.  
(One cheque sufficient to cover subscription and donation)

- ☐ Membership application (use form below) (N.B. Membership fee covers Bulletin subscription)
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- ☐ Membership renewal (\$20)
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- ☐ Tax deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Colong Wilderness Fund (cheques to be made payable to the Fund).

NAME (MR, MS, MRS, MISS) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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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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