

THE COLONG BULLETIN

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

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ALAN RIGBY 30th Anniversary

A commemorative exhibition of photographs, drawings and memorabilia will be held at the Blackheath office of the NPWS

November 2-17

The Government hates the environment. Compounding its retrograde decisions on greenhouse, woodchipping, uranium exports, Hinchinbrook Island, it's now slashing the environment budget, while handing BHP \$80 million in diesel fuel rebate. It's a quarry Australia budget. The diesel rebate is four times the environment budget.

Senator Dr. Bob Brown, S.M.H. Aug 21.

WILDERNESS RESOURCE CORNUCOPIA

Every time a wilderness is proposed for protection, the area in question suddenly becomes a cornucopia of economic resources. The current forest debate is no exception. The Forestry Commission has recently generated predictions of enormous reductions in timber yields if wilderness in state forests is protected. The reality, however, is far less dramatic as most wilderness areas can't be logged without wrecking the environment.

The losses predicted were generated using a computer program and desktop surveys collectively called the Wood Resources Study. The estimates produced did not adequately allow for limitations imposed on logging by EPA pollution licences, the relatively steep terrain and inaccessibility.

The Wood Resources Study generated estimates of long term sustained yield from logging wilderness that were for many areas greater than the rest of the timber region in question. For these findings to be right, the industry must have logged the less productive areas first. An unlikely scenario for any primary industry (see table).

It is now generally recognised by the Government that these resource estimates are misinformation. For example, the Forestry Commission claim that the Goobarragandra wilderness addition of 5,400 ha contains a whopping 240,000 m³ of quota sawlogs with stands of Alpine Ash and Mountain Gums containing 70 m³/ha. Such huge living monuments less than 75 km from Canberra will become a major tourist attraction.

In the long term, wilderness will produce less timber per hectare than lowland regrowth forests because it is more constrained by even the minimum logging controls required to protect soil and water resources. If rainforests and biodiversity are protected as well, then even less timber resources remain available.

The Forestry Commission's resource estimates appear to be designed to weaken the NSW Government's resolve to move the native timber industry out of old growth and wilderness, and into regrowth and plantation forests. The Forestry Commission wants continued

Continued on page 3

In this issue...

Wilderness Resource Cornucopia	1
NPWS Anti-wilderness Assessment	3
Anti-Conservation Coalition	4
Saving the Forests ..	5
MEETING DATES	5
Logged Old Growth Forests	6
No Second Airport for Sydney	7
City in a Park	8
World Heritage Devalued	9

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

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Derivation of the Cornucopia Index — the exaggeration of sawlog resources in wilderness areas (source data, Table 6.1 in DIFA Report).

Neg. region	State forests in each region (ha)	Identified wilderness in SF (ha)♦	% SF in identified wilderness	"Long Term" wood supply - (first class sawlogs in SF (m³/yr))	"Long Term" wood supply in SF (less id. wilderness (m³/yr))	Wood supply forgone in protecting id. wilderness in SF (m³/yr)	% decrease in sustained yield from SF wilderness protection	%dec %SF = Corn. Index (R)
N1	81,237	936	1.0	22,320	22,320	0	0.0	0.0
N2 R	452,068	29,028	6.4	115,055	97,718	R 17,337	15.1	2.4
N3	429,428	44,019	10.2	153,575	143,560	10,015	6.5	0.6
N4 R	195,178	24,144*	12.4	45,821	26,640	R 19,181	41.8	3.4
N5 R	157,316	40,904	26.0	28,980	21,000	R 7,980	27.5	1.1
N6 R	150,002	8,240	5.5	29,400	28,875	R 525	1.8	0.3
CENTRAL	112,349	3,000	2.7	14,144	14,144	0	0.0	0
S1 R	297,318	25,700	8.6	45,688	39,775	R 5,913	12.9	1.5
S2 R	96,520	9,000	9.3	9,700	7,400	R 2,300	23.7	2.6
TUMUT R	177,289	2,620	1.5	41,700	39,990	R 1,710	4.1	2.7
EDEN	236,598	11,704	4.9	26,200	~25,000#	~1,200#	4.6	0.9
TOTAL	2,385,303	119,295	5.0	532,583	466,422	R 66,161	12.4	2.5

Notes: R THE CORNUCOPIA INDEX: An Index value greater than ONE indicates that State Forests' predicted long term sawlog yield for wilderness is overstated because the yield per hectare should be less than elsewhere in the region (ie a cornucopia index > 1). An Index greater than TWO indicates that the predicted long term sawlog yields for wilderness in these regions is greatly exaggerated. The real long term sawlog yield for wilderness must be LESS than other forest areas on a per hectare basis because of steep terrain, inaccessibility and rainforest. If it were not for these factors it is probable that the wilderness would have been heavily logged.

- ♦ The tableland forests in N5 and N6 have a very low increment of commercial timber growth of around 0.2 m³/ha/yr. This does not justify once-off logging of rare wilderness forests. (The wilderness forests in N6 were promised protection by Mr Fahey in 23/12/93.)
- The total area of State Forest in Barrington wilderness (the figure in table 6.1 of the DIFA report excludes Stewarts Brook State Forest).
- # Guesstimate that assumes old growth does not contain vastly more available first quality timber resources than regrowth areas due to physical constraints, such as terrain and poor soils, and that the long term wood supply is equally constrained (required information is not available from Table 6.1 of the DIFA Report).
- ♦ Sources: Colong Foundation Wilderness Red Index, 1993 and Forest Products Association RACAC and wilderness submissions.

NPWS Anti-wilderness Assessment

The Wilderness Policy of the NSW Government promises the declaration of sixteen wilderness areas in consultation with the community.

During the last round of wilderness exhibitions, the NPWS sought to classify submissions on eleven wilderness areas according to nineteen comment categories. Thirteen of the first fifteen describe the concerns of the anti-wilderness movement. Of the remainder only three invite comment on the positive features of wilderness.

In other words the National Parks and Wildlife Service has invited anti-wilderness submissions that are contrary to the Government's policy to establish wilderness. The advocates of 4WD use, horseriding, mining and forestry have had ample opportunity to express their opposition under all the categories listed.

The aim of wilderness declaration is to exclude economic and intensive recreational development. But if the objections collected under the comment categories are accepted, wilderness will be virtually eliminated.

The Colong Foundation was not supplied with a submission form and our request for the comment form not to be used as the basis of analysis of the submissions has so far been ignored.

Continued from page 1

forestry operations over its traditional domain. The Forestry Commission's strategy, however, has become somewhat unstuck.

For the NSW Government any future logging of wilderness will be seen by the public as a serious policy reversal after a long running logging moratoria. Such a reversal would be rendered worse as logging will be the most environmentally destructive ever undertaken. The very steep slopes in wilderness will need to be made accessible for roading and logging. To make wilderness logging a viability, the EPA pollution licence conditions would need to be significantly relaxed in many situations. Such logging will lead to thousands of tonnes of soil choking tributary creeks and the destruction of biodiverse areas through heavy logging.

Application at current pollution control standards to the estimates of timber resources in the New England wilderness, reduced the sustained yield from 17,000 to less than 7,000 m³/ha/yr. In the Barrington wilderness, the estimated sustained yield was reduced from over 19,000 to less than 11,000 m³/ha/yr simply to account for inaccessibility considerations. Such reduced yields do not justify logging environmentally significant wilderness areas.

Wilderness diminished by truth test

To shore up the failing wood supply argument, the timber-industry is seeking to prove that NPWS identified wilderness is not true wilderness.

The Forest Products Association has gone to considerable trouble to prove past disturbance as a justification for further damage. However, the industry position is contrary to the Wilderness Act that allows for areas to be rehabilitated to a wilderness condition.

Protected wilderness areas contain areas that have been mined, logged, grazed and subjected to severe fires. The Washpool wilderness is on the World Heritage List of Properties but was partly logged and roaded before the former Wran Government protected it.

Mr Col Dorber, Director of the Association is scathing in his criticism of the Colong Foundation's wilderness poster and flyer, claiming the illustration is not of old growth forest. The flyer depicts part of the declared Washpool wilderness, one of the best forest wilderness areas in the State, and should be enlarged under the Government's Wilderness Policy.

The wilderness estate of NSW is the best we have left. Past damage is no justification for permitting further abuse of these rare areas. The threatened wilderness outside national parks must be protected now if we are to stop the loss of biodiverse forests.

Employment and the Forest Debate

In an unprecedented attempt to end the forest debate, which has gone on in this State for a quarter of a century, the Resource and Conservation Assessment Council brought together all forest interest groups. Negotiations at that level have now finished and the political process is about to deliver the Carr Government's decision.

In order to assist this process, State Forests of NSW commissioned a report by a firm of consultants (Margules et al) which was entitled "The Economic Impact of the NSW Timber Industry." This report was to provide an information base in order to assist the Government by providing details of the significance of employment in the wood products industry in the various regions.

In June 1996 Dr. Judy Clark prepared an "appraisal and application of findings" of this report which, while generally supportive of the findings, was critical of certain aspects, concluding that it underestimated employment in downstream wood processing. Her calculations, based on rather contentious estimates of flow on employment, show that about 6,300 jobs depend on the plantation based industry (more than the consultant estimated) and about 6,000 depend on the native forest industry. Contrary to many statements by its supporters, the latter represents 1.37% of rural employment when multiplier effects are included and 0.7% of direct employment.

The plantation based industry is much more important in the regions in which it is based, reflecting its highly decentralised nature and the extensive further processing undertaken.

Largely reflecting the pinus radiata plantings of the 1960's and 1970's, plantations now account for 40% of the State's sawn timber production. Plantation sawlog production in 2000 is expected to double the 1994 level. It is estimated that about 8,000 additional jobs could be generated in NSW if all this timber were processed.

The Anti-Conservation Coalition

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

Report of the House of Representatives Committee on the Environment Feb. 1993

Today's conservation movement dates from the formation of the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council in 1932 with representatives from the Sydney Bush Walkers, the Bush Tracks Club, the Coast and Mountain Walkers and the Mountain Trails Club. During the 1950s the National Parks Association and the Nature Conservation Council were established and their pressure for a parks service resulted in the creation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1967. The Colong Committee was appointed in 1968 and the Colong and Boyd Plateau campaigns established the conservation of natural areas as a mainstream public issue. The Colong Foundation's proposal for a Wilderness Act was adopted by the then Minister for Conservation, The Hon. Bob Carr, and passed by Parliament in 1987. As a result of over 60 years of campaigning NSW now has a world class system of national parks and some wilderness areas.

Although the remnant natural areas which the environment movement sought to save consisted mainly of the areas of least economic value, conservation was strongly opposed by development interests - mainly graziers, miners and loggers. Recently opposition has been led by recreational interests, which seek, not for profit but for pleasure, to extend their damaging activities to natural areas.

The anti-conservationists have now formed two political parties - the Outdoor Recreation Party, which includes the Public Land Users Alliance, the Sporting Shooters Association, the Field and Game Association, and the Public Land Users Alliance. The 4WD Association has now formed the 4WD Party. These organisations have the support of the Shooters Party and elements of the National and Liberal Parties and the NSW Farmers. The support of the

gun lobby raises some dubious questions. What do the sporting shooters shoot and where? Since shooting is illegal in national parks, why are they opposed to wilderness conservation? The support of the farmers is peculiar. Why do they need automatic weapons to shoot pests, unless perhaps they are bad shots? Shooters who enter private property without permission are often a menace to stock.

The coalition has several distinguishing features. None of its members has done anything to preserve the natural areas which they seek to exploit. None of them ever admit that ORV use, horse riding or shooting degrades natural areas. They claim that wilderness areas are "locked up," a claim which implies that if you don't own a 4WD - most of which cost between \$40,000 and \$112,000, - you can't get into them. Their campaign is marked by vituperation, angry emotionalism and

abuse of conservationists, who have been called lunatic fringe environmentalists, ratbag conservationists and eco-Nazis. Pam Allan, the Minister for Conservation, has been dubbed "the Minister for Misery" and Peter Singer "a green time bomb." We awarded the 1994 abuse Oscar to Peter Cochran M.P. who, at a National Party public dinner at Tumut, accused the Colong Foundation some 16 times of lying, and, in Parliament, described members of the Foundation as "baby-faced vipers." Mr. Ted Orr, a director of the Shooters Party, is a strong contender for the 1996 Oscar for his description of conservationists as "a bunch of long-haired gits up trees." Such abuse reveals the mentality of our opponents and probably turns people against them rather than helping their cause. As Milo Dunphy wrote after the Tumut dinner. "Our experience over nearly 40 years is that success in a national cause is preceded by a period of violent abuse."

Their campaign is larded with exaggerated claims which they cannot substantiate. The "greens" are accused of "following a long term agenda to lock up the Great Divide." They claim that World Heritage is pending for all of NSW west of the Silver City Highway and that two-thirds of western NSW has been identified as wilderness (much of this area has been described as low quality wilderness in the National Wilderness Inventory; less than 1% is described as high quality wilderness). It is claimed that the Wilderness Society received \$5 million of federal money in 1993 (the Society received \$57,000). They plan to fly out from the U.S. Ron Arnold,

Continued on page 5



Off-road vehicles in Chichester State Forest as depicted in article entitled "Forest Frolics" in the September Overlander 4WD magazine.

SAVING THE FORESTS

The National Forest Policy was announced in March 1995, the month the Carr Government was elected. Its aim was the management of the forests to conserve biological diversity and cultural values for present and future generations, develop a dynamic international forest products industry that could operate on a sustained yield basis and create a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system. A conservation benchmark was adopted of 15% of each original (1788) forest community, or more for communities which had already been 50% or more cleared.

The achievement of this objective was a horrendously complex task, rendered even more difficult by definition and research problems. Obviously the most complete remnants of the natural environment are to be found in undeveloped areas which consist almost entirely of old growth forests (or deserts). Such forest areas will contain a plethora of native flora and fauna, and will probably be the habitat of endangered species, but how are we to know? Since endangered species are rare and possibly living almost anywhere in the forests, how are they to be found in the millions of hectares of forest which would need to be searched? There is also the question of what constitutes old growth forests. Few forests have not been logged at some time. The Colong Foundation's solution to these problems is to preserve the areas most likely to contain endangered species - wilderness areas.

The biggest obstacle to forest preservation, however, has been the maintenance of employment. All governments agree that though reduction of employment to save money is laudable, reduction to save the environment is unthinkable, even though the continuance of overcutting is steadily reducing forest industry employment.

In NSW the Carr Government has realistically assessed these problems. It set up a Resource and Assessment Advisory Council. By allocating \$60

million, matched by the Commonwealth Government, to a programme of retraining of workers, redundancy payments, compensation of mill owners and encouragement of wood processing industry, agreement has been reached between loggers workers and conservationists per medium of an advisory committee. The Resource and Assessment Advisory Council considered the effects of reducing wood quotas by 30, 50 and 70 per cent. This was the basis for the timber industry's assertion, no doubt designed to torpedo the process, that there would be a reduction of 50% or more and thousands of jobs would be lost.

In view of the complex criteria and the inadequacy of data, it is difficult to see how the Government could have moved more quickly or effectively than it did to implement the National Forest Agreement. Had it waited until all areas were thoroughly assessed much irreplaceable forest would have been lost. Its aim was to give resource security to the timber industry and preserve all environmentally significant forest areas. This is the purpose of moratoriums on inadequately assessed areas. It is imperative that resource security be withheld from all potentially valuable forests. In other words conservation security must come before resource security. An old growth forest, containing trees centuries old will not fully recover, if logged, until these trees are replaced.

The conservation movement will not get all that it wants, neither will forest industries, but the progress made is beyond the dreams of the conservation movement at the beginning of last year.

Meeting Dates

*Meetings will be held at
6 pm on October 10th
and 24th and November
7th and 21st.*

*I would like to see a
genuine recognition of
the true crisis of the
Australian environment...*

*I would like to see a
substantial increase in
funding for land
remediation,
revegetation, expansion
of the reserve system,
proper management of
existing protected areas
and proper management
of the (Great Barrier)
Reef.*

**Penny Figgis, A.M., Vice
President ACF Aug 21.**

Continued from page 4

founder of the "Wise Use" Movement. The Movement aims to open up 70 million acres of federal wilderness to commercial development and motorised recreational use, open all public lands, including wilderness and national parks, to mining and energy development and develop the petroleum resources of the Arctic National Refuge in Alaska.

The anti-conservation lobby is evidently well funded. State electoral returns record that the Shooters Party, which raised \$369,000 to finance its 1995 campaign, received substantial donations from the firearms industry and dealers. The NSW Forests Products Association contributed \$10,000. The source of funds for the other organisations is not available, but it is probable that the manufacturers and distributors of those expensive ORVs contributed, if only through their extensive advertising in 4WD magazines. It is rumoured that the rally against environmental protection, held at Bathurst last November, co-sponsored by the Sporting Shooters Association and the Public Land Users Alliance, cost \$50,000 for extensive advertising and other expenses.

Despite the resources which the anti-conservation movement is able to employ, it is unlikely to turn back the rising tide of support for environmental protection, as measured by numerous opinion polls, which show that the great majority of people support the preservation of the natural environment.

Logged Old Growth Forest 60 Years On

The photograph (right) shows a remnant of the old growth forest in the Couridjah Corridor against a background of second growth trees. In the Dec 76/Jan 77 NPA Journal Myles Dunphy wrote:

This fine forest, even better than Blue Gum...was destroyed by about 10 years of timber extraction organised by the Forestry Commission which would not listen to representatives of the early camping walkers who particularly wanted the Corridor preserved as a primitive area about nine miles long. It was the finest forest anywhere within reasonable distance of Sydney, considering its length, canyon beauty, camping facilities, aloofness, wildlife content, wildflower garden, and fact that walkers could step out of the train and into the bush at Picton Lakes and Buxton at once. Access was by rail until a sawmill was brought from Wagga and established. This was the beginning of the end of a paradise into which children could be taken to enjoy bushland recreation without trouble and entirely free from roads, automobiles and motorist campers. It was the greatest loss sustained by early camping walkers.

(The Couridjah forest is now part of the Nattai National Park and well on the way to recovery. Perhaps the coming generation will enjoy the benefits which Myles described).



Boycott Woodchipping Campaign

On May 22, 1996, 23 national, regional and local groups, including the ACF, NCC and the Wilderness Society, called on the Australian public "Not to buy, trade, sell or invest in companies associated with the woodchipping of native forests."

The first company to be subjected to the boycott is Boral. The "Boralcott," largely driven by TWS, is calling for a boycott of Boral's sawn timber and liquid petroleum gas as well as pavers, plasterboard, cement, gravel and sand. Amcor, North and Wesfarmers may also be targeted.

A number of boycott campaigns have been successful, such as that directed against Shell plans to sink a giant oil platform at sea, the "Boycott Mitsubishi" Campaign, which prevented \$300 million of forest investments in South East Asia and the New York Times cancellation of newsprint purchases from MacMillan Bloedel, infamous for its temperate rainforest logging.

For further information contact Tim Cadman, (a Colong Foundation director) at the Native Forest Network, P.O. Box 301 Deloraine, Tasmania 7304. Phone 003 695150.

Conservation Mite

- Annual value of production **\$500 billion** (Bernie Fraser).
- Impact of environmentally damaging industries **\$7.5-6 billion** and government subsidies to these industries **\$5.7 billion** (National Institute of Industry and Economic Research.)
- Commonwealth Government annual expenditure on conservation **\$ half a billion** (dependent on Telstra sale).

NO SECOND AIRPORT FOR SYDNEY

- NOR EXPANSION OF KINGSFORD-SMITH

The No Aircraft Noise Party opposes the use of Kingsford Smith Airport, the South West Sydney Alliance opposes a new airport at the Holsworthy Military Base, and the Parramatta Residents Against Aircraft Noise along with several other community groups oppose the Badgerys Creek Airport alternative. These groups all want one thing - relief from the environmentally damaging effects of airport development. It is self evident that these anti-airport campaigns are stymied due to conflicting policy positions.

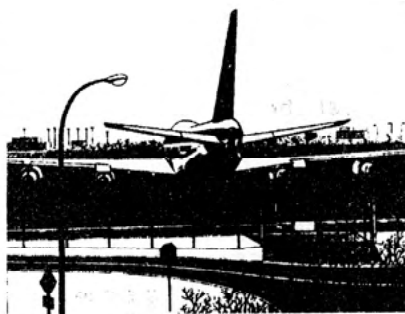
Under these circumstances the current Commonwealth EIS on Badgerys Creek and Holsworthy sites is likely to be used as a political tool that at best will seek to divert some aircraft noise to the unsettled areas near Sydney - its national parks - or worse, become a mechanism to allocate noise to those ungrateful electorates that did not vote for the Government.

On Friday 23 August, Total Environment Centre and the National Trust convened together a meeting to consider the formation of a No Second Airport in Sydney Alliance.

The meeting of over 60 people, representing dozens of organisations, reached broad agreement to form an Alliance to oppose further airport development in the Sydney Basin. A no second airport policy is a solution to the suffering that Sydney residents experience.

The meeting agreed to support a program that would see the:

- rejection of current proposals to build an airport at either Badgerys Creek or Holsworthy;
- construction of future airport development *outside* the Sydney Basin in an area of low population and environmental impact, where the local community supports its construction and would be served by fast rail;
- reduction of aircraft activity at Kingsford Smith Airport to domestic flights only; and
- cessation of development of aviation



in the Sydney Basin.

The Goulburn proposal

At the meeting, Messrs Bruce Simpson and Tony Lamarra recommended the Goulburn airport option in association with a "very fast train" linking with Sydney. A subsequent public meeting called by the Mayor of Goulburn on the 26 of August and attended by 250 residents supported this proposal (with 10 objectors). A representative of the ACT Government attended and expressed his Government's support for such an airport, served by fast rail link to Canberra.

The linking of the national capital, Canberra with Sydney by a fast train has many advantages, including reducing the travel times between the two cities and reducing greenhouse gas and other air pollution that comes from personal motor vehicle travel.

The Goulburn site on the Gundry Plains is some 20 kilometres south-east of the town. Mr Simpson explained that construction of the facility would not require the construction of the Welcome Reef Dam. Heffernans Creek just out of Goulburn or connection to the ACT water storage are the Council's preferred options for supply augmentation.

The impacts

The EIS on Badgerys -or- Holsworthy is supposed to be about whether or not a project can go ahead, and if it can, what are the "prudent and feasible

alternatives." This question is to a large extent determined by examining Sydney's capacity to cope with more airport development.

The Colong Foundation believes Sydney has exceeded the environmental and human health thresholds where any airport development can be accepted. The prudent alternative for airport development in New South Wales is a reexamination of alternatives outside Sydney and reduction of Kingsford Smith impacts.

Sydney's air pollution already kills 400 people a year, nearly twice as many as die in vehicle accidents (*Herald* 3/6/96). It contains such high levels of potentially cancerous pollutants that just breathing it poses a similar risk to smoking more than 10 cigarettes a day and may affect the health of up to 40 per cent of the population. The NSW Environmental Protection Authority has also warned that Sydney's photochemical smog is set to exceed international maximum levels for about 50 days per year.

Two of the damaging toxics contained in Sydney's air, benzopyrene and microscopic particles, are copiously produced by large commercial aircraft. Aircraft produce the most pollutants per passenger kilometre. The biggest culprit of Sydney's air pollution, car use, will also be greatly encouraged by a second airport. The net effect, increased smog, collects in the drainage lines and would accumulate in western Sydney where the proposed airport sites are located.

On the basis of this evidence, advocates of a second airport for Sydney must realise that they are advocating an early death for many Sydney residents. These airport-based deaths will rise as the population increases and causing flight frequency to rise.

Aircraft noise also has health impacts. In a vain bid to check of avoiding the outcry over noise impacts, pro-airport advocates will seek to divert flight paths from either Badgerys Creek or

Holsworthy away from population centres and over green spaces. Our wonderful national parks, the "lungs of Sydney", will become congested with aircraft noise. Not only will fauna be damaged but the psychological health of Sydneysiders will suffer by losing their refuge from noise and air pollution, and traffic congestion.

What about the Olympics?

Further problems will arise when the Olympic games are held. No second airport can be built by then. The nightly flight curfew at Kingsford Smith Airport must be retained and enhanced by directing freight and international flights elsewhere.

As a circuit breaker to this problem, the feasibility of using other airports for the peak tourist influx around the Games period should be examined. Perhaps the armed forces could come up with a solution to the transport and traffic problems of these alternatives. After all, like military exercises, the Olympics is all about efficiently moving people and machines.

Is a new airport needed?

There are of course concerns with any airport development. Aircraft travel greatly increases greenhouse gas emissions, urban development and pressures on water resources for drinking water and sewage effluent.

The option of not constructing further airport infrastructure must be considered during the environmental assessment. The aviation industry faces an uncertain future. The ever increasing world consumption of oil far exceeds the rate of discovery of new fields and in general the price of oil is sure to rise. Some forecasts predict a steep rise beginning around 2010, causing a sharp decline in air traffic.

The most fuel efficient land transport is rail. Any airport option that upgrades rail infrastructure and encourages its use will play a part in reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. All airport options outside Sydney should consider this benefit.

The next step for the no second airport in Sydney Alliance is to call another meeting to constitute itself as a unifying force. Total Environment Centre and the National Trust have offered ongoing help.

(Further information: Bob Walshe, who chaired the meeting, C/- Sutherland Environment Centre, ph. 9545 3077 or fax 9542 3580.)

THE CITY IN A PARK

Back in 1980 we received from the Planning Officer of the Kosciusko National Park an information sheet which set out the "overriding" management considerations. The first was that "Because of the Park's international importance there must be a limit to which development can be permitted." Another was that "The community will not accept continued disturbance of the Park's fragile sub-alpine environment." These principles have long since been forgotten. In Colong Bulletin no 151 we described developmental plans which would increase the capacity of existing resorts by 60% to cater for 55,000 visitors. In the last Bulletin we reported that the Nature Conservation Council was calling on the NSW Government to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act to prohibit the development and sale of private dwellings in national parks. Peter Prineas, Chairman of the NCC and a director of the Colong Foundation writes:-

"The National Parks and Wildlife Service has approved a large increase in accommodation (about 1,000 beds) for some of the ski resorts in the Kosciusko National Park. In June this year the Service's consultants revealed at a workshop that there will be a major development at Perisher, with buildings up to five storeys in height. The Perisher development, quite apart from any environmental impacts, will erode the public character of our national parks by a process of privatisation. This is a fundamental departure from national park philosophy and management principles. Privatisation began in a small way in the 1970's when long term leases for private apartments were granted at Thredbo in the Kosciusko National Park. Over the years, the Thredbo head lease has

been subdivided and private dwellings made available to private buyers. Lease conditions have usually required that these dwellings be made available for holiday letting in order to give a semblance of public availability and compliance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act, but leaseholders would have little difficulty avoiding these requirements. The development and sale of private dwellings under long term leases has been financially attractive for both the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Thredbo head lessee, and this form of development has fuelled the expansion of the Thredbo resort in recent years. Thredbo now supports a speculative real estate market based on these private dwellings, with units re-selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is not yet saying how the additional accommodation will be made available, but experience at Thredbo shows that the Perisher expansion will be driven by the development and sale of private apartments under long term leases. In other words, it will be a real estate development in a national park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service can expect to receive a substantial premium - many thousands of dollars per bed - for approving this type of development, and the developers profits would be commensurate.

If private dwellings can be developed and sold at Kosciusko, the same can happen in any NSW national park."

As reported in our last issue it is already happening in the Warrumbungle National Park where accommodation will be provided by private enterprise.

WORLD HERITAGE DEVALUED

The efforts of the Colong Foundation have been directed to the reservation of natural areas of state rather than local significance. Areas of state significance are enjoyed too by visitors from other parts and are therefore of national significance. Some areas of national significance have unique, rare, scenic, scientific, historic or other characteristics which renders them worth preserving for the sake of humanity. These are the areas placed on the World Heritage list by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Listing is granted at the request of the country nominating the area if the IUCN considers it has outstanding qualities. This attracts world attention to the listed feature. It also obliges the nominating country to protect it. Failure to do so could well lead to de-listing, resulting in world censure and loss of tourist interest. It is therefore in both the national and international interest that the management of World Heritage areas ensures their protection. It is also in the national interest to promote the listing of features of outstanding interest. In both regards Australian governments have failed to act in the national and international interest.

Although the Howard Government, in its policy document *Saving Our Natural Heritage*, published before the election, expressed the Coalition's belief that "concerted action must be taken now if Australia is to preserve its natural environmental infrastructure for the benefit of our children and grandchildren," and promised "the largest commitment to environmental action by any national government in Australia's history," subsequent action belies these commitments. The establishment of the \$1.15 billion Natural Heritage Trust is conditional on the partial privatisation of Telstra and the additional \$84 million in transitional spending, to be available before the Trust was established will not be available. The pre-election policy document stated that the Coalition would ensure that World Heritage listings would "become matters of national pride."

Additional funding "to assist in the management and upkeep of World Heritage areas" was to be only \$12 million over four years. Presumably there will be no additional funding unless the Telstra sale takes place. The Government's failure to protect listed areas or promote the listing of proposed areas is as follows in regard to Kakadu, Daintree, Hinchinbrook, the Blue Mountains and the Alps.

Kakadu

Kakadu has retained World Heritage listing despite the operation of an enormous uranium mine on a mining lease near Mount Brockman, one of the most scenic areas, well within the park and World Heritage area, and the establishment of a township. Since the abandonment of the three mines policy of the previous government it is probable that two additional mines will be approved on leases already granted. Against the recommendation of the Fox Inquiry the ore from Jabiluka mine, north of Ranger, will be processed at Ranger. Although lease requirements stipulate that tailings must be returned to the mine pit, their volume will exceed the capacity of the Ranger pit. Some will therefore remain in the tailings dam. As the tailings contain some 85% of the original radioactivity, and the Ranger dam has already been breached on one occasion, this will threaten the wetlands of Magela Creek.

A second mine, Koongarra, on a lease at the headwaters of the South Alligator River, threatens this pristine river. The Fox Inquiry recommended against the development of the mine.

Daintree

The Daintree Rainforest has been recognised by the IUCN as one of the world's last remaining wilderness areas. It qualified for World Heritage listing because it conforms to all four of the listing requirements. It is an outstanding example representing the major stages in the earth's evolutionary history, an outstanding example representing significant ongoing ecological and

biological processes, an example of superb natural phenomena and contains important and significant habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity. Listing was granted in 1988. It was strongly resisted by the Queensland National Party Government which instituted proceedings against it in the High Court of Australia.

In 1982 the Queensland Minister for Local Government, at the behest of local land developer, George Quaid, directed the Port Douglas Shire, against its wishes, to agree to a subdivision containing 1100 rural residential unserviced and unplanned lots, mainly of 1 ha. The ensuing checkerboard of rainforest clearings is a sad sight.

World Heritage listing was granted in 1988. The Douglas Shire Council proposed a Daintree Rescue Package to cost \$53 million, equally shared by the Commonwealth and State Governments, to buy back this privately owned land. The State and Federal Governments agreed to each contribute \$11.5 million. To date only 57 properties have been purchased at a cost of \$12.1 million. There is no indication that either government is willing to make further funding available.

Hinchinbrook

The Hinchinbrook World Heritage area is one of the few large scenic wilderness areas on the eastern Australian coast. Hinchinbrook Island is probably Australia's most pristine wilderness, being protected by water from the intrusion of feral animals. The area has been described by Dr. Jim Thorsell, Senior Adviser to the IUCN World Heritage Committee, as "The Nobel Prize of protected areas."

Oyster Point near Cardwell, on the beautiful Hinchinbrook Passage, has been the target of development interests since 1983. Sites looking over scenic wilderness, preserved and protected by the state, are a rich prize for resort developers. Tekin Australia cleared 7 ha. in 1989, but was unable to continue due to lack of finance. The company's special lease was acquired by Cardwell Properties (Keith Williams) in 1993. He

proposes to build an \$100 million 1500 bed resort and a 250 bed marina.

The project has been the subject of some 11 reports by experts, none of which favoured it. In 1994 the Queensland Government signed a Deed of Agreement which authorised the development, but later in the year the Governor General issued a proclamation which necessitated application to the Commonwealth for any works which might impact upon the proclaimed World Heritage area. The environmental impacts of the development fall into two classes. There are extensive off-site impacts, such as heavy visitation on surrounding sensitive national parks, massive increase in boating activity in the Great Barrier Marine Park and Hinchinbrook Channel, upgrading of Dallachy airport, sewerage and water pollution, death by boat strike of dugongs and turtles, destruction of coral reefs and depletion of marine species by fishing. Some of the on site impacts will be on sea grasses, (through dredging) tidal dynamics (through a rock training wall) sediment movement, mangroves, and on mud communities.

The election of Coalition Governments in both the Commonwealth and Queensland ensured the approval of the development. The Federal Government is loath to oppose state developmental policy and will only protect World Heritage areas "as a last resort."

Blue Mountains

The Colong Foundation proposal for World Heritage listing of the Blue Mountains was written by Dr. Geoff Mosley, an ex-member of the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas. It was launched by Bob Carr, then Opposition Leader, in December 1989 and supported by the former Environment Minister, Tim Moore. There followed a delay of nearly four years because the Commonwealth was reluctant to share the cost of the funding of an assessment of the area. In 1994 the National Herbarium was appointed to carry out the assessment. The assessment, which was an expanded version of Geoff Mosley's book, described the Blue Mountains as "an outstanding natural property of World Heritage status." An assessment of the assessment in the form of a steering committee was appointed. At last, in late 1995, the NSW World Heritage Ministerial Committee decided on the preparation of a W.H. nomination and a steering committee appointed (to re-assess the assessments). The committee has never met. The nomination was to be prepared

by June 1996, and, in view of the wealth of data available, this deadline should have been easily met, but it was not. The reason for the lack of action was given by Bob Carr on August 27th when he said that the NSW bid to have the Blue Mountains declared a World Heritage was jeopardised by a lack of cooperation from the Federal Government. He said the Federal Department of the Environment said the Commonwealth did not support the nomination.

The Commonwealth Government's opposition to the proposal does not accord with its February policy statement that "We support the addition of appropriate sites to the World Heritage List in recognition of their outstanding conservation values." This commitment is qualified in the succeeding sentence, which states that "Under the Coalition, sites will be proposed for listing only after the fullest consultation with and the cooperation of the relevant State or Territory government." The Coalition has certainly cooperated with the development obsessed Queensland Government by authorising the Hinchinbrook resort, but has failed to cooperate with the conservation minded NSW Government.

The Alps

This proposal was formulated by Dr. Geoff Mosley for the Victorian National Parks Association and published in book form in September 1988. Geoff Mosley writes:

The proposal includes forest areas to the south and east of the Alps proper. Indeed it is the grand sweep of sclerophyll dominated plant communities from the central heaths of Croajingalong and Nadgee all the way up through the altitudinally arranged belts of eucalypt forests (each zone dominated by two or three species) to the alpine vegetation which is the main feature with outstanding world heritage values.

He says that the previous federal Government, and in particular its Minister Faulkner, was not interested under the sway of Keating's economic rationalist policies. Professor Jamie Fitzpatrick, in his report to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, found that the region rated highly in terms of world heritage values.

Bob Carr has affirmed the NSW commitment to the nomination. The Victorian attitude is not known, but Victoria has not opposed the proposal. The ACT supports it. The Commonwealth attitude is not known, though there is known to be a problem with logging and cultural assessment. It appears that the Government is reluctant to promote listing of this area.

Environment Sidelined

The Howard Government has revealed its true colours by foreshadowing the abolition of key environment agencies.

.....It's crystal clear now that Senator Hill's prime objective is to eliminate agencies which may have the impudence to give him impartial and fearless advice on matters of environmental protection.....The Great Barrier Reef Authority, the Australian Nature Conservation Council and the Australian Heritage Commission are all established under separate Acts of Parliament. Although he has neutered these agencies by slashing their budgets, Senator Hill can't change their functions and operation without Parliamentary approval.

The Hon. Dr. Carmen Lawrence
MP, Shadow Minister for the
Environment 28/9/96

Forest Lies

Mr Ron Moon, editor of *4X4 Magazine*, has become an advocate for the logging industry in Australia. In the September edition, Mr Moon concludes his editorial attack on forest protection titled 'Forest Lies' by saying "in my view, some areas currently protected because of the lies already told (by conservationists), should be opened up for well managed logging operations. That way our 7.1 million hectares of loggable forests (in Australia) will be even more sustainable and a whole lot better for it, as well!" So logging as well as environmentally responsible off-road vehicle use are appropriate in national parks.

Conservationists Honoured

The Order of Australia Association has made a survey of the honours awarded from 1990 to 1994. Of the 7,638 awards, 112 were for conservation. This was a little above the awards to lawyers - 106, the media - 102, and well above the miners - 22, but well below sport and recreation - 571. The receipt of 3,020 awards for community service proves that one does not have to be rich, clever, famous or athletic to win a decoration.

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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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Return to The Hon Secretary, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland Street, Sydney 2000



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The Treasurer, Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd
The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland Street, Sydney. 2000

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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.....

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ADDRESS.....

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PROGRESS OF THE FOUNDATION

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 the 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. The Foundation is working for the preservation of old growth forests, particularly those of wilderness value and for scenic river legislation. 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 Street, Sydney NSW 2000



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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The Colong Bulletin, bi-monthly per annum	10.00
Blue Mountains for World Heritage	16.00
The Colong Story	8.00
How the Rainforest was Saved	8.00
Park or Pines	8.00
Kanangra Boyd, Nadgee, Goodradigbee and Lost World Wilderness Nominations	4.00 ea
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