

THE COLONG BULLETIN

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD

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World Heritage Scrutinised

LAST February, the World Heritage field assessors Dr Jim Thorsell and Mr Les Clark from the IUCN, and Mr Kevin Jones from ICOMOS, visited the Blue Mountains to consider the one million hectare nomination area. The World Heritage Bureau will receive these somewhat acidic reports at its July meeting. We also understand that the World Heritage field assessors' reports will not be publicly released by the Federal Government until Badgerys Creek Airport has been decided. In addition to the field assessor reports, the nomination report was academically assessed by Professor Ben Boer, an expert in environmental law, and the IUCN is now seeking further comment from other World Heritage experts.

One of the key criticisms of the

Australian Government's nomination report is that it understated the impact of Badgerys Creek Airport on the nomination area. The supplement to the draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to address these concerns. The assessors' concerns with the peace and solitude of the nominated area will help to counter the push from the residents of Western Sydney, if this airport is constructed, to orientate the main flight paths over the Mountains. Whether any future mitigating measures will guarantee protection of the natural quiet of the Blue Mountains wilderness areas remains to be seen.

A further criticism was that the nomination area is full of inholdings. Understandably the World Heritage Bureau sees these inholdings as targets for inappropriate development,

including mines (Jabiluka is an inholding within Kakadu National Park). The Hon. Bob Debus, as owner of the Sydney Water Authority's lands, can transfer these lands to the NPWS, removing, at the stroke of a pen, 90 per cent of the inholdings.

What the World Heritage Bureau can't possibly know is that the threats arising from inholdings have been fought off on just about every occasion. Mining at Mount Colong, damaging horseriding along the

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When considering a problem as large as the degradation of the natural environment, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, utterly helpless to effect any change whatever. But we must resist the response, because this crisis will be resolved only if individuals take some responsibility for it. By educating ourselves and others, by doing our part to minimise our use and waste of resources, by becoming more active politically and demanding change - in these ways and many others, each of us can make a difference

**Al Gore, Vice President of the
US in Earth in the Balance**

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World Heritage Scrutinised

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Coxs River, the threat of shale mining on Couloul Range in Wollemi, a proposed mushroom composting facility at Tinda Creek, resorts in the Grose wilderness are examples of development proposals located on inholdings that have been defeated. Pine planting on the Boyd, the Moomba gas pipeline through the Wollangambe, dam raising at Warragamba, super highways, logging in northern Wollemi were more general threats to the Blue Mountains wilderness areas that have so far been beaten off. The list goes on ... and sure, there are inholdings, but these are being acquired by the NPWS. These include the 320 hectare Duggan property on the Jenolan River, Budthingaroo on the Boyd Plateau (with generous financial assistance from the Blue Mountains Conservation Society), as well as parts of the Carlons and Armstrongs properties and inholdings in the Nattai wilderness. Conservation outcomes have been achieved for the last three decades on almost all controversial issues, so why would World Heritage nomination be brought into disrepute?

Given these criticisms (and bad odour over Jabiluka uranium mine) the nomination is expected to receive a cool reception when the World Heritage Bureau meets in July.

The State and Federal Governments already have set the wheels in motion to provide further expert comment to answer the concerns raised in the field assessors' evaluations. These comments must support the scientific assessments already undertaken for this stand alone nomination. The fate of the Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination, whether it is approved this year or deferred for a further twelve months, will be determined at the World Heritage Committee's December meeting.

Future eucalypt nominations

A deferral of the nomination is likely to be linked to the recommendation in the assessors' reports calling for the preparation of a serial eucalypt nomination. A serial nomination would require a World Heritage nomination of forests in Tasmania, Western Aus-

Despite the difficulties it is hard to understand what further is necessary to demonstrate the area's international significance or ecological integrity to the World Heritage Bureau...

ralia and Victoria, as well other areas in NSW... an enormous undertaking, with the Western Australian and Tasmanian governments being obliged to protect of old growth forests, mallees and woodlands currently in the hands of the timber industry and local graziers.

The serial nomination request in the field assessors' evaluation report draws on the recommendations of the National Forest Policy Statement. The Statement, signed by all Australian Governments state and federal, requires that the World Heritage values of eucalypt forests are protected.

This was to be implemented through the Regional Forest Agreements. Some of the Regional Forest Agreements for various regions have been signed, so the assessors' recommendation is flawed as the opportunity for World Heritage assessments under this process has passed (All RFAs must be signed by 2000 or woodchip export will be prohibited). A serial eucalypt nomination proposal would of course meet with National Party opposition within the Howard Government. In other words, the serial proposal is scientifically and politically ill advised.

The eucalypt values of the Blue Mountains have been adequately assessed and there is no need for them to be assessed further. There are values other than eucalyptus in the nomination (other criteria). One of the three other values/criteria addressed in the nomination is outstanding natural beauty, including outstanding wilderness areas. The NSW and Australian Governments have prepared the solid stand alone nomination on the advice of scientific experts. One problem that could not be overcome was that the geomorphological values were not a nomi-

nated as a World Heritage value. This was due to an academic disagreement between the appointed consultant experts about the very nature of the earth forming processes involved.

There is no other place in the world where grass roots nature conservationists have secured such an extensive national park system.

Despite the difficulties, it is hard to understand what further is necessary to demonstrate the area's international significance or ecological integrity to the World Heritage Bureau, given the extent of the nomination's wilderness areas and the discovery of the Wollemi pine in 1994.

By continued cooperation between the NSW and Federal Governments, any major weaknesses in the Blue Mountains nomination can be overcome with further expert advice. There is no doubt that strong community support has given this nomination its best possible chance. The World Heritage Committee would do this support an injustice to cloud the consideration of this nomination with the politics of the Jabiluka decision which is being given its own special meeting by the Committee. Once the Committee starts down this track, it will end up discredited by deal making like that which has damaged the International Olympic Committee.

The Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination has received almost universal support from the community and virtually no hostile media (with the possible exception of Ryhope Shire Council north-west of Wollemi National Park). The World Heritage Bureau should consider this overwhelming community support for the stand alone nomination when it makes recommendations regarding this proposal. *

Wilderness 2000

THE Colong Foundation for Wilderness, in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the National Parks Association of NSW and the Total Environment Centre, is undertaking the Wilderness 2000 campaign. Its aim is to secure two million hectares of high conservation old growth forest in wilderness national parks by the year 2000.

The Carr Government reserved 897,637 hectares of wilderness in its first term, more than doubling the area of existing wilderness. Roughly 100,000 hectares of this area was former state forest land and the remainder was mostly pre-existing national park estate.

The current area of wilderness reserved in NSW

is 1,548,011 hectares. The difference between this total and the area protected by the Carr Government is 650,000 ha. This area was reserved by the Coalition parties.

The Wilderness 2000 campaign needs to reserve 450,000 hectares more wilderness by the end of this year to reach the reserve target of 2 million hectares, and nearly double this area will be assessed over the coming months.

The Carr Government's Wilderness Pledge

As a result of representations by the Colong Foundation, the Carr Government advised it would be assessing and reserving a further 13 new areas and 13 additions to existing areas (Premier's Office,

March 19). These areas total about 650,000 hectares. The land tenure of these areas is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

The commitment areas shown in these figures include those areas provisionally identified by the NPWS during the forest process (e.g. Chaelundi), and nomination areas that existed prior to or independent of the forest process (e.g. Bundjalung, Grose, Yengo, Deua, Levers and Pilliga) plus those that were flagged by environmentalists and the Australian Heritage Commission during the forest process (e.g. the Washpool addition, Banyabba and Mt Ballow).

These wilderness areas will be assessed in three giant wilderness assessment reports:

Figure 1: New areas for wilderness assessment and protection by 2000

Name	NPWS Estate	State Forest	Crown Land	Leasehold	Freehold	Total Area (ha)
Banyabba	16,803	121 L♦	2,071♦	0	10	19,005
Bundjalung	8,100	2,100	5,500*	-	3,300	19,000
Chandlers Creek	9,125	9,089 L	-	-	69	18,283
Levers Plateau	15,326	-	-	27	-	15,353
Mt Ballow	3,000	-	-	-	200	3,200●
Mummel Gulf	9,500	2,500 L	-	-	300	12,300
Pilliga	77,110♦	32,475♦	8,465	-	8,365	126,415
Timbarra Plateau	-	7,000 L	-	1,000	3,400	11,400
Yengo	102,063	-	1,639	33	1,612	105,347
Grose	47,900	-	2,100	-	200	50,200
Bungonia	23,100	-	3,700	12,000	1,200	40,000
Buckenbowra	5,400	14,663	-	-	900	20,963
Brindabella	12,280♦	-	8,654	-	-	20,934
TOTAL	329,707	67,948	32,129	13,060	19,556	462,400

KEY: ♦ = part of Crown Land managed by NPWS L = leasehold within State Forest
 * = marine area
 ● = adjoins interstate wilderness ♦ = area divided into sections by roads, powerlines or horse riding

- The Upper North East Forest Region containing the proposed Banyabba, Timbarra Plateau, Bundjalung, Chandlers Creek, Levers Plateau and Mount Ballow wilderness areas, and proposed additions to the Bindery-Mann, Guy Fawkes and Washpool wilderness areas.

- The Lower North East Forest Region containing the proposed Mummel Gulf and Yengo wilderness areas, and proposed additions to the Macleay Gorges, Werrikimbe and New England areas.

- The Southern Forest Region contains proposed Bungonia, Buckenbowra and Brindabella wilderness areas, and major additions to the Deua, Jagungal and Ettrema areas, as well as minor additions to the Budawang area. It is interesting to note that the Ettrema addition includes over 14,000 hectares of national park that was originally reserved as part of the Mark Morton Primitive Area, the first area of wilderness protected in a Crown reserve in NSW.

Assessed but yet to be protected wilderness

The two Northern Regions also include previously NPWS identified wilderness of about 138,500 hectares. These lands consist of 120,000 hectares of mainly Crown leasehold in the Macleay Gorges and Guy Fawkes wilderness areas a further 18,500 hectares of state forests that are Crown lease lands as well. These lands are under a logging moratorium (ref. Premier's Office, March 23) and being acquired through the Dun-

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Wilderness 2000

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phy Wilderness Fund (see Bulletin 174, pg 3).

The Southern Region contains 61,810 ha of previously NPWS identified wilderness in the Deua that are yet to be determined by this Government. This comprises 9,086 ha of National Park, 48,924 ha of State Forest, 3,500 ha of Crown leasehold and 300 ha of freehold lands. The NPWS will be reassessing part of the State Forest area in the Dampier State Forest, following logging in the area before the Carr Government came to power in

Of the previously identified wilderness, only Binghi of 34,228 hectares and Coolangubra of 24,404 hectares have been completely rejected by the Carr Government as areas suitable for protection.

1995. These Deua and the other additions, as well as those described in the above table as the Deua-Tuross additions will undoubtedly be the most controversial of the Carr Government's second term, due to the large state forest area involved.

Of the previously identified wilderness, only Binghi of 34,228 hectares and

Coolangubra of 24,404 hectares have been completely rejected by the Carr Government as areas suitable for protection.

New Wilderness Assessments Areas in the South East

In addition to these commitments outlined above, there are several Wilderness Assessment Study

Areas that the NPWS are now examining as part of the Southern Forest Comprehensive Regional Assessment (not shown in the above tables). The land tenure data for these STUDY AREAS is not available as yet but are approximately described as follows:

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Yodeller Range, Northern Blue Mountains Photograph Henry Gold



Wilderness 2000

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- Murruin wilderness of 28,000 ha that lies south of the Oberon Stock Route centred on the Murrin Creek and upper Abercrombie River catchments.
- The Bogong Peaks wilderness addition of 1,700 hectares between Mt Howell and the declared Bogong wilderness.
- The Goobarragandra wilderness additions consisting of 20,720 at the northern end of Kosciuszko National Park and partly within the southern part of the Bondo-Micalong State Forest (about 6,000 ha).
- A Bimberi wilderness addition of about 5,700 ha that runs north of Mount Franklin.
- The Tabletop wilderness of 25,000 ha centred on Tabletop Mountains entirely within Kosciuszko National Park.
- The Indi wilderness of about 17,200 ha centred on the Indi Range comprised mostly of national park with some Crown lands.
- The Western Fall wilderness of 18,700 ha to the west of the Main Range, including the Ramshead Range.
- At the very southern end of Kosciuszko National Park there are also small Pilot and Byadbo wilderness additions, totalling 4,158 ha and 2,800 ha respectively.

Not daunted by this task load, the Colong Foundation is seeking the reservation of a further 12,000 hectare addition to the Jagungal wilderness. The Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park will become the target for ski resort

Name of addition	NPWS Estate	State Forest	Crown Land	Leashold	Freehold	Addn. total Area (ha)
Barrington	1,351	-	-	-	-	1,351
Bindery-Mann	4,032	18	-	3	-	4,053
Guy Fawkes - Mann NR adn	6,126	4,165	49	1,862	-	12,202
Macleay Gorges - Brittle Gum adn	1,663	-	-	-	-	1,663
Macleay Gorges - Styx River adn	4,690	1,284	-	26	2020	8,020
Washpool	-	1,459	-	-	-	1,459
New England	-	408	-	-	-	408
Wernkimbe adn - Doyles River	9,820	1,288 L	-	156	874	12,138
Wernkimbe adn - Stockyard Ck	4,222+	2,416	4,809	3,686	2,199	17,332
Wollemi	-	8,640	120	1	560	9,321
Budawang	-	1,276	-	-	-	1,276
Ettrema	14,665	3,300	400	-	-	18,365
Deua-Tuross	23,620+	48,530	-	300	366	72,816
Jagungal	26,100+	-	4,070	-	1,530	31,700
TOTAL	96,289	72,784	9,448	6,034	7,549	192,104

KEY: + = area divided into sections by roads, powerlines or horse riding.

L = leashold within State Forest.

Figure 2: Additions to existing areas for wilderness assessment and protection by 2000

development in less than 30 years. Within that time frame, there may be no suitable snow elsewhere due to the Greenhouse effect. To stop such devastating development, the original 1962 Kosciusko Primitive Area negotiated by Myles Dunphy should be reinstated. There is no doubt that this national park area is wilderness, and it was actually managed as wilderness for twenty years from 1962 to 1982. Given the extent of the wilderness assessments being undertaken by the NPWS across the state, it is amazing that the area is not being assessed at this date.

The total area of wilderness that could be secured during the second term of the Carr Government is approximately 850,000 hectares, plus whatever of the 140,000 hectares of Crown leasehold and other private lands can be voluntarily acquired using the Dunphy Fund. *

The Democrats' GST

Opinion on the environmental effects of the Democrats GST is somewhat divided. A consumption tax should reduce non-essential consumption. However, it is its effect on primary production in rural districts and not on the city-based consumption of services that will have the greatest impact upon natural environments.

Fuels will become cheaper for businesses (\$2.9 billion/year subsidy) and so more fuel will be consumed. Fuel is the key input cost for primary producers. Lowering production costs will also mean an increase in resource extraction rates and other primary production, a major environmental minus. For example, some conservationists claim that the price of woodchips will fall by a dollar. Obviously the concessions won by the Democrats on the fuel levy do not go far enough. Internationally, Australia as a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol is required to reduce the growth of its greenhouse gas emissions to 8 per cent above 1990 levels.

We will be the only OECD country to have reduced the tax on fuel in the last 10 years. Clearly the Democrats should not have forgotten their 1998 election commitment to a carbon tax on fossil fuels.

Environment Powers Inquiry

AT the end of May, a Democrat controlled Senate Reference Committee reported on Commonwealth Environment Powers. The Inquiry, Chaired by Democrat Senator Lyn Allison, made 30 detailed recommendations. Unfortunately the Government has rejected all of them, whilst the Labor Opposition accepted, with qualification, about two thirds of these recommendations.

The report reveals Labor's opposition to the concept of limiting the Commonwealth's interest in the environment only to matters of "national environmental significance". The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill 1998 seeks to delegate many environmental responsibilities to the states, reducing Commonwealth responsibilities to the narrow areas listed as "matters of national environmental significance", including the yet to be specified "nationally significant places". Labor's position ensures that the Bill could be significantly amended if the Bill comes on after the Democrats secure balance of power of the Senate in July. *[It won't. Ed.]*

If the Bill is debated after July, conservation will at last be back on the national political agenda with the first major review of Commonwealth environmental laws in 25 years. The Howard Government's new Federalist vision of delegating environmental powers to the States will have to be transformed, otherwise the legislation may become just too hot for the Government to handle.

Just how many pro-conservation amendments are achieved will precisely define the environmental ambit of the new relationship between the Democrats and the Howard Government. If the recommendations of the Senate References Committee are anything to go on, there is substantial

scope for amendment but also some major limitations.

Among the other key recommendations of the Reference Committee Report are buffer areas for World Heritage properties, third party (i.e. members of the public) standing in the courts to enforce Commonwealth environmental laws and a legal commission to assist government in finding a path toward an environmental sustainable future through a maze of State and Commonwealth environmental laws and the Constitution. Both major parties oppose these key Democrat recommendations. It is obvious that the sort of environmental management that in NSW is taken for granted is a long way off for the federal sphere.

Blue Mountains Case Study

Despite providing the Committee with two detailed submissions, making a two hour Inquiry presentation, organising a site inspection of the Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination area and providing ample copies of our *Blue Mountains for World Heritage* book, the Colong Foundation was ignored.

Our main recommendation sought an improved administrative framework for the assessment of World Heritage proposals. The endless indecision regarding the Blue Mountains was used to illustrate the inadequate bureaucratic framework. Apparently the Australian Democrats have no difficulty with the ten year delay of this nomination, despite every tier of Government and every major and minor party supporting it, including the National Party.

A study of Australia's 13 World Heritage areas reveals that environment protection is best progressed when there is political controversy. Now that the Blue Mountains is controversial, because of Badgerys Creek airport proposal, its protection could be assured. *

DONATIONS

The Colong Foundation gratefully acknowledges donations from the following during the half year to June 30th. The donations are particularly welcome in view of the Government's wilderness reservation program (see article *Wilderness 2000*) which will be bitterly opposed by anti-conservation interests.

A. Abbott, R. Aitken, Arthur Anderson & Co., V. Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. C. Austin, R.L. Badgery, E. Bell, C.G. Benjamin, J.S. Bentley, J.W. Blanche, J. Bowden, C.O. Boyd, P.E. Boyd, J.C. Brown, The Bush Club, M. Cawte, C. Caloudis, E.A. Chapman Wade, B. Chick OAM, Coast and Mountain Walkers, A. G. Colley OAM, J. Cook, Dr. P. Cooke, A. Cooper, G.A. Coote, A. Correy, R. Coster, G. Cox, I. Cox, L. Coyne, C.J. Davidson, Paul D. Dodd, R. Doyle, Dr. R.A. Duncan, E. Elenius, M. Ellwood, M. Esson, C.L. Ferguson, V.R. Figgis, D. Fisher, M.F. Flattely, G. Giles, W.J. Gillooly, J. Greening, S. Haginikitas, E. Hanvin, P.B. Haydon, W. Hillyer, M. Hillsmith, M.J. Holmes, B. Jones, L. Jones, G.F. Kallir, A. J. Keen, D and J. Kelly, M.E.V. Kilby, Prof. G. Laird, J. Lawler, K. and J. Lawson, Dr. A. K. Lethlean, C. Lubbers, Prof. B. Marshall, P. Maslen, D. Mellor, W.H. Midson, D. Mossop, K. Muir, Dr. W. Muir, L. McIntyre, M. Nordon, J. O'Reilly, Paddy Pallin Pty. Ltd. K.L.J. Parkhouse, J. Scarsbrook, R. Scott, I. Sefton, A. Shilling, J. Simons, M. Simpson, M. Smith, K. Stolzenheim, Dr. J. H. Stephenson, Dr. S. Stevens, L.M. Sullivan, R. Toop, D. von Behrens, Wanderers Bushwalking & Outdoor Club, T. Walsh, H. Whaite, M.J. White, J. F. Whitehouse, R. Willis, F. Winternitz, G.A. Woodward, J.D. Wrigley.

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THE KOSCIUSZKO AMUSEMENT PARK

Business overrides conservation



In his 1980 summary of "overriding considerations" the Planning Officer of the Kosciusko National Park wrote that "there must be a limit to which development can be promoted." The limit, or limits, were described in the Steering Committee's Visions for the New Millennium report of November 1998 to the Minister of the Environment. Recommendation 6.11 concerning commercial concessions and leasing provisions, contained "certain overriding principles" which included the following:

- All concessions should have a direct nexus with the purpose of reservation;
- No concessions of a private or semi-private nature should be granted;
- No residences should be provided within reserves other than for essential management purposes;
- The Service should not encourage a real estate market based on interests in land within its reserves and should not create leasehold and strata titles for the development of residential apartments or villas which provide the basis for such a market;
- The Service should not encourage developments of a village or urban nature within its reserves;
- The Service should plan and manage its reserves to make the maximum use of visitor accommodation and related facilities off-reserve;
- The Service should discourage the amalgamation or amassing of concessional interests within its public reserves and avoid the creation of commercial entities which may exert excessive influence in their management.

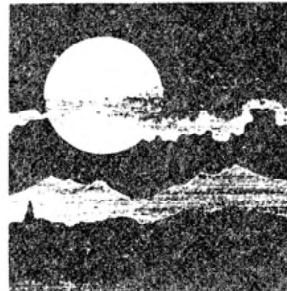
The overriding principles of the Visions report proved to be a mirage when the Commission of Inquiry recommended that overnight accommodation in the park be increased from 8,000 to 9,300 beds. The recommendation contravened all the above "overriding principles." The provisions of section 72(4)e of the National Parks Act, which prohibits the execution of any works affecting the natural condition of parks, was "overridden" by section s151 of the Act which permits the granting of leases for "accommodation, hotels, facilities and amenities for tourists and visitors" and "buildings erected for residential occupation."

Development within the park is subsidised by the NPWS, which in 1996/7 expended \$15 million and received only \$12 million in revenue. Revenue from park leases was \$5,435,053. Only \$334,800 was from the Thredbo head lease, which was negotiated in the 1950s. Development is also subsidised by the State Government which provides infrastructure such as the expensive reconstruction of the Alpine Way. It is a cosy arrangement whereby the sub lessees bear the business risk, the head lessee, Perisher Blue, receives an assured return and the NPWS and State Government subsidise the city within a national park.

Despite this favourable business environment, however, the head lessee has fears for the future because of the short snow season and the fall off of patronage during the rest of the year, which is causing a decline in market share. The Commission's approval of 1,300 additional beds, together with shops, offices, four story blocks of luxury apartments and a new ski-village ski centre was

approved by the Commission on the grounds that it would arrest the decline in market share experienced by the NSW ski industry. This approval was of course described by the Commission, as are all decisions favouring the developer, as "balanced" and further justified by being described as "holistic." It is probable that Perisher will follow the example of Thredbo by providing attractions such as music festivals, Shakespearian weekends, sculpture symposiums, art exhibitions and gymnasiums. It may well follow the Mount Hotham example by hosting picnic races, rodeo and mountain bike races. If the ski season shortens under the influence of the greenhouse effect and New Zealand becomes more popular, golf, polo, football and even 4Wdriving and horse riding may be promoted.

In order to prevent the development blight from spreading to the upper Snowy River and the Main Range, Colong has nominated for wilderness reservation the Primitive Area negotiated by Myles Dunphy in 1962 west of the Perisher snow city, but despite extensive wilderness assessments within the southern region this area is not being assessed. We hope this does not indicate NPWS approval of further business encroachment. (see also article in this Bulletin "Wilderness 2000" and "Capturing the High Ground," Bulletin 173.)



PRESERVING WILDERNESS for *all* Australians

THE Colong Foundation has never advocated that land owned, inhabited or used by Aborigines should be declared a wilderness against their wishes, nor to our knowledge has any such land been declared. We believe that wilderness should be preserved for the benefit of all Australians and not be degraded by hunting with 4WDs and guns. This view is supported by ACF Councillor Dr. Geoff Mosley, who wrote the following letter to the Habitat issue of April 99:

"I was the dissenting voice on the four-person sub-committee which produced the Draft Wilderness and indigenous Cultural Landscapes policy statement referred to in the February issue of Habitat and I would be grateful for the opportunity to say why.

The draft policy in my view is an excellent one if applied with full respect for human rights. First, wilderness, even in the modified form proposed in the policy, ought not to be imposed on the indigenous peoples' lands. It is their land and it should be their decision.

Equally, this wilderness prescription, which would allow motorised access, permanent habitations and interference with plants and animals, ought not be imposed on existing wilderness areas that are not indigenous peoples' land and where there is no native title.

I endeavoured to have these qualifications included in the draft statement but neither my fellow sub-committee members nor Council would agree.

Contrary to what Rosemary Hill and Penny Figgis say in their article the proposed policy is not in accordance with IUCN protected area standards. Certainly the IUCN policy contemplates the possibility of indigenous use of wilderness but it was never intended that the IUCN wilderness areas category had to be used by indigenous people (only in certain

circumstances) and the reference to indigenous use was not intended to be applied in wilderness areas where the land was not owned by indigenous people.

Similarly, the ACFs Land and Rights Policy whose adoption I was happy to move at the November Council meeting, does not require indigenous use of conservation reserves in all circumstances.

Until the draft is amended along the lines I have suggested I will continue to oppose its adoption."

"It is simply cant to rationalise the use of intrusive technology by some Aboriginal people in wilderness areas on the basis that it is a natural development of traditional ways, when it is utterly alien to the original cultural perspective..."

This policy is also strongly supported by the National Parks Association. In the June issue of its Journal, Executive Officer, Noel Plumb criticises an Australian Heritage Commission brochure published after an "unrepresentative" consultation in W.A. in May 1988. The brochure justifies the use of vehicles and firearms and the construction of houses in wilderness. Otherwise Aboriginal cultures would be treated "as museum pieces, denying their evolution."

Noel Plumb writes: "It is simply cant to rationalise the use of intrusive technology by some Aboriginal people in wilderness areas on the basis that it is a natural development of traditional ways, when it is utterly alien

to the original cultural perspective.....The AHC is mistaken to adopt the narrow and divisive agenda of a few indigenous ideologues who wrongly see wilderness as an impediment to land rights and Aboriginal sovereignty. This brochure is the tip of an iceberg aimed at crippling wilderness conservation, or at the least pressuring governments to link Aboriginal ownership and privileged use with further conservation reserves, no matter how tenuous the current Aboriginal associations.

Noel notes that this agenda has already surfaced in the NPWS assessment report on the proposed Grose Wilderness and concludes: "NPA strongly supports reconciliation with Aboriginal people and their involvement with management of wilderness and the national parks estate. Australia is proud of its tolerance and accommodation of diverse views. Wilderness is the only land category which uncompromisingly protects nature and supports evolution free of human hands. True reconciliation should support wilderness, not seek its annihilation."

The NSW environment movement's position

The 1988 Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW on Aboriginal Interests in Nature Conservation resolved (in part) that Aboriginal land councils should be afforded the opportunity of joint management of wilderness areas, with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Uluru Model, where their claims for such lands might be sustained, provided that these lands will be managed in a way that will not prejudice their wilderness values.

This resolution was amended by the 1993 NCC Annual Conference that resolved (in part) that the national parks of Australia form part

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PRESERVING WILDERNESS

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of the heritage of all Australians and they should for the most part be retained in public ownership and all of them should continue to be managed for the protection of the natural and cultural features for which they were dedicated.

The Conference accepted that the transfer of land in national parks, dedicated wilderness areas and similar reserves from public ownership and control, to the ownership and control of an Aboriginal community may occur, but this should be limited to circumstances where a local Aboriginal community initiates a claim, the claim is assessed in accordance with accepted rules, and the claim is found to be valid on the grounds that native title exists or that the transfer of ownership is necessary to maintain the cultural integrity of the local Aboriginal community.

The resolution also states that the transfer of ownership and control of national parks to Aboriginal groups as a method of compensating Aboriginal people for historic wrongs is not supported.

In 1998 the above position was confirmed by a further resolution passed by the NCC Annual Conference. It "supported joint management of wilderness areas with NPWS where their claims for such land might be sustained, provided these lands will be managed in such a way that will not prejudice their wilderness values..."

The Colong Foundation considers that Aboriginal people deserve the return of at least some of the more fertile land which used to provide their subsistence. Lands in national parks are for the most part unproductive and of marginal economic value, and management of them in a manner aimed at producing substantial economic benefit is likely to compromise nature conservation objectives. For this reason some conservationists now question whether the Uluru Model of National Park management is adequate to prevent the development of national parks in the more settled parts of Australia. The temptation to develop the eco-tourism potential of these lands against the best interests of nature

Budget Conservation

THE Commonwealth budget statement for the environment outlines how to save money and the natural environment. Conservation outcomes remain contingent on the sale of our most valuable public asset, the vast telecommunication infrastructure. Selling this asset in stages maintains conservation programs for longer but is no substitute for conservation funded from taxation. According to the Commonwealth's projected environmental expenditure (Sen. Hill, 11 May), the Howard Government's environmental programs have been maintained at \$1 billion in 1998-9 and this year but fall slightly in 2000-01 and by 2002-03 it collapses. We hope that the Democrat GST deal will kick in additional taxation by then, otherwise the environment budget will hit a disastrous \$392.1 million, including environmental expenditure on meteorology, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Senator Hill intends to run the Natural Heritage Trust by spending about a quarter of a billion during this Parliamentary term from the Telstra slush fund, which according to Herald reports goes mainly to Coalition electorates. The Government also plans to raid Telstra in 2001-02 for another \$250 million to extend the environment programs it funds.

The Commonwealth budget has some very imaginative initiatives, including making gifts of property tax deductible, creating a global whale sanctuary, expanding biodiversity conservation through new national parks and funding off-reserve protection as part of the National Reserve System initiative. So far, the Government has "approved" the acquisition of 1.4 million hectares (purchased with the \$16 million actually allocated, a bargain budget allocation of \$11.42 a hectare)!

conservation could be altogether too tempting for Aboriginal communities starved of other opportunities to make a livelihood. It is in this context that the restoration of fertile, economically useful land to Aboriginal communities is environmentally essential.

Another model that provides ownership to Aboriginal communities of existing national parks and

And the State-run World Heritage places also receive a funding boost to \$15.7 million, 50 per cent more than Labor spent in its final year in office. The Hexham Swamps are to be rehabilitated, coastal land acquired near Gosford and a large chunk of the Paroo River Overflow, one of the least disturbed areas in western NSW, is also to be acquired for a national park.

On the forest front, there is only \$5.8 million for finalising the Regional Forest Agreement process by 2000 when (optimistically speaking) areas not covered by an Agreement will be prohibited from exporting woodchips. This means that the Carr Government will have to carry most of the economic impacts of negotiations for protecting Southern Forests of NSW.

There is payment of \$96 million to the Department of Defence for the protection of publicly owned Sydney Harbour foreshore bushland. About \$90 million of this is simply a transfer payment from conservation budget for military spending on relocation to Queensland and remediation of Harbour lands. The other \$9 million actually is for a conservation purpose, providing public access to Garden Island. The Government has given no assurances that all these precious foreshore lands will be protected.

Despite the 1.25 billion dollar Telstra sale, there is no money for wilderness. As of July 1st, the Wilderness Unit in Environment Australia will be abolished due to a lack of interest by the executive of Environment Australia and Senator Hill's office. As a result the National Wilderness Inventory and the Wild Rivers initiatives will cease. The Colong Foundation will have to stretch itself to fill this vacuum - with no government assistance funding of course. *

wilderness where native title is established or are now used by Aboriginals, and that protects these areas with more certainty would be desirable. Such a model would recognise ownership, but the core areas of these national parks should be preserved as wilderness which has to be retained free of modifications by the works of modern European culture for all time. *

SAVING MORE OF THE NORTH EAST FORESTS

THE Government's scientific advisers reported that, in order to achieve scientific reserve criteria in the north east, new reserves covering 1.2 million hectares were necessary. Under the provisions of the Forestry and National Park Estate Act, 1998 only 380,000 hectares were reserved, an area only 50,000 hectares above that recommended by the timber industry. About 206,000 hectares of recognised wilderness on public and private lands, protected since 1991 by a logging moratorium, were left outside the NPWS estate and an additional 238,000 hectares of old growth forest were made available to the loggers.

Some of the excluded areas however may yet be saved. There are two categories of forest outside parklands the status of which have not yet been determined. These consist of 126,640 hectares of "areas for further consideration" and 176,678 hectares of "additional areas for reservation". The former are areas proposed by government agencies at the time of the forest decision in 1998, while the later are areas proposed by the North East Forest Alliance.

About 160,000 hectares of NPWS recognised wilderness were not included for "further consideration" by the Government in 1998 during the Comprehensive Regional Assessment. However, 125,364 hectares of these lands are Crown leasehold and a further 23,045 hectares are leasehold lands within state forests. For these two categories of leasehold land the Government is committed to protecting these lands in the reserve system, if they meet wilderness criteria (Premier's Office, 23 March 99). Of the above area 137,416 hectares already meet that test, including 18,695 hectares of leasehold within state forests. This commitment ensures that the remaining bits of Chaelundi State Forest in the NPWS identified Guy Fawkes wilderness are safe whilst the logging moratorium holds. Of the remaining lands not protected, only 2,000 hectares are NPWS identified wilderness and the rest are 4,350 hectares of State Forests leasehold (including Chaelundi wilderness) and freehold lands that cannot be subject to a logging moratorium.

The North East Forest Alliance's a minutely researched paper (by Dalian



Pugh and Carmel Flint) entitled "Last chance for Public Comprehensive Regional Parks" shows 303,318 hectares for reservation in some 250 areas. There are 46,749 hectares of wilderness within the 303,318 hectares and those areas adjoining 13 national parks. Most of this land is in the Binderry-Mann, Chandlers Creek, the western part of Washpool and Werrikimbe areas. The leasehold areas under logging moratorium include Mann, Macleay Gorges, Washpool and Guy Fawkes areas. Wilderness assessment processes in the north-east will further add to areas of protected forest (see 'Wilderness 2000' in this Bulletin). It appears that the initial assessments of forest protection levels in the north-east were too negative. *

Stump of an 800-year-old turpentine tree, destroyed by Boral in the Ballingarra State Forest



MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held on July 1st, 15th and 29th and Aug 12th and 26th.

SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION!

To: The Treasurer, Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.
Level 2, 362 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

The enclosed remittance or advice covers the items(s) indicated by a tick. (One cheque is sufficient to cover subscription and donation.)

- Membership application (see below) (NB Membership application covers Bulletin subscription)
- Membership renewal (\$20) Life Membership (\$500)
- Colong Bulletin Subscription to 31/12/99 (\$10) (Non-members only)
- Tax deductible donation of \$..... to the Colong Wilderness Fund (cheques to be made payable to the Fund)
NAME (Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss)
- ADDRESS
- P/CODE DATE
- SIGNED AMOUNT

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Why not join or invite a friend to join?

- Yes, I wish to become a member of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. 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



PROGRESS OF THE FOUNDATION

The Colong Foundation is the longest-serving community advocate for wilderness in Australia. It has initiated or been part of Campaigns that have secured over a million hectares of national parkland, most of which is wilderness. But a further million hectares of wilderness in eastern NSW is still not reserved under the Wilderness Act, although much of the area is now in national parks.

Now more than ever the Colong Foundation needs your support. Well financed anti-conservation lobbies, representing resource development, 4WD enthusiasts, equestrian and commercial tourism interests, have greatly increased development pressures on wild places.

The 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 parts and Kakadu are now World Heritage Areas. The Greater Blue Mountains Park is in being in fact, though not in name. 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. It has successfully campaigned for the nomination of the Blue Mountains for World Heritage listing. It is at present working for the protection of threatened wilderness in NSW, for the preservation of national parks from commercial development and damaging use, and for the preservation of old growth forests.

BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTION

Membership of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness covers Bulletin Subscription Fee.



Non-members of the Foundation may subscribe to the Bulletin for a fee of \$10 (covers all issues of the Bulletin for a calendar year).

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 of Wilderness Ltd. shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd."

THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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SENDER: THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS
Level 2, 362 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLONG FOUNDATION

	Price Posted \$				
WILD PLACES <i>The meticulously researched, beautifully written book on wilderness by Peter Prineas with photographs by Henry Gold (285pp)</i>	34.95	<input type="checkbox"/>	MYLES AND MILO <i>A biography, written by Peter Meredith, of The Colong Committee's Patron, Myles Dunphy OBE, and its founder, Milo Dunphy AM D.Sc. (376pp)</i>	25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
BLUE MOUNTAINS FOR WORLD HERITAGE <i>Geoff Mosley provides a comprehensive explanation of the wealth of heritage values in the Blue Mountains (135pp)</i>	16.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	THE BAREFOOT BUSHWALKER <i>by Dorothy Butler, Australian Geographic award winner. A story of a lifetime of adventure in wilderness and high mountains (292pp)</i>	25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
THE COLONG STORY <i>Describes the first major conservation battle in NSW (42pp)</i>	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASSIC BUSHWALKING MAPS by Myles Dunphy (Gangerang and Kowmung Maps) 5.00ea		<input type="checkbox"/>
HOW THE RAINFOREST WAS SAVED <i>Story of the campaign initiated by the Byron Flora and Fauna Conservation Society and the Colong Committee (59pp)</i>	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILDERNESS RED INDEX – complete \$100 <i>The Index describes the land ownership, values, history and threats to NSW wild places</i>	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARK OR PINES <i>The story of how the Boyd Plateau was saved (42pp)</i>	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	– Summary brochures \$2.00	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
			– Listing of individual areas \$5.00	\$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/>