

NSW Wilderness Red Index 1999 Heralds New Campaign

OCTOBER 14th, marked the launch of the 1999 NSW Wilderness Red Index by our Patron, the Hon. Neville Wran, A.C., Q.C. The launch, at the National Trust Offices, was well attended and marks a new chapter for the Foundation. There was a sense of new beginnings and dynamism brought about by the release of a new wilderness campaign slide show, our first colour brochure, an all new web site, and of course, the completely revised 500 page NSW Wilderness Red Index (see enclosed summary).

The meeting was opened by our Chairperson, Pat Thompson, who paid tribute to the work of Keith Muir, John Macris and Tom Widdup, and volunteers Fiona McCrossin, Henry Gold and Ross Coster. He described the progress of the national parks estate since 1975 when Neville Wran became Premier. Pat also thanked Paddy Pallin Ltd for their contribution of \$2,000 toward the production of the Wilderness 2000 colour brochure that is enclosed with this Bulletin. The Red Index was entirely funded by private donors, the Colong Foundation

further acknowledges their generous support that made the Index possible.

Neville Wran recalled our beginnings with the Colong Caves campaign and the extraordinary tactics of the environmentalists in winning a series of little conservation battles and his wonderful trips with Milo Dunphy. He looked forward to the time when all wilderness, which was only a few per cent of the landmass of NSW, would be preserved. He was confident that, despite the difficulties, we would get more from the Labor Government. Bob Carr was truly an environmentalist. The Red Index recognised the obligation imposed on environmentalists, who have chosen to come to terms with the world within which we live. It is a terrific reference, reminding the reader what's at risk. It will give many people the incentive and the resources to do something about protecting wilderness.

Tom Widdup, our new assistant director, then presented the Wilder-

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

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

DIRECTORS: Pat Thompson, L.C.P. (Chairman); Jim Somerville, A.M., A.S.A. (Vice-Chairman); Alex Colley, O.A.M., B.Ec., H.D.A. (Hon. Secretary); Albert Renshaw (Hon. Treasurer); Tim Cadman B.A. (Hons), M.A. (Cantab.); Guy Dunphy; Peter Maslen, B.Sc.(Eng), B.Sc.(Botany); Peter Prineas, B.A., LL.B.; Jeff Rigby; John Sinclair, O.A.M..

DIRECTOR: Keith Muir, B. Nat. Res. (Hons.) ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Tom Widdup, B. Com.

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Wilderness Red Index

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ness 2000 slide show that featured the beauty of the scenery, the flora and fauna nurtured by wilderness, and some of the destructive elements featured in the Index. The show has already been presented to more than a dozen community groups and more are coming forward each week to be entertained by Tom's professional presentation.

The launch is only a start, for now the work toward protecting wilderness must start anew. The factual groundwork of the Index will make a big difference in advancing the cause of saving threatened wilderness and ensuring proper management of the areas already reserved in national parks.

Placing the 500 page Red Index on the Colong Web Site overcomes three serious impediments to communication with potential readers - the limited availability, inflexibility and cost of reproducing a lengthy paper report (The Index was last produced in 1993 and sold 30 copies.) The Index can now be accessed through the Internet at no cost to the reader, while its cost in either printed form or on disk will remain at \$100 which provides the reader with the reference citations.

Red is for alert and watch out! The Foundation intends to use the information in the Index to meet the constantly changing campaign needs. This new advice can be quickly published on our Web site to inform and assist the community to more effectively respond to the threats to wild places. Of course the Bulletin will remain the primary means of communication with our members regarding wilderness issues. ■

Meeting Dates
Meetings will be
held on December
2nd and 16th,
and January 13th
and 27th.

Selling the Parks

Economic rationalism has managed to extend its tentacles into just about every crack of Australian life as it seeks out what remains of our publicly owned facilities and attempts to chop twist and turn them into profit-making products.

Fran Kelly, NPA Journal, April 1998

Declared wilderness is the only form of land use preserved from development. National parks, although their stated objectives are the conservation of wildlife, preservation and protection from works affecting their natural condition (see the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974), are increasingly subject to roading, accommodation, commercial activities, 4Wdriving, horse riding, helicopter overflights and other uses inimical to these objectives. If conservation is to be achieved, commercial and other high impact activities should be restricted to day visitor use on public roads. All other park facilities should be restricted to management purposes.

Whether any charge should be made for park use is itself questionable. Services, which benefit the entire public, such as defence, policing and roading (except some free-ways) are funded from taxation. Urban parks are funded by the ratepayers. National parks are enjoyed by all.

If park users are to pay for park management the provision of marketable facilities is necessary. Entrance fees cause no environmental damage, nor do most of the commercial ventures envisaged if the Millennium Vision recommendation that visitor accommodation and related facilities be situated off reserve is followed. If such facilities are provided within the park, environmental damage will be minimised if they are provided at park entrances only. Recent approvals of accommodation in park heartland, such as shack retention in the Royal National N.P., increase of 1,300 beds in Kosciuszko N.P. and cabins in the Warrumbungles will no doubt be followed in other parks.

The policy of commercial development of parklands is opposed to their preservation. Readers of the Colong Bulletin will have read of our mounting concern. We have opposed shacks in the Royal National Park (Bulletin 162), the use by the tourist industry of adjoining national parks as 'a free backyard' (Bulletin 162), Real estate within national parklands (Bulletin 165), Shacks in the Warrumbungles (Bulletin 166), Park users paying for park development (Bulletin 167), Commercial operations in the Blue Mountains national parks (Bulletin 169) and Real estate and commercial development in Kosciuszko (Bulletins 170, 172 & 175).

In the last Bulletin we described the restructuring of the NPWS following the Vision for the New Millennium Conference of July 1998. The positions to be filled and the responsibilities entailed are described in the job descriptions, which clearly envisage the promotion of commercial development. Regional Managers are to operate business units. The Business Manager will have a key role in leading the development of programs for the resort areas. The Manager Business Development will be responsible for sustainable revenue generation, cost effectiveness, park use fees, the management of expanding concessions and lease portfolios and retail sales, coordination of marketing and promotion of business ventures and the fostering of a business focus. The Financial Controller will focus on value adding and sustainable revenue generation. The Manager Information and Marketing will develop and implement strategic marketing and promotion plans.

The Wilderness Unit will be abolished and its functions absorbed into the Conservation Assessment and Priorities Unit of the Integrated Landscape Information and Management Division. Effective wilderness advocacy will be lost within other management priorities. If the NPWS does not protect the most pristine areas of the State, the restructure must be considered a failure. ■

The Special Areas Strategic Plan

Last year's Sydney Water Inquiry, chaired by Peter McClellan Q.C., made it clear that the inner catchment areas are critical to healthy drinking water supplies. The Special Area Catchments are the 'kidneys' that help cleanse the polluted waters flowing from the outer catchment areas.

McClellan's report found further expensive water treatment would be unnecessary, provided pollution sources could be reduced, the existing drinking treatment plants better managed, and the water cleansing abilities of our precious wilderness catchments restored.

The growing number of feral pests in Sydney's wild inner catchments, coupled with increased pollution flowing from rural districts, had dangerously weakened catchment health. The massive *Cryptosporidium* outbreak was a warning that could have been a catastrophe.

Better pest management of the Kanangra-Boyd and Nattai wilderness areas will help save up to \$500 million water treatment costs. A little more money spent on park management would ensure that more that can be spent on hospitals, schools and welfare, rather than filling the bank account of a multi-national water treatment plant engineering firm.

The Importance of the Strategic Catchment Plan

McClellan's final report recommended the immediate release of the final draft of the Strategic Plan of Management for the Special Area catchments. The draft report, released last September, is aimed at ensuring the ecological health and water cleansing capabilities of these areas. It is the penultimate step to a lengthy public consultation process on catchment management that was unfortunately diverted onto the demands for more vehicle and horseriding access, and provision of further development opportunities in these areas. The push for such damaging access has been effectively resisted, mainly as a consequence of the *Cryptosporidium* water scare. (Of course, these wilderness catchment issues are repeated up and down the Great Dividing Range and in every case there is a call for more access by user groups regardless of this important issue.)

Environment groups consider that the Special Areas should become national parks and managed by the NPWS, with adequate resources provided by the Sydney Catchment Authority, as recommended in the McClellan Report.

We are pleased to report that upon

launching the final draft Strategic Plan on September 2, Bob Debus, the Minister for the Environment, advised that all of the recommendations of the McClellan Report would be implemented. He also specifically mentioned that the Special Area catchments would be added to the NPWS estate.

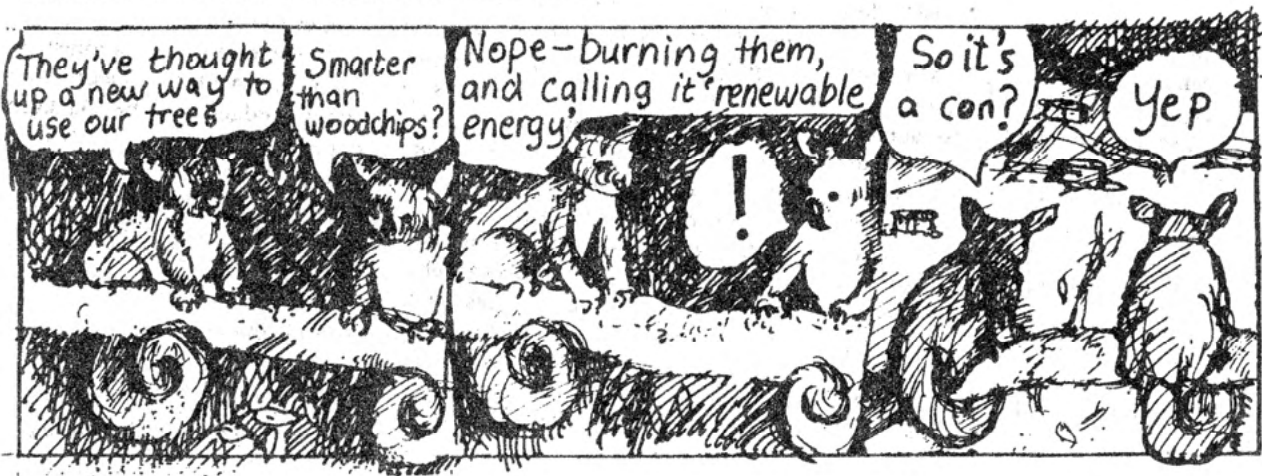
This was an important Ministerial decision, as the above McClellan recommendations were omitted from the Strategic Plan. Instead, the draft strategy disappointingly supported the status quo, by respecting the bureaucratic territories of the NPWS and the new Sydney Catchment Authority. Such a proposal would have reduced the Sydney Catchment Authority efforts in developed areas by wasting ratepayer's funds on duplicating administrative effort within the Special Areas.

The Strategic Catchment Management Plan also overlooked the McClellan recommendation to implement the catchment management plans through a Regional Environmental Plan, as part of a whole of catchment approach.

The main threat to water quality is not the 2,584 sq. km. of the Waragamba Special Area but the 6,466 sq. km. outside it. The Strategy paper states that serious threats arise from unsewered urban areas, particularly at Medlow Bath (see Colong Bulletin 173 article 'Sewage Backlash') and poor stormwater management. Another important issue is the

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CARTOON BY ANNE ROBERTS



Letters from Senator Hill and Bob Debus

Senator Hill writes:

I am disappointed with the Bureau's recommendations regarding the Greater Blue Mountains nomination. They are inconsistent with the advice of the independent experts involved in the assessment and nomination processes. My Department is evaluating the Bureau's recommendations and is liaising closely with the NSW NPWS regarding options for progressing World Heritage listing of the Greater Blue Mountains. I intend to pursue a stand alone nomination (as opposed to a serial, eucalyptus based nomination) of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to seek the earliest possible date for inscription on the World Heritage list. I will be discussing this matter further with my NSW counterpart, the Hon. Bob Debus MLA.

Bob Debus wrote that he is committed to pursuing a stand-alone Greater Blue Mountains nomination (rather than a serial nomination). He has asked the Director-General of the NPWS to initiate further discussions with officers of Environment Australia to determine options for re-submitting a stand-alone nomination. He also took the opportunity to personally thank Keith Muir for his commitment and involvement with the nomination and enclosed a report by Joan Domicelj on the July proceedings of the World Heritage Bureau. She writes that the report for the Bureau prepared by the advisory body ICOMOS, related to rock art rather than the nomination's claim of environmental bonding, which grew out of people's close association with the area and the growth of the conservation movement. Australia sought the opportu-

Down With The Trees

The Queensland Government's Land Cover and Trees Study reveals that 340,000 ha of native bush were cleared annually between 1995 and 1997. In the first seven months of this year permits were issued to clear 226,000 ha of virgin bush.

The Deputy Opposition Leader, Mr. Lawrence Springborg, said land clearing restrictions were 'a major affront to the concept of private ownership of land' and would wipe millions of dollars off rural land values.

S.M.H. report 6.10.99

nity to reply in detail to the issues raised before the Committee's determination of the nomination in December 1999, but this response was not submitted in time to either the advisory bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN) or the Bureau. Consequently the Bureau adopted the advisory bodies' recommendation without discussion.

Both governments will try again next year. ■

Special Areas Strategic Plan

...continued on page 3

removal of bush rock. These threats are addressed by the Minister for Planning, who released a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 58, which requires new developments to be assessed for potential impacts on water quality. This SEPP will shortly be replaced by the proposed Regional Environmental Plan. Ongoing action to upgrade sewerage systems and management for single householders is also under way.

Since wilderness is the most complete catchment protection, the catchments should be managed as such, even if in some cases past disturbance means that these areas may not qualify for wilderness reservation. The Joint Management Agreement incorporates most of the wilderness management principles long advocated by the Foundation and the Joint Management Advisory Group consisting of Mr. Robert Pallin,

Dr. Gavin Frost, Dr. Fred Bell, Mr. Bill Mowbray and Professor Peter Cullen endorses it.

A recurring theme in the accompanying Background Document released with the draft Plan is the pressure placed on the Special Areas for provision of more utility infrastructure easements, such as transport corridors which are 'a conduit for illegal access' such as motor cycle riding, horse riding, four wheel driving, rubbish dumping, arson, accidental fires and vandalism. The most significant threat to ecological integrity is identified as the collective impact of all the different forms of access. Regional population growth and quality of life demands create pressure for mining, agriculture and extensions to utilities.

Mining is of special concern. Damage consists not only of surface subsidence, but of 'pit-top' facilities, ventilation shafts, power substations, coal washing, transport and power and communication lines. Mining explo-

ration requires clearing of vegetation, moving of heavy equipment and establishing of access tracks. Redundant mining sites may become a focus for unauthorised access and vandalism. The draft Strategy also proposes the 'progressive cessation of mining operations' in Special Areas, in recognition of the damage caused by these activities. This recommendation is strongly supported by the Colong Foundation as water quality and yield are reduced by mining (see Bulletin 176 article, 'Catchment Integrity Comes Unstuck').

The role of conservationists in the preservation of the Special Areas is acknowledged in the Background paper which refers to Myles Dunphy's Greater Blue Mountains National Park plan, the Colong Campaign and the eventual realisation of Myles Dunphy's plan. The Background Document also confirms the policy of permitting low impact camping, bushwalking and swimming in the Schedule 2, Special Areas. ■

Horse Riding Tracks become Mudbaths

An article in the 'Northern Beaches' on the subject of horse riding in Kuring-gai National Park, quotes Noel Plumb, Executive Officer of the National Parks Association, as saying "The Park is being vandalised by a selfish and privileged group of horse riders ... some trails are now a series of mudbaths." He claimed that mud was knee deep in places and some bogs stretched more than 20 metres. The only way round this would be to create more sidetracks, which would also be used by horses.



Left: NPA member Alex Tucker considers whether to throw mud at the camera man, Noel Plumb

Right: Creek crossing on perimeter track showing steepness of bank



Our New Assistant Director

There were a dozen applicants for the assistant director position, many of them with high qualifications. We would like to employ them all if we had the means.

The successful applicant was Tom Widdup (B.Comm.) who majored in Marketing and Environment Policy. Tom expressed 'a strong passion for and commitment to wilderness issues', which was evidenced by his success in organising the first environmental collective at Griffith University and his employment by the Nature Conservation Council as Forest Resurgence Public Meeting Coordinator. His understanding of desktop publishing and training others in computer-based communications will be valuable.

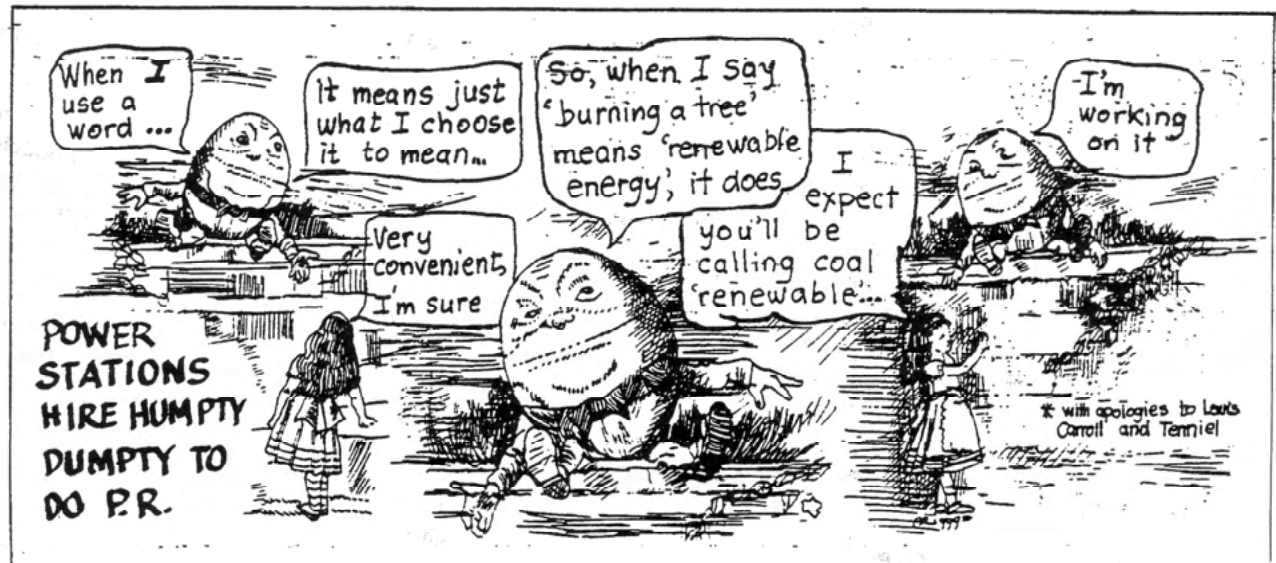
We believe his people management and promotion skills will help increase the profile of wilderness protection, as well and expand our membership. Tom has already dis-

played his technical skills in establishing the Colong Foundation web site and published 30 fact sheets on the new wilderness areas or additions in NSW. He has given over a dozen Wilderness 2000 slide talks that have proved popular and this response has encouraged other groups to make further requests for talks. He has also organised the production of a three metre long Colong Foundation banner so that we can make our presence felt at conservation rallies and market stalls.

Tom hopes to start a young group of Colong Foundation volunteer activists to bring new energies to the Wilderness 2000 campaign. He will be focussing on distributing Wilderness 2000 campaign information at market stalls and other public events.

Tom can be contacted at tom@colongwilderness.org.au ■

CARTOON BY ANNE ROBERTS



www.colongwilderness.org.au

by Keith Muir

SIX years ago the Colong Foundation started to compile information for a web site. As a result of this early development work, the site made up of over 200 web pages was launched on the October 14th. The delay has its benefits and most teething problems were resolved. One of the reasons for the delay was due to finding a way of making a web site for little cost. This problem was solved by our Internet service provider, GreenNet Australia, who are based in Melbourne but came to Sydney to run a training program for conservationists at no cost. GreenNet helped us secure www.colongwilderness.org.au as our domain name and to set up email and help solve countless other little problems.

The website is largely text based. We have chosen not to include too many graphics and images as they can

often distract attention from the real issues.

The site is in four parts: Wilderness issues and the Colong Foundation; Wilderness explained; Projects and Campaigns; and the Wilderness Red Index.

The NSW Wilderness Red Index is just part of the wilderness data on the site. Wilderness areas for states other than NSW is presented in a preliminary form, complete with maps, creating a geographically indexed data base on 221 wilderness areas, including the Australian Antarctic Territory.

The Wilderness explained section ranges over the wilderness concept and the role of the Dunphy family in bringing about its protection. The lighter side of the site is the Wilderness Y2K page that does the vision thing, while the Wilderness 2000 pages explain how to get active on wilderness protection in NSW. The site provides the data to enable activists to campaign more effectively. It will become more relevant and attractive over time as we respond to feedback and gain skills in this new area.

However, the Foundation will not disappear into cyberspace. The Internet cannot replace the role of news breaking media releases, brochures, face to face meetings, talks or slide shows.

Its main benefits are to provide

access to quality wilderness information for people who otherwise would not know of us. It is relatively cheap to publish on the net and helps save native forests. Conservatively, about a thousand or so people may visit the site a month. Providing these readers with the NSW Red Index in printed form would require half a million printed pages - an enormous amount of paper.

The site will be regularly up dated. But it would not be possible to slot web site publishing into the Foundation's campaigning work without the assistance of Ross Coster, our efficient Web Editor. While other groups have spent many thousands developing their sites by employing expert consultants, Ross developed ours in his spare time as part of his contribution to nature conservation (he is also honorary membership secretary for the Blue Mountains Conservation Society).

As a result of this site, the Colong Foundation hopes to receive vast amounts of electronic mail from people it have never heard of before. The web site is a step into the future but technology will never replace pains taking site inspections, or the research and bushwalks into the precious wild places that has helped to make the Foundation a respected authority on wilderness in NSW. ■

Bilby Reserve Project

In order to protect some of the last remaining bilbys, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service plant to fence them within a 25 sq. km fox and cat proof fenced reserve in the Currawinya National Park. The cost will be \$300,000, which the Service is confident, will be financed by a fence panel sponsorship scheme. A donation of \$20 will secure a panel. Donations should be made payable to 'Save the Bilby Fund' and sent to Peter McRae, P.O. Box 149 Charleville, QLD, 4470.



Queensland's Regional Forest Agreement

The Queensland NPA quotes as a WIN-WIN situation the State's Regional Forest Agreement, which is a direct contrast to the Government's land clearing policy. The agreement stipulates:

- 425,000 ha of new 'protected areas' (the boundaries put forward by the conservation movement). This is from an original 700,000 ha. of State Forests, of which 60% is being reserved. Total forest in reserves is brought to 782,000 ha. From an original 357,000 ha. - and increase of 120%. Reserves now cover 73% of forested public land.
- No logging of old-growth forest or wilderness on public lands ever.
- End to native forest logging in 25

years time (with a phase out occurring in the intervening period).

- No export woodchipping of native hardwood forests.
- No clearfelling of Crown native hardwood forests.
- Huge native species plantation establishment program.
- Government buys out all the Queensland operations of Boral Ltd. (The above reserves, however, are 'reserves in waiting'. While the extent of the future parks is large, compromises have been made to accommodate off road vehicles, horseriders, and the tourist industry, that may erode national park management in Queensland.) ■

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) (\$20)
- ☐ 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/CODEDATE
- SIGNEDAMOUNT

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

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



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLONG FOUNDATION

	Price Posted \$			
WILD PLACES	19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>	MYLES AND MILO	25.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The meticulously researched, beautifully written book on wilderness by Peter Prineas with photographs by Henry Gold (285pp)</i>			<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>	
BLUE MOUNTAINS FOR WORLD HERITAGE	16.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	THE BAREFOOT BUSHWALKER	25.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Geoff Mosley provides a comprehensive explanation of the wealth of heritage values in the Blue Mountains (135pp)</i>			<i>by Dorothy Butler, Australian Geographic award winner. A story of a lifetime of adventure in wilderness and high mountains (292pp)</i>	
THE COLONG STORY	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASSIC BUSHWALKING MAPS by Myles Dunphy	
<i>Describes the first major conservation battle in NSW (42pp)</i>			<i>(Gangerang and Kowmung Maps)</i>	5.00ea <input type="checkbox"/>
HOW THE RAINFOREST WAS SAVED	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILDERNESS RED INDEX – complete	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Story of the campaign initiated by the Byron Flora and Fauna Conservation Society and the Colong Committee (59pp)</i>			<i>The Index describes the land ownership, values, history and threats to NSW wild places</i>	
PARK OR PINES	8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	– Summary brochures	\$2.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The story of how the Boyd Plateau was saved (42pp)</i>			– Listing of individual areas	\$5.00 <input type="checkbox"/>