



THE COLONG BULLETIN

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD

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PROTECTING WILDERNESS AND NATIONAL PARKS

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One third of the world's extinct animals since 1600AD are Australian. Such a record is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Almost 3000 different types of ecosystems are now considered at risk.

**Federal Government's
National Land and Water
Resources Audit**

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Australia's attack on World Heritage repulsed

by Keith Muir

AUSTRALIA'S push to weaken the protection provided to properties listed under the World Heritage Convention was defeated by the World Heritage Committee in Paris in March. The Committee, at an extraordinary meeting convened to resolve the ongoing and acrimonious debate over proposed changes, rejected all Australia's proposals. Despite the bid being supported by America, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and India, Australia did not gain the numbers on the 21 nation committee to secure the necessary two thirds majority vote. In an earlier move to demonstrate that these proposals were not universally supported in Australia, the Senate censured the Federal Government "for its efforts to undermine the integrity of the Convention", supporting a motion put by Senator Bob Brown for the Greens.

Australia's objectives were: to establish a veto for countries opposed to their World Heritage areas being listed as In Danger or removed from the World Heritage List of properties; that the World Conservation Union, (better known as the IUCN and the official advisor to the World Heritage Committee) be prevented from facilitating independent investigations of actions that could damage a World Heritage property; and to require the Convention to operate on particular listed values, rather than the *outstanding universal value* and integrity of the properties listed.

The IUCN made the case that there should be no compromise position on retaining both the integrity of the site and the outstanding universal value for which each of the 730 world heritage properties were listed. Australia's proposed changes to the Operational Guidelines (which implement the World Heritage Con-

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Attack on World Heritage Repulsed

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vention) were considered an attack on this fundamental principle and would erode the capacity of the Convention to protect world heritage properties. After considering all the legal issues and the arguments of many state parties, Thailand then successfully moved that the existing text of the June 2002 Operational Guidelines be incorporated into the revised guidelines. The IUCN managed to get the Committee to agree to have the text amended to read "outstanding universal value" instead of values wherever it appears in the guidelines and add a reference to the integrity of the property so that these two points are read together.

The moves by the USA and Australia to narrow and restrict involvement of non-government organisations in the management of World Heritage properties also have been defeated for now. The capacity for external criticism by non-government organisations as to how sovereign nations care for our World Heritage can still be included in review processes through the IUCN. Given the pressure on world heritage, it is essential that this involvement remain inclusive and as broad as possible.

The revised Operational Guidelines will be signed off at the 25 June meeting of the Committee in Suzhou, China. It will be interesting to see whether the World Heritage Committee retains the Operational Guidelines with the "outstanding universal value" wording as per the Convention, or instead accepts a backdoor amendment to accommodate Australia and the USA's wishes.

Implications for Australia

The *Herald* (29/3/03) reported a Federal departmental spokesperson as saying "The Government will have to carefully consider the implications of this decision for our world heritage properties."

There is now a strong case for amending the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation* (EPBC) Act, 1999. This Act was based on world heritage values only, falling

well short of protecting the integrity of the area or the outstanding universal value of Australia's world heritage properties.

Australian World Heritage management principles, established under the regulations of the EPBC Act, should be rewritten as these also operate on world heritage values and do not protect the integrity of world heritage properties.

The EPBC regulations do not require an environmental assessment of mines, resorts and airports in World Heritage properties if these actions do not impact upon the world heritage values mentioned in the listing. The assessment for the area in question is a listed rainforest value. It should have its surrounding eucalypt forests logged without the Federal Government requiring an environmental assessment. In Tasmania, the Basslink development will adversely impact the Gordon River by causing significant river bank erosion. Under the EPBC Act, the Federal Government determined that the damage did not infringe the World Heritage Convention, because in the judgement of the Federal Minister, it does not adversely affect the values for which the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was listed. In the Blue Mountains, world heritage could be mined without a Federal Government initiated environmental assessment of the associated water pollution and cliff collapses, as long as the world heritage-listed eucalypt or sclerophyll communities were not impacted.

The EPBC Act requires the Federal Government to implement the World Heritage Convention and the above inconsistencies should be addressed. The World Heritage Committee's interpretation of the Convention rejected the values-based approach, confirming the more conservative property-based approach. Under this test for protecting the outstanding universal value of a world heritage property, Australia's world heritage can be more easily defended from adverse development proposals. The decision by the World Heritage Committee will be a major set back for developers who seek to exploit World Heritage properties. ■

This is about this generation having a conversation with the future... it is about preserving for our children and their grandchildren the old flavour of this continent.

Bob Carr, committing Labor, if re-elected, to the reservation of 65,000 ha of old growth forests on the North Coast - SMH 3.3.2003

Environment a Community Responsibility

It's about time the whole community took responsibility for the future of this country and recognised that for the long term survival of Australia it is critical that the rural population be treated as equitably as our metropolitan cousins.

That means paying true value for the revocation or irrigation licences, paying serious money for environmental services performed by landholders, and access to long-term low interest loans during periods of droughts and natural disasters.

Ron Anderson, SMH 20/3/2003

Colong Foundation, Total Environment Centre Honoured

Keith Muir, Director and Alex Colley, Hon. Secretary, of the Colong Foundation, and Jeff Angel, Director and Fran Kelly, Natural Areas Campaigner of the Total Environment Centre have been awarded Centenary Medals.

Meeting Dates

Meetings will be held in our Kent St office at 2pm on May 29th June 12th and 26th and July 10th and 24th. A strategic planning meeting will be held from 10 am on May 29th in our Kent St office.

Action Well Overdue on The Alps/South East Forests World Heritage Nomination

by Geoff Mosley

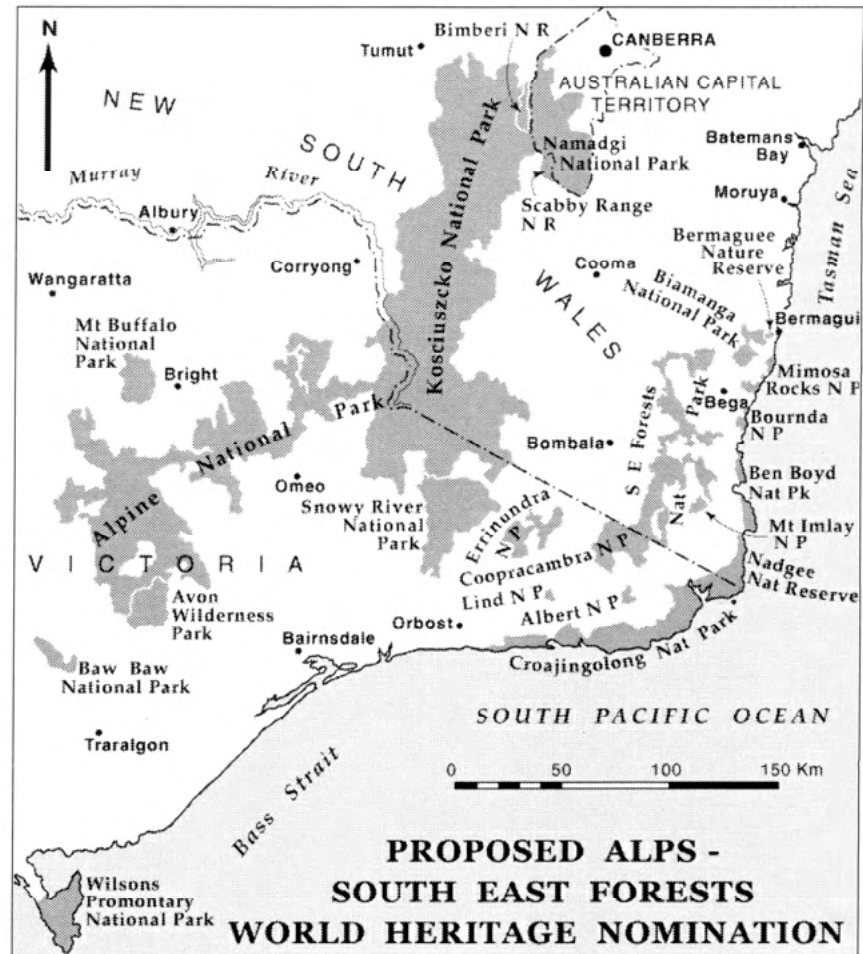
IN 1996 a vigorous environmental groups campaign for an Alps/South East Forests World Heritage nomination was deferred. This was done because of two main events: the initiation of the assessments which were carried out as part of the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process; and the focussing of attention on the more immediately winnable Greater Blue Mountains Area nomination.

The time has come to revive a campaign which is both visionary and difficult. Visionary because of what world heritage listing can offer to conservation of this undoubted part of the world's heritage and difficult because of the need to overcome the hurdle of the general inability of the four Governments involved to cooperate. Like the climbing of a high mountain the project requires a concerted effort, careful planning, and persistence.

In terms of length, the alpine section of the proposal stretches 370 kilometres from the northern tip of Namadgi National Park, west of Canberra, to Baw Baw National Park in the south (see map). Its greatest width, from Cape Howe north westward along the Vic/NSW border to the western boundary of Kosciuszko National Park, is about 200 kilometres. Clearly this is a concept of major proportions but it is what the region includes which makes it truly magnificent on a world scale.

Natural Values

Amongst the staggering wealth of conservation values present, those relating to the areas natural vegetation are probably the best known. Of course, all differences in biota are the product of the nature of the physical environment. Here the facts are simple. Australia's highest mountains are



less than 150 kilometres from the sea. In the 2,228 metres which separate them the response of the plant communities to altitude are wonderfully displayed but what makes this sequence so special is that it occurs in relatively unmodified sclerophyll vegetation.

What makes this 'sea to snow' array of plants so special internationally is that elsewhere around the world in most places where vegetation of this type occurs it has been reduced to very small natural fragments.

In addition, there is the Australianess of the plants. Attention has focussed on the forests and, in particular, on the eucalypts which dominate

all of the forest and woodland associations, but this region also offers the most complete representation of other major components of the sclerophyll biome, including extensive coastal heathlands and treeless alpine heaths.

The triumph of the eucalypts has been well documented (see reading list at end). They first began to develop about 30 million years before the present and the heath plants some 25 million years ago. The high degree of endemism in both eucalypt forests and heaths is the result of Australia's isolation during this period.

There are many places in the region

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where the changes in vegetation with altitude are to be clearly seen. Perhaps the most dramatic is on the western fall of the Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park where the land drops 1800 metres in under 6 kilometres. A summer climb of this great slope takes one from riverine woodland, successively up through dry sclerophyll forest, wet sclerophyll forest, subalpine woodland (snow gums) and finally to one of the world's most spectacular wildflower displays in the alpine meadows.

Also of international scientific interest in the higher areas are the rounded landforms and deep humus soils developed by mainly periglacial processes during the cold periods of the Quaternary. These areas provide an outstanding example of middle latitude landforms of this type.

Probably the most outstanding natural beauty values are to be found in the wilderness areas which occur in all major subregions from the coast (Croajingolong and Nadgee) to the deep valleys and uplands (especially the 330,000 hectare Snowy Indi Wilderness).

As with the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area there are also internationally important biodiversity values, including significant habitats for the protection of such threatened species as the Mountain Pygmy Possum and the Corroboree Frog.

What Would Be Included?

The areas which have potential to be included in the world heritage nomination have been intensively studied from this standpoint. While the final determination would, as usual, be left until the nomination preparation stage, the outstanding universal themes which have been identified provide a good indication of which areas would be needed.

The alpine areas are contiguous except for Baw Baw which has distinctive values and deserves to be connected to the Alpine National Park by means of a corridor in the Upper Thomson. There is nothing to prevent discrete areas from being included in the nomination, although generally it

would be desirable, where possible, for the areas to be linked.

In the Far South East of NSW the South East Forests National Park provides both an escarpment protection system as well as a link between the coastal and escarpment ecosystems. Over the border in Victoria the protected areas of East Gippsland provide several corridors from the coast to the uplands, including a major link along the Snowy River.

The coastal system of protected areas, dominated by heathland and heathy woodland, although not as continuous as their counterparts along the roof of Australia, are vastly more extensive than the few sclerophyll vegetation remnants conserved as world heritage elsewhere in the world. At the western end of the coastal section is the 50,000 hectare Wilsons Promontory National Park, a major centre of biodiversity. This Park also has both lowland and mountainous coastal wilderness. If included in the nomination its values would significantly enhance the regional justification for world heritage inscription.

What Would World Heritage Inscription Achieve?

World Heritage is essentially a measure for the protection of those outstanding places whose conservation is of importance to the whole world. Its aim is to ensure that the standard of care and presentation (i.e. interpretation) is adequate for areas inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The management implications of inscription are twofold: higher priority given to conservation; and a unified approach to management.

Greater attention would need to be paid to all activities which conflict with, or threaten, integrity and authenticity. Professor Kirkpatrick in his overview report (see below) has discussed the matters of concern. As an example the Bracks Government would need to honour the 1999 election promise of "examining ways to remove all grazing from the (Alpine) park". Policies of directing future resort development to sites outside the parks would gain greater relevance.

Above all a unified approach to world heritage management would be necessary. This involves both consistency and reference to the world her-

itage context for planning and decision making. In effect there would be a single protected area with the strongest possible teeth. The idea is not new for the alpine section. This year is the sixtieth anniversary of Myles Dunphy's Snowy/Indi National Park proposal.

But inscription would also mean there would be need for a similar approach for the various forest and coastal protected areas, several of which, although in different states, are contiguous and for forest park management to be coordinated with that of the alpine parks.

The need for a consistent/unified approach overall is underscored by considering how the world heritage context would have helped provide greater priority for conservation in relation to several reports and inquiries affecting the Alps/South East Forests which have occurred during the last two decades. Also, in early 2003: plans of management for Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks are being revised; a strategic plan is being developed for Victoria's alpine resorts; and scoping for the review of the management plan for the Alpine National Park has begun. Further, a world heritage frame of reference is important for the current spate of inquiries and studies into the summer bushfires of 2003, particularly since the Independent Scientific Committee, set up to assess the values of Kosciuszko for its Plan of Management review, has again recognised the existence of values of international significance that would meet World Heritage criteria.

Stage Reached

The Australian Alps was one of the first Australian areas to be proposed for world heritage nomination. This occurred in 1977 when the Australian Academy of Science made the suggestion in a submission to the Land Conservation Council. In 1987 the Victorian Premier, John Cain, backed the idea, and included East Gippsland Parks in his Government's proposal. Two years later the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, announced that the area would be assessed against the strict criteria of the World Heritage Convention.

The outcome of this assessment

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were four reports on the natural values, including a 1994 overview report by Jamie Kirkpatrick and a 1999 report on cultural values by Jane Lennon.

Both Kirkpatrick and Lennon found that a strong case could be made for world heritage listing on each of four criteria (i.e. four natural and four cultural). The former went further and concluded that the Alps would outscore the already inscribed Shark Bay, Fraser Island, the Wet Tropics and the Central Eastern Rainforests.

At the level of the conservation movement the campaign for nomination has been led by the Victorian National Parks Association and the ACF. By the mid 'nineties the list of groups supporting world heritage nomination numbered 10 national bodies and 15 others from three states and the ACT.

As mentioned, one of the developments which then intervened was the RFA process. Not surprisingly the World Heritage Expert Panel which operated from 1996 to 1998 as part of this process confirmed the presence of world heritage values in both the Alps

and Forests in the context of a 'sea to snow' sequence.

The Greater Blue Mountains Area nomination submitted in June, 1998 was inscribed in November, 2000 after being strongly opposed by IUCN (advisory body to the World Heritage Committee) on the grounds that it was not sufficiently representative of the eucalypt dominated vegetation communities to be found in Australia. IUCN mentioned the possible inclusion of other areas, including the Alps/South East Forests and South Western Australia.

The Federal Government insisted on a stand-alone inscription for the Blue Mountains and this is what the ACF prefers for the Alps/South East Forests and South West WA nominations. The idea of a series eucalypt nominations embracing both states would inevitably result in the comparative neglect of the other values present in both these regions.

As stratagem against the IUCN attack, the Commonwealth promised to carry out assessments of the additional areas mentioned by IUCN for the proposed national heritage list.

Further delay of this kind is neither warranted nor appropriate and, interestingly, the Commonwealth did not consider it necessary for its latest nomination - Purnululu.

The case for the Alps/South East Forests nomination has already been made in the strongest possible way. There was nothing that the Commonwealth said during the barney over the Blue Mountains that commits it to prior assessment of the region under the still to be approved national heritage legislation or prevents it from submitting a nomination without such assessments. The Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT all support a nomination. ACF has written to each of the four governments calling on them to cooperate in getting a nomination underway without delay.

The proposed nomination is undoubtedly the biggest current test in the heritage conservation field of our ability to act as a nation. The question is who will take the next step, or, more specifically, which of the four Governments will lead by calling a meeting to discuss a plan of action? ■

Environmental Ups and Downs

Bob Carr has flagged the creation of a Sustainable Natural Resources Authority to replace the Department of Land and Water Conservation and be responsible for coastal and regional planning. This means that conservation will come before development. Paradoxically as part of the government restructure, the wildlife were for three weeks in April removed from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and then retrospectively returned, although the regional parks were not returned. Mr Carr has re-appointed Bob Debus as Minister for the Environment and appointed Craig Knowles as Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources. His objective is to bridge the gap between farmers and environmentalists. He aims to 'introduce more successful policies in rescuing this battered old land of Australia, afflicted with salt, our rivers in danger of degradation, the huge problems that confront farmer and environmentalists alike and challenge both of them to come up with new ways of making policy.'

The gap between farmers and environmentalists will not be bridged unless farmers are assisted with the cost of essential measures, such as planting rural land with trees. The Colong Foundation has supported two means of financing such measures - an environmental levy or government borrowing. The Commonwealth Government however, sought to put development of World Heritage areas before their conservation by leaving developmental decisions to governments rather than giving the IUCN the right to declare them endangered by development projects, such as the Jabiluka development that would have overridden conservation of Kakadu National Park. The World Heritage Committee has rejected the Commonwealth's proposal (see article "Australia's Attack on World Heritage Repulsed").

Further Reading

Mosley, J.G. (1988), *Australian Alps World Heritage Nomination Proposal*, Victorian National Parks Association, Melbourne.

Mosley, G. and Costin, A. (1992), *World Heritage Values and Their Protection in Far South East New South Wales*, report to the Earth Foundation, Australia Ltd., Sydney.

Kirkpatrick, J.B. (1994), *The International Significance of the Natural Values of the Australian Alps*, report to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

Lennon, J. (1999), *The International Significance of the Cultural Values of the Australian Alps National Parks*, report to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

Mosley, J.G. (2002), *International and World Heritage Values of Wilsons Promontory National Park*, report to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria, East Melbourne.

Namadgi National Park risks being 'reinvented'

by Keith Muir

THREE programs are pressuring Namadgi National Park in the ACT to change its current management. A Special Purpose Lease over the national park has been issued to the Ngannawal Aboriginal community and joint Aboriginal management is being developed for the park. Numerous bushfire inquiries, initiated following the 2002-03 fires in the Australian Alps and the destruction of more than 470 homes, will no doubt see more changes. And a major post-bushfire review of public land use in the ACT, focussing on recreation, could give the high impact recreation lobby an opportunity to access sensitive park areas. Collectively these review processes could greatly influence the plan of management being developed for this marvellous wilderness park.

In October 2002 Environment ACT prepared a discussion paper on the park's values, omitting to mention the 31,800 ha Bimberi wilderness, a principle feature of this park. Wilderness was quarantined to a separate paper full of misstatements that enable the reader to believe that wilderness is a flawed concept, not supported by the community. Such remarks are at odds with numerous public opinion surveys showing strong community support for wilderness protection, with up to 99 per cent in favour of protection. Particularly galling was Environment ACT's incorrect claim that the 27,500 submissions to the NPWS of NSW Southern Wilderness assessment demonstrated that wilderness protection is becoming increasingly contentious. This remark ignores the 70 per cent of submissions that supported the environment groups' *Wilderness 2000 Protect Plan*. Lengthy discussions between the Foundation and Environment ACT have yielded

no change in their anti-wilderness stance.

Dr Maxine Cooper, executive officer of Environment ACT, presented two options to the National Parks Association of the ACT; wilderness will be either removed or redefined (the word 'wilderness' is placed within parentheses so as to meet the stringent requirements of political correctness). The redefinition option is a non-option reliant on the 1998 Malimup Communique – a statement on wilderness by the rightful Indigenous communities. This wilderness Communique acknowledges hunting (with firearms and dogs), gathering of flora, vehicular access and built accommodation in wilderness areas. The Communique was developed by a small group of Aboriginals and conservationists on an isolated private enclave in D'Entrecasteau National Park owned by a mineral sands mining company (Cable Sands), which says a lot about its credibility.

This apparent clash of Aboriginal rights and wilderness ideals is entirely avoidable. The hand back of Mutawintji National Park, near Broken Hill, is mostly protected wilderness, demonstrating that wilderness and Aboriginal ownership can be compatible. Despite opposition by Aboriginal management board members to aerial shooting of Mutawintji's feral goats, Haydn Washington reports that proposals to cut the wilderness in half to allow a neighbour to drive his cattle have been avoided. In practice, the wilderness management issues at Namadgi National Park can be sorted out in a similar step by step fashion. The current strategy requiring wilderness supporters to abandon their principles for the sake of rightful Indigenous communities is just a formula for accelerating community conflict.

The bushfires have opened a second front of issues for the Namadgi

National Park. Fiona McCrossin (*Bulletin* 197, pp.6-8) outlined how the recent fires prompted Kate Carnell, the former Chief Minister of the ACT and now an advocate for forest industries, to call for more burning and logging to get rid of the so-called waste on the forest floor. There are also local graziers who wish for a return to the days of the 'Man from Snowy River', with alpine grazing and associated burning. Such programs would cause massive soil erosion, the elimination of old growth and loss of the park's famous fields of wildflowers but, perhaps more critically, they fail to prevent wildfires. As Brian Gilligan pointed out (*The World Today*, 21 Jan 2003) 200,000 cattle and 17,000 sheep in the alpine areas of Kosciuszko National Park didn't prevent the 1939 fires. Nevertheless, the bushfire inquiries could become a 'hunt for the guilty' and find fault with the nature conservation management of national parks, requiring bushland incendiarism as a solution to the problem of residents not taking adequate precautions against bushfire.

The third front of political issues facing Namadgi arises from an announcement of a major study into non-urban areas of the ACT affected by bushfires. This broad land use study encompasses the national park and is likely to tie into the ACT Government's commitment to provide economic benefits for the Ngannawal community from the park.

Part of this overall land use inquiry is a Recreation Strategy that appears to be very similar to the 1998 tourism and access strategies in NSW by the NPWS, which marked their change from community based consultation to stakeholder based consultation. The Recreation Strategy Issues and Options Paper suggests tourist drives, commercial

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Namadgi National Park

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opportunities, visitor accommodation, cabins and opportunities from stakeholders to propose 'icon' projects to attract tourists. Environment ACT appear to be blundering into park development using the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) analysis as a guide. The ROS indicates where, how much, and what type of development, access and recreation is permitted in various park areas. The ROS allows development based on past disturbance. The methodology is the reverse of the NPA's Gudgenby bush regeneration efforts, where a pine forest is being restored to good bushland. The ROS allows parks to move up the development scale by allowing development in disturbed areas.

These three processes risk reducing nature conservation, the primary purpose any wilderness national park, to one of many stakeholder issues. These reviews would be wrong to dictate management outcomes that push development and access for high impact recreation, eroding the conservation purpose of the park. Namadgi National Park is not a bucket into which any development, recreational activity, or frequent over burning can be undertaken. Commercial developments, built accommodation and burning parks into a green desert of grass have no place in a national park. ■

Guide to National Parks

The National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW regularly publishes a free *Guide to National Parks*. The 2003 *Guide*, covers 193 parks and reserves ranging from the 674,370 hectare Kosciuszko National Park to the 2 hectare Yaranighs Aboriginal Grave Historic Site and Cadmans Cottage. The guide describes park highlights, activities and access routes to the park and will be a ready source of information for tourists.

River Red Gums by Jim Somerville

This unique forest type has had the misfortune to be placed last on the conservation priority list. In NSW a decade of neglect occurred while other areas went through the Regional Forest Assessment process. At long last the extensive Millewa forests on the Murray, and smaller remnants, will soon be subject to the long term planning process. Victoria's pride and joy is the huge Barmah forest, also on the Murray. It was the subject of a Land Conservation Council report in 1986, which recommended that grazing and timber production be phased out. This recommendation has not

been actioned and damage to the ecosystem continues unabated, despite the fact that even the bureaucrats admit to severe threats. Regrettably 300 year old trees are still being felled for railway sleepers despite the fact that concrete sleepers last three times as long as hardwood sleepers.

In both States the conservation status of these remnant riverine forests is extremely poor. Both governments owe a duty of care to future generations and should offer protection in the early part of this century to offset the disgraceful mismanagement of the past.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE???

I HAVE been a longtime member of the Colong Committee with an environmental interest spanning over 65 years and I am concerned at the misinformation and vehemence of the unattributed article in the March *Colong Bulletin* concerning the Braidwood-Nowra road upgrading. Articles such as these do little to advance the environmental cause. The upgrading has been promised for years and money allocated in budgets.

It is far from being a Road to Nowhere and as it is a link road it must have beginnings and ends from either direction. As far as the developing colony of NSW is concerned it is a road of antiquity. In 1824 Braidwood Wilson advocated a road from Braidwood to Jervis Bay and it as a route to the coast was explored by Murray of Yarralumlain 1839 and built as the Wool road. Nowra was declared site for a government town in 1852 and in 1900 Sassafras was proposed as one of the sites for the Federal Capital. In 1912 the route was surveyed to provide Canberra with rail access to Jervis Bay. It followed closely the present route.

Apart from the short climb from the Endrick to the Sassafras plateau (which has been already re-routed and surfaced) and at its northern end it is a gentle route with none of the steep grades, tight curves, safety ramps and landslides of the Clyde mountain route. Similar conditions exist on the Kangaroo valley, Jamberoo and Macquarie Pass to access Canberra and the Monaro from Wologong south.

All traffic from Nowra south would want to access the road rather than follow the now overloaded Princess highway and then to climb Clyde mountain. It is 68 kms shorter with considerable savings in fuel from distance, climbing steep grades and using excess fuel in traffic jam conditions over the long climb. I would have thought the savings in green house emissions would have been a real plus for the Colong Committee.

The road at present is almost a full 2-lane route except on the climb from above the Endrick to the protected Pancake Rocks. Two

alternative routes were investigated to avoid this natural feature, but were abandoned because of cost. The route will be preserved and will come by the Pancake Rocks allowing them to be preserved in all of their beauty. If 46ha (a small amount) is excised from Morton National Park it is a mark on the skill of the original surveyors of the route and the amount would be returned to the park as the old route will be abandoned.

At present there have been progressive upgrades on the Nerriga - Braidwood section with bitumen and hard - surfacing. Two 2 lane high level concrete bridges have been built over the Endrick and Corang rivers as well as re-alignments and preparations for hard surfacing and bitumen. The only old bridge remaining is a single lane wooden one over the Mongarlow River and no doubt as wood it will not last forever and eventually will have to be replaced.

A natural gas pipe line has followed the route from Nowra to near Braidwood with its contractor being obliged to restore and harden the road. Apart from that the Shoalhaven Shire has earlier carried out improvements with ballast and widening the Ettrema section. So except for a couple of small sections it is a full 2 lane road.

I have no doubt anyone who previously would have travelled over the Clyde Mt and followed heavy trucks up and down it will travel the improved route north to Nowra, to Jervis Bay and south as far as possibly to Milton and Ulladulla.

At present the road surface has been allowed to deteriorate as is always when reconstruction is planned, so it is a bit bumpy with corrugations and pot holes. The old mud baths have been eliminated with the building of the gas line.

No doubt the village of Nerriga will prosper from the passing traffic. The area through Morton will be protected and if further development takes place along the road it will at least bring that much pressure away from the coast.

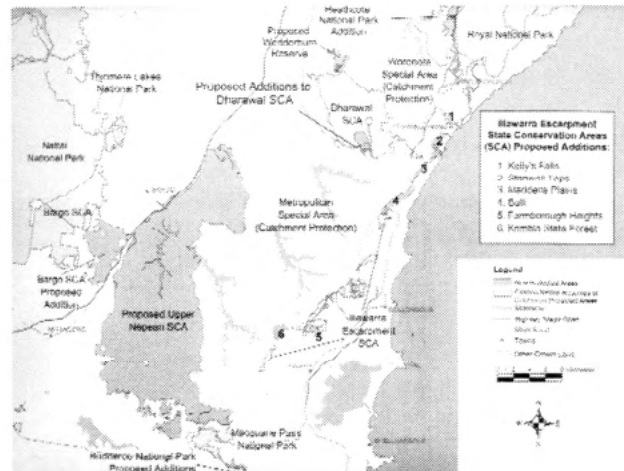
Reg Alder

New park additions and forest icon announcements

JUST prior to the election, 249,618 ha of wilderness areas in 14 new areas and 15 additions across NSW were protected. These March 21 additions bring the grand total of wilderness protected in NSW to 1,836,400 ha, which represents 31 per cent of the NPWS estate and just a little over 2.2 per cent of the state. The Pilliga, Yengo, Chaelundi and North Ettrema wilderness areas are planned to be protected at a later date. These promised declarations would be a useful step total toward protecting the 5 per cent or so of the state that remain in a

wilderness condition.

Several significant national park additions were also made, including 22,070 ha to Coolah Tops National Park, which tripled the size of that important national park. The Heathcote National Park was expanded by 420 ha, protecting the headwaters of the park between Heathcote and Waterfall and preventing urban expansion. This particular proposal has been on the books for over 30 years. Mr Frank Walker, Labor Member for the Georges River, initially supported Milo Dunphy's call for protection of the area from urban



sprawl in 1971.

In western NSW, four park additions totalling 75,000 ha, and the new Kurrumbidgee Nature Reserve of 1,300 ha, were announced as part of the Government's election policy. The Government also announced that important wetlands would be protected in the Macquarie Marshes, Narran Lakes and the Western Riverina.

The Premier also made a special announcement of 48,000 ha of new reserves in key areas in the North East forests that have been sought for protection for years by the environment movement (see map left). The new parks will protect from logging areas such as Chaelundi, Pine Creek, Wollumbin, Whian Whian, Sheas Nob, Jilliby, Black Bulga and Bungawalbyn.

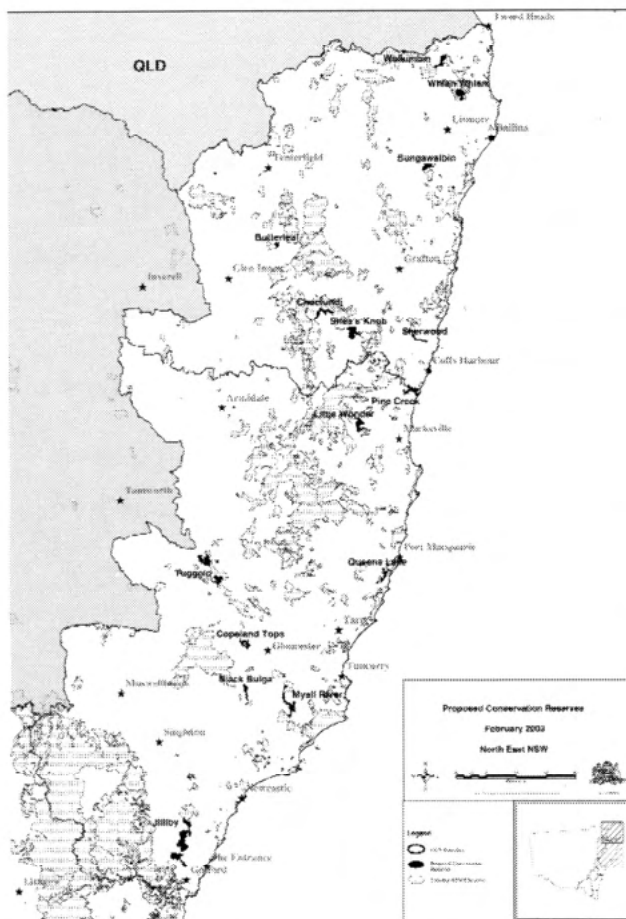
These new reserves will help build the network of conservation reserves along the eastern escarpment of NSW. From the top of the Dorrigo Plateau to the sea there will now be a wildlife corridor

because of the inclusion of Pine Creek into the national park estate. The Mt Warning National Park will be doubled in size and linked to the Border Ranges National Park, helping to protect important rainforests, including the World Heritage-listed Amaroo rainforest and coastal old growth forest. The Nightcap National Park will be increased by almost a quarter. It is home to the extremely rare and important ancient species the Nightcap Oak which, like the Wollemi Pine, is found nowhere else.

Further reserve additions were announced for the Illawarra Escarpment. The addition of 36,000 ha of parks in the south above Wollongong would link up the escarpment forests to those on the Victorian border forming an unbroken corridor of protected areas (see map above).

However, the proposed new Upper Nepean State Conservation Area, and

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additions to the Bargo and Illawarra State Conservation Areas, with others announced in the North East, will remain available for mining exploration.

The Carr Government has once again stepped up its effort to protect the natural world. It has reserved 1.8 million hectares since 1995, a monumental achievement indeed. ■

Present Wealth at the Expense of the Environment

The Bureau of Statistics, in its publication *Environment by Number*, states that net income per person has risen from about \$21,000 in 1992 to more than \$27,000, but the natural environment has been seriously degraded. Habitat has been lost; weed and pest infestation has increased; pollutants are accumulating; estuaries are under strain; energy consumption rose by 23 per cent during the nineties; waste generation is excessive by world standards; and many native species face extinction. Reporting of these and other authoritative facts given in the Bureau's report will enhance the effectiveness of the environment movement. However, although the facts given in the report are matters of common knowledge, many of which confirm simple observation, concern for the environment is falling. In 1992, 75 per cent of Australians professed concern. Ten years later only 62 per cent were concerned. The fall was most pronounced in the 19 to 24 age group – from 79 per cent to 57 per cent. Strange that those who have the most to gain from an ecologically sustained environment are losing interest.

TIM FLANNERY ISN'T HELPING TO SAVE THE PLANET

by Keith Muir

PALAEONTOLOGIST Dr Tim Flannery's paper 'Beautiful Lies' claims that "there has been a lot of unacceptably woolly thinking about the environmental crisis in Australia." He is highly critical of the "save the whale" campaigns. He considers "that at present the anti-whaling lobby is frustrating the attempt to develop a sustainable industry based on these creatures, and is therefore frustrating good management of marine resources."

Whales have inspired awe, wonder and respect for marine life. They sustain a major tourist industry around the globe. The whaling ban is a much broader debate than whether whales can be sustainably harvested or humanely killed (Flannery recommends only killing small and dumb whales). The ban is an outstanding global action to preserve wildlife from commercial exploitation. Even on Flannery's narrow basis of sustainable harvesting, whaling is impossible. The economic pressure for a rapid conversion of whales into money at a decent return on investment flenses Flannery's sustainability argument. Whales should be protected regardless, as respecting these noble creatures assists humanity to honour the planet that we still do not understand.

Flannery says that parks like Royal National Park are "marsupial ghost towns" and that it is a fallacy to believe that proclaiming more such reserves will do very much to preserve Australian wildlife. What he does not mention is that Royal National Park is in the top three places on the planet for plant diversity per hectare. Only southwest Western Australia and parts of South Africa have a higher diversity than Royal. Our oldest national park also

has the greatest bird diversity of any area in Australia. He criticises the absence of kangaroos, platypus and greater gliders in our oldest national park. The loss of kangaroos was the result of road kills being greater than reproduction and competition from rusa deer. This latter management issue is being tackled and traffic calming measures could easily be instigated to make the park kangaroo friendly. The platypus was wiped out by massive plumes of coal wash collapsing into Camp Creek in the headwaters of the Hacking River. The conservation efforts of the Friends of the Hacking River saw major improvements to the Metropolitan Colliery's waste management, unfortunately too late for the platypus. The loss of the greater glider was due to bushfires in the 1990s but there is a chance that the greater glider populations will recolonise from the forests along the Illawarra Escarpment (as long as the forest link along Lawrence Hargraves Drive at Stanwell Tops is not cut down). And, in this regard, the government's recent decision to reserve the bushland at Kellys Falls and along the northern part of the Illawarra Escarpment should be noted.

Few national parks in Australia are like Royal, which is a 19th century national park developed for people, whereas most modern parks are designed to protect nature from people, as author William J. Lines has suggested. What Royal has lacked is the wilderness management approach of which Dr Flannery is highly critical. In the 1930s Myles Dunphy proposed a Garawarra Primitive Area to the south of Royal but this plan was badly compromised by Bulli Council who pushed a road

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TIM FLANNERY ISN'T HELPING

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through the area before the Second World War. Dr Flannery fails to appreciate that wilderness management is about setting lands aside for nature and not a modern reincarnation of the doctrine of *terra nullius*. If wilderness is abolished in national parks, the last areas free from modern technology-based European culture will disappear. In other words, the abolition of wilderness would blot out the last remnants of pre-invasion Australia.

Most new parks are set aside to meet nature conservation objectives. Dr Flannery's marsupial ghost towns claim is not supported by the NPWS wildlife data for these national parks. The planned acquisition of Green Gully, for example, will protect a property which is a stronghold for the endangered Brush-tailed

Rock Wallaby.

Equally untrue is Dr Flannery's claim that old growth forests are relatively unimportant to wildlife. The wildlife data in the Forestry Commission's fauna impact statements, and the finding of the famous Land and Environment Court case regarding the Chaelundi forests are sufficient to disprove this assertion. Justice Stein concluded that "The high species diversity of arboreal marsupials and the presence of numerous species listed in Schedule 12 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974 makes it a veritable forest dependent zoo, probably unparalleled in south-eastern Australia." Of course Dr Flannery would not know that this decision led to the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection) Act, 1991 which eventually saved several hundred thousand hectares of native forest from the chop.

If Dr Flannery believes that

national parks are marsupial ghost towns and old-growth forests are relatively unimportant for biodiversity, soil and water conservation, where does he suggest conservation can be achieved? As Alex Colley has explained (*Bulletin* 197, p. 5), effective conservation measures are costly to landowners, who suffer reduced incomes.

The NSW Government's, "Getting the Balance Right" Policy announced during the election aims to ban broadscale land clearing and to create a range of incentives for farmers. These measures will greatly advance conservation objectives and will come in addition to new national parks to protect areas of high conservation value in the central west of NSW and elsewhere. The argument that parks come at the cost of broad scale conservation should be disregarded as defeatist and unbalanced; both strategies must be pursued. ■

The Wilderness Society continues to press home the fight for the Styx Valley forests of Tasmania bringing the destruction of its massive trees, like this one, into the living rooms of Sydney and Melbourne by placing full page advertisements in the major daily papers.



Wilderness essential to preserve endangered species

At least 100 million native animals, birds and reptiles die each year as a result of broad scale clearing of remnant vegetation in Queensland, according to a new World Wildlife Fund Australia report compiled by leading Australian scientists... Animals and plants are killed when their habitats are cleared, or die soon after of starvation or predation... For many species, clearing leads to fragmentation of habitats into small sub-populations in remnant patches of habitat that are vulnerable to catastrophic local events, such as bushfires. Once lost such sub-populations cannot be replaced by new immigrants of the same species because the patches are too isolated. Furthermore, the quality of the remnant habitat typically declines, with their size leading to increased predation or reduced breeding success. The decline of some quite common species towards extinction in remnants of 100s to 1000s of hectares is now well documented in several regions.

**Threatened Species Network
National Newsletter Autumn 2003**

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 item(s) indicated by a tick. (One cheque is sufficient to cover subscription and donation.)

- ☐ Membership application (\$25) to 31 December 2003
(NB Membership application covers Bulletin subscription)
- ☐ Colong Bulletin Subscription (\$11) to 31 December 2003 (non members only)
- ☐ Membership renewal to 31 December 2003 (\$25) ☐ Life Membership (\$550)
- ☐ Tax deductible donation of \$_____ to the Colong Wilderness Fund
- ☐ PLUS \$_____ being for publications as indicated on the reverse side of this form.

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Payment by credit card. Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard ☐ Expiry date ____ / ____

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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

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."



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. 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 up-dated and extended to other states. It has successfully campaigned for the listing of the Blue Mountains as World Heritage.

It is at present working for the protection of threatened wilderness in NSW; the preservation of national parks from commercial development and damaging use; and the preservation of old growth forests.

THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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| WILD PLACES | 27.50 <input type="checkbox"/> | THE BAREFOOT BUSHWALKER | 27.50 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>The meticulously researched, beautifully written book on wilderness by Peter Prineas with photographs by Henry Gold (285pp)</i> | | <i>by Dorothy Butler, Australian Geographic award winner. A story of a lifetime of adventure in wilderness and high mountains (292pp)</i> | |
| BLUE MOUNTAINS FOR WORLD HERITAGE | 17.60 <input type="checkbox"/> | CLASSIC BUSHWALKING MAPS | by Myles Dunphy |
| <i>Geoff Mosley provides a comprehensive explanation of the wealth of heritage values in the Blue Mountains (135pp)</i> | | <i>(Gangerang and Kowmung Maps)</i> | |
| HOW THE RAINFOREST WAS SAVED | (59pp) 9.00 <input type="checkbox"/> | | 6.00ea <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| THE BATTLE FOR THE BUSH | 27.50 <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The Index describes the land ownership, values, history and threats to NSW wild places</i> | |
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