

April/May 1993



\$2-00

# Environs

NIMBIN & RAINBOW NEWS  
P.O. BOX 209,  
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IN THIS ISSUE:- Mistake Logging, Sustainable Forestry Conf.  
Canal estate rejected, Tollways or railways? Bonville progress.

the north coast environment magazine





# Hoping the Mistake will not continue for long...

## *Update on Mistake forest logging*

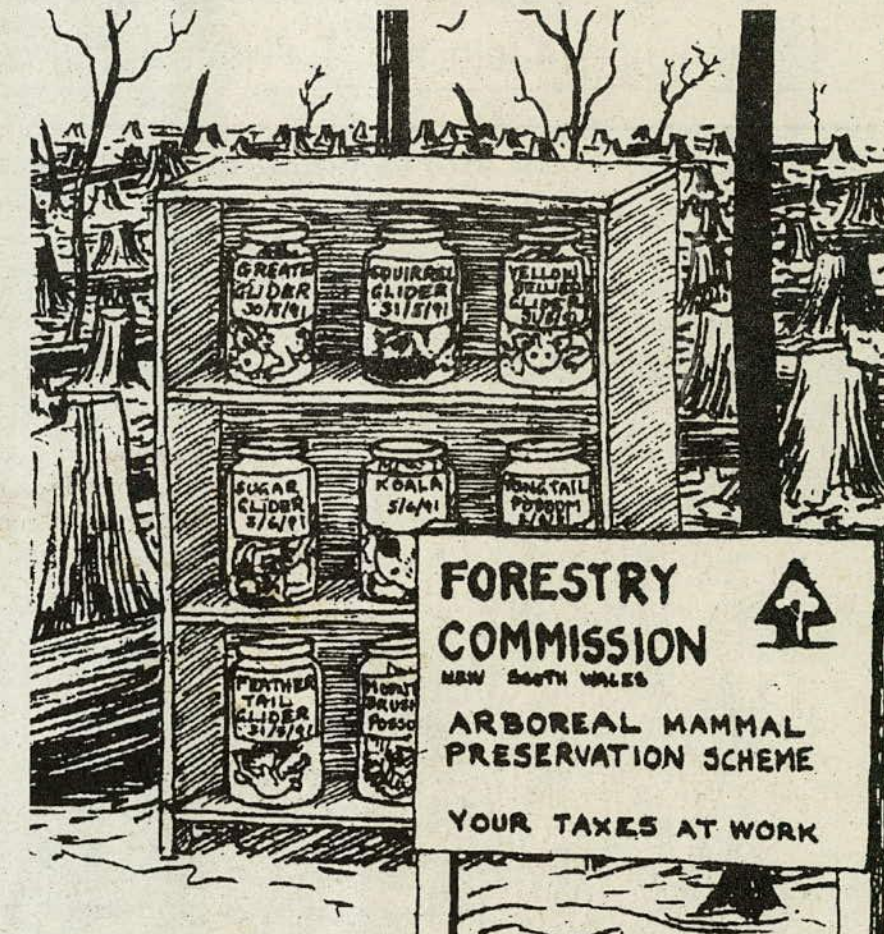
**Y**es, logging is still continuing in Mistake State Forest in the hinterland of the Nambucca Shire. The first two compartments are nearly completed, however several 'hopes' may materialise to see the forest receive better treatment than it is at present.

Various groups are pursuing these hopes.

The South Arm Catchment Protection Group is working on a proposal for a Flora Reserve in the forest which would preserve the largest areas of old growth, rainforest and inaccessible steep country: basically the heads of South Arm Creek and McHugh's Creek. Flora and fauna consultants have been hired to put together the proposal in a scientific way.

The residents are also discussing conservation agreements with NSW National Parks and Wildlife which could see the high conservation areas of their own properties adjoining the Mistake State Forest recognised and protected. Indications so far are that a large part of the upper catchment is very worthy of conservation. Koalas and other endangered species have been sighted regularly by residents.

The Nambucca Valley Conservation Association put in a substantial submission on the Fauna Impact Statement (FIS) presently being considered by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The FIS was totally inadequate and made no attempt to comply with the 22 requirements of the Director, as it must.



As the current logging is under a temporary licence to take and kill endangered species (given by NPWS without any assessment of wildlife) and as NPWS has said the EIS was deficient so an FIS should be done and as the FIS has still not remedied the inadequacies, reason dictates the NPWS should withdraw the temporary licence. Hence logging would have to stop until the requirements for the permanent licence were met.

NPWS are expected to announce their determination of the FIS soon.

Members of NVCA have also been holding discussions with the Forestry Commission's Urunga District Officer Mr Steve Rayson, who has promised a copy of the next draft harvesting plan and time to comment before any logging begins in a new compartment.

Members of the Mistake Forest Protection Group are working actively on their 'hopes' for the forest too. A Forest Camp is presently set up with volunteers studying the codes and requirements for the present operation,



then walking through the logged areas documenting any breaches of these codes that are found.

Termed the "Green Police", these people have already found: mistakes in the Forestry Commissions's forest type mapping that have resulted in some rainforest logging; major diesel and oil spills in the water catchment; logs felled on excessively steep slopes and left in creeks; numerous machinery intrusions into sensitive drainage lines, and illegal blading off on some sections of the road.

The Forest Camp has the blessing of the District Forester on the proviso that boots and helmets are worn in recently logged areas and that volunteers stay 200 metres away from actual operations. These requests are for safety and are considered reasonable by the group.

Some aboriginal artefacts have also been found and reported to the aboriginal community. They are planning a trip to the forest soon, and it is quite likely that their hope is to preserve the cultural heritage of the area.

Other hopes include the expectation that tighter Soil Erosion Mitigation Guidelines will be released soon. It also bodes well that the NSW Premier Mr John Fahey has signed the National Forest Policy which agrees to an immediate moratorium on logging high conservation old growth forests and a total phase out of such logging by 1995, and that an EIS for the Coffs Harbour/Urunga District Management Areas COULD recommend preservation of the last substantial remnants of old growth forest in the Nambucca - those in the Mistake State Forest.

*If you want to help, phone (065) 647 808 and leave a message.*

*Lyn Orrégo*

# Bongil Bongil National Park...

**T**here are fresh developments in the ongoing process to save an area of land at Bonville, just south of Coffs Harbour, and turn it into a National Park. The landowner, Bonville Beach Hardwoods, has gone into receivership.

We are told that the receiver will put parts of the property on the market. Since North Bonville has been rezoned mostly for urban development, it should sell without too much difficulty. However, Bonville South, being primarily a coastal strip zoned rural and environmental protection, will be more difficult to sell. It could be sold for considerably less than previously estimated; it may well be \$1M or less.

Now is the time for action. Urgent letter writing is needed to persuade the NSW Government to buy the 5km coastal strip and some 500 hectares of surrounding land at Bonville South. There will never be a better time to secure the area for the public.

In November 1992 the Minister for the Environment, Mr Chris Hartcher, stated that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is continuing "to participate in the planning process to protect the natural heritage values of the area."

The recognised natural heritage values of the area include: littoral rainforest, dune-swale system with hanging wetlands, 8 different forest communities, wetlands and habitat for at least 8 identified endangered species.

**‘There will never be a better time to secure the area for the public.’**

Bongil Bongil National Park would be the only coastal National Park on the north coast between Yuragir in the north and Hat Head in the south - the longest stretch of coastline in NSW without a National Park. The park would encourage ecotourism for Coffs Harbour and provide further public recreation.

Please remember that this might be the crucial moment for the creation of Bongil Bongil National Park. So please write immediately to:

Hon. Chris Hartcher, (Minister for the Environment), Level 20 Westfield Tower, 100 William Street, East Sydney NSW 2011  
from: Alan Lloyd Coffs Harbour National Park Support Group PO Box 24, Bonville 2441  
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# Sustainable Forestry in A View From



*This conference was held at Armidale, February 7-10*

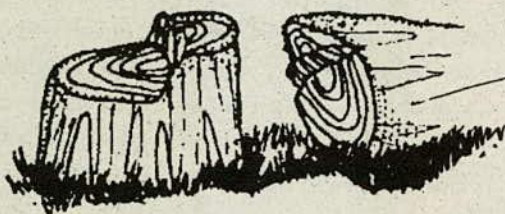
**M**any participants left with the feeling that the conference had failed to achieve a great deal except to highlight the conflict and polarisation over forest issues in NSW.

It was clear from the presentations by interstate researchers that NSW is a long way behind in its research and forest management planning. A

number of forest researchers soundly criticised the NSW Forestry Commission for its lack of foresight and research into aspects of non-timber values. It was clearly obvious that the Commission is only concerned with sustainable timber production. In comparison, Victoria has employed state of the art technologies such as Geographic Information Systems in forest planning and has developed management plans to address non-timber values. Queensland has suc-

cessfully developed a dispute resolution process to resolve the conflict over land use decisions in the Conondale Ranges. Western Australia and Tasmania have large areas of plantations.

It was encouraging to hear about the research and technology in other states and the possibility that the conflict of forests in NSW may be resolved through the use of an independent facilitator. The question is will the Commission talk to NEFA



## QUOTABLE WHAT WAS SAID

The "Sustainable Forestry

**70** 000 cubic metres per annum of sawlogs and eucalypt veneer will come from National Parks" [nearly 1/4 of annual yield]: *Mr Ken Felton, Forestry Commission of Tasmania*

"50% of the current sawlog yield in NSW comes from old growth forests": *Mr Tony Howe, Forestry Commission of NSW*

"There's not one National Park on the USA that is not losing species": *Beth Schultz, Western Australia Conservation Council*

"Australia has lost more species than anywhere in the world. In the last 100 years, 27 animals and 100 plants have become extinct": *Mike Branagan, Wilderness Society*

"Our conclusion: Forestry reduces biodiversity": *Mr Andrew Smith,*

**6** the Commission has made only token changes to their management and many of the archaic attitudes still remain

*Department of Ecosystems Management, University of New England*

A very small area (approximately 1%) would have to be managed more productively to balance taking out areas for conservation" [re East Gippsland representative reserve system]: *Mr A Bartlett, Strategic Planner, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Victoria*

"Reserve systems are probably the safest way of conserving species.

Extending logging rotations is another. The crucial gap in our information is the effects of logging 50 - 150 years after the event" and

"long term timber production will be shown to be dependent on maintaining wildlife and flora species.": *Mr Richard Loyn, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Victoria:*

"Forestry operations do impact on soils and permanently effect the



# Australia Conference

## One Participant



if an independent facilitator can be found?

The Commission claim that the conference degenerated into a 'Commission bashing' exercise was directly and indirectly correct. A number of speakers, and many of the questions, directly criticised the Commission, while they were shown by presentations from other states to be a insular organisation unwilling to adopt changes in community attitudes and

scientific standards. It was obvious to many participants that the Commission has made only token changes to their management and many of the archaic attitudes still remain. The lack of comprehensive research and the poor efforts contained in the current forest Environmental Impact Statements was clearly highlighted by comparison to information contained in many of the interstate speakers papers. These speakers were not bash-

ing the Commission, it was more a case of the Commission bashing itself by failing to keep abreast of new developments in both the scientific community and the general community at large. While the conference was an interesting forum of limited debate, it ended on the somewhat bitter point that unless the NSW Government ends its embargo on discussions with NEFA, polarisation over NSW forests will continue unabated.

by: A Steed.

## QUOTES

### WHO SAID IT

#### in Australia'' conference



environment. We are playing Russian roulette. We need stream monitoring and erosion models. 'Til then I believe there should be a moratorium on logging over 25 degrees and roading be confined to ridges': *Professor JW McGarity, Department of Resource Engineering, University of New England*

"Forestry Commission estimates of resources are 'guesstimates'. In Carrai there was an overestimation of 45% with no reduction of quotas for 2 years (all kept secret from the public). In Dorriggo there is a shortfall of 80,000 cubic metres with no reduction of quotas": *Dailan Pugh, North East Forest Alliance*

"What wasn't suitable for agriculture, forestry got. What wasn't suitable for forestry, conservation

got." [re: historical background of landuse]: *Professor Henry Nix, Australian National University*

"Australia is the driest continent on earth, our flora is unique. This will be important to the world. The National Forest Policy, agreed by all mainland states says the total area of forests should be increased,

ecologically sustainable management is a must, plantations must be expanded and a moratorium on high conservation old growth logging until its phase out altogether in 1995."': *Mr T Ryan, Chairman Standing Committee, Australian Forestry Council, Canberra*

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# CANAL ESTATE

## "Dead in the Water"

6 **...absolutely elated to learn of Minister Webster's rejection of the Dunbogan Canal Estate proposal** 9

**T**he Secretary of the Camden Haven Protection Society Alan MacIntyre, said his society members were absolutely elated to learn of Minister Webster's rejection of the Dunbogan Canal Estate proposal.

The Minister's decision clearly vindicates the position taken by many residents who have expressed opposition the "Sylvania Waters" style development since it was originally conceived in 1973.

However Mr MacIntyre was quick to react strongly in refuting the Minister's later criticism of the Society's opposition to the Dunbogan Canal proposal. "Mr Webster's attitude is typical of the 'develop at any cost' mentality adopted by certain sections of the National Party," said Mr MacIntyre. "His comments suggest he has little understanding of the State's planning laws and his own Government's Coast Policy".

The Society had presented a strong and well supported case against the development to an impartial Commission Of Inquiry. Commissioner Cleland's subsequent 150 page report rejected the canal proposal on almost every ground considered. Contrary to the Minister's assertion, the Protection Society has not taken the issue to court.

The commissioner accepted expert opinion that the development would adversely affect important wetlands, wildlife habitat, water quality and the visual amenity of the Camden Haven locality. The site also has a major acid

sulphate soil problem that may prove to be unmanageable.

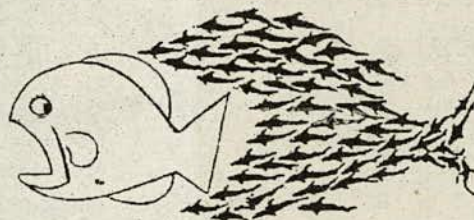
On the subject of jobs, Mr MacIntyre said the Society was fighting to protect existing jobs in the oyster and fishing industries. Commissioner Cleland found that water pollution from the canal estate could lead to a loss of oyster and fish production. "Why should these people lose their jobs so that speculative land developers can make quick profits?" said Mr MacIntyre.

He said the Protection Society has received advice from both the Depart-

ment of Planning and a leading barrister that the development application rejected by the Minister was now effectively "dead in the water". Any new proposal will again be subject to the same exhaustive Inquiry process.

"It is our belief that the only way a canal development could be approved for this site is by a thoroughly dishonest political decision that circumvents the State's planning laws" asserted Mr MacIntyre.

*from: Camden Haven Protection Society News Feb 1993*



## No more Bonville Bores?

**T**he proposal for a borefield at Bonville South (see ENVIRONS December 1992) on the land of the proposed Bongil Bongil National Park, now appears to be defunct. This is because the landowner, Bonville Beach Hardwoods, has gone into receivership.

A spokesperson for the Coffs Harbour Environment Centre said: "It is most unlikely that Coffs Harbour City Council will be able to negotiate a lease from the receiver as this would jeopardise sales potential of the land.

"This raises a sticky point: why did Council spend \$300,000 of ratepayer's funds on this project without first having signed a contract specifying leasing arrangements with the landholder? Inspection of council's documents shows, and Engineer Sandy Reid has confirmed, that there was never any such agreement.

"Thanks to everyone who wrote submissions on the Borefield EIS - over 200 were received, 80% of them anti-borefield."

*from Coffs Harbour Environment Centre, Feb 1993*



# Jervis Bay Disaster

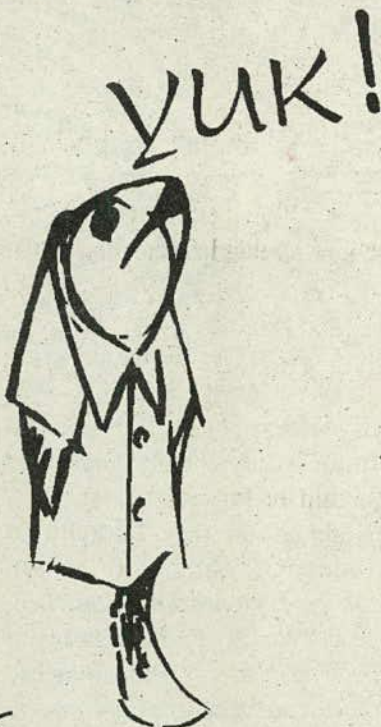
# TOXIC TIDES

**F**ive years ago the Guinness Book of Records listed Jervis Bay as having the cleanest water and the whitest sand in the world. Now the Bay is covered in toxic algae. Why? We asked Chris Illert, scientist and co-author of the book 'Toxic Red Tides' what is going on with so much of Australia's coastline, rivers and creeks awash with algal blooms:

"The combination of the warm temperatures of the East Coast current and nutrients is deadly to the marine environment. We must stop sewage going into the ocean and waterways of this country; sewage is the cause of the toxic tides and the algal blooms.

"It doesn't matter if the sewage is tertiary treated or not, the nutrients remain accessible to the marine environment which is irrevocably altered by the unnatural level of nutrients".

Chris Illert believes that 90% of sewage escapes into the sea and waterways during heavy rain. He points to the fact that Jervis Bay had no problems until the authorities hooked up 3,000 homes onto a sewerage pipe



*The combination of the warm temperatures of the East Coast current and nutrients is deadly to the marine environment*

at Plantation Point, a pipe which spews its contents directly into the Bay.

"At Jervis Bay now, the fairy penguins have hatched their young. With the fishing fleets of South Australia and NSW taking the young bait fish which is the food for the penguin chicks out of the Bay and its estuaries, the parents are forced to swim out in the red tide to find the only food available, poisoned fish. This poisoned fish is then fed to the young chicks who are dying in their hundreds.

"They all have the symptoms of paralytic poisoning, they can't breathe, or they starve to death. Whales and dolphins overloaded with toxic organisms are coming ashore dying as a result of the red tides", said Chris.

The extent of the tide created in Australia stretches right across to New Zealand where Chris Illert claims it is responsible for whale strandings which usually take place mid year.

*from: Australians For Animals Bulletin, Feb 1993*



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# Insurance industry wakes up to global warming

One of the largest businesses in the world, the insurance industry, is beginning to change its business practice because of an increase in climate-related disasters.

In a report entitled: "Climate Change and the Insurance Industry: solidarity among the risk community", Dr Jeremy Leggett, Greenpeace climate campaign scientific director, catalogued the growing number of insurance companies pulling out of areas which could be at risk from climate-related disasters.

Climate change, caused by the buildup in the atmosphere of gases such as carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, is likely to bring with it changes in weather patterns including cyclones like Hurricane Andrew which hit Florida last year, causing up to \$20 billion in insurance losses. Nine insurance companies collapsed in the wake of that hurricane and Cyclone Iniki in Hawaii late last year.

"There is a tremendous amount of governmental and business scepticism



when it comes to climate change, but one of the world's biggest industries is taking it increasingly seriously," said Leggett. In the aftermath of Cyclones Ofa and Val - two devastating cyclones within less than two years - Western Samoa's only fire and general insurer, National Pacific Insurance, announced it would remove all cover once existing policies ran out. In neighbouring American Samoa, Travellers Insurance Company similarly withdrew cyclone cover.

"Today new homeowners in Western Samoa and Hawaii are being left uninsured. Tomorrow the same could apply to a lot of infrastructure around

the Florida and Gulf coasts," said Leggett.

Leggett pointed out a certain irony in the financial crisis being faced by the world's insurance industry from these climatic disasters:

"Many large investments made by these companies are into the very area which is the main factor in human enhancement of climate change - the fossil fuel industry. This industry has been lobbying against curbs in emissions of CO2 at the negotiations on a climate convention," said Leggett.

"If the insurance industry wants to safeguard its future in the face of increasing climate-related disasters, it will have to ensure that its voice is heard at these negotiations.

"It will also have to look at its business practices and make changes in ways which could have incredible impacts. The companies themselves agree with this. It's clear that you can't have a healthy economy without a healthy insurance industry."

from: Greenpeace Press Release  
Feb 3, 1993

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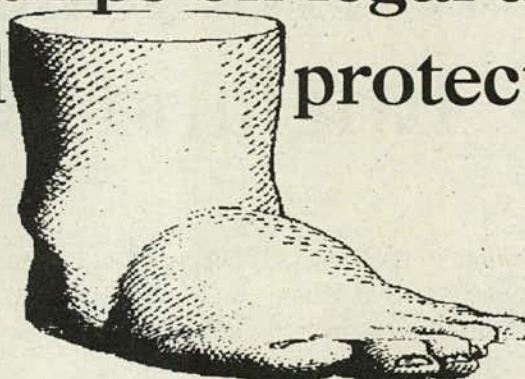
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# Government stamps on legal aid for environmental protection cases



**T**he Legal Aid Commission resolved that as of 1 January 1993, no grant of legal aid would be given in environmental matters. This is part of a general resolution to axe legal aid in civil matters.

These cuts came into force as a result of a decision which was made without consultation with interested groups and organisations, without adequate financial information and without any assessment of the social impact of such a decision.

The decision to axe legal aid in environmental cases is even contrary to the 'NSW Government Ministerial Inquiry into the administration of legal aid in environmental matters' which recommended that no changes be made to the legal aid policy.

It places at risk the viability of the Environmental Defenders Office which is a community legal centre that specialises in public interest environmental law. Up until 1992 the EDO relied on grants of legal aid for a substantial part of its funding to run environmental protection cases.

The loss of legal aid also has direct consequences for the EDO because

*effectively... there is no longer a legal avenue open for people concerned about enforcing environmental protection laws*

most of its clients who took environmental litigation in the public interest received funding from the Commission. Some of the cases that the EDO has fought with legal aid funding include *Jararius v Forestry Commission*, *Australian Conservation Foundation v Minister for Resources*, *Vaughan Taylor v David Mitchell Melcann*, *Malcolm v Newcastle City Council*. None of these important cases would have been possible without legal aid.

In September 1992 it was discovered that the State government had failed to provide the Legal Aid Commission of NSW with the \$3.2 million which had been allocated as a result of the Commonwealth State

funding agreement. The failure to pass this on to the Commission has contributed to their current budgetary crisis.

It has never been easy to get legal aid for environmental matters; only the most deserving cases with strong prospects for success and involving environments with unique qualities have succeeded in the past. The criteria for eligibility were amended in 1991 to take into account economic factors in determining whether to grant aid. Further, additional members were appointed to the consultative committee that considers applications for legal aid - including representatives of the forest industry, the mining industry and various regulatory authorities. The Commission's determination has effectively meant that there is no longer a legal avenue open for people concerned about enforcing environmental protection laws to protect the environment in NSW.

*(You can write to the Attorney General, The Hon John Hannaford, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney.)*  
from: EDO



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# Werrikimbe and New England Wilderness

**U**rgent action is required to support the National Parks and Wildlife assessments. There has been a vigorous anti-wilderness campaign on the North Coast and in particular in the Kempsey area. Mr Bruce Jeffery, National Party State member for the area, has been leading the campaign which has been taken up by 4 wheel drive enthusiasts, landowners and the league of rights devotees. Local newspapers and local Councils have enthusiastically

supported the campaign against the wilderness nominations. Early submissions received by NPWS indicated a majority opposed to wilderness.

Therefore PLEASE WRITE A LETTER in support of these wilderness areas. DO IT NOW. Don't wait until April 19th, when submissions close.

Here is a sample letter you could photocopy and send, or preferably, **using this for ideas, write your own**

**letter.** Try getting friends to write a simple paragraph or two to the effect that these wilderness areas are in our backyard, and we want it to remain that way?? Simple and easy. And the numbers really do count.

*Source: NPA Three Valleys Branch  
Editor's note: The New England Nomination includes parts of Oakes State Forest in the Nambucca Valley. Copies of the Assessment Reports are available at the NVCA Office.*

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Mask the page above here and photocopy

---

The Director, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service,  
PO Box 1967  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220  
Date:

**Re: Proposed Wilderness Areas: Werrikimbe and New England.**

Dear Sir,

I wish to support the Wilderness Assessment and boundaries recommended by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for the above Wilderness areas.

I support the Wilderness Assessments and boundaries for the following reasons:-

This is a unique opportunity to secure for future generations these areas which are relatively unaffected by human interference. It is also essential for the maintenance of biodiversity that these areas continue to function without the adverse impacts of human activities.

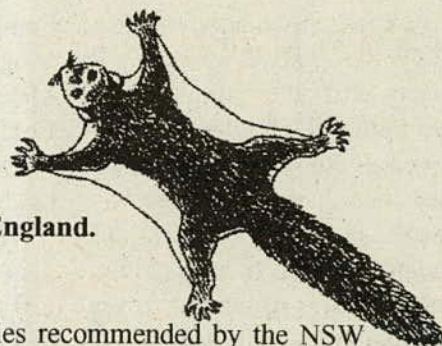
Urbanisation on the North Coast is occurring at one of the highest rates in the State and this poses a threat to the areas' biodiversity.

As only 4% of New South Wales qualifies as wilderness there should be no further delay in the declaration of these areas.

North East NSW has the second highest concentration of endangered and threatened species of plant and animals in Australia. These wilderness areas would greatly assist the protection of these species in intact ecosystems.

Old growth forest areas within the nominated wilderness areas are invaluable especially as the NSW Forestry Commission still seems to regard them as a resource to be used rather than preserved as an ecosystem for its ecological value.

Yours sincerely





# LARGE HOLE

in Ozone

**T**he last meeting of the Montreal Protocol in November 1992 strengthened the treaty to preserve the ozone layer, but omitted to control one known important ozone-affecting chemical.

The good news is that the date for banning some of the chemicals (halons, CFCs, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform) has been brought forward from the year 2000 to 1994 and 1996. The bad news is that the fumigant, methyl bromide, used to sterilise soils and kill pests on fruit and vegetables, has had its use

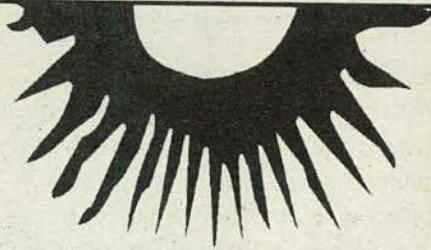
frozen at current levels but not curtailed.

Methyl bromide destroys up to 60 times as much ozone as the chlorine released by CFCs and other chemicals controlled by the ozone treaty. It was only this year that human-made methyl bromide was understood to make up 30% of the compound in the atmosphere, making it responsible for 10% of the ozone damage.

Agreement

The banning of this chemical could have as much effect on the ozone layer as banning CFCs and carbon tetrachloride 3 years earlier than scheduled. Although many countries believe their export industries (vegetables, tobacco, grass turf, vines and ornamentals) would be at stake, the Netherlands has banned its use completely, partly because it has poisoned drinking water. The Dutch presented a paper to the meeting showing that there are safe substitutes for methyl bromide.

*Adapted from New Scientist by Deb of Potoroo Review*



## Woodchip protest at Bunbury WA

**an industry which consumes over half of all forests cut in Australia, yet provides only 2% of jobs in the timber industry**

**T**hirty protesters were arrested at the Bunbury woodchip export facility on Sunday, February 14 in Western Australia. The arrests took place at the base of the massive pile of woodchips which had previously been old growth native forests.

The demonstration was planned as a water-based action to hinder the docking of a ship expected to arrive that morning. These ships are currently taking nearly 1 million tonnes of

woodchipped forests out of WA and over 5 million tonnes from Australia overall.

As it turned out, the ship was just moving into the harbour when the protesters arrived on Saturday afternoon. In a hectic burst of activity protesters donned wetsuits, inflated dinghies and launched kayaks. Although this managed to slow down the docking, the ship was eventually secured.

The next morning, police were positioned on the

wharf side of the woodchip pile, expecting the activity to occur in the same place as the previous day. Hidden from the police by the 30-metre high pile of woodchips, the protesters scaled the fence at the back of the complex and ran up the woodchip heap past the bewildered security guards.

By the time the police arrived a huge banner was unfurled with the words "Save native forests" draped down the side of the woodchip pile. Loading was again interrupted and

media attention focused on an industry that would rather keep hidden from public scrutiny - an industry which consumes over half of all forests cut in Australia, yet provides only 2% of jobs in the timber industry.

After cautions from the police to come down or face arrest, the protesters decided to come down, and were subsequently arrested anyway. They subsequently pleaded not guilty to charges of "failure to leave premises".



# RAILWAY OR

## What hidden agenda is pushing a

**T**ransport is a key element affecting our economy and our social amenity. There is very little doubt that our dependence on fossil fuels for our transport and our individual use of private motor cars is not ecologically sustainable. Our transport practices are largely responsible for our current problems with Greenhouse gas emissions, the loss of the natural environment through urban sprawl, urban air pollution including carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide and lead.

Recent studies on Sydney and Melbourne smog levels have revealed that they are at dangerously high levels. On one summer day in Western Sydney the level of ozone was two and a half times the maximum safe level recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Bangkok has become uninhabitable due to air pollution from car exhausts. American companies are sending their wives and children home to the United States to escape the life threatening pollution. Lead levels in the air have been measured up to 200 times World Health Organisation levels.

Transport is responsible for 26% of Australia's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: cars (54%) and trucks (17%) between them represent 71% of this total. Australia has given a commitment to meet the Toronto target of a 20% greenhouse gas reduction from 1988 levels by 2005. How will this be achieved if we continue to place our dependence on the motor vehicle? The Coalition's proposed reduction of the fuel tax is

likely to cause a considerable increase in motor vehicle use particularly large trucks. A solution to these problems would be for Urban redesign coordinated with an efficient public transport system to serve the needs of the people.

### NCEC RESPONSE

The North Coast Environment Council responded to two separate Regional Transport strategies sponsored by the Northern Rivers Organisation of Councils and the North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils in 1991.

Public comment on these strategies from written submissions and public meetings emphasised the fact that Rail Transport which had been given scant regard in the strategy was the favoured mode by the majority of respondents. Mr Wal Murray, State Minister for Roads, has now announced two options for a North Coast Road Strategy ignoring the Public's comment on the NOROC and NCROC Transport Strategies. Yet Mr Bruce Jefferey, member for Oxley, is reported as saying that "commu-

nity participation has already played a key role in developing the study". What hidden agenda is pushing a Tollway against the public's interest? What will the cost be to the community and the environment of promoting this emphasis on Road Transport? The proponents of such increased emphasis on Road Transport seem to ignore the following factors:-

- 🚲 The increase in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 🚲 More clearing of forests, bushland remnants and the resultant loss of wildlife.
- 🚲 Increased soil erosion and creek and river siltation.
- 🚲 The division of properties and communities.
- 🚲 Despoilation of the landscape by transport corridors, quarries and gravel pits.
- 🚲 One kilometre of highway equals 10 hectares of forest or private land or prime agricultural land.
- 🚲 The cost of maintenance increases dramatically with the use of heavy trucks. Independent reports state that a large semi trailer does 10,000

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# WALLYWAY?

## tollway against the public's interest?

times as much damage to a road than a car.

🚲 Accidents occur on both divided highways and two lane roads. Higher speed and traffic volumes will lead to higher death and injury rates. Where a truck is involved in an accident there is usually death and severe injury. The cost of such accidents in terms of medical and hospital treatment, insurance, loss of earnings must be included in the real cost of road transport.

🚲 The increased potential for spills and pollution after accidents involving trucks.

🚲 The noise factor may not be such a worry in the country but for residents within a short distance of large highways noise can be a contributing factor to deafness, lack of sleep and stress.

When these matters are costed into the costs of transporting goods by road then it appears that rail costs are much lower.

If we are to achieve an ecologically and socially sustainable transporta-

tion system then we must take action to:-

🚗 Promote the upgrading of the North Coast Railway, ultimately to modern dual track standard as a first priority to enable heavy long distance trucks to be removed from highways.

🚗 Agitate strongly against unnecessary road-duplicating tollway projects.

🚗 Agitate against any further major road building proposals in the Region unless they are proven to serve the local community with minimum environmental impact.

🚗 Petition the State Government for the introduction of competitive charges, concessions and incentives to maximise the rail haulage of freight and discourage road transport. Requesting the establishment of rail/road interchange facilities in the Region (eg Taree, Coffs Harbour and Casino).

🚗 Strongly support improved scheduling, upgrading of trains and rail facilities, including comfortable waiting rooms, to attract more people to rail travel.

🚗 Support the introduction of subsidised concession rates to encourage greater use of the Gold Coast Motor Rail. Market this service as a positive contribution to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

🚗 Agitate publicly for half of the revenue raised by the 3 x 3 fuel levy to go towards railway improvements. Such improvements should be the straightening of curves (built in the 19th century) to enable trains such as the XPT to achieve designed speed and the construction of passing loops.

🚗 Support those improvements on the Pacific Highway designed to eliminate black spot areas, increase passing lanes and construct town bypasses which also avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

🚗 Support environmentally sound improvements to increase safe travel on the Summerland Way to take pressure off the Pacific Highway.

🚗 Agitate strongly for increased charges and taxes on heavy road transport vehicles and coaches to recover the total cost of their operations to the community. The levies should be phased in over 10 years and should

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reflect the costs of road maintenance, more police surveillance to increase safe driving, pollution control and death and injury to the community resulting from heavy vehicle-related accidents.

 Support the establishment of a permanent public education programme on the North Coast to remind people of the environmentally and socially damaging consequences of the motor vehicle and the uncertain future for this mode of travel in the light of declining fuel resources and its contribution to greenhouse climatic change.

 Strongly petition the State Government to require that all works on railways and major roads including widening, deviations and bypasses, but with the exception of routine repair and maintenance, be the subject of Environmental Impact Statements released for public review and comment prior to detailed design stages. Final decisions on the works to be contingent on the findings in the EISs.  
*Terry Parkhouse, North Coast Environment Council*



### Raffle Winner

Ms J Johnston of Scotts Head was the lucky winner of the lovely dolphin painting raffled by NVCA and drawn at the Tree Fair.

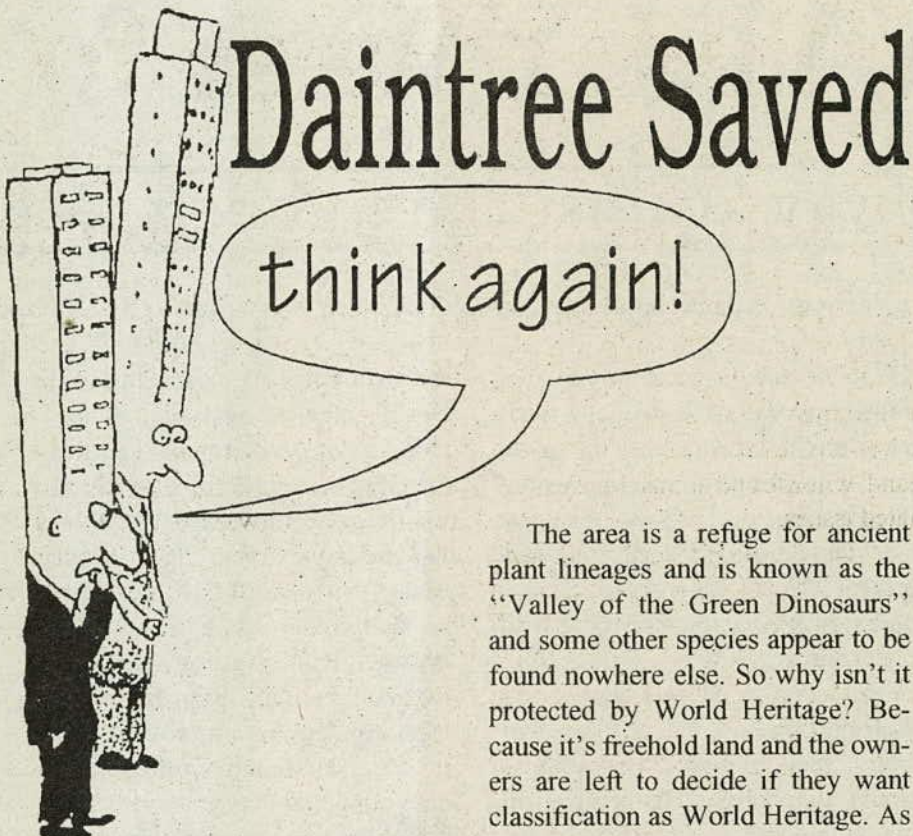
Thanks to all who bought tickets and thanks especially to Laura Coblyn for donating her painting.



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**V**isitors who cross the Daintree and travel along the rutted road to Cape Tribulation, north of Cairns admire the rainforest, convinced that they are travelling in the much publicised World Heritage Area of the Australian Wet Tropics.

Don't be fooled! A huge portion of lowland approaching the area has been bought up by George Quaid, one time chairman of the Douglas Shire Council. He realised the potential for tourism and with his partners, acquired 2,670ha of leasehold land in the Cow Bay district. Much of it was old pasture land but the rest was rainforest with an extraordinary diversity of types. The subdivision resulted in 745 blocks!

Never mind that some are inundated for 3-5 months of the year and are mosquito havens; they are deemed suitable for high-priced house sites. As tour operators take advantage of the trails, the visitors are thus exposed to the stupidity of such developments.

# Daintree Saved

think again!

The area is a refuge for ancient plant lineages and is known as the "Valley of the Green Dinosaurs" and some other species appear to be found nowhere else. So why isn't it protected by World Heritage? Because it's freehold land and the owners are left to decide if they want classification as World Heritage. As they are mostly 'absentee', this is decidedly a problem.

In 1989 the Government authorised the Far North Queensland Electricity Board to provide power north of the Daintree - which was good for George because he could build a town of 3,000 souls in the middle of Cow Bay rainforest area. The Douglas Shire Council doesn't want it put in and the community is mostly against it; both wanting to maintain the area's natural values.

The Queensland Government should be urged to revoke the provision of electricity to the area and the Federal Minister for the environment should come into the act; after all, it contradicts the Rio Convention on Biodiversity.

### Send letters to:

Mr Wayne Goss, Premier of Qld,  
Executive Building, 100 George St,  
Brisbane, 4000.

*Source: World Rainforest Report  
No 23*



# New access to Pollies

## Community Information Network

**M**arianne Grinter from Toxin Action Group (TAG) has recently moved to Canberra to continue working and lobbying on a variety of toxin and contaminated land, wildlife and human residues related issues.

"The development of a National Registration System for chemicals without associated Right to Know Legislation is one prominent example that has forced us to address a national agenda", said Marianne.

Marianne and her colleagues, who form the research group of the North Coast Environmental Council (NCEC), are developing an easy and simple information feedback system for regional groups called a Community Information Network (CIN).

Marianne says: "Regional groups and communities with their detailed local knowledge have much to offer Federal regulatory agencies. Local information regarding land usage, water and air pollution, site contamination and wildlife residues, if made available to both Federal politicians and regulatory agencies such as Com-

monwealth Environmental Protection Authority can dramatically affect policy direction, regardless of what government is in power."

Information that you believe is essential for decision makers to address can be forwarded to CIN by mail, computer disk or electronic mail (see address below). For ease of handling, this information should be in a one page format, clear and straight forward and include references and contact phone numbers.

In turn CIN can provide you with data on chemicals consisting of fact sheets on agricultural, domestic and industrial chemicals and associated data on crop usage.

"It is this approach of a two-way

flow of information that I envisage to be the main focus of a Community Information Network." Marianne said.

"We are asking you to consider supporting this system. We already have the nucleus of the system operating and have been able to provide Federal Cabinet with briefings on significant regional contaminated sites which resulted in immediate Federal Government intervention on behalf of the affected residents."

*Send to: Marianne Grinter, National Liaison Officer, 3 Le Hunt St, Deakin, ACT 2600*

*Tel & Fax 06 282 5808 E-mail peg:biomap.*

The NCEC research group, Bio-Regional Computer Mapping & Research is also developing low cost Geographic Information Systems for environment and community groups to utilise. This is a database that not only analyses text reports but can produce graphical maps of an area.

## MEETINGS



### Ulitarra's Programme

The Ulitarra Naturalist Group meets on second Tuesdays monthly, at 7.30pm at the Botanic Gardens, Coffs Harbour. All invited, bring your friends.

The format includes a guest speaker: on April 13 Robert Quirk talks on Koalas; May 11 Ray Hinchley on Astronomy; June 8 John Wrigley on Growing Australian Native Plants.

*Enquiries:*

*Brendon Gill (066) 536737*

### BUSH WALKS

**April 17/18:**

Styx River Canyon.  
Coordinator Alan Went  
(066) 551 453.

**May 12**

Upper Orara.

**June 12:**

Umdumbarra Creek, Bald Knob.





# Commission criticised over logging



**T**he NSW Forestry Commission has moved to stem criticism of its management of the State's logging sites, following the release of a highly critical report by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The Commission released the 50 page report yesterday - four months after its completion - and announced what it called a "series of tough new measures", including spot checks on logging sites.

The report identifies many breaches of logging conditions which have caused severe soil erosion in the Oakes State Forest, south-west of Coffs Harbour. The report carries 25 pages of photographs detailing the extent of damage in an area which has been considered for inclusion in the New England National Park.

It states that the logging operator had no understanding of some of the logging standards and that the forestry supervisor either had no understanding or did not check the operation. If the supervisor did understand the conditions he was unprepared to enforce them, the report states.

As a result of the poor logging practices and management, the report estimates that almost 90,000 tonnes of soil has been lost through erosion. To move this volume of soil, 8,814 trucks would have been required - or one truck working 40 hours per week for seven months!

The Commissioner for Forests, Dr Hans Drielsma, said the report confirmed "the need for more stringent

**‘If the supervisor did understand the conditions he was unprepared to enforce them, the report states.’**

policing of logging regulations State-wide". He said a new team would be established to audit logging operations throughout NSW, that compliance with the best road construction standards would be checked and that foresters, foremen and logging contractors would be offered workshops and field days to train them in erosion mitigation techniques.

But the reaction to these and other measures was sceptical, with both the logging industry and conservationists saying they contained nothing new.

A spokesperson for the North East Forest Alliance, Mr Dailan Pugh, said the Commission had spent the past decade assuring conservationists that logging was being properly managed in NSW.

"It's all been claimed to have been done before: foresters have been telling us for the past decade that it's being done," Mr Pugh said. "Yet we've found them breaking every rule in the book, but we still can't get any action."

The executive director of the NSW Forest Products Association, Mr Col Dorber, said the only new measure announced was a proposed standard to mitigate against erosion. However, the standard was still to be approved

by the Environment Protection Authority.

"I'm just wondering what adverse news is about to come out that they're [the commission] trying to head off," he said.

The report was requested by the commission after conservationists successfully blockaded the area early last year in an attempt to highlight the massive soil erosion and resulting contamination of the Bellinger River.

The North East Forest Alliance had requested the report under Freedom Of Information provisions but had been denied access to its findings, Mr Pugh said. "We've also been trying to have that area rehabilitated, he said. "A year later, the commission still hasn't got round to it. The situation is reprehensible".

by Danielle Cook  
*Sydney Morning Herald. 24.2.93*

## CONFERENCE

### The Burning Question: Fire Management in NSW

Conference: 5 to 7 August 1993  
at: Opal Cove, Coffs Harbour  
Jointly presented by UNE and Department of Bush Fire Services. You are invited to participate and/or contribute at this conference.

Inquiries to: Jackie Ross,  
Department of Continuing Education,

UNE Armidale, NSW 2351.

Ph: (067) 733 088

More details in next ENVIRONS  
hopefully!



## Mining Threat to "Proposed" Warrell Creek Nature Reserve

**N**ambucca Shire Council held a meeting on January 28 with representatives from the Department of Mineral Resources, Department of Conservation and Land Management (C&LM), National Parks and Wildlife, Clearing & Scenic Protection Committee, Mr Bruce Jefferey, Member for Oxley, and the public to try to finally resolve the Warrell Creek Nature Reserve proposal.

Mr Bob Brown of the Department of Mineral Resources, reported that the exploratory drilling of RZM and Australmin in the

Warrell Creek area indicated a heavy mineral beach sand deposit of 7.5 million tonnes on the western side of the creek.

Worth \$18.8 million and stretching for 8.5 kms (350 metres wide) from Warrell Point to just north of Scotts Head, Mr Brown said that the deposit would take two years to mine.

He also said that although less testing has been done on the eastern side of the creek (between the ocean and the creek) there were sufficient indications of resources there too, and that the Department wants the area

retained for mining. If no resources were found in the creek itself, the department would then allow it to be included in the nature reserve.

The Nambucca Shire Council had previously resolved to support the nature reserve on the eastern side of the creek but, the Mineral Resources Department comments caused some councillors to try and "have their cake and eat it too" by implying that mining might be a good idea before it became a nature reserve. However, a motion was passed that confirmed support for the nature reserve on the eastern side. Mr Bruce Jefferey, Member for Oxley, supported this motion.

The Department of Mineral Resources has been the main obstruction to such a reserve for years. However,

at this meeting, (C&LM) said they had an interest in retaining the crown land on the western side as they may want to use it for tourist facilities. They also told the meeting of three aboriginal land claims over the area which must be resolved; one of them longstanding (since 1984).

National Parks and Wildlife Service has been supporting a reserve for many years. The proposal for a reserve originally came from the Nambucca Shire Council itself in 1973.

With all these old and new impediments to be sorted out, it seems the reserve is still a long way off, although the meeting passed a resolution that Mr Jefferey ask the premier to resolve the conflicts between its departments so the eastern side reserve can go ahead.

by: Lyn Orrego

## EIS Criticised

**L**ast October a Forestry Commission Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed Logging in the Mt Royal State Forest was condemned by the North East Forest Alliance as 'fundamentally flawed'. Barrie Griffiths, a resident of Mt. Royal, called for an independent review of the EIS, and was not alone.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service believes the EIS was based on false assumptions and that 'unscientific' procedures had been used, while the Australian Museum found that the



conclusions drawn were not justified by the data. The Department of Fisheries found that no study had been undertaken into the impact of logging and road building on aquatic fauna. The Environmental Protection Au-

thority found the study to be factually flawed, while Singleton Shire Council asserted that the effects of logging on nearby Lake St Clair (the source of the town's water supply) had been inadequately assessed.

The lesson of Mt Royal is that there is a need for strictly defined guidelines for EISs, that statements should be independently monitored and reviewed, and that the review process should be open to the public. from: 'The Opinions Page', Newcastle Herald, 6 February, 1993.



# Riparian Zones

## A Chance to Heal Our Waterways

**T**he release of the Water Resources Council's discussion paper on the quality of the waterways has at least brought an increase to our vocabularies. To be of any more value, action needs to be taken in implementing some of its broad options.

The Riparian Zone Policy discussion paper, although made public in September last year, took quite some time to filter into the consciousness of the people of the North Coast. The National Farmers Federation, whose members are represented on the Water Resources Council, held a meeting in Lismore to discuss their response to the paper and decided to oppose some of its options. The farmers reacted primarily to the concept of riparian zone management - there exists no specific recommendation to fence stock from waterways, only a vague "option" to provide "blanket protection" to the zone.

**The perceived threats to our rivers and creeks, as listed in the report, are as follows:**

1. Grazing
2. Clearing
3. Flow regime change (Silt and erosion)
4. Pests and weeds
5. Pollution
6. Fire
7. Excavation, filling and construction

Some of these threats, if not all, form part of everyday land-use practice for farmers and graziers, and perhaps explains the angry reaction of the Farmers Federation.

There can be no suggestion that the Riparian Zone Policy paper comes as a result of "green infiltration", as

has been the case with other such reports. The Water Resources Council is comprised of representatives of the following: Department of Conservation and Land Management (C&LM) Public Works, Department of Planning, Forestry Commission, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment Protection Agency, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Farmers Federation, and Nature Conservation Council.

One can hardly say that a group such as this would exhibit a green bias. Riparian zone management, one would assume from the report, became an issue only recently, and legislation to protect the zone would appear to be necessary in light of the policy discussion paper. However, this is far from the truth of the matter. There are no less than eleven separate Acts, some dating back to 1901 which already provide for both protection of the riparian zone, and the prosecution of people breaking these various Acts.

### **These Acts are:**

1. Western Lands Act 1901
2. The Forestry Act 1916
3. Local Government Act 1919
4. The Fisheries and Oyster Farms Act 1935
5. Soil Conservation Act 1938
6. Rivers and Foreshores Improvement Act 1948
7. Clean Waters Act 1970
8. National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
9. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
10. Water Administration Act 1986
11. Crown Lands Act 1989

It is absolutely false to suggest that further legislation is necessary, leaving one to consider why nobody appears to be prosecuted for offences under the existing laws. Does a section of our society enjoy privileges which are denied to others? A casual observer of the state of our lands and waterways can see the reasons for our current state of degradation. Farming practices which have been proven to be injurious

to the land are still in use in this area today. As much as we may discuss these matters, the damage continues unabated. These land-use practices are usually in breach of one of the abovementioned Acts - laws are being broken, and nobody is prosecuted.

The powers of prosecution contained within the Soil Conservation Act alone would cover the kinds of damage which occur on our creek banks. However, the Department of C&LM, which administers the Act: "prefers to implement the Act by seeking cooperation". It would appear that this cooperation has not been forthcoming at least since 1938. Perhaps it is time the Department enforced the law, even to lend credibility to its title.

The Riparian Zone Policy Paper offers the best management options available to date, and deserves the community's attention. Community pressure may well be the only method of implementation for the options outlined in the report. In the meantime, landholders should be aware of their ability to bring prosecutions against other landholders who might be breaking the law.

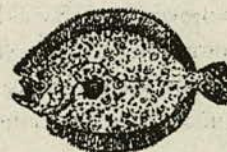
The facilities to deal with offences causing erosion or pollution are there - it is up to all of us who care for the land to avail ourselves of those facilities. **The law is on your side.**

*by Pan-Com, in the Nimbin News Jan-Feb 1993*

### **Editors note:**

*A copy of Riparian Zone Policy discussion paper can be read at the NVCA Office.*

*The Riparian Zone is that area between the low flow level of the watercourse and the high bank (the highest point of transition between the channel and the floodplain; ie it does not include the floodplain).*







## Borefield project finished?

ing released by the Department of Water Resources.

The Department's tests supported claims made by objectors that the projections of available yield and water table drawdown made by the EIS consultants, Mitchell McCotter, were not supported by fact, and seemed to be based entirely on wishful thinking rather than scientific methods.

The tests showed that to supply the required six megalitres per day the drawdown would be much greater, and extend over a much larger area than predicted by the so-called 'computer model' used by the consultants.

The scheme was supposed to allow Coffs Harbour's ad hoc urban growth to continue until a permanent scheme based on the Bellinger River was in place, but now the Bellinger scheme looks to be headed for the political

too-hard basket following united opposition from Bellingen residents.

The Department of Public Works, the scheme's designer, now admits it has serious doubts about the project's viability given the potential for environmental damage the larger drawdown would cause.

Coffs Harbour's Mayor, Ald John Smith, laid the blame for the debacle, which has cost the long-suffering ratepayer some \$3.5 million to date, at the feet of the PWD and the State Government who he said had pushed for the schemes.

Ald Smith also suggested building a pipeline from the Nymboida River to the Karangi Dam as an alternative, but this attracted predictable howls of outrage from Grafton Council and the environmental lobby.

A major critic of the borefield and president of the Ulitarra Society, Mr Peter Giller, said it was about time reuse was considered as a solution to Coffs Harbour's water supply problems.

Mr Giller said it had been obvious all along that the borefield was not the answer and would be an environmental disaster.

He believed it was wrong to claim that reuse could not supply enough water for Coffs Harbour and said he had calculated that recycling highly-treated waste water back into the town water supply could meet the city's needs well into the next century and save the cost of new dams.

*from: R. Clowes Coffs Correspondent*

**C**offs Harbour's proposed emergency water supply scheme, the much-criticised Bonville Borefield, looks to be dead following the results of aquifer test-

### Breakthrough for non-feral oysters

**T**he Hon Ian Causley, Minister for Natural Resources, met with oyster growers from the Hastings north to Ulmarra on February 5, 1993, and agreed to impose a ban on the importation of Geigus ('Pacific') oysters into the three 'clean' rivers - the Kalang, the Bellinger and the Nambucca.

Oyster growers from these areas have long been outraged that their famous and gourmet Sydney Rock Oyster (the non-feral oyster) is under threat from infestation by the

exotic, rampant, less tasty and less profitable Geigus oyster.

The Sydney Rock Oyster is the native species and it is expected the three 'clean' estuaries will have good business prospects for producing young oysters to be exported for fattening in other estuaries.

The Hastings River and the Macleay River oyster growers also requested closure from Geigus imports but their case was not accepted by the Minister.

*by Lyn Orrego*



## This Month's Cover

**Regent Bower Bird, (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*)**

Somewhere amongst my vast collection of reference material is a postcard sized membership certificate from the "Gould League of Bird-lovers", collected in my primary school days many years ago in Sydney, with an illustration of a Regent Bowerbird on it. Little did I realise way back then, that one day I'd be sitting in my studio watching these brilliant birds feeding on the berries of the wild tobacco, right outside my window.

The bird I've illustrated is a male, spectacularly black and yellow in colour, standing in the bower he builds to attract females, who come to mate and then go off and nest alone. The bower is usually smaller than that of the Satin Bowerbird, painted yellow with saliva and juice from crushed leaves, and decorated with snail shells, berries, pebbles, leaves etc, generally in red-black yellow-brown tones instead of the mainly blue decorations of the Satin Bowerbird. Like the Satin Bowerbird, the females and immature males have much more subdued colouring - in the Regent mainly fawn-brown feathers with scalloped white edges and a dull black patch on the back of the head. Males don't attain adult colouring for four to five years.

Regent Bowerbirds spend most of their time feeding on fruits in the mid and upper levels of the rainforest, descending to the ground only for bower making, display and mating.

**JULIE**

# Environs

the north coast  
environment news  
magazine

Environs is published every other month on a voluntary basis to bring together reports from a large number of environmental organisations. Many groups are affiliated with Environs, including the Bellingen Environment Centre, and the Nambucca Valley Conservation Association.

Editorial contributions are welcomed. They should include the authors name and phone number and should be sent by mail to: Environs, PO Box 123, Bowraville 2449, or by fax to (065) 647 808, or by email to: peg.environs. Subscriptions are \$12 for 6 issues. Advertisements may be lodged with Julie Mozsny by phoning (065) 695 360. Editorial for Environs is by Carol Margolis and the Environs team. Layout and typesetting is by Mike Holland. Cover artwork is by Julie Mozsny.

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