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NEW SOUTH WALES

Minister for the Environment

Level 20 Westfield Tower
100 William Street
East Sydney N.S.W. 2011
Tel: 368 2888
Fax: 368 2900

reply please quote: NP65737, NP65739, NP66450, NP66451, 66453

Mr A Ricketts
Research Officer
The Big Scrub Environment Centre Inc
149 Keen Street
LISMORE NSW 2480

9 OCT 1992

Dear Mr Ricketts

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon Chris Hartcher MP, has asked me to thank you for your contribution to the wilderness exhibition process.

The Minister has noted your comments and will ensure that they are accepted as a formal submission to the process.

All submissions are currently being analysed and in due course will be provided to Cabinet, as a record of public opinion, when the various wilderness proposals come to be debated. Please be assured that your views will be fully considered at that time.

Yours sincerely

Michael Photios MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister for the Environment

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PAM ALLAN M.P.

MEMBER FOR BLACKTOWN
SHADOW MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
SHADOW MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

Electorate Office
71A Boomerang Place
Seven Hills 2147

Tel: (02) 622 3110
Fax: (02) 831 2130

All correspondence to
P.O. Box 592
Seven Hills 2147

Mr Aidan Ricketts
Research Officer
The Big Scrub Environment Centre
149 Keen Street
Lismore 2480

Dear Aidan,

Thank you for your letter concerning wilderness areas.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is currently finalising nominations for a number of wilderness proposals around the State.

I will forward your correspondence to the Minister for Environment, the Honourable Chris Hartcher, MP, who has responsibility for determining wilderness areas under the New South Wales Wilderness Act.

On Labor's return to Government we will assess wilderness nominations with a view to ensuring the successful implementation of the Wilderness Act.

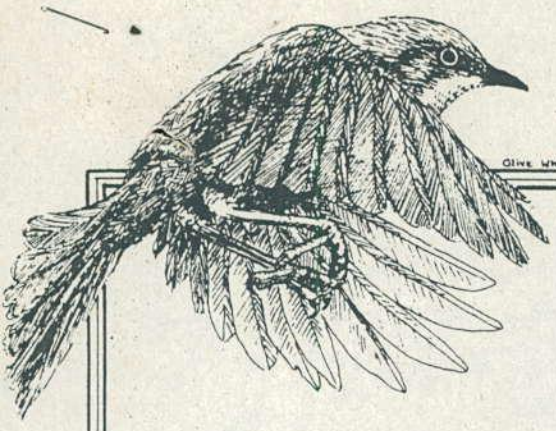
Then, as now, your views will be taken into account.

Yours sincerely,

Pam Allan

Pam Allan
Member for Blacktown
Shadow Minister for Planning
and Environment
Shadow Minister for Women's Affairs

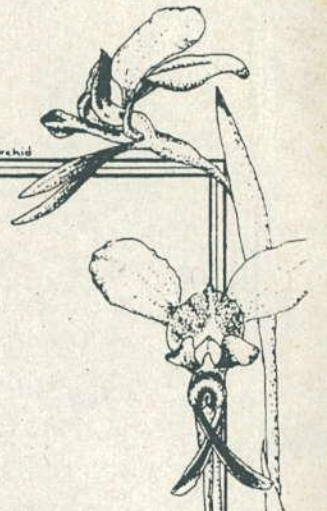
10/ October, 1992.



THE BIG SCRUB ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

INC.

149 Keen Street, Lismore 2480.
Phone (066) 21 3278
Fax (066) 22 2676



30 September 1992

Mr Bill Gillooly
The Director
National Parks and Wildlife Service
PO Box 1967
Hurstville 2220

Dear Mr Gillooly,

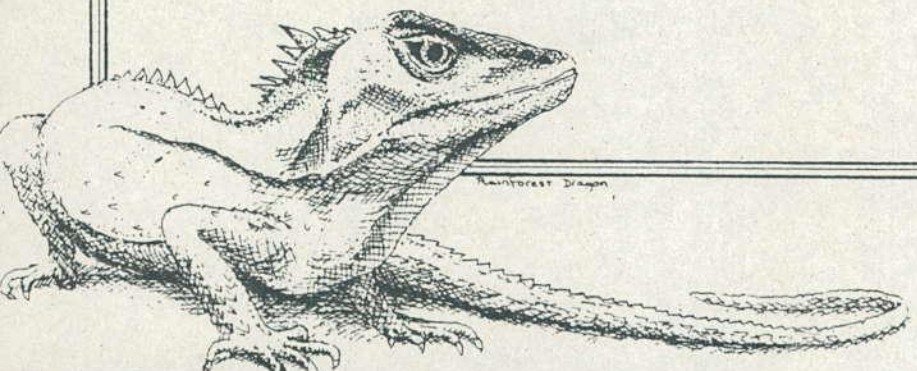
Submission regarding proposed Binghi Wilderness Area

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the preservation of wilderness areas generally and to specifically support the preservation of the whole of the area contained in the Binghi Wilderness Assessment Report, in accordance with Option One outlined in the the Assessment Report.

Wilderness is an irreplacable and increasingly rare resource. As well as containing critical habitat for many species of endangered plants and animals, wilderness also offers substantial benefits to the community in the form of water catchment, eco tourism and as an educational and scientific resource.

This Centre fully supports the transfer of land tenure from Vacant Crown Land and State Forest to National Park where this is necessary to fully protect and manage the whole of the Binghi wilderness area as a reserve. In view of the importance of the area to Aboriginal people, this Centre submits that any plan of management for the area must involve substantial ongoing involvement and control by Aboriginal people.

This Centre fully supports the cessation of grazing and mining within the Binghi Wilderness Area.



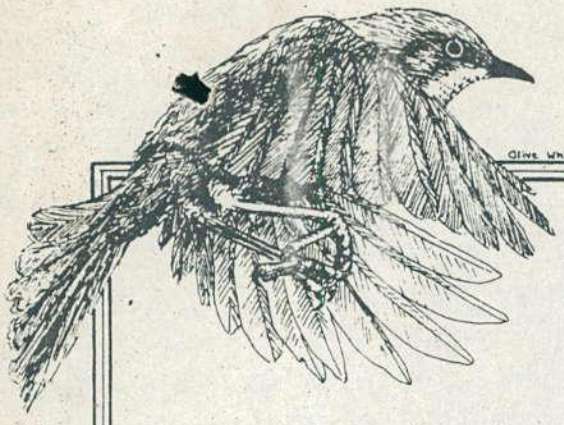
Protection of areas of old growth and wilderness is fully consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Resources Assessment Commission and also fully consistent with the aims and objectives of the Draft National Forest Policy.

Australia is one of the few developed nations in the world which is still custodian to substantial areas of wilderness. Failure to protect this important area would reflect very poorly on the environmental bona fides of the NSW government, and would subject NSW to justifiable international criticism.

I trust you will make the strongest possible recommendation to the government in support of protection for the whole of the Binghi wilderness area.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research officer



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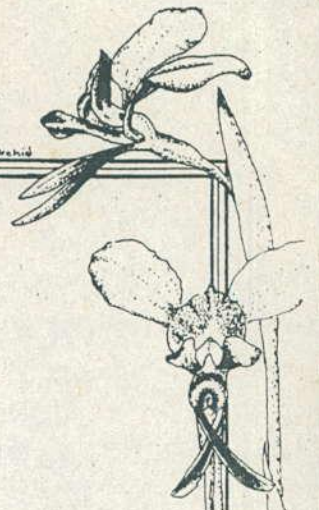


17 September 1992

cc Bill Gillooly
Chris Hartcher.

Ms Pam Allan
Opposition Environment Spokesperson
Parliament house
Macquarie St
Sydney
NSW 2000

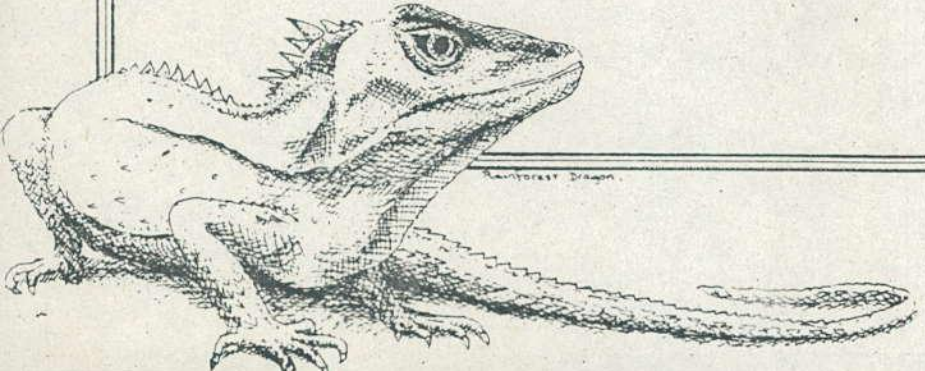
Submission regarding proposed Guy Fawkes Wilderness Area

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the preservation of wilderness areas generally and to specifically support the preservation of the whole of the area contained in the Guy Fawkes Wilderness Assessment Report.

Wilderness is an irreplacable and increasingly rare resource. As well as containing critical habitat for many species of endangered plants and animals, wilderness also offers substantial benefits to the community in the form of water catchment, eco tourism and as an educational and scientific resource.

As part of the research undertaken by this Centre I have studied the Assessment report and personally visited the Guy Fawkes area. The Guy Fawkes area contains substantial stands of old growth forest and the wild and scenic Guy Fawkes River.

I am aware that much of the identified area lies within the Guy Fawkes National Park, however it is also quite apparent that many of the most important areas of high productivity old growth forest occurs within the boundaries of the state forests, particularly Chaelundi State Forest.



The Chaelundi State Forest is now internationally famous, not only as the site of last years massive public protests but more importantly as having the highest recorded densities of aboreal marsupials anywhere in the world. The wildlife values of Chaelundi have been recognised by world reknowned scientists,and have been recognised by the NSW Land and Environment Court in a judgement that has been upheld by the NSW Court of Appeal.

The public of NSW has shown that it understands the values of the area and fully supports full protection of it's outstanding attributes. Anything less than full preservation of the area as wilderness would cause a repeat and escalation of the massively expensive public conflict witnessed last year.

Attempts to log Chaelundi in 1991 provided the catalyst for widespread public recognition of the threat posed to the survival of native species by continued timber harvesting in wilderness areas and led to the passage of landmark endangered species legislation.

This Centre fully supports the transfer of land tenure from State Forest to National Park where this is necessary to fully protect and manage the whole of the Guy Fawkes wilderness area as a reserve.

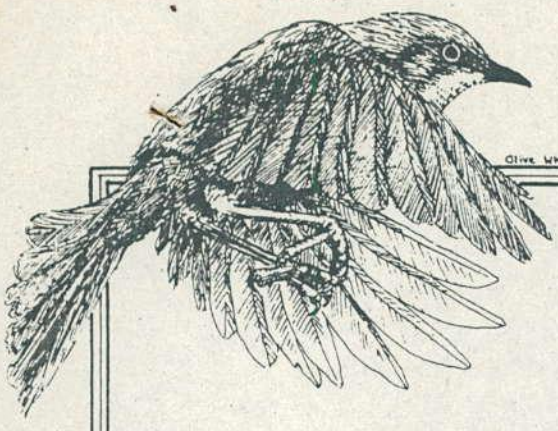
This Centre fully supports the cessation of grazing within the Guy Fawkes Wilderness Area.

Protection of areas of old growth and wilderness is fully consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Resources Assessment Commission and also fully consistent with the aims and objectives of the draft national Forest Policy.

Australia is one of the few developed nations in the world which is still custodian to substantial areas of wilderness. Failure to protect this important area would reflect very poorly on the environmental bona fides of the NSW government, and would subject NSW to justifiable international criticism.

I trust you will make the strongest possible recommendation to the government in support of protection for the whole of the Guy Fawkes Wilderness Area.
Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research officer



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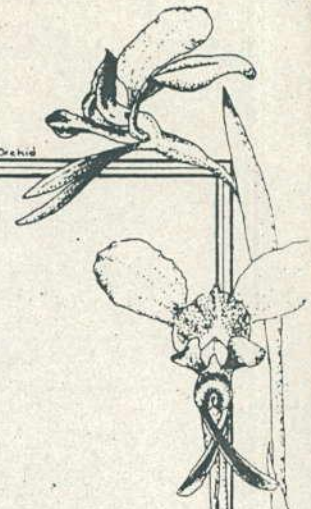


17 September 1992

Mr Bill Gillooly
The Director
National Parks and Wildlife Service
PO Box 1967
Hurstville 2220

cc Pam allan
Chris Hartcher.

Dear Mr Gillooly

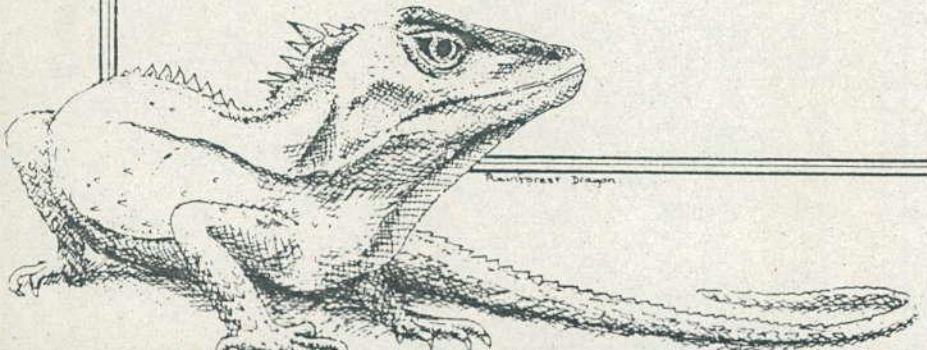
Submission concerning Oxley Wilderness Assessment

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the preservation of wilderness areas generally and to specifically support the preservation of the whole of the area contained in the Oxley Wilderness Assessment Report.

Wilderness is an irreplacable and increasingly rare resource. As well as containing critical habitat for many species of endangered plants and animals, wilderness also offers substantial benefits to the community in the form of water catchment, eco tourism and as an educational and scientific resource.

As part of the research undertaken by this Centre I have studied the Assessment report and personally visited the Oxley area. The Oxley area contains substantial stands of old growth forest and rainforest.

I am aware that much of the identified area lies within National Park, however it is also quite apparent that many of the most important areas of high productivity old growth forest and rainforest occur within the boundaries of the State Forests.



This Centre fully supports the transfer of land tenure from State Forest to National Park where this is necessary to fully protect and manage the whole of the Oxley Wilderness Area as a reserve.

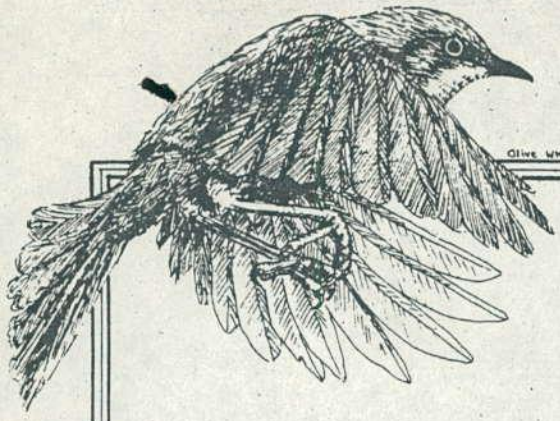
This Centre fully supports the cessation of grazing within the Oxley Wilderness Area.

Protection of areas of old growth and wilderness is fully consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Resources Assessment Commission and also fully consistent with the aims and objectives of the Draft National Forest Policy.

Australia is one of the few developed nations in the world which is still custodian to substantial areas of wilderness. Failure to protect this important area would reflect very poorly on the environmental bona fides of the NSW government, and would subject NSW to justifiable international criticism.

I trust you will make the strongest possible recommendation to the government in support of protection for the whole of the Oxley Wilderness Area.
Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research officer



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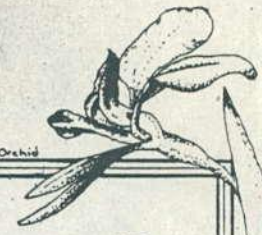
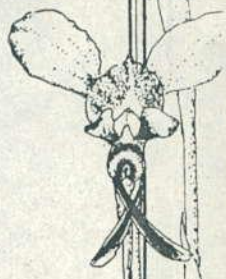




31 August 1992

Mr Bill Gillooly
The Director
National Parks and Wildlife Service
PO Box 1967
Hurstville 2220

Dear Mr Gillooly

Submission on Lost World wilderness assessment.

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the presevation of wilderness generally and to specifically support protection of the Lost World area through it's declaration as a wilderness area.

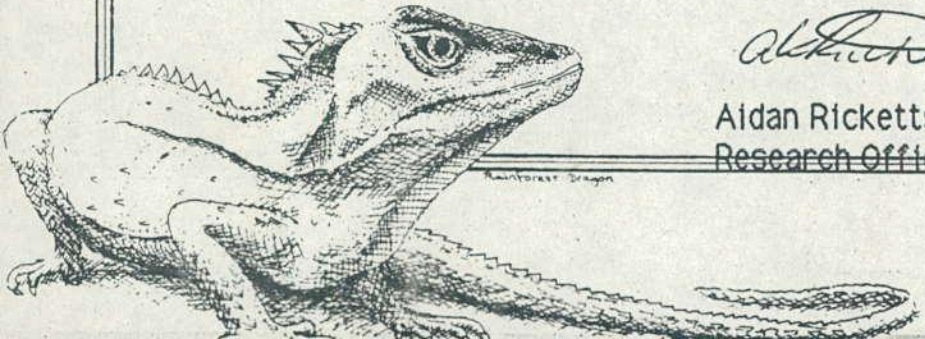
As the major part of the area is currently contained in National Park and existing nature reserves, there is no significant issue of land use allocation, or transfer of tenure involved.

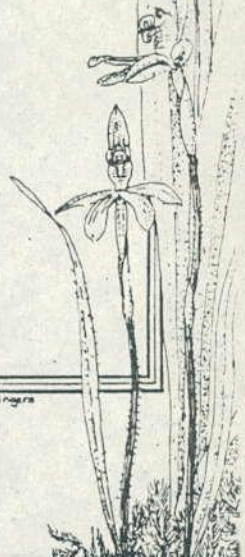
After having studied the Assessment report and visited the area involved the Centre fully supports declaration of the whole of the assessed area as wilderness. It is further submitted that management of the area should involve extensive and ongoing consultation with aboriginal people of the area, with a view to eventually returning these areas to aboriginal control.

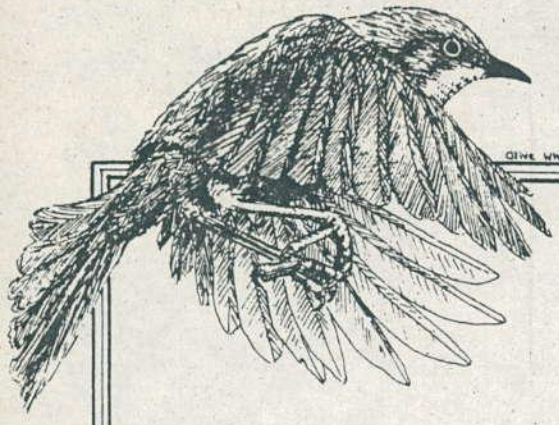
I trust you will make the strongest possible recomendation to the government in support of wilderness protection.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research Officer







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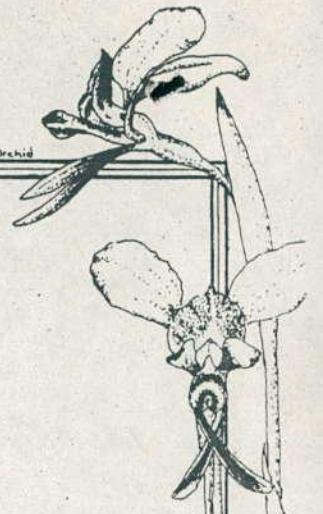


31 August 1992

Mr Chris Hartcher
Environment Minister
Parliament House
Macquarie st
Sydney 2000

cc Bill Gillodey.

Dear Mr Hartcher

RE : Lost World Wilderness Assessment.

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the presevation of wilderness generally and to specifically support protection of the Lost World area through it's declaration as a wilderness area.

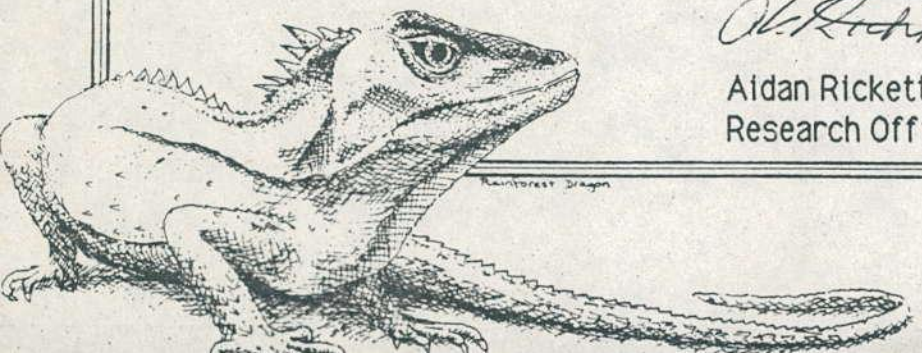
As the major part of the area is currently contained in National Park and existing nature reserves, there is no significant issue of land use allocation, or transfer of tenure involved.

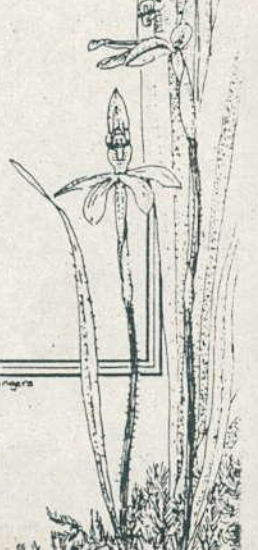
After having studied the Assessment report and visited the area involved the Centre fully supports declaration of the whole of the assessed area as wilderness. It is further submitted that management of the area should involve extensive and ongoing consultation with aboriginal people of the area, with a view to eventually returning these areas to aboriginal control.

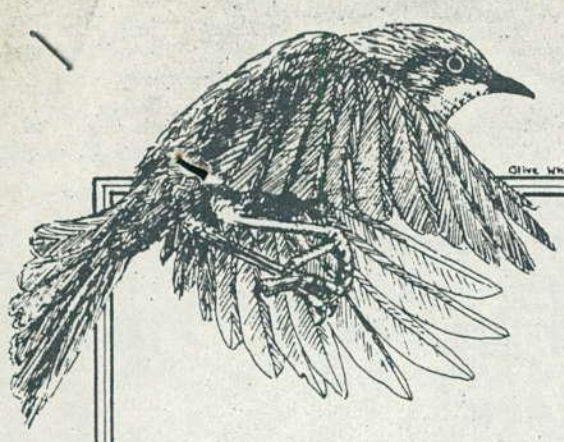
I trust you will make the strongest possible recomendation to the government in support of wilderness protection.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research Officer







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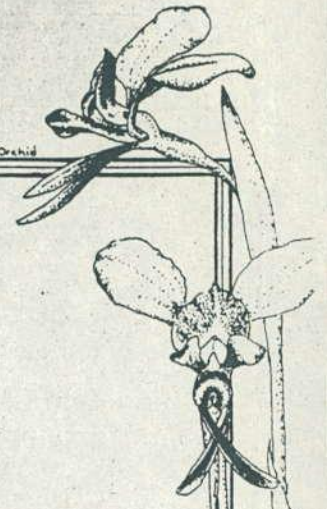


31 August 1992

Mr Bill Gillooly cc Pam Allan
The Director Chris Hartcher.
National Parks and Wildlife Service
PO Box 1967
Hurstville NSW 2220

Dear Mr Gillooly,

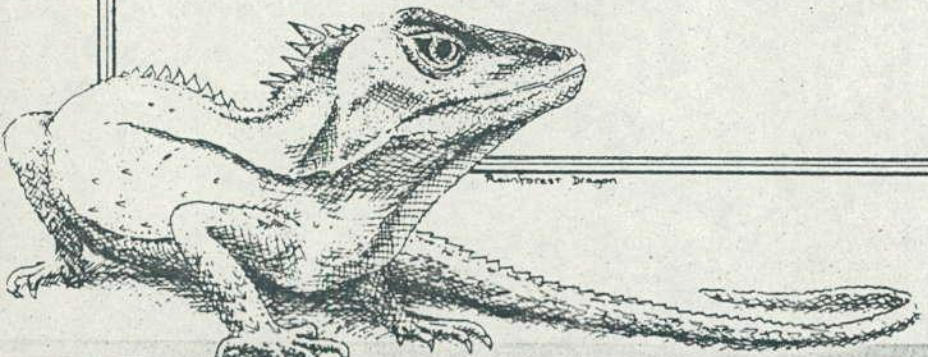
Submission on proposed Bindery Wilderness area.

I am writing on behalf of the Big Scrub Environment Centre to express support for the preservation of wilderness generally and to specifically support protection of the whole of the area contained in the Bindery (Mann) Assessment Report.

Wilderness is an irreplaceable and increasingly rare resource. As well as containing critical habitat for many species of endangered plants and animals, wilderness areas also offer substantial benefits to the community in the form of water catchment, eco tourism and as an educational and scientific resource.

As part of the research undertaken by this Centre, I have studied the Assessment Report and personally visited the Bindery area. The area contains substantial stands of old growth forests and the wild and scenic Mann and Nymboida rivers.

Areas adjascent to the assessed area have been rendered unsuitable for wilderness declaration as a direct result of recent logging activities, the same fate could be expected for much of the area still contained in state forest unless adequate protection is provided urgently.



The Forestry Commission is currently constructing roads along the boundary of the area which are specifically intended to serve future logging operations within the wilderness. There have already been confrontations between local people and the Forestry Commission over these operations and the situation could well escalate to costly and divisive public conflict if the reccommendations of the NPWS are ignored by the government.

As part of the action needed to protect this area, this Centre fully supports transfer of land tenure from State Forest to National Park for all State Forest within the area identified in the Assessment report.

Protection of areas of old growth forest and wilderness is fully consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Resources Assessmnet Commission and of the sentiments contained in the intergovernmental Draft National Forest Policy Statement.

Australia is one of the few developed nations in the world which is still custodian to substantial areas of wilderness. Failure to protect this important area would reflect very poorly on the environmental bona fides of the NSW government, and would subject NSW to justifiable international criticism.

The wilderness values of the Bindery area will be compromised irreversibly within a few months unless urgent action is taken to protect the whole of the assessed area.

I trust you will make the stongest possible reccommendation to the government in support of protection of the Bindery area.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Ricketts
Research officer

Wilderness Areas nominated under the Wilderness Act

Submissions received during the public display periods will be crucial in strengthening the recommendations which are taken to Cabinet. Further information to follow.

Wilderness Proposal	On Display	Close Display	Submission Analysis to Minister
~~Barrington Tops~~	19/4/93	~~19/8/93~~	30/9/93
4 Binghi	4/5/92	2/10/92	13/11/92
~~Deua~~	4/5/92	~~4/9/92~~	16/10/92
6 Goodradigbee	4/5/92	30/10/92	11/12/92
7 Kanangra-Boyd	4/5/92	30/10/92	11/12/92
~~Lost World~~	4/5/92	~~4/9/92~~	16/10/92
~~Mann~~	4/5/92	~~4/9/92~~	16/10/92
5 Nadgee	4/5/92	2/10/92	13/11/92
3 x Oxley Wild Rivers	8/5/92	18/9/92	31/10/92
2 x Washpool	8/5/92	18/9/92	31/10/92
10 New England	8/12/92	19/4/93	31/5/93
1 x Guy Fawkes	18/5/92	18/9/92	31/10/92
9 Werrikimbe	18/12/92	19/4/93	31/5/93

IDENTIFIED WILDERNESS AREAS IN N.E. NSW

Binghi

Binghi is in northern NSW near Tenterfield. It is a rugged area of diverse habitats and 36 rare or endangered plants. Fourteen species of fauna are on the endangered list under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Binghi is threatened by grazing leases and mining. The deadline for your submission on Binghi is **2 October 1992.**

Lost World

This area consists of the Border Ranges National Park and surrounding areas. It is the largest stand of subtropical wilderness in NSW, much of it rainforest. The deadline for your submission on Lost World is **4 September 1992.**

Washpool

Washpool is the largest rainforest wilderness in NSW, and contains the largest coachwood forest on Earth, the Willowie Scrub. The area is rich in wildlife such as Tiger Quolls and Wompoo Pigeons. The deadline for your submission on Washpool is **18 September 1992.**

Mann (Bindery)

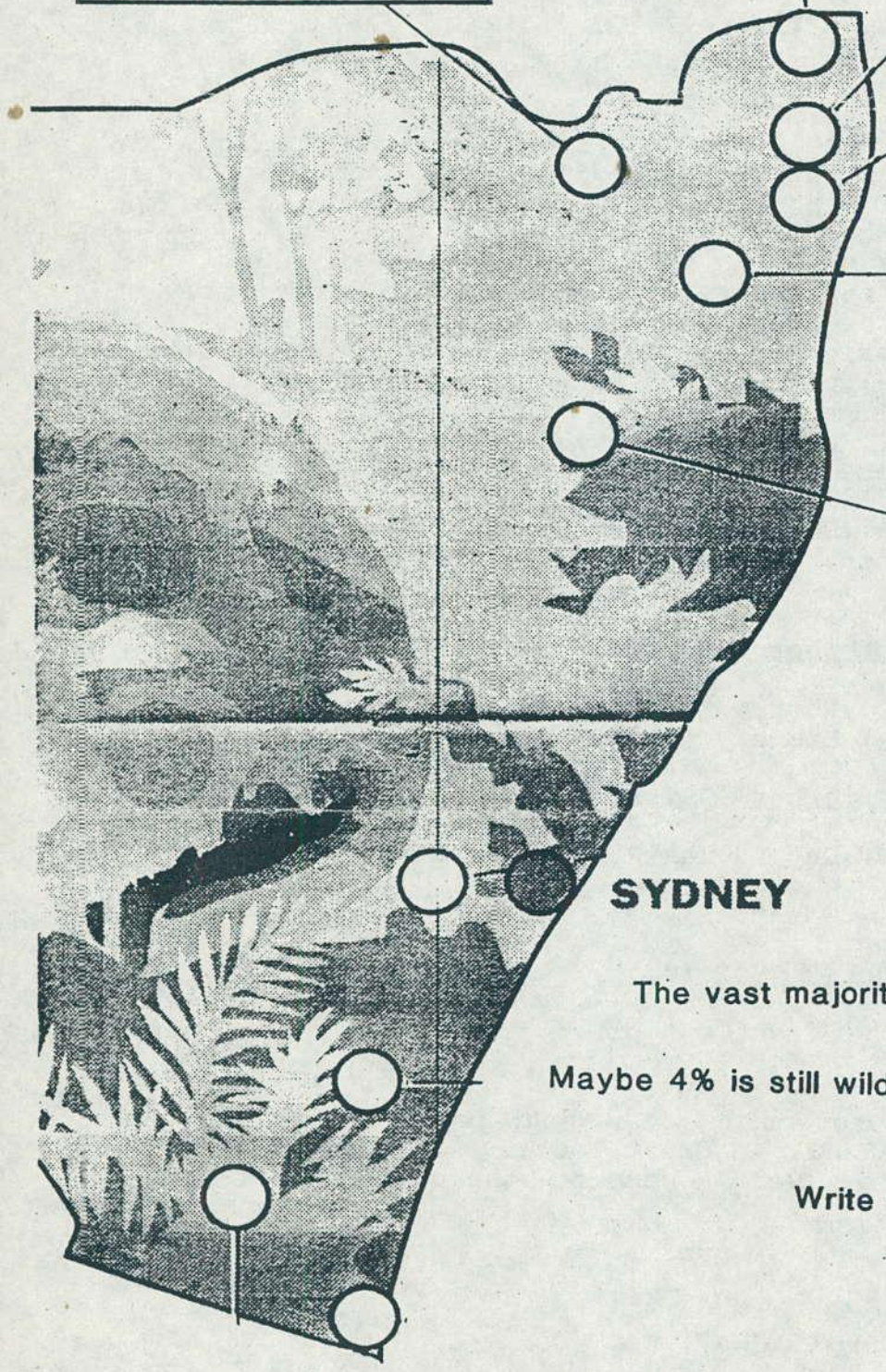
Mann or Bindery contains the spectacular Mann and Nymboida rivers in northern NSW. It includes 28 rare and endangered fauna, such as the brush-tailed rock wallaby. The deadline for your submission on Mann is **4 September 1992.**

Guy Fawkes

Guy Fawkes is found north of Ebor, and contains the longest wild river in NSW. It also contains part of the much discussed Chaelundi State Forest. It contains many arboreal mammals as well as some of Australia's most threatened ground dwelling animals such as the Parma wallaby. The deadline for your submission on Guy Fawkes is **18 September 1992.**

Oxley (Macleay Gorges)

Oxley is found in the mountains west of Port Macquarie. It contains three extensive wild river systems, as well as over 700 native plants, and 268 species of vertebrates. The National bicentennial horse-riding trail bisects this area, posing a number of threats. The deadline for your submission on Oxley is **18 September 1992.**



The vast majority of NSW has been developed.

Maybe 4% is still wilderness. It needs protection...

Write to:

THE DIRECTOR
NSW N.P.&W.S.
P.O. BOX 1967
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

with thanx to The Wilderness Society for the map and more!

CLARENCE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

126 BACON STREET GRAFTON

Ph: (066) 43 1863
P.O. Box 1073
Grafton 2460
Fax (066) 43 1250

BIG SCRUB ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
149 KEEN ST
LISMORE NSW 2480

URGENT

Dear friend

Submissions are desperately needed from environmentalists in support of wilderness in north-east NSW. From our sources, it appears that only 100 hand-written submissions will push the balance in our favour.

Ten wilderness assessment reports written by NPWS are currently on public display before the proposed wilderness areas are considered by Cabinet. The submissions received during the public exhibition period will form a vital part of the material on which the members of Cabinet will base their decision. [That's the idea, anyway. It's our guess that Wal Murray and Gary West may have already made up their minds, but there are other members of Cabinet].

Submissions are being received for six areas in the north-east of the state. In our region. The map (see reverse) shows where they are.

Submissions close 4 September 1992 for:

Lost World
Bindery (Mann)

Submissions close 18 September 1992 for:

Guy Fawkes River
Macleay Gorges (Oxley)
Washpool

Submissions close 2 October 1992 for:

Binghi

These areas need your protection. So - put pen to paper and send a submission. NOW. PLEASE. A draft letter is enclosed for those with less time to be creative. Remember - the quolls can't vote.

Yours for the trees

Hans von Gaia.

OFFICE COORDINATOR.

STATUS OF WILDERNESS IN NSW

About 2.0 million hectares of NSW are identified by conservation organisations as wilderness and 1.6 million hectares of this area is in the NPWS estate. Of the rest, there are 200,000 ha in state forest and 200,000 in Crown land (including leasehold land). A small fraction, less than 35,000 hectares, is freehold land.

Little national park is actually managed as wilderness. Only 540,000 hectares of the 1.6 million hectares of wilderness inside national parks is protected and declared under the Wilderness Act. As a result, even the National Party can triple the size of wilderness without adding a hectare to the park system.

To avoid criticism from not dedicating any new wilderness outside park areas, the Government could hide behind the Just Terms legislation. This legislation applies to both private and Crown land, although the latter case has not been tested in a Court. Theoretically at least, the NPWS can be made to pay for state forests, leasehold and other areas it receives from other Government authorities. This is because the Wilderness Act does not prevail over the Just Terms legislation or bind the Crown.

Since the introduction of the Wilderness Act, only the Nattai wilderness (about 30,000 ha) has been added to the parks system but is depth restricted to exclude coal seams. The Genoa (6,100 ha), Nymboida (18,998 ha), Ettrema (about 45,000 ha) and New England (28,000 ha) are recent additions to the wilderness estate inside national parks. None of these additions which total 128,000 ha contain substantial existing use conflicts.

The seven wilderness areas currently on display are much more controversial than the ones previously dedicated by the Greiner Government. Logging, over burning, off road vehicles, horse riding, maintenance of vehicle tracks and utility easements continue to degrade these areas.

In order to protect these proposed wilderness areas, wilderness management must take precedence over existing uses.

Wilderness protection is complicated by logging proposals

Wilderness determination is being influenced by logging proposals currently being assessed. The Timber Industry (Interim Protection) Act allows logging in the central and northern parts of the state without prior environmental assessment. About 100,000 ha of unprotected forest wilderness is affected and being rapidly degraded. Another 100,000 hectares of old growth forest wilderness is covered by a logging moratorium which runs till the environmental assessment processes for each management area are complete. The Act, however, does not prevent Cabinet protecting old growth forest wilderness in state forest or Crown lands.

The Timber Industry (Interim Protection) Act does not require concurrent determination of wilderness nominations and logging proposals, although the Minister for the Environment has given assurances to the Colong Foundation along those lines. Determination

of logging proposals will be by the Minister of Planning, Robert Webster, whereas wilderness proposals outside national parks will be determined by Cabinet.

To complicate the wilderness assessment process further, it is possible that a Natural Resources Management Council will be established. Its first priority will be to review the management of the north east forests. This assessment, if implemented, will lead to resource security for the timber industry on a region by region basis.

As a result of the above processes political attention will be placed on wilderness outside national parks in Crown land and state forest and on the broader economic implications of old growth forest protection.

Assessment of Individual Wilderness Areas

The details of assessment and campaigning for particular wilderness areas is primarily the responsibility of the nominating organisation. In order to assist this meeting the following information is provided.

There are seven NPWS wilderness assessments on display Deua, Bindery (Mann), Lost World, Kanangra, Nadgee, Goodradigbee and Binghi. Unfortunately what are generally excellent NPWS wilderness assessments have been contaminated by the political process.

The NPWS wilderness assessment reports come in two sections. The first part identifies areas of wilderness. These areas are in most cases similar to the areas nominated. The second part considers options for wilderness protection. The areas recommended by the NPWS for dedication as wilderness are often smaller than the area identified and fragmented by existing uses.

Options for wilderness protection were developed on instruction from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Tim Moore. The options often lack professional credibility and have a bias to status quo decisions. These, with some important exceptions (eg Mann), allow existing uses to be retained within wilderness areas.

Deua

The NPWS identified 80,000 hectares of the Deua as wilderness but made a political judgement that existing use has priority in a wilderness of state significance. The difference in size between the identified area and the nominated area, some 30,000 hectares, is found in the north. Half of this area is in the Deua National Park and the rest is leasehold and freehold, mostly located along the Deua River. These areas of national park are left out because fire trails have been retained. These smaller fragments are isolated by fire trails and would, if proposed as part of the wilderness, be even more ridiculous than the wilderness chips recommended by the Service.

The NPWS preferred option for Deua wilderness is to divide it into three fragments so as to allow unfettered off road vehicle and horse riding use. The Merricumbene, Dampier Mountain, Mongamula, Oulla and Bendethera fire trails are to be retained for their use. The total

wilderness area, if you can call any of the fragments wilderness, is 50,865 hectares.

The recommended area is 40,445 ha inside the Deua National Park, comprised of the Burra/Olla catchment (13,450 ha), the Woila Deua catchment (14,560 ha) and the central Deua valley (12,435 ha).

In addition to these areas of national park, four areas of state forest are proposed totalling 10,420 ha. In Dampier State Forest 656 ha of Diamond Creek are proposed for addition to the park and 6,765 ha of the upper Deua catchment, including Georges Creek. In Tallagandra State Forest 734 ha are proposed for addition in upper Woila Creek catchment. Further down the catchment, 2,265 ha of Badja State Forest are proposed for addition to the park.

Recommendation: That the Confederation of Bush Walking Clubs nomination be supported, perhaps with some amendment where large areas of clear land have been identified. Fragmentation of the wilderness by fire trails should be vigorously opposed.

Bindery (Mann)

The NPWS has identified 53,630 ha of wilderness, which is larger than the area nominated. The area recommended by the NPWS for dedication equals the identified area. The preferred option is to dedicate the state forests, freehold and crown leases as national park. Wilderness has been given priority over existing uses.

The preferred option consists of 29,576 ha of national park, 20,027 ha of state forest, 2,983 ha of leasehold land and 1,0345 ha of freehold land. The Mann and Nymboida Rivers are proposed for dedication as wild and scenic rivers. The entire wilderness is proposed for assessment as a potential World Heritage property.

Recommendation: Support the NPWS preferred option for dedication of the Mann wilderness.

Lost World

The area identified as wilderness by the NPWS includes all of the Border Rangers National Park (including Wiangarie Plateau), Limpinwood Nature Reserve and parts of the adjoining Mebbin State Forest.

The area proposed for dedication as wilderness by the NPWS is approximately 5,900 ha in extent and is augmented by a the Lamington National Park of 9,072 ha in Queensland. It is about 2,100 ha smaller than the nomination area. Areas of Brindle, Little Brindle and Sheepstation Creeks which are within the national park are excluded.

The NPWS also recommended that Gradys Creek and the upper part of Lynches Creek be assessed for declaration as wild and scenic rivers under section 61 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.

The recommended wilderness is a status quo decision paralleling the McPherson Remote Natural Area declared in the plan of management. The decision is disappointing as the nominated area was not controversial and should have been recommended by the NPWS in its entirety, especially since the total nomination area is only 17,115 ha.

The Parks Service incorrectly mapped the area nominated. It Service includes the Tweed Range Scenic Drive which was deliberately excluded by Colong Foundation.

Recommendation: Support the Colong Foundation's nomination for the Lost World wilderness.

Goodradigbee 30.10.

The NPWS identified wilderness has recognised the primacy of existing uses over wilderness. Wilderness boundaries are determined by excluding power lines, Broken Cart Track Stock Route, off road vehicle use, huts, Bicentennial National (horseriding) Trail and other horse tracks, and area degraded by previous grazing. The area proposed for dedication as wilderness also excludes the Cooleman area of 6,012 ha, recognised as having the most significant vehicle access problems of any park in the south-east region of NSW. Extensive areas of frost hollow grasslands degraded by past grazing has been excluded because of past damage and possibly because these areas are desired by off road vehicles and horse riders. These users are of continuing to degrade the wilderness with tracks and weed infestations.

About 5,750 ha of the Buccleuch State Forest, within the Goobarragandra River catchment, have been identified as wilderness.

The three areas recommended for dedication are:
Bimberi (28,960 ha including Scabby Range Nature Reserve [3,320 ha] but less 6,012 ha of the Cooleman Plain area);
Goobarragandra (33,970 ha which includes 5,750 ha of Buccleuch State Forest); and Bogong (27,444 ha).

These areas total 90,374 ha which is 33,626 ha less than the 124,000 ha nominated. More important than the difference in size is the reasons for it. Existing use has been given priority. For example, retention of the Broken Cart Track, a stock route, excludes over ten thousand hectares of Kosciusko National Park in the north east.

The NPWS has supported to case of the Electricity Commission against the Foundation's submission that power lines in wilderness areas be phased out. Setting suitably high rentals for easements could soon have Elcom reviewing powerlines in parks.

Incidentally, the only mention of the inter-government agreement on Alpine National Parks is a reference to the maintenance of Mount Franklin Road. Nothing about wilderness management, even though all alpine parks between NSW, Victoria and the ACT are connected though wilderness areas.

Recommendation: Support the Colong Foundation nomination which gives priority to wilderness use.

Kanangra-Boyd 30.10.

A more stringent interpretation of wilderness quality than that adopted by the Foundation has been applied by the NPWS. Of the 146,000 ha nominated by the Colong Foundation, 130,000 ha have been identified and recommended for dedication as a wilderness by the NPWS. The area includes some additions along the Tonalli River in the

south east. Two major deletions to the nomination are proposed. In the north east, the Jamison and Kedumba Valleys are excluded, and in the west, the Boyd Plateau. The powerline easement below Narrow Neck and across the northern quarter of the wilderness is given as the main reason for the former area's exclusion. The Boyd Plateau is excluded because of the Kanangra Walls Road. Both areas, however, are proposed to be managed as if they were wilderness. These areas should be included in the wilderness as a reminder to land managers that these areas be returned to a wilderness condition.

The area proposed for dedication by the NPWS include about 1,000 ha of Jenolan State Forest and about 10,000 ha of Crown land managed by the Water Board. The Crown lands are proposed to be managed under a wilderness protection agreement between the Water Board and the NPWS.

The management priorities in the wilderness assessment do not primarily go to existing uses. Kowmung River track and many old unused fire trails are proposed to be closed. Horse riding is proposed to be excluded from the Wild Dog Mountains. The Scotts Main Range track is to remain closed to the public but open to land managers and property owners.

Note that freehold inholdings within the nominated wilderness have been excluded from the wilderness identification. This will make it impossible for the NPWS to seek wilderness conservation agreements with the affected property owners (eg Konangaroo).

Recommendation: Support the Colong Foundation's nomination.

Binghi

The NPWS has identified 34,300 ha and advised that its preferred option is to dedicate as wilderness and national park over all vacant Crown land (about 18,500) and establish wilderness protection agreements over leasehold lands outside the proposed park (about 11,500 ha). Conservation agreements would be negotiated over Aboriginal freehold land (about 2,000 ha). The NPWS is silent about inclusion of the 487 ha of Torrington State Forest identified as wilderness and other freehold lands (about 2,000 ha).

About 32,100 ha of the identified area is considered unmodified natural and a further 2,200 ha between Torrington State Forest and Duck Creek catchment is capable of restoration. This latter area contains off road vehicle tracks, bush tracks, mine sites, tailings dams and other small dams, regrowth after logging, a trigonometrical station and areas of light grazing. The NPWS has given wilderness protection priority over these existing uses.

Best objectors quote is by Mr Stuttard - *Do not let (the) abysmal animal of the concrete jungle bite the hand that feeds it.* Runner up is Pacific Copper Limited - *Other than extreme north-west section of the nominated wilderness, (the) country is rough, almost devoid of vegetation and inaccessible. There are no people, no fences, no refuge, it is remote and dangerous.*

Recommendation: Support the NPWS proposal for Binghi wilderness.

Nadgee 2.10.

The identified area in NSW includes about 3,000 ha in the Nadgee State Forest within the western half of the Merrica River catchment and 17,116 ha of Nadgee Nature Reserve.

The Nadgee wilderness identified by NPWS covers about 20,100 ha*, with an additional 6,900 ha in Victoria which has been identified by the Land Conservation Council. This area, a total of 27,000 ha, is 10,650 ha less than the area Colong Foundation nominated. About 7,500 ha of the difference is attributable to the greatly reduced wilderness area identified by the Victorian LCC.

Some 1,500 ha of state forest along the border was deleted from Colong Foundation's proposal by the NPWS. This area includes Maxwells Flora Reserve and lightly logged rainforest. These areas were excluded because the Victorian wilderness has been reduced to exclude the downstream sections of these border rainforest creek catchments. Other areas which followed access roads have been excluded so as to move the wilderness boundary to the watershed. The apparently slavish attachment to catchment boundaries instead of access tracks not only reduces the area of wilderness but also is a poor management boundary to supervise.

The preferred management option has excluded Wonboyn Beach, the only large beach in NSW which can be managed as wilderness. The Colong Foundation's suggested management approach to address the concerns of Wonboyn residents was not considered in the wilderness assessment. This solution would have retained access to Baycliff and the head of Wonboyn estuary but enabled wilderness management for the beach.

* The areas of Nadgee Nature Res. 17,116 ha, State Forest 3,000 ha and Vic. wilderness 6,900 ha does not add to 28,750 ha as quoted in the wilderness assessment.

Recommendation: Support the amended Colong Foundation nomination which allows vehicle access to Wonboyn Inlet but not Wonboyn Beach.

Conclusions:

The NPWS is unwilling to resist strong objection from park user groups opposed to wilderness and in many cases has given their uses priority over wilderness.

The NPWS is prepared to seek additions to national parks of unprotected wilderness in state forests and crown land.

The priority given to high conservation value areas above resolution of existing use problems is a pragmatic means minimising objections and ensuring politic debate is focused outside the NPWS estate. This is an advantage but we should not condone such pragmatism.

News Release

May 5 1992

THE FUTURE OF WILDERNESS IS IN YOUR HANDS

Landholders, communities and interest groups across NSW are to be given the chance to comment on the fate of one of the world's rarest resources: wilderness.

Environment Minister Tim Moore said one of the great unfounded fears about the wilderness process was that land with wilderness qualities would be resumed against the owner's wishes.

"This is simpy incorrect - a glance at the *Wilderness Act* (1987) shows the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) cannot acquire or otherwise resume land for wilderness declaration without the owner's express written consent.

"Some people have also gained the impression that the active management of fire, feral animals and noxious weeds ceases in wilderness areas. This, of course, is completely untrue. These management activities, vital for the maintaintence of ecologically sustainable native plant and animal communities, are continuing in all the wilderness areas under the control of the NPWS."

"I urge everyone who cares about this issue to take the time to study the nominations, and send in their comments," Mr Moore said.

Seven NPWS wilderness nomination assessment reports - Deua (near Moruya), Lost World (Lismore), Mann/Bindery (Glen Innes), Binghi (Torrington), Nadgee (Eden), Kanangra-Boyd (Oberon) and Goodradigbee (Tumut) - will be exhibited from this week and open to submissions until September or October 1992.

These areas, nominated under the *Wilderness Act* (1987) by a number of community groups, are considered by the Director of the NPWS, Mr Bill Gillooly, to possess the key wilderness qualities of naturalness and remoteness. Each is considered to be large enough to maintain viable animal populations and ecological processes, and to offer people opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreational pursuits.

Mr Gillooly said only 4% of NSW remained in its original, undisturbed wilderness state, and only half is in national parks and reserves.

/more

NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

"Most countries, including the majority of those in Europe, have lost their wilderness areas forever. We, along with Canada, the United States, and a handful of other countries, are still in a position to save the remaining wilderness areas," Mr Gillooly said.

"The decision to preserve or destroy wilderness has enormous implications, and will be watched by people around the world.

"It is essential that every person in the State has the opportunity to participate in this historic process."

Mr Gillooly said wilderness offered tangible benefits such as clean air and water, as well as opportunities for scientific research and recreation.

"Wilderness helps to preserve the variety of life on earth, including plants and animals of potentially high economic value. Wilderness also preserves landscapes and relics significant to the Aboriginal community.

"These benefits must be carefully weighed against the other values and possible uses wilderness areas offer."

Wilderness nomination assessment reports will be exhibited in National Parks and Wildlife Service offices and council chambers in towns near nominated areas. They can also be seen at the NPWS information centre, level 1 43 Bridge Street, Hurstville, Sydney, tel. 02 585 6333.

Local members, and a wide range of user groups, farmers' associations and conservation bodies have also been provided with copies of the document.

"Comments must be submitted to the Director of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO BOX 1967, Hurstville, NSW, 2220, by the dates listed below, " Mr Gillooly said.

<u>Wilderness nominations - deadline for comments</u>

Deua	September 4 1992
Lost World	September 4 1992
Mann (Bindery)	September 4 1992
Binghi	October 2 1992
Nadgee	October 2 1992
Kanangra-Boyd	October 30 1992
Goodradigbee	October 30 1992

Media enquiries: Heather Wright
02 585 6449
(general)

Karen Markwort
064 562 102
(Goodradigbee)

John Dengate
02 895 7437
(Kanangra-Boyd)

Stuart Cohen
06 297 6144
(Deua, Nadgee)
Goodradigbee

Lawrence Orel
066 420 593

(Lost World, Mann, Binghi)

INFORMATION

WILDERNESS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is a wilderness?

A wilderness is any large natural area of land together with native plant and animal communities, essentially undisturbed by human activity.

The New South Wales Government recognises wilderness as important and the Wilderness Act 1987 provides the basis for protection.

What is the Wilderness Act?

The Wilderness Act 1987 is legislation to identify, protect and manage wilderness areas of New South Wales. The Act's objectives are to provide for the:

- permanent protection of wilderness areas;
- appropriate management of wilderness; and
- education of the public in the appreciation, protection and management of wilderness.

Wilderness management aims to:

- restore and protect the unmodified state of an area and its plant and animal communities;
- preserve the capacity of the area to evolve in the absence of significant human interference; and
- permit opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation.

Wilderness protection can be achieved by declaration of wilderness areas over lands which are:

- national park or nature reserve;
- other public land covered by wilderness protection agreement; and
- private land covered by voluntary conservation agreement.

Why is wilderness important?

Wilderness has important values including:

- **Natural and scientific:**

The preservation of wilderness is seen as the best way to retain the integrity of naturally functioning ecosystems and for allowing unhindered biological evolution. Wilderness is important for research and study and as a control area for modified lands.

- **Recreational:**

Wilderness can offer both passive and active recreation opportunities, such as appreciation of aesthetic values, as well as a challenge of endurance and self-reliance. Wilderness areas can have 'flow-on' effects on tourism as well.

- **Cultural and Social:**

Wilderness protects cultural diversity including the homelands of Aborigines. Wilderness also offers unique emotional and psychological experiences; solitude, a retreat, a renewal, a sense of freedom and for others a refuge from the stresses of modern living.

In a global context, wilderness is a rapidly diminishing resource. The majority of countries have no remaining wilderness areas. Australia is one of a few countries with a chance to preserve wilderness.

Despite this, it is estimated that considerably less than 1% of Australia is protected as wilderness. The majority of wilderness is located in the arid and semi arid regions of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia. Forested wilderness areas are, by contrast, very small in size.

Development over the last two hundred years has been so great that 96% of New South Wales is modified and the original wilderness has now shrunk to a handful of areas.

About 4% of the New South Wales is essentially in a wilderness state and, of this, almost half is already within the national park system. However, not even all of the areas within national parks identified as wilderness are protected as wilderness.

By virtue of their undisturbed nature and size, wilderness areas have a key role to play in wildlife conservation and scientific study. In New South Wales at least 26 mammal, 11 bird and 17 plant species of plants have become extinct in the past 200 years.

Furthermore, many other species are now reduced to small, vulnerable, populations occurring over much smaller and often isolated areas.

There is a need to conserve wilderness areas particularly for fauna, as:-

- only large, undisturbed natural habitats are likely to sustain wildlife populations and reduce the probability of species extinction;

- only in wilderness areas can the natural disturbance regimen (such as fires, flood or windstorms) and its consequences for evolutionary development continue and operate;

- wilderness areas provide refuge for species threatened by urban and rural development, timber harvesting, feral animals and increased fire frequency, and are important source areas for the surrounding lands; and

- wilderness provides a reference for the assessment of human impacts on natural systems which may operate at a local level, or, as with migratory species, over much more extensive areas.

Northern
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Grafton 2460

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How do wilderness nominations come about?

The Wilderness Act provides for a person or organisation to submit a written proposal for the establishment of a wilderness area.

As required by the Act, the National Parks and Wildlife Service investigates nominations to determine if the they are suitable for identification and declaration as a wilderness area. Declaration of a wilderness can only be approved by Cabinet.

What if my property is within a nominated wilderness?

Land owners whose properties lie within the nominated wilderness area are notified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

If you are in doubt as to the location of a nomination or if you require additional information please contact the Service. In making an enquiry please identify your property by portion number (or lot and DP) and parish. This will be of considerable assistance in handling your enquiry.

How are nominations assessed?

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is required to consider all wilderness nominations.

The Act identifies wilderness in the following terms: "An area of land shall not be identified as wilderness by the Director unless the Director is of the opinion that:

a) the area is, together with its plant and animal communities, in a state that has not been substantially modified by humans and their works or is capable of being restored tosuch a state,

b) the area is of a sufficient size to make its maintenance in such a state feasible, or

c) the area is capable of providing opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation.

In forming an opinion the National Parks and Wildlife Service may consider:

a) the period of time within which the land could be reasonably restored to a substantially unmodified state,

b) whether, despite development which would otherwise render it unsuitable, the land is needed for the management of an existing or proposed wilderness area, and

c) any written representations received by the Director from a person (including a statutory authority) as to whether the area of land should be identified as wilderness.

If a wilderness is identified how will landowners be affected?

The identification by the Service of an area as wilderness will not itself affect your land.

There will be no resumption of private land. Declaration of wilderness areas outside the national parks system, after assessment, can only take place with the written consent and through voluntary agreements with the landholder and only with Cabinet approval.

Should your land be identified as wilderness and the Minister for the Environment seeks to proceed with declaration of a wilderness under the Act, you may choose to:

- enter into a voluntary conservation agreement to ensure protection of the wilderness values and enable your land to be declared as wilderness,
- consider selling your land to the Service or
- decide to retain your land without wilderness declaration.

It should be stressed that the Wilderness Act does not force you to enter into a conservation agreement, sell your land to the Government or to give any additional rights of public access.

Wilderness declaration does not mean the end of active management. Bushfire suppression will continue under the Bushfire Act. Control programs for weeds and exotic animals are implemented to protect an area's wilderness qualities. Private motorised transport is discontinued; however for essential management purposes, vehicle access is maintained. Management is confined within legally declared wilderness areas and there are no buffer zones or plans to manage any areas as buffer zones.

How can I comment on a wilderness proposal ?

Please address your submission to:

The Director
National Parks and Wildlife Service
PO Box 1967
Hurstville NSW 2220

Kempsey rally sees landholders on the march to protect their rights . .

Farmers vent anger at land use rulings

Mr Bob Frank, the secretary of the Grafton District Council of the NSW Farmers' Association, took part in Friday's march at Kempsey after speaking of his personal problems with wetlands legislation.

Spurred on by the marching drum beat and bolstered by the support of the NSW Farmers' Association, hundreds of angry landholders took to the streets of Kempsey last Friday to protest at land use legislation.

By Rachel Newsome

Farmers travelled from the North Coast, Tablelands and south of Kempsey to take part in the march and to hear a range of speakers including NSW Minister for the Environment, Mr Chris Hartcher.

Mr Hartcher told farmers that under the Wilderness Act 1987 land nominated for a wilderness area could only be declared as such after a 'purely technical and scientific assessment by the National Parks and Wildlife Service' and written consent from the land holder.

His comment that the Government had no evidence that land values were affected by wilderness nomination was met with a disapproving reaction from the crowd.

The drought and recession had affected land values and the blame had been placed on wilderness nominations, Mr Hartcher said.

He admitted that after meeting with real estate agents and solicitors in Dorrigo he was open to change his opinion and said the Government would be investigating the problem.

He said the rights of landholders would not be affected by the legislation and it allowed a balanced view to be presented to the community.

"In no way does it (the Wilderness Act 1987) affect the land holding rights and the community can gain information it wants," Mr Hartcher said.

In question time following the Minister's address, Mr Ian Wisken from the Coalition for Economic Advancement said the legislation had sterilised potentially billions of dollars of resources.

He called for scientific evidence that proposed wilderness areas were 'the last stronghold of fauna' as claimed by conservation groups and pointed out that all land was capable of being restored to wilderness state over time.

The land surface was not static and had changed constantly even before white settlement, Mr Wisken said.

He put forward the point that Aboriginal populations had constantly 'burnt off' as part of their land management and to fence off areas without proper management would be hazardous to both neighbouring landowners and native fauna.

The NPWS figure that just 4 percent of the State had wilderness qualities was challenged by Mr Wisken.

He questioned how it had been calculated and said if this was the case, a precise map should be put on public display.

Minister is told Acts should be changed

The Cattlemen's Union has urged the NSW Environment Minister, Mr Chris Hartcher, to make several changes to the Wilderness and Endangered Species (Interim Protection) Acts.

The union's NSW chairman, Mr Eric Richardson, and Kempsey producer Mr Bruce Rossiter met Mr Hartcher last week.

They told the Minister that the Acts in their present forms were almost impossible to work with and for producers to stay within the law.

"Imprecise definitions of habitat in the Endangered Species legislation placed any person engaged in farming in jeopardy," Mr Richardson said.

"For example, should spurwinged plovers be rare in a given area, cultivation for cropping or pasture would be out as open paddocks are potential habitats for these birds.

"Cattlemen want the National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop a good neighbour policy similar to that which exists in Queensland."

He said the preservation of the integrity of national parks boundaries often meant that neighbours were pestered with noxious weeds and feral animals for which the national park acted as both a seed reservoir and feral animal refuge.

Amendments sought by the Cattlemen's Union to present wilderness legislation include:

- A $10,000 fee to cover investigation of proposals to extend or declare wilderness areas;
- A five-year time bar on resubmissions to declare as wilderness areas already considered and rejected by the Minister; and
- A prohibition on claims for declarations of wilderness areas already modified by clearing and farming.

Mr Richardson said he was encouraged by the Minister's reception of the proposals.

Disappointing to see crowd jeer conservation speaker

Comment by Rachel Newsome

To invite a speaker to address a meeting and then jeer him from the podium is the sort of ignorant behaviour normally reserved for British soccer hooligans, but that was exactly what happened at Kempsey last week.

It is true enough that the room was filled with irate farmers who have had to field fire from all sides — rising costs, falling returns and not least constraints on what they do with their land — but it was disappointing to see people unwilling to hear an opposing view to their own.

Mr Trevor Pike, from the Nature Conservation Council, accepted an invitation to speak at the NSW Farmers' Association public meeting presumably to put forward his organisation's views on wetlands zonings.

He was probably not naive enough to think he would have a ready audience and after hearing the reception environment lawyer Mr Tim Robertson received may have expected some disruption.

But the abuse and ridicule he received would have done little to establish in the minds of the public the idea that farmers are professional and moderate in their role as carers of the land.

It was interesting to note that among the group of people who did wish to hear what Mr Pike had to say was Mr Bob Frank, from Macksville, who spent $67,000 in court costs fighting restrictions initiated by the Nature Conservation Council.

Mr Frank is the secretary of the Grafton District Council of the NSW Farmers' Association.

Perhaps the rest of the room would have done well to hear and take note of the opposing view if only for the purpose of knowing what they are up against.

If the general public begins to perceive farmers as an uncivilised group incapable of reason, the fight for the 'right to farm' will be an uphill battle.

Environmental lawyer Mr Tim Robertson, who was the co-author of the Endangered Fauna (Interim) Protection Act, speaks at the Kempsey meeting.

The NSW Farmers' Association took to the streets to the beat of a drum at Kempsey last Friday to protest at land use legislation.

NSW Minister for the Environment Mr Chris Hartcher speaks to farmers and other landholders at the Kempsey meeting.

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May 5 1992

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Environment Minister Tim Moore said one of the great unfounded fears about the wilderness process was that land with wilderness qualities would be resumed against the owner's wishes.

"This is simpy incorrect - a glance at the *Wilderness Act* (1987) shows the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) cannot acquire or otherwise resume land for wilderness declaration without the owner's express written consent.

"Some people have also gained the impression that the active management of fire, feral animals and noxious weeds ceases in wilderness areas. This, of course, is completely untrue. These management activities, vital for the maintaintence of ecologically sustainable native plant and animal communities, are continuing in all the wilderness areas under the control of the NPWS."

"I urge everyone who cares about this issue to take the time to study the nominations, and send in their comments," Mr Moore said.

Seven NPWS wilderness nomination assessment reports - Deua (near Moruya), Lost World (Lismore), Mann/Bindery (Glen Innes), Binghi (Torrington), Nadgee (Eden), Kanangra-Boyd (Oberon) and Goodradigbee (Tumut) - will be exhibited from this week and open to submissions until September or October 1992.

These areas, nominated under the *Wilderness Act* (1987) by a number of community groups, are considered by the Director of the NPWS, Mr Bill Gillooly, to possess the key wilderness qualities of naturalness and remoteness. Each is considered to be large enough to maintain viable animal populations and ecological processes, and to offer people opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreational pursuits.

Mr Gillooly said only 4% of NSW remained in its original, undisturbed wilderness state, and only half is in national parks and reserves.

/more

NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

"Most countries, including the majority of those in Europe, have lost their wilderness areas forever. We, along with Canada, the United States, and a handful of other countries, are still in a position to save the remaining wilderness areas," Mr Gillooly said.

"The decision to preserve or destroy wilderness has enormous implications, and will be watched by people around the world.

"It is essential that every person in the State has the opportunity to participate in this historic process."

Mr Gillooly said wilderness offered tangible benefits such as clean air and water, as well as opportunities for scientific research and recreation.

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"These benefits must be carefully weighed against the other values and possible uses wilderness areas offer."

Wilderness nomination assessment reports will be exhibited in National Parks and Wildlife Service offices and council chambers in towns near nominated areas. They can also be seen at the NPWS information centre, level 1 43 Bridge Street, Hurstville, Sydney, tel. 02 585 6333.

Local members, and a wide range of user groups, farmers' associations and conservation bodies have also been provided with copies of the document.

"Comments must be submitted to the Director of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO BOX 1967, Hurstville, NSW, 2220, by the dates listed below, " Mr Gillooly said.

<u>Wilderness nominations - deadline for comments</u>

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Lost World	September 4 1992
Mann (Bindery)	September 4 1992
Binghi	October 2 1992
Nadgee	October 2 1992
Kanangra-Boyd	October 30 1992
Goodradigbee	October 30 1992

Media enquiries:

Heather Wright	Karen Markwort
02 585 6449	064 562 102
(general)	(Goodradigbee)
John Dengate	Stuart Cohen
02 895 7437	06 297 6144
(Kanangra-Boyd)	(Deua, Nadgee) Goodradigbee
Lawrence Orel	(Lost World, Mann,
066 420 593	Binghi)

News Release

May 5 1992

THE FUTURE OF WILDERNESS IS IN YOUR HANDS

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06 297 6144
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Goodradigbee

Lawrence Orel
066 420 593

(Lost World, Mann, Binghi)

1A James Lane
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone
267-7929
267-7525
264-2673

RELEASE

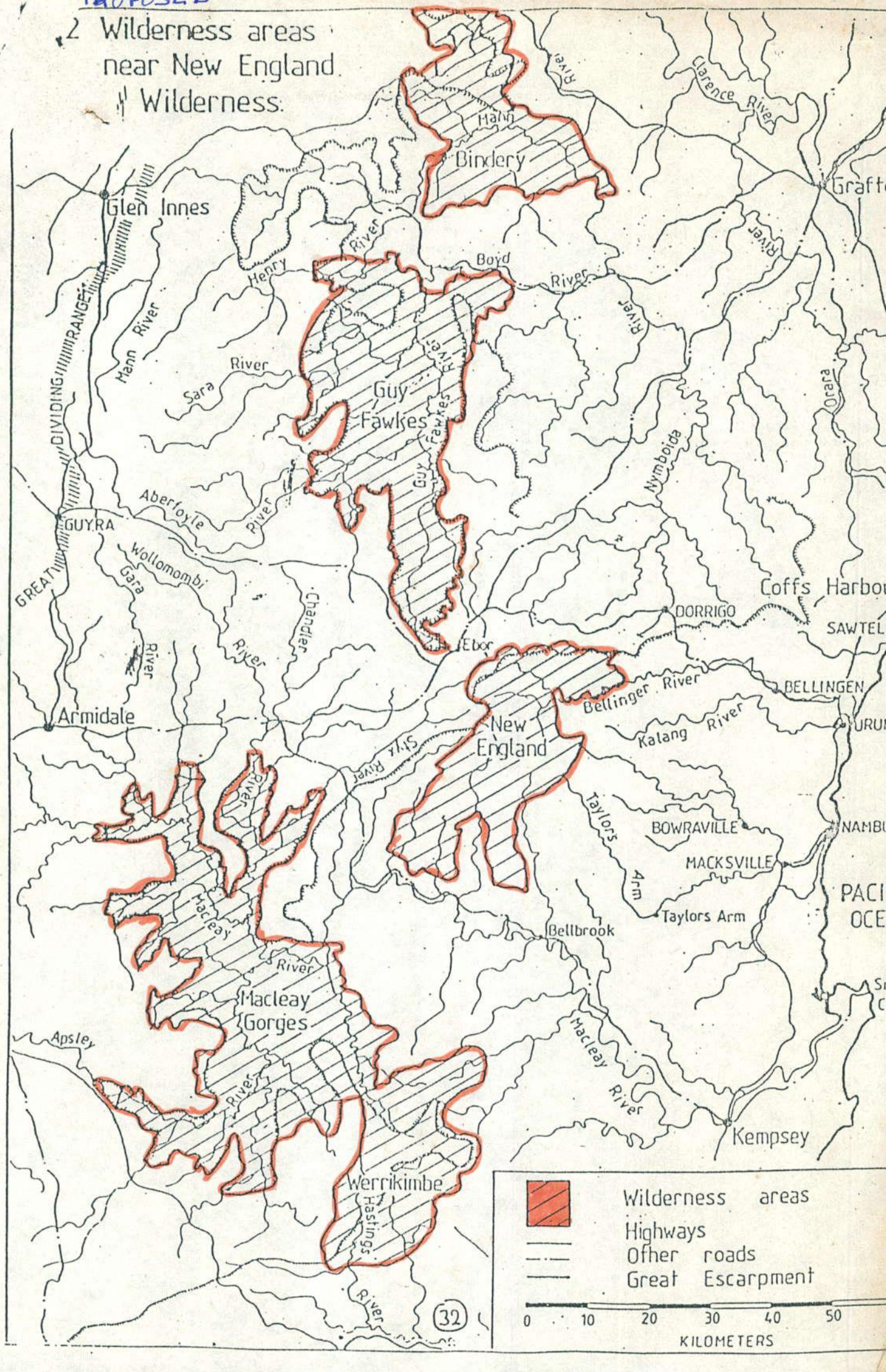
May 1982

IS THE UMPIRE
DECISION ON WILDERNESS

PROPOSED

2 Wilderness areas near New England.

Wilderness.



INFORMATION

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF WILDERNESS ASSESSMENT REPORTS

NORTHERN REGION

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is inviting public comments on the proposals submitted and the assessment reports prepared in response to those proposals.

The public exhibition of wilderness assessment reports was announced in the NSW Parliament on 9 April 1992 by the Minister for the Environment. The process being undertaken is in accordance with standing Cabinet policy mandating open government and public consultation on matters of State significance. It will provide Cabinet with the opportunity to review the full spectrum of public opinion in respect of the conservation of wilderness, and thus will contribute to more effective decision-making in respect of this matter.

The schedule for the exhibition programme is:

proposed wilderness/location	exhibition period start	end
Bindery - west of Grafton	4. 5.92	4. 9.92
Binghi - near Torrington	4. 5.92	2.10.92
Guy Fawkes River - north of Ebor	18. 5.92	18. 9.92
Lost World - Border Ranges National Park	4. 5.92	4. 9.92
New England - west of Macksville	18.12.92	19. 4.93
Macleay Gorges - east of Armidale	18. 5.92	18. 9.92
Washpool - east of Glen Innes	18. 5.92	18. 9.92
Werrikimbe - west of Kempsey	18.12.92	19. 4.93

Reports can be viewed at the council chambers of affected Shire/Municipal Councils and at the nearest District Offices of the National Parks & Wildlife Service. All reports are available for viewing at NPWS Head Office in Hurstville and for viewing or purchase at the NPWS Northern Regional Office in Grafton.

All submissions must be sent no later than the end of the public exhibition period to:

The Director
National Parks & Wildlife Service
P O Box 1967
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220.

N S W
NATIONAL
PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
SERVICE

Q) When is a wilderness not a wilderness ?

A) When it's gone

Inspect a copy of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's
wilderness assessment reports now on public exhibition
and have your say
about protection
of this valuable
vanishing resource.

SAMPLE SUBMISSION

IF YOU WISH - PLEASE CHANGE, EMBELLISH, AND ADD SPECIFIC POINTS ABOUT PARTICULAR WILDERNESS AREAS.

(Your address)

The Director
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 1967
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Dear Mr Gillooly

Submission on the proposed Washpool, Macleay Gorges, Bindery, Binghi, Lost World and Guy Fawkes River Wilderness areas.

I am writing to express my support for the protection of the above wilderness areas, located in north-east NSW.

Wilderness is a necessary and precious resource. It is the last stonghold of native plant and animal communities; it protects water catchments; it provides unique opportunities for environmental education and research.

This state has lost too much of its wilderness for us to afford having any of it left unprotected. The north-east of the state in particular is under increasing pressures from development and population growth; the opportunity to protect the remaining wilderness areas is fast disappearing.

I fully support the recommendation that Cabinet declares these areas as wilderness under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

I support the revocation of state forests and the purchase of Crown leases to establish declared wilderness areas within national parks.

I trust you will make the strongest possible report to the Government in favour of wilderness protection.

Yours sincerely

(Your name – signed & printed)

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Yours sincerely

MT PIKAPENE FORESTRY COMMISSION JOINT VENTURE .

Introduction.

The present restructuring of the North Coast timber industry through the establishment of eucalypt plantations is increasing. State forest joint ventures, as well as land purchases by state forests are part of a current aggressive campaign to meet the expected shortfall in future timber industry supplies.

To bring this about state forests extol their own virtues as being expert at these endeavours through glossy advertising literature and media releases describing research breakthroughs, such as occasional, unexpectedly good growth rates from isolated sites. Lesser successful endeavours are of course less publicised by State Forests. This is unfortunate because it is these, as well as the above average examples which should be available, so community members can evaluate state forests performance in this relatively new field of Australian native agro forestry. Given the present turmoil regarding laws concerning the clearing of native vegetation, and the need for community input in the regionalisation of the current statewide S.e.p.p. 46 law, it is also beneficial for the public to understand possible negative factors associated with such endeavours.

A number of scientists have highlighted the belief that our system of reserves alone is inadequate to securely maintain biodiversity and that private landowners must accept some responsibility in this regard. The S.e.p.p. laws were formulated with these ends in mind, while at the same time allowing for legitimate, sustainable development. With the present push to make up for sustained overcutting of the public resource in state forests, through utilisation of private resources, some consideration of possible ecological repercussions is warranted .An evaluation of the Mt Pikapene joint venture highlights a number of areas where sustainable management practices may be lacking.

Location. Mt. Pikapene forms part of a spur extending west from the Richmond Range some 30 K.south west of Casino. It is located in Pikapene state forest, about 20K south of Mallanganee. The area is promoted by State Forest maps, is listed as a high quality visual resource, and though not recognised as a recreation site, it is listed in State Forests inventory of sites for special emphasis visual resource management. (Casino EIS ,Document 9.)

Climate Mt Pikapene is located transitionally between Subtropical and Warm Temperate climatic regions.

Rainfall average is 1050mm per annum . Most rain occurs in the period December-May. Springs are characteristically hot and dry, and are a time of frequent wildfires. Winds are predominantly from the west at this time, making exposed westerly aspects particularly vulnerable to conflagrations.

Topography Geology and Soil. The Richmond range was formed through uplift of the Walloom coal measures. This resulted in a number of faults, which have weathered, to form relatively steep slopes, separated by narrow interfluves throughout this part of the range. Mount Pikapene, at 531 metres is one of several peaks aligned along a westerly spur from the range, towards the Clarence river.

The coal measures are a diverse group comprising lithic and felspathic quartz sandstone, siltstone, shale, coal and isolated basalt. Mt Pikapene has a relatively small

cap of coarse sandstone which drops away as escarpments above slopes of predominantly shale soils.
A fire tower once stood at the edge of the peak, it fell down in a storm some 6-8 years ago. A spectacular view down the central Clarence Valley and across to Washpool can be had from this point. Longterm public access had always been available to the lookout from a forestry road and across private land in Kyogle shire, for the last 300 metres to the peak ,which is partly in private land and partly in State Forest. Access from State Forest land to the lookout has been locked since 22nd October 1995.

Vegetation. Flora is diverse due to interacting factors of biogeography, topography, soil landuse and history.
The area receives marginal rainfall for rainforest development. At this regional interface of open and closed communities, core area species begin to differentiate subtle changes in soil and topography, patches become smaller and attenuated , and ecotones become a predominate feature of the vegetation.
Rainforest occurs on the southern and eastern side of the mountain. Floyd classifies it as an *Araucaria- Flindersia* sub alliance, though this is very general. A palm forest occurs around springs on a southern gully of the mountain A high subtropical content is apparent in the rainforest below the southern cliffs, dry rainforest characteristics increase around to the east and northern face of the mountain. The State forest boundary on this side is roughly at the ecotone of the eucalypt forest, though rainforest species such as Silky Oak, Teak and Hoop pine were interspersed across much of the 1200 acres of private land where the joint venture was carried out.
Eucalypt forest was diverse across the joint venture site, comprising Steelbox, Tallowwood, Ironbark, Grey gum, Spotted gum Redgum, Bloodwood Grey box and Stringy bark. These were distributed across a moist to dry sclerophyll forest continuum towards the western side of the mountain. A different flora occurs on the sandstone cap. It comprises a heath community of species such as *Banksia Casurina, Dillwinea, Callistomen Pultanea* and *Acacia*, in an isolated island like community on the mountain top. Flora has been only poorly surveyed.
It is worth noting that *Lantana* is particularly dense in most areas of human disturbance throughout the area. Floyd indicates it particularly troublesome in dry rainforest areas, citing it as a reason for the abandonment of further hoop pine plantation establishment.

Fauna As would be expected faunal diversity parallels the floristic and structural diversity of the vegetation and landscape elements. The area has been poorly surveyed, though local residents are aware of the presence of Koalas, a diversity of Gliders and Bats, numerous macropod species including rock wallabies. Birds are particularly abundant and include various owls and raptors which is in itself indicative of a healthy ecosystem.
Carnivorous marsupials are also relatively common.

Background. The property comprising 5 portions, totalling some 1200 acres changed hands in 1994.At this time most of the area was relatively heavily timbered with species previously described. Despite being logged on a number of occasions over the past 60 years, much of the integrity of the communities had been maintained. Largescale clearing was underway from about March 1995. Numerous loads of extremely large logs were observed to leave the property from this time, in addition to the cutting of a very large number of sleepers on site. Windrows were burnt through August, September and October despite drought conditions and extreme fire danger. The escaped wildfire was thus no surprise to local residents who have become aware of the danger period through previous experience over a number of years.

What did surprise local residents was the total lack of consideration for management of the operation as regards soil conservation strategies, the deliberate destruction of a potentially valuable resource, the complete lack of consideration for endangered fauna both before and after the fire. The occurrence of a second much larger fire three days prior to a much delayed investigation by State Forests, (which I believe found it was all OK, but was not made public). The lack of accountability of the parties involved, unanswered questions regarding the funding of the debacle, particularly with regard to payments made to the owner for clearing. The denial of longterm public access to the lookout, a very dubious real estate prospectus, which is in itself indicative of the once relatively 'pristine' nature of the area, and values which were destroyed. The further clearing, at a later date, believed possibly to be in breach of environmental laws, away from the joint venture site, on the lookout. The explanation of these events through statements by State Forests made on air, regarding the regular protective clearing on a number of occasions over the last ten years, around a fire tower which fell down 6-8 years previously. The clearing of old growth trees some 300metres from the lookout, supposedly blocking the view of a proposed new lookout tower

Other matters of concern are the planting of low value spotted gum and blackbutt in place of the high value hardwoods which occupied the site.

Observations made in August noted the death of some 50% of the planted seedlings on the top part of the mountain, no doubt attributable to frosts, as the clearing greatly increased the degree of exposure.

The large degree of wallaby damage among the remaining living seedlings on the upper mountain was also noted.

The much better growth rates of seedling on the lower slopes as a result of their enrichment of nutrient and sediment from the denuded slopes above is in itself indicative of poor land management practices

Specific concerns include how will grazing wallabies be controlled and how much herbicide will be used to control weed growth on the mountain slopes.

The initial account of events which unfolded following the Mt Pikapene joint venture fire are documented in photos and briefly summarised in a letter to the Catchment management committee. These points are further discussed.

It appears that the near total destruction of this area may have been within the law. Sepp 46 did not come out until August 10 . Forestry claim all clearing had ceased by this time, despite indications from a number of local residents that this may not have been the case.
In any case Sepp 44 which relates to requirements that developments of more than 10 hectares be provided with a botanical survey to assess potential koala habitat was formulated in 1994. If more than 15% of trees comprise primary koala trees (council schedule 10), a management plan regarding koala habitat is required. The key loophole in this legislation appears to be the word **Development**. It appears as this mass destruction is not considered a **development**, no Sepp was required.
The destruction of the lookout area as well as the removal of a number of very large eucalypts along the road (but some considerable distance from the lookout and not obscuring the view), were more recently done and are an additional matter, however there appear to be many loopholes in present land clearing legislation.

Forestry logging operations were underway in compartment 379, adjacent to the joint venture during 1995. This would have caused further disturbance to wildlife across the entire north face of the mountain. It is interesting to note that none of the environmental guidelines followed in the State Forest were considered necessary on the joint venture site.
I believe no botanical survey was undertaken, no faunal survey or faunal impact study was carried out on the joint venture site.
The consideration for fauna injured on the mountain following their being driven there by disturbance from both the joint venture site and logging in compartment 379, and then caught in a crown fire was totally lacking.
Forestry have continually defended the landowners locking of the gate.
They claim he is concerned about erosion from trail bikes, local residents claim they are a rare occurrence and in any case I believe State Forest maintain this part of the road. In any case the contribution to mobilised sediment by a few phantom bike riders appears insignificant beside the bulldozing, chainsawing and burning of 1200 acres. A party of UNE botany students who have regularly visited the area during semester breaks were recently informed by Council Staff that they risked prosecution for trespass, even walking in the area.

A group of local residents would like to see State Forest and Council lobby the owner for public access to be sustained. Failing this they would like State Forests to clearly mark the exact location of their boundary so
bushwalkers can use the public resource without fear they may be prosecuted for trespassing.

Additionally they would like the full details of this operation made public, including funding details, Soil Conservation investigation reports, Forestry investigation reports and any other matters regarding the operation.
This heightened public awareness of these matters should be beneficial in providing valuable baseline data, for reference in the formulation of public submissions regarding regional amendments to Sepp. 46, to ensure that environmental values are not significantly compromised in the establishment of Eucalypt plantations.

Your reference
Our reference DO 455

2 October, 1996

Ms Lesley Jacobson

Acrewood
Mallanganee
NSW 2469

STATE FORESTS
NORTHERN REGION

State Forests of New South Wales

Casino District
PO Box 688
Casino
NSW 2470
Phone (066) 62 4499
Fax (066) 62 5826

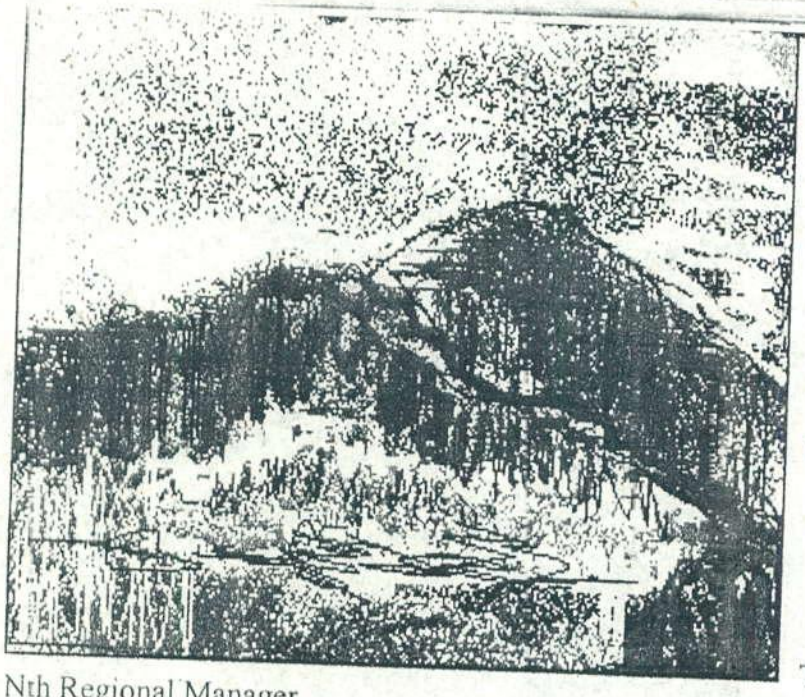
Dear Lesley,

I am writing with respect to your inquiries directed to Graeme King, the General Manager, Northern Region for State Forests of NSW.

State Forests has had access to Mt. Pikapene, as you indicate for many years. However, access is with permission of the private property landowner where the road passes through private land. It is the legal right of the landowner as to whether access is provided through private property and State Forests is not in a position to change that right.

Your letter indicates that the area is a public reserve with public access but I regret to inform you this is not the case. State Forests has had permission to use the area for a fire lookout tower which has served the purpose of both State Forests and private property landowners as a means of detecting wildfire in the area. However the land has never been designated as a public reserve.

Mt. Pikapene itself is listed in the supporting document No. 9 of the Casino EIS but as the coding indicates, the site is not recognised as a recreation site. The recording of Mt. Pikapene in the supporting document is referring to that area of Mt. Pikapene that occurs on State forest. State Forests will however continue to use the private property area (with the permission of the landowner) for fire observation. This will continue to be of benefit for detection of fire for all residents in the area.



Mallanganee 2469.

19th August 1996

Re ; Mt Pikapene

To Mr Graeme King

Nth Regional Manager
Forestry Commission N.S.W.

Following our conversation in Nov.1995 you indicated State Forests reluctance to become involved in the closure of the Mt Pikapene lookout and access road, and the matter should be taken up by myself with the landowner.

Preliminary legal advice suggests that as the road has been in use for considerable time as the State Forest records will verify, then the closure is *illegal*. Furthermore as Pikapene lookout is listed in the Casino Management Area E.I.S *ect* Supporting Doc No 9 (*page 15; No 59)*. as a public reserve under the management of the State Forest I believe it is up to you as the public representative to pursue its reopening for public access. This has been used in the past by locals and tourists alike as a scenic attribute of the Clarence Valley. Considering the economic downturn of this region and the need to encourage tourists, to deny the touring public access to a lookout appears shortsighted.

Considering the harmonious rapport you seem to have with the present owner, since the State Forests Joint Venture and our known opposition to the total destruction of our environment(ie what was, Mt Pikapene; the view from my bedroom window) you should represent us the residents who want it reopened. After all Mr King you are a public servant and Iam the public so serve me please.

I do urge you to act promptly so as not to increase the local ire to the debacle of Mr Benton destruction and the disgraceful attitude that has followed.

Thanking You

Acrewood
Mallanganee;
2469.

Leters to the Editor;

Re comments by Geoff Seyah (N.S. 2/9/96) and the eagle-eyed councillors of the Byron Bay Council swooping on enviromental issues in a, what you feel is , misguided manner.

Maybe we could 'culturally exchange' some of Byrons' councillors for some of Kyogle's.

When the SEPP 46 came into force I overheard one of Kyogles councillors advising local graziers that they wouldn't be able "to clear ya lantana or ya weeds". Which of course is totally untrue and if the SEPP guidelines or the policy itself had been read would be blantantly obvious but I doubt his constituents had read either.

As another one of our councillors left home, to attend to concil business, they could not have helped but see the total destruction of Mt. Pikapenes' enviromental attributes. This clearing , undertaken on private property for a " possible Joint Venture Forestry Agreement" and land developement, has been described by many people, suitably qualified in Resource Land Management ,as being amongst the worst cases of land management recently witnessed. 1200 acres were clear felled and then set on fire, destroying habitat trees and eroding topsoil. Some seedlings have been planted but I give them a poor prognosis of survival considering the enviromental factors now in place. The land is being advertised in the Sydney papers as being " 5 select lots among a pristine enviroment". The very attributes that were destroyed are now being proclaimed as being the main reson to buy the blocks. What did our council say? Not a peep! Public monies, possibly Super funds, funded this debacle and Kyogle ratepayers funded the council who allowed it.

Where were the Kyogle councillors and the Enviromental Services Manager when the illegal logging operations were going on at the Richmond Range ? Did they think the loggers were just widening the 'Gateway to the Rainforest'?

So Geoff would you like to exchange some Eagles for Ostriches or Bush Turkeys?

Lesley-Anne Jacobson

Profile Mt Pikapene / Joint Venture between State Forest and M.J.Benton.

___Clearing Started; approx. March 1995. I believe that the first application for the Joint Venture was rejected and another application lodged in the Coffs Harbour or Grafton office. This subsequent application was given approval.

Clearing was being undertaken up to and beyond the 30th September 1995. Lesley- Anne Jacobson contacted State Forests (Mr Graeme King) and was informed that all clearing had ceased on the 10th August and that no further clearing had been undertaken while these assurances had been given Mrs Lesley-Anne Jacobson was witnessing further clearing being undertaken. Mr King insinuated that Mrs Jacobson was ***not seeing clearing*** at all.

Thursday 19th October; 1995 a fire was seen to be out of control on the site known as Mt Pikapene.

Friday 20th October; Lesley-Anne Jacobson contacted Mr Graeme King to seek approval to rescue animals that were burnt and disabled due to the intensity and depth of the fire. Subsequent approval was given.

Saturday 21st of October; Lesley-Anne Jacobson in the company of Jim Morrison endeavoured to retrieve animals from the fire zone. This is when the full impact of the clearing and total destruction of what had once been a valuable eco-tone and Koala Habitat was realised. It was on the 21st of October that Lesley-Anne Jacobson witnessed a Parma Wallaby that was burnt on the tail and rear haunches. The Parma Wallaby has a very limited distribution range and the Mt Pikapene site was one extension of their range.

Sunday 22nd October; Went up to the Lookout to inspect site for injured or distressed animals and found that the owner had locked a chain across road as a temporary gate.

Monday 23rd October; Lesley-Anne Jacobson rang Mr Graeme King re the gate being locked. Mr King informed her that the gate was locked to prevent any persons from being injured on the burnt site.

Wednesday 25th October; Photos were taken to Soil Conservation Casino and was informed by an office worker that half a dozen complaints were already lodged. When asked for an unofficial opinion we were told " it is a bloody disaster" and were also informed that as it was a Joint Venture with Forestry that Soil Conservation had no jurisdiction. We also took these photos to the Casino office of N.S.W. State Forestry and showed them to Glen Meade. We were given "no comment" and were told to take it up with Joint Venture in Grafton.

Thursday 26th October; Contacted Joint Venture and were told that Rob Heathcote was overseas inspecting Eucalypt Plantations and was unavailable for comment.

Friday 27th October ; James Morrison was contacted by the A.B.C. Radio(local) to make comment on this issue as he is a local Botanist and Biologist doing a study on Dry Rainforest. A forestry spokesman on Prime T.V. was interviewed on the Evening News and said that an investigation was being implemented into this issue.

Monday 29th October ; Lesley- Anne Jacobson contacted Mr Graeme King concerning the clearing on Mt Pikapene.During this conversation Mr King tried to dispute that radical clearing had gone on at Mt Pikapene and also millable and useful timber was being burnt even though he ***admitted he had not inspected site*** prior or post the out of control burn off however agreed to inspect the site on the Thursday 2nd November and visit Mrs Jacobson for discussions on her worries. It was at his point in time Mr King had become condescending and patronising towards Mrs Jacobson which she views with intense distaste.

Wednesday 1st November; A fire, the intensity of which has never been witnessed before by older and long time residents, erupted on Mt Pikapene. This fire was so ***hot*** it could

be viewed from Bonalbo approx more than 20 kms away and the sky literally glowed.

Thursday 2nd Nov;. Graeme King never arrived to inspect the site or placate local residents.

Friday 3rdNov; Contacted Graeme King re his lack of appearance and the fire that was still burning on Mt Pikapene. Mr King informed us that all that was burning was sleeper offcuts and scrap timber and crowns on the ground. In the 12yrs Lesley-Anne Jacobson has lived here she has witnessed numerous offcut burnings as well as wildfire and brushfire and never has she witnessed anything that burnt with the amount of fuel loads that would have to have been present to obtain the ferocity that was in the blaze at Mt Pikapene on 1st November.

Mon 6th Nov; James Morrison contacted Mr Graeme King regarding the blocking of the Mt Pikapene Lookout Road and the possibility of severe erosion on the Joint Venture site. Mr King intimated that this matter did not concern him as it was the owner's responsibility to keep that gate open to the public. This is despite the fact that State Forests have this Lookout listed as a ***high visual resource*** in the Casino Forestry Areas E.I.S. *Supporting Document No.9 1993.*

November 1995; We had 219mm of rain and during this period & witnessed the mud and landslides off Mt Pikapene. It was during this period a letter was posted to the Catchment Management Committee for the Clarence Catchment.

1996

3rd May Rain washed away the Deep Creek Bridge at Mallanganee

5th May Heavy precipitation caused large mud slide to move off mountain

6th May Mud and silt from the Mt Pikapene Joint Venture block roadway.

9th May Further mud and silt slides off the Mountain cause silt and mud blockages (8ft) of considerable density on the Old Lawrence Rd and the causeway making it impassable to residents trapped in the flood. Creeks silted up .

June/July approx Bulldozing and widening of forestry roads. Bulldozing heard in the vicinity of Mt PikapeneLookout and Pine forests

Viewed plantation from the road; noted high mortality and wallaby damage amongst seedlings.

August Chain sawing heard from the region of Mt Pikapene and Bull dozing work being undertaken.

19th August sent letter to Mr G. King Coffs Harbour Regional Forestry Office re the opening of the gate to the Lookout.

22nd August Chain sawing from the Mt Pikapene area.

2nd September; Sent letter to the Nth Star re Mt Pikapene. Editor Mr Richard Jones deleted the section regarding the use of Public Monies and Superannuation Funds.

22nd September ; Found Lookout had been severly damaged and all vegetation scraped off

top and Old Growth trees 300metres from Lookout site removed.
25th September; Forestry Fire on the Sugarloaf above cleared Joint Venture area. Told by Forestry Casino it was a controlled burn to ensure the plantation below wasn't at risk from fire.
27th September; Jim rang Cath Duncan re Mt Pikapene and the Lookout being closed and varius attributes destroyed.
30th September; Jim was interviewed on A.B.C. Nth Coast Radio re Mt Pikapene but Forestry declined to be interviewed.

1st October; Warwick Ponder and Ian Cohen interviewed by Cath Duncan. This is when Warwick Ponder first raised the issue of the State Forestry providing the area with a new Fire Lookout Tower on Mt Pikapene. He also avoided the question of the use of Public monies.
2nd October; received letter from R Fussell, Casino Division of Forestry to inform me that the road and Lookout are on private property and as such was not under the jurisdiction of State Forests. The point had also been made Public at this time that the owner, Mr Mick Benton, had provided the State forests with a key to the padlock on the gate at the entrance to the mt Pikapene Lookout area . However what wasn't made public was that in fact State Forest have provided Mr Benton with one of their own locks.

Letter to the editor Northern Star, Oct 1996.

Don Page recently expressed concern about uncertainty of endangered species legislation holding up development appear ill founded if events which have recently unfolded at Mt. Pikapene are any indication of the situation. It appears that joint venture agreements allow State Forests licence to override various environmental laws to be extended onto private land, as long as the operation is claimed "sustainable". The argument thus revolves around its interpretation.

An evaluation of what became known locally as Mallanganees "Ocktedi" can provide an understanding of why some people may be opposed to joint ventures. The lack of ecological sustainability is difficult to dispute if facts are known. Photos at the Big Scrub, under the Pikapene file, highlight a number of points of contention regarding joint ventures.

As a keen local botanist engaged in graduate ecological studies, I could not help but notice the floristic diversity of the Pikapene site including Eucalypt and Dry Rainforest species, prior to recent clearing. Moreover the large proportion of Tallowwood, Grey gum, Ironbark in addition to *Eucalyptus rummeryi* , a species listed as rare. The rainforest species were part of a rare community, interspersed as an ecotone across the site. The mixed age structure of trees, and local historical accounts suggested the area had been periodically logged in the past, yet its attributes had been largely maintained. Such logging could have possibly continued indefinitely at this pace. With silvicultural follow up to ensure quality regrowth, under judicious management, the area could have provided an ongoing return which may have approached sustainability. This would have also seen the diverse faunal populations of gliders, bats, macropods, birds and koalas maintained. Few people would argue that timber production was not an appropriate landuse for the area, this is a land management issue. Forestry, in their wisdom allowed slopes of up to 26 degrees to be hastily logged, the remainder including advanced regrowth of those high value eucalypt species mentioned, pushed into gullies to be burnt. The aim being their replacement with lower value species

As these ventures don't expect a return for 40 years, one is forced to consider why the whole speculative operation needed to be established almost overnight. This development apparently proceeded without planning and in haste, presumably to beat Sepp 46, by August 10, 1995.

A more logical approach may have been the establishment of 50 hectares at a time, to be reviewed before the next stage which could correct any management practices found to be lacking, and allow wildlife to adjust to changes being made, either through migration or localised extinction.

The concept of Eucalypt plantations in Australia is in its infancy. State forests should admit this, and adopt a precautionary approach, particularly with regard to the very steep slopes. The Joint Venture Manager apparently makes annual trips to the third world to gain insights into their highly successful eucalypt plantations.

Both tallow wood and Grey gum are listed on councils schedule as primary Koala trees. Neither is being used as replacement in the operation, rather the quick growing lower value species are utilised. Koala habitat has thus not been sustained. Glider habitat of large hollow trees has not been sustained. Resource quality has not been sustained, beneficial landscape processes maintaining stability on slopes in excess of 26 degrees have not been sustained. Before this operation, public access to the magnificent views of the Clarence valley was available at the Pikapene lookout. This has not been sustained.

Claims that trail bikes were causing erosion on the track to this point are unfounded, and could never be compared to the disaster created with bulldozers. If erosion were considered a problem, the joint venture operation should not have been undertaken. Considerable slope instability was apparent during the May floods as was the sediment load of the creek draining the site, which had the texture of pea soup.

As State forests are publicly funded, I believe any subsidies given should have flow on benefits to the public. If these operations were carried out on degraded land these ends would be met. However, the replacement of an existing, high value, self pepetuating resource, in a stable landscape, with a lower value, speculative venture makes neither economic or ecological sense.

The nature of a prospectus concerning the attempted sale of the property claiming it to b "five selected 'rainforest' blocks set in a pristine environment", which is accompanied b two disclaimers is surely dubious.

I think if truly sustainable developments were intended there would be no problems to cause holdups, however when economists are placed in charge of developments in ecologically sensitive areas there will most often be problems.

With such a large proportion of our country in a severely degraded state, the subsidised degradation of existing landscape values, under the guise of an environmentally sound investment smacks of greed induced environmental vandalism and should have no place the restructuring of our timber industry.

J. Morrison, Mallanganee