

CHAPTER 19

THE PAST LEADING TO THE FUTURE – BEYOND 2009

'We have a dream, of a world where as part of nature we live in harmony with it.'
Vincent Serventy, 1981

In 2009 the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia is the product of the thinking of Society leaders and key members over the past one hundred years. Salient among these are the following contributions.

AIMS AND POLICIES OF THE SOCIETY

The prime concern of the Society is the preservation of wildlife and this by necessity involves the Society in the preservation of habitat and a concern to address all factors which threaten the survival of native species.

In 1934 David Stead wrote that this was an organisation whose sphere is, to a large extent, 'advisory, educational, and propagandist.' This continues to be its role, President Vincent Serventy claimed in 1997. Letters to newspapers and journals have always been an activity of importance and in his later years Vincent Serventy's letters to the media increased as his role of Editor of *Wildlife in Australia* was relinquished. Over the years, letters to government ministers, officers of government bodies and other environmental organisations attempted to present the concerns of the Society regarding the status of wildlife. The magazine, *Australian Wildlife* plays an important role in educating and informing the Society's members.

The advisory and lobbying roles, mainly carried out by the President, have been achieved by serving as a member of numerous advisory committees, whereby the needs of wildlife can be kept in front of the decision makers.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has always been appreciative of the role the Australian Aborigines played in the ecological history of this continent. Like humans everywhere they did have an effect on their environment, mainly through the use of fire as a hunting tool. The introduction of the dingo also had a major effect on some species. Aborigines, however, never pressed too hard on their land, except in their use of fire. They were conservers.

The Society fully supports land rights. In the case of land given to groups still living their traditional ways, it is their decision on how this land should be managed. But the Society hopes to encourage the formation of Aboriginal conservation groups so their resources will always be sustainable.

Giving Aborigines ownership of national parks and similar reserves could be a useful step, particularly if they were on the management councils and employed as staff. However, it is the firm view of the Society that national parks and similar reserves, whether owned or managed by Aborigines or not, must be conducted so as to meet accepted international standards. This means destruction of wildlife, both plant and animal, for any purpose except management, is forbidden.

The Society is opposed to any group, including Aborigines and industries, being allowed to hunt, cut trees, mine, or in any way damage the quality of such parks. Modern Aborigines rarely use traditional implements and may well repeat the destructive practices of white settlers. Their rights to hunt should take place in other lands than nature reserves of any kind. Permitting these to take place would also offend other visitors who have accepted that such actions damage the qualities for which the land was set aside.

This Society urges discussion with Aboriginal groups to determine the best method of satisfying the Aboriginal attachment to the land and, at the same time, maintaining the integrity of national parks and similar reserves.

Vincent Serventy became President in 1966 and resigned after nine years to travel overseas in 1975. He took up the reins again in 1976 but at the beginning of 1978 referred to 'the doldrums of the past few years.' The Presidential Report in January/February 1978 remarked that a great deal of the Society's work is like an iceberg, not obvious to ordinary members. There was a call too for a more active role for members, but did this eventuate? President Vincent referred to the iceberg again in his Presidential Report for 1989:

'Like an iceberg the work of our Society does not have a high public profile but your Council has been very busy this year. In many ways it has been a most fruitful year, our only disappointments being the failure to attract enough members to assist our lobbying power and, also in Sydney, the inability to attract people to our quarterly lectures, despite the fact that the speakers are outstanding'.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia played a very significant role in the first half of this century and perhaps the objectives, for which it strived, once achieved, were instrumental in reducing the number of interested and active members. The Fauna Protection Act of 1948 authorised the Fauna Protection Panel to set up Fauna and Flora Societies and the Panel, when in operation before 1967, set up fifty-four such societies, many of them still in existence. This would certainly reduce the membership of the Wildlife Preservation Society because people, especially those still in the workforce, have to ration their time and cannot spread their allegiance too widely. The National Parks Association began in 1957 and the Australian Conservation Foundation in 1965.

One Councillor of long standing commented in the 1990s on the lack of interest from members, particularly for meetings in the city. He pointed out that in the past there were not so many diversions; also, the Society kept changing its place for meetings and with each change members were lost and not so many new ones joined. The ageing membership also contributed to the difficulty of attracting the older members to evening meetings in the city. A challenge for the Society has been, and continues to be, provision of a program to attract younger members, although the University Grants Scheme of later years has addressed this problem to some extent.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 26 March 1991, Councillor Clive Williams raised an important matter under general business. He said, 'the Society appears to be healthy when we look at the Treasurer's Report, but we are in danger of becoming an affluent society that does nothing. The newsletter is the

Society's major activity amongst the members, but in order to attract new members and to encourage members to come to meetings, then the Society has to be seen to be doing something - this is an important issue for us to tackle.' Clive suggested that the Society needed a project to activate more interest, something which people could get behind and become involved with, such as the 'Save the Woodhen' campaign. '[We need] a worthwhile project which would be doing something useful for conservation and would also be activating the membership - we should not be leaving all the work to Vincent.'

At the Council meeting of 23 July 1991, the matter raised by Dr. Clive Williams at the AGM was discussed. Marjorie Woodman (who was Secretary at the time) suggested a campaign to protect mallee fowl from feral animals in the Little Desert National Park, Victoria; a larger protection area was discussed but the belief was this would be too expensive. John Robertson (Councillor) suggested the forests of the north coast, Chulundai, where a wilderness area was at risk from logging - it contained rare species. Vincent Serventy spoke of his local Scout and Guide groups which had adopted Kelly's Bush: once a month they clear the rubbish and maintain the trails. Clive Williams (Vice President) outlined an idea which would involve people outside the Society: the Society would offer a substantial prize for the person or group in Australia which did the most to preserve native plants and animals. This could be open to schools, Scout/Guide groups and individuals, to be judged by a panel of experts. A sub-committee could be formed to draw up rules in respect to the prize, as well as suggestions for the target persons or groups; Clive volunteered to convene the sub-committee and Marjorie and John volunteered to assist.

After some discussion on the feasibility of promoting a nation-wide competition, the sub-committee decided to run pilot events in the Eastern states. It was decided to limit the first prize to projects in Queensland but this failed to attract any interest even though the prize was increased to \$10,000. This attempt to promote interest and awareness of the Society's work in the wider community failed.

Another organisation which probably attracted members away from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia was the David G. Stead Wildlife Research Foundation of Australia. This was the memorial to David Stead set up by Thistle Stead, and many folk loyal to Thistle joined her in this project at Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo.

By 2009, concerns expressed in the 1990s about the Society's image and activities, have been addressed to some extent in a number of positive ways.

The first project of major merit was the University Students Wildlife Research Grants scheme. As indicated above, this idea of an award for work on behalf of wildlife had been suggested by Dr. Clive Williams in 1991. The University Student's Wildlife Research Grants scheme was introduced in 2005. The aims of the scheme were to benefit the preservation of Australian wildlife by supporting applied scientific research with a conservation focus; to further the Society's commitment to environmental education by supporting students with a research interest in conservation; and to increase awareness of and attract new members to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia. Initially the Society provided five grants of \$1,000 each to honours or postgraduate students conducting research that contributed to the

conservation of Australian wildlife. The grants provided the university students with funds for the purchase of equipment and consumables, travel expenses related to field research, or attendance at conferences at which the student was presenting their work.

In 2006 the University Student's Grants scheme was expanded to ten grants of \$1,000 each. The recipients came from as far afield as Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales. Since its inception the Society has awarded thirty-five of these grants. Dr. Al Glen, a Regional Advisor for Western Australia, heads the panel that judges the applications for the grants.

To celebrate the Centenary of the Society in 2009 previous recipients of the Initial University Student's Grants were eligible to apply for a \$5,000 Centenary Grant (follow-up grant). The two Centenary Grants of \$5,000 each were awarded based on each applicant's progress in the project for which the Initial Grant was awarded. The winners for 2009 were: Arian Wallach from the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Adelaide for her project 'Persistence of endangered mammals: Is the dingo the key?' and Andrew Cole from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Townsville for his project 'The control of coral disease by coral-feeding fishes'.

Second, the Serventy Conservation Medal was inaugurated in 1999, awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation.

Third, the Community Wildlife Conservation Award, granted first in 2004, is made each year to recognise organisations that make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife.

Fourth, Councillors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife conferences and meetings in the last ten years, actively initiating and sponsoring some of these gatherings, while participating in others.

Finally, a project of major commitment was the planned establishment of the Wetland Environmental Education Centre in the Rockdale Wetlands Corridor in Sydney, to be known as Ecoworld Gardens, but the Society was not granted formal approval by Rockdale City Council to lease the parcel of land around the Brighton Ponds. This was a project of great vision and even greater commitment for the Society in the years ahead but, unfortunately, the Directors now are 'back to the drawing board' and investigating alternative sites and projects.

MEMBERSHIP

From that small number who attended the inaugural meeting of the Society in 1909, membership in 1910-11 grew to 165 persons; by 1927 the number was 349. Here is an interesting breakdown of membership for :

1958

99 Life Members
 264 Annual Members
 30 Corporate Members
 4 Corporate Life Members
 7 Student Members
 5 Honorary Members

Total: 409 Members.

1968

192 Life Members
 456 Annual Members
 4 Honorary Members
 51 Junior Members
 16 Student Members

Total: 719 members

(no figures given for Corporate members)

1978

In 1978 membership totalled 387. It should be noted that in the early 1970s the Queensland branch of the Society incorporated and became an independent conservation group. The Australian branch based in New South Wales lost over one hundred members to the Queensland group.

1988

320 members

1998

473 members

2004

In 2004 membership totalled about five hundred. The largest majority of members came from the over fifties age group, were long-term members and very loyal and generous with their donations.

2005

The University Students Wildlife Research Grant project was introduced, with the criteria that all applicants must be members of the Society. Since that time, the majority of new members are in the under thirties age group.

2008

Membership grew to over seven hundred members. Although the projected target of raising membership to at least one thousand in time for the Centenary year was not quite realised, the demographic age of membership changed dramatically to a younger generation.

Every year when the renewals for membership are sent out, despite extensive publicity, there are always a percentage that fail to renew their membership. These losses are usually offset by new members joining.

The biggest change in recruitment of new membership is through the Society's website and the majority of new applications are now being received through this medium.

2009

The website has been upgraded to allow renewal of membership and payments to be made online. This will facilitate the Society in keeping up with modern business practices and appeal to the younger generation that make most decisions on the spot and want to complete the transaction immediately online.

AN ASSESSMENT FROM THE DIRECTORS

In early 2009 the Directors of the Society were asked to answer a questionnaire to rate in degree of importance (1 to 10 with 10 the most important) various issues with which the Society had been involved, or should be involved.

Rated most important in the Society's endeavours were conserving wildlife, action to save habitats and education. Plant conservation had received insufficient attention in the past, according to the survey, but the majority voted for greater commitment in the future. Action to save habitats, as opposed to commitment, had also received insufficient attention in the past, but the majority of Directors gave a rating of 10 to the importance of action in the future.

Only a moderate level of attention to education had been achieved in the last ten years according to the survey, while the Directors (with two exceptions) graded it 9 or 10 for attention in the future. The majority of Directors gave high importance to the university research grants scheme, both in achievement to date and in its importance as a future emphasis. There is potential here for these young people to provide a strong body of support for the Society's future work.

Commitment to wetland conservation was rated highly, but opinion was strong that action for wetland conservation had not measured up to verbal commitment. However, with one exception, opinion strongly favoured greater commitment and action on behalf of wetlands.

Catering for the members 'must improve' wrote one Director, with others rating it highly, but not as important as taking up action on behalf of various causes. However, 'action', as proposed by the majority of Directors (on behalf of causes), is impossible without a strong membership, and volunteers who will carry out that 'action' are needed. Thus, a committed and active membership should be encouraged.

COMMENTS FROM KEY MEMBERS

The longest serving member on the Society's Council has been Dr. Richard Mason, elected in 1976. Dr. Mason was a Vice President of the Society for many years. It is fitting that comments from key members should be introduced by the following comments from this member, now a Director in 2009.

Dr. Richard (Dick) Mason

These are bad times for voluntary organisations and even much larger bodies such as the National Parks Association of NSW have difficulty in finding members willing to

stand for office, or indeed even to attend meetings. When I first joined the WPSA it held regular monthly meetings in the city and the first series of meetings I attended, which concerned the mineral sands mining of coastal areas proposed as national parks, attracted overflow crowds with standing room only in the Adyar Hall, in Sydney. Such meetings have long since been abandoned because of lack of attendance. It was through such meetings that many like-minded people met and exchanged ideas, and from them councillors were elected and so office-bearers drawn.

We live in a very different age. People now work very long hours. Often husband and wife are both working. They have less time to attend meetings. People stay at home and watch television or sit in front of computers. They communicate by internet and mobile phone.

The Society numbers only a few hundred of the twenty million people in Australia, most of whom if asked might say they believed in conservation (or maybe not). Soon after its founding its members numbered a hundred but it has never had a large membership on which to draw for leaders. It has always depended on a few to carry on its work, and for much of its history has been dominated by forceful and dedicated people such as David Stead, Thistle Stead, Allen Strom and Vincent Serventy,

From the time I joined the Council of the WPSA in 1976, without wishing to detract from the work of others, I think it would be fair to say that the Society acted mainly as a platform for Vincent Serventy, so that he was able to sign his many letters to politicians, government departments and the media, as President WPSA. To a large extent Vincent was the Society until he retired.

It may now be said that Patrick and Suzanne Medway are the Society. Without them it would hardly exist. They have done a great job in raising the profile of the Society, with its annual luncheon at Parliament House, and through the university scholarships and the conservation awards given by the Society each year. They have raised the standard of the journal which is the Society's main service to and link with its members. There are however no obvious successors. If Patrick or Suzanne were to give up their present work for the Society, it would be in big trouble. It is difficult to attract new members and particularly actual workers to the Society.

The Society has been fortunate in receiving a number of generous bequests, so that it has considerable assets. There has been little discussion of how these might best be used to further the cause of wildlife conservation.

Patrick is very keen on the establishment of a field studies centre in premises which would also function as a permanent office for the Society. There are several field studies centres in NSW and few, if any, operate at a profit. It is hard to see why ours would be different and there is the danger that it would prove an exhausting drain on the Society's resources of both funds and people. We are living in very uncertain times with serious problems greater, I believe, than we have ever faced before, global warming, over-population, excessive demand for resources, and now a crumbling world economic system. The threats to life on earth are enormous. It is a wonder the WPSA has lasted one hundred years. Its future is impossible to predict. You ask do we have a political agenda. It is all political.

Max Blanch (Regional Advisor)

I think Society now is at a watershed. We have come to the end of the age of expansion. Our golden age of consumerism is over. Now is the time for reflection. Keeping up our present way of life is no longer possible because of depleted resources and increasing population world-wide. In the short term we may have some time if we can halve our consumption. Unfortunately, in society I see no understanding of this. Society believes that we can go on as if nothing has changed. This will mean increasingly desperate attempts to wring from the earth what is no longer there, eventually leading to water wars, food wars, whatever.

The next ten years will be a time of great challenge for WPSA. It will be a time of great change in attitudes brought on by necessity as the world changes in ways unimaginable at the moment. WPSA will need to be a think-tank that can help guide public opinion so that we can continue to do our best to conserve nature as change takes place. The extent of our success will be measured by the world our grandchildren inherit. As we fail, so will the quality of human life fail. There is more need for WPSA than ever. We will need to be forward thinking, innovative and try to influence change as it is forced on us, in the best direction. This will require the most flexible thinking and we'll have to be prepared to abandon ideas that seemed written in concrete, when they were written, for the good of the environment. The future I see for WPSA is more than ever protection of wildlife in the most difficult conditions we will have known.

Noel Cislowski (Director, Chairman of the Centenary Committee)

I have been concerned for the preservation of Australia's flora and fauna from my earliest years. When I tell people that my father was a sawmiller, they wonder how I could be so concerned about conservation or preservation that I am on the National Board of Directors of WPSA. The fact is that my father was unlike many other sawmillers. His constant comment was 'For every tree I mill, I plant two!' He was a leader in supporting afforestation and reforestation. My path was given early focus. As a teacher, for many years I was involved with the Gould League, along with educating students of the need for preserving natural bushland, especially the habitats of our unique wildlife. I fondly recall listening with my students to the excellent school broadcasts on the environment featuring a passionate Vincent Serventy.

My fondness for Australian poetry led me to realise the splendid contribution so many of our poets have made to increasing awareness of our wildlife and our Australian bush, and their advocacy for conservation. Foremost among such writers is Judith Wright. She also spoke passionately about her concerns in giving many addresses, including an address to our Society's Annual General Meeting in 1976. More recently writers such as David Malouf, Bruce Dawe and others have added their voices.

After many years in education, I realised, on retiring, that it was possible to continue to play a role on a broader scale through the Society. My relatively few years on Council have already strengthened my belief that education of not only students but also the wider community continues to be one of the most important tasks for our National Board and our members to address constantly and fervently.

Suzanne Medway (Executive Director, Company Secretary, Editor)

The biggest change from my point of view in the functioning of the Society in the last ten years has been the introduction of technology to run the every day operations of what is now an Australian Public Company Limited by Guarantee, registered with ASIC and controlled by an elected Board of Directors from the membership.

As I have had an extensive career background at a senior professional level in the corporate business community from secretarial, personal assistant to national executives and finally as company secretary of a major national defence company, I was very familiar with all modern business practices.

After my husband Patrick's retirement from the workforce in 1993, his passion was still very much with the Wildlife Preservation Society. He was elected Honorary Secretary and Executive Officer of the Society in 1996 and became totally committed to helping Vin Serventy as President.

As the wildlife conservation work of the Society was expanding rapidly, he asked me to help him in running the national office in my spare time.

When I finally decided to retire in September 1999, he asked me to assist him in his work in the operations of the Society on a full time basis. This involved taking over the administration and to set up a National Office for the Society. I found that most of the records were kept manually and not computerised. The minutes were typed on a typewriter and pasted in a book. The membership records had just been transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and all the wildlife information sheets, certificates and records were on printed paper form. The financial records were all kept via paper sheets, including hand-written receipts. The photographic library for use in occasional papers and the *Australian Wildlife* magazine were all photographic paper prints. Vincent Serventy still typed all his own articles on sheets of paper and posted out his letters to the media and government agencies.

As the Society grew and expanded, more wildlife conservation work and projects were taken on, with increased access to the public and by the public, the 'old' paper method was just too slow and cumbersome for us to continue with.

In February 2002 Vincent decided to retire and Patrick was elected National President of the Society. When Patrick was elected National President, he nominated me as the Honorary Secretary for the Society because of my close and ongoing involvement in the administration of the Society's operations.

I also became Editor of Publications for the Society. I revamped the Society's national *Australian Wildlife* magazine by using computer technology. We reduced the cost of production and expanded the collection of articles and photographs with an increasingly scientific focus on all our articles.

In 2003 the Council of the Society endorsed a recommendation by me to develop and operate our own website. A web designer was commissioned to establish the site and I researched and supplied the content for the new website. The website is now a 'living' organism of the Society and is constantly remodelled and updated as new technology becomes available. This allows the Wildlife Preservation Society to

remain relevant to our modern community needs and expectations, especially with a younger generation of more computer-literate students.

The power of the internet and email has been effectively and directly demonstrated many times to our advantage. One good example was the Society's *Earth 2000 Lecture* series held in the Wesley Centre Sydney in 2000. Dr. Jared Diamond from the University of California was invited to attend and to be the guest speaker. An extensive invitation list was well researched and prepared and then circulated via email with a request to pass the invitation on to friends, colleagues and family. We had no idea how many people would turn up and pay the \$15 admission fee to hear Professor Jared Diamond speak, but were absolutely astounded when nearly 800 people turned up to hear him.

The second example happened in mid-2007. I had got into the habit of having late email conversations with Lance Ferris of Australian Seabird Rescue. Lance asked my help in stopping a mass release of helium balloons that were being used for a celebration by a school in Queensland. Between the two of us we sent out emails to all our contacts asking them to spread the word and lobby the school and the Queensland Government to stop the release of these potentially fatal plastic balloons to our native wildlife, such as sea turtles and dolphins. The school received so many emails complaining about the release and potential danger to sea creatures – they flooded in from all around the world. So many emails objecting to the mass release of balloons were received that their computer system packed it in. It was very exciting to sit back and watch it happen on the computer screen as the location and sources of the emails were displayed. Needless to say, the proposed mass release of these plastic balloons was cancelled by the school!

In late 2008 I recommended to the Council that we introduce 'online' banking transactions to assist the Society's financial transactions. I told them that this was a necessary step to move the Society into the 21st Century as the younger members of the public are very much the 'right now' generation and want to be able to finalise something like becoming a member of the Society immediately and not have to download an application form, fill it in by hand, write a cheque and post it off.

In 2009 the website was updated to allow direct financial transactions online.

The administration of the Society is now fully computerised. The membership records, accounting and database is now kept on computer in an accounting program. Renewal invoices are sent out via email or, if the member has registered on the website, they are automatically sent out by the system. The photographic library is all kept digitally on computer. The magazine is compiled on the computer, photographs are inserted in the articles digitally and the finished draft is emailed to the printer to be formatted into the layout for the magazine and then printed.

The email system is used regularly to contact other wildlife conservation organisations, politicians, government and Society members. Applicants for the three awards are asked to send their submissions via email. Contributors to the magazine and newsletter make their contributions via email. Wildlife research is now done 'online' via web search engines.

In summary, the biggest achievement in the last ten years has been the modernisation of the whole administration structure of the Society in line with other major conservation and business corporations around the world. This allows the Society the ability to have immediate access to people, information and feedback from everywhere and everyone.

I think the Society is on the cusp of a major turning point.

Firstly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to run such an organisation on an all volunteer basis. The breadth and scope of our wildlife conservation work is just too vast and the campaigns and issues involved are just too complex to be run by volunteer 'amateurs'.

Corporate governance of a company is very complex, with the obligatory reporting to ASIC and the Australian Tax Office becoming more detailed. It is now very evident that paid, professional staff will have to be an option in the very near future.

Second, Patrick and I have been working as a volunteer team for the past ten years. The work of the Society has taken over our lives and our home. We work in the national office seven days a week, and all hours of the day and night. In 2010 we are hoping to step back a little. We have often talked about succession planning, and this will have to become a reality if we are going to find a new National President to replace Patrick and someone who will take on the roles of Executive Director, Company Secretary and Editor to replace me.

Third, is the necessity to find a permanent home for the national office.

All three steps will be necessary to put the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited at the forefront of Australian wildlife conservation and to run the Society as a viable, efficient organisation.

Dr. David Murray (Vice President)

Our efforts to protect Australian Wildlife are going to focus on several of the things we are doing well already. The first of these is group liaison, carried out by Judith May. We often find groups who can benefit from timely help from us, and whose activities we would know nothing about without Judith's research and contact.

Something else that should continue to prosper is the giving of research grants to tertiary students, whose applications are assessed by Dr. Al Glen. The number of \$1,000 grants was increased recently from five to ten. Now, in 2009, extra grants of several thousand dollars will be given to applicants judged to have the best projects. All of these grant recipients are contributing to the future welfare of Australian wildlife. Some will have long and productive careers, and may remain supporters of WPSA.

To improve our decision making and policy development, we will continue to gather information by attending conferences, such as those hosted by the Australian Association for Environmental Education, the Australian Network for Plant Conservation, the Mammal Society, Australian Wildlife Management Society and the

Pest Animal Council. The latter two groups have alerted us to a number of imminent threats to biodiversity, which are being outlined in newsletter articles.

Finally, we will undertake appropriate committee representation, such as Kangaroo Management and the NSW Pest Animal Council, and continue to consult with ministers at both state and federal levels in order to influence legislation for the better.

Dr. Clive Williams (Vice President)

For one hundred years the Society has operated entirely as a volunteer organization. It has thus shown a remarkable capacity to survive. However, there is a big difference between surviving and thriving. I believe that if we are both to survive and thrive then we need to become more professional.. This will mean generating sufficient funds to employ paid staff to carry out the policy directions set by the Directors. There are now many organisations with similar aims as ours and if we are to compete for the available funds we will need to be publicly identified with specific projects. Our future may even lie in either amalgamating with or forming close alliance with one or more similar organisations. The recent decision to involve a fund raising organisation in improving our financial resources is a good first step.

MODERNISATION

In November 1995 the executive held a planning meeting to look at modernising the Society's image. The aim was to move the Society forward and gain a more significant share of the conservation marketplace. After lengthy discussions, the following decisions were formally agreed upon:

- Upgrade letterhead
- Dark blue colour scheme adopted
- Patronage process, ie invite the Governor-General to become our patron as the Society is a national body
- Echidna as the logo – after examining many native animals Vin reminded Councillors that the echidna was a very 'down to earth' animal and he related the Society as a grass roots or down to earth conservation body
- Wildlife became one word – after enquiries with the NSW Education Department that the single word for wildlife was now in common usage
- Issue occasional papers on conservation issues and wildlife management
- Hold special seminars, ie Earth Day, Reduction of Roadkill, etc.

The next issue of the magazine was issued on 1 January 1996 with the layout changed to A4 and featuring a redesigned banner and logo.

THE FUTURE

Acting on sound legal and accounting advice, the Council implemented a major sustainable program for the future conservation work of the Society, with a new and modern constitution to cope with the administrative and structural charges necessary for the Society to receive Tax Exemption and Deductible Gift Recipient status. The Society also applied for registration as an approved environmental organisation with the Federal Government. Members and friends can make a tax deductible donation to

the wildlife conservation work of the Society, which is helping to establish its long term viable future in conservation.

THE TASK FOR THE FUTURE

Technological man is facing a dilemma, with finite resources still linked to emphasis on development, exploding human populations and degraded natural environments. A comprehensive conservation blueprint for an alternative stable society has yet to be put forward. Providing such a policy and plan should now be the main task of the conservation movement. Although the average Australian is now more aware of conservation issues and goals, global warming and diminished resources, the work of the Wildlife Preservation Society does not figure strongly in this awareness. This is the task for the Society – to educate the populace to the view that each organisation working for environmental protection fills a special niche and no one group can encompass every aspect of that protection.

The Society has its unique role to play, but people must be educated to understand how that role fits into the whole, what responsible action can be taken by any concerned individual, and that by being united the voice can be effective. The future of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited will almost certainly be in closer cooperation with other conservation groups.
