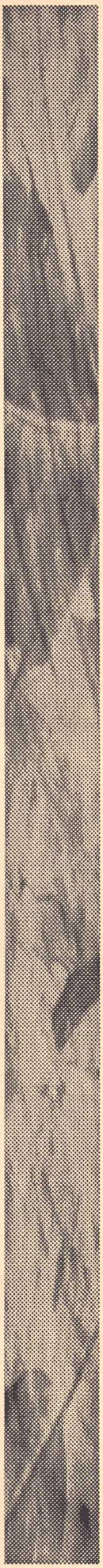
AUSTRALIAN Wildlife

AUTUMN 2000

Journal of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. (Founded 1909)
$2.50 (for non-members)
Print Post Approval No. PP243459/00117

Minister Bob Debus and Bernie Clarke OAM, 1999 Winner of the Serventy Conservation Award, along with Patrick Medway and Dr Dick Mason, Senior Vice President.

Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, Inc. (Founded 1909)
GPO Box 3428 Sydney NSW 1043



'AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE'

is the official journal of the
Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc.

Founded in 1909, the Society is dedicated to the conservation of our unique Australian Wildlife in all its forms.

Print Post Approval No. PP243459/00117

Price $2.50 (for non-members)

MEMBERSHIP

Ordinary:.....$20
Pensioner/ Student:.....$10
Corporate:.....$35
(Corporate Membership is open to Schools, Associations and Institutions)

PRESIDENT

Dr Vincent Serventy, AM, B Sc B Ed D Sc
Tel: (02) 4344 4708
Fax: (02) 4342 6291

EDITOR

Patrick W. Medway, B A, M Ed Admin, FPRIA, MACE
Tel: (02) 9556 1537
Fax: (02) 9599 0000

ADDRESS

National Office
Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc.
GPO Box 3428, Sydney NSW 1043
Tel: (02) 9556 1537
Fax: (02) 9599 0000

Production/ Printing: StuDio DiseNo Budget Printing

Articles may be copied or quoted with appropriate attribution.

COUNCILLORS 2000

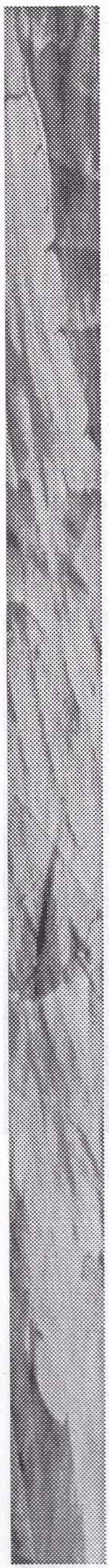
Patron: Judith Wright
President: Dr Vincent Serventy AM B Sc B Ed D Sc Order of the Golden Ark
36 Diamond Road, Pearl Beach NSW 2256
Phone: (02) 4344 4708
Fax: (02) 4342 6291
Senior Vice President: Dr. Richard Mason
Junior Vice President: Dr Clive Williams
Hon. Secretary/ Executive Officer: Patrick W. Medway
Min Secretary: Marjorie Woodman
Hon. Treasurer: Ralph Campbell
Ass. Hon. Treasurer:
Editor: Patrick W. Medway
PO Box 277 Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216
Phone: (02) 9556 1537
Councillors: John Robertson, John Clarke, Don Goodsir, Jason Zammit, Murray Hunt, Rosalind Gordon, Peter Stevens, Colleen Murphy
Regional Councillors:
Dr. Glen Ingram 5/46 Ferndale Street, Annerley QLD 4103
Max Blanch 41 Smith Street, Merewether NSW 2291
Jack Pearce 98 Alexander Street, Greensborough VIC 3088
Scientific Advisory Committee:
Dr Michael Augee, Mammals
Dr Walter Boles, Birds
Bernie Clark, Botany Bay
Dr Harold Cogger, Reptiles and Amphibians
Professor Alan Keast, Ornithology
Dr David Murray, Plants
Dr James Puckridge, River Ecology
Correspondence To: Executive Office, Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, Inc.
GPO Box 3428, Sydney NSW 1043

REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

We would like to hear from our country members, anywhere in Australia, who would like to become regional councillors. The value to us is we would have a more intimate relationship with women and men who have a knowledge which could be valuable for conservation.

Such Regional Councillors would be sent the minutes of our Council meetings so they would know more about what we are doing. They could also submit motions for consideration and so play a part in Society decisions. By being listed in our newsletter State members could contact them in emergencies.

All articles are written by Vincent Serventy and Patrick W. Medway unless stated otherwise.



Contents

From the Presidents Desk...

Annual General Meeting

The 2000 AGM was an outstanding success with a dedicated group of members being elected to serve on the Council. I was elected as President for the 31st time and I acknowledge your trust and confidence in me for this honour. We welcome two new members coming to serve on Council for the first time. They both have wide experience in wildlife conservation and are keen to assist the Society in its wildlife preservation work across Australia. They are Don Goodsir, a retired School Inspector and long time member of the Gould League of NSW, and Peter Stevens who has been a District Manager with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. We welcome them and commended them for their enthusiasm and support to the work of the Society.

Congratulations to Bernie Clarke OAM

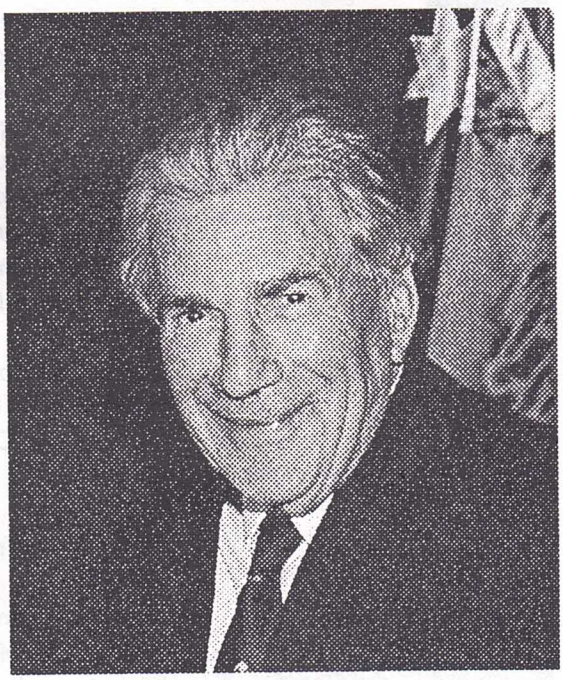
The 1999 award for the Serventy Conservation Medal and Award was made to Bernie Clarke for his outstanding conservation work in and around Botany Bay in Sydney. For more than fifty years Bernie has been working and educating young people about the importance of protecting our natural habitat and the wildlife which lives in it. He has worked tirelessly to prevent pollution and development from intruding into the natural habitat of Botany Bay and the Towra Point Nature Reserve. He is now an expert on the natural systems in and around the Bay and is on many advisory committees including the current Towra Point Nature Reserve Steering Committee set up and funded by Senator Robert Hill and Environment Australia. Our sincere congratulations go to Bernie for his commitment.

'Saving Australia' Proposal

I have written extensively on a proposal to save Australia from land degradation. I have issued a number of media releases on how to plant more trees across the country to prevent soil erosion as well as to earn a commercial return for the landowner. The Council approved of the proposal recently and I have written to all levels of government encouraging their support for our idea.

Environmental Education Classrooms Named

I have been greatly honoured to learn that the Council approved of the proposal to name the new double Classrooms in the new Wetland Environmental Education Centre in the Rockdale Wetlands corridor after me. The new classrooms will measure approximately 20 meters by 10 meters and will provide classroom facilities on a seven-day per week basis to young people to learn more about our precious natural environment. I thank the Council and the Management Committee of the new Centre for the honour thus conferred.



Dr Vincent Serventy, AM President

Annual Luncheon - Another Great Success

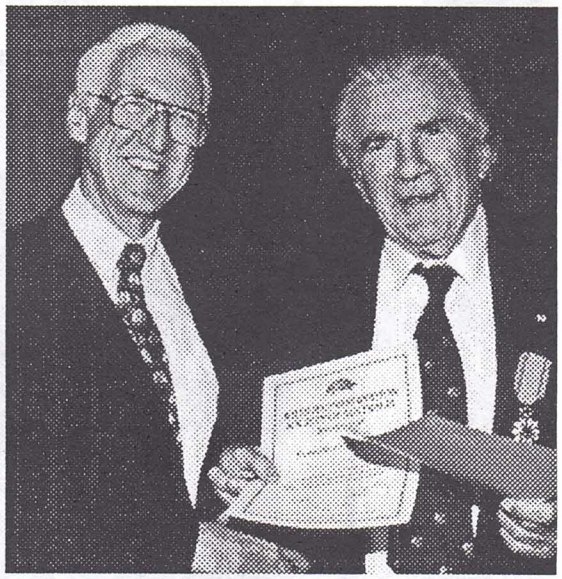
The year 2000 Annual Luncheon of Members and Friends, following the 2000 AGM, was another great success with some 75 guests present to hear the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Bob Debus, speak to us about conservation across the state. The Parliamentary House Dining Room catering was superb, as usual.

Minister Bob Debus speaking at the 2000 AGM at Parliament House.

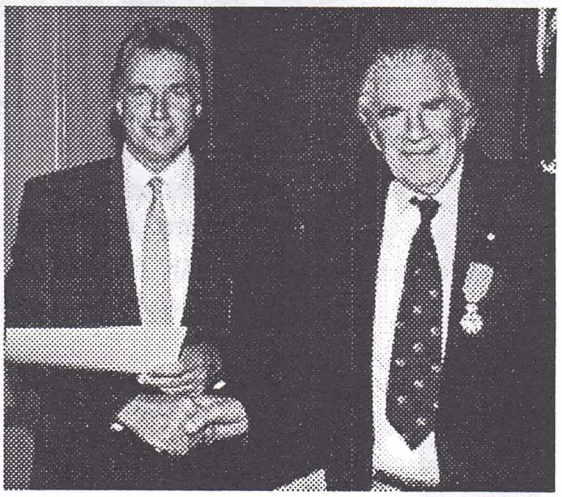
Bernie Clarke and family along with David Murray.

Vice President Dr Clive Williams with State Manager of the ACTV, Libby McIntyre.

Minister Bob Debus with Bernie Clarke, President Dr Vincent AM, Mrs Carol Serventy, Peter Lazar and Mrs Suzanne Medway.

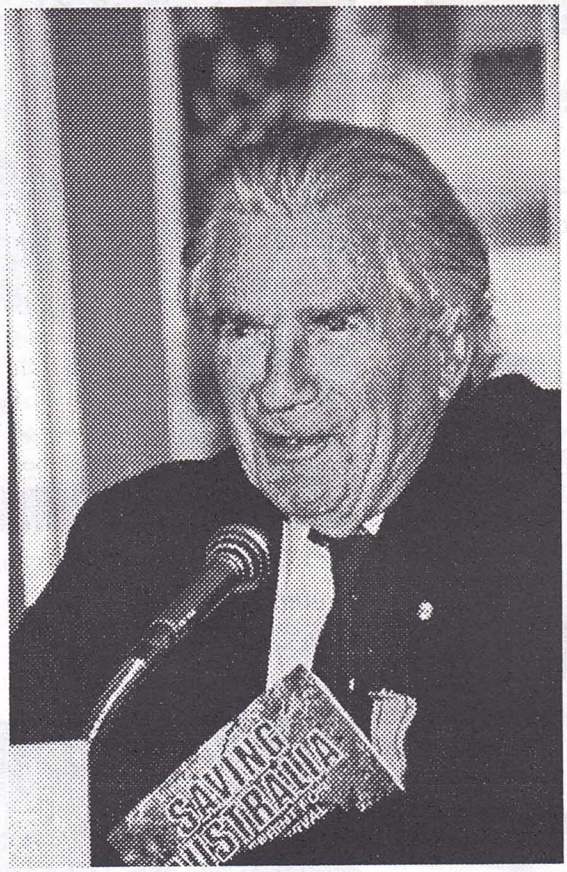


Dr Vincent Serventy presenting the Councillors Commission to new Councilor Don Goodsir.



New Councillor Peter Stevens receiving his Councillors Commission from Dr Serventy.

Auditor Jim Somerville receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from President Dr Serventy.



Dr Vincent Serventy AM at the 2000 AGM at Parliament House Sydney speaking about his new proposal for conservation by 'Saving Australia' from environmental degradation.

Bernie Clarke Wins Conservation Medal

Award winner Bernie Clarke OAM exhibiting his new Conservation Medal and speaking in reply to the presentation at Parliament House, Sydney.

One of the highlights of the day was the presentation of the Serventy Conservation Medal and Award to Bernie Clark of Oyster Bay. Bernie is a tireless worker for the environment especially around the Botany Bay region, which includes the Towra Point Nature Reserve. He spends hours every day working and lobbying government and other groups about the dangers of pollution, overdevelopment and poor planning, and other issues that directly affect the Bay and its environs. A video was shown featuring an interview, filmed by the ABC, of Bernie speaking about the Bay and Towra Point Nature Reserve. This was greeted very enthusiastically by the guests, as was Bernie's acceptance speech.

He is currently working with the Steering Committee to prepare a report to the Minister on the best solution to the erosion occurring on Towra Beach. The Consultants Report outlined a number of options ranging from beach re-nourishment through to constructing a number of breakwaters to prevent further erosion. Whichever recommendation is finally selected will be subject to a special EIS report by the NPWS.

Senator Robert Hill Visits Towra Point

The Federal Minister for the Environment, Senator Robert Hill, recently visited the Towra Point Nature Reserve to meet with the members of the Friends Group. It was an exciting visit with the Senator spending quite some time listening to the various members give their first-hand accounts of what has been happening on Towra. Bernie Clark welcomed the Senator and gave him an overview of the dramatic changes to Towra and described what the Steering Committee has been doing over the past 12 months.

Senator Hill provided the funding for the Steering Committee to prepare the Plan of Management and the Erosion Mitigation for Towra Beach.

NPWS Ranger Gary Dunnart, and Georgina Eldershaw described their work on Towra especially in the overall planning and mapping of exotic weed control. Ranger Geoff Ross gave an interesting account of the extensive wader and shorebird study program which is being undertaken with a special federal grant. He described how the migratory waders are now moving around the various corners and inlets of the Bay to find their special habitat during their foraging for food in Botany Bay.

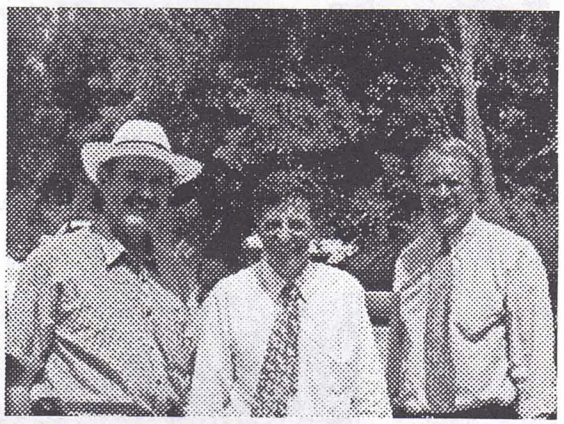
Pat Murray described how many of the migratory waders are now feeding in the mudflats of Woolaware Bay near Shell Point and outside of the protection of the Towra Nature Reserve.

We are very grateful to local Federal Member, Bruce Baird, for making the visit to Towra possible. Thank you Bruce for your support.

Bernie Clarke welcoming Senator Robert Hill to Towra Reserve.

Bernie outlining the progress we have made in cleaning up Towra.

Pat Murray outlining the new feed grounds for the migratory waders.



Patrick Medway, Chairman of the Friends group, with Senator Robert Hill and Local Federal Member, Bruce Baird, on Towra Reserve.

Senator Robert Hill addressing members of the Friends group on Towra Reserve.

Clean Up Australia On Towra Reserve

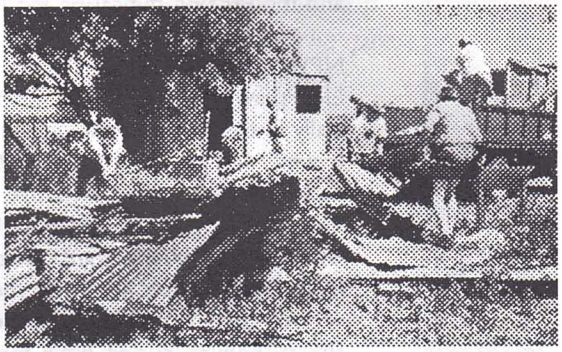
A special Clean Up Australia Day was held on Towra on Friday 3 March 2000. Arrangements were made for local schools to be invited to assist in cleaning up the causeway at Towra Reserve.

The target for this special clean up was the old garage and a rusting abandoned car once used by a local oyster farmer.

We pulled down the old shed and removed the rubbish on the back of a truck. The area is now being landscaped back to a natural bushland setting.

Volunteers helping to remove the rubbish from Towra.

Two volunteers collecting the small rubbish from the site.



Some of the rusting corrugated iron from the shed being removed.

More volunteers resting after removing the rusting old car.

The rusting old car being removed from the reserve.

Treasurer Ralph Campbell checking the car body to make sure there was no money left in the wreck.

NPWS officers removing a large truckload of rubbish from the Reserve.

The Minister's Speech 2000

Bob Debus spoke at our annual luncheon in Parliament House and this is an edited version.

The motivations which attract people to the conservation movement are varied: they may be aesthetic, moral, scientific or a mixture of all these.

To the period when your Society was founded conservation meant the preservation of big cats in concrete cages while the relentless extermination of such animals continued in the wild.

Recently I was in Regent's Park Zoo which despite sterling efforts by the present managers - is in many ways a most depressing memorial to this old style of wildlife conservation.

Conservation today means more than two shivering tamarind monkeys on a cement plinth; it means preserving or restoring their original habitat so these animals can flourish in the wild.

Your Society has played a key role in changing and developing the notion of conservation through the preservation of wildlife habitat.

cont. over

A sleeping koala. These animals are worth $1.1 billion a year to our tourist industry.

In Australia we have a tremendously rich and diverse biological base. It is estimated there are more than one million species of plants and animals in our land and sea. We are one of the few megadiverse countries.

More and more people are coming to understand that conservation and economic prosperity need not be in conflict. As well as enriching for their own sake here are two examples of economic benefits.

The contribution of the koalas to the tourism industry is estimated at $1.1 billion a year which is equivalent to 9000 jobs. Whale watching is a $50 million a year industry in Australia.

Or in other words our somnolent koala in a gumtree is really one of Australia's hardest working citizens!

Most of us can recall the impact on Sydney when Alex the whale came to visit. A century ago if Alex's ancestors had been sighted boats would have quickly launched with the aim of slaughtering the whale and rendering it down for lamp oil.

A hundred years on Alex's arrival was hailed by Sydneysiders as a symbol of the renewal of our environment while national parks staff and police had to protect the visitor from being 'loved to death'.

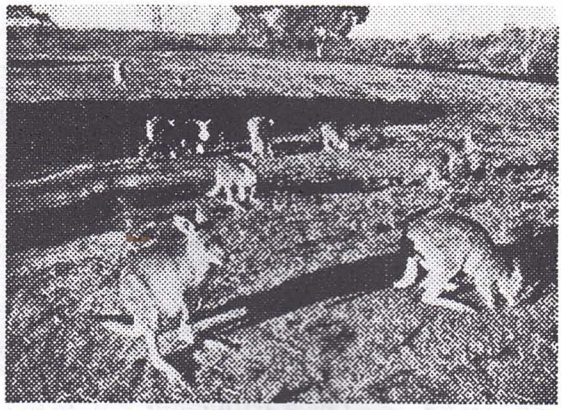
Across Australia ecotourism continues to grow in economic importance. This means more jobs for regional Australia because we are recognised as an outstanding tourist destination.

Only last week the National Parks and Wildlife Service was presented with an international award for Montague Island as a model of a project for non-invasive tourism in a sensitive environment.

As members of your Society would be only too aware, what is particularly significant about our wildlife, therefore compelling to travellers and scientists, is the percentage of species that are unique to this land.

For example about 84% of our mammals and 93% of our frogs are found nowhere else in the world. The figure for plants is just as impressive; 85% of our 20,000 species are ours alone.

One of the reasons for this diversity is the great range of ecosystems found here, ranging from alpine to tropical, from coastlines to arid, from grassland to rainforest. New South Wales has examples of all these.



Kangaroos at sunrise in Victoria. As our national emblem they provide aesthetic pleasure.

However, patterns of settlement and development have substantially altered all these natural environments; this has resulted in the rate of extinction accelerating.

Bob Debus then gave examples.

The damage to ecosystems has been well documented by our Society. Mr Debus went on:

One of the worst types of degradation is dryland salinity caused by the excessive removal of trees. Such salinity costs us over $250 million per year in lost agricultural production. Already 120,000 hectares of land in NSW is affected. However the NSW community has begun to grasp the problem and is supporting some ambitious activities to remedy the situation.

One of the most important things we have done is to protect land for conservation. Over the last five years more than one million hectares of land have been added to the national park system. More significant reservations will be announced shortly.

Parks are never the whole answer. To secure a long term solution the conservation message has to be adopted by the entire community. That is why such groups as the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia are so important.

The co-operative process is already underway. The scientists and rangers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service are working with local communities in a joint effort.

The recovery work for the Gould's petrel is one of the outstanding success stories. This is Australia's rarest endemic seabird. The NP and WLS worked with volunteers from the Cumberland Bird Observers Club, the Threatened Bird Network of Birds Australia and local high schools to work on a recovery program.

We have described this in some detail in previous magazines. As Mr Debus said it was an outstanding success and all taking part deserve our congratulations.

He went on to describe the voluntary conservation agreements by landholders since 85% of NSW land is managed by them. He then went on to describe what is being done with our longest 'paddock'.

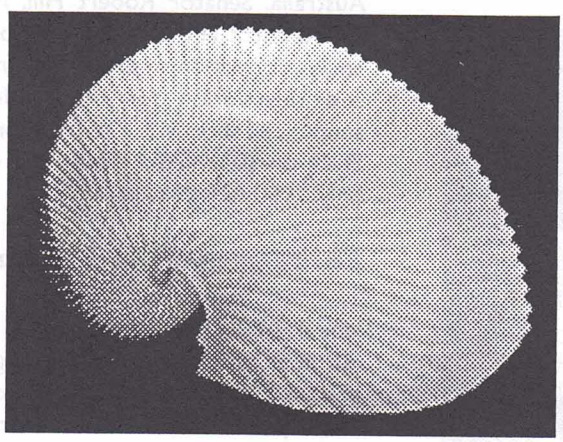
Of particular importance as publicly owned wildlife habitat across rural NSW is the network of Travelling Stock Routes and Reserves which comprise approximately 3% of the State. There is a gradual shift towards managing these for conservation as well as livestock use.

It should be noted that as part of the restructure of the NP and WLS arising out of the Visions of the New Millennium Review process that high priority is being given to involvement of the community in wildlife management and that the Service's new structure has a directorate specifically focussed on community involvement and education.

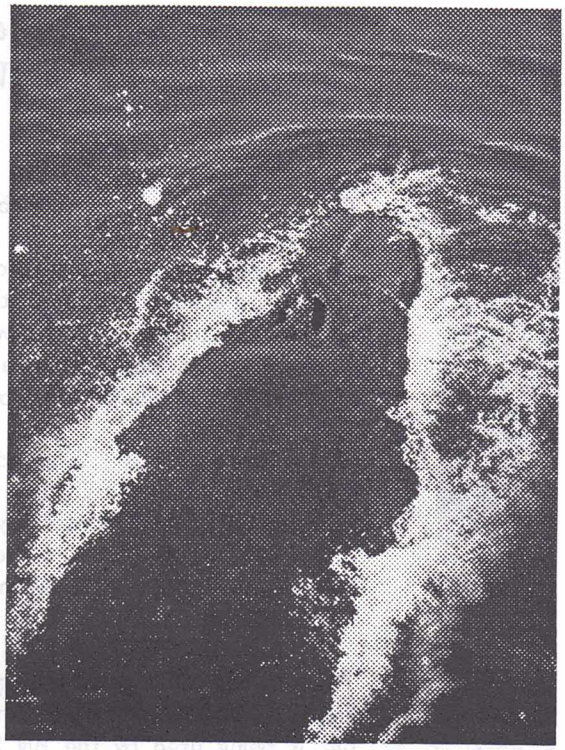
The government is also working with the community on the development of eighteen Regional Vegetation Management plans.

Let me end then by thanking the Society for its energetic work to protect our environment. It's this kind of commitment which gives me the greatest hope for the future of our diversity.

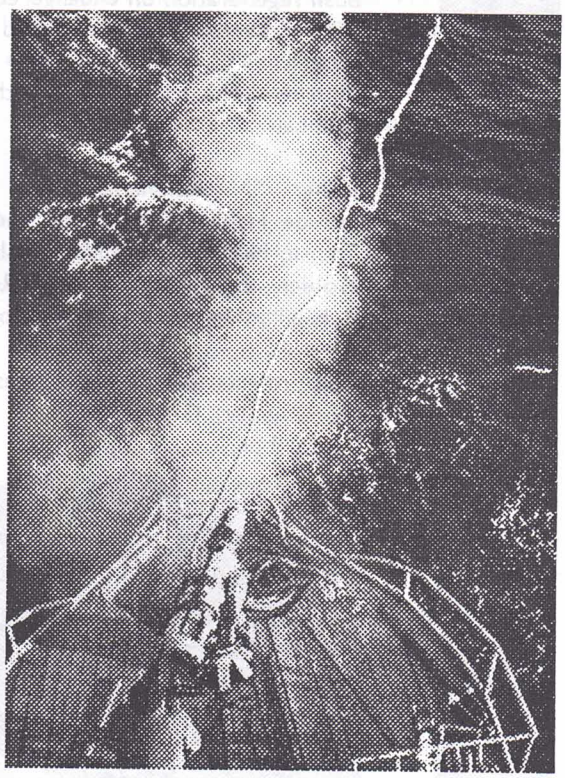
Bob Debus has always been a good friend to us. He and his government deserve the highest praise for all they have done to make this State a leader in environmental conservation.



Argonaut egg shell. In this cradle the mother protects her eggs in the seas off Montague Island which is a stronghold of the species of seashell.



Surfacing humpback whale. Whale watching brings in $50 million dollars a year.



The bad old days. A harpoon darts towards its victim.

TSN - Promoting the Conservation of NSW's Threatened Species

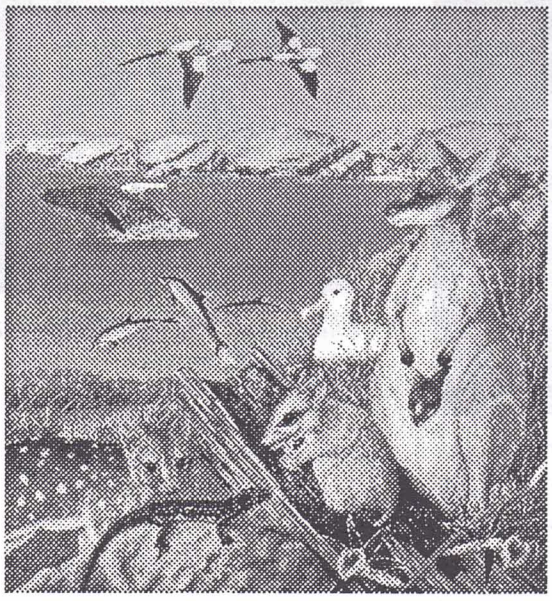
The TSN NSW has been very busy encouraging people across the state to get involved in on-ground recovery projects to protect threatened species and ecological communities. The focus is strongly directed towards empowering the community to participate in research, monitoring, management and educational projects.

One of the ways this is achieved is through the TSN Community Grants. These grants are available to incorporated community groups to fund threatened species recovery. They are funded by the Endangered Species Program of the Natural Heritage Trust.

The first round TSN Community Grant Projects are now well underway. One such grant, for example, is being used by the Big Scrub Rainforest Landcare Group to implement a model program for bush regeneration. The 170 members will be involved in implementing best practice methods and learning important new skills to carry out bush regeneration on endangered plants. Another TSN Community Grant funded the Friends of Grasslands to establish two new reserves for the Monaro Golden Daisy and its threatened grassland habitat.

Other TSN Community Grant funded projects include Habitat Restoration and Protection on Transit Hill on Lord Howe Island, Green and Golden Bell Frog Habitat Restoration, and Rehabilitation of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

The projects funded in the latest round of TSN Community Grants will be announced in September.



WOW! War on Weeds Declared

Berowra Catchment Management Committee and Hornsby Shire Council, with the help of the Green Corps, have declared a war on weeds (WOW) - a community education and involvement project to remove environmental and noxious weeds from our valuable bushland.

Remnant bushland is an irreplaceable asset in urban areas. It enhances property values, adds to residents' quality of life, and is vital for the protection of biodiversity and natural assets. Rehabilitating bushland requires more than just weed control.

If you live within 500m of bushland, WOW will help you identify and remove major invasive weeds such as camphor laurel and privet from your land and provide replacement plants grown from local seed. For information contact the Berowra Catchment Management Committee on (02) 9842 7187.

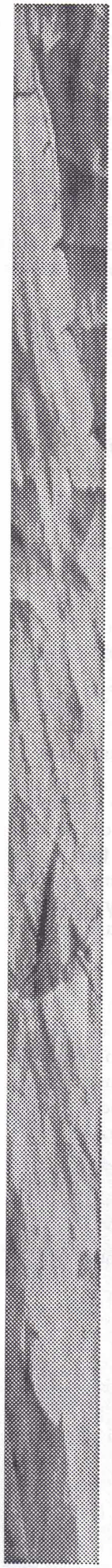
Legislative News

Environmental Defenders Office Conference: 'Power, Politics and Place'

The National EDO Network is holding a conference on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the division of environmental regulatory responsibility in Australia. The conference, to be held on Thursday 14 October, 1999, will provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss the implications of the Act and the future of environmental legislation in Australia. Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, will open the conference. Information regarding the program, speakers and registration for the conference will be announced shortly. For more information, call the EDO on (02) 9262 6989. Free call STD callers only: 1800 626 239.

Environmental Defender and Impact

June 1999 issues of these EDO publications are out now. Articles include: Getting documents out of your local council, Timbarra Gold Mine update, security for costs issues in recent cases, and a review of DUAP's Green Paper on Part 3 of the EP&A Act. Take out a subscription to keep up with the latest developments in environmental law. Call the EDO on (02) 9262 6989. Fax (02) 9262 6998. Free call STD callers only: 1800 626 239.



NCC Conference on the Land and Environment Court

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW is holding a conference on 27 and 28 August, 1999, on the operations of the NSW Land and Environment Court. Sessions include community experience with the Court, planning laws and opportunities for reform. For details contact the NCC on (02) 9279 2466 ncc@nccnsw.org.au

A Guide to Bird Habitats in NSW

The NSW Bird Atlassers (NSWBA) are proud to announce the launch of their latest publication - A guide to the bird habitats in NSW - an attempt to link the distribution of bird species with their preferred habitat.

This publication contains more than 200 photographs of the varying types of vegetation in NSW, from oceanic islands to rainforests, alpine herbfields, woodlands, grasslands, the largest riverine wetlands system in Australia, and the near-desert environment of the far west of this State. Given such a diversity of habitats it is unreasonable to expect the average bird watcher to be able to identify specific vegetation for the more than 500 species of birds accepted as occurring in NSW. Hence this guide to the bird habitats in NSW, which describes the differing types of vegetation, and provides a list of some of the more common types of birds one might expect to find there.

For more information or to order copies contact the publicity officer of the NSWBA: Jen Southern. Phone/Fax (02) 6753 3242.

Websites

By ELHAM MONAVARI
TSN Volunteer

www.murraycmc.org

This is the website of the Murray Catchment Management Committee. Here you will find information about the Murray Catchment, the Committee and Catchment Management, natural resource management, achievements thus far, and lots more.

www.sydneybats.org.au/

This is the site for the Ku-Ring-Gai Bat Society. The aim of this site is to educate people about bats and to encourage conservation of bat habitats and to restore the Ku-Ring-Gai Bat Reserve. On-line is information on the latest events and the best bat sighting areas. There are also links to other "bat sites". So if you're a lover of these mysterious mammals or would like to find out more about them, then check out this site.

http:203.132.10.220

This is the brand new website (still waiting on domain name, hence the unusual website address!) of the Murray Wetlands Working Group. Here you can find information on the wetlands of the Murray and Lower Darling, wetland health, wetting and drying cycles, and the MWWG strategic plan.

www.bushheritage.asn.au/

The Australian Bush Heritage Trust purchases land with the aim to protect it from logging and other threats. Each piece of land is maintained and managed. This site also has their newsletters on-line.

www.worldwildlife.org/travel

This site offers information on WWF planned trips. Travel costs are not included, but a great time is free! The 1999 trips sound so good you'll want to leave your computer immediately and jet off. With WWF travel you'll receive expert knowledge on wildlife and find the best times to go to see great wildlife. This site has great graphics.

www.earthwatch.org

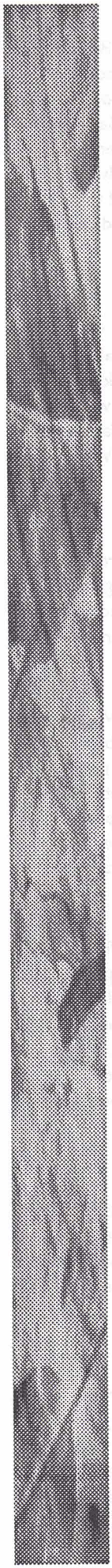
The EarthWatch Institute is a non-profit organisation that supports field research to improve management of the earth. It's mission goal is to promote sustainable conservation of the earth's natural resources and cultural heritage. It offers volunteers the opportunity to help scientists gather data in exotic locations. A great site if you want to save and help the planet.

www.bio.usyd.edu.au /SOBS/SRC_EICC/sre.html

Research into further understanding of ecological processes by changes to the coastal environment. This site has information on courses on offer and research programs.

www.gaia.org

The Global Village Network aims at creating committees where people live in harmony with the environment by using environmentally sustainable methods. This site has information on eco-villages as well as ways to minimise waste and the latest news from the eco-villages.



http://membersxoom.com/towra/index.html

Towra Point Reserve has an area of 386.4 ha. It forms a very important ecological community for migratory birds such as the Japanese Snipe. It is also involved in international treaties with China and Japan. This is a great site that stresses the importance of Towra Reserve and the conservation challenges it faces. It also looks at management action undertaken.

www.statistics.gov.au/

If statistics is what you need, then this site will be of great value to you. This provides great background information as it compares statistics from previous years. I went to the icon "Environment" and had a look at expenditure. I was then able to see how much the government and private sectors spend on protecting the environment. Interesting stuff!!

www.aph.gov.au/

This site is dedicated to the Senate. To find out about the latest projects I followed the path: 1) What's New From the Senate; 2) Inquiry into Jabiluka Mine Project. This provided me with background information on the proposed mine. It also had the Environmental Impact Statement on-line and looked at the rights of the traditional owners. Another thing worth noting (April 27, 1999) is the reform to the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Bill 1998.

www.nature.com

"Nature" is the international weekly journal of science. The website has up to date information on the latest scientific discoveries. By using key words you can "search" the site for the appropriate articles.

Overview of the Conservation Status of Australian Marine Invertebrates

The Australian Museum has recently been contracted by Environment Australia to undertake an overview of the conservation of marine invertebrates in Australia and its territories.

This will complement the existing report on non-terrestrial invertebrates (Yen & Butcher, 1997 - An overview of the conservation of Non-marine Invertebrates in Australia. Endangered Species Program, Environment Australia, Canberra). The report will cover topics such as the composition of the Australian fauna; the importance of marine invertebrates and invertebrate biodiversity (both for humans and for the maintenance of ecological processes); threatened invertebrate species, communities and habitats in Australia; approaches to invertebrate conversation, including marine protected areas; and major threatening processes.

Anyone interested in providing relevant expertise or input into this project is strongly encouraged to contact the coordinators of the project at the Australian Museum. Contact details are as follows:

Dr Winston Ponder
Tel: (02) 9320 6120, email: winstonp@amsg.austmus.gov.au

Dr Pat Hutchings
Tel: (02) 9320 6243, email: winstonp@amsg.austmus.gov.au

Australian Museum
6 College St, Sydney NSW 2000

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Australia's largest practical conservation group.

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) is a national, non profit, non political community organisation which was founded in Ballarat in 1982. ATCV assists land managers with projects which preserve, protect and restore Australia's natural environment and cultural heritage.

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers is all about involving the community in practical "hands on" conservation projects where people learn and understand their environment and know they are making a real contribution and difference to the restoration and future of Australia's fragile ecosystems. Typical projects include:

- Tree Planting
- Protection of threatened species
- Walking track construction and maintenance
- Seed collection
- Weed control
- Flora & fauna surveys
- Fencing
- Environmental education & monitoring

For more information, contact Libby McIntyre on (02) 9564 1244

EARTH 2000 CONFERENCE

A major International conference on conservation to stimulate a world wide interest in conserving our wildlife, to be held in Sydney, Australia from 3-11 June, 2000.

Sponsored by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. Founded in 1909.

Saving Australia

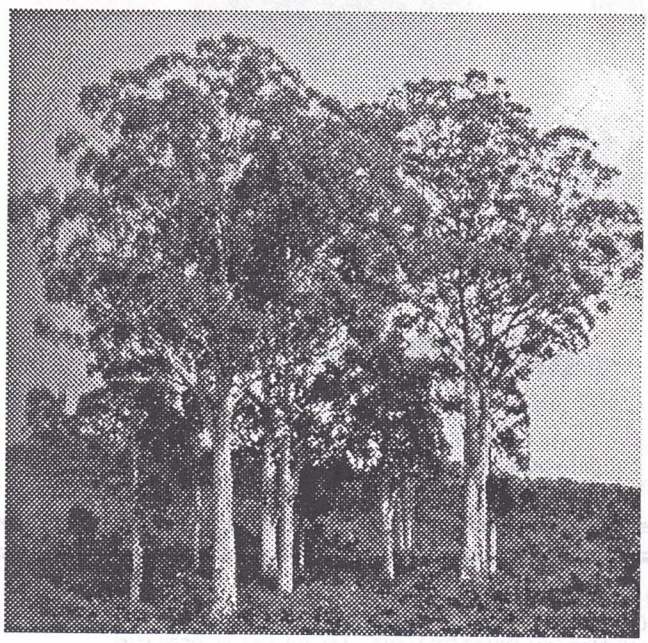
A New Snowy Scheme for the Millennium

by Vincent Serventy

Fifty years ago the Snowy Scheme began. It is often asked; do we have the vision today to create a similar effort to solve a major problem? First we must decide what is our major problem. Most conservation efforts up to the present have been devoted to the battle to save our forests. A worthy task, today almost completed, except for a few States. Our woodlands also suffered but only recently has there been any interest in saving them.

Our Society for many years regarded our major conservation need was to restore our soils. To stop the long and continuing degradation of our major asset.

What can we do? Luckily we have begun some moves so we have a 'greenprint' for the future. **Planting more trees solves many major problems.** The Olympic sites in every State are models to copy. In these projects Landcare, Greening Australia and other groups are involved with national government assistance, together with the local shire council helping.



Tasmanian Blue Gum.

High Rainfall Areas

In Western Australia CALM has been working for many years, not needing any Olympic spur to begin efforts. Also their schemes affect most of the State. A pilot scheme begun in 1988 has burgeoned into a hundred thousand hectares of Tasmanian bluegum plantations in the higher rainfall areas with hundreds of farmers taking part. This is not all 'blue sky schemes' as economic returns are already being earned by farmers in terms of timber sales.

Medium Rainfall Zones

The medium rainfall zone is now being targeted with plantations of maritime pines, trees which do well on the most infertile of sandy soils. The goal is to plant 250,000 hectares in the next ten years, all in the medium rainfall zone. The benefits are less erosion, ground water levels dropping and therefore winning the battle against salination, as well as side benefits of shade for stock. The farmers join in share farming schemes with CALM who supply both expertise and a great deal of extra help.

This is all part of the State salination plan which intends to establish trees and perennial shrubs at a cost of $3 billion. None of these three schemes entailed the clearing of forests, the plantations being carried out on already cleared land.

Arid Areas

What of the arid areas? These areas should be also covered with plantings of various kinds of acacias, mallees, sandalwood and the like, all helping with the main aims of countering erosion and salination and also providing immediate income in terms of oils etc.

Desert oak forest central Australia. The best solutions for arid lands of the world is tree planting to counter the greenhouse effect. Such lands are cheap to buy and have few people.

The New Scientist Magazine in a recent issue described a need to establish forests in the dry areas of the world, much more important than worrying about rainforests. The beauty of using dry areas is that everywhere the demands of agriculture and urbanisation make the use of much of this land too costly. In Australia we have vast arid areas suitable for plantings with mulga and other species, all earning carbon credits so Australia can meet the demands of the Kyoto international decisions.

So what should we do?

Obviously the first task is for Federal Minster Senator Robert Hill to gain a general approval from the Cabinet. Then a gathering of all the State CALMS, or their equivalents to facilitate this process. Western Australia is showing real progress in this area.

Feral Animal Control

The Western Shield program against feral animals is already doing wonders. Senator Robert Hill, with his experience on Olympic sites and other Heritage examples, financed from the sale of Telstra, are guides to follow. Money is now available from the new float of Telstra which could be channeled into this new project. It should answer 'where's the money coming from?'.

Once the main plan has been agreed, a much larger gathering at Canberra should be organised to sell The Vision. All the State conservation councils and the other major non-government groups should converge to get the voluntary conservation movement galvanised. Landcare, Greening Australia, Cleanup Australia, Farmers Federation and all interested bodies could also meet to hear The Vision. Hopefully they will be inspired and promise their full support. The Vision could then be officially launched.

Bonuses For All

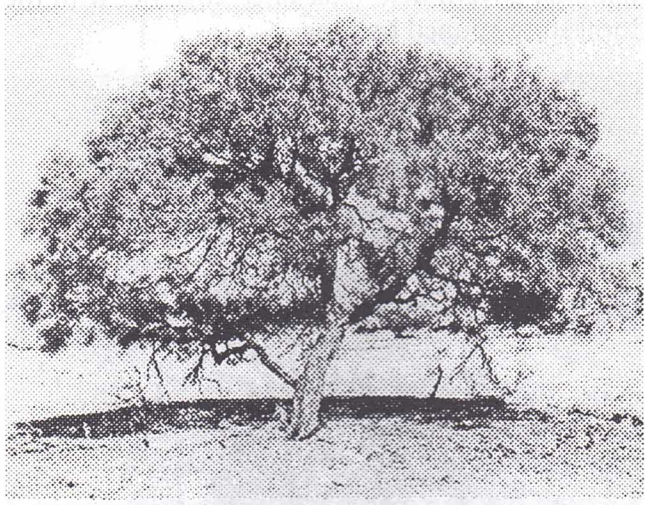
What a bonus for the years to follow 2000. We had a hundred thousand folk working on the Snowy scheme. With 'Saving Australia', we would have millions. It would cost so little and be wonderful for regional Australia.

Even the farmers could sell the carbon credits and be paid for doing the right thing.

'The Vision'
This Vision is a task for all Australians. We can all assist by planting more trees to save Australia and to help restore the land back to the way it used to be.

I call on everyone to join in the tree planting process and help save our land.

Vincent Serventy AM
President



Sandalwood, central Australia.

Official Address: Earth 2000 Conference Executive Steering Committee, GPO 3428, Sydney, NSW, Australia 1043
Vincent Serventy AM, PRESIDENT Tel: 02 4344 4708 Patrick W. Medway, EXECUTIVE OFFICER Tel/ Fax: 02 9556 1537

The Inaugural
EARTH 2000 INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION LECTURE

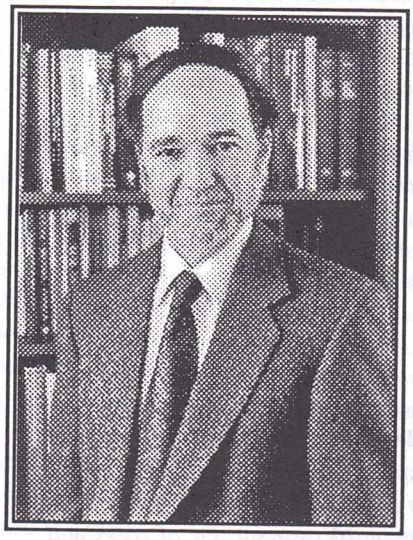
An Evening with Professor Jared Diamond

Thursday 8 June 2000, 6.30pm

Venue: Wesley Centre Theatre
220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Tickets: $15/ $10 (Concession)

Bookings: The Australian Museum Society
Tel: 9320 6225



Professor Jared Diamond, from the University of California, is the author of 'The Third Chimpanzee' and 'Guns, Germs and Steel'. Diamond's physiological studies have brought him fame and election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the same time, he has pursued a parallel career in ecology and evolutionary biology, combining research into population biology with practical efforts to stem the accelerating disappearance of the world's biodiversity.

For the past two decades, Professor Diamond has been devoting much of his time to popular science writing and speaking. An intellectually stimulating yet accessible and entertaining lecture is guaranteed.

BOOK NOW WITH TAMS on Tel: 9320 6225

Armidale Tree Group

Reversing the "humans are an exterminator species" theory

Tim Flannery, in his article "The Diversity Enigma" develops the argument that humans are one of the "exterminator species" (Australian Natural History, Vol 24.1 1992). This means we significantly reduce the species diversity in the areas in which we live. This is most clearly demonstrated in areas where soils have a high nutrient level and, using agricultural methods, we manage to dominate the ecosystem with one species such as cereal crops or cotton. We humans are also continuing to change the environment by land clearing, introducing plants and animals from overseas and altering soil fertility with introduced legumes and fertilisers. We are also changing the ozone layer, the composition of the atmosphere and the climate. Sadly, it is therefore realistic to expect more plant and animal species in Australia and across the world to become rarer. It is predicted that many will become extinct in the future.

In an effort to help rectify this situation on a local level, the Armidale Tree Group (ATG) has embarked on a project of introducing rare and threatened plant species from the New England area in NSW, into private gardens. The aims of the project are to develop propagation strategies for rare plants suitable for the garden and to encourage people to grow these plants in a wide range of soil and climatic conditions. The outcome will be reduced risk of losing the species and the environmental limits of each species can be better understood.

In gathering the data for this project it was discovered that among the over 200 rare and threatened species identified from the New England area, over 120 species of trees, shrubs and herbs have horticultural potential. Currently the Tree Group grows about 20 rare species of trees and shrubs. ATG has long fostered the growing of interesting rare species such as Hillgrove Gum (Eucalyptus michaeliana), Barren Mountain Mallee (Eucalyptus approximans), Melaleuca tortifolia, Callitris oblonga, Callistemon pungens and Westringia glabra. Other groups of rare plants that the ATG are interested in cultivating include Acacias, with beautiful rich yellow blooms, Boronias, with large colourful flowers, Callistemons (Bottlebrushes), Dodonaeas (Hop Bushes), Eucalypts, Grevilleas and Hakeas.

The ATG has an extensive list of rare plants under consideration for the project and if you would like a copy of the list, or would like to assist with the project (especially if you have rare plants growing in your garden), please contact Peter Metcalfe or Mike O'Keefe (phone 02-6771 1620 or fax 02-6771 1138) or call in to the nursery at 80 Mann Street, Armidale.

Understanding the Life Cycles of Land Fills

A Case Study of the Year 2000 Olympic Site: ***Dr Kate Hughes, Ecology Programs OCA***

The Evolution of Modern Landfills

Modern landfills are very much the product of post-war society and are very different in character to the old dumps of earlier human societies where populations were far smaller than they are today and more evenly dispersed to both urban and rural environments. Mining wastes have of course, been generated for centuries beginning with mining and metallurgy in ancient times ' but it was not until the first wave of industrialisation in the early nineteenth century that a huge scale of production was possible. In those times, however, communities produced and consumed products that are very different to products in use today and naturally the waste stream was significantly different. The availability of consumer goods was restricted to what the technologies of the time could provide and as well by the limited purchasing power of the community and the constraints of transport.

From the middle of the last century to the period immediately prior to the First World War, consumer products as we know them today did not exist. Domestic waste would have contained much putrescible matter as well as spent household items like rags, metal offcuts, leather, wood, glass and porcelain wastes and simple solvents, paints and glues. Wastes were also generated by the manufacture of basic and intermediate products associated with coal, iron and steel industries. These were mainly dealt with on-site or dumped nearby in gullies, rivers and seas. Wastes from the dye and chemical industries were also disposed of in the local environment.

The Homebush Bay Olympic Site.

The waste generation practices of this early industrial period would have generated ground and surface water pollution and the extent of damage to ecosystems would have varied greatly. However, the relatively small size of the industrial sector in relation to the available land would have ensured that pollution impacts generally remained localised. However it did exist in increasingly significant quantities and set the stage for what was to come when technological capacity made order of magnitude leaps in both the scale and quality of production.

The power of technology greatly expanded following the First World War and a greater range of consumer products appeared on the market. Consumer durables like radios, phonographs, cameras, fridges and other home appliances became quickly accepted and a range of consumer chemical products began to appear. However, the volume of products and associated wastes were still restricted by technology as well as being constrained by the low purchasing power of the population due to harsh economic times and another world war.

With World War Two over, production turned towards the consumer market and a huge range of consumer goods came rapidly onto the market. The purchasing power of the population had never been higher and the amount of waste generated in the affluent society expanded exponentially. The volume of wastes was one issue and placed stresses on landfall sites, causing many countries to turn to the incineration of wastes to cope with the volumes. In Australia, landfill sites for urban wastes were plentiful and in 1999 this method of waste disposal is still the most common.

The other critical issue was, and still is, the quality of the waste generated by a consumer society. Oil and water based paints, lead and acrylic paints, pesticides like copper arsenate, dieldrin, chlordane and DDT, plastics of all types and shapes, solvents and thinners of various chemistries, aerosol containers with an astonishing array of fillers, batteries large and small, and steel and aluminium cans are but some of the plethora of modern junk that now goes to landfill. This mix of toxic and potentially toxic compounds joins with putrescible matter and solid waste items to form a complex matrix of inorganic and organic matter overlaying the natural environment. From this point on, it is the anticipation of variability in possible environmental outcomes that are important for landfill managers and environmental technicians charged with protecting environmental assets from pollution impacts. Such anticipation is evident in the approach taken by OCA at the Homebush Bay Olympic site in Sydney, NSW, where fifty years of waste dumping left a legacy of degraded and contaminated lands.

Remediation Strategies at Homebush Bay, Premier Site of the Year 2000 Olympic Games

The Homebush Bay Olympic site is a 760-hectare site located 17 kilometres from the Sydney CBD. Originally the area comprised a diverse environment of wetlands, waterways, salt marsh, forests and grasslands. Much of the wetland and mud-flats were reclaimed for industrial development and during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, nine million cubic metres of domestic, commercial and industrial wastes were dumped on about 160 hectares, with various locations receiving different sorts of waste. These included oil products, gas works, chemical and foundry wastes, tar sludge, power station ash, builders rubble, asbestos, pesticide and related chemical by-products and the full gamut of domestic wastes. Site monitoring established that a range of substances were present in the landfills, at assorted locations and with erratic concentrations.

The complexity of the waste stream and its uneven distribution over the site posed significant challenges to the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA) which, as the construction authority for the Sydney Olympics, was charged with the task of site clean up. Overall, the organisation has been successful in this task because from the beginning a whole of site approach was taken, layered over a well-researched understanding of the ecology of the area " As various remediation projects were undertaken, an iteractive process of investigation, analysis and interpretation of site data sets resulted in an improved understanding of the biogeochemistry of landfills. This greatly assisted project managers to better understand the degree of pollution potential of the leachates generated from the landfill sites.

The remedial strategy involved the relocation of much of the waste from areas of high environmental sensitivity such as wetlands and waterways to engineered waste mounds that were built upon the huge existing waste mountains that existed at some parts of the site. Four engineered waste mounds exist on site and all include leachate management systems. As part of the overall site monitoring, regular sampling of leachate was undertaken for a large range of organic chemical and metallic analytes. The main compound consistently detected was ammonia, indicating that natural attenuation was taking place within the landfill matrix.

Where are the Metals?

During the site works, which to date have spanned five years, a major concern was the protection of ground and surface waters from contamination by landfill leachate. Prior to remediation works, extensive hydrogeological surveys were undertaken and established that site hydrogeology was characterised by the existence of multiple aquifers, both deep and shallow. Extensive site investigations established that the metals content of acquifers did not vary regardless of their location with respect the various landfills on the site. In other words, the metal levels in aquifers did not appear to vary as a function of proximity to groundwater. This outcome is explained by reference to the bio-chemistry of landfills, which proposes that metal contaminants within an organic matrix will bond and remain locked within the matrix. This mechanistic approach to understanding the fate of metals in landfills provides interesting lessons for future land managers as it provides a pollution assessment tool based on a robust understanding of the basic chemistry of the environment.[iii] The Olympic Co-ordination Authority is providing funding for an enhanced remediation strategy which will assist the provision of improved description of this and other aspects of the phenomenon of natural and assisted attenuation.

---

i For fascinating accounts of the history of metals see Wiley-Interscience Series of Texts and Monographs. Environmental Science and Technology. Metcalfe R.L. and Stumm W.Eds. John Wiley and Sons, New York.

ii See William R Jordan III Restoration Ecology: A Synthetic Approach to Ecological Research in Cairns J.. Rehabilitating Damaged Ecosystems second edition. Lewis Publishers Boca Raton FL., 1995

iii For a discussion see Benson W H. "Better Science Makes for Better Decisions". Editorial. Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry. SETAC(1995). Vol.14, no.11. Pp 1811 ff.

Australian Bush Heritage Fund

Bush Heritage was established in 1990 when two magnificent forest blocks, abutting the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, were put up for auction. Realising that these 241 hectares were destined to be woodchipped, environmentalist Dr Bob Brown used his US Goldman Environmental Prize of $49,000 as a deposit, borrowing the rest from friends and the bank, to buy the properties and set up the Australian Bush Heritage Fund.

The Fund has made rapid progress and currently has some 4,000 financial supporters. It is now a registered company with tax deductibility status and a national office in Hobart, Tasmania, and is managed by a Board of Directors who come from various States.

By 1996 Bush Heritage had paid off its original loans and acquired significant land holdings in four States. (Contact our office for details and the latest news.)

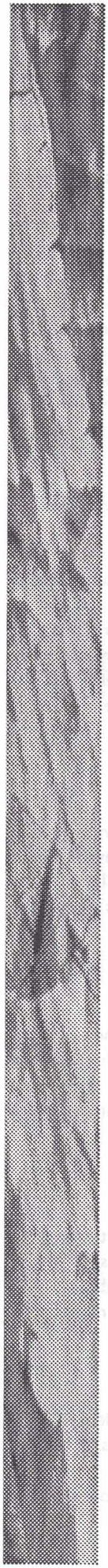
The objective of Bush Heritage is to identify and acquire important examples of Australia's unique ecosystem types and wildlife habitats. With the assistance of expert advisers, the Fund is continually assessing areas for potential purchase and its quarterly newsletter, Bush Heritage News, keeps donors informed of new acquisitions for conservation.

Did you know that a significant proportion of Australia's natural heritage is on privately owned land? Such land is often out of the reach government protection, but is increasingly threatened by inappropriate development.

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund, a non-profit organisation, is establishing a national approach to the raising of funds to buy and protect private lands of outstanding conservation value.

Global Models

The inspiration for creating the Australian Bush Heritage Fund came from large land acquisition bodies such as The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Lands in the United States and the Woodlands Trust and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the United Kingdom.



While distinctly Australian, Bush Heritage is building on the extensive experience of fellow organisations overseas, to ensure the best protection for Australia's national heritage.

Looking after the Land

Land purchased by Bush Heritage will remain secure irrespective of the vagaries of governments or industry pressure. They are committed to taking long term care of the areas purchase. Comprehensive management plans are developed for each block, to protect and maintain their special values. Voluntary land management committees are established, involving neighbours an local experts.

Remember the Bush in your Will

Bush Heritage is an excellent choice for those who love the bush and want to help it to survive for future generations. Bequests to Bush Heritage of money, property, shares, insurance policies or anything of value will contribute towards the purchase and protection of some of our unique natural inheritance.

Bush Heritage - Good News for Corporations

As more Australians have become aware of air and water pollution and other environmental hazards, companies are easy visible targets for criticism which can damage their public image. Even those who take costly steps to protect the environment find it hard to promote the difference between themselves and those who are not so careful.

Sponsorship of Bush Heritage is a positive and public way for companies to demonstrate their concern for the environment.

Threatened Species Day

Australia holds many different landscapes, and those landscapes are home to an incredible variety of plants and animals. However, this rich biological diversity is under threat, In NSW alone, more than 80 plant and animal species have become extinct since European occupation. More than 600 others are considered either endangered or vulnerable - and the list of threatened species continues to grow.

How do species become threatened?

One of the most devastating threats to native species can be caused directly by humans. This is the loss, modification or fragmentation of habitat. All species need habitat - or food and shelter - to survive.

Humans destroy wildlife habitat by clearing land, for such things as farming, logging or urban development. Habitat can also be disturbed - for example by pollution, or by changed water flows, or by the removal of particular elements of the environment (such as bushrock or fallen timber).

Native plant and animal species are also threatened by introduced (or exotic) species. Weeds invade the bush, particularly through the dumping of garden refuse and the spreading of exotic seeds by domestic stock. These exotic plants take the place of native vegetation. In addition, native animals must often compete for food with rabbits, wild goats, feral pigs and other introduced species. Many are preyed upon by feral cats, wild dogs and foxes.

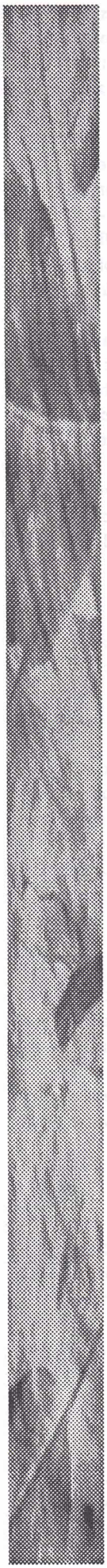
The following threatened species are all found in NSW or in waters off the NSW coast:

1. Spinner dolphin
(stenella longirostris) - vulnerable
Named for its acrobatic spins and twists, the spinner dolphin congregates in large schools in tropical and warm temperature waters. It is threatened by oil spills and by the increasing amounts of plastic debris and industrial waste being dumped into our waterways and oceans.

2. Humpback whale
(Megaptera novaeangliae) - vulnerable
Humpbacks migrate along the east coast of Australia, travelling between their Antarctic feeding grounds and their breeding areas off the Queensland coast. Since the end of whaling in 1963, their populations appear to be recovering. However, they are still threatened by water pollution and human interference.

3. Blue Mountains water skink
(Eulamprus leuraensis) - endangered
The Blue Mountain water skink lives only in the heaths, swamps and tussock grasslands of a few isolated areas in the central Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Loss of habitat , changes to water flow and quality, and predation by cats has brought this species to the brink of extinction.

4. Brush-tailed phascogale
(Phascogale tapoatafa) - vulnerable
This small marsupial is an agile climber, making its nests in tree hollow. Sparsely distributed along the coast of Australia, it prefers dry, open eucalypt



forests. Loss of habitat, through the clearing of land and inappropriate bushfire patterns, has put the brush-tailed phascogale on the threatened list. It is also hunted by foxes and cats.

5. Regent parrot
(Polytelis anthopeplus) - endangered
One subspecies of the regent parrot occurs only on the south-western plains of NSW, along the Murray River and a small part of the Darling. It depends on river red gum and black box trees for nesting, and on large, diverse blocks of mallee woodland for its food. Together with illegal trapping, habitat loss is a major threat to the survival of this beautiful bird.

6. Comb-crested jacana
(Irediparra gallinacea) - vulnerable
An exceptionally long hind toe helps the comb-crested jacana to walk on waterweeds. Alone or in pairs, birds forage along the edges of pools and among floating leaves. They often sunbathe, lying on their sides on the top of pond plants. Loss of habitat, and predation by foxes and cats, have taken their toll on the comb-crested jacana.

7. Wandering albatross
(Diomedea exulans) - endangered
Wandering albatrosses are the largest flying birds alive, with a wingspan of nearly three-and-a-half metres. They may live for more than 40 years, most of which time is spent at sea. Feeding principally on squid, many of these majestic birds are hooked and drowned during long-line fishing operations.

8. Wollemi pine
(Wollemia nobilis) - endangered
Unique to Australia, this recently discovered species is found in only one location. The pine is found in a warm temperate rainforest in Wollemi National Park, north-west of Sydney. It can reach a height of 40 metres. Threats to the tree's future include catastrophic bushfires, unauthorised collection of seeds by people, and the introduction of diseases. To protect the pine from interference, access to the site is highly restricted.

9. Spotted-tailed quoll
(Dasyurus maculatus) - vulnerable
The spotted-tailed quoll is a large carnivorous marsupial. Living in forests, it nests in caves, trees and hollow logs. It often basks in the sun during the day. Threats to this species include the loss of habitat through land clearance and competition with foxes and cats for food.

10. Black-striped wallaby
(Macropus dorsalis) - endangered
The black-striped wallaby prefers habitat in which it can hide - mainly forested country with a dense shrub layer. By day, groups of 20 or more rest under cover, in more or less permanent camps. The major threat to this wallaby is loss of habitat.

11. Blue-billed duck
(Oxyura australis) - vulnerable
The male, with his distinctive slate-blue bill, gives this species its name. Living in temperate wetlands, the blue-billed duck is mostly aquatic and is seldom seen on land. Numbers of the species have mainly been reduced by destruction or modification of habitat - in particular drainage works, land clearance, burning and cropping.

12. Cotton pygmy goose
(Nettapus coromandelianus) - endangered
Completely aquatic, this bird seldom leaves the water except to rest on logs. It prefers dams and waterways with deep-water plants, and spends most of its time floating among the waterlilies. Flying fast and low, it only comes near the shore to feed. The cotton pygmy goose is threatened by loss of habitat, especially dead trees with hollows near water. It also suffers with changes to water quality and flow.

13. Swamp orchid
(Phiaus tankervilliae) - endangered
The swamp orchid grows only in swamps on the north coast of NSW, at or near sea level. It flowers around September and October. Land clearance and development threaten this very rare plant.

14. Dwarf Phyllota
(Phyllota humifusa) - vulnerable
The dwarf phyllota is restricted to the southern Blue Mountains, where it grows in dry eucalypt forests on sand shale soils. It flowers during late spring and summer. Urban development and polluted water place this species at risk.

15. Green-thighed frog
(Litoria brevipalmata) - vulnerable
Found in isolated wet eucalypt forest along the northern NSW coast, this frog lives in grassy semi-permanent ponds. Loss of habitat and decreasing water quality have caused numbers of this species to decline.

How can you help?

There are a number of ways by which you can help to protect the threatened species of NSW:

- Join a community-based conservation group in your local area

• Get involved in feral animal control programs taking place in your area

• Keep domestic stock away from remnant vegetation

• Don't remove vegetation, especially near creeks, water courses or rivers

• Plant locally-occurring native species

• Control your pets, keeping cats and dogs indoors at night

• Ask the NPWS for advice on protecting threatened species habitat (see contact numbers below)

• Take care when driving - slow down in areas where wildlife are likely to be

• Don't remove dead standing trees or fallen timber

• Leave bushrock where it is.

Need more information?

For further information about threatened species ring your local NPWS office, or call 1300 361 967.

Alternatively, visit NPWS website, at www.npws.nsw.gov.au

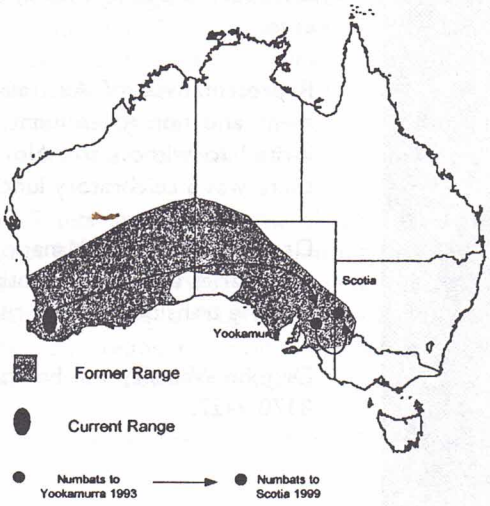
If you'd like information about events and activities in your area contact the Threatened Species Information Line 1800 684 447.

Numbats Return to NSW

At 11am on November 1999 the Numbat, one of Australia's most highly endangered wildlife species, returned to NSW after a 70 year absence.

Earth Sanctuaries, one of Australia's leaders in saving endangered wildlife, transported 20 numbats from Yookamurra Sanctuary in the Murray Mallee of South Australia to Scotia Sanctuary in NSW.

This translocation is a significant milestone for NSW conservation, as the State has suffered significant loss of biodiversity since 1788. The importance of the event is recognised by the co-operation Earth Sanctuaries has received for the project from WA's Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), South Australia's National Parks and Wildlife Division, and NSW's National Parks.



The Numbats will be released into Stage 1, a 4,000 hectare area at Scotia surrounded by 25 kilometres of feral proof fence and from which all cats, dogs, foxes, goats, sheep and rabbits have been removed.

The release sites have been hand picked by staff to have the best conditions for Numbat survival: good tree cover and a good distribution of tree hollows to provide protection and nesting sites.

Each female Numbat is capable of raising four young each year. At this rate, Scotia could be supporting a population of 5,000 Numbats within seven years, or more than half the world's population of this rare and unique marsupial.

Numbats once ranged over much of southern Australia from south-western NSW and north western Victoria through into South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, but were so affected by introduced predators that they were reduced to approximately 200 individuals by the 1970s and restricted to the Dryandra and Perup forests in the South West of WA. Due to CALMS innovative and strategic Western Shield Program, the numbers of Numbats and the area of suitable Numbat habitat has steadily improved.

In 1993 fifteen Numbats were translocated by CALM to Yookamurra Sanctuary in South Australia. This population thrived, and today there is estimated to be over 120 animals living within the safety of Yookamurra's 1,100 feral-free hectares. This abundance will allow a population of approximately 40 in total to be shifted to Scotia Sanctuary, and for a number of individuals to be returned to WA.

The Numbats will join growing populations of Bilbies, Plains Mice, Woylies, Bridled Nail-tail Wallabies and Stick-nest Rats at Scotia. All of these species are endangered and many were extinct in NSW until Earth Sanctuaries established Scotia

Sanctuary and progressively returned them to the area.

Representatives of Australia's foremost government and non-government wildlife bodies were invited to witness the November 24 event, and there was a celebratory lunch after the release.

Dr John Wamsley, Managing Director of Earth Sanctuaries Ltd, was in Scotia Sanctuary to supervise the translocation and release of Numbats.

Dr John Wamsley can be contacted at ESL on 08 8370 9422.

Seal Culls Won't Work

Christian Bell
Marine & Coastal Community Network

From time to time calls are made in the media in support of seal culling. These are usually made on behalf of marine resource users. Claims are made that seal numbers are booming and that a cull is needed to bring them under control.

The figures that I have would hardly seem to support that view. Take Moriaty Rocks (near Clarke Island in Bass Strait): Australian fur seal pups were counted and a figure of 397 was obtained in 1997. It showed a decrease of 788 seal pups on the 1994 count. From the other side of the Strait a worse set of figures were revealed from Reid Rocks (near King Island), the only breeding colony of Australian fur seals in western Bass Strait. In 1995, 2,891 seal pups were counted.

A similar count in 1998 observed only 244. These figures were obtained from the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service.

The population of Australian fur seals represents only a tiny fraction of what it would have been pre-European contact, when, after all, they virtually had the fish resource to themselves (as did the other wildlife). Aboriginal subsistence hunting would have hardly caused a dent in their numbers. Common sense suggests that it is Europeans who have substantially raided the larder and left relatively little for the wildlife.

Seals have had a hard time of it (in the case of the Australian fur seal), after nearly becoming extinct in Tasmanian waters. Yes, there has been a slow population increase since they have become protected species. Still, the lot of a seal is never an easy one and they are still illegally shot or fall victim to marine debris or other impacts of human use of the seas.

We have to learn to live intelligently when interacting with wildlife in either our recreational or commercial pursuits. Individual seals can cause damage to commercial fishing ventures, but a strategy that is based on a scorched-earth policy of reducing the whole population in order to control some individuals cannot work. It would be like saying you could eliminate crime in the human population by reducing our population by ninety percent. I suspect that there would still be plenty of enterprising criminals in the remaining ten percent.

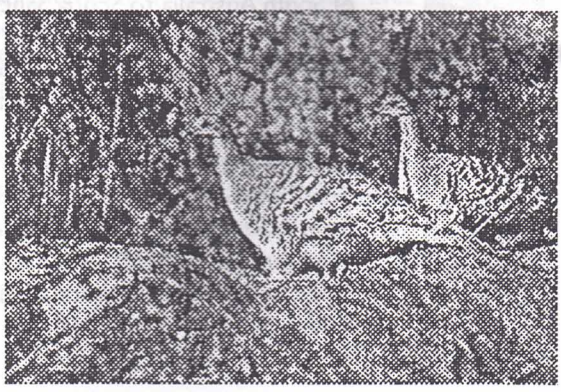
It's "Gnow" or Never

The Grants are an initiative of the Threatened Species Network (TSN), a community based program of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Endangered Species Program of the Biodiversity Group, Environment Australia, with support from local conservation organisations.

The Malleefowl Preservation Group Inc. based at Ongerup, WA has produced an excellent report on the Group's activities for the period 1992-97. Called The First Five Years, the report documents the experiences of the Group during their surveys of Malleefowl and its habitat and outlines the actions the Group has taken to protect the species. As stated in the report it "describes the project methodologies, successes and failures" and is intended to "assist and encourage the formation of similar interest rural community groups by providing a useful example and guideline reference".

This well-produced publication would be of special interest to any involved with survey and conservation of Malleefowl or similar species. It is available from the Malleefowl Preservation Group Inc. for the cost of $5 to cover post and packaging. The Group can be contacted at PO Box 3, Ongerup, WA 6336. Ph: (098) 282 007
Fax: (098) 282 018
Email: malleefowl_wa@bigpond.com

*The Group uses the catch-phrase "It's Gnow or Never" because Gnow is the local aboriginal word for Malleefowl.



Grants for Threatened Species

In May the Federal Environment Minister, Senator Hill, released details of 39 projects to be funded under the Threatened Species Network Community Grants program.

Seven of the projects are for the protection or enhancement of threatened species of birds or their habitat:

Forty-spotted Pardalote funds will enable the fencing of a recognised colony of seventy birds on private property on south Bruny Island, Tasmania, to exclude stock from the area. Fencing will allow natural regeneration and supplementary plantings of Eucalyptus viminalis seedlings upon which the Pardalotes are reliant for their survival.

Western Ground Parrot. A survey will be undertaken to determine whether there is an extant population of Western Ground Parrot at Cape Arid National Park, WA, and to determine its distribution and relative abundance.

Lord Howe Island endemics. The project involves control of weed species on Transit Hill. Transit Hill acts as a physical barrier to the spread of asparagus and protoasparagus species to the unique vegetation communities of Mts Gower and Lidgbird. The Lord Howe Island Woodhen and Lord Howe Island Currawong, both endemic, threatened species, utilise Transit Hill vegetation communities for breeding and feeding.

Malleefowl. This project , located on traditionally owned aboriginal land in SA, will involve surveying and monitoring of malleefowl and marsupial mole habitat to determine distribution, breeding activity and threats, for input into a community management plan.

Plains-wanderer. Landcare groups in northern Victoria will use the funds to establish numbers of Plains-wanderers in a known habitat for the species and undertake fencing, habitat management, pest control and public awareness programs.

Orange-bellied Parrot. This project will protect and increase critical Orange-bellied Parrot winter habitat at Swan Bay, Victoria, a major mainland over-wintering site. A 150 m boardwalk constructed over saltmarsh at Edwards Point Faunal Reserve (northern Swan Bay will restrict visitor access enabling saltmarsh to regenerate. An interpretive sign will educate the public.

Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater. Remnant box woodlands, which are vital habitat for Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters, are under threat. The Natte Yallock Landcare Forum (Victoria) will focus on securing existing remnant box woodland and establishing green corridors.

The Grants are an initiative of the Threatened Species Network (TSN), a community based program of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Endangered Species Program of the Biodiversity Group, Environment Australia, with support from local conservation organisations.

Conservation Network Newsletter of the Bird Observers Club of Australia

Disappearing Frogs

It seems most experts have decided the disappearance of various frog species is due to a number of factors.

Ultraviolet radiation, fungi.

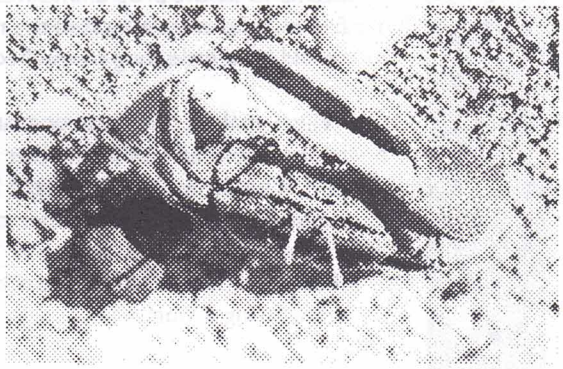
Now if only some person could solve the problem of the cane toad.

Fiddler Crabs

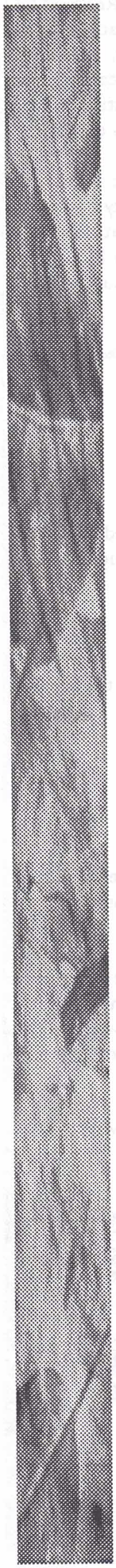
These are fascinating crabs where the males have one large flipper to lure females and also for defence, are suffering because of it.

In southern Portugal the claws are a delicacy. Fishermen catch the crabs, snap off the claw then throw the animal back, to grow a new claw. This takes time so the lack of effective males means populations crash.

It is only a temporary difficulty one would imagine.



Fiddler crab.



New Plantations

NSW coalfields leave behind a devastated landscape. But no more since scientists are working on solving the problem of low fertility and rainfall. Since there are 30,000 hectares of such land in the upper Hunter region the potential for new plantations is great.

The National Heritage Trust

We dealt with some aspects in the last issue. Now Professor Ian Lowe has analysed the conclusions of 29 reports from consultants, which make depressing reading.

The 1.25 billion dollars for the Trust did not come from taxation but from the hard work of taxpayers who over many years built up Telstra. These sales of public assets must come to an end once governments have run out of this kind of spending.

As the professor points out this money was 'the political sugar coating used to coat the pill of selling 49 per cent of Telstra.'

If some permanent improvements were made conservationists would have been happy. The Ministers were but it was not the message which came through to the professor.

One example: 38 million dollars for salinity when the Western Australian government is planning to spend a billion on this problem alone.

There is also strong evidence that political considerations were used to decide where the money went. Also the money was spread too thinly to be effective.

There was little scientific basis, according to one consultant group working on inland rivers. It seems while the programme was useful in winning friends who were allocated the money to spend, it would have little long term effect.

Which makes our Society plan to restore the nation's soils and its freshwater system so important. Our future is at stake and hopefully all political parties will work together on this aim.

If only they would treat the problem as though we were facing a war!

Queensland Clearing

The government has brought in a Bill which should save its wildlands. The only stumbling block is the need for federal funding for compensation for those farmers hard hit by the new law. Since they had lived for a long time with uncleared land, it would seem compensation would not be very high.

Oil Spills

New Scientist tells of a new supergel ideal for collecting oil spills without high costs. The gel soaks up the oil, then the whole can be rolled up like a carpet and taken away.

Green Power

New Scientist has a report from Ian Lowe of a conference held in Sydney.

Australia's scientists are showing the way ahead and the costs of power without emissions is their goal.

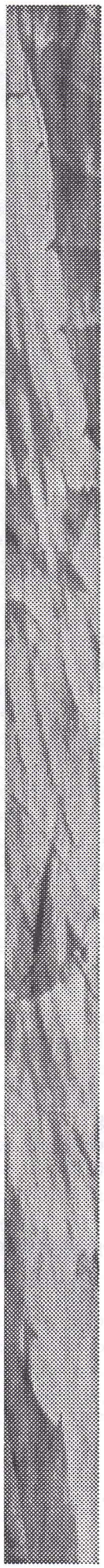
Many of the schemes are ideal for small scale use. We certainly hope so but our hopes have been dashed before. A start might be to demand all new houses must be built with solar panels to provide the domestic power needed for heating and cooling. It would be a start.

Good News from Brisbane

The Brisbane City Council will spend $45 million dollars on new buses which will run on compressed natural gas.

This change for the better came when the Lord Mayor asked some international experts what was the most concrete step he could do to improve the urban environment. They said to phase out diesel buses and explained to him how the fine particles in urban air were a major health risk. They cost Europe millions of dollars each year through illness and premature death.

Perhaps our members could write to their Lord Mayors to back us when we do the same through our council.



Vitamin D

In Manila, a tropical city, advertisers were urging folk to drink special milk fortified with vitamin D because the smog prevented children from getting enough of the vitamin. This vital element is formed in the body by exposure to sunlight.

Fortunately, in Australia we rarely have smog but we do have air pollution from diesel buses and trucks. What a commentary on the world we live in. Some of us have escaped by living in the country.

News from England

Farming costs Britain more than 2.3 billion dollars each year. This is almost as much as the country earns from agriculture according to the New Scientist.

The reason in that country is due to the cost of removing pesticides, nitrates and food pathogens from England's drinking water. The bill for food poisoning also includes the cost of hospital treatment.

There is also the cost of endangered species and restoring wildlife habitats. That costs $25 million a year. Then there is the cost of air pollution though the farmers cannot be blamed for most of that. It is our love for motor cars and the fact that most of the people live in cities. There is also the cost of raising embankments because of greenhouse causing rising sea levels.

Not a happy state but Australia should also be working out such costs, not so much because we are in the same sad state but we should be taking steps like the Brisbane City Council to cut one problem.

False Economies

New Scientist points out that the grip of the huge supermarket firms on what we buy creates false economies as shown by the cost of food produced by British farmers. So many of these costs are hidden so we may be subsidising their production without being warned. Trying to find out where food could be produced most economically is not easy. It is not in the developing countries always and often that is only because of low wages, wildlife destruction and the like.

Birds Australia

Good news. Their woodland appeal raised more than $50, 000. To that could be added $20, 000 from the wildlife service and another $100, 000 once the study programme is running.

There are other items for money raising such as raffles. However, it all depends on Birds Australia.

Lane Cove National Park

The planning of a bridge in this national in the heart of Sydney sets a precedent for similar intrusions into any national park in New South Wales. It is a thin end of the developer wedge. If it is good enough for Sydney why not anywhere in the State? National parks are a sacred symbol of conservation since the first was set aside at Yellowstone more than a hundred years ago. The basic principle accepted around the world was that the only changes planned should be those needed for the wise management of the park. Our government should obey that principle.

Feral Pests

A new book by Dr Tim Low is essential reading by every council member of Australian conservation organistaions. I could not put this book down, it was so fascinating, encyclopaedic in its coverage. He has also written many popular articles on the topic of feral pests. Many of the items are of species with which I have been familar and in many cases our council has tried to stir governments into action.

Every conservationist should at best buy, and if not, borrow a copy from a lending library. Our council will use it as a guide. We will encourage Senator Hill to have his staff produce a study to examine all his recommendations. For he not only points out the dangers. He also tells us what we should get our governments to do.

Later we will publish a longer review but this is a call to arms. Read the book and ask your local non-government conservation groups to do the same. Then get busy and bombard the government with a demand for action. We will certainly use it as our bible at the June conference.

Feral Future

by Tim Low, Viking Press $25.00

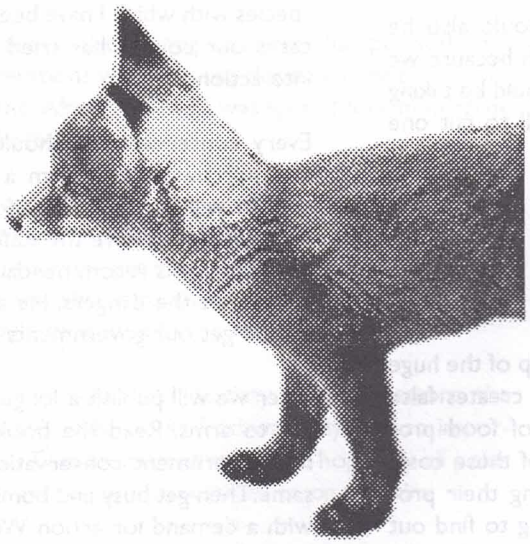
'Gardening has done more harm to the environment than mining'. With this challenge Dr Tim Low begins his first chapter. He continuues to prove the point in this magnificent book as he details the continuing flood of exotic plants into Australia, often illegally, more often encouraged by governments and well meaning people.

Can we stop this disastrous flood? It is inevitable the whole world will become less diverse, impoverished of species as invaders eliminate or breed out the original inhabitants? Will new diseases like cinnamon fungus destroy treasured plant species or toxoplasmosis decimate our marsupials. Dr Low is thought provoking and much of his story, distilled from years of personal research, of vital importance to every person interested in conservation.

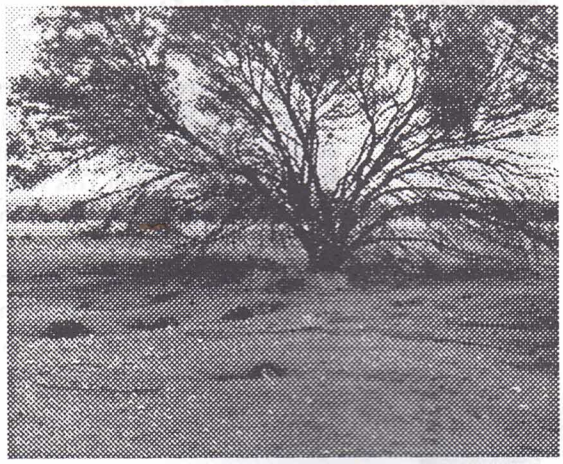
If we look far enough ahead, the eventual state of the biological world will become not more complex but simpler and poorer.

San Francisco Bay is crowded with 200 exotic creatures including Crustaceans from Australia. Florida's paperbarks grow so close together, nothing, not even grass, can sprout beneath them. We could continue this story for any country in the world and we have provided many of these exotics.

It is worth our fighting to save biodiversity, even if it is only a rearguard action.



The introduced fox has caused most of our small mammal extinctions.



Desert disaster with the ground riddled with rabbit warrens.

A few other points from this book. Our Society could not agree with his chapter on cats. Also with his discussion on Gould's petrel, pied currawongs and koalas.

We do agree with these comments about the idea of importing giant animals from abroad. One of the most bizarre arguments for importing an exotic species is propounded in Tim Flannery's remarkable book, 'The Future Eaters'. Are Australian plants that now grow outside their natural range in Australia still native plants? Many biologists, myself included think not. Are dingoes native? Under State laws they are sometimes recognised as wildlife. (Not by us, as well as Tim).

'Traditional owners insist on keeping a few buffalo for hunting. The same is true for banteng in Gurig National Park'. We do not agree.

'In my view the dingo is exotic because, irrespective of when it arrived it was brought here by people. It is after all a domestic dog gone wild'.

'But what of the cattle egret. This graceful bird flew in from Asia... It can survive here only because we felled forests and brought in cattle.' The wanderer butterfly survived only because of exotic cottonbushes. 'Scientists play god when they unleash new species and we must hope they have the wisdom to match their power'....

To guard against future ecological chaos all nations should be tightening their quarantine regulations but it won't happen, not only because the explosion in trade will make it impossible, but because free trade laws will intervene. The ETO conference at Seattle ended in disaster.

'The AQUIS has an impossible job to do.

The hare also introduced but it is not a major pest.

'About 7 million people with luggage, a million cargo containers, nearly twice as many air freight containers and about 150 million letters and parcels. It must also contend with smugglers, boat people, illegal fishermen, visiting islanders and errant yachties enter our country annually.'

One of our members was asked to collect fern spores and post them home by a gardening friend. Ignorance of dangers is a constant problem.

Fortunately Dr Low offers help, not only by lobbying governments but also by personal action. He lists many groups restoring degraded bushland. Landcare bodies are working more widely over the whole of Australia.

He lists seven principles of 'eco-friendly living'.

1) Don't grow problem plants; lists are available from your local council or Greening Australia.

2) Avoid planting exotics that bear fruit and berries.

3) Never dump garden wastes in bushland.

4) Don't allow your pets to fertilise bushland with their droppings (the same applies to humans).

5) Remove garden escapes from your local bushland (I removed one agapanthus, which a few years later had become five, from our local sand dune).

6) Join your local bushcare group.

7) Teach your children to care.

Letters to the Editor

December 22 1999

The Editor

Dear Sir,

Our Society's main worry about the road through Lane Cove National Park is that it would establish a precedent to allow similar roads and other intrusions into any national park in this State.

This would be the first time such a destruction of national park values has ever occurred. There is still time for a tunnel to be created rather than a bridge. The extra cost of a tunnel is worthwhile in terms of keeping the principle of a national park being a place whose qualities are to be preserved for our future. It is really important to us that governments should recognise the sanctity of national parks. It is a strange word to use but we believe those who first worked to have Yellowstone saved had that kind of feeling.

21 December 1999

Hon the Minister for the Environment
The Hon Bob Debus

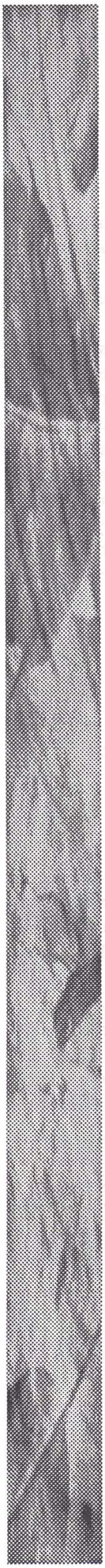
Dear Bob,

Our Society is disturbed about the decision to build a road through Lane Cove National Park. There has been a large public reaction to the disturbance to this urban bushland which was treasured by many.

Our biggest worry is that it sets a precedent since what is done at Lane Cove can be done elsewhere. The fact the Coalition shadow premier is making capital on this does not argue well for the next election.

We know you are only one voice in Cabinet but please do what you can to put this road underground so it will have no effect on the quality of the park.

Regards
Vincent Serventy
President



22 December 1999

The Hon. Richard Amery
Minister for Agriculture

Dear Richard,

The matter of sharks in captivity in the Shark Bar in Sydney has been brought to our attention. This is more a matter for Animal Liberation than of concern to our Society. However, like most folk we are concerned about cruelty.

Apparently the bar owners have no license to keep them but having applied for a license, use that as an excuse. We would be grateful if you could look into this matter. We do not think the licensee is interested in nature education!

More likely his customers obtain a thrill on seeing a 'maneater' in captivity and safe when circling in a tiny aquarium. Not a pleasant thought.

Yours sincerely,
Vincent Serventy
President

A letter from the Mayor of Sydney, Frank Sartor.

In answer to our plea to switch from diesel buses to gas powered as the best way to counter greenhouse warming for cities Mr Sartor wrote:

"...Unlike Brisbane City Council, the city of Sydney does not operate any bus services... However I have been advised by the City's Transport and Access Manager we introduced its first compressed natural gas powered bus almost five years ago and presently have around 150 CNG buses in its fleet. I am further advised an additional 100 buses have been ordered which are also wheelchair accessible.

State Transit has been awarded the Australian Fleet Managers award for the Environmental category and received the Premier's Public Sector Gold Award for the economy and environment in relation to its new bus fleet.

I am sure you will agree that Sydney, rather than Brisbane has led the way in the development and introduction of environmentally friendly public transport."

Truly a very impressive record and congratulations to the Mayor and Councillors.

A reply from Kim Yeadon, Minister for Forestry which is most reassuring.

Dear Mr Serventy,

"It is false to say native trees will be logged for energy production. The legislation passed by Parliament is about forest waste. This is unusable timber pieces which would normally be left on the ground, The use of forest waste in energy production will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 22,000 cars a year.

We also have a major commitment to developing plantation forests for alternative wood production. In the past four and a half years the government has increased hardwood plantation by about 23,000 hectares."

All this is good news. With all this plantation timber surely it is time we stopped clearfelling our native forests with their treasures of wildlife. At the very least selective logging would do little damage.

28 March 2000

Dear Mr Yeadon.

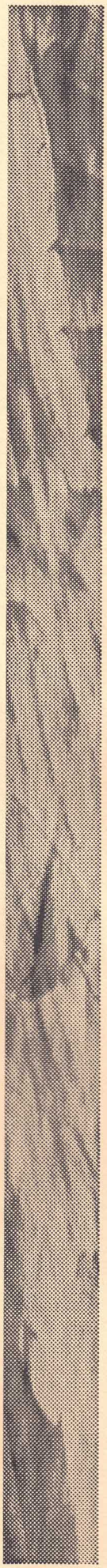
Thanks for your letter. I will publish it in our next magazine. We agree using timber wastes for energy production is excellent. We feel other wastes could be used for the same purpose.

However you may be interested in our remarks at the end of your letter.

It is good news about plantations. Surely the time must soon come when plantation timber can be used for all our wood needs. At the very least we should stop clearfelling our native forests and use only selective logging, the method used for more than a hundred years which did little harm to the original forests,

Yours sincerely

Vincent Serventy
President



Venus Repair Workshop

Suite 36a,
104 Bathurst Street, Sydney
(02) 9267 0706

We specialise in repairs to backpacking gear:

- Sleeping Bags – Repairing zips, washing, patching and refilling down bags.
- Tents – Patching, tape sealing, replacing zips and reproofing tents.
- Tent pole sections can be repaired or replaced.
- All garment repairs, including tape-sealing Goretex™ garments.
- Rucksacks, daypacks and travel packs repaired.

BROAD HORIZON

Intelligent tours with graduate guides!
Travel & Education

Our leaders are chosen for their knowledge & ability to explain culture & natural history. Travel to extraordinary places with people who believe education is a first step in restoring the environment.

Lord Howe. The Other Side of the Island. 10 Days.
With Ian Hutton, author & naturalist. Beautiful World Heritage Is., we explore & explain interesting sites, our ongoing research has revealed. Be immersed in natural history, unique ecology, birds, flowers, reef animals & geology. Walks, talks, brilliant food, scenery & cruise.
From $2195.

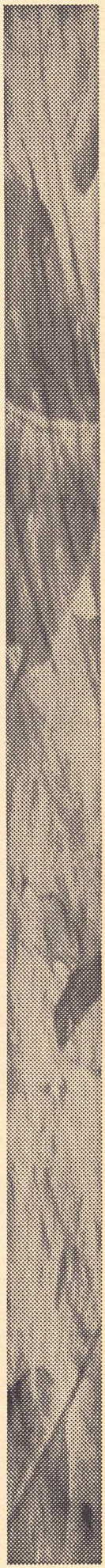
Listen To Our Land. 21 Days.
With Mary White, a great integrative thinker, with three major books on the evolution of the Australian landscape. See fossil evidence of past environs & effects of changing land use. Murray River, Great Coast Road, Grampians, Little Desert NP, Wyperfeld NP, Mildura, Lake Mungo, Menindee, Broken Hill, Maree, Sturt Desert, Birdsville, Strzelecki Desert, Innamincka, Cameron Corner & Tibooburra etc.
From $3100.

Central Australia. Deserts & Gorges. 16 Days.
We explain the formation of Alice Springs, Ayres Rock, Mt Connor, Olgas, Palm Valley, Fink Gorge, Henbury Crater, Haasts Bluff, Kings Canyon, Redbank Gorge, Ormiston Gorge, Stanley Chasm, Simpson's Gap, Serpentine Gorge, Jessie Gap, Emily Gap, Ruby Gap, Corroboree Rock, Trephina Gorge, n'Dhala Gorge, Rainbow Valley...lots. We present the evidence.
From $2680.

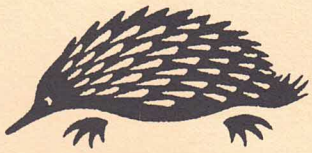
Subject to booking conditions.
The Broad Horizon Australian
Academic Tours P/L.
ACN 066 673 489
Lic. No. 2ta004092

Level 3/100
Clarence Street, Sydney
Ph: 61 (2) 9290 3734
Fax: 61 (2) 9290 3702
Email: droots@academictours.com.au
Web: www.academictours.com.au

WE HAVE MANY OTHER TOURS, OZ & OF, CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION & TOUR DETAILS.



Membership Form...



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, INC.

Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, Inc. (Founded 1909)
GPO Box 3428 Sydney NSW 1043

Membership

Why not become a member of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc?

Simply fill out this form.

Name: .....

Address: .....

City/ Suburb: ..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Fax: .....

Membership category (please circle)

Ordinary: $20.00 Pensioner & Students: $10.00 Corporate: $35.00

(Corporate membership is open to Schools, Associations and Institutions.)

Cheque/ Money Order (please circle) $ ..... enclosed. Donation $ .....

Mail to the: **Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc., GPO Box 3428, Sydney NSW 1043.**

Consider - A Bequest

Another way which you can support the work of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. is to remember us in your will.

If you would like to make a bequest to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc., add the following codicil to your Will:

I bequeath the sum of $ ..... to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. shall be complete discharge to my Executors in respect of any sum paid to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc.

"The challenge to the present adult generation is to reduce the increasing pressures on the Earth and its resources - and to provide youth with an education that will prepare them emotionally and intellectually for the task ahead."

VINCENT SERVENTY

President