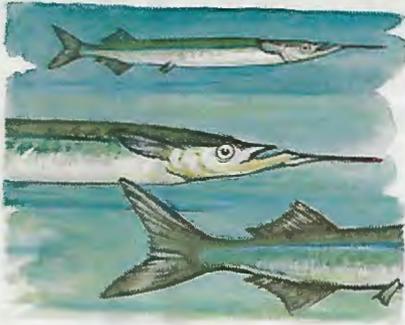


UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY LTD.

NEWSLETTER NO. 54 - NOVEMBER, 1983 - PRICE 20¢

EDITOR: R.W. Alcorn, 43 Rutland Road, Medlow Bath.



GARFISH

Patron: Mr. Allan A. Strom, A.M.

"The Commission notes that there is evidence that societies may come to value more highly in future things not included in conventional measurements of economic activity."

- (Ranger Uranium Environmental Enquiry. First Report).

OUR SOCIETY

COMING MEETINGS:

For speakers at coming meetings held on the last Friday of the month at the Hut, please see Public Notices in the Gazette. No meeting in December except for walk and barbecue on 3rd.

COMING WALKS:

	Leader	Meeting Place	Walk Area
<b>JANUARY</b>			
Sat. 7th	Keith Sherlock 57-1927	9.30 a.m. at Mt. Victoria Station to meet train from Sydney	Mt. Banks and Banks Walls - a look over the wild & rugged Grose - the termination of Cayley's walk. Easy stroll.
Thurs. 19th	June & Eric Blick. 88-1051.	24 Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath. 10 a.m.	Behind the Hydro Majestic. Magnificent view over Megalong Valley and an unusual rock known as Mark's Tomb. Easy stroll.
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
Sat. 5th 4	Lyle Davis 59-1877	9.30 Mt. Victoria Station to meet train from Sydney.	Mill Creek-Bilpin area. Rain forest - convict road. Historical and scenic. Easy stroll.
Thurs. 17th 16	Greta Vanry	10 a.m. The Hut	Moya & Inspiration Pt. - a slow ramble past the controversial convention site. Steady stroll.
<b>MARCH</b>			
Sat. 3rd	Paul Nagle 57-3181	9 a.m. Pub at McGraths Hill on Windsor Parramatta Rd.	Observing Swamp birds. Bring binoculars Sombre clothing.
Thurs. 15th	Reg & Dulcie Toseland 84-1682	Leura Baths (down below the Fork & View Restaurant, Cliff Drive. 10 a.m.	Prince Henry Cliff Top Walk - an area often overlooked - many lookouts. Easy stroll.

A NATIVE PLANT DAY is always a successful activity and the one held on 29th October was no exception. In the morning the Hut was filled with potted native plants and native plant enthusiasts when Jill Dark gave her very interesting talk and showed specimens of plants she recommended for various reasons, including bird attractive plants - Grevilleas, Hakeas and Banksias. She pointed out that Banksia ericifolia is the main source of nectar for honeyeaters on the Blue Mountains during winter so no garden should be without one or two (that is, if the garden is not frequented by a cat).

Jill again made a plea for leaving bush rock in the bush where it is needed by little animals. She suggested the use of sleepers or Koppers logs as attractive alternatives. Question time revealed a widening and deepening interest in native plants.

In the afternoon Margaret Esson, president of Blue Mountains Group of Society for Growing Australian Plants, and Bessie Bransen came along armed with S.G.A.P. Weed Monster and bags of weeds. Margaret identified the many species which are invading the bush on the Blue Mountains. Some were homely plants like broom, honeysuckle and ivy which people unthinkingly plant in their gardens.

Bessie spoke about the National Trust's Bush Regeneration course and demonstrated out-of-doors techniques used to remove different plants - dandelion, blackberry, broom, Agapanthus, etc. The only tools used are a long sharp knife, a narrow bladed trowel, secateurs and occasionally, a tomahawk.

Motivated by the convincing talks some of the audience expressed interest in doing the Bush Regeneration course if the National Trust would conduct one on the Blue Mountains. Evelyn Hickey of the National Trust has since advised that this would not be possible.

While cautioning that a little knowledge sometimes does more harm than good, members are reminded that there is a copy of Joan Bradley's booklet on Bush Regeneration in the Society's library. In the meantime, here are a few basic rules:

- Always watch where you put your feet. So many would-be bush regenerators squash down the very plants they are striving to encourage.
- Disturb the soil as little as possible. Press it down gently after carefully removing a weed and cover it with mulch.
- Remember bare soil favours weed growth.

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Markita Honinger's very successful Opportunity Table during the last long weekend raised \$250 for the Fund. Her hard work was much appreciated.

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WILL YOU ASSIST YOUR SOCIETY?

The Management Committee of your Society is seeking to increase the involvement of members in the activities of the Society.

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As well, three organisational committees usually operate. These are Management Committee, Land Use Committee and Land Preservation Committee.

Unfortunately however, in recent years there has been a trend that due to unavailability of sufficient volunteers, only a relatively small group of people has been involved in the business organisation of the Society.

This can result in a reduced activity in environmental issues due to pressure of work and may also mean that the Society is not necessarily representing a wide cross section of its membership.

If you have the inclination and a little spare time, we urge you to give thought to this matter.

We are currently looking at ways to subdivide responsibilities in order to reduce the load on one person and thereby allow new people to participate.

Working with other members you will find that the necessary skills are quickly acquired.

Contact a member of the Executive or a member of one of the Committees NOW.

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KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK - PARK OR CITY?

The Society recently wrote to Mr. Bob Debus, M.P., Member for the Blue Mountains, expressing our concern over proposed development within the Park. The following is a copy of our letter:-

"Our Society, together with other conservation groups, is concerned at proposed accommodation increases in the above National Park. We would ask that the Government:-

1. Refuse approval for additional accommodation in the Park.
2. Introduce amendments to the National Parks & Wildlife Act to remove the Minister's powers to reject the advice of the National Parks & Wildlife Service and its Advisory Council.
3. Reject the Australian Ski Federation's planned Twin Valleys resort.

We feel that the Park should not be sacrificed for the commercial advantage of developers, and would, therefore, be obliged if you would pass on our views to the Hon. E.L. Bedford, Minister for Planning and Environment."

END OF YEAR RAMBLE - BARBEQUE.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 - Meet at Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters, Valley Road, Wentworth Falls at 10.00 a.m. for ramble through the Reserve. This will be followed by a barbeque (fire ban permitting) and social. Bring your food and refreshments. Tea and coffee provided. ALL WELCOME.

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THE POPULATION QUESTION

In October, Mayor Peter Quirk was reported in the Gazette (26.10.83) as saying that the Blue Mountains Environmental Management Plan, currently under Council consideration, would determine what the population would be and how it would be controlled.

Here are some refresher points for members' memories and perhaps information for newer members.

In 1974, Council, with a Federal Government grant, commissioned an Urban Systems Corporation Study as a first step in the development of a Strategic Plan for the City. The broad implications of five different population ceilings were detailed. Council had then recognised the basic conflicts between conservation and urbanism.

THE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

- Future 1. - 47,000 population (passed about 1977!)
- Future 2. - 65,000 population (somewhere around our present population - this was voted the most popular figure by residents)
- Future 3. - 112,000 population (will be passed possibly 1994\*)
- Future 4. - 170,000 population (due about 2003\* - 20 years' time)
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\* These figures assume only a 5% population growth rate, the rate assumed by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils. Between 1976 and 1981 there was a 5.9% annual growth rate in population, with the actual rate even double this in some sections of the Mountains.

B.M.C.C.'s L.E.P. No. 4

This Local Environment Plan appears to allow 170,000 population as did the 1973 Planning Scheme Proposals. This 170,000 ceiling is increased each time Council permits re-zoning (or a zoning amendment) that allows for more intensive use of land, e.g. the proposed Leura Retirement Village on the zoned Open Space land of the Leura Golf Course.

THE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES STUDY PROVIDES information about the effects on our environment, and on the quality of life for residents, as population increases. It should be available in your Library. Some of its horrors follow here.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

47,000 population (Alternative Future 1 - left behind about 6 years ago) -

- moderate pressures on environmentally critical areas, even with this relatively low population.

65,000 population (Alternative Future 2 - about our present rate) -

- increased pressure on environmentally sensitive land (we notice it each week) including -
  - bush escarpment towns (it's vanishing before our eyes)

65,000 population (Cont.)

- the escarpments (Leura Tourist Resort?)
- village character and rural atmosphere
- views from the road, roadside rest areas and lookouts
- urban parks (e.g. Leura Park to become ovals)
- bushfire prevention problems (we've seen them)

112,000 population (Alternative Future 3 - we're headed for it now) -

- conflict between resident usage and visitor demands (e.g. Valley of the Waters threat from proposed Leura Golf Course Resort)
- increasing pressures on non-urban land (e.g. Retirement Village proposal for Leura Golf Course)
- views from Lower Mountains roads lost (they certainly have been fast disappearing)
- serious obstacles to bush fire prevention and suppression in the Central and Upper Mountains (just look at the Grose Valley!)
- increasing ribbon development (see the For Sale signs!)
- conflict between conservation and urbanisation.

(Because of these and other factors, 85,000 was resolved as the recommended population in 1975 - we'll reach it in 4 or 5 years' time!)

170,000 population (Alternative 4 - allowed for by B.M.C.C.'s L.E.P. No. 4) -

- serious pollution problem in widespread areas
- development of wilderness probable
- areas available for local open space use begin to disappear (Leura Golf Course?)
- pressures on escarpment preservation zones
- view from road decreases
- increasing pressures on open spaces between towns (will any still be there in 20 years' time?)
- spot pollution, erosion of roads and earthworks.
- serious competition between resident use and visitor use of regional natural recreation areas.

275,000 population (Alternative Future 5 - only 30 years away)

- highest bushfire danger and constraints on control programmes
- pollution of most natural park areas almost certain
- almost certain pollution of the Hawkesbury Basin
- threats to all environmental areas
- view from the Great Western Highway unavailable except in a few Upper Mountains glimpses
- local open space at a premium or unavailable
- serious pressures on bushland gullies and in fire-prone locations
- possible serious pollution around Central Mountains towns and Medlow Bath
- lookout views seriously impaired
- overuse of existing accessible areas
- very high demands on wilderness areas

TOURISM THREATS

Our Society agrees that Tourism is the only viable industry for the Blue Mountains. The Urban Systems Study pointed out how the Tourist potential of the area could be lost if population continues to grow. Some of the examples given are:-

65,000 population (approx. present figure) - greater need for policies of guidance and control of location and distribution of tourist attractions and accommodation facilities - (What planning was behind the

proposed Leura Golf Course zoning amendment?)

112,000 population (where we are seemingly headed now) -

- Conflict between conservation and urbanisation leads to uncertainty of the role of the Blue Mountains as primarily a 'leisure region' of attractive power to tourism.
- The retention of the attractive power of the region for Tourism will depend very much on the form, scale and intensity of development. (What price a \$25m Leura Golf Course Resort?)
- Greater need for policies of control relative to the locational distribution of tourist facilities and accommodation. (On an escarpment, visually defined, as proposed for the Leura Resort?)

170,000 population (allowed for by our L.E.P. No. 4) -

- Substantial decline in the attractive power of the region for Tourism due to the scale and intensity of urbanisation.

#### LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Increase in local employment has been given as an important reason in favour of the proposed Leura Resort. Even if we were to assume that the developers were correct in their employment figures, such numbers are of no real significance for overall local employment unless population increase were to cease.

The Commuters' figures given for the Alternative Futures show the significance of population increase on the numbers of local people having to seek work outside the area.

#### COMMUTERS

<u>Mts. Pop.</u>	<u>Upper Mts.</u>	<u>Lower Mts.</u>	<u>Total</u>
65,000	3,900 - 4,600	8,800 - 9,000	12,700 - 13,600
112,000	11,200 - 13,300	12,900	24,100 - 26,200
170,000	17,800	18,900 - 20,300	36,700 - 38,100
275,000	28,200	39,600	67,800

#### TRAFFIC

Our very narrow Blue Mountains ridge makes our traffic problems differ from those of Sydney's other Western Suburbs.

Just a couple of snippets from the Alternative Futures -

47,000 population (passed about 6 years ago) -

- The Great Western Highway would need to be widened to 4 lanes between Katoomba and Blaxland (!!!!)

170,000 population (allowed for on our L.E.P. No. 4) -

- Bells Line of Road widened to 4 lanes to act as the main east-west artery, by-passing the extensive development along the Great Western Highway.
- An inter-town through road parallel to the 4-lane Great Western Highway for local traffic.
- An additional inter-district road to the Nepean Plain from the Lower Mountains.

275,000 population -

- 20 trains at peak hour could carry 30,000 commuters
- remaining 37,000 may need up to 12 lanes of road to commute by car.

#### WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO?

Over the past ten years our Society has, in various submissions, recommended the following to Council -

1. No further alienation of CROWN LAND.
2. No further speculative land subdivisions and severe restrictions on any other land subdivision.
3. Industrial development should be of the service and craft type.
4. Building permits should be withheld from any land where our environment would be endangered and from anywhere visually detrimental to our world-renowned scenery.

No building permits -

- for any escarpment land (using a visual definition)
- in any 'between town' areas.
- on any steeply sloping ground
- on any swampland
- on wooded slopes feeding hanging swamps
- on the headwaters of any streams
- on land within at least 100 metres on either side of any stream
- when a septic tank would be needed
- for land on exposed ridges vulnerable to bushfires
- on the bushland side of perimeter roads (for bushfire protection and for protection of fire-fighters' lives)
- on land where water in volume is not available in case of bushfires
- where bush visible from train views would need to be cleared (for tourism reasons)

We have suggested that LEGAL means might be found to prevent people building in environmentally sensitive areas.

#### A NATIONAL HERITAGE

Our Society has stated that the Blue Mountains City itself could perhaps become part of the National Heritage Area, joining the already Listed Blue Mountains National Park. State and Federal funding could enable environmental protection to become a realistic possibility, with a population ceiling which would allow for the preservation of the character of the area.

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#### BIRD NOTES

At Medlow Bath this year we have had three enormous Channel Billed Cuckoos flying about giving out their harsh strange calls. Two are still here, probably looking for a pied currawong's nest to lay in. The Cave Warbler, who raised young in Katoomba shed last year have raised three young. They have now attached a second nest to the first and are sitting on eggs again. Bird often breed twice in a good food year. Flame robins have a nest in the garden and a blue wren attacks his reflection in the window every morning.

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ALUMINIUM CANS

It was gratifying to learn that can returns reached 733 million last year from a start of 19 million in 1973. This represents 55% recovery and is far better than any other country. The \$9.6 million pay out for 15,000 tons of metal must be making a great difference to our litter problems. Another bonus is that 2 tons of alumina need 15,000 kilowatt hours of electrical power to produce one ton of aluminium while 1.2 tons of cans produce 1 ton of the metal using only 750 kilowatt hours of electrical power. The cost of approx. \$750 a ton against approx. \$1350 a ton for primary ingot make ventures like Comalco's 15 million dollar new recycling plant at Yennora well worth while. By 1985 it is hoped to achieve 65% recovery.

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REPORT ON THE 3RD NATIONAL WILDERNESS CONFERENCE (A.C.F.) HELD AT THE CALIFORNIA, SEPT. 16-18, 1983.

I was by no means an unwilling delegate and I appreciate the payment by this Society of the Registration.

Judging from the calibre of the speakers, many of whom were quite youthful, we can rest assured that conservation is in good hands for many years to come.

On Friday we heard eight speakers on the theme "Battles Lost and Won". Some of the speakers may be known to you. Dick Johnson for instance, whose book "Alps at the Crossroads" is in our library, Warren Bonython of S.A. who walked across the Simpson Desert recently, Dr. Bob Brown of S.W. wilderness fame, and the meeting was chaired by the redoubtable Milo Dunphy.

In the evening the Mayor welcomed the gathering and pleaded for public input so that his Council could solve the problems of the Mountains and won all hearts by announcing that an independently funded Conservation Officer would be appointed.

On Saturday morning we formed workshops. I was with Peter Prineas who chaired a preliminary discussion on "The Politics of Winning Wilderness". In the afternoon we did a bus trip to Newnes Plateau which gave us a great view out north over the Wollemi Wilderness and an idea of what could happen if the Forestry Commission planted pines there. A breakdown in one of the buses caused us to be late for a Barbecue which I learned subsequently was arranged by this Society. Any comments I heard were favourable though many were a little shocked at the throw away extras, e.g. knife, fork, spoons, milk, sauce, salt containers, bibs, plates, all finished up as garbage. We did not arrive home until about 10.30 p.m.

On Sunday we resumed the workshops. Peter Prineas was interested enough to use the Laura controversy for discussion. He felt a massive letter-writing campaign was a good decision - not just ten or twenty letters but hundreds. He presumed a fresh building application would be presented.

A plenary session followed where the workshop discussions were made into resolutions. This was rather a crowded session owing to the limited remaining time. Workshop resolutions were scrapped, modified or accepted by the whole assembly under the capable chairmanship of Dr. Geoff Moseley. Copies of these resolutions will in time be posted to all participants.

Monday was to have been a day of short walks led by members of this Society but they were cancelled through lack of starters. I attribute this to the fact that it was a working day and also the whole building had to be empty by 4 p.m. for another conference. Interstate visitors would thus have to make a second accommodation booking just on the chance that a walk was to their liking.

I heard Milo Dunphy had about 10 in his 3-day walk in the Kowmung area. There

were five in the party I joined which spent three enjoyable days in the Wollongambe Wilderness - a circular walk out north from Bell station.

Summing up then the benefits of attending the conference were:-

- 1) An expansion of my knowledge of who's who in the conservation field.
- 2) Direct contact with Peter Prineas, the environmental solicitor, and Graham Wells, Director of N.P.A.
- 3) Anticipate the resolutions of the plenary session will keep us in touch with the current problems facing conservation.
- 4) My stolen quote of the year from Penny Figgis' talk (Liaison Officer of the A.C.F.) "I'd build the pyramids and stuff them full of cream if it provided jobs." She was quoting Norm Gallagher's comment at some conference. I thought it a classical summing up of the mentality conservationists have to fight against. Yet who can blame Norm Gallagher and what alternatives can we offer his unemployed members.

It behoves us all to ponder on how much of our own consumer habits have a 'pyramids and ice cream' touch about them.

What lowering of our living standards would we accept to help our less fortunate global inhabitants?

Pardon the touch of preaching, but that's what happens when you send members off to Wilderness Conferences.

LLOYD JONES.

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- increasing pressure on non-urban land (eg, Retirement Village proposal for Leura Golf Course)
- views from Lower Mountains roads lost (they certainly have been fast disappearing)
- serious obstacles to bush fire prevention and suppression in the Central and Upper Mountains (just look at the Grose Valley!)
- increasing ribbon development (see the For Sale signs!)
- conflict between conservation and urbanisation.

(Because of these and other factors, 85,000 was resolved as the recommended population in 1975 – we'll reach it in 4 or 5 years time!)

170,000 population (Alternative 4 – allowed for by BMCCs LEP No 4)

- serious pollution problems in widespread areas
- development on gully slopes probable
- areas available for local open space use begin to disappear (Leura Golf Course?)
- pressures on escarpment preservation zones
- view from road decreases
- increasing pressures on open spaces between towns (will any still be there in 20 years time?)
- spot pollution, erosion of roads and earthworks.
- serious competition between residents use and visitor use of regional natural recreation areas.

275,000 population (Alternative Future 5 – only 30 years away)

- highest bushfire danger and constraints on control programmes
- pollution of most natural park areas almost certainly
- almost certain pollution of the Hawkesbury Basin
- threats to all environmental areas
- views from the Great Western Highway unavailable except in a few Upper Mountains glimpses
- local open space at a premium or unavailable
- serious pressures on bushland gullies and in fire-prone locations
- possible serious pollution around Central Mountains towns and Medlow Bath
- lookout views seriously impaired
- overuse of existing accessible areas
- very high demands on wilderness areas

### TOURISM THREATS

Our Society agrees that Tourism is the only viable industry for the Blue Mountains. The Urban Study pointed out how the Tourist potential of the area could be lost if population continues to grow. Some of the examples given are:-

65,000 population (approx. present figure) – greater need for policies of guidance and control of location and distribution of tourist attractions and accommodation facilities – (What planning was behind the proposed Leura Golf Course zoning amendment?)

112,000 population (where we are seemingly headed now)

- Conflict between conservation and urbanisation leads to uncertainty of the role of the Blue Mountains as primarily a “leisure region” of attractive power to tourism.
- The retention of the attractive power of the region for Tourism will depend very much on the form, scale and intensity of development. (What price a \$25m Leura Golf Course Resort?)
- Greater need for policies of control relative to the location distribution of tourist facilities and accommodation. (On an escarpment, visually defined, as proposed for the Leura Resort?)

170,000 population (allowed for by our L.E.P. No 4)

- Substantial decline in the attractive power of the region for Tourism due to the scale and intensity of urbanisation.

### LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Increase in local employment has been given as an important reason in favour of the proposed Leura Resort. Even if we were to assume that the developers were correct in their employment figures, such numbers are of no real significance for overall local employment unless population increase were to cease.

The Commuters figures given for the Alternative Future show the significance of population increase on the numbers of local people having to seek work outside the area.

### COMMUTERS

<u>Mountains Population</u>	<u>Upper Mountains</u>	<u>Lower Mountains</u>	<u>Total</u>
65,000	3,900 – 4,600	8,800 – 9,000	12,700 to 13,600
112,000	11,200 – 13,300	12,900	24,100 – 26,200
170,000	17,800	18,900 – 20,300	16,700 – 38,100
275,000	28,200	39,600	67,800

### TRAFFIC

Our very narrow Blue Mountains ridge makes our traffic problems differ from those of Sydney's other Western Suburbs.

Just a couple of snippets from the Alternative Futures -

47,000 population (passed about 6 years ago)

- The Great Western Highway would need to be widened to 4 lanes between Katoomba and Blaxland (!!!!)

170,000 population (allowed for on our L.E.P. No 4)

- Bells Line of Road widened to 4 lanes to act as the main east-west artery, by-passing the extensive development along the Great Western Highway.
- An inter-town through road parallel to the 4 – lane Great Western for local traffic.
- An additional inter-district road to the Nepean Plain from the Lower Mountains.

275,000 population -

- 20 trains at peak hour carry 30,000 commuters
- remaining 37,000 may need up to 12 lanes of road to commute by car.

## WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO?

Over the past ten years our Society has, in various submissions, recommended the following to Council -

1. No further alienation of CROWN LAND.
2. No further speculative land subdivisions and severe restrictions on any other land subdivisions.
3. Industrial development should be of the service and craft type.
4. Building permits should be withheld from any land where our environment would be endangered and from anywhere visually detrimental to our world-renowned scenery.

No building permits -

- for any escarpment land (using a visual definition)
- in any 'between town' areas.
- on any steeply sloping ground
- on any swampland
- on wooded slopes feeding hanging swamps
- on the headwaters of any streams
- on land within at least 100 metres on either side of any stream
- when a septic tank would be needed
- for land on exposed ridges vulnerable to bushfires
- on the bushland side of perimeter roads (for bushfire protection and for protection of fire-fighters lives)
- on land where water in volume is not available in case of bushfires
- where bush visible from train views would need to be cleared (for tourism reasons)

We have suggested that LEGAL means might be found to prevent people building in environmentally sensitive areas.

## A NATIONAL HERITAGE

Our Society has stated that the Blue Mountains City itself could perhaps become part of the National Heritage Area, joining the already Listed Blue Mountains National Park. State and Federal funding could enable environmental protection to become a realistic possibility, with a population ceiling which would allow for the preservation of the character of the area.

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## BIRD NOTES

At Medlow Bath this year we have had three enormous Channel Billed Cuckoos flying about giving out their harsh strange calls. Two are still here, probably looking for a pied currawong's nest to lay in. The Cave Warbler, who raised young in Katoomba shed last year have raised three young. They have now attached a second nest to the first and are sitting on eggs again. Birds often breed twice in a good food year. Flame robins have a nest in the garden and a blue wren attacks his reflection in the window every morning.

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## ALUMINIUM CANS

It is gratifying to learn that can returns reached 733 million last year from a start of 19 million in 1973. This represents 55% recovery and is far better than any other country. The \$9.6 million pay out for 15,000 tons of metal must be making a great difference to our litter problems. Another bonus is that 2 tons of alumina need 15,000 kilowatt hours of electrical power to produce one ton of aluminium while 1.2 tons of cans produce 1 ton of the metal using only 750 kilowatt hours of electrical power. The cost of approx. \$750 a ton against approx. \$1350 a ton for primary ingot make ventures like Comalco's 15 million dollar new recycling plant at Yennora well worth while. By 1985 it is hoped to achieve 65% recovery.

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## REPORT ON THE 3RD NATIONAL WILDERNESS CONFERENCE (ACF) HELD AT THE CALIFORNIA, SEPTEMBER 16-18, 1983.

It was by no means an unwilling delegate and I appreciate the payment by this Society of the Registration.

Judging by the calibre of the speakers, many of whom were quite youthful, we can rest assured that conservation is in good hands for many years to come.

On Friday we heard eight speakers on the theme "Battles Lost and Won". Some of the speakers may be known to you. Dick Johnson for instance, whose book "Alps at the Crossroads" is in our library, Warren Bonython of SA who walked across the Simpson Desert recently, Mr Bob Brown of S.W. wilderness fame, and the meeting was chaired by the redoubtable Milo Dunphy.

In the evening the Mayor welcomed the gathering and pleaded for the public input so that his Council could solve the problems of the Mountains and won all hearts by announcing that an independently funded Conservation Officer would be appointed.

On Saturday morning we formed workshops. I was with Peter Prineas who chaired a preliminary discussion on "The Politics of Winning Wilderness". In the afternoon we did a bus trip to Newnes Plateau which gave us a great view out north over the Wollemi Wilderness and an idea of what could happen if the Forestry Commission planted pines there. A breakdown in one of the buses caused us to be late for a Barbecue which I learned subsequently was arranged by this Society. Any comments I heard were favourable through many were a little shocked at the throw away extras, eg, knife, fork, spoons, milk, sauce, salt containers, bibs, plates, all finished up as garbage. We did not arrive home until about 10.30 pm.

On Sunday we resumed the workshops. Peter Prineas was interested enough to use the Leura controversy for discussion. He felt a massive letter-writing campaign was a good decision – not just ten or twenty letter but hundreds. He presumed a fresh building application would be presented.

A plenary session followed where the workshop discussions were made into resolutions. This was rather a crowded session owing to the limited remaining time. Workshop resolutions were scrapped, modified or accepted by the whole assembly under the capable chairmanship of Dr. Geoff Moseley. Copies of these resolutions will in time be posted to all participants.

Monday was to have been a day of short walks led by members of this Society but they were cancelled through lack of starters. I attribute this to the fact that it was a working day and also the whole building had to be empty by 4 pm, for another conference. Interstate visitors would thus have to make a second accommodation booking just on the chance that a walk was to their liking.

I heard Milo Dunphy had about 10 in his 3-day walk in the Kowmung area. There were five in the party I joined which spent three enjoyable days in the Wollongambe Wilderness – a circular walk out north from Bell station.

Summing up then the benefits of attending the conference were:-

1. An expansion of my knowledge of who's who in the conservation field.
2. Direct contact with Peter Prineas, the environmental solicitor, and Graham Wells, Director of NPA.
3. Anticipate the resolutions of the plenary session will keep us in touch with the current problems facing conservation.
4. My stolen quote of the year from Penny Figgis talk (Liaison Officer of the ACF.) "I'd build the pyramids and stuff them full of cream if it provided jobs." She was quoting Norm Gallagher's comment at some conference. I thought it is a classic summing up of the mentality conservationists have to fight against. Yet who can blame Norm Gallagher and what alternatives can we offer his unemployed members.

It behoves us all to ponder on how much of our own consumer habits have a "pyramids and ice cream" touch about them.

What lowering of our living standards would we accept to help our less fortunate global inhabitants?

Pardon the touch of preaching, but that's what happens when you send members off to Wilderness Conferences.

Lloyd Jones.