

## Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

february newsletter 1983

P.O. Box 119, SPRINGWOOD. 2777.

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#### EDITORIAL.

Whilst there has not been a meeting this January, your executive

have been kept constantly busy with conservation issues that need our attention and involvement. It seems that the Christmas/ New Year "break"

is a busy time for Developers and Government Departments.

Uppermost on everyone's mind is the Franklin Dam Blockade, and the surrounding political events. Letters to the appropriate M.P.'s have been written, and will continue to be written on behalf of the Society, but this is not enough. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society has specifically asked us all to keep writing those letters to Malcolm Fraser, Doug Anthony, Mr. McVeigh, Ross Free, and Premier Gray. Take an hour out tonight, and ask the whole family to sit down with you to write a letter, or more, each. Letters do not have to be long and detailed; just request them to reconsider the Government's decision of December 8th not to intervene, and ask them to support the World Heritage Properties Protection Bill. Meanwhile, the A.C.F. and Senator Don Chipp have requested that the Society write to the 23 sitting members in marginal seats throughout Australia.

The Society has also contributed \$100 to supporting the Franklin Blockade, and members are helping to sponsor people at the blockade individually. (See enclosed form.) A very successful concert to raise money for the Franklin was held at the Home of Mick and Jill Dark on Friday 14th January, resulting in a cheque for \$150.00 heading to Tasmania.

Also, Wendy and Paul Godfrey are in Tasmania at the time of writing, personally taking down our \$100 to Dr. Bob Brown, along with over another \$100 raised at Paul's place of work. Why not take around a Franklin Appeal Bucket at your place of work, if you feel that the sympathy is there?

Wendy and Paul have been actively involved in helping with the Blockade, taking people to the area. Paul was arrested, but accepted the bail conditions,

so they should be back with us soon.

I had a letter from Germany from Gerald Williams who is a professional classical musician offering to put on a concert to raise funds for the Franklin. The Sydney branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society are excited, and it is hoped that a large venue in Sydney will be available, together with some supporting musicians. If not, a venue in the Blue Mountains will be chosen, so watch your papers for details.

Whilst Paul is away in Tasmania, I have taken on the job of editor

(and secretary) for this month.

Christine Stickley.

#### NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting will be held at the Teachers Resource Centre, in the grounds of the Infants School, Ross Street, Glenbrook, at 8.00pm on Friday, 11th February.

Slides of Paul and Wendy's bushwalking | blockading experiences in Tasmania!

cannot just sit back and let the environment be damaged.

#### NEXT WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING.

Monday, 14th February, at 7.30 p.m. at 7 Kent Street, Glenbrook. This will be to discuss the Urban Consolidation submission and other matters. If you are interested in helping, please attend.

In future, so more members can take part in these Works Committee Meetings, during which a lot of important decisions and policies are decided, it is planned to hold meetings at the home of Wendy and Paul Godfrey, at the above address at 7.30 p.m. every third Monday in the Month. If you would like to take part in these decisions and share some of the ever mounting workload, please feel free to attend. Being involved in these meetings makes one realise you

#### NEXT WALK.

To the Shipley Plateau - an area under threat of subdivision.

This is a pleasant walk beginning at Porters Pass, Blackheath, skirting the cliff face, views down to Megalong Valley, visiting the Grotto, Centennial Glen and Walls Ledge en route. The walk involves some steps, but is not particularly steep. It will be necessary to have some cars parked at Centennial Glen Road to carry walkers back to Porters Pass. Walkers may then choose to have a late lunch at the Quota Club picnic area in the Megalong Valley, (or elsewhere) or to lunch in the grounds of the Blackheath Swimming Pool and take an afternoon swim. This promises to be a pleasant day for the family, with time to socialize over lunch. If you feel the need, carry water and a snack on the walk. Walking time approx 3 hours.

Meet at Centennial Glen Road, off the road to Shipley Plateau, at Blackheath, at 10 a.m. Sunday, March, 6th.

#### COMING EVENTS.

- 1) Saturday, 5th February, Meeting at Lomatia Park, Springwood about the proposed Villa Units in Bland Road, Springwood.
- 2) Saturday, 12th February, Ivy Market, Springwood Civic Centre.
- 3) Friday, 25th February. Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society meeting at the Valley of the Waters Hut, Valley Road, Wentworth Falls.

  "Population Limitation on the Mountains." Discussion will be opened by Michael Ball who worked on the Urban Systems Five Alternative Strategy Plan.
- 4) Saturday, 26th February. Katoomba and District's sale of Native Plants at the Hut. 10am - 4pm. 1lam Talk by Jill Dark on plants suitable for the mid and upper mountains. 1.30pm Botany walk from the Hut.
- Sunday, 27th February. Concert in aid of the Franklin River Appeal.
   6.30 pm. Sydney Town Hall. For further information, ring T.W.S. 02-2677525.
- 6) Convoy to Canberra to protest about the Franklin. Wednesday, 23rd February. Cars covered with anti-dam placards etc. To meet at 12 noon, lawn in front of Parliament House. Bring Tents and Placards.

#### URBAN CONSOLIDATION: Circular 40 - Draft State Environmental Planning Policy.

#### MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING.

This policy is proposed to be implemented on a State-wide basis, including the Blue Mountains, by the Department of Environment and Planning to permit medium density housing, primarily Villa Homes and Town Houses, up to a height of two storeys, in <u>all</u> residential zones in the State where residential flat buildings or residential flat buildings containing more than two dwellings are prohibited.

The Policy is to encourage a variety of dwellings in residential

zones to meet the changing housing needs of the population,

- to contain costs of urban expansion to have more efficient use of services and facilities

- to contribute towards reduction in housing price inflation by enabling more dwellings to be built within existing areas.

The Policy requires no minimum lot size, but contains residential standards relating to density, height, landscaped area and private open space.

A Development Application under the Policy has to be advertised and submissions taken into account. The Minister's approval is needed before the Blue Mountains City Council can impose conditions or refuse an application for a Development by the Crown, public authority, or joint public/private agency.

"Medium Density Housing" in relation to a site, means 3 or more

dwellings on that site.

"Anything in any other environmental planning instrument (whether made before or after this Policy) which would, but for this Policy, prohibit or restrict or enable the consent authority (B.M.C.C.) to prohibit or restrict the carrying out of development to which this Policy applies, shall not apply to that development." Contributions may be required by B.M.C.C. to be made by the developer towards public amenities, services e.g. community, child care and youth centres, playgrounds, public recreation and open space, stormwater drainage and local roads.

The Blue Mountains City Council is opposed to the application of such a medium density housing policy to the Blue Mountains for the following reasons:-

- Existing services are inadequate to serve existing urban development. There is a serious backlog of basic works and services. Many areas already subdivided are not serviced, and there is no opportunity to recoup costs from the subdivider.
- 2) The capacity of the sewerage system is less than the population that could be accommodated under Council's present residential zoning.
- 3) Conservation of natural environment of the Mountains is of regional concern. Concern has been expressed at the capability of the environment to accommodate the possible population in zoned residential areas.
- 4) There is no shortage of residential flat sites near shopping centres and the price of land is generally relatively low. Council's Codes have not been cited by developers as a reason for failure to develop.

5) There appears to be little demand for medium density development in the Blue Mountains in view of its outer location and appeal as a low density living environment.

6) A "blanket" density allowance could preempt the recommendations of the proposed Heritage Study.

The Council is not opposed to a variety of residential accommodation, and has recommended that consideration be given to refinement within residential zones following an analysis of the character of the different towns in the City with a view to providing a variety of lot sizes. Council could also consider applications to vary residential zoning to allow different styles

of accommodation provided there is a detailed submission of a high quality design and there is a demonstated demand.

Submissions by local residents, organizations and the Council on this Medium Density Policy need to reach the D.E.P. by 28th February. This is the time now for you to consider the implications of this Policy. The Minister is committed to pushing this policy, so if you are not happy with it, it is important that you write to express your concern. If the Policy is accepted, there will be little ground on which to object if you suddenly find Villa Units proposed for next door. This Policy applies to all residential areas. Copies of the Policy are available for perusal at the Council offices.

This Society has not determined its position on the Policy as yet, but

will do so after the next meeting on February, 11th.

#### SURPLUS CROWN LAND. Draft State Environmental Planning Policy. No.45.

Here is another Policy being proposed by the D.E.P. that affects us greatly in the Blue Mountains. As there is a great deal of Crown land in the Blue Mountains, and the Society's Policy is for no further development of Crown Lands, the

Society strongly objects to this D.E.P. Draft Policy.

The main objectives are to achieve a use of public lands to promote the social and econmic welfare of the community, viewed from the State rather than a local perspective. The Minister is the consent authority. Any person, with the Minister's consent, may develop "surplus public land" for a use allowed by another environmental plan, or a use allowed on the adjacent or nearby land by another environmental plan. The land may be developed for housing, commercial or industrial use. The Minister may advertise the proposal, (unless it is a designated development, where advertisement is mandatory) and the Minister may require contribution to public facilities. The consent for the use of the land remains valid after it is sold.

Much of the outlying land in the Blue Mountains owned by the Crown is zoned Rural. Also, it has been stated by Crown Land officers that the Mountains are over supplied with public reserves, and even Reserves for Public Recreation

could be declared "surplus".

The Blue Mountains City Council strongly objects to this Draft Policy as it is contrary to the objectives of the Environment, Planning and Assessment Act to encourage public participation in planning. Council would also prefer that Crown Land in the Mountains was used to achieve "an environmental setting" for the Mountains to retain its character.

You may also object to this Policy, and objections must be at the

Dept. of Environment & Planning by 21st February.

WATER MONITORING OF BLUE MOUNTAINS CREEKS.

The Society is looking at the feasability of carrying out a regular water monitoring programme of selected creeks throughout the Mountains on a long term basis. No regular monitoring of any Blue Mountain creeks has taken place since 1979 after a cutback in funds and staff with the State Pollution Control Commission.

Options open are: - to collect the samples and have someone else carry out the analysis, which is expensive (up to \$30.00 per test)

- to collect the samples ourselves and do the analysis ourselves.

The latter option would require someone qualified in chemistry or environmental biology to supervise the tests so that the results will be accepted elsewhere, and to ensure that the tests are carried out to recognized standards. It is possible for the Society to purchase the equipment for the tests, costing up to \$600.00. To do this, the possibility of a Government grant is being investigated to support this major and important project. If you can assist with information on Government Departments that may be willing to grant money for such a project, please let us know.

In the meantime, the Society is seeking the assistance of members who may have access to a laboratory where this work could be done, and is also

seeking members who could take samples from creeks on a regular basis.

to hear from you if you know a creek you feel should be monitored for such

things as In, phosphates, turbidity, E coli content, and nutrient levels. We already have a student from Mitchell College of Advanced Education, Colin Webber, doing tests.

#### WATER CONSERVATION.

Here are some hints on conserving water:

1) Place plastic bowls in all sinks to save otherwise wasted water when washing veges. etc.

2) Save vegetable cooking water. If you don't drink it yourself, or use it for soups, your plants will appreciate a rich drink. (without salt.)

3) Flush toilet when only absolutely necessary.

4) Use truly bio-degradable products for washing & washing-up, so water can be used on the garden. Do not let the water from your washing machine go down the drain, attach a hose from it to the garden.

5) Use bath water for the garden.

6) Repair splits in hoses, poor connections and faulty washers.

7) Mulch the garden.

- 8) Keep a bucket in water usage areas of the house to empty water into from the sinks.
- 9) Write to your local State M.P. and the M.W.S.D.B. asking for restrictions on watering footpaths, cement driveways, cars etc. in the Metropolitan area.

partly from: "Grass Roots", No.34, Dec., 1982.

#### REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE COLONG COMMITTEE.

Members will be heartened to hear that the Colong Committee, having gained success with the Washpool area, and with all their projects, are now wanting to turn their attention to the Blue Mountains. They called a meeting with the Conservation Societies of the Blue Mountains, which was held at the Hut at Wentworth Falls, on Friday, 21st January. Also present were Milo Dunphy of the Total Environment Centre, and Mr. Bob Debus. All agreed it was a momentous occasion, during which the wheels were set in motion for improvements in the Blue Mountains.

The Colong Committee wished to address itself to three issue

1. Sand Mining in the Mountains

2. The Scenic Preservation of the Blue Mountains.

3. Water Pollution in the Mountains.

Time did not allow for discussion of the third topic, but this and others can be covered in the next meeting, to be held on Friday, 18th March, at 8.00pm at the Valley of the Waters Hut.

Under the two topics discussed, of prime concern was the Bell Sand Mine Application and the Proposed Leura Resort Convention Centre/Hotel complex to be situated on the Escarpment.

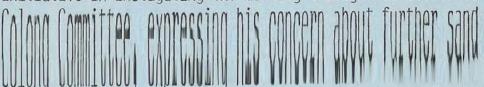
It appears that Council is to reconsider the Bell application at its next meeting. In the meantime, the Conservation Societies are puttting a great deal of effort into a solution to that problem.

As yet, this Society has not made a decision on the Leura Convention Centre. The Council has called for an independent environmental study and plan, & this will be open for public participation when it is on display.

The Resolutions of the Meeting were as follows: (not the exact wording)

1. To work towards a Local Environmental Study and a Local Environmental Plan for the City of the Blue Mountains, and to work towards the suspension of all extractive operations in the Blue Mountains.

initiative in instigating the meeting through his letter to the



mining applications, and to ask the Mayor to renew his opposition to the Bell Sand Mine. (This meeting was held 25th January, with . Graham Alcorn, Mick Dark, George Threlfo, Ross Bridle and Christine Stickley. Also discussed at this meeting were the

Leura Convention Centre, and the appointment of the Environmental Officer.)

#### THE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER.

At the Council Meeting on the 25th January, Council resolved that 1. a short list of suitable applicants (from over 60 received) be informed that Council is not proceeding at this time with a permanent appointment but they be requested to indicate their willingness to be involved in short term consultancy/ contractural arrangements during 1983.

2. Council review the situation at the end of March with a view to the appointment

of an Environmental Officer during 1983.

It was very encouraging to see the growing support for the need for an Environmental Officer amongst the Aldermen, none of whom opposed the idea at the meeting.

#### FIRE RETARDANT TESTS IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

The Society received a letter from the Council concerning the Aerial Fire Retardant Trials held at Blackheath during October last year. The retardant used was "Ammonium Solphate" which when mixed with water acts as a fertilizer. The Forestry Commission, the N.P.W.S., the M.W.S.D.B., and the B.M. Fire Brigades are assessing the after effects on the ecosystem and water.

Research by the Forestry Commission and M.W.S.D.B. to date, reveals water supply in the creek near where the tests took place has not been affected in any way. The trials did reveal "a slight browning of some Eucalyptus

trees but current drought has assisted in this being caused".

The Society will follow up the results of these tests with the above Departments, and the further tests that took place in January, as "the recent fires burnt out the trial areas and further research on the sites cannot take place."

No decision has been made on the viability of this concept, but the use of Ammonium Sulphate "has acted as a reasonable retardant on fire lines"

in the trials carried out so far.

PAST EVENTS.

The December Meeting attracted one of the largest crowds for some time to hear Mr. Gerald Williams speak about The Green Party in Germany. A very lively debate followed, and continued on during the supper break. We are appreciative of his time given before he left for Germany, and hope that the concert we hope to arrange soon will attract a much greater audience.

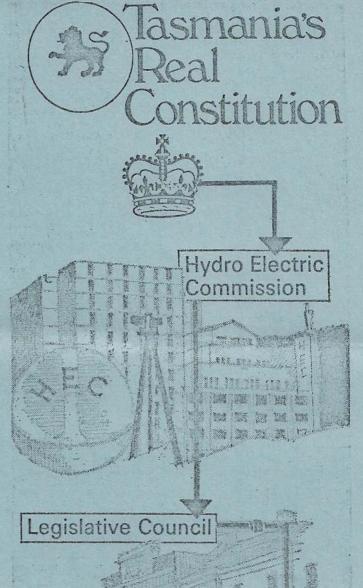
The next night saw our annual Christmas Party at the home of Ross Bridle and Christine Stickley. We are endeavouring to make this annual gathering project oriented, and this year took the form of writing letters to the Prime Minister etc. about the Franklin Dam. Wendy and Christine were very appreciative this Society has not been greatly hindered by its name in being involved in issues outside the Lower Blue Mountains. In future, we will seek acceptance in the surrounding areas and seek a wider membership from these areas.

The Society was recently sent a book of Raffle Tickets by the Fund for Animals. (e.g. parrots.) A cheque for \$20.00 was sent to the Fund.

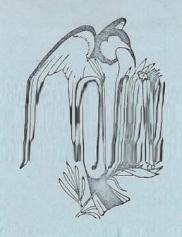
Wendy and Christine represented the Society at the opening of the RODDWAY ACTOSS LENNOX Bridge in December. The Society is continuing its

work on tree planting and regeneration around the bridge this year, under the co-ordination of Brian Mills. George Thrlefo organized a group of students from Dunheved High to clean up the rubbish under the Bridge. The kids put in a grand effort, and the Society is to present a book for the library in appreciation for their hard work. Brian then organized a working bee on a Sunday morning to tackle the blackberries. This was very successful, and further working bees will be planned, in the near future.

As is evident, the Society is facing yet another very busy year, requiring the involvement of <u>more</u> members. A great deal is being achieved by a core of hard workers, but it is becoming a full time job for a few to keep up the pace. Please put yourselves out this year to help the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society maintain its good work and high standards.



5 M.H. 1.2.83



### Lower Blue Mountains

## Conservation Jociety

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT. 8th October, 1982.

This has been an extremely busy year for the Society, and a year during which we have consolidated our credibility with Blue Mountains City Council, both the officers and some of the aldermen. In consequence, one would hope this acceptance extends to the general community. Through our numerous press articles this year, we have brought a greater awareness in the Mountains for the need for stronger conservation measures in order to maintain the Blue Mountains ecosystem.

The year couldn't have started with a more hectic pace than that provided by the B.M.C.C. elections, where we were immediately thrown into the controversy following a "Meet the Candidates" morning at the home of Besse Bramsen. Our questionnaire to candidates and the hard work helped to make conservation a major election issue. The Society stays abreast of Council decisions by sending a representative to each general meeting of Council, and by subscribing to the Business Paper, which has proved of great benefit.

The Society has been pleased with the good liason and co-operation the staff of Council have given by initiating meetings etc., and we hope this will continue to bring benefits to the Blue Mountains environment. Would that we received the same co-operation elsewhere!

Such meetings have been at Lennox Bridge with Mr. Phil Willis, and with the Deputy Town Planner on two occasions to discuss the position of the Environmental Officer and the Escarpment. Mr John Metcalfe, City Engineer, met us one night to discuss the construction of Railway Parade, Wentworth Falls, and we had a recent meeting with Mr. Willis regarding the Year of the Tree projects. We have had meetings with Ald. David March about the Statement of Objectives, and two with Ald. Ralph Williams. There will be future meetings with Aldermen to discuss conservation issues in their areas.

The Society has been in continual contact with the Escarpment Preservation Group, over the Emu Heights subdivision proposal, the Netball Courts at Lapstone, and recently, with the Electricity Commission. Other groups of residents asked for our assistance during the year, among them being those protesting about the Crown Land Subdivision at Coughlin Road and a subdivision/ development proposal at Farm Road, Springwood.



## Lower Blue Mountains

# Canselvation Joseph

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working on a detailed submission for next year's Conference on industry in the Blue Mountains.

1982 is more notably known as the "Year of the Tree", its introduction being celebrated with a concert in our meeting hall in January, when Evie Pikler sang her hauntingly beautiful "tree" songs. Our Society has been represented on the "Year of the Tree Committee" by Besse Bramsen and Kathy Chapman. Wendy Godfrey has represented the Society at Tree Plantings at the Nepean C.A.E. and outside the S.G.A.P. grounds at Glenbrook. A list of suitable sites in the Lower Blue Mountains needing trees has been presented to Council, to be incorporated in their project. Planting in the vicinity of Lennox Bridge will be the society's major contribution to the Year of the Tree. However, let us not forget that 1982 is only the beginning of the "Decade of the Tree", and these plantings should continue.

A great deal of interest has be shown by the media in the work that we are doing, especially from Sean Walker (of 2KA), who always seemed to want a coherent comment, for the news items at 6.30am. Also, Sydney Morning Herald reporter, Rosanne Robertson made 3 trips to the Mountains, and was shown sites from Glenbrook to Bell by members of the Works Committee. It is hoped that a substantial article will soon be appearing in the weekend S.M.H.

"Operation Noah" was underway at the beginning of the school year, with Wendy Godfrey giving talks to many schools in the Penrith/St.Marys area, from where a record collection was made.

In April we formed a Works Committee (Bob Chapman, Brian Mills, Wendy Godfrey, Paul Godfrey, Ross Bridle and Christine Stickley) to deal with writing submissions, and this has proved most successful. Major submissions this year have been on:

the Great Barrier Reef

the Eastern Escarpment
The Housing Commission land in South Penrith
Catalina Park
the appointment of an Ecologist to the B.M.C.C.
the Lakes Scheme Inquiry
the B.M.C.C. Statement of Objectives
Industrial areas in the Lower Blue Mountains.
S.W. Tasmania - Senate Select Committee
Environmental Legislation.

with many more letters of objection to various Government departments etc.



## Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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satisfactory to everyone, and that more members and visitors will be encouraged to attend monthly meetings.

During the year, our guest speakers gave informative addresses and often made for lively debates. Shirley Patterson spoke on the role of the National Trust, Bob Debus on the Western Sydney Planning Committee and other matters, Phil Koperberg on "Hazard Reduction by Control Burning", Lin Paish on industries in the Lower Blue Mountains, and Bev Fielder showed her beautiful slides of insects and flowers. There was also a members slide night when we travelled from northern N.S.W. to Kangaroo Island, S.A. Wendy Godfrey's slides of Menindee Lakes and Mootwingee were a welcome addition to our Christmas Party.

A number of walks were planned during the year, but our rare inclement weather prevented walks to St. Helena and Blue Gum Swamp Creek. Most outings have involved inspections, and with the work load facing the executive, there has been little time for social excursions. It is hoped this will be remedied next year and we rely on members to offer suggestions and to guide walks.

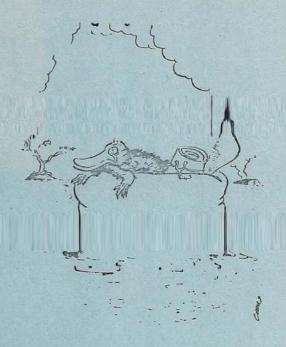
All this work could not have been done without time and dedication on the part of the executive and the hard working members. My thanks to everyone who gave up their Sundays and evenings to come to meetings or inspections. Thank you to Paul Godfrey, and Wendy, for an excellent newsletter, to Brian Mills for his all important Press Releases, to Colin Powell for keeping our finances in order, and to John Sheehy for helping us out as Honorary Solicitor. Thank you to Besse Bramsen and Margaret Esson for all the work they did as Publicity Officer and Editor respectively in the beginning of the year. Our thanks to Jill Dark and Aleen Hanley for keeping the minutes, and for their untiring efforts on our stall at the Ivy Market.

Many organizations, too, were grateful for their efforts, including the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Nature Conservation Council, Total Environment Centre, Save the Earth Fund, Rainforest Legal Action Fund, Pacific Peacemaker, Barrier Reef Fund and the International Fund For Animals. In total, the Society donated \$445.00 to these groups.

My special thanks to Wendy Godfrey for her wonderful work as Secretary. I don't think anyone can fully appreciate the amount of time and effort Wendy puts into the Society, which could not function at the high standard it does without her help. Wendy once said that it takes about an hour a day to do the



### RIVERS CAN'T SWIM



On the 8th December, 1982, the Federal Government announced that it would allow the Tasmanian Government to drown the Franklin River. This means that a major part of the World Heritage area of South West Tasmania will be destroyed. In spite of Federal Government assurances that damage will be limited, rivers can't swim.

We must reverse the decision of 8th December. If it is not reversed, in order to save the South West, we will have to campaign against the Federal Government at the federal election, due this year.

## Where will you be when we save the Franklin River?

Elections are labour-intensive industries. We have to contact and convince thousands of voters in marginal electorates all over Australia. We have to organise thousands of our supporters to hand out how-to-vote cards on polling day.

If you can help in any way, please fill in the form below and send it to us at the National South West Coalition. We will put you in touch with the NSWC office in your area.

Name			(H)
Address			Postcode
FEDERAL ELECTORATE:			
How would you like to help save the Franklin River?			
Leafletting		Doorknocking	
Handing out how-to-vote cards		Fundraising	
Publicity		Organising	
Transport		Distributing posters	
Other			
How much time can you afford?			
700 200000			

Please return to: Volunteer Register National South West Coalition