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COUNCIL OF NATURE CONSERVATION MINISTERS

NINTH MEETING

PERTH 10 JULY 1980

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MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS PRESENT

Western Australia:

Hon. G.E. Masters,
Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife,
Conservation and the Environment.
(Chairman).

Mr B.K. Bowen.
Mr C.F. Jenkins.
Dr F.G. Smith.

Commonwealth:

Hon. D.S. Thomson,
Minister for Science and the
Environment.

Mr T. Richmond.
Mr K.E. Thompson.

Australian Capital Territory:

Dr B.H. Pratt, representing
Hon. R.J. Ellicott,
Minister for the Capital Territory.

Northern Territory

Hon. P.A. Everingham,
Chief Minister and Attorney-General.

Dr G.A. Letts.
Mr M.A. Elliott.

Queensland:

Hon. I.J. Gibbs,
Minister for Culture, National Parks
and Recreation.

Dr G.W. Saunders.

New South Wales:

Hon. E.L. Bedford,
Minister for Planning and Environment.

Mr D.A. Johnstone.
Mr J. Giles.

Victoria:

Mr J.D. Brookes, representing
Hon. W.V. Houghton,
Minister for Conservation.

Mr J.C. Wharton.
Mr D.S. Saunders.

Tasmania:

Mr G. Middleton, representing
Hon. A.B. Lohrey,
Minister for National Parks and
Wildlife, Lands and the Environment.

South Australia:

Hon. D.C. Wotton,
Minister of Environment and
Minister of Planning.

Dr P.W. Ellyard.
Mr N.C. Gare.
Dr S. Barker.

Secretariat:

Mr P. Reece,
Secretary to Council.

Mr D. McAllister.

COUNCIL OF NATURE CONSERVATION MINISTERS

The ninth meeting of the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers was held at the National Parks Authority of Western Australia, Hackett Drive, Crawley, on 10 July 1980 with the Hon. G.E. Masters in the chair.

AGENDA ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Mr MASTERS - Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you here today. I was going to offer you 'a warm welcome' but perhaps the weather is not quite as warm as we would have hoped although the sun is now shining. At least our hospitality in Western Australia is warm and we hope that you will enjoy it and make the most of our friendliness of which we are rather proud in Western Australia. We are somewhat isolated here, although the jet age has brought about a slight change and we manage to have better communications than we had in the past. Nevertheless, it is a long run from Perth to the city nearest - Adelaide - so at times we tend to feel a little isolated. Our 150th year celebration last year gave us the opportunity to make more friends and invite more people here.

Our State is 2.5 million square kilometres, which is a fairly big area and we have a population of 1.2 million, approximately. We believe we are on the verge of great development - probably the biggest development ever in Australia; it is certainly the largest ever in Western Australia - and we look forward with relish to the challenges it represents. We recognise that because of those developments we will have some conservation and environmental problems and it is perhaps an advantage to us, at this time, to have this conference held in Perth. I am sure it is the first time this Council has been held in Western Australia since Council first met. Yesterday most people arrived early and we were able to arrange a seminar.

I believe that the seminar was advantageous for a number of reasons. Firstly, we got to know each other before the Council met and we loosened up and let go in more comfort than we would otherwise have done. Apart from that, the seminar was of advantage to me and my departmental officers, as I am sure it was to you.

Secondly, we visited the Western Australia wildlife research centre of which we are very proud. It is a short distance from Perth and was opened in 1974 by the Duke of Edinburgh. We also consider to be very pleasant the surroundings of the national park headquarters which were opened by the Premier in 1975. We demonstrate that we have a great interest in conservation. We are establishing that point very clearly in Western Australia.

Before we get under way with the conference, I would particularly like to mention two people. The first is our President of the National Parks Authority of Western Australia, Mr Jenkins, who, for 12 years - it seems all the time I have been in Western Australia - has been at the helm of the organisation overseeing national parks in this State. In his official capacity, Mr Jenkins is attending the meeting for the last time since he retires in August. We wish him well and hope that he can come as an observer one of these days and give us the benefit of his advice. We thank him for all he has done. At the same time we are losing Dr Smith who has been director for many years. Our national parks will suffer as a result of his departure. We are losing the top leadership in the national parks organisation and we will be hard pressed to replace those two gentlemen. I take advantage of this occasion to wish Dr Smith all the best and I know as a sailor he will enjoy a happy retirement.

I would like to record the apologies we have received from those who have been unable to attend the meeting. Mr Ellicott, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for the Capital Territory is unable to attend and will be represented today by Dr Pratt. We have an apology from Mr Houghton, Minister for Conservation in Victoria, who will be represented by Mr Brooks. Mr Lohrey, Minister for National Parks and Wildlife in Tasmania has sent an

apology and will be represented by Mr Middleton. We have also received apologies from the Ministers from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr MASTERS - The first item is to adopt the agenda as printed.

Mr THOMSON - At the end of the Conference I would like to say a few words about ~~a query on~~ ^{aquarium} fish.

Mr MASTERS - That is agreed.

Mr WOTTON - Yesterday, after the Conference, I spoke to people from other States about a scheme which we have just adopted in regard to the conserving of natural vegetation on private properties and the incentives which the Government is providing to do that. Certain people suggested they would like to hear more about that. I seek guidance from you on whether that could be brought under other business which is at the end of the agenda.

Mr MASTERS - Yes, that would be a good idea.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - SUMMARY RECORD OF EIGHTH MEETING OF COUNCIL

Mr MASTERS - The eighth meeting of the Council was held in Sydney and the summary is there for your information and for your agreement. A verbatim transcript is available if required for any particular point.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I do not support adoption of the summary record in its present form. I have written to the Secretariat expressing my reservations on the minutes as they read at present. As I recall it I am the only Minister who was at the last meeting and, for that matter, the meeting before, so I propose to give a little background. A resolution was passed at the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers meeting in Darwin in 1978 expressing concern that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service was involved in active national park control and management in the Northern Territory. That boils it down to its substance. At the last meeting of CONCOM I sought to raise the matter again to query progress by the Commonwealth in relation to complying with the terms of the resolution. It appears from a reading of agenda item 6 in the record that I merely reiterated the 1976 resolution, that Senator Webster, who was then the Federal Minister, satisfactorily responded and that there was in fact no difference of opinion between us.

I understand that it is not common practice to quote the views of individual ministers in the record, but there is no doubt in my mind that the record should satisfactorily indicate that there was still dissatisfaction on the part of the Northern Territory - particularly in regard to how the Commonwealth was operating within the Northern Territory. I would like to stress that point and I believe that the minutes should reflect truly the content of what was said at the time. I certainly do not want to labour the point because the relations which the Northern Territory has at present with the new Commonwealth Minister for Science and the Environment, Mr Thomson, are very cordial and we detect a considerable desire on the part of the Commonwealth to seek to comply with the spirit, if not the

letter, of the resolution. We hope for advances whereby the Northern Territory will assume the same position as the States in relation to all its national parks. For that reason I do not particularly like raising this matter at this time but I do believe that for accuracy of the record it is necessary to do so.

Mr MASTERS - Would any other Minister like to comment on this point? I believe you all have copies of the proposal he has put before us.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I move:

That at the bottom of page 6 the following words be inserted in the record: 'The Northern Territory Minister advised that the Commonwealth was still in default in respect of (i), (ii) and (iii) above'.

Without that the record is incomplete and incorrect.

Mr MASTERS - Is there any objection to that inclusion? Would any Minister like to make a comment?

Mr GIBBS - There is no objection from Queensland.

Mr MASTERS - There being no objection, that will be included in the record.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - MARINE PARKS AND RESERVES

Mr MASTERS - This item is mainly for information. Do any of the Ministers have any comments or queries on this matter? The Premiers Conference agreement and the various points are listed.

Mr BROOKS - The last paragraph on page 3 should refer to the reserves in the context of territorial or administrative boundaries only. Otherwise they are just State matters. In the third line of that paragraph after 'a marine park or reserve' I wish to insert 'which would extend across the boundary of the territorial sea' before continuing with the words 'which meets'. That should make it quite clear.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

Mr MASTERS - There are nine conventions and treaties listed there. I suggest that we go straight to sub-item (i), which is the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Is there any comment?

Mr EVERINGHAM - The only comment from the Northern Territory concerns Kakadu. It is in fact not the wetlands in Kakadu which have been nominated. The whole of Kakadu has been nominated and indeed I would say that at least three-fourths of Kakadu would be drylands. Probably a more selective approach should be taken in the future, but that is a note simply for the record.

Mr MASTERS - Are there any other comments on sub-item (i)? I would like to make one. I would challenge the last four lines of the first paragraph, which read:

Australia was able to ratify immediately because it was possible for responsibilities under this Convention to be fulfilled through administrative action or under legislation already in force.

That may be open to doubt. It has never been proved and never been tested. I am not sure whether it is absolutely right and so I make this comment for the record.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I just make the general comment that consultation on these conventions and treaties does leave a lot to be desired.

Mr MASTERS - We will make sure that is on the record.

Mr WOTTON - As far as sub-item (i) is concerned, South Australia is looking closely at including the Coorong area and particularly the lower reaches of the Murray Lakes on this list. I hope to come forward next year with something positive.

Mr MASTERS - If there is nothing further on sub-item (i) we will now move to sub-item (ii). This appears to be mainly for information.

Mr EVERINGHAM - The Northern Territory has no opposition to Kakadu National Park being nominated for the World Heritage List but we do counsel some caution. Perhaps we are being a little overcareful, but we do believe that this type of action is being

used by bureaucrats to strengthen their stance in wishing to involve themselves in matters that we believe are properly the concern of State or Territory governments.

Mr GIBBS - When we are talking about listings and all sorts of things, I think we should be very careful not to list things for the sake of listing them and not to flag wave to the world for the sake of flag waving. We should not make a rod for our own backs for some purpose or another that may not eventuate. In view of the United Nations' activities and world bits and pieces, we want to be careful that we do not end up sitting out in the ocean with people looking at us and waving big sticks at us. I think that all these things, including the treaties and World Heritage, may accumulate one day into something that we cannot handle.

Mr MASTERS - I think that would certainly go for Western Australia. That is exactly how we feel about it. We will now move to sub-item (iii). As far as Western Australia is concerned, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora appears to be working particularly well. There is a great deal of State and Commonwealth co-operation. We have been advised that Australia is a signatory to the three treaties for which ratification awaits legislation. They are listed. The first relates to a minor involvement as far as we are concerned, but is there any comment? Is there any comment on the second treaty, on agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan? I think the treaty is quite important. When a convention is entered into by the Federal Government I believe there should always be an abundantly clear indication that we are a federation. Therefore, when the Commonwealth Government enters into an agreement there should be, if possible, a reservation clause stating that the States have something to say about it; that they have an input to make. Most certainly I would be sorry to see agreements made without some sort of reservation clause included in them.

Mr THOMSON - When we sign international treaties we sign as a nation, Australia. I am told it is legally inappropriate

to have a Federal clause in those treaties. I think this conference should try to find a better method of consultation so that there is proper consultation with the States both before a treaty is signed and during the operation of a treaty. It seems that after treaties are signed their operation goes quite well. There seems to be some reservation that there may not be enough consultation before treaties are signed. I would be very happy to listen to any suggestions on that.

Mr EVERINGHAM - This subject is discussed ad nauseum in forums such as the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. I think there is general agreement by the States on a completely non-partisan basis that, generally speaking, there is insufficient consultation between the Commonwealth and the States and the Northern Territory before the adherence to many of these treaties, conventions, protocols or whatever they may be. Again I think I speak correctly in saying there has been an almost unanimous stand by the States that federal clauses indeed are appropriate.

Mr BEDFORD - I am interested in the conflict of advice here from our two Ministers on the question of the federal clauses. Mr Thomson, I understand that you said that your legal advice is that they are not appropriate?

Mr THOMSON - That is the advice I have, that in an international treaty a federal clause is inappropriate because it is signed on behalf of the whole nation. I realise there is conflict and disagreement. I think it is a matter for the Attorneys-General to take up in more detail. It is something that we cannot solve here. I am very much open to any suggestion that there should be more consultation because I am sure that is the key to our Federal-State system.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I believe consultation is the answer because in many cases if we had found out more than two weeks before Australia wanted to sign one of these treaties it would have been possible to agree on everything before that time.

Mr MASTERS - As far as Western Australia is concerned, we wish to have reservation clauses. I am sure the Attorneys-General will take it up. It is something on which I needed to make a point here today. I wanted to get the message over to Mr Thomson.

Mr THOMSON - It has been coming over for many years. I wish to support Mr Everingham's suggestion that consultation is the key. I think we have to make a very great effort to consult as much as possible before these things are done. I certainly will make an effort to do so in my own area.

Mr MASTERS - I suggest that at some time the States ought to look forward to putting a package proposal on conservation to the Commonwealth Government and try to pull things together because we seem to be going on and on. Perhaps a package deal of some sort would help considerably. It would clear things up.

Mr THOMSON - Most of our problems seem to be the result of lack of consultation and understanding beforehand. This applies in so many things.

Mr GIBBS - I think it is so to the degree that we do not know something has happened until it is a fait accompli. Although we have not been part of it, we have to bear the brunt of it, quite often with extra costs, et cetera that go with it.

Mr MASTERS - Is there any further comment? We are still on page 3 paragraph (3): 'A Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific'.

Mr BEDFORD - I am sorry, but may I interrupt before we proceed? With reference to the question of consultation and the machinery for it, would it be appropriate for this meeting today to decide how that consultation should be established and the time leads we would need in order to develop it? We have the assurance of Mr Thomson that consultation will take place. That is fine. I think now we ought to look at the machinery of it.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I think a resolution from this meeting seeking better avenues of consultation with the Commonwealth would be fine, but this is only one area. I really think it is something that has to be decided at the Premiers Conference. It has been on the agenda, I think, for the last two Premiers Conferences, but I think it is back with the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General to do something about setting up better machinery at the moment.

Mr MASTERS - I can see no reason why we should not at least put some resolution from this Council. At least it will reinforce much that has been said in the past. Do you wish to move in that direction, Mr Everingham?

Mr EVERINGHAM - Mr Bedford made the suggestion.

Mr BEDFORD - I was making the reference on consultation only in respect of this meeting. I accept the point. It is really a matter for decision between the Prime Minister and Premiers. It could be on the basis that in reporting to our own Premiers we point this out and try to get them to take up the cause in the general scene. We will all be reporting back to our governments, and it might be considered a little infra dig if CONCOM writes to the Attorney-General and says he ought to do something about it.

Dr PRATT - Could we put forward a motion then that this CONCOM conference feels that before any treaties or agreements are signed by the Commonwealth on behalf of the Australian people the States should be asked, with adequate time, for their opinions on those matters?

Mr BEDFORD - It would do no harm, I think. Mr Thomson has already made the comment that that would be covered.

Mr THOMSON - I would be very happy for that because it does formalise a feeling amongst us all.

Mr BROOKS - That is the general case of all treaties presumably, but the ones with which we are specifically dealing are ones with a conservation flavour and as I understand it they are all handled in the first instance by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service executive in Canberra. Surely it is possible for us to ask the Minister to direct the hierarchy of that group to consult with us early, tell us quickly what is going on and give us plenty of lead time and take note. Is not that really what we want?

Mr THOMSON - I agree entirely. I think the resolution should include the words 'items or subjects which are responsibilities of the Ministers for Conservation'. I do not believe we in this conference can go outside that generally, although I agree.

Mr MASTERS - I think we have made it quite clear what we are looking for and possibly the comment made by Mr Bedford, that we should report to our Premiers and ask for action to be taken in that field should be heeded.

Mr THOMSON - I will do the same.

Mr MASTERS - Do we all agree? Still on page 3, we come to treaty (3), 'A Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific'. This is at the consultation stage. I do not think we need to take any action.

Mr MIDDLETON - I express regrets from Tasmania's point of view, and I think the other States would agree, that consultations on this have been very protracted. In fact it was about two years ago that we first had contact. I understand still that only New South Wales and Tasmania have been consulted about the suitability of State laws for the application of this convention. It seems to be a very long time to have no action appearing.

Mr MASTERS - The words here are 'consultations are to be initiated'. You are saying that they have not.

Mr MIDDLETON - They were initiated, with Tasmania at least, about two years ago. We had one contact and nothing since, and I understand other States have not yet been consulted. Has this process stopped or what is the problem?

Mr MASTERS - I have no knowledge of it at all. Can anyone comment on that point? We are talking about initiation of consultation. We will record that comment. The next point to be raised is this:

Australia participated in meetings that concluded two conventions but at this time there has been no decision by Australia on signing either convention. These conventions are:

and then it lists them, beginning with the Antarctic Marine Living Resources Convention. Is there any comment on convention (1)?

Mr THOMSON - Really convention (3) on page 3 is a resource issue. Therefore it is a very complex one and we need more consultation, I agree, but I understand it is going on. This is more a resource issue than a conservation problem.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - STATE REPRESENTATION ON AUSTRALIAN DELEGATIONS

Mr MASTERS - We have recommendations (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Mr BEDFORD - This gets back to this business of consultation. The States would appreciate advice from the Commonwealth, with sufficient lead-time, on conventions that are coming up. I understand that there has been a bit of a failure here. Suddenly the States learn about such conventions, probably from the media. Is there any way in which the Commonwealth could provide that advice to the States on a fixed basis such as every six months or so? Then we will be in a better position to look at the question of representation.

Mr THOMSON - Are you asking for an earlier warning?

Mr BEDFORD - Yes.

Mr THOMSON - It is important that the States should be represented. I agree entirely with those recommendations. It is a matter of giving you sufficient warning. That is a good point.

Mr GIBBS - It says here that 'the initiative for the inclusion of State representatives should come from the States'. It is very difficult to include yourself or take the initiative if you do not know it is on. If you have to put a note through to Cabinet and receive its agreement that does not happen in 24 hours normally. Although it is our responsibility to initiate it, it is hard to go to dinner unless you are called.

Mr THOMSON - I will have to talk to the Minister for Foreign Affairs about this. It is a problem for the Department of Foreign Affairs largely, although we are involved.

Mr GIBBS - I think we should get an invitation. We should be advised that it is on and told that we are welcome to go. Then the State takes the initiative in deciding whether its representative should be included or not.

Mr THOMSON - Do you agree with the recommendations (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)?

Mr GIBBS - Yes, we do support those.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

Mr MASTERS - This is a matter for information.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Mr MASTERS - This again is for information.

Mr EVERINGHAM - We accepted this strategy when it was presented to us on the same day as it was presented in other State capitals and in Canberra. We are not against the Prime Minister's moves to develop a national conservation strategy. We are already well advanced in writing the principles and guidelines, particularly those which stress the relationship between development and conservation, into a revamped policy statement for our Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. In other words, although our Commission has only recently been established we are considering rewriting its charter, to improve it. I expect the new charter to be before Cabinet within a month. It, of course, will contain much that is useful from this world conservation strategy.

Mr MASTERS - Would anyone else like to comment?

Mr THOMSON - I am aware of what is happening in the Northern Territory and applaud it, but the Prime Minister wrote to Premiers on 30 May seeking views on the world conservation strategy and the development of a national strategy. Some Premiers have yet to reply. I have been given the responsibility of considering this for the Commonwealth and I intend to consult as widely as possible. A number of seminars will be held. The first one is on 15 July. At that seminar we will have consultations with non-government organisations. The next seminar will be a consultation with business and mining groups and certainly will include urgent consultations with State officials. It is suggested there be a seminar on 24 July in order to send a representative to a meeting in Canberra to discuss this. By that time we will have results of the other two meetings and we can give them to you. Again, it is going to be a matter of very wide consultation and a lot of talking before agreement is found. But the strategy we are thinking of at the moment is to find all those things on which we agree and come up with a broad policy for Australia, which will be a national policy. Then there will be a number of items which will need

much more consultation and will take a lot of time. So there are two phases - a fairly urgent need to see what we agree on concerning the world conservation strategy and the national strategy, and then consultation on all the other matters which are much more controversial.

Mr MASTERS - Thank you.

Mr BROOKS - In Victoria we did launch this same thing on the same day as everyone else but for World Environment Day the Australian Environment Council adopted this conserver society ethic. Our Ministry, together with the Australian Conservation Foundation, has been working on that with considerable success. We used the media to get our message across. The conserver society has a lot in common with this world conservation strategy, and I suppose the best way to sum it up is to say that we are not going to stop development, but we are going to learn to do more with less, particularly energy and the wasteful use of resources. It is a bit like some of General Booth's hymn tunes, too. It is a bit more powerful and it is strong in its appeal. We even have 11 other Government departments to support it, which must be a record. I would commend the Federal Government to have a look at this side. We have quite a lot of information on it and we have based a lot of it on what has been done in Canada with Operation Gamma. We think it has something, and we are now going to try to keep it going, I hope, with as much success as 'Life. Be in it.' and that gentle slob Norm. But whether or not we can is another matter.

Mr EVERINGHAM - It is immensely heartening to hear the Federal Minister, David Thomson, tell us that there is going to be the most complete and close consultation on the formulation of this national conservation strategy. I do not know whether I am 100 per cent correct, but I think no national conservation strategy is going to work unless it has the full support of the States and the Territories.

For that reason I wonder whether it should be looked at very closely by the Commonwealth and the States before deep consultation is entered into with other interested bodies and groups. The Commonwealth could then find itself marketing something that it knows it can eventually see adopted in practice.

Mr WOTTON - Mr Chairman, I support what the Commonwealth is doing because I think there will be deep consultation at the meetings that have been organised. Major opportunities exist for State government representation and for the Commonwealth and the States to work together on this strategy. I commend the Commonwealth Minister for Science and the Environment for the initiative he has shown in the organising of these meetings.

Mr THOMSON - Thank you very much for those comments. I encourage all States and the Territories to send representatives. Thereby we could have the preliminary discussions to see where we are going. I think Mr Everingham is quite right; the strategy cannot be formulated without the majority of us agreeing with it. The preliminary discussions will be on 24 July. It will be a meeting for officials to sit down together. We realise that neither the States nor the Commonwealth will have a fully developed strategy. We would like to have this initial meeting to see where we are going and where we think we agree. The Commonwealth could see whether its plan for developing the strategy is acceptable to the States.

Mr MASTERS - I think that is a very good idea. I welcome the meeting. I think the document we are talking about is a very powerful document not only on the Australian scene but also on the world scene.

Mr BROOKS - The Prime Minister declared his reservations about this strategy. He said it had to be done properly and entirely with full consultation. The letter he has written is difficult to answer in a meaningful manner; to answer everything that is raised in it. In a great effort to come up with this final strategy, we have to be careful. We should not do what some people have done. The Heritage Commission had people

running round listing things and declaring vast areas of our reefs and all the other things. That finally makes people nervous. The people I am talking about are the people in the street and who are in these areas. They do not understand fully what is happening. I think Dr Letts made those points quite clearly yesterday in his very simple summary; we have to spell out our values in regard to the whole concept. We have to spell them out to the community. If we are to come up with this strategy it has to be done properly. It has to be done slowly. What comes out at the other end must have gone through our people in Australia, as well as everyone else concerned. It has to be done carefully and with a lot of consultation. It does not want to be done overnight. With all the other things we have running around, we do not want to have another accumulation. I have found that people round the countryside are nervous. They do not know how many teeth things have got. I think our wilderness conference in Cairns was a typical example. A little brochure was put out and carelessly the whole Cape was painted green, including about 5,000 acres of cane country. One brush mark wiped out about 100 cane farmers. We had a lot of nervous people in David's area. This is just a word of warning. Whatever we do has to be done and explained properly as we go. We should not add to the nervousness of the people of Australia at this time in regard to what conservation means.

Mr MASTERS - I think the Council welcomes your conferring and consulting with it, bearing in mind the importance of this document. It might be fair to say that until we have looked thoroughly at it and understood what it means, we are all a little bit nervous.

Mr THOMSON - I think that is true. I must say that I welcomed the rather enthusiastic letter about this strategy. We in Australia are well ahead of many countries in already having a strategy of development and conservation, and I think we will find when we get more knowledge of the world strategy that our national strategy is really well in place in so many aspects. I do not think we will find it so difficult because

we have already agreed on so many things regarding development and conservation going hand in hand. It is the balance between the two that is the problem. So I would very much welcome as much from the States as we can get in the consultation process. I hope people will not be nervous about it because it is really a statement of intent and does not bind us to anything. Our national strategy will be a strategy for Australia.

Mr GIBBS - That is what we also hear about the Heritage Commission but if you ask the people they are nervous because they do not know. So it is up to us. If we feed out the right information it is okay and if we do not all we have is a lot of people lobbying Ministers, which is about how far you will get.

Mr THOMSON - Let us hope we all put out the right information. It is up to us.

Mr GIBBS - I know the States will.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(a) KANGAROO MANAGEMENT

UNITED STATES BAN ON IMPORTATION OF
KANGAROO PRODUCTS

Mr MASTERS - This is a matter for consideration. There are two papers in item 9(a). One is advising us of the United States ban on importation of kangaroo products and their changed attitude, and the other one is a management paper.

Mr GIBBS - Mr Thomson, have you the latest information from America on how the proposal to lift the ban is going and whether there are any problems?

Mr THOMSON - It is most encouraging. Their public comment period finishes, I think, on 15 July - in the next few days. I will read extracts of a paper which Dr Anderson has just sent. I understand it is to be sent to the States but if I read some of these extracts it might clear the air. This is a summary of Dr Anderson's statement. He was the United States fisheries and wildlife officer who came out. I met him and was most impressed. I think what he has to say here is of interest to us. He states that while there is some variation from State to State the relevant legislation uniformly attempts to perpetuate self-sustaining kangaroo populations and to keep the number of kangaroos within limits acceptable to landowners. Law enforcement programs are the weakest link in the system. The number of enforcement officers is quite limited and the land area very large. Many changes have been made to improve kangaroo management programs since the enactment of the United States Endangered Species Act. The fact that the Commonwealth of Australia National Parks and Wildlife Service was not established until 1974 is significant. This Service now reviews and co-ordinates the harvest quotas as suggested by each of the four States, in addition to its activities as a member of CONCOM.

Dr Anderson states that hard evidence makes it clear that good programs exist in each of the four States for the sustained management of the red, eastern grey and western grey kangaroos. The regulatory programs are well organised, effective and

generally very good. In addition, he concludes, it is clear that the populations are very abundant and their habitat is both very extensive and relatively secure. Those are very encouraging words, I think. He looked at it in some depth and he is saying that we have the right programs, we are doing a good job and there is no reason why the United States should not lift its ban. If it lifts the ban it will be a great relief to all of us from those States which have problems.

Mr MASTERS - Bearing in mind those comments, we have three recommendations on page 2 in agenda item 9(a)(i).

Mr THOMSON - It is difficult to change any of our systems at the moment when we are going through this very difficult period of negotiation with the United States. I think it would be a very good idea, when the United States lifts its ban, to let our present system continue for a period. If we change it now there might be some questions. There is a very strong lobby, and I am sure you have all been lobbied by it, called the 'Kangaroo Protection Society'. If we make any changes now they would be taken in the wrong context. Although our system is good, as Dr Anderson has said, if we could keep it going while we try the export program I think that would be sensible.

Mr MASTERS - Are you saying there is a possibility of changes to the second and third recommendations? Are you suggesting that we should agree with recommendation (i) and possibly defer recommendations (ii) and (iii) as they could indicate a change and therefore threaten the American understanding?

Mr THOMSON - That is what I would do. I realise the intent of this. It would mean a change to systems in some of the States and it would be unwise to do it at the moment, when things are going so well in our negotiations. Could we defer that to the next meeting?

Mr MASTERS - So recommendation (i) is quite acceptable. There is no present tagging system. The other two recommendations should be deferred.

Mr THOMSON - Yes.

Mr WOTTON - I certainly support that. South Australia supports the three recommendations to a certain extent but we feel very strongly that because climatic conditions cause changes in the population, and this is certainly happening in South Australia where there are fluctuations in climatic conditions which have been proved by aerial surveys then we want to retain the right to annual review rather than tri-annual review. We have very recently increased our quota from 150,000 to 200,000. This brings us up to about 15 per cent. We intend making it very clear to the public of South Australia that in doing so we reserve our right to reduce the quota if conditions next year are not as good as they are this year, if we have a drought for example. I think we should be able to do that on an annual basis.

Mr GIBBS - I understood that the quota of each State was recognised as a maximum and that the State could work within that amount and reduce it at its discretion. At present we are going back to the Commonwealth every three years, are we not?

Mr THOMSON - No, annually. It is suggested that we should retain that system for the time being because of the delicacy of the situation with America. It is working quite well.

Mr GIBBS - The present system should remain. We should give no indication of any alterations in this recommendation, otherwise we will give ammunition to our Australian lobby, which is just waiting for that to happen. We are happy with the present situation. It should not be changed in any way.

Mr MASTERS - So we agree to recommendation (i) and defer recommendations (ii) and (iii)?

Mr GIBBS - Yes.

Mr MASTERS - There is a very good report attached to this agenda item. When we table our report in Parliament could this report entitled 'Ad Hoc Working Group on Kangaroo Management Report to Standing Committee be attached to it? There seems to be a lot of good information in it and it would do no harm at all to get it to the public. We have some

problems in Western Australia because of criticism. It would be an advantage to make this a public document.

Mr WOTTON - I should point out that on page 3 of that document South Australian distribution costs are misquoted. They should be \$6,000 and not \$10,300 as reported there.

Mr MASTERS - Would anyone oppose the suggestion that this document be attached to our final report? That concludes discussion on those recommendations.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(b) YOUTH FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Mr MASTERS - This is for consideration and there is a recommendation on page 2 of the background paper. Are there any comments on this item? Do you agree with the recommendation?

Mr THOMSON - This is being considered in a budgetary context by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs as part of a much wider-ranging proposal. Until the Budget comes out we will not know the answer to that, but the program seems to have general support from the States and the Territories and that has been noted.

Mr MASTERS - There being no other comments I take it that we agree with the recommendation.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(c) LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr MASTERS - This is also a matter for consideration and there are a number of recommendations here. There being no comments or objections we agree to recommendations (i), (ii) and (iii).

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(d) REMOTE SENSING

Mr MASTERS - This report is for information.

Mr THOMSON - The receiving station at Alice Springs is operating fully. The computer system in Canberra, which will receive the information and sort it, is not yet quite operational but will be, I understand, by September this year. That will give us the chance to make good use of the Landsat program.

Mr MASTERS - I assume everyone has the report attached. There is a report on the next page which I think was late to come in but you should have it.

Mr WOTTON - While we are on this agenda item I would be pleased to table a book which was prepared by the ecological survey unit in my Department at the time of the 50th Jubilee Congress of the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science in Adelaide. The book is entitled 'South Australia from Space' and is very interesting. I would like to table it and would be very pleased to make it available to any State which would like to have a copy of it.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(e) SELECTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

Mr MASTERS - This item is for consideration and there is a paper attached. Perhaps the relevant part of that paper attached is paragraph 9 on page 2. We are asking Ministers to place proposals before their departments and governments and report back at the next meeting of the Council. It is simply a matter of uniformity. If you look at the following page you will see that there are any number of different descriptions used and it should be of benefit to all States if we were to get some uniformity in the situation.

Mr BROOKS - It will take a long time but it is a good aim.

Mr MASTERS - The proposal is a good one if we can get it under way. It seems common sense.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I would like to thank Mr Johnstone for the work he has put into this. We believe it should be given very serious consideration by everyone.

Mr MASTERS - Perhaps next year when we come along it will all have been done.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(f) SUB-PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Mr MASTERS - This is in connection with the recommendations of the ad hoc working group on sub-professional training. The Standing Committee's recommendation is on page 2 of the background paper under agenda item 9(b). It is a matter of proceeding with the production of the 'Australian Ranger Bulletin'.

Mr THOMSON - It is essential we have as much material as possible to put in this bulletin. It will come from the professional services and be of great interest to them and the Commonwealth has said that it will be responsible for the production of it. It will not be a grand glossy publication - it will be a simple one for professional people to find out what is going on in the rest of Australia, and I think that will be very valuable. I suggest you encourage your services to give us as many articles, comments and ideas as possible for publication in the bulletin.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(g) ENDANGERED FAUNA

Mr MASTERS - This is for consideration and there are a number of recommendations.

Mr EVERINGHAM - Not to be outdone by South Australia, I would like to table a book, too, but it is not so glossy because we do not have access to unlimited cash as has South Australia. It is the fifth in the series of a 14-part monograph prepared by Professor Messel and his group at the University of Sydney in respect of surveys of Northern Territory tidal rivers systems and their crocodile populations. The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission has provided funding for this survey over a period of years and will continue to do so in the course of the next couple of financial years. If anyone is interested in receiving the 14 books, two of which are still to come, he can notify us and we will be happy to send them to him. This brings me to the point I wish to make about this society's convention making it difficult for us, in the Territory, to develop crocodile farming which will be, as we see it, an important aspect of conserving this rather difficult endangered animal - although I am not quite so sure that it is all that endangered any more in the Northern Territory because in the last 12 months two people have been taken by crocodiles. Recently an Aboriginal woman was taken near Nhulunbuy on the Gove Peninsula and, again, a spear fisherman was taken in that area 12 months ago. We believe that the working group should have a look at this so that our plans to establish a number of crocodile farms will not be endangered. I hope that we could gain CCNCOM support for the working group to look at the matter and perhaps make recommendations which may need to result in changes to the endangered species convention - that is, CITES.

Mr MASTERS - You may table your book. Will we all receive one?

Mr EVERINGHAM - Certainly. If you would like one, I can arrange that.

Mr MASTERS - Recommendation 1, deals with naming species and I take it we are all agreed on that. Similarly, we are all agreed on recommendation 2. The Standing Committee recommends that Council agree to four recommendations under the recommendation 3 umbrella, and we are all agreed on those. There is also a note at the end advising us of the preparation of an annotated list of endangered species with a brief text attached. Apparently a red data book is very expensive so we are doing it this way. That is also agreed upon.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(h) ENDANGERED FLORA

Mr MASTERS - There is a report attached to this and I imagine you all have one of those. It is for information.

Short adjournment

AGENDA ITEM 9 - REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(i) TECHNICAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Mr MASTERS - This matter is for consideration. There are four recommendations. Does anyone wish to comment?

Mr BEDFORD - My colleagues might consider the moving of proposal (ii)(d), 'Culling of populations of native animals' into second position behind proposal (ii)(a) 'Fire management in semi-arid lands'. This might tie in with Mr Everingham's proposal about the crocodiles.

Mr MASTERS - Are you talking about (d) replacing (b)?

Mr BEDFORD - That is right. Move it up below (a) and the others move down accordingly.

Mr MASTERS - In regard to proposal (iv), 'Request Council to encourage New South Wales to commence planning a workshop...', you would be prepared to plan a workshop on proposal (ii)(d) 'Culling of populations of native animals', not proposal (ii)(b) 'Policies for marine reserve management'?

Mr BEDFORD - Yes.

Mr MASTERS - Do we all agree on that point? New South Wales will go ahead and organise that workshop.

Mr BROOKS - I think we ought to be able to manage more than one workshop in two years. I think Victoria has to do something about proposal (ii)(a), 'Fire management in semi-arid lands', which we are delighted to do. Could we put forward proposal (ii)(d)? The culling of animals is a very important subject, especially in Victoria.

Mr MASTERS - You are suggesting that we should proceed with the two workshops?

Mr BROOKS - We could try to hold them a few months apart.

Mr BEDFORD - We could have them concurrently.

Mr BROOKS - No, I think we should have them separately, but within a few months, not a year or so apart.

Mr BEDFORD - Would we have the resources?

Mr BROOKS - Victoria will do one. New South Wales will do the other.

Mr MASTERS - There will be one in Victoria in May 1981. Perhaps we could have the other workshop in September or October?

Mr BROOKS - Yes, that would do.

Mr GIBBS - Would it not be possible to hold the two workshops at the one time? Perhaps different people are involved. The cost of getting there, especially from Western Australia and Queensland, is high.

Mr MASTERS - The indication is that it would be better to do the two separately. That is what you said.

Mr BROOKS - Different people are involved.

Mr MASTERS - Yes, different people and different subjects.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I think September 1981 was suggested for the workshop on proposal (ii)(d). Would there be universal opposition to holding it in the first half of 1981?

Mr MASTERS - We intend to have the workshop on 'Fire management of semi-arid lands' in May. Do you mean that the other workshop could be held before that time?

Mr EVERINGHAM - In February or March.

Mr BEDFORD - Representatives from New South Wales agree that the earliest date on which we could do it would be in May.

Mr EVERINGHAM - Are you holding it?

Mr BEDFORD - We will hold the workshop on the culling of populations of native animals.

Mr EVERINGHAM - Will you do that in May?

Mr BEDFORD - Yes.

Mr MASTERS - You do not want the two to run together, do you?

Mr EVERINGHAM - Victoria is doing the other.

Mr MASTERS - Yes, it is doing it in May 1981.

Mr EVERINGHAM - They can both be in May because they involve different people - different technicians and scientists.

Mr MASTERS - Does New South Wales agree?

Mr BEDFORD - Provided different personnel are involved. The same people could be involved in the two workshops.

Mr MASTERS - If it is possible, we will hold them in May, if that is agreed.

Mr BEDFORD - Let us look at the situation as it develops. If it is possible, we shall do that.

Mr MASTERS - Are there any further comments on those recommendations? Are we agreed?

Mr MIDDLETON - Is there a possibility of us making some progress on (b) 'Policies for marine reserve management'? It appears that there is a lot of interest in the marine park issue. It is a new one. I understand that is why New South Wales was reluctant to take it on but is there nobody who is prepared to sponsor that one?

Mr MASTERS - As far as Western Australia is concerned we are becoming increasingly involved through one particular reef, if you like, which is Ningaloo Reef. But I would have thought that it was a little early for us to move. We are certainly moving in that direction. Most certainly, Western Australia, I think, would be willing to set up such a workshop but perhaps 1981 would be a little early. Perhaps we should be thinking of 1982 for Western Australia. We would be pleased to consider that. If the Council agrees, perhaps we could note that we would consider Western Australia should set up that workshop in the following year, 1982.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - PROPOSED WORKING GROUP ON ENDANGERED VERTEBRATES

Mr MASTERS - There is an attachment to this item.

Mr BROOKS - It is a bit timeless, this thing. Does it not need a time-table? It will go on forever. They need to be given a date to do something by, do they not?

Mr MASTERS - Do we agree first of all that it is a good idea? Western Australia, for example, has some doubts about any great benefit on this on a national basis.

Mr EVERINGHAM - We are not against it but we are not leaping up and down with enthusiasm because we think that, for instance, States can just get together in the areas that most directly concern them. I think the Northern Territory and Western Australia are looking at problems that we have with the rabbit eared bandicoots at the moment. So if this group is established I do not think it should be exclusive in any way and attempt to cut out co-operation on an ad hoc basis between the States.

Mr THOMSON - Could someone suggest a time-table to which we could work, if that would help? This is again a co-operative matter which seems important. There are a lot more species, of course, that are more widely spread between one or two States.

Mr MASTERS - Western Australia sees little benefit from it on a national scale but would be quite happy to co-operate.

Mr BROOKS - Most of the work is carried out by the States anyway on a normal day to day basis. Perhaps it is a question of collating or co-ordinating - or something of that nature - the things that the States are doing in the normal course of their work. We have our nail-tailed wallaby and various other things. I just thought we might include politicians on that endangered species!

Mr MASTERS - We are talking about setting up an ad hoc working group. I wonder if that ad hoc group or working group could simply collate the information and the work done by the States.

Mr BROOKS - I think that could be part of the putting out of your book - taking a responsible role of collating most information that is available anyway and setting it up.

Mr THOMSON - Nothing new is going to come. We will have to have a co-ordinated approach. We are collating all the information.

Mr BROOKS - What we do not want is an overlapping of people doing what is already available. You could donate that amount of money to the States and break it up among us, and we could spend it.

Mr MASTERS - We are agreed that if we do set up an ad hoc working group it will be in the collating field rather than doing work that may overlap.

Mr WOTTON - While we are on this agenda item I wish to bring to the notice of the Council a matter which is concerning us a great deal in South Australia. It concerns the freckled duck. Many of you are aware of the problems we have had in South Australia. It is very important that we get our act together and look at this matter in a wider program involving various States. On the opening day of ~~Bull~~^{Bool} Lagoon, which is one of our major wetland areas in South Australia, we had a complete disaster in that between 500 and 1,000 freckled ducks were shot. It has caused a very great amount of concern in the South Australian community. It has been one of the biggest issues, if not the biggest, that I have encountered since becoming Minister some nine months ago. As a result of that South Australia will be considering listing the freckled duck as rare, rather than merely protected, immediately after this conference. We will be following the line that New South Wales has taken in this regard. I believe the matter has been discussed informally by the Standing Committee and that it suggested that a meeting should be held by officers in South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria to look at this whole problem. South Australia would welcome the wildlife authorities from those States if they met in Adelaide within the next month or so to develop a joint research program to assess the current status of the freckled duck over the whole

of its range. This study would be submitted to the World Wildlife Fund as soon as possible.

While on this subject I would like particularly to thank New South Wales for allowing Dr Sue Briggs to come to South Australia to help assess the real situation in the State regarding the freckled duck. Because of a lack of resources, as we discussed yesterday, we were not able to move in very quickly and we have certainly appreciated the support which New South Wales has given us. I understand that Dr Briggs is coming back to South Australia this weekend. We will not be removing the freckled duck from the rare list until we are absolutely convinced that its position is secure. I am asking whether we can formulate a meeting in Adelaide within the next month or so of officers from the four States which I have suggested to look at the status of the freckled duck over its full range.

Mr MASTERS - I will support it. Mr Everingham have you any thoughts on this at all?

Mr EVERINGHAM - No.

Mr MASTERS - Do we agree with the South Australian proposition?

Mr GIBBS - Is this to be a special committee set up with someone from each of those States?

Mr MASTERS - That is what you intend Mr Wotton, is it not?

Mr WOTTON - It would be a special meeting set up for this purpose.

Mr MASTERS - That is agreed to and we will most certainly support it.

Mr WOTTON - I presume we have the support of the other States for the classification.

Mr MASTERS - They are quite happy to commit their Ministers.

Mr GIBBS - The meeting about the freckled duck will be initiated now by South Australia, will it not?

Mr WOTTON - Yes, we will organise it.

Mr MASTERS - You have the agreement of the Council so you will get the support when you need it.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - INTERSTATE TRADE IN FAUNA

Mr MASTERS - This is for information.

Mr BEDFORD - After the High Court case we sought the advice of Mr McHugh QC, in New South Wales. He was of the view that any legislation of a prohibitive nature would be ultra vires section 92 of the Constitution. He suggested that the State fauna authorities should meet to formulate a uniform regulatory approach to the control problem and then seek legal advice about its drafting. Everybody is aware of the fact that the High Court is pretty well split on this anyway and the result did not come out in the way we had hoped. Perhaps we should accept Mr McHugh's advice that in the first instance we should all get together and have a look at the problem with a view to drafting appropriate legislation or regulation. We should then seek further legal advice. To this end it might be appropriate for a resolution to come from CONCOM. Queensland suggested a special meeting with the Standing Committee for this purpose and New South Wales would certainly support this. So the resolution might state that we will implement the suggestion of Mr McHugh QC and that the meeting be held in Melbourne with Mr Jim Wharton, Director of Fisheries and Wildlife Division, Victoria, as the convenor.

Mr MASTERS - Would this be a special meeting of the Standing Committee? Do we all agree with that?

Mr GIBBS - It is pretty important to have that meeting. We have to sort out section 92. Let us take a simple case. If one of the Australian States were unwise enough to legalise marihuana then does section 92 allow people to bring it into Queensland saying that they bought it in another State in which it is legal and therefore no penalties can be imposed on them? To me there is a bit of a contradiction here. The courts have been a little lax in their judgment. It should be straightened out and cleaned up in one way or another, otherwise it makes way for other things to happen, other differences in law from State to State.

Mr MASTERS - Are we proposing a special meeting of the Standing Committee to consider all aspects, particularly the

legal problems, to get those legal problems submitted to a legal panel? The legal problem is the main one, is it not?

Mr BEDFORD - That is right. Whether or not we use Mr McHugh's services is a matter for the meeting of the Standing Committee. He gave the advising in the first instance and he was of that view but if the Standing Committee thinks it should be referred to other legal representatives that is fine. It will be up to the Standing Committee. The main thing is for the Standing Committee to meet and to get its act together, and then to get legal advice.

Mr MASTERS - I think legal advice is absolutely essential. That is obviously a decision for the Standing Committee. Do we agree with that resolution? Is everyone clear on that?

Mr GIBBS - It may be advantageous to have legal people from your Attorney-General's Department to give advice on that day. You may then have to decide to get outside legal advice at a later date.

Mr BROOKS - I would like to suggest that at that special meeting Victoria has its Crown law adviser who helps with fisheries and all sorts of other things, its head enforcement man from the Fisheries and Wildlife Division and a wildlife officer. They are the people who understand it. It would be a very good idea for the other States to have the same sorts of people.

Mr GIBBS - Queensland will certainly be involving someone from Crown law in this.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - PROTECTION OF MARINE MAMMALS

Mr MASTERS - This is for information and a report is attached.

Mr THOMSON - I understand a report on the legislation was tabled yesterday. The legislation as it applies to the Commonwealth applies outside the territorial waters and States have been asked by the Prime Minister to consider some legislation - either free-standing legislation, the adoption of the legislation of the Commonwealth or amending existing Acts to make them compatible. We would be very grateful if that could be done as soon as possible because we are going to the International Whaling Commission this month again on whaling.

Mr MASTERS - I think I can safely say that Western Australia will consider amending our existing Act rather than anything else.

Mr BEDFORD - In what way?

Mr MASTERS - I think we could incorporate it. Certainly we would have to change some of the penalties and identify some aspects, but we would prefer to do that I think rather than set out a complete new Act or use the Commonwealth Act.

Mr BEDFORD - Would you administer it?

Mr MASTERS - Yes. Each State and Territory would administer it under our wildlife Acts.

Mr BEDFORD - Do you say we are talking only about our own territorial waters?

Mr MASTERS - Yes.

Mr WOTTON - South Australia indicates to Mr Thomson that we will be using the Commonwealth legislation except in respect of our own waters and the gulfs of our own State, when we will be using our own Act. We will be amending our own Act to cover those waters but outside that we will be using the Commonwealth legislation.

Mr BROOKS - It is free standing by the look of it. We have decided that the whale is an animal, not a fish, and I think everyone else has, have they not?

Mr MASTERS - I do not know. That is how it looks. Are we all agreed? We can indicate to Mr Thomson that at least we are taking steps in our own individual ways.

Mr BEDFORD - I will check around the table on which authority in the States will administer this. Which will do it in Victoria?

Mr BROOKS - The fisheries and wildlife division of the Ministry for Conservation.

Mr EVERINGHAM - It is our Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission which administers it under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Mr MIDDLETON - This matter has not been resolved in Tasmania.

Mr WOTTON - In South Australia the Minister of Marine and Harbours and myself were discussing it and because CONCOM will be responsible I am fairly certain it would come under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Mr THOMSON - The Commonwealth wishes if possible to use CONCOM as the co-ordinating body for this.

Mr BEDFORD - Can we express that by way of a resolution from CONCOM?

Mr WOTTON - We can do if you would like to.

Mr BEDFORD - I will move that.

Mr MASTERS - Is that agreed? Very well.

AGENDA ITEM 13 - ANNUAL STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

Mr MASTERS - There is a large attachment which you have all studied, I suppose. Are we agreed on that? Very well.

AGENDA ITEM 14 - EXPORT OF FAMILY PETS

Mr MASTERS - This is for consideration. There are three recommendations. A letter from Customs is attached, which supports the proposals.

Mr BROOKS - Recommendation (ii) nullifies the others, does it not?

Mr MASTERS - I guess there are discretionary powers in all sorts of things, Mr Brooks. I suppose this would cool things off.

Mr BROOKS - I think we could note that the discretionary power has to be used carefully.

Mr MASTERS - I think there would be some reservations about the 2-year proposal. Perhaps the Standing Committee thought that at least where special consideration is required it might be able to use these discretionary powers. That would be a good Standing Committee. Do you accept those recommendations?

Mr BROOKS - The discretion will remain?

Mr MASTERS - That is right.

AGENDA ITEM 15 - CAGE STANDARDS FOR CIRCUS ANIMALS

Mr MASTERS - This item is for the information of the Council and of course has particular reference to Victoria.

Mr BROOKS - We have wheeled someone up and this has made the legislation stick. It is operative legislation.

Mr MASTERS - Have you taken someone to court?

Mr BROOKS - Yes. The fine was \$1,100.

Mr MASTERS - That might be a way of raising money for the Department! Does the Council accept the information?

AGENDA ITEM 16 - ENDORSEMENT OF 'FLORA OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA'

Mr MASTERS - This item is for the consideration of the Council. There are three recommendations. The second states: 'The Commonwealth Bureau of Flora and Fauna be requested to provide a subsidy of \$20,000 for its publication...'. This is for the book 'Flora of Central Australia', a production that is coming forward.

Mr EVERINGHAM - Those three recommendations came up during the last meeting of the Standing Committee. The point is that now the money has to come forward. The Northern Territory would be prepared to commit itself to a pro rata contribution in line with the States and the Commonwealth if they are prepared to come to the party. When I say 'pro rata' I mean the amount divided by the States and the Territory and the Commonwealth.

Mr WOTTON - I have written to Ministers asking for their support of a joint funding proposal. The unit cost of the book 'Flora of Central Australia' would be reduced from \$43 to \$29.95 with the subsidy, below \$30, which I would suggest makes it a much more attractive proposition. We have already indicated that we are willing to contribute \$5,000 as a State towards this project. We would very much like other States to contribute. We see it as a very worthwhile course.

Mr THOMSON - The Commonwealth decided to look at this subsidy of \$20,000. The Advisory Committee on Australian Biological Resources Survey did not say that the book should not be funded because of other higher priorities. It made the comment that it was an excellent production by South Australia. It was full of praise for the book. Of course, it is only one of many projects. If the States are prepared to help I think the Commonwealth would have to look at it again.

Mr GIBBS - Has the Commonwealth previously provided a subsidy for the production of a book?

Mr THOMSON - Only a certain amount of money for publishing flora and fauna books is available. That was used up this year. That is why I could not get the money. Mr Wotton is suggesting

that each of the States might contribute something. If that were so the Commonwealth would certainly again look at meeting some of the subsidy.

Mr GIBBS - This would be not a National Parks subsidy, but a publishing subsidy that would come out of the Treasury or whatever. As we are very close to the end of this financial year and the Budget is about to come down, would that fund be replenished?

Mr THOMSON - Yes, it would be. By how much it is to be replenished is another question. Probably the Commonwealth would look at it. We have very high expenses in trying to produce 'Flora and Fauna of Australia' by 1988, for the bi-centenary year. There is a very good committee headed by Sir Rutherford Robertson which advises us on this. The Committee advises that this is an excellent publication but other publications have greater priority.

Mr GIBBS - As far as Queensland is concerned, we realise the value of this book and we would participate to a level, but we would like all States to be part of it.

Mr EVERINGHAM - I do not think I meant all the States, I meant the ones having interests in Central Australia, which are Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Mr BEDFORD - I am encouraged by Mr Everingham. We have the same sorts of problems as the Commonwealth, you know; the funds run out. But New South Wales would be prepared to contribute, of course. I think it is a question of getting an idea of how much. There have been a few figures thrown around here today and on the question of States having an interest in their contribution and so on, perhaps we ought to work out a formula for that or get an idea of the sort of money that is involved.

Mr MASTERS - I think Mr Thomson probably has an idea of the cost.

Mr WOTTON - We are prepared to put in \$5,000 and we suggest that it would be up to the other States to split as far as the \$15,000 and the Commonwealth is concerned, if that is possible.

Mr THOMSON - We are not looking at a large sum.

Mr BEDFORD - Since the Commonwealth is prepared to put this up again before its Committee which determines priorities for the costing we should say that the States, and certainly New South Wales as it has indicated, are prepared to contribute. That can go back to the Committee and it can decide how much money it will put in. We will then know the position we are in, to contribute.

Mr MASTERS - As far as Western Australia is concerned, we have some reservations about the principle of carrying out this operation. Certainly this may well be worth while but if we adopt this principle and establish that in some cases we will subsidise a document or a book or whatever - this is largely a scientific book - I would not have thought that the subsidy we are putting forward would restrict sales at all. I make the point that I think it will be largely a scientific book. I will go along with the consensus today, but we have reservations. If we were to vote on it cold bloodedly, I suppose we would vote against it on principle. But the general feeling is that it should be supported so we will go along with that.

Mr BEDFORD - We would be waiting for a response, then, from the Commonwealth.

Mr THOMSON - Let me say that the Commonwealth will try to match the largest contribution from any single State. I cannot commit it if there is no money for it, but we will try to match it.

Mr BEDFORD - Play them at poker.

Mr MASTERS - Are we all agreed? We will go along with it.

Mr BEDFORD - Can we put it in the context of 'without prejudice'?

Mr MASTERS - Yes, that is a good point. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 17 - SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO FORESTRY

Mr MASTERS - This is for information and there is a fairly lengthy attachment of four pages.

AGENDA ITEM 18 - OTHER BUSINESS

Mr MASTERS - Two items are to be brought up at this stage. The first one is from the Federal Minister, the Hon David Thomson, who wants to talk about aquarium fish.

Mr THOMSON - As this is a fairly complex matter I hope you will forgive me if I read. We are talking about figures. In 1978 the Australian Fisheries Council recommended that a list of 84 species and 10 genera of freshwater fish be allowed for importation. At the Ninth Meeting of the Fisheries Council a list proposed at the previous meeting was generally supported but it was recognised that some amendments might be proposed by Ministers in the States and the Northern Territory. There has been a lot of discussion with representatives of the aquarium fish industry and there has been a meeting of minds. In fact they have now agreed that the list must be restricted. There has been an advisory committee on endangered species and agreement has been reached on a compromise list of about 109 species and 27 genera. I understand that neither Western Australia nor New South Wales was represented at that meeting.

There have been questions about the adequacy of quarantine procedures. At present the quarantine procedures are largely agreed by the Commonwealth and the States. They have to be tightened because it is coming into the Commonwealth where the problem occurs. This has been a very useful exercise and I think we have reached a very fair measure of agreement. It is a very difficult thing for the fish importers - the aquarium people who make their living out of it - but equally it would be very dangerous if we did not have some measure of control and agreement. There is a problem in that a large number of these fish are already in Australia. They are being bred and some of them could be released into Australian waters. They could pose both environmental and health risks. Therefore I seek your support in urging the Australian Fisheries Council and your representatives at that Council, which meets in

September, to consider implementation of State and Territory legislation to control the breeding, marketing and distribution of aquarium fish in Australia.

Mr BROOKS - Is that figure 109? I thought it was a good deal higher and that the number of species with which they are now dealing was over 300.

Mr THOMSON - We are advised that 109 is the agreed number.

Dr PRATT - I too have some reservations about that figure. I jotted it down as Mr Thomson was speaking. I thought from memory that the figure on which we had some agreement was more like 340.

Mr BROOKS - We have the chairman of the committee here, Mr Wharton.

Mr THOMSON - There are 109 species and 27 genera. There are 130 species of one genus, guinea fish, so that is how it comes out. They are all in one genus.

Dr PRATT - That would probably account for the confusion.

Mr MASTERS - We had the chairman of the committee, Mr Wharton, all prepared to explain that. Are we agreed to support Mr Thomson?

Mr BEDFORD - There should be a resolution from CONCOM to AFC pointing out our concern.

Mr THOMSON - Ask the AFC to do something about legislation within the States to control the breeding, marketing and distribution of aquarium fish in Australia, because the Commonwealth can do it only at the point of entry and through Customs. We have no control after that and this meeting and the committees have expressed very grave fears of what could happen if some of these fish do get out and carry diseases into our waterways.

Mr BEDFORD - What are the mechanics of this? After receiving our letter presumably AFC recommends to its Ministers - I know that in some cases that means people already sitting here but in other cases it does not - changes to legislation. It falls into the field then of another administration to pursue that.

Mr THOMSON - I think the AFC will then have to have a committee consider it to enable the States to decide on some measure of agreement. It needs to be fairly uniform legislation if it is to work because of the problems of State borders.

Mr MASTERS - Do we agree that it should come as a representation from this Council?

Mr BEDFORD - Do you mean to AFC?

Mr MASTERS - Yes, in support of Mr Thomson's request.

Mr WOTTON - As I said earlier, I bring this for information rather than anything else to other Ministers and for other States. It follows on from the discussion we had yesterday as I did not have the right of reply to the statement I think you made, that policies in States were that acquisition should take place and we would worry about management problems afterwards. We certainly do not have that policy in South Australia. We have had to stop acquisition, except for tidying up of boundaries, because we have made management our first priority. But we have looked at very closely and will be introducing in the next session of Parliament amendments to our heritage Act which will allow for practical conservation of natural vegetation on private land. It is purely a voluntary scheme between the landowner and another party. A heritage agreement involves the ministerial approval of a contract between the Government and

a private owner or between another organisation, for example the National Trust of South Australia, and a private owner. It involves a note being placed on the relevant titles in the Lands Title Office and this legally obligates future owners of the land to that agreement.

We believe it is a very positive system in which we say what an owner can do as well as what he cannot do. It permits, encourages and provides incentives for positive conservation measures to be taken, rather than merely preventing negative measures such as the demolition of a historic building, the clearing of natural vegetation or the ruining of an important landscape. As I said earlier, in the next session of Parliament we will be expecting to amend the South Australian heritage Act and this will allow this process to be implemented. This will then allow the expenditure of public funds. We have set aside \$150,000 annually for conservation purposes. That can be used for fencing vegetation, renovating a building or a structure or just providing information to private landowners as to how they could best conserve the land on their property. In that way we believe it will ensure that the public investment will be protected. The heritage agreement is, we believe, an exciting and important breakthrough for conservation as it is an important adjunct to current programs involving the acquisition of land for conservation and, as I have said, we have had to put a stop on that as a temporary measure. I have been very pleased indeed with the amount of interest shown in this project. It has certainly caught on in the community. We have been bombarded by those who want to be involved and who see the merit of it being on a voluntary basis. We feel that the scheme will be very successful.

Mr GIBBS - We are on the way to this. We are involving people and involving station properties with grazing areas which contain unique areas. We have the Treasury now studying how compensation can be made for surrendering some of these areas on a voluntary basis. It is a subject on which I think we will have more information at the next Conference.

Mr MASTERS - While I have the opportunity I would like to put my contribution forward. It is not really my contribution at all - it is by the president of our National Parks Authority, Mr C.F. Jenkins. He has produced this very fine book which we would like you to take with you as a reminder of your visit to Western Australia. Mr Jenkins is so pleased with it that if you wish it to be autographed he is most certainly happy to do that. He is a modest man. We offer that to you and hope you will be able to take a copy home and enjoy it.

Yesterday afternoon we had a seminar. I do not know whether it is going to be an accepted practice of CONCOM that this sort of thing takes place. It did seem to me to be of benefit and if the Council feels that is a good reason for continuing the program, I suggest it should be considered in the agenda for the Council in the prior meeting next year. I found it of great benefit, as I think, did all those who attended. I do not know whether or not it needs to be resolved by this Council that this should be the procedure from now on. It seems to me that this was the case last time.

Mr BEDFORD - I certainly favour the idea. I suppose the question of the subject for the seminar should be left in abeyance at this stage unless somebody has one to reel off the top of his head. Perhaps the Ministers could contact the secretariat on suggested topics for the seminar within, say, the next three months.

Mr MASTERS - We have to decide which will be the host State for the next Council meeting and so perhaps we could suggest that it be included for consideration. There being no other business we will turn to Agenda Item 19.

AGENDA ITEM 19 - NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL

Mr MASTERS - I believe Victoria indicated it was anxious to be the host State for the next Council. Is that correct?

Mr BROOKS - Do not think, although we are small, that we are not aggressive in that way. I think it is our turn. I understand that the Australian Environment Council and perhaps the Agricultural Council - there may be others - have met by invitation in New Zealand. I gather the Australian State which was going to have it that year has to carry the baby even though it is not the venue. We would be delighted to be the working horse, whether we have it in Victoria or somewhere else - that is, if we are going to follow those lesser councils - and to have the seminar before it, depending on its venue. I think we ought to leave the seminar open. One thing, however, does follow on from yesterday. We are under threat and abuse all the time for national parks - proper ones which are not used for various commercial pursuits - to justify their existence economically as a land use. That is a matter on which we are going to have more and more pressure all the time. We might address ourselves to that if the Council were held in Victoria. If it were in New Zealand or Papua New Guinea other topics might be better.

Mr MASTERS - If there are no more volunteers I suggest we accept Victoria's kind offer. It will be up to Victoria to advise us of the seminar and the subject of that seminar and to arrange the venue.

Mr BROOKS - I do not think it would be up to us to arrange that. Should not CONCOM formally ask its observers?

Mr MASTERS - We will try and arrange for an invitation. How about that?

Mr BROOKS - Delighted.

Mr THOMSON - I would like to thank Western Australia for its very good organisation and to congratulate the Chairman on the first class way in which he has run the meeting, with no nonsense and no delays.

Mr GIBBS - I support that. Our welcome here has been very warm. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, and your officers too, for the good job they have done making sure that every need has been met promptly.

Luncheon adjournment

AGENDA ITEM NO. 20 - PRESS STATEMENT

The Press statement was discussed and agreed upon.

Mr WOTTON - Great credit is due to you, Mr Masters, as Chairman for the way in which you have handled this meeting this morning and for the swiftness and efficiency with which you have chaired it. Much credit also needs to go to the officers who have prepared the reports. These have been very short, straightforward and easy to understand and so we have been able to look at the matters constructively and without going into a lot of detail, which is not necessary at a meeting like this. I commend the officers for the work they have put into the reports before us today and thank Mr Masters, on behalf of the visitors to Western Australia, for his hospitality.

Mr MASTERS - I would like to thank my own officers and particularly those from the National Parks Authority of Western Australia and Colette Wiltshire, who is organising the arrangements for this conference.