

MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION AND
LAND MANAGEMENT

REPORT FROM THE REVIEW OF THE OPERATION
OF THE CONSERVATION AND LAND
MANAGEMENT ACT 1984

31 December 1985

Foreword

Section 144 of the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 requires the Minister to review the operation of the Act not later than 31 December 1985 and prepare a report based on his review of the Act not later than 31 December 1985 and to cause the report to be laid before each House of the Parliament.

In making that review, the Act specified that the Minister should have regard for a report of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council or Honorary Royal Commission touching on the subject matters of this Act or in part thereof.

The previous Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Hon Ron Davies, initiated a review of the Department and the Act as required under Section 144. Due to the many administrative pressures of amalgamating three diverse departments, the tabling of this report was unfortunately delayed.

I am pleased to be able to table now the report of the review which was carried out by the previous Minister for Conservation and Land Management. There was a statutory requirement that the review only deal with the operations of the Department up until December 1985 and consequently the report does not refer to developments since that date.

I would like to take this opportunity firstly to acknowledge the Government's gratitude for the work of the Honorary Royal Commission and secondly briefly outline a number of developments which have occurred with respect to operations of the Conservation and Land Management Act and the Department of Conservation and Land Management subsequent to the time of the review was carried out.

At the time the review was undertaken, there were a number of policy initiatives in the process of formulation. In the interval since the review, decisions have been made on these matters. Specifically -

- the Timber Bureau has been abolished and incorporated with the Department of Conservation and Land Management. A new division of Forest Resources has been created which incorporates the functions of the Timber Bureau and the Timber Production, Silviculture and Inventory Branches. This initiative has already significantly improved the coordination of the Department's forest management activities;
- the Land Resource Policy Council has been abolished as part of the Government's economic strategy to reduce expenditure;
- the Bailey Committee investigating aspects of mining in national parks and nature reserves has been formed;

- heritage matters have been transferred from the responsibility of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management to the Minister for Planning.

Even at the time this review was undertaken, many of the recommendations of the Honorary Royal Commission had been implemented. This large part was because of the constructive way the Royal Commission undertook its responsibilities and the excellent relationship it established with the Minister of the Department at the time and the Department. This enabled the Department and the Minister to respond quickly to suggestions put forward by the Royal Commission before they were formalised in the Commissioners' report. The vast majority of the recommendations have been endorsed in practice, or in principle, by the Government.

The Government welcomes the Royal Commission's endorsement of the concept of an integrated Land Management Department. The Commissioners' recommendation was based on an assessment of the Department up until November 1985. The subsequent achievements of the Department which I have summarised below, is further evidence of the viability of the concept of an integrated land management agency.

Emergency Operations

Two major emergency operations which confronted the Department during this year provided a major test of the concept of an integrated land management agency. In February of this year, a major fire which threatened the Wanneroo pine plantation, Yanchep National Park and adjacent suburban areas. More recently, the Department was able to use its organisational skills in carrying out the most successful whale rescue operation ever undertaken in Australia. Both operations demonstrated that the Department has achieved complete integration because neither operation would have succeeded if the Department had not been able to coordinate and use all of its specialist skills.

Management Plans

One of the features of the Conservation and Land Management Act is its requirement for the preparation of land management plans. The Government has put particular emphasis on the management planning process. It is through this process that land use conflict can be resolved and that public participation is achieved.

The Department, in the relatively brief period since it has been established, has either completed or initiated 19 management plans including major plans for the Ningaloo Marine Park and each of the three forest regions.

Public Participation

Particular emphasis has been given by the Department to encouraging the public to participate in planning decisions and

also to participate in the management of public land. In addition to encouraging public involvement in the management plans, the Government has set up numerous advisory committees and the Department is exploring a variety of ways by which the public can assist the Department to manage public land. Particular attention has also been paid to local authorities. Over 30 different shires have received a detailed briefing on Departmental activities.

Dieback

One of the most significant conservation issues facing the Department shortly after it was formed was the recognition that one of the most significant areas for flora in the State, the south coast, was under threat from the soil-borne pathogen Phytophthora cinnamomi. One of the major benefits flowing from the formation of the Department is its ability to draw on a range of specialised skills to deal with complex management problems such as dieback. A comprehensive dieback management program has been implemented in the south coast national parks and nature reserves.

National Park Rangers

National park rangers, because of lack of resources available to the previous National Parks Authority, were significantly disadvantaged with respect to their conditions of service and their career structure. The Department has focussed on this group and has, in addition to significantly improving conditions, developed a career structure for national park rangers and a training program which will permit national park rangers to obtain a National Park Certificate.

A sub-set of the National Park Ranger Program was the implementation of an Aboriginal National Park Ranger Scheme. With the assistance of Commonwealth funds, a training scheme has been implemented in the Pilbara and four national park rangers will graduate this year.

Landscape Design

The formation of the Department resulted in the expertise of a skilled Landscape Architectural Branch to be applied to public land projects throughout the State.

Communication and Transport

In the 18 months since amalgamation, a coordinated communications system has been established throughout the State, so that the problems that existed prior to the amalgamation have been overcome. The vehicle fleet of the previous National Parks Service has been completely replaced.

Forest Management

The Department is currently in the process of developing a timber strategy which, after consultation with industry, is expected to provide a long term plan for the timber industry.

A major objective of the timber strategy is to achieve security of tenure for the sawmilling industry to enable them to invest in new plant and equipment to ensure wood suitable for processing the regrowth forest. Tangible evidence of the success of the Government's strategy to provide a long term sustainable future for the industry is evidenced by the success of a tender for karri thinnings. This tender of 20,000 cubic metres per year yielded a royalty price of nearly \$24.00 per cubic metre and will generate \$50m over the next 10 years.

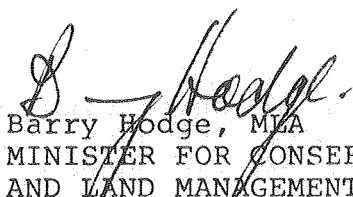
Wood Utilisation Program

The Department has been awarded a \$5m wood utilisation research contract. The research program is aimed at developing new techniques to utilise and market small logs currently being obtained from thinnings of the regrowth forest.

The success of the Department has had the effect of increasing the public's expectation of the management of public lands and wildlife, with the consequence that there has been a major increase in the demand for services provided by the Department. Consequently, the tasks undertaken by the integrated Department are far greater than those of its component agencies.

While recognising the need for extra resources in the Department, the Government is also faced with the difficulty of reducing the financial strain of the public sector on the State Budget. It would be unrealistic to assume that, given the current financial climate, that it will be possible to significantly increase the budget allocation of the Department. Consequently, the Department is continuing to review its operations to determine if the tasks it undertakes could be achieved more efficiently, if there were functions undertaken by the Department which could be foregone to allow resources to be directed to high priority issues and if it is practical to recoup the cost of providing some services by applying the 'user pay' principle. I am confident when this review has been implemented it will be possible for the Department to provide increased service despite funding constraints.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express my own and the Government's appreciation to the staff of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Any reorganisation places strains on staff. In the case of the staff of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the reorganisation was carried out efficiently with a maximum of goodwill and cooperation. In the period since I have been the Minister, I have been impressed by the esprit de corps, and the dedication of the staff who make up the Department.


Barry Hodge, MIA
MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

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1. Terms of Reference

Section 144 of the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 states:

(1) The Minister shall carry out a review of the operation of this Act not later than 31 December 1985 and in the course of such review the Minister shall consider and have regard to-

- (a) any report of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council or Honorary Royal Commission touching on the subject matter of this Act or any part thereof;
- (b) the effectiveness of the operations of the Department, the Commission, the Authority, and the Council;
- (c) the need for the continuation of the functions of the Department, the Commission, the Authority and the Council; and
- (d) such other matters as appear to him to be relevant to the operation and effectiveness of this Act.

(2) The Minister shall prepare a report based on his review of this Act and shall, not later than 31 December 1985, cause the report to be laid before each House of the Parliament.

2. Honorary Royal Commission

The majority of the Honorary Royal Commission's recommendations, reported in 1985, are endorsed by the Government. In fact, many were already current policy or had been implemented prior to release of the report. There was constructive interaction between the Honorary Royal Commissioners and the Department during the course of the Commission's review, and the Department was able to address many of the questions raised by the Commission during its investigation.

The Commission's recommendations are followed in each case by the Government's response:-

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 be amended to provide for areas currently excluded by Section 17(1) of the Act to be referred to the Commission or Authority for consideration. In the interim, the Minister should refer all such proposals for recommendation to the respective bodies.

It is proposed that Section 17(1) of the Act be amended to allow the change of purpose of vestings to be considered by the Lands and Forest Commission or the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Department of Conservation and Environment become the Department of the Environment. The new Department should not have direct responsibilities in the management of public lands.

Procedures are already in hand for the Department of Conservation and Environment to be amalgamated with the Environmental Protection Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Department of Conservation and Land Management be renamed the 'Department of Land Management'.

Should recommendation 2 be implemented there would be little need for re-naming. The word "conservation" embodies responsibilities under the Wildlife Conservation Act.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Within the Department there should be a Forest Service, a National Parks Service and a Wildlife Service. Each Service should be distinguished by the wearing of appropriate shoulder flashes.

This proposal if implemented would perpetuate the inefficiencies which existed prior to the amalgamation. The recommendation of distinguishing shoulder flashes for the three parts of the Department has already been implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Vehicles belonging to the Department of Conservation and Land Management should have no identification other than the Department's logo.

It is agreed there should be no identification other than the logo on vehicles except for those used by national park rangers. It is important for effective interaction with the public that national park rangers' vehicles be identified in addition to the logo.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The State Government and the Department of Conservation and Land Management should endeavour, as far as possible, to house the Department's central administration within a single complex.

This principle is agreed with planning of a single administrative complex under way, with the Building Management Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 7

- (a) *The Forest Research Unit and any other research units now located at Como should be transferred to the Woodvale complex.*
- (b) *The regional Research Unit now at Manjimup remain at Manjimup.*
- (c) *Consideration be given to transferring the Mapping Section (possibly to the Department's offices at Crawley).*

It is not practicable to shift the Forest Research Unit from Como to the Woodvale complex, but it is agreed that the Regional Research Unit at Manjimup should remain at that centre. Transferring the Mapping Section to another building is not seen as practical, given the plans for a single administrative complex.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The efficient library circulation system currently in operation continue.

It is agreed that the library circulation system should continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS 9, 10 and 11

The Engineering Services Section of the Department of Conservation and Land Management be completely decentralised to ensure that each region has full responsibility for the preparation and execution of its works program.

The Accounts Section of the Department of Conservation and Land Management be further decentralised, ensuring greater autonomy to the regions. Each region should have responsibility for all its operations, including the preparation and administration of its budget.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management's Planning Branch be decentralised, giving each region responsibility for its planning.

Each of these functions are already largely decentralised in the regions and districts throughout the State, but are serviced from a technical view point by those groups based in Perth. In particular the Planning Branch achieves a further stage of decentralisation by forming planning teams involving regional staff for each management plan that is being prepared.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The highest priority be given to the preparation of regional plans so that each regional manager can effectively manage the lands he has responsibility for.

This is current policy in the Department.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Department of Conservation and Land Management's senior management reaffirm and strengthen the chain of command, allowing for greater communication and more effective administration.

The Department has noted the criticism in the Foreword of the Report and adjustments in senior operations management have been made to strengthen the line of command.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The wildlife officers be integrated more fully with their fellow officers at both the district and regional level.

The integration of wildlife officers has proceeded in recent months.

RECOMMENDATION 15

In the training of wildlife officers emphasis be given to public relations, with a view to assisting them in their role as public educators.

Emphasis is already given to this topic.

RECOMMENDATION 16

A 'flying squad' with three members be formed to visit both regional and district offices of the Department of Conservation and Land Management on a regular basis. Such a group would listen to the problems faced by field staff and then report to the Department's General Manager, so that any problems may be resolved.

A 'flying squad' has been established by the General Manager.

RECOMMENDATION 17

- (a) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management instigate a scheme allowing exchange of personnel between itself and the Ministry for Natural Resources in Ontario, Canada.*
- (b) *Staff chosen for such a system of exchange should have relatively senior ranking within the organisation. However, other personnel showing initiative and potential should not be precluded.*
- (c) *Any personnel exchange that takes place should be for a period of twelve months.*

The Government agrees with this proposal in principle, subject to finance being available. Preliminary discussion has been held with the Canadian Vice Consul in Perth.

RECOMMENDATION 18

- (a) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management with assistance from the Valuer General's Office immediately assess all rental and lease agreements for properties under the Department's control.*
- (b) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management seek to rationalise the problem of properties under its control, either by selling the property or by negotiating long term lease agreements. Either option should be carried out as a commercial venture.*

In consultation with the Valuer-General's Office this task has already commenced.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The following regional names be changed:

*Central Forest to Central South West
Northern Forest to Northern Darling Range
Southern Forest to Southern South West.*

No advantage would be achieved by changing the names of the Forest Regions.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Timber Bureau be incorporated into the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

This is being considered.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Forest Production Unit of the Department of Conservation and Land Management be raised to Divisional status.

The role and the function of the Timber Production Branch, (presumably what is meant by forest production unit) is under review and further recommendations will be made to Government in due course.

RECOMMENDATION 22

A Joint Standing Committee of both Houses of Parliament be created. Such a Committee should be known as the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. This Committee should have seven members and have terms of reference covering all natural resources.

The formation of a Joint Standing Committee is the prerogative of the Parliament.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 be amended with the provision of a Review Clause. The period of review should be five years.

The Government agrees in principle and such a provision will be included in the next Bill to amend the Conservation and Land Management Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS 24, 25 and 26

More educational literature be provided for the public on matters relating to conservation and land management. Where a high quality product is prepared, the public should be charged at least the cost of production and possibly more. Such material should be made available to and sold through retail outlets. Provision should be made to provide certain publications free of charge to educational outlets.

Further ecological field study centres be upgraded or built and that future courses cover all aspects of land use and management.

A concerted effort be made to provide interpretation centres at as many national parks and other places of interest as soon as possible. A central interpretation centre should also be established, so visitors to the State have only to visit one central location to obtain information about all lands managed by the Department. One possible suggestion for the location of this centre is Kings Park.

These recommendations are in accord with Departmental policy and priorities. Planning is under way for raising of revenue from publications. The extent of these developments is limited by the need for additional funds and staff.

RECOMMENDATION 27

The interdepartmental cooperation in education that existed prior to amalgamation should be continued and broadened so as to cover all aspects of land management (i.e., national parks, wildlife reserves, forests etc.).

Cooperation with the Education Department has been broadened and a qualified teacher is to be seconded to work with the Department's Information Branch.

RECOMMENDATION 28

Courses in expedition skills should not only be continued but be expanded to cover those skills required in remote national parks, wildlife reserves or forest reserves.

The course in expedition skills has been reviewed and will be upgraded in status (a level 2 course is to be added) and made applicable to the other areas.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The Information Branch be provided with sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to fulfil its role in promoting the Department's role in conservation and land management.

Agreed in principle subject to funds being available.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The Department of Conservation and Land Management give consideration to the design of a new logo. The logo's concept should be simple and inexpensive to reproduce for any purpose.

It is not proposed to change the Department's logo. The design of the existing logo was chosen after extensive consultation.

RECOMMENDATION 31

- (a) *Either private enterprise or volunteer organisations, be permitted to operate information centres within national parks.*
- (b) *The existing systems in relation to private concessionaires be retained and where possible further encouraged.*

The use of volunteer and private enterprise organisations in parks and expansion of existing use of private concessionaires requires very careful consideration and should be in line with the fulfilment of greater public participation in park management. The Government, however, strongly supports the concept of public involvement in park management.

RECOMMENDATION 32

The Department retains monies collected from the sales of educational materials in order that it be used to improve the public's awareness of the Department's goals and objectives with respect to land management.

This is already done and is permitted under the Act. Efforts are under way to substantially increase revenue for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION 33

Where other departments have access to material prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to promote public awareness, some payment should be made to the Department to help finance such projects.

It is normal practice for other Departments to have access to data or material prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, with due acknowledgement. The matter of payment for this information would depend on the nature and the degree of effort required to provide the information. In many cases, information is exchanged between Departments, such that charging is not warranted.

RECOMMENDATION 34

The public be encouraged to submit proposals allowing areas to be proclaimed national parks. The final decision, however, in deciding on declaration of an area must always reside with the Minister.

There is an existing procedure for the public to submit proposals for reservation of national parks or nature reserves. This has often been done through the Department of Conservation and Environment, but can be done simply by writing to the Minister.

RECOMMENDATION 35

The Department of Conservation and Land Management establish a core of permanent volunteers, to be called Honorary Rangers. Any such group would work under directions received from the Department.

The Department favours the establishment of permanent volunteers to be associated with park management or reserve management. Honorary rangers under the terms of the Conservation and Land Management Act have legal powers and responsibilities, which such a group of volunteers need not necessarily possess. Volunteer assistance programs are under consideration, but before proceeding some industrial matters will have to be resolved.

RECOMMENDATION 36

Funds be made available for the collation of data held by the various Government departments (e.g. the Department of Lands and Surveys, Mines Department, etc.).

It is agreed that funds should be made available for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION 37

In the preparation of a land resource inventory, the inventory produced by the Land Conservation Council of Victoria³ should be used as a guide.

The Department will undertake a study of the Land Resource Inventory System used by the Land Conservation Council of Victoria.

RECOMMENDATION 38

Officers of the Division of Resource Management of the Department of Agriculture be responsible for collation of data for inclusion in a land resource inventory. The Division of Resource Management should be further assisted by officers from other Government departments having similar areas of expertise. All work should be carried out under the direction of the Land Resource Policy Council.

This is under investigation.

RECOMMENDATION 39

The Land Resource Policy Council be given the responsibility of setting priorities and allocation of funding for the collection and collation of material to be used in a land-use inventory.

The role of the Council is being investigated.

RECOMMENDATION 40

The Division of Resource Management liaise with the Department of Lands and Surveys to gain access to information collected by that Department's Remote Sensing Unit for use in the preparation of land resource inventory.

Considerable progress has been made in establishing this liaison.

RECOMMENDATION 41

The Department of Conservation and Land Management investigate the possibility of forest management within national parks. The Director of National Parks should make recommendations permitting such activities only after comprehensive studies have shown that there will be no adverse impacts on the long term objectives of the park. Any work conducted within a national park must adhere closely to guidelines prepared by the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

The Government is opposed to logging in National Parks.

RECOMMENDATION 42

The State Government make representations to the Commonwealth Government to establish a task force to assess the impact of proposed tax changes on private afforestation initiatives and recommend, where appropriate, direct assistance packages along the lines suggested by the Commonwealth Government in their Draft White Paper.

The State Government has already made representations on the general issue of taxation on private afforestation initiatives. This approach has been supported by the Forest Production Council in consultation with the Australian Forest Development Institute.

RECOMMENDATION 43

The Department of Conservation and Land Management be provided with the extra resources needed to further research into the effects of different fire regimes on the environment.

Agree in principle subject to finance being available.

RECOMMENDATION 44

The structure of the Bush Fires Board remain unaltered and it be amalgamated with the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The relationship of the Bush Fires Board to the Department of Conservation and Land Management is being reviewed by the Government.

RECOMMENDATION 45

All applications for building in designated fire prone areas should be referred to a services referee representing the appropriate fire authority for that location and other services.

Applications for building in fire prone areas should be referred to the State Planning Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 46

The State Minister responsible for Local Government and Fire Services in consultation with the Australian Insurance Industry Council, review the current means of premium loading with a view to increasing the loading on premiums for properties in high fire risk areas. The extra revenue collected should be made available to the relevant fire protection authorities.

This matter is under consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS 47 and 48

The State Government recognises the inadequacy of funding to the former National Parks Authority and ensures that the Department of Conservation and Land Management is provided with the necessary resources to resolve many of the problems faced by the National Parks Service without having a detrimental effect on either the Wildlife or the Forest Services.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management be provided with the necessary resources to ensure that once facilities have been brought to a high standard they are maintained.

The Government agrees that further funding is required to improve the level of management and control, and maintain a high standard of facilities. It is also possible to improve management of national parks by more efficient use of resources and removal of activities not appropriate to national parks.

RECOMMENDATION 49

The word 'dogs' be replaced with the word 'pets' on notices informing the public that pets are not permitted.

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 50

Pets be allowed into selected National Parks and the public be advised of these areas and the conditions under which pets will be permitted.

It is proposed that specified zones in national parks be excepted from prohibition of domestic animals, but assessed on a park and by park basis.

RECOMMENDATION 51

The issue of horses within the John Forrest National Park be reviewed. If it is found that the presence of horses within the Park is detrimental then steps should be taken to revoke permits. In the case of commercial riding ventures, revocation of the permit should be gradual to cause minimal disruption to the permit holder's livelihood.

The impact of horses on national parks is under review. It is proposed to retain the status quo for the time being.

RECOMMENDATION 52

The Department of Conservation and Land Management adopt the land classification scheme prepared by the International Union for Nature Conservation and Natural Resources (IUCN).

While the system per se will not be adopted, there is agreement with the IUCN classification principles. There will be variations in the specific categories proposed for amendment of Section 5 of the Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS 53 and 54

Before permission for exploration within a national park is granted, the Department of Conservation and Land Management prepare an Environmental Review and Management Assessment, with funds provided by the applicant for the preparation of this work. The Department of Conservation and Land Management should be responsible for ensuring that all conditions given in the Assessment are followed.

Where exploration locates a find of national significance further studies be conducted and an Environmental Review and Management Plan (ERMP) prepared. The ERMP should be prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management but funded by the exploration company seeking approval for mining. Finally, approval for mining should be the subject of an agreement between the miner and the Government, requiring ratification by the Parliament of Western Australia.

A working party with representatives from the Mines Department and the Department of Conservation and Land Management is reviewing the conditions under which mineral exploration may be permitted on national parks. Public submissions will be called for.

The role of the mining company in funding an environmental review and management plan will be the subject of recommendations by the interdepartmental committee.

RECOMMENDATION 55

- (a) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management adopt the IUCN system of land classification.*
 - (b) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management declare buffer zones around a townsite to protect the surrounding national park from degradation.*
 - (c) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management liaise closely with any local Government Authority that has vesting of a townsite adjoining a national park.*
 - (d) *That the Department of Conservation and Land Management adopt the Canadian policy with respect to the development or continuation of a townsite within a national park.*
- i) Part (a) -- see the response to Recommendation 52.
 - ii) With respect to recommendations (b) and (c) the Government's policy is for the Department to liaise closely with local authorities and the local community to ensure that parks are protected.
 - iii) As a general principle, the Government does not favour the development of townsites in national parks.

RECOMMENDATION 56

- (a) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management immediately assess the extent and severity of jarrah dieback outbreaks within the State's national parks.*
- (b) *The Department of Conservation and Land Management take immediate action to restrict further spread of the disease.*

An assessment of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (jarrah dieback) outbreaks in national parks is under way, particularly in South Coast parks; action has been taken to restrict further spread of the disease.

RECOMMENDATION 57

The Department of Conservation and Land Management close areas most seriously affected by disease for quarantine purposes. Quarantine should be maintained until it is possible to allow planned re-entry with minimal risk.

The Department is examining all avenues for control of disease in lands under its control. Where appropriate, areas of high risk will be placed into the disease risk area category (quarantine).

RECOMMENDATION 58

Joint management agreements be restricted to Government agencies but where a particular group has special interest or skills these should be utilised through Advisory Committees.

Agreed in principle.

RECOMMENDATION 59

The Department of Conservation and Land Management look to rationalising those nature reserves vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and those locations without vesting.

The rationalisation of nature reserves is under constant review and will be facilitated by proposed amendments to the Act (see recommendation 52).

RECOMMENDATION 60

Any area found to have little or no inherent conservation value should have its "A" class classification revoked and its vesting removed.

Following the completion of a review of vestings, all reserves will be given an appropriate classification.

RECOMMENDATION 61

Those areas without vesting found to have conservation value should be dedicated as nature reserves as prescribed in the Act. Once dedicated these nature reserves should be vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

Suitable classifications will be used on all reserves following the review outlined above and they will be vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 62

Interim regional plans be prepared for the management guidelines of nature reserves, pending final management plans.

Interim regional plans have been adopted in principle, and those for the three south-west forest regions are in course of preparation. A plan for the South Coast region is to be completed in 1986.

RECOMMENDATION 63

The State Government immediately provide the Department with additional funds to increase staff levels within the Department's Inventory and Planning Sections. Additional staff will allow for management plans for nature reserves at a regional level to be prepared more rapidly.

Agreed in principle but the proposal is subject to budget constraints.

RECOMMENDATION 64

Any area set aside for the purpose of flora and fauna conservation and vested in an Authority other than the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority should remain vested with the other Authority.

As a general principle, the Government believes that reserves vested for the purpose of conservation of flora and fauna should be vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

RECOMMENDATION 65

Section 13(3) of the Conservation and Land Management Act be amended in order that marine parks be defined as multiple use management areas, providing both conservation and protection of the marine environment, as well as contributing to the State's economic, social and material requirements.

This is agreed and approval for amendments to Section 13(3) will be sought from Cabinet in due course.

RECOMMENDATIONS 66, 67 and 68

The Department of Conservation and Land Management establish, as a matter of urgency, a listing of areas which should be given protection as Marine and Estuarine Protected Areas (MEPA's).

The State Government provide the Department of Conservation and Land Management with the resources needed to prepare and implement management plans for proposed MEPAs.

The State Government provide funding for the necessary equipment for the Department of Conservation and Land Management to properly manage the marine parks and marine nature reserves under its control.

There is general agreement with each of these three recommendations subject to the constraint of finance and staff availability. Approval will be sought to amend Section 5 of the Act accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 69

Attention be given to training existing staff, i.e., national parks rangers, in marine craft, so that the Department of Conservation and Land Management will be capable of managing the marine parks and marine nature reserves under its control.

Marine craft training of national park rangers and/or wildlife officers, where appropriate, will be undertaken as soon as feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 70

The Point Maud Marine Nature Reserve and the Point Quobba Marine Nature Reserve have their vesting transferred from the Department of Fisheries to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.

These are reserves under the Fisheries Act, and are not vested. Their status will be reviewed during the process of declaring Ningaloo Marine Park.

RECOMMENDATION 71

The Commonwealth Government be approached to financially assist the Department of Conservation and Land Management in the management of areas made accessible following the construction of Highway 1.

The Department has and will continue to make submissions to the Federal Government for additional funding for conservation and land management.

RECOMMENDATION 72

The Department of Conservation and Land Management seek public participation in recreation planning with volunteer assistance in construction of certain recreational facilities.

Agreed in principle and will be implemented where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 73

The Department of Conservation and Land Management take steps to increase the level of coordination, whether formal or informal, between other land management agencies ensuring rational recreational land-use planning.

Such coordination is already occurring.

RECOMMENDATION 74

Off-road activities be permitted in certain areas. In permitting such activities, the Department of Conservation and Land Management should maintain strict environmental controls on any land set aside for such activities.

Appropriate areas where environmental damage can be minimised will be set aside as the case demands.

RECOMMENDATION 75

In all management plans, recreation areas should be delineated. These areas should be given equal priority with other forms of land management performed by the Department, in order that outdoor recreational facilities may be provided.

Recreation areas will be delineated as appropriate and where they conform with recommended land use of reserved areas.

RECOMMENDATION 76

All staff be encouraged to participate in recreation based training program.

Recreational training programs are being developed within the Department.

RECOMMENDATION 77

The Department of Conservation and Land Management continue to protect historic sites as part of Western Australia's heritage.

This is current policy.

RECOMMENDATION 78

There be constant interchange of information between Local Government bodies and the Department of Conservation and Land Management. This interchange should be conducted at all levels.

Action has been taken to increase the level of cooperation and liaison with local government bodies. This is particularly the case in preparation of management plans.

RECOMMENDATION 79

In addition to the money spent on promoting tourism in Western Australia, funds also be allocated to ensure that the State's indigenous flora and fauna are managed effectively and facilities provided to cope with the additional visitors generated by this promotion.

Availability of funds is subject to budgetary constraints, but the possibility of obtaining external grants from Tourist operators is being pursued.

RECOMMENDATION 80

All rivers and estuaries either cutting or running through land managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management should be managed by the Department.

Agreed in principle. However, it is not proposed to change current administrative arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION 81

The Department of Conservation and Land Management continue to have responsibility for water catchment areas managed previously by the former Forests Department. Consultation between the Department and other government bodies having similar responsibilities should continue.

Agreed and consultation is continuing.

RECOMMENDATION 82

The Soil Conservation Service remain with the Department of Agriculture.

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 83

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN) classification of land-use options be adopted.

See the response to recommendation 52.

RECOMMENDATIONS 84 and 85

Quarrying and open cut mining be permitted in areas where the impact of such operations will be minimal.

Management policies, such as those prepared by the New South Wales Department of Environment and Planning, be drawn up to cover mining within Western Australia's national parks and other areas managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The policies on quarrying and open-cut mining, and management policies for mining, are being considered by the interdepartmental committee reviewing mining in national parks; see responses to recommendations 53 and 54.

3. Legislation

While the Conservation and Land Management Act has operated effectively, a number of anomalous situations and some minor short-comings have become evident. The amendments that are proposed are detailed in the schedule at Appendix 6.1 which summarises the proposed changes.

The principal sections of the Act that require amendment are those concerned with the classification of conservation and recreation lands (Section 5) and the definitions of nature reserves (Section 3) and marine parks (Section 13(3)). The classifications in Section 5(c)-(g) are defined in legal terms to fulfil requirements of previous Acts and to promote reference to other sections of the Conservation and Land Management Act. There are no definitions of purpose for these categories, and there are insufficient categories available. There is no category for small reserves which are used by the public for recreational purposes but which do not warrant the adjective "national" and the title "National Park." In practise some nature reserves are used in this way, contrary to the function prescribed for them in the Act.

There is no provision for general purpose zones in marine parks, comparable to the provisions under which the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is established. Consequently it would not be possible to permit professional fishing or other commercial utilisation of resources in Marine Parks under the Act.

The proposed amendment adds the categories - nature parks, regional parks, managed resource protected areas, and protected landscapes. Application of the entire list of IUCN categories for conservation reserves is not considered to be appropriate or necessary in Western Australia because the functions of all those categories may be provided for in the Act with these minor amendments.

Recommendations 52, 55, 65, 66 and 83 of the Honorary Royal Commission's report advocated similar amendments and these have been incorporated as far as practical.

Other proposed amendments will assist in more expedient and rational vestings of nature reserves and national parks (Sections 6(2), 6(4), 7, 7(3), 17(1) and 62), and for greater efficiency in management plan preparation (Section 56).

Section 33(4) of the Act stipulates that, in the absence of an approved management plan, only those operations necessary for the protection of wildlife and habitat may be carried out on parks and reserves. In practise this has proved to be too restrictive and more flexibility is required.

There are anomalies with the definition of minerals in the Mining Act and definition of leases in the Conservation and Land Management Act, which have precluded a coherent policy for the management of basic raw materials in State forest, national parks and nature reserves.

The following are the main reasons for the anomalies:

The Mining Act defines minerals as substances which occur in the earth and which are of economic value. This definition is too broad and does not take into account the fact that some substances are not economically extractable at the present time. The Conservation and Land Management Act defines leases as rights in land which are granted for a fixed term. This definition is also too broad and does not take into account the fact that some leases are granted for an indefinite period.

The anomalies arise because the Mining Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act were drafted at different times and by different departments. The Mining Act was drafted in 1964 and the Conservation and Land Management Act was drafted in 1969.

The anomalies are also due to the fact that the Mining Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act are not harmonized. The Mining Act is based on the principle of free enterprise and the Conservation and Land Management Act is based on the principle of public ownership.

The anomalies are also due to the fact that the Mining Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act are not updated. The Mining Act has not been amended since 1964 and the Conservation and Land Management Act has not been amended since 1969.

The anomalies are also due to the fact that the Mining Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act are not coordinated. The Mining Act is administered by the Department of Mines and the Conservation and Land Management Act is administered by the Department of the Environment.

The anomalies are also due to the fact that the Mining Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act are not consistent. The Mining Act allows for the extraction of minerals from State land and the Conservation and Land Management Act prohibits the extraction of minerals from State land.

4. Controlling Bodies

The Controlling Bodies met soon after the proclamation of the Act and continued to meet at regular intervals. A high level of attendance was maintained and levels of contribution by all members has been high. The controlling bodies have proved to be an effective mechanism for providing broad community participation in policy formulation by the Department.

Their achievements are summarised in Appendices 6.2 to 6.4.

5. The Department

5.1 Policy Development

5.1.1 The Policy Directorate

The Department's Policy Directorate meets at least fortnightly with interim meetings as necessary. To date 25 meetings had been held. Under the guidance of the Executive Director, corporate decision making is working well.

The Directorate considers:

- . policies or programs for land management and conservation.
- . internal Departmental arrangements and administrative procedures.
- . submissions to the Minister, the Commission, the Authority, or the Council, including management plans.
- . the Department's Corporate Plan.
- . Matters from the external environment which affect the Department.

In the first 8½ months of the Department's operations, the Directorate has considered 51 policy items. These items and their stage of development are listed in Appendix 6.5.

Preparation of a Corporate Plan has been a priority of the Policy Directorate. A mission statement and five primary objectives have been derived.

Given an urgent need for policies and strategies for implementation of the Act, these activities of the Policy Directorate are crucial to the effective operation of the Department. No change in its function or purpose is recommended.

5.1.2 Forests Policy

Review of Timber Resources

A detailed review of all pine log resources has been initiated and is nearly complete. The results to date indicate that the volume available now and in the decade to 1995 is well short of forecasts made in 1980 and that pine mills planned to come into production in 1990 must be deferred for at least five years. Preliminary discussions to explain the shortfall have been held with industry.

The role of second growth forests of jarrah, marri and karri in relation to the declining cut of mature hardwoods is undergoing a detailed review. These data are an essential base for revision of the former Forests Department General Working Plan which is due for replacement in 1987. The new Working Plan will be produced in three parts; one for each of the forest regions.

Dieback Policy

The dieback policy of 1983 has been reconsidered in the light of hygiene logging trials and an amended policy has been produced. It will allow entry into Disease Risk Areas for limited logging activity under strict hygiene controls and monitoring.

Basic Raw Materials Policy

After consideration by an inter-departmental committee with representatives from the Mines Department and from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, policy on access to basic raw materials, especially gravel, was revised. The new policy allows for removal of gravel by Shires under certain conditions to be by issue of a gravel licence. Under other conditions where the gravel is being sold or used more than 5 km from CALM lands under the control of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, gravel will be obtained through the Mines Department by means of a mineral lease. Gravel will not be taken from national parks or nature reserves except for use within the park or reserve, or providing access to the park or reserve.

Small Metropolitan Mills

There are several small sawmills in the Perth Metropolitan Area which have, at the Department's suggestion, formed an association. These mills provide employment and customer service based on a small quantity of small or low quality salvage or reject hardwood logs. They help provide a scavenging operation, mainly in the northern jarrah forest, and plans are in hand to provide a regular supply of logs to offset declining private property resources.

Two-Tiered Karri Forest

Tenders have been invited for the utilisation of 20,000 cubic metres of karri logs and 40,000 cubic metres of low quality karri and marri from a limited area of karri and marri forest in the Manjimup area. This is a resource which otherwise would not be utilised and is part of a program designed to optimise productivity of native production forest.

Softwood Sharefarming

The Government's softwood sharefarming scheme was prepared with careful analysis of costs and returns and was launched at Manjimup on 14 November 1985. The scheme provides for the farmer and the Department of Conservation and Land Management to enter into an agreement for 31 years to grow a pine forest on the farmer's land. The farmer will receive an annuity each year for 30 years, share the profit from the final crop and retain ownership of the land. To date there is a firm indication that the program will be successful.

Shannon Park

A management plan is being developed for the Shannon Park and the D'Entrecasteaux National Park and will soon be available for public comment.

Woodchip Licence

Work has begun on a review of the WA Chip and Pulp Co. Agreement Act prior to negotiating a new agreement. The present agreement expires in 1991 but provision must be made for public input and advance notice to Japanese buyers of any change of conditions.

The chipwood royalty is presently under review as required every 5 years.

5.1.3 Nature Conservation Policy

With the establishment of the new Department and the regionalisation of operations, a new and more diverse structure is in place for nature conservation. Many officers have new or extra responsibilities in this area, and lines of authority have changed.

The Department has had to implement new or modified operational procedures, and most significantly, has had to formalise clear policies where in the past few were written. Existing policies are being reviewed, and a number of guidelines have been issued for regional operations staff.

Wildlife Management

A major challenge under the new structure, given greater resources, is to integrate wildlife management with other land management programs at the regional level. There has been considerable progress, with tangible benefits. These have been:

- A flow of technical expertise from other sections of the Department, which was not readily available previously. Examples include:-

- . fire protection and dieback management knowledge applied to National Parks and nature reserves
- . biological survey and rare flora knowledge to forest management.
- Devolution of authority to the regions for management of nature reserves has resulted in more direct responses to operational needs and greater liaison with local communities to enhance protection of the reserves.
- Creation of the Planning Branch has extended the capacity for professional management planning for nature reserves.
- Integration of wildlife research results into draft of management plans and regional implementation of wildlife management programs are starting to have benefit in areas such as feral animal control and selection of reserves.
- Application of the public participation initiative to wildlife protection and nature conservation, including advisory and consultative committees, and through "friends" and voluntary working groups.

However, these benefits have yet to be fully realised and further changes are needed. Wildlife Officers have a dual responsibility - enforcement of wildlife protection legislation, and monitoring the condition of nature reserves. While the first requires central coordination and direct links to Head Office, the second demands further integration with the regional structure.

Presently, research programs on wildlife management are performed by two separate research branches, one which concentrates on forest areas, and the other elsewhere in the State. This distinction is arbitrary and of historical origin. There is a pressing need to integrate this work into a single wildlife research unit.

Marine Parks and Marine Nature Reserves

In accordance with Government policy, and with the new statutory basis provided in the Act, the Department has formed an ad hoc working group from the marine science community to draw up recommendations for the establishment of a series of conservation and recreation reserves in the State's coastal waters.

Two major marine parks, Ningaloo and Marmion, are about to be established. The Working Group will recommend others which will be representative of the State's marine flora and fauna and ecosystems.

However, the Department has limited staff with expertise in this area and before further implementation of this policy, it will be necessary to establish marine specialists in operations, planning and research.

Resolution of Land Use Conflicts

While the State Planning Commission has the primary planning role for Crown land, the Department of Conservation and Land Management is a major land management agency and has an important part to play in these planning decisions. It has convened a re-structured, inter-departmental liaison committee - the Peel Harvey Steering Committee - to ensure the balanced development and environmental management of these estuaries.

It has convened the Shark Bay Consultative Committee, intended to foster local community input to a land-use study of the Shark Bay district organised by the Planning Commission. It has participated in the planning for the Beeliar Regional Park which will provide for a variety of conservation values and recreation uses within an area subject to a variety of tenures.

Thus, together with the planning function of the State Planning Commission, and the existing provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act, the new Act enhances the capacity of the State to ensure effective wildlife conservation and environmental management throughout the State and the resolution of land-use conflicts.

5.1.4 National Parks Policy

General Policy

The National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority has agreed that, until revised or superseded, policies for National Parks should follow the publication 'Management Policies' published by the previous National Parks Authority. Policy revision and updating is well advanced in several areas, such as resource protection and planning. Some policy statements, e.g. 'Operations in Disease Risk Areas', have been produced, and the Department anticipates completion of associated documents shortly.

Major sections of the publication deal with use of National Parks for recreation which are expected to be superseded by the Departmental 'Recreation Policy' which is also in preparation.

Park Planning

A major policy paper has been prepared and will be submitted to the relevant controlling bodies shortly. It will, if approved, have a major impact on National Park planning through directing badly needed resources into this area. The Department is constrained by S.33 of the Act to conduct only "necessary operations" (see Section 3) where there is no approved management plan.

Although it is elsewhere proposed to amend the Act to make it less restrictive in this area, the allocation of additional resources into National Park planning is regarded as appropriate; first the variety of activity or proposed activity in National Parks requires considerable attention, and secondly there is already a backlog, built up over years through inadequate resources being applied in this area, as pointed out by the Honorary Royal Commission.

Mining in National Parks

This issue has been commented upon by the Honorary Royal Commission and received attention in the media. Policy development in this area will necessarily involve several Departments and Ministers since there is room for possible conflict between major policy objectives of the State.

The Government has agreed in principle to amendment of the Mining Act so that production mining in national parks and nature reserves is assented to by the Parliament. At present this applies only in the South West Land Division. The Government has also recently appointed a committee to review aspects of exploration and production mining on these areas. The Director of National Parks represents the Department: other members are Dr J Bailey, member of the EPA, Chairman, and Dr P Playford, Deputy Director General of Mines. The Committee is expected to report to the Government later next year.

5.2 Constraints on Department's Operations

Since its inception the new Department has faced an apparently insatiable demand from the community at large for its advice, its services, its management and regulatory functions, and for dissemination of information on a wide range of topics. It is now quite evident that the public expectation of performance in the area of conservation and land management is far greater than anticipated.

The Department has been given increased responsibilities from the Government, and as a result of the operation of the Act. In particular, there is an urgent need for many more management plans to allow forest, park and reserve operations to proceed, and each requires substantial public involvement. Participation through submissions, workshops, committees, seminars, surveys, etc is a high priority and improves the standard of planning, but it also places large demands on operations and planning staff.

Rationalisation in other areas of Government operations ... for example, the formation of the State Planning Commission and possible re-structuring of the Department of Conservation and Environment ... has consolidated the role of the Department as a land management agency. Consequently, there is a much greater demand from Government for advice.

Proposed additions to the estate ... Marmion Marine Park, Herdsman Lake, Bungle Bungle National Park, Ningaloo Marine Park, Shark Bay area, etc ... have significantly increased the workload well before vesting and allocation of extra staff and finance for on-site management.

Finally, there is an increased expectation of Departmental performance by its own staff. The recommendations in the Task Force report and arguments presented by Government in support of the amalgamation, predicted that areas under-serviced in the past (eg. national parks) would now receive greater attention and better management. Staff from the originating agencies are ambitious that these benefits accrue.

These increased pressures in the external and internal "environments" of the Department are being exerted against a constraint of limited resources.

The Department is partially accommodating these demands by increased efficiency in the operations which is being achieved by consolidation of policy determination, regionalisation of operations management, and coordination and re-allocation of resources across State forests, national parks and nature reserves.

The Department is attempting to alleviate its resource problem by ensuring that where appropriate it receives a fair return for the services and resources it provides.

Initiatives or reviews are under way at the Departmental level concerning royalties for woodchips, softwood and hardwood logs, national parks charges, leases and property transactions, sales of publications, and external sponsorship or joint projects.

5.3 Staff

5.3.1 Progress in Staff Appointments

The new Departmental structure listed 43 new positions in senior management, policy advice, branch and regional management. At the end of the calendar year, 36 appointments had been made, seven from outside the three originating agencies, five positions are filled on an "acting" basis, and two positions (Manager, Gascoyne Region; Manager, Finance Branch) were not formally created. These additions have allowed basic management and control to be extended to new areas of operations to other areas not adequately serviced in the past and has permitted a start on new initiatives, particularly in the policy area.

Unfortunately, the further staff additions needed for consolidation, and sought in the 1985/86 budget, were not approved and this has created severe difficulty in meeting the expanded workload and higher standard of management and control necessary for the Department to operate efficiently. A particular deficiency is the lack of clerical support for new regional and district offices, and new branches.

5.3.2 Industrial Arrangements

Prior to amalgamation a working party was formed to address industrial issues and differences in working conditions between the different groups that were highlighted by the amalgamation.

The investigations commenced by the working party are being continued by the Personnel Branch, by the usual practice of discussion with individual unions on their claims. This is being done in conjunction with officers of the Public Service Board and Office of Industrial Relations.

The amalgamation required a great deal of attention to industrial issues because of the following factors:

- Greater expectations and opportunities for employees;
- A tendency for groups to look at conditions of other groups;
- Many long standing ad hoc arrangements that were contrary to proper award coverage and processes were highlighted with expectations that these matters be rectified immediately;

- Potential areas of demarcation required immediate attention in order that advantages in staff flexibility were not lost through restrictions of union constitutional coverage;
- A review of the role of some groups which had industrial implications for structure, classifications and working conditions.

It is often difficult to deal quickly with demands for increased remuneration and changing conditions of employment by simply comparing one section of an employment package with another. Award entitlements for different groups have developed as part of differing employment packages that have been negotiated over the years. Changes to those conditions must also comply with current wage indexation guidelines.

Attention has been given to the following specific areas:

National Park Rangers

- a Rangers' conference and follow up actions to overcome immediate problems and allay immediate anxieties.
- review of the Rangers' role, structure, duties, wages and conditions was carried out.
- Rangers were surveyed to assist in the above review of structure and duties.
- A Rangers' working group was formulated to assist with the above investigations, administrative procedures and personal development matters.
- specific industrial matters addressed included investigations into a 5 day week for Rangers.
- claims from the union for increased wages and allowances and for a new classification in the award.

Reserve Assistants

These employees were employed on a temporary basis by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife prior to amalgamation.

Arrangements were made to employ them on a permanent basis under the provisions of the AWU (W.A. Government) Construction, Maintenance and Service Award.

Other matters of concern relating to employment conditions were resolved.

Professional Foresters and Forest Act Field Staff Officers

Sub-associations representing the professional foresters and the Forest Act field staff presented submissions seeking clarification on a variety of matters of concern.

Many matters raised have been resolved and others still require attention.

One matter of particular concern to the professional foresters is the apparent downgrading of some senior professional positions due to the structure of the Department, transfer from the professional to the administrative range and the effects of broadbanding.

Wildlife Officers

A submission has been received from this group concerning reclassifications and instituting a means for progressive promotion.

Discussions are continuing with the group on these matters in order to put a proposal to the Public Service Board.

Employees under the AWU (WA Government) Construction, Maintenance and Service Award 1984

The above award is a new Federal Award covering Government employees in Western Australia. The operation of the award in CALM is under review and many issues are under discussion and negotiation with the Union and the Office of Industrial Relations.

5.3.3 Other Staff Matters

Broadbanding, a new system of classification, is being introduced throughout the Public Service and extensive work has been done by industrial and personnel staff for its implementation to Public Service Act positions. Urgent consideration must now be given to its possible application to salaried field staff.

Surveys on the introduction of the nine-day fortnight and extended flexitime have been completed and implemented within the Government's criteria of no additional cost and improved services to the public. An assessment of its impact will be made early in 1986.

5.3.4 Training

Prior to amalgamation a training working group, with a representative of each originating agency was set up, examined existing induction and training and made recommendations. It concentrated on the vocational pre-employment training program which the Forests Department had been running for field officers. Changes to the curriculum of the two year certificate course were recommended to provide more generalised training suitable for entry into the wider range of field staff positions in the new Department.

With agreement from Technical and Further Education the changes were adopted for the beginning of the 1985 training year.

Since then other facets of training and induction have been implemented. The Forests Department's training policy and procedures were adapted to suit the new Department as an interim measure until a new policy was developed.

The Departmental training committee was expanded and a training catalogue was prepared to cater for the different occupational groups within the Department. A training calendar was prepared.

Still continuing is the Forests Department's promotional examination system to allow field staff to obtain necessary qualifications for promotion to field vacancies at higher levels.

Proposals for the future include:

- A training and career development policy to be adopted;
- Field staff vocational training to the revised format will be continued and successful students will be awarded a Certificate in Conservation and Land Management;
- Vocational training in modular form will be developed to allow employees and Rangers who can meet entry qualifications to obtain a Certificate and become eligible for field staff vacancies;
- The promotional examination system will be extended to other field staff where it is necessary for progression and promotional opportunities;

This is a likely industrial development in the near future. Exemption will be allowed in some cases where alternative qualifications or experience is suitable;

- Induction training will be provided for all new staff and for staff transferred to new jobs and/or localities;
- The existing staff appraisal system will be reviewed and all staff and Rangers will be appraised annually. The appraisal system will provide information on career development and training needs and will be linked to the training system;
- In-service training will continue and will be expanded as the need for new courses develops. All staff at all levels will be exposed to needs based training;
- Managerial and executive development training will continue to be provided in conjunction with the Public Service Board;
- The Department will retain membership of the Australian Institute of Management.

5.3.5 Safety

During the amalgamation process representatives from the Forests Department and National Parks Authority met to review procedures for safety, health and welfare of staff. It was obvious that the well developed and highly successful safety program of the Forests Department should apply in the new Department with its commencement.

The policy and procedures of the Forests Department were amended slightly and accepted.

Once the safety training programs were underway particular attention was paid to training personnel who did not have the Forests Department safety background. The courses were conducted by the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention and were very satisfactory.

Induction training particularly in relation to recording and reporting accident statistics was carried out at all centres.

First aid training was expanded to meet the increased demand and safety officers visited all sections of the Department.

Proposals for the future include:

- Computerisation of safety records;
- Revised accident recording and investigation procedures based on a systems approach;

- Meeting the requirements of noise abatement regulation (there will be considerable additional work both initially and ongoing);
- Managing the problem of RSI in the Department and meeting the guidelines of the Public Service Board RSI Task Force;
- Moving into the welfare area, providing counselling and retraining where necessary;
- Achieving better liaison with the SGIO and other bodies in relation to long term compensation cases;
- Increasing safety officer visits to districts and sections to meet the demand in new areas without downgrading traditional areas.

In essence, the safety, health and welfare program has been expanded to accommodate a new Department of much larger size with no increase in staff or finance of the existing Safety Section. Allocations from the budgets of the other two originating agencies were negligible. No account has been made of the need to travel to more remote parts of the State.

While the Safety Section has coped well to date, it must be expanded to meet the additional proposals above for the new Department.

5.4 Finance

5.4.1 Funding Constraints

In real terms the recurrent funding this year rose by 4.8% over 1984/85 which is below inflation.

The Department fared better in capital works although certain expectations were not realised and some projects have been foregone or at least deferred.

5.4.2 Revenue

Revenues currently paid to CRF involve hardwood royalties, sandalwood, hardwood and softwood conversion revenues and a variety of fees and other staff service receipts which are estimated to return \$23,125,000 in 1985/86.

Investigations of methods to apply scope to increase and to the 'user pay' principle are being undertaken. Specific areas of investigations include:

- Increased royalties, lease agreements, rents etc;
- Increased overhead charges on recoupable works;
- Contributions be sought from other Government agencies where Departmental activities produce third-party benefits;
- Increased compensation for loss of State forest, etc;
- Increased fees for entering and camping in National Parks and other recreation areas, and offering annual membership (including incentive packages);
- Departmental publications produced for sale;
- Consultancy fees for private investors in forestry ventures.

An improved system for managing subscriptions and handling collection of monies is being developed.

5.4.3 Accounting Systems

There have been severe difficulties in amalgamating the three accounting systems into one. The procedure was to "add on" the national parks and wildlife systems to the Forests Department system, and run the single system on one computer. The major problem has been with the existing software's inability to accept new accounts and to provide balances.

The Accounts Branch's workload has markedly increased since the amalgamation. There is still heavy reliance on temporary staff and on overtime to cope with these problems.

Work is proceeding towards a new accounting system for implementation in the 1986/87 financial year.

A revamped classification of accounts has been prepared in keeping with the new reporting requirements of the Department and Treasury. This will form the basis for presentation of 1986/87 estimates for which new budget documentation has also been prepared.

The final stage will be the design and implementation of standard computerised reports for a wide variety of cost centres. This work will depend upon the availability of staff within the Computer Services Section but it is anticipated that the system will be operational early in the 1986/87 financial year.

5.4.4 Internal Audit

Since amalgamation Internal Audit has instigated an effective facility for the establishment and examination of controls that previously existed only to a limited degree for national parks and wildlife personnel. In particular Internal Audit is now regarded as a crucial advisory medium for regional personnel on Departmental and Government administration and financial spheres policy.

Specifically, its achievements have been:

- An effective internal audit facility for all branches, regional and district offices, and outposts of the new Department;
- An advisory mode for all personnel on matters such as the Government and Department's current policy and procedures for accounting, financial and operational activities and responsibilities as detailed in the Audit Act and Treasury Regulations, Treasury and Departmental circulars, and specifically the correct handling of local purchase orders, tenders and contracts;
- Procedures to cope with the unique problems for mobile rangers, wildlife officers and national park rangers stationed at remote outstations - for instance revenue collection, security and banking;

- Review of the national parks revenue collection procedure with the aim of upgrading staff safety and security of revenue collected. There was liaison with the Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau;
- Establishment of a manual for the ordering, receipt, issuing and control of inventory and stores, at regional and district offices, and outstations.

Some areas that still require attention are:

- The development of a mobile Rangers handbook to cover such items as a procedure for stores and inventory control, handling of petty cash, receipting and banking of revenue collection, use of local purchase orders, use of requisition books, and responsibilities and authority, etc;
- The establishment of an effective reporting procedure for mobile Rangers;
- A review of the payment of wages to resident national park rangers.

5.5 Plant, Structures and Equipment

5.5.1 Engineering Services

The advantages of amalgamation have clearly been demonstrated in the coordinated upgrading of vehicles, housing and other equipment. In particular, the national park rangers have benefited.

The progress to date includes:

- Ready access to engineering expertise for vehicles, buildings, power plants, water supplies, boating, etc, for national park rangers and wildlife officers;
- A major rationalisation and upgrade of vehicles, particularly the national parks fleet.
 - . 27 new light vehicles for rangers and wildlife officers.
 - . 8 new trucks and 4 new tractors.
 - . disposal of 9 heavy vehicles and plant.
- Acquisition of 9 houses for additional regional staff and national park rangers;
- Ablution facilities and information centres to the value of \$140 000 in national parks;
- Use of ex-Forests Department houses to accommodate national parks rangers.

A further 19 new light vehicles for rangers and wildlife officers are to be put into service before the end of the financial year. Regional staff housing requirements continue to be assessed and surplus houses identified for disposal.

The changes have significantly reduced the time spent on maintenance by national park rangers and wildlife officers, releasing them for more appropriate duties.

The Engineering Services Branch has been working on plans to:

- Establish a park headquarters and services at the proposed Ningaloo Marine Park;
- Upgrade existing offices and build new ones at regional and district centres;
- Upgrade buildings and services at all national parks;
- Enhance the vehicle fleet management system.

Vehicle and housing rationalisation and upgrading will continue.

5.5.2 Radio Communications

The Communications Branch had the major task of establishing a coordinated radio network before the start of the fire season. This has required the installation of VHF transceivers and the modification of HF transceivers so that forests staff, national park rangers and wildlife officers can all be in communication over matters of fire, visitor safety, apprehending offenders, and officer safety. The program included:

- New and modified radios for approximately 400 vehicles;
- HF radio bases at Albany, Narrogin, Geraldton and Moora and a VHF repeater at Albany;
- Modification of radios for emergency use of the Royal Flying Doctor Service network;
- Radios for Rangers' houses and for mobile Rangers' vehicles and caravans.

The result is a vastly improved network not only benefiting fire suppression but other aspects of human safety.

5.6 Land and Wildlife Administration

The Land and Wildlife Branch has administrative responsibility for transactions involving the estate, and for various licencing, lease and permit matters. In its first nine months of operation there were considerable difficulties. A manager was not appointed until recently; staffing has been inadequate in number and training. There have been particular problems in administering land tenure for National Parks, because there has been no one staff position monitoring the entire estate. The Branch has performed satisfactorily, given these difficulties.

5.6.1 Conservation Lands Acquisition Committee

The newly established Conservation Lands Acquisition Committee has proved a more than effective replacement for the Environmental Protection Authority's Parks and Reserves Committee. The previous Committee was chaired by the Surveyor-General and included officers from the three originating agencies. It had to rely on money provided to the Department of Lands and Surveys to buy land. Only purchases of private land were considered.

The new Committee has officers representing nature conservation, State forests and national parks. It will coordinate the acquisition of Crown land and other land exchanges, using funds from the Department's capital budget where appropriate.

5.6.2 Land Acquisition

The need to rationalise the Department's estate is one of the Branch's highest priorities. By re-organising responsibilities within the Branch, an additional staff member will be available to do the more routine tasks in support of this complex and time consuming process.

Emphasis will be given to procuring Crown land free of charge and to a lesser extent by purchasing freehold areas of special importance. Land exchange involving the Department's estate and private freehold areas will also continue but will be examined in more detail, particularly in the early stages, to eliminate unsuitable exchanges.

All this will allow land to be obtained which will add to the diversity and viability of the Department's nature reserves and national parks. By removing private enclaves and rationalising boundaries the Department's management problems will be reduced.

5.6.3 Rationalisation of Licences and Leases

The Department administers a wide range of licences and leases ranging from aviary conditions, to apiary site fees, to permits to take fauna for scientific purposes. Action is being taken to consolidate and rationalise licencing.

Where possible, requirements to have licences will be reduced, particularly in the case of birds kept in aviaries. Further, the consolidation of licences which is occurring will remove the need for the W.A. Museum, for instance, to approach three separate sections in the Department for access onto its estate and approval to take scientific specimens.

Consolidation of conditions for apiary site permits will also be pursued; previously the three originating agencies had separate requirements. Liaison with beekeepers has been started to minimise any adverse environmental impact and to assist the industry to overcome its economic problems.

The granting of approval for quarrying of road building materials will also be improved now that a common basic raw materials policy is in place.

5.6.4 Rare Flora Protection

Action is also to be taken to map the occurrence of each declared rare species which can then be forwarded to management agencies such as the Main Roads Department, State Energy Commission and shires. Talks have commenced with the Main Roads Department to improve conservation of declared rare flora and roadside verges, with particular emphasis on liaison with local government authorities.

5.6.5 Disposal of Surplus Departmental Housing

The amalgamation has allowed the Engineering Services Branch to assess regional staff housing requirements and to identify surplus houses. The proposed sale will realise substantial revenue and reduce the Department's maintenance costs.

5.7 Regional Operations

Regionalisation is the base principle for the structure and effective functioning of the Department.

The whole State is divided into eleven regions; each to be self-contained eventually able to carry out all operational functions. Each has a Regional Manager who responds to the Divisional Manager, Operations.

In the first nine months of operation, progress in establishment of regions has been satisfactory.

The following three regions are fully staffed and functional:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Northern Forest | (Headquarters at Kelmscott) |
| Central Forest | (Headquarters at Bunbury) |
| Southern Forest | (Headquarters at Manjimup) |

In the following regions the basic organisation is in place and most functions are being carried out:

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| South Coast | (Headquarters at Albany) |
| Kimberley | (Headquarters at Kununurra) |
| Pilbara | (Headquarters at Karratha) |
| Greenough | (Headquarters at Geraldton) |
| Wheatbelt | (Headquarters at Narrogin) |
| Goldfields | (Headquarters at Kalgoorlie) |
| Metropolitan | (Headquarters at Mt Pleasant) |

Only the Gascoyne Region has not yet been established and this area is being managed partly by the Regional Managers at Geraldton and Karratha.

The general responsibilities allocated to regions are to:

- Prepare financial estimates and manage approved budgets;
- Participate in project teams preparing land management plans;
- Prepare and supervise works programs (based on approved management plans) for staff, employees and contractors;
- Help, guide and train departmental staff in the region; and to promote the health and safety of departmental personnel;
- Ensure the conservation of indigenous flora and fauna;

- Supervise and regulate industry (e.g. wildflower pickers, apiarists, timber and mining operations) on departmental land;
- Preserve or restore the natural environment on departmental land;
- Provide information and advice on land management and conservation to people in the region; promote conservation and good land management; and
- Liaise with Government and local government agencies in the region; represent the Department on interdisciplinary working groups, and advisory committees.

The specific emphasis is different in each region. For example, on the South Coast the emphasis is on National Park and nature reserve management while in the South West it is forestry management.

5.7.1 Summary of Progress and Problems in the Regions

Kimberley Region

Staff in the region comprise of the Regional Manager, a wildlife officer, two foresters, two national park rangers and a part-time clerk/typist.

This small group has responsibility for the whole of the Kimberley - a vast area with difficult access and climate. Major tasks include management of several large and important national parks and nature reserves, coping with booming tourist pressures, fire control, interaction with the pastoral industry, protection of rare flora and fauna, and running a departmental nursery at Broome.

Staff numbers are inadequate at this stage, and the regional team is poorly balanced. Priorities are for appointment of a planning officer, operations officer and administration officer at Regional Headquarters, a district manager and a wildlife officer at Broome and a reserves officer for the Prince Regent Nature Reserve. Additional ranger staff will be necessary when Bungle Bungle becomes a national park.

Pilbara Region

Staff comprises the Regional Manager, a wildlife officer, two foresters, a wildlife research officer, a clerk/typist and three national park rangers.

All the problems listed for the Kimberley Region apply equally to the Pilbara Region. Staff numbers are inadequate to properly service conservation and land management needs in the area.

Despite this, in the Pilbara as in the Kimberley, substantial progress is being made in many areas; notably preparation of management plans for the Dampier Archipelago and the Hamersley Range National Park, the formation of an aboriginal national park ranger training scheme and the development and maintenance of facilities in Millstream National Park.

Gascoyne Region

Little progress has been made in this area, to the shortage of funds. Currently staff in the region consists of one wildlife officer and one national park ranger.

The major project in this region is the development and management of the proposed Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park near Exmouth. Currently this development is being handled by staff from Perth and Geraldton, but the appointment of a District Manager at Exmouth and the transfer of two additional Rangers is scheduled for 1986.

Greenough Region

Staff currently comprise a Regional Manager, District Manager, operations officer, reserve management officer, three wildlife officers and four national park rangers.

Substantial progress has been made, especially in fire operations in the sandplain area, but new commitments at Shark Bay or the Abrolhos Islands will markedly increase the work load for existing staff.

Wheatbelt Region

Staff comprise a Regional Manager, District Manager, two wildlife officers, two reserve management officers, six forest officers and a clerical officer.

Although better placed than the new northern regions, there is still a huge task in the Wheatbelt Region, where there are hundreds of scattered nature reserves, totalling over one million hectares.

The departmental estate is not likely to substantially increase in this region, but there is a critical need to bring protection and management to many important areas, notably the reserve system east of Merredin.

Due to distance and the number of reserves it is necessary to subdivide the region into three districts, each with a management capability to bring, for the first time, a reasonable level of fire control and habitat management into the nature reserves. A new base at Merredin is proposed subject to the availability of funds.

Goldfields Region

Staff comprise a Regional Manager, two forest officers, one Wildlife Officer and a part-time clerical assistant.

This small group is charged with management of a large region in which there are hundreds of nature reserves, plus areas of national park and State forest. Staff are required to administer the sandalwood industry, the mining timber industry, and environmental protection over pastoral and mining areas.

One of the most serious conservation issues to be dealt with in this region is fire management in the vast inland desert and semi-desert areas. This will require major research studies.

South Coast Region

This region contains some very large national parks which have severe management problems, especially in fire control and dieback disease management. There are also important concerns about conservation of rare and endangered species, such as the noisy scrub bird in relation to fire and heavy visitor use.

Southern Forest Region

This region coincides with the old Southern Region of the Forests Department and is centred on the major hardwood forest of the State.

It is the centre for hardwood timber production in WA and staff have a major role in planning and supervising logging operations and in regenerating cut-over forests.

The new region also encompasses some 40 major nature reserves (including the important Lake Muir area) and a number of national parks in the Pemberton area and at Walpole-Nornalup. The region is also responsible for planning and managing the proposed D'Entrecasteaux National Park and Shannon Park over which there has been considerable public controversy.

Additional responsibilities in the region include fire and dieback management, recreation in forest zones, research and the management of a public participation programme.

The region employs just over 100 staff (including professional, technical, wages staff and rangers). One extra professional officer has been employed in the region since the new Department was formed.

Central Forest Region

This region generally coincides with the Central Region of the Former Forests Department.

It is the centre for the State's pine forest resource, incorporates major jarrah forests and two important national parks: Leeuwin-Naturalist and Yalgorup, and is responsible for supervision of several major mining operations.

The staff situation is basically unchanged since the formation of the new Department, comprising regional staff at Bunbury and foresters, rangers, wildlife officers and wages staff in districts, amounting to some 300 people in all.

Northern Forest Region

This region is similar to the Northern Forest Region of the former Forests Department, minus the Narrogin district (now part of Wheatbelt Region) and the Metropolitan Area.

Despite these deductions, this region has now perhaps the widest range of responsibilities and pressures in the Department. These are associated with the proximity of the Perth population, land use complexities in the jarrah forest, the need to upgrade very run-down national parks and to institute management of the new Lane Poole reserve, and the demands for public involvement in planning and management.

This region is substantially understaffed. Should resources become available, it would be desirable to employ additional wages staff at Mundaring and Wanneroo for park development and maintenance, field staff for nature reserve management, rangers for interpretation and environmental education programmes and foresters for silvicultural improvements in the hardwood forest.

5.8 Wildlife Protection

Since the amalgamation, the Wildlife Protection Branch has continued to fulfill its major role of protection of fauna and flora in much the same way as it has done in the past.

While there has been little change in the composition of the Branch, negotiations to reassess the Branch structure have been underway for some time. This will allow re-allocation of the workloads of several senior positions, enabling priorities to be better determined and resulting in supervisory staff having more time to liaise with field staff, to supervise their activities and resolve district problems.

Increased promotional opportunities for district wildlife officers, and a higher commencement classification for trainee wildlife officers should also result from restructuring the Branch.

Since formation of the new Department two additional wildlife officer positions have been filled, located at Albany and Geraldton to concentrate on flora conservation matters.

Regionalisation has been of great benefit, providing most wildlife officers with the support staff that they have lacked in the past, as well as better office facilities and a very efficient radio communications system. Because of the nature of their work, wildlife officers have in the past, of necessity had to be very independent people. Despite this however, they have fitted in very well with the new regional structure.

The close liaison with other groups within the new Department, has given a more efficient and effective coverage of areas of responsibility where sectional interest overlap. This co-operation has on several occasions resulted in the successful conclusion to investigations.

Numerous enquiries and investigations have been undertaken by the Wildlife Protection Branch during the period following amalgamation. Many of these have resulted in the apprehension of offenders, in several cases for the illegal taking or keeping of species of declared rare fauna.

In conclusion, it would seem that the Wildlife Protection Branch has fitted in well with the new Department, and is functioning as an efficient and cohesive unit.

5.9 Research and Planning

5.9.1 Research in General

A determined effort has been made to ensure the flow of information between the research, policy and operations sections of the Department. Lateral contacts have been established so that the Director of Research and Planning does not remain a sole means of transfer of information.

The most effective means of integration has been found to be the formation of working groups on specific achievable projects, such as the South Coast dieback project. Research Conferences, of which two have been held this year, have also facilitated interaction. Further progress has been made through regular branch head meetings, and through rotating branch heads as Acting Director of Research and Planning.

Liaison with Industry

The Wood Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey has been officially opened and the new sawmill equipment is being tested on regrowth karri, jarrah and marri. The centre includes a tunnel kiln and high temperature kiln and is producing exciting results in defect-free drying.

An application for Commonwealth funding of a 4 year research programme has been successful, but will require financial support from the State and industry.

5.9.2 Wildlife Research

A major advance has been the reallocation of existing staff and the employment of new staff to bring the number of research scientists to 15. These staff have all taken up their duties, and have been provided with vehicles and, in the case of the Woodvale staff, laboratory space.

One of the major achievements in wildlife research has been the involvement of individuals and organisations in conservation research through the use of specific projects such as the Banksia atlas compilation and the water bird survey.

Another major achievement has been the completion of the Nullabor Biological Survey in cooperation with the South Australian Department of Conservation and funded by the Commonwealth Government.

Another highlight has been the adoption of a plan to improve the availability of computers to researchers, especially micro-computers employing data-base and word processing software.

Implementation of the flora provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act and the associated survey and research work has led to discovery of many new species, even in such a common genus as Eucalyptus. Research focussed on individual species such as Eucalyptus caesia has elucidated the genetic structure of populations, and has indicated how conservation of rare species should be approached.

The numbat breeding program has been successfully completed. Steps have been taken towards establishment of other breeding populations in some Eastern States zoological gardens. The reintroduction of numbats into reserves from which they have disappeared has also commenced.

Foxes have been identified as the chief cause of decline of some small macropod populations, such as the rock wallabies and successful control of foxes using poisoned eggs has commenced.

Funds have been attracted for some ongoing and new projects.

5.9.3 Production and Protection Research

In Production Research, a major advance has been made in the thinning and protection of young karri stands. Successful mechanical thinning, and successful prescribed burns have been carried out in 15 year old stands.

The Harvey experimental sawmill and seasoning complex is now operating and achievements are being made in the utilisation of small hardwood logs. Commonwealth funding has been attracted for major expansion of the project.

Agroforestry research has progressed to where the economic evaluation of the costs and benefits could be carried out. The findings are encouraging. Extension work in agroforestry has been intensified.

Mine rehabilitation techniques used in the bauxite pits have been reviewed and there are indications that a change in emphasis is needed. Several timber species show good potential and research results suggest it is possible to use the pits for wood production. Such an objective will not necessarily compromise the water production priority of the area.

Research into maintenance and re-establishment of vegetation in the wheatbelt has been initiated and already there are promising indications that vegetative cover can be re-established relatively cheaply by direct seeding of native species combined with effective control of competing pasture. A grant has been obtained from the Rural Research Fund to study the cause of wandoo decline and the means of reversing it.

Further funds have been obtained for the application of Israeli water harvesting techniques in the north west of Western Australia.

The site classification of the southern jarrah forest, with emphasis on silvicultural characteristics, is nearing completion, and is being written up.

Site classification of the northern jarrah for dieback susceptibility is well advanced, and the analysis of the data indicates that much more precise definition of susceptibility will be possible. A great advance has been made in the understanding of the processes which determine susceptibility of a site to *Phytophthora* attack, in particular sub surface hydrology, and the internal water balance of the host trees.

A start has been made on the computerisation of research information for easy and fast retrieval. All research working plans approved since the 1950's, some 800, have been entered into the system which is now accessible on the Perkin Elmer.

A major initiative has been taken to speed up to process of getting the results of the *Pinus radiata* genetic improvement program into practice. A co-operative project has been started with the Southern and Central Forests Regions to produce cuttings on an operational scale. A new HAPSO (Hedge artificial pollinated seed orchard) has been put in at Manjimup. These initiatives will shorten the time taken to get the results of genetic selection into practice from some 9-10 years down to 2 or 3 years.

However there are constraints on Branch performance. It has been weakened administratively by outward movement of senior staff. Forest rangers have not been fully replaced in transfers.

A program of restructuring and relocation has been initiated to make up for these deficiencies and to assist in the training of senior staff for more administrative positions.

The effect of cuts in research budget over the last two financial years are starting to show. Officers in the Branch are having to look more carefully at priorities. No new work can be commenced without major shifts in priorities and re-allocation of funds. If the budget is cut or even just maintained at the same level next financial year the effect will be considerable.

5.9.4 Economics

The Economics Branch was formed from the Economics Section of the Forests Department. It services the new Department and also the Timber Bureau within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Staff was expanded from three economists to six; two on contract and an administrative officer who works full-time on CEP projects.

Economics work in progress includes:

- Softwood Sharefarming Scheme. The Scheme has been developed and launched. To date over 1,500ha of farm land has been offered for the Scheme. The assessment of the properties has commenced.
- Economic analyses of karri and softwood production programs, and review of future timber demands. Some of this work is almost complete; other work has just commenced.

There is a need to investigate the Department's accounting and budgeting systems for operations management and research; research environmental values and visitor fees for national parks; and develop socio-economic models for policy decision in natural resource management.

5.9.5 Management Plans

The Department of CALM is legislatively bound to restrict its activities in national parks and nature reserves to "necessary operations" until management plans have been drafted, subjected to public scrutiny and approved. This has placed a great demand on the Planning Branch to produce management plans.

To date, three management plans have been completed, all started before amalgamation, and 12 plans have been commenced. Several of these are major assignments - Lane-Poole Reserve, Shannon D'Entrecasteaux Area, Ningaloo Marine Park, Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, the South Coast Region, and three integrated plans for the Forests Region to replace the Forests General Working Plan.

The Planning Branch totals 14 staff positions; four professional officers from the originating agencies, four new permanent appointments including a professional position, five temporary support staff, and a graduate assistant.

Public involvement in drafting management plans has been successful in the two nature reserve plans produced. Workshops and discussion sessions have been held in connection with several plans and this goes well beyond the requirements of the Act for public participation. While this is time consuming, the benefits will include wider understanding of the biological and physical limits of the areas to meet the demands made on them, as well as wider acceptance of the final plan.

An outstandingly successful innovation has been the integration of operations and planning staff on planning groups preparing management plans. Each planning group is to have at least one member from the operations area and one from the Planning Branch.

In order to cope with the big workload of management plans the emphasis is now being directed towards regional management plans. Initially work will concentrate on five of the 11 regions. Also, work will still be carried out on the most urgent area management plans such as Leeuwin-Naturaliste and Hamersley Range National Parks.

5.10 Service Branches

The acute staffing problems affecting performance of branches in the Division of Technical Services were described earlier in this report. Otherwise, the transition to the new and wider responsibilities has been relatively smooth, and working relationships with other sections of the Department have been productive and relatively free of ambiguity or confusion.

5.10.1 Silviculture Branch

The Silviculture Branch develops and implements silvicultural systems in both hardwood and softwood forests and acts as a "bridge" between the Inventory and Timber Production Branches. A review of the softwood sawlog resource has been carried out confirming the need for changes in the projection of sawlog supply and consequently to the program of new sawmill development. Improvements have also been made to the organisation and supervision of seed collection.

The Branch will concentrate in the near future on maximising the productivity of softwood forests and development of appropriate thinning regimes for regrowth jarrah and karri forest. The main problem facing the Branch is lack of staff. Two professional foresters are urgently needed to develop and monitor hardwood forest management systems.

5.10.2 Timber Production Branch

This Branch has worked under great pressure the past nine months and has made a number of advances to improve the efficiency of timber utilisation and better control over forest harvesting activities, while ensuring a continuous flow of forest products to the industry. Several of these initiatives have resulted in increased revenue to the Department. A highlight of the last four months was the testing and partial commissioning of the new computer-based hardwood harvesting control system. The Branch has also made significant progress in resolving complex issues surrounding supply of logs to salvage sawmills and new log sale and logging contracts.

The greatly increased workload, with the Department increasingly becoming the prime contractor for hardwood log supplies, has required changes in field personnel, with senior field officers in each forest region being dedicated to the timber production function, operating in a similar fashion to specialist fire control foresters. However the Branch requires further clerical backup at Como and further forester recruitment to the Branch to widen the amount of expertise in this important area.

Some clarification of the regulations concerned with measuring and recording of logs is required. The hardwood computer system and increased emphasis on log stockpiling require changes in regulations under the Forests Act drafted 65 years ago. There are ambiguities in the roles of the Branch and the Timber Bureau.

5.10.3 Computer Services Branch

Since amalgamation considerable progress has been made in installing new hardware. Fourteen new printers were placed in country districts, eight micro-computers were installed as word processors at Como, Kelmscott and Crawley and a further three micro-computers were placed at Como, Dwellingup and Manjimup research stations. Increased access to mainframe computing is provided for Woodvale.

However, the loss of three staff has caused the shelving of two new initiatives, the records management system and electronic mail.

The whole area of information management in the Department is very complex and requires careful study to develop appropriate methods of meeting the Department's requirements. The Branch faces a critical deficiency of staff to do this and of funds for the necessary consultant, hire and hardware purchases. Greater use of technology is the only way the Department can meet its rapidly increasing workload without massive increases in staff, which is most unlikely.

5.10.4 Inventory Branch

In the last few months the Inventory Branch has been involved with a review of pine and hardwood sawlog availability reviews and development of a site index classification for regrowth karri forest. There has been a major review of jarrah forest inventory procedures to develop a system which provides more complete and more precise data. The aerial colour photography system for dieback disease mapping has been greatly improved with the introduction of the 230mm format photography. There have been greater demands made on the Branch for forest inventory data and for disease mapping to be extended into some major National Parks.

Current problems include lack of specialist staff to develop much needed forest growth models and uncertainty as to the roles of this Branch and the Timber Bureau.

5.10.5 Mapping Branch

This Branch caters to the Department's requirements for all mapping services from provision of cadastral maps to plans for operational use. So far it has achieved basic plan coverage of all regions but faces a daunting task to cope with all mapping requirements in a reasonable time frame. The Branch is currently looking to change its procedures and produce a wider variety of mapping products. The only way the increased workload can be met is by increasing use of technology and this area is one where rapid adoption of computer based systems is urgent. Extra funding is required.

5.10.6 Fire Protection Branch

Fire protection remains one of the Department's critical activities. The Branch has been very active in upgrading the radio communication system and improving the fire suppression equipment, especially in national parks and nature reserves. Fire management guidelines are being developed for national parks and nature reserves to serve as an interim measure until the development of formal management plans. The Branch is also heavily involved with country Shire Councils in developing regional fire co-ordination plans and large fire organisations, and in training personnel both within the Department and outside it in fire suppression techniques.

Developmental research is continuing in use of helicopters for ignition of fuel reduction burns, methods of fuel reduction in heathlands and computer based fire behaviour and fire suppression systems.

There are a number of areas of fire protection that are of grave deep concern. Due to the previous poor condition and inadequate amount of equipment for fire control in national parks and nature reserves, it has been necessary to divert new equipment into these areas instead of using it for planned replacement of equipment in the forest zone. Thus the fire preparedness of the forest area has been reduced. Additional funds are urgently required to offset this and for the necessary replacement of the Department's aerial surveillance fleet.

There is also a shortage of staff at two levels: first within the Fire Protection Branch to serve the Department's greatly expanded requirements and second, there are insufficient fire fighting crews to meet legal fire control responsibilities on all CALM lands. The lack of officer skill and fire experience in the Southern Forest Region, caused by staff transfers, is a serious problem.

5.10.7 Environmental Protection Branch

Since amalgamation, this Branch has given high priority to dieback disease protection of national parks and nature reserves, including surveys, liaison and provision of equipment. The South Coast Region was found to have very severe dieback disease problems. Surveys have also been undertaken to assess weed and feral animal distribution in national parks and nature reserves in six regions. Surveys of rare flora and preparation of rare flora manuals have been priority for the three forest regions.

5.10.8 Recreation and Landscape Branch

This Branch has been involved in preparation of site development plans and specifications over a wide area of the State, including Hamersley Range National Park, Hidden Valley National Park, Millstream-Chichester National Park, Tunnel Creek National Park, Lane-Poole Reserve, No. 1 Minesite Jarrahdale and Ningaloo Marine Park.

While the Branch has been very productive and has achieved much in those areas, and in participation in inter-Departmental projects, development of a computer-based system of landscape assessment, training for field staff, preparation of display material and advice to operations staff, its activities have been inhibited, like most other service branches, by lack of staff. The current severe workload is exacerbated by a series of CEP projects requiring Branch input. It has not been possible to carry out some important functions, such as the collection and assessment of visitor use data, and establishment of contacts with community groups who are users of state forests and national parks. The Branch should also be able to liaise more closely with field staff, on operations activities.

5.10.9 Information Branch

The Information Branch continued its work in rural advisory services and school education at much the same level as in the Forests Department before amalgamation. However, there has been a major increase in workload in publications, park and nature interpretation, publicity and coordination of public participation programs. Considerable progress has been made against the usual background of inadequate resources. Publishing, audio-visual production and displays are areas where public, Departmental and Government expectations are far in excess of what funds will allow.

The Branch is disadvantaged in its reactive public relations role by the Crawley/Como separation and its efficiency would be much improved by centralisation on one site.

The Branch has more recently become involved in co-operative work with other Branches, such as Recreation and Landscape Branch on design concepts for interpretive centres. It is hoped the shortage of funds will be alleviated to some extent by making use of provisions in the Act for retention of moneys derived from the sale of publications.

6. Appendices

6.1 Schedule of Proposed Amendments to the Conservation and Land Management Act

Section 3

To amend the definition of "Nature Reserves" to meet shortcomings that exist in respect of vesting.

Section 5

To amend the categories of land to include nature parks, regional parks, managed resources protected areas, and protected landscapes, partly as recommended by the Honorary Royal Commission.

Section 6(2)

To amend the section to allow for Land Act Timber Reserves to be vested in the Lands and Forest Commission.

Section 6(4)

To include a subsection which will allow protection of the status of a considerable number of nature reserves which are still unvested.

Section 7

To refer proposals for new reservation of lands to each local authority within whose district the land is situated.

Section 7.3

A section to be amended to protect the status of national parks which are currently unvested.

Section 13(3)

To amend the definition of marine parks as recommended by the Honorary Royal Commission.

Section 15

To amend the section to resolve an anomalous situation that exists in respect of the Public Works Act.

Section 17(1)

To amend shortcomings of the section as recommended by the Honorary Royal Commission.

Section 33(4)

To amend the subsection to allow "necessary operations", in the absence of a management plan, to be recommended to the Minister by the Controlling Body.

Section 56(1)

To amend the section in relation to preparation of management plans by establishing the primary objective of achieving or promoting the purpose of the land.

Section 56(1)(c)

To include a new subsection to define the requirements of management plans for marine parks recommended by the Honorary Royal Commission, (in association with Section 13(3)).

Section 56(1)(d)

To amend the definition of requirements of management plans for nature reserves to include other activities approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the Authority.

Section 62

To be amended so that the Trust Account to come within the Commonwealth Government's requirements for tax deductibility.

Section 106

To include a penalty for unlawful or unauthorised use or occupation of State forest and timber reserves.

Sections 122 and 123

To extend these sections, to include unbranded cattle from depasturing on national parks and nature reserves.

6.2 Achievements of the Lands and Forest Commission

Consideration of:

- . lands vested;
- . revocations from State Forest :
 - the Shannon forest;
 - the karri thinnings resource;
 - a proposal to establish a woodchipping industry on private land;
 - log resources for small metropolitan sawmillers.

Assistance was given to the Honorary Royal Commission.

Attendance at a joint meeting with the Authority to consider management planning.

6.3 Achievements of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority

Consideration of :

- . responsibilities of the Authority;
- . a backlog of vesting requirements;
- . classification of national parks;
- . lease conditions - Varanus Island;
- . draft management plans for :
 - the Lane-Poole reserve;
 - the Shannon Park/D'Entrecasteaux National Park;
 - Ningaloo Marine Park.
- . conditions applicable to mining in National Parks;
- . protection of stromatolites in Yalgorup National Park;
- . pastoral leases, D'Entrecasteaux National Park;
- . peat mining - Lake Muir;
- . water supplies - Hopetoun;
- . taking of rare animals;
- . Aboriginal rights to take flora and fauna;
- . development of Alfred Cove;
- . Agriculture Protection Board policy;
- . control of feral animals.

Submission of management plans to the Minister for :

- . Mooradung Nature Reserve.
- . Wyalkatchem nature reserves.

Recommendation of a publication on pollination of orchids funded by the Nature Conservation and National Parks Trust Account.

A visit to the D'Entrecasteaux National Park.

6.4 Achievements of the Forest Production Council

Establishment of and reports by :

- . a sub committee on research;
- . a sub committee on forest resources;
- . a sub committee on markets for regrowth hardwood;
- . a sub committee on security of access to log resources;
- . a sub committee on production forestry;
- . a sub committee on the forest production strategy;
- . a sub committee on the expansion of timber products manufacture.

Consideration of :

- . a report of the Timber Utilisation and Marketing Task Force;
- . the Taxation White Paper;
- . the apiary industry.

A submission for finance for a Public Interest Project under Section 39 of the Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act titled "New Generation Jarrah Processing".

A visit to jarrah regeneration forests and the Harvey Utilisation Research Centre.

6.5 Policy Items Under Consideration by the Policy Directorate

| POLICY ISSUE | STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT |
|--|---|
| 1. <u>POLICIES FOR CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT</u> | |
| Mining | In progress |
| Basic raw materials | Complete-Policy Statement No. 2 |
| Priorities for management plans | Review current |
| Compilation of wildlife and reserve management policies | Proceeding |
| Operations in disease risk areas | Complete-Policy Statement No. 3 |
| Allocation of sawlogs and log residues from State forests | Draft complete |
| Zoning of land and access | - |
| Dieback (general policy for all CALM lands) | In progress |
| Review/adaptation of forest management policies in the General Working Plan | Draft in preparation |
| Dedication of new nature reserves and review of current reserve classification | - |
| Fire (general policy for all CALM lands) | - |
| System for nomenclature and classification of land uses | Position paper is before NPNCA |
| Kangaroo management | To be derived from CALM Briefing Paper 3/85 |
| Apiary Sites | Some progress |
| Leasing land for pine production | In preparation |
| Review/adaptation of management policies of the National Parks Authority | - |

| POLICY ISSUE | STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Rehabilitation of disturbed land | In progress |
| Wetland conservation and management | In progress |
| Future wood production | In progress |
| Parks and reserves system (specifically Marine Parks and marine reserves) | Draft complete and circulating |
| Feral animal control | In progress |
| Preservation of the built environment | - |
| Management of endangered species | In progress |
| Review and update list of declared flora; declarations of rare flora | In progress |
| Noxious weed control | - |
| Taking of flora and fauna by Aborigines | Proceeding slowly |
| Recreation in nature reserves | Draft policy with NPNCA |
| Fencing of rare flora on private property | - |
| Criteria for issue of Wildlife Collecting Permits | - |
| Standards for Wildlife Parks | Position paper being prepared |
| Private enterprise ventures on Departmental lands | - |

| POLICY ISSUE | STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 2. <u>INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS/ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES</u> | |
| Scientific and technical publications | Complete-to be issued |
| Naming of forests, parks and nature reserves | Draft in progress |
| National Park Rangers career structure and status | Draft in circulation |
| The function and organisation of Wildlife Officers | Preparation commenced |
| Research priorities-needs and facts | Half complete |
| Budget and financial management | Draft circulating |
| Liaison with tertiary institutions and non-Departmental research agencies | - |
| The appointment, role and responsibilities of <u>Honorary</u> Wildlife Officers and <u>National</u> Park Rangers | - |
| Training | Complete-to be circulated |
| Industrial arrangements | In progress |
| Public participation | In preparation |
| Advisory committees | Complete-Policy Statement No. 4 |
| Relationship with environmental and forestry consultants | - |
| Housing | Draft almost complete |
| Land acquisition | - |
| Use and management of volunteer organisations | - |
| Environmental education and interpretation | Draft almost complete |

| POLICY ISSUE | STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT |
|---|----------------------|
| 3. <u>LEGISLATION</u> | |
| Review of Wildlife Conservation Act and Regulations | Proceeding |
| Review of CALM Act and regulations | In progress |
| Other impending legislation | |