

BRANCH, REGIONAL AND DISTRICT MANAGERS

CALM BRIEFING PAPER

Attached is a bundle of CALM Briefing Paper 1/85 which will inform your Branch/Office/Station of the Departments' and Governments' policy for Hawke Block; the reasons for and implications of that policy.

Briefing Papers are for internal communication purposes. We will issue them periodically when there is an aspect of policy or a contentious issue which needs clarification throughout the Department, and particularly for those officers likely to deal with the public on such matters. The "Hawke Block Controversy" is obviously a good example.

For Briefing Papers to do their job effectively you should keep the following things in mind:

1. The primary purpose of Briefing Papers is to keep staff up-to-date with current and contentious events around them, and which are likely to affect their work or their status in the community.
2. The circulation is to be restricted to staff within the Department. Briefing papers are not for reproduction and handing out to members of the public or the media. However, the information or perspective in the Briefing Paper can be the basis of a statement or response an officer might make on the issue but subject to appropriate qualification depending on the audience. In contentious situations, the Regional Manager must be consulted before statements are made to the media.
3. A request to produce a Briefing Paper may come from a region, a district, a research station or from headquarters, but the paper will be prepared by the Policy Directorate or senior operations management. The information contained will be relevant at the time of issue, but subsequent events can change the policy position. Some Briefing Papers may be revised and re-issued.

Please distribute the Briefing Papers as appropriate and advise the recipients of how they should be used. Let me know if an issue arises for which you think a briefing paper is needed.



DR S SHEA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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CALM BRIEFING PAPER 1/85

THE HAWKE BLOCK CONTROVERSY

SUMMARY

Land use decisions are the prerogative of the Government. The Department's task is to implement Government policies. The present policy is that the northern section of Hawke Block is a Conservation M.P.A. and is not to be logged. The southern section is a Forest Values M.P.A. and timber is recognised as a forest value. While this classification remains, logging will be planned in the area.

BACKGROUND

Hawke Block is situated 20 km southwest of Pemberton and is adjacent to Warren National Park. It contains some fine pure stands of virgin karri, together with areas of mixed marri, jarrah and karri forest.

Proposals to log the area for karri sawlogs and marri woodchips have drawn criticism from a broad cross-section of the public including environmental groups and local residents.. Their concerns are that:

1. Hawke Block contains the last and best stands of virgin karri near Pemberton.
2. The area adjoins Warren National Park.
3. Tourism in the area will suffer.
4. The proposals are new, and that Hawke Block was previously reserved from cutting.
5. There are acceptable alternatives where cutting could take place - for example Jane Block near Northcliffe.

Three aspects of Government policy affect Hawke Block:

1. The withdrawal of logging operations in the Shannon Basin.
2. The maintenance of existing and proposed levels of hardwood cutting; no adjustments will be made for the loss of the Shannon resource.

3. With the exception of the Shannon Basin, the land use plan set out in Forests Department General Working Plan No. 87 of 1982 will remain in force.

The outcome of these policies has been the relocation of logging operations, previously scheduled for the Shannon, in order to maintain the planned annual cut.

These logging operations have been relocated to:

- Selected road and stream reserves. Some cutting has been started on a trial basis and the effects are being monitored.
- Areas formerly retained as burning buffers. These have been relocated and amended to allow logging to be brought forward. Hawke Block comes into this category.

LAND USE PLAN FOR HAWKE BLOCK

The land use plan for Hawke Block which was approved by the Government in General Working Plan No. 87 of 1982 is shown on the accompanying map.

The breakdown of management priorities by area is:

1051 hectares (24% of the Block) is reserved for flora, fauna, and landscape conservation and will not be logged. This area adjoins Warren National Park;

447 hectares (11%) is stream and river reserve and is not scheduled for logging;

2819 hectares (65%) has been allotted a forest values function. These areas are subject to logging. Originally it was planned to cut in this area in the mid 1990s. The revised logging plan has brought this forward. The present proposals are to log in Coupe 17 (157 hectares) in 1985, and in Coupe 11 (119 hectares) in 1988.

A REPLY TO CRITICISMS

Hawke Block is not the last and best stand of virgin karri near Pemberton. Over one-third of the karri forest has been withdrawn from timber production. Many of these reserved areas are virgin and are near Pemberton.

The logging is expected to have no impact on Warren National Park due to buffering by the flora, fauna and landscape conservation area to the west, and other State Forest to the south of the Park. Areas of high conservation value within Hawke Block are located in the flora, fauna and landscape M.P.A.

Plans to log Hawke Block are not new. They have merely been brought forward by a decade or so. The Government's commitment to maintain a timber industry means that all karri forest not reserved for other purposes is subject to logging.

Concern has been expressed that logging will disrupt tourism in the area. However, Hawke Block has never been a focus of tourist activity. Recreational activities in the Block are centred on the Warren River. A wide reserve has been established along the river to protect the interests of canoeists and fishermen and other river-based recreationists.

In future years the cut-over parts of the Block may become a more important tourist attraction than they are now. Most of the Block is presently inaccessible by conventional vehicle.

The development of roads as a result of logging will change this situation. A bridge has already been constructed across the Warren River.

Second growth karri forest is highly attractive to tourists, as the popularity of the Rainbow Trail, Tramway Trail and Lefroy Brook Forest attests.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information regarding logging in Hawke Block can be obtained from Mr Don Keene at Operations Headquarters, Como.



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GENERAL MANAGER

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