

Supplementary Newsletter

Task Force on Land Resource Management in S.W. Australia

Dear Forester,

Copies of the T.F. report reached me just as the last Newsletter was going to press.

I understand the report has been widely circulated and most IFA members should have access to one. If you haven't, and want to read it, please phone me.

We now have until December 30th to make a submission. This makes it difficult. I therefore propose that three informal meetings be held at Manjimup (Mr Bradshaw to convene), Bunbury (Mr Spriggins) and Como (Mr Williamson). You will be advised of the dates. Each meeting will take note of points raised and these will be consolidated into a submission by the Committee.

I will also accept any individual written submissions up to 12/12/83.

I look forward to being able to make a clear expression of professional opinion on this issue.

Thanks,



R.J. Underwood  
CHAIRMAN

22 November 1983

SUMMARY — OF THE TASK FORCE REPORT

1. This interim report outlines proposals for re-organisation of land resource management and administration in Western Australia. The report has been released at this stage of the Task Force study in order to permit further discussion before final recommendations are made.
2. At an early stage of the study we concluded that it was impossible to confine it to the South West region because all of the agencies with which we were concerned had staff and responsibilities outside the region. With the approval of the Premier we have therefore made proposals on land resource management and administration which apply to the whole State.
3. During the period of this study we have been impressed by the competence and dedication of the staff of the government agencies involved in land resource management and administration. We have concluded that additional resources will have to be deployed to achieve effective and acceptable land resource administration and management in Western Australia. However, existing arrangements are not conducive either to the efficient use of resources or the development of community consensus on land use. We believe that before additional resources can be deployed efficiently, major changes to the existing structure and organisation of land management and administration agencies are necessary.

4. Co-ordination of land use policy

We propose the establishment of a Land Resource Policy Council chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and comprised of representatives of government agencies who have a lead responsibility in land resource management and administration and representatives of relevant community groups. The council will be serviced by an executive support group.

The Land Resource Policy Council's primary role will be to co-ordinate government land use and management policies and to ensure that regional land use plans are in accordance with government policies.

5. Land use planning in rural areas

Currently there are no formal mechanisms for co-ordinated planning outside the metropolitan region and relatively few resources are available for land use planning.

We propose:-

- a) the formation of a Department of Town and Country Planning, based on the existing Town Planning Department. The Town and Country Planning Department would support and co-ordinate land use planning by local authorities through the provision of land use planning skills;
- b) the integration of land use planning for rural areas with controls on management practices through the Soil and Land Conservation Act for prevention of soil and land degradation;
- c) statutory regional co-ordination of local authority planning only where the intensity and range of land uses requires it. We suggest a region based on Bunbury for early consideration.

6. Rationalisation of public land management

The Task Force believes that a major improvement in efficiency and co-ordination can be achieved by the incorporation into one organisation of the government agencies concerned with public land management and its associated research.

- a) We propose the formation of a Land Management Department which would incorporate the Forests Department, the National Parks Authority, the Wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Waterways Commission, the Kings Park Board and smaller elements of other agencies involved in land management or natural resources research.
- b) The new Department would be responsible for management of land currently vested in the Forests Department, the Western Australian Wildlife Authority and the National Parks Authority, and for vacant Crown land and unvested reserves. It would be responsible for land management planning of Rottne Island and could carry out land management of Regional Parks. It would have a State-wide responsibility for management and research for wildlife and it would provide land management expertise to other public agencies and the community as required.
- c) The major features of the new Department would be:
  - a Commission consisting of one full-time Director and two part-time commissioners;
  - three specialist policy divisions representing recreation, timber production and conservation with corresponding advisory committees;
  - an operations division based on integration of land management services at regional centres throughout the State;
  - land management according to plans which would be open for public comment and subject to formal approval.