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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Be enthusiastic and take responsibility for protecting your environment. Speak up. Get the media involved.

SEEK INFORMATION

Public libraries or Environment Centre library, 794 Hay Street.

Department of Conservation and Land Management, 52 Hayman Road, Como.

Department of Conservation and Environment, 1 Mount Street, Perth.

JOIN OTHERS WHO ARE CONCERNED

The Conservation Council of W.A., Australian Conservation Foundation, W.A. National Parks and Reserves Association (WANPARA), can all be contacted at the Environment Centre, 794 Hay Street, Perth.

'Friends of National Parks' groups are currently operating at Neerabup National Park (Wanneroo), Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park (Busselton-Margaret River) and Cape Le Grand National Park (Esperance).

Form your own 'Friends of National Parks' group.

BRING YOUR CONCERN TO THE ATTENTION OF OTHERS

Letters to the Editor of major metropolitan and country newspapers and your suburban newspaper.

If you form a local group you can write and send out a "media release", which is a draft article on your group's concerns, to all relevant print and electronic media outlets.

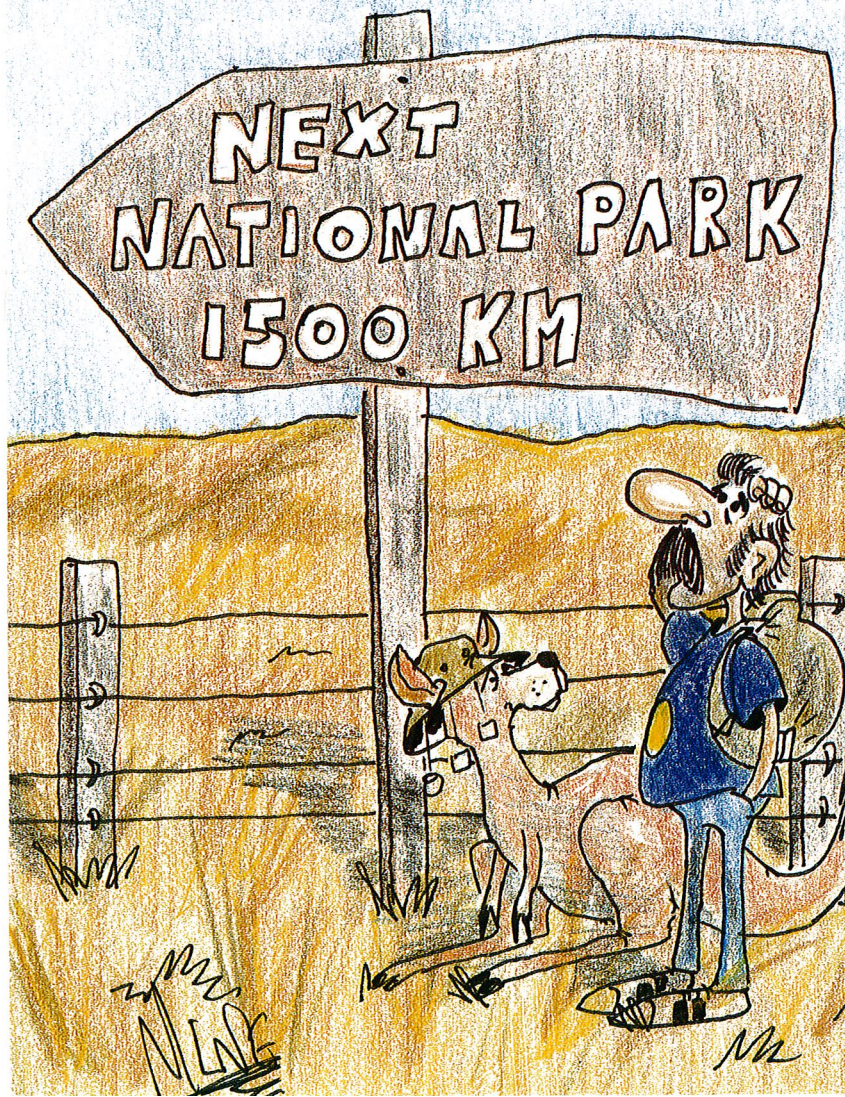
BRING YOUR CONCERN TO THE ATTENTION OF DECISIONMAKERS

Write a letter to:

- The Minister for Conservation and Land Management (State).
 - The Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment (Federal)
 - The Chairman of the National Parks and nature Conservation Authority.
- Visit or write to your local member of Parliament.

CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF WA. (Inc)
794 Hay Street,
PERTH, 6000.

A BETTER SYSTEM OF NATIONAL PARKS FOR W.A.



ACTION FOR UNPROTECTED NATURAL AREAS — NATIONAL PARK PROTECTION FOR THE SHANNON BASIN!

A good example of the campaign to reserve these natural areas is the Shannon Basin controversy.

In 1974 the 'Conservation through Reserves Committee' proposed that the Shannon Basin be made a National Park. It is an entire river drainage system containing a range of vegetation types, including many different types of karri formation.

In 1975 the Western Australian Forests Department advanced their logging programme in the Shannon by 7 years and commenced clearfelling what they claim to have been "degraded" karri forest. This continued for 9 years.

A major campaign in support of a Shannon National Park was launched by the South West Forests Defence Foundation and the Campaign to Save Native Forests, in association with the Conservation Council of W.A. This included public meetings, karri forest festivals, legal actions and the publication of a book entitled "Karri at the Crossroads" in 1982. In 1984 the new Labor Government instructed the Forest Department to phase out logging in the Shannon Basin and to manage it **as though it were a National Park**. The entire Shannon Basin still requires the protection of National Park status and, until this is achieved, the battle for the Shannon has not been won.



Clearfelling of karri stands in the south west

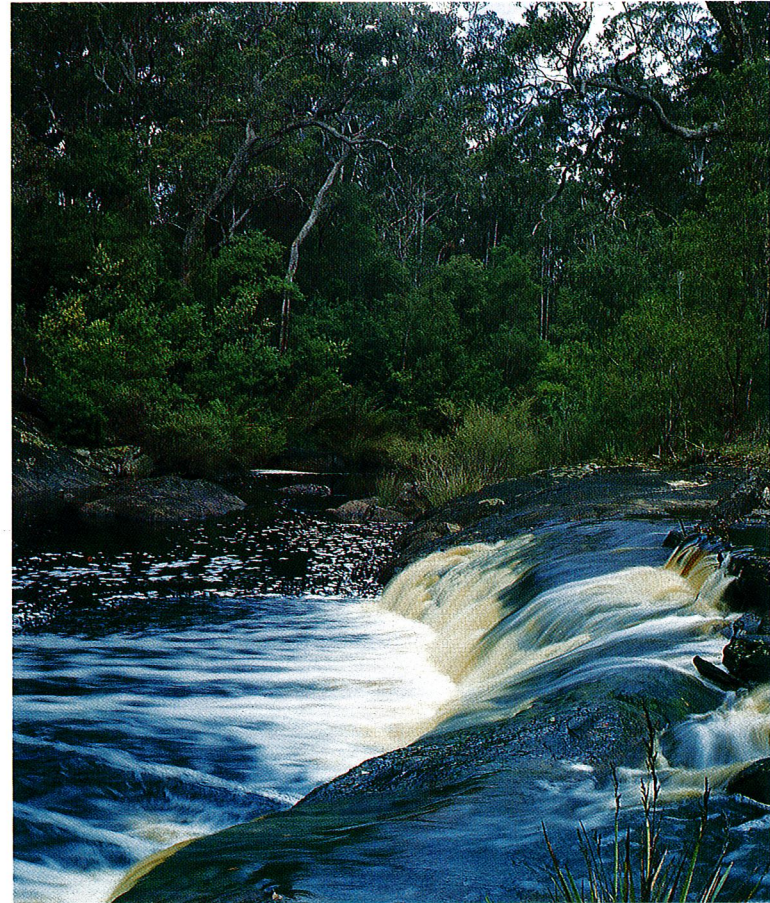
WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO ACT NOW?

Already $\frac{2}{3}$ of Australia's natural vegetation has been cleared. We have lost 75% of the West Australian forest and cleared almost 80% of the wheatbelt. Pressure on the remaining areas is great.

WHAT CAN WE DO, ISN'T IT ALL UP TO THE GOVERNMENT?

No: We owe the existence of many of our Parks and Reserves to conservationists and many other people who wish to protect our unique W.A. flora and fauna, for all people, for all time.

The Government will **only** act under pressure from voters.

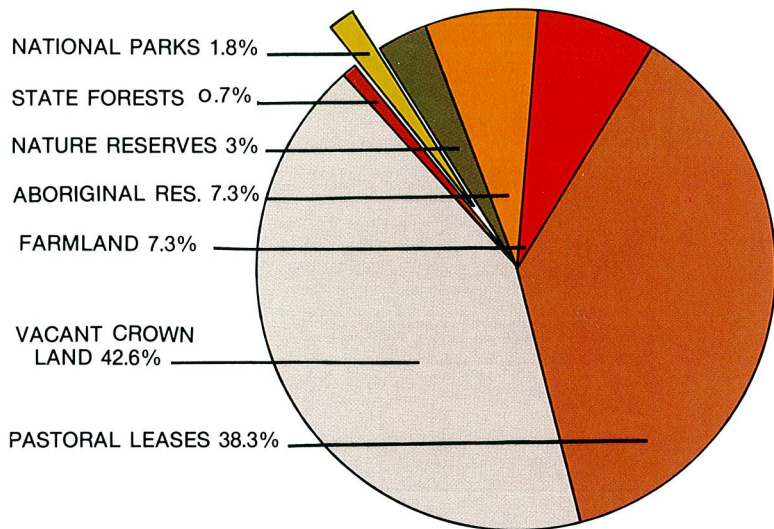


Shannon River Basin in the south west of W.A.

ONLY 1.8% OF W.A. IS RESERVED AS NATIONAL PARK

Much of this land is in the arid or semi-arid zone. Even small, undeveloped countries such as Costa Rica have 8% of their land reserved for National Parks.

Many National Parks were established only where the land had little value for agriculture, pastoralism, forestry or settlement. With the increasing demand for recreation and continuing degradation of our natural lands, the government must act to improve the system of parks and reserves by providing a truly representative system of ecologically viable National Parks.



NATIONAL PARKS SHOULD BE LOCATED OVER A WIDE RANGE OF VEGETATION TYPES

So that they:

- 1) Contain a full range of habitats, and so conserve our wildlife.
- 2) Protect special landscapes such as deserts, mountains or rivers.
- 3) Protect several examples of each habitat to prevent the loss of any one type through fire, drought or disease.
- 4) Preserve, for future generations, representative habitats as living, growing and changing entities, and thereby make provision for the maintenance of evolutionary potential.

SIZE AND SHAPE — WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Irregular borders and odd shapes have a detrimental effect on national parks.

“Most Australian Parks are small, have irregular boundaries and are not clustered or connected by corridors. We cannot expect them to adequately sample our wildlife or ensure its survival.”

Recher, Australian Natural History, 1976.

Each Park should encompass the variety of habitats within a particular vegetation system, rather than just landmarks such as a cave or a mountain. Where possible a Park should contain an entire biological system, such as a water catchment.

A long thin Park has no real centre and is more susceptible to fire and “edge effects” such as pesticide drift, weeds or run-off of fertilizers from farms.



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

In 1972 the Government established a 'Conservation through Reserves Committee' to find the best land use for vacant land in each region. The state was divided into 12 'systems' or regions for the study. It did not, however, look at all land, irrespective of tenure, to find out where Parks should best be sited. The best known of the reports, the System 6 Red Book, covers the Perth region. The Committee proposed many new Parks and Reserves. Regrettably, many of these proposals have not been carried out and the process of creating new National Parks and Reserves has now essentially STALLED.

For example, in 1974 it was proposed that the Kennedy Ranges, east of Carnarvon, be made a National Park. Though the Government publicly endorsed the plan it was never carried out. Ten years have passed in which there has been continuing damage from surrounding pastoral leases and exploitation of gems and fossils. The recommendations for new National Parks such as the Kennedy Ranges must be carried out quickly.

Nor did the study attempt to develop a comprehensive system of marine Parks and Reserves. Exceptional areas such as Rottnest and the Abrolhos remain vulnerable to exploitation.

The inadequacies in our system of conservation reserves were clearly demonstrated by West Australia's first comprehensive biological survey, undertaken by the W.A. Museum in the Eastern Goldfields region. The survey found that nature reserves cover only 0.17% of the study area and contain only 8 of the 39 vegetation types identified; none of the unique or important vegetation types, or uncommon flora are found in the reserves.



A marine park should be established to protect the beautiful and fragile coral reefs of the Houtman Abrolhos.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR AREA?

To check proposals for conservation Parks and Reserves in your area, seek out the series of "Red Books" at the Environment Centre (794 Hay Street, Perth.), State Library, public libraries or Department of Conservation and Environment library (1 Mount Street, Perth).

Once you know the details of proposals near to you, then you will be able to act effectively to help build a better system of National Parks for W.A.

