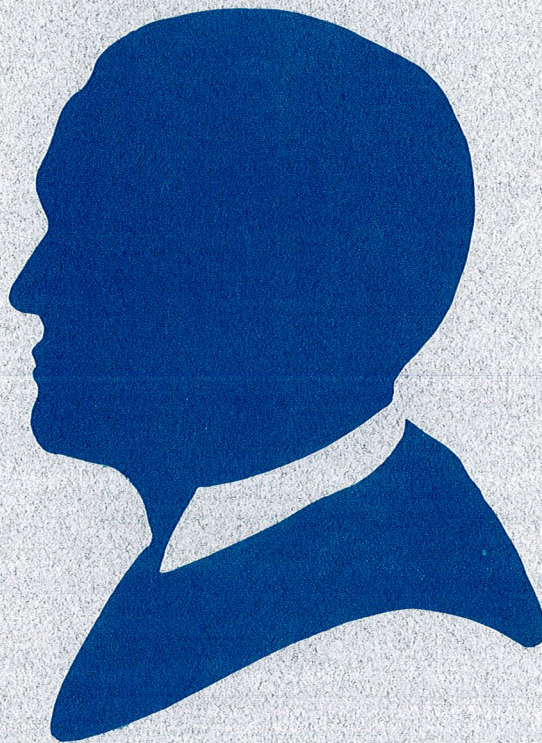


DUPLICATE

C.E.LANE POOLE MEMORIAL TRUST

LANE POOLE AWARD
STUDY TOUR, 1988/89



A REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

By
GREG VOIGT

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C.E. Lane Poole Memorial Trust

The Lane Poole Memorial Trust was established to commemorate the work of Charles Edward Lane Poole, and, in particular, the connection between the former Conservator of Forests and the late Thomas Cullity.

Lane Poole was appointed Inspector-General of the Woods and Forests Department in Western Australia in 1916, and was responsible for establishing the legal framework on which the State's forestry operations have since been carried out.

That legal framework was the 1918 Forests Act. Before the Act was introduced there was no legislation to control the amount of timber cut, the place and manner of cutting, or to regenerate the forest after cutting.

When Thomas Cullity graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1918, Lane Poole offered him the newly created position of Utilisation Officer in the Forests Department, which he held for one year before leaving to start up Millars' new commercial kilns at Yarloop.

Thomas Cullity maintained an interest in forestry and timber for the rest of his life and founded Cullity Timbers in 1928 and Westralian Plywoods in 1943. From these companies WESFI was formed.

The Trust was initiated by WESFI Chairman Denis Cullity in 1983, and developed by a Board of Trustees representing the former Forests Department and WESFI.

The current Chairman of the Board is the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Dr Syd Shea.

The WESFI connection resulted from a belief held by Lane Poole that forestry needed an interdisciplinary approach to cater for the needs of society.

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Introduction

As a result of gaining this award, I was able to attend a conference in Canberra which brought together many of Australia's foremost forest planners, and visit many recreation sites in the ACT - acquiring much knowledge as to how they were planned and being able to assess their design faults and successes.

I found that while Australians have been using forests and recreation sites for many decades, only now is thorough planning of these developments taking place. All too often time and money is spent in correcting past errors.

My main interest within CALM is in the areas of sensitive land management, rehabilitation of degraded lands and recreation planning. I believe that by following sound management practices and using a degree of common sense, our operations will become more reliable and successful. This will avoid costly repair jobs in the future and help us to maintain our reputation as professional land managers.

With many of this State's recreation sites now beginning to experience high user numbers, for example Purnululu National Park (Bungle Bungle), Yanchep and Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and Lane Poole Reserve, we as managers/planners need to look to the rest of Australia and the world - to study their management techniques and thus avoid making similar mistakes.

We can also assess the results of other managers' planning and application techniques and decide if the results are suitable for our situation.

This award allowed me to visit the Eastern States to see how their sites are planned and managed. This was achieved by:

- i) attending the Institute of Foresters of Australia's 13th Biennial Conference '*Forest Planning for People*', and
- ii) visiting the Australian Capital Territory to look at past and present land management practices.

Acknowledgements

Iwould like to express my gratitude to the trust for bestowing the award on me, and also to the Department of Conservation and Land Management and its officers who assisted me.

In particular I would like to thank Alan Sands for organising my Canberra visit, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and Glen Wilson for the assistance they provided.

'Forest Planning For Peoples' Conference

The conference was held at Leura in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. The theme was indeed timely considering the controversy emanating from many forest operations, particularly in the Eastern States.

The conference brought together planners from all states in Australia and provided an excellent forum for discussion on a range of planning issues. An ideal common to all participants was the need to ensure that all forest operations are based on the sustained yield principle and that all operations are planned with the future in mind.

Keynote speaker was Dr Peter Ellyard (Director, Commission for the Future) who, in his opening address, painted a clear picture as to the importance of forward thinking in planning operations.

In a vigorous speech he spoke of Australia's lack of planning by citing:

- ❖ that our imports exceed exports;
- ❖ that while we have many patents, most are developed overseas; and
- ❖ that Australia is basically a quarry, a sheep station or a beach.

This could be corrected, he stated, by:

- ❖ planning for at least 50 years into the future;
- ❖ more use of the product that all Australians possess between our ears;
- ❖ creating sustainable industries, export skills which are economically and ecologically sound; and
- ❖ enterprise education.

Another major point he made, and perhaps the most relevant to forestry, was that foresters and conservationists generally agree on the principle of sustained yield, yet don't seem to be able to talk with each other on how to achieve this. He pointed out that the confrontation approach just doesn't work, and that both sides must try harder. His final point was a warning to the conference. He stated that "although dinosaurs were technically competent - their environment changed".

Conference themes and papers

A high quality of material was presented on a wide range of topics. To comment on each paper would require more space than allowed for in this report. I can only recommend that the reader study the presented titles (see Appendix 1) and follow up any interesting topics by reading the full paper. Four main themes were addressed:

- i) the influence of international trends, Government policy and Federal-State relations on forest planning;
- ii) current approaches to forested land planning in Australia;
- iii) public participation in forest planning;
- iv) planning techniques.

Areas of particular interest to me were in sections (ii) and (iii). In section (ii):

- ❖ J.W. van Pelt: 'An approach to a scenery management system.'

This was an excellent paper putting visual resource management (VRM) into perspective as part of a multiple use management system.

- ❖ B.G. Chetwynd: 'Viewfield planning for viewpoints in remote mountainous areas of south-west and central Tasmania.'

This paper was also concerned with VRM - in the identification of important viewshed points, mapping 'seen-area' and then determining visual expectation zones.

- ❖ P.J. O'Shaughnessy, M.D.A. Jayasuriya and S.G. Arey: 'A review of the catchment management policies of three major water supply authorities with special reference to recent Melbourne Board of Works forest hydrology research results.'

This paper discussed several thinning operations and their effect on water yield and quality.

In section (iii):

- ❖ N.C. McCarthy: 'Public participation in management planning in the Dandenong Ranges National Park.'

This was an excellent paper which described the processes of implementing a public participation project. Although many difficulties were encountered, the end result was a generally well accepted management plan.

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Tour

The conference also included a full day tour. Several were available, each on a different aspect of forest management. I chose to attend the tour concerned with the joint management of national parks by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Metropolitan Water Supply. Many parks in NSW and Australia are also water catchment areas and have management practices to reflect this land use.

This tour visited the Kanangra Walls area of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park with members of the park staff and Sydney Water Board present. Many aspects of management were discussed - in particular the feral pig problem and the use of septic systems by households in the Blue Mountains. The feral pig population has been increasing at a steady rate for many years and park staff were concerned at the damage they were causing.

Management options were discussed, pointing out that any control program must not threaten water quality. A joint program has been implemented and is proving successful. While complete eradication is considered unlikely, mainly due to the difficult terrain, numbers can be kept so low as not to warrant concern.



Figure 1 Walk-trail to view Kanangra-Walls. Good hard surface of decomposed granite, drains very well; wheelchair access; good width. Some rehabilitation work can be seen to the left of the path.



Figure 2 Lunch time - Kanagara-Boyd National Park. This day-use site experiences high use. Pine log barriers have been used to define carparks and roadway. While effective, I feel it spoils the visual quality of the area; natural logs could have been used in conjunction with the naturally occurring trees/rocks to give a more visually pleasing effect while still defining carparking sites.

With regard to the use of septic systems within the Blue Mountains, it has been found that many of the creeks in this area have been polluted with septic effluent and are now unfit for drinking. This astounded me, as I believed that this beautiful area of Australia would never be polluted - especially with the limited urban development present.

However, the effluent from these systems is leaching into the creek systems. What's more, many of these creeks flow into reservoirs for Sydney's water supply. To remedy this problem it is proposed to construct a tunnel through the mountains and pipe the effluent to treatment works nearer Sydney. This is a grand and costly scheme; however, the preservation of water quality, especially around a city the size of Sydney, is considered paramount.

This preservation of water quality is a good example of future planning. While the catchment use constraints within parks may be considered too tight by many would-be users, they have served to protect these valuable water supplies. Over time, as we come to better understand the ecology of our environment, some of these constraints may be lifted.

ACT Parks and Conservation Service

This department is similar to CALM, having sections for logging operations, wildlife conservation, nature reserves, urban parks and research. Although only controlling lands within the ACT, it does have close ties with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. My few days here were involved with the wildlife conservation and nature resources section. The second part of the award involved spending five days in the ACT. Four days were spent inspecting recreation sites and facilities managed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, and one day was spent with Glen Wilson, a landscape architect.

Day One

Day One was spent with a ranger inspecting some of Canberra's nature parks. There are currently 21 parks in and around the city and a further 12 are proposed. These parks are important in that they:

- ❖ provide residents with natural areas for recreation and education almost on their doorsteps;
- ❖ are a scenic backdrop to the city; and
- ❖ are a habitat for wildlife.

At the time of my visit, a management plan for Canberra's nature parks was in the process of being compiled. A mail drop to all Canberra residents had been made explaining the plan's purpose and giving information on how they could participate in the planning process. The management plan should ensure the survival of these parks, many of which would fall into the hands of developers if their status was not secured. Parks visited were:

- ❖ Jerrabombera Wetlands
- ❖ Mt Ainslie/Majura
- ❖ Mt Pleasant
- ❖ Black Mountain
- ❖ Stirling Ridge



Figure 3 A 'caveletti' - horse gate, Ainslie Ridge. This type of gate allows access for horses and animals while still prohibiting vehicles.

The parks were in good condition, with much wildlife and human use observed. Figures 3 and 4 show some interesting structures seen during the tour. Another feature of the parks is the nature walks conducted by rangers on nominated days. These are well patronised and help give the parks a looked-after appearance, not just pieces of left-over bush where rubbish can be dumped and trees felled. The walks are varied and often feature night or early morning meets. I feel this makes a pleasant change from some people's image that rangers are only there to police people's activities.

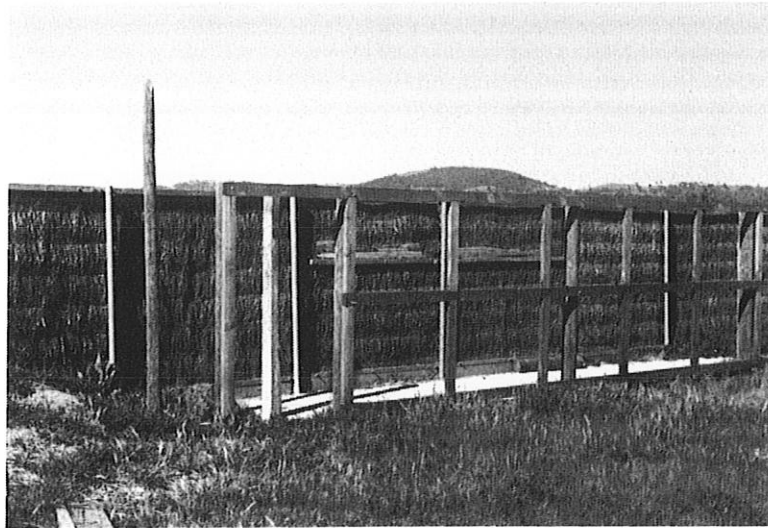


Figure 4 A bird hide under construction - Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Work was halted on this structure when several design faults were noticed:-

- i) drainage - all water tended to accumulate on the floor of the hide
- ii) disabled access - the hide is too narrow for wheelchair access and the viewing opening is too high
- iii) the open-end type structure would have allowed in too much light - birds would have been distracted by movement within the shelter.

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Day Two

On Day Two I visited Namadgi National Park. This park consists of mainly rugged bushland and is situated in the south-west portion of the ACT. The park is 94,000 ha in size, comprising almost 40 per cent of the Territory, and is the least used of the conservation reserves. Park staff felt this was because many 'Canberrians' preferred the snow fields of the nearby Snowy Mountains or travelled to the east coast. Many recreation opportunities do, however, exist in the park. For example:

- ❖ outstanding natural scenery and features
- ❖ large areas of wilderness
- ❖ limited, but good access
- ❖ historic Aboriginal and European sites
- ❖ well-established walk trail system
- ❖ snow areas in winter
- ❖ picnic areas/camping grounds
- ❖ part of the Australian Alps National Parks System
- ❖ fishing (in certain streams)
- ❖ horse riding (certain areas)

The park is relatively new, being gazetted in 1983. A draft management plan was produced in 1985 with the final comprehensive plan completed in 1986. The service now has an excellent opportunity to develop well-planned and landscaped recreation sites that complement their surroundings and are environmentally sound. I found Namadgi to be a good example of how new parks should be managed with the gazettal of the park, development of a management plan, and action on that plan. Unfortunately, many parks are not new and some suffer from past poor planning.

At the time of my visit, a new visitor centre was under construction. This centre features a large reception/display area and a theatrette with sophisticated visual aids and sound system. The centre is designed to cater for Namadgi's visitors well into the next century.

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Day Three

On this day, I visited Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. This reserve is probably the most widely known and used within the ACT. The area is very visitor-orientated, featuring:

- ❖ visitors' centre, with theatrette (this centre was being doubled in size at the time of my visit);
- ❖ wildlife enclosures - red and grey kangaroos, koalas and waterbirds;
- ❖ nature trails, mountain walks;
- ❖ regular bird feeding;
- ❖ guided walks.

The main visitor areas are "hardened" sites, i.e., bitumen roads, large parking areas, hard well-defined wide walktrails and grassed landscaped picnic sites.



Figure 5 Carpark and main entry path to koala enclosure - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Very high use area - large bitumen carparks, wide well-defined free draining access path.

I found the koala enclosure particularly well set out. A sign at the entrance explains how to find the koalas by checking areas marked on the sign by coloured magnetic dots. These dots are rearranged each morning after the enclosure is inspected by a ranger. A problem with this sign is that it is too wordy.

A close look at the sign will reveal how management has attempted to focus people's attention on the 'how to find koalas' section. The area around this sign becomes congested during busy periods, as people try to read the whole sign. Another sign a short distance inside the enclosure, or a small handout, would relieve this congestion.

Tidbinbilla is an excellent day-visitor type of park. Areas are well laid out and all facilities can accommodate single cars and motor bikes, or the largest tourist buses. This reserve is often visited by foreign dignitaries wishing to observe Australian native animals.

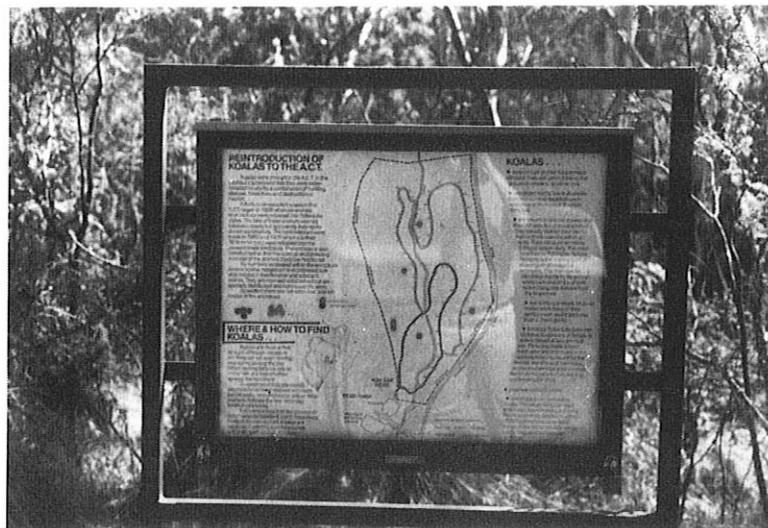


Figure 6 Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve - sign at the entrance to the koala enclosure. Magnetic markers show the animals' position after an early morning inspection by a ranger. During daylight hours the koalas tend not to move. An excellent set-up, though the sign is a bit wordy.

Day Four

This day was spent with Glen Wilson, a landscape architect working for a private company. My time with Glen was perhaps of the most value to me in that it let me see a professional land manager at work within the community. It also allowed me to see the view from the contractor's side of the fence. Several sites on which he was working were visited:

❖ Kambah Pool (on the Murrumbidgee River)

Here, Glen's company had undertaken some of the redesign works for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. This includes development of several picnic sites and refurbishment of one existing ablution block. The main problem experienced with this work, Glen explained, was that his contract was only one of several let by the service at one time, and this was leading to on-site friction between contractors. Some completed work is being disturbed as other contractors attempt to complete their contracts. There are also different standards and methods being applied and in my view the end result will vary considerably. I think the Kambah Pool situation can provide us with a model of how not to run contracts within our parks. Where possible, only one contractor should complete all the work to standards and methods agreed upon before commencement.



Figure 7 Completed tables. Refurbished ablution block in background. Edge of site on right hand side has been edged with rock for retention of the bank and to provide seating.

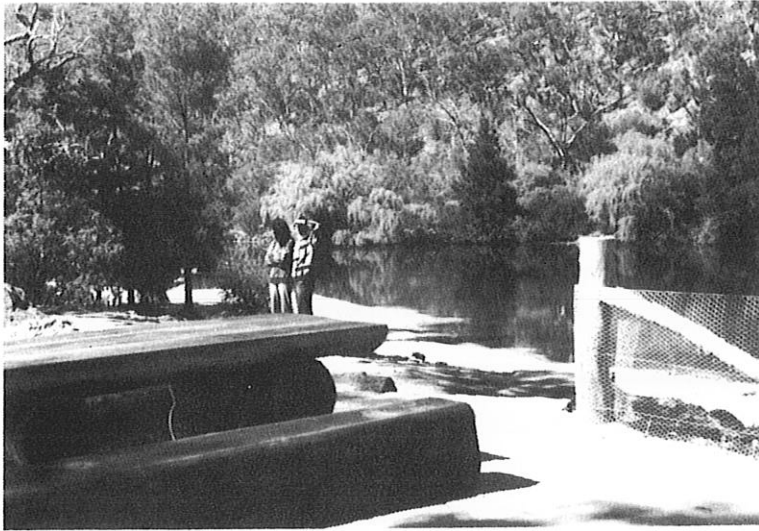


Figure 8 Same site as Figure 7, showing distance from river and type of barrier used to preserve the bank.



Figure 9 Stairway to river and barrier fencing (note barbed wire). Erosion from multiple access points was a problem here, but the fence and stairs have solved this. The two large rocks prevent cars from parking too close and blocking access. The stairs are made of jarrah.



Figure 10 This water course was beginning to erode. A synthetic matting has been laid along its course and filled with granite. Effective and expensive - an overkill in this situation.

❖ **Cadwell Primary School**

Glen's company won the contract to landscape the school grounds. The site was steep and exposed and had to be designed with small children in mind. Glen pointed out many small adjustments that he had made - many hardly noticeable; ie smaller steps, ramps where possible, specially-sited tree plantings.

❖ **A welfare/rehabilitation institution was also inspected.**

This site required several things of a landscape plan:

- i) good drainage - the site was built at the base of a large hill and the soils were mostly clay. Water tended to run-off rather than soak away;
- ii) a pleasant garden landscape that was hard-wearing and required little maintenance. All garden maintenance was undertaken by the in-mates at various levels of competence and interest; and
- iii) be accessible by wheelchair.

With this in mind, Glen first pegged the drainage line and wheelchair access routes, then terraced the site and planted hardy native species amongst the rocks.

Incorporated into the rock terracing along the drainage lines were water dissipation pools. These shallow depressions slowed storm water runoff and became winter pools/waterfalls, and in summer, grassy depressions.

The overall result encompassed all the required aspects, was pleasing to look at and was cost-effective. It was a pleasure to meet someone who, along with the obvious landscaping skills, used commonsense and was not afraid to use simple techniques.



Figure 11 & 12 Some of Glen Wilson's landscaping work
- low maintenance
- wheelchair accessible
- use of dissipation pools for stormwater
- relatively inexpensive.

Day Five

For my final day I was shown several sites along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor (MRC). This is a strip of land up to 4km wide along the full length (60km) of the ACT section of the Murrumbidgee River.

This corridor serves important hydrological and social functions, the need for which has been realised in the compilation of a management plan for the corridor. Without such a plan, this area would have been threatened by sewerage and stormwater pollution, urban development and inappropriate recreation activities.

The management philosophy for the MRC is one of striving to retain the present bushland, rural and cultural character of the corridor landscape, rather than permitting it to become an urban park with relatively formal park conditions and developments throughout.

Successful and sensitive retention of the undeveloped character of much of the MRC will be a very important contribution to the character of the future ACT, as a symbol of Canberra's place in the Australian landscape, as a distinctive resource for the people of the Canberra/Queanbeyan sub-region and as an integral part of one of Australia's major river systems.

Several sites along the corridor were visited:

❖ Pine Island

This site has been established for many years and features bitumen road access, large car parks and reticulated grass areas. Much work and money has gone into river bank stabilisation, mainly using a timber retaining wall process.

The Murrumbidgee floods most years, and several sections of this type of structure had washed out. In my opinion this form of stabilisation is, apart from being expensive, not practical. Controlled access to the beach area is required and the natural bank grade should be restored.

Figure 13 shows the typical Canberran picnic shelter. These ugly, often poorly sited shelters can be found all over the city. Unfortunately the Service is stuck with them as the transition to self government has considerably reduced its funds.

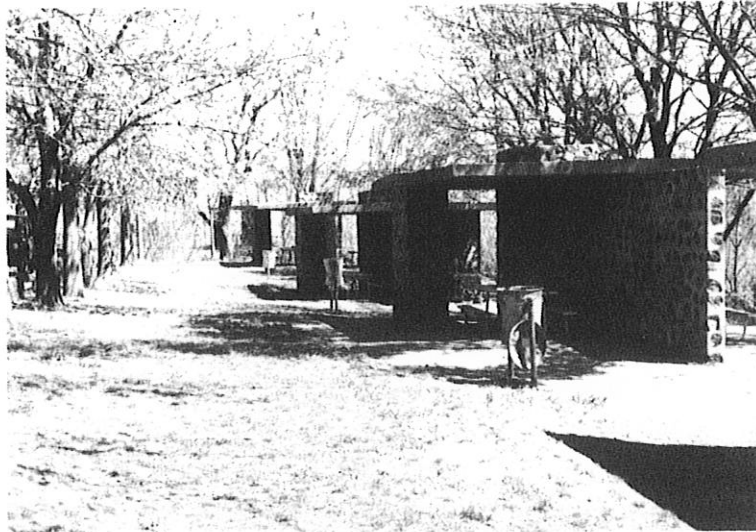


Figure 13 Typical Canberra picnic shelter.

❖ **Tharwa Bridge**

This site is basically a grassy floodplain under the bridge. Current maintenance consists of slashing the grass several times per year. Several more picnic tables and BBQ facilities are proposed. A pleasant site.

❖ **Flints Crossing**

This is another site that has been established for many years. It is unfortunately not without its problems. This picnic area is situated near Paddys River and is subject to flooding most years. Severe scouring usually occurs and every time this happens it is filled and regrassed - a good example of how poor planning can keep on costing.

❖ **Casuarina Sands**

An established site featuring a tavern, walk trails to nearby Cotter Dam, swimming and camping area - complete with hot showers and reticulated grass sites. This area receives very high usage and all developments are hardened; ie bitumen roads and parking, concrete kerbing. This site has never actively been planned and a serious people versus traffic problem exists. Several roads converge on this area (a river crossing point) and on weekends traffic is very congested..

Access to the tavern and other areas from the main parking area involves crossing these busy roads - a dangerous situation - particularly at closing time. The best solution would be to alter the roading, but due to the difficult terrain, the cost would be extremely high if indeed it could be achieved. Again a lack of rational planning is causing problems.

Conclusion

Before visiting Canberra, I believed this city to be a model for sound planning practices. However, while everything seems to have been well planned, the results vary considerably.

As discussed, many sites are experiencing management problems which with foresight could have been avoided. We are fortunate in WA that few of our recreation sites are fully developed. We now have the chance to look ahead and plan for the future so that when a particular site is ready for further development the planned improvement will be just that, improvements - not a headache for future managers.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia's conference has shown me the amount of expertise which is available and continually developing in Australia. Although the volume of information becoming available is ever-increasing, we must, as professional land managers, keep abreast of new innovations and incorporate them in planning proposals.

Only in this way can we achieve the planning standards required. The Lane Poole award has allowed me to gain an overview of the planning processes used in Australia to develop areas for public use.

I have found that in the past, much of the planning was inadequate, and as a consequence, many areas have suffered some form of damage. Today the planning process is considered an integral part of any proposed development, and this is reflected in the quality of sites produced.

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