



**COMO RESOURCE CENTRE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
& LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**


ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 1990 - 30 June 1991

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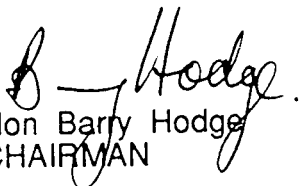
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The Secretary, Lands and Forest Commission, Department of Conservation and Land Management, PO Box 104, Como 6152, Western Australia.



HON MINISTER
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In accordance with Section 62 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985, I submit for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Lands and Forest Commission for the year ending 30 June 1991.


Hon Barry Hodge
CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The past year has seen an increase in activity by the Commission and a deliberate attempt to develop a higher public profile.

A number of joint meetings have been held between the Commission and allied statutory authorities such as the Forest Production Council and the Environmental Protection Authority.

In association with the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, the Commission has hosted a series of public seminars, workshops and field trips as part of a review of forest management practices. All these activities have been open to the public and have been well attended, constructive forums.

In February 1991 I represented the Commission at a national seminar on Public Issue Dispute Resolution, held in Brisbane and sponsored by the Commonwealth, Queensland and New South Wales Governments. The seminar was chaired by Tony Fitzgerald QC and strong emphasis was placed on the development of public participation in decision making about the use of publicly owned resources (such as State forests) and the resolution of disputes between conservation groups and industry over timber resources and exploration and mining on publicly owned land. I was pleased to note that Western Australia is more advanced in developing these processes via the Conservation and Land Management Act and the Environment Protection Act than most other Australian States.

Congratulations were extended by the Commission to Ray Perry, a member of the Commission, on his receipt of the Order of Australia Award (officer of General Division) granted to him on the Queen's Birthday.

A deputy member of the Commission, Mr Eric Bettenay, resigned in February 1991 and I wish to record the Commission's appreciation to Eric for his services during his term of office.

I am pleased to record that Associate Professor Dr Jennifer McComb has accepted the position of deputy member and has already begun to make a significant contribution to the Commission's work. Dr McComb sought, and has been given Commission approval, to attend meetings as an observer when her attendance as a deputy is not formally required.

The Commission would like to record its appreciation to the Department of Conservation and Land Management for the provision of resources, staff and office facilities. The Commission is a very small statutory authority and having no budget allocation of its own, is reliant upon the goodwill and cooperation of CALM for the provision of its basic services. An application has been submitted again this year to the Minister for a budget allocation to be made to the Commission. This would be beneficial in assisting the Commission with its work and underline its independent statutory role.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION

The Lands and Forest Commission was established under section 18 of the Conservation and Land Management Act, 1984.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSION

Functions of the Commission are determined by section 19 of the Conservation and Land Management Act, 1984. The functions of the Commission are:

- (a) to have vested in it State forest and timber reserves and relevant land referred to in section 5 (g);

- (b) to develop policies to achieve or promote the objectives described in section 56 (1) (a), (b) and (e);
- (c) to consider, in accordance with section 17, any cancellation, change of purpose or boundary alteration in respect of land vested in it;
- (d) to submit proposed management plans to the Minister as provided in Part V in respect of land vested in it;
- (e) to monitor the carrying out of management plans by the Department in respect of land vested in the Commission;
- (f) to inquire into and to advise the Minister on any matter on which the advice of the Commission is sought by the Minister;
- (g) to provide advice, upon request, on matters relating to land vested in it to any body or person, if the provision of advice is in the public interest and it is practicable for the Commission to provide it;
- (h) with the approval of the Minister, to cause study or research to be undertaken for the purposes of paragraph (b).

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION

Membership of the Commission is determined by section 20 of the Conservation and Land Management Act, 1984 and comprises:

- (a) 2 persons appointed by the Governor, on the nomination of the Minister;

Hon B J Hodge (Chairman)
Mr R Perry

- (b) and the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Dr S Shea.

Associate Professor, Dr J McComb was appointed in May 1991 by the Minister for the Environment as Deputy Member for Mr Perry following the resignation of Mr E Bettenay in February 1991. Dr McComb attended on one occasion.

MEETINGS OF COMMISSION

During the reporting year the Commission met on four occasions.

Meetings were conducted at the Executive Office, Department of CALM, in Crawley.

Meetings were held on:

27 August 1990	
6 November 1990	(joint meeting with FPC)
22 March 1991	(followed by a Special Joint Meeting with FPC)
12 June 1991	

The Commission convened joint meetings with the Forest Production Council on two occasions to discuss topics of mutual interest.

These topics included the joint agreement between CALM and the Australian Heritage Commission to assess National Estate values within the southern forests of WA; the economic state of the timber industries and short-term and long-term measures needed to provide for a viable industry; and the proposed review of forest management practises in Western Australian forests.

BUSINESS OF COMMISSION

Management Plans

The Commission reviewed and recommended for approval sections of the final draft of the Regional Management Plan for the South Coast Region, which affected those lands vested in the Commission.

Amendments to State forest and timber reserves

Under Section 19(1) (a) and (c) of the CALM Act, the Commission is the vesting body for State forest and timber reserves, and is to consider any cancellation and change of purpose on boundary proposed for its vested lands.

During the year the net area of State forest increased by 110 ha to a total of 1 750 467 ha. This increase is mainly due to the inclusion into State forest No. 10 of a former freehold property held in the name of the Executive Director of CALM. The total area of Timber Reserves fell by 112 ha during the year to a total of 144 287 ha. Most of the decrease is attributed to the excision of a portion of Timber Reserve No. 198/25 which was affected by past mining and will be further degraded by future mineral activities.

As the vesting body for State forest and timber reserves, the Commission took action on proposals put to it during the year. These included:

- The Commission agreed that negotiations could proceed for exchange of section of State forest No. 36 (58 ha) and Timber Reserve 159/25 (34 ha) for private property block near One-Tree-Bridge and another unspecified private property in the Southern Forest Region.
- The Commission agreed that Ministerial approval be sought for exchange of portion of Timber Reserve No. 69/95 (42 ha) for private property block at Wellington Location 3036.
- The Commission rejected a proposal to exchange a small section of State forest No. 57 for a small section of private property (Nelson Location 5489). The Commission advised that the Department continue negotiations with the proponent to provide for access to water from State forest.
- The Commission agreed that Ministerial approval be sought for exchange of portion (0.9 ha) of State forest No. 36 adjoining Channybearup Road for part of private property (Nelson Location 9522) on Lefroy Brook.
- The Commission agreed for CALM to proceed with negotiations to add the Timber Reserve 153/25 to the adjoining Nature Reserve 26238 located east of the Donnybrook townsite. This proposal was a System 6 Recommendation by the EPA.
- The Commission advised the Minister that it agreed to the excision of a sawmill permit site on State forest within the Dwellingup townsite. This action would enable former employees of the Dwellingup (Bunnings) Mill to purchase houses owned by Bunnings on this site. An additional area proposed to be revoked from State forest would become Vacant Crown land for future use by the Dwellingup Shire Council for amenity purposes.

- The Commission agreed that Ministerial approval be sought for the release of portion (20 ha) of Timber Reserve No. 185/25 (near Jardee) in exchange for private property (Nelson Location 3773) within the Perup Nature Reserve.

Other Land Use Issues

Review of Forest Management Practices

The Commission was briefed by the Department on the review of forest management practices which is part of the overall review of the Department's nature conservation strategy. This comprehensive review contains several major components including:

- development of silvicultural procedures required to protect stream water quality in the salt risk zones;
- the development of a more sophisticated road, river and stream system to provide for fauna habitat, stream protection and aesthetics;
- provision of additional reserves and buffer zones for poorly represented vegetation types, landforms, habitats and special features;
- re-calculation of the sustainable yield and annual harvest of the jarrah forest, following the finalisation of the jarrah forest inventory scheduled to be completed early in the 1991/92 year;
- application of visual resource management principles in all forest operations and activities.

The Commission was informed that this review is complementary and sequential to the commitments given in the Forest Management Plans and Timber Strategy of 1987. It was resolved that rather than deal with these issues in isolation, they would be resolved within the framework of the already successful timber strategy. The review would culminate in a report which would provide a major position statement on the charter, principles and practice of forest management in Western Australia.

As part of the public participation process for the forest management review the Commission, in association with the NPNCA and the Department of Conservation and Land Management, conducted a series of public seminars and workshops on forest management issues. Topics included:

- Recreation in National Parks and Nature Reserves;
- Jarrah Forest Ecology;
- Jarrah Forest Timber Management - this was followed by a field trip to the jarrah forest near Dwellingup;
- Review of Road, River and Stream Protection Zones (Workshop);
- Involvement of Aboriginal People in Conservation Management.

The Commission planned further seminars and workshops later in the year.

National Estate

The Commission was regularly informed of developments in the joint assessment by the Department of CALM and the Australian Heritage Commission of places of National Estate values within the southern forests. The Commission was informed that the joint study would aim to also develop agreed procedures for operations in identified National Estate areas located outside existing conservation reserves.

Visits of National Forest Review Groups

The Commission was informed by the Department of CALM of visits by several national enquiry committees and working groups established by the Commonwealth to investigate the management of forests and plantations. These groups included:

- The Resources Assessment Commission;
- The Ecological Sustainable Development Working Group on Forestry;
- National Plantation Advisory Committee.

National Forums

The Commission was informed by Dr Shea of the major issues that were dealt with by the Standing Committee on Forestry, of which Dr Shea was the current Chairman. These included forest resource security legislation; national forest management strategy; pricing of log resources; taxation for plantations on cleared farmlands.

The Chairman participated in a National Seminar on Public Issue Dispute Resolution held in Brisbane on 18-19 February 1991.

State of the Timber Industry

The Commission held a joint meeting with the Forest Production Council to learn of the depressed state of the Western Australian timber industry and its future outlook. Discussions were held on various options for improving the long-term future of the industry, and possible short-term measures for the economic relief of the industry.

Miscellaneous Matters

The Commission provided a response to the draft "Discussion Paper No. 1 - South West Region" commissioned by the State Government Select Committee on Land Conservation.

Information was provided to the Environmental Protection Authority following a request for data on silvicultural practices in the jarrah forest.

The Commission was informed by the Department of CALM on progress achieved on the development of demonstration forests near Mundaring and Collie to educate the public on forest management of Western Australian forests.

The Commission was informed of the establishment of a Forest Education Fund which will provide for a school's education program on forest management which is designed to be fully integrated into the current Secondary School syllabus.