President's Report 1973-74

CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Chairman's first Annual Report

Membership

The Capricorn Conservation Council was originally formed in July 1973 from five Central Queensland bodies, which were at the time already affiliated with the Queensland Conservation Council. Subsequently five more bodies joined the Capricorn Conservation Council, but in the meantime two bodies have become inactive. It is to be expected that our numbers may change from time to time, as some groups spring up and others disappear in response to the issues of the day.

There has been only one Associate Member, which has meant that none of the difficulties experienced by the QCC have arisen. However, as a result, no finance from this source has therefore been available.

Constitution

A constitution based on an earlier QCC version was modified for our use. However, the Committee has become aware of the need for further alterations. The incoming Committee could well study the revised QCC constitution before reaching a conclusion. If fund raising were contemplated in the future, as seems likely, then it would become obligatory for the Council to seek Incorporation.

Achievements

During the year there were notable developments in two major Central Queensland Conservation issues, namely in connection with the proposed Yeppoon Tourist Resort and the mining of limestone at Mt. Etna. The Council has actively participated in both these issues in collaboration with interested member bodies. It is quite impossible to allocate credit, as activities of the Council and of member bodies has often overlapped. Activities included sponsorship of press advertisements, preparation of press releases, radio talks, TV appearances, communication with politicians and government at all levels, etc. The Secretary prepared a submission to the Co-Ordinator-General's Inquiry into the Yeppoon Tourist Resort proposals, and has received and accepted an invitation to make verbal representations.

Two parties from the National Estate Committee of Inquiry were hosted during their visits. Subsequently, the Secretary prepared a submission for the Inquiry, in which all the major problems of the area were discussed.

The Council's efforts received recognition from the Australian Government in form of two grants amounting to $ 6,500. These enabled the Council to open an Environment Centre, and to employ the Secretary on a part-time basis. The opening of the Centre itself was performed by the Hon. Dr. Doug Everingham, Australian Minister for Health in the presence of a number of distinguished guests, including the Mayor, Mr. R.H.J. Pilbeam. The function was well attended, and provided the Council with some good publicity.

Contact with member and kindred bodies

One of the functions of the Council is to co-ordinate activities of member bodies with common interests. This has generally been achieved, although our contacts with Gladstone need reinforcing. Gladstone representatives attended three of our functions, while Rockhampton members were present at two Gladstone functions. The practice of appointing one Vice-Chairman from Gladstone and one from Yeppoon, is one which could well be continued. It was pleasing to have a Brisbane-based body with Central Queensland interests join the Council.

A successful state-wide conference, the first of its kind, was staged at Coolwaters in March 1974. The Council was represented at the first National Conservation Conference in Canberra during November 1973, and five delegates attended the July 1974 Hervey Bay Conference on Ecotactics.

The Council was represented at the opening of the QCC Environment Centre in December 1973. The Centre has since been visited twice by the Secretary. The Cape York Conservation Council representatives attended one of our meetings, while the CYCC Director was at the opening of our Centre. The Chairmen paid a visit to the CYCC Centre in August 1974.

Copies of our Minutes are being sent regularly to the QCC, CYCC, Gladstone and to UQSS in Brisbane. In return, we receive QCC Minutes, and of course ECOINFO. Some contributions to ECOINFO on local and global issues were made during the year, but it is felt that this publication deserves a much wider local readership and that member bodies should contribute more articles to help publicize our issues more widely. Greater involvement in other State and National issues would not only help our friends, but it would ultimately benefit us by encouraging our friends to take a greater interest in our affairs. It is to be hoped therefore, that links forged during this year will continue to be extended and reinforced in the future.

Contact with the public

Perhaps the most important function of the Council is to make the public, and young people in particular, aware of conservation issues. The Environment Centre will hopefully provide one means of doing so. However, before it can be fully effective in this area, we shall have to obtain more educational material, including books, maps, leaflets, copies of important legislation, etc. The Centre will need to be manned on a regular well-advertised basis. It is perhaps these aspects which will need the greatest attention in the coming year. This may necessitate employing more staff on both voluntary and salaried basis. These an other activities will of course be heavily dependent on continuing financial support from the Australian Government. It is to be hoped that this support will be increased and that other sources, particularly the State Government, will come to the rescue.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are due to members of the outgoing Committee, and to others for their hard work and moral support on many occasions. To mention names here would inevitably result in unfortunate omissions.

P. H. Springell
Chairman
30/8/1974