President's Report 1977-78

CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL

PRESIDENTS REPORT 1977/'78

This report for the first part of the year 1977-'78 is the second I have presented, and possibly the last, unless constitutional changes are possible. The working Executive managed to keep abreast of continuing and erupting issues even if to only keep some of them in the public eye.

Fund raising was another vexing problem complicated by administration under recent policies from Canberra by administration under recent policies from Canberra but solved by the 1978 Executive. Other workloads such as field study centres and environmental education were not pursued as hoped. However, the National Heritage Submissions have been most successful.

Monitoring decision making government agencies in Brisbane has provided more adequate information and will provide more impact on land use decisions in the future.

The inaugural meeting of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority indicated the increasing pollution, "strip mining of the reef" by overseas fishermen, and the complete lack of knowledge and information about the Reef. This is an intolerable situation with which management decisions are to be made in the short term.

It has been unfortunate that 1977/'78 was severed by the temporary closing down of the C.C.C. office and the relocation of several of the Executive. We have seen the departure of the Co-Ordinator General's Department and Regional Planning and withdrawal of legal aid.

The field work by some of the Executive has now been instrumental in having most of the major National Park proposals and several other areas in Central Queensland approved by the Qld Committee of Heritage Commission. This was achieved after considerable personal pressure and expense by John McCabe who co-ordinated most of the Queensland submissions to the Heritage Commission. However, considerable lobbying to do away with Federal interest in State areas is detrimental to the environment at all levels.

The backlash against the environmental movement is evident by multi-nationals and big business's push to have a House of Representatives Inquiry into the environment.

The Iwasaki Affair is the most blatant example of breakdown of democratic rights at all levels of Government. The future of the Federal Environmental (Impact of Proposals) Act and Environmental Impact Studies appears to be very limited.

Other legislation regarding Uranium and government fiscal support of it further deprives people of their common law rights. The political polarisation of the community has turned conservation into a punching bag for media manipulators. It appears to be timely to lay the foundations for the future by more attention to environmental education and local conservation matters.

The Capricorn Coast Protection Council has fought a long and bitter, and courageous, fight, only to have public involvement buried.

The monitoring of environmental changes (caused by the illegal construction of this resort) has thrown this conflict into a new phase which will require further outside assistance. Ray Harris has been an inspiration to everyone involved.

This year has seen the demise and departure of several affiliates, but has seen the expansion of C.A.N.P. and the hard work in fund raising operations and administration by the group and its Executive.

FINANCIAL :

The procedures of our Treasurer, Ron McCabe, the fiscal wizard, has enabled C.C.C.'s survival. Federal funding for conservation groups for the next financial year appears to be much the same but the Department has not yet announced the breakdown to various groups.

ADMINISTRATION :

Ron McCabe has performed again beyond the call of duty by handling all matters while the Executive was in limbo.

NATIONAL PARKS :

The major proposals in Central Queensland have been shelved, although a minor extension to Kroombit Tops is in the pipeline.

The chaotic events at Agnes Waters include the granting of new mining leases and a subdivision that formed rivers instead of roads during the wet season.

E.I.S.s :

Several E.I.S.s were assessed in 1978.

Iwasaki The Iwasaki draft was a complete debacle with consultants listing 57 areas of shortcomings in the guidelines and report. Q.C.C.'s submission was combined with C.C.C.'s and was determined by the consultants as the most comprehensive of the 100 submissions received. A sub-consultant has now revealed that an adequate social survey of Yeppoon would take 9 months and $25,000.

Rough estimates of Infrastructure costs external to the resort and financed by the Tax Payer include:

Power	$3 - $6 million
Roads	$20 million
Airport	$250 million

The costs of other facilities in Yeppoon plus water supply and sewerage maintenance are not estimable with present information. Other costs include increased professional administration in government areas generally.

The impressions obtained from many government departments showed that although most departments could not or would not assess the biological degradation or consequences, the engineering problems would escalate costs at an alarming rate, enough to halt the development in the mid-term.

Many issues have been omitted and will be described by the omnipotent, John McCabe.

The subject of recreational needs of the region are topical for the late seventies.

A brighter future can be seen with our new co-ordinator and centre, as we have been without both for some time.

Ted Fensom
President
(part 1977-'78)