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CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL INC:
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1990 -1991

This year has probably seen the greatest increase in workload placed on CCC since our initial beginnings in 1973. The most significant factor has undoubtedly been the committment of the Goss Government in Queensland to public consultation processes. A steady stream of Impact assessment Studies, Green Papers, Public Service Managment Commission reviews and Departmental policy reviews seems unlikely to abate for some time yet. While we have let some of these slide through without comment we cannot ignore those that affect this region, and with the Gladstone and Rockhampton areas experiencing the greatest number of mining and industrial development proposals through Australia, we must maintain our committment to a high standard of imput.

We also have specific functions of value to the conservation movement on a national basis. In particular, there is our expertise in dealing with forestry issues, with matters relating to asbestos handling, with caves and the managment of karst landscape (through CQSS, a member body), and with other issues such as restoration ecology, and endangered species campaigns.

The Shoalwater Bay issue has again taken up much effort from CCC and associated organizations. We have a very co-operative relationship with the Australian Army who are keen to run their managment practices past us for comment and also , since the recent election with the Livingstone Shire Council who are showing strong interest in addressing some of the past landuse mistakes in the Shire. CCC is constantly dealing with the six coastal local authority areas in this region, particularly with respect to Strategic Plans, dump and toxic waste sites, development proposals, wetland protection and other issues. Our contact with the more inland shires is restricted due to time and financial constraints. However the CQ Land Care Centre which we house is active in these areas.

It is disappointing that the Federal Environment Minister, Grahame Richardson, did not take account of the advice of The Australian Heritage Commission when he recommended the granting of Mining Leases to Pivot. It is indicative of the fact that governments are still sufficently uncommitted to environmental decision making, that they tend to make favourable decisions only on those issues which have had a high national profile. Fortunately, with the increasing involvment of the ACF in the Shoalwater issue, we can expect that high profile to delevop.

Each year we reach a stage of financial crisis prior to receipt of our Federal grant. In real terms we are now receiving only half the Federal grant that we received in out first full year of operation (1983-84), ans while our

fundraising effort has increased it has not been sufficent to meet the decline. This region will have to meet many of the hard issues of industrial development (Gladstone), land degredation., amd resource exploitation (coal mines etc). These are not the glamour environmental issues(such as rainforests), which environmental groups are likely to attract funding for. We are faced with the reality that we may eventually have to restrict our educational services, and to further reduce allocation for staff employment.
Our financial situation is made more difficult by the fact that we host the CQ Land Care centre (a first in Australia), but the funding for this Centre does not cover rent and provision of office equipment;these items having to be provided by donation or allocation of the limited funds CCC holds.

I am pleased to present this report and commend the work of the staff, executive, and volunteers who have made CCC the effective organization it is.

John McCabe

President

CAPRICORN COMSERVATION COUNCIL INC.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JUNE 1991

It is significant that the 1991 AGM of Capricorn Conservation Council takes place only two days after the ABC's Green Train has left Rockhampton on it's journey south. This very successful mini-expo has provided a convincing demonstrating of the extent to which environmental ethics has penetrated the thought processes of so many 'ordinary' Australians. We have seen a year in which green issues have been the media's 'flavour of the month' for an extended period in which only war and other global catostrophies have upstaged the environment issues. On the local front the conservation movement is sought after for opinions by public servants, local authority representatives and persons within industry. On the face of it the conservation movement has come of age and now has considerable standing within the community.
But there are disquieting signs that all is not well. There are indications from within both State and Federal Government spheres that key power brokers are working to diffuse the growing strength of the conservation movement. These people feel the changes wrought by the movement have gone too far, too fast and they seek to strengthen some of the old values of Australian and Queensland politics. We, in Central Queensland feel particularly strongly the frustation of being pushed aside by other agendas. For over two decades politicians of all political persuasion have touted for real and phantom industries in Central Queensland without any real committment to environmental planning or any aspects of community development likely to arise over time scales longer than three years.
The cynical granting of sandmining leases at Shoalwater Bay is indicative of the attitude of Federal Cabinet Ministers to Central Queensland, the "Quarry of Australia". It is many years since any company had the good fortune to secure massive mining leases over an area which had not even been subject to exploratory drilling and where the presence of an ore body is inferred rather than known.

The stalling game over hard decisions to be taken with our coastal conservation areas sugests that those who forsee a litter of broken promises from the Queensland Labor Government will be proven correct. Again, it seems that Central Queensland areas are are the predetermined sacrifices to the real and phantom industries. It will not be unexpected if our few remaining opportunities for brigalow national parks go the same way.

The most positive signs for sound environmental managment is coming from local government. From recycling programs, to Development Control Plans over key localities this is the area where changes are coming fast. It is I believe the area where we should concentrate more energy for it is surely the form of government most relevant to our day to day lives. There is a developing sense of partnership between local authority staff, councillors and environmentally minded community groups.

A very welcome $5000 grant from the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage(the first ever grants to conservation groups in Queensland) has enabled the purchase of a much needed computer system. However,despite the increasing workload carried by CCC, our Federal Government grant is now worth only half the value of the original funding given to this organization over 17 years ago. The need is greater than ever to seek alternate funds.
Although Rockhampton based we have a wide region to cover and increasingly we are unable to service that region. I have endeavoured to maintain a personal watching brief on the Gladstone area which is now subject to the most new industrial projects of anywhere in Australia. I regret that my level of service has not been adequate and perhaps it is time to concede that the region we can service should be reduced if Federal funds are not increased.
Capricorn Conservation Council must grow and change if it is to meet the environmental needs of the future. I remember in the early days of Queensland Conservation Council where the mainstay of the movement was university students of 18 to 22 years of age. The growing community voice for conservation is now coming from much younger students at the secondary and even primary school level. These new activists must share the resources of the conservation movement and must be given every opportunity to pursue programs which they themselves have devised.I and others will pass on to more specialised pursuits within the conservation movement and the organizations we hand on to the managment of others should be fit and able to meet the demands of tomorrow. The sharing of your idead on how this can be acheived would be most welcome.

John McCabe

President