

colong bulletin

No. 257 | December 2014

An adventure braided into a history

BY SIERRA CLASSEN

IN September and October, the Colong Foundation celebrated the 100th anniversary of Myles Dunphy and Bert's Gallop's historic 1914 adventure into the Kanangra wilderness, by re-enacting their epic bushwalk, beginning at Katoomba and ending in Picton.

In the weeks leading up to our walk, I developed a restless, disconcerted feeling about the idea of walking in their footsteps and reliving their experience. What was I getting into here?

As soon as we started walking, my movement replaced these apprehensions. Muscles softened into the rhythm of the walking on Cronje Ridge, the second day. Dave Noble claimed that this process takes three solid

walking days. My footsteps accustomed to the structures and patterns of the terrain, its textures and reactions to the tread of my shoes. My eyes and ears attuned to the landscape. By the same process, the historical clothing that had been a costume became supple to my shape and movements. It became part of me. My routines loosened and changed to accommodate the gear we were using, and reciprocally I found ways of fitting the new gear to my habits in the bush. Slowly, I progressed from travelling at odds with the terrain, to travelling through it and travelling with it. By the end, I no longer stiffly felt the boundaries between the layers of myself, my body, my historically accurate costume, my old Paddy Pallin pack.

It felt like the boundaries between me and the past, and

current and future members of our group, were loosening and fraying nicely (like soft second hand garments). Most importantly, the seemingly apparent boundary between us and the ecosystems we travelled through was soothed, if not melted away at times by our persistent presence and curiosity. The movement and complex interaction with the physical space of the journey transformed me. It is a familiar transformation—pouring myself into the living landscape—but this time I was becoming part of the land with palpable pasts and futures, and a lively present.

This is where the concept of braiding came into play. We intentionally made the Colong Wilderness Walk braid out of different strands of bushwalking history and more. This was a valuable and useful new awareness that helped distil some of the brackish complexities of the planning process and the actual walk. Our recreation of the walk united and braided together several stories and histories, becoming history itself.

I remember feeling very unworthy in my role as Bert Gallop at the opening ceremony at Katoomba. I felt dwarfed by the achievements of Myles and Bert whose path I was daring to follow—and the numerous people in attendance who I held in high esteem. The fact that I was wearing Bert's 'costume', deepened my sense

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General Meetings will be held at our office on Level 2, Fortuna House, 332 Pitt Street, at the new time of 5.00pm on Tuesday February 10th, March 10th and April 14th 2015. Members and visitors welcome.

Sierra Classen looking into Morong Deep (Image: K. Muir)



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that I was an imposter, rather than an artist or activist in a celebratory imitation of his achievement. I was accidentally entangled in the role of a leader or someone with insight and drive, like Myles and Bert. Maybe my waving arms were mistaken for gestures of enthusiasm, but it was more of a struggle for me. I was, feeling close to understanding Stevie Smith's poem, "Not Waving, but Drowning". I suppose you could call my sentiment humility if you were kind, but you could also call it shame.

Over the course of the walk, I felt myself grow into the role. The clothes and gear became more comfortable and convenient, for one thing, as I learned how to wear them. I always prefer second hand clothes. It often takes me a long time to wear a new garment in. With the costume, it was similar. It took a few days to get used to its form, textures, and capacity. In that time, the seams would loosen in places, creases formed, and the rocks, ground, and movement carded the fabric

weave and made it fluffier and more flexible around the joints. All of this corresponded to me feeling more and more at ease with the character to whom the costume pertained. Having the old clothing and gear helped us internalise personal and physical aspects of Myles and Bert's journey. This corporeal connection reminded us to ask deeper questions about the 'then and now', the differences between Bert and Myles' journey and ours. I felt a greater responsibility to their legacy, having walked 200 kilometres in their shoes.

Until we reached Yerranderie, Alex carried a Dungal swag and I carried an old Paddy Pallin pack with an alloy A-frame. The Dungal swag was made according to Myles' design. He and Bert used them on the original 1914 walk. Adapted from the swags commonly used to carry bedding by traditional post-colonial Australian nomads, or tramps, the Dungal swag used a gunny sack to balance the load front and back. Dungal is an amalgamation of Myles and Bert's surnames. It was their answer to the need to carry

more food and gear on longer distance, off-track trips into the wilderness—what they called bushwalking. After this early swag and a lightweight tent made of sail cloth (Japara) popularised bushwalking in clubs, Paddy Pallin came into being and brought in early bushwalking packs.

Paddy Pallin was the bushwalking outfitter that responded to the need among bushwalkers and outdoor enthusiasts of the early 20th Century to have lightweight gear. This new commercial outfitting of bushwalkers was essential to the development of bushwalking and conservation in the Blue Mountains and further afield. Carrying both the swag and pack brought Alex Allchin and I closer to that aspect of the history of bushwalking, another strand in our braid of conservation and bushwalking history. Picking up the packs from the present day Paddy Pallin store layered a present day connection to our experience. The Colong Wilderness Walk's intricacies and success were inextricable, as it interwove stories through time. ■

A History of the Blue Labyrinth

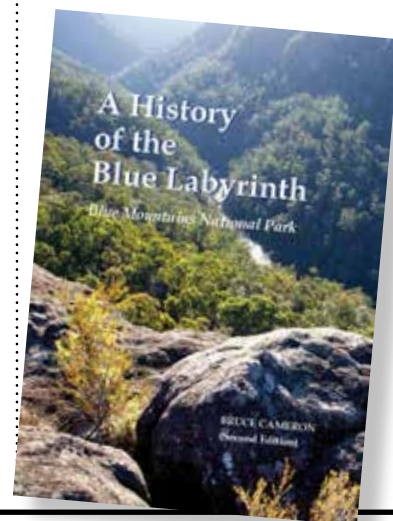
by Bruce Cameron
RRP \$65.00, plus \$10 postage, 2nd ed., 352 pgs, printed on recycled paper

Sandwiched between the suburbs of the lower Blue Mountains and the stored waters behind Warragamba Dam, the Blue Labyrinth is full of hidden beauty, wild places and history.

There are stories of first peoples, explorers, surveyors, farmers, miners, loggers, bushwalkers, road builders, tourists, firefighters and dam builders who all left their mark on this country, yet it remains a beautiful, largely pristine environment with plenty to delight us today.

Bruce Cameron's history presents fully referenced stories of the Blue Labyrinth and contains many historic and contemporary photographs.

Special price for members \$50 + postage (another reason to renew your subscription).



More plans to exploit parks

IN early December the NSW Natural Resources Commission released its final report that recommends commercial logging and grazing in State Conservation Areas north of Coonabarabran. These recommendations include:

■ Commercial logging of Cypress trees to recover costs of so-called 'ecological thinning' in selected state conservation areas;

■ Changing key reserve management legislation to allow for commercial logging and grazing; and

■ Changing the Federal Renewable Energy Target regulation to allow for a taxpayer subsidy of logging reserves when used to generate wood burnt for so-called 'green electricity'.

If the NSW Government adopts these taxpayer-subsidised plans it will damage

its green credentials.

Fencing to contain stock and using chainsaws and heavy logging machinery will cause serious environmental disturbance to these reserves. The Natural Resources Commission euphemistically describes this damage as increasing ecosystem heterogeneity, but this is just 'PR spin' to justify commercial logging of protected reserves. ■

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The Colong Bulletin • Editor: Pat Thompson; Asst. Editor: Bruce Diekman

ISSN 1325-3336 • Printed by Westonprint, Kiama

Early National Park Zoning Map Discovered

GEOFF MOSLEY & JUDITH CARRICK

THE zoning of national parks in management plans is today something we take for granted but, like all good ideas, it had to begin somewhere.

Myles Dunphy was an undoubted world leader in wilderness conservation and is best known for his primitive area proposals for the Blue Mountains and Snowy Mountains, but it was closer to his home at Annandale that he came to realise the need for land to be specifically set aside for this important conservation purpose.

In particular, an attempt to establish Garawarra as a primitive area reserve emphasised to him the need for such reserves to be much larger if they were going to be able to provide a true wilderness experience. Eventually provision for wilderness zones in national parks was made in the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act* of 1967.

One of the most endearing

memories of Myles was that he never gave up. Proof of this is to be seen in this recently rediscovered zoning map that he produced in 1936, for the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, dividing National Park (Royal National Park since 1955) into primitive areas and tourist areas. So, even while his efforts were turned to distant horizons, Myles saw the benefits of this approach for the smaller parks closer to home.

Note: The map was recently rediscovered by Royal National Park historian Judith Carrick (author of *History of Royal National Park 1879-2013*, 2014. The book can be ordered at either (02) 4267 4380, or jcarrick@ihug.com.au \$35 plus postage).



Please renew your support for 2015

2014 was a successful year for conservation. Your support enabled us to defeat the Coalpac open-cut mining plans in the Gardens of Stone region for a second time, with the assistance of our allies – the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Lithgow Environment Group.

The Colong Foundation has proven skills in protecting wilderness that rely on the ongoing support of its members, volunteers and allied groups. The Foundation does not annoy its supporters with streams of begging letters but reminds you at the end of the year that it is now time for all our members, supporters and donors to renew their support and membership (only \$30). If you can afford it, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help us expand our valuable conservation efforts, currently constrained by limited funds. Be assured that every dollar you contribute will go toward wilderness protection and conservation.

This year also saw the Colong Foundation organise a very successful eleven day event celebrating the beginnings of the conservation movement in Australia. Our new Board member, Alex Allchin, won the Nature Conservation Council's Rising Star Award for his role in leading Dunphy's Kowmung Adventure and another enthusiastic young adventurer, Sierra Classen, has now joined our ranks though co-leading this re-enactment event.

The Hon. Bob Carr became our new patron in recognition of his outstanding contribution towards wilderness protection. Bob's first task was to present a Symposium keynote address, *21st century wilderness* – a fitting tribute for perhaps the longest-serving and most consistent environmental champion of all time, Alex Colley!

The Foundation continues to expose the damage caused by horse riders to wilderness and has presented evidence to Parliament that Clarence Colliery near Lithgow has killed aquatic life for many kilometres of the Wollangambe River within the Wollemi Wilderness.

As this year draws to a close, there are battles looming over raising the Warragamba Dam wall and the wilderness estate – it's success in protecting nature is under siege on many fronts. We need the resources to ensure that our wilderness and its many native plants and animals continues to have the best chance of survival.

There is some hope. The NSW election next March offers opportunities for the Gardens of Stone and better protection for Sydney's water supply catchments. With your support NSW will have a greener, wilder 2015 with real achievements and success from hard work.

Thank you.

Keith Muir
Director

Sydney's World Parks Congress – the talkfest from hell affirms global environmental action

BY KEITH MUIR

IF you could sum up last month's once in a decade parks congress in a phrase, then *'the talkfest from hell affirms global environmental action'* would be it. Eight days, fourteen hundred events and six thousand delegates and volunteers created a driving 'snowstorm' of presentations on environmental policies and programs.

You needed mental snowshoes, strong coffee, vast determination, and a good smartphone to get anywhere as this was a paperless conference. Delegates without internet access were lost – literally only those with internet coverage could find their way. The Congress was a congested event. It was impossible to do much more than scratch the surface of the multitude of choices presented.

The Congress was highly political. Conservationist Harvey Locke's *Nature Needs Half* initiative was dropped from the Congress Communique (called the Promise of Sydney), as was

the pledge for a third of the world's oceans to be protected as marine parks where fishing and mining would be banned.

Mining companies, financiers and economists presented papers on conservation, as companies like Rio Tinto are actively engaged in financing protected area conservation. Logging, mining, oil and gas were discussed as part of the context of sustainable outcomes for sensitive environments, like the Amazon. There was a panel session that explored 'how mining companies can play a significant role in financing protected areas and biodiversity conservation'. There were papers on threatened species offsets and no net loss to biodiversity for development projects. There was an IUCN panel on measuring mining company environmental performance.

Mining and protected areas are matters that should be discussed with the mining industry at such an international forum on protected areas. You will know



Sierra Classen in her 1920s bushwalking costume taking questions from the floor at the World Parks Congress last month. Yes, that's a Paddy Pallin lightweight japara tent draped over the dais (Image: K. Muir)

that coal mining in the Blue Mountains badly impacts on our World Heritage Area. There were, unfortunately too many papers by miners, financiers and economists, and too little critical review of these plans. This was one major failure of the congress – policies and programs were presented but few were critically examined.

Also disappointing was that wilderness hardly received an airing, which was annoying as good papers from Dr Geoff Mosley and others were offered.

Triage for threatened species protection was discussed and strongly disliked by delegates. The IUCN has developed tools for its Red List of threatened species, but conservationists like John Benson fear that poor quality vegetation data will see triage decision-making misapplied in NSW. Unless you know where the threatened

species are it is likely that any 'blood money' given to threatened species for clearing habitat will be misallocated.

Dunphy's Adventure was well received by delegates

Geoff Mosley thought the presentation by Alex Allchin, Sierra Classen and Wyn Jones of Dunphy's Kowmung Adventure was the most interesting at the entire Congress. The purpose of their presentation was to explain how young people could, by re-enacting the efforts of conservation pioneers, connect with the nature and national parks.

Their presentation provided fresh damper, a wide range of hand-drawn, historical, conservation maps, camping swags, launched the video of

Alex Allchin receiving the Rising Star Award from National Greens Leader Sen. Christine Milne and Prof. Don White at the 2014 Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference (Image: J. Tremain)



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Combining Wilderness and World Heritage: The Olympic Park Challenge

BY GEOFF MOSLEY

BECAUSE of Australia's incredibly important role in the founding of the national parks movement and the protection of the Antarctic Wilderness, the holding of the Sixth World Parks Congress at Sydney's Olympic Park in November offered a wonderful opportunity to showcase, advance and combine both causes.

Incredibly, in spite of there being 1007 sites on the World Heritage List, no part of Antarctica is included on it and there is no site on the List to commemorate the Nineteenth Century beginnings of the national parks movement.

Antarctica, the Earth's fifth largest continent, has spectacular ice landscapes and wildlife and is the world's largest wilderness. It is protected by the Antarctic Treaty and the Madrid Protocol to the Treaty, against all military and minerals activity. Listing the continent would provide recognition by all parties to the World Heritage Convention of these inspirational examples of international environmental

co-operation and thereby provide an additional level of protection. The Australian Antarctic Territory covers 42% of the continent and given that Australia played a leading role in the negotiations leading up to the Antarctic Treaty and the Madrid Protocol, it is well placed to lead on the next big step of gaining World Heritage recognition.

One of the most significant places in relation to the early phase in the history of the national parks movement is Royal National Park near Sydney, the first place in the world to be reserved for the purpose of a national park. This was in April, 1879. In the USA the term 'national park' applied at Yellowstone (1872) and Mackinac (1875) was used to indicate that these were public parks under federal jurisdiction.

In the history of Royal National Park we can see how the national park concept evolved and how it spawned other conservation developments.

In Antarctica the cross cutting themes of wilderness and World Heritage are combined like no other place



Shark Rock, Royal National Park. Photo: Bob Crombie

on earth and Royal National Park played a major role in the development of the wilderness area movement in Australia.

This matter was believed to be of particular relevance to the 2014 Congress because the Australian Government had recently announced its interest in pursuing both

these nominations. A more detailed case for World Heritage Listing was presented to the Congress. To see my powerpoint presentation visit the following website <http://wpc2014.digitalposters.com>. au go to 'search for a poster' and then type 'Mosley' in the search form. ■

Sydney's World Parks Congress

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their wilderness bushwalk and presented an original poem written for the event by Wyn. It was a fun presentation that engaged the school kids attending from Sydney Girls High, as well as park managers and academics. No other event touched the number of bases our presentation did and it was done with style; it was world-class. So while everyone talked about how you engage people, Colong engaged the audience. I was so proud of them.

Outcomes

The *Promise of Sydney* is a statement of undertakings and

each delegate was encouraged in workshops to make a pledge towards this promise. This was a very clever way to ensure all the usual platitudes and good intentions that embody such a non-binding statement can gain political traction over the next decade until the World Parks Congress in Russia in 2024.

The *Promise* includes pledges from governments, international organisations, the private sector, Indigenous leaders, community groups and individuals. By calling for individual commitments, the *Promise* set out an ambitious agenda to safeguard the planet's natural assets, ranging from halting rainforest loss in the Asia-Pacific and tripling ocean

protection off Africa's coasts to a business commitment to plant 1.3 billion trees along the historic Silk Road.

With organisations allocated to tasks, the *Promise* outlines a pathway for achieving the existing Aichi global targets for biodiversity, including protection of at least 17% of land and 10% of oceans by 2020.

Ecologically Sustainable Development was omitted from the *Promise of Sydney*. Instead one size fits all policy goals, like sustainable development, created confusion.

My big worry that government funding for conservation is contracting around the world, and triage

decisions on what to save, using developer blood money and private reserve management are being treated as substitutes for national parks. They are no such thing!

The constant broadening of the nature conservation agenda carries with it as many risks as opportunities. In the final analysis, however, broad public support for nature and national parks is only assured through investment in the next generation. The enduring gifts of nature and national parks are theirs to discover, enjoy and protect. Happily, the congress united over this idea and we will see the resolve to save nature become stronger than ever. ■

It's Time

BY KEITH MUIR

THE NSW Government had a wonderful opportunity to announce a new Gardens of Stone park at the World Parks Congress, but Environment Minister Stokes announced instead the protection of 1,700ha of wetland in a new national park on the lower Clarence River. This limited response along with banning smoking in parks means that expectations remain high for a Gardens of Stone announcement in the lead up to the state election next March.

As you know, last month the Planning Assessment Commission not only rejected the Coalpac open-cut near Cullen Bullen, but reasoned that conservation was the highest and best use for the area. The Commission also found that pagoda landforms are of special significance and worthy of the highest level of protection – that is they should be fully protected from mining-induced impacts. The overreaction of the coal industry to this decision is not really surprising – it's not used to losing. Then on November 17, Coalpac resolved to go into liquidation, creating breathing space for a reserve outcome, if the NSW Government wishes to boost its environmental credentials with voters.

Coalpac lost, not once but twice, its open-cut mining proposals in the public forests of the Gardens of Stone were firmly rejected by the independent umpire. This absolutely unique outcome in the history of NSW planning did not mean that the planning system is broken as the NSW Minerals Council claimed. It meant that Coalpac's open-cut proposals are no good and in the wrong place.

Remember too that Lithgow's power plants will go on using coal, but from underground mines, creating more employment and more skilled jobs than if Coalpac went ahead. Coalpac would have

replaced underground coal supply, producing dirty coal from open-cut pits, that would have resulted in fewer, less skilled workers being employed. The Commission's decision is good for the environment, jobs and Lithgow, which is why two local underground mine workers stood up at the Commission's public hearing and spoke against Coalpac's plans.

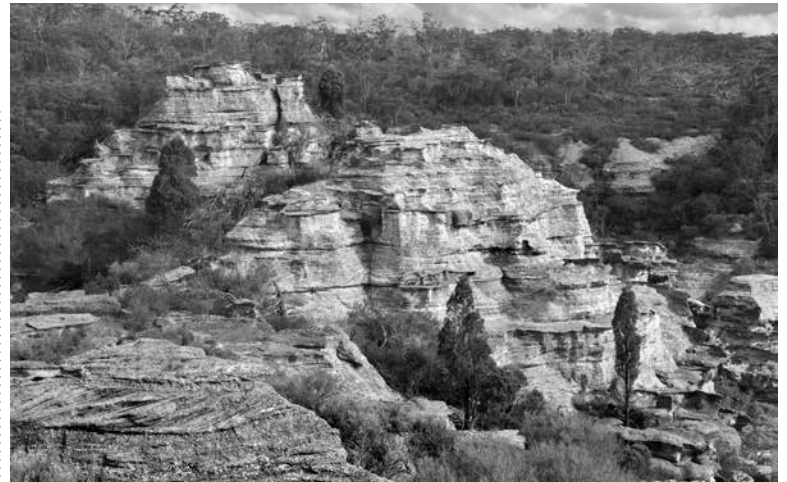
When it is all done and dusted, we must not forget that this pivotal decision isn't about the imperative of stopping the coal industry from making the planet unliveable, but about saving a unique part of the Australian bush, a decision that does not hurt Lithgow in the current coal market. Of course the coal for the power plant has to come from somewhere, and if that entails underground instead of open-cut mining, what is Lithgow's problem?

After a campaign spanning over 25 years the Gardens of Stone region should now be reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. As Ian Brown explained in 2012, it is right to protect the natural environment, spectacular pagodas of international significance, wonderful bushland, with so much wildlife, and so many threatened species that would be destroyed forever by open-cut mining.

The Commission's decision makes economic sense. Removing the last tonnes of coal by open-cut mining would destroy one of the best one tourism assets in the Blue Mountains.

The Gardens of Stone region has relatively gentle topography that enables easy access. As a result of the region's heritage diversity, scenic interest and accessibility from Sydney, it represents an outstanding opportunity for low-impact, nature-based tourism.

The Lithgow region needs the economic diversity that comes from tourism. Lithgow



Platye Pagodas in Gardens of Stone above Invincible Colliery (Image H. Gold)

needs to save the Gardens of Stone region from open-cut mining!

Our determination as opponents to open-cut mining stems from a passion to protect the natural and cultural attractions of the Gardens of Stone that are many, varied, widespread and highly appealing. Indeed features such as the Lost City are becoming iconic attractions of wide fame, despite the degradation and general havoc caused by unregulated off-road vehicle use.

When reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*, a network of visitor experiences would provide the basis for a whole new nature-based marketing initiative promoting the *Gardens of Stone region as the other side of the Blue Mountains*.

Hopelessly flawed economic arguments

Against this alternative vision, the Coalpac proposals would have provided zero benefit to NSW electricity consumers and not improved energy security. The economic arguments for the mine are contradicted by data from EnergyAustralia, the company that was to buy Coalpac if its proposals were approved.

Rod Campbell of The Australia Institute explained to the Planning Assessment Commission that EnergyAustralia's financial statements and its submission to the review of the Renewable Energy Target state that the electricity market is *grossly oversupplied*. In line with this situation, EnergyAustralia

rationalised its generation portfolio by closing the Wallerawang power plant.

EnergyAustralia's claim at the Planning Assessment Commission that the Coalpac mines would reduce NSW electricity prices by allowing EnergyAustralia to increase supply of electricity into the market is incorrect. Regardless of Coalpac, wholesale energy prices will be low for decades due to the wholesale electricity market being oversupplied.

Coalpac had nothing to do with energy security. If Coalpac had reopened it could have only provided 9Mt of coal over six years. EnergyAustralia has access to abundant coal resources. There is at least 160Mt in the vicinity of the Mount Piper power station and additional infrastructure had been approved, so that more remotely located coal could be accessed.

Lithgow has everything to gain by protecting the Gardens of Stone region. Katoomba, once a mining town, became a tourism mecca. Lithgow needs to broaden its cultural horizons and reinvent itself.

Help reserve the Gardens of Stone, write to the Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird, at Parliament House, Sydney, NSW, 2000. Follow the links to our web form letter at www.colongwilderness.org.au

References:

Brown, I., 2012, *A threatened wonderland the Gardens of Stone*, Colong Foundation and Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Campbell, R., 2014, *submission to the Planning Assessment Commission on the Coalpac mine modifications*.

SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION!

To: The Treasurer, Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd., Level 2, 332 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
 The enclosed remittance or advice covers the item(s) indicated by a tick. (One cheque payable to the Colong Foundation is sufficient to cover subscription and donation.)

- Membership application (\$30) to 31 December 2015
 (NB Membership application covers Bulletin subscription)
- Colong Bulletin Subscription (\$15) to 31 December 2015 (non members only)
- Membership renewal to 31 December 2015 (\$30) Life Membership (\$550)
- Tax deductible donation of \$____ to the Colong Wilderness Fund
- PLUS \$____ being for publications as indicated on the reverse side of this form.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Why not join or invite a friend to join?

Yes, I wish to become a member of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. I subscribe to the Foundation's aim of preserving Australia's wilderness remnants. I accept the liability provided in the Colong Foundation's Articles of Association to guarantee \$20 should it be needed in the event of the winding up of the Foundation. Signed



A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording... "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd."



ABOUT THE COLONG FOUNDATION

The Colong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, is Australia's longest-serving community advocate for wilderness. Its proposal for a Wilderness Act was accepted in 1987. To supplement this legislation, our Red Index, audits NSW wilderness areas, identifies threats and formulates site specific protection remedies. There are now 2,100,000 ha of protected wilderness in NSW. However, many beautiful and environmentally highly significant wilderness areas are not protected, such as the Pilliga and Goonoo on the north west slopes, the Deua Valley on the South Coast and the Tabletop and Main Range in the Snowy Mountains.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness has had a long and successful history. From its foundation in 1968 until 1975 it was the fighting force that prevented limestone mining and the destruction of native forest for pine plantations in the southern Blue Mountains. The Foundation not only played a leading role in realising Myles Dunphy's plan for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park, it pushed for its World Heritage listing, as well as the reservation of a Border Ranges National Park and Kakadu National Park. It has initiated successful campaigns for the protection of over a million hectares of wilderness in NSW.

The realisation of Myles Dunphy's vision of a comprehensive system of national parks with protected wilderness areas remains the primary objective of the Colong Foundation. Now, more than ever, the Foundation needs your support. Well financed and powerful rural interests, miners, loggers, resort developers, as well as four wheel drive enthusiasts, horse riders and others, have greatly increased the threats facing Australia's wild places.

Only with your help, through continued membership and donations, can the Foundation continue its campaigns for the preservation of the natural environment and effective nature-based national park management, and by concentrating on wilderness, these rare areas can be kept safe from development and misuse.

THE COLONG FOUNDATION

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