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ECOTOURISM RESEARCH**

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2 February 2006

The Secretary
Senate Environment, Comm Inf Tech & Arts Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sirs

INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PARKS

I enclose for your deliberations a set of journal articles, two books and several reports on the topic of tourism in Australia's national parks.

In summary, Australia's protected area agencies still feel the pinch of increasing visitor demand, increasing external pressures on protected environments, and increasing financial pressures on their own management capabilities.

One issue of critical current concern is the severe reduction in Commonwealth Government funding for World Heritage management. There seems to be endless buck-passing between EA, State National parks agencies and CMAs.

I have argued in the past for certain areas of State Forest to be used for tourism and conservation rather than logging. In practice, forestry agencies have adopted tourism, but without reducing logging, and have surrendered certain areas to parks agencies, but only after logging and roading them first.

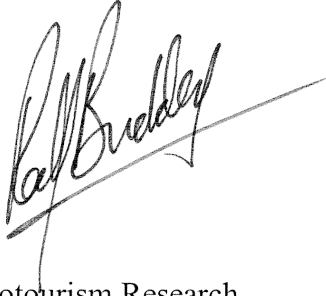
Over recent years, the National Heritage Trust has funded regional catchment management authorities to provide conservation works on private land. The actual conservation outcomes are not known but it appears that some of these funds at least, have not been very well used.

Conservation on private land, however – especially areas adjacent to national parks – will become increasingly critical in future, and NHT3, if it proceeds, needs much closer control and scrutiny. I enclose copies of recent correspondence with the Prime Minister and others regarding possible incentive mechanisms.

Private lands, however, are merely a supplement to the public protected area estate. Improved funding to expand, understand and manage the conservation estate is critical for the country's biodiversity and bioresources. This needs greater government investment, not greater reliance on tourism revenues.

If you would like me to give evidence in person to the Inquiry, I should be glad to do so.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralf Buckley', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Ralf Buckley
Director
International Centre for Ecotourism Research
Member CERRA and WTO WHA Scientific Advisory Committees
A/Chair, Biological Diversity Advisory Committee

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Encl

Buckley *et al* (eds) 2003 *Tourism, Conservation and Land Management* (CABI, Oxford)

Buckley (ed) 2003 *Tourism in Australia's Parks* (Griffith University)

Buckley 2002 *World Heritage Icon Value*

a journal articles