

Capertee Valley Environmental Group Inc.

ABN 31 096 498 385

CVEG Inc. Submission to the Senate Enquiry into Australia's National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Marine Protected Areas.

Introduction

Incorporated in 2004, Capertee Valley Environmental Group Inc.(CVEG) has over 60 Members, of whom the majority live in Capertee Valley and Capertee Village. Others live elsewhere in Central Western NSW and some in Sydney.

It was resolved during CVEG General Meeting, 18th February 2006, that CVEG concerns over the matter below be sent to you, bearing in mind the stated aims of the Enquiry:---

The Terms of Reference of the Senate Enquiry are to evaluate whether the funding and resources available are sufficient to meet the objectives of Protected Areas. To do this the Enquiry Committee will focus upon:---

- a. the values and objectives of the protected areas
- b. whether Governments provide sufficient resources for the objectives and their management
- c. threats to the objectives and management
- d. Governments' long-term responsibilities to create and manage protected areas
- e. the record of Governments in this regard.

CVEG's aim is to continue working to conserve, protect and maintain Natural Quiet and Biodiversity of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, particularly the World Heritage Area adjoining Capertee Valley and Wolgan Valley and near to Capertee Village and District.

Resource Deficiency

It may be concluded that there is resource- deficiency which prohibits the objectives and their management being sufficiently met. The Enquiry would otherwise not be undertaken. Point (a) is, it appears, inadequately resourced as per the proposition in Point (b).

Threats

CVEG sees climate change as the major threat to World Heritage Areas.

Particular conservation priority should be given to World Heritage Listed systems. These systems and areas have properties of uniqueness and ecological importance which have been confirmed against an International yardstick. Biological systems will come under significant pressure from climate change, change which is likely to proceed at a rate which will exceed the natural adaptive capabilities of those systems. (From: **Report to the Australian Greenhouse Office, DEH by The Allen Consulting Group... Executive Summary-Climate Change: Risk and Vulnerability**).

The probable exposure, magnitude of sensitivity, potential impact and risk due to vulnerability at a level dependent upon resilience, could be modified by intentional management. Managed Adaptation... developing and maintaining a strategy which incorporates mitigation... could influence sensitivity to exposure creating a cycle which reduces sensitivity and increases survival rate. (Modified from **Allen Consulting Group 2005**) This strategy would probably only work if the temperature increase does not exceed 2 degrees Centigrade. In the event of higher temperature the level of vulnerability would probably be too great to mitigate.

The Gardens of Stone Proposal Stage 2... a recent proposal by Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and The Colo Committee... has been documented for State Conservation Areas and National Park extensions between Medlow Bath and Capertee. If adopted, a result of the Proposal would be creation of a migratory corridor which would increase the natural adaptive capacities of biological systems which are under threat from climate change.

Fire Management, Fire Control and Park Use

Existing fire trails, where needed, should be improved and then maintained to a standard which optimises safety of fire- fighters. Quicker and safer access to bushfires is highly desirable for minimising risk and for reducing damage to fragile ecosystems.

CVEG supports the concept put forward by Lithgow Environment Group (LEG) of the "User Pay" principle. With well- maintained fire trails there could be... for a fee, and supervised by adequately trained National Park Officers or State Forestry Personnel... four wheel drive excursions into remote regions. Supervised, properly guided, shooting expeditions could be on offer (also for a fee) using the proposed well- maintained fire trails as starting points. This could be *raison d'etre* for such fire trails, a means of feral animal control and provision of enjoyable recreational activities for people who like that kind of thing whilst providing safer... if that's possible... fire fighting infrastructure. LEG's suggestion, supportive of mitigation, envisages sustainable and economically viable use of some areas and could satisfy demand for greater access to them.

Governments' Long-term Responsibilities to Create and Manage Protected Areas.

There is a real need for developing migratory corridors to assist the natural relocation of species which will come under stress due to climate change. This factor should be paramount on the agenda of, both, State and Federal Governments. This alone means more funding is needed.

Our Group firmly believes that protection of biodiversity within World Heritage Areas is of the utmost importance. The predicted loss of perhaps fifty percent of our Nation's

biodiversity within the next twenty years should be taken seriously by Government, State and Federal alike.

It is for Government to establish a system which protects our Country's World Heritage Listed Areas. Biodiversity is an integral, vital, part of these Areas. Adequate funding of the existing establishment and funding for adjuncts needed to mitigate the many adverse impacts which climate change has created, is creating and will create should be moved quickly through the necessary processes.

Yours sincerely,

G. William Sanday

President

In behalf of

Capertee Valley Environmental Group Inc.

By email