

Conservation Commission Annual Report 2000 - 2001

Transmittal to the Minister

Minister for the Environment and Heritage

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit the first Annual Report 2000 - 2001 of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, covering its activities for the period ending 30 June 2001, according to Section 31 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

The Conservation Commission is constituted under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, and in performing its functions complies with the following state legislation:

Disability Services Act 1993
Electoral Act 1907
Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985
Freedom of Information Act 1992
Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987
Industrial Relations Act 1979
Library Board of Western Australia 1951
Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984
Public Sector Management Act 1994
State Records Act 2000
State Supply Commission Act 1991
Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 1981

Thomas Day
Acting Chairman from 21 July 2001

Chairman's Overview

It is with pleasure that I submit the inaugural report covering the first eight months of the Conservation Commission's operations.

The Conservation Commission was formed on 16 November 2000. The Commission had its first formal meeting on 27 November 2000 and has met monthly since that date. The Director was appointed in January 2001 and support staff later in the year. However, the full complement of staff will not be on board until the next financial year. We have had excellent support from a senior secondee from the Department of Conservation and Land Management in the intervening period.

The focus of the Conservation Commission in the first months has been on setting strategic direction based on the Commission's Statutory functions and in the application of this to its operations. Full details of the business addressed during the year are given later in the Report.

Relationship building with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, which provides the Conservation Commission with technical advice and administrative support, has also been an important focus. The Department's support during the year has been very much appreciated.

The Government's decision to bring forward the development of the new Forest Management Plan has been a challenge, which the Conservation Commission members and staff have met with enthusiasm and professionalism. Members have committed extra time to ensure that this task is undertaken in a timely, transparent and consultative manner.

However, the forest area is only a portion of the Conservation Estate, and the Conservation Commission has a committee that is working closely with the Department of Conservation and Land Management to formulate a framework and priorities for the development of management plans for the remainder of the estate.

I am sure that this early groundwork will be built on in future years, as the Conservation Commission addresses the full range of its responsibilities.

I wish to thank fellow Commission members and the staff for their commitment during the period and, in particular, I would like to congratulate the Director Christine Shervington for her enthusiasm, energy and drive. I look forward to the Commission providing a valuable contribution to the Conservation cause in Western Australia.

Campbell Ansell
CHAIRMAN 11 November 2000 - 30 June 2001

Members

The Conservation Commission of Western Australia has nine members who, in the opinion of the Minister have knowledge of and experience in:

- conservation or management of biodiversity;
 - environmental management, including the management of the natural environment for use for recreational purposes; or
 - the sustainable use of natural resources,
- or,
- who have a particular function or vocational interest relevant to the functions of the Conservation Commission, and
 - who, in the opinion of the Minister, are able to make a contribution to the functions of the Conservation Commission.

One member is to be a person who, in the opinion of the Minister:

- has knowledge of and experience in Aboriginal cultural and Aboriginal heritage matters relevant to the functions of the Conservation Commission; and
- is able to make a contribution to the functions of the Conservation Commission.

The inaugural members of the Conservation Commission and their terms of appointment are:

Mr Campbell Ansell, Chairman	November 2000-November 2003
Mr Thomas Day, Deputy Chairman	November 2000-November 2002
Mrs Patricia Barblett	November 2000-November 2002
Associate Professor Jennifer Davis	November 2000-November 2003
Mr Glen Kelly	November 2000-November 2002
Mrs Barbara Morrell	November 2000-November 2001
Mr Graeme Rundle	November 2000-November 2001
Mr Rodney Safstrom	November 2000-November 2003
Dr Joanna Young	November 2000-November 2001

The Conservation Commission held eight meetings during the reporting period.

Summary of the Conservation Commission's activities and outcomes November 2000-June 2001

The Conservation Commission was formed on 16 November 2000 under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

Strategic Direction

The Conservation Commission has set itself a three-year mission to achieve a number of objectives relating to its statutory requirements and strategic direction, as well as Government policy, and has adopted the following vision and mission.

Vision

Western Australia is recognised as a place where biological diversity and the natural environment are valued and protected, and natural resources are managed sustainably.

Mission

By its leadership and actions, the Conservation Commission will work to conserve the State's biological diversity and to ensure the conservation estate for which it has responsibility is managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.

The Conservation Commission's achievements during the first eight months are detailed below under the Commission's key result areas.

Policy

In meeting its objective to develop and maintain policy and provide policy advice to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and to develop policies that promote the conservation of the natural environment of the State, the Conservation Commission has undertaken the following:

- A 'Framework for the Development of Policies, Position Statements, Guidelines (for Monitoring and Assessing the Implementation of Management Plans by CALM) & Procedure Manuals', was developed and adopted.
- A review of the former National Parks and Reserves Authority policies, including Wilderness Policy, Aboriginal involvement in National Parks and Nature Conservation Policy, Mosquito Control Policy, Drainage Policy and Basic Raw materials, was initiated with a view to ascertaining whether or not they were consistent with the Conservation Commission's mission and whether or not they should be adopted by it.

Estate

In meeting the objectives of

- identifying what is required for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for Western Australia; and
- considering proposed changes of purpose, or boundary of, land vested in the Conservation Commission and evaluating potentially incompatible activities on that land with a view to maximising biological diversity,

the following activities have been undertaken:

- Changes in purpose or boundaries, including advice of any contentious issue or activity, or the need to excise areas that are not of value in maintaining biological diversity, are considered at each meeting of the Commission. Provision of advice on applications is subsequently provided to the Minister.
- In working towards establishing a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserves system, the Commission's considered changes to reserves and their uses. During the period, a total of 17,610 ha of national parks were added to the estate, comprising 1,571 ha south-east of Margaret River, at present unnamed, but destined to become part of the Blackwood National Park; and 16,039 ha north-east of Walpole, which is unnamed, but unofficially known as Mt Roe - Mt Lindesay. There were no additional conservation parks added to the estate during the period. A total of 1,262 ha were added to the nature reserves: North Tarin Rock Nature Reserve (726 ha), Goegrup Lake Nature Reserve (319 ha) and Adele Island Nature Reserve (unofficial name, 217 ha).

Lands acquired by the Department of Conservation and Land Management in the present financial year, but not yet vested in the Conservation Commission, will be detailed in the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Annual Report.

- Provision of advice to the Department of Conservation and Land Management on matters relating to leases, licences, permits, mining tenements and other activities on land vested in the Conservation Commission. During the year, the following applications were considered: 83 lease applications in five batches; 206 licence applications in six; and 177 apiary permits in six.
- During the year, the 68 mining tenement applications were referred to the Conservation Commission; two decisions required under section 24 of the *Mining Act 1978* were made, and advice was provided on request to the Minister for Environment and Heritage on 21 tenement applications.

Management Plans

In meeting the statutory responsibility for the preparation and submission of proposed management plans for lands vested in the Conservation Commission to the Minister, and for the review of expiring plans, the Conservation Commission established a Management Plan Review Committee to liaise with the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

- In conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Conservation Commission has developed guidelines for the preparation of management plans for lands vested in the Conservation Commission. An integral part of this process has been to establish, with the Department, agreed priorities for the development and review of management plans for the coming year. It also provides for appropriate mechanisms whereby indigenous groups, organisations and traditional owners can fully participate, in a culturally appropriate manner, in the development and implementation of management plans.
- During the first year, the Conservation Commission has considered the drafts of proposed Management Plans for Herdsman's Lake and the Kimberley Region, and approved them for release for public comment.

The draft of the proposed Kimberley Regional Management Plan was revised before publication to take into account the protection and preservation of Aboriginal interests and cultural values, in line with the Government's new direction and the Conservation Commission's strategy.

The draft Herdsman's Lake Management Plan was released on World Environment Day by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

- During the year, an Audit Manager was appointed to commence duties in the next financial year to assess and audit, on a regular basis, the implementation of, and compliance with, existing and new management plans prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Forest Products Commission. The Conservation Commission developed generic guidelines for monitoring and assessing the implementation of management plans by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Forest Management

In implementing the Government's *Protecting Our Old Growth Forests* Policy and in order to provide certainty for the future, Government brought forward the development of the new Forest Management Plan. The Conservation Commission has a statutory role to prepare management plans and aims to ensure that the State forest and timber reserves vested in the Conservation Commission are managed on an ecologically sustainable basis, and that these principles are applied in the management of forest produce throughout Western Australia. Development of the new Forest Management Plan is being undertaken through the agency of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and where applicable, acting jointly with the Forest Products Commission, the Waters and Rivers Commission and any relevant water utility.

The Conservation Commission has established a Steering Committee guide the process and a Scoping Paper was formulated, published and public comment was sought. The Scoping Paper was revised in light of the public input and a Public Participation Program was initiated to ensure community input into the planning process.

Consistent with the Government's *Protecting Our Old Growth Forests* Policy, a number of reviews were initiated as part of the process of monitoring, assessing and auditing the existing Forest Management Plan, as well as providing input to future management plans.

A Preliminary Report of the Independent Panel on Calculating Sustained Yield for the Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 was submitted to the Conservation Commission in April 2001. This Report made a number of recommendations with regard to the new Forest Management Plan, which the Conservation Commission agreed to implement. In particular, a review of Silviculture Guidelines, with respect to regeneration adequacy, salinity constraints and habitat considerations, was commissioned to inform decision in the writing of the new Plan.

The Conservation Commission liaised with the Dieback Consultative Committee to implement the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 1010, 'Protocol for the identification and prioritisation for management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* protectable areas'. The terms of reference for a Social and Economic Impact Study of the potential impact of the new Plan on regional communities were adopted for commissioning in the new financial year.

The Conservation Commission established a Public Participation Program with an independent Coordinator as part of the development of the Plan, to ensure that the community had the opportunity to provide input to the Plan in an effective, timely and productive manner.

Advice and Promotion

The Conservation Commission meets regularly with the Minister for the Environment and Heritage to inform her of current issues facing the Conservation Commission. Additionally, the Conservation Commission provides advice on specific issues concerning the conservation estate as a when required.

There have been no instances under the *CALM Act 1984* Section 24 where the Minister for the Environment and Heritage has given the Conservation Commission directions in writing with respect to the exercise or performance of its functions.

In accordance with the *CALM Act 1984* Section 17 (4), there have also been no instances under the *CALM Act 1984* Section 19 (10) where advice has been provided to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and she has decided to act otherwise than in accordance with the recommendation.

Other Conservation Commission Activities

Field Trips

In order to introduce Commission members to conservation estate management issues and brief them on specific issues of relevance to their charter, the Conservation Commission undertook two major field trips during 2001.

South West forest regions - 21 March - 23 March 2001

The tour was attended by all Conservation Commission members. It aimed to inform the members about:

- forest types and structure;
- multiple use of the forests;
- forest management practices;
- forest management planning processes;
- public participation and consultation processes; and
- ecotourism in the forest region.

Members visited the northern jarrah forest, (Dwellingup, Harvey and Collie area), the central and southern forest areas, including Manjimup and Pemberton, and the karri forest region around Pemberton.

Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park - 17 and 18 May 2001

Eight of the Conservation Commission members toured the Park, to familiarise themselves with Park Management issues and, in particular, the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. They were exposed to management plan processes and their applications, and, in particular, park values, recreational activities, natural values of the land and seascape, and cultural and heritage values were examined.

Opening of the Karijini National Park Visitor Centre - 22 June 2001

In addition to the major field trips, the Director Christine Shervington and member Mrs Pat Barblett represented the Conservation Commission at the opening of the new Karijini National Park Visitor Centre by the Premier, Hon Dr Geoff Gallop. The party toured the National Park, viewed the site for proposed new facilities and discussed park management issues with the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Pilbara Regional Manager and local rangers.

Issues and Trends

There are a number of specific Government policies that the Commission will advance in the coming year.

Forest Management Plan

The main issue facing the Conservation Commission in the forthcoming year is the preparation of the new Forest Management Plan, including the management of the Public Participation Program. The Public Participation Program encompasses regional and city forums, with the aim of including community and stakeholder input into the development of the next Forest Management Plan, as articulated in the Government's *Protecting Our Old Growth Forests* Policy. The new Plan will be completed by the end of the next financial year.

Inventory of log stockpiles

In accordance also with the Government's *Protecting Our Old Growth Forests* Policy, an independent audit of log stockpiles and forest 'waste' will be undertaken with the aim of utilising as much of this timber as possible. The Conservation Commission will prepare an inventory of log stockpiles and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the system that manages log stockpiles and in-forest waste, and, if necessary, will recommend improvements.

Aboriginal joint management

Again, as outlined in the Government's *Protecting Our Old Growth Forests* Policy, the Conservation Commission, in meeting its statutory requirement to prepare management plans, will develop and implement joint management strategies for conservation reserves in full consultation with indigenous people. These strategies will take into account the inclusion of indigenous people in management and in decision making.

Expansion of Conservation estate

As a consequence of the Government's policy to create new National Parks and new reserves, the Conservation estate will be increased. The Conservation Commission will factor these areas into the priorities for the development of management plans.

Conservation Commission budget

The Conservation Commission was established with a minimal budget. Submissions for additional funds were not successful for the coming financial year. Therefore, it will be a challenge for the Commission to continue to develop its policy and audit functions and responsibilities within the financial vote.

Executive

The Conservation Commission has the following staff:

Acting Director:	Christine Shervington (appointed as Executive Officer in January 2001)
Personal Assistant:	Vikki Santwyk (appointed March 2001)
	Kylie Dyson (on secondment from CALM November 2000-March 2001)
Project Officer:	Kevin Vear (on secondment from CALM November 2000-June 2001)

For the duration of the Forest Management Planning process, a Public Involvement Coordinator, Marie Hauxby, Tailored Media, was appointed in June 2001.

Corporate Services

Corporate Services, including Human Resource Management, Financial Service and Information Technology support are provided under a Bureau Services Agreement with the Department of Conservation and Land Management Corporate Services Division.

An Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and Salary Packaging agreement were developed for Conservation Commission staff.

A Performance Management system has been established based on the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Individual Development and Performance Enhancement System.

As noted above, the Conservation Commission complies with a number of other Department of Conservation and Land Management policies and procedures, for example, the Code of Conduct, the Disability Service Plan and the Use of Credit Cards, until such time as the Commission develops its own.

The Conservation Commission is committed to the recycling of waste paper.

Director's Statement on Compliance

Disability Services Plan Outcomes

In the absence of its own Disability Services Plan, the Conservation Commission works to the Department of Conservation and Land Management Plan, provided through the human resource management service.

In particular, the Conservation Commission has adopted the strategies to ensure compliance with outcomes focused on ensuring Conservation Commission information can be made available to people with disabilities; and providing increased opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public consultation, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

Statement of compliance with Public Sector Standards

The Department of Conservation and Land Management undertakes Human Resource Management for the Conservation Commission under a Bureau Service Agreement.

In the administration of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, I have complied with the Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management, the WA Code of Ethics and the Department of Conservation and Land Management Code of Conduct, which is that used by the Commission.

Information on both the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct is provided to employees on commencement with the Conservation Commission.

No complaints have been lodged under the Code of Ethics during the reporting period and there have been no instances of misconduct.

Information Statement 2001

The *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (FOI)* provides that the public can access the majority of the records of the Conservation Commission. Wherever possible the Commission will endeavour to provide access to information as quickly and easily as possible without the client needing to submit a formal FOI request.

The Conservation Commission's records are managed in-house, with professional advice through the bureau service provided by the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Corporate Services Division. Documents held by the Conservation Commission include routine administrative records, Commission Agendas and Minutes, committee records, financial reports. Personnel records are held in CALMpeople Services Branch, which undertakes Human Resource Management for the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission is in the process of formulating a records disposal schedule, and the former National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority records will be forwarded to the Western Australian Archives, when the Schedule is approved.

Submission of FOI request

In the first instance, contact the Conservation Commission by telephone, email or in person, as it may not be necessary to submit a formal FOI request. The Commission will endeavour to satisfy each information request as quickly and comprehensively as possible.

Should an applicant wish to proceed with a formal application, a valid FOI application needs to be in writing; to give sufficient information so the document(s) requested can be identified; give an Australian address to which notices can be sent and be lodged at the Conservation Commission office with any application fee, if payable.

Applications and Enquiries

FOI Coordinator: Director
Conservation Commission
Corner of Hackett Drive and Australia II Drive
Crawley 6009
Tel: 08 9389 1766
Email: information@conservation.wa.gov.au

Applications will be acknowledged on receipt and a decision will be made and forwarded in writing within 45 days.

The means of accessing documentation is to be determined by negotiation between the Conservation Commission and the Applicant. Documents can be inspected at the Conservation Commission office, posted, sent by facsimile or emailed.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with an access decision she/he can request the Conservation Commission to undertake an internal review of that decision and, subsequently, a review by the Information Commissioner, if still not satisfied.

Amendment of Personal Information

Under FOI procedures, an individual may also apply to amend personal information about themselves if they think that it may be inaccurate or misleading. To do this, applications need to contact the designated FOI Coordinator nominated above.

Access Charges

The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* states that a \$30 fee must accompany a valid FOI application unless the request is entirely for personal information about the applicant. The Conservation Commission can help applicants determine if their enquiry is likely to attract the application fee if they contact the FOI Coordinator before submitting an application.

Fees may also apply for copying or transcribing information. These will be charged at cost, depending on the type and volume of copying necessary to meet the request. Photocopies will be charged at 20 cents per A4 page.

Concessions of 25% are available to applicants who can demonstrate financial hardship. As noted above, no fee is charged for a request to amend personal information.

2000-2001 Statistics

No requests were made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* during the reporting period.

Electoral Act 1907 (s175ZE Disclosure)

In accordance with Section 175 ZE of the *Electoral Act 1907*, the Conservation Commission of Western Australia incurred the following expenditure in advertising, market research, polling, direct mail and media advertising:

Total expenditure for 2000 /2001 was \$8381.60

Expenditure was in the following areas:

Advertising agencies nil
Market research organisations nil
Polling organisations nil
Direct mail organisations nil
Media advertising (including employment, public participation notices and advertising of contracts) \$8381.60