

# LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

## SOUTH GIPPSLAND STUDY AREA DISTRICT 1

### FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**October 1973**

This text is a facsimile of the former Land Conservation Council's South Gippsland Area, District 1 Final Recommendations. It has been edited to incorporate Government decisions on the recommendations made by Order in Council dated 18 March 1975 and 24 May 1977 and formal amendments. Subsequent changes may not have been incorporated.

Added text is shown underlined; deleted text is shown ~~struck through~~.

Annotations [in brackets] explain the origin of changes.

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1: 250 000 Map	omitted
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## A. INTRODUCTION

The Land Conservation Council was established by the *Land Conservation Act 1970*. As its main function, it makes recommendations to the Minister for Conservation about the use of public land in order to provide for the balanced use of land in Victoria. This report contains the Council's recommendations for the use of public land in the South Gippsland Study Area District 1.

Notices showing the boundary of the study area and advising that an investigation was to be carried out were published on June 25th, 1971. A thorough study of the area was then undertaken, and a descriptive report was published on December 20th, 1972. In the following 60 days the Council received submissions on the future use of public land from a wide cross-section of the community. Individuals, associations, companies, and local and State government bodies made helpful submissions covering most feasible forms of land use for the district.

After considering those submissions and the descriptive report, and visiting the area, the Council formulated proposed recommendations, which were published on June 11th, 1973. In the following 60 days, a further 58 submissions commenting on the proposals were received. After considering these submissions in turn, the Council prepared these final recommendations.

Extracts from the *Land Conservation Act 1970*, covering the procedure to be followed in formulating recommendations, were published in the descriptive report.

Table 1 compares land tenure between the study district and Victoria as a whole. Most of the alienated land is used for agricultural production, but about 20 000 hectares (ha) are, or are likely to be, used for softwood production. It is important to realise that differences exist between the qualities and types of land in the different categories of tenure. In general, land types that were well suited to agriculture were alienated some time ago.

**Table 1.: Land tenure**

	Victoria		Study area	
	Million (ha)	Percentage	Thousand (ha)	Percentage
Alienated land (or in process)	13.66	60	151 *	66
Public land in large blocks	6.86	30	57	25
Other public land	2.24	10	20 *	9
Total	22.76	100	228	100

\* Approximate figures 1 hectare = 2.47 acres.

At present, more than half of the public land in this study area is used at very low intensity for a variety of purposes - hardwood timber production, sand and gravel extraction, recreation, conservation of flora and fauna, and honey production. Smaller areas are used more intensively for softwood production, conservation, recreation, and waste treatment. Table 2 sets out present and recommended usage. Most areas have several uses and it is not possible to classify this land precisely.

The proposed recommendations are made on a block by block basis to conform with the descriptive report. They are preceded by general recommendations and an outline of the various forms of land use common to several blocks. The areas quoted are approximate. Where land is not specifically mentioned, present legal uses and tenure should continue.

**Table 2: Public land use.**

Primary use category	Present		Recommended	
	Thousand (ha)	Percentage	Thousand (ha)	Percentage
1. Low-intensity use for several purposes	33.5	59	9.5**	17
2. Recreation and conservation areas	11	19	31	54
3. Softwood production	3	5	6	10
4. Hardwood production			1	2
5. Waste disposal***	9.5	17	9.5	17
Total	57	100	57	100

Notes:

- \* Figures have been rounded and only include public land in large blocks. The total area of the study district is about 228 000 ha, of which 151 000 ha are privately owned.
- \*\* Largely uncommitted land, where use is to be considered when adjacent areas are studied.
- \*\*\* Council has noted that this land use is proposed and has recommended the investigation of alternatives.

The areas of land referred to in the recommendations have been identified as clearly as practicable, having regard to the information available and the comparatively small scale of plans. However, the boundaries of many areas have not been precisely surveyed and are therefore subject to minor modifications, road excisions, and other adjustments that may become necessary.

## B. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. General

In the study area, much of the land has been cleared for agriculture. Also about 20 000 ha are, or are likely to be, used for softwood production. It is desirable where possible that the remaining undeveloped land be retained under native vegetation.

Council wishes to stress the need for adequate management and protection of public land, as it has made its recommendations on the assumption that adequate resources will be provided for the appropriate managing authorities. If these resources are not provided, the Council's recommendations cannot be effectively implemented. There is an urgent need to make additional field staff and finance available, particularly to the National Parks Service. It is recommended that the present legal status and management of public land in each case be retained until the relevant authorities have the capacity to manage each area.

In particular, the Council stresses the critical need for protection from fire and makes the following recommendations.

- 1a** (i) That State Forest that, through processes under the *Land Conservation Act 1970*, is changed from such status should remain subject to the fire-protection provisions of the *Forests Act 1958* that apply to State Forest
- (ii) That satisfactory arrangements be made to ensure that Forests Commission fire-fighting personnel obtain or retain (as the case may be) familiarity with such land for fire-fighting purposes
- (iii) That all fire-protection works conducted by the Forests Commission on such land, other than suppression of wildfires, be subject to prior agreement between the management authority and the Forests Commission
- (iv) That in the event of failure to reach agreement as referred to in (iii), such matters should be referred to the Governor in Council for decision.

The Council, being aware that the Forests Commission and National Parks Service have already discussed the matter fully and reached agreement on the principles, further recommends that the two bodies continue their collaboration and devise a *modus operandi* for the implementation of such agreement.

### Parks

A park is here defined as an area of land reserved - for its scenery, biological content, or other features of interest - for public recreation and education in a natural environment. The conservation of native flora, fauna, and other features would be an essential part of national parks management, whereas other parks may be intensively developed for picnicking or other forms of open-space recreation by large numbers of people in semi-natural surroundings.

Application of appropriate management techniques requires a scheme of classification of parks. For the same reason, it may be necessary to classify some parks into zones. A need to create additional parks is recognised at this time, for while the area of natural bushland is decreasing, the demand for recreation in these surroundings is increasing.

Public recreation and education in natural surroundings is a major use proposed for substantial

areas of public land in the Holey Plains and Gippsland Lakes blocks. Council has noted submissions from several youth groups suggesting that land be made available for permanent camp sites and education areas, and recommends that these be examined by the relevant management authorities.

## **Wildlife**

Wildlife reserves are selected for their ecological significance for (or regional representation of) a biological community or a species, or for their value as a stopover for migratory and nomadic species. In some wildlife reserves the environment may be managed for selected wildlife species, while in others it may be managed to maintain the appropriate ecological associations. Implicit in the conservation of any animal or group of animals is the need to conserve the associated habitat.

The importance of other secondary uses of wildlife reserves, such as outdoor recreation and flora conservation, is recognised.

In the Gippsland Lakes block, wildlife conservation is the primary use recommended for three areas of public land and is a major use recommended for several zones within the proposed coastal reserve. In particular, Council acknowledges the need to conserve habitat for the New Holland mouse, water-birds, and migratory honey-eaters. It recommends the encouragement of game species, such as waterfowl and hog-deer, for western zones in the coastal reserve.

## **Hardwood timber production**

Most of the public lands of this study area have a low potential for economic hardwood production. However, within the Callignee block small areas of mountain ash forest remain, and it is recommended that 240 ha (600 acres) of similar areas (former farmland) with a high capability for hardwood production be replanted to hardwood species. Recreation and the conservation of flora and fauna are important secondary uses of areas that primarily support hardwood timber production.

## **Softwood timber production**

Council acknowledges that softwood timber production is an important component of the regional economy. The industry supplies a pulp mill at Maryvale and a particle-board factory at Rosedale. Most of the existing softwood plantations in this region are on private land, and Council strongly recommends that marginal agricultural land form the basis of further expansion of the softwood timber industry. It recognises that such land is becoming increasingly difficult to buy.

The Callignee, Stradbroke, and Holey Plains proposals below each recommend additional areas for softwood production adjacent to or surrounded by existing plantations. The gross additional area proposed for softwoods is about 2300 ha (5700 acres), of which 600 ha (1500 acres) now consist of former farmland purchased by the Forests Commission, and 650 ha (1630 acres) are to be exchanged for hardwood forest at present owned by A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd.

It is recommended that 400 ha (990 acres) be considered for future exchange for lands currently held by A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd. adjacent to the Morwell National Park and the proposed Mt. Worth National Park.

In parcels retained as public land and proposed for softwood production, at least 10 per cent of the gross area should be retained under native vegetation in addition to land required for roads

and fire breaks. This factor has been taken into account when allocating gross areas.

In order to provide diversity of landscape and habitat for native fauna, guidelines similar to those currently implemented by the Forests Commission of Victoria should be enforced within plantation area leases. In particular, the native vegetation around swamps, streams, and gullies should be retained.

The area of public land (at present under native vegetation) that is recommended for softwood production will supplement additional planting of private land.

## **Agriculture**

Most public land in the study area has a low capability for agricultural production. This statement is supported by the extensive purchase of former farmlands for timber production that has occurred over the years and the lack of submissions in favour of agricultural use of the land.

Should the recent higher demand and prices for agricultural products continue, private lands in this and other districts can meet the increased demands through more intensive use.

In a few situations where small areas of public land have been considerably altered from their native state, alienation for agriculture has been suggested.

## **Mining**

Coal, sand, gravel, and limestone occur on public lands in the study area. At present it is not possible to set aside areas of public land sufficient to meet all future requirements, largely because minerals and stone deposits often show great variability, and exploration and testing of areas may be both difficult and costly. There is a present demand for sand, gravel, and limestone from public lands.

The large deposits of brown coal beneath public lands here may possibly not be exploited for 20 years.

Council notes the submission by the State Electricity Commission, which makes clear the fact that future development of these coalfields would have an impact on much larger areas than those occupied by the open-cut mines. Many of the recommendations for the Holey Plains and Stradbroke blocks would be affected by such mining; for example, development of the Gormandale coalfield would affect Merriman Creek.

The reservation of conservation areas need not automatically exclude the opportunity for exploration for stone, minerals, or petroleum under strict supervision. Rather, attention should be directed towards the protection of other values and interests.

It is recommended that existing 'stone' extraction on public lands be allowed to continue and that, where necessary, reasonable extensions into surrounding land containing similar material be permitted. The existing legal provisions regarding method of working and eventual reclamation should be enforced, and buffer areas, in which no extraction is permitted, should be maintained. Recommendations for the Holey Plains block contain specific reference to limestone quarrying on Merriman Creek.

## **Uncommitted land**

Several areas on the boundary of the study district form part of much larger parcels of public land. Where there are no urgent and clear demands for these lands to be used for a specific purpose, it is recommended that they be considered when preparing land use recommendations for the larger adjoining areas. Uncommitted land should be used to satisfy present needs, provided this does not irrevocably change its character. Low-intensity timber and honey production and outdoor recreation are clearly reasonable uses of such lands.

## **Waste disposal**

Public land in this study area is also used for the disposal of industrial and domestic waste. The Gippsland Lakes recommendations cover this use of land.

## **Other recreation and conservation areas**

### **Bushland reserves**

Small and sometimes isolated areas of bushland are reserved to ensure some diversity in localities that largely comprise agricultural land or softwood plantation. Such reserves are recommended for the Stradbroke and Holey Plains blocks.

### **Flora reserves**

These are set aside to preserve particular species or associations of native plants for the enjoyment of the public. One such reserve is recommended in the Holey Plains block.

### **Stream frontages** (See Rivers and Streams SI - *Chapter E*)

It is recommended that all reserved stream frontages in this study area be used to conserve native flora and fauna, to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to maintain the local character and quality of the landscape; and that these frontages remain permanently reserved under section 14 of the *Land Act 1958*.

Where these frontages are subject to water frontage licences, the relevant legislation and regulations should be amended so as to clearly provide for free public access to and use of these lands for recreation, such as fishing.

The Thomson and Latrobe Rivers and Merriman Creek are used by anglers, shooters, and picnickers; the stream margins are also important for stock water supply and grazing. In a few localities substantial stands of red gum, melaleuca, and swampland vegetation remain. Although largely on private land, the vegetation along the Latrobe River from Rosedale to Longford is of particular note.

Because of the importance of indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat along stream frontages, the environmental consequences of any works designed to improve drainage or otherwise alter streams, should receive adequate assessment.

### **Trigonometrical stations**

The district contains 28 trigonometrical stations. It is recommended that the minimum area necessary for survey purposes be reserved around those on public land in the district where it would otherwise remain as unreserved Crown Land, and that where other forms of public tenure apply the Department of Crown Lands and Survey have the right to occupy - a minimum area around the station and maintain lines of sight.



## Special recreation areas

Several areas of public land are currently used for football grounds, motor racing, and a rifle range, and it is recommended below that these uses continue.

## 2. Holey Plains

This block was described on pages 87–91 of the descriptive report. The total area of public land is 14 416 ha (35 622 acres), of which it is proposed that 10 800 ha (26 700 acres) be retained in its natural condition and be permanently reserved for recreation and the conservation of fauna and flora.

The Coolungoolun brown coalfield underlies part of the land forming the subject of these recommendations, but the State Electricity Commission considers that it would probably not have any need to develop the field within the next two decades. However, in view of the world energy crisis, it is considered that these coal resources may have to be developed at an earlier date for the production of liquid and gaseous fuel. The additional area recommended for pine planting could produce one short-rotation softwood crop in two decades.

There are 1980 ha (4892 acres) previously held as plantation area lease and used for softwood production; it is proposed that an additional area of 1100 ha (2700 acres) be made available for this purpose. The difficulty of fire protection for softwood plantations is acknowledged. These proposed recommendations are illustrated in Plan 1, following the text.

### Recommendations

- 2a** That an area of about 10 450 ha, as shown on Plan 1, be permanently reserved as a State Park to provide for public enjoyment, education, and inspiration in a natural environment, and that it be managed by the National Parks Service.

Addition to Holy Plains State Park. Crown land allotment 69b, Parish of Rosedale should be included in the Holy Plains Park. (LCC letter to Minister 2/7/1976).

A substantial area of public land should be reserved in this block because the vegetation type, although widespread on public land in this study area, has very restricted occurrence outside it. In addition, a large proportion of the public submissions received by the Council urged that this particular area be retained under native vegetation.

Part of the Coolungoolun brown coalfield underlies some of this land to the east and it is recommended that further exploration to establish the quality and quantity of these coal resources be permitted under the authority of the State Electricity Commission or the Mines Department. In either case, consultation with the land management authority should precede any exploration.

Council is aware of the need to protect the enclosed and adjacent softwood plantations from fire. The general recommendations concerning fire protection apply to this area; moreover fuel-reduced zones are necessary around the perimeter of the proposed State Park and along the road from Rosedale to the limestone quarry. The margins of adjoining lands should also be used so as to reduce the fire hazard.

Oil and gas pipelines also pass through the area. These factors and the need for fire protection must be considered in the preparation of a management plan. Any additional oil and gas

pipelines that pass through this area should be confined to existing corridors where practicable so as to minimise conflict with the primary uses recommended above.

The public land totally encloses two areas of private land. One is owned by A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd., and consideration should be given to the purchase (or exchange) of this large central softwood plantation at the end of the first rotation. This would provide an area well suited to grazing by the larger native herbivores and considerably reduce potential conflicts in the management of surrounding land.

- 2b** That the existing plantation area leases, shown on Plan 1, continue to be used for softwood production under the *Land (Plantation Areas) Act 1959*. The gross area involved is 1980 ha (4892 acres).
- 2c** That an area of 57 ha (140 acres), shown on Plan 12, be used as a nursery for pine seedlings. An existing permissive occupancy permits A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd. to use it for this purpose.
- 2d** That a gross area of 1100 ha (2700 acres) shown on Plan 1 should be allocated for pine planting in this block, and should be made available as a plantation area lease. Council has considered the area of land in the study area already planted to softwoods and the potential problem of second-rotation degrade of these poor soils, as well as the need for fauna and flora conservation, in making this recommendation.

There would probably not be any need to develop the Coolungoolun coalfield within the next two decades during which time the area could produce one short-rotation softwood crop. The plantation area lease should make provision for Government-authorised exploration for brown coal by methods including geophysical techniques and/or drilling in the area.

However, since the State Government at some future time may decide to develop the brown coal underlying the plantation area in the State's interest, Council further recommends that any lease authorising pine planting should contain a special condition that all trees planted must be removed as required and the lessee paid the necessary compensation for any loss sustained.

A substantial area of native vegetation should be retained around each swamp in the softwood plantations, with a margin of at least 100 m around the larger swamps and 20 m around the minor ones. This would involve about 60 ha (150 acres) of land and would form part of the land required to be retained under native vegetation in the general recommendations above.

- 2e** That the Rosedale recreation reserve of 142 ha (350 acres) - allotments 72, 73, 74, and 75, Parish of Rosedale - continue to be used in the present manner for public recreation.
- 2f** That 17 ha (42 acres) shown on Plans 1 and 7 - allotment 213A, Parish of Rosedale - be used to help maintain the local character and quality of the landscape and to conserve flora and fauna, and that it be held as a bushland reserve under ~~section 14 of the *Land Act 1958*~~ [section 4 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*] for these purposes.
- 2g** That 28 ha (68 acres) - allotment 51E, Parish of Tong Bong - as shown on Plans 1 and 11, be used for the conservation of flora and that it be reserved under ~~section 14 of the *Land Act 1958*~~ [section 4 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*].

Within the study area this locality contains some ground flora. In addition it contains the most western occurrence of the purple scaevola (*Scaevola ramossissima*). It is often visited by field naturalists and others interested in our native vegetation.

Part of this land has been used for gravel and sand extraction. But the quality of the material is poor for road-making and Council recommends that extraction not continue on this land and

that the workings be revegetated.

A gravel pit within this area is currently used as a rubbish tip. When this pit is filled, it should be reclaimed and rubbish dumping in the area should cease.

- 2h** That 66 ha (163 acres) - in the southern portion of allotment 309A, Parish of Rosedale, adjacent to Merriman Creek - as shown on Plans 1 and 8, be retained as a bushland reserve and that it be held under ~~section 14 of the *Land Act 1958*~~ [section 4 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*].
- 2i** That the permanent reserve and Crown lands adjacent to Merriman Creek in the Parish of Holey Plains not be used for the production of limestone but act as a buffer between the creek and the limestone quarries on private land to the north.

The remnants of the native vegetation should be retained and the general recommendations concerning stream frontages should apply to this area.

- 2j** That 33 ha (81 acres) - allotment 20, Parish of Coolungoolan - as shown on Plans 1 and 14, continue to be used for school pine plantations under Permissive Occupancy from the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.

At the end of the rotation these areas should be incorporated into the proposed State Park.

### 3. Stradbroke

The 8140 ha (20 112 acres) of public land in this block were described on pages 92–95 of the descriptive report. They consist of one large parcel of 6726 ha (16 620 acres) and four smaller areas to the west.

#### Recommendations

- 3a** That the use of 6488 ha (16 220 acres) as shown on Plan 2 be considered when the very much larger area of public land immediately to the south of this study area has been studied.  
(See LCC Stradbroke Area Final Recommendations November 1977)

In the meantime, with the exception of 160 ha (398 acres) in the north-east of the block recommended for exchange for softwood production, the land should be used to maintain the natural ecosystem, to provide hardwood timber, honey, and stone, and for recreation, to the extent that these activities can occur without reducing the ability of the land to meet future needs.

The Crown land should be held under section 36 of the *Land Act 1958* and be Protected Forest as defined in the *Forests Act 1958*. The existing reserves should remain for the time being.

Strong submissions have been received that parts of this land be used for softwood production, fauna and flora conservation, and scenic purposes. The importance of parts of the area in the history of Gippsland has also been stressed. As this land forms a small part of a much larger area of public land, Council does not wish to make firm long-term recommendations on its use without a thorough study of the whole parcel. There appears to be no urgent reason to commit this land to specific uses at this time, so the land should be maintained as uncommitted land and protected forest, in a condition that keeps all future options open.

- 3b** That 279 ha (690 acres) shown on Plan 2 be used for the production of hardwood timber and for the conservation of flora and fauna, and that it remain reserved forest.

In a locality containing large areas of softwood plantation and agricultural land, this area has an important role as an example of the native vegetation and as fauna habitat. It should not be considered for future exchange for softwood plantations.

- 3c** That 400 ha (990 acres) - in the Parish of Tong Bong - shown on Plan 2, be considered for future exchange for lands currently held by A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd. adjacent to the Morwell National Park and the proposed Mt. Worth National Park.

- 3d** That 494 ha (1235 acres) - allotments 61B, 60, 38, 39, 25A and 25B Parish of Tong Bong - shown on Plan 2, form part of an exchange for lands in the Parish of Wamba, Wuk Wuk, Numbruk, and Moondarra, as agreed by the Forests Commission of Victoria and A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd.; and that 159 ha (398 acres) - allotment 56, Parish of Stradbroke - be dedicated as reserved forest and be available for exchange by the Forests Commission and A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd. This should consolidate areas of public land outside the study area.

In the proposed recommendations allotments 35 and 36, 110 ha (275 acres) in the Parish of Tong Bong were also included in this recommendation, but have been withdrawn because they are within the area delineated by the State Electricity Commission as the Gormandale coalfield. Allotment 56, Parish of Stradbroke, has been included in order that approximately the original acreage be exchanged.

- 3e** That 46.07 ha (120 acres) - being allotment 6C, 6E and 6F Parish of Callignee - as shown on Plans 2 and 10, be used to help maintain the local character and quality of the landscape and to conserve native flora and fauna; and that it be retained for these purposes as a bushland reserve under ~~section 14 of the Land Act 1958~~ [section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978].

Council has noted that the Country Roads Board and the Shire of Rosedale both extract gravel from a pit in this proposed reserve. It is recommended that these bodies investigate alternative sources of supply and that gravel extraction from the area cease within 2 years. The pit should not exceed 2 ha (5 acres) in area and should be rehabilitated in a manner that adds to the value of the bushland reserve.

- 3f** That 144 ha (356 acres) - being allotment 77, Parish of Willung - as shown on Plans 2 and 9, be used to help maintain the local character and quality of the landscape and to conserve flora and fauna; and that it be retained as a bushland reserve under ~~section 14 of the Land Act 1958~~ [section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978].

- 3g** That 28 ha (70 acres) - being allotment 77B, Parish of Willung - shown on Plans 2 and 13, be made available for agriculture.

Following an earlier decision to alienate these lands, all merchantable timber was removed and much of this land is now in poor condition.

- 3h** That 110 ha (275 acres) - being allotments 35 and 36, Parish of Tong Bong - be uncommitted land.

These allotments are within the area delineated by the State Electricity Commission as the Gormandale coalfield.

## 4. Callignee

The 1983 ha (4900 acres) of public land in this block were described on pages 96–99 of the descriptive report. It is proposed that the bulk of this land be used for softwood and hardwood timber production and two small areas for agriculture.

### Recommendations

- 4a** That 1740 ha (4300 acres), as shown on Plan 3, be used to produce softwood timber and that it be Reserved Forest.

This recommendation covers land whose original natural values have been grossly altered. The Forests Commission has repurchased farmland with a high capability for softwood production. There are about 930 ha (2300 acres) of existing softwood plantation, 600 ha (1500 acres) of proposed softwood plantation, and interspersed hardwood timber areas totalling 200 ha (500 acres). The recommendation will aid the economic development of the region and allow management of neglected land.

- 4b** That about 240 ha (600 acres), as shown on Plan 3, be used primarily to produce hardwood timber and that it be Reserved Forest.

Most of this land was cleared for agriculture, which proved unsuccessful. Some areas of regrowth could be managed to encourage timber production, and others should be replanted with hardwood species. In the areas remaining in a natural condition (especially gullies), the conservation of flora and fauna should receive particular attention.

- 4c** That just under 3 ha (7 acres) of Reserved Forest near allotments 11 and 12, Parish of Callignee, currently under pasture, and 0.4 ha (1 acre), adjoining allotment 72C in the same Parish, be used for agriculture.

If high survey costs make the alienation of these two small areas of public land uneconomic, then licensed occupation for grazing may be preferable.

## 5. Toongabbie and Denison

The 3430 ha (8475 acres) of public land on this block were described on pages 100–103 of the descriptive report. It comprises 2840 ha (7017 acres) of Reserved Forest and 590 ha (1458 acres) of unoccupied Crown land and reserves. The reserved forest unit of public land to the north-west of Toongabbie is not currently supporting intensive timber production, however 538 ha of unoccupied Crown land to the west of Toongabbie lies within the Boola working-plan area and is currently being used for intensive timber production pursuant to the provisions of the *Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Acts of 1961 and 1966*.

Bush-walkers use the area, and white-water canoeists as well as fishermen use the Thomson River on the northern edge of the block.

### Recommendations

- 5a** That the use and tenure of this land, west and north of Toongabbie township, as shown on Plan 4, remain unchanged pending investigation of the very large area of similar country to the north and west; and that the 538 ha of unoccupied Crown land to the west of Toongabbie continue to be managed for timber production pending this investigation.

- 5b** That the Toongabbie North racecourse and recreation reserve of 51 ha (125 acres), shown on Plan 4, continue to be used as at present for public recreation and grazing.

This reserve contains a fringe of timbered country with red gum, grey box, and yellow and white stringybark. Regeneration of these trees should be encouraged, and it is desirable to restrict grazing on parts of the reserve.

## **6. Gippsland Lakes**

This block is described on pages 104–110 of the descriptive report. It contains 29 100 ha (71 900 acres) of public land, including some areas with very high values for recreation and conservation. One area of 9417 ha (23 270 acres) is held by the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board, who use it for the disposal of sewage and industrial effluent. It is recommended that the land not held by the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board be put to various conservation and recreation uses under unified and integrated management.

### **Recommendations**

- 6a** That the area of 16 500 ha shown on Plans 5 and 6, be used to:

- (i) provide recreation opportunities, especially along the coastlines
- (ii) ensure the management and conservation of the native flora and fauna
- (iii) permit any works necessary for the stability of the land (this includes the cancellation of grazing licences, prevention of cutting of tea tree, prevention of illegal occupancies, and removal of illegal shacks)

and that it be permanently reserved (under ~~section 14 of the *Land Act 1958*~~ section 4 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*) for these purposes.

This coastal reserve should be operated as one unit by one agency of the Ministry for Conservation in consultation with its other agencies.

Various sectors of the peninsula to the south of the Gippsland Lakes have very high suitability for flora and fauna conservation and recreation. The potential of this peninsula could best be realised by unified management, but the particular characteristics of different sectors are recognised.

The following zones are recommended for consideration by the management agency and are shown on Plans 5 and 6:

Zone I: should be used to conserve fauna and flora, with limited activities that do not conflict with the primary objects. It is recommended that shooting be prohibited. This zone should include Sperm Whale Head and isolated blocks to the east as well as an area to the south-west of Loch Sport. It is suggested that shooting be prohibited on Lake Victoria within 200 m of Zone I, in order to protect fauna on the edge of this zone.

Zone II: should be used to conserve fauna and flora, with emphasis on preserving wildflowers. However it is recommended that shooting of game species, including hog-deer, be permitted. This zone would include public land south-west of the Loch Sport road, excluding the bed of Lake Reeve and land recommended for disposal of industrial and domestic waste.

Zone III: should be used to conserve fauna and flora, with the emphasis on preserving the New Holland mouse. However, it is recommended that shooting of game be permitted. This

zone would include all public land to the north-east of the Loch Sport road, excluding Zones I and V.

Zone IV: should be used primarily to manage and conserve fauna, particularly ducks; it is recommended that shooting of game be permitted. This zone includes all the bed of Lake Reeve between Seaspray and the causeway south-west of Loch Sport, as well as a strip of land along the edge of Lake Reeve presently vested in the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board. In this zone it may prove desirable to divert water from Merriman Creek into Lake Reeve in order to improve the habitat, provided a comprehensive survey is carried out to prevent flooding of privately owned land.

Zone V: should be used primarily to provide recreation opportunities such as swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, and walking, but shooting of game should not be permitted. This zone comprises a narrow strip of land along the southern shore of Lake Victoria west of Loch Sport and Red Bluff.

Within this zone, 69 ha (170 acres) of allotment 3A, Parish of Seacombe, is permanently reserved as the Loch Sport recreation area. It is recommended that this area be developed as a caravan and camping park.

Zone VI: should be used primarily for the conservation of water-birds and hunting should not be permitted. This zone comprises all of Lake Reeve north of Zone IV, and the part of Lake Victoria and islands that are public land within the study area.

Zone VII: should be used for restricted water-based recreation within designated areas. Speed-boating and water skiing, and the use of personal water craft and hovercraft, may be permitted only between Steamer Landing and First Blowhole. Other boating activities may be permitted with restrictions, as necessary, to protect waterbird habitat. Shooting is prohibited within the zone. The zone includes all of Bunga Arm. ~~should be used for restricted water based recreation including fishing and sightseeing. However, it is recommended that speed boating, water skiing and shooting be prohibited. This zone includes all of Lake Bunga.~~ (Order in Council 2/6/98)

Zone VIII: should be used primarily for the maintenance of stability of coastal dunes. Recreational activities should be limited to specific areas and carefully controlled. This zone includes all coastal dunes along the Ninety-mile Beach within the study area.

Unified management should make it feasible to provide full-time supervision and active management and protection of the resources of all the public lands on the peninsula. Provided the recommendations on use are observed, this should aid rather than hinder the task of meeting the specific objects of use for different parcels of land. Part of this area is currently a national park and part a wildlife reserve. Within the proposed coastal reserve, oil and gas pipelines are located on two 27 m wide easements. Council recommends that wherever practicable any new pipelines passing through the area should be confined to these existing easements.

It is recognised that the offshore region has been established as a major source of oil and gas, the full extent of which is not presently known. Council recognises that the utilisation of this resource could necessitate the location of power stations within the study area. It notes that the State Electricity Commission proposes three large service areas for possible power stations along the coast near Loch Sport, Paradise Beach, and Seaspray, but Council opposes the construction of power stations on the foreshore within this study area, which encompasses most fragile coastal lands.

Council is aware of the need to construct power station waste pipelines in the future and recommends wherever possible that these should be constructed away from public land. If, however, any of these are located on public land, it is recommended that the approval of the

management authority be sought prior to construction, and that the pipeline should be located in such a way as to cause minimal disturbance to the natural environment.

The proposed coastal reserve includes a number of road reserves, and it is recommended that all of these currently being used as roads retain their statutory capacities. It is also recommended that any proposed additional transmission lines in this area be confined to these reserves.

The boundary of the study area largely follows the southern shores of the Gippsland Lakes system. Several of the submissions received expressed concern regarding erosion, salinity, and pollution of the lakes, and also proposed measures to reduce these problems. Following a review of existing data, it will be necessary to improve the collection of information about trends in the quality and nature of the lake environment and the management and care of this environment.

**6b** That 2075 ha (5129 acres) be used primarily for the conservation of fauna and that it remain as wildlife reserve.

This land on the southern shores of Lake Wellington, including Lake Coleman and Dowd Morass, contains important areas of wetlands that have a very high conservation value, particularly for waterfowl. It has been noted that the State Electricity Commission has indicated that at some future date it may wish to use some or all of allotment 15A, Parish of Glencoe, in connection with a possible power station project.

**6c** That a full investigation be carried out in order to assess the extent to which disposal of industrial and domestic wastes damages the environment and to compare alternative methods of disposal, and that the management authority of the proposed coastal reserve make provision for an easement to carry a pipeline for the disposal of waste to the sea if this is required.

It is noted that 9417 ha (23 270 acres) is used or proposed to be used for the treatment of industrial and domestic wastes. This land is vested in the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board and although less than half this area is currently used for waste disposal, future development in the region will increase the need for land for this purpose.

Observations have indicated that the methods used for disposal of the noxious wastes on the farm damage the environment to the extent that this may cause pollution of the groundwater as well as pollution of part of the Gippsland Lakes system. Large-scale pondage of effluent containing concentrations of salt could ultimately result in the total loss of productivity of thousands of acres of land.

**6d** That the Seaspray recreation reserve of about 101 ha (250 acres) continue to be used in the present manner for public recreation and camping.

**6e** That allotment 1A, 6 ha (16 acres), Parish of Glencoe South, be made available for agriculture.

This area has already been cleared of natural vegetation and is currently used for grazing.



## C. MAPS

Maps omitted