

LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

**NORTH-EASTERN
VICTORIA
OVENS SOFTWOOD
PLANTATION ZONE**

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

November 1981

This text is a facsimile of the former Land Conservation Council's Ovens Softwood Plantation Zone Special Investigation Final Recommendations.

None of these recommendations was approved by Government by Order in Council.

The recommendations are shown for information only. No editing marks are shown.

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INTRODUCTION

The Land Conservation Council, Victoria, established by the *Land Conservation Act 1970*, carries out investigations and makes recommendations to the Minister for Conservation on the balanced use of public land throughout the State.

In March, 1981, the Council was directed to make an investigation of an area of public land in north-eastern Victoria according to the following Order in Council:

‘Whereas it is provided in Section 8 of the *Land Conservation Act 1970*, that where the Governor in Council is of the opinion that an investigation and recommendation of the Land Conservation Council in relation to any particular district or area of Victoria is necessary or expedient, the said Council may be required to make such investigation and recommendation within such time as is fixed by the Governor in Council.

And whereas the Government has directed the Forests Commission to increase the planting rate of softwoods in north-east Victoria by 800 hectares per annum, a total of 14 500 hectares of suitable land is required by the Forests Commission over the next ten years for plantation establishment.

Now therefore, His Excellency, the Governor of the State of Victoria by and with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, hereby requires the Land Conservation Council to carry out an investigation of public land within the area delineated on the plan hereunder and to make recommendations by the ninth day of November, 1981 on the best use of this land including the extent to which it might be used to fulfil the Government’s softwood establishment objectives.’

Procedure

A factual report describing the resources and forms of land use in the Ovens Softwood Plantation Zone was published on 15 April, 1981. In the following 60 days the Land Conservation Council received 371 written submissions from the general public and interested bodies on the future use of the public land in the study area. The Council considered these submissions and published proposed recommendations for the Ovens Zone on 17 July, 1981. The Council received a further 1946 submissions, and considered these when preparing the final recommendations.

Land use in north-eastern Victoria

Council is aware that the proposed expansion of the softwood planting program is only one of a number of demands being placed on land, both private and public, in north-eastern Victoria. Other factors that will serve to increase the competition for the available land in this region include: the development of the Albury—Wodonga complex and the consequent requirement for residential, industrial, and recreational land; the stated government policy to increase agricultural productivity; and the emphasis placed on expansion of the tourist industry, which in north-eastern Victoria is largely based on the area’s special natural and scenic features.

Given these competing demands, Council believes that the government’s present plans to increase the softwood planting rates in the area could lead to serious conflicts between competing interests. Any future additional demands placed on the region’s land base will only serve to exacerbate these conflicts. It will be essential that government takes this into consideration when contemplating any further expansion of land-dependent industries.

A. SOFTWOOD PRODUCTION

The study area includes a large proportion of the Ovens Softwood Plantation Zone, in which the Forests Commission has already established substantial areas of softwood plantation.

Demand and Supply in the Ovens Zone

Plantations in this zone are required in order to provide sustained supplies of raw material for integrated industries consisting of refiner groundwood pulp mills, sawlog and veneer mills, and preservative treatment plants.

Bowater Scott Australia Ltd, operating as Australian Forest Industries Pty Ltd, has a pulp mill and sawmilling complex at Myrtleford. The pulpwood is obtained under an agreement ratified by legislation in 1971 to guarantee a supply commitment of 35 400 m³ of pulpwood per annum and this rises to 63 720 m³ per annum by 1991. Current sawlog allocations total 185 000 m³ per annum. At the present time the Forests Commission is unable to fulfil demands, over and above its present commitments, from various companies in the region for supplies of softwood timber, particularly for material suitable for processing as sawlogs and veneer logs.

Companies involved in the timber industry are increasingly seeking to expand or diversify their operations in order to meet an increasing consumer demand for softwood products. Several firms are moving into the processing of softwoods because of diminishing supplies of hardwood timber in the region. If wood is to be available to meet new and expected industry requirements in the future, additional plantings of softwood will probably be necessary, not only in the Ovens zone but also in other areas of north-eastern Victoria.

At the end of the 1980 planting season, softwood plantations covering a net area of 18 265 ha had been established in the Ovens zone.

In 1977, as part of its final recommendations for the North-eastern Area, Districts 3, 4, and 5, Council recommended that more than 6000 ha be planted to softwoods - 4390 ha was allocated from public land, with the remainder to be met by purchase of private property. At the then planting rate of 650 ha per annum, this was sufficient land to meet planting targets up to and including 1985. However, as a result of the government's direction to increase the planting rate to 1450 ha per annum, the land allocated to softwoods will be exhausted by the end of 1982. It is necessary to provide for additional land now, because of the lead time involved in the preparation of land for plantation establishment.

Planning Period

Council is aware that planting at the increased rate of 1450 ha per annum is planned to continue for at least 17 years that is, until the year 2000. Thus the total net area of land required over this 17-year period is 24 650 ha. The study area contains a net total of 19 500 ha that meet the site requirements for softwood establishment. Other than a small area of reserved forest, this land has not been committed to any specific use, following government acceptance of Council's recommendations for the North-eastern Area, Districts 3, 4 and 5.

Information received from public submissions and from the Council's own investigations indicates that, within those 19 500 ha that meet the site requirements, a number of areas have particular significance for one or more of the following uses - apiculture, hardwood production, nature conservation, and landscape preservation. Council also considers that in certain areas

conversion of native forest to softwoods may result in an increase in soil erosion, a deterioration in water quality, and modifications to stream run-off, particularly in the Black Range Creek, Stoney Creek, Middle Creek, Fifteen Mile Creek, and Boggy Creek areas.

Council therefore considers that some of the land in the study area with a capability for softwood production should not be used for this purpose because it possesses other very important values. As a result, Council firmly believes that no more than 13 700 ha could be made available from public land for softwood production. This would mean that if a planting target of 24 650 ha is to be attained some 45% of the area required would have to be met from private land.

Council is aware that the apiarists regard the drier foothill forests of the region - especially those supporting red stringybark and red box species - as among the most valuable for honey production per unit area in Australia. Other forest types containing peppermint and gum species and the associated ground flora are also important, as they provide a honey flow at times when the drier forests are less productive. Hives are brought to the region from New South Wales and South Australia as well as from all over Victoria. The apiarists consider that the forested public land in the study area is more important than the uncleared freehold land, mainly because there is no guarantee that the freehold land will remain forested, and because the public land contains many important understorey species, either not present or under threat due to grazing on private land.

The region is important not only in terms of honey production but also because of its capacity to provide bees with an unusually high level of nutrition from pollen with a high crude protein content. As a result, bees reared in the region are highly productive and are strongly resistant to disease. For this reason the area is particularly important for the rearing of young queen bees and small colonies to replace older hives and maintain bee populations.

Of particular significance to the beekeeping industry are the northern- and western-facing slopes of the Black Range, the forested public land adjoining the Middle Creek and Fifteen Mile Creek valleys, and the Moyhu Timber Reserve. These areas support a mixture of box—stringybark and peppermint forests, making them among the most valuable in the region for apiculture. The Fifteen Mile Creek valley is also one of the few areas in south-eastern Australia that is suitable for the production of queen bees and many apiarists from all three States re-stock their hives with queens reared there. The loss of substantial tracts of forested public land in these areas would have a major impact on the apicultural industry.

As well as their significance for apiculture, the areas referred to above have other important values. The Black Range supports a diversity of vegetation types, from the box—stringybark forests on the lower slopes to the stands of alpine ash and snow gum at higher elevations. In addition, the susceptibility of the granitic soils to erosion in the upper part of the Black Range Creek catchment and the possibility of forestry activities affecting farming enterprises downstream make this area extremely undesirable for softwood plantation establishment.

The Black Range has been recorded by the National Trust as a significant landscape and has considerable recreational use. Its south-western slopes are also clearly visible from Powers Lookout - a popular area used by both local residents and tourists.

The Moyhu Timber Reserve contains significant resources of hardwood timber and provides fencing material and firewood for the local farming community. It also has a high conservation value in that it supports a diversity of fauna representative of both the riverine plains and the dry sclerophyll forests.

Council has recognized the importance of maintaining the quality and quantity of water, particularly in the Fifteen Mile Creek, which provides the domestic water supply for the township of Glenrowan. Council is also aware that some areas in the Fifteen Mile Creek and Boggy Creek catchments have the potential to produce hardwood sawlogs.

The drier foothill forests between Middle Creek and Fifteen Mile Creek are an important source of hardwood fencing timbers and firewood.

The Council was concerned about the effect of softwood plantations on the preservation of a distinctly Australian landscape. In particular, land that can be viewed from prominent lookouts or tourist roads was considered very sensitive in this regard, as was the upper Kiewa Valley, which the National Trust has classified for its special landscape significance.

Conversion to softwoods of all the public land that meets the site requirements for softwood production would involve the use of that land with the important features and values described above. This in turn would result in those features and values, which generally cannot be maintained on private land, being lost or seriously compromised. Softwood plantations, however, can be successfully established on private land. Council therefore considers that under no circumstances should the areas described above be considered for conversion to softwood plantations now or in the future, because of their value in relation to the apicultural industry, hardwood production, maintenance of water quality, nature conservation, and landscape preservation. In addition, other areas previously assessed as suitable for softwood plantation establishment have been excluded from consideration because of the operational difficulties associated with plantation establishment and harvesting.

Taking into account all these considerations, the total area of public land that could be considered for plantation establishment over the 17-year planting period is 13 700 ha. Portions of this land have some value for apiculture, conservation of landscape, or hardwood production, while others are somewhat remote from wood-processing plants and access would be more difficult. Account has been taken of these factors in the planting schedule outlined in the recommendations.

Council wishes to stress that no other land within the study area (other than the 13 700 ha referred to earlier) is available for conversion to softwood plantations, even if the planting period is to be extended beyond 17 years.

The proportion of public land converted to softwoods in any one year will vary according to the level of private land purchases in the region. The public land to be used first should be that with minimum conflicts. Land with apicultural and other values or with physical constraints should be used later in the planting program, and only if sufficient private land cannot be purchased.

Use of Private Land for Plantation Establishment

It has been a long-standing policy of Council that, wherever possible, marginal farmlands should be used for the establishment of softwood plantations. This has also been the policy of the Forests Commission - approximately 25% of plantations developed by the Commission throughout the State have been established on private land purchased for this purpose.

In addition, substantial areas of softwood plantations have been established by private enterprise on freehold land.

It is also apparent from public submissions that there is substantial community support for the use of low-productivity agricultural land for softwood plantations in preference to the use of forested public land.

As has been pointed out earlier, the study area does not contain sufficient public land suitable for softwood establishment to meet the government's planting targets. If those targets are to be achieved, use of private land will be necessary. In this regard Council believes that a number of strategies could be employed, including the purchase of private land and private farm forestry.

The purchase of private land

A Council-commissioned study of private land in the region indicates that, on the basis of past trends in land turnover, between 3000 and 4000 ha (gross) suitable for softwoods is likely to come onto the market each year over the next 10 years.

Furthermore, the study indicated that, of this land, an individual buyer could purchase up to 725 ha per year (close to 40% net of the land required for softwoods) without having an undue affect on the market.

The purchase of such private land for plantation establishment could be undertaken by private industry or the State.

Private industry

The government should indicate that it will be necessary for private companies to purchase freehold land for the establishment of their own softwood plantations.

Over the years the development of softwood plantations by private industry and individual landholders has become an established practice, to the extent that currently approximately half of Victoria's plantations are operated by private enterprise. The great majority of these are located on freehold land.

The Ovens Plantation Zone is one of the few in the State where private softwood plantations constitute an insignificant proportion of the total. Compared with the average Victorian position of approximately 1 ha of State-owned plantation for every hectare of private plantation, the corresponding Ovens Zone ratio is close to 27:1.

Council considers it not unreasonable to expect that private industry in this area, as in other parts of the State, should provide from its own plantations at least some of the raw material it ultimately processes.

The State, through the Forests Commission

At the expected land prices, the Forests Commission considers that the costs involved in purchasing selected parcels of suitable land and the subsequent establishment and maintenance of softwood plantations would be more than offset by the income collected from royalties derived from the timber resource.

As stated earlier, the Forests Commission has over the years purchased private land throughout Victoria for softwood production purposes. It is relevant to note, however, that the Commission is currently in the market for land in the study area, but is experiencing difficulty in purchasing significant tracts. One of the reasons for this appears to be social pressures that operate in this area against the sale of private land for softwoods.

Private farm forestry

The Council believes that the government could also encourage the expansion of private farm forestry in the region and that the industries requiring the timber resource should be encouraged to enter into long-term agreements with the private growers. Agreements of this type have proved to be very successful in other areas, particularly in the Portland—Rennick Zone.

The mechanism for expansion in private farm forestry already exists, in the form of farm forestry loans administered by the Forests Commission.

Effect on agriculture

The Council considers that use of private land for softwood production would not have a great impact on agriculture in the region, and on a State basis the effects would be minimal. The land most likely to be used for softwoods is the more marginal agricultural country used in the main for beef cattle production. Little of this land is capable of supporting the diverse agricultural enterprises associated with the land of higher agricultural productivity in the valleys and on the lower slopes.

Of greater concern is the effect of depletion of native forests on the apicultural industry. As outlined earlier, a considerable area of public land with a capability to grow softwoods is of importance for honey and pollen production. Use of the more marginal agricultural land for softwood production would minimize the extent to which this industry was affected.

Plantation Planning Guidelines

The Council believes that the impact large plantations of softwood have on the natural environment can be lessened by retaining selected areas of native vegetation, and by the adoption of appropriate catchment prescriptions prepared by the relevant management authorities. The guidelines set out below apply to the establishment of plantations on public land in this study area.

No continuous plantation unit should exceed 1400 ha without obvious break-up areas retained as native forest. Samples (100–200 ha) of all vegetation types in the area should be retained. Where possible, several types should be combined in one unit. The unit may be sited to improve the appearance of the plantation, or to combine with land unsuitable for planting to form a range of habitats for wildlife. Units may also include stands of native hardwood managed for timber production. While logging and fuel-reduction burning need not be prohibited in areas where native vegetation is retained, it is important to protect their functions in relation to soil conservation, water quality, and nature conservation. Any utilization, including that carried out prior to clearing, should be carefully controlled, and slash, snig tracks, and landings cleaned up. No retained area should be fuel-reduced in its entirety in any one year.

Native vegetation should be retained for at least 80 m from each bank along major streams and 40 m from each bank along minor streams. In order to maintain soil stability and water quality it may be necessary to retain a strip of native vegetation of at least 20 m from the centreline along some other watercourses. This is in line with other Council recommendations that all wetlands on public land be conserved. These strips of retained native vegetation should be kept free of bulldozed material, and windrows should be swept back to protect them from hot burns. The importance of ground cover and surface soil conditions in reducing the amount of sediment reaching streams should be recognized.

Landscape values of areas visible from main roads and major vantage points should be maintained or enhanced, with preference given to landscapes carrying native forests. The aim should be to avoid as far as practicable views of continuous swaths of cleared country, during both the establishment phase and the final felling of the mature crop.

This may be achieved by:

- retaining uncleared foreground reserves
- breaking up areas to be cleared with strategically located strips or blocks of vegetation
- retaining native forests as a backdrop on higher slopes and ridges

On minor through roads, an interesting environment should be maintained by amenity plantings (preferably of native and local species). Where plantations are to be established adjacent to private property, consideration should be given to reasonable requests by the landholders for the retention of native vegetation along boundaries.

Clearing prior to planting makes the soil more liable to erosion until a new vegetation cover forms. Special care must be taken to ensure that soil erosion does not begin or increase during this period, and that water catchment values are not impaired. Clearing is to be confined to areas with a ground slope generally less than 20 degrees. Other factors that influence the extent of erosion hazard - such as aspect, soil type and parent material, length of slope, and the amount of rainfall - should also be considered prior to clearing operations.

Roading is a major cause of concentration of water flows and a major source of sediment. In some plantations, special criteria in respect of road location, design, and maintenance may be necessary.

The Forests Commission should, from the earliest stages of development of a conversion plan, consult with the Soil Conservation Authority on matters affecting soil stability and the effects of land disturbance on water quality, and with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division on matters concerning wildlife conservation.

Recommendations

When formulating recommendations for the allocation of public land for softwood establishment over the next 10 years, Council was aware that planting at the increased rate is likely to continue until the year 2000 - that is, for the 17 years from the end of 1982. At the increased planting rate, the total requirement for land in those 17 years is 24 650 ha. Within the study area some 19 500 ha of public land meets the site requirements for softwood establishment. Council firmly believes, however, that the use of more than 13 700 ha for softwood production would have serious effects on industries using this land and would affect areas where there are already problems with the supply and quality of water used for domestic and agricultural purposes. Should the government decide that all 13 700 ha is to be used for softwood establishment, then no further land in the study area could be considered for this purpose.

As directed in the Order in Council under which this special study was conducted, the Council has recommended areas that could be considered for plantation establishment during the first 10 years of the planting program. The area of public land in the study area that could be used for plantation establishment from 1983 to 1992 is 8078 ha, or approximately ten-seventeenths of the 13 700 ha referred to above. The Council therefore recommends:

- A1** That the government encourage the use of private land for softwood plantation establishment by supporting the following strategies:
- (i) plantation establishment on freehold land by private industry
 - (ii) expansion of private farm forestry
 - (iii) State purchase of private land for plantation establishment
- A2** That, if State purchase of private land is to be undertaken, the Forests Commission be given sufficient funds to purchase to the extent required.
- A3** That the areas shown on the map and listed in the schedule below (A4 to A50) could be used for softwood plantation establishment in accordance with the guidelines outlined in these recommendations and the planting order shown in the schedule.
- that, should the government decide that public land is to be used for softwood establishment, then no more than 8078 ha net (A4 to A27) be planted in the years 1983 to 1992 inclusive.
- and that the areas required for softwood establishment be reserved forest under the provisions of the *Forests Act 1958* and be managed by the Forests Commission.

Land that could be considered for softwood plantation establishment from 1983 to 1992.

- A4** Boggy Creek 900 ha, within which an area of 815 ha net may be planted to softwoods

Notes: Council considers that the rate of softwood plantation establishment should be regulated in the Boggy Creek in order to protect water catchment values. Therefore in any 2-year period no more than 300 ha (approximately 10%) of the Boggy Creek catchment is to be prepared and planted to softwoods.

Plantation establishment in the Boggy Creek and on the Toombullup Plateau should be designed to preserve the scenic values and the native vegetation along the Mansfield—Whitfield Tourist Road.

- A5** Toombullup Plateau 1350 ha, within which an area of 1280 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A6** Drum Top 450 ha, within which an area of 430 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- Note: If a decision is made to plant this area with softwoods, it is planted in the knowledge that any works required to protect the plantation from fire must not be undertaken within the adjacent reference area.
- A7** Toombullup 60 ha, within which an area of 35 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A8** McDONALD'S Spur 55 ha, within an area of 45 ha net may be planted
- A9** West King 320 ha, within which an area of 270 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A10** Gentle Annie Gap (south-eastern fall) 300 ha, within which an area of 280 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A11** Rose River 350 ha, within which an area of 320 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A12** Rose River North 680 ha, within which an area of 570 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A13** Cropper Gap (eastern fall) 150 ha, within which an area of 130 ha net may be planted to softwoods

- A14 Cropper Creek 800 ha, within which an area of 625 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A15 Cropper Creek 200 ha, within which an area of 145 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A16 Cropper Creek (North Branch) 85 ha, within which an area of 60 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A17 Long Corner Creek 800 ha, within which an area of 640 ha net may be planted to softwoods (see NE 3,4,5 Review)
- A18 Barwidgee Creek 155 ha, within which an area of 130 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A19 Ovens 75 ha, within which an area of 60 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A20 Rosewhite 630 ha, within which an area of 300 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A21 Havilah 45 ha, within which an area of 38 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A22 Havilah Creek 295 ha, within which an area of 240 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A23 Lower Boggy Creek 150 ha, within which an area of 125 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A24 Middle Creek Track 95 ha, within which an area of 80 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A25 Gentle Annie Gap (north-western fall) 130 ha, within which an area of 110 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A26 Cambatong 880 ha, within which an area of 735 ha net may be planted to softwoods
- A27 Handcocks Track 620 ha, within which an area of 515 ha net may be planted to softwoods

Land that could be considered for softwood production after 1992

- A28 Scrubby Creek 120 ha, within which an area of 95 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A29 Middle Creek Plateau 630 ha, within an area of 590 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A30 Scrubby Creek 470 ha, within which an area of 395 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A31 Carboor 148 ha, within which an area of 125 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A32 Carboor 30 ha, within which an area of 20 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A33 House Creek 430 ha, within which an area of 388 ha net may be planted to softwoods
remote, difficult access, hardwood values
- A34 Upper West King 550 ha, within which an area of 460 ha net may be planted to softwoods
remote, difficult access, hardwood values
- A35 West King 300 ha, within which an area of 190 ha net may be planted to softwoods
clearly visible from Mansfield—Whitfield tourist road

Note: If a decision is made to plant this area with softwoods, it is planted in the knowledge that any works required to protect the plantation from fire must not be undertaken within the adjacent reference area.

- A36** Meadow Creek 440 ha, within which an area of 370 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A37** Sugarloaf 110 ha, within which an area of 75 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A38** Drum Top Road 94 ha, within which an area of 60 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A39** Myrhee 225 ha, within which an area of 190 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A40** Devils Creek 900 ha, within which an area of 550 ha net may be planted to softwoods
difficult access
- A41** Ryans Creek 60 ha, within which an area of 35 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A42** Evans Creek 350 ha, within which an area of 311 ha net may be planted to softwoods
remote, difficult access, adjacent to Lake William Hovell
- A43** Cheshunt South 55 ha, within which an area of 48 ha net may be planted to softwoods
small isolated block, visible from Powers Lookout
- A44** Whitlands 435 ha, within which an area of 400 ha net may be planted to softwoods
clearly visible from Powers Lookout
- A45** Dandongadale 525 ha, within which an area of 400 ha net may be planted to softwoods
difficult access
- A46** Spring Creek 155 ha, within which an area of 140 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A47** Edi Upper 95 ha, within which an area of 80 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A48** Edi Upper 300 ha, within which an area of 270 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural values
- A49** Upper Boggy Creek 310 ha, within which an area of 250 ha net may be planted to softwoods
apicultural and hardwood values
- A50** Kiewa Valley 200 ha, within which an area of 140 ha net may be planted to softwoods
difficult access; landscape considerations
- A51** That the present plantations (18 265 ha net) and those areas previously allocated, as shown on the map, be used for the production of softwood products and the provision of other goods and services compatible with the primary use, as well as providing opportunities for education and recreation.

B. FOREST AREA

When making recommendations on land for softwood plantations, the Council has recognized that their establishment constitutes a major change from any natural ecosystems they replace. Further, it realizes that softwood production is a long-term endeavour and that restoring the plantation areas to a near-natural condition is difficult. Adjacent areas of public land that have high nature conservation and/or landscape values thus play an important role in maintaining a local balance in land use. Because of their locations, these areas are also important for protecting the softwood resource from fire, and therefore must also be managed for this purpose. Such land has been designated forest area.

Recommendations

B1 That the area of 10 000 ha shown on the map be used for:

- (a) protection of the adjacent area recommended for softwood production
 - (b) conservation of fauna and flora, and preservation of scenic values
 - (c) low-intensity hardwood production, recreation, education, forest grazing, honey production, and mining, where these activities do not conflict with (b) above
 - (d) catchment protection and water supply, where these lie within water supply catchments
- and that the areas be reserved forest under the provisions of the *Forests Act 1958*, and be managed by the Forests Commission.

C. AGRICULTURE

In preparing its final recommendations Council has considered a number of requests for alienation of public land. Council believes that, in line with its recommendations for softwood production, no public land with a potential for softwood production should be alienated for other agricultural pursuits. Most of the land referred to in those requests would be suitable for softwood production and Council therefore believes that it should not be alienated for agriculture.

D. OTHER PUBLIC LAND

D1 For that public land not referred to elsewhere in these recommendations, Council does not propose any alteration to its final recommendations for the North-eastern area, Districts 3, 4, and 5, as published in April 1977. Government subsequently accepted these recommendations, some of which have already been implemented while others are currently being put into effect.

Exchange of areas for softwood production

An area of land recommended for softwood production in the final recommendations for the North-eastern area, Districts 3, 4, and 5 has been found to have a number of operational difficulties. Council therefore recommends:

D2 That an adjoining area of 100 ha, formerly recommended as forest area in 1977, be used for softwood plantation establishment in exchange for the area previously recommended as F12 (Smarts Creek Plantation) in the final recommendations for the North eastern area, Districts 3, 4, and 5

that the area formerly reserved for plantation establishment (F12) be forest area

and that both areas be reserved forest under the provisions of the *Forests Act 1958*, and be managed by the Forests Commission.

Amendment to Final Recommendations

In the final recommendations for the North-eastern area, Districts 3, 4, and 5, an area of 21 ha in the Parish of Myrhee was recommended as a gravel reserve (Recommendation P3). The resource located in the area has now been utilized and reclamation commenced. Those recommendations also made provision for legal access to allotments 25 and 25A, Parish of Myrhee (Recommendation Q7) along the southern boundary of the gravel reserve. The Council recommends:

D3 That 21 ha between allotments 9A and 25A, Parish of Myrhee, be uncommitted land

and that it be Crown land withheld from sale and be protected forest under the provisions of the *Forests Act 1958*.

D4 That the Department of Crown Lands and Survey investigate the provision of legal access through the uncommitted land to allotments 25 and 25A, Parish of Myrhee.

Unreserved Crown Land at Eurobin

The former State School Reserve at Eurobin was an area for which no recommendation was made in the final recommendations for the North-eastern area, Districts 3, 4 and 5. The Council therefore recommends:

D5 That 1 ha, adjoining allotment 4B, Parish of Barwidgee, and being the former Eurobin State School Reserve, become a streamside reserve

and that it be reserved under section 4 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and be managed by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.