

THE INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONAL PARK CONCEPT
ON KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK

By

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DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated, this dissertation
is my own work.

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ABSTRACT

An introductory study of the development of the national park concept and its influence upon decision-making and the ecological condition of the Kosciusko National Park. The study concentrates upon conflicts and the contradictions within the national park concept and between the national park land use and other land uses. These conflicts centre around the aims of national parks to preserve the natural ecological condition of an area and to allow public recreational use of that area. Further complications arise over the definitions of 'natural ecological condition' and 'democratic public use'. The history of Kosciusko National Park from 1944 (when it was established as Kosciusko State Park) to 1980 demonstrates the continued lack of resolution of these conflicts, from a period when little was known about natural ecosystem management to the present, when the ecological impacts of recreational uses are more widely understood.

An additional feature of the Park's history has been the making of decisions important for the area's preservation as a national park without consideration of basic national park aims. This occurred when the Park was established in 1944 and when livestock grazing was abolished above 1370 metres in 1957 and, despite the gradual development from the 1960s of more conscious management of the area as a national park, factors external to the national park concept still exert a significant influence upon management of the Park. This raises questions of environmental ethics and the place of national parks within Australian society.

The following episodes in the Park's history are treated in some detail - the establishment of the Park; the 1957 grazing debate; the impact of the Snowy Mountains Scheme; planning proposals; and the conflicts between Park user groups.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C.A.P.B.	Catchment Areas Protection Board
K.H.A.	Kosciusko Huts Association
K.N.P.	Kosciusko National Park
K.S.P.	Kosciusko State Park
K.S.P.T.	Kosciusko State Park Trust
N.P.P.A.C.	National Parks and Primitive Areas Council
N.P.W.S.	New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service
S.M.H.E.A.	Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority
W.L.P.S.	Wild Life Preservation Society

INTRODUCTION

The role of perception and attitudes in influencing the condition of the Australian environment has received increasing attention in the past decade. This is a vast field of study and can range from consideration of psychological factors and cultural preconditioning to examination of the philosophical, political or economic background to decision-making in a community. J.M. Powell, in the Introduction of his study *Environmental Management in Australia: 1788-1914* has expressed the problems related to the breadth of the topic -

Conservation must ... be viewed as a dynamic concept without precise definition, and none of the traditional disciplines can really expect to treat it adequately: a fusion of at least eight major approaches is required, ranging from economic, political, social and ecological perspectives, to those of aesthetics, ethics, philosophy and science/technology.¹

The many possible ways of approaching the topic and the difficulty of defining 'conservation' and associated concepts soon became apparent in this investigation of the influence of the national park concept upon Kosciusko National Park. The literature of the national park movement stated ideals that were frequently ignored in practice, and confusion and conflict within the movement were common. Many of the major events in the Park's history had little connection to the national park concept. Thus, it was decided to explore the roles played by these contradictions, conflicts and non-national park motivations in influencing decisions made about the establishment and management of the Park. The resulting account emphasises the actual arguments featured in the national park concept and concentrates upon the political and ecological segments of the many possible approaches.

The short time that was available for research and the short length imposed upon this thesis has limited the amount of source material that could be covered. A policy was adopted of concentrating upon the primary

sources relating to the major events in the Park's history contained in the Kosciusko National Park Files, New South Wales Parliamentary Debates, and the publications of the national park movement and other groups connected with the Park. It has been impossible to pursue detailed biographical research which might throw more light upon the motivations of individuals who were influential in the management of the Park. This study has been further complicated by the complexity of the history of the Kosciusko area. No comprehensive Park history has been published and many myths have developed, particularly in relation to the establishment of the Park in 1944. So it has been necessary to include a certain amount of historical description in order to account for changes in the national park concept and to relate the concept to Park management policies.

Therefore, this paper is an introductory exposition of the factors influencing the Park's environment and community attitudes to the Park. It covers a long period and attempts to portray the flavour of thought at various times rather than a comprehensive picture. The concepts discussed are those expressed by a few groups within Australian society and no claim is made that they represent the views of the remainder of Australians. Since these groups have exerted most influence upon the management of Kosciusko National Park, concentration upon their ideas does not present an unbalanced account.

The term 'nature conservation' is now most commonly used to describe the protection of native species and ecosystems that occurs in national parks. In this paper the term 'nature preservation' has been used in preference to 'nature conservation' in order to distinguish between the idea of keeping a natural system intact for national park purposes

(preservation) and the notion of conservation of the natural resources contained within such systems so that sufficient remain for future harvest.

Some geographical names also require explanation. From 1944 until 1967 the Kosciusko National Park was called the Kosciusko State Park. This did not imply any difference between state parks and national parks - the Kosciusko State Park was regarded to be equivalent to other national parks established at that time and was constantly referred to as a 'national park' by politicians, scientists and recreational organisations. The term 'Summit' or 'Summit area' refers to Mt Kosciusko and the nearby peaks, while the term 'Main Range' indicates the area stretching from the Ramshead Range immediately south of Mt Kosciusko to Dicky Cooper Bogong, a peak to the north near the source of the Munyang (or Whites) River.² The term 'Snowy Mountains' refers to the high mountains west of the Monaro which, except for the ranges north of Tantangara Mountain, comprise or surround the Great Dividing Range. Most of these mountains are within Kosciusko National Park. The term 'Kosciusko area' is sometimes used in place of 'Snowy Mountains'.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATIONAL PARK CONCEPT TO THE 1940s

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the idea of establishing national parks gradually percolated through a few minority groups in Australian society. Basically, the national park concept they expounded was the same as that found today in the official statements of government national park authorities and in the literature of the national parks movement. National parks were seen as relatively large areas, preserved in their natural condition for the benefit of present and future generations and for recreational and scientific use. They were to be administered for the public by government, preferably by a government authority empowered to control all national parks and similar reserves within a State. However, this similarity between the early and current concepts hides both the complexity of the national park concept, as well as changes in the meaning of its basic components, especially the idea of 'nature preservation'. A presentation of the history of the national park concept as merely a catalogue of the establishment of parks and changes in their management policies and techniques simply misses the point. As this paper intends to argue, the current problems and conflicts faced in Kosciusko National Park have important connections with the complexities of the national park concept.

1.1 The Development of the National Park Concept

There is some debate about the degree of influence exerted by the United States on the Australian national parks movement. In 1872, the first national park in the world was established at Yellowstone in the United States, closely followed by the National Park south of Sydney (now known as Royal National Park) in 1879. Despite this coincidence of timing, it appears that the Australian idea was arrived at independently from the

United States, though both sets of ideas were based upon similar traditions of Western society.¹ However, the United States established a National Parks Service in 1916 and its theories and experience did influence national park supporters in Australia. Likewise, national park legislation passed in Canada in 1911 and New Zealand in 1928 was studied by the national parks movement in Australia.²

By 1915, a few national parks and similar reserves had been established in all of the Australian States, and small national park lobby groups had been formed.³ This early movement was primarily an urban phenomenon - an extension of humanitarian town planning theories that had arisen in response to the crowded, polluted and unsanitary conditions in industrial towns. It was believed that the provision of recreational open space within urban areas could solve many of the health and behavioural problems of depressed, industrial communities and give such people an incentive to better their state in life. Experience of 'Nature' was believed to be beneficial to human beings and urbanisation was seen as lacking this vital human need. Many of the early national park theorists in Australia were town planners, administrators or intellectuals to whom national parks were 'super-urban' parklands, embodying to a heightened extent all the health and cultural advantages of urban parks. They removed recreation far from the unhealthy air of the cities to the 'pure' air of the mountains or seaside and provided a more definite contrast to the rigours of urban life, thus fulfilling the re-creative role of parkland, and enabling the masses to return to their urban tasks with renewed vigour.

Recreation reserves were also part of the movement to achieve political democracy and human rights. Not only did every citizen have the right to enjoy open space, but such space had to be managed democratically - to provide the greatest good for the greatest number. The absence of evidence of inequality was believed to be part of democratic management. Thus, access to national parks was to be facilitated for all citizens.

Private profit-making activities such as advertising or the harvesting of natural resources were described as 'exploitative' - however, this did not denote a radical new attitude to accepted land use and management practices. Rather, it was a relative description of what was acceptable within national parks and public reserves. In Australia, as the major cities increased in size and more natural bushland was alienated in their vicinities many people became concerned that public access to scenic points and natural areas would be severely limited. National parks were partly an attempt to provide against this possibility.⁴ 'Exploitation' was regarded as any action which restricted public access or which derived private gain from allowing public access - it was not the activity itself that was seen as exploitative, but its democratic implications in regard to public recreation. Thus, activities which changed the natural condition of the landscape were regarded as proper outside of national parks. Within parks they were condemned if conducted by a private operator, but were often acceptable if conducted by the park administration as representatives of the public. This emphasis upon the democratic purposes of national parks is possibly the source of the term 'national park'.

Knowledge of natural ecosystems was rudimentary and it was usually felt that preservation for public recreational use was sufficient to maintain the natural condition of an area. 'Natural conditions' were not interpreted to be the state of undisturbed ecological processes but were seen as merely a broad contrast to the urban and rural landscapes. Areas within national parks could be manicured or 'improved' according to notions of beauty and usefulness that did not always coincide with the preservation of native species. For instance, part of the National Park near Sydney was cleared of 'wild scrub' and 'bad and indifferent ... timber',⁵ deer and goats were introduced, and useful, sporting fish released into the streams. The early national park theorists did not perceive any contradiction between their praising of the qualities of Nature and their

attempts to change Nature into a more preferred mould. Natural areas were regarded basically as a source of useful and desirable human experiences and were not valued for their intrinsic qualities alone.

As new groups of people became interested in national parks, different interpretations of some of its features were imposed upon the basic national park concept. These changes centred around a more rigorous view of nature preservation formulated by some natural scientists, bushwalkers and, in New South Wales, the members of the Wild Life Preservation Society which was formed in 1909. This latter society was originally concerned about the threatened extinction of some species of Australian fauna and flora, and the cruelty with which many native animals were slaughtered. Its view of nature was initially very selective, most concern being felt for attractive, furry animals (like the koala, possum and kangaroo), or colourful parrots. Gradually the society was influenced by elementary notions of ecological interdependence that were being expounded by some natural scientists⁶ and it began to advocate the protection of plant and animal habitats in the form of nature reserves and national parks. These early ecological theories were mainly concerned with resource depletion and its limiting effects upon Australia's economic development.

The Philistines may ask why should we care, let us cut down the forests and sell the timber, let us kill the animals and sell their skins, let us cultivate the ground and make what we can out of it. The answer is clear. On economic grounds alone the last state of such a country will be poorer than the first. ... When the forest goes, a timber famine arises, the rivers become water courses alternately dry and flooded, droughts become serious, and the rivers and dams silt up. ... With the loss of the birds the devastating insects, which in Australia have at times stopped railway trains, have it, all their own way. The fruit trees become infested with parasites.

The protection of natural resources such as timber and water in areas particularly susceptible to damage from normal rural land uses came to be regarded as an auxiliary function of national parks. These views were also shared by many groups of bushwalkers who had initially come to support the preservation of natural areas as a setting for the 'hardy recreation' of

bushwalking, which became a popular minority activity in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸

Despite their opposition to the introduction of exotic species into national parks, the nature preservation groups did not believe that their ideas contradicted the earlier national park concept. They shared similar ideals of democratic use and believed in the psychological and social benefits to be gained from recreation in natural settings. They felt that public experience of unchanged native ecosystems would convince society of the need for stricter nature preservation. In New South Wales, this similarity of outlook was reflected in the formation of the Parks and Playgrounds Movement in 1930. This was an affiliation of clubs and organisations interested in parks and outdoor recreation and was intended to be a co-ordinating and planning board which would lobby and liase with governments to achieve the reservation of all types of parks and associated facilities.⁹ Though primarily composed of urban sporting bodies, it also included bushwalking clubs, the Wild Life Preservation Society, the Naturalists' Society of New South Wales, the Royal Society of New South Wales, the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, and the Town Planning Association of New South Wales.

In the 1930s, the bushwalking clubs began to organise to procure the establishment of national parks and the administration of parks and reserves by a central government authority. A deliberate attempt was made to use arguments acceptable to the whole national park movement.

*Conservation is of national significance and deserves the support of all patriotic people. In the past our case has been limited to saying, in effect, 'We want this place classified as a reserve because it's nice to look at and it's no good for anything else anyway'. Now we can say, 'It is in the national interest to conserve this area, not only because of its scenic beauty, but because it will yield timber or water, will help youth keep fit, or will attract tourists', and expect our case to attract attention. By paddling our canoe in the strong currents we shall get there much sooner.*¹⁰

In 1932, the New South Wales Federation of Bush Walking Clubs was formed, followed in 1934 by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council

(N.P.P.A.C.). Together they put the case that national parks could cater for a wide range of uses and purposes which were dependent upon the preservation of natural areas. This range of uses could be catered for by the zoning of parks into 'Tourist Open Areas', where living accommodation and recreational facilities would be provided, and 'Primitive Areas', which were undisturbed areas without roads where bushwalkers and trail-riders could pursue their activities.¹¹ Catchment protection and scientific research were also functions of primitive areas. It was realised that large numbers of visitors could damage parks, but it was believed that this could be easily managed by a system of closed seasons and by preventing large, monopolistic, profit-making enterprises from entrenching themselves within national parks. Environmental exploitation was conceptually linked to such large businesses, which were blamed for the attraction of large numbers of visitors to some national parks in the United States and the subsequent loss of their 'primitive state'. Government-run or small private concerns were regarded as less likely to cause damage, and as more amenable to public control. In their optimistic association of public control with environmental protection, the bushwalking clubs and the N.P.P.A.C. did not seem to be aware that their own campaign to establish national parks and the publication given to such areas might result in their over-use.

By the time Kosciusko State Park was established in 1944, there were several groups lobbying for the declaration of national parks in New South Wales. The N.P.P.A.C., under the direction of Myles Dunphy (one of the inspirers of the early bushwalking movement) had surveyed the areas in the east of the state which it thought suitable for national parks or primitive areas, and these suggestions were nominally supported by the rest of the national park lobby. The New South Wales Government was also becoming more receptive to the lobby's approaches. Several parks were established - in particular, part of the Blue Mountains National Park in 1932; Garawarra

Primitive Area (now part of Royal National Park) and Bouddi National Park in 1934; Tallowa Primitive Area (now Morton National Park), also in 1934; and the Heathcote Primitive Area in 1943.¹² Greater interest was beginning to be shown in the effective regulation of native fauna and flora protection. The *Wildflowers and Native Plant Act, 1927*, had improved the legal status of flora protection and, in the 1940s, improvements in fauna protection were being considered. This resulted in the *Fauna Protection Act, 1948*, which provided for the establishment of a government regulating body, the Fauna Protection Panel, and for the establishment of fauna reserves. However, the New South Wales Government was not so interested in systematising the administration of national parks. Each park was managed by a Trust, usually composed of representatives of government departments, local residents and Members of Parliament. The security of tenure of parks was limited and they could be revoked or subjected to other uses without any legal restrictions. Most parks were also a residual land use, occupying lands which, at that time, had limited economic productivity.

The tourist development and recreational aspects of national parks also gained a greater response from the New South Wales Government than the nature preservation dimension. Government policies were finally recognising the arguments put forward for decades in favour of outdoor recreation and its mental and physical benefits for the community. In 1939, the Federal Department of Health launched the National Fitness Movement, which was intended to encourage and co-ordinate recreational projects throughout Australia. Each State had a National Fitness Council and, in New South Wales (while its main efforts were directed toward sporting activities and youth camps) the Council supported the establishment of national parks as settings for its activities. It also included education in bushcraft and natural science in its programs.¹³ There was also renewed speculation, after the rigours of the Great Depression, to put Australia on the world tourist map. Scenic areas (including existing and proposed

national parks) were regarded as potential tourist resorts which would bring in revenue and boost Australia's overseas image. The Second World War curtailed any tourist developments but heightened the Australian sense of nationalism and produced a desire for post-war changes along patterns already established in the United States and Western Europe.

1.2 The National Park Concept as a Matrix

This brief description of the early national park concept and associated movement has shown that the central foci of the concept were the notions of nature preservation, public recreation and democracy. However, in spite of an impression of uniformity and unanimity given by the movement, different groups of supporters actually interpreted the three notions in different ways - in particular, nature preservation. Moreover, the association of these three notions was a potential source of conflict.

1.2.1 The Different Interpretations of the Main Principles

Despite the 'alliance' between various branches of the national park movement in the 1930s and 1940s and the development of a theory that different preferences could be accommodated in park management, a practical split was emerging between the older, aesthetic interpretation of nature preservation and the newer ecological outlook. Taken to its logical conclusion, as the preservation of pre-European ecological processes, the latter view threatened the degree of change accepted in the old-style national parks. It also imposed a management priority upon nature preservation since it advocated an exact description of preservation compared to the more flexible, aesthetic interpretation of Nature. Potential tensions were also evident within the ecological viewpoint. Should priority be given to the preservation of individual species, thereby regarding parks and reserves as habitats to achieve this end? This tended to be the emphasis of the wild life preservationists. Bushwalkers, on the

other hand, were more inclined to emphasise whole areas, since their recreation was dependent upon maintaining the natural ecological interactions within large areas.

The recreational uses proposed for national parks were dependent upon spatial separation from each other for success. However, no criteria were established by the national park movement for deciding questions of disputed use. Should priority be given to uses, such as tourist resorts, which would contribute to the national economy and provide opportunities for a broad spectrum of the community to visit a park? Or should priority be given to a high degree of nature preservation and the small group of hardy bushwalkers able to use remote and rugged areas? In reality, each group tended to put its own interests first and to display intolerance of its partners' preferences when conflicts arose. Myles Dunphy, for instance, was a firm exponent of the principle of free public access to national parks and primitive areas. Yet an examination of some of his proposals for the Kosciusko area show that by public access, he really meant access for his fellow bushwalkers, '... those who greatly value wilderness and wildlife'.¹⁴ Finally, the national park movement had no uniform policy upon the extent to which grazing, logging and mining should be allowed within parks. Variation even existed within groups of bushwalkers and supporters of ecological nature preservation.

1.2.2 The Conflicting Principles

The association of recreational use and nature preservation is the main conflicting theme of the national park concept today. For the original national park theorists these ideas were compatible and parks had a firmly defined public use function. With hindsight, the maintenance of this association in the 1940s was leading to logical contradictions caused by the different interpretations given to nature preservation. Yet these contradictions were only dimly realised. How could the more

stringent ecological view of nature preservation be reconciled with the belief that national parks must achieve 'the greatest good of the greatest number' if parks were also to provide opportunities for public recreational use? If uses were to be limited in favour of nature preservation was not elitism inevitable? Could national parks be regarded as democratic institutions if permitted uses discriminated against the majority of the community? The idea of limiting access and use was also contrary to the Australian tradition of the 'freedom of the bush'.

An alternative view of the democratic function of national parks can be seen in the catchment protection and cultural heritage arguments. Here, the existence of a wider public interest is implied. Individuals must be prepared to give up some benefits (in this case unlimited use of national parks) for the greater benefit of the whole community. This voluntary regulation for the good of society is the other side of democracy - it is assumed that freedom can only be achieved through order. Although such regulation was accepted in everyday life, in the 1940s it was not clearly perceived in regard to national parks and the 'freedom of use' aspects were stressed much more in regard to national parks than the restrictive aspects. This was emphasised by the great value given to personal experience of national parks by all national park supporters.

1.2.3 Implications

Despite a superficial uniformity it can be seen that the motivations and perceptions which led people to support national parks in the 1930s and 1940s were varied interpretations of common themes. For these reasons it is best to describe the movement and concept as a matrix, rather than as a monolithic ideology. The basic association of the ideas of nature preservation, public recreational use and democracy has remained in the national park concept to the present day. Many of the dilemmas experienced in current national park management are caused by different interpretations

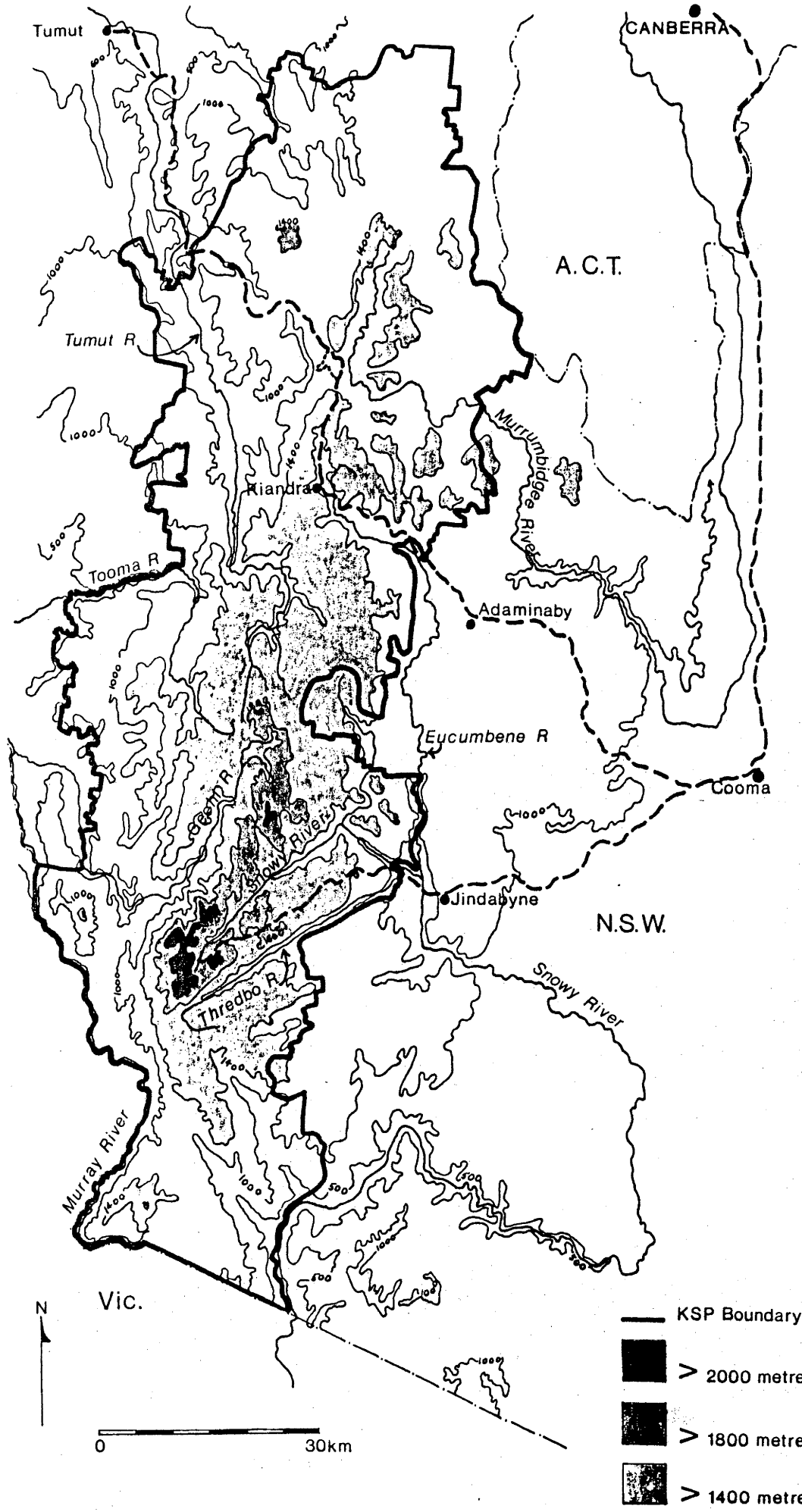
of these basic ideas or by continued attempts to reconcile a high degree of recreational use with strict nature preservation. The confessed failure of many national park administrators to reconcile preservation and use is frequently regarded as an unavoidable fact of life. This paper, however, seeks to view such dilemmas from a new perspective. Conflicts such as those occurring between preservation and use may be 'inevitable' in a purely physical sense but, because they have been formulated and associated by society, they also have a conceptual basis and, to that extent, are amenable to change and control. The following discussion of the national park concept and Kosciusko National Park will concentrate upon the above themes of contradiction and conflict.

Another important important implication of the national park concept was its potential to challenge the accepted Australian criteria for land use decision-making, which was traditionally based upon economic development.¹⁵ National park land uses introduced non-economic criteria into this process and also implied the prohibition or reduction of activities (such as grazing, agriculture and logging) which had brought revenue to governments and livelihood to individuals. Thus, national parks also became a political issue. Ironically, while national park supporters were claiming that national parks represented the public interest, other groups in the community were arguing the opposite. Hence, national park debates were also potential value conflicts between varying degrees of economic motivation. A strict dichotomy of values did not exist in the 1940s, as is illustrated by the support given to the revenue-producing aspects of tourist developments in national parks. The movement itself was confused about the balance between economic and non-economic values, and this introduced another complication into the national park concept and the implementation of its theories. The political and economic aspects of land use became significant features in the history of Kosciusko National Park.

CHAPTER 2THE KOSCIUSKO AREA - DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY TO THE 1940s2.1 Ecological Description¹

The area now within the boundaries of Kosciusko National Park consists of a mountain spine running approximately north-south, sloping gradually on the east and falling more sharply to the west. The higher ranges vary from 1300 to 1800 metres above sea level, reaching 2228 metres on Mt Kosciusko and over 2000 metres on the nearby peaks. Most of the Park is above 1000 metres, though the Tumut River and the Geehi River drop to 500 metres and the lower Snowy River valley reaches 230 metres near the Victorian border. The prevailing wind direction is from the west, giving the western side of the mountains a higher rainfall than the eastern side. For the whole area, the average annual precipitation of about 1255 millimetres is much higher than the Australian average of 420 millimetres, and is well above 2000 millimetres on the highest ranges.² Between May and October snow falls above 1200 metres, being more persistent above 1520 metres. No permanent snowfields exist, though patches of snow on the lee side of the Main Range persist into summer and sometimes last till the next winter. Temperatures are cooler than in the tablelands and plains to the east and west, decreasing by about 7.6°C for each 1000 metres of elevation. Weather conditions can be very variable, and blizzards can occur at high altitudes, even in summer. High winds are frequent, and frosts occur in most areas throughout the year.

Most of the Park consists of granitic rocks. There are also inliers of metamorphosed sedimentary rocks and areas of limestone (with caves) occur at Yarrangobilly and Cooleman. Parts of the Park also contain evidence of glacial and periglacial activity. In the Summit area the most recent glaciation has produced a series of glacial lakes and moraines - Lake Cootapatamba, Lake Albina, Club Lake, Blue Lake, and Hedley Tarn.



MAP 2.1 KOSCIUSKO STATE PARK, 1944

SOURCE: K.S.P.T. 1965; Central Mapping Authority 1978.

The valleys of Spencer's Creek and its tributaries also contain glacial features and the David Moraine on Spencer's Creek is considered important in dating the periods of glaciation which occurred on the Australian continent. In addition to these features of scientific and scenic interest, the splitting and downslope movement of rocks caused by periglacial activity, has left deep layers of unconsolidated material on slopes of less than 30°, making them particularly susceptible to erosion if the surface vegetation and soil is disturbed.³

This variety of climate, altitude, aspect and geological formation has resulted in a variety of vegetational associations, particularly in relation to altitude.⁴ On the wetter, steeper western slopes the lowest sites are occupied by *Eucalyptus camphora* woodlands, graduating into *E. macrorhyncha* and *E. maculosa* forests on drier sites, with *E. fastigata*, *E. viminalis* and *E. radiata* forests predominating on the wetter slopes up to about 1000 metres above sea level. *Eucalyptus delegatensis* (Alpine Ash) - *E. dalrympleana* forests occur up to about 1500 metres, being replaced by *E. pauciflora* (Snow Gum) woodlands, which generally coincide with the winter snow-line. The tree-line is reached at about 1830 metres. On the eastern side of the Park this altitudinal succession is somewhat telescoped, with fewer of the moisture-requiring *E. delegatensis*-*E. dalrympleana* forests. In the north and east extensive plains occur at altitudes of about 1300 metres to 1400 metres - for instance, the Long Plain north of Kiandra and the Snowy Plains around the Gungarlin River. Cold air draining from the surrounding ranges has caused an inverted tree-line to form, with the valley floor occupied by grasslands of Snow Grass (*Poa* spp.). In the lower, warmer and drier areas in the south (near the lower Snowy River) the lowest areas carry an alliance of *Eucalyptus albens* and *Callitris glauca* (Cypress Pine), and the *E. fastigata*-*E. viminalis* alliance is replaced by woodlands of *Eucalyptus albens*, *E. melliodora*, *E. bridgesiana* and *E. nortoni*.

The alpine area (defined as the area above the tree-line) is mainly confined to approximately 100 square kilometres surrounding Mt Kosciusko.⁵

It contains a rich variety of shrubs, herbs and grasses, many of which provide spectacular massed flowerings in summer. Of particular interest for this study are the high water-table areas which occur on valley bottoms or near hillside springs. These have been divided into fens (*Carex gaudichaudiana* alliance), valley bogs (*Carex gaudichaudiana-Sphagnum cristatum* alliance) and raised bogs (*Epacris paludosa-Sphagnum cristatum* alliance). These areas act as filters and sponges, soaking up the water draining from the surrounding slopes and allowing it to be slowly released into mountain streams - important for the efficiency of the area as a catchment and vital for the long term, sustained release of sediment-free water into rivers. Prior to European settlement, these sites were covered by a mat of vegetation, the gradual development of which had formed thick peat beds. Approximately 63 per cent of the area consists of herbfields and grasslands (mainly *Poa* spp).⁶ Rocky sites are occupied by heath communities, usually dominated by the *Oxylobium ellipticum-Podocarpus lawrencei* alliance. Two extremely specialised and rare plant communities occur on small areas subject to very harsh growing conditions - the feldmark alliance of the exposed, stony areas on the top of the Main Range; and the mat and cushion plants which occupy the snow-patch sites on the eastern side of the Range. All of the vegetation at high altitudes experiences difficult growing conditions, being subject to short growing seasons, winter snow coverage, and numerous freeze-thaw cycles, strong winds and high solar radiation in summer.

While the Park contains little endemic mammalian fauna, it supports a wide variety of species native to South East Australia.⁷ Of the endemic species, *Burramys parvus* (the Mountain Pigmy Possum) inhabits areas of heath in the subalpine Snow Gum woodlands and *Pseudophryne corroboree* (the Corroboree Frog) is found in Sphagnum bogs above 1200 metres. An interesting variety of insects is also present. Introduced species are well established throughout the area - in particular rabbits, foxes, pigs, dogs, cats and

horses. European and North American Trout have been introduced into all of the streams and rivers (dating from the 1880s) except at very high altitudes where natural barriers have prevented them from migrating. Here, the streams are still populated by the native Minnow (*Galaxias findlayi*).

Much of the flora and some of the fauna of the Park is related to the flora and fauna of other southern continents and is relevant to the study of continental drift. The altitudinal vegetation zones are also important for the study of plant adaptation, comparative morphology and speciation. Special interest has been shown in the alpine area. Together with its geological features, this makes the Park a focus of scientific interest. Likewise, its flora, fauna and scenery have attracted interest from the general public. Mt Kosciusko, the highest mountain in Australia, also attracts many visitors. At the same time, the area forms the catchment for the two major river systems (the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers) which flow through the low rainfall areas in the south east of the continent. The eastward flowing Snowy River (noted for its plentiful supply of water in a continent where rivers frequently dry up) also rises in the mountains. As one of the few areas of Australia where snow falls, the Kosciusko area is becoming increasingly used for snow sports. This combination of cultural and scientific attractions with the natural resources of water, timber and grasslands (and, lately, snow) has given the area a national significance and provides the framework for its land use history since the beginning of European settlement in the area.

2.2 Land Use Patterns and Proposals

The Snowy Mountains Area has a long history as an area of special significance for human societies, and as an area of transitory or seasonal human occupation. The area was too cold and carried too low an animal population at higher altitudes to sustain year-round Aboriginal use, except

for the milder areas of the Tumut River and lower Snowy River valleys. However, the surrounding Aboriginal tribes were attracted to the highest peaks in summer to feast on the Bogong Moths (*Agrotis infusa*) that aestivate there in large numbers, and to conduct ceremonial activities, trade and marriages between groups that normally separated for the rest of the year.⁸

A similar pattern of use was established from the beginning of European settlement of the surrounding areas in the 1820s and 1830s, and replaced Aboriginal use of the area as the local tribes were soon obliterated by disease. Pastoralists took their stock into the northern plains as a natural extension from the Monaro and Tumut districts, but failed to establish permanent settlements because of the severe winter climate. Gradually, the whole Snowy Mountains area was taken over for grazing - but only in summer, as a supplement to lowland pasture management, or for relief from drought.⁹ It came to be regarded as part of the public estate, able to be used by all. Not only local graziers utilised the summer pastures, but livestock was also regularly brought in from as far away as Narrandera and Hay. The area remained Crown Land and, in 1889, was organised into a system of summer grazing leases (generally known as snow leases) by the New South Wales Department of Lands. The notion of 'common land' held by many of these graziers was one of free and unhampered use established by tradition, and many graziers continued to take their stock to the mountains without applying for leases. The summer pastures came to be dominated by large landholders from the west who used the pastures for drought relief or who made high profits through illegal sub-leasing.

The public significance of the area extended far beyond its use for common pasturage. The fascination of the highest mountain in Australia, the mountain scenery and its supposedly 'healthy' air attracted a series of hardy tourists throughout the nineteenth century. The Yarrangobilly Caves were developed into a small tourist resort by the New South Wales Government

in the 1880s. At the turn of the century, inspired by new Australian nationhood and personal interest in the Snowy Mountains, a group of prominent New South Wales politicians, bureaucrats and professionals¹⁰ began ambitious plans to develop the area into a world-class tourist and ski resort. By 1909, the road to the summit of Mt Kosciusko (now MR 286) had been completed, together with the track connecting the glacial lakes in the Summit area, the Hotel Kosciusko at Digger's Creek, the Creel fishing lodge near Jindabyne, and Bett's Camp, a skiing hut and staging post between Perisher Valley and Spencer's Creek.¹¹ The Chalet at Charlotte Pass was built in 1930.

By this time, the alpine and sub-alpine regions had become a focus of scientific interest, mainly because of their specialised and rare flora, evidence of glaciation and climatic conditions unusual in Australia.¹² The utilisation of the area's water resources for a wider public purpose also received attention from the 1880s - in particular, the 'quirk of nature' which sent the plentiful waters of the Snowy River to the east, through well-watered lands where the river's flow was 'wasted'. Numerous proposals were made to divert Snowy River waters for irrigation in the dry west of New South Wales. Other proposals were made to utilise the many mountain rivers for hydro-electricity production.¹³

Although no documented proposals to establish a national park in the area were made before the 1920s, the tourism and nature preservation interest evinced from the 1880s had many of the characteristics of the early national park movement. Many visitors expressed the desire to see the whole area opened up for public recreation and extolled the psychological advantages of a holiday in the Alps.

*It is impossible to view the scenery without emotion. On the summit itself one sees as far as the eye can reach ranges of mountains succeeding each other until they fade away in a distant horizon, and presenting the appearance of a billowy ocean. Nearer to us are huge mountain masses, contemplation of which irresistibly suggests to man his own insignificance It is grand, sublime, ennobling! It gives one a broader view of men and things. In short, it is an education.*¹⁴

Public reserves were established around the Hotel Kosciusko and Yarrangobilly Caves and were stocked with game animals, while attempts were made to establish exotic trees.¹⁵ The existence of grazing leases was not regarded to be detrimental to the preservation of the flora, fauna and scenic features of the area and most published accounts praised the perceived grazing value of the alpine and sub-alpine grasslands. Even the botanist J.H. Maiden (who noted the tendency of sheep to eat some of the rarer plants) and R. Helms (who predicted that the graziers' practice of firing the pastures would cause soil erosion) apparently did not envisage a situation where the removal of livestock grazing would be necessary to protect the area's other features.

2.3 Ecological Condition in the 1940s

Up to the 1940s, the seasonal usage pattern in the Snowy Mountains remained relatively unchanged. A few attempts had been made to establish permanent pastoral and mining settlements, but these soon dwindled to a few tiny, isolated mining ventures and the virtually deserted village of Kiandra.¹⁶ The intervention of two world wars and an economic depression had squashed the possibility of water resource and extended tourist developments. Road access was limited to the Kosciusko Road and the road between Cooma and Tumut. A few rough stock routes and bridle tracks also penetrated the area.¹⁷ In the general public view, the Snowy Mountains remained remote and romantic - an indefinable symbol of Australian culture, celebrated in folk-lore, but little visited and understood.

A century of small mining ventures and tourist developments had caused localised ecological changes such as disturbance of the ground surface, limited planting of exotic trees and the introduction of weeds such as the blackberry and briar. Livestock grazing and an associated increase in the incidence of fires¹⁸ (mainly lit by graziers to encourage

more palatable pasture growth and extend the area of pasture by killing trees and shrubs) had a more significant and widespread environmental impact. Most of the mature trees of the Snow Gum Woodlands and the *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forests had been destroyed by fire and replaced by even-aged coppice or seedlings.¹⁹ In a few areas, this regrowth had been killed by further burning and grazing and was replaced by grasslands or shrublands. Conditions leading towards serious soil erosion were prevalent throughout the area, and the complete removal of soil had occurred in patches, especially along the top of the Main Range. These trends had the potential to reduce the area's water catchment efficiency as the removal of dense vegetation and deep soils resulted in lower infiltration rates, increased overland flow and sediment load and a decrease in sustained stream flow. This was accelerated by the susceptibility of the bogs and fens to fire, trampling, grazing and changed drainage patterns. In the 1950s it was estimated that bogs and fens had been reduced to under 50 per cent of their pre-European area - many being replaced by actively eroding water courses.²⁰ The abundance of many of the more palatable alpine herbs and grasses had also been severely reduced. Introduced herbs such as Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) had taken their places.

Despite the beginnings of serious ecological deterioration, the Snowy Mountains area remained an enclave of relatively unchanged native ecosystems and retained the visual character of bushland, compared with the settled pastoral lands to the east and west.

2.4 National Park Proposals

Myles Dunphy was responsible for the first documented proposal to establish a national park in the Snowy Mountains. Attracted by the area's ruggedness, remoteness and relatively undisturbed condition, he had visited the mountains in the 1920s and formulated the idea of establishing a park

south of the Thredbo River, extending to the Pilot and over the border into Victoria. When the N.P.P.A.C. was formed in 1934, Dunphy's proposal was formally accepted as part of the Council's policy. Known as the Snowy-Indi National Park proposal, it was exhibited in 1935 and 1936.²¹

At first, the Snowy-Indi National Park proposal appears to have attracted little attention from the Government. In 1943, however, the New South Wales Department of Lands requested any interested organisations to submit plans for a national park in the Snowy Mountains. Dunphy submitted the N.P.P.A.C. proposals on behalf of the bushwalking movement, while the Parks and Playgrounds Movement and the National Fitness Council of New South Wales proposed a much larger area.²² Dunphy extended his original plans northwards to include the northern extent of the Main Range so that his proposals would be more in line with those of the two latter bodies. The Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales also corresponded with the Department about the nature preservation features of the area.²³

Following these submissions, a Bill to establish a national park over approximately 500,000 hectares (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ million acres) was drafted and passed as the *Kosciusko State Park Act* in 1944. It has often been presumed that the establishment of Kosciusko State Park, following a period of specific lobbying for a park in that area and involving consultation with the national park movement, was due mainly to the efforts of the movement. This interpretation regards the establishment of the Park and its subsequent management as being motivated by the national park concept. In Chapter 3 however, I offer an alternative explanation, which gives a different perspective to the relative societal and political importance of the national park concept and to the early management of the Kosciusko State Park.

CHAPTER 3

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF KOSCIUSKO STATE PARK, 1944-1957

3.1 The Establishment of the Park

No account of the early history of Kosciusko State Park offers a satisfactory explanation for the establishment of the Park, taking into account the complete set of events which occurred in relation to the area in 1943. In this year, the current series of snow leases expired. As early as 1942 the Department of Lands made known an intention to re-organise the leases (which were dominated by wealthy graziers and pastoral companies from western New South Wales) in favour of landholders from the immediate vicinity of the mountains.¹ The Department was also considering means to prevent soil erosion in the Snowy Mountains catchment, as well as proposals put forward by some Monaro landholders to convert the grazing leases in the Long Plain and Gungarlin River areas to closer settlement blocks. The catchment protection concern was further stressed by the New South Wales Government as part of its long term proposals to divert the waters of the Snowy River for irrigation. In addition, the newly established Soil Conservation Service wished to restrict grazing and burning in the catchment. The *Soil Conservation Act, 1938* had declared the Snowy River catchment to be an area of Erosion Hazard, and the catchments of the Burrinjuck and Hume Reservoirs were designated as Catchment Areas, thus bringing land use practices in these areas under special regulation.² However, no changes could be implemented until the snow lease agreements, that existed in 1938, expired in 1943.

In early 1943, the Government set up a special committee to review land use in the Snowy Mountains, comprising three representatives of the major land use viewpoints - C.J. Harnett, the ex-District Surveyor of Lands; Barrie, the Surveyor General; and E.S. Clayton, the Commissioner of the Soil

Conservation Service. This committee heard representations from all groups who had suggestions for the area, including the national parks movement. Government preoccupation with the fate of the area was intense, and the Premier, W.J. McKell, visited the area accompanied by the Minister for Lands, J.M. Tully; the member for Monaro, J. Seiffert; and E.S. Clayton.³ On the 3rd of September 1943 the new tender conditions for the snow leases were published.⁴ The lease boundaries were re-drawn, strict stocking rates and burning restrictions were attached to each lease, and a badly eroding area of 4000 hectares around the Summit was completely withdrawn from grazing. Leases were now to be regarded as supplementary pasture for the benefit of small, local landholders and not as revenue raising propositions. Only landholders with home holdings in the vicinity of the Snowy Mountains were eligible for the leases. Regulations were made to discourage overstocking. Only a lessee's own livestock could be pastured on a lease and agistment of other people's stock was forbidden. Simultaneously with the calling for new tenders, McKell announced that a national park would also be established in the Snowy Mountains.⁵

Hancock (the first recent author to deal with the establishment of the Park and whose interpretation is also followed by Bardwell and Turner) suggests that the Park was established for a combination of catchment protection and national park reasons.⁶ He suggests that the Premier, McKell, was influenced by these two lobby groups and decided to achieve their joint aims by administering the area as a national park. Superficially this interpretation is valid, but it misses the underlying political atmosphere and the relative priorities given to the dual functions of the proposed Park.

The concern for catchment protection referred to by Hancock was part of the general concern among natural scientists and some resource administrators that Australian land use practices were causing a depletion

of natural resources. In New South Wales and Victoria much of this concern was focused upon the Snowy Mountains area because it formed the upper catchment of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers, which were regarded as the 'life sources' of the dry western parts of those States. This concern was being increasingly shared by the inhabitants of these western areas, who wished to see a boom of primary and secondary industries in their region. The availability of water was one of the limiting factors of such development, particularly for irrigation. The first large irrigation schemes on the Murray River had been pioneered in the 1880s at Mildura and Renmark, while the first irrigation areas on the Murrumbidgee River were established in 1912. The great priority given to irrigation in this area was recognised by the *River Murray Agreement* of 1915, which included provisions for the construction of the Hume Reservoir (completed in 1936). Irrigation on the Murrumbidgee River was facilitated by the construction of Burrinjuck Dam (completed in 1927).

Concern for the condition of the catchment was focused upon two perceived problems -

- (i) that soil erosion in the catchment would cause siltation of the major reservoirs;
- (ii) that removal of soil cover in the catchment would lessen its long-term water storage capacity - by lessening the infiltration rate and causing increased overland flow which, in turn, would cause increased flood peaks but lower normal flows, thus lessening the water available for irrigation at low flow periods when it was most needed.

In the 1920s, the River Murray Commission (a joint Commonwealth-States body appointed by the *River Murray Agreement*) had communicated to the New South Wales Department of Lands its concern that clearing and burning on grazing leases was causing erosion.⁷ As a result an investigation of the New South

Wales section of the Murray catchment was conducted by B.U. Byles of the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau in the summer of 1931 and 1932. Byles established that serious soil erosion was beginning to occur and attributed it mainly to the repeated firing of the area by the snow lessees.⁸ Studies conducted by S.G.M. Fawcett in the Victorian Alps in the early 1940s suggested that catchment deterioration was more widely attributable to over-grazing and trampling by stock, as well as to fire.⁹ At this stage, however, most catchment protection proponents believed that fire was the major cause of erosion - with some contribution from gross over-stocking by the western graziers. The solution was seen to be the greater regulation of grazing practices rather than the cessation of grazing in the catchment area. Attention was also focused on fire after vast areas of the Snowy Mountains and Victorian Alps were burnt in the bushfires of 1939.

Parallel with these investigations, the New South Wales Government was attempting to control erosion throughout the State. In 1933, the Erosion Control Board under E.S. Clayton was set up. In 1938 this was extended into a statutory authority, the Soil Conservation Service, established under the *Soil Conservation Act*. Areas needing special protection were to be declared areas of Erosion Hazard or Catchment Areas¹⁰ and were to be subject to special land use controls, determined and administered by the Catchment Areas Protection Board (C.A.P.B.). This Board¹¹ consisted of the Minister currently administering the Act (as Chairman), the Commissioner of the Soil Conservation Service (as Deputy Chairman) and representatives of the Departments of Lands, Agriculture, Works and Local Government, the Forestry Commission and the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. The *Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913*, was amended so that no leases or licences could be let or extended in areas of Erosion Hazard or in Catchment Areas unless approved by the C.A.P.B., which could also attach special conditions to such leases and licences.¹² It was indicative of the concern

held for the catchments of the Snowy Mountains that, of the four specific areas for concern mentioned in the Act, three were within the Snowy Mountains. Thus, when the snow leases were renewed in 1943 they were to be subject to the veto of the C.A.P.B.

McKell, who led the Labor Government which came to power in 1941, has often been described as the initiator of the New South Wales Government's involvement in soil and water conservation activities. This interpretation appears to rest upon an image McKell built for himself during his election campaigns, and ignores the fact that the basis for water conservation and erosion control had already been established by previous governments. It would be impossible to determine McKell's personal conviction of conservation and nature preservation principles without detailed biographical research, but it is fairly certain that, whatever the complexity of his motivations, his support for soil and water conservation was a shrewd political move. Water conservation and irrigation proposals were vote-catching issues in western New South Wales. There was also a movement among some Murray Valley residents to secede from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and form an independent State¹³ - a controversy which McKell must have been eager to avoid. Proposals for post-war Soldier Settlements also involved extension of the irrigation projects. For whatever complex of reasons, McKell supported the greater regulation and protection of the Snowy Mountains catchment, which he described as an area of national importance.

If catchment protection had been the Government's only consideration, then control of land use practices by the Catchment Areas Protection Board would have been sufficient action. However, the situation was complicated, not by the national park lobby, but by the Government's wish to accommodate the interests of the local Monaro and Tumut graziers and to deal with internal government conflicts brewing over the area. Like the people of the Murray Valley, the inhabitants of the Tumut and Monaro districts were anxious

to extend the productivity of their region and the proposals for closer settlement of some of the snow lease areas were part of this move.¹⁴ The Soil Conservation Service and McKell believed that closer settlement would worsen the condition of the catchment.¹⁵ Yet the McKell administration, as a Labor Government with a policy of support for the 'little man' was also anxious to obtain the political support of this area, where the landholdings were mainly small and not very prosperous - especially since the Monaro had voted to State Parliament a Labor member, Jack Seiffert, who was particularly vociferous in pursuing the demands of his electorate. Thus, it was decided in 1943 to reach a compromise between the interests of the occupants of the upper and lower reaches of the river systems, with the aim of conserving water resources vital for the economic development of the State. The snow leases were to be regulated to remove the worst malpractices, thus helping the area to recover and satisfying the water users of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys. Leases were limited to the close vicinity of the mountains, thereby placating the demands of this region.

At the same time, the Government was concerned that the Soil Conservation Service and the C.A.P.B. would use their powers to ban grazing in the catchment completely and, in so doing, destroy the compromise with the local graziers. During the parliamentary debates on the *Kosciusko State Park Bill* Seiffert hinted that he suspected that E.S. Clayton wished to stop grazing completely in the Snowy Mountains.¹⁶ Seiffert later made these accusations openly.¹⁷ Hints of such an extreme attitude on the part of the Soil Conservation Service were regarded as power-brokerage, rather than a genuine desire to protect the catchment, despite the duty imposed upon the Service to control erosion. This accusation of power-building (which appears to have been unfair to Clayton) was fostered by the Department of Lands, which resented the trespass of the new Soil Conservation Service upon its traditional responsibilities as controller

of Crown Land. In fact, the Department of Lands was attributing its own political motivations to the Service, since much of the past neglect of Crown Lands was due to the Department's management of these areas almost solely as producers of revenue which would enhance its power in the bureaucratic hierarchy as an important contributor to the public purse.

In the light of these conflicts it becomes clear that the Kosciusko State Park was engineered as a means of maintaining the political balance between catchment protection and grazing, western and eastern graziers, Soil Conservation Service and Lands Department. The idea of a Snowy Mountains national park was known to the Government through the proposals of the national park movement, and its tourist development possibilities were regarded as attractive. Wartime nationalism also appears to have influenced the Government.

*The Government believes that if we are to progress as a truly great nation the development of our scenic and tourist resorts must proceed side by side with our commercial and industrial progress.*¹⁸

Once the national park movement submitted its proposals in 1943, it must have become apparent that the establishment of a park would provide a separate administration over the whole area and would possibly keep the feuding government departments apart while maintaining the political compromise desired by the Government.

The Kosciusko State Park Trust (K.S.P.T.) - the body established to administer the Park - consisted of representatives of government departments with responsibilities in the area and was obliged to carry out the provisions of the *Soil Conservation Act* within the Park.¹⁹ All resource management within the Park boundaries was either under the control of the Trust or required the concurrence of the Trust. To this end existing Forestry Reserves within the Park boundaries were revoked,²⁰ and mining²¹ and grazing²² leases could only be granted by the relevant departments with the Trust's concurrence. Thus, the Trust was clearly intended to be a

catchment protection body, and the mediator of land use in the area. Yet, it was just as certainly intended to support the perpetuation of the grazing leases. The Park contained all of the area covered by the snow leases and the Trust was to receive the revenue from the leases.²³ The membership of the Trust was also dominated by the Lands Department, which supported the continuation of grazing. As Chairman of the K.S.P.T., the Minister for Lands was empowered to nominate five other trustees, one to be an officer of the Lands Department and four others.²⁴ Of the four remaining trustees, there was to be a representative each of the Public Service, Forestry Commission, Soil Conservation Service and Government Tourist Bureau - each nominated by the Minister administering these departments.²⁵

The Government also departed from its normal practice when establishing national parks by giving the Kosciusko State Park a much greater security of tenure, which could only be revoked by Act of Parliament.²⁶ While this is normally regarded as an indication of the Government's greater conviction of the importance of national parks, it is likely to have been more directly motivated by the desire to give stability to the administration of the area in the interests of catchment protection and political compromise.

3.2 Management of Kosciusko State Park

3.2.1 The Period of Minimal Management

Political pragmatism guided the way in which the Park was established and ensured a management formula that supported the continuation of snow lease grazing. However, this framework proved to be inadequate to deal with active management situations beyond the 'status quo'.

Provision was made in the *Kosciusko State Park Act* for the Trust to carry out recreational developments and implement nature preservation policies through regulations and the establishment of a Primitive Area over

an area equivalent to one-tenth of the Park.²⁷ Yet, having established the Park as a political prop, the McKell Government and its successors were not prepared to give the necessary financial support to its development as a national park. The revenue provided by the grazing leases was approximately £10,000 a year and was the Trust's only assured income. Except for a few Parliamentary grants for specific purposes - mainly the acquisition of freehold land within the Park boundaries - the Trust received little additional money for development and management.²⁸ The Trust also had little time to administer the Park, as its members were busy in their primary occupations and met at only a few, poorly attended meetings a year. The only staff employed were a Secretary in Sydney, and a Building Supervisor and helpers based in a depot at Waste Point within the Park. No Park Rangers were employed by the K.S.P.T. and policing of the Park Regulations was left, theoretically, to the Lands Department Rangers who supervised the snow leases. In 1957, a Committee of the Australian Academy of Science reported:

*The region is ... a National Park largely in name only, and there is very little information given on the access roads to advise visitors where it begins or ends. There is no field museum and no obvious means of ascertaining where rangers may be found.*²⁹

With hindsight, it is probable that the Trust's inability to develop the Park was beneficial for the future management and nature preservation status of the area. The Trust supported propositions by the Ski Council of New South Wales, the Parks and Playgrounds Movement and the National Fitness Council to establish a network of resort villages and lodges above the snowline, including a string of lodges along the Main Range.³⁰ Lack of finance prevented the Trust from carrying out these developments itself. The traditional distrust of private enterprise activities within national parks was particularly strong among the early Trust members and reflected the McKell Government's intention to exclude private enterprise from the Park in the interests of democracy.³¹ Therefore, the ski clubs and other bodies were unable to carry out many of their own plans. By 1950 it became

apparent to the Trust, under pressure from the Ski Council, that it was unable to supply sufficient accommodation for Park visitors and, in 1952, the *Kosciusko State Park Act* was amended to allow the Minister for Lands to grant leases of land for the provision of tourist facilities. By 1957, however, only two lodges (Albina and Kunama) had been built on the Main Range and limited building was beginning at Perisher Valley and Thredbo.

If more funds had been available to the Trust it is possible that the number of ill-sited and scattered developments that exist in the skiing areas today would have been much greater. The ecological effects of resort development at high altitudes were little understood (even by the proponents of soil conservation) until the results of Soil Conservation Service investigations into soil erosion in the area became available in the mid-1950s. Even then, the potential impact of resorts must have appeared small in comparison to the widespread effects of grazing. Nature preservationists were more concerned that buildings and roads were not sited upon any of the glacial features or rarer plant communities than with the more mundane (but fundamental) siting problems, such as stream pollution and alteration of drainage patterns. In part, this was due to lack of experience of building at high altitudes in Australia. More concern was also shown for the careless behaviour of tourists - littering, careless lighting of fires - than with the resort installations themselves, and nature preservationists generally envisaged a greater degree of development within the Park than they would today.³²

Most of the recreational groups (with the exception of the bushwalking clubs) believed that the nature preservation function of the Park could be fulfilled by attention to the aesthetic design of facilities alone.

Whichever plan wins the day it is important that nothing should be done to impair the wild beauty of this primitive region. It would be a thousand pities if carelessly sited roads should slash the noble hillsides with ugly scars, or ill-designed shacks mar the symmetry of the skyline.³³

This view was shared by the majority of the trustees. Great attention was paid to the appearance of buildings,³⁴ and building and repair staff were the only Trust employees based in the Park. Beyond the building regulations, no effective environmental constraints were imposed on the early developments. During the building of Albina Lodge by the Ski Tourers' Association in 1950 and 1951 the Trust offered the assistance of its workmen, who drove a bulldozer to the site, leaving a deeply gouged, eroding track in an area very sensitive to disturbance.³⁵ The lease agreement granted to the Kosciusko Hotel and Chairlift Syndicate (the original developers of Thredbo) was very liberal. In return for the construction of a hotel, a chairlift, a petrol station, road access from the Alpine Way and water, sewerage and electricity services, the Company was allowed to occupy the Thredbo Village for a rent of £1 a year for five years. If, at the end of this period, it had satisfied the above building conditions, it was to be granted a ninety-nine year lease of the village area of 27 hectares for a rent of £100 for the first five years, afterwards becoming a proportion of the Company's gross receipts - $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 per cent from 1967 to 1982, 1 per cent from 1983 to 2012, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent from 2013 to 2056). Franchise rights for the provision of liquor, petrol, uphill transport and sales of other goods were also to be granted in an adjoining area of 1850 hectares, with limited franchise and first option on the development of uphill transport in a further area of 20,655 hectares, which extended to the Victorian border near Tom Groggin.³⁶ Due to financial difficulties, the Company was unable to meet the five year schedule. It was taken over by the Lend Lease Corporation which negotiated a new lease, eliminating the 20,655 hectare franchise area which has since remained in an undeveloped condition.

3.2 3.2.2 The Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme

During this period of low key management and lack of developments

then thought appropriate to a national park, the Snowy Mountains area did not gain a public image as a national park. Except for bushwalkers, skiers and scientists, few people visited the Park. Ironically, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme provided the main public image of the area - an image of technological progress, and domination of Nature somewhat at odds with the ideals of nature preservation.

When the Snowy Mountains Scheme began in 1949 the Trust made no protest about its potential effect upon the scenery and natural ecosystems of the Park, or attempted to impose conditions upon construction activities. Only a few scientists expressed doubts about the compatibility of a hydro-electric scheme with the nature preservation goals of a national park.³⁷ By the mid-1950s the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority (S.M.H.E.A.) had built many vehicular roads and tracks into previously inaccessible areas and was conducting public tours of the Snowy Mountains - not primarily to see the Park, but to view the progress of the Scheme and its technological wonders.

In fact, the Scheme was regarded not only as progressive in a technological and economic sense, but as a contribution to resource conservation - the wise use of resources advocated by the catchment protectionists. Since the control of erosion was essential for the efficient construction and viable operation of the Scheme, the S.M.H.E.A. became a strong supporter of the Soil Conservation Service.³⁸ Likewise, the Scheme was generally supported by the proponents of catchment protection and the water users of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys because it was to increase the water available for irrigation. As Soil Conservation Service researches began to show that continued grazing was worsening soil erosion at high altitudes, the catchment protection lobby began to call for more severe restrictions on the snow leases. E.S. Clayton, who was also the Soil Conservation Service representative on the K.S.P.T., and B.U. Byles, who was the Forestry Commission representative, both

supported grazing restrictions.³⁹ However, they fought a lonely battle against the majority of Trustees, who took the side of the Lands Department and snow lessees, and continued to support grazing within the catchment. The attempt to introduce the K.S.P.T. as a separate administration had failed to resolve the conflict between the Soil Conservation Service and the Department of Lands since the legal involvement of the two departments in the snow leases had been continued and the Trust became an arm of the Department of Lands. During the ensuing debate over the continuation of grazing, neither side looked to the Trust as the administrator of the area. Instead the anti-grazing lobby regarded the C.A.P.B. to be the area's land use controller, while the snow-lessees looked to the Department of Lands⁴⁰ - an eloquent witness to the Trust's ineffectiveness.

3.3 The National Park Concept

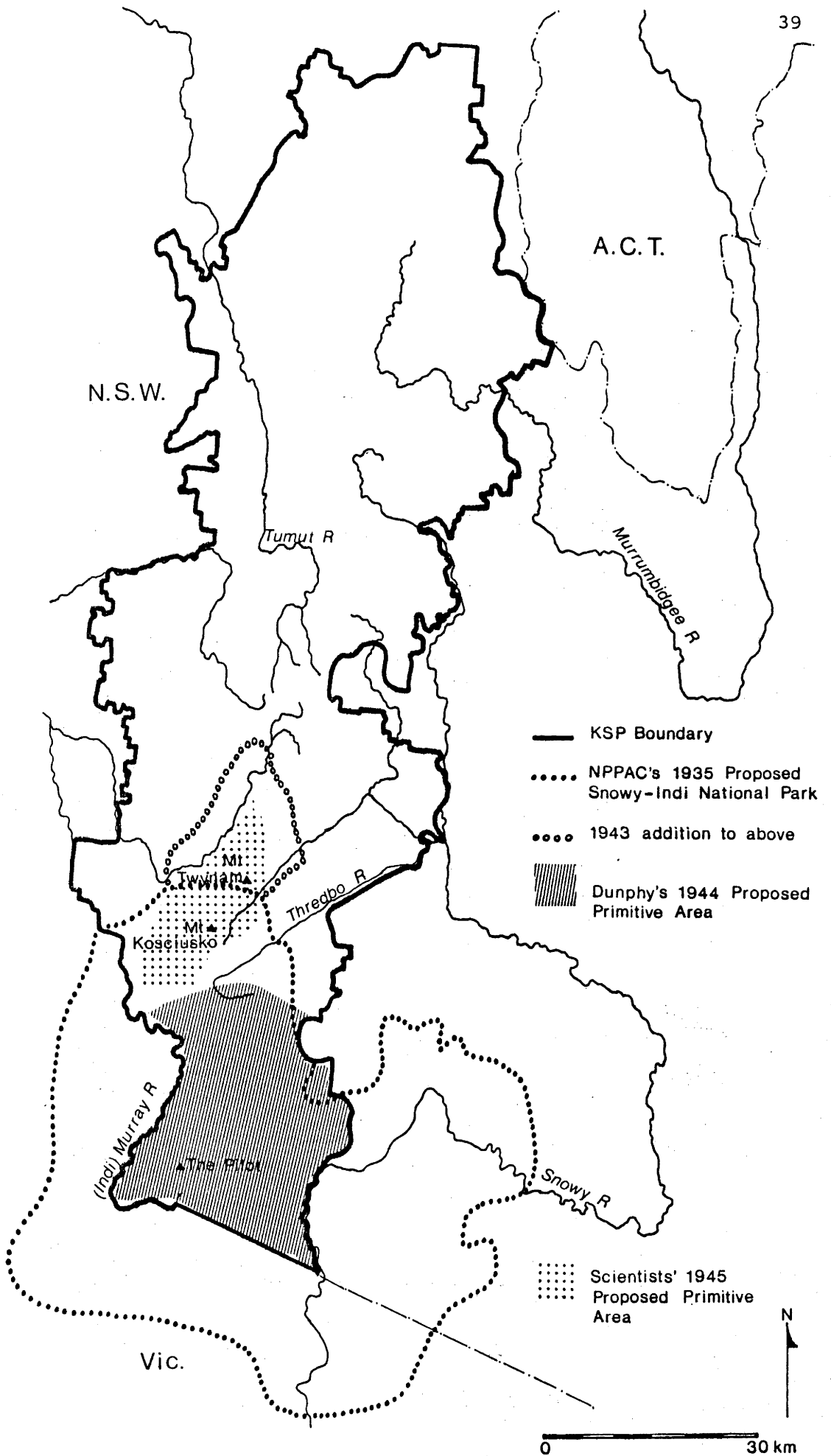
Once the Kosciusko State Park had been established and the members of the national parks movement had an opportunity to make practical management suggestions, their different interpretations of elements of the national park concept prevented the formation of any consensus in regard to management of the Park. The Wild Life Preservation Society, natural science bodies and bushwalkers were opposed to the 'playground' approach of the National Fitness Council, the Parks and Playgrounds Movement and the Ski Council. However, the lack of development within the Park prevented any explicit confrontation from occurring between the two basic views of nature preservation. Yet a conflict did occur within the former group over the finer points of ecological nature preservation and the democratic aspects of public access.

Section 5(3) of the *Kosciusko State Park Act* allowed the Trust to establish a primitive area over one-tenth of the Park area. The nature of a primitive area was not defined. Originally, the Wild Life Preservation

Society, Royal Zoological Society, Linnean Society and the bushwalking clubs were agreed that a primitive area should be established between the Thredbo River and the Victorian border - Dunphy's reiteration of his original national park proposal.⁴¹ To the scientists, a primitive area was a 'closed laboratory' of undisturbed natural processes, access to which would be restricted to scientific researchers. When he became aware of this interpretation, Dunphy accused the scientists of elitism and of abandoning the fundamental principle of national parks - the combination of public recreation with nature preservation. He defined a primitive area as follows:

*The major purpose is education and restricted recreation combined; that is the appreciation, on the spot, by actual contact, of the primitive area, its scenery, wild-life, plant-life and natural phenomena, as a special type of outdoor environment for education, pleasure or adventure.*⁴²

After some months of debate over the definition, the scientific societies proposed in early 1945 that the alpine area would comprise a more suitable primitive area, and abandoned Dunphy's suggestion. This was precipitated not only by the scientists' greater interest in the floral and geographical features of the alpine area, but also by their decision that this area was very susceptible to damage and needed the greatest degree of protection of all the Park. Already, a quarry had been excavated in the David Moraine to obtain gravel for the maintenance of the Kosciusko Road. It was also proposed to include the steep western slopes of the Main Range in this primitive area. Wishing to put a consistent proposal to the Trust and realising the scientific value of the alpine area, the New South Wales Federation of Bushwalking Clubs supported the scientists. With some bitterness, Dunphy clung to his original idea, together with the Sydney Technical College Bushwalkers and his own organisations, the N.P.P.A.C. and the Mountain Trails Club.⁴³



MAP 3.1 PRIMITIVE AREA PROPOSALS 1944-1945

SOURCE: N.P.P.A.C. 1943; N.P.P.A.C. 1945.

In terms of Park policy, this conflict had no impact because the Trust failed to declare a primitive area. But it did spark off a controversy within the bushwalking movement over the definition of primitive areas, and resulted in a move to use the term 'wilderness' for Dunphy's type of primitive area. The wider philosophical and social implications of restricted public access do not appear to have been examined. In fact, Dunphy's notion of public access to primitive areas was only slightly less restrictive than that of the scientists. On the other hand, Dunphy's proposals for a limited access area within the Park had much less radical implications than those of the scientists. One of the reasons why he clung to his suggestion of a southern primitive area was its isolation - it was ideal for bushwalking as well as being unlikely to conflict with potential economic uses such as forestry, grazing and tourism that were actual or probable claimants to the centre and north of the Park.⁴⁴ Dunphy appears to have believed that economic uses would eventually dominate the Park and that it would be useless to oppose them. In effect, he was accepting the practice of establishing national parks and primitive areas on land that was useless for most other purposes, and was glad for this to occur, since it left bushwalkers to an unthreatened enjoyment of remote areas. Yet the scientists' support of the declaration of a primitive area over the alpine area implied a future competition between strict nature preservation and economic land uses with claims on the area - since graziers, the tourist industry and, later, the S.M.H.E.A. were much more interested in using the alpine area than the south of the Park.

Another difference of opinion occurred between Dunphy and the Wild Life Preservation Society (W.L.P.S.). Dunphy argued that dingoes should be protected in the proposed primitive area because they were native animals and part of natural ecosystems, while the W.L.P.S. believed that dingoes should be eradicated because of their alleged depredations upon small mammal populations. The opposite view was taken on brumbies (wild horses).

Dunphy proposed that all the brumbies within the Park should be driven into the primitive area for sanctuary. He claimed that they caused no environmental damage and were part of the romance and history of the Snowy Mountains. Yet the W.L.P.S. was shocked by the suggestion to protect a non-native species and argued that brumbies did indeed disturb natural ecosystems.⁴⁵ Both Dunphy and the W.L.P.S. aimed to preserve natural processes in national parks but, in these instances, they were attempting to manipulate natural systems to represent their own desired picture of Nature.

3.4 Summary

The constant theme for land use concern in the Snowy Mountains during this period was its contribution to economic productivity and material prosperity. A greater appreciation of ecological relationships was beginning to emerge, but was mostly regarded as a tool to achieve the above aims. The area's national park status was given very low priority. The Park had, in fact, been established for reasons of political expediency and resource conservation. Today, the Kosciusko State Park's security of tenure and large size are often taken to be indications of advances in society's recognition of the national park concept during this period. However, these features must be attributed to the primary motivations of political balance and catchment protection.

Conflicts occurred within the national park movement as, when faced with an opportunity to recommend management policies, each segment fell back upon its primary interests. This failure to agree demonstrates the inconsistencies of the national park concept and the delicate balance between elitism and free public access, preservation and use, species preservation and ecosystem preservation. The movement learnt few philosophical lessons from these differences of opinion and few of its suggestions were

implemented by the K.S.P.T. Further conceptual and management developments were left to a new set of circumstances as a greater awareness of the national park status of the area emerged as an aftermath to the grazing debate which reached a head in 1957.

CHAPTER 4

THE GRAZING DEBATE AND ITS AFTERMATH, 1957-1966

4.1 The Abolition of Grazing above 1370 metres

The seven-year tenure of the snow leases limited the implementation of further catchment protection measures to the period between expiry and re-allocation, when any new regulations could be included in the new lease agreements. In 1950, at the expiry of leases issued in 1943, the Soil Conservation Service and the C.A.P.B. achieved the withdrawal from grazing of a further 17,800 hectares near the Summit and 7,300 hectares near the head of the Geehi River.¹ In the following years, the Soil Conservation Service officers who had been appointed to investigate the extent of damage and the likelihood of vegetative recovery in the Snowy Mountains catchment reported their results. These results indicated that a general deterioration was occurring in areas above 1370 metres (4500 feet) - that is, the areas most used for grazing, the subalpine woodlands and high plains. A.B. Costin (one of these officers, who had also studied the ecological systems of the whole Monaro district) divided the area according to the importance of specific units for the maintenance of catchment efficiency, their value and practicability for grazing and their present ecological condition.² He found that areas vital for water yield (in particular the bogs and fens) were also very susceptible to damage from grazing, trampling and burning. Together with other severely eroding areas, bogs and fens were so interlinked with the remaining relatively undamaged areas that a complex and expensive system of fences would be needed if a grazing industry compatible with catchment protection was to be established. The situation was complicated by the unpalatability of snow grass. This had been known to the snow lessees for decades and had led them to fire the pastures to induce more palatable new growth. However,

the Soil Conservation Service studies revealed that stock grazed selectively on the herbs that grew between the snow grass tussocks and on the bog and fen species. Thus, the low stocking rates which the 1943 re-organisation had attempted to achieve did little to reduce the heavy pressures of selective grazing. With repeated grazing the abundance of native herb species was reduced leaving bare spaces susceptible to erosion or which were colonised by introduced herbs which were unable to provide adequate soil cover in the area's difficult climatic conditions and which were themselves intensely grazed. To maintain catchment efficiency any future grazing would have to be at such low rates that, combined with the costs of protective fencing, it would not yield an economic return to the graziers. The sowing of 'improved-pasture' species that would support higher stocking rates was a possibility, but the difficulty of establishing these species in an area with a short growing season, frequent frosts and easily erodible soils was again regarded as uneconomic, especially when combined with the costs of providing such pastures with their high fertiliser requirements.

Following these results and recommendations the Soil Conservation Service and the C.A.P.B. (under Clayton's influence) began to press for the abolition of grazing above 1370 metres. They were joined by representatives of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys, the people of which had formed organisations to further their long-term interests of economic development and catchment protection. The Murray Valley Development League, which was formed in 1944, expressed its objectives as follows:

- . *To secure the maximum conservation of water in the Murray and its tributaries.*
- . *To secure the overall development of the Murray Valley through the development and utilisation of its natural and potential resources to the maximum extent consistent with their wise conservation.*³

Together with the Murrumbidgee Water Users Association and the Australian Primary Producers' Union, the League mounted an aggressive campaign against the high altitude snow leases.⁴ The campaign was also supported by the

S.M.H.E.A. In December 1956 the Australian Academy of Science (newly formed in 1954) appointed a Committee to investigate the condition of the Victorian and New South Wales mountain catchments as part of the Academy's general review of land use policies in Australia. This Committee also recommended that grazing cease above 1370 metres.⁵

On the other hand, the snow lessees, the Snowy River and Tumut Shire Councils (who, incidentally, received rates based upon the snow leases), the Department of Lands and the majority of K.S.P. Trustees supported the continuation of grazing. As well as being a conflict between vested interest-groups, this debate also became a classic confrontation between old and new notions of land management in Australia. The anti-grazing lobby based its arguments upon the notion of an ecological system where the relationship between soil, precipitation, runoff, vegetation, fauna and climate had evolved to form a balanced and interdependent whole. The pre-European combination of a deep soil mantle, dense vegetation cover and numerous bogs and fens was regarded as an extremely efficient catchment system. It was feared that the degree of active soil erosion present by the 1950s would totally destroy the area's ecological balance and, on adverse sites, would possibly result in complete denudation of the mountain sides. Costin and his fellow ecologists expressed the situation thus:

In contrast to this general picture of instability and change, the situation before human disturbance was one of stability and active upbuilding. In the forests and subalpine woodlands the presence of old, uneven-aged stands of trees with a comparative lack of fire scars in their early history indicates conditions of natural replacement without or with only occasional major disturbances by bushfires. Similarly the shrub, grassland, and tall alpine herbfield communities were stable and in places were extending the soil-plant mantle over steeply sloping surfaces; The long stability of the bogs and fens and of the still more difficult snow patch environment is evident from the depth of the underlying peats, representing accumulations of several thousand years.⁶

Human interference with any part of a system had to be compatible with that area's environmental constraints - climate, length of growing season, soil types - and with the other variables of the system.

The snow lessees represented an older model of land management based on observation and European pastoral traditions. Their criterion for a balanced system was not its ability to remain stable under the conditions in which it had evolved, but its ability to respond to what they saw as 'natural uses' - domestic livestock grazing and agriculture. The Australian landscape was not regarded to be a set of balanced ecosystems before European settlement, but as a collection of plants and soils that had never reached a balance, because they had never been tamed by grazing and agriculture. It was contended that most Australian trees were shallow-rooted and unable to bind the soil, while the tussock grasses did not sufficiently cover the soil to prevent erosion. Livestock grazing was believed to improve soil stability and infiltration rates by converting tussock grasses into a close sward.⁷ A grazed sward was also encouraged for fire prevention. The snow lessees argued that snow grass was particularly ill-adapted to catchment protection because, unless grazed and burned, it 'smothered' itself and died.⁸ The establishment of improved pastures in the snow country was advocated as providing both the best fodder and the most efficient catchment cover, despite run-off measurements taken by the C.S.I.R.O. Alpine Ecology Unit which suggested that the infiltration rate for improved pasture was much less than that for naturally occurring plant communities in the snow lease area.⁹

The conflict came to a head when the leases expired in 1957. The C.A.P.B. refused to grant permission for the renewal of all grazing leases above 1370 metres - 75 per cent of all the Snowy Mountains grazing leases. The K.S.P.T. and the Department of Lands proposed instead a much smaller degree of restrictions and a substantial increase in rental. They also showed some favour to proposals put by the Snow Lessees Association to extend the leases into Optional Purchases as an incentive to lessees to establish improved pastures.¹⁰ A stalemate ensued, during which the

conflict between the Soil Conservation Service and the Department of Lands spread into State Cabinet. Both the Minister for Conservation (in charge of the Soil Conservation Service and Chairman of the C.A.P.B.) and the Minister for Lands, threatened resignation if the policies of their respective departments were not implemented. Finally, Cabinet decided that catchment protection must be given priority and that the suggestions of the anti-grazing lobby offered the best means of preventing further catchment deterioration. It was decided to allow the current leases to run for another year, but to definitely terminate grazing above 1370 metres in 1958. The loss of revenue to the K.S.P.T. was to be replaced by an annual grant from the S.M.H.E.A. to be used for soil conservation works in the badly damaged Summit area.

4.2 Anti-Grazing Motivation

The case for the abolition of grazing was argued and decided almost entirely from the point of view of catchment protection. The fact that this would also aid preservation of the natural condition of a national park was regarded as a fortunate spin-off. Moreover, the aim of catchment protection was the preservation of natural ecosystems because of their efficiency as water conservers and, ultimately, their contribution to economic development. The Australian Academy of Science Committee expressed these priorities:

*... with the rapid growth of population and of secondary industry water is bound to become a bottleneck in Australia's development. There is no question but that the primary use of all our high mountain catchments must be for water and every other land use will have to be subordinated to this.*¹¹

However, the catchment protection outlook had many features in common with the national park concept and provided a basis for the future management of the area as a national park. The preservation of native ecosystems became an accepted feature of land management in the area, as did the ecological

land use model. When attempts were made to orientate management more towards the national park concept, these two features maintained a dominant management role.

The dispute with the snow lessees also produced a reaction against the 'unrestricted access' view of public land and unconsciously reinforced the view among the future managers of the Park that responsible management of the area should be directed to its wider public interest aspects. In the opinion of the anti-grazing lobby the snow lessees and the Department of Lands were ignorant exploiters of a public resource. This was emphasised by the refusal of many graziers to abide by the regulations imposed in 1943 and 1950. Stock were constantly allowed to wander into restricted areas and to damage the S.M.H.E.A.'s revegetation works. A group of scientists who surveyed the Park's natural features in 1946 reported:

Behind local insistence upon the accepted right to burn-off indiscriminately is a basic and illogical intolerance of any growth not concerned with the immediate needs of pasturage. Indisputable evidence of this irresponsible attitude was provided the Survey party when, after passing through recently burnt tracts on the slopes of Mt Pilot, bushmen in advance of the party were observed to light patches of dried grasses as a quite natural sequence to lighting their cigarettes, and in defiance of the known aims of the Survey.¹²

The Snow Lessees Association explicitly contested this view that common land should be used primarily for some wider public interest. The proper use of common land was actual physical use by the groups with an interest in that land:

*This area belongs to the people.
If the farming section is excluded from the whole park area, one is prompted to the thought of - who next?¹³*

This was a classic statement of the dilemma between preservation and use and summarised the democratic anomalies of excluding particular segments of the public from public land. In the subsequent management of the Park, the graziers' view was increasingly rejected when conflicts developed between nature preservation and public use.

4.3 The National Park Concept

4.3.1 The Kosciusko Primitive Area

After the main perceived threat to the ecological viability of the Snowy Mountains was removed with the abolition of grazing above 1370 metres, several of the anti-grazing proponents turned their attention to certain anomalies of national park management which had been revealed during the debate. In their 1957 Report the Australian Academy of Science Committee mentioned the area's national park status as an additional reason for the abolition of grazing and recommended that the K.S.P.T. be re-organised to reflect nature preservation and recreation interests,¹⁴ as well as the primary aim of water conservation. The Committee suggested that national parks would be held in greater value in the future and that the time was opportune for an investigation into the types of land uses acceptable in national parks. Many of the scientists who had become interested in the area during the grazing debate, including others who had been concerned with the preservation of the Park from its earliest days, pursued these lines of thought. Initially, most attention was focused on the alpine area.

In 1958 a group of fifty-two Canberra and Sydney scientists¹⁵ submitted a report to the Trust, resurrecting the old proposal for a primitive area. An Australian Academy of Science Committee was subsequently appointed to investigate this proposal. Unlike the earlier proposal, this was not envisaged as a 'closed laboratory' but rather as a way of protecting the alpine area from S.M.H.E.A. hydro-electric works and from the proliferation of ski lodges, ski tows and tracks above the tree-line. A Primitive area was redefined as:

... an outstanding tract of land in which the preservation of natural conditions is the primary aim of management It follows that there shall be no conflicting forms of utilisation, no buildings, and no development except perhaps graded walking tracts.¹⁶

'Natural condition' was interpreted as the preservation of native species and ecosystems.

This report was written with the implication that the Park should be managed for a combination of nature preservation and public recreational purposes, with a priority given to nature preservation. It was argued that a nature preservation priority would actually enhance the opportunities for democratic recreational use as well as safeguarding the wider public interest of catchment protection and preservation for future generations. The ski club proposals for a system of lodges and ski tows along the Main Range were regarded as the 'virtual alienation of the choicest parts of a rare and irreplaceable landscape' by a vested interest-group which was also exploiting the area in an uncontrolled fashion. The old national park spectre of private profit and environmental exploitation was restated. The solution was to be the removal of these private activities and the opening of the area to increased use by 'as many kinds of visitors as possible', who would be limited to activities which had a minimal environmental impact.

It is also known that some of the investors in the Main Range huts are also interested financially in the new Thredbo River venture, and that the two groups of enterprises could be operated to mutual advantage in conjunction with each other. The thought of financial profit by private interests in a national park is of course alien to the best of national park principles. In the case of the proposed primitive area, therefore, we urgently recommend that no further buildings be constructed and that the existing huts be resumed for public use. As maintenance problems increase, as they must, we recommend their complete removal¹⁷

The scientists' suggestions projected an atmosphere of compatibility and co-operation between public recreational uses, scientific uses and nature preservation against vested-interest environmental exploiters. This was a challenge to the resort developers and ski clubs who had regarded the building of lodges and ski tows in the Summit area to be their right as park users - a right which had been supported by the K.S.P.T. in the past. Likewise, the scientists' image of the S.M.H.E.A. changed from that of an ally in the catchment protection debate to that of an environmental exploiter. It was argued that works by the Authority in and near the alpine area would scar the landscape and destroy many important geological and vegetational

features. The construction activities and revegetation works would also introduce more exotic herb species to the area.

The arguments against the Authority's works were not based on national park principles alone. It was admitted that the Scheme was a valid use of water resources and that the Snowy Mountains was the only extensive source of irrigation water and hydro-electric power in southern New South Wales. The proposed high altitude works, however, would contribute little to irrigation and the scientists proposed that the shortfall in expected electricity production caused by their abandonment could be met by thermal power stations which, by 1958, could be operated more cheaply than when the Snowy Mountains Scheme had been designed in 1949.¹⁸ In other words, it was implied that national parks were not to have an absolute priority in decision-making, even though the achievement of nature preservation was dependent upon the strict regulation or exclusion of most normal land use activities. National parks were only to receive strict protection if no 'essential' land uses competed for park areas. This argument may have been motivated partly by a desire to convince politicians and to tone down the radicalism of the Primitive area proposal. Yet it was also consistent with the arguments used by the Australian Academy of Science Committee in 1957, when the importance of economic development was stressed. Thus, the scientists were combining two conflicting sets of values - the nature preservation ideal, and the economic development ideal which resulted in the destruction of natural ecosystems. Primitive areas were defined as exclusive land uses free from development - which was condemned as exploitation. Yet the viability of strict nature preservation areas was to be dependent upon a rate and type of resource use that was antipathetic to nature preservation.

A similar antithesis exists between nature preservation and resource conservation - the former seeks to preserve, the latter to use, albeit in a regulated way - even though both notions are based upon the ecological

view of nature. Thus concern for preservation of the alpine area developed partly from concern for water conservation. However, the attempt to increase the conservation of water by the Snowy Mountains Scheme could only be achieved with the loss of some nature preservation values.

4.3.2 Changes in the National Park Movement

The primitive area proposal of 1958 also reflected an increased community awareness of national parks. Many new bushwalking and nature preservation societies were formed in the 1950s, culminating in the formation of the National Parks Association of New South Wales, in 1957. Though still a minority group, this new movement came to exert some political influence. Government authorities for the centralised administration of national parks were set up in Victoria in 1957 and in Queensland in 1959. The Australian Academy of Science extended its interest in national parks by appointing a Committee to review Australian national park policies and to suggest areas suitable for national parks. This Committee published a report in 1962, also the year of the First World Conference on National Parks, to which Australia sent delegates.¹⁹

This new movement shifted the emphasis of national parks firmly away from the 'playground' approach to the preservation of native Australian ecosystems and landscapes. An attempt was made to extend the earlier concepts of the social and economic benefits of national parks into a general land use ethic based upon ecological principles. The Caloola Club,²⁰ for instance, presented nature preservation and resource conservation as parts of a scale of wise land use where the maintenance of ecological viability was the primary goal. The strict preservation of native ecosystems in national parks was presented as having benefits for resource conservation, as well as for recreation and contemplation. In addition to the catchment protection role emphasised in the 1930s and 1940s, national parks offered a way -

- (i) for scientists to study relatively undisturbed natural processes and to apply this knowledge to future environmental problems;
- (ii) to preserve a varied gene pool with which to replenish cultivated and domestic species suffering from a lack of resistance to disease or pests;
- (iii) to educate the community about ecological principles.²¹

As has been demonstrated by the Kosciusko Primitive Area proposal, the contradictions implicit in the combination of nature preservation and resource conservation (within the context of current socio-economic values) was not realised fully. The new movement emphasised that national parks were to be areas chosen for this purpose because of their inherent characteristics, not residual lands unsuitable for any other purpose. However, such areas could be suitable for sustained-yield resource conservation uses such as forestry. Little attention was given to ways in which such competing 'ecological' uses could be settled except for an impression that education and communion with Nature, gained through visiting national parks and wilderness areas, would result in an intuitive understanding. This 'ecological ethic' also presumed the continuation of a life-style that demanded an increasing use of natural resources to maintain a high material standard of living - a constant rationale for a resource preservation approach to disputed land uses.

This inability to reconcile resource conservation and nature preservation may have been due partly to the expedient nature of some of the 'ecological ethic' arguments. To many national park supporters the resource conservation reasoning may have been no more than a convenient argument aimed at gaining political approval for new national park schemes. This is suggested by the following passage from the Caloola Club's journal.

*There is no essential difference between Wild Life Preservation, the Preservation of Places of Natural Beauty, the Conservation of Water and Forest, the Prevention of Soil Misuse or any other avenue of Conservation, since wastage of any natural renewable resource must bring extensive inroads into untouched reserves Naturalists, Bushwalkers and others who find particular interest and satisfaction in the preservation of primitive lands, must lose their parochialism and widen their interests to stress the importance of all forms of Conservation; a general demand for the use of natural resources on a sustained-yield basis will enhance the opportunity to preserve the primitive.*²² (My emphasis)

The provision of a wide range of recreational pursuits was still regarded as a fundamental national park principle. However, bushwalking and camping were preferred over more facility-oriented activities and an implicit elitism existed side by side with pressures for greater public access to national parks. The movement also demanded a high degree of preservation in national parks at the same time as it emphasised the importance of human experience of parks.

*Whilst recreational facilities may be available in various kinds of parks, it is the Nature reserves that offer unique opportunities for Nature appreciation. The emphasis is therefore on human values, and this means, in practice, that national parks should be designed and managed to provide the visitor with a satisfying experience of the natural features within the park. The national park concept seeks not only the conservation of Australian Nature, but also its presentation; and only through effective presentation can ordinary people benefit in terms of physical and mental health, in knowledge of Australian Nature, in good citizenship, and in the refreshment of the spirit that is Nature's special gift.*²³

Thus, the dilemma between preservation and use, and democratic and elitist use was maintained.

4.3.3 The Wilderness Concept

This emphasis upon bushwalking and nature preservation was beginning to find expression in Australia in the 'wilderness concept'. This was a development of the earlier bushwalking concept of 'primitive areas' where a minimum interference with natural processes was combined with the experience of Nature and the challenge and companionship of hardy recreation. The concept of wilderness attempted to define these ideas more precisely,

drawing upon recent ideas of recreation, psychology, ecology and land use. Though equivalent to many of the ideas of the Australian national park movement, the wilderness concept in its present form was developed in the United States, where it was embodied in the *Wilderness Act* of 1964. Much of the theory subsequently developed in Australia was based upon the United States formulation.

Basically, wilderness areas were defined as natural areas untouched by modern human activity. Attention was paid to the size and degree of recreational use appropriate to the maintenance of natural conditions and which would enable wilderness users to experience an absence of human intervention and civilisation. This latter perceptual or psychological feature has received increasing emphasis in the wilderness concept, so that wilderness has come to be defined not only by the extent of relatively undisturbed ecosystems within an area but also by the number of tracks and roads, the distance from access points and, hence, the number of visitors. A convention has arisen that a foot-journey of at least one day is needed to reach the centre of a 'true' wilderness area.²⁴

Ideally, wilderness zones should comprise a large proportion of the area of national parks. Like the national park concept, the wilderness concept continues the preservation-use duality. The dilemma of democratic use is still maintained, because wilderness supporters claim that wilderness is set aside for the public (for most of the reasons that national parks comprise the public interest) but, by definition, only limited public recreational use is possible if an area's wilderness condition is to survive.

4.4 Attempts to manage Kosciusko State Park as a National Park

Following its defeat over grazing, the K.S.P.T. gradually changed into an administration more concerned to manage its estate along the lines suggested by the national park movement. The nature preservation minority

became a majority as a turnover in the Trust membership occurred and other Trustees were persuaded to change their opinions. In 1959 a Park Superintendent, Neville Gare, was appointed with headquarters and staff based within the Park.²⁵ Gare was determined to bring management of the Park into line with the most up-to-date national park policies. This included the practices of the United States National Park Service, in particular the technique of Master Planning, a zoning design based upon a park's natural resources, present and predicted uses, and current impacts upon nature preservation. Gare was also amenable to the suggestions of the national park movement and the Australian Academy of Science, and his ideas for managing the Park became a test of the theories advocated by these organisations. Catchment protection and nature preservation became the dominant management aims, with which the recreational use aims needed to be balanced.

Numerous controversies arose as the new management ideas were tested, but few were implemented. A Primitive Area along the lines suggested by the scientists in 1958 was finally established in January 1963. Most other policies were to be implemented through a Master Plan, but no management plan was adopted for the Park until 1974. Gare had intended to make the preparation of a Master Plan his first task, but was held up by lack of staff and time, as the new administration became almost totally occupied with the supervision of a boom in ski resort development. A draft plan was prepared by 1961 but its modification took several years of part-time work by Gare and the Trustee, B.U. Byles, who maintained an energetic interest in the management of the Park and in general national park philosophy. In November 1965 a Master Plan draft was exhibited for public comment.

4.4.1 The 1961 Planning Proposals

The earliest management proposals in this period followed the belief that a high degree of public use should be encouraged in national parks and

that any adverse impacts could be controlled by zoning and by limiting the ability of vested interest-groups to extract profits from parks. Initial implementation of the latter theory was fairly naive, as the Trust was dependent upon private enterprise to provide most visitor facilities. After the collapse of the original Thredbo developer in 1961 and the takeover by the Lend Lease Corporation, the Trust wished to negotiate a lease which would make the development of Thredbo more amenable to public control. Yet, despite the elimination of the 20,655 hectare franchise area the new lease conditions were still very favourable to the Company (Kosciusko-Thredbo Pty Ltd). The rent was to progress from \$4,000 to \$8,000 over a five-year period and was to become 5 per cent of net profits before tax when they exceeded \$8,000. Explicit environmental protection conditions were not included in the lease.²⁶

Gare himself envisaged the establishment of a more extensive system of resorts than is currently advocated by the Park administration. In his 1961 Master Plan draft²⁷ he suggested that accommodation centres be developed at Waste Point, Sawpit Creek, Wilson's Valley, the Hotel Kosciusko site (on Diggers' Creek on the Kosciusko Road), Smiggin Holes, Perisher Valley, Guthega, Kiandra, Yarrangobilly Caves, Thredbo and Geehi. Documents dating from this period also show that the White's River-Dicky Cooper's Bogong area was being considered for skiing development.²⁸ Compare this to the current accommodation areas of Charlotte Pass, Perisher Valley, Smiggin Holes, Guthega and Thredbo, and the single hotels at Digger's Creek and Wilson's Valley. The size of these resorts was also envisaged as being larger than today. Table 4.1 shows Gare's 1961 predictions for the number of residents to be accommodated in some resorts by 1971, compared with the residential design limits for the same resorts given in the 1974 Plan of Management.

TABLE 4.1 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED RESORT POPULATIONS, 1961 and 1974

Resort	1961 Suggestion for 1971 Population	1974 Plan of Management Design Limits
Perisher Valley	2500	2500
Smiggin Holes	500	860
Guthega	2000	250
Charlotte Pass Chalet	2000	810

SOURCES: Gare 1961a and N.P.W.S. 1974

The Ski Council of New South Wales proposed the development of a ski run of international standard, with a chairlift, from the summit of Mt Twynan to the Guthega Pondage - one of the few sites on the Australian mainland with a sufficient vertical drop for an international ski run. It was also proposed to develop the east and west ridges of Mt Tate (north of Guthega) for skiing. In 1961 Gare regarded these developments as so important that he suggested to the Australian Academy of Science Committee investigating the primitive area proposals that the proposed boundaries should be amended to exclude these areas.²⁹

4.4.2 The 1965 Proposed Plan

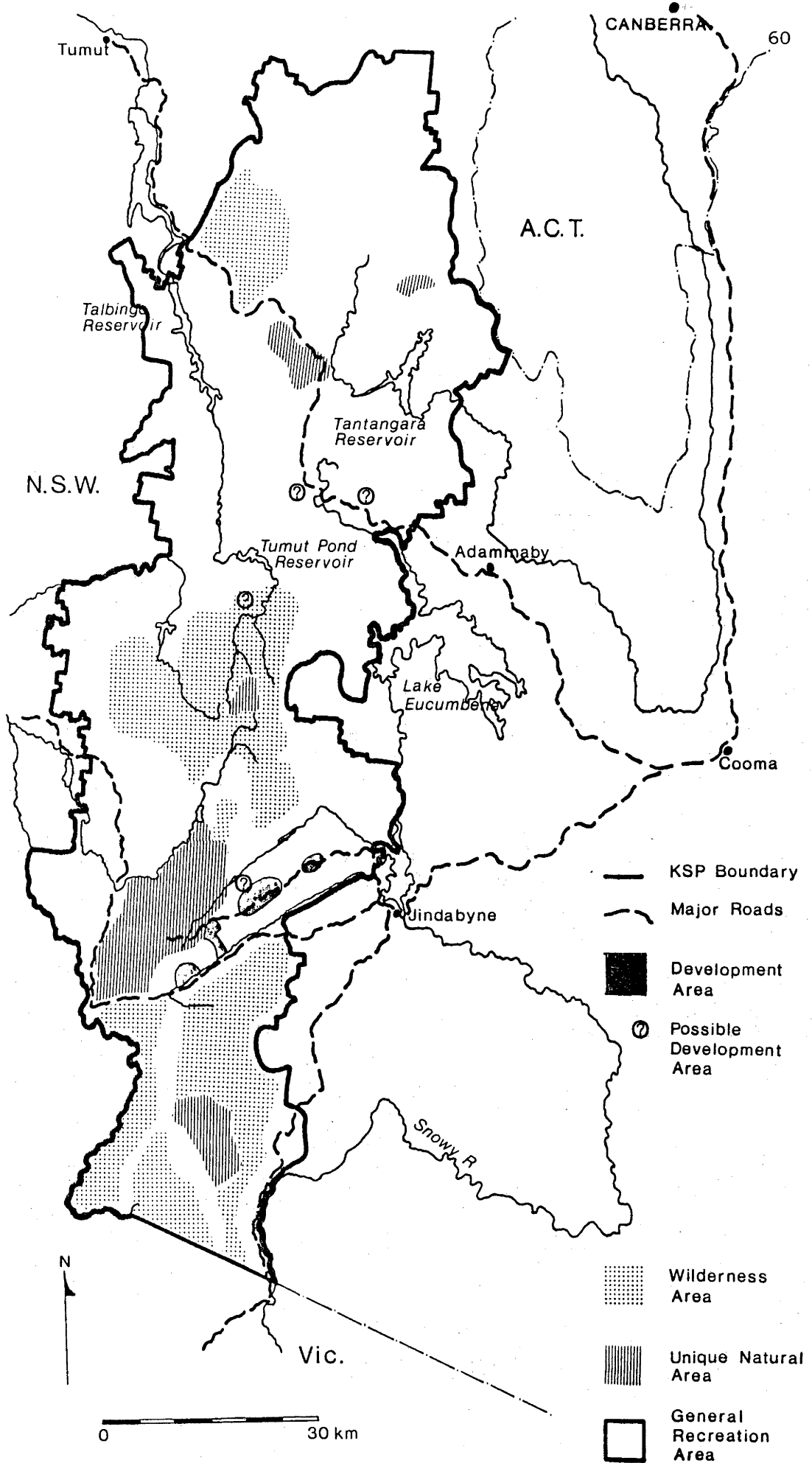
By the mid-1960s Gare had greatly modified his proposals for recreational facilities, as experience with managing the Park revealed the environmental problems associated with recreational developments. He was also influenced by United States wilderness management theories and corresponded with J.G. Mosley, then one of the few specialists on national park planning in Australia and now Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation.³⁰ Works conducted by the Soil Conservation Service to stabilise and revegetate badly eroded areas of the Main Range provided a practical

example of the difficulties of restoring damage of the type that could be caused by high levels of visitation. The number of Park visitors was increasing in the 1960s and vehicular use of the network of roads and tracks built by the S.M.H.E.A. was resulting in erosion, litter and illegal shooting.

The Department of Main Roads was planning to upgrade the Kosciusko Road from Perisher Valley to the Summit into a bitumen-surfaced, all-weather road, despite the fact that the road was already channelling visitors into the vicinity of Mt Kosciusko, turning it into a crowded car park instead of the heart of a primitive area.³¹ Gare's early optimism about co-operation with the ski clubs and resort developers was becoming modified by a lack of success, as the Trust's environmental protection regulations were constantly ignored. For instance, vehicles continued to be driven to Albina Lodge after the Trust had prohibited their off-road use in the Primitive Area and the Soil Conservation Service had revegetated the track to the Lodge.

The 1965 Proposed Plan³² outlined a much tighter control of recreational uses. The Park was to be divided into zones defined as follows:

- (i) Wilderness Areas: open only to visitors on foot and kept free of any alteration of natural conditions, except survival huts.
- (ii) Unique Natural Areas: for the specific protection of outstanding scenery or scientific features and to be managed as wilderness areas.
- (iii) General Recreation Areas: comprising the majority of the Park, and to be managed for outdoor recreation with the minimum of facilities.
- (iv) Development Areas: for the provision of accommodation and skiing facilities and to be limited to areas of low scenic value.



MAP 4.1 PROPOSED ZONING PLAN, 1965

SOURCE: K.S.P.T. 1965.

(v) Historic Sites: such as Kiandra.

(vi) Hydro-Electric Areas: around S.M.H.E.A. installations.

Many of the areas zoned as Wilderness or Unique Natural Areas contained developments anomalous to the uses and developments permitted in the Proposed Plan. Gare wished to remove as many of these anomalies as possible in order to restore the areas to a condition as close as possible to that which had prevailed before European settlement. Thus he wished to close the Kosciusko Road at Charlotte Pass where it entered the Primitive area (now to be re-named Unique Natural Area), revegetate it and convert it into a narrow walking track.³³ The use of this area by over-snow vehicles in winter was also to be prohibited in order to maintain the psychological impression of wilderness.³⁴ Gare also suggested that Albina Lodge be acquired by the Trust in order to stop the pressures being exerted by the ski clubs to build more private lodges on the Main Range. This would also allow the Trust the future option of converting the Lodge into a simple survival hut.³⁵ Ski tows and chairlifts were to be prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Unique Natural Areas, thus ending hopes to develop the Mt Twynam ski-run and the steep western faces of the Main Range. This caused much bitterness in skiing circles, especially in the light of Gare's earlier support for the Mt Twynam proposal. Horse-riding, the traditional means of travel in the Snowy Mountains, was to be excluded from Wilderness and Unique Natural Areas.

After public submissions had been received on the 1965 Proposed Plan it was decided that more knowledge of the Park's natural features and ecological condition was necessary before an effective plan could be implemented. To this end, the Resources Management Committee was appointed. It consisted of M.F. Day (as Chairman), B.U. Byles, A.B. Costin, H.J. Frith (Chief of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research), N.C. Gare, J.N. Jennings, J.G. Mosley, A.A. Strom (the Chief Guardian of

Fauna, from the Fauna Protection Panel) and D.J. Wimbush (from the C.S.I.R.O.). The Committee's report was presented in 1968 and supported Gare's policy of restoration of natural conditions.

*The vegetation of much of the Kosciusko National Park has been greatly changed by over a century of grazing. Some land has been cleared and what remains over much of the rest is a native rather than a natural cover. The aim of management will be to take whatever direct measures are necessary to restore conditions to what they would be like without the influence of man, and otherwise to protect the area from further adverse influences allowing natural forces to take their course to the maximum extent feasible. Gradually the land should return towards its condition prior to the advent of man in the area.*³⁶

4.4.3 The Preference for Wilderness

Beneath the above changes in management policy there was an unadmitted implication that car-based and resort-based activities were inappropriate in national parks. Gare referred rather contemptuously to the 'hoards of motor cars' and Byles wrote of '... those poor unfortunate creatures who, firmly wrapped and insulated in the carapace of metropolitan habits, pursue their habitual way of life in luxury hotels situated in the snow country'.³⁷ Byles went further by suggesting that people who liked 'metropolitan comforts' could not understand and appreciate national parks. When describing the view from the western side of the Main Range he reflected -

*If we should ever decide to build a real alpine lodge for the select few who are capable of enjoying it, this is the site.*³⁸

Thus, the spirit of co-operation between park management and all recreational uses was replaced by a preference for wilderness uses and bushwalking, that appeared to many people to be an elitist exclusion of most of the public from the Park, though Byles rationalised -

*... I ask you which is the more selfish: the man who requires the exclusive use of a thousand acres of real estate in order that he may camp in solitude during his one week's holiday, or one who requires the exclusive use of £5,000 worth of mechanical gadgets in order that he may enjoy his.*³⁹

The rejection of the development-oriented values of society implicit in these judgments of facility-based recreation was not linked, in this

case of management issues and theories regarding Kosciusko, to demands for a life-style based on a lower material standard of living and a decreased demand for sophisticated facilities in all spheres of life, including national parks. Rather, Kosciusko State Park was presented as a temporary haven from modern life-styles and the implications of an ecological ethic appear to have been limited to the wise use and protection of the Kosciusko area alone. For instance, Byles suggested that the expected electricity production from the controversial S.M.H.E.A. high altitude works could be produced by nuclear power stations or by hydro-electricity works in Tasmania, thus allowing the Kosciusko Primitive Area to remain undisturbed.⁴⁰ That is, Kosciusko would be protected, but at the cost of some other area.

At the same time, the Park administration continued to expound the right of the public to use the Park, albeit with greater restrictions than previously envisaged. This was partly a wish to avoid alienation of the public and politicians from support for the Park, but it was also the result of a genuine conceptual dilemma within the minds of national park theorists. In a democratic society how ethical is the restriction of public use of and access to public lands? This was clearly revealed in Byles' writings. On one hand he condemned 'metropolitan comforts', but within a few paragraphs he advocated the planning of the Park for the enjoyment of all. Similar principles were expressed in the 1965 Proposed Plan despite its actual effect of limiting use.

*The object of this Development Plan is to plan land usage within the Park so that its primary values shall remain undiminished and so that the public may have the fullest possible range of recreational experience, whether physical, mental or spiritual, in natural outdoor surroundings.*⁴¹ (My emphasis)

The 1965 Proposed Plan's restriction of recreational uses and developments which had previously been accepted and encouraged by the Trust, together with the continued advocacy of public rights of use by the Park

administration, provided the main theme for opposition to the Plan by those users most affected - skiers, resort developers, road users and horse-riders. Of the approximately forty-five submissions received in response to the Plan, twenty-one opposed its limitation of facilities and prior uses, while twenty submissions, mainly from bushwalking and nature preservation organisations, supported the Plan or advocated even greater restrictions. The remaining submissions did not touch upon these issues. Many of the submissions of the former group argued that, as the Park was a public reserve, the public should not be excluded. In particular, traditional visitation points like Mt Kosciusko should not be closed to people with insufficient time, or who were too handicapped by age or illness, to reach them on foot. A less purist perception of wilderness than that of the national park movement also emerged, and the argument that roads, buildings, and other evidences of human occupation spoiled the 'wilderness experience' was specifically contested in many of the submissions sent to the Trust. It was claimed that most Park users would not venture far from roads and that large areas were still left between the existing tracks and roads. Finally, many submissions condemned the implicit favouring of bushwalkers, arguing that bushwalkers could be no more guaranteed to respect principles of nature preservation than any other Park visitor. One correspondent who had been riding in the Park for many years wrote -

... if you have seen as I have, walkers, their eyes fixed on some distant peak trampling determinedly over snow daisies or eyebrights, or throwing themselves down on beds of gentians for rest or for the partaking of refreshment you would not feel a horse could do more damage.⁴²

4.5 Summary

With the removal of grazing from a large percentage of the Park one of the major inconsistencies with the area's status as a national park was removed. Attention was then turned to the type of management suitable for

Kosciusko State Park and consistent with preservation of the catchment. This coincided with a new wave of theory development within the Australian national park movement. Both interrelated streams of thought contributed to the subsequent management policies of the Trust and the new Park Superintendent. During this period Gare changed his attitudes to recreational use from comparatively active encouragement of a variety of developments and uses to a much more restrictive view, in the interests of nature preservation. Thus, within nine years a wide range of traditional or established uses of the Snowy Mountains came under threat - firstly, grazing; then aspects of the Snowy Mountains Scheme; and finally, uses such as skiing and horse-riding which had long been regarded as an essential part of the Park, were also restricted. These policies represented the evolution of a more exclusive definition of national park land uses, and few conventional land use activities were to be permitted within parks. Different criteria were also to govern decisions on national park activities. This had not been obvious at the beginning of the period, when the Australian Academy of Science argued for nature preservation in the ultimate interests of economic development and the scientist's report of 1958 presented nature preservation as ultimately subservient to the demands of economic growth. By 1966 the application of economic growth values to national parks was being rejected, but little integration was achieved between the application of ecological values to other spheres of life in addition to national parks.

Different interpretations of the national park concept caused a lack of agreement over new policies and divided users of the Park more sharply on interest-group lines. The claim that restricted use was not undemocratic because it fostered the wider public benefits of the Park (such as catchment protection) was insufficient consolation to prior or potential users whose activities were being curtailed and who interpreted the more favoured

bushwalking activities as elitist. This highlights the problem that experience of Nature was an essential part of the national park concept. It was difficult to argue that one section of the community should be free to use more of the Park than another while also claiming that experience of the Park was necessary to understand it.

The Park administration's claim that the Park was to be managed according to democratic principles, while putting forward policies thought by many people to be undemocratic, was partly a response to the need to maintain political support for the Park. Few of the controversial new proposals came to fruition in this period because the Park still suffered from lack of finance and political power. The Snow Lessees' Association was making constant pleas to the Government to re-introduce the high altitude snow leases, thus maintaining an aura of uncertainty about the Park's future. The Trust itself remained a fairly vacillating and uninfluential body, apprehensive about Gare's more radical propositions. The best example of the continued low political priority given to the Park is the Trust's relationship with the S.M.H.E.A., discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME, 1949-1974

5.1 The Beginning of the Snowy Mountains Scheme

In 1949, five years after the establishment of the Kosciusko State Park, the Snowy Mountains Scheme was begun. This was the final outcome of decades of speculation about the diversion of the waters of the Snowy River. The Scheme, under Commonwealth control, was to divert water from the Snowy and Eucumbene Rivers into the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers where it would be used for irrigation. On the way, the water would be used to generate electricity. The major construction works were to be situated within or close to the Park. The waters of the upper reaches of many rivers were to be diverted by aqueducts to raise their generation capacity and large water storages were to be constructed on the Snowy, Eucumbene, Murrumbidgee, Tumut, Tooma and Murray Rivers, with pondages on some of the smaller rivers. Within a few years the Park was converted from an isolated, little-visited region to a major construction site interlaced by tracks and temporary camps and townships. As well as providing access to construction sites, tracks were also built to facilitate surveying and hydrological monitoring throughout the whole Park area. In 1966 Gare described the Park as the world's most roaded national park,¹ and by the completion of the Scheme over 1600 kilometres of roads and tracks had been built by the S.M.H.E.A.² A comparison of Maps 2.1 and 5.1 shows the major changes wrought by the Scheme on the Park landscape.

The S.M.H.E.A., the Authority established by the Commonwealth to construct the Scheme, was given wide powers to conduct all works necessary to the Scheme, to enter upon and occupy all land for purposes of survey and construction, and to excavate or take any material (gravel, timber, etc.) from land so occupied.³ No mention was made in the Authority's

empowering statute, the *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Power Act, 1949* (Commonwealth), of the Kosciusko State Park. Nor were definite provisions made for controlling the environmental impacts of the Scheme. There was only the ill-defined obligation that:

*In the exercise of its powers under this Act, the Authority shall cause as little detriment and inconvenience and do as little damage as possible.*⁴

In the event, the Authority virtually ignored the existence of the Park and the Trust, and no agreements were made between the two bodies about the Scheme's obvious disruption of the Park's scenery and natural ecosystems. No licenses were taken out for the occupation of Trust lands or compensation paid for the use of materials from the Park.

The low priority given to national park matters in the 1940s and the lack of understanding of the ecological impact of large construction schemes on the sensitive alpine and subalpine areas, resulted in a lack of public and political concern for the Scheme's influence upon the Park. This was reinforced by the constitutional controversy which surrounded the Scheme and by the New South Wales Government's pre-occupation with maintaining its control of land and resource use within the State's boundaries.⁵

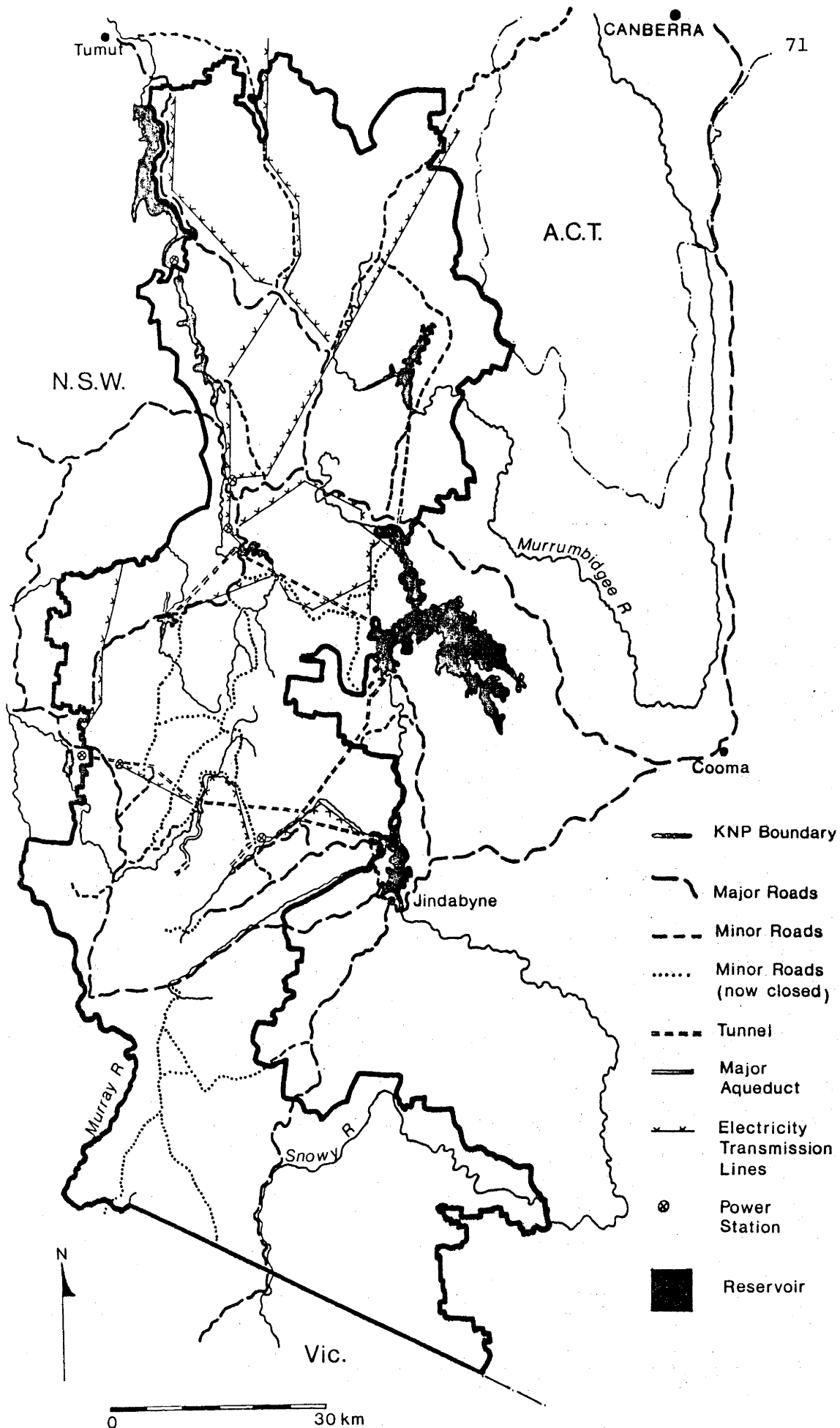
New South Wales supported the diversion of the Snowy River waters but, in the later 1940s, had favoured a diversion to the Murrumbidgee River, to be used primarily for irrigation - a continuation of McKell's policy of support for irrigation schemes. This would have reduced the flow of the Victorian portion of the Snowy River and was opposed by the Victorian Government. The Victorian and South Australian Governments and the residents of the Murray Valley favoured diversion, but to the Murray River, where they would receive the benefits. The Commonwealth Government favoured use of the Snowy River waters to produce electricity to bolster its proposals for post-war reconstruction and industrial development. Not only was there conflict over the type of scheme, but there was dispute over which parties would control the construction of the scheme and over how the

benefits of the scheme would be partitioned. A joint Commonwealth-State Committee was formed to investigate the matter in 1948 and formulated a scheme combining hydro-electricity production with diversion of Snowy River waters to both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers. Though most parties were agreed on this combined proposal, disagreement still existed over control of the project. This was partly a continuation of the battle for use of the Murray River between the riverine States, as well as being a resurrection of State fears of Commonwealth powers. The Commonwealth Constitution of 1901 had left the States with control over their own land and resources, and the Commonwealth Government could only interfere with this control in a few cases involving the whole nation, such as defence, navigation and interstate trade.⁶ Yet the States were constantly watchful for Commonwealth incursion into their rights and were apprehensive that Commonwealth involvement in the proposed Snowy Mountains Scheme would reduce both their control of the Scheme and their share of its benefits.

Fearful that it would take years to reach an agreement and that New South Wales would begin an irrigation diversion that would prejudice the hydro-electricity potential of a Snowy River waters diversion, the Commonwealth Government decided to push forward without State participation. It found the powers to enter upon and interfere with State lands and waters in the defence provisions of the Constitution.⁷ It was argued that the production of electricity was vital if Australia was to be able to maintain self-sufficient production of food, clothing, weapons and machinery in the event of another war, and that underground power stations in the mountains were less vulnerable to air attack than installations nearer the coast. Further competence was found in the *Seat of Government Acceptance Act, 1909* (Commonwealth) which granted the Commonwealth Government the right to use the Snowy River waters to generate electricity for use in the Australian Capital Territory, the right to construct the necessary structures and to

conduct the electricity to the Territory.⁸ The Commonwealth's use of its defence powers in peace-time and reliance upon legislation that only allowed the generation of electricity for use in the Australian Capital Territory when, in fact, it proposed to generate more electricity than could be used in the Territory and to conduct diversions for irrigation purposes, was questioned by constitutional lawyers. The States threatened to challenge the Scheme in the High Court if they failed to reach an agreement with the Commonwealth guaranteeing an equitable allocation of the Scheme's electricity and irrigation water yield and a limitation of the Commonwealth's absolute control.

The atmosphere of legal insecurity surrounding the Scheme stimulated the S.M.H.E.A. Commissioner, William Hudson, to proceed with construction as quickly as possible in order to present any challengers with a '*fait accompli*' and to gain public support by the early production of electricity. Preliminary surveys and road building began almost immediately Hudson was appointed. However, little was known about the difficulties involved with earth-moving activities in this area of cold temperatures, snowfalls, and steep mountain sides covered by deep layers of unconsolidated material. In its haste the Authority added to the basic ecological disruptions and visual impacts of the Scheme by failing to test the viability of ancillary works (such as small aqueducts) and by omitting to survey the best routes for many of its roads and tracks. Roads were built across steep slopes where the loose soil and rock exposed by deep batters and the practice of side-casting excavated material caused massive landslips.⁹ Hudson decided to concentrate early construction activities upon the relatively small Guthega project in order to produce electricity within a short period.¹⁰ This meant that the Authority imposed its early inexperience on high altitude areas where excavations were more prone to collapse and vegetation took longer to recover from disturbance than at lower altitudes.¹¹



MAP 5.1 THE EFFECT OF THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS SCHEME ON KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK
 SOURCE: New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1974; S.M.H.E.A., *Annual Reports*.

Ironically, the S.M.H.E.A. soon gained a reputation for environmental protection as it began to revegetate disturbed areas and to conduct research into soil conservation techniques. This was not motivated by concern for preservation of the Park, but by the Scheme's economic dependence upon stable ground surfaces. The worst setbacks to the early construction works were the collapse of access roads, resulting in the heavy costs of rebuilding roads and delaying projects.¹² Revegetation techniques were governed by criteria of economic efficiency rather than appropriateness for the preservation of natural ecosystems. Thus, exotic grass and tree species (especially Willows and Poplars), were planted extensively, since species native to the area were too slow-growing and seed was available in insufficient quantities for quick, inexpensive revegetation. Many of the revegetated areas are now being taken over by native plant communities but the Willows and Poplars persist and present a visual intrusion along many of the roads in the Park. The construction activities and the widespread use of vehicles also facilitated the spread of weed species in the Park and the feral cat population was greatly increased by animals wandering away from the Scheme's camps and townships.¹³

5.2 Conflict with the K.S.P.T.

In 1958 the relationship between the K.S.P.T. and the S.M.H.E.A. entered a new phase with the passing of new legislation governing the Authority's activities and with the Trust's emerging attempts to manage its estate as a national park. An Agreement¹⁴ made between the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victoria settled the allocation of electricity and irrigation water between the three parties and limited the S.M.H.E.A.'s wide powers to the construction phase of the Scheme, thus satisfying the States' major worries about the Scheme. A minor part of this Agreement imposed certain environmental protection obligations upon the Authority.

These were mainly concerned with catchment protection matters such as prevention of stream siltation and fire, and limitations on timber removal.

However the Authority was also required to consult with the K.S.P.T., to:

*... keep the Kosciusko State Park Trust fully informed of such work to be carried out within the boundaries of the Kosciusko State Park as may affect the Park, and in carrying out of any such work exercise all proper care to preserve natural assets, including trees, scrub, grasses and beauty spots in the Park.*¹⁵

Provision was also made for licences to be issued to the S.M.H.E.A. for the occupation of lands within the Park.¹⁶

This recognition of the Park's existence and the Trust's duty for nature and scenery preservation did not imply that the Trust had any power to impose its wishes upon the S.M.H.E.A. The political decision-making process still gave priority to the protection of the area as a catchment rather than as a national park, and was dedicated to the completion of the Scheme with as few interruptions as possible. This is clear from the wording of the legislation. The Authority was cautioned to take 'proper care'¹⁷ of the Park environment but there was no definition of what this entailed and, hence, no guarantee that the Trust's interpretation of 'proper care' would be upheld. Nor were mechanisms provided to enforce these provisions. The issue of licences to the S.M.H.E.A. for occupation of Park lands was not compulsory, and their effectiveness was limited as no licence terms or conditions could be '... inconsistent with such use of the land for the purpose of the Agreement or Supplemental Agreement as the Authority considers necessary.'¹⁸ Nor could licences applying to permanent works (dams, aqueducts, tunnels, power stations) be revoked while those installations were being used for the purposes of the Agreement of 1958.¹⁹ Thus, the Authority could legally argue that any of its actions were necessary for the conduct of the Scheme and evade any conditions imposed by the Trust.

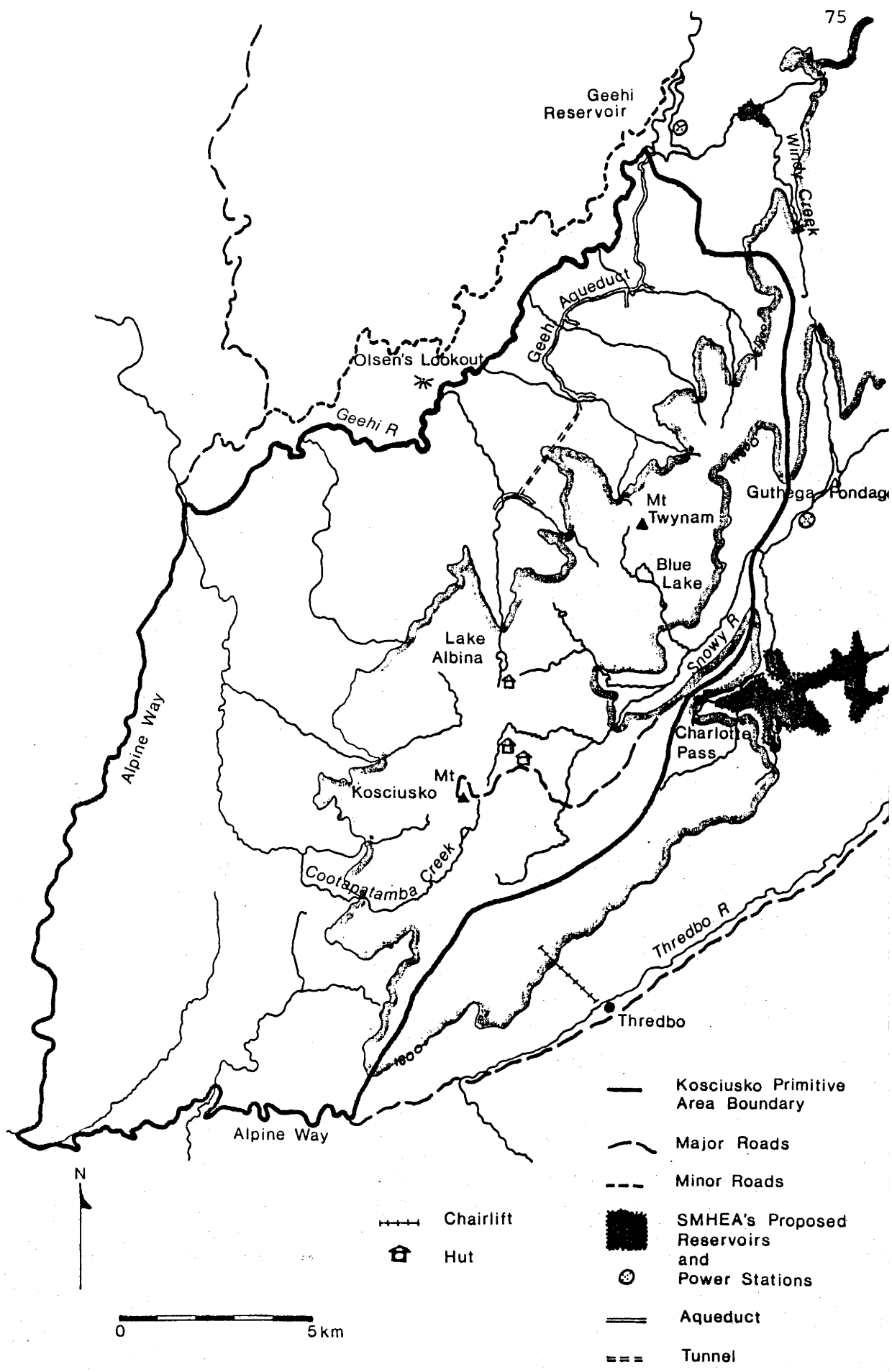
As it eventuated, licences were not issued to the Authority and the K.S.P.T. was unable to enforce any major concessions to national park values

upon the remaining construction works. The two conflicts described below characterise the problems faced by the Trust.

5.2.1 The Primitive Area Debate

The scientists' Primitive Area proposal of 1958 was aimed at preventing S.M.H.E.A. construction works within or close to the alpine area. These works comprised:²⁰

- (i) *The Kosciusko Project.* A 27 metre high dam was to be built across Spencer's Creek near its intersection with the Kosciusko Road in order to supply water to a power station to be built on the Snowy River above the Guthega Pondage. Excavations for the dam would disturb the David Moraine and the impounded waters would submerge other glacial features in the area. Though outside of the proposed Primitive Area boundaries, the reservoir was only feasible if supplied with water from within the Primitive Area. These additional water supplies would be drawn by aqueduct from Cootapatamba Creek and the Upper Snowy River. The scientists were concerned that the diversion of water would empty stream beds and drain bogs and fens below the points of diversion. The aqueduct benches and access tracks would scar the landscape and further disrupt drainage patterns. Exotic plant species would have to be used to revegetate the aqueduct benches and the further introduction of such species into an area of unique alpine vegetation was regarded as undesirable.



MAP 5.2 THE KOSCIUSKO PRIMITIVE AREA AND S.M.H.E.A. WORKS

SOURCES: Australian Academy of Science 1961; Costin, A.B. *et al.* 1979, p.108; Commonwealth Department of Minerals and Energy 1974.

(ii) *The Geehi Project* was associated with the diversion of water from the Snowy River into the Murray River. A balancing pondage on the diversion tunnel was to be constructed on the Geehi River. More water was to be led into the system from a 54 metre high dam on Windy Creek, which was also meant to provide water to a power station. Water from the streams on the western face of the Main Range would be tapped by an aqueduct which would traverse the steep slopes at an altitude of 1250 metres to 1100 metres. The aqueduct bench would be clearly visible from viewing points to the west, such as Olsen's Lookout, and the side-casting of excavated rock would result in artificial scree and destruction of vegetation on the thickly forested lower slopes.

The Australian Academy of Science took up the scientists' proposals and appealed to both State and Federal Cabinets to prevent the Authority from continuing with its plans. Little attention was given to these appeals and work was begun on the Geehi Aqueduct in 1962. Finally, the K.S.P.T. proclaimed a Primitive Area in January 1963, in the hope that its legal powers over the Park would prevail against the S.M.H.E.A.

An immediate outcry was made by Hudson, who contested the exclusive land use view of primitive areas, especially the right of the Trust to exclude land uses with a prior claim to the area. All the contested constructions had featured on the earliest plans for the Scheme. Hudson also challenged the scientists' claims that most of the proposed works would contribute little to the Scheme's output or that they would interfere with preservation of the alpine ecosystems. He argued that water diversions would not significantly reduce stream flows and that native species would soon take over the revegetated areas. His interpretation of the national park concept followed the 'cosmetic preservation' tradition of the early national park movement and was contrary to the newer view that national

parks should be kept in an undisturbed natural state. For instance, the S.M.H.E.A. supported the Kosciusko Reservoir as follows.

*Scenic value is largely a matter of personal opinion, and in a number of countries hydro-electric works of the type associated with the Snowy Mountains Scheme are considered to add to the natural attractions.*²²

In addition, Hudson offered to cause minimal disruption to the landscape, to replace part of the Geehi Aqueduct by a rock tunnel, and to aid scientific investigation of the David Moraine prior to its inundation. This approach remained unacceptable to the Trust and the Academy, resulting in an impasse, where the final decision passed to State and Federal Cabinets. It was finally decided that the Geehi Aqueduct and Pondage should be constructed but that decisions on the other works (which were not scheduled to begin for several years) should be deferred. The Trust and the Academy had least objection to the Geehi Project²³ but it was probably the extent to which work on this Project had already been carried which prompted the Cabinet decisions rather than any firm commitment to the scientists' nature preservation arguments.

In 1967 when detailed planning was begun for the Kosciusko Project it was found that the engineering difficulties involved made the Project uneconomic. The Scheme's resulting electricity shortfall could be made up by the pump-storage generation method planned for the new low altitude power stations, Murray 1 and 2, and Tumut 3. Thus the S.M.H.E.A., of its own accord and without consideration of national park values, withdrew the Kosciusko Project and the Windy Creek Dam and Power Station proposals.²⁴

5.2.2 The Surge Tank Debate

Hancock claims that the K.S.P.T. emerged from the Primitive Area debate as '... a power in the land'.²⁵ This interpretation is questionable considering the Trust's inability to impose its wishes upon the S.M.H.E.A. in a matter in which its legal relationship with the Authority was more

clear-cut. In 1965, the Trust became aware that the Authority was about to build a surge tank on the tunnel which transferred water from Lake Jindabyne to the Island Bend Pondage.²⁶ This structure, which was to be 35.7 metres high by 7.6 metres in diameter, was to be situated at the Snowy Valley Lookout on the Kosciusko Road - a popular scenic point on the major road in the Park. The tank, moreover, would be visible for a considerable distance both from within and without the Park. The K.S.P.T. submitted to the Authority that the proposed surge tank was contrary to its obligation under the 1958 Agreement to preserve 'beauty spots' in the Park,²⁷ and that the tank should be redesigned as the ground-level pool structure, which was more commonly built for these purposes. The Trust also claimed that the S.M.H.E.A. had failed in its obligation to keep the Trust 'fully informed' of its construction plans. The surge tank proposal had not been described in the Authority's letters on the Jindabyne-Island Bend Tunnel and the Trust had presumed that the tank would be an unobtrusive ground-level structure. By the time the Trust discovered the nature of the tank's design, the Authority had already begun work on the tunnel and pumping-station which had been designed to function with the tower-type of surge tank. The K.S.P.T. maintained strong opposition to the structure, even when Hudson proposed to make it more aesthetically appealing by covering its aluminium surface with dark, textured concrete to simulate an appearance of natural rock. However, this architectural treatment was the only concession won by the Trust, as appeals to State and Federal Cabinets were decided in favour of the S.M.H.E.A.

5.3 The Completion of the Scheme

In 1974 the Scheme was completed following several years of winding-down during which most of the Authority's staff were removed from the Park. It appears unlikely that the Scheme will be extended in the future since the water sources most suitable for diversion have been included in the present scheme.²⁸

The Scheme has imposed a zoning framework upon the present management of the Park which would probably not have been chosen if the Scheme had never been built. For instance, the S.M.H.E.A.'s road system has become the basic Park road system. Ski resorts were built on the Alpine Way and Snowy Valley Road in the 1950s and public pressure ensured that the Alpine Way would remain open after the Authority had ceased to use it. These two roads together with the Kosciusko Road, concentrate visitors in a number of resorts close to the alpine area. They are also difficult roads to maintain, as they were not designed to be major tourist roads and are susceptible to landslips. Public vehicular use of S.M.H.E.A. tracks in the 1950s and 1960s established a 'prior right' in the minds of many Park visitors, who protested when these tracks were later closed by the Park administration.

While the vegetation disruptions caused by grazing and burning destroyed the 'wilderness character' of much of the Park, the area would have reverted slowly to the ecological climaxes of pre-European times. However, the Snowy Mountains Scheme introduced a network of tracks, aqueducts, and transmission lines into many areas that have now been zoned as wilderness, especially in the Jagungal Wilderness, and remain as anomalies to the Park administration's policy of reversion to natural conditions.

The new Park administration that was established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1967* (New South Wales) was given greater legal powers than the Trust to control construction activities within national parks. In addition, recent Commonwealth and New South Wales legislation requires the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements for projects like the Snowy Mountains Scheme.²⁹ Yet this greater attention to environmental protection and planning has come too late to influence the impact of the Snowy Mountains Scheme upon the Kosciusko area. The nature preservation, scenic and ecological impacts which would now be considered under this new legislation were ignored when the Scheme was begun. Thus, the Scheme became a continuation of the custom of making major decisions about the Park environment without a prior consideration of the type of activities appropriate in a national park.

CHAPTER 6THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION, 1967-19806.1 The Ecological Condition of Kosciusko National Park6.1.1 The Influence of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*

In 1967 the New South Wales *National Parks and Wildlife Act* was passed, finally bringing the administration of national parks and nature preservation matters under a single government department, guaranteeing all national parks a tenure that could only be revoked by Act of Parliament¹ and providing legal recognition of the value and purpose of national parks. Thus one of the basic demands of the national park movement since at least the 1920s was achieved. This Act established the National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.P.W.S.), under a Director, to control and manage all national parks in the State.² The nature preservation, educational, scientific and recreational functions of national parks were recognised in the legislation, as well as the need to restrict many land use activities within national parks. Provision was made for each national park to have a plan of management, the implementation of which was (theoretically) binding upon Park managers.³ A mechanism was designed for members of the public to make submissions during the preparation of plans of management⁴ and for organisations and individuals concerned about national parks to be represented on the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, which was to advise the Minister, and on the Local Committees attached to each Park as advisers to the Park Superintendent and the Director.⁵ The Act also provided for the establishment of Wilderness Areas within national parks and recognised the more extreme interpretation of 'wilderness' by only permitting structures to be built within Wilderness Areas under special circumstances.⁶

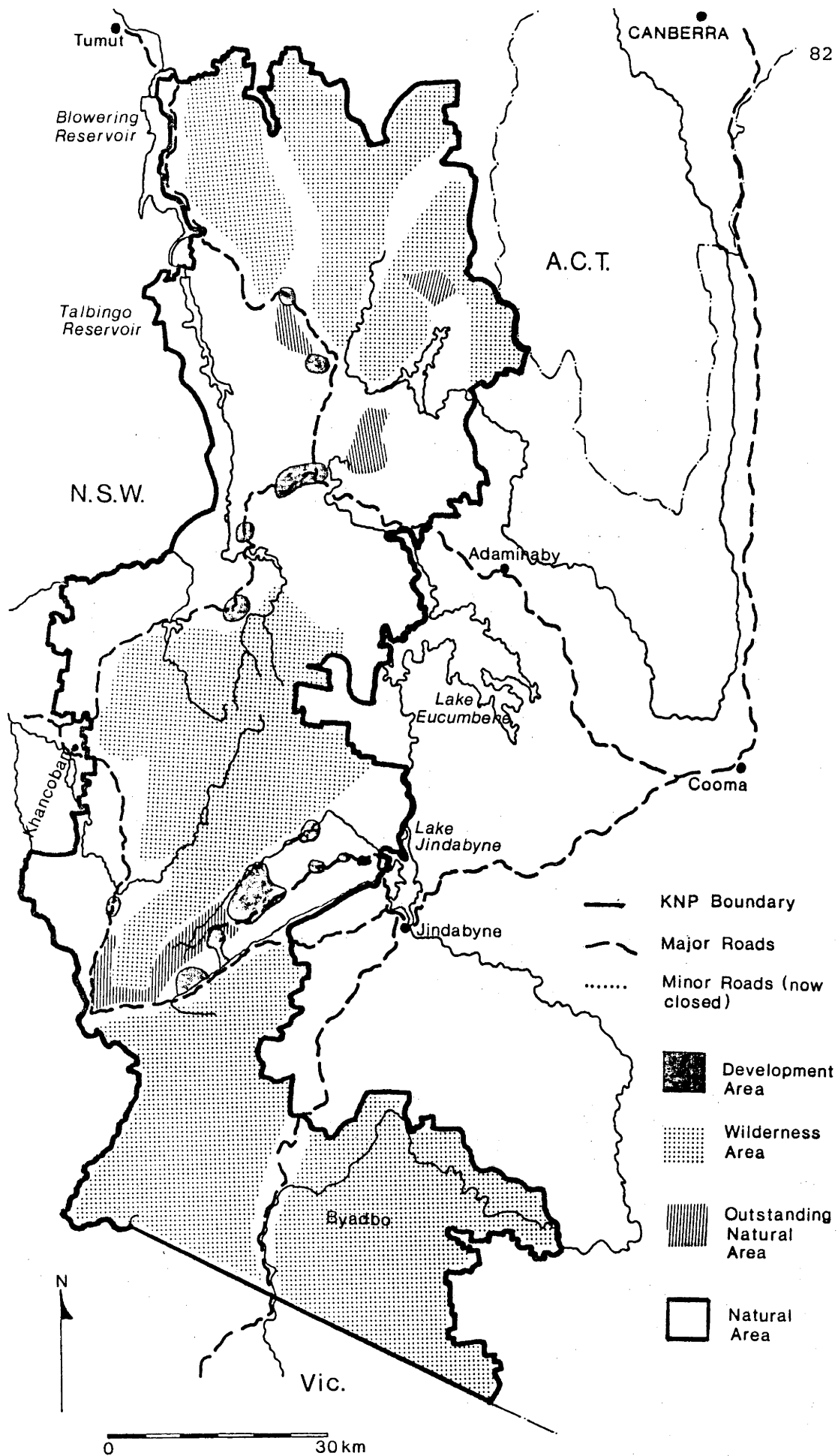
The general impression given by the N.P.W.S. since 1967 has been one of gradual rationalisation of past anomalies and attempts to implement

effective policies compatible with current national park theories. Soon after the Act was passed, the name of the Kosciusko State Park was changed to Kosciusko National Park, and its 'care, control and management' passed to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife. The former Trust became the Park's Local Committee. In 1974, a plan of management was approved for the Park, formally establishing nature preservation as the primary management aim.

Kosciusko National Park encompasses the major alpine region of Australia. The Park is permanently reserved and managed to conserve the alpine, montane and lowland regions with their geographic, geologic, prehistoric, historic, vegetation and other wildlife features; to protect the major snowfields and catchments of the rivers which are used in complex hydro-electric and water conservation works; to provide opportunity for scientific research, and for outdoor sporting activities, particularly snow sports, in a natural setting; to bring the visitor into intimate contact with the scenic grandeur, geologic phenomena, and natural history, and to develop among the visitors, through personal participation, intellectual, aesthetic and educational experiences which are available, in the highest order, in this diverse and colourful region.⁷

The emphasis upon wilderness and control of development activities which had caused such controversy in the 1965 Proposed Plan was further extended. Zoned wilderness now covered 54 per cent of the Park,⁸ a much larger area than had been proposed in 1965. The development zones remained similar but a policy of limiting any extension of hotel/motel/lodge accommodation in the Park beyond that allowed in existing lease agreements, was announced.⁹

Since 1967 the area of the Park has been increased substantially by the addition of the Byadbo Wilderness Area. Likewise, a gradual resumption of freehold islands within the Park has been taking place. Most of the S.M.H.E.A. tracks have now been closed to public vehicular traffic. A system of closer consultation about possible damage caused during maintenance of the Snowy Mountains Scheme installations has also been implemented with the authorities now responsible for the Scheme - the Snowy Mountains Council, the S.M.H.E.A., and the State Electricity Commissions of Victoria and New South Wales.



MAP 6.1 KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK, 1980

SOURCE: New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1974; Central Mapping Authority 1978.

6.1.2 The Other Side of the Picture

Notwithstanding the existence of a theoretically improved management framework, there is a general belief among N.P.W.S. officers and interested members of the public that Kosciusko National Park is not being managed as well as it should be. While the cessation of stock grazing (finally achieved in 1969) and the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme have removed the most widespread threats to the Park's ecological condition and a general vegetational improvement is evident, an increasing degree of recreational use is causing numerous localised problems. Sewerage-related stream pollution has occurred at Thredbo and Perisher Valley. At low-flow periods there is insufficient water in the Thredbo River to dilute Thredbo's sewage effluent to the standard regarded as acceptable in national parks (the 'Protected' category of the *Clean Waters Regulations, 1972*). Thredbo's current water supply is also marginal for the combined needs of accommodation and emergency use against fire, and any large extensions of accommodation within the Village would require the damming of streams outside of the Thredbo Development Area, possibly the Thredbo River - the only major high-altitude river in the Park left untouched by the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Construction activities within Development Areas have destroyed many of the local bogs and fens. Erosion caused by the construction of ski lifts and the clearing of the ski runs is also a problem which is not always effectively controlled by the concessionaires.

In the rest of the Park feral animals such as pigs, horses, dogs, cats and rabbits are subject to little control by the N.P.W.S. There is much criticism of fire control policies within the Park. Since 1951, most of the Park has been covered by the Hume-Snowy Bush Fire Prevention Scheme, which has pursued a policy of controlled hazard reduction burns to reduce the fuel load in areas below 1750 metres.¹⁰ Many scientists now believe that controlled burns are inappropriate within national parks because:

- (i) they establish unnaturally frequent fire regimes which could lead to the extinction of some species of fauna and flora;
- (ii) they often become uncontrolled wildfires, or burn so hotly that they damage the major tree and shrub species;
- (iii) soil erosion and weed invasion are initiated on the bare patches left after controlled burns, and are also facilitated by the numerous access tracks and bulldozer-breaks that are associated with controlled burns.

On the other hand, nearby landholders advocate the extension of the controlled burning policy and regard the Park as a constant fire threat to their own properties. Erosion problems are occurring due to public vehicular use of tracks, mostly in the Coleman Plains area, but also in the Jagungal and Pilot Wilderness Areas where vehicular access is prohibited. In addition, erosion along foot tracks in the Summit Area is increasing and some of the bog, feldmark and snow patch vegetation along the major routes has been trampled by walkers.¹¹ Campers in the alpine area have been known to cut up mature specimens of the slow-growing *Podocarpus lawrencei* for use as firewood, and vegetation and soil disturbance around popular camp sites may develop into erosion problems. Similarly, trees in the vicinity of the most intensively used back-country huts have been mutilated for firewood and the environs polluted by human waste.

Although the damage caused by these uses and situations is minor compared to the perturbations of the past, they indicate the beginnings of more serious ecological changes if they remain uncontrolled. With the greater emphasis upon strict maintenance of natural conditions and the preservation of native species within national parks, many people regard the current degree of damage within Kosciusko National Park to be undesirable. Concern is being expressed that increased recreational use and provision of facilities will not only cause ecological deterioration and loss of nature

preservation values within the Park, but will interfere with the scenic qualities and uncluttered atmosphere thought to be desirable in a national park. The N.P.W.S. has admitted its failure to deal with these problems and is currently reviewing the 1974 Plan of Management with the aim of identifying problems more clearly and establishing a more efficient management framework.

There are two main reasons why these newly emerging pressures continue to be exerted by Park users and why the N.P.W.S. has failed to contain their increase. Firstly, they result from continuing differences of interpretation of and conflicting principles within the national park concept. Secondly, the management of the Park is open to political control and dissatisfied groups of users have begun to lobby the New South Wales Government to cater for their recreational requirements in the Park. The political problems faced by Kosciusko National Park have received much attention from nature preservation and national park organisations in recent years¹² and, for this reason the political constraints upon management of the Park will be discussed before looking at the conceptual sources of these conflicts.

6.2 The Political Situation

6.2.1 The Power of the Minister

The main legal guidelines and framework for national park management in New South Wales are contained in the plan of management provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*. Despite an impression of effectiveness, these provisions are actually almost unenforceable and are open to political manipulation.

The Act implies that management activities in national parks must only be conducted within the framework of plans of management. Section 72(1) states that the Director must prepare a plan of management for each

national park 'as soon as practicable' after the commencement of the Act (in 1967) or the formation of the Park (in the case of Parks established since that date). However, the N.P.W.S. has chosen to concentrate its resources upon the acquisition of the remaining wilderness areas and representative natural ecosystems of New South Wales and few plans of management have been written to date. Even for Kosciusko National Park, where the basic groundwork for a plan had been prepared before 1967, a plan of management was not approved until 1974, seven years after the Act was passed and fourteen years after Gare began to compile his first draft plan. 'As soon as practicable' can clearly mean a very long period.

The approval of plans of management ultimately depends upon the Minister currently in charge of the N.P.W.S. Following public exhibition of the draft plan and the receiving of public submissions, the Director must submit it to the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council for its consideration and advice, whereupon it must be submitted to the Minister. The Minister is required to consider any comments and suggestions made by the Council, but is not obliged to implement them. He can then adopt the plan without alteration, or 'with such alterations as he may think fit'. The Minister may also amend or alter an existing plan of management at any time, or cancel it and substitute a new plan. Although these changes must go through the above process of public exhibition and consideration by the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, the final plan is still subject to the Minister's discretion.¹³

Section 81 of the Act suggests that the Director is obliged to implement the policies written into plans of management and that operations not contained in a plan cannot be carried out within a national park -

81(1) Where the Minister has adopted a plan of management for a national park ... it shall ... be carried out and given effect to ... by the Director where the care, control and management thereof have been vested in the Director.

81(4) *Notwithstanding anything in any other Act, where the Minister has adopted a plan of management for a national park ... no operations shall be undertaken on or in relation to the park ... unless the operations are in accordance with that plan of management.*

However, the Director is completely subject to the control of the Minister,¹⁴ who is bound neither by the prohibitions of Section 81 nor by Section 72, which outlines the management objectives to be followed in the preparation of plans of management. Thus, the Minister can actually command the Director to carry out actions contrary to the Director's obligations as stated in the Act. In addition, the Minister has the unrestricted power to grant leases and licences for the erection and provision of visitor facilities and for the general occupation and use of national park lands - except where such lands are 'lands submerged by water', when the terms and conditions of any leases and licenses granted by the Minister must be in accordance with the plan of management in operation for that Park.¹⁵

These features of the Act were raised in the case *Attorney-General (N.S.W.) ex. rel. Dorman V. Director of National Parks and Wildlife*, where Dorman and the National Parks Association of New South Wales argued that the Minister had granted a lease within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park that was contrary to the Park's Plan of Management, and that Section 81 subjected the Director to a duty not to allow the operations and activities associated with this lease. The judgment on this case held that the duty under Section 81 to implement plans of management and to prohibit operations not in accordance with these plans was binding on the parties or persons '... in whom is vested the care, control and management of Crown Land being a national park' - in this instance, the Director. Section 81 was held not to apply to parties or persons in whom the care, control and management of the national park was not vested. Since the Act does not mention the Minister in this regard, he is not bound by Section 81. Moreover, Justice Powell extended this reasoning by ruling that, when granting a lease, licence or easement, the Minister was removing that land from the care,

control and management of the Director. Thus the Director is not bound by Section 81 in regard to national park land which is subject to a lease, licence or easement agreement.

Another ruling in this case established a further legal precedent for the reduction of the effectiveness of plans of management. Justice Powell ruled that the Director's duty to carry out and give effect to a plan of management, and to prohibit operations not in accordance with that plan, did not apply where there was insufficient staff and finance to carry out the required measures.

6.2.2 The Political Attitude to National Parks

The fact that political control of the management of national parks in New South Wales is written into the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* gives an indication that the Government is still tentative about recognising the exclusiveness of the national park land use, and regards national parks primarily as representations of community demands rather than as areas to be preserved for their intrinsic characteristics. That is, national parks are treated as vote-catching issues.

The role of political motivation is demonstrated by T.L. Lewis, who was Minister for Lands (the Minister then in charge of national parks) from 1965 to 1974. Lewis had a personal interest in national parks and, as the Member for Wollondilly since 1957, was on the Trust of the Morton National Park. When the Liberal Party came to power in 1965, Lewis was responsible for speeding up the establishment of a government department for the administration of the State's national parks, a process which had been proceeding very slowly under the previous Labor Government. As Minister for Lands, Lewis was Chairman of the Kosciusko State Park Trust and he helped to speed up the publication of the 1965 Proposed Plan. Yet, despite his contribution towards the establishment of the N.P.W.S., Lewis succeeded in alienating many sections of the national parks and nature preservation

movements - including the National Parks Association of New South Wales and the Total Environment Centre in Sydney, run by Milo Dunphy, the son of Myles Dunphy. Lewis was accused of allowing Ministerial control to become a feature of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* so that he could personally control the management of national parks. His support for national parks was interpreted by some individuals to be motivated by his desire for political power, and he was accused in Parliament of:

*... seeking recognition in the field of National Parks in order to win the premiership of New South Wales.*¹⁶

The national parks movement also condemned Lewis for yielding too easily to development-oriented pressure groups.

It is significant that the Labor Party, although it criticised the ability of the Minister to control national park management and castigated Lewis for his actions in this respect,¹⁷ has not changed these aspects of the Act since coming to office in 1976. In reality, in a development-oriented society, politicians are practically forced to treat national parks in a politically expedient way, even though the resulting decisions may involve compromises inimicable to the nature of national parks. It is not in a government's best electoral interests to alienate powerful companies, employer or union groups which may advocate policies contrary to strict nature preservation principles within national parks. Short three-year terms of office make governments particularly susceptible to this type of pressure. Moreover, the need to keep and attract electoral support ties in well with the democratic recreational use aspects of the national parks concept. A large proportion of lobby groups involved with national park issues at the present time are arguing for the continuation of or permission for some type of public use. In this climate it is very difficult for governments to justify the expenditure of public money on national parks while imposing restrictions upon public use of those parks. Thus, there has been a continuing political emphasis upon the recreational

use of national parks. W.F. Crabtree, the first Minister-in-charge of National Parks in the 1976 Labor Government, made no attempt to conceal his recreational use priorities -

Perhaps, most importantly, we have a duty to make sure that the citizens of New South Wales receive the maximum possible benefit from national parks in terms of education, recreation and relaxation.

Quite simply my philosophy is that parks are for people.

I believe that our national parks and reserves should provide refuge but not only for the elements of our natural environment.

For our citizens, they must provide a refuge from the stresses and tensions of life in our modern world.¹⁸

Crabtree's 'parks are for people' emphasis was modified by Paul Landa (the Minister from 1978 to 1980) who was more sympathetic to the nature preservation role of national parks.

6.2.3 Political Problems in Kosciusko National Park

Since 1967, Ministerial and Government decisions affecting Kosciusko National Park have generally favoured the overall nature preservation status of the Park. This applies to the abolition of grazing in 1969 and the approval of the nature preservation emphasis of the 1974 Plan of Management. In relation to the newer environmental impacts described in 6.1.2, however, the formation of political pressure groups and some instances where politicians have succumbed to these pressure groups suggests that political intervention in management may increase in the future.

The political power exerted by the resort concessionaires receives most attention from nature preservation groups today.¹⁹ The Head Leases of the three major resorts are held by large companies which, between them, have substantial development, financial and media power in New South Wales, and whose enterprises provide a substantial number of private sector jobs within the State. As already mentioned, the Thredbo Lessee, Kosciusko Thredbo Pty Ltd, is a subsidiary of the large Lend Lease Corporation, which

has interests in real estate and the building and construction industries. The Perisher-Smiggin lease is held by a subsidiary of Consolidated Press Holding Ltd, Kerry Packer's publishing company, while Charlotte Pass is controlled by Noahs Ltd, a large motel chain. These companies hold leases which are regarded as particularly liberal by current environmental standards and, under the present lease agreements, are guaranteed control of their respective resorts until the years 2012 in the case of Thredbo (with a 45-year option until 2057), 2025 for Perisher Valley and 2015 for Charlotte Pass. In 1971, Kosciusko Thredbo Pty Ltd persuaded the Minister to vary the terms of its lease to allow the erection of condominiums (apartments to be sold to private individuals) despite the opposition of the N.P.W.S.²⁰ These apartments are expected to sell for between \$120,000 and \$200,000 in 1981.²¹ It has also been claimed that a lease extension and franchise renewal for the Perisher Valley lease was pressured upon the Government before the 1978 State election.²² Nature preservation groups are apprehensive that these companies will continue to pressure the Government to allow developments within their lease and concession areas which may be detrimental to the Park environment or gain control over new leases, thus bringing about the monopolistic exploitation of parks long feared by the national parks movement. The problem is heightened by the fact that environmental deterioration within resort areas is not always contained within their boundaries, but can influence other areas of the Park - as with Thredbo's water supply and effluent problems.

Other groups with interests in the Park area which they feel are being discriminated against by present management policies are also beginning to exert political pressure. Since grazing was abolished above 1370 metres many of the former snow lessees and other graziers have continually pressed for the re-introduction of grazing, on the grounds that it does not destroy native ecosystems and is, in fact, absolutely necessary to prevent fires since it reduces the thick growth of

understorey species. In 1973 the Minister for Lands, F.M. Hewitt, yielded to this pressure and allowed drought-stricken graziers to use Park lands below 1370 metres for that season. Demands for grazing admission to the Park peak in dry years, the latest being made during the drought at the end of 1980. Many downhill skiers, incensed about N.P.W.S. plans to restrict further increases in resort accommodation to towns outside the Park and to restrict skiing facilities with the Park may also form into an influential lobby group. Four-wheel drive and recreational vehicle clubs throughout Australia have recently begun a campaign to change their image as environmental destroyers, to minimise the destruction caused by their activities, and to press for permission to use tracks in previously closed areas, including national parks. This may have some bearing upon decisions about the closing of vehicular tracks in the north of the Park. In 1971, a group of individuals, bushwalking and ski clubs formed the Kosciusko Huts Association (K.H.A.), with the aim of restoring and managing the many old huts within the Park. This group has been able to exert considerable pressure upon the N.P.W.S., to such an extent that recent N.P.W.S. proposals to demolish several huts throughout the Park²³ have been severely modified to apply only to huts above the tree-line.²⁴ The K.H.A. still opposes the demolition of these few huts, in particular Albina Lodge, and is continuing to pressure the N.P.W.S. to allow the huts to remain in its new Plan of Management.

6.3 Interest Group Divisions as a Reflection of the National Park Concept

A problem which arises when dealing with these perceived threats to the preservation of Kosciusko National Park is the tendency to regard the existence of vested interest-groups and political pressure groups as the fundamental cause of present environmental damage. It is often assumed that removal of these 'self-interested exploiters' will solve many present

problems. However, the solutions may not be so simple. The formation of these interest-groups, in the first place, indicates deeper divisions which are rooted in the national park concept itself. Most of the current debates centre around the nature of democratic recreational use of national parks and reflect dilemmas apparent within the national park concept throughout the history of the Park, but which had not previously been tested in actual Park management.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the theoretical policy formulated by the Park's managers and their advisors in the 1960s was the restoration of natural ecological conditions. Bushwalking and its winter equivalent, ski-touring, were favoured as the activities most compatible with these ideals. Since management of the Park passed to the N.P.W.S. implementation of this 'Return to Nature' policy has been attempted, with an emphasis upon the removal of structures and roads considered to be anomalous with the Service's nature preservation aims and the 1974 Plan of Management. Thus, the Kosciusko Road from Charlotte Pass to the Summit has been closed, although, due to political pressure, it remains open to buses during summer school holidays. Most of the remnants of the old village of Kiandra have been demolished. Some people within the N.P.W.S. and nature preservation organisations have suggested that some or all of the huts in the Park should be demolished - in particular those huts which are visual intrusions upon a natural landscape or whose use is causing ecological deterioration. Two huts, Harvey's and Mould's (the latter having been renovated by the K.H.A.) were burnt down by a N.P.W.S. Ranger on his own behalf.²⁵ The N.P.W.S. is also concerned that native ecosystems within Development Areas be preserved intact, though this is very difficult given the level of foot and vehicle traffic and construction that occurs within resorts.

These policies, together with others outlined in 6.2.3, have caused a gradual alienation of many Park users from support for many N.P.W.S.

proposals and the formation of lobby groups among skiers and hut users. Support for increased vehicular access within the Park is widespread, but less organised. Supporters for N.P.W.S. policies are also identifiable with user interest-groups (such as bushwalkers and scientists) but are difficult to divide into categories, as there are a variety of viewpoints over wilderness issues in particular. The following summary of interest-group conflicts with the N.P.W.S. concentrates upon the arguments presented by their representative organisations and cannot avoid oversimplification of the views of individuals within these organisations.

The most commonly used arguments against N.P.W.S. restrictions on recreational uses reiterate the dilemma of the definition of democratic use and the relative priorities to be allocated to use and preservation. Moreover, a striking feature of the debates is the similarity between the arguments put forward by groups with very different perceptions of the type of Park they would like to see.

The basic argument used against the Service's 'Return to Nature' policy is that the N.P.W.S. has a duty to allow public use of the Park and that, in a democratic society, permitted uses must not discriminate against large sectors of the population. Each interest-group pronounces its own demands to be representative of a wider section of the community and condemns N.P.W.S. proposed restrictions for favouring narrow, 'elitist' uses. Each group also claims to be motivated by public concern, not self-interest. The N.P.W.S. is condemned for being a 'faceless bureaucracy', out of contact with the public it is supposed to serve and pandering to its own preferences - one of which is the privilege to use vehicles in prohibited areas. Are Parks for people, rangers or wombats? Variations of this theme were reiterated in the public submissions to the 1973 Draft Plan of Managements by opponents of the closure of vehicular tracks in Wilderness Areas, and currently feature in the arguments put forward by skiers and the K.H.A.

In general, most Park user groups now agree on the ecological definition of nature preservation and accept the principle of preserving native species within national parks. They differ on the extent of 'naturalness' that should be achieved and the degree of human exclusion that should be enforced, maintaining that the present public demand for recreational use of the Park is a fact of life that should not be opposed. It is argued that natural conditions can be maintained together with increased public use by the application of new technologies. Thus, the skiers' lobby counters the Service's proposals to limit the development of resort accommodation within the Park by claiming that sewage effluent problems can be overcome by building better treatment plants,²⁶ and the K.H.A. advocates the use of solar assisted septic systems to overcome pollution at the more intensively used huts.²⁷ Likewise the K.H.A. advocates the building of more huts as the answer to the over-use of existing huts, rather than their removal. Finally, user groups maintain that their particular demands influence only a small percentage of the Park, leaving the remainder in an undisturbed state. The downhill skiers' lobby argue that Development Areas cover only 3.5 per cent of the total Park area. Advocates of increased vehicular access similarly claim that tracks occupy a very small space and have called for the policing of the tracks to ensure that vehicles do not leave them, rather than complete closure. Pieter Arriens of the K.H.A. has argued that hut usage has a minimal effect on the Park since huts occupy only 0.0001 per cent of the Park's area.²⁸

Despite this similarity in approach, these user groups do not form a united front against the N.P.W.S., but often direct their accusations against each other. Supporters of increased resort accommodation and road access view the wilderness users as elitist, while wilderness users condemn resort users of elitism and self-interested environmental

exploitation. Ironically, wilderness users themselves are divided over the huts issue, with the K.H.A. accusing anti-hut groups of elitism. Undeniably, all these user groups appear to be elitist while claiming they are acting in the public interest. The K.H.A., for instance, in its opposition to the N.P.W.S. proposals to remove several huts, has argued that removal of huts discriminates in favour of the very rich, able to afford lightweight gear; the fit and strong, able to carry sufficient protective gear; and the foolish and ignorant, who set off with insufficient equipment. Yet the K.H.A. is opposed to use of huts by commercial guided-tours and by horse-riders²⁹ - in effect discriminating against groups who do not ascribe to the type of recreation favoured by K.H.A. members. As did the skiers, resort developers and supporters of increased road access in the 1960s, the K.H.A. appeals to its established right to use and maintain huts, because the Association's formation was encouraged by Gare in 1971 and it still receives support from the N.P.W.S. (in the form of materials and helicopter transport) for the renovation of huts.³⁰

This proliferation of interpretations is imposed upon the already difficult problem of returning to a natural state a Park which has been significantly perturbed in the past and used for purposes anomalous with the basic aim of nature preservation. The K.H.A. has argued that the 'Return to Nature' policy ignores the reality that Kosciusko National Park is not a true wilderness and contains numerous man-made structures, in particular the Snowy Mountains Scheme.³¹ Differences also exist between individual N.P.W.S. staff members in relation to these problems.

The problems of decision-making are further complicated by the Service's avowed commitment to democratic public use and public participation in Park policy. The *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* (New South Wales) does not indicate the explicit relationship between recreational use and nature preservation, or enjoin upon the Director a

specific duty to allow public recreational use of national parks - unlike national park legislation in some other States.³² However, the Service has interpreted the Act as imposing upon it a responsibility to make parks available for use by the largest possible number of people,³³ thus maintaining the dichotomous aims of strict nature preservation and increasing public use which were held by Gare³⁴ and Byles in the 1960s. In its opposition to vested interest-groups the N.P.W.S. has appealed to the traditional arguments for public use of national parks. For instance, in opposing the extension of ski resorts the N.P.W.S. has emphasised the elitist nature of the ski lodges, and the expense of resort accommodation, arguing that restriction of accommodation to surrounding towns will make use of the Park '... available to as wide a range of visitors as possible and not be restricted to specific sections of the community'.³⁵ However, having defined democratic use in regard to resorts to be 'as wide a range of visitors as possible' and having associated the concept of democracy with recreational use, the N.P.W.S. has left itself open to contradiction and accusations of inconsistency over other policies which involve restrictions on public use. Nor does the Service's argument for restriction of resort accommodation in the interests of democratic use stand up to its own logic. If the resorts are elitist now, they will become even more elitist in the future as the privilege of living in the Park in winter, close to skiing facilities, will be limited to the members of ski lodges and those people wealthy enough to afford commercial accommodation, unless accommodation facilities within resorts are expanded and diversified.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*, does present the Service with an explicit legal dilemma by requiring the preservation of historic sites and buildings³⁶ at the same time as it imposes a nature preservation duty upon the Director and the Service. In the case of huts within the Kosciusko National Park, the Service has declared that its nature

preservation duty requires the removal of some huts. Yet it can also be argued that its historical preservation duty requires the huts to be kept and maintained.³⁷

6.4 Summary

During the 1970s the opportunity occurred to implement national park theories developed in the preceding decades. Rather than producing the 'golden age' implied by the national park movement the result has been a fragmented debate, split along the lines of tensions apparent in the national park concept after the establishment of the Park in 1944. It is claimed that nature preservation and recreational use are the dual purposes of national parks, but there has been a failure to agree on the balance between preservation and use or between different types of recreational uses.

This degeneration to vested interest-group debate now threatens to dominate management of the Kosciusko National Park, in contrast to the assumptions of the 1940s, '50s and '60s, when it was believed that education, zoning and voluntary restrictions would transcend what were regarded as petty, exploitative quarrels contrary to the public purpose of the Park. Now, however, opponents in the various debates accuse each other of contravening the public interest principles of national parks. Agreement on the exact nature of the 'public interest' has not been reached.

The extent of this divisiveness was revealed at the Seminar on Kosciusko National Park held at the Canberra College of Advanced Education on 29 August 1980.³⁸ In his introductory talk, B.H. Leaver, the Regional Director of the N.P.W.S. South Eastern Region, emphasised the Seminar's aims as follows:

*I am not expecting definitive statements on particular issues, but rather the more difficult aim of balance, perspective, and overview.*³⁹

However, the discussion failed to come to grips with these aims and shied away from consideration of the conceptual and ethical basis of the confrontations between Park users and the N.P.W.S.

CHAPTER 7REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS7.1 The Future

Two major themes have emerged from this discussion of the history of the management of Kosciusko National Park. Firstly, there has been continual conflict over management policies. These debates have not decreased in recent years, even though the administrative organisation and management aims of the Park have been rationalised by the N.P.W.S. Instead, conflicts have continued to reflect interest-group divisions. From the 1940s, the main arguments put forward by these conflicting groups have centred about the dilemmas of the national park concept - the relationship between preservation and use and between different interpretations of democratic use. Secondly, the major decisions influencing the preservation of the Park's natural environment have been made for non-national park reasons and the management of the area has been consistently subject to political manipulation - now enshrined in the New South Wales *National Parks and Wildlife Act*.

Given the consistent way in which these events have occurred in the past, it seems likely that the trends of the 1970s (as discussed in Chapter 6) will continue in the 1980s. The Park's varied natural resources of water, snow, sporting fish, mountain scenery, bushland and 'wilderness' continue to be demanded by the community and visitor numbers are expected to increase. Thus, it is probable that Park user groups will continue to pressure the N.P.W.S. to make provision for their recreational requirements and the Government will in turn pressure the Service to accommodate these demands. Unless a marked change in attitude occurs among park users, most of their demands will be directed towards the increased provision of facilities throughout the Park - whether ski lifts, hotels, roads or huts. The long terms which the major development leases have yet to run will

also constrain N.P.W.S. attempts to limit the number of overnight visitors staying in the resorts in winter. Even if the number of overnight visitors does not increase greatly, the environmental problems associated with the resorts will not be solved, since additional car parking facilities and the upgrading of roads will be needed to cater for the daily commuters to the ski fields. On the other hand, the pressures to re-introduce grazing to the Park may become less significant because, since 1973, Ministers have resisted pleas to allow grazing in national parks throughout the State.

The current revision of the 1974 Plan of Management aims to deal with the Park's management problems, but the legal, political and conceptual framework within which Park management must be conducted make the effective implementation of any measures contained in the new Plan doubtful in the near future. The N.P.W.S. intends to identify the Park's features much more precisely than in the 1974 Plan and to attach specific management objectives and prescriptions to each feature or problem so that there is no doubt about the administration's obligations. However, this presumes that the Plan will be a binding legal document - a status it cannot achieve given the power of the Minister to change or over-ride plans of management, and the Director's lack of obligation to implement and abide by plans if he has insufficient staff and funds.

The new Plan may result in improved nature preservation management in some areas, such as fire control, where the complexities and inter-relationships of different ecological impacts will be more precisely defined in the new document. But no plan, no matter how carefully researched, can control the social and political pressures upon the Park, especially as it seems likely that the new Plan itself will contain the conflicting objectives of use and preservation and will continue to advocate use of the Park by a wide range of visitors while pursuing policies which actually

favour specific interest-groups. The N.P.W.S. hopes to receive ideas from the public (in response to exhibition of the Draft Plan) suggesting ways in which the ecological impacts caused by increased visitor use can be minimised. But will any measures (such as the construction of paths along heavily used routes) be effective if Park visitors are unwilling to abide by them? Experience with the path from Rawson's Pass to the summit of Mt Kosciusko has shown that paths must be carefully designed to encourage walkers to keep to the path. The additional expense incurred in the careful design and construction of such tracks must limit the number of measures that can be implemented. By their nature, many such measures regiment Park users and intrude upon the psychological experience of relative isolation and lack of human intrusion. It seems that the complete achievement of the national park concept may be impossible.

The N.P.W.S. has been unable to assert many of its policies in regard to politically sensitive issues. Many of the problems perceived in the 1960s are still present. For instance, in 1966 Gare proposed to close and revegetate the Kosciusko Road from Charlotte Pass to the Summit,¹ but today no firm policy has been decided. The scientists' report of 1958² suggested the conversion of Albina Lodge to a simple survival hut and this option was supported by Gare in 1966.³ Again, no firm decision has been made about the fate of the Lodge. Will the new Plan be able to reverse this tradition of indecisiveness given the continuation of conflict and political pressures? A continued lack of staff and resources has also contributed to the Services' impotence, and has been compounded by the management demands of the resorts and by the heavy work-load imposed during the skiing season. Unless more staff and resources are allocated to the Park, the current neglect of the majority of the Park (such as lack of control of feral animals) may continue, despite a new Plan which directs otherwise.

A third theme in the management of Kosciusko National Park has been the development of an ecological management policy which advocates the

return of the area to its pre-European natural condition. There is some evidence that the exact definition of this policy may become the subject of debate - thus continuing the fragmentation of the national park concept. As knowledge of natural ecosystems has grown the possibilities of manipulating ecological relationships for a desired effect have become apparent. Take the case of the national park aims of species preservation and ecosystem preservation. It is possible that the processes of natural ecological succession may threaten the survival of a rare species. Likewise, natural occurrences (like wildfires caused by lightning strikes) may threaten the few remaining stands of mature Snow Gum woodland in the Park. Should the natural processes be interfered with to preserve something rare or should they be allowed to continue with the minimum of human interference? A theoretical example was discussed at the Seminar in August 1980. It was observed that tall heath communities provided habitats for small mammals, including the rare *Burramys parvus*, but that many of the heaths in the Snow Gum woodlands were the result of past burning and grazing and would be gradually succeeded by grasslands⁴ - the natural climax vegetation in areas still covered by a fairly deep soil. Should there be intervention in the form of controlled burning to maintain the present extent of tall heath vegetation, or should the natural changes be allowed to occur?

However, there appears to be a tendency for some Park managers and nature preservationists to wish to preserve the current features of specific areas and to lack an understanding of the fundamental ecological principle - change. This is a return to the type of debate which took place between Dunphy and the W.L.P.S. in 1945, where both parties wished to achieve their own ideal of Nature under the guise of preserving natural processes. Is process more important than appearance? Are we attempting to dominate natural processes in national parks or do we wish them to continue undisturbed?

7.2 Conclusions

This paper attributes many of the conflicts and dilemmas over management of Kosciusko National Park to the philosophy, attitudes and political framework of Australian society. Basically they have resulted from the continuation of the dual national park aims of nature preservation and democratic recreational use after their original conceptual compatibility had been changed by the notion of ecology and the physical effects of unrestrained recreational use became apparent to a few national park supporters.

It was implied at the end of Chapter 1 that the conceptual aspects of these conflicts made them more amenable to human control than if they had solely physical causes. Yet how can we minimise conflicts that are as fragmented as those at Kosciusko, especially where they are perpetuated by the political system? There is no easy answer but a clue can be gleaned from the value or ethical confusions reflected in the debates.

Throughout its history the fate of the Kosciusko National Park has been dominated by motives which had little to do with the area's national park status and which were often the antithesis of nature preservation and ecological values. These economic and political values have continued to influence the Park despite their rejection as inappropriate in regard to national parks by many national parks supporters. In other words, national park values are not integrated with the other values of society and, until a greater uniformity of aims and attitudes is attained, the conflicts will continue. The conflicts within the national park concept itself represent the 'growing pains' of a new attitude to Nature. Familiar values (such as democracy) have been associated with new ideas (such as ecological nature preservation) without realising their contradictions and people are forced to practice one set of values in their everyday lives and another set in regard to national parks. Thus, people use goods and facilities the construction of which has caused much environmental destruction, but expect

an absolute lack of destruction in national parks. Other people take their careless everyday attitudes to the environment into national parks and unconsciously cause damage. New ideas about the environment have arrived before a comprehensive ethical framework has been established to guide judgment.

Any such environmental ethic will need to influence peoples' behaviour so as to enhance nature preservation and minimise the conflict between use and preservation, national parks and resource conservation. The philosophers R. and V. Routley have suggested that the root of conceptual contradictions in the environmental movement is the combination of Western society's predominantly utilitarian or chauvinistic values with a valuing of Nature and natural processes for their own sakes and not for their contribution to human well-being.⁵ The ecological outlook has often been categorised as 'non-utilitarian' because it challenged the previous precedence given to purely economic criteria. However, the Routleys argue that much of the environmental outlook only values matters which serve to bear upon human interests, and is still basically utilitarian. Applied to the national park concept and Kosciusko National Park, this human chauvinistic motivation can be seen in the emphasis on personal experience and recreational use of national parks and in the arguments for preservation based upon the area's scientific and catchment value and its potential use for future generations. The non-chauvinistic outlook is implied in the value placed on undisturbed natural processes.

Routley suggests that the conceptual conflicts experienced over environmental matters can be minimised by the adoption of a non-chauvinistic attitude to the environment. This would not imply non-use of national parks but a more respectful use such as was practised by the American Indian and Australian Aboriginal people:

The sort of behaviour warranted by each viewpoint (i.e., chauvinistic and non-chauvinistic) and thought admissible by it, the concept of what one is free to do ... will normally be very different. It is certainly no coincidence that cultures holding to the intrinsic

*view have normally been far less destructive of nature than the dominant Western human chauvinist culture.*⁶

If, as the Routleys' ideas imply, only an ethical change throughout Australian society and a resulting change in life-style can help the conflicts over management of Kosciusko National Park and lessen the demands for ecologically damaging facilities, then there can be no swift solution, especially as the present conflicts are mainly on a chauvinistic plane and the N.P.W.S. is tied into using utilitarian arguments to maintain political support for the Park. However, the practicalities of politics have dominated the Park since its formation - perhaps it is time to frame a new outlook.

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1. Powell 1976, p.4.
2. Definition taken from The Geehi Club 1978, p.27.

CHAPTER 1

1. Pettigrew and Lyons 1979, p.18; Bardwell 1974, p.400.
2. *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act, 1911 (Canada); Public Reserves, Domains and National Parks Act, 1928 (New Zealand).*
3. Bardwell 1974 contains detailed descriptions of the early national park movement in the United States and Australia.
4. The National Park of New South Wales 1902, p.94.
5. As above, p.26.
6. Bardwell 1974, pp.175-87; Powell 1976.
7. Barrett 1925, pp.11-12.
8. Bardwell 1974; Dunphy 1979; Strom 1979.
9. Parks and Playgrounds Movement of New South Wales, 1935-36.
10. Colley 1946, p.11.
11. New South Wales Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and N.P.P.A.C. 1935.
12. Dunphy 1979.
13. Strom 1979, p.67; Pallin 1942.
14. N.P.P.A.C. 1945, p.6.
15. Bardwell 1974, pp.139-40.

CHAPTER 2

1. See Map 2.1
2. Anderson 1978.
3. Costin, A.B. 1970, pp.88-9.

4. The vegetational description has been compiled from Costin, A.B. *et al.* 1979; Costin, A.B. 1978; Wimbush 1980; and Costin, A.B. 1954
5. Costin, A.B. *et al.* 1979, p.17.
6. As above, p.80.
7. Catling and Newsome 1980; Wimbush 1978.
8. Flood 1980b, pp.61-82, 156-95.
9. Hancock 1972, pp.131-44; Helms 1893; Helms 1896
10. These included Charles Kerry, a well known photographer who was born on the Monaro and who was mainly responsible for developing skiing from an activity limited to Kiandra residents to a more widely based sport; Sir Joseph Carruthers, premier of New South Wales from 1904 to 1907; and Percy Hunter of the Government Tourist Bureau, who was an enthusiastic early skier.
11. New South Wales Immigration and Tourist Bureau 1907-1909.
12. Hancock 1972, p.143; von Lendenfeld 1885; Maiden 1898; Maiden 1899; Helms 1890; Helms 1893; Helms 1896.
13. Wigmore 1968.
14. Maiden 1898, p.722.
15. New South Wales Immigration and Tourist Bureau 1907-1913.
16. Moyer 1959.
17. Byles 1932, p.11.
18. Flood 1980b, p.19. The Aborigines appear to have burned the lower forests and woodlands, but much less frequently than the graziers.
19. Costin, A.B. 1958; Costin, A.B. *et al.* 1959; Costin, A.B. and Wimbush 1979.
20. Costin, A.B. 1958, p.6.
21. See Map 3.1; N.P.P.A.C. 1943; Dunphy 1978.
22. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8/7/1943, p.7.
23. Dunphy 1978.

CHAPTER 3

1. *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 10/12/1943.
2. *Soil Conservation Act, 1938* (New South Wales), Sec.16. Also First Schedule and Second Schedule.

3. New South Wales Parliament 1943-44, p.2085; Hancock 1972, p.167; Dunphy 1973.
4. New South Wales Government 1943.
5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4/9/1943, p.8.
6. Hancock 1972, pp.166-7; Bardwell 1974, pp.199-200; Turner 1979, pp.221-235.
7. Byles 1932, p.27.
8. As above, pp.28-31.
9. Australian Academy of Science 1957, p.9.
10. *Soil Conservation Act, 1938* (New South Wales), Secs.17, 20.
11. As above, Sec.32.
12. As above, Sec.37.
13. See early issues of Murray Valley Development League 1946-50.
14. *Cooma-Monaro Express* issues for 1943.
15. *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 10/12/1943; McKell 1944.
16. New South Wales Parliament 1943-44, p.2104.
17. New South Wales Parliament 1947-48, p.1243.
18. New South Wales Parliament 1943-44, p.2085.
19. *Kosciuszko State Park Act, 1944* (New South Wales), Sec.12.
20. As above, Sec.7.
21. As above, Sec.8.
22. As above, Secs.11(1), 11(2).
23. As above, Sec.15(a)(i).
24. Originally only two additional Trustees were to be appointed by the Minister for Lands, but this was amended to four in 1947.
25. *Kosciuszko State Park Act, 1944* (New South Wales), Sec.4.
26. As above, Sec.3(2).
27. *Kosciuszko State Park Act, 1944* (New South Wales), Sec.5.
28. New South Wales Department of Lands 1944-1957.
29. Australian Academy of Science 1957, p.24.
30. Ski Council of New South Wales 1945, pp.42-9; Axford 1944.
31. New South Parliament 1943-44, pp.2086-7.

32. This is clear from a reading of Joint Scientific Committee ... 1946, especially pp.25-6, 45, 54.
33. Axford 1944.
34. The K.S.P.T. specified that the lower levels of buildings were to be built of stone while the upper levels were to be of wood painted black, brown or dark green in order to blend into the landscape.
35. Scientific Bodies 1958, p.10.
36. Kosciusko National Park Files.
37. Browne 1952; M. Day in discussion during seminar held at Canberra College of Advanced Education, 24/8/1980, see Turner 1980, p.74.
38. See Chapter 5.
39. Hancock 1972, pp.168-71.
40. Murray Valley Development League 1950-57.
41. N.P.P.A.C. 1945; Dunphy 1978. See Map 3.1.
42. N.P.P.A.C. 1945, p.2.
43. N.P.P.A.C. 1945; Dunphy 1978.
44. Dunphy 1978.
45. N.P.P.A.C. 1945; Wild Life Preservation Society, 2(1), pp.12-16.

CHAPTER 4

1. Durham 1956, Part II, p.156.
2. Costin, A.B. 1954, p.821; Costin, A.B. 1957.
3. Murray Valley Development League, 1(4), June 1946, p.3.
4. Hancock 1972, p.170; Murray Valley Development League 1954-57.
5. Australian Academy of Science 1957. This Committee included A.B. Costin. Its report forms a good outline of the grazing debate and the opinions of the various parties involved.
6. Costin, A.B. *et al.* 1959, p.24.
7. J.R.M. 1943.
8. Murray Valley Development League 1(7), September 1946, p.6. This view has been more recently expounded by Oliver Moriarty, a staunch supporter of grazing in national parks - see Moriarty 1973 and 1974. The 'smothering' argument may have been derived from observation of dead patches of snow grass, which had died due to drought or insect attack.
9. Australian Academy of Science 1957, p.49.

10. *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 15/7/1957; 19/7/1957; 31/7/1957; 5/8/1957; 12/8/1957; 25/10/1957.
11. Australian Academy of Science 1957, p.44.
12. Joint Scientific Committee ... 1946, p.53.
13. *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 19/7/1957, p.1.
14. Australian Academy of Science 1957, pp.28, 42-4.
15. Among this group of scientists were W.R. Browne (former Professor of Geology at Sydney University) and E. Troughton (of the Australian Museum) who had been members of the party which carried out a scientific survey of the Park in 1946. Also involved were A.B. Costin, M.F. Day and B.U. Byles (of the K.S.P.T.). Costin had conducted much of the research into the ecological effects of grazing in the Park and later extended this into a study of long-term vegetational trends. He is now a member of the Kosciusko National Park Local Committee. Day (an entomologist) was interested in the theory and establishment of national parks and was Chairman of the Australian Academy of Science Committee on National Parks, speaking at the First World Conference on National Parks in 1962. He was appointed to the K.S.P.T. in 1966 and is now also a member of the Park's Local Committee.
16. Scientific Bodies 1958, p.3.
17. As above, p.11.
18. Australian Academy of Science 1961; Browne *et al.* 1965.
19. Australian Academy of Science 1962; Adams 1964.
20. Caloola Club 1955.
21. As above; Day 1964.
22. Caloola Club 1955, p.22.
23. National Park Association of New South Wales, 1(2), 1960, p.2.
24. Mosley 1978; Davey 1978.
25. K.N.P. Files; Hancock 1972, pp.174-5.
26. K.N.P. Files
27. As above.
28. Gare 1961a.
29. Gare 1961b.
30. Correspondence in K.N.P. Files.
31. Gare 1966b.
32. K.S.P.T. 1965; See Map 4.1.

33. Gare 1966b.
34. This evoked protests from the resort developers and concessionaires who had operated over-snow vehicle tours. See the submissions on the 1965 Proposed Plan, K.N.P. Files.
35. Gare 1966a.
36. Resources Management Committee 1968.
37. Gare 1966b; Byles 1964a.
38. Byles 1962.
39. Byles 1965.
40. As above.
41. K.S.P.T. 1965.
42. Submissions on the 1965 Proposed Plan, K.N.P. Files.

CHAPTER 5

1. Gare 1966b.
2. Costin, A.B. 1970, p.89.
3. *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Power Act, 1949* (Commonwealth), Secs.17-21.
4. As above, Sec.33(1).
5. The controversy is described in detail in Wigmore 1968, pp.79-176. See also the parliamentary debates on the Scheme, which centre around the themes of defence, national security, economic growth and irrigation, with barely a mention of the Park - especially Commonwealth of Australia 1949, and New South Wales Parliament 1949.
6. Commonwealth Constitution, 1901, Sec.51.
7. As above, Sec.51(vi).
8. *Seat of Government Acceptance Act, 1909* (Commonwealth), Sec.10.
9. Durham 1956, Part I, p.128; Costin, A.B. 1970, p.89.
10. S.M.H.E.A., *Annual Reports* 1949-50; 1950-51.
11. The Guthega Dam is about 1600 metres above sea level.
12. S.M.H.E.A., *Annual Report* 1952-53; Durham 1956, Part I, pp.128-31; also personal communication from A.B. Costin.
13. Costin, A.B. 1970, p.93.

14. This Agreement appears as two Schedules appended to the Commonwealth *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Power Act, 1949*, and the New South Wales *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Agreements Act, 1958*. It shall be referred to as the '1958 Agreement' throughout this paper, all references being to the First Schedule.
15. 1958 Agreement, Sec.13(k).
16. *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Agreements Act, 1958* (New South Wales), Sec.12.
17. 1958 Agreement, Sec.13(k).
18. *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Agreements Act, 1958* (New South Wales), Sec.12(2).
19. As above, Secs.12(4) and (5).
20. See Map 5.2; Scientific Bodies 1958; Australian Academy of Science 1961; Browne *et al.* 1965.
21. Hudson 1963.
22. Australian Academy of Science 1961, p.392.
23. See 4.3.1.
24. S.M.H.E.A., *Annual Reports*, 1966-67, 1967-68. Sir William Hudson retired as Commissioner in April 1967. The removal of his forceful character and great drive to push the Scheme forward against all opposition may have contributed to the decision to abandon the high altitude projects.
25. Hancock 1972, p.177.
26. K.N.P. Files.
27. 1958 Agreement, Sec.13(k).
28. Personal Communication from A.B. Costin.
29. *Environmental Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act, 1974* (Commonwealth); *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (New South Wales).

CHAPTER 6

1. *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* (New South Wales), Sec.37. The 1967 Act brought the administration of national parks and similar reserves and the protection of native flora and fauna under the N.P.W.S. However, the latter matters remained under separate legislation, the *Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act, 1927* (New South Wales) and the *Fauna Protection Act, 1948* (New South Wales). The new Act of 1974 repealed these Acts and brought all the concerns of the N.P.W.S. under the one piece of legislation. Thus, it is most convenient to refer to the 1974 version of the Act.
2. As above, Secs. 6-17.

3. As above, Sec.72.
4. As above, Sec.75.
5. As above, Secs. 23-26, Schedules 2 and 3.
6. As above, Secs.59-61.
7. New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1974, p.4.
8. As above, p.22.
9. As above, p.20.
10. As above, pp.32-4; New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1980d.
11. New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1980a.
12. For instance the Kosciusko Committee, based at the Canberra and South-East Region Environment Centre, and the Kosciusko Plan Committee, based in Sydney. See Fisher 1980.
13. *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* (New South Wales), Secs.75(3)-75(9).
14. As above, Sec.8(10).
15. As above, Sec.151.
16. New South Wales Parliament 1974, 112:790.
17. See debates on the 1974 Act, New South Wales Parliament 1974.
18. New South Wales N.P.W.S., *Annual Report, 1975-76*.
19. For instance, see Fisher 1980.
20. K.N.P. Files.
21. *Canberra Times*, 17/1/1981, p.6.
22. Costin, J. 1979.
23. New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1980b.
24. Personal communication from N.P.W.S. officers.
25. K.H.A. *Newsletter*, 19, May 1977, pp.3-4.
26. New South Wales Ski Association representative in Turner (ed.) 1980, pp.72-3.
27. K.H.A. 1980, p.12.
28. Arriens 1978.
29. K.H.A. 1980, p.3.

30. K.H.A. *Newsletter*, 1971-1980. The N.P.W.S. and the K.H.A. also differ on the extent to which huts contribute to safety, with the Service arguing that the existence of huts encourages ill-equipped people to enter wilderness areas and that people caught in a blizzard would be unable to find a hut anyway. The K.H.A. maintains that huts have saved lives and, for this reason alone, it would be foolish to remove them.
31. Arriens 1978; K.H.A. 1980.
32. See the *National Parks Act, 1975* (Victoria) and the *National Parks Authority Act, 1976* (Western Australia), which both denote recreational use to be an aim of national park management in their preambles.
33. See New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1980a, b, c, d, and the numerous recent press releases dealing with the Plan of Management Review, the latest of which appeared in the *Canberra Times* of 17/1/1981, p.6.
34. Gare resigned as Park Superintendent in 1971
35. New South Wales N.P.W.S. 1980c, p.4.
36. *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* (New South Wales), Sec.72(d).
37. This has been argued by Flood 1980a.
38. Turner 1980.
39. Leaver 1980, p.3.

CHAPTER 7

1. Gare 1966b.
2. Scientific Bodies 1958, p.11.
3. Gare 1966a.
4. Turner 1980, p.27.
5. Routley 1980.
6. As above, p.131.

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