

## 18.66 Mining in National Parks and Nature Reserves especially in Australia

NOTING that Western Australia's national park and nature reserve system is of international importance; CONCERNED that Western Australia's national park and nature reserve system is inadequate in that amongst other shortcomings it fails to provide protection for about half of the State's rare and endangered flora;

RECOGNIZING that the Western Australian Government has introduced a policy banning exploration and mining from 55 of the State's national parks;

ALARMED that this policy will still allow mineral exploration and mining in three of Western Australia's most important national parks, which in themselves make up half of the total area of national park in the State;

ALARMED ALSO that this policy will allow mineral exploration and potential mining in all of Western Australia's nature reserves;

NOTING that areas of mining leases and infrastructure corridors will be excised from five of the State's national parks, thereby reducing the viability of the parks and risking the introduction of exotic plants and plant diseases;

NOTING that the Hamersley Range National Park is already identified by IUCN as a park under threat from gold-mining and mineral exploitation by its inclusion in IUCN's *Register of Threatened Protected Areas of the World, 1990*;

NOTING IUCN's definition of a national park (Category II Protected Area) is:

"A relatively large area where

1. one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, where plant and animal species, geomorphological sites and habitats are of special scientific, educative and recreative interest or which contain a natural landscape of great beauty;
2. the highest competent authority of the country has taken steps to prevent, or eliminate as soon as possible, exploitation or occupation in the whole area and to enforce effectively the respect of ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features which have led to its establishment; and

3. visitors are allowed to enter under special conditions, for inspirational, educative, cultural and recreative purposes."

FURTHER NOTING that the IUCN definition of a nature reserve (Category I Protected Area) is:

"These areas possess some outstanding ecosystems, features and/or species of flora and fauna of national scientific importance or are representative of particular national areas; they often contain fragile ecosystems of life forms, areas of important biological or geological diversity or areas of particular importance to the conservation of genetic resources. Size is determined by the area required to ensure the integrity of the area to accomplish the scientific management objective and provide for the protection of the area.

Natural processes are allowed to take place in the absence of any direct human interference; tourism, recreation, and public access are generally proscribed. Ecological processes may include natural acts that alter the ecological system or physiological features, such as naturally occurring fires, natural succession, insect or disease outbreaks, storms, earthquakes and the like, but necessarily exclude man-made disturbances. The educational function of the site is to serve as resource for studying and obtaining scientific knowledge."

AWARE that much work has yet to be done to establish a comprehensive system of parks and reserves and to maintain biodiversity in Australia and many other countries;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

1. CALLS UPON the Western Australian State Government to respect the IUCN definitions of national parks and nature reserves by abandoning its policy of allowing mineral exploration and mining in national parks and nature reserves and permitting exploration and mining in D'Entrecasteaux, Hamersley Range and Rudall River National Parks;
2. CALLS UPON governments, and specifically the Western Australian State Government, to ensure that the exclusion of exploitative industries from national parks and nature reserves is a matter of law, not of policy;
3. URGES governments not to exclude land from existing national parks or nature reserves to

enable mining or other exploitative uses of  
that  
land or the resources within it.

Note: *This recommendation was adopted by consensus. The observer of the Government of Western Australia made an explanatory statement of that Government's policy. The Australian State member delegation, the Australian Government Agency members and the Saudi Arabian State member delegation stated that had there been a vote they would have abstained.*

