

Gazeffail Celebration

Declaring 'You have to make rules', the Minister for Planning and Conservation, Evan Walker, officially opened the Environmental Living Zone on Sunday, Oct. 10. Before cutting a traditional flower-festooned cumbungi plait stretched across Oxley Bridge, the Minister stressed the role of planning in combating the pressures of an expanding city on environmentally-sensitive regions. He also praised the concept of the E.L.Z. as a potential model for other areas.

Mr Walker, representatives from concerned government and other bodies, and other individuals who have contributed to the E.L.Z. were invited to the Bend of Islands to join with members of the Bend of Islands Conservation Association and friends to mark the gazetting of the Healesville Development Order on 30 August. The I.D.O. according to the Victorian Government Gazette, 'introduces a new set of urban and rural zones including an Environmental Living Zone which aims to control residential development in the environmentally sensitive "Bend of Isles" area.'

Both the Labor government, which finally enacted the legislation, and the previous Liberal government under Sir Rupert Hamer, which had drawn up the provisions, were instrumental in the creation of the E.L.Z. The politically bi-partisan nature of the celebration was underlined by the participation of the former liberal Minister for Conservation, Vasey Houghton, who spoke about the Yarra River as a focal point for community involvement. Other speakers at the ceremony included Mr Gary Prattley, Acting Director of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority, who stressed the need for community-based action; and Cr Gary Cooper, representing the Shire of Healesville, who called on local councillors to increase their understanding of the E.L.Z.'s technical provisions.

Other guests included inree state parliamentarians, councillors and officers from the Shire of Healesville, and representatives from the Department of Planning, U.Y.V.D.R.A., the Australian Conservation Association, Soil Conservation Authority, Fisheries and Wildlice Division, and Sherbrooke Shire Council.

After the ceremonies were over, participants followed a nature trail laid out by B.I.C.A. to Neil and Abbie's home, where a cold lunch was served.



Getting storted

My involvement with the concept of the Environmental Living Zone started as a result of a discussion I had with Neil Douglas nearly ten years ago at a meeting called to consider the subdivision of a section of Green's Bush on the Mornington Peninsula. Neil, through the generous donation of a painting, managed to help convince the Green family, seemingly against their

commercial interest, to oppose the subdivision of the estates land. It was this land which was subsequently purchased by the State Government, and Neil's intervention played a crucial role in the process.

After the meeting Neil told me of his concept for special planning controls to protect the type of life style which was being developed by himself and other enthusiasts in the Bend of Islands area. I had previously gained an insight into Neil's interests and the general concept through my involvement in the Blackburn Tree Preservation Society and the Little Desert Co-operative, both of which had been supported by Neil and a close personal friend, Bob English, who owned land in the area.

I subsequently met Neil and Abbie, together with Alistair Knox, Tim Ealey and a number of other persons interested in the concept, at Neil's home. At that time I was employed by the Westernport Regional Planning Authority, which was in the process of doing preliminary work on a conservation plan for the Southern Mornington Peninsula. As a consequence I suggested that perhaps the best way to further the concert was to prepare a report. Soon after, a number of us, including Tim Ealey, Bob English and Gary Jungwirth, prepared a report in the form of a booklet which was illustrated by Neil's drawings of various flowers and shrubs. The Australian Conservation Foundation took a keen interest in the booklet and agreed to type it — not an easy task from my longhand script. Bob and I then produced some hundreds of copies manually on the Westernport Authority's photocopier — thus we finally repaid our debt to Neil for the Green's Bush National Park.

The booklet served as a focus for the concept and, following a seminar organized by the ACF, it was published in printed form — I always preferred the version we produced ourselves. After much pressure the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works finally took up the idea, and then subsequently the concept was adopted by the Shire of Healesville and after much "to-ing" and "fro-ing" approved by the current Government.

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Start looking.

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Sels & Red Box parrot pe

STICK MAWAM STOPS RABBIT

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On reflection, I can recall discussing the Environmental Living Zone with either a resident. a local politician, the planners, or some other interested party who may have been able to help, a couple of times every month in the intervening eight years. This is ironic in view of the fact I initially thought I had played my part in producing the booklet. Strangely the concept changed little during that period, which seems to suggest that the idea was a good one right from the start, although it took the bureaucracy an inordinate amount of time to finalise it. I have certainly enjoyed my involvement, particularly in view of the fact that a number of firm and lasting friendships have grown out of it.

I also believe that the concept has a much wider application, and since its approval I have suggested it for a number of other bushy areas where similar-minded spirits dwell.

Department of Planning

John Lawson Acting Secretary

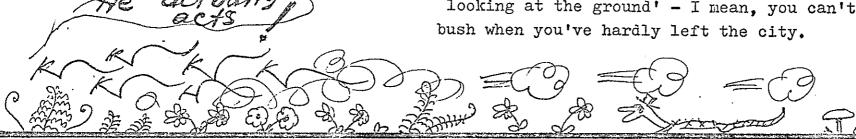
saucrat in the bush

I don't think I ever did care much about the Environmental Living Zone (SWAT / itself. I'd scrubbed about in that blue/ grey world of the red box/red stringy before. I've never been more embarrassed (SWAT/ than the time my kids presented Tim and Rava with a posy of nodding greenhoods they had found all by themselves. And pumpkin seeds surely must be better located in the pulp of a pumpkin than in the belly of a beef-eater like NOO THEY MAKE myself.

Not good enough. You need more than that to stir a bureaucratic reaction.

(MORE PUMKIN SEEDS!)

Perhaps it was something Mal McClure said ... something about 'An Island'. Ridiculous. You can never trust those longhairs. Even after my son found a powerful owl by doing just what Neil said: 'Walk around looking at the ground' - I mean, you can't be in the real



No. it was something else. Here was a whole collection of individuals fighting amongst themselves - you could almost call it a community - all committed to maintaining a lifestyle of mud-pies, dirt roads and wholemeal bread.

On reflection. I think I'd have started a new file even if I'd been approached by a mob of bikies wanting to live in a scramble track, or actors in a theatre or muso's in a monastary. The situation was unusual to say the least. People trying to live together in harmony in surroundings they liked - in a way they wanted unencumbered with the demands of a gimmie society.

Now, that is worth fighting for. So I sharpened my quill, initiated a new file. and the relentless machinery of Government started to grind.

It took a little time. I know. But then, even the Lord took seven days - and he didn't have Neil Douglas on the phone every second day.

> George Wright Director for Planning Country, Victoria

held up to that stage.

WRIGHT.

blanning dimensions

My first involvement with the Bend of Islands and the Environmental Living Zone Started in mid-May 1976, when as a Conservation Planner with the Ministry for Conservation, I attended one of the Bend of Islands Association Meetings at the home of Neil Douglas.

Although I had not met any inhabitants of the area prior to that meeting. I had a fair idea as to what to expect; George -Wright, my boss at the time, who through GREATER LOVE HATH NO INIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE TOTAL LIVING, PLANNER THAN THE, THAT the concept of environmental living, his involvement in the formulation of HE GETS DUNKED DON'S was well known in the area, skilfully fired up my imagination about the area, its colourful inhabitants. the concept of the E.L.Z. and the implications for the future planning of the State. Then, he even more skilfully manoeuvred me into the position of the Ministry's official representative, responsible for dealing with all matters concerning the E.L.Z., the position he himself had

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One of the reasons I believe that George decided to cut down on his involvement was because he, together with many others, believed that it was only a matter of time (short time at that) before the E.L.Z. was proclaimed. Six years later, and a great deal of water under the bridge, the E.L.Z. has finally seen the light of day. And George is still an optimist, which does not really surprise me, because to be a planner one must continue to be an optimist.

What followed in the next six years was a protracted planning process which took an inordinately long period of time due to a combination of factors, including the cessation of the M.M.B.W.'s planning controls over the area (a matter beyond the control of ordinary mortals), a number of planning mishaps (we always learn from our errors) and of course the complexity of the physical environment itself and social and cultural elements and their interactions both internally and externally.

Looking back over the period of six years some matters stick in mind. I clearly remember the hearing of objections by the M.M.B.W. at the Ringwood Library in March 1977 and Neil's presentation to the hearing board. Neil was under full steam, eloquently arguing the point relating to the prohibition of domestic pets in the E.L.Z., holding high up in the air a thigh bone that belonged to a wallaby killed by a pack of domestic dogs and facing the audience, when the Chairman of the hearing board politely interrupted him by quietly pointing out, "Mr. Douglas, it is us you have to convince, not the audience!" Neil paused for a second or two, readjusted his posture by rotating about 170° and continued undaunted and with the same degree of enthusiasm. The hearing, as we know now, did not bear fruit as one month later the Board of Works ceased to be a planning authority in the area, following the establishment of the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority in April 1977. That incident, however, amongst many others, did illustrate the enthusiasm, optimism and determination of the people living in the area to have the Environmental Living Zone approved and recognized.

My contact with the Bend of Islands up to 1979, when I left the Ministry for

Conservation and joined the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority, was
maintained through involvement with various studies both physical and sociological. The
area would have to be one of the most intensively studied areas anywhere in the world and
the fact that many students, both under- and post-graduate, have used it to satisfy their
examiners, goes to show the degree of tolerance of the people living there. I continued

my infrequent visits to the area and an occasional walk with bare-foot Neil and Gary Prattley from the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority through the bush, which further improved my understanding and enhanced my feeling for the area. Planning process was grinding along slowly and the provisions of the ordinance to be included in the healesville's I.D.O. were being sorted out and finalized. An abortive exhibition of the I.D.O. in late 1977 was followed by re-exhibition in September/October 1978, with E.L.Z. included -in both. In the meantime the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan was being prepared, and in October 1980 it was put on public exhibition for 5 months. The Regional Strategy Plan gave recognition to the Environmental Living Zone along the lines proposed in the Shire of Healesville's I.D.O.

Finally, in September 1982 after a long time. many trepidations and many hassles, we see the approval of the Healesville's I,D.O. and with it the legal recognition of what must be the first Environmental Living Zone in Victoria and possibly anywhere in Australia. A cynic may say. 'So what? It is only one more zone in the myriad of zones in the numerous planning Schemes and I.D.O.'s in the State of Victoria.' But it has much greater and deep rooted significance and implications for planning in Victoria. On one hand, purely from a physical point of view, it is a zone admirably suited to solve an existing planning problem in a manner acceptable to the majority of people living there. As it happened the majority of those people are nature lovers and are willing to manage and keep the greater part of their land for nature conservation. That may not sound such a revolutionary idea, as we have National Parks and other nature reserves that are managed for that purpose, but in the scheme of private land ownership it is quite a revolutionary idea. Historically, Australians have viewed and considered the land as a commodity,

something to be subdued by subdivision and sale for profit. People in the E.L.Z., however, apart from clearing a small area for their houses. are determined to keep the rest of their land in the natural state and manage it for the value of its vegetation and native animals living there. The idea is so revolutionary and so unusual that many people find it difficult to come to grips with it. They cannot understand that anyone in his right mind would want to buy and own 10 acres of land and keep and manage more than 90% of it in its natural state and to accept, voluntarily, numerous restrictions on, amongst other things, keeping of domestic pets and cutting down even a sing e tree. and of course a total prohibition of further subdivision.

To me, a private individual and a planner, the approval of the E.L.Z. is a very significant development. From a physical point of view it has found a suitable solution to a planning problem and much more importantly I feel, from a philosophical and ethical point of view, it has a potential to create and foster a change in attitudes in the way we perceive and value our natural environment, or if you wish. "the bush". which I feel is the greatest heritage that we have. It has potential to make people think twice before they start that chain saw or a bulldozer to clear that block of land and destroy what nature has taken so many years to create in order to grow a few bales of hay or to create a grazing paddock for that pony that probably is destined to become redundant in a year or two anyhow. It has a potential to make people look around themselves and see the things of beauty they never believed existed in the bush before; it has a potential to make people realize that it is possible to live in harmony with the natural environment without at all detracting from the quality of life and rather adding a new dimension to it.

As an individual and a planner I wish the E.L.Z. an exciting and prophetic future.

(Pronounced Rosella) Gojko Raseta Senior Planner, UYVDRA

Living in the E.L.2.

MUM? FEEN MY TONE does not by

"The Age"
Monday, 11th Oct. 1982

Bend of Islands is nature home

Australia's first environmental living zone came into being yesterday. Some 580 hectares of bushland at the Bend of Islands, on the Yarra River 35 kilometres from Melbourne, were gazetted for "environmental living".

The bushland, which has 60 human residents, a mob of grey kangaroos and a lot of smaller wildlife, will be kept in national park condition under the new zoning — but with people living in it.

The new zoning, declared by the Planning Minister, Mr Walker, bans cats and dogs, plants foreign to the Yarra Valley, clearing of the bushland and subdivision into lots of less than 40 hectares.

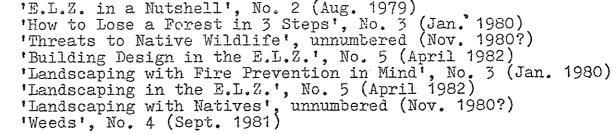
Official gazettal of the Environmental Living Zone does not by itself ensure that this small, fragile area will remain as a viable natural habitat. Just as in any national park, careful management is necessary to control the impact of people on the area.

What of our own impact? We need to examine the use of our blocks of land in the light of the provisions as described in the zoning regulations. (Copies of the relevant portions of the Healesville I.D.O. are enclosed.)

- Has the use of our land damaged plants, animals or stream ecology?
- Are we regularly walking, barbecuing or letting the kids play where orchids previously have bloomed?
- Is our activity interfering with ground nesting birds or
- * kangaroo movements?
- Have we restored areas damaged while building?
- Have we landscaped with vegetation indigenous to this area?
- Has our development caused any significant soil erosion?
- Do we ensure that visitors (including people holidaying, pichicking or sightseeing) do not bring domestic pets into the area?

While these are only some of the issues we need to address, increased awareness and understanding of what is required to manage our pieces of land environmentally will not only be rewarding but also ensure the success of the Zone by keeping it in 'national park condition'.

Some articles previously published in the Newsletter may be helpful:



Janet Mattiske



towards Gazettal.... ... and Beyond

1950s	Landholders meet irregularly to discuss problems of matual concern and possibility of declaring area a 'sanctuary'.
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1961 16 landholders share cost of maintaining Catani Blvd a: a private road.

1962 Bushfires devastate area.

1966

First B.I.C.A. meeting held to preserve area and prevent further subdivision.

1967

Recommendation that Yarra Brae section of Yarra River be reserved for water storage.

1968**-**69 Successful opposition to Shire directive to burn off all scrub and undergrowth or have land bull-dozed.

1971

Planning policies recognize need for preservation of special features of Yarra Valley and 'green wedges'. Fornation of Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative.

WHERE ARE WE GOLLYGO

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ve.

1973 Riverfront landowners informed M.M.B.W. will compulsorily acquire land for Yarra Brae dam.

> Formation of Yarra Brae Action Group, which organizes public meeting at Warrandyte.

B.I.C.A. submission on environmental impact of proposed dam.

1974 Government accepts recommendation dam not be built.

'Residential Conservation' symposium.

Residential Conservation published by 1975 A.C.F. Government decision to trial 'residential conservation' (later changed to E.L.Z.)

at Bend of Islands.

B.I.C.A. meetings with and submissions 1976 to various government bodies.

> Exhibition of M.M.B.W.'s I.D.O., including E.L.Z.

McColl report on 'Ecological and Social Study of Bend of Islands Area' carried out (published in early 1977).

I.D.O. transferred to newly formed 1977 U.Y.V.D.R.A.

1980 Shire of Healesville's proposed I.D.O. containing E.L.Z. adopted.

Amendment prohibiting domestic animals 1981 incorporated into I.D.O. THEX SAY THE MINISTIERS CALLED E.L.Z. PAST AND FUTURE . . .

Nothing lovely was safe. Bush was bad! You had to MOVE FURTHER OUT!

So the artist in all of us was found in the planners, politicians, press and purchasers, creating the answer...the E.L.Z.

Geoff Downes, previous Director of Conservation, said that Carlton and other life-style areas (for motor racing, minibikes, rifle ranges, ponyclubs) could be helped; otherwise grand old gardens or new ones would always be under threat.

So the E.L.Z. was a world precedent at the U.N. '70 Human Habitat Conference.

A Government/E.L.Z. committee will promote this truly cultural and community creating tool here and elsewhere.

Esentially for people and enthusiasts working together, private fortunes are not needed; moreover, E.L.Z. ensures permanence of the land amenity!

The industrial revolution and blind commercial values have at last met their match!

> The complete quotation is: "Life is not meant to be easy, but take heart, young man, it was meant to be delightful!" (Shaw)

> > Neil Douglas

·1982 Gazettal of I.D.O.

> AHA BUT HE'S BUSH WALLES &

WALKER (T.F.) BRING A
PLATE OF
MUCK FOOD

General Meetings



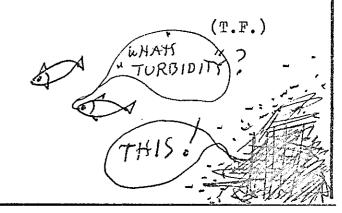
Speakers from state bodies closely involved with the Environmental Living Zone addressed the most recent two general meetings of B.I.C.A. On 6 June Gojko Raseta, senior planner with the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority, spoke about the organization and functions of the Authority, and on 12 September Alec Mitchell, Chairman of the Soil Conservation Authority, discussed problems of soil erosion.

Gojko, whose association with the E.L.Z. goes back six years, informed us that the membership of the Authority includes two representatives from each of four shires (including Healesville): three permanent residents of the region nominated by primary producers, conservation organizations, and trading and commercial interests; and four members nominated by the Minister for Conservation, the Minister for Forests, the Minister for Community Welfare Services, and the M.M.B.W. The major means of implementing planning controls on the area. Gojko pointed out. was the Regional Strategy Plan (which in fact was finally approved by the government in late October). Among the

provisions that affect the Bend of Islands most directly are two recommendations: that M.M.B.W. land held for the Stan Brae and Yarra Brae projects be acquired and turned into a national park and that a freeze be put on further M.M.B.W. sales on Mt. Lofty and the Bend of Islands area.

Alec Mitchell, another old friend of the E.L.Z., told us that the goal of the Soil Conservation Authority was to prevent the loss of soil or fertility so that sustained usage of land could continue forever. On the world level. he said, usable land is being lost at a great rate due to population pressures and development. Whereas in 1950 there was 1 ha. of arable land per person in the world, twenty years later there was only 1/6 ha., and in the year 2000 it is estimated that there will be only 1/8 ha. per capita. Australia faces a similar threat to its arable land. In Victoria the soil erosion is a major problem resulting from urban expansion, increased cropping on poorer quality land. and salting either through irrigation or the reduction of trees.

Speaking of the middle Yarra Valley (from Warburton to Dight's Falls), Alec said that turbidity in the river is the product of diffuse erosion sources, including tracks, house sites, and drainage lines. Thus to prevent further erosion and increased turbidity, attention to detail is most important: tracks should be made on ridges, houses should be located to minimize erosion. eroded areas should be revegetated, and run-off should be prevented by the raking or placing of natural barriers along contour lines. He pointed to a special problem with the clay soil in the Bend of Islands area, indicating that it seals itself. He recommended we break up our clay soil in eroded areas. thus permitting rainfall to penetrate the earth.



12 our committee work

As well as the usual 'routine' work of organizing general meetings and publishing the Newsletter, both of which activities are aimed at continuing to educate, inform and involve members of the Association, your committee has had the usual large number of issues arise and occupy their time and energy over the past few months. Some of these have been:

- * Gazettal celebration, a more detailed account of which appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.
- * A sub-committee has continued to work on the problems posed by MMBW surplus land in the area. The Ministry for Planning is anxious to set up a "study committee" to examine this and certain other matters. These include problems with implementing the environmental living provisions, any unsatisfactory aspects of the I.D.O. as it currently pertains to the E.L.Z.. and possible further extensions. We anticipate playing an active part in the workings of this "study committee" and have already had talks with Ministry officials.
- A submission was made to the National Conservation Strategy for Australia. This outlined the "grass roots" approach to conservation planning which resulted in the E.L.Z. and how the concept of environmental living could apply on a much wider basis.

* Much discussion, but as yet lattle decision. has occurred on the subject of S.E.C. clearing under power lines. This essential work must be carried out, but there may be ways to produce a satisfactory result with more pleasing aesthetic consequences than sometime

NOT AN ABIGAIL , A

The last general meeting granted the Association a mandate to liaise with the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in their fight to prevent the Gordon River dam. Members should expect to hear more from T.W.S. in the future.

occur. Any suggestions from members...please?

* The committee submitted an appeal to the Planning Appeals Board objecting to the Shire's determination to grant a permit for a landowner to fence his property. We believe this proposal to be not only unnecessary but quite against the intent of the provisions in the I.D.O. We are currently awaiting notice of the hearing of the appeal.

> John McCallum President

Some members of the community feel the Committee is difficult to approach. Let's talk about this problem at the General Meeting on 5 December.

Calender of Community Activities

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

Our Bend of Island Whole Foods co-op is very much alive with some twenty member-families currently participating. We could, however, really benefit from having several more families join, so do chew on it(!)

Since Eilish has left the area, I am now the co-ordinator of the Food Co-op — that is, I hold books, files and equipment between buys, roster buyers, etc., and act as a general contact point. Pam Deylen is now our new bookkeeper and 'auditor' and general keeper of the purse strings.

To help Food Co-op members to plan ahead a bit, I have drawn up a roster for buys for the next year or so. If you discover that your scheduled turn at buying is unsuitable/impossible, please let me know as soon as you can.

The next buy will be organized by Mattiskes and Wilsons, with the pick up to be at the Wilsons' on 11 Dec. between 10:00 and 1:00.

In 1983, the three buys will be organized by: Stevens & Woiwods, Henrys & Powells, Ealeys & Cooke-Hill.

Please call me if you have any queries.

Barbara Cargill (7120-426) Lot 18, end of Henley Rd.

ART

Life Drawing Group: Meets 12:30 every Tuesday in good weather at the Creek House, Henley Road, and in bad weather at Neil and Abbie's. Contact Wendi Henderson, 7120-393.

WILDLIFE

Bird Observers Group: Walks often Sunday mornings. Contact Jim Mattiske, 7120-356.

KIDS

Babysitting Club: Dee Pelling, 7127-286.

Playgroup: Meets every Tuesday morning at different homes. Contact Cric Henry, 7120-547.

WALKS

Whenever...but usually Saturday mornings. Contact Abbie Heathcote, 7120-352.

WORKING BEE

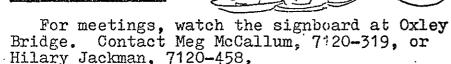
Before the General Meeting we'll cut back branches and shrubs that protrude into our roadways. Bring an appropriate tool and meet at the top intersection of Catani and Henley at 10 a.m., Sunday, 5 December.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING

At Jo and David's...24 Dec. at 8:00 p.m.... BYO everything, including voice. Practicing Conservationists welcome.

LADIES AUXILIARY



CLASSIFIED ADS

House for Sale in E.L.Z.: 2.6 ha., 23 squares. Alistair Knox design, second hand bricks, slate floors, leadlight windows, 3 bedrooms, studio, 2 large living areas. Price around \$110,000, but negotiable. Ring Hans or Carole, 7120-246.

Land/houses available in E.L.Z.: Contact John McCallum, 7120-319, or Cric Henry, 7120-547.

NEWSLETTER

On behalf of the B.I.C.A. committee, the convenor wishes to thank all those who contributed articles, Neil Douglas for illustrations, Matthew Weigall for photos, Abbie Heathcote for lettering, and Carol Ann Fisher for typing.

We need another typist, Any volunteers?

Tom Fisher, 7120-451

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

B.I.C.A.SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you are in arrears or wish to join the Bend of Islands Conservation Association, please clip the coupon below and mail, together with \$6.00 per person to: Michael Pelling, Treasurer, P.O. Kangaroo Ground 3097.

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٠	Enclosed is \$ for B.I.C.A. subscriptions
•	for the following persons (include addresses and
•	phone numbers):
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