



# Reflections

The Journal of the *Lake Pedder* Restoration Committee

## The lake we're giving back to the world

Twenty one years ago, Lake Pedder was drowned for the production of electricity. Today, plans are under way to restore the lake. There has been widespread international interest and support, beginning in January 1994, when the 1000 delegates of the world conservation body, IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) meeting in Buenos Aires passed a motion calling on the Australian Government to back the restoration of Lake Pedder 'as a symbol of hope that humanity can recover some of the global heritage lost over the last century'. The international David Suzuki Foundation has pledged

its support, along with The Australian Geographic Pty Ltd. People all over Australia are joining forces for Pedder, projects are being initiated locally and co-ordinated by the Hobart office.

The Pedder restoration campaign is a watershed not just in Australian conservation history but in global terms. Progress towards

rectifying the world's greatest environmental blunders can be led by Australia. When the eyes of the world are upon us, Sydney 2000 will focus attention on humanity and physical excellence; Pedder 2000 will focus attention on the environment and moral excellence. The two events will complement and enhance one another.

*'If Lake Pedder were to be re-exposed, its beauty would return, irrespective of the length of time the lake had been flooded. ... There is very fortunately, in this case, what lawyers call a locus poenitentiae—an opportunity to repent. ... if not we ourselves, the day will come when our children will undo what we so foolishly have done'.*

EDWARD ST JOHN, QC, AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT LAKE PEDDER COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY, 1974

## The seven most commonly-asked questions about Lake Pedder—and their answers

- 1 *Hasn't the original lake been destroyed by the flooding?*  
No. Scientific studies released this year have shown that the beach and the dunes are still intact, covered by a few millimetres of sediment.
- 2 *Wouldn't draining leave a muddy mess?*  
Yes. For a little while. But within a year, the area will begin to regenerate, and rain will wash the beach and dunes clean.
- 3 *Don't we need the power?*  
No. At the moment, we have a surplus of 130 MW. Lake Pedder produces only 60 MW. If Comalco leaves Tasmania in 2001, as most experts

- believe it will, our surplus power will be 300 MW.
- 4 *How could you destroy that huge dam?*  
The Gordon dam is not part of the Lake Pedder impoundment. It will remain. So will the Gordon Power Station. Restoring Lake Pedder involves releasing water from the Serpentine and Scotts Peak dams only.
- 5 *Will it ever look the same again?*  
Yes. We're working for the future, not just for next year or the year after. Lake Pedder has been beneath the impoundment for only 22 years—in the long-term, no time at all.

- 6 *What about the trout fishing?*  
Tasmania has hundreds of trout fishing lakes, including Lake Gordon, right next door. The world has only one Lake Pedder.
- 7 *Will it really be a tourist attraction?*  
Yes. The restoration process itself will attract world-wide interest. Eco-tourism is a huge growth industry. Lake Pedder will be a world focus for environmental rehabilitation.

SEPTEMBER 1994

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## From the groups

THERE ARE active Pedder 2000 groups in Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne and Sydney. If there's not a group in your town or city, why not get one started? Contact Pedder 2000 for information and material.

Meanwhile, here's what's happening around the country:

### Launceston

The Launceston Branch of Pedder 2000 meets regularly—contact Helen Tait on 003 318389 for times and venues. The group embraces the grand ideas of Restoration, Regeneration and Recovery, and is providing lots of ideas and impetus for this hope-filled campaign—for example, could Queen Elizabeth walk on the Pedder beach in 2000, the year of her 70th birthday?

### Burnie

Contact: Arnold Rowlands 004 31 7439.

### Melbourne

The Melbourne branch of Pedder 2000 plans to bottle Lake Pedder water, and use it for publicity and fund-raising. They drank toasts to the real Lake Pedder at a recent meeting! Contact Annabel Richards 03 8362670 or Peter Stapleton 03 4163391 for more information.

Melbourne branch has the following material for sale—excellent as rare and unique Christmas gifts!

*The World of Olegas Truchanas* Last chance to get a copy of this beautiful book. Very limited numbers available. \$100 plus \$5 p/h  
*Lake Pedder—Why a National Park Must be Saved.* Very limited numbers of this historic publication available.

\$20 plus \$2.50 p/h

*The Tyler Report—Lake Pedder*

A Geophysical Study by Dr Peter Tyler.

\$10 plus \$2.50 p/h

*Why Lake Pedder Should Be Restored* Lake Pedder Study Group. Report by Dr Geoff Mosely.

\$15 plus \$5 p/h

*Lake Pedder by Bob Brown.* A superb photographic record.

\$15 plus \$5 p/h

Lake Pedder T-shirt: unbleached, with 4-colour painting of the lake. S M L XL

\$29.50 plus \$5 p/h

*Pull The Plug t-shirts.* Unbleached, Aust-made. L only.

\$16 plus \$5 p/h

*Lake Pedder posters.* Beautiful laminated poster.

\$20 plus \$5 p/h

*Pull The Plug bumper stickers* \$2.50 plus 50¢ p/h

If you live in Melbourne, you may be interested in genuine Lake Pedder water in a souvenir bottle. Please enquire.

Please send orders and cheques to Pedder 2000, 114B Winmalee Road Balwyn Vic 3103.

### Sydney

Contact Milo Dunphy (TEC) 02 247 7476; Brigid Dowsett (ACF) 02 247 4285.

## It's been done before

IN THE north-west of the USA, two large dams on the Elwha River are coming down after 82 years – to restore the legendary salmon and trout fishery. The Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act, October 1992, "...recognises the critical importance of a healthy ecosystem and this historic

opportunity to correct environmentally devastating mistakes of the past". (Shann Cantrel, Friends of the Earth, USA). The Elwha dams will not be the first in the USA to be removed for environmental restoration and river activists target several more.

(SOURCE: WORLD RIVERS REVIEW, VOL.8 NO.1, PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RIVERS NETWORK).

## Pedder Pearls

...there appears to be no major problem in draining the Huon-Serpentine impoundment'

DOUG HILL, ENGINEERING CONSULTANT TO THE LAKE PEDDER STUDY GROUP

THE HEC'S ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

*Our responsibility is to be sensitive to the community's concern for the environment and carry out our business accordingly... protecting what we have and repairing where we have been.*

*All major features of the original beach and dune systems are intact. ... Accumulation of sediment over the original lake bed is slight, no more than a few millimetres.*

PROFESSOR PETER TYLER, LAKE PEDDER. A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, MAY 1993

*This generation must accept responsibility for our actions and those of our fathers and be prepared to pay for the required restoration of our environment.*

IAN McLACHLAN, SHADOW MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

*This new lake is a shroud, a drowned plain... This place makes electricity. The whole place for miles and miles and miles, makes electricity... It cannot reveal anything of its prior effect on people.*

RUSSELL KELLY, 'INHERITING OLD PEDDER', IN PRESS

*What better project to end the sad century of destruction and so welcome the new millennium of sustainable development.*

DAVID BELLAMY

## Lake Pedder audio-visual revival underway

THE TRUCHANAS audio-visual presentation on Lake Pedder is a spectacular collection of images celebrating the moods of that exceptional place.

Olegas Truchanas visited Lake Pedder over 30 times and photographed there. He saw, as a public servant required to maintain political silence, that there was only one course open to him—to show the people of Tasmania, through his photography, what they were about to lose. In the early 1970s, this was an act of moral courage. The response to his public audio-visual presentations at the Hobart Town Hall was dramatic and unrivalled—on eight consecutive occasions there was standing

room only, and the doors had to be closed half an hour before each show. Hundreds were turned away!

The key to the successful technique in the audio-visuals was provided by Olegas's long-time friend Ralph Hope-Johnstone. Ralph probably took the first colour pictures of Lake Pedder. He was first there in December 1947, one of a party of walkers flown in by Lloyd Jones, Tasmanian-born aviator who introduced aerial photography in the South West.

Ralph was an engineer with a wide knowledge of optics, electronics and music, and was deeply interested in the visual appeal of the images from slides

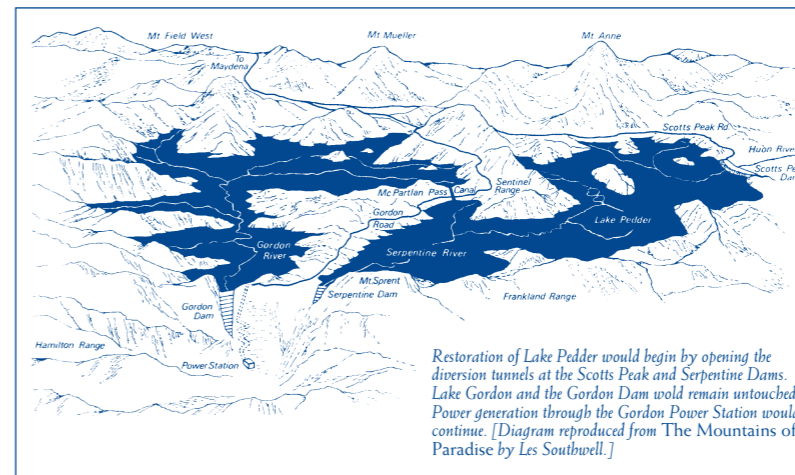
dissolving and fading to the demands of music. Before the availability of commercial equipment, he had a system of fading projectors, manually-operated, that was his own invention. He set about solving the problem of recording a program of image and sound, perfecting it in his studio, and later presenting it, fully-automated, to a large audience. When he acquired the Arion 2000 dedicated programmer, he painstakingly recorded the steps taken in synchronising the recorded program with appropriate music.

The subtle and mysterious beauty of Lake Pedder was viewed on a large screen, where scene after scene appeared, faded and dissolved to the haunting music of Sibelius and Delius. The vision was so powerful that

people who had not seen the lake were astounded that its destruction could ever have been contemplated.

From the beginning of the flooding, the evidence of the beauty of this once incomparable place resided in the photographs. The audio-visual was taken to capital cities around Australia and was used as evidence before the Lake Pedder Committee of Enquiry in Hobart in 1973. The Committee members were deeply moved—Edward St John QC said 'The best attempt to re-create some of the feeling of the place is probably by means of the audio-visual production.'

In 1994, Pedder 2000 is seeking to bring the Lake Pedder audio-visual back to life as a powerful force for the spirited bid to restore Lake Pedder.



Restoration of Lake Pedder would begin by opening the diversion tunnels at the Scotts Peak and Serpentine Dams. Lake Gordon and the Gordon Dam would remain untouched. Power generation through the Gordon Power Station would continue. [Diagram reproduced from *The Mountains of Paradise* by Les Southwell.]

## Beneath the dark water—what the scientific study showed

SONAR SURVEYS of the drowned lake by Professor Peter Tyler and his team from Deakin University prove that all the major geomorphic features of the original Lake Pedder remain largely intact. Sediment accumulation on the floor of the new reservoir has been minimal over the past 21 years. This is consistent with known long term deposit rates documented from other lakes since the retreat of the glaciers that formed them at the end of the last ice age.

The beach is intact—samples of sand were taken. Even Pedder Pennies were retrieved by the Eckman Grab. The dune also remains in position, protected by a mat of peat.

## Rehabilitation

IT IS anticipated that Lake Pedder Beach will appear much as it was within a few months of its re-exposure. The same natural processes of wind on sand that initially produced the dune will restore the form of its slightly eroded face over one or two seasons of exposure.

More active rehabilitation measures will be required along parts of the perimeter of the artificial reservoir where the peat mat has been broken down by

wave action. The demonstrated effectiveness of modern rehabilitation techniques, as shown for instance by the HEC's own recent efforts in rehabilitating scarred areas around its construction sites on the King and Henty-Anthony schemes, means that the restoration of Lake Pedder can in time be complemented by effective rehabilitation of the eroded margins around the drained dam.

## Timeline

**1 MILLION YEARS AGO:** Glacial outwash blocks the flow of the Serpentine River. A unique glacial lake is formed, nine square kilometres in area with a beach of pink quartz sand, three kilometres long and nearly one kilometre wide.

**20 000 YEARS AGO:** Aboriginal people lived in the area as the present Lake Pedder was formed.

**1835:** Surveyor John Wedge names the lake 'Pedder' after the Chief Justice of the colony, Sir John Lewes Pedder.

**1874:** Landscape painter William Pigenit visits and paints at Lake Pedder.

**1898:** A branch of the Port Davey track reaches Lake Pedder.

**1946:** The first light plane landing is made on the 3 km beach.

**1955:** The Lake becomes the heart and focus of the Lake Pedder National Park.

**1968:** The LPNP is incorporated in a new and larger Southwest National Park.

**1967:** Premier Eric Reece announces that the Gordon Power Scheme will result in 'some modification to the Lake Pedder National Park'.

**1972:** The world's first Green Party, the United Tasmania Group (UTG) is formed to oppose the flooding.

**1972:** In spite of a massive campaign of national and international opposition, the lake is flooded, to provide an extra 60 MW of electricity.

**1973:** The Tasmanian Government refuses an offer from the Commonwealth Government to fund a simple alternative version of the Gordon Scheme in order to save the lake.

**1982:** The Huon-Serpentine impoundment is included within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area because of the IUCN's (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) express hope for its restoration as a natural lake.

**1993:** The IUCN, meeting in Buenos Aires, passes a unanimous resolution calling for the restoration of the lake.

**1993:** Scientific studies reveal that beneath 15m of water, the features of the Lake Pedder area—beach, dunes, and Serpentine River—are unchanged under a few millimetres of silt.

**1994:** Comalco closes its third potline. Tasmania's power surplus reaches 130 MW.

**1994:** Pedder 2000 is launched in Hobart with national and international expressions of support.

# Twelve good reasons why Lake Pedder should be restored

BOB BROWN

1 Lake Pedder was, will again be, one of the Planet's most gently beautiful places. It is three kilometres long and wide, an area of nine square kilometres, 300 metres in altitude, in Tasmania's western mountains. World authorities, including the World Conservation Union have called for the lake's restoration.

2 The lake's beach of fine, pink quartzite sand was, and will be, a Mecca for walkers, photographers, artists and poets. The beach, three kilometres long, took six minutes to walk across. Behind it are Pedder's 8 metre high sand dunes and, behind them are the exquisite little Maria Lakes and marshes.

3 The study by Professor Peter Tyler's expert team from Deakin University has found that the lake bed, its dunes, Lake Maria, and even the sand patterns on the beach are still intact, awaiting recovery. Only a few millimetres of fine silt covers the scene.

4 Even the Pedder Pennies, little stones surrounded by a smooth soft collar of ferromanganese, sit on Pedder's floor, as they did before the inundation. The restoration would allow study of the pennies, and, if they survived, any of the area's unique species of molluscs and other life forms, as well as any aboriginal sites in the valley.

5 Economist, Mr. Brian Kohl, has found that there will be no cost from draining the impoundment over Lake Pedder. This is because the flooding of Lake Pedder provides only 60 megawatts of electricity, while Tasmania has an excess of 130 megawatts, and when Comalco goes, that will be 170 megawatts more. That is, Tasmania can spare the 60 megawatts at no loss or cost to our economy.

6 Tourism expert, Dr Louise Crossley, estimates that even if the lake's recovery drew only an additional 4 percent

of visitors to Tasmania, and increased intrastate (local) tourism by only 2 percent, this would boost spending in Tasmania by \$20 million annually.

7 This would mean an extra 620 jobs in Tasmania's service industries.

8 The impoundment, as it is, is the least popular of Tasmania's seven top trout fisheries, with the worst catch rates. Restoring Lake Pedder and the Serpentine River could create a 'wild' trout fishery of the type which is most popular these days.

9 Lake Pedder is a unique type of glacial lake, formed by the last glaciations. Dr Kevin Kiernan, a Tasmanian Geomorphologist, describes it as an '*...extraordinary landform complex that...has no replicate on Earth and is akin to a biological species for which only one solitary and vulnerable individual remains*'. It is of world scientific interest. Its recovery is already sparking international attention.

10 The Pedder 2000 Committee and Dr Louise Crossley have recommended a centre of excellence in restorative ecology be set up—to decide how best to restore Lake Pedder. The centre's studies and experience could then be used for similar projects overseas.

11 The 3 small dams used to flood Lake Pedder could be removed, with Federal funding. This would create hundreds of jobs. But this is not essential. The recovery can be carried out by 'pulling the plug' in the diversion tunnels at the dams. Perhaps the dams could be kept as a monument to the tragedy of flooding Lake Pedder in 1972.

12 The whole world would win. What a symbol of optimism, as we celebrate the new millennium, the Pedder 2000 Project (alongside 'Sydney 2000') would be a symbol of human-kind turning around at least some of the destruction of the twentieth century, in a gesture of goodwill to nature and to all future generations.

## Support from across the world

THE CAMPAIGN to restore Lake Pedder has fired the imagination of many people. The Aga Khan, Prince Phillip, Joanna Lumley, John Farnham, Allan Ginsberg, Arne Naess and Bryce Courtenay are among the thousands of people who have registered their support for the project. Here's what the Aga Khan wrote:

I have just been advised of proposals to restore Lake Pedder to its original splendour, and hasten, through the good offices of Professor David Bellamy, to add my personal endorsement, as a lifelong conservationist, to this visionary and most inspiring endeavour.

The tragic fate of Lake Pedder presents in microcosm the ravages on the ecology of our planet wreaked by profit-motivated attitudes which ultimately prove both shortsighted and short-term.

Efforts to prevent the initial destruction gave birth to a new green consciousness which spread throughout the world. May its reincarnation similarly serve as a universal symbol attesting to the validity of those beliefs and re-enforcing the environmental awareness which must henceforth guide our destinies.

Lake Pedder presents a cautionary tale to which we have a unique and unhopd-for opportunity to provide a happy ending. The conservation community must rise vigorously and united to meet this exemplary challenge.

PRINCE SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Please join Pedder 2000, and become part of the efforts of existing conservation organisations and individuals worldwide.
- Please give generously to enable us to run a first-class campaign.



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