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# Action Strategy for Protected Areas in the South Pacific Region

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Prepared during the Third South Pacific National  
Parks and Reserves Conference, Apia, Western  
Samoa, 24 June - 3 July 1985

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*Cover photo:* The dramatic South Coast of Upolu Island, Western Samoa part of which is now protected in the Ole Pupu Pu'e National Park.

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## FOREWORD


The Third South Pacific National Parks and Reserves Conference, sponsored by SPREP in cooperation with IUCN, produced a number of outputs which represent important advances for conservation in the South Pacific. This Action Strategy is one of the outputs that outlines the priorities for concrete and unified action and which will provide the framework for action until the next regional conference is held in 1989.

The Strategy itself was developed from the "ground up" -- the draft was prepared by field managers from 20 countries during the technical sessions of the Parks Conference. It was then reviewed and formally adopted at the subsequent ministerial meeting. The Strategy thus was designed by and for the countries of the South Pacific region and spells out both general guidelines for action, as well as some specific requirements for most of the member countries of SPREP.


We are particularly pleased to note that the Action Strategy reflects the human dimensions of conservation in a region where traditional rural populations are dependent on the sustained use of living natural resources.

These living natural resources are a common heritage to mankind -- they have values at local, national and international levels. The exploitation of these resources is being greatly accelerated by the process of economic development, often aided by financial support from international sources. Therefore, it is necessary that international cooperation also be directed toward achieving conservation aims. This will be most effective for well-planned projects which clearly emphasize improvement of the quality of human existence as part of protected areas management.

We are most grateful to the support given to the Conference from our colleagues in UNEP, Unesco, WWF, and from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. The targets that have been set are ambitious, yet achievable, and we look forward to continued and accelerated cooperation with all concerned in their implementation.



Kenton R. Miller  
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South Pacific Commission



THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF  
NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION



World Wildlife Fund

## ACTION STRATEGY FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION

### INTRODUCTION

The South Pacific is a vast region extending over 29 million sq km, or seven times the area of the Caribbean. Of this, only about 500,000 sq km is land. The island environments present special, often critical, problems for nature conservation. Geographical and ecological isolation have led to the evolution of unique species and communities of plants and animals, many of which are adapted to only one island or island group, and found nowhere else in the world. There are about 2000 different types of ecosystem throughout the South Pacific, and on some islands 80% or more of the species are endemic. Limited space means that ecosystems are restricted, with small biological populations and this increases their vulnerability.

Population growth, steady habitat destruction from increasing demands on limited land resources, and competition and predation by introduced species have all combined to put pressure on natural environments and native species. A recent comprehensive review of environmental concerns in the region highlighted the problems of land and habitat destruction due to accelerated soil and coastal erosion, coastal reclamation, mining activities, excessive harvesting of native forests and of coastal fish resources, and pollution of both inland and coastal waters. On many islands of the region the diminishing area of natural undisturbed environments has become critical. Relatively large numbers of native plant and animal species are endangered (or extinct). There are about seven times more endangered bird species per capita in the South Pacific than in the Caribbean, and one hundred times more than in North America or Africa, placing heavy responsibilities on small island nations.

Some island countries have made great efforts in protecting natural environments. By 1985 there were 95 protected areas in the region, totalling approximately 800 sq km. However, this represents only about 0.15% of the total land area and there is an urgent need for expansion of the protected area network. This Strategy, therefore, is based on the premise that further establishment of protected areas is vital in the South Pacific, both on land and at sea. Sustainable development of resources through conservation can be aided by protected areas and protected species systems because:

- they assist in the maintenance of traditional customs and culture,
- they maintain the main life support systems and enhance the resource values of these systems,
- they contribute to the maintenance of island biological diversity and the conservation of genetic resources,
- they provide opportunities for research and education, and
- they provide economic opportunities through recreation and tourism.

Protected areas and protected species systems thus serve environmental, social, economic, cultural and spiritual needs of societies.

Establishment and effective environmental management of protected areas and species involves several considerations. These include an enforceable legal framework, a close working relationship between governments and community groups in planning and management, the integration of modern and traditional skills applied in the field, and support from research, training, education and information services. Pacific countries also have a need to consider a wider range of categories of protected areas for management of those essential resources and processes which maintain the balanced and healthful environment on which island people depend for survival.

This Strategy aims to provide a work programme to implement the conservation and protected area objectives of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme Action Plan for Managing the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region. The Strategy was developed by the Technical Session and adopted by the Ministerial Meeting of the Third South Pacific National Parks and Reserves Conference conducted within the framework of SPREP in Apia, Western Samoa, 24 June to 3 July 1985. It incorporates the views of IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas which was a co-sponsor of the Conference.

## APPROACH

This Strategy has five goals concerned with conservation education, conservation policy, the establishment and management of protected areas, and regional and international cooperation. A number of objectives are identified within each goal under which are listed activities needed at national, regional and international levels. Specific project suggestions for each South Pacific country appear in the Appendix.

GOAL A: TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES AND EXPAND EFFORTS IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VALUES AND BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION INCLUDING PROTECTED AREAS.

### OBJECTIVE A.1

To facilitate maximum possible community involvement in the development of protected areas systems and to ensure public awareness of their benefits.

### ACTIVITIES

#### National Level

1. Develop extension programmes, with emphasis on grass roots approaches, to deliver the message to local people.
2. Provide relevant educational and interpretive facilities (visitor centres, nature trails, publications, etc.) in protected areas.
3. Train staff in communication techniques with special emphasis on developing local support for conservation.
4. Provide publications in appropriate languages for each protected area in the region for distribution to schools.
5. Place signs and exhibits at isolated island anchorages to solicit understanding and cooperation of visitors.
6. Develop environmental education manuals for teachers.

7. Prepare films and slide presentations on parks and other selected conservation topics.
8. Develop at least one demonstration park in each country with a full range of educational facilities and programmes (e.g. visitor centre, nature trail, exhibits).
9. Sponsor radio programmes and provide media coverage of activities of the protected area agency.
10. Encourage the involvement of non-government organizations in education projects.

#### Regional and International Level

1. Support local workshops for developing local capacity in education and communication methods.
2. Provide educational material and supplies (e.g. mobile education units).
3. Support attendance at training courses and seminars in conservation education.
4. Support SPREP's activities through its Education, Training and Information Network.

GOAL B: TO DEVELOP CONSERVATION POLICIES WHICH PROMOTE PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NATURAL RESOURCE USE

#### OBJECTIVE B.1

To expand the use of appropriate types of protected areas and other conservation measures to encompass the management and maintenance of those resources and environmental processes on which people depend for their survival.

#### ACTIVITIES

##### National Level

1. Integrate protected area inventory activities (Goal C.1.1) with preparation of resource inventories identifying areas of critical importance for water supplies, erosion control, disaster protection, soil conservation, waste purification and other factors essential to maintaining the carrying capacity of islands.

2. Develop plans and programmes to protect these essential features and processes including, where appropriate, their inclusion in a protected areas system.
3. Ensure that renewable island resources such as forests, agricultural land and fisheries are developed on a sustainable basis.
4. Initiate monitoring programmes to follow changes in essential resources or processes that may require remedial action.
5. Give prominence to the establishment of protected areas in regional, national, and local plans for conservation or development of natural resources.

#### Regional and International Level

1. Provide assistance to countries in the preparation of National Conservation Strategies.

#### OBJECTIVE B.2

To implement the protected area components of national conservation strategies by the development of general policies for protected areas and their application through management plans for specific areas.

#### ACTIVITIES

##### National Level

1. Develop general policies for the management of systems of protected areas which would guide the preparation of plans for specific areas.
2. Develop general policies through a process of public consultation according to needs and use the resultant policies as mechanisms for information and education.



GOAL C: TO ESTABLISH A REPRESENTATIVE NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS WITHIN THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION

At present less than 20% of the ecosystem types in the South Pacific region are represented in protected areas. There are a large number of unique island ecosystems and associated species that are vulnerable to complete disappearance. Each country should have a representative system of protected natural areas and cultural sites which, together with other conservation measures, would assure the survival of all the ecosystems and species that make up the country's natural heritage. The creation of such a system in the South Pacific will take time and must take into consideration the unique characteristics of the South Pacific Islands, including traditional patterns of land use.

OBJECTIVE C.1.

To develop an inventory of plant and animal habitats and ecosystems within each country.

ACTIVITIES

National Level

1. Undertake inventories of major natural landscapes, ecosystems and habitats (both terrestrial and marine) and assess their potential for reservation as protected areas. Include consideration of areas of exceptional scientific, ecological and cultural value, areas containing particularly rich and diverse native biota, and localities of rare, endangered and endemic species and identify areas which are particularly fragile or at risk.

Regional and International Level

1. Assist island countries in developing national resource information surveys.
2. Prepare and conduct a protected area systems review for the South Pacific Region and disseminate its results widely, linking the distribution of habitats and species in order to provide a framework for national action. (In preparation by IUCN, to be completed by late 1985).

3. Develop a protected area data base from information collected by governments and other sources, and publish relevant data as a directory of South Pacific Region Protected Areas. (In preparation by IUCN, to be completed by end 1985).
4. Collaborate with governments in developing a biogeographical classification system which could be used throughout the Region, in protecting biological diversity.
5. Strengthen national capacities for resource surveys and inventories through regional information and training programmes.
6. Support efforts to develop a regional capacity to use data processing, remote sensing and other technologies for improved inventories, maps, planning and monitoring of resources. Emphasis should be on methods appropriate for use by local communities in the South Pacific Region.

#### OBJECTIVE C.2.

To establish a representative system of protected areas within each country.

#### ACTIVITIES

##### National Level

1. Develop a national programme to protect the natural and cultural resources of the country through conservation programmes and particularly by the systematic establishment of protected areas. The IUCN has identified ten basic categories of reserves and these should be examined to determine which are the most appropriate for the country and for the area concerned.

For example, Category I may be appropriate in areas where strict nature conservation is required. Categories V, VII and VIII may be more suitable for small countries or where it is desired to apply nature conservative reserves in inhabited areas. The inclusion of international categories such as Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and wetlands (RAMSAR) sites should be encouraged.

2. Attempt to achieve the following targets within the next four years:
  - the establishment of at least one protected area in each country and territory of the region and to establish an additional 50 protected areas in the region as a whole, and
  - an increase to 40% the number of ecosystems receiving some kind of protection.
3. Obtain adequate financial support for the establishment of protected natural areas, including the leasing of customary land. Because protected natural areas are of international benefit and importance, it is appropriate that financial support for their establishment should come from both national and international sources.

#### OBJECTIVE C.3

To ensure appropriate status and legal protection for protected area systems.

#### ACTIVITIES

##### National Level

1. Prepare appropriate legislation to provide for protected area establishment. Such legislation should recognise and reinforce any traditions and taboos which protect natural resources.
2. Introduce measures through the constitution or by legislation to provide the means for protecting and ensuring the continued existence of parks and reserves.
3. Examine and encourage alternative means for protecting areas outside the formal dedication of reserves and protected areas. This could involve conservation measures on freehold or customary owned land, either with the consent of the owners or through easements, leasehold or other arrangements. Where possible, emphasis should be placed on ways in which customary land holders and, when appropriate, freeholders can protect their land without relinquishing ownership.

GOAL D: TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION.

Responsibility for protected area management in the South Pacific is often fragmented between a number of government departments or statutory authorities. Few countries have established specific departments or statutory authorities for protected area management. The development of an agency with specific responsibilities for protected area management is an essential first step. This should also incorporate provision for an adequate number of appropriately trained staff. The training of protected area staff is a major priority in South Pacific countries and is addressed in objective D.3.

OBJECTIVE D.1.

To encourage each country to establish an agency responsible for overseeing the establishment and management of protected areas, which is adequately staffed and equipped.

ACTIVITIES

National Level

1. Develop a strong central directorate responsible for conservation and protected area management and develop mechanisms within government for appropriate consultation with other departments concerned with national development and resource exploitation.
2. Ensure that there are adequate staff for the administration, planning and management of protected areas - both terrestrial and marine.
3. Establish strong links with community consultative committees, to establish and maintain liaison between policy makers and local communities.
4. Supplement staffing of agencies by facilitating the involvement of local people in management, e.g. as wardens, rangers, caretakers.

#### Regional and International Level

1. Assist in the establishment of agencies responsible for protected area management through technical advice, the secondment of officers in this field to work with Pacific Island Governments and the funding of positions.

#### OBJECTIVE D.2.

To ensure that adequate management plans are prepared for all protected areas.

#### National Level

1. Document the values and objectives of each protected area, specifying clearly the purpose of its protected status.
2. Prepare a management plan for each protected area, ensuring that the local community and the staff are fully involved in the process.
3. Develop compatible management objectives for buffer areas surrounding the protected areas.

#### Regional and International Level

1. Assist with the development of guidelines for preparation of management plans, giving particular consideration to the educational value of such plans.
2. Assist with training workshops to ensure that local managers can prepare management plans for their own protected areas, thereby ensuring the local commitment to implementation of the plans.

#### OBJECTIVE D.3.

To develop training programmes to ensure the availability of adequately trained manpower.

## ACTIVITIES

### National/Regional/International Levels

1. Encourage the inclusion of appropriate protected area management skills in relevant educational curricula.
2. Publish and distribute a training manual on protected area management in the South Pacific.
3. Develop and undertake in-service training programmes to develop protected area skills drawing on appropriate regional expertise. Emphasis to be placed on the practices of traditional use and their incorporation into contemporary park management procedures.
4. Encourage participation of staff at regional and international training programmes.
5. Encourage bilateral training involving secondment of officers, from countries within and outside the region, to facilitate on-the-job training of local staff.
6. Undertake a regional manpower requirement survey to identify future training needs and opportunities.
7. Provide basic reference manuals and publications on protected area management to all park officers in the region.

### GOAL E: TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION IN PROMOTING CONSERVATION IN THE REGION AND SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

The framework for regional cooperation in environment management in the South Pacific is provided by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

#### OBJECTIVE E.1.

To promote cooperation among the countries of the South Pacific to ensure effective management and protection of their natural resources.

## ACTIVITIES

### Regional and International Level

1. Support provision of a full time person to SPREP to assist in implementation of this strategy.
2. Encourage interchange of ideas, information and expertise in conservation amongst countries, at senior policy, professional and research levels.
3. Offer study tour and working tour facilities to examine conservation activities within countries of the region.
4. Encourage interchange of expert staff between national management agencies, particularly where expertise is needed to address specific problems.
5. Establish a regional data base on aspects relating to protected area management and the establishment of mechanisms for circulating this information between countries.
6. Provide support for SPREP as the regional coordinating body for protected area management issues.
7. Facilitate exchange of information and expertise concerning conservation activities.
8. Provide support to international conservation agencies and conventions particularly the World Heritage Convention.
9. Encourage conservation officers to contribute to newspapers, magazines, journals and other media thereby contributing to increasing awareness of conservation within countries and at the regional level.
10. Promote the establishment of joint protected areas along common boundaries to effectively conserve shared resources.

## APPENDIX

### SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY PRIORITIES FOR ACTION ON PROTECTED AREAS

This annex is a summary of information submitted by country delegates. It is a provisional list of project ideas relating to conservation and protected areas identified by delegates as those matters which are in most urgent need of implementation in their countries. The projects relate to the goals and objectives of the Strategy and offer specific suggestions where it could be implemented. It is hoped that, after suitable consultation, these and other project ideas will be developed and formalised in each country and implemented as resources permit and with regional or international assistance if required.

#### AMERICAN SAMOA

- Implement recommendations regarding new areas for reservations and taking fish (C.2.)
- Possible reservation of reef area at island of Ofa (C.2.)
- Possible reservation of forest on Mt. Lata (Tau) (C.2.)
- Implementation of management programme at the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (D)

#### COOK ISLANDS

- Complete baseline survey, prepare management plans and recruit and train personnel for Suvarrow Atoll National Park (C, D)
- Establish Kakerori Reserve on Rarotonga Island including completion of baseline survey, preparation of management plans, and conducting a public education and awareness campaign (C, D)
- Develop and implement a public education and awareness campaign for the establishment of Rarotonga Water Catchment and Wildlife Reserve (A)
- Develop a National Conservation Strategy (B)
- Designate Island of Takuten as a Wildlife Sanctuary through negotiation with customary land owners and a public education and awareness campaign followed by preparation of management plans (C, D)



## FIJI

- Development of the National Conservation Strategy - a framework exists but further development of strategy requires recruitment of an experienced team leader (B)
- Final drafting and enactment of the National Parks and Reserves Act emphasising local customary ownership of lands required for the system of protected areas (C)
- Development of Garrick Reserve as a national park pilot project (C)
- Development of Tai-Elevuka reef environs as a marine national park pilot project with the help of customary fishing right owners (C)
- Designation of Sigatoka Sand Dunes as a project area - management plans and programmes to be developed nationally (C, D)
- Training staff, developing an environmental awareness programme and production of education resource material obtaining international funding for the establishment of identified protected areas which will include leasing of customary lands, such as for Wasainali Reserve, and other areas (A, C, D)

## GUAM

- Establish the Hilaan area as a protected area (C)
- Conduct a multimedia public education programme on the need for further protected areas (A)
- Develop tourism programme to give emphasis to parks and protected areas (A)
- Complete the survey of proposed protected areas (C.1)
- Facilitate the exchange of management and resource information, particularly with the Northern Marianas (E.1.)

- Revise regulations to improve management of protected areas (C.3.)
- Implement management activities for established protected areas and training programmes for staffing of these areas (D.3.)
- Request USA, in cooperation with American Samoa and Northern Marianas, to ratify and enforce international agreements (E.2.)

#### KIRIBATI

- Formulate a National Conservation Strategy (B)
- Implement the Feral Animal Eradication Programme on Christmas Island (D)

#### MARSHALL ISLANDS

- Seek technical assistance in identifying potential protected natural resources and reserves (C)
- Seek assistance in formulating legislation and governmental policies which would take into account customary land ownership (C.3)
- Seek assistance in the development of a comprehensive environmental educational programme (A)
- Obtain assistance in seeking funding sources, to promote conservation and protected area goals (B, E)
- Develop a National Conservation Strategy (B)

#### NEW CALEDONIA

- Intensification of education and public information activities relating to nature conservation, with special attention being paid to school text-books for use at all levels. (A-1)
- Adoption of a Territorial "charter" on the protection of the natural and the cultural heritage. (B)
- To establish new areas of protection of the environment, classified according to the IUCN categories, as follows:

- . bird reserve on Chesterfield Islands
- . rotating marine reserves in reef areas
- . extension of "Riviere Bleue" Territorial Park
- . preservation of the lake ecosystems of the "Plaine des Lacs" (C.2)
- . legislative measures to ensure the permanency of parks and reserves. (C.3)
- . redrafting of forestry legislation, taking into account customary ownership. (C.3)
- . protection of endangered endemic species. (C.1)
- . establishment of a central structure for the management and planning of protected areas. (D.1)
- . support of SPREP's activities and promotion of co-operation among international scientists and experts with a view to furthering knowledge in the field of ecology. (E)

#### NORTHERN MARIANAS

- Develop public information and education programme through the training of staff in effective communication techniques and development of education strategies including audio-visuals, posters and publication of articles in newspapers (A, D.2.)
- Formulate management plans for wildlife reserves (D.1.)
- Train personnel in park management (D.3.)

#### PALAU

- Develop an effective conservation agency with adequate staffing (D)
- Recruit and train wardens to manage and protect Ngerukewid reserve (D)

- Assess living and non-living resources with a view to establishing new reserves (C)
- Review and update all laws and regulations pertaining to environmental protection and develop management plans and policies (C, D)
- Develop educational programmes for conservation (A)
- Obtain financial assistance for creation and development of protected areas including leasing of customary lands and waters (C)
- Provide adequate resources to control dynamiting of reefs (D)

#### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- Review conservation legislation (C.3.)
- Develop public awareness programmes in environmental education (A)
- Review administrative structures to effect efficient implementation of environmental and conservation policies (D.1.)
- Review "protected area register" (C.2.)
- Draw up list of endangered species of plants and animals (C.1)
- Review the effectiveness of the current system of protected areas (C.2.)
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and design a representative system of protected areas (C.1.)
- Secure assistance and support for the preparation of management plans for Mt. Willhelm National Park, McAdam National Park and Mt. Gahavisuka Provincial Park (D)
- Develop a National Conservation Strategy (B)

#### SOLOMON ISLANDS

- Develop a National Conservation Strategy to review all environment aspects of development (B)
- Develop, expand and implement a national environment awareness programme including radio broadcast, publications, and the establishment of a mobile unit (A)
- Review and update all existing legislation relating to protected areas and conservation, and, where necessary, draw up new legislation (C)
- Undertake staff training in the fields of biology, botany, ecology and park management (D)
- Develop the following areas as protected areas:
  - . Oema atoll and the island of Oema as a wildlife sanctuary
  - . Mount Austin, Mount Galego
  - . Island of Arnavon
  - . Lake Te Nggono and its flora and fauna (C, D)

#### TOKELAU

- Safeguard populations of clams and turtles by the establishment of turtle hatcheries and by clam farming. Assistance is needed specifically in the exchange of information and, if possible, in sponsoring training for three Tokelauans in the techniques of clam farming and turtle hatching (D)
- Record traditional knowledge and practice on the use and conservation of resources

## TONGA

- Develop and implement intensive public education and training programme including radio broadcasts on environmental conservation and grants for overseas study on environment related disciplines (A)
- Survey all potential protected areas followed by preparation of management plans and provision of funds for management (C.1.)
- Develop a national environmental strategy (B)
- Prepare a resource inventories to help in identifying areas of critical importance for resource conservation (C.1.)
- Exchange environmental expert staff between countries of the region for short periods to cooperate in addressing specific problems and in exchanging ideas (E.1.)

## VANUATU

- Develop a National Conservation Strategy (B)
- Establish a Kauri Reserve on Erromango Island involving:
  - . negotiation with and compensation of customary land owners as appropriate;
  - . survey and inventory of proposed area;
  - . development of management plan;
  - . support for park officer training and positions (C)
- Establishment of recreational reserves on Espiritu Santo involving:
  - . survey and inventory of proposed areas
  - . negotiations with and compensation of customary land owners as appropriate (C)
  - . development of management plans (D.2)
  - . support for park officer training and, if necessary, positions. (D.3)

### WALLIS AND FUTUNA

- Protect the underground water lens against pollutants (B)
- Prepare a training and information programme in relation to the Action Plan (A, D.3)
- Establish an efficient monitoring system for marine reserves (C.1.)

### WESTERN SAMOA

- Develop a national environmental strategy (B)
- Investigate the remaining traditional marine and fishing rights (C.1.)
- Train researchers and managers in the marine field (D.3.)
- Assess conservation status and availability of reef and lagoon areas (C.1.)
- Include environmental concerns in education systems (A, B)
- Establish an Environmental Management Unit responsible for environmental assessment, liaison, environmental education, legislation and environmental reporting (D.1.)
- Map all national ecosystems (C.1.)
- Make an inventory of flora and fauna, particularly endangered species (C)
- Prepare management plans for all protected areas (D)
- Develop a national environmental public awareness campaign to be implemented through schools, mass media and Pulenu'us (A)
- Set aside areas which include ecosystems not covered by existing parks and reserves (C.2.)
- Complete a review of marine resources (C.1.)
- Send the Superintendent of Parks and Reserves to the 1987 Parks Management Training Course in New Zealand (D.3.).

## NOTES



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