

This volume provides the refereed versions of all the papers presented at a symposium to examine the proposed restoration of Lake Pedder, held at the University of Tasmania on 8th April 1995, with the exception of a paper on platypus presented by Professor Nigel Forteath who declined to publish in these proceedings.

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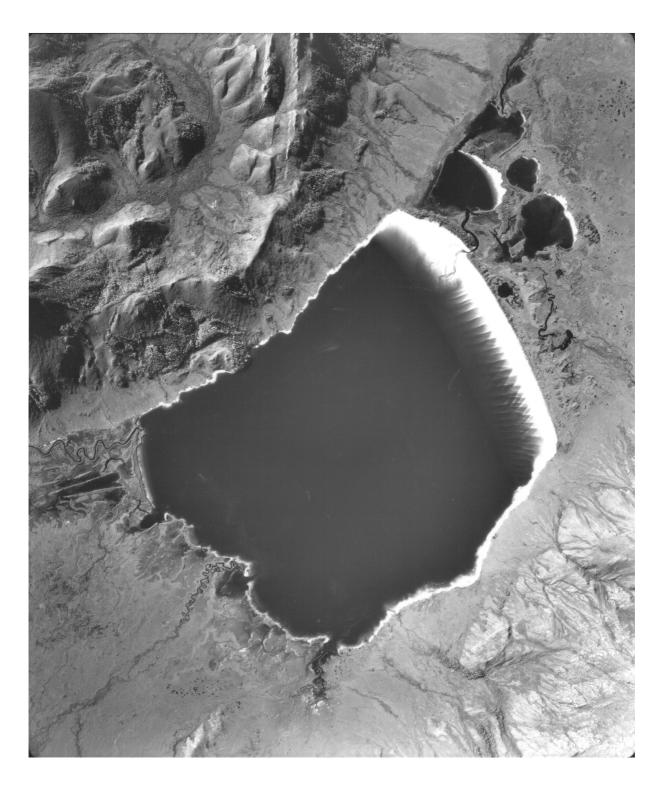
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LAKE PEDDER: VALUES AND RESTORATION

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Frontispiece: Lake Pedder and the Maria lakes from the air prior to flooding. Northeast at top, main beach approximately 2.5 kilometres long. Vertical airphoto taken 14th May 1972, immediately prior to inundation of the lake (Project F345, Run 1, Image T603-106, © Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment, Tasmania).

FOREWORD

It is a very great pleasure to pen this foreword to a book dedicated to the restoration of Lake Pedder. Over the past two centuries Australians have worked very hard to destroy their futures. Just imagine what it would be worth to Tasmanian tourism today if a few thylacines had escaped the century of persecution that sealed their fate. And imagine how much richer life would be if the unique and intriguing culture of the original Tasmanians had not been so ruthlessly and thoroughly destroyed by earlier European generations.

Unfortunately, neither the unique cultures of the Tasmanian Aborigines nor the Thylacine can ever be recovered. They are lost forever, leaving us the inheritors of a poorer, less interesting world whose future looks ever more doubtful. There is one gross mistake, however, that can be rectified: the flooding of Lake Pedder.

Before that act of officially sanctioned vandalism, the lake was the jewel in the crown of what is arguably Australia's most significant wild region. The plant communities growing on the hills surrounding Lake Pedder are little changed since the age of the dinosaurs. Evidence has been found that similar communities, including an archaic Huon Pine, grew on Seymour Island on the Antarctic Peninsula 65 million years ago. What nature crafted over the ages we destroyed in a moment.

The flooding of Lake Pedder resulted in one of the greatest thefts of humanity's common wealth to occur in the 20th century. To restore the Lake and its environment in the 21st would be one of the greatest gifts to the future we could give.

Tim Flannery¹

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