

**NATIONAL PARK ESTATE (SOUTH-WESTERN CYPRESS RESERVATIONS)
AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

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Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Robert Brown.

Second Reading

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [11.18 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Shooters and Fishers Party is pleased to introduce the National Park Estate (South-Western Cypress Reservations) Amendment Bill 2012, which simply revokes the reservation of certain land—the bed of Meroo Lake recreational fishing haven—as part of the Meroo National Park. Members who were present in the last Parliament would remember that transferring that Crown land into the National Parks Estate as part of Meroo National Park was hidden in Government legislation called the National Park Estate (South-Western Cypress Reservations) Act 2010, which was passed in the second last sitting week of the previous Parliament. It was a deal between the previous Government and the Greens—one of many they did—that they thought would result in a flow of green preferences to Labor prior to the 2010 State election. But guess what? After The Greens got the bed of Meroo Lake and the river red gums, they changed their mind. They took the land and kept their preferences.

On the other hand, it was left to the Shooters and Fishers Party and the Liberal-Nationals Coalition to oppose this Labor-Greens deal, which we did. I note that during the debate the Hon. Catherine Cusack stated that using the entire bed of Meroo Lake Recreational Fishing Haven as an offset in the Merry Beach Caravan Park land transfer was contentious because Meroo Lake had been declared a recreational fishing haven—one of many that were funded by \$20 million from the fishing licence trusts. The honourable member also pointed out that it was not one of the main issues in the bill, but was slipped into the back end of the bill, a bill which was debated in virtually the dying days of the Labor Government.

The Shooters and Fishers Party led the charge in opposition to this bill—marked by a lack of consultation with recreational fishers—about the virtual alienation of this fishing haven, to be given effect by the installation of locked access gates. This is a repeated theme with national parks across New South Wales—lock it up and leave it. What a ridiculous idea that access is blocked by a gate and fishermen have to go all the way to Ulladulla, pay a fee to get the key to gain access, and have to return the key after each day's fishing. As Homer Simpson would say, "Duhhhh."

I visited the site at the behest of local fishers, and was appalled at the effect of the declaration to the access track that the National Parks and Wildlife Service had allowed to occur. It was simply disgusting. The track barely allowed access by four-wheel-drive vehicles. It is like the premature removal of the recreational fishing haven signs on the Princess Highway. The authorities got a bit ahead of themselves. They decided they would take down the signs before the bill even hit the House. Maybe that was part of the original plan to keep fishers out. The Coalition opposed the bill when it was before the House. The Shooters and Fishers Party would like to believe that the Coalition's earlier concerns about the fishing haven are still valid, that it is still concerned about recreational fishers in New South Wales and that it will show that support by voting for this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and set down as an order of the day for a future day.