



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ACCESS RESTRICTIONS TO PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERWAYS

Inquiry into access restrictions to public lands and waterways

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on access restrictions to public lands and waterways, including but not limited to Aboriginal land, heritage sites, national parks, crown reserves, state forests, crown land, state conservation areas, wilderness areas, conservation areas, water catchment areas, marine parks and aquatic reserves, travelling stock routes, unallocated crown land, fire trails and management roads, foreshore areas, river beds and riverbanks, local government-managed parks and reserves, and areas under rehabilitation or former mining leases, disused railway lines for rail trails and all forms of access to waterways, bushwalking, hiking, camping, mountain biking, horse riding, fossicking and prospecting, four-wheel-driving, drone and remote observation activities, recreational and subsistence fishing, spearfishing, natural and traditional medicine and remedy gathering, food gathering including mushrooming, bee keeping, scientific research, educational or cultural activities, and cultural or conservation hunting, and in particular:
 - (a) the current and projected extent and rationale of access restrictions across public lands, including the balance between environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation and public access
 - (b) the social, economic and recreational impacts of access restrictions on local communities, recreational users and industries such as tourism, forestry and agriculture
 - (c) the adequacy of government investment in maintaining and improving public access and infrastructure on public lands
 - (d) the legislative and regulatory frameworks governing access restrictions, including any inconsistencies, gaps, or areas for improvement
 - (e) suitable alternatives or models for managing public land access that balance conservation objectives with public access, including examples from other jurisdictions
 - (f) the impact of restrictions on diverse user groups, including people with disabilities, Aboriginal communities and rural populations
 - (g) consultation processes and the level of community engagement undertaken when implementing or reviewing access restrictions
 - (h) the role of state and local government authorities and any other relevant entities, in managing and enforcing access restrictions on public lands, and
 - (i) any other related matter.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 28 May 2025.¹

Committee membership

Hon Mark Banasiak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC*	Legalise Cannabis Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Scott Barrett MLC	The Nationals	
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Ms Sue Higginson MLC	The Greens	
Hon Rachel Merton MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon John Ruddick MLC*	Libertarian Party	

* The Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC is a deputy chair of the committee from 26 June 2025 for the duration of the inquiry.

* The Hon John Ruddick MLC is participating member of the inquiry from 1 July 2025 for the duration of the inquiry

¹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 28 May 2025, item 43.