

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - CROWN LAND INQUIRY

A further point that I consider important and valid for the Committee's information, but which I was unable to raise due to time limitation and direction of questioning, is with regard to maintaining support to Community Crown Reserve Trusts.

It is understood that there are in excess of 600 Crown reserves managed by volunteer committees appointed by the Minister. This represents a workforce of between 2000 and 4500 volunteers undertaking day to day responsibility for public land for the benefit of local communities. If properly resourced, this is an extremely effective and efficient system.

From a local government perspective there is concern that failure to appropriately support and maintain these community trusts in the proposed legislation will result in the responsibility for these reserves devolving to local councils.

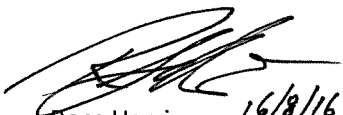
Section 355 of the Local Government Act does not provide the equivalent guidelines as the 30 sections contained in the Crown Lands Act for community reserve management.

For local government to try to emulate the current community reserve trust system would be an extraordinarily complex and expensive exercise, particularly if the proposed legislation was not specifically supportive of it.

The apparent decline of community members volunteering for Crown reserve trusts is not unrelated to the substantial reduction in support services provided by the State. Previously regional departmental support staff provided not only advice and guidance, but also appreciation which encouraged volunteers to prevail.

The management of reserves by local volunteers generates an ownership by the community and a willingness to contribute and protect the asset. With council ownership, the community assumes council has the resources and withdraws involvement, and furthermore expects a higher level of service.

For the State Government to dismantle the current reserve trust system and transfer management arrangements to local government will generate substantial cost to councils in administration, resource management, asset management, maintenance and insurance. Without substantial additional resources this would become an unacceptable burden on local government and could only be perceived as unethical cost shifting.

  
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