

**Submission
No 271**

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

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* Our conservation areas are important not only for biodiversity protection, but also for other critical ecosystem services such as fresh water catchment protection, and carbon sequestration.

* The landscapes, places and objects in national parks are significant for their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural values

* Australia has signed the International Convention on Biodiversity and committed to conserve biodiversity.

* The NSW government is a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment whereby the Australian Government and all State Governments agreed to the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas, and while the NSW government has made significant progress to date in this regard, many biogeographic subregions remain under represented.

* The science is clear that protected areas are the most effective way of conserving biodiversity.

* Local communities benefit economically and socially from national parks.

* The management of national parks is undertaken by the skilled professional staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and supported by a large number of community volunteers who take pride in these special areas. The NPWS has considerable expertise in feral animal control, invasive weed management and fire management.

* The effective management of national parks for conservation is hampered by budget pressure and demands to manage and provide infrastructure for an increasing number of recreational activities such as hunting and horse riding.

It would also appear that the views of the majority of the committee are against the principles of protected areas. The terms of reference are biased towards economic values and disregard the professionalism of the National Parks and Wildlife Service experts. The case studies chosen by the committee are new additions to the national park estate and do not provide examples of the long term benefits of national parks to local communities.