

Submission
No 422

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Electorate Office Orange - Public land management inquiry

From:
To:
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10 AUG 2012

GPSC's

Re: Inquiry into Management of Public Land in NSW

I would like to submit my comments on the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No 5, inquiring into the Management of Public Land in NSW.

My first concern is the composition of the Committee as it relates to the topic of the Inquiry. The Chair, Mr Robert Brown, has already been involved in the dubious deal that led to the government supporting a Bill to allow access to national parks for hunting, despite the Premier's pre-election promises to the contrary. The Committee appears to be inherently biased, with the views of the majority known to be against the principles of protected areas. How can a fair and un-biased report be expected from such a committee?

The establishment of the Inquiry presents a very mixed message about the State Government's intentions and especially its commitment to both existing public lands and the future of our national parks. The Terms of Reference are extremely ambiguous, suggesting on one hand that the government is seeking to restrict the reservation of parks, but also that economic values rather than conservation is the target.

Is this just a blind to justify the degradation of our national park estate through the introduction of grazing, logging and high impact recreations such as tourist resorts, 4WD access and horse riding? What exactly is being looked at in terms of "Potential operational, economic, and social impacts"?

The management of National Parks has to date been undertaken by the skilled, professional staff of the NPWS, supported by many interested community volunteer groups. Their efforts have effectively been hampered by accelerating budget constraints, and will be further restricted by recently announced staffing cuts. The intrinsic value of our National Estate (including Forests, Reserves and National Parks in NSW) lies in its conservation of biodiversity, its representation and protection of critical ecosystems, and preservation of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture in Australia. Plus, our forests are a hugely important factor in carbon sequestration.

I trust the report of this Committee will be made widely available and the public given every opportunity for comment, especially since the intentions of the government in this instance are highly questionable.