

**Submission
No 343**

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

Name: Mr Peter Thompson

Date received: 30/08/2012

National Parks are essential for the well-being of the citizens of Australia. The commendable long-standing national approach is that at least 15% of all ecosystems should be managed for conservation as part of a comprehensive, adequate and representative National Reserve System. The additions to the National Parks system over the last 20-30 years are important because they aim to sample all ecosystems, not just the infertile land that no-one else wants. The additions to National Parks (and other Reserves) in the Brigalow Belt, the River Red Gum areas and the far west of NSW are great achievements for conservation and for human well-being. We must leave our wonderful National Parks for nature-centred purposes and not allow them to be taken to meet short-term human-centred material purposes. After all, over 85% of all land is available for commercial use, so if any industry can't survive on that, then it is in bad shape and will not be saved by sacrificing our National Parks. Sustainable Forestry is a good concept but it has rarely been practiced in Australia. For example in the Pilliga the forestry industry has been in long-term decline as indicated by: closure of mills over many decades; decline in average log size over many decades; and never doing enough thinning for wood production. The Pilliga timber industry cannot be saved by allowing logging in National Parks. Nor should high conservation value areas be given up for logging 'in exchange' for degraded logged-out areas. Cypress pine is a magnificent natural resource and a long-term sustainable inland timber industry could be based on managing cypress pine regrowth on historically (pre-1991) cleared private land and on giving full and proper value to the timber. I ask the Committee to recognise the vital benefit to society and citizens of a secure system of National Parks (and other Reserves). Please do not squander the conservation achievements of previous parliaments and the community. Please do not compromise the public interest in these public lands by allowing private and sectional interest groups to use our National Parks for logging, mining, grazing, hunting and other inappropriate purposes. These private and commercial interests can be met on private land, which is the vast majority of land. Public land must be for public benefit and, at this point in history, the greatest such benefit will be non-material well-being for all citizens.