

**Submission
No 127**

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

Name: Mr Matthew Pitcher

Date received: 3/08/2012

Dear Sirs,

I write to you in regards to the less than acceptable approach to the management of public lands, particularly when it comes to the continuing restriction of 4wd access.

The prevailing way of managing National Parks, and sadly now State Forests seem to be following suit is to simply lock people (other than themselves) out, or restrict access so much that it is no longer enjoyable, or too hard to access.

Perhaps if the NPWS spent less money on jet fuel flying around in helicopters, they could spend more man hours actually managing and policing these areas on the ground. As I have been told by an old friend who is a ranger with the NPWS (or DECC or whatever they're called these days), "The easiest way to manage an area is to lock people out".

In my opinion, this is not management!

There are so many places now, that I grew up going to, or spent a large portion of my younger adult life in, that are now closed to public access.

It saddens me no end that I can't take my children to all of these places to instill a love of nature and the bush that you just can't achieve in the crowded, sanitized, regulated camping areas that we are forced into more and more.

The funny thing is, most of these areas that are now restricted, have been either previously mined, logged and farmed for many, many years and then, whilst being used for recreation, rehabilitated themselves to a point where it is deemed they need to be "protected", so up go the gates.

Places that spring to mind are the Blue Mountains, Barrington Tops, up around the Myall Lakes/Buladelah area, between Hawks Nest and Seal Rocks (where I believe there was a flawed (read non-existent) public consultation process and more recently the Watagan mountains area on the central coast. You could also include pretty much everywhere along the NSW coast.

The current process of Draft management plans for National Parks is highly unfair, and not at all in the interest of those who actually like to recreate and spend time in these areas.

Summing up I feel there is a need to give recreation a voice in the management of Public Lands, and not just having it as an afterthought, or thought of not at all. The 4wd/camping industry in Australia generates millions upon millions of dollars, and helps to distribute some of that money into out of the way areas. This can only be a good thing and something that should be encouraged.

It is both beneficial to the community, and entirely sustainable when it comes to the environment.

Kind Regards,
Matt Pitcher