

**Submission  
No 392**

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

**Organisation:** Central West Environment Council

**Date received:** 31/08/2012

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The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

### **Submission**

#### **Inquiry into Management of Public Lands in NSW**

Central West Environment Council (CWEC) is an umbrella organization representing conservation groups and individuals in central west NSW working to protect the local environment for future generations.

CWEC wishes to comment on the briefing given to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 by Dr Leon Brennan on 26 July 2012.

It is of great interest to CWEC that the issue of hollows as an important habitat feature was discussed and the fact that these may take between 50 to 100 years to form in Red Gum forests. It has been estimated in other slower growing woodland tree species, such as Ironbark, that tree hollows can take up to 250 years to form.

It is significant that more than 300 species of Australian native animals — mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians — use tree hollows. However, there has never been a complete inventory of them. Many of these species are threatened, or are in decline, because of land-use practices such as grazing, timber production and firewood collection.<sup>1</sup>

The management of public lands in NSW to protect hollow bearing trees and allow their establishment is critical for the future of these native species. National Parks and Nature Reserves are the best way to achieve this important outcome.

Once a tree becomes senescent and dies, its hollows still provide important habitat features for nesting, roosting and protection from prey. When a dead standing tree collapses and falls to the ground, these habitat values are then provided to ground dwelling animals.

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbons, P. & Lindenmeyer, D. 2002 *Tree Hollows and Wildlife Conservation in Australia* CSIRO publications

The significance of the tree hollow in the Australian landscape cannot be overstated.

CWEC notes that Dr Bren in his discussion of the condition and management of Red Gum forests concludes with the statement: *'it would be nice if there were some older growth areas. I do think there is an excessive amount of regrowth compared to old growth. It would be nice to have something that vaguely corresponded to the full range of age classes.'*<sup>2</sup>

The management of natural areas for their own benefit and for the values they provide is an important role for Government. Not all areas can be considered solely for production of goods and material wealth.

The provision of ecosystem services has important social and economic benefits as well as environmental values. These must be taken into account.

CWEC trusts that the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 will consider the broad range of environmental needs and benefits when considering the management of public lands in NSW

Yours sincerely

Secretary

Friday 31 August 2012

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<sup>2</sup> Transcript p22