

**Submission  
No 312**

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

**Name:** Mr Brian Casburn

**Date received:** 2/08/2012

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# Wollondilly River Station

*Pet friendly Bush Camping*

[www.wollondillyriverstation.com](http://www.wollondillyriverstation.com)

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The Hon Robert Brown MLC  
General Purpose Standing Committee No 5  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney 2000

Dear Hon Mr Brown MLC,

RE: Submission on the management of public lands

1-8-2012

To NPWS land expansion:

- NPWS has already more land and properties than they can manage.
- Some vegetation zones are already over represented in the existing NPWS allocations.
- Decisions to convert land to NPWS is often made by people with university degrees and lots of theoretical knowledge but little or no understanding and experience in on-ground management and hands-on approaches in the field. Each property and it's issues are different and can often only be sufficiently managed by local in-depth knowledge and experience, not generalized book case studies.
- NPWS's policy of "lock-it-up" is a failed one.
- NPWS seems to be set on grabbing any land possible, whether it is suitable or worthy of becoming NP or not.
- There should be an inquiry into NPWS and their operations.

To Hazard reduction and bush fires:

- Management of weeds, feral animals, hazard reduction and bush fire control, fencing is often not sufficiently achieved by NPWS.
- Hazard reduction and bush fire control require local experience and management and often cannot be planned broad scale for large areas.
- Local property owners know how to and when it is the best time to do hazard reduction burns or how to stop a bush fire. They need to be able to do so on a immediate local level without being locked into large planning schemes.
- In the past many bush fires have started in and spread from NPWS areas into private lands and communities. Mainly caused by lack of hazard reduction, inaccessible terrain (due to closed or unmanaged tracks) and late responses to fire outbreaks.
- During these large bush fires many fauna and flora which is so vehemently protected by NPWS from disturbance by us the public, is sadly killed and destroyed. A local example is the refusal of NPWS Picton to give access to a group of bushwalkers for a "Rogaining" event ( Orienteering bush walk event in small groups of 5 to 10 people over 24 hours) in the Wollondilly River Nature

Reserve near Bowral, as it would disturb the population of wallabies there.

To weeds and feral animals:

- It is well known that NPWS are not sufficiently capable of controlling the weed and feral animal populations in their areas. Often these pests spread into adjoining private lands.
- Fencing between NPWS areas and private lands are often inadequate to stop animal movements.
- Control measures for ferals can be controversial ( baiting, aerial helicopter shooting, etc), expensive or ineffective.
- Private landowners usually know their local weed problem and are already trying to manage it, some weeds can be very successfully managed by mechanical means (slashing) or selective grazing, which is not done by NPWS. Proper pasture management and improvement is also a weeds combatant.
- Some feral animals can be managed by harvesting and selling ( e.g. goats, deer, pigs, carp) for use as food, pet food or fertilizer and create added value for land owners. NPWS approach of “shoot and let rot” is uneconomical and also polluting and attracting other vermin ( Foxes, Pigs etc).
- I see nothing wrong to some parks being opened to culling ferals by responsible licensed shooters.

To agricultural land and private operations:

- Agricultural land should stay in private hands to remain productive.
- Farmers are more environmentally conscious today, it's in their own interest to keep the land healthy and productive, both in agricultural and other biodiversity. The property is a farmers lifeline and main interest, it's viability and sustainable productivity is at the heart of their concern.
- A active, productive farm is an asset to the local area as it is providing food and jobs, is interested in maintaining a healthy, productive farm and environment, and often passes this on to the next generation.
- Sadly property owners hands are already tied too much by native vegetation laws which often make it near impossible to profitably run a farm.
- Crown lands adjoining properties may be better managed when incorporated into the local landholders management plans for their own farms. The problems on either side of the fence are often the same (weed, ferals, erosion etc) and can be incorporated in the overall farm plan. Turning it into NPWS often does not improve any of this.
- Crown lands or lease areas may be incorporated into neighboring farms for rotational grazing and so be maintained and productive.

To economic impacts:

- A active, productive property is a property which constantly feeds money and economic value and stability into it's local community, providing jobs and income to local businesses alike. This will cease when taken over as NPWS.
- Crown lands or other properties currently used privately provide rates and other profitable income to the local area and council which will cease when taken over by NPWS.

To social impacts:

- Land used and operated by private people is populated area, often passed down through generations of farmers families. When taken over by NPWS the settlement stops, people often move to urban areas contributing to the urban sprawl and the degradation and depopulation of rural areas. Any farm which closes down has a follow on effect in it's whole community.
- The threat of NPWS taking over crown land, other leases or private land is hanging like a

“Damocles sword” over rural landholders. Land owners, lessees and occupiers of crown lands need assurances that they are safe from NPWS land grab threats, so they can be confident in investing and managing their properties for the future.

- When an area is declared NPWS it is virtually locked up to the public, usually the only use and access is to park outside the gate and go walking, without pets or horses or even pushbikes of course. The public has virtually no rights or possible activities in a NP.
- NPWS has become a “dirty word” in rural communities.
- The management of NPWS should be impacted by input from their local communities.

To Toorale Station:

- The Federal Government should not have jurisdiction over NP in NSW.
- Bourke Shire may have to be funded by state government to keep the shire going due to the loss of income of Toorale’s rate payments.
- The conversion of farming properties into NPWS should be stopped. It has been reported in “The Land” newspaper that the local Parks manager at Bourke will spend \$4 000 000 destroying the existing irrigation system. This is a gross waste of resources and money, Toorale should be returned to private ownership and remain a productive property. The Wollondilly Nature Reserve is one such property near us, which was a productive farm and is now over run with weeds and producing nothing.

Yours faithfully  
Brian & Ina Casburn,  
Wollondilly River Station.