

**Submission  
No 264**

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

**Organisation:** Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority

**Name:** Mr John Carse

**Date received:** 7/08/2012

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**Catchment Management  
Authority**  
Sydney Metropolitan

ABN 93695453413

Ground Floor, Macquarie Tower,  
10 Valentine Ave, Parramatta. NSW 2150  
PO Box 3720, Parramatta. NSW 2124.  
Tel:02 9895 7898 Fax: 02 9895 7330  
Internet: [www.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cma.nsw.gov.au)

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Letter No: 0604526  
Contact: John Carse  
Phone: 02-9895 6272  
Email: [john.carse@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:john.carse@cma.nsw.gov.au)

7 August 2012

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**RECEIVED**

10 AUG 2012

**GPSC's**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in New South Wales**

The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (CMA) wishes to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the management of public land in New South Wales. Please find attached the Sydney Metropolitan CMA submission.

If you wish to clarify any points in the submission, please do not hesitate to contact Jo Ann Moore on 02 9895 7898 in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

John Carse  
**General Manager**



Catchment Management  
Authority  
Sydney Metropolitan

ABN 93695453413

Submission to the Inquiry into Management of Public Land in New South Wales

By

Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority

Date – 7 August 2012

## Background

The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is one of 13 NSW natural resource management regional bodies and is a Statutory Authority under the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA's role is to provide leadership through its Catchment Action Plan in a landscape-scale approach to management of the natural environment across the Sydney Harbour, Cooks River, Georges River, Botany Bay and Hacking River catchments.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is Australia's largest urban natural resource management (NRM) region in terms of population (55 per cent of NSW population) and the smallest in terms of staff and area.

Sydney Metropolitan CMA consists of a Ministerially-appointed, skills-based Board of Directors, responsible for the strategic direction of natural resource management in the region, supported by a small staff of administrative and NRM professionals.

The Sydney basin is the fifth most bio-diverse region in Australia. However its biodiversity is also the most threatened by population and invasive species pressures. In spite of these pressures and its urban context approximately 40 per cent of the Sydney Metropolitan area remains as intact native vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic). Within the area there are seven national parks, 11 aquatic reserves, one state forest and two state conservation areas.

These natural environments are valued by most members of the Sydney community and provide essential ecosystem services – water quality, clean air and recreational and cultural opportunities – that contribute to the city's economic sustainability and social well-being. Protecting, enhancing and restoring these natural environments is critically important for this reason. Significantly, many of these remnant natural environments occur on public land in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area.

## 1. Introduction

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA welcomes the opportunity to submit to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in NSW. Public land management is a core issue in this NRM region in ensuring the long term protection, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and its ecosystem services for the economic sustainability and social well-being of Sydney.

The following comments are provided on the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in NSW.

## 2. Terms of Reference

### 1 (a) Process of conversion

The Terms of Reference make no reference to the NSW Government's commitment to the National Reserve System Framework objective which is "*to develop a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas – commonly referred to as the CAR reserve system.*"

Specifically CAR means:

1. Comprehensive: the inclusion in the National Reserve System of examples of regional-scale ecosystems in each bioregion
2. Adequate: the inclusion of sufficient levels of each ecosystem within the protected area network to provide ecological viability and to maintain the integrity of populations, species and communities
3. Representative: the inclusion of areas at a finer scale, to encompass the variability of habitat within ecosystems

The CAR reserve system principles should be the foundational underpinning for any consideration of converting Crown Land, State Forests or agricultural land into National Park Estate. In particular, a National Park Estate built on the CAR reserve system principles will ensure we will have a resilient natural environment able to continue to provide critical ecosystem services such as fresh water, clean air and carbon sequestration in a robust and cost effective manner, as identified in the CSIRO's Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Reserve System (2008) reports. NSW should progressively extend protection to examples of all our ecosystems in keeping with our obligations as a signatory to the national strategy: *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*.

Additionally, National Park Estate contains landscapes, places and objects that are naturally and culturally significant to Aboriginal people. Again the Terms of Reference are silent on the consideration of Indigenous (and Non-Indigenous) cultural values as a key consideration for the review of the management of public land for conversion into National Park Estate. However, supporting such values can be a worthwhile contribution made by the National Park Estate.

### 1 (b) Impacts after conversion

It is agreed that one of the Terms of Reference should examine in detail, the range and extent of issues considered (operational, social, economic and environmental) as potential for impact on neighbouring land prior to the nomination of public land for conversion to National Park Estate. Issues such as the alienation of other parcels of Crown Land should be included in this term. However, given the CAR reserve system principles, it seems unlikely that Crown Land, State Forest or agricultural land with significant vertebrate pest species or weed species impacts would meet the test for consideration as a new National Park Estate addition. It is, however,

acknowledged that fire risk would not be eliminated through the adherence to CAR reserve system principles. In such cases consideration should be given to the purchase of the required Asset Protection Zone from the neighbouring property to provide an additional tool in fire management and hazard reduction.

#### 1 (c) Case Study

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA commends the examination of case studies in order to analyse Terms of Reference 1 (a) and 1 (b). Case studies provide real time data and field visit opportunities to see land management policy in action.

It is noted, however, that the suite of National Park Estate cases identified in 1 (c) are, without exception, very recent additions to National Park Estate. It is strongly recommended that an older National Park should also be included in the case study analysis. This will ensure the ability to consider the long term benefits of National Parks to local communities, to tourism and to biodiversity conservation in accordance with the CAR reserve system principles.

### 3 – Public Land management models – funding models, “sustainable use” principles

#### Funding Models

In addition to the funds required for land acquisition any models under consideration for the management of public lands should provide for an adequate and sustainable form of funding and resource allocation to deliver the objectives of the respective public land use. In the case of the National Park Estate, the funding model should ensure the preservation and protection of CAR values in perpetuity.

#### Sustainable Use principles

The international Convention on Biological Diversity, signed by 150 governments at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, identifies unsustainable use and overexploitation as the ongoing major threat to biodiversity. In this regard it behoves the Standing Committee to clearly define the term “sustainable use” to ensure the objectives and purpose of reserving land for National Park Estate will be achieved and that no long term decline in the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem function or the protection of ecological integrity will result. The objectives and purpose of reserving land for National Park Estate are identified in Part 4, Division 2 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Further any management model that employs or advocates “sustainable use” principles must identify a set of critical indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of such uses in order to measure any impact and the extent of such impact on the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem functions and the protection of ecological integrity of the National Park Estate.

Additionally such models that employ or advocate “sustainable use” principles in National Park Estate must ensure that such uses do not cause any decline to the cultural significance of the land to Aboriginal persons and should not prohibit or impede an Aboriginal person or group from using the land for cultural purposes.