

**Submission
No 267**

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

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I am concerned that this Inquiry will be used to impede the reservation of national parks and to justify the degradation of the existing national park estate through grazing, logging, and high impact recreation such as four wheel driving and horse riding. Conservation areas in NSW are important for biodiversity protection, and critical ecosystem services such as fresh water catchment protection, and carbon sequestration, which all of us need.

The landscapes, places and objects in national parks are significant for their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural values

Australia has signed the International Convention on Biodiversity and committed to conserve biodiversity and they need to be considered in this inquiry.

The NSW government is a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment whereby the Australian Government and all State Governments agreed to the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas. Many biogeographic subregions in NSW remain under represented and therefore there is still a need for assessment and research in these areas.

The science is clear that protected areas are the most effective way of conserving biodiversity. Local communities benefit economically and socially from national parks. I have a young child and am most concerned for our safety if I take him to a national park or state forest in which shooters and hunters are operating. We have previously been keen bushwalkers and campers and invest time and money in discovering our beautiful natural areas. When I lived in central west NSW I walked with the local bushwalking club in the local national parks and state forests and it gave me a wonderful insight into the natural beauty and health benefits of walking peacefully and safely through these areas.

The management of national parks is undertaken by the skilled professional staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and supported by a large number of community volunteers who take pride in these special areas. The NPWS has considerable expertise in feral animal control, invasive weed management and fire management. Recreational shooters are not needed in our protected areas, nor have their actions found to be successful in controlling feral animals. in other areas

The effective management of national parks for conservation is hampered by budget pressure and demands to manage and provide infrastructure for an increasing number of recreational activities such as hunting and horse riding.

Also of concern is that this Inquiry is targeting the iconic River Red Gum national parks. Having lived in central western NSW and travelled further west it is obvious that we need more reserves in this region of NSW as it becomes increasingly developed by agriculture, forestry and mining interests.

I believe that there will be bias in the inquiry. The views of the majority of the committee are against the principles of protected areas. The terms of reference are biased towards economic values and disregard the professionalism of the National Parks and Wildlife Service experts. The case studies chosen by the committee are new additions to the national park estate and do not provide examples of the long term benefits of national parks to local communities.