

**Submission
No 206**

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

Name: Mr John Busch

Date received: 3/08/2012

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the important matter of use of public land.

I have noted with great concern over recent years the increasingly exclusionary policies of government and NPWS in dealing with public land use. It would seem that as soon as an area is subject to a "Management Plan" the inevitable outcome is that the general public are either locked out of that area or at best have their activities severely restricted.

I appreciate that there are at times good reasons for closing areas off and am not advocating open slather for all or particular groups. However, it seems to be the case that more often than not these decisions are being based on ideology rather than a demonstrable need.

I realise that there is a need for conservation and wilderness areas and applaud efforts to promote biodiversity. However, in a land as vast as ours I cannot accept that there is not room to cater for all needs.

Activities such as bushwalking, mountain biking, horse riding, trail bike riding, four wheel driving and camping are all legitimate recreational past times. These activities not only provide a release from our working lives but also promote a healthy lifestyle as well as injecting large sums of money into local economies. All of these activities should be encouraged. To do this we need access to public lands.

It is often argued that the above activities cause damage to the environment. However the areas used for these activities make up such a small percentage of our public lands that I do not accept that any damage which may occur would be of great significance.

There may be cases where the government and therefore the people can obtain some income from public lands such as leasing state forests for logging but I believe that any such commercial undertakings should not be at the cost of public access.

With regard to determining appropriate uses for national parks, crown land and reserves, I believe that those decisions should be made by boards containing members which represent a cross section of the community rather than just NPWS and government departments. This may remove the ideological element in the decision making and provide a much more equitable outcome for all concerned members of the public.

In closing, I submit that public land should be retained for the use of the public for a variety of activities and not simply gated shut and locked away from the vast majority of Austalians.

Thank you,

John Busch