

**Submission
No 469**

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

Organisation: Nimbin Environment Centre

Name: Mr Alan Roberts

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Summary:

Nimbin Environment Centre was instrumental in the saving of some of what is now the World Heritage Listed Border Ranges National Park. It is the largest area on Earth of Sub Tropical Rainforest and yet, sadly, it is small, fragmented, poorly buffered and vulnerable to species extinction unless remedial action is taken.

We submit that the role of the National Park system as a refuge (here) for Gondwana species and a bulwark against extinctions of species is incompatible with other uses – euphemistically referred to as “sustainable use” in the 3rd term of reference.

We will be happy to discuss with you further the enhancement and further protection of this very important biome for the future, including properly resourcing National Parks to manage these public lands.

World wide, 97% of Native Forests have been ruined. We are in the middle of Earth's 6th great species extinction, this time due to one species alone, us. We are causing 200 species to go extinct each day.

Our Northern Rivers Sub Tropical Rainforest World Heritage National Parks, small and fragmented as they are, surprisingly are the largest area of Sub Tropical Rainforest remaining on the planet. Within this region we have some of the greatest diversity of bird, frog, snake and mammal species found anywhere in Australia. Because of the fragmented forests and lack of buffer zones many species are vulnerable and threatened with extinction unless a proactive approach is taken to extend the National Park system. Our area is the last refuge for many Gondwana species from 80 million years ago when Australia separated from Gondwanaland.

Nimbin Environment Centre's shop at the above address was the command centre to save World Heritage Nightcap National Park from logging. It was the first forest saved and declared National Park by the community. We will be happy to discuss further "The conversion of Crown Land, State Forests and agricultural land into National Park estate or other types of conservation areas, including the:

- a. Process of conversion and the assessment of potential environmental, social, operational and economic, and impacts
- b. Environmental, social, operational, and economic impacts after conversion, and in particular, impacts upon neighbours of public land and upon Local Government
with particular reference to: Native Hardwood State Forests in Northern NSW"

With reference to the last point, Native Hardwood State Forests are not ecological preserves and bear no relation to National Parks. This is plainly obvious just from a superficial observation of State Forests and National Parks – they are two different entities. National Parks are biodiverse ecologies and as long as they are large enough, with large enough gene pools to give resilience they are sustainable unless global warming destroys that resilience. The bigger the National Park the better its chance of holding out longer against global warming. National Parks are carbon stores which mitigate against global warming. National Parks also purify water and air.

As well as these biospherical services National Parks are spiritually uplifting areas of beauty that provide a very important social and tourism benefit. Tourism benefits the economy more so than logging.

For these reasons the euphemism "sustainable use" in the 3rd term of reference is anathema to the Nimbin Environment Centre. If "sustainable use" refers to logging then biodiversity is ruthlessly lost and species extinctions follow. If "sustainable use" refers to 4WD's and dirt bikes in National Parks then just a few local examples of the massive soil erosion this creates will put paid to any notion of "sustainable use". 4WD's, dirt bikes and horses bring weeds and shatter the tranquillity of National Parks that is important for stress free animals, including humans.

In summary, because of Earth's poor reserves of the Sub Tropical Rainforest biome and because of all the qualities listed above, Nimbin Environment Centre wants more Sub Tropical Rainforest reserved in National Parks and more people resourced to care for them.

Submitted on behalf of Nimbin Environment Centre by
Alan Roberts
Secretary NEC