

**Submission
No 335**

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

Organisation: YMCA NSW

Date received: 30/08/2012

YMCA of Sydney

Inquiry Submission

What do we do?	What do we stand for?	Our Point of Difference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Recreation ▪ Children's Services ▪ Camping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Families ▪ Healthy Living ▪ Developing Young People ▪ Those Less Fortunate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We Partner ▪ We have the heart of a charity and head of a business
Members	Attendances & Locations	Staff & Volunteers
90,000 + Members 30,000+ Family members	Annual impact - 3.4 million + Locations - 113	Staff - 2,038 Volunteers - 5,000

YMCA Response: Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in New South Wales

We submit to the committee that, in regards to Terms of Reference 1a and 3:

1. The Committee recommends to the Government the option of converting usable Crown Land into contestable-by-tender, long-term, low-cost leases to Non-Profit Organisations to maximise the social impact of public land;

We submit to the committee that, in regards to Terms of Reference 1c:

2. The Committee recommends to the Government to undertake independent studies of YMCA Camp Yarramundi and the proposed YMCA Camp Surf as case studies of possible uses of the mentioned lands to maximise social impact of public land;

We submit to the committee that, in regards to Terms of Reference 2:

3. The Committee encourages occupation of Crown Land, preferably by Non-Profit Organisations, which aims to maximise the social impact of public land, to uphold management practices that are mandated for private property holders, including fire, weed and pest management practices.



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The Y is a vibrant, self-funding, not-for-profit charity delivery contemporary programs focused on family, healthy living, developing young people and those less fortunate. The Y's ability to positively impact people's lives, strengthen communities and respond proactively to many of today's biggest social challenges is significant. Its diverse programs and services delivered to over 40 communities across NSW, generating in excess of four million visits per year.

The Y operates in 113 locations across NSW and has: 21 Community Recreation facilities; 15 Aquatic, sports and fitness facilities; 13 outdoor swimming pools; 58 children's services facilities; 3 campsites and 3 community projects. Many of these facilities and projects are undertaken with the Y as a partner to local councils, organisations and schools.

The Y is much more than a provider of community programs. Embedded into everything the Y does is a commitment to strengthening community.

- 1. The YMCA recommends that the Government allow for the conversion of Crown Land into contestable-by-tender, long-term, low-cost leases to Non-Profit Organisations to maximise the social impact of public land.**

The conversion of land into National Park estate or other types of conservation area should seek to maximise the social as well as environmental value of the land. The Y believes that positive social impacts from such tenures can be increased by the involvement of Non-Profit Organisations.

In the conversion of land, one should provide opportunities for Non-Profit Organisations to both provide input on potential socially beneficial uses of land as well as tender for such uses. This will allow for not only the mitigation of impacts, but for the creation of new, positive uses of land.

The YMCA of Sydney commenced its camping program at YMCA Camp Yarramundi in the 1930s. This marked the beginning of one of the Y's longest-running, most holistic, and most successful youth programs in Australia – YMCA Camping.

The Y knows, supported by international studies, that high-quality, out-of-classroom learning influences how children behave and their lifestyle choices¹ - this shows the potential for school trips, such as YMCA Camps, to change individual lives and the lives of whole communities. Over 10,000 people per year participate in overnight camps at Camp Yarramundi.

YMCA Camping also provides a platform to demonstrate the Y's commitment to family, particularly those facing financial hardship or adversity, through its Rebuilding Families Camps. These heavily subsidised camps provide opportunities for siblings separated due to foster care (Siblings Reconnect camp), grandparents who are also carers of their grandchildren (prYme Carers camp) and families in need (Weekend Escape and Recreation Relief camps).

¹ The Innovation Centre, University of Exeter (2006) – Changing Minds: The Lasting Impact of School Trips



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The Y provides these camps because we know that there are approximately 24,000 children in out-of-home care², with many of them being separated from their siblings when placed in this care. We also know that there are more than 16,000 families in which the grandparents were guardians or main carers of resident children³.

The Y knows that there is potential for us to grow and to better serve communities in need. The main requirement for us is to be present in more communities with a varying range of activities.

The Y believes that opportunity exists in partnership with the NSW Government. The Y prides ourselves on partnering to serve the communities where we operate. We currently partner with over 20 councils, 50 schools and with organisations such as the Indigenous Land Corporation.

The Y further prides itself on the financial viability of our camps. We have a \$400,000 annual fundraising program to subsidise our Rebuilding Families camps and have a strong operating model, including school camps and corporate functions, to ensure the financial viability of our facilities. However, our financial model does not support capacity for a commercial lease.

In terms of the conversion of Crown Lands, the Y believes that if a tender process existed which made it easier for Not-For-Profit organisations which can prove a significant social outcome, that the NSW Government should offer a peppercorn lease for the longest term lease available. Long term leases would encourage Not-Profits to invest their own funds into the development of the site. Providing non-market rents to Non-Profits is a common practice of Governments who wish to get the most out of the unique services and resources of Not-For-Profits.

For example, the Y is currently in negotiations with Port Stephens Council and the Department of Lands for the provision of a concessional lease to operate YMCA Camp Surf on Crown Land; as part of these negotiations, the Y has committed to investing \$1.5 million to make the location appropriate for camp-style accommodation.

A tender process is suitable to ensure competition within the sector and for the Government to be sure that they are also receiving value for their investment. The Y stresses that the focus should be on a Not-For-Profit provider which can outline their plans to maximise social impacts.

The Y is encouraged by the process the NSW Department of Education and Communities adopted, where Principals can put the operation of out-of-school-hour care to a not-for-profit only tender. This requires the school to make a conscious decision that they prefer a community-minded operator, committed to maximizing social impact. The Y believes a similar model with long-term, peppercorn lease arrangements would benefit the provision of community services.

¹ Fostering NSW

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Family Characteristics, Australia, 2009 - 2010



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2. **The YMCA recommends that the Government use YMCA Camp Yarramundi and the proposed YMCA Camp Surf as case studies of possible uses of the mentioned lands to maximise social impact of public land.**

The Y recognises the potential of sites such as Yanga Station and Toorale Station, depending on ease of travel to and from these facilities, to host YMCA school camps and Rebuilding Families Camps. We invite the committee to tour YMCA Camp Yarramundi and to investigate the proposed YMCA Camp Surf as case studies for what can be duplicated across the state for the benefit of communities in need.

YMCA Camp Surf is proposal YMCA Youth and Family Camp at Samurai Beach. The Camp, whilst staying true to our focus on Family, would also address the lack of surf safety education. In NSW alone, there were 7074 Beach Rescues which averages 19 rescues per day. Nationally nearly 250,000 preventative actions are taken by Surf Lifesavers due to inexperienced swimmers.

YMCA Camp Surf will also encompasses a full environmental and educational experience for school children. This camp will also include coastal geography and environmental awareness, surf zones (dangerous and safe areas), rips (identification and easy escape methods) and waves (negotiating and returning to the beach safely). The YMCA target for schools will include remote and regional NSW, disadvantaged regions and those schools with a high representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) students.

The Y is involved in the west of NSW through the Broken Hill YMCA, through which it has come to understand many of the issues facing the community. Yanga Station near Balranald and Toorale Stations near Bourke are both in areas where the Y may be able to impact people's lives.

The Y has the camping experience, the community focus and the resources available to duplicate similar camps and to also develop new camping concepts to address other pressing community issues and needs. We believe that the adoption of

3. **The YMCA encourages the appropriate occupation of Crown Land, preferably by Non-Profit Organisations which aim to maximise the social impact of public land, to uphold management practices that are mandated for private property holders, including fire, weed and pest management practices.**

The Y believes that whilst risk mitigation and management strategies can be implemented to ensure safety and sustainability, the best option for usable Crown Lands is the occupation of the land and the upholding of practices that are mandated for private property holders, including fire, weed and pest management practices. Further, continued use and thus maintenance of heritage properties is often an appropriate management tool for properties for which use has changed.

