

**Submission
No 361**

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

Name: Mr Robin Dobson

Date received: 30/08/2012

Personal Submission to:

Management of public land in New South Wales (Inquiry)

The Australian bush and its wilderness belong to all Australians.

- It belongs to our Senior citizens who are too frail to walk long distances.
- It belongs to our ex-service men and others who have lost limbs or are otherwise physically handicapped.
- It belongs to those Australians who have heart conditions or other medical problems and to those who simply do not care to undertake strenuous activities.
- It belongs to horse riders, to four wheel drive participants, to shooters and to bush walkers.

It belongs not, just to the small percentage of the population who want to bushwalk to the exclusion of all others.

‘Protecting the wilderness for future generations of Australians’ as it is currently implemented is in fact: protecting the wilderness for future generations of bushwalkers, not for all Australians.

Closing vehicular tracks and horse trails, denies access to every Australian except for the bushwalkers.

- Many of the tracks are two wheel drive vehicle accessible.
- Many other tracks are suitable for soft road vehicles.

Closing a track does not restore the track to wilderness.

Track closure is discriminatory and grossly unjust to the majority of Australians; *we are being denied our birth right.*

Vehicular tracks and horse trails take up a small fraction of one per cent of the bush and wilderness, yet open up the bush for all Australians to enjoy.

In the past 12 months I have suffered a serious back injury and can no longer walk long distances or over rugged terrain; my wife also has been severely handicapped by osteoarthritis of the knees and is about to have both knees replaced. *We will both be denied access to parks in which vehicular traffic is banned.*

Other Considerations:

- There is a growing interest in access to the bush as is evidenced by the growing numbers of SUVs being purchased by ordinary citizens. (SUV sales up 27.8% in April 2012).

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- Admittedly there are 4WD hoons, just as there are 2WD hoons. Preventing vehicular access to a park is not the solution to this problem.
- Most 4WD clubs teach responsible driving and minimisation of foot prints.
- The cost of track maintenance could be offset by allowing 4WD clubs to voluntarily participate or allowing them to 'adopt a track'.
- For thousands of years our indigenous population have controlled bush fuel levels by conducting controlled burning. In recent times small pressure groups have demanded that bush fuel levels not be controlled; this has resulted in very intense bushfires, in which many lives have been lost and hundreds of houses destroyed.

Sincerely

Robin Dobson
30/8/2012