

Submission
No 43

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I am deeply concerned that this inquiry will be used to halt the reservation of 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.

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. Local communities benefit enormously from national parks, as places of peaceful relaxation where we can reconnect with nature. I count myself very blessed that, despite living in Australia's busiest city, I am able to 'escape' the hustle and bustle of the city by visiting one of the many national parks that are interwoven into the fabric of Sydney. There is no better family holiday than a week long trip spent camping, bush walking, bird spotting and kayaking in one of the beautiful national parks in Victoria and New South Wales.

The landscapes, places and objects in national parks are also significant for their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural values. However, the benefits to people should not be the only consideration. Our conservation areas are important not only as the few havens available for habitat and biodiversity protection, but also for other critical ecosystem services such as fresh water catchment protection, and carbon sequestration.

Australia has signed the International Convention on Biodiversity and committed to conserve biodiversity. 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, and while the NSW government has made significant progress to date in this regard, many biogeographic subregions remain under represented. The science is clear that protected areas are the most effective way of conserving biodiversity.

There is an inherent undemocratic bias in this inquiry. The views of the majority of the committee are against the principles of protected areas. Furthermore, the terms of reference are biased towards economic values and disregard the professionalism of the National Parks and Wildlife Service experts. 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.

The chair of the inquiry is Mr Robert Brown of the Shooters and Fishers Party. This Party is on record for lobbying the government to allow even more access to national parks for hunting. This inquiry represents yet another mixed message about the State Government's commitment to existing and future protection of our national parks. The State Government has recently legislated to allow recreational hunting in national parks despite an election promise not to do so and it is an abomination. There are countless stories on the internet available to anyone who chooses to read them about people visiting national parks who are mistakenly shot by hunters.

A handful of right wing red necks, who managed to get the balance of power in NSW due to an unfortunate fluke during a period of bad will following Labor's mismanagement of the state, should not determine the fate of our national parks, which belong to us all. This is Australia, not Texas.