

**Submission
No 128**

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

Name: Mrs Sharyn Lafontaine

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I would like to offer this submission in support of our wild places and urge the committee to consider the long term impacts of activities not compatible with the International Convention on Biodiversity.

As a property owner and president of Bungawalbyn Landcare, I would like to make this submission in regards to the inquiry into the management of public lands in NSW.

My husband and I currently own and manage a small nature reserve in the Bungawalbyn Catchment of Northern NSW. Our property abuts National Parks estate and is in close proximity to State Forests and other Nature Reserves. The Bungawalbyn Catchment is a part of the largest tidal waterpool in Australia and forms a regionally significant wildlife corridor in a period of predicted climate change. The environmental threats to this region are many and varied. As a "boots on the ground" opinion, I would like to share with the committee some of the issues affecting our region.

Feral animals, invasive weeds, unregulated week-end recreational use and poor logging practices have contributed to losses in biodiversity and the general degradation of environmental values. For example, on most week-ends, the residents of Bungawalbyn endure an influx of pig hunters to Doubleduke State Forest. These hunters release their dogs without regard to private property, leave piles of stinking pig entrails on the beaches of our creek, cut boundary fences to retrieve lost dogs and speed up and down our roads. This is not feral animal control. In my capacity as president of Bungawalbin Landcare I am a member of the Bungawalbyn Feral Pig Management Committee. Our committee includes National Parks staff, landowners, Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Livestock Pest and Health Authority and Forests NSW working together to control pigs in our catchment. Our strategy involves tracking and monitoring pig populations before luring the animals to custom made baiting stations. Many hours of carefully planned work is often destroyed when hunters and their dogs arrive on the scene, scattering the pigs far and wide. Recreational hunters generally have a low kill rate compared to baiting or aerial shooting by professional hunters and by constantly chasing pigs into new areas the threat of disease transmission increases. These problems will only be compounded by the recently passed legislation that allows hunting in National Parks. Bungawalbyn National Park and Doubleduke State Forest provide important habitat for the endangered coastal emu population. Hunters and dirt bike riders pose a real threat to their survival and rangers should not have to waste their time policing these activities.

While I appreciate the need for hardwood products from our state forests, it is critical to the health of the ecosystem to strictly enforce existing regulations. Unfortunately this was not the case with logging operations that recently took place in Doubleduke State Forest.

There are many locations on the east coast of Australia for hunters, anglers, horse riding, dirt bike riding and other motorised activities. Our National Parks and Nature Reserves are not the places for these activities. The economic value of our Parks which provide refuge for wildlife, conservation of biodiversity for its genetic values, carbon sequestration, clean water, scientific, educational and low impact recreational uses, as well as spiritual and cultural values cannot be understated. With our evolving high stress urban lifestyles, well managed, adequately funded, unspoiled Parks will provide far more eco-tourism dollars to their surrounding communities than allowing activities that cater to a small minority or short term economic benefits.