

**Submission
No 337**

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

Organisation: Barmah forest Preservation League

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Submission on NSW Public Land Management

From the Barmah Forest Preservation League

The Barmah Forest Preservation League was formed in 1982 to help protect and preserve the Barmah Forest, we currently have a membership of 160, and although the Barmah Forest is located on the Victorian side of the Murray River we have a close affiliation with the Millewa Forest on the northern bank of the River. We believe these two forests for practicality should be treated as one.

We agree with the Ramsar definition of wise use principles that these Forests should be protected for the good of the environment and the community not to be locked up and abandoned, Barmah was listed with Ramsar in 1982 and Millewa in 2003.

Prior to the listing of these Forests as National Parks, they were a well-managed living growing forest, they were an integral part of the community, providing employment, income and materials to our community, they had a very healthy tourism trade and were well loved by the community.

Today we have a poorly managed Park, locked up most of the time, providing virtually no employment, very little income, producing no materials and a struggling tourist industry to a community that has lost its forest based industries, a community that has lost a lot of its youth that has had to move on to find employment. And the very sad thing is that the new Park has lost its connection with this local community that has loved it for generations. And a Park that is in serious danger of burning and being lost forever

We as an organization cannot understand how a government can ignore the traditional owners of this county, the Bangerang, only to recognise a relatively new group (formed in 1985) that as far as information available to us is that are not a democratically elected group to represent the indigenous. We as an organization don't have a problem with the Yorta Yorta, but we do believe the Bangerang should be recognised

Our view is that after every commission, investigation and inquiry it is usually recognised how important it is to have local knowledge as the base for decision making, this community had that luxury prior to the National Park decision and again the government of the day ignored the communities advise and even at this early stage it is becoming quite clear that the impending outcome is clearly going to be detrimental to these magnificent forest, the environment, the local communities, the traditional owners and future generations

Please give us our forest back!

The Secretary

Barmah Forest Preservation League