

Submission
No 449

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 15/08/2012

Partially Confidential

RECEIVED

15 AUG 2012

27 July 2012

GPSC's

The Chairperson
The General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5
Legislative Council
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

Re Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in NSW

I am a neighbour of public land in NSW and prior 2000 the public land was under the responsibility of the Water Board, the Electricity Commission and the Dept of Lands then it was converted to Special purpose National Park with also the Water Catchment Authority. Also local council involvement in all areas of concern eg, property from 1868 Gazetted, the local council consistently refer matters to NSW government authorities. Those authorities deny any jurisdiction; even though it has been Gazetted in 1868 as a right; you cannot acquire an outcome to resolve the concerns you have raised.

Back in 2000 there was a huge bushfire in the Public land and it spread to our property and burnt the fences, some grazing land only subdued by a joint effort of the Rural Fire Service, neighbours and myself combining resources and co-operation resulting in minimal loss by all parties working as a team. Native animals sort refuge on our property to get away from the fires as did the appropriate authorities and my family without and discretion by me. We had the local bush fire brigade come and settle on the property so that they could monitor the progress of the fires as we are 1600 ft above sea level and we can see for long distances from Penrith to Picton and the Sydney skyline. I never saw and National Parks or Water Catchment personnel during that crisis event; only the Police Service and the Rural Fire Service.

Since 2000 and the conversion to National Parks there has been no regular bush maintenance or attempt to prevent, control another fire event happening by the authorities that used to occur some 20 – 30 years prior. We are due to have another bushfire because there has been no land management of the area by either of those authorities. As a land-holder in an area as I live; I have learnt a great deal from these events. At great cost and many thoughts my neighbours and I have learnt that prevention is greater than cure. I myself have acquired tractors, bulldozers, fire fighting equipment and water tankers to protect my property and the local environment. To listen is to learn. There needs to be fire trails again cut and maintained; there needs to be communication between authorities and neighbours; each should be asked about the land and their everyday knowledge regarding the bush-land; during the past event, the Rural Fire Service used water from our dams and replaced it.

There needs to be regular burn offs in located areas between these fire trails. This used to occur regularly until we ended up with university students that do not understand that the undergrowth incubates its own warmth and then in summer

when the excessive heat is on us the bush fires erupt and the native animals and our lives, home and livestock suffer.

I would encourage the Standing Committee to include regular bush maintenance and that the fire trails again be re-established by the local bush fire brigades. We have seen over the years that the indigenous people of Australia had regular burn offs to maintain our native plants and animals to prevent plagues. Here at Oakdale we have some magnificent native plants from native orchids, wattle to waratahs and they need to be rejuvenated by fire to survive.

We as Australians are required to maintain this land for our future generations; therefore regular maintenance of the bushland is a must do situation; by providing easy access to fire trails which would prevent loss of life and property and protect this environment that has suffered for at least the past 15 to 20 years of doing nothing but letting native animals and trees be destroyed by bush fires.

Unless you have been in a bush fire you cannot really appreciate the fierceness and devastation of fire that is uncontrolled and cannot be reached by fire trails that are non-existent. Waiting for the unknown forecast. The code, goals and planning should be to find, figure-out, fix, approach, seek advice, adhere, prevent, protect and preserve.

I have attended co-called public meetings by invitation to be the only public involved in the meeting; leaving the function feeling even more distant. I make time to attend in "my own time" when its to difficult for them to converse to me in "their time" on the clock or off the clock. Other matters that are of concern to me is that there is very little communication between the authorities and their neighbours.

I remember the rangers of the past that we have had during the past 35 years and they were land-owner user friendlier than the current University educated youngsters who have no idea of the bush, its plants its animals and how precious these are and the past rangers were pro-active in having fire trails and burn offs of allocated areas so that we did not have the fires of 2000. They expressed concerns, asked for information (input) into management and control and sought a happy relationship ; as it should be. Those fires will occur again because we the people of NSW and the National Parks and the Water Catchment authorities etc are not thinking ahead and planning like the old generation did. Those ranger and manager spoke to their neighbours, communicated to all, gave advice on when there were dead trees, when there had been a problem in the area, asked if anyone had seen anything.

The current mob drive past, do not communicate to their neighbours, do not attend local meetings at the Workers Club regarding the coal seam gas; do not advise the neighbours of meetings to be held. They are happy to advise their counter parts in other Government Departments, Local etc., so that they can achieve their agendas. All people need to compromise in their thinking of the environment, plants, animals and their neighbours. There needs to be specific agendas and strategic plans set for fire trail maintenance, for possible plague proportions of pest animals such at rabbits etc.

We here in New South Wales do not use our National Parks sufficiently so that everyone can go into the public land, enjoy the fauna, native animals and the environment. We should be encouraging the erection of private enterprise

building into these areas not stopping all and everyone from going into these areas. If we in NSW can look at what the Americans have done to their national parks and made a profit then we should be also looking at that too. There can be section dedicated to boating, 4 wheel driving and hiking and areas for families to come for a weekend to camp, pitch a tent or stay in a hotel or cabin. Getting companies to sponsor a village or a cabin or hotel to promote NSW magnificent Public lands for holidays could do this.

The other thing that I am concerned about is the non-allowance of the community into the Government land by off-road bikers, fossickers, bush walkers.

I went to USA and visited Yosemite in California and they have an excellent social and environmental management programme in operation there. The general public can go there and enjoy the public lands, camp there and stay in either tents, cabins or hotels or 4 wheel driving and these are all hidden in between the trees so that when you look at the area from a distance you do not see any of the infrastructure you just enjoy the scenery, the mountains the grandeur of their National Park – it is not until you are down in the valley that you actually see the hotels, tents, cabins etc., not as in Kosiosko National Park where it is all about money; not education; or appreciation of the Park and its features. The Americans have even allowed for their native animals; mainly the bears; warning that it's their domain and you are the visitor; allowing "the bears" to roam free in amongst these building etc. They have magnificent community eating structures with unique American type eats where a family can go for a day or a week or a weekend and enjoy the environment and nature at very little cost to the community and people.

I will give you a quote from Art of War – a known Chinese figure Sun Tzū said *"losing one will prevent the loss of all. but should never be sacrificed"*.

Yours sincerely,