

**Submission  
No 509**

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

**Name:** Mr Wal Mitchell AM

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Wednesday, September 12, 2012

The Chair  
Legislative Council  
General Purpose Standing Committee  
Inquiry into the management of public land in New South Wales  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Submission by Walter Henry Mitchell AM; management of public land in New South Wales**

Dear Chair,

Thank you for allowing me this brief time to present to you an alternative to the management of public lands in regards to Toorale Station at Bourke.

After almost 150 years as a successful grazing property in the Western Division on the banks of the Warrego and Darling Rivers the property known as Toorale Station was sold to the Government to form the Toorale National Park and allow the return of the water license to government. My submission deliberately steers clear of the benefits, costs and the follies of that action.

I would propose that there can be a sensible approach applied to the management of the Toorale property that would allow the National Park to remain, allow the water license to be kept in Government ownership and allow part of the property to be returned to productive agriculture.

The principals of sustainable use and allowing for economic, environmental and social outcomes is possible on the one property. I would suggest that:

The National Park remain on Toorale Station in the areas as outlined on the map and already gazette. This is an area that runs from the Darling River to west of the Warrego river. This area has significant environmental and social benefits to the community and the potential to provide economic benefits through tourism and increased visitation as a national park.

The area to the North of the Toorale National Park remain a State conservation area and includes areas of significant environmental importance along the floodout country of the Warrego.

I would suggest that the area to the west of the Toorale National Park and bounded by grazing holdings to the west should be returned as a grazing property under the provision of its existing western lands leases. This will be of great benefit to the economic sustainability of the region including:

- The return of some 54,385 Ha to prime grazing production
- Allowing for rates to be once again be paid to Bourke Shire Council
- Allow for additional jobs to the area particularly in the fields of shearing, transportation, stock handling, fencing and the like

WESTERN LANDS LEASE IN PERPETUITY IS AS STANDING AS FREEHOLD  
WHILE ITS TENURES ARE ADHERED TO - LEASES ARE SOLD ON OPEN MARKETS

There are significant costs to National Parks and the State Government of owning and managing the 54,385 Ha in question and these costs would be met by the new lessee. These costs include those for feral animal control, weeds management and more recently fire mitigation.

The present fire fuel figure is estimated to be twice the stocked (land carrying stock) land assessment of 6-10 tonnes per hectare.

I understand that the basic infrastructure required to run this property west of the Toorale National Park is in place with fencing, road access and stock water points still in good repair.

My family has been grazing stock in this part of the western division since 1874 and I have a full appreciation of the ability of a grazing property to make an economic, social and environmental return to its owner and the wider community.

I would urge you to consider allowing the return of part of Toorale Station to grazing and allowing it to once again make a significant contribution to the people of Western New South Wales.

I look forward to discussing this urgent matter with you further and would invite you out to Toorale to fully consider this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Wal Mitchell AM