

**Submission  
No 229**

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

**Organisation:** Australian Labor Party, Murwillumbah Branch

**Name:** Mr Pat Miller

**Date received:** 18/08/2012

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This submission examines the options for public land use, particularly of the National Park estate. The background assumption is that an inquiry raises disturbing possibilities in light of the recent decision to allow shooters into national parks.



Response to:

- The Standing Committee On State Development
- **Inquiry Into The Management Of Public Land In New South Wales (Submission)**

Copy to:

- Thomas George MLA, Member for Lismore
- The Hon. Luke Foley MLC, Shadow Environment Minister

From:

- Murwillumbah Branch, Australian Labor Party
- Pat Miller, Secretary

Date:

- August 02 2012

The Murwillumbah Branch of the Australian Labor Party is a grass-roots community group that works to improve our community. We participate actively in democratic political process and are keenly aware of our region's environmental heritage value.

Members of our branch engage with their local communities. This submission was generated through thorough extensive background knowledge and the active participation of branch members.

This submission will address the terms of reference individually.

1. The conversion of Crown Land, State Forests and agricultural land into National Park estate or other types of conservation areas, including the:
  - a. Process of conversion and the assessment of potential operational, economic, social and environmental impacts
  - b. Operational, economic, social and environmental impacts after conversion, and in particular, impacts upon neighbours of public land and upon Local Government
  - c. That the following cases be considered in relation to Terms of Reference 1(a) and 1(b):
    - River Red Gum State Forests in the Southern Riverina,
    - Native Hardwood State Forests in Northern NSW,
    - Yanga Station in Wakool Shire, and
    - Toorale Station in Bourke Shire.

The Northern Rivers has huge biodiversity protected by a large national park estate. We consider the expansion of National Park holdings to be crucial to the economy and environmental values of this area.

Any reversal of National Park status will be seen as another direct attack on the ecological values of the Northern Rivers.

We protest in the strongest possible terms the political and financial motivation backgrounding this review. It is clear that vested interests have succeeded in generating this review that will, in our opinion, pave the way for environmental vandalism on an unprecedented scale.

Minister Robyn Parker in her April 24 2012 media release stated she "reiterated an assurance that hunting would not be allowed in NSW national parks."

That the premier and minister have recently decided, in a shameful deal, to allow shooters in national parks clearly underscores our lack of confidence in this review.

We have no confidence that River Red Gum forests will be protected, given that shooters are now going to be allowed into national parks.

Australia has signed the International Convention on Biodiversity and committed to conserve biodiversity. Why then are we reviewing the process that clearly demonstrated our commitment to protecting this biodiversity?

Inherent in this first term of reference is a clear view to allowing logging and other forest use for economic benefit rather than having a clear view of conservation values.

2. The adherence to management practices on all public land that are mandated for private property holders, including fire, weed and pest management practices.

The committee must differentiate management practices for private and public land. They serve different purposes. Private land is generally used for economic benefit, public land is for the benefit of biodiversity.

Minister Parker stated in the April 25 2012 media release, "Likewise, there are no moves to roll back recent additions to the reserve system in the State's north east forests or to change the basic conservation objectives that underpin their management."

Why then is this second term of reference included?

3. Examination of models for the management of public land, including models that provide for conservation outcomes which utilise the principles of "sustainable use".

The committee needs to define the terms 'sustainable use' and 'conservation outcomes'. The scope of the terms of reference are deliberately broad; this is of great concern.

4. Any other related matters.

The bias of the committee is of concern. The terms of reference are deliberately favour economic outcomes.

It is clear that logging is on the agenda and further incursions into recreational use of national parks – shooting, fishing, horse riding – will be considered.

This is completely unacceptable from an economic and environmental perspective.

A far better inquiry would be to evaluate the current logging practices in the state and make significant and far-sighted changes that would ensure renewable timber resources on a large scale, rather than decimating our existing old-growth forests.

Pat Miller  
Secretary