

**Submission  
No 412**

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

**Name:** Mr Jim Morrison

**Date received:** 31/08/2012

---

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to your inquiry.

I have tertiary qualifications in Natural Resource Management and more than fifteen years experience in regional natural resource management planning in NE NSW. This has involved participation as a conservation representative on Water, Native Vegetation and Bushfire Management Committees on the North Coast and Northern Tablelands. I was a community representative on the Upper North Coast Catchment Management Board and community representative on the Border Ranges Biodiversity Management Plan and the Northern Rivers Biodiversity Plan Steering Groups.

I have been Chairman of the Bell Miner Associated Dieback Working Group for the past ten years. This group includes representatives of farmer, conservation, industry and indigenous groups as well as state government agencies. We have worked co operately over this time to try to address this significant threat to forest health. (see [www.bmad.com](http://www.bmad.com))

I share the concerns of many in the community that there is an apparent bias in the make up of this Upper House Standing Committee and in the Terms of Reference of the inquiry towards the economic exploitation of the environment to the detriment of good conservation outcomes. Many in the community believe that the views of conservation advocates will not be given due consideration in this inquiry and that their making a submission is a waste of time. I hope that this is not the case

The committee should be aware that the Comprehensive Regional Assessment of NSW Forest Values was an extensive undertaking which assessed in great detail the environmental social and economic values of the NSW Forest estate.

I fully support the 1997 Nationally agreed criteria for and commitment to developing a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative Reserve system as outlined in the Regional Forest Agreements. It should be acknowledged that although NSW has extensive areas of National Parks that there are still many communities which have not reached the nationally agreed reserve targets even when informal reserves and conservation management zones are included. I fully support further inclusions of appropriate vegetation communities to meet the national reserve criteria for each bioregion.

It should be remembered that some sixty million dollars of restructuring money was paid to industry through the Regional Forest Agreement process and extensive plantations established to provide future timber supplies.

The inquiry should be aware that many of the 'new' National Parks along the Richmond Range in NE NSW were formerly State Forests which were extensively logged during the 1990's prior to being handed over to NPWS. There was no post logging weed control undertaken by State Forests and very little funding for NPWS to undertake this work. This area is now the centre of one of the largest outbreaks of Bell Miner Associated Dieback in NSW. Mapping by the BMADWG IN 2004 indicated that some eight thousand hectares of a twenty thousand hectare study area on the Richmond Range were severely impacted by BMAD.

This huge area of dead trees and dense lantana has expanded considerably since this time. BMAD is a legacy of unmitigated logging disturbance across this region. The BMAD Working Group has determined that it costs around \$2,500 per hectare to restore terminally affected forests. This involves extensive replanting as these terminally affected forests generally unable to naturally regenerate due to declining seed production. There are presently some one hundred thousand or more hectares severely impacted by BMAD in NSW and an estimated two and a half million hectares of forest is at risk of developing BMAD.

It is unfair that NPWS is often wrongly vilified in regard to BMAD impacts on the Richmond Range National Parks when it was actually the extensive resource extraction, ie unmitigated logging disturbance which initiated the problem.

The linkage between disturbance, lantana invasion and the development of BMAD in at risk forests is well understood. State Forest continue to log BMAD affected and at risk forests and commit very few resources to appropriate post logging rehabilitation. This continues to increase the extent of the BMAD problem. The present State Forest Management cannot in any way be considered as either economically or ecologically sustainable.

In 2008 BMAD was declared a Key Threatening Process by the NSW Scientific Committee. Rather than prepare a Threat Abatement Plan (which would undoubtedly require effective post disturbance weed control and active rehabilitation in at risk or affected forests) the government planned to prepare a Statement of Intent regarding BMAD. Both the past Labor government and the present Coalition have stalled the development of the SOI. I believe the government is ignoring its responsibility under the Threatened Species Conservation Act by not completing the Statement of Intent and in not requiring effective post logging weed control following all logging operations in BMAD at risk or affected forests on all tenures. Until this is implemented BMAD will continue to expand across the landscape and cause considerable loss in all forest values.

Issues associated with Northern Hardwood Forests, including BMAD, their systemic breeches of regulations and their extensive reliance on government subsidies and failure to deliver economic returns have been extensively dealt with by the North East Forest Alliance in their submission to this inquiry. I fully support all the recommendation made in the NEFA submission as well as the points raised in the submission by the North Coast Environment Council.

I am concerned that this inquiry will be a forum for anyone with an axe to grind regarding National Parks management practices .I have had extensive experience working with NPWS/DECC staff and found them to be generally very competent, experienced and diligent in performing their duties. I believe the major problems associated with NPWS management are due to a lack of adequate long term funding to effectively implement their management plans.

Thank you for considering my submission

Jim Morrison