

**Submission
No 333**

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

Organisation: Oyster Bay Motorcycle Club

Date received: 29/08/2012



OYSTER BAY MOTORCYCLE CLUB INC

SINCE 1973

Lyn Braico
On behalf of OBMCC

29 August 2012

Oyster Bay Motorcycle Club (OBMCC) would like to voice their opposition over the proposed conversion of Crown Land, State Forests and agricultural land into National Park estate or other types of conservation areas in NSW.

OBMCC is a family based off road motorcycling club. We have approx. 300 members who ride for pleasure, enjoying the outstanding terrain that wonderful rural and regional area have to offer. Many members also compete at all levels of off road rallying – at local, state and National events.

OBMCC encourages the safe and responsible usage of off road motorcycles, always mindful of the environment in which we are riding.

Our sport relies on State Forests, Crown Land and agricultural land to survive. We pride ourselves on providing well managed events, on well-maintained machines where we strive for minimal impact on our surroundings. Our sport is governed by strict environmental rules, including enviro-mats and noise restrictions on our motorcycles. We are doing everything in our power to ensure that we keep riding areas open for all.

OBMCC Enduro rallies have been proven to benefit not only our members and other competitors, but local rural and regional communities as well. We have information to confirm that our events raise valuable revenue for the local areas, primarily in tourism, accommodation, food and fuel for attendees. In 2010 we organized the Australian Four Day Enduro (A4DE) in the Portland/ Lithgow area of NSW and by all reports over \$1.5 million was poured into this shire over the week of our event. There has also been a marked increase in local tourism since this event – riders who enjoyed riding the local state forests during the rally and have since recommended the area to friends and family. Our event was conducted under State Forest permits, with rules, regulations and guidelines for erosion control. OBMCC paid a monetary bond to guarantee the correct and

mindful usage of this valuable resource and worked closely with State Forest NSW to ensure a successful event, not only for our club, but for our public lands and the environment as well. The A4DE 2010 was hailed as the “best ever in Australia” and State Forest returned our bond once the rehabilitation process was complete. Everyone was a winner, the organisers, the competitor, State Forest NSW and the local community. This is what PUBLIC LAND is for – for the public to use.

OBMCC members travel throughout NSW to all types of areas/events to ride. When in State Forests and on Crown Land, riders are riding on registered, noise restricted bikes. Members are licensed for motorcycling and most also hold a Motorcycling Australia Competition License. We hold ourselves personally responsible for our actions on public land and endeavor to find new areas to explore as well as enjoy our regular riding area. A large majority of riding is on single tracks throughout the bush, and this usage ensures that access is kept open for all. If the bush is not used, it overgrows and weeds take over. An open trail is a healthy trail.

Over the past 10 years or so, there has been an increase in the lands that have been reclaimed for National Parks and Conservation areas. This policy is of great concern as we have seen first-hand the negative aspects of this reclassification.

A classic example of this is the "Mountaineer Trail" in the Barrington Tops area of NSW. Once this was the primary fire trail of this area, traversing the entire Barrington range, wide enough for 2 vehicles to pass safely. This trail ensured that should an emergency arise, fire and rescue personnel would be able to assist easily and efficiently. Then policy changed and gates were placed at either end of the trail, so the area was unable to be access without paying a bond and accessing a key from an office some 40 klms away. Subsequently people stopped using this trail.

Today, the "Mountaineer Trail" in the Barrington Tops is overgrown and unmanaged; the area a safety hazard should a fire break out, all because access was restricted to the few, rather than the many who used and maintained it. This is a direct result of the area being classified as a National Park and the subsequent lack of staff, little or no weed management and no regular

maintenance causing erosion and collapse of what was a well-used thoroughfare.

This is not the only case of this in NSW, just a prime example of a policy that did not work that will ultimately endanger anyone who will be trapped in the Barrington Tops should fire break out or another air emergency arise.

We have seen other areas that have been reclassified into National Parks on the mid north coast that have also suffered since changing over from State Forests/Crown Land. The Nerong Forest and the Bulahdelah Forest to name a few – most of these areas are not only overrun by weeds, lantana etc., but the increase in feral animals since the “lock down” is extraordinary. Not only pigs, but wild dogs, now rule this area where once regular access seemed to keep the numbers down. National Parks simply do not have the resources, human nor financial, to keep these parks free from vermin.

It is imperative that our public land remains accessible for public use. This includes motorized sports, horse-riding, adventure sports and general access for all families. This land was set aside originally by our ancestors to ensure equal

and open use for all future generations. To shut this land down, to reclassify it so that no one except bushwalker's has access is simply outrageous and a gross mismanagement of valuable forestry, crown lands and agricultural pastures.

We urge the Government Committee to recommend that public lands remain accessible for all, and to even re-instate some areas back to Crown Land, State Forests and agricultural land, to open up and rehabilitate these regions back to a usable, environmentally balanced habitat, ready for our future generations.