

Submission
No 147

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 28/07/2012

Partially Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. I am a user of a number of State Forests for recreational mountain biking and off-road motorcycle riding. These are two of my favourite sporting activities - I don't get time to participate in organised sports such as soccer due to family and work commitments. I am not a gym person so this is the main way for me to keep fit. I am of the view that some public land needs to be made available for the public to use for activities that are not permitted in National Parks. In particular, some areas need to be close to Sydney. I ride a registered and insured off-road motorcycle in the Watagan State Forest and find its location to be such that I can trailer my bike there, ride and return home in one day. There are no private facilities where I can ride trails - motocross parks do not provide for trail riding. What needs to be done is acknowledge that public land, such as State forests, needs to be retained and made available for EVERYONE to enjoy their form of recreational activity. There are many National Parks in NSW, including ones in and around major populations such as Sydney, and these provide great recreational opportunities for bushwalking etc, however there are very few opportunities for off-road motorcycling and mountain biking. State forests need to be retained so that these activities can be pursued - that way there will be little conflict with bushwalkers who can and usually do use National Parks. Interestingly, I see very few bushwalkers in the Watagans State Forest, no doubt because people choose to walk in the many National Parks that are available to them. There are some who will say that off-road motorcycle riding and mountain biking cause erosion and damage. That is true. It is also true that tracks, roads, trails and human activity in National Parks cause damage. We don't exclude people from National Parks because of this. Environmental impacts such as erosion and other impacts need to be put into perspective. In the majority of cases, walk 5-10m into the bush either side of the track and look back; in many cases you wouldn't even know the track was there. Some areas have been damaged by 4wd vehicles and I notice that some of the tracks are temporarily closed to 4wd vehicles during wet weather to prevent unacceptable damage. Impacts need to be managed where necessary: it is not necessary or fair to exclude uses such as off-road motorcycles and mountain bikes. Off-road motorcycle riding in State forests is a recreational activity enjoyed by people from all backgrounds - people I ride with include a lawyer, human resources director, accountant, managing director, publisher, small business owner, mechanic and a miner. Our ages range from late thirties to mid fifties and we are all responsible and ride registered and insured bikes - people aren't welcome on our rides if they aren't. Finally, I would like to say that I support the need to ensure that users have the appropriate registration and insurance and these requirements should be enforced. Please retain public land such as State forests close to Sydney and in other areas so that those activities that are (rightfully) excluded from National Parks can be pursued in a lawful manner. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.