

Submission
No 28

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 16/07/2012

Partially Confidential

Submission

General Purpose Standing Committee No5

Parliament House

Macquarie St

Sydney. NSW 2000

Management of Public Land in NSW (Inquiry).

Date July 16th 2012.

Submission

Submission for the values and the importance's of National Parks and other conservation areas

The NSW State Government Land inquiry.

Management of the State`s public land and impact of converting crown Land, State Forests or agricultural land into National Parks or other conservation areas.

The Committees Chair, *Shooters and Fishers Party MLC Mr Robert Brown*, The Committee will look into various case studies, including River Red Gum State forests in the Southern Riverina, native hardwood State forests in northern NSW , Yanga Station and Toorale Station.

Dear Sir/Madam

I hope this inquiry will be a fair and open non political inquiry and not just a front to target and undermine our valuable protected lands.

The inquiry should also make reference to the value of these protected lands from the point of tourism and the protection of our water catchments which provide clean fresh water vital to the rural community water needs and farming lands.

Large areas of community water catchments have been transferred into National Parks and other forms of Conservation Lands over the years. As such in some cases, access may have to be limited in some areas. A good example is Barrington Tops region where areas of Hunter water catchments were converted over into the National Parks estate.

These catchments are vital to Newcastle city for its water from the source Chichester Dam within the Barrington Tops national park wilderness estate and also with the advantages of tourism world heritage values these protected areas have given economic benefits back to the community from clean pure water to direct employment and to indirect benefits like from *the Emirates Wolgan Valley spa Resort* in Wollemi National Park and to the popular Dorrigo National Park which backs next to the Dorrigo township bringing with it major economic activity to *Binna Burra* and *O`Reilly`s Guesthouses* within the edge of Lamington national Park on the NSW QLD border are well known good examples.

One area where the inquiry should investigate is: Why our timber needs are still so dependent on the existing State forests? Why the industry is slow to move fully into existing plantations and establish new plantations for their long-term needs? How our State forests are managed and their current state of condition?

This now brings to the issue of mismanagement and handling of state forests that has been allowed to continue through most of the timber producing states. Under the regional forest agreements throughout the various states, the majority of the big players were bought out with state and federal funds. However some of the old industry players have been allowed buy-back into the industry at a later date, some under new names, with additional new players entering the market and even foreign overseas companies. A good example is Ta Ann in Tasmania, over time putting more demand on the existing pool of forests available for harvesting and further undermining the protection of our forests.

basically a lack of proper control at the state level of industry players leaving and re-entering the industry over various periods of time without taking into account the true volume of timber available and giving out contracts that have huge amounts of compensation payable to the Industry players if timber volumes cannot be met , resulting in over cutting.

The recent auditor General`s report on the management of NSW State Forests was very disturbing and damning.

With the majority of the State forests have now been extensively logged. It seems the industry players are now trying to get access to our precious National Parks to meet timber supplies contracts before being forced to go fully into plantations possibly with support and help from some political parties and government agencies instead of trying to remedy the cause of the problems.

The big question now is how this was allowed to happened and how can we find a solution? As we see there are similar issues with forestry in most of the other States.

One solution to help overcome this is to have a Federal body fully in charge of forestry contracts and take the responsibility away from the States. As it is obvious the States are having difficulties handling these issues.

I fear this inquiry will try to find a need and ways to open our National Parks to industrial scale logging without taking into account their values from water catchment protection, tourism with long- term economic benefits, world heritage, also the importance of the value of Old growth and rainforests and unique rare geological formations for the need of tourism attractions, biodiversity and the protection of endangered flora and fauna. A good example is the Koala now in a serious

decline in northern NSW which is a different genetic species to other koalas in the other States; The State forests however are exempt from the new federal Koala protection laws. The forests of northern NSW have been classified as a major biological hot spot, as reported by the National and Wildlife Service.

Ask the owners of the *Emirates Wolgan Valley spa Resort, Lamington National Park Guesthouses* and the many smaller less known *guesthouses* dotted around and within edges of the national parks estate if they will be happy with a logging or mining operation adjacent to their businesses? I think not. As we have seen the rural community is very concerned about coal seam gas issues and the protection of their water catchments and the importance of the ground water and the long-term economic activity within their community. It is now time to understand and accept how our protected lands do play an important economic role in these areas.

Any form of degradation from impacts from mining, logging, the expansion of roading, to horse riding, trail biking in environmentally sensitive areas in the various protected lands can also undermine the tourism value of the national parks estate in the eyes of the international community and also cause irreversible damages in various cases to our natural environment.

This inquiry comes at a time when tourism bodies in Australia are spending millions in media adds in China promoting and encouraging their people to come to Australia and enjoy our unique environment with our clean green image. This inquiry could undermine our international tourism image if it is not handled carefully.

It is also a matter of importance and time is now that the tourism industry makes a stand to promote nationally and protect the values of the national parks estate instead of leaving it to various environment groups to fight these battles.

Please consider the above information.

I have not made any donations of \$1000 or more to any political party over the past two years