

**Submission  
No 136**

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

**Organisation:** Wakool Landholders Association

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**Date received:** 30/07/2012

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SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE WAKOOL LANDHOLDERS  
ASSOCIATION  
July 2012

The majority of our Landholders live, work and are the custodians of freehold and leased land in the Wakool Shire in the Southern Riverina. Many of these properties adjoin parts of the new Riverina Red Gum Reserve, much of which has been converted to National Park estate or other very restricted land tenure. One of our major concerns is that NSW already has over 680 National Parks (NP) that they do not have the resources to properly manage. In our area there have been approximately 10 State Forests converted into NP's. Many of these are in inaccessible locations especially by motor vehicle. Up until the conversion many of these original SF's were managed and looked after by the adjoining Landholders who would pay a lease fee to the State Government. Management included weed, feral animal and most important of all wildfire control. We have sought assurances that this level of management would continue under NPWS to no avail. The real concern is that these areas will become 'powder kegs' for summer lightning strikes and other causes of wild fire.

It became quite obvious after the SF's had been converted that the report used to justify the decision was misleading and the data used to suggest that Red Gum industry was not sustainable was wrong. (This statement was accepted by the main author of the report - Dr. John Williams). It is a well known fact that River Red Gums are one of the fastest regenerating species and Australian forests are considered to be amongst the world's best and healthiest. The ramifications of decimating an \$80 million industry that provided more than 350 jobs in a rural area with limited job opportunities, has been devastating for the small and larger communities that it supported. The ridiculous assertion that tourism would compensate the loss has been proven to be blatantly wrong.

The purchase and conversion of Yanga (which is actually in the Wakool Shire) and other productive food and fibre producing properties is another example of the short sightedness of Gov't. The reason Yanga is such a jewel is because of its previous management and its earning capacity. Its previous employment opportunities and wealth generation for Balranald cannot be replaced. The Wakool Shires loss of its biggest ratepayer (>\$50,000) affects all the rest of its constituents while still having to provide services for very little return.

The Wakool Landholders Association would like to express their concern that regional Communities are being sacrificed for the sake of a green political vision that is devised in large urban areas, that do not take into consideration the huge negative impact that these decisions have on the social fabric let alone the devastating effect they have on the economic and employment opportunities in country areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to have input into the inquiry.