

Supplementary
Submission
No 433a

INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition Inc

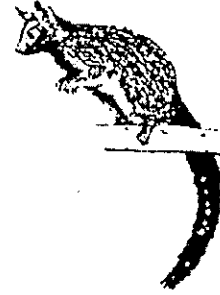
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5/10/12*

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SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT IN NSW

In this supplementary submission I wanted to enlarge on a number of matters raised in the original submission.

1. Some Aspects of the Role of the NPWS locally (Clarence Valley LGA) in weed management:

In addition to their work in controlling weeds in NPs as part of their regular work programs, NPWS staff work with community groups who assist in controlling weeds in local National Parks.

Examples of this community/NPWS cooperation:

1. Iluka Landcare – working for 20 years in the Iluka Nature Reserve & Bundjalung NP
2. Yamba Dunecare – working in the Clarence Estuary Nature Reserve for the past 10 years
3. In Yuraygir NP (the coastal park which extends from Red Rock in the South to Angourie in the north)
 - Sandon River Ratepayers – controlling weeds on council land adjacent to the village as well as in the National Park
 - Diggers Camp Dune Care – since mid 1990s
 - Yuraygir Landcare (based at Minnie Water) since the mid 1990s
 - Angourie Dune Care – since mid 1990s
4. On Susan Island (in the Clarence River adjacent to Grafton). The western section of Susan Island is Nature Reserve and the other section is Crown Land under the control of the Susan and Elizabeth Island Recreation Trust. The NPWS has assisted in preparing applications for grant money to employ workers to control weeds. For example recently a team of workers from CHES (Coffs Harbour Employment Support Services) has been working one day/week for the last 6 months on Susan Island (as well as other sites in the Clarence Valley). CHES operates programs to help unemployed people return to the workforce. NPWS assists with this because what happens on the Trust part of the island can impact on the Nature Reserve at the western end.

2. Cane Toad Control in the Clarence Valley

NPWS has also been involved with cane toad eradication in the Yamba area (the Annual Cane Toad Roundups as well as eradication programs in other areas.) It has also assisted the volunteer group Clarence Valley Conservation in Action (the CIA) in its cane toad eradication activities. With budget cuts and because this activity was "off-park" the Yamba round-up has recently been taken over by Wetland Care Australia.

3. Examples of Aboriginal Control of Traditional Lands in Association with NPWS

Two examples of this different approach to National Park management on the North Coast are:

1) Gaagal Wanggaan (South Beach) National Park – on the coast south of Nambucca Heads and east of Warrell Creek. This park, created in 2010, is jointly managed by the Gumbaynggirr people of the Nambucca Valley and NPWS. It was obtained by the aboriginal people in a land claim and leased back to NPWS. The Board of Management is composed of the aboriginal owners, NPWS, Nambucca Council, and Local Aboriginal Land Councils. It provides employment for local aboriginal people.

2) Arakwal National Park, Byron Bay. This similar arrangement between the Arakwal people and NPWS pre-dated Gaagal Wanggaan.

4. Core Function of National Parks Being Compromised

In our original submission the Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition (CVCC) referred to its concern that National Parks were being opened up to activities that are incompatible with their core function – biodiversity conservation. This function is clearly elucidated in Section 2A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (Objects of the Act)

There has recently been a move to allow increased access for horse-riding in some areas of the National Parks Estate. The CVCC believes horse-riding should not be permitted in the National Parks Estate because of the damage these animals do. Examples of this are

- erosion and vegetation damage both on formed tracks/trails, the banks of watercourses and in other areas.
- pollution of watercourses and spreading of weeds through faeces.

Of even more concern is the decision to allow recreational hunting in 79 areas in the National Parks Estate. National Parks and Nature Reserves are special areas for biodiversity conservation and activities such as bushwalking and the enjoyment of the natural world. Recreational hunting is not compatible with these activities.

It is interesting that when the Premier earlier this year defended his decision to open up 79 areas to recreational hunters, he informed the people of NSW that none of the parks/reserves close to Sydney would be opened up. That must have been a great relief to Sydneysiders, but it was scarcely welcomed by those in regional areas who enjoy visiting their local national parks. Dorrigo National Park and Gibraltar Range NP are two of those parks in our area that are to be opened up.

Recreational hunters have had access to NSW State Forests for a number of years for the enjoyment of their sport and ostensibly also to deal with the feral animals in this public

land. It is our understanding that in a period of 12 months to 30 April 2012 the Game Council estimated that licensed hunters killed 15,663 animals, mostly rabbits, from public lands. The effectiveness of recreational hunters as controllers of feral animals is open to considerable question. The Committee might be interested to look at the information sheet the Invasive Species Council has produced on whether recreational hunting is capable of reducing feral species.

http://www.invasives.org.au/documents/file/fs_rechunt2_NSWvfacts.pdf

The CVCC believes that recent governments have not given careful thought to the likely long-term impacts of their decisions and that in line with one of the principles of ecologically sustainable development, they should be taking a much more precautionary approach.

Leonie Blain
Hon Secretary
Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition Inc
5 October 2012