

**Submission
No 306**

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

Name: Mr Jim Muirhead

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I write this submission with local knowledge of the subject - because I have been going into these forests for over thirty years and feel that I have seen and learn t a lot over those years.

I have bush walked with dogs in these forests, have camped, fished and hunted these forests. I also ride horses though these forest but can not any more.

I have collected firewood from them as well. I am a photographer and a bit of a greenie. I believe that sustainable use of our resources are ok as long as it doesn't affect too many other aspects of the surrounding environment.

These forests are in great condition considering the long drought that we have had over the last 15 years.

I believe that they have been managed well over the last 200years and before that the Aborigines managed them for thousands of years. In fact they where not big forests as we have them today they where mainly open reed beds and pockets of red gum along the edges of the rivers and creeks though out the district.

This can be seen on maps and in the history writings of the early settlers. also through stories from the local Aborigines.

I feel the forests where made into national parks because of reasons that are totally wrong and that they should be handed back to the public that used them sustainably over the last 200 years and managed them with great care for future generations.

If they had not taken great care of these forests then they would not be in such good condition. If we lock up and leave them eventually it will lead to the forests going backward especially when the fire that we always dread happens because of to much of a fuel load left on the forest floor. This won't happen with good cattle grazing practices and good forest timber harvesting practices.

I have hunted camped and fished these forests now for thirty years and now I can not do these things.

Fishing and camping are still allowed but I have planned a few Fishing trips to the river and I have come across locked gates. This is extremely annoying as you have spent a lot of time and money getting organized only to have to turn around and come home. Access for fishers is becoming harder and harder.

I used to hunt these forests under the game council restricted license system and found this way of managing forest hunting very acceptable to most people. We would start hunting these forests just after Easter and stopped just before the Christmas holidays when the tourists would come to the river to camp (with there dogs).

In the months that we hunted you never saw any body else in the forests except for some fishing camps as winter in these forests can be cold and quite dull to tourists. So now that hunting has been stopped the hunters dollars are now going to other communities and towns where you can still go hunting.

I now have a Victorian Game license and go down to Victoria to hunt duck and Quail when in season and hunt deer in the high country. I used to do this in NSW but can not as easily so I spend my money in another state as it is only 18kms to the Victoria border. The towns around Deniliquin now suffer from the national parks because I go else where.

I am only one of thousands that do this you may ask how I know this it is because of the positions I hold in hunting clubs and fishing associations and getting feed back from our members.

Many people have came to these parks for relaxation and families have been coming here all there lives sometimes to the same spot. They are families that don't go to the resorts

or on cruises or to the sea side they like the river and spend their money in these towns that surround the forests.

A huge proportion camp with their dogs and the now because of the national parks they are now not coming to these areas. The dogs are well controlled and do not annoy other campers. They do not go out into the forest and chase wild life as some will tell you. The people that tell you this do not camp in these forests or they are telling you lies.

If these forests are not actively managed then they will suffer and the wild life in these forests as well, with the feral animals getting out of control the native animals numbers will decline.

Those that say hunting in these forests will be dangerous have no idea how we as hunters work. Driving a car on Australian roads is more dangerous or going into hospital is more dangerous than hunting in our forests. So they should be concentrating on these other dangerous activities that go on in Australia every day.

Locking these forests up the way they were locked up was very unfair. They were not locked up for the betterment of the environment they were locked up so the labor party could obtain green preferences at the last state election. Frank Sartor told the community that he was going to give them a lesson on politics.

At least he was truthful about it not like the NRC and the rest of the government. Every body should be ashamed of the way the forests were locked up.

If nothing comes out of this inquiry then these communities will start to break the law more and more. They have towed the line up until now but are at a breaking point.

I have spoken to many people and they say this to me, I have been successful in holding this off by telling people that we must be law abiding but they say enough is enough.

This inquiry hopefully will come up with some good common sense ideas and hopefully the communities can get back on their feet.

Some recommendations I think you should come up with.

No 1. That these red gum forest go back to forests NSW for their management as they where before being made into national parks under false reasons.

No 2 That hunting in all national parks and state forests and crown land be adopted in their management practices for feral animal control under the NSW Game Council.

No3 That all public lands be able to be used sustainably for the financial gain of the government so that these public lands can stand on there own two feet and not be a burden on the tax payers of this state.

No 4 That the local communities have more input and are listened to by governments as generally they know there area and the correct management practices better than some of these so called highly educated people that claim to know all about every thing but don't and are just put there to come out with the Governments Political agenda.

No 5 That these red gum forests be a test case with a committee formed to help run these forests with any title that these forests may have. The committee should be one that has local groups, industry and people that care about these forests.

No 6 That the Bangerang Aboriginal community be recognized as the rightful Aboriginal group being the original community and still that lives in the Barmah/ Milliwah forests.

Thank you for your time
Jim Muirhead