

**Submission
No 272**

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

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The Oxygen Farm is a private conservation group that purchased and has managed a 375ha area of high biodiversity land for the last 22 years. We wish to make the following points about public land management in NSW.

We are fearful that this inquiry will put short-term economic needs before the long-term benefits to all of maintaining our National Park estates. Maintaining the status-quo and not allowing human activities such as hunting, logging, mining or commercial enterprises other than eco-touristry operations into Parks and other gazetted Conservation areas will maintain the biodiversity and health of water catchments on which humans (and all other life forms) depend.

By using newly established Parks as specific cases for inspection this Committee has biased the inquiry. Long- established National Parks should have been included as well to gauge community feelings about National Parks and maintain a balance of views. Communities with new job losses (in the logging business in particular) have not had time to adjust or find alternative areas of employment and will naturally be still angry about the way things have gone (the important River Red Gum Forests of the Southern Riverina being an example). We think that you will find that if you had canvassed the views of communities around old National Parks you would have found that most of these communities have benefited economically and socially from the establishment of the National Parks.

We have a border with State Forests and are seriously concerned about the mismanagement of these Forests which are occurring:
Blatant breaching of environmental licencing conditions,
An ever-shortening logging cycle- some forests are being relogged within ten years whereas before it would have been 20-25yrs before relogging.
State Forests have, in the past, illegally logged the Oxygen Farm in order to maintain supply.

Logging costs the community in terms of road maintenance – to see your newly graded road chopped up and destroyed by logging trucks, who pay nothing towards the cost of maintaining these roads is frustrating to both the people affected and the Local Governments charged with the up-keep of these roads.

In the RFA of 1998 a large area of the former Wingham Management was converted to National Parks.

Our Parks are well managed, despite being seriously understaffed, with visitor numbers increasing every year.

The National Parks Office in Taree is very supportive of private conservation initiatives. The Officers there, and indeed all over NSW, have great experience in feral animal control, weed management and fire management.

Much employment is to be had in these areas – with a little training all those who lost work with the establishment of these Parks (and who knows how many people have actually been affected) could gain useful and far more sustainable employment in these Parks with long-term benefits for all.

Australia is a signatory to the International Convention on Biodiversity. Any incursions into the National Parks of NSW by logging, mining, hunting, etc would be a blatant breaching of this Convention.

The National Parks Estates are important not only for biodiversity conservation but also for protecting our fresh water catchments and are also a huge contributor towards carbon sequestration.

Any ideas of logging or mining these areas are extremely short-sighted and the science proves that these conservation areas are the best way of conserving biodiversity.

There should be no increase to the areas of State Forests that allow hunting in them. Hunting has only happened because of the unfortunate state of politics in Australia in general and NSW in particular. This Inquiry should be brave enough to admit that it was a mistake in the first place to allow such activity to happen.

There is nothing in the terms of reference that make mention of the significance of these areas in terms of their importance to Aboriginals and non Aboriginals.

This is a short submission. Much more could be written.

Suffice to say that The Oxygen Farm is against the opening up of National Parks to any human resource-stripping activities; is against opening any more State Forests to hunting; and distrusts the motives of this Committee.

Thank you.
Ange Martin
President.