

**Submission
No 407**

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

Organisation: Wingham Forest Action

Name: Ms Jane Watson

Date received: 31/08/2012

Wingham Forest Action feels that:

Current Forestry Management Practices are very bad due to pressures of Wood Supply Agreement.

This Agreement needs to be examined and acted upon in order to maintain a sustainable supply in the future.

WFA is against any proposals to allow hunting, mining, logging and gross commercial activities in National Parks.

WFA is against the broadening of hunting programs in State Forests and thinks the whole programme should be halted.

WINGHAM FOREST ACTION
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Submission to the INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Wingham Forest Action (WFA) is a community-based group that has been in existence for the last 23/24 years.

Starting with the Greiner Govt. we have pursued all ensuing Governments (State & Federal) in the matter of Forest Conservation and Forestry Management Practices. We have done this by lobbying, direct-actions, legal challenges and participating in Govt. processes and Committees. It is this Government's turn now!

We wish to make the following comments to this Inquiry.

1. WFA is against the expansion of the recreational hunting program into further areas of State Forest. Due to the unfortunate short-sighted alliances that both sides of politics have entered with this Party, this program is a sop to the Shooter's Party that both this and the previous State Govt sees fit to pander to. This Inquiry should look at the literature and analysis available on this matter to see that it is a non-effective way of feral animal control. For example when you shoot one fox, 20 feral cats can take its' place (Landcare literature).

WFA is definitely against any hunting being allowed in National Parks.

2. WFA is of the opinion that short-term economic needs will be put before the proven long-term benefits of protecting land for their biodiversity and water-catchment protection qualities. This is dangerous and flies in the face of research into the values of these areas to all life on this planet.

3. WFA would like the status-quo maintained with regards to human recreational and resource gathering activities in National Parks. No shooting, no logging (the pretext of existing plantations within National Parks is ridiculous- non of these plantations were ever maintained before they became National Parks), no mining of any sort, and only minimum ecotourist activities

4. We would like you to examine very carefully Forest Management Practices in Public Forests as they occur now. Driven by a very silly Wood Supply Agreement, State Forest regularly breaches environmental licence conditions. The logging cycle is getting shorter and shorter 10yrs cf. 20/25 years in the past. The Wingham EIS (1993) was predicated on a canopy removal of 30% in its estimates of quota and a semi-sustainable supply. These days 60% of the canopy is removed, which in practice means every merchantable stick and there is nothing sustainable about it. It is known far and wide as "flogging".

5. The NSW Govt.'s own literature states that due to climate change the predicted re-growth rates of Forests is going to slow dramatically (when you are looking at "product"). Given this plus the fact that Wood Supply Agreement was signed off by the

last Govt. in corrupt and sneaky ways (a new Agreement was signed in 1998 some weeks before the result of the RFA was announced- wouldn't you wait to actually see how much wood was going to be available to be logged), this would seem the perfect time for this Government to nullify this contract and negotiate terms with the signatories (mainly Boral), blame it all on the last lot and give our Public Lands a chance to be managed in a proper and sustainable way. The bottom is dropping out of the wood market in case you haven't noticed.

6. 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. A fairer roads tax rate would be appropriate when this happens to a community.

7. We perceive bias in the Committee's Terms of Reference in that no communities from established National Parks are to be consulted about the effects of a National Park on the local community and whether the community was able to absorb/retrain the people who lost jobs in the Forestry industry. The Parks that were proclaimed in around the old Wingham Forest Management Area are very well managed despite being understaffed. A lot of the people there are ex Forestry personnel and their expertise in infrastructure maintenance, feral animal and weed control and fire management is excellent. Their attitude to "their Parks" is now one of looking at their resource in a different way. We have all won.

We think that you will find that if you had canvassed the views of communities around established National Parks you would have found that most of these communities have benefited economically and socially from the presence of the National Parks.

8. There is no reference to any Indigenous Heritage or European Heritage values in these areas to be examined. There should be.

9. 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.

This submission is an abbreviated version of the opinions of Wingham Forest Action.

If any clarification is necessary please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Thank you for your time.

Jane Watson
for Wingham Forest Action.