

**Submission
No 70**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Wollondilly Macarthur Mountain Bicycle Club

Date received: 19 July 2016

Inquiry into Crown land

Response prepared by Grant Byrne on behalf of the Wollondilly Macarthur Mountain Bicycling Club.

1. That, notwithstanding the allocation of portfolios to the General Purpose Standing Committees, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 6 inquire into and report on Crown land in New South Wales, and in particular:

(a) the extent of Crown land and the benefits of active use and management of that land to New South Wales,

I understand that local councils manage some Crown land for the state, however, my local council appears to have a very limited idea of what land they own themselves and find this difficult to manage. The thought of the council appropriately managing the use of Crown land does not fill me with confidence.

On behalf of the club I have also been through the process of gaining a Crown lands license for the use of land for the purpose of riding bicycles. This process took 18 months, cost the club thousands of dollars and a week after receiving the license a NSW Trade and Investment, Crown Lands representative contacted me to say they were revoking the license because they had made an error. Further discussion with different NSW T&I, CL demonstrated how influential personal beliefs were on the decision making process.

There are two areas within the Wollondilly Shire that have previously been used by recreational mountain bicyclists. These areas have now been closed to cyclists. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that since use by cyclists and maintenance of trails has stopped, there has been a significant increase in rubbish dumping, motor bike use and other undesirable activities. Active management by a local sporting club, such as ours, could see an improvement in the condition of the local environment and reduce the anti-social behaviour that is occurring. The explicit use of the land would be a deterrent to much of the current unwanted activities and also promote environmental awareness in the area.

It's important that there is a process for letting community groups use Crown land, however, the process needs to be more affordable, quicker and also follow a structured sequence that is free of influence from employees' personal bias and attitudes.

(b) the adequacy of community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown land,

I'm only aware of the <http://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/> website as a form of communication between the public and NSW Crown land. It is a terrible website that does not contain regular updates as I have been advised by NSW T&L,CL that it should. It is difficult to find appropriate information. Contact information provided is not specific enough. Using the links is like going around in circles and the search function is not very useful for finding relevant information.

(c) the most appropriate and effective measures for protecting Crown land so that it is preserved and enhanced for future generations, and

Our club believes that community involvement, through the use and management of Crown lands, on behalf of Crown lands is the most appropriate and effective method of preserving and enhancing Crown land. Getting people involved in caring for the environment through the direct use of appropriate activities helps build a sense of connectedness and respect for the resource.

(d) the extent of Aboriginal Land Claims over Crown land and opportunities to increase Aboriginal involvement in the management of Crown land.

As per section (c), our club believes that communities should work together to preserve and enhance Crown lands. This includes working with Local Aboriginal Land Councils to actively use and manage Crown land.