

**Submission
No 245**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mrs Jennifer Kenna

Date received: 23 July 2016

UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND SUBMISSION
Jennifer Kenna

I am against transferring Crown Land to local councils. Local councils cannot manage what they have now. We have already previously written to object to this proposal. The Corindi Beach Community has a reserve which is managed by a trust. A petition was signed by many residents saying we do not want Coffs Council managing our crown land. Our Crown Reserve is used by the residents and visitors including the local Aboriginal Community for a great number of pursuits. See attached list. I have already written letter to Coffs Harbour Council about unnecessary tree clearing and other environmental issues which have degraded land. In this area people are cutting down trees on public land for views, clearing SEPP 14 land illegally and the council has taken no action.

I am against allowing any Western Lands grazing leases to freehold. Or transforming the Crown lands Division into a Public Trading Enterprise.

We do not want Mr Baird and Mr Grant putting our state in the black with a massive fire sale of Crown Land and TSR's, it will be a very black day indeed for our rapidly disappearing and detrimental consequences for everyone. The crown land in NSW should be kept in perpetuity as a haven for our native plants and wildlife.

I have already seen one farmer on TV saying he wants to knock down a paddock tree full of hollows. All of our parrots, owls, possums, bats etc. need these old growth trees to nest and roost in. An aboriginal who worked on a cotton farm (which had no trees) told me that the only biodiversity on the farm was introduced rats and snakes. In the Central West at least 20 bushland birds are in serious decline, selling off of Crown Land will exacerbate this effect.

Our Travelling Stock Reserves and Crown roads should not be sold off as these are some of the last haven for our native birds, animals and plants. I have been a birdwatcher for 40 years and I have noticed this serious decline. Birds that were once common are now rarely seen. These TSR's, Crown Roads, Reserves and Vacant Crown Land provide a valuable service to our wildlife acting as corridors for movement of wildlife. Insectivorous bats eat the equivalent of half of their body weight every day in insects, many birds also eat large amounts of insects providing a valuable service to farmers.

Whilst cycling from Grenfell to Forbes into a very strong headwind, I noticed that even one large tree in a paddock had a mitigating effect on the wind. We have already experienced massive dust storms from over clearing. Whilst serving on the Central West Catchment Management Committee we were shown how much salinity was having an effect on everything from farmland to buildings in towns such as Wellington and Mudgee, where salinity lines were evident on brick houses about a metre up the walls. This rising salinity also affects our roads eating away at them and causing them to degrade rapidly into large potholes. Down in the lower part of the valleys it is turning farmland into salty degraded unusable land. We need to be restoring and increasing the extent of our native vegetation. We will not achieve this by selling off our crown land. I have seen a farmer restore his native vegetation and then the next owner knock it all down.

2.

With an ever growing population we need these small reserves for sources of recreation. Reserves by rivers and streams are used for camping, fishing, canoeing, birdwatching etc. Not just the reserves adjacent to the coast where the majority of the population go, but the small local community in the other areas, particularly west of the mountains. Keeping these reserves in, as part of the crown estate will ensure that they are not cleared and degraded by a local farmer. Not that I am saying all farmers will clear their land, but many will. Crown land provides us with clean water, air carbon sequestration and biodiversity. Biodiversity can live without us but we cannot live without biodiversity.

In many areas especially on the western slopes, most of the land on better soils has been cleared, the few remaining TSR's and Small Crown Land Reserves have what remains of the vegetation types which used to exist such as White Box and Yellow Box woodlands. When I lived in Orange I was involved in a flora survey, many of these small reserves have the last vestiges of our native flora. This makes these reserves valuable for the survival of our native birds and animals. Australia already has one of the largest extinction rates. Many of our large animals such as koalas are a drawcard for overseas tourists are in rapid decline due to tree clearing. A friend of mine at Arrawarra had a koala trying to shelter under his solar panels after the road was cleared for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. I cannot express too strongly the detrimental effect weaker land clearing laws will have on our precious wildlife.

Land along the north coast is being cleared at a rapid rate. When we have a major rainfall event, which happen regularly and are set to increase with the effects of global warming, it is obvious that there is a serious problem already with erosion. When you look out to sea there is a dark brown silt stain all along the coast. For instance more and more land is being cleared for blueberries. In quite a few instances the blueberries are planted up and down very steep slopes, so that when it rains the soil ends up washing out to sea. Weakening land clearing laws will not improve the situation. Soon it will be like grapes, there will be a glut of blueberries and at what cost to the environment, we need better farming practices as we have well under 10% of arable land in this country. What is needed is to look at the long term view and not the short term grab for money view.

We live on the driest inhabited continent, there are already water issues without relaxing land clearing laws and the selling of crown land so that it can be cleared. Trees have a beneficial effect on rainfall and depletion of trees adds to desertification of our land.

It is not evident to some people how highly our Crown Reserves and TSR's are valued by many of us for their cultural, wildlife and floral values. Their hidden values providing a service in the landscape that is not obvious to some farmers and politicians, without them we will live in a depauperate society. Life is not all about money and perhaps like the kingdom of Bhutan we need a gross national happiness meter.

3.

Corindi Beach Recreation Reserve has a dune area along the coast, a small estuary, a race track which was established in the 1890's, Soccer Fields, Community Hall, Pony Club Areas, A native vegetation area which include an aboriginal boardwalk as part of a bush tucker walk. The race track was used for picnic races until the demise of this due to insurance issues when the expense became too dear. It is adjoined on the north side by the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Community. This area is very valuable to the Corindi Beach and Coff Coast Area and is used for a great many activities. Some of which follow:

Aboriginal Bush Tucker Walks and training for young indigenous members of Corindi Beach and Coffs Harbour Area
School sports
Soccer Club Competition
Pony Club
Horse training events
Individual Athletes for training one resident has just joined the Institute of Sport
Jogging
Dog Walking
Bicycle Riding
Bird Watching used regularly by individual residents and Coffs Coast Birdwatching Club
Nature Study
Fishing
Access to the northern end of Corindi Beach
Weddings and Funeral Services
SES training days
Williamtown Airforce have conducted training sessions
Model Aircraft
Visitors to the area for bush and boardwalk
Tourism promoted by the Corindi Beach Caravan Park for walks
Passive recreation

The community hall is used for a great many activities. Meetings, parties, weddings, prize nights, trivia, dances etc.