

Submission
No 292

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name suppressed

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Submission to Upper House Inquiry into Crown Land

Crown land protects many natural landscapes and ecosystems from the coast to the far west of the state, including beaches and waterways. Remnant bushland in cities and around rural towns and agricultural areas is often Crown land and critical for the survival of native species in these places.

My family and I go bushwalking regularly in Sydney on routes through Crown land. We holiday and birdwatch in a south coast village surrounded by Crown reserve with abundant wildlife. We visit family in a little town in the Hunter Valley with a town common where locals can have a couple of cows and where the travelling stock route provides pleasant birdwatching.

It is only because our beaches and waterways belong to the Crown that Australians enjoy enviable access to both of these and so in a way Crown land has shaped our Australian way of life and identity as well as our landscapes.

I am concerned that recent proposals in the White Paper to remove the set of principles in s.11 of the Crown Lands Act 1989 that guide the management of Crown lands, will only water down the environmental protection, nature and water conservation, and recreation purposes Crown lands fulfil. The proposal to set up a Public Trading Enterprise to manage Crown Lands on a business model creates alarm in my mind and in the public mind that this government is all about selling off everything!

In the past Crown land has been generally well managed from a conservation perspective. This is reflected in the large parcels of important habitat that have been added to or become National Parks from the Crown land estate. Crown reserves have become refuges for threatened species and part of wildlife corridors. While local communities often are involved in conservation activities on these reserves and other Crown lands- I participate in Landcare activities on a Crown reserve- this does not mean that Crown lands should be transferred to local councils as proposed in the White Paper. Local councils are already overburdened meeting ratepayer needs.

Crown agricultural leases must remain under Crown management and not converted to freehold as this allows for more input by the Crown into the management of these areas to meet objectives of soil, water, and nature conservation as well as agricultural

production. In the past many expired leases have been added to the National Park estate or acquired as wildlife sanctuaries.

The two rural villages in which I holiday both have informal thoroughfares on Crown land that are "paper roads" or old access laneways for sully removal. These thoroughfares provide not only pleasant routes for rambling and access to picnic areas and waterways but also routes for local wildlife such as kangaroos which add to tourist enjoyment of these areas. Such undeveloped roads should not be sold.

In areas where it is appropriate to lease or sell parcels of Crown land, social equity should be just as important as economic gain. For example Landcom releases by ballot allowed for more equitable

and affordable blocks. A small fish and chip shop on a jetty may be more socially appropriate than an expensive restaurant even though the lease return may not be as great.

I have read the National Parks Association submission and think that this is a great very detailed submission which offers a good alternative to the White Paper proposals and I hope the Upper House will give it good consideration and adopt its recommendations.

As Crown lands are foremost public lands, as much public input as possible should be sought before any new legislation is introduced and all Crown lands must be managed in a transparent and accountable manner with public participation.

Yours sincerely,