

Submission
No 145

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Tweed District Residents & Ratepayers Assoc

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Submission : Parliamentary Inquiry into Crown Land

Terrestrial Crown Lands in our area are extensive and in highly sought after coastal, estuarine and beachfront areas. Marine Crown Lands historically encompass all naturally occurring water course beds.

We are fortunate that many of our Crown Land coastal reserves remain in their natural state and believe that the Tweed Shire Reserves Trust which is charged with administration/management of four CL coastal holiday parks, is applying the profits therefrom to the maintenance and preservation of those natural reserves.

We are mortified to learn that the Crown may propose to transfer further lands into the control of Tweed Shire Council, we presume, under a Reserve Trust arrangement.

We would be loathe for any undeveloped CL on the foreshores, to be placed under the control of Tweed Shire Reserves Trust while such trust is composed entirely of elected councillors.

Tweed Shire Council has been subject to two separate inquiries by the Local Government Office and whilst no criminal charges have every been laid, the inquiries revealed that over \$600,000 had been donated to L/NP candidates in one particular election in an attempt to gain control of the council for the benefit of developers.

It could be said that elected officials in our Shire whilst behaving legally, have shown a complete disregard for ethical and moral considerations in the past, and for that reason we believe that any Reserves Trust or similar entity managing CL which may come under its jurisdiction should have to seek public comment and submissions on development plans on CL.

Under the existing CL regime, Government has leased CR 59360, lands dedicated for public reserve and recreation in 1926, containing SEPP 14 wetlands, Endangered Ecological Communities of flora/fauna and subject to JAMBA and CAMBA International Migratory Bird Agreements, to Gold Coast Airport for the purposes of runway expansion.

The CR provided a forested buffer zone between the current runway end and residences of approximately 800 metres. The runway extension will require massive land fill in acid sulphate soils, interruption to groundwater flows and all this will occur on the shores of the Cobaki Broadwater, the prime fish nursery in Tweed Shire and the foundation of our recreational and commercial fishing industry.

Gold Coast Airport is a private company, which within its existing Federally leased airport lands has managed to increase its business by 500% since 1998.

We acknowledge it is a major economic driver, but believe it would continue to be such without runway expansion. If the Minister had bothered to consult, he may have been convinced that the granting of a lease to the airport was not in the economic interests of the north coast, as a prime fish hatchery is being put at risk.

The lease was granted by the Minister with no public consultation. Public lands, by their very nature, are of interest to the public and this lack of consultation must be fixed in any new legislation.

Jack Evans Boatharbour Foreshores and Harbour

The harbour is in the CBD of Tweed Heads Town adjacent to the Queensland boundary.

The harbour is a designated a “no power boat” zone to provide quiet and safe water based activities for the community. The harbour provides a safe and interesting environment for learn to swim, snorkel, dive, sail, paddleboard, etc in the security of no power boats or jet skis.

It is major destination on weekends and public holidays for family entertainment.

The foreshore lands of the harbour have been mooted for high rises by prior governments and there are proposals for private enterprise infrastructure on the northern parkland.

Tweed Heads is expected to increase its population b 20% in the next five years , with the harbour foreshores the focus recreational area for the high rises which are now underway in the CBD.

It is essential that the public foreshores of the boatharbour are retained to provide recreational opportunities for our growing population.

Classification of Crown Lands

We note there appears to be no classification of CL and further that the Government is unaware of exactly what comprises the land bank, nor the uses for which the land is suitable.

We would suggest that the first step requiring attention is a data base establishment of all CL , together with local council area, street address or other identifying description, and the purposes to which the land is held.

This may be expensive and time consuming, but we do not believe the Government should proceed with any further legislative changes until the community is made aware of what its assets are.

We are further concerned that, as was the case with Gold Coast Airport and Westconnex, etc, these executive decision making processes will continue to over-ride the public good and stifle debate on alternate resolutions to problems, which do not involve alienation of community land.

Conclusion

Crown lands must be preserved for the benefit of the community and our future generations. These lands are fundamental to our social, economic and environmental well-being and their management must conform to environmentally sustainable principles.

You are requested to recommend that a moratorium on the selling, leasing or development of crown and public lands be implemented immediately.

Ronni Hoskisson, Hon Sec

Tweed District Residents & Ratepayers Association

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