

**Submission  
No 320**

## **INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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I live in Gulgong in Central Western NSW and I am deeply perturbed by many implications of the proposed changes to the management of Crown Lands and Travelling Stock Routes. There are many such areas in this region, and in droughts they are traditionally used for the agistment of stock that otherwise would have starved or been destroyed. This situation will still continue, given our nation's history of long, hot droughts. It is foolhardy not to recognise and provide for this.

- Crown Land is a major reference point of largely undisturbed country, a picture of what used to be here before large-scale grazing, land-clearing and urbanisation took place. In this context they have great environmental values and provide corridors for wildlife and vegetation. They are used by the public as passive recreation areas – camping, fishing, birdwatching, bushwalking and picnicking. It will be a great social loss should these amenities be taken away from public use.
- I am actively involved in one such area of Crown Land, Adams Lead in Gulgong, which is a very historic goldmining site. This is being developed as a passive recreation area, an educational site and is being revegetated as an example of Box Gum Grassy Woodland, of which only a tiny percentage exists of its once widespread coverage.
- To protect the valuable public asset of these Crown Lands and Travelling Stock Routes they must remain in public ownership, held in trust by the government on behalf of the people of NSW as it is at the moment.
- A proper examination needs to be completed in terms of evaluation of the social, cultural and environmental values before decisions are made regarding transfer of public ownership to private or agency ownership. There has been minimal community input on many of the issues raised in this proposal. There are also instances of lack of clarity or information regarding matters of funding to Councils for transferred land, and definitions of “Local” and “State” as it refers to Crown Land. A lot of it seems to be “secret business”.
- I am deeply troubled about the proposal that Crown land should be administered as a Public Trading Enterprise. This is very concerning as it allows widespread sale and commercialisation of Crown land, a policy that is completely at odds with public recreation and environmental values.
- There is no clear indication as to how indigenous cultural values will be served by new proposals to transfer or sell land to the as yet unidentified organisations or landholders. Crown Land must be properly managed with indigenous participation to protect these values, especially where there are any outstanding land claims.
- In summary, there needs to be an increase in public and indigenous participation in the management of Crown Lands and TSRs. Principles of ecologically sustainable development need to be the benchmark. Recognition must also be given to the importance of protecting ecosystems and the services they provide such as clean water and air, carbon storage and biodiversity. They must remain in Public ownership.

Yours sincerely

Diane O'Mara