

Submission
No 342

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Pottsville Community Association

Date received: 24 July 2016

Submission to Crown Lands Review from Pottsville Community Association

Dear Reform Team,

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide feedback on the current review of Crown Lands management. Please accept the following comments and include them in your modifications to the legislation governing Crown Lands.

We strongly believe:

The community has the right to know what land are crown land in their area and there needs to be a complete register of all Crown Lands available for public to access easily.

Crown lands with important social, cultural or environmental values needs to be protected in perpetuity for the future generations and it is local communities who need to be able to guide which lands they are.

We have an obligation of intergenerational equity in that future generations should have access to Crown Lands as much as we have.

The public interest is often better served by the retention of a public asset for future uses. Future community infrastructure needs can be met using Crown lands, and we need to retain them for such uses rather than allowing them to be sold off for private interest and short term gain.

Coastal strip crown lands, dunal areas and riparian zones need to be retained as public open space, to protect access for the public to beaches and creeks but also to protect and act as a buffer as climate change impacts our private developments.

Crown lands provide important linkages between conservation areas and their role in corridor formations will become more important as climate change effects our land.

Ecologically sustainable development principles need to be an object of the new Crown Lands legislation.

Social and environmental values of Crown Land need to have equal importance and consideration given to them as the potential economic value gained by privatising the land as many parcels of Crown Land currently provide important habitat for wildlife and corridors for future refuge.

The Crown Plan planned to be taken over by the Gold Coast Airport for an unnecessary instrument landing system ILS is believed to be not in the public interest as the ILS has been shown to be out of date and there has been no meaningful community consultation on the privatization of this land.

In Pottsville, the Crown Lands Act affects our RSL oval, Ambrose Brown Park, the market site, the community hall, Pottsville Environmental Park, the estuary areas, the creek banks and the beach dunes. These lands are strongly valued and heavily used by the community and enrich our lifestyle immensely. As most of these lands are not state significant, under the new legislation, control of these lands could be transferred to local government, along with the right to sell or lease these lands without public consultation. This system is vulnerable to the vested interests sometimes contained within local councils and could result in the permanent loss of important community use public lands to the public.

While we support the principle of management rights of Crown Lands being returned to the original inhabitants of this land, there needs to be the same protection given as for all Crown Lands that no lease or right of use or sale can occur of Crown Land without a public approval process. The community owns the land, if the majority of a community can see the public benefit of a proposal and weigh it up against any loss of public access / amenity only then should a piece of Crown land be able to be transferred out of public use, whether managed by aboriginal or non-aboriginal people.

The return to Reserves, created by usages of Crown Lands such as Tweed Coast Holiday Parks needs to be used on wider Crown land protection and improvement rather than pooled for general costs within a State or Shire.

Any consideration of multiple uses of crown lands need to give highest priority to retaining public use and access to the lands and maintaining or improving environmental conditions of the site.

As our building densities increase and our population grows, Crown Lands have an even stronger function to serve in the community, as public recreation spaces, habitat linkages, and green open space to continue an outdoor healthy lifestyle even when we no longer have our own backyard.

Please protect these lands, for us, and for the future generations.

Yours sincerely

Chris Cherry

President

Pottsville Community Association