

Submission
No 335

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Association for Berowra Creek

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for
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Inc.



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NSW Parliament Upper House Committees

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/lodge-a-submission.aspx?pk=2404

Parliamentary inquiry into Crown lands

The Association for Berowra Creek is concerned at the inadequate community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown Land. Crown land belongs to the people of NSW and must be conserved for future generations. It must not be sold or given to developers.

Crown land often contains undisturbed natural landscapes which provide food, shelter and habitats for endangered species. Crown land contributes to the conservation of native vegetation, wildlife corridors, biodiversity, and coastal environments, wetlands, rivers and estuaries in NSW. They are important for river health in NSW and must be properly maintained. Crown land is used for a range of recreational activities such as bushwalking, fishing, bird watching, surfing at beaches and kayaking. Access to Crown land must be maintained to allow these activities to continue.

There is a history of the transfer of public lands to private ownership in NSW. Two recent examples are Barangaroo¹ and the Paddington Bowling Club lease². The 95 hectares of public land at the Bay Precinct in the Glebe/White Bay area in Sydney could also end up as a traffic interchange instead of the much needed sports parks¹. Giving control of Crown lands to cash strapped local councils may result in councils selling valuable land and it may not, therefore, benefit the community if open space is in short supply. Hornsby Council has already resolved to sell 2 small parks to the private sector, including 18X Water St., Hornsby, which is in high density Belair Precinct where there is a documented shortage of recreation space³, and 111X New Line Rd., Cherrybrook⁴. The Association for Berowra Creek is concerned that fewer reporting requirements for Crown Reserves will result in less transparency and more public reserves being sold to the private sector. As a result, wildlife corridors and biodiversity will be lost.

Many of our members have farming friends who have recently used Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs). TSRs provide food for cattle and sheep during droughts, and after fires and floods. They provide shelter and breeding sites for threatened species, as they are not cleared¹. Many farmers would have been bankrupted after the recent droughts without access to these TSRs.

Driving along the TSRs is a traditional Australian cultural activity. The TSRs are important in keeping stock off the roads and preventing car accidents and fatalities caused by collisions with stock. TSRs must be protected for future generations. TSRs must be properly managed to prevent overgrazing. They should not be leased as they belong to the people of NSW.

Recommendations

Crown land must remain in public ownership, held on Trust by the State on behalf of the people of NSW, if it is to remain a valuable public resource. Crown land must be managed in an open, accountable and transparent way based on the principles of ecological sustainable development. There must be Plans of Management for all Crown lands and greater public participation in their management. Agencies responsible for the administration of Crown land, including Travelling Stock Routes, must work co-operatively with other land managers including State Forests, NPWS and councils to promote conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services.

Lee Kemp
Chairperson

REFERENCES

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