

Submission
No 340

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Parliamentary Inquiry into Crown Lands

I am alarmed at the inadequate community consultation and input 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 should not be given to local councils and developers, and Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) should not be leased out.

Crown Land contains undisturbed landscapes and contributes to biodiversity, wildlife corridors and conservation of our native wildlife. They are important for river health in NSW and must be maintained. Crown land is used for recreational activities such as bushwalking, kayaking, fishing, surfing, and swimming at beaches, all of which are part of the Australian way of life. To lose access to Crown Lands would be to lose our heritage and culture. Crown Land must remain in Trust for the people of NSW and for future generations. As a surfer, I regularly use Crown Land for rest and recreation. It should be available for all to use, not for the exclusive use by those wealthy enough to buy it.

I am alarmed that my farming friends were unaware of the planned disposal of TSRs. This indicates that the government has not adequately consulted with the community, especially the farming community that actually uses TSRs. During the recent drought, my farming friends used the TSRs to provide food for their beef cattle and to take them to market. I was in awe of their tales of mateship and laughs around the campfire, with a billy on the boil. Without continuous TSRs, some farmers would have gone bankrupt and lost the family farm. These TSRs help keep cattle and sheep off the roads, reducing road fatalities caused by collisions of cars with stock. They are used during drought and after floods and fire to feed cattle and sheep and to take them to market. Their use is part of traditional Australian farming culture. As TSRs are not cleared, they provide habitats, food and shelter for endangered species. TSRs must be conserved and managed to prevent overgrazing. They belong to the people of NSW.

NSW has a well-documented history of mismanaging Crown Lands and transferring public land to private ownership. Two examples include Barangaroo¹ and Paddington Bowling Club lease². The 95 hectare Bay Precinct at Glebe/White Bay is another example of where public land, which is needed for open space and sports fields, could end up as a traffic interchange². I live in Hornsby Shire. Hornsby Council has resolved to sell 2 small parks to private enterprise e.g. 18X Water St., Hornsby, where there is a documented shortage of open space³ in high density Belair Precinct, and 111X New Line Rd., Cherrybrook⁴. We need all the open space available, especially in high density zones. Access to open space has health benefits to the community⁵. Crown Land needs to be preserved for future generations. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Crown Land must remain in public ownership and held in Trust by the State on behalf of the people in NSW. Crown Land must be managed in an open, transparent and accountable manner, based on the principles of ecological sustainable development. Conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystems must be maintained. All Crown Lands should have Plans of Management that protect their biodiversity. Travelling Stock Routes should be managed so that ecosystems are conserved and overgrazing is prevented. Crown lands should not be handed to local councils. Regulation of Crown Lands should not be reduced.

REFERENCES

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3.

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4. http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/85436/Public-Hearing-Report_FINAL.pdf and

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5. <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/researchers-find-30-minutes-of-parklife-a-week-can-make-all-the-difference-20160627-gpsxk8.html>