

**Submission  
No 313**

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

**Name:** Mrs Jane Paul

**Date received:** 24 July 2016

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22nd July, 2016

The Convenor.  
Crown Land Upper House Inquiry  
NSW Parliament

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Upper House inquiry into Crown Land**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

I am a concerned citizen living in Orange.

I wish to make the following points in regards to the terms of reference for the inquiry.

- I cannot support any suggestions that Crown land be handed over to local Councils. Councils too often do not have the expertise necessary for such a responsibility, and absolutely should not be asked to do so without such expertise. Councils already are the lessees of some local Crown land for its management with mixed results. However any change would not be in the public interest and is very concerning as it could become an opening for private interest groups paving the way for disposal of the land for monetary gain. How this proposed transferral will take place is unknown, an undesirable situation leaving the community uninformed. Will the land be State or Local? We cannot agree to support such a proposal.
- I do believe that under-utilised or not actively managed Crown land should not be an excuse for their sell off; instead they must be retained in public ownership for the future. Crown lands have been conserved for generations and are special places with many attributes that are highly valued by this group. They provide habitat for birds and other fauna, even the tiniest remnant of vegetation on small parcels of Crown land is valuable.
- The classification of Crown lands as of high conservation value will be an advantage that will trigger the need for more active management especially for control of noxious weeds and pest animals. However lands already classified as such are increasingly at risk of being encroached upon for permits to carry out activities that undermine their ecologically sensitive nature, as in hunting and mountain bike riding in our local area (and elsewhere). Such pressure must not be countenanced, these lands are scarce and beyond value, they protect vegetation communities, unique geology, vulnerable fauna, and are not found anywhere else due to past land clearing and/or other development. Commercial activities can go elsewhere but conservation areas cannot.
- I am concerned that leasing of Crown land for commercial purposes may be considered as a legitimate activity. Any commercial gain from Crown land should be in the public interest, with protecting the social and environmental value of such land a priority. Access to Crown lands to the exclusion of the general public is strongly opposed. Even with strong opposition to undeveloped road closures, for

example, they have gone ahead. Community input and consultation is inadequate, or too often ignored, and needs to be strengthened to avoid undesirable situations arising. Actions the State has taken in matters such as the above are deplorable.

- Increased Aboriginal involvement in the management of Crown land to conserve its cultural and heritage values as well as environmental values is strongly supported by myself.
- Greater recognition of the ecological and social values of Crown land can be promoted by Government, and the Crown Land Act given greater power against future attempts to repeal for example, the current land management principles in the Crown Lands Act 1989. Those principles in the current Act ensure the public benefit of Crown land is preserved for the future. Loss of, or watering down of these principles will leave Crown land vulnerable to pressures not in the public interest. Other proposed changes also undermine the key principles of Crown land management, set out in section 11 of the Crown Lands Act 1989, including environment protection and the conservation of natural resources. In my view of this is not in the public interest.
- It is vital that TSRs and travelling stock routes be retained, funded and managed as in the past, and be accessible to the public. Their ecosystem function and other ecological attributes are irreplaceable.
- Public lands should be held on trust for the people of NSW; managed by the Government with management directed at identifying and protecting the diverse values of public lands (NCC@nature.org.au)
- The NSW Government proposals of significant changes to the way Crown land is managed in NSW are out of touch with public needs and desires of the community. Crown land must not be considered a commodity for governments' own 'use and abuse', they are precious jewels in the 'Crown' to be valued and protected in an open and transparent manner.

I wish to state that I value Crown Land very highly and want it kept in public ownership.

Yours sincerely

Jane Paul  
Citizen for our native vegetation