

Submission  
No 315

## INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Organisation:** Daroo Orange Urban Landcare Group

**Date received:** 24 July 2016

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DAROO

Orange Urban Landcare Group

PO Box 1127  
31 Kearneys Drive  
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21st July 2016

The Convenor.  
Crown Land Upper House Inquiry  
NSW Parliament  
20th July, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

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

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

Daroo Orange Urban Landcare Group was formed in 2002 with the aim of protecting and caring for areas of bushland or remnant vegetation in the urban area of Orange. With the support of government and non-government grants the group is presently caring for an Ecologically Endangered Community on Crown land containing remnant vegetation. ...

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

- We 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. 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.
- Our group cares for Wentworth Reserve in Orange city because of its ecological values and the need for such remnants to be appropriately managed. The community derives many benefits from the conservation of the reserve, there is walking with nature, jogging, children riding bicycles, Tai-chi, dog-exercising, appreciation of the beautiful trees, the birds and the peaceful setting.
- We 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 now s
- 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.

- We are 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.
- 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 the view of our Landcare group, 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.

Daroo Landcare values Crown Land very highly and want it kept in public ownership.

Yours sincerely  
Jane Paul  
Project Manager