

**Submission
No 152**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: South West Anglers Association Inc

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SOUTH WEST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INC.

Incorporating Angling Clubs of the Riverina District of New South Wales



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Inquiry into Crown Land.

South West Anglers Association Inc. (SWAA) would like to take the opportunity to comment on the inquiry into crown land in NSW.

SWAA is an Association of recreational fishing clubs in the south west and Riverina regions of NSW as well as clubs from northern Victoria. The Association has 25 member clubs and an individual membership exceeding 2,500.

Of particular interest to our members is any crown land that affords access to our waterways.

With the ever increasing participation in fishing, boating and associated recreational interests it has never been more important that access to our waterways is not only preserved but increased.

It is our view that the management of crown land in this regard has been poorly implemented and the main aim of those entrusted with that management has been focused on disposal rather than preservation for the use of the general public.

SWAA has been involved in a great number of proposals to sell off crown, or paper roads over the past few years. The attitude of land managers in these proposals is that the sale should go ahead unless solid grounds for retention are raised by interest groups such as ours. These objections are a significant workload on the people who work within these Associations and these people are in the main volunteers who give freely of their time to improve the freedoms of their members.

The role of representing the States 1 million recreational anglers, who contribute in excess of \$15 million annually in licence fees alone, falls to a small band of dedicated volunteers whose efforts are largely ignored by Government departments such as Lands.

Perhaps the attitude should be more about retention of these public lands in the first instance and those wishing to purchase the land in question should need to establish the lack of need to keep it in public hands.

The consultation regarding the disposal of public land is totally inadequate in its present form. To continually refer to websites to establish what might happen is very time

consuming and again an impost on the voluntary worker.

Perhaps if lands that were under consideration of sale could be grouped together in 6 or 12 month periods, and that information was circulated through the major groups and associations we might have a better chance to effectively deal with areas of potential loss.

Another significant issue of concern to this Association is the lack of follow up on decisions made following the public consultation process. There are numerous examples of decisions being made in our favour, and the land has been retained in public hands, only to have the adjoining landowners continue to use the land and deny access to the general public.

When a decision has been made to preserve a parcel of land for the public use, is it not too much to ask of the relevant Government Department to ensure that it becomes available to the public in a very short time.

The extent of Aboriginal claims over public land is disturbing and this Association believes that it is counterproductive to grant any single group exclusive use of a public resource. Our members would welcome representatives of any Aboriginal community to be a part of any management group, but that management group should be representative of all the people in the community.

It is vital that with our rapidly increasing population, and an ever diminishing amount of suitable locations for public use that we take immediate, appropriate and effective measures to preserve and indeed increase the public land available for use.

National Parks have succumbed to the "lock it up and leave it" management mentality, the current review of TSRs appears to heading towards the exclusion of many recreational activities and the reckless cashing in of paper roads and crown reserves will very rapidly deplete this country of the freedom to enjoy our magnificent outdoors for future generations.

Rural and regional communities in many cases have limited access to our rivers and streams and a vast amount of the available access is via public land.

It is therefore vital that any future management decisions take very serious considerations of the free and unrestricted use for recreational activities.

He time is overdue for a halt to the disposal of public land until a fair and comprehensive appraisal of the loss of the access and the economic and social impacts of such loss can be established.

Terry Maloney

Secretary. South West Anglers Association Inc