

**Submission
No 204**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Vivien Ward

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The Hon. Paul Green MLC

Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Submission to the Upper House Inquiry re Crown Land.

Dear Mr Green

I live in Randwick. I would like to express my concerns to this Inquiry concerning the future of Crown Land in NSW. Many of the most enjoyed and most treasured parts of our life-style are connected with Crown Land, and our free access to such varied areas.

However there are demands for development that do not seem to see the same value in this open public space. Not everything has to be valued in terms of dollars. As more and more people are being provided with only very small living space options, our Crown Land Estate must become increasingly essential for continuing public access.

a. The extent of Crown Land and the benefits of active use and management of that land to NSW.

- I understand that perhaps all the open space that we love is Crown Land – beaches, coastal headlands, ocean pools; Parks, National Parks; estuaries, rivers, water catchment areas. It probably includes community facilities – schools, sporting fields, places of worship, Town Halls . . . This all allows for a wide variety of uses, including both active and passive recreation, sporting facilities, community activities.

I also understand that Crown Land in NSW is in fact ‘owned’ by the people of NSW. It is an inheritance that we can all share, left by wise forebears, or from a time when there was less demand for development. We need to ensure that this inheritance is not squandered, but is so valued that it can also be passed on for future generations.

- In many areas Crown Land also provides the only habitat for wildlife, species that are increasingly becoming endangered, critically endangered, vulnerable to extinction. There is an environmental imperative to allow plant and animal species to survive, even to help them to survive, with the on-going protection of crown Land, including perhaps the expansion of crown Land to allow for at least effective wildlife corridors.

All succeeding State governments have a huge responsibility to maintain our Crown Lands, as public spaces. The land is not there as a windfall for sale or long term lease by a government of the moment. Council management seems to have been effective to date, but the change in Councils gives no certainty for the future.

b. Adequacy of community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown Land.

I think that there is a real concern that our public assets are no longer ours, a fear and a sense of anger that even heritage parkland has insufficient protection. From experience with the unfolding

of the SELR through Moore Park there is no confidence that the consultation process is really anything more than ticking a box. **Banners in Moore Park proclaim that 2016 is the 150th Anniversary of the People's Park** – and to celebrate it has become nothing more than a construction zone. Trees were removed to allow for a 'temporary' relocation of the whole of Anzac Parade through Moore Park. Earlier this year there was a lot of talk and uncertainty about a new stadium in Moore Park. The little used Albert Tibby Cotter Bridge is a prime example of lack of consultation in regard to public land.

The Malabar Headland, south of Maroubra Beach, was promised as a National Park by both major political parties. Then the Rifle Range lease was extended for 50 years. While Randwick Council has been working to create a coastal walkway, there is still not a great confidence in the future of all of this land as public.

I was surprised to read that stock routes were being sold off. There could possibly be a range of Crown Land parcels that could go the same way. I am not confident that the public ownership of Crown Land will be of high regard if development opportunities come along. My experience from attending every public consultation for the SELR has left me with little faith that public concerns are heeded at all.

c. The most appropriate and effective measures for protecting Crown Land so that it is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Maintain public ownership and free and open public access. Public access and use of open space is very important in Australia. There needs to be care with increasing calls for tourism developments. We are very lucky that we have free access to beaches, in contrast to other parts of the world where 'private beach' areas are fenced off. Recently Taronga Zoo presented plans for tourist accommodation within the zoo. It will clearly be an exclusive facility. That is a significant change in the use of that Crown Land, and not a desirable change at all.

Protect Crown Land from permanent built foot prints. To ensure this allows for varied uses. Centennial Park can hold major events, but when they are packed up the fields return to free, public access. The Kiama Headland can host the Kiama Show, football games, Conference activities from the adjacent Pavilion. **Hire fees for playing fields should be affordable so that they can be used by a variety of sports, and at all levels.**

Total protection of protected wildlife and the habitats they need to survive must be effectively enforced. This should include coastal and marine areas where necessary.

d. Aboriginal involvement with Crown Land.

Clearly there are long-held connections with their land by Aboriginal people in my council area. The Community at La Perouse also maintains their traditional connections with the Jervis Bay area. Respect for their knowledge and their work is essential.

Conclusion.

I fear that a trend to differentiate 'sale' from '99 year lease' is being used to privatise more and more publicly owned assets. Crown Land must be protected from this. While there may be needs to release land for housing at times, that selection needs to be judicious. Crown Land is for the people, not just for fads of the moment, and not just for quick profits to be made by some. The

honest preservation of this Crown Land Estate is essential, along with a conscious care for its environmental protection. I hope that this can be ensured for now and for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to your Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Vivien Ward

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