

**Submission
No 214**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Maria Bradley

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Hon Paul Green MLC
Committee Chair
GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a late submission into the NSW Upper House Inquiry into Crown Land

I have seen Crown land in my area disappearing into the hands of private developers over the last 20 years and so I believe this Inquiry is both necessary and timely. I have been a volunteer administrator in junior sport and have a family.

Crown land is an invaluable community resource. By having public ownership of crown land we are allowing EQUITABLE ACCESS to much needed amenities such as Centennial and Moore Park as well as more generally parks, beaches, wharves , ports, camping and caravans, cemeteries and bowling clubs. Crown land can also an invaluable habitat and areas providing bio diversity which is our responsibility to protect.

> Terms of Reference

> A- the extent of Crown Land and the benefits of active use and management of that land in NSW

- we need a map and register of Crown land in order to understand what we have and what we are losing when this is sold as well as the amount the land has sold for and to who.
- using crown land should place social, heritage and environmental considerations above economic.
- having crown land allows people to access facilities in an affordable manner. Parks and beaches are free and allow passive recreation and well as some free organised activities such as BBQ and off the leash dog parks.

For sports that depend on crown land and having this in the hands of the public means that volunteers can run a club that allows children and families to participate in sports because their fees are kept low. Once a club has added expenses, then people can no longer afford that sport as fees will increase so the club can pay its expenses including lease

A hockey club in Sydney's South East has had its rent increased by its local council by 200% and its lease not renewed. This club has several hundred members and is now in a vulnerable situation.

Surf clubs are very different to most other sporting clubs, they enjoy beautiful coastal locations with large halls allowing them to have a successful commercial aspect. Other clubs eg bowling clubs are usually not in this position and I hope that the Committee will acknowledge this difference.

If responsibility for Crown land is given to local councils, appropriate funding and systems must be established to prevent change-of-use, lease or sale. Thereby ensuring that future generations are able to access these facilities as well.

> Case Study Crown land Sold in Sydney's East

I have seen many bowling clubs sold to developers in the east, these include the Dover Heights Bowling club, Maroubra bowling club. Other Crown land includes the sale of. Maroubra Bay High School, Vaucluse High School, Areas of Centennial and Moore Parklands. This means the community

today and future generations will no longer be able to access this open space or this facility. This is becoming even more relevant today as our population continues to increase and our facilities and amenities decrease.

> Case Study Professional Organised Sport and its Acquisition of Parks

The increase in population has seen local parks designated (and bequeathed) for passive use come under pressure from professional organised sports including rugby league, rugby and cricket.

Bardon park in Coogee is one such example where an off leash dog park is used for junior rugby league. Heffron Park and Moore Park are other examples.

The athletic facility of ES Marks has a designated specific use ie athletic field , it is well used by schools for a variety of sports as well as Little Athletics and its original use and intent should be protected , respected and enhanced not compromised or encroached on by other sports.

This suggests the community need more open spaces not less.

> B- the adequacy of community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown Land

-It is not fair to place a commercial or market value to Crown land when assessing the "opportunity cost" or reduction in value, of reserving the land for community use. Marking the land value up can result in a pressure to sell the Crown land.

It is difficult to place a market value on Crown land eg an off leash dog park or a tree filled park which allows people to escape the stress of their urban environment or busy lives. It is well documented that open green space provides important health and psychological benefits. Having affordable places where people can enjoy passive and organised activities is essential to a healthy and happy community and the productivity of that community.

- the public should be widely consulted before any change to Crown land occurs, an advertisement in the local paper for example is not sufficient and a long notice should also be given. Council Community Precincts are a place where information can be also distributed.

> C- the most appropriate and effective measures for protecting Crown land so that it is preserved and enhanced for future generations

-It is important that Crown land is available for future generations to enjoy just as we have. Existing legislation regarding the protection of Crown land should be strengthened and execute funding should be allocated to protect, enhance and where necessary, acquire more Crown land. Any changes in the legislation should propose ecological sustainable development with respect to Crown land.

-social, cultural and environmental concerns should always be placed above economic considerations when deciding the future of Crown land and a collaborative approach be taken.

-where Crown land offers an important habitat for our wildlife this should never be considered for sale or development. We are losing species at an increasing rate and unless we make a commitment to place conservation above economics, this will continue and we run the risk of endangering our unique wild life eg the koala currently on the threatened species list.

> D- the extent of Aboriginal land claims over Crown lands and opportunities to increase Aboriginal involvement in the management of Crown land

- mechanisms to identify and properly facilitate land claims over Crown land should be established. Currently the Indigenous Rangers is a highly successful program and programs such as this could be strengthened and widened.

> Summary

Again thank you for this opportunity, this is such an important issue and there are many conflicting interests but as Crown land is owned by the government, its primary focus should be protection and enhancement of the land for social, heritage and environmental concerns above economic for both people and wildlife.

Maria Bradley