

**Submission
No 239**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission by Mr G J McCarry into Enquiry into Crown Lands

Crown land is extensive, making up approximately 42% of New South Wales. Most is in the Western Division of NSW and is leasehold land.

The remainder is in the more populous central and eastern parts of the State and is of even more significance on account of its lesser area in places with higher population density. Such parcels are therefore subject to more intensive use and are more likely to be of value to the community at large.

- Crown land extends over a very wide range of ecosystems and consequently provides habitat for a large variety of bird and animal life.

It contains large tracts of relatively undisturbed landscape, even if they fall short of "wilderness".

- Crown land is used for a wide range of active and passive recreational activities and should therefore be managed actively to ensure that public enjoyment of and access to these activities is maintained.
- Independently of active use, Crown land has significant environmental values, and when properly managed, contributes enormously to the conservation of native vegetation, wildlife habitat and corridors, biodiversity and coastal environments, wetlands, rivers and estuaries in NSW. The retention and appropriate management of Crown land will provide a long-term public benefit including in the form of ecosystem services, landscape resilience and river health.

- Crown land of high conservation value needs active management including control of weeds and pest animals and ensuring that its ecological value is not undermined by commercial activities such as grazing.
 - Reducing active management of the Western Division of NSW threatens biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as the viability of agricultural land, and will significantly increase carbon emissions. Proposed changes to the way Crown land is managed in the Western Division include conversion of some leasehold land to freehold land, and removing requirements that management be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
 - Changes to Crown land management will be exacerbated by proposed changes to native vegetation laws in NSW which, if passed, will see land clearing rules significantly weakened by the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill, including enabling broad-scale land clearing.
 - Controlled grazing of TSRs has helped to conserve significant parcels of remnant vegetation including endangered ecological communities and threatened species in the Central Division. TSRs need appropriate grazing regimes and management to maintain their importance as wildlife corridors.