

**Submission
No 240**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Dr Tatiana Paipetis

Date received: 29 July 2016

Dr Tatiana Paipetis

28 July 2016

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 6

NSW Upper House

NSW Parliament

Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into the Future of Crown Land in NSW

I thank Samuel Griffith for permitting an extension, thereby affording me the opportunity to make this submission.

While I am thankful for the opportunity to make this submission, I respectfully submit that the notice period for submissions and the lack public awareness and thereby the opportunity for making such submissions is of serious concern. The future of NSW Crown Land will have an enduring long-term impact on current and future generations and warrants greater time both for consultation and consideration. There are many community, cultural and resident groups who will be impacted by any changes in the laws and ownership of what is currently Crown Land and affording these groups and concerned and impacted citizens the opportunity to make their opinion home is central to good government.

The Government is proposing to change the way crown land is managed. This includes the introduction of a business-orientated model and the transfer of crown land to councils. As a consequence, this will see land being reclassified as operational land, or alternately land commercialised or sold off. It is unconscionable for government to proceed down this road without proper and thorough consultation with all impacted stakeholders. In addition to inadequate public stakeholder consultation on the use and disposal of Crown Land, I raise my profound concern regarding the lack of readily accessible information on planned sale, leasing and granting of other interests of Crown land.

The exhibition of the Crown Lands White Paper in 2014 was inadequate and not well understood. This is reflected by the low submission rate, with only 626 submissions made. Further, the

government has indicated it will introduce legislation into parliament soon without making the legislation available for public comment before its introduction. This is not acceptable.

In addition to the above listed concerns regarding process, I raise a number of concerns around the planned sale or transfer of Crown land. These include: i) the lack of regard for native title claims on this land; ii) the responsibility of government in to preserve and maintain Crown Land with important environmental, cultural or social value as public land; iii) the need to re-purpose Crown land from current use to new uses that are in the public interest.

To afford all environmental, Indigenous, cultural, community and social groups the opportunity and right to comment on and make submissions on the value that the Crown land in question has to them, it is essential that a clear public register of Crown Lands be made freely available to all members of the public. The long term interests of these groups and future generations far outweigh the short-term goals of government to profit from public assets in the form of Crown land. It is grossly unjust for government to act in its own short-term interest and place this ahead of the greater long-term public good. This is not the role of government.

I urge the Committee to afford the First Nations people of NSW the right and opportunity to present their concerns and interests for consideration. The current consultation process has not adequately encouraged or allowed for this.

Similarly, much broader and in depth consultation is required with relevant and potentially impacted environmental, cultural, community and social groups with respect to each parcel of land that is considered for sale, lease or transfer by the government of NSW. The government is elected to represent the interests of those that it represents and must act accordingly. Quick sales that without consultation for short-term political and/or private interest rather than long-term public gain is reprehensible and unconscionable.

Finally, there are clear demands in the fast growing and densely populated urban centres of NSW for more public facilities such as parklands, schools and community centres, to name a few. When there are growing and sometimes critical public demands, for instance the need for more high schools in Sydney's city fringe, the sale of Crown owned buildings and property to private developers rather than the repurposing and opening of much needed schools and other public amenities is short-sighted and grossly unjust. It certainly highlights that the NSW government is not acting in the interest of those that it represents.

I thank the Committee for taking the time to consider the above and urge the Committee to act in the long-term interests of the citizens and in particular, our children and grandchildren, the future citizens of NSW who will benefit most from Crown land being retained as such.

Sincerely,

Dr Tatiana Paipetis