

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Paul Beckett

Date received: 10 August 2016

Partially
Confidential

Please find attached a copy of the Report I presented to _____, subsequent to this report several things have transpired as follows ;

1. The lessee is now deceased.
2. The current status of the lease has not been made available.
3. Council inspected the site but it is believed access was not gained.
4. Two floods have occurred and access to the public is no longer possible, unless by boat, due to the considerable riparian erosion.
5. Council Riparian repair has been commenced nearby at The Haven river bank under the State & Council Joint funded Dredging Initiative. But it is unlikely that access will ever be possible as per above.

I would like to request that this information and this email be forwarded to The Hon Paul Green MLC for inclusion in the Crown Land Inquiry and a view to a determination of the necessary action for the future of this Crown Land Property to better benefit of the State & The South Coast Community in General.

..... Kind Regards..... Paul Beckett..... JP Retired. Sussex Inlet.

FARNHAM HEADLAND. SUSSEX INLET.

1. Brief History.

This Headland is a vital community/public and Government asset with substantial Indigenous and early settler history as well as considerable natural assets.

Geology.

Permian sand and ironstone, siltstone and shale with quaternary dunes and alluvial deposits in the adjacent estuary.

Crown land added to the Conjola National Park, excluding the lease area of Inlet Holiday Cabins adjacent to Stingray Bay, being under Land & Water Conservation and Council control.

Traditional owners being the Aboriginal people of the Dharawal-Dhurge language group.

The former Australian railways camp moved to the other side of the Inlet left footings, also glass bottle retaining walls, which are now degraded.

Substantial history exists of Indigenous presence on this site and connections with the Walter Hood Wreck site, also the early Alamein Road and recreational camp sites.

2. Future Potential.

The current lessee has indicated that during his tenure future building is intended – National Park assets in the area have been degraded by erosion, but not withstanding this, the Headland has tremendous future potential as a public and community asset, only limited by the imagination.

Eco-tourism, walking/biking, orienteering tracks, nature and Indigenous education, future jump off point for natural power generation, and fish farming.

Perhaps even a sheltered harbour and marina, sea night navigation beacon, and you can just keep adding to the list. It should be noted that recent erosion problems have made access not possible unless by boat or permission from the gated access, or by the dangerous rocks around the point from Cudmirrah Beach.

These wonderful views of the Inlet can now only be had by either paid occupation, boat, or dangerous access, and locked away to the average public.

It is also of note that one of the recommendations under the St Georges Estuary Management Plan was for a seaward boat ramp and facility, avoiding the bar altogether. This option, only limited by the cost, should not be excluded from the future planning when the population may change considerably, making this a necessity.

3. Current Lease.

The area of two acres is under Land & Water Conservation and Shoalhaven City Council authority.

In 1918 Mr Henry Hourigan leased these two acres of Headland from the Commonwealth for a holiday camp tent site. Humpies were later added, after twenty nine years the lease was sold to Mr Frank Sherry who added cabins. Then sold to Mr Tom Lowe in 1974. Then the lessee became Mr Charlie Cropper in 1976. Electricity and a vehicle track access was added to the now know Inlet Holiday Cabins or Croppers Cabins.

This lease was extended to a transferable lease for a period of twenty years, transferable on the passing of Mr Cropper Senior but not withstanding a new land assessment including changes in planning control and Community consultation. (As can be seen from NSW Hansard, attached.) The actual termination date is not clear but could be six years or less.

Furthermore the predicted effects for climate change sea level rise would also make human occupation of that site less valid, and in time may even present a safety concern for any occupier.

Clearly erosion of String Ray Bay, The Haven and The Headland would also suggest that the bar no longer protects these areas from erosion with heavy seas, with possible inclusion of this area as "Hot Spot" assessment declaration under the NSW Coastal protection Management Plan and Act of 1979 amended 2011 to include Ministerial concurrence.

This Headland is of significant interest to all stake holders with tremendous potential and will be hotly debated in the future.

Summary.

Considering climate change and sea level rise, the lack of an up to date study and recommendation of halting future building until a proper assessment of the future use, the erosion, and other issues, will not go unnoticed by future generations.

THE OPPOSING ARGUMENT.

The main opposing argument to this submission, in my opinion, is the safety aspect of having someone to rescue a person in trouble in the Inlet.

The opposing argument for this however would be, that person should be a qualified surf rescue person, and if not, would they also be placing their own life in danger?

A night watch is valid, but someone in the Inlet at night is less likely.