

**Submission
No 198**

**INQUIRY INTO ACCESS RESTRICTIONS TO PUBLIC
LANDS AND WATERWAYS**

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I am writing to express my support for restricting activities in the state's national parks and nature reserves which could adversely affect nature conservation.

As the pressures of increasing population, climate change and agricultural development threaten our ecosystems, protection of our parks as vital islands of biodiversity is vital.

Many studies have now shown that disturbance of natural areas increases the likelihood of weed invasion, bushfires and feral animals all of which destabilise the plant and animal communities there. Lantana invasion of the coastal eucalypt forests is prevalent in logged areas but virtually non-existent in undisturbed forest on the NSW north coast and ranges. Logged wet eucalypt forests in the same region were markedly more likely to suffer crown fires in the severe bushfires of 2019/2020. Having lived and worked in Taree for 30 years I was able to witness these differences first hand. To contemplate allowing logging of any sort in our reserved areas would be to threaten their prime role as areas of nature conservation.

I also wish to express my opposition to allowing the development of commercial facilities within our national parks and high impact activities such as dirt bikes and hunting. These parks have historically been accessible to all regardless of their wealth and should remain so and should not be limited by the activities of others.

Australia has a dreadful record of plant and animal extinctions since European arrival. Foremost in deciding future park policy should be the long term security of the plants and creatures within our parks.

I have been fortunate to have visited my favourite national park, Barrington Tops, many times over the last 50 years. I have hiked there in the midsummer heat and enjoyed the cool mountain streams and Beech forests. I have camped there in deep winter snow. I have enjoyed it with family and friends. Always as I look south from Carey's Peak, I'm struck by the fact that it really is a miracle, a biological unspoiled island within sight of the Pacific Ocean and the city of Newcastle.

To restrict the pressures on places like Barrington Tops is to maximise the chance of such areas remaining ecologically intact. Hopefully this sentiment will direct any policy decisions for our parks.