



RON. G.J. and Margery SMITH

March 1, 2006

The Secretary  
Senate Environment,  
Communications Technology and the Arts References Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary, **Re: Senate Enquiry Into National Parks**

**This submission relates mainly to Kosciuszko National Park.**

The conditions found here also relate to many other NSW National Parks.

- 1) **WHO ARE WE:** The authors have during the last 22 years skied, fished, walked and back-packed widely over the whole of KNP and have extensive photographic collections featuring the Huts, the fire and service trails, trigonometric sites, important features such as the Main Range, the Warragong Peaks, the Bogong Range, Lady Northcott's Canyon and the Great Alpine Walking Track from Canberra to the Murray River. In excess of 10 000 kilometers walking was covered during our studies of the KNP. Margery served six years as a member of the KNP Advisory Committee. In addition Margery an approved amateur mycologist is a Member of Fungimap Australia and is an approved student of fungi and lichen that have symbiotic relationships with most trees and plants in the park. She has a library in excess of 2000 photographs of non vascular plants that survive in KNP and keep the whole park healthy.

2) **TERMS OF REFERENCE:** (a) Values and objectives of national parks and reserves

- It is most difficult for any person to know precisely the difference between, wilderness areas, national parks and various reserves created for different and sometimes illogical reasons. We have made submissions to many proposals by the State Government to create Wilderness Areas but are not aware that any suggestions made have been adopted.
- We find that some of the requirements of the Wilderness Act (created by Bob Carr) are ludicrous and that this Act is used to exclude people, horses vehicles etc from heritage areas formally used by them since settlement.
- We do believe that some areas should be excluded from general use but not to the extent demanded by the 'Green Movement' and granted by the Government
- Many reserves have been created for local reasons. Eg. Reserve for the 'Plains Warbler' (see addendum)
- South Australia and Queensland allow and provide vehicular access to their Wilderness Areas. Why can this not be done in NSW?
- The spiel created by one section of the KNP in advertising by way of brochures and TV is often at odds with actual conditions
- "The NSW Labor Government's announcement of 21 new National Parks and reserves was ludicrous given it was failing dismally to properly manage the existing ones. NSW parliamentarian, Andrew Stoner, said today


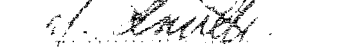
*Mr. Stoner said Labor had today expanded the National Park estate without giving a thought to how it would adequately manage and resource them."*

- 3) **TERMS OF REFERENCE:** (b) Whether Governments are providing sufficient resources to meet those objectives and management requirements.
- Any user of KNP will rapidly become aware that insufficient resources are being provided to maintain the Park in the conditions existing today. Most facets of the park conditions have deteriorated since day 1 of the Park's existence and daily change for the worse
  - The small number of workers currently employed in KNP have no hope of keeping the park free of feral animals, noxious weeds, service and fire hazards as did the employees of graziers controlling over 300 leases that were converted to KNP. This meant that in excess of 600 workers were employed during the grazing period to maintain the leases free of weeds, feral animals and hazards as was required by the terms of the leases
  - We have spent many hundreds of hours removing pine wildings, cotoneasters and hawthorn trees that have escaped into the Park from private dwellings. Also made concerted efforts to eliminate blackberries on the foreshores of Three Mile Dam
- 4) **TERMS OF REFERENCE** (c) any threats to the objectives and management of our National Parks.
- The most noticeable threats to management are, the amount of pressure that "Green Groups" are able to place on the Government to achieve their aims. These groups, to us, appear to control the Advisory Committees and the Advisory Council.
  - The Wilderness Act, written by Bob Carr, *pre-supposes the primacy of the bio-centric view on wilderness identification and management over the "anthropocentric" view*, should be changed. Such changes will allow activities by humans in such a manner that the bio-diversity that currently exists will be maintained.
- 5) **TERMS OF REFERENCE** (d) the responsibilities of governments with regard to creation etc.
- The message we have tried to convey in submissions opposing wilderness declarations has been; "before declaring national parks and wilderness areas, noxious weeds, feral animals should be removed from the areas and fire hazards reduced"
  - Before declaring national parks and reserves the government should take into consideration, loss of jobs and that forests are self re-newing. The Bago forest that has been logged for over 100 years is an example of permanent timber producing forests
- 6) **TERMS OF REFERENCE** (e) records of governments with regard to creation etc.
- Bob Carr, when declaring that a new National Park was to be declared on the escarpment above Woollongong made the statement, "I want to finish the JOB". During his term as Premier he has created many huge bonfires that he is pleased to call 'National Parks'. These (bonfires) national parks were to be managed to preserve the National Icons included and the bio-diversity therein for our children and our grand children to enjoy. These (bonfires) national parks, because of under financing, influence of so called Green movement and incompetent management have destroyed the forests of the

magnificent Australian icon called the Great Dividing Range, nearby ecosystems and bio diversity from Canberra to the Victorian border and then some

- National Parks and reserves should not be created before funding is available to maintain them.
- NPWS should have, on staff, at least one mycologist so that the health of the non-vascular plants are monitored because the health of trees and plants above ground depends on them.

Yours faithfully Ron Smith.

Margery Smith

**ADDENDUM:**

- 1) From terms of reference (2) above - Plains Warbler reserve. We understand that NPWS purchased at great expense two former sheep stations in the western division of NSW for the express purpose of preserving the Plains Warbler, a small bird that inhabited the two properties. Houses and sheds were demolished, fences removed, windmills removed, dams filled-in and the area made ready for the threatened Warbler. Within 6 months a small notice appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald stating that the scheme was a failure because the Plains Warbler was dependant on sheep for its survival. Not one word of what has happened to the Warbler has appeared anywhere since. Nor has the cost been divulged!