



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

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RE: SUBMISSION TO NSW TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVES REVIEW

I am making this submission on behalf of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc (HBOC), based in the Hunter Region of NSW. HBOC is the largest club or group in the Hunter Region that caters specifically for those with an interest in birds in their natural habitat, with approximately 350 members. HBOC is affiliated with BirdLife Australia; the country's largest bird conservation organisation with over 85,000 members and supporters across the country. HBOC are most concerned with the Government's program of divestment of land assets through the Crown Roads sale process, *Crown Lands Act 2016* and possibly through this Travelling Stock Reserves Review.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Once again comment is sought on a substantially important issue with inadequate time for interested parties to visit areas and make comprehensive submissions.

The allocated time may be adequate for farmers to check out their local TSRs or comment on those TSRs that they utilise in their immediate vicinity but broader comment on a wide range of TSRs is stifled. Thus the opportunity for stakeholders such as HBOC to make strategic assessment of the review is extremely limited.

Until the Local Land Services (LLS) released the mapping tool, the location of many TSRs was unknown except perhaps by farmers utilising them as part of their property or for drought relief. Access and use for recreational purposes was limited by lack of knowledge of location and concerns of trespassing on private property.

GENERAL COMMENT

The Public Consultation Paper states *"TSRs contain significant environmental values including important remnants of native vegetation in highly cleared landscapes, endangered ecological communities and habitat for threatened species, such as koalas. The long, linear nature of the TSR network ensures that these species can move through and disperse across the landscape."*

In NSW, up to 25% of bird species are listed as threatened under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, with several species also listed nationally under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. One of the mostly highly threatened guilds of birds in NSW are those that occur within the temperate woodlands, with numerous species already listed under the aforementioned legislation and many more species showing serious declines. About 85% of

temperate woodlands have already been cleared and much of the remnant 15% is highly fragmented and dominated by invasive/aggressive species. The retention of woodland and forest in NSW must be a high priority and TSRs inherently contain important remnant vegetation that serves as habitat for these threatened and declining woodland bird species.

There is an imperative that those TSRs with environmental values are preserved and managed as wildlife refuges and for approved recreational activities. Additionally those adjoining rivers or streams, whilst providing high value habitat and drought refuge importance, should also be maintained to provide access to the waterway for recreational activities. Where an unused TSR adjoins or is in close proximity to a national park perhaps consideration could be given to incorporating that TSR into the national park. In these instances there should not be a considerable burden on national park land managers, as these are infill sites and would not add a significant area of management area to the estate, but would have profound benefits for conservation.

With increasing fuel costs, declining petrol stocks, increasing droughts, floods and bushfire from climate change there may be a likelihood that TSRs may be needed again in the future. The precautionary principle should be invoked where divestment of any TSR is considered as re-acquisition may be difficult.

CATEGORY 2 & 3 TSRS

Due to time constraints my comment was limited to identifying TSRs in the Hunter Valley from the Mapping Tool and locating them in Google Maps Satellite View to ascertain vegetation cover and possible value for biodiversity conservation.

Below are details of the TSR's viewed which appear to have high biodiversity value and suggested actions for reservation. This list is not a complete list of all TSRs which may have environmental conservation or biodiversity values in the Hunter Valley.

TSR REFERENCE	NAME	SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE RESERVATION OR RE-PURPOSE
R 23425	Sawyers Gully	Incorporate into Werakata National Park
R 24159	Lovedale	Incorporate into Werakata National Park
R 43521	Corrabare	Incorporate into Corrabare State Forest
R 54172	Belford	Incorporate into Belford National Park
R 43565	Omadale	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 39652	Omadale	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 68495	Omadale	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 85283	Omadale	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 9519	Cessnock	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 54096	Ovingham	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 16043	Milbrodale	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 54401	Hollydene	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 57625	Brawboy	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity
R 54433	Brawboy	Reserve for environmental conservation or biodiversity

Thank you,