

Submission  
No 41

## INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Organisation:** Vacluse Bowling Club

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# VAUCLUSE BOWLING CLUB LTD

## **Inquiry into Crown land**

### **A submission by the Vaucluse Bowling Club**

#### **Vaucluse Bowling Club**

A committee meeting of the Vaucluse Progress Association in 1938, was given a lease of a portion of Samuel Park, Vaucluse, which had been withheld from sale in 1930 for the purpose of public recreation. On January 12, 1939, the Vaucluse Bowling Club was formed and the greens and clubhouse were subsequently built by the Bowling Club.

For 77 years the Vaucluse Bowling Club has operated successfully on Crown land. (Lease number 201801). This community sports organisation is deeply embedded within the community. During that time, the Vaucluse Bowling Club has funded improvements and the maintenance of the buildings and grounds.

In lawn bowl's heyday after World War II, there were as many as 800 NSW bowling clubs. In 2014 there were 540. Vaucluse Bowling Club has seen several nearby clubs close over the decades: Rose Bay, Bellevue Hill and more recently Paddington.

Vaucluse Bowling Club has been fortunate as its clean air and grand views have set it apart from many others. Good governance and a small but committed group of members have ensured its existence.

The location of the Bowling Club on New South Head Road, a main thoroughfare means that it attracts a lot of passing traffic and interest.

It should not be forgotten that lawn bowls is a healthy outdoor sport which is enjoyed by people of all ages and at top level by teenagers and older people and is always popular with spectators at Commonwealth Games. Lawn bowls exercises co-ordination, balance and fine motor skills, - all worthy for maintenance of health and the social interaction is beneficial for all ages. Croquet, a lesser known sport, has similar benefits.

#### **Current Use**

The following presently uses the land at 80-82 New South Head Road, Vaucluse:

- Vaucluse bowlers
- Vaucluse croquet players
- Tennis players
- Vaucluse community garden gardeners
- Local public school bowls and tennis periodic activities
- Occasional bowls days for schools' old boys and social or work groups



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The clubhouse is used for:

- Infants & older children's gym classes during the day
- Alcoholics Anonymous meetings at night
- Dancing & Zumba classes
- Martial arts classes
- Book club meetings
- Men's chat club meetings
- Centre of Jewish Life dinners
- Miscellaneous social gatherings

The land and the clubhouse have good use by the local community for a range of activities.

The land has been used lawfully, fairly & constructively, without prejudice to any individual or group.

A conservative estimate of people who actively engage with activities at the club would be at least 300 people per week.

## **Issues**

There has been poor consultation with the community regarding this Inquiry.

Given that one of the aspects of the inquiry is for the General Purpose Standing Committee to comment upon the 'adequacy of community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown land', it is ironic that our organisation received no information about this Inquiry from the NSW Government.

If not for our own awareness of sector issues, you would not be reading this submission today. How many other community-based organisations were ignored? It should have been standard procedure to write to all organisations who are currently tenants of Crown land and asking them to participate in the Inquiry. We recognize that the Inquiry has been publicised but often to larger entities such as Councils and Trusts. If you want grass roots engagement the Inquiry needed to communicate more directly. The system at the Department of Primary Industry can generate monthly invoices very well. The same database should have been used to seek input into this Inquiry. We know that you will be missing out on a plurality of voices.

We have found our dealing with the Department of Primary Industries to be poor. We welcome the possibility of this Inquiry to strengthen the communication process between community groups and government bureaucrats dealing with Crown land matters. Reducing red tape and streamlining administration would be of great benefit for the community and provide cost savings for government.



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The recommendation from the White Paper to 'help grow the NSW economy' is dangerous. If interpreted as a money making venture. The great danger with this Inquiry is that it will give permission to government to sell Crown land to developers or fully commercial enterprises. We are also opposed to the Department of Primary Industries – Land transitioning to a public trading enterprise. This is clearly a key agenda item of the NSW government and one that we see as very flawed and not in the best interest of the community.

To this end we strongly advocate that Crown land remains with the state and is not devolved to local Council. Although no level of government is free of vested interests, local council has fewer checks and balances in place. In relation to the idea of market rent for tenants, this would cripple our small organisation.

We have concerns about potential loss of environmental, heritage and social values if the outcomes of the Inquiry are not fairly managed.

## **Recommendations:**

1. That proper and full consultation takes place with organisations currently leasing Crown Land.
2. That qualitative and quantitative research is undertaken with community members leasing Crown land.
3. Install a simple and effective lease management system.
4. Establish a community reference committee to inform government of issues facing the tenants of Crown land.
5. Provide long term leases for tenants.
6. Provide below market level rental for not for profit and community groups.
7. That the Minister not be required to approve minor changes to tenancy agreement and renewal of leases.
8. That the management of crown land remains with the Department of Primary Industry – Land.
9. The requirement to have plaques on Crown land recognizing the original Aboriginal tribes that inhabited the area.

Submitted by

The Board of Vaucluse Bowling Club

[vauclusebowlingclub@gmail.com](mailto:vauclusebowlingclub@gmail.com)

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