



CENTRAL ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY INC.
(FOUNDED 1937)

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Feedback on the draft State Strategic Plan for Crown land

Please see the following submissions in respect of the draft State Strategic Plan for Crown land

Introduction

These submissions have been prepared on behalf of the Central Acclimatisation Society Inc, which was initially incorporated under the Fisheries Act and subsequently under the Associations Incorporation Act.

The Society has a long history of enhancing freshwater fish stocks in the Central Tablelands of NSW by re-stocking and preservation and restoration of key aspects of fish habitat, including spawning beds, refuge pools, riparian vegetation (which hosts a large variety of terrestrial insects which form a critical part of the diet of many freshwater fish) and works closely with Local Land Services and NSW Fisheries.

Our Wallerawang Branch has vigorously fought to protect the viability of the upper Coss River and of trout spawning beds in particular. Our interest is not limited to recreational fish species, such as trout, bass or golden perch. It extends to conservation of threatened species such as the Macquarie Perch. In fact, the Society has taken a position of strong support of the Macquarie Perch recovery project in the Central tablelands.

Our Sofala Branch has been vigorous over decades in seeking to protect and enhance the Murray Cod population in the upper Macquarie River and has been very supportive of the trout Cod recovery programme, solely as a conservation issue.

Virtually all our members are keen freshwater anglers with experience in freshwater fishing around Australia (e.g. Cape York, the Kimberly, Victorian high country, Northern Territory, waters of the MDB and eastern watershed) and overseas (New Zealand, Alaska, Japan etc), and in the Central Tablelands of NSW in particular.

Access to rivers and streams is critically important to a viable freshwater fishery and many access points in the Central Tablelands are via Crown lands, such as TSRs, and other public land such as Crown roads. There are many additional points of access which could be effected via Crown lands, if the Strategic plan were appropriately finalised and implemented.

Submissions addressing the draft State Strategic Plan for Crown land

3.3.1 Enable jobs growth, commercial opportunities and sustainable economic progress in regional and rural NSW

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Submission

We are disappointed by the seeming favouring of the recreational needs of coastal dwellers and virtual silence in the *draft State Strategic Plan for Crown land* as to comparable needs of rural populations.

The beds of many inland rivers and streams appear to be Crown Land as the left and right banks of many a water course form the boundaries (as metes and bounds) of the adjacent freehold subdivisions, yet this is not acknowledged at all in the *draft State Strategic Plan*.

For many rural people, picnicking, canoeing or swimming in rivers and streams is the equivalent of going to the beach or the harbour for many city people. This is not acknowledged in the Vision. Furthermore, the intangible benefits of recreational fishing should not be overlooked (see *Identifying the health and well-being benefits of recreational fishing*, Prof A. McManus, Dr W. Hunt, J. Storey, J. White; FRDC report 2011/217).

It is incontestable that improved access to rivers and streams has significant attraction for many tourists, and the angling tourist in particular. See further below on tourism.

Expand regional tourism

Submission

We strongly support this and note the importance of the attractions of inland rivers and streams for tourism.

There are many tourists prepared to travel in regional NSW in pursuit of bird watching, recreational fishing or kayaking.

For example, the author of these submissions often travels to NZ to fish because of the significantly better access to rivers and streams. In so doing, he met an American missionary couple on long service leave from their posting in south Asia who had sought out the same remote water course as the author in order to try for a photograph of a black stilt (a water bird). Sometime weeks later, while fishing down Deniliquin way, he met the same couple engaged in the same pursuit, now in Australia. But to catch the fish or get the bird photograph, one needs legal access to the river or stream.

Such tourists as the bird watcher or angler are largely invisible to the mainstream tourist industry as they tend to make their own plans based on particular research. However, properly addressed, they represent a significant untapped tourist market.

Many foreign anglers would regard the opportunity to catch a Murray Cod in a river or stream as the angling opportunity of a lifetime. Given better access, Murray Cod would easily rival NZ trout or Alaskan salmon as a lure for the travelling international angler.

Assist new sustainable energy, resources and infrastructure projects

Make land available for wind and solar generation etc

Submission

We note that properly managed, none of this would create access problems when occurring on Crown Land bordering waterways. All that would be needed would be to have planners being mindful of the issue and consequently ensuring relatively small easements here and there for access to the rivers and streams by anglers, canoeists and bird watchers etc. with consequent enhancement of amenity and attraction for rural populations and tourists.

Seek opportunities to integrate green and open space into existing leases and licenses
(p.41)

Submission

We strongly support this. In many cases, establishing an easement along and to the banks of watercourses would greatly enhance appropriate recreational opportunities, riparian conservation and fish habitat with consequent benefit for rural communities and tourists.

Support and restore environmental values on Crown land (p.43)

Submission

We strongly support this and note the potential for greening of those parts of riparian zones that are Crown Land to produce financial benefits as carbon offsets, besides the immeasurable benefits to the freshwater fishery and other conservation values. The importance of the riparian zone for fish and other aquatic lifeforms should not be underestimated.

Manage Crown land to build resilience in a changing climate (p.43)

Communities across NSW are preparing to meet the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, longer and more intense drought and fire seasons, and more intense storms, flooding and coastal erosion. In many cases, proactive land management is a critical component of mitigating these risks for communities, habitats and species. Crown land is often positioned at the interface between natural hazards and sensitive land uses (eg coasts, waterways, riverbeds and peri-urban bushland). It has also long played a refuge role, including through travelling stock reserves and showgrounds.

Submission

We support this and refer to the submission below citing the potential benefits of traditional aboriginal cultural burning.

Strengthen and uphold compliance to ensure a fair go (p.48)

Submission

We support this. For too long, in our experience, Crown land has been abused by unscrupulous persons with seeming immunity from the consequences one would expect if there had been properly resourced compliance activity.

3.3.4 Work with Aboriginal communities to realise the potential of their land rights (p.50)

Submission

We sympathise with and support this, but submit that reasonable provision should be made where possible to ensure access of all to waterways for legitimate recreational purposes, and, conversely, assistance for aboriginal communities to effectively communicate a better understanding and respect by non-aboriginals of traditional land use and especially of culturally significant places.

We will explore co-management of suitable areas of Crown land with Aboriginal groups who have the knowledge and interest to collaborate in land management. (p.56)

Submission

We support this. Anglers have a strong interest in restoration of riparian zones and are at the same time aware of the need to manage bushland with due regard to bushfire mitigation. From the examples that were experienced on the South Coast during the 2019-2020 bushfire season it is extremely likely that support for traditional aboriginal cultural burning, for example, will produce the ideal outcome for seemingly conflicting goals.

4.1 Make more of our information available and transparent (p.59)

Submission

We strongly support this. Many opportunities for accessing rivers and streams for fishing are missed because of the lack of transparency relating to tenure status.

This is, unfortunately, often exacerbated by the conduct of individuals who frequently attempt to assert greater rights than those they actually have, to the disadvantage of the public.

For example, the road in to one of the largest public reserves on the upper Macquarie River was unknown for many years owing to the owner of the adjacent freehold land disguising the entrance to the road, thereby effectively allowing the reserve to become his private domain. From satellite photographs, it appears that a large part of the reserve has been cleared but it is unknown whether this was ever permitted.

Similar situations abound, in our experience.

The present cost and inconvenience of making reliable enquiries or searches as to tenure of Crown Land are prohibitive.

Final Submission

Given the importance of Crown Lands for the viability of the freshwater fishery generally and for freshwater fishing as an important recreational activity in rural areas, especially as to access, and the actual and potential economic benefits (the value of the Snowy Mountains trout fishery has been valued in the vicinity of \$60 million - *Economic survey of the Snowy*

Mountains Trout Fishery, Dominion Consulting Pty. Ltd., February 2001, and recreational fishing in the Murray Darling Basin in excess of \$1 billion - *Benefits of the Basin Plan for the fishing industries in the Murray-Darling Basin* Ernst & Young for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, 9 July 2012), it is inappropriate and extremely disappointing that anglers are not acknowledged as a specific stakeholder group.

Yours faithfully



Don Barton
Secretary