

MEDIA RELEASE

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National parks inquiry puts fox in charge of hen house

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) has today called on Premier O'Farrell to categorically rule out any weakening of environmental protections for national parks and public lands in New South Wales.

"We are alarmed that government members in the Upper House have lent their support to a move by the Shooters and Fishers Party to establish a parliamentary inquiry into the management of national parks and public lands," said Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

The inquiry terms of reference specifically target the iconic River Red Gums national parks and the native forests of northern New South Wales. The inquiry will be chaired by Shooters and Fishers MLC Robert Brown.

"This is not an innocent exercise. The Shooters and Fishers have a clear agenda when it comes to our national parks.

"This inquiry puts the fox in charge of the hen house. For years, Shooters and Fishers MLC Robert Brown has campaigned to gain hunting access to national parks, under the guise of 'sustainable use', and has repeatedly called for the River Red Gums National Parks to be revoked.

"In the lead up to the election, the Premier gave assurances that his Government would not cave into pressure to open up our national parks for hunting, logging or mining.

"Following today's announcement, the Premier must, yet again, reaffirm his commitment to protecting our national parks and rule out any moves to roll back existing national parks.

"With the extensive threat to public land across the State from open cut coal mining and coal seam gas exploration, surely national parks can be left as they were intended to be: sanctuaries for fauna and flora and for the peaceful enjoyment people across the State," Mr Clarke said.

"It's time this matter was put to rest once and for all."

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