



**4WD Owners Club South Aust. Inc.**  
**(Trading as Mitsubishi 4WD Club S.A.)**

**PO Box 214, Park Holme, South Australia, 5043.**

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25 February, 2006.

**Inquiry into Australia's national parks, conservation reserves  
and marine protected areas.**

**Mitsubishi 4WD Club - SA**

Our club was incorporated in 1986 as '4WD Owners Club South Aust. Inc.' & is generally known to as Mitsubishi 4WD Club. Our aims are to promote 4 wheel driving as a responsible, family oriented activity. We actively support conservation of the natural environment and participate in a range of volunteer activities. We are active members of the South Australian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs.

**Club submission :**

**Summary :**

- (a) 1. Provide increased funding for fire prevention and fire fighting.**
- (a) 2. Utilise volunteers to assist with the control of 'feral' plants in national parks and conservation areas.**
- (b) 1. Provide funding and resources to encourage volunteer participation and recognition of volunteer activities.**
- (b) 2. Recognise & utilise skills of volunteers to reduce planning and supervisory work load (on volunteer projects) of paid staff.**
- (c) 1. Change Public Liability legislation to make park users responsible for their own actions and decisions.**
- (d) 1. Establish a data base with web site links to provide information on solutions to common park management problems.**

**Term of Reference**

The funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to :

- (a) the values and objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas;**

**Submission Detail :**

- (a) 1. The Ngarkat Group of Conservation Parks (Sth Aust) was created to preserve one of the last remaining remnants of mallee scrub in south-eastern Australia & protect the ecosystems within the park. Following the recent (Jan '06) fires, it has been estimated that only 14% of the park now has vegetation greater than 10 years old.**

The greatest threat to these ecosystems is bush fires, destroying 66,000ha. of native scrub in 2 weeks (Jan '06); like most fires in the last 10 years, this years fires were again started by lightning strikes.

***Nothing can be done to prevent lightning strikes, but funds must be provided to establish an improved track network, more and better fire breaks and appropriate fire-fighting equipment.***

(a) 2. As 4 wheel drive enthusiasts, our members visit a large number of parks and reserves each year; we find it disappointing to see large areas infested with foreign and feral weeds. Recent visitors to the Victorian Alps reported huge areas inaccessible due to infestation by Blackberries. Large areas of 'Outback Queensland' including many national parks (Great Basalt Wall N.P., Carnarvon Gorge N.P., Mount Moffatt N.P., Lonesome & Expedition N. Parks etc.), are infested with Prickly Pear & several varieties of prickly trees introduced from South Africa. Carnarvon Gorge N. Park was a particular Disappointment with patches of prickly pear lining the entrance road, within 100 metres of park HQ.

***While it may not be possible to eradicate these weeds, a volunteer programme could be developed which would involve little more than planning, publicity, a small financial compensation for costs and public recognition of the volunteer contribution.***

### **Term of Reference**

The funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to :

(b) whether governments are providing sufficient resources to meet those objectives and their management requirements;

### **Submission Detail :**

(b) 1. I appreciate that governments can not finance sufficient staff to achieve all of the objectives of all of the parks, reserves & protected areas. Australia has a huge volunteer resource, willing & capable of assisting paid staff to achieve common objectives. A common complaint from staff & volunteers is that projects can not go ahead due to lack of funding. Volunteers will willingly donate their labour if the task is meaningful, planned and appropriately timed. If projects are constantly stopped or deferred due to lack of planning or lack of funds, volunteers rapidly loose interest.

***Provide funding and resources to encourage participation and recognition of volunteer organisations in maintenance and management of parks, reserves and protected areas.***

(b) 2. Many volunteers have (or had if retired) a high level of technical, supervisory or other skills, which they are happy to use for the benefit of project to which they are donating their time. In many cases, if properly utilised, these skills would be of greater value to a project than a physical contribution in the form of manual labour. To most volunteers, it is very frustration to see a project fail or poorly executed due to lack of technical knowledge or inadequate planning by paid staff.

***Recognise that volunteers are more valuable than just cheap labour. Many volunteers have planning, supervisory and other skills that would enable them to plan and complete tasks & projects with minimal staff input or supervision.***

### **Term of Reference**

The funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to :

(c) any threats to the objectives and management of our national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas;

### **Submission Detail :**

(c) 1. On a recent visit to Queensland, club members encountered camping area closures & access to several tourist attractions prohibited, due to perceived Public Liability Risk. Too frequently, we read of claims (and awards) against property owners or managers for accidents which most people would consider the 'claimants own fault'. It is about time that Australians accepted responsibility for their own safety. If a sign warns that a track is un-maintained & may be dangerous to an inexperienced driver, I know that I am entering at my own risk.

**Revise Legislation covering Public Liability to place responsibility for ones own action on the user. Clarify what can be deemed an adequate warning, penalise frivolous and malicious claims, limit lump sum payments & create a fund to pay a whole of life pension in place of huge lump sum payments.**

### **Term of Reference**

The funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to :

(e) the record of governments with regard to the creation and management of national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas.

### **Submission Detail :**

(e) 1. Although national parks may be at opposite ends of our continent, they will frequently have common problems. Typical of this is reducing erosion in coastal parks, stabilising vehicle tracks in sandy environments or revegetating an area after a fire. In many cases, park managers & staff are not aware of trials, research, successes & failures carried out in other parks.

**Establish a national data base to identify (& provide web site links) trials, research, successes & failures of potential common problems within parks, reserves & protected areas.**

### **Prepared by**

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### **Prepared on behalf of Mitsubishi 4 Wheel Drive Club S.A.**

By R. Bolto, (Club delegate to South. Aust'n. Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs),

**Authorised by the Management Committee** of the Mitsubishi 4 Wheel Drive Club S. A.  
on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2006.

## **Terms of Reference**

The funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to :

- (a) the values and objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas;
- (b) whether governments are providing sufficient resources to meet those objectives and their management requirements;
- (c) any threats to the objectives and management of our national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas;
- (d) the responsibility of governments with regard to the creation and management of national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference to long-term plans; and
- (e) the record of governments with regard to the creation and management of national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas.

The Committee is inviting public submissions on its inquiry. Submissions should be lodged by 1 March 2006 and the Committee encourages lodgement in electronic form to [ecita.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ecita.sen@aph.gov.au)