

12 CONCERNS WITH the PROPOSED GOVERNMENT AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT 1972

1. The Bill includes an inappropriate new objective in the Act of mining, hunting and grazing in some parks and reserves;
2. It includes an objective of undefined “other activities” in the “public interest” in parks and reserves;
3. It continues the inappropriate category of Recreation Park for a limited number of parks (which are probably marked for disposal and which can be reduced in size without parliamentary approval as for other parks/reserves);
4. It fails to reflect internationally recognised understandings in its creation of new categories of parks/reserves;
5. It misleadingly re-names areas of National or Conservation parks reserved for potential mining as Nature reserves, without placing any appropriate restrictions on the form such mining activities may take;
6. It continues to misname wetland wildlife reserves as Game reserves for duck hunting;
7. It potentially creates an onerous new legal onus on park managers to clear areas of park/reserve to protect private property from fire;
8. It removes the conservation priority where mining, grazing or hunting rights are being exercised in parks/reserves;
9. It entrenches mining and grazing rights in some reserves where they could previously have been removed for conservation reasons at a state, national or international level;
10. While the introduction in the Bill of Aboriginal co-management and ownership of some parks/reserves is supported, it creates a new loophole for downgrading National or Conservation parks to Nature reserves which allow mining rights not previously allowed;
11. It sets the stage for division and manipulation of Aboriginal and wider community groups by the mining industry in the same way Fortescue Metals Group have apparently acted in WA;
12. It contains no provisions to ensure management plans for parks/reserves are prepared or implemented within a reasonable time.