

**Tourism and Recreation:
The Future of National Parks**

A Blue Mountains Case Study.

By

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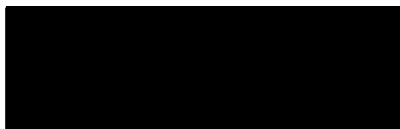
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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



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ABSTRACT

For several years, natural environments have developed as a major resource of the tourism industry. In New South Wales, visitor numbers to national parks have increased substantially and are expected to continue to rise over the next 10 years. With this being the case, it is important to explore the future of national parks and the future of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service based on the growing popularity of these natural areas among the general public.

Four themes were identified from the literature as potential factors that could significantly influence the future of national parks in New South Wales. These four factors were:

- Tourism and recreation,
- Government funding,
- Private sector investments, and
- Zoning.

Each of these four themes, and their relationship with national parks, was examined through a combination of literature research and stakeholder interviews.

The results of the study suggest that the future of national parks will be closely inter-related with three of the four themes identified in this study. First, it was clear that tourism and recreation will remain a key concern within national parks and, encouragingly, the attitude found within the study toward tourism and recreation was positive. Secondly, it was evident that the future of the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be constrained by government funding. Unfortunately, the issue of funding for national parks identified the secondary concern of poor staff morale within the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This, too, could affect the future of national parks. Finally, this study considers that zoning in national parks is an under-utilised management tool and one that could be being used extensively.

It is the role for the private sector in the future of national parks that remains unclear. Certainly, this study found that the private sector has much to offer the future of national parks. However, the actual development and implementation of a partnership within national parks could prove far too difficult to implement and could further stress the financial and human resources of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The future of the private sector in national parks needs much more consideration.

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