

**Submission**

**No 069**

# **CONSULTATION ON THE MODERN MANAGEMENT OF COMMONS**

**Name:** The MacDonald Valley Association (Organisation)

**Date received:** 20/02/2017

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Date: Mon, Feb 20, 2017 at 4:41 PM  
Subject: Submission - Commons

The Macdonald Valley Association Inc (MVA) is a community organization whose main aim is the representation of the interests of the residents and ratepayers - the Community - of the St Albans and Macdonald Valley area.

We unreservedly support the St Albans Commons continued existence under the Commons Management Act as detailed in the Submission of the Trustees to the Department of Industry – Lands in relation to the NSW Government’s updated proposal for Commons. We are aware that we will be identified in the summary of submissions list.

As a separate local Community organization we appreciate and benefit from the community, cultural, heritage and environmental values embodied in the continued existence of the St Albans Common Trust with a Roll of Commoners and an elected Board of Trustees.

We are particularly disappointed that the Fact Sheet fails to clearly disclose that it is the intention to abolish the role of Commoners along with the election of Trustees. This aspect of the proposal is fundamental to the Government’s package and its absence in the key consultation document significantly diminishes the credibility of the Government’s process and more broadly its proposals.

Specifically, MVA reiterates our opposition to any proposal that would result in the repeal of the Commons Management Act and the designation of the St Albans Common as Crown Land under the Crown Land Management Act. To do so would eradicate the Common Roll and the function of the Commoner and, over time, the right to elect those Trustees who manage the St Albans Common Trust. We understand that this function will be transferred to Land Managers under Ministerial appointment which is unacceptable to us. The legislative proposals are in direct conflict with the excision of Commons from the Crown Lands Management Act, which only occurred in November 2016 to much acclaim from all parliamentary parties

The MVA emphasises our support for the suggestion of the Trustees of the St Albans Common Trust that the Commons Management Act be retained, with a limited application to “eligible” Commons as listed in a new Schedule. An “eligible Common” would be a functioning Common in good standing under the Commons Management Act whose management and operations are carried on in a manner consistent with purposes as specified.

Relevant purposes would embrace those suggested by the Department of Industry- Lands i.e. a common, community use and protection of cultural, heritage and environmental values.

The MVA is acutely aware that the St Albans Common provides this community with a strong sense of identity as it has done for so long. We draw your attention to the strong community sentiment and opposition to the proposals sketched out in the Fact Sheet. We alert you to the Community’s strong support for the St Albans Common to remain in community ownership and control. We also draw your attention to the strong community feelings towards the environmental values and long-standing, award winning work in environmental restoration that the MacDonald Valley community have been engaged in for decades. We trust that the Department and Minister will carefully consider our submission and ensure that any further proposals are provided with greater detail and that the Community is given adequate time for their consideration.

Yours sincerely  
Vera Zaccari  
Secretary  
On behalf of the Macdonald Valley Association