

Submission

No 055

CONSULTATION ON THE MODERN MANAGEMENT OF COMMONS

Name: Torrington Common

Date received: 20/02/2017

Torrington Common

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Subject: Commons-Submission

Dear Sir/Madame, (Governance & Strategy & Policies).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal for Commons in the Review of Crown Land Management to be put forward in the 2016 Act.

We agree with the proposals put forward and we must point out that our Draft Management Plan 1994 already reflects those exact strategies. I believe that most commons in NSW were asked to submit a Management Plan about this time. However, although we were helped by Lands Office from Armidale to formulate our plan, they never commented after it was submitted. We assume it was accepted. In fact we have only recently been informed (3rd December 2015 by Armidale) that we are not An Open Common as we believed (gazetted 11th April 1896 & 1st June 1901 as lot 23896 & 32765). We would like to see more input from our local office.

Our strategies have been based on the original open plan agreed by residents in “the old days” and it has worked well until recently. Our policy was to run cattle around the village to keep the grass down as fire protection and because the rough terrain made it difficult to mow. Residents built stock proof fences.

However in 2015 a militant group of residents caused so much trouble (nasty letters and threats due to their lack of understanding cattle and not maintaining fences) that we were forced to fence off some of the common.

With these facts in mind we are reluctant to agree whole heartedly on Public Consultation although it is one of our policies and residents are informed when meetings are being held. We fear that control of the common could be taken over by unsuitable groups. Fortunately provision is already in place for a higher authority to intervene such as an appointed “Common Administrator” from The Lands Department or Local Council. This may eventually become the case because a lot of Commons such as ours are run by ageing volunteers and it is difficult to engage younger people to take on these jobs. Very few are willing to accept roles due to the increasing expectations from bureaucrats to follow and understand Acts and Regulations no matter how simple they claim to be.

1. We would like to see more consultation directly from NSW Department of Industry-Lands, that they take an interest in WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO, rather than just our CRRS Annual Report.
2. Make allowance for future control of Commons by a paid administrator or representative from NSW Department of Industry-Lands due to our ageing volunteers.
3. Develop a strategy of simpler, common sense administration that will attract younger people into volunteering.

I trust that our comments may be of help.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Stelzer (Secretary Torrington Common Trust)

And

Fred Sherratt (President)