

Submission

No 057

**CONSULTATION ON THE MODERN
MANAGEMENT OF COMMONS**

Name: David Rawlinson

Date received: 20/02/2017

My name is David Rawlinson, a cattle farmer residing at [deleted].

I am a Commoner of the St Albans Common. I endorse the Submission of the Trustees of the St Albans Common Trust to the Department of Industry – Lands in relation to the NSW Government’s updated proposal for Commons. I am aware that I will be identified in the summary of submissions list.

Specifically, I reiterate my 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. I understand that this function will be transferred to Land Managers under Ministerial appointment which is unacceptable to me. 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.

I have cattle agisting on the St Albans Common at the present time as I do each year to rest our paddocks as part of our sustainable farming management practice as the soils in our valley are sandy and carrying capacity is not as robust as for other soil types. The St Albans Common continues to function as it was originally intended and without the opportunity to graze my cattle there my business would not be viable. The NSW Government's attempt to take over private land that has worked exactly as planned for nearly 200 years, under the pretext of it needing better management is disingenuous at best and outright opportunistic land grabbing at worst.

On November 9th 2016, following an intensive and persuasive "Save St Albans Common" campaign the Commons Management Act was removed from the Crown Lands Management legislation with the agreement and support of all in the Upper House at the time. The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) said

"This is democracy in action. The role of this Chamber is to achieve the right outcome. There is a decision to be made on a group of amendments that have been proposed by members of all parties in this Chamber. As members of the House of review".

Nothing has changed since then so it can only be assumed the Minister Blair's fine comments were merely designed to put the St Albans commoners and community at ease while the Government planned it's next attack on out land.

I emphasise my 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 last Save St Albans Common campaign taught this community a great deal. If the NSW government thinks the soothing words in it's January 2017 fact sheet will persuade us to give up the fight for our Common it has greatly underestimated our anger and tenacity. We will not go quietly and are prepared for a long, vociferous and aggressive fight.

Yours Sincerely
David Rawlinson