

Submission

No 089

CONSULTATION ON THE MODERN MANAGEMENT OF COMMONS

Name: Corowa Common

Date received: 21/02/2017

Corowa Common Trust

Date: Tue, Feb 21, 2017 at 11:47 AM

Subject: Corowa Common Trust submission

COROWA COMMON TRUST SUBMISSION

21st February 2017

Overview

The Corowa Common was dedicated as a permanent common on the 6th December 1867.

Whilst the main purpose and source of income is cattle grazing, the Corowa Common has the River Murray as its largest boundary and is open to the local community and outside visitors for recreational purposes such as picnicking, fishing, swimming, dog walking and also bush camping (in a special designated area).

It has also been used for events such as weddings, family celebrations, school sports, fire brigade training, army cadet exercises, university recreation design studies as well as the Murray Darling Basin Commissions celebration dinner for 150 invited guests which included many Federal and State Ministers.

In accordance with the current Common's Act, anyone wishing to become a commoner must reside within a common boundary (Corowa's was gazetted on 13/08/1895) and must not hold more than 20 ha of land within this boundary.

The extra benefit of joining the Corowa Common and paying the annual \$10.00 fee is for agisting of cattle, receiving annual reports, being able to have a voice in its operation at annual general meetings as well as electing Board members.

Recommendations

- We would like to see a membership requirement be incorporated in the new legislation with the benefits as stated in the last Overview paragraph. This will ensure that only locals who have the expertise and best interest of a common have a say in its future.
- As your legislative framework is seeking to ensure that commons remain in the control of local communities we would like to see that anyone who wishes to become a member of a common be restricted as stated in the second last paragraph above. This would ensure control is kept within the local communities and also cannot be exploited by the larger farming enterprises.
- We would also like this membership to have total control of who is elected to the board who must also be members of the common. For a Board to work effectively, members must share a common goal so these elections will ensure that the local knowledge and expertise is retained for the best interest of the common and local community.

Conclusion

The current Corowa Common Management Plan and Trust Handbook covers such things as the objectives and specified usage of the common, Cattle management, Recreation management, Environmental & Land management and Occupational Health & Safety. A full copy of the Corowa Common Trust Handbook was sent to the Project Director, Crown Lands Review on the 16/06/14 and we believe that this handbook is in line with the proposed legislation.

To protect pasture and native flora, the Corowa Common Trust restricts the number of households who can agist cattle and also the number of head per household. This is reviewed at each annual general meeting to ensure the land is not overgrazed.

With revenue from cattle grazing, our Trust Board undertakes weed management and fence maintenance and improvements whilst at the same time providing labour at no cost to the Trust. This ensures that the Corowa Common is cared for and protected for use by current and future generations.

Yvonne Hornsey

Secretary

Corowa Common Trust