

Submission to VEAC re: Statewide Assessment of Public Land - response to Draft Proposals

Precursor

During the weekend of September 10 the headline, 'Caulfield Racecourse Reserve trustees sacked after parliamentary review,' came to the attention of many people following closely the machinations of the CRR, other restricted crown grants and the government's response to the VAGO report, 'Management and Oversight of the Caulfield racecourse Reserve'.

Ironically the words of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust chairman ring true for every restricted crown grant when he said, "the trust's structure was anachronistic and needed reform."

While the little known restricted crown grant, the Burke and Wills Mechanics Institute Trust, does not have the massive profile of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve or the level of complexity or the sort of "money" involved, it does not mean this particular trust, or any other is any less anachronistic nor should escape reform.

The government certainly needs to work on the remaining outdated crown grants and as a result of my research, especially the Burke and Wills Trust.

Reform of Restricted Crown Grants

Draft proposal R3 (g) "Provide for staged transition of trusts managing restricted crown grants to a modern legal and governance framework such as committee of management" is too vague.

I do appreciate that of the 33 active RCG's and nine dormant RCG's each has individualised issues and circumstances so maybe "staged" may refer to the implications of these different circumstances. Still vague though.

However, there does appear to be lack of resolve and an absent sense of genuine reform in proposal R3 (g) given that every remaining contactable set of trustees of the active RCG's have been approached more than once to modernise management systems to a committee of management structure.

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve has become a separate case deserving of its own legislative response yet the rest could be treated as one with one distinctive and focused legislative change.

All the active RCG's that are not incorporated have deliberately chosen to avoid a C of M structure and so obviously have a keen interest in maintaining the status quo. Why is that?

The lack of transparency, openness and accountability attached to unincorporated RCG's only leads to the potential for accusations of misuse of public land.

What would happen if an individual RCG decide to reject a "staged transition to a modern legal and governance framework?"

Nothing, so all this work focused on crown grants would be fruitless.

R3 (g) needs to change to be more assertive and decisive reflecting the need for genuine reform of these archaic and anachronistic management structures of public assets.

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