

The Gundaroo Police Paddock

History

The historical purpose of the Police Paddock, as the name infers, was to graze the village police horses which could not be quartered at the Police Station Stables (now the Cork Street Café).

The Gundaroo Vision Plan, developed in 1999 by the Gundaroo Community Association (GCA), dealt with the issue of rural subdivision and maintenance of open spaces; core attributes which attract people to both live in, or visit Gundaroo. The vision plan explored several concepts for the Police Paddock; including a rural education centre and a site for solar or wind power generation. In subsequent years neither of these concepts was realised.

In 2005 the GCA revisited the need to preserve the police paddock, which may have been under consideration for residential subdivision. In order to avert this threat and to continue the historical theme of the paddock, the GCA successfully applied for the licence to lease the Police Paddock. Local horse owners were approached by the GCA to provide a revenue stream through horse agistment and the GCA Police Paddock Subcommittee was established to manage the Licence and associated Police Paddock issues. The subcommittee's key goal was to sustain and beautify the area as well as making it habitable for horse grazing.

Establishment of the Sub-Committee

The GCA advertised extensively for involvement in both the Police Paddock Subcommittee and an agistment user group and following a series of public meetings both groups were formed under GCA oversight. The subcommittee put forward a number of options to best manage the paddock and the GCA endorsed a model of horse agistment users who would make a long term commitment to developing infrastructure, paddock maintenance and horse accommodation.

As the paddock required up-front investment to purchase and build infrastructure and to establish the licence, the GCA required the subcommittee to raise all necessary funds from the user group who would also be required to deliver a cost neutral outcome with respect to ongoing costs.

The GCA confirmed that short term agistment to horse owners outside the user group would be not be practically possible due to the lack of infrastructure, equine hygiene issues and the administrative overhead of a higher turnover of agistment arrangements.

On this basis the Police Paddock Sub-committee was appointed by the GCA with a mix of horse-owners and non-horse owners. See the GCA website at <http://www.gundaroo.info/gundaroo/gca/index.htm> for a list of the current sub-committee members.

Where is it?

The police paddock is an unimproved 10acre (4 ha) village block located between Morning, Lute, David and Lind Streets in Gundaroo.

Goals

1. To preserve a historic, open space in Gundaroo
2. To ensure that the Gundaroo Police Paddock remains a long term, viable and cost neutral community asset
3. To improve environmental aspects of the Gundaroo Police Paddock including pasture management, water usage and weed control
4. To develop the Gundaroo Police Paddock and surrounds into an attractive community location through initiatives such as tree plantings
5. To provide long term horse grazing opportunities to the Gundaroo community through a Police Paddock Users Group
6. To facilitate development of other Police Paddock uses and activities to ensure the long term sustainability of the historical Gundaroo Police Paddock

How is it managed?

Subcommittee

The GCA appoints or reconfirms the sub-committee on an annual basis to ensure that the paddock is managed in accordance with the Goals as described above. The sub-committee positions are: President, Treasurer and Secretary.

The subcommittee maintains control of the Police Paddock for the general day-to-day running, management, and maintenance of the police paddock.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held once per year (date and venue for the meeting is advertised in the Gundaroo Gazette) between September and November to discuss key Police Paddock business and recommend the subcommittee positions for the next year. The GCA Committee confirms (or reviews) the recommended subcommittee positions to ensure that the subcommittee has the appropriate representation to assure that the position holders will be able to achieve the goals of the police paddock and be effective in meeting the GCA's obligations under the Licence.

Individuals wishing to nominate for a sub-committee position must notify the Police Paddock Secretary in writing at least seven days prior to the AGM. The letter must indicate the sub-committee position being nominated for and an overview of how the nominee will assist the Police Paddock Sub-committee to be run in accordance with the goals described above.

Usergroup

As the GCA has no income stream suitable to sustain the Police Paddock, the usergroup consists of the individuals who are approved by the subcommittee and who have provided the initial funding (or subsequent entry fee) for acquisition of the paddock infrastructure. The user group is also responsible for fully meeting the yearly costs of running the Police Paddock including, but not limited to, The Dept Lands annual licence fees, council rates, insurance, Rural Land Protection Board fees and maintenance costs.

Members of the user group are also entitled to keep horses on the police paddock in accordance with Subcommittee direction and the stock levels defined in the *Gundaroo Horse Paddock Management Plan* – at the end of this document.

The subcommittee treasurer is responsible for keeping a record of all user group members' contributions and entry fees and of the ongoing costs and outgoings of the Police Paddock.

The initial User Group's capital ownership of initial infrastructure is to be written down over time by the market value of the agistment benefit enjoyed by each member (after payment of other mandatory outgoings and expenditure).

Over time, a user's initial investment will diminish to zero as the benefits gained from horse grazing are offset against the original financial contribution. Once a user has a zero balance, the market value of future agistment benefit will be put towards a capital improvement fund to be used for PP improvements e.g. fencing, plantings, other capital improvements.

Waiting List

As there are limited grazing opportunities available on the Police Paddock, there is a waiting list managed by the Police Paddock sub-committee for users who wish to join the user group.

1. Expressions of interest for joining the user group on the Gundaroo Police Paddock should be directed to the GCA through gundaroo@gmail.com
2. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of existing members leaving the User Group and / or on the ability of the Police Paddock to support additional horses as determined by the GCA Police Paddock Subcommittee, in accordance with the Gundaroo Horse Paddock Management Plan – see next page
3. There is an advance fee of \$200 per horse required on acceptance of an offer to join the user group and this payment reflects the long term commitment required to participate in the group. This payment is refundable on subsequent transition of membership to a new User Group member.
4. Between 2005 and 2011 (the date when initial user's contributions are fully offset by agistment benefits) new users who replace existing users, are required to purchase the outstanding capital value that remains on the books for the existing user. The current amounts for the outstanding capital can be obtained by contacting the current Police Paddock Subcommittee treasurer. The amount paid is fully offset as an agistment benefit to the new user
5. Grazing arrangements are conducted on a long term basis and requires users to:
 - a. contribute with funding and labour to the Paddock infrastructure including fencing, shedding, water supply and other requirements
 - b. contribute to maintenance of the Paddock including weed control fencing repairs, access control and pasture management
 - c. provide funds to contribute to the annual costs of the Paddock including insurance, license fees, rates, spraying and horse feed in accordance with rates determined by the GCA Police Paddock Subcommittee

Gundaroo Horse Paddock Management Plan

As submitted to the NSW Department of Lands

a. Land & Soil Care / Rehabilitation Plan

The land is currently in sound condition, relative to climatic conditions. Stock levels will be maintained at levels ensuring adequate pasture retention and soil protection.

Extensive tree planting is proposed.

b. Farm Care & Management Plan

The land will be constantly monitored and stock rates adjusted to ensure good pasture retention.

c. Noxious and other Weed Control Plan

Local agriculture experts will examine the land on an annual basis and determine a weed treatment program. Noxious weeds will then be monitored and treated as required.

d. Flora & Fauna Conservation & Preservation Plan

Local agriculture experts will examine the land and identify any remnant native vegetation and establish a plan for their management. A tree planting has commenced and will be continued over the next few years.

e. Tree Preservation & Rehabilitation Plan

There are no trees on the land but tree planting of local native species will be conducted as a community program.

f. Stock Grazing Programme

There will be a maximum of 4 horses on the land at any one time. There are alternative locations to which horses may be moved if the land is unable to sustain the horses at certain periods. In times of low rainfall and low feed levels these spelling periods will need to be considerable.

g. General

A herdsman will be appointed and will have final say regarding stock levels and environmental issues for the licensed area.

h. Fire Control Programme

All grassed areas on the licensed area will be monitored for the possibility of fire. If there is deemed to be a potential fire risk, the area will be slashed as necessary.

i. Fencing Program

There are existing boundary fences on the property that will be monitored & maintained.

j. Impact on adjoining land and plan to alleviate

There is no adjoining land as the block is totally surrounded by public roads. There will be minimal or no impact on the adjacent blocks of land.

k. Water Management Plan

There are two dams on the block whose water levels will be monitored. If the water levels are low the stock will be removed or water transported to the block for storage in open water troughs.

l. Pollution Control Plan

Stock levels allow animal waste to be absorbed into the soil on a natural basis.

m. Environmental Impact Plan

Local agriculture experts will examine the land and identify any remnant native vegetation and establish a plan for their management. See also sub-para(d).

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