

AgShows NSW Submission to the Review of the Crown Land Management Act 2016



Camden Show 15.03.2024 | © Brett Atkins



PO Box 1047 | L1 49 Gladesville Road
Hunters Hill NSW 2110
T: (02) 9879 6777
ABN 69 150 951 670

AgShows NSW submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review

Executive Summary

Agricultural Shows are integral to the identity of regional communities. While retaining their historical role of showcasing agricultural excellence and innovation, shows today continue to promote and preserve Australian rural culture and unite communities, as well as educate the public about the importance of agriculture in Australia’s economy.

With around 170 much-valued country shows held on Crown land in NSW each year, improvements to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 (CLM Act) are needed to support show societies to adapt, and to lock-in the future socio-economic sustainability of shows. AgShows NSW sees the renewal of the CLM Act as an opportunity for its positive evolution through amendments which can streamline, simplify and provide certainty for show societies and the 16,000 volunteers integral to the successful delivery of shows statewide.

AgShows NSW has prepared this submission drawing on the expertise and advice of rural advisory service Seftons, led by Robbie Sefton AM, and in collaboration with AgShows NSW’s 192 members across NSW. Our focus is on seven key ‘macro’ issues which we consider critical to address as part of this review.

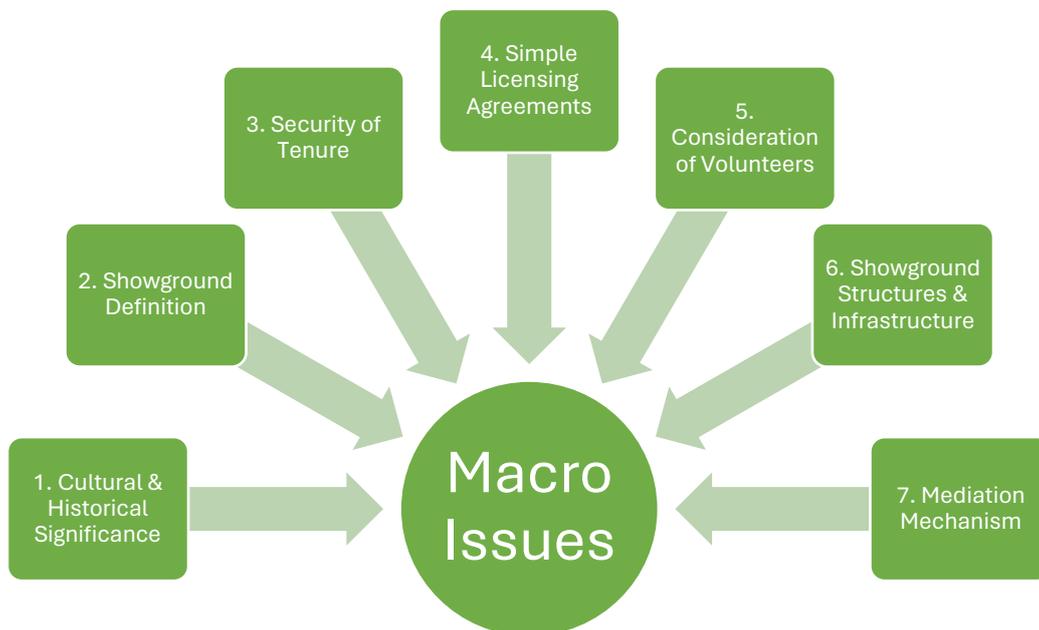


Figure 1: AgShows NSW Macro Issues under the Crown Land Management Act 2016

Show societies have been committed caretakers of Crown land throughout Australian history. Where show societies have had accountability and responsibility for these lands, they have been maintained and protected at a high standard. That said, AgShows NSW’s submission is underpinned by a deep appreciation that Crown land should be available for broad community use now and in the future.

In its submission, AgShows NSW seeks to demonstrate not only that there is immense value to the NSW government in shows being strategically considered alongside the CLM Act, but that it is essential that the Act better enables show societies to protect shows, showgrounds and consequently the contribution that shows are making to regional and rural communities and economies at a time of immense challenge for our regions.

Section 1: Macro Issues Show Societies are Facing

In this section AgShows NSW has provided an overview of key issues for shows and show societies under the CLM Act and sought wherever possible to be focused on sharing our recommendations for resolving these issues as an outcome of this review.

Agricultural shows nationally generate more than \$1 billion in economic benefits, are visited by 6 million people and are supported by 50,000 volunteers.¹ In NSW, there are 16,000 volunteers supporting shows and regional shows attract 1.2 million people through their gates annually.²

AgShows NSW is seeking the CLM Act to:

1. Recognise the cultural and historical significance of shows.
2. Define showgrounds as a mechanism to address other issues of complexity and lack of clarity in decision-making.
3. Provide secure and longer-term tenure to show societies to ensure they are equipped with the confidence to plan and invest as necessary for the ongoing viability of country shows.
4. Set clear, simple and easy to use licensing agreements to cut red-tape for show organisers.
5. Be attune to and cater for the volunteers who are, by and large, responsible for navigating the CLM Act and its processes for shows.
6. Enable and empower greater investment and accountability for showground infrastructure.
7. Enshrine a mediation and/or issue resolution process.

¹ [Supporting Agricultural Shows and Events \(dceew.gov.au\)](https://dceew.gov.au)

² AgShows NSW member reporting in the 2023 annual insurance declaration for public liability.

Macro Issue 1: Cultural and Historical Significance of Shows

As the dry brown land often said to have been built by riding off the sheep's back, the local agricultural show is synonymous with Australia's national story of growth and prosperity.

When farmers began embracing global technology and science at the turn of the 20th Century and innovating in agricultural equipment and production techniques to adapt to the harsh Australian climate and overcome geographic isolation, AgShows NSW was established in 1929 as the membership associated representing agricultural societies across NSW.

The historic role of agricultural societies in putting on the local agricultural show is one of driving farming excellence and strengthening community pride. Shows, competitions, on-farm experiments and field days were the repository of news and information about technology, new equipment, disease management and new and innovative ways of farming.³ They were also the place where agriculture's value in the local and national economy was celebrated, and communities united behind the success, or otherwise, of the farming year.

Today, there are more than 190 agricultural shows across NSW each year and of these approximately 170 are held on Crown land or reserves. Not only are these shows performing their historic role of showcasing agricultural innovation and the state's world-class products, shows are major annual events, acting as an attraction anchor for overnight and weekend visitors to our regions and driving significant economic flow-on benefits to local businesses and trades. Importantly, as communities recover from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and face headwinds from the cost-of-living crisis, commodity prices and more extreme weather events, shows are also uniting regional and rural people around a common purpose and providing a much-needed opportunity for rural pride.



Picture 1: Shoalhaven Show 1910 | State Library of NSW

*"And then there's the show—ah!
there's the show! The event of the
year, you know. When the paddocks
are green, and the sheep are in prime,
And the wheat's just yellowing for
harvest time. When the air is cool,
and the sky is blue, And the days are
bright, and the nights are too...There's
a hum of voices and a laugh or two,
And the heart of the bushman is light
and true. There's the lowing of cattle
and the bleat of sheep, And the scent
of the gum leaves sweet and deep.
And the girls from the farms with their
cheeks aglow, And the lads from the
stations all a-row."
— "The Pick of the Paddock"
Steele Rudd 1868-1935*

³ [Industrial Revolution in Australia: impact on the wheat industry – Inside the Collection \(maas.museum\)](https://maas.museum/)

Recommendation 1

To ensure Crown land managers are aware of this deeply rooted history and cultural significance of country shows, AgShows NSW recommends that there is:

- A. Education of Crown land managers about the cultural and historical importance of shows; and
- B. An amendment to the current CLM Act to include the following sentiment:

“If an Agricultural Show Society exists on a showground, that consideration be given to their needs by the Reserve Land Manager when licenses or Plans of Management are being negotiated.”

“In 2024 Moree Show will mark 150 years since the first one and is the longest running event in the district. The Show is an all-inclusive event, that welcomes people of all ages and demographics. It is also an affordable event. Many children who don’t get a chance to go to larger centres are able to experience quality entertainment in their own town.”

- AgShows NSW survey respondent, March 2024



Picture 2: Moree Show

Macro Issue 2: Definition of a Showground

It is disappointing to observe that the [discussion paper](#) for the CLM Act Review is silent on the interconnectedness between the CLM Act and the proper functioning of show societies in administering country shows. AgShows NSW considers that a major part of the challenge is the absence within the Act of anything to define or designate showgrounds, despite showgrounds being included in the [NSW Government's 2020 Strategic Vision for Crown Land](#) discussion paper and specific emphasis given to future integration of showgrounds with other community uses.

AgShows NSW has requested that the definition of a showground be included within the CLM Act on several occasions. It is firmly our view that a definition would significantly aid land managers and show societies when working through clarity of Crown land purpose and provide a reference point to inform decision-making.

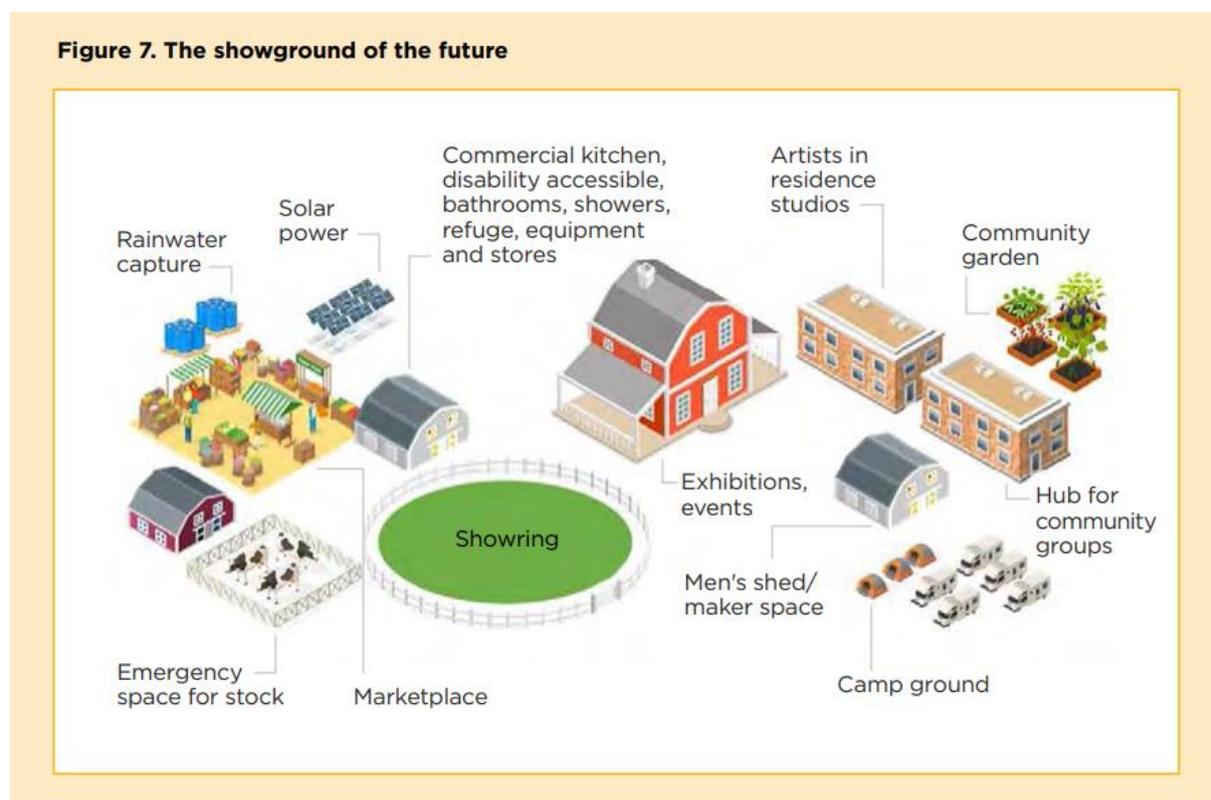


Figure 2: Showground of the future, NSW Government 2020 Strategic Vision for Crown Land Discussion Paper – Where we come together

“The Lismore Showground is a major contributor to the City of Lismore. We hold many different events, provide accommodation either holiday or emergency, we host a weekly Farmers Market, Speedway and various cultural institutions and clubs as well as the largest Show outside of Sydney in NSW.”
- AgShows NSW survey respondent, March 2024.

Recommendation 2

To embed a showground definition within the CLM Act, AgShows NSW proposes the following:

"A showground refers to a designated area for the purpose of hosting a variety of events, including agricultural shows and exhibitions, competitions, community gatherings, and recreational activities. It serves as a versatile venue where local farmers, artisans, exhibitors, and members of the community come together to showcase agricultural produce, livestock, handicrafts, and talents, as well as to engage in social and recreational pursuits. Showgrounds for such purposes are equipped with necessary infrastructure and amenities, such as exhibition spaces, livestock pens, stage areas, recreational fields, parking facilities, and communal spaces. The utilisation of showgrounds for agricultural shows and community events is subject to compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing land use, public gatherings, safety standards, environmental protection, and community engagement."



Picture 3: The Bellingen Showground

Macro Issue 3: Security of Tenure

Interruptions to the staging of all country shows have occurred at only three points in NSW history: during the first and second world wars and in the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Planning and scheduling of shows occurs cyclically and demands time and resources from show societies, predominantly made-up of volunteers. It is standard practice for shows to set their show dates three years in advance.

The Sydney Royal Easter Show generates \$247 million each year in economic benefit to NSW⁴ and many of the country shows societies will schedule their own shows so they can take their best of the best livestock, produce and crafts to compete at the Sydney Royal. In addition, the competitions which nurture the next generation of agricultural leaders start in local shows, then progress through regions onto state competitions and even some national events.

However, while the NSW Department of Education has set school holiday dates until 2030 and as a corollary, the Sydney Royal Show Society is set to align its show dates accordingly, the vast majority of country shows lack the showground tenure to be planning more than one year out. The key reason shows are unable to plan in advance is because Crown land managers are either unwilling, unable or not enabled by the CLM Act to lock-in secure and medium to long-term tenure arrangements. The capacity of show societies to plan and budget across a longer time horizon is impacting the success of shows and creating undue impact on volunteers.

The Showmen's industry (carnival and ride operators), travelling food and beverage operators, entertainers, show jumping course builders, equestrian sporting bodies and many other businesses and people depend on the country show circuit and would also benefit with longer-term confidence and planning ability. These businesses, which are still recovering post pandemic, will choose to travel elsewhere if they cannot secure a contract with a show society. If country shows can't secure these businesses to deliver key elements of shows it impacts their attendance, gate takings and ability to invest in their show and showground.

Recommendation 3

Crown land managers should be properly enabled to:

- A. Offer a minimum five-year lease arrangement with a five-year option to renew. This should replace the current and limiting short lease arrangements in place for many shows on Crown land.
- B. Avoid the need for individual Ministerial approval for longer-term leases.
- C. Issue a Memorandum of Understanding similar to those created with Surf Lifesaving Australia or Men's Sheds which means that shows know that each year during a set period they will have access to the Crown land to use as a showground.

⁴ [2023_SRES_infographic.pdf \(eastershow.com.au\)](#)

Macro Issue 4: Licensing Agreements

Licensing agreements are arduous, complex and differ from showground to showground. The impact of the current arrangement is that show societies are having to invest inordinate time, money for legal support and resources to navigate overly complex processes and often without the skillset or support framework to achieve the right outcome for their show society. There are invariably flow-on effects in terms of the effectiveness and success of shows.

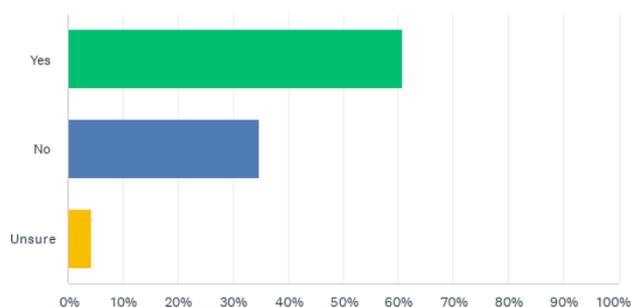
Current licensing is also acting as a disincentive for show societies to use funds to invest in showground infrastructure. It is often the case that while many other community groups may use showground venues and infrastructure, there is an absence of accountability or responsibility for showground infrastructure - due to the way the CLM Act requires they are managed. As such, this is becoming a barrier to show societies investing in the future of infrastructure on these lands as they no longer have any decision-making powers with regards to their use.

Recommendation 4

The CLM Act needs to facilitate:

- A. Shorter, simplified agreements that are digestible and easy-to-use;
- B. Longer term lease agreements that provide shows societies with confidence of tenure to plan and invest in showground infrastructure;
- C. Ability to renew with an agreement extension if no changes to terms since signing of previous agreement to cut red-tape and take some of the resource burden away from show societies and their volunteers; and
- D. Streamlining agreements to enable AgShows NSW as the membership body overseeing shows to better support shows with consistent and streamlined information, resources and toolkits to navigate the licensing process.

Do you have a license agreement with your Showground manager?



AgShows NSW survey results, March 2024

61% Show Societies had a license agreement, 35% did not have an agreement and 4% were unsure. Of those that had an agreement, 81% were on a one year agreement.

Figure 2: AgShows NSW Showground Survey 2024

Macro Issue 5: Consideration of Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of regional communities and are often spread thinly across a number of responsibilities and accountabilities for groups and activities. Show societies alone across NSW are comprised of approximately 16,000 volunteers, with 50,000 volunteers nationally dedicated to supporting shows.

The complexity of CLM Act and how it interacts with the requirements of shows diminishes the capacity of volunteers and makes it more difficult to attract new volunteers, especially younger people as part of succession planning for key roles. This is because there is extensive and complex documentation required to deliver shows on Crown land which is a proven time and motivational barrier for volunteers. AgShows NSW is aware the contracts for long-term leases are over 45 pages and has had feedback that while the longer-term lease is preferred, it requires legal support to understand it, and complete it correctly.

Show society members are also volunteering their time on land manager Boards and committees. Feedback from members indicated that when there is representation from show society volunteers within the land manager Boards and committees, the relationship is very productive and satisfaction with the management of the showground is significantly higher.

It would be extremely beneficial to show societies and their volunteers for processes and documents to be simplified, templated and readily useable by a broad cross section of the community. This would also better equip AgShows NSW to support shows societies statewide.

Recommendation 5

In consideration of volunteers supporting shows across NSW, AgShows NSW requests that the renewed CLM Act support and enable Crown Land managers to produce and distribute:

- A. Simple, concise and easy to read documents which are easily accessible and well communicated;
- B. Templated documents which can be easily updated;
- C. Clear, consistent and easy to understand communication style;
- D. Documents with a writing style that is accessible to a new user/volunteer; and
- E. Tips and tools for completing documentation such as online training, how to guides, templates and examples in different formats, video recordings/webinars to support users to complete documents.

“The local show has always been an integral part of the community... In recent times, nothing demonstrated this more than the success of our 2023 show - after three years of COVID and rain, the community came out in force to support the show and take the opportunity to reconnect. The show experience is generational and the one community event all can enjoy.”
- AgShows NSW survey respondent, March 2024

Macro Issue 6: Showground Structure and Infrastructure

While show events are only held for a handful of days each calendar year, showgrounds are valued and highly used community assets across regional, rural and remote NSW. It is critical that showground developments ensure that the infrastructure is maintained and improved in a way that protects shows, and also supports the multipurpose way showgrounds are supporting community life. Figure 2 details a showground of the future in the NSW Government's Strategic Vision for Crown land Discussion Paper.

Empowerment of Crown land managers to be determining use of Crown land, has unfortunately enabled the handover of buildings to other community groups for year-round use without any solutions or reparations provided to relocate a component of a show to another purpose-built location. These groups are often not equipped or interested in maintaining the show infrastructure. There are many examples across NSW where the result is showground infrastructure becoming dilapidated or in disrepair. Show societies are often one of the only groups which are motivated to fund improvements, however they lack access to the showground or security of tenure required to willingly make investments. I.e., if a show society is unable to access the showground and because of tenure ambiguity, doesn't know have certainty of future show dates, it makes little financial sense to invest infrastructure or to pursue government grants that might support improvements.

Recommendation 6

As part of the CLM Act review, AgShows NSW is seeking:

- A. Improved consultation with the show societies regarding redevelopment of showgrounds;
- B. Solutions provided to show societies by the Crown Land Manager in the event existing infrastructure is not able to be used, with costs covered to erect a temporary structure which is fit-for-purpose;
- C. Mechanism for mediation when issues between Crown Land Managers, other user groups and show societies do arise; and
- D. Recognition that show societies have built buildings and structures on Crown lands and while the upkeep of buildings may differ from showground to showground, their investment over time should be taken into account.

“Due to the contributions of the Nowra Show Society for over 150 years the Shoalhaven community now has a facility for many community purposes, including an emergency evacuation centre, sporting facilities, agricultural show and activities, and a space for all cultural and inclusive community events.”
- AgShows NSW survey respondent, March 2024

Macro Issue 7: Mediation Mechanism

AgShows NSW fully appreciates that in communities with few useable and accessible community spaces, showgrounds have a busy and diverse range of uses. As custodians of showgrounds for over a Century, AgShows NSW understands the need to protect these assets from environmental degradation so that they are available for generations to come. Having said that there will from time to time, be matters that require resolution to achieve the various objectives of the different user groups, including showground societies. Currently there is no formal or structured pathway to resolve issues when they do arise, and we seek renewal of the Act to remedy this.

Recommendation 7

- A. A mediation mechanism is put in place to allow Crown Land Managers to collaborate with user groups, including show societies to resolve issues of access and other matters as and when they do arise; and
- B. A dedicated person/s to investigate or adjudicate – preferably with the ability to travel to the Crown land site.

Case Study: *The Kempsey Show Society is currently opposing changes to Kempsey Showground made by the Crown Land Manager where the Horticulture Pavilion will be handed over to another community user and no longer available for the show. Moving the popular flower section risks diminishing entries and the public perception of the quality of the event and overall, the customer experience. When the Show Society was initially notified, there was no solution proposed for the Horticulture section and there was no detail or transparency regarding the proposed community hub activity and commercialisation of the site. A subsequent solution presented by the Land Manager was not workable due to the lack of consultation to determine the requirements to run the Horticulture section of the show. These negotiations were taking place months out from the show with significant stress and uncertainty placed on the Society. The Kempsey Show is able to use the Pavilion for the 2024 show, but its use remains in question for 2025 and beyond.*

Case Study: *There are ongoing tensions between the Kyogle Show Society and its Land Manager. The dissatisfaction stems from various concerns including an inadequate and non-flexible agreement between the two parties, restrictions on contents insurance, high costs for hiring grounds, lack of consultation or engagement and poor maintenance of facilities which has increased the risk of holding a safe event. The Kyogle Show (6-7 October 2023) was a success but issues remain unresolved with their Crown Land Manager as planning commences for the 2024 event.*

Section 2: AgShows NSW Response to Discussion Paper Questions

In this section, AgShows NSW has sought to provide specific answers to the discussion paper questions aligned to the macro issues for AgShows NSW as these pertain to the CLM Act and which have been detailed in Section 1. AgShows has only answered questions which are relevant to show societies and showgrounds.

Discussion Paper Question 1: Should the objects of the CLM Act be updated? If so, how should they change?

Yes, the CLM Act objects need to be made easier to interpret and apply to on-the-ground decision making. Specifically, AgShows NSW is seeking increased clarity in the objects and the removal of complex language, as identified in Macro Issues 4 and 5 (Simple Licensing and Consideration of Volunteers). There is currently a lack of alignment between objectives and priorities for show societies in practice. It would be much easier to navigate if priorities could be kept outside of the CLM Act to reduce the inclination for broad and differing interpretation.

Discussion Paper Question 2: Are the principles of Crown land management still relevant, and is it appropriate to continue to include them in the CLM Act? Or should they be located outside of the Act, where they can be more easily maintained?

There are objects and principles within the CLM Act and regulations that need greater alignment to avoid conflicts. Keeping the principles outside of the Act itself to reduce broad interpretation and to allow for evolution of principles outside of legislative review periods, would be optimal.

Discussion Paper Question 3: How could the CLM Act better support the strategic use of Crown land to meet important NSW Government Priorities, such as through different tenure and partnership arrangements?

There is strong alignment between shows and the enablers' outlined in the NSW Government's 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW.⁵ Shows are major tourism attraction events for many towns and deliver flow-through economic benefit to traders and businesses in town. Further, in retaining their historical role of showcasing agricultural excellence, shows have the capacity to keep building on the role they are playing in promoting modern agribusiness, acting as a gateway for information about critical projects and more.

⁵ [A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW \(begacircularvalley.com.au\)](https://www.begacircularvalley.com.au)



Figure 3: Enablers of the NSW Government's 20-year economic vision for regional NSW.

Currently there is a lack of recognition by the NSW Government in considering the role of shows in development and execution of other government priorities for regional NSW. Specifically, there are opportunities for shows to be a place where people from the community can access information about advanced manufacturing techniques that might improve productivity, tap into ecotourism opportunities, understand more about the value of high quality food products. Given the significance of renewable energy to the state's future supply, and the challenges agencies face navigating these projects at the community level, shows can also be a central place of information and community engagement on projects. Shows are a considerable resilience builder for communities around seasonal challenges such as drought, fires and floods – providing an opportunity for communities to share information and build resilience.

As a further point, and as outlined in Macro Issue 3 (Security of Tenure), the CLM Act's limitations in facilitating secure tenure arrangements for shows is a barrier to achieving greater strategic objectives linked to government and other community priorities. Tenure arrangements impact planning capacity and this in turn impacts the ability of shows to fulfil and maximise a strategic role.



Picture 4: The Goulburn Show community.

“Goulburn Show is the biggest community event held in Goulburn, the community value the show as a place to meet and show their skills.”
 - AgShows NSW Survey Respondent, March 2024

Discussion Paper Question 6: What changes could be considered to the CLM Act to make it easier to submit an application for a certain development of dedicated or reserved Crown land? For example, could the kinds of development where the Minister is taken to have already given consent to be expanded?

First and foremost, AgShows NSW is seeking definition of a showground within the CLM Act to support greater clarity and visibility of the connections between the Act and showground management. As outlined in Macro Issue 2 on page 4, AgShows NSW has offered a definition of a showground.

Showground infrastructure is of immense value to the broader community and there are current challenges to maintaining and investment in this infrastructure for the future, due to restrictions governing accessibility and accountability for show societies. The CLM Act should be enabled in a way which recognises the historic investment that show societies have made in showground infrastructure and equip and enable show societies to invest where they can, in updating showground infrastructure. Any other redevelopment of showgrounds which is facilitated by the Crown Land Manager must take into account the needs of shows in running a show. For example, the Act could make it easier for show societies to submit for approval by simplifying application processes, streamlining approvals by the Minister to take into account the needs of show societies in advance and over a longer tenure timeframe, with required documentation shortened and simplified.

“Our showground has been described to us by Crown Land as one of the best this side of the Blue Mountains. The Land Managers and Show Society work together to update and improve the facilities. The Leeton Show Society is going ahead leaps and bounds with an excellent Committee, our show runs over two days and has a large increase in crowd size and exhibits last year were a record. The Community back our show 100%, it is well supported by outside towns, it brings our community together from the towns folk to the farmers.”

AgShows NSW Survey Respondent, March 2024

Discussion Paper Question 7: What is the best way to notify people about events, activities or changes that may have an impact on Crown land in their area?

Overall, communications tools and channels need to adopt a multiplatform, contemporary approach which recognises the various ages and cultural demographics of a community. Notification about events, activities and changes that may impact Crown land should optimize a range of communications channels and be attune to the fact that many people in regional communities engaging with the impacts of Crown land are volunteers and perform many and various roles across the community. AgShows NSW has emphasised the importance of considering volunteers in Macro Issue 5. Opportunities for engagement should align with a best-practice approach as outlined in the [International Association of Public Participation Spectrum \(IAP2\)](#) and recognise the value in harnessing local knowledge and also in having people actively participate in decisions affecting their communities.

Specifically in relation to shows and showground, AgShows NSW requests that there is:

- Signage and notices at the showground and also distributed via land managers;
- Ongoing engagement with industry bodies such as AgShows NSW regarding best-practice delivery of objects under the CLM Act and opportunities to address challenges as and when they arise;
- Consideration of how to use shows as a vehicle to communicate with large groups; and
- Use of well accessed and diverse communication channels such as the local newspaper, local primary and high school newsletters, community radio, Council newsletters, emails, website, community social media channels as well as letterbox drops.



Picture 5: Group of show volunteers

Discussion Paper Question 8: What are your views about the Crown land manager structure? Does the CLM Act outline the powers and obligations of land managers in a sufficiently clear way? How could it be improved?

The biggest barrier within the CLM Act to enabling and empowering AgShows NSW to provide the necessary support to its show society members is lack of consistency and alignment in land management approach as to how the CLM Act is implemented at the community level.

Simplification of processes, which recognise that each show is unique in its arrangements, starts with the objects under the CLM Act. The role of the Crown land manager intersects with every one of the Macro Issues which AgShows is seeking to demonstrate in this submission.

1. *Macro Issue 1 (Culture & History)*: Some land managers simply do not recognise or appreciate the historical and cultural value of shows and shows are not included in their obligations as land managers.
2. *Macro Issue 2 (Definition Showground) and Macro Issue 6 (Showground Structures)*: There needs to be clarity for land managers around their obligations and role requirements and this clarity must take into account the role of shows at showgrounds on Crown lands.
3. *Macro Issue 3 (Security of tenure)*: The CLM Act should be evolved in a way that provides greater power and inclination of Crown land managers to offer and facilitate greater certainty of tenure and over a longer time period.
4. *Macro Issue 4 (Simple licensing)*: The CLM Act should be evolved in a way that provides greater power and inclination of Crown land managers to offer and facilitate simple licensing agreements.
5. *Macro Issue 5 (Volunteers)*: The Crown land manager structure must be simple, clear and easy to understand in a way that enhances show societies' ability to optimise the role of volunteers and to allow for succession planning.
6. *Macro Issue 6 (Showground Structure & Infrastructure)*: There is misalignment between the Local Government Act and the CLM Act and where land managers are Councils, this can lead to confusion or conflicts regarding decision making. Legislative reform is required to ensure alignment and consistency and better serve the interests of stakeholders. Land managers should be mandated to involve show societies in the planning and management of showgrounds.
7. *Macro Issue 7 (Mediation)*: There needs to be a clear and independent pathway to escalate and refer matters where land managers are not meeting their obligations or where there is evidence of misalignment between how the role is being performed and the objectives and wellbeing of show societies.

It is AgShows NSW's experience that where there is a show society member presence on groups with the Crown land manager, there is greater opportunity to educate land managers about the value of shows and better capacity to integrate show priorities with overall Crown land management.

Discussion Paper Question 9: What are your views on the powers and obligations of the 2 current categories of land managers? What changes, if any, would you like to see regarding these powers and obligations or to the categorisation and appointment of Crown land managers?

According to a survey of AgShows NSW's members, 57 per cent of showgrounds are managed by a Crown lands Trust/Board and 35 per cent by the local council. There is conflict between the Local Government Act and CLM Act which means that Council is interpreting and enacting its relevant act at the same time Crown land managers are interpreting and enacting the CLM Act and the objectives and priorities under these acts often do not align.

Discussion Paper Question 10: What are your views about expanding or introducing new land manager categories or clarifying the scope of the existing categories?

Although AgShows NSW does not have a formal position on this matter, we acknowledge the importance of clarity regarding the scope of land manager categories. Clear definitions and delineations can enhance understanding and facilitate effective land management practices.

Case Study: The Northern Suburbs Agricultural and Horticultural Show Society Inc, which operated the St Ives Show for over a century, expressed concern over the Draft Plan of Management for St Ives Showground, highlighting their significant historical contributions in building and maintaining infrastructure on the grounds, including the recently condemned Secretary's office. They emphasized the failure of the draft plan to acknowledge their long-standing presence and agreements defining their use of the space. Referring to historical agreements dating back to 1947 and more recently in 2015, they stressed their exclusive rights to certain areas and activities on the showground, which were overlooked in the new draft plan. They called for a more thorough review of the draft plan with more community consultation and to recognise their contributions and ensure the showground's continued functionality and open space.

Case Study: The Rock Show Society and its members are still deeply saddened by the loss of its historic sheep pavilion in November 2021. The pavilion held significant historical and cultural value for the society, serving as a cornerstone of their activities. Its absence not only affects the physical infrastructure of their gatherings but also struck at the heart of their identity and heritage.

Discussion Paper Question 11: What are your views on Crown land managers and council land managers having more flexibility to grant longer-term leases and licences on Crown land without ministerial consent? Should the powers of category 1 land managers to grant tenures be aligned with council land managers, given that their native title obligations are aligned?

Planning and scheduling of shows occurs cyclically and demands time and resources from show societies, predominantly made-up of volunteers.

It is standard practice for shows to set their show dates three years in advance and as already outlined, show societies will often take into account the scheduling of the Sydney Royal Easter Show and the role it plays in profiling the role of agriculture and positive benefits of show-attendance.

However, while the NSW Department of Education has set school holiday dates until 2030 and as a corollary, the Sydney Royal Show Society is set to align its show dates accordingly, the vast majority of country shows lack the showground tenure to be planning more than one year out. The key reason shows are unable to plan in advance is because Crown Land managers are either unwilling, unable or not enabled by the CLM Act to lock-in secure and medium to long-term tenure arrangements. Enabling show societies to plan and budget across a longer time horizon contributors to the success of shows and the businesses and industries who rely on them. A survey of AgShows members in March 2024 revealed that 36 per cent of show societies do not have a current licensing agreement with their Crown land manager.

As outlined in Macro Issue 3, AgShows NSW is seeking:

- A minimum five-year lease arrangement with a five-year option to renew. This should replace the current, ineffective and limiting short lease arrangements in place for many shows on Crown land. Just like the Sydney Royal Easter Show benefits from, country show societies should optimally be equipped with the confidence of longer lease arrangements.
- Avoiding the need for individual Ministerial approval for longer-term leases.
- A Memorandum of Understanding created, similar to those with Surf Lifesaving Australia, or Men's Sheds which means that shows know that each year during a set period they will have access to the Crown land to use as a showground.

Discussion Paper Question 12: What further reforms, if any, should be considered to the requirements of the CLM Act around plans of management? Should requirements around when a plan is needed or who should be required to submit a plan be amended? Should content specifications be streamlined? Should there be incentives attached to having a plan in place, such as greater autonomy?

Lack of historical and cultural recognition of showgrounds and their classification as a community space is potentially undermining community visibility over the heritage and importance of shows. In some instances, year-round use by a community group is taking precedent to a show and buildings are sometimes being handed over for other use without solutions offered to then house show activities.

The reserve's purpose is a key phrase used by Crown lands in determining plans of Management for Council managed/controlled Showgrounds. Our information shows that only 16 per cent of show societies currently have an approved plan of management for their showground.

Once again, a showground definition would better enable the CLM Act to be interpreted on-the-ground in a way that recognises the needs of shows and create better pathways for resolution of matters such as maintenance and investment in showgrounds and infrastructure.

AgShows NSW would like to see dedicated plans of management developed by the Crown land manager in close consultation with all groups that use the showground, including of course show societies.

Discussion Paper Question 13: How could the CLM Act better ensure the purpose or purposes of dedicated or reserved Crown land are considered in any plan of management for the land?

Our members are reporting that they are not confident that Crown land managers are being briefed or educated as they come into their roles on the historical, cultural and indeed economic value of shows and their importance as events in regional areas. This unfortunately results in circumstances where shows are simply not being considered in land management. To emphasise, neither AgShows NSW, or the show societies which it represents, are seeking year-round use or exclusivity of showgrounds. We do, however, require secure tenure and understanding of the value of shows to be equipped to keep the show tradition alive and maintain the role that shows play in the broader socio-economic vibrancy of regional, rural and remote towns. A definition of a showground would certainly aid clarity of purpose.

Discussion Paper 14: What changes do you think are required around the governance obligations of statutory land managers under the CLM Act? How could the CLM Act better support statutory land manager boards and directors to meet their governance obligations?

The most effective way of managing the priorities of Crown land managers and show societies is occurring on-the-ground where there is show society representation on the trusts/groups managing Crown land. As such, AgShows suggests that every effort should be made to have a show society member invited to represent on the relevant groups/committees and Boards overseeing how Crown lands are managed and used by the community.

“The relationship between our Show Society and Showground Manager is excellent as the Showground management trust members are also members of our Show Society so harmony between the two is excellent.”
AgShows NSW Survey Respondent, March 2024

Discussion Paper 15: What changes, if any, should be made to the statutory land manager structure to address current issues around reporting?

Please see our answer to Discussion Paper Question 14.

Discussion Paper 16: How could reporting requirements be simplified to alleviate the financial and administrative burden on statutory land managers, while appropriately managing risk?

Please see our answer to Discussion Paper Question 14.

Discussion Paper Question 17: How could the CLM Act better support an improved understanding of the purposes for which Crown land can be dedicated or reserved?

The CLM Act should evolve in a way that reflects the historical, cultural and socio-economic value of shows to regional towns and communities across NSW which can be achieved by a definition of a showground and improved understanding of the connection between the way Crown land managers are administering the act and the impact on maintenance and enhancement of showground structures and infrastructure for their core show purposes.

Discussion Paper Question 18: What are your views on enabling a Crown land dedication or reservation under the CLM Act to be automatically cancelled or revoked where the land has been approved for transfer to a native title holder under the Native Title Act? Are there other ways that the CLM Act can improve the smooth transfer of Crown land to native title holders under an approved agreement?

AgShows NSW does not possess specific knowledge or experience regarding Native Title and Crown land to answer this question. We acknowledge the importance of respecting Australia's First Nation people's rights and interests.

Discussion Paper Question 24: Are there other ways in which the identified compliance and enforcement issues could be addressed, or are there other gaps in CLM Act measures to protect land in the Crown estate that have not been identified?

The primary compliance and enforcement issues within the CLM Act for AgShows relate to consideration of the volunteers who are interacting with requirements and obligations under the Act.

AgShows NSW requests that any reforms are clearly communicated, with a volunteer audience in mind and that the costs of complying with a remediation order and subsequent penalty notice are commensurate with the resourcing limitations of show societies.

As a practical measure, shows will potentially look to add signage to a structure so that showground users know what they can and can't do and to avoid enforcement during showtime operations.

Discussion Paper Question 25: What are your views on establishing principles to guide the determination and redetermination of royalties and enabling objections to royalty amounts, as with rents?

It is AgShows NSW's firm view that principles underpinning royalties or profits are developed with the understanding that the majority of showground users are not-for-profit organisations which are already heavily resource constrained and in many instances being run predominantly by volunteers.

To the extent that any profit is derived from running events on Crown land, this profit should be directed to maintenance and improvement of the show and the buildings and facilities on Crown land which can in turn benefit local communities. Further, given the need to plan for longer periods of time and budget for any rent increases, shows require longer tenure than is currently provided.

“Any buildings built by the Society immediately becomes under the control of the Land Manager. Due to the uncertainty of the tenure of a new building or the Showground, why would you invest in building new pavilions, etc”
AgShows NSW Survey Respondent, March 2024

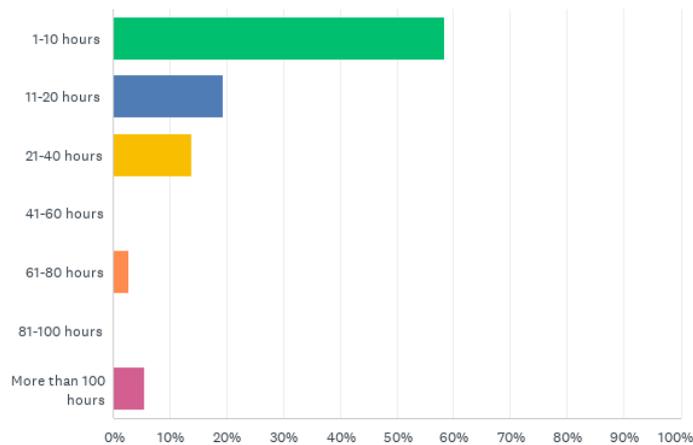
Discussion Paper Question 26: Do you have comments on any other matters or issues, or any feedback about how the CLM Act interacts with other relevant legislation?

Beyond our disappointment that there is nothing specific in the discussion paper acknowledging or seeking resolution on some of the issues impacting the future viability of shows and show societies, AgShows NSW has also not observed anything in the discussion paper to highlight opportunities to improve and enhance mediation of disputes. As outlined in Macro Issue 7, this is a core issue as currently there is a requirement for such a process to readily resolve issues as and when they arise.

AgShows NSW also requests that consideration be given to accessing funding to upgrade showground facilities, acknowledging the difficulties the CLM Act is causing with regards to accountabilities for upgrading infrastructure and maintenance of facilities where they are in good order. Historically this has fallen to show societies which have been happy to take on this role. However, in the absence of tenure confidence or a role in decision-making about Crown land use, some show societies have become disenfranchised from making the investments needed to benefit the broader community. At present, 86 per cent of our show societies say that showground infrastructure is maintained by volunteer effort and in 81 per cent of occasions it is show societies, not Crown land managers, applying for grants and funding for show infrastructure improvements.

AgShows NSW fully appreciates that in communities with few useable and accessible community spaces, showgrounds have a busy and diverse range of uses for communities. As custodians of showgrounds for over a Century, we are also very much alive to the need to protect these assets from environmental degradation so that they are available for generations to come. As discussed in our response to discussion paper question 9, better integration and collaboration between administrators of the CLM and Local Government Act would be extremely beneficial for all showground users.

On average, how many volunteer hours does your Show Society contribute per to the Showground per week?



Who usually applies for funding for your Showground? (tick all that apply)

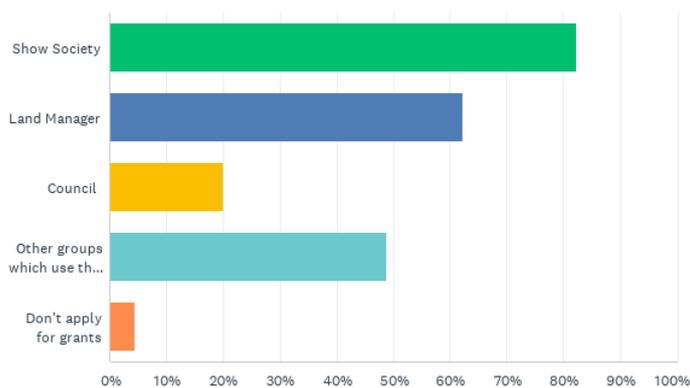


Figure 4 & 5 (above): AgShows NSW Showground Survey, March 2024

Section 3: Supporters of AgShows

In this section Ag Shows NSW has compiled several letters and statements from key supporters of AgShows NSW and show societies across NSW. These letters and statements have been included to demonstrate that there is broad support for evolving the CLM Act in a way that enhances the capacity of show societies to run successful show events in their communities.



Monday, 18th March 2024

Dear Crown Land Management Act 2016 review team,

I am writing to you on behalf of AgShows Australia to express our support for the issues highlighted by AgShows NSW in their submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review.

AgShows Australia is dedicated to the promotion and advancement of agricultural shows throughout Australia. Our organization serves as a central hub for coordinating and supporting the efforts of agricultural show societies across the nation, including those in New South Wales. We recognize the intrinsic connection between the viability of agricultural shows and the effective management of Crown land, as many of these shows are held on such land.

Agricultural shows hold immense significance in Australia's agricultural landscape, serving as platforms for showcasing excellence in food production and rural life. These events play a vital role in fostering community spirit, providing economic opportunities for local traders, and promoting tourism in regional areas. Additionally, they serve as invaluable avenues for disseminating critical information and fostering volunteerism.

With approximately 170 vibrant shows hosted annually on Crown land in NSW alone, AgShows Australia sees great potential for positive evolution through amendments to the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

We share the concerns raised by AgShows NSW in relation to Showgrounds on Crown land. It is essential that Crown land remains accessible for the broad community use, both now and in the future, to ensure the continued success and prosperity of agricultural shows.

We offer this letter in good faith, with the hope that our collective efforts will lead to positive outcomes for the future of agricultural shows and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Dr Robert Wilson AM

President

Agricultural Shows Australia
ACN 615 857 451
C/- Royal Agricultural Society of NSW
1 Showground Road, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

Friday 15 March 2024

Dear Crown Land Management Act 2016 review team,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales (RAS of NSW) in support of the AgShows NSW submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review.

The RAS of NSW is dedicated to promoting and supporting agricultural Shows throughout the state. Our organisation's mission is deeply intertwined with the well-being of agricultural Shows across New South Wales.

Regional and rural Shows play an important role because performances and experience gained at local Shows are vital to ensure the Sydney Royal Easter Show exemplifies the best of the best in NSW and Australian livestock, produce and competition. There is always local pride on the line when the best-of-the-best in the country come to compete in the city and we see first hand what an enormous impact country Shows have on the fabric and well being of the NSW community at large.

Through the country Shows and the Sydney Show there is an array of opportunities which nurture Australia's next generation of agricultural leaders. Our Shows encourage personal and professional advancement and industry networking at youth events like our Young Judges competitions, the Young Woman Competition and the Rural Achievers.

Of note in the AgShows NSW submission is the issue of tenure and the length of licensing agreements between Crown land Managers and Show Societies. Long-term licensing agreements are crucial for the smooth staging of large annual events, providing certainty for organisers and allowing for investment, best practice planning and successful execution.

The NSW Department of Education's forward release of school holiday dates allows the RAS of NSW to strategically plan the Sydney Show, where possible within both the Easter break and the NSW school holidays period, ensuring we can plan well ahead. Secure future planning is something we'd like all our country Shows to have - long term confidence to stage their Shows and contribute to agricultural and regional communities' in NSW.

With approximately 170 vibrant shows hosted annually on Crown land in NSW, and Australia's largest annual ticketed event held annually at the Sydney Showgrounds, the RAS of NSW believes that by addressing the concerns raised by AgShows NSW in its submission, we can ensure that Show Societies and Shows continue thriving on Crown land as they have done so successfully for the past 200 years.

I am willing to provide any further information that may be required.

Sincerely,



JOHN BENNETT OAM
President

Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

1 Showground Road, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127
Locked Bag 4317 Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127 | ABN 69 793 644 351
Tel: (02) 9704 1111 | Email: info@rasnsw.com.au | Fax: (02) 9704 1122 | www.rasnsw.com.au



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW



To Whom It May Concern

Dear Crown Land Management Act 2016 review team,

I am writing to you as the NSW Shadow Minister for Crown Lands, to endorse AgShows NSW as a trusted voice, supporting 192 member Show Societies in the State of NSW.

I have been made aware of its submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review, and request that you give their submission consideration deserving of such a highly respected organisation.

Our local shows are a fantastic tradition; they are the heartbeat of so many rural communities.

Not only do they celebrate the best of the best in the community, but our local shows allow visitors to experience the tastes, sights, and sounds of our rural and regional areas.

There are 22 shows all up in our Cootamundra electorate; each one underpinned by wonderful local volunteers who work so hard year-in and year-out, to bring the shows to life.

In its submission to this review, AgShows NSW is raising several key issues it considers critical to ensure that show societies are better equipped and supported to hold shows on Crown Land in communities across regional, rural and remote NSW; AgShows' submission is underpinned by a deep appreciation that Crown Land be available for broad community use now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Cooke". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Steph Cooke MP
Member for Cootamundra

19.03.2024



Steph Cooke MP, Member for Cootamundra

Young Office: 140 Boorowa Street (PO Box 350) Young NSW 2594 Phone: 6382 2399 Fax: 6382 3144

Junee Office: 25 Seignior Street (PO Box 338) Junee NSW 2663 Phone: 6924 2533 Fax: 6924 1537

/StephCookeMP @StephCookeMP cootamundra@parliament.nsw.gov.au www.stephcooke.com.au



4 Turner Ave, YATALA QLD 4207

Tel: 07 3807 0011

ABN: 75 134 664 816

Email: admin@showmensguild.com.au

Web: showmensguild.com.au

Dear Crown Land Management Act 2016 Review Team,

As President of the Showmen's Guild of Australasia, I am writing to express our support for the matters brought forth by AgShows NSW in their submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review.

The Showmen's Guild of Australasia represents a diverse community of Showmen and women whose businesses are part of the fabric of agricultural Shows across New South Wales & around Australia.

Our organisation supports and promotes the vitality of these Shows.

From the amusement rides and games, Show food to the showbag stands, Guild Members are deeply invested in making sure these Shows thrive because, these events contribute significantly to the livelihood of our Guild Members

Country Shows have been around for hundreds of years and they're still going strong. Notwithstanding, fires and floods and COVID-19, they're more important than ever. They're a slice of Aussie culture, bringing communities together and spreading some much-needed joy.

AgShows NSW has raised some important concerns in their submission, and we're behind them.

Of particular importance to the Showmen's Guild of Australasia is the issue of tenure. If the Shows can plan years in advance, so can Guild Members.

The more advanced notice of Show dates we have the better we can work with the Shows to offer first class rides and entertainment.

Infrastructure maintenance and accessibility is also of great importance to our Members. We need Crown Land Managers to consider the multiple uses and users of Showgrounds. For our Members, we need consideration to be able to bring in vehicles of all sizes to Showgrounds, to be able to manoeuvre rides and heavy equipment and we need space to safely set up rides, sideshows and food vans.

We support the future of all Agricultural Shows and encourage changes to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 that will enable them to continue to thrive and keep the Showmen's Guild on the road, doing what we do best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Pink', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Aaron Pink

PRESIDENT

Showmen's Guild of Australasia



Sydney International Equestrian Centre
Saxony Road
Horsley Park NSW 2175

PO Box 7077
Wetherill Park BC NSW 2164

02 9620 2660

29.02.2024

Dear Crown Land Management Act 2016 review team,,

I am writing to you as the CEO of Equestrian NSW to extend our support for the matters raised by AgShows NSW in their submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Statutory Review.

Equestrian NSW is greatly invested in the welfare and development of showgrounds and agricultural shows throughout NSW. As the governing body for equestrian sports in NSW, we recognise the integral role that these shows play in the development of equestrian sports and sportspeople.

Country shows provide a platform for equestrian enthusiasts of all levels to showcase their skills and compete in various disciplines such as show jumping, dressage, eventing, show horse, carriage driving and more. These events offer opportunities for both experienced riders and newcomers to participate, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie within the equestrian world.

In addition, they play a vital role in the development of equestrian sport and sportspeople by providing opportunities for participation, skill development, promotion, networking, and talent identification. With women and girls making up almost 90% of Equestrian NSW members, equestrian events not only provide an opportunity for women and girls to participate as competitors but also to take on leadership and administration roles in the running and coordination of events and committees. These events contribute to the vibrancy and growth of the equestrian community and play a crucial role in nurturing the next generation of riders and athletes.

Equestrian NSW would like to highlight that importance of including show societies in decisions regarding infrastructure planning as they understand the requirements of getting horses onto showground and how to structure the competitions and site with the safety of the animals, riders and public in mind. Tenure and length of license is also important as competitions are points based and many take place at the shows to qualify for larger events. Without confidence in Show dates, our events may need to take place elsewhere or be moved to another show which has longer tenure.

We share the concerns raised by AgShows NSW in relation to Showgrounds on Crown land as Equestrian NSW also holds events on Showgrounds at non-show times. Country shows are indispensable for the growth of equestrian sport.

Sincerely,

Vireena Peacock (CEO)

Section 4: Collaboration and Consultation Process

To develop this submission to the CLM Act Review, AgShows NSW:

- Reviewed previous documentation and submissions to the NSW Government regarding the Crown Land Management Act 2016.
- Made its members aware of the CLM Act Review and submission deadlines via newsletter, email, committee and Board meetings, and social media channels.
- Held a webinar for members to give them a snapshot of the CLM Act, including an overview of the Government's goals and objectives were for reviewing the Act, demonstrated the value of show societies' contributing a submission and provided an overview of how AgShows' submission.
- Developed an AgShows NSW showground survey to gain up-to-date insights about current use of showgrounds in NSW and understand the needs, challenges, and satisfaction levels of show societies whose shows are on Crown land.
- Held online focus group with the 36 Directors of AgShows NSW who are geographically disbursed across NSW.
- Created briefing documents for members to help them participate in the review.
- Created briefing documents for external stakeholders when seeking letters of support, so they could understand the macro issues show societies are facing and recommendations being made by AgShows NSW.

AgShows NSW engaged [Seftons](#) to help prepare AgShow NSW's submission to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 Review. In 2018, Seftons supported the NSW Department of Industry (Crown Lands) to consult with showground stakeholders and provided their findings to give Crown Lands a better understanding of the needs of showground managers and users and how to support them to provide better services to their communities.

Authors

Brooke Beales

CEO, AgShows NSW

M: 0439994342

Brooke.beales@ascofnsw.org.au

Jessica Harris

Account Director, Seftons

M: 0409 188 743

Jessica.harris@seftons.com.au

Section 5: Conclusion

AgShows NSW thanks the NSW Government for the opportunity to be part of the consultation to evolve the Crown Land Management Act 2016. We wish to emphasise that show societies are not seeking exclusive use of the showground year-round. Show societies across NSW recognise that showgrounds must be multipurpose spaces which underpin the communities in which they are located. Show societies are extremely proud to have built these showgrounds and that they are today available for broad community use and are especially proud to have developed, through grants and the hard work of volunteers and sponsors, their own funds and means of managing shows.

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