

17 Sep

A dog's tail from the park



One dog who enjoys the off-leash dog area very much indeed!

The common is crown land, reserved for public recreation.

The designated off-leash dog area is on "the common", Crown Land set aside for public recreation in the 1850s. It is next to the low level crossing over Turallo creek between Turallo Terrace and Elmslea. If you arrive in Bungendore, alone and friendless, get a dog, put it on a leash and head there as the shadows are lengthening. Your dog, once off its leash, will find best friends in no time, and equally importantly you will meet other dog owners; don't expect to remember their names or they to remember yours but you'll certainly get to know the names of their dogs!

With the proposed new High School taking over not just a large section of Bungendore Park and Majara Street, our dogs (and we) will lose a large part of this community recreational space as well, to provide an agriculture plot and a parking lot! I can't think of this without Joni Mitchell's song of the late 60s running through my head.

"Don't it always seem to go. That you don't know what you've got till it's gone. They paved paradise, put up a parking lot."

Just think of poor Rip, Max, Hilda, Greta, Dotty, Maggie, George and Johnny and their many friends. At their playground they are free to cavort and socialise while their parents and grandparents are distracted. The occasional ball is thrown nonchalantly from a \$2.98 plastic "woomera" from Bunnings without much thought or direction. There is a scramble. Some have learned to share and "play nicely" but there are a couple who are yet to understand doggy rules, and our Maggie is one of them. "You can take a cattle dog out of Queensland but you can't take Queensland out of the girl." I apologise on her behalf!

There are no sexist (re)barks; they are all desexed. And no colour bars or class barriers. Pedigreed dogs and "bitsas", black, brown, white, off white and spotted play on the same team. Some would blush if they'd known their fathers! They slosh through the puddles, roll in the mud and drop their balls in the creek, bewildered as the current picks them up and spirits them away. Then they're off in all directions to sniff out the latest doggy news or check their wee-mail. Meanwhile, once total strangers now sharing common ground swap dog stories and community news in an easy going manner. Not only are their names forgotten, but out of dog walking clobber, wrapped up like "Michelin man" in beanies, coats and scarves, you'd never recognise them in the pub or IGA. There is a real feeling of camaraderie on the common as the evening chill seeps in along the creek, the western sky fills with a blaze of colour and we turn to head home at the end of play. A short, twenty minute walk organised by your dog has stretched to an enjoyable hour.

The off leash area is just another reason why Bungendore is a special place; a place to immerse yourself in a beautiful environment and meet beautiful dogs and their beautiful people, whether it's early morning, noon or at sunset. For Maggie it's an evening ritual that she has been dreaming of since breakfast. Save her from the nightmare of losing it for a "paved parking lot".

There are far better sites for a High School with land available for parking spaces and agricultural plots that don't require the need to take a slice of Dog Paradise. Our common is land reserved for community recreation, an area that has belonged to us for this purpose for a century and a half... and in

Bungendore dogs are as much a part of the community as people.

[Help us keep Bungendore Park – get involved.](#) It's as easy as sending an email – we even have templates you can use. The dog park is just one more thing that makes Bungendore special, and it will be one more thing we lose in favour of a misplaced school.

< The Bungendore community centre

Save Bungendore Park Inc.

Bungendore, NSW
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Incorporated in New South Wales under the
Associations Incorporation Act 2009

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