

Blackall Town Common



Blackall-Tambo
Regional Council

Management Plan

20 September 2023

BLACKALL-TAMBO REGIONAL COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

The Blackall-Tambo Regional Council aims to provide excellent service and leadership for our residents.

BLACKALL-TAMBO REGIONAL COUNCIL VALUES

The Blackall-Tambo Regional Council will provide strong community leadership underpinned by the core values, quality service, community engagement, equity, integrity and commitment. These core values are fundamental to how Council carries out its activities and to the ultimate achievement of its long-term goals.

BLACKALL-TAMBO REGIONAL COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2025

Rural lands – Council controlled lands are well managed.

CONSULTATION

The Town Common Plan has been developed with the intention of documenting all of the agreed strategies between Council and stakeholders focusing on best practice management of both stock and the environment. Its intention is to ensure the continued viability of the Blackall Town Common.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction, operational information and framework for the development, management and maintenance of the Blackall Town Common identifying the community needs and matching them to Council resources in an effort to provide services in a cost efficient and effective way.

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this Management Plan is to provide a guiding living document that has been developed through consultation with the community and the Town Common Advisory Committee which has identified issues, provided forward planning, incorporated an action plan and budget that can be used in the daily management of this natural resource.

REFERRAL DOCUMENTATION

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council – Corporate Plan 2020-2025

Local Government Act 2009

Stock Route Management Act 2002

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Local Laws & Subordinate Local Laws

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Pest Management Plan.

ABBREVIATIONS

BTC Blackall Town Common

PMP Pest Management Plan

BTCAG Blackall Town Common Advisory Group

BTRC Blackall-Tambo Regional Council

BTCM Blackall Town Common Management

LAND PROFILE

The Blackall Town Common has an area of approximately 1660 ha (4,101 acres). This consists of two parcels north of town along Evora Road.

Mitchell grass and Gidgee timber can be found on the plains to the front of the Common with buffel grass, Box, Coolibah and Gidgee timber to the back.

Generations of townspeople living in the community of Blackall have enjoyed the opportunity of agisting stock on the Town Common.

In partnership with council they participate and assist in best practice management of the environment, fodder, infrastructure, resources and advise on the day to day management. This engagement ensures positive outcomes and legacy for future generations.

TENURE OF THE BLACKALL TOWN COMMON

The property description of the Blackall Town Common is listed below:

Lot	Plan	Description
6	SP293539	Town Reserve
158	TB240	Reserve for Pasture

INFRASTRUCTURE

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES

This provides a snapshot of existing infrastructure on the Blackall Town Common, providing an analysis of their current status and location.

Generally the infrastructure is in good condition. A planned, budgeted and documented maintenance plan will be developed in consultation with the Blackall Town Common Advisory Committee.

Water infrastructure and facilities consist of:

- Town water;
- 5.5km of 50mm ploy pipe;
- Two cup and saucer concrete tanks (3,500 gallons);
- One 30,000 gallon poly tank feeding cement troughs in the Common and Butcher's Paddock;
- One water hole; and
- Douglas Ponds.

These facilities replaced an open bore drain in approximately 1996.

Water is supplied via this infrastructure to the following users:

- Common livestock;
- Native fauna;
- Travelling livestock;
- Blackall community for leisure activities;

Blackall Saleyards

The Blackall Saleyards are used as holding yards for the muster of the Town Common.

Fencing

Under the Stock Route Management Act 2002, the local government may give adjoining landowners notice to build a stock-proof fence of the boundary of the land.

Roads

BTRC is responsible for maintaining the following:

- fire breaks
- Stock Route/Council Roads

A grid, which is the responsibility of Council for maintenance, is located on the Evora Road near the Woolscour.

Vegetation

Timber covers 70% of the Town Common with 40% of timber being Gidgee. Box and Coolibah trees cover the remaining 30%.

Mitchell grass is predominate on the grass plains with Buffel grass in the timber.

Native grasses such as Button, River Couch and herbages in season are scatter on the Town Common.

All areas are well grassed with the exception of the clay pans areas which has little to no grass.

Environmental Management

The Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Pest Management Plan (PMP) was developed for the benefit of the whole community and is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Stock Route Management Act 2002 Queensland.

With the implementation of the Stock Route Management Act 2002 responsibilities are identified for local government and landowners. Blackall-Tambo Regional Council has recognised its responsibilities and roles within the Act and has put forward a Pest Management Plan that not only addresses current legislation but also endeavors to raise community awareness of pest management issues.

Resourcing pest management continues to be an inhibiting factor to achieving desired goals, however it is anticipated that this plan will become an aid not only for pest management planning but for gaining external funding to achieve set objects.

IDENTIFIED WEEDS ON TOWN COMMON

MOTHER OF MILLIONS (*Bryophyllum delagoense*)

Mother of Millions is a perennial herb to 1m high. Mother of Millions are escaped ornamental plants originating from Madagascar.

Five species are commonly naturalized in Queensland with one species and a hybrid increasing over substantial areas. Mother of Millions is highly toxic to stock and because of its succulent features is well adapted to dry areas.

As the name suggests one plant can reproduce a new general from masses of embryoids (plantlets) that are formed on the leaf edges.

This makes these plants hard to eradicate. Mother of Millions are erect, smooth, fleshy succulent plants growing to one metre or more in height. All species form tall flower spikes in winter with clusters of bell-shaped flowers. Each species has a distinctive leaf-shape, but all produce small plantlets along the edges of the leaves. These plantlets drop readily, develop roots, and establish quickly to form a new colony.

Firebreaks are in place to burn and spray Mother of Millions.

Mother of Millions is a category 3 restricted invasive plant in Queensland.



PARKINSONIA (*Parkinsonia aculeata*)

Parkinsonia is a thorny shrub native to South and Central America which has been named a Weed of National Significance (WONS) in Australia.

In Queensland parkinsonia is found in at least 35 local government areas and covers over 80,000 hectares.

Heavy infestations are present in the Fitzroy, Lake Eyre and Gulf river catchments. The catchment areas of the Balonne and Maranoa rivers that flow into the Murray-Darling system and the rivers that flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria are mostly free, but isolated infestations in central and western Queensland have the potential to spread across large areas.

Under favorable conditions it can form dense thickets along creeks and rivers and around dams, replacing any pasture grasses and hindering stock movement. Complete eradication from Queensland is not practical given the size and remoteness of infestations; possible and desirable, however is reducing its rate of spread and adverse effects and protecting areas at risk through enforced management and control.

Parkinsonia is a Weed of National Significance (WONS).



NOOGOORA BURR (*Xanthium pungens*)

Noogoora Burr is found along river and creek flats, on roadsides and in pastureland following seasonal rain or floods. The burrs readily contaminate wool, significantly reducing the value of the wool due to increased processing costs. Thick patches of Noogoora Burr may deny sheep access to watering points. This plant is also a serious competitor in pastures and summer crops.

Seedlings are poisonous to domestic stock, causing death if eaten in sufficient quantities.

Noogoora Burr is not a declared weed in Queensland.



BATHURST BURR (*Xanthium spinosum*)

Bathurst Burr was first introduced into Australia in the early 1800s from South America, as a result of contaminated grain or livestock imports. It is common weed in many parts of the world and reduces agriculture productivity.

Bathurst Burr is a declared weed in Queensland.



MEXICAN POPPY (*Argemone ochroleuca*)

A glaucous (blue-green) erect single to several stemmed annual with yellow sap, reproducing only by seed and with a central taproot.

It grows from 60 to 120cm in height. It has leafy stems that grow up to 60cm, with prickly lobed leaves. The flowers are showy and have a dark red 3 to 6 lobed stigma (glandular region at the tip of the style).

Commonly found as a weed of roadsides, mining dumps, rabbit warrens, recently cultivated paddocks, waste places and over grazed pastures. It often occurs as dense stands in sandy stream beds and alluvial flats associated with intermittent inland streams.

Mexican Poppy is a declared weed in Queensland.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Illegal Dumping

Dumping of liquid or soil waste in a location other than approved waste disposal facility is illegal under the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. This illegal practice will be policed, and offender reported to the relevant authorities.

Litter

Litter is an offence under the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. Any reports of this illegal practice will be reported to the legal authorities.

Fire Breaks & Trails

The implementation of bush fire mitigation measures is essential to minimize the potential for fires to start upon or cross into surrounding properties.

These breaks are also used for the containment and back burning to control fires.

Firebreaks work as a physical barrier, preventing or slowing the passage of a fire front. Accordingly, for firebreaks to be effective they must be free of all combustible or vegetative debris. These fire breaks must also be easily passable.

Annual maintenance grading ensures the removal of vegetive debris from the fire breaks. This grading is done in a way that reduces environmental damage during the construction phase and minimal environmental impact during maintenance operations.

The firebreaks are graded annually.



Wild Dogs

The term wild dogs refers collectively to purebred dingoes, dingo hybrids and domestic dogs that have escaped or been deliberately released.

Early management strategies focused on eradication of wild dogs. The effectiveness of control campaigns was usually based on circumstantial evidence.

The development of radio-tracking technology provided the opportunity to study wild dog movement and allowed better assessment of the effectiveness of control operations.

Wild dog control methods include trapping, shooting, fencing, and the use of guard dogs to protect valuable stock. A planned strategy using a combination of these methods that also considers wild dog behavior will enable effective management of population.



BLACKALL TOWN COMMON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Objectives of this Advisory Committee was to provide a consultative forum that could effectively address the Blackall Town Common Stock Management issues arising from operational processes and procedures with a view to developing and implements best practice animal husbandry practices.

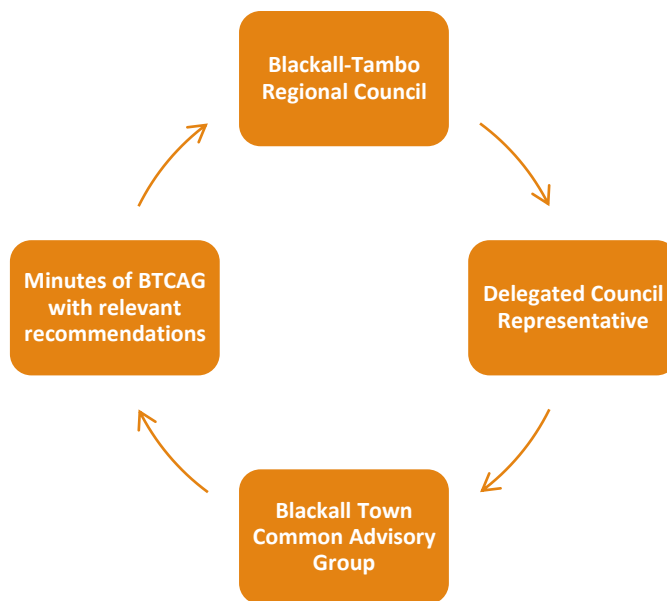
Appendix – Terms of Reference

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Council will communicate directly with the Advisory Committee to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Scheduled meetings with delegated Council officers, delegated BTRC Councillors and the BTCAG will be the main source of communication and engagement.

Minutes of these meetings will be included in the agenda of the BTRC for Council’s consideration of any recommendations and for general information.



STOCK MANAGEMENT

STOCK NUMBERS

In consultation with the Rural Land Officer the committee may make recommendations to Council concerning the number of stock to be agisted on the Town Common.

These recommendations will be made after consideration of the following:

- Assessment of fodder on the Common;
- Seasonal conditions;
- Community demand.

A maximum of 80 units of stock can be agisted on the Town Common. (1 cow = 1 unit | 1 horse = 2 units.)

A maximum of 20 horses only can be agisted on the Town Common. No more than 4 horses per household are permitted.

A maximum of 40 cattle only can be agisted on the Town Common. No more than 5 cattle per household are permitted.

BULLS ON COMMON

The Blackall Town Common Advisory Group shall be responsible for the purchase of bulls acceptable to the cattle owners and replaced as and when the Committee deems appropriate.

If required by the Committee an annual bull fee will be levied by Council and will be applied per joined females. The fee will be agreed to by the Committee. The fees will be held in trust for the purpose of procuring additional bulls for the common.

The purchase of bulls will be the discretion of the Committee and the sale of common bulls will be credited to the bull levy account.

CLASS OF ANIMAL PERMITTED ON THE TOWN COMMON

Class of animals permitted on the Town Common and definition of same are:

- Horses;

- Foals – under 6 months – no payment;
- Cows;
- Heifers;
- Steers – Common bred only up to 12mths;
- Un-weaned calves; and
- Committee approved bulls only.

CLASS OF ANIMAL NOT PERMITTED ON THE TOWN COMMON

Class of animal not permitted on the Town Common:

- **NO** – entires (horses)
- Donkeys
- Goats
- Camels
- Sheep

STOCK ON COMMON

Stock owners must:

- have their own registered brand; and
- horses must be identifiable;
- be a Registered Biosecurity Entity.

CRITERIA FOR AGISTING STOCK ON TOWN COMMON

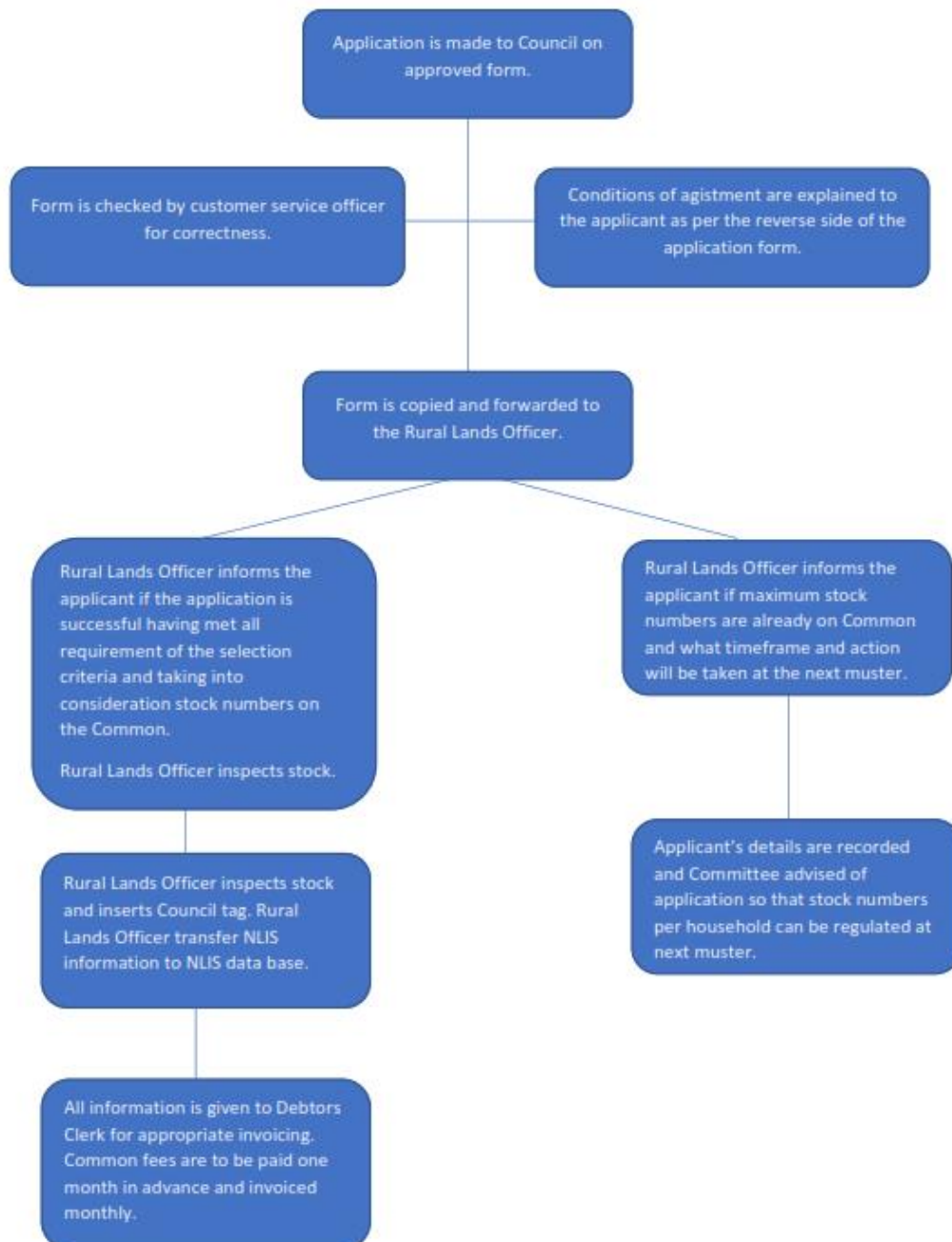
The criteria for agisting stock on the Town Common are as follows:

- Stock agisted is per household in the township of Blackall;
- Maximum number of stock per household is determined by recommendation to Council taking into consideration seasonal conditions and grass count;
- Stock number per household may vary due to demand for agistment; i.e. Council approves a maximum number of stock per household however a person meeting the set criteria requests agistment after a common muster, must wait until the next muster. Other users under supervision of the Rural Lands Officer decreases their numbers to accommodate the new request;
- Must be a resident (own or rent premises) in the township of Blackall (as per the Blackall Planning Scheme map at appendix 2) for a minimum of 6 months;
- 18 years of age;

- Must have own brand registered in agistee's name;
- Must not own more than 10ha of land;
- Must be the bona fide owner of the stock;
- All stock weaned are deemed as adult stock.
- Stock owners must have their own registered brand;
- Stock owners must be a Registered Biosecurity Entity.

PROCESS FOR AGISTING STOCK

- Application to Council on approved form;
- Total number of stock allowed on Town Common at time of application will influence the number of head agisted;
- All stock inspected by Rural Lands Officer prior to depasture.



CONDITION OF USE

Owners must notify the Rural Lands Officer before depasturing stock or removing stock under special circumstances from the Town Common.

Any stock removed permanently without notifying the Rural Lands Officer will be invoiced until notification of the removal is made to the Rural Lands Officer.

Animals are depastured at the owner's own risk.

Compulsory weaning of all calves 6 months and over going back onto the Common – owners' responsibility.

Administration to be advised of any stock removed or depastured so that appropriate invoices can be distributed.

Any removal of stock off Town Common – Council tags to be returned to Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Rural Lands Officer.

All weaned cattle introduced to the Town Common must pay agistment and carry a Town Common tag.

Rogue cattle will be removed on recommendation of Advisory Committee and Rural Lands Officer.

Common fees are paid one month in advance when agisting stock.

Debtor invoices are dispatched monthly.

The branding of calves on the Common may only occur during the musters or approved musters.

Owners are responsible for the payment of NLIS tags.

Owners agree to pay all agistment and applicable bull levy fees and charges as set down by Council in the annual schedule of Fees and Charges.

BLACKALL TOWN COMMON MUSTERS

The Common is mustered, the first muster being March and the second muster being September. These months are preferred however, due to seasonal conditions they may vary from time to time to accommodate the weather and market.

The coordination of the muster is the responsibility of the Rural Lands Officer and BTCAG:

- Cattle removed only at time of musters;
- Employment of contract musterers is the responsibility of the committee.
- All yard work is done by volunteer/contractor labour at their own risk;
- Work Health and Safety procedures are observed and practiced at all times;
- Rural Lands Officer records all stock movement on and off the Common.
- Council may muster at any time for management, biosecurity reasons or animal welfare.
- Horses may be taken off the Common for work or sports if the animal can be caught in the paddock without the need to muster other horses. Horses removed from the Common for these purposes will still pay agistment if they are to be returned to the Common.

CHEMICAL REGISTER

A chemical register will be maintained by the Rural Lands Officer specifying:

- What chemical rate;
- Spray rate;
- Dosage per animal;
- Withholding period;
- Expiry date of chemical; and
- Date of application.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Consequences Likelihood	Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Catastrophic (4)
Probable (A)	L	M	S	H	H
Possible (B)	L	M	M	S	H
Improbable (C)	L	L	M	S	S

Risk Level	(H) (S) (M) (L)	High – must be dealt with immediately Significant – must be dealt with urgently Moderate – apply routine procedures Low – may be accepted and managed
Likelihood	A B C	Probable – can be expected to occur during the activity Possible – not expected to occur during the activity Improbable – conceivable but highly unlikely to occur during the activity
Consequences	5 4 3 2 1	Catastrophic – death or huge financial loss Major – extensive injuries or major financial loss Moderate – medical treatment required or high financial loss Minor – first aid treatment or medium financial loss Insignificant – no injuries or low financial loss



ID	Identified Risk	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Consequences	Risk Level	Priority
1	WH&S Stock handling	Volunteers with previous stock experienced to work cattle.	B	3	M	1
2	WH&S Maintenance	Rural Lands Officers inspect and repair yards regularly.	B	3	M	1
3	Unfenced roads	Appropriate signage is installed.	B	2	M	
4	Noxious weeds	Spraying and monitoring.	A	3	M	
5	Overstocking	Grass check and monitoring.	C	1	L	
6	Fires	Grading of fire breaks and burn offs.	B (seasonal)	4	H	
7	Erosion	Grading, land fill and drainage.	C	1	L	
8	Disease outbreak	Monitor movement of cattle and regular inspections of stock.	C	5	L	
9	Water infrastructure break down	Piping water from bores and town water.	B	2	L	
10	Animal health and welfare	Spraying of stock and treatment of dehorning.	C	1	L	

LOCAL LAWS

Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2010 – Schedule 1 – Prohibition on keeping animals – Section 5(4)(5).

Schedule 1 Prohibition on keeping animals

5	Stallions & Bulls	Stallions and Bulls in a designated town area, except where the bull is kept within a “town common” designated by the local government for grazing cattle under “common rights”.
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BLACKALL TOWN COMMON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. TITLE

The name of the Committee shall be the Blackall Town Common Advisory Committee.

2. PURPOSE

To provide a consultative forum that can effectively address the Blackall Town Common Stock Management issues arising from operational processes and procedures with a view to developing and implementing best practice animal husbandry practices.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- Blackall-Tambo Regional Council will appoint management representatives.
- This committee must not be appointed as a standing committee of Council.
- Membership will be made up of stock owners who have stock agisted on the Blackall Town Common and paid agistment fees.
- A member of the advisory committee (whether or not they are a Councillor) may vote on business before the committee.
- There is only one (1) vote per household.

4. CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEE

- The committee may appoint one of its members as Chairperson.
- Duties of the Chairperson in liaison with the management representative of council will include the following:
 - Scheduling meetings and notifying committee members;
 - Inviting specialists to attend meetings when required by the committee;
 - Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available;
 - Ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome;
 - Review and approve the draft minutes before distribution;
 - Ensure minutes are forwarded to Council for inclusion in the Council agenda with all recommendations documented.

5. MINUTE TAKER

The role of the minute taker is to:

- Prepare agendas and issuing notices for meetings and ensuring all necessary documents requiring discussion or comment are attached to the agenda;
- Distributing the agenda one week prior to the meeting;
- Taking notes of proceedings and preparing minutes of meeting;
- Distributing the minutes to all committee members one week after the meeting; and
- The minutes shall be checked by the Chairperson and accepted by committee members as a true and accurate record at the commencement of the next meeting.

6. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

Meetings of the Committee will be held twice per year as a minimum at the time and place decided by the committee.

7. QUORUM

A quorum will be six (6).

8. VOTING RIGHTS

- All members have equal voting rights.
- Invited guests and management representatives appointed by Council will have no voting rights.

9. PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS

- Business may be conducted at a meeting of a committee only if a quorum is present.
- At a meeting of a committee:
 - (a) Voting must be open; and
 - (b) A question is decided by a majority of the votes of the members present; and
 - (c) Each member present has a vote on each question to be decided and, if the votes are equal, the member presiding also has a cast vote; and
 - (d) If a member present fails to vote, the member is taken to have voted in the negative.

10. INVITED GUESTS

Internal or external persons may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chairperson, on behalf of the committee, to provide advice and assistance where necessary.

They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Chairperson.

11. COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL CEASE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE IF THEY:

- Have no stock agisted on the Blackall Town Common.
- Have unpaid agistment fees.

12. FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Blackall Town Common Advisory Committee are:

- To provide advice to Council on best practice management of the Blackall Town Common;
- In consultation with the Rural Lands Officer, the committee may make recommendations to Council concerning the number of stock to be agisted on the Town Common;
- The committee will by consensus at the committee meeting identify the breed of bull to be purchased;
- The committee will assist with the implementation of the Blackall Town Common Management Plan as adopted by Council;
- Consultation on infrastructure, development and maintenance.

DEFINITIONS

Resident:	a person who owns or leases a residence in Blackall and resides in the town permanently or on a continuous long-term basis.
Council:	Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, a delegated officer or representative of Council.
RBE:	Registered Biosecurity Entity – if you own or keep 1 or more cattle, sheep, pigs, bison, buffalo, deer, alpacas, llamas, or other animals from the Camelidae family, horses, ponies, donkeys, mules, zebras other animals from the Equidae family you must be registered as a biosecurity entity.
Household:	a house located on an allotment located within the designated town area.
Rural Lands Officer:	Council appointed officer including a Local Laws officer.

