

Town commons records



Research Guide to town commons records at
Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

Queensland State Archives holds town commons files from 1866 to 1974.

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

ITM	QSA Item (describes the item)
PR	Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy)
DR	Digital Representation (for a digital image)
S	Series ID (for a series of records)
A	Agency ID (for the creating or responsible agency).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.

Historical context

Section 14 of the *Alienation of Crown Lands Act 1860* gave right to unenclosed common lands within any agricultural or other reserve, to purchasers of land within the reserve and to the residents in any adjacent township, to be determined by regulation. The Minister for Lands was responsible for making regulations.

The *Crown Lands Alienation Act 1868* formalised the setting up of town commons. The Governor-in-Council could proclaim unsold land as a town common, if it was requested by a petition signed by not less than 30 resident town freeholders and provided the petition had not generated a counter-petition signed by a greater number of resident freeholders, following a 60-day gazettal notice. The common was vested in the Crown and could be sold or extended. The common was not to exceed 20 square miles. Conditions were laid down on who could use the common, and the fees for de-pasturing stock.

Sheep were allowed on commons only in special circumstances. The cost to de-pasture cattle was at a rate of not less than two shillings per head per annum, and in no case was any one freeholder to run more than twenty head on the same common. The 1868 Act gave a definition of 'cattle' for the purposes of the act. Cattle 'shall mean and include mares, geldings, colts, fillies, asses, mules, cows, oxen, heifers, steers, and calves...'.

The *Commonage Act 1870* allowed the Governor-in-Council to delegate the power to manage and make rules and regulations relating to the common to the mayor and corporation of a municipality.

The *Crown Lands Act 1884* provided for the resumption of commons, and in the *Land Act 1910* all commons were deemed to be pasturage reserves.

Lands Department

Town Commons Files

27/4/1866 - 11/1/1974

[S14066](#)

The files include the petition or petitions, maps and correspondence about the setting up of the common. A few files have correspondence relating to the later sales of land from the common. These files can be useful for locating people in the area. The occupations of the petitioners are usually listed after the signature.

To find a file, identify the town common (by location) and the ITM number from the description list in the table provided in Appendix A.

Other sources of information

For related land records, refer to the Reserve Files search procedure available in the Reading Room.

Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.

Appendix A

Town commons in Queensland

ITM ID	Description	Date Range	
ITM75722	Allora Town Common	20/7/1868	1/08/1918
ITM75749	Bundaberg Town Common	13/7/1889	5/2/1890
ITM75746	Capella Town Common	30/6/1885	11/1/1886
ITM75723	Cardwell Town Common	2/4/1869	31/8/1869
ITM75737	Charters Towers Town Common	16/7/1880	4/8/1880
ITM75734	Clermont Town Common	17/11/1876	8/07/1916
ITM75743	Clermont Town Common	5/8/1881	6/9/1881
ITM75745	Cooktown Town Common	8/9/1885	22/10/1885
ITM75724	Dalby Town Common	24/2/1893	2/2/1911
ITM75744	Diamantina River Town Common	21/7/1885	23/1/1886
ITM75730	Drayton Town Common	27/4/1866	25/01/1908
ITM75725	Goondiwindi Town Common	10/5/1870	2/6/1870
ITM75738	Goondiwindi Town Common	6/6/1882	14/5/1887
ITM75748	Herberton Town Common	2/6/1888	7/9/1888
ITM75739	Hughenden Town Common	23/10/1884	8/10/1887
ITM75741	Ingham Town Common	2/2/1888	2/2/1888
ITM75736	Maryborough Town Common	20/12/1876	19/04/1879
ITM75740	Normanton Town Common	4/1/1885	16/2/1885
ITM75747	Normanton Town Common	1/6/1887	5/1/1888
ITM75726	St Lawrence Town Common	16/8/1866	31/3/1869
ITM75727	Roma Town Common	10/2/1869	10/1/1883
ITM75735	Springsure Town Common	21/4/1877	5/6/1913
ITM75726	St Lawrence Town Common	16/8/1866	31/3/1869
ITM75732	Tambo Town Common	15/11/1883	22/1/1884
ITM75731	Tiaro Town Common	31/03/1873	23/07/1913
ITM75728	Toowoomba Town Common	7/12/1868	19/05/1909
ITM75733	Walsh River Town Common	13/10/1874	7/5/1875
ITM75729	Warwick Town Common	8/3/1901	20/1/1911
ITM75742	Winton Town Common	11/3/1885	1/4/1885