



## Day 11 - Fact Sheet 29

### Tales of the Todd- Read all about it!

# What is the Common Good?

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When you talk about self interests and interest groups, you realise that individuals have a lot of freedom as long as they obey the laws and do not harm others. Sometimes, however, we have to look beyond our self interest or our interest groups.

We have many important responsibilities to our community as well as to each other. If our actions hurt others or make it hard for others to follow their self interests, we may have to compromise. Some people's wishes or needs may not be met to the extent they may like. But everyone's interests should be met to a certain extent. This is especially true when we all share something in common such as a water source or a central landscape feature (such as the Todd River). If, for example, the actions from our self interests lead to pollution or land degradation, then we might have to change the way we do things. This is for the Common Good.

The Common Good means that which is in the interest or well-being of the whole community. Everyone enjoys some good that is common to all of the citizens. The common good will provide a better quality of life for everyone rather than just a few. For example, everyone in the community benefits from having safe street, good schools and a clean environment. The common good also requires that we consider how our actions will affect the future.

If what we do today will lessen the quality of our future lives, then we have to consider the common good to be more important than our self interests. The idea of thinking about how our actions will affect our future well being is part of sustainability. For example, if we set fire to the big old trees in the Todd (or cut them down for firewood), someone will have a fire to keep warm by and cook their food. However in the future, not only will there eventually be no more trees to burn, we will also have an unhealthy river system.

It is important that each of us becomes involved in our community. This will ensure that our community will be a good place to live for our families and neighbours. Some of us might volunteer to help others or clean up our community. Others might get involved with helping to make decisions or to work for a government agency.

The common good is one reason why we have government. Government acts in the interest of the entire community.