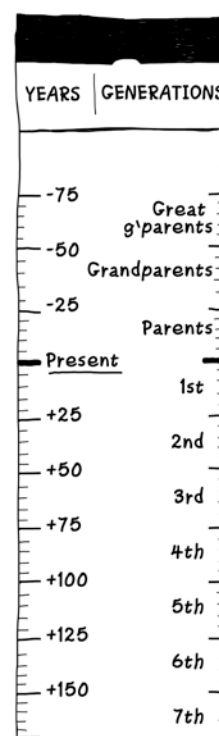


Taking back property involves recognising diverse forms of property, and thinking about the ways that all forms of property can be ‘commoned’ in order to benefit people and environments. There are four steps for taking back property.

1. We start with the diverse property identifier (right) in order to recognise the various legal forms that property can take. Have a think about some examples of these different forms of property. Although the identifier focuses on the biophysical word, these different forms of property can also relate to cultural, social and knowledge resources (think, for example, of legal battles over copyright or human genes).
2. Now consider how the examples that you have come up with are being managed. Are they being managed with a view to the long-term? Some Indigenous groups manage their resources by using a seven-generations philosophy. They make decisions on the basis of how the outcome will affect the next seven generations. One way to make the seven-generations philosophy more real is via a yardstick in which we assume a generation to be twenty-five years. We can locate ourselves in relation to the past, via our parents, grandparent and great-grandparents, and then we can start to look forward to the future and the next seven generations. Do any of the examples you have come up with use a seven-generations philosophy?
3. It is likely that when the seven-generations philosophy is being put into practice resources will take on the characteristics of a commons. The commons identikit (below) lays out these characteristics. Consider some of the examples you have already identified. How closely to these match the commons identikit? What would need to change to make the resource a commons?

| DIVERSE PROPERTY IDENTIFIER |
|--|
| PRIVATE |
| ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE State-owned Tenanted Ninety-nine-year lease Customary Community-managed Community trust |
| OPEN ACCESS Atmosphere Water Open ocean Ecosystems services |

A COMMONS YARDSTICK



1 GENERATION = 25 YEARS

| Access | Use | Benefit | Care | Responsibility | Property |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Shared and wide | Negotiated by a community | Widely distributed to community and beyond | Performed by community members | Assumed by community | Any form of ownership (private, alternative private, open access) |

4. Taking back property means building a seven-generations philosophy into decisions about the access, use, benefit, care and responsibility of resources. When we do this, we are starting to build commons that will benefit people and environments. The Ways of Commoning tool (below) shows how all forms of property can be commoned. The top row identifies enclosed private and state property that may be commoned, while the bottom row identifies unmanaged commons (such as the open seas) that have unrestricted access but no principal carer or responsible institution. The aim in commoning is to have property managed according to the conditions identified in the middle row--and with a view to the next seven generations.

Take some of the examples you have identified and discuss whether they have the characteristics of a commons (the middle row). What would need to change to make these examples into commons?

| | Access | Use | Benefit | Care | Responsibility | Ownership |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Commoning enclosed property | Narrow | Restricted by owner | Private | Performed by owner or employee | Assumed by owner | Private individual Private collective State |
| Creating new commons | Shared and wide | Negotiated by a community | Widely distributed to community and beyond | Performed by community members | Assumed by community | Private individual Private collective State Open access |
| Commoning unmanaged open-access resources | Unrestricted | Open and unregulated | Finders keepers | None | None | Open access State |

The example below is of the Flashjack Commons that has been established on private property owned by the Spooner family to protect the endangered Bridled Nailtail Wallaby (also known as the 'Flashjack'). See how it has the characteristics of a commons (the middle row, above).

| Access | Use | Benefit | Care | Responsibility | Ownership |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Spooner family, sporting shooters, community volunteers, researchers, rangers, cattle, and native species of plants and animals | Rules set by a conservation agreement to protect brigalow habitat and flashjacks, and eradicate weeds, feral animals, pests, and fire | Flashjacks, cattle, brigalow habitat, and future generations | Spooner family, sporting shooters, community volunteers, community organizations, researchers, and rangers | Spooner family, researchers, volunteers, and Bridled Nailtail Wallaby Trust | Individually owned private property gifted by the Spooner family |

Source: Gibson-Graham, J.K., Cameron, J. & Healy, S., 2013, *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming our Communities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Chapter 5.