

Crown Lands Division

Crown Lands provides a property management service for the Department of Lands.

Crown Lands is the custodian of Crown land status information and, under the Crown Lands Acts, administers Crown land held under lease, licence or permit. In addition, the Division manages vacant Crown land, land retained in public ownership for environmental protection purposes and the lands of the Crown public roads network. Crown land is allocated for public uses, including schools, hospitals, sports grounds, community recreation and housing development. Crown reserves are managed in partnership with both councils and local community groups.

The goal of Crown land management is to optimise environmental, economic and social outcomes for the benefit of the people of NSW.

The Crown Lands Division offers a diverse range of services including:

- General enquiries about Crown land and payment of Crown land accounts.
- Marketing and disposal of Crown land for residential, commercial, industrial and rural use.
- Applications for leases, licences, enclosure permits and purchase of Crown land.
- Conversion/purchase of Crown leasehold tenures.
- Assistance in management of local community reserves.
- Administration of Crown roads.
- Native Title investigation.
- Management of 27 Minor Ports along the east coast of NSW.
- Land survey and title creation including investigations of Mean High Watermark definitions and Aboriginal land claims.
- Map and aerial photograph sales.

Senior Managers

Graham Harding, General Manager

Bob Costello, Director Business Performance

Adrian Harte, Regional Manager Central

Craig Barnes, Regional Manager North Coast

Leanne Taylor, Regional Manager South

Andrew McAnespie, Regional Manager Sydney/Hunter

Stephen Francis, State Manager Commercial Development

Management, strategy and performance review

Key issues

- Crown land, including the Western Division, comprises approximately half of all land in NSW, with an area of around 39 million hectares valued in excess of \$8.3 billion.
- Crown land is allocated for diverse public uses such as sporting, camping and recreation areas. In addition, significant Crown lands are retained for protection and management for their environmental importance.
- Crown land is available for leasing for commercial and agricultural purposes as well as development and sale to meet the needs of expanding regional and rural communities.
- Implementation of the reforms introduced in the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment (Budget) Act 2004, particularly environmental assessment to facilitate perpetual lease conversions and development of the framework for covenants to protect natural resources.
- The magnitude of the Crown estate, including its infrastructure and ecological values, creates significant demands on State and community resources.

Objectives 2004/2005

- Development of comprehensive databases, management systems and processes to support continued efficient management of Crown land.
- Continued responsible management of natural resources on Crown reserves such as the conservation of water, flora, fauna and scenic beauty, while still encouraging public use and enjoyment of the land.
- Encouragement and support of volunteers to help care for Crown reserves through the mechanism of community trust boards.

- Continued implementation of commercial management of Crown and other surplus State-owned lands.

Outcomes

- Promotion of and active participation on the Game Council and on the Noxious Weeds, Bushfire Mitigation and Estuary Management Committees to manage the natural resources on Crown land.
- Cooperation with local authorities in the eradication of feral pests and weeds on Crown lands.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers commissioned to review the management of trust reserves and develop a Handbook to assist community trust boards.
- Improved performance in the stewardship of the Crown estate with implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Review into Rentals for Waterfront Tenancies on Crown Land in NSW.
- Improved operational and commercial awareness by adoption of contemporary ‘best practice’ to optimise commercial returns.
- Implementation of a Management Operating System for business development.

Objectives 2005/2006

- Responsible Crown land management to optimise environmental and socio-economic benefits to the State.
- Continued development of a Public Trading Enterprise-like environment to guide the operations of Crown Lands NSW.
- Continued implementation of Crown land legislative reforms by undertaking environmental assessments of Oyster Leases and the Perpetual Lease Conversion program.
- Maintain integrity of data to enable accurate internal reporting of the value of the Crown estate.
- Continued internal promotion of the Crown Lands Management Operating System.
- Implementation of a Program Management model structure to identify and create service delivery efficiencies and opportunities that will provide flexibility and stability into the future.
- Encouragement of staff to undertake training in administration and management of public land.
- In light of the forthcoming Independent Pricing and Regulatory Review into Rental Arrangements for Crown Land Communication Tower Sites

continue licence negotiations with major communications carriers for use of Crown land for telecommunications towers.

- Complete the management review of Rookwood Cemetery.
- With the active participation of government agencies and stakeholders, continue development of Master Plans for the future direction and development of the Crown land maritime precincts at Coffs Harbour; South Harbour, Tweed Heads; Port Macquarie; and, Forster-Tuncurry.
- Undertake feasibility studies for the development of Ulladulla, Batemans Bay and Wollongong harbours.

Managing Land Assets

The Crown Lands Division practices sustainable management of State-owned lands for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. As the property manager for Crown land tenures, reserves and unallocated Crown lands across eastern and central New South Wales, the Division manages an area of approximately 12.7 million hectares.

Crown land is a valuable public asset and Crown Land NSW strives to deliver the optimum environmental and socio-economic benefit for the State. Under the Crown Lands Acts 1989, the Division administers and manages Crown lands held under lease, licence and permit; community and Council reserves; lands retained in public ownership for environmental purposes; lands within the Crown public road network; and, vacant Crown lands. Crown land is also allocated for public uses such as schools, hospitals, sporting facilities, recreation and community events.

Under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, the Crown Lands Division researches, prepares and issues Real Property Act titles for Aboriginal land claims granted over Crown land. It also manages, on behalf of the Government, applications made under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 affecting land in New South Wales. This includes the making of Indigenous Land Use Agreements aimed at settling these claims.

The Division continues to meet the government’s environmental obligations, working in partnership with natural resource stakeholders across the State to rehabilitate Crown lands. It also promotes the revegetation and rehabilitation of Crown land tenures by providing rental incentives ad supporting community initiatives to enhance the environment.

The Crown Lands Division has developed networks with other Crown land agencies across Australia, sharing and

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exchanging information and developing strategic solutions for improved Crown land management.

Through the Division, the Department is committed to sharing Crown land resources among the whole community providing, for example, recreation for the general public, tourism opportunities for local communities, support for local fishing industries, communications for regional Australia and farming opportunities for rural families.

In particular, the Division manages Crown land tenures, Crown reserves and vacant Crown lands totalling 8 million hectares involving the administration of 34,724 road enclosure permits, 17,766 licences, 12,054 leases, 2,714 purchases and 104 other tenure accounts.

The income of \$99.7 million from the management of Crown land tenures and sales of surplus Crown and State-owned lands is detailed hereunder:

	2001/02 (\$ million)	2002/03 (\$ million)	2003/04 (\$ million)	2004/05 (\$ million)
Rent & royalties	21.86	25.63	28.03	43.44
Administration fees	0.19	0.21	0.04	0.05
Application fees	1.48	1.09	1.12	1.85
Search fees	0.32	0.27	0.29	0.23
Total	23.85	27.2	29.48	45.57

Sales of Surplus Crown land

	2001/02 (\$ million)	2002/03 (\$ million)	2003/04 (\$ million)	2004/05 (\$ million)
Development of remnant sites	23.85	12.45	3.82	3
Sale of Crown leasehold to existing tenants	13.74	9.68	9.18	6.3
Sale of vacant Crown land	2.26	2.19	36.9	
Sales to other state government departments and agencies	2.11	1.83	5.17	8
Totals	39.71	23.96	20.36	54.2

To meet needs for public safety, some \$320,000 has been expended on the removal of dangerous and unauthorised structures, including dangerous trees, and the remediation of contaminated sites.

In addition, the Division recognises community support obligations to non-profit organisations, charity groups, pensioners and rural community members encountering financial hardship by providing rental rebates to the value of \$4.9 million. A further \$7.75 million in rentals have been waived in accordance with the legislative reforms introduced in July 2004.

The Crown Lands Division has implemented an asset tracking system that captures and reports on movements in the base data of the Crown estate. About 5700 asset movements with a book value of \$274 million were captured and recoded during 2004/05.

Crown Lands Reforms

The Government introduced important changes to the management of Crown land through the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment (Budget) Act 2004.

The purpose of the reforms is to streamline administration and to achieve a fair and equitable return on the Crown land assets of the State. These reforms also provide an opportunity for perpetual leaseholders to make applications to convert their leases to freehold, subject to certain conditions.

The reforms will affect approximately 11,000 Perpetual Leases, ranging from small suburban blocks to large agricultural holdings. Also affected by the reforms is the Crown road network where a simplified amalgamation

program has already reduced the number of Enclosure Permits from approximately 45,000 to 34,724.

A Reforms Service Centre has been established at Dubbo to meet the reforms challenges and to work in conjunction with Regional staff to streamline and manage the process. Seven staff have been recruited to operate the Reforms Service Centre - a Manager, Administrative Assistant and five technical and land management staff. To complement the Reforms Service Centre, land management positions have been established at various Regional locations and a land economist/valuation position established at Newcastle.

The heritage listed Dubbo Lands Office has also undergone extensive refurbishment to provide adequate workspace for the new unit as well as the District Crown Lands staff.

An integral part of leasehold conversion and road sale processes will be assessment of natural resource issues. This assessment, together with negotiation with interested stakeholders including the Department of Environment and Conservation, Forests NSW and landholders, will guide imposition of covenants to protect important ecological, natural resource, cultural heritage and other significant values.

This whole of government approach will support Catchment Management Authorities in implementing catchment action plans and meeting environment targets.

Systems have been developed to provide a consistent approach for both Regional and Reforms Centre Staff in environmental assessment and the use of computerised mapping programs. This will provide a consistently high standard of documentation and final plans.

Road Reforms

The Crown Lands Division is developing a strategic approach to promote the reforms to close and purchase Crown roads. In this regard, Departmental

Administrative arrangements for Crown Reserves

	2000-02	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Community Trust Boards	866	911	839	758	754
Council trust management	7,014	7,007	7,150	6,885	6,905
Corporations other than Councils	729	746	780	782	780
Trusts managing Commons	213	209	206	206	206
Other bodies	6,519	6,564	6,534	6,528	6,523
Under Crown Lands NSW control	17,197	17,450	17,490	17,840	17,656
Totals	32,538	32,887	32,999	32,999	32,824

representatives have already met with regional groups of farmers to explain the reforms.

Landirect

Landirect is an evolving e-business approach to Crown land business transactions.

A key Landirect objective to provide automatic transfer of Enclosure Permits as a Crown Land Information Database (CLID) update has been introduced resulting in significant savings in staff processing times.

In addition, all Crown Lands application forms are now accessible on-line, including forms for clients to lodge applications for conversions of Perpetual Leases resulting from the Crown lands legislative reforms.

The first stage of the on-line Solicitor Searches was introduced in District Offices in April 2005 with a pilot trial for selected solicitors to access on-line Solicitor Searches scheduled to commence in August 2005. Following this trial, the on-line service will be offered generally to Solicitors/Conveyancers across NSW.

A system to facilitate the transfer of Domestic Waterfront Licences, similar to the Enclosure Permit process, is being developed and on-line applications for new Domestic Waterfront Licences will also be automated as part of this development.

Crown reserves

Crown reserves comprise about three percent of NSW and are a valuable component of the State's network of reserved, protected and public lands.

The Crown reserve system provides the people of NSW with a variety of facilities including local and regional parks, showgrounds, community halls, picnic areas, caravan parks, camping grounds and travelling stock reserves.

The Crown Lands Division oversees management of almost 33,000 Crown reserves and dedications in NSW. Local communities, including councils, directly manage approximately half of these reserves with the remainder managed by the Division.

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State Parks

Crown reserves include a network of 9 State Parks, which are popular with campers, caravan enthusiasts and those who participate in fishing and boating activities. Most State Parks are located on the picturesque inland water storage areas of the State. With continuing drought conditions throughout the State, visitor numbers are down to 630,000, a reduction of 10% from previous years.

Nearly \$1.4 million was granted to State Park Trusts for operational and running costs including maintenance or development of recreational facilities and equipment.

Public Reserves Management Fund

The Public Reserves Management Fund (PRMF) provides financial assistance for the development, maintenance and protection of Crown reserves in NSW. The PRMF is self-funding with income derived from loan repayments by trust managers and the payment of levies from the operation of Crown coastal caravan parks. During the year, 115 grants and 44 loans were provided to trust managers.

All trusts are audited to ensure profits are returned to improving public reserves.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Grants			
Number	134	94	115
Value	\$1,188,358	\$879,414	\$1,126,753
Loans			
Number	87	73	44
Value	\$5,036,825	\$4,972,190	\$4,175,900

Walking Tracks and Recreational Trails

Walking tracks maintained by the Crown Lands Division continue to attract interest and significant levels of usage.

During the reporting year The Six Foot Track has been partially realigned to reduce erosion and track head signage works completed.

Along The Great North Walk, 1.5 kms of track upgrade work has been completed in the Crosslands Reserve, a board walk and bridge over the Calna Creek has been upgraded and Departmental plaques placed on signage along the Walk.

Meanwhile the partnership with the Bicentennial National Trail has seen the Division assist in the fine tuning of the route of the Trail to address risk management and legal access issues in various tenures, and the production of a third edition guidebook for Southern NSW.

Objectives for 2005-2006 include the formation of a Recreational Trails Working Group to develop a Strategic Plan for the Departments recreational trails. It is anticipated that the Plan will assist the integration of recreational trails into the Lands reform agenda.

Minor Ports

The Minor Ports Unit consists of 10 professional staff with qualifications in engineering, environmental and marine science disciplines. The Unit manages three Programs: the Minor Ports Program, the River Entrances Program and the Waterways Program. Advice is provided on maritime and coastal aspects of Crown land management.

Minor Ports Program

The NSW Government operates the Minor Ports Program to provide and maintain port infrastructure as well as safe, secure port access. The program benefits the commercial fishing industry, the growing tourism industry, recreational boating and local communities.

Through the Crown Lands Division, the Department has responsibility for care and management of 27 fishing ports throughout NSW. These facilities, with a total replacement value of some \$600million, provide an important role in the ongoing financial success of many NSW coastal regions. In addition to being operational bases for the commercial fishing fleet, the ports and assets are experiencing increasing demands as destinations

and departure points for tourism, charter boats and recreational boating activities. The recently completed Eden Snug Cove Management Plan is aimed at reconciling these various demands.

The 2004-05 program budget of \$2.06million was fully allocated to works including:

- the remediation of contaminated land at Tweed Heads Boat Harbour
- stage two repairs to the concrete multi-purpose jetty at Eden
- various investigations, design studies, physical modelling, operations plans and management studies
- provision of a new low-level landing at Tuncurry
- repairs to several wharves and jetties.

River Entrance Program

The principal objectives of the River Entrance Program are to maintain breakwaters at 21 river entrances along the NSW coastline and to minimise public risk liability at all breakwaters. The breakwaters have a total estimated value of some \$700 million.

Funds of \$400,000 were made available to the program in 2004-05 and were applied to repairs of training walls and breakwaters at Harrington, Kingscliff, Forster and Evans Head.

An underwater inspection of the southern breakwater at Narooma was also carried out to determine the extent of scour along the toe of the structure.

Waterways Program

The Waterways Program seeks to ensure sustainable use of the waterways (crown land) and foreshores administered by Crown Land Division and to improve their recreational access and amenity for the public.

In past years under the Waterways Program, a subsidy has been provided to Councils for such works as:

- preparation of a waterway plan of management
- vessel sewage pump-out facilities
- planning, design and construction of boat launching ramps
- wharves
- associated facilities such as car parking, landscaping, lighting to improve navigation and to assist in the reduction of waterways pollution.

Though no funding provisions were made for new Waterways projects in 2004-05, eight existing projects were completed in the year including Style’s Point Jetty restoration, Marmong Point Boat Ramp restoration, design of a jetty at Yarrahappinni Wetlands Reserve and designs of boat ramps at Bermagui and Sussex Inlet.

Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project

In 2004/05 the Department of Lands assumed responsibility for the Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project. The sand by-pass project, in cooperation with the Queensland Government, Gold Coast City Council and Tweed Council, ensures that Queensland beaches are nourished with a continual supply of sand and the entrance to the Tweed River remains navigatable. The sand supplied to date has now restored the southern beaches of the Gold Coast.

Crown land assessment

Before Crown land can be dealt with, either for public or private benefit, a land assessment must be undertaken to determine its capability and suitability for different purposes. The land assessment process addresses the principles of Crown land management, and includes public consultation as part of the process.

During the year, 82 rapid assessments and 22 full land assessments of Crown land were undertaken.

Where the principles of Crown land management, as listed in the Crown Lands Act, have been taken into account, the Minister has the right to waive land assessments. In 2004-05, to facilitate appropriate land use allocation for Crown lands, the Crown Lands Division processed 144 requests for land assessment waivers.

Crown land caravan park management

Through Crown reserves and tenured Crown land, the Crown land caravan park network is a significant contributor to caravan park accommodation across NSW. Over 33% of all caravan parks and camping ground sites in NSW are Crown land caravan parks. There are over 10,000 holiday van sites in Crown land caravan parks.

Through levies on income, coastal Crown land caravan parks are the major contributor to the Public Reserves Management Fund.

Game and feral animal control

The Game and Feral Control Act 2002 was introduced to allow conservation hunting/culling within NSW to enhance environmental outcomes on public and private lands.

The Game Council was established to undertake the functions of the Act, including liaising with government departments and landholders on game and feral animal control.

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Feral animals prey on fauna, destroy the habitat, pollute waterways, damage fences, cause erosion through trampling and grazing, cause a safety hazard to drivers, attack stock and also carry disease.

In reducing feral animal numbers on Crown land, control programs aim to provide positive environmental outcomes with the assistance of well trained and motivated people in the community.

There is no financial outlay to achieve the environmental outcomes of the Act as the program utilises volunteers who have undergone extensive training and are members of recognised hunting clubs with a restricted gaming licence.

This program demonstrates conscientious proactive management of Crown land within NSW.

Trust services

Local communities, including local councils, manage almost half of the Crown reserves in NSW. The remainder are managed by the Crown Lands Division.

The Division provides services to community reserve trust boards including coordination of a voluntary Group Fire and Damage insurance scheme.

Trust members are volunteers whose services contribute to the well being of their local communities. In recognition of this service, 70 Trustee Long Service Award Certificates were presented to eligible trust board members who had completed ten years or more of service.

Crown land bush fire management

Through the Crown Lands Division, the Department of Lands has a statutory responsibility under the Rural Fires Act to prevent bush fires starting on, or spreading on or from land under its control.

In September 2003 the Division appointed four (4) Land Management Officers and a Land Management Coordinator (Bush Fire) to assist departmental officers in addressing the Department's bush fire responsibilities. These positions have facilitated a more strategic approach to the Division's bushfire management.

Works

More fire trail works and fire breaks works on Crown land were carried out in 2004/05 than ever before. A works program valued at \$1,151,643 (including \$451,643 from the Department of Lands) was implemented under the Fire Mitigation Works Fund (FMWF) administered by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee. In addition to the FMWF program, the Department allocated \$42,163 to address urgent bush fire hazards.

Changes to the Bushfire Coordinating Committee's Policy for the Fire Mitigation Works Fund are likely to reduce the percentage of the funds available for Crown lands in the future.

Fire Trails

The Division, in cooperation with Rural Fire Service, has developed a program to record all fire trails on lands managed by the Department. In 2004/05, the location of 2,628 kilometres of strategic fire trails managed by the Department has been identified and mapped. In 2005/06 the Division will focus on inspecting and maintaining these trails.

Complaints

The numbers of complaints from the public and fire authorities were substantially less than 2003/2004, as recorded in the Bush Fire Complaints Register.

Committees

The Crown Lands Division represents the Department on the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and on local Bush Fire Management Committees in areas where there are significant parcels of land managed by the Division. In other areas of the State, Division officers provide a point of contact for Bush Fire Management Committees, if required.

The Division has participated in the preparation and/or review of:

- The Bush Fire Environment Code 2005
- Guidelines for Planning for Bushfire Protection
- Bush Fire Management Committee Review, and
- Guidelines for Preparation of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.

Agreement

In January 2005, the agreement between the Bushfire Coordinating Committee and the Department of Lands expired and was replaced by a letter of understanding from the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service. This will result in a substantial increase in the roles and responsibilities of the Department for bushfire management, including a greater responsibility for undertaking bush fire hazard reduction activities.

Weed management on Crown land

The Division is responsible for management of weeds on land under its control. This includes preventing the introduction of new weeds and the spread of existing weeds to adjoining land. The NSW Department of Primary Industries (through the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee - NWAC) is the lead agency in weed control matters and Local Control Authorities (Council and Weeds County Councils) are responsible for the coordination of planning processes and on-ground activities.

The Division is involved in development of Regional weed management plans, the federal Weeds of National Significance initiative, the Bitou Bush Threat Abatement Plan and Recovery Plans for Threatened Native Species (in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Conservation).

The Bitou Bush spraying programs in the Taree and Tweed Regions have resulted in approximately 50% reduction of Bitou in the past three years.

While 123 grants totalling \$585,000 were made for weed control work, some local weed authorities have implemented a scheme to formally lodge complaints about weed infestations on Crown land.

The Crown Land Strategic Development and Marketing Program

The program was established in June 2004 in response to:

- Government direction to realise an improved return on Crown land assets to meet defined targets, and
- Provision of improved services to other government agencies in the management and disposal of their surplus government Crown land assets given the constraints flowing from the "Gandangarra" case.

During the year the Program worked towards achieving the objectives set by reviewing the current policies and procedures and developing and implementing improved ways of providing necessary outcomes as required by all relevant stakeholders.

Outcomes achieved in 2004/05 were:

2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	
Number of weed control projects supported on Crown and departmental land	98	100	120	123
Number of research projects supported	2	2	1	3
Number of complaints about weeds on Crown and departmental land	24	18	15	38

Pest management on Crown land

The Crown Lands Division also has responsibilities to eradicate pest animals on land under its control. The NSW Department of Primary Industries is the lead agency and Rural Lands Protection Boards (RLPBs) are responsible for the planning and coordination of on-ground actions.

The Division's pest animal control programs include support for the Fox Threat Abatement Plan prepared by the Department of Environment and Conservation and Outfox the Fox, an initiative of NSW Primary Industries and the RLPBs. The Division also supports Regional Wild Dog Management Plans, Recovery Plans for threatened native species and a research project into the effect of aerial baiting of dogs and foxes on native quoll populations.

The Cane Toad program at Yamba is conducted in conjunction with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and is considered to be a success with participant numbers doubling since last year. This resulted in the removal of 1,300 toads in the annual muster.

- Developing partnerships with other government agencies to effectively manage the delivery of Crown land requirements in the disposal of their surplus government properties on a State wide basis;
- Identifying and implementing improved business processes related to land disposal; and
- Managing strategic disposal of non-essential public lands within the greater metropolitan area to achieve the financial target of \$14.6 million.

Inter-departmental Roads Committee

The Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) on Crown Roads was formed at the request of the Minister for Lands as a result of ongoing community issues relating to the formation, maintenance and ongoing management of Crown roads.

The purpose of the IDC is to facilitate communication between participating agencies and to create a protocol framework to address the issues of providing legal and practical access over Crown roads.

The IDC has met three times in the last financial year. Their report is due in late 2005.

Learning and Growth

The Crown Lands Division offered staff the opportunity to expand their knowledge and enhance their skill in land administration and management by undertaking Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management at Yallah TAFE and Certificate III in Government (Lands Administration).

Project Successes

The Crown Lands Division continued to meet its environmental, economic and social obligations through:

- Management of more than 12,000 leases and almost 18,000 licences, with a majority of these supporting our farmers by enhancing agricultural opportunities with land to graze animals, to farm exotic fruits in the north, sugar cane on the coast, wheat out west, and rice in the Riverina.
- Around 7,000 licences for domestic waterfront purposes providing for wharves, jetties, boat sheds and boat ramps, supporting recreational opportunities for waterfront residents and the general community.
- Management of commercial leases across the State for facilities including marinas, caravan parks, and waterfront restaurants.
- Support for the community by recognising community services obligations to non-profit organisations, charity groups, pensioner groups, and rural community encountering hardship by granting concessions to fees and annual rents.
- Management of 27 minor port facilities along the east coast of NSW supporting the local fishing and tourism industry and providing for community recreational use
- Promotion of revegetation and rehabilitation of a number of Crown land tenures in an on-going program to support the retention of native flora and fauna, and to assist in providing native wildlife with a natural habitat. This includes making rental incentives available to landholders to encourage rehabilitation in collaboration with local councils
- Provision for the extraction of resources on Crown land through licences for businesses and government authorities including local councils and the RTA for the use of gravel on major roadways, and the building industry for the use of sand to produce materials such as glass and concrete
- Provision of Crown land for the erection of communications towers to create mobile phone and emergency service networks across NSW, as well as improved radio and television transmission to our rural communities.
- Representation at the Commercial Leases Conference provided an opportunity to promote Crown Lands NSW to key stakeholders.
- Remediation of a site contaminated by diesel oil leakage at Tweed Harbour.
- Provision of learning opportunities to staff in Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management and Certificate III in Government (Lands Administration).
- A land assessment at Karuah on the Port Stephens Estuary of sixteen leases and license used for oyster depuration and processing activities.
- A land assessment of 616 hectares of Crown land in the Sydney northern suburbs of Belrose, Oxford Falls and Cromer. The assessment outcome determined that over 70% of the land would be conserved for environmental protection/community purposes while the remainder will be investigated for disposal.
- Dedication on 22 October 2004 of land at Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, North Rocks and West Pennant Hills for the purposes of Preservation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Preservation of Flora and Fauna and Public Recreation. Known as Bidjigal Reserve and comprising over 300 hectares, creation of the reserve resulted from the Bidjigal Reserve Deed of Agreement which was entered into by the Director General, on behalf of the Minister, in December 2003 to facilitate withdrawal of native title claim NC94/6 lodged on behalf of the Darug people. The Agreement, through creation of the reserve, allows for a consistent shared management and conservation of the land for the mutual benefit of the citizens of NSW, the local community and the descendants of the Darug people.
- Reservation of 1.4 hectares of land at Allambie Heights for community purposes. On 1 December 2004, the Hon Tony Kelly MLC, Minister for Lands, formally presented trust management of this reserve to the Sunnyfield Association. The Sunnyfield Association is an organisation dedicated to the care and vocational training of people with disabilities in NSW. The reserve will be used for a purpose-built centre housing therapy services and lifestyle improvement and development programs.

Major Initiatives

Major initiatives of the Crown Lands Division included:

- **Jobs for rural NSW**

Seven new jobs were created in the regional NSW town of Dubbo as part of the Dubbo Reform Processing Unit. The unit is being established to manage the statewide processing of leasehold conversions and Crown road closures and purchases.

To accommodate this new business unit, Dubbo's historic Lands office received a refurbishment including re-carpeting, fresh paint, the establishment of the unit manager's office, a conference room and up to 14 new workstations with desktop and networking facilities.

- **Funding for remedial works at Eden**

Funding of \$685,000 was provided to complete remedial work at the Eden Multipurpose Jetty at Snug Cove.

The Multipurpose Jetty at Snug Cove, Eden, was built in 1985 and provides safe berthing and unloading for a range of commercial vessels. In the late 1990's evidence of corrosion from salt attack on the jetty's reinforced concrete was identified.

Remediation required a two-stage approach. Stage One was completed in October 2003 at a total cost of \$475,000 and comprised patch repairs to reinstate damaged concrete and steel reinforcement.

Stage Two involved the installation of an electronic protection system to prevent corrosion of the steel reinforcing bars embedded within the concrete jetty.

The jetty is available to the Eden Commercial Fishing Fleet and is crucial to the ongoing economic viability of the local fishing and fish processing industries, which are major employers in this region.

Managed and maintained by the Crown Lands Division under the NSW Government's Minor Ports Program, the jetty has a replacement cost of \$10M and is one of the largest maritime assets managed by the department.

- **Walkers Promote Hume & Hovell Track**

In April 2005, the Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, led a two-day trek along the Hume and Hovell Walking track to showcase the historic walk and entice more Australians to enjoy its pleasures.

The 440km track is the largest recreational project undertaken by the Department of Lands and has something for everyone from day walkers to serious hikers, nature lovers and history buffs.

Welcoming a group of community leaders, tourism operators and the media on day one, Mr Kelly said the track was a world-class walking experience.

The walkers followed parts of the route taken by explorers Hume and Hovell on their 1824 expedition from Lake George to Port Phillip.

The Hume and Hovell Walking Track starts at Cooma Cottage on the outskirts of Yass and finishes at the Hovell Tree on the banks of the Murray River in Albury.

- **Joint effort at Ulladulla Harbour**

The Crown Lands Division and Shoalhaven City Council worked in partnership to upgrade the walking surface on the Southern Breakwater at Ulladulla Harbour.

The works have provided a safer approach along the breakwater for the many people who use it for exercise and recreation every day.

The project complements work that Council already has underway within reserves on the northern and western sides of Ulladulla Harbour.

- **NSW provides sand for Palm Beach**

The NSW Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, and the Queensland Minister for Environment, Desley Boyle, announced that agreement had been reached to make up to 70,000 cubic metres of sand available to the Gold Coast City Council for use in its sand nourishment project at Palm Beach.

The project to transport the sand from the mouth of the Tweed River to Queensland serves to both maintain a navigable entrance to the river and to restore the beaches on the southern Gold Coast.

The NSW and Queensland Governments' Tweed Sand Bypass Project is an important cross-border initiative to restore some of the most important beaches on the eastern seaboard.

- **Memorandum of understanding ensures historic rest areas remain available for use**

An agreement between the Department of Lands and the Rural Lands Protection Board has ensured that users of the Bicentennial National Trail can continue to seek safe refuge overnight on Travelling Stock Reserves.

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The Bicentennial National Trail provides a "living history" of life in the Australian bush, following historic coach and stock routes, old packhorse trails, and country roads.

The agreement has ensured that the traditional experience of using some 60 Travelling Stock Reserves for safe refuge will continue for walkers who come from all over the world to walk, cycle and ride horses on this great trail.

The Bicentennial National Trail is a multi-use trail along the Great Dividing Range stretching between Cooktown in tropical North Queensland and Healesville in Melbourne - a distance of 5,330kms.

- **New office for growing Coffs community**

Crown Lands NSW has established a new office at Coffs Harbour this year. Coffs Harbour has enjoyed considerable growth over the past ten years and further growth has been predicted. Previously, the Crown land functions were carried out from the office at Grafton.

The new Lands office, located in the Coffs Jetty precinct, houses 10-12 staff working in Crown land management, surveying and valuation.

The new office brings more services for the local community and a greater focus on the unique land management issues facing Coffs Harbour and its magnificent coastline.

- **New look for walking track**

The Crown Lands Division built an observation deck, with spectacular views to Coolangatta Mountain, Gerringong and Kiama, on the Abraham's Bosom Walking Track.

The new deck provides a unique vantage point for walkers trekking the 9km walking track and is located close to the "Merimbula" Trigonometrical station. The deck provides a rest area and look out for users of the track.

The observation deck replaces the original lookout, which was burnt down about five years ago in a bushfire.

- **State Parks Conference**

The annual State Parks conference was held at Lake Glenbawn in October 2004.

The two-day conference provided an opportunity to bring representatives of all nine State Parks together to network, discuss new ideas and develop strategies to improve service to the many visitors who come every year to enjoy nature and the open space of the Parks.

This year the conference focused on bushfire management, reserve foreshore management and a fresh approach to the marketing of these important public assets.

- **Local land development to meet needs of expanding Tamworth community**

The Crown Lands Division has developed land at Tamworth in response to local demand for home sites, which was particularly strong over the past two years.

The development was part of the social responsibility of the department to provide land to meet the expanding needs of rural and regional communities.

This land development project was a win-win situation for the local community, who will benefit from much needed quality home sites, while the income from the sales will assist in providing essential public services.