

Crown Lands DIVISION REPORT 4

Ensuring responsible and sustainable management
of Crown land for the people of NSW

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CROWN LANDS

Division Report

Crown Lands Division provides a service that is multi-dimensional, optimising environmental, economic and social outcomes on Crown land for the benefit of the people of NSW.

Crown Lands Division provides a Crown land property and land management service and is responsible for the management of 43.7 million hectares of Crown land in NSW - approximately half the state.

Multiple use of Crown land is specified by legislation in the principles of Crown land management, which guides the division in its management.

Crown land is allocated for public uses, including schools, hospitals, sports grounds, community recreation, conservation and housing development.

A significant portion of Crown land is also available for alternative uses, including leasing for commercial or agricultural purposes, through to land development and sale to meet the needs of expanding regional and rural communities.

Crown Lands Division is the custodian of Crown land status information and under the *Crown Lands Act 1989* administers Crown land held under leases, licences or permit. Crown Lands Division manages land retained in public ownership for future public use and environmental protection purposes and the lands of the Crown public roads network.

The many and varied public assets within this portfolio have a major positive impact on the social, environmental and economic health of NSW and its people.

Reserved Crown land covers everything from iconic public open spaces such as Hyde Park and Bondi Beach, to community halls, showgrounds and

tennis courts in small country towns. All of these reserves share the same importance to the communities they service.

Reserved Crown lands also include cemeteries, such as Rookwood, one third of the state's caravan parks, 15 state parks and the thousands of reserves that provide access to rivers, estuaries, and harbour foreshores. Lands is responsible for the sustainable management of these important public spaces.

Where appropriate, development is encouraged by the private sector that will guarantee economic growth, sustainable jobs and an income stream to the people of NSW that, in turn, funds priority government programs. These opportunities extend from industrial, commercial or residential development, with many sites opportune for maritime-related development supporting the tourism industry.

As a manager of such a large portfolio of assets, the division has a duty of care to protect these assets. Considerable resources are invested in bushfire planning and hazard reduction. Significant programs are underway across the state to control weeds and feral animals, and also to manage rubbish dumping and legacy contaminated sites.

The division is also responsible for the effective management of the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993* and the state's *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. The management of Crown land must accord with these statutes.

Crown Lands Division recognises that land is a vital resource and aims to protect and manage Crown lands to provide public value to the community through the following programs.

- Managing and administering Crown lands under lease, licence or permit, lands within the Crown public roads network and Crown lands within the regional reserve system and other reserves.
- Managing and administering Western Lands Leases under the *Western Lands Act 1901*.
- Allocating land to meet the needs of expanding regional communities by responding to demand and providing residential land for quality home sites and industrial and commercial lands to facilitate business development.
- Managing land sustainably by conserving natural resources for future generations through the creation of conservation reserves, whilst also providing development and production opportunities for local communities.
- Developing and enhancing our public reserves to meet contemporary and community expectations.
- Supporting farmers by enhancing agricultural opportunities with lease and licences to graze animals and for crop farming.
- Researching Aboriginal land claims and preparing advice to the Minister for Lands to determine claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.



“The many and varied public assets within this portfolio have a major positive impact on the social, environmental and economic health of NSW”

- Managing applications made under the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* affecting land in NSW.
- Supporting the Western Land Advisory Council in advising the Minister on and promoting the social, economic and environmental interests of the Western Division.
- Administering the *Wild Dog Destruction Act 1921*.

Customers

Crown Lands Division clients and customers are diverse and range from the Minister to other government and local government agencies, community groups and individuals.

Crown Lands Division:

- actively promotes partnerships with local government authorities, reflecting the adoption of proactive management of the Crown estate. Councils have been supportive of this new focus of Lands
- is developing professional business relationships to establish broad criteria that will assist both parties in achieving corporate goals

- encourages and supports community and non-profit groups to delivery their social objectives.

Principal officers

Graham Harding, General Manager Crown Lands Division

Stephen Francis, Director of Commercial Development, Fellow of Australian Property Institute, EngSurvCert, AssocDipSmBus, ProfCertPropLaw, GradDipTechMgmt, BBus (Land Economy)

Adrian Harte, Director of Land Management, BSc (Agric), MRurSc, GradDipPubSecMgmt

Graeme Ford, Director of Business Services Crown Lands, Land & Engineering Survey Drafting Cert, Post Land & Engineering Survey Drafting Cert

Craig Barnes, Regional Manager North Coast, Registered Surveyor, BSurv, GradCertBusTech

Andrew McAnespie, Regional Manager Sydney-Hunter, BSurv, GradDipPubSecMgmt

Peter Walker, Regional Manager Central, BSc (Agric)

Geoff Woods, Regional Manager Western, Western Lands Commissioner, DipAgric

Craig Abbs, Director Coastal and Estuary Infrastructure, BEng (Civil) Hons

Jennifer Jude, Director Native Title and Aboriginal Land Claims, BA, LLB (Hons), LLM, GradDipInf/Sci (Lib)

Richard Hunt, Director Crown Lands Policy, BSc, MTCP, MBA, Solicitor

Brett Phillips, Regional Manager Central Coast-Hunter, BSc

Paul Robinson, Director Strategic Projects, B Bus, B Surv Hons

Ken Sullivan, Regional Manager, Bsurv, MTCP, MMGT, FAICD

Jan Van Der Walt, General Manager Festival Development Corporation, Mount Penang



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Aims and objectives for 2007/08

Crown Lands Division's aims and objectives for 2007/08 are stated in the *Crown Lands Division Strategic Plan 2008-2013*.

- Contributing to growing prosperity by:
 - development for commercial purposes where appropriate
 - improving economic performance
 - maintaining Crown land infrastructure.
- Environment for living to:
 - achieve better environmental outcomes
 - improve facilities, access and use.
- Build the organisation and its networks by:
 - improving collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
 - improving business through a project management discipline
 - building technical capabilities
 - establishing a commercial business model
 - reviewing business process.

Key projects

Responsible Crown land management to optimise environmental and socio-economic benefit to the state

Silverton Wind Farm

The proposed Silverton Wind Farm will comprise a site of approximately 32,000 hectares located on the Mundi Mundi Range to the north of the old mining town of Silverton near Broken Hill in NSW.

The project will ultimately provide for up to 500 turbines, capable of generating 1000 MW of clean, renewable energy that could supply up to 400,000 homes. This equates to approximately half of a current coal fired power station.

The proposed site is currently held under a number of Western Lands Leases held for the purpose of grazing, film making and tourism and comprises part of four separate grazing properties.

In June 2008 the government amended legislation to permit the granting of a special purpose lease (for the wind farm) over the existing grazing leases, thus retaining the currency and equity of the existing grazing leases for the benefit of the current lessees.

HMAS Adelaide artificial reef and dive site

In January 2008 the HMAS Adelaide was decommissioned from military service

and gifted to the state of NSW to be sunk as an artificial reef and dive wreck off Terrigal on the NSW Central Coast. The ex-HMAS Adelaide, a 138-metre long escort frigate with 28-years naval service, will be a major dive attraction for the Central Coast and boost tourism to the region.

The site for sinking the ship is expected to be Crown land in a regional Crown reserve and the likely site of any shore-based development (The Haven at Terrigal) to support the project is a Crown reserve. Lands is the lead agency for both the implementation and ongoing management phases of the project.


State parks

The development of new and existing state parks provides a platform to deliver services to the community. State parks are designated Crown reserves, which are generally contiguous and are managed to enable multiple uses focusing primarily on public recreation, tourism and environmental protection.

In addition to the existing ten state parks, new state parks have been created at:

- Goolawah
- Bellinger Heads
- Manning Entrance
- Harrington Beach
- Wallaga Lake.

Coordinated marketing has been achieved with a new website and successful promotion at trade shows including the



Lands' recreational assets include 15 state parks, 760 km of popular walking tracks and over 260 caravan & camping grounds

Caravan and Camping Supershow in March 2008. The profile of state parks was also improved with the publication of the NSW Road Directory 3rd Edition.

Caravan and camping extension program

Crown Lands Division manages more than 260 of the 900-plus caravan and camping grounds across NSW, and is working to create further opportunities in this area. Seven facilities were added to the portfolio during 2007/08.

Several other opportunities have been identified as potential development sites for new or upgraded caravan parks. This includes 'Greenfield' sites on the Lower North Coast, several expiring leases on the South Coast and upgrades being investigated by the NRMA. These sites have been presented at the May 2008 Tourism Trade Show, Darling Harbour.

Strong collaboration has been established with the NSW Caravan and Camping Industry Association, the Campervan and Mobilehome Club of Australia and several other bodies to help progress the department's business as well as the industry as a whole. Significant and successful promotion of the business was achieved at the Caravan and Camping Supershow in March 2008 and the responsiveness of caravan park operators is reflected by their participation on Lands' website www.caravanandcampingnsw.com.au launched in March 2008. Subsequently the website received over 46,000 hits during the following three months from enthusiastic holiday makers.

Statutory review of the Western Lands Act 1901

The majority of the Western Division is Crown leasehold lands which are administered under the *Western Lands Act 1901*. This legislation has been amended and modernised over the years since it was first enacted.

The most recent of those amendments occurred in 2002, and introduced section 3B into the Act, which requires a formal review of the Act after five years to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain relevant and whether the Act's provisions remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The division recently completed this review.

Public consultation was an important aspect of the review which found that while the policy objectives of the Act remained generally valid, some amendments were required.

These amendments include the creation of an easement along the length of the dog proof fence which prevents wild dogs from entering NSW, strengthening the boundary fencing provisions as they apply to Western Lands leases, greater clarity relating to indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage and the ability to accommodate new land uses.

Recreational tracks and trails

Lands actively manages three long distance walking tracks, a number of short walks and is the coordinating authority for the Bicentennial National Trail.

Significant progress has been made on implementing the recreational trails

strategy with the development of four new recreational trails predominantly on Crown land. A review of the governance of the three existing walking tracks has been completed. Lands works with the Transport Ministry to enable the closure or handover of selected disused rail lines in NSW.

Development of master plans for the future direction and development of Crown land maritime precincts

Coffs Harbour

The Minister adopted a Plan of Management for the future of the Jetty Foreshores to develop a sustainable working harbour, international port and gateway to the Coffs Coast region, celebrating its cultural, historic, recreational, economic and environmental significance to the people of NSW as a place for social endeavours and employment opportunities.

The project aims to provide a safe and sustainable outer harbour entrance, an expanded number of marina berths, an improved boat ramp and loading facilities and improved recreational, commercial and tourism opportunities.

A call for Expressions of Interest to develop two significant sites will facilitate the upgrade of this significant Crown land site.

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Tweed Heads

At Tweed Heads, we are working to deliver a world class marina and recreational boating facility at Boyds Bay. A Call for Expression of Interest to develop the marina closed in June and a new office has been established in Tweed Heads, providing the focal point for continued consultation with council, the community and local industry to improve the recreational, economic and tourism potential of the Tweed Shire.

Improving returns on operational Crown lands

Licensing communication tower sites

On behalf of the government's land management agencies, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) undertook a review of the licensing and rental arrangements that apply to Crown land communication sites in New South Wales. The purpose of the review was to develop a policy framework for delivering a consistent government approach covering tenure, licensing and rentals for communications tower sites on Crown lands administered by Lands, Forests NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Services.

The IPART recommendations are now being implemented with the industry.

Oyster industry

Lands is delivering a whole of government review into the oyster industry and is

working to implement a range of reforms to meet government, industry and community expectations.

The work involves negotiation of new long-term leases for the land component, including a leaseholder work plan for rehabilitation of degraded Crown land and the capture of survey information of existing and orphaned Crown land used by oyster growers.

A 20-year term is being offered to provide the security requested by the industry and a number of partnerships have been developed with industry, other government agencies, local government and catchment management authorities to secure funding for future cleanup of abandoned sites.

Streamline processes and reduce costs of administration of Crown land

Conversion, Valuation and Asset Management Project

The Crown Land Conversion, Valuation and Asset Management Program is a Treasury funded initiative to upgrade the quality, reliability, availability and strategic value of Crown land information. The program of works has three related projects; the Crown Land Conversion Project, the Valuation Project and the Crown Reserve Asset Data Management Project. The projects will cost \$22 million and will be completed by June 2010.

The Crown Land Conversion Project's objective is to identify, record and value all of the state's Crown land assets. The improved integrity of our spatial and textual data will provide the foundation to streamline processes and improve performance. Crown land data assets are progressively being consolidated within our core business systems of Crown Land Information Database (CLID) and the spatial Cadastral Records Viewer (CRV). This challenging project involves accessing a diverse information sources spanning more than 100 years in hard copy and electronic format.

Each parcel of Crown land will have a value and the Crown estate will be re-valued annually at minimum cost.


Sustainable burial practices

A discussion paper *Sustainable Burials in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Area* was placed on public exhibition in May and June 2008.

While enough burial space exists to meet the short and medium term burial needs of most sections of the community, without action people within the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA) will be faced with fewer burial choices in future years.

The discussion paper sought community comments and suggestions on 19 options designed to address the management of burial space in the Sydney region.

The public feedback is now being collated and a report for the government will be prepared.



13 kms of beaches have been protected as surfing reserves

Performance highlights

Port Macquarie

Port Macquarie is one of the few coastal towns with its CBD adjoining a major river (the Hastings) and the coast. With the upgrading of the Port Macquarie marina and associated recreational boating facilities, and the delivery of community infrastructure worth many millions of dollars, the town will be able to take advantage of its location. Lands is currently negotiating with a preferred proponent for the delivery of this infrastructure linking the Port Macquarie CBD to Settlement City with a vibrant tourist and recreational area.

Ballina

The Crown Lands Division has worked with Ballina Shire Council and adopted a plan for the Richmond River foreshore at Ballina. The plan facilitates the upgrade of the existing Trawler Harbour into a dynamic marine, commercial and residential hub. The division will call for Expressions of Interest to develop the site in 2008/09.

Forster/Tuncurry

Lands has entered into an agreement with Great Lakes Council to prepare a Plan of Management for Cape Hawke Harbour and the entrance to Wallis Lake. This plan will be prepared and

exhibited next financial year and will set the direction for the heart of Forster and Tuncurry townships.

Lennox Head and Crescent Head National Surfing Reserves

Crown Lands Division worked in partnership with the local community, the National Surfing Reserves Committee (NSRC) and Ballina and Kempsey councils to create the legally protected surfing reserves under the *Crown Lands Act 1989*. This provides a statutory significance to the symbolic dedication and identifies the significance of the Crown estate in surfing culture and Australian lifestyle.

Both sites are nationally and internationally recognised iconic surfing sites on the north coast of NSW.

Showground upgrades

The appointment of administrators at Kempsey and Coffs Harbour showgrounds is seen as a turning point for the fate of these iconic reserves. At Kempsey more than \$500,000 is being spent refurbishing and making safe facilities that have served the community for many decades. At Coffs Harbour the administrator has turned a budget deficit into profits with more people using the reserve than ever.

Freehold conversion of residential leases in the Western Division

A number of concessions are available to make the conversion to freehold of Western Lands Leases held for residence more affordable.

Since this program began in November 2005 a total of 1,593 applications to convert residential leases to freehold have been received with 1,528 applications completed to date. Lands has received 230 applications in the year to 30 June 2008 and 400 applications have been finalised during this same period.

Administration and management of the unincorporated area of NSW

The unincorporated area of NSW, located in the state's far west, comprises an area of about 93,000 square kilometres, nearly one third of the Western Division. It has a population of about 850 people and its main towns and villages are Silverton, Tibooburra, Milparinka and Packsaddle. Unlike the rest of NSW, the area does not have a local government council to provide administrative and regulatory services.

The Crown Lands Division provides a comprehensive system of services, planning and development controls to the unincorporated area in conjunction with the Silverton and Tibooburra village committees.

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Responsibilities of the Crown Lands Division include managing the Tibooburra aerodrome, paying street lighting costs for Silverton and Tibooburra, controlling noxious weeds and feral animals and facilitating small community grants primarily for heritage projects in Milparinka, Silverton and Tibooburra.

Compliance processes and successes

Environmental compliance is an essential component of the land management function. Lands is implementing a compliance strategy including an operational compliance policy, the appointment of an environmental compliance coordinator, preparation of a compliance operational manual, an Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Environment and Climate Change for compliance reporting in the Western Division, development of monitoring procedures for Crown land conversions and actively investigating serious environmental breaches on Crown land. Two recent investigations of environmental damage on Crown land have resulted in prosecution action with guilty pleas, convictions recorded and substantial penalties applied.

Improve environmental outcomes by collaborating with catchment management authorities

Lands has continued its collaboration with all catchment management

authorities (CMAs) in NSW to ensure that the enhanced management of Crown lands and direction of the division's programs contributes appropriately to the achievement of natural resource management targets described by catchment action plans.

Liaison has taken place between Central Region and Border Rivers-Gwydir, Namoi, Central West and Lachlan catchment authorities to establish common goals and needs. Good progress has been made developing partnerships in environmental protection resulting from the Crown lease conversion program, property vegetation plans on Crown tenures, information to CMAs on their catchment target goals and funding for plans and works on Crown lands. This has resulted in four recent grants for plans of management in public land in the Central West CMA.

Heritage, Conservation and Development Policy for Silverton, NSW

Lands is preparing a Heritage, Conservation and Development Policy for Silverton to provide standards and guidelines for restoration and maintenance of existing buildings and other heritage items whilst also defining zones in the village which will permit certain activities.

Silverton is subject to growing development pressures due to increased levels of tourism and the possibility of additional speculative developments occurring in and around

the village associated with future commercial ventures in the area, such as the proposed Silverton Wind Farm development.

Regional Crown reserves

Two new regional Crown reserves were approved and gazetted in the Central Region; the Macquarie Turon Regional Crown Reserve north of Bathurst and the Canobolas Regional Crown Reserve surrounding Orange.

The former comprises 206 lots totalling 4,518 ha, and the latter 185 lots totalling 3,468 ha.

This is part of a rationalisation of the current Central Tablelands Heritage Lands Reserve into more manageable entities and will enable co-ordinated management of a number of reserves and areas licensed for grazing. Current action is to dispose of land parcels no longer required in the Crown estate and will be better managed by local land owners.

Reserves management

A draft Plan of Management for the Barigan Regional Crown Reserve, east of Mudgee, is due to be completed by December 2008.

The Central Region was successful in applying for grants from the Central West Catchment Management Authority to develop plans of management for four different clusters of Crown reserves; Yarabar Reserve near Dubbo, Olinda



Reserve near Rylstone, Sofala reserves and Capertee reserves. These grants are to address catchment targets of improving the management of public lands.

The plans are to be completed by June 2009.

Central Region also re-established a reserve for public recreation at Dargan Creek, near Lithgow, and appointed the Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation as trust manager. This reserve contains iconic rock climbing sites, some heritage railway dams, bushland, and is popular with local, Sydney, interstate and international visitors.

Licensing arrangements are being put into place for commercial users and funding will be sought for ongoing management and development. It is intended to appoint a community trust once the management arrangements have been bedded down.

Perpetual lease conversions

The conversion of perpetual leases to freehold is continuing, with land management covenants being placed on title to protect existing environmental values. 4,238 of the 10,720 leases subject to the special purchase offer have been converted to freehold. Some 254 of the converted leases have covenants on title, with 38,799 ha of land subject to environmental protection.

Meeting the residential land requirements at Broken Hill

Broken Hill is currently experiencing significant growth, linked particularly to investment in the region in the mining sector. As a consequence of this growth, there is significant demand for land for residential and other uses.

Lands has completed a comprehensive audit of available Crown land at Broken Hill which meet this growing demand.

Report on operations

Minor Ports Program

The Minor Ports Program provides and maintains port infrastructure as well as safe, secure port access to 25 fishing ports along the NSW east coast.

Minor ports cater for the commercial fishing industry, the growing tourism industry, the recreational boating industry and local communities. They play an important role in contributing to healthy NSW coastal communities, providing opportunities for economic growth, jobs, tourism and recreation.

Projects under this program include road works and port services to improve operations, public access works to promote visitation to foreshore areas, infrastructure such as unloading wharves and mooring jetties, breakwater repairs and maintenance dredging.

Highlights of projects undertaken during 2007/08 include repairs to wharves, roads and breakwater at Coffs Harbour (\$200,000), roadworks, services and wharf repairs at Eden (\$162,000) and electrical works at Crowdy Head (\$43,000).

River Entrances Program

The principal objectives of the River Entrances Program are to maintain breakwaters and half tide training walls at 21 river entrances along the NSW coastline and to minimise public risk liability at these breakwaters. With a total estimated value of \$1 billion, these structures play a pivotal role in the safe navigation of marine vessels, including commercial fishing fleets and recreational boats.

The division manages eight hard rock quarries, which have been used for the production of rock armour for breakwaters and training walls.

Works funded under this program include maintenance of breakwaters and river training walls, dredging of river entrance bars and improved access to breakwaters for community use.

Projects completed in 2007/08 include breakwater repairs and upgrading at Moruya North (\$186,000), Narooma South (\$200,000) and Hastings North (\$164,000), together with dredging at Yamba (\$220,000) and Black Neds Bay (\$56,000).



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Waterways Program

The Waterways Program aims to ensure sustainable use of waterways and foreshores which are Crown land and to improve public access for recreation and amenity for public use. These projects operate in partnership with local government.

Works under this program include waterway planning, recreational boating infrastructure studies, launching ramps, wharves and associated facilities such as car parking, landscaping and lighting. The program also caters for maintenance dredging and assistance in the reduction of waterway pollution by providing vessel sewage pump-out facilities.

Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project

Lands manages the Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project, which is a joint initiative of the NSW and Queensland governments.

The objectives of the project are to ensure the entrance to the Tweed River remains navigable and the southern Gold Coast beaches are nourished with a regular supply of sand. The sand bypassing system intercepts and removes sand that is moving naturally northward along the coastline towards the river entrance. Sand bypassing is undertaken using a combination of a fixed pumping jetty south of the Tweed River, together with occasional dredging of the entrance using a floating dredge.

Sand bypassing operations reduce the sand fed into the river entrance area and have maintained a clear navigation channel at the entrance since the start of operations in 2001.

During 2007/08 a total of 730,000 cubic metres of sand was transported by a combination of pumping and dredging. The total NSW contribution to the project during the year was \$4.8 million.

Recent monitoring has revealed a substantial increase in the number of recreational and commercial vessels using the entrance.

Transfer of Festival Development Corporation

The Festival Development Corporation's mission is to foster ecologically sustainable development at Mt Penang Parklands, complementing the existing heritage character, enhancing the quality of life of the people living nearby by providing new opportunities for recreation and reflection, creating new permanent jobs on the Central Coast and long-term economic benefits for the region and the state.

This 156 hectare site offers a prime development opportunity for the Central Coast region and has a mixture of business uses on site, including a small business precinct, tourism services, open space for recreation, with educational and sporting uses. Mt Penang Parklands is home to 35 small businesses employing approximately 300 people.

The upcoming projects for the Festival Development Corporation include:

- construction of the Kariang Mountains High School
- the design and development of a new event park, including access to more indoor facilities for cultural and community activities
- the establishment of Coast Corporate Park, which is 30 hectares of prime development land located on the western side of the site
- the further expansion of the small business precinct.

Mt Penang Festival Development Corporation is administratively supported by Lands but produces a separate annual report. The corporation reports to the Minister for the Central Coast.

Drought Communities Crown Reserves Improvement Program

This program was instigated last year to provide relief for people and communities in areas severely affected by the current drought. The program provided small grants to Crown reserve trusts, located in declared drought exceptional circumstances areas, to engage local landholders, rural workers and other residents in improvement and maintenance projects on Crown reserves.

A special allocation of \$1 million was made from the Public Reserves



More than 700 Crown reserves are managed by community volunteers through reserve trusts

Management Fund, with a limit of \$10,000 per project and an emphasis on labour remuneration.

Most of the applications and recommended projects came from the central and southern inland regions of the state, and the far west (where there are fewer community trusts). They included projects such as painting, repair and replacement of deteriorated sections of buildings, drainage and water supplies, fencing, removal of rubbish, tree planting, showground improvements, provision of disabled access and sun shelters and many others.

Crown lands, native title, Aboriginal land claims and status directorate

Requests for legal advice on matters concerning Crown lands, leases and agreements for major initiatives have increased over the past year.

A working party, which includes Crown Lands Legal staff, was set up to provide standardisation and plain English versions of all leases, agreements for lease and licences being used by the Minister and the Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation.

The Native Title Branch has continued to provide support to the Minister in his role as the nominated Minister for New South Wales under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and three indigenous land use agreements that have resolved native title applications have been registered.

The future Act, indigenous land use agreement for a wind-farm, also received registration.

The Federal Court, sitting at Woodenbong, has made one consent determination that non-exclusive native title rights and interests exist in respect of land the subject of the Githabul Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

The Native Title Branch continues to work towards negotiated settlements in the 37 applications for a determination of native title that remain in the Federal Court.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Investigation Branch has carried out its work in an area of very high volume both in the number of Aboriginal Land Claims still continuing to be made by Aboriginal land councils pursuant to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* and in the number of appeals being made to the Land and Environment Court from the determination of the Minister and to the Supreme Court from decisions of the Land and Environment Court. Surveys of land determined to be claimable Crown lands, so as to effect the grant by the Minister to the claimant Aboriginal land council, have been well progressed throughout the year.

Crown Lands Policy Branch

Crown Lands Policy Branch has continued to provide Crown lands policy support and advice to the Minister's Office, the department's executive and to the Crown Lands Division on all functions related to or impacting on Crown

land. Broadly these functions have included development of the legislative and strategic framework associated with the Crown lands reform agenda, management of whole-of-government issues that impact on the Crown estate and development of policies affecting external stakeholders.

The branch represented the department at numerous interagency and stakeholder consultation processes throughout the year including those relating to various State Plan priorities, management of perpetual leases, land management agreements, the national parks estate, rural lands protection boards, filming on public land, liquor licensing, soils policy and review of the *Western Lands Act*.

Crown land bushfire management

Lands has a statutory responsibility under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* for bushfire protection on land under its control. Handover of responsibility for organising mechanical hazard and fire trail works on Crown lands from Rural Fire Service to Lands was completed in May this year.

Despite some extended wet periods in some parts of the state more fire trail works were done on Crown lands this year than ever before. Much of the fire trails works were undertaken by the Soil Conservation Service. Lands, with the assistance of the Rural Fire Service, has also undertaken significant amount of hazard reduction works on Crown

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land, particularly in the asset protection zones. Funding for the fire trail and hazard reduction works came from the Commonwealth Bush Fire Mitigation Program, the State Fire Mitigation Works Fund and direct funding from Lands.

In cooperation with Rural Fire Service, Crown Lands Division has now recorded the condition and location of most of the fire trails managed by the department. The majority of fire trails managed by the department have been inspected and programs put in place to bring them up to standard.

Land for development

The program had targeted revenue of \$13.5m with a completion date of 31 April 2008. These targets were established to meet budget commitments.

Western Division Legal Road Network Project

Lands is creating a defined network of legal public roads and private rights of way linking cities, towns and villages, providing legal access to all Western Division properties and places of significant public interest.

This project will involve the identification and dedication of some 20,000 kilometres of public roads in the Western Division and is expected to take several years to finalise. In addition, it will involve the creation of easements in the form of

private rights of way to properties where frontage to a road does not exist.

Approximately 1,100 kilometres of road north of Broken Hill through to the Queensland border has been defined and dedicated in the last 12 months. This required the withdrawal of 7,000 hectares from affected Western Lands Leases.

Future focus

Based on assessment and evaluation of the NSW Government's State Plan, Lands' reform agenda, Corporate Plan and Results and Services Plan, Crown Lands Division's strategic objectives for 2008/09 are:

- create opportunities for economic growth by:
 - developing Crown land, where appropriate, for commercial purposes by the private sector for public benefit
 - improving economic performance.
- delivering better services by:
 - maintaining and investing in Crown land infrastructure
 - achieving better environmental outcomes for natural resources on Crown lands
 - providing better access to, and use of Crown lands for broader community benefit
 - undertaking targeted review of business administration process to improve service delivery.
- building the organisation and its networks by:
 - establishing and maintaining collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
 - building technical capacity to deliver business objectives
 - developing staff capacity to meet the needs of the organisation.

NSW has more than
33,000 Crown reserves
which have been set aside for public use