



The Department of Lands is the NSW Government's lead agency for land and property information and services, spatial information and the Crown lands of New South Wales (NSW), and the provider of specialist soil conservation and environmental services.

We are entrusted with the care and management of public land and our land information systems underpin the state's economy, contributing to the development of sustainable rural communities and the provision of specialist land management services.

Lands is building the infrastructure for current and future generations through innovative and professional management, sustainable land allocation and by working in partnership with other arms of government, our business clients and the community.

Our success is measured through meeting our customer and community needs, achieving sound financial management, continuous performance improvement and building a knowledge-based organisation.

This report records Lands' progress over the past 12 months in achieving these aims. It has been a period of consolidation but also one of innovation as the organisation responds to the contemporary demands of our community.

This is a hallmark year for Lands as it recognises 150 years of contribution and achievement in land information and management – a milestone we share with the celebration of the sesquicentenary of responsible government.

Land and Property Information Division (LPI) maintained sound business performance of the land title registration service despite a softening property market.

A key feature was the substantial increase in the range of LPI products and services available online, an outcome of a strategic drive towards a digital business environment.

Customers can now obtain a variety of property documentation on the Lands' website or conduct online searches. Significant progress has also been made with ePlan which builds on the existing electronic plan lodgement capability and will dramatically reduce the number of manual steps in processing a plan.

A highlight this year was the launch of the Spatial Information eXchange, providing high resolution aerial photography and satellite imagery via the website, with the option of topographic and cadastral data overlays. This service provides for a whole of government spatial information portal and enhances government's ability to manage the state's built and natural environments and enables better, faster and more efficient decisions.

Lands is a driving force in the National Electronic Conveyancing System – a proposed national system for lodging and settling property transactions electronically. The national body has published a detailed business model and will soon consult stakeholders on how the new system should work.

LPI has followed through on its commitment to create a single land cadastre with Sydney Water and is well on the way to aligning local government authorities with the unified digital cadastral database.

Crown Lands Division is the custodian of Crown land estate and manages Crown land held under leases, licences and for sale. Land is retained in public ownership to meet the diverse needs of the community from housing, economic and business development to public recreation and conservation.

Amendments to the *Crown Lands Act 1989* took effect this year, enabling a range of contemporary solutions for Crown reserve management, commercial flexibility and strengthened ability to protect environmental values.

The division continues to undergo structural reform towards a more efficient administrative and business focus and among a number of notable achievements was the creation of NSW's 10th State Park on the Belmont coastal wetlands south of Newcastle.

The land reform program for Crown roads and perpetual leases was strongly supported and has stretched the capacity of our agency to meet the demand in a timely way.

Soil Conservation Service (SCS) is well-established in rural NSW as a leader in soil conservation earthworks and consultancy, with projects ranging from maintaining dam foreshores to flood mitigation. While demand for soil conservation earthworks was affected by ongoing drought conditions the division's consultancy business is thriving.

As a business, SCS delivers the highest quality product to clients; a fact recognised by its commendation in the Premier's Public Sector Awards for the Tingha sewerage scheme which earlier earned two industry environmental awards.

The Office of Rural Affairs continued its work in raising the concerns of country NSW with government and advising on rural issues, services, policy and initiatives.

This year the office supported the Regional Communities Consultative Council in developing a model for coordinating humanitarian refugee settlement in rural and regional areas of the state.

This program will assist rural and regional communities in supporting the increasing number of refugees from overseas who settle in NSW.

Finally, I wish to thank the management team and staff within our organisation who have enabled the department to meet its financial and service delivery targets.

Together we have achieved a great deal in the 12 months under review and I remain very confident of our ability to progress our key initiatives over the next year.

Warwick Watkins
Director General
Surveyor General
Registrar General