

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S Report



The State Plan provides a focus for Lands' decision making, resource allocation and action, underpinned by clear accountabilities and reporting mechanisms.

Lands contributed to a large number of State Plan priorities and in a direct and substantial way to five priorities through:

- encouraging people to enjoy our wonderful Crown land reserves, holiday parks and walking tracks through ongoing maintenance and enhancements
- promoting community volunteering through a reserve trust board membership campaign and sponsoring community awards
- supporting healthy living with the many recreational and sporting facilities on Crown land
- continuing to raise the quality of customer service

2007/08 saw Lands performing well under the State Plan:

A new direction for New South Wales that is guiding the NSW public sector response to the opportunities and challenges for our state.

- contributing to better environmental outcomes through our customer programs and the management of Lands facilities.

This year Lands continued to invest in improving land information systems and enhancing and developing electronic service delivery capabilities.

Highlights of the year included:

- improving government property information systems
- developing enhanced systems for electronic lodgment of plans
- improving the spatial data infrastructure including geographical coding of addresses, topographical and cadastral data systems, and survey and spatial data delivery services
- converting the remaining Old System and paper Torrens Titles to the automated Integrated Titling System
- progress in developing a National Electronic Conveyancing System.

A particular focus has been on coordinating spatial datasets for whole-of-government planning for emergencies and major events.

Lands' Emergency Services Spatial Information Library continues to grow and this resource was increasingly relied upon by NSW Police, state emergency agencies and our federal colleagues in planning for and managing major events like the APEC summit and World Youth Day.

Increasingly Lands' spatial data, and that of other agencies, is delivered through the Spatial Information eXchange (SIX) – a government shared portal to the latest land and property information which combines high resolution aerial photography and remote sensing satellite imagery. The SIX portal continues to develop with several enhancements this year for both government clients and the general public.

In the physical world, Lands is making a significant contribution to rebuilding infrastructure and the capacity for future growth through a range of coastal developments from the Tweed in the north to Eden in the south.

Multi-million dollar projects, involving private sector partnerships for investment and development, are managed for sustainable and balanced outcomes that will support regional communities for generations to come.

Lands assumed administrative responsibility for the Festival Development Corporation during the year.

Land and Property Information Division

Land and Property Information Division has responded well to the challenges of managing its business in a weakening property market and managing the



knowledge transition of a maturing workforce.

Whilst the number of deposited plans was down on the previous year, the number of dealings lodged with Titling and Registry Services increased slightly as LPI continued to expand the electronic service delivery options available to clients.

In what will be one of the most important advances for the property market, Lands continues to co-operatively develop the National Conveyancing System (NECS) with key government, industry and professional stakeholders. The system will provide a convenient electronic transaction system for legal practitioners, conveyancers, banks and independent mortgage processors.

In March 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the COAG Business Regulation and Competition Working Group would oversee the implementation of the new e-conveyancing system.

Lands is progressing well on the substantial work needed to prepare for NECS at both the state and national levels; we are on schedule to provide for implementation of national e-conveyancing in NSW by 2010.

In the spatial realm, Lands has commenced the process of acquiring Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology that will allow it to produce highly accurate Digital Elevation Models (DEMs).

Over the next year, LPI will continue to invest in improving land information

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systems and enhancing and developing electronic service delivery capabilities. New projects include the NSW Surface Model Improvement Project, which will complement advances already achieved through the acquisition of an aerial digital camera to capture high quality digital imagery and enhancements to our Continuing Operating Reference Stations (CORS) positioning network.

Crown Lands Division

Our Crown Lands Division is working in partnership with local government and the private sector to revitalise important regional coastal centres. These projects seek to upgrade infrastructure for recreation and tourism, while also preserving essential maritime uses and providing a greater variety of services for the general public.

These partnerships also provide opportunities for economic growth to achieve stronger regional economies as directed in the State Plan.

Each of these coastal projects undergoes extensive planning and consultation with business and the community with the support of local government.

On the North Coast, planning is

underway in the Tweed, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour marine precincts for enhanced public recreation, tourism and commercial opportunities.

Further south, Ariadne Australia entered into a lease agreement with Lands to operate and redevelop the Batemans Bay Marina with ownership of the land remaining in public hands. Other port infrastructure planning exercises are proceeding at Wollongong, Ulladulla, Coffs Harbour and Bermagui.

Lands takes an innovative and flexible approach to regional development opportunities and there was no better example than the legislative amendments this year to enable leasing of Crown land for a wind farm near the far western town of Silverton. This project, subject to planning approval, will ultimately generate sufficient clean, renewable energy to supply up to 400,000 homes.

Equally as important is the division's role in protecting the environment and our heritage. This year, Lands created five new state parks and three national surfing reserves at Angourie, Lennox and Crescent Head on the NSW North Coast. The division strengthened its environmental compliance, an essential component of the land management function.

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Soil Conservation Service Division

During the year the *Soil Conservation Act 1938 No.10* was transferred to Lands, reuniting the Soil Conservation Service Division with administrative responsibility for the Act.

The appointment of the Director General of Lands as Soil Conservation Commissioner enables the division to move forward in a constructive manner to serve the lands and people of NSW.

It gives Lands a lead agency role for soils in the State Plan priority for better outcomes for native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways.

The report *NSW Soils Framework 'Looking Forward Acting Now'* was prepared and endorsed by the Natural Resources and Environment CEO Cluster Group and submitted to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Rural Affairs.

The framework suggests new directions in NSW soil management within the areas of institutional arrangements, research and development, marketing and awareness, information exchange and capacity building, funding and incentives, policy tools, regulations and natural resources management legislation in general.

A NSW State Soils Policy Working Group, led by Lands, is developing a draft NSW Soils Policy.

On the operational front, Soil Conservation Service enjoyed another solid year despite ongoing difficulties caused by the drought.

Office of Rural Affairs

The Office of Rural Affairs continued its good work with the Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) in bringing government

and communities together to develop sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes in country NSW.

ORA supported the Rural and Regional Taskforce to prepare a report to the Premier on regional strategies.

ORA and the RCCC managed comprehensive consultations in the smaller communities on behalf of the Taskforce. These consultations ensured access, input and participation by members of small towns in the final report to the Premier.

Surveyor General's Report

In my statutory position as Surveyor General I continued to support the growth of surveying and spatial information industries within NSW and beyond. This year has seen a particular focus on strategic development of the fast-growing spatial information industry, within which Lands plays a central role for government.

A review of spatial operations commenced this year and will be implemented throughout 2008/09. The review covers all spatial operations within Lands and involves evaluating current resources, structures and capabilities as well as assessing trends and future directions in technology and customer requirements.

The review will position Lands for a sustainable future in delivering spatial programs and services and to achieve greater synergies in operations.

As part of our service commitment to government, utilities and the geospatial community, Lands is working on the Lands Spatial Data Infrastructure (L-SDI) program, which is designed to significantly enhance the currency, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the state's key spatial datasets. The L-SDI will

form one building block of a common whole-of-government framework, as proposed in BOSSI's '*Common Spatial Information Initiative*' (CS2i), onto which other agencies can participate and/or build their SDI components. This approach will provide a platform for data compatibility and integration and reduce costs to agencies whilst ensuring continuing control at agency level of the data which supports each agency's core business.

Under the State Plan, the NSW Government has made a strong commitment to research, knowledge development and economic growth.

Lands is playing its part with a number of initiatives such as jointly funding the appointment of Dr. Lin Lin Ge to the inaugural position of Associate Professor of Spatial Information at the University of NSW.

This appointment leverages the significant investment the government has made in spatial information, particularly at Lands.


During the year Lands employed 12 spatial information trainees at Bathurst to work in a variety of spatial information areas under a structured job training program whilst also undertaking formal TAFE studies.

The Surveyor General International Fellowship in Surveying and Spatial Information was awarded to Peter Sergeant who used the fellowship to study international mine surveying practices.

In my role as Surveyor General I hold the statutory positions of President of BOSSI and Chair of the Geographical Names Board (GNB).

BOSSI was active in its continuing role of promoting professional development and standards, and has played a significant role in legislative reform.

Detailed reports from BOSSI and the GNB are contained in this publication.



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Registrar General's Report

As the Registrar General my role is to safeguard and maintain the integrity of the register of land ownership in NSW. The activities of this office are integral to the process and confidence in the property market.

Sectors of the property market experienced difficulties during the year but demand for Lands information services remained steady.

As ever, Lands remained vigilant against attempts at property fraud involving identity theft. The fraud mitigation unit has compiled a comprehensive library of cancelled automated titles which can be used to verify the authenticity of titles lodged, trained staff in fraud awareness, completed a fraud risk analysis of over 100 types of Real Property dealing transactions and developed appropriate risk mitigation strategies.

The rights of property owners are being further strengthened through amendments to the *Real Property Act 1900* to give greater assurances against property theft through fraud.

This legislation will tighten the obligation of lenders and witnesses to lending documents to ensure that they take reasonable steps to know the identity of parties to a mortgage and other land dealings.

Lands' progress towards a digital business environment continued apace with significant progress in converting

remaining Old System parcels and progressive digitisation of one million historical lands records.

The ePlan Program is transforming the way that Lands processes land title plans; from lodgment and examination through to registration and updating the cadastre on the Digital Cadastral Data Base (DCDB). The electronic lodgment of plans for registration through ePlan now has more than 600 surveyors subscribed to the system and ePlans represent around one quarter of total plan lodgments.

A new simplified electronic process is being introduced for property transactions involving a notice of sale or transfer of land form (colloquially known as a NOS form) in New South Wales.

The electronic process will make it easier and simpler to prepare a NOS form, whilst providing for greater accuracy in information collected.

These projects and others are part of preparing Lands for the introduction of the National Electronic Conveyancing System in 2010.

The LPI division represents a wealth of experience and knowledge, particularly amongst the older workers on the verge of retirement.

LPI has continued to pursue a comprehensive strategy to recruit and train staff. Following four years of modest recruitment and training programs, LPI this year embarked on an expanded program to recruit 32 graduates and trainees every year.

Lands today is transforming the way we do business to meet the needs of a 21st Century economy.

As the key provider of land and property information services in this state we have responded to the security demands of an online world by strengthening our vigilance of the home ownership register within our keep and preparing for an exciting future of seamless national conveyancing.

We are harnessing rapidly advancing geospatial technology to meet the whole-of-government challenge to apply spatial information to the state's economic, resource and security needs.

Our land management role and expertise is relevant to every community in the state, irrespective to size, and our commitment to excellence is amply demonstrated in this report.

I wish to thank the management team and staff within our organisation who enable Lands to meet its financial and service delivery targets each year.



Warwick Watkins

Director General
Surveyor General
Registrar General
Soil Conservation Commissioner