

Crown land adjoining private property

This information sheet helps you find out who manages the Crown land near your property and tells you what you need to know as our neighbour.

The Department of Planning and Environment's Crown Lands branch manages Crown land on behalf of the NSW Government for the people of NSW.

This document relates to the 3 major types of public land managed by the department:

- Crown reserves
- Crown public roads (most often undeveloped road corridors also known as 'paper' roads)
- Crown waterways (the beds of most inland waterways and the bed of the Pacific Ocean to 3 nautical miles offshore is reserved Crown land).

In this fact sheet we will refer to them all as just 'Crown land'.

How to identify who manages public land that adjoins your property

Public land is managed by various public authorities, such as National Parks and Wildlife Service, your local Council, Local Land Services, Crown Lands and others. The managing agency may have installed signs at entrance points to the public land that identify its contact details and what activities are permitted or prohibited.

If there is no signage, you can find out if the land is Crown land by completing a property search via the NSW [Government Property Index](https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/government-property-index-list)¹, using the [NSW Planning Portal spatial data viewer](https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer/#/find-a-property/address)² or by contacting the department on 1300 886 235.

Find Crown land on a map

We provide digital maps of the Crown land estate via the [NSW Planning Portal](https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer/#/find-a-property/address)².

The maps give information on Crown land, waterways, reserves and tenures (such as leases, licences and enclosure permits). You can view a Crown land property report by searching by lot number or street address.

What you can do on Crown land

Private recreation

In general, low impact recreational activities are permitted on Crown land without any authorisation. Activities such as bushwalking, hiking and outdoor sporting activities that don't involve a vehicle and do not interfere with native fauna or flora are considered low impact.

Higher impact activities on Crown land require approval

Activities that potentially interfere with the public's use and enjoyment of Crown land or disturb the natural environment will most likely require a licence or authorisation from us. Examples include

¹ <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/government-property-index-list>

² <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer/#/find-a-property/address>

installing any structures or fixtures, placing items and/or storing materials on the land, and driving a car or other vehicle on Crown land.

You can drive vehicles on Crown public roads. However, if you want to do even minor works to create or maintain an access track on a Crown public road, you will need written consent from the department.

Private use of Crown land adjoining your property

Any private use of Crown land that adjoins your property is unlawful unless you hold a valid licence or permit from the department.

For example, you need a licence or permit to graze animals, construct fencing, disturb vegetation, store items, park vehicles, construct garden beds, place outdoor dining sets, install sheds or garages, put up a clothesline or install a compost bin or children's play equipment.

Garden waste or storm water disposal

You cannot dispose of any type of garden waste on Crown land. Illegal dumping destroys native bushland and animal habitats by introducing disease, weeds and pests. It also increases the risk of bushfires. You should dispose of garden waste by placing it in your green organics waste bin, composting it or taking it to your local waste facility.

If you see anyone dumping materials or waste on Crown land, report it via the NSW Environment Protection Authority's [RID \(Report Illegal Dumping\) online portal](#)³ or by calling 131 555.

Directing or piping stormwater run-off from your private property onto adjoining Crown land is not permitted. This action can affect the natural soil composition and usual surface water flow on the public land, potentially causing flooding issues for adjoining property owners and roads. Property owners must ensure all stormwater coming from their property is correctly piped and drained to the street gutter or a location in accordance with the local development control plan.

Vegetation clearing and road works on Crown 'paper' roads

Clearing vegetation or undertaking even minor road works on Crown public roads requires written approval from the department. For more information, see our [Guideline – administration of Crown Roads](#)⁴.

Erosion control measures – waterfront properties (retaining or sea walls)

Installing erosion control measures on your waterfront property boundary may require a controlled activity permit from the [Natural Resources Access Regulator](#)⁵ and development consent from your council.

If any part of the proposed structure will be located within the adjoining Crown waterway, you will need landowner's consent from the department to lodge the development application with council and a domestic waterfront licence before beginning construction.

For more information see the [Domestic waterfront licence pages](#)⁶ on our website.

³ <https://ridonline.epa.nsw.gov.au/#/home>

⁴ <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-07/Administration-of-Crown-roads-guideline.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nrar>

⁶ <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/licences-leases-and-permits/apply-or-manage-licence/apply-domestic-waterfront-licence>

Bushfire management

In cooperation with the NSW Rural Fire Services, we oversee an extensive bushfire mitigation program that includes maintaining fire trails and asset protection zones and undertaking hazard reduction burns within bushfire districts on Crown land across the state.

You cannot use Crown land for any new adjoining property development plans to address your own bushfire mitigation responsibilities.

For more information on the department's bushfire mitigation programs see the [Environmental management page](#)⁷ on our website.

Your responsibilities as our neighbour

Landowners must ensure that private property and all associated occupation is wholly contained within their property boundary. Landlords or their agents must ensure residential tenants do not encroach onto adjoining Crown land.

If you or your tenants wish to access or undertake an activity on adjoining Crown land, please call us on the number given at the end of this information sheet to discuss your options.

Ensuring compliance

We will investigate any concerns reported from members of the public or other government agencies, or issues identified through aerial imagery or site inspections to control unauthorised use of the Crown estate.

Using Crown land without approval is an offence. We can take compliance regulatory action if we need to.

Compliance enforcement actions can include:

- directions to remove structures, vehicles or materials illegally placed on Crown land
- stop-activity orders issued 'on the spot' to stop or prevent unlawful activities taking place on Crown land
- issuing penalty infringement notices – \$1,100 for each infringement.

For more information on the department's compliance strategy and enforcement policy see the [Compliance page](#)⁸ on our website

Where to go for help:

Visit our website at www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/

Call us on 1300 886 235

For help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450**

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⁷ <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/protection-and-management/environmental-management>

⁸ <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/protection-and-management/compliance>