



# State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land

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Where we come together

2020



# Contents

---

<b>Introduction from the ministers and commissioner</b>	<b>4</b>
---	----------

## SECTION 1

---

<b>This is your opportunity to shape the future of Crown land in NSW</b>	<b>8</b>
--	----------

<b>1.1</b> Developing the State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land	10
--	----

## SECTION 2

---

<b>Crown land is vast, varied and valued – but not well understood</b>	<b>12</b>
--	-----------

<b>2.1</b> How Crown land came to be	16
--------------------------------------	----

<b>2.2</b> Crown land can be managed in different ways	18
--	----

<b>2.3</b> Aboriginal people have legal rights regarding land	22
---	----

<b>2.4</b> NSW has unique additional Aboriginal land rights	23
---	----

<b>2.5</b> New approaches are needed to secure Aboriginal rights to Crown land	24
--	----

## SECTION 3

---

<b>What we will seek to achieve with this plan</b>	<b>26</b>
--	-----------

<b>3.1</b> The world is changing, and so are the needs of communities	27
---	----

<b>3.2</b> Crown land supports resilient, sustainable and prosperous communities	28
--	----

<b>3.3</b> Priorities for Crown land	30
--------------------------------------	----

## SECTION 4

---

<b>Enabling initiatives will support delivery of the plan</b>	<b>58</b>
---	-----------

<b>4.1</b> Make more of our information available and transparent	59
---	----

<b>4.2</b> Improve service for our customers	60
--	----

<b>4.3</b> Expand support to Crown land managers	62
--	----

## SECTION 5

---

<b>Timelines to deliver the plan's priorities and outcomes</b>	<b>64</b>
--	-----------

## SECTION 6

---

<b>We will report regularly on the plan's outcomes</b>	<b>68</b>
--	-----------

## SECTION 7

---

<b>What's next</b>	<b>70</b>
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# Introduction from the ministers and commissioner

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## Introduction by the Honourable Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

A key priority for our Government, particularly for me as the State's first Public Spaces Minister, is to provide better access to quality, green, open public space for people right across NSW. Crown land – the public's land, which makes up almost 50% of the State – will play a significant role in achieving that goal.

Some of the state's most iconic and beautiful public land is Crown land.

In Sydney, Crown land contributes significantly to open space provision. From pocket parks to regional open spaces and bushland, urban Crown lands can support quality of life for residents, attract visitors and provide habitats for local wildlife. Our goal is to link these parks and other green spaces to form a 'green grid' that will stretch right across Greater Sydney and make our city an even better place to live.

This Crown lands State Strategic Plan is important because it seeks to ensure we not only deliver the greatest public benefit of our Crown land, but that in doing so we also

support its custodians, such as local Surf Life Saving Clubs and PCYCs.

A strategic approach to managing Crown land also gives us the opportunity to do things better than we have in the past, and that is especially pertinent when it comes to the resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims and ensuring recognition of Native Title rights.

We want to make sure the people of NSW get the greatest value from the Crown land reserves we have at our fingertips. That's why we want you to have your say and let us know how we can best work together to manage Crown land now and into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Stokes".

**Rob Stokes**  
**Minister for Planning and Public Spaces**



## **Introduction by the Honourable Melinda Jane Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing**

Crown land is the public's land. In creating this draft of the State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land, we have sought every opportunity to manage Crown land to achieve the best possible benefits in the public interest.

One of our key priorities has been identifying opportunities to create jobs and economic opportunities for our regional communities.

We can use Crown land to provide housing and employment, support growing populations in regional towns, and take some of the pressure off our populated urban areas. The land can also be used to attract investment and create jobs in export-oriented manufacturing, energy generation, and new and emerging industries.

Community and volunteer organisations are the beating heart of our regional towns. This plan contains ideas for how we can better support our showgrounds, racecourses, boating and marine assets, youth groups and clubs. These include improving security and duration of tenure over Crown land, so that

the organisations who add so much to our communities have a stable base from which to grow and thrive.

As we enter a new decade we will take a more proactive and engaged approach to management of Crown land. Consulting with the community on this plan is the first step in that process, and there will be many more opportunities to get involved.

Please take the time to read the plan, discuss it with your friends and families, and give us your feedback to help shape how Crown land is managed now and in the future.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Pavey', written in a cursive style.

**Melinda Jane Pavey**  
**Minister for Water, Property and Housing**



### **Introduction by Professor Richard Bush, Crown Land Commissioner**

As commissioner, I have the privilege to talk with a wide range of people across the community, in industry and those involved in the management of Crown land. People are passionate about Crown land, they recognise its significant potential, and are enthusiastic about the future of the estate. These same people have been at the forefront of major challenges during the time of formulating this strategy.

Our community has been faced with a multitude of challenges at the time of the development of this strategic plan – drought, fire, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to these impacts and contributing to the rebuilding of our communities and local economies will be a feature of this strategic plan. It will outline pathways that ensure the Crown estate can contribute in the best possible way to recovery and building of resilience.

Our Crown land estate is remarkable in terms of scale, diversity and utility. The governing legislation enables it to be used for an array of purposes to deliver economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. As we experience

changes in our economy and lifestyles and in our climate, the uses of Crown land will continue to evolve.

This is the first strategic plan for Crown land that has been developed in NSW. It presents a generational opportunity to position Crown land as a major contributor to the prosperity, sustainability and wellbeing of our community.

The plan will align Crown land management and priorities with the aspirations of the community.

Now is the time for all stakeholders to have their say on how Crown land is managed. I encourage you to think creatively about how Crown land can support NSW. Please take advantage of the opportunity to contribute your ideas and recommendations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Bush', written in a cursive style.

**Professor Richard Bush  
Crown Land Commissioner**





SECTION 1

# **This is your opportunity to shape the future of Crown land in NSW**

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**This draft State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land (the plan) outlines a proposed vision and strategy for management of Crown land in NSW. The document also provides an introduction to the ‘what, where and how’ of NSW Crown land. This is the first such plan for Crown land, and it represents an opportunity to change the way Crown land is managed for the benefit of the communities of NSW.**

We will soon be calling for submissions so that we can hear from you, the public, and from our valued stakeholder organisations. Your feedback will be used to ensure we have a plan which creates the greatest benefit for the communities of NSW.



### **Who manages Crown land**

Crown Lands, a part of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment NSW (the department, or ‘us/we’) is responsible for the management of Crown land in NSW, as specified in the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* (the Act). We perform our work under the direction of the ministers who administer the Act.

The Act also requires the government of NSW to create a State Strategic Plan to set the vision, priorities and overarching strategy for the management of Crown land in NSW, including the outcomes that are expected to be achieved by implementation

of the plan, and the timeframes for achieving those outcomes. The document you are now reading is the initial draft of that Plan.

The Act seeks to ensure that Crown land is managed and used in ways that provide consistency, efficiency, fairness and transparency. It requires us to take environmental, social, cultural heritage and economic considerations into account, and to manage and administer Crown land for the benefit of the whole community. The Act also seeks to facilitate the use of Crown land by Aboriginal people, including through co-management.

# 1.1 Developing the State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land

This draft plan has been prepared through research and consultation, including engaging with stakeholders who operate on or who are involved with Crown land. We are now presenting the draft plan to the public. The consultation process will last for several months.

Figure 1 outlines the process we have followed to develop this draft plan, and the timeline for public consultation.

**Figure 1. Development of the State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land**

Stage	Who we are talking to
<b>Research</b>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	Key stakeholders, councils, peak bodies, government agencies, peak Aboriginal bodies, Crown land managers.
<b>At the end of our research phase, we will have a draft Crown Land State Strategic Plan.</b>	
<b>Two stage consultation period:</b>	
 <p><b>Stage 1:</b> Release draft plan for public information.</p> <p><b>Stage 2:</b> Submission period (min. of 42 days).</p>	Everyone in NSW has the chance to provide feedback. We will also loop back with key stakeholders.
<b>Report back</b>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary report</li> </ul>	We will report back on the key themes we heard from your feedback.
<b>At the end of the feedback and reporting phases, we will update the plan based on your feedback and submit the draft to the Ministers for their consideration.</b>	
<b>Advise</b>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final plan adopted</li> <li>• Implementation commences</li> </ul>	We will let you know when the plan is endorsed by the ministers.





## SECTION 2

# Crown land is vast, varied and valued – but not well understood

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There are over 34 million hectares of Crown land in NSW (approximately 42 per cent of the state), an area larger than Italy, the United Kingdom or South Korea. It is a unique and complex estate containing arid rangelands in the west, the mountainous terrain of the Great Dividing Range, forests, grasslands and towns, through to vast stretches of beaches and waterways in the east, that extends out into the marine estate beyond our shores.

Crown land is held in trust by the NSW government on behalf of the community, and there are special processes to determine how the land is used and managed. Unlike freehold property, it cannot be bought or sold except under special provisions. Aboriginal communities have legal rights over some Crown land, and these are explained in more detail in Section 2.3.

Crown land is highly valued and enjoyed by diverse communities and individuals across the state.

It is used for a wide variety of purposes, from farms, parks, reserves, roads and cemeteries, to showgrounds, campgrounds and industrial sites. Crown land provides essential space for business, tourism, recreation, well-being and biodiversity.

The range of potential uses mean that there are often competing interests or aspirations for the use of Crown land. Where there are competing claims we aim to resolve them in a way that is fair, equitable and aligned with government priorities. This supports our commitment to manage the land to the greatest benefit to the community of NSW.

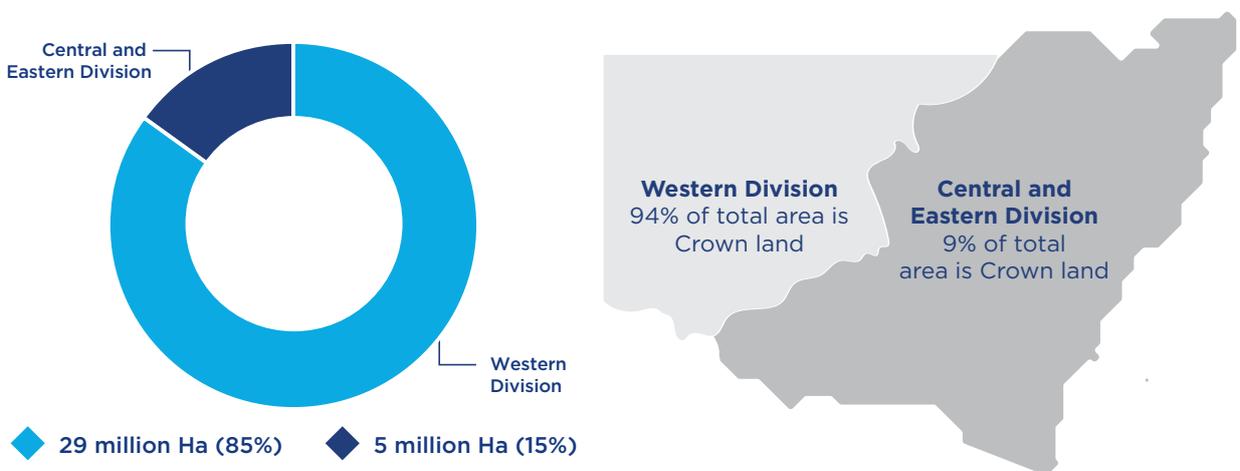
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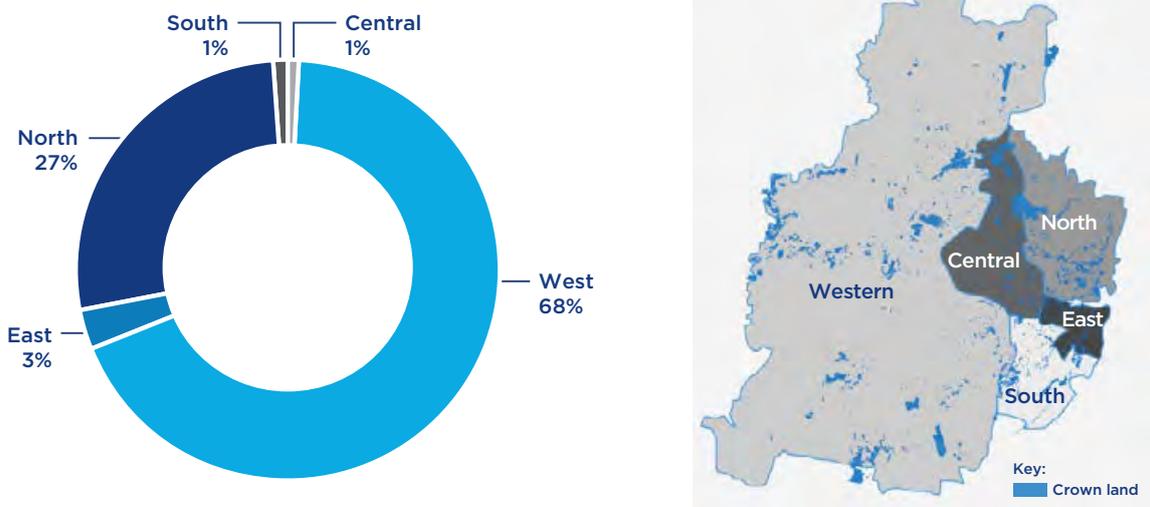
Most Crown land (approximately 85 per cent) is in the Western Division and is used for grazing, cropping, mining and renewable energy generation. Much of this land has been leased on a perpetual basis. These perpetual leases confer rights that are similar to those of freehold title, and these leaseholders manage the land.

Figure 2 shows the split of the Crown land portfolio across the regions of NSW, and Figure 3 shows the distribution of Crown land in the metropolitan Sydney area.

**Figure 2. Profile of Crown land in NSW**



**Figure 3. Crown land in metropolitan Sydney**





Crown land comprises 42% of all land in NSW.

Most Crown land (approximately 85 per cent) is in the Western Division and is used for grazing, cropping, mining and renewable energy generation.

## 2.1 How Crown land came to be

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Prior to European settlement, all of what is now NSW was Aboriginal land. As part of establishing a new colony the government of Great Britain asserted legal ownership of all land. From this base the colonial, and then the state government proceeded to allocate or sell land, and to record and guarantee its ownership. Most of these allocations and sales created what are now freehold property rights for the new owners.

In 1983 the Parliament of NSW created a system of Aboriginal land rights to compensate Aboriginal communities for the loss of their land. This provided for the return of some Crown land to Aboriginal ownership.

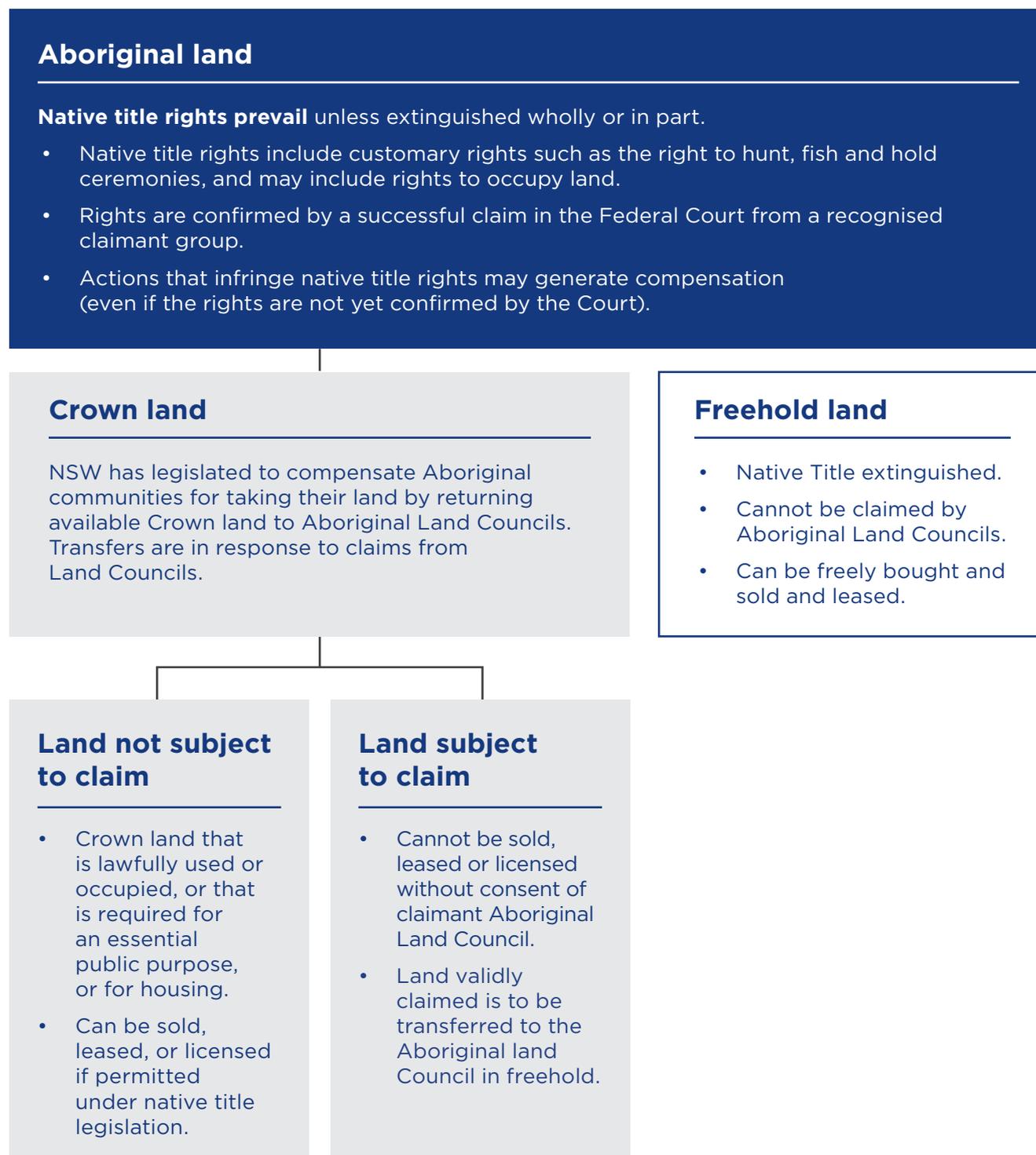
This system continues to the present today and is explained in section 2.4.

In 1992 the High Court of Australia found that traditional Aboriginal rights to land (known as native title rights) continue to exist across Australia in cases where they have not been extinguished by subsequent government legislation or actions.

Figure 4 provides more details on the status of various categories of land in NSW, and section 2.3 explains what happens when native title is found to continue.



Figure 4. Status of land in NSW



### 2.1.1 Not all NSW Government land is Crown land

The NSW Government manages large areas of land in the state, and not all of it is Crown land. For example, national parks and state forests occupy large areas.

Other NSW Government departments own or control land for specialised purposes such as roads, schools, hospitals and prisons. These other lands will not be governed under this plan.

## 2.2 Crown land can be managed in different ways

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Crown land can be reserved or dedicated for specific purposes. It can also be leased or licensed to individuals or organisations, and it can be managed by NSW Government departments, local government councils or by others.

These arrangements are outlined in the Act. They are intended to ensure that the land is used and managed in the ways that best serve the communities of NSW.

### 2.2.1 Some Crown land is dedicated or reserved, and this affects how the land is used

There are over 34,000 Crown land reserves allocated on behalf of the community for a wide range of public purposes including environment and heritage protection, recreation and sport, open space, community halls, special events and government services.

Once land is dedicated or reserved by the government it may generally only be used for the nominated purposes or compatible activities. There is a process for changing the nominated purpose of a reserved or dedicated area of Crown land, however it is not a common occurrence and requires a decision by the ministers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Dedication' may only be revoked by the ministers with responsibility for Crown lands tabling their intention to do so in the NSW Parliament. 'Reservation' status may be changed more simply, by ministerial decision, following the carrying out of any community engagement required by the Act.



## Hyde Park

Many Crown land reserves have a rich and complex history, where the use of a reserve has evolved over time to meet the needs of the community. An example of this is Hyde Park, which is now a popular retreat for workers and visitors to the Sydney CBD. At the beginning of the colony the land was used for collecting firewood and grazing animals. Its first recreational use was a racecourse and in the 1820s it was used as a cricket pitch. Later the park became a venue for Sunday oratories on political and civic topics and for election meetings. In 2015 the Yininmadyemi: Thoust Didst Let Fall monument was completed. The work acknowledges that even before Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were counted in the census and recognized as citizens, they were risking their lives to defend Australia. This site for the monument, at Hyde Park South, was chosen as it was once a ritual contest ground, a crossroads for traditional walking trails, and an important site for ceremony, gathering and camping.



## 2.2.2 Crown land may be leased or licensed for multiple purposes

Often Crown land is leased to others to use. Examples of activities conducted under lease include marinas, cafés, surf lifesaving clubs, Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC), Scouts and Girl Guides' halls, Men's Sheds, caravan parks, and industrial facilities. There are currently 10,800 leases held over Crown land. When measured by area, most of the leases (85 per cent) are in the Western Division and are used for grazing and other purposes.

Access to Crown land may also be authorised through licensing. A license on Crown land authorises the holder to conduct specified activities. A wide range of activities may be licensed, and these activities can usually co-exist with other uses.

Examples include domestic waterfront jetties, mobile phone towers, water and sewerage infrastructure, grazing and quarries. There are currently 18,300 licences held on Crown land across NSW. Licences may also be granted for short-term uses such as festivals or events.



### **Broken Hill Solar Farm**

The Broken Hill Solar Farm is located on Crown land. In order to create this facility AGL, an energy company, approached the leaseholder of the land and negotiated a purchase of the grazing lease. By agreement with the department, AGL then surrendered the grazing lease and was issued a commercial lease that would authorise the development and occupation of the land as a solar farm. The term of the current lease is for 30 years with an option to renew for a further 30-year term.

### 2.2.3 Some Crown land is managed by others

In some cases, Crown land is managed by individuals or entities who have the capability, interest and resources to care for the land. For example, many local government councils manage Crown land within their council areas. Community-based groups, corporations, incorporated associations or Aboriginal Land Councils may be designated as Crown land managers.

Crown land managers are responsible for the control and management of land under their care. They can grant leases and licences<sup>2</sup> to others who wish to use the land, and can collect revenue to assist with the care, upkeep and development of the land they manage (if that use is consistent with any reservation or dedication that has been placed on the land).

Many community-based groups are staffed by volunteers who provide their time and skills free of charge in order to benefit their community. The contribution volunteers make to social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes across NSW has been, and continues to be, substantial. Generations of people have benefitted from the generous work of these volunteers.



#### **Norah Head Lighthouse**

The Norah Head Lighthouse is a non-profit organisation comprising community representatives appointed to manage the reserve and its associated activities including maintenance, marketing and operations. The reserve is supported by over 50 passionate volunteers, who conduct tours of the lighthouse, the site and its historic buildings and maintain the surrounding bushland through bush care and coast care groups. Two reserve managers live on site and manage the accommodation and bookings. The heritage Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage and Assistant Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage are let for accommodation and the venue is available for hire for functions including weddings and receptions.

<sup>2</sup> These can be granted with approval by the ministers with responsibility for Crown lands. The exception is for Council land managers, who do not need permission from the minister to grant licences and leases.

## 2.3 Aboriginal people have legal rights regarding land

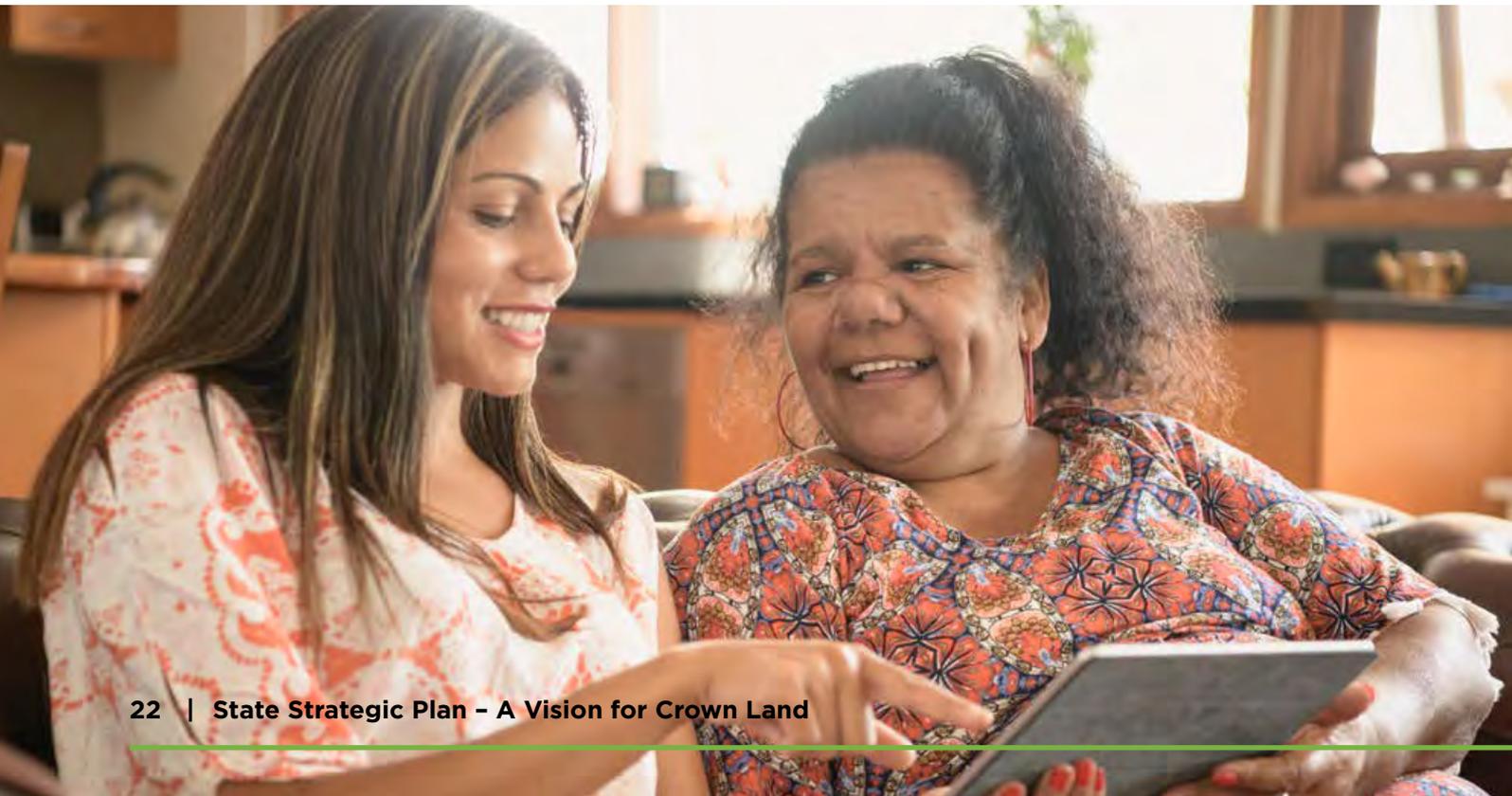
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Some Aboriginal people in NSW have native title rights to Crown land because they can establish an ongoing customary law connection to land. Native title rights typically include the right to access land, hunt, gather, take resources for bush medicine and other traditional uses. Where native title is recognised, native title holders' rights will continue to exist over Crown land for all future generations and any activities affecting these rights needs to be carried out by Crown Lands in accordance with the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are also some cases where native title rights have been extinguished by specific government actions, such as conversion of land to freehold, or by the granting of perpetual leases (for example in the Western Division). In many cases the status of native title rights on the land has not yet been determined.

If the Federal Court has determined that native title persists, the holders of these rights may be entitled to use or access the land for a range of traditional purposes. In some cases, they may be entitled to exclusive possession. Each claim is assessed by the Federal Court, to determine the rights in each case, and the identities of the rights holders.

We recognise that Australia's First Peoples need access to Crown land in order to exercise their native title rights and also more broadly to care for Country and undertake cultural practices. Removing barriers to access is of great importance to them and the wider community.



## 2.4 NSW has unique additional Aboriginal land rights

While native title may exist anywhere in Australia, there is also a system of Aboriginal land rights that applies only in NSW. In 1983, the NSW Parliament passed the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (the ALRA). The ALRA was established to return some Crown land in NSW to Aboriginal people through the processing of Aboriginal land claims.

The ALRA established a network of elected Aboriginal Land Councils, which are empowered to claim, acquire and utilise land as an economic base for Aboriginal communities in NSW. Under the ALRA, Aboriginal Land Councils may claim and be granted freehold title to Crown land that is not being used or required for residential or essential public purposes.

To date, 13,356 Aboriginal Land Claims have been reviewed and resolved in accordance with the provisions of the ALRA. Each assessment involves reviewing a range of records across multiple government agencies and determining the facts applying to the land over time. It is possible to have multiple claims over the same or overlapping parcels of land.

The claims assessment process is complex and requires special expertise. Processing of Aboriginal Land Claims has not progressed as quickly as hoped, and there are a significant number of claims currently awaiting assessment.

To date, 13,356 Aboriginal land claims have been reviewed and resolved in accordance with the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

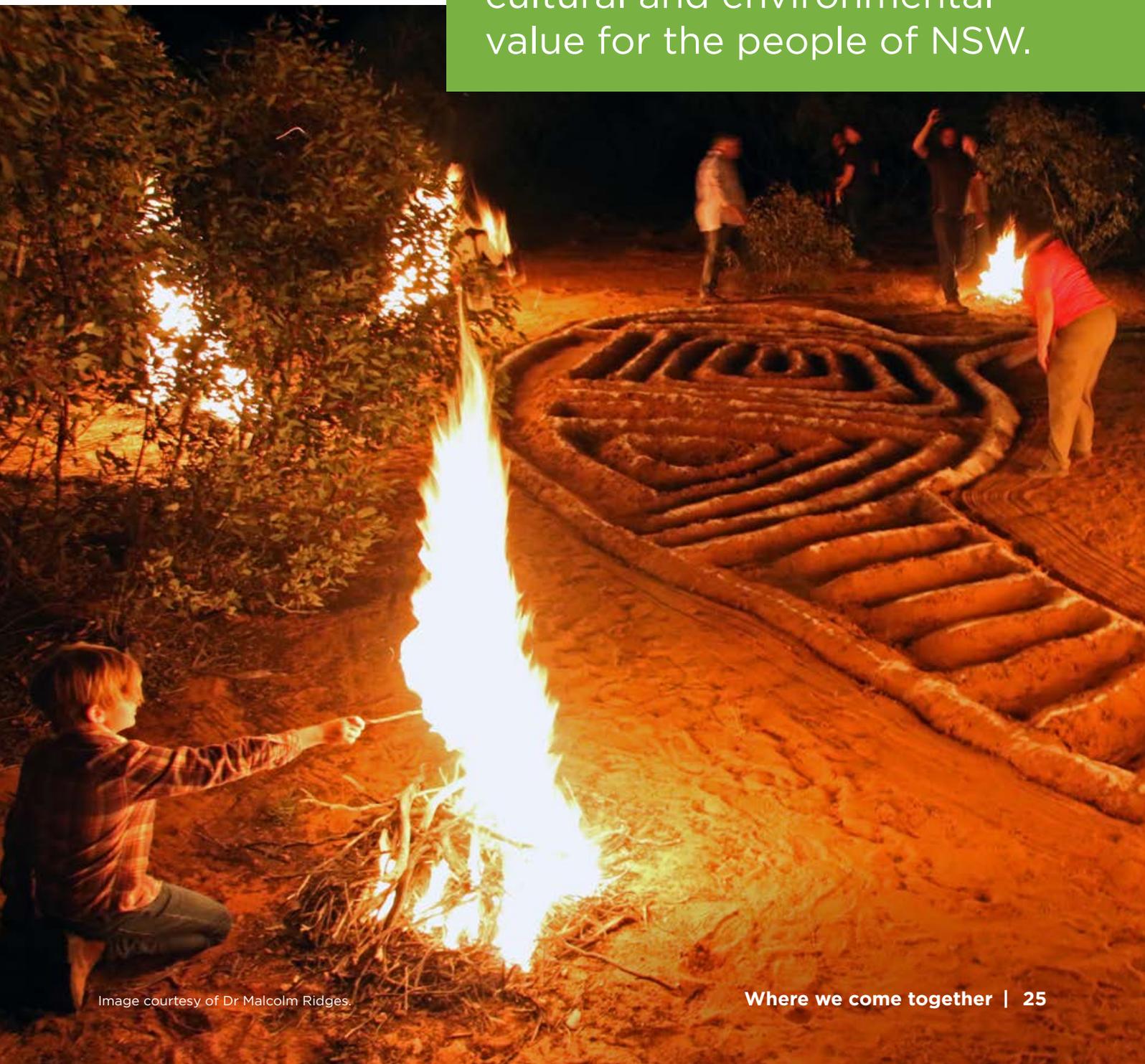
## 2.5 New approaches are needed to secure Aboriginal rights to Crown land

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Crown land already delivers enormous economic, social, cultural and environmental value for the people of NSW. However, the complicated and unresolved intersection of the legal rights of the state, Aboriginal Land Councils and native title claimants and rights holders are delaying benefits for all. This can mean that some Crown land cannot be developed or used by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal communities for many years.

This draft plan includes as one of its key priorities the development of new approaches between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal bodies who may have legal rights to Crown land. This will help resolve uncertainties and enable land to be used for maximum benefit.

Crown land already delivers enormous economic, social, cultural and environmental value for the people of NSW.





## SECTION 3

# What we seek to achieve with this plan

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**This section presents the proposed vision, overarching strategy and priorities of the draft plan, as well as the outcomes we expect to achieve over the coming decade.**

## 3.1 The world is changing, and so are the needs of communities

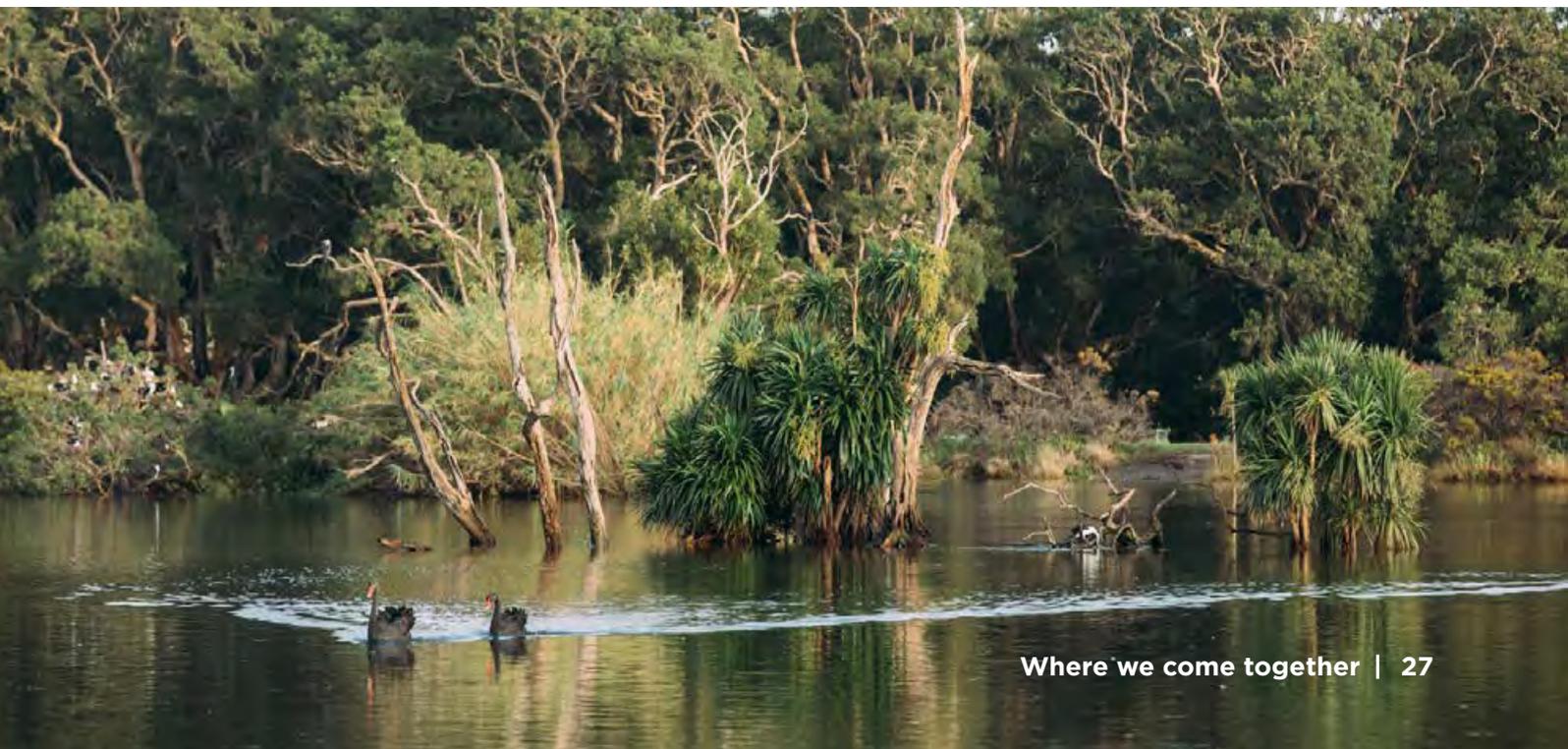
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Much has changed over the years since Crown land was first established in NSW. One of the strengths of the Crown land legislation is that it sustains land in public ownership, able to be used to meet the needs of each generation. As we set our course for the coming decade it is timely to reflect on the current and future needs and priorities of the government and our communities.

- The NSW government and the Crown land ministers have expressed ambitious priorities for how Crown land can contribute environmental, economic, cultural and social benefits for NSW
- The needs of our communities are changing, as population grows, our economy evolves, and climate change impacts our land

- Legislation and court decisions intended to empower Aboriginal communities and establish their rights to land in NSW have not been as successful as hoped in their aims. This has created delays and obstacles to the recognition of Aboriginal rights to Crown land in NSW, as well as to other uses of Crown land.

The world is changing at a rapid pace, it brings into focus the need for optimising public land for multiple benefits that deliver tangible outcomes for the economy, the environment and our social wellbeing. There is a huge need and the public assets have the capacity to make a major contribution against these criteria.



## 3.2 Crown land supports resilient, sustainable and prosperous communities

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The vision embodied in this plan is for Crown land to support resilient, sustainable and prosperous communities across NSW.

This means using Crown land to enable a wide and evolving range of activities that generate economic, social, cultural and environment benefits for all communities across the state. We will seek to adopt a proactive and dynamic approach, so that Crown land is utilised in a way that facilitates growth, productivity and sustainability.

**To realise this vision, we will:**

- 1. Adopt a quadruple bottom line approach to the management of Crown land.** To ensure that we generate the best outcomes for the entire NSW community we will seek to optimise the economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities generated by activities on Crown land, for current and future generations. We will develop an assessment framework based on a quadruple bottom line approach to guide our decisions. Where possible we will seek opportunities that deliver multiple benefits simultaneously.
- 2. Support the network of Crown land managers across NSW.** Crown land managers will be appointed based on their capability, skills and commitment to utilise and care for the land. We will work with Crown land managers to help them succeed and will devote resources to attracting and informing the next generation of land managers. We will support and enable innovation and adaptation.
- 3. Empower Aboriginal people to play a central role in delivering this vision.** Aboriginal land rights are key to the achievement of the social, cultural, economic and environmental objectives of the Act. We will adopt land transfers to, and partnerships with, Aboriginal people as a core method of securing the benefits that are the plan's objectives. The department will seek new ways of working with Aboriginal people that recognise their legal rights, wisdom and contribution.
- 4. Collaborate with government and stakeholders to steward the land in our care.** We will work proactively across government and with non-government stakeholders to share information, create opportunities and overcome barriers so that we can meet the community's evolving needs and aspirations.



The vision embodied in this plan is for Crown land to support resilient, sustainable and prosperous communities across NSW.

# 3.3 Priorities for Crown land

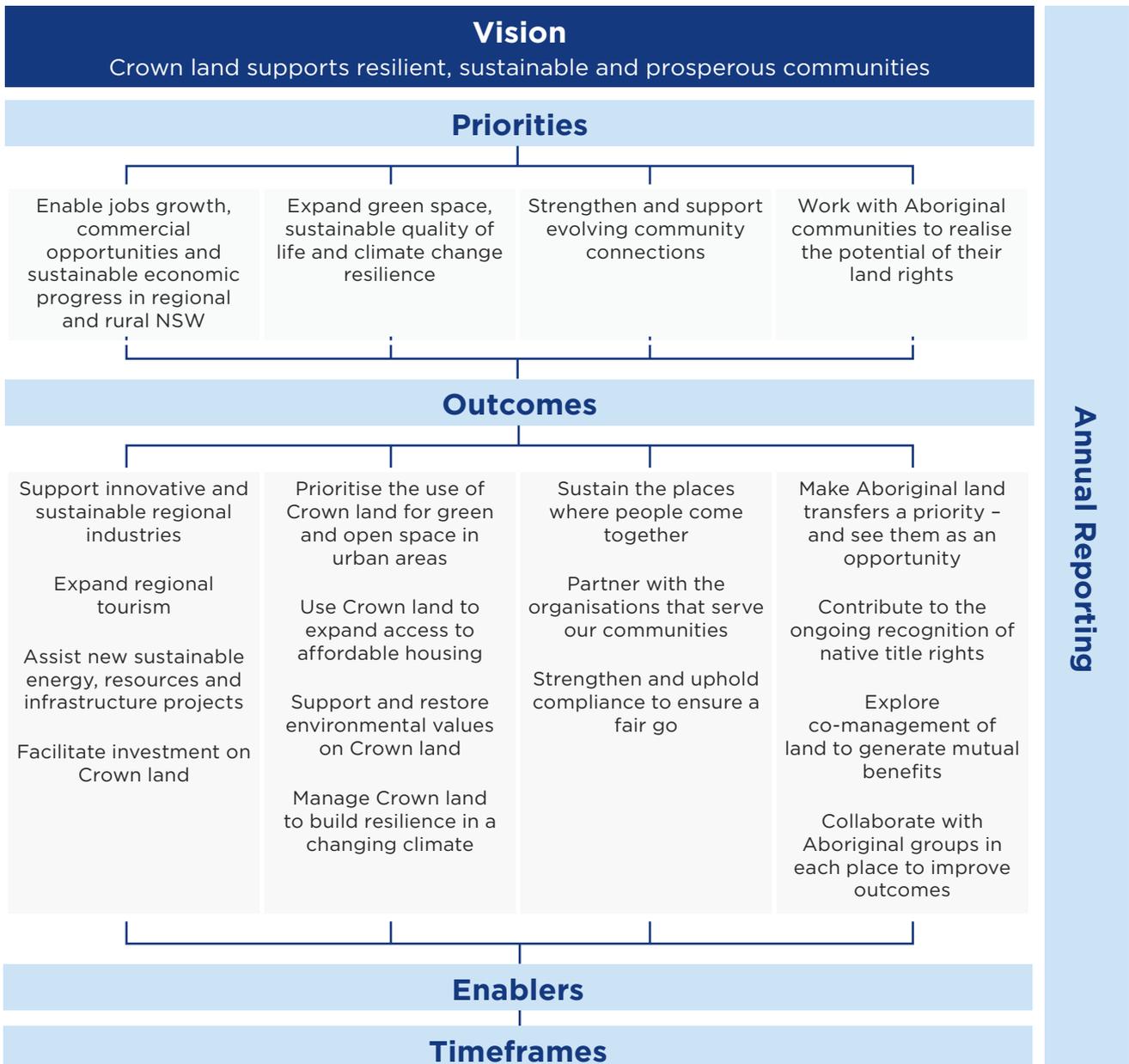
Over the next 10 years our priorities will be to:

- Enable jobs growth, commercial opportunities and sustainable economic progress in regional and rural NSW
- Expand green space, sustainable quality of life and climate change resilience
- Strengthen and support evolving community connections

- Work with Aboriginal communities to realise the potential of their land rights.

These priorities are supported by a set of outcomes to be achieved over the early, middle and full decade of the plan. Figure 5 depicts the overarching strategy contained within the plan, including priorities and outcomes.

**Figure 5. Overarching Strategy of the State Strategic Plan - A Vision for Crown Land**



In addition to these priorities, much of our existing work will continue. This includes programs to mitigate the risk of bushfires on fire trails and asset protection zones, conservation of natural resources, remediation of contaminated land, coastal dredging, infrastructure, and compliance. At times major infrastructure programs take place on Crown land, and we will seek to enable these. We will continue to focus attention and resources on our asset maintenance programs.

COVID-19 has contributed to one of the most significant economic and social impacts that Australia has experienced in the past 100 years. How the Crown Land Estate can contribute to building our community prosperity and provide public value to address these short to medium term impacts of COVID-19 will be carefully considered in the design and implementation stages of the plan. There will be particular focus on supporting local industries and regional economies.

The priorities and desired outcomes of this plan call for an ambitious transformation of the administration of Crown lands in NSW.

To support this transformation, a detailed implementation plan will be developed, with inputs from stakeholders and the community. Given the size of the estate, this plan will take time to implement. This plan will also require significant development of the department's systems and skills base. Hence, a staged approach is proposed.

- In the first year of the plan, there will be a focus on planning, consultation and preparation, coupled with delivery of some key enablers and 'quick wins'.
- Years 2 - 5 will be a period of applied implementation. It will no doubt involve teething issues, optimisation in the face of constraints and adaptation. Delivery of tangible 'wins' will continue through this period.
- Years 6 - 10 is envisaged to see the realisation of substantial, systematic and enduring benefits for the whole community.

Individual outcomes will be delivered within short-term, medium-term or long-term timeframes, as shown in Figure 6. Section 5 of this plan contains detailed descriptions of the individual outcomes and proposed timeframes.

**Figure 6. The plan's outcomes will be achieved in short-term (1-2 year), medium-term (5 year) or long-term (10 year) timeframes**



### 3.3.1 Enable jobs growth, commercial opportunities and sustainable economic progress in regional and rural NSW

Jobs generate prosperity for individuals, families and communities, and most job creating industries require land. Making Crown land available can play a crucial role in attracting and activating new investment in industries that will create jobs. Investment can also generate commercial returns for the state that can be recycled to support improved management and services across the portfolio. Through this plan, Crown lands can contribute to new and changing industries that will contribute to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

#### Support innovative and expanding regional industries

Crown land already provides land for a range of industries across NSW, and we will continue to support regional economies in this way. The Crown land estate includes much of the coastline of NSW, including the beds of coastal waters. There may be opportunities to support marine aquaculture, for example by providing locations for oyster farming and innovative new industries such as seaweed cultivation.

#### Support the marine and boating industries

Most of the beds of coastal waters and the available waterfront land on the NSW coastline is Crown land. As our population grows, so too will the demand for boats, moorings and marine services. Crown land can be used to host businesses that manufacture and repair marine craft, and which service a range of aquaculture industries.

Crown land can also be used to provide access to launching and mooring facilities, helping to preserve the way of life that is so much a part of our coastal Australian culture.

These activities also generate significant health benefits. Spending time on the water has been shown to make a positive contribution to people's quality of life by reducing stress and improving mental health.

#### Explore 'closed-loop' bio-mass and clean technology precincts

There is potential to utilise the by-products from agriculture and industry to generate gas and heat, which can in turn provide electricity and inputs for other industries. This can create what is known as a 'closed loop' precinct. As an example, in Germany there are now over 9,000 local-scale plants employing 48,000 people that use outputs from agricultural and other industries to produce electricity, gas and heat for further industrial use. In Australia, these other uses could include intensive agricultural activities that produce stock feed or that sequester carbon.

Aligned to the *NSW Primary Industries Climate Change Research Strategy*, which is investigating innovative approaches to electricity generation using organic matter (biomass), Crown land could provide suitable locations for some of these types of operations.

## Coffs Harbour slipway

The Coffs Harbour slipway is an important boat repair and maintenance facility that services the Mid North Coast's commercial boating and fishing industry, as well as recreational boaters. The slipway facility was constructed in the early 1980s to assist boaters to remove their boats from the water for cleaning, repairs and painting. After 30 years of use it was found that the land directly under the slipway and the bed of the surrounding waterway were significantly contaminated as a result of historical use of chemicals that are now known to be unsafe.

In 2016, Crown Lands commenced the complex remediation process with \$2.6m in funding from the NSW Government.

Over several months, approximately 5,500 tonnes of contaminated materials were extracted from the site and adjacent waterway. Once the remediation was completed, the facility received significant upgrades to enable craning out of vessels from the waterway, chemical storage and runoff management.

The site was reopened in 2018 and is now fully functional and servicing the local community and businesses again.

Further improvements are proposed in the future and include provision of a 75-tonne travel lift.<sup>3</sup>

3 Photo courtesy of Soil Conservation Service.

## Expand regional tourism

Tourism has strong jobs growth potential in regional NSW and the diversity of uses supported under the Act means it can play a valuable role in capitalising on this potential.

### Leverage the economic benefits of national parks

There are likely to be areas of Crown land adjacent to national parks that could be used for accommodation and recreation. These would make it easier for tourists to visit and enjoy the parks, creating jobs, economic and commercial opportunities in regional areas.

### Eden Port

In August 2017 we began works on the extension of the Eden Breakwater Wharf to deepen the harbour and extend the wharf by 100 metres to enable it to berth large cruise ships. This \$44 million project is a multi-government initiative jointly funded by the Australian Government, NSW Government and the Bega Valley Shire Council. It will help open new avenues for tourism to drive economic growth in the region. The local community has been excited about the new opportunities that this project will bring. As the community recovers and rebuilds following the disastrous bushfires of 2019-20, these assets will help local businesses re-establish and grow jobs and economic opportunities in the area.

### Support tourism activities for showgrounds

Some showgrounds on Crown land already include caravan parks and facilities for recreational vehicles. These are enjoyed by tourists and the growing numbers of retirees who travel across Australia. With help to overcome some regulatory barriers, these facilities could be expanded, attracting more visitors to regional centres and generating the funds to maintain and enhance community assets on showgrounds. We will work with suitable showgrounds to inform them of opportunities, resources and funding which may help them expand into these types of ventures.

### Conduct a portfolio review in collaboration with the tourism industry

We will conduct a portfolio review of Crown land that may be suitable for tourism sites and industries, working with partners in the tourism industry and other State land managing bodies, to identify the most prospective sites.



### **Assist new sustainable energy, resources and infrastructure projects**

As technology changes, so does the way we generate and transmit energy. New energy ventures and infrastructure projects can support strong local economies and create employment.

#### **Make land available for wind and solar generation**

The *NSW Primary Industries Climate Change Research Strategy* is funding innovative energy projects to support clean energy and local energy solutions for regional communities. Some regional Crown land is suitable for wind and solar power generation and could be used for these innovative projects. These projects can generate new jobs in numbers that are significant in smaller communities. They also generate electricity at relatively low cost, and most have minimal environmental impacts.

#### **Seek opportunities to support the Hydrogen strategy**

Some Crown land in rural and regional areas of the state could support the development of hydrogen assets associated with this prospective new energy source. The Commonwealth Government is implementing a *Hydrogen Strategy* that identifies opportunities for significant new energy sources and exports and may create opportunities to use Crown land that will support regional jobs and growth.

#### **Promote investment by making data available**

The department will seek to accelerate economic and commercial opportunities by working proactively with economic development agencies and local councils. We will publish maps and data detailing tenure status, land reservations and other information to help identify where economic and commercial opportunities might exist for stakeholders. This approach will make it easier for potential investors to locate prospective sites for new or expanded job-creating activities.

#### **Assist with infrastructure project approvals**

Some infrastructure and resources projects may require access to Crown land, for example for utilities and access roads or where portions of Crown land are contained within larger sites. We acknowledge that the process for approval can in some cases be complex and lengthy. We will find new ways to work with public and non-government proponents to deal expeditiously with these requests, so that the benefits of these projects can be realised sooner. The new approach to accelerating the resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims that is explained below will make a significant contribution.



## **Facilitate investment on Crown Land**

Promoting investment in improved facilities and new opportunities is one of the best ways to stimulate jobs and growth in communities. Under this plan, Crown land will be managed in a way that encourages appropriate and sustainable investment and generates an appropriate return from commercial activities.

### **Increase security of tenure for leaseholders to promote investment**

When organisations which lease Crown land are considering further investment, a key consideration is the length of their tenure. When tenures are too short to enable a full lifecycle of investment and return, it can deter investors from making upgrades to infrastructure and equipment that would be helpful in sustaining the Crown land estate, providing services and generating commercial returns.

The department and Crown land managers can improve certainty of tenure while continuing to support the public interest objective under the Act by offering longer-term leases that enable investors to recover their initial investment with a reasonable economic return.

We can also promote investment by talking to leaseholders about renewal earlier in the lease period. Leaseholders are unlikely to invest in a new facility or venture during the later stage of a lease, if they can't be sure of their tenure.

Under the plan, we will develop a set of tools to help the department and Crown land managers improve certainty of tenure on the land they manage. The tools will be developed through consultation with industry and other interested stakeholders.

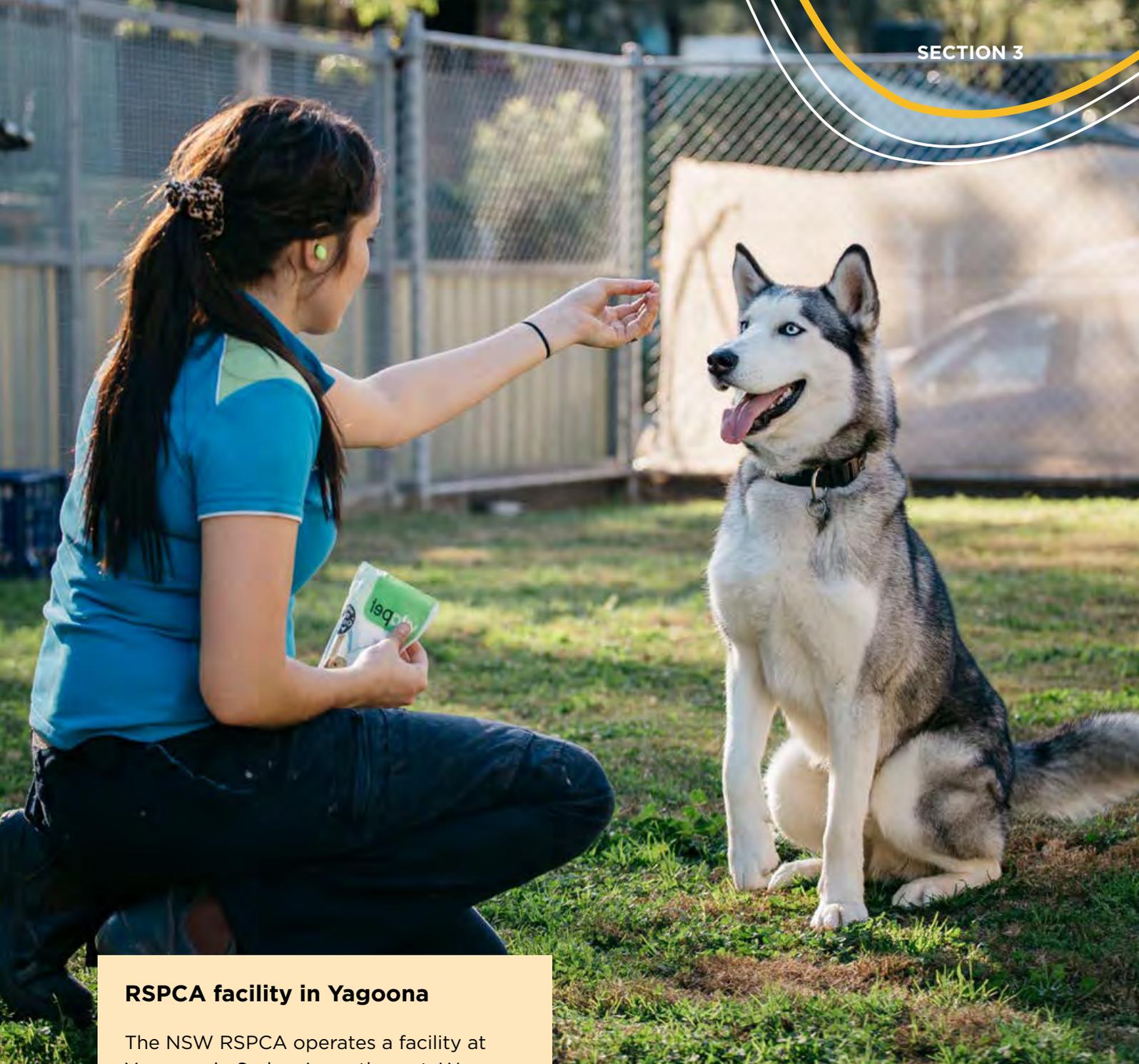
### **Create a framework to assess and prioritise proposals**

We will create a process and framework that enables us to assess and prioritise proposals that are made for the use of Crown land by potential investors. The framework will provide clarity of the process and timelines, so that proponents know what to expect. It will also ensure that risks are mitigated and that important legal issues (such as Aboriginal Land Claims and native title) are properly considered.

### **Ensure we realise and reinvest a fair return for commercial activities upon Crown land**

When commercial activities take place on Crown land it is appropriate that the community receives a fair exchange. We will continue to refine our processes to determine the fair value to be charged for commercial activities on Crown land and will reinvest the proceeds to maintain and improve the land and assets of the estate.

Our policy of providing affordable access to Crown land for non-profit organisations and activities that provide community benefits will remain a key component of ensuring maximum benefit to the community from the use of Crown land.



### **RSPCA facility in Yagoona**

The NSW RSPCA operates a facility at Yagoona in Sydney's south west. We have extended the term of the RSPCA's lease to 50 years, to provide certainty of tenure and allow for an \$18 million redevelopment including a new veterinary hospital, upgraded administrative and stores buildings, and new legacy dog kennels. The lease extension will save the RSPCA in excess of \$7.4 million, compared to what they would pay on a commercial site. The money saved can be redirected towards animal welfare and expanding the services the RSPCA offer, including educating the community about animal welfare and the services the RSPCA provide.

The NSW Government has adopted a priority for greening our city and a target to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality, green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023.

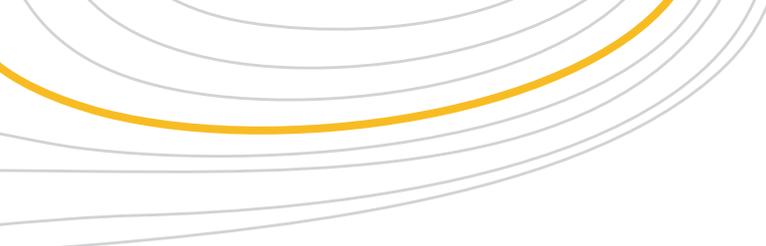




### 3.3.2 Expand green space, sustainable quality of life and climate change resilience

NSW's population is growing rapidly, especially in urban areas. Recognising the importance of green and open space to quality of life, the NSW Government has adopted a priority for greening our city and a target to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023. This government has also released a Greener Places policy.

NSW's climate is also changing, with risks of fire, storms, coastal erosion and rainfall deficits expected to increase. While some Crown land has long been managed to protect environmental values (and will continue to do so), there will also be a range of ways that Crown land can be managed to mitigate climate change risks.



## **Prioritise the use of Crown land for green and open space in urban areas**

The government's new Greener Places policy establishes principles to integrate green and grey infrastructure within urban development, create networks of open space, deliver multiple ecosystem services and to involve stakeholders in development and implementation. The policy is underpinned by the Sydney Green Grid, which identifies a network of high-quality green space that connects town centres, public transport hubs, and major residential areas.

Crown land will be a key resource for delivering these principles and under this plan we will contribute proactively.

The Greater Sydney Commission has prepared district plans containing details of how the Green Grid will be achieved across the 5 districts of greater Sydney. These plans also include more sustainable patterns of urban growth, including localised approaches for electricity (micro-grids and distributed generation) and for waste management and recycling.

Crown land located in growing urban areas of Sydney and beyond can be used in a variety of ways to realise these plans.

## **Work with partners to realise green and open space outcomes**

Government land within urban areas is often a complex tapestry of land types, users and owners. There may be Crown land managed by partners that could be used to support green and open space. By activating and making accessible these lands, we can contribute to quality of life for our urban communities.

Much of the Crown lands estate is already used for green or open space. However, there may be opportunities to do more with other reservation types, or unreserved land.

Local government councils manage considerable areas of Crown land in urban areas. By working with councils, we will seek to address any regulatory or policy obstacles to using Crown land within their area as green or open space. The objective will be to remove any red tape that prevent councils from making improvements to Crown land that benefit the local community. We will also work with the government's Metropolitan Greenspace Program to advance green space outcomes.

We will proactively engage with other government landowners to advance green and open space initiatives. This will likely also require refinement of existing, or new models for future management of linear and other greenspace areas, to be implemented collaboratively.

### **Repurpose Crown land to expand green and urban space**

The extent of land currently available for green space will vary between regions. In some areas it may make sense to repurpose existing land so it can be activated and used differently than it is now. Improvements may include removing weeds, landscaping, creating spaces for games and sports, and for walking and cycling paths.

We will publish maps of Crown land and encourage Crown land managers and the public to help identify land that could be used in a different way to expand green and urban space. We will also engage strongly with local stakeholders when considering repurposing or embellishment of Crown land for green or open space.

### **Seek opportunities to integrate green and open space into existing leases and licenses**

We will conduct a review of land which is not currently being used for green and open space, and which is under license or lease. In some cases, there may be a potential to encourage multi-use of the land. For example, clauses encouraging multi-use of a portion of the land for recreational or green and open space could be included within the terms of new or renewed leases or licenses.





Crown land across NSW can be used for conservation of landscapes and species, in support of the government's biodiversity priorities.

### Use Crown land to expand access to affordable housing

The high cost of housing is a significant issue in many communities. Accommodation costs can present a barrier to relocation and community growth, as well as creating personal hardship.

Crown land can potentially be used to mitigate some of the housing affordability problems communities experience. For example, land lease programs are arrangements where residents purchase a manufactured home and place it on land under a long-term lease, enabling them to enjoy the benefits of home ownership without the cost of buying land. The savings obtained from not having to purchase land can make it possible for families and individuals to afford a home. There are currently almost 500 land lease communities in NSW, accommodating around 34,000 people.<sup>4</sup>

Under this plan, the department will seek industry proposals to consider how Crown land could be used to support the development of additional land lease communities in regional NSW.

Realising the potential of land leases on Crown land will require a proactive partnership with industry, other NSW government departments and local government councils. We will need to consider local preferences, regulatory frameworks, and the potential for regulatory reform. It will also be important to understand the status of any native title and Aboriginal Land Claims. We will work with partners and stakeholders to navigate these considerations as we explore the potential opportunities.

### Support and restore environmental values on Crown land

Crown land across NSW can be used for conservation of landscapes and species, in support of the government's biodiversity priorities.

State and federal environmental laws require that certain types of development that impact on the environment must procure 'environmental offset credits' to achieve overall balance. Some Crown land with high environmental values can be used to generate offset credits. There are also state programs that encourage land being used to maximise biodiversity and conservation. Opportunities include creating new dedications for conservation purposes, changing the way the land is managed to make it eligible for offset credits, and entering conservation agreements.

Offset credits and conservation agreements have the potential to become a source of ongoing funding to care for and conserve the land and its biodiversity in perpetuity.

### Manage Crown land to build resilience in a changing climate

Communities across NSW are preparing to meet the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, longer and more intense drought and fire seasons, and more intense storms, flooding and coastal erosion. In many cases, proactive land management is a critical component of mitigating these risks for communities, habitats and species. Crown land is often positioned at the interface between natural hazards and sensitive land uses (eg coasts, waterways, riverbeds and peri-urban bushland). It has also long played a refuge role, including through travelling stock reserves and showgrounds.

The NSW Government has commissioned a review following the recent devastating bushfires and continues to develop its approaches to mitigation of flood, coastal erosion and drought risks. We will look for opportunities to work with the responsible government agencies, which have the required specialist expertise, as well as with communities to manage Crown land using the new approaches that are developed.

### 3.3.3 Strengthen and support evolving community connections

Crown land includes many places enjoyed by local communities for diverse activities, often supported by local volunteers, businesses and local government councils. In many cases these valuable facilities and assets, and the volunteers who maintain them, would benefit from more support and tools that will help them to evolve to meet emerging needs. The plan proposes a range of initiatives to support community connections on Crown land.

### Sustain the places where people come together

In many places across NSW, Crown land provides the space for community hubs where people come together. We will explore ideas for how to further support iconic organisations and activities on Crown land.

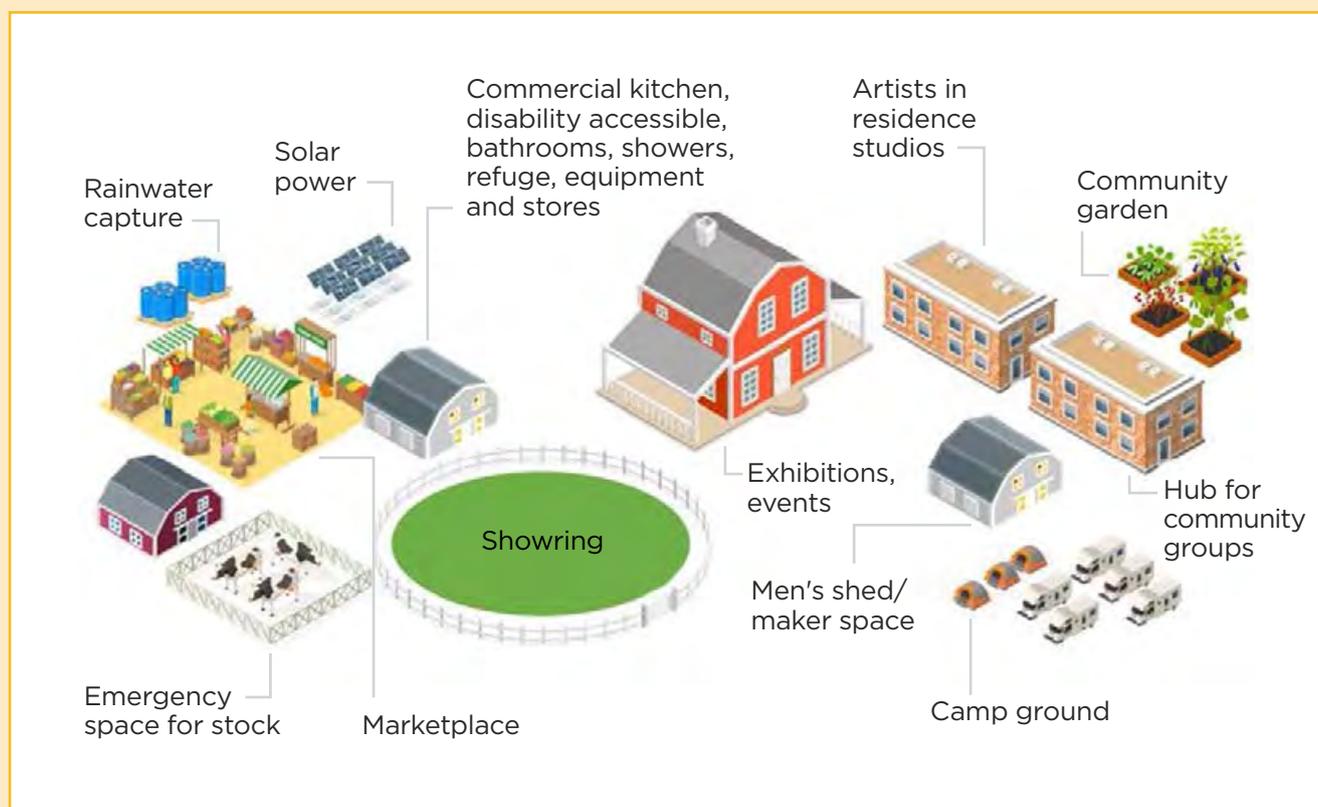
#### **Support showgrounds to expand and sustain their operations**

In many regional communities, the showground is a central meeting point for families, businesses, farmers, tourists, community organisations and volunteers. Showgrounds can also provide a place of refuge during natural disasters.

We will work with showground managers to help them expand their commercial and community operations. We can also help advance a role for suitable showgrounds as places of emergency refuge for their communities. This could assist to unlock the funds required to upgrade amenities and maintain critical emergency-use facilities.

Figure 7 illustrates a vision for how the department can support showgrounds as they continue to evolve.

**Figure 7. The showground of the future**



There are over 230 showgrounds on Crown land in NSW. Most are managed by volunteer committees. Showgrounds are well known for the agriculture display events that they host, and some also function as a community hub, providing space for markets, camping and caravans and other group events (car clubs, music festivals and so on).

Showgrounds have been used as safe refuges for people and livestock during natural disasters, for example during the disastrous bushfires of 2019/2020.

Some showgrounds on Crown land include caravan parks and/or facilities for recreational vehicles. These attract visitors to the region, and provide space for the expanding numbers of retired 'grey nomads' travelling across Australia.

The plan proposes designating suitable showgrounds as emergency refuges for the communities they serve.

This would recognise the central role showgrounds play in the community in challenging times, and will help showground managers access funding to upgrade their facilities, as illustrated above.

The same assets that would be valuable in an emergency situation (such as large undercover areas, space for recreational vehicles and caravans, accessible toilets and washing amenities, and commercial kitchens) are useful year-round for caravanning and a range of other activities and events that would attract visitors, generate jobs and strengthen community connections in regional areas.

Co-locating emergency refuge and community facilities on showgrounds, and enabling multiple use of the facilities as needed, would support the showgrounds and allow them to continue in their traditional role, while generating the funds needed to maintain and enhance their amenities.

### **Sustain the thriving community life of our beaches**

For communities located on the coast, the beach is often the place where people go to connect with nature, meet friends, and enjoy recreation. Most beaches in NSW are on Crown land. The plan envisages ensuring we are doing our part to support the role beaches play in our coastal communities. This could include longer or standardised leases for beach-oriented community organisations that would help them improve and maintain public access facilities.

### **Promote multi-use within community hubs**

One of the best ways to unlock the benefits of land used by communities is to promote co-location of a number of organisations in a single place. For example, co-locating a community garden, farmers' market, Men's Shed, makerspace and an artist's studio at a single site can create opportunities for new and diverse interactions between people who would not normally meet. These new connections between people with shared and complementary interests help to strengthen the fabric of communities.

We will work with Crown land managers to develop policies and materials that enable multi-use and shared development of community hubs located on Crown land.





## **Partner with the organisations that serve our communities**

Many organisations who use or manage Crown land do so solely for community benefit. The plan proposes ways to better support these organisations and recognise their contribution.

### **Support peak body community organisations**

Many community groups are represented by peak bodies at the state or national level. There are opportunities for us to work directly with the peak bodies, simplifying the process of engaging with Crown land and saving time for the volunteers who often run these organisations at the local level. For example, the terms of leases and licences with Crown land managers may vary across the state. This can lead to unnecessary duplication of effort, and misaligned tenure terms across different sites on which the organisations operate.

The plan envisages engaging with these peak community bodies to provide security of tenure, minimise red tape, and facilitate their engagement with the department and Crown land managers. This will enable the organisations to focus their time on providing benefits to the community. Ensuring security of tenure will unlock potential investment into assets managed by community organisations and support longer-term planning.

Where it makes sense to do so, peak community organisations could themselves be nominated as Crown land managers for the sites they operate. In these cases, we will provide induction and ongoing support and tools to help them make the best use of the lands and assets in their care. We will ensure that the terms of appointment are structured to preserve the public's interests, and equitable access to the sites and facilities.

## **Provide tools and resources for common categories of operation hosted on Crown land**

Certain types of operations on Crown land require a high level of knowledge and experience to be effective. For example, running a showground is a complex operation, as is managing a multi-use community centre. Many of these operations are managed by volunteers. To support their work, we will create a set of tools and resources for some of the more common categories of operation hosted on Crown land. The department will create forums where the people who manage these operations can share knowledge, experiences and best practice with each other. They will also enable problem-solving and sharing of solutions.

### **Promote reduced utility costs on Crown land**

One of the largest costs for community-based facilities on Crown land is often electricity. The department will explore opportunities to help managers of these facilities access funding to install roof-top solar panels to lower their electricity bills. In areas at risk of drought, we will help managers investigate options for rainwater harvesting and re-use.

## **Strengthen and uphold compliance to ensure a fair go**

Fairness and equity are important components of our vision for thriving communities on Crown land. We will continue to focus on ensuring that Crown land is used lawfully, and that appropriate revenue is collected.

A strong approach to regulatory compliance will ensure that land managers, tenants and licensees fulfil their responsibilities and that unauthorised use or damage is addressed. This will ensure that the plan's priorities can be achieved, and the public's interest is maintained.

Revenue collected from compliance activities helps to maintain Crown land and ensure we pass it on to the next generation in the best possible condition.

A photograph of a building facade with a sign for PCYC (Police Citizens Youth Clubs). The sign is white with a blue and red logo on the left and the text 'POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUBS' on the right. The building has a blue textured wall and a white textured wall. There are two security cameras mounted on the white wall. A blue metal railing is visible in the foreground. Green plants are in the bottom left and right corners. A red fence is visible on the right side.

**PCYC** | POLICE CITIZENS  
YOUTH CLUBS

### **Police Citizen's Youth Clubs**

Police Citizen's Youth Clubs (PCYC) is an organisation that supports communities by providing sports, events and activities catering for all sectors of the community. For example, PCYC Lake Macquarie offers fitness classes, boxing, gymnastics, kinder gym, judo, school sports, kickboxing,

jiu jitsu, basketball and floorball. The club also delivers programs like the Safer Drivers Course and Traffic Offenders Intervention Program and provides after school and vacation care. PCYC Lake Macquarie is located on Crown land.

### 3.3.4 Work with Aboriginal communities to realise the potential of their land rights

Aboriginal people and communities hold legal rights regarding Crown land under the ALRA and native title.

This plan makes a strong commitment to support Aboriginal people's access to Crown land, to generate benefits for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

During the public consultation period, we will engage with Aboriginal people to hear their views on the outcomes we propose in this plan and agree the best ways forward together. After public consultation is complete, we will refine the plan with the benefit of their advice.

#### Darling River

We are in the process of negotiating an Indigenous land use agreement with the Barkandji people. The Barkandji people are from Country that is located around the lower Darling River, Barkandji meaning "belonging to the river". Covering more than 128,000 square kilometres in the far west of NSW, the Barkandji native title claim is the largest in the state. It starts at the NSW and South Australian border just above Broken Hill. The claim stretches down to Wentworth, across to Ivanhoe and up to Tilpa and Wanaaring and includes a 400 kilometre stretch of the Darling River.

An agreement is being negotiated to allow the department to undertake land management activities on Crown land where native title has been recognised. Through the discussions with the Barkandji people it has become clear that there are several barriers preventing the Barkandji from fully accessing and utilising the wider Crown land estate. The department is working hard with the Barkandji people to better understand their needs and to 'think outside the box' for solutions that match the Barkandji's aspirations for the land.





## Indigenous Enterprise: Maroota Sands

In 2005, the Deerubbin Aboriginal Land Council was granted approximately 44 hectares of land that had been zoned for resource extraction, with a vacant land value of approximately \$700,000. The council has now applied for state significant development status for a sand extraction enterprise spanning approximately 50 per cent of the granted land area, which the council intends to develop in a joint venture with a concrete production company.

If the application is approved and the quarry site is permitted to operate, it is anticipated that the quarry will produce between 500-600 kilotons of high-quality construction-grade sand annually for the next 25 years.

This sand will contribute a critical resource for the broad range of major infrastructure projects being developed in the Western Sydney Growth area, including the development of the Western Sydney Airport and M12 motorway. Moreover, assuming a stable price of sand, the venture has the potential to generate up to \$375 million in revenue over its 25-year lifespan.

The council also estimates that the mine will provide up to 400 jobs for members of the local Aboriginal community. This will in turn provide further benefits by reducing welfare dependence and providing an avenue for intergenerational employment and skill building.<sup>5</sup>

### Make Aboriginal land transfers a priority – and see them as an opportunity

Prompt, equitable and efficient resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims on Crown land will be a key outcome of the plan.

At present, there are many parcels of Crown land that are unable to be used because there is uncertainty about ownership and control. Resolving this uncertainty will enable the land to generate economic, cultural, environmental and social benefits for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal owners and occupiers.

Under this plan, we will embrace transfers of Crown land to Aboriginal Land Councils as an opportunity to genuinely partner with Aboriginal communities to deliver economic, social, cultural heritage and environmental benefits for themselves and for non-Aboriginal members of the community. This means that we will invest the resources and leadership focus necessary to resolve Aboriginal Land Claims in an effective and timely manner.

Some Aboriginal Land Councils are already significant land holders and are using their land to create a range of economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities for their communities. As Aboriginal Land Councils continue to develop their assets and their capabilities as landowners, they will be able to facilitate a wide range of activities that will generate income, jobs, accommodation, services and recognition in the wider community.

In 2019, the NSW Government put new planning policies in place to assist Aboriginal Land Councils accelerate approvals of strategic plans and development proposals for their land – the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Aboriginal Land) 2019*. We will work with state land-use and planning agencies and local government councils to realise the opportunities created by these new provisions.

Empowering Aboriginal ownership and management of land creates benefits for the entire community of NSW.

At present, there are over 38,000 Aboriginal Land Claims that have not been resolved. Prioritising and accelerating the resolution of claims will reduce uncertainty and enable new uses and improvements of land to be considered.

For example, many valuable projects require access to Crown land. These include public projects like new roads, hospitals, playing fields or boat ramps. They also include private industry projects such as windfarms, mines and powerlines. Where projects would impact on Crown land with an unresolved land claim, they are frequently delayed by a year or more. These delays impose significant costs across the economy.

Once claims are resolved, the project proponent can then negotiate access arrangements with either the local Aboriginal land council or with the department.

## Contribute to the ongoing recognition of native title rights

We are actively involved in building positive relationships with native title holders through negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) that relate to Crown land.

We will continue to recognise and support native title rights to ensure that rights holders can fully enjoy and exercise their rights on Crown land. We will seek to be creative and proactive as we negotiate ILUAs, exploring innovative ways to improve specific access to land. This may include voluntary ILUA arrangements to support native title rights being exercised on Crown land at the same time as Crown land is used for other purposes.

We will continue to develop our expertise and leadership in the complex area of law that concerns native title. We will ensure that native title is considered as part of all Crown land management activities; consider native title in our advice to other Crown land managers and agencies; seek to ensure that native title co-exists with the interests of others.

## Sand Dune Adventures

In 2007, Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council was successful in having its claim for lands at Stockton Bight granted under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.

A feasibility study was conducted in late 2008 to identify enterprise opportunities that could be linked with the community's desire to promote Aboriginal culture and heritage while providing an exciting, hands-on tourism experience.

Following that process, Sand Dune Adventures was created. This is a not-for-profit tourism enterprise showcasing the area's uniqueness by offering quad bike and Hummer tours. Sand Dune Adventures is wholly operated by local Aboriginal people and has been recognised as one of Australia's leading Indigenous tourism experiences. It has been recognised with both regional and state awards and has received the Qantas gold award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism at the 2017 Australian Tourism Awards.

Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council and Sand Dune Adventures have collectively created employment for 23 Aboriginal people as administrators, tour guides, maintenance workers, site officers, culture and education experts, and on the Sand Dune Adventures "Green Team".



We will explore co-management of suitable areas of Crown land with Aboriginal groups who have the knowledge and interest to collaborate in land management.



### Explore co-management of land to generate mutual benefits

Aboriginal people possess cultural and environmental traditions that inform them how best to care for the land. We will explore co-management of suitable areas of Crown land with Aboriginal groups who have the knowledge and interest to collaborate in land management. This may include appointing Aboriginal groups as Crown land managers, or co-management of specific sites or uses on Crown land, as appropriate for the place and group.

Collaborating with Aboriginal people on the management of Crown land will expand the opportunities for Aboriginal people to make management decisions about the land, including publicly used lands; provide opportunities to participate in decisions regarding conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage values; and secure the benefits of cultural land management practices.

Options for co-management will be explored in addition to, and not as a replacement for, support for Aboriginal Land Claims and native title rights.

### Collaborate with Aboriginal groups in each place to improve outcomes

Each place and landscape in NSW has its own special character and opportunities. Local Aboriginal communities also have their own priorities and interests. We propose a place-based approach to working with each community to develop our new approach to resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims and working with native title parties.

By engaging with the local representatives of each place, we can work collaboratively to assess the land available and agree a way forward, recognising that an approach that works well for one place may not be suitable for another. This approach will be based on genuine partnerships with local Aboriginal communities and a commitment to a transparent and proactive approach.

In addition to these engagements, we will proactively develop and provide information resources to Aboriginal communities across NSW about access to Crown land.



## SECTION 4

# Enabling initiatives will support delivery of the plan

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We have identified a range of enabling initiatives that we believe would be of significant value to the communities of NSW, and support delivery against the plan's strategic priorities and objectives.

## 4.1 Make more of our information available and transparent

The department will review the available data regarding Crown land and present it to the public accessible and transparent ways. This may include a digital map of Crown land, searchable text information about tenure status, a database of Crown land managers, and other information useful to the public and potential licensees or leaseholders.

Making this information available to the public will empower our stakeholders and customers to better understand the opportunities available through the use of Crown land. Increasing our data capabilities will also support us as we assess strategic initiatives and proposals.

Given the vast scale and complexity of the Crown land estate, preparing this information will be a significant undertaking.

We will prioritise areas and regions with the greatest opportunity for new uses of Crown land and engage with stakeholders to inform our decisions about where to focus our attention.

The Crown land commissioner plays a key role in maintaining transparency and open communication about the management of Crown land.



## 4.2 Improve service for our customers

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There are a variety of different leases and licences available to users of Crown land, and a variety of different entities entitled to grant them. The terms, lengths, costs and processes for granting of these leases and licences can vary significantly depending on the Crown land type, status or manager.

We will work to establish a standardised approach to the categories of leases and licenses that will allow a more streamlined approach. This will reduce processing time and increase transparency and certainty for users.

### 4.2.1 Standardise leases and licensing for common activities

We will produce standard templates for leases and licences for common activities across the state. The department will consult with interested organisations and Crown land managers as it develops this reform. Once adopted, standardised approaches should reduce the time and cost required for processing.

### 4.2.2 Simplify licensing for domestic waterfront structures

There are many private jetties and wharves built on Crown land. Changes to these structures require licensing by the department as well as development consent from the local government council.

Obtaining approval involves three stages:

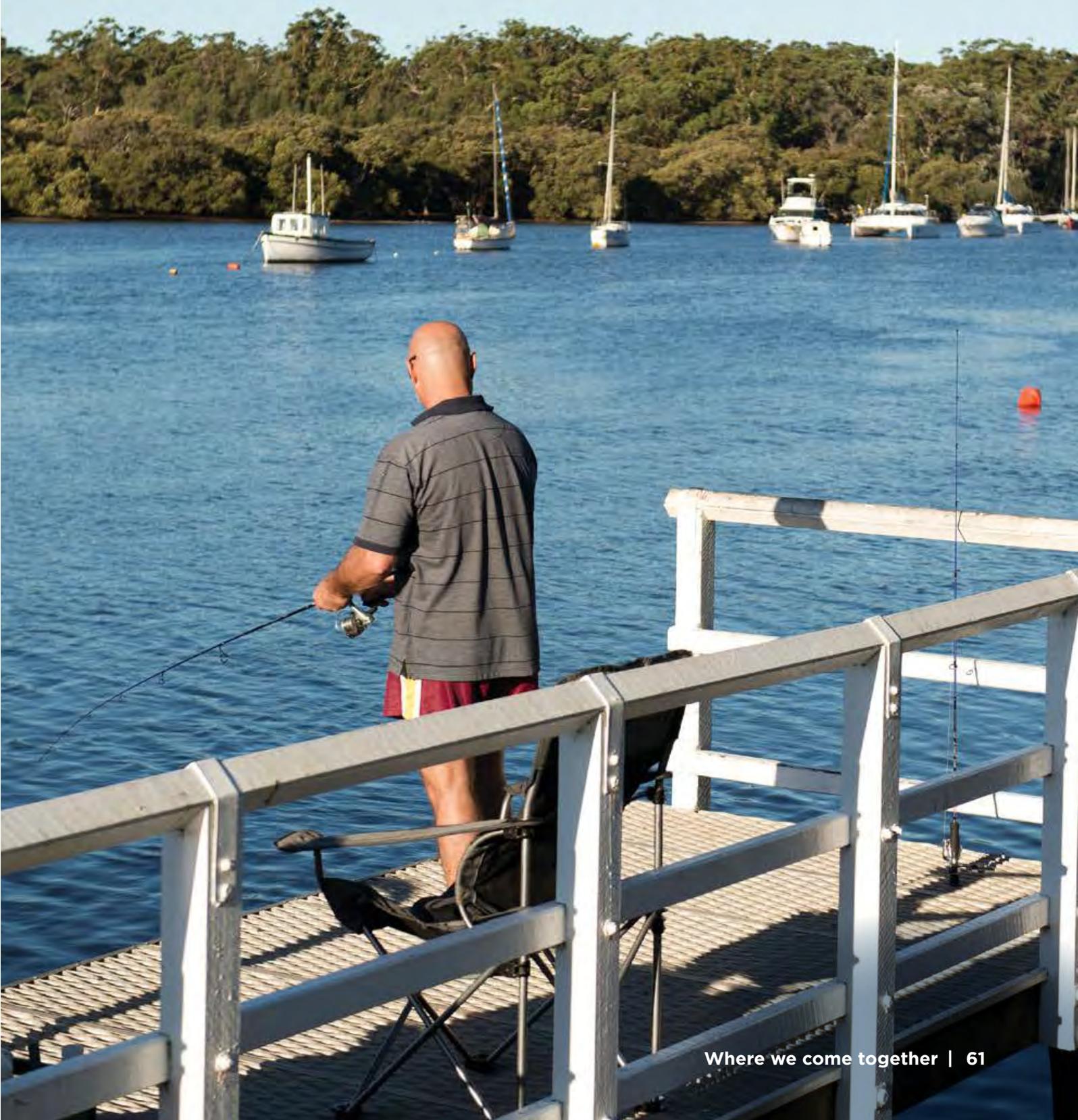
1. obtaining land-owner's consent from the department
2. obtaining development consent from the local government council
3. applying to the department to obtain a licence.

We will work with local government councils to explore options to simplify this process, so that licensing private jetties and wharves is easier and quicker. The new process will retain the technical and environmental assessments that are key to ensuring the safety and operability of the proposed structures and contain measures to ensure that native title rights are respected.

### 4.2.3 Reduce red tape for government entities managing Crown land

Many government entities in NSW are also managers of Crown land. For example, most local government councils have areas of Crown land under their management. At present, these entities need to obtain the approval of the department for common activities such as creating access easements, constructing and maintaining water and sewer systems, amenities blocks and boat ramps, and establishing cycle and pedestrian pathways.

Under the plan we will investigate updating licensing requirements so that government entities managing Crown land are able to conduct this type of common and low-risk activity in a more efficient manner.



## 4.3 Expand support to Crown land managers

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We propose several measures to expand our support to Crown land managers, including the volunteers who provide such valued support to communities.

### 4.3.1 Provide tools and resources to volunteer Crown land managers

Many Crown land managers are volunteers who provide service to their communities without much guidance on how to meet their obligations. The plan proposes that we will develop and provide tools and support to help volunteer land management boards.

- We will inform volunteer managers about government support and funds for which they may be eligible. For example, managers eligible for the NSW Treasury Managed Fund (TMF) self-insurance scheme can substantially reduce the annual cost of insuring the buildings and other assets they manage
- We will develop tools and support that will be helpful to volunteer managers, such as online accounting and planning templates and record-keeping tools appropriate to Crown land
- Wherever possible, we will seek to simplify the reporting obligations that volunteer land managers need to fulfil.

We will also explore the option to create an online collaboration and sharing platform, so that volunteer land managers can share questions and expertise with each other.

### 4.3.2 Build understanding of native title

The practical operation of native title laws is complex. Local government councils and other Crown land managers are sometimes unclear about their obligations. Uncertainty about what to do and who to consult can delay or prevent opportunities to use Crown land to create benefits for communities.

Under the plan, we will work with other government departments to develop a base of information resources regarding native title, and where possible will inform Crown land managers on how to access this information.

While every Crown land manager is responsible for making their own decisions and fulfilling their obligations regarding native title, we will seek to assist by connecting them to sources of information available to us.

### 4.3.3 Engage and support a new generation of Crown land managers

Many Crown land managers, and particularly those who support community organisations, are approaching the age of retirement.

We will conduct a proactive recruiting effort to engage and support a new generation of Crown land managers who will ensure that these organisations continue to provide benefits to their communities for decades to come.

There are around 34,000 Crown land reserves across NSW.





## SECTION 5

# Timelines to deliver the plan's priorities and outcomes

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Figure 8 presents each of the proposed individual outcomes described in the preceding pages and proposes timelines for their achievement.

- **Short-term outcomes will be delivered within one to two years**
- **Medium-term outcomes will be delivered within five years**
- **Long-term outcomes will continue throughout the 10 years of the plan's duration.**

More detailed timelines and implementation plans will be developed following the consultation period and subsequent refinement and implementation of the plan.

Figure 8 is intended as a reference tool and as an indicator of intended sequencing. Each outcome is described in detail in sections 3 and 4.

**Figure 8. Outcomes and timelines**

<b>Enable jobs growth, commercial opportunities and sustainable economic progress in regional and rural NSW</b>	
Support the marine and boating industries	Medium-term
Explore 'closed-loop' bio-mass and clean technology precincts	Medium-term
Leverage the economic benefits of national parks	Short-term
Support tourism activities for showgrounds	Medium-term
Conduct a portfolio review in collaboration with the tourism industry	Medium-term
Make land available for wind and solar generation	Short-term
Seek opportunities to support the Hydrogen strategy	Medium-term
Promote investment by making data available	Medium-term
Assist with infrastructure project approvals	Short-term
Increase security of tenure for leaseholders to promote investment	Short-term
Create a framework to assess and prioritise proposals	Short-term
Ensure we realise and reinvest a fair return for commercial activities upon Crown land	Short-term
<b>Expand green space, sustainable quality of life and climate change resilience</b>	
Work with partners to realise green and open space outcomes	Short-term
Repurpose Crown land to expand green and urban spaces	Medium-term
Seek opportunities to integrate green and open space into existing leases and licenses	Medium-term
Use Crown land to support affordable housing in regional communities	Short-term
Support and restore environmental values on Crown land	Long-term
Manage Crown land to build resilience in a changing climate	Short-term

<b>Strengthen and support evolving community connections</b>	
Support showgrounds to expand and sustain their operations	Medium-term
Sustain the thriving community life of our beaches	Medium-term
Promote multi-use within community hubs	Medium-term
Support peak body community organisations	Medium-term
Provide tools and resources for common categories of operation hosted on Crown land	Short-term
Promote reduced utility costs on Crown land	Medium-term
Strengthen and uphold compliance to ensure a fair go	Medium-term

<b>Work with Aboriginal communities to realise the potential of their land rights</b>	
Make Aboriginal land transfers a priority – and see them as an opportunity	Medium-term
Contribute to the ongoing recognition of native title rights	Short-term
Explore co-management of land to generate mutual benefits	Medium-term
Collaborate with Aboriginal groups in each place to improve outcomes	Short-term

<b>Enabling initiatives will support delivery of the plan</b>	
Make more of our information available and transparent	Long-term
Standardise leases and licensing for common activities	Short-term
Simplify licencing for domestic waterfront structures	Short-term
Reduce red tape for government entities managing Crown land	Medium-term
Provide tools and resources to volunteer Crown land managers	Short-term
Build understanding of native title	Short-term
Engage and support a new generation of Crown land managers	Short-term





SECTION 6

**We will report  
regularly on the  
plan's outcomes**

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Once the final plan is approved, we will provide updates on our progress and report on the outcomes and initiatives on an annual basis.

Each report will describe what has been achieved in the reporting year and track our overall progress against the stated outcomes. This reporting will be contained within the department's annual report, which will be made available on our website.





SECTION 7

# What's next

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Your feedback is important to us and we want to make sure you have the opportunity to share your thoughts on the draft plan.

### Consultation period

Our consultation period will be conducted in two stages to ensure that your voice is heard. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first stage commences with the release of the draft plan for public information and will provide time for you to consider it.

The second stage will invite submissions. It will be advertised in newspapers and updated on the department's website and other channels, to enable stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft plan.

### Make a submission

Following the announcement of the second stage, you will be able to make a submission on the draft plan directly from our website using our online submission form. This form guides you through the plan and once you hit 'submit' you will receive a confirmation email as well as a copy of your submission.

You can also send us written feedback by post. Please indicate your preference if you wish your feedback to remain confidential. Our website provides details on how you can make a postal submission or you can call the department.

### Attend an information session

We will be holding information sessions during the submission period. These may need to be online information sessions, depending on the assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic. To join an on-line information session you will need to have access to a computer, laptop or smart phone. Details about how to register for a session will be available on the department's website.

#### More information

Find out more information about the draft State Strategic Plan by contacting the department on:

**Visit:** [dpie.nsw.gov.au/ssp](https://dpie.nsw.gov.au/ssp)

**Phone:** 1300 886 235

**Email:** [cl.enquiries@crowland.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cl.enquiries@crowland.nsw.gov.au)



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