

# History of Land and Property Information

NSW government land management has a long and rich history dating back to the earliest days of the colony. Surveying, exploration and land administration were once pivotal to the survival of the Colony and we are proud of the vital role we have played in the State's history from 1788 to the present: through depressions, boom times, times of peace and times of war. In this fact sheet you will find a brief overview of the more interesting milestones in our history.

## 1788–1855

By his commission dated 2 April 1787 and instructions dated 25 April 1787, Governor Philip was given power and authority to dispose of and to grant such lands as were in the power of the Crown. Grants were to be evidenced by a document bearing the seal of the Territory and be entered upon record by an officer as Philip should appoint. On 7 February 1788 the Colony of New South Wales was proclaimed for Britain as Crown land.

The office of the Surveyor General had been established at the foundation of the Colony. Augustus Alt arrived on the First Fleet holding the Office of Surveyor of Lands. In his Commission, Governor Philip was instructed that he issue his warrant to the Surveyor of Lands to make surveys of, and mark out in lots, such lands upon the said territory that may be necessary for their use.

The commission of all early Governors declared that no land grants in the name of the Crown should bind the Crown until enrolled before an officer or officers appointed for that purpose. A Grant Register was commenced by the Secretary of the Colony under instructions from Governor Arthur Phillip on 22 February 1792. James Ruse received the first land grant in March 1792 for 30 acres at Rose Hill (Experiment Farm near Parramatta). He had occupied the land since 21 November 1789. The first woman to be granted land was Ann Robinson on 22 August 1794.

Aside from Crown land, the registration of private legal transactions continued to cause official concern as litigation over the buying and selling of freehold land grew. On 27 February 1802 Governor King issued a Public Order for the recording of Assignments and other Legal Instruments in the Judge Advocate's Office. On 6 March 1802 the Old Register commenced the first registration of private dealings in land.

Due to ill health Alt's colonial services had virtually ceased by 1797, and his duties were being carried out by the Deputy Surveyor of Lands Charles Grimes. Alt retired in 1802 and Charles Grimes was appointed to the position of Surveyor General.

In 1804 Grimes was granted a leave of absence to return to England, from which he did not return until 1806. During his absence George Evans was appointed to undertake the duties of the Surveyor General. He performed this role until he was discharged from this office for fraud in 1805.

Henry Williams was appointed to replace him until Grimes returned in 1806. Grimes again left the colony in 1808 because of events connected with the deposition of Governor Bligh.

Governor Macquarie stated in a dispatch to Viscount Castlereagh in 1810 that a good surveyor was much needed, and if Grimes was not permitted to return to duty that a successor must be appointed to discharge the important duties of this office. Grimes resigned from the position of Surveyor General in 1810.

In 1812 John Oxley was appointed to the position of Surveyor General. Much of Oxley's time was devoted to journeys of exploration rather than ordinary survey work. This fact was noted in Commissioner Bigge's report in 1822. He stated that the business of the surveying department had fallen into arrears, either by the proportion of staff compared to the increase in work, or to the frequent interruptions occasioned by the long absences of Mr Oxley, Mr Meehan and Mr Evans on tours of discovery. As a result of the report additional surveyors and draftsmen were appointed in an attempt to overcome arrears in the survey work in the colony.

In his report Bigge strongly recommended that in order to facilitate the location of land to settlers on their arrival from England, the country intended to be settled should be previously surveyed and laid out in districts. Consequently in 1825 Royal Instructions were issued to Governor Darling which ordered a general survey of the Colony, and its division into counties, hundreds, and parishes. A general valuation of land throughout the Colony was also to be undertaken. Neither the survey nor the valuation of lands was to extend into those districts which lay beyond the range of any actual settlements.

As the population advanced, these operations would be extended over those Districts, so that at all future times settlers would know in what Country, Hundred and Parish any particular lands were included and at what rate they had been valued. No land was to be granted until the survey was completed. Commissioners of Survey were appointed to put these instructions into effect. The Surveyor General was appointed as one of the Commissioners.

The *Deeds Registration Act 1825* (5 George IV No 22) legislated for the enrolment of land grants in the Supreme Court. This was the first time any Governor of the Colony had been directed specifically to enrol grants in a Court of record and introduced the principle that any deed or instrument executed bona fide and for valuable consideration should take priority according to the date of registration and not execution. The first Registrar of Deeds was appointed on 16 November 1825 and the Old System Deeds Register and Vendors' Index commenced on that date. On 15 February 1823, James McBrien, a surveyor from the Department of Lands recorded the first finding of gold in the Fish River near Bathurst. Nervous authorities silenced his find.

John Oxley died in 1828 and Major Thomas Mitchell was appointed to the position of Surveyor General. He set apart a small room on the upper floor of the Surveyor General's Department for the "arrangement of all maps in alphabetical order for the better preservation of the order which is essential for the purpose of ready reference". Lithography using flat bed printing on limestone slabs had commenced in the Surveyor General's Office in 1828 using press imported in the Colony in 1821. The first map prepared was "St John in the Hundred of Parramatta, County of Cumberland". Maps had all been hand engraved in England prior to this date.

At around this time the Surveyor General's Department underwent a considerable internal reorganisation. In 1830 the Surveyor General was given control of the Surveyor of Roads and Bridges, and in the same year the Commissioners appointed by the Royal Instructions in 1825 had the Commission revoked and the Surveyor General became responsible for all arrangements connected with the survey of the Colony. In addition the Colonial Architect also came under the control of the Surveyor General from 1833-1835. In 1837 the supervision of roads was transferred to the Royal Engineers and the Colonial Secretary became responsible for the Colonial Architect in 1835.

In 1831 free land grants were abolished. Land within the 19 Counties was from then on only to be sold by public auction. The survey of the Colony was fraught with difficulties and delays, and a map of the 19 Counties was not produced until 1834. The 19 Counties were officially proclaimed on 4 December 1835. Despite the 1831 prohibition against settlement outside the 19 Counties, squatting continued and in 1836 the Squatting Act was proclaimed by Governor Bourke creating grazing licences for Crown land outside the 19 Counties. In 1844 the budget of the Surveyor General's Department was drastically reduced as a result of the economic depression of the 1840's. Many surveyors were removed from the salaried staff of the Department and forced to work as licensed surveyors.

On 1 January 1844 the Office of the Registrar General was constituted under the Colonial Secretary. William Carter was the first Registrar General. His functions included registration of Acts of Parliament of the Colonial Legislature, compulsory registration of births, baptisms and burials, registration of Wills, devices, deeds, conveyances and other assurances. The first deed registered was on 5 January 1844.

In 1847 the Limits of Settlement were abolished and the Colony was divided into three districts: settled, intermediate and unsettled. In 1848 New South Wales was divided into the 141 Counties and 7515 Parishes that exist today.

In 1849 the Office of the Registrar General was abolished and all duties and land records were returned to the Supreme Court. It was then re-established in 1855 with Christopher Rolleston as Registrar General and with its only function being the registration of births, deaths and marriages.

In July 1855 Governor Denison appointed a Commission of Inquiry into the Surveyor General's Department, arising from Mitchell's preoccupation with exploration and surveys in the field. Thomas Mitchell died in October 1855 before the Commission reported. Little was done to implement the recommendations of the Commission except the appointment of District Surveyors throughout the colony to supervise work of various licensed and salaried surveyors.

## 1856–1983

In 1856 with the introduction of responsible government, the Surveyor General's Department came under ministerial control of the Secretary of Lands. Correspondence formerly addressed to the Colonial Secretary regarding the alienation of Crown Lands was now dealt with by the Surveyor General. In 1857 the Registrar of Deeds and all instruments was transferred back from the Supreme Court to the Registrar General. Compulsory registration of births, deaths and marriage was introduced on 1 May 1857. Later that year the Registrar General was transferred back to the Supreme Court and the first Deposited Deed was received on 17 December 1858.

In 1858 a Select Committee of Enquiry investigated the Surveyor General's Department and repeated most of the criticisms of the earlier 1855 enquiry.

On 30 September 1859 the Department of Lands and Public Works was separated to form the Department of Public Works and the Department of Lands. John Robertson was appointed as the first Secretary for Lands. At the same time, control of Immigration passed from the Colonial Secretary to the Minister for Lands until 14 September 1869 when it reverted to the Colonial Secretary's control. The Inspectors of Sheep and the Examiner of Coal fields also came under the control of the Lands Department.

The *Crown Lands Acts 1861 (NSW)* introduced by the New South Wales Premier, John Robertson, in 1861 allowed selection before survey and introduced conditional purchase of Crown land which allowed a new group of small landowners to break up the squatter's monopoly of land and Parliament. While land in the more settled districts had been sold by auction, vast areas of rich grazing were under the control of pastoralists. In an attempt to address this imbalance the new legislation implemented John Robertson's scheme for 'Free Selection before Survey' whereby the whole leasehold area of the Colony was open to selection and sale at any time. Selectors could choose a limited area (40 to 320 acres) in any place at £1 per acre with ownership conditional on the selector's residence, improvement to the lands, and payment of moneys owed. Attempts by selectors, whether bona fide settlers or speculators, to obtain land led them into open conflict with pastoralists.

The Lands Department was charged with the administration of the alienation and occupation of all Crown Lands. This power flowed from two Acts: the *Crown Lands Alienation Act 1861* which allowed the sale of Crown Lands and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act 1861* which allowed for the leasing of Crown land. In 1861 legislation repealed the Order in Council of 1847 and abolished the old Land distinction of the Colony: 'settled districts; (19 Counties plus specified established areas), 'intermediate districts' and 'unsettled districts'. The new land differentiation involved town land, suburban land, first class settled districts and second class settled districts.

While 'selection claims' could be lodged at local land offices, the administration of the Lands Department was centralised in Sydney. Land selections were processed slowly at best with long delays occurring because of backlogs, distances, inaccurate survey maps, partial decisions, and reappraisals. The practices of 'dummying', where a person would select an area, comply with the residential condition only to sell by prearrangement to another party and 'peacocking,' taking the best part of run to block access to water, further complicated the Department's work.

To protect the public estate both the Lands Department and the Survey Office could proclaim areas as reserves; however, the majority of the requests for quarantining of land came from pastoralists. Reserves were proclaimed and gazetted before they were marked out and charted with the description in the Government Gazette, being the only guide for land agents and selectors. Between 1861 and 1883 three separate validating Acts were proclaimed for the relief of selectors who had unwittingly settled on reserved and other lands not open to alienation.

On 1 January 1863, Christopher Rolleston introduced the Torrens Title (Bound Register) to New South Wales. Torrens Title was based on Lloyd's shipping register and is a single document containing land description, registered proprietor and impediments against the land, with a government guarantee of ownership as opposed to a chain of deeds and no certainty to title. The Lands Title Branch commenced. In the 1860's and 1870's the Registrar General's Department also took on responsibility for the registration of brands and registration of companies.

Until 1867, correspondence relating to the sale of Crown Land had been addressed to the Surveyor General's Department, but from that date all correspondence relating to such matters was addressed to the Lands Department directly. In 1874 all matters relating to gold and other mining were transferred to the Mines Department.

'An Act to regulate the Alienation Occupation and Management of Crown Lands and for other purposes' represented the first systematic Crown Land Legislation setting out a series of land tenures. All Crown land dealings, dedications, and sales came under the ambit of the Act. All future grants of land would contain a reservation of minerals and the Governor could reserve or exempt land to safeguard public interest. New South Wales was divided into three districts - the Central Division, the Eastern Division, and the Western Division. The Governor could by proclamation establish and define boundaries of land districts and appoint a land agent for each district. District surveyors and other necessary staff could also be appointed. A local land board was constituted for each land districts, with a right of appeal from its decisions to the Minister for Lands, who was to adjudicate as in open court.

The Minister's decision in any appeal case concerning conditional purchases was to be "final and conclusive." If the introduction of further evidence was warranted then the Minister could return the matter to the local Land Board. The first Appeal Court under the Act was held on 2 November 1885.

The Act defined a variety of landholding leases including:

- conditional leasehold – pastoral leases for a maximum term of 5 years in Eastern, 10 years in Central, and 15 in the Western Division
- occupation licenses for the occupation of land for grazing for one year
- homestead leases
- annual leases for pastoral purposes
- scrub land leases
- scrub land conversion leases
- wharf and Jetty leases
- special purpose leases for dams, tanks, irrigation works, punt houses, ferries, bathing places, landing places, saw mills, brick kilns, lime kilns, slaughter houses, tanneries, wool washing establishments, quarries, fisheries, tramways, building or repairing ships or boats, obtaining guano, shells, limestone, loam, brickearth, gravel or ballast, inkeeping, running a store, smithy, bakery, or mail station.

"An Act to amend the *Crown Lands Act of 1884*, and to make provision in other respects for the management and disposal of the Public Lands and for other purposes" commenced on 1 December 1889 and allowed for "Artesian Well Leases" in the Western Division of New South Wales. Land around a well or borehole site could be reserved for one year to enable drilling, with a lease following if sufficient water was found. Also this new Act provided for the first time leases on a secure tenure for the Snow Lands of the Colony (being the elevated parts of the Cooma and Wagga Wagga Land Board Districts).

The *Real Property Act 1900* commenced on 1 January 1900. Still in force today, this Act contains many of the provisions which govern the ownership of land in New South Wales.

The *Western Lands Act (1901)* established the Western Lands Board to administer the western land of New South Wales. As a result of legislation the Land Board and District Survey Offices at Bourke were closed. The Land Board Districts of Hay and Moree were altered markedly while the Land Board district boundaries of Goulburn, Dubbo, and Wagga Wagga were redrawn.

The *Crown Lands (Amendment) Act (1908)* enabled conversion of leaseholds into more desirable tenures and ultimately into freehold status. From 1 July 1908 the Forestry Branch of the Department of Lands was transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

The *Crown Lands Consolidation Act (1913)* was passed to consolidate the provision of all Acts relating to Crown Lands – thirty six in number passed since 1884. This Act, as amended, remained in force until 1989 when the was passed.

The Returned Soldiers' Settlement Branch was established in October 1916 to assist veterans of the Great War. Rental assistance to the widows or widowed mothers of those "who had made the supreme sacrifice for the cause of liberty" followed in 1918. The management of Travelling Stock and Camping reserved became the responsibility of the Pastures Protection Boards with the Department of Lands retaining a monitoring role. The Valuer General's Department was also established in this year.

The *Conveyancing Act 1919* was proclaimed allowing the lodgement and recording of plans relating to Old system or common law title. The Miscellaneous Register and the Register of Causes Writs and Orders were established.

From 1923 to 1927, the Department provided farms for migrants under the Imperial Migrant Agreement of 1923 (Commonwealth) vetting all applications for "qualification certificates." The main areas of settlement were the Ben Lomond Estate near Glen Innes. Control of the migrant settlers' accounts was transferred from the Colonial Treasury to the Lands Department in 1940.

In response to the crises in land settlement caused by the Great Depression, the department of Lands implemented a series of relief measures:

- preparation of Metropolitan Crown Land for building purposes – road construction, clearing and levelling – by the unemployed from 1921-1931
- reduction of interest and rentals for the years 1933 to 1938
- extension of re-payment periods up to 20 years
- postponements, waivers or remission of moneys owed
- deferment of payments pending the harvest or wool clip
- the release of small land blocks for the unemployed and indigent to establish homes and mixed farming operations – 1931 to 1938
- loan scheme for rural landholders to employ the bona fide unemployed to develop their land and aid with rabbit destruction.

In response to booming suburban development in the post war years, changes were made to legislation in 1945 to ensure that all private plans of subdivision were required to have Council approval before registration regardless of the area of the parcels.

In June 1947 an Assistant Director of Mapping was appointed within the Department to establish a central mapping organisation under the direction of the Surveyor General. This was followed in 1950 by the approval by the Premier of the recommendations concerning the functions and formation of the Central Mapping Authority.

The *Survey Co-ordination Act 1949* stated that all future survey plans had to connect to permanent marks placed by government surveyors in specially gazetted areas. This led to the establishment of the Central Plan Register under this Act.

In 1957 the first use of a computer in the Department of Lands was recorded. It was used for survey calculations.

In 1958 the Aerial Survey Unit commenced operations using leased Lockheed Hudson aircraft chartered from East West Airlines. This was followed in 1960 by the production of the first standard topographical maps.

From the 1960s onwards technology began to impact on the functions of the Registrar General's Department. Mass production of Certificates of Title commenced in 1961 resulting in the switch to the New Form Torrens Title Register and standardised forms for the lodgement of Deposited Plans commenced.

Strata titles commenced in 1961 with the proclamation of *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act 1961*.

In 1963 a Real Property Act ruling stated that any Crown land identified for a specific purpose, for example for subdivision or disposal, would require the preparation of a Deposited Plan of survey. Miscellaneous plans and road plans continued to be catalogued in the Bridge Street Plan Room.

In 1966 the Geographical Names Act established and described the functions of the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales.

The Central Mapping Authority was removed from Department in June 1973 and decentralised to Bathurst in 1976.

Following the 1975 Machinery of Government Review, and Administrative Unit styled the Department of Lands was formed, comprising the Crown Lands Office (formerly the Lands Department), the Registrar General's Office, the Western Lands Commission, and the Central Mapping Authority. Land registration was to be the responsibility of the Registrar General's Office with land management undertaken by the Crown Lands Office. General Administration of Lord Howe Island was transferred to the Department from the former Chief Secretary's Department. A separate Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages was set up under the Department of Services.

Electric distance measuring equipment was introduced in the 1970's followed by laser. This greatly simplified surveying practices. In 1975 the last hand drawn Crown plan was completed and the system of Crown plan cataloguing ceased.

In November 1981, the Department of Local Government and the Department of Lands were abolished and their branches were amalgamated to form the Department of Local Government and Lands. Amendments made to the *Crown Lands Consolidation Act 1913* and the *Real Property Act 1900* ceased the issue of Crown Grants and these were replaced by the issue of Certificates of Title. The last Crown Grant was issued to the Trustees of St Vincent's Hospital on 30 September 1981.

In 1983 the world's first computerised Torrens Title System (ALTS) was introduced. Stage 1 was to create computer titles for lots in newly registered subdivision plans.

## 1984–1991

The Department of Lands was established on 15 February 1984 when the former Department of Local Government and Lands was abolished and separate government departments were created. The Department was responsible for the State's land resources, and this involved protecting and managing Crown estate, and providing for the establishment and maintenance of integrated, reliable and accessible State-wide land information systems and associated mapping and surveying services.

In August 1986, the Registrar General's Office, now known as the Land Titles Office, was removed from the Department of Lands and placed under the Attorney General's Department. In 1988, however, it was briefly returned to Lands before being established as a separate administrative unit in June 1988, preparatory to it becoming a commercial operation.

In June 1988, the Department consisted of the following divisions:

- Crown Lands Office
- Central Mapping Authority
- Western Lands Commission
- State Land Information Council.

The Crown Lands Office was responsible for the management of Crown land in the Eastern and Central Divisions of New South Wales and included district land offices. The Central Mapping Authority was responsible for the State's mapping and survey needs and included the Surveyor General and the Geographical Names Board. The Western Lands Commission was responsible for the management and protection of Crown land in the Western Division of the State. The State Land Information Council was established in 1984 and was responsible for planning and implementing an integrated Land Information System, capable of providing immediate access to land-related data held by different agencies throughout the state.

The year 1987 saw the withdrawal of Imperial Units of Measurement as legal units of measurement in the real estate industry specifically to contracts dealing with an interest in land.

The Department underwent a major restructure in the 1988-89 financial years to allow greater focus on products and services rather than procedures and inputs. The move away from the fragmented configuration of operational arms and support services was intended to improve lines of communication and accountability, and to allow the Department to optimise its resources, co-ordinate major projects more effectively, and to adapt to technological change.

The *Crown Lands Act (1989)* introduced a framework for the administration and management of Crown land and facilitated the streamlining of many functions, and the Department became active in participating in joint ventures with private sectors of the surveying and mapping industries. With the proclamation of the *Crown Lands (Continued Tenures) Act* in the same year, new conditional purchase tenures ceased, although the continuation of incomplete conditional purchases made under the *Crown Lands Acts* and *Western Lands Act 1901* was provided for.

## 1991–1995

On 1 July 1991, the Department of Lands and Soil Conservation Service were abolished and their functions were incorporated with the Land Titles Office and the Valuer General's Department under the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The Department's provisional organisational structure was simplified to give it two principal divisions, one concerned with land management and the other with land conservation, planning, and research. By mid-April 1992, three Program Directors (Corporate Services, Land Management, Conservation) and five regional Directors has been appointed, with regional offices being established at Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Orange, East Maitland, and Grafton.

On 25 May 1993, the Minister for Land and Water Conservation was appointed and re-established the Soil Conservation Service as a separate organisation within the department. The Department then consisted of four divisions – the Soil Conservation Service, the Crown Lands Service, Corporate Services, and Land Information. The latter included the Land Information Centre (Surveyor General), the state Land Information Council Directorate, the Land Titles Office (Registrar General) and the Valuer General's Office.

The *Native Title (New South Wales) Act 1994* legislated for indigenous Australians to have continuing common law rights and interests in land still owned by Government. The Department was made responsible for the administration of Commonwealth legislation within New South Wales.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management was abolished and the Department of Land and Water Conservation was established on 6 April 1995.

## 1995–2010

The Department of Land and Water Conservation was established on 6 April 1995 when the former Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Department of Water Resources and the Water Services Policy Division of the Department of Public Works were amalgamated. The new Department also included the Catchment Assessment Commission and the National Resources Audit Commission and the National Resources Audit Council from the Cabinet Office.

The new Department centralised the natural resource management responsibilities previously spread across several administrative units. The Department was responsible for helping the community to maximise the long term benefits received from its natural resources through the management of nearly all the State's land, water, coastal and vegetation resources, including maintenance of the property databases critical to the economic and social security of the State.

When the Department was established in 1995, it consisted of the following major branches:

- Land Titles Office
- Valuer General's Office
- Land Information Centre

And the following sections:

- Natural Resources Policy Unit (this became the Office of Natural Resources Policy by 1996)
- Internal Audit section
- Corporate Planning and Audit
- Government Relations and Executive Services

The Office of Natural Resources Policy was established to provide integrated policy advice toward achieving sustainable land, water, forest, vegetation and costal resources management. The Office also provided policy and administrative secretariat services to the Forestry Advisory Council and the Water Advisory Council.

On 18 April 1997, the Valuer General's Office was established as a separate Department responsible to the Minister for Land and Water Conservation. The regulatory and valuation functions of the former Valuer General's Office were split and two new organisations established. The Valuer General's Department became a regulatory body supervising the open tendering processes for contracts for mass valuation services in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. The second organisation being the State Valuation Office remained within the Department of Land and Water Conservation. The Office operated on a commercial basis, competing for contracts against private valuers in the three cities of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, and also provided valuation services in country areas by way of uncontested contracts with the Valuer General.

By 1998, the Department consisted of the Land Titles Office and sections for Executive Services, Business Development, and Marketing. Soil Services, Land NSW and State Water were established as internal businesses to manage these resource operations. To ensure the separation of resource management and revenue generating activities in management of the Crown Estate, Land NSW evolved into a commercially operated business unit of the Department. By 1999, Land NSW provided complete land and property management services, managing the sale, lease, or license of Crown lands or State owned property not required for public purposes. Land NSW was a highly decentralised unit operating through fifteen district offices.

Soil Services was originally established as a commercial operation in 1990 and developed into an authority in soil conservation earthworks, offering services to rural and urban clients in two areas. Soilworks provided services in planning, designing and constructing soil and water conservation earthworks, and Soilconsult provided fully commercial consultancy services on a broad range of areas associated with environmental protection.

Following the State election of March 1999, administration of the Land Titles Office was transferred to the Department of Information Technology, and administration of the State Valuation Office was transferred to the Department of Public Works and Services. On 30 June 2000 the existence of the Land Titles Office as a separate entity ended and Land and Property Information New South Wales (LPI) commenced. It commenced operating off budget on a commercial basis.

It was during the 1990s that Land and Property Information began an increased focus on moving towards electronic service delivery as paper based records were progressively microfilmed and then imaged. At this time the E Plan Project for the electronic lodgement of plans was launched.

On April 2003, the Department of Land and Water Conservation was abolished and its branches were transferred to other Departments.

The Soil Services Unit, Minor Ports Unit, and staff administering the *Roads Act 1993* and *Crown Lands Act 1989* were transferred to the Department of Lands. All other branches of the former Department of Land and Water Conservation were transferred to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning, and Natural Resources.

In June 2001 the Geographic Names Board commenced dual naming of geographical and cultural sites to preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.

On 6 September 2002 manual charting on all LPI charting maps ceased and the maps were imaged and made available electronically. This was the beginning of a long process for LPMA of progressively imaging and making available to the public the records of our past – whether maps, plans, registers or other records. Records have included the Crown plans, the Parish maps, the Torrens Title Bound Registers, the deposited plans and strata plans, dealings and the charting maps.

On 27 April 2007 the Western Region became the fifth administrative division of the Department of Lands after transfer from the Department of Natural Resources.

Administration of the *Soil Conservation Act 1938* was transferred from the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water to the Minister for Lands in September 2007. December 2008 saw the transfer of responsibility of the Office of Biofuels to the Department of Lands.

A new agency, the Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA), was established under the NSW Government restructure that commenced on 1 July 2009.

LPMA moved from being an Authority within the Super Agency Cluster of Services, Technology and Administration (DSTA) to the Planning Super Cluster in March 2010.

LPMA comprised the staff and functions of:

- Former Department of Lands
- The Registrar Generals Department
- The Valuer Generals Office
- Soil Conservation Service
- State Property Authority (SPA)
- Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority
- Lake Illawarra Authority
- Chipping Norton Lake Authority
- Hunter Development Corporation
- Cooks Cove Development Corporation
- Festival Development Corporation
- Office of Strategic Lands
- Office of Rural Affairs
- Office of Biofuels
- Geographical Names Board (GNB)
- Waste Assets Management Corporation (WAMC)
- Board of Surveying and Spatial Information (BOSSI).

LPMA had a strong history with rural and regional New South Wales through the Office of Rural Communities and maintained offices in 50 locations across the state.

## 2011–present

On 3 April 2011 the new Liberal government approved the “Public Sector Employment and Management (Departments) Order 2011”. The Order establishes nine Principal Departments and Other Public Service Divisions. The Land & Property Management Authority (LPMA) was abolished as a Division of the Government Service.

- The Office of Biofuels was added to the Department of Trade and Investment, Infrastructure and Services.
- The Lake Illawarra Authority was added to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.
- The Office of Strategic Lands was added to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
- The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Hunter Development Corporation, Central Coast Regional Development Corporation and Luna Park Reserve Trust, were added to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
- Crown Lands Division and Soil Conservation Service were added to the Department of Primary Industries.
- The Surveyor General and Registrar General and the role and functions of the current Land and Property Information Division were added to the Department of Finance and Services.

All other branches (not mentioned above) were added to the Department of Finance and Services.

Land and Property Information (LPI) is now a division of the Department of Finance and Services. LPI represents knowledge, heritage, and responsible land management.

Since the first documented land records, LPI has continued as the guardian of all land information in NSW. Today, with new technologies and greater expertise in the field, LPI is a world leader in land information and management. From the first handwritten land records to the powerful online land data systems used today, LPI continues as a pioneering force in land management.

From *The Crow Quill to Scribing, History of pre computer Mapping, Lands Department New South Wales* Frank Farrugia and *Keydates of the Registrar General's Department* Anthony Cranney.

### Disclaimer

This fact sheet must not be relied on as legal advice. For more information about this topic, refer to the appropriate legislation.

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T 1300 052 637  
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F + 61 2 9233 4357  
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