

Presented by
D Mooney. 12/9/13
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**Public Accounts Committee Meeting 12/9/13
NSW Government Property Register (GPR)**

Until the recent introduction of the GPNSW Act there has been a requirement for organisations under the Annual Reports Act to provide LPI with details of lands under their control for LPI to place in the GPR. However there has been no power for LPI to compel agencies to provide this information. LPI's role is to maintain the GPR based on the details provided by the agencies.

LPI uses its Land Title Register (Titling system) and digital cadastre (which is a digital depiction of all known parcel of land in NSW) along with information contained in other agency notifications published in the Government Gazettes to quality control the information in the GPR.

In its efforts to achieve a single title system for NSW and as complete a cadastre as reasonably possible, LPI has for a number of years been systematically converting remaining Old System (common law) land parcels to Torrens Title, and issuing titles for other land under government control such as State Forests, National Parks, Crown Reserves and Western Lands Leases.

These programs, while unrelated to any obligations on LPI for holding a register of publically owned lands have none the less been of great benefit in bringing additional land records into the GPR.

It must be stated that these initiatives rely on the individual agencies, as they are the ones with the records and understanding of the land they control. Naturally, progress on these initiatives is dependent on those agencies having the resources to undertake this work. LPI assists the agencies and checks the output supplied by them for errors or anomalies. LPI must ensure that information entered into the Titling system is correct and does not compromise existing title to land. Nearly 34% of the NSW Gross State Product is generated from the property industry, which in turn relies on confidence in the Titling System. After checking these converted parcels they are entered into the Titling system which automatically updates the GPR.

LPI also sends out all the data held in the GPR each year and asks the agencies to verify the information and add any information that is missing. Not all agencies reply and despite follow up calls and emails LPI does not always receive information back from all agencies. As previously stated, LPI has neither legislative backing nor mandate to compel agencies to comply.

The other concept of 'finished' is a little misleading. No register is ever finished. It is continually changing as is the case in the Titling System which is being augmented by the Old System conversion programs and the Forestry, National Parks and other land development processes all the time.

It is interesting to note that no legislative backing currently exists to compel land owners and others with a legal interest in land to register their land transactions with LPI. However, failure to do so means that they forego the State Guarantee of Title which is dependent on registration. The incidence of non-registration of land transactions is therefore likely to be negligible, but there is no direct way of checking this assumption.

Also the GPR will never hold all Government land and be 'finished'. For example, there is no benefit in identifying creeks and river beds and crown roads into the GPR or for that matter, the titling system. These are converted on a transaction basis if needed, as the land is dealt with.

From the beginning of European settlement, land in NSW was alienated and subdivided on a piecemeal and isolated basis, not always tied to other surveys. This has resulted in there being Crown lands that are simply the residue of what is left after all the other subdivided or reserved land has been dealt with. LPI can partially identify these "holes" in the parcel fabric but without a proper investigation, including work to adequately define the extent of a parcel by a controlling authority, LPI cannot issue title to this land.

The GPR has been developed by LPI to provide a spatial layer which has proved very useful to the agencies that use the GPR and the quality of the GPR is continually being improved. The new GPNSW Act, recognising that LPI has no mandate to compel agencies to provide information has given a step in provision for Government Property NSW to ensure compliance with the Act.

The outstanding audit item that has been there for ten years is about the completeness of the GPR which, for the reasons outlined above, is not a realistic requirement. The GPR needs to be complete and fit for purpose. The materiality or otherwise of including the residual pieces of land currently not included in the GPR needs to be taken into account.

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