

**Submission  
No 218**

## **INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Surf Life Saving New South Wales

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28<sup>th</sup> July 2016

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No.6  
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## **Inquiry into Crown Land**

### **Background of Surf Life Saving NSW**

Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) is made up of 129 affiliated Surf Life Saving Clubs, 11 Branches and 77,000 members. Last season our lifesavers watched over 6.8 million people who visited NSW beaches. Our lifesavers carried out more than 6,600 rescues, 157,000 preventative actions and 14,700 first aid cases.

The mission of SLSNSW is to save lives, create great Australians and build better communities.

### **Key issues for SLSCs on Crown Land**

More than 80 Surf Life Saving Clubs (SLSCs) are located on Crown Land due to their prominent position along the NSW coastline. SLSNSW would like to express our appreciation towards the NSW Government and the Hon. Niall Blair MLC in January this year for announcing a standardised lease template for SLSCs located on Crown Land. This standardised lease template offers the statutory minimum rent and 20 year minimum lease term as the default position for all SLSCs on Crown land in recognition of the significant public benefit our SLSCs provide the community of NSW and its visitors.

This standardised lease agreement is in recognition of the significant public benefit our SLSCs provide. In the SLSNSW 'The value of Surf Life Saving NSW to the community' report undertaken in 2015 with the assistance of PwC, it was estimated that the value of lives saved and injuries prevented in 2014/15 was worth \$1.9 billion in NSW and that for every dollar invested in SLS in NSW, there is a return of \$46 through an avoidance of 320 drowning deaths in 2014/15. In the 2014/15 season, our lifesavers volunteered 672,967 hours of their own time to patrol our beaches and an additional 188,630 hours training, assessing and supervising nippers.

Through the provision of the standardised lease template, it allows our SLSCs to carry our fundraising activities and also commercial arrangements if these are carried out under the permitted use of the SLSC. Whilst these are not the primary activities of our SLSCs and not the most significant part use of the premises, it does enable SLSCs to raise revenue in pursuit of its lifesaving objects and to fund its obligations under the lease as long as it goes back into the primary purpose of providing lifesaving services and operations. The costs of running a SLSC are high and a number of SLSCs have built the clubhouses themselves and carried out building and maintenance works over a period of decades through their own volunteer labour or at their own cost. Enabling SLSCs to fundraise and carry out commercial operations ensures the future sustainability our SLSCs by giving them an income stream to fund lifesaving operations and purchase lifesaving equipment, which makes them less reliant on Government funding.

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SLSNSW supports the Government in its efforts to manage and protect Crown Land so the facilities on this land that provide services to the public, including SLSCs are able to continue to deliver services to the benefit of the community. As previously outlined in our submission on the White Paper, SLSNSW supports the development of one piece of legislation to manage Crown land as we have some SLSCs who are on dual crown and council land, which has resulted in confusion about whether Local Council or Crown Lands control the land; and what legislation and requirements apply. SLSNSW would like to thank the Department of Crown Lands for the work they have done in solving this issue for a number of SLSCs and for continuing to work with us to ensure SLSCs with dual ownership of land are moved across to being solely on Crown Land.

SLSNSW would like to thank the NSW Government for recognising the value of Surf Life Saving services to the community and the need for our facilities to be located on Crown Land along the coast to enable supervision of the general public swimming at our beaches and easy access to rescue equipment and services.

*Authorised by Phillip Vanny AM, Chief Executive Officer, Surf Life Saving NSW*