

**Submission
No 354**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Planning Institute of Australia

Date received: 25 August 2016



23 August 2016

Mr Samuel Griffith

Principal Council Officer

Parliament of NSW

gpsc6@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

Dear Samuel,

Upper House Inquiry into Crown Land – Planning Institute of Australia (NSW) Submission

The Planning Institute of Australia NSW (PIA) understands that legislation is being considered that would divide and reallocate responsibility for Crown Land according to its local or state role. As a result, many Councils and different State Agencies would become the responsible owners and managers of the estate. PIA values the integrity of the Crown Lands estate, and the importance of sustainable and coherent stewardship over the long term.

PIA is the peak body representing professionals involved in planning Australian cities, towns and regions. The Institute has around 5000 members nationally and around 1200 members in New South Wales. PIA NSW plays key roles in promoting and supporting the planning profession within NSW and advocating at all levels in relation to key planning and public policy issues.

The PIA requests that the Upper House consider the issues raised in Section 2 of the Terms of Reference in the context of growth pressures affecting the amenity of our cities, as well as environmental stresses such as habitat loss experienced across NSW.

Sydney, and other metropolitan centres in NSW, are growing rapidly in population and there is strong demand for the establishment of additional public spaces and the improvement of community land assets for recreation, habitat, landscape values and other community uses.

In regional NSW, travelling stock routes and Crown reserves have regional values as habitat and land cover; their role and management should be considered holistically and not fragmented.

In both urban and regional NSW, a long term view needs to be taken to the management of the Crown lands. The lack of an immediate use should not be a justification for disposal or irrevocable loss of their natural or cultural values. Decisions on the management of the Crown Lands estate should be based on ESD principles. PIA promotes the following positions:

1. **Support retention and enhancement of Crown Land Estate:** PIA acknowledges the natural, landscape and recreational values of the Crown Land estate in the context of a growing NSW population and increasing environmental and climate change pressures.
2. **Net Community Benefit Criteria:** PIA notes that there may be compelling reasons to transfer or repurpose Crown Land resources to achieve adopted strategic planning objectives. PIA recommends the inclusion of safeguards against unjustified sale and unsympathetic development of the Crown Land estate by inserting a *net community benefit test* on any decision that may result in the transfer, loss, damage or fragmentation of community land. (The community are not only local community members and interest groups but also the long term interests of the wider population of NSW).
3. **Integrated Regional Strategic Planning of Crown Land Estate:** PIA advocates proactive regional scale strategic planning of the Crown Lands estate integrated with Regional Plans. This is important for consistent and holistic policy and operational decisions on land use and ownership across the entire crown land estate - especially in relation to regional resources such as travelling stock routes and habitat in the Western Division.
4. **Support for the role of local government:** Councils need to be in a position to identify the purposes of allocated Crown Lands in their Community Strategic Plan and be resourced to manage the lands accordingly. They require the capacity to receive or raise sufficient financial resources to cover the management costs, especially in relation to transferred Crown public roads.
5. **Aboriginal rights respected:** Aboriginal rights with respect to Crown Lands should not be compromised by the proposed reforms and opportunities for Aboriginal management should be increased.

PIA appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Upper House Inquiry and would be pleased to provide further information if required. Please contact John Brockhoff (Principal Policy Officer PIA NSW)

Kind regards,

Marjorie Ferguson RPIA

NSW President Planning Institute of Australia