

NSW North Coast
Crown Reserves
Management
Strategy



BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

NSW Crown Lands Service



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Management Strategy

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March 1994

This Document is one of two documents, the other being the Strategy Actions Document. The Actions Document addresses the issues raised in this Background Document. The Background to the North Coast Crown Reserves Management Strategy includes information on:

- ☐ *Crown Reserves and the Crown Reserve System*
- ☐ *Key Issues facing Crown Reserve System management*
- ☐ *Examples of the range of Crown Reserves on the North Coast*
- ☐ *The process of preparing the Strategy.*

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Foreword

The development of the North Coast Crown Reserves Management Strategy commenced with a fundamental review of the role and function of Crown Reserves and the Crown Lands Service (former Department of Lands).

From 1988 to 1992 the Grafton Lands Office identified key issues which needed to be examined in an holistic and coherent manner. This formed the genesis of the North Coast Reserves Management Strategy. The historical position should not be lost, and so this Document records the issues and processes behind development of the Strategy.

The Crown Reserve System is unique. Reserves are managed by the community, either through Local Government Councils, Trust Boards or local incorporated bodies. Reserves are accessible, people oriented, and used for a wide range of purposes. Reserves are part of the oldest system of public land management since European settlement.

The work of Peter Cuming through Sustainable Futures Planning and Design was invaluable. The commitment of the project team at Grafton was fundamental to adoption of the concept. The interaction between Peter Cuming and the team provided the wisdom to collate the background material and innovation to develop the strategic vision.

This Document provided the catalyst for the North Coast Strategy, following many years of questioning conventional management practices and searching for imaginative direction into the future for the complex and challenging Crown Reserve System.

This background material generated the production of the:

- NSW Crown Reserve System brochure;
- NSW North Coast Crown Reserves Management Strategy brochure;
- Principles for Management of the Crown Reserve System brochure;
- NSW North Coast Crown Reserves Management Strategy Actions Document.

I commend reading of these documents to obtain further understanding of the Crown Reserves System, and the Management Strategy for North Coast Crown Reserves.



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North Coast Crown Reserves Management Strategy
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1.0 Background

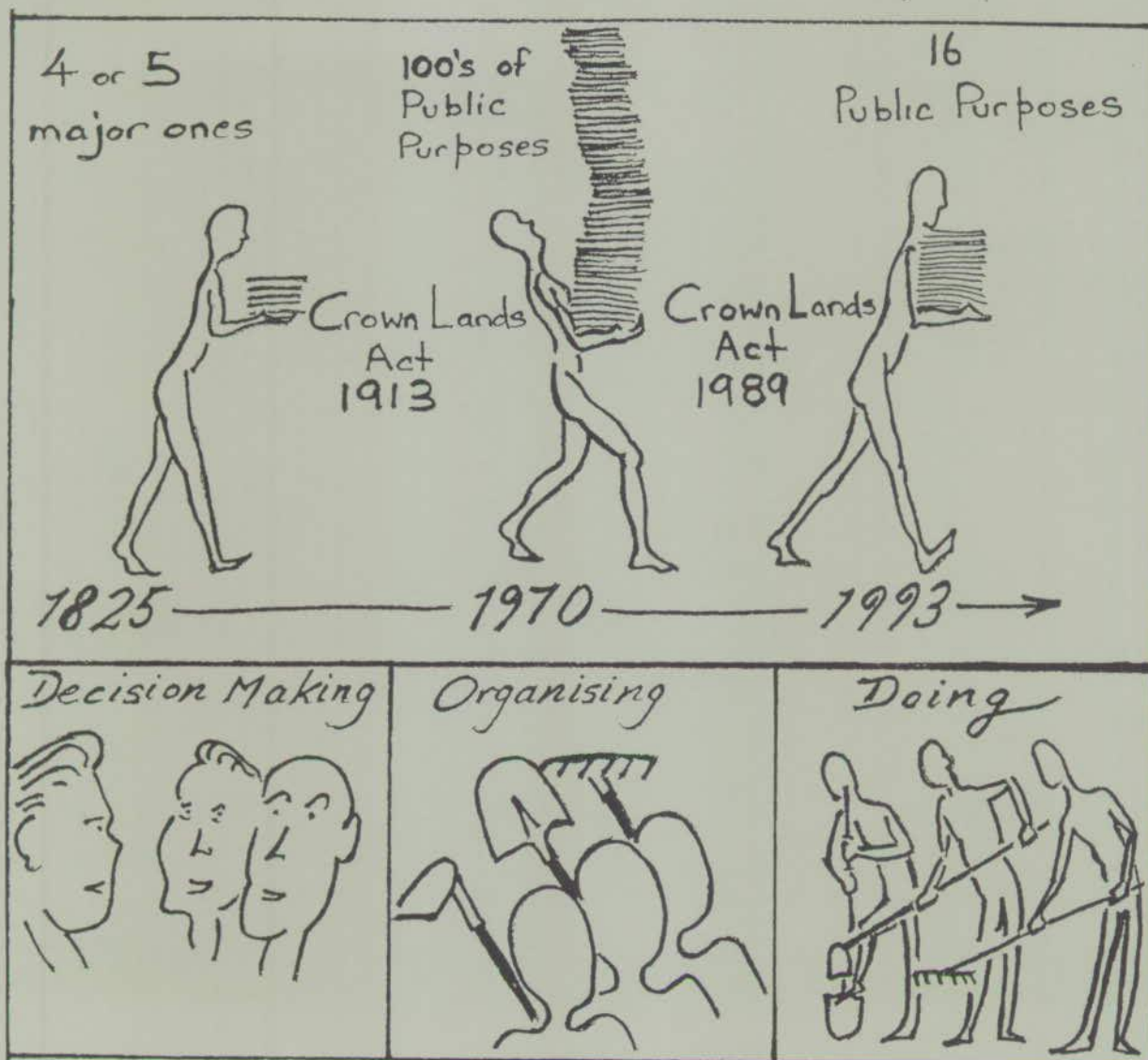


Fig. 1

The Crown Lands Act, 1989, rationalised the number of public purposes which had been steadily growing since 1825, becoming an administrative burden to deal with.

1 Background

1.1 What are Crown Reserves ?

Crown Reserves are community land set aside for a wide range of public uses including environment and heritage protection, recreation and sport, halls and showgrounds, other community facilities and open space.

Our favourite camping areas, picnic spots, beach or riverside, our local hall or flora reserve, golf or racecourse could be a Crown Reserve managed by a Reserve Trust involving local people.

Over the years Reserves have been created to protect and manage important community resources located on Crown land. This continues today.

1.2 General History

Since colonisation of New South Wales more than 100,000 parcels of Crown Land have been set aside for many public purposes under succeeding Crown Lands Acts and related legislation.

The Government Domain in Sydney is the oldest of the Crown Reserves in Australia. The first formal statement of colonial Government policy; a passage in a despatch dated 1st January, 1825, from Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Governor Brisbane refers to the "necessary reservations for public purposes." The despatch went on to detail the need for reservation of ..

"...places fit to be set apart for the recreation and amusement of inhabitants of any Town or Village, and for promoting health of such inhabitants....or which it may be desirable to reserve for other purpose of public convenience, utility, health or enjoyment"
(Paper by M. Weiss, CaLM, 1992)

The importance of retaining lands for public purposes was recognised as colonial settlement areas expanded in the mid to late 1800's and Crown Land settlement continued into the 20th Century. Additional purposes were created to protect a broader range of resources as community needs and awareness grew.

These purposes addressed such matters as protection of scenic or scientific values of the natural environment, the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people and colonial settlement, public infrastructure and access, and provision for economic opportunities to name a few. The later foundation of the State Forest and National Parks Systems utilised Crown Lands, including in some instances Crown Reserves.

The responsibility for Crown Reserves is now shared by the NSW Government through the Crown Lands Service of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CaLM); in partnership with Reserve Trusts managed by Local Government Councils, Trust Boards, and other management bodies (eg. travelling stock routes managed by the Rural Lands Protection Boards).

The Crown Lands Act, 1989, rationalised the number of public purposes broadly covering all those notified under former legislations. (**Appendix 1** lists the existing public purposes, and the Crown Lands Service can provide a list of the previous purposes)

1.3 What is the Crown Reserve System?

The Crown Reserve System (CRS) :

- Is the oldest and most diverse system of public land management existing in NSW, and in fact Australia. It is administered and supported by the Crown Lands Service.

The CRS has retained a large proportion of the NSW coastline and other valuable community areas in public ownership. On the North Coast approximately 65% of the coastline is protected in Crown Reserves. Many community halls, public places, as well as Aboriginal sites and places of significance located on Crown Reserves, are classified by the National Trust, other heritage agencies, and recognised as cultural treasures.

- Has developed as the number of dedications and reservations has grown. It now incorporates well over 30,000 public reserves and estimated 100,000 parcels of land (*Crown Lands Database, 1993*) from the coast to the far western plains of NSW; set aside by succeeding Governments; to provide for the needs and enjoyment of the people of, and visitors to NSW.
- Contains the largest and most diverse range of recreational facilities and areas in NSW; managed in a co-operative relationship between the Crown Lands Service, Local Government Councils and a wide range of community members.
- Is unique because Reserves are generally controlled by Reserve Trusts placing responsibility for day to day and longer term strategic management decisions in the hands of local people. Local Government plays a major role in the Crown Reserve System as manager of the majority of Reserve Trusts.
- Recognises the individual and collective values of the diverse range of Crown Reserves in NSW. The values of individual Reserves are enhanced by being part of the Crown Reserve System.
- Acknowledges the role of other agencies such as NPWS, State Forests, Local Councils, and peak community organisations and interest groups in shaping the overall direction for future state and regional conservation; open space, recreation and leisure; and natural resource management.
- Over 1.3 million hectares of Crown land in NSW had been reserved for habitat protection, recreation, public access and open space by 1986 allowing for the development of recreational programs such as camping areas, waterside reserves, a statewide system of walking tracks, and nature conservation programs. (*Department of Lands, 1986, 6*)

1.4 How is a Reserve created ?

The manner in which Crown Land can be set apart for public purposes is through the process of **Dedication** (Section 80) or **Reservation** (Section 87) under Part 5 of the Crown Lands Act, 1989.

Crown Land may be Reserved as a result of the Land Assessment Process undertaken by the Crown Lands Service. Other Reserves can be created by the acquisition of freehold land or reservation of other government lands, at the request of other Government authorities, and by initiatives of the wider community. The public purposes for which Reserves can be created are listed at Appendix 1.

DEDICATION: is the vesting of land by the Crown, on a trust in perpetuity. Such a trust grants an interest in that land and its values to the public at large (ie. all people of NSW). It is a signal that the Government on behalf of the community attaches particular values to the land area as a public resource to be protected. A dedication may only be revoked following the approval of both Houses of Parliament.

RESERVATION: is an alternative form of allocation of Crown Land for public use. In circumstances where the use of a Reserve may change (eg. caravan park or public buildings) a reservation may be revoked and altered by the Minister by Gazette notification. This process allows the community to address the need to re-assess its public facilities and areas and possibly alter that use to suit changing social and cultural requirements. A reservation cannot be revoked until the Minister has advertised the intention to do so and considered any public comments received.

Both dedication and reservation for a public purpose under the Crown Lands Act, 1989 serve to protect the public's interest in its lands and the land's inherent values. Where reservation is not seen as a strong enough management tool over time, or the purpose is clearly recognised as one to be retained in perpetuity, then dedication for a specific purpose may be more appropriate eg. for environmental protection, public recreation.

1.5 Why is a Reserve created ?

Reserves are generally created to :

- (1) retain land and facilities in public ownership for the benefit of present and future generations.
- (2) protect land and its resources in perpetuity which satisfy the following criteria:
 - maintenance of public access to points of interest, leisure and recreational opportunities
 - conservation of natural and cultural heritage
 - management of natural resources
 - provision of a sustainable economic base for public land and resource management
 - provision of a diverse range of recreation and leisure opportunities
 - compatible multiple use of Crown Land for the wider community
 - compliment and link with other land management systems, including social, cultural, recreational, economic and conservation resources.

Crown Lands are no longer made available through the Crown Reserve System to meet the previous broad range of departmental and community needs. Placing and retaining Crown Lands within the Crown Reserve System is now mainly allied to:

- * conservation of natural resources; including cultural and heritage values; ensuring the land and its resources are protected in perpetuity; and
- * appropriate public use and enjoyment of suitable land, encouraging sustainable multiple use to satisfy justifiable recreation and social needs.

1.6 How Reserves are managed - The Trust System

Reserves are managed by Reserve Trusts, which are independent and autonomous corporate entities established under the Crown Lands Act 1989. Trusts are established by the Minister for Land and Water Conservation. They are charged with the care, control and management of a Reserve, in such a manner as to meet the requirements of that Reserve's public purpose(s).

Reserve Trusts are the appointed Trustees of Crown Reserves and these legal entities in turn need physical management to operate and fulfil the responsibilities. This is undertaken by appointing **Reserve Trust managers**. The Manager of a Reserve Trust is in a similar position to the director of a company, ie. it is a fiduciary relationship (a position of trust). The Manager is appointed to represent the best interests of the Reserve Trust.

The management options available under the Trust System are:

1 Corporate Manager:

is generally the Local Government Council but may also be an incorporated charitable or non profit making body. Councils often appoint a management committee representing community interests and expertise to assist in day to day management, providing advice, and recommendations to Council as Manager of a Reserve Trust.

2 Trust Boards:

comprising between 3 and 7 members of the public who nominate in response to advertisement in local newspapers. These people can be nominated by organisations or community interests related to use and management of the Reserve area. Numbers in excess can be appointed in an ex-officio capacity, in virtue of an office or position held representing specific community interests related to the Reserve. eg. a government agency, Local Council, user or special interest group.

3 Administrator:

is temporarily appointed to facilitate a future management objective which can include establishing a Trust Board or Corporate Manager. An administrator has an identical role to that of the Trust Board or Corporate Manager in regard to statutory and strategic management functions, although the intention is normally to "hand the reigns" over to a Reserve Trust manager as soon as possible. This can include specific tasks related to management issues and future management options.

An administrator can be appointed to manage a Reserve Trust:

- * as a transition between creation of a Reserve and appointment of a permanent management regime,
- * as a change from an existing to a new management regime,
- * in a situation where a Reserve is handed back to the Crown Lands Service by a Reserve Trust manager, or a Reserve Trust is removed from its responsibilities,
- * to terminate the affairs of a Reserve Trust.

■ **Plans of Management:** for Reserves are the primary statutory tool used to provide direction for Trust managers in implementing management action. These initiatives involve public consultation and community input, and establish the principles of land and resource management. The Plans are in many ways an extension to local government planning, acknowledging State and Local Government policies, land zonings, and development control plans, as well as linking land use to adjacent areas to assist in local planning strategies. These Plans need to be more strategic in order to deal with complex issues, and enable adjustment over time based on social and technological changes.

■ Community Land Management:

The Crown Reserve System is unique in management terms as it places total responsibility for care, control and management of a Reserve and all of its improvements, on the Reserve Trust appointed by the Minister for Land and Water Conservation.

Both day to day and long term management decisions are made by Reserve Trust managers on behalf of the wider community. Community input into management of Crown Reserves throughout NSW includes about 700 members of Reserve Trust Boards together with possibly 2000 members of Local Councils and Council management committees.

Over 10,000 local people are estimated to be involved throughout NSW in a wide range of daily management activities. Many more people are involved through working bees, and community projects eg. Dunecare and Landcare, Community Service Club activities and employment training programs. The Crown Reserve System relies on management by the community for the community.

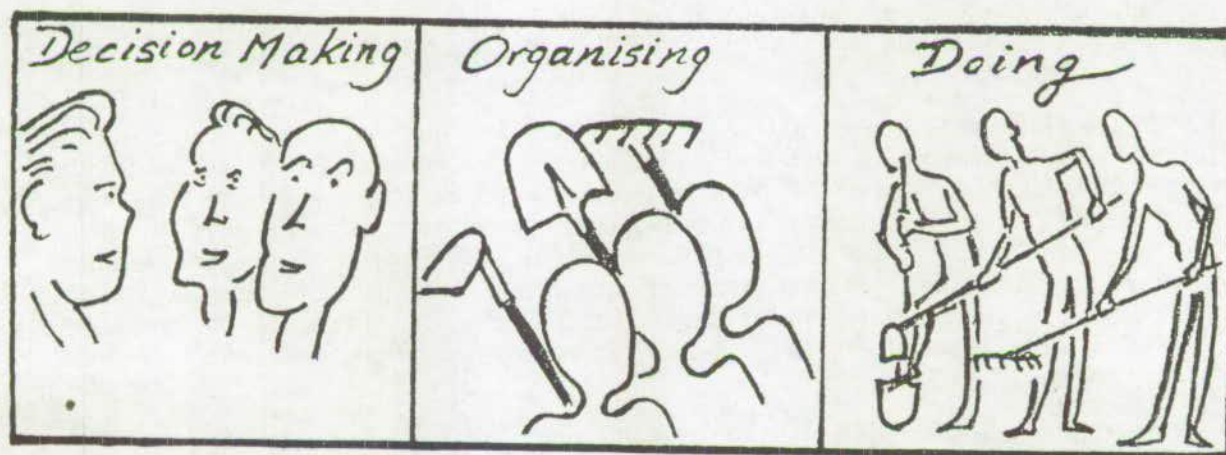


Fig. 2 The Trust System - local people making decisions & putting them into action

This "grassroots" based management of public assets provides a mechanism to harness the energy of the community. Later initiatives such as Dunecare, Landcare and TCM programs, many of which are undertaken on Reserves depend upon community support and involvement in a similar manner. The value of management expertise, time and resources made available by Reserve Trust members is at little or no cost to the State, and is recognised as a major contribution to the quality of life enjoyed by all Australians.

The Crown Lands Service provides operational support, opportunity for financial assistance, and guidance to Trusts in meeting community needs and expectations. This includes encouraging public input into management for individual Reserves in the System.

1.7 Broad Variety of Reserves

Historically since initial European settlement a wide range of purposes were used to set aside land for public uses and to protect valued resources. More recently, due to a change in government policy reflecting a stronger focus on land management and more clearly defined community use of Crown land, the number of public purposes for reservation and dedication have been rationalised to those currently listed in *Appendix 1*.

Some interesting and important examples of Crown Reserves in NSW include nationally and internationally well known places such as Bondi Beach, Manly Beach, Luna Park, Jenolan Caves, Murray Riverside Reserves, Burrinjuck Dam and on the North Coast, Cape Byron Headland (Australia's most easterly point).

The variety of Reserves found on the NSW North Coast include:

Nature Conservation: Goolawah Environment Protection Reserve; Red Hill Flora Reserve, Iluka and Broadwater Koala Reserves; Booyong Recreation and Flora Reserve; University of New England Research Centre - Arrawarra Headland; Maclean Rainforest Reserve. A range of coastline and riverside reserves also contain conservation areas set aside for protection of flora and fauna eg. Angourie Reserve, Woolgoolga Beach Reserve, Red Rock Reserve, Moonee Beach Reserve. Coffs Harbour Regional Botanic Gardens has been created from a diverse environment to contain conservation, recreation, social, and education values.

Historical and Cultural Reserves: Dirawong (Goanna Headland) Reserve, Nimbin Rocks, both Aboriginal areas of significance; Trial Bay Gaol (Arakoon State Recreation Area), Grafton Showground (contains T.J Ford Pavilion - 'The Barn'); Lismore and Port Macquarie Court Houses; Woodenbong War Memorial Hall; Timbertown logging museum, Wauchope; and a wide range of other public buildings and places along the coast are of historical significance.

Recreation Reserves: Ranging from civic parks and gardens such as Knox Park Murwillumbah, and Kingsford Smith Park, Ballina; to coastal recreation areas such as Jack Evans Boatharbour, Tweed Heads; Evans Head Reserve, Boambee Creek Park Reserve, Sawtell Reserve. Crown Reserves cater for a wide range of recreational activities. Specific recreation Reserves include sports facilities such as Coffs Harbour, Yamba and Ballina Swimming Pools, the latter including a waterslide complex; Coramba Sportsground, Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads golf course and specialised facilities such as the Rollands Plains Rodeo Ground. The Cape Byron Headland Walking Track attracts thousands of visitors annually.

Accommodation Facilities: Caravan parks and camping grounds on the following Reserves provide holiday and visitor accommodation facilities: North Haven; Crescent Head; Hat Head; Scotts Head; Urunga Heads; Sawtell; Park Beach Coffs Harbour; Moonee Beach; Woolgoolga Beach; Red Rock; Jackadgery; Brooms Head; Calypso Caravan Park, Yamba; Iluka; Silver Sands Caravan Park, Evans Head; Broken Head and Clarkes Beach Caravan Parks, Byron Bay; The Terrace Caravan Park Brunswick Heads; Pottsville Beach - South and North; Hastings Point; Kingscliff Beach; Fingal Head; Boyds Bay Caravan Parks at Tweed Heads.

Social Activities: Halls and showgrounds which cater for social activities are located on Crown Reserves. These include :

Halls - Rollands Plains; Bellbrook; Kalang; the North Dorrigo School of Arts hall; Bonville Memorial hall; Lawrence Literary Institute hall ; Whiporie; Tabulam; The Channon; Tuntable Falls; Uki; Woodenbong Hall and Mount Burrell Community Centre. Showgrounds - Rollands Plains; Kempsey; Dorrigo; Coffs Harbour; Grafton; Maclean; Bangalow; Lismore; Mullumbimby; Kyogle; Murwillumbah; and Bonalbo.

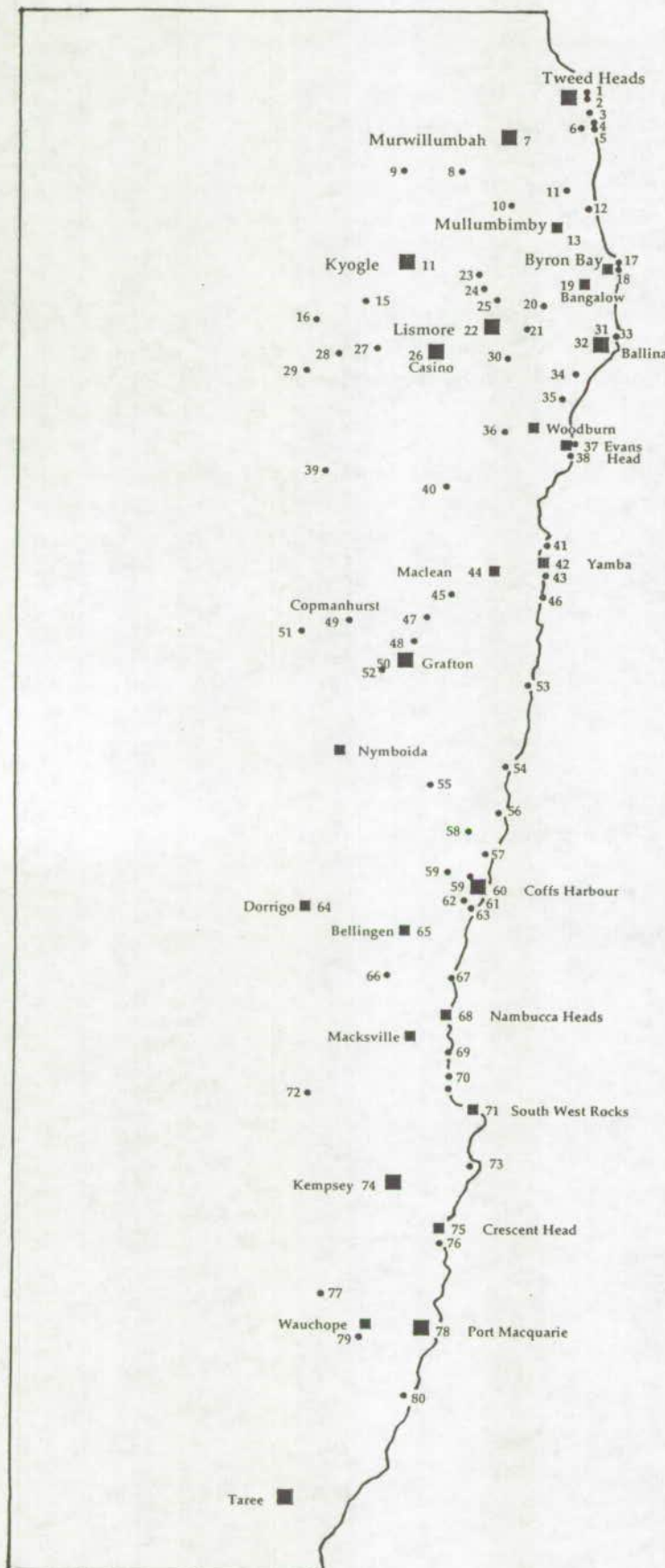
Commercial Activities: As well as the wide variety of caravan parks, camping grounds and holiday cabin complexes located on Crown Reserves examples of other important local and regional business activities include: The Beach Cafe, Byron Bay; Ballina Waterslide Complex, Ballina Swimming Pool; Racecourses at Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Ballina, Casino and Tabulam.

■ A wide range of schools, churches, hospitals, scout and girl guide halls and camping areas, bowling clubs and greens, community centres, aged person's facilities, kindergartens and government utilities are also sited on Crown Reserves.

Map #1 on the following page provides examples of a variety of Crown Reserves located on the North Coast, including a number of those indicated above.

Some of the thousands
of Crown Reserves
on the North Coast.

Look for them
in your local area.



- 1 Boyds Bay & Border caravan parks
- 2 Jack Evans Boat Harbour
- 3 Fingal caravan park - coastline reserve
- 4 Kingscliff caravan park - coastline reserve
- 5 Boganbar coastline reserve
- 6 Cudgen - Round Mountain recreation & conservation reserve
- 7 Murwillumbah showground, Knox Park, Brays Park hall
- 8 Tyalgum flora reserve
- 9 Woodenbong hall
- 10 Uki hall & recreation reserve
- 11 Burringbar recreation reserve
- 12 Brunswick Heads coastline reserves
- 13 Terrace caravan park
- 14 Mullumbimby showground
- 15 Kyogle showground
- 16 Bonalbo showground
- 17 Pretty Gully flora reserve
- 18 Cape Byron headland reserve
- 19 Broken Head caravan park
- 20 Bangalow showground
- 21 Booyung recreation & flora reserve
- 22 Alstonville showground
- 23 Lismore showground, Spinks Park
- 24 Tantible Creek hall
- 25 Nimbin Rocks
- 26 Channon hall
- 27 Casino showground
- 28 racecourse & recreation reserve
- 29 Mummulgum hall
- 30 Tabulam racecourse & hall
- 31 Drake recreation reserve
- 32 Gundarimba flood refuge reserve
- 33 Ballina racecourse
- 34 Kingsford Smith park
- 35 Angel's Beach & Shelley Beach coastline reserves
- 36 Wardell recreation reserve
- 37 Broadwater Koala reserve
- 38 Coraki Common
- 39 Evans Head recreation reserve (Silver Sands caravan park)
- 40 Dirawong reserve (Garrina Headland)
- 41 Baryulgil recreation reserve
- 42 Whiporie recreation reserve & hall
- 43 Iluka Koala reserve
- 44 Yamba flora reserve - Calypso caravan park
- 45 Angourie coastal reserve
- 46 Maclean rainforest reserve, showground
- 47 Lawrence literary institute hall, riverside reserves
- 48 Broome Head caravan park, coastline & recreation reserves
- 49 Lower Southgate flood refuge reserve
- 50 Almy Creek recreation reserve
- 51 Copmanhurst hall & recreation reserve
- 52 Grafton racecourse, showground, See park
- 53 Jackadger camping & recreation reserve
- 54 Bawden's Bridge travelling stock route & reserve
- 55 Minnie Waters caravan park
- 56 Red Rock recreation reserve
- 57 Glenreagh recreation reserve
- 58 Woolgoolga Beach caravan park & coastline reserves
- 59 Moonie Beach caravan park & coastline reserve
- 60 Lower & Upper Bucca recreation reserves
- 61 Coramba sports ground
- 62 Coffs Harbour showground, golf course
- 63 Coffs Creek reserve, Park Beach reserve
- 64 Coffs Harbour Regional Botanic Gardens
- 65 Bonville memorial hall
- 66 Sawtell caravan park & coastline reserve
- 67 Dorrigo showground, North Dorrigo school of arts
- 68 Bellingen showground
- 69 Kalang hall
- 70 Urunga Heads caravan park & coastline reserve
- 71 Nambucca Heads golf course, Headland reserve
- 72 Scotts Head coastline reserve & caravan park
- 73 Grassy Head & Stuart's Point caravan parks
- 74 Arakoon State Recreation Area
- 75 Bellbrook hall
- 76 Hat Head caravan park & reserve
- 77 Kempsey showground, racecourse
- 78 Crescent Head caravan park & Big Nobby coastline reserve
- 79 Goolawah coastline nature reserve
- 80 Rollands Plains showground, hall & sportsfields
- 81 Pt Macquarie historic court house, coastline reserves
- 82 Timbertown logging museum
- 83 North Haven caravan park

Map #1 - Some Reserves of the NSW North Coast
- from the North Coast Crown Reserves Strategy Brochure

1.8 Interesting facts about North Coast Crown Reserves

General Aspects

- 1 There are over 6000 * parcels of land which are part of the Crown Reserves System reserved or dedicated for a wide range of public purposes .
- 2 There are approximately 1400 * Reserves under the management of Crown Reserve Trusts. Most of these Trusts are managed by Local Government Councils, and Council appointed management committees.
- 3 In addition some 120 * Reserve Trusts are managed by community based Trust Boards comprising about 700 * people giving their time freely to assist in managing these community assets. Many more people participate in management programs on Reserves, helping the Trusts to implement decisions and plans, and raise management funds.
- 4 Each year it is estimated that 2.5 million people visit the North Coast Reserves for a diverse range of uses including picnics, camping and holidaying, active and passive recreation such as walking, swimming, surfing, lawn bowls, golf, horse racing and agricultural shows. This does not include the regular visits by people to Reserves which include community halls and other facilities.
- 5 Revenue generated within the Reserve System is used to employ people, maintain Reserves, protect the environment, and improve Reserve amenity. Total revenue generated from Crown Reserves including income and lease payments is in the order of \$15 million each year. (1993 est.)
- 6 About 65% of the North Coast coastline is Crown Land within the Reserve system. Most of the popular surfing beaches are within or adjoin a Crown Reserve.

Caravan Parks and Camping Areas

- 7 Approximately 60 caravan parks and camping areas are located on Crown Reserves providing some 5400 tourist sites.
- 8 Over 2000 people live permanently in North Coast Crown Reserve caravan parks.
- 9 Over 250 people are directly employed either full or part time in the caravan parks. There are a large number of diverse types of local and regional small businesses that benefit by servicing these parks and visitors to them.
- 10 Revenue from these parks is estimated at \$12 million annually (1993) with profits (about \$2 million) being used to maintain, upgrade, and enhance Crown Reserves.
- 11 Flow on expenditure from people staying in these caravan parks/camping areas injects an extra estimated \$18 million (1993 figures) annually into the North Coast economy. This figure is based on the multiplier of \$1.50 for every \$1 spent on visitor accommodation. (ref: Sustainable Futures, 1993)



Fig. 3 " This is the life ! "

* These figures will be reviewed with the implementation of the Strategy and updating of the Reserves data base. It is likely that these preliminary figures will rise.



Fig. 4 The diverse values of Crown Reserves are enjoyed by many people

2.0 Key Issues

2 Key Issues

2.1 Preamble

A general lack of understanding of what Crown Reserves are, how they are created and managed, and where they fit in to the overall management of public resources has resulted in ignorance about the Crown Reserve System. A glaring example of this occurred when the NSW Parliamentary Standing Committee on State Development, in its report "Coastal Planning and Management in NSW - A Framework for the Future" (1992) ignored the strategic importance of coastal Crown Reserves and the management framework already in place under the Reserve Trust system.

A further illustration of this was the lack of acknowledgement by the Commonwealth Resource Assessment Commission (RAC); in their recent investigation and reporting on coastal issues and management (1993), for the historical allocation of funding generated from Crown Reserves activities (including holiday accommodation in caravan parks) being used for coastal land management. The RAC proposes a tax being placed on coastal holiday accommodation to raise funds to assist in implementing Coastcare programs. Within the Crown Reserve System existing management programs are in place and future action planned, utilising funds raised through visitation to selected coastal Reserves.

These public results are due to the Crown Reserve System being taken for granted, and its effectiveness being overlooked. This has been exacerbated by the lack of identity, absence of promotion and community education about the Reserve System, its existing management activities, and potential for the future.

There is a need to broaden and raise management standards; and commitment to protecting and enhancing the wide range of Reserves' values. In many instances available skills, and interest of Trust managers, are not matched by required management information and resources. Community energy lies dormant, or is being channelled into specific programs such as Dunecare by other government sponsored action, whilst the bigger management picture requires support. This needs to be rectified by a new approach to public land management involving more strategic thinking, research, education, community participation and cooperative support, including developing self reliant funding of management programs within the Reserve System.

The value of community input needs to be acknowledged, incorporated into Reserve management budgets, and rewarded. Developing a visionary approach to management, with incentives for people to protect and care for our public resources, for innovation and practical results is vital. It will enable government to move away from time and resource consuming Reserve regulation and administration, into a partnership of co-operative management action.



Fig. 5 What are the values and benefits of the Crown Reserve System ?

2.2 Key Issues

A range of key issues have been identified in regard to the Crown Reserve System and its management. These issues are: (not necessarily discussed in order of importance)

Need for recognition

Issue 1 *The importance of many Crown Reserves in regard to recreation opportunities; conservation of resources including biodiversity and cultural heritage; and protection of scenic landscapes and open space; is not widely recognised and acknowledged.*

Concern has been expressed in regard to the absence of a philosophical sustainable land management position; resulting in the perceived 'selling off' and/or damaging of Crown lands involved in the Reserve System. Some Reserves, particularly along the coast (eg. frontal dune systems) and waterside areas, have no active management regime in place and this needs to be rectified over time as resources become available.

The need to provide a clear and strong commitment protecting valuable resources in perpetuity within the System; or identifying criteria for transfer to other appropriate management agencies is required. Existing and proposed protective management regimes need to be better communicated to interest groups and the wider community. The assistance and input of skilled people in resource management should be further encouraged.

Lack of knowledge of Reserve values

Issue 2 *Lack of an identifiable system of Reserve types and significance status, is exacerbated by incomplete inventory of Reserve values and resources. Knowledge of specific values within and overall value of many Reserves is lacking, including ecological, cultural, and economic aspects.*

There is a need to undertake a complete inventory of Reserve values, developing an approach which provides better understanding, protection and care of these values. Without knowing the range of existing and potential values and uses, the very nature of what makes a Reserve or number of Reserves special can be lost. Similarly there is uncertainty as to what level of significance a Reserve or number of Reserves may have. Therefore the level of resources to be directed into management; and the type and intensity of uses an area can sustain are unknown.



Fig. 6 *Lack of knowledge of values on coastal Crown Reserves can include potential impact of weeds on native vegetation (graphic from Goolawah Reserve Management Plan - Stage 2)*

**Need for
integrated
approach**

Issue 3 *Ad hoc approach to Reserve management on a local and regional basis; and lack of acknowledgement of the Statewide System in considering each Reserve.*

Reserves with appointed Trusts often tend to be managed on an individual basis with little integrated management with adjoining and nearby similar Reserves. This is partly the result of the reservation/dedication system historically used to create Reserves; and management planning generally focussing on individual Reserves. Similarly little action has occurred linking similar and different Reserves on a local and regional basis to benefit overall Reserve and Reserve System management.

There is a need to recognise the similar and integrated nature of many Reserves, at local and regional levels and the opportunities to link them in management strategy; leading to better management and commitment to the Statewide Reserve System.

**Need for
cooperation**

Issue 4 *A need exists for closer co-operation and networking between Trusts; and the Crown Lands Service and Trusts; sharing ideas, information, and assisting in management resource allocation.*

Trusts managing similar land and community resources presently have little contact with each other, tending to work in a vacuum, apart from ad hoc networking. This can result in Trust managers not knowing of management options; duplication of resources in management action; loss of experience and skills to the Reserve System; and a sense of isolation in resource management.

There is legitimate demand and strong support for establishment of a more connective approach between Trusts, facilitated by the Crown Lands Service. This could include a regular conference, information and training workshops, skills register, possibly a regular newsletter and distribution of useful data on a needs basis. This process will need to acknowledge and accommodate legitimate business confidences; and the often competitive nature of business enterprises within the Region; including those on Reserves

**Need for
community
involvement**

Issue 5 *There is a need for greater community involvement; co-operative responsibility; and opportunities for public input in Reserve management; including Reserve users and visitors to the North Coast region. Criticism has been levelled at the existing process of choosing members for Trust Boards.*

Information on Trust management activities and proposed actions should be available to the general public in an informative and interesting form, from individual Trust managers as well as the Crown Lands Service. This could take the form of creative and easy to read annual written reports, regular newsletters, media specials and/or videos.

The important role Trust managers play needs be promoted; particularly Local Government; encouraging further people in the community to participate in Reserve management and support local Trust managers. The Crown Reserve System requires the involvement of a broad range of people with skills, interest and experience matched to the management requirements and challenges of each individual or group of Reserves. These are important qualities for the choice of Trust and management committee members.



Fig. 7 The Reserve Trust team - Who should fill the gap ?

Issue 6 *The incremental and ad hoc regional approach to protection of biodiversity, cultural and recreational resources, and open space needs to be replaced with greater co-operation between land and resource management agencies at both local and regional levels of management.*

It is vital that cultural and natural resources be protected across management system boundaries. This in turn will assist in developing a regional approach to open space and conservation management. Relevant Crown Reserves should be integrated through management strategies with other resource management systems at local and regional levels eg. National Parks and Nature Reserves, Forestry and Council Reserves. Data bases should be rationalised with similar reference, collection and cataloguing criteria, enabling efficient, co-operative and focused management planning.

In regard to recreation and leisure, scenic landscapes and nature conservation, a commitment and concerted effort is required to assist in establishing and maintaining a regional framework and pattern of open space.

A substantial commitment has been made by the Government to Total Catchment Management, Landcare and Dunecare programs. In many cases these activities occur on Crown Reserves with little reference to, or in some cases involvement with the Trust managers. There is a need for greater cooperative planning and management action. There is presently little recognition of funding from Reserve Trusts currently being allocated to Landcare and Dunecare programs.

Issue 7 *The identified need and benefit of having guidelines and advice available to assist Trusts and to encourage and acknowledge excellence in management. Trust managers are presently given little training or assistance in their roles, which could give rise to ineffective or inappropriate management action.*

There is a need for assistance to Trusts in the form of guidelines and advice for a range of management functions such as business development, advertising and promotions, conservation, rehabilitation and enhancement of resources, public participation in management and conflict resolution. Similarly established management standards are required for a range of Reserve types, to assist Trusts managing similar Reserves in achieving an acceptable level of management, and for the purpose of evaluating management planning and action.

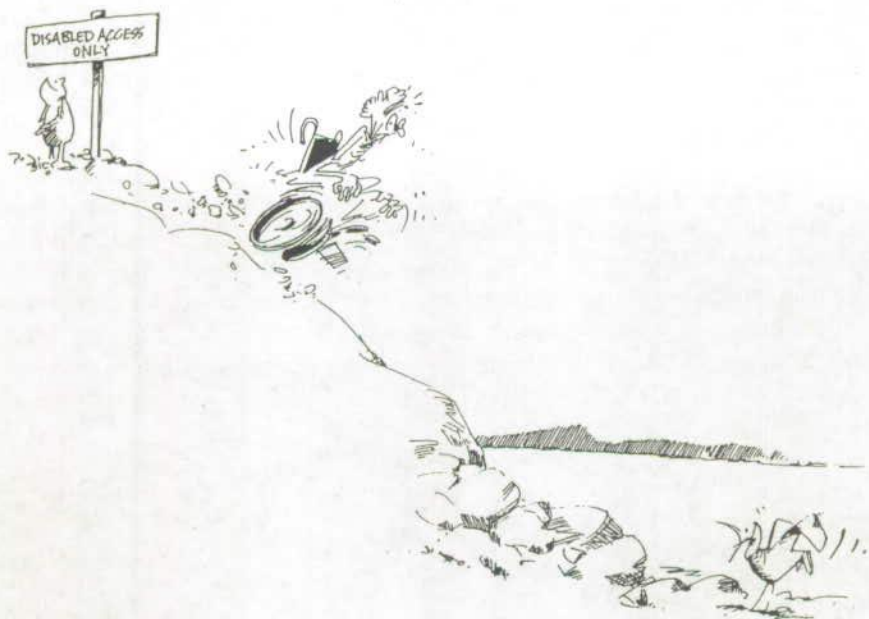


Fig. 8 *Guidelines and advice are needed at times to ensure adequate design and management action. Graphic from Goolawah Reserve Management Plan - Stage 2*

There is a need to provide incentives to and acknowledge Trusts achieving accepted management standards and goals, and striving for excellence. This should include financial and management assistance, possibly a range of awards, and communicating the achievements of Trust managers to other Trust managers and the wider community. Similarly there is a need to assist Trust managers through advice, training and encouragement; or where necessary change Trust membership, when reasonable community expectations and resource management standards are not being achieved.

**Lack of
Identity**

Issue 8 *There is a present lack of identity, support for, and commitment to the Reserve System. The resulting lack of promotion and community education in regard to existing management activities and potential for the future, has resulted in the Reserve System being taken for granted, and its effectiveness in a wide range of resource management being overlooked.*

This issue concerns a range of Crown Lands Service staff, Trust managers, and Reserve users, who see the important work being carried out within the Reserve System in resource management being ignored by, or unknown to the wider community, including a number of recent important government committees of review investigating coastal management.

This has resulted in a lack of commitment to the Crown Reserve System. Government policy hasn't adequately acknowledged the diverse number of different Crown Reserves as belonging to an historical system of land management. If support for the Reserve System is not publicly acknowledged and backed with resources, the potential to involve a wide range of community interests in ongoing management of public resources may be compromised.

The lack of a management strategy for the Reserve System based on achieving a long term vision of intergenerational custodianship has exacerbated this problem. There is a need to develop a corporate and public image for the Reserve System. This should reflect its diverse resources, community based management process and intergenerational commitment; including a vision and management goals; a public logo; and integrated range of promotional and educational material.

**Limited funds
and resources**

Issue 9 *Funds and resources to manage Reserves within the Crown Reserves System are presently limited, with disparity existing between similar and different types of Reserves.*

Funds generated from Reserves need to be re-invested back in Reserves into the following areas as a matter of priority:

- (i) investigating and implementing ways to maintain and increase funds without damaging Reserve values;
- (ii) protecting and enhancing natural and cultural values particularly in coastline and waterside Reserves, and areas of important local and regional conservation status;
- (iii) maintaining and where appropriate upgrading recreation, community and leisure facilities.

The issue of uncertain and often non prioritised broad based government funding decisions establishes the need to develop a high degree of self reliance in the Reserve System, including a regional budget and priority funding process, local and regional business and financial strategies. There is a need to broaden the funding base including investigating and accessing management resources and program finance from a range of government and non-government sources such as grant and loan funds, ethical appropriate sponsorship, community based projects, educational institutions and so on.

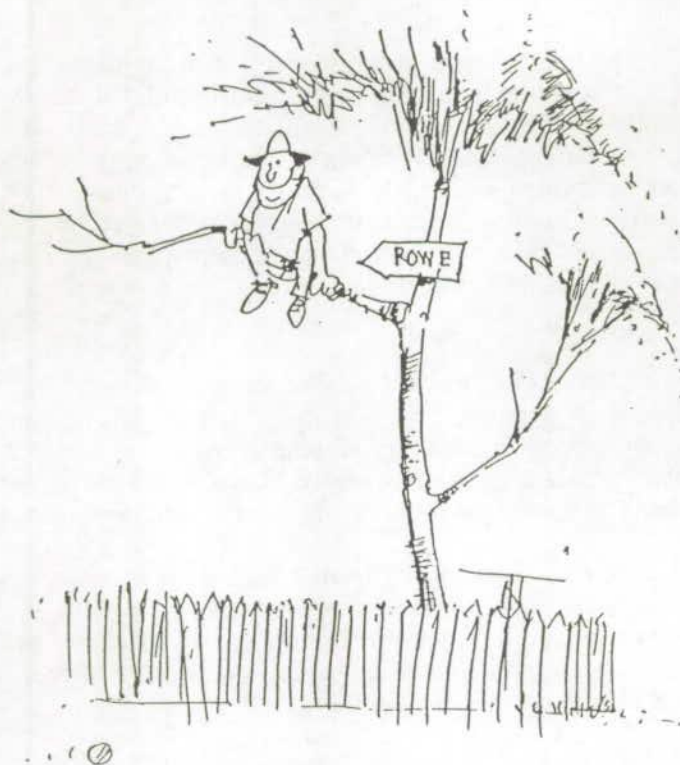


Fig. 9 A typical Aussie rural grandstand, or lack of resources to provide appropriate local facilities

Appropriate business and practices

Issue 10 *There is some concern in regard to development of business enterprises on Reserves and the potential for these in some cases to damage important cultural and natural values. There is a need to adopt appropriate development standards and codes of business practice.*

Development such as walking trails, picnic facilities and community buildings, kiosks, amenities and accommodation centres can enhance or damage Reserve values depending upon aspects such as size, style, location, construction, management and maintenance techniques.

Likewise business established on Reserves needs to be ecologically sustainable, enhance Reserve values, and provide for justifiable community needs and interests.

There is a need to examine existing fund raising processes on Reserves, and relate these to an overriding land management vision. This necessitates maximising the viability of commercial undertakings on Crown Reserves within the bounds of ecological sustainability, to generate funds for ongoing management of lands within the Reserve System. Business on Reserves needs to be ethical, providing appropriate products and services, and meeting accepted community standards.



Fig. 10 Ethical business should provide for people and protect Reserve values

Issue 11 *Promotion of the Reserve System is virtually non existent and ineffectual. Marketing of Reserves should not compromise Reserve values. Advertising and promotional material should relate to Reserves, meeting community standards and ethics in regard to any product endorsement.*

The reason many people aren't aware of the Crown Reserve System is that it is not promoted. Advertising of places, facilities and services offered within the System is generally undertaken on an ad hoc basis relating to specific aspects such as walking trails or accommodation centres. This marketing and information service is generally undertaken on a statewide basis, with little regional promotion. It has not been seen as a high priority to develop a distinctively regional approach linking local Reserve and major coastal catchment attributes, coordinated at the regional and state level.

There are advantages in promoting the Reserve System and Crown Reserves in regard to establishing a public image, and advising people of the values and range of recreational and social opportunities the System provides. A well directed and clearly focused promotion can encourage community assistance and appropriate use of areas and facilities, helping to raise the awareness of all participants and stakeholders in Reserve use and management. The very nature of advertising Reserve values and the Reserve System places management practice "in the spotlight". This process encourages public accountability, and should help to improve management practices.

For a gentle holiday
visit Delicate Beach
We like it like that !

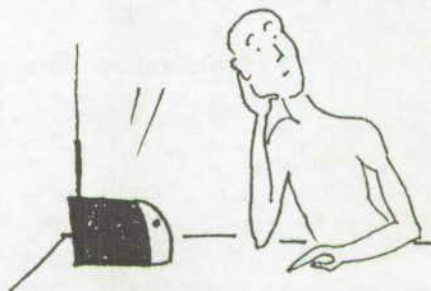


Fig. 11

Protecting Reserve values through sensible promotion

Recreational demands on coastal reserves are growing as the region's population and visitation rates increase. Marketing of Reserves, or sectors of Reserves such as holiday accommodation, coastal beaches and features, needs to ensure that the carrying capacity for Reserve areas are identified and not regularly exceeded, resulting in damage to Reserve's attributes. Likewise marketing and promotional material should be ethical, based on a "truth in advertising" perspective, relate specifically to Reserves, and encourage sensible and sustainable use of resources.

Issue 12 *Lack of consistent evaluation of Reserve Trusts and Crown Lands Service, including feedback on management performance, and review of innovative and positive management opportunities.*

New standards of resource use and management resulting from changing community perceptions and innovation in management are presently being implemented in an ad hoc manner throughout the Reserve System, as well to a certain degree in all existing management systems. The possibility of Reserve Trust managers and the Crown Lands Service not achieving suitable standards of management is ever present when no regular evaluation and feedback process is in place. Inappropriate management action going undetected or not being adjusted with back up support and advice; does not engender confidence and commitment to achieve necessary changes.

Lack of acknowledgement and encouragement of wise resource use and management results in missed opportunities to encourage ongoing positive management; and provide and promote examples of striving for and achieving excellence within the Reserve System.

When regular and wide ranging auditing and evaluation of the Reserve System is not undertaken it is impossible to effectively assess management performance, where and how improvements can be achieved, and the type and range of support needed. Without evaluation and feedback it is difficult to know whether Reserves are being wisely managed, and whether Reserve managers are achieving management goals.



Fig. 12 Using evaluation and feedback to achieve our goals

Evaluation and feedback are a vital part of management and need to be given high priority. They should be viewed as a positive and natural function of management with beneficial results, rather than a negative inspection process to be feared. Reserve Trust Boards and Corporate Managers, as well as Crown Lands Service staff and Reserve visitors are entitled to feedback.

The evaluation and feedback process established across and throughout the Reserve System will need to engender a sense of trust, mutual support and confidence to assist in achieving management excellence. The foundation needs to be regular honest evaluation carried out by Reserve Trust managers, the Crown Lands Service, and other participants and stakeholders involved in Reserve use and care. This should be backed up by clear and useful guidelines and access to advice. Willingness to help bring about change where it is needed is paramount, rather than to just condemn mistakes, ignorance, and inappropriate actions. Likewise praise and encouragement should be given where it is due for good work, for trying, and giving time and energy. Positive examples of community based and cooperative management should be identified and acknowledged.

3.0 Approach & Methodology

3.0

Approach & Methodology

3.1 Method of Strategy Preparation

Preparation of the North Coast Reserves Strategy involved interrelated actions occurring simultaneously over the period November 1992 to December 1993:

- Identifying and linking key issues
- Strategic thinking and creative response
- Consultation process

3.1.1 Identifying and Linking Issues

The Crown Lands Service established a project group in 1991-2 in the Northern Region to identify the range of issues related to coastal management and Reserves on the North Coast. The need for a more strategic approach to Reserve management on the North Coast was identified by the Northern Region of the Department of Lands as early as 1988. A number of staff were encouraging this in the mid 1980's.

The results of this project group review led to recognition of the need for an integrated approach to Reserve management including all Crown Reserves. The preparation of a Management Strategy for the North Coast was recommended to identify and improve on existing management practice. A strategic planning consultant; Peter Cuming, Principal of Sustainable Futures Planning and Design; was employed to assist in a teamwork and networking approach to establish a focus, platform and concept for future management.

3.1.2 Strategic Thinking and Creative Response

The project group was broadened to include a wider range of Crown Lands Service officers in daily contact with Reserve Trusts and the public. Weekly workshops were held discussing the concept of an integrated system of Crown Reserves and exploring ideas related to a management framework encompassing the concepts of:

- * ecologically sustainable resource use,
- * co-operative management action,
- * inter-generational landcare and environmental enhancement, and
- * self reliance in funding through ethical business practice involving appropriate Reserves.

The result of this work was discussed with a wide range of community interests and other government agencies. Comments and suggestions from these people were included in the Strategy development process.

The following were invaluable to Strategy preparation:

- * experience in preparing management plans for Reserves;
- * thinking strategically and in a holistic manner about management issues and process;
- * liaising with a broad range of stakeholders and participants within the Reserve System such as Reserve Trustees, users and visitors, and other government agencies;
- * involvement of Crown Lands Service staff at all levels of the organisation;
- * a broad range of viewpoints revealed in the consultation process and project group; and
- * knowledge of how the present Reserve System operates.

A window of opportunity was identified by the project group, which established the view that acknowledging intergenerational equity; developing empathy (seeing each other's point of view); encouraging creative response to issues; seeking common ground and a "win-win" approach in management including conflict resolution; should be used to design and implement the management planning framework.

The strategic questioning and debate of management issues and potential action developed a broader perspective of public land management within the project group. This resulted in greater understanding of the values of the Crown Reserve System, recognition of the broader nature and influence of issues, and need for a holistic management approach to be reflected in the Crown Reserves Management Strategy.

Good stewardship of resources is about recognising the value and role of custodianship. The process of developing the Strategy in itself was recognised to be as important as the final product. It was generally agreed that the Strategy, should and will evolve and change, because sensitive management is a dynamic process.

3.1.3 Consultation Process

A range of community interests have been involved in development of the Crown Reserves Management Strategy to assist in identifying and linking issues; develop an integrated approach to Reserve management; and review the draft Strategy.

- Wide ranging consultation was undertaken with a range of government agencies involved in land and resource management, Reserve Trusts (including Councils and Trust Board members), community organisations, special interest groups, and Reserve visitors.
- Much of this consultation occurred in unstructured dialogue encouraging creative and candid comment. Feedback and points of view were included in the Strategy design and development process.
- These interests; with other groups and government agencies; including the Federal level where relevant; will continue to play an important role in Strategy implementation and review.
- A range of recent public reports and strategies on coastal and community resource management were reviewed to ensure the draft Crown Reserves Strategy reflected the recommendations and thrust of these documents. A list and recommendation of these reports and strategies can be viewed in Appendix 1 of the Strategy Implementation Document.
- The following government agencies, and other interests were consulted in preparation of the Strategy. A range of Federal and State Government Parliamentary Committee members involved in recent coastal resource management reviews were also consulted.

Regional Level: State Government Departments & Agencies

Crown Lands Service
National Parks & Wildlife Service
Department of Planning
State Forests of NSW
Public Works Department

Soil Conservation Service
Tourism Commission of NSW
Department of Water Resources
Department of Agriculture & Fisheries
Department of Sport & Recreation

Peak Community Organisations

North Coast Environment Council

North Coast Regional Aboriginal Land Council

Local Level Consultation:

Reserve Trusts - range of Local Councils, Trust Boards and Reserve Managers
Reserve visitors and users.
Local conservation and community group interests
Tourism offices - a number of North Coast district tourist offices
School children - primary and secondary

3.1.4 Consultation Aids

The process of strategy development included preparation of:

- * a 7 minute Video - *The Crown Reserve System on the NSW North Coast*;
- * a full colour brochure on the Crown Reserve System, its Values and Management Vision;
- * a full colour brochure establishing the North Coast Strategy and complimented by the Crown Reserve System brochure;
- * a multi media presentation platform describing the Crown Reserve System, and main elements of the North Coast Strategy.

These management aids have been an important part of developing and establishing the Strategy. Use of them involved review by; and feedback from; the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Crown Lands staff at Executive Board, Head Office, Regional and District office levels, government departments, Trust managers, school children, and general public. This evaluation resulted in adjusting these aids for ongoing use in promoting the Reserve System and the North Coast Management Strategy.

3.2 Approach to Strategy Implementation & Review

Implementation of the Strategy will include the Crown Lands Service, Reserve Trusts including Local Councils, as well as Government agencies, interested community groups and the general public. The Strategy will be promoted through the Crown Lands Service, Councils, and other selected agencies. The Strategy is likely to be adjusted over time reflecting feedback from the community, and government agencies.

A major North Coast Reserve Trust seminar is being held in conjunction with the launch of the North Coast Crown Reserves Strategy; utilising the video, brochures, and multi media platform to describe the management concept and main elements of the Strategy. Reserve Trustees, a range of government agencies, peak community organisations and representatives will be invited to this presentation. It is hoped this will be a catalyst for future workshops and conferences to share ideas and consider a range of management action and issues within the Reserve System. This interaction including mutual support, peer group feedback, and cooperative learning is embodied in a number of goals of the Strategy (See Goals 5, 8 and 12 in Section 5 of the Strategy Actions Document)

The Strategy is a focus and blueprint for the Crown Lands Service in managing the Reserve System on the North Coast. It will be influenced by reaction and input from Reserve Trusts, and other participants and stakeholders within the System. As with results of any process which requires definitive statements, the Strategy document will date over time and may require changes in its direction. It is hoped that the path established in the exercise of the developing and implementing the Strategy will place the next generation of managers and helpers in a better position to protect the values and opportunities available on, and from Crown Reserves; and within the Reserve System.

The Strategy has been designed from an intergenerational perspective with a recognition that some goals will take many years to achieve. In some situations this will involve handing on the reins of action to the next group of Crown Lands Service staff and Reserve Trustees, whilst other goals such as protection of natural and cultural values will require ongoing vigilance and management action maintained through generations of Reserve managers, agencies and visitors.

Ongoing co-operative review of the Strategy based on the main methods of Strategy preparation is envisaged. (see Section 3.1). Feedback from Trusts, the wider community, and other government agencies will be a vital component of evaluating and adjusting the Strategy over time. This principle is an important Goal of the Strategy, and embodied in a number of Action Plans (see Goal 12 in Section 5 of the Strategy Actions Document).

3.3 How will the Strategy benefit Reserves and the Reserve System?

The Strategy is expected to benefit Crown Reserves and the Crown Reserve System in the following ways:

- * setting a direction in regard to custodianship, and priorities for land management and use of public funds in the overall stewardship of public resources in NSW;
- * reaffirming the Reserve System; and encouraging greater promotion and understanding of its existence, and the Reserves within it;
- * recognising and supporting an intergenerational management process, including the protection and enhancement of Reserve values in perpetuity;
- * providing a strategic approach to management; encouraging innovation and creative practical action at all levels of planning and management;
- * gaining an overall understanding of the range of values and attributes on Reserves and within the System as part of a resources audit, and linking these to other resource management systems;
- * identifying and defining the roles of participants and stakeholders in the Reserve System and how they can be encouraged to participate in management of Reserves and the Reserve System;
- * establishing a supportive environment for Reserve Trusts and the wider community in Reserves management; encouraging the building and maintaining of a network of interests and skills;
- * providing a clear and positive image of the Reserve System;
- * setting out to achieve a vision of excellence in management; including performance assessment, accountability, providing guidelines, encouraging training and cooperation;
- * linking the history of the Reserve System to the present and future in a strategic approach to resource management, cooperative decisionmaking and action.

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- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
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Also reviewed were a range of Government Policies, and Strategies from other Australian States. North Coast Crown Reserves departmental files and management plans were also used as resource documents.

Appendix 1

List of Public Purpose Reservations for Crown Reserves

Crown Lands Act 1989

30.7. ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 30-A

PUBLIC PURPOSES DECLARED FOR THE PURPOSES OF
SECTIONS 80 AND 87, CROWN LANDS ACT 1989PART A - PUBLIC PURPOSES DECLARED FOR THE
PURPOSES OF SECTION 80 - DEDICATION

PURPOSE	GAZETTE	PURPOSE	GAZETTE
Access	15.12.1989	Public Recreation	15.12.1989
Accommodation	15.12.1989	(Public Recreation	
Caravan Park	15.12.1989	(and Coastal	15.12.1989
Community Purposes	15.12.1989	(Environmental Protection	
Environment Protection	15.12.1989	Rural Services	15.12.1989
Government Purposes	15.12.1989	Showground	15.12.1989
Heritage Purposes	15.12.1989	Travelling Stock	15.12.1989
Public Park	15.12.1989	Urban Services	15.12.1989
		Water	15.9.1989

PART B - PUBLIC PURPOSES DECLARED FOR THE
PURPOSES OF SECTION 87 - RESERVATION

PURPOSE	GAZETTE	PURPOSE	GAZETTE
Access	15.12.1989	(Public Recreation	
Accommodation	15.12.1989	(and Coastal	15.12.1989
Caravan Park	15.12.1989	(Environmental Protection	
Community Purposes	15.12.1989	Rural Services	15.12.1989
Environmental Protection	15.12.1989	Showground	15.12.1989
Government Purposes	15.12.1989	Travelling Stock	15.12.1989
Heritage Purposes	15.12.1989	Urban Services	15.12.1989
Public Recreation	15.12.1989	Water	15.12.1989

(Note: Future public requirements is also a public purpose - see section 87(1),
Crown Lands Act 1989.)