



NSW Land Registry Services, formerly 'Land Titles Office' and 'Land and Property Information'.

<http://www.nswlrs.com.au/>

NSW LRS maintain current and historic title records in a number of public registers.

The largest register is the Torrens Title register, introduced in 1863. Torrens titles are protected by State Government Guarantee and contain information in relation to current ownership and encumbrances on the land such as mortgages, leases and easements.

The General Register of Deeds was the first land registry in NSW established on 16 November 1825 under the Registration of Deeds Act 1825. It contains common law (old system) deeds for land transactions and incorporates the register of Causes Writs and Orders, Bills of Sale, Register of Resumptions, Powers of Attorney and all other miscellaneous deeds registered in the LPMA.

Access is electronic for all items entered in the General Register of Deeds since November 1992. The NSW LRS website has a number of publications, which researchers may find helpful.

"Old System" Records

Until 1802, there were no official records of land transactions. Once established, official recording of transactions was not compulsory. The first land transactions recorded in the "Old Register" at the LPI are often so vague as to make it impossible to now identify the land involved. From 1825, the system became more formal - registered deeds took priority over unregistered deeds, regardless of date, and this led to most transactions being registered. However, it was still not compulsory, and still is not. From 1825, an index of vendors was also established, but it was not until 1896 that a purchaser's index was established.

The "old system" was cumbersome, requiring a fresh deed to be drawn up for each transaction, with proof of title depending upon the validity of the prior "chain of deeds". In 1863, therefore, it was decided to commence changing to "Torrens title".

"Torrens Title" Records

The big advantage of Torrens title was that title was guaranteed by the Government and did not depend upon the validity of each deed in the chain since the land was first alienated (granted or sold) by Government.

Applications to bring old title land under the Torrens system are known as "primary applications", and require the furnishing of all deeds, documents and evidence necessary to establish the validity of ownership, generally right back to the original grant. This often requires furnishing previously unregistered deeds, as well as birth, baptism, death and marriage certificates, statutory declarations and other documentation supporting claims to ownership. Certificates from other countries are often included. Primary application numbers for a particular property are generally annotated on the original grant of the land.

Old Form Torrens Registers

Old Form titles were issued from 1863 to 1961. "Old Form" refers to the large paper format used for the creation of these records. Under the Torrens Title System, land transactions were registered on one title document called The Register. The Register shows a chain of ownership, including transactions affecting the title over a period of time and a description of the land parcel.

Primary Applications

A Primary Application is made to convert land title from what is known as Old System title to registration under the provisions of the Real Property Acts (commonly referred to as Torrens Title).

Primary Application packets can contain:

- the survey plan
- correspondence, including Lands Department working papers and memos

- reports from the Title Examiner's and the Survey Draftsman
- the draft Certificate of Title
- caveats against the Application by adjoining owners or others claiming an interest in the land
- deeds, possibly including mortgages, and other dealings with the land.

Even if a packet contains documents relating to a primary application in respect of land in which you interested, it may not contain all the documents referred to in the application, particularly if the land was the result of one or more subdivisions.

Primary Application packets are progressively being transferred to NSW State Records and are being listed on Archives Investigator. <http://investigator.records.nsw.gov.au/>

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Access is electronic for all items entered in the General Register of Deeds since November 1992. The (LRS) Online Shop provides access to paid searches and free index searches. The website has a number of publications that researchers may find helpful relating to:

[First Stop Guide to the Records of the Register General](#) (Apr 2011) (PDF)

[Old System Information and Search Guide](#) (Apr 2011) (PDF)

[Searching the Registrar General's Maps and Plans](#) (Apr 2011) (PDF)

[Torrens title Information and Search Guide](#) (Apr 2011) (PDF)

LRS Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV)

Digital copies of many key LRS records are available including historical parish maps, Crown plans, Old Form Torrens Title Registers and Plan Lodgement Books.

[Launch HLRV](#)