NSW Comprehensive Property Addressing System
Case study portfolio of addressing issues in NSW
Title: NSW Comprehensive Property Addressing System

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A case for change

Improvements in the NSW addressing system are required to ensure that:

- there is a significant reduction in effort to capture and maintain addresses
- ambiguities regarding responsibilities for allocating and managing address information are removed
- remediation of duplicate address components (suburb, road names and number) and affected addresses
- delays as a result of multi-handling and reworking of address information are reduced
- errors as a result of duplication of databases are reduced.

The community, business and government rely on information from Land and Property Information (LPI) for a variety of purposes. The datasets built and maintained by LPI are among the State’s most important commercial and historical information assets. They include millions of land titles, associated plans and dealings, valuation information, survey control and mapping, addresses and spatial information, including aerial imagery and elevation data.

The Comprehensive Property Addressing System (CPAS), hosted by LPI, will be the single source of truth for addressing information in NSW.

The system is targeted to increase efficiency and effectiveness for the delivery of emergency services, post and utility services and to support a range of government activities.

The objective of the CPAS program is to improve the property addressing system in NSW, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness for the delivery of emergency services, post and utility services and to support a range of government activities. CPAS is required to be the source of truth for addresses within NSW.

Specifically, the objectives of the CPAS program include improvements to the addressing system made through the capture, storage, maintenance, geocoding, access and distribution of NSW addressing data. Improvements to the addressing system include:

- strengthen the ability to create/allocate, capture at point of creation, store, maintain geo-code and distribute authoritative official addresses
- capture, store, maintain and distribute information necessary to locate alias addresses and features of interest information and link these, where appropriate, to authoritative addresses
- ensure that rural addresses are correctly assigned, captured, stored, maintained, geocoded and distributed
- ensure that complex site addresses and strata site secondary addresses are correctly assigned, captured, stored, maintained, geocoded and distributed
- create metadata to enable the efficient and accurate discovery, exchange and dissemination of information.
The CPAS program will provide:

- improved property identification for the delivery of services, licensing, land administration and revenue collection
- reliable, real-time access to shared services accessing the full range of formal and informal geocoded address information to government, business and the community
- support for improved emergency planning, response and recovery
- support for address custodians and address users through government services and the continued assistance from the Geographical Names Board
- education programs to service providers and the community regarding comprehensive addressing and the related costs and risks associated with the use of incorrect address information.

Vision for addressing in NSW

The following points outline the vision for addressing in NSW.

- All address sites will have a logical, unique, authoritative, geocoded, property address.
- All new addresses will comply with the Australian/New Zealand Geographic information – Rural and urban addressing standard AS/NZS 4819:2011.
- There will be an official repository for NSW addresses which will be deemed the source of truth for all Government agencies.
- Processes to formalise address components will minimise duplicated effort, ensure rapid approval and feed the official repository for NSW addresses.
- An efficient governance framework will allow for mediation and directions to resolve risks and issues.
- It is expected that government agencies will use authoritative addresses.
- Alias and / or vanity addresses will be collected and related to authoritative addresses.
- Communication mechanisms will be put in place to promote the use of authoritative addresses.
- Where changes to longstanding address components are required to minimise confusion, strategies will be developed to reduce disruption and distress for the affected local community.
- All components of an address must be correctly and appropriately sign posted or marked.
- The powers relating to the creation and change of address components should remain with the currently nominated level of government.
- Instantaneous services will be available for address users to validate and download authoritative addresses and related alias data.

“Property addressing establishes and underpins the order by which a community and society can function most effectively. Changes to current Legislation pertaining to Addressing that will make it less ambiguous will benefit the safety of the greater community. Property Addressing needs to be mandatory and compliant within the Standard. Statements that affirm LGA as the Addressing Authority and a raised profile of addressing as a mandatory function, together with less arduous processes, will allow council to manage this critical requirement with vigour.”

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Reference: NSW Addressing Working Group Final Report
Addressing issues across NSW

Addressing issues can compromise services such as courier, mail, taxis, deliveries, ambulance etc. In the case of emergency services this actually puts lives at risk. There are a number of addressing issues in NSW which the CPAS program aims to resolve, including:

- **One place with many addresses** – examples from the case studies include the use of vanity and alias names, and addresses recorded or used differently by a number of organisations or services.

- **One address duplicated across a number of places or properties** – in NSW there are currently 240,000 duplicated address sites leading to confusion in navigation of people and assets. There are currently 91 duplicate address localities in NSW and 1,613 instances where road names are duplicated in the same address (findings from the NSW Address Working Group 2009).

- **Inconsistencies in addressing databases** – there are currently hundreds of databases being used by service and government agencies for addressing and road naming in NSW.

  There are anomalies in the addressing data across these databases that have been caused by human error, residents communicating wrong addresses, changes in address, road names not being updated, and fabricated addresses making their way into databases, i.e. external mapping and addressing agencies accepting crowd sourced information.

- **Places without names or numbers** – there are still many locations across NSW that do not have a locatable address. Examples include government and community buildings such as courthouses and schools, rural properties, and complex sites such as hospitals, universities and aged care facilities.

A recent survey conducted by LPI found that approximately 32 per cent of councils in NSW do not seek to address internal buildings within complex site locations.

The case studies outlined in this report demonstrate the anomalies in addressing data. They show that issues with addressing and road naming cause problems relating to emergency service responses, service delivery, resident confusion, and other services and community issues.

The CPAS program aims to minimise these incidences by implementing systems, services, governance and guidelines to meet the needs of address authorities, emergency services, state and government agencies, businesses and the community when it comes to logical, locatable address information.
One place, many names

The introduction of the CPAS program will significantly reduce the incidences of addressing issues that have been identified across NSW. In order to overcome the issues with one locality having many known or registered names, road names or addresses, the CPAS program will implement a number of new processes including:

- a single authoritative address database
- the implementation of clear and concise governance and guidelines that will improve addressing practices and minimise the application of alias and vanity addresses.

A number of agencies, including government agencies, postal services, private companies and service delivery agencies, will use the single address database.

The following case studies are examples of where one place with many names exists in NSW, and how this addressing anomaly poses problems for the community.

A field trip discovered that Wilcannia-Bourke road was sign posted on the intersection of the Barrier Highway (National Route A32), and listed by the Local Government Area Council as being East Tilpa Road. Giving the one road 3 possible names could cause problems for service delivery, including emergency services.

LPI field trip discovery

Is my address record the same as yours?

Inconsistency across agencies and databases can cause difficulties for residents when dealing with service agencies who require address information. For example, a resident in NSW notified LPI that they were experiencing difficulties due to inconsistencies in the address for the one property.

The RMS database identified the resident’s address locality as Millthorpe, although the resident lives in Forest Reefs. The inconsistency occurred because the resident’s neighbour listed their address at the RMS as Millthorpe. As a result the resident could not list their property as Forest Reef because the neighbour’s property is actually closer to Forest Reef than that of the resident.

Current data policies mean that it is unlikely that RMS will change the Millthorpe address as it already exists in their database. Other agencies such as Council and other legal documentation identify the resident living in Forest Reef. As the resident’s licence address does not coincide with other legal documents, applying for a loan and other services are cumbersome tasks as statutory declarations regarding the address are often required.

Email correspondence – LPI and resident, August 2011

With the implementation of the CPAS program this type of issue will be minimised through the development of a state wide policy for the creation, exchange and maintenance of address information and the provision of a whole of government address verification web service.
An online search for Ashby House in Tamworth returned inconsistent address information to the information found in LPI databases.

The online search found the address to be Ebsworth Street, Tamworth; however LPI lists the suburb as West Tamworth. This street is also known as the New England Highway.

**Email correspondence – LPI and client, June 2012**

This example emphasises the need for accurate information across addressing databases and records within NSW in order for the correct address to be identified and used correctly.

A street name in the NSW Highlands has two names. “Willow Drive” is the name stored in three different and highly used databases since 2009. However, two other frequently used databases have the same street listed as “Creek Street”. This instance has caused confusion amongst the residents and service delivery agencies.

**LPI correspondence – Wingecarribee Shire Council, November 2011**

**Spelling mistakes causing havoc**

Often, different address databases hold different spellings of road names. For example, in a town on the South Coast of NSW, a street is listed with the spelling ‘Callala Street’ in LPIs database systems, however, Council’s database and the Australia Post database has the spelling listed as ‘Calala’.

To add more confusion to the situation, the street is signposted with the spelling ‘Cal ala’ with a space between the ‘l’ and the ‘a’.” Two different names or spellings for one street registered in government and service delivery databases can cause confusion amongst residents and service delivery agencies, as does the differentiation in street sign posts.

**LPI correspondence – resident enquiry**

“Correct addressing in rural areas is vital, and having a ‘single source of addressing information’ is crucial to saving lives in the bush.”

Walcha Council
Planning ahead: property numbers

A NSW council numbered a street with numbers only for existing residences, not taking into consideration or allowing accommodation for future developments on that street. As a result the entire street needed to be renumbered. Over a year since this activity there are still addressing issues and residents and services often resort to using the old numbering system.

LPI correspondence – council enquiry

What is my suburb?

A family, who lives in the Penrith district, use 5 different suburb names for their residential address! The suburbs vary from:

- Penrith
- Quarry Hill in street directories
- Claremont Meadows by the GNB
- Werrington in Telstra’s database
- Werrington South in the local Government Water Rating System.

This confusion over the location could have had serious consequences. When the family called an ambulance for a diabetic brother, the ambulance was sent the wrong way and as a result was significantly delayed arriving on the scene.

The Sunday Telegraph

In the suburbs of Newington and Silverwater, there is a problem with the suburb boundary. As at March 2012, LPI’s database held the property 3181762 (lot 273 DP270336) as being in Newington, but the real location is in Silverwater (gazetted 30th October 1998).

Many councils are unaware of their ability, under GNB policy, to make minor suburb boundary amendments, without the need to publically advertise when a subdivision occurs after a suburb is gazetted.

Email received by LPI, March 2012
Getting rural addressing right

The use of prefixes in road names does not meet our best practice guidelines:

- **AS4819; 2011** – the new Standard was distributed to each Council in NSW in July 2012
- **GNB guidelines.**

The GNB guidelines for addressing states: “The use of a compass point prefix or an additional suffix such as “north” or “extension” should be avoided”.

In a South Coast Council area there has been concerns raised about the way the rural properties have been addressed along the Princes Highway. There are two separate properties in one suburb that have a house number of 63 – one is addressed as number 63 and the other is addressed as U63, where the ‘U’ is a prefix and not a suffix.

Not all addressing database systems used in NSW have a prefix field. In certain instances, the prefix will not be displayed, and thus the address looks to be an exact duplicate of the neighbouring number 63 address. This poses a number of issues relating to the effective delivery of goods and services, including emergency services.

**Email correspondence – LPI and council, January 2012**

Addresses that do not comply with national standards are not often stored in the national dataset. The CPAS program will continually improve the quality of address data and ensure compliance with national standards whilst still supporting search functionality on those addresses that are non-compliant but used by the general public.
Duplicate addresses, suburbs and road names

The following case studies bring to light the issue of duplicate addresses, suburbs and road names.

“New South Wales currently has over 3.8 million address sites, of which an estimated 240,000 are duplicated, leading to confusion in navigation of people and assets. There are currently 91 duplicate address localities in NSW and 1613 instances where road names are duplicated in the same address locality.”

National address management framework

‘Case study: Addressing at the state and local government level’

Findings from the NSW Address Working Group

The implementation of the CPAS program will reduce the incidences of duplicated addresses by implementing a number of addressing solutions, including:

- a single authoritative database that will be managed by LPI in a centralised, geocoded, property address repository
- functionality that will assist in recognising duplicate names and addresses
- the introduction of governance and guidelines will ensure the reduction of duplicated localities and limit the duplication in newly created addresses and road names
- addresses in the single authoritative database that will have attributions including, but not limited to, quality, status, type and contributing authority.

Without the implementation of the CPAS program and collaboration and cooperation across agencies, these addressing issues will continue to cause problems within the community.

The following case studies are examples of duplicate locality names and addresses that exist across NSW and that have, or could cause confusion for the community, businesses, local state and federal government and service delivery.
The cost of duplicate address information

A large landslide, possibly due to a storm water leak, could have been detected sooner had the operators who took the call at Sydney Water, despatched a crew to the correct location (the corner of Victoria and Bellevue Road, Bellevue Hill). Instead the crew were dispatched to a location that had similar names: Victoria Road and Bellevue Avenue but this location was in West Ryde. The call was received a week prior to the landslide occurring. The crew in that week did not realise the incorrect address was inspected.

A Woollahra Council officer notified Sydney Water Authority about excessive water in the area two days prior to the landslide. There was a dispute over who should incur the expense of $1 million clean-up bill, Sydney Water or Woollahra Council.

Sydney Morning Herald, July 2009

An ambulance attended a call where Augustus Street Merrylands was given as the address. A note on the mobile data terminal indicated that the street was formerly known as Wright Street. The subject edition of a commonly used street directory had two Wright Streets listed in Merrylands.

Parramatta Council changed the name of their Wright Street to Augustus Street. The actual street sign reads as Augustus Street formerly Wright Street. However the latest edition of the street directory lists Augustus Street Merrylands with a cross street of Hilltop Road. This Wright Street is actually in Holroyd Council area and was always Wright Street and is sign posted as such.

The street directory had changed the wrong street in their latest edition. The publishers have been made aware of the error and the correction appeared in the following edition. However, an incidence like this proves that the current process for renaming duplicated names and distributing that information is not without confusion and error.

LPI correspondence – Ambulance Service NSW, August 2011

Duplicate names exist across adjoining LGAs, causing confusion for Postal Services and Emergency Services alike. An example of this occurs in adjoining LGAs of Kyogle and Clarence Valley, less than 11km from each other. The locality name of ‘Deep Creek’ exists in both local government areas. Clarence Valley’s ‘Deep Creek’ has a post code of 2460 and Kyogle’s ‘Deep Creek’ has a post code of 2469. Emergency services have been delayed due to the confusion among the address areas in the past.

Email correspondence – LPI and Richmond Valley Council, March 2012

“We currently have four Brown’s Lanes in the Shire and 23 repeated road names which need to be changed to avoid confusion.”

Bland Shire Council
Inconsistencies in addressing databases

Citizens are currently required to separately notify numerous government agencies and other entities when they change their address due to inadequate processes and systems. There are numerous address databases used by multifaceted organisations across NSW including RMS, LPI, Emergency Services, Utilities, Postal Services, Local Councils and other Government bodies, street directories and navigational aids to name a few.

“The daily interactions between government, the private sector and the community result in thousands of new addresses being created and captured in Australia every week. This address information is collected and stored in many different ways, creating the potential for addresses to vary widely in quality and accuracy.”

PSMA Australia

‘Real time addressing management and the benefits for disaster and emergency management services’

The impact of service agencies and other authorities using their own address datasets means that there may be many addresses in use for the one location. This is causing significant issues for day to day services including:

• the inability to get a licence or change an address because the address doesn’t match the system
• no address being found in individual databases
• the inability to obtain a passport without going through significant effort to provide evidence of your correct address
• difficulties for delivering services such as food, mail or parcels
• uncertainty that emergency services can locate an address on the ground without issue.

Addressing anomalies filter into these databases through human error, crowd sourced information, out-dated address information and new development addressing errors. With the implementation of the CPAS program, many of these anomalies will be rectified. The most significant way CPAS will do this is by implementing a single authoritative database. The database will hold the authoritative address information for all addressable localities in NSW.
Can you find us? The importance of accurate address information

A resident in Northern NSW wrote a letter to their council raising concerns over the amendment to addressing conducted by the council to accompany a new development.

“I am writing to Council as it has become apparent to us that since our road name needed to be changed it is even more difficult to find us”.

The construction of a new bypass meant that the residential road name was changed. The databases that hold addressing information in NSW were not updated consistently and locating the address has become problematic. “Since using our new road name, it has been increasingly difficult for anyone to find us; they cannot find us using GPS or Google maps or Whereis”.

The resident raised concerns over emergency services not reaching their property. “Recently we needed to report a loss to Police. I phoned the police assistance line and had to give our address. It did not come up in the Police database”.

Council records, 7 June 2012

In a rural council area within NSW, a man’s house burnt down after emergency services could not locate the property owner. Emergency services informed the land owner that their database indicated that they were on a road called “Boggabilla Road”. However, council did not have that road listed in their database.

The address was later checked against Land and Property Information data and found the man’s address at “Boggabilla Road” was listed in the database. The update had yet to be made to the emergency services database. ‘Real Time Access’ feature that will be available as part of the CPAS program will minimise the occurrence of similar scenarios.

Email correspondence – LPI and Gwydir Shire Council, October, 2012

A resident found himself in a frustrating situation where his address could not be located in the emergency response address database. The man was informed that his address in the particular suburb where he lived did not exist. His two year old grandson had suffered a fit, and he was concerned the delay could have been critical.

The man said his council rates, water notices and gas account lists his property as being in his named suburb. Letters from his electricity supplier are marked as the same suburb name but it lists its supply address as another suburb. His pension card shows a particular postcode but his home electricity supplier shows one different. Council records showed that the suburb had two postcodes.

“Where the heck are we?” – local newspaper
Who is doing what?

In 2005, a commonly used street directory had many streets deleted from their directories as they were considered ‘fakes’. The street directory contained fake cemeteries, scout halls, phone boxes and a host of other ‘made-up’ landmarks. The removal of all fake street names and landmarks occurred over time.

It is uncertain how many fake street names have been filtered into some of the service company databases. Some of these address entries could still be wrong in the current databases used by NSW services, such as emergency services and energy companies.

‘Case of the disappearing streets that never were’ – local news report, January 2005

The Daily Telegraph emphasised that “lives are being put at risk by a ‘triple-0’ computer system that demands an exact street address before an ambulance can be sent.”

Emergency service operators require an exact and correct address to reach people in the required time frame. “Ambulance workers said the geolocating computer caused delays when a caller was unable to state an exact address. Even a missing letter from a street name could derail it”. Inconsistent addressing information can cause delays in emergency service response times.

Is the information getting to the right people on time?

An ambulance had a problem locating a rural property address near a town in Central West NSW. The ambulances’ GPS did not recognise the address and the ambulance was unable to locate the rural property.

The local council had completed their rural addressing program and had sent their address to LPI.

The ambulance service confirmed that the communicated road name did not exist in their GPS device. It was identified by the rural address owner that his address was captured differently in two GPS devices. When the GPS was unreliable, the Ambulance Service followed signage to try locating the rural property. The ambulance officers noted that the signage was unclear and they were still unable to locate the property.

The current process for LPI is to send an automated monthly update to the NSW Ambulance Service. However, there is currently no mechanism to ensure the GPS provider receives updated address information and to subsequently integrate it into their systems to be updated by the user.

‘Location let down’ – local newspaper, July 2011

GPS devices

GPS providers are not required to use spatial information from any one agency, nor are they required to update the spatial information at regular intervals - this is at their discretion. This includes the information loaded into the GPS device used in some emergency service vehicles.

There is minimal awareness by the GPS users to download updates provided by the GPS provider. It is not unusual to have a GPS device that contains spatial information that is years out of date.
From address to signage

On 23 November 2001, two accidents occurred approximately 30 kilometres apart on the Gloucester to Nowendoc Road (which is also known as Thunderbolts Way and the Nowendoc to Walcha Road). The first accident occurred at approximately 5:45pm where one of the occupants sustained relatively minor injuries. The second accident occurred at approximately 6:45pm where one occupant sustained very serious injuries.

Two helicopters and three ambulances from Armidale, Walcha, and Gloucester were despatched to attend the first incident. The two helicopters flew over the second incident enroute to the first accident site. One helicopter returned to Newcastle empty and the other helicopter transported a patient with a broken wrist to Tamworth Base Hospital.

The Armidale ambulance which was enroute to the first accident passed by the second accident site and stopped to attend the patients of the second incident. The ambulance which was designated to attend the second incident arrived on scene 1 ½ hours after the call was placed. The two other ambulances that had been diverted from the first accident also arrived on the scene of the second incident. The ambulance confusion was the result of a number of factors, including a lack of clear signage or direction.

LPI correspondence
MJH Turner (Myall Lakes Electorate Emergency Services Co-ordination)

“This serious accident highlights road naming and mapping inconsistencies resulting in confusion, putting lives at risk. This also demonstrates the cost to the state when incidents cannot be located.”

“\textit{It is estimated that just over 8\% of the existing sites in NSW do not have an allocated address number and while local councils, if they wish, can direct occupants to identify their premises with numbers, there is no formal requirement stating councils must allocate addresses to all new address sites}.”

National address management framework
‘Case study: Addressing at the state and local government level’
Findings from the NSW Address Working Group

Using the right address

A recent article in The Telegraph stated that “Balmoral residents deny living in Mosman. Most Balmoral locals know they are living in Mosman but prefer to use the harbour side name because it has a more prestigious ring to it”. This issue is most commonly referred to as a ‘vanity suburb’. It causes a number of issues for service delivery and emergency services and often unbeknownst to the user of the vanity name places lives at risk.

\textit{The Daily Telegraph, May 2012}
Getting the address right in the early stages of development

Residents, who live in Hume Gardens Estate in Albury-Wodonga, regard themselves as Lavington residents. However, according to the Albury Council & the Geographical Names Board, Hume Gardens Estate lies in the suburb of Glenroy. Some residents aired their confusion saying “a contract of sale referred to the house being in Lavington”. It has a post code of 2642 which is Lavington. This is very confusing”

‘Suburb chaos sparks anger’
The Bordermail, January 2013

The impact of spelling errors

A street name in Central Western council area was signposted at one end of the street with an “e” in the name and at the other end of the street it was signposted with the “e” being replaced with an “o”. Inconsistencies in spelling of signs and within databases can affect the efficiency of deliveries of goods and services to an address.

Local newspaper, December 2011

A spelling error of a suburb name on signage has occurred in a suburb in western Sydney. Students attending a local college raised the error to the attention of local council and the Roads and Traffic Authority who both denied ownership or having anything to do with the sign. Both advised that they haven’t used that colouring or template format for many years.

Now the suburb name has been misspelled by the Police and Community Youth Clubs plus the State Government and the Community Builders program. Both the council and the RTA are working on finding out to which the sign belongs.

‘It’s a sign that spells out neglect’
The Daily Telegraph, June 2005
Who’s doing what and the impact of ambiguity

A representative from RMS notified LPI about a conflicting name for a highway in NSW. In the Road location dataset, the highway was identified as ‘Ebor Grafton Road’. Locally and in the DCDB and DTDB databases the road was identified as Armidale Road.

RMS indicated that the mentioned road naming and maintenance was the responsibility of the local Council. Councils seem to be confused about their responsibility of naming and maintaining highways due to them running through a number of LGAs.

Email correspondence – LPI and RMS, February 2012

Who’s doing what and the need for education

Crowd sourced address information can make its way into mainstream addressing databases used by government and service agencies. This can pose real problems if the address information is not the correct address.

An example of crowd sourced address information comes from an article in Red + Green magazine where a Wootton resident named and signposted a lane that led to his property “Rabbitohs Lane”. Though this name has yet to make its way into addressing databases or ‘google maps’ – which often use crowd sourced information, the local postal service knows the lane well enough to send mail to this location.

‘A stroll down Rabbitohs lane’
Red + Green Magazine Season 12: Issue 3

There is no policy to govern the naming of private roads. The CPAS program will ensure that there are policies and processes in place for these roads to be named in accordance with state guidelines and that the road is registered in the single authoritative dataset.
The following case studies highlight the issue of multiple properties within a large complex that do not have individual addresses allocated to them. Examples include complex sites, such as hospitals, universities and retirement facilities; and rural properties. There are a number of CPAS program initiatives that are or will be put in place to ensure all addressable locations have an address. These initiatives include:

- Complex Site Addressing project – LPI is working in collaboration with Councils to ensure complex sites have internal addresses allocated
- the implementation of governance and guidelines that will ensure all addressable locations are addressed
- the introduction of a single authoritative database
- NES functionality (as explained in previous section).

Every day emergency services are exposed to the risks associated with the lack of information related to complex site addressing.

The need for early address capture and distribution
Street directory maps used by Emergency Services are not updated immediately after the asphalt is laid and are therefore not keeping up with the urban sprawl of new-release suburbs; in certain districts suburbs are being ‘lost’.

Callers to ‘triple-0’ were told that their street does not exist, and the Ambulance Service was incorrectly dispatched to the wrong suburb resulting in the ambulance not arriving until 2 ¼ hours after the initial call was made.

The Daily Telegraph, November 2005

A new North Coast development and street renaming changes in and around an Industrial Estate, has resulted in residents not being found by visitors and delivery and emergency services such as Police. This is because of different listings on Google Maps, Whereis, Sensis, the White Pages, and GPS and by council and the Office of the Valuer General.

Correspondence with council, June 2012
Need for education and communities

One of the key drivers to improving addressing practices across NSW is education. While there are current guidelines relating to addressing in NSW, confusion still exists across addressing bodies where the custodianship is unclear.

It is also important for the community to understand how crucial it is to learn and use their correct legal address for the purpose of improving the state of addressing and to ensure confusion by service agencies is minimised.

The following case studies are examples of where improvements in addressing education are needed.

LPI has received emails requesting information about who the correct authority is to name highways in local areas.

In 2010, Wentworth Shire Council gazetted two road names, Henry Road and Adelaide Street, both of which are the Stuart Highway. The following advice in regards to authority was provided by LPI:

“Whilst RMS is the authority for the highway, the application of the local road name(s) in use over that extent of the highway falls back to Local Government”.

There needs to be clearer governance and guidelines in place to eliminate further confusion over highway naming authority.

Email correspondence – LPI and Wentworth Council, April 2012

A rural property resident needed to register a mobile phone sim card with a telecommunication company. However, the telecommunications company’s database was not set up to accept a property name as valid address, it was set up to only accept a number. The resident was not aware that their local council would have a record of their correct property address. The resident only had knowledge of the property name.

Sydney Morning Herald, March 2010

The task of locating rural properties currently requires an explanation such as just a few miles past the grid or after the last letterbox. This has caused delays and inconvenience for emergency services and the delivery of goods and services to the community.

Rural addressing provides a standardised means of locating rural properties (Australia-wide) with a system that is accurate, easy to understand and easy to apply. Educating rural property owners on the benefits of using their new legal address is still required in some areas.

GNB ‘Rural Addressing for NSW’ – Information sheet
“Many landholders are reluctant to adopt Rural Addressing numbers and often revert to property names, we encourage they retain their property name in their address and also include the number to eliminate this problem. There is still a lack of use of rural address numbering.”

Gunnedah Shire Council

Does my property have a number?

On a remote property near Boomi in far North NSW an ambulance was called to assist a man who had become unwell from working in the heat on a hot day.

The ambulance operator who received the call could not locate the property or road name on their system. The operator communicated a house number, but was informed that the property did not have a house number.

The operator terminated the call after they could not locate an exact address on a map. Assistance was sought by a local stock and station agent who knocked on the door of the Goondiwindi Ambulance Service.

‘Triple-0 bungle over lack of street address - again’
Importance of correct address information

Comments from service agencies

I cannot stress how important it is to ensure that accurate address information is made available and used at all times. Police Officers are often required to attend locations in circumstances quite literally involving life and death.

Delays in responding to calls for help caused by poor address information have, and continue to have, disastrous and tragic outcomes - even seconds can cost lives. Problems such as duplicate street and suburb names and inconsistent street numbering all have a significant effect on the response times of all emergency services.

Local councils are tremendous supporters of our emergency service organisations and we once again call upon their assistance in ensuring that all addresses are clearly and logically allocated and accurately recorded. We also appeal to the community to support us and local councils in ensuring correct address information is applied and used at all times.

Inspector David Brogden, NSW Police Force

Fire & Rescue NSW’s (FRNSW) purpose is to enhance community safety, quality of life and confidence by minimising the impact of hazards and emergency incidents on people, environment and economy of New South Wales. Accurate and current addressing information is critical in enabling FRNSW resources to be deployed to incidents via our Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch application (ESCAD).

The consequences of delays in location identification in terms of lives and property can be catastrophic. A structured approach to addressing is paramount and the Comprehensive Property Addressing System (CPAS) will provide the backbone for this effort.

Addressing is forged at the local council level and correct address information supplied to the community in this structured way enables them to quote an authoritative location that FRNSW and other emergency services can find and respond to with minimal delay.

Graham Chapman, Fire & Rescue NSW
Progress towards better addressing

There are a number of examples across NSW where councils and other government agencies are taking actions to improve addressing and addressing practices in their areas. Some examples of these proactive initiatives and practices are outlined in the case studies below.

Rural addressing
The Gwydir Shire and Bingara Council have identified the critical urgency of attending to inconsistencies of rural addressing within their area. Bingara Council identified that ambiguous rural addressing is a risk factor for emergency services reaching the intended destination.

“As Emergency Services personnel, such as ambulance officers are becoming more transient and the Emergency Services call centres are moving to larger centres like Dubbo and Newcastle, the need for clear naming will only increase”.

Bingara Council are taking steps to ensure that there is unambiguous addressing in their rural areas, and better signage for easier identification of rural properties.

Bingara Advocate, September 2011

Why is Rural Addressing needed? Currently, the task of locating rural properties requires a definition such as just a few miles past the grid or after the last letterbox. This has caused delays and inconvenience for emergency services and the delivery of goods and services to the community. Rural addressing provides a standardised means of locating rural properties (Australia-wide) with a system based on property entrance point measurement that is accurate, easy to understand and easy to apply.

For more information on rural addressing see www.gnb.nsw.gov.au

Policy and processes
In 2010, Forbes Shire Council announced the implementation of a new rural addressing policy which will assist emergency service providers in reaching the correct property. Forbes Mayor agreed that the implementation of a new rural numbering system was a “critical change”. The Forbes Advocate stated that “the rural addressing standard administered by Land and Property Information is a simple, straight forward and standardised means to identify local rural properties throughout Australia”. The Forbes rural addressing project is now complete.

Local newspaper, 2010

Good governance
The Sunday Telegraph noted beneficial changes to addressing standards and guidelines by the GNB:

Australian Standard guidelines call for road naming standards according to the road type definition and also outlining the rules for the numbering of units in multi-level buildings e.g.

• a treeless street can no longer be called a boulevard
• a land-locked road cannot be called an esplanade
• units are to follow a similar numbering system to hotels where the first number indicates the level or floor.

Sunday Telegraph, November, 2012

The CPAS Program through consultation with NSW stakeholders has supported the GNB and LPI in developing the NSW Address Policy and the NSW Addressing User Manual. These documents are available on the LPI website http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au/about_lpi/comprehensive_property_addressing_system and the GNB website www.gnb.nsw.gov.au.

For more information email cpas@lpi.nsw.gov.au.
Glossary

**Alias address** – a substitute or alternative address for a site. In many circumstances alias address may not be officially recognised or recorded.

Also see vanity address.

**Complex Site Addressing** – provides a unique identification for secondary address sites within a larger, primary address site. E.g. universities, hospitals, multi-storey buildings, retirement villages, strata title properties and super lots are all considered complex address sites.

**Crowd sourced information** – information sourced from external non-custodial parties.

**Digital Cadastral Database (DCDB)** – a database held and maintained by LPI containing spatial information representing land administrative and legal social boundaries. Themes include:
- government administrative boundaries such as Local Government Areas, Suburbs, Counties, State and Federal Electoral Districts, and other administrative areas
- cadastral fabric, fiscal property and Crown tenure
- proclaimed boundaries for State Forests, National Park & Wildlife Reserves and Livestock Health and Pest Authority Districts
- road corridors and centrelines.

**Digital Topographic Database (DTDB)** – a database held and maintained by LPI containing spatial information representing the physical environment. Themes include:
- cultural / built
- transport
- elevation
- hydrology
- names
- land cover.

**Global Positioning System (GPS)** – navigational and surveying facility that can provide location and time information.

**Geographical Names Board (GNB)** – board that is authorised by the Geographical Names Act 1966 to assign names to places; to investigate and determine the form, spelling, meaning, pronunciation, origin and history of any geographical name; and to determine the application of each name with regard to position, extent or other reference.

**Geocoded Urban & Rural Address System (GURAS)** – LPI’s property based geocoded address system. It treats Urban and Rural Addresses in the same manner i.e. the construct of each address is to have a (minimum) house number, road name and road type and suburb. It uniquely locates addresses (geocode), with a real world position (latitude and longitude), for each address point.

**Local Government Area (LGA)** – administrative division of a country that a local government is responsible for.

**National Address Management Framework (NAMF)** – provides an overarching set of standards for the process of verifying an address and exchanging digital address data between government departments and organisations. The overall aim of the NAMF is to provide a unique address where one address equals one location.

**Notification and Edit Service (NES)** – is a system created by LPI that will provide a communication channel that allows for the reporting and repair of incorrect information and data.

**Prefix** – a word, letter or number that is placed at the beginning of a word to modify or change its meaning.

**Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)** – an agency which brings together the former Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Maritime.
Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) – replaced by RMS.

Rural addressing – a collaborative community project administered by local councils and supported by LPI. It is a simple, straightforward means to identify and locate rural properties throughout Australia.

Suffix – a word, letter or number that is placed at the end of a word to modify or change its meaning.

Universal Business Directory (UBD) – brand of street directories in Australia. UBD products include maps, atlases, guides and DVDs.

Valnet/Valnet2 – an LPI database used to store the Register of Land Values.

Vanity address – a location identifier used by residents and citizens to identify a location that is not the ‘actual’ or ‘correct’ address.

The most commonly used example is “Kings Cross” in Sydney, which is an urban place and not an actual suburb or proper component of an address. When an ambulance is called to Kings Cross, the location identified actually covers several suburbs including Darlinghurst, Potts Point and Woolloomooloo and this makes it problematic for the ambulance service to find the patient.