NSW Comprehensive Property Addressing System
Single source of truth for addressing in NSW
Title: NSW Comprehensive Property Addressing System

ISSN: 2203-6164

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May 2014 LPI (B) P14/10/039
# CONTENTS

BACKGROUND ................................................................. 4

WHY A NSW CPAS ............................................................. 6

THE CPAS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES ......................................... 7

CASE STUDY: ‘VANITY’ SUBURBS ........................................... 9

CASE STUDY: CORRECTING AN INCORRECT ADDRESS RECORD ...

CURRENT ADDRESS DATA FLOW FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE ...

PROPOSED NSW CPAS PROCESS AND DATA FLOW ............... 12

RECOMMENDED REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK ...

WHAT’S IN IT FOR NSW .................................................... 14
BACKGROUND

The NSW Addressing Working Group (NAWG) was formed by the NSW Spatial Council on 24 June 2009, in response to the Council’s report highlighting the need to review NSW’s processes, legislation, systems and governance related to addressing.

NAWG’s mandate is to develop an Address Vision for NSW for the next decade. The Address Vision is:

“By 2012, New South Wales will implement a comprehensive property address program to meet the needs of emergency services, business, government and the community by providing open and timely access to accurate, consistent and logical property address information”.

It was determined that there is a market failure in addressing as NSW’s current system is ambiguous and is not comprehensive. This situation results in a number of costs and risks borne by the NSW community and government. The building of a NSW Comprehensive Property Addressing System (CPAS) and its supporting regulatory and administrative framework will address this market failure.

The CPAS program will ensure that there is one ‘source of truth’ for NSW address information, which will consist of an automated centralised system that is maintained by the host agency, Land and Property Information (LPI).

LPI is well placed as the lead agency for this program due to its strong relationships with local government and the Geographical Names Board (GNB) as well as building on LPI’s existing cadastral and topographic systems. Address data is core information for undertaking many of LPI’s activities, particularly in relation to land valuations, land title records, property sales and the geo-coding of address information. LPI has, for this reason, already established a significant part of the address database through its existing addressing systems.

CPAS will comply with the National Address Management Framework (NAMF) specifications and integrate the Australian/New Zealand Rural and Urban Addressing Standards (AS4819) into reformed regulations and administrative frameworks.

The CPAS project does not seek to change the current distribution of responsibility for address element creation in NSW.
COMPREHENSIVE PROPERTY ADDRESSING SYSTEM

“The case study evidence indicates that the current state of addressing practices across Australia is inconsistent, inefficient, susceptible to inaccuracies, protracted, and represents a threat to public safety”.

*National Address Management Framework: Proof of Concept, May 2008, endorsed by the Online and Communication Council (OCC); December 2008.*

“Street Address is fundamental to a citizen’s ability to interact with government, however street address information is poorly and inefficiently managed throughout the public sector. Poor and inaccurate street address information has been identified as a significant risk in the emergency services area, and as such safety and security are compromised.”

*Address Management Policy for the Western Australia Public Sector: Policy Framework and Standards; January 2010.*

“The provision of accurate and current addresses in NSW is regarded as a major imperative for the delivery of emergency services, post and utilities as well as to underpin a range of government activities. Over half of all government business is transacted through, or relies on, addresses which underpin some $30B of economic activity annually and provide the administrative and information basis for Government to collect some $5B of revenues and charges each year, expected to grow by over 20% during the next decade.”

*NWS Spatial Council, NSW Address Working Group, Address Workshop; November 2010.*

The objective of the Comprehensive Property Addressing System (CPAS) is to improve the property addressing system in NSW to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of emergency services, post and utility services and to support a range of government activities at the local, state and Commonwealth levels.

The CPAS program will create a comprehensive and official geo-coded address database for NSW that will be the ‘Single source of truth for addressing in NSW’.
WHY A NSW COMPREHENSIVE PROPERTY ADDRESSING SYSTEM (CPAS)

The regulatory and administrative framework for creating and distributing addresses does not support a clear, comprehensive, collaborative approach to addressing.

The lack of a well defined regulatory and administrative framework is one of the factors contributing to the process of naming roads and creating addresses being confusing, unnecessarily time consuming and costly for councils and their staff.

There is no single source of truth or central repository of official or trusted address information for NSW.

For example, Emergency Service Organisations (ESOs) are unable to access a singular address database which accurately represents all the geo-coded addresses, including aliases, across NSW. ESOs need access to this information to successfully respond to emergencies, to activate emergency warning systems and to plan and execute disaster recovery operations.

There are many different ways in which address information is created and distributed.

Addresses are constantly changing as suburbs are redefined and new subdivisions are created. There are approximately 4500 suburbs in NSW and each council has its own process and stakeholder lists for communicating any new or changed addresses.

Inaccurate and ambiguous address information poses risk for councils and the community.

The risk associated with poor addressing is easily demonstrated when related to emergency management and the efficient delivery of services; what is less obvious is the risk associated with accountability when creating and managing address information.

There is no governing body to assist and support councils in rectifying inaccurate and ambiguous address information.

Councils must have recognised support when undertaking this necessary task. An address focussed governing body will assist councils and support their authority in creating and modifying address information.
THE CPAS PROGRAM
OBJECTIVES

The CPAS program aligns with many of the objectives of the NSW 2021 plan including:

REBUILD THE ECONOMY

Red tape reduction.

The CPAS program will reduce red tape by providing streamlined semi-automated address creation processes.

Enhance the economic and social efficiencies for industry and the community.

A NSW CPAS will significantly reduce the costs to industry as a result of incorrect addressing. It will minimise the impact on the community when a property address requires modification. The instance of address modifications will decrease significantly as the CPAS program progresses.

Improving public sector efficiency.

The CPAS program will provide a single authoritative source of truth of address information that will underpin government, business and community transactions such as:

• the National Broadband Network
• service delivery e.g. mail and licensing
• hassle-free connections to utilities.

RETURN QUALITY SERVICES

Improve efficiency and accuracy in the creation and distribution of address information.

Through the enhancement of spatial systems and the provision of automated processes and web services the CPAS program will enable a more efficient and accurate address creation and distribution process in NSW.

RENOVATE INFRASTRUCTURE

The creation of a comprehensive and official geo-coded address database for NSW.

The CPAS program is a significant investment for the State of NSW. A centralised system with the provision of key automated web services will support not only government agencies but businesses and the community.

STRENGTHEN OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES

Online and timely availability of trusted and authoritative spatial and textual information.

The CPAS program will maximise the value of the trusted and authoritative address information created by councils by ensuring consistent information is available to all stakeholders including critical services such as Utilities, Australia Post, Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Triple Zero (000).
Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters.

The real-time provision of precise spatial information is a key objective of the program and crucial in achieving the NSW 2021 plan outcomes.

Eliminate ambiguity and provide a consistent understanding and approach across all addressing authorities.

This will be delivered through streamlined regulation and administrative processes and education as to what is required of addressing authorities in the provision of address information.

Provide more effective governance and support by modifying the role of the Geographical Names Board to specifically include addressing matters.

CPAS will support councils’ authority to modify address information that poses a risk for councils and the community. Effective governance will support councils in their interaction with the community when an address modification is required.

Assess the status of Rural Addressing. Develop and implement a collaborative strategy for its completion and ongoing maintenance.

The CPAS program is undertaking a review of the Rural Addressing status across affected councils. LPI will continue to work collaboratively with councils to complete their rural addressing and to develop manageable maintenance processes.

Effective governance will support councils in their interaction with the community when an address modification is required.
CASE STUDY: ‘VANITY’ SUBURBS

In early January 2010 the outside BBQ of a home caught fire and the owner called Triple Zero (000). The emergency call was sent through to the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and a unit was despatched in Katoomba. This was despite Lithgow being much closer to the fire.

The property owner had provided Triple Zero (000) with the address that had been documented on the sales contract as presented by the developer. Unfortunately the estate name had been incorporated into the address instead of the correct suburb name.

The fire brigade was despatched to a town some 70km’s away; this area having a suburb name similar to the estate name relayed by the property owner.

Subsequent investigation has revealed that Triple Zero (000) did not have the address in their system that was relayed by the property owner, nor should they have. The local council has since confirmed the correct suburb name with the property owner and the other affected residents in that neighbourhood, who incidentally were using the wrong suburb name.

Fortunately, the property owner was able to extinguish the fire before any major damage was sustained. This confusing situation could have had grave consequences if a more life-threatening incident had occurred.
CASE STUDY: CORRECTING AN INCORRECT ADDRESS RECORD

A home owner found themselves in a complicated situation where they had their correct address on their rates notice, insurance policy and banking documentation and a different address on their driver’s license. This creates problems whenever 100 points of identification evidence is required, such as when applying for a loan.

How could such a problem occur? The next door neighbour had incorrectly listed their street address with the RTA as number 665 in the correct street name in the wrong suburb. This was done before this person moved into number 663 and correctly listed their house as number 663 in the correct street name in the correct suburb.

In this instance the RTA database holds the correct street name against the wrong suburb name. So the home owner is unable to change the address on their licence to match their rates notice and other documentation. Whenever a situation arises where they have to verify their identity they have to remember whether they used the address on their licence or their correct address. The home owner was required to submit a statutory declaration to substantiate the correct address.
No two of the address databases are the same.
NSW COMPREHENSIVE PROPERTY ADDRESSING SYSTEM – CPAS

» Geographical Names and Addressing Board – GNAB
» Australian Rural and Urban Addressing Standard – AS4819
» NSW Geocoded Comprehensive Address Database

ADDRESS CUSTODIANS

» 152 NSW Local Government Areas
  • Great Lakes Council
  • Cowra Shire Council
  • City of Ryde

» Public and private agencies
  • Private developers
  • Retirement villages
  • Landcom
  • Department of Education
  • Department of Housing

ADDRESS USERS

» Local Government
» Australia Post
» Emergency Services
» General Public
» Sensis (Telstra)
» National Broadband Network
» Electoral Commissions

12
LPI is working with key stakeholders to review the regulatory and administrative framework related to addresses. Recommended directions include:

- All address sites must be allocated an address.
- Addresses are to comply with the Australian and New Zealand Rural and Urban Addressing Standard – AS4819.
- Addresses must be created earlier in the development process.
- All roads linked to an address site must be named.
- Private Roads will undergo a formal naming process – the same as public roads.
- Correct and appropriate address number and road/street signage must be erected.
- Address custodians must supply all address information, including road names and their extent, to LPI for processing through CPAS.
- Address custodians are to align their official address information with the NSW comprehensive official geocoded address database; this will minimise the dissemination and use of ambiguous address information.
- Address information must be created at the earliest possible stage; recommended to be synchronised with development application approvals.

The legislative directions described here are based on the recommendations made by the NSW Addressing Working Group that were subsequently approved by the NSW Spatial Council.
WHAT’S IN IT FOR NSW

The CPAS program engages Local, State and Commonwealth Government and other public and private stakeholder agencies in achieving the objectives of the CPAS program and in contributing to the successful outcomes of the NSW 2021 plan.

The benefits of the CPAS program to NSW will be ongoing and increase as the creation, accuracy, distribution and use of address information improves overtime.

- CPAS will maximise the value of the trusted and authoritative address information created by councils.

- An improved regulatory and administrative framework will streamline the process of naming roads and allocating an address.

Reforms will explicitly detail addressing accountabilities thus making it easier for authorities to create the most appropriate address information.

- These reforms along with a centralised distribution centre will mitigate the risks associated with inadequate address management processes for council and the community.

CPAS will do this by ensuring consistent and timely information is available to all stakeholders including critical services such as Utilities, Australia Post, Electoral Commissions, Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Triple Zero (000).

- CPAS will provide rapid identification of address locations including alias and vanity addresses.

- CPAS users will be able to access a single address database which accurately represents all addresses.

- Streamlined naming processes and systems that are easy to use will be developed and implemented.

- CPAS will provide intuitive two-way web notification services and distribute information through incremental event changes and general data feeds, on terms agreed to by each stakeholder, including councils.

- Improved address search and validation services along with the introduction of a Property Address Confirmation Certificate will encourage the use of correct address information.

- CPAS supports the NSW community and industry through increased efficiency and effectiveness of emergency, postal and utility services.

- CPAS will reduce red tape for address custodians by providing semi-automated naming processes and online verification and validation services.