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[www.oralra.nsw.gov.au/landclaims.html](http://www.oralra.nsw.gov.au/landclaims.html)  
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**LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**OVERVIEW**

The preamble to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)* states that land in New South Wales was traditionally owned and occupied by Aboriginal people, and is of spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance to Aborigines. It recognises the need of Aboriginal people for land and acknowledges that land set aside for Aboriginal people in the past was progressively reduced without compensation.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is important legislation that recognises the rights of Aboriginal people in New South Wales and provides a vehicle for the expression of self-determination and self-governance.

The purposes of the Act are:

- (a) to provide land rights for Aboriginal persons in New South Wales,
- (b) to provide for representative Aboriginal Land Councils in New South Wales,
- (c) to vest land in those Councils,
- (d) to provide for the acquisition of land, and the management of land and other assets and investments, by or for those Councils and the allocation of funds to and by those Councils,
- (e) to provide for the provision of community benefit schemes by or on behalf of those Councils.

At May 2009,

- More than 17,600 land claims have been lodged with the Registrar
- 2,325 claims have been granted - this figure includes land claims that were granted in full or partially granted
- the remainder of the land claims have been refused, otherwise finalised or yet to be determined by the Minister
- the total area granted is 81,813 ha
- The estimated total value of the land granted under the Act was approximately \$2,157 billion.

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