

**DAVID HARRIS MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND TREATY**

**TARA MORIARTY MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR CROWN LAND**

**NSW LABOR WELCOMES PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON RESOLVING
ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS**

A report from the Auditor-General's reveals the Government has failed to make a significant dent in the number of outstanding land claims, particularly in relation to Crown Land.

The [report](#) identified a deficiency in the lack of departmental resourcing to process and manage claims.

The Auditor General's report made the following findings:

- The number of unprocessed Aboriginal land claims continued to increase, with unaudited data showing it had 36,769 unprocessed Aboriginal land claims to assess and determine as at 30 June 2020. This is an increase of 914 claims from 2019.
- The number of unprocessed claims more than 10 years after they were lodged has increased by 10.9 per cent to 7,656.
- In 2019/20, the Department resolved 1,505 claims, compared to 1,037 in 2018/19. 280 claims were successful and 1,225 claims were refused or withdrawn.

In 2016 the Government introduced a new framework known as Aboriginal Land Agreements (ALAs) to enter into voluntary and legally binding agreements to resolve land claims. This was to reduce the need for costly and lengthy land claim determinations.

To date not a single agreement has been reached.

The Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty David Harris said: "The Auditor-General has been raising the speed of Aboriginal Land Claim determinations since a performance audit in 2007 when there were 8,922 unprocessed claims.

"That number has grown to almost 38,000 unresolved claims and it is appropriate that a new performance audit is undertaken to get to the bottom of why this number is growing exponentially," Mr Harris said.

“NSW Labor welcomes the Auditor-General’s commitment to undertake a performance audit during 2020/21, to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration of Aboriginal land claims.

“The aim of land ownership being a pathway to economic independence for Aboriginal people in NSW is being thwarted by a system that is overly complex and under resourced.”

The Shadow Minister for Crown Land Tara Moriarty added: “Land claims are continuing to grow but are not being dealt with because the Government refuses to provide the necessary resources.

“The Auditor-General found that there are ‘limited Departmental resources to process and manage claims’,” Ms Moriarty said.

“The Auditor-General also advised that reports to parliament since 2007 have called for the matter to be better managed, but the Government has failed to act.”

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