

## Deeds Indexes

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## Wellington Land Deeds Registration

### Introduction

The Deeds Registration System documented changes of ownership and boundaries for pieces of land from the 1840s onwards. The key index in this system is the Deeds Index (DI), which gives an overview of what has happened to a parcel of land up until 1924.

Under Deeds Registration, the first establishment of a land title was usually a Crown Grant or Warrant, which passed the land from the Crown into private hands. Later transactions and changes to the land could be registered into the Deeds System.

It was not mandatory to register a sale of land, but registration enabled ownership to be tracked and validated through a Government system. When a transaction occurred the documentation was taken to the Deeds Office. There it was numbered and copied into the relevant type of register, usually a Deeds Register (DR), Crown Grant Record Book (CG) or Will Book. The original document was returned to the owner. These transactions were then copied into a Deeds Index.

Under the Land Transfer Act 1870 land transactions could be registered in either the Land Transfer system or in the Deeds System. From 1924 onwards land could only be registered in the Land Transfer system as the Deeds system was phased out. Some land remains in the Deeds System today.

**See Research Guide:** *Land – Wellington*

### Searching Deeds

To search the Deeds Registration System, one of the following is needed:

- A Certificate of Title record that refers to a Deeds Index entry. (Certificates of Title records are held by LINZ).
- Legal Description: The Section Number (Appellation) of the land.
- The name of an historical Registered Owner (See Nominal Indexes).

### Certificates of Title (held by LINZ)

The first Certificate of Title issued against a piece of land should cite a preceding deeds reference. This is noted in the top-left corner of a certificate of title. All subsequent certificates of title quote the preceding certificate of title reference.

The first certificate of title issued for a piece of land is therefore key to locating historical information in the deeds system.

### Deeds Indexes

[AFIH 22394 W5691/39-99]

Deeds Index volumes (held in the LINZ Register Room) record all the registered transactions for a piece of land, on a dedicated page within the index.

Each page details the documents that were filed, including the document (instrument) type and number, date of registration, date of the document and where it is recorded/transcribed. The last may be in a Deeds Register Book [AFIH 22395 W5691/100-386], a Crown Grant Book [AFIH W5687/67-88] or a Wills Book [AFIH W5687/259-270] (see below).

Deeds Index volumes are organised geographically by registration district and then by section number. Each Index Book index at the front, gives page numbers for the sections in a registration district.

### Finding Correct Deeds Indexes

- (a) If the Section Number is known check the Wall Chart (see next page).
- (b) If an Instrument (document) Number is known, look in the Nominal Primary Indexes (see next column)  
[AFIH 22393 W5691/1-38]
- (c) If only the owner's name is known, check the Indexes to Primary Deeds – Alphabetical (see below)  
[AFIH 22396 W5691/386-388]

A reference to the Deeds Index Book is also found on the first Certificate of Title, which can be obtained from LINZ. If the land was transferred out of the Deeds system into the Certificate of Title system, underneath the final entry in the Deeds Index Book will be an Application Number for a Certificate of Title.

## Searching by Section Number using Wall Chart

The Wall Chart in the LINZ Register Room lists all major Registration Districts (localities) and gives a Deeds Index volume number [AFIH 22394 W5691/39-99] for each section in a Registration District. Each volume's index gives page numbers for sections and districts.

## Searching by Instrument (Document) Number

When a document was registered in the Deeds system it was assigned a sequential number, known as an instrument number. The Indexes to Primary Deeds (see below) list the documents by instrument number.

## Searching by Person's Name

### Indexes to Primary Deeds – Alphabetical 1845-1990 (probable gaps) [AFIH 22396 W5691/386-388]

These Wellington Index volumes, sometimes called 'Deeds Indexes' or 'Alphabetical Indexes' or 'Nominal Indexes', are an alphabetical list of people who had an interest in a piece of land. Each name entry provides an instrument (document) number which leads to the Nominal Primary Indexes (see next column).

The alphabetical/nominal indexes were compiled as people registered documents into the deeds system, so the names are in approximate date order. There is some overlap between indexes so researchers should check all three indexes, and it is likely the indexes are incomplete in the later 19th century.

A nominal index is also available to the Deposited Deeds c1845-c1868 [AFIH 22398 W5691/391]. See Research Guide: *Land – Wellington*.

## Further Deeds Records

### Nominal Primary Indexes [AFIH 22393 W5691/1-38]

The Nominal Primary Indexes to Deeds are arranged by Instrument Number and state both the type of document and the parties to it. They refer (usually as book and page number) to where the document was recorded, for example in:

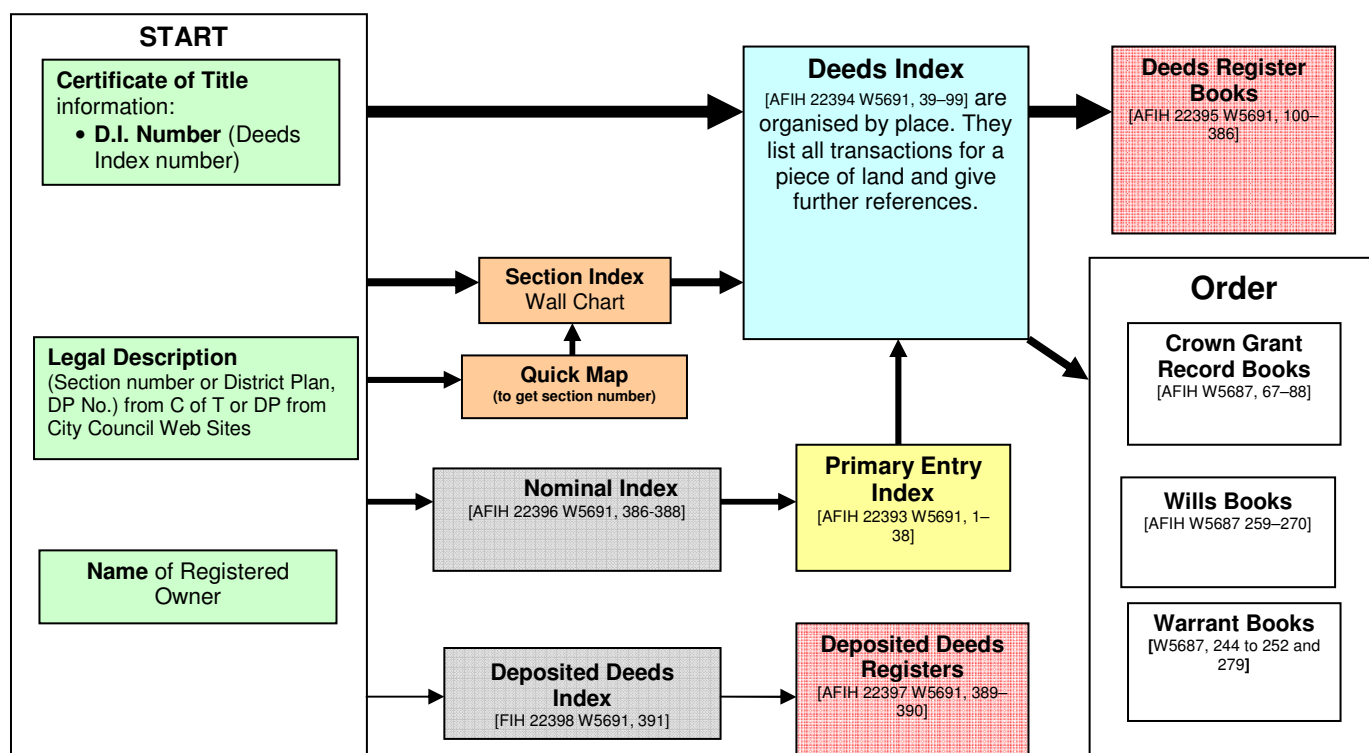
- Deeds Register Book [AFIH 22395 W5691/100-385]
- Crown Grant Book [AFIH 22367 W5687/67-88]
- Wills Book [AFIH 22879 W5687/259-270]

The Nominal Primary Indexes also provide a reference to the Deeds Indexes [AFIH 22394 W5691/39-99], which show all dealings for that particular piece of land.

Instrument numbers can be found by searching for owner's names in the Indexes to Primary Deeds – Alphabetical. [AFIH 22396 W5691/386-388]

### Deeds Registers [AFIH 22395 W5691/100-385]

As each deed was registered an entry was made in a Deeds Register. The information in the register book includes a full transcript of the transaction, the instrument number, type of document, date registered, parties involved and reference to the relevant Deeds Indexes [AFIH 22394 W5691/39-99] (see page 1).



The above diagram outlines several common approaches to searching the records of the Wellington Land District [AFIH] held at Archives New Zealand Wellington.