

Opening Ceremony of the Lottery-funded
Oturei Marae in Dargaville, Northland



New Zealand
e-Passports are
among the world's
most secure and
technologically
advanced



Civil Defence exercise



Monitoring Blackjack at Auckland Casino

our vision

The Department of Internal Affairs is a recognised leader in public service – known for innovation, essential to New Zealand, and trusted to deliver

our purpose

The Department of Internal Affairs serves and connects citizens, communities and government to build a strong, safe nation

outcomes we contribute to

Strong Sustainable
Communities/Hapū/Iwi

Safer Communities

Trusted Records of
New Zealand Identity

**We also have a key
Departmental objective**

Executive Government
is Well Supported

our workplace principles

We value people

We act with integrity

We provide outstanding
service

TE TARI TAIWHENUA
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS »
annual report
Pūrongo ā Tau
2006–07

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part one »

overview

Chief Executive's Overview

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Chief Executive's Overview



For 167 years, since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the establishment of Crown authority in New Zealand, the Department of Internal Affairs has been part of the fabric of New Zealand. This is symbolised in our logo. In November 2007, it will be exactly a hundred years since we began using the name “The Department of Internal Affairs”, given in Māori as “Te Tari Taiwhenua”.

This Annual Report highlights the progress we have made in the past year as one organisation in our purpose of serving and connecting citizens, communities and government to build a strong, safe nation.

Our purpose supports the Government priorities set out in the three themes of economic transformation, families – young and old, and national identity. Our outcomes describe the ultimate result of our work. These outcomes – strong, sustainable communities/hapū/iwi, safer communities and trusted records of New Zealand identity, as well as our objective to support Executive Government – align with and support the Government themes.

Working to progress economic transformation

The Department has a leadership role in managing the central government/local government interface. A key focus during 2006/07 has been working cooperatively with Auckland councils to strengthen regional governance in Auckland, as part of the ongoing development of Auckland into a world class city. The Department led the Government's engagement with Auckland local authorities, building strong working relationships and co-chairing the Joint Chief Executives' Forum. In July 2007 the Government endorsed the Final Report of the Strengthening Auckland's Regional Governance Project as a positive first step for strengthening Auckland's regional governance. The Government also announced that it would establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance to examine and report on what local and regional governance arrangements are required for the Auckland region over the foreseeable future. The Department will be helping to implement the proposals in the Final Report and supporting the work of the Commission.

At the national level, the Department is promoting the opportunity to vote in the 2007 local elections, and an understanding of the single transferable vote system.

In March 2007 we successfully hosted the fourth Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Auckland with a theme of “delivering development through local leadership”. Six hundred delegates from more than 40 nations discussed common topical issues in local government, and examined New Zealand's local government initiatives, and how central and local government work together. The Commonwealth Local Government Conference was the first planned ‘carbon neutral’ event to be staged in New Zealand.

Our work with local government, and in community development and grant funding, contributes to local economic development: building social capital, infrastructural services, environmental management, facilities development and heritage protection. This local infrastructure is needed to achieve effective economic transformation.

The Significant Community-Based Projects Fund was established in 2005 to distribute \$32 million to regional or national major community-based projects that could not get sufficient funding from existing sources to complete their capital works. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs announced Cabinet decisions on six successful applications this year, and the fund is now fully committed. The projects are spread throughout the country and are in the designated outcome areas of arts, culture and heritage, sport and recreation, tourism, conservation and the environment, and economic development.

The New Zealand passport continues to be one of the most highly regarded in the world, providing visa-free access to more than 50 countries. In 2006/07, the Department issued over 390,000 passports and travel documents. To improve security and stay ahead of fraudsters, in 2005 we introduced the e-passport and moved to a five-year passport. During 2006/07 we began work on a Passport Redevelopment Programme. The Programme will enable the Department to further improve the security of the New Zealand passport and the integrity of the processes used to issue passports and other travel documents, ensuring that the New Zealand passport retains its reputation as a trusted travel document and record of identity.

Supporting families – young and old

Families, in their various forms, are the basis of community. The Department's involvement with families starts with the registration of births, and continues through the registration of marriages, civil unions and deaths. Families are also supported directly by our community development work, our support for volunteering and our work to protect New Zealanders from objectionable material. Families are indirectly supported by the local government and community work of the Department and by the respect for family cultural traditions supported by the Office of Ethnic Affairs.

Communities are also supported by our regulatory work to ensure that gambling is lawful, fair and honest and that it benefits the community. In our censorship and gambling work we continued to implement new legislation and enhance our public education, monitoring and enforcement role.

A key milestone was achieved in March 2007 when about 20,000 gaming machines at more than 1,600 pubs and clubs were connected to a new electronic monitoring system. This was achieved 10 days ahead of the deadline set by statute. This new monitoring system enables the Department to track and monitor gaming machine operations, ensuring the integrity of games and limiting opportunities for dishonesty. We have continued our work with the Ministry of Health to reduce problem gambling, and families throughout New Zealand benefit from the New Zealand practice of returning gambling proceeds to the community.

The Department continues to find New Zealanders involved in the trading of images of the abuse of children and other objectionable material. We have continued to urge the imposition of appropriate penalties under the law, which, under recently strengthened provisions, will mean jail sentences in many cases. We have further enhanced the tools we have available to detect offenders. The censorship area has been very successful with all 37 cases undertaken in 2006/07 resulting in a conviction.

To minimise the impact of disasters, the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management is urging people to "have a plan for you and your family". This has been actively promoted through two programmes – a programme for schools "What's the Plan Stan?" and a public awareness programme, "Get Ready Get Thru". During 2006/07 this work included a mail drop to every household in New Zealand aimed at getting New Zealanders better prepared for disasters.

The Rates Rebate Scheme, administered by the Department of Internal Affairs, was enhanced in 2005/06 by increasing the income threshold for rebate entitlement and the amount of subsidy available to low-income homeowners on the cost of their rates. Under the enhanced scheme, rebates were received by 112,000 ratepayers in 2006/07, compared with 4000 applicants who received rebates the previous year. The total value of rebates paid out by the Department in 2006/07 was \$49 million (GST inclusive).

Our telephone interpreting service, Language Line, has been extended to yet more service providers, working to ensure equity of access to government services for

people with little or no English. Use of the service in the health sector can reduce communication barriers, which might prevent families from seeking treatment. To help young people and their families, we have also begun introducing Language Line in schools and this will continue in 2007/08.

Building national identity

We take pride in being the oldest government department, and continue to make an ongoing contribution to the development of New Zealanders' sense of national identity.

Our Visits and Ceremonial Office worked with others to foster international relationships and an understanding of New Zealand culture and heritage. For example, the team helped to organise the ceremony to honour the gallantry of Lance Sergeant Haane Manahi. It has been a busy year with a total of 61 guest-of-Government visits and 23 commemorative events arranged and supported, including three Royal, seven Presidential and three Prime Ministerial visits.

In our stewardship role for birth, death, marriage, civil union and citizenship information we are, quite literally, the custodians of New Zealanders' records of national identity. This year 29,979 people became New Zealanders at citizenship ceremonies conducted by local authorities and supported by the Department.

We need to recognise and enjoy the benefits of diversity. The Department, particularly through the Office of Ethnic Affairs, acts as a point of contact between government and ethnic people, and provides information and advice about and for ethnic communities. We have continued to support ethnic groups through a variety of forums and events. We have also provided ongoing input to cross-government initiatives, in particular the Connecting Diverse Communities initiative and the New Zealand Settlement Strategy.

We have also run a series of projects aimed at increasing the visibility of ethnic communities and worked with the media, who play a role in shaping public opinion towards ethnic communities. Awareness of the existence of ethnic communities and positive images of those communities is important for community acceptance.

Contributing to the Development Goals for the State Services

We have actively sought to take a leadership role in the State sector with projects that contribute to advancing the Development Goals for the State Services. These include:

- » supporting the Digital Strategy, by helping to improve skills in the community through initiatives such as the Connecting Communities Programme, Community Partnership Fund and CommunityNet Aotearoa. During 2006/07 we successfully implemented the second and final round of the Community Partnership Fund (providing funding for community information and ICT projects), and completed the UPLIFT programme to take ICT skills into the community.

- » developing identity authentication solutions for New Zealanders, through our stewardship of the Evidence of Identity Standard and our work to develop a whole-of-government Identity Verification Service (IVS). Detailed design work for the IVS has been substantially completed with samples developed to demonstrate how it will work.
- » improving responsiveness to ethnic diversity in policy and service delivery, by providing training and advisory services to State sector agencies. The Office of Ethnic Affairs has reviewed the Ethnic Perspective in Policy framework across government and provided training to support this, and on intercultural awareness.

Part Two provides many examples of where we contributed to shared outcomes, working with a wide range of agencies. The objective *Executive Government is Well Supported* has involved us in working closely with the Parliamentary Services towards achieving common systems and processes in the parliamentary complex. I chaired a sub-committee with membership from the State sector, business and local government that provides support to goals three to five of the Development Goals for the State Services.

Enhancing the capability and capacity of the Department

In recent years we have benefited from the Government investing in the capability and capacity of the Department. Our focus for 2006/07 was on strengthening the capability for Vote Emergency Management. Twenty-four new staff have been recruited and inducted into the organisation during 2006/07. This major exercise – a significant expansion – is complete and the Department is now much better positioned to undertake a wide range of tasks across the sector, and manage emergency events well. The Department's reputation and relationships with the civil defence and emergency management sector and key central government agencies have improved with the changes, and this has resulted in improved levels of trust.

Towards the end of the year we took on a new responsibility with the establishment in the Department of a compliance unit to give effect to the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007, which came into effect in September 2007.

Over the past five years the Department has focused on building "one organisation", where the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The Department's Executive Management Team has sought to more clearly define what "one organisation" means in practice, reviewing the key drivers for departmental change and developing a vision for the Department to 2010, with some initial priorities. This will provide the focus for capability development in 2007/08.

A successful example of working as "one organisation" was the achievement for the Department in 2006/07 of tertiary level status in the ACC Workplace Safety Management Practices Programme. This was a significant achievement for a large organisation, where many of our staff are not confined to offices.

The development of more integrated corporate services with stronger support from the centre is also providing value. For example, we have put significant effort into improving the management of projects through the recently established Project Office. The Office provides valuable information and guidance for project managers, and management assurance for the Department's portfolio of projects.

Conclusion

In October 2007 I will be leaving the Department of Internal Affairs to take up a position as Chief Executive of the Department of Labour. I want to place on record my thanks to all those who have helped the Department to perform so well over the last five years. When I started as Chief Executive in 2002, I found that the organisation was defined – both inside and outside the Department – by the diversity of its tasks. Five years on, I believe the dedication of staff in all parts of the Department has led to a change in that perception. Working together as one organisation, staff and managers now better understand the coherence of the group of tasks given to them by government, and their links and alignment to the Government's themes and priorities. I am confident the organisation will continue to play a vital role in serving and meeting the needs of citizens, communities and government, and helping to build a strong, safe nation. It has been a privilege to be part of an organisation that is such an integral, and enduring, part of the fabric of New Zealand.

Nei rā te poroporoaki atu, māna anō te runga rawa koutou e manaaki e tiaki.

Christopher Blake
Chief Executive

Vision for the Department in 2010

By 2010 the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) will be one organisation as demonstrated by:

- » the trust and respect of all stakeholders for our high performance and ability to deliver across our breadth of responsibilities
- » our accessible, responsive services to the public that reflect integration across the Department and coordination with our fellow agencies
- » leadership of the strategic thinking and policy development in our areas of expertise
- » our efficient use of resources and ability to respond flexibly to changing demands
- » leveraging the diversity inherent in our Department so that the whole delivers more than the sum of the parts.