



July 97

A news update for Land Information New Zealand clients.







Process Integration: Better, faster, easier

Introduction

New focus for Land Information NZ

Welcome to the first issue of **Landscan**, the official client newsletter of Land Information New Zealand. Since our organisation was formed exactly one year ago, we have been developing systems to ensure we deliver our customers world class land and sea bed information services.

As a relatively new organisation, our goals may not yet be widely recognised, so are worth summarising here. Our focus is on:

-  providing topographic and seabed information that covers New Zealand's area of jurisdiction which meets or exceeds customer expectations
-  providing seabed information that will maximise New Zealand's continental shelf claim
-  providing a secure national land title and survey system available from remote locations with a turnaround time of 24 hours for 95 percent of survey and title transactions
-  the transfer of surplus Crown lands to the private sector, local authorities or the conservation estate
-  efficiently managing the Crown's interest in land and protecting the public interest
-  enabling Government to decide how future sea bed rights will be held

In this issue of **Landscan**, we bring you up to date with developments. One key issue is Process Integration – a major project that will streamline and simplify your requests for survey and title information. The Fact Sheet enclosed with this newsletter outlines the “nuts and bolts” of the process, and shows how it will affect your day-to-day interaction with us.

I trust you will find this newsletter a useful building block for our working relationship, and I would welcome any suggestions from you on future content and ways of improving **Landscan**.



Russ Ballard  
Chief executive

National office address

A reminder to all Land Information NZ clients that our national office postal address is now: PO Box 5501, Wellington.

Aucklanders will be the first to notice the benefits of Process Integration within Land Information New Zealand, with other regions soon to follow. It may be a prosaic title, but Process Integration promises big improvements in the way we do business with our clients.

The Fact Sheet included with this issue of **Landscan** will bring you up to date with the detail, but essentially Process Integration brings together two of our main business streams – survey plan examination and title registration.

Until now, the two functions have been dealt with at separate offices and often in separate buildings. The first stage of Process Integration brings these together at one location, with specialist staff dedicated to both processes.

Implementation of this change starts at the Auckland regional office on 7 July, with the other four regions following between August and October (see page 2). The changes will flow on to district offices during the same period.

Along with other enhancements, such as the standardisation of forms, this streamlining will bring faster and more straightforward survey and title processing, accompanied by a better quality of service.

Of course making this happen successfully requires far more than cosmetic changes at the front counter. Land Information NZ is making major internal changes to support Process Integration.

Ron Munro is Manager, Service Delivery. He is responsible for the standards implemented by a team of regionally based service delivery managers. Each will be responsible for both the integrity and quality of their office's survey and title services.

“These are new positions,” Ron explains. “Significantly, some of the applicants are from other industries with a strong service component.”

“This reflects our swing towards a much more client-driven approach. Our Regional Service Delivery managers will be responsible to the District Land Registrars and Chief Surveyors to ensure the legal requirements of our service are met, but they're also responsible to their Regional Managers on issues such as speed of delivery and client satisfaction.”

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## Process Integration (continued from cover page)

Ron says the service provided to clients will be monitored closely, even down to the service industry technique of spot checks at service counters by quality assurance staff travelling incognito.

He says the integration of title and survey services is a major logistical exercise. "Land Title Services are accompanied by many tonnes of paper. In some cases we need specially strengthened floors just to house it."

Which leads us on to the long-term vision for process integration. The present paper-based system is planned to transfer to a totally digital environment within seven years. While funding approval is still being sought for this stage of the process, the essential short-term groundwork being done now will yield immediate dividends to clients.

### Where and when to find us

Integrated survey and titles services will be available at the following regional offices from these dates:

#### Auckland

Price Waterhouse Centre, 41-43 Federal Street: 7 July 1997

#### Hamilton

Hamilton Land Information NZ Building, 820 Victoria Street: 4 August

#### Wellington

Mayfair House, 44-52 The Terrace: 1 September

#### Christchurch

Torrens House, 195 Hereford Street: 22 September

#### Dunedin

John Wickliffe House, Princes Street: 6 October

### The Minister of Lands, and colleagues at Earnscleugh.



### Wigram sale completed

The sale of the former Wigram airbase by the Crown to Ngai Tahu has been successfully negotiated through Land Information New Zealand's Crown Property Service, in consultation with the New Zealand Defence Force. The disposal of the approximately 275 hectare property on the outskirts of Christchurch sparked intense interest. Mike Jeffares, Manager of Crown Property Aquisitions/Disposals says the deal, due to be settled on 12 December has been completed to the satisfaction of all parties, including aviation interests, the Christchurch City Council and local residents. The negotiated price is \$16.6 million plus GST.



### Automation planning goes up a gear

The digital transfer of survey and titles information to Land Information New Zealand's clients has come a step closer with the shortlisting of three suppliers for the automation project design phase. This follows the successful conclusion of the user requirements phase.

Deputy programme manager Terry Jackson says that while funding approval for the final build and implementation phase is still pending, the project design stage is a significant step.

"The first phase was an analysis of our business needs and how that impacted on information needs," he explains. "That has now been completed.

"The design phase, which we expect to take several months, designs in detail the applications, technology and database requirements to meet the business needs outlined in the user requirements document.

"We carried out some client consultation during the initial phase, but this process will be continued throughout project design.

"The design phase will include the building of a 'prototype' to ensure that our business and its clients understand what is being proposed.

"We need design specifications as a robust base for the later stages of automation. This includes system building, data capture from paper records, data conversion, hardware and software supply, training, documentation and implementation.

"The systems for automation of a survey and titles services will be using proven rather than leading edge technology."

The successful supplier for the project design phase will report to the overall programme manager who will in turn report to a steering committee which includes representatives from those who will be the heaviest users of the automated system – the survey and legal professions.

Automated systems are already in place overseas, Terry says. "We've identified systems in Canada, Malaysia and Australia, and will be learning from their experience," he says.

### Earnscleugh Tenure Review Completed

The Minister of Lands, John Luxton, made a flying visit to Earnscleugh Station in Otago recently, for a first hand look at the type of country involved in the tenure review of High Country pastoral leases. Pictured from left to right are Mr Luxton, Secretary to the Minister - Jane Pearce, Chief Crown Property Officer - Sam Brown, and Ministerial Press Secretary - Conor English.

The tenure review of Earnscleugh, one of Otago's best known High Country stations, was completed under the Land Act, in 1996. Under this process, areas with significant conservation and recreation values are transferred by negotiation to the Department of Conservation. The balance is then able to be freeholded to the existing lessee. Lessees are involved throughout the process of negotiation between the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Commissioner's agent Knight Frank Limited, the Department of Conservation and the public submissions phase.

Transfer of the ownership of land after a tenure review has taken place should become more streamlined and efficient when the Crown Pastoral Land Bill is passed. First introduced two years ago, the Bill was delayed by last year's election. It is now back on the Parliamentary programme where it is currently before the Primary Production Select Committee. Several hundred submissions on the Bill were received.

The Office of the Valuer General (OVG) joins Land Information New Zealand's regulatory group from July 1st 1998, and will operate in a similar way to the Registrar General of Land.

The remainder of Valuation New Zealand, in the meantime, becomes a Crown Owned Company, and will lose its service monopoly progressively up to the year 2000. It will compete for contracts for valuation services to standards and specifications set by the OVG.

The change reflects a widespread trend in the state sector to separate regulatory and operational functions, providing a more fair and transparent system for accountability and the delivery of services.

The OVG will:

- advise Government on valuation issues and the regulation of the sector
- set minimum standards and specifications for any organisation competing for local government related work
- monitor and audit the standards
- set standards for, and be custodian of the national property database and valuers' field notes previously held by Valuation New Zealand.

Policy advice to Government on valuation issues will be provided by the Land Information NZ Policy Group.

As part of the reorganisation, elements of the Valuation New Zealand and Land Information NZ databases may be merged. This is expected to yield significant efficiencies and cost savings, which will ultimately benefit ratepayers.

The Chief Executive, Russ Ballard, will report to Government by December 30 1997 on the savings and benefits that can be gained from integrating the databases.

The new Valuer General is expected to be appointed before December this year and head the unit that will establish the OVG in Land Information NZ.

### Accredited agents carrying out the "legwork"

The days of armies of public servants doing everything from counting sheep to building dams have long passed. These days, the state sector is focusing more closely on policy, standards and specifications and monitoring the quality of the services that are delivered.

Separating policy, regulatory and service delivery functions has helped remove anomalies and inefficiencies. It means that users of services have a wider choice while being assured that the services will be delivered to audited standards.

It is against this background that Land Information NZ has begun to accredit agents who are licensed to carry out services formerly delivered exclusively by the department itself.

Property is the first area of department activity to use accredited agents. Chief Crown Property Officer, Sam Brown, says 13 agents have so far been accredited to carry out some of the "legwork" associated with the department's work in the acquisition and disposal of Crown property under the Public Works Act. They are also involved in Land Act work, assisting with property marketing, valuations, contract negotiations and the like.

The accredited agents vary from one-person organisations to companies employing up to 40 staff.

"Estate agents and law firms make regular use of agents for this sort of work," Sam says. "We are fitting in with a commonsense practice in the marketplace, secure in the knowledge that there are very clear lines of accountability and good quality assurance principles."

He says that in future the use of accredited agents will spread to other areas of Land Information NZ activity, including surveying and topographic/hydrographic work.

### Geodetic Datum 2000

Observations to establish a new geodetic control network for New Zealand are well under way. The existing datum was established in 1949. It includes distortions of up to 5 metres, due mainly to the limitations of the technology of the day, and to ground deformation since 1949. Geodetic Survey Adviser, Graeme Blick, says new GPS technology allows far more survey marks to be located where they are most needed – near centres of human activity. Because 1940s survey technology relied so much on line of sight, many of the original control points are on remote and inaccessible hilltops. He says the new datum will incorporate a velocity model to track ground movements and update the network as distortions occur.

### Finding a chemical needle in a haystack

Many of the agricultural "wonder chemicals" that emerged during the post-war period were just too good to be true. They decimated pests and diseases while allowing production to boom. But some of them definitely outstayed their welcome in the environment.

One of those chemicals is the insecticide dieldrin. It is believed that when the chemical was banned in the 1960s, containers – some with chemicals still in them – were buried on a number of Crown farm blocks. Many of these properties are now privately owned.

Under the Resource Management Act the responsibility for dealing with chemical contamination resides with the current owner. But, explains Margaret Kennedy, Manager of Property Audit and Management, the Crown is acting responsibly on identified sites to ensure that the problem does not remain buried in the past.

"While the issue of liability is unclear, the Crown is committed to investigating sites identified by land owners and regional councils. We will develop a strategy to deal with the contamination."

Margaret says locating the suspected dump sites has involved much high-tech detective work. "We've commissioned studies of the sites with magnetometers and ground penetrating radar, and undertaken soil and water sampling and analysis.

"The recent case of the deformed brown trout in Southland drew much publicity when they were linked to dieldrin contamination, but in fact that link is unproven as yet."

Land Information NZ's predecessor took on the responsibility for managing identified chemical contamination sites in 1995, and Land Information NZ has continued the task.

The on-site work is outsourced to specialist environmental consultants, who work closely with the local regional councils and use their records to help pinpoint the sites.

The most important thing, Margaret says, is that while the chemicals may be hidden from sight, the Crown has taken the first step in resolving a complex environmental issue.



Craig Harris and Margaret Kennedy, of Property and Audit Management.

When “user pays” for government services first appeared a decade ago, there was, Rowland Woods admits, considerable confusion. The senior Land Information New Zealand policy analyst says that while most people accepted user pays in principle, it wasn’t easy to implement fairly.

Ten years and much valuable experience further on, Land Information NZ is taking a close look at how it sets charges for its data services.

“Today we have much clearer guiding principles,” Rowland says. “Essentially, government information should be made as freely and widely available as possible. The databases we administer are there to enable public policy (eg, defence) and statutory functions to be carried out.

“While the taxpayer carries the cost of the initial gathering and maintenance of the information, individual end users are expected to pay a reasonable charge for accessing it. Access costs are divided into processing and dissemination.

“In the case of survey information sent out electronically, for example, the processing cost would be for the work involved in getting the data into an appropriate form for transmission, and the dissemination cost would be the actual line charges for transmitting the data.

“Some existing charges may be split to reflect more fairly what they are paying for. For example, the Land Transfer Levy includes components which pay for the Registry function of the Land Title Office and contribute to the cost of the survey system.”

Rowland says that once Cabinet has approved the department’s interpretation of government policy on charges for information (expected by the end of June), Land Information NZ will begin to overhaul and streamline its fees and charges for all services.

Recent restructuring has made the process reasonably complex. For example, survey information and land title information were formerly charged for by different departments under different accounting systems.

These are now being integrated under the change to a single counter system at Land Information NZ offices, so the charging systems will also need integration.

Because the fees for both types of information are set out under different schedules to the Land Titles and Survey Fees and Charges regulations, the regulations themselves will require changing as part of the review process.

Rowland says the type of information affected by charges will include survey, land titles, topographical, hydrological, geodetic and digital cadastral data.

“At this stage we don’t expect any big changes in the overall amounts charged for access to information. What we do expect is a more consistent and fairer system.

“We will be consulting client groups as part of the review process before any changes are finalised.”

A week in politics, as they say, is a long time. Nine years in the life of a digital land information system is a very long time indeed.

In 1988 the former Department of Survey and Land Information began the massive task of digitising New Zealand’s paper-based cadastral data to form a Digital Cadastral Database (DCDB). The process continued through until 1996, when the data capture phase of the project was finally completed.

Because of some inconsistencies in the base data, and the huge effort required simply to digitally capture the information, some resulting data is not totally “clean” and consistent. In a digital environment it is now possible to identify and correct these inconsistencies and errors that existed in the paper-based data.

During the decade there has been a considerable evolution in the sophistication and power of the hardware and software used to manipulate digital cadastral data. An upgrade to Sun Workstations and VISION 4 software last year makes it possible to change our processes and maintain topology in the database and perform other data integrity checks, especially during the maintenance process.

Being responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Digital Cadastral Database, Land Information NZ has developed and implemented procedures to standardise the database.

Noel Tapp, cadastral information support officer with Land Information NZ, says “a consultant has been contracted to help us examine the data model, maintenance processes and the tools that we use in maintaining the DCDB. As part of this process we plan to be able to check the integrity of data during maintenance, rather than after the fact.”

The original data model has shortcomings due to the limitations of the technology of the day, but given new hardware and software Noel says that standardisation can now be achieved and the goal is to provide:

- topologically correct data to retail and wholesale users of the DCDB
- attribute data which conforms to defined standards
- new maintenance tools and processes to protect the integrity of the DCDB
- a consistent Survey Data Index (SDI) at every public counter.

Before any changes are made to the DCDB model there will be consultation with end users of the data. Any feedback will be considered in making a final decision on the changes.

Thanks for reading *Landscan* and we welcome your feedback. For further information or permission to use *Landscan* articles contact: The Communications Manager, Land Information New Zealand, P O Box 5501, Wellington. Web: <http://www.linz.govt.nz>.

Are Our Records Correct?

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