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A news update for Land Information New Zealand clients.

Landonline FEATURE: PAGES 5-6

In this issue of Landscan we focus on customer service – what **LandonLine** will let you do.

WHY Y2K WILL BE A SAFE DAY FOR LAND TITLES

There aren't many corners of daily life left unaffected by the so-called millennium bug. When computer clocks tick over to midnight on New Year's Eve 1999, under-prepared computer systems could go seriously awry.

It is with this prospect in mind that LINZ established the Year 2000 (Y2K) Project Team in July last year. The team is focused on continuity of business services over the millennium change. They are looking at all business risks associated with the changeover to Y2K - right down to the electronics that manage the lifts and phone systems.

One major system challenge is the LINZ land title register. If that was to cease functioning, even for a short period, it would cause major disruption to commercial life throughout New Zealand. The Auckland power crisis earlier this year gave just a taste of the problems that could ensue if the millennium bug bites.

Ann Foster is a member of the LINZ Y2K team tasked with proofing the land title system against the millennium bug.

The current land title system is, she explains tactfully, a "legacy system". In plainer language, it is built on patched-up software that is over 10 years old and not designed with the turn of the century in mind.

It will be retired and replaced by the new, Y2K-friendly automated survey and title system, but this won't come fully on stream until 2001.

With the help of suppliers EDS, and a network of users within LINZ, the software that drives the land title system is being given a thorough overhaul to isolate and fix the Y2K bug. The work has been split into four phases.

Ann says up to six programmers have worked on Phase 1 of the project, which identified crucial dates which could trigger problems such as 9/9/99, 1/1/99 and of course 1/1/00.

"We left the year field with two digits, but changed the logic in the program to accept '00' as the year 2000, not 1900," Ann says. "Our user group have done a fantastic job testing the reprogrammed system. I'm glad to say that although we threw every possible problem at the system, we didn't encounter one date field problem."

Phase 1 of the system went live during the weekend of 5/6 September. Ann says that although due to be replaced within three years, dates within the land title system will be good for another 30 years – just in case.

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WHAT'S NEW ON THE LINZ WEBSITE

DCDB providers

LINZ manages and maintains the Digital Cadastral Database (DCDB) but no longer supplies retail and added value services. For a list of suppliers see: www.linz.govt.nz/databases/dcdb/index.html

Electronic LINZ File Index (ELFI)

This index of Crown Property Files can be accessed on our web site by accredited agents with user ID and password (available through Office of the Chief Crown Property Officer). To find ELFI information on our site, go to: www.linz.govt.nz/databases/fileindex/index.html

LINZ Profile

To find out about our vision that drives the people of LINZ, our goals, business direction, strategies and the key people, take a look at the LINZ Profile on: www.linz.govt.nz/organisation/profile/index.html

Continental Shelf

For an update on the Continental Shelf project, there's an excellent article by NIWA, IGNS and LINZ, first published in the NZ Geophysical Society's Newsletter and now available on our web site. Take a look on: www.linz.govt.nz/business/topo-hydro/csdp/index/os.html



Landonline
survey and title automation

Land Information New Zealand is embracing the new technologies of the digital age, by automating survey and title records. Check pages 5-6 for details.

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While New Zealanders and Australians might sound indistinguishable to other speakers of English, we all know there are some important cultural and linguistic differences. There are the obvious points of contention (pavlova, rugby etc) and then there are some surprisingly big differences in the way we define topographic data.

LINZ Topographic Information Adviser Kim McAven says New Zealand and Australia have developed topographic land information systems and standards fairly independently of one another, and with different objectives in mind.

“Our digital topographic database is more advanced than Australia’s in that it is capable of delivering on-demand mapping,” she explains. “With the benefit of experience, we probably take a more pragmatic approach to the features. For example, Australia includes features as small as individual parking spaces – we don’t quite go to that level of detail.”

Kim says geographic and historical differences are also reflected in the way topographic data is defined and stored. “For example, we make allowances for including pa sites – something not required in Australia.”

End use is also a factor. New Zealand’s system is unique in that it underpins mapping used by emergency services.

The differences in topographic data protocols can cause problems, especially for external contractors who carry out government land information systems work on both sides of the Tasman.

The National Topographic/Hydrographic Authority (part of the LINZ regulatory group) is now working with its Australian counterparts to develop a common lexicon that can be used in both countries. The combined data dictionary will standardise classifications and definitions of spatial features identified for management of topographic data.

Contact for further information: Kim McAven, Topographic Information Adviser, Land Information New Zealand. Ph (04) 471 6850. Email kmcaven@linz.govt.nz

Topo/hydro contacts

The National Topographic/Hydrographic Authority can now be contacted directly via email. If you have any topographic or hydrographic enquiries they can be respectively emailed to: topo-info@linz.govt.nz • hydro-info@linz.govt.nz

The Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1998, which became law on June 23, is making the process of pastoral lease tenure reviews much simpler. It affects about 2.45 million hectares, or 20 percent of the South Island.

Tenure reviews are being applied to Crown Pastoral Leasehold land to distinguish economically productive land from land with important conservation values. It is a delicate process of consultation that takes into account the interests of farming, conservation, iwi groups, recreational groups and the Crown. It enables good farmland to be freeholded, while land with conservation or other important values stays in the Crown estate.

Two high-profile tenure reviews have been carried out in Otago. They involved:

- the adjoining Camberleigh and Glencreag Stations
- Earnsclough Station.

Until the new law was enacted this year, tenure reviews such as theirs were carried out under the 1948 Land Act. The process could take as long as five years under the old legislation, but under the “purpose built” Crown Pastoral Land Act, tenure reviews are expected to be much quicker and more efficient, without sacrificing the interests of the various stakeholders.

The new Act details the processes to be followed, and provides for standards to be set for these processes. Commissioner of Crown Lands Sam Brown says that because this is a complex issue that will take some time, LINZ will issue interim standards progressively.

He says that many tenure reviews were already under way under the old legislation and these will now have to be transferred to the new process. While this means a new beginning for some tenure reviews, the new system offers real benefits compared with the old procedure.

“We will be able to take information from the old review process so that we can work with maximum efficiency under the new legislation,” he says. Mr Brown has written to all Crown Pastoral Lessees asking them to initiate a tenure review under the Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1998 by inviting the Commissioner of Crown Lands to start the process.

“In 1997/98 tenure reviews under the old 1948 Land Act process saw the purchase of one property and progress made on 140 pastoral leases. This included the completion of 22 draft proposals and nine final proposals for tenure review, and the signing of nine Heads of Agreement.”

Contact for further information: Dave Gullen, Advisory Services, Land Information New Zealand. Ph (04) 460 0126. Email dgullen@linz.govt.nz

The Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 will help promote the sustainable of South Island high country land, while protecting conservation values, recreation, access and iwi interests.

It is nearly three months since the restructuring of the former Crown Property Services, and LINZ clients are becoming used to new channels for dealing with Crown Property transactions.

Paul Jackson, Manager Crown Property Contracts, says that although Crown Property functions are now only carried out in Wellington, Hamilton and Christchurch, it's important to remember that all other services offered by LINZ (eg, lodgement of survey plans, title enquiries) are still being delivered at all 12 LINZ offices.

Since 1 July, all work associated with the managing and administration of Crown property is being handled by private sector accredited agents and contractors. These agents are certified to carry out specific tasks for which LINZ has statutory responsibility, mainly concerned with the Public Works Act and Land Act.

Crown Property Contracts staff are located at LINZ offices in Hamilton, National Office (Wellington) and Christchurch. They manage contracts for the sale and management of Crown property on the LINZ balance sheet. The sale of land for other Crown agencies is primarily managed directly by accredited agents who will also arrange any statutory clearances from LINZ.

Paul says clients have made good use of an 0800 number set up specially to handle enquiries relating to Crown property. The number is **0800 805 469**. He says the number of calls has started to fall, indicating clients are now getting used to the new lines of communication and spread of responsibilities. The number was set up to help people through the transition and will be discontinued when the need is no longer there.

Enquiries are often about buying or leasing specific Crown properties. "If callers have the necessary detail we can usually give an answer straight away," Paul says. "In future people will be able to refer directly to Contracts Managers in Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch for this information.

"People are also wanting the names of accredited agents and we can supply these, indicating which agents are qualified for the tasks required. This information is also available from the office of the Chief Crown Property Officer."

In addition to the 0800 help desk there are a number of individuals within LINZ who can help with specific enquiries.



management
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Acquisition or disposal of Crown property
• 0800 805 469

fl Accredited Agents (private sector agents)
• Chief Crown Property Officer 04-460 0554

Crown land, historical information(eg, maps, photos etc)
• Chris Buckler 04-460 0593

Crown property files
• Your local LINZ Region or Branch office

All other Crown property functions/issues
• 0800 805 469

Protection mechanism for Maori interests in surplus Crown land (disposal of Crown land)
• Caryl Thomas 04-460 0598

fl Sites of significance
• Caryl Thomas 04-460 0598

fl Road legalisation and stopping
• Accredited agents

fl Overseas investment certificates/enquiries
• Brendan Mulholland 04-460 0116

fl Bona vacantia (where ownership is unknown)
• Brendan Mulholland 04-460 0116

fl Crown forest licences
• 04-460 0153

fl Crown pastoral land
• Bob Lysaght 03-379 9793

fl State Owned Enterprises allocations
• Chris Buckler 04-460 0593

fl Mining
• Your local LINZ office: Chief Surveyor

fl Weed and pest control on Crown-owned land
• 0800 805 469



Focus on customer service

Land Information New Zealand is looking closely at the service it will give its customers as it implements its automated survey and title system throughout the country.

General Manager Operations, Carolina Gartner, says that LINZ is doing a detailed analysis of how it will handle the transition to the automated survey and title system, and how it will operate once the system is up and running.

“The two most important aspects of our service are consistency of delivery and responsiveness,” according to Carolina.

“Customers know that LINZ staff give reliable and accurate service. We also know that customers have high expectations of our willingness to help them and our ability to provide a prompt service.”

“Some of the issues we are dealing with include questions like how we will provide access to non-automated records, such as field notes and traverse sheets. How will customers who aren’t on-line get access to our records, whether we have them stored digitally or in paper form?”

“We are also looking very closely at what we will do with the Land Title Link service. Our automated system will be a great improvement on Land Title Link and SDI, and will eventually replace them. However, it is more than a simple upgrade, and we need to have a straightforward way to move from one system to the other.”

Even after the first phase of the **Landonline** programme, dealings and plans will still have to be lodged in paper form.

“A crucial process is how we will handle the lodgement of dealings and plans from customers who post them to our offices.”

The Land Transfer (Automation) Amendment Bill will address this issue by allowing postal lodgement of dealings.

Carolina says that one of the greatest challenges will be when LINZ installs the system into its five regional offices [Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland] and closes their associated branch offices.

“We will need to train our staff, install a new computer system, convert our records to digital form, and move the branch office records...all while keeping going with our usual business of approving plans and titles transactions, and providing customers with the records they need to do their jobs.”

“We’ll also need to help our customers understand how we will interact with each other, and how they will get access to our records after we’ve automated our offices.”

“This will put quite a bit of pressure on our staff to keep the standards of service up.”

“However, we will stage the process so that we train staff on the system before we convert our records. This will happen before customers will be able to do remote searches of our records.”

“During the conversion and implementation stages, the most important thing is to not make our problems into our customers’ problems.”

“The plans we are making now will allow us to minimise the disruption to our services, and provide the most reliable and prompt service possible during the changes.”

Contact: Carolina Gartner
General Manager Operations
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What Landonline will let you do

While the **Landonline** programme will make a great difference from the outset to the way people search the survey and title records and carry out land transactions, the full benefits of the system will be phased in over several years.

As the system is progressively put into place around the country, people will be able to use LINZ software to search the survey and title records. About seven million of LINZ’s 30 million records will be converted to digital format and stored on-line. Most of these records, such as all the survey plans, titles and high access documents will be scanned and the images stored in the automated system’s database. All title information, such as the current owner, easements, and mortgages etc, will be keyed into the system and stored as structured digital data.

Landonline Programme Manager, Terry Jackson, says that on-line customers will be able to search all of that information through a computer, and either view it or print it directly.

“We won’t be imaging the most infrequently accessed documents, such as field notes and traverse sheets. However, people will be able to order them on-line, and we will send them to the customer.”

“Because most of the routine searching will take place over the computer network, our customer services staff will be freed up to retrieve the records that we won’t image. This will be

important for those customers who are used to searching these records at one of the seven branch offices we will progressively close. On the other hand, it will make it easier for people who currently have to travel considerable distances to view records such as field notes by letting them order the relevant information directly through their computer.”

Terry says that on-line customers will also have access to LINZ’s ‘Legal Knowledge Base’ and be able to check the transactions they prepare against some automated ‘business rules’.

“This ‘pre-validation’, as we’re calling it, will let conveyancers and surveyors check the information they intend providing to us as part of a transaction, to see whether it is complete and to make sure that it doesn’t contain any errors.”

“The pre-validation of transactions, combined with postal lodgement, will greatly cut down the number of requisitions and smooth the way for conveyancers and surveyors.”

“In the first phase, surveyors and conveyancers will still have to provide us with paper because, although Parliament will have changed the law to allow us to keep records in a digital form, we will still have to receive the information on paper. We won’t keep that paper version, however. We will image the documents after lodgement, and return them to the person submitting them.”

“It won’t be until the law is changed from 2001 that we will be able to receive conveyancing transactions and survey plans in digital format.”

“The Legal Knowledge Base will contain most of the Registrar General of Land and Surveyor General rulings, and District Land Registrar and Chief Surveyor decisions, as well as statutes, regulations, technical guidelines and case law.”

Contact: Terry Jackson
Landonline Programme Manager
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Future land transaction process.

Sequence of events

6

Early 1999

- Law change to allow storage of electronic records.

From July 1999 - first phase of Landonline programme

- Pilot of automated survey and title system in Otago Land District.

On-line customers in Dunedin will be able to search LINZ’s records via their computer system and check their transactions against certain ‘business rules’.

Electronic lodgement of survey plans and title transactions will not be possible at this stage, although postal lodgement will be allowed.

Late 1999

- Invercargill office closed after conversion of records completed.

Late 1999 - early 2001

- Automated system put in place in the rest of the South Island and the North Island, region by region.

- Closure of offices in Nelson, Blenheim, Hokitika, Napier, Gisborne and New Plymouth after their records are converted.

January 2001

- Law change allowing digital lodgement of survey and title transactions.

From 2001 - second phase of Landonline programme

Customers will be able to lodge some survey and title transactions remotely after the second phase of the system is introduced nation-wide. However, postal lodgement will continue for customers who aren’t on-line.

General inquiries about the **Landonline** Programme:

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