



Landscan

DECEMBER 1998

A news update for Land Information New Zealand clients.

FAST TRACK OPTION FOR SURVEY AND TITLES

Land transactions generate two main “front desk” tasks handled by Land Information New Zealand: the inspection and approval of survey plans, and the searching and registration of land titles. From the client’s point of view, the more quickly and efficiently these can be handled, the better. And if they can be dealt with in one go, then better still.

With the creation of LINZ in July 1996 the processes for survey and titles work have been progressively moved together to rationalise the effort required on both sides of the counter. Process integration, implemented in August 1997, has been another important step in this process.

The LINZ Auckland region, which handles some 40 percent of the New Zealand’s land transactions, has taken things a step further, with a quick, efficient service that doesn’t compromise on quality.

A new system of simultaneous lodgement is the result of a partnership between LINZ, the survey and legal professions who are the direct users and – most importantly – the end users such as property developers. It’s their business, after all, that depends on fast, accurate processing of plans and titles.

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Customer Services Officer Shareen Chandhry discusses simultaneous lodgement with a customer at the LINZ Auckland office.



Landonline goes online

Landonline is now featured on LINZ’s Internet site. Visit it at:

<http://www.linz.govt.nz/landonline/index.html>.

Landonline stories in this issue include: new Landonline groups for solicitors and surveyors; computer specs for Landonline; the Landonline web site and news about survey interface software, duplicate titles and document requirements. Turn to pages 5 - 6.

WHAT’S NEW ON THE LINZ WEBSITE

Hydrographic strategy

With the world’s fourth-largest exclusive economic zone, New Zealand has a greater interest than most in information about the sea bed. New technology for the collection and storage of this information now yields large amounts of data. LINZ has taken over responsibility for buying this data on behalf of the Crown, and has developed a national strategy for the effective collection and dissemination of this valuable information. To read the strategy in full, visit our site at:

www.linz.govt.nz/organisation/business/topo-hydro/hydro/hydrostrategy.htm

260 Topographic Map Series

A new introduction to this 1:50,000 map series explains the purpose of the 260 Topographic maps and how they are used. The introduction links to an easy-reference index with the map reference numbers formatted into the shape of New Zealand. By clicking on the area (and map number) of interest, you will be connected to a page dedicated to that map. Among other things it shows an overview “thumbnail” map, major geographic features and place names, plus the date of the latest edition. For a closer look, visit us at www.linz.govt.nz/organisation/business/topo-hydro/map/260/intro.htm

Annual Report on line

For the second year running the LINZ Annual Report has been published on the internet. In addition to getting the information out quickly, internet publishing is more cost effective than traditional paper and ink. The Annual Report for the year ended June 1998 joins a number of other LINZ corporate publications on the web. To review the 1997/1998 LINZ year, visit our site at: <http://www.linz.govt.nz/publications/annreport/index.html>

Services to you

The LINZ Operations Group provides services such as plan approval, document registration and plan and title record searching. To assist our customers LINZ has recently published the Fees and Codes for survey and title services, Searching a Title (a guide to obtaining copies of titles and documents held by LINZ) and a Guide to Land Title Registration. These will help LINZ clients in their day-to-day dealings with LINZ. To check how it can help you, navigate your way to: www.linz.govt.nz/publications/opsgroup/index.html

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Somewhere, deep within Land Information New Zealand's IT system, the Year 2000 has already arrived. It's not a case of wayward time-keeping however. Quite the contrary.

The Year 2000 project team has set up a stand-alone test environment with the computer system clock wound forward to the turn of the century. The objective is to make absolutely sure that LINZ's key information systems keep working when the clock strikes midnight on 31 December next year. CHRIS, the department's payroll and human resources system is just one such system being put through its Year 2000 paces now to ensure a smooth transition to the next century.

Software that has been supplied by outside organisations has been upgraded where necessary, but this will also be given a thorough run-through in the LINZ test environment.

Year 2000 Programme Manager Ann Foster says the test site emulates a regional office. "First we test the infrastructure and then we look at the individual applications," she explains. Testing will be completed by February 1999.

Also undergoing a Year 2000 compliance audit are the many desktop PCs in use throughout LINZ. As each one is tested it is given either a green (compliant) or red (non-compliant) sticker. Ann says upgrading most PCs to be Year 2000-compliant is generally straightforward.

If a "red" PC cannot be fixed it will be replaced before the end of next year. As the **Landonline** automation project rolls out, some older, non-compliant machines will be made redundant before the end of 1999.

And once the "green" PCs are secured, no new software will be introduced until the century's end. Ann Foster says LINZ's risk management for its information systems is underlined by a policy of avoiding "leading edge" developments until they have been thoroughly tested in a commercial environment.

"Protecting the integrity of the land information is our core business," she says. "We don't want to introduce any unnecessary risk, and that includes the Y2K factor."

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Simultaneous lodgement was developed as a team effort between Auckland's District Land Registrar (Dave Chapman) and Chief Surveyor (Bruce Morrison) who canvassed the idea with the legal and survey professions. Service Delivery Manager Bruce Devonport helped bring the idea to fruition by making it work in practice.

Simultaneous lodgement is a simple but very effective idea. If survey plan and new title documents relating to one land transaction are lodged simultaneously (actually, within two working days of each other), and contain no serious inaccuracies, then LINZ guarantees a turnaround time of 10 working days for the issue of title.

Where there are large amounts of capital invested in a new land development, this is a powerful incentive for solicitors and survey firms to co-ordinate their efforts and submit accurate plans and documents concurrently. By contrast, a standard turnaround time is up to 20 working days for plans, with a further 15 days added for titles.

Bruce Devonport says surveyors and solicitors were initially cautious when the system was introduced six months ago.

"But now that the benefits of fast turnaround are becoming clear, they're very enthusiastic," he says. "About 20 percent of new title lodgements are now simultaneous and we could probably handle more than 50 percent this way."

Bruce says solicitors and surveyors are appreciating that a mistake on either part will slow down the whole process. "To date only one simultaneous lodgement has been rejected, and any minor problems are quickly amended when we contact the firm concerned."

An important spinoff for LINZ is the multi-skilling of its survey and titles staff. Survey officers are becoming warranted to handle land transfer work, while land title officers are gaining recognition of their competence as plan examiners.

Kevin Knight, Service Delivery Manager for LINZ's Hamilton region, says this multi-skilling was one reason why his office adopted the Auckland model last month. With Hamilton handling a further 30 percent of New Zealand's total survey and title work, it means simultaneous lodgement is now available for well over half of the country's land transactions.

"The faster turnaround for customers was another important incentive for us to introduce the system," Kevin says. "We share a number of major customers with the Auckland region, and understandably they were expecting the same choices here."

"It's enabling our staff and customers to use their initiative and improve our levels of service."

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"BLOWOUT" AN ILLUSION

Readers of "Computerworld" may have spotted a recent article in which an opposition member of parliament highlighted apparent cost blowouts in government IT projects. Among the projects fingered was the Digital Cadastral Database (DCDB), a major Land Information New Zealand system.

It was claimed that the project over-ran on both time (98 months instead of 72) and budget (\$45.41 million instead of the budgeted \$16.86 million).

Surveyor-General Tony Bevin says the apparent cost over-run was the result of a change to full cost accounting part-way through the project.

"The \$16.86 million budgeted was for only direct salary and equipment costs," he says. "The total actual cost of \$45.41 million included all overhead costs such as support staff, accommodation, depreciation, inflation and interest on capital."

He says that if allowance is made for the change in accounting and for inflation and revenue generated by the project, the DCDB actually came in \$2.4 million under budget.

"The project generated some \$4 million in external revenue, as well as significant departmental savings."

Tony says the DCDB took two years longer to complete than predicted due to changes in the scope of the project, to include census and electoral data.

"The DCDB is now completed and fully operational. It is used as a map base by a number of government departments and most major utilities and local authorities. DCDB data will be converted into the new automated survey and title system currently being built."

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NEW UNIFORMS

How many LINZ customer services staff does it take to serve one customer? Well, not usually this many, but when the chance came up to show off the new customer service uniform in the LINZ Hamilton office, everyone was keen to be in on the picture! Service Delivery Manager Kevin Knight (who modestly stayed out of the picture) says some staff recently took part in a Kiwi Host course. "They felt the smart white uniform tops with LINZ logo and staff names added a professional touch to the front desk service," Kevin says. "Our clients certainly seem to agree, and we've had a positive response to the new look."

Pictured from left to right are: Valuer Hamish McKegg and across the counter, LINZ customer services staff Mark Gower, Linda Boylan, Pamela Blackburn, Laraine Wicks, Mike Larsen, Melissa Ewart, Angela Robertson and Debbie Niethe.

IMPACT OF NGAI TAHU ACT ON PLACE NAMES

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The Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 introduces Maori/English dual naming for some 80 place names in the South and Stewart Islands. One of the most notable is Mt Cook, now to be called Aoraki/Mt Cook.

The New Zealand Geographic Board Nga Pou Taunaha O Aotearoa, which is administered by LINZ, will take responsibility for these names. Both the New Zealand Geographic Place-Names Database and future publications of relevant maps will be updated to reflect the dual names.

The Act also added a new function to the Board to encourage the use of original Maori place names on official maps and for the appointment of an extra Board member nominated by Ngai Tahu.

Several examples of dual naming recently attest to the growing recognition of the role of the Treaty of Waitangi and understanding of the early history of New Zealand. For example the approval of the joint name Mt Taranaki or Mt Egmont and, more recently, Matiu/Somes Island and Makaro/Ward Island in Wellington Harbour. By retaining the more recent European name along with the older Maori name, dual naming overcomes some of the problems wholesale replacement can cause, such as loss of identity or historical association or confusion especially in an emergency situation. It also allows for either use, and perhaps with time, for the original Maori name to gain greater every day acceptance and use.

For further information, contact Wendy Shaw, Secretary, New Zealand Geographic Board, Ph (04) 460 0581. Email wshaw@linz.govt.nz



The title of the old Simon and Garfunkel song (“Keep the Customer Satisfied”) could well be the theme for LINZ customer services staff. But unlike the song’s lyrics there’s certainly no mention of slander and libel in the results of LINZ customer satisfaction surveys!

In fact the regular monthly surveys are showing a continuous improvement in levels of customer satisfaction. The measures are built around the LINZ All Stars Customer Service programme and relate mainly to land title services. Carolina Gartner, General Manager Operations for Land Information New Zealand, says the commitment to building high levels of customer satisfaction is locked in to the department’s performance agreement.

“Overall our satisfaction levels are high in most offices for most months; problems identified are usually quite minor,” Carolina says. “Our last annual survey showed a 6 percent improvement in customer satisfaction with quality of services and an 11 percent improvement in satisfaction with timeliness.”

“Our staff helped set the standards they’re measured by, so they’re very committed to the programme. There’s healthy competition between the offices, and we feed the results of the monthly surveys directly back to the staff concerned so they can address any problems. It’s also important that they receive positive feedback for their efforts to improve service levels.”

Ron Munro, LINZ’s Manager Service Delivery, explains the customer surveys are thorough but unobtrusive.

“We do two types of survey, both carried out by an independent survey company,” Ron explains. “In the first

case our survey company makes routine enquiries to LINZ in the guise of a customer – both by phone and through ‘on-site’ visits. They then report back on measures such as professionalism, length of response times and so on.”

Ron says this technique is commonly used throughout the service industry, with positive results.

“The second type of survey we do is a regular survey of customers. In these we quantify satisfaction in terms of quality and timeliness.”

Ron says any problem areas identified are given over to the regional manager and service delivery manager to address.

Carolina says there was a 7 percent decrease in the volume of document intake in the year to June 1998, largely as a reflection of the economic slowdown. While this has relieved some pressure on staff, there have been increased demands in other areas.

“The challenge for our staff has been to maintain day-to-day services while also helping with the development of the **Landonline** automation project.”

“Our monthly customer satisfaction surveys are showing that staff are meeting that challenge. But there’s no room for complacency. The surveys provide us with the information we need for a continuous process of service improvement.”

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Landonline

survey and title automation

Landonline goes online

Landonline is now featured on LINZ's Internet site. As well as information specifically tailored for different groups of customers, the site also features a tour through the prototype of the **Landonline** searching functions. Visitors can also register on mailing lists. Information will be updated regularly, so bookmark the site and visit it at:

<http://www.linz.govt.nz/landonline/index.html>

Solicitors and surveyors set up Landonline groups

The New Zealand Law Society and New Zealand Institute of Surveyors have set up committees specifically to deal with issues coming out of the **Landonline** programme.

Each organisation has a representative on the Steering Committee that oversees the **Landonline** programme, but Tim Jones (NZLS) and Stuart Kinnear (NZIS) have found that being the main point of contact for LINZ on virtually everything to do with automation was taking a great deal of their time.

By establishing these committees, the two bodies will provide support for their Steering Committee representatives.

Membership of committees

New Zealand Law Society's Presidential Working Party on Automation:

John Greenwood (joint convenor - Auckland), Tim Jones (joint convenor - Auckland), Richard Cross (Napier), Kate Walker (Dunedin), Chris Ward (Invercargill).

New Zealand Institute of Surveyors automation

committee:

Stuart Kinnear (Wellington), Michael Morris (Wellington), Hugh Gilbert (Hawera), Brent Gawn (Wellington), Bruce Manners (Wellington) and a representative from Consulting Surveyors of New Zealand.

Computer requirements to go on-line
LINZ customers wanting to upgrade their computer systems will find that the standard new desktop PCs will be powerful enough to run the **Landonline** software.

Landonline Programme Manager Terry Jackson says that the system runs well on PCs that were available a year ago.

“That means that today's PCs will easily run the **Landonline** software. The two things that people who are thinking of upgrading need to be aware of are the need to have the fastest modem they can get, and to have a slightly larger than normal screen.”

The recommended requirements for PCs to run **Landonline** software are:

- Operating system - Windows 95
- Processor - 233 MHz Intel Pentium
- Memory - 64 Mb RAM
- Floppy drive - 1.44 Mb 3.5 inch drive
- Hard drive - 3 Gb drive
- CD-ROM - 12 speed CD-ROM
- Monitor - 17 inch graphics monitor

“Ideally, on-line users should have a 56kb modem as the minimum. If they can get a 128kb, or even an ISDN modem, that would be better,” according to Terry.

“Seventeen inch monitors are commonly offered as upgrades - or even standard - with new PCs. They might be larger than people are used to when doing word processing, but they'll really notice the difference when viewing the images of scanned titles and plans.”

“We're finding that our 200MHz and 233MHz machines are operating adequately. New PCs generally have 333MHz or 400MHz processors, and these will be more than adequate for running **Landonline**.”

No survey interface software at early stage of *Landonline* programme

LINZ has withdrawn the tender to develop computer software to allow surveyors to submit digital survey data into the automated system.

Landonline Programme Manager Terry Jackson says there was some early interest from survey software companies to develop a way for their programmes to interact with the automated system.

“However, they have now decided that they would rather wait to see the system in operation before producing an ‘interface’ for their programmes. That doesn’t mean that we won’t have digital submission of survey datasets - just that it won’t happen right away.”

“But that still leaves LINZ without a software package to use to enter digital survey data directly into the automated system. We would have used one of the commercially produced, compatible packages, but we now have to develop our own, which will be part of the new computer system.”

LINZ is also in the early stages of a project to encourage commercial software developers to create programmes that will let solicitors submit digital title data before lodging the paper documents.

Duplicate titles will be replaced in *Landonline*

One of the changes conveyancers will notice about registering dealings once **Landonline** is in place is that the existing duplicate titles will be replaced by a computer-generated version, produced by the automated survey and title system.

Duplicate titles provide land owners with the ‘right to deal’, that is, it is an assurance that they are the legal owner and are entitled to sell the land. Currently, the duplicate title is presented to LINZ for a transfer or other dealing. The changes are recorded on the title and the duplicate, and the duplicate is returned to the land owner, or in most cases, the mortgagee.

Registrar-General of Land Brendan Boyle says that the existing duplicates will be replaced by a new version generated by **Landonline**.

“When a dealing is presented under **Landonline**, the duplicate title will be destroyed. Once the dealing is completed, and the documents registered, we will issue a new duplicate title. However, it will contain only the current information, without the historical information currently on the duplicates.”

“These new duplicates will give land owners the same ‘right to deal’ as the current ones. There will be no change to their legal status, and they will still need to be produced for subsequent transactions.”

“They will also look similar to the current ones, except they will only show current information.”

LINZ is currently investigating the future of duplicate titles in a fully automated titles system, which will not come into force until phase two of the **Landonline** programme (in 2001). LINZ has discussed the issue with the New Zealand Law Society and the New Zealand Bankers Association, and will be issuing a discussion document on the future of duplicate titles early next year.

Bound documents not needed by LINZ under *Landonline*

The way LINZ will process new documents will change under **Landonline**, with the documents scanned at lodgement, and returned to the solicitor.

However, Registrar General of Land Brendan Boyle says this means that documents might not be returned in the same condition in which they were presented.

“Over the years, we have encouraged solicitors to present bound documents to us, and virtually all of the copies we keep are either glued or sewn.”

“However, under **Landonline**, we won’t be keeping paper copies of legal documents. We will scan the documents when they are lodged, and then give them back.”

“Unfortunately, the scanners we would prefer to use have automatic document feeders like the ones on photocopiers, which bound documents won’t go through. That leaves us with two alternatives; either scan the pages one at a time - which will be pretty time consuming - or guillotine the bound documents to get them through the automatic document feeder.”

“If solicitors stapled the documents, instead of binding them, that would make our job easier, and enable us to return the scanned documents much more quickly. Alternatively, they could still bind them, and we could guillotine them and staple them before returning them.”

Brendan Boyle says that LINZ has approached the Law Society’s Working Party on Automation about this issue.

“We would like to know practitioners’ views about the practical or potentially legal consequences of the documents not being bound, or of LINZ returning the documents stapled together.”