



JUNE

2003

A news update for Land Information New Zealand clients

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Russ Ballard closes the LINZ file as he ends his seven-year term as the department's Chief Executive this month.

RUSS BALLARD MOVING ON FROM 'TIGHT AND ROBUST' LINZ

It is with mixed – but very positive – feelings that Russ Ballard ends his seven-year term this month as LINZ Chief Executive.

“I joined LINZ when it was created as a new organisation in 1996. If LINZ was a child, it would be a very vigorous one by this stage – not mature yet, but robust, well educated and with a good set of values.”

“Naturally it's going to be sad leaving an organisation that I've nurtured from day one,” Russ adds, “but at the same time I'm looking forward to the next stage of my career with great anticipation.”

With a Massey University Master's degree in agricultural science (he was recently honoured with a special Massey medal as part of the university's 75th anniversary celebration), that career began as a research scientist in the forestry sector.

In 1987 he was appointed to head the newly created Ministry of Forestry – part of the first wave of restructurings that saw commercial operations and core government functions starting to be teased apart.

From there he became Director-General of the then Department of Education, overseeing the creation of today's Ministry, and the implementation of Tomorrow's Schools.

This was followed by seven years as Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Again, this was a period of great change.

Russ initially joined LINZ as the head of the establishment unit in 1996 and was involved in the separation of the core Government services and regulatory functions from the Department of Survey and Land Information and the Navy (land titles, survey, property, topography and hydrography) to form LINZ which came into being on 1 July 1996. The regulatory function of the Valuer-General became part of LINZ in 1998.

What gives him some satisfaction is that during his seven-year term he has helped build a tight and robust unit. Coming in as an “outsider”, without the traditional professional background in land information was in many ways an advantage, he says.

“We've integrated the various elements that were brought together in 1996 into a cohesive organisation, and within LINZ we have developed a clear focus on policy, regulation and delivery of core services.

“I'm also very pleased with the way we have consolidated purchasing through our Contracts group.”

Not surprisingly, the planning and implementation of high-profile projects like [Landonline](#) has also brought Russ immense satisfaction, but it is the state of LINZ itself that pleases him most as he prepares to take his leave.

“The totality of LINZ is the thing. We've got an excellent pool of talent and technical skills, and at the top level, a very stable and experienced senior management group.

Russ agrees that his last decade or two in the public service have been characterised by big changes. While things will never stand still, he says LINZ is in good shape for the future.



QUICK ACTION TO CONTROL PEST WEED IN LAKE BENMORE

A combination of quick action, good teamwork between LINZ, Environment Canterbury and Meridian Energy, and excellent weather conditions, has seen an infestation of oxygen weed (*Lagarosiphon major*) in Lake Benmore sprayed during the narrow seasonal window that was available.

Perfect conditions enabled a prompt start to aerial spraying operations at Lake Benmore.

The 75-square-kilometre hydro lake is the site of New Zealand's second-largest hydro station, has about 1.5 times the water of Wellington Harbour and is contained by New Zealand's largest earth dam.

A resource consent to use Aquagel to control the weed was lodged with Environment Canterbury on 18 March, and the aerial spraying completed just nine days later on 27 March. The herbicide, which contains the active ingredient diquat, is already used to control oxygen weed to great effect in a number of other lakes and waterways in New Zealand (see *Landscan* March 2003).

The spraying was organised for LINZ by its service provider, Landward Management.

David Morgan, Contract Manager with the LINZ Crown Property Management Group, says early indications are that the plants are dying off as expected.

“Certainly there will be ongoing developments with programmes like **Landonline** and other e-Government initiatives as they come on stream. There will be technology reviews and external circumstances can change.”

But LINZ, Russ says, is now well configured for the increasing trend to web-based delivery of services. “The vision is sound – there’s no pressure to restructure.”

Having said that, there’s a twinkle in Russ’s eye when he looks ahead to the challenges facing his successor, Brendan Boyle (see sidebar). While Brendan will be inheriting a robust and energised LINZ, he won’t be sitting idle.

As Russ contemplates moving on, he can also take the time to look at LINZ within a broader context – and the big picture is a level that Russ enjoys.

While we don’t necessarily have the resources of larger jurisdictions, Russ says New Zealand has many strategic advantages when it comes to running a spatial information agency.

“Our state sector structure allows us to be quick and nimble as an organisation. There’s a huge amount of inertia built into our counterparts in large jurisdictions like the United Kingdom and the United States.”

Russ says our “give it a go!” culture also provides an excellent environment for innovation. And being a young country we have a survey and title system that is also relatively young.

“We’re fortunate to have a sound land information system, uncomplicated by national land borders.”

Russ feels the period of major upheaval for government organisations is ending, not just for LINZ, but across the whole public service.

“We’ll see a little bit of pulling back into the centre – but probably no major institutional changes, but more of a focus on sharing, cooperation and communication between departments and groups.

“There will be more flexible solutions, a breaking down of ‘silos’. The hard-wired organisations will be left intact, but we’ll see the edges getting a little more porous as people learn to share information and accountabilities.”

You just know that Russ will be staying right in the thick of things as this next step in the evolution of the public service plays out. And he intends to.

He is planning to work in the strategic governance area, working as an independent non-executive director – not only on government boards, but also in the commercial sector should the opportunity arise.

And he’d like to put something back into the public sector, working through the State Services Commission offering mentoring for new chief executives and senior executives coming to grips with new challenges.

“I’ve got a bit to offer there.”

That may be something of an understatement.

NEW LINZ CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The State Services Commissioner, Michael Wintringham has announced the appointment of Brendan Boyle as Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand.

Brendan Boyle is currently the Director of the E-Government Unit at the State Services Commission, a position he has held since September 2000. Prior to that Brendan was the Registrar-General of Land at LINZ (1996 - 1999).

Brendan will start his new role in early August. Until then Sharon Cottrell, Acting General Manager Operations, will be Acting Chief Executive at LINZ.

Landscan will profile Brendan next issue.

While the immediate problem has been dealt with swiftly, total eradication of these weeds is not possible, David says.

“We have started consultation with Meridian Energy and Environment Canterbury and propose meetings with other interested groups such as the local community board, prior to developing a longer term strategy for controlling the weed infestation in Lake Benmore.”

While lagarosiphon is common throughout New Zealand, Lake Benmore had been free from the weed until its recent discovery.

“We give new outbreaks of weed our highest priority and we treat them very seriously,” says LINZ Manager, Crown Property, Paul Jackson. “The lakes cover large areas, so if the public notice anything, particularly new weed infestations in lakes or waterways and we are alerted, we can respond quickly, as was the case with Lake Benmore.

“LINZ is actively managing the lakes with our service providers, and we are also working closely with Meridian Energy, Fish & Game and regional councils.”

It is thought the weeds may have been spread to Benmore via ponds in the upper Waitaki area, reaching Lake Benmore through creeks and streams which flow into the Ahuriri River.

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To report suspected new aquatic weed infestations call toll free: 0508 244 746

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LAND ONLINE NOW AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

Land Information New Zealand's **Landonline** 'eDealings', electronic title dealings, is now available throughout the country. This is a further step in what constitutes a world first in the integration of electronic survey and title information services for land professionals.

The eDealing package enables lawyers and conveyancers to prepare and lodge routine conveyancing transactions, like mortgage discharges, transfer of titles and registration of new mortgages, via the Internet, without having to provide any paperwork to LINZ, says LINZ Acting General Manager of Operations, Sharon Cottrell.

"From searching to lodging, the whole process can now be done electronically and submitted to LINZ online. This is a world first in terms of service integration."

The processes are basically the same as in the paper environment, but much faster. The LINZ titles register updates automatically once an eDealing is registered. Layers of security have been introduced to ensure that the advent of online transactions in no way compromises the integrity of this fundamental land record.

The eDealing software was successfully piloted with a group of Christchurch law firms over the summer, with feedback heralding it as easy to use and efficient. It was released in the South Island at the end of March and has now been released, as planned in the North Island.

"After five years' design, development and testing, the creation of a national Internet-based land information management system for New Zealand is almost complete, and we are very happy to see it being so readily accepted - if not demanded - by our customers," says Ms Cottrell.

Landonline conveyancing customers across the country can now undertake the majority of their routine title work electronically from their own office. They can access **Landonline** via a secure channel over the Internet, search the LINZ database, download and print title and survey plan details and images, prepare property dealings electronically and submit them online to LINZ.

As the number of law firms signing up increases, users will be able to take full advantage of the efficiency of the system as they conduct electronic title dealings with other firms using **Landonline**.

Existing **Landonline** conveyancing customers can upgrade to eDealings immediately via the **Landonline** website and LINZ expects that other conveyancing customers, who might have been waiting for eDealings to be introduced, will now sign up to **Landonline** and enjoy the benefits of a fast, easy to use and efficient title dealings system.

The support eDealing customers receive includes a self-paced computer based training tutorial disk, a "roadmap" showing in easy steps how to undertake the work, and an online support "toolkit" comprising User Guides, Online Help, and Quick Reference Cards.

SAVINGS FOR HOME BUYERS

Home buyers will pay lower LINZ survey and title fees and charges from 1 July, 2003.

The average person buying a house will pay a LINZ disbursement of \$100 for their transfer of ownership and mortgage if completed in paper form, compared to \$166 at present. A person having the same transaction performed electronically will pay just \$42, a decrease of 75% from the current fee.

Similarly, all searches are cheaper. The average purchaser currently pays between \$19 and \$21 for the range of searches they may require. That will drop to \$14-\$16 for over-the-counter searches or \$8-\$10 if carried out on an entirely remote basis.

LINZ has recently reviewed all its survey and titles fees and charges. New fees and charges for LINZ title and survey electronic transactions are significantly less than for paper transactions.

Key changes to LINZ survey and titles fees and charges are:

- **all** products and services fees and charges have been reviewed
- new fees and charges more accurately reflect the real cost of transactions
- electronic fees are cheaper than manual fees
- manual fees have increased in some cases
- all search fees have reduced
- new survey and title validation processes include the introduction of resubmission fees.

STATEMENT OF INTENT MAPS THE WAY AHEAD

One of the changes to come out of the Government's "Review of the Centre" is a new accountability document for government departments, the Statement of Intent (SOI).

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LINZ's first Statement of Intent was published as a Budget document last month. It presents the department's plans for the next three years, and will be updated annually as part of the budget planning process. The SOI brings together two former publications: the Departmental Forecast Report and the LINZ Strategic Business Plan.

The SOI tells the LINZ 'story' from a range of perspectives, starting with a broad strategic framework. It maps out the outcomes to which LINZ aims to contribute, the tasks that lie ahead, how resources will be applied, and – because it is a budget document – the cost of specific activities for the next financial year. It also deals with accountability, and details a comprehensive set of measures against which LINZ's performance will be assessed.

In his introduction, the Minister for Land Information, Hon John Tamihere, notes that LINZ has moved aggressively from a paper-based agency towards a predominantly electronically based one over the past three years.

"LINZ will build on technological advancements to ensure that trusted land and seabed information is collected, maintained, processed and used efficiently," he says. "In doing so, its aim is to ensure impediments to suppliers and users of its information are kept to a minimum."

In its strategic framework section, the SOI builds on these themes and builds stronger links between the Government's goals and the management of LINZ.

Its analysis of the current operating environment provides some background relating to the direction of LINZ.

These include:

- increasing adoption of digital information and communication technologies (in 2001, 88 percent of businesses regularly used a computer)
- a greater need for whole-of-government initiatives – ensuring that the shared need for fundamental geospatial information across a whole range of core government activities is met
- raised awareness about conservation of national resources and public access to South Island high country – the focus here is on LINZ's responsibility for the 304 Crown pastoral leases and tenure review process
- a need to identify and remove barriers to the development of Maori land.

The task of meeting government outcomes is broken down into 'end outcomes' and 'intermediate outcomes'. The focus on the intermediate outcomes – the means to the end, if you

like – is on a system of well-balanced regulation, customer-focused services and leveraged information (others' use of LINZ land and seabed information to achieve better results).

The SOI details how LINZ will work towards these outcomes through its activities, coupled with a series of 'capability improvement issues' – in other words, ensuring the right resources are in place to achieve these outcomes.

Just how those outcomes are achieved is looked at from several perspectives:

- Financial: ensuring benefits from regulation and service delivery outweigh costs and that costs for access to information match the cost of dissemination
- Customer: ensuring that the various stakeholder groups affected by LINZ regulatory activities or services are treated fairly and get the best possible results
- Process: ensuring LINZ's internal processes contribute to achieving LINZ's outcomes.

Like all well-constructed stories, the LINZ SOI also provides 'context', in the form of some useful background on the department's responsibilities.

This SOI is just the beginning. Over the coming year further work will be done to:

- determine the key indicators LINZ will use to measure its progress
- explain the risks that affect LINZ's ability to deliver its outputs and mitigate their potential impact
- detail current and future capacity issues for LINZ and how they will be addressed.

LINZ is currently developing a process to progress this work and will be contacting stakeholders to invite their input and participation.

True to our commitment to the eLINZ strategy, the document is available online at:

www.linz.govt.nz/rcs/linz/pub/web/root/supportinginfo/AboutLinz/Objectives/soi/index.jsp



The Statement of Intent tells the LINZ 'story' from a number of perspectives.

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From left: Kevin Kelly, Amanda Thompson and Jerome Sheppard were nominated by LINZ to join the group of 20 senior public servants taking part in the inaugural Masters programme.

THREE LINZ NOMINEES FOR EXCLUSIVE MASTERS PROGRAMME

A select group of 20 New Zealand senior public servants has started on the first intake for the Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) and among them are three nominated by Land Information New Zealand.

The degree programme, run by the newly established Australia and New Zealand School of Government, is a top level professional school established late last year by a consortium of Australian and New Zealand governments, universities and business schools. The school offers a masters-level programme in public administration and specialised programmes for emerging leaders in the public sector.

Wellington's Victoria University is participating in the school, which brings together talented senior public servants, leading academics and experienced practitioners from New Zealand, Australia and overseas. Behind the school is a determination by the Government to rebuild a strong core public service to improve the delivery of government services to New Zealanders.

Three staff nominated by LINZ and accepted for the two-year, part-time EMPA course are: Kevin Kelly, Acting General

Manager Policy; Amanda Thompson, Senior Solicitor, Office of the Registrar-General of Land; and Jerome Sheppard, who had been Implementation Manager, **Landonline**, and is now on secondment to the State Services Commission (SSC), where he is Relationship Manager at the E-Government Unit.

Kevin Kelly joined LINZ two years ago as Manager Legal Services, after 10 years in the public service in the legal and policy areas, some of that time in management positions. He moved on secondment to the Acting General Manager Policy position at the beginning of the year.

Kevin had completed a BA in Canada, soon afterwards travelling to New Zealand to undertake a LLB – and he loved it so much here he decided to stay. In 1999 he completed a Master of Public Policy (MPP) with merit through Victoria University and believes the EMPA fits well with the MPP, but



The strategy reflects the department's mandate to provide an accurate, modern spatial reference system.

REVISED GEODETIC STRATEGY AIMS TO BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENTS

LINZ has unveiled a revised Geodetic Strategy for the five years 2003-2008, which takes the department further along the path set out by its Virtual Agency (eLINZ) Strategy.

The previous Geodetic Strategic Business Plan (1998) focused on the development of a geodetic system to meet cadastral survey and **Landonline** requirements.

The new strategy reflects the department's mandate to provide an accurate modern spatial reference system that is authoritative, accessible, delivered efficiently and effectively, and that supports all surveying and land information system requirements.

The strategy provides for:

- realisation of the New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 and Ross Sea Region Geodetic Datum 2000
- a national vertical reference system
- stronger alignment between the geodetic and cadastral systems
- managing the effects of earth movements on control stations, in order to maintain accuracy.

it gives a wider focus on public administration issues. It will also give him a greater range of skills to be able to contribute more effectively to the public service.

He has enjoyed working closely with counterparts from all over Australia and New Zealand, and found the first paper he completed, dealing with creating public value, to be particularly relevant to his job. His current syndicate assignment, which may well be very pertinent to several parts of New Zealand, focuses on how to resolve traffic congestion problems in the Sydney central business district.

Amanda Thompson is Senior Solicitor in the Office of the Registrar-General of Land, with responsibility for the administration of the land transfer system.

Amanda joined the Legal Services group at LINZ in the late 1990s, moved to the Registrar-General’s team about four years ago, and was appointed senior solicitor two years ago. She had left school early and while working in the office of a legal firm started, as a twenty-two-year-old, doing a law degree part-time. When she finished her degree she decided she didn’t want to go into private practice and instead got a position with Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and has remained in the public sector since.

Several years ago Amanda felt it was time to undertake some postgraduate studies and had looked at both the Master of Business Administration and MPP degrees. However, she didn’t feel either was quite right for her and where she believed she wanted to take her future – within the public sector.

Consequently, she was delighted to be selected for the EMPA and is already finding very positive benefits for her work with LINZ, providing her with ideas on ways to frame and support arguments on a day-to-day basis.

“It is certainly making me more effective in many ways, and had relevance straight away,” she says. “There are great opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas.”

Jerome Sheppard did a Bachelor of Commerce in valuation at Lincoln in the 1980s, and then followed that with a Masters in Public Policy in the 1990s. He describes the establishment of the EMPA as a wonderful initiative by the New Zealand and Australian governments and was very pleased to have been selected for the inaugural intake.

He recently moved from LINZ on secondment to the SSC, where he has taken over the relationship management responsibilities for the E-Government Unit.

Jerome’s most recent project with LINZ was **Landonline**, as Implementation Manager. Prior to that he was the Project Manager for the New Zealand Continental Shelf Project.

The first session of the EMPA degree course revealed the wide breadth of knowledge and experience of participants, and will provide some valuable networks and contacts for the future, he says.

He has been surprised at the commonality of issues right across Australian federal and state departments and New Zealand departments, and is interested in seeing how they are dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

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To increase the accessibility of geodetic information the strategy proposes:

- developing and maintaining a network of ground marks to provide access to the geodetic system
- enhancing the active control network
- providing access to geodetic data in line with eLINZ principles
- communicating effectively with spatial data users.

It also includes initiatives that focus on LINZ’s resources and networks including:

- ensuring the availability of the necessary skills and resources
- being responsive to changing needs
- entering strategic alliances and partnerships to further its work

- providing leadership in its field.

The strategy goes on to detail a five-year plan of goals strategies, including timelines for specific tasks.

“In putting this strategy into practice we will be working closely with our users to define our five-year work programme,” says Surveyor-General, Tony Bevin.

“With this plan we are embarking on an exciting future by adopting new technologies, implementing new systems and creating new ways of accomplishing our mission and goals.”

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Carol Brown (centre), wife of the late Sam Brown, holds a portrait of her husband at the presentation earlier this month of Sam Brown Scholarships to five LINZ staff. With Carol are the scholarship recipients (from left): Kiri Symons, Trevor Hose, Ricky Legge-Murray, Nicky Karu and Gidget Russell.

FIVE RECIPIENTS FOR SAM BROWN SCHOLARSHIP

Five Land Information New Zealand staff members are sharing this year's Sam Brown Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship is awarded to honour the former Chief Crown Property Officer, Sam Brown, who died in October 2001.

Gidget Russell, Customer Services Representative, Wellington, expects the next year to be "full-on". She works full time, cares for her four children and is grabbing every spare minute to work on a Diploma in Maori and Management (a full-time year-long course) from the Otaki-based university, Te Wananga O Raukawa.

She is excited about the opportunity for personal and career growth the diploma will give.

With Ngati Kahungunu affiliations, Gidget was born in Hawke's Bay but moved to Wellington as a toddler. She regards the scholarship as an important stage in her personal journey and is now considering tackling the Masters degree once she finishes the diploma course.

Trevor Hose, Support Analyst, Wellington, made a major career change about four years ago, when he gave away his chef's hat and moved into the world of information technology. After working in Wellington and Sydney in applications servicing, he moved to LINZ.

Soon after he joined, he heard about the Sam Brown Scholarship, and decided to apply. "I haven't noticed a lot of Maori working in IT," he says, adding that he hopes to be a positive role model for other young Maori when he graduates. He is doing a programming course at Massey University's Wellington Campus, for a Diploma in Business Computing. He starts in July and expects to take two years on a part-time basis. He did an Advanced Certificate in PC Servicing through Massey in 1999, and since then has completed several systems-based qualifications.

Kiri Symons, Solicitor, Wellington, joined LINZ late in 2001, after three years working as a solicitor for the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission. She is a solicitor in the Office of the Registrar-General of Land, and plans to study for a Master of Laws (LLM) part-time over the next three or four years.

She was delighted to be selected for one of the Sam Brown Scholarships. "The scholarship is a great initiative as it enables its recipients to work toward their goals. I feel honoured to have received the award," she says. "I am building on my current legal skills and tailoring the course in a way that complements the work I am doing for LINZ."



Her first elective is a paper on e-commerce, which is particularly relevant to LINZ and its extensive use of technology-based business operations.

It took **Ricky Legge-Murray**, System Support Representative, Auckland, two years to decide to apply for a Sam Brown Scholarship. "I wanted to do it, but I just hadn't got the time as I was the only IT support person in Auckland."

Ricky joined the then Department of Survey and Land Information in 1988. He is very keen to increase his limited te reo skills and so is enrolling for a BA in Maori at Auckland University. He sees this as part of a long-term personal development programme, although believes there will be times when it will benefit his professional life – such as when he attends hui for work.

However it was his family responsibilities that finally made him make the decision to apply for the scholarship. His tribal connection is with Te Aupouri, from north of Kaitaia, and as the eldest grandchild he is now being called on to represent the family in a variety of situations where the knowledge of te reo would help him better fulfil his role.

Nicky Karu, Assurance Analyst, Office of the Registrar-General of Land, Wellington, has been working for LINZ or its previous incarnations for longer than she wants to say.

During her time with the Department of Justice, she got assistance to do a BA in Maori at Victoria University, working part time, which she finished in 1997, the year she had her first child. This built on her interest in her Maori language and heritage, and fitted in well with the department's strong commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Three years ago she started on a Masters in Public Policy at Victoria University, with support from LINZ and this year has been awarded one of the Sam Brown Scholarships. Some of her studies tie in closely with her work, particularly since she has been seconded to the National Maori Land Information Project, which she hopes she will be able to use as the intern part of her degree.

Born and raised in Wellington, Nicky has close tribal affiliations with Ngati Tamatera.

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