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NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTED

LINZ will welcome its new Chief Executive Colin MacDonald on 1 July.

Colin comes to LINZ from the Inland Revenue Department where he was the Deputy Commissioner, Business Development and Systems. He has previously acted in the position of Chief Executive there.

“I’m looking forward to getting out and meeting LINZ staff and our key stakeholders, and listening to any ideas and issues they might have.

“Stepping in at a time when 100% e-lodgement is on the horizon, I consider it a great opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are heading.”

Colin grew up in Glasgow and went to Glasgow University, where he completed a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. He is also a Chartered Engineer and a member of the British Computer Society.

He worked for several organisations in the UK, including one of the largest provincial legal firms.

In 1994, Colin moved to New Zealand, and joined KPMG holding the positions of Senior Consultant and Associate Director. Following this, he became the Chief Operating Officer for the ANZ Banking Group (New Zealand) Limited.

With more than 25 years’ experience in leadership and IT across a number of industries and sectors, he brings a range of skills and knowledge to LINZ.

“LINZ appealed to me because it has a reputation as a well run organisation and a quiet achiever,” said Colin.

“It provides such an important function to New Zealand, because a secure, effective land information and transfer system is essential to any economy.”

Colin is married to Paula and has three children.

STREAM RESTORATION WORK RECOGNISED BY PLANNING INSTITUTE

Work to restore a stream in an environmentally sensitive area near Turangi has been recognised in an award for the firm contracted by LINZ to manage the task.

Taupo-based Cheal Consultants received the New Zealand Planning Institute’s 2008 Planning Excellence in Project Award for the Hangarito Stream diversion project. The award recognises innovative or creative excellence in a project involving physical work using a natural or physical resource, or its protection or conservation, to improve the amenity or environment.

The formerly weed and silt-choked stream had been diverted and heavily modified during the 1960s when the Tokaanu power scheme was in full swing. Barely visible under a tangle of willows and brambles, the Hangarito was prone to flooding the adjacent farmland.

LINZ’s involvement in remedial work for the stream began a decade ago as a consequence of the Ancillary Claims Deed as part of the 1998 Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Ngati Turangitukua. On behalf of the Crown, LINZ was responsible for settling a number of ancillary claims resulting from the settlement, including the restoration of the Hangarito Stream and provision for future maintenance of the drain.

Graham Williams, Technical Leader Liabilities and Disposals, says LINZ worked in partnership with a number of stakeholders

LINZ TACKLES RABBITS IN CANTERBURY

LINZ began rabbit control operations in June over 4000 hectares of Crown-administered Canterbury riverbeds.

It is the largest operation of its type LINZ has carried out, and comes at a time when rabbit populations have increased markedly, causing concern in rural communities about their impact.

LINZ portfolio manager David Morgan said rabbits were being tackled at several open riverbed sites on the Clarence, Hapuku, Waiau, Hurunui, Rakaia, Maerewhenua and Hakataramea rivers.



Example of rabbit hole damaged land.

during the complex planning and consultation process that followed.

“Resource consents for the project were lodged in 2002 and granted in 2005 after consultation involving iwi, hapu, landowners, Genesis Energy, Transit New Zealand, Taupo District Council, Environment Waikato and the Department of Conservation. The remedial work, planned by Cheal Consultants, got underway in 2006.

“In just two years since the restoration was started, the Hangarito itself has already been transformed from an eyesore to a pleasant amenity for the area. LINZ congratulates Cheal Consultants for its deserved award.”

Graham said the final stage of the work, including some minor stabilisation works and the opening up of the drain into the Tokaanu tailrace, should be completed shortly. LINZ would then transfer responsibility for the drain to Environment Waikato after a two year monitoring period.

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BEFORE

The Hangarito Stream, Tokaanu, prior to remedial work and immediately after the stream cleaning was completed.

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AFTER

The sites were identified by Environment Canterbury, which is responsible for monitoring populations and coordinating control efforts under its Regional Pest Management Strategy.

David said the control programmes would complement efforts by adjoining landowners.

“We are pleased with the support we have received from the rural community and Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu for this work. What we’re doing will provide positive socio-economic and land management benefits for farmers and local communities,” David said.

Resource consents for each operation were issued in May by Environment Canterbury, and extensive consultation has been carried out with adjoining landowners, local communities and Ngai Tahu.

“It has been quite an exercise to ensure that all those who need to be informed have been kept in the picture. We take our biosecurity responsibilities seriously and want to be seen to be responsible landowners,” said David.

Most of the work involves ground application of Pindone and 1080 carrot baits. Sites where there is a higher potential for public use (on the Clarence, Hapuku and Maerewhenua

riverbeds) are being treated solely with Pindone, and 1080 will not be laid where there is a risk of baits entering water.

Two large and difficult to access riverbed sites on the Waiau are being treated with 1080 applied by helicopter.

David said the public had been urged to treat the control sites with caution for six months.

“There is no health risk in using areas treated with 1080 or Pindone as long as bait is not handled, children are supervised, and animals are not taken from treated areas for eating. Consent for each operation is received from the Medical Officer of Health, and independent water quality monitoring is carried out after the treatment.”

Full details of the control programme, including public notices and maps, are available on the LINZ website: www.linz.govt.nz.

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TENURE REVIEWS MAKING PROGRESS

Tenure reviews of South Island High Country pastoral leases have made considerable progress in the past six months.

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Mathew Clark, Manager of LINZ's Christchurch-based Pastoral Unit, said nine substantive or final proposals had been put to lessees over the last six months and a tenth was due to be put to a leaseholder in June.

Mathew said the recently agreed deals had secured public access and a wide range of conservation values and recreational opportunities, and allowed for diversified activity on land that is to be freeholded.

Notable agreements reached in Canterbury included reviews of the Mt Cook, Mesopotamia, Mt Potts and Redcliffe leases.

The review of the 2463 hectare Mt Cook Station pastoral lease, at the head of Lake Pukaki, resulted in 1612 hectares or 65 percent of the property becoming public conservation land next to Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Newly protected land on the lower slopes of the Burnett Mountains

could be a potential future addition to Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

Of Mesopotamia's 26,140 hectares located in the upper Rangitata Valley, 20,888 hectares are destined to become public conservation land. A further 5252 hectares of productive developed river flats and rolling country will be freeholded to the leaseholder, subject to covenants over 1487 hectares to protect biodiversity.

Mt Potts, across the valley from Mesopotamia Station, was made internationally famous by the Lord of the Rings as the setting for Eodoras. This review resulted in 8670 hectares becoming public conservation land, and 1022 hectares being freeholded.

Conservation land from Mt Potts and the Redcliffe's reviews is being added to the Hakatere Conservation Park which opened last year. The Redcliffe agreement contributes 7809 hectares to public conservation land, and 1383 hectares is to be freeholded.

NEW STRUCTURE WILL BOOST RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEASEHOLDERS

LINZ is working to build and maintain more direct relationships with pastoral leaseholders and people who carry out activities in the high country.

Mathew Clark, Manager of LINZ's Pastoral Unit, told lessees attending the annual Federated Farmers' high country committee conference in Wanaka that LINZ was committed to ensuring pastoral land continued to be well managed and in accordance with lease terms.

In changes implemented late last year, LINZ combined its tenure review and statutory land management teams into a single pastoral unit based in Christchurch.

Then in April this year, the pastoral unit took over as first point of contact for lessee enquiries, a role previously carried out by a service provider under an outsourcing model established in 2000.

Mathew said the new approach has been adopted in order for LINZ to be more responsive to the needs of lessees.

"Leases need to be managed in a way that is fair and lawful and reasonable for all parties – the Crown and the lessee.

"This means LINZ needed to take a more hands-on role in day-to-day lease and licence management, particularly in the area of discretionary consents.

"We want direct, open and sound relationships with lease and licence holders and other parties who carry out activities on Crown pastoral land.

"We will be working more closely with lessee representative groups, as well as other stakeholders, and keeping lessees informed on key issues. We'll also be undertaking ongoing process and system improvement.

"Overall, this adds up to us being more responsive and more accessible to lessees, and will give us better information about activities on pastoral land," said Mathew.

As well as enabling one on one contact between LINZ and the lessee, the new approach should improve turnaround times for applications to carry out activities other than grazing, such as permits for commercial recreational activities.

Notable agreements in Central Otago include the Kyeburn and Home Hills reviews, with conservation land earmarked for inclusion in the proposed Oteake Conservation Park.

Overall, of the 303 pastoral leases eligible for tenure review under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, agreements have been reached for 65 reviews to date.

This has resulted in approximately 175,000 hectares or 48 percent of reviewable land being transferred to the Department of Conservation, and approximately 190,000 hectares (52 percent) being freeholded to lessees.

Ninety-six leases are in the earlier stages of the review process from information gathering through to the development of substantive proposals. Public submissions on the preliminary proposal for the Allandale/Greenvale pastoral leases are currently being analysed and three further

preliminary proposals are expected to be advertised shortly.

Mathew said 20 of 38 lakeside properties where Cabinet announced funding would not be approved unless lessees agreed to meet certain conditions last year were now back in the process. The lessees of these properties had agreed to meet conditions outlined by the Government last year, including lakeside land being retained by the Crown, or the lessee accepting restrictions on the land's future use and development.

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“We’ll be providing more guidance on applications and the supporting information required when an application is made, and keeping lessees informed about progress,” said Mathew.

An important focus for the pastoral unit is ensuring that the rights of lessee and lessor are clearly understood. “We intend to work collaboratively to help ensure all parties understand terms and conditions and encourage compliance.”

Mathew also outlined to lessees changes to the contracting model LINZ uses for pastoral lease management.

A panel of five service providers has been appointed to supply a range of operational services and advice relating to lease and licence management, property inspections, valuations, applications for consent and other miscellaneous activities.

Work will be allocated to service providers on a case by case basis. This will allow LINZ to maintain control of all activities and processes.

In addition to the panel, Lakes Property Services have been contracted to carry out lease and licence administration services such as invoicing and lease renewals.

Mathew also reported on a project to review whether pastoral leases are being managed with ‘good husbandry’, and whether

discretionary consents are being issued in accordance with the Crown Pastoral Land Act and the Land Act.

“We reviewed a sample of our pastoral lease inspections and we found that in general land is being managed well and leaseholders are meeting their obligations to be good husbands of the land. We also found that consents being issued comply with the law.”

LINZ is being increasingly proactive in directly monitoring compliance with indicators of good husbandry, and has instituted an ongoing pastoral lease inspection programme that aims to inspect around 50 leases per year.

“We’re currently in the process of gathering information on all consents dating back to 1985. This information will then be more readily able to be used for future decision-making and general land management.”

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AGREEING ON A GEOGRAPHIC NAME: PROTOCOL SMOOTHS PATH FOR ROSS SEA REGION

From Mount Abbot to Zykov Glacier, the geographic names of the Ross Sea Region of Antarctica tell a fascinating story.

From the purely prosaic (Nameless Glacier) to the whimsical (Catspaw Glacier), the names are a permanent record of the culture and history of the people who have explored and worked in this part of the white continent. Blizzard Peak, Mount Terror, Mount Overlord, Mount Thor and Misery Peak are not products of a fantasy writer's imagination, but real places in a harsh environment.

Gallipoli Heights and Pearl Harbour Glacier reflect important milestones in the histories of the two countries with the greatest operational and scientific interests in the Ross Sea Region: New Zealand and the United States.

Both nations have a long history of cooperation in the Antarctic, and this tradition has been further strengthened with the signing of a Relationship Protocol regarding the assigning of geographic names.

The agreement between the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB) and the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) establishes principles and protocols for assigning further geographic names in the Ross Sea Region.

NZGB Chair Don Grant explained that under the agreement, the two parties would advise each other on a proposed name, with the aim of having it approved by the respective boards. Of course, just as couples can't always agree on a name for their child, countries may also have different views on what to call a place. The new agreement recognises this, and allows a name to be assigned by one board and perhaps not the other, should there not be consensus. However all efforts will be made to adopt each other's names, despite differences in respective naming guidelines.

"The protocol represents a firm commitment by both parties to collaborate when assigning geographic names in the region," Don said. "Both countries retain their own naming guidelines, allowing for unique naming characteristics of each country to be applied and respected."

Don said the Ross Sea Region still had many unnamed hydrographic and geographic features, and there would be plenty of opportunities for both countries to continue to assign names. "New place names on topographic maps are generally assigned by both New Zealand and the United States on a 50/50 share basis."



Don Grant signs the protocol on behalf of the New Zealand Geographic Board.

The NZGB's jurisdiction over Antarctic place naming was formalised by the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008, which was passed last month (see accompanying article).

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GEOGRAPHIC NAMING FRONTIERS EXTENDED

A new Act passed in May has extended the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) to name features of our Continental Shelf and formalised the board's Antarctic place naming role.

New Zealand's undersea frontiers could soon be rolled out if the United Nations accepts this country's case for expanding its continental shelf boundaries. This would extend our sovereign rights to cover an area up to 24 times the size of New Zealand's landmass.

While most of this country's places and geographic features on dry land now bear names, many of the volcanoes, canyons and other major features of the undersea continental shelf landscape have no name.

The New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 modernises the processes for the official naming of places and geographic features and will replace the 62-year-old New Zealand Geographic Board Act 1946.

An Order-in-Council is the only formality remaining before the new legislation is enacted, possibly later this year.

According to NZGB Chair Don Grant, the new Act makes a number of changes which enable the Board to carry out its functions and duties more effectively. "It also recognises the importance of correct names for places and their location for New Zealanders in their everyday lives, and for emergency services when they are responding to incidents."

Other features of the new Act include:

- the opportunity for public input into proposed names for Crown-protected areas managed by the Department of Conservation
- a responsibility of the NZGB to maintain an online gazetteer of official geographic names containing location and historic information
- formalising the NZGB's role in naming places in the Antarctic (see accompanying article).

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LINZ WEBSITE IMPROVED

LINZ will be launching an improved www.linz.govt.nz website in the coming weeks.



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The website has thousands of pages of information on New Zealand’s land and seabed: from geodetic formulae and information on titles; to topographic maps and hydrographic charts; and Crown land biosecurity.

The main focus of the new website is cleaner, clearer navigation and up-to-date content.

“Our aim is to make it easier and faster for users to find the information they need,” said Justine Gilliland, LINZ Manager Strategic Communications. “The site had grown iteratively over the years since it was created. It was time to take a look at the big picture and make the site work more coherently.”

The website will have a refreshed design and clearer navigation. New features will include distinct ‘Find Out More’ pages for each section, providing a quicker connection with related information. A powerful new search engine will also allow users to find the information they want more quickly. Content has also been reviewed and updated. The website will better deliver regulatory and policy information and new services such as searches for geodetic marks.

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