

# ICA Country Report 2005

## New Zealand

### 1 Brief description of the Government Structure

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of New Zealand, as head of state and an appointed Governor-General as her representative. There is a unicameral Parliament (elected under proportional representation) and a centralised system of Government providing the majority of public services to New Zealanders.

While regional and local government are functionally independent of central government (and each other), they are mandated and governed by legislation passed in Parliament. The range of services provided by regional and local government is limited compared to other jurisdictions, e.g. Education, Police and Fire Service are provided by central government.

Cabinet is at the heart of the central government decision-making process in New Zealand. Cabinet is made up of Ministers, drawn from the Members of Parliament from the governing political party or coalition of parties. It operates through a series of committees that focus on specific issues, but responsibility for decisions ultimately rests with Cabinet as a whole, as it operates under a principle of collective responsibility.

The Prime Minister is the leader of the Government and the chair of Cabinet. In addition to this and any portfolio roles they may have, the Prime Minister also has an important role in promoting co-ordination across the Public Service.

The Public Service consists of 35 departments that are required to serve Ministers impartially, which primarily involves the effective implementation of Ministerial decisions and the provision of free and frank advice. In addition to the Public Service departments, there is a range of other organisations within the wider State sector providing different services/functions and constituted under a range of statutory provisions. (e.g. State-Owned Enterprises, Crown entities, Offices of Parliament, non-Public Service Departments). Most of these organisations' activities are funded through appropriations (which are included in an annual Appropriation Bill approved by Parliament) and is accountable to a responsible Minister for their performance.

Three public service departments have a functional responsibility spread across the Public Service and the wider State sector). These central agencies are responsible for co-ordinating and managing public sector performance and each has a different focus area. The Treasury is responsible for budgetary and fiscal management, the State Services Commission focuses on the performance of State sector organisations and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet facilitates government strategic and operational decision-making.

Additional references:

[www.govt.nz/aboutnz/](http://www.govt.nz/aboutnz/)

[www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)

## **2 The strategic approach towards e-government**

The strategic approach to e-government is encapsulated in the E-government Strategy [www.e.govt.nz/docs/e-gov-strategy-june-2003/index.html](http://www.e.govt.nz/docs/e-gov-strategy-june-2003/index.html)

This is the second update of the E-government Strategy, which was first released in May 2001.

The update builds on very good progress in two areas - building the foundations for e-government (especially the all-of-government web portal [www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz)), and delivery of a growing range of e-government initiatives by government agencies.

The updated strategy shows how e-government is an enabler of the changes in the public sector that government is seeking, as it requires agencies to focus on delivering results that people value, rather than merely the efficient production of outputs.

E-government is a way of tapping unrealised potential for high quality government in New Zealand. It enables government agencies to separately and collectively lift their performance and deliver better results through using information and technology in new, more collaborative, ways.

The revised strategy emphasises that fact that, while the centre of government needs to create the right conditions for e-government, it is agencies that actually deliver government information and services, and therefore deliver on e-government goals. For this reason, achieving the goals of the strategy requires a mix of top-down and bottom-up initiatives.

The strategy deliberately does not identify explicit e-government goals and initiatives that agencies will undertake alone or in clusters. These should be identified in agencies' Statements of Intent, or other strategic planning documents. Accordingly, the strategy confines itself to:

- setting a broad direction and timeline for achieving overarching e-government outcomes;
- specifying a set of all-of-government initiatives that need to be undertaken to allow agencies to go forward and deliver e-government; and
- identifying ways that agencies efforts can be facilitated, coordinated and supported by the centre of government.

The e-Government strategy delivers part of a wider Digital Strategy [www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz/](http://www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz/)

“The Digital Strategy is about creating a digital future for all New Zealanders, using the power of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance all aspects of our lives. It is a strategy for ensuring New Zealand is a world leader in using information and technology to realise our economic, environmental, social and cultural goals. The Digital Strategy isn't just about technology ... it's about people and their ability to connect to the things that matter to them.”

## **3 Organisational Issues**

The responsibility for leading implementation of the E-government strategy lies with the Information and Communication Technologies Branch of the State Services Commission. [www.ssc.govt.nz](http://www.ssc.govt.nz)

The State Services Commission (SSC) ensures that the State Services are well placed to carry out Government policy and meet the needs of New Zealanders. It has a specialist role as a leader on issues of State Services development and a core function of appointment and performance management of Public Service chief executives.

The SSC also advises on State Services management issues and defines and promotes good practice in a number of areas, including e-government, people capability and integrity and conduct.

The State Services Commissioner has announced new Development Goals for the State Services: the e-government strategic goals have been integrated into these development goals. [www.ssc.govt.nz/development-goals](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/development-goals)

A key component of the E-government Strategy is the E-government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF). [www.e.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp](http://www.e.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp) The e-GIF is a collection of policies and standards endorsed for New Zealand government information technology (IT) systems. The e-GIF:

- helps government agencies more easily work together electronically
- makes systems, knowledge and experience reusable from one agency to another
- reduces the effort required to deal with government online by encouraging consistency of approach.

The steward of the e-GIF is the State Services Commissioner, supported by the e-GIF Management Committee. Standards are recommended for inclusion in the e-GIF by working groups, which comprise technical staff from agencies and sometimes people from information technology vendors.

#### **4 Operational Issues**

There are a range of challenges to the implementation of the E-government strategy [www.e.govt.nz/docs/e-gov-strategy-june-2003/chapter7.html](http://www.e.govt.nz/docs/e-gov-strategy-june-2003/chapter7.html). The key challenges include:

##### **Governance**

E-government is a new way of doing business for government. As agencies become more interconnected there will be challenges for public sector governance. In particular, there is a need for decision-making processes that support integrated back office and service delivery strategies and business processes.

##### **Funding**

In 2002, the question of how much funding e-government activities require, and how this requirement should best be met, was identified as a major challenge. Work on this question with the Treasury reached the following conclusions:

- it is hard to separate e-government funding from normal departmental expenditure on information and communications technologies;
- e-government funding should not be treated separately from other funding requirements. It should be addressed as part of normal budget processes;

- Government should be prepared to invest in a "portfolio" of e-government initiatives that may have some initiatives with negative fiscal benefits, but positive social or economic benefits. Overall, the portfolio should have positive net benefits; and
- the quantum of e-government funding required in future is currently unknown. A more accurate picture should be revealed through subsequent Budget processes.

### **Building capability in agencies**

E-government demands that agencies develop new capabilities. For example, agencies will have to:

- learn how to make best use of the Internet to reach their customers;
- integrate e-government into their overall strategic planning;
- adapt themselves to an environment in which more information and technology is shared, or subject to all-of-government policies and standards; and
- find ways of collaborating with other agencies in potentially complex webs of integrated service delivery.

This challenge rests mostly with agencies as they develop specific capability to meet their needs. The centre will need to support agencies in this.

## **5 Other issues**

### **Trusted Computing**

Trusted computing and digital rights management (DRM) are emerging classes of technologies that have implications for the integrity of government-held information.

These implications concern continuing government access to its own information, ensuring that such access will be under its exclusive control, and that sensitive information will be protected from disclosure to unauthorised third parties.

The SSC has been investigating these implications, and is in the process of developing principles and policies regarding the appropriate use of these technologies.

Until such all-of-government principles and policies have been adopted, New Zealand government agencies have been advised to not use these technologies.

For further information refer [www.e.govt.nz/trusted/trusted.asp](http://www.e.govt.nz/trusted/trusted.asp).

## **6 Key areas of New Zealand's Information Technology strategy**

Three areas of significant importance to New Zealand's E-government strategy at this time are:

### **Online Authentication [www.e.govt.nz/authentication/index.asp](http://www.e.govt.nz/authentication/index.asp)**

To use some government services, you need to verify who you are. You also need to know that you are dealing with a real government agency. The process of verifying who you are and establishing the authenticity of the agency is called 'authentication'.

In recent years the SSC has been working with a range of public interest groups and agencies to examine what online authentication might mean for people and government agencies dealing online with each other. The focus has been on determining an approach

that allows individuals to have confidence when they transact online with New Zealand government agencies.

In April 2002 this work resulted in the Government approving a set of policy and implementation principles for authentication. The principles were the basis for the four conceptual models that were developed in late 2002 to represent the possible ways to achieve a consistent approach to online authentication. These models were analysed to determine the implications of each approach and feedback was also sought via a public consultation.

This led to a decision by the Government in June 2003 to proceed with designing an all-of-government authentication solution. With input from a range of groups and individuals the SSC determined how such a solution might work and considered the various implications that it may give rise to. On the basis of this work the Government has decided that a phased implementation of all-of-government authentication should commence.

The current phase, 'Initial Implementation,' which builds on previous work, started in July 2004, and consists of:

- The initial implementation of the Shared Logon service.
- Developing standards for the overall authentication process.
- Policy work on privacy, and future legal implications.
- Researching and developing ways in which electronic identity can be managed.
- Development of review bodies and privacy impact assessments.
- Further work to confirm the estimated costs and benefits of rolling out Shared Logons to other government agencies.

The programme does not cover authorisation, which is what privileges a user will enjoy. Authorisation, including access control and role management, will continue to be managed by the agency providing the service.

### **Web access strategy**

The State Services Commission is developing a strategy for the use of Internet technologies by State Services agencies to support the State Services development goals for 2007 and 2010. This work covers areas:

- Finding information and services.
- Providing information and services that are of value.
- Using information and services.

It is a government goal that by 2007 Internet technologies will be integral to the delivery of government information, services, and processes, and that by 2010 the operation of government will have been changed markedly by use of the Internet, and particularly the delivery channels for government services.

A key goal is that by 2007 the concept of 'no wrong door' will be prevalent, where New Zealanders accessing government services will be referred appropriately to the organisation that is able to best address their concerns. By 2010 government agencies will be working together to co-ordinate the delivery of end-to-end services that may involve different

government agencies, providing joint services through appropriate management of different physical and electronic channels.

The Web Access Strategy is intended to provide a way forward to meet the first of these requirements, finding information and services delivered via the Internet or other information networks.

### **Government Shared Network**

The Government Shared Network (GSN) is a high-speed, dedicated secure telecommunications infrastructure that will enable government agencies to share information with each other at higher speeds and more cost effectively to enhance the delivery of services to the New Zealand public.

The project will deliver these key features:

- A secure fibre-optic network connecting government agencies in Wellington
- A wide area network (WAN) connecting government agency sites anywhere in New Zealand on a secure government focused voice and video capable data network.
- Services delivered on the GSN including Internet access, IP telephony, secure remote access and off-site data storage

For further information please send an email to [e-governmnet@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:e-governmnet@ssc.govt.nz) .