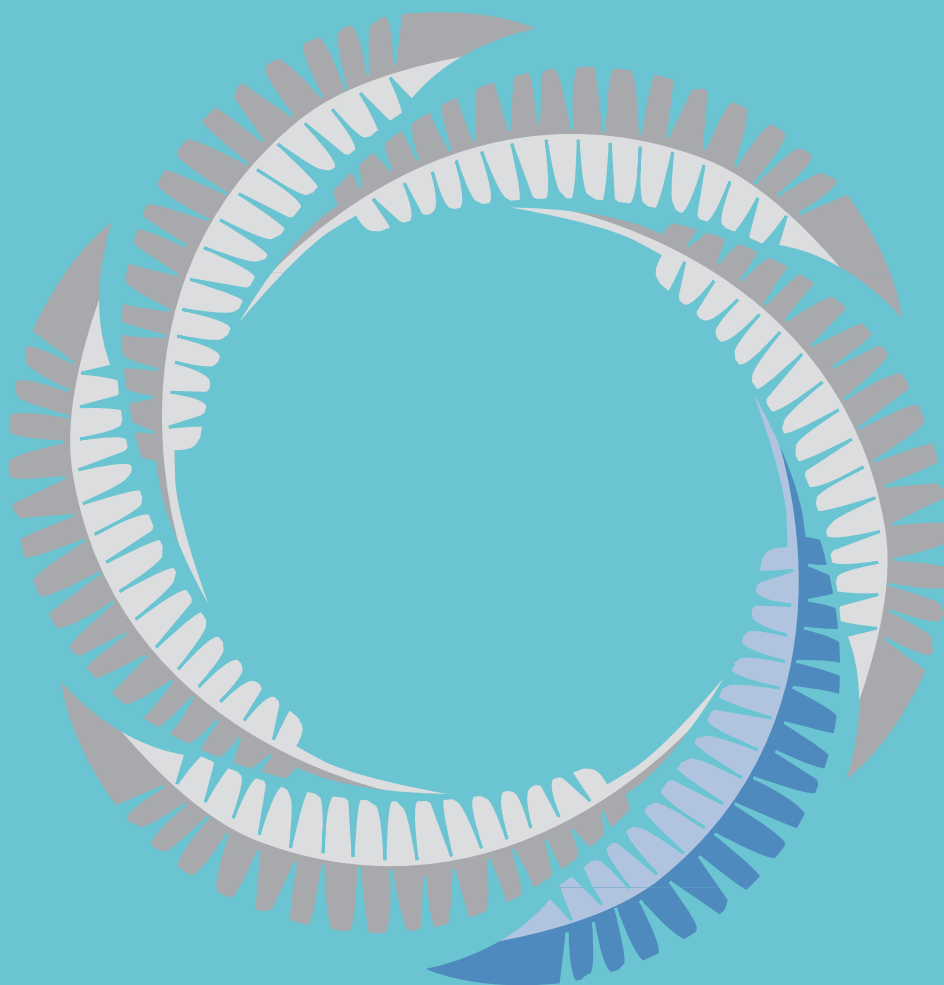




Accessible State Services

Rotorua research pilot report



Accessible State Services

Rotorua research pilot report

Acknowledgements

The State Services Commission wishes to acknowledge the following agencies and organisations for their help in producing this report:

Accident Compensation Corporation
Career Services
Child, Youth and Family
Citizens Advice Bureau
Community Law Centre
Department of Conservation
Department of Internal Affairs, including the Local Government and Community Group
Department of Labour, including Immigration New Zealand and Occupational Safety and Health
Destination Rotorua Economic Development
Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing
ESOL Home Tutors (Rotorua) Inc
Housing New Zealand Corporation
Inland Revenue
Korean Residents Association
Labour Electorate Office
Lakes District Health Board
Land Transport New Zealand
Legal Services Agency
Ministry of Economic Development, including the Companies Office
Ministry of Education, including Group Education Improvement and Support and Group Special Education
Ministry of Justice, including the Rotorua High/District Court
Ministry of Social Development, including the Family and Community Services and Work and Income Services
New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
Pacific Islands Development Charitable Trust
Police
Rotorua Chamber of Commerce
Rotorua District Council
Salvation Army
Scion
Te Puni Kōkiri

State Services Commission
ISBN 0-478-24474-6
July 2006
Crown copyright

Contents

State Services Commissioner’s preface	5
Overview	7
Accessible State Services Goal milestones	7
Who’s knocking at the door?	7
Is there a door?	7
Is the door open?	8
How the door is being oiled	8
No wrong door	8
Introduction	9
Structure of the report	9
Part 1	11
Development Goals for the State Services	11
Accessible State Services Goal	11
Why this research?	12
Research method	12
Part 2	15
Accessibility	15
Responsiveness	25
Part 3	41
Next steps	41
Bibliography	43
Appendices	45
Appendix 1: List of participants	45
Appendix 2: Interview questions for agencies	46
Appendix 3: Development Goals	48

State Services Commissioner's preface

Nearly 200,000 people work in the State Services, in a wide range of agencies. Collectively, these agencies are responsible for providing most of the essential services people need in order to live their lives. Our society depends on the health, education, welfare, justice and transport systems working well – with New Zealanders' interests at heart.

The environment in which the State Services operates is a challenging one and the nature of some of the work of State servants is difficult. There are national changes that State Services agencies need to understand and respond to. State Services agencies need to adapt so they are able to respond to the changing needs of New Zealanders and serve the government better.

The six Development Goals for the State Services are all about how to make our public management system work better. Lifting our collective performance means we can more effectively achieve the government's aims for New Zealanders.

The combined effect of achieving the Development Goals on employment, excellent State servants, networking, coordination and trust is that New Zealanders experience accessible, responsive and effective services.

In order to lift our collective performance, we need to better understand the current situation. Research is needed to determine whether the State Services is poor, average or good in terms of accessibility for New Zealanders. Earlier this year, the State Services Commission undertook a pilot study in Rotorua that identified how accessible and responsive services in that community were. The pilot was also designed to test our research methodology.

The material from that research pilot is summarised in this document. I hope that this research will now be used as a platform to increase the capacity of the State Services to learn from New Zealanders' views on what works, and what does not, in terms of access to services.

I would like to thank those Rotorua agencies, intermediaries and members of the public who willingly took part in our research pilot and who embraced the aims of the Accessible State Services Goal.



Mark Prebble
State Services Commissioner

Overview

This section presents an overview of what participants in the Rotorua research pilot told the research team. The literature review suggested that barriers to accessing New Zealand State Services exist. What the researchers heard from Rotorua research pilot participants supports this view, and that agencies continue to introduce measures to address these barriers.

Accessible State Services Goal milestones

The milestones for the Accessible State Services Goal are:

By June 2007: No wrong door – any New Zealander accessing government services will be referred appropriately to the organisation best able to address their concerns.

By June 2010: Right doors in the right places – government agencies work together to coordinate the availability of services across the country, using co-location, joint services and management of different physical and electronic channels.

The ‘door’ metaphor is continued in the report to illustrate the current situation for access to State Services in Rotorua. The report starts by looking at ‘Who’s knocking at the door?’ in terms of who should be accessing services. To identify the range of access channels available, the researchers asked ‘Is there a door?’. ‘Is the door open?’ asks if there are any barriers to people’s access to services. Agencies’ initiatives to improve access to their services are considered in ‘How the door is being oiled’. ‘No wrong door’ presents the ways agencies are working together to coordinate the delivery of services.

Who’s knocking at the door?

Government policy determines who should be accessing particular State Services. The agencies tasked with delivering those services in Rotorua use a variety of methods to identify who is and who is not accessing services or fulfilling their obligations. Where they have identified groups who are not accessing services or fulfilling their obligations, they target their resources to reach those groups.

Is there a door?

There is a range of channels for people to access services. The most popular method depends upon the service user and the type of service they are accessing. Face-to-face was often the preferred channel for both service providers and users. Many people found that intermediaries are necessary for accessing services. Agencies that recognise the role that intermediaries play build and maintain relationships with them. Relationships with the community that agencies serve are also important for improving access.

Co-location of agencies can increase access for people. For those agencies without a physical presence, the Internet and call centres are essential access channels. While

some call centres have been assessed positively by service users, others have been reported as not meeting callers' needs.

Is the door open?

While multiple channels provide some people with options to match their preferences, barriers to access still exist for other service users. The barriers identified include: lack of awareness; lack of privacy in an open plan environment; lack of access to the Internet; lack of public transport; and the attitudes of some staff.

How the door is being oiled

Staff recruitment and training are important for ensuring people are treated fairly and respectfully, as well as for informing them about their entitlements and obligations. In addition, agencies are promoting awareness of their services (for example, through engaging with the community). They are making efforts to ensure that all their communications and websites are easy to read and understand. Specific access needs that agencies are working to meet include language, cultural, mobility and literacy needs. Several agencies have developed specific staffing roles in order to tailor their approach to the community.

No wrong door

Some good referral initiatives are in place – for example, inter-agency collaboration around joint clients. Effective relationships between agencies are a key factor for successful collaboration. Collaboration works best when it is focused on practical solutions for service users.

Looking forward, agencies have identified some ways access to State Services could be improved, including better use of information and communications technology.

In order to appreciate the richness of the stories behind this overview, you are invited to read the following part of this report.

Introduction

The ‘Accessible State Services Goal’, within the wider Development Goals programme, is focused on improving the attention that State Services agencies pay to New Zealanders’ expectations and experience of service delivery. If agencies are increasing their capacity to learn from New Zealanders’ views of what works, and what does not, in terms of access to services, then those services are more likely to make a difference for, and meet the needs¹ of, New Zealanders. (The term ‘New Zealanders’ used here, and hereafter in the report, includes those who interact with the New Zealand State Services.)

The research project was undertaken as a ‘launch and learn’ exercise – it was to test how well the method worked, and to report what was said about the state of access to services in Rotorua.

Research and literature reviewed in late 2005 showed that in New Zealand, as in other similar jurisdictions, there are a number of barriers that prevent access to State Services. The Accessible State Services Rotorua research pilot was therefore designed to explore how wide or deep the problem is, at a time when there are many known government initiatives in train to improve access.

This report presents a summary of the responses provided to the State Service Commission’s (SSC’s) Rotorua pilot research team. It includes responses from interviews with State Services agency staff and intermediaries, as well as experiences and perceptions relayed by the focus group participants. The report complements the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006*².

The responses provided in this report do not represent the SSC’s views, and no conclusions have been drawn on the state of access to State Services in either Rotorua or New Zealand. Instead, the report presents a wide range of views on the extent to which the Rotorua community is able to access State Services and the extent to which agencies make those services available to the community.

Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is divided into three parts. Part 1 presents the context for the Accessible State Services Rotorua research pilot – the Development Goals for the State Services and the Accessible State Services Goal, in particular. Part 1 also describes why the SSC has undertaken the pilot, and the research method used.

Part 2 presents a summary of what respondents told the research team concerning the accessibility and responsiveness dimensions of the Accessible State Services Goal.

Part 3 summarises the next steps towards planning the Accessible State Services Goal research for 2007.

¹ In this report, ‘needs’ means needs as defined by current legislation, regulation and government policy.

² While the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006* includes some of the findings of the Rotorua research pilot, as comment on the current situation for the Accessible State Services Goal, this report provides a more comprehensive summary of the responses from the research participants.

The Bibliography includes references to the literature reviewed prior to commencement of the pilot, as well as links to some of the State Services agencies' initiatives that have been included in this report.

The Appendices list the research participants, provide the research questions for agencies, and offer background information on the Development Goals for the State Services.

Part 1

This part presents the context for the Accessible State Services Rotorua research pilot – the Development Goals for the State Services and the Accessible State Services Goal, in particular. It also describes why the SSC undertook the pilot, and the research method used.

Development Goals for the State Services

In March 2005, the Government agreed an ambitious set of Development Goals for the State Services (see Appendix 3). These goals provide a framework for delivering the next generation of State Services. The ideas behind these goals are not new, but, by making them clear and visible, and by setting timelines for progress, starting with milestones for 2007 and 2010, a clear agenda has been set for the State Services.

The SSC has published a *State of the Development Goals Report 2006* in order to:

- describe what the State Services might look like when the goals have been achieved
- introduce an initial set of indicators for measuring progress towards achieving the goals and their associated milestones³.

Future reports will help identify key issues and areas where action is needed to maintain momentum on the Development Goals programme.

Accessible State Services Goal

The Accessible State Services Goal is one of six Development Goals for the State Services. The goal is to:

Enhance access, responsiveness and effectiveness, and improve New Zealanders' experience of State Services.

This goal reinforces the need for State Services agencies to take an 'outside-in' perspective in shaping their services. The path to meeting this goal includes achieving the following two milestones:

By June 2007: No wrong door – any New Zealander accessing government services will be referred appropriately to the agency best able to address their concerns.

By June 2010: Right doors in the right places – government agencies work together to coordinate the availability of services across the country, using co-location, joint services and management of different physical and electronic channels.

³ See the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006* for the Accessible State Services Goal indicators.

Dimensions of the goal:

Accessible State Services – This dimension is concerned with how services are made available, both in terms of physical location and online accessibility, and the implications of this for service users.

Responsive State Services – This dimension includes how well service users are treated and how well their specific requirements are met by agencies.

Effective State Services – This dimension is concerned with the extent to which services provided meet the needs of the user, and contribute to outcomes sought by the government.

This research pilot focused on the ‘accessibility’ and ‘responsiveness’ dimensions of the goal, as measured by agencies and as perceived by users, and did not specifically measure ‘effectiveness’ of services. However, where anecdotal information was obtained about effectiveness, it is noted in the report.

Why this research?

The research pilot was primarily undertaken to explore the state of access to State Services in Rotorua, in order to obtain information for the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006*. In designing the pilot, the SSC took the opportunity to gain a rich picture of the state of access to, and the responsiveness of, services in Rotorua. This was more in-depth than was required to report against the indicators of progress for the Accessible State Services Goal – hence two separate reports have been published in 2006.

In undertaking the pilot research, the SSC adopted a ‘launch and learn’ approach to assessing whether barriers to access existed for communities in Rotorua and to learning about what works to improve access. In this way, the pilot was undertaken to test the SSC’s research method.

The SSC also intended that the pilot would increase the capacity of the State Services to learn from New Zealanders’ views on what works, and what does not, in terms of access to services.

Research method

Selecting a location

Given time and resource constraints, the research pilot concentrated on sampling one geographical location. The following criteria were used to select a location:

- neither a big city nor a small rural town
- a wide range of government services
- a range of different types of economic activity
- demographic mix
- an urban area that is supported by a rural hinterland.

Rotorua met all of these criteria.

Research design

Qualitative methods were used – both interviews and focus groups. The fieldwork was conducted during March and April 2006.

To determine access to government services from the perspective of service *providers*, interviews were held with:

- 19 State Services organisations (42 staff members)
- the Rotorua District Council
- eight social and business intermediaries or community organisations.

To determine access to services from the perspective of service *users*, focus groups were held with:

- six Māori social service users
- six social services users
- six business services users.

A copy of the interview questions for State Services agencies is included as Appendix 2. The same question set was used for interviews with intermediaries, with some minor wording changes to account for perspective. For the focus groups, a small number of questions were used to encourage participants to discuss and explore their recent experiences of State Services and to offer suggestions for what works and what does not.

The small research sample was not expected to be representative of all communities, nor of all State Services, but to be indicative of the state of access to government services in Rotorua. While qualitative research can be used to identify a range of issues and to assess the intensity with which views are held, further quantitative research would need to be undertaken to establish with certainty whether the views expressed are held throughout wider populations.

Part 2

This part presents a summary of what respondents told the research team concerning the accessibility and responsiveness dimensions of the Accessible State Services Goal.

Accessibility

Who's knocking at the door?

In order to deliver on the outcomes sought by government, State Services agencies need to know not only who is 'knocking at their door' but also who is not accessing services. Agencies need to know whether people are accessing their entitlements and/or fulfilling their obligations. The research team asked agencies how they identified who they should be providing services to. For most agencies, this follows a staged approach. In the first instance, legislation usually sets out who is entitled to receive services and what people's obligations are. At the next level, agencies are directed by national strategy or plans provided by their National Office, usually developed through research based on, for example, census data and/or the Deprivation Index.

Following on from national direction, agencies undertake their local strategic planning processes, which identify key regional priorities. These are often undertaken in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders. For example, the Department of Conservation's (DOC's) Conservation Management Strategy Plan provides a stocktake and identifies issues, objectives and priorities, and is undertaken in consultation with the public and the Conservation Board. The Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) develops regional profiles by gathering information from various sources to find out about housing needs. The Lakes District Health Board (DHB) undertakes a health needs assessment every three years, which produces information on local population demands and needs for health and disability services. The Ministry of Education (MoE) responds to the needs of the area by forecasting for school rolls. Local authorities assist the MoE in determining where early childhood education services should be located.

Agencies stated that they also take into account who is not accessing services or fulfilling their obligations. They use a combination of formal and informal systems to identify these people. For example, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) undertakes national studies and has systems in place to determine where it is not meeting needs. Inland Revenue (IR) analyses the Inland Revenue Systems information and monitors projected targets. Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ) checks motor vehicle, drivers, and operating registers, and shares data with Police, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Transport. The Department of Labour (DoL) and ACC are also beginning to share data.

Networking can help agencies to identify who is not getting services. This is dependent on staff networks and connections in the community, including close links with iwi and Māori forums. Many agencies told the research team they also rely on their community officers – for example, business advisors and Māori community officers, in the case of IR – to provide customer insight. Community links or

relationships with intermediaries and non-government service providers are also important, as they are often the organisations assisting the people who have fallen through the gaps. Agencies also gain information from other agencies through inter-sectoral and government networks.

Using the information collected through these processes, agencies target their resources to those groups most at risk, those groups who are eligible but not taking up services, or those who may not be fulfilling their obligations. This includes youth at risk, high-growth-potential companies, or small businesses with the highest need for business advice. As one Regional Director said, “We are not all things to all people”. Thus, agencies need to be strategic and proactive. Given the high Māori population in Rotorua⁴, and based on community profiles and the Deprivation Index, along with the growing Pacific and Asian migrant population⁵, many agencies are also targeting their services towards these groups. Members of both Asian and Pacific communities confirmed that agencies had approached them to raise awareness of their entitlements⁶ or to seek their support and input into new initiatives⁷.

Agencies also target non-compliant taxpayers, illegal immigrants or people who use the land transport system without a licence.

Is there a door?

The methods people can use to access services include:

- phone, including DDI, mobile (e.g. via the main police number) and some texting
- Internet (e.g. applying online for grants)
- email
- fax
- face-to-face
- letters
- intermediaries
- referrals.

Agencies are able to tell what methods people are using by monitoring the source. They told the researchers they monitor website hits, phone calls, call centre contacts and hours spent on community engagement. The MoE keeps a log sheet that tracks who calls, where they are from and where the call has gone within the agency. This allows them to identify where there are common problems. For agencies with national call centres, information on who calls and for what reason is collected at the national level and in some instances is reported regionally and locally.

⁴ 37% of Rotorua residents are Māori, compared with 15% for New Zealand as a whole. (Rotorua District Council, Rotorua District Demographic Profile 2002, www.rdc.govt.nz/About+Rotorua/Statistics+and+Demographics/Demographics.htm)

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ ACC entitlements, ‘Working for Families’, ‘Early Childhood Education’

⁷ Department of Labour, ‘Settlement Support Initiative’

What seems to be the most popular access method depends upon the user and what services they are accessing. For example, young people accessing Career Services can use chat lines on the website⁸.

For the Companies Office, the most common method for accessing their services is through the Internet. However, the Companies Office also noted that many people still prefer to phone, which they encourage people to do, as the Office can get more information from the client by phone than by email. Focus group participants commented that websites can be useful, but they like to talk to a person and their queries may not always fit the standard format of ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ on websites. Some agencies commented that it seemed not many people used their websites, as the information online is not always what people want.

Some intermediaries found the phone the most effective method, especially if matters were relatively urgent. However, in the Bay of Plenty, the proportion of the population with telephone access in the home is lower than average⁹. For non-urgent matters, letters are still a useful method, including posting in applications, such as work permits. Letters and emails have the advantage of ensuring there is a written record of communication.

Agencies and focus group participants told the research team they got more out of a face-to-face visit. This could include calling into the office at the front counter, arranging appointments or attending meetings. To facilitate face-to-face visits, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has a network of 21 Work and Income offices throughout the Bay of Plenty region, with an office in all major communities. New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) commented that it did not usually get a lot of foot traffic, but staff were noticing more now that it had an office co-located with Rotorua Destination Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce.

Many people find that intermediaries are necessary for accessing services. Intermediaries will often accompany their clients to interviews with agencies, or hold meetings with the agency and clients at their office. Some people find the environment at intermediaries’ offices is more neutral and offers more privacy. Participants in the focus groups identified how important intermediaries are, especially for people with low confidence or poor communication skills.

People generally access the courts through lawyers. They also access legal aid through lawyers, who submit applications to the Legal Services Agency. Criminal legal aid applications can be filled out with the help of their own lawyer or through the duty solicitor. The Duty Solicitor Scheme is managed and funded by the Legal Services Agency and provides free legal advice to those entitled.

There are some services that require people to be referred by other agencies or organisations. For example, people who access ACC services are generally referred by various health providers. Some general practitioners (GPs) are now doing referrals electronically, which speeds up the lodging of claims. The MoE’s Group Special Education services are accessed mostly through written referrals from schools and early childhood education centres. The Department of Building and Housing refers tenancy disputes to the courts. Police receive referrals from courts for police protection orders. Child, Youth and Family (CYF) receives referrals from Police, mostly via fax.

⁸ www.careers.govt.nz

⁹ www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/documents/2005/regional/regional-indicator-summary-sheet.xls

Agencies and organisations can also direct people to other services when they are aware of their additional needs. Career Services identified that Work and Income, the ACC and ‘Da Bomb Shelter’ (a youth centre that also runs health clinics) were referring clients to them. The HNZA gets referrals from Work and Income and the DHB. Other agencies also confirmed that they receive referrals from other State Services agencies and intermediaries. Some referrals are generated through inter-agency forums such as Strengthening Families or the Youth Transition Strategic Group. Referrals can also come from staff members who are out in the field working with individuals and communities.

Other methods for accessing services include agencies providing alternative offices in the community – for example, Heartland centres and even the Community Police kiosk in the middle of the Rotorua central business district.

It’s who you know

Relationships, also, are important for accessing services. Agencies, intermediaries and focus group participants consistently reported that having a contact, or knowing who to go to, facilitated access. Agencies have established both formal and informal relationships with intermediaries and community groups, including iwi. Intermediaries and community groups remarked that the system seemed to work better when they had personal relationships or contacts within agencies. One participant stated, “Without the relationships, you won’t get the service you want”. It especially helps if those contacts are ‘higher up the ladder’. For one intermediary, being able to go straight to a branch manager made all the difference.

Agencies, intermediaries and focus group participants all considered that Rotorua’s being a small town makes it easier for people to build relationships outside of work. Agencies identified that relationships are driven by committed, capable people. Community organisations wanted to see relationships based on mutual understanding and trust, ones that are genuine on the part of the agency, not just a ‘tick box exercise’.

One of the reasons Rotorua was selected for the pilot was that it has a wide range of State Services located there. But not all State Services have a physical presence in Rotorua, and even those that do have a presence do not always provide a full range of services. For these State Services, the Internet and call centres are important access channels. For example:

- The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) has a call centre based in Christchurch, with 23 lines for MED functions. The phone numbers route callers immediately to specialists in their area, for example 0508 COMPANIES (Companies Office) and 0508 IPONZ (Intellectual Property Office). The call centre specialists are also trained to refer people on for other technical enquiries – for example, the Companies Office specialists may refer people to the Intellectual Property Office. According to the Companies Office, making company information available over the Internet and decreasing the fees for company searches has increased access to their services. The fees for searching have decreased three times over the last ten years, until this is now free. In 1999/2000 there were approximately 500,000 company searches, while in 2004/05 there were almost 6,500,000 searches.
- IR has dedicated lines to specialists, for example business tax specialists. The call centre can also refer people to knowledge specialists. There is a database that records staff competencies and allows staff to divert calls to people with the required skills. An increased focus on self-help products on the website has led to the addition of a ‘Look at Account’ information service, where clients or

their tax agents can review their accounts in a secure online environment¹⁰. This is a popular service for overseas students, who can get real-time information on their student loan, track their repayments and use online calculators to work out interest amounts. A secure email is also available, providing an easy method of access for people out of the country or unable to contact IR during business hours.

- The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) refers enquiries to 0800 numbers (e.g. 0800 PASSPORT) and also makes cards available at reception with contact numbers for other services.
- The LTNZ, along with a call centre that provides specialist knowledge, provides services directly through service delivery agents such as New Zealand Post, the Automobile Association, Vehicle Testing New Zealand, and Vehicle Inspection New Zealand.

Is the door open?

Research and literature reviewed prior to the commencement of the interviews¹¹ showed that there were a number of barriers preventing access to State Services when individuals, families and businesses needed them. These included: high demand and long waiting lists; a lack of information; geographic or physical location; financial costs (including the cost of getting to services); ethnic or cultural inappropriateness; lack of access to the Internet; unsuitable opening hours; and confusion about which organisation was the appropriate one. The researchers observed most of these barriers in Rotorua.

Agencies and intermediaries identified that people in rural areas are more likely to experience barriers in accessing State Services. This is particularly the case if they do not have a phone or transport. However, as agencies and intermediaries commented, this is not an issue just for rural communities – anyone without transport or communication technology can be isolated, especially the elderly. Added to this is the cost of getting to services. Intermediaries and agencies observed that it is difficult for some people with low incomes to get public transport, if there is transport. For example, there is only one bus from Murupara to Rotorua¹². Among those who have a car, there are issues for some who could not afford to register or warrant their cars and therefore cannot park in town. Others lack the money for parking meters. The Heartlands centres are intended to remove some of the barriers for people in rural areas, but, as one agency pointed out, Heartlands cannot reach everywhere, and does not include all services.

Other financial barriers included not being able to afford lawyers' fees. One intermediary told the researchers that some people who are not eligible for legal aid are falling through the gaps because they cannot afford a lawyer. For example, some people who need domestic protection orders do not qualify for legal aid because they are working. The intermediary also stated that people can be disadvantaged by the fact of the Family Court not being open at weekends, if they require a protection order urgently. Although this was mentioned to the researchers in the course of the fieldwork, Courts staff commented that it has not been raised as an issue with them.

¹⁰ www.ird.govt.nz/online-services/keyword/

¹¹ See Bibliography

¹² www.baybus.co.nz/Regions/EasternBay/Timetable.aspx?RouteType=Regional&RouteID=16

Agencies and intermediaries identified that lack of access to computers and the Internet can be significant barriers to people's access to government services. Access can be restricted for financial reasons, because of people's confidence and capability, because of concerns about security issues, including identity theft, or through lack of broadband, although the latter was more likely to impact on rural communities. Internet access in Rotorua is lower than the national average¹³, which, as the Rotorua District Council noted, is a factor agencies need to take into account if they are putting their services online.

Interviewees¹⁴ stated that low education levels can also make it difficult for people to access services. For example, if people are unable to read and write well, filling out forms can be difficult. People with low literacy levels are more likely to be less articulate, to lack confidence and self-esteem, and to be reluctant to seek assistance from State servants. These are the people who are more likely to rely on intermediaries.

Ethnic or cultural factors were also identified as a barrier. These can be on the part of the organisation or of the community. Intermediaries told the researchers that some organisations have culturally insensitive staff. On the part of the community, there can be language barriers and/or different cultural norms. For example, Pacific communities are sometimes reluctant to give the agency full information about their personal circumstances, for fear of making themselves look bad. This prevents the agency from providing a full service. Dealing with government can also be intimidating for some ethnic communities. The DoL identified that some migrants may be reluctant to contact them for fear they will get into trouble.

Distrust or fear of agencies can affect the wider community as well. Interviewees recognised that people's perceptions, based on historical difficulties, such as negative publicity or mismanagement of funds, or their own past experiences with agencies, can erode confidence and lead to suspicion of government. There also remains a stigma attached to accessing some agencies' services (e.g. 'going on the benefit').

For the elderly, it may simply be a case of 'not wanting to bother' agencies with their problems, which they perceive to be minor in comparison with other people's problems.

One intermediary commented, "Older people tend to try and avoid red tape and are reluctant to ask for more help, particularly financial [help]".

Sometimes accessibility can be just a matter of awareness. If people do not know the services exist, or what they are entitled to, or how agencies can help them, they will not or cannot access their services. As one agency put it, "People who know the most access the best". A number of agencies identified that there is often a lack of understanding or knowledge of what they do and the services they have available. Police, for example, considered that clarifying their role to the public and getting better information to the community about what they do was the key to improving the way the public perceive them.

In addition, there was often confusion about which agency to go to for government services. For example, a range of people are not aware that Immigration New Zealand and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) are services of the DoL, or that passports

¹³ www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/documents/2005/regional/regional-indicator-summary-sheet.xls

¹⁴ Interviewees include agencies, intermediaries and focus group participants.

come from the Department of Internal Affairs. This made it difficult for them to find these services, especially if they were looking in the telephone book. The DoL acknowledged that its health and safety services are not listed under its name in the Rotorua white or blue pages. One business focus group participant summed it up as, “The phonebook used to be easy. Now you have to fluff around”.

Some migrants found that, while information on government services is available, it is fragmented. They commented that each department has its own information, and the language is usually bureaucratic ‘government-speak’. The use of acronyms can also present problems. Migrants want information about services that are available all in one place, in a ‘one stop shop’, and in their own language.

As noted earlier in this report, some agencies do not have a physical presence in Rotorua, which presents difficulties for people who prefer to access services in person. The research team was told that not having an immigration office in Rotorua also makes it difficult for businesses trying to attract skilled migrants. The burden is falling on intermediaries to provide information and assist potential immigrants and businesspeople. For example, some people end up going to the local Member of Parliament to sort out immigration problems.

Some agencies with offices in Rotorua identified that barriers to access may include not being centrally located or signage not being prominent.

For small businesses, the cost of complying with government regulations was identified as a major barrier. The Small Business Advisory Group has reported that the cumulative effect of all the regulations places a significant burden on small businesses. It found that the cost of complying with regulations falls disproportionately on small businesses. The report concluded that the effect of this is to take the focus of businesses away from more productive activities¹⁵. Participants in the business focus group confirmed this. They explained how compliance costs decrease the competitive nature of businesses, divert energy, and result in a loss of production and opportunity to invest. One participant described how an agency’s invoicing system was “a nightmare”, commenting on the time and resource-hungry nature of the paperwork required. Another participant explained that he had been required to hire extra staff to deal with compliance issues. This resulted in opportunity costs in terms of lost productive employment and time.

Business focus group participants attributed this situation to introducing a competitive business model into what is essentially a monopoly. In their own words, “It doesn’t fit”. They see that because there is no competition, State Services agencies do not lose business if they do not respond to customers’ needs. Businesspeople want to comply, they said – they “don’t want to be criminalised”.

“But for small businesses, they don’t have enough people to comply, so if they are going to be a criminal, they might as well be a good criminal!”

Small businesses comply, but only to the extent necessary, instead of the agency and businesses cooperating. One agency reflected that, because of its enforcement role, some businesses will not access its services. Another commented that the bureaucratic nature of government made it difficult for some businesses. The business focus group also thought that there were too many layers of government (district, regional and

¹⁵ Small Business Advisory Group Report, March 2006, p 6, www.med.govt.nz/upload/31258/sbag-2006.pdf

central) and wanted more contact with central government. They found it productive when able to deal directly with chief executives from Wellington.

On a positive note, one participant did remark that compliance in other countries (e.g. Singapore and Canada) is even more difficult, and that New Zealand, in comparison, does well.

Quality of service

The quality of service people receive also impacts on New Zealanders' access and influences their perceptions of the State Services.

Focus group participants found some call centres challenging. Comments included:

“When you finally find the phone number you may as well shoot yourself! It was impossible to get someone to talk to.”

“Unless you speak to someone on the other end of the line, you may as well put the phone down. Even when you get through and get voicemail, they never ring you back.”

“You need to be able to talk to the correct person, not just a call centre. Nine out of ten times you can't talk to the right person. It raises my blood pressure.”

Intermediaries observed that their clients hate using automated call centres and prefer to talk to someone in person. Another issue included push button instructions, where people's problems do not always match the options given. This was said to be particularly difficult for people for whom English is not their first language.

Intermediaries and focus group participants felt that some agencies do not provide an environment that makes people feel welcome or comfortable to go to alone. There is a lack of privacy in open plan settings, both in the reception area and when being interviewed. Some people are reluctant to seek help in front of others, in some cases fearing that their whānau may find out about their issues. Others feel uncomfortable having case managers discuss their case in front of them. As mentioned earlier in this report, these people often prefer to attend meetings at intermediaries' offices, which are considered neutral and offer more privacy.

Social service focus group participants and intermediaries thought that some Work and Income staff are not forthcoming with information about people's entitlements. Either they do not tell people what they are entitled to or there are inconsistent messages from different staff members. Focus group participants thought that agencies should make all of their entitlements clear, and provide full and easily accessible information. They suggested that agencies provide a full list of what people could apply for, as they do not always know how or what to ask about. It was stated in one of the focus groups that there is a lot of information available online, but people either do not have Internet access, or are unsure where to find the information they need.

It's not about the agency; it's about the people in the agency

Some focus group participants saw agency staff as not welcoming or respectful, while others felt they are judgemental, and look down on them. Māori focus group

participants noted that young Māori people are likely to feel judged on their appearances and not treated with respect. For those who already have low self-respect, this can create ‘walls’ between them and the agency. They are reluctant to return unless accompanied by an advocate or intermediary. One intermediary also noted that the way people look can affect the way they are treated. For example, older people may be treated dismissively by agency staff. One woman from a focus group decided to test her theory that the way people look affects the treatment they receive, and went to an agency dressed casually. She said that she was treated differently from when she was dressed in a businesslike way.

Focus group participants remarked that respect is a two-way thing, with clients and staff needing to show respect for each other. They felt, though, it should come from the staff member first. Treating people with respect could be as simple as keeping an appointment. One woman arrived at an agency to be told that the staff member was not available, and was told to make an appointment for another day. “It was only when I argued with them, and told them that I had to take time off work, and asked how to make a complaint, that they made another appointment for me [at that time]”. She thought they had treated her differently once she said that she was working. Another woman pointed out that there was no penalty for staff members who missed appointments, “but if I turn up late or miss an appointment I am penalised”. However, one agency recognised that seeing clients on time is an issue and identified it as an area for improvement.

Nothing bigger than giraffe

For intermediaries and focus group participants, being able to communicate well was one of the most important skills for agency staff. They said that this included listening and asking the right questions. Some people felt that they are not listened to, or if they are, they are not necessarily understood. They found the language some staff used alienating and they did not feel comfortable asking for clarification. The research team was told that a lot of problems stem from inappropriate communication. People got frustrated and angry and either did not go back to the agency or acted out their anger and got into trouble. One focus group participant explained:

“A lot of people who are like me don’t know how to converse properly. Don’t use words that are too big, anything bigger than ‘giraffe’ you lose me. I just nod my head “Alright, thank you”. It needs to be on a level the normal person can understand. If they don’t understand, it leads to frustration. I don’t want to get angry and I don’t want to go to my case manager to be embarrassed. So instead I went and got the information I needed from the library or the Community Law Centre.”

Some staff were seen as arrogant. One business focus group participant related his experience when receiving a bill following an accident that arose from someone falling off one of his horses. He explained how he was given a lecture on horses from the staff member of an agency totally unrelated to his business. He found that response arrogant and others commented that the ‘We know best’ attitude flows through to how agencies treat the community. Business focus group participants believed that agencies fail to consult communities adequately. Instead of consulting them with an open mind and recognising their local knowledge and expertise, communities are told what the agency is going to do. They expressed annoyance at what they thought was a lack of consideration given to the effect policies would have on business, that is, the amount of extra work and compliance. For them, there were too many surprises from government when there was inadequate consultation.

Some focus group participants and intermediaries felt that the quality of service depended on the skills and capability of staff, and that some staff had low capability levels. They considered that this was due to agencies being under-resourced, and to poorly paid staff who were not properly trained or well managed. This led to poor morale and high turnover or unhelpful staff. One intermediary had heard an example of a staff member telling a client, “I can’t be bothered with you”.

The treatment people receive also depends on organisational culture. This often influences how staff perceive people and how they carry out their duties. Some agencies were seen to be treating everyone “as though they were trying to rip off the system”. One participant in the focus groups remarked, “Just because some people do this, it doesn’t mean that everyone rips the system off”.

Police identified that their culture is offender-oriented. They told the researchers that no-one deliberately does a bad job, but that Police “live in the world of offenders” and moving from the “rough and tumble of offenders” to dealing with victims, or even the public, is a real challenge for their officers. As one officer confirmed, “Police can’t just trust and believe what people tell them. They have to be sceptical”.

Intermediaries felt that agencies sometimes lose focus that people are individuals and each case is unique. They noted that if staff treat people fairly and respectfully, staff get a better reaction. Often people appreciate intermediaries for simply taking the time to listen to them.

The research team was informed that not just young or unskilled people are using intermediaries – even small businesspeople need their assistance (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce). Although the researchers had expected to find that some people prefer to go to intermediaries rather than government agencies, they found that people generally had been to an agency first, and had not received in the first instance the help they wanted. Usually this was because there was a lack of understanding of why they did not qualify for an entitlement or because they had found the staff member unhelpful. They had then either gone to an intermediary on their own initiative, or had been referred by the agency. Intermediaries stated that their clients find their experience with agencies better if an intermediary or advocate accompanies them. This is because intermediaries take the time to listen and take in the information, know the right questions to ask, or can use their private offices for meetings.

Despite identifying barriers to accessing services, focus group participants also made positive comments. Many of the people interviewed had established positive relationships with agency staff. They felt that some staff are helpful, supportive, and informative and are working hard to provide a good service. The researchers were told that “The man on reception at Work and Income always has a smile and is helpful”. People also expressed concern for the welfare of staff members, realising that they do not always have an easy job. They did not want to place additional pressure on staff. People also thought that some agencies are performing well, in that they are responsive to the needs of New Zealanders. This is examined in the next section of the report.

Responsiveness

How the door is being oiled

In the previous section, some factors that could prevent access to State Services were identified. These included a lack of awareness, a lack of easily understood information, low education levels, cultural inappropriateness, language barriers, a lack of staff responsiveness, and confusion about which agency is the appropriate one. There are many initiatives in train to improve service responsiveness, and this section looks at what agencies are doing. As one intermediary observed, there is a door, “but it needs a bit more oil”.

Staff responsiveness

Staff recruitment and training are important for ensuring people are treated respectfully. Recruitment is focused on getting the right people with the right skills. These include communication and relationship skills.

Most staff undertake an induction course when they start work at an agency. Such courses generally include the code of conduct, charter or mission statement that set out how the organisation will treat its clients. The ACC, CYF and the MSD also provide training on effective communication, interview techniques and negotiation skills as part of staff induction. Most agencies provide ongoing training and professional development to improve staff responsiveness. This includes understanding different perspectives and working with different cultures.

Generally, there was good feedback from staff on the effectiveness of training. However, one agency stated that further training is needed for some frontline staff to improve the organisational culture to one of responsiveness or “making the public count”. Another noted that training needed to be constantly updated to take into account the higher demands on staff. They are dealing with more people with complex needs such as drug and alcohol abuse. The issue then becomes one of balancing staff responsiveness while ensuring staff safety. The ACC noted that its training includes how to deal with angry people.

In addition to training, agencies provide human resources policies, procedures, protocols or guidelines that set out how staff are to interact with clients. This is to provide consistent service and to ensure that staff are aware of the behaviours expected of them. For example, CYF usually has two social workers present when investigations take place, to provide a level of assurance that staff treat families with respect and to ensure that any information is recorded accurately. Some agencies obtain informed consent or provide a service guarantee that they will check with clients before making any decisions that affect them.

Most staff learn how to deal with people by experience, and by the guidance and support they receive from each other on the job. For example, experienced DIA Māori staff will attend a hui with a new Pakeha advisor. Some agencies use external bodies to provide cultural supervision of staff for the benefit of their clients. Police, for example, have set up an iwi advisory board that acts as a sounding board for them. Iwi have also assisted them in sensitive situations. Police reported that this is helping to improve relationships and change perceptions of Police actions.

Many managers said they model the behaviour they expect from staff, that is, they treat their staff the way they would like staff to treat their customers. As an example, the Legal Services Agency stated that:

“For a start, we treat our staff fairly and respectfully. We recognise that we are dealing with people in difficulty ... Fair and respectful treatment is an emphasis for us – we are here to facilitate access to justice.”

Most agencies interviewed said they monitor their staff to ensure they are treating people fairly and respectfully. The majority of agencies monitor through customer complaints and there is a variety of avenues for customers to complain. One agency identified that its complaints process could be improved. Some agencies publish their complaints procedures on their websites. IR also provides a dedicated phone line.

However, as one agency identified, a lack of customer complaints does not provide complete assurance that staff are meeting the agency’s expectations. Hence agencies use a number of other mechanisms to monitor staff behaviour. These include customer satisfaction surveys (using both internal and external resources), mystery shoppers, listening to phone calls and staff observations. For example, IR team leaders are required to join and observe their team members in the field, and to provide feedback and coaching on a regular basis to ensure that a high level of customer service is provided. The DoL has procedures for reviewing a certain number of immigration applications each week, to check that the process has been followed and the case is fair, and to pick up any issues.

Agencies also receive feedback (both positive and negative) from the community and community organisations. The Companies Office stated it has received very good user feedback on its contact centre.

Some agencies said they acknowledge the good work that staff are doing, but if people are not performing well interventions are put in place. These can include coaching, further training for staff and, ultimately, disciplinary procedures. One agency acknowledged that the performance management process had resulted in varying degrees of success.

Promoting awareness

The research team asked agencies how they promote awareness of their services. Agencies produce a wide range of written material, including information packs, pamphlets, and posters. For example, the MSD publishes posters about SKIP (Strategies for Kids, Information for Parents). One intermediary thought that Family Court brochures are excellent, providing useful information for parents following separation, and a clear explanation of the Family Court process. As well as the Ministry of Justice nationwide information, the courts also disseminate a civil jurisdiction local information package. Some agencies provide multilingual brochures and other resources. Many agencies send out regular newsletters to stakeholders and the community, both electronic and hard copy. They also send regular email updates and letters to target groups. For example, the DoL’s immigration and health and safety services both target industry groups. DOC provides interpretation material at all of its sites, and supplies brochures to visitor information centres. Another example of promoting awareness is the 600 copies of the Bay of Plenty Regional Plan that the MSD distributes, which is also available online.

The telephone book, community directories and A-Z publications are other ways that people find out about the services agencies provide. The Māori focus group noted that the Rotorua Youth Directory issued by the District Council is very helpful, but does not seem to cover everything. Business focus group participants wanted a directory listing government services rather than agency names, to avoid confusion around which agency provides which services. They thought that a hard-copy service directory would make it easier to contact the right agency.

Agencies reinforced the importance of keeping all published material up to date. The DoL generally does not reprint hard-copy information, as it quickly becomes out of date. Instead, it ensures that information on its website is current. This has created some issues for people with slow Internet connections, or no Internet access. To resolve these issues, most DoL inspectors carry memory sticks, which hold all health and safety publications that they can download on to their clients' computers.

Agencies also use their websites to promote awareness of their services and to provide information about current initiatives. For example, the DoL uses its website to encourage expatriates to return home. Career Services observed that all secondary schools access the KiwiCareers website for careers advice and information. The MoE website provides information for community groups who want to establish an early childhood education centre. People can find out about DOC campsites through its website rather than going into an office. DOC has received good feedback on its website, with comments that it is "informative and easy to use".

Agencies advertise their services using a variety of media. They promote awareness using television campaigns, for example, to promote road safety. Police said there is a Rotorua tourist TV channel, which includes advice about keeping safe. Agencies also use radio advertising. For example, the DoL uses local media and radio stations to publicise health and safety. Family and Community Services also advertise on the radio, promoting their 211 number. However, one agency observed that it needs to balance the cost of advertising with having the resources available to provide the service once it has raised awareness.

The DoL identified that project work with key industry groups (such as those in the tourism sector) has increased awareness and demand for their services. They also occasionally do a 'blitz' on health and safety in Bay of Plenty towns.

An important way that agencies promote awareness is through fieldwork and engaging with the community. This can include hui, public meetings, roadshows, expos and field days. Presentations were also common, and one agency commented that "We present at any given opportunity". Some examples included:

- HNZC presentations to tenants, young mothers, women's support networks, and prisoners
- ACC presentations to local groups such as Plunket, Grey Power, youth groups and schools, about injury prevention
- DOC presentations to small communities, such as Minginui and Murupara, to better link the community to conservation
- MSD regular presentations to a wide range of community groups, including Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce and other non-government organisations. MSD also regularly consults with local mayors and community leaders.

Some agencies promote their services in more informal ways. For example:

- IR has promoted the ‘Working for Families’ package with stands at local family-oriented events, such as the local teddy bears’ picnic
- the MoE talks to playgroups about the services it provides, and how to be a licensed early childhood education centre.

Several agencies identified that word of mouth is another important way that people find out about their services. They noted the importance of being visible in the community.

Agencies also use their networks to promote awareness of their services to other agencies and non-government organisations. They do this through inter-sectoral forums and inter-agency meetings, such as Strengthening Families. Other networking events, such as conferences and seminars, give agencies the opportunity to inform the public about their services. NZTE sponsors export awards to promote key values about business, development and leadership. Agencies also keep intermediaries informed, which is important, as intermediaries often promote agencies’ services directly to their clients.

Communications units in agencies issue media releases about their services, helping to raise awareness and to respond to media coverage of events. For example, the DoL typically issues a media release following an accident or the outcome of a prosecution.

Several agencies wanted to do more to promote their services. For example, DOC wants to raise people’s awareness of local walking tracks. The New Zealand Crown Forest Research Institute, Scion, identified that it is working hard on raising awareness of its services. It is planning to inform the community about its services by holding an open house in 2007, something it has not done recently.

Agencies are making efforts to increase people’s awareness by ensuring that they are informed about everything they may be entitled to. As the MoE commented, “We make sure people get everything they can and try to be equal”. In order to do this, agency staff need to find out clients’ full details. Agencies and intermediaries identified that clients have an obligation to be open and honest and tell the full story, so that agencies can provide the services that clients are entitled to. Intermediaries also noted that agencies need to ask the right questions. The MSD told the researchers that its case managers use interview techniques to obtain clients’ stories. One MSD staff member also commented that it is difficult for staff to ensure people are informed of all of their entitlements because it offers more than 50 products. They have a ‘We’re here to help’ brochure that includes their most common products.

Intermediaries stated that there is no simple way for people to find out about all their entitlements. One successful example given was the ‘Working for Families’ brochures, which inform people of what they may be entitled to by using scenarios. The ‘Working for Families’ package has been widely advertised, using various media to inform people.

As well as letting people know about their entitlements, agencies also need to inform people of their obligations. For example, one intermediary observed that it is not always clear what people need to do, or to bring with them, to apply for a benefit. One MSD staff member commented that its call centre staff only have a short period of time to make an appointment with people, and may not hear about all of their needs in order to tell them what to bring. Agencies use a range of methods to explain people’s obligations. The business focus group thought that hard-copy newsletters are

a good method of providing information to businesses about their obligations. To ensure that people understand their obligations, MSD staff read out application forms and then ask clients to confirm their understanding, both orally and in writing. Similarly, ACC staff explain a ‘Declaration of Responsibilities’ document to claimants and they are required to sign that they understand their responsibilities.

Agencies also ensure people are aware of their obligations by using repetition and reminders. For example, the Companies Office sends annual reminders to companies and incorporated societies about their obligation to file a return. LTNZ uses mailouts to remind people when their driver’s licence needs to be renewed. Both the HNZN and the MSD said that they frequently remind their clients to let agencies know if their circumstances change, as such changes may affect their eligibility for services.

Making information easy to understand

The research team asked intermediaries whether the information that government agencies provide is easy for their clients to understand. The intermediaries commented that some agencies need to simplify their language. Because of the low education levels of its clients, one intermediary commented that government information can seem like ‘gobbledy-gook’. Intermediaries noted that agencies use acronyms and technical language, which people do not always understand. They also commented that the information some agencies provide is not clear and concise, or consistent.

Furthermore, the researchers asked agencies how they ensure that their information is easy to understand. Many agencies found that providing written information, then explaining it in person, is a good way of ensuring people understand about their entitlements and obligations. The MoE finds that a multi-pronged approach, with writing to people, meeting with them, and giving them opportunities to ask questions, is a good way of getting information across. Another agency, the DoL, breaks down its information into topics and typically provides one-page information sheets. The ACC told the researchers that the DHB has adapted the ACC’s information and colour-coded it as a ‘How to’ guide for new registrars. This helps doctors to understand the information so that they are in a better position to explain it to patients.

While agencies need to provide full information to people about their entitlements, intermediaries stated that it was important that agencies do not overload people with too much complicated information and confuse them. The ACC, for example, is aware that it provides large amounts of information, which can intimidate people. It gives clients a booklet, which describes all their entitlements.

Agencies are making efforts to ensure that all their communications and websites are easy to read and understand. They identified the use of plain English as being essential. As one agency said, “Keep it simple, real simple”. Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) noted the importance of questions in application forms being easy to understand. Another way that agencies simplify their information is to aim for a reading age similar to most newspapers. For example, the Career Services KiwiCareers website is designed for a reading age of 12 years. The MSD’s superannuitant brochures use a large font, to ensure that clients can read them easily. The DoL stated that it keeps information short and simple, using bullet points. The agency provides links to sections of the website for further information. IR is working towards jargon-free language. The business focus group told the research team that it found the IR website to be very accessible.

Agencies target communications so that they are appropriate for various audiences to understand. IR is aware that while it can quote sections of the Tax Administration Act to tax agents, it needs to explain what the Act means to non-technical people. Similarly, the Companies Office noted that the majority of its client base has changed from accountants, lawyers, and intermediaries to businesspeople, and it has had to ensure that its website uses language that a wide range of people understand. The Companies Office also commented on the importance of providing a good search capability on its website to make it easier for all of its users, as over 95% of documents are filed online.

Many agencies use quality assurance processes and user testing to ensure that their information is easy to understand. They regularly test their websites and other information with relevant interest groups. Pacific people interviewed confirmed that IR has met with them to look at ways of improving its services and making its information more accessible and user friendly. The DHB carries out quality assurance through its steering committee, which checks its information. In addition, most agencies' information goes through corporate communications units prior to being released.

Meeting specific access needs

In order to facilitate access, it is sometimes necessary to customise services to particular groups or circumstances. Some agencies use the community profiles from Statistics New Zealand or develop their own regional profiles in order to understand their community and tailor their services accordingly. Working under legislation or policy requirements, agencies told the researchers they endeavour to be proactive, innovative and flexible about the ways they meet the needs of the different groups of the population.

Given the cultural diversity in Rotorua, agencies are working to ensure that their staff are culturally aware. Various agencies have undertaken cultural awareness training, including courses on Māori language and protocols in order to build staff confidence. Police have developed protocols around sudden death and early release of the body to whānau. In addition, Police have people in place at hospitals to explain the procedure to family members. To reflect different cultural requirements, the DHB is looking at its services around mortuaries, autopsies and waiting times. It also has a chaplain bless a room after a patient dies.

For the DHB, the whole concept of 'whānau ora' is about meeting Māori needs, that is, supporting Māori families to achieve their maximum health and well-being. The DHB has funded Māori providers for a van, so they can collect clients for their appointments, as part of their community health function.

The CYF Family Group Conference process is a means of tailoring services for children and youth at risk, and youth offenders.

Agencies also aim to educate other people they work with. LTNZ's contractual requirements for service delivery agents cover cultural issues. For example, only a female photographer can take Muslim women's driver's licence photos. The DoL is trying to educate employers about supporting the family members of skilled migrants. Mothers at home with children may feel isolated, which may be a pull factor for skilled migrants returning to their country of origin. Asian migrants we spoke to noted that some migrants also need to change their attitudes. The issue is how to integrate into the wider community, while maintaining their own culture.

The importance of communicating with clients in their own language, in order to be culturally responsive, is recognised by agencies and is carried out in a variety of ways. Some agencies provide access to interpreters through the Office of Ethnic Affairs' Language Line or through their own contact centre. In addition, some agencies have staff who are fluent in Māori and other languages.

Agencies also recognise the importance of cultural diversity in the workplace, and of the workforce being reflective of its client base. The Māori focus group observed that it makes a big difference when frontline staff are Māori, as it is easier to relate to them. The MSD noted that an ethnicity balance happens naturally in the Bay of Plenty region, with high levels of Māori staff. The DHB is actively working to increase the number of Māori in the health and disability workforce at all levels, as part of the Māori Health Strategy.

Agencies have specifically designed roles to tailor their approach to the community. Career Services has Kaitohutohu, Māori career consultants, to assist Māori with career planning. IR currently has business services advisors, social policy liaison officers, Māori community advisors, agent account managers (a service to tax agents) and industry partnership teams (to find out about the needs of particular industries). Scion has a Māori Strategy Manager. The MoE has employed a Pacific Island advisor. DOC has Kaupapa Atawhai Managers, who facilitate the relationship with iwi. TPK has kaiwhakarite, who are responsible for facilitating relationships between iwi and other organisations. The Family Court Coordinator facilitates access for members of the public to a range of counselling and other professional services. Police have found that particular suburbs are better dealt with if iwi liaison officers or community constables are involved. The community constables are selected with community involvement on selection panels.

While some agencies are debating the success of specifically designed roles, participants in the Māori and business focus groups were in no doubt. The Māori focus group thought that the Māori Youth Unit at Work and Income was “a huge improvement”. The business focus group considered that small businesses are benefiting from IR's business advisor, whom they found to be very responsive and helpful”, although they thought the service could be more widely advertised. IR told the research team that promotion of available services is something it is continually focusing on.

Many agencies also encourage their staff to go out into the community. This enables staff to meet with people who are either unable to travel, or feel more comfortable in a non-agency venue. For example, staff members will visit hospitals, marae, churches, young parents at schools, people in their own homes, and even McDonald's. To facilitate mobility, some agencies provide their staff with mobile phones, while others provide cars and laptops with remote access. Agencies can also hold telephone conference calls, if requested.

Most agencies are committed to improving access for people with disabilities and special needs. For example:

- Career Services provides scholarship information for people with disabilities. It has presented to deaf clients and works with the Deaf Association of New Zealand. The agency has prepared a guidance folder for staff to help special needs clients, and all career plans for Year 10 students include special needs.
- IR has a dedicated 0800 fax number to assist deaf or hearing-impaired customers who are unable to communicate via the telephone. This is listed on its website, but not in the phone book. IR encourages people to nominate others

to access information and assistance on their behalf, when appropriate. In addition, it has a hotline with Work and Income (see below, ‘No wrong door’), which minimises the need for people to move between the two offices. Its buildings are designed for easy access.

- The DoL is located on the first floor of its building. The agency has made arrangements with the ground floor tenant to utilise its interview rooms for people who are less mobile.
- Work and Income has a free fax number for the deaf.
- The DHB has a post-natal depression service operating out of the Plunket rooms. It provides counselling in a safe environment, away from the stigma of mental health services.
- Police have an emergency fax number and TTY (text telephone) line for people with impaired hearing or speech. Trained call centre operators convert typed text into speech and vice versa¹⁶. The numbers are listed both on the Police website and in the phone book. The agency has tailored services to meet policy requirements and the needs of adult sexual abuse victims. It has done some training around gay issues and has a gay and lesbian coordinator.

Police are also looking at the physical organisation of its buildings. The interview rooms are not built for victims or ‘soft’ interviews. Members of the public currently approach the front counter through the same entrance as prisoners. At present, there are plans to upgrade the front counter facilities. This will provide separate access for offenders and the general public.

The ACC has established the Advocacy Grant Scheme¹⁷, which funds advocacy organisations who give advice or assist claimants to access ACC services. Priority groups for the grant scheme include claimants with literacy issues, disabilities, or brain injuries (so that for example, Brain Injury Associates can accompany a claimant). Māori, Pacific peoples, other ethnic groups and migrant communities are also priority groups. A Pae Arahi can accompany Māori claimants to a meeting, or go with a case manager to their home, if required. The Pae Arahi can also act as a mediator if a problem arises. The ACC states in every letter that other support people, or family members, are welcome to accompany claimants.

The courts recognise that in some cultures people are not confident to talk one-on-one. People can bring whānau or friends for support and the courts acknowledge the importance of working with the wider group.

Agencies also assist people with low literacy levels. Some staff members will help their clients to fill in forms, if they cannot read or write. Career Services focuses on working face-to-face with clients, rather than providing long reports.

Some focus group participants and intermediaries were starting to see improvements through agencies tailoring their service delivery. Others were concerned that the efforts some agencies are making to be culturally responsive appear to be token gestures.

¹⁶ Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Social Development. *Work in Progress: 2004-2005*. Wellington, MSD, December 2005, p 66. See the report for a fuller list of agencies’ responses.

¹⁷ www.acc.co.nz

No wrong door

As noted previously in this report, people access some services through referrals from other agencies or organisations. Agencies sometimes only identify referrals from other agencies anecdotally, that is, when a service user tells them – for example, when Work and Income staff in Rotorua advise taxpayers to go to IR for details of income or confirmation of an IR number. The agencies have set up a formal system between themselves to make the referral process work efficiently. IR operates a hotline service to Work and Income staff, so the latter can contact a specific IR officer while the client is with them. If that officer is unavailable, Work and Income staff can call a hotline number that any of the IR services staff can answer from their desk.

Work and Income and the HNZN are trialling a seamless service between the two agencies. A staff member from the HNZN works out of the Rotorua MSD office four mornings a week, to coordinate issues around income and housing. This ensures people get the right entitlement or, if there is an inappropriate referral, the client does not have to go back and forth between the two organisations. The issue can be sorted out on the spot and ‘face-to-face’.

The MSD has piloted a free confidential helpline (0800 211 211) in the Bay of Plenty, which acts as a portal to other social services and organisations. The helpline is open seven days a week, from 8am to 9pm. It is designed to provide an easy, central point of access to a wide range of services for families and communities. The operator can access a national directory that lists the services and organisations available, and can put the caller through while they are still on the line. The caller can hear the details and know they are being put through to the right people. This means that the person only needs to make one phone call. For example, an operator can refer calls to the CYF helpline. There are protocols around transferring calls to CYF, with the operator staying on the line until the call has been answered. Courts informed the research team that they liked the 211 concept of providing a directory service to increase access. The MSD is developing a public information campaign to raise awareness of the new service. The District Council was an integral part of the launch, which was held at the Council Chambers and which both officers and elected members attended.

In addition to hotlines and helplines, referrals can also be made electronically. The ACC and the DHB receive electronic referrals from GPs. The DHB has set up a secure network with an accessible database for GPs. Patient information, laboratory results and X-ray results can also be sent electronically to GPs.

The District Council’s office receives numerous calls about central government services, as people often do not realise the difference between local and central government. The Council’s receptionists refer people to the relevant agency, which means they need to know the different agencies’ roles. The Regional Commissioner for Social Development coordinated the establishment of a forum consisting of 22 central and nine local government agencies, to engage in the community outcomes process (CO BOP). Each of the organisations that are part of the CO BOP intends to provide a ‘one pager’ to the Council on what their organisation does.

Agencies generally thought that most referrals to them are appropriate. Group Special Education keeps a referral register to check this. IR receives a large number of referrals from Work and Income, and, besides the hotline, is working closely with Work and Income to ensure that taxpayers are not referred unnecessarily. For example, IR’s Social Policy Advisory Officer meets with Work and Income staff on a regular basis. In March 2006, their discussion centred on how both agencies will deliver on their ‘Working for Families’ responsibilities, and reconfirmed the

appropriate situations for referring customers. The researchers were informed that the relationships established between organisations, by staff at all levels, also facilitate appropriate referrals. These relationships help to ensure that staff have a clear understanding of each other's roles. Intermediaries who know what services an agency provides are also better placed to refer appropriately.

When there are inappropriate referrals, agencies are often able to provide assistance or redirect people to the right agency. For example, job seekers may be referred to Career Services. The agency gives advice on career planning and directs them to job vacancy websites to prepare them for employment, but does not find them a specific job. Immigration NZ receives questions and referrals about citizenship, which are passed on to the relevant DIA call centre number. Police receive several types of inappropriate referrals, such as requests for civil dispute mediation, and take these as an opportunity to work with the community, or appropriately refer people.

For some agencies, the problem is not one of inappropriate referrals, but of not knowing who is not being referred to them, or of not receiving timely referrals for harder-to-reach groups. Group Special Education stated that children who are not attending early childhood education are less likely to be referred before they enter primary school, and that Māori children are over-represented in this group.

In addition to referring people to other agencies, staff redirect or assist people with enquiries about other services within their agency. For example, the DoL will refer anyone with employment or immigration queries on to the appropriate service anywhere within the department. This may include referring people to labour inspectors if they have had their position terminated, or if they have a dubious employment agreement. The Local Government and Community Group of the DIA refers people to its 0800 numbers, as it prefers people to talk to the experts. The agency also has cards available at its reception desk, with the contact numbers of other services; it also provides application forms. The MSD said it assists people by personally contacting other staff in the organisation rather than referring the client on. The client interaction remains the responsibility of the case manager.

Agencies train their staff to ensure that they are able to assist people with all their enquiries. The ACC stated it undertakes very robust training on people's entitlements and on all the agency's services that clients may require. DIA inductions cover information about the different business services within the DIA, to enable staff to point people in the right direction. As well as their initial training, some agencies provide ongoing professional development to ensure staff are aware of organisational developments. LTNZ has initial and ongoing in-house call centre training, so that staff are kept informed about all the services that clients may require.

The Companies Office contact centre specialists are trained to refer people, for example in technical areas such as intellectual property. Additionally, the Companies Office contact centre logs all the calls and then information is displayed on the staff member's computer screen, based on the type of call, so they have the correct information to assist the client. The information is an extension of what is on the website, to ensure consistent messages throughout the organisation. The logging system also allows the Companies Office to analyse the types of enquiries, in order to identify information gaps on their website. This enables the Office to identify areas for improvement, including training requirements, in order to keep staff and information on their website up to date.

Staff relationships within agencies also help them to keep up to date and aware of what is available.

Some agencies undertake compliance checks, or monitor the contact their staff have with the public, to ensure they provide the appropriate service. For example, recordings of various dealings with the public are played back weekly to LTNZ staff by internal trainers. Staff from a couple of agencies identified that they need improvement in the area of referrals. One thought that more training about other services in their agency would be useful. Another was aware that some callers have to repeat their problem several times, as their calls are referred to various staff members, instead of being dealt with at the first point of contact.

Some agencies thought that the first staff member people contacted should be able to provide all the necessary help. IR has adopted a ‘whole of job’ approach to ensure that all matters are resolved without multiple contacts. Staff are highly trained and multi-skilled, so that they can answer the majority of enquiries. For any remaining unresolved queries, staff refer people either to a specialist or to an appropriately skilled person. In the future, IR plans to implement an imaging project that will scan all correspondence. Ultimately, this functionality will enable correspondence to be allocated to staff around the country in real time, on the basis of need. One intermediary acknowledged that IR is good at assisting people to get all their needs met within the organisation. The MSD structure is intended to reflect a ‘whole of MSD’ approach or ‘no wrong doors within MSD’. For example, there are now Regional Commissioners for Social Development rather than Work and Income Regional Commissioners.

Making whole-of-government approaches happen on the ground

Agencies identified other ways that they coordinate and collaborate around joint clients. Collaboration was “great and varied” and included:

- inter-sectoral forums, such as Strengthening Families, Local Services Mapping, truancy working groups, Regional Inter-sectoral Forum (RIF), the Youth Transition Strategic Group, and Youth Offending Teams
- co-location, for example Heartlands and ‘the business hub’
- joint ventures
- joint projects
- memoranda of understanding, for example in the area of family violence including Police, courts, CYF, iwi social services and other non-government organisations
- community and local government initiatives
- collaborative meetings.

As one agency commented, “We are not short of inter-agency collaboration ... In the regions it happens anyway”.

Opinions varied on how well coordination/collaboration was working between agencies. Most of the people interviewed thought that at the inter-sectoral level there was varying success. One intermediary said that it would like to see a whole-of-government approach, which it was not seeing yet. Agency staff thought that agencies are less siloed than in the past and are generally not patch-oriented. The majority of agencies felt that collaboration works best when it is focused on a particular project.

The Companies Office gave an example of an initiative that worked well because it was a discrete project. A World Bank report showed that New Zealand was the third easiest country behind Australia for starting a business (which includes incorporating a company and applying for a tax number). The Companies Office has collaborated with IR so that businesses can now apply for an IR number on the Companies Office website, as part of forming a company. The Companies Office considered that this is proving very successful, and businesses benefit from decreased compliance costs.

Another example of agencies collaborating on a particular issue was during the civil defence emergency floods in the Eastern Bay of Plenty region. Agencies reported that working with other organisations, like the HNZA, TPK, the MSD, DOC and the District Council, not only delivered real benefits but also improved relationships between agencies that had not previously worked together.

Most agencies identified the importance of relationships for collaborating effectively. Police, for example, see their role as preventing crime/road trauma from occurring in the first place. Critical to this is establishing good partnership arrangements and sharing research and analysis between partners to influence and focus prevention activities. Some agencies were just beginning to establish networks, while others had long standing relationships. Some agencies thought that coordination and collaboration are about personal experience and knowing someone. However, more important was having the right people. As one agency reported, it takes a long time to rebuild relationships that some staff destroy.

As well as having relationship skills, effective collaboration also relies on the commitment of the people involved. As one agency stated, “It’s tough keeping coordination going. You have to really want to do it”. Agencies observed that it is also important to have someone at the table with the authority to make the hard decisions. The MSD thought that Strengthening Families is successful in areas where there is strong commitment from regional managers, who attend every meeting. One agency, however, stated that, with so many inter-sectoral groups, managers cannot attend all of the meetings. Agencies identified that it is also important to have a consistent person attend, because trust is another factor in making collaboration work, and trust takes time to build.

Agencies regarded funding as an important driver for enabling coordination. The ability to leverage funding affects relationships and the ability to lead collaborative projects. The MSD Regional Commissioner has his own budget, whereas other agencies’ funding may be centrally controlled and they may not have the flexibility to fund joint projects. The MSD is seen to have regional discretion with funding, and this encourages people to engage with the agency.

Agencies considered that understanding each other’s roles is another important factor. It helps them identify who to work with to prevent duplication. It can also avoid misunderstandings when an agency cannot collaborate because of its particular role or function. LTNZ is working closely with the DIA, which is responsible for identity services, for example, in using DIA protocols around proof of refugee status to ensure that refugees’ or migrants’ driver’s licences use the same lettering as passports, for consistent identification.

Business focus group participants perceived that there was a lack of collaboration between the ACC and the DoL. They gave an example of when a visitor to their business site has an accident without their knowledge. The ACC will pay the claimant out, but not inform the workplace or the DoL. Businesspeople claim they find out about the accident only after their ACC premiums increase. Both the ACC and the DoL commented that they are now working together on a number of projects, and

share information about who they are working with, so that they can manage clients jointly, without duplicating services.

One way to eliminate duplication and better understand what each organisation does is to locate agencies together in the one site. NZTE is a financial partner in ‘the business hub’, a one-stop shop including the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotorua Destination Economic Development Agency. While it does not have any staff based there, it does share the facilities. As it is relatively new, the benefits for business are still to be proven. However, co-location means that businesspeople may only have to go to one place, and there is closer alignment between organisations working to improve economic development.

One intermediary thought that having services located in one place stopped people being inappropriately referred and also helped clients with transport problems. Heartland centres are located in provincial and some rural towns and serve as one-stop shops from which the local population can access a range of government services. The MSD pays for the coordinators, who need to have a general understanding of what services the contributing agencies provide. Heartlands exists wherever Work and Income has a presence, and provides an opportunity for other agencies to have a regional presence. The MSD reports that Heartlands is working well and makes liaison with agencies easier.

Collaboration for community outcomes

Agencies also collaborate for the benefit of the community. DOC, TPK and the MSD worked together to commission a report that linked community health to the health of the Whirinaki forest¹⁸. The report looked at how improved conservation outcomes would lead to improved community health. It came up with recommendations for training opportunities, for example working in the bush, learning navigation, first aid and chainsaw skills, understanding bio-diversity, or obtaining a licence to use poisons. The MSD could then look at how it could match people’s skills to jobs. There was also potential for better promotion and use of the forest, by identifying tourism opportunities. This project was a vehicle for responding to wider issues than a single agency could cover. As well as conservation, it included opportunities for both tourism and the local unemployed.

Similarly, HNZA meetings can include the Tertiary Education Commission, the MSD, and the DIA to discuss a wider housing response than just state housing. They also look at education and training for local unemployed people, for example to carry out repairs, to ensure sustainable housing.

One agency identified that agencies could be doing more around community outcomes and planning with local government. That agency also pointed out that trying to coordinate with local authorities is difficult, as there are so many in the Bay of Plenty region. Another agency thought that a lack of coordinated planning between agencies was a barrier to successful collaboration. As mentioned previously in this report, a collaborative forum for the Bay of Plenty central and local government to engage in the community outcomes process (CO BOP) has been established. The terms of reference set out the purpose, principles and processes agencies will follow to progress community outcomes and regional well-being. The forum has begun to identify a series of goals and outcomes it wants to achieve.

¹⁸ Martin, D. and Mutch, L. ‘Accessing economic opportunities in the Whirinaki’. A report prepared for Te Puni Kōkiri, August 2005 (unpublished)

Comments about CO BOP from the agencies interviewed were generally positive. It is proving to be a useful network for central and local government to coordinate, and agencies are getting better at sharing plans. The HNZN remarked that agencies are committed to showing the community that they are working on joint projects, as per the community outcomes they have identified. The process is also proving to be a uniting effort at local government level. While central government agencies meet in the morning, local government agencies also meet together, and the two groups join in the afternoon.

Projects with the community can lead to breaking down barriers between the community, iwi and government agencies. DOC and TPK are working closely on a range of initiatives with local iwi, such as developing walkways around Rotorua lakes.

A different example of collaboration is joint ventures. Ensis is a trans-Tasman joint venture between Scion and Australia's CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products. This venture integrates the forestry-focused activities of the two companies and has allowed Scion to expand its research and development capabilities. Ensis is the largest provider of research and development services to the forestry, wood and fibre industries in Australasia¹⁹. Although joint ventures can be challenging in terms of governance and accountability, Scion thought they are a useful way for different agencies to work together.

Agencies identified a number of issues that need to be taken into consideration to ensure effective collaboration. These include the following:

- Clients can get swallowed up by the collaboration process and feel they do not own or drive the process.
- Personalities and issues around leadership and ownership can get in the way.
- The numbers of people involved can sometimes slow the process down, making it difficult to get cross-agency agreement.
- Often collaboration is about working on long-term projects, which can be difficult to sustain.
- There may be delays and slippage in timeframes.

Agencies commented that the Privacy Act can prevent the open sharing of information. It can also be a barrier to agencies ensuring compliance by users. IR stated that it can get information from Police, but currently cannot provide Police with information. IR also told the researchers that it is aware of cases where people are receiving benefits inappropriately from MSD whilst in employment; however, it is unable to inform MSD, due to the restriction of the Act. Agencies can apply to the Privacy Commissioner to authorise information-matching programmes and increasing numbers of applications are being made²⁰.

Meeting community needs

In order to ascertain whether they are meeting community needs, agencies were endeavouring to understand what those needs are. They are doing this in a number of ways. First, they undertake consultation with the community. For example, the DHB consults with the public over its strategic plans through interviews, focus groups and community forums. The MSD also holds focus groups for input into regional

¹⁹ Scion. 'Next generation biomaterials'. Pamphlet

²⁰ *Annual Report of the Privacy Commissioner for the Year Ended 30 June 2005*

planning. In addition, the MSD facilitates the Local Service Mapping (LSM) process, a community-based approach that identifies local priorities, needs and opportunities as well as gaps and overlaps in the current service delivery and funding allocations²¹. DOC surveys the community every four or five years to ask, “What do you want out of DOC?”. One survey led to a pest control programme. TPK developed a community profile report in Te Puke, as a pilot, which sought community input.

The HNZN administers the Housing Innovation Fund²², which is available to community groups or organisations to meet the social housing needs of their community. As part of the application, organisations are encouraged to consult with their community.

Some agencies undertake research to determine community needs. One example is the report commissioned by TPK, DOC and the MSD, linking conservation to community health. This articulated how conservation outcomes could lead to social and economic improvements for the community.

Agencies are analysing data from a variety of sources to forecast demand and needs for services. For example, the DHB health needs assessment identifies areas of health need, and IR forecasts the expected uptake of entitlements and monitors the actual uptake.

Most agencies carry out a range of monitoring and evaluative activities to ensure they are meeting community needs. Some agencies have sought feedback from the community through attending hui, talking to community groups and monitoring media. Others noted that they receive feedback anecdotally or through third parties. One agency noted that it has no formal mechanisms to determine whether they are meeting needs, but they hear if they are not meeting them.

Many agencies use customer satisfaction surveys, which they either undertake themselves or contract to independent providers. However, these surveys only cover the clients in receipt of services. They do not necessarily pick up whether agencies are meeting the needs of all the community, that is, community members not accessing services. Some agencies have a sense that there is a group of people who should be accessing services but are not.

The DHB has advisory committees that are responsible for monitoring progress towards the DHB’s objectives. These committees include representatives from the relevant user groups – for example, the Disability Support Advisory Committee includes a number of people with disabilities.

Some agencies told the researchers they carry out formal evaluations of programmes and services. Other agencies noted the difficulty of measuring outcomes. A few agencies use quantitative measures to prove success. For example, the DoL tracks the number of serious accidents occurring, and the MoE tracks the number of children staying in school and achievement levels.

However, one agency acknowledged that with the limitations on staff and resources it is unlikely that all needs of the community are met. The District Council anticipates that the collaborative approach between local and central government will help to progress the outcomes determined by the community. This process will be monitored and reported on, to assess whether agencies are meeting community needs.

²¹ Ministry of Social Development. ‘Local Services Mapping: a Community-based Approach to the Improved Delivery of Social Services’. Wellington, MSD, April 2005

²² www.hnzc.co.nz/HIO/index.html

Improvements for accessibility

In concluding the interviews, the researchers asked agencies to describe what they thought an accessible service would look like. One agency summarised it as “an easily accessible, well advertised, locally available one-stop shop with all the necessary information, which can be accessed at most reasonable times”. Other agencies agreed that it would be customer-focused, including:

- a choice of channels available for people to access services
- a process that is simple for service users
- appropriate referrals, including follow-up to check that those referred have had their needs met
- services being tailored to the individual client’s needs
- adequate resources for agency staff to do their jobs well
- well-trained, experienced staff
- agencies coordinating and collaborating towards shared outcomes, where appropriate.

CYF and Police observed that in an ideal world there would be no need for their services.

The final question asked of agencies in the research was: “If you could do one or two things to improve the access to your services, what would they be?”. There were numerous and varied responses, and some examples follow.

One agency would simplify its forms to improve their quality and reduce their number. Another would provide childcare facilities for clients, so that they could attend meeting without their children. Agencies wanted to make better use of information and communications technology. For example, CYF wanted professionals to be able to make referrals to them electronically, as they can to other agencies. Police thought that a single non-emergency number would improve access to them.

In order to increase accessibility of website information on government services, some agencies would like Internet kiosks easily available to people. Courts, for example, would like kiosks located either in the courts buildings or in local libraries or Heartlands. The MED has an Internet kiosk in its offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and has co-located a kiosk with BizInfo in Dunedin.

DOC currently contracts Rotorua Tourism to provide brochures and information and wanted to do more to tap into other organisations to make its services more accessible. Some agencies suggested more flexible opening hours, to include after-hours or weekend services. Several agencies wanted their staff to have increased ability to go out into the community to deliver services.

Agencies wanted to find better ways to connect with groups that have been marginalised for a long time, or, as one agency said, to “get a hold of the invisible people”. For example, the DHB wanted to reach socially disadvantaged groups through better targeting of programmes, such as immunisation, breast and cervical cancer screening, and smoking cessation.

Part 3

This part summarises the Accessible State Services Goal research planned for 2007.

Next steps

The Accessible State Services Rotorua Research Pilot was undertaken to inform the current situation for the Accessible State Services Goal in the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006*. It was undertaken as a ‘launch and learn’ exercise, and was as much about the SSC testing how well the method worked as about reporting what was said about the state of access to services in Rotorua in 2006.

Because the Rotorua research pilot has worked well, and following further evaluation of the method, the SSC is planning additional Accessible State Services Goal research to be undertaken in 2007. This research will inform progress against the indicators in the *State of the Development Goals Report 2007* and inform the SSC's wider Development Goals programme. While the research questions relating to the ‘accessibility’ and ‘responsiveness’ dimensions of the goal will be reduced from those used in 2006, the research scope will be expanded to include both a wider geographical sample and a focus on the ‘effectiveness’ dimension of the goal.

At the time of writing this report, there is no intention to fully report subsequent Accessible State Services Goal research separately from future State of the Development Goals Reports.

Comments on this report can be made to:

Rotorua Research Pilot
State Services Commission
PO Box 329
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Email: rotorupilot@ssc.govt.nz

Bibliography

Accident Compensation Corporation. Advocacy Grant Scheme, www.acc.co.nz/wcm001/ideplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&nodeId=3880&ssSourceNodeId=1494

Anae, M., Anderson, H., Benseman, J. and Coxon, E. *Pacific Peoples and Tertiary Education: Issues of Participation: Final Report*. Prepared for the Ministry of Education by Auckland UniServices Limited, February 2002

Annual Report of the Privacy Commissioner for the Year Ended 30 June 2005

CareerPoint online chat, www.careers.govt.nz/topic.asp?topic=CareerPoint%20online%20chat&title=CareerPoint%20online%20chat&docid=280

Centre for Child and Family Policy Research. *Outcome/Impact Evaluation of Family Start: Final Report*. Prepared for the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development. Auckland UniServices Limited, March 2005

Cullen, R. and Herson, P. *Wired for Well-Being: Citizens' Response to E-Government*. A report presented to the E-government Unit of the State Services Commission, June 2004

Curtis, C., Vowles, J. and Curtis, B. *Channel-Surfing: How New Zealanders Access Government*. Prepared for the State Services Commission by Auckland University Survey Research Unit, September 2004

Family, Child, Youth and Community Research and Evaluation Unit. *Evaluation of the Heartland Services Initiative*. Prepared for the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development. Wellington: MSD, October 2004

Housing New Zealand Corporation, Housing Innovation Online, www.hnzc.co.nz/HIO/index.html

Ignite Research. *Wellington Regional Legal Needs Assessment: Final Research Report*. Wellington: Legal Services Agency, 2005

Inland Revenue, Go to Account Information Service, www.ird.govt.nz/online-services/service-name/services-l/online-look-acct-info.html?id=righttabs

Martin, D. and Mutch, L. 'Accessing economic opportunities in the Whirinaki'. A report prepared for Te Puni Kōkiri, August 2005 (unpublished)

Ministry of Social Development. *Local Services Mapping: a Community-based Approach to the Improved Delivery of Social Services*. Wellington: MSD, April 2005

Ministry of Social Development. *Review of Strengthening Families Local Collaboration*. Wellington: MSD, April 2005

Ministry of Social Development. *The Social Report*. Wellington: MSD, July 2005

www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/documents/2005/regional/regional-indicator-summary-sheet.xls

Morris, J. *Women's Access to Legal Services*. Wellington: Law Commission, 1999

New Zealand Police. *Working Together with Ethnic Communities: Police Ethnic Strategies Towards 2010*. Wellington: Office of the Commissioner, New Zealand Police, December 2004. Publication Number PUBO-195

New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (Inc.) and Lazar Associates Ltd. *As Seen from Levin: Improving Government Communication with Citizens – a Report from the Region*. Report to State Services Commission, Wellington, July 2001

Office for Disability Issues. *Work in Progress: 2004-2005: Fifth Annual Report from the Minister for Disability Issues to the House of Representatives on Implementing the New Zealand Disability Strategy*. Wellington: Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Social Development, December 2005

Small Business Advisory Group Report, March 2006
www.med.govt.nz/upload/31258/sbag-2006.pdf

State Sector Act, 1988

State Services Commission. *Achieving e-government 2004: a Report on Progress towards the New Zealand E-government Strategy*. E-government Unit Research Paper. Wellington: SSC, October 2004

State Services Commission. *State of the Development Goals Report 2006*. Wellington, SSC, July 2006

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of participants

The following is a list of agencies and intermediaries that participated in this research.

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)
Career Services
Child, Youth and Family (CYF)
Citizens Advice Bureau
Community Law Centre
Department of Conservation (DOC)
Department of Internal Affairs, including the Local Government and Community Group (DIA)
Department of Labour, including Immigration New Zealand and Occupational Safety and Health (DoL)
Destination Rotorua Economic Development
Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing
ESOL Home Tutors (Rotorua) Inc
Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC)
Inland Revenue, including the Child Support Office (IR)
Korean Residents Association
Labour Electorate Office
Lakes District Health Board (DHB)
Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ)
Legal Services
Ministry of Economic Development, including the Companies Office (MED)
Ministry of Education, including Group Education Improvement and Support and Group Special Education (MoE)
Ministry of Justice, including the Rotorua High/District Court
Ministry of Social Development, including the Family and Community Services and Work and Income Services (MSD)
New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE)
Pacific Islands Development Charitable Trust
Police
Rotorua Chamber of Commerce
Rotorua District Council
Salvation Army
Scion
Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK)

Appendix 2: Interview questions for agencies

Accessibility Questions

1	Who's knocking at the door?
---	-----------------------------

How do you identify who you should be providing services to, in the context of the community you serve?

What systems do you have for knowing who should be getting services but are not?

How do you promote awareness of your services?

2	Is there a door?
---	------------------

What methods do people use to access your service? (How do you collect this information?)

Are there any other ways people can access your service?

3	Are users directed to the right doors?
---	--

Do you know whether other organisations (eg both government and non-government) are directing people to your service?

As far as you know, are the majority of people appropriately referred to your service?

What systems/relationships do you have to work with [community organisations (social)]/ [intermediaries/brokers (business)]?

4	Were there any barriers to the door?
---	--------------------------------------

What factors make it easier for some people/businesses more than others to access your services?

Can you think of any other factors that make it difficult to access your services? And harder for any particular group?

5	When are services available?
---	------------------------------

Is there demand for your services outside of normal business hours? (If yes, how do you meet that demand?)

Is there more demand during particular business hours and how do you meet it?

6	Is the service customised when necessary to facilitate access?
---	--

What ways do you tailor your service delivery to meet people's needs and to facilitate access?

Responsiveness Questions

7 Are users welcomed?

How do you ensure that your staff treat people fairly and respectfully?

8 Is information intelligible?

How do you ensure that people are informed about everything they may be entitled to (eligible for)?

How do you ensure that people are informed about all their obligations?

How do you ensure that your information is easy to understand?

9 Are doors opened for users?

How do you ensure that your staff assist people to get their various needs met within your organisation?

What ways do you co-ordinate and collaborate with other organisations around joint clients? How well is this working? What are the barriers to co-ordination and collaboration?

10 Was the service delivered?

How do you ensure that the service was delivered to the people entitled to it (those eligible for the service)?

How do you measure the quality of service delivery and ensure that delivery standards are met?

How do you know that the way you deliver your service is meeting the needs of the community?

11 Are there points for redress?

What changes have been made to improve service delivery as a result of complaints?

Is this the standard procedure?

12 Finally

Can you describe what an accessible service would look like to you?

If you could do one or two things to improve the access to your services, what would they be?

Appendix 3: Development Goals

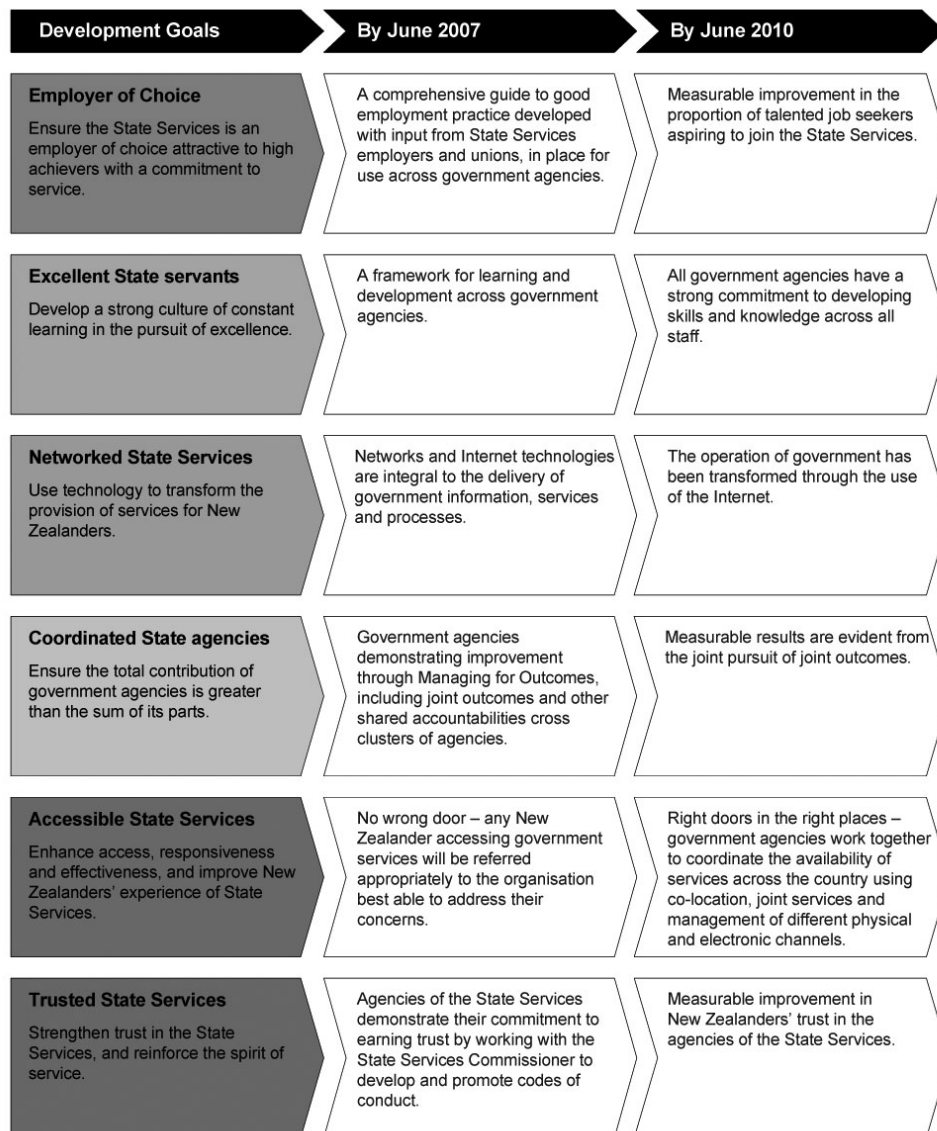
Development Goals for the State Services



Overall Goal

A system of world class professional State Services serving the government of the day and meeting the needs of New Zealanders.

The overarching goal is supported by six Development Goals for the State Services.



State Services Commission

100 Molesworth Street, Wellington

PO Box 329, Wellington

Phone (04) 495 6600

Fax (04) 495 6686

www.ssc.govt.nz