

DEPARTMENT
of the PRIME MINISTER
and CABINET



Statement of Intent

for the year ending 30 June 2007

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activities, priorities, responsibilities



Chief Executive's overview

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's overall responsibility is to provide, at an administrative level, the "constitutional and institutional glue" that underpins the role of executive government within our system of parliamentary democracy. The department provides a range of support services to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers. Wide-ranging assessments and policy advice provided to the Prime Minister assist her in leading her government and serving effectively as chair of the Cabinet, and in conducting the day-to-day business of the government. The department has a key leadership role, with The Treasury and the State Services Commission, in relation to the public service.

STATEMENT OF INTENT 2006/07

This Statement of Intent sets out the manner in which the department proposes to fulfill its various roles in support of the Governor-General and Prime Minister over the 2006/07 year. It builds on last year's Statement in a number of respects; but it also incorporates information on new activities and priorities, which reflect the programme of the government sworn in following the 2005 general election.

We do not expect our core functions or activities as a department to alter significantly over the coming year and the next three years. Effective policy and administrative support for the Prime Minister and Governor-General will remain the key requirements. Our public service leadership and co-ordination role will receive greater emphasis because

the department has been tasked to take an active inter-departmental role in support of the new government's three policy themes: economic transformation; families – young and old; and national identity.

Cabinet has laid down these three themes as the government's priorities for the next decade [CAB Min (06) 7/22 rec 1]. DPMC will support the Prime Minister in carrying forward this ambitious new programme by working actively with the other central agencies, and with departments, so that the government's priorities are delivered. Some additional resources are being provided to the Policy Advisory Group in recognition of the enhanced responsibilities the Group has in supporting these themes.

Our activities around the themes – whether in terms of policy development, co-ordination and alignment,



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OVERVIEW

or monitoring and evaluation – will all contribute directly to the shared central agency outcome initiated last year. This “shared outcome”, developed jointly with The Treasury and the State Services Commission, is intended to give recognition to the very real shared interest each of us has in an effective public service. It has become the department’s Contributing Outcome 5: *“A high-performing, trusted and accessible state sector, delivering the right things, in the right way, at the right price”*. Work to give substance to this outcome will remain a priority for the department over the coming year.

In August, Dame Silvia Cartwright will complete her term as Governor-General. A new Governor-General (Judge Anand Satyanand) will be sworn in. The Clerk of the Executive Council, the Official Secretary, and staff from the Cabinet Office and Government House will all be seeking to ensure the smoothest possible transition between the Governors-General. Together with the general election in 2005, the transition between the Governors-General is a key aspect of DPMC’s Contributing Outcome 2: *“Executive government is well conducted and continues in accordance with accepted conventions and practices”*.

The increasingly globalised international environment continues to pose challenges for New Zealand. The department has a key responsibility to advise the Prime Minister of developments overseas that are relevant to New Zealand’s interests, and to assist the Prime Minister and ministers in preparing for and handling perceived threats to the domestic or external security of the country. Through the Officials’ Domestic and External Security Committee (ODESC), DPMC plays a key leadership and co-ordination role across government and, more widely, in raising awareness and preparedness for external and domestic threats. With ongoing risks such as an avian influenza pandemic, terrorist emergency, or natural disaster facing New Zealand, both the External Assessments Bureau (EAB) and the Domestic and External Security Group (DESG) can expect to be fully engaged. Major challenges to New Zealand’s welfare and security environment, whether originating from overseas or as a result of natural or other disaster in New Zealand, must be expected to happen from time to time. In recent years, we have seen many such events occur overseas. Were such a challenge to confront New Zealand, it would generate a large impact on – and call for a disproportionate response from – central government agencies such as DPMC.

Because DPMC sits at the very heart of the government’s response to challenges of this sort, it must be able to respond effectively not only in the support it extends to the Prime Minister and the wider government but also in terms of its own responsibilities. Without effective responses at times of real pressure, public trust in the department and the wider system of government will be undermined.

To this end, it is necessary to sustain effort to build the capability of DPMC staff, and to improve communications and cross-government systems so that we can adequately prepare for and respond to major challenges. Continued efforts will be made to build whole-of-government understanding of, and preparedness for, major risks.

As I noted in last year’s Statement of Intent, the most important resource the department has at its disposal is its staff. We shall continue to make every effort to recruit suitably experienced, talented, and motivated people keen to contribute at the very centre of government. DPMC remains an exciting and interesting place to work, but the roles are not without challenge. With my senior management colleagues, I shall continue to give priority attention to our technology platforms and management practices, to ensure we offer an attractive and stimulating workplace that enables us to recruit the range of capabilities we need to serve the Prime Minister and Governor-General to the necessary high standard.

Maarten Wevers, CNZM
Chief Executive
8 May 2006