



# INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Providing  
strategic corporate  
management services  
to support business  
and operational  
imperatives,  
and promote  
organisational  
excellence

## Corporate Human Resources

Acting Director: Marlene Krasovitsky

Corporate Human Resources provides professional and specialist services for:

- human resources management;
- industrial relations;
- training and development;
- client service strategies; and
- organisational and policy development and implementation.

## Executive and Strategic Services

Director: Greg Curry

Executive and Strategic Services provides a range of strategic and specialist services that promote organisational excellence and enhance the Department's capacity to achieve its goals. These include:

- corporate communications;
- corporate/strategic planning;
- disability strategy coordination; and
- management of the Department's *LawLink NSW* Internet and *InfoLink* Intranet websites.

## Management Services

Director: Russell Cox

Management Services is responsible for:

- financial and management accounting;
- installation and maintenance of computer networks and systems;
- property maintenance and administration; and
- corporate management services.

## Corporate Human Resources

Corporate Human Resources (CHR) comprises the Human Resources Branch, the Corporate Development and Training Unit and the Norimbah Unit.

*Goal: Continuously improve our services and increase satisfaction among our diverse clients.*

CHR undertook a client survey in 1999 which involved personal interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire. Whilst indicating that CHR has significant strengths in Human Resources strategy and policy development, significant opportunities for improvement were identified in personnel operations and recruitment, which

will form the key strategic priorities for CHR over the next 12 months. This information provides a baseline against which future performance will be measured and has enabled performance measures for CHR service standards to be developed.

In response to changes to Ethnic Affairs legislation, the Department has developed an *Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS)*. The Statement, which consists of seven initiatives, demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the whole of the community can access our services. A task force comprising key staff in the Department has been established to assist with the implementation of the EAPS across the Department. The aim of the task force is to increase awareness of the EAPS, to facilitate discussion of related issues and to encourage a collaborative approach from business centres to the continuous improvement of client service.

Over the past year, a number of restructures and reviews were commenced involving the following areas of the Department:

- the Supreme Court registry;
- Library Services;

- Community Justice Centres;
- the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner;
- Legislation and Policy Division; and
- the Corporate Development and Training Unit.

All reviews and restructures are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the operation of business centres and must be within budget.

*Goal: Build a harmonious and productive organisation which reflects the diversity of the people of NSW.*

The Department undertook an *Employee Survey* during the year which received a 96 per cent response rate. Feedback on the results was given to all staff and a *Human Resources Strategic Plan* developed for implementation next year.

The implementation of the Department's *Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Strategic Management Plan* continued during the year. The plan continues our goals to ensure that the Department is achieving excellence in EEO program planning, implementation and

Colleen Starkis and Frank Edwards of the Norimbah Unit organised the 2000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network Meeting. The theme this year focused on career development which was supported by high-profile indigenous and non-indigenous authorities sharing their personal success stories.





The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy... provided schemes to facilitate career development.

outcomes. Strategies have been developed to improve the representation of women and non-English speaking background staff at senior levels, incorporate EEO into strategic planning, and to ensure that there are better indicators to measure the effectiveness of the organisation.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy also continued this year. The strategy aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment initiatives as well as to establish a number of new programs, policies and schemes to facilitate career development, workplace support and strategy management. CHR is currently evaluating the strategy as part of the preparation of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

A discussion paper was distributed throughout the Department by CHR during the year to canvas comments from staff about varying flexible working hours. The proposed variation to flexible working hours enhances the availability and applicability of flexible working practices. Negotiations are currently under way to finalise a new Flexible Working Hours Agreement.

Our Staff Manual contains policies, procedures and guidelines and was developed to inform staff of their rights, responsibilities and working conditions. It ensures all staff have equitable access to information and opportunities within the Department.

New policies were developed for inclusion in the Staff Manual, including *Guidelines for the Recruitment of People with Disabilities* and the *Government Related Employees Appeals Tribunal Policy*.

A number of policies within CHR are under review including:

- workplace relationship guidelines;
- maternity leave;
- study time;
- interpreter guidelines;
- part-time work;
- temporary employment;
- recruitment and selection;
- SES higher duties; and
- alcohol and other drugs.

A rewards and recognition program, *Awards for Excellence*, commenced in September 1999 to offer staff and teams additional encouragement, support and recognition. The program is encouraging higher levels of staff morale, job satisfaction, productivity and client service. Seventy-six nominations have been received for the period September 1999 to August 2000 from a diverse range of business centres and 33 awards have been presented by the Director General to individuals and teams for excellent achievements.

The *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP) continues to provide staff access to professional counselling to help them resolve their problems in a comfortable, neutral and confidential manner. The service is provided free of charge to our staff and their families. The EAP also provides a "manager assist" component which gives managers access to assistance in dealing with issues of concern within their workplace.

The *Workplace Ethics and Behaviour Program* continues to be progressively implemented. This program aims to create a harmonious, productive and harassment-free working environment where the contribution and diversity of staff is valued. Strategies under this program include:

- a review of the grievance policy;
- the implementation of *Harassment Prevention Policy and Workplace Relationships Guidelines*;
- the review of the *Code of Conduct*;
- identification and training of contact officers and workplace relations advisors; and
- the review and implementation of an *Ethics in the Workplace* training course.

The Department's *Legal Eagles Vacation Care Program* continued to operate, accommodating up to 40 children per day. The Vacation Care initiative was available to children between the ages of 5 and 12 and extended across the State through the *Regional Vacation Care Subsidy Scheme*. This scheme allows staff who cannot access *Legal Eagles* to be reimbursed a portion of their vacation care expenses.

The Department is continuing with the review and development of an *Occupational Health, Safety and Injury Management Improvement Plan*. A consultant has been engaged to undertake a review of the current system including procedures, accountabilities, training, recruitment and employment; to assess the level of compliance with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) legislation across the Department and to develop key performance indicators to be included in an action plan.

The consultant has also been contracted to write OH&S and rehabilitation policies and the guidelines relating to manual handling and repetitive strain injury.

The Corporate Development and Training (CDT) Unit provides planning, training, organisational development and consultancy services to enable the Department's business units and individuals to achieve their goals and objectives.

This year, more than 3,900 staff across the Department participated in more than 100 courses and customised programs offered by CDT. Training and development services were provided in a range of areas including:

- business planning;
- career development;
- cross cultural communication;
- executive development;
- client service;
- performance planning and development;
- quality management;
- supervision and management; and
- information technology.

A number of new courses were also offered in response to external and internal client needs, including:

- Managing Client Service;
- Leading Teams;
- Using Q Skills in Your Workplace;
- Making Good Decisions;
- Working with Clients with an Intellectual Disability;
- Working with Clients with a Hearing Impairment;
- Working with Clients with a Mental Illness; and
- Improving Staff Performance – Skills for Managers.

Privacy Legislation training was also provided for NSW Public Sector Agencies.

Significant gains were achieved during the year in Local Courts training through two Information Technology trainers and a generalist trainer. More than 150 Local Courts staff from all over the State received training in

Information Technology and Local Courts Information Systems. The generalist trainer provided a range of training courses to over 870 Local Courts staff throughout NSW. A strategy to improve the delivery of operational training to Local Courts staff was also developed in consultation with Local Courts. It is anticipated that the new strategy will commence in the coming year.

*The NSW Action Plan on Dementia* was the catalyst for the Unit's work with a range of government and non-government agencies including the Ageing and Disability Department, Alzheimers Association and NSW Young Lawyers to develop strategies for community and legal education about dementia. Outcomes included the *Dementia Awareness Day* which featured a community

More than 150 Local Courts staff from all over the State received training in Information Technology.



awareness program and legal education program during Law Week in May 2000.

Other achievements for CDT include:

- developing a number of Senior Manager and Executive Development programs in consultation with the Director General and Management; and
- coordinating a number of management conferences in which approximately 180 senior managers and executives participated.

## The Year Ahead

The key priorities for Corporate Human Resources in the coming year are to:

- develop and implement strategies to address issues identified in the employee survey, particularly in the areas of merit recruitment and selection, staff training and development and performance management;
- implement the Senior Executive Service Performance Management System; and
- implement the Human Resources Strategic Plan.

## Executive and Strategic Services

Established in October 1999, Executive and Strategic Services (ESS) incorporates corporate communications, disability strategy coordination, Internet and Intranet services and corporate strategic planning.

*Goal: Continuously improve our services and increase satisfaction among our diverse clients.*

A *Strategic Framework for Court Services* was developed in 2000 to provide direction for NSW court services over the next four years. The framework identifies initiatives currently planned for the courts, tribunal services and the Department and serves as a guide to planning future initiatives and reforms. Developed in partnership with the judiciary, the framework will:

- improve coordination between justice system agencies;

- improve court environments and court access in areas of high demand; and
- improve court services and procedures for court users.

Performance of court services will now be monitored through the introduction of key performance indicators and improved national benchmarking.

As part of the Department's *Disability Strategic Plan 1997-2000* (which aims to ensure that people with disabilities have full and equal access to our justice system), a *Flexible Service Delivery Project* was piloted and the first phase completed in June 2000. This Project was proposed as a way of providing the environment, skills, resources and authority for frontline staff to respond to individuals with a disability within the current service provision framework.

A key achievement of the project was staff training in disability awareness and flexible service delivery strategies. Twenty per cent of staff have now received general disability awareness training and a physical access audit of all courthouses has been completed. Other achievements include the increased provision of information in alternative formats, such as enlarged print and audio. Hearing assistive devices are now available for court hearings and more information is provided to people with disabilities and support organisations about options for communicating.

[The Attorney General's Department has eight portable hearing impaired systems for court usage in NSW. The systems are based on infrared technology which enables courtroom audio to be transmitted to participants fitted with the system enabling them to hear the proceedings clearly.](#)



The *Disability Strategic Plan* was reviewed this year and a new plan developed for 2000–2002. Building on the successes of the previous plan, the new plan aims to deliver more practical outcomes for people with disabilities.

Development of a *Justice Portfolio Disability Action Plan* was initiated in coordination with other agencies in the Justice and Human Services portfolios.

The Department's Internet website *LawLink NSW* was rated the most popular legal website in Australia in May 2000 and is regularly rated as one of the top 10 most visited government websites. The number of pages viewed on *LawLink NSW* has substantially risen this year to an average of 1.9 million visits per month compared to 220,000 last year. Twenty-three per cent of website visitors are from within rural and regional NSW. The most visited site is the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages which registers approximately 500,000 page views per month. Key achievements for *LawLink NSW* this year were:

- the addition of a history of the NSW legal system for students and historians; a resource that maps the NSW legal system from colonial times and its influence on the Australian legal and political landscape;
- a fully searchable database is now available on the NSW Law Reform Commission site which has over 100 full text reports and papers dating back to 1968;
- the judgments database *CaseLaw NSW* was launched and now contains over 4,000 judgments from various NSW courts. These databases are sourced directly from participating courts and tribunals enabling decisions to be available more quickly than on any other free to air service in Australia. *CaseLaw NSW* was a semi-finalist for an Australian Internet Award for best professional/industry website in 1999;
- access to daily court lists was introduced to service the legal profession and the public on matters listed for hearing in NSW courts and tribunals;
- the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

now includes an online genealogical index site, which records an average of 20,000 searches each day; and

- an online resource centre for professionals working in the domestic violence sector, called *DV Link* was launched in March 2000.

The Department's *Quality Program* facilitated an audit of data collections across all business centres and assisted in the development of Data Improvement Plans as part of the business planning process.

*Managing By Fact*, a course designed to assist officers collecting, managing and interpreting data, was also commissioned and launched as a result of the data review program.

The Quality Council commissioned and launched the video *Getting Better All the Time* as an introduction to the Quality Program for all staff. The video has been widely shown throughout the Department, is used as a training resource, and shown in inter-departmental forums.

A proposal to establish a *Legal Helpline* service was developed in partnership with the NSW Bar Association, the Law Society of NSW and the NSW Legal Aid Commission. To be established in the coming year, *Legal Helpline* will provide free information, advice and referral services and act as the first point of contact for those in the community needing legal assistance.

ESS's corporate communications area continued to provide a communication consultancy service to the Department. Advice and assistance was provided to a number of business centres to develop publications, including brochures, newsletters and reports.

ESS has worked in partnership with the Supreme, District and Local Courts, and the Community Relations Division, to implement the *Courts Information Project*. This client service initiative focuses on providing plain language information about court procedures and the justice system to the public, including information sheets and precinct maps which provide directions on how to access courthouses. A series of information sheets on apprehended violence orders have already been developed under this project.



ESS coordinated a pilot communication survey across three business centres during the year. The results of the survey provide a snapshot of communication practices across the three different operational areas and include a rating of staff satisfaction with current communication practices, and a list of key issues requiring priority attention in order of importance. The participating business centres have developed action plans to address the opportunities for improvement identified by staff. The methodology devised by the pilot will be used to review communication practices more broadly across the Department.

Other achievements during the year include:

- the collection of NSW data for the Courts Administration chapter of the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2000*;
- improved corporate and business planning processes for the Department aimed at providing a clearer, more compact reporting framework;
- streamlining internal data collection processes in order to avoid duplication of effort; and
- the coordination of plans to ensure continuation of service throughout the Olympics period for each Departmental business centre.

## The Year Ahead

The key priorities for Executive and Strategic Services in the coming year will be to:

- continue to monitor, review and enhance the Strategic Framework for Court Services;
- continue to develop and implement key performance indicators for NSW courts;
- facilitate the establishment of Government Access Centres (in conjunction with Legislation and Policy and member agencies of the Government Access Program Steering Committee);
- initiate a review of judicial workloads with respect to resources;
- develop the Department's Corporate Plan 2001–2003;

- drive, monitor and review the implementation of the Disability Strategic Plan 2000–2002 and complete development of a *Justice Portfolio Disability Action Plan*;
- extend the range of services and information available on the *LawLink NSW* Internet and the *InfoLink* Intranet websites;
- facilitate establishment of the *Legal Helpline* in partnership with the Legal Aid Commission, the Law Society of NSW and the NSW Bar Association;
- establish and implement a new direction for the Department's quality program;
- in conjunction with Corporate Human Resources, conduct annual reviews of Senior Executive Service officers performance agreements with respect to business centre plans;
- facilitate and coordinate the data collection for the Courts Administration Chapter of the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2001* and improve national benchmarking through development of improved statistical measures;
- monitor and report on progress against *Olympic Service Delivery Plans*, in accordance with Premier's Department requirements; and
- develop enhanced community education programs.

## Management Services

Management Services comprises Financial Services, the Capital Works Unit and Information Technology Services.

*Goal: Continuously improve our services and increase satisfaction among our diverse clients.*

Information Technology Services continued to expand the Department's computer network by increasing the number of computer locations and with access to the network and providing increased access to email, Intranet and Internet facilities.

An E-Commerce Facilitation Committee has been established to examine appropriate options for acquisition of technology to support real time

transactions across the Internet, such as electronic filing of court documents which is being trialled within the Land and Environment Court, and online birth certificate validation with the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Westpac Bank.

New and upgraded telephone systems have been installed in several locations including the Anti Discrimination Board, Office of the Legal Services Commissioner, the State Coroners Office, Worimi Children's Court, and courthouses in Albury, Kiama, Coffs Harbour, Katoomba, Moss Vale, Taree and Tweed Heads.

Several court rooms in the Supreme and District jurisdictions have now had a range of technologies including videoconferencing, specialist document management software and real time computer assisted transcription installed. These technologies were utilised in the Thredbo Inquiry and are currently being utilised to support the Glenbrook Rail Accident Special Commission of Inquiry.

Enhancements to the Supreme Court Case Management application have commenced to enable both the monitoring and reporting on the progression of court cases, which will make a significant contribution to the court's ability to manage and improve performance in relation to case disposals.

Y2K preparation was completed on schedule and there were no significant Y2K related issues.

The Department's *2000-2003 Information Technology Strategic Plan* has been completed and published.

A significant upgrade of the Department's financial accounting system was finished this year. This also included upgrading the system to cater for the introduction of the new Goods and Services Tax.

A new *Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual* was developed along with a revised accounting policy for *Victims Compensation Fund Debtors*.

Other achievements for Management Services this year include the introduction of centralised payment of Jury Fees and the successful transition to the Year 2000 of the Department's financial system.

The Department has continued to consolidate occupation of leased accommodation over the last year by way of a number of lease initiatives. Mainly, these have involved the consolidation of tenancies within the Goodsell Building and Downing Centre and those premises located between the Phillip Street and Goulburn Street legal precincts.

Whilst there were no major relinquishments of leased accommodation over the last 12 months the Department has continued with the consolidation of its leased portfolio in the Central Business District.

There has been an increase in the amount of leased accommodation under the Department's control brought about by the acquisition of additional leased premises by a number of trading enterprises under the administration of

the Attorney General's Department, i.e. Office of the Protective Commissioner and State Debt Recovery Office. The Anti-Discrimination Board at Newcastle was relocated into a larger area upon expiry of its previous lease and additional floor space was acquired at 815 George Street for the Industrial Relations Commission.

This added one additional private lease and six Crown leases to the portfolio, increasing the rental commitment by \$0.6 million. A summary of the Department's leased portfolio over the last six years is as follows:

Date	m <sup>2</sup> (Area)	\$ (Rental)
April 1996	57,040.75	15.1M
April 1997	53,602.00	14.1M
April 1998	60,181.70	15.1M
April 1999	67,414.29	16.9M
April 2000	69,026.37	17.5M

A state-of-the-art court complex was built in Toronto this year at a cost of approximately \$4.5 million. Significant extensions were

Several courtrooms in the Supreme and District jurisdictions now have a range of technologies, including videoconferencing.



## INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES



The modern complex of Toronto Courthouse officially opened in July 2000. The new complex includes special rooms for victims of domestic violence and crime, access for people with disabilities, and a large waiting area, shaping it as the leader in the State in its court facilities.

completed to Waverley and Bega Courthouses and Court 3 at Darlinghurst, the District Court Criminal registry at the Downing Centre and the Land and Environment Court were fully refurbished.

The Department's *Strategic Office Accommodation Plan* has highlighted a number of strategies for continuing the consolidation and increased efficiency of the Department's leased portfolio. The Plan will call for a further relinquishment of floor space and further reductions in floor space ratios across the Department.

### The Year Ahead

Key priorities for Management Services in the coming year are to:

- investigate the application of emerging technology to improve efficiency and productivity in transaction processing, banking, reporting and access to financial information;
- examine accommodation standards for leased premises with a view to improving those standards in line with current Government practices;
- place a high priority on continuing the extension of technology infrastructure in the Courts around NSW, particularly with the Court Administration System and the Criminal Histories project;
- take a leading role in joint initiatives within the justice sector to achieve service and efficiency benefits in information sharing and exchange between agencies through projects such as the *Justice Agency Data Exchange (JADE) project*;
- ensure all courts throughout NSW have access to the Department's Intranet, email facilities and network applications by the end of 2000;
- deploy an additional 300 personal computers throughout NSW courts with existing computer facilities and extend current court applications to a further 30 Local Courts; and
- continue the expansion of electronic service delivery and electronic commerce potential throughout the Department.