

BIOSECURITY, COMPLIANCE AND MINE SAFETY DIVISION



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Nature and scope of activities

The Division works closely with other divisions, government agencies and industry to develop and deliver integrated biosecurity and mine safety strategies, programs and responses.

Responsibilities include:

- analysing and developing strategies to manage risks
- coordinating delivery of short and long-term programs to manage biosecurity risks
- working with communities and primary industry participants to increase their capacity to manage these risks
- developing approaches to achieve biosecurity and mine safety outcomes which reflect stakeholder views
- enforcing NSW DPI legislation to complement other approaches to achieving government policy objectives
- planning and delivering emergency responses to natural disasters in accordance with the State Disaster and Emergency Plan.

The Division comprises:

- Animal and Plant Biosecurity
- Surveillance and Biosecurity Operations
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Compliance Standards
- Agriculture and Fisheries Compliance Operations
- Mine and Forest Safety Performance.

Major outcomes achieved

Compliance

An integrated approach across industry

The Division successfully integrated biosecurity and compliance services across a range of industries including livestock, commercial plants, fisheries and forests. Integration allows a more consistent approach to activities including planning, training, enforcement and response. Additionally, an expanded first response team was created for biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies.

The new integrated approach has already been put into practice in managing a number of incidents and is working well.

Formation of a single branch containing all agriculture and fisheries uniformed compliance staff is allowing progressive implementation of a strategy for integrated compliance activities across NSW DPI. Initiatives include:

- creation of a special operations unit with tactical and intelligence gathering responsibilities across the branch
- establishment of a single Prosecution Review Committee for better managed prosecution action across agriculture and fisheries
- coordinated training for all compliance staff
- orderly review of occupational health and safety issues across all compliance staff
- coordinated provision of peer support for all compliance staff.

Compliance action

Compliance action in 2004-05 included the seizure by fisheries compliance officers on the South Coast of approximately three tonnes of stolen abalone. Officers are using sophisticated operational surveillance equipment and strategic intelligence analysis to target organised theft. The most serious offenders face heavy fines and, in some cases, custodial sentences.

A large fisheries patrol vessel is under construction and should be operational in November 2005. Designed for fast response along the NSW coast from Batemans Bay, the vessel will increase protection levels for the abalone and offshore fisheries.

Drought assistance

Assisting producers affected by the prolonged drought has been a critical area of activity. At 30 June 2005, 89 per cent of the State was drought declared. We handled over 1000 calls on the Drought Hotline, processed 17 617 transport subsidies worth more than \$18.5 million for agistment, fodder and water, and organised 59 farm family gatherings.

Further details of NSW DPI drought assistance appear in this report in the section on the Agriculture and Fisheries Division.

Review of Mine Safety 2004

In September 2004, the Minister for Primary Industries announced a review of mine safety by the Hon. Neville Wran AC QC, with assistance from Ms Jan McClelland and an expert panel. NSW DPI provided resources and contributed information, including a substantial submission. The report on the review was publicly released in April 2005.

Overall, the review found that a more cooperative approach by industry, unions and government on mine safety would be beneficial. The Government is now considering the review's 31 recommendations.

Although the rate of mine accidents continued to decline in 2004-05, there were still a number of incidents reported, including one fatality at a quarry.

The Mine Safety Advisory Council did not formally meet during 2004-05, however, the various industry-specific safety advisory committees continued to meet and members of the Council were fully consulted and involved in the Review of Mine Safety conducted by the Hon. Neville Wran.

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the exclusion, eradication or effective management of risks to the economy, environment and human health posed by pests, diseases and chemical residues.

Major biosecurity operations in 2004-05 targeted threats to the fishing, aquaculture, cattle and citrus growing industries.

Aquatic weed control

The aquatic weed salvinia has caused major problems on the Hawkesbury River. An extensive \$1.3 million program over 18 months, which involved harvesting, installation of booms and chemical control, ensured that fishing and boating could continue.

Biological control using weevils also shows promising results. Initial findings at 12 monitoring and research sites were that over 90 per cent of plants sustained some degree of damage.

An increasing level of community awareness is assisting in control of the noxious marine weed *Caulerpa taxifolia*, with NSW DPI promoting understanding of the problem over the year through erection of new *Caulerpa* warning signs and distribution of advisory material. We also trained more divers for another *Caulerpa* handpicking day in North Harbour Aquatic Reserve.

Our scientific approach to *Caulerpa* control is detailed in this report under the Science and Research Division.

Cattle ticks

The NSW DPI cattle tick program continued with a number of outbreaks identified and subsequently eradicated. The last remaining section of the NSW Cattle Tick Protected Area around Kyogle was also released, freeing up movement of livestock from the 183 properties in this area and allowing movement into other parts of NSW. This was another milestone in the management of cattle tick in NSW.

Tick fever

The first outbreak of tick fever since 1997 prompted representations from stock owners to the Minister for Primary Industries. In response, the Minister initiated an inquiry by Mr Garry West into the potential use of tick fever vaccine, the introduction of Queensland cattle into NSW and the use of electronic surveillance to enhance border control measures. After receiving submissions and consulting widely with North Coast producers, Mr West presented his report to the Minister on 30 June 2005.

Citrus export markets protected

Following the detection of the exotic bacterial disease citrus canker in Queensland, NSW DPI regulatory and horticultural staff went to Queensland to assist with the early surveillance program. NSW DPI also provided critical laboratory analysis and diagnostic services for the detection of the disease.

A national survey of citrus orchards was undertaken to demonstrate the absence of the disease and restore national pest free area status. As part of this process, NSW DPI coordinated a survey of NSW citrus growing regions according to the national protocol. No evidence of citrus canker was found in NSW, a result that ensured continued access to export markets including New Zealand.

Assistance for oyster farmers affected by QX disease

In June 2004, QX disease was detected in Sydney rock oysters in the Hawkesbury River. QX disease is caused by a protozoan parasite *Marteilia sydneyi* and is specific to the Sydney rock oyster.

Monitoring since December 2004 has indicated an increased incidence of QX in the Hawkesbury. Significant mortalities occurred in the upper river area, where the bulk of oyster farming occurs.

As chair of the multi-agency QX Disease Task Force, NSW DPI led development of a package of measures to assist industry. The measures included:

- waiving some government charges
- allowing growers free access to financial counselling and family support services
- introducing a government-subsidised de-stocking and infrastructure cleaning program
- introducing and funding a concessional loan scheme to help growers adjust to the production implications of the outbreak.

Biosecurity databases

The Division develops and manages strategic biosecurity data systems for optimal delivery of NSW DPI policies and priorities. Some 58 biosecurity databases provide essential information for internal users and external clients – supporting surveillance, control and compliance, and market access for animal, plant and fisheries products. The integration or linkage of some of these databases with components of the Property Event Management System in the next two years will further enhance useability and efficient data management.

Planning and surveillance

National plans

Collaboration between Rural Lands Protection Boards and divisional staff ensured effective animal health planning. Among important initiatives were coordination of disease surveillance, emergency disease preparedness and animal health control programs. Assessment of these initiatives against 179 draft national animal health criteria showed full compliance against 93 per cent of the criteria and partial compliance against the remainder. Corrective action was taken to address performance in areas of partial compliance.

The Australian Veterinary Emergency Plans (AUSVETPLAN) are the basis for Australia's exotic disease preparedness.

The Division contributed to the revised AUSVETPLANS for avian influenza, disposal and destruction, and the Control centres management manual.

Monitoring

Australia has the world's lowest risk rating for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) which has devastated cattle markets around the globe. Surveillance of neurological cases in cattle and sheep over the year, monitoring of the ban on feeding meat products to ruminants, and monitoring of imported cattle continued to ensure that NSW and Australia maintain the current BSE ranking.

Divisional staff continued to monitor the exotic diseases hotline which members of the public call for advice on any suspected exotic disease. There were a number of investigations as a result of hotline calls. These included a suspected case of foot-and-mouth disease in piglets and a queried case of the exotic disease vesicular stomatitis in a horse. Both cases proved negative.

Educating industry

Foot-and-mouth disease, commonly caused internationally by feeding pigs prohibited substances (swill), could potentially cost Australia billions of dollars. The Division held workshops for both Rural Lands Protection Boards and NSW DPI regulatory officers to ensure that they can detect and deter people from feeding swill to pigs.

Sudden sheep and cattle deaths from poisonous plants continue to occur and must be differentiated from possible emergency disease incursions. For educative purposes, divisional staff conducted poisonous plants workshops at Wagga Wagga and Tamworth. More than 100 district veterinarians, private practitioners, departmental staff, university staff and interstate visitors attended.

Market assurance

Pesticide and residue risk reduction

Access to international markets is threatened if testing shows organochlorine (OC) residues in red meat. OCs degrade very slowly in soil and treatments applied over 20 years ago still represent a risk.

In NSW, 350 property management plans control the access of stock to affected soils. Regulatory officers from the Division are conducting 120 audits of producers' compliance with the plans and investigating any problems revealed.

To ensure that chemicals are applied correctly and that residues do not become a problem, the Division developed training resources to support the delivery and assessment of the SMARTtrain suite of chemical accreditation courses. Resources included:

- a video and PowerPoint presentation on calibrating a boom spray
- a revised and updated reference manual and assessment guide for the AQF4 Chemical Risk Management course

- revised and updated CDs to assist trainers and school teachers in delivering all courses
- an integrated manual and workbook for a new course on on-farm fumigation.

The Division also designed an abridged Chemical Risk Management course to enable departmental and rural lands protection board veterinarians to meet new chemical use requirements under the *Pesticides Act 1999*.

Ovine Johne's disease management

This program successfully moved from a largely regulatory program to one based on management and producer involvement. The underlying principle is that by using animal health statements producers assess their risk of introducing Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) when purchasing sheep. The Department is currently reviewing the statements. Producers are also increasingly using vaccine in OJD management to reduce stock mortalities.

The industry advisory committee for the disease identified a number of new projects it considers worthy of funding via a new OJD transaction-based levy introduced under the *Agricultural Livestock (Disease Control Funding) Act 1998*. The projects include an OJD extension coordinator, provision of negative abattoir surveillance information, a review of exclusion areas and enhanced vaccination safety. The Minister for Primary Industries will make the final decision on funding based on the committee's recommendations.

Fruit fly control

The news on fruit fly control has been positive. Most of the south-western production towns regained their status as free of fruit fly for the domestic and New Zealand markets. An integrated program of sterile insect release and targeted pesticide application, as well as dry conditions, resulted in declining fruit fly populations in all production towns and orchard areas in the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone.

NSW, Victoria and South Australia all contributed to an upgrade of the climate control system in the sterile fruit fly production facility at Camden.

Legislative support for animal, fish and plant health programs

Significant changes in policy in NSW DPI animal, fish and plant health programs were made effective by amendments to legal instruments including:

- removal of the cattle tick quarantine line near Kyogle, in line with the Minister's decision to release the last remaining cattle tick protected area
- declaration of the Yass Rural Lands Protection Board area as part of the footrot protected area, demonstrating the progress of the footrot campaign
- gazettal of a new exclusion area for the serious grapevine pest phylloxera, along with restrictions on the movement of high-risk materials such as grapevines, soil and machinery into and within NSW, to support most of NSW becoming an exclusion area.

Mine safety

Legislation

The Division continued to take a guiding role in legislative reform to promote a positive safety culture within the NSW mining industry.

Following passage of the *Mine Health and Safety Act 2004*, the Division began work on supporting regulations to allow its commencement. Together with the *Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002*, the Act represents a major reform of health and safety legislation for NSW mines.

The Coal Competence Board which the Division is setting up under the Act will also play a part in improving mine safety.

The Division continued to liaise with WorkCover in developing regulations to support the *Explosives Act 2003*, revising the dangerous goods provisions, and developing regulations for major hazardous facilities – all of which will apply to mines. Administration of the regulations will be an ongoing divisional role.

Accident investigation

The table below presents accident investigation statistics for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 financial years.

Performance statistics	2003-04	2004-05
Investigations commenced	4	2
Investigations completed	2	4
Investigations in progress	4	2
Reports submitted to Coroner	2	2
Coronial inquests commenced	2	0
Prosecutions commenced	8	2
Successful prosecutions	10	6

The Division completed investigation of four cases carried over from the previous reporting period. The investigations concerned:

- fatal injuries to a contractor on the surface at a coal mine in November 2003 while a load was being moved by a mobile crane
- fatal injuries to a contractor at a coal mine in May 2004 due to a fall of roof
- fatal injuries to a contractor at an open cut coal mine in May 2004 while changing a tyre on a large dump truck
- serious head injuries sustained by a mine employee at an underground coal mine in May 2004 when pulling chains failed.

Two new accident investigations commenced during 2004-05. These concerned:

- spinal injuries to a mine employee sustained while travelling on the conveyor of a continuous miner at an underground coal mine

- fatal injuries to a quarry employee sustained when the haul truck he was driving broke through the roadside barrier and rolled down a steep slope.

An inquest into the death of a miner at a metalliferous mine in November 2002 commenced in May 2004 and was finalised in February 2005.

Lessons Learnt project

In July 2004, an analysis of accident investigation findings was presented at the annual NSW Mining Industry OHS Conference. The primary conclusion was that awareness and detection of mine safety risks were deficient.

Measuring performance

During the reporting period, the Division conducted a pilot survey of hours worked within the mining industry. Despite a poor response rate, the survey provided some insight into the hours worked and the incidence of injuries to contractors. The exercise also gave the Division an understanding of how to collect information more effectively in the future.

As part of a continuous improvement program, the Division is reviewing the COMET (Common Mines Environment) computerised data collection and storage system. The review entails regular revision of data and quarterly user group meetings to discuss the system's use and functionality. The outcome will be more useful information on mine safety performance for both NSW DPI and industry.

Communication and consultation

The Division utilised a variety of methods in promoting safety information to all stakeholders. Workshops, seminars and conferences included the:

- Occupational Health and Safety Conference 2005 in collaboration with the NSW Minerals Council
- Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar
- Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar
- Check Inspectors Seminar
- mine operator workshops and safety awareness courses at Lightning Ridge and White Cliffs.

In a comprehensive program, the Division increased dissemination of information via the website and email while continuing to publish hard copy safety alerts, mine design guidelines, handbooks and codes of practice. The *Mine Safety Update* was distributed to more than 3000 industry stakeholders. The Division also developed resources to explain the transitional arrangements during the move of mineral resource functions from Sydney to Maitland and Thornton.

Another new publication was the comprehensive *Audit Checklist for OHS Consultation for NSW Mines* that the Division developed to assist mines in complying with current safety legislation.

Divisional performance				
	Units	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Outcomes:				
Persons accredited in emergency response preparedness	no.	189	144	193
Compliance rates for recreational fishers	%	86	89	88
Compliance rates for commercial fishers	%	91	91	91
Compliance rates for aquaculture	%	48	40	85
Outputs:				
Biosecurity plans to which Department has contributed	no.	86	68	104
Training programs for emergency response preparedness	no.	10	15	15
Biological control agent releases	no.	237	264	270
Attendees at workshop seminars relating to health and safety in the mining industry	no.	1 093	2 400	2 400
Major investigations (mining)	no.	n.a.	n.a.	5
Prosecutions (mining - Investigation Unit reports)	no.	n.a.	n.a.	...
Prosecutions (fisheries)	no.	436	326	400
SEINS penalty notices (fisheries)	no.	1 764	1 660	2 500

Healthy and safe industries

Use of insecticides and aircraft across large areas meant that risk management was crucial

LOCUST CONTROL A BILLION DOLLAR SUCCESS

The 2004-05 Australian plague locust control campaign was the largest and most successful campaign of its type in NSW history. Results show \$1 billion of NSW crops and pastures saved at a cost of \$21.3 million.

The campaign was a coordinated effort involving NSW DPI, Rural Lands Protection Boards, NSW Farmers' Association, Australian Plague Locust Commission and landholders. HQ at Orange directed local control centres at Narrabri, Coonabarabran, Gunnedah, Dubbo, Mudgee, Narrandera, Forbes, Molong, Deniliquin and Wagga Wagga.

Statistics confirm the campaign's scale:

- 16 688 locust reports by landowners
- enough insecticide issued to treat over 1 million hectares for ground and aerial control
- 2400 aerial targets treated by NSW DPI across nearly 400 000 hectares
- 800 aerial targets treated by the Australian Plague Locust Commission over 352 500 hectares in NSW.

Prior to the expected outbreak, an action plan was developed and implemented. Activities included surveillance, farmer awareness workshops, a media campaign directed at rural communities and review of locust control plans.

The significant use of insecticides and aircraft across large areas meant that risk management was crucial.

After two aircraft incidents mid-campaign, the second of which involved two tragic fatalities, all aircraft operations were suspended while a specialist assisted NSW DPI in reviewing risk management for aerial locust control. Changes included the development of an aviation capability risk management plan, greater definition of aerial tasks involved in locust control, and further revision of operating procedures to enhance risk mitigation processes that were already in place. Staff also received additional training in aircraft operations.

Throughout the campaign, education of landholders on the safe use of insecticides was a priority. There were landholder awareness workshops across NSW plus brochures on the safe use of the insecticide, including residue aspects. In addition, NSW DPI sought landholder approval prior to aerial spraying. A variety of insecticides were on hand so that an appropriate insecticide could be used on each farm, including a fungal agent for environmentally sensitive areas.

After the campaign, debriefs identified what went well and where there was scope for improvement. Next time we will be even better prepared.



STRATEGY, POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION



STRATEGY, POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

Nature and scope of activities

The Strategy, Policy and Communications Division plays a leading role in translating government priorities and industry needs into NSW DPI policy and corporate agenda. It also coordinates whole-of-government approaches on industry issues, manages contentious issues and publicises NSW DPI achievements.

The Division's five branches and their responsibilities are:

- Policy and Legislation Coordination Branch – setting overall policy direction and acting as the focal point for coordination of Indigenous policy across NSW DPI
- Industry Analysis Branch – providing economic and social analyses of policy options and preparing innovative and integrated policy options for consideration by stakeholders
- Public Affairs and Media Branch – coordinating management of critical matters and promoting the work of the Department and primary industries
- Corporate Planning and Risk Management Branch – developing and implementing frameworks for corporate governance, planning and reporting
- Communications Branch – driving strategic communications through electronic and hard copy publishing and event management.

Major outcomes achieved

Direction setting

The bringing together of four agencies to form a new department meant major change for all personnel involved. The way in which staff did their jobs changed and, more importantly, the nature of the work changed as jobs were realigned with the goals of the new organisation. One of four divisions with integrated functions across the whole of the Department, the Strategy, Policy and Communications Division was instrumental in setting and communicating the overall strategic direction.

At the centre of the strategic framework is the *Corporate Plan 2005-2008*, which articulates NSW DPI's vision and values, and clearly defines key result areas, intended outcomes, and strategies. The plan also identifies the high-level key performance indicators against which we will assess our progress over the coming years.

The Division led the development of the corporate plan, coordinating input from many stakeholders and staff. The initial phase involved a series of workshops held from October 2004 to March 2005 at which executives and senior managers provided extensive input into a draft plan. Staff then had the

opportunity to comment on the draft – their input leading to amendments – before production of a final plan, which the Board of Management endorsed.

The corporate plan outlines the strategic context for NSW DPI activities rather than detailing the activities themselves. At the next level down, the divisional plans will establish detailed strategies, performance targets and milestones to assess how well divisions are contributing to corporate outcomes. Divisional plans will also link planning with resource allocation.

Drought relief

Another important achievement for 2004-05 was assessment of the industry impacts of severe drought to gain Commonwealth exceptional circumstances relief for all eligible drought-affected NSW farmers.

Activities included:

- developing and submitting successful applications for exceptional circumstances relief for all producers in the Cooma–Bombala district, Gundagai (orchardists) and the Murray Valley (ricegrowers)
- preparing detailed crop reports that resulted in changes to exceptional circumstances crop criteria and wider support coverage throughout NSW cropping areas
- compiling comprehensive reports on drought recovery to support a review of Commonwealth decisions to restrict provision of an additional 12 months' relief to selected areas. The reports were critical to review of further areas and to additional exceptional circumstances declarations
- supporting the development of national drought policy through improved administrative arrangements for exceptional circumstances drought relief and redirection of relief measures to encourage greater on-farm preparedness
- contributing to the development of a national system for monitoring changes in climatic, environmental and production variables relevant to exceptional circumstances drought declarations. A monitoring prototype is being evaluated for potential use in future droughts.

Communications

Following the establishment of NSW DPI, the Division immediately commenced integration of the former agencies' websites, developed a new intranet for use by all staff, and created corporate branding for all promotional material.

In the interest of optimal communication with NSW DPI stakeholders, the Division initiated a program to foster consistent communications planning. Outcomes to date include the introduction of a communications planning template in key areas. The program will continue in the new financial year with a review of publications and events. A protocol is already in place for assessment, coordination and evaluation of sponsorship and events.

As well as planning future external communication, the Division promoted the work of NSW DPI through production of an extensive range of corporate material including the *Bush Telegraph* magazine, manuals, fact sheets, advertisements and posters.

Internal communications was also a major focus. Over 500 staff participated in an audit to assess internal communication practices, processes and attitudes within NSW DPI and set a benchmark for future audits. The findings are now being compiled and will form the basis of an internal communications plan. The activities of the branch have also been critical to the successful integration of NSW DPI.

Legislative program

During 2004-05 the Division coordinated the preparation of internal Cabinet Minutes and responses to many external Cabinet Minutes. The Division was also responsible for managing the NSW DPI legislative program, providing support for passage of the following Bills through parliament:

- Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Area Bill 2005
- Coal Acquisition Amendment (Fair Compensation Bill) 2005
- Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2005
- Noxious Weeds Amendment Bill 2005
- Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Amendment (Permits and Leases) Bill 2005
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2004.

Policy development and review

Policies provide a basis for action and decision-making. Within NSW DPI a policy development framework was created to:

- establish rules, procedures and resources that will ensure a consistent approach to the development of well-articulated policies
- ensure our policies reflect the vision, mandate and goals of the new department and facilitate our operations
- allow staff members easy access to current policy
- provide a mechanism for monitoring and review of existing policies
- set up formal channels for communicating policy.

The framework, which is now in use, includes a policy template, development procedures and writing guidelines.

Media relations

The divisional staff across the State succeeded in gaining positive media coverage for NSW DPI through media releases, articles and publications.

Given the diverse and widespread nature of NSW DPI activities, we wrote a policy and protocol to assist staff in dealing with the media. These documents, which apply to all

staff, are designed to ensure a prompt and accurate response to media inquiries.

Supporting rural women

The Rural Women's Network is a small but high profile program within NSW DPI. The network's aim is to connect the NSW Government and the community on issues affecting rural women and to empower rural women to achieve their goals.

In 2004-05 the network:

- produced and distributed three editions of the *Country Web* newsletter
- coordinated the popular 2005 Rural Woman of the Year Award for NSW, sponsored by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. Jenny Bradley won the award for pioneering new practices in the lamb industry
- ran 14 Shaping Our Futures Together workshops on women's career and personal development
- launched Daring to Dream, a web-based program that publicises how rural women are successfully acting as change agents within their communities and provides a mechanism for networking and informal mentoring.

Socio-economic assessment and standards

The Division assisted the Natural Resources Commission in developing a socio-economic standard and community targets to help guide Catchment Management Authorities with decisions on regional investment. We also contributed to the development of the *Socio-Economic Assessment Guide for Catchment Management Authorities*, used to assess the socio-economic impacts of specific investment proposals.

Hawkesbury River oyster farmers

As discussed earlier in this report, Hawkesbury River oyster farmers were severely affected by the outbreak of QX disease in 2004-05. The Division prepared what proved to be a successful proposal for NSW Government assistance to the industry. Roll-out is now in progress. An application to the Australian Government for exceptional circumstances assistance was also completed.

CASE STUDY

Excellence in service delivery to stakeholders

*Building DPI helped
staff shape the strategic
direction of the new
department*

MAPPING THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW DEPARTMENT

The challenge: to take 3 600 staff from four agencies on a journey of organisational change to the NSW Department of Primary Industries. The solution: a major change initiative called Building DPI which recognised that staff must help shape the new department's vision, strategies and values.

The first step was to prepare a 'journey map' that graphically represented how staff would move from the present to the future along with material for interactive staff feedback sessions. Next was the selection of 20 master facilitators whose tasks included reviewing the journey map and training additional facilitators.

At this stage the change program identified that staff should understand the forces impacting on NSW DPI, namely:

- the changing competitive landscape
- increasing government regulation
- shifting Indigenous priorities
- changing stakeholder needs

Given the number of staff and locations involved, rollout of the feedback sessions required detailed planning. In the three months to 30 June 2005, 3200 staff attended 110 forums at 42 locations across the State.

The content and schedule planning paid dividends. Pre and post session questionnaires indicated that staff understanding of the new department increased. Feedback from all sessions was recorded and, demonstrating how seriously it was taken, led directly to changes in NSW DPI's corporate plan.

The full commitment and ongoing involvement of the Board of Management and the senior management team were the keys to the overall success of the change initiative. They ensured sufficient human and financial resources were allocated.

With the new department now fully operational, Building DPI will contribute to the imminent rollout of branch and individual plans as staff will have a clearer understanding of corporate level vision and strategies. In the end, the success of the initiative will be measured by improved service delivery, stakeholder satisfaction and staff commitment.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION



CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

Nature and scope of activities

The Corporate Services Division provides advice and assistance to enable staff in the other six divisions of NSW DPI to do their work efficiently and effectively. Based principally in Orange, with some staff at other sites to provide local support, the Division comprises:

- Finance and Administration
- Human Resources
- Asset Management
- Information and Communication Technology
- Legal Services.

Major outcomes achieved

Consolidation of corporate services functions

Under NSW DPI's shared corporate services strategy, the corporate services divisions of the three former agencies that now make up our non-trading component were consolidated into one unit. This and the related initiatives detailed below resulted in significant ongoing savings in corporate overheads – savings that are being redirected to our frontline activities.

Consolidation entailed the integration of three separate financial management information systems into one (SAP) and three human resources management information systems into one (Aurion). The entire process was achieved using internal staff and resources.

Savings of \$1 million per year in rent will be realised through the rationalisation of accommodation in locations where we had more than one office. Co-locations or relocations occurred at Cooma, Yass, Forbes, Singleton, Lockhart/Wagga, Richmond/Windsor, St Leonards/Maitland, Sydney CBD, Lismore/Wollongbar, Mullumbimby/Murwillumbah, Tumut, Manilla/Tamworth, Mildura/Buronga/Dareton, Newcastle/Maitland, Wellington and Crows Nest/Flemington/Wollstonecraft. Co-locations at a further seven locations (Cobar, Orange, Deniliquin, Armidale, Inverell, Grafton and Sydney CBD/West Pennant Hills) will be finalised next financial year.

The new Corporate Services Division reviewed the majority of corporate policies, procedures and processes of the former agencies and brought them together into a new corporate standard. The remainder of the process will be completed during the next financial year.

Improvements in finance and administration

NSW DPI signed agreements with the Game Council of NSW and the NSW Food Authority to provide office accommodation at a number of our sites throughout the State. The initiative will produce savings for all agencies.

The Division paid 17617 claims under the Drought Transport Subsidy Scheme to drought affected farmers. Each claim was paid, on average, within two weeks of receipt.

The introduction of BPay facilities further enhanced service to clients, as did the establishment of a hosted payment page on the Department's website which allows clients to pay departmental invoices by credit card.

In the interest of service improvement, the NSW DPI library expanded electronic provision of services and documents to staff and external clients. Staff received training so that they could make the most effective use of the electronic databases and journals.

The Division introduced new procurement processes to improve operating efficiency including:

- the use of purchasing cards for purchases under \$1500
- establishment of preferred supplier agreements to achieve savings in high volume purchases of goods and services.

Amalgamation of ICT infrastructure

The major focus in information and communications technology was on the amalgamation of the separate infrastructures of the former agencies into a single network.

To improve the flow of communications between different locations:

- data networks were closely coupled, thereby providing access to a single intranet
- a single help desk at Orange replaced three separate help desk operations
- email systems were more closely linked.

Extensive use of video conferencing led to better communication between offices and reduced travel expenditure. Further expansion of network capacity, based on broadband contracts negotiated through the Department of Commerce, improved communications and also reduced costs.

Essential services to NSW DPI clients and staff were maintained, with minimal interruption, during the transfer of computer facilities from the old Mineral Resources offices at St Leonards to our new Maitland office. The work coincided with the commissioning of a modern communications network integrating voice and data communications through broadband links to 13 sites – yet another initiative that will enhance communication capabilities and cut costs.

A PC replacement program continued to improve computer reliability and performance and enhance staff productivity. When the program concludes, all computer users in NSW DPI will have a standard operating environment.

Development of a new software package known as Front Gate was completed to provide frontline staff and other agencies with spatial information on properties during agricultural emergencies. This system, based on cadastral and topographic

data supplied by the Department of Lands, will be the starting point for further development of Geographical Information System capability within NSW DPI.

Progress towards a single records management system began with a major system upgrade completed in 2004-05. The new records system will enhance internal electronic communications and reduce duplication and costs.

Staffing the new organisation

Creation and implementation of our new management structure has been a major human resources undertaking. To date, there has been considerable progress in the evaluation of positions and appointment of staff.

A Joint Consultative Committee was established with the unions to ensure that industrial issues are managed appropriately in the context of the operations of the new agency. Many issues were resolved including:

- relocation of the Mineral Resources Division staff to Maitland
- development of new employment policies and procedures
- consultation on co-location and relocation initiatives
- development of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of decisions relating to our 2004-05 budget.

With a view to reducing duplication in management, corporate support and other non-front line positions, NSW DPI implemented a voluntary redundancy program after negotiation with the Public Service Association. We subsequently processed more than 300 redundancies and helped all staff involved through the Job Assist Program.

Asset rationalisation

Under our reinvestment strategy, the Division sold The Entrance office and began disposal of a number of other properties including laboratories at Lidcombe, a part of Temora Agricultural Research and Advisory Station, and a part of Wollongbar Agricultural Institute. In addition, a number of leases for surplus properties on the Queensland/NSW border were terminated.

In order to reduce overheads and eliminate duplication, NSW DPI shifted dairy science to Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI). This initiative involved the closure of the Wollongbar Agricultural Institute dairy and enhancement of the EMAI dairy. The enhancements will support a major new dairy research program worth \$9 million in partnership with Dairy Australia at EMAI.

NSW DPI research will also benefit from the relocation of Forests NSW staff to the former Grafton Agricultural Research and Advisory Station and the leasing of 700 hectares to Forests NSW for research activities involving forestry plantations.

At Lismore, the chemical residue laboratory closed. Diagnostic capacity was then transferred to better facilities at the Wollongbar Centre.

The motor vehicle fleets of the former departments of Fisheries, Agriculture and Mineral Resources were rationalised and incorporated into one fleet with operational savings of approximately \$0.45 million per annum.

Legal services

Legal services in the former departments of Mineral Resources, Fisheries and Agriculture were amalgamated, with the 15 legal officers grouped into three main units. Staff are located at Orange, Wollstonecraft and Maitland.

Compliance with subpoenas by NSW DPI and the gazettal of legal documents was centralised in Orange.

Electronic Services Delivery

The Department offered a wide range of information services from four public websites. This included access to both new and archived publications, with thousands of titles available electronically. Hard copy publications can also be purchased online through the NSW Government Bookshop.

Other services available electronically include:

- online and voice activated purchase of recreational fishing licences
- online display and query of historical and current mineral exploration tenement information, and mineral exploration title applications
- online provision of transactional information to large commercial clients of forest investment services.

Servicing other agencies

NSW DPI established a service level agreement with the NSW Coal Compensation Board to provide corporate services (payroll, personnel, accommodation, IT and other services) to the Board. We now provide corporate services to the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, the Game Council of NSW and the NSW Coal Compensation Board on a commercial basis.