



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

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<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/corporate-publications/nsw-dpi-annual-report-2007-08>

# Corporate Services Division

*Delivery of high quality services*

## Nature and scope of activities

The Corporate Services Division develops, manages and advises on systems, infrastructure, policies and standards to provide services to NSW DPI in the areas of finance and administration, human resources, assets, information technology and legal services.

The division comprises five branches: — **Human Resources**  
— **Finance and Administration**  
— **Assets**  
— **Information and Communication Technology**  
— **Legal**

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## Major outcomes achieved

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### A safe, satisfying and fair work environment

Payroll and employee services were provided to over 3800 employees during the year, including clients in the Rural Assistance Authority, the Game Council and the Coal Compensation Board. In addition to the normal employee payroll, NSW DPI provided payroll services to over 350 members of boards and committees. Structural changes both within NSW DPI and other NSW government agencies increased staff movement and placed additional demands on payroll and employee management.

The Human Resources Committee met quarterly and addressed such issues as:

- the development of a 'employer of choice' culture
- design and implementation of a new performance management system
- endorsement of an extensive management training program.

Major development of the Aurion Employee Self Service online system gave staff access to their personal information. The system also allows them to complete various functions such as applications for leave, transfer, higher duties, overtime and training courses.

The Joint Consultative Committee continued to meet during the year to ensure the effective management of industrial issues. The memorandum of understanding with the Public Service Association regarding the advertisement of vacant positions established during the formation and restructure of NSW DPI ceased during the year, bringing to a successful close the amalgamation of four departments into the one agency.

The *Women's Employment Strategy Action Plan: Progress and Targets 2008-2009* was released. It details the achievements of the Women's Consultative Group over the past 12 months as well as plans for the coming year.

NSW DPI looked after staff mental health and wellbeing through the Employee Assistance Program, now provided by Converge International, which offers counselling, mediation and psychological support for all employees and their families. There were also a number of training courses to support staff in dealing with workplace issues such as stress management and bullying and harassment.

The training program expanded to include 10 new courses including Safer Driving, Project Evaluation and Managing Challenging Staff while the compulsory Leadership and Management Development Program for senior managers commenced. A total of 2565 staff attended 104 courses during the year.

Internal services and facilities enable achievement of business aims

### Records management and communication

Consolidation of records is now complete with the inclusion of all documents from the previous minerals, agriculture and fisheries systems in the new TRIM global system. This represents a triumph of both technology and collaboration — the latter essential in devising a single classification and naming convention across

all departments. The new system links seamlessly with existing software applications.

There was another step towards records integration when the State Records Authority gave NSW DPI the approval required for compliance with the *State Records Act 1998*, which replaced a number of earlier separate approvals.

In keeping with best practice, NSW DPI continued to emphasise electronic delivery of journals, databases and documents, with the major focus for 2007–08 being the implementation of an integrated library management system. This will allow clients to access their records of alerts and loans. As a prelude to the introduction of the system and to improve the overall efficiency of library services, an extensive review and cull of departmental collections was undertaken.

NSW DPI extensively modified the Front Gate mapping system, which assists management of emergencies and disease outbreaks through allowing easy access to information on infected areas and properties. Version 2 incorporates aerial images with maps and proved a key component of the equine influenza response.

Telephone and data network services were enhanced. Work included the improvement of network interoperability between our West Pennant Hills office and Orange headquarters and an internal speed-dial telephone plan that allows many NSW DPI staff to dial extensions in other offices without entering the full STD number

The telecommunications section maintained accreditation to international security standard ISO27001 as required by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The quality of services was further confirmed when benchmarking showed that helpdesk and on-site support services were provided at low cost and high efficiency.

### Electronic service delivery

Enhancement of employee self-service facilities continued, as described earlier.

Electronic service delivery played a major role in managing the equine influenza outbreak. Horse owners were able to register requests for horse movements online and organisations to register events involving horses. The mapping of the various exclusion zones used in controlling horse movements involved the use of NSW Department of Lands technology, an arrangement that further cemented the relationship between NSW DPI and Lands.

The department continued to use the Government Broadband Network established by the NSW Department of Commerce for its wide area network.

We are currently working closely with the Australian Department of Climate Change for the exchange of natural resource information linked to the Australian Government's monitoring, evaluation and reporting commitments.

### Managing physical assets

Measures to assist NSW DPI in aligning assets with current and future business priorities included:

- disposal of a number of properties, including the remaining part of the former Biological and Chemical Research Institute at Rydalmere and the former depot at Singleton

- construction of a feed evaluation laboratory at Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute
- installation of border tick video surveillance at six sites on the Queensland border
- construction of shared building for NSW DPI and the Marine Parks Authority at Huskisson
- refurbishment of the fish hatchery at Port Stephens and offices at Tuncurry and Swansea
- completion of irrigation infrastructure at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute for the reuse of effluent from West Camden treatment works
- marketing of the Narara Horticultural Research Station for sale following rezoning of the property for residential and rural residential use.

Preparation for a major upgrade for biosecurity at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute began with the development of a business plan and supporting documents. Treasury has approved \$43 million for the upgrade over five years.

While drought caused significant crop failures on our inland properties, the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute had an excellent season, which significantly improved the financial viability of farming enterprises. However, the lack of spring rain in the southern half of the State meant that there was no grain harvested at our Wagga Wagga, Temora and Yanco operations.

### Legal advice and services

Work over the year included:

- approval of contracts for research and development, licensing, commercialisation projects and consultancies
- the hearing of agricultural tenancy arbitrations
- preparation of prosecution proceedings against mining companies and individuals for serious offences under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* and *Explosives Act 2003*
- completion of prosecutions for offences under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*
- prosecutions for contravention of agricultural legislation
- preparation of the following for gazettal: 218 orders, 153 appointments, 29 closures, 3 exemptions, 1 public quarantine, 12 revocations, 6 delegations, 10 proclamations, 8 notifications, 2 easements, 4 interim orders, 19 regulation amendments.

## Significant issues

### Equine influenza (State Plan S8, P6)

Staff across the division rose to the challenge when the equine influenza campaign greatly increased the demand for many corporate services. In doing so they contributed significantly to the overall success of NSW DPI in eradicating the virus within six months.

For example, the majority of Finance and Administration staff were involved in the emergency response, either directly as members of special teams or indirectly in such activities as processing over 100 000 emergency-related financial transactions, liaising with Animal Health Australia on financial matters and assisting the development of expenditure forecasts.

The ICT role was to provide around-the-clock support by supplying new computers and telephone services at control centres and developing software and spatial systems to supply information as required. The new Front Gate mapping system was tested to the maximum while being used to capture and verify the location of thousands of properties suspected as carrying or actually carrying stock infected by equine influenza. Internet-based forms were also developed and modified at short-notice to improve the flow of information and reporting on horse movements and event registrations.

Human Resources staff worked both at the state disease control headquarters and the local disease control centre while those from the Staff Payroll Centre and Employee Services Unit were heavily involved with processing overtime and penalty payments, inducting new employees and processing employment approvals.

### Water availability and asset performance

Reductions in the availability of irrigation water again significantly reduced income from the by-products of research. As the outlook for 2008–09 is less than encouraging, we were compelled to prioritise all essential activities on research stations dependent on irrigation.

### Drought payments (State Plan S8, P6)

In excess of 18 000 drought transport subsidy claims were processed and paid to farmers affected by the drought.

## Future directions

In 2008–09 the division will:

- strengthen leadership capacity and build a strong performance culture through ongoing training in leadership management
- implement the Connect performance management system
- gather feedback on employee satisfaction through such means as an online exit survey and employee attitude survey
- explore opportunities to consolidate and simplify NSW DPI's industrial award structure
- form an ICT steering committee to prioritise ICT resources to more effectively meet NSW DPI needs
- implement an enterprise-wide system to improve the remote provision updating and tracking of personal computer software
- upgrade the SAP financial management system to version ERP
- evaluate and, if appropriate, implement new accounts payable technologies and an automated process to improve the uploading of BPay and credit card transactions into SAP.



## Case study: Promoting a positive safety culture in NSW DPI

In 2006 an external review identified deficiencies in the management of occupational health and safety (OHS) across the department. In addressing these deficiencies, NSW DPI has built a new OHS management system that changes our approach from reactive to proactive and advances a positive safety culture.

Corporate documentation forms the backbone of the new system. However, it is more than a series of policies and procedures and, importantly, incorporates initiatives to increase awareness of risk management and workplace safety. Among the initiatives are:

- an annual staff achievement award to recognise a significant contribution to safety
- a computerised chemical management system at our larger sites for recording all workplace substances, including laboratory and agricultural chemicals
- the Work Safe for Life monthly newsletter
- a feedback email address, which gives staff an avenue to express concerns and request OHS information
- an easy-to-navigate OHS webpage accessible by all staff.

Everyone had the opportunity to comment on the system's policies, procedures and forms. Consultation assisted staff buy-in, as did the commitment of senior management. Demonstrating this commitment, the Director-General signed an OHS policy statement that is now on display in all NSW DPI workplaces.

To implement the new OHS management system and raise awareness, there was a series of 40 presentations to employees and management at 28 locations across NSW.

With a risk-based system in place, NSW DPI will no longer be dealing with incidents and injuries after the fact but instead will be actively promoting employee health and wellbeing.