

# **New Zealand Institute of Surveyors: National Report to FIG, Munich 2006**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The New Zealand Institute of Surveyors (NZIS) has a long and proud history, being established in 1888. It currently has 1200 full members plus almost 250 student members and takes the lead role in New Zealand in representing surveyors in various public and political forums. Membership numbers have been static for the last five years.

Over the last four years, ongoing economic growth has created an environment in New Zealand in which surveyors have been busier than at any other time in recent history. This has been exacerbated by skills shortages. As a consequence, professional remuneration for surveyors has climbed significantly now comparing more than favourably with other professional groups. Indeed, the long-term prospects for ongoing increases in remuneration look to be very bright indeed.

## **2. RECENT INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

### **2.1 Legislative Change**

In 2002, after almost 70 years in which all Registered Surveyors were legally required to be members of the NZIS, legislative change resulted in this statutory obligation being lost and membership of the NZIS becoming voluntary. At the same time the title, “Registered Surveyor”, with its associated functions, was replaced by the title, “Licensed Cadastral Surveyor” and the Survey Board of New Zealand replaced by the Cadastral Surveyor’s Licensing Board. Licensing now involves a more confined set of professional examinations than has been the case in the past.

### **2.2 Professional Change**

No longer being a body of statute, combined with a now voluntary membership, has led to the NZIS making significant changes as it has sought to redefine its public and professional image. At its Annual Conference in 2003, the NZIS sought to establish a new and an advanced form of professional recognition for its members by adopting the title “Chartered Professional Surveyor”. This name, together with an accompanying logo was registered with the Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ).

Unfortunately, the registration process had barely been completed when it became clear that the adoption of this new title was likely to face unforeseen difficulties. In the first instance, it became apparent that the use of the word, “Chartered” (when not formally conferred either in statute or by HM the Queen), might have placed the NZIS in breach of Section 14 of the Flags, Emblems and Names Protection Act, 1981. Secondly, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) challenged the validity of the registration with IPONZ in that it was likely to be misleading to the public. Finally, it became apparent that the Institute of Professional

Engineers NZ, who used the term “Chartered Professional Engineer” (CPEng), was also in objection. The Council of the NZIS, while believing that it could defend its position against these challenges, recognized that the cost of doing so might be high. Thus the search for a new title commenced. At its 2005 Annual Conference, in Dunedin, the title “Registered Professional Surveyor” (RPSurv) was unanimously adopted as the NZIS’s premier professional title for its members. In order for this title to be conferred, a person must have met the following criteria:

- Have a four-year BSurv degree, or equivalent.
- Be a member of the NZIS (normally full membership is not conferred until the professional entry examinations have been successfully completed – generally two and a half years after conferment of the BSurv degree).
- Be competent in measurement science plus three other surveying related disciplines.
- Show advanced competence in at least two surveying related disciplines – this will generally require at least three-years of post membership professional experience.
- Have met the Institute’s continuing professional development policy requirements.

As of August 2006, almost 400 NZIS members have been granted the title RPSurv.

In other institutional changes, there has been a series of restructurings in government’s primary survey and mapping organization, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). Perhaps the most worrisome for the profession has been both the ongoing downgrading of the position of Surveyor General, with associated reductions in responsibility, and also the loss of core surveying expertise. Within the profession, there is an emerging view that New Zealand’s land title system, so painstakingly developed over the last 150 years will slowly lose significant elements of its integrity due not only to these changes, but also to government cost-cutting, and to automation processes.

## **2.3 Gender Issues**

While the surveying profession in New Zealand has traditionally been male dominated, a gradual but significant change has occurred in the last 10 years such that 15% of the graduates from the School of Surveying at the University of Otago, the sole New Zealand provider of graduates, are now female. While this percentage is consistent with the overall male/female ratio in other like professions in Australasia (such as engineering), the challenge remains one of continuing to raise female participation rates.

## **3. RECENT CHANGES IN SURVEY PRACTICE**

### **3.1 Landonline**

In November 1997, in order to process survey and titles transactions more efficiently, the New Zealand Government agreed to develop an electronic titles register and digital cadastral system (Landonline) that would enable cadastral survey and land title transactions to be processed in an online environment. The system is managed by Land Information New

Zealand (LINZ) and enables registered land professionals - conveyancers, and surveyors, as well as territorial authorities - to conduct secure electronic title and survey transactions in real time via the Landonline website, automating and speeding up traditional manual processes.

Since its introduction in 2000, electronic transactions have been growing steadily with the ultimate goal being to move to 100% electronic lodgement of all survey and land title transactions by 1 July 2008. This is consistent with the New Zealand Government's desire to see its services supplied electronically as part of its e-government initiatives.

As at June 2006, 77% of all survey companies have purchased *e-survey* licences, and 48% of all surveys were lodged electronically. This is an 85% increase in *e-surveys* lodged when compared with June 2005.

At the same time, 29% of all *e-dealing*-capable dealings were lodged electronically. This is a 265% increase in *e-dealing* instruments lodged when compared with June 2005.

There has also been substantial growth in the numbers of territorial authorities taking up *e-certification*. Of the total of 73 councils, 18 are actively certifying plans in Landonline and 35 are in various stages of interest and enablement.

### **3.2 Urban Design**

In professional practice in New Zealand, a strong new thrust in urban design has emerged. Initially implemented by the Ministry for the Environment with terms of reference focused towards architectural outcomes, the NZIS has been successful in broadening its focus such that it now includes subdivisional design and the wider urban environment – the domain within which New Zealand surveyors operate. In the long term, this government led initiative, which is gathering momentum with its focus towards sustainable environmental solutions, is likely to lead to the New Zealand surveyor redefining his/her approach to subdivisional design.

## **4. FUTURE CHALLENGES**

In looking to the future, the NZIS sees many challenges. The foremost of these are expected to be:

1. Both overcoming existing skills shortages at all levels in the profession and meeting the increased demand for surveyors' professional services. This skills shortage is close to becoming a skills crisis, if it has not already reached that point.
2. The training of future generations of surveyors. As existing personnel retire, the recruitment of new staff at tertiary teaching institutions with the appropriate mix of academic training, professional knowledge, and teaching experience will be essential.
3. Adapting to a new professional environment in which surveyors, with their broadly based professional training, are not marginalized and increasingly constrained in their activities

by administrators (or even other professional groups) who do not understand a surveyor's qualifications and training.

4. Creating a new professional ethos that has a much higher level of public and professional recognition than has been the case in the recent past.

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