



1. Introduction – the Challenge and the Context

Our Business Capability story is one of the many important stories that makes Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) the special agency that it is -*'the best little agency in town'* and *'as a place with edge and challenge where performance expectations are high'*.

(quote from a new employee at a recent induction programme)

Our success as an agency has been achieved through visible leadership; setting clear outcomes and performance expectations; planning, resource allocation and priority setting, being purposeful about when and how to involve our people in the business challenges we face and building on the good work of those who have gone before us.

Our work began in 1840's when Felton Mathew was appointed as the first Surveyor General of New Zealand and the first lands 'Deeds' registry office was opened in Auckland. LINZ was formed in 1996 following the restructure of the Department of Land and Information.

Today LINZ's purpose is; "to maintain and build confidence in property rights in land and geographic information, and encourage land information markets to develop and mature"

In 2009 a number of factors came together in LINZ and crystallised the importance of our role, our contribution, our people and our leadership.

The imperative for an expanded strategic direction that everyone in LINZ understood was driven from the need for better, smarter public services within tight fiscal constraints, increasing pressure on New Zealand's natural resources and the need for agencies to better coordinate resources and strategies and, at the very core of LINZ's purpose; the growth in location-based information technologies that enables better re-use of government data.

The operational challenges were stark; to move more quickly from paper processing for survey and land titles, paper maps and charts supplied through 12 offices spread throughout New Zealand with 879 staff; to deliver services in a more accessible and efficient way.

With a relatively new senior leadership team; a new Chief Executive and three new General Managers and the shared understanding of the need to deliver four challenging outcomes¹ for government we embarked on a visible and deliberate new path and journey with all our people. The business challenges ahead of us required new ways of leading, connecting and delivering. The goal of moving LINZ from a 'quiet achiever' to a 'confidant achiever' was born.

Today LINZ leads the 'All of Government' delivery of geospatial information. We have received international recognition for our land title registration, a 12 year project, Landonline which enabled full electronic lodgement of survey and title transactions.

Our work administering the survey and titles system forms the basis of New Zealand's land and property rights market and the system of buying and selling property in New Zealand is regarded internationally as "superbly run"².

We are now staffed by 426 staff people in 3 offices.

Our purpose and our work provide people and business with secure property rights, a pre requisite for a prosperous, sustainable economy. Each and every one of our staff either directly or indirectly contributes to the government's highest priority of lifting economic performance.

2. Clear Leadership and Expectation Setting

2009 saw substantial change in the LINZ Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and with it a desire to bring about cultural change in the organisation. This wasn't a journey for the faint hearted. With change came hard decisions, resolve and courage. Our challenge was to develop the people, knowledge and technology support to deliver the Government's priorities and to work smarter with the resources we had. We developed a People Strategy, a two-year programme of work with four key areas of focus to build the culture and capability needed for the next decade and beyond. We set milestones within each of the focus areas and began to deliver against them.

Capability Priorities/ Our Four Outcomes - Statement of Intent 2010- 2013



Building adaptability translated to an expectation that our people would move quickly to respond to new challenges. This aspiration was supported by the development of new or enhanced frameworks in learning and development, performance management and workforce planning.

We stated clearly in our People Strategy, where we were as Quiet Achievers and what behaviours were needed to become Confidant Achievers and how to get there.



Our Leadership approach became more formal through a suite of targeted leadership development programmes, including 360 degree feedback for managers. The targeted programmes for developing our technical leaders and people managers grew leaders' ability to create and articulate a sense of direction, to lead change, to foster innovation in a facilitative style that developed the talent of their teams. We implemented a talent management process to all levels of our management.

We also developed a joint leadership capability programme with other agencies in the Natural Resources Sector of government.

A programme for raising and monitoring employee engagement commenced in 2010 to build on the existing strong and positive culture and to ensure that staff learnt new skills and expertise and continued to contribute as LINZ moved from a quiet achiever to a confident achiever.

We surveyed employee engagement at the beginning of the culture change and have continued to survey annually. The survey results provide LINZ with robust monitoring data and hold our managers accountable for the way they lead, manage and engage with their people.

Performance planning and review processes were improved to ensure we had the best information to prioritise our resources and monitor the impact of our results.

We revised our performance measures to more meaningfully and accurately demonstrate our progress in achieving outputs and outcomes. Today we continue to realise the value of planning and reporting, in our organisational performance and culture.

We have also developed a framework for incorporating research and evaluation into our strategic planning so we have targeted measures to evaluate the impact of our information leadership role on productivity in the economy.

In May 2010, LINZ took part in a formal performance improvement assessment developed by the State Services Commission to measure our capability, performance and ability to deliver on the Government's priorities. LINZ has continued to be an early adapter of new approaches for performance improvement. In 2011 we were part of the first tranche of state sector agencies to complete the four year Workforce Strategy and have been commended as a leading agency in our approach and use of the Workforce Strategy.

We established specific measures to **measure progress** and to ensure that we delivered our capability priorities and listed these in our Statement of Intent so that they remained visible to our people and to our various stakeholders.

Examples included: an increase in positive responses in our employee engagement survey, an improvement in our turnover rate for staff with less than two years' tenure in the technical stream, maintenance of customer satisfaction levels*

*Research conducted in March 2010 reported an overall satisfaction level of 81% for topographic customers who had contacted us, and 70% for bulk data extract

customers. August 2009 research on our land title and survey customers reported an overall 80% satisfaction level with our services.

3. Participative Culture: Our Place - Making a great place

As a senior leadership team we were clear about the vision for the future and had developed the skeleton of the way we were going to achieve all aspects of the Vision. We committed to paint a collective picture with our people of the way ahead and through the process became the advertisement for how to behave collaboratively. Our Place-Making a Great Place began.

We designed a **planned and deliberate process** for truly engaging people. The SLT's purpose with the 'Our Place' picture and café style sessions that were run in all the offices of LINZ was to create an ongoing and living picture of LINZ using the creation of a visual through interactive discussions.

Visual

An illustration created by an external illustrative team provided us with a visual representation of LINZ's direction that staff could engage with. Its "sketch" look showed it was not a complete picture and still had many areas that needed to be worked on. The white space was deliberate, to enable staff at the Our Place sessions to contribute and help fill in the gaps. There were also areas in the future environment that SLT were not sure of, and the pieces missing in the puzzle showed both the sections LINZ might need to figure out, or perhaps work collaboratively with others to fill in.

Circle room configuration

The sessions began by creating a sense of collegiality and group involvement through a circle set up of the room. Staff were asked to discuss in pairs; 'What was important about this picture'.

World Café method

The session then shifted to using the world cafe interactive methodology that encouraged participation by all. Staff at each table gave their top two points from these sessions on the question 'Imagining ourselves in the future we've talked about, what were the big leaps we had to take to get there?'

300 of our staff, around 60% participated in the 12 sessions with the SLT in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington.

Once all the sessions were completed, staff feedback was immediately placed on the intranet in raw form. This was a deliberate signal to staff that their comments were recorded and would be quickly acted on.



Taking into account all the staff feedback, SLT then worked with the illustrator to update the picture.

SLT presented Our Picture, Version 16 to the wider LINZ leadership team, and discussed the next steps. Several minor changes were made – and one major change which was to place the wider LINZ leadership team prominently in the picture.

Our picture of Our Place- Making a great place is described in six sections:

1. Our Future State
2. Collaboration and Key Strategies
3. Where We've Come From
4. Developing our organisation - Unleashing Data, Knowledge and Talent
5. Our Core Functions and Underpinning Foundations
6. Our Outcomes

The Our Place Picture is a visual representation of LINZ's strategic direction, and our Statement of Intent. Our picture created a common language for LINZ, and articulated the strategic direction in a way that let staff see themselves and their work. It also gave all staff a sense of ownership in the future direction of the organisation.

Throughout the time we were running the sessions and developing the picture of Our Place- Making a great place we used all the communication channels available to us. These included regular personal messages from our Chief Executive, updates on the process and the outcomes and personal stories through our intranet InLINZ and our magazine LinzLink.

The Chief Executive and the SLT also communicated how the Our Place picture would link to our planning process which began to anchor Our Place into the way we work.

4. Integrating Our Place into the culture of LINZ

We began to use the icons and language developed as part of the Our Place- Making a great place picture to remind, sign post and embed the picture as a unique identifier for our people. This continues to day and written communication throughout LINZ regularly uses the Our Place icons and language. The Our Place language appears in all strategic documents.

Everyone in LINZ, no matter what their role or business group, can see themselves and their contribution to LINZ in the Our Place picture.

We regularly use the Our Place picture with our stakeholders and customers in describing LINZ and our journey.

The Our Place picture and story is a significant driver and informer of our People Strategy using the same icons, colours and language. The People Strategy and the Our Place picture are inextricably linked.



The Our Place picture is reviewed and discussed annually with our extended leadership team and with staff. In 2011 SLT presented a different looking picture and staff were adamant that they wanted the Our Place picture to remain as it is. For us this was a symbol of how powerful the Our Place picture has become and how strongly our people identify with it, and guard its use and future.

We know that the Our Place picture will continue to evolve as we take the next step in our performance story. Our Business with Maori strategy will see us developing language and new icons to demonstrate the links from land information, the land or whenua and its connections. This evolution will again be a guided journey of SLT leadership working with all our people to fill the new 'white spaces' as we consider the importance of our work with and through Maori for the economic prosperity of New Zealand.

5. Our People Strategy

People initiatives in leadership, learning and development, performance and talent management were designed and implemented to deliver the Our Place- Making a great place strategic direction.

To help us achieve this, our focus has been on unleashing our unique talent, skills, and expertise for the direct benefit of our customers. The Our Place People Strategy identified the ways for us to do this:

- clarity for staff around what is expected of them, through a revised and strengthened performance management process
- we identified individuals' strengths, and gave them opportunity to do their best work every day
- taking a strengths-focused approach to development, and encouraged on-the-job learning
- working collaboratively in the Natural Resources Sector, sharing leadership development programmes and opportunities

6. Results

An independent review of progress against our performance improvement goals in August 2011 stated that "The senior leadership team has made considerable progress in implementing a broad range of performance initiatives. There is also clear evidence that the behavioural change necessary within the organisation to support the move from "quiet achiever" to "confident achiever" is occurring." The review also stated that "Good progress has been made in engaging with staff to refresh and advance the Our Place picture and embed the strategic direction.

There is good anecdotal evidence that staff have taken greater "ownership" of the Our Place picture and there is greater clarity for staff about what the change means for them.

Tools to support the LINZ Leadership Team (LLT) to implement the initiatives and lead the behavioural change have been developed and deployed. There has been good engagement by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with the LLT in setting



expectations about the type of leadership they are to provide to the wider organisation and the manner in which they should provide that leadership.”

Results from specific questions in our first Gallup engagement poll showed that our staff felt more connected to our purpose and direction than before the programme began, and that they could see and understand their individual contribution.

The results of the second Gallup Engagement Survey in 2011 showed a significant increase in engagement across LINZ, and particularly in our managers. Our response rate was 92%, and our overall engagement score went from 3.64 to 3.88 out of a total 5.

HR reports show an increase in manager capability as a result of leadership development programmes and talent development.

We have just concluded our third engagement survey and are celebrating the achievement of an increased score of 4.16 out of 5, a move upwards from our last year's result of 3.88.

The result places us as the **most highly engaged workplace** in the **New Zealand public sector**.

7. Learning/Success Factors

The Our Place picture continues to be successful because of the high level of involvement from staff working at all levels in LINZ, and through the ongoing, strong leadership of the Senior Leadership Team and the LINZ Leadership Team. It is also fundamental to all our people processes, from recruitment and induction through to talent development and leadership.

The inclusive process that was used with staff led to a real sense of ownership of the outcomes, including the picture and the strategies.

As an integrated programme it was reflected in all areas of the business. For example, the common expectations in all staff performance agreements match the behaviours outlined in Our Picture. It continues to inform our focus and performance expectations.

We learned that it is important to celebrate and build on what has gone before. Our people appreciated that we took the approach of this programme being “part of a journey,” and we recognized and celebrated work already done. Also, it is important to demonstrate ongoing commitment to the programme. Real value stemmed from staff seeing long term commitment from their leaders. Staff also really valued the opportunity to speak face-to-face with the Senior Leadership Team. This built collegiality, confidence, and trust.

8. Conclusion

Our resolve in 2009 to set out a clear vision and link our people and their day to day work through to the delivery of clear organisation outcomes for the benefit of all New



Zealanders was the right path to take. Our current strategic direction in our Statement of Intent³ 2012- 2015 has three key outcomes of; managing property rights, managing location based information and managing crown land.

Improving our organisational performance and contributing to better public services for all New Zealanders is known throughout our organisation as the outcome of **a well run LINZ.**

The challenge to continue to be a high performing agency is always with us. This is expected of us by our communities, both national and international, our Minister and government and most of all by our people.

References

¹ LINZ Statement of Intent 2010>2013

² Trans Tasman Briefing Report: N.Z. Government Departments, People and Policy, June 2012, page 69

³ LINZ Statement of Intent 2012>2015