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Tēnā koe ██

Response to your official information request

Thank you for your official information request received on 2 July 2024 for information relating to the New Zealand Geospatial Strategy (2007) ('the Strategy') and the New Zealand Geospatial Office (NZGO).

In response to your request, we would like to provide you with the following background information and context. Once you have had the opportunity to consider this information, please advise if there is any further information you wish to receive.

The key principles of the Strategy underpin LINZ's work

The Strategy was a key document at the beginning of New Zealand's geospatial journey when it was first published 18 years ago.

Since 2017, as documented in its Strategic Intentions documents[1], the key principles of the Strategy for open, accessible and interoperable geospatial data have underpinned LINZ's geospatial work.

LINZ's key achievements towards delivering its outcome of increasing the use of high-value geographic and property information, are documented in its Annual Reports[2].

The role of the NZGO

In 2006, the NZGO was established within LINZ to lead the implementation of the Strategy. Central to the NZGO's work was the establishment of a national Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI).

An SDI is a framework that facilitates connections between providers of spatial information and users/consumers of that information. It can be defined as the

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[1] https://www.linz.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/strategic-intentions
[2] https://www.linz.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/annual-report

www.linz.govt.nz

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technology, policies, standards, and human resources necessary to acquire, process, store, distribute and improve the usability of geospatial data.

The NZGO could not establish a national SDI by itself, it required organisations holding geospatial data to willingly participate. Participating in a national SDI required organisations to invest time, funding and resources to ensure their geospatial data, its collection, maintenance and accessibility met specific standards, policies and practices.

Barriers to organisations participating in a national SDI

A 2014 review of progress towards a national SDI found that many organisations experienced barriers to participation. As a result of these external barriers, a national SDI was not in place by 2014, or by 2017 when the NZGO was effectively disestablished.

The key conclusions of the review can be summarised as:

- Organisations tended to participate in the national SDI for their own ends rather than because Cabinet has directed them to, or to deliver a public good.

- Organisations holding geospatial information, such as local authorities or Crown Research Institutes, had a primary focus on delivering operational efficiencies and value for ratepayers or customers/stakeholders and didn't have the resources to participate if they didn't get direct benefit.

- While some organisations saw the value in a national SDI, many found it difficult to understand let alone explain to others, making it difficult for them to convince management to invest time or money in it.

- There needed to be more clarity on the state of progress with the Geospatial Strategy and the SDI, with identifiable measures towards a defined "end game".

The report notes that an SDI is never "finished"; it is an organic system that continually evolves in response to changes in technology, datasets and user practices. This is at odds with the aims of the NZGO's SDI work, which put a deadline of 2014 for implementing a national SDI.

The 'Barriers, incentives and disincentives to participate in the national Spatial Data Infrastructure' report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

NZGO governance structures

Cross-sector governance structures were set up to guide and govern NZGO's activities. Despite a review and reset in July 2013, low attendance and low engagement in these governance groups was ongoing and meetings were frequently cancelled.

The Geospatial Executive Group's role was to govern the direction of the Strategy. It comprised Chief Executives from key agencies and met three times per year. Its last meeting was in February 2016.

The Geospatial Senior Officials Group's role was to actively drive the adoption of the Strategy and its work programme. Its members were geospatial advocates from key

agencies. The group met monthly until August 2015 and, following four meetings in 2016, it last met in December 2016.

Responding to changes in the data and digital systems

In 2017, as part of broader organisational change, LINZ made changes to how it focused and aligned its geospatial efforts to deliver LINZ's strategic objectives, enable it to work in a more connected way, and maximise its capacity and resources.

This was in response to significant changes since the Strategy was launched in 2007, namely:

- changes in the New Zealand government, private sector and international contexts

- significant advances in technology (including cloud-based data storage and dissemination channels)

- changing needs and expectations of data-users and data-holders

As a result of these changes, the NZGO's functions were decentralised and distributed across the Location Information business group (effectively disestablishing the NZGO) and the principles of the Strategy were integrated into Location Information's work. At this time, NZGO comprised one manager and three technical specialists. The consultation document for this change is attached as **Appendix 2a** (refer to section 4.3.1) and the decision document is attached as **Appendix 2b** (refer to sections 3.2.1 and 4.1).

The decision to decentralise the functions of the NZGO was supported by stronger data and digital leadership across government. In 2017, two key government roles were established:

- The Government Chief Data Steward role, responsible for establishing a common approach to the collection, management and use of data across government. This effectively supersedes the 2006 Cabinet mandate to establish the NZGO.

- The Government Chief Digital Officer role, responsible for leading the development of shared digital processes and infrastructure for government.

LINZ continues to support the emergency management system

At the time of its disestablishment, the NZGO and its national SDI work did not have a focus on a particular system or domain, such as emergency management. One of the responses to this was the establishment of the Resilience function at LINZ as part of the 2017 change process referred to above.

As previously advised in our response to your OIA request dated 14 June 2024, the LINZ Resilience programme currently delivers significant value to the emergency management system through its key data improvement programme and geospatial support to emergency response agencies. These programmes demonstrate the application of the Strategy's principles by delivering open, accessible and interoperable geospatial data that is used during emergency events.

LINZ is committed to supporting the emergency management system and will continue to work with partners, such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), as the government responds to the Mateparae inquiry.

Further information

We trust this context and information is useful. If you would like further information, you are welcome to contact us at ministerialsupport@linz.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note, this response letter outlining our decision on your request, **with your personal details withheld**, and any attached documentation will be published on the Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand website. This is likely to be published by 30 August 2024.

Nāku noa, nā
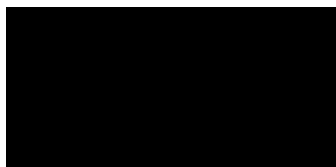
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