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Regional Offices and Research, Development & Improvement Division

On 10 January 2005 a new phase began in the Department of Conservation: that date heralded the formal beginning of a new Head Office Division (Research, Development & Improvement Division: RD&I), and the changed roles for the Northern and Southern Regional Offices.

This factsheet explains why the changes were made, and the new roles for the Regions and RD&I. The changes will improve the department's ability to set and implement long-term and clear strategies, and develop effective operating systems by:

- Bringing science and research staff together with development and improvement staff, so that they better inform each other
- Integrating national research, development and improvement work within one Head Office division, meaning greater co-ordination and clearer strategic direction
- Allowing the two General Managers, Operations, to concentrate on leading and monitoring the conservation delivery work carried out by Conservancies.

A brief look backwards

The review that created the new model was sparked in March 2003 by an Internal Audit report on the Regional Offices. While acknowledging the excellent work achieved by the offices, the report flagged the need to place greater emphasis on making sure that the operational work done in Conservancies did in fact achieve the outcomes DOC commits to, in its Statement of Intent (SOI). A follow-up study of the Central Regional Office revealed that the workload to improve systems and procedures was big and getting bigger; it distracted the Regional General Manager from leading the Conservancies and ensuring the effectiveness of conservation delivery in the field. The study also showed that national improvement work needed to be better co-ordinated with the national science, technical and information systems work carried out by the Science, Technology and Information Services Division (STIS). This led to a formal review and, finally, a decision in November 2004 to implement change and merge all STIS and improvement work.

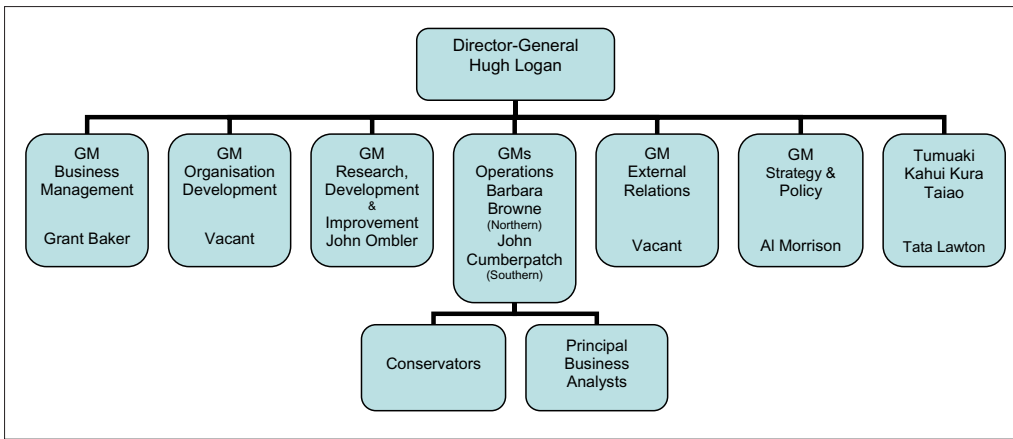
The Regional Offices

Two Regional Offices exist in Christchurch and Hamilton; they are led by *John Cumberpatch* General Manager Operations, Southern and *Barbara Browne* General Manager Operations, Northern. These positions are each supported by two Principal Business Analysts (*Graeme Ayres* and *Warren Murphy* in Southern; *Simon Kelton* and a vacant position in Northern). They have significant responsibilities for monitoring, analysing and forecasting financial and operational performance and provide whole-of-business advice to the general managers. The Southern Regional Office also has a position to support the Ngai Tahu Settlement agreement.

A primary role of the Regional Offices is to monitor and evaluate the work of Conservancies to make sure that DOC's operational work does in fact achieve



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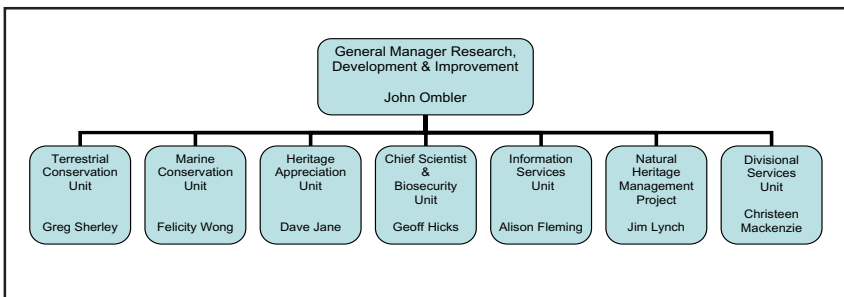


the outcomes it commits to in the SOI, science and technical advice; that national standards are properly applied, and that there is a strong stream of operational performance reporting available to the Director-General.

The Research, Development & Improvement Division

All national science, technical and improvement work is now carried out in the RD&I Division, based in Head Office, Wellington, with some staff in the regions. This is led by John Ombler, General Manager Research, Development & Improvement.

The RD&I Division contains 162 permanent or part-time staff and has been organised in functional work streams to give growing emphasis to the principles of site-based conservation management; and to provide support and services to Conservancies and other Head Office divisions. It will inform departmental policy and prepare the strategies, operational policies, procedures, scientific knowledge, operational tools and information systems needed by the Conservancies. A new position of Chief Scientist has been



established to develop research strategy and provide professional oversight of DOC's scientists. All improvements for national systems and processes are mapped and planned to improve the co-ordination between the various developments and to make sure that Conservancies have the capacity to absorb them.

RD&I is located mainly in Wellington but some teams remain located in Hamilton and Christchurch to minimise disruption and ensure that a strong connection remains between RD&I staff and operational staff. Also, emphasis is placed on maintaining strong connections with external research and technical associates such as Crown Research Institutes and universities.

ROLES AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RD&I UNITS

The Terrestrial Conservation Unit provides oversight and leadership for terrestrial conservation and a co-ordinating role for achieving the terrestrial objectives of the NZ Biodiversity Strategy.

The Terrestrial Conservation Unit is led by Greg Sherley. Sections:

The Threatened Species Section (manager to be appointed) leads threatened bird, fish, frog, reptile, invertebrate and plant recovery, and national recovery projects on kakapo and kiwi. The Terrestrial Sites Section, led by Elaine Wright, leads the identification and monitoring of priority sites and will develop improved site-based strategies for terrestrial conservation. The Freshwater Sites Section, led by Tracie Dean, oversees the classification and identification of priority freshwater and estuarine sites and waters of

national importance, and provides advice on freshwater threats and restoration. The **Plant and Animal Pests Section** (manager to be appointed) coordinates the elimination or mitigation of weed and animal pest threats by developing control strategies, techniques and operating procedures, and ensuring these meet regulatory requirements. This section also supports wild animal recovery operations, commercial licensing and recreational hunting, and maintains pest management databases. The **Fire Co-ordinator**, *Kerry Hilliard*, oversees rural fire management, control and reporting, and liaises with Internal Affairs and the NZ Fire Service. The Unit is supported by two research teams. The **Threatened Species Science Section**, led by *Don Newman*, works on the ecology, population biology and protection of priority threatened birds, frogs, reptiles, invertebrates and plants. The **Sites & Threats Science Section**, led by *Rod Hay*, develops techniques for the identification and management of priority sites for conservation, including islands and mainland islands, and new and integrated approaches to the elimination or mitigation of weed and animal pest threats.

The Marine Conservation Unit has wide-ranging functions in marine and coastal conservation and a co-ordination role for achieving the marine objectives of the NZ Biodiversity Strategy and marine protection for the wider exclusive economic zone.

The Marine Conservation Unit is led by *Felicity Wong*.

Sections:

The **Conservation Services Programme Section**, led by *Bob Zuur*, investigates through research and fishery observation the adverse affects of commercial fishing on marine protected species, and develops methods to mitigate adverse effects. The **Marine Species & Sites Section**, led by *Janice Molloy*, focuses on the protection of priority marine species, especially marine mammals and seabirds and provides advice and support for the establishment of marine reserves and other forms of marine area protection. The **Coastal Sustainable Management Section**, led by *Guy Kerrison*, advocates and advises on sustainable management of coastal areas under the Resource Management Act, aquaculture development, and foreshore and seabed management under the new legislation. The **Policy Section**, led by *Caroline Hart*, provides policy advice to support all these functions. The **Marine Science Section** led by *Ian West* provides research and advice on protection and restoration of marine sites and species, including advice to the International Whaling Commission, marine ecology and population biology, marine classification, and the impacts of marine farming and coastal development.

The Heritage Appreciation Unit supports the department's work in historic heritage, recreation and tourism, concessions and working with communities.

The Heritage Appreciation Unit is led by *Dave Jane*.

Sections:

STSO¹ **Historic Protection & Appreciation**, *Paul Maboney* co-ordinates the conservation and interpretation of priority historic and cultural sites, and development of systems for historic heritage asset management and reporting. The **Recreation Section**, led by *Mike Edginton*, is responsible for recreation facility and visitor asset database management, planning for recreation experiences and visitor impacts, and recreation reporting. The **Concessions & Tourism Section**, led by *Andy Thompson*, oversees relationships with the tourism industry, concessionaire assessment and management and the concessions database. STSO **Communities**, *Nicky Wright* develops and co-ordinates community awareness best practice in support of DOC's Working with Communities Strategy. The **Heritage Appreciation Science Section**, led by *Broniek Kazmierow*, conducts research on historic and cultural sites and visitor management, and social research on community awareness and involvement in conservation. The section maintains the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme.

¹ Senior Technical Support Officer

The Chief Scientist & Biosecurity Unit provides science leadership and strategy, and is the external face of RD&I on science and biosecurity matters.

The Information Services Unit develops the national information & technology strategic plan and works with departmental staff to improve conservation outputs by providing IT knowledge and creating information products, services and systems to meet the department's needs.

The Divisional Services Unit provides a range of services to RD&I and the department.

The Natural Heritage Systems Project Team will develop national inventory, monitoring and reporting systems and robust methods to better prioritise and manage natural heritage assets.

The Chief Scientist & Biosecurity Unit is led by Geoff Hicks who is also Chief Technical Officer–Biosecurity.
Sections:

The **Science Relationships & Planning Section**, led by *Tracey Grose*, co-ordinates science planning, out-sourced science contracts, and relationships with external science associates and government science agencies. The **Biosecurity Section**, led by *Barbara Brown*, is responsible for biosecurity strategy and reporting, advice on biosecurity risks, DOC biosecurity responses, declaration of unwanted organisms, and exemptions. The **RD&I Publishing Section**, led by *Jaap Jasperse*, provides science and technical publishing and communication services including: editing and layout; illustration and graphics, national document registration, electronic publishing, and maintenance of the DOC publication standards.

The Information Services Unit is led by Chief Information Officer Alison Fleming. Sections:

The **Information Resources Centre**, led by *Olwyn Crutchley*, provides library and records services, information management and information research. The **Applications & Development Section**, led by *Tony Charles*, provides business systems analysis, data and design standards, software development, national database design and support, external data sharing, data curation and national oversight of GIS and intranet. The **Technology and Outsourced Services Section**, led by *Ken Walker*, oversees and maintains the department's computer and business software platform and its communication networks and their security and architecture.

The Divisional Services Unit is led by Christeen Mackenzie. Sections:

The **Finance & Business Services Section**, led by *Chris McLaughlin*, provides finance management, advice and support, and administrative support functions for the RD&I Division. The **Training Section**, led by *Mike Morrison*, provides training services to the department in ecological management, conservation asset management tools and databases, and a range of other applications and standard procedures. The **Science Electronics Section**, led by *Stuart Cockburn*, designs electronic equipment for research and monitoring purposes, and supplies and maintains such equipment for departmental use. The **Animal Banding and Marking Section** led by *Graeme Taylor* operates the NZ Bird Banding Scheme and provides advice, bands, equipment supplies and bird recovery information nationally. The **Senior Engineer**, *Calvin Cochrane*, provides professional engineering leadership, standard operating procedures, and structural design and inspection of DOC structures.

The Natural Heritage Systems Project Team is led by Jim Lynch. Teams:

The **Data Collection & Management Team** (team leader to be appointed) co-ordinates the collection and curation of national datasets for use in natural heritage assessment and reporting. The **Design, Analysis & Reporting Team** (leader *Wendy Evans*) oversees the design of the business systems that will be used by DOC for natural heritage management and co-ordinates the development of tools for analysis and reporting. Team members are seconded from other units in the department.

(Version 2, 21 June 2005)