

Briefing for Incoming Minister

MINISTERIAL SERVICES

November 2008

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

Introduction

1. Ministerial Services portfolio is concerned with providing Executive Government with the operating environment, support and advice to carry out its duties.

Executive Government Support.

2. The Executive Government Support (EGS) group within the Department of Internal Affairs provides operational support and strategic advice to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services. This includes support for Guest-of-Government visits through the Visits and Ceremonial Office. EGS also has a range of other functions including the Translation Service, NZ Gazette Office and the Congratulatory Message Service, as well as providing services to commissions of inquiry and other ad hoc bodies.
3. EGS works collaboratively with the other four agencies on the Parliamentary campus, in particular the Parliamentary Service, to provide seamless services to members of Parliament including members of the Executive.
4. The other four agencies on the Parliamentary campus are the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of the Clerk, Parliamentary Counsel Office and the Parliamentary Service.
5. EGS also works collaboratively with other government agencies when arranging visits and events through the Visits and Ceremonial Office, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

The Ministerial Services Portfolio

6. The Ministerial Services portfolio encompasses responsibilities for:
 - Ministers' domestic accommodation in Wellington
 - Ministerial office staffing, administrative support, accounting information, communications technology and media monitoring services
 - the provision of self-drive and chauffeur-drive transport
 - management of Guest-of-Government visits, reception support at international airports, Ministerial and state functions, commemorative events and national anniversaries
 - management of the non-departmental appropriations:

- Ministers' Internal and External Travel
 - Travel for Former Governors-General and Prime Ministers
 - Executive Council and Ministers' Salaries and Allowances
 - Governors-General Pension Arrangements
 - Annuities to Former Governors-General, Prime Ministers and Widows.
7. As noted in the Department's Statement of Intent 2008-11, we aim, over the medium term, to measure our services to Ministers against these performance criteria:
- Ministers have access to high quality staff at all times
 - All members of the Executive feel assured of administrative or IT support or a reliable transport service
 - Members of the Executive are able to interact seamlessly with other elements of the parliamentary complex
 - Executive Government transition is completed within previously agreed time frames to a high level of satisfaction
 - No member of the Executive suffers a safety or security incident due to lapses in our performance.
8. Through support for Guest-of-Government visits we contribute to building better international relations, while other ceremonial events help celebrate and develop an understanding of New Zealand culture and heritage.
9. There are no Crown entities or statutory bodies associated with this portfolio.

Legislation

10. The Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services is responsible for determining services in respect of Executive travel, accommodation, attendance and communications in accordance with section 20A of the Civil List Act 1979. The current services and allowances available to members of the Executive are specified in the *Executive Travel, Accommodation, Attendance and Communications Services Determination 2003*. The Department has been reviewing the current Determination with the aim of identifying any changes that

might be appropriate in light of increased costs and developments in technology. We will brief you separately on this matter by mid-December 2008.

Major policy and implementation/operational issues

Collaboration with other agencies on the Parliamentary campus

11. We work collaboratively with other agencies on the Parliamentary campus towards ensuring that executive government is well supported. During periods of transition, our focus is on providing new Ministers with staff and other support to guide them through unfamiliar systems and protocols associated with the Parliamentary and Cabinet environment, and managing the transition of travel, residential accommodation, staffing, communications and remuneration arrangements for new and departing Ministers. On a longer-term basis we are working with other Parliamentary agencies to improve the interoperability of the information and communications systems that support Ministers and their staff to function effectively anywhere and at any time.
12. We have in place a training and development strategy to ensure the continuity of sound support and the retention of institutional knowledge.

International context

13. Strategically, we are mindful of the potential for international political tensions to impact on the safety and security of executive government. Accordingly, with support from government security agencies, we have assessed the security requirements for residential accommodation and transportation services and have taken steps considered prudent at the current low threat level. We will continue to review security requirements and will take any necessary actions in the light of emergent risks. We are working with the other agencies to further enhance our abilities in this area.
14. We make a valuable contribution to New Zealand's foreign affairs and economic objectives via our management of the visit programmes of official guests of government. Within the strategic objectives set by the Prime Minister for each visit, we collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other agencies as appropriate, to develop and implement visit programmes that position New Zealand to have a distinctive profile in the international arena, and

to provide guests with enhanced understanding of the opportunities for engagement.

Contribution to national identity

15. We work with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and other agencies to support access to and understanding of New Zealand's culture and heritage via our management of commemorative and ceremonial events. Over time we have seen a gradual upsurge of public interest in marking and acknowledging significant occasions, particularly where these have a link to the development of a sense of nationhood. We expect this trend to continue to impact on the turnout at events such as the annual ANZAC commemorations, and potentially to generate public demand for more commemorative and ceremonial markers of important events in the future.

Day to day management of the portfolio

16. It is usual for the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services to take a close interest in the services provided to Ministers. In practice, this oversight may be delegated to a senior member of the Minister's staff. Oversight functions may include working with Executive Government Support senior staff to:

- monitor the expenditure of Ministerial offices and Ministers' internal and external travel
- approve increases in staff numbers in Ministerial offices, including any proposals by Ministers to appoint contract staff
- allocate Ministerial office suites
- allocate Ministerial housing
- oversee the administration of entitlements to Ministerial vehicles.

17. The Visits and Ceremonial Office will work closely with you in your Prime Ministerial capacity to arrange visits by Heads of State and other significant delegations, as well as ceremonial events of national significance.

Key issues over the next three months

18. As noted in paragraph 10 above we will brief you by mid-December 2008 on potential changes to the *Executive Travel, Accommodation, Attendance and Communications Services Determination 2003*.

Appendix I: Organisation Chart for Executive Government Support Group in the Department of Internal Affairs

Executive Government Support

