

Vote Parliamentary Counsel

Baseline Alignment Proposal

Version 1

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Submitted by:

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Section 1: Alignment to Government Priorities

Vote Parliamentary Counsel delivers a core service to Parliament and the executive.

Vote Parliamentary Counsel supports Parliament and the executive in their law-making roles, and contributes to the Government's objectives, by drafting changes in the law that are necessary to implement Government policies, and to provide ready access to New Zealand legislation.

Over 2010/11 and the next two financial years, the key priorities of PCO are:

- **to continue to deliver the Government's legislation programmes and making New Zealand legislation readily accessible to the public.** These are the outcomes of PCO's two strategic objectives and will continue to be its focus of operations.
- **making the content of the New Zealand Legislation (NZL) website (www.legislation.govt.nz) an official source of legislation (the Officialisation Project).** This project, expected to be completed by 31 December 2012, involves comparing the collection of principal legislation (in force in New Zealand as of 3 September 2007) with amendments incorporated against the original printed version of each enactment and regulation and every amendment made to them. It also involves updating the format to reflect current drafting style and reformatting technical inconsistencies and errors present. There will be a reduction in the quantity of titles reprinted as part of the annual reprints programme during the period leading to completion of this project. Staff from other PCO business units will continue to assist with the officialisation project as time allows, which avoids the need to recruit additional staff to complete the project.
- **progressing the implementation of the government's responses to the Law Commission reports *Presentation of New Zealand Statute Law and Review of the Statutes Drafting and Compilation Act 1920*.** This (detail described fully in Section 2) contributes towards the achievement of the Government's key policy goals in the areas of regulatory reform and innovation and business assistance by:
 - consolidating old and much amended legislation through new revision powers
 - reducing the need for technical remedial legislation and
 - improving access to legislation by electronic capture of historic (repealed) statutes.
- **Enhancing and simplifying the NZL system.** A key objective of PCO is to enhance and simplify the NZL system to improve users' experience and to enable the competitive tendering of support arrangements post 2011 to coincide with new support arrangements in 2013. Significant benefits will result from a more complete understanding of a critical business support system for PCO. Lower costs and commercial benefits will be delivered through the ability for PCO to obtain services from third party service providers on a contestable basis and through the bringing in-house of the database maintenance work at the end of the current out-sourced contract (30 October 2010). The planned enhancements will ensure that major software components of the NZL system are updated and developed in order to ensure the continuing value of the Government's investment in this asset.

Section 2: Reprioritisation

- **Making the content of the New Zealand Legislation (NZL) website (www.legislation.govt.nz) an official source of legislation alongside the printed copies they publish (the Officialisation Project).**

The officialisation project, described in Section 1, is expected to be completed by 31 December 2012. PCO intends that the legislation on the NZL website will become an authoritative and official source of New Zealand legislation in the future. After consultation with the judiciary, legal profession, and others PCO will seek to make the NZL website an official source of legislation (through the implementation of provisions in the programmed Legislation Bill). There will be the potential for the Crown to make further savings at that time by reducing or removing the current subsidy of hard copy printed legislation. PCO currently assumes that there will continue to be a demand for hard copy printed legislation, but will investigate the feasibility of moving to a print-on-demand at full cost model.

- **Drafting support and training for Pacific Island nations:** In order to meet the commitment in PCO's Statements of Intent from 2009 onwards of assisting particularly those jurisdictions for which New Zealand has constitutional ties and responsibilities PCO intends to support drafting training and development work in the Cook Islands and to provide critical drafting support to the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau as well as continuing to contribute with Australian drafting offices to development and training programmes for other Pacific Island nations. This will be funded from within PCO's resources and (in outyears) with assistance from NZAid and other agencies.
- **Programme of revision of old statutes:** as part of its contribution to the government's goal of better regulation, PCO plans to undertake a triennial programme of statute law revision, the aim of which is to make the statutes more accessible without changing their substance. The amount of revision undertaken will depend on the availability of funding to administering departments as well as PCO, which will need to be assessed in the context of other priorities. Only a small amount of revision could be undertaken by reprioritising existing resources within PCO. No additional funding will be sought in the 2010/11 financial year therefore. However, once the fiscal position of the Government allows, PCO intends to seek funding to undertake a significant triennial programme of statute revision. The estimated associated additional annual baseline cost for the substantial programme would be \$445,000.
- **Electronic access to historic (repealed) statutes:** the NZL website provides access to New Zealand statutes that are in force. All repealed Acts dating back to 1841 will be captured digitally and made publicly available online because many are deteriorating rapidly in their printed form and there is limited access to them. No additional funding will be sought in the 2010/11 financial year. PCO will begin work on this project in the 2010/11 financial year, the project will be managed in such a

way that any financial commitments will be within PCO's ability to handle from within existing resources. Depending on how the project proceeds it may be necessary for PCO to seek additional funding in the outyears of the project but any budget bid would depend on the fiscal position of the Government at the time

Enhancing and simplifying the NZL system: Two streams of work will take place to achieve the technical simplification of the NZL system - the first focuses on reducing risk, including risk related to PCO's dependency on its single delivery partner, as well as risk of the NZL system not being available to the government and parliament due to serious disruption or disaster. The second focuses on the delivery of technical and architectural simplification of the NZL software and hardware. This programme is intended to ensure that by 2013 PCO will have simplified the NZL system broadened the external support base for the system and lowered the overall cost of ownership of the system. The insourcing of the database maintenance work will also result in a small reduction in PCO costs.

Section 3: Summary of Financial Movements