

**REVIEW OF  
VISITS AND CEREMONIAL OFFICE  
  
REPORT FOR  
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Review

The review was undertaken for the purpose of identifying a clear strategic direction for VCO against which to determine the capability needed for the Office to meet current and future workloads effectively and successfully.

The outcome envisaged from the review was better positioning of the Office for the future by linking capability to strategic direction.

The review addresses two key risks:

- *Staff risks* arising from VCO's reliance on a small group of longstanding experienced staff for delivery of VCO services and a reasonable expectation of retirements in the not too distant future, and need for succession planning to ensure ongoing core capability.
- *Delivery risks* related to VCO's ability to deliver services to clients whose exacting standards reflect the importance attached to successful outcomes from New Zealand's international bilateral relationship initiatives, and to the objective of building a confident nation.

The review does not consider whether VCO might take on any new functions. Nor does it query the need for a VCO. There is a clear appreciation among key stakeholders of the importance to Government of a group skilled in the management of visits and ceremonial and commemorative events, able to offer an impartial, efficient service combined with sound institutional knowledge.

It is necessary to distinguish between capability (the attributes an organisation) and capacity (the level of resourcing in relation to volume of activity). The two are linked in so far as an organisation inadequately resourced for its workload will not be able to achieve maximum capability.

## Overview

The nature of VCO's responsibilities, and of its exacting operating environment, suggest it is not unreasonable to view VCO as a strategically significant contributor to the Government's foreign policy bilateral interests and to the Government's concern to see New Zealand's identity fostered through ceremonial and commemorative events.

VCO's capabilities have served it well in the past. The present environment has begun to signal changed expectations, while the future holds new demands.

## Key Influences

Important influences on how the review was approached were that:

- The capabilities needed in VCO are essentially internal and under its own management control: succession planning; skills development; relationship management; processes and systems; and ways of working (culture).
- These capabilities are, however, important not only for reasons of internal efficiency and effectiveness, but also because a highly capable VCO is vital to the Government's objectives for visits and events.

- VCO is but one part of the overall means for meeting government objectives in these two respects. Achieving government objectives in the bilateral arena and for national identity depends also on the roles of other ministries and departments and on their capabilities.

### **VCO's Key Characteristics**

The characteristics that distinguish VCO, and that define capability requirements, are:

- High client expectations. VCO operates in a sensitive, high profile and demand-driven environment. VCO's clients have exacting service expectations.
- A small, experienced team. VCO operates with a small team of professional staff. This represents a very significant body of experience, and also a succession risk.
- High quality service relationships are critical to VCO's delivery of effective service. The relationship with MFAT, particularly, is crucial to developing visit programmes that will effectively meet the Government's objectives.
- High pressure workloads. "VCO's lead times are compressing, the volume of activity is increasing, peaks and troughs are becoming just peaks - but standards can't be lowered." There is general consensus that VCO's workload is accelerating and an emerging trend that the notice for and length of visits is getting shorter. Visit Managers are often having to proceed with making visit arrangements in the absence of a full approved 'visit specification'
- Prerequisites for effective service delivery. These can be defined as:
  - Creative and effective design of visit programmes to meet the visit objectives in a way that reflects well on New Zealand;
  - Effective project management;
  - Knowledge of visit protocols and procedures;
  - Management of relationships with key stakeholders;
  - Development and maintenance of a strong network of accommodation, travel, and service contacts;
  - Perfect attention to detail and task completion; and
  - Teamwork.

### **Assessment of VCO's Current Capabilities**

The picture that emerged from the review is one of very definite strengths within VCO that should remain at the core of VCO's operation, combined with a clear sense of areas for future capability development.

**People** – VCO has a highly valuable asset in its small team of dedicated, long-experienced staff with a reputation for sound professional and technical knowledge of the logistics of visit management and the organisation of ceremonial and commemorative events. VCO is particularly recognised for its logistical skills and for its institutional knowledge

This has its downside, which is the problem of succession risk, compounded by the lack of any plan for developing staff; and a tendency to work to tried and tested ways of doing things, when clients may be looking for new ideas and flexibility.

In some areas staff are not equipped with up-to-date skills expected in today's public service.

**Culture** - VCO is known for its strong public service ethic. There is a tendency for VCO staff to see themselves as working for VCO rather than the Department. This stands in the way of the Office tapping into the knowledge and resources available in the wider department.

**Client focus(visits)** – VCO has a good focus on the experience offered to visitors, but is seen as less strongly focused on the interests of the host, as the client.

This applies as much to parliamentary visits as to visits hosted by a Minister.

**Relationships and networks** – Key stakeholders are complimentary about VCO's relationship with them and place importance on the goodwill that exists between themselves and VCO.

There would seem to be scope to widen VCO's networks to add more breadth to programme content and perhaps introduce new ideas into ceremonial and commemorative events.

**Policy links** – The strategic purpose of, and objectives for, visits are not presented with sufficient clarity or carried through with a consistent focus. This needs to be read in the context of VCO's role vi-a-vis the role MFAT has in visit objectives and programme design.

VCO does not have sufficient skills in translating policy objectives into visit delivery, reducing the role it could play in contributing programme ideas and being 'policy sensitive' in the way it manages visit logistics.

**Ways of working** – VCO staff each carry direct responsibility for the visits and events to which they are assigned, and work in a quite self-contained way.

This has some efficiency benefits, but means the Office, as a unit, misses out on the gains from having strong teamwork capability. It also affects how VCO projects itself to stakeholders and their perceptions of, and confidence in, VCO's capability.

**Information sharing** – It is not apparent that staff actively and freely share information and knowledge they accumulate in the course of their work, with each other or with staff seconded in to assist at peak times, and when new staff are appointed.

**Systems** – The Office has revised and improved its operating manual and uses the common software to maintain its databases.

These methods work well for capturing and allowing access to formal information that is easily shared. They are not so useful for information that is 'tacit', ie information that is personalised and hard to formulate and communicate. Yet the capacity to share this kind of information and intelligence is vital to a well-functioning unit, and especially important to VCO given the nature of its functions.

**Tikanga Maori** – The importance of incorporating Maori custom into both visits and ceremonial and commemorative events is now a given. VCO's knowledge and skills in this regard are variable (some individual staff have good knowledge)

and is not reflected through the unit as a whole. To meet today's expectations there needs to be a more highly practised understanding of Maori custom and protocol in the unit.

**Leadership** – The leadership factor in VCO has both an internal and external dimension. Internally, areas of importance in leadership are achieving strategic alignment with the Department's overall direction, strategic management of the business and managing capacity in terms of resources for service delivery. Externally, the leadership role entails building and maintaining relationships that support VCO's 'bigger picture' role in meeting Government objectives. Strategic management of both the business and external relationships has suffered from the absence of the Director.

**Capacity** – Managing capacity, in terms of resources for service delivery, is as important as managing capability for VCO to be able to meet output requirements and achieve higher level outcomes. Currently there is little margin for effective workload management, and frequent reliance on ad hoc arrangements to cover peak times. Neither supports an emphasis on capability.

**Airport lounges** – The re-building of the Auckland International Airport terminal has presented an opportunity to look at renovating the VIP lounge. This would be a good investment and not a little overdue. There appears to be no compelling case to disestablish the lounge, and a case for considering the provision of a useable lounge at Wellington Airport.

**Facilitation** – Given the bio-security risks for New Zealand, the requirements of international conventions and immigration requirements, there is no option but to apply the same procedures to dignitaries as to every other person arriving and departing. That said, there is always room for improvement. The Customs Department is currently undertaking a review of Customs' border processing of VIPs. A key outcome of the project will be ensuring that appropriate channels of communication are in place among all the agencies involved. This will be helpful to VCO.

**VCO's wine store** – Two questions arise. The first is the merits, in policy terms, for VCO to hold such a collection. Feedback from VCO's primary client, the Prime Minister, was that the store appeared to be a reasonable investment. To prove or disprove this would require a cost-benefit analysis that would need to show that, in retaining the store, costs did not outweigh benefits. The second question is one of capability succession. There is a need to consider options for securing wine store skills for the future.

## **Future Direction**

A prerequisite for change is establishing a clear shared statement of future direction for the Office. This is fundamental to VCO being able to:

- Operate in a way that is successful for clients, stakeholders, the Department and staff.
- Work to a plan for developing capability.

A 'future direction' statement is set out in the main report. It emphasises the value VCO provides to the Executive and Government by supporting the promotion of New Zealand's interests and values, and contributing towards Government's foreign policy goals, delivered through high standard services designed and delivered around the defined needs and preferences of VCO's clients.

## **Future Capability**

Developing future capability will rely on a mix of:

- Maintaining and enhancing present capabilities, and
- Adding new capabilities.

Specific new capabilities include:

- Developing strategic, client-focused visit services with a strong focus on Government's objectives, complementing MFAT's lead responsibility for visits policy.
- An approach for operating under future arrangements agreed with the Office of the Clerk for the planning and implementation of visits by guests of Parliament.
- Continuing excellence in the logistics of visits and event management.
- Continuing emphasis on building, extending and maintaining stakeholder relationships.
- Developing VCO's teamwork.
- Further active consideration to developing a sector approach to visit management.
- Strengthening capability in tikanga Maori.
- Developing VCO's skills in writing briefings for Ministers.
- Actively building and retaining institutional knowledge, taking a 'knowledge management' approach.
- Investing further in database development to capture VCO's 'intellectual property and to ensure clear internal processes for managing visits and events.
- Addressing the need, and options, for capability succession if the wine store is to be retained.
- Addressing future capacity: VCO needs to be resourced to a sufficient level if it is to be able to offer the kinds of capabilities required in the future. This will include staffing levels and systems support.

## **Strategies**

The components of a future strategy to develop capability are:

- Playing to VCO's existing distinctive strengths.
- Filling gaps.
- Maintaining a balance between continuity and change.
- Investing in resources to build new and enhanced capability.
- Addressing critical success factors – the prerequisites for future capability.

## **Structure**

Changes to structure that could be considered are:



- Creating a position focused on enhancing VCO's policy understanding as input to visit and event management.
- Adding another tier of support staff to carry out tasks able to be delegated by visit managers and VIP coordinators, and adding systems capability to the Office.

## **Location**

The particular nature of commemorative/ceremonial services raises the question of whether this function might fit well in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, capitalising on the potential to improve capability around the philosophical and policy underpinning the Ministry could lend to these events.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations are set out in detail in Part 8 of the report and cover:

- Future direction
- Policy capability
- Skill development
- Staffing
- Systems capability
- Physical assets
- Location of VCO functions.

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# **PART 1. INTRODUCTION**

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## **1.1 Purpose of Review**

The task set for this review was to:

- Develop a strategic plan, taking account of the current and emerging environment within which the Visits and Ceremonial Office (VCO) operates and the expectations of stakeholders; and
- Recommend any changes to capability required to position the Office well to achieve its strategic objectives and to address known risks.

The overall purpose was to suggest a clear strategic direction for the Office against which to determine the capability needed for the Unit to meet current and future workload effectively and successfully.

Discussion with management fine-tuned the 'strategic plan' component to mean a draft statement of strategic direction, incorporating outcomes and an understanding of VCO's environment, its business, its distinctive contribution to government objectives and setting a framework for the development of the capabilities required for VCO to meet, effectively, future demands. A fully-fledged strategic plan would involve more detailed work and specification.

In respect of the capability component of the brief, the review covers:

- Capability now
- Capability for the future
- The difference between these.

## **1.2 Outcomes from Review**

The main outcome envisaged from the review was better positioning of the Office for the future by linking capability to strategic direction.

This, in turn, should assist VCO to:

- Improve on its delivery of outstanding service, tailored to meet present demands better (a 'step up') and geared to meet changing expectations and new demands.
- Develop capability that is sufficient to ensure VCO is able to deliver its outputs and services with minimum risk.

## **1.3 Background to Review**

This review has part of its genesis in work the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has been undertaking with the intent of lifting the Department's performance in line with today's standards of public sector management. This work includes developing departmental capability.

There has been little change within VCO over quite a long period of time, other than moves in staffing provisions.

The review is timely because of:

- The impetus of change at the departmental level, which includes a focus on delivery of services to Ministers under the auspices of Executive Government Support (EGS). VCO needs to be part of the change process.
- Risks VCO is facing, the most significant being staffing risks: the prospect of retirements among key staff in the foreseeable future; and an emerging problem with covering the increasing volume of VCO activity (manifested in heavy workloads and lack of cover for staff absences). The first is a question of succession planning to retain and build capability; the second is a question of capacity – the sufficiency of resources in relation to work levels.

It is fair to say that the review was sparked not by past inadequacies, but by a perception of changing times and the different capabilities required for that.

#### THE EGS REVIEW 2004

A review of Executive Government Support last year stressed the need to review regularly the skills and capabilities required to achieve outputs and outcomes and address any gaps against actual. It suggested this would require EGS to "develop and implement a broader process that regularly reviews skill and capability requirements to deliver its outputs and outcomes".<sup>1</sup>

While the EGS review spoke more particularly about Ministerial Services, in respect of VCO it referred to the need for a risk management plan, noting that "the major risk associated with a visit is that it is badly planned and executed and New Zealand's international reputation suffers as a result".<sup>2</sup> The risks referred to related specifically to the mechanisms for visit planning and logistics.

The EGS review pinpoints a number of issues relevant to the present review. The two reports should be considered side by side in deciding future action.

A specific catalyst for the present review is an awareness on the part of management (and staff) of the following risks:

- VCO's reliance on a small group of longstanding experienced staff for delivery of VCO services, and a reasonable expectation of retirements in the not too distant future – hence the question of succession planning to ensure ongoing core capability.
- Reliance also on the knowledge and experience of staff with particular, and in some cases unique, responsibilities (such as management of VCO's wine store) and the risk to continuity of capability when any such position falls vacant.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of Review of Executive Government Support*, September 2004, Recommendation 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Report*, page 43.

- The risks of failing to maintain capability to enable VCO to deal with the demands of a changing environment, calling for a look at VCO's capability requirements to ensure they are sufficient going into the future.
- Embedded in these risks, the point made in the EGS review (but taken a notch higher) which is VCO's ability to deliver 'star' services to clients whose exacting standards reflect the importance attached to successful outcomes from New Zealand's international bilateral relationship initiatives, and to the objective of building a confident nation, to which VCO contributes, respectively, through its roles in managing visits and ceremonial and commemorative events.

## THE 2001 CAPABILITY REVIEW

An earlier review undertaken for EGS in 2001 included consideration of capability sufficiency to meet changing needs in the delivery of efficient and effective service to Ministers.<sup>3</sup>

The report very usefully identifies critical success factors for VCO (used in Part 4 below in discussion of current capability).

The report commented on the unpredictability of VCO's visits workload and suggested this could be managed by maintaining a small base team of visit managers and contracting in further support and co-ordination services. This suggestion addressed VCO's capacity (work volumes), as distinct from capability (resources and skills). The latter is more the focus of the present review.

The 2001 report also recommended disestablishment of the position of Deputy Director on the grounds that one-on-one management worked against the provision of a "capable service".

### 1.4 The Review Process

Two factors influenced the process adopted for the present review:

- First, it was important that the review tap into the experience of VCO staff. VCO staff's knowledge of the particular demands placed on the Office, and their knowledge of the visits and ceremonial 'industry', played a central part in the review.
- Second, given that VCO operates in an environment in which close stakeholders have a very immediate interest in the Unit's management of visits and ceremonial occasions, a major part of the work involved interviews with a range of stakeholders.

The review was undertaken as an integrated process, combining:

- (1) A series of discussions with VCO staff and interviews with a selection of key stakeholders (primarily departmental officials). These played a central part in defining the scope and focus of the review and generated many of the key ideas on future capability development. This component of the review also identified a wider group of stakeholders able to offer input. The full list of contributors to the review is shown in Appendix One.

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<sup>3</sup> *Capability Review: Service Delivery to Ministers*, undertaken by Anne Patillo.

- (2) Discussions in the course of the review with senior managers in the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), including the Chief Executive, to further define the focus of the review as it proceeded and to obtain feedback on preliminary findings. Summary notes were prepared for these discussions.
- (3) A discussion with the Prime Minister to obtain her views, as a principal client, on VCO's visit management services. (No other Ministers were formally interviewed. The perspective of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was, however, well represented by a senior official.)
- (4) A limited examination of literature on organisational capability and strategy development. This included State Services Commission work on capability and a sample of strategic direction documents for New Zealand government departments.
- (5) Study of DIA's strategic and accountability documents including material on direction-setting work currently underway; and reference to previous reviews undertaken for Executive Government Support.

## **1.5 Acknowledgments**

Thanks are due to VCO staff for their input to the review at an extremely busy time, and to staff and stakeholders for their willingness to offer candid comment and constructive suggestions.

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## **PART 2 APPROACH**

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This section sets out the conceptual framework for the review. It covers:

- Scope
- Key influences
- Defining capability and capacity
- The link between future direction and capability
- Outcomes and capability.

### **2.1 Scope**

The review was defined by the wish to focus on future direction and capability. It was not undertaken as a review of VCO's past performance. Rather, it looks ahead to how VCO might be positioned in the future to meet changing and future demands and expectations in comparison with VCO's present positioning.

The report in effect picks up where previous reviews left off, in particular the 2004 *Review of Executive Government Support* and the 2001 *Capability Review: Service Delivery to Ministers*. These two reviews covered Executive Government Support as a whole, with specific, but not very extensive, commentary on VCO. The present review centres purely on VCO, although in the context of VCO's place within the Department and its key external relationships (which are critically important to VCO's operations).

The review considers both the visit management and ceremonial and commemorative events roles of the Office. Previous reviews have tended to be mainly about visit management, an emphasis echoed in interviews with stakeholders for the present review. This may be explained perhaps by the level of interaction visit managers have with key stakeholders, including Ministers, and high exposure to stakeholders – also perhaps by the high-level policy outcomes associated with visits. Looking into the future, and considering the growing attention being given to events that symbolise New Zealand's heritage and identity, it is going to be increasingly important that the function of managing ceremonial and commemorative events is also fully capable.

The review does not consider whether VCO might take on any new functions. The assessment of future capability needs is made against VCO's existing functions, albeit with a renewed sense of direction. One suggestion that came through during the review concerned the division of visit management responsibility between full guests of government (which lies with VCO) and partial guests of government (handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

While not originally a factor for the review, the question of VCO's location was raised in discussions. The relevance to capability is whether VCO's capability could be enhanced by proximity to the capabilities of another arm of government. The report responds to this question, in brief, in Part 7.

It is worth noting that no one spoken to in the course of the review queried the need for a VCO. There is a strong common appreciation of the importance to Government of a group skilled in the management of visits and ceremonial and commemorative events, able to offer an impartial, efficient service combined with sound institutional knowledge.

## **2.2 Key Influences**

Important influences on how the review was approached were that:

- The capabilities needed in VCO are essentially internal and under its own management control: succession planning; skills development; relationship management; processes and systems; and ways of working (culture).
- These capabilities are, however, important not only for reasons of internal efficiency and effectiveness, but also because a highly capable VCO is vital to the Government's objectives for advancing New Zealand's international interests (through bilateral relationships) and to preserving and developing national identity (as represented by commemorative events).
- VCO is but one part of the overall means for meeting government objectives in these two respects. Achieving government objectives in the bilateral arena and for national identity depends also on the roles of other ministries and departments and on their capabilities, whether in a lead role (MFAT in the case of visits) or associated roles (other agencies, in the case of both visits and events).

The review focuses therefore on VCO's capability in relation to its particular roles and functions, acknowledging that this is important not just for its own sake, but in terms of VCO's complementarity with other parts of government that contribute to the Government's objectives for visits and events.

## **2.3 Defining Capability and Capacity**

A distinction needs to be made between capability and capacity. Standard definitions used in this report are:

- *Capability* is about the attributes an organisation needs now and in the future to deliver the outputs required to achieve the Government's goals desired outcomes efficiently and effectively. Capability includes people, resources, systems, culture and relationships.

Managing capability is about how these various dimensions of capability are used together, under a further capability – leadership.

- *Capacity* is about the level of resourcing in relation to the level of activity, or work volume, determined by demand for the organisation's services. It is the means an organisation has at its disposal to function effectively.

The link between capability and capacity is that for an organisation to utilise its capabilities well, it needs to be resourced at a sufficient level. In other words, if an organisation is not resourced to a level that matches its workload, it is unlikely it will be 'capable'. Later in the report capacity is highlighted as a prerequisite to the development and maintenance of effective capability.

## 2.4 The Link between Future Direction and Capability

The brief for the review required that VCO's capability be assessed against a clear future direction – addressing the question, 'capability for what'?

To do this, the report lays out a possible future direction for VCO, offering a framework for identifying where capability needs to be developed.

The value of this approach is twofold:

1. Having a defined direction allows attention to focus on VCO's *distinctive* roles, and therefore its *distinctive capability requirements*. This is important given the interdependency of VCO and other government agencies in achieving Government's objectives. Being clear about the nature of VCO's contribution to these objectives has three benefits: allows the future development of capability to be properly targeted; it provides a clear focus for VCO's accountability; and it avoids blurred expectations about who is responsible for delivering what.
2. It looks ahead to the capabilities VCO will need in a changing environment and to be responsive to clients whose own environment and priorities will continue to change.

## 2.5 Outcomes and Capability

Capability only means something in the context of the outcomes sought. Investing in the development of capability is a form of intervention, and in the language of current public sector management, interventions are about achieving desired outcomes.

The discussion in Part 6 of this report of future capability is founded on outcomes suggested in the draft strategic direction statement Part 5, section 5.5). These outcomes need to be tested with the Department's management and staff against outcomes for the Department as a whole. It is simply noted here that investing in future capability will have little point if the Department does not insist on having well-defined outcomes for VCO (profiled in the Department's strategic and accountability documents) and if these outcomes are not embedded in the daily operations of the Office (with buy-in from staff).

The selection of priorities for capability development need, also, to be determined by the outcomes sought from visits and ceremonial and commemorative events.

## 2.6 Abbreviations

VCO	Visits and Ceremonial Office
EGS	Executive Government Support
DIA	Department of Internal Affairs
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MCH	Ministry of Culture and Heritage
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
OOC	Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives



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## **PART 3 VCO'S SERVICE ENVIRONMENT**

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This section describes VCO'S service environment, setting the scene for assessing VCO's capability. It covers:

- The operation as it exists now;
- Its defining characteristics.

### **3.1 VCO's Operation**

The following description relies in part on information in the 2004 review of EGS:

#### **DEFINITION OF SERVICES**

VCO is a business unit within the Executive Government Support business group of the Department.

The definition of services for the Visits and Ceremonial Office is described in Vote Ministerial Services, output class Visits and Official Events Co-ordination.

"This output class involves the provision of services related to visits by guests of Government, reception services at international airports for the Governor-General, Ministers and guests of Government, State and Ministerial functions, commemorative events and national anniversaries."

By way of further elaboration, VCO's responsibilities include Royal visits, State ceremonial occasions, Government hospitality, the Congratulatory Message Service, the Government Flag Store and State funerals.

VCO is also responsible for the management of a functions wine cellar and the airport lounge facilities in Auckland and Wellington (the Wellington lounge is barely used because of location and space limitations).

This represents a diverse range of functions with some commonality, but also some features that are distinct to the particular function – differences, for example, between guest of Government visits and Royal visits.

#### **STRUCTURE**

The Office has a flat structure, headed by a Director (currently on secondment; an Acting Director has been appointed). The other nine staff comprise:

- Five Visit Managers (one of whom is part time and one who combines the role of Visit Manager with responsibility for Commemorative Events), responsible for the planning, management, and evaluation of a visit.
- Two Commemorative Coordinator positions (one part time, the other the position combining the Visit Manager/Commemorative Coordinator roles).
- Two VIP Coordinators in Auckland (one part time).
- An Administration Officer.

## CUSTOMER BASE

VCO normally arranges visits or events on behalf of, or for, the Prime Minister, a Minister or The Speaker.

The Prime Minister is VCO's primary client.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

VCO has multiple relationships with other government agencies and to some extent with organisations and people outside Government.

The primary relationship for visits is with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which has the lead responsibility for policy, encompassing visit objectives and programme design. The Ministry's role include the responsibility of the Chief of Protocol for matters of protocol during visits.

Visit management also requires working relationships with Police, Customs, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Government House, relevant Ministerial offices, Ministry of Defence, the Office of the Clerk, Speaker's Office and the Parliamentary Service. Other government agencies that may be involved in visit planning include NZ Trade and Enterprise, Tourism NZ, Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. On top of these, ceremonial and commemorative events management typically involves working with a variety of other bodies and people contributing to the mounting of a major event.

## WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN EGS

The Office works closely with VIP Transport on the land transport of guests, and with Media Services for visit programme communication and media management before and during major visits.

Aside from these functions VCO's activities don't significantly impact on most of the other Executive Government Support services. Work is being done in the Department, and within EGS, to bind the Department more strongly together through managing business services across the Department and fostering the idea of 'one organisation, many businesses'. This points to greater coordination of corporate functions, and the balance to be achieved between common systems and unit self-sufficiency.

## THE PATTERN OF SERVICE DEMAND

In the year to 20 June VCO coordinated 90 visits and events including 52 guests of Government and 8 commemorative events. This is comparable to the 2003-04 year, indicating a sustained high level of activity.

One staff member handles the approximately 800 requests for congratulatory messages each year.

### **3.2 Key Characteristics**

#### HIGH CLIENT EXPECTATIONS

VCO operates in a sensitive, high profile and demand driven environment.

Visits (who, how many and when) and ceremonial and commemorative events are both determined externally, meaning that VCO is not 'master of its own destiny' in terms of workload. There is limited opportunity for input from VCO on the stream of visits.

VCO's clients have exacting service expectations. Clients expect highly reliable and well-executed services, delivered promptly. At face value many of the services appear straightforward. However, the environment in which these services are delivered is risk averse and demanding.

There is no opportunity for rehearsals – each visit and event has to be right. Repeat experience is the primary way VCO builds up its knowledge of what works, and what doesn't, for both visits and events.

#### A SMALL, EXPERIENCED TEAM

VCO operates with a small team of professional staff. Staff need to know how to organise and execute a range of detailed 'deliverables', and know what has to be done by other parties. Staff job descriptions highlight this.

Most staff have been with VCO for over nine years and three staff members for over twenty years. This represents a very significant body of experience.

#### IMPORTANT SERVICE RELATIONSHIPS

High quality service relationships are critical to VCO's delivery of effective service.

The relationship with MFAT, particularly, is crucial to developing visit programmes that will effectively meet the Government's objectives.

Negotiation and establishment of the visit and the objectives for the visit are the responsibility of MFAT. Working closely during this phase of a visit is necessary for VCO to build familiarity with the visit objectives and the guest profile. A Protocol exists to guide this process and is currently being revised and re-issued.

Also vital is maintaining a high level of goodwill with other operational units of Government and with outside parties, such as leaders in industry.

#### UNEVEN WORKLOADS

The workload of VCO's visit management staff varies considerably, being a function of the number and timing of visits. Typically in the past the extent of service demand for guest of Government or partial guest of Government visit management has been dependent on the stage of the electoral cycle, the length of a government's tenure and the Government's approach to international relationships as part of its foreign and trade policy.

There is general consensus that VCO's workload is accelerating. Certainly, staff and management in VCO cannot recall a time when the visit programme was as condensed as it has been over this year, visits following closely one upon the next. Some of the growth can be attributed to the two international meetings hosted by New Zealand – APEC and CHOGM. These visits extended the pattern of visit demand. The workload in this period for VCO was very high because of the timing of the visits and the seniority of the visitors.

It is hard to predict what the future level of visit activity will be, but a fair guess would be that the amount of attention New Zealand is attracting internationally will mean a sustained flow of heads of state and other high level visits critical to the Government's foreign policy objectives.

## SHORT TIME FRAMES

The notice and length of visits appears to be getting shorter (two months seems to be the maximum amount of notice; it is often a lot less). As a result VCO is expected to plan and implement visit programmes speedily, without loss of efficiency. Visit Managers are often having to proceed with making visit arrangements in the absence of a full approved 'visit specification' (ie, agreed, clear policy objectives and programme design).

It is not unusual for visit objectives to be advised to VCO very close to the visit, sometimes only once the visit has begun or even after the visit has occurred.

The pattern of ceremonial and commemorative event activity is relatively predictable and consistent. Most events are known well in advance, but some (notably eminent funerals) will occur at short notice.

## TRANSACTION V ADVICE-BASED SERVICES

In her report on EGS capability in 2001, Anne Patillo made a distinction between transaction and advice-based services. *Transaction* services involve clients saying what service they require, and when. The services provided are often selected from a menu of 'standard services'. *Advice-based* services can only be delivered with the active involvement of the client in the specification and creation of quality service. These services may be based on a general approach or framework, but will be tailored to the specific needs of the client.

She concluded from the then service profile of EGS that the majority of services were either environmental (not relevant to VCO) or transaction services. There were few advice-based services.

## PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Also in her 2001 report, Anne Patillo listed the factors on which planning and management of a successful visit or event depended. Her list was:

- Creative and effective design of visit programmes to meet the visit objectives in a way that reflects well on New Zealand;
- Effective project management;
- Knowledge of visit protocols and procedures;
- Management of relationships with key stakeholders;
- Development and maintenance of a strong network of accommodation, travel, and service contacts;
- Perfect attention to detail and task completion; and

- Teamwork.

These remain apt characteristics of VCO's service delivery requirements. Equivalent prerequisites apply to VCO's delivery of ceremonial and commemorative events. Use is made of them in the assessment of current and future capability below.

### **3.3 Summary**

The nature of VCO's responsibilities, and of its exacting operating environment, suggest it is not unreasonable to view VCO as a strategically significant contributor to the Government's foreign policy bilateral interests and to the Government's concern to see New Zealand's identity fostered through ceremonial and commemorative events.

More immediately and pragmatically, and in the words of one person interviewed for the review:

"VCO's lead times are compressing, the volume of activity is increasing, peaks and troughs are becoming just peaks - but standards can't be lowered."

The combination of these two contrasting aspects of VCO sets the theme for discussion of VCO's current capability in Part 4 following, and future direction and future capability in later Parts 5 and 6.

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## **PART 4 ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CAPABILITY**

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This section presents a status quo assessment of VCO's present capability, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and the associated issues.

The section goes into some detail in order to provide the foundation for identifying areas of future capability development - and begins to do this.

The question of capacity is also commented on, given the link between capacity and capability.

Sources used for this assessment included external stakeholders, DIA managers, VCO staff, previous reviews and material available on the State Services Commission website on capability.

### **4.1 The Context**

It is important to emphasise that capability doesn't exist in a vacuum. Present capability, and the potential for future capability, for any organisation is very dependent on context in terms both of opportunity and constraints.

Relevant to this review are key aspects of VCO's service environment described in Part 3 above.

Constraints that need to be taken into account include:

- The small size of the Office, particularly in relation to the increasing volume of demand for VCO's services.
- The timeframes for visit planning which are frequently very short (certainly in terms of formal advice to VCO that a visit is approved, and sometimes short notice of the visit from the visiting party).
- The fact that visit objectives can be advised very late, and sometimes not in advance of VCO needing to get started on arranging programme logistics.
- The expectation, nevertheless, that VCO will get everything right and deliver a faultless visit or event.

These suggest that one capability set for VCO in respect of visit management is the ability to act with decisiveness and speed to ensure visits proceed.

There are two ways to look at this problem:

- One is to recognise that these constraints inhibit the exercise of other important capabilities that can only really come into play if there is time to do the job properly. If capability (current or future) is to be fully realised attention needs to be paid to removing or reducing such constraints.
- The other is to accept the reality that there will always be constraints, and to regard capability as input to managing around them, still producing a high quality outcome.

Strategies set out later in this report propose a mix of these approaches.

## 4.2 Present Capabilities

Set out below is a summary assessment of VCO's capabilities, under what are regarded as categories of capability relevant to a service organisation. They combine the success factors identified in Anne Patillo's review and categories used in current public service practice.

Each category reflects the broad definition of capability used in this report:

"Capability is about the attributes an organisation needs now and in the future to deliver the outputs required to achieve the Government's goals desired outcomes efficiently and effectively. Capability includes people, resources, systems, culture and relationships."

### **People**

Ultimately an organisation depends for its success on the commitment and skills of its staff and the asset represented by sum of their competencies, experience and attributes.

VCO has a highly valuable asset in its small team of dedicated, long-experienced staff with a reputation for sound professional and technical knowledge of the logistics of visit management and the organisation of ceremonial and commemorative events. Staff have extensive experience in their roles, have developed a wealth of knowledge and are committed to providing a high quality of services in a demanding and often time sensitive environment. The regard held for VCO's experience and knowledge extends to the facilitation staff based at Auckland International Airport.

VCO is recognised for its logistical skills and for its institutional knowledge (an area of capability notably lost to some other parts of the public service). These are vital components of successful planning for visits and events.

This has its downside, which is the problem of succession risk. With key staff approaching retirement or possibly leaving to take other jobs, and no plan in place for replacing their experience, VCO faces a future capability vacuum.

This risk is compounded by the lack of any plan for developing staff not just for VCO's current demands, but preparing staff to respond to a changing environment. Factors that are already impacting on VCO's environment are described in section 5.3 below.

Other features of VCO's people capability are:

- A tendency to work to tried and tested ways of doing things, when clients may be looking for new ideas and flexibility.
- In some areas staff are not equipped with up-to-date skills expected in today's public service. Two examples are information technology (no longer the preserve of IT-trained support staff but rather tools of trade for

professional, specialist staff in any organisation); and familiarity and competence in tikanga Maori (now an integral component of all public services needing more than a superficial 'nod', and featuring more in VCO's client expectations). VCO's IT and tikanga Maori capability are still underdeveloped.

## **Culture**

Culture has to do with the values, ethics and integrity of the organisation and the people in it. It provides the 'space' for how the organisation works.

VCO is known for its strong public service ethic, a highly valuable quality for a unit of government responsible for delivering services involving high-level dignitaries and some of NZ's most symbolic events.

Internally, there is one aspect of culture in VCO that reduces the capability contribution the Office is able to make as part of the larger Department. This is the tendency for VCO staff to see themselves as working for VCO rather than the Department. This stands in the way of the Office tapping into the knowledge and resources available surrounding it and that would both add corporate capability and be a source of additional support when needed. VCO's insularity is as much to do with the way the Department has been managed from above as with its own internal culture – something that is being addressed. (The Department's Statement of Intent gives VCO work limited recognition.)

Other aspects of internal culture are covered under Ways of Working below.

## **Client Focus**

In respect of guest of government visits, VCO has a good clear focus on the experience offered to visitors, but is seen as less well focused on the interests of the host as the client (primarily the Prime Minister, and also other Ministers). The host's impressions about the outcome of a visit is as important as the visitor's.

This is a matter of sensitivity to the outcome for the host, and also of the service provided to the host. Aspects of client service raised in the review were:

- The preparation of briefings on programme details. These are often done 'on the run', informally by e-mail, and without the policy context (as ideally would be provided by MFAT in advance, as envisaged in the MFAT Protocol for management of guest of Government visits). What is lacking is a consistent format for briefings that refers back to the policy objectives for the visit, makes the link between these and the content of the briefing and includes cost estimates and when decisions need to be made.
- It seems that client requests have not always been incorporated into ongoing programme content, eg the representativeness of guest lists for luncheons/dinners.
- The emphasis on consistency of format for visit delivery leads to repetition and stifles thinking around fresh ideas



for visits that would make them more highly tuned to the purposes of the visit and to the interests of the visitor.

- There is little active engagement with the client during visit planning. The tradition is to take a 'transaction' approach to visit planning.
- Communication with people in other agencies over matters of programme detail can at times be insensitive, and create awkward situations for others.

It is important to note that the first four points need to be read in the context, first, of VCO's role vi-a-vis the role MFAT has in visit objectives and programme design; and second, the time pressures VCO is typically under. This is covered below under Visit Planning.

In a sense, VCO as a whole is not geared to be responsive to its key clients:

- it does not have control over the nature and flow of work
- its small scale means it cannot be expert across the diverse range of activity a visit programme might entail
- it is responsible for only part of the outcome of a visit.

There is a similar set of issues in respect of the client focus for guest of Parliament visits. These require a particular understanding of the nature and nuances of parliamentary visits. The client for these is the Speaker of the House through the Office of the Clerk. OOC is proposing to establish an in-house visit capability with the Office of the Clerk as the lead agency and adviser to the Speaker, and VCO providing the logistical services.

### **Relationship Management and Networks**

VCO has a diverse range of stakeholders with interests in how visits and events are delivered. Equally, key stakeholders are vital to VCO's ability deliver services effectively. Management of that reciprocity in VCO's relationships is an important area of capability.

Relationship management capability means knowing what stakeholders expect and what VCO can expect from stakeholders.

The majority of key stakeholders interviewed for the review were complimentary about VCO's relationship with them and place importance on the goodwill between themselves and VCO. Some commented on having excellent rapport with VCO and having the benefit of VCO's 'know how' on logistical details. Most were satisfied with the level of interchange (except for issues with the link between policy objectives for visits and visit implementation – this is commented on below under Policy Linkages).

Networks are also now seen as a critical area of capability for organisations everywhere. For visits, VCO's important networks include the hospitality and related services sector, diplomatic community and among sections of industry,

education etc. There would seem to be scope to widen these to add more breadth to programme content (for example, it was suggested that visit managers could build up more knowledge of newer locations to include in programmes), and perhaps introduce new ideas into ceremonial and commemorative events.

For ceremonial and commemorative events, staff have well-established networks into the Wellington community and with organisations connected to New Zealand's commemorative occasions as well as relationships with government agencies and diplomatic missions.

Relationship management and networks have become increasingly recognised as essential to providing Government with 'joined up' whole of government service delivery.

### **Policy Links**

At the heart of external stakeholder comments on visit management was the issue of the strategic purpose of, and objectives for, visits and a view that there needed to be more clarity and a more consistent focus around these as the foundation for visit planning.

In fact, DIA as a department does not have a direct portfolio responsibility related to the policy interests associated with visits. Those lie in foreign policy, trade and bi-lateral relationships linked to New Zealand's key economic sectors and are within MFAT's domain.

Nevertheless,

- First, and given that MFAT is responsible for producing the programme outline as well as policy objectives for the visit, as part of its strategic-level advice to Ministers, VCO can have a role in contributing programme ideas (including its experience-based knowledge of 'what works' and perhaps knowledge of new visit opportunities) that might meet policy objectives.
- Second, it seems important that VCO is 'policy sensitive' in the way it manages visit logistics.

These two aspects provide the point of intersection where visit programmes 'gel', allowing the client Minister to receive a 'seamless' service and improving the links between policy objectives and visit delivery – seen as currently lacking.

Some internal policy capability would also give direction to VCO's interface with a wider range of government agencies able to contribute to visit programmes such as the Ministry of Economic Development, the Crown Research Institutes and the education sector. These contacts are made now, but in a more limited way perhaps than the potential offers.

### **Ways of Working**

Capabilities that come into this category include teamwork, information sharing.

#### *Teamwork*

VCO staff each carry direct responsibility for the visits and

events to which they are assigned, and work in a quite self-contained way.

This has some efficiency benefits, but means the Office, as a unit, misses out on the gains from having strong teamwork capability. It is the collective efforts of the whole team that set the limits of capability – a ‘sum greater than its parts’ argument. Not working together as a team means the skills and energies of staff are confined to their specific projects and are not available to the collective output of the unit.

Lack of teamwork also affects how VCO projects itself to stakeholders and their perceptions of, and confidence in, VCO’s capability. Stakeholders interviewed for the review commented on their sense that VCO did not function strongly as a team.

Teamwork is a skill to be learnt and should be helped by VCO’s small size and proximity of staff. Rather than diverting staff from day-to-day demands, it should create a stronger sense of capacity to get the overall job done.

#### *Information sharing*

This is a specific manifestation of teamwork and has to do with staff acting cross-functionally. The capability to share information and intelligence is vital for effective collective performance.

The weekly staff meetings VCO holds are a good way to keep everyone informed.

Less apparent is the regular sharing of information staff accumulate in the course of handling visits with staff seconded in to assist at peak times, and when new staff are appointed. Not doing so means duplication of effort (or, worse, the risk of the uninformed staff person making an inadvertent error) and reduces the collective knowledge of the Office.

Bringing streams of knowledge together allows insights into how services might be improved.

The section immediately below on Systems comments further on information sharing.

## **Systems**

Systems capability is basic to any organisation.

Improvements to VCO’s systems have been ongoing, notably in electronic operational systems. These were covered in some detail in the 2004 review of EGS and are simply noted here.

The 2004 review commented that “EGS has a culture where rather than writing down processes, systems and guidelines for decision-making, staff pass on information verbally. This creates a risk of “mythologies” developing as to why something can or cannot be done. These “mythologies” become “facts” or “rules” which must be adhered to.”

That is perhaps a fair characterisation of VCO in the past. The Office has revised and improved its operating manual and uses the common software to maintain its databases.

These methods work well for capturing and allowing access to formal information that is easily shared. They are not so useful for information that is 'tacit', ie personalised, hard to formulate and communicate – yet the capacity to share this kind of information and intelligence is vital to a well-functioning unit and especially to VCO given the nature of its functions.

As noted in the 2004 review of EGS: "While there are some well-documented procedures in many areas and some others rely on the knowledge of the individuals involved. The degree of documented policies and processes appear to reflect the "culture" within the individual units and the way in which they operate."

**Tikanga  
Maori and  
Multi-  
Culturalism**

The importance of incorporating Maori custom into both visits and ceremonial and commemorative events is now a given.

VCO's knowledge and skills in this regard are variable (some individual staff have good knowledge) and is not reflected through the unit as a whole. This is despite the well-expressed competency requirement for effectiveness in delivering on responsibilities to Maori, and meeting obligations under the Treaty, set out in one of the more recently revised VCO staff job profiles. To meet today's expectations there needs to be a more highly practised understanding of Maori custom and protocol in the unit.

The Department has put much effort into working out how it can incorporate the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into its activities, with experience available to be adopted into VCO.

The need to do so is likely to become more necessary. One possible development is agreement between an Iwi and the Crown, as part of Treaty negotiations, for a protocol covering the role of the Iwi in welcoming guests of Government. While in the first instance this will be a matter for MFAT's lead role in programme design, it will fall to VCO's visit managers to see that such occasions are properly integrated into visit delivery, and done well.

Also of increasing importance is the benefit of being able to relate to the cultures (language and customs) of guest of Government visitors. Given the diversity of countries from which they come, it is not possible to do this always, and staff do try to learn basic greetings and phrases to make guests feel more at home. There would seem to be scope however to introduce greater skills in the language and customs of at least the major geographical groupings, as the opportunity arises.

**Leadership**

This has been left to last in the assessment of current capability because it is the capability that underpins the capability VCO as a whole is able to achieve.

The leadership factor in VCO has both an internal and external dimension. Internally, areas of importance in leadership are achieving strategic alignment with the Department's overall direction, strategic management of the business and managing capacity in terms of resources for service delivery. Externally,

the leadership role entails building and maintaining relationships that support VCO's 'bigger picture' role in meeting Government objectives.

Strategic alignment has lagged as VCO has received relatively little profile in the Department's strategic thinking process.

Strategic management of both the business and external relationships has suffered from the absence of the Director (currently on secondment to a Minister's office), the position being filled by two short-term appointments. The attention of both Acting Directors has been heavily absorbed by royal visits along with other immediate demands on the Office. And as noted in the 2004 review of EGS, and fairly describing VCO, "The operational nature of the EGS business has led to a concentration of resources focused on operating within the business and delivery of services. This has been to the detriment of adequate strategic management of the business, as managers focus their effort on day-to-day delivery."

The Director has developed some ideas for lifting the strategic focus of the Office, one being to re-orient the allocation of visit projects from the present loosely geographic approach to a sector approach aimed at improving the connection between Government's objectives for visits and implementation. He has also worked on widening the network of government agencies VCO involves in visit planning. These sorts of moves deserve to be sustained.

To conclude this assessment of VCO's capability, three further aspects are discussed:

- Capacity issues
- VCO's airport lounges
- VCO's wine store.

The second two matters sit a little outside core capability in that they are assets rather than capabilities. Both however contribute to the resources VCO has available to deliver services.

### **4.3 Capacity Issues**

The distinction, and relationship, between capability (skills etc) and capacity (resource levels in relation to work volumes) has been drawn earlier in this report.

Comments here are intended to highlight the necessity to resource VCO to a level that allows both the exercise of existing capability, and further capability development.

Managing capacity, in terms of resources for service delivery, is as important as managing capability for VCO to be able to meet output requirements and achieve higher level outcomes.

Currently there is little margin for effective workload management, and frequent reliance on ad hoc arrangements to cover peak times. Neither supports an emphasis on capability.

All stakeholders recognise that VCO operates with quite limited resources. This is a bigger issue than VCO and has a lot to do with what one stakeholder described as New Zealand's tendency to "undershoot".

That is not to say NZ should offer a comparable level of 'visit experience' as offered by other countries. Nevertheless there seems to be a general view that VCO needs more resources (funding and people). The present level of resourcing leaves VCO somewhat "fragile".

The main point is that an organisation needs enough people to cover demand for its services in such a way that allows room for good planning (crucial for sound risk management), staff training and development, team liaison, strategic thinking and all the other aspects of an organisation that is well run and allows people to function at their best.

The approach to meeting service demand levels has been to maintain staffing levels in readiness to manage a number of visits at one time. This has meant periods of time, and in the last year extended periods, when there was not enough work for all of the staff employed. Over this year visit staff have been very stretched, going from one visit straight into the next.

As noted in the 2004 EGS review, these workload variations indicate a need for a more flexible approach to staffing in VCO. It may also be time to look thoroughly at the adequacy of the core level of personnel, and include comparison with our near neighbours, Australia.

Other ways to address capacity constraints include:

- Lifting the level of support staff. In VCO this is on the light side and sits with one person. It has been common in the public service to pare back support staffing and shift traditional support activity to the specialist staff – most obviously by equipping those staff with IT skills so they can produce their own material. VCO might be better able to manage workloads, and add capability to enhance the quality of service to clients, and hence outcomes, if support was increased.
- More use of IT. Some of VCO's basic operational tasks are case-by-case and tend to be done manually. Nevertheless an examination of the scope to use IT more systematically seems certain to present opportunities for augmenting staff capacity, add professionalism to VCO's outputs – and make life easier for staff.

#### **4.4 Airport Facilities**

The purpose of the lounges located at Auckland and Wellington International Airports is to provide a place for welcoming and seeing off incoming dignitaries and also New Zealand Cabinet Ministers.

The facilitation service covers management of the lounges, hospitality for guests and coordination of border procedures (customs and immigration control).

The high expectations VCO's ministerial clients have of VCO's services generally extend to the lounge and facilitation services.

## LOUNGES

The main flow of visitors is through Auckland. The Auckland Airport lounge is serviceable and well located 'airside' the terminal building. It is however dated. The toilet area is sub-standard. If the lounge is to be regarded as part of the 'showcasing' of New Zealand to visitors it would need a significant face-lift. One comment from a knowledgeable observer was that while it did not need to be five-star, it ought at least to be four-star.

The screening equipment is being moved into the actual lounge area because of airport renovations, cramping the space.

The staff office itself is cramped and not adequate for the two staff now working there.

The structural work at the airport terminal presents an opportunity to move on to lounge renovation. This would be a good investment and not a little overdue.

There may be a case for considering providing a useable lounge at Wellington Airport. The lounge in Wellington is seldom used as it is impractical and not suited to the purpose.

At both airports, consideration could be given to using the general VIP lounges rather than the Department operating its own separate facilities. This has some appeal (this already happens in Wellington, and some Ministers already use the Auckland one in preference) but would make it harder to facilitate visitor parties through border procedures and to offer privacy, and would eliminate the ability for 'airside' greetings and farewells. There appears to be no compelling case to disestablish the VCO lounge facility.

## FACILITATION

An important part of visit management is ensuring visitor parties move swiftly and discreetly through border procedures. Given the bio-security risks for New Zealand, international conventions and immigration requirements, there is no option but to apply the same procedures to dignitaries as to every other person arriving and departing. Dignitaries understand this and there are seldom any real problems.

That said, there can be the occasional glitch. Customs, Immigration and Ministry of Agriculture officers are attuned to the need to treat VIP visitors with respect and minimise the impact on them. They work closely with the VCO staff to this end. Protocol risks are covered by careful logistics planning, a role that sits with the VCO VIP Coordinators who are well regarded for the way they manage their responsibilities.

The Customs Department is undertaking a review of Customs' border processing of VIPs (including guests of Government, and foreign and New Zealand diplomats, members of Parliament, and other VIPs) and their accompanying entourages. Specifically the project is expected to develop and document, in agreement with other relevant agencies, workable protocols and procedures for the arrival and departure processing of these people. A key outcome of the project will be

ensuring that appropriate channels of communication are in place so that all the agencies involved are fully aware of the border processing requirements that apply in each circumstance and to each person arriving or departing New Zealand in a VIP party. The review should be useful for VCO.

The MAF person consulted for the review wondered if there was merit in VCO, MAF and Customs establishing an elite team to handle the top most important guests of Government where "perfection" was critical. The team would be specially trained in protocol and be brought together as needed.

#### **4.5 The Wine Store**

VCO's wine collection has been built up over many years, begun at the behest of the Government. It is located in two sites – about to be brought together into one, in Bowen House. This will allow proper storage conditions.

The collection has a current book value of just over \$133,000 (shown as the purchase price plus GST) and comprises some of the best wine produced in New Zealand. A rough assessment of the market value (if sold retail) could be in the order of \$1 million.

Two questions arise:

- The first is the merits, in policy terms, for VCO to hold such a collection. This can be answered in terms of cost-effectiveness and benefits:
  - In terms of cost effectiveness, sound purchasing has meant top wines can be served to guests of Government at prices that are sometimes a fraction of current market prices. A full economic analysis would take into account cellaring costs, staff costs and associated expenses. That analysis hasn't been done for this review, but could well result in a positive finding in light of very good purchasing.
  - The benefits lie in the opportunity to showcase the best New Zealand has to offer, wines that are often exclusive and add to the objective of enhancing New Zealand's image with our bilateral partners. This is consistent with the fact that the outcomes Government is seeking from visits can sometimes include not only political and economic objectives, but more directly personal ones concerned with ensuring a particular visitor leaves New Zealand with positive impressions, and perhaps a new insight into New Zealand's aesthetic and technical capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

A case could be made to source top wines as and when needed from wholesale suppliers, incentivising suppliers to offer good purchasing arrangements.

Feedback from VCO's primary client, the Prime Minister, was that the store appeared to be a reasonable investment. On balance there is an argument for a Government-funded wine store offering the ability to provide visitors with a representative selection of exclusive wines. To prove or disprove this would require a cost-benefit analysis that would need to show that in retaining the store costs did not outweigh benefits.

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<sup>4</sup> This personal aspect of guest of Government visits is noted in MFAT papers documenting visit protocols and process.



- The second question is one of capability succession. The VCO person responsible for managing the wine store has built up a depth of knowledge of New Zealand wine and contacts with wine makers. This will be hard to replace, given that people with his level of knowledge will most likely be immersed in the wine industry, and not perhaps attracted to a position in VCO with only part time involvement in wine store management.

An option to consider for the future is whether one or two special advisers from the wine industry might be appointed, perhaps as honorary positions, to provide guidance on purchasing, storing and selection for guest of Government occasions. Alternatively, the wine store function could be contracted out.

#### **4.6 Conclusions**

This assessment of VCO's current capability highlights a number of aspects to factor into future capability development. The picture is one of very definite strengths that need to remain at the core of VCO's operation, combined with a clear sense of the opportunities to take the capability of the Office forward.

In summary, VCO's capabilities have served it well in the past. The present environment signals changed expectations, while the future holds new demands.

Central to any future change will be, as now, the capabilities of VCO staff on whom the Office ultimately depends for its ability to deliver services that satisfy its clients and serve the interests of New Zealand. This will be a matter of forging some new capabilities, combined with a shift in the approach staff take to their roles, in terms of both substance and style.

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## **PART 5 FUTURE DIRECTION**

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This section puts forward a view on a future direction for VCO, to lead into an analysis of future capability requirements.

It does not present a strategic plan as such, since that would require more detailed input and engagement.

The aim is rather to set out the core of a strategic direction capturing the essence, scope and logic of a VCO capable of meeting future demands.

### **5.1 The Benefits of Setting Direction**

This review was initiated with an expectation that it would crystallise the sense that VCO was at a point of needing to change, indicate the nature of that change and identify the capabilities required to implement change.

A prerequisite for change is a clear shared vision of the future direction for the organisation. This is fundamental to VCO being able to:

- Operate in a way that is successful for clients, stakeholders, the Department and staff.
- Create the right context for capability to be developed.

As observed in the 2004 review of EGS (page 14): "For a business to run effectively and ensure it has the appropriate policies and procedures to reduce risk, the nature and scope of the business must be clearly defined and understood. Providing clarity is a strong foundation on which to develop a short and longer-term plan for the service."

Direction entails having a clear compelling and concise statement that communicates the outcomes sought and that focuses the work of the organisation and the nature of its skills and resources. For VCO that means something that is stated in terms of aspirations for executing service delivery and a client focus.

The future direction statement should answer the question 'what kind of organisation does VCO want to become over the next 2 – 5 years?' and express the things the organisation needs to do well to meet clients' needs.

To work, it should:

- Align with and incorporate the overall direction of the Department.
- Be grounded in something that makes sense for a unit of government that is part of a service to executive government.
- Allow the tangible benefits to the Government from services delivered to be defined, and then demonstrated in terms of what VCO has done to deliver these.
- Enable management and staff to know what is expected of them and why.

## 5.2 Key Components of Future Direction

### AN OUTCOMES APPROACH

Future direction is, first and foremost, a function of the outcomes desired by clients and the Department. For VCO, outcomes inevitably also involve other stakeholders in terms of their outcomes and their complementary roles.

In general public service terms outcomes mean:

- Working to achieve results for New Zealand.
- Collaboration and working together within the Department and with other agencies.
- A focus on effectiveness.
- Challenging existing norms.

These are all apt dimensions for VCO and provide a good guide to where future direction should be focused. Capability is instrumental to achieving outcomes.

### VCO'S ROLE

Future direction also starts with deciding what is VCO's primary role or focus, both in its own right and relative to the other key players in VCO's arena. This turns on:

- VCO's primary 'value add' – what VCO does that no-one else does. What would VCO be measured by? For example:
  - Its ability to consistently deliver professional visit and ceremonial events, and/or
  - Its contribution to New Zealand's strategic and policy interests (ie a consistent policy underpinning to visits), or
  - A mix of these.
- VCO's distinctive capabilities – what skills etc does VCO have for visit and event responsibilities that differentiate it from other government agencies? For example:
  - Logistical skills
  - Institutional knowledge based on past experience
  - Contacts and networks
  - Databases.

## ALIGNMENT WITH THE BROADER DIRECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT

Future direction will also come from alignment with the overall direction of the Department (as set out in the Statement of Intent and other documents) and how this is translated down to Executive Government Support and in turn VCO.

DIA's 2005 Statement of Intent includes the following, relevant to VCO:

- In the Chief Executive's overview, an emphasis on the Department as "one organisation" – a consequence of focusing on outcomes. Within this is the notion of "many businesses", encapsulating the diversity of functions the characterises the Department.
- A vision that "The Department of Internal Affairs is a recognised leader in public service - known for innovation, essential to New Zealand and trusted to deliver."
- A key departmental objective that "Executive Government is well supported" under which comes the function of "coordinating visits and official events". In elaboration of this the SoI identifies as an 'enabler' VCO's role in ensuring that "Government's expectations of government official visits and ceremonial events are met".
- An approach to managing for outcomes designed to develop an understanding of whether the Department's interventions are "correct or the best influence on outcomes".
- A departmental initiative to develop and implement a strategic "to ensure current and future needs for the Visits and Ceremonial service can be achieved, create a best practice knowledge base and continue to enhance relationships with other agencies, particularly MFAT, to identify how best to support their objectives".
- A reference to working closely "with MFAT and other agencies in planning and hosting visits and events for guests of Government".

Work is underway at the executive management level within the Department to implement these directions. The theme running through this work is the vision of the Department becoming a recognised leader in public service and the importance of utilising collective skill and strength to achieve this.

A draft strategic statement for EGS includes the specific aim of supporting the effectiveness of the Executive and government by:

"Supporting the promotion of New Zealand's interests and values and contributing towards government's foreign policy goals by arranging appropriate programmes for the marking of significant national events and for visiting guests of government."

Taken together, these statements offer a clear steer to where strategic focus for VCO lies.

### **5.3 The Context for Future Direction: Currents of Change**

A further factor in VCO's future direction is changes in VCO's operating environment. These represent marked shifts that can be expected to have lasting influence on the Office, becoming part of VCO's 'space' and impacting on planning for future capability.

#### **THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

New Zealand has a rapidly growing place and influence in the international arena with an increasing emphasis on bilateral relationships that facilitate our economic interests through trade foreign investment and knowledge transfer. As part of that is the focus in government economic policy on 'new' economic activity, and emphasis on leading edge technology, research and development and creative industries, and promoting these internationally. There are clear moves to step up New Zealand's international connections in order to leverage these opportunities and broaden engagement with our international partners.

Successful high level visits are an important cornerstone in developing the capacity and standing to pursue bilateral, and also regional, initiatives. VCO's clients will expect more fine-tuned visits designed to fit the intersection between New Zealand's interests and those of the visiting countries.

It is not all about economic interests. New Zealand is also developing as an international citizen and playing its part in the global society.

#### **NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY**

There are distinct signs of an increasing sense of nationhood and interest in commemorative events in New Zealand.

As one stakeholder put it, we can expect in the future to see more "pomp and ceremony" and more importance attached by Government to access for New Zealanders to opportunities to engage with our historic moments and heritage, as part of civil society.

This gives the ceremonial and commemorative events section of VCO a wider and more significant context.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR**

Today's focus on outcomes has created strong expectations of 'joined up' services to Ministers and inter-departmental collaboration with a 'whole of government' emphasis.

A 'whole of government' approach includes:

- Collaboration.
- More common approaches to service development and delivery.
- The adoption of standard approaches across departments where appropriate.
- Better engagement with departments and Ministers.

To protect and advance its 'ownership' interests, Government requires assurance of future capability to deal with these approaches.

## TIKANGA MAORI

Profiling New Zealand in the international arena increasingly means integrating tikanga Maori in ways that present the country in its full cultural and historical diversity and uniqueness.

Tikanga Maori can be expected to add a significant dimension to VCO's direction in the near and further future.

## OPERATIONAL REALITIES AND PRESSURES

Already noted in this report is the apparent trend towards a higher volume of visits with compressed timeframes.

Any consideration of VCO's future direction must take this into account.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY

Finally, the impact of new technology on service delivery needs to be factored in. It will impact (and is impacting) on 'back office' functions everywhere, on inter-agency communication and on the quality of outputs. It potentially holds one of the keys to more seamless services when these are delivered through more than one agency, and to a client-based view. Some functions may come to be organised around shared knowledge bases.

### **5.4 The Strategic Purpose of Visits**

One factor that will define VCO's future direction is the distinction between the roles MFAT and VCO play in achieving Government's outcomes for visits. This issue is discussed further in Part 6 below in relation to future. Here it is noted that the role assigned to VCO will determine VCO's focus for the future in terms of operational orientation and capability development.

A recurring theme in stakeholder views sought for the review was the need for more clarity and a more consistent focus on the strategic objectives of visits, and clearer linkages between policy objectives and visit planning.

MFAT has lead responsibility for advising Ministers on the policy aspects of visits, including objectives and programme design, and for coordinating the interdepartmental planning process.

VCO is responsible for the delivery of the visit, covering logistics planning (including liaison with other departments) and logistics management during the visit.

Bridging the gap between policy and implementation means having clarity of responsibility and the right mix of skills at the point of intersection.

While a policy focus and culture is not required of VCO, given VCO's lead role in implementation a case can be made for VCO to have some form of policy capability – not to do the analytical work, but to strengthen VCO's ability to translate policy objectives into visit programmes. This would allow VCO to:

- Have a role in contributing programme ideas (including its experience-based knowledge of 'what works' and perhaps knowledge of new visit opportunities) that might meet policy objectives.
- Be able to present programme drafts to Ministers accompanied by a synopsis of the policy objectives (based on information from MFAT) so that the purpose of the visit is kept to the fore.
- Remain 'policy sensitive' in the way it manages visit logistics.

Taking this approach, VCO's future direction in respect of visits becomes more complementary to MFAT, combining:

- The logistical capability of VCO as the unit responsible for ensuring host Ministers are satisfied with operational delivery that serves policy interests.
- The policy capability of MFAT as the Ministry with lead responsibility and whose Ministers' strategic objectives visits are meant to serve.

## **5.5 A Statement of Future Direction**

The following statement aims to answer the question 'how does VCO see itself in the future'. It also provides a point of reference for thinking about future capability.

As evident from its brevity, it is a strategy statement rather than a strategic plan. As noted early in this report, a strategic plan would involve an iterative process with VCO staff and management and between VCO and the Department's management. Work of that nature is underway, arising out of the Department's Statement of Intent.

The statement lays a foundation for a more fully developed strategic plan.

It is presented as a set of ideas. For it to become something that people in the organisation see as encapsulating their understanding of VCO's direction, it will need to be worked through with staff and management.

The statement begins with a 'value and service proposition' – that is, the tangible benefit VCO can provide to the Executive and Government through what it does.

It then sets out outcomes, goals, scope (roles), strengths and distinctive capabilities, development priorities, operating principles/strategies and what VCO will need to fulfil future direction.

## **FUTURE DIRECTION**

### *VALUE AND SERVICE PROPOSITION*

VCO provides value to the Executive and Government by supporting the promotion of New Zealand's interests and values, and contributing towards Government's foreign policy goals, by arranging appropriate programmes for visiting guests of government and for marking significant national events.

VCO also provides a similar service to Parliament in respect of guests of Parliament.

Value is delivered by producing a stream of high standard services designed and delivered around the defined needs and preferences of VCO's clients and with extreme attention to detail.

### *VISION*

VCO is recognised as the leader in the organisation and implementation of programmes for significant national events and guest of Government, Parliament and Royal visits, based on its distinctive capabilities and its management/leadership.

### *OUTCOMES*

Outcomes for Government to which VCO contributes and will give priority are:

- Positioning New Zealand to have a distinctive profile in the international arena and among New Zealanders.
- An enhanced understanding by New Zealand's international partners of the opportunity for engagement, leading to economic opportunities for New Zealand.

### *GOALS*

VCO aims to achieve operational excellence as a service delivery organisation. This will be measured by the reputation the Office earns among clients, stakeholders and departmental colleagues for its:

- Creative and effective design of
  - visit programmes that meet the Government's objectives in a way that reflects well on New Zealand, and
  - ceremonial and commemorative events that encapsulate New Zealand's history and heritage and contribute to building a confident nation.
- Effective and efficient provision of visit management services to Parliament.
- Effective project management.
- Knowledge of visit and event protocols and procedures.
- Management of relationships with key stakeholders.
- Development and maintenance of networks of people and organisations able



and willing to contribute to visit and event outcomes.

- Perfect logistics with attention to detail and task completion.
- Teamwork.

#### *SCOPE (ROLES)*

VCO will have a continuing focus on its core role as a business unit within the Executive Government Support business group of the Department, providing services that deliver outcomes desired by Government. These relate to visits by guests of Government, reception services at international airports for the Governor-General, Ministers and guests of Government, State and Ministerial functions, commemorative events and national anniversaries.

While not changing its role, the Office will strengthen its understanding of the policy context for visit planning and implementation, to enhance its complementarity with MFAT in ensuring a seamless visit management service to Ministers.

#### *STRENGTHS*

VCO's present and future distinctive capabilities are key sources for delivering value to Government.

They include:

- A strong public service and professional ethic
- Organising/logistical skills
- Institutional knowledge of protocol and political process
- A knowledge and information base
- Client responsiveness
- Relationships and relationship management
- Ability to build and maintain goodwill
- A focus on 'business as usual' under pressure
- Committed staff.

#### *DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES*

The opportunity for VCO is not to do different things, but to do things differently. Areas VCO will seek to improve include:

- Emphasis on refining how VCO operates and adding capability in some specific areas.
- Strengthening VCO's contribution to joined up services to Ministers by developing complementarity with other key departments (especially MFAT in the case of visits, bringing a 'whole of government' element into visit planning) and by continuing to focus on collaboration to work through other agencies and to add their 'know how' to visit and event planning and implementation.
- Having the right mix of skills to bridge the space between visit policy

objectives and implementation.

- Improving systems and processes to see they are used to best effect and support staff to be efficient and effective.
- Developing and maintaining an information base for designing goal-oriented visits and events.
- Providing staff with a high quality work environment.

#### *OPERATING PRINCIPLES/STRATEGIES*

VCO will:

- Keep under review, and keep refining, the skills needed in a changing environment.
- Attend to risk management.
- Maintain a balance between continuity and change.
- Benchmark its performance against wider standards, including the possibility of seeking access to ideas from other countries (such as by having VCO staff travel overseas with New Zealand ministerial parties) and from the experiences of New Zealand Ministers travelling overseas as guest of Government, benchmarking against a comparative standard with another like country, or through best practice goals or peer recognition.

#### *WHAT IS NEEDED TO FULFIL FUTURE DIRECTION*

- The right skills – competencies.
- The right systems – IT and support.
- The right resources – budget.

## **5.6 Conclusions**

This section has set the scene for planning for future capability. It offers guidance as to how capability planning can be shaped.

Future *direction* is about what VCO seeks to be and do.

Future *capability* is about how VCO is placed to do it – a function of its skills, resources etc.

The statement of future direction is only a start, offering a suggested path forward to be developed with staff and management.

The next section builds on this.

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## **PART 6 FUTURE CAPABILITY**

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This section discusses the capabilities required to fulfil strategic direction and VCO's business requirements. It highlights the role capability plays in helping organisations meet their strategic goals and maintain operational strengths.

### **6.1 Aims**

The primary aims of focusing on capability are to place VCO in the best possible position to meet current client expectations, improve the responsiveness and quality of its services and quickly and effectively respond to changing demands.

Ultimately the aim is to strengthen VCO's ability to deliver services that contribute to the Government's outcomes.

Part 4 of this report analyses existing capabilities. These will continue to be important in the future. In some cases they can be enhanced. There is also a need to add some new capabilities to the mix. These are presented below.

### **6.2 Approach**

Four key themes sit behind the approach to capability development suggested below. The capabilities highlighted for retention and development all have these purposes.

- First is that having the right people with the right knowledge and skills, in sufficient numbers, is pivotal to achieving 'best capability'.
- Second, establishing an outcomes focus in line with the Department's outcomes for Government is probably the single most effective shift VCO can make.
- Third, capability development should set its sights on providing a seamless, and as far as possible flawless, service to Ministers.
- Fourth, complementarity of capability is increasingly expected in support of a 'whole of Government' approach to service delivery. This means fine-tuning the intersection between departments to achieve seamlessness (no gaps) and allow each agency to access the capabilities of others.

Each of these themes requires VCO to have a clear sense of future direction and to pursue this with confidence.

### **6.3 Enhancing Capability**

#### **STRATEGIC, CLIENT-FOCUSED VISIT SERVICES**

A significant future requirement is for a strong focus on Government's objectives for visits, meaning clearer links between policy objectives and implementation.

For guest of Government visits the policy dimension sits with MFAT, but there is clear scope for VCO to complement this by having the ability to understand and be responsive to the nuances of policy, and the objectives of the bilateral relationship, when planning and implementing visits at the logistical level. VCO can usefully have a recognised active role in producing ideas on visit programmes – knowing what works, what might meet the particular purposes of the visit and aware of new opportunities to add to the programme 'menu'. This role is consistent with VCO's accountability for the logistical outcome of any visit and would VCO allow to contribute more effectively to a joined up service to Ministers. VCO will be better placed to convert policy objectives into 'on the ground' delivery.

This does not need a policy person as such, but rather the capability to ensure VCO's services incorporate an understanding of the policy context and the policy objectives are threaded through the logistical planning and implementation for which VCO is responsible.

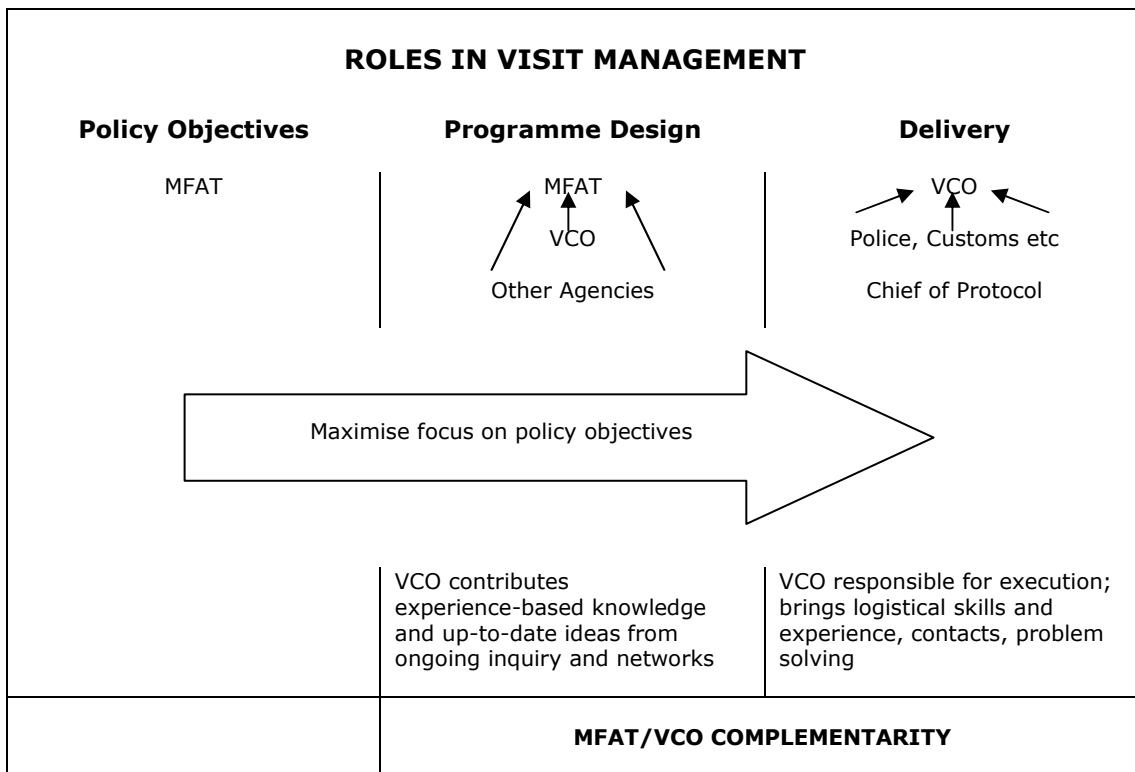
To do this, VCO needs input from the policy ministries, primarily MFAT, providing a clear statement of policy objectives and as far as possible a guide to the kinds of activities that would meet these objectives. Such advice needs to be received by VCO with adequate lead time to build into visit planning – accepting that this is not always possible, given the sometimes short notice MFAT receives of intended visits.

It would also help VCO upgrade the quality of the visit programme briefs it provides to Ministers, incorporating the policy context. While policy objectives need to be communicated, in good time, from MFAT to VCO, if VCO has a better understanding of policy context it will be better placed to write this into any material it documents to Ministers.

That said, it is sensible for VCO to steer away from building capability to fulfil roles that logically lie with MFAT as the Government's foreign policy adviser.

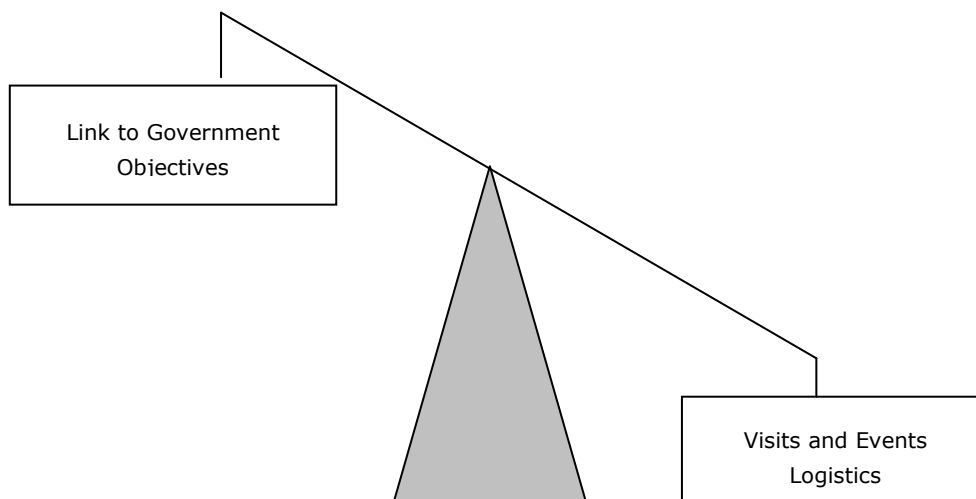
The Protocol for visit management provides for other departments to participate in the interdepartmental committee for policy-setting and programme development, adding their knowledge and 'know how' to the planning process.

The role for VCO vis-à-vis MFAT can be represented as follows. It shows that what is important is not just the distinction between the roles of policy and implementation, but what sits between these roles and provides the links.



The execution of visits through the planning and implementation of logistics remains the core role of VCO. The suggested balance is represented below:

### **VCO'S BALANCE OF ACTIVITY**



### **OFFICE OF THE CLERK**

As well as capability to work with MFAT on policy context, VCO will need to develop an approach for operating under future arrangements agreed with the

Office of the Clerk for the planning and implementation of visits by guests of Parliament.

A draft protocol prepared by OOC sets out an intent to base guest of Parliament visits in its own Office, OOC becoming the principal policy adviser to the Speaker on incoming and outgoing inter-parliamentary travel. The annual programme of incoming visits will have an outcomes focus. In the case of each visit, MFAT and OOC will develop the policy, with VCO involved in the implementation.

This approach is similar to the way in which servicing of guests of Government visits is intended to happen. It reinforces the fact that parliamentary visits are a part of New Zealand's international connections, and that visits can be a blend of foreign policy and parliamentary objectives. As with guests of Government visits, the proposed Protocol offers scope to use VCO's valuable knowledge of how New Zealand can be promoted and of logistical matters that can be relevant for the development of visit programmes aligned with objectives, and for VCO to be in tune with objectives.

The draft was produced as a basis for discussion with MFAT, VCO and the Parliamentary Service. It presents an opportunity to work through VCO's role in parliamentary visits and how it can best meet the expectations of the client.

## OTHER CAPABILITIES

VCO's role in strategic, client-focused visit services is but one area for development. Other capabilities needed for the future include:

- **Logistics management:** Continuing excellence in the logistics of visits and event management. VCO should continue to use experience from each visit and event to improve future outcomes, as it does now. An eye for detail, 'finesse' and intelligent understanding of what makes for a successful visit or event remain necessary to ensuring there are no shortfalls in the services delivered. There should be active and ongoing investment in developing staff skills for these functions. As drawn from stakeholder interviews, these include a strong sense of public service and ethics; institutional knowledge of protocol and political process; project management skills; risk management skills and judgement; 'street smart' confidence; the ability to build and maintain goodwill; agency relationships; wide knowledge of New Zealand; initiative; and ability to keep a 'cool head'.
- **Stakeholder relationships:** Continue to build and maintain these and the goodwill VCO has established. Continue also the initiatives that have been taken to extend these to other Government agencies able to contribute ideas and information to visit programmes.
- **Institutional knowledge:** The continuing importance of building and retaining institutional knowledge. This however should be extended to become knowledge management – more comprehensive capture of the knowledge and information (explicit and tacit) that sits with individual staff and more systematic, active sharing and pooling of information in a collective culture.
- **Teamwork:** Making best use of staff experience, minds coming together to solve problems and generate ideas, the opportunity to keep questioning "why we do it this way" rather than necessarily replicating tried and tested ways. This compares with VCO as place of stand-alone professionals. It

should not be regarded as just a buzzword, but rather as a key underpinning to VCO's effectiveness.

- Sector knowledge (for visits): Give further active consideration to developing a sector approach to visit management and to developing sector knowledge as a means for injecting new ideas into programme design attuned to the profile Government seeks to give New Zealand's economic interests among bilateral partners.
- Cross-cultural capability: VCO needs to strengthen its capability in tikanga Maori. This seems likely to become an important operational dimension to VCO's responsibility for visits and events. It would strengthen VCO as a collaborative enterprise.
- Briefing skills: The 2004 review of EGS noted that "At times the (EGS) businesses need skills and expertise to undertake tasks that are outside the operational activities, such as writing policy, technical and other documentation ..... EGS is basically an operational business unit and as a result lack staff with skills and competencies in these non-operational activities." Writing briefings is an area of useful skill development for VCO, and one that would considerably enhance its reputation for professionalism with stakeholders and clients.
- Media capability: In the course of interviewing for the review the suggestion was made that VCO could benefit from having its own media event management capability. A distinction was drawn between day to day management of the media and media event management. VCO does not have any in-house media capability of its own and relies on EGS for this function. Any consideration of 'in-housing' media skills should take into account the benefits of flexibility offered by being able to draw on media staff outside VCO.
- Internal systems: Systems capability is necessary for efficiency and effectiveness. VCO needs to invest further in database development to capture its 'intellectual property' (a knowledge management approach) and to ensure clear internal processes for managing visits and events, including resource/staff planning allocation. As recommended in the EGS review, "all EGS systems, processes and procedures need to be comprehensive and clearly documented to provide the basis for decision-making to ensure client needs are met while risks are minimised".

In essence, the shift in capability can be summed up as follows:

<b>SHIFTS IN CAPABILITY EMPHASIS</b>		
<b>Retain</b>		<b>Develop</b>
Logistical skills	...	Policy understanding
Internal and visitor focus	...	Client focus
'Product' consistency	...	New ideas, tailored services
Individual project management	...	Teamwork
Professional service	...	Flexibility
Relationships for job at hand	...	Relationships to broaden outlook
Manuals, procedures	...	Knowledge management

## **6.4 Capability Assets: VIP Lounge and Wine Store**

### VIP LOUNGE AND FACILITATION

The re-building of the airport terminal presents an opportunity to look at a lounge renovation, once the siting of the lounge is known as certainty. It would be a good investment and not a little overdue. Plans are already being considered.

VCO's facilitation staff work closely with the other agencies associated with visitor arrivals and departures. The system works well, albeit that there will sometimes be the inevitable glitch.

### WINE STORE

The key issue, if the wine store is to be retained, is one of capability succession.

Options need to be considered for the future as to how this specialist function is staffed.

## **6.5 Resourcing for Capability**

VCO needs to be resourced appropriately if it is to be able to offer the kinds of capabilities required in the future. The central issue is one of creating room in work programmes for the Office to develop capability and to manage workload volumes. This includes:

- Staffing levels

Managers need to ensure the opportunity exists to regularly review the level of staffing against the scope of the business and ensure a proper match between staff capacity and workloads.

There is scope to consider adding more support staff to carry some of the tasks currently carried by visit managers and ceremonial and commemorative coordinators. A culture of delegation will be necessary.

Reinstatement of the position of Deputy Director would strengthen VCO's capacity to coordinate resources and workloads and ensure support systems keep pace with VCO's needs, freeing the Director to focus on developing



VCO's strategic positioning and, in the shorter term, on overseeing the implementation of changes arising from this review. This suggestion is elaborated in Part 7 below.

- **Systems support**

Capacity can be vastly augmented by having adequate and up-to-date systems support. This can both increase the productivity of staff and avoid time wasted as people try to undertake tasks for which they do not have the technical skills.

## **6.6 Summary**

This direction for future capability relies on a mix of:

- Maintaining and enhancing present capabilities, and
- Adding new capabilities.

The suggestions made above are not insignificant. They will require strategies and a carefully planned transition. Part 7 comments on these.

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## **PART 7 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

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This section sketches out approaches that might be employed to implement capability development in VCO and manage the transition. It is not a full exploration of the means for implementation – this is best done once a decision is made on exactly what approach to take to capability development, linked into an agreed future direction for the unit.

### **7.1 The Broad Components**

Essentially, the implementation process needs to build in:

- A change 'driver'. Section 7.2 below suggests the use of best practice methodology.
- A clear framework of performance criteria and approach to measuring performance.
- Providing the resources and 'space' to carry out the work.
- Change management for staff and recruitment of new staff.
- The prospect of relocating some of VCO's functions to enhance capability.

Each of these is discussed below, not as a prescription but rather as ideas for consideration by management and to work through with staff.

### **7.2 A Best Practice Approach**

The draft Statement of Future Direction described in section 5.5 above suggests a vision for VCO:

"VCO is recognised as the leader in the organisation and implementation of programmes for significant national events and guest of Government visits, based on its distinctive capabilities and its management/leadership."

One means for this to become a reality is to adopt a best practice approach to the management and operation of the unit.

Best practice is a widely used method for improving how an organisation functions, aimed generally at improving processes and systems but also having the bigger purposes of maximising the value staff are able to contribute to the organisation and creating greater 'customer satisfaction'.

A practical definition is that:

Best practice consists of good practices that have worked well elsewhere, that are proven to work and have produced superior results in terms of the organisation's standards of service performance.

Inherent in best practice is benchmarking against the practices of other organisations that are at the leading edge in their field. Key features of best practice are:

- It starts with establishing criteria for the standard of performance the organisation aspires to.
- It is a comparative exercise, comparing existing practices with those used in other like-organisations that have the potential to deliver better results. Ideally comparisons are made with organisations that are engaged in practices similar to those of the originating organisation and are 'best' in how they organise, manage and operate their business. They do not need to be in the same field of business.
- Methods for identifying best practices include information search, liaison visits to other organisations, establishing relationships for information exchange, using experts, soliciting suggestions from clients and staff and management forums.
- Best practice is a moving target based on the principle of continuous improvement. For that reason it is best run as a staged process – especially for a smaller-scale unit such as VCO.
- It can be formal, or part of the organisation's known and understood ways of operating (ie its culture).

Best practices can include all an organisation's processes and systems or focus on those areas where the organisation wants to lead. Common best practice areas are target-setting, work programme planning, project management, communications and quality control.

For VCO a best practice approach could include standards of service delivery, observation of protocols, cultural practice, use of technology and other aspects of capability. Some of these could be benchmarked by having staff experience first hand the way visits and events are organised in other countries.

### **7.3 Measuring for Success**

How an organisation is measured is a powerful element in steering direction and change.

As noted in the 2004 EGS review, "Across DIA there is an emphasis on output performance measures as the measure of operational performance. .... (The) form of performance assessment will not provide a comprehensive information base on which to monitor performance."

Within EGS work is presently underway to develop an outcomes-based approach to performance, involving the identification of joint outcomes to which VCO contributes. In EGS's case, and in VCO's, outcomes are typically ones led by other departments, with EGS and VCO having key responsibility for operational delivery in a client relationship.

It would be timely to explore this in relation to implementing capability improvements in VCO and using the joint outcomes approach to define VCO's contribution, and hence define where the unit needs to be positioned to perform well.

The measurement system for VCO should also be designed to establish a stronger profile for the unit, by highlighting the nature of VCO's contribution and the areas where it is distinctly able to excel.

## 7.4 Resourcing for Success

Mention is made elsewhere in this report of the constraints of time and resource under which VCO operates, particularly the relatively small team, at times heavy workload and frequently short timeframes for mounting a visit – at the same time as high standards of delivery, at the level of extreme detail, are expected.

The recommendations in Part 8 below emphasise the need to ensure VCO has sufficient resources to make the transition to new capability successfully, and to support ongoing capability development and service delivery of the desired standard.

Ways to do this include additional staffing:

- Reinstating the position of Deputy Director, allowing the Director to focus on strategic management including (and initially primarily) managing the implementation process. The Deputy would also be directly involved in the implementation process, with specific responsibility for operationally allocating resources and aligning processes and systems with any new requirements. The ongoing purpose of the Deputy position would evolve with the outcomes of change.
- The Director would retain the 'direct report' relationship with visit and event staff.
- The Director's position would include a focus on enhancing VCO's policy understanding, as input to visit and event management. The job 'brief' would be one of inquiry, scoping VCO's environment and liaising with relevant policy ministries.
- Introducing a level of trainee visit/event managers, and creating an extra visit manager position to allow for new staff to be appropriately supervised and trained.
- Augmenting the level of staff administrative support, as recommended in recommendation 13(e) and structuring the unit's administrative capability to provide coordinated support to management and to visit and event staff.

Account does need to be of uncertain demands on staff and the fact that VCO staff typically do not currently have the time (or sometimes motivation) to undertake supervision and training of new staff. Management responsibility for new staff would sit with the Director, and operational support with the Deputy Director.

Equipping staff with the right skills for the current and future environment is also vital. Recommendation 15 suggests that staff training be reviewed to ensure appropriate training opportunities for skill development are available to staff. This needs to include planning for staff to have time off to undertake training, and post-training support so that staff can apply the benefits of training undertaken. Training should include the opportunity for staff to refresh their knowledge and ideas for visit and event planning.

## **7.5 Staff Developments**

A consequence of introducing capability improvement and adopting a 'future direction' framework for this could be a need to review current job profiles. Apart from the job profile for the Commemorative Events Coordinator (which has been relatively recently updated), staff job profiles do not reflect or acknowledge current expectations and realities very well, and could require further change to reflect future requirements.

If the proposals in this review are implemented, it would be logical to review job profiles. It may also be appropriate to review gradings in line with job profiles. This is a matter outside the present review, but is one that could be expected to flow from it.

Another influence on job profiles and gradings could flow from the re-design of EGS's performance framework, as mentioned in section 7.3 above.

## **7.6 Location**

While outside the immediate brief for this review, the matter of location was raised in discussions with management, staff and stakeholders.

The suggestions made here are noted here for further consideration if appropriate.

### **VISIT MANAGEMENT**

Some stakeholders suggested that visit management might be better located in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, as it is in other countries, for proximity to the Government interests in the objectives of international bilateral relationships and for direct access to the Prime Minister.

An alternative view is that by being located in DIA, VCO is able to be the "neutral face" for visit management, not having any vested interest in policy. This is perhaps an advantage for a function focused on logistics.

### **CEREMONIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS**

The capability that may be required for ceremonial and commemorative events in the future is to build on the "pomp and ceremony" associated with events and reflect the apparent growing public in our history and heritage, and the benefits politicians see in that for New Zealand's nationhood.

The nature of ceremonial and commemorative events raises the question of whether this function might fit well in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, with the opportunity to draw directly on MCH's role in supporting and promoting New Zealand's history and heritage. Giving the Ministry this direct responsibility could greatly enhance the part these events play in nation building which is a core interest for the Ministry.

The merit in this idea is worth considering. It would offer the potential to improve capability by offering a complementary philosophical and policy underpinning to ceremonial and commemorative events.

Questions of resourcing, and delineation of the functions to be transferred, would need to be explored. It would be important that any such transfer carried with it enough 'critical mass' to ensure that ceremonial and commemorative events thrived in the new environment and that the Ministry was placed to make it a success.

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## PART 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 8.1 Overview

The purpose of this review has been to focus on future capability. The recommendations have therefore been framed around that purpose.

A first step in the process of implementing capability improvements is to agree on a future course for VCO, on the lines, for example, of the draft future direction statement set out in section 5.5 above (modified if necessary to reflect management intent). A longer-term horizon is essential to planning for change and managing the change process.

The recommendations below are designed to be practical actions for progressing VCO towards improved capability. The ultimate aim is to position VCO to provide a service that achieves maximum advantage from visits and events and a high level of client satisfaction. The approach that would flow from this report would mean:

- Playing to VCO's existing distinctive strengths.
- Filling gaps.
- Maintaining a balance between continuity and change.
- Investing in resources to build new and enhanced capability.

The recommendations are structured around strengthening the quality dimensions of the unit's operations, leading to a more client-tailored service that works seamlessly with the other key agencies involved in visit and ceremonial/commemorative event management.

Factors that should be built into implementing the recommendations include:

- Aligning VCO with the development path of the Department.
- Ensuring that VCO's distinctive capabilities (the things VCO is uniquely good at doing) are clearly identified, profiled and built on.
- Ensuring VCO's roles and capabilities are fully complementary to those of its key partners in visits and ceremonial and commemorative events.

Actions to improve capability will depend for their success on a number of conditions. These include:

- *Resourcing* – Ensuring VCO has sufficient resources to make the transition new capability successfully, and to support ongoing capability development and service delivery of the desired standard. It is particularly necessary to take account of the pressures on staff during busy periods and the need to allow for staff training and supervision of new staff.
- *Senior management commitment* – Recognition at the senior level of the department of the merit and importance of the changes being sought, and active commitment from the top to sustaining these over the two to three years it will take to effect change.

- *Leadership of the change process* - The leadership and management role in the change process is pivotal, particularly to engage and support staff and to advocate for, and communicate, the changes internally and externally.
- *Involvement of other key agencies* – VCO management will need to work with the other agencies that are part of visit and ceremonial and commemorative event planning to secure their understanding of planned developments in VCO and their ‘buy in’ to these and achieve clarity around the complementary roles each agency has (especially the MFAT/VCO, OOC/VCO and MCH/VCO relationships).
- *Timely planning* – Lead times for visit and event planning need, as far as possible, to be sufficient to support effective delivery of service by VCO. VCO needs to receive timely advice of proposed visits (including objectives, intended outcomes and programme requirements); similarly for ceremonial and commemorative events.
- *Culture change within VCO* – It is important that staff be open to change and accept differences in the way VCO may be operating in the future.

The following recommendations fall into several broad categories and seek to address issues of policy capability, skill development, staff resourcing and structure, systems and physical asset capability.

The focus of policy capability in VCO should be on making the links between policy objectives and programme logistics work better. It is not envisaged that VCO would itself acquire policy expertise, but rather an understanding of the policy context.

Within these recommendations the critical issue of succession risk is addressed. Recommendations on adding more staff resource, and those designed to better capture knowledge assets, will go towards this end.

## 8.2 Recommendations

### FUTURE DIRECTION

Rec 1	A clear agreed direction for VCO be set and adopted as the reference point for improving capability.  <i>Refer Part 5: Future Direction; and Section 5.5: A Statement of Future Direction.</i>
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### POLICY CAPABILITY

Rec 2	The General Manager, Executive Government Support and Director, VCO, coordinate with MFAT to complete the work being done on re-establishing protocols for visit management, to achieve an agreed allocation of roles, responsibilities and expectations and including provisions for coordinating and sequencing visit planning, interdepartmental liaison and information sharing.  <i>Refer Section 5.4: The Strategic Purpose of Visits.</i>
Rec 3	Within the staffing changes proposed in Recommendation 13 below, the reinstated position of Deputy Director in VCO be designed to separate the roles of business management and strategic management, the latter being the primary focus of the Director



	<p>(including responsibility for the interface with the relevant policy ministries and for the integration of policy objectives into visit implementation).</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.4: Resourcing For Success.</i></p>
Rec 4	<p>VCO's Director develop a plan for the integration of Government's policy objectives into visit planning and implementation, the plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing VCO's input to visit programme design so that it more clearly reflects policy objectives;</li> <li>• improving programme briefings to Ministers, briefings to follow a consistent, recognisable style integrating policy objectives;</li> <li>• noting that this will require policy objectives to be communicated to VCO in a form that gives VCO a clear and timely steer, with sufficient lead time to allow these to be integrated into VCO's logistics planning and briefings; and</li> <li>• adopting a similar approach for ceremonial/commemorative event planning, should this function remain with VCO (see Recommendation 22 below).</li> </ul> <p><i>Refer Section 6.3: Enhancing Capability: Strategic Client Focused Visit Services; Other Capabilities/Sector Knowledge.</i></p>
Rec 5	<p>Staff receive training in the preparation of briefing material to Ministers using a consistent approach and format.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 6.3: Enhancing Capability: Strategic Client Focused Visit Services.</i></p>
Rec 6	<p>These developments be applied to VCO's role in guests of Parliament visits and to VCO's relationship with the Office of the Clerk in visit planning and implementation, as appropriate and in line with the agreed Protocol being proposed by the Office of the Clerk and with the joint outcomes approach being developed in EGS for managing performance.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 6.3: Enhancing Capability/Office of the Clerk; and Section 7.3: Measuring for Success.</i></p>
Rec 7	<p>Client Ministers be invited, at the appropriate time, to provide feedback on the above changes.</p>

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Rec 8	<p>Programme innovation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A plan be developed to increase capability within VCO to introduce new ideas into visit and ceremonial/commemorative event planning, to include (for visits) a stronger sector focus and broader base of up-to-date knowledge of visit opportunities, and for ceremonial/commemorative events a stronger link to the emerging public and policy interest in these events.</li> <li>b) Staff be provided with opportunities to experience the approaches taken to visits and ceremonial/commemorative</li> </ol>
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	<p>events in other countries. For visit management staff this should particularly involve opportunities to experience being a 'guest' and exposure to different quality benchmarks.</p> <p>c) Other means be identified for staff to refresh their knowledge, including time out for this purpose.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.2: Present Capabilities/Relationship management and network; and Section 5.5 Future Direction Statement; and Section 6.5: Resourcing for Capability.</i></p>
Rec 9	<p>Information technology:</p> <p>a) A plan be developed to update the information technology skills of VCO visit management and ceremonial/commemorative event staff to ensure their skills are commensurate with the level generally expected of professional staff, and to reduce the amount of manual processing and improve efficiency.</p> <p>b) The level of staff support provided to visit management and ceremonial/commemorative event staff be increased as proposed in Recommendation 13(e) below.</p> <p>c) New information technology being introduced into the department be examined for its relevance and usefulness to VCO's operations.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.2: Present Capabilities: People, Systems; and Section 6.5 Resourcing for Capability.</i></p>
Rec 10	<p>Tikanga Maori and Multi-Culturalism:</p> <p>a) Staff participate in training in te reo and Tikanga Maori to the level needed for VCO <b>as a whole</b> to move in line with the growing expectation of competency in this area.</p> <p>b) Planning be undertaken to ensure VCO is able to work successfully within any specific new developments that augment the Maori cultural dimension in visits and ceremonial/commemorative events.</p> <p>c) Active consideration be given in the recruitment of new staff to widening VCO's cultural competency (language, knowledge), to reflect to a greater degree the geographical areas from which guests of Government come, in particular Asia and the Pacific.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.2: Present Capabilities: Tikanga Maori and Multi-Culturalism.</i></p>
Rec 11	<p>Team development:</p> <p>a) Steps be taken to strengthen teamwork capability in VCO under the leadership of the Director.</p> <p>b) Team development be built on adopting a clear future direction for VCO as the common core, a consistent focus on clients, clear designation of roles within VCO, consistency of approach to and methodology for planning and logistics and commitment to, and methods for, a free flow of information among staff.</p> <p>c) A stronger team culture be fostered in VCO, demonstrated and recognised by management as a key aspect of staff performance</p>

	<p>and rewarded accordingly.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.2: Present Capabilities: Ways of Working.</i></p>
Rec 12	<p>Resource support for skill development:</p> <p>a) Any decisions to increase the level, or alter the structure, of staffing in VCO take into account the need to create room in staff and management workloads to undertake training and development.</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.4: Resourcing for Success.</i></p>

## STAFFING

Rec 13	<p>An assessment be undertaken of the case for increasing the overall level of staffing in VCO, with a view particularly to:</p> <p>a) Reinstating the position of Deputy Director to be responsible for managing the operational and administration aspects of the unit, including core staff management, business development, resource procurement, work flow management, systems development and functions delegated by the Director.</p> <p>b) Reviewing the job scope of the Director to focus it on strategic management and purpose (including representing VCO at senior management level and alignment with department-wide initiatives), higher level representation in visits and at events, policy linkages (relationships with policy ministries and Ministers, development of policy context in VCO) and developing the information content of visit programmes and ceremonial/commemorative events. The Director to retain the 'direct report' relationship with visit and event staff.</p> <p>c) Creating a tier of up to three trainee visit managers to train with experienced visit managers under the guidance of the Director, with training parameters aligned with VCO's agreed future direction, and aimed at filling the 'succession gap' and supporting a move for the Director away from direct visit management.</p> <p>d) Possibly creating one additional visit manager position to allow for the impact of absorbing trainee staff.</p> <p>e) Increasing the support staff establishment from the existing sole position to another one or two administrative positions to support the increasing professionalism of the unit and allow the present Administration Support Officer to focus on core responsibilities any new future responsibilities.</p> <p>f) Developing a recruitment strategy that includes looking to the event management industry as a possible source of trainee visit management staff, and for any replacements to retiring staff.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 6.5 and Section 7.4: Resourcing for Success</i></p>
Rec 14	<p>An assessment be made of the need to strengthen VCO's media management capability, particularly for larger visits and events, and the best means for doing this.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 6.3: Other Capabilities/Media Capability.</i></p>

Rec 15	<p>Staff training be reviewed to ensure appropriate training opportunities for skill development and refreshment are available to staff and that this includes planning for staff time off to undertake training (with post-training support to allow staff to apply the benefits of training undertaken) and opportunities to seek out new/different programme activities for visits.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 7.4: Resourcing for Success</i></p>
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## SYSTEMS CAPABILITY

Rec 16	<p>A knowledge system be developed and implemented to capture, and make accessible, staff knowledge assets, particularly the tacit knowledge built up among staff from many years of experience and otherwise not recorded in VCO's databases. The aim of such a system would be to improve information sharing and transfer, and protection against succession risk.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.2: Present Capabilities: Systems.</i></p>
Rec 17	<p>Information technology be upgraded as proposed in Recommendation 9 above, and in line with VCO's needs.</p>
Rec 18	<p>Existing templates for visit and ceremonial/commemorative events management be reviewed to ensure they are comprehensive of VCO's operations, workable, consistently applied, and that they support capability and enhance staff effectiveness.</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.2: A Best Practice Approach.</i></p>
Rec 19	<p>A review be undertaken of VCO's core practices – formal and informal - to align them with best practice in terms of both style and content. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client focus (such as programme/event input, briefing procedures, feedback processes and responsiveness checks).</li> <li>• Planning procedures (scheduling, resource allocation and monitoring).</li> <li>• Sourcing best practice benchmarks, such as from comparison with other countries, or through a stakeholder focus group.</li> <li>• The scope to improve the budget planning and allocation loop for visits and allow VCO more budget control.</li> </ul> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.2: A Best Practice Approach.</i></p>
Rec 20	<p>The methods used to measure VCO performance be reviewed to align them with future direction and client expectations, and to ensure they are robust and able to be used to influence future performance and capability development. This can be done as part of the department's development of the Statement of Service Performance.</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.3: Measuring for Success.</i></p>

## PHYSICAL ASSETS

Rec 21	<p>Airport facilities:</p> <p>a) Plans for the cosmetic upgrade of the lounge at Auckland International Airport be completed and the upgrade progressed, following on from the structural work already underway.</p> <p>b) Consideration be given to investment in the provision of a suitable lounge at Wellington Airport, based on an assessment of usage and the scope for a location in the airport complex that meets visit purposes.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.4: Airport Facilities.</i></p>
Rec 22	<p>Wine store:</p> <p>Planning be undertaken to secure the future availability of wine store management skills, including the options of in-house skills as at present or external provision which could be on a retainer basis.</p> <p><i>Refer Section 4.5: Wine Store.</i></p>

## LOCATION OF VCO FUNCTIONS

Rec 23	<p>An investigation be made of the merits and feasibility of transferring VCO's ceremonial and commemorative events function to the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, with a view to locating this function in close proximity to policy responsibility for culture and heritage. Among the implications needing to be examined are the level of resourcing transferred and any issues associated with absorbing the unit into the Ministry.</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.6: Location.</i></p>
Rec 24	<p>As an intermediate step between the status quo and the possibility of locating ceremonial and commemorative events in the Ministry, an investigation be made of the merits of establishing an interdepartmental commemorations committee, to co-ordinate the resourcing, planning, and provision of coordinated advice to the Prime Minister on all internal events and New Zealand's participation in overseas events.</p> <p><i>Refer Part 7: Section 7.6: Location.</i></p>

## APPENDIX: LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO REVIEW

### External Contributors

Rt Hon Helen Clark, Prime Minister
Diane Morcom, Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Office
Alec McLean, Principal Private Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
Dave McGee, Clerk of the House of Representatives
Rosemary Banks, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Malcolm McGoun, Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Martin Matthews, CEO, Ministry of Culture and Heritage
Tia Barrett, Official Secretary, Government House
Brook Barrington, Prime Minister's Office
Bruce Blayney, Officer in Charge of Diplomatic Protection Squad, NZ Police
Paul Grant, Senior Private Secretary, Office of Hon Phil Goff
Neil Hyde, Manager, Border Monitoring Group, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
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### Internal (DIA) Contributors

Christopher Blake, Chief Executive
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Andrew Renton Green, Acting Director, VCO from 1 April
VCO staff: Jim Blair, Vanessa Donaghy, Bob Franklin, Sharon Mills, Jenny Officer, Max Simmons, Darryl Stevens. Francis Reynolds, Ross McLeod, VIP Coordinators, Auckland.
Joe Frahm, Manager, Media and Communications, Executive Government Support

### External Commentators

John Goulter, Former Managing Director, Auckland International Airport Ltd and Executive Committee, Business and Parliament Trust (with regard to lounge facilities at Auckland Airport)
Todd Muller, General Manager Grower Services, ZESPRI Group Ltd (with regard to management of VIP visit programmes in the corporate sector).