
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Formal Review of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA)

SEPTEMBER 2011

State Services Commission, the Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Lead Reviewers' Acknowledgement

As lead reviewers for this Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) Review for the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) we would like to acknowledge the thoughtful contributions of MWA's Chief Executive and leadership team. In addition, we had considerable input from a cross section of MWA's external stakeholders. We were well supported by officials from the State Services Commission (in particular Deb Te Kawa), the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury.

Senior staff within MWA recognised this Review as an opportunity to identify and make significant performance improvements. There was open engagement throughout the process and we note that even before the Review had begun, MWA was addressing many of the issues touched on in this report.

**Performance Improvement Framework
Formal Review: Ministry of Women's Affairs**

**State Services Commission, the Treasury, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Wellington, New Zealand**

**Published September 2011
ISBN 978-0-478-36160-5
Web address: www.ssc.govt.nz/pif**

Crown copyright 2011

Copyright / terms of use



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non commercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 New Zealand licence. [In essence, you are free to copy and distribute the work (including in other media and formats) for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown, do not adapt the work and abide by the other licence terms.] To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/nz/>. Attribution to the Crown should be in written form and not by reproduction of any such emblem, logo or Coat of Arms.

AGENCY'S RESPONSE

The Ministry of Women's Affairs appreciates the opportunity to be externally reviewed against the Performance Improvement Framework. The timing for the Review is ideal, given the newness of the Ministry's Leadership Team. The findings of the Review provide insight, direction and impetus to support ongoing improvements in the Ministry's performance.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs must positively contribute to, and influence, policy development and decision-making. To do so, the Ministry needs smart strategies, a critical mass of intellectual capacity and a sharp focus on intended outcomes.

The Review balances the Ministry's strengths alongside challenges. The Review notes the Ministry's strong performance in providing its nominations service. It also notes strengths in the Ministry's international work, its relatively recent research on sexual violence and the development of an indicators framework for monitoring outcomes for New Zealand women. The Review also acknowledges recent efforts to strengthen the Ministry's Leadership Team and policy leadership, as well as the recent review of administrative and support services.

The findings of the Review resonate with my own view of the Ministry's performance and current position. I acknowledge the urgent need for a more coherent forward direction for the Ministry. This must be matched to government priorities, be shared across the organisation and result in deliberate strategies and actions, including resourcing decisions, to achieve the desired results. I expect, as part of these strategies, to see greater attention on groups of women who face the poorer outcomes than others. In some cases, this may include Māori and Pacific women, women with disabilities or younger women.

On the following page I set out planned improvements in four areas:

- developing a shared purpose and direction across the organisation
- ensuring clear desired impacts and strategies to achieve these across the Ministry's three priorities
- involving external stakeholders in shaping and focusing the Ministry's work
- ensuring fit-for-purpose services, systems and processes.

For each area, I set out the actions to be taken and measures to be used to assess success.

Improvement to be achieved	Actions	Measures of success
<p>1. Shared purpose and direction across the organisation that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • future-focused • aspirational • supported by aligned values, culture and behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-of-staff team building and planning sessions, twice yearly, from 2011-12 onwards. • Alignment of SOI, output and unit plans, performance agreements, competencies and demonstrated rewards, from 2011-12 onwards. • Indicators of staff engagement and organisational well-being are developed (2011-12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feedback on clarity of purpose, vision and their contribution to these (2012). • Assessment of indicators of staff engagement and organisational well-being (2012 onwards).
<p>2. Clarity of desired impacts across the three priorities, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear strategies to achieve the desired impact for each priority • focus on target groups of women, eg, Māori, Pacific • resourcing decisions are based on the strategy for each priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-of-staff planning and assessment sessions, from 2011-12 onwards. • Alignment of strategies and budgets, from 2012-13. • Develop indicators of progress and impact (2011-12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from auditors and central agencies on intervention logic and performance indicators (in 2012-13 SOI). • Assessment by external reviewers on the match between planned strategies and actual delivery (2012).

<p>3. Involvement of external stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • key public sector agencies • experts, eg, Māori leaders, business leaders, academics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationship strategies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – input/feedback from stakeholders on shaping our priorities and strategies, and whether we are achieving progress (2011-12 onwards) – working with others to make progress on each priority (2011-12 onwards). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from external stakeholders on clarity of purpose, vision and common ground (2012-13 onwards). • External parties' engagement and contribution to our priorities and wider work programme (2012 onwards).
<p>4. Fit-for-purpose services, systems and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions on services, systems and processes are based on a common framework, focused on business need • systems and processes support and drive improved performance • greater efficiencies are achieved each year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and review of services, systems and processes are built into work programme each year (from 2011-12). • For 2011-12 the priorities for review are ICT and information management, and property. • Relevant benchmarking and other comparative data are identified and used (2011-12 onwards). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual assessment of progress against stated objectives and overall position in terms of quality, quantity and cost (2012 onwards).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Agency’s Response	1
Table of Contents	4
Lead Reviewers’ Summary	5
Central Agencies’ Overview	6
Summary of Ratings	8
Agency Context	10
Results Section	11
Part One: Delivery of Strategic Priorities	11
Part Two: Delivery of Core Business	14
Organisational Management Section	16
Part One: Leadership, Direction and Delivery	16
Part Two: External Relationships	21
Part Three: People Development	24
Part Four: Financial and Resource Management	27
Summary of Priority Areas for Action	31
Appendix A	32
Overview of the Model	32
Lead Questions	33
Appendix B	34
List of Interviews	34

LEAD REVIEWERS' SUMMARY

Recent months have seen a number of changes in the Ministry of Women's Affairs' (MWA) governance structure. A new Minister was appointed to the portfolio earlier this year; the Chief Executive has been in place for just a few months; and three of the four other members of the Leadership Team are new to their positions.

MWA was in the process of finalising its *2011-12 Statement of Intent* as we undertook this Review. While there is unlikely to be any significant change in the Government's high level objectives for the Ministry, some important shifts are already evident in the way the Ministry is approaching its work.

As a small, population-based Ministry, MWA is obliged to pursue most of its outcomes by working with and through other agencies and non-governmental organisations. It faces the usual problems endemic to small organisations: limited depth and breadth of skills and experience; second tier staff with heavy management responsibilities, who are also responsible for providing collective leadership at a strategic level; and comparatively high corporate overheads. Nevertheless, the Ministry is determined to capture the advantages a small agency potentially has owing to agility and ease of achieving alignment of purpose.

We were impressed by the commitment and ambition of the approach taken by the Chief Executive and leadership team at the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The feedback we received from external stakeholders about MWA's forward capability was increasingly favourable, beginning to overcome a perception that it had taken some time to adjust to changing Government priorities.

MWA's policy and research work has been refocused and is increasingly expected to add value to that provided by larger Ministries. One question we raise in this report is whether there should be a stronger focus on the situation of Māori and Pacific women. MWA's nominations service (a database of women for positions on State and private sector boards) is universally highly commended for its professionalism and effectiveness. The Ministry is also seen as doing a commendable job in New Zealand's international obligations.

We were impressed by the Ministry's publications, in particular, the two-yearly 'Indicators for Change' report, which brings together a comprehensive set of statistics and other data tracking the progress of women in New Zealand.

At the time of our Review a comprehensive reassessment was being made of the state of the Ministry's corporate services. While from a compliance and external audit perspective the systems and controls are seen to be working well, there were questions about the high proportion of the Ministry's funding going into corporate services, as well as the extent to which the Ministry was well supported by the services provided. More importantly, there is a question about how the Ministry can use these corporate functions more strategically to gather the operational information needed to drive improved performance. It is reassuring that the Ministry has not only found significant savings in the corporate services review allowing it to further invest in its core policy functions but has also identified steps to improve the quality of corporate services provided to the Ministry. This bodes well for the future.

Paula Rebstock
Lead Reviewer

Neil Walter
Lead Reviewer

CENTRAL AGENCIES' OVERVIEW

What is the Performance Improvement Framework and what are we trying to achieve?

The Performance Improvement Framework is a framework applied by a small group of respected organisational leaders to provide insights into agency performance, identifying where agencies are strong or performing well and where they are weak or need to improve. The framework covers both results (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) and the organisational management factors that underpin sustainable superior performance.

Because a common framework is used, the reviews not only inform agency performance improvement plans, but also help us build a body of knowledge that provides us with a better picture of cross-system performance and identifies issues which we need to address at sector or system level.

The Performance Improvement Framework is an initiative developed by central agency and State services chief executives to respond to the need for improved effectiveness and efficiency in the State services. It is also important to acknowledge that the New Zealand State services operates from a position of strength and continues to be recognised internationally as among the top performers. However, we recognise that we must meet the ever-increasing and reasonable expectations of Ministers and the public generally, especially in these times of economic and fiscal stress.

What are we learning?

In general, the reviews completed so far confirm that we have a 'can do' service, which is strong on delivering the results government wants now – agencies engage well with Ministers, are responsive, and effectively deliver on Government priorities. We have a service that values probity and the systems and processes that support transparency and ensure accountability for the expenditure of taxpayers' funds. We have a service that recognises that its people, and their combined knowledge, experience and commitment, are our greatest assets. We are relatively good at putting in place the systems and processes (for example financial management systems) that should support them to make their best contribution.

At the other end of the spectrum, we are not as good as we should be at working across internal and external silos, progressing the medium- to long-term work programmes that will position us to meet the future needs of governments and taxpayers and reviewing the ongoing need for, or methods of delivery of, the services we currently provide.

We need to be better at measuring the results of what we do and comparing them to the results government was seeking to achieve. We need to bring together the information we have to make better decisions about what we do and how we do it. For example, we need to use our financial management systems to understand and manage the costs of the services we provide, rather than simply to develop and monitor budgets.

Next steps?

We are now in the second year of the Performance Improvement Framework programme, agencies reviewed to date are at various stages of implementation of their responses to their reviews. We will work with them to support and monitor their implementation of those responses and to evaluate whether their actions are having the improvement results anticipated.

As indicated above, we are looking across the Performance Improvement Framework review results to identify both the agencies that others can learn from and the areas of systemic weakness that we need to tackle as a service rather than on an agency by agency basis. Key to these will be our ability to monitor long-term effectiveness (are we actually achieving the outcomes as opposed to merely delivering the outputs?) and our ability to review the effectiveness and efficiency of what we do (are we providing services the best way we can or indeed can the services be better provided by someone else?).

The central agencies are in the process of identifying the key areas for improvement across the system, mapping the work that is currently underway in these areas and work that might be done in the future.

Iain Rennie
State Services Commissioner

Gabriel Makhoul
Secretary to the Treasury

Maarten Wevers
Chief Executive
Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet

SUMMARY OF RATINGS

Results

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	RATING
Leadership: Women have the opportunity to develop and use their skills and talents	
Violence: Women are healthy, empowered, resilient and safe	
Employment: Women fully participating in work, family and community across their life course	

CORE BUSINESS	RATING (EFFECTIVENESS)	RATING (EFFICIENCY)
Policy advice		
Nominations Service		
	RATING	
Regulatory impact	N/A	

Rating System

 Strong	 Well placed	 Needing development	 Weak	? Unable to Rate
--	---	---	---	------------------

Organisational Management

LEADERSHIP, DIRECTION AND DELIVERY	RATING
Vision, Strategy & Purpose	
Leadership & Governance	
Culture & Values	
Structure, Roles and Responsibilities	
Review	

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS	RATING
Engagement with the Minister(s)	
Sector Contribution	
Collaboration & Partnerships with Stakeholders	
Experiences of the Public	?

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT	RATING
Leadership & Workforce Development	
Management of People Performance	
Engagement with Staff	

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	RATING
Asset Management	N/A
Information Management	
Efficiency	
Financial Management	
Risk Management	

Rating System

 Strong	 Well placed	 Needing development	 Weak	? Unable to Rate
--	---	---	---	------------------

AGENCY CONTEXT

The Ministry of Women's Affairs was established in 1984. It is the smallest of the Government's core agencies, with a staff of around 35 (a small number of whom are part-time) and a budget of just under \$5 million.

The Ministry's responsibilities are relatively tightly defined. As lead advisor to the Government on issues specific to women, its core function is policy advice. It manages a nominations service and handles New Zealand's international obligations as they relate to the situation of women. It has a research programme, produces a number of reports and publications and manages a range of events and meetings each year.

The Government's three priority goals in recent years have involved women taking a greater leadership role in society, participating more fully in the economy and being resilient and free from violence.

RESULTS SECTION

Part One: Delivery of Strategic Priorities

This section reviews the agency’s current ability to deliver on its strategic priorities agreed with the Government. It is based on the completeness of the agency’s plans, the stage at which the priority is at and the capability and capacity of MWA to deliver on the priority. The report is also informed by consideration of identified risks.

Leadership: Women have the opportunity to develop and use their skills and talents	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Well placed</p> <p>The outcome sought is an increase in the number of women in leadership roles across the economy. The measure of impact is the number of women on State sector and private sector boards. This outcome is clearly connected to the Government’s main goal of a step-change in New Zealand’s economic performance. It also supports the Government’s goal for women. What is less clear is how the Ministry’s activities contribute to its measures. There are also questions about whether the Ministry needs to expand the scope of activities it pursues to support this priority area. In this regard, the Ministry has begun some targeted activity to address the small numbers of women on private sector boards, in particular.</p> <p>While the Ministry is widely seen as performing in a highly valued and professional manner in this priority area, most stakeholders are unclear on the extent of its effectiveness and/or efficiency.</p>

Violence: Women are healthy, empowered, resilient and safe	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>The focus of the Ministry’s work here is the prevention of violence, especially sexual violence. A two-year research project was concluded recently and has been submitted to the Task Force for Action on Violence Against Women.</p> <p>New Zealand has a worryingly high incidence of violence against women. It is difficult to find evidence of much real progress being made in the latest statistical data on criminal victimisation.</p> <p>This problem is particularly acute for Māori and Pacific women. We question whether there should be a greater focus on research into the situation of these more affected groups. This could be in conjunction with agencies such as the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Māori Women’s Welfare League and PACIFICA.</p> <p>Our observation is that, generally speaking, the Ministry works well with other agencies and groupings in this area and that its research work on the prevention of violence against women is well regarded. It is critical, however, that its collaboration and research is translatable into policy, if it is to maximise its effectiveness.</p> <p>At the time of this Review the leadership team was finalising its draft <i>2011-12 Statement of Intent</i> and had not yet started to prepare detailed work plans or fix final resource allocations. It was still unclear how it would revitalise its work in this priority area to find its point of difference.</p> <p>Given this, it is not surprising that the Ministry also needs to more clearly identify the impacts it can have and the relevant performance measures.</p>

Employment: Women fully participating in work, family and community, across their life course	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>The Ministry undertakes a range of activities in support of this goal. Primarily, however, it is the quality of its policy and research work and its standing with other agencies that determine its effectiveness.</p> <p>One policy manager has primary responsibility for the Ministry’s work in this area but the leadership team needs to keep a close eye on the direction of effort, the effectiveness of MWA’s interventions and the way it is leveraging results from its relationships with other agencies.</p> <p>The Ministry was viewed by some as having lost some ground in recent years in terms of its influence on policy development. The leadership team seems committed to refocusing the Ministry’s effort by better aligning its outcomes with Government priorities. It may need to broaden the scope of its measures and activities and better clarify how its activities contribute to its measures.</p> <p>Discussion was held in a recent planning day with staff on how to better support the Government’s key economic goal. Staff were reportedly reinvigorated by the discussion and could see potential areas for future effort. Setting that agenda is yet to be completed. This is a very broad area, covering social and economic policy. Care will be needed to prioritise and identify areas where the Ministry can bring a unique and valuable insight to the policy discussion. Recent support provided to the Minister on potential Welfare Reform has demonstrated the Ministry’s ability to underpin effective interventions.</p>

RESULTS SECTION

Part Two: Delivery of Core Business

This section reviews the agency’s effectiveness and efficiency in delivering its core business. The report is based on a judgement about the current performance of the agency and the trend demonstrated over the last three to four years.

Policy Advice	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> <p>Effectiveness</p>  <p>Efficiency</p> 	<p>Performance Rating (Effectiveness): Needing development</p> <p>Performance Rating (Efficiency): Needing development</p> <p>Policy advice (including research in support of it) is the Ministry’s core business. It accounts for all of the Ministry’s staff apart from the nominations service and corporate services.</p> <p>A recent restructuring exercise has put two new senior managers in charge of this work area. One has responsibility for economic and social policy, the other for justice policy (in particular, the reduction in the incidence and damaging impacts of violence, especially family violence) and international obligations, such as reports to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).</p> <p>While it is too early to say how this new structure will work out, the Ministry is fortunate to have attracted experienced and highly regarded people to the two policy manager positions. It is critical that both policy managers build credible capability across their teams, to ensure they are not unduly reliant on management intervention to sustain quality of policy advice. We still have some questions about the split of responsibilities across these two teams in terms of workload and policy coverage.</p> <p>While the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) assessments and ratings need to be viewed in context, indications are that the standard of MWA’s policy advice and Ministerial submissions – while still quite good – has fallen off in recent years. (This is not a commentary on the new structure or recent appointees, since the most recent NZIER assessment pre-dates the changes.)</p> <p>The feedback from MWA’s previous Minister on the quality of its policy advice in 2010 was generally very positive. Early indications are that this level of satisfaction is being maintained following the change of Ministers.</p> <p>Careful prioritisation of the Ministry’s policy and research effort is going to be important to ensure close alignment with the Government’s key objectives as departmental appropriations and performance come under close scrutiny. The Ministry needs to continue to find its point of difference and effectively translate its research and collaboration with women’s organisations into effective policy advice.</p>

Nominations Service

<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p>	<p>Performance Rating (Effectiveness): Well placed Performance Rating (Efficiency): Strong</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>  <p>Efficiency</p> 	<p>Feedback on the nominations service from the full range of external stakeholders was very positive. It is clearly seen as a professional and efficient nominations service and an exemplar for the public service.</p> <p>The difficulty we have in rating its effectiveness is that the results in recent months in State sector board directorships are less than encouraging. (The number of women on State sector boards has dipped from 42.3% in December 2008 to 41.5% in December 2009.) This of course is not necessarily a reflection on the quality of MWA’s work, given that final decisions are outside its control.</p> <p>It is encouraging that the nominations service unit is now working closely with the Minister on ways of placing more women in director positions on public sector boards. Discussion is also under way on a possible broadening of MWA’s mandate in this area.</p> <p>We also received very positive feedback on the Ministry’s assistance to private sector boards actively looking for new women directors. This is a challenging area and the nominations service will need to develop sound strategies to make breakthroughs, particularly given the significant percentage of private sector boards with little history of seeking diversity of board membership.</p> <p>The nominations unit both invites and welcomes feedback on its service. It is universally highly regarded for the way it engages with other agencies and groupings.</p> <p>Looking forward, the nominations service needs to find more meaningful ways to gauge its ultimate impact and therefore its effectiveness.</p>

Regulatory Impact
 How well does the agency’s regulatory work achieve its required impact?

<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p>	<p>Performance Rating: Not applicable</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>MWA has no regulatory functions.</p>

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT SECTION

Part One: Leadership, Direction and Delivery

<p>Vision, Strategy & Purpose</p> <p>How well has the agency articulated its purpose, vision and strategy to its staff and stakeholders? How well does the agency consider and plan for possible changes in its purpose or role in the foreseeable future?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>The Ministry's leadership team is relatively new and can be said to be still settling into its work.</p> <p>Currently it is giving priority to building a strong relationship with the Minister's office and finalising its <i>2011-12 Statement of Intent</i> and developing its Business Plan.</p> <p>In that sense, and notwithstanding there are unlikely to be any significant changes in the Government's main priorities in this area of work, MWA's vision, purpose and strategies are still work in progress.</p> <p>The leadership team clearly understands the importance of putting time and thought into the best ways of contributing to the Government's desired outcomes.</p> <p>Although most are new to their second tier positions, leadership team members are highly committed and bring a wide range of skills and experience to the table. They have recently focused on how they wish to operate as a leadership team, including identifying their purpose. Leadership team members need to remain cognizant of the risk of focusing too heavily on past gaps and weaknesses, rather than on a comprehensive strategy to take the Ministry forward.</p> <p>At the time of this Review we observed that more focus and time needed to be put into engaging staff in mapping the way ahead for the Ministry. We note that the leadership team has now held a planning day with staff to discuss the Ministry's vision and purpose. This should help to build the trust and confidence needed in an organisation that has recently seen such a widespread change in leadership.</p> <p>Finally, we note elsewhere in this Report that the rather self-contained way in which MWA's corporate services has been managed has made it difficult for the leadership team to ensure that strategy drives resource allocation.</p>

Leadership & Governance
 How well does the leadership team provide collective leadership and direction to the agency?

<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>Since her appointment in mid-2010, the Chief Executive has put a lot of effort into ensuring that the Ministry has strong leadership. We were told the Ministry had in the recent past suffered from a lack of clarity on its main purpose and strategies, following the change of Government.</p> <p>It is apparent that the Ministry’s role and responsibilities are being thought through carefully at leadership team level and being made clear to staff. One of the advantages of small agencies is that regular meetings can easily be held with all staff. It is important that these meetings are used to not only gain the buy-in of staff but also to feed through the ideas and insights of staff into the strategy-setting process.</p> <p>Individual second tier managers seemed to both understand and subscribe in theory to the collective approach to leadership introduced by the Chief Executive. Exactly how this will play out in practice is a work in progress.</p> <p>While it is too early to give a rating beyond ‘needing development’ in this area, we have a great deal of confidence in the ability of the Chief Executive and leadership team to instil in the Ministry the shared sense of purpose and direction it needs to make a significant contribution to the Government’s goals.</p> <p>As indicated above, it is vital for the leadership team to take the rest of the organisation with them. The current focus on the leadership team working together, while necessary, is not sufficient to support the achievement the agency is seeking. Unsurprisingly, given the significant changes in leadership at the Ministry, there are trust issues regarding the new leadership that need to be worked through. This can only happen by engaging directly with staff in the development of the Ministry’s high level vision, purpose, strategy and culture. The recent consultation feedback on the corporate services review underscores this point.</p>
--	---

<p>Culture & Values</p> <p>How well does the agency develop and promote the organisational culture, behaviours and values it needs to support its strategic direction?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>We have the impression that MWA has the potential to become a tightknit organisation with a shared sense of purpose, supported by a shared culture and agreed behaviours. Its engagement scores are above the public service average.</p> <p>The Chief Executive has made good progress in getting across to the leadership team some key messages about the behaviours that need to permeate the Ministry to drive improved performance. This process has also started with staff but now needs to be taken to the next level.</p> <p>There was a suggestion that a degree of risk aversion, complacency and unwillingness to take responsibility had crept into the organisation in recent years and that it had become rather inward looking. We were encouraged at the importance the leadership team gave to an outward-looking, client-focused approach to MWA’s work.</p> <p>Going forward, the leadership team will need to find systematic ways to embed the culture and behaviours it will need to support the high level of organisational capability and performance it is seeking. This will, inevitably, require more direct engagement with staff on how to accomplish this, as well as ongoing commitment to modelling the desired behaviours.</p>

<p>Structure, Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>How well does the agency ensure that its organisational planning, systems, structures and practices support delivery of Government priorities and core business?</p> <p>How well does the agency ensure that it has clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities throughout the agency and sector?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Well placed</p> <p>The Ministry’s structure seems to be generally well suited to its roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>To our observation, the leadership team is taking its planning responsibilities seriously.</p> <p>We have mentioned elsewhere a concern that the corporate services area has, over the years, become insulated from the Ministry’s overall strategy and developed something of a life of its own. This concern is being addressed. Looking forward, the Ministry needs to ensure organisational systems and practice are aligned and used to drive performance across the Ministry.</p> <p>Our impression from meetings with external stakeholders is that the Ministry has made good progress in communicating its role and general approach to other agencies and organisations working in the sector. On the other hand, we found some confusion about the recent split between the two policy areas, which may be a communication issue, though this needs to be tested. There are also some questions about the relative size of the leadership team roles and whether the current structure fully utilises the considerable capability of the team.</p>

<p>Review</p> <p>How well does the agency monitor, measure, and review its policies, programmes and services to make sure that it is delivering its intended results?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Well placed</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the Ministry’s corporate services has taken place to ensure it is being provided in the best possible way and at least cost. This should produce some efficiency and effectiveness improvements in the Ministry’s service performance.</p> <p>The Ministry seems sufficiently aware of the importance of constantly assessing the impact it is having on the Government’s main objectives. It is open to feedback from Ministers and the other agencies and organisations it works with.</p> <p>The leadership team shows every sign of wanting to measure its progress against agreed goals and targets in a systematic and thoughtful way. To do so it will need to ensure managers have all the operational information they require. The most recent Statement of Intent and Annual Report set out relevant and useful criteria for assessing impacts and measuring the Ministry’s performance. Looking forward, the Ministry will need to strengthen the measures of its impact once it has revitalised its policy priorities and work programme.</p> <p>The nominations service also needs to further consider how to assess its impact, particularly in the newer area of focus on private sector boards.</p>

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT SECTION

Part Two: External Relationships

Engagement with the Minister(s) How well does the agency provide advice and services to its Minister(s)?	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Well placed</p> <p>Feedback from the Minister last year was positive on the quality of the Ministry's work and our impression is that the current Minister is generally pleased with the quality of the policy advice and services she has received to date. There was evidence that while there had earlier been concern about the quality and quantity of policy advice weakening, this trend has now been reversed.</p> <p>The Ministry is taking seriously its responsibility to build and maintain a strong relationship with the Minister and the Minister's office.</p> <p>It was apparent at the leadership team meeting we observed that MWA's second tier managers understand, and are emphasising to their staff, the need to be responsive to the Government and the Minister.</p> <p>Our impression is that the quality of the Ministry's policy advice is steadily improving. The leadership team needs to take care to anticipate areas that require Ministerial consultation and input.</p> <p>It is also vital the Ministry continues to ensure it has an experienced advisor in the Minister's office whom the Minister has confidence in. The opportunity to work in the Minister's office should be viewed as a career development opportunity.</p>

<p>Sector Contribution</p> <p>How well does the agency provide leadership to, and/or support the leadership of other agencies in the sector?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>Population or diversity agencies depend heavily on influencing other agencies and non-government organisations to achieve their results.</p> <p>MWA obviously takes its relationships with government agencies seriously and puts effort into them. Feedback we received from its key partner agencies was generally positive. The Ministry is seen to be doing solid and well targeted policy and research work and to work effectively at the interface with other agencies. Its research and evidence-based approach to particular justice sector projects has been seen to add a point of difference.</p> <p>The nominations service is particularly well regarded by the agencies it deals with. MWA also gets praise for its handling of New Zealand’s international obligations on issues specific to women.</p> <p>We make the point elsewhere that closer engagement with agencies and organisations dealing with disadvantaged groups, such as Māori and Pacific women, would be advantageous. Relationships with key not-for-profit organisations also need to be revitalised to ensure strong relationships translate into collaboration that contributes to identifiable outcomes.</p> <p>As the Ministry reinvigorates its strategy, it will be important for it to systematically implement an engagement plan, which demonstrates a sophisticated and calibrated approach to its relationships in the sector.</p>

Collaboration & Partnerships with Stakeholders	
How well does the agency generate common ownership and genuine collaboration on strategy and service delivery with stakeholders and the public?	
PERFORMANCE RATING 	Performance Rating: Needing development
	<p>Feedback from external stakeholders was generally positive, although some organisations would clearly like to see more of the Ministry and work more closely with it. However, it is noteworthy that none of the key government agencies MWA interacts with identify it as a key partner.</p>
	<p>In general, MWA appears to pay a good level of attention to its relationships with the non-governmental sector and to take seriously its responsibilities for consultation and information exchange. This engagement needs to be better prioritised and more strategic to deliver genuine collaboration on strategy.</p>
	<p>We have referred elsewhere to the desirability of the Ministry working more closely with agencies and groupings dealing with the most disadvantaged groups of women.</p> <p>Some sector groups are aware of the Ministry's purpose and work programme but indicated they were unclear on what role they might play in the Ministry's strategy. High quality relationships need to be leveraged to achieve genuine collaboration.</p>

Experiences of the Public	
How well does the agency meet the public's expectations of service quality and trust?	
PERFORMANCE RATING ?	Performance Rating: Unable to rate
	<p>The Ministry does not attempt to measure public perceptions of its work and value in any systematic way nor is it clear how this could be done.</p>
	<p>Much of the impact MWA has on issues of importance to women is likely to be attributed to the mainstream agencies through which it works.</p>
	<p>Although MWA has a fairly low public profile outside its constituency, it does put considerable effort into speeches (including by the Minister), issues a fair number of press releases and publications and organises occasional functions to highlight specific issues or occasions of importance to women.</p> <p>Looking forward, more thought needs to be given to how to measure the impact of this effort.</p>

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT SECTION

Part Three: People Development

Leadership & Workforce Development How well does the agency develop its workforce (including its leadership)? How well does the agency anticipate and respond to future capability requirements?	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>The current leadership team is conscious of perceived past weaknesses of MWA and has therefore focused on the leadership team operating as a cohesive leadership team and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of corporate services. To date this has been primarily a top- down process.</p> <p>Looking forward, the leadership team needs to actively engage the whole organisation and take a more proactive approach to leading change in the agency. This will require a shared purpose, vision, culture and strategy across the organisation. There are encouraging signs that the leadership team is increasingly taking such an approach.</p> <p>Until this approach is bedded in, it is very difficult for MWA to anticipate and respond to future capability requirements. The prospect of a declining appropriation for the next two or three years, in particular, will require some hard thinking.</p> <p>Recently, the Ministry has had considerable success in recruiting high calibre staff. Nevertheless, the Ministry needs to put in place development plans for its leadership team, to undertake workforce planning from the vantage point of the organisation’s future requirements and succession planning across the organisation.</p> <p>The Ministry’s human resources (HR) strategy acknowledges the need for close alignment of leadership and workforce development with the business plan but there are no actions specified as to how this will be achieved or dates for delivery.</p>

Management of People Performance	
How well does the agency encourage high performance and continuous improvement among its workforce? How well does the agency deal with poor or inadequate performance?	
PERFORMANCE RATING 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>Our impression is that up until recently the Ministry has not paid sufficient attention to performance management issues. We were told that workforce performance management was unstructured and uneven and as a consequence, the agency had become complacent.</p> <p>Looking forward, we are reasonably confident performance management issues will receive greater attention. A large part of this involves the new team of second tier managers clarifying their expectations of staff and reflecting these in work programmes and performance expectations/reviews.</p> <p>We were given the impression that training programmes had in the past been determined by the staff members' preferences rather than the organisation's needs. This needs to be addressed.</p> <p>As in any small organisation, the calibre of senior staff is critical. MWA has succeeded in attracting high performing second tier staff and will need to put safeguards in place against key capability loss.</p> <p>There is a question about the high costs of MWA's recruitment processes. It was not clear to us that the expensive testing process applied to short-listed candidates was always necessary or effective.</p>

<p>Engagement with Staff</p> <p>How well does the agency manage its employee relations? How well does the agency develop and maintain a diverse, highly committed and engaged workforce?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>We have no reason to think that the Ministry is managing its technical employee relations in anything but a satisfactory manner. This will take on additional importance as the corporate services review nears completion and as the new management regime gets into its stride.</p> <p>The MWA engagement score is high. In 2010, the Gallup Survey placed the Ministry at the 84th percentile of the New Zealand State Sector database and above the 75th percentile of the worldwide public administration database. Staff satisfaction was rated even higher at the 92nd percentile.</p> <p>Nevertheless, throughout the Review questions were raised about the extent to which the Ministry staff were engaged with the Government’s current priorities and the leadership team’s vision for the organisation. If the Ministry wishes to achieve the performance level it aspires to, then greater staff engagement levels and alignment with the Ministry’s core business direction will be necessary and should be achievable, given the nature of the organisation.</p> <p>We do have a question about some aspects of the diversity of the Ministry’s workforce. While the Ministry has recently recruited two additional Māori staff (increasing the total to six), there are no staff of Pacific, Asian or other minority ethnic groups. Some key stakeholders may find this a barrier to their closer engagement with the Ministry.</p>

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT SECTION

Part Four: Financial and Resource Management

Asset Management How well does the agency manage agency and Crown assets, and the agency balance sheet, to support delivery?	
PERFORMANCE RATING N/A	Performance Rating: Not applicable
	The Ministry does not manage any significant Crown assets.

Information Management How well does the agency utilise information & communications technologies to improve service delivery?	
PERFORMANCE RATING 	Performance Rating: Weak
	<p>We were told that the current information and document management systems are a problem: in other words the information and communications technology (ICT) Strategic Plan issued in August 2010 does not appear to have hit the mark. While the TRIM system may have been an improvement over the former electronic filing system and the Ministry is able to meet the minimum compliance levels against the Archives audit template, as reflected in the requirements of the Public Records Act 2005, many Ministry staff remain concerned about the information management support provided.</p> <p>Specifically, the electronic document system does not provide policy and other staff with the levels of efficiency and reliability needed for information storage and retrieval. This is to be assessed more closely in the review of corporate services, mentioned elsewhere in this Review.</p> <p>A second issue raised with us was that managers do not get the operational and management information they need to understand and improve their units' performances.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Ministry's website is well designed and user friendly. The guidance notes for women interested in being appointed to a directorship are first class.</p>

<p>Efficiency</p> <p>How robust are the processes in place to test for efficiency and make efficiency improvements? How well does the agency balance cost and quality when considering service delivery options?</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>A wide-ranging review of MWA’s administrative services is now under way. One of its objectives is to assess whether MWA’s administrative services can be delivered at a lower price and be integrated more strategically into the Ministry’s drive to improve its performance.</p> <p>Our impression was that MWA’s corporate overheads have been higher than they need to be and that corporate functions are not as fully integrated into the Ministry’s strategic planning framework as they should be. Moreover, there were questions raised about the quality of some corporate services and concerns that policy managers do not at present get the operational information they need to properly assess and manage their units’ performances. It is of course difficult to assess the costs and quality of policy advice and Ministerial servicing in any precise way. Performance measurement is a particular problem for small agencies with limited resources. MWA’s current performance indicators seemed to us likely to give the leadership team a reasonably good handle on the efficiency and effectiveness of its policy teams.</p> <p>It was interesting to note that the Ministry has on two or three occasions joined forces with other small agencies and central agencies to consider possible co-location and shared services options. While nothing came of those exercises, it does not seem to us to preclude mutually beneficial collaboration in the future. Such arrangements could well improve servicing levels and secure efficiency gains for small agencies.</p>

Financial Management How well does the agency manage its financial information and ensure financial probity across the business?	
PERFORMANCE RATING 	<p>Performance Rating: Needing development</p> <p>From an external and compliance perspective, the Ministry runs its finances efficiently. Recent external audit and internal control reports are positive.</p> <p>We also found the Ministry’s corporate documentation to be in good order. It has what seem to be appropriate and clearly articulated policies covering such areas as risk management, fraud policy and financial delegations.</p> <p>The problem we encountered (and which explains why the rating is not ‘well placed’) has to do with the rather separate and self-contained way in which corporate functions – including financial reporting and management – seem to have been carried out in the recent past.</p> <p>The question of who holds (and manages) parts of the budget relevant to their work area is important in any organisation. In this case, we concluded that responsibility for financial management was too centralised under the corporate manager and should be devolved in greater measure to policy managers.</p> <p>Moreover, financial management does not seem to be well integrated into the Ministry’s strategic planning. Major resource allocation decisions need to involve the leadership team.</p> <p>We expect the review of administrative services under way to produce improvements in this area.</p>

Risk Management How well does the agency manage agency risks and risks to the Crown?	
<p>PERFORMANCE RATING</p> 	<p>Performance Rating: Well placed</p> <p>Generally speaking, risk management seems to be handled well in MWA. The instructions to staff are clearly expressed and well documented.</p> <p>MWA has no Audit and Risk Committee but given its small size and overall management record (its management and control environment was rated 'good', and its financial management and controls 'very good', in the 2009-10 year) we did not sense a need for one.</p> <p>The one leadership team meeting we observed showed the new management team will be taking its risk management responsibilities seriously.</p> <p>Project documentation we examined incorporated good risk management analysis. Indeed, the Ministry's instructions and guidelines to staff not just on risk management but in such areas as safety and health, employee relations, delegations and behavioural expectations, were of a uniformly good standard.</p> <p>Looking forward, it is important the Ministry takes a systemic approach to managing strategic risk, in addition to the compliance approach it takes to risk management. This will give it a powerful tool to reinforce the strategic direction the leadership team is committed to.</p>

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

The summary of identified performance improvement recommendations (tabled below) is designed to prompt conversation with the leadership team. A more formal set of recommendations is likely to be documented following this conversation.

	Recommendation	Who?	Why?
1	Leadership team (LT) to continue to review MWA's strategic direction and work prioritisation, in conjunction with the Minister and with full staff involvement.	Chief Executive (CE) and LT	To address the problem of a lack of clarity in, and looseness around, the Ministry's objectives and strategy.
2	Continued emphasis to be given to an outward-looking approach and client focus, with a strong emphasis on engagement with other agencies and groupings.	CE and LT	To overcome the perception of a Ministry that has tended to be inward looking and insufficiently responsive to the Government's priorities.
3	Managers to concentrate on making expectations and targets clear to staff, prioritising effort, managing performance, monitoring efficiency and ensuring quality assurance.	Policy managers	To address the perception of a slide in the quality, quantity and usefulness of policy advice and research.
4	Consideration to be given to doing more in respect of the circumstances and issues confronting Māori and Pacific women.	CE and LT	To redress the impression that this dimension of MWA's work has fallen away in recent years.
5	Use the current reassessment to check the efficiency and fitness for purpose of corporate systems and ensure a better balance (and devolution) of corporate responsibilities within the wider Ministry.	CE and LT	To address concerns that the corporate services function is too expensive, not providing the right kind and level of servicing to policy managers and the LT and is insufficiently integrated with the Ministry's substantive work units.

APPENDIX A

Overview of the Model



Lead Questions

Results

Critical Area	Lead Questions
Government Priorities	1. How well has the agency identified and responded to current government priorities?
Core Business	2. How effectively is the agency delivering this core business area? 3. How efficiently is the agency delivering this core business area? 4. How well does the agency's regulatory work achieve its required impact?

Organisational Management

Critical Area	Element	Lead Questions
Leadership, Direction and Delivery	Vision, Strategy & Purpose	5. How well has the agency articulated its purpose, vision and strategy to its staff and stakeholders? 6. How well does the agency consider and plan for possible changes in its purpose or role in the foreseeable future?
	Leadership & Governance	7. How well does the senior team provide collective leadership and direction to the agency? 8. How well does the board lead the Crown Entity? <i>(For Crown Entities only)</i>
	Culture & Values	9. How well does the agency develop and promote the organisational culture, behaviours and values it needs to support its strategic direction?
	Structure, Roles & Responsibilities	10. How well does the agency ensure that its organisational planning, systems, structures and practices support delivery of government priorities and core business? 11. How well does the agency ensure that it has clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities throughout the agency and sector?
	Review	12. How well does the agency monitor, measure, and review its policies, programmes and services to make sure that it is delivering its intended results?
External Relationships	Engagement with the Minister(s)	13. How well does the agency provide advice and services to its Minister(s)?
	Sector Contribution	14. How well does the agency provide leadership to, and / or support the leadership of other agencies in the sector?
	Collaboration & Partnerships with Stakeholders	15. How well does the agency generate common ownership and genuine collaboration on strategy and service delivery with stakeholders and the public?
	Experiences of the Public	16. How well does the agency meet the public's expectations of service quality and trust?
People Development	Leadership & Workforce Development	17. How well does the agency develop its workforce (including its leadership)? 18. How well does the agency anticipate and respond to future capability requirements?
	Management of People Performance	19. How well does the agency encourage high performance and continuous improvement among its workforce? 20. How well does the agency deal with poor or inadequate performance?
	Engagement with Staff	21. How well does the agency manage its employee relations? 22. How well does the agency develop and maintain a diverse, highly committed and engaged workforce?
Financial and Resource Management	Asset Management	23. How well does the agency manage agency and Crown assets, and the agency balance sheet, to support delivery?
	Information Management	24. How well does the agency utilise information & communications technologies to improve service delivery?
	Efficiency	25. How robust are the processes in place to test for efficiency and make efficiency improvements? 26. How well does the agency balance cost and quality when considering service delivery options?
	Financial Management	27. How well does the agency manage its financial information and ensure financial probity across the business?
	Risk Management	28. How well does the agency manage agency risks and risks to the Crown?

APPENDIX B

List of Interviews

This review was informed by input provided by a number of staff, relevant Ministers, and by representatives from the following businesses, organisations and agencies.

Agency/Organisation
Crown Ownership Monitoring Unit (The Treasury)
MAGNet (Monitoring, Appointments and Governance network)
Māori Women's Welfare League Incorporated
Martin Jenkins
Ministry of Culture and Heritage
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Ministry of Social Development
National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges Incorporated
National Council for the Employment of Women
National Council of Women of New Zealand
New Zealand Institute of Economic Research Incorporated
New Zealand Shareholders Association
Office of Ethnic Affairs
Office of the Auditor-General
PACIFICA Incorporated
Te Puni Kōkiri

