



Cabinet

CAB Min (03) 41/2B

Minute of Decision

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Minister of State Services

Copies to:

Prime Minister
All Ministers
All Chief Executives
All Senior Private Secretaries
Speaker of the House
Clerk of the House
Secretary, EXG

New Zealand Government Web Guidelines: Mandatory Requirements

On 15 December 2003, following reference from the Cabinet Committee on Government Expenditure and Administration, Cabinet:

New Zealand Government Web Guidelines

- 1 **noted** that the New Zealand Government Web Guidelines ('the Guidelines') assist government agencies to make online information and services as accessible as possible to the widest range of New Zealanders using the Internet;
- 2 **noted** that the Guidelines assist government agencies to develop websites that give effect to core Public Service values, and also to meet obligations under the Official Information Act 1992, the Human Rights Act 1993, the Policy Framework for Government-held Information, and the e-government, New Zealand Disability, and Māori Language strategies;
- 3 **directed** all Public Service departments, the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Defence Force, the Parliamentary Counsel Office, and the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service to implement the Guidelines as follows:
 - 3.1 all new or revised content produced for existing non-Guideline compliant websites after 1 April 2004 should comply with the Guidelines as closely as possible;
 - 3.2 existing websites should become compliant with Version 2.1 of the Guidelines on the next occasion of a complete website redevelopment occurring before 1 January 2006;

- 3.3 all websites must comply with at least version 2.1 of the Guidelines by 1 January 2006;
- 3.4 all websites must comply with subsequent versions of the Guidelines produced after 1 January 2006 subject to the revision and version control practices outlined in paragraph 6;
- 4 **agreed** that conversion of non-compliant website content produced before 1 April 2004 to meet the requirements of the Guidelines (e.g. conversion of documents from pdf to html format) is not required in cases where that content:
 - 4.1 falls within section 6.4.2 of the Guidelines ('Special Purpose Documents'); or
 - 4.2 is of non-digital origin and/or for which a Guidelines-compliant format is not available; or
 - 4.3 is not of high and enduring interest to the public; or
 - 4.4 is outdated, and could be retired from use; or
 - 4.5 for any other robust and defensible reason, cannot feasibly be made directly accessible;

Reviews and Governance of the Guidelines

- 5 **noted** that the Guidelines will be periodically reviewed and updated to account for changing technology, and the evolving capability and needs of both website users and providers;
- 6 **agreed** that subsequent versions of the Guidelines will be developed in a consultative manner, and implemented with due regard to the need for timeframes that allow for return on existing website investment, and prioritisation of web development among other agency activity;
- 7 **agreed** that governance of the Guidelines will involve:
 - 7.1 the State Services Commissioner acting as steward of the Guidelines, with responsibility for:
 - 7.1.1 ensuring the Guidelines remain fit-for-purpose, and for timely publication of updated versions accounting for changing technology, user capabilities, and agency needs;
 - 7.1.2 ensuring the Guidelines are administered fairly and in a way that accounts for and balances stakeholder interests;
 - 7.2 the e-government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) Management Committee acting on behalf of the steward in meeting those responsibilities;
 - 7.3 the e-government Unit of the SSC acting as custodian of the Guidelines, with day-to-day responsibility for:
 - 7.3.1 administering the Guidelines using the consultative processes and models provided by the e-GIF;

- 7.3.2 maintaining the Guidelines, with a focus on proactively identifying areas where they need to be updated so as to avoid imposing any unnecessary restraints or costs on agencies' use of website technologies and/or website design;
- 7.3.3 advising the steward on matters related to the administration and uptake of the Guidelines;
- 7.3.4 promoting the Guidelines, and assisting agencies to implement them;

Exemptions

- 8 **agreed** that, where an agency considers that there are no alternative technologies and/or management practices that enable the function of a website to be fulfilled while also complying with the Guidelines (in part or in full), or where costs of changing websites to enable compliance may be significant, exemption from Guidelines-compliance for a limited period of time may be sought, and that:
 - 8.1 granting of any exemptions will occur through processes in which the e-GIF Management Committee will have the role of decision-maker;
 - 8.2 the Committee will determine the specific term of an exemption, and no exemption will be permanent;
 - 8.3 on its expiry, an agency will be free to apply for further exemption;

Implementation Issues

- 9 **agreed** that agencies required to adopt the Guidelines will be responsible for conducting self-audits of compliance, and that these agencies must be able to demonstrate compliance with at least Version 2.1 of the Guidelines to the State Services Commission by 1 January 2006, and with subsequent versions produced after that date, according to assessment criteria that the Commission will accredit and/or provide by 30 June 2004 and keep updated as required;
- 10 **noted** that there are unquantified fiscal costs, and economic and social benefits associated with this proposal;
- 11 **noted** that arrangements for implementation of mandatory Guidelines-compliance include mechanisms for mitigating fiscal and operational risk to agencies;

Further Work

- 12 **invited** the Speaker of the House to direct the Office of the Clerk and the Parliamentary Service to implement the Guidelines and demonstrate compliance with them on the same basis as the Public Service;
- 13 **invited**, in coordination with the Minister of State Services:
 - 13.1 Responsible Ministers to write to State sector agencies (excepting State Owned Enterprises and Offices of Parliament) encouraging them to implement the Guidelines;
 - 13.2 the Minister for Local Government to communicate the Guidelines to local government, inviting their implementation;

Publicity

- 14 **noted** that the Minister of State Services will publicise Ministers' decisions about the Guidelines;
- 15 **agreed** to publication of this paper and its associated minute on the website of the e-government Unit of the State Services Commission;

Consultation

- 16 **noted** that the Minister of State Services indicates that consultation is not required with the government caucuses or other parties represented in Parliament.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (03) 593; EXG Min (03) 14/6

Secretary's Note: The EXG minute has been produced as a separate minute from Cabinet because of its impact on all portfolios.