



RESPONDING TO THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

07

ANNUAL REPORT

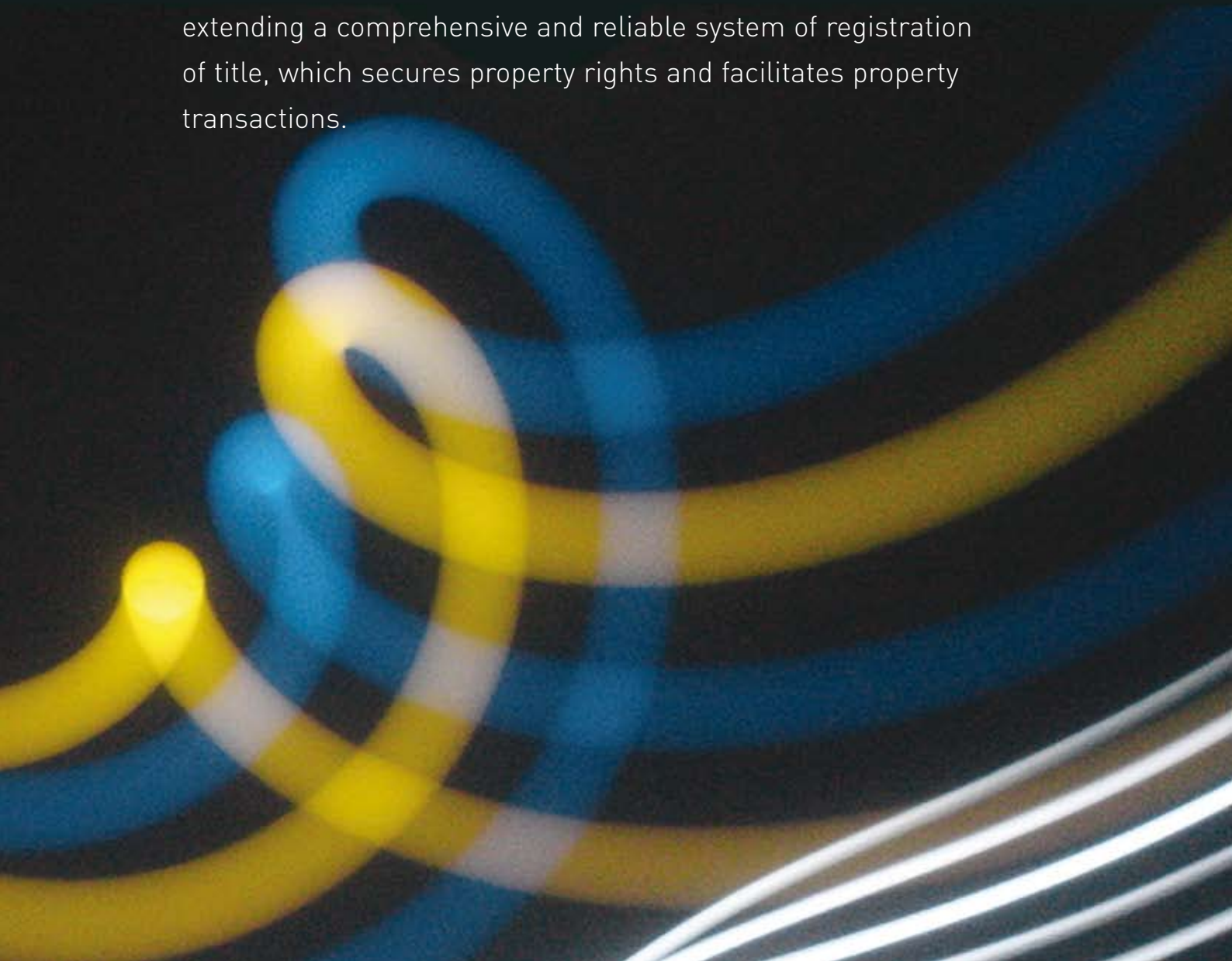


The Property Registration Authority
An tÚdarás Clárúcháin Maoine

Our Mission

To promote and safeguard the legal, societal and economic framework of property ownership in Ireland.

This will be achieved by maintaining and extending a comprehensive and reliable system of registration of title, which secures property rights and facilitates property transactions.



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Mission and Values

The Mission of the Property Registration Authority is:

To promote and safeguard the legal, societal and economic framework of property ownership in Ireland. This will be achieved by maintaining and extending a comprehensive and reliable system of registration of title, which secures property rights and facilitates property transactions.

Members of the Property Registration Authority



Gerry McCaughey
Chairperson



Emer Daly



Brid Carter



John Shaw



Michael Cahill



Michael Edwards



Michael Kelly



Roderick Tyrrell



Una Woods



Marie Whelan



Seamus Carroll

MISSION AND VALUES

The Property Registration Authority will conduct its business adhering to the following values:

Service to our Customers

The Property Registration Authority is committed to providing its customers with an excellent service which is readily accessible through a variety of channels.

Public Interest

The Property Registration Authority is committed to carrying out its functions in the public interest in an open and transparent manner.

Commitment to Staff

The Property Registration Authority values the dedication of its staff and is committed to supporting them in delivering a high quality service to its customers and in developing fulfilling careers within the organisation.

Governance and value for money

The Property Registration Authority is committed to compliance with good governance, probity, and conducting its business in a cost effective manner.

Consultation

The Property Registration Authority is committed to consultation with its stakeholders in the ongoing development and delivery of its services.

Senior Management Team



Standing left to right – Brian Kelly, John Deeney, Diarmuid Clancy, Michael Treacy, Frank Treacy, John O’Sullivan
Seated left to right – Fran Leahy, Catherine Treacy, Paul Brent.

Foreword by the Chairperson of the Property Registration Authority

I am pleased to introduce the Property Registration Authority's (PRA) Annual Report for 2007. This Report, while the second since the establishment of the PRA in November 2006, is the Authority's first full years' Annual Report.

2007 was a year of significant achievements for the PRA.

Substantial progress was made in the ambitious Digital Mapping Project which won the "Best Project in the Government to Business" category at the Inside Government Awards ceremony in April 2007. The purpose of this award was stated as recognising "excellence and creativity in the implementation of leading-edge information and communications technology initiatives throughout the public sector in Ireland".



The PRA also received a number of other awards during the year for the excellent delivery of its innovative IT projects, among them the "BT Inspired Award", which recognised organisations that "have demonstrated business value creation through the use of Information Communications Technology".

These awards reflect the hard work, commitment and dedication of all staff in the organisation in the successful implementation of the PRA's modernisation agenda.

At a European level the PRA became an active service provider for the European Land Information Service (EULIS) whereby our landdirect.ie customers can now avail of online services offered by other participating European Land Registries and vice versa.

I was delighted to be involved in the very successful "Registering the World Conference" hosted by the PRA in Dublin in September which was attended by delegates from over 50 jurisdictions across the world. On behalf of the Authority, I wish to extend my congratulations to those staff involved in organising this excellent event.

The commitment of the PRA in implementing Government initiatives is reflected in this report. During 2007, following an extensive programme of consultation and collaboration with all our stakeholders, considerable progress was made in developing an eReleases model which will be the first phase of the PRA's eRegistration programme. This is in line with the development of a system of eConveyancing in accordance with Government policy.

The PRA is also progressing one of its key statutory mandates "to promote and extend the

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PROPERTY REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

registration of ownership of land". We look forward to the support of the Law Society in achieving this objective, which is an essential step on the road towards eConveyancing.

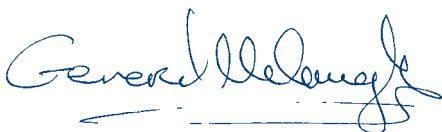
The delivery of efficient services to our customers remained a high priority for the PRA throughout the year. This report details the continued growth in the level of activity for the PRA during 2007.

The success of our online service landdirect.ie can be clearly gauged from the increase in the level of usage of this service during 2007. The level of transactions increased from 2.1 million in 2006 to 3 million in 2007 which reflects the quality and level of services now available to our customers online.

The record level of growth in applications lodged for registration during 2007 posed a considerable challenge for the PRA. The responsiveness and enthusiasm of staff however, ensured that the demanding modernisation agenda and the progressing of Government initiatives continued apace. The PRA's first Strategic Plan, approved by the Minister in December, reflects the very ambitious targets which have been set to ensure the delivery of an efficient service.

The decrease in the number of new house completions, which is forecast for 2008, represents only one element of the PRA's activity. Ireland's housing stock alone has grown from 1.2 m. in 1995 to 1.9 m. at the end of 2007 and there will be additional property transactions arising as a result of this larger database. Increased demand for the services of the PRA, arising from the implementation of the National Development Plan, which includes several major transport and infrastructural projects and from the extension of compulsory first registration of title is also expected in 2008 and beyond.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation of the dedication and commitment of Ms. Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive, the Management and Staff of the PRA. I look forward to their continued support and the support of my fellow members of the Authority as we face the challenge of achieving the goals and objectives as set out in our Strategic Plan.



Gerard McCaughey CHAIRPERSON, PROPERTY REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Overview of Chief Executive Officer

The year 2007 was a time of celebration and challenge for the organisation. It marked both the first full year in existence of the Property Registration Authority and the Tercentenary of the establishment of the Registry of Deeds. A number of highly successful events and undertakings were organised to celebrate the Tercentenary, of which the organisation and staff can feel justifiably proud.



The two year calendar, the DVD "From the Quill to the Electronic Age", the commemorative stamp launched by An Post and the "Nationwide" television programme all proved to be excellent ways of marking this historic occasion and offered an opportunity to publicly acknowledge the valuable contribution made to the State by staff of the Registries both present and past.

The Tercentenary Conference in September, formally opened by Minister Brian Lenihan, and the Tercentenary dinner held in conjunction with the conference, graced by the attendance of President Mary McAleese as our guest of honour, proved to be the highlight of the celebrations. The conference and the associated events, whilst providing the opportunity to celebrate past achievements with pride, inspired us as an organisation to look to the future with ambition and confidence.

Building on the 2006 initiative to extend compulsory registration to three additional counties, and following the successful roll-out schedule of Digital Mapping, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, on the recommendation of the PRA, recently signed an order extending compulsory registration to a further six counties, bringing the total number of counties now covered to twelve. This should be seen as a clear indication of the commitment of the PRA to extend compulsory registration of title to the entire country.

2007 saw the number of applications for registration (dealings) received by the Land Registry increasing by 17,723, or 7.17%, to reach a new record level of 260,180. Intake in the Registry of Deeds also increased, by 4.51%, to reach another record level of 100,002. To put such increases in perspective it is worth noting that the year 2006 had recorded the previous highest annual lodgement of cases. The combined increase in work over the past two years in the Land Registry has been 22.78% and 7.7% in the Registry of Deeds. Such exceptional rates of increase speak for themselves. All of the significant business and economic indicators and commentators predict that intake for 2008 will not continue at these record

OVERVIEW OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

levels. However the additional property transactions arising as a result of the larger database of registered titles, the implementation of the National Development Plan which incorporates several major transport and infrastructural projects and the increased intake of work arising from the extension of compulsory first registration of title, will continue the necessity for developing new methods of working in order to balance intake and output and provide an excellent service for our customers.

The continuing success of our Digital Mapping project is a fine example of such developments and of the PRA's innovative approach to the use of technology. The 2006 Annual Report provided details of the successful completion of Phase 1 of this ambitious project. I am very pleased to now report that Phase 2 is on schedule and, at the time of writing, the registered boundaries of counties Longford, Westmeath, Meath, Louth, Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Clare together with South Dublin have been digitised and are now available online. This development has been warmly welcomed by our customers. Several additional counties will be added during 2008 as the project continues towards its scheduled completion date of 2010.

Further progress was made in the decentralisation project of re-locating a part of the operations of the PRA to Roscommon town. A number of staff are currently working in temporary accommodation there and progress has been made regarding the acquisition of a suitable site and the development of facilities for permanent office accommodation. The considerable energies being expended on this project will undoubtedly ensure a successful long term outcome. The challenge for 2007, however, was to limit its impact on the delivery of services – a not inconsiderable feat when one considers that almost 17% of the current staff of the PRA were recruited during 2007. This challenge will continue during 2008 and beyond as the project is advanced. Inevitably it takes some time for new staff to acquire the appropriate level of knowledge and skills to replace those who have left the organisation and this transition must be carefully managed. Because of the successful outcome of the many demanding projects undertaken to date by staff of the PRA, I am confident, however, that this challenge will also be successfully met.

Finally I would like to thank all staff who contributed to another very successful year for the PRA and also to thank the Chairperson, Mr. Gerard McCaughey and the other Authority members for their support and guidance throughout the year. I look forward to continuing to work with everyone in the PRA in the same spirit of shared commitment towards excellence which has ensured such successful outcomes to date and to building further on such success.


Catherine Treacy CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The year in review

The ongoing programme of change and innovation in the Property Registration Authority has resulted in a considerable improvement in the quality of service offered by the organisation. The development and implementation of new systems has been a feature of our activities over the past decade and this was continued during 2007.

Electronic Services

Continued growth in both the level of activity and the number of subscribers to landdirect.ie was recorded during 2007. By the end of the year 12,741 subscribers had availed of 1,129,824 fee paying transactions. Over 80% of these services were delivered on demand and the vast majority of the remainder were completed within 2 days.

As a result of the roll-out of digital mapping and the provision of the new associated services, our customer base has widened and now includes an increasing number of estate agents, surveyors, architects, engineers and others involved in property related work. By the end of 2007 we had reached a position where almost 5,000 fee-paying transactions per day were being conducted through landdirect.ie with a similar number of services provided where no fee is charged.

The following table outlines the number of subscribers and the increased level of usage of our online services since the first full year of the service in 2000.

Year	2000		2004	2005	2006	2007
No. of professional users	1,700		7,500	9,500	10,900	12,741
No. of online transactions*	0.2 million		1.2 million	1.7 million	2.1 million	3 million

*The number of online transactions includes fee paying and non fee paying services, transactions and activities availed of by our customers.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Digital Mapping Project

Following the successful implementation of Phase 1 of the Digital Mapping project in 2006 and the commencement of Phase 2, the digitisation of registered boundaries for counties Longford, Meath, Westmeath, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Clare, Louth and Wicklow has now been completed. To date this has involved approximately 600,000 registered parcels and we have now increased our throughput to 55,000 parcels per month which will ensure completion of the project by early 2010. When the project has been completed some 2.5 million parcels, comprising approximately 16 million boundaries, will be available for customers on-line.

The digitisation programme for counties Dublin, Roscommon and Sligo commenced in 2007 and these counties together with a further 4 counties, are expected to be completed in 2008.

Delivery of new survey vector data has been agreed with Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) for 2008 which will facilitate progress on this project, with the expectation of completing a further 660,000 parcels in 2008.



PRA online digital map showing boundary detail

The use of the digital mapping data and technologies has been successfully embedded into the registration process. All sub-division and first registration applications in digitised counties are now being processed using the Digital Mapping elements of our Integrated Title Registration Information System (ITRIS). The creation of certified copies and maps for these areas has been automated thereby ensuring the achievement of our customer charter targets.

In addition, the landdirect.ie service now provides both boundary data for the digitised counties and map searching and allied facilities for the entire country. This service enables customers to search and locate registered property using the digital map and the address point database provided through An Post's Geodirectory product which has been integrated into landdirect.ie. Further extensions to the mapping services are planned for 2008.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Activity levels

Land Registry

Since the launch of the Integrated Title Registration Information System in 1999 and as a result of substantial process change, the number of dealings completed annually has grown substantially. The year 2007 saw a further increase in the number of applications lodged for registration as against the intake for 2006. This was particularly significant as it is the area where some 80% of our resources are deployed and is the most time consuming of our activities. The increased lodgement of 17,723 applications was very challenging, as was the increased level of lodgement in the Registry of Deeds. As part of the digital mapping project it was necessary to divert some staff away from casework and to re-assign them to quality assurance work with a consequent slight impact on the number of dealings completed. The data conversion programme involves the transfer and reconciliation of the boundary data of all registered property from paper-based maps to digital format. This is a significant and business critical programme that has a four year project timescale and during 2007 the project team quality assured 619,141 land parcels which had a total of 3,735,264 boundary lines. From these figures it is clear that the Land Registry achieved significant outputs during 2007. The digital mapping project is now generating substantial productivity gains and these will become evident during 2009 when such gains begin to outstrip the overheads involved in the project.

While the overall number of applications on hands increased during 2007, in the case of 62% of all applications received, being those in order for registration and not requiring mapping, over 90% were completed within 20 working days. This represents a substantial improvement on recent years. The categories where delays occur are those where the case requires mapping or is lodged in a format that is unacceptable for registration and is subject to query. The provision of new mechanisms for customers to avail of mapping services and other information online has already and will continue to fundamentally change how our services are provided. As outlined above, our Digital Mapping project is designed to address the mapping situation and, while still at an early stage, indications of considerable progress are already evident. (See also Appendices 2 & 3 at the end of this report)

Registry of Deeds

The number of registrations recorded in the Registry of Deeds during 2007 increased by 4.51% to 100,002 which was the highest ever received. The Registry met this challenge admirably and continues to maintain an “up to date” service.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

A significant milestone was reached in September with the completion of a data capture programme which had been ongoing for several years. This work involved the creation of an index to the recorded memorials for searching purposes, which now facilitates electronic searching of the records from the 1st of January 1970 to date.

Ground Rents

The Property Registration Authority operates the Ground Rents Purchase Scheme under the Landlord and Tenant (Ground Rents) (No. 2) Act 1978 under which owners of leasehold property can purchase their Ground Rent (freehold interest) either through a consent or arbitration procedure. This scheme commenced in 1978 and since then 78,367 applicants have purchased their ground rents and acquired the fee simple to their dwelling houses under the vesting certificate scheme.

The Authority successfully operated the scheme in 2007, a year which saw the intake of consent applications reduce by 8% [757 as opposed to 826 in 2006] and output of such cases increase by 11% [798 as opposed to 718 in 2006]. The year also saw a 32% increase [from 749 to 989] in the intake of arbitration applications. However processing times for such cases significantly improved in 2007. As a result of this, output increased by 23%. Details of the activity in 2007 and the comparative figures for 2005 and 2006 are shown in the table at Appendix 4.

Website

Our website continues to grow as a valuable communication mechanism and as an information portal for our customers into landdirect.ie. The site was re-designed and upgraded during 2007 and went live in early 2008. The value of this service to our customers can be measured by its level of usage which includes:

- The homepage received almost 2,000,000 visits during 2007, which is a 14% increase on 2006.
- The landdirect.ie homepage was accessed more than 1.2 million times, a 20% increase in activity.
- The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Section of the site also saw a major increase in activity with over 115,000 visits.
- Practice Directions were accessed more than 110,000 times
- During 2007 we continued to add Irish language content to the website and more than 5,300 hits were received on the Gaeilge homepage.

Financial Report

Income

Fees received by the Property Registration Authority by way of cash, cheques, revenue stamps etc. amounted to €79.7m in 2007 as against €78.7m in 2006. This was an increase of €1m or 1% over 2006 revenues. All fees received are returned to the Exchequer.

Expenditure

Actual expenditure from the Property Registration Authority Vote for 2007 amounted to €41.5m (as against €38.2m for 2006 – an increase of 9%) leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €38.2m (as against €40.5m for 2006).

Of the total sum expenditure of €41.5m, salaries and overtime accounted for €30.4m; which represented 73% of the total. During 2007, expenditure on salaries and overtime increased by €2.4m, or 9% over 2006.

Total Current Expenditure for 2007 amounted to €37.9m as against €35.1m for 2006 (an increase of €2.8m).

Capital Expenditure for 2007 amounted to €3.6m as against €3.1m for 2006 (an increase of €0.5m).

When the following costs are included:

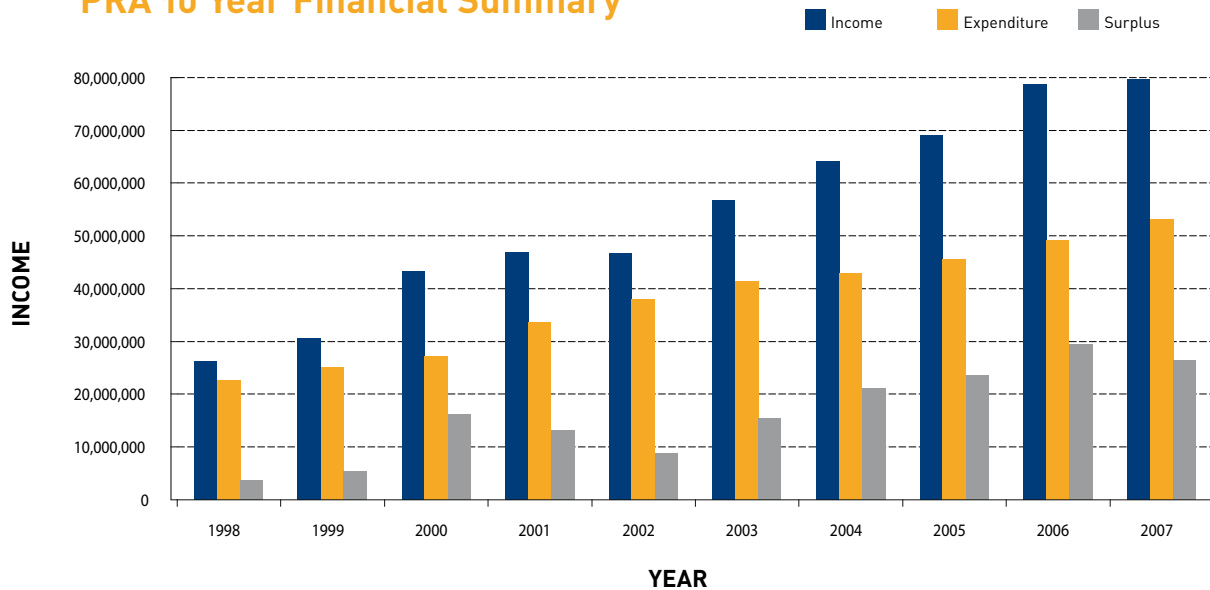
- €3m under Vote 7 - Superannuation and Retired Allowances
- €4.7m under Vote 10 - Office of Public Works
(Current €1.9m and Capital €2.8m)
- €4m notional rents on State-owned properties

the total expenditure in 2007 increases to €53.2m and leaves a notional excess of income over expenditure of €26.5m for 2007 (as against €29.5m for 2006).

This total represents a decrease of €3m or 10% on 2006.

FINANCIAL REPORT

PRA 10 Year Financial Summary



Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997

It is the policy of the Property Registration Authority to fully comply with the terms of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997. The PRA has procedures in place to ensure that all invoices are paid within the statutory time limit. While the procedures have been designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

In 2007 a total of 8 invoices incurred late payment penalties. The value of all invoices that were paid late amounted to €88,606. This represents 0.8% of the total payments falling within the terms of the Regulations. The total interest paid during 2007 resulting from late payments amounted to €524.55.

Governance

The policy of the PRA is that good governance, based on a sound system of management and financial control, must be an integral element of our strategy. This is important so as to meet the expectation of stakeholders whilst at the same time, ensuring accountability for the receipt and expenditure of public funds.

During 2007 the PRA carried out its functions in a manner that reflected appropriate standards of corporate governance, financial management and control.

- Satisfactory reports were provided by the Internal Audit Unit, Audit Committee and the Comptroller and Auditor General
- Current and capital expenditure outcomes were aligned to annual targets and profiles
- Timely and relevant management reports were produced that enabled informed decision-making
- Confirmation of the quality of controls was outlined in the Statement of Internal Financial control attached to the annual Appropriation Account
- Measures were taken to manage and mitigate risks – the Risk Register was reviewed, assessed and updated on a regular basis.



Major Initiatives

Decentralisation

Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the PRA's decentralisation programme. An advance party of 74 staff are now located in the temporary office in Roscommon and the PRA is actively pursuing the assignment of additional staff to complete this phase of the decentralisation programme. It is anticipated that the temporary office will be fully occupied, with up to 90 staff serving in Roscommon by mid 2008.

Two further milestones were reached in 2007.

1. In May, a limited range of case processing commenced in Roscommon. This was extended in September when the successful roll out of digital mapping enabled the full range of case processing to be undertaken in the decentralised office. Training of new staff is ongoing and is supported from the Dublin and Waterford offices.
2. The site for the permanent building in Roscommon was acquired early in 2007. Invitations to tender were subsequently issued by the Office of Public Works and proposals from those firms that had been short listed were submitted in December. The process of selecting the preferred tender then commenced in the OPW.

The PRA continued to co-operate with the release of staff for other decentralisation programmes.

Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill

The Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2006 has passed all stages in the Seanad and the second stage in Dáil Éireann. On 6th November 2007, the Bill was referred by the Dáil to the Select Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights. The Bill provides for a comprehensive reform and modernisation of land and conveyancing law and will repeal over 150 pre 1922 statutes, replacing them with provisions more suited to modern conditions.

The Bill also contains amendments to the Registration of Title Act 1964 which will assist the Authority in its operations and will facilitate the introduction of eRegistration and eConveyancing.



MAJOR INITIATIVES

Completion of the Land Register

The ongoing growth of the Register can be seen from the total number of folios that were live at the end of each of the last 4 years:

2004	2005	2006	2007
1,647,679	1,716,662	1,770,233	1,808,552

Following on from the initiatives taken in 2006, the Authority continued to actively consider the strategies and options available to implement its statutory mandate to extend title registration. Arising from such consideration it is anticipated that a further programme of extension of First Registration will commence in 2008.

In addition a Compulsory First Registration (CFR) Working Group was established by the Authority which met on a number of occasions during the year. In-depth consideration was given to developing a CFR model based on certification of title by solicitors.

Draft documentation, including a proposed new form of certificate, was approved by the Authority in December 2007 and the process which allows for a process of consultation with the Law Society to commence early in 2008.

The existing Fees Orders were reviewed in 2007 with a view to incentivising first registration by certification and it is anticipated that new Fees Orders will be made in 2008.

eRegistration/eConveyancing

In line with the Government's policy to develop a system of eConveyancing, the PRA initiated its own eRegistration Project in 2007 - building on its success to date with its on-line services.

The main focus of the project in 2007 was customer consultation and stakeholder engagement. With this in mind, representatives of the Law Society, the Irish Mortgage Council and the Revenue Commissioners were invited to join the Project Board. Invitations were also issued to all bar associations offering to hold briefing sessions in their locality. Such sessions were undertaken in consultation with the Bar Associations representing



MAJOR INITIATIVES

counties Kildare, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Galway, Mayo, Meath, Longford, Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly and were very well received.

It is planned that the first phase of eRegistration will be the introduction of a system to provide for electronic discharges in respect of registered charges. This will be followed by electronic charges and transfers and together with the eStamping project being undertaken by the Revenue Commissioners will, in practical terms, represent the first implementation of the eConveyancing programme in Ireland. At this stage it is planned that eDischarges will go live in early 2009.



Margaret McGinley, Chairperson of An Post presents Catherine Treacy with a commemorative stamp to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Registry of Deeds.

Practice Directions

The programme to revise and update the existing Practice Directions (PD's), which commenced in 2005, continued into 2007. A Working Group on Draft Rules and Practice Directions was set up in 2007 to evaluate and approve the revised PD's which have not yet been published. A new PD on Priority Entries was published in 2007. Work is progressing on several other Practice Directions to be published during 2008.

Legal office notices which were issued during 2007 and which involved changes in office practice were posted on the Authority's website under Practice Direction 47.

A considerable volume of work was undertaken in drafting a new set of Rules in respect of the Registry of Deeds. These rules which will fundamentally change how the Registry operates will come into operation in 2008.



The fact that the Practice Directions on our website were accessed more than 110,000 times during 2007 is a clear indication of the importance of this work.

Staff Resources

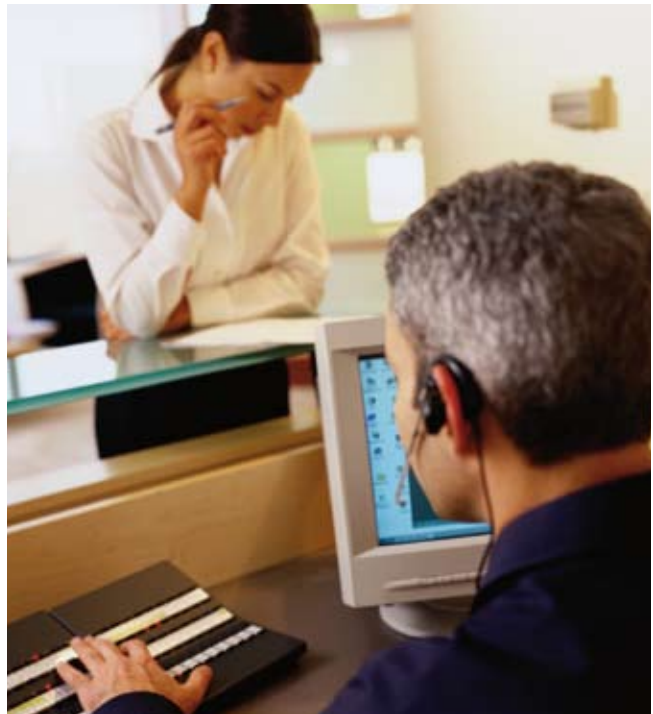
The recruitment of new staff on behalf of the PRA was managed through the Public Appointments Service. Staff also transferred into the Authority on foot of the Government's decentralisation programme.

At the 31st December 2007 there were:

- 770 people, filling 697.2 legal, administrative and technical posts and
- 188 of our staff (24% of the workforce) were availing of work-sharing options.

During 2007:

- 51 staff availed of term time and 46 staff were recruited on temporary contracts to cover these vacancies
- 64 staff left the Property Registration Authority in 2007 through resignations, retirements, transfers and career breaks
- 120 permanent staff (17% of the authorised posts) joined the Property Registration Authority.



As the work of the PRA requires a level of intensive and specialised training, particularly in the early stages after assignment, the induction of this number of new staff required a significant input of resources. It will take some time before this effort is reflected in the productivity levels of the new staff.

The Registries continued to offer a range of flexible working arrangements to staff, including flexitime, work-sharing and term time leave.

(See Appendix 5 at the end of this report for comparative staff numbers with previous years).

Partnership

The Partnership 2000 Agreement requires the implementation of a Public Service Modernisation Programme which aims to improve the delivery of services and to increase the active participation of those working within the Public Service.

The objectives of this Programme are to be achieved in each department or office through the formation of a Partnership Committee, consisting of senior management, union representatives and staff representatives.

The partnership committee within the PRA, set up under the Partnership 2000 Agreement, continued to play a vital role in the ongoing development of a variety of initiatives.

During 2007 a very significant example of this was the role the committee played in securing agreement for the awarding of the contract for the data capture of the remaining imaged folios which is now underway. A further example was the achievement of the integration of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) with our HR policies and processes.

See Appendix 6 for members of Partnership committee.



Registry of Deeds Tercentenary

During 2007 a number of initiatives were undertaken to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Registry of Deeds. These included:

- A Tercentenary Calendar
- A commemorative DVD titled "From the Quill to the Electronic Age"
- The publication by An Post of a Tercentenary Stamp
- A special feature on the Registries by RTE's Nationwide programme
- An international conference on the theme "Registering the World"

Conference

The Registering the World conference, hosted by the PRA, took place in Dublin from 26th to 28th September 2007. The conference was attended by over 200 delegates representing 52 different jurisdictions and 11 organisations. Papers presented during the conference are published on our website www.prai.ie under Conference Papers.

The conference was organised in conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Working Party on Land Administration. A number of those in attendance expressed the view that it was the most comprehensive conference on this area of activity that they had attended.

The conference was formally opened by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr Brian Lenihan, TD and after formal addresses by Ms Christina von Schweinichen of the UNECE and Mr Peter Creuzer, Chairman of WPLA the delegates were welcomed to Dublin by Ms Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive of the Property Registration Authority.

The keynote address was given by Mr John Manthorpe, the former Chief Land Registrar for England and Wales who is now an international land consultant. His address set the scene and the tone for the conference and the papers, presentations and discussions which



Pictured at the opening ceremony of the Conference were (left to right) Christina von Schweinichen (UNECE), Brian Lenihan TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive PRA

REGISTRY OF DEEDS TERCENTENARY

followed were of an extremely high standard. These were much appreciated by the delegates and by many others who, while unable to attend, have been able to access the conference papers online. The event provided a unique opportunity to exchange information and ideas with representatives from a wide group of registration authorities from many jurisdictions.

The conference was the highlight of the Tercentenary celebrations and the formal conference dinner was held in the Great Hall at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, who was the guest of honour, was formally welcomed by Ms Catherine Treacy and after her address a presentation was made by Mr Gerry McCaughey, Chairman of the Property Registration Authority. The combination of the outstanding venue, the attendance of the President and her uplifting address combined to make the occasion a memorable event for all in attendance.



Keynote speaker John Manthorpe, International Land Consultant



President Mary McAleese and Dr. Martin McAleese with Gerry McCaughey and Catherine Treacy of the PRA at the Registering the World conference dinner

International Links

European Land Information Service (EULIS)

The Property Registration Authority formally joined EULIS on the 21st of November 2006. The overall aim of the EULIS project is to explore issues associated with providing access to property ownership information across borders, using the Internet as the delivery medium, thereby creating better conditions for borrowers and lenders operating within the European credit market.

The PRA became an active service provider for EULIS in December 2007. Access to EULIS is now available on landdirect.ie and our customers can avail of the online services offered by other participating European Land Registries and vice versa. All professional users of landdirect.ie have been given access to this service.



At present, the countries connected to the live service are England and Wales, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

European Land Registry Association (ELRA)

The European Land Registry Association (ELRA) was established in 2004 with Ireland as one of the founding members and has since continued to grow and expand.

The primary purpose of this association is the development and understanding of the role of land registration in real property and capital markets. ELRA also provides a useful forum for discussion and plays a significant role in keeping members informed of relevant developments at EU level.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) - Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA)

The UNECE's Working Party on Land Administration was established in 1999 with the aim of promoting land administration through security of tenure, developing real estate markets and modernising land registration systems in countries in transition.



The WPLA has developed into an effective network of land administration officials in Europe and North America. It operates by sending independent experts to the ECE countries to render policy advice and recommendations on national programmes on land market development and real estate registration.

The Registering the World conference hosted in Dublin in September 2007 was held under the auspices of the WPLA.

The Four Registries Quadrilateral network

For a number of years meetings have taken place on a bi-annual basis between representatives of the land registration bodies for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the PRA to discuss and explore a range of matters of mutual interest. Hosting the meetings rotates between the four bodies and the PRA hosted a meeting in October 2007. Since its establishment a number of sub-groups have been formed to consult and report on a variety of topics including, business trends and activity levels, electronic conveyancing/registration, benchmarking, electronic funds transfers, security of systems and other international developments.

Customer Charter

Service Delivery Targets

The service delivery targets for copy folios applied for via landdirect.ie were achieved throughout 2007 and at times were exceeded.

The target for the issue of copy folio/filed plans via landdirect.ie is set at 80% to be issued within 1 working day. While this target was achieved for many periods of the year, there were intermittent periods when the target timeframe was slightly exceeded.

The service delivery target for Official Map Searches was not fully achieved during 2007. However with the continuing rollout of Digital Mapping, map searching facilities have been significantly improved and this improvement is expected to continue during 2008.

The target for the availability of reference numbers for dealings lodged by post or at public counters was exceeded throughout 2007. Dealing reference numbers were available through landdirect.ie within 1.3 days of lodgement.

All of the service delivery targets set out in the Registry of Deeds Customer Charter were achieved throughout 2007.

Access to facilities

The Authority's website now complies with Level AA Conformance to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the W3C.

Service through the Irish language

The PRA's Irish Language Scheme 2007-2010 was published in 2007 and was circulated to the main Irish language organisations as well as being made available to legal practitioners at the various seminars hosted throughout the country organised in conjunction with the local bar associations. The scheme is also available on our website.

Five members of staff in our Waterford office, four in our Chancery Street building and two in our building in Nassau Street are available to provide service in the Irish language at the public counters in those buildings.

A list of the contact names for the members of the Irish language team has been circulated to all public counter staff and to all other staff dealing directly with members of the public. The list has been given to the staff operating the switchboard and is also available on the intranet.

During 2007 we continued to add further content to our Gaeilge page on the website. Our parallel Gaeilge website will be operational in 2008.

External Scrutiny

Performance Verification Group

The Property Registration Authority continued the implementation of its modernisation programme as detailed in the organisation's Towards 2016 Action Plan. Some of the key areas in which progress was made were the roll out of digital mapping, the implementation of the project for the completion of the structured register, the enactment of secondary legislation and the availability of EULIS to Irish subscribers. Two progress reports were submitted to the Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform who verified that satisfactory progress had been achieved.



Parliamentary Questions

- 680 e-mails were received and dealt with during 2007 via reps@prai.ie. This is a service for TDs and Senators introduced in 2006 to reduce the need for formal Parliamentary Questions regarding the current status of pending applications and to provide the information required in a more timely fashion. There has been a very substantial drop in the number of Parliamentary Questions tabled in respect of PRA matters since the introduction of this service.
- 25 Parliamentary Questions were tabled by members of the Oireachtas and replied to during 2007. 9 related to registration applications and 16 were non- registration related.
- 123 letters/representations from TD's and Senators were received and dealt with during 2007.
- 13 letters were received from the Ombudsman's Office relating to 5 complaints to the Ombudsman.

Freedom of Information requests

When the Property Registration Authority (PRA) was established on the 4th November 2006, the Land Registry and Registry of Deeds came under the control and management of the PRA and all records held by the Registries became vested in the Authority. In order for a body to become subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts it must be specifically listed as such – this is done by means of a Statutory Instrument.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

Arrangements are now being made to schedule the PRA for FOI purposes and the necessary regulations are currently being drafted; it is intended that they will be implemented at an early date.

However, as many of the records held by PRA are routinely available to members of the public we will continue to deal with queries from the public regarding access to records outside of FOI legislation.



Complaints Procedure

Only two formal complaints were received during 2007 and were dealt with under the Authority's complaints procedure.

Customer Focus Group

This forum met on several occasions during 2007. These meetings provided a continuing opportunity for consultation on a range of issues and the dissemination of information on any changes planned or being introduced.

Visitors and Seminars

Visitors to the Registries

A range of visits, to both Registries, by individuals and by groups were hosted during 2007 and visitors from overseas who attended the Registering the World conference were facilitated in visiting the offices of the Land Registry and the Registry of Deeds.

Seminars

A growing area of activity in recent years has been the involvement of staff of the Property Registration Authority in seminars/conferences/training courses for various groups. PRA officials participated in, and made presentations on, a range of topics at a number of seminars and training courses for solicitors and other customers during 2007. These included:



Fran Leahy, Human Resources Manager, PRA with members of the Chinese delegation to the Registering the World conference

- **Registration of Deeds and Title Act 2006** – Law Society of Ireland
- **Aspects of first registration** – Law Society of Ireland
- **Digital Mapping/landdirect.ie** – Law Schools (Dublin and Cork), Irish Institution of Surveyors, Survey Ireland Conference, IRLOGI, Bord na Mona, LGCSB, Trinity Law Students, Bar Associations in Cork, Wexford, Kilkenny, Midlands, Galway, Mayo, Meath
- **eRegistration and eConveyancing** – Law Schools (Dublin and Cork), Law Society Task Force on eConveyancing, Law Reform Commission, Bar Associations in Kildare, Wexford, Kilkenny, Midlands, Galway, Mayo, Meath, Roscommon, Annual Property and Conveyancing conference (Law Society), Irish Mortgage Council
- **Land Registry Practice and Procedures** – CLT (Ireland), Cork Bar Association
- **Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2006** – Law Society of Ireland

Awards

The success of the overall Integrated Title Registration Information System (ITRIS) and the Digital Mapping element of the system have been recognised on a number of occasions to date. During the period being reported on the following awards were received:

1. The Digital Mapping System element of ITRIS (DMaps) received the Association of Geographic Information Award for Innovation and Best Practice in London.
2. In February 2007 the Digital Mapping project was chosen as the Best Project in the 'State Body' category at the Irish eGovernment Awards.



Gerard McCaughey, Chairperson of the PRA and Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive receive an eGovernment award from Tom Kitt TD, Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach

3. In April 2007 the project was the winner in the "Best Project in the "Government to Business" category for the Digital Mapping project at the Inside Government Awards. The purpose of these awards was "to recognise excellence and creativity in the implementation of leading-edge information and communications technology initiatives throughout the public sector in Ireland".

The project also received two Merit Awards in

- the "Best Partnership Project" category and
- the "Innovative Organisation of the Year" category.

4. In August 2007 the ITRIS was selected as a finalist for the European eGovernment Awards organised by the European Commission.
5. In October 2007 the ITRIS project won the BT Inspired Award in the Government category at the National Final awards. The awards were created to recognise and reward organisations that have demonstrated business value creation through the use of ICT.
6. In November 2007 the project was awarded a "Good Practice Label" by the EU for the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the public service.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Appendix

Appendix 1

Financial Summary 1998 to 2007

	Income €	Expenditure €	Surplus €
1998	26,318,600	22,715,105	3,603,495
1999	30,520,749	25,112,953	5,407,796
2000	43,241,436	27,101,290	16,140,146
2001	46,940,178	33,748,457	13,191,721
2002	46,756,661	37,926,803	8,829,858
2003	56,722,653	41,287,974	15,434,679
2004	64,069,840	42,903,579	21,166,261
2005	69,057,542	45,493,585	23,563,957
2006	78,756,868	49,276,688	29,480,180
2007	79,699,655	53,255,544	26,444,111

APPENDIX

Appendix 2

Land Registry Workflow – All Categories

For comparison purposes this table shows the figures for 2007, 2006 and 2005 at 31st December.

Application Type	Year	Intake	Output	Cases under query	Work in progress
DEALINGS	2007	260,180	217,954	31,921	182,624
	2006	242,476	220,072	35,617	139,029
	2005	211,167	221,815	37,282	115,493
EXAMINERS AND SECTION 49 CASES	2007	4,951	4,216	4,505	6,349
	2006	4,205	4,035	4,347	5,703
	2005	4,286	4,651	4,745	4,703
GROUND RENT APPLICATIONS	2007	1,746	1,914	897	338
	2006	1,576	1,585	965	441
	2005	1,543	1,213	966	727
LAND COMMISSION CASES	2007	120	510	736	4,179
	2006	464	1,385	878	3,812
	2005	263	676	853	4,733
FILED PLANS & COPY FOLIOS*	2007	201,475	200,523	N/A	5,846
	2006	219,477	217,126		4,894
	2005	221,333	222,410		2,543
SCHEME MAP APPROVAL	2007	1,986	1,671	N/A	1,818
	2006	2,082	1,520		1,385
	2005	2,036	1,257		823
COPY INSTRUMENTS	2007	11,578	11,353	N/A	2,620
	2006	12,331	11,943		2,477
	2005	12,034	11,742		2,089
OFFICIAL MAP SEARCHES	2007	4,067	4,067	N/A	0
	2006	5,417	5,451		96
	2005	6,294	6,331		130

*As a result of the successful completion of Phase 1 of our Digital Mapping project the anticipated reduction in the number of requests for Certified Copy Folios and Filed Plans is now emerging. This is as a consequence of the availability of this information online. In particular during 2007 there was an increased level of map related information available through DmapS.

APPENDIX

Appendix 3

Applications received

The following are the levels of lodgement/activity in the main categories of our work over the past three years.

	2007	2006	2005
Applications for Registration*	264,747*	247,024	215,613
Certified Copy Folios and Filed Plans	201,475	219,477	221,333
Certified Copy Instruments	11,578	12,331	12,034
Official Map Searches	4,067	5,417	6,294
Folio Inspections	805,757	743,536	712,652
Names Index Searches	225,388	228,919	207,689
Total	1,513,012	1,456,704	1,375,615

*The figures for "Applications" include the number of Dealings, Section 49 applications, First Registrations and Irish Land Commission Schedules lodged. A single application could result in one or several registrations.

Appendix 4

Grounds Rents Activity

	Year	Intake	Output
Arbitration Cases	2007	989	1062
	2006	749	866
	2005	666	479
Consent Cases	2007	757	798
	2006	826	718
	2005	878	734
Total	2007	1,746	1,914
	2006	1,575	1,584
	2005	1,544	1,213

APPENDIX

Appendix 5

Staff Resources

	2005	2006	2007
Average Authorised Posts	661	653	688
Average Posts filled	641	631	670
Staff exiting	57	66	64
Staff assigned	28	88	120

Appendix 6

Membership of the Partnership Committee during 2007

Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive, Chairperson
 Shay Arthur, Staff representative
 Paul Brent, Mapping Advisor
 Diarmuid Clancy, Deputy Registrar (Operations)
 Peter Byrne, FUGE
 Seamus Cashman, PSEU
 John Deeney, Deputy Registrar
 Michael Edwards, Staff representative
 Patricia Grant, Staff representative
 Jackie Gray, Secretary
 Karen Gray, Staff representative
 Nuala Keaveney, Staff representative
 Fran Leahy, Human Resources Manager
 Andrew Lyons, Staff representative
 Greg McDermott, AHCPs
 Celine McGann, Staff representative
 John Murphy, IMPACT Legal Branch
 Neil O'Hehir, IMPACT Technical and Survey Branch
 John O'Sullivan, Information Systems Manager
 John Power, CPSU
 Michael Treacy, Corporate Services Manager

APPENDIX

Appendix 7**Other Internal Committees**

- The Information Systems Steering Committee
- The Budgetary Committee
- The Health & Safety Committee
- The Ideas Committee
- The Training and Development Committee

Committees with Internal and External representation

- The Rules Committee
- The Working group on Compulsory First Registration
- The Working group on the Rules and Practice Directions
- The Customer Focus Group
- The Audit committee
- The eRegistration Project Board
- The Digital Mapping Project Board

Cross Departmental Groups

The PRA continued to participate in and contribute to a range of groups dealing with cross-departmental issues. These included:

- The Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform Oversight group
- The Secretaries General and Heads of Offices group
- The Change Management Network
- The Quality Customer Service Network
- The Personnel Officers Network.
- Freedom of Information Network
- The IS Managers Network

Contacts

The Property Registration Authority

The Property Registration Authority was established on 4 November 2006 to manage and control the Land Registry and Registry of Deeds.

The central office of the Land Registry comprises four constituent offices:

1: Chancery Street, Dublin 7, DX 228

Phone: (01) 670 7500 or LoCall 1890 333 001

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Geographic Work Groups for Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Westmeath

2: Block 1, Floor 1, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1, DX 232

Phone: (01) 670 7500 or LoCall 1890 333 001

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Geographic Work Groups for Counties Kildare, Wicklow
- Ground Rents for all counties.

3: Nassau Building, Setanta Centre, Nassau Street, Dublin 2, DX 227

Phone: (01) 670 7500 or LoCall 1890 333 001

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Geographic Work Groups for Counties Clare, Dublin, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo.

4: Cork Road, Waterford, DX 44090

Phone: (051) 303 000 or LoCall 1890 333 002

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Geographic Work Groups for Counties Carlow, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford.

Registry of Deeds

Deals with all counties

Address: Henrietta Street, Dublin 1, DX 199

Phone: (01) 670 7500 or LoCall 1890 333 001

Public Office Open: 10.00am-4.30pm.

Ground Rents

Deals with all counties

Address: Block 1, Floor 1, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1, DX 232

Phone: (01) 670 7500 or LoCall 1890 333 001

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm.

www.prai.ie

Enquiries in Irish (all counties)

Phone: LoCall 1890 333 004