



The Property Registration Authority
An tÚdarás Clárúcháin Maoiné

2008

ANNUAL REPORT

Facilitating property transactions
in a changing world

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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The Role of the Property Registration Authority

The Property Registration Authority (PRA) was established on 4th November 2006. The key contributions of the PRA to the Irish economy are to provide a register of title to land and to guarantee security for those dealing with property.

There are two separate systems for recording property transactions in Ireland:

- The State guaranteed system of registration of title formerly operated by the Land Registry
- The system of recording deeds formerly operated by the Registry of Deeds.

Following the enactment of the Registration of Deeds and Titles Act, 2006, both systems are under the control of the PRA whose primary statutory remit is to complete the Irish land register which will lead to a single system of title registration supportive of Government policies on land administration, including electronic registration, electronic conveyancing and the emerging Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The principal functions of the PRA are to:

1. Provide and maintain a system of registration of Titles and Deeds in accordance with the relevant legislation
2. Promote and extend the registration of ownership to land
3. Deal with applications under Part 3 of the Landlord and Tenant (Ground Rents) (No. 2) Act, 1978
4. Keep the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform informed of progress in relation to the registration of ownership to land and to assist him or her in the development of policy in relation to such registration
5. Provide reliable and comprehensive information and certification services
6. Maintain financial viability.

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.

The PRA will conduct its business adhering to the following values:

SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

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

PUBLIC INTEREST

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

COMMITMENT TO STAFF

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

CONSULTATION

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

Members of the Property Registration Authority and Senior Management Team

THE PROPERTY REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Gerry McCaughey (Chairperson)

Michael Cahill

Seamus Carroll

Brid Carter

Emer Daly

Michael Edwards

Michael Kelly

John Shaw

Roderick Tyrrell

Máire R. Whelan

Una Woods

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Catherine Treacy (Chief Executive Officer)

Paul Brent

Diarmuid Clancy

John Deeney

Fran Leahy

Brian Kelly

John O'Sullivan

Frank Treacy

Michael Treacy



Overview of Chief Executive Officer

In presenting the Annual Report for the Property Registration Authority for 2008 I am deeply aware of the changed economic circumstances in which we operate. The staff and management of the PRA are already adapting to these changes. Nevertheless it is important to record, as this report illustrates, that this organisation has had a very successful year and faces the challenges ahead with the experience and confidence gained from having overcome many obstacles in the past.

The Strategic Plan for the Property Registration Authority sets out the high level objectives for the organisation which have been agreed between the Minister and the Authority. I am pleased to record that significant progress was made on each of these objectives during 2008 and details of the achievements in relation to each objective is contained in this report. Of particular satisfaction is the fact that during the year a record level of output was achieved (an increase of 11.1% on the previous record) and the overall arrear of casework was also reduced in a year where the second highest level of intake in our history was recorded. I would like to place on record my appreciation to everyone who contributed to this achievement.

It was also a year in which significant progress was made in our two major infrastructural projects:- data capturing the textual information from the register and digitising the registered boundaries. Both of these projects are crucial to our plans for electronic registration and electronic conveyancing and are reported on in detail elsewhere in this report. Both projects are on schedule for completion in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

A Ministerial Order extending compulsory first registration (CFR) to six additional counties came into operation in October which now brings to twelve the total number of counties where CFR applies. Further significant progress will be made in 2009 by the extension of CFR to an additional twelve counties.

In parallel with these progressive steps, further reforms were also introduced for the Registry of Deeds where the Tercentenary Celebrations were brought to a conclusion in a most appropriate manner by introducing technological changes and a suite of new Rules and Forms which are more in keeping with the 21st century. These changes have been widely welcomed by our customers and the availability of an on-line form building facility has contributed to this success.

As part of our continuing programme of business process improvement further steps were

OVERVIEW OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

implemented with the re-organisation of work processes and a re-modelling programme in our Dublin and Waterford offices. This programme enabled the PRA to vacate the accommodation that we had occupied in the Irish Life Centre since 1994 and to surrender it to the Office of Public Works for alternative use. As part of this programme our Public Office in Chancery Street was upgraded by the OPW which enabled the PRA to merge eight public counters into a single location providing an improved service for our customers and more efficient use of staff.

Continuous change is an essential feature of successful ICT programmes. The PRA's Integrated Title Registration Information System (ITRIS) will be 10 years old this year. During 2008 a major upgrade of our ICT infrastructure was undertaken, resulting in increased computer capacity, extended communications bandwidth and improved system performance for customers and staff. This upgrade provides the PRA with the headroom to roll out additional online services over the coming years. As part of our ongoing change process it is planned that the Registry of Deeds Abstract Management Information System (RAMIS), which was launched in 1990, will be fully integrated into ITRIS during 2009. This will provide further improvements for our customers and additional efficiencies to our operations.

Further recognition of the value and success of the PRA's systems and services was the receipt of a second Public Service Excellence Award, during a ceremony in Dublin Castle on 18th April 2008.

All of this progress has enabled the PRA to build for the future. At the time of writing the first operational element of electronic conveyancing in Ireland, the PRA's eDischarges project, which is completely paperless, has been successfully launched. It is now planned to move on to further modules of electronic conveyancing.

As mentioned above, it is clear that the PRA now operates in an extremely challenging economic and managerial environment, where the organisation will have a reduced budget and fewer staff. Our challenge will be to continue to provide our customers with the improved level of service to which they have become accustomed. Whilst intake of work will inevitably reduce during 2009 there remains a large volume of casework on hands awaiting registration. It is planned to make further progress in reducing this work as we advance with the major objective for the PRA – the further extension of compulsory first registration.

I am confident, as has happened with all challenges faced in recent years, that continued good teamwork internally, by committed and enthusiastic staff, combined with an active approach to stakeholder involvement, will see the PRA successfully navigate its way to further successful outcomes in the new environment.


Catherine Treacy CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Progress against objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Extension of Compulsory First Registration (CFR)

Advance the completion of the Irish Land Register by extending Compulsory First Registration (CFR) while arresting the growth of unregistered titles.

The Authority, in accordance with its statutory mandate, continued to actively implement the strategies and options available to it to extend title registration.

By virtue of S.I. No. 81 of 2008, Compulsory First Registration (CFR) was extended to Counties Clare, Kilkenny, Louth, Sligo, Wexford and Wicklow from the 1st of October 2008.

- 8,342 unregistered titles were transferred from the deeds system to the title system, compared to 6,341 in 2007, an increase of 31.56%.
- Voluntary certification of title in compulsory first registration (CFR) areas increased significantly due to the successful implementation of an out-reach programme utilising the expertise of the professional staff of the Authority supported by comprehensive on-line information.
- The Authority is represented on the Ministerial Working Group set up to examine the business case for extending CFR based upon compulsory certification of title by solicitors.

The present estimate is that approximately 95% of the land mass and over 87.5 % of titles are now registered in the Land Registry.

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

2005	2006	2007	2008
1,716,662	1,770,233	1,808,552	1,849,388

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 2: Digital Mapping

Facilitate the eConveyancing and eRegistration initiatives by advancing the rollout of the Digital Mapping Project, with the ultimate objective of achieving full conversion of all registered land parcels by 2010.

The Digital Mapping Project proceeded throughout 2008 with counties Roscommon, Dublin (which brought the number of parcels digitised to over 1 million) Sligo, Kildare, Cavan and Cork completed. This resulted in approximately 1.5 million parcels being made available for case processing. The number of counties in which all registrations of new parcels are processed using the digital mapping technology had reached 15 by the end of 2008.

At the time of writing, there are now 11 counties remaining, with County Limerick currently undergoing Quality Assurance with an anticipated go live date of February 2009. Counties Mayo and Donegal are currently being prepared for digitisation. This phase is on target and within budget for completion in mid 2010.

As a result of the digitisation programme, customers have access to this digital data through the landdirect.ie service. These map related services have added some 4,000 new map related transactions per day to the existing daily transactions conducted through this service and more comprehensive information on the level of transactions is set out at Appendix 4.



PRA digital map showing registrations overlaid on Osi aerial photos

As a consequence of the digital mapping project, a number of new services were developed during 2008 including the Special Registration Map and an electronic Area Search facility. It is intended to further extend the range of services provided using the digital mapping data in 2009.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 3: eRegistration

Contribute to the national eConveyancing programme by preparing for and commencing roll out of an electronic Registration of Title (eRegistration) programme.

In line with Government policy to develop a system of eConveyancing, the PRA initiated its eRegistration Project in 2007.

A Project Board was established to direct the project and, acknowledging the importance of stakeholder engagement in the development of a successful system, representatives of the Law Society, the Irish Mortgage Council, the Revenue Commissioners and the Companies Registration Office were invited onto the board.

The first phase of this project was the development of an online system to discharge mortgages, known as eDischarges, which was developed in partnership with the Law Society and Irish Mortgage Council. This system will enable lending institutions to request the cancellation of registered charges by electronic means without the need to submit any paper to the PRA.

The development of an eDischarges system is the first step by the PRA in the development of a national system of electronic registration of title (eRegistration). The launch of eDischarges will also mark the delivery of the first element of eConveyancing in Ireland.



DATA CAPTURE OF FOLIOS

In order to support the Government policy of developing a system of eConveyancing, the PRA in 2008 commenced a project to data capture, in full digitised format, its entire remaining stock of some 800,000 folios.

Following a tendering process, a specialist company was appointed to undertake the data conversion task. The data capture phase of the project commenced in early 2008 and was supported by a team of PRA staff in our Roscommon office, who quality assured the data when returned from the bureau. A substantial number of folios were data captured by the end of the year and it is expected that the project will be completed on time, and within budget, before the end of 2009. This will mark an important milestone in the support of eConveyancing in Ireland.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 4: Legislative Framework**Ensure appropriate legislative provisions and Practice Directions are in place to achieve objectives.**

Part 3 of the Registration of Deeds and Title Act (providing for the modernisation of the Registry of Deeds services) came into effect on the 1st of May 2008. New Registration of Deeds Rules 2008 commenced in operation on that date under S.I. 52 of 2008. Subsequently a “working group” on Draft Rules and Practice Directions was established which, during 2008 has:

- Recommended to the Authority, for its approval, a Practice Direction on new Registry of Deeds Procedures, which was adopted on the 21st of April 2008.
- Considered draft Land Registration Rules 2008 providing for applications in electronic form for the cancellation of registered charges. The Rules (made by the Registration of Deeds and Title Rules Committee) came into operation on the 1st of September 2008.
- Recommended that the Authority approve a new Practice Direction relating to the registration of orders under the Criminal Justice Act 1994 and the Criminal Justice Act 1996, which recommendation was adopted on the 21st of April 2008.
- Recommended that the Authority engage in consultation with stakeholders (including the Law Society) in relation to its requirements under the Family Home Protection Act 1976 and Family Law Act 1995. The consultation took place in 2008 and a revised Practice Direction will be considered in 2009.

Work also progressed in relation to Rule changes and the review of practices arising from digitisation of the Land Registry map. Draft Land Registration Rules and a new Practice Direction in relation to this matter are expected to be implemented during 2009.

The eDischarges process will be governed by a new set of Rules (S.I. 326 of 2008) which came into effect on 1st September 2008 and the system will go live early in 2009.

Further progress was made in relation to Rule changes and the review of practices arising from the commencement of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008. Draft Land Registration and Registration of Deeds Rules and a new Practice Direction in relation to this matter will be considered in early 2009.

Under Section 4 of the Registration of Deeds and Title Act 2006, all the Acts under which the Registry of Deeds formerly operated (Registration of Deeds Act 1707, 1709, 1721, 1785, the Registry of Deeds (Ireland) Act 1822, 1832) were repealed and replaced with new provisions

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as set out in Part 3 of the Act (Sections 32 to 49). Part 3 of the 2006 Act commenced operation on the 1st of May 2008.

New Registry of Deeds Rules and Fees Order, providing for the modernisation of the Registry of Deeds, also commenced in operation on that date. The main rule changes were:

- the replacement of the memorial by a modern application form
- the replacement of Negative or Common searches by an Official Search
- the replacement of the Book Page and Number system with a Serial Number
- the fixing of priority of deeds in order of lodgement



PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

Objective 5: Developing Customer Service

Anticipate and meet customer expectations together with existing and emerging market demands, nationally and internationally.

EULIS

On the 21st November 2006, the PRA became a member of the European Land Information Service (EULIS). The overall objective of EULIS is to facilitate cross border lending, to create better conditions for borrowers and lenders in the European Credit Market, using the Internet as a medium for accessing land registration information.

Currently, EULIS consists of ten members (England and Wales, Scotland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Lithuania, Iceland and Ireland) who have agreed to work together on a cooperative basis. Since December 2007 professional customers of the PRA's www.landdirect.ie service have had quick and easy direct access to online land registration information and services in several other European countries.

Further information is available on the EULIS website at www.eulis.eu



PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

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 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. 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.

VISITORS TO THE REGISTRIES

A range of visits, to both Registries, by individuals and by groups were welcomed during 2008. Among the visitors to our offices was a delegation from the Ugandan Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development who were hosted as part of the Ireland Aid programme.

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP

This forum met on several occasions during 2008. 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.

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GIS USERS GROUP

With the ongoing development of products and services on foot of our Digital Mapping Project the need for a separate forum, to address evolving issues, was identified. With this in mind a GIS Users Group was established bringing together representatives of Government Departments, Local Authorities, State enterprises, academia and the representative bodies for surveyors. The group met twice during 2008 and further meetings are planned for 2009.

SEMINARS

A growing area of activity in recent years has been the involvement of staff from the PRA in seminars, conferences and 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 2008. These included:

ASPECTS OF FIRST REGISTRATION/CFR

- Law Society of Ireland, Clare Bar Association

DIGITAL MAPPING/LANDDIRECT.IE

- GIS Ireland Conference
- Society of Chartered Surveyors
- ESB
- Teagasc
- Bar Associations in Clare, Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford and Laois
- Roscommon County Council
- Bord na Mona and other Government departments

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

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- Annual Property and Conveyancing conference (Law Society)
- Irish Mortgage Council

USE OF THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

- Genealogical Society of Ireland

REGISTRY OF DEEDS RULES AND FORMS

- ESB

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The PRA'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.

The English version of the website www.prai.ie was re-vamped and re-launched on 15 February 2008. As part of the upgrade to our website a parallel Irish language website was launched later in 2008.

In line with the commitment given in our Scheme, all new static content which appears on the English site from 15 February 2008 also appears on the Irish site, with the exception of the Practice Directions and legal office notices which are of a technical legal nature.

A customised training course was provided to members of the Irish language team during 2008. Five members of staff in our Waterford office and four in our Chancery Street building are available to provide service in the Irish language at the public counters in those buildings. Information regarding Irish language courses available are posted on the staff Intranet. Details of our Irish language scheme are included in all Customer Service Training courses.

In April 2008, the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga carried out a review of the implementation of our scheme. The recommendations made in their report have since been implemented.

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Objective 6: Maintaining Customer Service

Provide excellent customer service within defined response times and determined quality standards. This will be achieved by:

- (a) Arresting the growth in the arrears of cases on hands, and**
- (b) Accelerating the reduction of the present arrears of casework over a 3 year period.**

LAND REGISTRY

During 2008 a reduction in the overall arrear of cases on hands was recorded. In the main category of work "dealings" the arrear was reduced from 214,545 to 210,655. As a result of our improved productivity levels the average turnaround times for cases was also improved. The details of the levels of activity in various categories are set out hereunder and further statistics are provided at Appendix 2.

The total number of applications for registration completed during 2008 was 253,132 made up as follows:

■ Dealings	246,512
■ First Registration - based on examination of title	3,275
■ Section 49 Applications	1,370
■ Ground Rent Applications	1,620
■ Land Commissions Applications	355
Total	253,132

This total of 253,132 completions resulted in 572,604 new registrations being made during the year. The total number of dealings completed was a new record and was an increase of 12.7% on the 2007 level. More complete details of output for 2008 and comparisons with previous years is set out at Appendix 2.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS

The number of registrations recorded in the Registry of Deeds during 2008 was 94,350 which was a 5.6% reduction on the record levels recorded in 2007. The Registry continues to maintain an "up to date" service.

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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 81,862 applicants have purchased their ground rents and acquired the fee simple to their dwelling houses under the vesting certificate scheme.



The PRA continued to operate the scheme in 2008, which saw the intake of consent applications increase by 9% [826 as opposed to 757 in 2007] and output of such cases reduce by 25% [595 as opposed to 798 in 2007]. This reduction was as a result of diversion of staff to other casework and an increase in cases under query.

The year saw a 16% reduction [from 989 to 830] in the intake of arbitration applications. Turnaround times for such cases improved in 2008 with only 94 cases awaiting the attention of the Arbitrator at the end of 2008 compared to 177 at the end of 2007.

A total of €191,000 was paid out in 2008 in respect of purchase money applications compared to €130,000 in 2007. Details of the activity in 2008 and the comparative figures for 2006 and 2007 are shown in the table at Appendix 5.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

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	2005	2006	2007	2008
No. of professional users	1,700	9,500	10,900	12,741	13,872
No. of online transactions*	0.2 million	1.7 million	2.1 million	2.9 million	3 million

* The number of online transactions includes fee paying and non fee paying services, transactions and activities availed of by our customers. It also includes electronic applications for registration (eForm 17), enquiries by customers regarding the current status of an application and a number of services related to our digital mapping service.

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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 site received 2.8 million visits with 4 million page views
- The www.prai.ie homepage was viewed almost 1.6 million times
- The landdirect.ie homepage was accessed almost 1.2 million times
- The new Registry of Deeds eForms page was accessed over 140,000 times
- Practice Directions were accessed more than 110,000 times
- The Certification of Title section was visited almost 23,000 times
- There were 180,000 unique visitors to the site



PRA website was redesigned and upgraded.

SERVICE DELIVERY TARGETS

The service delivery targets for certified copy folios applied for via landdirect.ie were achieved throughout 2008 and at times were exceeded.

The target for the issue of certified 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 target for Official Map Searches was exceeded during 2008, with 99.06% of searches completed inside 5 days.

The target for the availability of reference numbers for dealings lodged by post or at public counters was achieved throughout 2008. Dealing reference numbers were available through landdirect.ie within 1 day of lodgement.

All of the service delivery targets set out in the Registry of Deeds Customer Charter were achieved throughout 2008.

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Objective 7: Organisational Development

Maintain a responsive and flexible organisation with the capacity to deliver on organisational objectives.

On 8th July 2008, the Minister for Finance announced that all Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities – other than Health and Education – would be required to reduce their payroll bill by 3% by the end of 2009. In addition, the funding for some temporary staff in the PRA was withdrawn from the end of 2008.

The PRA has identified a number of measures to reduce the payroll bill including a reduction in staffing numbers. Vacancies have not been filled and some staff have been re-deployed to other offices. The number of staff employed by the PRA at the end of 2008 was 686 compared to 706 at the end of 2007, a reduction of 4%.

At the 31st December 2008 there were:

- 752 people, filling 685.905 legal, administrative and technical posts in the PRA
- 209 staff (28% of the workforce) were availing of work-sharing options

In addition 51 staff left the PRA in 2008 through resignations, retirements, transfers and career breaks. Recruitment of permanent and temporary staff was organised using the services of the Public Appointments Service. Staff also transferred into the PRA on foot of the Government's decentralisation programme. 33 permanent staff (5% of the authorised posts) joined the PRA during 2008. In addition, 44 were recruited on temporary contracts during 2008 to cover term time vacancies.

As can be seen from Appendix 6 staff turnover was lower in 2008 than in previous years. The PRA applied for and was granted its own recruitment licence by the Commission for Public Service Appointments on 12th March 2008 thus enabling it to conduct recruitment on its own behalf if required.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Performance Management and Development System is now embedded within the organisation and is used to manage all aspects of staff performance.

In addition to their contribution to the work of the organisation, many of the staff of the PRA are involved in community and voluntary activities outside of the organisation. In particular staff have traditionally taken the opportunity to mark the Christmas festival by donating to

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nominated charities. In 2008 staff in the Waterford office donated money to Breadline, an organisation for the homeless in Waterford and, through the Society of St Vincent de Paul, provided gifts for children at Christmas. Staff in the Dublin offices made a donation to the Irish Cancer Society.

(See Appendix 6 at the end of this report for comparative staff numbers with previous years).

PARTNERSHIP

The formal Partnership system, first established in 1998, continues to play an important role in the delivery of improved customer services and in the engagement of staff in the Public Service Modernisation Programme. A Review and Transitional Agreement 2008-2009 under the main *Towards 2016 Agreement* was agreed by the Social Partners in the later part of the year and in November 2008 the Report of the Task Force on the Public Service underlined the role of and challenges to Partnership in the implementation of its recommendations.



Within the PRA, the Partnership committee met 3 times during 2008. The main matters considered during the year were the operational re-organisation of the PRA, rationalisation of office accommodation in Dublin and integration of grades. The first two items were agreed and their implementation was effectively completed by the end of the year. Unfortunately it was not possible to make progress on proposals for the integration of grades at this time. Implementation of the PRA's Action Plan under *Towards 2016* also continued during 2008.

See Appendix 7 for members of Partnership committee.

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Objective 8: Corporate Governance

Ensure that the organisation carries out its functions in an environment that reflects appropriate standards of corporate governance, financial management and control.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Property Registration Authority was established by the Registration of Deeds and Title Act 2006. It consists of 11 members appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Chief Executive implements the policies and decisions of the Authority and is accountable to the Authority generally as regards governance and performance. Reports are presented to the Authority by the Chief Executive on all matters pertaining to the implementation of the PRA's strategies and objectives, including financial reports and the PRA's Risk



Register, which are discussed and approved by the Authority at its regular meetings. A progress report on the PRA's Strategic Plan was presented to the Authority in late 2008 and the progress made on the plan during 2008 is detailed throughout this report. Members of the Authority also participate in joint Authority/Staff Working Groups and are represented on the PRA's Audit Committee.

The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer and in that capacity is personally accountable to the Oireachtas in respect of all funds voted for the PRA for the provision of services. The Accounting Officer must prepare, on an annual basis, an account of expenditure and receipts, known as the Appropriation Account, and present this account to the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Accounting Officer may then be called to the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the Account.

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OVERALL GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

The overall Governance and Control Framework within which the Authority operates, is mainly guided by the recommendations of the Working Group on the Accountability of Secretaries General and Heads of Offices (the Mullarkey Report), together with the Public Financial Procedures, as issued by the Department of Finance. The main elements of that Governance Framework are as follows:

AUDIT COMMITTEE

An Audit Committee consisting of a number of members external to the PRA, together with two Authority members and a member of staff, is in place since 2007. The Audit Committee reviews and assesses the work of the Internal Audit Unit. The Committee also reviews the Authority's approach to Risk Management. Four meetings of the Audit Committee were held in 2008.

INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT

Audits are conducted by the Internal Audit Unit across the range of activities of the Authority including Financial, operational and governance. Seven audits were completed in 2008. All reports were submitted directly to the Accounting Officer and to the Audit Committee.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A Risk Register in accordance with the Department of Finance guidelines is maintained on an ongoing basis. The maintenance of the register is designed to ensure that risks are identified and assessed and necessary mitigating actions are, where resources allow, put in place.

The Risk Register is compiled by Senior Management and presented to the members of the Authority on a quarterly basis.

DATA PROTECTION

A review of the PRA Data Protection guidelines was commenced in 2008 and two new Office Notices on Data Protection were published. These covered;

1. Rights and responsibilities under the DP Acts and
2. Personal data of staff.

These are the first in a series of updated Data Protection Office Notices which, combined, will form the revised Data Protection policy of the PRA. This project will continue in 2009.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

PROCUREMENT

All procurement activity in the PRA is guided by the Public Procurement Guidelines and Policies published by the Department of Finance. There is a framework of procurement procedures in place including segregation of duties, regular management reporting and a system for the authorisation of expenditure. Formal sanction is sought from Department of Finance for all expenditure above a certain threshold.

To ensure that the Authority continues to adhere to best procurement practice, it is intended to develop a Corporate Procurement Plan in 2009.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

A comprehensive system of Financial Reporting is in place within the Property Registration Authority;

- The Chief Executive provides a financial overview to Authority members on a monthly basis;
- Formal reports on actual expenditure against budgets are submitted to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Department of Finance on a monthly basis;
- Returns of Fee income received are submitted to the Exchequer on a weekly basis;
- The Annual Appropriation Account is prepared and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- Relevant and timely reports containing Financial and non Financial information are provided to Senior Management.

Ongoing expenditure management in 2008 resulted in the achievement of budgetary targets in respect of both current and capital expenditure.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

Objective 9: Decentralisation**Relocate part of the Authority's operations to Roscommon pursuant to the Government's decentralisation programme.**

Towards the end of 2008, the Government announced that it had reviewed the decentralisation programme and identified priority elements on which implementation should proceed at that time. The decentralisation of part of the PRA to Roscommon was one of the projects identified. On foot of this decision the PRA is continuing with the implementation of its decentralisation project.

Phase 1 of the implementation is substantially complete. By the end of 2008 some 86 staff were located in temporary office accommodation in the Government Buildings complex at Convent Road, Roscommon. An intensive training programme was delivered to these staff during 2008 with ongoing support provided by experienced staff from the Dublin and Waterford offices. The increasing experience of the new staff enabled the processing of an expanded range of cases in the Roscommon office during 2008.

The title to the site for the scheduled building in Roscommon was transferred to the Office of Public Works in 2007. During 2008 the OPW selected the preferred bidder, for the construction project.

As part of the wider decentralisation programme 14 staff were released by the PRA to other Departments and offices during 2008.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

Objective 10: Office Accommodation**Provide appropriate office accommodation for the organisation.**

As part of the overall PRA organisational transformation programme a project was initiated to rationalise accommodation in Dublin. Our Public Office in Chancery Street was upgraded by the OPW thereby enabling the merging of 8 public offices which had operated from three different buildings into a single location providing an improved service for our customers and more efficient use of resources. A further benefit was that we vacated the offices which we had occupied in the Irish Life Centre since 1994 and surrendered this accommodation to the Office of Public Works for alternative use.

During 2008, as a result of work undertaken, six public offices in our Waterford offices were re-located to a single location within the building.

Significant improvements to our storage facility in Santry were also undertaken during 2008.

Financial Report - Summary 2008

Income

Fees received by the Property Registration Authority by way of cash, cheques, revenue stamps etc. amounted to €65.6m in 2008 as against €79.7m in 2007. This was a decrease of €14.1m or 18% over 2007 revenues.

Expenditure

Actual expenditure from the Property Registration Authority Vote for 2008 amounted to €46.2m (as against €41.5m for 2007 – an increase of 11%) leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €19.4m (as against €38.2m for 2007).

Of the total sum expended of €46.2m, expenditure on salaries and overtime amounted to €32.9m; this represented 71% of all expenditure. During 2008, expenditure on salaries and overtime increased by €2.5m, or 8% over 2007.

Total Current Expenditure for 2008 amounted to €41.1m as against €37.9m for 2007 (an increase of €3.2m).

Capital Expenditure for 2008 amounted to €5.1m as against €3.6m for 2007 (an increase of €1.5m).

When the following costs are included:

- €3m under Vote 7 - Superannuation and Retired Allowances
- €3m under Vote 10 - Office of Public Works (Current €2m and Capital €1m)
- €0.3m under Vote 19 – Financial Shared Services
- €4.4m in respect of notional rents on State-owned properties

the total expenditure in 2008 increases to €56.9m and leaves a notional excess of income over expenditure of €8.64m for 2008 (as against €26.4m for 2007).

This total represents a decrease of €17.76m or 67% on 2007.

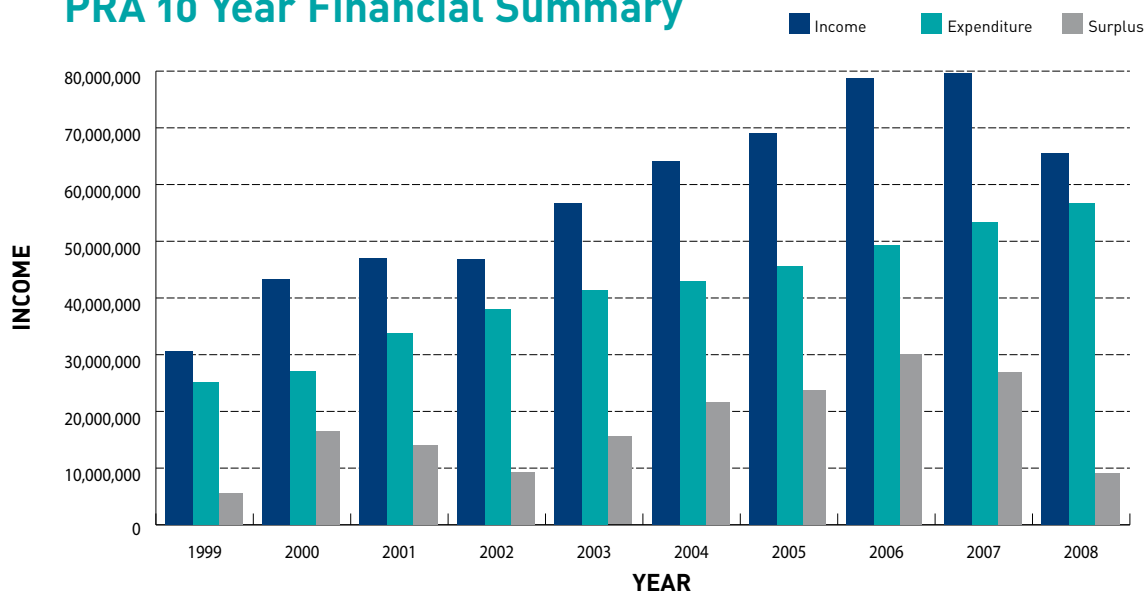
FINANCIAL REPORT - SUMMARY 2008

Prompt Payments of Accounts Act 1997

It is the policy of the Property Registration Authority to fully comply with the terms of the Prompt Payments 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 2008 a total of 30 invoices incurred late payment penalties. The value of all invoices that were paid late amounted to €214,042. This represents 1% of the total payments falling within the terms of the Regulations. The total interest paid during 2008 resulting from late payments amounted to €768.

PRA 10 Year Financial Summary



External Scrutiny

A number of additional mechanisms to verify and quality assure the activities and services of the PRA are in place. These include:

Performance Verification Group

In May 2008, the PRA submitted a progress report on the implementation of its modernisation programme to the Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform who subsequently verified progress on the items set out in the PRA's Action Plan under *Towards 2016*. These included the introduction of new Registry of Deeds Rules, the further extension of Compulsory First Registration and preparatory work for the first phase of Electronic Registration. These projects are detailed elsewhere in this report.

Parliamentary Questions

- 752 e-mails were received via reps@prai.ie - a mail box which has been specifically established to deal with queries from members of the Oireachtas. All communications received were dealt with inside 48 hours during 2008.
- 5 Parliamentary Questions were tabled by members of the Oireachtas and replied to during 2008. 1 related to a registration application and 4 were non registration related.
- 88 letters/representations from TD's and Senators were received and dealt with during 2008.

The volume of activity in the PQ area is much reduced from the levels of previous years. This is evidence that the new system for members of the Oireachtas, to submit their questions electronically, is working very well.

Office of the Ombudsman

- 10 letters were received from the Ombudsman's Office relating to complaints received by that office. All were duly processed during 2008.

Complaints Procedure

- 9 formal complaints were received during 2008 and were dealt with under the PRA's complaints procedure.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

Freedom of Information requests

When the PRA was established in 2006, the Land Registry and Registry of Deeds came under the control and management of the new organisation and all records held by the Registries became vested in the Authority.

Arrangements are underway to schedule the PRA for FOI purposes and the necessary regulations are currently being drafted. It is envisaged that this process will be completed in 2009.

It should be noted however, that as many of the records held by the PRA are routinely available to members of the public we will continue to deal with queries and requests regarding access to records outside of FOI legislation.

Awards

The Property Registration Authority's Integrated Title Registration Information System (ITRIS) received a Public Service Excellence Award during a ceremony in Dublin Castle on 18th April 2008.

The Public Service Excellence Awards, which are presented by An Taoiseach every two years, recognise commitment, creativity and innovation behind important projects that add value to public services used by citizens.

This award was a further validation for the PRA of the success of various projects, which has previously been recognised by a variety of parties in recent years.



Catherine Treacy, Chief Executive receives a Public Service Excellence award from An Taoiseach Mr Bertie Ahern TD.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

Financial Summary 1999 to 2008

	Income €	Expenditure €	Surplus €
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
2008	65,569,135	56,762,071	8,807,064

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 2

Land Registry Workflow – All Categories

For comparison purposes this table shows the figures for 2008, 2007 and 2006 at 31st December.

Application Type	Year	Intake	Output	Cases under query	Work in progress
DEALINGS	2008	243,917	246,512	34,250	176,405
	2007	260,180	217,954	31,921	182,624
	2006	242,476	220,072	35,617	139,029
EXAMINERS AND SECTION 49 CASES	2008	4,199	4,645	5,384	6,802
	2007	4,951	4,216	4,505	6,349
	2006	4,205	4,035	4,347	5,703
GROUND RENT APPLICATIONS	2008	1,656	1,620	813	434
	2007	1,746	1,914	897	338
	2006	1,576	1,585	965	441
LAND COMMISSION CASES	2008	48	355	669	2,982
	2007	120	510	736	4,179
	2006	464	1,385	878	3,812
FILED PLANS & COPY FOLIOS	2008	211,499	211,660	N/A	5,685
	2007	201,475	200,523		5,846
	2006	219,477	217,126		4,894
SCHEME MAP APPROVAL	2008	1,034	882	102	50
	2007	1,986	1,671	N/A	1,818
	2006	2,082	1,520	N/A	1,385
COPY INSTRUMENTS	2008	10,619	10,420	172	2,052
	2007	11,578	11,353	N/A	2,620
	2006	12,331	11,943	N/A	2,477
OFFICIAL MAP SEARCHES	2008	3,328	3,327	N/A	89
	2007	4,067	4,067		0
	2006	5,417	5,451		96

Notes:

1. An estimate of 1,500 cases has been made in respect of applications which were recorded prior to 2008 as "Dealings" and subsequently changed to "Examiners Cases". While this does not affect the overall total number of cases processed it results in an understatement in the cases actually processed by examiners and an overstatement of the number processed by dealings sections.

APPENDIX

2. An audit of the arrear of Land Commission cases was undertaken in 2008 and the arrear as shown above has been adjusted to reflect the actual number remaining to be processed. The amended figure accounts for cases which were completed but not recorded as such over the years.
3. The arrear of scheme map approvals has been adjusted to take account of the actual number awaiting attention which was overstated in previous years.
4. The intake figure for copy folios and filed plans includes 8,307 applications where the folio or filed plan was re-issued for no fee.

SUMMARY

Applications Completed	253,132*
No of transactions	419,432
No of Registrations	572,604

*Includes Dealings, First Registrations, S. 49, Land Commission and Ground Rent applications.

During 2008 there were 77,204 new folios opened and 302,265 individual folios modified on foot of the above activity.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 3

Applications received

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

	2008	2007	2006
Applications for Registration*	248,164	264,747	247,024
Certified Copy Folios and Filed Plans	211,499	201,475	219,477
Certified Copy Instruments	10,619	11,578	12,331
Official Map Searches	3,328	4,067	5,417
Folio Inspections	716,650	805,757	743,536
Names Index Searches	203,262	225,388	228,919
Total	1,393,522	1,513,012	1,456,704

*The figures for Applications for registrations as shown above include the number of Dealings, Section 49 applications, First Registrations and Irish Land Commission cases lodged. As outlined at Appendix 2 an application could result in one or several registrations.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 4

Digital Mapping Activity

The following table shows the level of activity being undertaken online, by our customers, in respect of our Digital Mapping service, for which the capacity to measure was developed in 2009. Some of these services are alternative mechanisms for undertaking searches and others are new services. This will result in a gradual reduction of the demand for some of the traditional methods of searching as outlined in Appendix 3. As we will have the statistics for the level of activity in respect of a full year available is proposed to include the figures shown in Appendices 3 and 4 in a composite table from 2009 onwards.

Month	Geo-directory search	Townland Index/Map Index search	Inspect Map	Monthly Total
April	12,373	28,857	36,890	78,120
May	11,246	28,009	30,930	70,185
June	10,374	24,983	28,107	63,464
July	12,871	33,481	34,263	80,615
August	11,561	27,799	29,878	69,238
September	12,459	29,855	33,183	75,497
October	12,925	30,280	33,647	76,852
November	11,439	28,447	31,424	71,310
December	8,307	20,592	23,323	52,222
Total for 9 months				637,503

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 5

Grounds Rents Activity

	Year	Intake	Output
Arbitration Cases	2008	830	1,025
	2007	989	1,062
	2006	749	866
Consent Cases	2008	826	595
	2007	757	798
	2006	826	718
Total	2008	1,656	1,620
	2007	1,746	1,914
	2006	1,575	1,584

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 6

Staff Resources

	2006	2007	2008
Average Authorised Posts	653	688	705
Average Posts filled	631	670	685
Staff exiting	66	64	51
Staff assigned	88	120	77

APPENDIX 7

Membership of the Partnership Committee during 2008

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 (Legal)
 Michael Edwards, Staff representative
 John Flynn, IMPACT Technical and Survey Branch
 Patricia Grant, Staff representative
 Jackie Gray, Secretary
 Karen Gray, Staff representative
 Declan Hayden, CPSU
 Nuala Keaveney, Staff representative
 Fran Leahy, Human Resources Manager
 Andrew Lyons, Staff representative
 Greg McDermott, AHPCS
 Celine McGann, Staff representative
 John Murphy, IMPACT Legal Branch
 Ernan Tobin IMPACT Technical and Survey Branch
 John O'Sullivan, ICT Manager
 John Power, CPSU
 Michael Treacy, Corporate Services Manager

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 8**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
- 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.

Land Registry

Chancery Street, Dublin 7, DX 228

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

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Deals with Counties Cavan, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Westmeath, Wicklow.

Cork Road, Waterford, DX 44090

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

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm

- Deals with Counties Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford.

Registry of Deeds

Henrietta Street, Dublin 1, DX 199

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

Public Office Open: 10.00am-4.30pm.

- Deals with all counties.

Ground Rents

Chancery Street, Dublin 7, DX 228

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

Public Office Open: 10.30am-4.30pm.

- Deals with all counties.

www.prai.ie

The English language version is the original text of this report.

Notes