

Director-General's Message

The 2006/07 year provided many new challenges for Commerce, as we strengthened our position as a key service provider and regulator in the government sector.

The Department contributed to building a stronger NSW economy by assisting government agencies to deliver their services and programs effectively and efficiently.

Commerce performed strongly throughout the year, with notable achievements in the areas of infrastructure, information and communications technology, industrial relations, fair trading, environment and property.

Staff in the Office of Public Works and Services and NSW Procurement ensured that taxpayers received high value for money in designing, constructing and managing capital works valued at over one billion dollars, developing innovative goods and services contracts and introducing new initiatives in information and communications technology.

Staff in the Office of Industrial Relations and the Office of Fair Trading strived to make doing business simple and fair for consumers, traders, employers and workers.

The Office of Industrial Relations implemented a number of initiatives to protect young workers and provide them with fair employment conditions. A new website called Young People at Work now provides young workers with information about their rights and responsibilities at work.

The Office of Fair Trading implemented regulatory changes that will bring about significant changes for communities and businesses in the areas of motor vehicle repairs, real estate, small business and in home building. Staff across the State responded to over six million calls for assistance during the year.

In July 2006, the Premier launched *People First*, a coordinated approach to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) investment across government. A savings target of \$565 million over the next four years has been set. This will be achieved by consolidating Government ICT to reduce duplication, amalgamating infrastructure and aggregating purchasing. Just one example was the new personal computer agreements signed during the year that will save government agencies more than \$120 million over the four year life of their equipment.

This financial year, as a result of proactively marketing the benefits of smartbuy, the Government's electronic marketplace, agencies achieved estimated total savings of \$34.5 million, effectively doubling the savings figure achieved last year.

With the State battling one of the most severe droughts in memory all year, Commerce was called on to provide a range of specialist services to state and local government bodies.

Under the Sydney Metropolitan Water Plan, Commerce played a major role in securing additional supplies of water from Warragamba Dam, working in partnership with the Sydney Catchment Authority and other agencies.

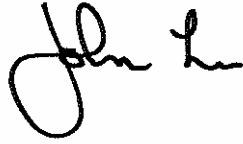
Councils on the Central Coast, North Coast and Southern Highlands also benefited from the expertise available within Commerce in managing their scarce water supplies. Commerce designed and project managed the construction of a pipeline from the Hunter to the Central Coast to alleviate the threat of dwindling supplies to local communities in the region.

Towards the end of the year, in June 2007, natural disasters were declared in the Hunter and Central Coast regions. Once again, Commerce's long standing expertise in this field was called upon, with staff undertaking key engineering, communications and technical roles on a 24 hour basis as well as providing information and assistance to affected consumers through the government's Disaster Recovery Centre.

The year was not without organisational change, with the State Records Authority joining Commerce in November 2006, along with Businesslink and the shared services division of the former Department of Natural Resources. With the formation of the State Property Authority in September 2006, the majority of functions of the State Property branch in Commerce were transferred to the Minister for Finance. The property valuation services went to the Department of Lands in March 2007.

Commerce's strong performance through the year could not have been achieved without the skills and dedication of staff and I thank them for their valued contributions.

I would also like to acknowledge the present Minister for Commerce, the Hon Eric Roozendaal MLC and his predecessor, the Hon John Della Bosca MLC, for their support and direction through the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lee', is positioned above the printed name and title.

John Lee
Director-General