

Annual Technical Reports on Patent Information Activities in 1998 New Zealand

I Evolution of patent activities:

- During the year 5436 applications were received. This represents a five percent drop in new applications compared to 1997. The number of PCT Treaty applications entering national phase were 3226, this is drop of about two percent over the previous year.
- The number of applications granted during the year was 4091, representing an increase of about 12 percent on 1997. This increase in registrations is directly attributed to a project started by the Office in September 1996 to eliminate the backlog of unexamined applications. The project was completed by the middle of 1997.

II Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, distribution and use of primary and secondary sources of patent information:

- The Office on a monthly basis produces a Journal detailing amongst other things patent information such as new applications received, patents accepted and published and patents sealed. In addition the Office publishes quarterly the "IPONZ Bulletin", containing general information about the Office. Further, the Office maintains an Internet Homepage detailing information about the Office, how to make applications with us, practice notes and access to online bibliographic searching of published patent specifications back to 1986. In addition, any changes or proposed changes to Office practice in relation to patents are made through a regular communication posted to the majority of clients and referred to as the "Information for Client".
- All published New Zealand Patent specifications are made available to the public on microfiche in the Information Centre. In addition the Information Centre provides the public access to published specifications of numerous other countries, such as Australia, United States of America, Canada, EPO, Great Britain, and WIPO published PCT Treaty pamphlets, in a variety of media such as paper, microfilm, microfiche, and CD-Rom.
- Development work began on the project (Intellectual Property Online or "IPOL") to turn the Office into a fully electronic office providing clients with online access through the Internet for electronic filing and maintenance of patents as well as online searching of patents.
- Preliminary work was begun in relation to the electronic back capture of patent abridgements and published specifications. Searching of patent abridgements back to 1986 was made available online through the Internet. In addition, work was begun in order to publish the monthly

Journal on CD-Rom with the first issue on CD-Rom being published in January 1999.

III Matters concerning abstracting, classification, reclassifying and indexing of technical information contained in patent documents:

- All applications published have an abridgement written in English for the application by a patents examiner.
- A manual card index of all New Zealand patent abridgements published in the Journal is maintained. The Office uses the International Patent Classification (sixth edition). While all new applications are classified into the IPC sixth edition, the Office also has a number of abridgements classified into IPC fifth edition as well as a number of in a much older New Zealand unique classification system.
- Online searching of patent abridgements published since 1986 is available through the Internet. The Office currently uses and makes available to the public in the Information Centre an Advance Revelations database, which provides searchable bibliographic data on patent applications.

IV Search file establishment and upkeep:

- In addition to card indexes of published New Zealand abridgements, examination staff have access to numerous electronic databases available through the Internet. In addition, the Office provides staff with access to numerous CD-Roms utilising a CD-Rom tower attached to the Office LAN containing such discs as Access via Mimosa on a CD-Rom, US bibliographic information and numerous dictionaries and encyclopedias accessible. An extensive technical library of publications is also available to examination staff.
- The card indexes of published New Zealand abridgements is update monthly coinciding with the monthly publication of the Journal. CD-Rom discs used for searching are updated regularly as updated discs become available. The technical library is reviewed regular to ensure the information is current and relevant.

- The Information Centre maintains a collection of patent specification published from a number of countries, including Australia, Canada, US, Japan, Great Britain, European Patent Office and WIPO, and stored in a number of different mediums such as paper, microfilm, microfiche and CD-Rom. These publications are available to both the public and the examination staff to utilise.

V Activities in the field of computerization and other mechanized search systems:

- The Office utilises a PC network using Microsoft NT and Novell. Each PC operates in Microsoft's Windows 98 environment.
- An internal electronic database (Advanced Revelations) is used to record all register information concerning applications and registered patents. Public access to this database as well as a paper copy of the register information are available in the Information Centre.
- Work began on a project to develop a fully electronic office for the filing and processing of patent applications (Intellectual Property Online – IPOL), utilising Oracle as the database and the Internet as the access route for external users. It is anticipated that External users, via the Internet, will be able to conduct remote searching. Scoping for a project to electronically back capture published abridgements in OCR format and to electronically image patent specifications began.

VI Administration of the industrial property office library and services available to the public:

- The Intellectual Property Office Library is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm, and no appointment is necessary.
- Client Services Staff are available to assist clients with lodging patent applications, and to assist with classification of patents, searching the New Zealand patent register, locating the complete specification of registered patents.
- Client Services staff maintain the Information Centre and manage the collection of old and new material. Some of this work has involved the preparation of old registers to be relocated to the National Archives of New Zealand.
- Clients currently do not have to pay a photocopying charge or a printing charge from the Information Centre, but a charging system will be implemented soon.

- The following information services are available to the public:
International Patent Classification:
 - Abridgement cards of published patents entered on the New Zealand Register.
 - The Patent Register.
 - Access to complete specifications of registered patents is available on microfiche.
 - Access to some overseas patents with specifications is available on CDROM and microfilm from database programmes including US Bibliographic and Mimosa.

- The public photocopying service previously provided by the Office has been contracted out to a third party.

- The Office has an Internet homepage, the address being www.iponz.govt.nz. General patent information can be obtained from this site but at present the availability of patent specifications is still under construction.

- At a regional level we are part of the New Zealand Libraries Interloan system, whereby we provide information to other New Zealand members for a charge. Selected libraries throughout New Zealand also receive copies of the Patent Office Journal for public access.

VII Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent document and information:

- At an international level the Information Centre provides copies of New Zealand patent specifications to a number of overseas countries, namely: The United Kingdom, Australia, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Austria and Bulgaria.

- Currently, the medium allowed for filing applications and used for the exchange of priority documents is paper. Development work began during the year on IPOL (see above), which will provide for the electronic online filing of applications and exchange of documents.

- The Office adheres to the principles of the changeover to electronic media and development work began during the year. It is envisaged a move to CD-ROM in the succeeding financial year will be made.

VIII Other relevant matters concerning education and training in, and promotion of, the use of patent information, including technical assistance to developing countries:

- Assistance was given to the Kingdom of Tonga in helping them with the set up of their intellectual property office.
- A project was begun to look at ways of assisting private applicants (those who choice not to use an agent) in the registration of patents.