

THE HON. JOHN KOBELKE MLA
Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection

In accordance with Section 31 of the *Land Valuers Licensing Act 1978*, the Land Valuers Licensing Board is pleased to submit for your information and for presentation to Parliament the Annual Report for the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.

Bryan Gardiner
CHAIRMAN

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STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This year has seen a marked increase in the number of new licence applications resulting from a healthy economy and, to a lesser extent, from a Government agency now requiring many of its employees to hold licences. In terms of compliance matters, there were again only a relatively small number of complaints. It is, however, important to note that no systemic problems appear obvious in the industry.

The introduction of the State Administrative Tribunal ("SAT") on 1 January 2005 has been a significant initiative by the State Government for a number of Boards and Committees. All disciplinary matters normally heard by the Board will now be the responsibility of the SAT which will also be the body to review certain decisions by the Board.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Tony Gorman who has been appointed as a deputy member of the Board during the year. I also wish to acknowledge the ongoing support provided by the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection, Hon John Kobelke MLA and that of his officers in the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection who assist the Board in its statutory functions.

Bryan Gardiner

CHAIRMAN

THE LAND VALUERS LICENSING BOARD

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE LAND VALUERS LICENSING BOARD

The Land Valuers Licensing Board is a licensing and supervisory authority for people who conduct valuations of land. The Board is responsible to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection.

The Board administers the licensing system for land valuers, acts as a disciplinary body¹ and contributes to the public policy agenda by making recommendations on legislative matters to the Minister.

The Board is established under the *Land Valuers Licensing Act 1978* ("the Act"). The Act and the Land Valuers Licensing Regulations 1979 ("the Regulations") set out the licensing requirements for land valuers and invest the Board with the authority to hold disciplinary Inquiries. A Code of Conduct is established under the Act and provides for enforceable standards of conduct for land valuers. There is also a Gazetted Schedule which regulates the maximum amounts of remuneration for the various kinds of services rendered by licensed valuers.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Act requires that the Board be comprised of members with a range of legal and valuation expertise. The composition of the Board and the qualifications relevant to each position are prescribed in Section 6 of the Act.

The membership of the Board comprises:

- (a) a Chairman who is a legal practitioner of not less than seven years standing who is nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the Law Society of Western Australia [section 6(1)(a)];
- (b) one member who is nominated by the Minister [section 6(1)(b)];
- (c) two members who are experienced in the valuation of land, are members of the Australian Property Institute, and are nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the Western Australian Division of that Institute [section 6(1)(c)];

¹ As from 1st January 2005 the State Administrative Tribunal became responsible for hearing complaints concerning occupational misconduct and reviewing decisions concerning licensing.

- (d) one member who is experienced in the valuation of land, is a member of the Australian Property Institute, and is nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia [section 6(1)(d)].

Each member may be appointed for a period of not more than four years and is eligible for re-appointment. The Governor may appoint a person as the deputy of a member.

BOARD PROFILE

Mr Bryan Gardiner (Chairman)

Mr Gardiner was appointed, pursuant to Section 6(1)(a) of the Act, as Chairman of the Board on 26 November 2002 and his current term expires on 21 October 2005.

Mr Gardiner is a qualified legal practitioner operating his own practice which, among other matters, handles issues relating to property transactions. He is also a director of an international company and a Government appointee on a regulatory Commission.

Dr Pat Addison (Member)

Dr Addison was appointed, pursuant to Section 6(1)(b) of the Act, as a Member of the Board on 13 April 2004 and her term of appointment expires on 31 October 2006.

Dr Addison has a PhD in accounting and is a principal in an accounting practice and a lecturer at a tertiary institution. She has also been a member of the Land Valuation Tribunal since 1997.

Deputy: Mrs Hazel Butorac

Mr John McNamara (Member and Deputy Chairman)

Mr McNamara was first appointed, pursuant to Section 6(1)(c) of the Act, as a Member of the Board on 18 January 1994. His current term of appointment expires on 31 October 2006.

Mr McNamara has extensive experience as a land valuer. He is a past-National President and a Life Fellow of the Australian Property Institute.

Deputy: Mr John Martin

Ms Jenny Le-Fevre

Ms Le-Fevre was appointed pursuant to Section 6(1)(c) of the Act. She was first appointed as a member on 7 May 1996 and her current term expires on 30 October 2005.

Ms Le-Fevre has extensive experience as a land valuer, is a Fellow of the Australian Property Institute and operates a valuation practice.

Deputy: Tony Gorman (as from 22 December 2004)

Mr Kingsley Lewis

Mr Lewis was appointed pursuant to Section 6(1)(d) of the Act. He was first appointed as a member on 22 October 1999 and was re-appointed during the year. His current term expires on 21 October 2005.

Mr Lewis has extensive experience as a land valuer, is a Fellow of the Australian Property Institute and a member of the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia.

Deputy: Keith Wilson

CHANGES TO BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mr Tony Gorman (Deputy Member)

Mr Gorman was appointed on 22 December 2004 as the Deputy Member for Ms Jenny Le Fevre. Mr Gorman replaced Mr John Persse who resigned as deputy member on 24 March 2004.

Mr Gorman has been a licensed land valuer since 1995, is a Divisional Councillor with the Australian Property Institute and a partner in a valuation practice.

REMUNERATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Board members are remunerated on the basis of their attendance at meetings. The following rates apply:

Chairman

For meetings of four hours or less - \$310

For meetings of more than four hours duration - \$470

For hearing inquiries - \$155 per hour

Members

For meetings of four hours or less - \$210

For meetings of more than four hours duration - \$320

The Board understands that the Minister will review the sitting fees applicable to the various Consumer Protection regulatory boards to take into account time spent for preparing for Board meetings. The transfer of the responsibility for disciplinary inquiries from the boards to the State Administrative Tribunal will also be considered in this review.

BOARD ADMINISTRATION

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board held 12 meetings during the financial year.

The Board generally meets every month and considers matters such as applications for land valuers licences, policy and legislation issues, industry education issues, compliance matters and, where required, applications for disciplinary proceedings against licensed valuers.

BOARD SERVICES

The Department of Consumer and Employment Protection ("the Department"), through its State Government budget allocation, funds the provision of services to the Board.

Administrative and support services are supplied to the Board by the Finance and Valuation Industries Branch of the Department. This branch also deals with Departmental matters relating to credit, debt collectors as well as providing support services to the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board and the Commercial Tribunal².

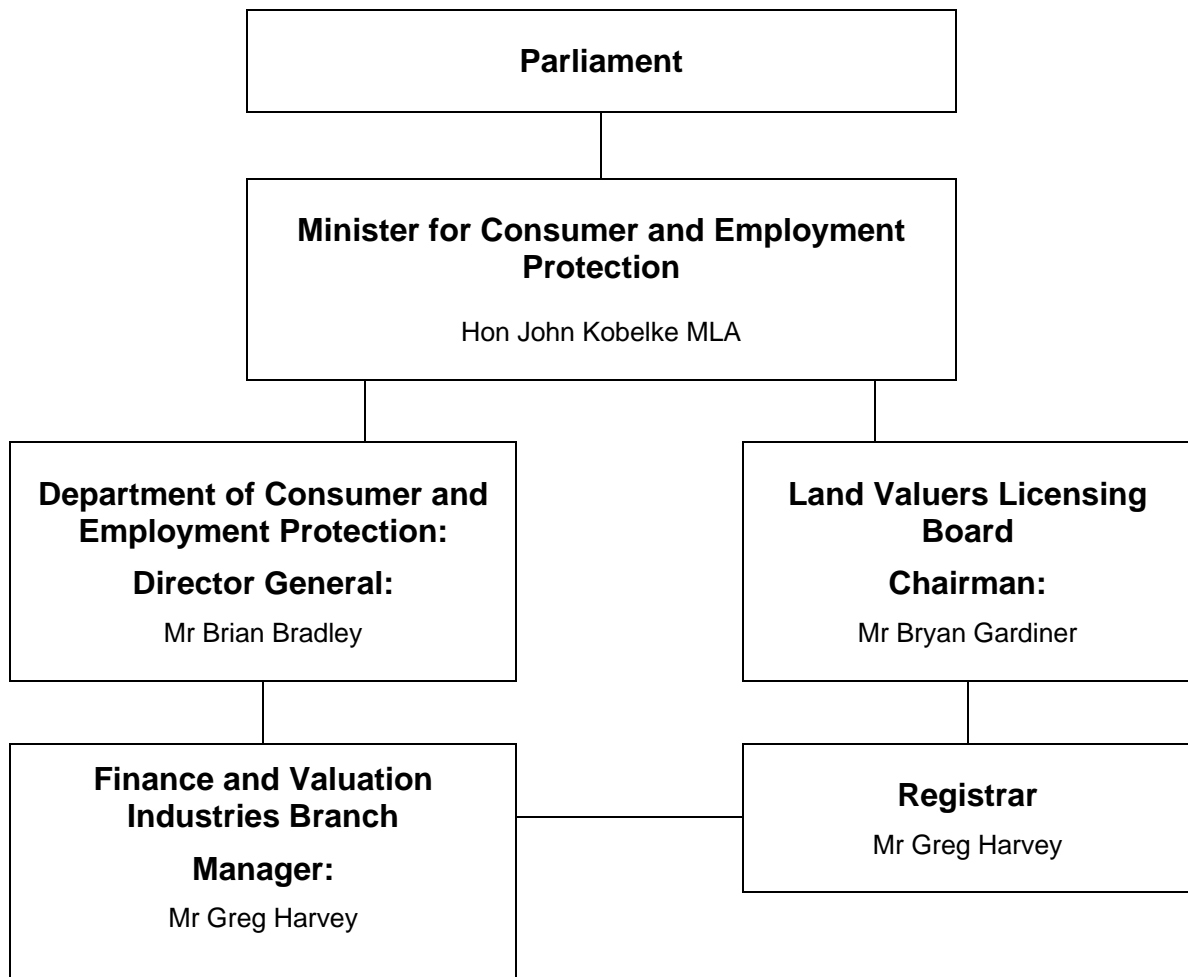
CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

As a state statutory body, the Board is required to adhere to the Western Australian Public Sector Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics sets out the values and behaviour expected of members of state statutory bodies.

² The Commercial Tribunal was disbanded when the State Administrative Tribunal was established on 1st January 2005.

The Board also adheres to a Code of Conduct developed for Board members and officers of the Board to complement the Code of Ethics. The Code defines appropriate conduct for Board members and provides guidance for ethical decision making by the Board.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



LICENSING

LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

The Board may grant a land valuer's licence to an individual who meets the requirements of the Act and the educational requirements prescribed in the Regulations.

Applicants for a land valuer's licence apply under one of three categories:

- (a) Members of the Australian Property Institute [s19(b) of the Act]; or
- (b) Holders of a prescribed degree or diploma who have also had:
 - (i.) two years satisfactory practical experience in the valuation of land immediately preceding the date of application; and
 - (ii.) a total of not less than four years satisfactory practical experience in the valuation of land within the period of ten years immediately preceding the date of application [s19(c) of the Act];
- or
- (c) Persons who have previously held a licence under the Act within the period of five years immediately proceeding the date of application [s19(d) of the Act].

The required qualifications are a Bachelor of Commerce (Property) or a Bachelor of Business – (Valuation and Land Economy). In Western Australia, Curtin University of Technology currently delivers these courses.

NUMBER OF LAND VALUERS

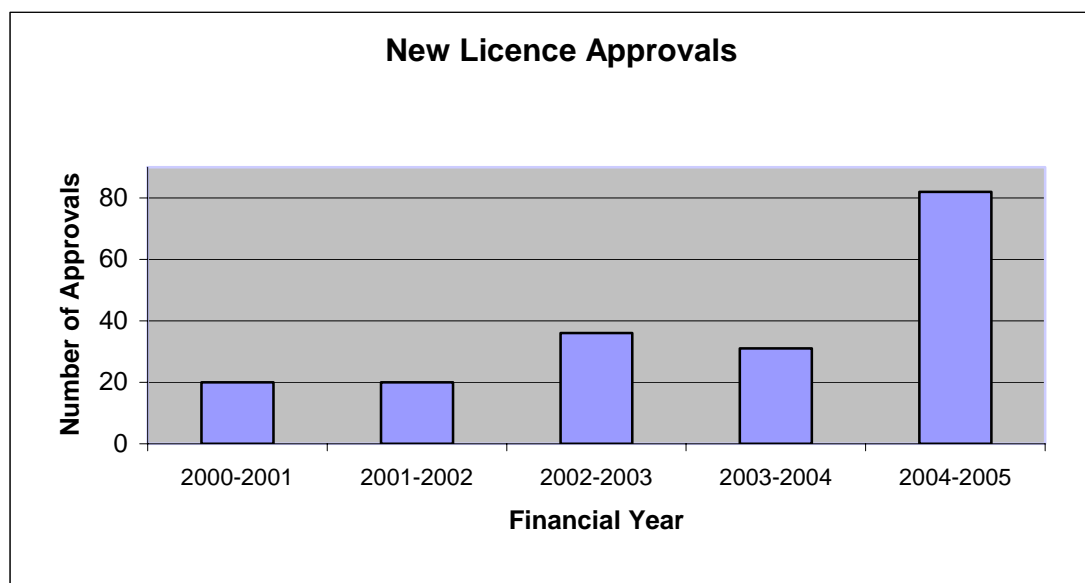
As of 30 June 2005 the total number of land valuers licensed in Western Australia was 547.

NEW APPLICATIONS

Licences are granted on triennial basis (ie for a three year period). During the year, 82 applications for new licences were granted. No applications were declined.

The graph below shows the number of new applications for a land valuer's licence in the past five years. The significantly higher number of new licences granted over the past two years is a healthy sign for the industry and is indicative of the growth in the property sector during times of a strong economy.

Although the number of new applications has increased markedly, compared to some other occupations, the figure is comparatively and proportionately low. This reflects the high qualifications required and the competitive nature of the industry.



In accordance with the provisions of the Act, any person may lodge an objection to the grant of a licence. The Board continues to have jurisdiction for receiving and considering objections to the grant of a licence. However, there were no objections lodged during the year.

LICENCE RENEWALS

Land valuers have up to 28 days after the expiration of their licence to make an application for renewal for a further three year period. A late fee applies to land valuers lodging their renewal applications within this 28-day period.

Historically, all new licences were initially granted for varying periods with the effect that they all became renewable on the same date. Any renewal thereafter was for a period of three years.

However, a common renewal date created administrative difficulties and confusion in the industry and, furthermore, was inconsistent with the licensing periods in other occupational groups. In more recent times, all new licences are granted for three years.

For the reasons as stated above, many licences became renewable on 1 July 2005. There were 466 licences renewed during the financial year up to 30 June 2005.

The Board has a statutory duty to ensure that industry participants are fit and proper to obtain a licence. Accordingly, valuers are required to provide a police clearance certificate when applying for a licence. This year the Board extended this requirement for the renewal of licences.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

Land valuers licensed in other Australian jurisdictions may obtain a Western Australian licence under the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition (Western Australia) Act 1995*. Currently Queensland and New South Wales are the only states which have a registration regime. Tasmania and South Australia have a negative registration regime.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Board relies on the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection to conduct investigations into complaints received against land valuers. The departmental staff conducting these investigations did so under the authority of the *Consumer Affairs Act (WA) 1971* but during the year powers of investigation were included in the *Land Valuers Licensing Act 1978*. The attrition of departmental investigation staff causes regular setbacks for the Board while new staff gain an understanding of aspects of valuation which are often very complex. The Board understands that the Department generally is having difficulty recruiting suitable compliance staff.

In all cases, the investigation will focus on the valuer's application of proper practices and principles rather than the actual valuation figure. Due to the subjective nature of valuation and the fact that it is a professional opinion, the valuer's client may not agree with the actual value provided. Neither the Land Valuers Licensing Board nor the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection has the power to resolve a question about the validity of the amount of value or the consequences of a person's reliance upon the valuation. Nor can the Board or the Government deal with claims relating to financial losses. These must be made through the courts.

In cases where a complainant is able to provide reasonable evidence of alleged breaches of the Land Valuers Licensing Act, Regulations, Code of Conduct or Maximum Remuneration Schedule then a complaint should be lodged with the Board.

To assist in the proper functioning of the Board, a Complaints Committee comprising of senior departmental staff and a deputy member of the Board, who is a licensed

land valuer, reviews, monitors and provides guidance on the investigation of complaints received against licensed valuers. However, following the resignation of the particular deputy member of the Board, the reduced number of complaints and the more recent introduction of the State Administrative Tribunal the Complaints Committee was disbanded.

The Board continues to receive a Compliance Report for discussion at its meetings. Now that the State Administrative Tribunal has taken over responsibility for the conduct of disciplinary inquiries it is possible for the Board to become more involved in compliance matters during the investigation stage. This is indeed appropriate given that the Board will now be the Applicant in any disciplinary Inquiries lodged by the Board with the State Administrative Tribunal.

Departmental investigators are not qualified land valuers. Therefore, as part of the investigation process, independent land valuers may be engaged to audit or provide a critique of a valuation which is the subject of a complaint. The Board has a forensic procedure which provides guidance to the investigators and instructions to those independent valuers.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST LAND VALUERS

During the year, 10 complaints were received and this is generally consistent with the number of complaints received in the past two years. Six of the complaints included allegations relating to valuation practices, one related to fees and charges and three related to licence matters. There were no systemic problems identified in these complaints.

Eight complaint files were closed during the year where the investigations failed to identify breaches of the Act or related regulations. However, of these matters the Board provided some guidance to three valuers on their valuation practices to assist in minimising the risk of further complaints. Another complaint file was closed following disciplinary action (see Board Inquiries). Coupled with complaints carried over from the previous reporting year, there are currently seven matters which are the subject of ongoing investigations, six of which relate to valuation practices and one to fees and charges.

From an educative perspective, the Board published an article on its website advising valuers that it would be prudent business practice to provide an estimate of, or cap, their costs where appropriate. Such an arrangement would minimise the risk of a fee-related dispute arising with the client. This information was also forwarded to the Australian Property Institute for its members.

Complaints against land valuers

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Number of Complaints	29	19	7	7	10

BOARD INQUIRIES

Where a complaint indicates a breach of the Act, Regulations, Code of Conduct or Maximum Remuneration Schedule, and the investigation and legal advice supports further action, the case will be brought to the Board with a recommendation which may include an inquiry.

Up until 31 December 2004, the Board could, on the application of the Registrar or any other person, or of its own motion, hold an inquiry into the conduct of any licensed valuer. In an inquiry the Board acts as a judicial tribunal and conducts the proceedings according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forms. The Board is not bound by the rules of evidence and may inform itself on any matter in such manner as it sees fit.

The Board had the power to summon witnesses, inspect papers and documents, require a person to give evidence on oath or affirmation and require any person appearing before the Board to answer questions.

If the Board was satisfied, after conducting an inquiry, that proper cause exists for a licensed valuer to be disciplined, it could:

- (a) reprimand or caution the licensed valuer;
- (b) impose a fine not exceeding \$500 on the valuer;
- (c) suspend or cancel the valuer's licence and, in addition, disqualify the valuer either temporarily or permanently, or until the fulfilment of any condition which may be imposed by the Board, or until further order from the Board, from holding a licence; and make orders as to costs.

While the Board had the statutory authority to discipline licensed valuers, where proper cause exists, it does not have the statutory authority to award compensation to persons who may have suffered civil damages. Persons seeking compensation from land valuers for alleged civil damages must do so by undertaking independent legal action.

Persons who consider they have suffered a loss as a result of a valuers alleged negligent or incompetent actions are nevertheless encouraged to notify the Board of any concerns they may have regarding the conduct of licensed valuers, so that those concerns may be investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action taken.

As from 1 January 2005, responsibility for hearing disciplinary inquiries was transferred to the State Administrative Tribunal. The Tribunal has similar powers to those outlined above. In such instances, the Board will become the Applicant. There were no applications lodged by the Board with the Tribunal.

Inquiries Completed During 2004-2005

Number	Respondent(s)	Alleged Breaches	Outcome
1/2004	Rodney Gardiner	<p>Section 28(2)(b) of the Act</p> <p>Section 28(2)(b) of the Act (alternative allegation)</p> <p>Article 3(a) of the Code of Conduct (1985) (alternative allegation)</p> <p>Article 4(a) of the Code of Conduct (1985)</p>	<p>Mr Gardiner was fined \$400 for breaches of section 28(2)(c) of the Act and Article 3(a) of the Code of Conduct. His licence was also suspended for three months but such suspension was in itself suspended provided that he is not convicted of any offence under the Land Valuers Licensing Act 1978 within the next 18 months following the Inquiry.</p> <p>Mr Gardiner was also fined \$400 for a further breach of section 28(2)(c) of the Act and Article 4(a) of the Code of Conduct. He was ordered to pay costs of \$2,000.</p>

Ongoing Inquiries

Number	Respondent(s)	Alleged Breaches	Current Status
3/2002	Bernard Worthington	<p>Section 28(2)(b) of the Act (two allegations)</p> <p>Article 3(a) of the Code of Conduct (1985)</p>	<p>On 2 July 2003 Mr Worthington was fined \$500 on each of the three allegations and had his licence suspended for three months. In addition, for a three month period after the suspension is to be lifted he is required to have any valuations prepared by him countersigned by a licensed land valuer. An order for costs is yet to be determined.</p> <p>Mr Worthington appealed to the District Court and a stay was ordered which meant that the above decision shall have no effect until the appeal has been concluded.</p> <p>On 4 March 2005 the Court decided against the Board's decision in</p>

Number	Respondent(s)	Alleged Breaches	Current Status
			respect of the issue of incompetence and in favour of the decision of negligence and Article 3(a) of the Code of Conduct. The matter was heard by the Board on 15 June 2005 and the decision was reserved.

The status of all inquiries is reported as at 30 June 2005. More recent information can be obtained from the Board's website www.docep.wa.gov.au/landvaluers. Information concerning matters referred to the State Administrative Tribunal can be accessed via the website www.sat.justice.wa.gov.au.

Summary of allegations

Section 28(2)(b) of the Act	Negligence or incompetence in making a valuation.
Section 28(2)(c) of the Act	Acting in breach of the Code of Conduct.
Article 3(a) of the Code of Conduct (1985)	Failure to carry out the valuation to the best of his knowledge and ability and in accordance with the proper principles of valuation.
Article 4(a) of the Code of Conduct (1985)	Conducting himself in a way which injures or is likely to injure the reputation or professional status of licensed valuers.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board had two committees, namely:

- Inquiry Processes Committee
- Complaints Committee

However, as result of the establishment of the State Administrative Tribunal these Committees no longer serve any purpose and have been disbanded.

LEGISLATION

LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

The State Government introduced the *State Administrative Tribunal (Conferral of Jurisdiction) Amendment and Repeal Act 2004* which enabled the establishment of the State Administrative Tribunal in January 2005. This legislation also introduced a number of legislative amendments to the *Land Valuers Licensing Act 1978*, including:

- New powers to appoint an investigator and conduct an investigation (previously investigations relied upon powers of the *Consumer Affairs Act (WA) 1971*);
- Appeal rights on reviewable decisions of the Board are now to be exercised through the State Administrative Tribunal;
- The investigation provisions of the *Land Valuers Licensing Act* will continue to apply despite any surrender of a licence;
- The authority to determine if proper cause for disciplinary action against a valuer exists will now rest with the State Administrative Tribunal. The Board may make an allegation to the Tribunal and, thereby, become the Applicant in any ensuing Inquiry; and
- Additional reporting requirements in terms of the Annual Report.

The Board understands that it is proposed by the Government to introduce further changes including the provision for infringement notices for relatively minor offences.

LAND VALUERS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board, with the approval of the Minister, may prescribe a Code of Conduct under section 26 of the Act. The Code is an important method of regulating the operations of licensed valuers and is legally binding on the valuers. The Code was last reviewed and gazetted in January 2004.

MAXIMUM REMUNERATION SCHEDULE FOR LAND VALUERS

In accordance with the Act, the Board may (with the Minister's approval) publish maximum amounts of remuneration for licensed valuers. The remuneration notice was last amended and gazetted in December 2003. While the Schedule sets the *maximum* fee which can be levied by a valuer, it is important to note that market forces are such that many valuers may charge fees less than the Schedule.

It is also worth noting that some of these fees will be established on an hourly rate. The Board believes that it is prudent business practice for valuers to provide an estimate of, or cap, the costs where appropriate. Such an arrangement would minimise the risk of a fee-related dispute arising with the client.

LICENSING AND OTHER FEES

The State Government sets the fees which shall apply to licensing and other services provided by the Board. The following fees were gazetted on 27 June 2003 to be effective from 1 July 2003.

LICENCES	FEE
Application fee and grant of a licence for a 3 year period	\$352.00
Renewal fee for a 3 year period	\$352.00
OTHER	
Examination in respect of application for a licence (s19(4))	\$40.25
Inspection of register of licensed valuers	\$10.90
Certificate of individual registration (first page)	\$10.90
(each subsequent page)	\$2.05
Certificate of all registrations in the register	\$128.00

In June 2005, the Governor amended the Regulations by deleting the above fee (\$40.25) for the examination in respect of applications for a licence. This fee referred to applications for a licence when the Act was first introduced and, therefore, is no longer applicable.

THE STATE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

The State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) became effective on 1 January 2005 and will be responsible for the hearing of disciplinary inquiries and appeals on reviewable decisions made by the Board (eg licensing decisions).

The Board will continue to administer the licensing system for land valuers and contribute to the public policy agenda by making recommendations on legislative matters to the Minister.

No applications were made to the SAT for disciplinary Inquiries. Equally, there were no applications for review lodged with the SAT in respect of reviewable decisions by the Board.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

INTERNET WEBSITE

The Land Valuers Licensing Board website continues to be a point of interest and an ideal form of communication in respect to the activities of the Board and general information for the industry and public.

The website provides information on a range of issues including:

- The Board and its functions;
- Legislation;
- Inquiry matters;
- Licensing;
- Register of licensed land valuers;
- Helpful hints for persons using the services of a land valuer; and
- Links to other related sites.

The website address is **www.docep.wa.gov.au/landvaluers**.

PUBLICATIONS

The Board reviewed the information leaflet entitled *“Notes on Land Valuers”* for persons using the services of a land valuer. Copies of the new edition were sent to the Australian Property Institute, Real Estate Institute of WA and all licensed land valuers. Copies are also available from the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection and on the Board’s website.

TELEPHONE AND COUNTER SERVICE

The Department provides both a counter and telephone advice service to the public, on behalf of the Board. Both services are available during business hours for advice about the licensing and regulation of land valuers.

STAFF TRAINING INITIATIVES

The Department provides training for staff in respect to their specific tasks and also for general customer services and process improvement.

FORECASTS OF THE WORKLOAD AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

The number of licence applications escalated towards the latter part this financial year and is expected to continue at this rate into the next financial year. The Board will also be required to consider renewals for licences, with many members of the industry having licences which expire on 30 June 2005. The number of complaints appears to have returned to “normal” following the Royal Commission Into the Finance Broking Industry which contributed to a spike in complaints during the period 2000 to 2002.

The introduction of the State Administrative Tribunal will remove the disciplinary inquiry function from the Board and this will allow the Board to become more involved in complaints without prejudicing a fair hearing in any matter which may develop into an inquiry. It is expected that this will assist in an improved performance in terms of the time taken to conclude investigations.

The Board also understands that the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection will be conducting a review of the Branch which provides support to the Board. The review will assess the appropriate level of permanent resources and it is expected that this will assist in the retention of staff. Furthermore, the Board has been advised that the Department will be introducing a new complaints and licensing recording system early in the next financial year. This will improve the ability to cross-check licence applications/renewals and complaints.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

The Board is not a statutory authority for the purposes of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985*.

All licensing fees paid by licensed valuers are collected and brought to account by the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection and credited to the consolidated fund at State Treasury. The costs of maintaining the operations of the Board are met from funds appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Department. Amounts of income and expenditure are incorporated in the accounts of the Department and are published in the Department’s Annual Report.

Section 175ZE of the *Electoral Act 1907* requires public agencies to report details of expenditure to organisations providing services in relation to advertising, market research, polling, direct mail and media advertising. The Board has not incurred expenditure of this nature.