

## **Demand for ICT Professionals To “Increase Exponentially”**

PRESS RELEASE – NZ Computer Society Inc. (NZCS)

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*For Immediate Release*

**A very clear message was sent today by Hon David Cunliffe, Minister for Communication and Information Technology, about the “exponential growth” of demand for ICT Professionals over the next 5-10 years.**

The comment was made during the launch of the Digital Development Council, part of a new “Association of Associations” structure set up by the Government and ICT Sector to further the digital development objectives of New Zealand.

NZCS Chief Executive Paul Matthews today said that the Society strongly supported the Digital Development Council, which contains strong NZCS representation, and congratulated the leadership shown by the Government in setting it up.

“The establishment of the DDC marks the end of a long and often rocky road which is littered with structures such as the proposed ICT-NZ ‘One World Government’ model, which fell heavily out of favour and was subsequently abandoned.” Matthews said.

“The nature of this structure and the collaborative way it has been constructed indicates that the Minister is actually prepared to listen to, and work with, the Sector to deliver the structure needed to achieve real results” Matthews said.

There was, however, a serious warning regarding the current ICT skills shortage accompanying the announcement, with Minister Cunliffe stating that “Demand for [ICT Professionals] was likely to increase exponentially over the next 5-10 years”, noting that this was an issue that needed to be urgently addressed.

The ICT Sector is already experiencing a very serious shortage of skilled ICT professionals, with recent data showing the fill rates for ICT vacancies hovering around the 54% mark; well below the 80% regarded as acceptable. The “Survey of IT Recruiters 2008” recently released by the Ministry of Labour also echoes this, with 36 of the 50 IT occupations listed showing a significant shortage of suitable applicants.

“Students in school and others contemplating a career in ICT really need to give this some serious thought”, Matthews said. “There are mountains of challenging and exciting, really well paid jobs in this sector, and this is just further confirmation that this is unlikely to change anytime soon. ICT is where the smart, well paid jobs are”, he said.

Matthews noted that the issue was large and serious, but that “the NZCS is targeting [the skills shortage] by working to remove barriers on a number of fronts, with an NZCS report released earlier this week highlighting serious issues with NCEA Achievement Standards used in schools likely contributing to the low uptake of ICT as a career, as well as moves towards the introduction of an ICT professional framework and certification structure likely to improve the professional recognition of the country’s ICT practitioners”.

Matthews concluded that “an urgent revamp of the ICT-related school curriculum and pathways into and through the profession was needed to address these very serious issues”, and noted that he hoped the shortage would now receive the attention it deserved.

**ENDS**

*For more information please contact:*

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### ***About the NZ Computer Society***

The NZCS is the professional body of ICT professionals in New Zealand, and achieves its mission of increasing the professionalism of the NZ ICT industry via a range of initiatives. The Society's membership includes a large number of senior ICT figures in New Zealand, as well as corporate partnership with many of the most successful ICT organisations in New Zealand.