

7 August 2001

Hon. Trevor Mallard

**MEDIA STATEMENT:
New Unit for Cyber Threats**

The Government will establish a new unit dedicated to providing advice and support to protect New Zealand's critical infrastructure from cyber-threats.

State Services Minister Trevor Mallard said the Centre for Critical Infrastructure Protection (CCIP) would be located within the Government Communications Security Bureau.

"New Zealand's critical infrastructure comprises the systems that are essential to maintaining the political, social, or economic life of the country. That includes our energy and telecommunications systems, transport, finance, and law and order," Trevor Mallard said.

"Some of that infrastructure is almost wholly in the private sector, some of it is wholly in the State sector. Some of it is spread across both sectors.

"The new centre will be the nexus of co-operation between the State sector and the private sector in protecting New Zealand against cyber threats, and it will be the route by which we are connected to the world in protecting systems.

"Owners of infrastructure - whether they are in the State sector or the private sector - will remain responsible for the security of their systems. But the new centre will provide co-ordination, and support and advice on the ways in which we can maintain and improve our security.

"In the past, New Zealand's distance from the large population centres of the world has provided us with some protection against threats to our infrastructure. Those days are past. Telecommunications and the Internet provide the potential for people to reach into our critical infrastructure from thousands of miles away.

"The Government is moving to protect New Zealand's infrastructure from such threats. The establishment of the centre is one of the first steps."

The centre will have three roles:

- providing 24-hour 'watch and warn' advice about threats from viruses and hacking attempts;
- analysing and investigating potential and actual threats in order to improve New Zealand's protection; and
- assisting owners of critical infrastructure to identify and understand their vulnerabilities and to provide advice in protecting critical infrastructure.

The centre will be operating from April. The centre will cost about \$850,000 annually to run. Capital of \$269,000 - mostly for IT equipment - is also required.

Trevor Mallard said other steps were underway to improve New Zealand's protection from cyber-threats.

"Currently, the Government has amendments to the Crimes Act before the House. The amendments will make unauthorised access to IT systems illegal in New Zealand, and they will outlaw, specifically, denial of service attacks.

"I'm also pleased that Transpower is leading work on security for critical infrastructure in the electricity industry, an area that was highlighted in a State Services Commission report in December.

"Further, in core Government agencies, I will soon require departments to meet certain IT security standards to ensure security of infrastructure," Trevor Mallard said.