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Media Release

Retirement Commission's Sorted website rated number 1 Government website

The Retirement Commission's Sorted website, designed to help New Zealanders manage their finances and save for retirement, has been independently rated the most user-friendly and personable government website.

The State Services Commission's e-Govt Unit reviewed 56 government websites on a range of factors including accessibility, usability and personalisation. Sorted was rated the overall top website and scored highly on all factors.

Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan said she's thrilled with the result. "It is independent evidence that Sorted is a highly effective way of helping New Zealanders get sorted on money matters."

Sorted was launched in October 2001 and is part of the Retirement Commission's strategy to help New Zealanders save for their retirement. "Back in 2000 we recognised the word 'retirement' was scary, complicated or irrelevant to many people so we wanted an approach that would have appeal to all people regardless of age and familiarity with financial issues. The result was the Sorted website," said Ms Crossan.

"Sorted is the first website of its kind and it was a calculated risk to change the major focus of our education programme to online delivery when we launched it. We've now received over 1.8 million visits to the site. Last month alone we had 80,000 unique visits, so we're in no doubt that Sorted is a valuable source of information for New Zealanders. These statistics and recognition such as the e-Govt rating shows the potential risk has paid off."

Ms Crossan said the Commission had worked very hard to personalise the site. "The emphasis in the website is on visitors selecting the information and tools most relevant to their needs."

Sorted offers a range of interactive tools and 18 calculators to help people sort their money matters, including budgeting, net worth, saving, investing, managing debt, retirement planning and managing a nest egg.

The website uses a friendly cartoon character, the Sorted mouse, and contains a full range of personal financial planning topics.

This isn't the first time the Sorted website has received praise from the industry. In 2001 and 2004 Sorted won NetGuide's Web Award for Best Finance website.

Since its 2001 launch, over 85,000 thousand people have established a My Plan account on Sorted that allows them to save calculations and goals in a secure environment so they can return and update their plans at a later date.

The 56 websites were reviewed as part of three separate pieces of work carried out by e-Gov Watch on behalf of the State Services Commission. The State Services Commission sponsored reviews of 41 agency websites in 2004 as part of its review of progress towards the goals of the E-government Strategy. This year the Commission sponsored reviews of 25 Crown entity websites, using slightly different criteria. These reviews are part of a wider strategy to ensure that websites delivering government information are accessible, usable and useful to their target audiences.

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