



More information

Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website www.iponz.govt.nz or by calling us free on 0508 447 669.

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Who we are

The Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ) sits within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). MBIE is the steward of the Intellectual Property (IP) regulatory system in New Zealand.

At IPONZ, our purpose is to deliver high quality and robust intellectual property rights and support fair markets that thrive.



Our year at a glance



6TH MOST ACCESSIBLE

IP OFFICE WEBSITE

World Trade Mark Review 2020

100% ONLINE





5 TECHNICAL FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



28 HEARINGS DECISIONS ISSUED



301 OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT RELEASES

7 WEBSITE AND SYSTEM RELEASES





GREW TO 131 PEOPLE



47,245 TRADE MARK CLASSES EXAMINED



2,271 PATENTS EXAMINED



1,782 DESIGNS EXAMINED



87 PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS EXAMINED



2 IP AWARENESS EVENTS

- > The Work of the Trade Marks Māori Advisory Committee (August 2019)
- Kiwi Business Boost,
 a collaboration between
 business.govt.nz
 and IPONZ

(November 2019)



Foreword

FROM THE IPONZ NATIONAL MANAGER

Tēnā koutou,

2019/20 brought the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 to the world.

This had a number of impacts on IPONZ but overall the importance of intellectual property protection has shone through and filing activity has remained strong.

Up until March 2020, IPONZ was forecasting another record filing year for trade marks, which at financial year end June 2020 ended up being only marginally less than the 2018/19 year.

The patent backlog remained but to deal with this IPONZ has continued growing its capability to the greatest number of patent examiners in our history. This included new examiners joining and beginning training during lockdown.

International work has moved online with many staff having middle of the night meetings at WIPO and UPOV. We have also continued our fruitful bilateral relationships with IP officials from around the world.

The Plant Variety Rights Office led the way in the new normal with a lot of international engagement usually running in time zones not favourable to New Zealand! They also managed to keep essential trials on track during the lockdown.

Last year we had hoped to be conducting opposition hearings in a more timely manner. This did not improve through the first part of 2020, but IPONZ is now scheduling record numbers of hearings. IPONZ worked closely with key stakeholders to improve this situation.

In February 2020 IPONZ implemented new fee structures for patents and trade marks to rebalance the revenue generated in these systems. We have only had 12 months to assess the impact of the changes but they appear to have largely achieved the objectives.

2020 saw the conclusion of the Patent Attorney Examination Board functions.

IPONZ would like to thank the members of the New Zealand Institute of Patent Attorneys who have given their time to work alongside the Commissioner over many years. The hard work and collegial working relationship of the Board has contributed to a reputable and competent Patent Attorney profession in New Zealand.

In particular, a special thank you goes to Bryan Thompson for his expert chairing of the Patent Attorney Exam Board from 2004 – 2020.

Ngā mihi,

SP Gullagler

Simon Gallagher National Manager, IPONZ

PATENTS AND DESIGNS

5,900 APPLICATIONS FOR PATENTS, EXCLUDING DIVISIONALS	29,326 PATENTS ON THE REGISTER
1,480 APPLICATIONS FOR DESIGNS	11,636 DESIGNS ON THE REGISTER
↑76.4% GROWTH IN PCT NATIONAL PHASE ENTRY EXAMINATION REQUESTS BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 4,021	↑28.9% GROWTH IN NATIONAL COMPLETE EXAMINATION REQUESTS BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 1,120
1953 ACT DIVISIONAL APPLICATIONS • 44.4% BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 170	1,696 FIRST REPORTS ON PCT APPLICATIONS,575 ON NATIONAL COMPLETE APPLICATIONS,INCLUDING DIVISIONALS AND STANDARDS.

COVID-19 presented unique challenges for everyone. We applied time extensions to reduce immediate pressure on clients. Our Technical Focus Group (TFG) helped design specific communications to guide clients affected by the global pandemic.

Our dedicated training team and cloud-based learning management system paid off. It enabled us to welcome and train new examiners remotely during lockdown. Our international work was reduced and became largely online. But we maintained our engagement with overseas colleagues including those at WIPO, IP Australia, Japan, China and Fiji.

We continued to drive improvement of our systems and processes and introduced new user-friendly templates for our Patent examination reports. These were developed in-house in consultation with our TFG members and clients. New templates will be rolled out for other Patents and Designs letters in 2020 and 2021.

The IP Laws Amendment bill continued its journey through the consultation stages. The policy recommendations were shaped by TFG input and operational considerations.

The Patents team's work load grew steadily in 2020, with PCT applications up 76.4%, while convention applications also had a significant 28.9% rise.

A contributing factor was the fee increase for examination introduced in February. We saw a large spike in examination requests before the change. We also continue to receive precautionary divisional applications, particularly in the Science teams. These factors added to the significant operational pressures facing the Patents team.

However, we have continued to build examination capacity and efficiency. We now have 59 patent examiners, whose individual capacity will increase with time and experience. We are setting new records for numbers of first and subsequent examinations completed. Consequently, we are seeing pendency times stabilise and reduce in some technology areas. Our focus on recruitment, capacity building and pendency reduction will continue into the 2020-2021 financial year.

The Designs team experienced less operational pressure. Total applications were around the same levels as last year, and we worked through the backlog of Design applications efficiently after the level 4 lockdown.

TRADE MARKS AND GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

25,741 TRADE MARK APPLICATIONS FILED	53,535 TRADE MARK APPLICATION CLASSES FILED	
1,616 SEARCH AND PRELIMINARY ADVICE REPORTS	283,922 TRADE MARKS ON THE REGISTER	
↓0.4% DECLINE IN NATIONAL TRADE MARK APPLICATION CLASSES BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 31,409	N ↓ 0.9% DECLINE IN NZD (MADRID) TRADE MARK APPLICATION CLASSES BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 22,126	
25 GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ON THE REGISTER		
1,006 APPLICATIONS REFERRED TO THE MĀORI ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHO ADVISED 3.8% (38) WERE LIKELY TO OFFEND MĀORI		

The start of the 2019/2020 financial year had a heavy focus on ensuring that our structure and staffing levels were appropriate to keep abreast of the increases in volumes we had seen in the years previous. This led to an increase in the trade marks team from 29 to 39 full time equivalents, and the Office recruited 8 new staff in two tranches to fill these vacancies.

As COVID-19 began to spread around the world, it began to quickly affect our ability to engage internationally. IPONZ had to remove ourselves early from a range of conferences and international meetings as our Ministry and Government indicated that International travel should cease. Some of these engagements went ahead in a remote format with examiners submitting proposals and comments on the Nice Committee of Experts meeting held in May 2020.

We continued to provide assistance to other countries in their journey to accede to the Madrid Protocol, which aligns to our International strategy outcome of improving international ease of doing business. In 2019/20 we hosted visits from and provided training to Indonesia and Fiji.

The final application for New Zealand's geographical indications (GI) for wine "North Canterbury" became registered in June. There are now 18 New Zealand wine registrations.

While IPONZ remained open and working over lockdown, our ability to examine at our normal levels was reduced somewhat during lockdown level 4, which led to a backlog of trade mark examination cases.

Our focus for the next year, in light of our backlog and staff growth is to primarily focus internally on training and a few key projects for our direct stakeholders and staff.

Top 5 for 2019

These are the top 5 industries for which New Zealand businesses filed Madrid applications for overseas protection in 2019.



Services for Business and Retail Services



Electronics and Computers



Pharmaceuticals, Supplements and Baby Foods

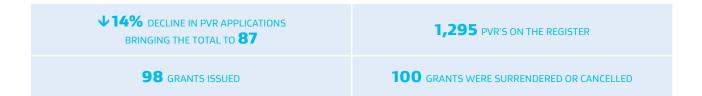


Scientific & Engineering Services and Software Design



Honey, Confectionery and Ice Cream

PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS



National restrictions caused by the global pandemic created a number of difficulties for technical work in autumn 2020. Autumn is the usual period for the completion of testing for some species or the planting and establishment of trials for others. It was fortunate that these activities were eventually permitted to continue, and successfully completed with no significant consequences. The disruption has caused some delays in the examination timetable and Right decisions were made later in 2020 than usual.

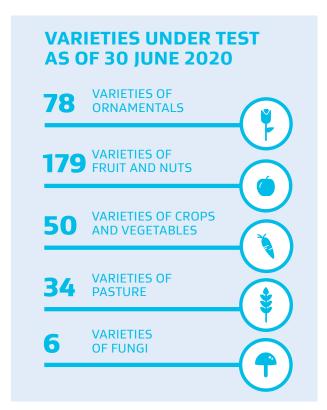
A Quality Management system for DUS testing was introduced in the 2019/20 year. The Plant Variety Rights Act 1987 (section 10 d) requires that a variety is eligible for grant of Rights if that variety is sufficiently 'distinct, uniform and stable' (DUS). The Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand is ISO 9001:2015 accredited and provides an overall Quality Management system for examination; however there was no specific system for DUS testing. Guidance was sought from other authorities with experience and a model was developed for the New Zealand situation. The first audit was successfully carried out for the testing of apples, peaches and plums in late 2019.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) conducted all meetings in 2020 by virtual means. New Zealand participated in the Council, Consultative Committee, Administrative and Legal Committee, Technical Committee and the Technical Working Parties for Agriculture, Ornamentals and for Fruit. New Zealand will take over the chairmanship of the Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops for 2021-2023.

The review of the Plant Variety Rights (PVR) Act 1987 has continued with Cabinet agreeing to make changes

to the PVR Act in November 2019. The drafting of a Bill has commenced, which is expected to be introduced to Parliament by late 2020 and a new regime put in place by late 2021.

In association with the review of the Plant Variety Rights Act 1987, a review of operational activities and Office functions has been completed. The results of the review have led to proposals for change in the primary legislation and will require the drafting of regulations. Elements not directly connected with legislation have been recorded and will be acted upon using amendments to Office and internal practices.



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IPONZ YEAR IN REVIEW 2019/20

HEARINGS

503 ACTIVE PROCEEDINGS	3 DECISIONS APPEALED TO THE COURT	
↓19.5% DECLINE IN PROCEEDINGS FILED, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 508		
258 TRADE MARK OPPOSITION PROCEEDINGS	195 TRADE MARK REVOCATION PROCEEDINGS	
24 TRADE MARK INVALIDITY PROCEEDINGS	27 TRADE MARK DECISIONS ISSUED	
2 PATENT OPPOSITION PROCEEDINGS	12 PATENT PROCEEDING REQUESTS ON EXAMINATION CASES	

The main focus of the Hearings Office in 2019/20 was increasing capacity to ensure hearings could be scheduled in a more timely manner and additional Hearings Officers were appointed to help achieve this. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown pushed scheduled improvements into the second half of 2020 and caused disruption to the processing of procedural correspondence.

The Office has seen record-high and consistent numbers of hearings being scheduled. We have also seen over 90% of procedural correspondence responded to within the targeted 15 working days. A large number of hearings are now being heard via video link and we appreciate the input from our stakeholders that has ensured the success of this.

Our cost awards guidelines for uncontested cases were updated to ensure quick resolution. We also updated our evidence guidelines and pre-hearing directions to simplify proceedings. New guidelines to support the use of Māori tikanga at hearings were published and video conferencing is now used exclusively for some hearings.

The focus of the Hearings Office over the next year is to ensure the continued progress of the scheduling system. This includes introducing electronic case scheduling which will provide earlier notification of the hearing date. This will help us reach our scheduling timeframe target of four months.

We will see further promotion of alternative dispute resolution, investigate other areas where hearings procedures can be simplified and continue to grow our connections with international IP Offices.





From IPONZ case studies: Tara Strahan, Jo Falloon, co-founders of Honeywrap, and a Honeywrap reusable food wrap made of strawberry-print fabric and beeswax.

Credit: Mark Tantrum Photography Ltd.

Building IP awareness

DREAM IT. DO IT. OWN IT.



From IPONZ case studies: Ata te Kanawa, co-founder of Miromoda Fashion Awards talks about ten years showing the best of Māori fashion in New Zealand Fashion Week.

Credit: Mark Tantrum Photography Ltd.

We have a programme in place to help develop a better understanding of intellectual property amongst small- to medium-sized businesses in New Zealand. We estimate that there are over 10,000 new businesses each year that don't register their intellectual property.

Our 'Dream it. Do it. Own it.' campaign helps small businesses, start-ups and individuals in business understand why IP is important, what type of intellectual property protection they should be considering, and where to go to get more information. It delivers key messages through the use of case studies of real New Zealand businesses.

We developed four more case studies in the 2019/20 year, adjusted around the impact of COVID-19. Representing small to medium enterprises, the range of subjects expanded this year with businesses representing social enterprise, technology agri-business, Māori business and communications technology sectors. There is now a total of ten case studies, made available in a publishing cycle through the IPONZ website and Facebook posts.



IPONZ was also part of the 'Getting Started' sessions at the New Zealand Boost programme in 2019. IPONZ met roughly 20 businesses, who mostly needed assistance with naming and branding. Our demonstrations of the Trade Mark Check tool were therefore well-received.

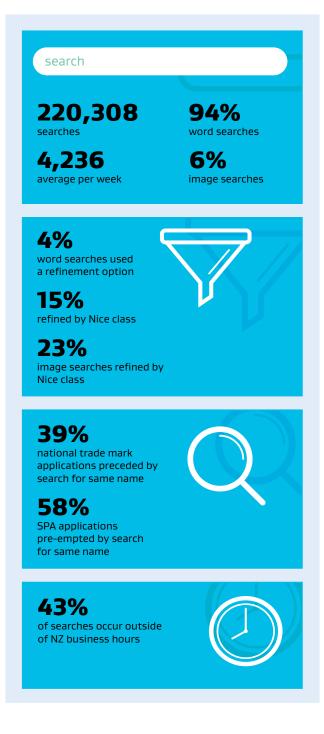
Trade Mark Check

ACTIVITY FOR JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

IPONZ launched <u>Trade Mark Check</u>, an innovative new tool that allows users to quickly find out if a brand name or logo is already on New Zealand's trade mark register, or looks similar to one that is. Trade Mark Check was first launched in July 2019 and a final version was released in February 2020. It can be used on multiple devices, and combines a new user interface designed for non-experts with the latest deep learning artificial intelligence technology.

After New Zealand first entered COVID-19 lockdown, we noted that there was a substantial rise (50%) in the number of queries made using the Trade Mark Check tool. This was followed by a corresponding increase in requests for IPONZ search and preliminary advice reports, and a record number of New Zealand trade mark applications in June and July 2020. While it is still too early to confirm, this is an indication that Trade Mark Check is fulfilling its purpose as a useful tool for small business owners to refine and develop their trade mark ideas.





150th anniversary of IPONZ

150 years of intellectual property in New Zealand

September 12th 1870 saw the birth of the official New Zealand public register of patents. 150 years later, the register has gone on to become one of the most fascinating and culturally significant pieces of New Zealand archival history.

The past century and a half has seen momentous changes in the way we think about Intellectual Property (IP). While early patent applications were dominated by flax harvesting and gold mining – in a modern world of unmatched innovation and globalisation, protecting Kiwi ingenuity is also about owning trademarks, industrial designs, plant varieties, geographical indications and the broader concept of ownership and Intellectual Property.

On an international scale, over the past hundred and fifty years IPONZ has put a stake in the ground by protecting New Zealand inventions and supporting businesses as they take their ideas out into the world. The New Zealand IP office is recognised as a world leader for its culturally inclusive legislation, awardwinning online registration services, innovative 'Trade

Mark Check' tool and a service ethos that supports the commercial strategy of iconic New Zealand innovations and trade marks. Many of our little nation's big successes can be found within the Patent Office's IP registers.

Paving the history of patents

The first registered patent, number 001, was a machine 'for the preparation of the Fibre of the Phormium tenax', otherwise known as flax spinning – a practice used to create rope. The machine was developed and patented by Arthur G Purchas and James Ninnis, after observing traditional Māori flax spinning practices. Flax rope subsequently became one of New Zealand's major exports, commonly used for rigging on ships and at ports.

In the 1880s, the new Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act 1889 amalgamated the registration of the patent, design and trademark interests under the administration of the Patents Office. New Zealand's first Trade Mark was registered in the name of JAS. Hennessy & Co. from France for "Brandy in bottles".

Many of the early New Zealand trademarks have gone on to be successful brands and logos that are still recognised today, such as Edmonds Baking Powder and Fernleaf New Zealand Butter.

Progressing with the times

Fast forward to 1898, when the first patent applications from 'women inventors' were recorded. According to the Patent Office's Annual Report 1899, there were "thirty applications from women inventors lodged during the year", several of which were in reference to "articles connected with dress". By 1909, women made up 24% of the total number of applications. The next several decades saw the rate of female patent applicants rise and fall by small margins, but ultimately remained fairly consistent.



From IPONZ case studies: James Whyte, owner and operator of Baker Gramercy (above right). Credit: Mark Tantrum Photography Ltd.

In 2020, we can confidently say we've come a long way. IPONZ recently hosted the annual 'World IP Day: Powering Change', an event dedicated to empowering women in innovation and creativity. Events like this are part of the wider IPONZ mission to encourage all New Zealanders to find confidence, inspiration and pride in their own ideas and progressive thinking.

Hall of fame

It seems unlikely that the original Patent Officers of 1870 could have imagined that 150 years later, our IP registers would hold thousands of remarkable New Zealand inventions – many of which changed the world.

Modern inventions in the fields of technology, chemistry or biology indicate how far we've some since 'Patent 21475', otherwise known as Richard Pearse's first patented invention. He applied to register aspects of an ingenious bicycle-turned-plane in 1906, which many argue was the world's first flying attempt.

The stories behind many well-known New Zealand inventions sit hidden within the IPONZ archives. In 1913, the quintessential southern 'Swanndri' was patented by New Plymouth tailor William Broome. The original design was a woollen work shirt with special waterproofing to help rural farmers cope with harsh weather conditions.

The highly contested 'Jandals' were registered by Auckland businessman Morris Yock in 1957, despite the outcry of Taranaki man John Cowie, who claimed he began making a plastic version of a traditional Japanese sandal in the late 1940s.

In 1997, nearly seven decades after they rose to popularity, Kiwi company Zespri registered a trade mark for the 'Kiwi Kiwifruit' – an attempt to make a distinction between New Zealand kiwifruit and the Chinese gooseberry (also known as kiwifruit).

The importance of owning your trade mark and plant varieties was a lesson well learnt by Zespri, who now successfully distribute their SunGold, Zespri Red and other kiwifruit varieties across international markets.

Evolving cultural awareness

The passing of the Trade Marks Act 2002 brought significant legislative change and saw New Zealand become an internationally renowned thought leader in the world of IP. The Act created new grounds for the Commissioner of Patents, Trade Marks, Designs and Plant Variety Rights to refuse the registration of trade marks due to cultural insensitivity and established the Māori Trade Mark Advisory Committee to provide advice on proposed use or registration of Māori text or imagery.

IPONZ has also played a key role in creating legislative recognition of many traditional Māori ideas and practices, whether it be musical instruments, construction methods, harakeke, kākahu, whakairo, knowledge of plants or medicine.

We were the first country in the world to incorporate cultural awareness into our Intellectual Property laws.

Questions around the ownership of ideas and practices are not answered easily but we will always seek to recognise the true value of traditional knowledge and reflect that in our work.

Simon Gallagher, National Manager, IPONZ.

Fees review, changes and impact

IPONZ fees

Our trade mark, patent and design services are fully cost recovered. This means that we charge fees to recover the costs of our services from those who directly benefit from those services. In 2019, we completed a routine review of our fees to support a more consistent and transparent approach to cost recovery, across the range of services that we provide.

As a result, some patent and trade mark fees changed on 13 February 2020. Most trade mark fees decreased, many patent fees increased, and a new 'excess claims' fee was introduced.

Trade Mark Fees

Trade mark application fees went down from \$150 per industry class to \$100. The fee for an IPONZ Search and Preliminary Advice (S&PA) report, used to check if a trade mark is available, can also be deducted from the fee to register a trade mark.

Every ten years, when you renew your trade mark, the fees will be less, from \$350 to \$200 per industry class.

More information is available on our website:

www.iponz.govt.nz/about-ip/trade-marks/fees/

Patent fees

Some fees for patents increased, with a new Excess Claims fee introduced for more complex applications with thirty or more claims during the examination process.

More information is available on our website:

www.iponz.govt.nz/about-ip/patents/fees/

Later in 2020, a report considered the impact of the fee changes on IPONZ revenue and the intent of the fee settings. The report included the transitional impacts of the fees changes and the likely impact of COVID-19 on assessing the effectiveness of the fee changes. The report found that whilst it is still early to see the impact of some of the fee changes, overall, changes were either meeting or exceeding their stated intent.

We expect the next report to be available by the end of 2021.

Financial statement

2019/20 Year

As part of the fees review, IPONZ received Cabinet approval for appropriation increases for 2018/19 and outyears. This will enable IPONZ to provide the required information in the fees review discussion document, address continued growth in the volume and complexity of trade mark and patent filings, and reduce the balance of the memorandum account over time. The table below provides an overview of our 2019/20 financials.

	·		
	2019/20 Actual	2019/20 Budget	2018/19 Actual
	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's
Revenue			
3rd Party Revenue			
Trade marks	12,895	12,666	15,343
Patents	10,600	10,440	7,622
Designs	298	247	288
Plant Varieties	370	413	410
Other	252	304	282
Total 3rd Party Revenue	24,414	24,069	23,945
Total Crown Revenue	194	194	85
Total Miscellaneous Revenue	27	0	0
Total Revenue	24,635	24,263	24,030
Expenditure			
Personnel	11,149	11,485	9,316
Operating	4,309	5,034	4,021
Capital and Assets	485	705	1,239
Corporate costs	9,703	9,203	7,991
Total Expenditure	25,646	26,427	22,567
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,011)	(2,164)	1,463
	2019/20 Actual	2019/20 Budget	2018/19 Actual
Memorandum Account	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's
Opening Balance	31,181	29,804	29,804
Revenue	24,441	24,090	23,944
Expenditure	25,562	26,427	22,567
Closing Balance	30,060	27,467	31,181

Looking ahead

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

We will continue to update our systems and legislation. We consider it a priority to continue to invest in timely, human-centred services, which are flexible around the changing needs of the market, the New Zealand public, and future innovations – meaning 24/7 availability, quick uptake of modern technologies, interconnected systems, and accessible and transparent data.

What does the future look like?

- More capacity and capability within IPONZ teams to deliver timely and robust IP rights.
- Development of a goods and services tool to improve the classification experience for trade mark applicants.
- Increased incorporation of tikanga Māori in our practices and processes.
- In 2020 the median time from when a proceeding is ready to be heard will be in 4 months or less.
- Automated Hearings scheduler in the IPONZ case Management system.
- > Review of the user experience of our online Services.
- Deeper research into emerging trends in IP data and our clients' behaviour to better understand their needs.
- Extend the IPONZ Learning Management System for training Patent Examiners to include Trade Mark and Designs content.
- Understand and look to utilise advances in artificial intelligence in relation to intellectual property administration for the benefit of customers.

We're working towards increased partnership with:

- > New Zealand's innovation industry
- > Other IP offices
- > Small business clients



From IPONZ case studies: Kat Lintott, co-founder of Wrestler talks about her journey into virtual reality.

Credit: Mark Tantrum Photography Ltd.



Appendix

NEW ZEALAND'S IP LANDSCAPE IN 2019/20

TOP 5 TRADE MARK CLASSES

GOODS AND SERVICES CLASSES FOR TRADE MARK APPLICATIONS FILED IN 2019/20

5,029

(35) Advertising, business management, business administration, office functions

4,936

(9) Apparatus and instruments for scientific or research purposes, audiovisual and information technology equipment, safety and life-saving equipment

3,245

(42) Scientific laboratory services, engineering, computer programming, architectural services or interior design.

3,172

(41) Education; providing of training; entertainment; sporting and cultural activities.

3,017

(5) Pharmaceuticals and other preparations for medical or veterinary purposes.

TOP 5 PATENT CLASSES

IPC CLASSES FOR PATENT
APPLICATIONS FILED IN 2019/20
(EXCLUDING DIVISIONALS)

2,706

Human necessities

1,762

Chemistry; Metallurgy

734

Physics

708

Performing operations; Transporting

400

Fixed constructions

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS FILED THROUGH NEW ZEALAND

Trade Mark applications with New Zealand as office of origin503

PCT international applications filed with New Zealand as receiving office..........148

APPLICATIONS AND REGISTRATIONS IN 2019/20				
		APPLICATIONS	REGISTRATIONS	
TRADE MARKS (BY CLASS)	National	31,409	28,576	
	International (NZD)	22,126	20,272	
	Total	53,535	48,848	
PATENTS	Complete	1,454	614	
	National Phase Entry	4,446	1,317	
	Total	5,900	1,931	

REGISTRATIONS IN FORCE IN NEW ZEALAND AS OF 2019/20

283,922



TRADE MARKS

29,326



PATENTS

11,636



DESIGNS

1,295



PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS

25



GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

RENEWALS FILED IN NEW ZEALAND IN 2019/20

12,612



TRADE MARKS

21,953



PATENTS

1,069



DESIGNS

1,045



PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS



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