

The Treasury

Budget 2012 Information Release

Release Document

June 2012

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Key to sections of the Official Information Act 1982 under which information has been withheld.

Certain information in this document has been withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- [1] 6(a) - to prevent prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the government
- [2] 6(c) - to prevent prejudice to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial
- [3] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people
- [4] 9(2)(b)(ii) - to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information or who is the subject of the information
- [5] 9(2)(d) - to avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand
- [6] 9(2)(f)(iv) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials
- [7] 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions
- [8] 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege
- [9] 9(2)(i) - to enable the Crown to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage or prejudice
- [10] 9(2)(j) - to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice
- [11] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage
- [12] 9(2)(ba)(i) - to prevent prejudice to the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

Where information has been withheld, a numbered reference to the applicable section of the Official Information Act has been made, as listed above. For example, an [4] appearing where information has been withheld in a release document refers to section 9(2)(b)(ii).

In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

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Hon Christopher Finlayson
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

Thank you for your contribution to the Justice Sector Four Year Budget Plan and recent March Baseline Update submissions covering Vote Treaty Negotiations and Attorney-General.

Four Year Budget Plan

I consider that the Justice Sector Four Year Budget Plan, incorporating Vote Treaty Negotiations and Vote Attorney General is acceptable, but due to cost pressures and the number of changes expected in the sector over the next year, another Four Year Budget Plan should be submitted in advance of Budget 2013.

Final Budget decisions

Final decisions on Budget initiatives, as well as possible expenditure savings, will be made by Cabinet on 23 April 2012. Please note also that acceptance of all Four Year Budget Plans is subject to the Government making satisfactory progress towards its priority of returning to surplus by 2014/15. If economic circumstances put the surplus target at risk, Cabinet may need to reconsider its fiscal track and some or all Budget Plans.

March Baseline Update

I have examined your submission for Vote Treaty Negotiations and I approve your updated baselines for Vote Treaty Negotiations.

The MBU submission for Vote Treaty Negotiations includes transfers of underspends of \$63,000. As you are aware, the Justice Sector is working with the Treasury on a proposal for more flexible financial management arrangements [6]

The proposal includes the establishment of a Justice Sector fund to enable underspends to be transferred more easily across votes and across financial years. The proposal has yet to be considered by Cabinet, but if it is approved, Justice Ministers may wish to consider transferring a portion of these (and any future underspends) into the fund.

I have examined your submission for Vote Attorney-General – and the subsequent minor changes discussed with officials – and approve your updated baseline for Vote Attorney-General.

The changes reflected in the amended table 2 are:

- The reduction in Revenue Department to meet the required efficiency savings.
- A forecast change in Departmental Output Expense: Legal Advice and Representation.

I accept the fiscally neutral adjustment (FNA) in 2011/12 into the Departmental Output Expense: Conduct of Criminal Appeals. However, I understand that this appropriation is likely to have similar pressures in the future. I am interested in your plan to address this risk into outyears and invite you to submit information on how Crown Law will manage this by 30 June 2012.

All other aspects of your Vote Attorney-General baseline update are agreed.

Yours sincerely



Hon Bill English
Minister of Finance