Glossary of Terms

Accruals basis of accounting

An accounting basis where revenue is recognised when earned and expenses when the obligations they relate to are incurred. This contrasts to cash accounting, where income is recognised when the cash is received and expenses when cash to settle an obligation is paid out.

Appropriations

Appropriations are legal authorities granted by Parliament to the Crown or an Office of Parliament to use public resources. Most appropriations are set out in Appropriation Acts.

Baselines

The level of funding approved for any given area of spending (eg, Vote Education). All amounts within baselines are included in the forecasts.

Commercial portfolio

Consists of assets and liabilities held by companies with commercial objectives.

Consumers Price Index (CPI)

Statistics New Zealand's official index to measure the rate of change in prices of goods and services purchased by households.

Contingent assets

Income that the Crown will realise if a particular uncertain event occurs, or a present asset is unable to be measured with sufficient reliability to be recorded in the financial statements (unquantified contingent assets). Contingent assets typically comprise loans with specific events that trigger repayment and IRD pending assessments (where there is a proposed adjustment to a tax assessment).

Contingent liabilities

Costs that the Crown will have to face if a particular uncertain event occurs, or present liabilities that are unable to be measured with sufficient reliability to be recorded in the financial statements (unquantified contingent liabilities). Contingent liabilities typically comprise guarantees and indemnities, legal disputes and claims, and uncalled capital.

Core Crown

A reporting segment consisting of the Crown, departments, Offices of Parliament, the NZS Fund and RBNZ. For a list of all entities included in this segment, refer to the Government Reporting Entity (pages 87 to 89).

Core Crown expenses

The day-to-day spending (eg, public servants' salaries, welfare benefit payments, finance costs and maintaining national defence etc) that does not build physical assets for the core Crown. This is an accrual measure of expenses and includes items such as depreciation on physical assets.

Core Crown revenue

Consists primarily of tax revenue collected by the Government but also includes investment income, sales of goods and services and other revenue of the core Crown.

Corporate tax

The sum of net company tax, non-resident withholding tax (NRWT) and foreign-source dividend withholding payments (FDWP).

Current account (Balance of Payments)

The current account records the value of New Zealand's transactions with the rest of the world in goods, services, income and transfers. The current-account balance is the sum of all current-account credits less all current-account debits. When the sum of debits is greater than the sum of credits there is a current-account deficit. The current-account balance is commonly expressed as a percentage of nominal GDP.

Cyclically-adjusted balance (CAB) or structural balance

An estimate of the fiscal balance (operating balance before gains and losses) adjusted for fluctuations of actual GDP around trend GDP. CAB provides a picture of the underlying fiscal position and the effects of policy decisions.

Demographic changes

Changes to the structure of the population such as the age, gender or ethnic make up.

Domestic bond programme

The amount and timing of government bonds expected to be issued or redeemed.

Excise duties

A tax levied on the domestic production of alcohol, tobacco and light petroleum products (CNG, LPG and petrol).

Financial assets

Any asset that is cash, an equity instrument of another entity (shares), a contractual right to receive cash or shares (taxes receivable and ACC levies) or a right to exchange a financial asset or liability on favourable terms (derivatives in gain).

Financial liabilities

Any liability that is a contractual obligation to pay cash (government stock, accounts payable) or a right to exchange a financial asset or liability on unfavourable terms (derivatives in loss).

Financial portfolio

Consists of the assets and liabilities held by the Crown to finance or pre-fund government expenditure.

Fiscal drag

The additional tax revenue generated from source deductions as an individual's average tax rate increases as their income increases.

Fiscal impulse

A summary measure of how changes in the fiscal position affect aggregate demand. To isolate discretionary changes, fiscal impulse is calculated on a cyclically-adjusted basis and excludes net interest payments. To better capture the role of capital spending, the indicator is derived from cash flow information.

Fiscal intentions (short-term)

Indications of the Government's intentions for operating expenses, operating revenues and the impact of its intentions on the operating balance, debt and net worth over (at least) the next three years. These intentions are required under the Public Finance Act 1989 (PFA).

Fiscal objectives (long-term)

The Government's long-term goals for operating expenses, operating revenue, the operating balance, debt and net worth, as required by the PFA. The objectives must be consistent with the defined principles of responsible fiscal management as outlined in the PFA and must cover a period of (at least) 10 years.

Forecast new capital spending (Capital allowance)

An amount provided in the forecasts to represent the balance sheet impact of capital initiatives expected to be introduced over the forecast period.

Forecast new operating spending (Operating allowance)

An amount included in the forecasts to provide for the operating balance (revenue and expenditure) impact of policy initiatives, changes to demographics and other forecasting changes expected to occur over the forecast period.

Gains and losses

Gains and losses typically arise from the revaluation of assets and liabilities, such as investments in financial assets and long-term liabilities for ACC and GSF. These valuation changes are reported directly as a movement in net worth (eg, asset revaluation reserves) or indirectly through the statement of financial performance.

GDP deflator

An index of changes in the general price level in the economy. It is calculated as the ratio of nominal GDP to real GDP.

Generally accepted accounting practice (GAAP)

GAAP refers to the rules and assumptions used to prepare and present financial statements. GAAP is an independent and objective set of rules that govern the recognition and measurement of financial elements, such as assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses.

Government Finance Statistics (GFS)

A statistical framework for government reporting developed by IMF to aid comparability of results between countries. This differs from the GAAP framework that is used for reporting by the Government in New Zealand.

Gross sovereign-issued debt [GSID]

Represents debt issued by the sovereign (the core Crown) and includes government stock held by the NZS Fund, ACC and EQC.

Gross debt

GSID excluding settlement cash and bank bills.

Gross domestic product (GDP)

A measure of the value of all goods and services produced in New Zealand. Changes in GDP measure growth or contraction in economic activity or output. GDP can be measured as the actual dollar value of goods and services at today's prices (nominal GDP), or excluding the effects of price changes over time (real GDP).

Gross domestic product (expenditure)

The sum of total expenditure on final goods and services in the economy.

Gross national expenditure (GNE)

A measure of total expenditure on final goods and services by New Zealand residents.

Insurance liabilities

The gross obligation for the future cost of claims incurred prior to balance date represented in today's dollars (present value). The net liability is the gross liability less the asset reserves held to meet those claims.

Inter-segment eliminations

The amounts of transactions between different segments (core Crown, Crown entities and SOEs) that are eliminated to determine total Crown results.

Labour force participation rate

Measures the percentage of the working-age population in work or actively looking for and available for work.

Labour productivity

Measures output per unit of labour input (where labour inputs might be measured as hours worked or the number of people employed).

Line-by-line consolidation

A term used to refer to the general approach to the presentation of the Crown financial statements. It means that the individual line items for revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities in the financial statements of Government include all departments, Offices of Parliament, RBNZ, SOEs, Crown entities and other entities controlled by the Government.

Marketable securities

Assets held with financial institutions. These assets are held for both cash flow and investment purposes. Examples are bonds, commercial papers and debentures.

Minority interest

Minority interests include those who recently purchased shares in the Government Share Offer Programme as well as the pre-existing minority interests in Air New Zealand limited and the minority interests held in the Crown Fibre Holdings Group and Solid Energy

Monetary conditions

Aggregate monetary conditions measure the degree to which short-term interest rates and the exchange rate either support or restrict economic growth.

Monetary policy

The policies that RBNZ uses to regulate the supply of money in New Zealand. RBNZ implements its monetary policy decisions by adjusting its Official Cash Rate (OCR) in an effort to maintain stability in the rate of CPI inflation within a defined target range.

Tightening monetary policy means raising the OCR in order to moderate aggregate demand pressures and reduce inflationary pressures. Easing monetary policy has the reverse effect.

National saving

National disposable income less private and public consumption spending. Income excludes gains and losses on capital. Gross saving includes depreciation.

Net core Crown cash flow from operations

The cash impact of operating results. It is represented by the operating balance (before gains and losses) less retained items (eg, net surplus of SOEs, Crown entities and NZS Fund net revenue) less non-cash items (eg, depreciation).

Net core Crown debt

Net core Crown debt provides information about the sustainability of the Government's accounts, and is used by some international rating agencies when determining the creditworthiness of a country. It represents gross debt less core Crown financial assets (excluding advances and financial assets held by the NZS Fund). Advances and financial assets held by the NZS Fund are excluded as these assets are less liquid and/or they are made for public policy reasons rather than for the purposes associated with government financing.

Net international investment position (NIIP)

Measures the net value of New Zealand's international assets and liabilities at a point in time.

Net worth

Total assets less total liabilities. The change in net worth in any given forecast year is largely driven by the operating balance and property, plant and equipment revaluations.

Net worth attributable to the Crown

Represents the Crown's share of total assets and liabilities and excludes minority interests' share of those assets and liabilities.

Operating balance

Represents OBEGAL (refer below) plus gains and less losses. The operating balance includes gains and losses not reported directly as a movement against net worth. The impact of gains and losses on the operating balance can be subject to short-term market volatility and revaluations of long-term liabilities.

Operating balance before gains and losses (OBEGAL)

Represents total Crown revenue less total Crown expenses. OBEGAL can provide a useful measure of underlying stewardship than the operating balance as short-term market fluctuations are not included in the calculation.

Output gap

The difference between actual and potential GDP. Potential GDP is the level of output an economy can sustain without acceleration of inflation.

Outputs

Outputs are the goods and services commissioned by Ministers from public, non-governmental and private sector producers. Outputs may include the supply of policy advice, enforcement of regulations (such as speed limits in transport), provision of a range of services (in health, education, etc), negotiation and management of contracts and administration of benefits.

Productivity

The amount of output (eg, GDP) per unit of input.

Projections

Projections relate to the period beyond the five-year forecast period and are based on long-run economic and fiscal assumptions. For example, the projections assume no economic cycle and constant long-run interest, inflation and unemployment rates.

Residual cash

The level of money the Government has available to repay debt or, alternatively, needs to borrow in any given year. Residual cash is alternatively termed "Cash available/(shortfall to be funded)".

Residual cash is equal to net core Crown cash flow from operations excluding NZS Fund activity less core Crown capital payments
(eg, purchase of assets, loans to others).

Settlement cash

This is the amount of money deposited with RBNZ by registered banks. It is a liquidity mechanism used to settle wholesale obligations between registered banks and provides the basis for settling most of the retail banking transactions that occur every working day between businesses and individuals.

Social portfolio

Consists of the assets and liabilities held primarily to provide public services or to protect assets for future generations.

Specific fiscal risks

All government decisions or other circumstances known to the Government which may have a material impact on the fiscal and economic outlook, but are not certain enough in timing or amount to include in the fiscal forecasts.

System of National Accounts (SNA)

SNA is a comprehensive, consistent and flexible set of macroeconomic accounts which meets the needs of government and private sector analysts, policy-makers and decision-takers.

Tax revenue

The accrual, rather than the cash ("tax receipts") measure of taxation. It is a measure of tax due at a given point in time, regardless of whether or not it has actually been paid.

Terms of trade

The terms of trade measure the volume of imports that can be funded by a fixed volume of exports, and are calculated as the ratio of the total export price index to the total import price index. New Zealand's headline terms of trade series is derived from export and import price indices from Statistics New Zealand's quarterly Overseas Trade Index release. The Treasury forecasts the terms of trade on an SNA-basis, using implicit export and import price indices derived from quarterly national accounts data.

Top-down adjustment

An adjustment to expenditure forecasts to reflect the extent to which departments use appropriations (upper spending limits) when preparing their forecasts. As appropriations apply to the core Crown only, no adjustment is required to SOE or Crown entity forecasts.

Total borrowings

Represents the Government's total debt obligations to external parties and can be split into sovereign-guaranteed debt and non-sovereign-guaranteed debt. Non-sovereign-guaranteed debt represents the debt obligations of SOEs and Crown entities that are not guaranteed by the Crown.

Total Crown

Includes the core Crown (defined above) plus Crown entities and SOEs as defined by the Government Reporting Entity on pages 87 to 89.

Tradable/non-tradable output

There is no official definition of the tradable sector. In this document the tradable sector is defined as the part of the economy particularly exposed to foreign competition. It includes primary, manufacturing and tourism industries. Non-tradable output is estimated as a residual of total real GDP.

Trade-weighted index (TWI)

A measure of movements in the New Zealand dollar against the currencies of our major trading partners. The currencies comprise the US dollar, the Australian dollar, the Japanese yen, the euro and the UK pound.

Votes

When Parliament considers legislation relating to appropriations, the appropriations are grouped within “Votes”. Generally, a Vote groups similar or related appropriations together (eg, Vote Health includes all health-related appropriations administered by the Ministry of Health).

Year ended

Graphs and tables within this document use different expressions of the timeframe. While some tables may refer to the end of the tax year (31 March), others will refer to the end of the Government’s financial year (30 June). For example, unless otherwise stated references to 2013/14 or 2014 will mean the end of the financial year.