

The Treasury

Budget 2013 Information Release

Release Document

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

Reference: T2013/1229

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THE TREASURY

Kaitohutohu Kaupapa Rawa

Date: 7 May 2013

To:
Minister of Finance
(Hon Bill English)

Deadline: Read prior to Cabinet Legislation Committee at 7:45am, Thursday 9 May

Aide Memoire: Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas Bill

Purpose

This Aide Memoire is a briefing on the Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas (HASHA) Bill that will be considered by the Cabinet Legislation Committee this week.

Update on progress with the HASHA Bill

A number of changes have been made to the policy underlying the HASHA Bill since policy decisions were taken at Cabinet on 15 April [CAB Min (13) 12/14]. The Cabinet paper which accompanies the Bill sets out the substantive changes that have occurred since that time.

Several matters that we previously raised have been addressed through the drafting process. [8]

The most significant change is that the Bill now includes plan change powers as well as resource consenting powers. This aspect of the proposal was developed following negotiations with Auckland Council. The Council raised a concern that, when the Unitary Plan is notified, the greenfield areas designated as 'future urban zones' will not contain any rules that define what types of urban development can occur within them. The Council's view was that this would cause unnecessary uncertainty for developers (e.g. affecting their ability to secure finance), and that the plan change process which will happen through the Hearings Panel as part of consultation on the Unitary Plan will not be fast enough.

The HASHA Bill, therefore, provides for a new plan change/variation process whereby only adjoining landowners and NZTA will be consulted. The entire process will be required to be undertaken within 6 months, and will have no appeal rights.

[6]

Select committee process

Given the speed with which the Bill has been produced and the degree of overlap with the Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms and Unitary Plan processes, we think that the select committee process will be even more important than usual. Although officials have worked very hard to align the Bill with other areas of work, the policy details underlying the Bill have been shifting late into the process which means that some inconsistencies may remain.

The Cabinet paper proposes referring the HASHA Bill to the Social Services Committee. We think the Bill would benefit from being considered by the Local Government and Environment Committee, especially in terms of linkages with the RMA reforms. There may be good reasons for referring the Bill to another committee (e.g. in terms of managing workloads), but if possible, we think the Local Government and Environment Committee would be a better fit for this Bill.

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