

The Treasury

Budget 2015 Information Release

Release Document July 2015

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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] 6(e)(iv) - to damage seriously the economy of New Zealand by disclosing prematurely decisions to change or continue government economic or financial policies relating to the entering into of overseas trade agreements.
- [4] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people
- [5] 9(2)(b)(ii) - to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information or who is the subject of the information
- [6] 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.
- [6a] 9(2)(ba)(ii) - to protect information, where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest
- [7] 9(2)(d) - to avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand
- [8] 9(2)(f)(iv) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials
- [8a] 9(2)(f)(ii) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the collective and individual ministerial responsibility
- [9] 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions
- [10] 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege
- [11] 9(2)(i) - to enable the Crown to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage or prejudice
- [12] 9(2)(j) - to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice
- [13] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage
- [14] Not in scope

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, a [4] appearing where information has been withheld in a release document refers to section 9(2)(a).

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



Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Budget 2015 and Beyond: Strategy and Process

Portfolio: Finance

On 4 August 2014, Cabinet:

Budget 2015 approach

- 1 **noted** that since 2008, the government has encountered severe economic and fiscal challenges, and has responded to these through a measured programme of improving public sector performance;
- 2 **noted** that the government's books have turned around significantly over the last six years, resulting in Budget 2014 delivering a small surplus in 2014/15;
- 3 **noted** that progress has come from defining results, directing agencies to achieve them, and reprioritising resources accordingly;
- 4 **noted** that better public service performance is helping to achieve the government's social objectives and to deliver considerable fiscal savings as social results are achieved;
- 5 **noted** that the government is moving to managing a growing economy rather than recovering from a recession;
- 6 **noted** that the operating allowance for Budget 2015 was lifted to \$1.5 billion per annum;
- 7 **agreed** to the continuation of the fiscal strategy outlined in Budget 2014;
- 8 **agreed** that Budget 2015 focus on targeting vulnerable groups of people and improving public sector performance;

Four-year Plans

- 9 **noted** that the purpose of four-year plans remains unchanged, which is to provide an integrated view of a department's medium-term strategy to be delivered within existing baselines;
- 10 **noted** that proposed changes to four-year plans are designed to reinforce their key strategic role, to strengthen their ownership by chief executives, and provide greater flexibility to accommodate the needs of a government post-election;

- 11 **agreed** to strengthen chief executive ownership of four-year plans and their implementation by making them primarily departmental documents, with Ministers being satisfied that the plans are consistent with the government's policies and the performance expectations of the department;
- 12 **agreed** that new initiative bids will be collected separately from four-year plans, as this approach reinforces the focus of four-year plans on how chief executives will deliver within existing baselines while providing flexibility for when new bids need to be submitted post-election;
- 13 **agreed** that draft four-year plans be provided to the incoming Minister in November 2014, with the four-year plans being finalised post-budget decisions;
- 14 **noted** that sustainable funding for the all-of-government ICT common capabilities programme led by the Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) will be considered as part of Budget 2015;
- 15 **noted** that the Minister of Finance has asked the Treasury and the GCIO to consult agencies on paragraph 14 above in the later part of 2014.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (114) 438
