

The Treasury

Budget 2017 Information Release

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[1]	to prevent prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the government	6(a)
[4]	to prevent prejudice to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial	6(c)
[11]	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.	6(e)(vi)
[23]	to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people	9(2)(a)
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[26]	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	9(2)(ba)(i)
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[29]	to avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand	9(2)(d)
[31]	to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting collective and individual ministerial responsibility	9(2)(f)(ii)
[33]	to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials	9(2)(f)(iv)
[34]	to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions	9(2)(g)(i)
[36]	to maintain legal professional privilege	9(2)(h)
[37]	to enable the Crown to carry out commercial activities without disadvantages or prejudice	9(2)(i)
[38]	to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice	9(2)(j)
[39]	to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	9(2)(k)
[40]	Not in scope	

In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) and section 18 of the Official Information Act.

Reference: T2017/687 DH-44

Date: 20 March 2017

To: Minister of Finance (Steven Joyce)

Deadline: Tuesday, 21st March 2017

Budget 2017 Bilateral with Minister Bennett – Vote Police and Vote Serious Fraud

You are meeting with Minister Bennett at 8pm on Tuesday 21 March to discuss Budget initiatives in her portfolios. This briefing provides information on the initiatives in the Police portfolio, including Vote Police and Vote Serious Fraud.

Vote Police

Following the \$503 million *Safer Communities* pre-commitment across Police, Justice and Corrections, Police have one other initiative in the Budget process, Iwi and Community Panels. This initiative is being considered as part of Track 1.

Iwi and Community Panels

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Police refer eligible individuals to a panel taking into account prior offending, current offending circumstances and victim considerations.

People of any ethnicity are eligible for referral to a panel if they are aged 17 years and over, have committed a low level offence and admit responsibility. Low level offences are those with a maximum penalty threshold of six months imprisonment or less (excluding family violence and methamphetamine related offences). The most common offences referred to a panel are: disorder, shoplifting, wilful damage and careless driving.

The Social Investment Panel thought the initiative was high quality, and supported its focus on restorative justice. It also noted that the panels reduce pressure on the Justice Sector pipeline.

Treasury are generally supportive of the iwi panels approach, as it provides a community-based programme with some wrap-around characteristics that seems effective at reducing re-offending for young Māori, a population that is over-represented in the justice pipeline.

The major evidence supporting this initiative comes from an analysis of the results of the existing Iwi and Community Panels pilot. This evaluation showed a significant reduction in re-offending for young Māori of 57 fewer prison days over the two year follow-up period (a 12% reduction) compared with a comparison group.

However, this evaluation also showed negligible or negative impacts on re-offending for the other panel populations – older Māori and non-Māori – and evaluation statistics had high uncertainty. [33]

Given the uncertainty in the evaluation, and the lack of demonstrated effectiveness for a large proportion of the panel population, this initiative was not assessed as meeting the high threshold for funding that underpinned the Track 1 process.

Rather than restricting the scope of Iwi Panels to the population for which they have a demonstrable impact (young Māori), Police's view is that the Panels should be open to all ethnicities, as there is a need to ensure people of all backgrounds can have open access to alternative justice mechanisms that reduce justice sector pipeline pressure and reoffending. The wider scope also mitigates the risk that panels are perceived as a separate, parallel justice system solely for Māori.

The new element of discretionary funding for each Panel attendee, [33] may increase the effectiveness of the Panels on participants outside the young Māori cohort by increasing the ability of the Panels to address specific drivers of the attendee's offending.

If funding is not provided for Iwi Panels at Budget 2017, Police have stated that the panels would not continue past the current allocation from the Justice Sector Fund which ends in June 2017.

It is possible that further funding could be sought from the Justice Sector Fund and you may wish to discuss this with Minister Bennett. This would be dependent on there being sufficient funding available in the fund, and an assessment of the suitability/priority of this initiative to receive funding given it has been funded previously.

Vote Serious Fraud

Case and Evidence Management Systems

This initiative seeks \$1.4 million operating and \$0.8 million capital over four years to procure an integrated case and evidence management system for the Serious Fraud Office (SFO).

The investment will enable the SFO to use modern technology to improve the management of its investigations, principally through an increased ability to manage and analyse the large and increasing volume of evidential documents and data. It will be accompanied by technology that would allow a unified view of the SFO's operations including case resourcing, prioritisation and costs.

Treasury supports this initiative and considers it would have sizeable benefits to the SFO. However, this initiative is not included in our minimum recommended Social Sector package due to the large pressure on the operating allowance and this initiative's discretionary nature. There is limited service risk associated with not funding this initiative this Budget, but it is likely that funding will be required in the future as the SFO's existing information systems become less fit-for-purpose, so we recommend deferral to a future Budget.

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Colin Hall, Manager, Justice Security and Government Services, [39]