

# The Treasury

## Budget 2014 Information Release

### Release Document

### July 2014

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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
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- [6] 9(2)(d) - to avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand
- [7] 9(2)(f)(iv) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials
- [8] 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions
- [9] 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege
- [10] 9(2)(i) - to enable the Crown to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage or prejudice
- [11] 9(2)(j) - to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice
- [12] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage
- [13] Not in scope
- [14] 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.

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 [3] 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.



Dear

## FOUR YEAR PLANS

This letter introduces the guidance for 2014 Four-year Plans. Based on feedback from a review of the 2013 Four-year Plan process and work with an agency reference group, this year's process is intended to provide greater flexibility and adaptability to specific agency or sector circumstances.

Overall, the emphasis remains on providing a clear and integrated medium-term view of an agency's/sector's direction on strategy, supported by information on financial performance, workforce, IT, capital management and risks. This aims to allow Ministers to understand agency or sector priorities and the trade-offs that may be required to achieve key government goals.

In summary:

- Four-year Plans are intended to form the central component of the Budget 2014 process and will be submitted to the Ministers of Finance and State Services by portfolio Ministers.
- As in 2013, Four-year Plans are working documents between an agency and its Minister(s).
- Unless advised otherwise all agencies will need to complete a Four-year Plan for Budget 14. If you have been advised previously that you have an exemption or are required to provide an update only, please engage early with your central agency leads (Treasury Vote Manager and /or SSC Deputy /Assistant Commissioner), to confirm that this is still appropriate.

This year, we have aimed to provide more flexibility to focus Four-year Plans in a way that is most relevant to agencies or sectors. Key changes for 2014 Plans include:

- More emphasis on providing an integrated strategy for the outcomes each agency or sector will deliver and a complete picture across the four years of the Plan.
- Increased attention to agencies' response to Government priorities including the Better Public Services programme.
- Attention to Chief Executives' accountabilities for stewardship and the collective interests of government.
- Increased structure and definitions around the detailed information that will support a Four-year Plan's narrative and also providing more robust information as a basis for advice to Ministers to use, for example, in the 2014 budget process. Definitions around workforce information have also been strengthened to provide for a more consistent system view across agencies.

Key background points to note are:

- Government has identified returning the Crown accounts to surplus in 2014/15 as a key priority for this term;
- As in previous years, planning should be on the basis of no new funding from the centre, except where indicative allocations have been advised; and
- Departments should consult closely with agencies in their sector to ensure that Plans align and draw appropriate links to each other. In some cases, agencies may choose to prepare a joint sector Four-year Plan.

**Key Dates**

- Agencies should agree with their central agency leads when a final draft Plan will be available to central agency teams with the latest date being 1 November 2013
- Final Four-year Plans to be submitted to SSC & the Treasury on 13 December 2013.

Central agencies are working closely together to support agencies' development of Four-year Plans. Please engage early with central agency teams to discuss the approach you would like to take to your Four-year Plan. Initial contact should be made via your central agency leads.

To facilitate engagement with central agencies please also provide contact details for the person leading Four-year Plan development in your agency to [marilyn.rimmer@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:marilyn.rimmer@ssc.govt.nz) who will forward details to Treasury and SSC lead contacts.

The guidance for 2014 Four-year Plans is now available on CFISnet at <http://cfisnet/Default.aspx> and the SSC website at <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/four-year-plans>.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Forgan  
Deputy Secretary, Budget & Public Services  
The Treasury

Peter Brown  
Deputy Commissioner System Capability  
State Service Commission