The Treasury

Budget 2026 Information Release

September 2026

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Information Withheld

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act that would apply have been identified.

Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to sections of the Act under which information has been withheld:

[1] 6(a) - to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the government

[2] 6(b)(i) - to avoid prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government

[4] 6(c) - to avoid prejudice to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial

[7] 6(e)(ii) - to prevent serious damage to the economy of New Zealand by disclosing prematurely decisions to change or continue government economic or financial policies relating to the regulation of banking or credit

[12] 7(a)(i) - to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of the self-governing State of the Cook Islands

[13] 7(a)(ii) - to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of the self-governing State of Niue

[14] 7(a)(iii) - to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of Tokelau

[15] 7(a)(iv) - to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of the Ross Dependency

[23] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people

[25] 9(2)(b)(ii) - to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information or who is the subject of the information

[26] 9(2)(ba)(i) - to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice 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

[27] 9(2)(ba)(ii) - to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest

[31] 9(2)(f)(ii) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting collective and individual ministerial responsibility

[33] 9(2)(f)(iv) - to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials

[34] 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions

[35] 9(2)(g)(ii) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through protecting ministers, members of government organisations, officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment;

[36] 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege

[37] 9(2)(i) - to enable the Crown to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage or prejudice

[38] 9(2)(j) - to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice

[39] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage

[40] 18(c)(i) - that the making available of the information requested would be contrary to the provisions of a specified enactment

[41] 18(d) - information requested is or will soon be publicly available

Where information has been withheld, a numbered reference to the applicable section of the Act has been made, as listed above. For example, a [23] appearing where information has been withheld in a release document refers to section 9(2)(a).

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Vote Conservation; Vote Agriculture, Biosecurity, Fisheries and Food Safety

Vote(s)	Conservation; Agriculture, Biosecurity, Fisheries and Food Safety
Track	Spending
Description	The Minister of Conservation, on behalf of the Minister for Biosecurity, is seeking an invitation to Budget 2026 for $60 million total time-limited funding from 2026/27 to 2028/29 to support the wilding conifer control. Funding would be used for critical deferred maintenance for treated sites and additional control activities in other high priority sites. Further, the Minister of Conservation has proposed using higher than forecast International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) levy revenue to fund this programme.
Operating Average Per Annum ($m)	15 (requested $20 million per annum for three years)
Total Capital ($m)	0
Treasury advice	**Summary:** We recommend declining the request for a Budget 2026 invitation because it does not meet the criteria for inclusion (it is not a critical cost pressure, coalition commitment, nor a new initiative aimed at delivering a core Government priority). Instead, we recommend requesting the: • Minister for Biosecurity investigate implementing a National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) for long-term control, and • Minister of Conservation consider using current IVL allocations to fund critical work required via the 2026/27 IVL investment plan process, in advance of an NPMP being implemented. **Background**: • <u>Wildling conifers</u>. We recently advised that wilding conifer control is a material issue with significant economic costs but the Crown has funded a disproportionate amount of control efforts to date (e.g., the Crown has funded ~$170 million since 2016/17 whereas third-party contributions over that period have only totalled ~$30 million) [T2025/2253 refers]. • <u>Approach to IVL allocations</u>. Ministers agreed to a structured investment plan process to evaluate discretionary uses of IVL funding and that any revenue in excess of IVL allocations would be substituted for existing Crown funding to generate savings [T2024/3353 refers]. The Crown currently manages upside and downside risk of higher and lower IVL revenue at the centre to support fiscal headroom and stability in programme funding, respectively. **Advice:** We recommend you request an NPMP is investigated for wildling conifer control: • An NPMP is a statutory instrument under the Biosecurity Act, offering an enduring approach to wildling conifer control. It would enable levying powers to be applied to the full range of risk exacerbators and beneficiaries of control efforts (like foresters, other landowners, and regional councils). • An NPMP would provide a mechanism to more equitably share control costs. Without an enduring mechanism in place, the status quo approach risks i) significant pressure from stakeholders for further Crown funding without a commensurate contribution from other parties and ii) an insufficiently resourced approach to long-term wildling conifer control. However, an NPMP could take between 18-24 months to establish. In the interim, further deferral of maintenance and management of critical control areas could increase the eventual costs of an NPMP (including potentially for the Crown) and incur economic costs for affected regions.

	We recommend you indicate you will consider the case for 'bridging funding' as part of the 2026/27 IVL investment plan process. We understand that the Department of Conservation (DOC) will provide IVL Ministers with a draft investment plan by December 2025. Lastly, we do not recommend increasing DOC's IVL allocation. This would be inconsistent with prior decisions that IVL revenue over and above DOC and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's existing allocations should be used to generate additional fiscal headroom.
Conditions on Invitation	Not applicable.
MoF Decision	a. **Indicate** if you would like to invite this initiative into Budget 2026 *Invite / Do not invite **(Treasury Recommended)*** b. **Indicate** if you support increasing DOC's IVL allocation *Yes / No **(Treasury recommended)***